Special Issue II
ISSN 2454-5694
Volume 10
Number 2
December 2024

JOURNAL OF KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

An International Bilingual Journal of
Social Science (UGC CARE)



JOURNAL OF
KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES
Office: 3/25/1, R.K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700042
Phone:+9432490361
Email: ksasianstudies@gmail.com
kspublication1@gmail.com
Website: www.kolkatasocietyforasianstudies.com www.jrksas.org

EDITORS
Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ranjana Banerjee
Mahidas Bhattacharya
Sanjukta Dasgupta
Mita Banerjee
Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri
Tridib Chakraborti
Sharmistha Banerjee
Swati Sen Mandi
Krishna Bhattacharya
Krunoslav Mikulan
Satyabrata Chakrabarti
President, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

John Adamson
Shyam Sundar Bhattacharya
Pratiti Ghosh
Debi Chatterjee
Mina Dan
Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Sudipa Ray Bandyopadhyay
Mesbah Kamal
Suniti Pathak
Durga Basu
Arpita Basu
Treasurer, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

General Information

Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies is a double blind peer reviewed publication. It is an International Journal dedicated to the development of all branches of Social Sciences with special reference to Asian Studies. The Journal accepts theoretical and empirical papers on interdisciplinary studies. The Journal occasionally publishes special issues which mediate on a single topic. It also publishes research notes, reports, book reviews, etc.

JKSAS is a half-yearly (June and December) and bilingual (English and Bengali) journal. Only original unpublished papers are accepted. Papers submitted for consideration must not be under consideration elsewhere. The copyright of the accepted papers will lie with Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Decisions of the Editorial Board are final.

Subscription and Business Affairs

	Annual Subscription	
Countries	**Institutional Subcribers**	**Individual**
India	**INR 1200.00**	**INR 1000.00**
Foreign Countries	**US $ 100.00**	**US $ 90.00**

All correspondences relating to subscription, advertisements and other business matters should be addressed to the SECRETARY, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Remittance should be payable to KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

Copyright@Kolkata Society For Asian Studies.

Editorial

This special issue covers a wide range of subjects. In addition to other articles, this volume contains papers, which were invited and presented in a webinar on Indo-Japan relationship. In the article entitled *Indo-Japanese Relations-Traditional and Present Scenario,* Purabi Ganguli has discussed the historicity of the relationship between the two countries through more than the last 1500 years, though diplomatic relationship between the two countries is established only in the year 1952. She has pointed out the role of spirituality, especially through diffusion of the doctrine of Buddhism. Debanjan Ghosh in the article *The Evolving Landscape of Educational and career Opportunities between India and Japan,* discussed on the opportunities in terms of education and exchange programmes, with a view to strengthening the bond between the two countries.

Tanaka Kenechi, Aneesah Nishaat and Minei Yusaku from Japan in the jointly authored paper entitled, *Comparative Study of moral Education in India and Japan,* have discussed from the pedagogical view point, the moral education system provided in the school text books, in both the countries. A comparison of the systems has shown the difference in terms of Japan having a homogenous population as opposed to much diversity present among the communities in India.

The paper entitled*, Harappan Imageries and Artistic Liberty: A Socio-economic Analysis of Power Struggle Based on the Depictions Represented on Seals and Sealings* by Sabah Salim is an attempt at deciphering and interpreting Harappan seals and sealings from a new perspective of power and authority of the contemporary society. The paper, *Iron Metallurgy in Manipur with reference to the ancient iron smelting sites at Kakching: an archaeological and empirical approach* is written jointly by Naorem Naresh Singh and Oinam Ranjit Singh. They have made an attempt at finding the history of Iron technology in the state of Manipur with special attention to the ancient iron smelting place at Kakching in the state.

From Monarchy to Democracy: Indo-Bhutan Relations in Transition, by Sanjit Pal gives a historical account of change in political situation of Bhutan. Discussion is based on Indo-Bhutan relationship in terms of politics, trade and security against invasion from neighboring countries.

There are a number of articles focusing on gender and community based studies. Mohana Das and Madhurima Mukhopadhyay, jointly wrote the paper*, Envisioning an Empowered Dalit Future: Resistance, Acceptance, and Liberation through Selected Works of Bengali Dalit. Writers.* As the title

suggests she has taken three stories, one written by Mahasweta Devi and two by Monoranjan Byapari. On these backdrops of literature the future of dalit communities is assessed. Another paper entitled, *Strength in Solidarity: Exploring Women's Empowerment in Khaled Hosseini's: A Thousand Splendid Suns* by K. Jaya is also on literature study. She had shown that women may achieve power if they join hands and make collaborative effort for achieving the same as shown in Hosseini's work.

Paper titled, *Does Appearance Related Anxiousness Hint towards Body Dysmorphic Disorder? A Gender-based Enquiry about Appearance Concern* is written by Rituparna Ghosh. The article dealt with a disorder known as Body Dysmorphic Disorder. The author made an attempt at finding out if anxiousness about appearance is related to this disorder. The study is with primary data and concerns both men and women of different age groups and she tried to find out if there is any relationship between use of social media and body dissatisfaction. The paper, *gender equity and health: examining health policies for women in India* by Sanchita Chakrabarti, examines health status of women with the use of secondary data from National Family Health Survey. Study is made from diverse aspects related to health of a woman and has suggested implementation of proper health policy for women in India. The paper, *Unveiling the Dark Legacy of Witch Hunts: Exploring Causes, Consequences, and Mental Health Impacts,* written under joint authorship of Bhupendra Mishra, Uttiya Basu and Purbita Das, pointed out the evil practice of witch hunting. They have given data of such practices prevailing in Africa and India. They have identified the types of women who are usually marked as witches and not only discussed the practices but also have given an account of Law and Acts that are there for the prevention of witch hunting and made some suggestion for policy of the government for prevention of such heinous practices. Focus is laid on women's right in the paper, *Legislation to Implementation: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Legal Protections for Marginalized Women in India,* written jointly by Debdatta Das, Paramita Bhattacharyya and Sudipta Adhikary. Although it is believed that gender discrimination is absent among the tribal communities in India, the paper *Gender Disparities in Education: Insights from Tribal Populations in Jharkhand* by Rita Biswas, Renu Jahagirdar and Sudipta Adhikary has pointed out that disparity exists in providing education to girl children among the tribal communities studied by them. With the question of women empowerment by providing cash for education to female school going students, Sukanya Ghosh, Jyotika Teckchandani and Neeta Tripathi wrote the paper *Conditional Cash Transfer Schemes and Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal*. The authors researched upon Kanyasree Prokolpo in an urban district, Kolkata and in a rural area in Purulia district of West Bengal. They reported success of the project but at the same time suggested some measures on the part of Government to make it more supportive to the cause of women empowerment.

The paper, *Navigating Stigma: Adaptation Challenges of Divorced Women in Bangladesh—A Qualitative Exploration,* is by Nafisa Tabassum Bristi, Md. Abdul Kader Miah and Prakash Chandra Roy from the department criminology, Bangladesh. They have written about the pathetic situation

of divorced women in Bangladesh. They have suggested measures for alleviating their condition in the society. From Divorced women the switch over is to single mothers in the paper, *Perceived Life Satisfaction of Institutionalised Single Mothers and Recommended Social Work Intervention in Karnataka State* by K. Harish and P. G. Aquinas. The study is made of the single mothers, who are institutionalised at "Swadhargreah", safe house, in the state of Karnatak, India. The women studied were in the age range of 15 to 39 years. The study showed that the women in the institutions are moderately satisfied with their life as single mothers.

There are two papers on the concept of "menstruation". The paper *Menstruation in Assam: Beliefs and Practices by* Panna Garg and Upala Barua focused on the rituals connected with the Goddess of Kamakshya in Assam. The attitude of both male and female are studied in respect to much needed process of menstruation in the life cycle of human kind. In Assam the concept rotates around the goddess, the beliefs and rituals connected with the process and significance of the puberty of the females in modern day Hindu society of Assam. The other paper is titled as, *Monitoring Menstrual Health Knowledge, Communication Patterns and Taboos among University Students in India,* by the authors Ashok Kumar, Yukti Dhadwal and Vinit Yadav. The study is made in the state of Haryana, India. Sample size is 1698 students both from undergraduate and postgraduate classes in the universities. It is found that there is a gender specific need for communication about menstruation in educational institutions.

There are a few papers on trade and commerce. The paper entitled *Customers' Perceptions of the Quality of Banking Services Following Mergers and Acquisitions: An Analysis of the SBI Merger* by Nisha. P. and K. Kanniammal. They have taken data from the clients of SBI at Palakkad, who were present at the time of the merger. They have used statistical methods for analysis of the data and found that the clients were satisfied with services that are provided after merger of the banks. Nilam Rai and Veer Mayank's paper titled as *Conflict between International Trade Provisions and Climate Change Policies,* point out the conflict that has come up between the policy of World Trade Organization and environment conservation process of the planet earth. Authors, Uttiya Basu, Kaushik Banerjee, Sudipta Adhikary, and Subham Chatterjee in their paper*, Religion's Impact on India's Commercial and Economic Practices,* have categorically pointed out from historical to modern day business transactions carried out by groups of traders in India belonging to different religions, namely, Hinduism, Buddhist, Jainism and Islam. They concluded that religion has an important role in shaping trade and commerce in India. Criteria, like business ethics, social networks, trade routes, craftsmanship etc., played important role in shaping and developing of trade through time in India.

There are papers which are on policy making in various sectors in India. Gadde Omprasad's paper, *Trends and Dynamics in India's External Energy Policy,* assessed India's energy resources and policies for acquiring the deficit energy from international sources. Ivy Dhar in her paper, *Finding the Blue Drums: A Micro Study on Urban Household Water in Delhi,* deals with the formalization of

informal in a number of unauthorized colonies in Delhi. Data is collected from 90 households of two unauthorized colonies, Khadar and Sanjay. Lack of pipeline water supply has made the residents to pump out water from underground pipelines by the local residents. Paramita Bhattacharyya's paper, *A Deep Dive into the Effects of Eminent Domain on victims of Land Acquisition in India,* made a critique of Government policy in acquiring land for public and development purposes. The owner of the land acquisitioned is in a way is victimized. *Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner: An Insight into NCF-2005, NCFTE-2009 and NEP-2020 is* a paper by Nilay Mondal and K. N. Chattopadhyay. This is on pedagogy. They found that the reflective method is more effective. A teacher is to go back and reflect upon its teaching to find how effective it was for learning by the students. Another paper on education system in India is *Institution-building Process in the Development of Multidisciplinary Institutions (MDI)* by Yeasmin Sultana. In this paper the author has made analysis of National Level Educational Policy (NEP 2020) introduced by UGC, which advocated multidisciplinary institute building across the country by 2030. The author criticized such process of institute building.

The editors would like to thank the authors of the articles submitted for this volume. They are also grateful to the erudite reviewers, whose efforts and criticism has enriched this volume.

Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu
The Editors

Content

Indo-Japanese Relations-Traditional and Present Scenario ... 9
Purabi Ganguli

The Evolving Landscape of Educational and career
Opportunities between India and Japan ... 19
Debanjan Ghosh

Comparative Study of moral Education in India and Japan ... 25
Tanaka Kenechi, Aneesah Nishaat and Minei Yusaku

Harappan Imageries and Artistic Liberty: A Socio-economic Analysis of
Power Struggle Based on the Depictions Represented on Seals and Sealings ... 38
Sabah Salim

Iron Metallurgy in Manipur with reference to the ancient iron smelting
sites at Kakching: an archaeological and empirical approach ... 48
Naorem Naresh Singh and Oinam Ranjit Singh

From Monarchy to Democracy: Indo-Bhutan Relations in Transition ... 58
Sanjit Pal

Envisioning an Empowered Dalit Future: Resistance, Acceptance,
and Liberation through Selected Works of Bengali Dalit. Writers. ... 72
Mohana Das and Madhurima Mukhopadhyay

Strength in Solidarity: Exploring Women's Empowerment in
Khaled Hosseini's: A Thousand Splendid Suns ... 87
K. Jaya

Does Appearance Related Anxiousness Hint towards Body Dysmorphic
Ddisorder? A Gender-based Enquiry about Appearance Concern ... 93
Rituparna Ghosh

Gender equity and health: examining health policies for women in India ... 107
Sanchita Chakrabarti

Unveiling the Dark Legacy of Witch Hunts: Exploring Causes, Consequences, and Mental Health Impacts ... 121
Bhupendra Mishra, Uttiya Basu and Purbita Das

Legislation to Implementation: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Legal Protections for Marginalized Women in India ... 134
Debdatta Das, Paramita Bhattacharyya and Sudipta Adhikary

Gender Disparities in Education: Insights from Tribal Populations in Jharkhand ... 149
Rita Biswas, Renu Jahagirdar and Sudipta Adhikary

Conditional Cash Transfer Schemes and Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal ... 158
Sukanya Ghosh, Jyotika Teckchandani and Neeta Tripathi

Navigating Stigma: Adaptation Challenges of Divorced Women in Bangladesh—A Qualitative Exploration ... 168
Nafisa Tabassum Bristi, Md. Abdul Kader Miah and Prakash Chandra Roy

Perceived Life Satisfaction of Institutionalised Single Mothers and Recommended Social Work Intervention in Karnataka State ... 182
K. Harish and P. G. Aquinas

Menstruation in Assam: Beliefs and Practices ... 193
Panna Garg and Upala Barua

Monitoring Menstrual Health Knowledge, Communication Patterns and Taboos among University Students in India ... 207
Ashok Kumar, Yukti Dhadwal and Vinit Yadav

Customers' Perceptions of the Quality of Banking Services Following Mergers and Acquisitions: An Analysis of the SBI Merger ... 222
Nisha. P and K. Kanniammal

Conflict between International Trade Provisions and Climate Change Policies ... 236
Nilam Rai and Veer Mayank

Religion's Impact on India's Commercial and Economic Practices ... 247
Uttiya Basu, Kaushik Banerjee, Sudipta Adhikary, & Subham Chatterjee

Trends and Dynamics in India's External Energy Policy ... 255
Gadde Omprasad

Finding the Blue Drums: A Micro Study on Urban Household Water in Delhi ... 273
Ivy Dhar

A Deep Dive into the Effects of Eminent Domain on victims of Land Acquisition in India ... 285
Paramita Bhattacharyya

Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner: An Insight into NCF-2005, NCFTE-2009 and NEP-2020 ... 296
Nilay Mondal and K. N. Chattopadhyay

Institution-building Process in the Development of Multidisciplinary Institutions (MDI) ... 310
Mohammad Asif & Yeasmin Sultana

Indo Japanese Relation- Traditional and Present Scenario

Purabi Gangopadhyay

Abstract

India and Japan, two Asian civilizations, have been in continuous contact with each other for more than 1500 years. India was known to Japan as 'Tenjiku' or Heavenly Abode. And since 13th October, 538 CE Japanese started admiring Tenjiku as their spiritual motherland. But the Buddhism which was nourished in China and later found way to Japan through Korea had developed a new flavour of it's own, that was in some respect deviated from the original Buddhism of India. Another surprising fact is that, it was Indian culture which only migrated and not accompanied with the Indian people. Later, visit of Indian monks and sages strengthened the Indo-Japanese spiritual relations. Moreover the zeal and interest of Japanese Buddhist monk-scholars fostered the tie more strongly. Names of the Japanese scholars like Eisai, Myoe and Indian scholars-monks like Bodhidharma, Bodhisena, Dharmapatha may be mentioned.

Since 19th century this relations took a new form and dimension. Visit of Swami Vivekananda, Tagore to Japan and visit of many Japanese scholars like Tenshin Okakaura reconsolidated the Indo-Japanese fraternity. Some courses introduced by the Tokyo University, instead of the policy of 'getting rid of Buddhism' by the then government of Japan, popularized Indian philosophy in Japanese Archipelago. Two stalwarts of Indian independence movement, Rashbehari Bose and Netaji had very close contact with Japan.

Since the First diplomatic relation between these two countries established in 1952, many summits and different bilateral contact made this relation stronger in every year. And it will continue to become stronger day by day.

Introduction

India and Japan, two Asian civilizations, have been in continuous contact with each other for more than 1500 years.

In past, India was known to Japan as 'Tenjiku' or Heavenly Abode. And since 13th October, 538 CE Japanese started admiring Tenjiku as their spiritual motherland, when the Koreans (and not the Indians) introduced 'Buddhism' or 'Butsudo' to Japan for the first time. Soon after Buddhism introduced into

Lecture delivered on Japan Month, 26.10.2024, organized by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

Japan, it did not take a long time to become the central force of spiritual as well as cultural belief in Japan. As a natural embodiment different aspects of higher culture brought about enormous changes in the life of the people of Japan. Here it should be mentioned that, as Buddhism did not enter into Japan directly from India and it had to pass through China and Korea, for obvious reasons Buddhism absorbed many indigenous influence of both the countries. Thus the Buddhism which was nourished in China and later found way to Japan through Korea had developed a new flavour of it's own, that was in some respect deviated from the original Buddhism of India.

Longing for Spiritual Motherland

However, since its inception to Japan on 13th October, 538 CE Buddhist Culture, ideology and pattern of Buddhist life-style strongly influenced Japanese archipelago. As Buddhism is basically an Indian belief or ism, along with Buddhism, Indian Cultural elements influenced the life and culture of the then Japanese Society.

But the surprising fact is that there is no record of direct contact between India and Japan in the initial stages. And also it is interesting to note that barring a few legends, there is dearth of historical evidence of migration of Indians to Japanese mainland. It was Indian culture which only migrated and not accompanied with the Indian people. Even without the presence of Indian people in Japan, the cultural activities of the ancient Indian people had created a strong appeal only to be cordially embraced by the people of ancient Japan.

It is believed that one South Indian Buddhist monk reached Japan after completion of his work in China around 536 CE. This Buddhist bonze is known as Bodhidharma. One research by Tsutomu Kambe (one physicist by profession) reveals that Bodhidharma who was a prince by birth had some spiritual attitude from his very childhood. Thus he turned down his princely life and became a monk. As per the Chinese records, after a lapse of sixty years after the Mahaparinirvana or death of Gautama Buddha, Bodhidharma realised that now is the time to popularize master's idea to the East Land (China). He realized most of the tenets of Buddhism in China do not have any clear idea about Mahayana Buddhism. Thus he sailed for China probably around 521 CE and after a long journey through sea he landed in China in either in 524 or in 527 CE. He stayed in China for almost nine years in austere religious practices. On completion of his work in China for about nine years he might went to Japan.

Due to meagre historical evidence concerning Bodhidharma, paradoxically, is offset by countless legends about this sage and was deified in Japan. But the importance of this Indian sage on Japanese psyche, is evident from different common belief among the people. Bodhidharma is popularly known in Japan as Bodai Daruma. A particular example of believing Bodhidharma or Bodai Daruma in his deified form is worshiping a particular doll named after him. This Daruma Doll is regarded as the symbol of good luck and at times it acts as solace to common people.

According to hearsay, one Indian priest named Dharmamarga or Dharmapatha (called Hodo in Japan) went from Rajagriha during the time of Emperor Kotoku in Japan in Nara period (645-654 CE). But no details of his activities in Japan are available.

Indian Culture was migrated without Indian diaspora which has created a new social order created by Indian Philosophy in Japan, which is the reverence towards Sanskrit Language. It was Sanskrit that bridged the gap left with limited opportunities of migration of Indian or Japanese priests and common people. Sanskrit became a favourite subject of learning because many important Buddhist texts were composed in Sanskrit. These texts travelled to China from India and then to Japan. One of the eight great Buddhist priests, Kukai or Kobo Daishi as well as many other Buddhist priests learnt Sanskrit in Japan and China. Kukai had been to China between 804-806 CE and learnt Sanskrit from an Indian monk, Prajna who also was staying in China during that time. It was Kukai who introduced a slightly altered form of Devanagri in Japan called Shittan. The word Shittan is derived from Sanskrit word *Siddham* or sacred letters of *Devanagri*. Learning the Shittan letters is also pursued in Japan even today. In the modern cemeteries too, the Shittan letters can be found engraved or written on four sides of the vertically-placed appreciably large memorial stones. The letters philosophically indicate five elements in which the body is transformed after death. The tomb stones are of various designs following the *Stupa* design. In general, the Gorinto or the tomb stone or memorial stone comprises primarily of five layers.

The Supplementary Chronicles of Japan (Shoku Nihongi) indicates that the first official visit of one Indian Buddhist monk took place in 8th Century CE., to be more precisely in 736 CE. This monk was Bodhisena.

Bodhisena, was a South Indian Brahmin by birth but he consecrated to Buddhism and trained as monk in India. Seeing the deep interest the Chinese showed for Buddhism, and also with a believe that *Manjushri* (the bodhisattva of wisdom or future Buddha) lived on the Chinese mountain of Wutai, he went to China on his own and became acquainted with many Buddhist scholars from different countries. He also met the Japanese ambassador to the Tang court while he was in China, who induced him to go to Japan.

Then, in 734 CE he sailed for Japan with a few Chinese and Cambodian Buddhist priests. But a severe sea storm and rough weather prevented them from reaching Japan. Finally in 736 Bodhisena again sailed for Japan and managed to reach. There he stayed for a few years in the Daianji Temple. There he met important Buddhist priest of Japan, Monk Gyoki.

During this period Japanese Emperor Shomu (C.701-756 CE.) who was a devout Buddhist sent an envoy to China after a gap of 16 years and also thought of inviting a Buddhist priest either from China or from India, who could teach the necessary commandments to Japanese Buddhist priests. At that point of time Gyoki introduced Bodhisena with Japanese Emperor Shomu. Emperor's dream became successful with the visit of Bodhisena or Baramon Sojo (Brahmin high priest).

As it was rare in those days in Japan to come across with an Indian Buddhist priest, Emperor Shomu was highly pleased to meet Bodhisena. In 751 CE, Bodhisena became the priest in chief and put in charge of Buddhist priests and nuns. In 752 CE Bodhisena received the highest honour from the Japanese government as well as the Buddhist polity of Japan.

At this time, the Todaiji Nara was preparing for the eye opening ceremony or *Kaigen* rite of its great Buddha. It was also decided that the sacred rite to be performed by Emperor Shomu, who had patronised this major construction that took place over nine years. But Emperor Shomu fell ill. According to the Records of Todaiji (Todaiji Yoroku) the emperor himself selected Bodhisena to perform that grand service of the colossal image on 9th April, 752 CE. This incident goes on to show to what extent an Indian Buddhist priest was able to impress the Japanese mind.

The Kaigen Rite or Eye-opening ceremony by Baramon Sojo or Bodhisena to the Todaiji Temple of Nara. was an impetus to grow a stronger cultural as well as historical ties between India and Japan. In a way, Bodhisena was the first official emissary of Indo-Japanese friendship and the colossal image of the Great Buddha of Todaiji still stands as a symbol of fraternity between our two countries from the middle of the 8th century.

Bodhisena also established one temple Ryozenji/ Reizanji on the foot of Tomi Mountain on the south of Tomi Cho is Nara. Tomb of Bodhisena remains in the complex of that temple. The main hall of this temple is now treated as National Treasure.

Gradually belief towards Buddhism and also the number of follower of Buddhism increased a lot in Japanese Society. Japan's Princely Imperial Priest, Shinnyo Hoshinno, who was the son of Emperor Heijo, gave up his position of Crown Prince and entered in a monastery in the Todai-ji temple and became monk. He was known as Takaoka Shinno before he became a monk. In 861, he left the Dazaifu Shrine of Fukuoka, Kyushu with his 23 associates and he came to China and also attempted pilgrimage to India for studying Buddhist Philosophy. But he could not reach India. According to popular legend, on his way through Laos he died from an attack by tiger . However, he was the first Japanese Buddhist who tried to visit Tenjiku.

A few other monks and travellers tried around the 8th/9th centuries to visit India which was their spiritual motherland, but the difficult terrains through China hindered their attempt to reach India and they could not accomplish their desire.

Mention may be made of Eisai, Myoe and a few more.

Eisai was basically founder of Zen Buddhism in Japan, the concept of which was brought to Japan by Bodhidharma. He studied Buddhism in China and went to China twice for learning Buddhism and finally tried to visit India. But he was also unable to complete his attempt.

At the same time of Eisai another Buddhist monk scholar Myoe planned his trip to Tenjiku. He

belonged to Kegon sect of Buddhism and was the priest in Kozanji Temple in Kyoto. Myōe is perhaps most famous for his contributions to the practice and popularization of a mantra associated with Shingon Buddhism.

Myoe is also well known for keeping a journal of his dreams for over 40 years which continues to be studied by Buddhists and Buddhist scholars and for his efforts to revive monastic discipline. In his "Journals on the Distance to the Great Tang and India. Myoe mentions his plan for visiting India, the land for the origin of Buddhism. But finally he cancelled his planning.

After Myoe no other Japanese Buddhist monk probably tried to visit India for a long time. Again during Edo period (1603-1868) situation was changed. Some books like The "History of the Indian Collection" by Hirata Atsutane opposed the traditional view of the world and argued that Buddhism is nothing but merely a part of Indian Custom. In spite of all these controversies Buddhist priests had an interest in India as source of the Buddhist World view. And many Japanese Buddhists priests and monks aspire for visiting India. But no authentic record is available about the fact that how far and how many of them were successful to accomplish their dream.

Officially, the first Japanese to set foot on Indian soil was Yajiro or Anjiro in 1587 A.D. It is said that Yajiro met Saint Fransisco Xavier in Malacca and visited Goa with him. Thus Yajiro did not visit India in connection with Buddhism. But he might have some interest to visit the spiritual motherland of his own country.

One of the most famous Japanese travellers to the Indian subcontinent was Tenjiku Tokubei (1612–1692), named after *Tenjiku* ("Heavenly Abode"), the Japanese name for India. Tenjiku Tokubei was more popular as a Japanese adventurer and writer of the early 17th century. He travelled to Southeast and South Asia. In 1627, Tokubei visited China, Vietnam and Siam (modern Thailand) as a sailor of a Japanese merchant ship. He spent some time in Siam and again visited the country with Dutch ships. He also sailed to India, to visit the source of the Ganges and the country of Magadha. He returned with great wealth and numerous stories to tell. Upon his return to Japan, and after the introduction of the Seclusion policy (Sakoku) of Japan, Tokubei wrote an essay titled "Tenjiku Tokai Monogatari" or "Story of Sea Travels to India" on his adventures in foreign countries, which became very popular in Japan. As Tokubei visited India around 17th Century, he might not experience the life and culture of a purely Buddhist state of India. Bur undoubtedly, his accounts are good source of information regarding India to Japanese people.

Visit of Shimaji Mokurai to India in 1872, on his way back to Japan from Europe, opened a new chapter in Indo-Japanese Buddhist relationship. He is regarded as the first Japanese Buddhist monk to visit India. Mokurai, was a Buddhist priest and reformer of the Jodo Shin sect, who strongly advocated freedom of religion and the separation of religion and government. He was also the founder of Japanese Red Cross. But how far Mokurai influenced the then Indian Buddhism with his ideas and philosophy is still a subject of research. He stayed in India for a very short period.

During Meiji Period (1868-1912) the trend towards foreign contact got a new dimension. Meiji Government selected some scholars and students to travel abroad to study various fields. As well as many foreigner teachers and instructors were hired to teach their respective field at Japan and many Japanese students studied under their guidance. Buddhist studies were also not an exception. But surprisingly there were very few Japanese scholars who wanted to visit India to study Buddhism. Because there was an idea that, Buddhism was disappeared from India by that time. Instead many Japanese Buddhist students-scholars went to Europe to study Buddhism under scholars like Max Muller and some of them had stopped in India on their way to Europe or their return to Japan for just to visit the Buddhist ruins or monumental sites.

Mention may be made of scholars like Nanjo Bunyu and Takakusu Junjiro. Both of them studied at Europe. Nanjo Bunyu visited India 1887 via Srilanka. To discuss about these two Buddhist Scholars some very brief discussion about Tokyo University may be mentioned. Tokyo University was established in 1877 (10th year of Meiji Era). Initially it was an University to train the government officials. Two years later, i.e. in 1879 Kato Hiroyuki, a Professor and head of the department of Literature of that University invited one Buddhist monk-scholar Hara Tanzan and started a course on Lectures on Buddhist Works as an optional course in the department of literature. Incidentally, in 1868, the government had issued an order known as SHINBUTSU BUNRI REI or "Order to Separate Buddhism and Shintoism" and unfortunately ushered an era known as HAIBUTSU KAISHAKU or getting rid of Buddhism.

In this environment of anti-Buddhist sentiment, the establishment of course on Buddhism at a state university was indeed a courageous step for Prof. Kato and Prof. Rev. Tanzan. During first series of his lecture Tanzan used Buddhist Philosophical Work known as "The Awakening of Faith in Mahayana", a text that is popular in Japan even today. Two years later after the initiation of this course the subject was included in the department of Philosophy and not in the department of Literature.

In fact, Tanzan himself considered this course as "an experiment in Indian philosophy". One of the well known scholars from this department was Murakami Sensho, a devout Buddhist.

But he propagated the theory that "Mahayana is not Buddhism". Though this theory was not well accepted but it was representative of a critical view of Buddhism which began during that era, in contrast to the sectarian Buddhist studies of the past.

A few years later Nanjo Bunyu returned Japan after completion of his studies in Europe via Srilanka and India. He was carrying impression of Indian Buddhism and began the studies of BONGO literally means "language of Brahmins", i.e. the Studies of Sanskrit.

Later on another Scholar Takakusu Junjiro has taken the charge of the studies and created the course entitled "The History of Indian Philosophy and Religion". Like Bunyu Junjiro also had the experience of Buddhist Life in India. Though both of them studied in Europe mainly under Sanskrit Scholar Max Muller but they visited India.

New Dimension of Indo-Japanese Relation

Over the ages, influence of Indian Buddhist priests, pilgrims and philosophers to Japan consolidated this age-old cultural relation which is continuing since 752 CE.

But till the middle of the 19th Century Japan's contacts with India were governed by their contacts with Great Britain. To the people of India, "Japan became an example to be emulated, as it had been successful in modernizing and preserving its independence".

Swamiji was overwhelmed with the sincere workmanship of the Japanese people during his visit to Japan on his way to the World Congress of Religion at Chicago in 1893. He had opinion that Indians could learn a great deal from Japan and he encouraged Indian youths to go to Japan for their study and development of their skill. From about the last decade of the 19th Century Japan's trade relation with Japan started by the shipment of a cotton bale to Japan by Indian merchants.

From the end of the 19th Century, however, the relations between India and Japan started assuming an elaborate and different form. Later in the 20th Century again a cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and India was reinstated through the historic meeting and friendship between Rabindra Nath Tagore and Tenshin Okakura, a great Japanese thinker and pioneer of modern Japanese art in 1902.

Tagore's visit to Japan on several occasions, following his first visit in 1916 may be regarded as another turning point of Indo-Japan cultural and academic relationship. From then onwards the relation assumed a new content and value. Later, after the re-consolidation of Indo-Japanese fraternity owing to the visit of Tagore to Japan and visits of some dignitaries from Japan to India, the nature of ties between these two age-old cultures got a new dimension. Many Japanese scholars, being fascinated by the Indian heritage and culture, started their studies on Indian literature and culture. Thus, the studying of language also became necessary for them. Similarly, Indian scholars and others interested also started studying Japanese language and culture. The initiation of study of Japanese language and culture started in 1954 at Visva-Bharati.

India's freedom movement also received considerable sympathy and support from Japan. Two stalwarts of Indian independence movement, Rashbehari Bose and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had very close association with Japan. The trust and friendship between India and Japan built by them is also considered as strong pillar for modern bilateral ties between these two Asian Nations. Rashbehari Bose's advent in Japan in1915 gave fresh life to the Indian revolutionary movement. He convened a conference in Tokyo in March, 1942. In that conference, establishment of the India Independence league was decided. In recognition of the spirit of Rashbehari Bose, the Government of Japan honoured him with the Second Order of merit of the Rising Sun. Not only in the political field, till today Rashbehari Bose is also remembered in their everyday life of the common people of Japan for introducing the unique and traditional cuisine of India, widely known as Indian Curry. And this

INDO-KARE has become a most popular food item in modern Japan.

In June 1942 it was decided to invite Subhas Chandra Bose to join as President of the India Independence League established in March of the same year. After joining of Subhas Chandra Bose, the League gained momentum and led to the participation of many Indians irrespective of caste, gender, religion. The determination and commitment of Netaji had also touched the heart of the people of Japan and they also lent a hand of friendship and cooperation to further enhance his patriotic efforts.

When Japan suffered from her first defeat in and lay prostrate, India went out of her policy and become friendly and generous to Japan. Moreover Justice Radhabinod Paul's dissenting opinion on Tokyo Trials exonerated each and every one of the accused on each and every count of the indictment. With such cultural and political relationship people of both the countries felt necessity to know each other and gradually this age-old bond became stronger and stronger day by day.

In the first decade after the diplomatic ties were established in 1952 several high level exchanges took place. One of the important such delegations was Japanese Prime Minister Nobuke Kishi's visit to India in 1957 following Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's return visit to Japan in 1957 and visit of Indian President Mr. Rajendra Prasad in 1958.

With the emergence of a technical civilization and the idea of globalization, Japan has gained even more prominence in the world's trade market and business field. Indo Japanese relations took another dynamic shape. India-Japan relations have made a steady and significant improvement especially since 2000s. One of the important and defining features about this is the establishment of an annual summit between the Prime Ministers of two countries. Japan is the only country in Asia with which India has institutionalized an annual summit system.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's visited India in August 2000. This visit of Mr. Mori provided the momentum to strengthen the Japan-India bi-lateral relations. Mr. Mori and his Indian counterpart Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee decided the establishment of "Global Partnership between Japan and India"..

Since Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to India in April 2005, Japan-India annual summit meetings have been held in respective capitals. When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Japan in December 2006, Japan-India relationship was elevated to the "Global and Strategic Partnership", which was designed in 2000.

In 2006 the then Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Shinzo Abe and his Indian Counterpart Dr. Manmohan Singh signed the "Roadmap for new dimension to the strategic and global partnership between Japan and India". Both the leaders had the same view regarding the use of ODA (Official Development Assistance). A Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Japan and India was concluded in 2011.

The year 2007 had a special importance in the bilateral history between Japan and India, especially of West Bengal. Firstly the year was the centenary year of Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata. Moreover, that year celebrated as Japan-India friendship year in commemoration of the signing of cultural agreement between Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi and Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957.

As the regular programme of an annual summit between the Prime Ministers of two countries, in September 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Japan and in 2015 Prime Minister Abe's visit to India upgraded Japan-India bi-lateral relations and also resolved to transform the Japan-India Special strategic and Global partnership into a deep, broad based and action-oriented partnership. They announced that, 'Japan and India Vision 2025', which is a special Strategic and Global Partnership for working together for the establishment of peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World. This is a joint statement that would serve as guidance for "new era in Japan-India relations."

In November 2016, Prime Minister Modi's official visit to Japan for the summit meeting with his Japanese counterpart opened another new sphere of India Japan fraternity. Prime Minister Abe stated, that summit meeting was a magnificent meeting that substantially advanced the "new era in Japan-India relations," and he hoped the two countries would lead the prosperity and stability of the Indo-Pacific region as a result of coordinating the "Free and Open India and Pacific Strategy" of Japan and the implementation of "Act East Policy" by India.

As effect of this Act East Policy Indo-Japanese Relation gained strong base not only in the technical or economic field but also it enhanced cultural and academic relations. Since 2006, DST or Department of Science and Technology initiated through JSPS (Japan Science and Technology Agency) and MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology) different opportunities to Indians for their development of skills through various programme.

These schemes have given chances to different scholars and students to visit Japan for their academic accomplishment, which was one of the ideas of Swami Vivekananda after his visit.

In August 2017, the two countries announced the establishment of the Japan-India Coordination Forum (JICF) for Development of the North-Eastern Region, described by India as "a coordination forum to identify priority development areas of cooperation for development" of northeast India. The forum will focus on strategic projects aimed at improving connectivity, roads, electric infrastructure, food processing, disaster management, and promoting organic farming and tourism in northeast India. In May 2023, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced a new Indo-Pacific plan during his visit to India.

Moreover, both the countries decided to continue efforts to revise the memorandum on simplifying visa procedure which may enhance people to people exchanges in business and tourism areas. Not

only the economic or commercial ties were entangled, but has also already enhanced and will enhance the cultural ties between two countries.

Concluding Remarks

As a concluding remark I would like to say that, India and Japan have had a long and strong bond. Even in the modern age of highly advanced technology and industry both countries share a deep affection for each other's views and inter-country relations which is reflected in the current trend of professional ties as the two countries declare themselves as global and strategic partners. Moreover, in recent years, the influx of large numbers of Indian professionals, mainly IT professionals and other professionals with Japanese language skills, have entangled a strong tie between two countries, which may foster stronger ties in the years to come.

References:

- Chamberlain, Basil Hall – Things Japanese, London, fifth edition of 1905.
- Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, Hindu Divinities in Japanese Buddhist Pantheon, Benten Publishers Kolkata, 1979.
- Kazuo Azuma "Meeting of Okakura Tenshin and Rabindra Nath Tagore-A great opportunity"- in Path from India Path from Japan-Lecture series on Japan India relations, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2008.
- Kazuo Ogura, Japan's Asian Diplomacy A legacy of two millennia-International House of Japan, Inc, 2015.
- Nakamura, Hajime, Japan and Indian Asia, Calcutta, 1961.
- Noro Motoyoshi (A Collection of Speeches), Consul General of Japan, Kolkata-"Eternal Bond-Congruence between the Land of the Moon and the Land of the Rising Sun- India & Japan", EL ALMA Publications, Kolkata, 2007.
- Purabi Gangopadhyay, "Japanese Language Education in Eastern India-Changing Scenario" – in book entitled 'Japanese Studies Changing Global Profile' Edited by P.A. George, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 2010.

Bio Profile of the Author:

Resource Person, Japanese Language, School of Languages and Culture, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata

Joint General Secretary, Indo-Japan Welfare and Cultural Association, Kolkata.

Translator of Japanese Literature into Bengali and Essayist on the topic of Japanese Studies.

Email: purabi2001@gmail.com

The Evolving Landscape of Educational and Career Opportunities between India and Japan

Debanjan Ghosh

Abstract

India and Japan are the lands of new opportunities in terms of higher education, technical studies, research, and finding a suitable job. The paper provides a comprehensive exploration of the educational and professional exchange between these two nations, examining historical foundations, structural frameworks, curriculum strategies, and the pursuit of access, quality, and accountability. Searching into the nuances of educational, cultural, historical, and socio-economic contexts, the research sheds light on challenges faced by both nations and presents innovative practices. This comparative analysis offers valuable insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers seeking a deeper understanding of education systems, the growth of career opportunities, and the need for educational and professional exchanges in diverse cultural and economic contexts.

Key Words: *India, Japan, Japanese language, education, exchange, career, job.*

Introduction

Friendship between India and Japan has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. The Indo-Japan artistic exchange in the modern time was initiated with the arrival of Tenshin Kakuzo Okakura in India. He is considered to be one of the most interesting figures in Japanese intellectual history. Okakura made his way to India in 1902, with a Buddhist priest, Shitoku Hori, who was the first foreign student of Santiniketan. In 1905, a Japanese national, Jinnosuke Sano, came to Santiniketan at the invitation of Rabindranath Tagore to teach Judoo and Japanese Language. He was the first Japanese Language teacher in India. After the independence of India Prof. Kazuo Azuma initiated to establish a strong foundation of Japanese language education in India. These kind of every single glorious event contributed to the present day's fruitful relationship between the two nations in a wide range of areas of cooperation.

Lecture delivered on Japan Month, 26.10.2024, organized by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

1. **Educational exchange**

Cooperation in the field of education is being conducted through partnerships between education and research institutions, student and teacher exchange, government scholarships, promotion of Japanese language education in India.

According to a recent survey by the Japan Foundation, there are total number of 323 institutions offering Japanese language curriculum in our country. Under which, 52 are universities, colleges and graduate schools. There are 225 private foreign language schools conducting Japanese courses. Others are primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

1.1 **Japanese Language in school curriculum**

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) of India already introduced Japanese language at the secondary and senior secondary levels from class 6 onwards since 2006. The main reasons why Japanese should be taught in Indian schools are :

1. It would help in furthering cross-cultural understanding between Asian countries and further expanding to the global area.
2. Japan could become one of the new destinations for Indian students in pursuit of higher education.
3. It would increase and improve the employability of students.
4. It would give the much needed impetus to the increasing economic and cultural ties with Japan.

1.2 **Academic partnerships**

Japan is a country that attracts worldwide attention in terms of science, technology, arts and culture. Nowadays international students including Indians take the opportunity to study in its top class education environment.

There are 665 academic and research partnerships, including student exchanges, between more than 138 universities and institutes of Japan and around 227 universities and institutes of India.

The partnerships range from liberal arts to management, and business studies to international studies. Apart from academic partnerships, several Indian institutions have started “India-Japan Centre” related to research and study. Similarly, several Japanese institutions have started research centres in collaboration with India or focus on India. Student exchange programs, especially short term, have enabled Indian students to visit and experience Japan. Similarly, Japanese students have been coming to Indian universities for various courses including Hindi and Bengali languages. Various departments of Buddhist studies of Japanese universities also offer papers on Sanskrit, Pali, Indian Buddhism and Indian Philosophy as part of their curriculum.

1.3 **Scholarships**

1.3.1 MEXT

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan has been inviting international students including Indians to study in Japan since 1954. The scholarships are offered in the field of Social Sciences, Humanities, Economics, Business Administration, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Agricultural Studies, Medicine, Nursing and many other subjects for undergraduate and research students.

1.3.2 Young Leader's Program

The Young Leader's Program under MEXT aims to contribute to cultivate future national leaders in Asian and other countries, moreover, to contribute to establish friendly relationships among various countries and to improve policy planning activities.

In addition, there are several organizations in Japan that offer scholarships for international students.

1.1.3 Other scholarships

1. MONBUKAGAKUSHO HONORS scholarship for privately financed international students has been provided by Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO).
2. Local Governments and Local international associations in Japan provide scholarships to students living in their district as well as those attending institutes in their district.
3. Private foundations scholarships are provided by private companies or organizations.
4. Scholarships for the applicants residing abroad: Although most of the scholarships under this category are available after coming to Japan, several local governments, local international associations, and private foundations accept applications from overseas.
5. The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program seeks to enhance internationalisation in Japan by encouraging mutual understanding between the people of Japan and those of other nations through the enrichment of foreign language education and promotion of international exchange at local level. The Program began in 1987 with cooperation from governments of participating countries. Under this program Assistant Language Teachers are placed mainly in local boards of education and elementary, junior high and senior high schools.

2. **Professional exchange**

Japan has many excellent companies that have high technology and are eager to expand their business to India. These are not only limited to big companies but also include small enterprises. One can develop his/her career through the experience in various Japanese companies, from a traditional

company to a vigorous start-up. There are so many companies which want to hire "High-skilled foreign professionals" too.

Now, the number of Japanese companies registered in India is 1400 with manufacturing firms. These Japanese companies have 4901 business establishments in total. On the other hand, more than 100 Indian companies are working in Japan at present.

To enhance their business by acquiring human resources with specialized skills, the Japanese companies have established 35 Japan-India Institute of Manufacturing (JIM) in India and as well as 11 Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) in Indian Engineering Colleges.

The main reasons behind hiring Indian students for Japanese companies are: To stimulate the workplace by increasing diversity within the company and to cultivate and expand overseas business in general.

According to a recent survey (2021) done by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, the top 10 occupations for Indian students are : 1. Translation and interpretation, 2. Marketing research, 3. International trade, 4. Non-executive level management, 5. Information and communication technology, 6. Corporate sales, 7. Public relations and advertising, 8. Technology development, 9. Accounting and 10. Care giver.

2.1 Importance of Japanese Language

An important point is to remember that, the Japanese companies expect a minimum level of Japanese language skills from Indian job seekers. One should able to communicate at a minimal level in Japanese in a limited amount of business settings. In this scenario, one should qualify at least N3 level of Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) or J4 level of Business Japanese Test (BJT) before apply for a job.

Before starting to job hunt in Japan:

1. Try to understand the uniqueness of job hunting in Japan and how the process is different from India.
2. And, make sure that, what companies look for in Indian candidates is their "Japanese ability" and "communication skills". Japanese language ability is essential in order to explain yourself properly at interviews.

2.2 Career opportunities

Recently Government of India and Japan initiated to cooperate under "Technical Intern Training Program" (TITP) and "Specified Skilled Worker" (SSW) initiative of Japan. TITP was commenced in Japan in 1993, to contribute to developing countries by accepting people from these countries through

on the job training. India commenced its operations under this program in 2018.

2.2.1 Technical Intern Training Program (TITP)

TITP aims to empower the Indian youth by providing them with career advancement opportunities. Technical interns, after receiving training in India, are sent to Japan for three to five years. The major job categories including 81 in total under this Program are : 1. Agriculture, 2. Fishery, 3. Construction, 4. Food manufacturing, 5. Textile, 6. Machinery and Metals, 7. Airport ground handling, and 8. Others.

2.2.2 Specified Skilled Worker (SSW)

TITP offers various benefits to the interns such as, opportunity to work as a Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) in Japan after completing three years of TITP successfully. Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) is new residency status introduced by the Government of Japan in 2019. The Government of India and Japan jointly implemented SSW in 2021. After completing the training under TITP and SSW in Japan, the interns are expected to return to their home country and utilize the skills acquired in Japan.

Conclusion

The relationship between India and Japan has been developing appreciably in recent years. Besides strengthening of the educational and economic ties, cooperative relations are progressing at the Government level, while many exchanges are taking place at the private level. As two Asian democracies, India and Japan are important partners for mutual development. We believe that increasing people to people exchanges and deepening mutual understanding will help us maintain this excellent relationship and elevate it to a higher level in future.

References:

- https://www.japanese.jpf.go.jp/do/result
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://nsdcindia.org/sites/all/themes/ibees/images/send-org/TITP-Guidelines-Oct-2021.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjs8cjVldiMAxW7efUHHfeeKf0QFnoECCoQAQ&usg=AOvVaw26pfZQQVHjYJF7qbZU-lC6
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.jitco.or.jp/download/data/okuridashi_English.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwi6p7mrl9iMAxU_yjgGHbC8NcsQFnoECCsQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0mNWsKo9B9_K5NAXjYAufN
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29268/jsp-brochure.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiy_I6KmNiMAxVjzjgGHVLDIXYQFnoECCoQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0k_0ZIHafQeCQhGPfaV83_
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://nsdcindia.

org/sites/all/themes/ibees/images/send-org/TITP-Guidelines-NSDC-Oct-2022.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjs49jNmNiMAxXOzqACHeoPEp4QFnoECAwQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3gWcUyxGl5Uoq9Zh-3FxpG

- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.otit.go.jp/files/user/200303-6.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjQ-8WAmdiMAxV04jgGHZuGOhQQFnoECCAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1V9MliLywhtJVHIi9kygFG
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.cbse.gov.in/circulars/cir341105.htm&ved=2ahUKEwjhsJu9mdiMAxVTzjgGHYGLJTQQFnoECFcQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3cDBx_qCt__i7Q8EXTb0eK
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/hrportal/forprofessionals/studyandworkinjapan.html&ved=2ahUKEwjB4Y7-mdiMAxWtyjgGHYrcBsgQFnoECCAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1RQFHV1xkdWCoB7C61piFS
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/highered/title02/detail02/sdetail02/sdetail02/20240710-mxt_kotokoku01-1.f&ved=2ahUKEwihgfemmtiMAxWkzDgGHaefBD8QFnoECB4QAQ&usg=AOvVaw0a4yqLdiANfDXbUNZJkkr6
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/_mt/2024/04/EN_2024-2025Scholarship_Pamphlet.

  pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiQlfiKm9iMAxVTzDgGHZvbFxwQFnoECCgQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3sjc1O6TmFJYVQDYDxTrs9

Bio Profile of the Author:

The Author is a Resource Person of Japanese Language at Rabindra Bharati University and as well as a Japanese Language Teacher, based at the International Institute of Language and Culture of Kolkata, of which he is the Director. His main interest is on Indo-Japan cultural relation through Bengal and cultural heritage of Bengal. He performs Tagore songs in Bengali and as well as in Japanese. He was specially invited for the program entitled "Special Training Program for Young Teachers of the Japanese Language from South Asia" at the Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute, Urawa, Japan in 2009. He is currently involved on a chronological study of Rabindranath Tagore's Literature translated into Japanese Language.

Email: debanjanghosh.kolkata@gmail.com

Comparative Study of Moral Education in India and Japan

Tanaka Kenichi[1] Aneesah Nishaat[2] & Minei Yusaku[3]

Abstract

This study compares the state of moral education in India and Japan. India started considering moral education as a national issue after gaining independence from British colonial rule. In case of Japan, moral education was introduced in schools in 1958 as "time for ethics."

Approach toward the moral education has traversed different trajectory in two countries. Though moral education is deemed important, the diversity of Indian society and the discretion of state administrations regarding education make it challenging to establish uniform moral education at the national level. Therefore, there is not a dedicated textbook for moral education in India yet. However, moral education-related content is included in different textbooks such as English textbooks. On the other hand, establishing uniform moral education was not complicated for Japan due to its homogeneity and has a dedicated textbook for moral education. In both countries, continuous reform can be seen in educational policies for moral education.

However, from the comparison of textbooks in both countries, similar topics related to morality were found, but with a different approach to teaching them. Additionally, continuous reform can be seen in policies regarding moral education in both countries.

Keywords: *Moral Education, Comparative Study, India, Japan*

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comparative study of the history and current status of moral education in India and Japan, with the aim of exploring if there are elements that can contribute to each other's moral education. Both countries face various issues related to children, such as bullying, violence, and anti-social behavior in school education and the importance of morality has been increasingly recognized. However, in India, establishing a unified moral education at the national level is challenging due to the diversity of Indian society and the substantial discretion of state authorities in educational matters. On the other hand, Japan has established a moral education based on uniform policies and it is an integral part of all educational activities. However, there are challenges related to adapting moral education to changes in times and society. Therefore, in this research, we will review

the current status and content of moral education in both countries, focusing on commonalities and differences, and explore elements that can facilitate mutual learning.

It should be noted that in the context of research and educational policies in India, the terms related to morality, such as "moral values," "spiritual values," and "values," are used without clear differentiation. Therefore, in this research, we have also used multiple expressions based on relevant literature and sources.

2. History of moral education in India and Japan

2.1 India

In India, the serious consideration of moral education as a national issue began after gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Prior to that, moral education was not a formal subject in the curriculum. The first attempt to incorporate moral education into the education system can be traced back to the recommendations made by the Committee for Religious and Moral Instruction (CRMI), which was established in 1959 and issued its recommendations in 1960 (Seshadri 1978). Based on the mandate from the Ministry of Education, the CRMI concluded that teaching moral and spiritual values in educational institutions is desirable and the curriculum should include studies on the lives and teachings of religious leaders, ethical systems, and philosophies with emphasis on good conduct, social service, and patriotism at all stages.

Furthermore, it is emphasized that it should respect the spirit of the Constitution, including provisions such as "No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds" ("Article 28," The Constitution of India). The sensitivity of religious groups should also not be ignored. However, the committee suggested that there should be no harm in students learning ethical codes from various religions, while acknowledging the need for a balanced approach. Additionally, the committee made various recommendations for the content of moral education at different educational levels. For example, in primary schools, it was suggested that moral education should be conducted twice a week, and teachers should narrate stories based on the great religions of the world excluding religious doctrines and rituals. These recommendations aimed to strike a balance between moral education and the diverse religious and cultural landscape of India.

However, this does not imply that people in India did not have opportunities to learn moral values in the past. In ancient India, education was deeply rooted in values (Mondal and Majumder 2019), with the tradition of "Gurukul" where students lived with their teachers learning a wide array of knowledge and values. This included Vedic studies, cleanliness, and the mentor-disciple relationship (Patil and Patil 2021). Throughout history of India, from the Vedic period to the present, various traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islamic rule, and Christian influence have explored and taught aspects of human life including truth, morals, and ethics (Mefodeva, Fakhrutdinova, Ukhimenko and Valeeva

1997). Moral lessons and stories have been passed down through generations.

Due to India's rich religious and philosophical historical background, it is considered impossible to separate morality from religion and spirituality in the country. The prevailing belief is that moral education should be a fusion of both. Indian thought has traditionally seen a pure humanistic or moral approach to life as incomplete and insufficient unless it is coupled with religious considerations (Radhakrishnan 1959: 52-55,). The CRMI recommendations, which include teaching about the life and teachings of great religious leaders and stories based on the great religions of the world, can also be seen in the context of this historical background. They underscore the importance of integrating religious and moral values in moral education.

2.2 Japan

In Japan, historically, religious concepts such as compassion, mercy, and harmony have been emphasized through Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism, and they are believed to have shaped the common moral values of the Japanese people. However, it was in 1872, during the Meiji Era, that "Shushin" (moral education) was first introduced as a subject in schools. In post-World War II (WWII) Japan, various policies were proposed for moral education, with four significant turning points. The first was the discontinuation of "Shushin." After WWII in 1945, under the General Headquarters for the Allied Powers (GHQ)'s leadership, Japan introduced new educational policies, including the "Policy on the Japanese Educational System" and the "Policy on the Suspension of Shushin, Japanese History, and Geography."

The second was the introduction of a dedicated "Time for Ethics" in the curriculum by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 1958. A "Time for Ethics" was introduced in the elementary and junior high school curriculum, marking the beginning of moral education classes. The purpose of the "Time for Ethics" was to complement, deepen, and integrate moral education with other educational activities while fostering desirable moral habits, attitudes, and judgment in students (Toyoizumi 2016).In the same year, the MoE established “The National Curriculum Standard," which set legally binding standards for the curriculum.“The National Curriculum Standard" has undergone revisions approximately every ten years. The goal of the 1989 revision of the elementary school curriculum was to cultivate individuals who can respond to the changes in society, leading rich and resilient lives. The content was organized into four new categories: "1. Primarily regarding oneself," "2. Primarily regarding interactions with others," "3. Primarily regarding interactions with nature and the sublime," and” 4. Primarily regarding interactions with groups and society”.

The third was the distribution of "Kokoro no Noto (Notebook for Mind)" (renamed as "Watashitachi no Dōtoku (Our Morality)" in the 2013 revision by the MoE in April 2002. It was initially considered as supplementary material. A 2012 survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) revealed that it was being used as a teaching resource in most elementary and

junior high schools. In practice, it was treated as equivalent to textbooks (Sakai, Tanaka and Nakamura 2017).

The fourth was the formalization of moral education as a subject in the curriculum. In the 2008 revision of the elementary school curriculum, the changes were made in accordance with the amended Fundamental Law of Education. The shared ideal was to cultivate the "zest for life," that connects to their future. They emphasized the importance of children being able to find their own challenges, learn, think, make judgments, and take action independently; even in a society that is unpredictable and undergoing significant changes.

In the 2015 revision of the elementary school curriculum, moral education was positioned as the core of education. This change was driven by the need to address issues such as bullying and other problematic behaviors, and to prepare students for living in a rapidly changing society with a focus on nurturing their ability to live rich and self-determined lives. Furthermore, the curriculum needed to address the challenges posed by the thinking patterns required in a society focused on scientific and technological innovation (Oshitani 2017). In this context, MEXT(2018) introduced "Special Subject: Moral Education" to emphasize the importance of harmonizing scientific and moral thinking. MEXT called for the improvement and evaluation of the use of moral education textbooks and teaching methods in elementary and junior high schools. This curriculum revision marked the most significant change in 78 years since the end of WWII. These educational policies were institutionalized by the state and were also closely related to societal changes (Sakai, Tanaka and Nakamura 2017).

3. India’s diversity and Japan's homogeneity

3.1. Diversity in India

India is characterized by a rich diversity in terms of language, religion, ethnicity, and social hierarchy. This diversity is reflected in the education system as well. As previously mentioned, there is a strong connection between religion, spirituality, and morality. For example, language serves as a means of communication for the people, shaping their social and cultural activities. Individuals, through the acquisition of their language, undergo personality development and social learning. Therefore, when teaching morality and values to children, it is natural to use myths, stories, and ethical narratives written in the native language of the society they are born into and can understand. Differences in language are also reflected in the variations of people's moral and value systems.

Furthermore, in India, education has been the responsibility of state governments since independence. Although it was declared as a subject, jointly governed by the central and state governments, in 1976, the discretion of state governments continues to have a significant influence. This is rooted in the country's diversity.

Despite the widely recognized importance of moral education, the majority of state-run schools in

India are generally hesitant to teach morality as a separate subject. Instead, moral and value education is incorporated into various subjects. In other words, there is still no national consensus on the concept of morality and the implementation of moral education as a subject. This lack of consensus makes it challenging to introduce uniform moral education. As a result, only a few states, such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, have introduced moral education as a subject (Seshadri 1981).

3.2. Homogeneity in Japan

Unlike India, Japanese society is homogeneous. Japanese is taught and used as the sole standard language throughout all regions. Regarding religion, many Japanese identify with multiple religions simultaneously. Additionally, as noted by Shimada (2009), there are people in Japan who do not adhere to any specific religion. It is common practice among Japanese people to visit shrines and temples to pray on New Year's Day and to hold funeral rites at temples when they die.

In Japan, the new Meiji Constitution abolished the social hierarchy of samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants. Therefore, Japanese government can teach morality uniformly throughout the country in elementary and junior high schools based on the moral education policy made by MEXT (2018).

4. Debate over moral education

4.1 Discussions regarding moral education as a subject in India

The question of whether planned and organized moral education is necessary has been a long-standing theme of debate in the Indian education system. While there are opinions advocating for the inclusion of morality as a subject within the educational system, notable figures in India such as Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sri Aurobindo held a negative view towards direct moral education. They believed that morality should not be taught as a separate subject but should be integrated into the overall education system.

Tagore advocated for innate moral insight in humans, emphasizing suggestive education over teaching (Mani1961: 245). Sri Aurobindo proposed imparting moral education through emotional development and forming good habits, criticizing the inefficacy of teaching morality as a subject (Bhyrappa 1968: 94, 99). Gandhi believed that schools should focus on nurturing individuals' character, and he saw education through manual labor as contributing to the harmonious and holistic development of the body, intellect, and spirit (Yonezu 2012). While Gandhi differed in educational methods from Tagore and Aurobindo, the common theme in their educational philosophies was that the true purpose of education was not just the transmission of knowledge but the understanding and practice of moral principles. These great thinkers shared the belief that humans inherently possess moral values, and the goal of education should be to help children bring out their moral values in the context of social life. Therefore, if moral education is to be considered, it should be integrated

throughout the entire educational system, rather than confined to a single subject.

4.2 Discussions regarding Japanese moral education as a subject

Similar to India, after the end of WW II, the question of whether moral education should be a subject in education has been a long-standing theme of debate in Japan. After the end of WWII, moral education was prescribed as something to be learned throughout the entire educational system. The formalization of moral education as a subject had active support from both government and researchers and practitioners. On the other hand, questions were raised about whether moral education could be taught at all. The critique primarily centered on the fundamental question of whether it made sense to teach moral education, and if it was even possible (Murai 1990).

The introduction of moral education as a special subject in schools also faced criticism and concerns about state control and potential imposition of moral values on children. At the time, the Special Committee on Educational Policy of the Japan Educational Research Association primarily raised four points of concern (Nihon Kyoiku Gakkai Kyōiku Seisaku Tokubetsu Iinkai1957). The first was whether the establishment of special moral education would wrongly involve the state in matters of individual conscience. The second was whether special moral education would go against the essence of moral education. The third was whether there was a risk of undemocratic content being taught under the framework of special moral education. The fourth was whether the approach of special moral education might also pose issues in terms of teaching methods (Sakai, Tanaka and Nakamura2017). These discussions also encompass fundamental questions about what morality is.

5. The education policies related to moral education in India and Japan.

When comparing moral education in India and Japan, it is essential to consider the relationship between their respective education policies and moral education. This is because the policies and institutional design of each country have a significant impact on moral education.

5.1 Basic education policy regarding moral education in India

The first National Education Policy (NEP) in India was promulgated in 1986, and it has undergone revisions since then. NEP (1986) primarily focused on access to education and equity, leading to the development of the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" in 2009. Regarding value education, the policy emphasized that in a culturally plural Indian society, education should aim to nurture universal and eternal values that seek unity and integration among people.

The NEP (1986) outlines several key principles, such as inclusive education, flexibility, incorporating cultural heritage and values, and secular education. For India, one of the most significant challenges has been how to integrate its diverse population into a unified nation without risking division or conflicts. The NEP (1986) explicitly underscores the importance of addressing diversity in education.

The fact that state governments have significant discretion in education also reflects the background of this diversity. The NEP (2020) highlights education's goal as develop good human beings. Such individuals exhibit rational thinking, compassion, courage, resilience, a scientific temperament, and creative imagination. They should also have a strong ethical foundation and values. The policy focuses on producing productive, contributing citizens who can adapt to a rapidly changing world by acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Given these objectives, there is a growing use of the broader term "value education," which encompasses not only moral education but also the cultivation of values, ethics, and attitudes necessary for the development of well-rounded individuals. The concept of "value education" can also be seen in documents such as the "Value Education Handbook for Teachers" created by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in 2012. In contemporary Indian education, it can be observed that the terms "morality" and "values" are used interchangeably without clear differentiation.

5.2 Basic educational policy regarding moral education in Japan

In Japan, the Education Basic Law was enacted in 1947, stating the purpose of education as "the fostering of citizens who are competent individuals, capable of leading an upright and prosperous life, and are conscious of their obligations as members of a peaceful state and society, and who love truth and justice, value individual dignity, respect labor and responsibility, have a spirit of independence, and are filled with a deep sense of morality."

In 1958, "Time for Moral Education" was allotted in schools with the goal of supplementing and integrating moral education within various subjects, special educational activities, and school events. The aim was to nurture desirable moral habits, sentiments, and judgment in students, as well as to deepen their self-awareness about their roles in society and enhance their moral practical skills (Aoki, Kanai, Sato and Murakami 1980: 279).

Even with many revisions in the curriculum guidelines, the importance of moral education has not changed. In the curriculum guidelines announced in 2017, the previous “Time for Moral Education” has been made into a “Special Subject: Moral Education.” In addition, the content has been improved to better deal with the issue of bullying and to provide a more systematic approach that takes into account children's developmental stages, and instruction that incorporates problem-solving and experiential learning.

6. Implementation status of moral education in India and Japan

6.1 National Approaches to Moral Education in India and Japan

As mentioned above, it is difficult to establish a uniform moral education at the national level due to the diversity of Indian society and the large degree of discretion that state administrations have regarding education. Therefore, there is still no national consensus regarding the meaning, content,

and methods of moral education, and only a limited number of states have adopted moral education as a subject.

On the other hand, the implementation of moral education in Japan is nearly universal, with almost all the schools offering moral education. Each school submits the following information to their local educational committees in mid-February: 1) the overall plan for moral education, 2) the annual teaching plan for the moral education subject, and 3) a separate sheet containing details such as the teaching topics, materials, questions, and related items for the moral education subject. Subsequently, the local educational committees submit this information to the prefectural authorities, and it is then reported to the MEXT. Typically, the MEXT announces the implementation status of moral education in the following year around July to August.

6.2 Comparison of contents of moral education in Indian and Japanese textbooks

In order to understand the differences in content of moral education between India and Japan, it is appropriate to compare the content of textbooks for grades 3,4,5 and 6 of primary school in both countries on the same basis (Table 1). In the table 1, content of moral education is classified into 4 factors: A: Mainly about oneself, B: Primarily, matters related to interactions with others, C: Mainly related to interactions with groups or society, D: Mainly concerning the relationship with life, nature, and the sublime, and explained each moral factors in brief words. It is based on the 1958 Notification on The National Curriculum Standards and the 2017 Notification "Special Subject: Moral Education" of Japan.

For this comparison, moral education textbooks from Japan and English language text books from India were utilized. Due to India's linguistic diversity and limited availability of information on moral education implementation, a unified English textbook from the National Council of Educational Research and Training was chosen. Given India's multilingualism and the widespread teaching of English, it serves as a common language. Since content related to moral education is observed in textbooks for third graders and above, a comparison was made with the content of textbooks for grades 3 to 6 in both India and Japan.

Table1 : Topics related to morality in the textbooks of primary school in India and Japan

	Topic
A: Mainly about oneself	➢ Judgment of good and evil, autonomy, freedom, and responsibility ➢ Honesty, sincerity ➢ Moderation, self-control ➢ Personal growth ➢ Hope and courage, effort and strong will ➢ Pursuit of truth
B: Primarily, matters related to interactions with others	➢ Kindness, compassion ➢ Gratitude ➢ Etiquette ➢ Friendship, trust ➢ Mutual understanding, tolerance
C: Mainly related to interactions with groups or society	➢ Respect for rules ➢ Justice, fairness, social justice ➢ Diligence, public spirit ➢ Family love, fulfillment of family life ➢ Better school life, fulfillment of group life ➢ Respect for tradition and culture, an attitude of loving the country and hometown
D: Mainly concerning the relationship with life, nature, and the sublime	➢ The preciousness of life ➢ Love for nature ➢ A sense of wonder and reverence ➢ The joy of living better

Result of Comparison

(1) Both countries' textbooks include elements categorized into four groups (mentioned above) and their respective moral components, with no essential differences observed. Japanese moral education textbooks are richer in topics and have a greater volume of text compared to Indian textbooks. Additionally, all elements of the A to D categories are incorporated into textbooks for each grade in Japan. On the other hand, Indian students commonly learn three languages: the language of their region, Hindi, and English. Since English is considered a foreign language for students, incorporating numerous moral topics into elementary school textbooks is challenging. However, the essence of moral topics learned over the four years of elementary education (grades 3 to 6) in India is similar to that in Japan. Moreover, Indians also learn about morality through various textbooks written in their regional languages. Therefore, while it may be difficult to assess quantitatively, there seems to be no significant qualitative difference in moral education between the two countries.

(2) Japanese moral education textbooks cover numerous topics and keywords related to morality, encouraging students to read, think, and write their thoughts. It includes sections for students to write their thought. However, questions arise regarding time allocation for these activities. Indian textbooks, on the other hand, include sections like "Reading is fun" and "Talk Time" for each topic, helping students to engage through various tasks. The emphasis on student-initiated discussions in Indian textbooks may stem from a perception of Indian fondness for debates. Despite fewer topics, Indian textbooks may offer more time for students to share opinions and engage in discussions, potentially enriching the learning experience.

(3) Recent Japanese moral education textbooks often have content with unknown authors, many sourced from "Elementary School Reading Materials and Their Use" by the MEXT. They frequently rely on systematically created topics for moral education. It includes the textbook for third graders which has a noticeable amount of content and topics created by the Moral Research Editorial Committee. This could be attributed to the fact that Japanese textbooks are approved by the MEXT. In contrast, Indian textbooks select topics from both domestic and international stories and poems with clearly identified authors, distinguishing them from Japanese textbooks.

(4) Despite having fewer topics compared to Japanese textbooks, Indian textbooks always incorporate poetry and poetic expressions. India has a rich tradition of oral transmission of myths and folktales from ancient times, and Indians are known for their proficiency in recitation. Growing up, they become familiar with songs and poetry through regional traditional and religious events. This background suggests that the emphasis on tradition is reflected, and despite the limited number of topics, poetry remains an integral part of Indian education. Additionally, for Indians, learning through poetic expression may be more enjoyable and memorable, adding a practical dimension to the educational approach.

7. Conclusion

We discussed about moral education in India and Japan. Based on that, we found several similarities and differences between India and Japan. In case of India, there is no national consensus on moral education. There are various discussions regarding the values and roles of morality, and there is still no unified and clear concept of morality. Second, India's diverse society and the significant discretion of educational matters under state governments make it challenging to establish nationwide moral education. While recommendations for implementing moral education at multiple levels have been made, achieving consensus on making it a separate subject in various states has not been successful. Thirdly, moral education practices in some states vary in terms of the targeted grade levels, instructional hours, content, and the allocation of time for moral education.

Japan's moral education also faces challenges, such as challenges relate to the improvement, and evaluation of teachers' and students' efforts within the existing unified subject of "Special Subject: Moral Education."

Both in India and Japan, moral education places a strong emphasis on children "thinking, discussing" and problem-solving or experiential learning. For example, engaging children in hypothetical problem-solving situations and experiencing and learning about better behaviors concerning contemporary issues. In addition, both countries also emphasize on "teaching values" and "acquiring life skills."

About differences, curriculum of moral education in Japan includes content related to all the four factors (see table 1) in each grade's text book. However, in Indian curriculum, though all these factors are included, each grade concentrates on certain topic such as, grade three text book focuses on love for nature. This gives students ample time to learn various aspects of one broad topic and opportunity to engage in various activities related to that topic throughout the year. In addition, Indian textbooks include stories with religious teaching to teach morality and value, whereas, Japanese moral education textbooks do not include any content related to religion.

Overall, both India and Japan emphasize moral education as important part of education system.

Reference:

- Aoki, T., H. Kanai, S. Sato and T. Murakami. 1980. *Shin DōtokuKyōiku Jiten.* Daiichihoki Publications
- Bhyrappa, S. L. 1968.*Values in Modern Indian Educational Thought.* NCERT
- Central board of Secondary Education. 2012. Values Education - A Handbook for Teachers.
- Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations of Education, Council of National Research and Training. 2014. Education for Values in Schools – A Framework.

- Government of India. The Constitution of India. 1949. Article 28.
- Mani, R.S. 1961. *Educational Ideas and Ideals of Gandhi and Tagore*, New Book Society of India.
- Mefodeva, M., A. Fakhrutdinova, A. Ukhimenko and G. Valeeva. 1997. 'Historical Perspective of spiritual and Moral Education in India', *Man in India*, 97 (8): 71-77.
- Ministry of Education. 1960. Report of the Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). 1958. Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines - Moral Education Section.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).2018. Commentary on the Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines (Heisei 29 Notification) - Special Subject: Moral Education Section.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Education. 1986. National Education Policy.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Education. 2020. National Education Policy.
- Mondal, G. C. and P. Majumder. 2019. Value based Education in India: Current issues and Challenges (Conference presentation). Educational Renovation in Contemporary Society, 2019.
- Murai, M. 1990. *Can morality be taught?* Tokyo: Kokudosha Publication
- Nihon Kyoiku Gakkai Kyōiku Seisaku Tokubetsu Iinkai. 1957. *DoutokukyouikuniKansuru Mondaiten (Souan)*[Issues Regarding Moral Education (Draft)].
- Oshitani, Y. 2017. *Revised Elementary School Education Curriculum Practical Course - Special Subject: Moral Education,* Tokyo: Gyousei.
- Patil, V. K. andK. D. Patil. 2021. 'Traditional Indian Education Values and New National Education Policy Adopted by India', *Journal of Education,* 203(1):1 –4.
- Radhakrishnan, S. 1959. *An Idealist View of Life*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Sakai, K., N. Tanaka and M. Nakamura. 2017. Historical Changes of Moral Education in Japan and Current Problems: Potential of Information Morals Education in “Special Subject Doutoku”. *Bulletin of Educational Faculty of Shizuoka University*, 67: 105–119.
- Seshadri, C. 1978. 'Moral Education in India', *Journal of Moral Education,* 8(1): 7-13.
- Seshadri, C.1981. 'The concept of Moral Education: Indian and Western – a comparative study', *Comparative Education,* 17(3): 293-310.

- Shimada, H. 2009. *The absence of religion is the true religion of the Japanese*. Tokyo; Kadokawa Publication
- Toyoizumi, S. 2016. "A Study of the History of Moral Education(2): From the Establishment of`the Class of Moral Education` to the establishment of `the Special Subject, Moral Education`", *Annual Report of the Faculty of Education of Bunkyo University,* 50: 243-254.
- Yonezu, M. 2012. 'A Study of Moral Education from the Historical and the Theoretical Relations between Montessori and Gandhi', *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Education, the University of Tokyo*, 52: 13-22.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1.] Seisa International High School, Tachikawa
E-mail: tskk.tanaka@kki.biglobe.ne.jp

[2.] Lecturer, Higashi Nihon International University
E-mail: aneesah.nishaat@gmail.com

[3.] Tokyo Metropolitan Tama Education Office, Tachikawa
E-mail: yuyalps@gmail.com

Harappan Imageries and Artistic Liberty: A Socio-economic Analysis of Power Struggle Based on the Depictions Represented on Seals and Sealings

Sabah Salim

Abstract

The imageries represented on the Harappan seals and sealings have long been a part of inconclusive debates and discussions. Each of these artifacts, bearing unusual and unique scenes may independently indicate a narrative in themselves since to associate them in a series, so as to assemble a complete picture is still quite difficult. These visual images, however, having been associated with social, religious and other aspects as singular scenes when speculated upon has till date reached an indecisive verdict. In view of the many possibilities that have already been put forward, this research article tries to delve inside the minds of the Harappan artists to bring into discussion new perspectives in terms of iconography and give it a socio-economic angle, looking beyond their mythological and religious interpretations that may have been exclusive to the Harappan people. It has been indicated in quite a few such depictions on seals and sealings that the Harappan world was somewhat experiencing a society where a kind power-play was being orchestrated by the hands of the elite few, that is, what we understand in modern times as a world consisting of the haves and have-nots, as in, the presence of an oligarchic society in terms of economic activities. This avenue will be the core concern of this paper and to postulate on the matter rather than to justify this notion.

Keywords: *Economic, elite, Harappan, Iconography, oligarchic, Social, Seals, Sealings, zoomorphic*

Introduction

The artistic value of the images on seals and sealings along with the artistic liberty that was permitted to the people, involved in the creation of such scenes, which, are in some cases seemingly explicit and it is with regard to these representations that the oppressive attitude of the select few, over those who are not as privileged are reflected. For this very purpose this paper has taken into account the study of certain seals and sealings that display such ingenuity recovered from various sites.

It is however, a great disadvantage that the Harappan script remains undeciphered and hence, we are left with the zoomorphic imageries on the seals and sealings at our disposal that may help shed

light upon the socio-economic conditions of the Harappan world in terms of the monopoly in the hands of a few authoritative people, over trade and the other financial benefits that they may have reaped by making the majority of the Harappan people obligated to work and function under their banner. The work of the artist and his/her attempts to create a kind of narrative that may reflect on the social structure of the Harappan world at its maturity is what will be discussed here, moving away from religious and mythological perspectives and theories which remain subjected to defiance.

A Study of the Iconography on Harappan Seals Bearing Peculiar Details

The intriguing Harappan seals had become an object of scrutiny with its very first discovery at the site of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro and since then it has been a topic of many debates and innumerable interpretations. The seals and sealings have since then been attached to the notion that it was used in trade related activities due to their discovery at various Harappan trading routes and at the sites like Lothal which has been famously claimed to have been an important trading post. Some of the other imageries have brought to light certain cultic and religious significance as well which have been called as a form of ritualistic practice like the one from Mohenjo-daro where a man is shown seated in front of a tree and from within the tree is seen perhaps an apparition of a human like figure with horns.

For the purpose of the study of these iconographic images as has been mentioned earlier, selected, are a few unique representations on the seals and sealings that will be interpreted and given a new perception to be considered as a possible explanation for the display of such conception. These imageries belong to the period when the Harappan civilization was in its mature phase as has been mentioned earlier.

It is not unknown that the Harappan people had a very well established trade network both inland and also at places as far as Oman, Falaika Islands, and other western civilizations that were it contemporaries. The presence of the seals and sealings at various other Harappan sites and geographically speaking, going as far as its contemporaneous civilizations like Mesopotamia and others have led to the consideration that they were perhaps used as tokens for traders and the like.

Therefore, taking into consideration the last aspect, this research paper speculates further, the theory of the seals and sealings being utilized as tokens or perhaps even symbolizing an emblem that represents a well to do Harappan who was thriving in seafaring activities. Perhaps, there were quite a few people who were monopolizing and keeping a check on the sea routes and making sure their cargoes were bringing in the maximum profits from far off regions. In this context we are taking into consideration some of the seals which may be representing such powerful people or symbolizing their might that they were conveniently exercising over the less privileged members of the Harappan working community, which, has been brought to light by certain artists through their artistic expressions.

The sites of Chanhu-daro, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro confirm to the homogeneity of the seals

speaking along the lines of iconography with the seal recovered from the Perisan Gulf, which is round in shape and a seal from Ras-al-Jinz which is made of copper pointing again to them being an object operating for a certain kind of trading purpose.

It is significant to note that the sites located at the fringes of the Indus region were housing the largest number of sealings which might have been used in trade and commerce. Also, apart from Lothal, there were other sites like Gola-Dhoro/Bagasra, Kalibangan as well as Banawali, which deserve special mention here, were all located in Gujarat, where the sealings that were recovered possibly was being used for economic purpose, that is, as a license to trade.

Apart from the unicorns only four other animals seem to have been depicted on the seals in great numbers, these were bison, goat and tiger. Elephant impressed seal was also recovered from Lothal. The Harappan people thus, who were a genius known for organization and homogenizing the seal and sealings and the imagery on them are now being questioned. It is now being debated that there were variations in certain aspects of the same animal that was being represented on the seals and perhaps each of these differences had a specific message to convey.

Seals and Sealings: A General Description

The fact that these seals have no chronological order is one of the major concern apart from the fact that during the first stages of documentation right after the discovery of the two major classical Harappan sites, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro (classical because the two places possess the most basic and typical features in terms of the town planning as well as of the umpteen artifacts that have been recovered since the commencement of the twentieth century belonging to this civilization) had been inadequately conducted.

The seals of the Harappan civilization, in their most basic appearance are square in shape and made mostly of materials like terracotta and steatite. An image of an animal is usually present on them accompanied with an inscription on the top.

A sealing is basically what is used to make an impression of a seal and the material which is used for this purpose is clay. It is then impressed on an object for sealing it. However, the findings of such sealings have, till date been rather rare. The seals and sealings under speculation are as follows:

The Bull Overpowering a Horned Man Imagery from Chanhu-daro

The imagery on the seal (Fig. 1) also known as the rape scene recovered from Chanhu-daro, has been discussed by the author Marta Ameri (Allchin 1985, Ameri et.al. 2018:) in the book, Seals and Sealings in the Ancient World. The scene according to further observation can be said to be displaying the dominance of a powerful person over the weak. It projects a kind of elitist social structure that might have been prevalent in the Harappan social hierarchy. It has been pointed out by several scholars

that the Harappan Society might have had an oligarchic construct since the so-called citadel area was separated from that of the regular housing complex. Hence, there are some indications that the people could have been divided into the groups of the haves and the have-nots. The imagery shows a bull which has often been recognized, even in present times as a symbol of power and as an aggressive force, here, is observed to overpower a human who, has a headdress which resembles a horn, If you look closely the phallic of the bull is upright and it is a composite animal with the head of what looks like that of a barasingha and the body of a Brahmi bull with dewlaps and the sides of his face is covered by a material that appears to be somewhat like a lace.

As regards the human who is being assaulted and subjugated, has one hand over his head on the ground as if broken and with the other he/she is trying to defend itself. The human is seen to have a horn and hence it also shows the strength perhaps of a supernatural being. However, it is certain that the stronghold is that of the composite animal here in this imagery. A complete narrative is at present not possible to construct without a series of imageries as has been mentioned earlier, be it in the form of a prequel or in sequence.

This is a problematic aspect for the reconstruction and proper interpretation of these imageries since the limitations such as the undeciphered script of the Harappans and the expanse of the civilization resulting in the difference in the style of imageries recovered from various sites makes it cumbersome a task to come to a concrete conclusion.

But, one thing seems clear, which is, there were artists who were either commissioned to make such explicit imagery displaying violence or it was from their own conscience that they decided to make such a display of the ones who were at the head of the Harappan economy.

Man seated before a Tiger

Another interesting seal recovered from the site of Chanhu-daro, (fig. 2) represents the figure of a man seated before a tiger while in the background is seen another man carrying what seems to be two vessels on either side by tying it to a stick resting on his shoulders. This human-animal interaction with an on-looking human is perhaps indicating toward a dual aspect prevalent in the Harappan society where one person is wealthy enough to own a tiger and symbolizing his might while the other is a worker who has been in and around a fairly thick woodland or some kind of marginal forest as is indicated by the tree behind him and before him the four arrow-like signs could mean bushes and shrubs and he is in all probability carrying whatever he could salvage in a container. The human and the animal are facing one another and in a state of calm as if the two are acquainted, so much so that the wild animal almost appears to be a domesticated species. There is no sign of any kind of aggression or violence.

Horned Human Attacking a Horned Tiger

This seal recovered from Mohenjo-daro (fig. 3) depicting a human like figure with two horns and a tail with the hind legs like that of a bull is shown battling a horned tiger which might represent a person who held a powerful position in the economic or administrative levels of the Harappan period. There are two more interesting imageries from the mentioned site (fig. 5 and 6) which might have some connection to this combat scene between the human like figure and the tiger with horns. Both these imageries have a gathering of humans adorning elaborately dressed headgears and among them one is offering an animal to the apparition seen in the tree. This scene has been believed to be a kind of "divine adoration", but, for what purpose was this apparition invoked? Perhaps this can be connected to the summoning of a super being that would subjugate the elite. Both, the images, the one fighting the horned tiger and the one appearing before the gathering from a tree have similarities like the headgear. Another possible narrative can be that the one offering the animal to the super being was bestowed with certain abilities that would combine him with the features of the animal that is, the bull which is being offered an indication which can be seen in the form of the hind legs of the human in the shape of a bulls and hence provide with the capability to combat the horned tiger. The possibilities of having a valid explanation are many. However, the second narrative can help build a sequence and even a kind of tale that could speak about the Harappan people, their trials and belief system.

Buffalo Attacking Human-like Figures

As we have observed in the previous images there is a violent nature of the imageries whenever there is a human-bull interaction. In this depiction of a bull throwing away humans and holding one in the air with its horns is a scene that is both terrorizing and disturbing (fig. 4). The humans are dressed in headgears and are wearing in their hands what appear as bangles. Again, bull being a symbol of power and stubbornness is adamant to destroy anyone who comes in its way. This could have symbolized a rich and powerful being unafraid to display his might on even those who might be a group of ritualistic performers, since, these people are wearing the headdress that are depicted on the devotional scenes (fig. 5 and 6) recovered from Mohenjo-daro. The devotional scene on the molded tablet deserves a special mention since it is a similar version as the one depicted on the seal at the same site of Mohenjo-daro.

Conclusion

An important aspect to take into consideration as we proceed to the conclusion is that the establishment of the Harappan domain into five zones by Possehl (Possehl and Raval et.al. 1989) has led to the observation that there was similarity and yet concurrently, variations in certain cultural aspects of this civilization. Not all the regions had the same kind of iconography in terms of representations on seals, sealings and in certain other day to day lifestyle of the people in terms of livelihood, be it the kind of livestock being reared at a particular site or agricultural production, which is again quite obvious

because not every site had durable climatic conditions or an ecosystem to sustain a homogenous life for all. People had to make do the best of their circumstances. This is perchance a major reason why they were so careful about storage of water and its preservation during trying circumstances.

Whatever the case may be, it all points to the fact that many regions have in fact shown diversity in the seals though the basic structure remains the same. The unicorn, for example, was considered as being one of the homogenous factor when it came to its anatomy and now with the coming up of discoveries at various sites one after the other, it has become quite apparent that there were different varieties of the same unicorn within a singular site as well as when compared with other places, when observed closely, thus, loosening the notion of a uniformity in the pattern regarding the representation of these imaginary creatures and giving the idea that these variants might have erupted to authenticate and make known one tradesman from another, hence, working as trade mark.

Among the several reasons that was essential for the survival of the powerful depended one was on the constant untiring labour of the masses which consisted from agriculturists, shepherds, including the very skilled Harappan craftsmen, potters and other small scale industrialists, who created imageries displaying the might of the select few who took charge of controlling the populace. Perhaps some of these seals were made-to-order artifacts that were showing a display of supremacy over the meek. The Harappan people known for their skilled craftsmanship and agricultural prosperity might have been trading their items with such businessmen who had access to overseas activities and so the former would sell him the items from their small scale production. This might also explain the factory sites at some of the places to have been close to the housing complexes.

It was further pointed out by Marta Ameri (Ameri, 2013) as well that the seals were markers of identity which is further investigated in this paper and the these imageries are viewed not just as a means to clarify the trade and economic or religious pattern, but also as a hidden message that lay bear the exploitation of the working management such as weavers, potters, farmers, etc at the hand of the elite.

The struggle for controlling the weak has been present since time immemorial and Harappan people might have also fallen prey to such circumstances. Some of the images that have been taken into consideration to speculate on this point have been discussed at length. The peculiar seal recovered from Chanhu-daro (fig. 1) might help in shedding light to such happenings within the Harappan social structure in terms of monopolizing the economy of a particular region. This rape scene referred to by Marta Ameri (Possehl: 2002, Abraham, et al. 2013) that has already been discussed gives the recognition that the bull has been seen as a sign of aristocracy and used for the display of power. It is not uncommon to show the image of an animal as a symbol of human grandeur and might. This image could have been displaying a particular person who was so imposing enough in terms of monetary gain as to overwhelm a supernatural being. Adding to the previous theories, this research paper goes forward with other possible explanations of this scene that make up a large section of the

Harappan people's psyche, ideology in terms of the fear of being terminated at the hands of powerful and influential traders and entrepreneurs of the time and the struggles they might have faced at the hands of the powerful few.

In the context of extensive trade network, Lothal has been referred to as a Harappan port town and seen as an "entrepôt" for trade and production (S.R Rao, 1979), whereas Chanhudaro, though has no evidence of a Pre or Early Harappan occupation, shows the presence of the mature phase. But, what they have in common are the iconographic imageries that show the power-play of the elitists. At lothal, the maximum number of seals discovered bears the image of the unicorn, which accounts for around 89% in total. Apart from that there are images of bison, goat, tiger and bird. It has been suggested that as regards the influential members of the Harappan world, only a few were present here since Lothal as has been considered a port had the route that led to trade with the Persian Gulf and further. It is also said that the presumably administrative sealings were recovered in much larger numbers at Lothal than at any other site. Thus, it is the bigger industrialists who had hold over this site at the time and the seals and sealings recovered here were mostly representing their alliances with regard to the trading activities.

Going back to the bull imagery, it is usually depicted with a single or both horns and with or without a dewlap, again some have a trough like object in front of them and some seem to have been tied to a staff. The script which is undeciphered, present along with these scenes on the top vary and some are accompanied by fish like symbols and arrows, or a man carrying what is believed to be a sacrificial jug.

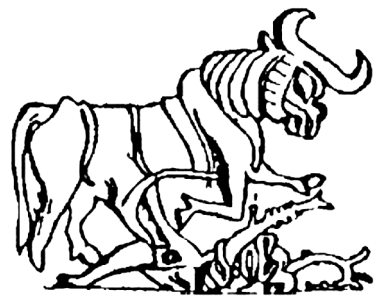
Instead of just looking at these images in the religious contexts, these can be observed to be a kind of trading system. The jug could signify an object holding oil, or grains or anything that can be traded with along with the fish on behalf of a bull and perhaps it can also mean that the bull signifies a higher authority in the trading line with whom an exchange is being made or offered so as to gain some favour or commodity.

To give a final conclusion, it has been seen that these seals and sealings despite being associated with religious practices and even after being compared to the present day religious customs could bear an altogether different perspective since the final verdict regarding their truth is still wanting. This research paper, thus, remaining true to its topic, does not intend to establish a specific notion, but rather, an attempt to put forward a few new interpretations in the midst of the previously discussed explanations by various research scholars with regard to these unique creations by the Harappan artists.

List of figures

Images Depicting Human and Animal Contact/Conflict

Fig. 1



Seal showing buffalo attacking prostrate devotee, Chanhu-daro (after Mackay 1937: 6, Possehl 2002: 8.7, Ameri 2018: 9.6c)

Fig. 2



Seal depicting a man seated before a tiger with a man looking at them, Chanhu-daro (after Posshel: 2008: 9, Ameri: 2018: 9.5b)

Fig. 3



Seal displaying a horned human attacking a horned tiger, Mohenjo-daro (after Kenoyer 2010: 9, Ameri 2018: 9.5c)

Fig. 4



Seal showing a buffalo attacking human like figures, Banawali (Kenoyer 2010: 12, Ameri 2018: 9.6b)

Fig. 5



Seal representing a devotional Scene, Mohenjo-daro (Wright, 2010: 10.6, Ameri, 2018: 9.3)

Fig. 6



Molded tablet portraying a devotional scene, Mohenjo-daro (Joshi and Parpola, 1987: 488c)

Bibliography

Excavation Reports:

- Lal, B. B., Joshi, J. P., Thapar, B. K., & Bala, M. 2003. *Excavations at kalibangan: the early harappans (1960-69).* New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.
- Marshall, J. Revised 1996. *Mohenjo-Daro and the indus civilization in three volumes.* New Delhi: Asian Educational Services.
- Rao, S. R. 1985. *Lothal a port town 1955-62.* New Delhi: Archaeological survey of India.
- Vats, M. S. 1997. *Excavations at harappa(1920-21, 1933-34),* Vol. 1-2. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Books:

- Ameri, M., Costello S. K., Jamison G., Scott S. J. 2018. *Seals and Sealings in the Ancient World.* United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press
- Abraham S. A., Gullapalli P., Raczek T. P., Rizvi U. Z. 2013. *Connections and Complexity: New Approaches to the Archaeology of South Asia*. California: West Coast Press
- Possehl G. L., 1993. *Harappan Civilization: A Recent Perspective* (Second revised edition): Mohan Primlani, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd

Journals:

Mackey, E. J. 1937 'Excavations at chanhu-daro 1935-36', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, 85*: 527-545.

Bio Profile of the Author:
P h. D Research Scholar
Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology
Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
Email: sabah.salim.203@gmail.com

Iron Metallurgy in Manipur With Reference To the Ancient Iron Smelting Sites at Kakching: An Archaeological and Empirical Approach

Naorem Naresh Singh[1] & Oinam Ranjit Singh[2]

Abstract

Iron (Fe) is a metal found abundantly in the earth's crust and is considered one of the most important metals for the growth and development of human civilizations. Iron smelting is the technological process of extracting iron from its ores. Regarding the origin of the art of iron smelting in the world, most of the historian point towards Asia Minor (Anatolia and the Caucasus) in the region of Armenia, where the Hittites performed the iron-making processes around 1700 BCE. Manipur is one of the eight states of North East India, which was also an ancient kingdom with a long recorded history of its own. The growth and advancement of iron use and its metallurgy in the region is a very important area of research for the reconstruction of a precise history of technology in Manipur. This is when an iron-smelting community called the Kakchings comes to light. Historically, they are known for their expertise in the art of iron smelting. It is also suggested that they supplied iron to the kings of Manipur as a yearly tribute. This paper focuses on the introduction of iron use and its metallurgy in the ancient kingdom of Manipur, based on archaeological and literary sources. The significance of iron smelting sites found in and around Kakching is also analyzed for a better understanding of the development of iron metallurgy in Manipur.

Key words: *Iron, Iron smelting, Iron metallurgy, Kakchings, Khamlangba.*

Introduction:

Iron is the most abundant metal found on earth (by mass). It is considered as one of the most important metal for the social and economic development of the human society. The ancient civilizations experienced a big jump in technological advancement and economic growth within a short period of time by using iron tools and weapons for household, agriculture and war purposes. Historically, the use and production of iron have come a long way. V. Tripathi expressed "*Iron as a metal undertook a long journey from one of the most expensive metals (four times more expensive than gold) to the cheapest one, from the costume apparel of mobility to the tools of the craftsman and the farmer*" (Tripathi, 2001:26). The earliest known iron artefacts are the nine small beads which are dated to circa 3200

BCE, found in the burials of Gerzeh, Egypt, by G. A. Wainwrigh (Weeks, 1968:31). Based on their 7.5% nickel content, they are found to be made of meteoritic iron shaped by hammering into beads and strung into ornaments with gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, etc. (Thilo *et al,*2013). Similar was the case with the blade discovered from the royal tomb in Ur (Kroeber, 1948:725). It is generally accepted that the type of iron first used by humans was of meteoritic origin. Meteoritic-iron is different from terrestrial-iron which is rust-resistant due to its high nickel content. It was used in making decorative ornaments and expensive weaponry crafts in ancient times. Iron metallurgy is equally important as the iron itself. It is the process of producing iron from its ores and using it to make different types of tools and weapons for both domestic and social uses. The process requires a set of technological skills and knowledge. V. Tripathi has rightly stated that "*The innovations in metallurgy led to its (iron) adaptation on a much larger scale than ever before*" (Tripathi, 2001:26). The topic of the origin of iron and ferrous metal metallurgy is still in debate. But according to the archaeological findings, Hittites in Anatolia appear to have produced iron from their ores between 1500 and 1200 BCE (Weeks, 1968:32). Historians like Weeks, N. R. Banerjee, and D. P. Agrawal suggested that iron metallurgy originated in Anatolia and was spread to other parts of the world after the fall of the Hittites in 1180 BCE. This theory of the single origin of iron metallurgy is strongly argued by other scholars like Dilip, K. Chakrabarti, Jane Waldbaum, John Newton Friend, and Vinay Tripathi with a different theory of multiple origins of the technique Tripathy 2001).

India is well known for its crafts in the field of iron metallurgy. Damascus steel also known as Woodz steel, which is considered as a valuable metal in antiquity, first appeared in India. The Iron Pillar of Mehrauli, Delhi, which is also known as the *Rustless Wonder*, has been a worldwide sensation for a long time. And it is also reported that during the revolt of 1857, the British found it very hard to destroy the Indian blades seized from the Indian armies (Tripathi, 2001:25). According to earlier researchers like Gordon and Wheeler, the beginning of ironworking in India may be traced back to 700–600 BCE. But with the introduction of radiocarbon dating in association with archaeological evidence of the Painted Grey Ware culture, it had been pushed back to the second millennium BCE (Tiwari, 2014:536), which is generally accepted among the majority of scholars.

On the question of how it was started in India, two primary theories have been developed. The first one suggests that the knowledge of the iron working process was diffused from the Hittites of Anatolia and was brought to India by the Aryans after the fall of the Hittite empire. This theory was supported earlier by scholars like Wheeler, Gordon, M.N. Banerji, Roy, N.R. Banerjee, Neogi, etc. (Tripathi, 2012:4). But scholars like Chakrabarti, V. Tripathi, and Rakesh Tiwari, strongly challenged the theory on the basis of archaeological and metallurgical facts and data. This group of scholars propounds the second theory which indicates the indigenous origin of iron metallurgy in India. Chakrabarti said "*In any case, there is no reason to relate the origin of iron in India to any process of dispersal from a fixed centre of origin in Anatolia*" (Chakrabarti, 1972:183). Rakesh Tiwari also stated that ironworking in India developed independently (Tiwari, 2012:543). V. Tripathi had also done extensive work on the

emergence of iron technology in India. She said that, "*Archaeological evidence on iron technology at its earliest level has been examined in divergent cultural zones that existed in different ecological settings. Each of these cultural units was almost independent of each other, having few common traits*."(Tripathi, 2012:37). She then deduced "*a detailed evaluation of the literary, archaeological, and metallurgical data on iron technology in ancient India is suggestive of its independent beginning in the subcontinent*." (*Ibid*: 36). However, in both cases, northeast India had not been touched.

Regarding the history of iron metallurgy in North East India, there is the same question of whether the knowledge of iron smelting is of indigenous origin or was it brought to the region from other places. It is a fact that very few works have been done focusing on the history of iron metallurgy in North East India. The area deserves more attention from scholars and researchers. Two scholars, Pawel Prokop and Ireneusz from Poland, had done extensive work on the history of iron smelting in the Khasi Hills, Meghalaya (North East).They collected charcoal samples from the different layers of iron slag and sandy colluvial deposits at the Nongkrem and Raitkteng sites in the Khasi hills. The dates of the samples were determined through radiocarbon dating method. The sample from the Nongkrem site was dated to 2040±80 years BP (Pawel and Ireneusz, 2013:766). Pawel claimed it as "*the earliest studied iron smelting site in the Khasi Hills and consequently, in the whole of NE India*" (*Ibid*). But the given date is quite late as compared to the evidences found from other parts of India. The metallurgical tradition was also found to be accompanied with the erection of megalithic memorial monuments, which is similar to other megalithic sites in India that are frequently associated with the Copper-Bronze or Iron Age. Regarding the origin of the knowledge, Pawel wrote "*The relative isolation of the Khasi people, who inhabited a highly elevated plateau, is evidence of the indigenous origin of manufacturing technology. On the other hand, given their trade contacts with the surrounding lowlands, one cannot exclude the possibility of the diffusion of iron production knowledge from the west*." (*Ibid*: 767).

Iron metallurgy in Manipur:

Manipur is one of the eight states of North East India, sharing the international border with Myanmar in the west. In spite of being quite an isolated place because of its geographical location and terrain, like other ancient kingdoms, Manipur has its own history of iron and the development of its industry. It also has a number of significant ancient iron smelting sites which are the clear evidences of the practice of Iron Metallurgy in ancient Manipur.

This study focuses on two main points for the reconstruction of the history iron in Manipur. They are as follows:

1. When did the use of iron start in Manipur?
2. How did the people of Manipur possess the knowledge of iron metallurgy?

In order to determine the answers to these two questions, both relevant literary and archaeological sources are to be examined carefully.

Analysis of the literary evidences:

According to *Poireiton Khunthok*, an ancient Manipuri text, Poireiton came to Manipur with a number of followers and wandered in search of a place for settlement. He brought an iron staff with him (Chandra Singh, 1979:28). It also writes about an incident where he encountered a person while wandering around the kingdom and the person was holding an axe probably made of iron. These are possibly the mention of iron first time in the historical texts of Manipur. From the statements, it may be asserted that Poireiton came from or through a place where the Iron Age had already had developed. According to B. Kulachandra Sharma (Sharma, 2007:36), a Manipuri scholar, the axe held by the random person was made of iron. If it is true, it may be inferred that the Iron Age had also already been developed in Manipur at that point of time. But no information was given on Poireiton's origin and the time of his arrival. However, based on other literary sources, Kulachandra Sharma stated that the arrival of Poireiton in Manipur took place during the reign of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (*Ibid:* 37). K. Ruhinikumar and O. Ranjit Singh have also have given the opinion that Poireiton arrived in Manipur around the 1st century AD. (Ruhinikumar Sharma and Singh: 2010:159)

Khamlangba Khunkumlon is another Manipuri text that deals with the history of Khamlangba and his settlement. He is a local deity of Kakching, and also referred to as the god of iron smelting and its associated works (Sharma:*Opcit*: 38). J. Shakespear, who was a British Political Agent of Manipur (1905-8) also remarked about the iron deposits, "*All these deposits are under the protection of an Umang Lai, i.e., forest god, named Khumlangba, who has to be propitiated before the iron can be worked*" (Shakespear, 1910:349). The text mentioned about his settlement at Uripok (Manipur) from where he went to Takhel (presently Tripura) in search of iron ores. This assertion suggests that the knowledge of iron smelting from its ores had already been there in Manipur during that time. Unfortunately, the time of the event was not given in the text. So, for finding the period of Khamlangba and his ventures, another Manipuri text called *Sagol Kangjei* is needed to be referred. It mentioned about a mega event organized by Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, in which a Sagolkangjeimatch (recognized as polo) was played and Khamlangba was one of the players who was praised for his performance (Saratchandra, 2016:14). Therefore, it has suggested that Khamlangba was a contemporary of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba.

Meitei Ningthourol, an ancient Manipuri text, also reported that Khuyoi Tompok, whose reign started from 154 AD to 263 AD, found lumps of iron while excavating the ground at Kakching (Bormani, 1918: 9) which became the first indication of the availability of iron ore in Manipur. According to O. Ranjit Singh and Englangbam Nixon Singh, Khuyoi Tompok's reign is regarded as the age of technological advancement (O. Ranjit Singh, 2013:9).

Meitrabakki Yot Thanggi Chak (*The Iron Age of Manipur*) written by B. Kulachandra Sharma is an elaborate work on the history of iron in Manipur. After the examination of a number of relevant sources, he assumed that the iron age in Manipur started from around 2100-2050 years ago, which

means the 1st Century BCE (Sharma, 2007:47). He also made another significant claim that the chronological sequence of the metal ages of Manipur was completely different to the conventional metal age sequence of other parts of the world.

Conventional Metal age sequence:

1. Copper age 7000-6000 years ago
2. Bronze age- 6000-3700 years ago and
3. Iron age 3700 years ago

Metal age sequence of Manipur as claimed by Kulachandra Sharma:

1. Iron Age-1970-1200 years ago
2. Copper age- 1200-900 years ago and
3. Bronze age 900-200years ago (Sharma, 2007:30)

On the part of the British colonial records and accounts, a note penned by J. Shakespear (Political agent of Manipur, 1905-08 and 1909-14) titled as, "*Notes on the iron workers of Manipur and the annual festival in honour of their special diety, Khumlangba*", is found to be quite useful in tracing the history of iron metallurgy in Manipur. It stated about the origin of the Kakching people (an iron smelting community), as well as the processes and requirements of iron smelting by this group of people.

The analysis of the literary sources has revealed that the earliest references given to the association of the Manipuri people with iron fall in or around Nongda Lairen Pakhangba's reign. He was the founder of the Ningthouja dynasty of Manipur. According to various other sources, it is conventionally accepted that he came to power in 33 CE which is the 1st Century AD (Sanajaoba, 2005:40).

Analysis of archaeological data:

Archaeological research, which is the backbone of historical fact findings, seems to have reached Manipur late. Very few archaeological studies on the history of iron have been done in the region. Some important data on the findings of the archaeological surveys conducted by the State Archaeology Department, Manipur, at different sites of the state (Sharma ,2007:41-43) are given below:

Sites	Findings
Mongjam (Imphal- West District)	A small Iron knife, grayish loam fan deposit overlain the light yellowish brown fissure clays deposit probably of late Holocene, plain and decorated potsherds.
Nongpok Keithelmanbi (Senapati District)	Iron slag, large number of potsherds.
Panjaopallumching, (Kakching District)	Iron implements like a barbed harpoon, a barbed arrowhead and a sword were found along with some cultural remains of human burial

Moirang (BishnupurDistrict)	Faintly painted pots, a wooden coffin of about 12ft. long and some other remains were found. The cultural remains were found to be similar with that of Panjaopallum Kakching.

However, no record of carbon dating or any kind of scientific dating of the remains can be found except for the 12ft long coffin from the Moirang site. The coffin was carbon dated and was assigned to 1170 A.D (State Archaeology of Manipur, 1987: 9). The data also indicate that the cultural remains of the Panjaopallum and Moirang sites were found to be similar, which means that the iron remains of Panjaopallum were possibly of the same period. It may be pointed out that 1170 AD is a very late date as compared to the literary evidences of the iron. In the light of this, it appears to be insignificant in tracing the origin of iron use in the region.

The data also shows that the cultural remains from Nongpok Keithelmanbi are similar to those found in Mongjam. Since there are no records on the scientific dating of the remains of these two sites, no concrete facts regarding the subject can be extracted. Therefore, the available facts from the data are found to be less useful for the concerned objective.

For a deeper understanding of the history of iron and its metallurgy in Manipur, evidences of iron smelting at Kakching needs to be closely examined.

Iron Smelting at Kakching:

Kakching is a small town situated along National Highway No. 102 and is 45 kilometers away on the south from Imphal, the state capital of Manipur. It is home to a community of Loi people who are famous for their iron smelting tradition and is located roughly 70 kilometers away from Indo-Myanmar borders. It is more like a cultural identity for this group of people. The knowledge and skills required for making iron have been passed down from generations to generations. They are also considered to be the last iron smelters of the Manipur. There are a number of theories and arguments from different scholars and historians regarding the origin of the knowledge of iron smelting possessed by this group of people. It is believed that they migrated from place to place in search of iron ores before settling at the present location. Their ethnic history is also found to be very much associated with the history of Khamlangba (the god of iron smelting), who is still worshiped by the people as their local deity.

The importance of studying the history of iron smelting at this particular region is that it will not only help in understanding the history of iron and its metallurgy in Manipur but will also help in the reconstruction of the history of iron in the North East India.

According to some literary works and accounts from the local elders, there were a number of sites in and around the Kakching area where iron was smelted.

They are given below:

a) Panjaopallumching,

b) Tumu-ching,

c) Yotshungbam Pareng, and

d) Kereching (As mentioned by Kshetri Bira)

It is generally believed that the people of Kakching brought the knowledge of the iron smelting in that area. J. Shakespear has also expressed that, "*The people claim that their ancestors came from Cachar, whence their most important clan's name, Meyanglangbam, Meyang denoting a foreigner from Cachar. The story runs that the ancestors of the Meyanglangbam and Khettrimayum clan were one day walking near Thobal, and noticed some earth thrown out of a bamboo rat's burrow, which resembled that in which iron was found in Cachar, so they gathered it and on their way home they met the Raja, who asked what they were carrying, and, being told, ordered them to experiment and report the result. Eventually the community, numbering then only five or six households, was settled near the spot where the ore was found, and subsequently moved to their present /locations, where the deposits of ore are more extensive*" (Shakespear:*opcit*:349). According to this, the introduction of iron smelting in the area automatically falls on the time when the iron smelting community settled there for the first time. And according to '*Meitrabakki Puwarida Kakching'* by Mayanglambam Gourachandra, the Kakching people is said to have migrated from the Thoubal area, which is about 25 kms away on north from the present location in the year 1740, during the reign of Maharaj Gambhir Singh (Mayanglambam, 2002: 5). On the other hand, this concept is contradicted by the findings of the surveys recently done by M. R. Sheikh and his team. Charcoal samples were collected in the survey from one of the iron smelting sites at the outskirt of Kakching, locally called Tumu Ching, situated at about 5 Kms. to the South-West from the central Market of the Kakching town. The age of the samples was determined with the Thermo luminescence dating method and was found to be 1600$\pm$80 years old i.e. 4th–5th century A.D. Sheikh, *et al* 2023). It appears to be much earlier than the first settlement of the people at the region as mentioned.

Another important piece of relevant information from the book *Meitei Ningthourol* is about the incident when Khuyoi Tompok found lumps of iron while digging the earth at Kakching (Bormani, 1918: 9). This information has suggested that the people knew about the occurrence of iron ore in the Kakching area during the reign of Khuyoi Tompok (154 AD to 263 AD), which is also much earlier in date than the said settlement of the Kakching people.

Contrary to general belief, these facts seem to have shown that iron smelting activities had already been carried out at the Tumu-Ching prior to the presence of Kakching people in the area. And this new development raises an entirely new question concerning who smelted iron for the first time in that specific area and where they came from.

Looking from that angle, the association of the people from Myanmar with the iron metallurgy at Tamu-Ching has been expressed in various sources. It is already said that the charcoal samples found in Tumu Ching were found to be 1600±80 years old. One interesting fact about the name 'Tumu Ching' or 'Tumu Hill' is that it is similar to the name of a town called 'Tamu' in Sagaing Region in north-west Myanmar near the Indo-Border, locally known to the people of Manipur as 'Tumu'.

M. R. Sheikh also wrote about a conversation he had with the watchman of that area. When asked about how the hill was covered with such slag, the watchman replied, "*The place has remained covered with such slag, which they called Yotthi, since time immemorial. The hillock was known as Tumuching simply because the people from Tumu now in Myanmar crossed the series of mountain ranges in search of iron ores and settled there to undergo the work of iron smelting*" (Sheikh, 2023). Sheikh has also conducted a comparative study on the traditional iron works in Manipur and Bagan District of Myanmar and found that the shiny glassy matrix that formed the iron slag from Kakching is similar to those found attached to the lumps of bricks that formed the furnaces of Bagan in Myanmar. After performing different tests like Thermo luminescence analysis (TL), X-ray fluorescence analysis (XRF), X-ray diffraction analysis (XRD) and other tests, it also is said that the phosphorous content in the iron slag of Tumu Ching (Kakching) was found to be higher compared to the conventional iron produced in other parts of India (Sheikh, 2013:124). These assertions in connection with Sheikh's archaeological findings has signified that people from Tamu (Myanmar), which is on the eastern side of Manipur, came to this particular area and performed iron smelting there during the 4th or 5th century AD, much earlier than the settlement of the Kakching community in the area (Year 1740, as stated by Gourachandra Sharma). This theory also fits in with Kulachandra Sharma's claim of the diffusion of iron use (Cast iron) to Manipur from China through Myanmar. (Sharma, 2007:49). However, it is still a fact that the people of Kakching, who are considered to be an iron-smelting community, had a historical connection with Tripura and Assam regarding their origin and their local deity, Khamlangba (God of iron smelting). Therefore, according to the analysis, when it comes to the question of how the people of Kakching possessed the art of iron smelting, it points towards both eastern (Myanmar) and western (Tripura and Assam) sides of the kingdom. The existence of ancient iron smelting sites other than Tumu-Ching at the region, still imply that there is the possibility of the presence of indigenous or other iron smelting communities in and around Kakching for the same purpose. Therefore, it may be concluded that the area of Kakching might have been an iron smelting hub in the ancient times where people from different directions and places came to the region and smelted iron at different points of time, which is how iron smelting ultimately became a culture for the people living in the area.

Conclusion:

After thoroughly analyzing the information gathered from different sources and connecting the dots in an attempt to understand the historical development of iron use and its metallurgy in Manipur, it is evident that iron, as a metal locally called '*YOT*'(iron), was known to the ancient people of Manipur

since or before the reign of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (33 AD-154 AD). They were also aware of the occurrence of iron ore in the kingdom. The art of iron smelting, which requires a level of technological expertise was found to be practiced as early as the fourth or fifth century AD in a region presently known as Kakching, which is in the southern part of the kingdom. The evidence that people from Myanmar smelted iron at Tumu Ching (Manipur) has indicated the possibility of the diffusion of iron-smelting knowledge from China to Manipur through Myanmar. This finding has created a new area of historical research. However, the historical connection of the iron smelting community of Kakching with Cachar (presently Assam) and Takhel (Presently Tripura) cannot be ruled out. So, it is concluded that people with iron smelting skills came from different directions and places, including those from outside the kingdom, at different periods of ancient Manipur. On the other hand, with the presence of ancient iron smelting sites in Manipur, where archaeological surveys are yet to be done on scientific lines, the possibility of indigenous origin of iron smelting in Manipur still exists. However, the sources available for the reconstruction of a more precise history of iron in Manipur are still very limited. More archaeological surveys are needed to be conducted at the remaining iron smelting sites of Kakching and Mongjam areas, followed by comparative studies of the findings with those from other parts of India (especially the north-eastern states) and Myanmar. A study on the ethnic history of the people of Kakching is also needed in order to trace the origin of the art of iron smelting possessed by the people of Manipur.

References:

- Bormani, S. 2018. *Meitei Ningthourol*, Brsa Publication, Imphal. Ajit Sarangthem (publisher).
- Chandra, M. 1979. *Poireiton Khunthok.* Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal.
- Chakrabarti, D. K. 1977. 'Distribution of Iron Ores and the Archaeological Evidence of Early Iron in India'. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.*
- HomenThangjam and H. Isworchandra. *Quest for Development in Manipur: Continuity, Constraints and Contradictions*. New Delhi
- Kroeber,A.L. 1948. *Anthropology.* George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd, London.
- Mayanglambam, Gourchandra, 2002. *Meitrabakki Puwarida Kakching (Kakching in the History of Meitrbak)*. Kakching, Manipur.
- Prokop, P & Suliga, E. 2013. 'Two thousand years of iron smelting in the Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, North East India'. *Current Science*.
- Sanajaoba, N. 2005. *Manipur: Past and Present, Volume-4.*Mittal Publication, New Delhi.
- Saratchandr, Dr. L. 2016. *Sagol Kangje ,* Imphal.

- Shakeaspear, J. 1910. 'Notes on the Iron Workers of Manipur and the Annual Festival in Honour of Their Special Deity Khumlangba'. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Gret Britain and Ireland,* Jul. – Dec. Vol. 40
- Sharma, B. Kullachandra. 2009. *MeitrabakkiYotkiChak (The Iron Age Of Manipur)*, Imphal
- Sheikh, Md. Raheijuddin. 2013. 'A Comparative Study of Traditional Iron Works in Manipur and Bagan District of Myanmar by Physical Techniques'. *International Journal of Physics and Application*, http://www.irphouse.com/ijpa/ijpav5n2_08.pdf accessed on 15th September, 2023
- Sheikh, M.R. 2010. Correcterization of Iron Slag of Kakching, Manipur by X-ray and optical spectroscopy in *Indian Journal of Pure and Applied Physic*s, New Delhi
- Sheikh, Dr. Md. Raheijuddin. 2023, Physics for Cultural Heritage: Need of the Future Generations. http://e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=education.Science_and_Technology.Physics_for_Cultural_Heritage_Need_of_the_future_generations_Part_1 accessed on 10th September, 2023
- Singh, O. Ranjit. 2010. Contextualization Pre-Historic Sites of Manipur. (ed.) J.B. Bhattacharjee. *State And Economy In Pre-Colonial Manipur*. Kolkata
- Singh, Oinam Ranjit (ed.). 2013. Pre-Colonial and Colonial Sources of Revenue.
- Thilo Rehren, Tamás Belgya, Albert Jambon, GyörgyKáli, ZsoltKasztovszky, ZoltánKis, Imre Kovács, BoglárkaMaróti, Marcos Martinón-Torres, GianlucaMiniaci, Vincent C. Pigott , Miljana Radivojević , László Rosta, László Szentmiklósi, Zoltán Szőkefalvi-Nagy, 2013. '5,000 Years Old Egyptian Iron Beads Made From Hammered Meteoritic Iron'. *Journal of Archaeological Science.*
- Tripathy, Rakesh.2014.https://www.academia.edu/72573008/The_origins_of_iron_working_in_India_new_evidence_from_the_Central_Ganga_Plain_and_the_Eastern_Vindhyas
- Tripathi, V. 2001. Emergence of Iron in India: Archaeological Perspective. *Metallurgy in India; A Retrospective.* India International Publisher
- Tripathi, V. 2012. 'Aspects of Iron Technology in India'. *Propagation; A Journal of Science Commnication.*
- Weeks, M. E. 1956. 'Discovery of Elements'. *Journal of chemical Education.*American Chemical Society

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Ancient History & Archaeology, Manipur University.
Email: narikakching@gmail.com
&
[2]Head, Department of Ancient History & Archaeology, Manipur University.

From Monarchy to Democracy: Indo-Bhutan Relations in Transition

Sanjit Pal

Abstract

The enduring "special relationship" between India and Bhutan has evolved over the decades, shaped by shared cultural affinities, strategic interests, and developmental goals. This article examines how Bhutan's gradual shift from monarchy to democracy has redefined diplomatic dynamics and policy frameworks between the two nations. While Bhutan's transition to democracy was largely self-driven, India's support has been crucial in facilitating this shift. Economically, India remains Bhutan's largest trading partner and primary development aid contributor, supporting Bhutan in key sectors like hydropower, education, and infrastructure. Yet, Bhutan's economic reliance on India brings certain limitations, including limited diversification and vulnerability to economic fluctuations within India. Geopolitically, Bhutan's position between the major powers of India and China requires careful diplomacy to safeguard its sovereignty. For India, Bhutan's independence and stability are vital to its broader regional security strategy. The article further explores points of convergence, such as hydropower collaboration, and areas of divergence, like Bhutan's growing desire for more diplomatic freedom, which sometimes contrasts with India's strategic priorities.

Keywords: *Indo-Bhutan relations, democracy transition, economic ties, geopolitical strategy, hydropower collaboration*

Introduction:

The Indo-Bhutan relationship is a unique, enduring partnership shaped by geographical proximity, cultural ties, and strategic cooperation. Formalised by the 1949 Treaty of Friendship, this "special relationship" was built on mutual non-interference and development collaboration, with India playing a key role in Bhutan's infrastructure, economic stability, and political security during its monarchical era. However, Bhutan's transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy in the early 2000s marked a turning point, allowing Bhutan to explore diversified foreign relations, including ties with China, and work towards self-reliance. For India, Bhutan's democratic transition brought both opportunities and challenges. Preserving a close partnership with Bhutan became essential, not only to support its democratic journey but also to maintain regional stability and protect mutual interests, particularly in

the critical hydropower sector, which benefits both economies. Bhutan's democratic evolution requires a rebalancing of this relationship to accommodate each country's evolving interests and priorities. This article examines the current dynamics in Indo-Bhutan relations, exploring areas of economic cooperation, the challenges and benefits of India's support, and the broader geopolitical considerations shaping the relationship. It will analyse points of convergence and divergence, offering insights into a stable, future-oriented partnership.

Indo-Bhutan Special Relationship:

The Indo-Bhutan relations are regarded as a special friendship based on mutual economic dependency, as well as similar religious, cultural, and historical links. Bhutan and India set up formal diplomatic relations right after India's independence. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, recognised the significance of Bhutan in India's security environment. The rise of China and its assertive stance towards Himalayan states influenced Nehru's foreign policy towards these countries and his approach to Bhutan. The basis of this relationship is the 1949 Treaty of Friendship, which established a special tie between the two nations and made it possible for India to assist Bhutan's economic growth (Mitra, 2010:27). The treaty emphasises key ideas such as maintaining "peace and friendship" and promoting "free trade and commerce" between Bhutan and India. An important article of the treaty is Article 2, which guarantees that India will not interfere in Bhutan's internal affairs in exchange for Bhutan's agreement to follow the advice of the Government of India regarding its external relations (Mitra, 2010:27). However, Bhutan expressed discontent over Article 2, which imposed limitations on Bhutan's foreign policy decisions by requiring India's "guidance" and Article 6 which directed Bhutan to seek India's permission for arms imports (Mitra, 2010:27), as they felt these provisions restricted their ability to forge relationships beyond India. Nevertheless, considering the aggressive posture of China towards the Himalayan region and its territorial claims, Bhutan chose to sign the treaty. From India's perspective, this treaty holds particular importance, as Bhutan serves as a protective buffer along India's Himalayan frontier, supporting regional security interests. The subsequent visit of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Bhutan in 1958 (Chakrabarty, 2015:24) strengthened Indo-Bhutan relations, as Nehru emphasized the importance of building roads to improve communication within Bhutan and connect it to nearby Indian territories. Following this visit, Bhutan embarked on a program of planned development, receiving significant assistance from India.

Since the early 1960s, especially after India's defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, Bhutan began to question India's ability to ensure its security. Concerns grew over India's capacity to shield Bhutan if China attempted a Tibet-like intervention. This led Bhutan to rethink its foreign policy and gradually diversify its international relations. Bhutan joined the Colombo Plan in 1961, the Universal Postal Union in 1966, and the United Nations in 1971 (Muni, 1984:519), marking significant moves toward broader diplomatic engagements. As a UN member, Bhutan began casting independent votes, sometimes diverging from India's stance, as seen at the 1979 NAM Summit in Cuba, where Bhutan

aligned with China and some Southeast Asian nations over the Khmer Rouge issue (Ram, 1980:32). Additionally, Bhutan opposed India's stance by strongly objecting to the Soviet Union's troop presence in Afghanistan after their invasion in December 1979 (Muni, 1984: 519). In the 1980s, Bhutan expanded diplomatic relationships with several countries, including Nepal, the Maldives, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, the European Economic Community (EEC), the Netherlands, Kuwait, Finland, Sri Lanka, Austria, and Pakistan (Labh, 2016:12). It also joined international organizations such as the FAO, IDA, and IMF in 1981, and SAARC in 1985 (Chakraborty, 2023:8). The initiation of boundary talks with China in 1984 (Bisht 2010:3) further demonstrated Bhutan's intent to move beyond the "aid and advice" framework of the 1949 Indo-Bhutan Treaty. From the 1990s onward, India prioritized its relationship with Bhutan, deepening cooperation in culture, education, science, and particularly hydropower, fostering a relationship built on trust, mutual respect, and regular high-level exchanges.

Background of Bhutan's Political Transition:

As the main theme of this article is the impact of Bhutan's transition from monarchy to democracy on Indo-Bhutan relations, it is pertinent to understand the background of Bhutan's democratic transition. Historically, Bhutan was fragmented, with clan chieftains competing for power until ZhabdrungNgawangNamgyal, a Tibetan prince and abbot, unified Bhutan under a central administration in the early 1600s (Kohli, 1982:7). NgawangNamgyal established the dual governance system called the Choe-Sid, which divided religious and administrative authority between the Je Khenpo (head of religious affairs) and the DrukDesi (head of secular affairs) (Malik 2016:135). After his passing in 1651, Bhutan saw frequent conflicts as influential figures like the DrukDesis and Penlops contested for power. This period of turmoil set the stage for UgyenWangchuck, the Penlop of Tongsa, to stabilize the kingdom in 1907, ultimately leading to his recognition as Bhutan's first hereditary king. UgyenWangchuck's strategic diplomacy with British India earned him the title of "Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (NCIE)", establishing strong ties that helped shape Bhutan's modern state (Labh 1974:28). Following his impactful leadership, UgyenWangchuck was succeeded by His Majesty JigmeWangchuk, who became Bhutan's second King (Pal, 2022a:127). He continued a centralised rule until JigmeDorjiWangchuck, the third king, initiated significant reforms between 1952 and 1972. These reforms, including the creation of the "Tshogdu" (National Assembly) in 1953 and the formation of the "LodoiTshogde" (Royal Advisory Council) in 1965. Additionally, serfdom and slavery were abolished, aimed to modernise Bhutan but met opposition from conservative factions (Joseph, 2006:1311).

Ethnic and cultural complexities further impacted Bhutan's journey toward democracy. Bhutan is home to diverse ethnic groups, including the Ngalong, making up 16.5% of the population, the Kjheng at 3.64%, the Bumthangpa at 4.37%, the Sharchop at 23.92%, and the largest group, the Lhotshampa, who comprise 30.82% (Mitra 2010:46). As modern reforms progressed, the Lhotshampa

community faced increasing marginalisation, especially following the annexation of Sikkim by India in 1975, which sparked fears of a similar fate in Bhutan. In response, the Bhutanese government implemented strict citizenship acts in 1977 and 1985, as well as the 'Driglam Nam Za'[1] policy (Ghosh, 2010:240) mandating cultural conformity. Many Lhotshampas were labeled as "illegal immigrants," resulting in widespread displacement, with about 108,000 Lhotshampas eventually seeking refuge in Nepal (Shrestha, 2023)[2]. In the face of ethnic tensions, the democratic movement gained momentum, supported by organizations such as the Bhutan State Congress and the Bhutan People's Party (BPP), both of which advocated for a limited monarchy and multi-party system (Sinha, 2002:180). A critical milestone was reached in 1998 when King JigmeSingyeWangchuck delegated some powers to the prime minister, initiating a phased democratic transition. The King also began drafting Bhutan's first constitution, culminating in the 2005 release of a draft that laid the groundwork for a constitutional monarchy. In a surprising move, the fourth King JigmeSingyeWangchuk, declared his immediate abdication on December 14, 2006 (Gallenkamp, 2010:17). In June 2007, the embargo on political parties was repealed in anticipation of the approaching elections (Gallenkamp, 2010:12).

The path toward democracy accelerated with the 2008 elections, marking Bhutan's first democratic election between the DrukPhuensumTshogpa (DPT) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). India supported Bhutan throughout this period, ensuring fair elections and aiding the political transition. On July 18, 2008, Bhutan adopted its first written constitution, solidifying its status as a constitutional monarchy and officially marking its democratic transition. JigmeKhesarNamgyelWangchuck was crowned as Bhutan's fifth king on November 6, 2008, symbolising the country's commitment to its new political framework (Gallenkamp, 2010:16). Today, Bhutan's democratic journey represents a unique blend of traditional monarchy and democratic values, with India playing a supportive role in Bhutan's stable political transition.

Impact of the shift from monarchy to democracy:

India's engagement with democratic Bhutan has proven more challenging than simply pleasing the Druk King. While there is no strong anti-India sentiment in Bhutan, the younger generation of Bhutanese desire more transparent and competitive diplomatic relations with India. Recognising the changing dynamics of Bhutan's internal politics, both countries revised their 1949 Friendship Treaty in 2007 prior to the first general election of Bhutan. Article 2 of the amended treaty states that Bhutan doesn't need to follow India's advice on foreign policy or obtain its consent for the import of weapons. The article now states that both the countries "shall cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests. Neither government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other" (Stobdan, 2017)[3]. This updated treaty reflects the modern nature of their relationship and establishes the basis for future development in the twenty-first century. It indicates that the days of taking Thimpu for granted are no more. By this, "Bhutan achieved a significantly greater freedom in foreign and defence politics- areas hitherto controlled by New Delhi

for nearly sixty decades" as an author points out (Hussain, 2007:51).

With its newfound autonomy, Bhutan embarked on a diplomatic expansion to diversify its economic partnerships and attract foreign investments. In the 2013 parliamentary elections, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged victorious and came to power in Bhutan (Chandra 2015:143). At this time, Thimphu decided to broaden its international contacts, leading to an expansion in its diplomatic ties with other countries, which grew from 25 in 2011 to 53 by 2013. (Stobdan, 2014:9). In mid-2013, an atmosphere of mistrust developed between the two countries when the DrukPhuensumTshogpa (DPT)-led government abruptly shifted Bhutan's India-centric foreign policy, placing greater emphasis on strengthening ties with China. This extra overture of Bhutan to Beijing seemed to have exploded the crisis. Indeed, there was widespread belief that New Delhi withheld petroleum subsidies from the then-DPT government of Bhutan a few days prior to the July 2013 general election as a form of retaliation for their growing proximity to Beijing (Malik, 2016:137). For this initiative, Indian government faced criticism inside and outside India. As a result of the initiative, India's relations with Bhutan were severely damaged and Bhutanese eternal goodwill for India vanished overnight.

In recent years, Bhutan's economic growth has been sluggish, with an average growth rate of just 1.7 percent over the past five years. The country faces high inflation, significant youth unemployment (29 percent), and a mass exodus of its working population. More than 17,000 Bhutanese citizens departed the nation in 2022 alone, and around 5,000 civil personnel resigned from their jobs in 2023 to relocate (Pant, 2024)[4]. This migration is putting pressure on Bhutan's economy, demographics, and everyday administration. Bhutan's business and tourism sectors have struggled to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to increased borrowings and imports, dwindling revenues, and foreign reserves falling to a critical level of US$ 467 million (Shivmurthy, 2024)[5]. Even though India has continuously supported Bhutan through currency swaps, subsidies, grants, hydroelectric power, major infrastructure projects, and funding for its Five-Year Plans, it has not been able to curb the economic recession. Some Bhutanese people now feel that if this situation continues, Bhutan might become even more dependent on India, which could lead to higher unemployment and greater debt for future generations.

As democracy and social media presence grow, more people in Bhutan are getting involved in foreign policy discussions. The generational shift in Bhutan, fuelled by the introduction of television and the internet in 1999 (Pal, 2022a:128), has further complicated the foreign policy landscape. Young people in Bhutan are becoming increasingly outspoken and questioning traditional views, including Bhutan's close ties with India, as they are exposed to global perspectives through ICT and digitalization. This generation is less apprehensive of China and more open to its economic opportunities, contrasting with their predecessors who faced political and economic turmoil and were more grateful for India's assistance. The younger Bhutanese are more critical of India's role in Bhutan's border negotiations with China and perceive India's economic influence as overbearing.

Indo-Bhutan Economic Relations: Benefits and Limitations of India's Support

India and Bhutan have shared a unique and enduring economic partnership that has been central to Bhutan's development trajectory. India has historically been Bhutan's principal source of financial assistance, trade partner, and investment benefactor, playing a crucial role in shaping Bhutan's infrastructure, education, healthcare, and overall socio-economic fabric.

Financial Assistance and Infrastructure Development:

India's financial contributions to Bhutan's economic development are evident in the support it has provided to Bhutan's Five-Year Plans (FYPs) (Table-I). The First Five-Year Plan (1961-1966) was funded entirely by India, signalling the beginning of Bhutan's economic modernisation. At that time, Bhutan was an isolated kingdom with limited infrastructure and communication networks. With India's assistance, the priority during this period was to end Bhutan's isolation, primarily through the construction of essential transport links. India financed the construction of over 1,770 kilometers of roads, including the 208 km highway that connected Phuntsholing to Thimphu and Paro. India's financial assistance to Bhutan's FYPs has expanded significantly over the years, from INR 107.2 million during the 1st FYP to INR 45,000 million for the 12th FYP (Pal, 2022a: 111), reflecting India's long-term commitment to Bhutan's development. This support has significantly contributed to Bhutan's rapid economic growth. Its GDP grew from USD 128 million in 1980 to USD 400 million by 2000. By 2020, Bhutan's GDP had reached USD 2.3 billion (World Bank Open Data, n.d.), showing nearly six times growth in just two decades.

Hydropower Cooperation: A Win-Win Partnership:

The cooperation between India and Bhutan in hydropower development exemplifies a mutually beneficial alliance that has bolstered Bhutan's economic growth while contributing to India's energy security. With its mountainous terrain and fast-flowing rivers, Bhutan holds an economically viable hydropower potential of 23,760 MW from an estimated 30,000 MW (Lamsang, T. 2017)[7]. India has played a critical role in realising this potential, providing both technical expertise and financial support. Notable projects such as the 1,020 MW Tala, 336 MW Chukha, and 60 MW Kurichhu Hydroelectric Projects were established with India's assistance, underpinning the hydropower sector's importance to Bhutan's economy. In 2020, the hydropower sector contributed 17.74% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Pal, 2022:84). Bhutan exports hydropower exclusively to India, with significant growth over the years. In 2019, hydropower constituted 40.79% of Bhutan's exports to India, up from 34.38% in 2006 (Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan, 2016:52). This increased revenue, reaching Nu. 11,918.67 million in 2019 from Nu. 11,681.98 million in 2018 (Pal, 2022:86), supports Bhutan's economic stability while helping India meet its projected electricity demand, expected to reach between 2,074 TWh and 2,785 TWh by 2030 (Sahil, 2018)[8].

Nonetheless, Bhutan's dependence on hydropower exports exposes Bhutan to India's energy demands and external project risks, including project delays and rising debt. Bhutan's public debt from hydropower projects has been exacerbated by cost overruns. The Tala Hydropower Project, initially set to finish in 2005, was delayed until 2007 due to geological issues, raising costs from Rs/ Nu 14 billion (US$331.84 million) to Rs/Nu 41.26 billion (US$1.02 billion) (Saklani et al., 2019)[9]. The Punatsangchu-I Project, delayed from 2016 to 2022, saw costs rise from Nu 35.148 billion to Nu 93.756 billion (Lamsang, T. 2017)[7]. Similarly, the Kolongchhu Project's costs increased from Nu 33.05 billion to Nu 54.818 billion since 2015(Dechen, 2022)[10]. For example, Bhutan's major Tala Hydropower Project, initially set to finish in 2005, was delayed until 2007 due to geological issues, raising costs from Rs/Nu 14 billion (US$331.84 million) to Rs/Nu 41.26 billion (US$1.02 billion) (Saklani et al., 2019)[9] and same thing happened to the other projects also. As a result, hydropower-related loans have increased significantly over the years. According to a report by the Royal Audit Authority (RAA), these loans account for 73% of Bhutan's external debt, totalling Nu. 162,359.048 million for 2020-21 financial year (Pal, 2022:86), heightening concerns about long-term economic sustainability. Additionally, most of the workers involved in various projects are Indian, which raises employment concerns among Bhutanese locals. Moreover, the low tariffs India pays for Bhutan's electricity at Rs. 1.80 per unit, compared to domestic Indian prices of Rs. 7-8 per unit (Pal, 2022:86), also exacerbate local grievances. Environmental impacts and technical difficulties further complicate this cooperation, with climate change posing threats like flood risk to downstream regions in India. The Talahydel project faced technical issues, including cracks in four turbine runners valued at Nu 280 million. Additionally, a high-voltage 500 MW cable, costing Nu 40 million, failed shortly after installation in the Tala powerhouse (Bisht, 2011)[11], highlight ongoing quality concerns. Despite these challenges, hydropower remains a cornerstone of Indo-Bhutan relations.

Trade and Investment Relations:

India is Bhutan's largest trade partner, with bilateral trade experiencing significant growth in recent years. The 1949 Treaty of Friendship laid the groundwork for free trade between the two nations, and subsequent agreements, such as the 1972 Trade and Transit Agreement and the 1983 Trade and Commerce Agreement (Pal, 2022a:186), further facilitated trade by simplifying customs procedures and allowing Bhutan to trade with third countries through India. In the early years of their trade relationship, Bhutan's exports to India primarily consisted of agricultural products like cardamom, oranges, and potatoes. However, as Bhutan's economy has diversified, so too has its export portfolio, which now includes products such as cement, wood, alcoholic beverages, and, most importantly, electricity. The value of bilateral trade between the two countries, excluding electricity, grew significantly from US$ 484 million in 2014-15 to US$ 1,606 million in 2022-23("Guj Exports to Bhutan Surge by 52% in 5 Yrs," 2024)[12]. Both countries have taken steps to expand trade routes and strengthen their trade relationship. In 2021, they decided to open seven more entry and exit points,

adding to the 21 that were approved in 2016 (Shivamurthy, 2022)[13].

India has played a significant role in fostering economic growth in Bhutan through foreign direct investment (FDI), especially as Bhutan moved toward economic liberalisation. Initially conservative in its approach to FDI, Bhutan has gradually relaxed policies, with landmark policy amendments in 2002, 2010, and 2014, encouraging sustainable, socially responsible, and ecologically sound investments. India, Bhutan's largest FDI source, has driven impactful projects across various sectors. For instance, the State Bank of India (SBI) became Bhutan's first foreign investor in 1971 by holding a 40% stake in the Royal Bank of Bhutan (Rebel, 2016)[14]. India's influence extended further as Tata Power invested $6 million in a joint hydroelectric project with Dagachhu Hydropower Corporation, and Sunayana Commodities Pvt. Ltd entered a $11 million joint venture with Quality Gases Pvt. Ltd (Pal, 2024:49). These projects have bolstered Bhutan's economy, spurred job creation, and introduced advanced technologies, making India a vital partner in Bhutan's sustainable economic development.

Nevertheless, Bhutan consistently runs a trade deficit with India, exacerbated by its high reliance on imports, particularly fuel, machinery, and food. Bhutan's rupee crunch, caused by its negative balance of trade and payments, has strained its economic relations with India. In FY 2019-2020, Bhutan's current account deficit stood at Nu 16,849 million, and this increased to Nu 42,428 million by 2023-2024 (Pal, 2024:50). Although India extended a standby credit facility of INR 10 billion in 2012 to alleviate Bhutan's rupee crunch, this financial assistance has not completely resolved the issue. Furthermore, challenges such as illegal cross-border trade, tax evasion, and monopolistic practices by Indian contractors complicate the bilateral economic relationship, often leading to resentment within Bhutan towards India's economic dominance.

Limitations of India's Support and Bhutan's Economic Diversification:

While India's support has been indispensable for Bhutan's development, there are inherent limitations to this economic relationship. Bhutan's over-reliance on India for financial assistance, trade, and energy exports has created vulnerabilities that the kingdom is eager to address. Consequently, Bhutan's democratic government has been working to diversify its economic relations, as evidenced by its increasing engagement with European countries, including China. Since the initiation of Bhutan's First Five-Year Plan (FYP) in 1961, India has consistently provided financial support for both Bhutan's FYP and various development projects. But since the 5th FYP (1981-1987), the ratio of India's financial aid to Bhutan's total plan outlay dropped from 100% in the 1st FYP to 14.52% in the 12th FYP. In response to this declining percentage of financial assistance, Bhutan has made concerted efforts to achieve self-reliance by utilising internal resources and seeking support from new patrons among Western countries and international monetary and welfare organisations like EEC, UNCDF, and HELVETAS, DANIDA, JICA, and UNDP, etc (Pal, 2022a:112). These partnerships have provided Bhutan with greater autonomy in its economic planning and execution, reducing its reliance on India's financial assistance over time.

In recent years China-Bhutan relations have further deepened. Trade between Bhutan and China has surged recently, reflecting a growing economic connection. China-Bhutan trade relations have increase significantly in the last few years. In 2020, the trade volume between the two countries was only two billion, but it reached fifteen billion in 2022(Pant, 2024)[4]. Since 2008, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Bhutan has grown significantly, reaching 10,000 by 2015. These tourists contribute substantial revenue, spending around USD 250 on visas alone, in contrast to Indian tourists, who spend as little as USD 15 per day(Shivamurthy, 2022)[13]. This difference in spending has heightened Bhutan's need to build stronger diplomatic and economic ties with China.

Geopolitical Compulsions of Both India and Bhutan:

The India-Bhutan relationship is deeply influenced by their geographical closeness, historical ties, and regional power dynamics. Bhutan, positioned between India and China, has traditionally relied on India for economic support, security, and cultural affinity. For India, it's crucial to keep Bhutan as a close ally to balance China's growing presence in South Asia. This was especially evident during the 2017 Doklam standoff (Chengappa, 2017)[15], which underscored India's need to ensure that Bhutan remains a secure buffer zone to protect its borders and prevent Chinese influence near the strategically sensitive Siliguri Corridor (also known as the "Chicken's Neck"). Bhutan, meanwhile, faces the complex task of safeguarding its sovereignty by balancing relations with its powerful neighbours. While it values India as an essential economic and security partner, Bhutan has cautiously started exploring limited engagement with China. China's territorial aspirations and efforts to increase its diplomatic influence in Bhutan add further complexity for both nations. Thus, Bhutan must carefully navigate its alliances to maintain its sovereignty, benefit from India's support, and cautiously engage with China in ways that won't undermine its longstanding ties with India.

Points of Convergence and Divergence:

India and Bhutan enjoy strong convergence on key issues like regional security, economic growth, and sustainable development, with hydropower cooperation being a pivotal example. Bhutan's hydropower exports to India are central to its economy, while India benefits from this clean energy, exemplifying a mutually advantageous arrangement. Both countries also share concerns over security threats from China. China's territorial claims, including incursions into Indian borders like Arunachal Pradesh and encroachments on Bhutanese land, illustrate a consistent strategy aimed at diminishing India's influence in Bhutan. Since 2015, China has developed settlements like "Gyalaphug" and "Pangda" in western Bhutan, with at least four more constructed as of 2021(Vishnu, 2020)[16]. Its 2021 Land Borders Law aims to strengthen border defenses and establish more border settlements (Shivamurthy, 2022)[13], a move that pressures Bhutan and reinforces India's concerns over Chinese encroachment.

However, Bhutan's increasing desire for an independent foreign policy highlights emerging points of divergence. Bhutan's younger generation increasingly seeks a global identity beyond its traditional

ties with India, advocating for a more transparent, competitive diplomacy. Viewing India's economic assistance as self-serving, many support establishing diplomatic and economic relations with China. Bhutan's cautious engagement with China reflects a shift towards a balanced foreign policy that sometimes contrasts with India's priorities, especially concerning Chinese influence in South Asia. India's apprehension over China's activities in Bhutanese territory and potential shifts in Bhutan's foreign policy adds tension to their relationship, despite shared interests in security and economic cooperation.

Despite some areas of divergence between the two countries, Bhutan has consistently remained India's most reliable ally. There is not much possibility of Bhutan totally deviating from its friendship with India. Under Prime Minister NarendraModi's leadership, India has remained the top economic and development partner of Bhutan, reinforcing the idea of a balanced and equal partnership between the two countries. Under his leadership, the country introduced the Neighbourhood First Policy (NFP). To emphasise his dedication to this policy, Modi chose Bhutan for his initial official trip on June 15, 2014, strengthening the strong ties between the two nations (Labh, 2016:119). He referred to the bilateral ties as "B2B" (Bharat to Bhutan) relations (Stobdan, 2014:51), emphasising parity between the two neighbouring nations regardless of other asymmetrical factors. During the visit, Modi laid the groundwork for the 600 MW Kholongchu Hydroelectric Project (Padma and Mani 2017:82), aimed at broadening the scope of cooperation between the two countries. On March 21–22, 2024, Modi made his third visit to Bhutan, where he was honoured with the Order of DrukGyalpo. During this visit, both countries signed an agreement to initiate two railway projects: Kokrajhar to Gelephu and Banarhat to Samtse, aimed at enhancing connectivity and trade. India also committed to strengthening investment, trade, connectivity projects and infrastructure, particularly in the Gelephu Special Administrative Region (SAR). For Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan (FYP), India assured a provision of □100 billion, and in the 2024-25 budget, the Indian government allocated □20.68 billion for Bhutan (Laskar, 2024)[17]. These efforts underscore India's ongoing support and investment in Bhutan's development, highlighting the emphasis on parity and mutual benefit in their relationship.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the transition from monarchy to democracy in Bhutan marked a fundamental turning point in India-Bhutan relations. As Bhutan embraces democratic principles, new ideas and aspirations have also emerged, especially among the younger generation. India, as a long-standing friend of Bhutan, needs to change its approach in line with these developments. It is imperative that India addresses the negative perceptions created by its policies and actions in Bhutan as these can damage bilateral relations. India should seek to develop a balanced and beneficial economic relationship with Bhutan, moving away from traditional models of economic assistance linked to political loyalty. Instead, India should focus on building sustainable economic ties that enable Bhutan to become more self-reliant and economically resilient. This could include projects such as capacity building, local

infrastructure development and cross-border trade and investment facilitation. Moreover, India should recognise Bhutan's aspirations for greater independence and its desire to establish relations with other countries, including China. Instead of seeing Bhutan's engagement with China as a threat, India should see it as an opportunity to strengthen regional connectivity and cooperation soft-power initiatives such as educational reforms and cultural exchanges can also play an important role in enhancing India-Bhutan friendship.

At the same time, Bhutan needs to manage its relations with India carefully, keeping in mind its geopolitical responsibilities. As a small country between two powerful neighbours, Bhutan's adherence to the revised Indo-Bhutan Agreement of 2007 is key to maintaining diplomatic relations with India (Malik, 2016:133), especially in terms of security and border control. Bhutan's role in supporting India's national security, through responsible foreign policy coordination and active border vigilance, particularly along its border with China, is critical. Moreover, Bhutan's economic obligations are equally important, as India remains Bhutan's largest trading partner and a major contributor to its hydropower sector. Environmental cooperation, cultural diplomacy, and soft power initiatives, such as student exchanges and tourism, further reinforce the bonds between the two nations. And by performing these duties and responsibilities that forge ties on the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries, Bhutan ensures a stable and constructive relationship with India, essential for its security and development. Practical and realistic approaches to their growing partnership will serve Bhutan and India in navigating the challenges of changing geopolitics.

Notes:

1. Driglam Nam Za is Bhutan's traditional etiquette code, emphasizing respect for authority, family, and elders. Rooted in Buddhism, it includes specific dress codes—women wear the 'Kira', men the 'Gho'.
2. Shrestha, D. D. 2023. "Resettlement of Bhutanese Refugees Surpasses 100,000 Mark." *UNHCR India*, February 5, 2023. https://www.unhcr.org/in/news/stories/ resettlement - bhutanese-refugees-surpasses-100-000-mark.
3. Stobdan, P. 2017. "In The Tri-Junction Entanglement, What Does Bhutan Want?" South Asia Journal. July 12, 2017. https://southasiajournal.net/in-the-tri-junction-entanglement-what-does-bhutan-want/.
4. Pant H.V & A. G. Shivamurty. 2024. "The India-Bhutan Story: India Understands the Urgency and Needs of Its Neighbour." *Financial Express*, March 27, 2024. https://www.financialexpress.com/ opinion/the-india-bhutan-story-india-understands-the-urgency-and-needs-of-its-neighbou r/ 3438659/.
5. Shivamurthy A.G.2024. Bhutan elections: What is at stake for India?.ORF, Jan 22, 2024, https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/bhutan-elections-what-is-at-stake-for-india

6. *World Bank Open Data*. (n.d.). World Bank Open Data. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2020&locations=BT&start=1980&view=chart
7. Lamsang, T. 2017. Bhutan is neither a "vassal" nor a "protectorate". The Bhutanese, 20 July 2017, available at https://thebhutanese.bt/bhutan-is-neither-a-vassal-nor-a-protectorate/
8. Sahil. (2018). *The future of Indian electricity demand how much, by whom, and under what conditions*. Brooking India. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/ 2018/10/The-future-of-Indian-electricity-demand.pdf
9. Saklani, U., Alinea International, Tortajada, C. (2019). India's development cooperation in Bhutan's hydropower sector: Concerns and public perceptions. *Water Alternatives*, 734–759. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333731868
10. Dechen. (2022, June 28). NC asks govt to expedite decision on delayed hydropower projects. *KUENSEL*. https://kuenselonline.com/nc-asks-govt-to-expedite-decision-on-delayed-hydropower-projects/
11. Bisht M. 2011. India-Bhutan Power Cooperation: Between Policy Overtures and Local Debates, IDSA, October 7, 2011, available at https://bit.ly/3LgOmwR, accessed on 02.09.2022
12. Guj exports to Bhutan surge by 52% in 5 yrs. (2024, July 23). *Ahmedabad Mirror*. https://www.ahmedabadmirror.com/guj-exports-to-bhutan-surge-by-52-in-5-yrs/81872318.html
13. Shivamurthy A.G.2022. The Changing Contours of Bhutan's Foreign Policy and the Implications for China and India, https://shorturl.at/L5HFK
14. Rebel A. Cole and S. Carrington. (2016). An Assessment of Financial Sector Development in Bhutan. Asian Development Bank. Available at
15. Chengappa, R. (2017, July 7). India-China standoff: All you need to know about Doklam dispute. *India Today*. https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20170717-india-china-bhutan-border-dispute-doklam-beijing-siliguri-corridor-1022690-2017-07-07
16. Vishnu. (2020, November 11). Bhutan's Denial Of China Incursion Is "Blatant Untruth": Global Observers. https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/bhutan-denies-chinese-incursion-blatant-untruth-say-global-observers-2328012
17. Laskar, Rezaul H. 2024. "Modi announces □10k croresupport for Bhutan over next 5 years." *Hindustan Times*, March 22, 2024.https://shorturl.at/KUz7q

References:

- Bisht, M. 2010. "*Bhutan: Internal Developments and External Engagements"*, in IDSA country Brief, January 2010, Pp. 1-36, https://idsa.in/countrybrief/bhutan
- Chakrabarty, M. and S. Saha, 2015. *India-Bhutan Relations: A Survey*, in World Focus, August,

2015, Pp. 21-28

- Chakraborty, P. Chatterjee 2023. 'Re-examining India-Bhutan Relations: From Guardian to Consultation from the Prism of India's Neighbourhood Policy', *World Focus,* September 2023, Pp. 5-16
- Chandra, V. 2015. "*India and South Asia Exploring Regional Perceptions"*,(Eds.), Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2015
- Gallenkamp, M., T 2010**.** "*Democracy in Bhutan: An Analysis of Constitutional Change in a Buddhist Monarchy*", IPCS, **P**p.1-19, https://www.files. ethz.ch/ isn/ 113886/RP24-Marian-Bhutan.pdf
- Ghosh, P.2010. Bhutanese Refugees A Forgotten Saga, Minerva Associates (Publications), July 2010.
- Hussain, W. 2007. "India and the Upcoming Democracy", *Himal Southasian*, vol. 20, No. 5, May 2007
- Joseph, C.M. 2006. Political Transition in Bhutan, *EPW*, Vol. 41, No. 14, pp. 1311-1313, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4418044
- Kohali, M. 1982. *India and Bhutan: A Study in Interdependence, 1772-1910*, New Delhi.
- Labh, k. 1974. *India and Bhutan*, New Delhi, Sindu Publications Ltd
- Labh, K. 2016. *Foreign Policy of Bhutan*, Kalpaz Publication, New Delhi
- Malik, A. H. 2016. 'Bhutan's Transition from Absolute Monarchy to Constitutional Monarchy: An Analytical Perspective of Current Indo-Bhutan Relationship', *World Focus*, Pp.132-136
- Mitra, D. 2010. *Indo-Bhutan Relations: Political Process, Conflict and Crisis.* New Delhi, Academic Excellence.
- Muni, S. D. 1984. 'Bhutan Steps Out', *The world Today.* London, vol. 40, no. 12, Pp. 514-520, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40395575
- Padma, R., and G. K. Mani. 2017. "indo-bhutanese relations: the emerging energy cooperation." *Asia Pacific Journal of Research*, December, Pp. 81–84. https://web.archive.org/web/20180422063029id_/http://www.apjor.com/downloads/1412201713.pdf
- Pal S. 2022. 'Indo-Bhutan Hydropower Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges', *World Focus,* October, 2022, pp-84-88
- Pal S. 2022a. *Indo-Bhutan Relations: In the Twenty First Century*, New Delhi, Kunal Books
- Pal S. 2024. 'Indo-Bhutan Economic Partnership: Lessons and Best Practices', *World Focus,* September, 2024, PP-46-52
- Ram, M. 1980. 'Bhutan: Keeping a neighbour in Line'. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* Hongkong, 30 May 1980, Pp.32-35

- Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan. (2016). *Annual Report 2016/17.* https://www.rma.org.bt/bank/RMA%20Publication/Annual%20Report/annual%20report%20%202016-2017.pdf
- Sinha, A.C.2002. *Himalayan Kingdom Bhutan: tradition, Transition and Transformation*, Indus Publishing House
- Stobdan, P. 2014. "India and Bhutan: The Strategic Imperative." *IDSA Occasional Paper No. 36. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.* https://www.idsa.in/ system/ files/ opaper/ OP IndiaandBhutan_pstobdan.pdf

Table-I

Five-Year Plan (FYP) Plan- Wise Allocations of Bhutan and India's Contribution:

YEAR/PLANS	**TOTAL ALLOTMENT** (in Rs.million)	**INDIA'S CONTRIBUTON** (in Rs.million)	**INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION (%)**
1961-1966 (1st plan)	107.2	107.2	100%
1966-1971 (2nd plan)	202.2	202.2	100%
1971-1976 (3rd plan)	475.2	426.6	90%
1976-1981 (4th plan)	1106.2	853.0	77%
1981-1987 (5th plan)	4440.5	1340.0	30.2%
1987-1992 (6th plan)	9500.0	4000.0	42.1%
1992-1997 (7th plan)	23500.0	7500.0	31.9%
1997-2002(8th plan)	40000.0	10500.0	26%
2002-2008 (9th plan)	89000.0	26100.0	29.33%
2008-20 13 (10th plan)	149000.0	34000.0	23%
2013-2018 (11th plan)	213000.0	45000.0	21%
2018-2023 (12th plan)	310000.0	45000.0	14.52%

Source: Annual Reports (From 1st to 12th), Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India &K.uensel Online.com, accessed on March 8, 2024

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Naba Barrackpur Prafulla Chandra Mahavidyalaya
Email: sanjitpal76@gmail.com

Envisioning an Empowered Dalit Future: Resistance, Acceptance, and Liberation through Selected Works of Bengali Dalit Writers

Mohana Das[1] & Madhurima Mukhopadhyay[2]

Abstract

Dalit literature means literature written by the Dalit and normally presents Dalits' oppression, hope, and agency. This paper explores the narratives of liberation and resistance in Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* and Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit*. Dalit literature has therefore become one of the best ways through which people at the peripheries of Indian society can express their plight. Two compelling works provide a candid view of the abuses suffered by the Dalits andgive the reader a glimpse of the author's upward mobility from the state of pauperism to being a well-known writer and Dalit rights activist. Both together present a rich analysis of the themes of survival, survival, and the search for dignity. Looking through these works, it is possible to recognize the function of Dalit art as a means to protest against the conventional caste system and raise visions for the society that is completely just known as 'Dalit-Futurism'.

Keywords: *Dalit-futurism, autobiography, subjectivity, objectivity, memoir, resistance, liberation, acceptance, activism, education.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Dalit literature has invariably evolved as a potent tool in rendering the experiences of the oppressed Indian society. Among them are two types of texts, the first one is *Mother of 1084* (1974) by Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016) and the second one is *Interrogating My Chandal Life* (2008) by Manoranjan Byapari (1965-present), which depicts the harsh realities of Dalits while allowing them to elevate to a state of freedom. The political crisis of the Naxalite revolt through the figure of a mother who has lost her revolutionary son, and thereby suffers from structural violence is artistically presented by Devi. Conversely, Byapari's autobiographical work offers a stark depiction of Dalits' conditions; the story of his life transforming from illiteracy and extreme poverty to a recognized writer and social activist. Taken together, the stories presented in the work enable the viewers to experience the themes of rebellion, survival, and the search for respect. Analyzing the following works, it is possible to define how the representation of Dalit identities subverts the seemingly fixed caste system and aims at

picturing a future where caste oppression will not exist.

> "Was there anything in the way she had brought up Brati that had made him into number 1084 in the decade that headed towards liberation?
>
> (Devi, 2008, p. 14)

Mother of 1084 (translated by Samik Bandyopadhyay) revolves around Sujata after the death of her son, Brati; and adjusted substantially to the socio-political ethos of caste supremacy (Banerjee, 2024). This transition from mourning to advocating against oppression is one of the movie's major themes of resilience. *Interrogating My Chandal Life* (translated by Sipra Mukherjee, 2018) describes the author's journey from a life of extreme poverty to the beginning of his writing career as well as his powerful struggle against caste oppression.

Due to the oppressive establishment of such cultures in different societies, Dalit literature offers a voice to the oppressed group of people. Whereas Devi's novel gives an account of the socio-political changes in the form of a mother's struggle with her son who is actively fighting against injustice; Byapari's autobiography gives the reader a first-hand and personal experience of the change from being oppressed to becoming active in fights against oppression. These stories not only give testimony to the present-day caste discrimination system but also hold the possibility of change, in a non-segregated India. Listening to the testimonies of the women and men of the Dalit folks, it is possible to comprehend their ability to fight and struggle.

This study aims at analyzing how personal and social story telling offer possibilities of imagining altered social reality. In positioning these works within the context of Dalit Futurism, and by engaging the thinking of subaltern studies as well as trauma theory, the paper's aim underscores the tension between imperialism, disenfranchisement, and emancipation. This approach also highlights the socio-political significance of these texts and positioned them as some of the most important contribution to international discourses on marginalization and Empowerment.

1.2 **Research question**

How do Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Bypari deconstruct caste oppression through the distinct narratives and what strategies do they employ to envision empowered futures of Dalits?

1.3 **Rationale**

Critically analyzing the works of Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Byapari can be useful for getting a better comprehension of the discriminated societies in India, focusing on Dalits. Analyzing their narratives, it becomes possible to analyze how literature can also represent a powerful agent of change within societies. Regarding the methodology, since this research will focus on analyzing primary texts by Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Byapari, this piece of work will take a qualitative approach

with a focus on textual analysis. It will apply thematic analysis to determine the various and multiple strategies employed by Devi and Byapari in depicting an empowered future for Dalit's foresight, stories' narration, character development, and the most essential part of the text, the themes of resistance and resilience.

1.4 **Scope and Relevance**

Concerning the significance of this study, it is about the possible outcomes of this work – this research can contribute to the contemporary discourses of caste and social justice. Thus, by analyzing the stories of Devi and Byapari the research will reveal the possibilities of using literature as the mirror of the society that at the same time can empower and reconsider the conventional power structures. This paper aims to enrich the existing knowledge of Dalit literature and how it may be utilized in the desire and fight for change both in theory and practice. Thus, the findings will be useful to scholars investigating postcolonial and caste issues and activists and policymakers striving for the promotion of social justice and equality.

2. Liberating narratives: Subjective and objective experience

The chosen notion of liberation in literature inter relates the subjective and the objective perspectives to provide an all-encompassing picture of the characters' path to becoming anew, to emancipation from oppression. Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* and Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life* are excellent examples where the subjective rendering of individual life cooperates with the objective knowledge of people's misery. Mother of 1084 focuses on the individual tragedy of a mother, Sujata who suffers the loss of her son Brati to state terrorism. She remains a grieving, confused, and gradually politically enlightened mother schooled by socio-political processes that cost her son (Philip, 2018) *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, a personal memoir integration narrates his experiences of fighting caste prejudice and poverty in his own life. He is fighting for dignity and to survive as a subjective sphere (Das, 2023).Thus, the main characters' dilemmas and extramural realities presented by the two authors raise the question of the possibility of education and activism to fetch justice. One cannot help but remember the meaning of their works as calls to resist the oppressive systems and fight for justice.

Comparing the two texts is rather valuable for understanding how the phenomenon of subjectivity contributes to movements against oppression. Thus, combining Sujata's personal tragedy in *Mother of 1084* with the firsthand experience of caste persecution in *Interrogating My Chandal Life* these stories build a complex view at systemic subjugation. Both the novels don't depict the resistance as the confrontation to power structure, but as a process towards possibility of imaging a world that is fair and just. Their interlinkages offer a unique experience of individual and group resilience thus depicting the kind of change embodied in Dalit narratives.

2.1 Subjective experience

Social justice and equality are a major theme in literature published in today's world. Be it poetry, play, comedy, or short story, an important role in portraying resistance and resilience, which are the possible topics for studying the opportunities of the oppressed communities (Sreelekshmi, 2021). These texts provide an excellent look into the marginalized subjugated people in society who continue to fight for their freedom as they imagine a life different from the one they are living.

> "…Or was there something that she could have done, or not done, to make him number 1084?"
>
> (Devi, 2010, p. 15)

The lines assert in the context of the Naxalite Rebellion in India by relating the subject of a woman whose son becomes a victim of political violence. Where Devi's narrative advocates for the search for justice, it also shows how the socio-political circumstances that breed such tragedies influence the nature of resistance movements and their effects on the victims (Chakraborty, 2019). Also, *in Interrogating My Chandal Life*, Byapari fills the gap in life writing by presenting the Dalit's life's realities and the problems of cast dominance, identity, and survival. The novel also provides a personal perspective of the hardship that people belonging to the Dalit caste go through but at the same time, they are depicted as struggling warriors (Das, 2023).

> "I was born into an impoverished Dalit family in a place called Turuk-Khali near the village of Pirichpur which used to be a part of…"
>
> (Byapari, 2018, p.1)

Thus, *Interrogating my Chandal* Life like Byapari's *There's Gunpowder in Air* also raises the general theme of the Dalit people as another socially oppressed population that continues to endure and uphold its integrity amid adversity. Similarly, the *Mother of 1084* vividly depicts such oppressed groups as the Naxalites who continue to fight despite their being suppressed and losing their dear ones (Philip, 2018).Thus, the caste-based resistance from Devi's narration emerges that the Dalits are in the process of demanding justice and transformation against the hegemonic caste oppression, wherein they struggle to subvert numerous cultural eye patches and orthodoxies. Also, it successfully highlights cultural resistance touched upon when addressing the issues of the cultural and social identity of Dalits whose rights, beliefs, and values are violated by the upper castes (Meghwal, 2018). It holds, political resistance. Thus, the Naxalite movement is at the core of the novel representing rebellion against the repressive state power and social injustice. Nevertheless, there is one more aspect manifested in the person of the protagonist – the personal fight against the political and social injustice that has claimed her son's life. Despite her process of grieving and her longing for justice in the film, the audience can identify and appreciate the mother's emotional strength of women who struggle with systemic

injustice. While *Mother of 1084* presents political and personal resistance, *Interrogating My Chandal Life* emphasizes the resistance based on caste and cultural fields. Analyzing the presence of the scope of this work, resilience allows us to understand how the people or the communities can adapt and develop based on the negative experiences.

2.2 Collective experience

By looking at the emotional and social resilience profiled in *Mother of 1084* with the personal and collective resilience in *Interrogating My Chandal Life,* the different ways in which marginalized populations manage everyday and extraordinary adversities will emerge (Byapari, 2023). For example, how and in what way do Devi and Byapari employ their accounts to raise awareness about and challenge all manners of institutional oppression while at the same time not detracting from stories of ambition and resilience of the oppressed?

To answer this, in *Mother of 1084* one witnesses resistance to colonial legacy.The Naxalite movement in the novel can be viewed as a struggle against colonialism and its postcolonial prolongation, the state failure. The represented mother and her son's participation is significant as they represent social rebellion against the state repression and colonialism's impact (Chakraborty, 2019). Moreover, the depiction of the Naxalites' rebellion against the violent suppression of the state corresponds to the struggle against historical and modern imperialism and oppression. While analyzing the autobiography written by Byapari, it is possible to trace the postcolonial approach by focusing on the problem of the caste system descended from colonialism and the ways Dalits fight it. It is, therefore, about Byapari's exclusion and his struggle to gain acceptance, where the uncared social structure that colonialism imposed continuous prejudice castes.

Thus, it is hoped that from this undertaking, the 'subaltern idea' may give a clear perspective of how resistance and resilience are constructed in these literary texts, and how they inform the conception of Dalit Futurism that disrupts the existing paradigm for the subjugated groups. For example, post-colonialism which has been enunciated by scholars like Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is based on subaltern studies that deal with the discursive histories of the subaltern who are mentally and socially dominated by the elite. It explores how all these categories of people fight social oppression and self-ownership (Bhagwat and Arekar, 2018). Also, Dalit-futurism directly addresses the future from the viewpoint of the Dalit social category, and sometimes even from the perspective of its dreams, thus redefining or at least complicating the hegemonic historical timeline (Jamdhade, 2014): '*Yet, there being no dearth of tenderness in their hearts, they would set aside a handful of rice from their meals for my mother'* (Byapari, 2018, p.1). Subaltern Studies helps to understand how the Dalits challenge oppression and how their story elaborates on a different future. For example, Devi places the Naxalite movement and the mother's resistance under the category of subalternism against the state power. This complements Dalit Futurism in that it points out how subjugated persons struggle

and create a hopeful future in the face of oppression. In this manner, Byapari's textual account offers an important subaltern voice on caste suppression. This could be explained to an extent by how he illustrates and breaks away from dominant caste thinking and presents a Dalit perspective on the future.

3. Interrogating Self: Vision of Empowerment and Liberation

In a literary sense, the character of the mother evolves from *Mother of 1084* as a woman who is born into a wealthy family and therefore, does not understand certain sociopolitical structures and injustices that exist around her. Finally, Brati dies and she starts to realize her suffering and her condition as an oppressed woman in the existing society (Meghwal, 2018). The very idea of being a non-Dalit is a way of critically reflecting, learning, speaking in support of, and being responsible for, conducting self-interrogation. While analyzing the genres as a Non-DalitI can actively engage in the fight for social justice. This journey, in the given narratives of *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life,* brings out the process of awareness and action to strive for emancipation on the part of both men and women. Thus, Subaltern Studies become instrumental in the cognition of Dalits' agency and defiance against marginalization, therefore supporting a notion of the future that is centered around Dalits (Dash, 2023). It allows me to think about one's attitudes and possible actions that might contribute to the maintenance of the caste system. This refers to prejudice, assumptions, and other practices that subordinate Dalits in their day-to-day encounters.

3.1 Vision of Empowerment

To hold a future that seeks Dalit's fortune on equality, acceptance, and better opportunities, *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Manoranjan Byapari and *Mother of 1084* by Mahasweta Devi act as visions of empowerment. The works act as a sign of resistance against the structured oppression and their longing for the casteless and politically enlightened future: *"I have been a witness to those dark days in the decade of the seventies when people rose in revolt against them and helped establish a new rule"*(Byapari, 2018, p.80). The two narratives set out essentially different methods of attaining equality and it would be interesting to ponder inherently from a liberal perspective of the writing.

Thus, Byapari's memoir reveals the qualities, pains, and bleedings of a Dalit's narration, which focuses on the personal and collective fight against the organization of casteism. A vision of freedom in Byapari's text is based on the assertion of Dalit identity and, consequently, search for social-economic emancipation. For example, a dignified right to an educated and socio-economically empowered self. The relation of education is portrayed not only in the context of individual advancement but as a process antithetical to the doctrine of untouchability. The main character Byapari himself comes out of the oppression of caste hegemony through education, depicting an emancipation approach. Therefore, Byapari strongly favors the cultural transformation in terms of Dalits' perception by the upper caste.

In his narrative, therefore, the key messages call for structural transformation of the social-mental environment and making space for Dalits to socially ascend from the socio-economic status that they are confined to because of their caste: *'It had made me see my pain about that of the entire community'* (Byapari, 2018, p. 95). Thus, the memoir fosters the notion of collective pragmatic and exerted effort on the part of the population and the society in particular as well as policy changes.

On the other hand, while Sujata shows physical freedom which is an aspiration of Western women, Mahasweta Devi's novel illustrates a kind of freedom in a different political context of the Naxalite movement. The problem of the novel about its vision is even more closely related to politics political activism and the struggle against state violence. Digesting Devi's account of the events and actions of the characters as well as her reflections on her own story, provides the audience with an idea of how political activism and rebellion can bring about change (Vats and Bakhshi, 2016). The empowerment that is depicted in the novel is very much correlated with collective political action and the fight against state terrorism. The mother's agency can therefore be understood as originating in her participation in the struggle for justice for her son and other individuals who have been subjugated by the regime (Nigam, and Roy, 2014):

> 'Why did it never strike her that when a son became a stranger to his mother, and they lost touch with each other even while they lived under the same roof, there could be a threat growing from it?'
>
> (Devi, 2008, pp. 16)

The main struggle the mother performs is an attempt to achieve justice, which is translated into the theme of the possibility of collective action. The aspect of her empowerment can be seen in a woman's capacity to challenge an oppressive state even after the loss of their son (Vats and Bakhshi, 2016). Thus, in Devi's novel, change and the fight for social justice are portrayed as a product of political movements and activism. Thus, the tactic used by Naxalites is the fight against the state's repressive institutions and the representation of the rights of the victims: '*All that Brati could have been charged with was that he had lost faith in the social system itself'* (Devi, 2008, p.17). Calling for transformation on the structural level, the novel points to the need for people's actions and individual and collective actions against oppression perpetuated by the political and social systems. Through the mother's fight, the theme of political struggle for the abolishment of oppression is established in the novel. The attempts to call for justice by the repeated story of her son and other activists are indeed a critique of state violence on oppressed groups, as narrated in the novel.

Thus, both texts depict hope for a world of no suppression, but with various means of getting there. Byapari's goal is grounded in the idea of individual and communal socio-economic emancipation through the process of education as well as bringing about a structural alteration in the perception of Dalit subjectivity. On the same note, political activism and the fight against State repression as depicted in Devi's narrative are core components of procuring social justice. Therefore, *Interrogating*

My Chandal Life has shown a hopeful future in socio-economic transformation and education, whereas, *Mother of 1084* focused on the fight for political power which will triumph over state tyranny. Both works help promote further discussions on social justice, as they depict different views towards deliverance from caste-related and political oppression.

3.2 Vision of Liberation

Mahasweta Devi's novel *Mother of 1084* and Manoranjan Byapari's autobiography *Interrogating My Chandal Life* are two aesthetic texts that depict how the mechanism of contestation and survival coexists in the context of the subordinate group. Devi's novel depicts the turmoil and the political-social intervention prevalent in Naxalite times to portray the pain expressed by a mother's killing of her son turned into political violence (Dahiya, 2017). The autobiography can be perceived as a political novel of the postcolonial context set in the background of the Indian liberalization process. Byapari's autobiography can be viewed as an ethnographic representation of one Dalit's life full of poverty and caste discrimination. The events in both prove the significance of systemic oppression while at the same time showing an audience how protagonists struggle and cope with such adversity (Crenshaw, 2013). Similarly, known as Intersectionality, it was named by Kimberlé Crenshaw when she looked at how different types of oppression fold together like race, class, and gender. It underlines the fact that othering processes are a result of an individual's combined social categorizations (Cho et al., 2013).

The concept of freedom described in these texts is not merely a politics of becoming for the self, but a politics of becoming for all. In the story, through Sujata's transformation Mahasweta Devi was able to show how individual suffering can be used as a lever for national politics. Likewise, Byapari's narrative also reveals the matrix of casting class, poverty and literate and unravel educated consciousness to bring change. As such, Dalit Futurism could be used to think of futures that are free of caste, gender, and class oppressions. Intersectionality gives a lens on how these multiple identities are formed and how they influence experiences and resistances. For example, one can decode how the gender and the political situation influenced the mother's grieving and resisting processes. This is to how political struggles affect Dalit and marginalized women's lives at the grassroots level: 'She had heard that Brati and his friends wrote their slogans on paper first, before writing them on the walls' (Devi, 2008, p. 18). In *Interrogating My Chandal Life,* Byapari aptly describes the intersections of caste with poverty and gender that she has gone through. These intersections assist in pointing out how the Dalit people's resilience and resistance are influenced by several forms of prejudice: '*Great souls have endeavored tirelessly to bring man to this realization and liberation for thousands of years'* (Byapari, 2018, p.60). To break the prejudice and stereotypes of the time comes a recall of trauma and a break from internal fear.

Also, trauma is an integral aspect of the narratives. Trauma Theory aims to investigate trauma effects at the psychological and social level and the processes of traumatized individuals and

communities including their resistance. It explores how trauma is manifested in terms of identity, behavior, and ways of operating resistance (Quiros, et al., 2020). In this case, Dalit Futurism is mostly about speaking about and dealing with the impacts of caste cruelty but also about creating new and better worlds beyond these ordeals. Trauma Theory offers an understanding of the mechanisms and experiences of minority populations in dealing with and fighting back against their past and current oppression. For example, *Mother of 1084* can be analyzed using the concepts of Trauma Theory since it presents the mother as a traumatized character who resists: *'The question that followed his death was whether by killing him the authorities had been able to destroy the burning faith in faithlessness that Brati and his compatriots had stood for'* (Devi, 2008, p.20). It gives an insight into the correlation between an individual's traumatic experiences and political activism and firmness. In *Interrogating My Chandal Life* Byapari's mentioned experience of affective events like caste-violence and poverty exemplifies the generality of trauma on Dalit subjectivity as well as its organizational fight. Thus, his narrative demonstrates that resilience is constructed through adversities and the process of coping with and recovering from a traumatized state: "*I have got over that. And no sense in grieving over it because nobody is going to hand you a plateful of rice because you're going hungry'* (Byapari, 2018, p. 59).

Therefore, Dalit futurism envisions the future as something that goes beyond the trend of oppression that has been punishable to the Dalit people. They help explain how Dalit subjects challenge oppression, adapt to it, and imagine change from situations that are unfavorable to them. Inter sectionality contributes to understanding how Muslim Dalits operate for a better world and comprehending how diverse sources of injustice work together to form the experience of Dalit people. Trauma Theory taken within the context of Dalit social realities describes how trauma affects Dalit people and how hope and visions for the future are built in its wake. Through the application of these theories, subjected to the analysis of *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, one can further one's understanding of how resistance and resilience are constructed from a Dalit context and the role of these narratives in the interpretation of Dalit Futurism.

4. Autobiography and Memoir: A pathway towards education and activism

Autobiographies or memoirs are a fascinating means of education and advocacy in presenting the first-person narrative of the life of people of color. Similarly, in *Interrogating My Chandal Life,* Manoranjan Byapari has underlined the apartheid-like scenario for Dalits and the ability of education to bring a positive change. Being a Dalit boy from a village, he rose to the level of a writer and activist, which proves the role of narratives in mobilization (Byapari and Bala, 2021). Likewise, Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* creates intense emotions out of the mother's plight to also express socio-political aspects of the Naxalite movement (Dahiya, 2017). Both the analyzed texts seek to make the reader learn about systematic injustices as they encourage people to take action against injustice, demonstrating how individuals' narratives are powerful tools of social action as they change society by changing hearts.

4.1 A purging of self-interrogation through education

In *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, Byapari reveals education as the light and the condition that can help people free themselves. Born in severe poverty and suffering from caste oppression, Byapari's right to education is restricted, yet education itself becomes his only medium through which he is pulled out of suffering and oppression: "I was, in those days, the 'victim of an incomplete education'" (Byapari, 2018, p. 172). His story demonstrates a clear comprehension of how schooling can act as a tool to end the issues of poverty and caste suppression. Consequently, in the *Mother of 1084*, while education is not the focus of the work, it is still present in a rather crucial manner. Brati, a Naxalite revolutionary, is the son of Sujata an educated woman who slowly emerges out of her political abyss thanks to the death of her son, Brati. This is due to her practical education that allows her to analyze and comprehend the socio-political factors that preceded the involvement of her son in the movement. Education is another important theme portrayed in the novel about Sujata's reflective and analytical disposition: He had all his children educated. You can't do without education nowadays, do you.' (Devi, 2008, p.54). This belief is evident when she learns about her son's fights against the injustice system through his comrades. This journey of understanding provides revelation about the significance of education in increasing awareness and tolerance. This transforms readers' knowledge about the historical and present-day prejudices that these groups endure and mobilizes readers to fight such oppression.

Though the preceding discussion suggests that socio-political aspects of Bengal during the 1970s are handled by Devi in her other creations like Hajar Churashir Maa (Mother of 1084), yet, the novel primarily sensitizes the readers about the Naxalite movement. She bends the conventional historical perspective by portraying the revolutionaries and their families as people like you and I; hence making the readers appreciate their radical movements. Therefore, Byapari's autobiography can be appreciated as the author's experience of life and as a pedagogical device simultaneously (Biswas and Chakraborty, 2024). He enlightens the readers about the ordeals of the Dalit class struggle and the power of education through his life's narration. He wants people occupying the lower strata of society to strive for change by educating themselves: '*meanwhile, my education continued and I read on, stumbling over the difficult words'* (Byapari, 2018, p.212).The main character of the novel Byapari who overcomes illiteracy and rises to the level of a writer as well as an intellectual person capable of writing meaningful literature is the best example of how education can change one's life.

4. 2. Denial or Acceptance: Importance of Activism

Activism has become part and parcel of being a writer, especially for someone like Devi. Her entire existence focused on advocating for the oppressed societal groups as she used her writing as a tool of activism. The role of activism is closely interconnected with the *Mother of 1084's* storyline. For example, Brati as a character engaged in the Naxalite movement can be seen as the resistance to the oppression of the state and the violence committed by it. The passionate activist, and above all, the

martyr, becomes a model for Sujata's change from a subservient little woman into a vengeful huntress of justice: '*I set an apolitical mother's quest to know her martyred Naxalite sin, to know what he stood for; for she had not known the true Brati ever…'* (Devi, 2008, p. xii). Also, Sujata is a great example of how activism can be life-changing. While discovering the truth about her son's life and his death, the woman actively engages in the political process that he advocates for. This participation is the transition between mourning the death of a son to taking a stand for the death of many, thus showing how activism helps people to stand up for themselves.

In *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, social activism is evident in Byapari's works as he does not relent in fighting for social issues, especially through writing and politics. This account records his participation in several social struggles and his passion for Dalit liberation (Singh, 2021). For example, the transformation of Byapari from a manual worker to a writer reflecting the catastrophe of oppression points to the libido of an activist. Literary activism such as the Naxalite uprising, the latter part of his engagement shows his fight against caste oppression*: 'But for any man leaving the freedom of the world to enter imprisonment without his tears is rare'* (Byapari, 2018, p. 195).The activism rising through his narrative is thoroughly interwoven with Byapari's text. Besides, his works are not only a testimony to his psychological issues but also an appeal to protest against injustice. Issues of caste remembrance and oppression are crucial to Byapari's literary and activism career in general, especially given that he is an ardent Dalit rights supporter. This is especially so since Byapari's interaction with Dalit literature and his attempts to mainstream this subaltern literature can be said to be an activist venture (Biswas and Chakraborty, 2024). The texts dispute the dominant discourses and propose the social justice values organization of communities.

These books present more than mere life histories; they are education and advocacy in *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Byapari. In Byapari's life narrative, education turn into a cultural rallying call for liberty from the shackles of caste oppression even when education is attained in antagonistic circumstances. In like manner, a story of loss and survival comparable to that depicted in Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* can mobilise people. Such texts recall readers' attention to the fact that social activism and education as processes are far from being mere individual projects; they are, in fact, an inherent part of the process of social change. It is for this reason that in the two novels under study; *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life*; education and activism are depicted as the main driving forces toward transformation and liberation. They employ the technique of raising awareness about the systematic oppression of specific groups and mobilizing the reader towards activism. They use their characters' transformations and also their participation as activist writers to convey the message of change brought by education and activism in the field of social justice. Their creative production remains a painful appeal for change and struggle against oppression and for a better world: '*Get rid of useless thoughts. Try to think of how you can have a more or less decent life here'* (Byapari, 2018, p.197).

5. Conclusion

The objective facet of these narratives is thereby uncovered when juxtaposing *Mother of 1084* by Mahasweta Devi and *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Manoranjan Byapari to reveal the process of positive transformation due to education and activism. Additionally, the research methodology included a qualitative analysis that provided the grounds for the closest attention to the themes, narrative patterns, and socio-political realities depicted in each of the works. Secondary source materials such as scholarly articles and critiques were also used to supplement the information gathered from the authors' works to present a detailed analysis of the authors' works and contribution to the Dalit literature and activism. Thus, by conducting textual analysis, the research aims to define some elements that show how both Devi and Byapari respond to caste oppression and imagine the possibilities of Dalit liberation. Thus, such a methodology allowed for obtaining a detailed understanding of the presented narratives and the strategies chosen by the authors, as well as underlining their relevance to the scope of social justice and literary activism.

While both texts depict the importance of life's odyssey that aims at achieving personal identity and power, the main characters' endeavors for collective emancipation demonstrate how mourning, prejudice, and fighting for one's rights can be translated into fighting for society's rights. In the above narratives, the writer seeks to address what the society and the regime denied them by joining socio-political movements and fighting for their rights. Thus, the knowledge of the targeted communities' historical and present situation shared by Devi and Byapari is complemented by motivating readers to change the existing oppressive paradigm and encouraging them to engage in social justice work. By narrating their individual experiences and struggles, both authors express their desire for a fairer society thereby illustrating that individual freedom can only be achieved if social injustice is counteracted.

Mother of1084 successfully shows how Devi breaks down the caste system through the juxtaposition of the loss of her child and a fight against social injustice. Thus, Sujata unmasks state power and the subjugation of the weak all these are depicted in the novel through Sujata's transformation. Thus, Devi uses her protagonist and her struggle which has its political reflection, and this underlines that personal suffering is linked to political suffering. On the other hand, Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life* stands out as an autobiographical account. Byapari's own victim's account of discrimination, poor livelihood, and hard work brings into perspective the trends of marginalization affecting Dalits. His narrative mechanism is underlined by a sort of realist representation of life that depends on both education as well as self-education. The story of Byapari – a boy from a downtrodden Dalit family, becoming a writer and activist is a testimony that education and activism can change the status quo. Speaking autobiographically his simple but powerful true-life narrative of how he struggled and fought against the oppressive caste system needs to be told.

Both the texts from India – Mother of 1084 by Mahasweta Devi and Interrogating My Chandal Life by Manoranjan Byapari speak for the importance of literature to help reflect on society and

contribute to social change. In so doing these works enlighten us on the enduring evils of caste and state which the two works and authors explain through political activism and personal ordeal. Through the character of Sujata, Devi shows how personal loss could inspire political awakening. In the same way, Byapari's memoir path of knowledge and self-awakening is a potent tool to break the circles of structures of oppression. Together, these texts help envision a future free of the shackles of caste discrimination which is briefly summed up by the idea of 'Dalit Futurism.' By presenting the concept of personal strength alongside the idea of collective action, they offer a plan of liberation that shakes the existing order and provides a new, more just, world. Finally, this research reaffirms the timeliness of Dalit literary works to wage advocacy and to make the readers feel and act against injustice. Thus, Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Byapari present Dalits' oppression at the hands of the upper castes and empower them through the voices dominating the majority of the narratives, education, activism, and inspirational storytelling employed by the two authors.

By anchoring personal pain and social dreams, *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life* demonstrate how Dalit literature can change people's lives. The stories of oppression already present are also stories of a future defined by the struggle for change, learning, and action. These texts push readers an important task of engaging with systematized injustice and envisioning justice and thus confirm the status of said volumes as these interventions belong to Dalit Futurism. Thus, both works indicate that the message and role of literature when as social vision and empowering mechanism are timeless.

References

- Banerjee, S. 2024. 'Forms of Translation, Translation of Forms: From Gorky's Mother to Mahasweta Devi's Mother of 1084'. *Comparative literature studies*, 61(2), pp.306-334.https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.61.2.0306
- Bhagwat, H. and Arekar, M., 2018. *On the Margins: TheorisingSpivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?"*. Ars Atrium, 6, pp.38-44. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/55502272/Ars_Artium_2018-libre.pdf?1515603348=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DArs_Artium_Vol_6_January_2018_Guest_Edit.pdf&Expires=1721933576&Signature
- Biswas, P. and Chakraborty, A. S., 2024. 'Synchronizing the Dalan, Chandal Aesthetics and Namashudrayan in Manoranjan Byapari's Autobiography Interrogating My Chandal Life'. *South Asian Review*, 45(1-2), pp.105-125.https://doi.org/10.1080/02759527.2023.2277967
- Byapari, M. and Bala, M., 2021. *Dalit Writing in Bangla. Subalternities in India and Latin America: Dalit Autobiographies and the Testimonio*.https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=p_kvEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT171
- Byapari, M. 2023. 'Interrogating My Chandal Life'. *Voices of Interdisciplinary Critical*

Explorations, 13(1), p.191. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/109282271/Voice_June_2023-libre.pdf?1703055889=&response-content disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DVoices_Voices_of_Interdisciplinary_Criti.pdf

- Chakraborty, A., 2019. 'Trauma and Transformation: An Exploration of Mahasweta Devi's Mother of 1084 through the Lens of Trauma Theory'. *MIDDLE FLIGHT,* p.86. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Durgesh-Ravande/publication/375893292
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K.W. and McCall, L., 2013. 'Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis'. Signs: *Journal of women in culture and society*, 38(4), pp.785-810.https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/669608
- Crenshaw, K.W., 2013. Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *In The public nature of private violence* (pp. 93-118). Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203060902-6/mapping-margins-intersectionality-identity-politics-violence-women-color-kimberl%C3%A9-williams-crenshaw
- Dahiya, S.K., 2017. Voice of a Mother's Protest in Mahasweta Devi's "Mother of 1084". *Universal Research Reports*, 4(4), pp.49-51. https://urr.shodhsagar.com/index.php/j/article/view/158
- Das, D., 2023. *Problematizing the Hegemonic Conceptualization of Refugeehood in West Bengal: A Study of ManoranjanByapari's Interrogating My Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit* .http://inet.vidyasagar.ac.in:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/6786
- Dash, S. 2023. *Dalit Subjectivity in the Post-Independent Dystopian Indian Society: A Study of Selected Dalit Writings in English Translation* .http://inet.vidyasagar.ac.in:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/6766
- Devi, M. 2008. *Mother of 1084.* Translated by Samik Banerjee. Seagull Books.
- Devi, M. 1997. *Hajar ChurashirMaa* (Mother of 1084). 1974.
- Jamdhade, D.S., 2014. 'The Subaltern Writings in India: An Overview of Dalit Literature'. *The Criterion-An International Journal in English,* 5(3).https://www.the-criterion.com/V5/n3/Dipak.pdf
- Meghwal, S. 2018. Mother identity in Mahasweta Devi's 'Mother of 1084'and Maxim Gorky's 'Mother': A comparative study. *CRITIC,* p.251. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sonu-Saini3/publication/336836056_Journal_of_Centre_of_Russian_Studies_Critic_Special_Issue-no_15/links/5db562e84585155e270759b3/Journal-of-Centre-of-Russian-Studies-Critic-Special-Issue-no-15.pdf#page=269
- Nigam, Y.K. and Roy, V.K., 2014. 'Neo Dalitism: A New Approach to Dalit Literature'. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Studies,* 3(8), pp.262-269.https://www.researchgate.net/profile/

Vijay-Roy/publication/283915119_Neo_Dalitism_A_New_Approach_To_Dalit_Literature

- Philip, C. T., 2018. 'Mahasweta Devi's Mother of 1084: A Subaltern Reading'. *Journal of English, 6(S1), pp.84-85*.https://shanlax.com/wp-content/uploads/SIJ_ENG_Sep2018_V6_N1_023.pdf
- Quiros, L., Varghese, R. and Vanidestine, T. 2020. 'Disrupting the single story: Challenging dominant trauma narratives through a critical race lens'. *Traumatology,* 26(2), p.160.https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2019-57837-001
- Singh, A. 2021. Other ways of being: Development, difference, and dissent in *Assata Shakur and Manoranjan Byapari's autobiographies.* McGill University (Canada).https://www.proquest.com/openview/b04d74d1c429eaf419381852a09b4ec4/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y
- Sreelekshmi, M. 2021. 'Post-partition Trauma, Social Isolation and Double Marginalisation of East Bengali Dalit Refugees in Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life'. A Peer-Reviewed Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* UGC-CARE listed vide Sl. No. 168, Gr. D, p.47. http://www.rockpebblesindia.in/pdf/December-2021-Vol-XXV-No-IV.pdf#page=49
- Vats, V. and Bakhshi, J. C., 2016. Psychological Crisis of Mother in Mahesweta Devi's Mother of 1084. 21-27. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/47559938/4084-libre.pdf?1469621178=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DPsychological_Crisis_of_Mother_in_Mahesw.pdf&Expires=1721932073&Signature

Bio Profile of the Author:

Research Scholar,
Amity Institute of English Studies and Research
Amity University Kolkata
Email: dasmohana07@gmail.com
&
Assistant Professor II
Amity Institute of English Studies and Research
Amity University Kolkata
Email: mmukhopadhyay1@kol.amity.edu

Strength in Solidarity: Exploring Women's Empowerment in Khaled Hosseini's "A Thousand Splendid Suns"

K. Jaya

Abstract

Women have historically been regarded as inferior, insignificant, and minority citizens. This has been built by societal conventions that have traditionally pushed women to the centre of debates. Women have been purposefully suppressed to the point where their lives have become terrible in the so-called patriarchal culture. This study delves into the portrayal of women's empowerment through solidarity in Khaled Hosseini's novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The novel, set against the backdrop of Afghanistan's tumultuous history, vividly captures the struggles faced by Afghan women in an era of patriarchy. Drawing on feminist literary theory and socio-cultural analysis, this research investigates how Laila and Mariam navigate their lives, finding strength and agency through their deep bond of solidarity. Through closely examining the characters' experiences, the study explores how Laila and Mariam's relationship evolves from initial rivalry to a profound sisterhood forged by shared adversity and mutual support. This paper highlights how their collaborative efforts enable them to resist oppression, challenge gender norms, and pursue their aspirations despite the limitations imposed upon them.

Keywords: *Women Empowerment, Solidarity, Patriarchy, Resilience, Sisterhood, Gender Equality.*

Introduction

Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan-born American author, was known for his lyrical portrayals of Afghanistan. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, his second book, is set against the backdrop of over thirty years of political unrest and is based on the author's 2003 visit to Kabul, Afghanistan. His portrayal of female characters and their concerns captures the attention of many readers. In the story, two Afghan women, Laila and Mariam, demonstrate a deep love tie and find themselves connected as though they cannot live apart; as a result, they are reliant on each other. According to Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" theory, people's behaviour is influenced by five basic needs, namely physical, protection, affection, confidence and self-realisation. All five principles of need are implicit in the novelist's language tactics; specifically, the employment of signs, pictures, emblems, symbols, and tokens assists readers in unravelling different elements of the woman's personality.

Sigmund Freud's "Psychoanalytic Theory of Motivation" attempts to study the inner depth of human behaviour. Freud identified two primary motivational forces. The first is Eros, or life impulses, which is a constructive power. This is represented as the "ego drive" and "sex drive". The second is *Thanatos*, or death desires, which is a destructive force. This "death drive" embodies the concept of Nirvana. Freud's research primarily focused on neurotic individuals.

On the other hand, Maslow, a contemporary of Freud, emphasised understanding positive mental health. This distinguished him from Freud and others. Maslow considers the physiological, safety, and social needs as inadequate demands that must be satisfied before reaching the ultimate aim of "self-actualisation". "Khaled Hosseini depicts masculine power achieving their wants by abusing women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Mariam and Laila, the novel's female representative characters, illustrate the causes that push women to put up with abuse and injustice in a patriarchal culture.

"My intention was to delve into the intimate lives of two Afghan women who were grappling with hardships. As a writer and an Afghan, I found no narrative more captivating, significant, or compelling than the plight of women in my homeland" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 409)

Viewing Mariam, the illegitimate child of Jalil and Nana, through the lens of Maslow's theory, offers a profound understanding of her suppressed psyche and turbulent thoughts. Nana, even while expecting a child, is denied necessities and safety. Years later, she recounts to Mariam the pain she endured during her birthing, saying, "You made me lay on that cold, hard floor for almost two days. I neither ate nor slept" (Hosseini, 2013, p.11). Instead of providing Mariam with her needs, her mother consistently refers to her as "a clumsy little harami" (Hosseini 2013, p.4).

She identified that a "harami" was only for people who are legitimate to claim for love, family, home, and acceptance. As an illegitimate, Mariam had to move into the suburbs with her mother, where she had little opportunity to discover her lack of necessities. Although Jalil used to see Mariam every Thursday, Nana referred to these trips as "his idea of penance" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 11).

Patriarchal Society

The first victim of patriarchal bias is identified as Nana. Nana is forced to live a life of isolation because she fears social rejection as a result of her illegal relationship with Jalil and subsequent pregnancy. Jalil, who is equally responsible for this offence, escapes punishment. In actuality, his polygamous lifestyle is a sign of his wealth. Nana's experiences as an Afghan lady support her conviction that a man always points an accusing finger at a woman. According to Mariam, the only thing an Afghan girl needs to study is tolerance. Nana strikes Mariam as being wise beyond her years. One such coping mechanism used by most Afghan women is endurance, which entails returning to long-standing customs and routines and developing them as secure havens to block out suffering. This ritualistic, passive response is adopted by Nana, who then imparts it to Mariam. Like Nana and Mariam, the majority of Afghan women meekly endure the trauma of their circumstances since it is acceptable according to tradition.

A girl is always the victim of sorrow, according to Nana's common sense, which she draws from her personal bias. Nana thinks that an Afghan woman ought to be skilled in the art of endurance. Mariam serves as a tool for Hosseini's message that parents have a significant impact on how their children develop as individuals. Mariam is subject to different influences from Jalil and Nana. Nana is a helpless individual who has gone through unpleasant circumstances. Therefore, such experiences are the foundation for how she sees the world. After discovering she is expecting Mariam, Nana decides to live a life of seclusion.

Mariam is forbidden from going to the movies with Jalil by her parents. The satisfaction of Jalil's esteem requirements overrides Mariam's social demands, even though "it is the creators of the harami who are culpable, not the harami, whose only sin is being born" (Hosseini, 2013, p.4). Jalil desires to hold his nobility in society. Mariam needs selfless love, stability, and educational opportunity, but Jalil and Nana failed to meet these needs. Mariam's visit to Kabul is notable because she exhibits independence, freedom, and bravery while stumbling through the city's streets in search of her father.

She approaches Jalil's door and answers the door not as a visitor but as Jalil's daughter, defying all social conventions. Her first act of defiance against patriarchal authority is her obstinate reluctance to leave without first meeting her father and her decision to spend the night at his doorway. Even Jalil, who hides from Mariam's presence, is overwhelmed by such ferocious determination. Mariam has understood the real face of Jalil. Mariam returns home to face the biggest catastrophe of her life. Nana had hanged herself from a tree, she discovers. Mariam has had two devastating blows in a row as a result of Nana's death. Mariam will be troubled by Nana's death because she blames herself for it. On the same day, Mariam loses both of her parents. According to Hosseini, marriage in Afghan society is related to practicalities rather than pure love.

Marriage is portrayed as a patriarchal obligation and tradition. The statement, "For centuries, women have been told when they will marry, who they will marry, and, incidentally, for how much," (Hosseini, 2013, p. 410) supports this. Mariam's forced marriage to Rasheed, a burly, ruddy-faced man much older than her, is not an isolated case. Upon seeing Rasheed, her dream of a blissful married life shatters, leading her to think, "this is the face of my husband" (Hosseini, 2013, p.53). This jeopardises her physiological and safety needs once again.

Hosseini states, "there has always been an ideological gap between liberal reformist Kabul and rural Afghanistan" (Hosseini 2013, p. 409). Kabul is seen as a hub of "female autonomy" (Hosseini, 2013 p. 409), while Afghan women lead "subterranean lives of obedience and service"(Hosseini, 2013, p. 409). Mariam's parents deny her education, a crucial tool for gaining self-esteem and dignity. For women like Mariam, tolerance is the only required skill.

During her journey to Kocheh-Morgha, Mariam, a woman from the lowest social stratum, observes a disparity between her fate and modern women's. She encounters women who seem similar, but their

actions and autonomy bewilder her. They are fashionable, not wearing the burqa and even wearing red lipstick, which Mariam is forbidden to wear. Mariam, however, is condemned to a life of servitude and poverty, which "made her aware of her lowliness, her plain looks, her lack of aspirations, her ignorance of so many things" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 74).

Empowerment through Solidarity

Laila's parents are introduced in the novel's first half. Rasheed's neighbour is Laila's family. At the communal tandoor, Mariam first meets Laila's mother, Fariba. Fariba presents herself and her ten-year-old son Noor to Mariam as a lively and friendly mother. Another victim in the story is Laila. She has perceived good childhood care when compared to Mariam. The war shatters her dreams and love. She has lost her parents. Rasheed has taken advantage of her pathetic condition in terms of refugee. He has married Laila. She is just fourteen years old and takes the hand of Rasheed, a sixty-year-old man. Rasheed announces the death of her parents and Tariq. Upon receiving the devastating news of Tariq's demise, Laila finds solace in her pregnancy. This unborn child instils in her a sign of newfound courage. She experiences an unprecedented form of love, one she has never encountered before. Victimised people, like Laila, understand that solitude is a danger that must be avoided at all costs and that there is no such thing as a modest concession to their links with the outside world. As tenaciously as their captors work to destroy their relationships, these captives seek to maintain contact with a world outside the one in which they are imprisoned.

Initially, Mariam views Laila as a rival, leading to a sense of animosity. However, over time, their relationship transforms from hostility into a bond resembling that of a mother and daughter. This is due to the growing connection between Laila and Mariam. They find solace in each other, fostering a sense of affection and solidarity. Their survival is not just physical but also emotional, anchored by their mutual trust.

Laila experiences Mariam's motherly love and devotion towards Aziza. Mariam, for the first time, feels genuinely desired. She hears declarations of love that are both blatant and unequivocal: "Mariam had never before been wanted like this. Love had never been declared to her so blatantly, so unequivocally" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 246). Mariam's maternal affection for Laila earns her a level of "respect and consideration not accorded to her as a mere wife" (Jung, 2000, p. 69).

Laila confesses the secret of Aziza being Tariq's daughter with tremendous force. Mariam experiences a solid bond as well as fulfilment of her esteem goals. Maurene O'Hara and John Nicoletti (2005) argue in "Tis Herself" that "a sense of belongingness is a sine qua non of healthy Psychological functioning everywhere." "Such a sense develops in childhood and continues throughout life through experiencing mutual empathy; by sensing oneself as a part of a whole". (O'Hara & Nicoletti, 2005, p. 24)

Mariam, having experienced the betrayal of loved ones, is determined to prevent Aziza from enduring the same. As a result, she showers Aziza with love and devotion. As Francis Bacon writes in "Of Love", "There is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion towards the love of others, which if not spent upon someone or a few, does naturally spread itself towards many." (Bacon, 1924, p. 45)

The love Laila and Aziza show Mariam gives shows Mariam realising she is not loathed. When Tariq returns to Afghanistan and sees Laila, Rasheed beats her. This act depicts "the patriarchal ideology of male dominance and female subordination in a traditional society allows Rasheed to be even more of a villain" (Karthic and Immanuel, 2018, p. 378).

The novel explores issues of female identity and life philosophy through the lens of Abraham Maslow. His "hierarchy of needs ranges from the most basic human needs of physiological needs for food, clothing, shelter, water, comfort, and procreation among others to the highest level of aesthetic needs for people to enjoy and promote the beauty of human environment" (Aruma, 2019, p. 26). Mariam's life disproves Maslow's hierarchy of needs. She had her basic needs met throughout her upbringing and marriagebut lacked respect and esteem.

Conclusion

In "A Thousand Splendid Suns," Khaled Hosseini portrays the empowerment of women through the profound bond between Mariam and Laila. Their solidarity shines against the turbulent backdrop of Afghanistan's political and social turmoil, illustrating their strength and resilience amidst oppression. The novel delves deep into their psychological struggles and the healing process that emerges from their solidarity, focusing on how they confront and navigate trauma, suppression, and the burdens of patriarchal expectations. Both characters challenge the oppressive norms of marriage, family, and society, finding strength in each other's support. Hosseini reinforces that their shared resilience allows them to endure and rise above the societal constraints designed to suppress them. Mariam's ultimate sacrifice and Laila's deep gratitude, embodied in her decision to name her daughter Mariam, highlight the enduring impact of their connection. This act symbolizes not just personal gratitude but a tribute to the transformative power of sisterhood and support in the face of adversity. Hosseini emphasizes that hope, courage, and unity can empower women to reclaim their voices and identities. The novel ultimately reflects the broader message that even in a patriarchal society, solidarity among women is a powerful force for change, healing, and resistance.

References:

- Aruma, E. O., and Melvins, E. H. 2017. 'Abraham Maslows Hierarchy of Needs and Assessment of Needs in Community Development'. *International Journal of Development and Economic Sustainability*, *5*(7), 15–27.

- Bacon, Francis. 1924. *"Of Love." The Essays of Francis Bacon,* (edit) Mary Augusta Scott, Oxford UP. p. 45-47.
- Hosseini, K. 2013. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd.
- Jung, A. 2000. *Unveiling India: A Woman"s Journey*. Penguin India.
- Karthic, R. V. and Immanuel, S. G. R. 2018. Sexual Politics: An Explication of Male Dominance and Misogynism in Khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns. *Langlit,* 4 (3).
- O'Hara, M., and Nicoletti, J. 2005. *Tis herself: An Autobiography*. Simon and Schuster.
- Pichère, P. and Cadiat, A.-C. 2015. *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. Lemaitre.
- Willmott, Dominic and Ryan; Saskia and Sherretts; Nicole and Woodfield; Russell and McDermott, Danielle. 2018. Motivation: A Critical Consideration of Freud and Rogers' Seminal Conceptualisations. *Polish Psychological Bulletin. 10.24425/119490.*

Bio Profile of the Author:

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Sri Krishna Arts & Science College
Coimbatore
Email: jaya.litejaya@gmail.com
ORCID id: 0000-0001-8353-4937

Does Appearance Related Anxiousness Hint towards Body Dysmorphic Disorder? A Gender-Based Enquiry about Appearance Concern

Rituparna Ghosh

Abstract

The idea of perfection is a myth or is vague. People nowadays are always striving for perfection, be it their looks, body image, clothing etc. But are there any exact criteria that makes us perfect? The rampant usage of social media has almost compelled us to believe in the abstract idea of perfection and the existence of a virtual world. The widespread usage of filters in clicked images have made our lives literally virtual. We are almost separated from the real-life situations. Appearance related anxiousness can be a symptom of Body Dysmorphic Disorders, which is known to be a very common disorder. People who are anxious about their appearance are not satisfied with their appearance and are engrossed with finding flaws in the same which is actually non-existent or is minimal. Generally, it is a common observation that women are more concerned about their appearance than men. Women are meant to be beautiful from the societal perspectives. Thus, it can be assumed that appearance related consciousness will be more among women than men. Anxiety related to appearance can affect individuals irrespective of all age groups. Concern about appearance starts at adolescence. Thus, in this paper an attempt has been made to study how much there is anxiousness about appearance among various age groups and gender belonging to varied spaces and whether these tendencies can indicate the presence of Body Dysmorphic Disorder or not.

Keywords: *Appearance anxiety, virtual world, perfection, gender divide, non-existent flaws.*

1. Introduction

Appearance related concerns mostly dissatisfaction and lack of confidence can hint towards anxiety regarding the same. We can observe individuals are unsatisfied with their either skin, hair, weight etc. or all around their physical appearance. Due to this dissatisfaction, it is observed that people are always trying to modify themselves not actually but virtually. The use of filtered photos on social media platforms can be cited as an example of such efforts. Appearance related anxiousness can indicate the presence of Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), which is said to be a very common disorder but it is not recognized and so the disorder remains untreated (Phillips et al. 1995:1216). It has adverse effects

on different spheres of life (Malik et al. 2021:3). Social media usage and body image dissatisfaction are positively related i.e. longer the social media usage the more is the dissatisfaction with one's body (Hashim et al. 2022: 12).

BDD though comes under the purview of psychology, behavioural patterns of humans are a subject of discussion of geography and this creates a linkage between the two disciplines. Behavioural approach in geography which focusses on the study of human behaviour establishes the connection between Geography and Psychology. Behavioural geography which is said to be a "psychological turn in human geography" (Hussain 2002:404) has a multidisciplinary approach and includes "ideas, paradigms and theories produced by psychologists, philosophers, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, ethnologists and planners" (Hussain 2002:407). Behavioural geography which recognizes "man as a responder to stimuli. It seeks to identify how different individuals respond to particular stimuli" (Adhikari 2004:271). Geographical Psychology is an emerging discipline where emphasis is placed upon personality traits (Shuttleworth et al. 2020:3).

1.2 Objectives

The present study has been conducted to achieve the following:

1) To find out appearance related concern among males and females.

2) To find out appearance related concern among different age groups.

3) To find out the relation between social media usage and body dissatisfaction.

1.3 Previous Work

Phillips Katharine A et al. (1995) in their report on "Case Study: Body Dysmorphic Disorder in Adolescents" have elaborated how BDD in spite of being a common psychiatric disorder is not recognized and not known among clinicians (Phillips et al. 1995:1216). They have mentioned that the disorder mostly starts during adolescence.

Bjornsson Andri S et al. (2010) in their article on "Body dysmorphic disorder" have talked about the disorder in detail, its definition, classification, the symptoms, the age group most prone to the disorder and the various treatments. The study concluded with the fact that how the disorder remains unrecognised, how its acknowledgement and treatment is urgently necessary and also stressed upon its prevention (Bjornsson et al. 2010:10).

Malik Farheen et al. (2021) in their article on "Body Dysmorphic Disorder: A Comprehensive Review" have talked about the disorder in detail, the symptoms, the criteria for identifying the disorder, the effects it has on life with special emphasis on the life of students and the ways of managing the same (Malik et al. 2021:2-6).

Alruwayshid M. S. et al (2021) in their article on "The influence of social media on body dissatisfaction among college students" have found out that there is an effect of socio-economic status of individuals on their body dissatisfaction i.e. higher the socio-economic status higher the body dissatisfaction and vice-versa (Alruwayshid et al. 2021:1745). The study was conducted on both male and female university students of Saudi Arabia (Alruwayshid et al. 2021:1742).

Hashim Noraini et al. (2022) in their article on "Dissatisfaction about Body Image During Social Networking among University Students" have established the fact that longer exposure to social media enhances dissatisfaction about body image and exposure to social media is one of the causes of dissatisfaction about body image (Hashim et al. 2022:12). The study found that gender; body mass index and body dissatisfaction are significantly related to each other (Hashim et al. 2022:16).

Czernecka Agnieszka et al. (2023) in their paper on "Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire-Dermatology Version (BDD-DV): formation and validation of the Polish language version" have discussed about BDD, its onset at adolescence and its adverse effect on life. They have mentioned that defects are related mainly to skin and hair (Czernecka et al. 2023:421). The study is based on survey on Polish speaking population to identify the disorder. The questionnaire used for the survey is Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire-Dermatology Version (Czernecka et al. 2023:421). The study involves rigorous statistical calculation and analysis.

The present study is an attempt towards identifying appearance related concerns among different age groups and gender in varied space which may indicate the presence of BDD. Such a holistic and comprehensive approach is lacking in the previous studies on BDD. Mostly studies on BDD have been done by psychologists and medical professionals but the present one has been done from a geographer's perspective. Thus, herein lies the distinctiveness of this study.

2. Materials and Methods

The perception study is based on primary data collected through sample survey. The perception study has been conducted using a questionnaire based mostly on 'Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire' or BDDQ which "is a brief, widely used self-report measure" (Dyl et al. 2006:371) and other questions related to appearance concerns based on 'Appearance Anxiety Inventory' (Veale et al. 2014:605) or "AAI can be used as a tool for treatment planning and outcome measurement" (Veale et al. 2014:615) as an effective tool for identifying the disorder. The survey conducted on 82 individuals includes 65 females and 17 males. The participants of the survey are from different age groups ranging from 18 to 44 years. Previous works have been reviewed for a clear understanding of the concept and for finding the research gaps.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Social and Economic Characteristics of the Population Under Study

The social and economic characteristics of the participants involved in this present study have been taken into consideration. The different parameters about the above characteristics are gender, age, marital status, residential location-urban or rural, educational qualification and occupation.

3.1.1 Gender, Age and Educational Qualification

Appearance related consciousness and gender are related to each other. Generally, it is seen that females are comparatively more conscious about their appearance than the males. The participants in the survey consisted of 79.33 per cent females and 20.67 per cent males.

It is assumed that concern about appearance is dependent on age. There seems to be an inverse relationship between age and appearance related consciousness. The survey has been conducted on individuals of age below 20 years, 20 to 30 years, 30 to 40 years and of 40 years and above. The minimum age of the participants in the survey was 18 years and the maximum age was 44 years. The survey results show that 28.05 per cent of the participants are below 20 years of age, 47.56 per cent are between 20 and 30 years, 19.51 per cent are between 30 and 40 years and 4.88 per cent are 40 years and above.

Education makes an individual aware and as well as conscious, thus educational qualification was asked for. Even when any problem remains undiagnosed, only when questions related to that problem are administered to them, it might make the individuals aware of the same. The responses obtained on educational qualification was classified as higher secondary, graduation, post-graduation, technical and above post-graduation. It can be seen from the survey that 36.59 per cent of the respondents are educated up to the 12th standard, 24.39 per cent are graduates, 21.95 per cent are post graduates, 12.20 per cent have B.Tech degree and 4.88 per cent have M.Phil and Doctorate degrees.

3.1.2 Marital Status

Marital status and anxiousness about appearance may be related to each other. The survey results show that 81.67 per cent of the respondents are not married and 18.33 per cent are married.

3.1.3 Occupation

Occupation can also be a cause of making oneself appearance conscious. The responses obtained on nature of occupation through the survey was classified into student, service, business and unemployed. The survey reveals that 57.32 per cent are students, 34.15 are engaged in service, 6.10 are engaged in business and 2.44 per cent are unemployed.

3.1.4 Residential Location

Place of residence can be a determinant of one's concern about and presenting oneself. Since access to certain facilities such as salon, beauty parlors etc. are location dependent so the place of residence of the participants has been considered. Though nowadays these facilities are available irrespective of the location. About 56.11 per cent of the survey participants were from urban areas and 43.89 per cent of the same were from rural areas.

The survey was conducted on individuals across diverse spaces- various states of India, various districts of West Bengal and even outside the country. About 39.02 per cent of the participants are from the district of Paschim Bardhaman, 18.29 per cent are from the district of Bankura, 14.63 per cent are from Kolkata, 9.76 per cent are from the district of South 24 Parganas, 4.88 per cent are from the district of North 24 Parganas, 3.66 per cent are from countries of Japan, United Kingdom, 2.44 per cent are from the state of Karnataka, 1.22 per cent are from the states of Jharkhand, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh and districts of Birbhum, Hugli and Nadia respectively .

3.2 Appearance Related Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Different parameters/ criteria have been taken into consideration in order to find out satisfaction and dissatisfaction related to one's appearance. The responses for most of the questions have been categorized into "Yes" and "No". But for some questions categories "Sometimes" and "May be" have been included. Results about appearance related satisfaction or dissatisfaction have been represented in Figure 1 and discussion about the same have been done in the following paragraphs

3.2.1 Worry about One's Look

The participants in the survey were asked whether they were worried about their appearance or not. The survey results show that 4.88 per cent of the respondents (Figure 1) are always worried about how they look, 30.56 per cent of them are sometimes worried about the same. Most (64.56 per cent) of the respondents are not worried about their looks.

3.2.2 Anxiety about Not Being Thin Enough and Getting Fat

The participants were asked whether they were anxious about their figure being not so slim or they were worried of getting fat. The survey results show that 30.45 per cent of the respondents (Figure 1) were anxious that they were not slim enough and were also afraid of getting fat, while 69.55 per cent of the same were not anxious about the same.

3.2.3 Upset with Life because of One's Look

The participants were asked to state whether they were upset with life because of their appearance. The survey reveals that 13.44 per cent of the respondents (Figure 1) feel that they are not happy in

their lives because of their appearance while 86.56 per cent of the same are not unhappy in their lives due to their looks.

3.2.4 Problems with Look Affecting Relationships, Social Activities

The respondents were asked to convey whether their problems with appearance affected their relationships with friends, partner and involvement in social activities. About 9.78 per cent of the participants (Figure 1) in the survey feel that their perceived problems about their appearance affect their relationships and involvement in social activities, while 90.22 percent of the participants do not feel the same.

3.2.5 Problems with Appearance Interfering with Work and Other Activities

The participants were enquired whether their problems with appearance interfered with their work or other activities. The survey revealed that 7.33 per cent of the respondents (Figure 1) said that problems with their appearance interfered with their work and 92.67 per cent of the respondents said that there was no such problem.

3.2.6 Avoidance Due To Looks and Things Avoided

The participants were asked whether they avoided anything because of their looks. The survey results show that 8.46 per cent of the respondents (Figure 1) said that they avoided certain things due to their appearance. Among them most (6 per cent) of the respondents avoided fitting cloth because of their looks and 1.23 per cent avoided make-up and hair products due to their looks. About 91.54 per cent said that they had no such problem and their response was negative.

3.2.7 Satisfaction with Skin Colour

The respondents were asked to state their satisfaction with their skin colour. It has been commonly observed that fair complexion is always preferred over dark complexion. Figure 1 shows that 8.54 per cent of the respondents are not satisfied with their skin tone while 91.46 per cent are satisfied with the same.

3.2.8 Applying Filters and Editing the Photo

The respondents were asked whether they use filters while clicking their own photos. The usage of filters may hint towards dissatisfaction with their appearance. Filters completely transform the appearance of an individual. The survey reveals that filters are always used by 10.97 per cent of the respondents, 57.32 per cent of the respondents sometimes apply filter and 31.71 per cent of the respondents do not use filters (Figure 1). About 68.29 per cent of the respondents are inclined towards application of filter for clicking their own photos.

The reason for using filter was also enquired about. The survey reveals that only 1.92 per cent of the respondents use filter as they are dissatisfied with their appearance and 98.08 per cent use filter to

improve the whole photo, though responses in this regard was found to be an ideal one rather than the true one.

The participants were asked to mention whether they felt the necessity of editing their clicked photo or not. It is commonly observed that photo editing with special reference to selfie and also those portraits clicked by others occurs due to dissatisfaction with oneself. The survey reveals that 4.88 per cent of the respondents always edit photo, 60.98 per cent edit their photos sometime and 34.14 per cent of the respondents do not edit photos (Figure 1). About 65.86 per cent of the respondents have a tendency towards editing their photos.

The reason for editing photo was also looked into. The survey reveals that 2.04 per cent of the respondents were not confident about their appearance, 6.12 per cent wanted to remove the flaws in their appearance, and 91.84 per cent of the respondents wanted to improve the photo in totality.

3.2.9 Appearance Related Anxiousness

Generally wearing make-up can be a way of enhancing one's appearance as well as concealing one's real appearance. The female participants in the survey were enquired about whether they put on a lot of make-up on usual days. The survey reveals that none of the female participants wear huge make-up on normal days.

The female participants were asked to mention whether they have the confidence to leave for outside without putting on make-up on normal days. The survey results in Figure 1 show that 90.76 per cent of the female participants are confident to go outside without wearing make up on normal days while 9.24 per cent of them are not confident to leave for outside without putting on make-up on usual days.

Dressing well can indicate one's wish to look good for oneself or making oneself representable to others. The male participants in the survey were asked to state whether they feel the necessity to get well-decked up on normal days. Figure 1 shows that 29.41 per cent of the male participants feel it necessary to get well-dressed even on normal days while 70.59 per cent of them do not feel the same.

The male participants were asked to mention whether they were confident to leave for outside without being well-decked up on normal days. The survey results in Figure 1 show that 88.24 per cent of the male participants have the confidence to go outside without being well-decked up on normal days while 11.76 per cent of them are not confident about the same.

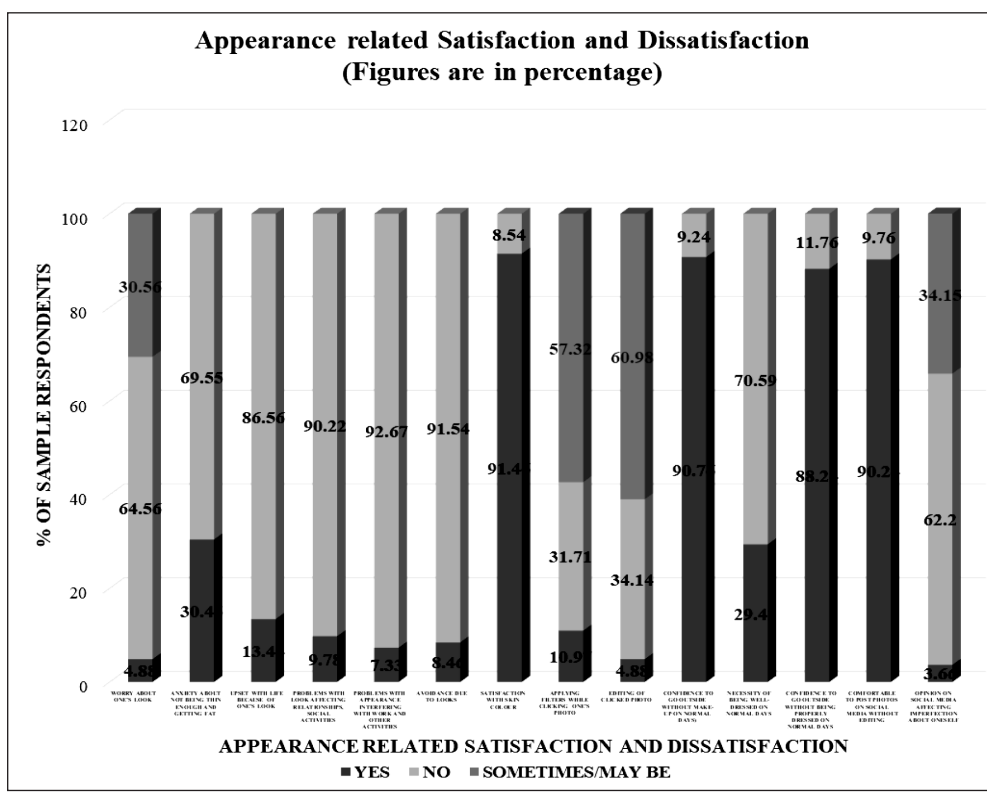
It has been assumed that discomfort associated with posting unedited photos on social media can be an indication of anxiousness about one's appearance. The participants in the survey were asked to state whether they are comfortable to post their photos on social media without editing the same. Figure 1 shows that 90.24 per cent of the participants are comfortable to post unedited photos on social media while 9.76 per cent of the participants are not comfortable about the same.

The reason for such discomfort was also looked into. About 55.56 per cent of the participants mentioning discomfort said that they wanted to present the best version on oneself on social media while 44.44 of them said that dissatisfaction with appearance was the reason for their discomfort in posting unedited photos on social media.

3.2.10 Effect of Social Media on Perception of Body Dissatisfaction

The participants in the survey were asked to state whether social media affected their idea of imperfection about themselves. The survey brings forth the fact that 3.66 per cent of the participants think that social media has an effect on their idea of imperfection, 34.15 per cent of them are not sure of the same and 62.20 per cent of them think that social media has not impacted their idea of imperfection (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Source: Sample Survey, January 2024.

3.2.11 Time in Hours Spent in a Day Thinking About Ones Looks

The respondents were asked to state about the number of hours they spend in a day on thinking about how they look. The survey results show that majority (96.34 per cent) of the respondents said that they spend less than one hour in a day thinking about their own appearance. About 2.44 per and 1.22 cent of the respondents mentioned that they spend one to 3 hours and more than 3 hours in a day respectively thinking about that their own appearance.

3.2.12 Time Spent on Dislikes and Likes in Appearance

The participants were asked to mention whether they spend more time thinking about dislikes in their appearance than what they like in their appearance. The survey reveals that 6.10 per cent of the participants spend more time on thinking about what they dislike in their appearance rather what they like in their appearance, while 93.90 per cent of them said that they spend more time on thinking about what they like in their appearance rather than what they dislike in their appearance.

3.2.13 Significance of Appearance in Assessing Self-Worth

The participants were asked to mention the importance of their appearance in determining their self-worth which can be indication of one's anxiousness about their appearance. The study shows that 13.41 per cent of the participants said that their appearance has prime importance while assessing self-worth and 86.59 per cent of them do not think so.

3.2.14 Time and Monetary Investments in Improving Appearance

If one is too much concerned about their appearance then one may devote lot of time and money for making their appearance perfect. The survey participants were asked to state whether they spend lot of time, effort and money for making their appearance perfect or not. The study reveals that 2.44 per cent of the participants have confirmed that they spend lot of money, time and effort for making their appearance perfect while 97.56 per cent are not involved in that.

3.2.15 Contentment with Appearance Controlling Happiness or Sadness

The participants were asked whether their contentment with appearance dictates their state of happiness or not. The survey results reveal that for 21.95 per cent of the participants the answer was "yes" i.e. their satisfaction with appearance control their mood and determines their happiness or sadness and for 78.05 per cent of them it was "no" rejecting the existence of such a situation.

3.2.16 Appearance Related Reassurance

The participants were asked to state whether they sought reassurance from others about how they look or not. About 82.93 per cent of the participant does not seek reassurance from others about their appearance which means that they are confident about their looks and 17.07 per cent of them do look for assurance from others.

3.2.17 Life Events Occurring Due to Appearance

The participants were asked to inform whether they feel that their appearance was or can be responsible for occurrence of certain events in life in the past as well as in the future. About 9.76 per cent of the participants feel that certain events in life had occurred and will occur because of their appearance while 90.24 per cent of them do not feel the same.

3.2.18 Problems in Self-Acceptance Due to Appearance

The participants were asked to state whether their appearance create problems in accepting oneself and in enjoying their life. About 85.37 per cent of the participants do not have such problems while 14.63 per cent of them do think that their appearance creates problems in accepting themselves and in enjoying their lives.

3.3 Appearance Related Securities and Insecurities

Certain questions to address the securities and insecurities related to one's appearance were administered to the survey participants. The responses have been categorized as "Not at all", "a little", "often", "a lot" and "all the time". The results about the same are shown in Figure 2 and the discussions about the same have been done in the following paragraphs.

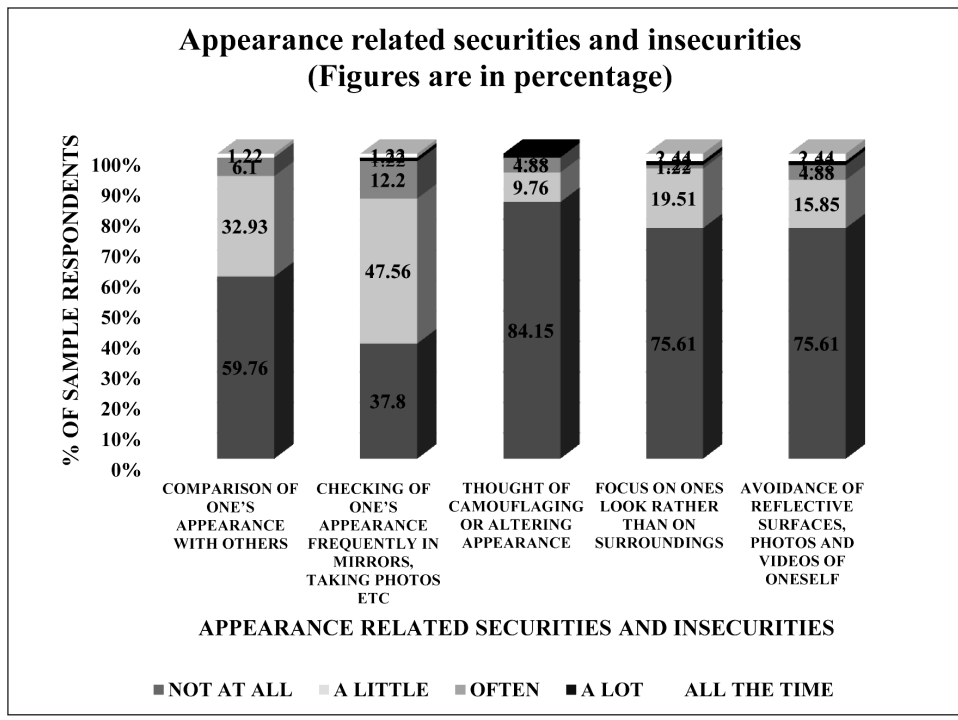
3.3.1 Comparison of Appearance with Others

The participants were asked to mention whether they involve in comparison of one's appearance with others or not. The survey results in Figure 2 show that 59.76 per cent of the participants do not compare their own appearance with others while 1.22 per cent of them are always involved in comparison of their own appearance with others.

3.3.2 Frequency of Checking Appearance

The participants were asked to state whether they are frequently involved in checking themselves in mirrors, clicking photos of oneself or not. The results obtained through the survey show that 37.80 per cent of the participants are never involved in observing themselves in mirrors and clicked photos while 1.22 per cent of them are always involved in frequent observation of themselves in mirrors and clicked photos (Figure 2).

Figure 2



Source: Sample Survey, January 2024.

3.3.3 Need to Camouflage Appearance

The participants were asked to say whether they think of changing or hiding their appearance or not. The survey results shown in Figure 2 reveal that 84.15 per cent of the participants do not think of altering or hiding the way they look while 15.85 per cent of them think of changing or concealing their real appearance.

3.3.4 Preoccupation with Appearance

The participants were asked to state whether they are focused on their appearance rather than on what is happening around or not. The survey results shown in Figure 2 reveal that 75.61 per cent of the participants do not pay attention on their appearance while 24.39 per cent of them are involved in paying attention on their appearance and do not bother about their surroundings.

3.3.5 Uneasiness with Appearance

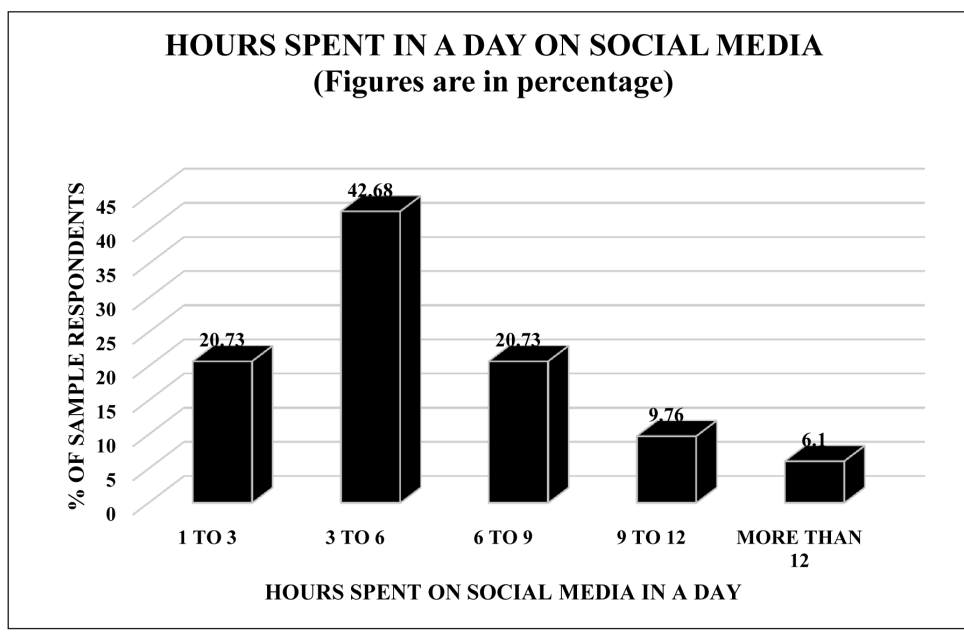
The participants were asked to say whether they avoid mirrors, previously clicked photos and videos

of oneself or not. The survey results in Figure 2 show that 75.61 per cent of the participant do not avoid mirrors, already clicked photos and videos of themselves but 24.39 per cent of them do avoid such things.

3.3.6 Time Spent Daily on Social Media

The participants were asked to state the time they spend on social media (Facebook, Instagram etc) in a day. The survey results show that 36.59 per cent of the participants spend 6 hours and more on social media while 63.41 per cent of them spend less than 6 hours on the same in a day (Figure 3).

Figure 3



Source: Sample Survey, January 2024.

3.3.7 Age of Onset of Realising Imperfection

The participants were asked to mention the age at which they started realizing imperfections in themselves. The survey results reveal that 60.98 per cent of the participants did not recognize imperfections in their appearance, 26.83 per cent of them recognized such imperfections at adolescence, 9.76 per cent of them recognized them at the age of 20 years and above and only 2.44 per cent of them recognized such imperfections below 10 years.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study is based entirely on primary data. It brings before us that bodily dissatisfaction is less among older age groups compared to the younger age groups under study. The responses to some of the specific questions on appearance concern have been found to be an ideal one rather than the true one. Another interesting fact that has come up is the reluctance on the part of male participants in participating in the survey. Though previous studies showed that usage of social media effects satisfaction and dissatisfaction about oneself but this study could not find such effect. Acceptance of oneself in totality without being anxious or insecure is what needs to be done. But since appearance related anxiousness can mean the presence of BDD, it needs to be seriously addressed as discussion about the same may arouse realization of an individual who may not be aware of the same. The study attempted with a multidisciplinary approach aims to stress on people's perception on anxiety related to appearance which possibly can hint towards presence of a very serious psychological disorder from a geographer's point of view. Self-realization of the problem and finding a solution for its amelioration is what needs to be targeted for a healthy living.

5. References

- Adhikari, S. 2004. *Fundamentals of Geographical Thought*. Allahabad: Chaitanya Publishing House.
- Alruwayshid, M.S. et al. 2021. 'The influence of social media on body dissatisfaction among college students', *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 10(4): 1741-1746. DOI: 10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_1529_20.
- Bjornsson, A.S. et al. 2010. 'Body dysmorphic disorder', Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience, 12(2): 1-13. DOI:10.31887/DCNS.2010.12.2/abjornsson.
- Czernecka, A. et al. 2023. 'Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire-Dermatology Version (BDD-DV): formation and validation of the Polish language version', *Advances in Dermatology and Allergology,* XL (3): 421-426. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5114/ada.2023.128974.
- Dyl, J. et al. 2006. 'Body Dysmorphic Disorder and Other Clinically Significant Body Image Concerns in Adolescent Psychiatric Inpatients: Prevalence and Clinical Characteristics', *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 36(4): 369-382. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs10578-006-0008-7.
- Hashim, N. et al. 2022. 'Dissatisfaction about Body Image During Social Networking among University Students', *THE MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*, 13(4):12-18. DOI:10.31674/mjn.2022.v13i04.003.
- Hussain, M. 2002. *Evolution of Geographical Thought.* New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Malik, F. et al. 2021. 'Body Dysmorphic Disorder: A Comprehensive Review', *Medical Journal*

of Trakya University, 8(1): 2-7. DOI: 10.4274/tmsj.galenos.2021.08.01.02.

- Phillips, K. et al. 1995. 'Case Study: Body Dysmorphic Disorder in Adolescents', J. AM. ACAD. CHILD ADOLESC. PSYCHIATRY, 34(9): 1216-1220. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-199509000-00020.
- Shuttleworth, I. et al. 2020. 'Geography, psychology and the 'Big Five' personality traits: Who moves, and over what distances, in the United Kingdom?', *Population, Space and Place*, 1-28. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2418.
- Veale, D. et al. 2014. 'The Appearance Anxiety Inventory: Validation of a Process Measure in the Treatment of Body Dysmorphic Disorder', *British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies,* 42: 605-616. DOI: 10.1017/S1352465813000556.

Bio Profile of the Author:

Assistant Professor
Department of Geography
Raniganj Girls' College
Raniganj
Email: rituparnargc@gmail.com

Gender Equity and Health: Examining Health Policies for Women in India

Sanchita Chakrabarti

Abstract

Addressing the issue of health and more importantly, women's health is largely dependent on societal and environmental factors. Interventions for women's health difficulties are necessary at every stage of their lives. The essay examines the distinction between gender equity and equality and how women's health has been addressed globally. By looking at secondary data on demographics, marriage and fertility patterns, sanitation, and nutritional status the study seeks to understand the Indian women's health status. Additionally, the study examines the different health policies that have recently been created to address women's health requirements. It concludes thereon that health issues of women are not an isolated issue and are intrinsically linked to education, employment opportunities, and participation in the decision-making process.

Keywords: *Health, Gender Equity, patriarchy, nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, health policies*

1. Introduction

The health of an individual is one of the basic human rights that indicates the individual's well-being. In addition, the development of women's health as a human resource is an important factor in the progress and overall advancement of any country. India has throughout time reinforced and restructured its primary healthcare implementation system as a signatory to the Alma-Ata Declaration. The National Health Policies have also emphasized 'Health for All' and at the same time aimed for Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The health of an individual is a complex phenomenon that depends on social and environmental factors. As a result, the health of Indian women is inseparable from the discrimination that exists in Indian society and spreads to the household. Women in Indian society are treated in a qualitatively inferior manner as a result of patriarchal rules and values. Furthermore, the lived experience of women's health in India, a large and sociocultural diverse nation, differs with social stratification like caste and class, as well as with rural-urban dichotomy and regional disparities. **(Misra, 2006)**. The androcentric view used to address health issues harms women's health. Gender discrimination at the societal level has led to unequal representation of women in health policies. Health policies about women in India

have been a neglected area in policy research primarily focussing on maternal health programmes. While these kinds of treatments are essential for maintaining the health of both mother and child, health policy makers must address gender issues as women go through different stages of life.

Based on certain factors interacting between gender and health, such as demographic position, marriage and fertility profile, sanitation and nutritional status, and health policies created to address the issue of gender inequity in health, this paper delves into women's health in India as a human right.

2. Material and Methods

The study utilized data from National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5 which was conducted in 2019-2021. The NFHS-5 is a thorough, cross-sectional survey that collects data at the state/UT and national levels and provides estimates on key indicators on demographics, health, nutrition and gender equality**.** Information about the sample size, sampling strategy, and data quality can be found in the NFHS reports. Data for the NFHS-5 came from a total of 6,36,699 homes. In addition to NFHS 5, a literature study is used to accomplish the objective of this work. Searches on Social Policy and Research, Pub Med, Hinari, Med Ind, and Google Scholar were done to obtain review literature on gender disparities in health.

Review of Literature

The discussion on gender equity in health arises from the fact that women's health requirements are different owing to the epidemiological contour of the sexes. Hence gender is a significant indicator of the inequality in health in most developing countries. To analyse the gender aspect in health the study heavily draws from literature relating to two aspects. Firstly, how is gender related to health and the conceptual understanding of gender equity, and secondly women's health needs like nutrition, sanitation, and hygiene and how they have been addressed in India.

Extant studies have focussed on bringing about the conceptual understanding of gender equity specifically concerning health (**Mooney, 1987; Kutzin, 1995; Sen and Ostlin, 2008; Payne, 2009; Sen and Iyer, 2012; Heise et al., 2019; Weber et al., 2019; Heymann et al.,2019).** Gender equity in health is measured with its relation to access to health and health outcomes. Access to health has shown that healthcare has been underutilized by women owing to expenditures that have significantly affected health outcomes **(Saikia and Bora, 2016; Bhan, 2016; Chidambaram, 2018; Das et al., 2018; RaoGupta et al., 2019; Mondol and Dubey, 2020).** Discussions on how limited decision-making independence and access to financial resources have adversely affected women's health have also been documented in several studies **(Santow, 1995; Bloom et al., 2001; Batra, Gupta and Mukhopadhya, 2014; Saikia et al., 2016; Mohan et al., 2019).** Numerous investigations have also documented that women's health is adversely affected due to nutritional deficiency which in turn affects maternal and child health **(Mishra, 2006; Sinha et al., 2017; Narayanan et al., 2017, 2019;**

Vir and Malik, 2015; Nanda et al.,2015). Sanitation and menstrual hygiene are other problems faced by teenager girls in poor nations which have a direct effect on their health. Studies related to sanitation show that open defecation leads to poor health in women and also affects their mental well-being and security **(Pardeshi 2009; Nallari 2009; Majumdar 2010; Padhi et al., 2015; Saleem 2019**). Studies related to menstruation hygiene have discussed women's experience in managing menstruation and the effects of poor menstrual hygiene **(Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Koonan, 2019; Majeed et. al., 2022; Vogel et al., 2022; Karjee et al., 2023).**

The vast literature on gender equity and health has addressed multiple women's health problems from physical to mental which can be improved with policy initiatives that aim at women's empowerment.

Gender Equity and Health

Health inequities have been identified across the globe as a major concern which has a separate dimension when interlaced with gender and poverty. The WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health posits that gender-based health disparities stem from political, social, economic, and environmental factors, rather than solely being attributed to limited access to healthcare **(World Health Organization, 2008).** The subordinate socio-economic position of women to men has led to poor health outcomes amongst women which include anemia and nutritional deficiencies, HIV/AIDS, and several other sexually transmitted diseases and maternal mortality and morbidity **(Heise et al., 2019; Weber et al., 2019).** To address gender-related health inequities**,** there is a growing understanding that the variables influencing men's and women's health are as distinct as their biological makeup. Gender discriminations are socially constructed and subject to change, while biological causes determine health disparities between men and women. The connection between gender and health should be studied in light of women's particular health requirements and take into account the variations in the epidemiological profiles of the sexes. Due to the biology of reproduction, it is necessary to investigate the specific health needs of women. Despite their widespread use, the Madrid Statement on Gender Mainstreaming in European Health Policy defines gender equity and equality differently.

"Gender equity refers to the equitable and just allocation of benefits, power, resources, and responsibilities between individuals of different genders. The concept acknowledges the existence of distinct needs, power dynamics, and resource accessibility between women and men. It emphasizes the importance of identifying" and addressing these differences in order to correct the imbalance between the genders. However, "the absence of discrimination based on a person's sex in opportunities, allocation of resources or benefits, and access to services" is what gender equality means. These two definitions make it relevant for health policies to acknowledge the biological differences between men and women and, as a result, refrain from trying to achieve the same results with the same set of policies. Therefore, gender equity rather than gender equality is frequently the purpose of health

policy. However, it is challenging to determine how much of the health disparity is due to gender and how much to biology **(Payne, 2009)**.

Aside from biological reasons, inequalities exist within health systems about access and utilization of health services, demonstrating power relations that make health a site of gender conflict. Because of their status in society, women are more vulnerable than men since they have fewer options to earn a living and access other resources like health care, which increases their dependence on other people for security and survival. The measure of equity in healthcare is related to the concept of access i.e. improving access to healthcare for those with the greatest needs and also to outcomes like health status or consumption of health goods. The gender approach to healthcare raises the question that improving access to healthcare is not a sufficient condition for achieving equity in terms of health status. It is important to pay attention to making scarce resources available that will be directly beneficial to women **(Standing, 1997).**

There are two approaches to show that there is gender inequality in health: gender disparities in health risks and gender disparities in healthcare. The historical legacy of gender inequality in society means that women, particularly impoverished women, bear a minimum share of the health-related costs of gender inequality. Men and women have different risk factors for illness, disease, and disability. Women are allocated domestic duties that require a lot of physical labour, such as gathering firewood or water for household use. **(World Health Organization, 2016)**. According to a study, cooking with these solid fuels contaminates the air in the home. In low-income countries, household air pollution is one of the leading causes of death among women from noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease, lung cancer, and stroke **(World Health Organization, 2018).** Since women have historically found it difficult to afford healthcare, access to care is a prime example of significant gender disparities. Additionally, women have relatively little autonomy when it comes to making decisions about their own sexual and reproductive health, such as whether to use contraceptives or what medical treatment to get after giving birth. **(UN Annual Report, 2019).** Gender biases in health have a direct effect on maternal under-nutrition and impact the weight of babies **(Shah and Shah, 2010)** and malnutrition amongst children of both genders **(Sethuraman et.al., 2006; Bhutta et. al., 2008).**

Several international forums have "addressed the issue of gender inequality, with the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 being the first to address the topic of gender mainstreaming **(United Nations, 1996**). Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of assessing the effects of any planned action on men and women, such as laws, policies, or programmers. The goal is to ensure that men and women benefit equally and that inequality does not" persist. **(United Nations, 1997)**. Its purpose is to include gender concerns in policies and programs to address the power disparity between men and women and enhance health outcomes in the medical field. (**World Health Organization, 2009).**

Emergence of Gender Equity on the Global Platform

The consideration of gender equity and its health implications have been addressed across several deliberations of WHO and the UN. Several of these reports highlight that gender equality plays a very prominent role in overall economic productivity. The UN's Decade for Women (1975-85) dedicated an entire decade where gender-related inequality in various sectors was highlighted. Throughout the 1990's women's right to education, health economy, and political participation was represented in various global forums.

A turning point for global health was reached in 2007 with the WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health, which proposed that social, political, and environmental factors—rather than healthcare access—are the primary causes of health disparities, with gender playing a significant role. The report also highlighted that the inherent patriarchal norms of society translated into negative health outcomes for women and girls **(World Health Organization, 2008)**.

The "Gender Disparity Index (GII) was created by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2008 to assess the effects of gender inequality on health. The GII is a composite index that assesses three facets of women's lives: involvement in the workforce, empowerment, and reproductive health. The percentage of women who complete intermediate education, the number of women entering the workforce, the representation of women in the legislature, and the rate of maternal and adolescent mortality are the five indicators that are used to calculate it **(UNDP, 2008).**

One of the most important aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations is gender parity in health. It is acknowledged that achieving SDG Goal 5 on Women" Empowerment and Gender Equality is a prerequisite to achieving other SDGs. This entails putting a stop to discrimination and exploitation of women, acknowledging unpaid caregiving and domestic labour, guaranteeing access to reproductive rights and sexual health for all people, and granting access to intermediate technologies. **(Dhar, 2018).**

Looking at the concept of Gender Equity in health and how it is addressed at the global level, the next section delves into Indian women's health by examining the demographic position, marriage and fertility profile, sanitation and nutritional status, and the various health policies that have been designed to achieve the objective of Gender Equity.

3. Discussion on NFHS 5 DATA

Demographic Status of Women

Gender composition is an important criterion for analyzing the character of a given population. India's sex ratio is 1020 according to the NFHS-5 (2019–21), which puts the country in a better condition than it was in NFHS-4 (2015–16), which was 991. The states of Kerala (1084), Tamil Nadu (995), and Andhra Pradesh (992) have favourable sex ratios, while Haryana (877), Jammu and Kashmir (883), and Sikkim (889) have low sex ratios.

Even though the sex ratio in terms of population has advanced, the survey shows that the sex ratio at birth for children born in the last five years is 929, a slight improvement from the NFHS-4 which was 919.. Poor child sex ratio is a clear indicator of widespread sex-selective abortion and sex determination using diagnostic techniques like ultra-sonography in urban and semi-urban areas and gradually moving to rural areas. Amartya Sen has referred to the discrepancy in the male-to-female sex ratio as the "missing women" problem. **(Sen, 2002).** Inequality and neglect at all stages of women's lives are the cause of relatively higher female mortality than men in many developing countries.

Marriage and Fertility Profile

According to NFHS-5, the percentage of women between the ages of 20 and 24 who marry before turning 18 has decreased from 26.7% in NFHS-4 of 2015–16 to 23.3% of the population. The progress made in this domain has been remarkable as there has been a remarkable decline in the percentage of women who got married before the age of legal age of 18 years. Even the number in rural areas (27%) in NFHS -5 is much less than the total percentage in NFHS-4 (31.5%). The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) that is children per woman has also seen a slight change from 2.2 in NFHS-4 to 2.0 in NFHS 5. However, although the age group of girls from 15-19 years who were pregnant or already had a child at the time of the survey has come down from 16 % in NFHS-3 to 7.9 % in NFHS-4 to 6.8 % in NFHS 5, the dominant form of contraception has been female sterilization which was 37.9% with male sterilization at 0.3 % in the survey of 2019-21**(IIPS 2021)**.

Sanitation Related Needs for Women

Sanitation needs to be seen as a social issue and a human right to achieve gender fairness. Menstrual hygiene and open defecation are the two components of sanitation-related needs for women. Due to their unique biological makeup, women have particular requirements for cleanliness and hygiene that are related to the reproductive process. According to NFHS-5 rural and urban households that use sanitation facilities include 70.2 % which is even lower in rural areas which stands at 64.9%. Plausible evidence shows open defecation has adverse effects on maternal health. Pregnant women who defecate in the open have a higher chance of hookworm infestation than those who use toilets **(Majumdar et al., 2010).** Open sanitation has also been a cause of stress and trauma for women at different stages of their lives. Extant studies show that girls have experienced trauma while finding an open place to defecate, fear of being watched while defecating, and restricting their defecation or urination **(Hirve et al., 2015; Sahoo et al., 2015).**

For women, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is another significant sanitation-linked issue. Menstrual health has gained attention on a global scale in recent years, with particular attention paid to women's lived experiences in low-income nations about access to sanitary products, clean water, and toilets **(Critchley et al., 2020)**. Research indicates that of the 113 million teenage females in India, approximately 68 million attend 1.4 million schools. One factor that discourages adolescent

girls from attending school is poor menstrual hygiene practices **(Thakur et al., 2014; Muralidharan et al., 2015)**. Studies show that lack of cleanliness during menstruation leads to morbidity and other problems like abdominal pain, urinary tract infection, and pregnancy complications (**Swaminathan, 1987; Ramachandran et al., 2016)**. Like other health issues, a woman's menstrual hygiene is also influenced by her socioeconomic position. Gender disparity has resulted from men's ignorance of menstruation hygiene and the social restrictions and lack of education placed on girls (**Mason et al., 2017).** The study also shows, 'women and girls experience stress and trauma when there are insufficient sanitary facilities to manage menstruation' **(Sahoo et al., 2015).**

Gender parity is a bigger goal when it comes to sanitation measures, and in India, women's sanitation and hygiene have traditionally been seen as infrastructure problems. Infrastructure is important, but there are also structural issues that must be addressed since they lead to stress and trauma and are dictated by unequal gender standards.

Nutritional Status of Women

In poor and low-income countries nutritional deficiency is common amongst people and women in particular. Conversely, the child's dietary needs are greatly influenced by the mother's health. There is evidence that women's nutrition affects the health of their children and this is the reason why health policies should put a lot of emphasis on women's nutrition **(Mason et. al., 2012)** Women require greater attention to nutrition owing to the natural processes of menstruation and child birth. However, in India, the nutrition of women is heavily guided by social norms and practices. These include eating last and taking less, giving up on food when food is less to ensure that the husband, children, or their in-laws have enough. These social customs are not adjusted even during the crucial events of women's life like pregnancy and breast-feeding when more nutrients are required. In some communities, pregnant women are encouraged to eat less to have easier deliveries or fast for their sons which deprives them of essential nutrients like protein and iron and also reduces calorie intake **(Narayanan et. al., 2019).** Study shows in Punjab even with agricultural growth and economic development social discrimination against young girls in nutritional matters continued to persist. In matters of women's child care and feeding practices gender disparity persists where the girl child is breastfed less frequently and for shorter durations than the boy child **(Chatterjee and Lambert, 1989).**

National data collected from NFHS-5 show 18.7% of women with below normal Body Mass Index (BMI) which indicates nutritional deficiency among women. The prevalence rate of undernutrition was higher in rural areas (21.2 %) compared to urban areas (13.2%). Adults' BMI serves as a gauge of their nutritional status. BMI of less than 18.5 among adults leads to low productivity and reduced immunity to illness while overweight leads to the development of other types of health problems. There have been significant changes in BMI of women with improvement in maternal health services when compared with the NFHS-4 (22.9) and NFHS -3 (35.5)

According to the national data, the prevalence of anaemia amongst women was also high. During pregnancy the requirement of iron increases but it is not fulfilled by most Indian women. NFHS-5 presents women between the ages of 15 and 49 for the survey. 57.2 % were anaemic while 53 % of pregnant women in the same age group were anaemic. For women with anemia, not getting enough energy, proteins, and fats is the main cause of this condition. The study conducted on women from Ten Indian States showed poor intake of various other nutrients required by girls during adolescence, before the onset of pregnancy, and during pregnancy **(NNMB, 2012)**. While poor purchasing power is the primary cause of poor maternal nutrition other factors like early marriage, conception below 20 years of age, and poor knowledge of self-care contribute to inadequate maternal nutrition. Pregnancy-related poor nutrition raises the risk of low-birth-weight newborns which starts a genetically transmitted vicious cycle of stunting. Further, it results in short adults with tiny pelvic sizes, which increases delivery problems, mortality, and morbidity **(Vir and Malik, 2015).** Cultural practices and social norms have a powerful and direct impact on the food intake of women in the family. According to research, young women are the first to give up food to make sure that their husbands, children, and in-laws have enough to eat. Even when food is scarce during poor times it is women who cut down on nutrition to ensure that children and men have enough food. Such coping strategies lead to under-nutrition among women**.** Evidence from rural India shows, that a significant number of mothers whose children show improved nutritional status have shown a decline in BMI in the same period **(Narayanan et. al., 2019).**

To effectively address the nutritional aspect of women's health, policy initiatives need to identify the specific barriers that hinder women's "nutritional empowerment." Nutritional empowerment refers to the process through which women acquire the capacity to attain good health in an environment where they were previously deprived of this capability. It covers information on food consumption in addition to social and economic resources. **(Narayanan et. al., 2019).**

Programmes for Achieving Gender Equity in Health in India

To address gender equity in health several efforts have been initiated by the government encompassing all spheres of women's health. The flagship empowerment programme to protect the girl child is the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), which ensures her survival, education, and safety and identifies the creation of a conductive socio cultural, economic and political environment to enable women to enjoy their rights. According to NITI Aayog's discussion on poverty, women's health has also been positively impacted through Ujjawala Yojana (cooking fuel distribution) and Saubhagya (improved electricity coverage) which has escalated their living conditions and this has significantly contributed to bringing down poverty as 24.82 crore people escaped multidimensional poverty in the last nine years.

Menstrual health is a major public health concern in India, yet it went largely neglected by

government, until the early 2000s. Between 2005 and 2010 policy makers have made considerable strides toward improving Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) for women and girls by incorporating it in National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). In 2011, the Scheme for Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene among adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 years was adopted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Under this scheme, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) provides sanitary napkins to adolescent girls. Under the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janausadhi Pariyojna (PMBJP), health security for women is ensured through Janaushidhi Kendras that provide sanitary napkins that are oxo-biodegradable. In 2015 the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation under Swaach Bharat Abhiyan issued guidelines to raise awareness on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in rural areas as part of its mediations to change sanitation hygiene behaviour (PIB, 2022). International efforts such as "UNICEF's WASH" (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) program have contributed to addressing the infrastructure needs related to sanitation.

Apart from menstrual hygiene, sanitation policy has also evolved over the years. In 2008, one of the main focus areas for National Urban Sanitation Policy was to improve the hygienic conditions of women through cost effective technologies. The Swaach Bharat Mission-Grameen addresses issues related to safety, privacy and dignity of sanitation related needs of women in public places. Innovations in women friendly sanitation include Sthree Toilet in Karnataka as a mark of gender sensitive sanitation infrastructure. Pink Toilets in Noida is specifically designed to address the emergency needs of women for convenience, security and privacy (PIB, 2024).

In 2018, the National Nutrition Mission (NNM), also known as POSHAN Abhiyaan was inaugurated which aimed at improving nutritional outcomes for children, breastfeeding mothers, and pregnant women. In order to realize its goal, the Mission integrates with maternal health platform like Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana where cash incentive is provided to pregnant and lactating mothers to bring about improvement in maternal health. Another element of POSHAN Abhiyan is Anaemia Mukt Bharat which provides folic acid and prophylactic iron supplementation (PIB, 2023).

In order to deal with the issues of lower male sterilization which is rooted in patriarchal bias of the society, Mission Parivar Vikas was introduced in 2016 under National Health Mission for improving access to contraceptives and family planning services across 145 high fertility districts of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand. The increased prevalence of unwanted pregnancies is the result of absence of counselling of women on birth spacing and alternative ways of contraception. The Mission aims to empower women to make their choices and also involve men in the process (PIB, 2019).

4. **Conclusion**

The gender perspective is crucial in health interventions due to the influence of gender on health in India. Apart from the health programmes aimed at improving women's health, policy documents

have also recognized the need for a holistic approach to address gender equity in health. The National Policy for Women 2016 (Draft) recognizes the need to provide 'holistic and life cycle approach to women's health for appropriate, affordable and quality health care'. The policy documents emphasizes on the need to address nutritional deficiencies in all stages of their life and the need to put an end to intra-household discrimination against women and girls when it comes to nutrition **(GoI, 2016)**. The document recognizes sanitation and drinking water as more of a social issue and important for women's health. Educating women about hygienic practices and involving them in decision making process in waste disposal and improving water and sanitation systems has been discussed in the document. The National Health Policy 2017 also aims to look after the health requirements of women beyond the reproductive age group of forty years. The policy document also speaks of strengthening public hospitals making them 'more women friendly' **(NHP, 2017).** Since 2005, the Indian Union Budget has included a gender budget. By allocating funds to activities and initiatives geared towards women, gender-responsive budgeting effectively addresses gender inequality and closes the gender gap in all spheres of social, economic, and political life. Gender Budgeting has also been recognized in The National Policy for Women 2016 (Draft) which calls 'for gender focal points, gender desks, Gender Budgeting Cells set up in Ministries, state government Departments, Panchayats and urban local bodies' **(GoI, 2016).** Another successful strategy for public health initiatives is community participation. Research indicates that community-based health interventions have reduced malnourishment among young women and girls in the community and assisted them in forming good personal habits **(Pradhan et al., 2023)**. Research has shown that combining community-based health intervention initiatives with self-help groups increases women's empowerment. Women's empowerment, on the other hand, plays a critical role in influencing healthcare choices and women's physical and mental well-being. **(Roy and Chaudhuri 2008; Sahu and Singh, 2012).**

Despite health interventions, the statistical health profile of women in India shows that the implementation of policies and programs on women's health in India has lacked a holistic approach that links women's right to health with other rights in the establishment of an egalitarian democratic society. As in other places, gender disparity in health is still a problem in India. Gender equity is measured with the GGGI. The four components that make up the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) are economic participation and opportunity, educational achievement, health and survival, and political empowerment. India had a score of 0.944 in the GGGI Report 2020 for health and survival. Understanding how rights in other areas, such as protection from violence, employment opportunities, political participation, and access to education, fit into the larger framework of the right to equality and nondiscrimination is crucial for achieving gender equity in health. Reducing health disparities and advancing women's rights to health can be achieved by tailoring health policy to account for these socio-economic considerations.

Reference:

- Bhutta, Z. A., Ahmed, T., Black, R. E., Cousens, S., Dewey, K., Giugliani, E. and Shekar, M. 2008. What works? Interventions for maternal and child undernutrition and survival. The Lancet, 371(9610), 417-440.
- Chatterjee, M., and Lambert, J. 1989. 'Women and nutrition: reflections from India and Pakistan.' *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 11(4), 1-16.
- Critchley, H. O., Babayev, E., Bulun, S. E., Clark, S., Garcia-Grau, I., Gregersen, P. K., and Griffith, L. G. 2020. 'Menstruation: science and society'. *American Journal of obstetrics and gynecology*, 223(5), 624-664.
- Dhar, S. 2018. 'Gender and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).' *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 25(1), 47-78. Available at https://doi.org/10.1177/0971521517738451 accessed on 20.2.20
- GoI 2016. National Policy for Women, Draft. Ministry of Women and Child Development Available at https://womenchild.maharashtra.gov.in/upload/579d8215ef25bdraft%20national%20policy%20for%20women%202016_012.pdf accessed on 7.11.2024
- IIPS 2021. National Family Health Survey- 5, 2019-21 Fact Sheet India, Mumbai: International Institute of Population Sciences. Available at https://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5_FCTS/India.pdf accessed on 14.5.2023
- Koonan, S. 2019. 'Sanitation interventions in India: gender myopia and implications for gender equality.' *Indian Journal of gender studies*. 26(1-2), 40-58.
- Mason, J.B., Saldanha, L.S., Ramakrishnan, U., Lowe, A., Noznesky, E.A., Girard, A.W. and Martorell, R. 2012. 'Opportunities for improving maternal nutrition and birth outcomes: synthesis of country experiences'. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 33(2 Suppl 1): S104-S137
- Mason, L., Sivakami, M., Thakur, H., Kakade, N., Beauman, A., Alexander, K. T., and Phillips-Howard, P. A. 2017. 'We do not know': a qualitative study exploring boy's perceptions of menstruation in India.' *Reproductive health*, 14, 1-9.
- Majeed, J., Sharma, P., Ajmera, P., and Dalal, K. 2022. 'Menstrual hygiene practices and associated factors among Indian adolescent girls: a meta-analysis'. Reproductive health, 19 (1), 148.
- Misra, M. 2006. Gendered Vulnerabilities: Women's Health and Access to Healthcare in India, The Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT), Mumbai
- Narayanan, S., Fontana, M., Lentz, E., and Kulkarni, B. 2019. Rural women's empowerment in nutrition: a proposal for diagnostics linking food, health and institutions. Mumbai: Indira Gandhi

Institute of Development Research

- NHP. 2017. National Health Policy. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare: Government of India Available at https://mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/9147562941489753121.pdf accessed on 6.1.2020
- NNMB. 2012. National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau. National Institute of Nutrition: Hyderabad Available at: https://www.nin.res.in/downloads/NNMB_Third_Repeat_Rural_Survey%20%20%20Technicl_Report_26%20(1).pdf accessed on 13.6.2021
- Payne, S. 2009. How can gender equity be addressed through health systems? Health Systems and Policy Analysis Policy Brief No. 12. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe [online] http://www. euro. who. int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/64941 E, 92846.
- PIB. 2019. Press Information Bureau. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Available at https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1593004 accessed on 6.11.2024
- PIB. 2022. Press Information Bureau. Ministry of Women and Child Development. Available at https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1846147 accessed on 6.11.2024
- PIB. 2023. Press Information Bureau. Ministry of Women and Child Development. Available at https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1910409 accessed on 6.11.2024
- PIB. 2024. Press Information Bureau. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Available at https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2024/sep/doc2024916394801.pdf accessed on 6.11.2024
- Pradhan, M. R., Unisa, S., Rawat, R., Surabhi, S., Saraswat, A., RS, R., & Sethi, V. 2023. Women empowerment through involvement in community-based health and nutrition interventions: Evidence from a qualitative study in India. Plos One, 18(4), e0284521.Available at 10.1371/journal.pone.0284521accessed on 20.1.2024
- Roy, K., and Chaudhuri, A. 2008. 'Influence of socioeconomic status, wealth and financial empowerment on gender differences in health and healthcare utilization in later life: evidence from India'. *Social science & medicine*, 66 (9), 1951-1962.
- Sahoo, K. C., Hulland, K. R., Caruso, B. A., Swain, R., Freeman, M. C., Panigrahi, P., & Dreibelbis, R. 2015. 'Sanitation-related psychosocial stress: A grounded theory study of women across the life-course in Odisha, India'. *Social Science & Medicine*, 139, 80–89 Available at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.06.031 accessed on 11.9.2018
- Sahu, L., and Singh, S. K. 2012. 'A qualitative study on role of self-help group in women empowerment in rural Pondicherry, India'. *National Journal of Community Medicine*, 3(03), 473-479.

- Shah, P. S., and Shah, J. 2010. 'Maternal exposure to domestic violence and pregnancy and birth outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analyses'. *Journal of women's health*, 19 (11), 2017-2031.
- Sen, A. (2002). 'More than 100 million women are missing' in Gender and Justice (ed.) Ngaire Naffine (pp. 219-222) London: Routledge.
- Sethuraman, K., Lansdown, R., and Sullivan, K. 2006. 'Women's empowerment and domestic violence: the role of sociocultural determinants in maternal and child undernutrition in tribal and rural communities in South India'. *Food and nutrition bulletin*, 27(2), 128-143.
- Swaminathan, P. 1987. 'State and subordination of women'. *Economic and Political Weekly,* WS34-WS39.
- Standing, H. (1997). 'Gender and equity in health sector reform programmes: a review'. *Health policy and planning*, 12(1), 1-18.
- United Nations (1996). Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf accessed on 23.5.2020
- United Nations. 1997. Economic and Social Council Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system. Available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/ECOSOCAC1997.2.PDF accessed 26.11.2018
- UNDP. 2008. Gender Inequality Index. Available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/genderinequality-index-gii accessed on 18.6.2023
- UN Annual Report. 2019. UN Women Annual Report 2018-19. Available at https://annualreport.unwomen.org/en/2019 accessed on 23.5.2020
- Vir, S. C., and Malik, R. 2015. Nutrition situation of women in India: current status, implications on child undernutrition and challenges ahead. Stat Appl, 13(1-2), 71-84.
- World Health Organization. 2008. Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health: Commission on Social Determinants of Health final report.
- World Health Organization. 2009. Strategy for integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO Available at http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44044/9789241597708_eng_Text.pdf accessed on 26.11.2018
- World Health Organization. 2016. Burning opportunity: clean household energy for health, sustainable development, and wellbeing of women and children. Available at https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/204717/9789241565233_eng.pdf;jsessionid=F8C2F14FF7

D31EA78EE389DB9BBA773E?sequence=1 accessed on 20.4.2016

- World Health Organization. 2018. Ten leading causes of death in females. Available at http://www.who.int/gho/women_and_health/mortality/situation_trends_causes_death/en/ accessed on 12.2.2018

Bio Profile of the Author:

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,
Hooghly Women's College (affiliated to The University of Burdwan), Chinsurah-Hooghly, India
Email: chakrabartysanchita@gmail.com

Unveiling the Dark Legacy of Witch Hunts: Exploring Causes, Consequences, and Mental Health Impacts

Bhupendra Mishra[1], Uttiya Basu[2], & Purbita Das[3]

Abstract

"India 'witch hunters' kill mother and four children" - read a news article from BBC on the 30th of January, 2019. In today's modern world of metaverses and crypto currencies, a dark reality thrives – a reality often ignored in its entirety, a reality to which people shrug shoulders in disbelief. For there are some phenomena which make the *Homo sapien sapiens* too uncomfortable to even fathom at dinner table conversations, since they are not subjects that can be brought up by intellectuals at a party with beverages in their hands – such is the taboo associated with them. For such phenomena have been around for decades, if not millennia. Such an instance is the phenomenon of witchcraft, black magic, *voodoo/hoodoo*, *tantra*, whatever one may call it. In the sordid underbellies of vibrant neo noir cityscapes, the living breathing evil of such (often) misplaced beliefs draw breath and with each breath they draw, another's comes to an end. This doctrinal research document shall provide an overview and summarize the practices of witch-hunting and the criminality thereof still prevalent today and shall delve into the matter of mental illness(es) associated with such unpleasantries and rituals which might be a factor influencing the same or which are but end products or byproducts.

Keywords: *Witchcraft, Criminality, Criminal Law, Mental Illness, Witch Hunters, India.*

Introduction

A few objectionable practices/customs/traditions have continued in India since the days of old, inclusive of but not limited to - *sati pratha*, settlement framework and so on. Even the with the advancements of both the efficient and instructive practices of today, however, it is true that we have had the option to destroy a considerable lot of such malicious performances. Notwithstanding the act of a search for witches, as yet predominant in varying landscapes, all across the nation, inferable from the conventional/orthodox mannerisms and mentalities of individuals. Numerous individuals in the past have been tormented and executed owing to the confidence of the citizens in the noxious phenomena, such as black magic. As surprising, heinous and atrocious as it is, the incomparable Joan of Arc, who drove France towards triumph in contradiction of the British, was scorched alive, while

being merely 19 years old, on being blamed for black magic (Behringer, 2004). The intelligences of the Indian National Crime Bureau 2015 stated that 2290 women were marked as sorceresses and persecuted across India between 2001 and 2014.

There is a problem in society in our country represented by the practice of black magic, which is fueled by harsh convictions and persecutions. It is not unheard of in certain parts of India for people who are acting strangely or showing signs of mental illness to be taken not to a psychiatric hospital or therapist but to a Tantric Baba or Witch Doctor who is said to be skilled in the occult arts and black magic.

In today's age, psychology and related disciplines have advanced to incredible extents. Specialists, researchers, and the legal system all have a vested interest in how the public understands the concepts of mental health and mental illness. In the world of today – as liberal as it purportedly is, individuals who could get mental assistance from specialists, therapists, and others, are not treated yet, but are given in to fake and Healers of the Dark Arts professing options to perform expulsions of a supernatural nature in order to cure the illness(es).

Meaning of Witchcraft and Witch Hunting

The concept of 'black magic' or simply 'magick' is comprised of two lyrics '*wicce*' meaning 'create'. *'Wicce'* has rooted from '*wicca*' which translates to 'witch' and '*craeft*' alluding to 'expertise or capacity'. Black magic is the exercise of supernatural capabilities, while the person who engages in the practice of black magic is known as a witch or a wizard. Previously, maternity specialists were blamed for black magic and were made to face persecution and social conviction through exposure to torment. Due to the stigmatizing connotation of the term, people who are (supposedly) involved in black magic are looked down upon and ostracized by society. However, witch hunting is a malicious practice in which women who have been confirmed to have caused negative effects are marked as witches by Ojhas (occult/supernatural specialists/tantriks) or other significant local individuals (Briggs, 2002). These women are then pursued, expelled, lashed, assaulted, strutted, stripped, and marched through the town. They may also be forced to eat human excrement, lose their hair, and be whipped, and so on. Different titles, such as dayan, tonahi, beta khauki (child eater), adam khauki (alpha predator), bhaikhauki (brother eater), maradmuhi, kheldi (characterless), bisahin (poisonous), bhootni, dakan, and so on, are given to the women who are suspected of being witches. Thus, both direct physical violence and indirect forms of violence constitute elements of witch hunts.

History of Witch Hunting

At the turn of the thirteenth century in Europe, Germany in 1587, and in early modern era America, 1450–1750, the heinous practice of witch hunts was widespread and generally accepted as normal.

- **Britain:** There were three major organised demonstrations in England against witches during

Queen Elizabeth's reign. Agnes Waterhouse, a woman, was the principal object of persecution and eventual execution in England for black magic. In the well-known case of "The Chelmsford Witches," King James I of England encouraged the execution of witches, which in turn spurred the case of "The Pendle Witches" in the middle of the 1600s. Lord James I of England was the monarch at the time.

- **Europe:** Even highly respected locals like professors, judges, and so on were not spared the difficulties and atrocities of "Trier Witch Trials," which took place between 1581 and 1593 and were the major sorceress persecution/execution in European history.
- **America:** In 1690, in the town of Salem, Massachusetts, there was a series of events known as "The Salem Witch Trials." Many people were put to death through this time.

The Beginnings of the Hunting of Witches in India

No one knows for sure when witch hunts in India first started. Those who are at least somewhat proficient in black magic call the Morigaon district of Assam as home, and legend has it that they spread the technique there decades ago (Briggs, 2002). The purported study is a standard one in India and is predominant in rustic secluded regions particularly among the ancestral populace. In the states of Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, witch hunts are particularly common.

And Who Exactly are the Victims?

The most common casualties of searching for witch are older ladies, widows who are marked as sorceresses in view of their actual bodily deformities or flaws which are observable, such as, hunchbacks, abnormal hair or skin tones. In a couple of instances even men have been blamed for possessing extraordinary abilities and are made to endure the fallouts. The family(ies) and offspring(s) of the ones, who are marked as witch(es), have to endure such treatments as they are generally communally outcaste and are expelled from the village or city or in more awful instances even killed.

Various Forms of Witch-Hunting Attacks

1. Attacks Conceived in Advance: These are the predetermined/preempted assaults intended towards fulfilling some specific aim, including unlawfully snatching property, lewd behavior and even at times for extracting payback.

2. Surprise Attacks: These assaults occur with next to no earlier struggle or warnings and the casualty has almost no information as to the allegation preceding these assaults. Shock assaults are rougher than the determined ones.

The Problem: Explained

No exact and affirmed information can be introduced or deduced for depicting the obliviousness of individuals in Villages with respect to Mental Health. It is important to keep in mind that this does not fall under the purview of any one religion (Legal Services India, 2022). This is something that transcends religious boundaries. Every single religion, including Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, in addition to other surrounding convictions, encourages such blatant disregard for the mental health and/or common liberties of others. Because of ignorance and nonappearance of reachable clinical offices, the situation has become increasingly dire, and an increasing number of people are turning to con artists, witch hunters, and quack physicians for assistance.

Countries Where the Practice of Pursuing Witches is Still Common

The nations where these practices are as of yet predominant include Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Gambia, Nepal, India, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Mexico, South Africa, Chile, and West Indies. (IPleaders, 2020)

The victims of witch-hunting

- There were 400 victims of witch hunts in Tanzania in 2016.
- 2097 people were killed between 2000 and 2012 in India.
- In 2001, Jharkhand established a law intended to prevent the practice of witch-hunting. In 2015, however, five women were killed after being chased by a mob on suspicion of black magic.
- There were 99 documented cases of witch hunts in Orissa in 2017, up from 83 in 2016 and 58 in 2015.
- There were 202 documented examples of people being designated as witches and then slain in Assam between 2001 and 2017. This included 114 women and 79 males.

A 30-year-old Jharkhandi woman was recently murdered on suspicion of witchcraft. Jharkhand is a state that often engages in witch hunts. More fatality due to expulsion has been reported from Telangana. This time it involved a 24-year-old woman who was whipped by an offender from her own family for three days, before she was taken to the hospital and eventually died there.

The Orissa High Court has just been made aware of a case involving the murder of a woman who was the subject of an effort to exorcise a "bad soul" from her body. The Orissa High Court denied the perpetrator's bail motion; however the victim's brother or sister was given a hearing and granted immunity. The judge observed the lawyer dressing up as a witch doctor and exorcising people who were claimed to be possessed.

Three women were killed because they were accused of being Witches in the case State of West

Bengal v. Kali Singh and others. For performing black magic rituals, roughly 50 people showed up to the residence in question and demanded 60,000 rupees as a fine. The three women were taken to the river where they were executed and dumped under the water. Depending on mitigating circumstances, such as whether or not the accused were confused by arbitrary persecution and whether or not they belonged to restricted zones, one of the Hon'ble Judges has ruled that punishments ranging from death to life in prison are appropriate.

Why is Witch Hunting Actually Flourishing?

- Those with an eccentric worldview believe that witches possess supernatural powers that they employ to harm others (by killing people, destroying crops, or harming animals), influence their bodies and minds, and seek out knowledge outside the realm of science.
- When people in rural areas with few or no educational opportunities or the elderly, unskilled residents of urban centres are unable to understand the context around a tragic event, they are quick to blame others.
- Not having money, being broke, and refusing to have sexual relations.
- Witch hunts can have many different causes, including a naive and moderate culture, patriarchy, economic worries, personal and social battles, envy, property debates, a dearth of clinical offices, and oblivion.

The Repercussions

Victims were subjected to mental anguish in addition to their physical suffering, as a Result of Such Witch Specialists or Attempts at Public Lynching by Irritated Assemblies (Witch Hunting), as well as Fraud and the Extraction of Wealth from the Victim and the Family or Associates of the Victim for the Sake of Confidence.

There are practitioners of witchcraft who are able to rid individuals who are said to be possessed by evil spirits through the use of exorcism. A fresh investigation has revealed that the risky procedure of executing expulsions was directly responsible for the deaths of two young children, ages 4 and 6 respectively.

State governments have passed legislation to combat the evil that is Witch Hunting, with an emphasis on denouncing the harrowing and demonic displays that have been presented against women, children, and occasionally men (Federici, 2004). Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Assam, and Jharkhand are just few of the states whose governments have enacted laws to counteract such rigidity and mitigate its negative effects.

However, these regulations are pointed toward providing cures in individual cases, the authorities

& the governance don't intend to destroy the evil in the general public overall. Furthermore, there is a lack of uniformity in the punishment meted out to those responsible for wrongdoing. Karnataka's approved resolution carries a sentence of more than a year and up to seven years in prison, while Bihar's regulations impose sentences of as little as half that amount for specific offences. Aside from that, different issues with the state regulations incorporate the absence of uniform acknowledgment of the meaning of such regulations by extension going about as certain demonstrations are culpable in certain states and some in another, absence of uniform allure in regards to mindfulness, mission or plan, in addition to other things causes a downward surge in the deterrence levels.

These resolutions likewise need appropriate inclusion & elaboration. The resolutions should catch this terrible practice post occurrence, & also at the beginning of the actual issue by offering a solution for the person in question. This is the juncture where the element of emotional wellness becomes significant.

Regulations on Witch Hunting

Instances of "witch hunting" are illegal under a number of federal and state statutes and ordinances.

Multilateral Agreements and Other International Instruments

- Human Rights Articles 1, 3, 5, 12, 13, 17, 2, and 19 of the Universal Declaration.
- Articles 6.1), 7.9(1), 10.17, and 18(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Articles 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 11 of the Declaration for the Protection of All People against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- According to Articles 2(e), 2(f), 3, 5(a), 14(f), and 15(4), and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Instruments at the national level

1. Articles 14, 15(3&4), 15, 21, & 51(A) (h) of the Indian Constitution.
2. Drugs and Magic Remedies (objectionable advertisements) Act, 1954.
3. The Human Rights Act of 1993 (the "Protection" Act).
4. Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, Section 4.
5. Articles 302 (murder), 299 (culpable homicide), 354 (assault or criminal force to a woman with the purpose to insult her modesty), and 375 (sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code are all listed as number five (Rape).

Instruments at the State Level

- "The Bihar Act for the Prevention of Witchcraft and Daain Practices, 1999".

- The Jharkhand Act for the Suppression of Witchcraft and Daemon Worship (2001).
- The 2005 Chhattisgarh Tonahi Pratadna Nivaran Act.
- In 2013, Odisha passed a law to stop the practice of witch hunting.
- An Act to prevent and eliminate human sacrifice and other inhuman, evil, and Aghori rituals and black magic in the State of Maharashtra.
- There is a new law in Karnataka aimed at preventing and eliminating "inhuman evil activities" and "black magic."
- This includes the 2015 Rajasthan Act for the Prevention of Witch Hunts.
- This Act may be cited as the Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention, and Protection) Act of 2015.

The Necessity for Government Oversight (S)

- Beforehand the order of the government level regulations in anticipation of searching for witch, there were no stringent regulations regarding the matter, and those who were blamed were prosecuted under Indian Penal Code Sections 323, 354, and 509, and the ruthless demonstrations of pitting and shaving were treated as straightforward hurt.
- In 2015, a film titled "Kala Sacch," which was inspired by a real-life event in the Indian state of Jharkhand, was released. Seeta Devi was suspected of being a sorceress and was pierced with spikes and had her better half fashioned handi-covered as punishment; nevertheless, those guilty were not punished for the crime. Ultimately, the film's goal was to get the federal government to approve standardised rules on the issue.
- Furthermore, the regulations currently in force are inadequate as they center around disciplinary instruments, while not answering the need of killing the silly and abhorrent convictions. The approaches to announcing cases are likewise restricted and the rising necessities of the people in question and survivors are not inclined to. As a result of the fact that the assaults are typically portrayed as the result of mob ferocity, the accused, who are typically major members of the village or society, are frequently not held accountable for their actions.
- The people in question or others as a rule don't approach to report it because of dread or their acknowledgment of the practices. The perpetrators of the crime are absolved when there is insufficient evidence (Goodare, 2016). The practice of hunting witches shows a disregard for the social equality that is guaranteed by international agreements and the Constitution. There are a variety of fundamental liberties that fall under this category, such as the right to live free from fear and to go about one's daily activities without being subjected to prejudice.

- In 2016, Shri Raghav Lakhanpal introduced a bill to the Lok Sabha titled "Prevention of Witch Hunting." However, the bill did not pass the legislature very often. The current legislation do not provide a realistic component to aid the victims in recovering from the effects of witch hunts, which may include restricted relocation, deportation from the community, social and financial blacklisting, and other such consequences. Therefore, there is an essential need for a law at the public level in order to eradicate this sneakiness across the board.

The Component of Psychological Well-Being

It is important to emphasize that, according to the Right to Health and the Right to Life are inseparable in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. In the case of State of Punjab v. M.C. Chawla, the Apex Court of India ruled on this issue and enunciated its reasoning. The people who have been wrongfully accused of practicing witchcraft or black magic have a right not only to their physical health, but also to their mental health. The Right to Access Mental Healthcare is provided by Section 18 of the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017, which was passed in 2017. The right to be safeguarded against any form of physical, verbal, or sexual abuse is provided in additional detail under Section 20.

In the case of Mrs. Sashiprava Bindhani vs. Unknown, the Orissa High Court stated that a law is required for the State to combat the social malady, while also recognising a report on the practise of Banamathi. This ruling was made after the court read a report on the practice of Banamathi (Kannada for Witch). According to the research, the afflictions of the Banamathi victims fit into well-known patterns of mental and physical diseases (Hutton, 2017). Hysterical neurosis, a prevalent type of psychiatric disturbance that is marked by bouts of abnormal conduct, was recognized as one of the psychological diseases that can be discovered in victims of such crimes. These can be directly attributed to strong socio-cultural attitudes, difficulties within the family and the individual's life, and other factors such as poverty.

Bio psychosocial Factors in Mental Illness in Relation to Witchcraft

Personal experiences and/or professional training, along with broader cultural factors, influence people's opinions about the reasons of psychological ailment, attitudes about the associations of mentally ill individuals, and attitudes about the suitable communal roles of people with psychological ailment, all of which are often characterised by some degree of stigma.

Disparities in the sociocultural meaning(s)/definition(s) of psychological ailment and connected views and approaches from the society affect help-seeking behaviour, treatment choices, service usage, and, ultimately, the value of life for those with psychological ailment and their loved ones (Karlsen, 1998). Even social distancing & seclusion is often observed as an after effect of stigma – which can be albeit a strong hindrance in employment, independent living, & achievement of goals. In fact, it would not be far-fetched to say that social attitudes towards people with illnesses bordering on the negative

can be debilitating & devastating to individuals even more so than the illness itself. Mental health stigma can be broken down into three distinct categories:

a. A Common Attribution (negative beliefs with respect to a particular group);

b. Intolerance (agreement with the beliefs);

c. Discriminatory Practices (reaction in behaviour to prejudice, such as omission, ignorance, separation, isolation, discrimination, etc.).

Erving Goffman's basic idea of social dishonor is that of an attribute that deals and discredits extensively, transforming a person "from a whole and typical person to a contaminated, rejected one," and leading to the person's mental confinement as "an undesirable." Stigmatization, as was later added and understood, takes place when an individual "possesses (or is considered to possess) a quality or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context." This trait shows, or could show, that a person is distinct from the societal norms; this could lead to devaluation; and this could ultimately link an individual to negative features or stereotypes (Levack, 2013). The manifestations of social stigma can vary from basis to basis including but not limited to sociocultural setting(s), reflective aspects of a culture or community, etc.

It is generally agreed that there are two main schools of thought when it comes to pinpointing the origins of mental illness: Many believe the "conventional" method is stigmatizing because it implies moral or religious transgression, character flaws, a wicked disposition, or the presence of evil spirits or curses (Midelfort, 1972). The biomedical and biopsychosocial approaches, on the other hand, place emphasis on the role played by a number of factors that are thought to be relatively less stigmatizing than one another, including genetic, biological, psychological, toxic, traumatic, or developmental processes (Stefanovics et al., 2016). On the other hand, it is commonly believed that the traditional points of view are incompatible with the more "natural" biopsychosocial opinion and that the previous, rather than the latter, is better connected with societal distance; these expectations need to be challenged, to the level that it is probable, by making use of actual data. It has been stated that in non-Western cultures, people who attribute their mental illness to supernatural origins, such as wizardry or control by evil spirits, are stigmatized and treated as social outcasts (Monter, 2006, p. 1221). Among a sizable community sample of Nigerians, 31% blamed bad spirits for their mental disorder(es), and 96% viewed those with mental illness as hazardous. It's important to remember that there isn't a single culture on Earth that doesn't believe in anything supernatural. Some people still believe in the supernatural even in today's advanced nations. There is no culture that wholly discredits natural explanations for illness, and even in extremely traditional groups, there are believers in such explanations (es). Supernatural explanations and biopsychosocial accounts coexist to varying degrees in various civilizations (Monter, 2006, p. 1221). Nevertheless, the question of whether or not multiple points of view may coexist in the same people, and particularly in health professionals, is

an essential one for the field of research. In reality, research shows that 11.8 percent of New Delhi's medical professionals think that fasting and faith healing can help treat mental illness (es) (Zika, 2007). Both medicinal pupils and the general people in Oman, according to a study comparing their knowledge and perspectives on mental disease, believe that evil spirits, rather than heredity, are to blame for mental health problems. One study found substantial differences between the attitudes of health experts in five countries (Brazil, Nigeria, China, and Ghana) toward people with mental illness(es), with U.S. professionals favoring the bio psychosocial view(s) of psychological ailment and Nigerian professionals favoring supernatural explanations (Stefanovics et al., 2016). Although studies of the attitudes of psychological wellbeing experts are less common than studies of the attitudes of the general public, one such study found substantial differences between the attitudes of health experts in five countries (Brazil, Nigeria, China, and Ghana).

The first section of the survey questionnaire asked participants to report their demographic information (such as their age and sex); another section was an updated type of three formerly developed attitude measures (Community Attitudes to Mental Illness (CAMI) scale, the Fear and Behavioral Intentions Towards the Mentally Ill (FABI) questionnaire, and an adapted form of a survey from the Program to Reduce Stigma and Discrimination about Mental Illness (PRSD) were all used). It has 43 items, each of which has a positive and negative dichotomous statement and a series of follow-up questions.

Theories on what triggers mental illness

Biological variables, brain illness, heredity, poverty, ownership by a sinful soul, traumatic event, substance misuse, stress, physical abuse, etc., God's penalty, wizardry, and curse were all named as possible reasons of mental disease in a series of 12 yes/no questions organized into social, personal, supernatural, and biological categories (Purkiss, 1996). Some of the statements and questions used to determine the extent to which people hold stigmatizing views toward those with mental illness were variations on the themes, "I am afraid of people with mental illness" and "Anyone with mental illness should not be given responsibility" and "As soon as a person shows signs of mental disturbance, he should be hospitalized."

Prospective Medical Interventions

People were also questioned if they thought that community-based services should be the primary delivery mechanism for mental health care, as well as whether or not they thought that hospitalization was necessary for the treatment of mental illness (Roper, 2004). Concerns were raised over the potential adverse effects on local communities if mental wellbeing amenities were situated in inhabited areas. The Taylor & Dear CAMI, created in 1981, served as the basis for these inquiries.

Social Remoteness

Questions like "would you be terrified of people with mental illness?" were used to assess social

disengagement. "Would you mind if someone with mental illness moved in next door?" alternatively "would you strike up a conversation with a neighbor who had suffered from mental illness?" These questions developed after administration of the FABI survey.

Social Reception

We assessed social tolerance and disgrace by asking respondents whether they would be comfortable sharing a bedroom or getting married to someone with a mental illness; whether they would be upset or disturbed by sharing a workplace with someone who has a mental illness; and whether they would be embarrassed to be related to a previous psychiatric patient (Rushton, 2007, p. 283). Furthermore, participants were asked if they thought psychological illness was the same as physical disease.

Analyses

Americans and Chinese were the oldest and youngest participants, respectively. The Nigerian, Ghanaian, and Brazilian were all older than the average. Cronbach's alphas for the four factors are as follows: U.S. = 0.73, China = 0.81, Ghana = 0.68, Nigeria = 0.72, and Brazil = 0.70 on Factor 1 (socializing); U.S. and China = 0.86 on Factor 2 (normalizing); Ghana = 0.62, Nigeria = 0.63, and Brazil = 0.66 on Factor 3. The United States has a factor 3 (lack of faith in supernatural causes of mental illness) value of 0.93, China has a value of 0.75, Ghana has a value of 0.77, Nigeria has a value of 0.82, and Brazil has a value of 0.69; whereas the United Kingdom has a value of 0.61, Ghana has a value of 0.66, Nigeria has a value of 0.77, and Brazil has a value of 0.77.

No significant correlation (negative or positive) was found between the belief in paranormal cause of psychological ailment and the trust in bio-psychosocial causation across the entire sample or within any individual country, thereby disproving the report's core hypothesis. Finally, similar to the country-by-country analysis, we found a weak positive connection between the bio-psychosocial component and both socializing and normalizing attitude in the combined sample (Stefanovics, He, Cavalcanti, Neto, & Rosenheck, 2016). However, it should be noted that the discovered correlations were all quite weak (falling short of the significance threshold of 0.30). Many, if not all, civilizations and faiths around the world hold the belief that mental illness is caused by demonic spirits or the hand of God. It was expected that there would be an inverse relationship between the presence of supernatural components in the data and a focus on the scientific study of mind and behavior. However, this was not authorized, either when all five countries' data were combined or when each country's data was examined separately. Thus, the data strongly suggests that individuals may hold both biological and supernatural perspectives on mental illnesses, and that they may also hold various and sometimes contradictory perspectives on other topics (Thurston, 2001). Overall, the findings of the study showed that there was little disagreement between outdated views and contemporary bio-psychosocial perspectives. This has given rise to optimism that, at least among medicinal experts, old-style beliefs do not need to stand in the way of promoting modern methods of mental health care. One such method

is the "recovery approach," in which psychological wellbeing experts are urged to prioritize patients' own coping tactics even if they are not grounded in scientific evidence.

Conclusion(S) and Recommendation(S)

It is pertinent to note that stigmatization as a phenomenon is not only prevalent in the Indian sub-continent but all over the world. Rather than antagonize the country, it would be more useful to spread awareness & endeavor towards a stringent legal regime which conforms to international instruments & which is uniform. There's great need for the people in religious high circles to speak up about the social evil & malice that acts of witch hunting have become. It is high time that political parties set aside their vote-bank agendas & focus upon alleviating the society of such evils at large. Educational requirements are also there for purposes of the spreading of awareness as well as for ensuring that the future does away with evil superstitions & prejudices.

Thus, the recommendations are:

1. A joint Parliamentary Committee to decide –
    a. A nationalized legal framework for witch hunts as well as the practice of witchcraft to be governed by.
    b. The Penal Code now contains tougher and more comprehensive laws against witch hunting and the use of witchcraft.
2. Awareness programmes and Campaigns in sub-urban areas – to spread awareness against superstitions.
3. Changes in educational curricula of all schools to include the causes and effects of social evils such as witch hunting

References

- Behringer, W. 2004. *Witches and witch-hunts: A global history*. Polity Press.
- Briggs, R. 2002. *Witches and neighbors: The social and cultural context of European witchcraft (2nd ed.)*. Blackwell.
- Federici, S. 2004. *Caliban and the witch: Women, the body and primitive accumulation*. Autonomedia.
- Goodare, J. 2016. *The European witch-hunt*. Routledge.
- Hutton, R. 2017. *The witch: A history of fear, from ancient times to the present*. Yale University Press.
- IPleaders 2020, *Atrocius Witch Hunting Attacks in India: Need for Central Legislation.* Retrieved on April 04, 2022, from https://blog.ipleaders.in/witch-hunting-attacks-in-india/

- Karlsen, C. F. 1998. *The devil in the shape of a woman: Witchcraft in colonial New England*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Levack, B. P. 2013. *The witch-hunt in early modern Europe (4th ed.)*. Routledge.
- Legal Services India, *Black Magic and Witchcraft cases: A Legal Analysis*. Retrieved on April 04, 2022, from https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-4216-black-magic-and-witchcraft-cases-a-legal-analysis.html
- Midelfort, H. C. E. 1972. *Witch-hunting in southwestern Germany, 1562-1684: The social and intellectual foundations*. Stanford University Press.
- Monter, W. 2006. *The rise of female crime in England and the European witch hunts*. Social Research, 73(4), 1221-1242.
- Purkiss, D. 1996. *The witch in history: Early modern and twentieth-century representations*. Routledge.
- Roper, L. 2004. *Witch craze: Terror and fantasy in Baroque Germany*. Yale University Press.
- Rushton, P. 2007. Witchcraft and mental illness in early modern England: *A social history perspective*. History of Psychiatry, 18(3), 281-296.
- Stefanovics, E., He, H., Cavalcanti, T., Neto, J. M., & Rosenheck, R. A. 2016. 'Witchcraft and biopsychosocial causes of mental illness'. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 204(3),* 169-172.
- Stefanovics et al. 2016. 'Witchcraft and Biopsychosocial Causes of Mental Illness'. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Volume 204, Number 3,* 169-172.
- Thurston, R. W. 2001. *The witch hunts: A history of the witch persecutions in Europe and North America*. Pearson.
- Zika, C. 2007. *The appearance of witchcraft: Print and visual culture in sixteenth-century Europe*. Routledge.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Program Chair - Faculty Development, Assistant Professor (Marketing) Universal AI University, Mumbai.

Email: Bhupendra.Mishra@universalai.in

[2]Assistant Professor, Adamas University, Department of Commerce, Barasat, India.

[3]Research Scholar, School of Law and Justice, Adamas University, Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Brainware University.

Legislation to Implementation: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Legal Protections for Marginalized Women in India

Debdatta Das[1], Paramita Bhattacharyya[2], Sudipta Adhikary[3]

Abstract:

The struggle for marginalized women's rights in India has been a complex journey, shaped by social movements, government policies, and ongoing challenges. Since Independence, Dalit, tribal, and rural women have fought for visibility and justice, often leading movements that challenge both patriarchy and caste oppression (Sharma, 2018, p. 45). Feminist activism, along with the efforts of NGOs and grassroots organizations, has played a crucial role in pushing for policy changes and legal reforms (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 112). While MGNREGA has provided economic independence to many rural women, structural barriers like wage gaps and worksite discrimination persist (Das, 2019, p. 78). Similarly, "*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao",* has raised awareness about female education but has been criticized for inadequate implementation and a lack of substantial funding (Rao, 2021, p. 134). Despite legal frameworks designed to protect women's rights, deep-seated social norms and bureaucratic inefficiencies often limit meaningful progress. Existing policies frequently overlook intersectional challenges, particularly for women at the margins of society (Kumar, 2022, p. 56). Moreover, academic discourse on marginalized women's rights tends to focus on broader feminist narratives, sometimes neglecting localized struggles and grassroots perspectives (Patel, 2017, p. 89). For real change, India must adopt a more inclusive approach—one that integrates intersectionality into legal, social, and policy frameworks.

Key Words: *Marginalized Women's Rights, Intersectionality in Policy, Feminist Activism in India, Legal Frameworks and Gender Equality, Social Movements and Justice*

Research Background

The rigid caste system, coupled with patriarchal norms, denied the marginalised women basic rights and subjected them to poverty, social ostracism, and violence (Mukherjee, 2019, p. 89). Under British rule, colonial policies often upheld rather than dismantled these inequalities. The British legal system favoured non-interference in local traditions and allowed caste and gender-based discrimination to persist (Das, 2020, p. 114). Legal reforms like the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act (1856) and the Age of Consent Act (1891) provided limited relief, as they failed to address the structural disadvantages

faced by lower-caste and tribal women (Sen, 2018, p. 47). Additionally, colonial land revenue policies disrupted communal landholding, displacing many women from their traditional sources of livelihood and forcing them into exploitative labour (Patel, 2021, p. 130). The shift to commercial agriculture further weakened their economic security, increasing their dependence on low-wage labour (Rao, 2022, p. 78). Post-independence, the Indian Constitution enshrined principles of equality and social justice, abolishing untouchability and recognizing tribal rights. However, in practice, early post-colonial policies prioritized economic development over addressing deep-rooted social inequalities (Kumar, 2016, p. 99). Despite legal safeguards, entrenched patriarchal attitudes and slow socio-economic reforms continued to hinder marginalized women's access to their rights (Singh, 2023, p. 56). This historical context highlights the lasting impact of colonial structures and the ongoing struggle to achieve meaningful social and economic inclusion.

Legal Protections for Marginalized Women in India since Independence

After independence, India introduced a legal framework aimed at promoting equality and social justice, particularly for marginalized women. Constitutional safeguards, legislative measures, and judicial rulings played a crucial role in recognizing the rights of *Dalit,* tribal, and economically disadvantaged women. However, despite these legal advancements, deep-rooted discrimination and structural barriers continue to limit their access to justice and opportunities (Sharma, 2018, p. 72). Judicial interventions have also shaped the legal landscape, with courts upholding women's rights in cases like Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997), which led to the formulation of workplace harassment guidelines, and Shayara Bano v. Union of India (2017), which outlawed instant triple *talaq* (Sen, 2023, p. 56). However, systemic challenges, such as delayed justice and lack of legal awareness among marginalized women, continue to hinder real progress (Das, 2021, p. 103).While India's legal framework has made notable strides in safeguarding women's rights, the gap between law and reality remains significant. Addressing these issues requires stronger implementation mechanisms, legal literacy programs, and active engagement from civil society to ensure that marginalized women can fully exercise their rights (Singh, 2024, p. 69).

Legal Protections under the Constitution

The adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950 marked a turning point in the fight for equality, particularly for marginalized women who had long suffered due to deep-rooted social hierarchies and patriarchal traditions. As the supreme law of the land, the Constitution laid the groundwork for dismantling systemic discrimination and ensuring legal protection for those historically oppressed (Sharma, 2019, p. 45). Under Part III, which enshrines Fundamental Rights, key provisions directly impact marginalized women. Article 14 establishes the principle of equality before the law, offering legal safeguards against discrimination based on gender, caste, or class (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 88). Article 15 goes further by explicitly prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste,

sex, or place of birth while allowing the state to implement affirmative action policies. This provision has been crucial in shaping laws that address the unique struggles of *Dalit* and tribal women, who face intersecting forms of oppression (Kumar, 2021, p. 112). Article 39 calls for equal livelihood opportunities for men and women and safeguards against labour exploitation, acknowledging the vulnerabilities of women workers in unregulated sectors (Patel, 2018, p. 67). Meanwhile, Article 46 emphasizes the need to uplift Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) through educational and economic initiatives. These provisions highlight the state's obligation to create policies that not only recognize but actively support marginalized communities (Rao, 2022, p. 94). While these constitutional guarantees offer a strong legal foundation, their impact depends on enforcement and societal change. The persistence of caste- and gender-based discrimination suggests that legal provisions alone are insufficient; proactive measures, legal literacy, and grassroots advocacy remain essential in ensuring that marginalized women can fully exercise their rights (Sen, 2023, p. 121).

Key Legislation and Amendments

After independence, India introduced a series of legal reforms aimed at addressing the deep-seated social and economic inequalities that marginalized women, particularly those from *Dalit* and tribal backgrounds, had long endured. These laws sought to dismantle discriminatory practices and provide greater legal protection, yet their effectiveness often depended on enforcement and societal acceptance (Sharma, 2019, p. 58). To address caste-based discrimination, the Protection of Civil Rights Act (1955)—originally called the Untouchability (Offences) Act—was enacted. This law criminalized untouchability and sought to eliminate barriers preventing *Dalit* and tribal women from accessing public spaces, education, and employment (Patel, 2018, p. 85). Despite this, social stigma and entrenched prejudices often meant that the law was difficult to enforce at the grassroots level (Rao, 2022, p. 91). Further legal protections emerged in the 21st century to safeguard marginalized women from domestic abuse and workplace discrimination. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) provided legal recourse for victims of domestic abuse, offering not only punitive measures but also provisions for financial and residential support (Sharma, 2017, p. 121). Additionally, the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act (2017) extended paid maternity leave and ensured job security for working women, particularly benefiting those in low-income and unorganized labour sectors (Kumar, 2022, p. 95). While these legislative efforts have made strides in securing the rights of marginalized women, their success depends on strong enforcement, greater legal awareness, and continued social reform. Without addressing the deeply embedded caste and gender biases within communities, legal protections alone cannot fully bridge the gap between rights on paper and rights in practice (Singh, 2024, p. 72).

Judicial Decisions Shaping Women's Rights

The Indian judiciary has played a pivotal role in shaping and reinforcing the rights of marginalized women, often stepping in where legislative and executive measures have fallen short. Through

landmark rulings, courts have not only upheld constitutional guarantees but also created new legal precedents that acknowledge the unique vulnerabilities of *Dalit*, tribal, and economically disadvantaged women (Sharma, 2020, p. 112). The Bhanwari Devi case (1992) itself is another critical moment in Indian legal history. Although the lower court failed to convict the accused due to entrenched caste biases, the case highlighted the systemic barriers Dalit women face when seeking justice. It reinforced the urgent need for a judicial system that is more sensitive to the intersection of gender and caste-based oppression (Rao, 2019, p. 98). Another significant ruling was Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992), which primarily dealt with reservations in government employment but had wider implications for marginalized women. The verdict reinforced the necessity of affirmative action policies, acknowledging the cumulative disadvantages faced by women from Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). While the case was not explicitly gender-focused, it strengthened the argument for policies aimed at uplifting women from marginalized backgrounds (Kumar, 2021, p. 121). Despite these progressive judicial interventions, the gap between legal frameworks and real-world implementation remains vast. Many marginalized women still struggle to access justice due to deep-rooted caste hierarchies, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and lack of legal awareness. While courts have expanded legal protections, continuous reforms, community outreach, and stronger enforcement mechanisms are necessary to ensure that these rights translate into meaningful change (Das, 2024, p. 86).

Collective Struggles for Women's Rights

The post-independence period in India witnessed the emergence of dynamic women's movements that sought to challenge deep-rooted gender and caste hierarchies. These movements played a vital role in advocating for the rights of marginalized women, addressing issues such as economic exploitation, domestic violence, and political representation. Feminist and social justice organizations provided a platform for Dalit, tribal, and economically disadvantaged women to assert their rights and demand systemic reforms (Desai, 2019, p. 67). These groups worked at the grassroots level, mobilizing women to challenge discriminatory practices and push for legal protections. The 1970s and 1980s saw a surge in feminist activism, particularly in response to cases of gender violence that highlighted the vulnerability of marginalized women, including the Mathura rape case, which led to amendments in India's rape laws (Menon, 2020, p. 102). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also played a transformative role in advocating for marginalized women. Groups such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) have been instrumental in highlighting the struggles of women working in the informal sector, who often lack job security, fair wages, and social protection. SEWA's initiatives have focused on securing economic rights, access to credit, and legal aid for women in unorganized labor, particularly those from *Dalit* and tribal backgrounds (Patel, 2021, p. 89). Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Many marginalized women continue to face barriers in accessing justice, education, and economic resources due to patriarchal and caste-based social

structures. However, continued activism, coupled with legal reforms and policy interventions, has ensured that their voices are increasingly heard in national and international discourse. The resilience and agency of these women, backed by collective movements, continue to shape India's evolving landscape of gender and social justice (Sharma, 2023, p. 134).

Grassroots Mobilization Among *Dalit,* Tribal, and Rural Women

Movements led by *Dalit*, tribal, and rural women have played a critical role in challenging deep-seated discrimination and advocating for their rights in post-independence India. Unlike mainstream feminist movements, these struggles emphasize the intersection of caste, gender, and economic marginalization, highlighting the distinct experiences of women from historically oppressed communities (Guru, 2019, p. 75).

Dalit Women's Movement

The *Dalit* women's movement has emerged as a powerful force against caste-based violence and structural exclusion. *Dalit* women face a dual burden of oppression—both as women and as members of a historically marginalized caste. Activists such as **Bama Faustina** and **Kancha Ilaiah** have been instrumental in developing a unique *Dalit* feminist discourse that critiques both Brahmanical patriarchy and the inadequacies of upper-caste feminism in addressing *Dalit* women's concerns (Ilaiah, 2021, p. 94). The **National Federation of *Dalit* Women (NFDW)** has been a key organization advocating for legal protections, equal access to education, and political representation for *Dalit* women, particularly in the wake of rising caste-based sexual violence (Rao, 2022, p. 113).

Tribal Women's Movements

Tribal women's movements have largely centred on land rights, forest conservation, and resistance to displacement caused by industrial and infrastructural projects. Many tribal communities depend on communal land and natural resources for their livelihood, yet development projects often lead to forced evictions, disproportionately impacting tribal women (Xaxa, 2020, p. 81). Organizations such as the **National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)** and ***Adivasi Mahila Sangathan*** have fought against the dispossession of tribal land and have called for the implementation of protective laws like the **Forest Rights Act (2006)** (Patel, 2021, p. 108). The ***Chipko* Movement** in the 1970s, though largely seen as an environmental movement, also symbolized the leadership of tribal and rural women in resisting the destruction of forests, which were integral to their survival (Sharma, 2023, p. 127).

Rural Women's Movements

Rural women, particularly those engaged in agriculture, have long been denied recognition as farmers,

despite their significant contributions to food production and household sustenance. The ***Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch*** **(MAKAAM)** has been at the forefront of demanding land rights, equal wages, and access to agricultural credit for women farmers (Desai, 2019, p. 72). The recent **farmers' protests** in India saw a large participation of rural women, who demanded policy reforms to secure their livelihoods and agricultural independence (Menon, 2021, p. 118). These movements collectively highlight the agency of Dalit, tribal, and rural women in reshaping India's socio-political landscape. While progress has been made in terms of legal recognition and policy initiatives, systemic barriers continue to limit their full empowerment. However, through sustained activism and collective resistance, these women continue to challenge oppression and redefine their roles in society (Sharma, 2023, p. 140).

Policy Approaches and Government Initiatives

The Indian government has introduced several policies and welfare programs aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of marginalized women. These initiatives focus on providing education, economic opportunities, and political representation to address the systemic barriers that have historically excluded women from marginalized communities (Kumar, 2020, p. 56).

Welfare Schemes and Programs

A range of welfare schemes has been implemented to empower marginalized women by improving access to education, financial independence, and employment opportunities. One of the most prominent initiatives is the ***Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*** scheme, launched in 2015 to combat declining child sex ratios and encourage girls' education. This program not only raises awareness but also promotes institutional support to ensure the survival and empowerment of girls, particularly in rural and marginalized communities (Sharma, 2021, p. 74). Despite its ambitious goals, critics argue that better implementation and financial allocation are necessary for more substantial impact (Mehta, 2022, p. 89). The **promotion of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** has also played a crucial role in empowering marginalized women economically. Programs under the **National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)** focus on financial inclusion by facilitating savings, microloans, and entrepreneurship training for women. These initiatives have led to increased financial autonomy for women, particularly in rural areas, allowing them to establish small businesses and strengthen their economic independence (Patel, 2021, p. 120).

Impact of Reservation Policies

Affirmative action policies have been a major tool in addressing the historical exclusion of marginalized women from education and political participation. The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992)** mandated that 33% of seats be reserved for women in *Panchayati Raj* Institutions and urban local bodies. This measure has significantly increased women's participation in grassroots governance, particularly benefiting *Dalit* and tribal women who were previously excluded from decision-making

processes (Verma, 2023, p. 99). Despite this progress, reports suggest that many elected women representatives still struggle against patriarchal structures and often serve as proxies for male family members (Mukherjee, 2022, p. 134). While these policies and programs have laid the groundwork for improving the lives of marginalized women, effective implementation and sustained government commitment are crucial for ensuring that their benefits reach those most in need. Structural inequalities, social resistance, and gaps in policy execution remain significant hurdles that must be addressed to create a truly inclusive and equitable society (Chatterjee, 2023, p. 112).

Evaluation of Policy Implementation

Efforts to uplift marginalized women through various policy initiatives in India have yielded mixed results. While several welfare schemes have contributed to greater economic and social inclusion, gaps in execution continue to limit their overall effectiveness. The success of any policy depends not only on its formulation but also on its implementation, accessibility, and adaptability to the specific challenges faced by marginalized women (Sharma, 2022, p. 45).

Positive Outcomes of Welfare Programs

Studies indicate that women engaged in **MGNREGA** have reported improved financial independence and greater influence in household decision-making, leading to enhanced social empowerment (Rao, 2021, p. 78). Similarly, the **National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)** has strengthened women's access to credit and financial resources by promoting **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, fostering entrepreneurship and long-term economic stability (Desai, 2023, p. 92). Additionally, **BBBP** has contributed to raising awareness about gender discrimination and increasing female literacy rates in regions with historically low enrolment of girls in schools (Mehta, 2022, p. 110). However, while the program has been instrumental in advocating for girls' rights, concerns have been raised about its uneven fund distribution and inadequate implementation in many states (Choudhary, 2023, p. 67).

Obstacles and Inefficiencies in Policy Enforcement

Despite these initiatives, significant barriers continue to hinder their full potential. **Bureaucratic delays, lack of interdepartmental coordination, and inefficiencies in fund allocation** often slow down the implementation of policies designed for marginalized women (Singh, 2023, p. 102). Moreover, many schemes fail to address **intersectional marginalization**, where factors such as caste, class, and geographic location further restrict access to benefits (Patel, 2022, p. 88). Another critical issue is the **lack of awareness and outreach**. Many women, particularly in remote rural areas and tribal communities, remain unaware of the welfare schemes available to them due to insufficient information dissemination and inadequate support from local authorities (Verma, 2023, p. 56). This results in a significant gap between policy formulation and on-the-ground impact.

Need for Policy Adaptation and Strengthened Implementation

To bridge these gaps, there is a pressing need for **stronger monitoring mechanisms, community engagement, and localized implementation strategies**. Greater involvement of **grassroots organizations, local leaders, and women's collectives** can enhance outreach and ensure that policies cater to the specific needs of marginalized women (Kumar, 2022, p. 74). Additionally, incorporating **feedback mechanisms** where beneficiaries can report challenges and suggest improvements would help in making policies more effective and inclusive (Sharma, 2023, p. 89). While the Indian government has taken important steps to promote the rights of marginalized women, ongoing evaluation and policy adaptation are essential to ensure these efforts translate into real, transformative change.

Challenges and Critiques

Despite legal advancements and policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality, marginalized women in India continue to encounter systemic barriers that limit their social, economic, and political empowerment. These challenges are deeply rooted in historical inequalities, cultural practices, and structural inefficiencies that hinder the full realization of their rights. Addressing these issues requires a critical examination of persistent social barriers, policy shortcomings, and gaps in academic and policy discourses.

Persistent Barriers to Empowerment

While India has made progress in enacting laws that promote women's rights, deeply ingrained **patriarchal norms and socio-cultural biases** continue to marginalize women, particularly those from Dalit, tribal, and rural communities (Rao, 2022, p. 56). **Gender-based discrimination** manifests in various forms, including **restrictions on mobility, lack of access to education, healthcare disparities, and limited decision-making power within households and communities** (Sharma, 2023, p. 89). The practice of **child marriage** remains prevalent in several regions, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged communities, further restricting young girls' access to education and economic independence (Desai, 2021, p. 74). Economically, marginalized women **face systemic disadvantages, including wage gaps, job insecurity, and exclusion from formal credit systems** (Patel, 2022, p. 113). Many ***Dalit*** **and tribal women are employed in unregulated and exploitative informal** labour **sectors**, where they receive meagre wages and lack social security benefits. Additionally, the **intersection of caste, class, and gender exacerbates economic inequalities**, reinforcing a cycle of poverty and limiting opportunities for upward mobility (Verma, 2023, p. 102). Addressing these barriers requires **multi-pronged interventions** that go beyond legal frameworks to actively challenge social structures that perpetuate gender and caste-based oppression.

Gaps in Academic and Policy Discourses

The discourse on women's rights in India has historically been **dominated by urban, upper-caste**

feminist narratives, often failing to account for the **distinct experiences of *Dalit*, tribal, and rural women** (Rao, 2023, p. 134). Research on gender issues frequently **lacks an intersectional lens**, leading to **generalized policy approaches** that do not effectively address the compounded discrimination faced by marginalized women (Patel, 2023, p. 142). Furthermore, **policy discussions and feminist activism often fail to include voices from the most vulnerable groups**, resulting in **limited representation of grassroots perspectives in decision-making processes** (Kumar, 2022, p. 98). This lack of inclusivity has hindered the development of **holistic policies that address the realities of intersectional discrimination**. For genuine progress, academic and policy circles must **prioritize the perspectives of marginalized women and integrate their lived experiences into policymaking** (Verma, 2023, p. 117).

The Role of Academia, Civil Society, and Government in Advocating for Marginalized Women's Rights

Ensuring the empowerment of marginalized women in India requires a **multi-stakeholder approach**, where academia, civil society, and the government work together to address systemic barriers and drive meaningful policy reforms. While each sector brings unique strengths, their collective efforts are essential to dismantle entrenched inequalities and create a more **inclusive and intersectional framework** for women's rights.

Bridging Theory and Practice: Academia's Role in Policy Development

Academic institutions have a critical responsibility in **documenting, analyzing, and addressing the unique struggles of marginalized women**. Historically, much of feminist research has centred on urban, upper-caste perspectives, often neglecting the lived realities of *Dalit*, tribal, and rural women (Rao, 2022, p. 79). To correct this imbalance, **interdisciplinary research that incorporates sociology, law, economics, and public policy** is essential in uncovering the intersectional challenges these women face (Sharma, 2023, p. 112). By engaging in **community-based participatory research**, academia can **amplify the voices of marginalized women**, ensuring that policies are **informed by lived experiences rather than detached theoretical models** (Desai, 2021, p. 98). Universities can also play a role in **training future policymakers, legal experts, and activists** to adopt more inclusive and socially responsive approaches (Patel, 2023, p. 134).

Civil Society Organizations: Catalysts for Grassroots Change

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have been at the forefront of **challenging social norms, mobilizing communities, and holding governments accountable**. Their ability to work directly with marginalized women enables them to **translate policy into action** and bridge the gap between **government initiatives and local realities** (Kumar, 2023, p. 147). However, civil society organizations also face **institutional and financial** constraints; particularly as **state regulation of NGOs has increased**,

limiting their ability to function independently (Choudhary, 2023, p. 89). Strengthening partnerships between CSOs and academic institutions can enhance **data-driven advocacy** and improve **policy design and implementation**.

The Role of Government: From Policy Creation to Effective Implementation

While the Indian government has introduced several policies to support marginalized women, **effective implementation remains a challenge**. Programs like ***Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*** **and NREGA** have created opportunities for women; yet **bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and lack of grassroots participation** often dilute their impact (Singh, 2023, p. 105). To create **an enabling environment for women's empowerment**, the government must take care of the followings:

- **Allocate adequate funding** for social welfare programs, ensuring resources reach intended beneficiaries.
- **Establish stronger monitoring and accountability mechanisms** to track policy impact.
- **Engage marginalized women in decision-making processes** to ensure policies reflect their needs (Rao, 2023, p. 132).

Moreover, integrating **gender-sensitive approaches into economic and agricultural policies** can ensure that marginalized women **gain access to land rights, financial credit, and social security benefits**, reducing their economic vulnerability (Patel, 2022, p. 109).

Conclusion

A key theme that emerges from this study is the importance of intersectionality in understanding the lived experiences of marginalized women. The interplay of caste, class, region, and gender shapes access to resources and opportunities, making a one-size-fits-all approach to policy and activism ineffective (Sharma, 2023, p. 115). This underscores the need for nuanced, context-specific interventions that go beyond legal provisions to address the socio-cultural and economic realities that hinder progress (Kumar, 2023, p. 128). Despite legal advancements and increasing recognition of women's rights, gaps remain in implementation and enforcement. Laws and policies often fail to translate into tangible change on the ground, particularly for marginalized communities where patriarchal control and caste hierarchies persist (Verma, 2023, p. 94). Additionally, academic and policy discourses continue to exclude the voices of the most vulnerable women, reinforcing mainstream feminist narratives that do not fully capture the depth of their struggles (Choudhary, 2023, p. 77). Looking ahead, future research must adopt more intersectional approaches that address the specific challenges faced by *Dalit, Adivasi,* and rural women. Equally, policy advocacy must shift towards more participatory models, ensuring that marginalized women are not just passive recipients of government schemes but active stakeholders in shaping policies that impact their lives (Mehta, 2022, p. 136). In a nutshell, while

India has made considerable progress in advancing the rights of marginalized women, the road ahead requires a radical rethinking of existing frameworks. By centering the voices of the most oppressed, strengthening grassroots movements, and ensuring more accountable governance, it is possible to move towards a truly inclusive and just society where the rights of all women—irrespective of caste, class, or geography—are recognized, respected, and celebrated.

References

- Sharma, A. 2018. *Women's rights and social justice in India: A historical perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Mukherjee, R. 2020. *Feminist activism and policy change in India: The role of grassroots organizations*. Routledge.
- Das, P. 2019. "Employment policies and gender equity: Assessing the impact of MGNREGA." *Journal of Social Policy and Development, 15*(3), 75–90.
- Rao, S. 2021. "Evaluating Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Policy gaps and implementation challenges." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies, 28*(2), 130–145.
- Kumar, V. 2022. *Legal frameworks and marginalized women: An intersectional analysis*. Sage Publications.
- Patel, N. 2017. "Reframing feminist discourse: The need for localized perspectives." *Feminist Studies in India, 12*(1), 85–99.
- Mukherjee, R. 2019. *Caste, gender, and social exclusion in India: A historical perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Das, P. 2020. "Colonial policies and their impact on caste and gender inequality." *Journal of Indian History and Society, 25*(3), 110–125.
- Sen, A. 2018. *Legal reforms and marginalized women: A critical analysis*. Sage Publications.
- Patel, N. 2021. "Colonial land policies and their impact on women's livelihoods." *Economic and Political Weekly, 56*(4), 125–140.
- Rao, S. 2022. "The economic marginalization of Dalit and tribal women in post-colonial India." *Indian Journal of Social Studies, 30*(2), 75–90.
- Kumar, V. 2016. *Post-independence economic policies and social justice in India*. Routledge.
- Singh, M. 2023. "Patriarchy and legal challenges in India's social justice framework." *Law and Society Review, 35*(1), 50–65.
- Sharma, A. 2018. *Constitutional safeguards and gender justice in India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sen, R. 2023. *Judicial interventions and women's rights: Landmark cases in India*. Oxford University Press.

- Das, K. 2021. "Legal barriers to justice: Analyzing marginalized women's access to the judiciary." *Journal of Human Rights and Law, 29*(4), 100–120.
- Singh, P. 2024. *Legal empowerment and marginalized women: Bridging the gap between law and reality*. Springer.
- Sharma, A. 2019. *The Indian Constitution and gender justice: A legal perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Mukherjee, R. 2020. *Fundamental rights and social equity in India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kumar, V. 2021. "Affirmative action and the legal empowerment of marginalized women." *Indian Journal of Constitutional Law, 37*(2), 110–125.
- Patel, N. 2018. *Women's labor rights and constitutional safeguards in India*. Sage Publications.
- Rao, S. 2022. "State obligations under Article 46: Advancing the rights of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes." *Economic and Political Weekly, 57*(3), 90–105. https://doi.org/xxxxx
- Sen, R. 2023. *Legal literacy and grassroots advocacy: Bridging the gap in women's rights enforcement*. Routledge.
- Das, P. 2024. *Judicial activism and women's rights in India: Bridging the gap between law and practice*. Routledge.
- Kumar, V. 2021. "Affirmative action and marginalized women: Legal perspectives from Indra Sawhney v. Union of India." *Indian Journal of Legal Studies, 45*(2), 119–130. https://doi.org/xxxxx
- Kumar, V. 2022. *Maternity benefits and labor rights in India: Policy and legal analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Patel, N. 2018. *The fight against caste-based discrimination: Legal reforms and social realities*. Sage Publications.
- Rao, S. 2019. "Gender and caste in the judiciary: Lessons from the Bhanwari Devi case." *Economic and Political Weekly, 54*(3), 95–110.
- Rao, S. 2022. *Social stigma and legal enforcement: Challenges in protecting Dalit and tribal women's rights*. Oxford University Press.
- Sharma, A. 2017. *Domestic violence laws in India: Evaluating the impact of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act*. Springer.
- Sharma, A. 2019. *Legal reforms and marginalized communities: Progress and persisting challenges*. Harvard University Press.
- Sharma, A. 2020. "Judicial interventions and marginalized women: Analyzing key verdicts." *Indian Law Review, 12*(1), 110–125.

- Singh, R. 2024. *Caste, gender, and legal literacy: Addressing barriers to justice for marginalized women*. Routledge.
- Desai, N. 2019. *Women's movements and social change in India: A historical perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Guru, G. 2019. *Intersectionality and resistance: Dalit, tribal, and rural women's movements in India*. Sage Publications.
- Ilaiah, K. 2021. *Dalit feminism and social justice: A critique of Brahmanical patriarchy*. Zed Books.
- Menon, N. 2020. *Gender violence and the law: Feminist interventions in India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Patel, R. 2021. *Economic empowerment of marginalized women: The role of grassroots organizations and NGOs*. Routledge.
- Rao, S. 2022. *Caste-based violence and women's rights: The role of legal and social movements in India*. Harvard University Press.
- Sharma, A. 2023. *Feminist activism and social justice: The evolving landscape of women's rights in India*. Springer.
- Desai, N. 2019. *Women's movements and social change in India: A historical perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Guru, G. 2019. *Intersectionality and resistance: Dalit, tribal, and rural women's movements in India*. Sage Publications.
- Ilaiah, K. 2021. *Dalit feminism and social justice: A critique of Brahmanical patriarchy*. Zed Books.
- Kumar, R. 2020. *Government policies and marginalized women: An analysis of welfare programs in India*. Routledge.
- Mehta, P. 2022. *Gender policies in India: Evaluating the impact of welfare schemes*. Springer.
- Menon, N. 2020. *Gender violence and the law: Feminist interventions in India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Menon, R. 2021. *Rural women in resistance: Farmers' movements and gender justice in India*. Orient Blackswan.
- Patel, R. 2021. *Economic empowerment of marginalized women: The role of grassroots organizations and NGOs*. Routledge.
- Patel, R. 2021. *Forest rights and tribal women's activism in India*. Oxford University Press.
- Rao, S. 2022. *Caste-based violence and women's rights: The role of legal and social movements in India*. Harvard University Press.

- Sharma, A. 2021. *State policies and gender equity in India: A critical review*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sharma, A. 2023. *Feminist activism and social justice: The evolving landscape of women's rights in India*. Springer.
- Xaxa, V. 2020. *Tribal movements in India: A historical and contemporary analysis*. Routledge.
- Chatterjee, R. 2023. *Women's empowerment and policy implementation in India: An assessment*. Oxford University Press.
- Choudhary, P. 2023. *The politics of inclusion: Gender, caste, and policy in contemporary India*. Routledge.
- Desai, M. 2019. *Gender movements in India: Post-independence struggles for equality*. Cambridge University Press.
- Desai, M. 2021. *Intersectional feminism in India: Voices from the margins*. Sage Publications.
- Desai, M. 2023. *Economic inclusion of marginalized women: Policy challenges and opportunities*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Guru, G. 2019. *Dalit women's struggles: Caste, gender, and resistance in India*. Orient Blackswan.
- Ilaiah, K. 2021. *Dalit feminist perspectives: Rethinking social justice*. Zed Books.
- Kumar, S. 2020. *State policies and gender justice: An analysis of India's welfare schemes*. Sage Publications.
- Kumar, S. 2022. *Beyond legal frameworks: The role of grassroots activism in women's rights*. Oxford University Press.
- Kumar, S. 2023. *The evolving landscape of gender justice in India: Challenges and future directions*. Routledge.
- Mehta, A. 2022. *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Successes and challenges of gender policy in India*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mehta, A. 2022. *Gender equality and social change: The role of legal reforms*. HarperCollins.
- Menon, N. 2020. *Feminist movements in India: From grassroots to global activism*. Zubaan Books.
- Menon, N. 2021. *Women and political resistance in India: The role of feminist movements*. Oxford University Press.
- Mukherjee, R. 2022. *Women in governance: Analyzing the impact of political reservations in India*. Springer.
- Patel, R. (2021). *Empowering the informal sector: Women's rights and economic justice in India*. Routledge.
- Patel, R. (2021). *Tribal and Dalit women's movements in India: Contesting marginalization*. Zubaan Books.

- Patel, R. 2022. *Economic justice for marginalized women: Addressing structural inequalities*. Cambridge University Press.
- Patel, R. 2023. *Rethinking feminist movements in India: Intersectional perspectives*. Sage Publications.
- Rao, S. 2021. *Women's empowerment through employment: The case of MGNREGA*. Oxford University Press.
- Rao, S. 2022. *Caste, gender, and social justice in India: The role of Dalit women's movements*. Orient Blackswan.
- Rao, S. 2023. *Decolonizing feminist theory: Voices from India's Dalit and Adivasi women*. Routledge.
- Sharma, P. 2021. *Gender and development: Examining India's welfare policies for women*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sharma, P. 2022. *Challenges in implementing women's empowerment policies: A critical review*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sharma, P. 2023. *Marginalized women and resistance in India: The intersections of caste, gender, and policy*. Sage Publications.
- Singh, R. 2023. *Gender-responsive governance: Evaluating policy impact in India*. Springer.
- Verma, T. 2023. *Affirmative action and political participation: Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions*. Zed Books.
- Xaxa, V. 2020. *Tribal women and land rights: A historical and policy analysis*. Orient Blackswan.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Law, the University of Burdwan
Email: ddebdatta@gmail.com

[2]Assistant Professor, School of Law, Brainware University
Email: pib.law@brainwareuniversity.ac.in

[3]Associate Professor, School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India

Gender Disparities in Education: Insights from Tribal Populations in Jharkhand

Rita Biswas[1], Renu Jahagirdar[2], & Sudipta Adhikary[3]

Abstract:

Gender Disparity is a social practice that shows the difference between men and women in access to resources. In this context, the education sector is no exception. Orthodoxy is still carried out that does not allow educating a girl child, thus denying them the basic '*Right to Education'*. Educating girl is one of the fore most steps towards achieving empowerment of women. Being one of the educational backward sections of the society, the tribal communities are especially vulnerable in this regard. Thereby, the paper attempts to find the gender gap in literacy between different tribal communities of Jharkhand. The study makes use of doctrinal data from census of India, 2011 to calculate the disparity in literacy using Sopher's index. The paper exhibits a negative relationship between literacy and gender among tribes of Jharkhand.

Keywords: *Gender Gap, Literacy rate, Education level, Scheduled Tribes, Jharkhand*

Introduction

In Indian Context, T. B. Naik (1972) has mentioned some features of tribes like economically backward (Primitive and traditional means of exploiting natural resources), having a common dialect, politically unorganized etc. Literacy is one of the most fundamental elements of education which improves quality of life, reduces mortality rate and empowers women and girls (Sharma and Deogam 2019, p. 16200–207). However, much of the literature has been reviewed for knowing the past and present scenario of gender disparity in male and female literacy. Anant Kumar's (2008) analysis of the status of education on tribal children finds that tribal children feel insulting and offensive because of the class room environment which continuously tries to discriminate of being a tribal student (Pal and Mondal 2021, p. 1–20). Joshi (2010) mentioned that the indigenous children are still unable to access school education and poverty being the main reason behind it. Bose studied Gender inequality in Education in India and reveals that girls are at greater disadvantages compared to their brothers and basically son preferences lead to gender discrimination (Bose 2012, p. 67–91).

Level of Education among Tribal populations in India

According to census 1991, the literacy rate of the tribal population of India was only 29.6 % which rose to 47.10 % in 2001 and again increased to 59 % in 2011. We can see the trend of increasing literacy rate among the tribal population of India (Ramachandra 2019, p. 100–109). ST male literacy rate was 40.65 % in 1991 which increased to 68.5 % in 2011, In case of both male and female we can see the upward trend in literacy (Chaudhuri and Roy 2009, p. 215–38). If we compare it with the total literacy of India, then we can find there is an increase of 12 % of literacy from 1991 to 2001 and again 9% increase from 2001 to 2011 in total literacy (Ramachandran and Chatterjee 2014, p. 157–78). But for tribal population it has increased 18% from 1991 to 2001 and again 12 % from 2001 to 2011(Kumar 2008, p. 3111–23). The tribal literacy is 59 % in comparison to 73% of the total population. The gap between tribal female literacy and total female literacy is about 15% (Dutta 2017, p. 289–306). There trend of increasing in literacy rate of tribal population but still low in comparison to the total literacy of India (Rustagi and Menon 2013, p. 41–58). There is also the trend of decrease in literacy gap of tribal population and total population i.e., from 22.61% literacy gap in 1991 to 14 % gap in 2011 (Ghosh 2007, p. 109–25)

Study Area

Jharkhand has a total geographical area of 79,714 square km. surrounded by the state of west Bengal at its east, by Odisha at its south, by Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh at its west and by Bihar at its north. It lies between 21° 58’ 14.73” to 25° 20’ 55.74” north latitudes and 83° 19’ 52.58” to 87° 58’ 42.87” east longitude.

Database and Methodology

For the purpose of the study, the tribal population of the Jharkhand state needs to be taken into consideration. The study is mainly quantitative and analytical in nature and based on secondary data sources. Data has been collected from various sources like *“Census of India 2011”*. For calculating the disparity statistical tools like sopher’s method is applied for examining the gender gap between male and female literacy rate. Besides some other reports by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on Tribal education, Annual report (2020), Jharkhand Statistical Profile 2020 report, Jharkhand Statistical Abstract 2011 have been used in the study area.

Measuring literacy disparity by using “*Sopher’s Index*”, is method of calculating disparities, which has been developed by “*David V. Sopher (1974)”*.

According to this method:

If X1 and X2 represents the respective percentage of value of variables of group 1 and 2 then the disparity index (DI) can be calculated by the formula

DI = log (X2)/(X1) + log (100 - X1)/(100 - X2)

Where, DI = Disparity Index

X2=Percentage of male literates, X1=Percentage of Female literates, i.e. X2 > X1

Results and Discussion

The literacy rate of Jharkhand increased from 53.5 % to 66.4% over the decade of 2001- 2011. Although Female literacy increased from 38.8 % in 2001 to 55.4 % in 2011 which shows the increase of 17 % in literacy rate while male literacy has increased only by 9 % from 67.3 % in 2001 to 76.8 % in 2011. The literacy of tribal population is lower than total population.

Table 1 District wise Tribal Population of Jharkhand, 2011

District Name	Total Population	Tribal Population	Percentage share of STs in districts	Distribution of STs in District
Khunti	531885	389626	73.3	4.51
Simdega	599578	424407	70.8	4.90
Gumla	1025213	706754	68.9	8.18
Paschimi Singhbhum	1502338	1011296	67.3	11.70
Lohardaga	461790	262734	56.9	3.03
Latehar	726978	331096	45.5	3.83
Dumka	1321442	571077	43.2	6.61
Pakur	900422	379054	42.1	4.38
Ranchi	2914253	1042016	35.8	12.05
Saraikelakharsawan	1065056	3374642	31.9	4.00
Jamtara	791042	240489	30.4	2.78
PurbiSinghbhum	2293919	653923	28.5	7.56
Sahibganj	1150567	308343	26.8	3.57
Godda	1313551	279208	21.3	3.23
Ramgarh	949443	201166	21.2	2.33
Garhwa	1322784	205874	15.6	2.38
Bokaro	2062330	255626	12.4	2.96

Deoghar	1492073	180962	12.1	2.09
Giridih	2445474	238188	9.7	2.76
Palamu	1939869	181208	9.3	2.10
Dhanbad	2684487	233119	8.7	2.70
Hazaribagh	1734495	121768	7.0	1.41
Chatra	1042886	45563	4.4	0.52
Kodarma	716259	6903	1.0	0.07
Total	329,988,134	86,45,40	26.2	100

Source: Census of India, 2011

With respect to the tribal population of Jharkhand we can see that the literacy rate of STs in Jharkhand was 40.7% in 2001 which rose by 17 % and became 57.1 % in 2011. STs Male literacy increased by 54.0 % in 2001 to 68.1 % in 2011 and Female literacy from 27.2 % in 2001 to 46.2 % in 2011.

Table 1. clearly shows the distribution of tribal population in the state of Jharkhand. The population of tribes can be seen in all 24 district where, highest proportion of tribal population is found in Khunti district (73.25), followed by Simdega (70.08%), Gumla (68.93), Paschimi Singhbhum (67.31%), and Lohardaga (56.86). The concentration of tribal population is less in Kodarma district with only 6,903 (0.1%) followed by Chatra 45,563 (4.4%), Hazaribagh 1,21,768 (7.02%). Figure 2 shows that the distribution of tribal population is highly concentrated in southern part of the state Jharkhand, having more than 60 % of tribal population and less than 15 % of tribal population can be seen in the districts like Koderma, Chatra, Hazaribagh etc. But the scenario is little different when we are concerned only with the distribution of tribal population within the state. Figure 1 is showing that Ranchi has the highest tribal population with 10,42,016 (12.05%), Paschimi Singhbhum 10,11,296 (11.70%), and Gumla 7,06,754 (8.18%), Purbi Singhbhum 6,53,923 (7.56). The districts like Koderma, Chatra, Hazaribagh, Palamu, Giridih, and Dhanbad having tribal population have less than 10%

.

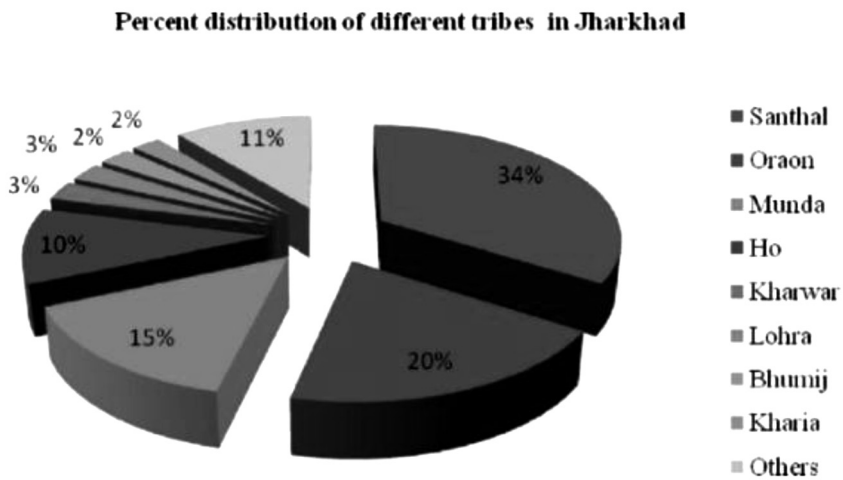


Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of different tribes, Jharkhand 2011

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349307460



Fig 2 Tribal Population (% of district population) in each Districts of Jharkhand, 2011

According to Census 2011, the literacy rate of Kawar (54.48%), Oraon (56.39%), Munda (52.47%), Khond (53.39%), Kharia (55.65%), Karmali (52.19%), Chik baraik (54.77%), Chero (52.3%), are above 50 percent. Oraon has the highest literacy (56.39%). Low literacy rate below 30 percent have been found in the tribal groups like Baiga, Birhor, Korwa, Parhaiya and Savar. Santal has the highest male literacy rate (61.38 %) followed by Oraon (56.39%), Munda (58.04%) and Kharwar(59.86%). In context to female literacy rate Oraon (43.73%), Munda (43.73%), Santal (38.61%) and Kharwar (38.31%) are having the highest literacy rate and the lowest literacy rate is found in Banjara, Parhaiya, Savar, Kol. Lowest the literacy of tribal community, the larger the gap will be found, which shows the inverse relation between literacy and Gender gap. Banjara (35.45%), Savar (29.25%), Parhaiya (28.65%) and Kol (27.97%) are showing large gap between male and female literacy.

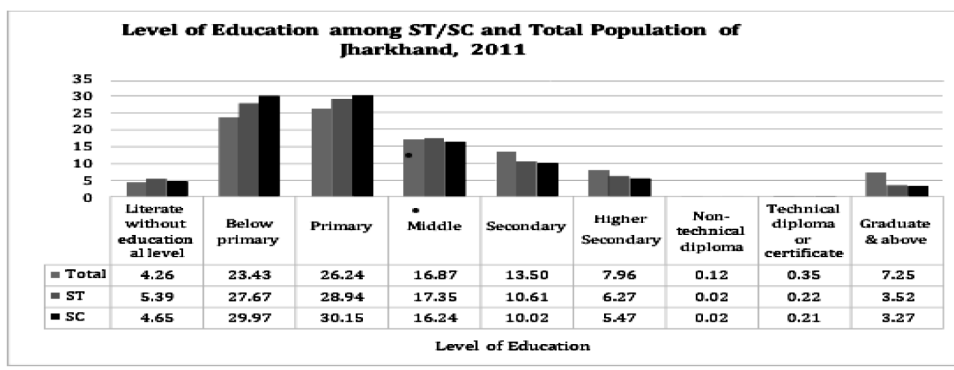


Fig.3 Level of Education among SC, ST and Total Population.

Source: Calculated from Census of India, 2011

Fig.3 also reveals that; female literacy is less then male literacy in all tribal communities. Although, majority of tribal communities showing moderate disparity in literacy. On the basis of above fig.3, three categories have been classified to show the level of disparity in literacy among the tribal communities. Tribal groups have the highest literacy rate among other tribal groups. Oraon (56.39 %), Kharia (55.16%) Munda (52.47%) literacy rate ensures that the value of education is more in them and the main reason behind fewer gaps in literacy among male and females. Performance of tribal communities namely Bedia, Birhor, Chero, Gond, Gorait, Ho, Karmali, Santal, Sauria Phariya, kawar and Baiga having SI value of 0.31- 0.40 shows medium disparity. The high value of disparity can be seen in Bathudi, Binjhia, Birjia, Banjara, Asur, Kharwar, Kond, Parhaiya, Savar, Bhumji, kol and *Kisan* where SI value ranges between (0.40-0.60). The important factor behind these tribal groups showing high disparity is remained primitive who still practices preagricultural systems, like hunting and gathering, rope making and iron smelting (Katiyar

2016, p. 46–69). They are chiefly agricultural labourers and consider all these as their traditional occupation (Kumar 2008, p. 3111–23). In the context of the highest disparity tribal group like *Asur* there is a 26.15% gap in literacy followed by *Kharwar* (23.37%), *Savar* (29.25%), *Pahariya* (28.65 %) and *Kol* (27.97 %). In the lowest disparity tribal groups like *Kharia, Oraon, Munda* and *Chik Barik,* there is only 9.51 %, 12.56 %, 16.09 % and 16.65 % gap in literacy found between male and females.

Table.1 shows that in Jharkhand out of total population in which 55.55% are literates. In case of ST and SC population, comprising 26.20 % and 12.08%of total population of Jharkhand have literacy of 47.43% and 45.66% respectively. We can see a trend of declining enrolment in different levels of education of different category of population of Jharkhand. The scenario of decline in the enrolment level is not only seen in the tribal community but also in the general population and also SC population. Enrolment of students after matriculation drops down sharply as well as in technical and non-technical education contributes only 0.01% and 0.22% of enrolment. In the case of total population, the scenario is same as among SC and ST. The number of students enrolled gradually decreases from primary level of education towards higher level of education. The reason behind the sharp decline of education level among the tribes is the socio-economic condition of a family, negative attitude of parents towards education, children from the family forced to contribute to family income either directly by working as a labour and also due to the geographical isolation of a tribal community in the remote areas.

Conclusion

The paper presents a descriptive analysis of the gender disparity in literacy among the tribal communities of Jharkhand. It is observed that the high disparity is found *in Asur, Savar, Kawar, Kond, Kisan and Banjar*a. These tribal communities still practice hunting, gathering as their traditional occupation, and they considered themselves as remained primitive, is the major factor showing high disparity. While the tribal communities like *Kharia, Chik Baraik, Oraon and Munda* are showing high literacy rate as compared to other tribal communities and also have less gender gap in literacy. There is a sharp decline of students after matriculation as well as in technical and non-technical. The major reason behind these decline trends is the socio-economic condition of a family, Child labour to earn livelihood and negative attitude of parents towards educating a girl child. Ramachandra Kumar (2019) explains that extreme poverty, tribal exploitation, illiteracy are some of the important reasons behind inclusion from education. The socio-economic condition of the majority of the population does not have basic amenities namely food, shelter, clothing, health and education. In the rural Jharkhand more women and girl child witnessed deprivation and discrimination. The study highlights an inverse correlation between literacy rates and gender disparities. It demonstrates that tribal communities with higher literacy levels exhibit narrower gender gaps, while those with lower literacy levels experience wider disparities in literacy between males and females.

References

- Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). n.d. *ASER in India Official Site for ASER Report.*
- Bose, S. 2012. 'A Contextual Analysis of Gender Disparity in Education in India: The Relative Effects of Son Preference, Women's Status, and Community.' *Sociological Perspectives* 55 (1): 67–91.
- Chaudhuri, K., and Roy, S. 2009. 'Gender Gap in Educational Attainment: Evidence from Rural India.' *Education Economics* 17 (2): 215–38.
- Deograhia, P. C. 2015. 'Literacy and Universalisation of Primary Education in Jharkhand: Issues and Challenges.' *JJDMS, XISS, Ranchi.*
- Dutta, S. 2017. 'Educational Inequality in India.' *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration* 31 (4): 289–306.
- Ghosh, A. K. 2007. 'The Gender Gap in Literacy and Education among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand and West Bengal.' *Sociological Bulletin* 56 (1): 109–25.
- Joshi, G., Petty, C., Wozniak, J., Henin, A., Fried, R., Galdo, M. ... & Biederman, J. 2010. 'The heavy burden of psychiatric comorbidity in youth with autism spectrum disorders: A large comparative study of a psychiatrically referred population.' *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 40*(11), 1361–1370. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-010-0996-9
- Katiyar, S. P. 2016. "Gender Disparity in Literacy in India." *Social Change* 46 (1): 46–69.
- Kumar, A. 2008. 'Education of Tribal Children in Jharkhand: A Situational Analysis.' *Jharkhand Journal of Development and Management Studies, XISS, Ranchi* 6 (4): 3111–23.
- Literacy Rate of India—Population Census 2011. n.d. https://www.census2011.co.in/literacy.php.
- Naik, T. B. (1972). *Bāraha Bhāī Biñjhavāra*. Madhyāpradeśa Hindī Grantha Akādamī.
- Ramachandra, K. 2019. 'Educational Justice to Deprived Children in the State of Jharkhand: Issues, Challenges, and Future Prospective.' *Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies (IJDTS)* 7 (2): 100–109.
- Ramachandran, Vimala, and Prerna Chatterjee. 2014. 'Evaluation of Gender and Equity Issues under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan.' *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 21: 157–78. https://doi.org/10.1177/0971521514525081.
- Rustagi, P., and Menon, R. 2013. 'Literacy and Elementary Education Status in Jharkhand: Challenges to Universalisation.' *Journal of Economic & Social Development* 9 (2): 41–58.
- Pal, S. B., and T. K. Mondal. 2021. 'Gender Gap in Rural Literacy: A Spatio-Temporal Analysis of Bankura District in West Bengal, India.' *GeoJournal*: 1–20.

- Pala, K., Joshi, S., & Mondal, P. 2021. The relevance of variations in auditory perception for second language teaching and learning. In *Grammar and Multilingualism*.
- Sharma, S., and P. Deogam. 2019. 'Government Schemes for Elementary Education of Jharkhand: An Overview.' *Think India Journal* 22 (14): 16200–207.
- Singh, A**.** 2020. 'The Status of Girls' Education in Jharkhand.' *SSRN*. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3686884.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1, 2] Senior Facilitator, Regenesys Business School, South Africa.
Email: rita.kbiswas@gmail.com
[3]Associate Professor, School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India.
Email: *sua.law@brainwareuniversity.ac.in*

Conditional Cash Transfer Schemes and Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Kanyashree Prakalpa in West Bengal

Sukanya Ghosh,[1] Jyotika Teckchandani[2] & Neeta Tripathi[3]

Abstract:

The concept of "Women empowerment" has become a burning issue for quite some time. It cannot be denied that genderization is a deeply ingrained social phenomenon. Some of the signs of extremely unequal gender relations that are common in our society include the large male-female ratio, the gap in literacy rates among both the genders, the early marriage of girl children, the low rates of female participation in politics and the workforce, etc. To combat this practice of gender discrimination and improve the status of women in India, the Indian government has taken major actions from time to time. Introduction of Conditional Cash Transfer Schemes is one such program. In keeping with this, the West Bengal government, too, has launched such a scheme, namely "Kanyashree Prakalpa", in 2013. Its objective was to encourage girls to continue their education and to delay their age of marriage and to make them empowered. The present study aims to determine how successful Kanyashree Prakalpa has been in bringing about the true empowerment of women, a decade after it was first introduced, in two socio-economically different districts of West Bengal, namely Kolkata and Purulia. Of these two districts, Kolkata is a megacity and the capital of West Bengal while Purulia is one of the backward districts of the state that has even received grant from Backward Regions Grant Fund. For this, data was first collected from randomly selected beneficiaries of both the districts with the help of a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedule. The data was then statistically analyzed for uncovering the patterns and trends of the impact of such programs on its recipients living there. Then comparing the results of the scheme between the two districts via T test, the researcher found that while the Prakalpa yielded positive responses from both the districts, it made a greater impact in Purulia.

Key Words: *Conditional Cash Transfer Schemes, Genderization, Gender discrimination, Kanyashree Prakalpa, Social phenomenon, Status of women, Women empowerment*

Introduction:

The issue of “women empowerment” has become a matter of global concern for quite some time.

"Gender" is very deeply embedded in our social system and highly unequal gender relations are prevalent in our society. It cannot be denied that women for long have been the victims of patriarchal domination. There still exist huge disparities in male-female ratio, severe gaps in their literacy rates, poor female participation rates in politics, lower female participation in labour forces, etc. This is in spite of women making considerable progress and reaching milestones in several areas keeping at par with the men.

In India, historically parents have been found to mostly favour sons over daughters, a gender prejudice that has persisted for generations. Many Hindu traditional families still execute the "pumsavana" rite on expectant mothers with the belief that it will guarantee the birth of a son or will somehow alter the sex of the foetus if in case it is found to be female.[1] It is estimated that this strong son preference and the prevalence of practices like foeticide and female infanticide have led to the disappearance of nearly 100 million females who may just be considered "missing".[2]

Even today, a large number of women are subjected to atrocities that include verbal, physical and emotional torture along with interpersonal violence. Denigrated as the lower sex, they are frequently discriminated against and are perceived as less deserving than the males. Our society's deeply ingrained patriarchal traditions, societal norms, power imbalances and cultural beliefs cast a very detrimental effect on the women and impede their advancements in life. All these further compound their marginalization or deprivation, making it more difficult for them to attain an equal and just standing in society alongside their male counterparts. Thus, this discriminatory system of our society, which perpetuates gender inequality, frequently traps women in abusive cycles which they are often unable to break free.

However, this was not the situation for women since times immemorial. In ancient India they used to enjoy a high position and status in the society. They were seen as both active and important members of the community, and their activities extended beyond simply taking care of the daily domestic tasks.[3] They were even worshipped as the Mother Goddess and were acknowledged as the creator as well as the destroyer of the entire universe.

During the early Vedic period, the women were accorded total involvement in educational, political, social and religious practices. They even enjoyed access to "upanayan" and "veda".[4] Maitreyi, Gargi, Lopamudra, Apala were some of the leading women sages who were highly revered in those times.

However, times changed and with it changed the position of the women in the society as well. The condition of the women underwent severe deterioration during the later Vedic period. Caste system, child marriage, Sati became prevalent in the then social system. Education for the womenfolk took a backseat and with time women were completely barred from getting education.

The condition of the women gained a lot of attention during the British rule which saw several social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891),

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883), Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) among others fighting for the cause of the womenfolk. In this situation, under immense pressure, the British Government was forced to undertake several reforms for the improvement of the position of the women. Subsequently several laws and Acts like the 'Abolition of Sati' (1829), 'The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act' (1856), etc. were passed that sought to improve the conditions and bring about a social transformation for the women.

Status of Women in Post-independent India

Ever since India gained independence, Government of India has continuously been trying to bring a change in the condition of the women and to ensure gender equality by several provisions, laws and Acts. For example, Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees "equality before law" and "equal protection from law" to all citizens of India. Similarly, Article 15 of the Constitution of India prohibits any sort of discrimination among its citizens on the basis of race, religion, caste, gender, or place of birth. The state has also been empowered by our Constitution to make or enact any special provision for women and children [Article 15 (3)]. The Constitution of India also guarantees to all its citizens equality of opportunity with regard to appointment or employment in offices under the state [Article 16 (1)]. Similarly, Article 16 (2) states that no one should be considered ineligible with respect to religion, race, caste, sex, etc. for any sort of employment to the office under the state.

Mention needs to be made here about the Directive Principles of State Policy which, too, have provisions for the women regarding upliftment of their status. These include Article 39(a) that calls for the equal right of men and women to adequate means of livelihood; Article 39(b) that seeks to provide equality of pay for equal work done for men and women; Article 39(e) that seeks to protect the health and strength of all workers, male, female and children alike from any sort of abuse and getting engrossed in such hobbies that are unsuitable for their age and strength and Article 42 which tries to ensure maternity relief for women and just and humane conditions of work for all.

But it is disheartening to see that despite all these efforts the condition of the women still remains pretty miserable. There remains a huge disparity between the laws, acts, policies and programs undertaken by the Government to achieve the desired objective of eradication of gender discrimination and the reality that prevails in our society.

Gender inequality thus still persists in our society. A shocking picture in this regard is reflected in the number of crimes that took place nationally as brought forth by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) that shows both the figures and the increasing trend of such brutal and inhuman crimes. As per the NCRB Report (2023)[5] India witnessed a surge in crimes against women by four percent throughout 2022, the number of reported crimes escalating from 3,71,503 cases in 2020 to 4,28,278 cases in 2021 to 4,45,256 cases in 2022. The most alarming part was that out of this about 31.4% crimes were reported to be inflicted on the women by their husbands or relatives.

The practice of child marriage is also very widespread in India. As per the report of National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) (2019-21), 23.3% women were found to have been married before the age of 18 years and nearly seven percent women in age 15-19 years were reported to be mothers or pregnant at the time of the survey.[6]

UNICEF[7] has provided a very grim picture of child marriage in India. It states that one out of every three child brides worldwide belong to India with Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh housing half of those brides in India. It further states that near about 40 percent of girls who are married before 18 years of age live in West Bengal, Bihar and Tripura.

With respect to education, it may be said that considerable disparity exists here also. As per the data obtained from the National Statistical Office (NSO), the male-female literacy gap nationally in 2021 was 12.9% where the literacy rate for females was 70.30% as against the male literacy rate that stood at 84.70%.[8] In West Bengal, projected literacy rate of females is estimated to be at 70.54% while for men it is 81.69%.[9] The research of World Economic Forum on Global Gender Gap (2024) exhibited that in matters of educational attainment gender inequality is still persistent in India as it ranked 129th in the category with a male-female literacy rate gap standing at 17.2%.[10]

Women also are expected to perform the unpaid works involving care giving and household chores mainly. Since success and the worth of labour are primarily determined by financial indicators, women's contributions, which are crucial to the proper operation of the family and society, are often overlooked and seldom receive the recognition they deserve. Additionally, these responsibilities prevent women from getting engaged in paid employment, and even in cases when they are able to do so, they may receive lower pay despite doing the same amount of work as men.

However, there has been a bright spot in the Periodic Labour Force Survey Report of 2022–2023 published on October 09, 2023 by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, which showed a significant improvement (four percent) in India’s female labour force participation rate, bringing the total to thirty-seven percent in 2023.[11] This certainly is due to the Government of India's persistent efforts that have made this feasible. But at the opposite end of this light there still looms darkness as in the workplace also women face the brunt of gender harassment and violence. This continues even after the implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act in 2013, otherwise known as POSH Act. NCRB report reveals an increase in the number of victim counts for sexual harassment against women at workplace from 402 in 2018 to 422 in 2022.[12] As such it is indisputable that much work remains before we may achieve gender parity for which women empowerment is undoubtedly an important criteria.

Conditional Cash Transfer Schemes (CCT) and Kanyashree Prakalpa

Government, as already mentioned, has introduced a number of Acts, laws and programs from time to

time to facilitate the much-needed and desired empowerment of women and to improve and elevate their status. One such program is the Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme (CCTs), which may be regarded as a financial tool that gives the targeted population direct cash payments upon meeting specific requirements.

CCTs, which was introduced as one social security policy in 1997 in Latin America under the name Progressa (later renamed Opportunidades in 2004), has been progressively adopted by numerous other nations worldwide with varying aims and purposes. Examples of some such international CCTs are Bolsa Familia introduced in Brazil in 2003, Program of Advancement through Health and Education introduced in Jamaica in 2002, Subsidios Condicionados a la Asistencia Escolar introduced in Bogota, Colombia in 2005, etc.

In India, the centre as well as numerous state governments has launched several CCTs that are especially targeted towards bringing about the welfare of the girls. Examples include Balika Samriddhi Yojana (Government of India, 1997), Balri Rakshak Yojana (Punjab, 2005), Girl Child Protection Scheme (Andhra Pradesh, 2005), Mukhya Mantri Kanyadan Yojana (Madhya Pradesh, 2006), Indira Gandhi Balika Suraksha Yojana (Himachal Pradesh, 2007), Dhanalakshmi Scheme (Government of India, 2008), Mukhya Mantri Kanya Suraksha Yojana (Bihar, 2008), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Himachal Pradesh, 2015), Kuvarbai Nu Mameru Yojana (Gujarat, 2020), Uttar Pradesh Bhagyalakshmi Yojana (Uttar Pradesh, 2021), Lek Ladki Scheme (Maharashtra, 2023), etc.

The Government of West Bengal, too, has introduced Kanyashree Prakalpa, a Conditional Cash Transfer scheme in the year 2013. It has the dual objectives of motivating the girl children to pursue their education for long and to push their marriages at least to 18 years of age. This is to make them equipped so that in future they may have a better standing in the society and can avoid the associated risks of early pregnancies and other health problems.

Achieving higher education is still a major concern in West Bengal due to the sharp decline in girls' school attendance. This is also a result of the fact that many low-income parents do not see the financial value of sending their daughters to schools and instead believe that marriage will provide more stability for the girls and their families. They fail to realize that this may entail a life full of financial and social instability for them. Studies show that this lack of education leaves the girls ill-prepared for the work activities they may want to pursue later in life and renders them vulnerable to poverty and exploitation throughout their lives.

Kanyashree Prakalpa has 3 elements: K1, K2 and K3.[13]

- **K1**- This is an annual scholarship scheme of Rs 1000 given to unmarried girls between 13-18 years of age, enrolled in classes eight to twelve in a Government recognized regular or equivalent open school or equivalent vocational or technical training course.

- **K2**- This is a one- time grant of Rs 25000 given to unmarried girls aged 18-19 years. Unmarried girls should have turned 18 years at the time of application and enrolled in a Government recognized regular or open school or college or pursuing vocational or technical training or sports activity or is an inmate of Home registered under J J Act 2000 before applying for this scheme.
- **K3**- Girl students of any age registered under K2, having at least 45% marks in graduation and presently pursuing a regular post graduate degree in science/arts/ commerce under any university are eligible for this scheme where science students receive Rs 2500 per month while arts students receive Rs 2000 per month.

It needs to be mentioned here that the benefits are sent straight to the recipients' bank accounts thus giving them complete freedom over how they spend their money. Thus the Scheme attempts to serve as a source for their complete financial inclusion in addition to empowering them.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is designed so as to comparatively analyze the impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa on the recipients in the two socio-economically different districts, Kolkata and Purulia of West Bengal, a decade after its introduction. Kolkata, a megacity, is the capital city and the most prosperous and advanced one among all the districts of West Bengal. Purulia, on the other hand, is one of the backward districts of the state so much so that it has received grant from the Backward Regions Grant Fund.

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- To find out the impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa with regard to women empowerment on the beneficiaries of Kolkata and Purulia.
- To determine the attitudinal change of the parents towards the girl children in both Kolkata and Purulia in the aftermath of Kanyashree Prakalpa.
- To study the change in the outlook of the society towards the marriage of the girl children in both the districts post the launch of Kanyashree Prakalpa.
- To compare the effectiveness of the Prakalpa in Kolkata and Purulia districts of West Bengal.

Methodology

The study undertook a two-stage sampling:

- Stratified Random Sampling was used to choose the districts of Kolkata and Purulia respectively from the lists of West Bengal's advanced and backward districts.
- Simple Random Sampling was then used to choose a total of 502 recipients of the scheme, 251

from each of the two districts.

Thus the population of the study consisted of all the beneficiaries of Kanyashree Prakalpa in the entire state of West Bengal. The sample consisted of 502 Kanyashree beneficiaries (251 from each places of Kolkata and Purulia) that represented the entire population.

The researcher employed a mixed methods approach and employed the following tools to draw the conclusions:

- Structured questionnaire for the 502 recipients of the Prakalpa, 251 each from Kolkata and Purulia
- Semi-structured interview schedule for the parents of the beneficiaries with the aim of finding out the opinions of the stakeholders
- Focus group discussions
- T-test of difference to find out the significant difference between the two data sets of data that were gathered from the two specified districts

Findings and Interpretations

The following interpretations were arrived at after a detailed and thorough analysis of the data:

- The Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme, namely Kanyashree Prakalpa is successful in achieving women empowerment in both Kolkata and Purulia, the advanced and backward district respectively of West Bengal, with significant shifts in the perception of women's empowerment as noted following the implementation of the scheme in these two districts.
- Kanyashree Prakalpa brought significant changes in the attitude of the parents towards the girl children in both the districts under consideration.
- There has been a significant shift in the society's outlook towards girls' marriages in both of the aforementioned districts of West Bengal after the program's inception.
- There is a notable disparity in the Prakalpa's efficiency between the two districts mentioned, with Purulia experiencing a higher influence than Kolkata.

Based on the results above, it is thus clear that Kanyashree Prakalpa has had a significant influence in both Kolkata and Purulia districts of West Bengal. However, compared to Kolkata, which is an advanced district of West Bengal, it is seen that the program has a bigger influence in Purulia, a backward area. After conducting a thorough analysis of the data and information collected through the tools, the researcher concluded that the following variables primarily account for the variations in the scheme's impact across the two districts:

- The Kanyashree beneficiaries in Kolkata usually enjoy higher standard of living in comparison to their Purulia counterparts. As such the former often view the program's benefits as opportunities

to make their existing conditions only better as against the beneficiaries of Purulia who consider the program a crucial tool for addressing their core problems. Hence the latter respond more to the scheme than the former.

- Being a backward area, Purulia experience a relative sense of deprivation in comparison to Kolkata. This resulted in Kanyashree Prakalpa becoming potentially more successful in resolving the associated problems and enhancing the living conditions of its beneficiaries in Purulia.
- The dependence on the conditional components of the scheme is much less in Kolkata than in Purulia. This is due to the city's well-established educational infrastructure as well as increased awareness of the threat posed by many social evils like child marriage. Hence, in Kolkata, the focus is less in addressing the fundamental issues, whereas in Purulia, this is not so. Purulia recipients respond more strongly to the program as a result.
- The residents of an advanced megacity, Kolkata mostly have higher prospective income and more options for alternative sources of income than those in Purulia, a less developed region. Hence Kanyashre Prakalpa has a greater economic impact in Purulia than in Kolkata.
- In general, it is seen that individuals value personal independence and self-sufficiency more in regions with higher levels of development, like Kolkata. Hence it is likely that residents here resist government intervention. On the other hand, it is more probable that the people in underdeveloped areas like Purulia are more receptive to the concepts of government initiatives that support their general well-being.

Issues and Recommendations:

Kanyashree Prakalpa although, undoubtedly, has yielded a positive influence on the lives of its beneficiaries in both Kolkata and Purulia, there are a few issues that might be considered to improve the program's effectiveness. These are given below.

- Education is certainly a powerful tool for empowering girls but it needs to be accompanied by employment. The gap between the two is still very wide and needs to be bridged so as to usher in true empowerment of women.
- Merely educating the girls would not go a long way in achieving the objectives of Kanyashree Prakalpa. For this, they ought to be made employable too. Girls are frequently found to lack the necessary training and abilities needed in the workplace, which prevent them from getting employment or moving up the career ladder.
- Many women fail to pursue paid employment as they are forced to spend more time on unpaid labour such as providing care at home that include child rearing, looking after the family, etc. To help with this, appropriate care giving facilities need to be established in the workplace so that

they can take advantage of paid employment opportunities.

- In the workplace, gender inequality still exists, with women receiving lower pay than males despite doing the same amount of work. Addressing this practice is necessary to guarantee equity in the labour market.
- The program needs to incorporate career guidance and vocational training also to inspire and provide the recipients with the necessary skills for future employment opportunities.
- There has to be more robust and improved monitoring and evaluation so that are funds are used more appropriately and effectively.

Endnotes:

1. Kakar, S. 1988. Feminine Identity in India. In: R.Ghadially (ed.), *Women in Indian Society: A Reader*. p.47.India: Sage Publications.
2. Croll, E. J. 2001. 'Amartya Sen's 100 Million Missing Women', *Oxford Development Studies*, 29 (3): 225-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600810120088840 (accessed on 5th October 2024)
3. Analayo, B. 2018. 'Overeating and Mindfulness in Ancient India', *Mindfulness,* 9 (5): 1648-54. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-1009-x (accessed on 5th October 2024)
4. Sheik, S. and A. R. Raina. 2018. 'Status of Women in Ancient India: A Comparative Study of North Indian Society and Kashmir', *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 6 (3): 159-64.

Websites:

5. https://www.newsclick.in/crime-against-women-india-4-ncrb-report-2023 (accessed on 5th October 2024)
6. https://visionias.in/current-affairs/monthly-magazine/2024-11-14/social-issues/child-marriage-in-India (accessed on 10th November 2024)
7. https://data.unicef.org/resources/ending-child-marriage-a-profile-of-progress-in-india-2023 (accessed on 10th November 2024)
8. https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/state-wise-literacy-rate-in-india/ (accessed on 21st November 2024)
9. https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/west+bengal.html#google_vignette (accessed on 1st December 2024)
10. https://www.iasgyan.in/daily-current-affairs/gender-gap-in-education-in-india#:~:text=Ranking%3A%20India%20is%20ranked%20129th,2023%20to%200.964%20in%202024 (accessed on 1st December 2024)

11. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1966154 (accessed on 31st December 2024)
12. https://www.isdm.org.in/blog/its-womens-day-but-on-ground-little-has-changed (accessed on 31st December 2024)
13. https://wbkanyashree.gov.in/kp_4.0/scheme_rationale.php (accessed on 31st December 2024)

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1] Research Scholar, AISS, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh
Email: sukanyaghosh0103@gmail.com

[2] Assistant Professor, AISS, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh
Email: jtekchandani@amity.edu

[3] Professor, Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi
Email: neeta.tripathi@dsc.du.ac.in

Navigating Stigma: Adaptation Challenges of Divorced Women in Bangladesh—A Qualitative Exploration

Nafisa Tabassum Bristi[1], Md. Abdul Kader Miah[2] and Prakash Chandra Roy[3]

Abstract

Divorce is one of the most shocking social problems in Bangladesh. The main challenge a woman faces after divorce is adapting to society. The present study strives to explore the adaptation challenges of divorced women. A qualitative approach is implemented to assess the adaptation of divorced women. The study conducts semi-structured interviews with ten participants (ensuring ethical issues) through the purposive sampling method. The findings encompass seven major themes: a) reasons for divorce; b) impacts of divorce; c) social attitude towards divorcees; d) attitude of the family towards divorcees; e) life satisfaction; f) challenges; and g) adaptation of divorced women. For the proper adaptation of divorcees, the initiatives of the government, non-government organizations, and integrated community-based programs like counseling after divorce, pre- and post-marital counseling programs, training for their employment, and creating awareness at the community level about positive and supportive attitudes towards them are needed.

Keywords: *Divorcee, Harassment, Adaptation, Social stigma, and Post-Divorce Challenges*

1. Introduction

Divorce is one of the most alarming social problems in the contemporary societies of Bangladesh, and women are the ultimate sufferers of it. Divorce means the official end of a marriage (Nwoye, 1999). This social problem is dreadful as it separates spouses and changes familial relations. Children of these families face bitter experiences. Interaction, compromise, and commitment—the absence of these factors may lead to divorce (Elizabeth, 2001). A report of the Arbitration Council of Dhaka City Corporation states that, in 2006, female-initiated divorce was 67.14 percent, whereas 32.68 percent was for males (Arbitration Council, 2006). According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the application rate for divorce has increased by 34 percent in the last seven years (Prothom alo, August 27, 2018). A minimum of 50,000 divorce applications were filed in Dhaka North and South City Corporations in the last six years, which indicates that on average, one divorce application was filed every hour (Ibid.). Indeed, independent women do not want to continue an abusive marriage.

Some think divorce is much better than tolerating pain. According to the Kazi office at Doail Union of Sarishabari Upazila in Bangladesh, the total number of registrations of divorce in 2018 was thirty-eight, and in 2019, this number was fifty. Additionally, in 2018, about twenty-seven compromised divorces were documented in the BRAC office of the Sarishabari zone, with the intervening role of arranging ADR. Due to the divorce, a total of BDT 29,24,010 was transferred to the divorced woman. Similarly, in 2019, 28 compromised divorces were documented in that office, and the total transferred money was BDT 24 lacs. In addition, deserted women have been growing unpleasantly in South Asian countries, including Bangladesh (Ahmed and Ahmmed, 2015). The main reasons for divorce are communication gaps, mismatches, changing lifestyles, adultery, and dominance (Wolcott and Hughes, 1999). Besides, an unsuccessful pregnancy has a higher risk of divorce (Bhuiya et al., 2005). Behavioral attributes, local taboos, and various prohibition practices may signal divorce in Indigenous society (Enwereji, 2008). Divorce may lead to negative experiences, as marriage is not only a spousal relationship; it connects two families and societies (Fackrell, 2012). Moreover, a divorced woman encounters great costs including loss of family, identity, relationship with children, shelter, income, etc. (Leighman, 2009). Among all victims, women are the primary victims who pay most of the social costs of divorce (Rahman et al., 2013). They face social exclusion, stigma, and harassment in the workplace as well as difficulties in a second marriage (Parvez, 2011). Again, children are the worst victims of family breakups (Aktar, 2013). In addition, due to divorce children face many problems like the absence of a father, a lack of mental and emotional support, and changing relations with family, neighbors, and school (Maundeni, 2000). Divorce can cause distress, disruption to adults and children, and an unstable situation (Harkonen, 2014). Further, marital reconciliation is a hard decision as it has not received much attention yet, but factors including children and religious or spiritual issues play a significant role in reconciliation (Plauche, 2014). Higher levels of self-compassion may reduce emotional pain; it may be a psychological recovery after divorce or marital separation (Sbarra et al., 2012). Also, highly educated, and professional women may develop a wide range of survival strategies to face the difficulties and challenges they experience (Kavas, 2010). Similarly, achieving women's empowerment regarding their individual happiness, autonomy, and feminine sexuality may diminish female subordination (Nazmul, 2018). Through the Preventive and Relationship Enhancement Program, couples may learn about fundamental communication skills, respect, nurturing, and gathering renewed energy in marital relationships (Bath, 2010). Particularly, social education relating to family life, counseling, new job sources, and strengthening health care services at the grassroots level may lead to a positive change in family patterns in Bangladesh (Samad, 2015). The present study focuses on the adaptation of divorced women in society, with connected causes, effects, and challenges. In addition, the study strives to fulfill some specific objectives, such as: i) to get an overview of the socio-demographic condition of divorced women; ii) to assess the attitude of family and society toward divorcee; iii) to find out the challenges they face after the divorce; and iv) to propose some policy recommendations for the adaptation of divorced women in society.

2. DESIGN AND METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach to describe the adaptation challenges of divorced women in society. The purposive non-probability sampling technique is used to conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the participants. The study areas include the Doail Union, Mahadan Union, and the Municipal Area of Sarishabari Upazila in Jamalpur District. Case studies and key informant interviews (KII) are the ultimate data collection tools. Later, the findings from the case study and KII are analyzed thematically.

2.1 Ethical considerations

All participants are informed about the study and ensure their privacy and confidentiality. With their positive consent and rapport building, information has been collected at their convenience. No pressure has been placed on them while taking the information. Any kind of deceit or temptation to spend money has been avoided in conducting the study. Even the recorder has not been used, and no picture is captured during interviews.

2.2 Participant selection and setting

The participants' list is taken from Kazi offices in the study area. Throughout the list, the researcher has reached a total of Ten (10) participants who are available and agree to share their miseries. The interviews are conducted at the participants' residences.

2.3 Data collection

Data has been collected using semi-structured interviews. The researcher and participants did not know each other before the study. Some statistical information is collected from a local Kazi office and the BRAC office in Sarishabari. Primary data have been collected through case studies (10) and Key Informant Interviewees (05) by adopting face-to-face interviews using semi-structured questionnaires. On the other hand, the KIIs of the study were the upazila chairman, headmistress, senior officer of BRAC (Sarishabari zone), officer in charge, and an ex-member of a ward of the union from Sarishabari upazila. Additionally, secondary data includes various research articles, journals, reports, booklets, books, newspapers, and online sources.

2.4 Data analysis

After the completion of data collection, these interviews have been recalled and translated into English. The researcher reads these several times and highlights meaningful sentences from the paragraphs. Thematic analysis has been used to make clear findings as per the objectives.

3. FINDINGS

The researcher made a contract with thirteen respondents, and among them, ten participants agreed to participate in the interview. They were 18 to 48 years old. Their present status includes: nine of them are divorced, and the one remarried after divorce (Table 1). Additionally, five divorces are initiated from wives, which is called 'W' divorce (divorce from wife), three are initiated from their husbands, which is mentioned as 'H' divorce (divorce from husband), and the remaining two divorces are compromised divorces ('C' divorce) in nature (Table 1). The present study highlights seven key thematic areas, which include: a) reasons for divorce; b) impacts of divorce; c) social attitudes towards divorced women; d) attitudes of the family towards divorced women; e) life satisfaction; f) challenges facing divorce; and g) adaptation of divorced women.

3.1 REASONS OF DIVORCE:

The reasons for divorce are physical and mental torture, demanding dowry, adultery, drug addiction, gambling, the wrong decision of choosing a partner, misunderstanding and indifferent behavior toward partners, poverty, immaturity, and family conflict. Eight of them were tortured inhumanely. Husbands were involved in adultery as reported by four respondents. Moreover, some face problems after their pregnancy as their husbands cannot find happiness in their changing physical appearance because of breeding. Key informant interviewees describe that child marriage, drug addiction, dowry, family conflict, extramarital affairs, and husbands staying abroad are common reasons for divorce in this area.

Table-1: Socio-demographic characteristics of divorced women

Case study	Age	Present status	Education	Year of marriage	Year of divorce	Occupation	Present residents	Nature of divorce
01	48	Divorced	Post graduation	1997	2004	Headmistress	Alone	'W' divorce
02	25	Divorced	JSC	2018	2020		Parental family	'W' divorce
03	21	Divorced	Hons 3rd year	2015	2020	Student	Parental family	'C' divorce
04	23	Divorced	Hons 2nd year	2018	2019	Tutor and Student	Parental family	'W' divorce
05	18	Divorced	SSC pass	2016	2018	Student	Parental family	'W' divorce
06	27	Divorced	Class 9	2003	2019		Parental family	'H' divorce
07	35	Divorced	Class 5	1998	2019		Parental family	'H' divorce
08	22	Divorced	HSC pass	2017	2019		Parental family	'H' divorce

Case study	Age	Present status	Education	Year of marriage	Year of divorce	Occupation	Present residents	Nature of divorce
09	25	Divorced	Illiterate	2009	2019		Parental family	'D" divorce
10	45	Remarried	Class 5	1991	2005	Sweeper	New husband	'C' divorce

3.2 IMPACTS OF DIVORCE

Women must face different problems as post-divorce effects. It may be psychological or physiological, even the impact on their children cannot be ignored.

3.2.1 *Psychological impact*

After the divorce, most of the respondents face depression, tension, anger, mental pressure, loneliness, and stigmatization. Divorces are afraid of remarriage because their experiences with marriage were not good for them. Few respondents are afraid of the razz of second husbands' families for their lost virginity. Among many, some respondents feel helpless and hesitant; tension arises because of stigmatization and uncertainty.

Table 2: Summary of the Reasons, Effects, and Adaptation

Case	Reason	Effect	Adaptation
01	Greed, drug addiction, infidel, adultery, physical and mental torture, antagonistic nature of mother-in-law, sharing of wife with another male.	Depression, tension, staying alone sleeplessness, indifference, economic problems, both social and family blaming, labeling, fear of remarriage, untrusted nature upon human, son facing bullying, anger, frequently losing temper	Employment, meditation, social activities, support from family and friends, counseling from the doctor, diary writing, helping the helpless, getting support from the administration in the job sector, and setting up a strong mentality.
02	Drug addiction, forced abortion, dowry, physically unfit, dowry, indifference, torture physically and mentally, harassment from in-law's family.	Depression, sleeplessness, both social and family blaming,	Education, self-confidence, mental strength, positivity, courage, self-counseling, motivation from family and neighbors, determined goal, taking worries as a lesson, remaining silent.
03	Verbal and physical abuse, torture, irresponsible to wife and daughter, greed, dowry	Topics of social gossiping, depression, and tension.	Education, self-confidence, mental strength, getting support from friends, family, and neighbors, taking treatment for reducing stress, and counseling.

Case	Reason	Effect	Adaptation
04	Misunderstanding, wrong partner selection, rejection and ignorance from husband, the barrier to communication with parents.	Anger, tension, depression, mental stress, frustration.	Employment, education, mental strength, full support from family, peer group, and society.
05	Drug addiction, rude behavior, dowry, family conflict, physical and verbal abuse	Blaming from batch mates and society, sleeplessness, the mental pressure	Education, support from my father and aunt, trying to be busy, counseling, and diary writing.
06	Adultery, physical and mental torture, irresponsible.	Economic crisis, gossiping.	Remaining silent, faith in luck, and support from family, and society.
07	Adultery, drug addiction, physical abuse, losing interest in wife after giving birth to two children.	Tension, mental stress	Faith in luck, sympathy from society.
08	Verbally and physically abused, torture from in-laws' family, adultery, dowry	Insecure, economic crisis, blaming, gossiping, tension, sleeplessness.	Self-counseling, support from friends, treatment.
09	Gambling, physical torture	Economic crisis, blaming	Patience, remaining silent, faith in luck
10	Immaturity, poverty, indifferent	Economic crisis	Employment

3.2.2 *Physiological impact*

Women face different health disturbances as an outcome of torture and mental stress. Some live with broken hands because of torture (Case 2). Still, one had a hearing problem due to slapping in the ear, and as a result, her ear fractured. In addition, some face hormonal problems (Case 1) and go through long-term treatment (Case 3). Furthermore, some face different physiological problems like sleeplessness, heavy pain during menstruation, and pain in the breast.

3.2.3 *Impact on Children*

After the separation of the parents, children face an identity crisis, and about 87% of children opine that they feel frustrated (Aktar, 2013). In the present study, seven respondents have children. All of them must struggle for their broken family. The struggle may be social, psychological, physical, or economic. Additionally, some children of broken families must face an identity crisis, isolation (Case 6), and bullying from their friends or classmates (Case 1). As children stay with their father, they feel frustrated and depressed for their mother. On the other hand, the key informants of the study also underline the effect of divorce on children. Children must pay social, economic, and psychological costs due to the separation of their parents.

3.3 Societal Attitude Towards Divorced Women

People cannot live alone. They share their emotions as people connect with a common thread. Divorced women experience mixed situations in society. They may become victims of social blaming. For instance, the respondent in Case 5 opined that people always speak in my absence and that I must be more adjustable. A husband may misbehave or abuse sometimes; that is natural to society, but for that, I would not give up. Even my batch mates would razz and gossip that it was my fault that I could not hold my husband.

3.3.1 *Negative attitude*

Some share that they are labeled at every stage of society and are treated negatively. Despite their husbands' fault, they are blamed. They face social stigma, get bad proposals, and take chances in vulnerable conditions (Case 1). The key informants of the study also opine the same in this regard. They all highlighted the societal blaming, gossiping, and whispering that divorces are facing in their daily lives. Women are oppressed and helpless. They must pay the social costs mostly. Society, including neighbors and peers, love to gossip about them (KII 1)."

3.3.2 *Mixed attitude*

Three respondents experienced mixed attitudes. Some neighbors are good enough and incredibly supportive (Case 3). But in the case of any social program, they change their outlook due to divorce issues.

3.3.3 *Positive attitude*

However, some (03) also get sympathy from society. They get at least mental support from them. People in the community do not misbehave (Case 7) as they witness the husband's torture and extra-marital affairs. Neighbors always give us mental support and encourage us to survive vigorously.

3.4 Attitude of Family Towards Divorced Women

Family is the most fundamental and closest place for all human beings. But when the divorcee returns to their parental home and continues to stay there, what happens to them? Is there any difference in attitude before and after divorce? In the study, five respondents described how their family accepted them. Some opine that they are treated the same as before (Case 3) while some share mixed experiences in this regard. Some had bitter experiences as no good proposal would come for their sisters. Thus, family members started insulting them. Furthermore, the parental family structure has changed. As the brother gets married, their wife cannot tolerate the divorced sister-in-law and their children. Therefore, their lives now become uncertain and insecure in their parental house (Case 9). According to the KII, unpleasant family acceptance is so common, and some parents consider them a burden because of

their poor economic condition. Close people, even parents, may change their attitude when it comes to giving maintenance or if they have unmarried sisters.

3.5 Satisfaction in Present Life: Regret or Revel!

Out of Ten (10) respondents, seven (07) have no regrets about divorce. Even three (03) of them strongly express their feelings that instead of continuing an abnormal relationship, they should break the fake bond. Instead of tolerating physical and verbal torture, continuing studies, and starting a new life (Case 2) as well as developing own career are much better (Case 1). In contrast, three respondents regret divorce because of their present painful lives. Getting a divorce letter from their husband was very shocking and unexpected (Case 7). Divorce may get rid of torture but causes social stigma now (Case 9). Even, the remarry option might not bring happiness for some as they thought the first husband was more attentive and caring for them; it was wrong to make a divorce decision (Case 10).

3.6 Challenges After Divorce

Divorce creates different problems as women are labeled as 'divorcees,' and they feel shy about participating in social programs. They avoid social programs to sidestep gossiping and stay alone. Women carry bitter experiences to manage these challenges. The present study identifies the following challenges

3.6.1 *Economic hardship*

Economic hardship is the main problem for a divorced woman. In the study, five respondents faced severe economic hardship. Among the rest, two of them manage their livelihoods by doing something. The other two respondents have average solvency, and their siblings are fewer in number. Thus, they have not faced severe problems. One respondent gets support from her aunts for maintenance. KIIs also viewed it the same way: the divorced women in this area face severe economic crises.

3.6.2 *Unpleasant Family Acceptance*

In most cases, parents stay with their daughters when they are being tortured, oppressed, or at their in-law's house. But when a woman returns to her parents after getting divorced, she is not well accepted. The family members may change their mindsets. They may have brothers, but if they get married, their wives may consider them a burden. Again, if they have unmarried sisters, they may be considered "bad" for having a divorce. For instance, unmarried sisters do not get good proposals for marriage. At that time, parents may treat their divorced daughter as a barrier. KIIs explain that as more women return to their parental house, parents, as well as siblings, may consider them a barrier to their overall progress (KII 2). The bitter truth is that siblings, especially brothers, cannot maintain good relations with divorce (KII 3).

3.6.3 *Facing obstacle to work*

Sometimes divorced women may face obstacles to doing work. Family members may be forbidden to work because of their prestige issues. They are not allowed to work, and they do not get proper respect, rather they must tolerate insults (Case 9).

3.6.4 *Possibility of being a victim through dishonest people*

There are many dishonest people in society. When women get divorced, dishonest people try to take advantage. They sometimes want to have extramarital affairs or give proposals to marry those women to acquire women's money or dowry (Case 1). One key informant describes dishonest people showing fake emotions towards them from the greed of the bride price. Moreover, bad people take the chance to build illegal relationships in the time of their helpless condition (KII-3).

3.6.5 *Insecure and Uncertain Future*

Divorced women, especially those who have children, absolutely feel insecure. Tension arises about the future of their child. Out of ten respondents, three express their anxiety about an uncertain life. Some explained that they have daughters, and the parents are not well-off. Thus, they feel uncertainty and insecurity (Case 8).

3.6.6 *Challenges of Remarry*

In a patriarchal society, divorced women are seen negatively. When they want to remarry, different problems arise. They do not get any good proposals for marriage. Dishonest people try to abuse them. Again, many women fear remarrying as if they marry again, their husbands and family members may tease them about their past lives. Lost virginity (Case 5) and having children (Case 3) are the main challenges of remarrying.

3.6.7 *Bondless from dearest one*

Sometimes, because of divorce, women may stay away from their children. If fathers get custody of children, mothers must suffer. In some cases, children stay with their fathers; otherwise, they will not get property, shelter, and maintenance. For that, mothers miss those children a lot as there is no alternative way.

3.6.8 *Social blaming*

Most of the respondents are victims of social blaming. They and their children must tolerate blaming and bullying. Neighbors tease the divorced women indicating it was their fault for the divorce. Besides, they like to gossip about divorcee.

3.7 Adaptation of Divorced Women

Adaptation means coping with or adjusting to a pristine environment. Adaptation refers to someone changing his or her ways of living, thinking, working, etc. to an area that best suits. Divorced women may adapt to society in several ways. The present study strives to find out the possible ways of adaptation for divorced women. The ways are presented below:

3.7.1 *Employment*

Employment may be the path to reducing the problems of divorces. Women may do any kind of work for their maintenance. It may be a government job, an NGO job, any kind of business, garment work, etc. Out of Ten (10), three (03) respondents were found to have engaged in work. Through the job, they have overcome the maximum problems of my life (Case 1), maintaining their expenses (Case 4). Many key informant interviewees pointed out the importance of employment. One of the strongest ways to adapt properly in society is to do a job. Employment is the best way to survive. Divorced women should engage in any kind of work. Those who are illiterate should at least go for garments. Because if they stay at home without doing something, close people, even parents, may change their attitude (KII 3). Divorced women should take training in youth development institutions. As the study area is famous for handicraft dresses and nokshikatha, they may start their journey by doing these. Their economic solvency may reduce their problems (KII 5).

3.7.2 *Education*

Education is something that can change the thinking process and the mental outlook and it is easier for her to do a job. Among the cases, three (03) of them continue their studies after divorce, and one of them is going to start education. Because they think that only by being educated, they can survive in society. Education will certainly help to get an honorable job (Case 3). Education and employment are necessary to overcome the problem. Women must get an education for their survival (KII 2)

3.7.3 *Support from family and friends*

Some of the participants got support from family and friends. Among the cases, six of them get help from their friends. Some friends were the first supporters in the vulnerable situation. They helped me mentally and economically. It is a blessing for me to have such friends (Case 1). In contrast, the family wants to support them, but their condition may be unfavorable. The rest of the four cases describe that they face blaming and teasing instead of support.

3.7.4 *Faith and Spirituality*

All have faith in their religion and believe in luck. Whatever happens to them, they try to adapt to the situation with patience. Especially in cases 6, 7, and 9, they have faith in luck and remain silent when they are blamed or teased. Some still have faith in God as better days will come in their lives.

3.7.5 *Social and Creative Activities*

Through social work, they may remain busy to reduce their pain. Nine cases have no specific involvement with social activities. Only Case 1 has experience in doing social work. She describes, "I have established 'Shotota Tohobil' for helping the helpless. Again, I do recitation, write diaries, and sing in leisure time."

3.7.6 *Recovering Psychological Stress*

Most of the participants get counseling from parents, friends, or close relatives. Some do self-counseling some get counseling from doctors. However, none of the cases visit a specialist for counseling. Again, only one knows about meditation very well as she heard about meditation from a friend and participated in some meditation classes. She often does it and after meditation, she feels relaxed and fresh."

4. **Discussion**

The scope of adaptation for a divorced woman is so unclear and minimalist in Bangladesh. However, the study finds that most cases have experienced both physical and mental torture. Dowry, drug addiction, adultery, gambling, the wrong decision to choose a partner, pregnancy difficulties, and family conflict cannot be ignored anymore. Apart, the research findings disclose that the push factors of divorce are value clash, the husband's lack of love and commitment, lack of freedom, obstacles in self-development through education, the husband's involvement in extramarital affairs, and emotional torture (Parvez, 2011). Moreover, unlettered women with unsuccessful pregnancy outcomes were at the highest risk of being divorced (Bhuiya et al., 2005). From the analysis of the case studies, most of the respondents face psychological problems like anger, tension, depression, anxiety, loneliness, mental pressure, losing their temper over minor issues, being indifferent, etc. Besides physiological problems like sleeplessness, bad headaches may arise. One case describes that hormonal imbalance creates different problems in her body, like abnormal pain during menstruation, pain in the breast, etc. under the study. Societal attitudes towards marginally divorced women are not the same; these women have mixed experiences from society under the study. Some divorced women have bitter experiences, like victims of blaming, stigmatization, and gossiping. Some of them get support and sympathy. Another research finding shows the post-divorce effects of stigmatization and a sense of regret (Asante et al., 2014). Likewise, divorced women face social exclusion and stigma, harassment in the workplace, difficulties in a second marriage, and downswing changes in lifestyle (Parvez, 2011). The present study reveals that the attitudes of the family towards them are different. Around half of the cases are accepted completely, but the rest have mixed experiences. From the analysis of the case studies, the duration of staying in the parental home, changing family structure, and an unmarried younger sister are big issues and push factors for both parents' and other family members' changing attitudes. Children from divorced families face bullying, ignorance, and stigmatization, according to the study. They are deprived of a healthy environment and basic needs. After a family breakup, children feel insecure, depressed, and helpless (Akter, 2013). Besides, divorce may cause bullying behavior in in-school adolescents (Opara, 2014). Though parental divorce ensures stressful experiences, it makes them more mature and leads to a better relationship with their mother (Maundeni,

2000). Additionally, children may be the major deciding factor in reconciliation (Plauche, 2014). The study shows most cases have satisfaction after divorce because they are free from meaningless bonds. In a few cases, immaturity, tension for the children's future, and love and affection for their husbands make them unhappy after divorce, and for them, it is simply a curse. The challenges they face in their own lives include economic hardship, unpleasant family acceptance, barriers to going outside for work, the possibility of being victimized by dishonesty, an insecure and uncertain future, the challenge of remarrying, being bondless with their dearest, and social blaming. The study shows that women try to adapt through education, employment, mental support, the help of family, belief and spirituality, social and creative activities, and recovery from psychological stress. However, some of the cases have no direct initiative to adapt. They just remain silent and depend on luck. Only one case is found in diverse strategic adaptation, like meditation to reduce stress, engaging in social activities, and communicating with good friends. It is a matter of regret that the other nine cases do not use these, and some do not know meditation, counseling from specialists, etc., even though they have no interest in social and creative activities. On the other hand, education plays a massive role. Educated and professional women develop a wide range of survival strategies in the face of the difficulties and challenges they experience (Kavas, 2010). The woman who utilizes these facilities is both educated and established. So, for proper adaptation, education is the most essential and basic thing for everyone. Moreover, higher levels of self-compassion reduce divorce-related emotional intrusion and ways of improving the lives of divorcing adults (Sbarra et al., 2012). The major obstacles to the adaptation of divorced women are negative social reactions and a negative attitude toward the family. Even divorced women face harassment in accessing justice. BRAC provides legal support by arranging ADR, assigning a lawyer in court, collecting bride prices for women, observing them after divorce for a particular period, and providing psychological support, giving suggestions, and showing the path of what to do. BRAC must concentrate on all types of women-related issues, the heavy pressure of work is sometimes responsible for getting less attention from divorced women. So, the establishment of an organization only for divorced women to give social, economic, psychological, and legal support is now a demand for time. Hence, counseling programs, meditation, and different support centers should be available for divorced women.

5. **Limitations**

Firstly, the study is limited by a small sample size, as it is a qualitative and in-depth study, so the sample size was small. Secondly, the participants are from the same geographic area. For this reason, generalizations are not possible from the study. The other limitation of the study is that it focuses only on divorced women and not on men.

6. **Conclusion And Recommendations**

Women in Bangladesh are always in a disadvantaged position if they get divorced. They face problems managing their post-divorce consequences. Neither family nor society are safe for them. Social blaming, torture, harassment, stigma, insecurity, unpleasant family acceptance, and economic hardship are quite common for them. Consequently, the children of divorce also face teasing and bullying. But

government attention is not enough for them to adapt. Hence, there is no special organization to help them legally, psychologically, or economically. The study recommends that new job sources, especially employment sectors, should be increased for this marginal group. Ensuring employment and education is necessary for their adaptation. Through vocational and social education relating to family life, they may get easy access to adjustment. To prevent marital discord and separation, couples should have access to the following services: guidance before and after marriage, training in effective communication, support for strengthening their bond, and education on the realistic aspects of married life. Strategies like reforming family and social welfare, increasing access to economic resources, supporting, and compromising mentality, social and creative activities, meditation, respect, and prioritizing each other will be helpful for their reintegration and to minimize divorce. Again, mass media and different NGOs also play a role in changing negative attitudes towards divorced women through increasing awareness among community people.

Acknowledgments

We are sincerely thankful to the Ten (10) participants for their magnificent contributions. Similarly, we are grateful to the five cooperative key informants for their valuable time and information. We are also thankful to the Kazi office and BRAC office of the study area, who provided various statistics to enrich the study and provide us with the sources of the case.

References

- Ahmed, N., & Ahmmed, F. 2015. 'Problems and challenges of deserted women in Bangladesh: An observational study'. *Journal of International Social Issues*, *3*(1), 1-11.
- Aktar, S. 2013. 'Effects of Family Breakup on Children: A Study in Khulna City'. *Bangladesh e-journal of sociology*, *10*(1).
- Arbitration Council. 2006. Information related to Divorce in Dhaka City Corporation.
- Bath, K. B. 2010. *A qualitative study of couples' experience of the Preventative and Relationship Enhancement Program* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech).
- Bhuiya, A., Chowdhury, A. M. R., Momen, M., & Khatun, M. 2005. 'Marital disruption: determinants and consequences on the lives of women in a rural area of Bangladesh'. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 82-94.
- Elizabeth, S.M.A. 2001. *Divorcees Blended Families-Problems and Solutions*. New York: The Door Counseling Centre.
- Enwereji, E. E. 2008. 'Indigenous marriage institutions and divorce in Nigeria: the case of Abia state of Nigeria'. *Eur J Gen Med*, *5*(3), 165-169.
- Fackrell, T. A. 2012. Wandering in the wilderness: A grounded theory study of the divorce or reconciliation decision-making process.
- Härkönen, J. 2014. 'Divorce: Trends, patterns, causes, consequences'. *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to the sociology of families*, 303-322.
- Hossain, M., and Ghose, S. (2018, August 27). One divorce per hour in Dhaka. *Prothom Alo.* Retrieved from https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/One-divorce-in-Dhaka-every-hour.

- Kavas, S. 2010. Post divorce experience of highly educated and professional women. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Middle East Technical University Türkiye*.
- Leighman, M. R. 2009. Loss of the dream: Stories of mid-life divorce. *Texas A&M*.
- Maundeni, T. 2000. *Children's experiences of divorce in Botswana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow).
- Nazmul, N. 2018. *Muslim marriage and divorce: recounting married women's quest for individual sovereignty in literary and legal arenas of Bangladesh* (Doctoral dissertation, BRAC University).
- Nwoye, A. 1999. *Marriage and Family Counseling*. Jos: Fab Education Books.
- Opara, O. V. 2014. 'Perceived impact of divorce and geographical separation of couples on bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents in Nigeria'. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, *5*(2), 138-143.
- Oppong Asante, K., Osafo, J., & Nyamekye, G. K. 2014. 'An exploratory study of factors contributing to divorce among married couples in Accra, Ghana: A qualitative approach'. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *55*(1), 16-32.
- Parvez, K. N. 2011. *Social changes and women-initiated divorce in Dhaka, Bangladesh: Gaining or Loosing Power?* (Master's thesis, The University of Bergen).
- Plauche, H. P. 2014. The Hard Decisions: A Qualitative Study of Marital Reconciliation.
- Rahman, M., Giedraitis, V. R., & Akhtar, T. 2013. The social sanction of divorce: Who ultimately pay the social costs of its adverse effects? *Sociology and Anthropology*, *1*(1), 26-33.
- Samad, M. 2015. 'Marriage in changing family pattern of Bangladesh: The present trends'. *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice*, *3*(4), 155-161.
- Sbarra, D. A., Smith, H. L., & Mehl, M. R. 2012. 'When leaving your ex, love yourself: Observational ratings of self-compassion predict the course of emotional recovery following marital separation'. *Psychological science*, *23*(3), 261-269.
- Wolcott, I., Hughes, J., & Ilene, W. 1999. Towards understanding the reasons for divorce.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]B.Sc. (Hons), MS in Criminology and Police Science,
Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University
Santosh, Tangail-1902, Bangladesh.
Email: nafisabristi.cps12@gmail.com

[2]Associate Professor, Department of Criminology and Police Science,
Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University
Santosh, Tangail-1902, Bangladesh.
Email: makcps@gmail.com
&
[3]Lecturer, Department of Criminology and Police Science,
University of Chittagong
Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh.
Email: pcr.cps@cu.ac.bd

Perceived Life Satisfaction of Institutionalised Single Mothers and Recommended Social Work Intervention in Karnataka State

Harish. K[1] & P.G Aquinas[2]

Abstract:

The research on life satisfaction among single mothers (SM's) often highlights that they are generally an unhappy group. The study views by assessing how institutions shape the satisfaction with life of SM's. Changes in demographic characteristics, social and economic status have shifted the direction of care of SM's. The present study is aimed towards understanding the satisfaction with life of institutionalised single mothers located in the rehabilitative institutions like Swadhargreah, in Karnataka State.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the measurement tool developed by Dienar, Emmons Larsen and Griffin (1985), was used to assess respondents' satisfaction with life. Descriptive research design was applied for the study. Institutionalized SMs within the age group of 15 to 39 were enrolled for the study. The study's findings reveal that institutionalized single mothers are falling behind in nearly all areas, including education, income, and employment. It was observed that institutionalized single mothers are generally dissatisfied with their overall quality of life, as indicated by the studied population.

Keywords: *Satisfaction with life, Single Mother, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Unwed Mothers*.

Introduction

Institutionalized single mothers (SM's) represent a growing demographic feature within societies worldwide, embodying the complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors that shape modern family structures (Murray, 2016). The term "institutionalized" in this context refers to the systemic factors that contribute to the prevalence of single motherhood in which societal structures accommodate or marginalize the group (Galabuzi, 2004). Single motherhood, once considered an exception, has become a prevalent and enduring aspect of modern family life (Mack, 2023). The institutionalization of single mothers reflects not only a shift in societal norms but also the consequences of diverse factors such as changing gender roles, economic pressures, and evolving attitudes towards marriage and relationships. As women increasingly participate in the workforce and gain financial independence, the

traditional nuclear family model has undergone significant transformations (Dowd, 1995).

Economic factors play a pivotal role in the institutionalization of single mothers. Financial strains, whether due to divorce, separation, or the choice to raise children alone, can compel women to navigate the challenges of single parenthood (Brown, 2004). The lack of adequate support structures, both in matters of childcare facilities and workplace policies, often exacerbates the challenges faced by these mothers as they strive to balance the responsibilities of work and family (McLanahan, 1989). Social attitudes and stigmas surrounding single motherhood also contribute to its institutionalization. While we can see improvements that challenge outdated perceptions, lingering stereotypes and judgments can impact the well-being of SM's and their children (Brandwein, 1974). Addressing these societal biases is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment that recognizes and values the diverse ways in which families are structured.

Government policies and social programs play a vital role in either perpetuating or alleviating the challenges faced by institutionalized single mothers. Adequate access to affordable healthcare, education, and childcare services can significantly impact quality of life for both mothers and their children (Fuller, 2002). As societies grapple with these issues, the institutionalization of single mothers becomes a focal point for discussions on equality, family dynamics, and the broader implications for social cohesion (Ziehl, 2003). The phenomenon of institutionalized single mothers is a multifaceted and dynamic aspect of contemporary society.

1.1 **Single Mother Family**

To comprehend the challenges faced by single-mother families, it is essential to understand the societal position of women (Bharat, 1986). Single mothers often find it difficult to care for their children (Ketteringham & Kristin). Additionally, a single mother who is also responsible for her parents and other family members faces even greater challenges, particularly if she has teenage children (Laveena, Govindaraju, & Meena, 2016). The study (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2011) on SM's in Four Metro Cities of India, specifically targets Socio-economically disadvantaged SM's in Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai. The study focuses on elucidation of the struggles and challenges faced by SM's, with the consequent goal of establishing an accessible support system to bring about positive changes for disadvantaged SM's within the family, society, and government interventions.

1.2 Scenario in Karnataka State

In Karnataka, India, there are no official estimates regarding the number or percentage of single mothers in the population (Ministry of Women and Child Department, 2011). However, data from the Sample Registration System (SRS) of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India provides information on the population's sex composition by marital status. As of 2011, 5.2% of India's total population comprised single mothers. This indicates that rural areas of Karnataka have a higher concentration of widows, divorcees, and women separated from their husbands compared to urban regions. In the US, 80% of single parents are women. (Sanford & Dornbusch, 1985). As per the 2001 Census of India, there were 34.8 million widows and 2.34 million divorcees or single mothers.

2. Literature survey on the topic

The study (Herbst, 2013) suggests that Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reforms

have significantly enhanced the welfare of SM's, contributing to higher life satisfaction, increased optimism about the future, and improved financial stability. These reforms have provided better access to resources, empowering single mothers to achieve greater self-sufficiency and economic security. Especially, these effects on confidence level, were achieved without compromising mental and physical health. The research study reveals that a significant number of single parents in the target area are confronted with financial challenges, primarily attributed to the scarcity of well-paying employment opportunities, as highlighted by informants. Consequently, many of these single parents find themselves categorized within the low-income family bracket (KudengaMugove, 2017). Study emphasizes the imperative to invest in the education of women, specifically focusing on single mothers with children. This targeted investment is crucial for empowering them to enhance their economic status (Zhan & Pandey, 2004).Individuals raised by a single mother throughout their childhood, and to a lesser extent those who experienced parental separation, showed a gradual yet persistent decline in life satisfaction in later years, even when controlling for childhood socio-economic status (Richter & Sakari Lemola, 2017). Families play a crucial role in providing support, particularly when government-sponsored welfare programs are insufficient, especially for mothers facing financial difficulties after marital disruption (Swain, 2005). Given the significant prevalence of institutionalized single mothers, there is a scarcity of studies examining perceived life satisfaction among them in India. Notably, much less research has been conducted on SM's in the state of Karnataka. The gap, which lies between effectiveness of present institutional measures applied and lack of interventions from the relevant government authorities is highlighted in existing studies.

3. Materials and Methods

Descriptive method is used by the researcher, as they seek to examine and interpret life satisfaction among institutionalized SM's in Karnataka. The study focuses on single mothers who are widowed, separated, or divorced, within the geographical scope limited in the state of Karnataka, India. Data specifically related to single mothers in Karnataka is considered, and the sample was filtered based on inclusion and exclusion criteria to target institutionalized single mothers residing in Swadhar Greh, one-stop centers, and Santhwana centers. The study includes mothers aged between 15 to 39 years who have one or more children.

Sample determination table (Krejcie & Morgan, n.d.) was used to calculate the sample size for this study. A total sample size of 104 was proportionately distributed across eight districts based on the population within the four administrative divisions of Karnataka state, using cross-multiplication. The researcher employed a probability sampling method, ensuring that all respondents selected for the study were random samples. The independent variables include Socio- demographic characteristics such as age, education, income, occupation, total members in family, ownership of house, total years spent as single mother, age at marriage, age at pregnancy and total number of children. In order to investigate in to single mothers' life satisfaction, this study utilizes the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985). The SWLS is a short 5 item tool of 7-point scale designed to determine global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life.

Self-developed questionnaire was used in order to determine the socio-economic category of institutionalized single mothers recorded. Reliability test was conducted on the life satisfaction interval data. Other than these, descriptive analysis, chi-square tests are also used to find out if there is any

associations between socio-demographic variables and satisfaction with life of institutionalized single mothers. Software like, IBM Statistical Package for social studies 15 (SPSS) is utilized for descriptive and non-parametric analysis of this study.

4. Results

Table 1: Social, economic, demographic profile of SM's in Karnataka (N=104)

Profile	Frequency	(%)
Age (years)		
15-19	20	19.2%
20-29	48	46.2%
30-39	36	34.6%
Income		
No Income in Rs.	17	16.3%
3000 to 5000	53	51.0%
5001 to 10000	13	12.5%
10001 to 15000	21	20.2%
Education		
Illiterate	17	16.3%
Primary	29	27.9%
Secondary	32	30.8%
Graduation/Post Graduation	26	25.0%
Occupation		
Unemployed	29	27.9%
House wife	26	25.0%
Private factory employees	29	27.9%
Other working	20	19.2%

Years of being single		
1-2	67	64.4%
3-5	32	30.8%
More than 5 years	5	4.8%
Type of Marriage		
Love marriage/Self Arranged	38	36.5%
Traditional / Family arranged	66	63.5%
Marital Status		
Below 18 years	46	44.2%
19 to 20 years	35	33.7%
21 to 26 years	23	22.1%
Age at pregnancy		
Below 18 years	12	11.5%
19 to 20 Years	45	43.3%
21 to 22 Years	22	21.2%
23 years and more	25	24.0%
Reasons for single mother		
Divorced	29	27.9%
Widowed	15	14.4%
Unwed Mother	7	6.7%
Separated	53	51.0%

The above table presents a comprehensive overview of the demographic and socio-economic profile of institutionalized single mothers. In terms of age distribution, individuals between 20-29

years old constitute the largest segment at 46.2%, followed by those aged 30-39 at 34.6%. Income distribution reveals that a majority, 51.0%, falls within the Rs. 3000 to 5000 income bracket, while 20.2% earn between Rs. 10001 to 15000. Education levels vary, with 30.8% having completed secondary education and 27.9% being illiterate. Occupation-wise, the data indicate a diverse workforce, with 27.9% unemployed, 25.0% housewives, and 27.9% engaged in private factory jobs.

Further, the majority of these single mothers have been single for 1-2 years (64.4%), with 30.8% experiencing singlehood for 3-5 years and a smaller percentage, 4.8%, for more than 5 years. Marriage types are diverse, with 63.5% having had traditional or family-arranged marriages, and 36.5% opting for love or self-arranged marriages. Marital status indicates a significant number of mothers becoming single before the age of 18 (44.2%), with age at pregnancy reflecting similar trends, where 43.3% became mothers between 19 to 20 years. Reasons for single motherhood include separation (51.0%), divorce (27.9%), and widowhood (14.4%), with a smaller percentage attributed to unwed mothers (6.7%). These findings provide a characterized understanding of the living conditions, marital histories, and reasons for single motherhood among the institutionalized single mothers in the surveyed population.

4.1 Satisfaction with life of institutionalized Single Mothers

To measure the satisfaction with life of institutionalized single mothers, five components and their response were taken. Reliability of this construct was measures by Crona Bach's Alpha = 0.816, which shows sufficient reliability. Analysis of these components is specified underneath and adjustment was done keeping in mind of the mean value ranges from 5-35: 5 to 15 as Dissatisfied; 16-25 moderately satisfied; and 26-35 Satisfied. A detailed table and the questions with scores and classification are presented in table number 2

Table 2: Life Satisfaction with institutionalized SM's in Karnataka State

Statements	N	Mean	Std. D	Median	Mann Whitney test Z value	p value	
Most ways my life is close to my ideal.	104	2.88	1.70	3.00	5.425	0.000	HS
Conditions of my life are Excellent.	104	2.98	1.60	3.00	6.299	0.000	HS
Satisfied with my life.	104	3.16	1.88	3.00	6.439	0.000	HS
So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	104	3.22	1.85	3.00	6.907	0.000	HS
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	104	3.27	2.07	3.00	6.172	0.000	HS
Satisfaction with life	104	15.52	5.30	15.50	5.705	0.000	HS

The data provided in the above table reveals range of the satisfaction of life of SM's in Karnataka state. The information includes several statements about different aspects of life satisfaction such as 'in most ways my life is close to my deal', 'the condition of my life is excellent', 'I am satisfied with my life', 'so far, I have gotten the important things I want in life', 'if I could live my life over; I would not change almost nothing'. The statements indicate overall life satisfaction of SM's along with statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation, median, and results of the Mann Whitney test. When asked about 'In most ways my life is close to my ideal', the data revealed a Mean score as 2.88, Standard Deviation 1.70, Median: 3.00, Mann Whitney test Z value as 5.425, followed with the P Value of 0.000 (significant at the 0.05 level). The average response to this statement is around 2.88; suggesting that, on average, SM's in Karnataka state feel somewhat close to their ideal life. The Mann Whitney test indicates a significant difference in responses, suggesting that there are variations in how different individuals perceive this aspect.

Further, when asked the question, 'The conditions of my life are excellent' the data revealed a Mean score as 2.98, Standard Deviation 1.60, Median 3.00, Mann Whitney test Z value 6.299 with the P Value p value 0.000 (significant at the 0.05 level). The average response indicates that single mothers tend to rate the conditions of their life as good (2.98). The Mann Whitney test suggests a significant difference in responses, reinforcing the idea that there are variations in how single mothers perceive the excellence of their life conditions. Additionally, when asked about 'I am satisfied with my life' the data revealed, Mean score as 3.16, Standard Deviation 1.88, Median value 3.00, Mann Whitney test Z value 6.439 with P Value as 0.000 (significant at the 0.05 level). The mean of 3.16 suggests that, on average, single mothers' express satisfaction with their life. The Mann Whitney test indicates a significant difference in responses, highlighting variability in satisfaction levels among the participants.

When asked the question, 'So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life', the data further revealed the Mean score 3.22, Standard Deviation 1.85, Median 3.00, Mann Whitney test Z value 6.907, and P Value 0.000 (significant at the 0.05 level). The response shows that that, on average, single mothers feel that they have achieved important things in life. The Mann Whitney test suggests a significant difference in responses, indicating diverse perspectives among the participants. Additionally, when asked, 'If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing'. The data revealed Mean score as 3.27, Standard Deviation of 2.07, Median score 3.00, Mann Whitney test Z value 6.172, P Value 0.000 (significant at the 0.05 level). On average, single mothers express a relatively low desire to change aspects of their life if given the chance. The Mann Whitney test indicates significant variations in responses.

When looked about the Overall Satisfaction with life, the data revealed the mean score of 15.52, Standard Deviation 5.30, Median score as 15.50, Mann Whitney test Z value 5.705 and P Value as 0.000 (significant at the 0.05 level). The mean score of 15.52 suggests an overall moderate level of

life satisfaction among single mothers in Karnataka state. The Mann Whitney test indicates significant variations in overall life satisfaction levels. The test further suggested that while there is a general trend of satisfaction of life among single mothers in Karnataka, there are significant variations in how individuals observe different factors of their lives. The results of the Mann-Whitney test indicate that these differences are statistically significant.

Table 3: Overall satisfaction with life of Institutionalized SM's in Karnataka State

Satisfaction with life	Frequency	(%)
Dissatisfied	52	50.0
Moderately Satisfied	47	45.2
Satisfied	5	4.8

The data provided in the above table offers insights into the life satisfaction of SMs, detailing the distribution of responses among different levels of satisfaction. The data revealed, Dissatisfied Frequency N= 52, with the Percentage 50.0%. It shows that half of the single mothers in the surveyed group reported being dissatisfied with their lives. This is a substantial proportion, indicating that a significant number of SMs in the sample are experiencing discontent or dissatisfaction with various aspects of their lives. Further, in Moderately Satisfied, the frequency shows N =47, with a percentage 45.2%. Nearly half of the single mothers (45.2%) fall into the category of being moderately satisfied with their lives. This suggests a middle-ground level of satisfaction, where most of the individuals have a balanced outlook on the circumstances' showing room for improvement in certain areas. Further, for the respondents, who are satisfied, the frequency showed N= 5, the Percentage value 4.8%. Showing, a small proportion of single mothers 4.8% reported being satisfied with their lives. While this percentage is relatively low, it indicates that there are individuals within the sample who express contentment and fulfilment with their current life situations.

Overall, the data suggests a diverse range of life satisfaction levels among SMs, with an equal split between dissatisfaction and moderate satisfaction, and a smaller percentage expressing high satisfaction. The substantial proportion of single mothers reporting dissatisfaction highlights the challenges or concerns that a significant portion of this population may be facing. Adding to it, understanding the factors contributing to dissatisfaction or moderate satisfaction provides valuable insights for support programs or interventions focusing at refining the well-being of SM's in the surveyed population. The data provides a subtle shade of expression and view of the life satisfaction of SMs, illustrating both challenges and contentment within this demographic section.

5. Recommended social work implications

1. **Skill-building Programs:** Establish initiatives that concentrate on cultivating tangible life competencies, including financial literacy, vocational training, and parenting capabilities, with the aim of empowering single mothers.

2. **Parenting Support Groups:** Create support groups to foster a sense of community among single mothers, providing a nurturing space for sharing experiences and offering advice on parenting.

3. **Childcare Assistance:** Offer affordable or subsidized childcare services within the institution to alleviate the challenges on single mothers and promote their participation in educational or vocational programs.

4. **Educational Opportunities:** Enable single mothers to acquire knowledge and skills for enhanced employment prospects by providing access to educational opportunities, including literacy programs and vocational training.

5. **Mental Health Services:** Integrate mental health services within the institution to address psychological challenges and promote emotional well-being among single mothers.

6. **Financial Literacy Workshops:** Conduct workshops on financial literacy to empower single mothers with the knowledge to manage their finances effectively and plan for their future.

7. **Legal Aid Services:** Provide legal aid services to address issues related to custody, child support, and other legal matters that may impact the well-being of single mothers.

8. **Health and Wellness Programs:** Implement health and wellness programs, including access to healthcare services and fitness activities, to promote physical well-being among institutionalized single mothers.

9. **Networking Opportunities:** Facilitate networking opportunities for single mothers to connect with possible companies, trainers, and other support systems within and outside the institution.

10. **Crisis Intervention Services:** Develop a responsive crisis intervention system to address immediate challenges and emergencies that single mothers may face within the institution.

11. **Transitional Housing Support***:* Establish transitional housing programs to support single mothers in transitioning from institutionalized settings to independent living, ensuring a smoother reintegration into society.

12. **Trauma-Informed Care:** Train staff to provide trauma-informed care, recognizing and addressing the potential trauma that single mothers may have experienced, and creating a safe and supportive environment.

13. **Access to Technology:** Ensure access to technology, such as computers and internet facilities, to help single mothers stay connected with their support networks and access online resources.

14. **Cultural Competency Training:** Offer staff cultural competency training to enhance their understanding and appreciation of the diverse backgrounds and requirements of single mothers in institutionalized settings.

15. **Advocacy for Policy Changes:** Participate in advocacy initiatives to shape policy changes that positively affect the rights and well-being of single mothers, both within institutional settings and in broader contexts.

16. **Recreational and Leisure Activities:** Organize recreational and leisure activities within the institution to promote socialization, stress relief, and a sense of community among single mothers.

17. **Peer Support Programs:** Create peer sustenance programs where experienced single mothers mentor and support those who are newer to the institution, fostering a sense of community and shared experiences.

18. **Collaboration with Community Resources:** Foster collaborations with external community resources, such as local nonprofits, to expand the range of support services available to institutionalized single mothers.

19. **Feedback Mechanism:** Implement a feedback mechanism that allows single mothers to voice their concerns, suggestions, and feedback regarding the institution's programs and services, ensuring continuous improvement and responsiveness to their needs.

Implementing these social work implications can contribute to a more holistic and empowering environment for institutionalized single mothers, ultimately enhancing their life satisfaction and well-being.

6. Ethical Consideration:

Ethical considerations are diligently followed in the research supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), ensuring the honesty, credibility, and preservation of the rights of all involved participants. Adhering to ethical principles is paramount to safeguarding the dignity and well-being of the research subjects. The researcher places a high priority on safeguarding informed consent from participants, providing them with complete particulars about the study's objectives, procedures, and potential risks. Stringent measures are in place to maintain confidentiality, safeguarding the privacy of participants, and handling any identifiable information with the utmost care. The research design and methodologies are crafted with cultural sensitivity, demonstrating respect for local norms and values. Transparent communication and ongoing engagement with participants, coupled with procurement approval from pertinent ethics review boards, are integral components of the research process.

Conclusion

The study on perceived life satisfaction of institutionalized single mothers and recommended social work intervention in Karnataka State found out that single mothers experienced moderate satisfaction with life in institutions. The satisfaction of life of single mothers exhibits a nuanced narrative characterized by moderate contentment. Analysis of crucial variables, including proximity to an ideal life, excellent life conditions, satisfaction, attainment of essential goals, limited desire for life alterations, and overall life satisfaction, points to a balanced outlook. Despite facing challenges the majority express moderate satisfaction, emphasizing resilience and adaptability. Understanding the intricacies of these variables offers a pathway for targeted interventions. By fostering individualized support programs that address

these facets, social work initiatives can contribute significantly to enhancing the overall life satisfaction of single mothers in Karnataka, promoting resilience, and fostering a extra favourable environment for well-being of the community.

Reference

- Bharat, S. 1986. 'Children of Single Parents in a Slum Community'. *The Indian Journal Social Work Achieve*, 367-376.
- Brandwein, R. A. 1974. 'Women and children last: The social situation of divorced mothers and their families'. *Journal of Marriage and Family,* 36(3), 498-514.
- Brown, S. L. 2004. 'Family structure and child well-being: The significance of parental cohabitation'. *Journal of marriage and family*, 66(2), 351-367.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985. 'The Satisfaction with life Scale'. *Journal of Personality Assessment.* 71-75.
- Dowd, N. E. (1995). Stigmatizing single parents. Harv. Women's LJ, , 18, 19.
- Flagship Report, U. N. 2019-2020. Progressf the Worlds Women 2019-2020. Families in a Changing World .
- Fuller, B. K. 2002. Welfare reform and child care options for low-income families. The Future of Children, , 97-119.
- Galabuzi, G. E. 2004. Social exclusion. . In D. R, Social determinants of health (pp. 235-251.). Toronto: Canadian Scholar Press Inc.
- Herbst, C. M. 2013. Welfare reform and the subjective well-being of single mothers. Journal of Population Economy , 203-238.
- Ketteringham, & Kristin. (n.d.). Single-Parent Households How Does it effect the children.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. (n.d.). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities.
- KudengaMugove. 2017. Challenges Encountered By Single Parents In The Learning And Development Of Children. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 178-186.
- Laveena, D., Govindaraju, & Meena, M. 2016. A Study on the Challenges Faced by Single Parent on Teenager Care. International Journal of Advanced Trends in Engineering and Technology, 54-59.
- Mack, K. E. 2023. The Case for Single Motherhood: Contemporary Maternal Identities and Family Formations. Alabama: University of Alabama Press.
- McLanahan, S. &. (1989). Journal of Marriage and the Family,. Mother-only families: Problems, prospects, and politics., 557-580.
- Ministry of Women and Child Development (2011). A Study of Single Mother In Four Metro

Cities of India. Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata,Mumbai:Partners in development Initiatives.

- Murray, L. (. (2016). Motherhood, risk and everyday mobilities. In Gendered mobilities. In L. Murray, Motherhood, risk and everyday mobilities. In Gendered mobilities (pp. 47-64). Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Pandit, A. 2019, July 8. Single mothers head 4.5% of all Indian households. Single mothers head 4.5% of all Indian households . Mumbai, Maharastra, India: The Times of India.
- Richter, D., & Sakari Lemola. 2017. Growing up with a single mother and life satisfaction in adulthood: A test of mediating and moderating factors. PLOS ONE | https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0179639 , 1-15.
- Rowlingson, K., &Mckay, S. 2005. Lone motherhood and socio-economic disadvantage:insights from quantitative and qualitative evidence. the Editiorial Board of the Sociological Review , 31-49.
- Sanford, M., & Dornbusch, j. 1985. Single Parents Extended Households and the control of Adolescents. Sanford Centre for the Study of Youth Development , 326.
- Swain, P. 2005. 'Living Arrangements among Single Mothers in India'. *Canadian Studies in Population*, Vol. 32.1 pp. 53-67.
- Zhan, M., & Pandey, S. 2004. Economic Well-being of Single Mothers: Work First or Postsecondary Education. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 87-110.
- Ziehl, S. C. 2003. The family and social cohesion. In w. h. *together, social cohesion in South Africa* (p. 195.). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Acknowledgement

Dr. Harish K awarded of ICSSR Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the year 2022-23. This paper is largely a product of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). However, the responsibility for the facts stated, opinions expressed, and the conclusions drawn is entirely of the author.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[a]Post-Doctoral Fellow ICSSR-PDF, Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Social Work, Mangalore University, Karnataka, India
Email: harish83kalai@gmail.com
&
[b] Professor, Department of Post graduate Studies and Research in Social Work, Mangalore University, Karnataka, India

Menstruation in Assam: Beliefs and Practices

Panna Garg[1] and Upala Barua [2]

Abstract:

Assam, being the land of the bleeding goddess Kamakhya, holds a special scope for the researchers to look into different aspects of menstruation; people's perception towards it, associated beliefs and behaviours, such as prohibitions in some works to dos along with their reasons and so on. Menstruation although is a very much needed process for continuation of life, it is not at all considered to be a pure and pious phenomenon. Mother deity is worshipped in this *kshetra* (land) but simultaneously, physical distancing with menstruating women is practiced. Therefore it is necessary to get people's perception regarding this biological phenomenon. The process of bleeding every month is not only looked down upon by the males but also by the females who are subjected to go through it.

Keywords*: menstruation, practice, taboo, ritual, purity, pollution.*

Introduction:

The menstrual cycle is a natural monthly process from puberty to menopause affecting the female reproductive system. The length of the cycle varies, which can affect fertility. (Thiyagarajan, *et al.* 2024). One of the most important milestones in a female's life is her first period, or menarche, which marks the beginning of menstruation and this regular bleeding process continues till menopause. In India, girls typically get their first period between ages 10 and 16 and the average age for a girl to start menstruating is 13.5 years. Menopause, among Indian women on average, begins around the age of 51 (Sonowal, *et al* 2021).

Menstruation has been a mystery in human history, with women considered ritually impure and dangerous during this time (Delfin, *et al* 2017). In India and Assam, menstrual taboos silence girls from discussing serious health issues, forcing them to endure suffering alone. Menstruating women face widespread discrimination, viewing them as "impure" and "dirty." This stigma leads to their exclusion from various aspects of life, including kitchens, temples, shrines, and social and religious gatherings (Das, 2008, 2015; Patar, 2019). Most world religions, except Sikhism, have historically associated menstruation with impurity and uncleansiness. These negative attitudes persist today, impacting reproductive health, psycho-social well-being, and participation in outside world activities

(Delfin, *et al 2017*). In recent history, there was a counter movement for defying these. The Sabarimala Women Entry movement in India in 2019 aimed to challenge menstrual taboos in religious places of worship. The Supreme Court lifted a ban on menstruating women entering the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala, sparking controversy with feminist activists and religious institutions. The UDF government has defended the right to practice religion for these devotees.

Trends of research:

Menstruation studies can be broadly categorized into two research approaches. The first approach investigates menstrual knowledge, hygiene and health within diverse cultural and socioeconomic settings (Baishya, 2017; Gopee, 2024). In contrast, the second approach delves into the intricate relationships between menstruation, ritual impurity, and religious prescriptions. This paper adopts the latter approach, examining the perceptions and experiences of Assamese women pilgrims visiting the Kamakhya temple, where they seek the Goddess's intervention, and solace in addressing the psycho-social challenges posed by the attainment of puberty and problems arising out of menstruations. In Assamese, attainment of puberty by girls is commonly referred to as *dangor howa* (to grow big*) or tuloni howa* (to rise socially) while menstruation is termed variously as c*uva* (to become ritually impure), *nowara howa (*unable to perform) and *kaxeria howa* (to become marginalized or sidelined).

Significantly, scholars like Sridhar (2017) and Dunnavant, *et al* (2017) after exploring menstrual concepts in various socio-religious traditions, including Indic, ancient, and Abrahamic religions have shown that although the themes of impurity and sacralise, are often seen as opposites are in reality seen as complementary in many religions including Indian and pre-Christian polytheistic cultures. This is true for Assamese Hindu society, where puberty rituals for a young adolescent girl were practiced mostly by the upper caste Brahmins and Kayastha communities in the past (Barua, 1999[1892]; Sarma, 1989) are now being popularly practiced by different castes lower in ritual status (Das, 2025).

Rationale:

In the context of Assamese society, there is a striking paradox. The *Ambubachi* festival (June 22-26) celebrates Goddess Kamakhya's menstrual cycle, symbolized by the Brahmaputra River's reddish waters during monsoon. This paradox highlights the contradictory attitudes towards menstruation, where a woman's menstrual blood is often stigmatized, yet the sacred garments worn by the Goddess, *angadhak* and a*ngabastro*, are revered as symbols of fertility and protection against evil (Kamat and Tharakan, 2021).

Besides, this dichotomy raises a poignant question, why is menstruation celebrated as a sacred and positive phenomenon in the context of goddess worship, yet simultaneously stigmatized and isolated in the everyday lives of women? The *Ambubachi* festival at the Kamakhya temple attracts devotees

from across India, each carrying unique wishes and problems they seek to resolve through Mother Goddess Kamakhya's blessings. Given the festival's focus on menstruation, this paper explores the experiences and concerns of devotees who visit Kamakhya, particularly during *Ambubachi*, with the hope of receiving divine interventions on problems arising out of their menstrual cycles.

Objectives:

The main focus of the paper is as follows:

i. Identify the menstrual-related problems that women seek to resolve through the Goddess's intervention.

ii. Locate the contemporary status of Assamese magico-religious beliefs, and practices connected with menstruation.

iii. To locate the significance of a girl's puberty ritual called *tulonibiya* or *santi biya* in the changing milieu of contemporary Assamese Hindu society

Background and Research Process:

The subject matter of this research paper evolved concurrently with the first author's PhD research on various dimensions of the Kamakhya temple and its rituals and religious performances. Data for the present paper was collected between 2021 and 2022 during the *Ambubachi melas*. Initially, the first author collected data on the wishes that devotees, irrespective of gender and marital status, sought to be fulfilled by seeking the blessings of the Kamakhya Devi which revealed notable gender differences between socially expected wishes for men and those specific to women, with most wishes centring around life cycle events, such as, pregnancy, childbirth, the birth of a male child, barrenness, finding suitable marriage partners, besides other common issues like health, jobs, prosperity in business and life, family and business-related court cases, to counter black magic, redemption for breaking taboos, or death. However, wishes seeking divine interventions for problems like delayed or non-occurrence of puberty (or primary amenorrhea when a woman has not had her first period by the age of 16), and other menstruation related problems and health issues like PCOs were not expressed openly by the women devotees at first. These were revealed much later with caution. It seemed that cases of secondary amenorrhea were not taken seriously, particularly after the birth of a child. Taking a cue from such information, the present paper tried exploring the experiences and concerns of women devotees who visit Kamakhya, particularly during *Ambubachi*, with wishes related to their menstrual cycles.

Samples and tools of data collection:

The *Ambubachi Mela*, a three-day annual festival, unfolds in June, attracting devotees from far and

wide, many of whom arrive before the official commencement. To capture the essence of the event, fieldwork was conducted for five days in 2021 and 2022, starting a day before the *Mela* (fair) began and ending a day, after its formal conclusion during the *Ambubachi* fair. Following the collection of data on the wish patterns of male and female pilgrims, in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 120 Assamese women devotees, representing both rural and urban backgrounds, using a standardized interview schedule. Non-Assamese devotees were not covered. After further refinement, a total of 47 devotees were excluded from the study due to various reasons, including failure to return for a second interview (17), unwillingness to participate (23), physical disability (4), and young age (3), leaving 73 devotees in the list. It was decided to take 50 percent of the devotees from the first three categories and thereafter 65 percent from the 4th category of devotees randomly. The sample for the study finally emerged as below:

Table 1: Preliminary Scrutiny and Sample Size

Sl. no.	Categories ofpilgrims		
		Original List	**Sample of participants N=43 (%)**
1	Aged women above age 45	08	04 (09.30)
2	Newly married	10	05 (11.63)
3	Adult women between 25-45	12	06 (13.96)
4	Girls between 15-25 years	43	28 (65.12)
	Total	**73**	**43 (100.00)**

It may be observed that the proportion of unmarried girls between ages 15-25 years is maximum (65.12%); followed by adult women between 25-45 years (13.95%); newly married couples (11.63%); while the lowest proportion is represented by aged women above age 45 years.

In the present work, the term participant is used for the Assamese devotees who have come to offer prayer seeking divine blessings and intervention regarding their menstruation-related problems. These women participants generally come with their families, mostly mothers.

Tools of data collection:

A comprehensive interview schedule, cum guide, served as the primary tool for data collection. To ensure reliable and nuanced data, standard anthropological tools incorporating structured and unstructured interviews, and case studies, tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the participants were used. Data verification was conducted through telephone and personal follow-ups.

Findings:

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants:

Age Structure: This sample is distinct in that it encompasses a wide age range, spanning from 12 to 50 years old, effectively capturing the experiences of women from the onset of puberty to the potential onset of menopause.

Table 2: Age Structure of the Participants

Age Range (in years)	Nos of Participants	PC
12-20	22	51.16
20-30	14	32.56
30-40	03	06.98
40-50 and above	04	09.30
Total	**43**	**100.00**

The majority of participants (51.16%) fell within the 12-20 age range, closely followed by 32.56% in the 20-30 age range. Collectively, these two age groups accounted for 83.72% of the total sample.

Case 1: Youngest participant Priyanka Das, a 12-year-old participant studying in class V, came from a rural area near Mangaldoi, did not attain her puberty at the time of data collection. But her mother had been dreaming repeatedly that Ma Kamakhya told her to visit *Ambubaci mela* together with her daughter before she attained puberty. Their family astrologer prompted the parents to hurry and seek blessings of the great Goddess before her puberty.

Case 2 : Moina Boro 44 year old married participant, who attained puberty at the age of 17, but her periods were always irregular. Her menstrual cycle was very erratic and painful. She was married at the age of 29 but was unable to conceive until she was 37 years old. She often faked having periods to avoid stigmatization due to her irregular menses. Hers was a joint family where her two sisters-in-law (husband's brother's wife) were all having regular menses. When she was unable to conceive, her husband took her to a fertility clinic, and there he came to know about her condition. He was furious at her charade and took her to Ma Kamakhya for a special puja after *Ambubachi*. On the day of *Ambubachi Mela*, she promised her husband that she would not lie about her periods. She collected the red-coloured holy cloth from *Ambubachi Mela* and placed it at the family altar. Two months after visiting *Ambubachi Mela*, she had conceived, and a son was born in due course. After two years, a girl was also born. Since the birth of her son, she has been attending *Ambubachi mela* regularly so that she would continue to have her regular menses. Presently, at the age of 44 years, she is facing apprehension about her approaching menopause. She fears that once her monthly periods stops, she will not be loved by her husband but also lose the blessings of Ma Kamakhya. Therefore, she now prays to Ma Kamakhya, so that her menopause will be delayed as far as possible.

Rural-urban composition:

It may be mentioned here that for categorization, participants' families were classified as urban if they had resided in towns or cities for at least three generations, regardless of their current rural residence for work-related purposes. Conversely, participants who had recently migrated from rural areas to urban centres were categorized as rural.

Table 3: Rural-Urban Background of the Participants

Locality	No.s of Participants	PC
Rural	17	39.53
Urban	26	60.47
Total	43	100.00

The results showed that 39.53% of the participants hailed from rural areas, while 60.47% were from different urban areas of Assam including Guwahati. The difference between rural and urban participants may be attributed to sampling fluctuations. Moreover, ten participants are from Guwahati.

Case 3: Mrs Lily Pator, a 42 year old married participant from a rural area of Morigaon district came to get relief from her severe menstrual cramps and pains which she developed after the birth of her two sons aged 6 and 3 years.

As per the prediction of her family medicine man, she has been on the target of some neighbours, who were practicing black magic. She had visited a number of local shrines but to no avail. Therefore, on the advice of the local medicine man she has come in search of a Khasia magician who generally visits *Ambubaci mela* regularly. She had already contacted him. The magician will perform a ritual after the Mela is over. But gynaecological examination revealed that she had developed a bulky uterus for which hysterectomy was suggested. But she wanted to avoid surgery and therefore had come to seek some divine remedy.

Puberty status of the participants:

At the time of the survey, 69.77% of the participants had already reached puberty, whereas 25.58% had not yet attained puberty. Notably, the latter group falls within the typical age range for the start of puberty**.**

Table 4: Puberty Status of the Participants

Whether Attained Puberty	**Nos of Participants**	**PC**
Already attained	37	86.04
Yet to attain	04	9.30
Others	02	4.65
Total	43	100.00

The two participants categorized as other" exceeded the typical age range for puberty onset, with one being 26 years old and the other 27 years old.

Marital status of the Participants:

A significant majority of the participants (60.47%) were unmarried. This was largely due to the presence of a substantial number of younger devotees in the sample. The percentage of unmarried participants is 34.88. There were a few participants in the sample who were separated or divorced.

Table 5: Marital Status of the Participants

Marital Status as on date of Interview	Nos of Participants	PC
Married	15	34.88
Unmarried	26	60.47
Separated/ Divorcee	02	04.65
Total	**43**	**100.00**

This demographic composition is advantageous for our study, as it aims to explore the socio-cultural nuances associated with various stages of the menstrual cycle, and it increases the likelihood of gathering more comprehensive information.

Participants' visit to Kamakhya:

The participants were asked about their total number of visit to Kamakhya and the purposes of such visits. The responses are scrutinized and presented below:

Table-6: Number of times the Participants Visited Kamakhya

No of Times visited	Nos of Participants				Grand total	
	Attained Puberty	PC	Yet to Attained Puberty	PC	Total	PC
01	09	24.32	03	50.00	12	27.91
02	13	35.13	01	16.67	14	32.55
03	07	18.92	02	33.33	09	20.93
05	08	21. 62	-	-	08	18.60
Total	**37**	**100.00**	**06**	**100.00**	**43**	**100.00**

Table 6 shows that eight participants visited Kamakhya as many as 5 times along with their parents and all of them attained puberty. The majority of the participants made 2 visits (32.55%) followed by

one visit (27.91%) by 12 participants and three visits by 9 (20.93%) participants. It may be observed from the table that among those who are yet to attain puberty 50 percent of them have visited the Dham once followed by 33.33 percent who visited three times.

Motivations and Mentors:

Table-7: Motivations and Mentors: Who Advised Participants to Visit Kamakhya Dham on Ambubacimela

The persons who advised participants to visit Kamakhya	No.s of Participants	PC
Local Baba/ sanyasi	05	11.63
Dream	04	09.30
Family Astrologer	18	41.86
Family Friends/ Relatives/ neighbours	11	25.58
School Teacher	02	04.65
On our own	03	06.98
Total	**43**	**100.00**

The primary motivation for visiting Kamakhya Dham, cited by 41.86% of participants, was to seek the goddess's blessings following advice from family astrologers. Recommendations from relatives, neighbours, and family friends were the second most common motivation (25.58%). Additionally, 11.63% of participants credited local spiritual leaders, such as, *Babas* or Sanyasis, for inspiring their visit while 9.30% were inspired by dreams which prompted them to visit Kamakhya. Many believe that offering puja immediately after *Ambubaci* yields miraculous results, drawing devotees to the temple during this time and creating a surge of activity upon the reopening of the temple doors on *Ambubaci Nibritti.*

Reasons for Visiting Kamakhya during *Ambubachi*:

The participants disclosed four types of problems for which they visited Kamakhya and were praying for a divine solution

Table 8: Problems of the participants

Sl No	Initial Problem	Nos of Participants	PC
1	Non-occurrence of menarche	19	44. 18
2	For regular menstruation/ health issues like PCOS of the unmarried daughter	15	34.88
3	Psychological Trauma	06	13.95
4	Others (evil eye, infringement of taboos, black magic)	05	11.62
	Total	**43**	**100.00**

It may be observed that as high as 44.18 percent of participants have come to seek blessings from Mother Goddess, so that they may attain menarche. In Assamese Hindu society, the attainment of puberty is often celebrated as a life-cycle rite. It has become much more popular in contemporary rural and urban spaces which the parents tend to celebrate with much pomp and gaiety spending huge sums of money. Besides, the traditional objective of observing *tulonibiya* of marking the womanhood of their daughters and parents; today they have another motive behind it. They fear that in the contemporary complex situation, the parents fear that their daughters may elope without a formal wedding ceremony. Therefore, the parents prioritise on observing *tulonibiya* even if it means incurring significant expenses or debt.

It seems the mela attracted a large number of young unmarried participants who came with the hope of getting married soon. However, a number of these young participants have not attained puberty or have some other menstruation related issues that have come in the way of getting married.

Case 4: Indrani, an unmarried 18 year old participant from a rural area of Jorhat, has an affair with a local boy who was her classmate since their high school days. As she has not attained puberty to date her *tuloni* is still to be held. In a rural area such information becomes a public affair. She is facing problems from the boy's side.

All her peers and even her younger sister has attained puberty and in all their *tulonibiya* she had participated in a folk practice of holding a sacred bundle called *konai*, consisting of figs or betelnut, whichever is available along with a few beads of gold and ruby on a strand of necklace. It is believed that those young girls who hold it on their lap will be attaining puberty soon. On advice of her aunt, she also slept with her sister while having her periods. But in Indrani's case, these were not helpful. Her family has consulted both allopathic and homeopathic medical practitioners. She is in tremendous psychological trauma. On the advice of a local astrologer, she has come to seek blessings from Ma Kamakhya

Case 5*:* Ms. Meena Devi, a 36-year-old unmarried lady, disclosed that she attained puberty at the age of 17 years. All her classmates and cousins were having their periods regularly, including even her own younger sister. This put immense stress on her and her family. Everyone; friends, relatives, and neighbours, was putting mental pressure on her and her family. Everyone was interested in why she was late in having her periods. Her mother took her to a gynaecologist, who diagnosed it as dysmenorrhoea and gave her medicines.

However, her grandmother arranged a special worship at Kamakhya dham. After the first worship, she was undergoing regular fasting on Mondays and Fridays for one year. She attained her menarche a few days after her 17th birthday. At present, she is working as a teacher in primary school. She has been visiting Kamakhya on *Ambubachi* regularly since then.

Case 6: Mridusmita Das, 26-year-old unmarried participant has been visiting Kamakhya for the last 5 years as she has not attained puberty. At first, the participant only told about her irregular periods and the presence of uterine fibroids. However, her mother secretly confided to the researcher that Mridusmita has underdeveloped genitals since her birth and has hormonal problems, which she does not want to disclose openly. At present Mridusmita is working at a private bank in Guwahati. Her

mother is worried about her daughter and is consulting medical and magico-religious practitioners at the same time. A visit to Kamakhya during *ambuvachi* was suggested by a local medicine man six years ago.

Case 7: Karishma Saikia a 16-year-old participant from Lakhimpur is having tremendous social and psychological pressure as most of her peers as well as her younger sister have already attained puberty. She has performed many magico-religious practices including holding the *konai* of all the recently held puberty rituals called *tuloni*. To explain what a *konai* is, her mother described the details of a *tulonibiya* or puberty ritual among Assamese Hindu families, which defines the rules, prescriptions, and taboos related to menarche and monthly menses, is presented here.

The findings of the study reveal a complex intertwining of psycho-social and health issues arising out of menstruation-related problems of Assamese women pilgrims who visited *Ambubachi* during 2021-2022. No doubt, late or non-occurrence of puberty is a matter of worry for the parents for the health status of their daughters. However, it is the non-performance of the puberty ritual *tuloni* that brings embarrassment to the family and the girl. In villages and certain older urban neighbourhoods, people know each other quite intimately. Therefore non-performance of such rites attracts social attention. Similarly, late menarche also causes awkwardness amongst peer groups of young girls. Besides, various folk beliefs and folk treatments related to irregular menstruation are provided within the *tuloni* ritual. A brief description of the *tuloni* ritual was gathered from the participants from different regions of Assam.

In the past, when pre-puberty marriage was in vogue, this puberty ritual was part of the wider marriage ritual among the higher castes like the Brahmana and Kayastha. After the first marriage rite, the child bride was ceremoniously taken by the groom's party for a few hours to the groom's house and again brought back to her parent's house where she was allowed to stay till she attained puberty. This practice, known as *ghar -gachakowa* (stepping into the husband's house) is still practiced in a modified form in connection with contemporary wedding ceremonies.

During the present study, although regional variations could be noticed among the participants, the rite broadly follows a common pattern as follows.

When the first indications of menstruation were detected, the girl often confided in her mother. She was immediately confined in a secluded chamber for a period ranging from a few days to a month, as recommended by the astrologer, who decided the duration of her seclusion and vows (*vrata*) depending on the timing of the first menstruation. After the proper period of seclusion (often seven days), the girl was brought out and ceremonially washed to the accompaniment of songs performed by the gathering womenfolk of the village/ neighbourhood.

In some areas**,** a bundle containing seven wild figs and a few coral and gold beads fastened together in a piece of cloth is made. If figs were not available, a few betel nuts or branches of pomegranate were used. This bundle called *Konaai* (may be the corrupt form of the colloquial and popular Assamese

name *Kanai* of boy Krishna), symbolizing a male child, is placed on the lap of the girl who was ceremonially bathed and was made to sit in an assembly of female relatives and neighbours. She gives it over to her mother, or, to some other respectable female relations, who delivers it to another. In this manner, all the females present receive the Kanai in their arms by turns, and in doing so, each one pays some money, which becomes the exclusive property of the girl. The ceremony concludes with a reception provided for the guests by the girl's guardians. The bundle or the *konai* is kept carefully after the ritual is over. In the past, the *konai* was kept safe until the *santibiya*, (sprinkling ceremony). The ceremony takes place at a time, when the groom comes to take the bride to her new home.

However, it is also believed that a prepubescent girl may attain early puberty by holding the *konai* of another girl. There is another magico-religious belief that a girl who is late in having her monthly period is often asked to sleep with a currently menstruating girl. This may be an instance of contagious magical belief.

Tulonibiya is still quite popular in many rural and urban households while going for much pomp and extravaganza as compared to yester years. This, according to many older participants, is due to a feeling of insecurity amongst parents regarding the possibility of holding a proper marriage ceremony in the future. For many parents, the future is full of uncertainty as the cases of love affairs and elopement are on the rise. Such rising popularity of publicly highlighting menarche leads to much embarrassment for those who are suffering from primary and/or secondary amenorrhea.

According to traditional Assamese beliefs, the time of a girl's first menstruation influences her personality and fate. Astrological readings classify pubescent girls into a few categories based on their time of attaining puberty (Das, 2008). These are as follows:
Padmini Kanya: A girl who menstruates at dawn is thought to lead a serene existence.
Siprani Kanya: Menstruation between 9 a.m. and noon denotes a naughty and mischievous nature.
Ugro Kanya: Afternoon menstruation represents fury and a quick temper.
Hostini Kanya: Evening menstruation is regarded the most difficult, as stress and strain can lead to irritation.

Penance and Fasting:

Astrologers suggest penances and fasting to help girls overcome any impediments in their marriages. Fasting lasts from one week to a year, depending on the girl's *jog* or fate and the timing of her first menstruation.

Taboos :

The life of a girl after attaining puberty seems to be full of restrictions and taboos that continue for the rest of their life. These include not going to school, not sleeping in bed but may sleep in a separate cot or room, having only vegetarian food, avoiding meat and eggs; not attending marriage or other sacred

ceremonies; not entering the kitchen, and using kitchen utensils; among countless others. On the third day of each monthly cycle, a ceremonial bath including a hair wash is mandatory.

In the book, *Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual,* (Turner, 1967: 93- 110) anthropologist Victor Turner studied female puberty customs as part of *.rites de passage*. These rituals symbolize a girl's passage into womanhood representing a significant turning point in her life. Female puberty rites often include ceremonies, rituals, and educational elements aimed at preparing girls for their new duties, while being culturally specific. All the three phases mentioned by Turner (1967) could be observed in respect to Assamese *tulonibiya. Tulonibiya* presents as a classic example of Turner's three phases of rites-de-passage. These are as follows:

i. Separation: in which the girl is disengaged from her early years. She achieved family relationships.

ii. Liminality: the period of transition in which the girl is neither a child nor a woman.

iii. Reintegration: is when the girl is reintroduced as a lady into the society

Conclusion:

The present paper reveals certain inconsistencies in the lives of Assamese women who have come to seek divine blessings from Mother Goddess Kamakhya to resolve their problems related to their non-commencement or irregular menstrual cycles leading sometimes to major health issues as well as socio-psychological pressures. In Assamese culture, puberty is a significant milestone that marks a girl's shift to fertility. However, this milestone is inextricably linked to the ingrained patriarchy that pervades daily life. Women, in particular, play an important role in maintaining these societal standards, frequently indirectly reinforcing current power dynamics. For pre-pubescent girls, this tacit expectation can cause emotions of guilt and obligation. As a result, the onset of menarche provides a sense of comfort by validating their femininity and fertility. Simultaneously, the drive to attain menarche becomes a multidimensional force, influencing young females on many levels and for a variety of causes.

The impacts of problems arising out of establishing their femininity, the participants have sought diverse parallel solutions from allopath, homeopathy, magic, home remedies and seeking the religious path by coming to the Goddess. Goddess Kamakhya is like their own mother who also has Her celestial annual menstruation. The pieces of crimson cloth soaked in her menstrual blood as a holy symbol of Her powers which the pilgrims carry back with them gives them hope and confidence to continue their daily lives with their own challenges.

References

- Baishya, J. 2017. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene: A study on knowledge attitude and practices of women in the unorganised sector of Guwahati city assam. *Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University*.
- Barua, H.C. 1892; reprinted, 1999 *Marriage Systems of the people of Assam*, Guwahati
- Bhartiya, A. 2013. 'Menstruation, religion and society'. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 523–527. https://doi.org/10.7763/ijssh.2013.v3.296
- Cohen, I. 2020. Menstruation and Religion: Developing a Critical Menstrual Studies Approach. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 115–129). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-0614-7_11
- Das, M. 2008. Menstruation as Pollution: Taboos in Simlitola, Assam. *Indian Anthropologist*, *38*(2), 29–42. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41920072
- Das, M. 2015. Writing the Body: An Autoethnographic inquiry. *Ignou*. https://www.academia.edu/12479368/Writing_the_Body_An_Autoethnographic_Inquiry
- Das, M. 2025. 'Food and Rituals: Narratives of Food Consumed by Assamese Menstruating Women.' *International Journal of Research and Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, Jan. 2025, pp. 279–87, doi:10.52403/ijrr.20250136.
- Das, M. 2025. 'Food and Rituals: narratives of food consumed by Assamese menstruating women'. *International Journal of Research and Review*, *12*(1), 279–287. https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20250136
- Dunnavant, N. C., & Roberts, T. 2012. Restriction and renewal, pollution and power, Constraint and community: The paradoxes of religious women's experiences of menstruation. *Sex Roles*, *68*(1–2), 121–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0132-8
- Gopee, A. K. 2024. (Re) making menstrual hygiene discourses in India. *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society*, *7*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/25729861.2024.2410509
- Kakati, N. 2024. Ritualizing Menstruation Blood: An Exploration of Kamakhya, the Goddess who is "Happy to Bleed". Antrocom J. of Anthropology 20-1(2024) pp. 441-450.
- Kamat, S., & Tharakan, K. 2021. 'The sacred and the profane: menstrual flow and religious values'. *Journal of Human Values*, *27*(3), 261–268. https://doi.org/10.1177/09716858211006529
- Katti, S. V., Pimple, Y., & Saraf, A. 2017. 'Menstrual hygiene in rural India'. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, *8*(4), 978. https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-5506.2017.00458.2
- Patar, M. 2024. Article: Tuloni: Experiences and Negotiations around Womanhood in Published by: Indian Sociological Society. *www.academia.edu*. https://www.academia.edu/40803592/

Article_Tuloni_Experiences_and_Negotiations_around_Womanhood_in_Published_by_Indian_Sociological_Society

- Rabha, D. 2024. 'Taboo Associated with Menstruation and the bleeding deity Kamakhya Devi'. *International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET)*, 79. https://www.irjet.net/archives/V11/i8/IRJET-V11I811.pdf
- Sarma, SN. 1989. A Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Medieval Assam, 1200-1800 AD; Guwahati
- Sonowal, P., Talukdar, K., & Saikia, H. 2021. 'Sociodemographic factors and their association with menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls in Urban slums of Dibrugarh town, Assam'. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, *10*(12), 4446–4451. https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_703_21
- Sridhar, N. 2019. Menstruation Across Cultures: A Historical Perspective by Nithin Sridhar .*www.academia.edu*.https://www.academia.edu/38689170/Menstruation_Across_Cultures_A_Historical_Perspective_by_Nithin_Sridhar_Preview_
- Tan, D. A., Haththotuwa, R., & Fraser, I. S. 2017. 'Cultural aspects and mythologies surrounding menstruation and abnormal uterine bleeding'. *Best practice & research. Clinical obstetrics & gynaecology*, *40*, 121–133. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpobgyn.2016.09.015
- Thiyagarajan DK, Basit H, Jeanmonod R. Physiology, Menstrual Cycle. [Updated 2024 Sep 27]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2025 Jan. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/books/NBK500020

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]PhD Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Cotton University
Email: pannagarg20@gmail.com
&
[2]Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Cotton University

Monitoring menstrual health knowledge, communication patterns and taboos among university students in India

Ashok Kumar[1], Yukti Dhadwal[2] & Vinit Yadav[3]

Abstract

This research paper explores the communication patterns, knowledge, and taboos concerning menstruation among female college and university students in Haryana, India. The study highlights the lack of healthy communication, knowledge, and menstrual education that can have adverse effects on women's health, especially menstrual health. Data was collected through survey methods from 1698 female students pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate degrees from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Haryana. The majority of female participants had basic knowledge about menstruation but lack in-depth knowledge and education. The menstrual communication gap led to taboos and stigmas among the students, indicating that there is a need to improve gender-specific communication in families and higher education institutions. The study emphasizes the need to increase education, awareness, and communication about menstruation, and encourage open conversations to reduce stigma. The research suggests a comprehensive menstrual hygiene communication strategy is required to improve menstrual communication in India.

Keywords: *Communication, Female students, Knowledge, Menstruation, Taboos.*

Introduction

Menstruation is a natural biological phenomenon that affects around 108 billion of the world's population, with India having around 37.5 million menstruating women. Menstruation knowledge, education, and communication are crucial tools for the reproductive health of the young population, especially in the fight against menstrual taboos and myths. A comprehensive menstrual policy is necessary to improve the menstrual health of female students. An effective health communication strategy is required for India to achieve sustainable development goals such as good health and well-being, quality education, and gender equality.

Many cultures and societies have traditionally viewed menstruation as a taboo topic, leading to a lack of open and honest communication. This lack of communication has led to a lack of education and resources for many women, particularly in developing countries (Boratne et al., 2014). It can lead to negative effects on women's health, such as infections, isolation and embarrassment. A study found

that Chinese undergraduates in Hong Kong had negative attitudes towards menstruation, likely due to the traditional Chinese culture and social environment (Finlay et al., 2020). Students are found to have significant misgivings about menstruation and get affected by societal myths and taboos concerning menstrual habits (Wong et al., 2013). The cultural taboos and lack of resources can make it difficult to provide education and resources for menstrual health (Chothe et al., 2014). However, there are also cultures in which menstrual communication is more open and accepted. In those cultures, menstruation is seen as a rite of passage and is celebrated with rituals and ceremonies. It is not viewed as a source of shame or embarrassment, but rather as a natural part of life (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003).

Studies have shown that traditional gender roles can result in unfavourable attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that can impact how girls manage their surroundings both at school and at home (Gold-Watts et al., 2020). Girls who have been communicated severe taboos reported higher levels of stress about menstrual staining demonstrating the health implications of menstrual communication inequalities (Gundi & Subramanyam, 2019). Women have traditionally viewed menstruation in a negative light, seeing it as something to be hidden and considered unclean (Kaur & Vats 2020) (Hawkey et al., 2021). Research has found that young adolescent girls are not adequately prepared for puberty and menstruation mothers (Ali and Rizvi, 2010). In many parts of India they have limited knowledge about menstruation and face stigma (Coast et al., 2019). There is a lack of discussion opportunities in the social sphere (McCammon et al., 2020). People living in urban areas are more likely to have a higher level of knowledge and positive perceptions about menstruation (Parvin et al., 2021), while those living in rural areas and those with lower levels of education are more likely to have inadequate knowledge about menstrual health and hygiene (Dube & Sharma 2012) (Siabani et al., 2018) (Rastogi et al., 2019) (Bhusal et al., 2020).

Mothers are considered the most reliable source for young adolescents (Zakaria et al., 2019), although the information provided is not enough to give them the confidence to openly discuss menstruation, avoid feeling ashamed, or break away from the taboos (Jalan et al., 2020). Therefore, educating women about menstruation, and providing them with access to menstrual products and resources is essential. Creating an environment in which open and honest communication about menstrual health is encouraged. Despite the importance of menstrual education and communication, many countries and cultures continue to have a lack of resources and programs dedicated to addressing these issues. Issues (Dube & Sharma, 2012) (Kusuma & Ahmed, 2016). This is particularly true in developing countries, where cultural taboos and lack of resources can make it difficult to provide information related to menstrual health Most females have inaccurate knowledge about reproductive health (Gaferi et al., 2018). Health education is found to have a positive effect on the knowledge and practices of adolescent school girls regarding menstruation (DeMaria et al., 2020). This study aims to describe the knowledge and behaviour of female students regarding menstruation, including the influence of the environment, parental role in providing menstrual education, and societal rules that limit conversations. The study uses a qualitative approach and includes pre-field research, fieldwork,

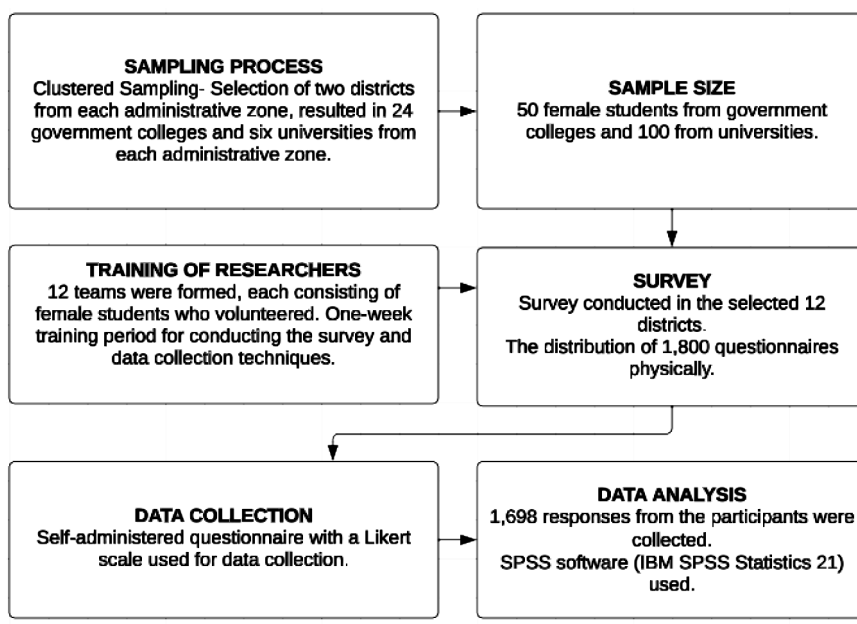
data collection and data analysis. The findings provide insights into the current situation regarding menstrual education and communication in the higher institutions of Haryana and highlight the need for open communication within families and communities to ensure that individuals are adequately informed and supported during menstruation.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the menstrual health knowledge among female university students, including their understanding of the menstrual process and its awareness.
- To examine communication patterns and taboos surrounding menstruation among female students, exploring the extent to which students engage or adhere to cultural norms.

Material & Methods

For this quantitative study, female students from government universities and colleges in the Haryana state of India were selected as the sampling unit. The participants were exclusively from undergraduate and postgraduate programs and consented to participate.



Sampling and participants

The study used clustered sampling to represent all zones in Haryana, with six administrative divisions included. Two districts were randomly selected from each administrative zone and two colleges and universities were randomly chosen from each district. A total of 24 government colleges and six

universities were selected from each administrative division. The sample size was kept the same for each college, with 50 female students surveyed from government colleges and 100 from universities. A team of researchers was trained and sent to each educational institute for the survey, with a total of 1,800 questionnaires distributed.

Data Collection and Statistical Treatment

Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. Responses were collected using a Likert scale. The questionnaire included questions about the participant's knowledge of menstruation, their communication patterns surrounding menstruation, and any taboos or stigmas associated with menstruation. Twelve teams were formed, consisting of female students who volunteered for the research. The students received one week of training on conducting the survey and data collection techniques. The survey was conducted in the selected 12 districts. The collected data amounted to 1,698 responses and was entered into SPSS software (IBM SPSS Statistics 21) for analysis.

Results

This study surveyed 1698 female respondents, the majority of whom were undergraduates aged between 17 and 20 years old, living in rural areas. 66.4% were studying in college and 33.6% in university, with 70.7% being undergraduates and 22.3% postgraduates. The study revealed that while the majority of participants had some basic knowledge about menstruation, their understanding of its biological and scientific aspects was limited. There was a lack of open communication about menstruation between the respondents and their parents, relatives, and teachers. Taboos and stigmas surrounding menstruation were prevalent, but most respondents did not adhere to them. Female respondents lacked awareness about menstrual health and held onto certain myths and misconceptions. Accessible healthcare resources and support for menstrual health education were lacking. The study emphasizes the need for improved education, open communication, and accessible healthcare resources to dispel myths and provide comprehensive knowledge about menstruation.

Data analysis

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the respondents

Demographic Variable	Number of cases	Percent
Type of Institution		
College	1128	66.4
University	570	33.6
Total	1698	100.0

Age		
17-20	1094	64.4
21-24	518	30.5
25-28	70	4.1
Above 28	16	0.9
Total	1698	100.0
Education		
UG	1320	77.7
PG	378	22.3
Total	1698	100.0
Mother's Education		
Illiterate	159	9.4
Primary	127	7.5
Middle	323	19.0
Matric	448	26.4
10+2	294	17.3
UG	219	12.9
PG	83	4.9
Others	45	2.7
Total	1698	100.0
Father's Education		
Illiterate	257	15.1
Primary	57	3.4
Middle	140	8.2
Matric	336	19.8
10+2	399	23.5
UG	338	19.9
PG	114	6.7
Others	57	3.4
Total	1698	100.0

Mother's occupation		
Housewife	1137	67.0
Laborer	32	1.9
Private job	52	3.1
Government job	99	5.8
Independent work	117	6.9
Others	190	11.2
No reply	71	4.2
Total	1698	100.0
Father's occupation		
Farmer	446	26.3
Laborer	181	10.7
Private job	190	11.2
Government job	171	10.1
Independent work	327	19.3
Others	327	19.3
No reply	56	3.3
Total	1698	100.0
Residential Area		
Rural	1012	59.6
Urban	686	40.4
Total	1698	100.0

The total number of respondents is 1698, out of which 66.4% were studying at a college and 33.6% were from a university. The majority of respondents (64%) were between the ages of 17 and 20, with 30.5% between the age of 21 and 24. A majority of respondents (70.7%) who participated in the survey were undergraduates, and 22.3% were postgraduates.

The data of the respondent's mother and father on education, qualification, and occupation were

gathered. The findings on the respondents' mother's educational qualification revealed that approximately 10% (9.4%) of the respondent's mother were illiterate. The majority of the mothers' (26.4%) had matriculation. 17.3% of them passed senior secondary, and 19% completed middle education. Only 4.9% of the mothers earned a post-graduate degree, and 12.9% graduated. 2.7% of respondents indicated that their mother did some other courses like ITI, PGDCA, skill training courses, vocational courses, and research degrees (M.Phil. or Ph.D.). The majority of respondents (23.5%) indicated that their father completed higher secondary education, with an equal percentage completing matriculation (19.8%) and graduation (19.9%). 3.4% of the respondent's father falls in the "others" category. The mothers' occupations of the participants show that the majority (67%) of them are housewives. 6.9% of the mothers have their own independent work, like being a tailor, boutique owner, beautician, entrepreneur, businesswoman, and many more. 11.2% were categorised in the "others" category, where respondents didn't clearly mention the occupation of their mother and preferred to write it as clerk, teacher, doctor, nurse, CA, lawyer, etc., without mentioning clearly whether it was private or government-associated; therefore, it was separately interpreted. According to the findings, the majority of respondents' mothers were homemakers. The respondent's father was mostly (26.3%) a farmer. Out of 1698 respondents, 1012 (59.6%) lived in rural locations, and 40.4% lived in urban residential areas. This implies that the female respondents are mostly living in rural settings. The findings show that most of the respondents are undergraduates, aged between 17 and 20 years, and pursuing their graduation. Most of the respondents' mothers have completed high school, while their fathers have completed senior secondary education. The mothers are mostly homemakers, while the fathers are farmers.

Table-2: Menstruation Related Knowledge

Sl. No.	Statement/Response	Not at all		To little extent		To some extent		To a great extent		To extremely great extent		Chi-Square	p-value
		Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%		
1	I believe that menstruation is a routine monthly discharge from our reproductive parts after a particular age.	1067	62.84	292	17.20	219	12.90	47	2.77	72	4.2	2071.73	0.0001
2	I think menstruation is a kind of physical malfunction among women.	1332	78.45	108	6.36	114	6.71	75	4.42	69	4.01	3629.65	0.0001

3	I don't agree with people who believe that menstrual fluid is accumulated in and then discharged by ovaries.	545	32.10	177	10.42	287	16.90	290	17.08	398	23.4	227.65	0.0001
4	In my opinion menstruation is a process of getting woman's reproductive system ready to attain fertilization.	1056	62.19	272	16.02	191	11.25	86	5.06	92	5.4	1960.81	0.0001
5	I was aware about menstruation before I got my first period.	412	24.26	331	19.49	317	18.67	174	10.25	464	27.3	143.47	0.0001
6	The recurrent monthly flow of menstruation is an external indication of women's general good health.	522	30.74	724	42.64	217	12.78	81	4.77	154	9.07	875.69	0.0001

Table 2 presents the results of Chi-Square analysis applied to the statements related to knowledge and awareness about menstruation among the female respondents. The findings indicate significant results, as the p-value is 0.0001 for each item of knowledge. It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents (62.84%) lack knowledge about menstruation as they do not agree that it is a natural process of routine monthly discharge from the reproductive parts after a certain age. About 7% of the respondents believed in the natural process of menstruation and possessed knowledge about periods. Additionally, 12.9% of respondents gave a neutral response, indicating their uncertainty about the entire process. The respondents lack awareness about menstruation, suggesting that female graduates from colleges and universities do not consider menstruation as a natural process.

78.45% of respondents disagreed with the notion that menstruation is a kind of physical malfunction among women, indicating that most participants are aware of menstruation as a process rather than a body malfunction. The responses illustrate significant p-value for the item 2.

The results from item 3 indicate a lack of knowledge among participants about the biological aspect of menstruation, as there is no clear majority. The findings from item 4 suggest a lack of awareness about menstruation, as the majority of respondents (62.19%) disagreed with the statement that menstruation is a process of getting a woman's reproductive system ready to attain fertilization. Additionally, only 27.3% of respondents agreed to an extremely great extent with the statement that they had awareness about menstruation before menarche. The Chi-Square value for item 5 is 143.47. Moreover, the responses to statement 6 indicate that most respondents (30.74%) disagreed with menstruation as an indicator of women's good health, whereas 4.77% and 9.07% of respondents agreed to a great extent and an extremely great extent, respectively. The Chi-Square values for the recurrent monthly process of menstruation are 875.69 with a probability level of 0.0001.

Overall, the results from items 1-6 about menstruation knowledge indicate that female students lack knowledge about menstruation, particularly the biological aspects. Therefore, there is a significant need to raise awareness about menstruation and menarche among female students.

Table-3: Menstrual Communication Pattern

Sl. No.	Statement/Response	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently		Very Frequently		Chi-Square	p-value
		Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%		
1	How often you participate in discussion and communication regarding menstruation?	348	20.5	182	10.7	525	30.9	356	21.0	286	16.8	183.92	0.0001
2	How often have you and your mother talked about menstruation?	438	25.8	305	18.0	448	26.4	367	21.6	140	8.2	186.16	0.0001
3	How often have you and your father talked about menstruation?	1165	68.6	190	11.2	166	9.8	95	5.6	81	4.8	2535.75	0.0001
4	How often you receive support in communication from female members?	586	34.5	278	16.4	373	22.0	222	13.1	239	14.1	263.76	0.0001
5	Have you ever received supporting communication from male members?	690	40.6	313	18.4	296	17.4	178	10.5	219	12.9	489.52	0.0001
6	Have you ever received counselling related to menstruation from a healthcare professional?	717	42.2	260	15.3	366	21.6	166	9.8	189	11.1	595.64	0.0001

The table 3 shows Chi-square test on various statements of the communication practices related to menstruation. The findings suggest that there is a significant trend among the respondents towards negligence in menstrual communication practices. The chi-square values for all statements are significant, indicating a strong association between the respondents' communication practices and the various factors related to it.

The majority (30.9%) of respondents have shown negligence to communication. 21% and 16.8% have shown frequent and most frequent discussion about menstruation respectively. This indicates that less number of respondents have open environment to carry our discussion related to menstruation. 26.4% respondents occasionally talk about menstruation with their mothers and 25.8% never talk about it with their mothers. The results demonstrates that the responses are not in clear majority and there is a lack of open environment for carry out discussions as females are not comfortable to talk about menstruation even with their mothers.

The discussion about menstruation with male counterparts is forbidden and the result clearly implies it. Most of the respondents (68.6%) opined that they never talk about menstruation with their

father. The responses to the statement 4 imply majority (34.5%) respondents have never received any support in communication related to menstruation from the female members. A majority of respondents (40.6%) have responded that they have received no support in menstrual communication from the male members. Statement 5 results indicate that the male members are not being supportive regarding menstrual communication and making the female uncomfortable whenever needed. The responses to statement 6 show that the respondents have received no menstruation-related counselling from the health care professionals. Most of the responses (42.2%) indicate that the females have never received any type of counselling about menstruation from health care professionals. The results about communication practices with male and female counterparts indicate that males are not lending help on the issues of menstrual communication and the discussion is not frequent. The support from female counterparts seems missing and only occasionally the discussion is done. The conservative approach of female members is reflected in the findings. The respondents have hesitation to discuss about menstruation and there is no support from males and females to discuss about it. The health counsellor is providing no support related to guidance on menstruation and therefore, there is a difficulty to conduct better communication among the respondents.

Table-4: Taboos Associated with Menstruation

Sl. No.	Statement/Response	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Chi-Square	p-value
		Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%		
1	Women must not enter shrines/temples while having periods.	238	14.0	222	13.1	232	13.7	385	22.7	621	36.6	344.45	0.0001
2	Women in menstruation are susceptible to get possessed by evil spirits.	52	3.1	162	9.5	190	11.2	561	33.0	732	43.1	1000.68	0.0001
3	Menstruating females are impure.	93	5.5	117	6.9	158	9.3	585	34.5	745	43.9	1083.36	0.0001
4	Menstrual blood is dirty.	279	16.4	538	31.7	326	19.2	253	14.9	302	17.8	153.51	0.0001
5	Menstruating females are restricted from doing household chores, entering the kitchen, and serving during periods.	191	11.2	250	14.7	193	11.4	425	25.0	639	37.6	437.38	0.0001
6	I think that cold and sour foods influence the menstrual flow and should be avoided.	438	25.8	610	35.9	265	15.6	166	9.8	219	12.9	391.77	0.0001
7	I believe married women should avoid touching elders and her husband during her periods	112	6.6	176	10.4	163	9.6	565	33.3	682	40.2	818.01	0.0001

Table 4 shows the taboos related to menstruation and how females are breaking the taboos. The chi-square values for all statements are significant, indicating a strong association between the respondents' beliefs and the menstrual taboos. Nearly 60% disagree that it is forbidden for women to enter shrines during their menstrual periods. This indicates that this taboo is not prevalent among the respondents. A majority of respondents (43.1%) have strong disbelief that menstruating women are susceptible to get possessed by evil. A majority of respondents (43.5%) strongly disagree that menstruating females are impure while, 6.9% strongly agreed to it. Most of the responses show that the respondents overcome the irrelevant beliefs and taboos. Though most respondents do not believe that menstruation is an impure process, majority of them (31.7%) strongly agreed that menstrual blood is dirty. The results show that respondents believe that the blood ejected during menstruation is dirty. This further indicates unclear perceptions among the female students.

Statement 5 has a majority of responses (62.6%) showing disagreement on restrictions for menstruating females from doing household chores, entering the kitchen. The findings for item 5 indicate that most of the respondents abstain from following the restrictions enforced during menstruation. Chi-Square value is 437.38 for item 5. A majority of respondents (35.9%) believed that cold and sour foods influence the menstrual flow. A lesser number of respondents (12.9%) do not believe in it and disagree to statement 6. The p-value is significant at 0.0001 with Chi-Square value 391.77.

Statement 7 is about believes that married women should avoid touching elders and her husband during her periods, to which majority respondents (73.5%) disagreed. The findings suggest that the majority of respondents do not believe in the menstrual taboos and do not follow the restrictions imposed during menstruation. While some taboos still prevail among a small percentage of respondents, the overall awareness and education level among the female students seem to be high. The results highlight the need for more education and awareness programs to eliminate the negative beliefs and taboos related to menstruation.

Discussion

The present study sheds light on the communication patterns, knowledge, and education related to menstrual health among female college students in Haryana, India. The findings of this study reveal a concerning lack of menstrual health knowledge and communication (present study). This study is in line with DeMaria et al. (2020) and Boratne et al. (2014), who also emphasize the need for health education initiatives among adolescent girls, their parents, and teachers to improve menstrual hygiene and dispel myths and misconceptions about menstruation. The study participants were educated graduates and postgraduate students, yet they had limited knowledge and education related to menstruation, indicating a significant gap in their knowledge of this natural process and its functions. This result is consistent with the findings of Sychareun et al. (2020), who found that young adolescent

girls are not adequately prepared for puberty and menstruation.

The survey revealed that the respondents lacked knowledge about the biological and scientific aspects of menstruation and were unaware of the natural process and its functioning. The majority of the respondents were aged 17-20 and were from rural areas. This is similar to the findings of Tan et al. (2017) and Rubinsky and Gunning (2020), who found that girls in India follow cultural practices without much questioning, and are affected by societal myths and taboos concerning menstrual habits. The communication about menstruation was lacking among the respondents and their parents, relatives, and even teachers. This is consistent with Das et al. (2020), who found communication disparities related to menstruation among boys and girls, which prevent discussing menstruation. The topic is considered a taboo among both female and male members of society, and there is minimal support for communication and discussion.

However, the study participants disagreed with the belief that menstruation is a curse of God, indicating that they do not consider it a nuisance. The respondents also did not adhere to certain menstrual taboos, such as the belief that menstruating women should not enter shrines or that they are possessed by evil spirits. This is similar to the findings of Wong et al. (2013), who found that many females tended to disagree that menstruation should be kept secret. (present study; Wong et al., 2013).

Conclusion

This research paper sheds light on the concerning lack of communication, knowledge, and menstrual education among female college and university students in Haryana, India. The findings of this study highlight the need to improve gender-specific communication in families and higher education institutions, increase education and awareness, and encourage open conversations about menstruation to reduce stigma and taboos. The study emphasizes the need for a comprehensive menstrual hygiene communication strategy in India, as suggested by the research, to bridge the knowledge gap and reduce menstrual taboos and stigmas. The study's findings can help policymakers, educators, and healthcare professionals in developing effective strategies and policies to improve menstrual health communication, knowledge, and education in India. The study highlights the urgent need to increase awareness, education, and communication about menstruation among female college and university students in Haryana, India, to improve women's overall health and well-being.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the female students who participated in this study. Their valuable contributions and cooperation were essential for the success of this research.

References

- Ali, Tazeen Saeed. and Syeda Naghma Rizvi. 2010. 'Menstrual knowledge and practices of female adolescents in urban Karachi, Pakistan', *Journal of adolescence* 33, no. 4: 531-541.
- Arora, Anjali, Mittal, Anshu., Pathania, Deepak., Singh, Jagjeet., Mehta, Chandan., and Bunger, Ruhi. 2013. 'Impact of health education on knowledge and practices about menstruation among adolescent school girls of rural part of district Ambala, Haryana'. *Indian Journal of Community Health* 25, no. 4: 492-497.
- Bhusal, Chet Kant, Bhattarai, Sigma,. Kafle, Raju., Shrestha, Rubina., Chhetri, Pradip, and Adhikari, Kishor. 2020 "Level and associated factors of knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among school-going adolescent girls in Dang district, Nepal." Advances in preventive medicine 2020.
- Boratne, Abhijit V., Datta, Shib Sekhar., V. Karthiga, Singh, Zile., Dongre, Amol R., and I. D. Mail. "Perception and practices regarding menstruation among adolescent school girls in Pondicherry." Health 2, no. 4 (2014).
- Chothe, Vikas., Khubchandani, Jagdish., Seabert, Denise., Asalkar, Mahesh., Rakshe, Sarika., Firke, Arti., Inuka Midha, and Robert Simmons. "Students' perceptions and doubts about menstruation in developing countries: a case study from India." 2014. Health promotion practice 15, no. 3: 319-326.
- Coast, Ernestina, Samantha R. Lattof, and Joe Strong. 2019. "Puberty and menstruation knowledge among young adolescents in low-and middle-income countries: a scoping review." *International journal of public health* 64: 293-304.
- Das, Sayantani, Akash Mallick, Premananda Bharati, and Subir Biswas. 2020. "Effects of menstrual characteristics, symptoms and hygiene-related practices on menstrual experience: A comparative study between freeholder and tenant adolescent schoolgirls of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India." Anthropologischer Anzeiger; Bericht Uber die Biologisch-anthropologische Literatur 77, no. 3: 183-193.
- DeMaria, Andrea L., Beth Sundstrom, Stephanie Meier, and Abigail Wiseley. 2019. "The myth of menstruation: how menstrual regulation and suppression impact contraceptive choice." BMC Women's Health 19, no. 1: 1-8.
- DeMaria, Andrea L., Cara Delay, Beth Sundstrom, Audrey L. Wakefield, Zeina Naoum, Jaziel Ramos-Ortiz, Stephanie Meier, and Kristin Brig. 2020. "My mama told me it would happen": menarche and menstruation experiences across generations." *Women & Health* 60, no. 1: 87-98.
- Dube, Shubha, and Kirti Sharma. "Knowledge, attitude and practice regarding reproductive health among urban and rural girls: A comparative study. 2012." *Studies on Ethno-medicine* 6, no. 2 (2012): 85-94.
- Finlay, Jocelyn E., Nega Assefa, Mary Mwanyika-Sando, Yadeta Dessie, Guy Harling, Tasiana Njau, Angela Chukwu et al. 2020. "Sexual and reproductive health knowledge among adolescents in eight sites across sub-Saharan Africa." *Tropical Medicine & International Health* 25, no.1: 44-53.

- Gaferi, Sharifa M., Manal F. Al-Harbi, Sahar M. Yakout, and Aziza T. Soliman. 2018. "Knowledge, attitude and practice related to reproductive health among female adolescents." J. Nurs. Educ. Pract 8, no. 8 : 53.
- Gold-Watts, Anise, Marte Hovdenak, Marguerite Daniel, Subramanian Gandhimathi, Rajamani Sudha, and Sheri Bastien. 2020. "A qualitative study of adolescent girls' experiences of menarche and menstruation in rural Tamil Nadu, India." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being* 15, no. 1: 1845924.
- Gundi, Mukta, and Malavika A. Subramanyam. 2019. "Menstrual health communication among Indian adolescents: A mixed-methods study." PLoS One 14, no. 10: e0223923.
- Hawkey, Alexandra J., Jane M. Ussher, and Janette Perz. 2022. "What do women want? Migrant and refugee women's preferences for the delivery of sexual and reproductive healthcare and information." *Ethnicity & Health* 27, no. 8: 1787-1805.
- Jalan, Anurita, Himansha Baweja, Mehar Bhandari, San Kahmei, and Aruna Grover. 2020. "A Sociological Study of the Stigma and Silences around Menstruation." *Journal of Thematic Analysis* 1, no. 1: 47-64.
- Kaur, Maninder, and Tanya Vats. 2020. "Menstrual awareness, hygiene, practices and perceptions among the adolescent girls of Nahan, Himachal Pradesh, India." *International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health* 7, no. 3: 1145.
- Markstrom, Carol A., and Alejandro Iborra. 2003. "Adolescent identity formation and rites of passage: The Navajo Kinaalda ceremony for girls." *Journal of research on adolescence* 13, no. 4: 399-425.
- Matsumoto, Tamaki, Miho Egawa, Tetsuya Kimura, and Tatsuya Hayashi. 2019. "A potential relation between premenstrual symptoms and subjective perception of health and stress among college students: a cross-sectional study." *Bio Psycho Social medicine* 13 : 1-9.
- McCammon, Ellen, Suchi Bansal, Luciana E. Hebert, Shirley Yan, Alicia Menendez, and Melissa Gilliam. 2020. "Exploring young women's menstruation-related challenges in Uttar Pradesh, India, using the socio-ecological framework." *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters* 28, no. 1: 1749342.
- ML, Kusuma, and Mansoor Ahmed. 2017. "Awareness, perception and practices of government pre-university adolescent girls regarding menstruation in Mysore city, India." *International journal of community medicine and public health* 3, no. 6 : 1593-1599.
- Parvin, Gulsan Ara, Nina Takashino, Md Shahidul Islam, Md Habibur Rahman, Md Anwarul Abedin, and Mrittika Basu. 2021. "Menstrual knowledge and perceptions of schoolgirls in Bangladesh: do socio-economic factors really matter?." *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare ahead-of-print*.
- Rastogi, Shreya, Aparna Khanna, and Pulkit Mathur. 2019. "Uncovering the challenges to menstrual health: Knowledge, attitudes and practices of adolescent girls in government schools of Delhi." *Health Education Journal* 78, no. 7 : 839-850.

- Rubinsky, Valerie, Jacqueline N. Gunning, and Angela Cooke-Jackson. 2020. "I thought I was dying:"(Un) supportive communication surrounding early menstruation experiences." *Health Communication* 35, no. 2: 242-252.
- Siabani, Soraya, Hanie Charehjow, and Maryam Babakhani. 2018. "Knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) regarding menstruation among school girls in west of Iran: a population based cross-sectional study." *International Journal of Pediatrics*.
- Sychareun, Vanphanom, Kongmany Chaleunvong, Dirk R. Essink, Phouthong Phommavongsa, and Joanne Durham. 2020. "Menstruation practice among school and out-of-school adolescent girls, Lao PDR." *Global Health Action* 13, no. sup2: 1785170.
- Tan, Delfin A., Rohana Haththotuwa, and Ian S. Fraser. 2017. "Cultural aspects and mythologies surrounding menstruation and abnormal uterine bleeding." *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology* 40: 121-133.
- Wong, Wing Chi, Mei Kuen Li, Wai Ying Veronica Chan, Yuen Yu Choi, Chi Hung Sandra Fong, Ka Wah Kara Lam, Wun Chi Sham et al. 2013. "A cross-sectional study of the beliefs and attitudes towards menstruation of C hinese undergraduate males and females in H ong K ong." *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 22, no. 23-24: 3320-3327.
- Zakaria, Muhammad, Junfang Xu, Farzana Karim, and Feng Cheng. 2019 "Reproductive health communication between mother and adolescent daughter in Bangladesh: a cross-sectional study." *Reproductive health* 16, no. 1: 1-12.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Associate Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Central University of Haryana.
Email: drashok@cuh.ac.in
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9814-910X

[2]Assistant Professor ,Chitkara School of Mass Communication, Chitkara University, Rajpura, Punjab
Email: Yuktidhadwal07@gmail.com

[3]Research Scholar, Institute of Mass communication and Media technology, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana, India
Email: vinityadav.2011@gmail.com

Customers' Perceptions of the Quality of Banking Services Following Mergers and Acquisitions: An Analysis of the SBI Merger

Nisha. P[1] & K. Kanniammal[2]

Abstract

An organization's success is greatly influenced by finance, which holds a notable position in all sectors, including the banking sector. The principal sources of funding are banks. The banking industry in India has seen significant transformation as a result of deregulation and technological innovation. Merger and acquisition (M&A) is the most significant of the tactics that banks have implemented to react to these developments and become more competitive. Combining two or more businesses into one is known as a merger. Technology advancements and modifications in managerial approaches are primarily to blame for these impacts. Mergers and acquisitions have a great impact on investors, employees, customers, and the world around them. The paper emphasizes the understanding and perspective of customers regarding bank mergers, with a primary focus on them. The majority of the data was gathered from primary and secondary sources. In-depth discussions with 115 SBI employees from various branches in the Palakkad area were used to get the data. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Chi-square test were the statistical techniques used to examine the data that were gathered. According to the study, the majority of customers were aware of the SBI bank merger and happy with it.

Key words: *SBI merger, Acquisition, Customers perception. Customer's awareness, Customer's satisfaction, Technology development.*

Introduction:

The banking sector plays a significant role in the country's financial development and accounts for 7.7% of GDP. In addition to thousands of credit cooperatives, the Indian banking sector is made up of 27 public sector banks, 22 private banks, and 46 foreign banks. The banking industry has seen significant transformation in recent years as a result of deregulation and technological advancements. Both the internal and external frameworks of the financial sector are impacted by these changes. The bank employed a number of tactics to run smoothly and successfully. The most often used restructuring tactic employed by banks to increase their competitiveness is mergers and acquisitions. There are numerous motivations for the bank merger, including the development of technology, the

development of financial synergies, raising the capital structure, and raising share values, among others. The combination of SBI and its affiliation with Bharatiya Mahila Bank is the largest merger in the history of the banking industry. The bank's entry into the group of 50 worldwide banks due to this merger includes its balance sheet size, number of branches, and ATMs, among other factors. A company's human resources are its most important asset. With more than one crore customers, SBI has a sizable client base, and its views on bank mergers range. This study mainly focused on the customer's perception towards bank merger.

Review of Literature:

Krishna Prasad Sharma (2018) assesses the effect of bank mergers and acquisitions on customer satisfaction during the post-merger phase in Nepal region. The weighted average approach and simple arithmetic mean have been used to quantify customer satisfaction and service quality. The study looked into the possibility that creditors rather than depositors gain more from mergers and acquisitions in Nepalese banks and financial institutions. According to the study's findings, combined banks can increase their efficiency through mergers and benefit their clients as a result. The integration of new technology has resulted in an improvement in service quality. Mergers and acquisitions had a positive impact on the post-merger period, and employees were pleased with the changes. ICICI Bank has performed very well since the merger (Meenakshi Sharma *et al.*, 2015). Bank fees have increased after the merger and acquisition, and there is a belief that the wealthy gain from the SBI merger (Swathi *et al*., 2019). In order to boost customer satisfaction, the bank should reduce technological problems and offer a suitable reporting system (Shabu 2020). Customers are made aware of recent developments in the banking industry and are aware of bank mergers and acquisitions (Manoj Sangisetti, 2022). The researcher made the argument that people's perceptions and levels of satisfaction with bank mergers are positive. Customers' overall satisfaction level has not changed since the banks merged (Maria Susan Mathew 2020) but they are satisfied with the service quality and employees performance. Reshma Reji and Jayashankar (2019) argued that after merger the bank provides better service quality to its customers.

Statement of the Problem:

The most intricate and sophisticated kind of business reorganization is merger and acquisition. The procedure extends organizational activities and entails a significant financial investment. Resolving mergers and acquisitions primarily depended on the organization's financial and economic success. It increases the organization's reach, but it also carries with it a host of problems and difficulties. After the consolidation of banks there are still a few areas where banks may truly differentiate themselves by providing an exceptional customer experiences. The relationship between a bank and its customers has the greatest impact on customer loyalty. Numerous studies, both domestic and foreign, have been done on customer satisfaction or customer's perception towards the bank merger, but there is research gap

in those studies where the basic understanding of the effects of merger on public sector banks seems to be lacking. Hence this study helps to understand the customer's perception towards the merger of public sector banks special reference to SBI. The primary emphasis of this survey was on customers' perceptions of the SBI bank merger and their level of awareness of it. The largest merger in the history banking sector is the merger of SBI. State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Travancore, and Bharatiya Mahila Bank were the five affiliates of SBI that merged on April 1, 2017. The primary focus of this study was the merging of SBI and SBT.

Purpose of the study:

The market's constant change is compelling industries to adopt new company strategies. Among the most important are acquisitions and mergers. The structure, perception, culture, philosophy, and operation of the banks have all undergone significant change as a result of the merger. A business concept's most important component is its human resource base. Thus, when considering a merger or acquisition, human resources should be given more weight. Regarding the merger process, customers' attitudes differed. The study is more crucial in order to gain a more thorough comprehension of customers' perceptions and satisfaction with bank mergers. Simple logic would suggest that mergers and acquisitions would speed up growth, yet numerous failures have also been noted. Although mergers and acquisitions may have positive effects on the economy, they undoubtedly disregard the human element when it comes to consumers and employees. Generally speaking, the essay examines how customers view bank mergers and determines how aware they are of them. The study was conducted on different SBI segments in Palakkad district. The main samples are preferred by clients in Palakkad district. This paper mainly focuses on customers' perceptions and awareness about bank mergers.

Methodology:

Investigating consumer perceptions of bank mergers, particularly as they relate to the SBI bank merger, is the main objective of this article. The awareness of and satisfaction with bank mergers are also investigated in the poll. To resolve the research challenge, the study needed to collect data from the primary source and use quantitative approaches using the questionnaire method. SBI categories in the Palakkad district were considered by the researcher. Clients who were there when SBI merged were located in the Palakkad district. Using a simple random technique, 115 SBI clients were selected at random to serve as a sample. Secondary data from a range of journals, articles, and other sources were needed for the study. The major tools used for analyzing the data were descriptive statistics; the study approach is both analytical and analytical in nature.

Objective of the study:

1. To identify the customer's awareness about bank merging.
2. To assess the customer's satisfaction towards bank merger.
3. To investigate opinion of customers towards bank merging.

Hypotheses:

Ho1: There is no significant relation among demographic profile and awareness about merger.

Ho2: There is no significance among demographic profile and post-merger satisfaction

Ho3: There is no difference in mean score of demographic profile and perception towards merger.

Analysis and interpretation:

The collected data set were arranged in tabular form and different statistical techniques were used to analyze the data with the help of Statistical Package of Social Science Software (SPSS), version 25. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and percentile were used. ANOVA and Chi-square test were employed. The demographic profile of the 115 respondents are presented in the Table.1. Out of 115 respondents, 75 (65.21percent) are males and 40(43.79 Percent) are females. Majority of the percent in the age group of 31-40 years (40, 34.78 percent). Only 3.49 percent (4) belongs to the age group of below 21 years, 22.61 percent (26) belongs to 21-30 years, 21.74 percent (25) belongs to 41-50 years, and 17.38 percent (20) belongs to the age group of above 50 years. Out of 115 respondents 69.57 percent (80) are married and 30.43 percent (35) are unmarried. Major part of the respondents are the post-graduates (52, 45.21 percent), and only (12, 10.43 percent) are intermediate or HSC qualification. Graduates are 33.04 percent (38) and professionals are 11.30 percent (13). Highest number of respondents 46.96 percent (54) are earning below 2 lakhs per annum and smallest number of respondents 4percent (3.47) are in the category of 8-10 lakhs. 27.82 percent (32) belongs to 2-4 lakhs, 10.43 percent (12) belongs to 4-6 lakhs, 6.96 percent (8) belongs to 6-8 lakhs and only 4.36 percent (5) belongs to the category of above 10 lakhs.

Table 2 represents the respondent's awareness about merger and acquisition based on Gender, Age, Marital Status, Educational Qualification and Annual Income. It is noted that out of 75 male respondents 63 are aware and 12 were unaware about merger and acquisition of banks. In the Age group, out of 4 respondents 1, out of 26 respondents 21, out of 40 respondents 25, out of 25 respondents 19, and 20respondents 12 are aware about merger and acquisition of banks and the rest of being are unaware about the concept of merger of banks. Out of 80 married 68 and 35 Un-married 29 are aware about merger and acquisition in banking sector. Majority of the 52 post-graduate 42, out of 38 graduate 27, out of 13 professionals 9 and out of 12 intermediate/ HSC 5 are aware about bank merger and acquisition. The rest of being is unaware about the merger of the banks. Being the income level

up to 2 lakhs, out of 54 respondents 44, 2-4 lakhs out of 32, 24 respondents, 4-6 lakhs 9 out of 12 respondents, 6-8lakhs 6 out of 8 respondents, 8-10 lakhs 3 out of 4 respondents, above 10,00,000 4 out of 5 respondents are aware about merger and acquisition in banking sector. It was find out that most of the respondents were aware about merger of banks.

From the above analysis it was find out that customers are aware about merger and acquisition in banking sector and it can be related to the finding of the previous study Manoj Sangisetti, (2022).

Chi-square test was applied to test the relationship between the demographic profile and awareness about the merger of the banks. Chi-square test at 5 percent significant level, Null hypothesis is accepted when the calculated value is greater than 0.05 and it is rejected when the calculated value is less than 0.05. Based on the survey result it is inferred that null hypothesis is accepted, based on Gender (.160>0.05), Marital status (725>0.05) and Income level (.085>0.05). Hence, there is no significant relation between awareness about merger and acquisitions of bank based on gender, marital status and income level. On the other hand, the null hypothesis is rejected based on Age (**.032<0.05)** and Education (.**008<0.05).** Hence, there is a significant relation regarding awareness about bank merger and acquisition based on age and education level. This paper is clearly mentioned the pivotal role of age and education of respondents in the awareness about bank merger and acquisition, whereas gender, marital status and income level does not play any role and contributes to the existing knowledge to further level.

ANOVA test applied to identify if there is any significant difference in age and education with the awareness about merger and acquisition of banks. It is clear from the table 3 that age and awareness about merger scores are not statistically significant at the 5% level of significant (f=1. 778. p-=.154>.05). The null hypothesis was accepting and there is no a variation in the mean scores obtained for the variable "age and awareness about merger". It is cleared from the table 4 education and awareness about merger and acquisition of the mean scores are not statistically significant at the 5% level of significant (f=.342, p=.795>0.05). So we agree to the void assumption "there is no uniformity in the mean scores obtained for the variable education and awareness about merger"

Table 5 showed the mean score and standard deviation of satisfaction level of customers during the post -merger period. Considering the introduction of new products and services the mean score of 4.12 and standard deviation .718, improved ATM services has mean score of 3.78 and .824, online facilities has the mean score of 3.86 and standard deviation of . 968, customer relationship with the mean score of 3.76 and standard deviation .938, service quality has mean score of 4.12 and standard deviation .773, redress of grievances 3.56 and standard deviation. 972, interest rate of mean score 3.68 and standard deviation .891, promptness in action mean score of 3.88 and standard deviation .718 and service charge mean score of 3.32 and standard deviation 1.269. The customers were more satisfied with the new products and services introduced after merger and acquisition and the maintaining of service quality. The customers were less satisfied

with the grievance redress process and the service charge imposed by the bank after merger. In light of this, the bank must move quickly to address consumer complaints and service fees.

From the above statistics, the customers were more satisfied with the new products and services introduced and service quality after merger of the banks and it can be related to the findings of the previous literature Krishna Prasad Sharma (2018). It is also showed that the customers were dissatisfied with the grievance redress and service charge imposed by the bank are still be a major problem which can be related to the findings of previous studies such as Swathi *et al.*, (2019), Shabu (2020).

Table 6 showed the ANOVA, to test the significant difference in age and post-merger satisfaction of customers, it is cleared that age and post-merger satisfaction of the mean scores are statistically significant at the 5% level of significant ($f=5.907$, $p=.001<0.05$). So we eliminate the null hypothesis. The result showed that post-merger satisfaction is different among the different age groups. Table 7 showed the education and post- merger satisfaction of customers. It is clear that education and post-merger satisfaction of the mean scores are not statistically significant at the 5% level of significant ($f=.342$, $p=.795>0.05$). As a result, we accept the H0 "there is no variation in the mean scores obtained for the variables "education and post-merger satisfaction"

It is clear from the table 8 that age and perception towards the merger, the mean scores are not statistically significant at the 5% level of significant of perception towards product and services ($f=1.356$, $p=.260>0.05$), perception towards service quality ($f=.445$. $p=.722>0.05$), So we accept the null hypotheses in perception towards the product and services and service quality "there is no variation in the mean scores obtained for the variables "age and perception towards merger". The mean score obtained is statistically significant at the 5% level of significant of perception towards customer services ($f=3.712$, $p=.014<0.05$), perception towards employee performance ($f=4.206$, $p=.007<0.05$). So we reject the null hypotheses in perception towards customer services and employee performance. There is a significant variation in mean score obtained for the variables "age and perception towards merger".

Customers are more satisfied with the service quality and employee's performance and this finding is related to the previous study Maria Susan Mathew (2020).

Limitations of the study:

1. Limited area was considered for the purpose of study
2. Most of the customers were reluctant to express their opinion.
3. Bias of the respondents may affect the result of the study.
4. The intrinsic limitations of the sampling are also a main constraint.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the employees:

Description of the demographic profile		**Frequencies**	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	75	65.21
	Female	40	34.79
	others	–	
Age	Below 21 Years	4	3.49
	21-30 Years	26	22.61
	31-40 Years	40	34.78
	41-50 Years	25	21.74
	Above 50 Years	20	17.38
Marital Status	Married	80	69.57
	Un-Married	35	30.43
Education	Up to Intermediate/H.S.C	12	10.43
	Post-Graduate	52	45.21
	Graduate	38	33.04
	Professional	13	11.30
Annual Income	Less than 2 lakh	54	46.96
	2-4 lakh	32	27.82
	4-6 lakh	12	10.43
	6-8lakh	8	6.96
	8-10 lakh	4	3.47
	Above 10 lakh	5	4.36
	Total	**100.00**	

(source: Primary data)

Table.2. Awareness about merger and acquisition

Awareness about merger and acquisition

Awareness about bank merger and acquisition based on Gender					**Value**	**df**	**Asymp.Sig (2-sided)**	**Result**
Gender	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**	Pearson Chi-Square	**1.970**	**1**	**.160**	**Accepted**
Male	63	12	75					
Female	25	15	40					
Total	**88**	**27**	**115**					
Awareness about bank merger and acquisition based on Age					**Value**	**df**	**Asymp.Sig (2-sided)**	**Result**
Age	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**	Pearson Chi-Square	**12.608**	**4**	**.032**	**Rejected**
Below 21	1	3	4					
21-30	21	5	26					
31-40	25	15	40					
41-50	19	6	25					
Above 50	12	8	20					
Total	**78**	**37**	**115**					
Awareness about bank merger and acquisition based on Marital status					**Value**	**df**	**Asymp.Sig (2-sided)**	**Result**
Marital status	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**	Pearson Chi-Square	**.056**	**1**	**.725**	**Accepted**
Married	68	12	80					
Un-Married	29	6	35					
Total	**97**	**18**	**115**					

Awareness about bank merger and acquisition and Education					**Value**	**df**	**Asymp.Sig (2-sided)**	**Result**
Education	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**	Pearson Chi-Square	**12.420**	**4**	**.008**	**Rejected**
Intermediate/HSC	5	7	12					
Post-Graduate	42	10	52					
Graduate	27	11	38					
Professional	9	4	13					
Total	**83**	**32**	**115**					
Awareness about merger and acquisition and Annual income					**Value**	**df**	**Asymp.Sig (2-sided)**	**Result**
Income	**Yes**	**No**	**Total**	Pearson Chi-Square	**8.200**	**4**	**.085**	**Accepted**
Up to 2,00,000	44	10	54					
2,00,000-4,00,000	24	8	32					
4,00,000-6,00,000	9	3	12					
6,00,000-8,00,000	6	2	8					
8,00,000-10,00,000	3	1	4					
Above 10,00,000	4	1	5					
Total	**90**	**25**	**115**					

(Source: Primary data)

Table 3. Age and awareness about merger

ANOVA					
Awareness about merger and acquisition					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.162	3	1.387	1.788	.154
Within Groups	86.133	112	.776		
Total	**90.296**	**115**			

Table.4. Education and awareness about merger and acquisition

ANOVA					
Awareness about merger and acquisition					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.827	4	.276	.342	.795
Within Groups	89.469	111	.806		
Total	90.296	115			

Table 5. Respondents satisfaction on banking experience after post-merger

Statements	**Mean Score**	**Standard Deviation**
New products and services were introduced	4.12	.718
ATM services has improved	3.78	.824
Online facilities have improved	3.86	.968
Customer relationship is well maintained	3.76	.938
Service quality is maintained	4.12	.718
Grievances are quickly redressed	3.56	.972
Interest rates are acceptable	3.68	.891
Promptness in actions	3.88	.772
Service charges are satisfactory	3.32	1.269

(Source: Primary data)

Table.6. Age and Post merger satisfaction

ANOVA					
Post Satisfaction					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.963	4	4.321	5.907	.001
Within Groups	81.197	111	.732		
Total	94.160	114			

Table.7. Education and post merger satisfaction.

ANOVA					
Post Satisfaction					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.422	3	2.807	3.634	.015
Within Groups	85.738	111	.772		
Total	94.160	114			

.

Table 8. Age and Perception

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Perception Products Services	Between Groups	2.186	3	.729	1.356	.260
	Within Groups	59.651	111	.537		
	Total	**61.837**	**114**			
Perception Customer Service	Between Groups	7.219	3	2.406	3.712	.014
	Within Groups	71.955	111	.648		
	Total	**79.175**	**114**			
Perception Service Quality	Between Groups	.554	3	.185	.445	.722
	Within Groups	46.134	111	.416		
	Total	**46.689**	**114**			
Perception Employee	Between Groups	6.577	3	2.192	4.206	.007
	Within Groups	57.858	111	.521		
	Total	**64.435**	**114**			

(source: primary data)

Future Scope of the Research:

The purpose of the study is to determine customer knowledge of and satisfaction with the bank merger. The paper also discusses how customers feel about the bank merger. The study only looks at the several SBI branches in the Palakkad area. Since consumers' needs and preferences for financial services are always evolving, there is a lot of room for further research on the same topic in the future. It is possible to expand the research to include information on employee perceptions, levels of satisfaction, and HRM practices following mergers and acquisitions. Additional research can be conducted to see

whether the anticipated outcomes of the merger—such as operational excellence, a decrease in fraud, the effectiveness of ATM services, etc.—have materialized or not. Analyzing the bank's performance following the merger has many possibilities.

Conclusion:

Due to globalization and fastest change in the technology, the world is in a state of flux. Several firms are also facing intense competition and in order to face this competition and utilization of the opportunities many firms are using various strategies. Among them most important is the merger and acquisition. The biggest merger in the history of banking business is the merger of SBI with its associates. This study is mainly based on the customer's perception towards SBI bank merger. The study also identifies the customer's awareness and satisfaction towards bank merger. Customers from different branches in Palakkad district is selected as an area of the study. Following the merger and acquisition process, customers' views and levels of satisfaction with regard to the particular criteria are satisfactory and undoubtedly have a good outcome. According to the findings of present study, majority of clients are aware of bank mergers and are happy with the system.

References:

- Agrawal, Riche. January 2018. 'Impact of merger and acquisition on employees' perception in banking sector of India'*, International Research Journal of Management and Commerce.* ISSN: 2348-9766, Vol.5, Issue1.
- Antharjanam, Parvathy Devi. Raj, Reshmi. Sunddra, Suman. Abymon, DS. 2020. 'Impact of merger and acquisition of banks on customers and improvements in E-services of the bank: A case study of SBI-SBT'. *International Journal of Psychological Rehabilitation,* Pp. 10241-10249. Vol.24, Issue: 08. ISSN: 1475-7192.
- Athma, Prashanta and Bhavani, A. 2016. 'Mergers in Banking Sector in India: An Analysis of Pre& Post Merger Performance of SBI & HDFC Bank', *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM),* Pp. 07-16. E-ISSN: 2278-487X, P-ISSN: 2319-7668
- Goyal K. A and Joshi, Vijay. 2012. 'M&A in banking industry: Case study of ICICI Bank Ltd', *International Journal of Research in Management.* ISSN-2249-5908; Issue 2, Vol.2
- Gupta, Ashish Kumar and Kaur, Pawandeep. November 2017. 'Impact of SBI merger on Banking sector', *International Journal of Enhanced Research in Management & Computer Applications ISSN: 2319-7471, Vol. 6 Issue 11.* https://erpublications.com ..
- J. Ishwarya. 2019. 'A study on merger and acquisition of banks and case study on SBI and its Associates', Conference Proceeding Published in *International Journal of Trend in Research and Development (IJTRD)*, ISSN: 2394-9333, Pp. 22-25. www.ijtrd.com.

- J, Jayashankar. Reji, Reshma and M. S, Swathi. 2019. 'Merger of SBI and its Associated: A study on customer's perception with reference to Ernakulum city', *International Journal of Research in Engineering, IT and Social Sciences.* Pp. 254-261. Impact Factor: 6.565, Vol.09, Issue 03
- K. Prabhakar and Ebenezer, Vasanth. 2020. 'A study on the customer perception towards bank merger and the recent developments with reference to public sector banks'*, Mukt Shabd Journal. Pp. 198-206.ISSN No: 2347-3150, Volume: IX, Issue-IV, No. 2.*
- Kotnal, Jayashree R. 2016. 'The economic Impact of Merger and Acquisition on profitability of SBI', *International Journal of Applied Research*. Vol. 2, Issue 7, Part L; Pp. 810-818. ISSN Print: 2394-7500, ISSN Online: 2394-5869.
- Lakshman, U. N.*,* Ramanath HR, Subramanyam, M. 2019. 'Performance analysis of SBI before and after merger period', *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR).* Pp. 719-726. Volume 6, Issue 1, ISSN-2349-5162.
- Mathew, Mariya Susan. 2020. 'Bank merging- impacts and effects on productivity, customers and employees', *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science.* Pp. 657-682. Volume: 02, Issue: 06. E-ISSN: 2582-5208.
- Mehta, Apurva Kumar Balakrishna. 2019. 'A study on customer's satisfaction towards banking technology', *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies (IJAHMS)*, Pp. 40-46. ISSN: 2395-0692.
- Papathanasiou, Spyros. Mylonas, Pavlos and Kenourgios, Dimitris. 2018. 'Bank Mergers-Takeovers and Customer satisfaction: The Case of Greek Commercial Bank', *International Journal of Finance and Economics and Trade (IJFET).*
- Paula Alvarez-Gonzalea and Carmen Otero-Neira. 2019. 'The effects of merger and Acquisition on customer –company relationship: Exploring employees' perception in the Spanish banking sector', *International Journal of Bank Marketing.* ISSN: 0265-2323.
- Phalke, Manish and Desai, Avinash. 2017. 'Study on perception of customers towards the performances of lending procedures of banks due to merger and acquisition', *Global Journal for Research Analysis (international).* Pp. 450-457. Vol. 6, Issue-5, ISSN No. 2277-8160, IF: 4.547, IC Value 80.26
- Rabb, Aby Abdul. 2014. 'A study on customer's satisfaction towards banking services of SBI in Kanyakumari District', *International Journal of Management and Commerce Innovations.* Pp. 429-443. Vol: 2, Issue.2. ISSN: 2348-7585.
- Saraiya, Alpha. 2018. 'Customers satisfaction and SBI: A case study of Dungarpur city', *Inspira-Journal of Commerce, Economics & Computer Science (JCECS)* 8 ISSN: 2395-7069 General Impact Factor: 2.4668, Volume 04, No. 02, Pp. 08-14
- Shabu. 2020. 'A study on the impact of bank merger on the quality of banking services with special references to State Bank of India', *A journal of Composition Theory. Vol. XIII, Issue VI,*

ISSN: 0731-6755.

- Shah, Burhan Ali and Khan, Niaz. 2017. 'The impact of merger and acquisition on the acquirer banks performance', *Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal, University of Wollongong Australia.* pp. 30-54. Vol.11, Issue-3.2017, DOI: 10.14453/aabfj.V.11. i3. 4.
- Shaik, Salauddeen. Kumar, P. Raghu and Kumar, A. Dalvin Vinoth. July 2019. 'An impact of Merger and Takeovers of Public Sector banks in Enhancing Customer Satisfaction' *International Journal of Recent Technology & Engineering (IJRTE),* Pp. 6418-6422. ISSN 2277-3878, Vol-8, Issue.
- Sharma, Krishana Prasad. 2018. 'The Impact of M&A on customer satisfaction in post-merger phases in Banking Sector Nepal'*, The Journal of Nepalese Business studies.* Vol. XI, No. 1, Pp. 57-69, ISSN 2350-8795 (print). ISSN 2676-1238 (online)
- Sharma, Meenakshi. Gaur, Tanvi and Bansal, Yamini. 2015, 'A case study on customer's satisfaction level post-merger and acquisition (with special reference to ICICI Bank and Bank of Rajasthan)'*, International Journal of Scientific Research.* Pp. 3-7. Vol. 4, Issue. 5. ISSN: 2277-8179.
- Sharma, Sanjay and Sidana, Sahil. 2017. 'Impact of SBI merger on financial condition of SBI', *International Conference on Recent Trends in Technology and its Impact on Economy of India.* Pp. 390-396.ISBN:978-93-86171-74-0.
- Tiwari, Sanjay. August 2011. 'Merger of Banks: Some Issues and Challenges', *ZENITH-International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research. Pp. 51-59. Vol.1, Issue 4, ISSN: 2231-5780.207.*

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, MSTM Arts and Science College,
Perinthalmanna, Malappuram (dit)
Research Scholar,
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbator.
Email: nishakutty1982@gmail.com
&
[2]Research Guide,
Professor, Department of Commerce,
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore
Email: kanniammalsiva1411@gmail.com

Conflict between International Trade Provisions and Climate Change Policies

Neelam Rai[1] & Veer Mayank[2]

Abstract

This research study explores the tricky chemistry between "international trade agreements and environmental concerns," focusing on "climate change." Address the conflicts that frequently arise between the principles and objectives of the "MEAs" and the "Trade Agreements", especially within the structure of the "WTO". The document examines how the 'WTO' rules have managed to adequately integrate the 'climate change' policy, which has led to a dispute between commercial law and environmental regulations. It also uncovers possible solutions and policy recommendations to reconcile these conflicting regulations and promote both economic growth and green and environmentally friendly global business practices.

Keywords: *International Trade Law, WTO (World Trade Organization), Global environmental law, Multilateral Environmental Agreement, Climate Change, Convention, Protocols*

Introduction

Advances in technology and science have improved our ability to understand the environmental consequences of both natural phenomena and human actions [5]. While several treaties such as "The Vienna Convention of 1985" which safeguards the "*Ozone Layer"*, have proven effective in achieving their goals [6]. As a result, environmental agreements have rapidly expanded to include various solar specialties such as the "*Biodiversity Act*"[1] and the "*Law of the Sea"*[2]. Among these branches, 'Climate Change Law'[3] has emerged as a significant and complex area, similar to a symbolic environmental law tree taking shape. [7]

Trade liberalization plays a vital role in improving global economic well-being and expanding opportunities for billions of people to lead fulfilling lives. However, the rapid growth of international trade and the integration of value chains have raised many questions about the trade-environment interactions.[8] Despite the growing pressure to address the border between International commerce and the changing climate neither the 'GATT' nor the WTO [9]' explicitly address climate change. This oversight is due in part to the scientific community's growing understanding of the effect of changing climate caused by international trade.

The position of the WTO [10] on environmental protection raises questions about how effectively its institutional framework contributes to safeguarding the environment. The current debate revolves around the connection between trade regulations and environmental measures aimed at reducing the consequences of climate change, highlighting the complex and critical nature of this discourse.

On one hand, trade can be viewed positively as it generates resources that can be invested for the defense of the ecology and enhances resource efficiency, fostering multilateral cooperation to tackle cross-border environmental issues. However, there's also a negative aspect to free trade which reduces biodiversity and increases ecological risks. Additionally, trade-driven growth may result in environmental damage due to unsustainable resource consumption and increased waste production. Moreover, trade agreements sometimes categorize economic interest over environmental measures, potentially undermining environmental protection efforts [11].

The (Trade) laws and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change[4] (UNFCCC) highlight how commerce and the ecosystem are inextricably connected. Using trade law tools in "international environmental law" highlights the significance of the connection amid commerce and the ecology under the "WTO" framework. Despite their distinct problems, both trade and environmental issues are managed using similar tools such as taxes, tariffs, regulations, and subsidies [12].

The differences between "World Trade Organization" and "Multilateral Environmental Agreements"[5] have sparked debates about their norms; however, international trade may offer "climate change" key principles from WTO law, such as non-discrimination[6] under the (MFN) and *"National Treatment Principles"*.

Environmentalists are urgently investigating the mechanism behind climate disruption, while governments are actively formulating policies and initiatives to mitigate its root causes and prepare for the inevitable. This collaborative effort involves multiple global negotiations that have been ratified by many countries, symbolizing collective commitment through negotiations, discussions and workable compromises among the parties involved. [13] When Parties ratify environmental agreements, there is a risk that their standards will clash with the trade regulations. In addition, some countries are adopting green industrial policies aimed at supporting competitive industries in environmental sectors such as renewable energy. Still, they may face obstacles imposed by global trade and contract regulations unless trade rules change towards a more outward-looking approach. [14]

Currently, there are many "MEAs" operating under the leadership of "UNEP"[7] and "UNFCCC". Some of these agreements also include trade measures. However, not all global environmental treaties are truly multilateral, as some initiatives are regional in scope. [15]

For MEAs to be effective, they must be based on international cooperation and consensus among participating parties. Before delving into MEAs, it is essential to familiarize yourself with the essential aspects of both trade regulations and environmental agreements. Trade regulations under MEAs often take the form of import or export bans that may violate the standards of the*"* (GATT) and the "*World Trade Organization"* (WTO). Although trade bans are permitted under the "*General Exception*"[8] clauses of the GATT/WTO [16], they must meet certain criteria.

Another key issue is that trade provisions in some MEAs may create discrimination between Parties and non-Parties. The implementation of such provisions could potentially conflict with core elements of the GATT/WTO, such as the "*Most Favored Nation Principle"* (Article 1) [17]

It is necessary to address the key legal issues posed by "MEAs" in "climate policy", especially the complex interplay between WTO rules and international environmental agreements. This research is crucial for navigating complex issues of commerce and ecological relations promoting harmony in trade and environmental policy.

Challenges in Harmonizing Trade and Environmental Principles

Concerns about the relationship between trade policy and environmental measures, particularly climate change legislation, have increased in recent decades. The focus on "sustainable development" has led to questions about the interplay between market access and environmental concerns, highlighting the blurred boundaries between trade provisions and green procedures. Various literatures highlight these challenges in harmonizing both trade policies and environment measures.

"Christina Voigt" (2005) has highlighted that international law is complex and includes numerous fragmented treaties with different norms and principles. This complexity often leads to legislative overlaps, making it challenging to harmonize these different elements [18]. Although these mechanisms aim to address ecological concerns, they can potentially conflict with multilateral rules, especially WTO rules, as they are discriminatory and distort free trade.

According to "*Vanda Jakir"* (2013), there is a tendency for some entities to reject their members' environmental measures because they perceive these measures to have a harmful effect on trade rules. This view quickly examines recent developments in WTO law, highlighting in particular the ongoing conflict between liberalization of tradeand environmental protection. [19]

"Thomas Cottier and Manfred Elsig" (2011) argue that the cross-cutting nature of 'environmental law' is a fundamental reason for its inherent fragmentation. This fragmentation has prevented environmental law from being consolidated under the umbrella of a single international organization, highlighting the complexities and challenges in harmonizing 'trade and environmental regulations' worldwide. [20]

"DiMatteo" (2003) analyzes how 'environmental law' is inextricably linked to societal and commercial development as suggested by the preamble principle of sustainable development of the "*World Trade Organization*". It cannot be considered in isolation, but rather as an understandable framework that intersects with different areas of law at national, regional and international level. [21]

"Yamina and Depledge" (2004) examine the legal and institutional aspects on climate change law, with a focus on the application of public international law to nation states on climate change. They also highlight unique legal concerns and uncertainties of the "Kyoto Protocol".[22]

On the contrary, "*Doelle*" (2005) outlines the agreement structure under the 'Kyoto Protocol' and assesses the possible impact of the WTO on climate change measures. The author's main goal is to appraise the ability of this mechanism to encourage countries to carry out environmentally friendly actions and conform to the "climate change regime".[23]

"D. Gerandi" (1997) proposes harmonization and modernization of the "GATT" dispute settlement system as a solution to the conflict between "trade and environmental" measures; nevertheless, their argument recognizes that coordination can be a costly strategy, especially for poorer countries. [24]

"Nicola Anna May Durrant" (2008) notes the lack of comprehensive legal analysis of the operation of an effective integrated legal response to "climate change" at both international and national levels. This includes using regulatory, accountability and market mechanisms to effectively address "climate change". [25]

"James Bacchus" (2019) highlights that international agreements lack a clear definition of measures to respond to "climate change". Nevertheless, there is a broad understanding that such instruments should not involve arbitrary, inconsistent and unjustified discrimination against trade. He questions how to regulate the soundness of these measures without agreed definitions. [26]

"Runnalls" (1998) stated that emerging countries are not opposed to increasing the level of environmental protection. However, they have suffered huge losses due to duties and exemptions obstacles set up by rich countries. This has led to the assumption among developing countries that developed countries can use environmental protection measures to advance their interests. [27]

Aligning Trade Rules with Climate Policies

This research article, resulting from an academic's thesis, investigates the convergence between "trade rules and climate policies." Its main objective is to recognize strategies within the trading system that can effectively address "climate issues" while being aligned with environmental standards. Recognizing the seriousness of global ecological problems, the document emphasizes the imperative of international cooperation between nations. The scholar arrived at this specific research problem

after carrying out extensive research in the area.

Each nation may favor a different set of climate policy tools to counteract climate change. Environmentalists have defended the effectiveness of climate change instruments such as taxes, and many nations are adding subsidies to their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, there are major points of caution when designing climate change policy. Therefore, differences may arise with fundamental legal and institutional issues between "free trade and environmental measures".

Trade and Climate Policy Conflicts under WTO Law

A. Environmental policy:

In recent decades, free trade development and climate change programs have developed independently, and their paths are more divergent. Trade sanctions against non-parties to climate change treaties, i.e. actions that discriminate against goods and services from non-parties to the treaty to force them to join are likely to be in violation of WTO law and are not intended to achieve the objectives of the UNFCCC. So, no country is allowed to impose climate related policies outside their territorial jurisdiction which is against the main principles of WTO in the name of preserving the environment, human and animal safety etc.

Similarly, we have another norm conflict that arises between trade and ecology on the main components of the WTO, which are 'National Treatment' (Article III)[9] and 'Most Favored Nation'[10] (Article I). Likewise, another issue is related to "*Article Eleven"* of the GATT/WTO, which does not speak of restrictions or prohibitions other than taxes, duties, other charges, etc. As a result, the majority of environmental trade prohibitions are quantitative.

Another problem is process and production problems, which are closely related to "Article XX exception" and "Article III". Suppose an importing country decides to ban the sale of domestic or imported cars that generate more pollutants in their exhaust than allowed by a specific standard. If the products themselves cause pollution, the administration of the importing country can ban their sale on a non-discriminatory basis, thereby causing a dispute between the GATT/WTO article and domestic environmental policy.

Inflexible climate policies:

Another issue is dispute settlement and transparency, as the WTO's dispute resolution tool is not effectively established to deal with environmental disputes, according to many environmentalists. Many trade-related environmental issues or disputes lend themselves to non-judicial alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as arbitration, mediation, conciliation, etc.

Another source of trade restriction debate for environmental goals is the use of stricter environmental mechanisms in the name of trade-related measures, which are inspired not only by ecological concerns but also by concerns about excessive competition from foreign companies. Furthermore, GATT/WTO law applies to the provisions of "multilateral environmental agreements" and many of these clauses are inconsistent with trade standards.

Thus, questions have arisen regarding whether trade is beneficial or harmful to the environment, its overall impact on both exporting and importing nations, and who holds the responsibility for addressing trade-related environmental issues. These concerns have gradually gained attention in recent years.

Case Studies

a) Renewable Energy Subsidies:[11]

The case is with regard to renewable subsidies known as Feed-in-Tariff Program run by the Canadian Government. This program offered a guaranteed rate to private households and commercial producers that generated solar PV. To benefit from the scheme, electricity suppliers had to comply with „minimum required domestic content levels" when designing and constructing solar PV or wind power electricity generating facilities. The Complainant argued that FIT program was inconsistent with the WTO fundamental principle i.e "Article III"[12] of GATT, "Article 2.1"[13] of the Trade-Related Investment Measures Agreement because the said program"s requirements unfairly discriminate imported domestic goods and infringement of "national treatment obligation".

b) Solar Cells and Modules:[14]

Indian solar mission known as "Jawaharlal Nehru Solar Mission" was the subject of dispute between Indian solar energy producers and imported solar energy producers. The Indian government committed to buy power at a set price from solar energy producers but the solar energy producers had to impose obligatory local content standards on the amount of energy they generated from solar cells and modules made in India. The United State asserted that India"s Domestic contained requirement measures were in conflict with "Article III" of GATT and the TRIMS Agreement. The Appellate Body opined that measures i.e „domestic content requirements"[15] for solar cells and modules as a prerequisite for the sale of the solar energy (electricity) to the government is a violation of the fundamental principle of national treatment. Further, the dispute settlement body rejected India"s justification under Article III: 8 (a)[16] GATT and Article XX (j) (d)[17] GATT.

Managing the Interface between Trade Policies and Climate Measures

The connections between trade guidelines and climate policies are complex, with potential tensions and

obstacles. It investigates the impact of trade policy over the environment and vice versa, emphasizing the significance of intensive efforts to address global environmental concerns and promote sustainable business practices. Trade serves a dual function in terms of environmental implications by facilitating the diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies. Similarly, environmental regulations contained in multinational agreements may have an impact on trade, creating compliance issues with existing trade laws.

There are differences between trade laws and ecological guidelines, which have different goals, objectives and principles. While trade provisions encourage economic growth and competition, environmental agreements address specific environmental concerns through restrictions.

To overcome the worldwide conflicts between 'trade' and 'environmental' measures, the study proposes drafting laws, encouraging dialogue and cooperation, integrating policies, establishing a dispute resolution system, and building stakeholder capacity. It promotes a just strategy that prioritizes economic interest and ensures sustainable environmental sustainability.

Thus, the paper proposes a promising approach for managing the interface concerning commerce and climate, focusing on coherent international frameworks and coordinated efforts to facilitate the management of labor-environmental challenges and promote global sustainable development.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that without a clear international approach to balancing climate change and trade rules, conflicts may arise, potentially undermining both climate policy and free trade policy. Achieving win-win outcomes requires a comprehensive analysis of how trade and climate policies can support each other. Involvement from international organizations such as the WTO and UNFCCC, regional bodies, local governments, and collaboration between private and public sectors is crucial for effective implementation. By aligning trade and climate policies, it is possible to create fair incentives despite conflicting norms in international law. Given the lack of specific agreements on climate change within WTO provisions, member countries must harmonize their climate actions with environmental agreements through negotiations, thus avoiding conflicts with commercial principles.

Notes:

1 Biodiversity Act- Conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources. Available at https://www.indiacode.nic.in (assessed on 4.5.2024)

2 Law of Sea- set of international agreements, treaties, and customs that governs the oceans and

seas. Their main objective is to maintain order, productivity, and peaceful relations in the sea. For example The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is one of the key international treaties that govern the law of sea. Available at https://www.blog.ipleaders.in (assessed on 4.5.2024)

3 Climate Change Law- is a broad term for the laws and policies that govern how governments respond to climate change. Available at https://www.ise.ac.uk (assessed on 4.5.2024)

4 UNFCCC- is the UN process for negotiating an agreement to limit dangerous climate change. It is an international treaty among countries to fight against dangerous human interference with the climate system. The Convention‟s main objectives are interpreted in Article 2 i.e. „stabilized of greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-caused) interference with the climate system‟. available at https://treaties.un.org (assessed on 10.5.2024)

5 MEAs- it is legally binding agreement between multiple countries to address environmental issue. MEAs are especially designed to address environmental problems that are global, transboundary, or affect multiple countries. MEAs are usually written as convention, protocols, or agreements, and are approved by each country‟s parliament. There are some well-known MEAs such as UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, and Convention on Biological Diversity etc. Available at https://www.fao.org (assessed on 10.5.2024)

6 Non-discrimination- is the fundamental principle of WTO that applies to all member countries during trade between member nations. Available at https://www.humanium.org (assessed on 20.5.2024)

7 UNEP- it is the leading environmental authority in the United Nations system. UNEP uses its expertise to strengthen environmental standards and practices while helping implement environmental obligations at the nations and global level. Available at https://www.unepfi.org (assessed on 20.5.2024)

8 General Exception- are those key provisions of the GATT which allow member nations to justify on a number of non-trade policy grounds measures includes protecting the environment and public health etc. Available at https://www.wto.org (assessed on 20.5.2024)

9 National Treatment- One of the fundamental principle of the WTO that requires member nations to treat imports and domestic products equally to prevent nation from taking discriminatory measures against imports. The principle is applied on a case-by-case basis for example, charging customs duty on an import is not a violation of national treatment, even if locally-produced

products are not changed an equivalent tax. Available at https://www.investopedia.com (assessed on 23.5.2024)

10 Most-favored Nation- is a principle that requires countries to treat all their trading partners equally. It means non country should give special treatment to goods or services coming from one particular trading partner. Available at https://www.wto.org (assessed on 23.5.2024)

11 WT/DS426, available at https://www.wto.org-dispu_e-ds426_e (assessed on 3.6.2024)

12 Article III of GATT- National Treatment

13 Article 2.1 of TRIM- National Treatment and Quantitative Restrictions

14 DS456: India- Certain Measures relating to Solar Cells and Solar Modules, available at https://www.wto.org-dispu_e-cases_e-ds456_e (assessed on 3.6.2024)

15 Domestic Content Requirement- trade regulation that requires a certain percentage of a product‟s value to be sourced locally to promote domestic production and employment. Available at https://www.mondaq.com (assessed on 3.6.2024)

16 Article III:8 (a)- Government Procurement Derogation available at https://www.wto.org-res_e (assessed on 3.6.2024)

17 Article XX (j) and (d) of GATT- General Exception available at https://www.wto.org-res_e (assessed on 3.6.2024)

References

- Ki-Moon ,Ban, Former Secretary- General of the UN, available at: https://www.globalgiving.org
- *Introduction to International Environmental Law,* Module Paper, An MHRD Project under its National Mission on Education through ICT, pp 1-11 (NME-ICT), *available at*http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in.
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (1999), *Environment and Trade- A Handbook,* Second Edition, available at https://www.oas.org/dsd/toolkit/Documentos/MOdulell/Multilateral%0Environmental%0Agreeents.pdf
- Bates, Gerry *"Environmental Law in Australia,"*6th edition, 2006, available at www.https://search.library.uq.edu.au.
- Grossman, Gene M. & Alan B. Krueger*, "Environmental Impacts of a North American Free Trade Agreement,"* Discussion Papers EcoN. (Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International

Affairs, Princeton, N.J.), Nov. 1991, available athttp://www.jstor.org.

- Thrachtman, Joel. P. "Trade and Problems, Cost-Benefit Analysis and Subsidiary. *European Journal of International Law,* Vol 9, ", pg no. 32 -85, available at https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/9.1.32.
- Herein after the acronym of WTO is World Trade Organization.
- Peel, Jacqueline (2008). *"Climate Change Law: The Emergency of a New Legal Discipline"*, P. 32 Melbourne U.L. Rev.
- Knur, Franziska (2014) "*The United Nations Human Rights- Based Approached to Climate Change- Introducing a Human Dimension to International Climate Law ,"*pp.37-60, available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2t4cvp.7
- *Trade and Climate change*, a report by the World Trade Organization and United Nations Environment Programm, available at https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/abstract_trade_climate_change_e.pdf.
- *Climate Change, Coming soon to a Court near you, International Climate Change Legal Frameworks* (2020), Asian Development Bank, available *at* http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/660321/international-climate-change-legal-framework.pdf.
- World Trade Report 2022*, Climate change and international trade*, available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_envir_e/envt_intro_e.htm
- Davey, William J. (2008*), "The Quest for Consistency: Principles Governing the Interrelation of the WTO Agreement At the Crossroads: The World Trading System and the Doha Round"*, pp. 101-127, available at https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-211-69379-7_4
- Dagne, TeshagerWorku (2010), "The Debate on Environmentally Motivated Unilateral Trade-Measures in the World Trade Organisation: The Way Forward" Vol. 9, Iss 3, *Washington University Global Studies Law Review,* available at https://openscholarshii.wustl.edu/law_globalstudies/vol9/iss3/3
- Voigt, Christina (2005), "*Conflicts and Convergence in Climate Change and Trade Law: The Role of the Principle of Sustainable Development*" available atwww.esil-sedi.eu/sites/default/files/Voigt_0.PDF
- Jakir, Vanda (2013), "The new WTO Tuna Dolphin Decision: Reconciling Trade and Environment?" available at https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/168962.

- Cottier, Thomas and Manfred Elsig, (2011), *"International Law and the Environment,"* pp 14 available at www.elgoronline.com.
- DiMatteo, L. et al., "The Doha Declaration and Beyond: Giving a Voice to Non-Trade Concerns within the WTO Trade Regime", publication *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law,* pp 95-160, Vol 36, available at *https://scholarship.law.vanderbilt.edu*
- Yamin Farhana and Joanna Depledge (2004), *'The International Climate Change Regime: A Guide to Rules, Institutions and Procedures'* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Doelle, Meinhard (2005), *'From Hot Air to Action? Climate Change, Compliance and the Future of International Environmental Law'* Dalhousie University Canada, available at http://dalspace.library.dal.ca
- Damien Gerandi, (1997) "*Trade and Environment: A Comparative Study of EC and US Law,"* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, *available at* https://www.cambridge.org
- Durrant, Nicola Anna May (2008), *'The Role of Law in Responding to Climate Change: Emerging Regulatory, Liability and Market Approaches,"* Thesis from Queensland University of Technology Brisbane pp. 39 to 41, *available at* http://eprints.qut.edu.au
- Bacchus James, (2019), Report *Title "What is Climate Response Measure?,"* Published by Central for International Governance Innovation, available at https://www.jstore.org/stable/resrep24970.8
- Runnalls, D. (1998*), 'Shall we dance? What North Needs to do to Fully Engage the South in the Trade and Sustainable Development Debate?,"* available at http://iisd.ca

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1] PhD Research Scholar, Department of Law,
Sikkim University
Email: nrai.21pdlw03@sikkimuniversity.ac.in &

[2] Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Sikkim University

Religion's Impact on India's Commercial and Economic Practices

Uttiya Basu[1], Kaushik Banerjee[2], Sudipta Adhikary[3], Subham Chatterjee[4]

Abstract:

This paper examines the historical impact of various religions on the trade system in India. It explores how religious beliefs, practices, and institutions influenced trade routes, commercial- activities, and economic interactions throughout different periods of Indian history. Many Indian religious traditions have fostered artistic and craftsmanship skills, leading to the production of religious artefacts, textiles, and other goods. These products have not only served religious purposes but also contributed to trade and commerce both domestically and internationally. Religious teachings often emphasize the importance of charity and giving back to the community. Additionally, this paper investigates the impact. Through an analysis of various religious traditions, this study aims to shed light on the complexities and synergies between Trade and Religion.

Keywords: *Religion, trade, Caste system, Principles, Commerce etc.*

Introduction

The impact of religions on the Indian trade and commerce system is multifaceted and has evolved over centuries, shaping economic practices, social structures, and cultural norms. Here are some key ways in which religions have influenced trade and commerce in India like Ethical Framework, Social Networks, Trade Routes and Diaspora, Caste System and Occupational Specialization. Religious institutions, such as temples, mosques, gurudwaras, and monasteries, have served as centre of community life where people gather not only for worship but also for social interaction and economic activities (Shahnaz 2000, p.150). These networks have facilitated trade relationships, information exchange, and economic cooperation among merchants. Religions have played a significant role in the establishment and expansion of trade routes in India. Many religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, emphasize ethical principles like honesty, integrity, and fair dealings (Joshua 2007, p.780). These values have historically guided business practices, fostering trust among traders and creating a conducive environment for commerce.

Background of the Study

A historical overview of trade in India from ancient times to the present day reveals a rich tapestry of commercial activities, cultural exchanges, and economic developments. Around 3000 BCE People of the Indus Valley Civilization were engaged in long-distance trade, along the Ancient Trade Routes with Mesopotamia, Central Asia, and in the regions of Persian Gulf (Thapar 2002, p.45). The Maurya Empire (322 BCE - 185 BCE) established trade relations with the Hellenistic kingdoms, facilitating the exchange of goods and ideas across Asia (Kosambi 1975, p.112). Indian ports such as Bharuch, Broach, and Sopara were vital hubs for maritime trade with the Roman Empire, Southeast Asia, and East Africa (Ray 1994, p.87).

In Medieval Trade the rise of Islam in the 7th century CE facilitated trade connections between India and the Middle East. Islamic merchants and sailors played a key role in maritime trade in the Indian Ocean. Indian spices, textiles, and luxury goods were highly sought after in the markets of the Islamic world, Europe, and East Asia. The Delhi Sultanate (1206 CE – 1526 CE) and later the Mughal Empire (1526 CE – 1857 CE), further expanded trade networks, fostering cultural exchange and economic prosperity. This was followed by Colonial Trade and European Dominance. European colonial powers, including the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British, established trading posts and colonies in India from the 16th century CE onwards. The British East India Company dominated trade in India during the 17th and 18th centuries CE, controlling key ports and monopolizing the export of Indian goods such as textiles, spices, and tea. The British Raj (1858 CE – 1947 CE) imposed economic policies that favoured British industrial interests and disrupted traditional Indian industries, leading to deindustrialization and economic exploitation. India gained independence from British rule in 1947. In Post-Independence times India embarked on a path of economic development and industrialization. The liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s led to economic reforms, trade liberalization, and increased integration into the global economy (Joshua 2007, p.780). India has become a major player in international trade, exporting a wide range of goods and services, including information technology, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and automobiles. Trade agreements, such as the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and bilateral agreements with countries like the United States and European Union, have further facilitated trade and investment flows (Blum and Dudley 2001, p.215). Historically, trade in India has been characterized by cultural diversity, technological innovation, and commercial enterprise. From the ancient trade routes of the Silk Road and the Spice Route to the modern era of globalization, India's trade history reflects its role as a dynamic and influential participant in the global economy.

Objectives and Methodology

The main object of this research is to explore the impact of religion on Indian trade and commerce system. The research is totally descriptive in nature. For the purpose of research secondary data is used, which is collected through various research studies, journal, magazines and internet.

Analysis

Impact of Hinduism on Trade:

The impact of Hinduism on trade in India can be analyzed through various lenses, including religious beliefs, cultural practices, and socio-economic structures. Here are some key ways in which Hinduism has influenced trade:

Ethical Framework:

Hinduism emphasizes the concept of dharma, which encompasses moral and ethical duties. This ethical framework influenced business practices and trade transactions. Traders were expected to adhere to principles such as honesty, integrity, and fairness in their dealings. The concept of karma, the belief in the consequences of one's actions, also played a role in shaping ethical behaviour in trade.

Social Cohesion:

Hinduism promotes the idea of social harmony and cohesion within communities. Trade often strengthened social bonds as it facilitated interactions among people from different regions and backgrounds. Temples served as not only religious centres but also as hubs for economic activities and community gatherings. Trade guilds (*Shrenis*) formed around temples, fostering cooperation, trust, and mutual support among traders.

Rituals and Festivals:

Hindu festivals and rituals had significant economic implications for trade. Festivals such as Diwali, Navratri, and Pongal were occasions for increased consumption and trading activities. Merchants often offered special discounts and promotions during these festivals to attract customers. Temples and pilgrimage sites also attracted trade, as pilgrims purchased goods and services during their visits.

Patronage of the Arts and Crafts:

Hindu rulers and wealthy merchants were patrons of the arts and crafts, which stimulated trade in luxury goods. The production and trade of textiles, jewellery, sculptures, and other artistic goods flourished under the patronage of Hindu elites. Temples served as centres for craftsmanship and artistry, providing employment opportunities and driving local economies.

Influence on Economic Institutions:

Hinduism influenced the development of economic institutions and practices in India. For example, the caste system, although a complex social structure, also had economic implications. Certain castes were associated with specific occupations, including trade and commerce. The *Vaisya* caste, traditionally associated with merchants and traders, played a crucial role in the economic life of ancient India.

Cultural Exchange

Hinduism facilitated cultural exchange and trade connections with neighbouring regions and civilizations. Trade routes such as the Silk Road and the Spice Route connected India to Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Along these routes, Hindu merchants traded goods, ideas, and cultural practices, contributing to the diffusion of Hinduism and Indian culture.

In summary, Hinduism has had a multifaceted impact on trade in India, shaping ethical norms, fostering social cohesion, influencing economic practices, and facilitating cultural exchange. Understanding these dynamics provides insights into the historical and cultural foundations of trade in the Indian subcontinent.

***Impact of Buddhism and Jainism on Trade*:**

Both Buddhism and Jainism have had significant impacts on trade in ancient India through their teachings, ethical principles, and cultural practices. Here are some key ways in which Buddhism and Jainism influenced trade:

Emphasis on Non-violence and Ethics: Both Buddhism and Jainism emphasize the principles of *ahimsa* (non-violence) and ethical conduct. Merchants and traders following these religions were expected to engage in trade activities without causing harm to others, including animals and the environment. This emphasis on ethical behaviour in trade fostered trust and integrity in commercial transactions.

Respect for Life and Compassion: Buddhism and Jainism advocate for compassion and empathy towards all living beings. Merchants and traders influenced by these religions often practiced kindness and fairness in their dealings with customers, suppliers, and business partners. This ethical approach to trade contributed to the development of long-term relationships and mutual respect within trading communities.

Role of Monastic Orders: Buddhist and Jain monastic orders played important roles in trade and commerce. Monasteries served as centres of learning, pilgrimage, and economic activity. Monks and nuns engaged in trade, barter, and donation-based economies, exchanging goods and services with laypeople and other monastic communities. Monasteries also provided hospitality and support to travellers and traders along trade routes.

Trade Routes and Networks: Buddhism and Jainism spread along trade routes that connected different regions of ancient India and beyond. Merchants, pilgrims, and missionaries travelling along these routes facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural practices. Buddhist monasteries and Jain pilgrimage sites became important nodes in the network of trade routes, attracting traders and travellers from diverse backgrounds.

Influence on Art and Craftsmanship: Buddhist and Jain patronage contributed to the development

of art, architecture, and craftsmanship in ancient India. Merchants and traders supported the production of religious artefacts, sculptures, textiles, and other luxury goods. Buddhist *stupas*, monasteries, and Jain temples became centres of artistic excellence, attracting artisans and craftsmen from far and wide.

Economic Principles and Social Welfare: Buddhism and Jainism promote principles of simplicity, frugality, and contentment. Merchants influenced by these religions often practiced moderation in their lifestyles and business activities. Wealth acquired through trade was often used to support religious institutions, charitable causes, and community welfare projects, contributing to the well- being of society as a whole.

Overall, Buddhism and Jainism had profound impacts on trade in ancient India through their emphasis on ethical conduct, compassion, cultural exchange, and economic principles. Their teachings influenced the behaviour of merchants and traders, shaped commercial practices, and contributed to the integration of diverse communities along trade routes.

Impact of Sikhism on trade

The impact of Sikhism on trade, while not as extensively studied as other religions like Hinduism or Islam, can still be observed through several key aspects:

Ethical Business Practices: Sikhism emphasizes ethical conduct, honesty, and integrity in all aspects of life, including trade. Sikh business owners and traders are encouraged to adhere to these principles, fostering trust and reliability in commercial dealings.

Community Cohesion and Support: Sikhism promotes the concept of *seva* (selfless service) and community welfare. Sikh traders often engage in philanthropic activities and contribute to the well-being of their communities through donations, charity work, and supporting local initiatives. This sense of community support can strengthen trade networks and relationships.

Business Ethics and Social Responsibility: Sikh teachings emphasize the importance of earning an honest living and sharing wealth with those in need. Sikh business owners are encouraged to prioritize ethical business practices, fair treatment of employees, and sustainable approaches to commerce. This focus on social responsibility can influence trade practices and contribute to the development of a more equitable economy.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Sikhism encourages individuals to work hard, be industrious, and strive for excellence in their endeavours. Sikh entrepreneurs and traders have contributed to various sectors of the economy, including agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Their entrepreneurial spirit and innovative approaches to business can drive economic growth and development.

Global Trade Networks: Sikh diasporas communities around the world have played a significant role in international trade and commerce. Sikh traders and entrepreneurs have established businesses

in diverse sectors and have contributed to cross-border trade between countries. Their connections and networks facilitate economic exchanges and cultural interactions on a global scale.

Cultural Exchange and Integration: Sikhism emerged in the context of the Indian subcontinent, where trade routes connected diverse regions and civilizations. Sikh traders and merchants engaged in commercial activities along these trade routes, facilitating cultural exchange and integration between different communities. This exchange of goods, ideas, and technologies contributed to the enrichment of Sikh culture and the broader society.

While there may not be extensive scholarly research specifically focused on the impact of Sikhism on trade, these observations highlight the potential ways in which Sikh values, teachings, and practices can influence commercial activities and economic relationships within Sikh communities and beyond.

Impact of Islam on Trade

The impact of Islam on trade has been significant throughout history, particularly in regions where Islam spread, including the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia (Greif 1989, p. 860). Here are some key ways in which Islam has influenced trade:

Trade Networks

Islamic civilization facilitated extensive trade networks that connected distant regions. Muslim merchants, known as the "*Sahib al-souq*" (masters of the market), played a crucial role in establishing and maintaining these networks (Kuran 1997, p.50). The expansion of Islam into regions such as the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, and the Indian subcontinent facilitated trade routes that linked the Mediterranean world with Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Urbanization and Commercial Centres

Islamic cities became vibrant centres of trade and commerce. Cities such as Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, and Cordoba served as hubs for economic activities, attracting merchants, traders, and artisans from various cultural and religious backgrounds. Markets (*souqs*) and bazaars thrived in these urban centres, offering a wide range of goods, including spices, textiles, ceramics, and luxury items.

Banking and Finance

Islamic banking and finance principles have significantly impacted global trade and finance. Islamic finance prohibits the payment or acceptance of interest (*riba*) and promotes risk-sharing and ethical investment practices. Instruments such as *mudarabah* (profit-sharing) and *murabaha* (cost-plus financing) have been used to facilitate trade and investment within the Islamic world and beyond (Kuran 1995, 160).

Maritime Trade

Islamic traders were active participants in maritime trade, particularly in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Muslim sailors and navigators developed advanced navigational techniques, such as the use of the astrolabe and the compass, which facilitated long-distance sea voyages (Kuran 1995, p.160). Ports such as Alexandria, Aden, Malacca, and Calicut became important centres of maritime trade, connecting East and West.

Cultural Exchange

Islamic civilization facilitated cultural exchange and the diffusion of goods, ideas, and technologies across regions. Trade routes such as the Silk Road, the Spice Route, and the Trans- Saharan trade routes facilitated the exchange of goods such as spices, textiles, ceramics, and luxury items. Islamic merchants also played a crucial role in spreading Islamic culture, architecture, and language to diverse regions.

Legal Framework

Islamic law (*Sharia*) provided a legal framework for commercial transactions and trade practices. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh al-mu'amalat*) includes rules and regulations governing contracts, partnerships, sales, and other commercial activities. Islamic courts (*qadis*) adjudicated disputes related to trade and commerce based on *Sharia* principles.

In summary, Islam has had a profound impact on trade, contributing to the development of trade networks, urban centres, banking and finance systems, maritime trade, cultural exchange, and legal frameworks. Understanding the role of Islam in trade provides insights into the historical and economic dynamics of the Islamic world and its interactions with other civilizations.

Conclusion

In summary, religions have played a pivotal role in shaping the Indian trade and commerce system through their influence on ethical standards, social networks, trade routes, occupational specialization, regulations, craftsmanship, and philanthropy. While these influences have been profound and diverse, they have also evolved over time, reflecting the dynamic nature of India's religious and economic landscape. Religious beliefs and practices have often led to the emergence of taboos and regulations governing certain goods and services. For example, the taboo on consuming beef in Hinduism has affected the meat trade in some regions, while dietary restrictions during religious festivals impact the food and hospitality industries.

References:

- Blum, Ulrich, and Leonard Dudley. 2001. 'Religion and Economic Growth: Was Weber Right?' *Journal of Evolutionary Economics* 11: 207–30.
- Greif, Avner. 1989. 'Reputation and Coalition in Medieval Trade: Evidence on the Maghribi Traders.' *Journal of Economic History* 49: 857–82.
- Joshua, Hendrik. 2007. 'Religion and International Trade: Does the Sharing of a Religious Culture Facilitate the Formation of Trade Networks?' *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 66 (4): 765–94.
- Kosambi, D.D. 1975. *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History.* Mumbai: Popular Prakashan: 109-112.
- Kuran, Timur. 1995. 'Islam Economics and the Islamic Subeconomy.' *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9: 155–73.
- Kuran, Timur. 1997. 'Islam and Underdevelopment: An Old Puzzle Revisited.' *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 153: 41–71.
- Ray, Himanshu Prabha. 1994. *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the Maritime Links of Early South Asia.* Delhi: Oxford University Press: 82-87.
- Shahnaz. 2000. 'Religion, Ethics, and Stock Trading: The Case of an Islamic Equities Market.' *Journal of Business Ethics* 23 (2): 145–59.
- Thapar, Romila. 2002. *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300.* Berkeley: University of California Press: 39-45.

Bio Profile of the Author:

[1] Assistant professor II, Dept of Commerce, School of Business, Adamas University
Email: basuuttiya@gmail.com

[2] Professor &; HOD, School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India
Email: hod.law@brainwareuniversity.ac.in

[3] Associate Professor, School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India
[4] Assistant Professor, School of Law, Brainware University, Barasat, India

Trends and Dynamics in India's External Energy Policy

Gadde Omprasad

Abstract

In the new millennia, India's energy policy has been guided by objectives like having access to the energy sources at affordable prices, improved energy supply, diversity in energy resources, and emphasis on renewable resources; sustainability and economic growth. The energy security aspect is extremely important for the countries for faster and overall economic growth as the modern paradigm of economic development demands uninterrupted supply of energy sources at the affordable prices. India has oil reserves of about 783 million tonnes and extracts about 0.7 million barrels per day. The demand stands at about 4.85 million barrels per day and has been facing a domestic production shortage of about 4.1 million barrels per day. This gap leaves India in a vulnerable position of dependency on imports from foreign countries. This vulnerability is also influenced by the developments at the international level. In order to cope-up with the changing dynamics of international system on one-hand and growing demand for oil as well as imports on other, necessitates the country to adopt an external energy policy suitable for both, the country needs and also fluctuations in the international system. The paper attempts to connect the changing dynamics both at the international level and India's external energy policies since the independence.

Keywords: *External Energy Policy; Energy Security; Production of oil; Consumption; Demand-supply gap; Imports; OPEC*;

Introduction

External energy policy can be defined as a country's efforts in addressing its energy requirements through foreign policy approaches and strategies. It includes engagement with foreign countries, institutions, entities in regard to supply of the resources to satisfy country's domestic needs. These engagements also include bilateral to multilateral in nature and executed through trade agreements. External energy policy of a country is blended with energy security, economic and, foreign policies. It comprises un-interrupted supply of energy resources from foreign sources, ability to negotiate and adjust into the fluctuations in the costs of energy imports, mechanism to find alternatives as well as access to new sources during the critical situations at the international level, and thus distributing the energy resources to people at the affordable prices.

The external energy policies of a country consists (i) ways and means to access the energy sectors like oil and gas in the background of the competition at affordable prices, (ii) adjusting the foreign policy options according to the developments at international level, (iii) looking for new possibilities of supply and dealing with the interruptions of the same. In this whole process one can find two dimensions. One, the access to the energy resources at affordable prices, which is a commercial and economic dimension, while the other is adjusting the foreign policy directions and securing supply of energy resources, which is a strategic dimension. Hence it can be assumed that the external energy policy is a combination of the economic and strategic dimensions of a country. Since the modern economic activities largely depends of the availability of petroleum crude oil and natural gas, the absence of the same can disturb the economic paradigm and can cause potential damage to the day to day activities, increase in inflation and have huge impact on socio-economic security of the people and ultimately the very national security (Brown, 1977). Thus the external energy policies are connected to national security and national interests.

External energy policy plays a pivotal role in shaping a nation's strategic approach to energy-related issues on the global stage, influencing diplomatic, economic, and security considerations. A fundamental aspect of external energy policy lies in its role in ensuring energy security. The concept of energy security involves safeguarding a nation's access to reliable and affordable energy sources.

A well-crafted external energy policy addresses the complexities of energy security by diversifying energy sources, establishing strategic reserves, and fostering international collaboration. In an interconnected world, where energy markets are globally linked, ensuring a stable energy supply is essential for economic stability and development (Makari, 2014).

Geopolitically, external energy policy influences a nation's relationships with other countries and regional stability. Competition for access to and control over vital resources, such as oil and gas, can contribute to regional tensions and conflicts (Klare, 2002). A judicious external energy policy seeks to navigate these geopolitical complexities, promoting cooperation and preventing resource-related disputes.

The transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources represents another critical dimension of external energy policy. With the global imperative to address climate change, policies promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability have become integral. External energy policies that align with global efforts to reduce carbon emissions contribute to mitigating climate change and fostering international cooperation in the pursuit of sustainable energy solutions (Victor et al., 2006).

Economic considerations also underscore the significance of external energy policy. The export and import of energy resources, as well as investments in the energy sector, play a vital role in a nation's economic well-being. External energy policies that facilitate responsible resource management and

promote fair trade contribute to economic stability and growth (Yergin, 2006).

Furthermore, external energy policy shapes a nation's technological and innovation landscape. Collaboration in research and development, technology transfer, and the exchange of best practices in energy-related technologies are essential components of a forward-looking energy strategy. The oil wealth can impact a nation's capacity for innovation and technological advancement (Colgan, 2010).

External energy policy holds immense significance in the contemporary global landscape. It is intricately linked to national security, geopolitical stability, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and technological advancement. A well-formulated external energy policy addresses multifaceted aspects, contributing to a nation's resilience, influence, and responsible participation in the global community.

Review of Literature

A comprehensive historical narrative, detailing the evolution of the global oil industry and its profound impact on economic, political, and geopolitical landscapes is unfolded by Yergin (2006), tracing the industry's trajectory from its inception. Yergin elucidates the intricate connections between oil, economic power, and international relations. Markari (2014) takes a holistic view of energy security, examining its dimensions from economic, geopolitical, and environmental perspectives. This interdisciplinary compilation enriches our understanding of the challenges inherent in ensuring stable and sustainable global energy supplies. Klare's (2002) work investigates the nexus between natural resources, especially energy, and global conflicts. Klare contends that competition for vital resources, such as oil, serves as a catalyst for geopolitical tensions and armed conflicts. Through historical and contemporary analyses, Klare provides insights into how resource competition shapes the global political and security landscape. Shifting focus to natural gas, Victor et al. (2006) explores the geopolitical implications of natural gas production and distribution. The authors delve into the role of natural gas in international relations, energy security, and economic dynamics, offering valuable perspectives on the evolving nature of energy geopolitics.

Colgan (2010) examines the intricate relationship between oil wealth and conflict. Colgan's analysis reveals instances where oil revenues contribute to political instability and may even trigger armed conflicts. By scrutinizing the mechanisms through which oil wealth exacerbates geopolitical tensions, Colgan sheds light on the complex connections between oil resources and global security dynamics. Gilpin (2001) provides a comprehensive overview of the political and economic dynamics shaping the global energy landscape. Gilpin's work emphasizes the interconnectedness of political and economic factors in understanding the complexities of global energy relations.

Additionally, the 'World Energy Outlook' reports by the International Energy Agency (IEA) serve as crucial resources, offering in-depth analyses and projections of global energy trends and policies.

These annual reports provide valuable insights into the current state and future scenarios of the global energy landscape, contributing to informed decision-making and the development of sustainable energy policies on a global scale.

Ghosh (2017) deliberates on global energy management, supply strategies, and conservation efforts. The work provides very useful insights into sustainable energy practices and highlights the relevance of the same in the changing context of global environmental politics. Belyi and Goldthau's (2010) edited volume explores the political dimensions of energy crises, investigating how they impact and are influenced by global politics. Victor and Lupu's (2012) article reviews the state of political science research on international law, providing insights into the intersection of political science and energy policy.

These seminal works collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of external energy policy, offering historical context, interdisciplinary perspectives, and in-depth analyses of the intricate connections between energy, politics, and international relations.

Methodology

The study of external energy policy necessitates a multifaceted methodological approach to comprehensively analyse the intricate interplay of political, economic, environmental, and technological factors that shape a nation's engagement with global energy issues. A foundational aspect of this methodology involves documentary analysis, wherein official documents, policy statements, and international agreements are scrutinized to unveil the formal positions, goals, and strategies that underpin a country's energy policy. A holistic study of external energy policy demands a methodological mosaic that combines these approaches, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted factors and dynamics that characterize a nation's engagement with the global energy landscape.

Quantitative data analysis followed for the study, which allowed a systematic examination of statistical data related to energy production, consumption, trade, and environmental impacts. This data-driven approach provides a comprehensive overview of trends, correlations, and potential causal relationships within the realm of external energy policy. The study also used a comparative analysis to discern patterns, differences, and commonalities in the data provided.

India's External Energy policy: Energy Security is the goal, Realism is the approach

Majority of the countries in the world have limited energy resources. The fossil fuels like petroleum crude oil and natural gas are the primary energy sources consumed by the countries. A country must have a policy for the uninterrupted supply of these fuels not only for accelerating the domestic economic activities but also in addressing the basic necessities including transportation of goods to satisfy the requirements of the society. Any situation of the gap between demand and supply creates

problems both at the domestic and international levels. The implications of the demand supply gap includes, emergence of an active world oil market, where the prices are subjected to volatility, political influences and domination of energy supplying countries or organisations.

Energy security has been an important objective of India's foreign policy since independence in 1947. Both industrial resolutions of 1948 and 1956 have emphasised on state control over exploitation of energy resources, oil exploration as well as electricity production. During the first decade after the independence, India recorded about 100 million tonnes of oil equivalent of (Mtoe) primary energy consumption (Jean-Marie, 2022) which needed to be increased substantially in order to bring a large number of populations under the ambit of energy security. India's effort to achieve this goal accompanied by economic development and inclusive growth required a foreign policy which is based on the principles of realism. India's engagements with both the cold war blocks and the adoption of Non-alignment Movement are parts of the realist approach to achieve the goal of energy security.

India's foreign policy approaches towards USA in 1960s in order to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, Soviet-India relationship since 1970's in building the nuclear reactors were part of the goal of energy security. As the net importer of crude oil to satisfy the domestic requirements, India's relations with the OPEC and its position during the Arab-Israel conflict can be seen as another illustration of India's foreign policy approach based on the realism to achieve energy security. The oil embargo of 1970's exposed India's vulnerabilities in the crude oil sector (Baru, 1983) and necessitated it to maintain cordial relations with the west Asian region. At this point India's foreign policy guidelines of respecting territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression and settling the conflicts with peaceful negotiations (Ganguly and Pardesi, 2009) came in handy on one hand and maintaining equal distance so that the national interests are satisfied, on the other hand, could be observed.

Domestic demand- production gap: Main vulnerability

In the initial decades, India met the demand for petroleum oil with a larger share of domestic production. In 1966, 1967 and 1969 India's domestic production could meet up to 64, 82 and 75 per cents of total demand for oil respectively. The same trend could be seen from 1982 to 1991 where domestic production met more than 50 per cent of total demand for oil. Since then gradually the share of domestic oil production in total demand fell to just 13.5 per cent by the end of 2019. The average decadal gap analysis explains that from 1961 to 1970 domestic oil production satisfied 44.28 per cent of overall demand for oil, from 1971 to 1980 the same had been 33.88 per cent, from 1981 to 1990 it was 58.5 per cent, from 1991 to 2000 it fell down to 39.46 per cent, from 2001 to 2010, it further decreased to 24.85 per cent and from 2011 to 2019, its share fell down to the lowest to 16.27 per cent. It also depicts that since the year 1991 onwards the percentage share of domestic production gap has been increasing and India's dependence on oil imports have also been on the rise accordingly. Further, the ratio of non-commercial energy sources to commercial sources also increased from 80:20 in 1950 to 46:54 in 1990 (Jean-Marie, 2022).

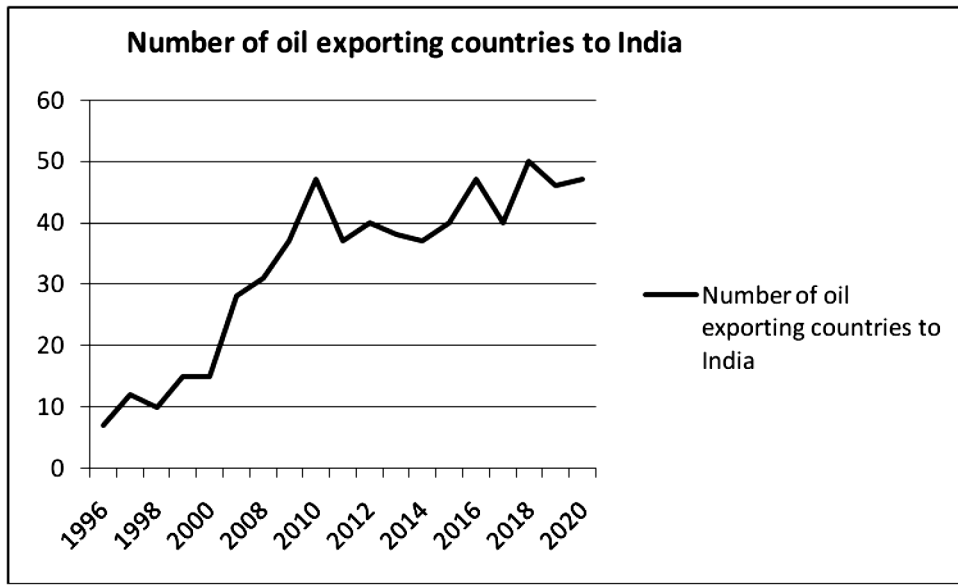
The data of OPEC (2021) further indicates that, though there has been a steady increase in both demand for oil with an average growth rate of 5.77 per cent between 1960 to 2019, and the domestic crude oil production with an average growth rate of 6.04 per cent, the same has not been reflected in real time growth of crude oil production leading to a massive gap of 4.18 million barrels per day by end of 2019. The same had been 144 thousand barrels per day in 1960. The average gap between oil demand and oil production from 1960-2019 has been 5.62 per cent.

As the country has been marching towards the economic development, demand for energy resources is also on the rise which reflected in crude oil imports. The data on the imports of oil since 1980 shows that there has been a substantial increase in its imports which were about 3 lakh barrels in that year to more than 4.5 million barrels by the end of 2019 with an average growth rate of about 31 per cent (ibid).

Share of crude oil imports in overall imports of the country has been a major concern as a large share of foreign exchange reserves are spent on these imports. In the overall imports, the share of petroleum has been on the rise for nearly two decades from the middle of 1990's. During that time the import of crude oil took the share of about 13 per cent, increased to 28.62 per cent in 2000-01 and further reached to the peak of 32 per cent in 2013 (ibid). But since the beginning of 2014, there has been a trend of reduction as it had been reduced to 21.66 per cent in the year 2019 and further to about 15 per cent in the year 2020-21(ibid). The average per centage share of crude oil imports in the overall imports for the last two decades has been around 24, about one fourth of the total foreign exchanges spent on imports (Department of Commerce 2022). As a result there has been a growing policy shift towards production of bio-fuels, which gained momentum since 2006 onwards as part of India's effort to shift towards decreasing dependency on oil imports. This attention towards bio-fuels contributed to a significant increase of about 6 folds since 2014 and by the end of 2019 India produced about 38000 barrels of bio fuels (OPEC 2021).

How Diversified India's crude oil imports?

India's heavy dependency on the imports of petroleum and crude oil from foreign countries has made it to adopt a careful path of accommodating national interest in foreign policies. In an environment of conflict and cooperation in the international system, the import sources also have been diversified over a period of time. Till the year 1996, India used to import the petroleum and crude oil from about 7 countries which have been increased to 47 countries by the end of 2020 (Figure 1) (Department of Commerce 2022).



Source: *Based on author's compilation of data extracted from Trade and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/default.asp.*

Figure 1: Number of Oil exporting countries to India from 1996 to 2020

Tables 1 to 3 are self explanatory in projecting the changing nature of India's crude oil imports from various countries during three governments, i.e. United Front government, UPA I and II, subsequently NDA II & III governments. The data pertaining to country wise imports from the year 2000 to 2005-06 is not available in the data bank of the ministry of commerce, government of India. During these three governments one can observe the imports which were largely coming from less than ten countries in 1996 slowly but gradually increased to more than 45 other countries by the end of 2020-01.

Table 1: Top ten sources of petroleum and crude oil imports from 1996 to 2000

(in per cent)

1996-1997	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**
Nigeria (28.27)	Nigeria (24.24)	Nigeria (31.24)	Nigeria (30.47)
Saudi Arabia (22.04)	Saudi Arabia (21.17)	UAE (17.76)	Saudi Arabia (18.61)
Kuwait (14.56)	Kuwait (15.27)	Saudi Arabia (17.67)	UAE (14.42)

UAE (2.31)	UAE (14.94)	Kuwait (11.70)	Kuwait (11.45)
Iran (12.61)	Iran (9.94)	Iran (6.92)	Iran (8.93)
Egypt (1.10)	Iraq (4.35)	Malaysia (5.90)	Malaysia (4.76)
Malaysia (4.14)	Egypt (3.96)	Egypt (4.50)	Egypt (4.37)
	Malaysia (3.90)	Iraq (4.25)	Yemen (2.60)
		Pakistan (0.05)	Iraq (2.06)
			Qatar (1.24)
100	**97.78**	**100.00**	**98.92**

Source: *Based on author's compilation of data extracted from Trade and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/default.asp.*

During the period, from 1996 to 2000, petroleum and crude oil imports were diversified from just 7 countries to more than 10 countries. These countries occupied 97 per cent to 100 per cent share in India's overall crude oil imports in these years. Further Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE were the largest suppliers, occupying the share of more than 70 per cent of total imports. Throughout these years Nigeria and Saudi Arabia were the largest suppliers of the petroleum and crude oil to India. Nigeria accounted for more than 28 per cent of India's total imports, while Saudi Arabia with about 20 per cent. Both Iran and Iraq supplied less than 10 per cent of these products and did not feature prominently in the list of India's import destinations (Table 1).

Table 2: Top ten sources of petroleum and crude oil imports from 2006 to 2014

(in per cent)

2006-2007	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Saudi Arabia (23.20)	Saudi Arabia (23.60)	Saudi Arabia (20.50)	Saudi Arabia (18.12)	Saudi Arabia (17.61)	Saudi Arabia (19.68)	Saudi Arabia (19.62)	Saudi Arabia (21.55)
Nigeria (14.69)	Iran (15.22)	Iran (14.37)	Iran (13.19)	Nigeria (11.35)	Iraq (13.99)	Iraq (13.24)	Iraq (12.72)
Iran (13.86)	Nigeria (11.38)	UAE (11.85)	Kuwait (9.44)	Iran (9.95)	Kuwait (10.68)	Kuwait (10.00)	Kuwait (10.49)

Iraq (11.70)	Iraq (10.67)	Nigeria (11.12)	Nigeria (9.24)	Iraq (9.66)	Nigeria (10.16)	Venezuela (9.77)	Venezuela (9.70)
Kuwait (10.54)	UAE (10.08)	Kuwait (10.29)	Iraq (9.03)	Kuwait (9.46)	UAE (9.34)	UAE (8.74)	Nigeria (9.45)
UAE (7.36)	Kuwait (9.59)	Iraq (9.81)	UAE (7.03)	UAE (8.49)	Iran (8.74)	Nigeria (7.74)	UAE (7.68)
Malaysia (4.88)	Malaysia (3.63)	Venezuela (5.32)	Angola (5.46)	Venezuela (5.63)	Venezuela (4.97)	Iran (6.63)	Iran (5.92)
Yemen (3.99)	Turkey (2.03)	Malaysia (3.60)	Venezuela (3.64)	Angola (5.50)	Angola (4.89)	Angola (4.91)	Angola (4.18)
Venezuela (1.50)	Yemen (2.02)	Angola (1.87)	Oman (3.54)	Oman (3.33)	Qatar (3.84)	Qatar (4.63)	Columbia (3.32)
Egypt (1.38)	Libya (1.79)	Qatar (1.84)	Qatar (3.10)	Qatar (3.32)	Brazil (2.13)	Mexico (2.24)	Qatar (2.98)
93.11	**90.01**	**90.57**	**81.79**	**84.30**	**88.42**	**87.52**	**87.98**

Source: *Based on author's compilation of data extracted from Trade and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/default.asp.*

During UPA I and II governments which came to power in 2004 first term and again in 2009 in the second term, one can find the reduction in the dependence on the top ten sources of petroleum and crude oil as their share from about 93 per cent in 2006 got reduced to about 88 per cent in 2013. This reduction could be attributed to the changing stand of the government in its dependence and a policy shift to focus more on the diversification of the crude oil resources (Chatterjee, 2012). During this period Saudi Arabia continued to be a large exporter of crude oil to India averaging more than 20 per cent of total imports. It can also be observed that in terms of per centage share of imports Saudi Arabia maintained to occupy about 20 per cent of the total imports where as imports from Nigeria reduced to almost 50 per cent than the previous government. Similarly the share of imports from Iran recorded a decline from 2007 onwards from 15 per cent to less than 6 per cent by the year 2013. At the same time imports from Venezuela had been on the rise (Table 2).

Table 3: Top ten sources of petroleum and crude oil imports from 2014 to 2020

(in per cent)

2014-15	**2015-16**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**
Saudi Arabia (18.71)	Saudi Arabia (20.47)	Saudi Arabia (19.34)	Iraq (20.07)	Iraq (19.53)	Iraq (22.16)	Iraq (21. 65)
Iraq (12.17)	Iraq (16.31)	Iraq (16.43)	Saudi Arabia (17.47)	Saudi Arabia (18.76)	Saudi Arabia (19.81)	Saudi Arabia (18.10)
Nigeria (11.12)	Nigeria (13.71)	Iran (12.60)	Iran (10.28)	Iran (10.56)	UAE (10.67)	UAE (12.36)

Venezuela (9.98)	Venezuela (8.62)	UAE (9.60)	Nigeria (9.38)	UAE (8.38)	Nigeria (8.74)	USA (9.01)
Kuwait (9.86)	UAE (8.30)	Nigeria (9.55)	UAE (7.00)	Nigeria (8.31)	Venezuela (5.87)	Nigeria (8.23)
UAE (9.50)	Iran (6.48)	Venezuela (7.79)	Venezuela (6.70)	Venezuela (6.36)	USA (4.75)	Kuwait (5.25)
Iran (6.04)	Kuwait (5.44)	Kuwait (4.16)	Kuwait (6.05)	Kuwait (4.76)	Kuwait (4.71)	Mexico (3.33)
Angola (3.79)	Angola (4.02)	Angola (3.03)	Angola (3.53)	Mexico (3.74)	Mexico (3.22)	Angola (2.21)
Mexico (2.31)	Qatar (2.26)	Malaysia (2.79)	Mexico (3.15)	USA (3.16)	Angola (2.56)	Oman (1.93)
Brazil (2.16)	Mexico (2.10)	Mexico (2.61)	Oman (2.76)	Angola (2.87)	Kazakhstan (2.09)	Qatar (1.61)
85.64	**87.7**	**87.9**	**86.39**	**86.41**	**84.60**	**83.69**

Source: *Based on author's compilation of data extracted from Trade and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/default.asp.*

From 2014 onwards, it is characterised by a steady decline in the imports from top ten countries, yet they occupied more than 80 per cent of India's total petroleum and crude oil imports. During this period Iraq emerged as the largest exporter of the petroleum resources to India followed by Saudi Arabia and UAE. Interestingly for three years, from 2016 to 2019 Iran was one of the largest exporter of crude oil to India before US imposed sanctions came into existence in full scale. From 2019 onwards USA has emerged as one of the top ten crude oil exporter to India and this sudden appearance in the list can be explained through its attempts to substitute for Iran (Table 3).

In all the years the west Asia region has been a major exporter of oil resources to India and the country's relations with the region stood time tested, political, conflict turmoil, by and large attributed to India's successful negotiations, neutral stand and well maintained relations through bilateral ties (Wadhwa, 2021).

India-OPEC Energy Cooperation

India's association with Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries has been historic and ever since the OPEC was formed in the year 1960, India maintained cordial relations with member countries of the organisation, without interfering in the internal matters and on the issues of conflicts among the members. As collectively OPEC holds about four-fifths of the international proven petroleum reserves and accounts for more than two-fifths of world oil production (OPEC, 2003), the organisation plays an important role in maintaining the oil economy in the world (Fattouh and Sen, 2016). As world's third largest oil importer, India's imports from the OPEC countries constitute 85 per cent of our total crude imports and 94 per cent of the gas imports (Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

n.d.). Due to various religious and political reasons, the members of OPEC particularly in the west Asian region is marked with geo political interests of major powers (Issah, 2021). The conflicts since the beginning of the formation of Israel, the Arab-Israel war 1948, the Six-Day War, 967, Yom Kippur War 1973, Palestinian terror hostages, 1975, the Iran Revolution, 1979, Iran–Iraq War 1980–1988, Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, 1990–1991, US war on Iraq, 2003–2011, Arab Spring, Libyan Crisis, and economic sanctions on Iran were the major challenges to India's foreign policy. In all these conflicts, India either remained as a spectator or called for peaceful resolution of the conflicts (Pradhan 2004). Major challenge to India's foreign policy appeared during the first gulf war of 1991, where it had a dilemma to condemn Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait, as Iraq had been a major supporter of India's Kashmir policy (Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, 2002). Both Iraq and Kuwait accounted for more than 40 per cent of India's crude oil imports and also hosted about two hundred thousand workers during that time (Malik, 1991). In order to boost the relations between India and OPEC an annual conference, "OPEC-India Energy Dialogue" has begun in 2015, to look into the key energy issues such as ensuring India's energy security and access (OPEC, 2017). But it has to be noted that the OPEC could not provide an alternative or increased its supply at the discounted prices on the eve of India's reduction of petroleum and crude oil imports from Iran and Venezuela on the eve of US sanctions against these countries (Mahajan, 2018). As a result India had to turn towards US for the imports of oil to satisfy the domestic demand.

India's Energy policy towards its South Asian Neighbourhood

There are three institutions dealing with the energy cooperation in South Asia including- (i) South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), (ii) South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) and (iii) Bangladesh-India-Myanmar- Sri Lanka-Thailand-Economic-Co-operation (BIMSTEC). SAARC established its energy centre in 2006 in Islamabad, Pakistan to enhanced energy cooperation among the South Asia Region (SAARC Energy Centre, n.d.). Due to the political reasons, the initiatives like SAARC could not meet its desired objectives. As a result India's policies towards its other neighbours have been so far more bilateral than multilateral. India is part of South Asia Regional Electricity Market (SAREM) funded by the World Bank group and as part of the programme, the emphasis is given on strengthening regional transmission connectivity between India-Nepal, India-Bangladesh and India-Bhutan (World Bank live 2022). Through these transmission lines, Nepal started exporting about 364 MW of electricity to India from the hydro electricity generated in multiple plants in Nepal (The Hindu 2022). It is a significant contribution to the foreign exchange earnings to Nepal as the country is expected to earn about Rs 4.78 billion through this trade. India-Bhutan electricity trade is an example of mutual benefits. India has constructed four hydro power plants in Bhutan with a total capacity of about 2100 MW and construction of another three power plants with an estimated capacity of 2820 MW are underway (Siddiqui 2020). This cross border electricity trade has facilitated electricity trade between India and Bangladesh. At the moment Bangladesh imports about 1200 MW

of electricity from India and is expected to increase the trade in near future as the country's estimated demand for the electricity will grow upto 60,000 MW by 2041 (Hossain, 2022).

India's International Solar Alliance initiative

One of the significant part of external energy policy of India is to launch in collaboration with France in 2015 an International Solar Alliance (ISA), with objectives of addressing the issues related to the production of solar energy, to cooperate with each other on the issue of production cost, financing and technology and to mobilise required funding of about US $ 1000 billion dollars reducing the cost of finance and cost of technology for immediate deployment of competitive solar generation; and (iii) to mobilise more than 1000 Billion US Dollars by the year 2030. Indian initiative could successfully mobilise about 121 solar resource rich countries and the initiative is seen as an India's effort to achieve the objectives mentioned in both Paris agreement on climate change (CoP 21) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. India allocated about Rs.1750 millions as financial assistance for the initiative and for setting up of ISA and till date released a sum of Rs 1450 millions for creating a corpus fund, building infrastructure and meeting day to day recurring expenditure. So far about 70 countries have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA. 44 of these countries have ratified the ISA treaty (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy 2018).

India's energy policy towards big powers: From Cold War to Russia-Ukraine War

India's first nuclear power plant, Tarapur Atomic Power Station, with a boiling water reactor was built with the collaboration of United States and was commissioned in the year 1969 (Logan, 2022). The collaboration was significant in the context where the US was not a keen supporter of the transfer of nuclear technology and agreed under the collaboration to supply the enriched uranium for 30 years (Noorani, 1981). But soon the agreement on this supply of nuclear fuel was over after India's first round nuclear tests in 1974 (ibid). Though the India US collaboration in the field of nuclear energy began in the initial period of India's independence, India's foreign policy did not tilt towards adopting any sides in the context of cold war politics and particularly India's refusal to sign the Non Proliferation Treaty sighting the reasons of discriminatory policies towards achieving the complete nuclear proliferation (Thomas, 1998). This policy continued in the later year's Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), in which India participated at the negotiations level but refused to sign the final draft as it felt that the treaty did not address a number of core concerns raised by India (United Nations, n.d.). The success of India's foreign policy in terms of achieving the confidence of the world powers in nuclear technology could be visible in the form of India-US Civilian Nuclear Agreement signed in the year 2005, in spite of the fact that India is not a signatory to either NPT or the CTBT. India's negotiations with the Bush administration persuaded US to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, exclude India from the list of non cooperation on the nuclear technology transfer, exceptions for India from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and India's agreement to separate its civilian nuclear

power plants from the non civilian ones (IAEA, 2009). The agreement marked a significant change in US policy towards India in two perspectives, one, the relations began to be seen from the strategic perspective, a long term partnership with India as part of its grand strategy to counter China and second, a marked divert from "South Asia region" policy or "India-Pakistan" policy to a separate India policy. In the subsequent years India signed major agreements for civilian nuclear cooperation with France, Russia, Namibia, Canada, Argentina, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Chech Republic, Australia, Sri Lanka, UK, Mongolia and Japan. In the year 2008, the NSG adopted a policy decision to allow civil nuclear cooperation with India. This policy resolution facilitated investments, industrial partnerships, technology sharing, and other measures which can augment the nuclear power capacity in India (Ministry of External Affairs 2016). At the same time in 2010 India passed Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010 and whoever is the supplier of nuclear energy related equipment whether domestic or foreign company becomes responsible for any damage (Ministry of External Affairs 2015), in accordance to the 1997 Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC). Further in 2009, India and US in order to help India in building its capacity in the installations of clean energy technologies, so that an inclusive, low carbon emissions to address both social and environmental needs were signed with an agreement on the Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE) (Office of International Affairs, n.d.).. This agreement can facilitate India to develop clean energy technologies. In the post implementation of economic and trade sanctions against Iran and Venezuela, USA has emerged as one of the top 5 oil exporters to India occupying the share of about 9 per cent of India's total imports. However it has to be noted that the cost of imports from Iran had been lesser than the cost of imports from US and Canada. India in this regard has left with no option but to turn towards to these countries.

On the other hand energy cooperation between India's relations with USSR till the end of cold war and with Russia in the post cold war had been historical. Since 1960s, USSR had been closely associated with India's nuclear energy development programmes. The 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation further strengthened these ties, where the post 1974 and 1998 nuclear tests and the subsequent isolations, USSR and Russia supported India's efforts by agreeing to supply heavy water to India and remained crucial in the nuclear energy development programme (Sengupta and Poonangi, 2022). In 1988 and 1992 Soviet Union became part of India's Kudankulam nuclear plant and in the year 2001 Russia agreed to supply low enriched uranium fuel for Tarapur reactor in Maharastra (Gopalakrishnan, 2002). In 2018 both the countries entered into an agreement where Russia will help India to build 6 more nuclear reactors (Miglani and Clercq, 2018). This relationship continues even during the times of Russia-Ukraine war and sanctions by US and its allies on Russia. By the end of May 2022 India purchased US$ 5 billion dollar worth of Russian oil and more than 7 million barrels per day. This deal replaced Russia as the second largest oil exporter to India after Iraq (News 18, 2022).

Conclusion

Both, the end of cold war and economic liberalisation placed India in a more comfortable position than the earlier decades and witnessed the dominance of realist approach in both foreign and external energy policies. Since 1991, India's external energy policy is characterised by i) bilateral dialogues with individual countries, organisations like OPEC, International Energy Agency (IEA), International Energy Forum (IEF), Energy diplomacy and ii) acquisitions in the overseas assets. The bilateral dialogues and joint working groups with more than 20 countries are part of securing energy related interests and energy diplomacy. As part of this diplomacy India not only signed Memorandum of Understandings with the bigger energy resource countries but also in the field of renewable energy sectors with countries like UK and with Japan for Electric Vehicles (EV), storage system including batteries, electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI) and Energy Conservation in Buildings and industries, energy efficient appliances; development of solar energy including solar PV cells; wind energy and others. At multilateral level, EU-India signed an agreement, Clean Energy and Climate Partnership, 2016, for promotion of clean energy, climate friendly technologies and research related activities (European Commission 2016). In January 2018, India and ASEAN issued Delhi Declaration, where they emphasising on long term food and energy security. Further, they focused on the renewable energy technology through international platforms including the International Solar Alliance (ASEAN, 2018).

One of the major developments in the post liberalisation period of India, since 1991 has been India's efforts to invest in the overseas energy resources by acquiring shares, collaborations with the foreign companies in exploring, developing and producing the fossil fuels for both domestic consumption and international markets.

Indian public sector companies like ONGC Videsh, Oil India, Bharat Petro Resources Limited, Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and Gas Authority of India could secure about 55 overseas assets in 25 countries with an investment of about US $ 36.5 billion dollars, in which 25 are at exploration stage and 22 are oil producing, 3 gas pipelines and 6 at the developing stage (Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, 2022).

References

- ASEAN, 2018, "Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to Mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations", January 25, https://asean.org/delhi-declaration-of-the-asean-india-commemorative-summit-to-mark-the-25th-anniversary-of-asean-india-dialogue-relations/.
- Baru, Sanjaya. 1983. 'Self-Reliance to Dependence in Indian Economic Development', *Social Scientist*, vol. 11, no. 11, pp. 34-46.

- Belyi, A. V., & Goldthau, A. 2010. *The Politics of Energy Crises.* London: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, Lester, 1977. "Redefining National Security", *World watch Paper* 1, pp 1-43, World Watch Institute, Washington DC.
- Chatterjee, Neeladri. 2012. 'A Time Series Forecast of Geopolitical Market Concentration (GMC) Risk: An Analysis of the Crude Oil Diversification Portfolio of India', *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 36, no.1, pp. 145-165.
- Colgan, Jeff, D. 2013. *Petro-Aggression: When Oil Causes War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
- Department of Commerce, Trade Statistics, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/default.asp.
- European Commission, "EU and India agree on clean energy and climate partnership", 31 March 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/eu-and-india-agree-clean-energy-and-climate-partnership-2016-03-31_en.
- Fattouh, B. and A. Sen. 2016. 'The Past, Present, and Future Role of OPEC', in Van de Graaf; T. Sovacool; B. Ghosh; A. Kern and F. Klare. eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of the International Political Economy of Energy*, London: Palgrave Handbooks in IPE, pp 73-94.
- Ganguly, Sumit and Manjeet S. 2009. 'Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy', *India Review*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 4-19.
- Ghosh, A. 2017. *Energy: Management, Supply and Conservation.*
- Gilpin, Robert. 2017. *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Gopalakrishnan, A. 2002. 'Evolution of the Indian Nuclear Power Programme', *Annual Review of Energy and Environment*, vol. 27, pp. 369-395.
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie Marie and Victor, David G. and Lupu, Yonatan. Political Science Research on International Law: The State of the Field (August 23, 2011). *The American Journal of International Law,* Vol. 106, No. 1 (January 2012), pp. 47- 97.
- Hossain, Emran, 2022. 'Bangladesh's power import from India nears fourfold despite overcapacity', *New Age Bangladesh*, March 12.
- IAEA, "Agreement between the Government of India and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards to Civilian Nuclear Facilities", *Information Circular*, 29 May 2009, https://dae.gov.in/node/writereaddata/ncpw/infcirc754.pdf.

- International Energy Agency. *World Energy Outlook.* Paris: International Energy Agency.
- Issa, Mohammad Saleh Bani. 2021. 'Great Powers' Cold War and its Impact on Regional Security: West Asia as an Analytical Model Study', *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 1-15.
- Jean-Marie, Martin-Amouroux, 2022. 'Energy in India: from Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira Gandhi', *World Energy History*, May 5, 2022, https://www.encyclopedie-energie.org/en/energy-in-india-from-jawaharlal-nehru-to-indira-gandhi/.
- Klare, Michael T. 2001. *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict.* New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Logan, W .A. 2022. 'Constructing Tarapur, 1964–1969', in *A Technological History of Cold-War India, 1947–1969*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Science and Technology, Palgrave Macmillan, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78767-7_9.
- Mahajan, Anilesh S. 2018, "Why India needs to rethink its relationship with OPEC", October 21, 2018, https://www.businesstoday.in/opinion/columns/story/why-india-needs-to-rethink-its-relationship-with-opec-151015-2018-10-21.
- Makari, Andrew, (ed.) 2014. *Energy Security: An Interdisciplinary Approach.* New Jersy: Wiley Publishing.
- Malik, J. Mohan. 1991. 'India's Response to the Gulf Crisis: Implications for Indian Foreign Policy', *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, no. 9, pp. 847-861.
- Miglani, Sanjeev Miglani and Geert De Clercq. 2018. "Russia signs pact for six nuclear reactors on new site in India", *Reuters*, October 5, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-russia-nuclear-idUSKCN1MF217.
- Ministry of External Affairs, 2015. "Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010 and related issues", *Media Centre*, February 08, 2015, https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/24766/Frequently_Asked_Questions_and_Answers_on_Civil_Liability_for_Nuclear_Damage_Act_2010_and_related_issues.
- Ministry of External Affairs, Question No. 2812, 2016. "Foreign Countries having Nuclear Pact with India", *Media Centre*, August 11, 2016, https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/27300/questiion_no2812_foreign_countries_having_nuclear_pact_with_india.
- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, 2018, "PM inaugurates first assembly of the International Solar Alliance", 2018, https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1548295.
- Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, "Oil Gas Assets", 2022, https://mopng.gov.in/en/international-cooperation/oil-gas-assets.

- Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, 2002, "Shri Ram Naik calls on Saddam Hussein", 2002, https://archive.pib.gov.in/archive/releases98/lyr2002/rjul2002/06072002/r060720021.html.
- Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, "Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries", https://mopng.gov.in/en/international-cooperation/opec.
- News 18, July 06, 2022 "India Spends $5.1 Billion To Import Oil, Gas, Coal From Russia in 3 months", July 06, 2022, https://www.news18.com/news/business/india-spends-5-1billion-to-import-oil-gas-coal-from-russia-in-3-months-report-5502295.html.
- Noorani, A. G. 1981. 'Indo-U.S. Nuclear Relations', *Asian Survey*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 399-416.
- Office of International Affairs, "US-India Energy Cooperation", https://www.energy.gov/ia/initiatives/us-india-energy-cooperation.
- OPEC, "Data Tables", 2021, https://asb.opec.org/data/ASB_Data.php.
- OPEC, "OPEC's role and the challenges we face in the petroleum industry", 2003, https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/913.htm
- OPEC, 2017, "The Growing OPEC-India Relationship", https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/4567.htm.
- Pradhan, Bansidhar. 2004. 'Changing Dynamics of India's West Asia Policy', *International Studies*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 1-88.
- SAARC Energy Centre, "About SEC", https://www.saarcenergy.org/.
- Sengupta, Shayak and Rama T. Ponangi. 2022. 'Russia's Outsized Role in India's Nuclear Power Program', *The Diplomat*, May 28, 2022.
- Siddiqui, Huma. 2020. 'Celebrating India-Bhutan ties: The Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project receives prestigious award', *Financial Express*, October 21, 2020.
- *The Hindu*. 2022. 'Nepal starts exporting 364 MW electricity to India', June 11, 2022.
- Thomas, R. G. C. 1998. 'Should India Sign the NPT/CTBT?'. in R.G.C. Thomas. ed., *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 284-309.
- United Nations, (n.d.), "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)", Office of the Disarmament, https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/ctbt/.
- Victor, Robert W. R., Amy M. Jaffe, and Mark H. Hayes. 2006. *Natural Gas and Geopolitics: From 1970 to 2040.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wadhwa, A. 2021. 'India, Europe/the European Union and West Asia', in R.K. Jain. ed., *India, Europe and Asia*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 187-209.

- World Bank live, 'Regional Power Trade: Toward a Green, Clean and Energy-Secure South Asia', 2022, https://live.worldbank.org/regional-power-trade-towards-green-clean-and-energy-secure-south-asia.
- Yergin, Daniel. 1991.*The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power.* New York: Free Press.

Bio Profile of the Author:

Associate Professor
Centre for South Asian Studies
School of International Studies, JNU,
New Delhi-110067
Email: opgadde2@gmail.com

Finding the Blue Drums: A Micro Study on Urban Household Water in Delhi

Ivy Dhar

Abstract

The patterns of domestic water access and use are diverse in urban locations and significantly reflect the state of public distribution of water. Delhi's household water supply is largely dependent on the nature of the land use and whether the location is defined as a formal or informal settlement. The present study is based on the investigation of Unauthorised Colonies of Delhi to show how this type of informal settlement is at the receiving end of discriminated water provision. It is based on a field survey of two Unauthorised Colonies comprising data from 90 households. Methods applied are convenience sampling for collecting household responses on the questionnaire, administering of interview schedule, narrative inquiry in the locality, and non-participant observation. It is to be understood that gender and socio-economic disadvantages intersect the urban water needs. The findings suggest that the informal arrangements of water have become formalised by the regulated use of alternatives. It seems a publicness of water is forcibly built through an informal supply system.

Key words: *Household water, unauthorised colonies, Informal settlements, Urban, Gender, Delhi*

Introduction

The site of blue drums, even white, as water storage units in the front yards of houses is common in certain residential areas of Delhi. It indicates the area lacks a reliable water supply and has to depend largely on stored water. In such locations, the residents may not only struggle with shortages in meeting the daily water requirements but concerns can be related to quality, rationing, and complex informal management that arises due to irregularity in the supply. The issue of domestic water supply cannot be simplified to only its availability and non-availability.

It is widely discussed that water availability and practices are experiential. The socio-spatial contexts shape access to household water. Heightened disparities are observed in the water distribution that place the urban vulnerable population to encounter water inequalities alongside coping with other social-economic challenges (Alankar 2013: 46). This disparity contributes to the cycle of poverty. The complexities of providing essential public services to the marginalised urban population are

well-founded in developing countries. Studies have looked at reasons for rapid urbanisation and the resultant issue of underserving the urban poor (Giles and Brown 1997: 100). The significant rise of urban concentrations not only characterises demographic growth, but a host of issues also open up regarding the functional land use patterns and public utility and services (Biswas and Gangwar 2021: 199-200). Urban land and water planning are not unrelated topics. Due to limited policy visions, they remain unconnected and fall short of incorporating the needs of all types of settlements. Discussing water in Delhi must be placed within the spatial characteristics of its urban formations.

The unauthorised colonies (UCs) also referred as informal or unplanned settlements, are contrived illegal spaces that result from the crisis and chaos induced by failed urban planning experiments (Bhan 2013: 58-59). The pooling of private lands was one way to have UCs. It also evolved from fringe agricultural lands and has developed in violation of zoning regulations. A context of illegality has been associated with them though guidelines exist to upgrade the status by regularisation unless those colonies are an infringement on the ecologically or archaeologically sensitive zones and contravene public land use. Given the variation in size, the trajectory of development, and land use types, it has been a source of contention to cluster all unauthorised colonies as one unit. It may be difficult to discuss a complete overview but some attempts can be made to understand the core nature. The discussion can help in further understanding the locational complexities of water arrangement.

The present study primarily brings to discussion the informalities and challenging conditions of domestic water provisioning in the UCs. It will explore what alternative sources are devised in an authorised manner for meeting the daily water requirements and how it compels those affected to carry the burden of water shortage and expenses. While literature exists noting the informal water vendors as a rescue for water stress in Delhi, this study explores the question of how publicness is built to dilute the context of informality. By studying the household options and noting the gender experiences of the user group from the field observations in UCs of South Delhi namely Madanpur Khadar Extension and Sanjay Colony,[1] the paper tries to examine how the dimensions of access to water intersect with social hierarchies.

Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi: An Overview

The socio-spatial development of Delhi has been broadly categorised as formally planned and unplanned or informal settlements.[2] At a broad level, all type of unplanned settlements is tenuous in nature, and with respect to their access to the services, entitlements, and infrastructure, they can be referred to as "excluded settlements" (Heller, Mukhopadhyay, Banda and Sheikh 2015: 3). The physical identification is not difficult to ascertain given that the informal settlements are overcrowded, refuse dumps strewn all over, frequent queues for filling water with ample evidence of low sanitation options resulting in open defecation. The social and economic attributes are visible where the quality of life gets severely compromised. Those who tend to be drawn to these types of settlements are

migrants from rural areas (Ishtiyaq and Kumar 2011:37).

The mismatch between growing housing needs and the unaffordability of housing in the formally planned residential areas has resulted in the growth of UCs. The official definition for UCs is "illegal colonies in violation of Master Plan with no clear land title." The most recent recorded number of UCs in Delhi is 1797 having a population of more than 40 lakh. (Planning Department 2023: 252). Mapping and identification of the UCs took a long time even though the spurt of growth was much rapid. In the 1990s UC listing was prepared when already they reached 1071 in numbers (Planning Department 2006: 168). The two major distinguishing features of exclusions are the unrecognised status and lack of development of basic services. The UCs may not have had formal entitlement to services but those built buying plots with semi-legal tenure are secured from eviction.

In all these years, a notion existed to mainstream the UCs and some declarations have been made from time to time about the public spending to improve development work.[3] The progress remains limited for Delhi's 30 per cent population living in the UCs (Ajith and Kataria 2022). The proposed investment for modifications through Delhi's Master Plan 2041 does not show much promising role either given that it only encourages private developers to step in. Public discourses reiterate that steps must be taken to prevent any further expansions of UCs but as long the roadmap glosses over concrete realities, the growth of such types of settlements cannot be curtailed.

A Review on Informal Water Provisions

Research on access to water in Delhi elucidates that the public distribution of water is unable to meet all demands. As a result of rapid urban growth, the supply is under severe stress and in such a scenario the existing water infrastructure and services tend to favour settlements of higher income groups while informal settlements face systematic neglect and marginalisation (Haider 2016a: 2). Rhetorical concerns for the urban poor manifest in Delhi's governance but the most coveted public water network, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) continues to underserve the settlements that reside the poor.

Not having access to a piped supply creates compelling circumstances. Inhabitants of UCs may depend on shallow hand pumps and in most cases these are contaminated and unfit for human consumption (Dutta, Chander, and Srivastava 2005a: 442). While installing private bore wells without formal approval in Delhi is illegal, such an option is resorted to or services of private water tankers come as rescuers. Unresolved water issues and lack of coverage have habitually invited private water services who may illegally obtain water from public networks or over-extract water by violating norms. Breeding of privatisation of water has been one of the most unavoidable infrastructural lacunae and commodification (Kumar, Singh, Cooper, Mdee and Singhal 2021:7; Maria 2008).

Studies have discussed the household expenses accrued from water in the informal settlements. The household may have to spend a significant amount of money to procure water, both in terms of

quality and quantity. A substantial part may be for investing in reliability by installing storage tanks and motors handsets to draw up water for storage, taking services from water vendors, etc., and the other part of the investment may be in water purification and filtration (Dutta, Chander, and Srivastava 2005b: 457). The government subsidy on water for the poor carries a caveat of households with metered water consumption, and lacking such arrangements deprives a sizeable poor of becoming beneficiaries of subsidies (Haider 2016b: 4; Kacker and Joshi 2012: 30; Khan 2018: 126). It is now almost a settled debate that the centralised water system of Delhi is ineffective for the UCs and a more featured analysis can be brought forth by exploring the field.

Methodology and Analysis

The UCs are scattered all over Delhi. There are very few studies that have focussed primarily on the UCs and their development needs. Some may have referred to the UCs within the broad discussions of all unplanned settlements. The diverse land use settings add further constraints in coming up with a common denoting factor. A compiled government list of the UC in a single database is available. However, while referring to the sections on coverage of development work much information is missing (Urban Development Department of Government of NCT of Delhi 2018). Given these constraints, choosing UCs as field sites was challenging.

The present analysis is based on two UCs, Madanpur Khadar Extension (Khadar Extension) and Sanjay Colony in South Delhi that were developed through a resettlement process. The former was part of the village Madanpur Khadar and was developed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to resettle slum dwellers. The resettlement process started in 2001 and continued for some time. Sanjay Colony came up around 1976 and was developed for the labour community that came to work in the nearby Bhatti Mines. A further ecological factor was also referred to in the search for sites. The Khadar Extension lies in Yamuna floodplains as *Khadar* denotes low-lying lands adjacent to a river. The Sanjay Colony falls in Delhi Ridge, rumps of Aravalli hills and its semi-arid forest habitat. The other most significant development question in the study is access to household water. Evaluating the status of pipelines by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), it was found that the Khadar Extension is said to have completed laying the pipelines, and for Sanjay Colony, no pipeline was laid. In the Khadar Extension, pipelines remain non-functional as the DJB did not start the water supply (Urban Development Department of Government of NCT of Delhi 2018). The field survey was undertaken to understand the ground reality and the implications for the residents in the chosen localities.

Given that the sites are not systematically registered colonies, the convenience sampling method was adopted. The participants in the study comprised of household water user group. The sampling unit was an individual household. The questionnaire administered for the study captured the respondents' migration status, income sources, infrastructure of the localities, challenges, and experiences related to water use. 90 households were covered in the study. A narrative inquiry of women respondents

through group interviews became the backbone of the study noting the lived experiences on water distress. Non-participant observation was incorporated as a process of inquiry while residents were collecting household water. The assigned bore well operator was informally interviewed to discuss the local operational issues.

A study on household water cannot be taken up as an isolated issue. We have purposefully looked at the components that may act as social determinants for placing the context of the domestic water supply. The focus is on the present time with reference to the past developments of the localities. The various dimensions of field analysis of both locations are not comparable but some commonalities and contrasts were noted. Therefore, wherever necessary separate aspects were highlighted but mostly they were analysed to understand the coherent water issues of UCs. The focus remains on analysing and debating the core issues with a few specific numerical representations.

Location and Social Dimensions

The continuous occurrence of migration itself has led to the growth of UCs since the 1950s-60s. Khadar Extension and Sanjay Colony were somewhat considered transit accommodations and were carved out of villages on the outskirts of Delhi. Despite commonalities of forced migration, the locations present two vividly contrasting migrant tales. The former absorbed migrant families mostly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, who were evicted from a Delhi slum. They were allocated plot sizes 12 or 22 sq. meters by the DDA charging a few thousand rupees. The situation was precarious with no livelihood options at the resettlement site and the earlier places of work were at a distance with unaffordable and unreliable commute. The unlivable conditions were documented at the time the settlement came into existence, lying in proximity to the inundation from Yamuna, with no official supply of electricity and water, and people faced health hazards from the Thermal plant in the vicinity. People had little option to move out and lived with the threat of getting disowned without legal land deeds (Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch 2001).

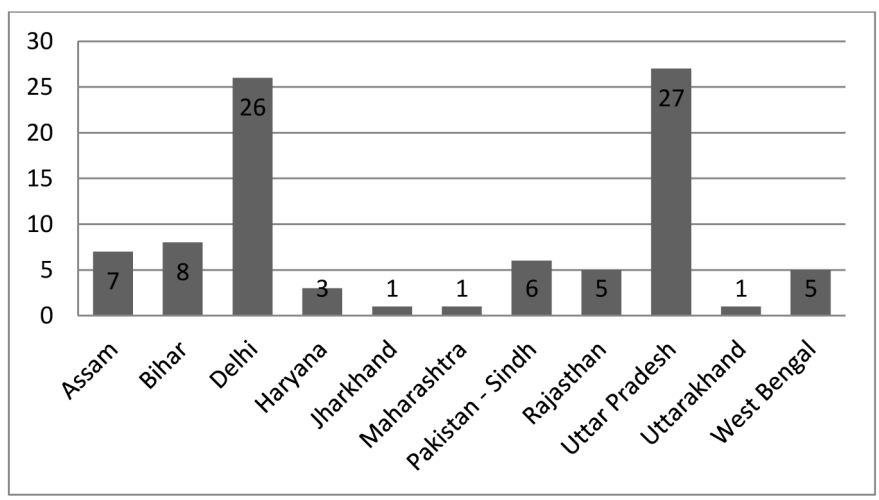
Sanjay Colony came into existence as a labour village absorbing migrant families largely belonging to the Odh tribe of Sind and Punjab provinces of Pakistan. Owing to their traditional occupation of earthworks, they took up livelihood in the Bhatti mines. The odd 200 houses that were constructed in the 1970s had minimal infrastructure at that time, no official electricity and water supply, and compromised sanitation and sewage. Later in 1991, the area was declared as part of the Asola Wildlife Sanctuary, seen as an encroachment on the Delhi Ridge violating the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 that led to the closure of Bhatti mines. After its re-classification as an illegal settlement, residents not only lost livelihoods, but had been continually facing eviction threats, bearing refugee status and to the extent of a few being government suspects as Pakistan nationals (Singh 2014).

The background of re-settlements provided a basis for revisiting the identity of residents. The element of migration, however, cannot remain static. The data from the field suggests that new migrants

were drawn to the Khadar Extension primarily for cheaper housing options or work opportunities living in rented accommodation. It was observed that the Khadar Extension no longer holds its' identity as an outskirt, having good connectivity with the Delhi metro and nearby posh neighbourhood. Sanjay Colony continues as an excluded and extended part of Delhi, with fragile connectivity and lesser livelihood options. The place was less preferred by newer migrants.

Due to prolonged residence having crossed over as second or third-generation of re-settlers, and being disconnected from their ancestral locations, the residents in the Sanjay Colony prefer to refer to Delhi as their home state. However, in both locations only with further probing, the migration status was disclosed. Most of the women respondents have stated that they moved in after marriage. Families hailed from Haryana Uttarakhand, Assam, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, with a larger number from Uttar Pradesh apart from Delhi declared as the original residency. The representation is explained for the 90 households in graph 1.

Graph 1: Place of Original Residence (in numbers).



Source: Author

Informal Occupation and Gender

Informality and stagnation characterise livelihood options for both locations. Finding regular employment was considered difficult for the households. Those residing in Khadar Extension engaged in varied forms of informal labour including scrap dealing, delivery services, working in transport, nearby shops, company work, and domestic help with households' income ranging between 100,000 and less than 400,000. The self-employed were earning slightly better than others, of which one has reported himself as a farmer. The residents of Sanjay Colony have very rare experience of

job diversification. Their earlier generation worked in the quarries of Bhatti Mines and now many households continue as unskilled labourer in construction sites. Invariably *mitti khudai* (digging) was the most common answer. Few households earn from other forms of informal labour like transport services or shops. The household annual income in the Sanjay Colony was found to be less than 200,000.

The study finds visible gender dimensions in education and occupation. 70 per cent of women and around 40 per cent of men participating in the survey have reported themselves as illiterate or school dropout. However, it was seen that irrespective of gender, those who have passed school did not take education further. The three respondents who have gone to college are men but they did not have any better jobs and the one who has completed post-graduation was unemployed. The men who happened to be unemployed at the time of the survey have reported to have worked earlier. The men may have slightly better educational opportunities but cannot be said to have highly progressed towards having diverse career options. Occupation for women has been in restricted fields. In the Khadar Extension mostly women worked as domestic help in nearby housing complexes along with scrap dealing or were working in shops. In Sanjay Colony, a negligible number were reported to be working in the construction sites and running kiosks. With no nearby posh location, the occupation of domestic help is completely ruled out for Sanjay Colony residents. A majority of women reported themselves as housewife but a similar situation for men would bring them unemployed status. This condition of staying at home for women becomes a prime factor in our observation of household water collection.

A (Non) Piped Water Supply

The water arrangement remains informal because an authorised piped supply is not present in these locations. The residents of the Khadar Extension have arranged a provisional connection attached to the DJB supply pipeline passing through the underneath streets in the area. If living in a rented accommodation, the residents have to pay a fixed amount to the house owner for using the motor pumps installed for drawing water for storage. Devoid of a metered water connection, the usage is controlled according to the landlords' instructions. The water supply is only provisional but the residents reported regularity in the flow recalling that they have faced more shortages in the past.

Sanjay Colony, on the contrary, depends on public bore well connections that seem to be operating sanctioned through the DJB. The households have their pipeline connected to the bore well and storage units and on a sharing basis use the motor pumps to access it. An assigned operator from the colony is responsible for opening the valves and is paid a paltry sum by the households as a user fee. Despite irregularity in supply with existing informalities, the residents of Sanjay Colony find the arrangement better than the previous times. A woman stated that she had to fetch water from a tube well two km. away, and in a heavily forested area in Bhatti Mines. Fetching the water would take at least two hours and further bear the burden of carrying water on the head. The DJB tankers that were provided

earlier would be stationed at a distance from the residence. Walking for water has somewhat found an alternative in the bore well supply.

One can observe that the domestic water in these locations is under the quasi-controls of authorities and become part of a (non)piped water supply. Despite the condition of informality, the publicness in water distribution is created for the under-served areas. Occasional options for the water source in both locations are tankers when there is a fault in the motor pumps. Hand pumps are now non-functional due to depleting water tables. Borrowing water from landlords having private bore wells is yet another option for Khadar Extension residents though did not disclose much information knowing the illegal nature of such water extraction. The provision of the existing access to household water is explained in the fig. 1.

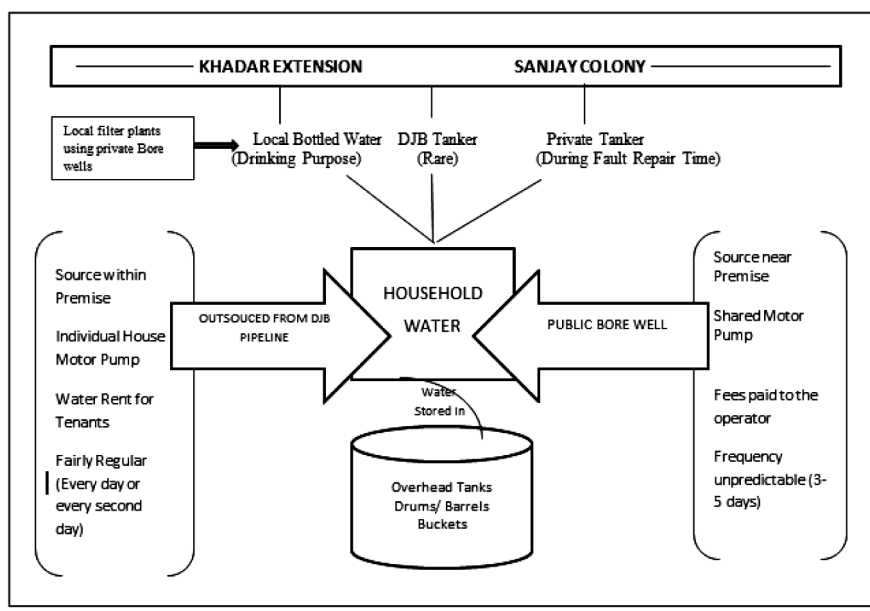


Fig 1: Household Water Provision.
Source: Author

(Un) Safe Drinking Water and Affordability

Based on the data collected, it is observed that the water secured through the informal arrangements is highly contaminated. Muddy, mixed with sand and foul smelling is the most common response from the field sites. During the survey, the residents of Sanjay colony showed tiny bugs in the water and complained that it was unfit for drinking. The residents of both Khadar Extension and Sanjay Colony complained of getting hard water, even unfit for washing and other purposes yet continued using it as

people did not have any choice. Families in Sanjay Colony referred to getting medically treated for kidney stone which they understand was due to the hardness of the water though it is not clinically proven.

The survey found that 74 per cent of households preferred buying drinking water from private sources but it depends on their own assessment of how unclean the water gets. Apart from the monthly operational cost and fault repair cost, 68 per cent of households spent up to Rs. 1000 per month for buying drinking water from local private suppliers, 6 per cent have reported spending between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 2000 per month, 3 per cent states sometimes they may buy, and the other 23 per cent cannot afford to buy drinking water. The households do not have water meters and therefore not entitled to the Delhi government scheme of free water despite the households' economic conditions which otherwise should allow them to get such entitlement.

Buying drinking water regularly was mostly observed in the Khadar Extension than Sanjay Colony, and could be related to the respective income levels. There is no guarantee of the water quality from the vendors except that it may look cleaner. The vendors see an opportunity to serve the areas by selling locally filtered water to those who cannot afford branded water. The group interview with women has indicated the situation to be better despite of economic cost attached than being dependent on free-of-cost tankers for which water collection is more time-consuming.

Household Water Needs and Women

Dealing with family water needs as a household chore was one of the major observations drawn up in the study from in-depth interactions. The supply in the Khadar Extension is often affected due to low water pressures and at times two to three hours is lost in checking the supply. Women in the Khadar Extension disclosed that they perceive no inequality if they have to take the prime responsibility as water providers alongside other household chores and caregiving because men have work outside the home and are the primary monetary providers. Women and girls of reproductive age group however are not expected to go out to buy drinking water, which is either carried out by men or elderly women. Fear of harassment and unsafe neighbourhood was understood as a major social condition that impeded women's mobility.

The water struggle seems imperative to the type of location that Sanjay Colony is where there is a perennial shortage of water. Along with all other household chores, the responsibility of water collecting, storing, and rationing is on the women whose men are informal labourers. The issue of safety was not much botheration as the Colony largely consisted of extended families of a community. Though the burden of walking for water has ended, but the struggles continue and women and girls have to proactively participate in getting the water needs met for their families. In the survey, most women have denied marital discord in the distribution of roles except a few women have reported getting into verbal discord occasionally due to precarious situations of water shortages.

Negotiations and Social Discords

The social complexities were bound to arise when the water provisions were dependent on negotiated supply and at times the access was disrupted due to an informal operational system. Neighbours get into conflict about who gets how much when the water pressure is low. The residents of both locations have discussed that social status is a major factor in the negotiations on water. The dominant social groups in the Khadar Extension area tend to control access to DJB tankers which deters many from taking such services. In the Sanjay colony, some respondents opened up about personal equations due to caste affiliation with the bore well operator which charts out the frequency of water availability to particular households that are better than others. The bore wells are supposed to be operated by the DJB but staffing issues put it upon a resident who operates the system without proper guidelines. However, the bore well operators review their work as social services in return for earning a bare minimum wage.

The local political milieu did not benefit the areas, and the representatives have never taken much interest in working for the water provisions. The DJB seems to be working in phases to see that a regularised water supply can be provided for the Khadar Extension though the progress was slow. Whereas for Sanjay Colony which comes under a forested area, there is no such plan for regularisation even in the near future. The residents in the UCs seem to have accepted the fate of informality with barely any effort made to approach the authorities.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the issues of water provisions in UCs and the resultant marginalisation in access. Water stress has been a key concern for many decades since the re-settlement process of these localities. However, improvements in bringing water within premises have pushed further informal arrangements to settle in. Thus, the vacuum created due to the lack of formal piped supply has allowed both private water options and quasi-public water distribution to thrive. To the extent that authorised groundwater use for domestic purposes became a common feature further straining the water resources. It was observed that a minimum fulfillment of daily water needs has diverted people's attention, diluting their demands for acquiring piped supply.

Household expenses are met for establishing and extending an informal local water network for the neighbourhood that allows the non-state providers to become a permanent feature. It is observed that the pattern is almost similar and expensive for the low-income families residing in both the UCs yet failing to avail security of quality water. Social background of education and income often guide perspectives and negotiation rules. The lack of work opportunities is a lived reality that interferes with giving economic stability and leaves residents surrendered to the informal water situations. The gender dimension adds further disadvantage to women who may not question their active participation in taking the household water roles. We can conclude by saying that the range of adjustment practices is

complex, intersecting with many other social complexities bearing varied local dynamics in the UCs.

End notes

1. The study acknowledges the minor research grant, 2022-23, from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi. This paper is based on a section of the field research in the UCs. I am particularly thankful to Harshita and Shakil Shokeen for their field assistance.
2. The identified informal urban settlement types of Delhi are the Regularised Unauthorised Colonies, Resettlement Colonies, Slum Designated Areas, Jhuggi Jhopri Clusters and Unauthorised Colonies. There are further variations in the status depending on whether they fall into the legal ambit.
3. The Delhi Government has announced Rs. 13000 million for the development of UCs in the fiscal year 2022-23 (NDTV 2022).

References:

- Ajith, A., and Kataria, R. 2022. 'Delhi's Unauthorised Colonies: An Issue Only for the Election Season?', https://www.thequint.com/opinion/delhis-unauthorised-colonies-an-issue-only-for-the-election-season (accessed on 10 September 2023).
- Alankar. 2013. 'Socio-Spatial Situatedness and Access to Water', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(41): 46-54.
- Bhan, G. 2013. 'Planned Illegalities: Housing and the 'Failure' of Planning in Delhi: 1947-2010', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(24): 58-70.
- Biswas, A. and Gangwar, D. 2021. 'Studying the Water Crisis in Delhi due to Rapid Urbanisation and Land Use Transformation', *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 13(2): 199-213.
- Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch. 2001. 'Always on the Run: A Report on the Plight of Slum Dwellers in Two Relocation Sites of Delhi', http://www.unipune.ac.in/snc/cssh/humanrights/housing/14.pdf (accessed on 16 September 2023).
- Dutta, V., Chander, S., and Srivastava, L. 2005. 'Public Support for Water Supply Improvements: Empirical Evidence from Unplanned Settlements of Delhi', *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 14(4): 439-446.
- Giles, H., and Brown, B. 1997. 'And Not a Drop to Drink: Water and Sanitation Services to the Urban Poor in the Developing World', *Geography*, 82 (2): 97-109.
- Haider, A. 2016. 'Inequalities in Water Service Delivery in Delhi', https://www.waterintegritynetwork.net/2016/02/02/inequalities-in-water-service-delivery-in-delhi (accessed on 7 September 2023).
- Heller, P., Mukhopadhyay, P., Banda, S., & Sheikh, S. 2015. 'Exclusion, Informality, and Predation in the Cities of Delhi: An Overview of the Cities of Delhi Project, Working Paper',

https://indiahousingreport.in/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/05/Cities_of_Delhi-Overview-1.pdf (accessed on 5 July 2023).

- Ishtiyaq, M., and Kumar, S. 2011. 'Typology of Informal Settlements and Distribution of Slums in the NCT Delhi', *Journal of Contemporary India Studies: Space and Society*, 1: 37-46.
- Kacker, S. D., and Joshi, A. 2012. 'Pipe Dreams? The Governance of Urban Water Supply in Informal Settlements, New Delhi', *IDS Bulletin*, 43(2): 27-36.
- Khan, N. 2018. 'Access of Water Supply in the Unauthorised Colonies of Delhi', *International Journal of Advance and Innovative Research*, 5(1): 123-130.
- Kumar, A., Singh, N., Cooper, S., Mdee, A., and Singhal, S. 2021. 'Infrastructural Violence: Five Axes of Inequities in Water Supply in Delhi, India', *Frontiers in Water*, 3: 1-16.
- Maria, A. 2008. 'Urban Water Crisis in Delhi: Stakeholders Responses and Potential Scenarios of Evolution', https://www.indiawaterportal.org/articles/urban-water-crisis-delhi-stakeholders-responses-and-potential-scenarios-evolution (accessed on 10 September 2023).
- NDTV. 2022. 1,300 Crore Allocated for Development in Delhi's Unauthorised Colonies', https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/delhi-budget-2022 (accessed 2 November 2023).
- Planning Department. 2006. 'Economic Survey of Delhi 2005-06', https://delhiplanning.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/Planning/economic-survey-2005-06/cht14.pdf (accessed on 5 September 2023).
- Planning Department. 2023. 'Economic Survey of Delhi 2022-23', https://delhiplanning.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/Planning/ch._14_housing_and_urban_development_0.pdf (accessed on 5 September 2023).
- Singh, D. 2014. 'Delhi: Forest dept suspects 'foreign' nationals living illegally in Asola sanctuary',https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/delhi-forest-dept-suspects-foreign-nationals-living-illegally-in-asola-sanctuary/story.html (accessed on 10 September 2023).
- Urban Development Department of Government of NCT of Delhi https://udd.delhi.gov.in/ud/unauthorized-colonies-cells-uc (accessed on 10 September 2023).

Bio Profile of the Author:
Assistant Professor,
School of Development Studies,
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi.
Email: ivydhar@gmail.com.

A Deep Dive into the Effects of Eminent Domain on victims of Land Acquisition in India

Paramita Bhattacharyya

Abstract:

In our modern civilized world, land acquisition for public purpose and development purpose is a regular practice. In the developing country like India, development and industrialization are one of the main focused areas of the government, which leads to a large number of land acquisitions. A high number of displaced people are created in this course of acquisition. The government's excessive interference in the acquisition process, fragile compensation policy and resettlement policies and low infrastructure lead the displaced people in more pathetic condition. In India the remedies provided in law to enforce right to property are guided by a set of predetermined factors. The factors are created lots of harassments to the evicted people and hampering basic rights as well as property rights of those people. Land owners had to go through a miserable situation. The Indian Constitution in its original form under Article 19 (1) (f) guaranteed to its citizens the right to property as one of the fundamental rights and Article 31strengthened the right to property by constitutional restraint. Such provisions were replaced by 44 amendments to the Constitution by insertion of Article 300-A. Article 300 A confers the property right as a constitutional right. In the context of the Constitutional provisions and acquisition laws, if government for the public purpose finds any private land for the acquisition, then practically there are no other options left to the private owner to counter the decision and save the ancestral land. The prejudice policies of the government on the compensation etc. have been framed in such a way that a land owner gets transformed into a victim.

Key words: *Development induced victimization, victim of abuse of power, eminent domain, right to property, just compensation*

I. Introduction:

Different countries have their own laws and policies of land acquisition. In the developing countries like India, development and industrialization are one of the main focused areas of the government, which leads to a large number of land acquisitions. A large number of displaced people are created in course of such acquisition. Such displaced victims mostly share a common grievance of inadequate compensation. The government's fragile resettlement policies and low infrastructure further adds misery to the life of displaced people. It leads to a pathetic state to such displaced people.

II. Concept of Eminent Domain:

The term "eminent domain" was adopted from the legal instrument ―De jure belli ac pacis‖ which is written by the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius in 1625. Private Land can be used by the State in the event of need for the public. Under eminent domain, the sovereign power is founded upon the following two maxims.

A. ―Saluspopuliest supreme lex‖ i.e., community interest is superior.

B. ―Necessita public major est quam private‖ i.e., public interest is greater than private necessity. (Bhattacharyya, 2015)

There are three basic features of eminent domain.

i. The State can acquire private property;

ii. The State has authority to use the private property for public purpose;

iii. State has an obligation to make just compensation to those whose lands are taken over.

III. International Perspective:

Every country has power over its land resources. This power is exerted differently by different nations. Different countries have used the word eminent domain in various terms, i.e., acquisition, expropriation, compulsory purchase etc. In the United States and Philippines the power is adopted as eminent domain. In India, Malaysia, Singapore it is used as a land acquisition where as in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland it is used as a compulsory purchase. In Hong Kong, Uganda the term is referred to as resumption. In Australia it is referred to as resumption and compulsory acquisition. It is used as expropriation in France, Italy.

Right to property provides the holder an exclusive power over an object against the entire world. The right is not free from restrictions. Various countries have adopted the right to property in their laws. The right has been recognized in various international documents i.e., Article 17(1) and 17 (2) Of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; Article 17(1) of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1966; Article 5 and 16 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1979; the Convention on the Status of Refugees, 1951; the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families, 1990. Various regional documents exist to provide right to property in their state i.e., Article 14, 13 and 21 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981; Article 23 of American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and American Convention on Human Rights; Article 1 of Protocol I to the European Convention on Human Rights, 1953

In India, the Constitution in its original state adopted the right to property as a fundamental right, but after the 44th Constitutional amendment in the year 1978, the right to property as a fundamental

right was repealed. Currently, right to property is a constitutional right under Article 300A of the Constitution of India,

IV. Domestic Laws:

In India first land acquisition law was enacted in the year 1824 i.e., Bengal Regulation I of 1824. Thereafter various statutes and regulations relating to acquisition were enacted and repealed, and finally the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 was passed in 1894. The Act has failed to serve the Constitutional intent, and after a long time in the year the 2013 a new law has been enacted i.e., The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. But the Act has many drawbacks as it is inadequate to provide remedy to the displaced people. At present there are four provisions in the Constitution, i.e., Article 31A, 31 B read with Ninth Schedule, 31C and 300A dealing with property rights and eminent domain. Our Constitution has given more emphasis to the interest of public and the interest of the individual has less importance. 1st Amendment to the Constitution of India added the 9th schedule and Article 31-B to the Constitution of India to protect the laws relating to land reforms from being struck down by the court. 1st, 4th, 7th, 17th, 25th, 40th, 42nd & 44th, amendments added a lot of legislations in the 9th schedule. In the various cases1 the provisions were challenged. Land acquisition is a known phenomenon all over the world. This power of government connotes the state's legitimate capacity to seize individual private property for public uses and for only compensation. Different countries all over the globe practice ―Eminent Domain‖ in their own way, which eventually gives a large number of displaced people to the society. India is also having land acquisition process and practice all through its territory. Land acquisition by sovereign authority is being practiced since ancient India through various other names and practices. Ancient Vedic rulers used to practice Ashvamedha Yajna to acquire land. The land acquisition by exercising eminent domain power by the government had been legally recognized since the colonial era. The first acquisition law in India was enacted in the year 1824, i.e., Bengal Regulation I of 1824. In the year 1894 a general acquisition law, i.e., the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, had been implemented. After independence with the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, various state governments had their own state laws of dealing with land acquisition policies. Since independence, various state governments started enacting various acquisition laws for their territory and then, started inserting the laws in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The colonial legislation of 1894 had not been serving proper legislative intent and had failed to be in conformity with Constitutional provisions. To remedy the ambiguity and various lacunas in the aforementioned law, The Act of 2013 came into existence and made certain changes in the process of acquisition and method of calculating compensation etc. The aforesaid Act has made various other changes like definition of ―public purpose‖, inclusion of provision for social impact assessment, rehabilitation and resettlement policy etc., but on analyzing the law, it is realized that it still lays scope for future modification in the administrative and legislative structure in order to ensure justice. After the enactment of the Act of 2013 the government is acting like a middle man for the corporate giants.

V. Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Ordinance, 2014:

In December 2014, the Government has promulgated an Ordinance that has amended the Act of 2013. The following are the list of amendments made by the Ordinance, 2014:

- Amendment of sub clause (i) of clause (b) of sub section (1) of section 2 referred that ―public purpose‖ shall include infrastructure projects including ―private hospitals‖ and‖ private educational institutions‖.
- The amendment further referred that the ―consent Clause‖ as mentioned in first proviso of clause (b) of sub section (2) of section 2 shall not be applicable for acquisition for projects, for national security or defence, rural infrastructure, housing for poor people, industrial corridor and social infrastructure projects. In this regard a new section i.e., section 10 A has been inserted by the amendment. The provision has exempted certain projects from social impact assessment, consent clause and review clause.
- A second proviso to sub section (2) of section 24 has been inserted by the amendment. The provision has exempted the period of stay order or injunction order in computing the period of five years as mentioned in the first proviso to sub section (2) of section 24.
- Amendment to section 24(2), the retrospective clause has also been made.
- Amendment to section 87 referred that, ―Where an offense under this Act has been committed by any person who is or was employed in the Central Government or the State Government, as the case may be, at the time of the commission of such alleged offense, no court shall take cognizance of such offense except with the previous sanction of the appropriate government, in the manner provided in section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- Amendment to section 105 (3) referred as, ―The Provisions of this Act relating to the determination of compensation in accordance with the First Schedule, rehabilitation and resettlement in accordance with the Second Schedule and infrastructure amenities in accordance with the Third Schedule shall apply to enactments relating to the land acquisition specified in the Fourth Schedule with effect from 1st January 2015
- As per section 101 of the Act of 2013 if land acquired remained unused for a period of time, it shall be returned to the owner. The Ordinance alternatively allows the Government to provide for another period.

To replace the Ordinance of 2014, another Ordinance promulgated in the year 2015. Again another ordinance i.e., The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 2015 was promulgated on 30th May 2015 (The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement

(Amendment) Second Ordinance, 2015) to replace the previous one. The replacement Bill was referred to Joint Parliamentary Committee on 12th May 2019 for detailed examination. (https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-right-to-fair-compensation-and-transparency-in-land-acquisitionrehabilitation-and-resettlement-second-amendment-bill-2015, n.d.) As per the available data in the government public domain electronic records, the Joint Parliamentary Committee has been given an extension up to the last day of the session 2019. To remove the difficulties arose from above situation the Central Government in compliance with existing law has made an order. (Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition) The order has been commenced on the first day of September 2015.

VI. Impact of Eminent Domain in India:

In this acquisition process most of the displaced people are being transformed from a land owner to a victim. In the process they suffered economically and socially to maintain their basic needs of life. The children of these displaced people are losing their opportunities from their ancestral land. The compensation amount which the government provides is far below the need for resettlement. Displaced people cannot purchase land to resettle themselves and start their new life.

A number of socio-economic impacts in India are caused by the removal of people from local habitats. Forced displacement has become a major challenge for displaced people. Many issues have been caused by forced displacement, including: landlessness; unemployment; food insecurity; homelessness; stigmatization; food insecurity; community displacement; lack of access to public property resources, etc. Weak resettlement plans and unsupported social care programmes have led to community deterioration. Acquisition and displacement contribute to economic instability and social insecurity. Women and children have been suffering a lot. The Indian Constitution provides equal rights for men and women. But Women's access to land largely depends on customs and personal laws in India. Because of the existence of different personal laws in India there are different inheritance rules across the country. The succession laws are different under different personal laws. According to the 2010- 11 agriculture Census, in India, nearly a third of the farmers are women, but they own less than 10.34 per cent of the land, while 75 per cent of the female labour force is there.

The average land keeping size for women is 0.93 ha, compared with 1.18 ha for men. The displaced women face numerous challenges such as physical, social, financial, and health problems. Owing to resettlement, the women were considered to be the most affected one. They earn no money since they do not possess property rights on land. Under resettlement and rehabilitation programmes, women are not viewed equally from men. India has a lot of facts on displacement and violation. The demonstrations in Noida's Bhatta-Parsaul in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Narmoda Banchao andolon and many more are examples of violence. Nandigram dispute of West Bengal, in 2007 has been a great witness of violence. In Nandigram violence 14 people were killed while protesting the acquisition of 10,000 acres of land. Beside these, an immense acquisition took place across six states and three

union territories in the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor. It spreads through six states as well as three union territories. Narmoda Banchao Andolon and Sardar Sarovar dam development violence, Singur violence, Tahiri dam project violence, Vabnagar incident etc., pointed out that the policy needs to be halted immediately. Beside the above mentioned issues there are other issues also. The development projects have always led to the exclusion of the original habitants and disorganization of the socio-cultural relations that have been established over the centuries. In most cases these displaced people became discouraged and became the downtrodden section of society. Negative consequences of displacement are not limited to socio-cultural areas but also economic issues are there. In most situations, the displaced have faced several forms of impoverishment: threats, destruction and dislocation of livelihoods and jobs, desecration of their ancestral sacred areas, tombs and places of worship, loss of shared property wealth etc.

VII. Judicial Responses:

PUNE MUNICIPAL CORPN. VS. HARAKCHAND MISIRIMAL SOLANKI

The most important issue involved in the case was the interpretation of Section 24(2) of the 2013 Act. The acquisition proceedings were challenged on the ground that it has violated section 5A of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. The proceeding was also challenged on the ground of violation of section 7 of the Act. The High Court held that "the acquisition proceedings for the development of Forest Garden could not be initiated by the Commissioner with the mere approval of the Standing Committee without resolution of the General Body of the Corporation. The acquisition proceedings were also held bad in law for non-compliance with Section 7 and other statutory breaches. Inter alia, the High Court has quashed the acquisition proceedings and gave certain directions including restoration of possession." By feeling aggrieved by the order of the High Court, Pune Municipal Corporation filed an appeal before the Supreme Court.

The Apex Court held that "Section 24(2) also begins with a non-obstante clause. This provision has an overriding effect over Section 24(1). Section 24(2) enacts that in relation to the land acquisition proceedings initiated under the 1894 Act, where an award has been made five years or more prior to the commencement of the 2013 Act and either of the two contingencies is satisfied, i.e.; (i) physical possession of the land has not been taken or (ii) the compensation has not been paid, such acquisition proceedings shall be deemed to have lapsed. On the lapse of such acquisition proceedings, if the appropriate government still chooses to acquire the land which was the subject matter of acquisition under the 1894 Act then it has to initiate the proceedings afresh under the 2013 Act".[2]

INDORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY VS. MANOHAR LAL[3]

The important issue involved in the case is whether compensation "deposited" in treasury is proper and whether it would be treated as the compensation "paid" to the landowners. The issue involved with

the interpretation of section 24(2), 24(1) (b) of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. Whether proviso of section 24(2) of the said Act is to be interpreted as a part of Section 24(1) (b)? The meaning of the word "paid" under Section 24(2) and the word "deposited" in the proviso of Section 24(2) were to be interpreted in the case. Another issue also involved in the case was that what will be the effect of refusal to accept compensation?

The present case has similarities with the Pune Municipal Corporation case. In the Pune Municipal Corporation case, it was held that "in case landowners are not willing to accept the compensation, the same has to be deposited in Court. Mere deposit of compensation in treasury cannot be regarded as payment as per Section 24(2). In other words, land acquisition proceedings under the 1894 Act will lapse." This view was upheld in various cases nearly over three years but two judges‟ bench of the Supreme Court in the present case questioned the correctness of the Pune Municipal Corporation case and sent the present case to the larger bench. The larger bench by 2:1 majority held the decision of the Pune Municipal Corporation case to be "per incuriam". On the other hand, the minority decision consented to the Pune Municipal Corporation case.

The Apex Court held that "Under the provisions of Section 24(1) (a) in case the award is not made as on 1.1.2014 the date of commencement of Act of 2013, there is no lapse of proceedings. Compensation has to be determined under the provisions of Act of 2013." The Court further held that, the expression „paid‟ in section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 does not include a deposit of "compensation" in court. Consequently the majority of landowners shall be entitled to compensation as because they did not get compensation. The Court further held that, "landowners who had refused to accept compensation or who sought reference for higher compensation, cannot claim that the acquisition proceedings had lapsed under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013." The court stated that the proviso to Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 is to be construed as part of Section 24(2) not part of Section 24(1) (b). The Court said that, while

KEDAR NATH YADAV VS. STATE OF WEST BENGAL[4]

In the year 2006 government of west Bengal acquired 997 acres of fertile agricultural land in Singur, West Bengal for the construction of the tata motors nano factory. The total cost of the project was Rs. 1,400 crores.[5] The Singur is situated on Durgapur Expressway and about 90 km far from Kolkata. The land acquisition was made under the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. Protest starts in Singur against the acquisition. In the Year 2007, Tata Motor starts construction work of the plant. Mass attacks Tata Motor's factory. It was thought that NANO production could be stimulated from Singur if violent behaviour continues. Tata Motors starts to get invitations from other states to relocate the factory. NANO project was being pulled from Singur to Gujarat. Due to land acquisition mainly six villages have been affected. The affected villages are Bajemelia, Beraberi, Gopal Nagar, Joymolla, Khaserbheri, and Singhaberi. There were 5000 households in these villages. There were near about 600

cultivators within these affected households. There are different types of cultivators like pure owner cultivator, pure tenant cultivator, mixed tenant cultivator etc, and agricultural workers are also there within the category of non-cultivators. The land acquisition in Singur resulted in social and economic hardship to a large number of people. The government has offered compensation to landowners.[6] Most of the owners are rejected the compensation because of inadequacy and the land has not been categorized properly to determine market value.

On the issue of acquisition and compensation matter, Supreme Court adjudicated. The apex Court on 31st August 2016 has set a historical verdict on land acquisition and the court quashes Land Acquisition of 2006 saying that the due process of Law and procedures have not been followed and ordered Tata Motors to return the Land within 12 Weeks. A bench of Justice V Gopal Godwa and Justice Arun Misra has also directed that compensation paid to farmers would not have to be paid back and those who are cultivators, agricultural workers and non-cultivators also. A large number of landowners were under-compensated compared to market values. Tenants also did not get adequate compensation. Lastly, agricultural workers were not rewarded at all. All they have lost their financial security, land rights, social prestige even their basic right to livelihood had been infringed. The landowners and affected others have become victims of industrialization. The incident of land acquisition of 2006 has made a wretched memory to the people of Singur. The acquisition has broken the economic structure of the area.[7]

SRI VENUGOPAL V R VS. THE STATE OF KARNATAKA (2017) 3 SCC 313

In the present case, petitioners challenged two notifications that were issued under the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Act, 1966. The notifications were issued to acquire various plots of land. Petitioners challenged the notices issued under sections 9 & 10 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. This Court allowed the petition and quashed notifications. This order was challenged by the aggrieved. In that respect, writ appeals were allowed setting aside the order of learned Single Judge. The Court further ordered that landowners who had not received compensation during the pendency of the writ petition shall be paid compensation. The compensation will be based on the market value. Market value is to be obtained as on the date of final notification. Against the said order of Division Bench, a special leave petition was filed. The special leave petition was dismissed by order dated 18.01.2016. The possession of the lands has not been taken and the fact is showing that the final award has not been passed.

Petitioners contended that the whole acquisition proceedings stand lapsed under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013. The Apex Court held that provisions of Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 have no application to the provisions of the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Act, 1966. The Court stated that "therefore, a challenge made to the Acquisition Proceedings on the said ground is not sustainable." The Court further held that the contention of the petitioners that the acquisition proceedings have stood lapsed because of unreasonable delay in action and in award making and the authority has also delayed

in paying compensation are to be considered seriously. The Court stated that "The delay in passing the award in the instant case is not 3 years or 4 years but it is 7 years from the date all hurdles were cleared by the decision of the Division Bench." The Court further stated that "In view of the above rulings, I have no hesitation in holding that the entire acquisition proceedings, in this case, have been abandoned and lapsed due to the inaction." The acquisition proceedings are confirmed as lapsed.[8]

VIII. Development induced Displacement and Victimization:

Table.1 Worldwide Projects and Displacement in 1991

Region	Projects	Percentage	People	Percentage
Latin America	13	8.9	1,80,000	9.1
Europe	5	3.4	27,000	1.4
East Asia	58	39.7	588,000	30.0
Middle East	7	4.8	32,000	1.6
South Asia	29	19.9	1,024,000	52.1
Africa	34	23.3	1,13,000	5.8
Total	**146**	**100**	**1,963,000**	**100**

Source: World Development Environment Department report 1996.[9]

The figure in the first column specified the region. The statistic in column two represents the number of projects for development and the proportion of projects for development in column three. The number of displaced people is shown in fourth column and the proportion of them is shown in fifth column.[10] In a report, World Health Organization stated that the construction of massive dams has contributed to the displacement of about 40 to 80 million people worldwide.[11] More than 22 percent of development caused displacement per year resulted from urban infrastructure and transport programs.[12] The following table offers a statistic on the displacement in respect of projects since 1993.

Table 2 World Wide Project Wise Displacement of People in 1993

Category	Total Displacement	Percentage
Extraction, Mining	94000	4.8
Urban Infrastructure	443000	22.6
Dam, Irrigation Canaels	1304000	66.4
Others	122000	6.2
Total	**1963000**	**100**

Source:http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/287241468766455768/pdf/multi0page.pdf

The table indicates that roughly 66.4%, of total population displaced worldwide by constructing many

dam buildings and irrigation canals. Then urban transport and infrastructure accounts for 22.6%, of the overall production of displacements.4.8 percent displaced due to extraction and mining and 6.2% were displaced due to other development construction.[13]

An Involuntary Resettlement Portfolio Review (phase –II) report of the World Bank, submitted in 2014 revealed that development projects are carrying three categories of impacts worldwide on the displaced people. These are mentioned below.

- loss of property and other assets;
- Functional exclusion
- Loss of revenue and livelihood.[14]

The development and progress has only helped a tiny number, although millions of people pay the price without profiting. Approximately, two hundred and thirteen lacks of people were displaced in India due to land acquisition. It is increasing frustration and, it shows the failure of the planner to provide the expected benefits. It indicates that the government has made effort which is too low to mitigate the suffering of displacement and to resettle the displaced in full. The main development projects which induce displacement in India are infrastructure projects, industrial corridors, public private partnership projects, projects for private companies, dam construction, mining activity, construction of roads, railways, port etc. This involuntary displacement converts the land owners to victims because the entire process lacks proper compensation policy, rehabilitation and resettlement policy and adequate planning. Consequently, India has witnessed several land acquisition agitations which are mainly due to the lack of proper structural policy of the government.

IX. Conclusions:

To summarize the study, the conclusion is derived as the development is need of hour and it cannot be compromised. What we need to ensure is a sustainable and balanced approach towards the same. So that the interest of the victims are not threatened, and compromised and at the same time socio-economic development of society does not get arrested for the same. Therefore, aforesaid modifications in the administrative and legislative structure are necessary in order to ensure justice to the victims of development - induced displacement. The basic rights, fundamental rights and natural rights of all concerned should be guaranteed and the state,,s approach should be focused on ensuring the same without any interruption at the cost of corruption, bureaucratization, politicization and criminalization.

End notes:

[1] Shankari Prasad vs. Union of India, AIR 1951 SC 458; Sajjan Singh vs. State of Rajasthan, AIR 1965 SC 845; Golak Nath vs. State of Punjab AIR 1967 SC 1643; Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala AIR 1973 SC 1461

[2] http://www.supremecourtcases.com/index2.php?option=com_content&itemid=99999999&do_pdf=1&id=44862 last visited on 6th June, 2023

[3] SLP(C) No.-009036-009038 / 2016)

[4] Judgment delivered on August 31,2016

[5] https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/mamata-offers-land-but-tata-wants-her-to-pay-rs-154cr-compensation-for-singur-acquisition-3033594/ last visited on 6th August, 2023

[6] http://ibread.org/bread/system/files/bread_ppapers/p035.pdf last visited on 5th August, 2023

[7] https://indiankanoon.org/doc/168057026/ Last visited on 23rd May 2021

[8] https://www.livelaw.in/pdf_upload/pdf_upload-373144.pdf last visited on 6th June, 2023

[9] https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr/wdr-archive last visited on 9th August, 2021

[10] http://www.shram.org/uploadFiles/20140305073042.pdf last visited on 25th August 2020

[11] https://www.who.int/docstore/water_sanitation_health/vector/dams2.htm#:~:text=The%20report%20of%20the%20World, problems%20associated%20with%20their%20development. Last visited on 25th August 2020

[12] https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/topic/environment-and-naturalresources#:~:text=The%20World%20Bank%20Group's%20Environment,enhance%20ecosystem%20services%20(such%20 as last visited on 25th August, 2020

[13] http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/287241468766455768/pdf/multi0page.pdf last visited on 25th August, 2020

[14] http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/96781425483120443/involuntary-resettlement-portfolio-reviewphase2.pdf last visited on 25th August, 2020 Bio Profile of the Author: Assistant Professor School of Law Brainware University Barasat, West Bengal mailtoparamita84@gmail.com

Bio Profile of the Author:

Assistant Professor
School of Law
Brainware University Barasat, West Bengal
Email: paramita84@gmail.com

Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner: An Insight into NCF-2005, NCFTE-2009 and NEP-2020

Nilay Mondal[1] & K. N. Chattopadhyay[2]

Abstract

This article analyses the inclusion of reflective teaching practice in the national education policy and curriculum framework and puts major emphasis on the significance and different ways and activities of reflective teaching practice. Reflective teaching practice is a process by which instructors evaluate their instruction in the classroom by revisiting and reassessing their own teaching practices to make better their instructional practices and enhance students' learning. This is a conceptual research work based on document analysis. The researcher includes three important documents on teacher education, i.e., NCF-2005, NCFTE-2005, and NPST for NEP-2020. The analysis summarises that NCF-2005 emphasizes daily, weekly, and monthly reflection for teachers, emphasizing self-reflection during in-service. NCFTE-2009 promotes reflective practices, recommending process-based curriculum, meaningful school internships, and reflective journal writing. The latest Indian framework, NPST, includes four stages of professional development with specific criteria for reflection, promoting reflective practice among teachers.

Keywords: *Reflective practice, NCF-2005, NCFTE-2009, National Professional Standard for Teachers (NPST), NEP-2020*

Introduction

In each teacher education programme, reflective practice is an extremely important component. Engaging in reflective practice is crucial in strengthening the overall competence of teachers (Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021). Reflective practice enhances the professional development of teachers (Mathew *et al.*, 2017). A high-quality education is dependent on the quality of the teaching staff. Therefore, teachers' reflective teaching practice is very essential for quality teacher education programmes as well as quality education.

Currently, the practice of reflective teaching is widely encouraged. As our education system is dynamic, the teacher needs to be ready to adapt to these changing environments and in this respect reflective practice can play a significant role in tackling these changing and challenging situations

(Machost & Stains, 2023). There are some practical strategies for reflective practices for teachers like writing reflective journals, lesson recording, feedback from teacher educators, peers and students, action research, and collaborative learning (Mathew *et al.*, 2017). Impedovo and Malik (2016) conducted a study on the practical application of reflection in the classroom and they found colleagues' feedback was an important strategy of reflection. Saif and Safder (2023) conducted a qualitative case study of teacher educators. They found that participants were widely engaged with different strategies of reflective practice to improve classrooms. The participants mostly used students' feedback, colleagues' support, and self-assessment as strategies of reflection. Another study was conducted by Harford and MacRuairc (2008) on reflective practice among student-teachers. The findings revealed that the student-teachers recognized peer-videoing as a powerful instrument for reflection. Faghihi and Sarab (2016) conducted a mixed-method study on Iranian English teachers and they found teachers' scores on the reflective practice scale were low. The qualitative result also showed that institutional arrangement was the main concern for reflection.

In India too, the implications of reflective practice have been given special importance in teacher education programmes as well as policies. Reflection or reflective practice is mentioned in almost every framework or document related to teacher education programmes as an important criterion or indicator of quality teaching. The researchers analyze the inclusion of reflective practice in the national framework of teacher education. In this article, the researcher includes three important documents: the "*National Curricular Framework-2005"* (NCF-2005), "*National Curricular Framework for Teacher Education-2009" (*NCFTE-2009) and *"National Education Policy-2020"* (NEP-2020). As NEP -2020 specially mentioned "*National Professional Standard for Teachers"* (NPST) as a draft for teacher education, the researchers considered this for the present analysis (NEP-2020, para 5.20). The objectives of this article are to analyze how much importance is given to reflection on these frameworks and what the different ways of reflection for teachers are mentioned there.

Concept of Reflective Teaching Practice

The discipline of reflective practice has garnered significant attention in professional and scholarly circles for several decades. With the push for more professionalization in teaching and teacher education in the 1980s, the idea of reflection and reflective teaching became more common (Farrell, 1999). The beginnings of this can be attributed to the pioneering contributions of Dewey, who explored the intricate processes of thinking and reflection within the context of teaching (Dewey, 1910; 1916). Subsequently, Donald Schön (1983; 1987) furthered the investigation of reflective practice and developed models that strengthened the theoretical basis (Nadhreen, 2020). Throughout the subsequent years, numerous scholars investigated, expanded, and questioned the concept of reflective practice (Glasswell & Ryan, 2017, p. 4).

It's more likely to make things more confusing than clear to try to find a single meaning for

reflective teaching practice. John Dewey (1933, p. 9) defined reflection as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends." According to Dahal (2013), "reflection is a way of observing evaluating and reflecting on one's own actions in order to bring about change in practice. It involves thinking about and critically analyzing one's actions with the goal of improving professional practice." Zeichner and Liston (1996) mentioned that "a teacher cannot be said to be practicing reflective teaching activities if they do not question the values and philosophy that guide their work as well as the presumptions they have about teaching and learning."

Reflective teaching generally refers to a procedure by which instructors evaluate the efficacy of their instruction in the classroom by revisiting and reassessing their own teaching practices.

Benefits of Reflective Teaching

Reflective practice serves as a mechanism through which educators can enhance their professional performance in order to address the educational requirements of their students adequately. According to Brookfield (2017), reflective practice offers several benefits to educators. These are explained below:

- Reflective practice helps teachers to take informed actions. "By informed actions I mean those that are based on assumptions that have been carefully and critically investigated. Informed actions can be explained and justified to interested colleagues and students and their rationale can be clearly communicated." (Brookfield, 2017).
- It provides a rationale to teachers for teaching practice. A pedagogical gyroscope acts in a manner very similar to having a rationale that is composed of your fundamental ideas and working assumptions. It assists you in making judgments in challenging circumstances and stabilizes you in times when you feel as though you are being swept away by forces over which you have no control.
- Teaching in the twenty-first century is like riding a roller coaster. Teachers faced various difficulties in teaching larger classes, managing a diverse group of students and controlling the multicultural and multiracial communities. Reflective teaching helps teachers to handle the emotional roller coaster.
- Self-laceration is common among teachers who strive for excellence. If pupils appear to be struggling, they may quickly blame themselves. Brookfield mentioned that reflective teaching practice helps to avoid self-laceration.
- Another important benefit of reflective practices is they enliven the teaching-learning process. Here, teachers give more opportunities for engagement to the students in the classrooms. So, students also think critically.

- Teachers' reflective practices promote democratic impulse in the classroom. "when you show students how you're constantly checking out your own assumptions and looking at your practice through the four lenses you have available, you're modeling a commitment to democracy for them." (Brookfield, 2017, p. 93).
- Smith, G. (2023) mentioned five benefits of reflective teaching practices. These are as follows:
- Reflective practice makes your lesson plans better.
- Reflective practice can help teachers break out of a teaching rut.
- It motivates a teacher to do something new in their teaching practices.
- Reflective teaching practices are a significant component of continuous professional development.
- Teachers get opportunities to share their experiences.

Methodology

Document Analysis:

Document analysis is one of the essential qualitative research methods. According to G. A. Bowen (2009), "Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material." "Document analysis is a method of systematic examination of communication or of current records or documents." (Singh, A. K., 2021, p. 280).

This strategy places primary emphasis on the contents of documents that have been prepared for the aim of analytic inter-textual analysis. The document analysis process frequently includes both content analysis and thematic analysis as practical components. (Higgins & Goodall, 2021, p. 3-4).

Selection of Documents

The documents that we looked at for this analysis were as follows: "*National Curriculum Framework-2005"* (NCF-2005), "*National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education"* (NCFTE-2009), and "*National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST")* draft for NEP-2020 as it mentioned (NEP-2020, para. 5.20). These draft or frameworks were included because teachers' professional standards and the teacher development programme of 21st-century India were mentioned.

Analysis

NCF-2005 and Reflective Practice

The National Curriculum Framework- 2005 (NCERT) was a significant milestone for the Indian education system. This framework has made a substantial impact on various aspects of the education system, including the teacher education programmes. Reflective teaching practice is one of the crucial

areas of teacher education programmes. Undoubtedly, this curriculum framework has also given some light on the context of reflective practice as it is now a vital element of any teacher development programme.

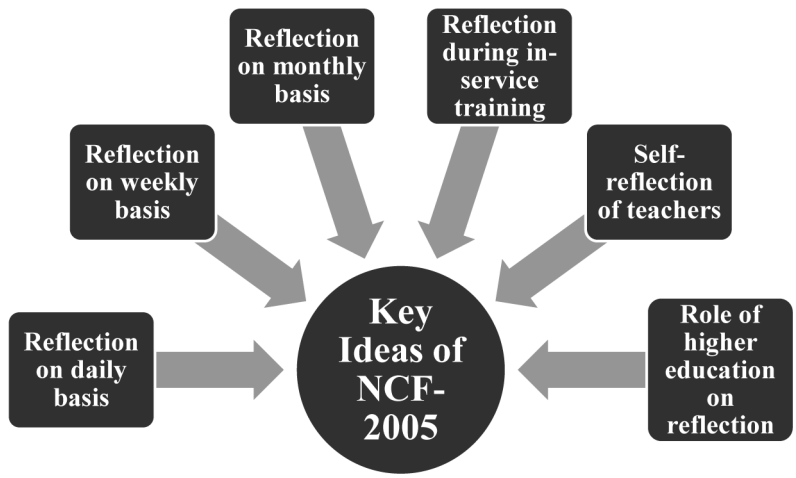


Fig. 1: Key Ideas of NCF-2005 on Reflection

- **Reflection on a Daily, Weekly and Monthly basis:**

This framework mentioned specific periods for teachers' reflection over different occasions. *"On a daily basis (at least 45 minutes) to review the day, make notes on children to follow up the next day, and organize materials for the next day's lessons (this is in addition to the time that they may need to correct homework)."(NCF-2005, p. 98-99).* So, all teachers are directed to reflect on the daily class activities for at least 45 minutes. NCF-2005 advocated time of reflection on a weekly and monthly basis also. *"On a weekly basis (at least two/three hours) to take stock of learning, to work out details of activities and projects proposed, and to plan a group of lessons (unit) for the coming week." (NCF-2005, p. 99).* Every week, teachers should reflect on their lesson activities for two or three hours and make a plan for next week. *"On a monthly/term basis (minimum of one day) to review their own work, children's learning, and map the contours of the learning activities planned for the groups they teach." (NCF-2005, p. 99).* So, a minimum of one day is necessary for teachers to reflect on their teaching to enhance student's learning. NCF-2005 clearly indicated that teachers need to follow reflective teaching practices, and it provided a precise time framework for teachers. During monthly meetings, teachers of similar subjects and classes from cluster levels share their ideas about the teaching process, and based on that, they can plan for upcoming classes. Teachers can follow the reflection during the monthly meetings.

- **Reflection during in-service training:**

"Current in-service training-related time allocation (compulsory 20 days per year) could be partly diverted towards making time available for such reviewing, reflecting and planning." (NCF-2005, p. 99). So, NCF-2005 focused on reflection during in-service teacher training also. During those compulsory 20 days, the teachers should concentrate on reviewing and reflecting on their current teaching practices and planning for future instructional processes. Reflective practice is the major component of in-service teacher training.

- **Self-reflection:**

"Self-reflection needs to be acknowledged as a vital component of such programmes." (NCF-2005, p. 112). This framework also mentioned self-reflection as an important component of in-service education or training programmes.

- **Role of higher education on reflection:**

NCF-2005 mentioned that higher education institutions also have a significant role in the teacher education programme to promote the professional status of both secondary and elementary school teachers. Also, this framework emphasizes on review and restructuring the teacher education programme. *"For the, 'reflective teacher' who possesses the professional competence and orientation that the curriculum framework rests on, it will be necessary to review and restructure teacher education programmes" (NCF-2005, p. 122). "Higher education can also provide space for reflection, discussion and debate on educational ideas and practices as well as facilitate the interface between schools and policy makers." (NCF-2005, p. 122).*

NCFTE-2009 And Reflective Practice

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009 is a document formulated by the government of India with the aim of suggesting necessary modifications and advancements for the National Council for Teacher Education. This council is an entity established by the Indian government pursuant to the National Council for Teacher Education Act 1993 and was inaugurated in 1995.

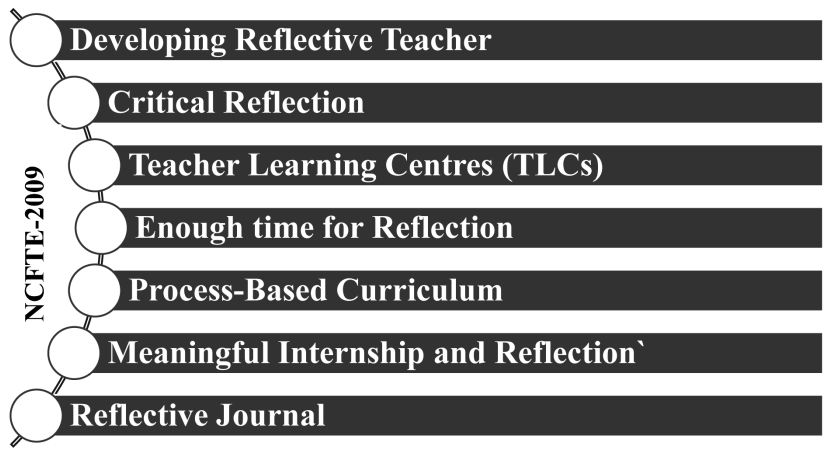


Fig. 2: Key Ideas of NCFTE-2009 on Reflection

- **Developing Reflective Teachers:**

NCFTE 2009 emphasized developing reflective teachers. A reflective teacher evaluates his or her teaching practices to improve the pedagogical practices and enhance the learning process of students. The reflective teacher poses not only cognitive or informational dimensions but also positive attitudes, values and perspectives, along with practical teaching skills. *"The implication of this is to give due emphasis to developing reflective teachers with positive attitudes, values and perspective, along with skills for the craft of teaching." (NCFTE-2009, p. 15).*

- **Teacher education as a reflective undertaking:**

NCFTE-2009 mentioned the teacher education programme as a reflective undertaking. So, we can understand the significance of reflective teaching practice in teacher education. Moreover, in the context of a pedagogical perspective, reflective practice is one of the prime elements. Another point is that reflective practice is crucial for ground-level teaching. *"Teacher education, it may be seen, is a reflective undertaking that also issues forth in pedagogical prescriptions for carrying out teaching at the ground level." (NCFTE-2009, p. 15).*

- **Critical Reflection:**

The NCFTE-2009 emphasized critical reflection of teaching practices. Critical reflection involves identifying, questioning, and assessing our assumptions about knowledge, beliefs, feelings and actions (University of Waterloo, n.d.). Teachers should constantly follow the process of reflection to update their pedagogical knowledge to meet the various needs of their learners. *"Pedagogical knowledge has to constantly undergo adaptation to meet the needs of diverse contexts through critical reflection by the teacher on his/her practices." (NCFTE-2009, p. 19-20).*

- **Opportunity to student-teachers for reflection:**

A pre-service teacher education programme is very important for developing good quality teachers. During this period, opportunities for reflection should be given to the pre-service teachers. The teacher educator should create the scope of reflective activities. *"Teacher education should provide opportunity to student-teachers for reflection and independent study without packing the training schedule with teacher-directed activities alone." (NCFTE-2009, p. 20).* NCFTE-2009 also mentioned that the curriculum should be designed carefully to foster opportunities for reflection for the student-teachers. *"Develop professional skills in pedagogy, observation, documentation, analysis and interpretation, drama, craft, story-telling and reflective inquiry." (NCFTE-2009, p. 24)*

- **Provide enough time for reflection:**

NCFTE-2009 expressed time as a critical factor in the initial teacher training programme. It mentioned that there should be a reasonable duration of time that provides enough opportunities for reflection. *"Any form of initial teacher preparation needs to be of reasonable duration that provides enough time and opportunity for self-study, reflection and involved engagement with learners" (NCFTE-2009, p. 45).* The duration of the pre-service teacher training programme after a bachelor's degree would be two years, and that provides an adequate opportunity for reflection.

- **Process-based curriculum to develop reflective teachers:**

To prepare a reflective teacher, NCFTE-2009 proposed a process-based curriculum. It was different from the dominant practice of teacher education. Teacher educators always engage student-teachers with more profound reflection. Student-teachers always maintain reflective journals. *"Teacher educators evoke responses from students to engage them with deeper discussions and reflection. Students maintain reflective journals on their observations, reflections, including conflicts" (NCFTE-2009, p. 52).* A reflective journal is one of the crucial instruments of reflective practice. It is a personal record of teachers' teaching experience. From a reflective journal, one can identify important events in the classroom and improve them. NCFTE-2009 gave special importance to reflective journals during the internship programme. *"School Internship – students teach within flexible formats, larger frames of units of study, concept web-charts and maintain a reflective journal" (NCFTE-2009, p. 52).*

- **Training to be Reflective Practitioners:**

The NCFTE-2009 recommended that student-teachers would be reflective practitioners. Moreover, in this regard, all possible training should be provided to them. There should be adequate curricular space and opportunities to observe and engage with students. It also focuses on the development of professional capacities. "*There needs to be adequate curricular space for critical content engagement and the development of professional capacities in pedagogy, ... and reflective enquiry." (NCFTE-2009, p. 54). "Professional opportunities need to include reflection on their own experiences*

.....and reflective analysis of the practice of teaching." (NCFTE-2009, p. 54). Feedback is another crucial element during the training programme. *"Availability, quality, appropriateness and sufficiency of feedback are necessary for learning to be reflective practitioners." (NCFTE-2009, p. 54).*

- **Meaningful School Internship and Reflection:**

The school internship programme is a vital phase of the pre-service teacher development programme. During this phase, a student-teacher can experience the school environment and apply their teaching methods practically. A good internship can help to prepare a reflective teacher. "*A sustained contact through internship would help teachers to choose, design, organize and conduct meaningful classroom activities, critically reflect upon their own practices through observations, record keeping and analysis and develop strategies for evaluating students' learning" (NCFTE-2009, p. 54-55).*

- **Teacher Learning Centres (TLCs):**

Another major recommendation of NCFTE-2009 was to establish Teacher-Learning Centres (TLCs). Its major functions are to provide a hands-on experience with learning materials and meeting with students. It gives opportunities for reflection. "*A TLC would be a structural space located within a teacher education institution for providing student teachers with hands-on experience with learning materials, engagement with learners and opportunities for self-reflection." (NCFTE-2009, p. 55-56).* A TLC also focuses on tasks that directly help the teacher's personal and psychological development. "*Some of the self-directed learning strategies would include finding answers to deep reflective questions; reflective reading; reflection on observations in the classroom followed by group discussion; identification of issues for further self-study; keeping reflective diaries/journals." (NCFTE-2009, p. 58).*

- **Evaluating the student-teachers and Reflection:**

Evaluation of the progress of the would-be teachers is very important for the success of the teacher education programme. NCFTE-2009 mentioned reflection as a crucial element of evaluation. From the perspective of the learner, student-teachers are able to do "*reflection on issues regarding students' learning, expressions, creativity, discipline, influence of varying contexts." (NCFTE-2009, p. 60).* Another aspect is mentioned from the perspective of post-contact discussion report writing: *"Quality of discussions, insights, analysis, reflections." (NCFTE-2009, p. 60).* Students are also assessed based on their reflection during internship activities. *"Observing and reflecting on classroom practices, ... records of planned units of study and regular daily diary/journal of reflections" (NCFTE-2009, p. 60).*

- **Reflective Journal:**

Reflective journals are personal notes or records of teachers about what happened during the process of teaching in the classroom. In a reflective journal, a practitioner puts his or her ideas, thoughts, feelings, and reflections about his or her teaching (Göker, S., 2016). With the help of a reflective

journal, we can evaluate the progress of student-teachers. NCFTE-2009 gave special emphasis on reflective journals. "*Each intern would be expected to keep a reflective journal that would help him/her revisit his/her experiences in the classroom over the period of internship." (NCFTE-2009, p. 61)*. The content of a reflective journal is also discussed here. "*Evaluation of the journal would mean looking at how the intern has been able to gradually move towards writing reflections rather than merely describing classroom events and processes." (NCFTE-2009, p. 61)*.

NEP 2020 and Reflective Practice

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) is the latest education policy and the first policy of 21st-century India. It is a comprehensive policy that covers all aspects of education. Reflective teaching practices are related to teacher education programmes. NEP 2020 mentioned that the NCTE will form the "*National Professional Standard for Teachers".*

The NCTE produced the draft "National Professional Standard for Teachers" to guarantee the excellence of teacher education in the Indian Education System. This draft has established various requirements that align with the fundamental concepts outlined in the NEP 2020. These professional characteristics are essential for an efficient teaching-learning system. The professional standards aim to ensure that teachers at all levels of education possess a high level of competence, have received professional training, and are deeply passionate about their work.

This draft has identified four categories of teachers based on their performance criteria: Beginner teacher, Proficient teacher, Expert teacher, and Lead teacher. In this context, reflection is recognized as a sub-domain of professional development, where various performance criteria are delineated based on the specific types of teachers.

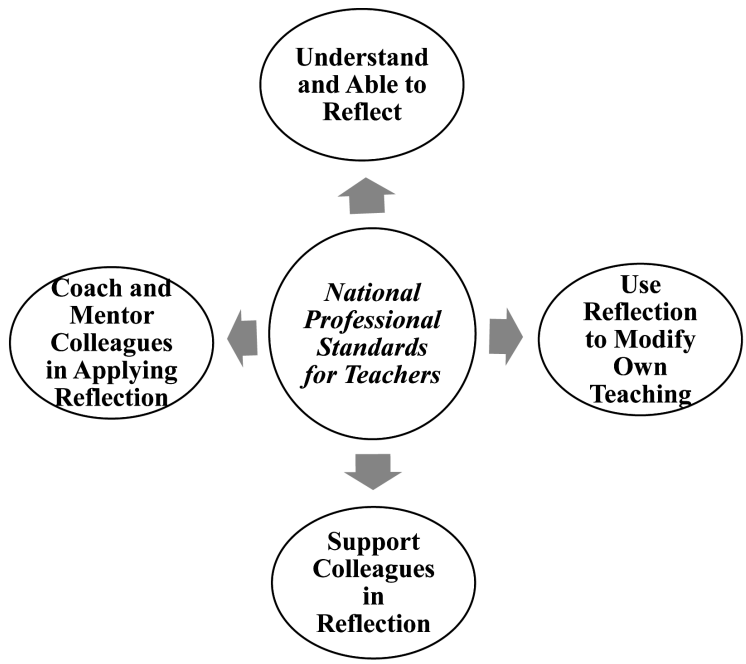


Fig.3: Key Ideas of NPST on Reflection

A beginner teacher has only begun to comprehend the idea and procedure of reflection, and gradually, he or she is able to reflect on his or her own work in actual scenarios. *"Demonstrate understanding of reflective practices and able to reflect on own work" (p.41)*

The next stage of the teaching career is becoming a proficient teacher. Here, the performance/ criteria of a proficient teacher not only reflect their teaching but also, they can able to modify their teaching practice according to learning needs or situations. *"Use reflective practices to modify own teaching practice" (p.41).*

The third stage of teachers' professional development is Expert teacher. Here, the National Professional Standards for Teaching (NPST) has emphasized the ways in which instructors may support their colleagues in reflective practice. It is, therefore, necessary for him or her to assist his or her colleagues in the process of reflective practice because he or she is an expert educator. *"Support colleagues in reflecting on their teaching practice to improve teaching and learning" (p.41).*

The final stage of teachers' professional development is Lead teacher. Lead teachers are the teachers with the highest level of expertise. They have already completed the previous three performances. Here, the professors assume the roles of coaches or mentors. They assist their coworkers in implementing reflective practice in actual or pragmatic scenarios. *"Coach and mentor colleagues in applying reflective practices." (p.41).*

Discussion and Conclusion

This analysis of the position of reflective practice within the frameworks and documents pertaining to teacher education in India shows that, across all of these documents and frameworks, reflection is regarded as an essential component for enhancing the quality of instruction. Ideally, reflective teaching is a process by which instructors evaluate the efficacy of their instruction in the classroom by revisiting and reassessing their own teaching practices to improve their teaching and enhance students' learning. The implications of reflective practice in teacher education programs are very important and gradually we will find its more significance in the near future. Not only in the Indian educational policy framework, but the teachers' reflection is also a mandatory professional standard in many developed countries like the USA, Australia, Singapore, Scotland, England, and New Zealand. Different policy documents related to teacher education in these countries encourage teachers to practice reflective teaching in various ways (Glasswell & Ryan, 2017). Reflective practice improves the quality of both pre-service and in-service training programmes. Pre-service teachers can utilize reflective practice to improve their classroom activities, effective lesson planning and behavioural management, whereas professional development is one of the major areas for in-service teachers (Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021).

In our discussion, we found that NCF-2005 specifically mentioned the time duration for reflection on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Special emphasis is given to the self-reflection of teachers during the in-service period. Moreover, it is a significant framework for reflective practice. The term reflection is widely mentioned in NCFTE-2009. It emphasized developing reflective teachers. NCFTE-2009 recommended various aspects that promote reflection among preservice as well as in-service teachers. Among them, process-based curriculum is one of the major areas. It also mentioned a meaningful school internship programme, which assists the student-teacher in reflection. Writing a reflective journal is another major activity that would develop a reflective mindset among teachers. NPST, prepared by NCTE, is the latest Indian framework of teacher education. It also emphasized the reflective practice of teachers. It includes four stages of teachers' professional development, and each stage has specific criteria for reflection. To sum up, it is found that reflective practice is essential for teacher education programmes and these curricular frameworks or drafts gave special emphasis on it.

References

- Bowen, G. A. 2009. 'Document analysis as a qualitative research method'. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*(2), 27-40. https://doi.org/10.3316/qrj0902027
- Brookfield, S. D. 2017. *Becoming a critically reflective teacher* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- *Critical reflection | Writing and communication centre*. (n.d.). University of Waterloo. Retrieved November 16, 2023, from https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/critical-reflection

- Dahal, H. N. 2013. *Reflective Practices by English Language Teachers* [Master's thesis]. https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/bitstream/123456789/13444/1/Full%20Thesis.pdf
- Davut Göker, S. 2016. 'Use of reflective Journals in development of teachers' leadership and teaching skills'. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *4*(12A), 63-70. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.041309
- Dewey, J. 1933. *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. DC Heath and Company, Boston.
- Dewey, J. 1910. *How we think.* New York: D.C. Heath. Retrieved from https://archive.org/stream/howwethink000838mbp#page/n25/mode/1up
- Dewey, J. 1916. *Democracy and education.* Wikisource. Retrieved from https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Democracy_and_Education
- Faghihi, G. & Sarab, M. R. 2016. 'Teachers as a reflective practitioners: A survey on Iranian English teachers' reflective practice'. *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills (JTLS)*, *7*(4), 57-86.
- Farrell, T. 1999. Understanding reflective teaching. *Teaching and Learning*, *19*(2), 52-63.
- Glasswell, K. & Ryan, J. 2017. Reflective Practice in Teacher Professional Standards: Reflection as Mandatory Practice. In *Reflective Theory and Practice in Teacher Education, Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (pp. 3-26). Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
- Harford, J. & MacRuairc, G. 2008. 'Engaging student teachers in meaningful reflective practice'. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *24*(7), 1884-1892. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.02.010
- Higgins, J., & Goodall, S. 2021. 'Transforming the wellbeing focus in education: A document analysis of policy in Aotearoa New Zealand'. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, *16*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.13697518.v1
- Impedovo, M. A. & Malik, S. F. 2016. 'Becoming a reflective in-service teacher: Role of research attitude'. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *41*(1). https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n1.6
- Machost, H. & Stains, M. 2023. 'Reflective practices in education: A primer for practitioners'. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, *22*(2). https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.22-07-0148
- Mathew, P., Mathew, P., & Peechattu, P. J. (2017). 'Reflective Practice: A Means to Teacher Development'. *Asia Pacific Journal of Contemporary Education and Communication Technology (APJCECT)*, *3*(1), 126-131.
- Mathew, P., Mathew, P. & Peechattu, P. J. 2017. Reflective practices: A means to teacher development. *Asia Pacific Journal of Contemporary Education and Communication Technology (APJCECT)*, *3*(1), 126-131.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Human Resource Development. https://www.education.

gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

- Nadhreen, B. M. 2020. *An Evaluation of Reflective Practice as Experienced by TESOL Teachers in a Saudi Academic Institution* [Doctoral dissertation]. https://hull-repository.worktribe.com/OutputFile/4222881
- National Council for Teacher Education. 2009. *National curriculum framework for teacher education 2009*. NCTE. https://ncte.gov.in/Website/PDF/NCFTE_2009.pdf
- National Council for Teacher Education. 2021. *National professional standards for teachers*. NCTE. https://ncte.gov.in/WebAdminFiles/PublicNotice/Hindi_0_17_11_2021_6377274822 81976435.pdf
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. 2005. *National curriculum framework 2005*. NCERT. http://www.ncert.nic.in/rightside/links/pdf/framework/english/nf2005.pdf
- Saif, S. & Safdar, S. 2023. 'Maximising professional growth: A case study exploring reflective practices of teacher educators'. *Global Educational Studies Review*, *VIII*(I), 410-424. https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2023(viii-i).36
- Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action.* New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Schön, D. A. 1987. *Educating the reflective practitioner: Towards a new design for teaching and learning in the profession*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Singh, A. K. 2019. *Tests, measurements and research methods in behavioural sciences* (6th ed.). Bharti Bhawan.
- Smith, G. 2023, June 15. *What is reflective teaching and why is it important?* Bridge Universe - TEFL Blog, News, Tips & Resources. Retrieved November 19, 2023, from https://bridge.edu/tefl/blog/reflective-teaching/
- Suphasri, P. & Chinokul, S. 2021. 'Reflective Practice in Teacher Education: Issues, Challenges, and Considerations'. *PASAA*, *62*, 236-264.
- Zeichner, K. M. & Liston, D. P. 1996. *Reflective teaching: An introduction*. Routledge.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1]Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Education, The University of Burdwan
Golapbag, Purba Bardhaman, 713104, West Bengal, India
Email: nilaymondal433@gmail.com
&
[2]Professor, Department of Education, The University of Burdwan
Golapbag, Purba Bardhaman, 713104, West Bengal, India
Email: kchattopadhyay@edu.buruniv.ac.in

Institution-building Process in the Development of Multidisciplinary Institutions (MDI)

Mohammad Asif [1] & Yeasmin Sultana[2]

Abstract

NEP 2020 and subsequent guidelines from UGC on transforming higher education into multidisciplinary institutions have mandated the establishment of multidisciplinary institutions across Indian state/ districts by 2030. Agreeing with the view that the NEP 2020 recommendation and the Guidelines are prepared on a positive note, scrutiny of these points highlights several challenges on the way to implementing guidelines into practice. There are two major challenges pointed out by the researchers in this paper. The first one is regarding the nature of institutions. 'Institution' is not a well-recognised and emphasized idea in the academic circle in Indian context while studying higher education especially in relation to multidisciplinary institutions. The second issue analyzed here belongs to the domain of institution building process. It is argued that the concept of institution building is practiced in a half-hearted manner. It is seen more as an exercise of developing institutional infrastructure and other visible and tangible aspects in the name of institution building, but the academic process is not given due weightage. Researchers suggest that to materialize the dream of transforming higher education institutions into multidisciplinary institutions, the process of institution building must be focused.

Keywords: *Multidisciplinary Institutions, Higher Education Institutions, NEP2020*

Introduction

National level Policy document (NEP, 2020) and subsequent detailed guidelines brought by UGC (2022) advocated the establishment of multidisciplinary institutions across the districts by 2030. It will involve converting the existing stand-alone single-stream specialized institutions into interdisciplinary institutions. It is a welcome move but a daunting task. Establishing new multidisciplinary institutions and transforming existing institutions into multidisciplinary institutions are pertinent concerns in institution building. Understanding how institution-building takes place and operates within the institution will be the first step towards visualizing the multi-disciplinary landscape of Indian higher education in 2030, the date NEP 2020 has set to establish at least one multidisciplinary institution in almost every district of the Indian state. (10.7. NEP 2020: 35)

The present world is organizationally oriented and these "organizations fill our world" (Cawsey et al. 2015: 5). If one notices happenings in their surroundings, everyone will find themselves surrounded by many organizations and institutions. It is a matter of routine requirements that humans engage and interact with so many institutions daily. Even our identity got intertwined with institutional identity (Ramarajan, 2014: 589). That is why humans are characterized as organizational beings. One should not feel surprised by this characterization as humans are shaped under the influence of a widespread organizational network. It is also a common observation that individuals who become members of some organizations and institutions hold the same views and perspectives as the organization and institutions may hold and promote. This is one of the reasons that explain how individuals' identities evolve under the aegis of institutional identity. Individual identity is well connected nowadays with institutional affiliation.

Institutions have a deep-rooted impact and influence on the human psyche. Institutions including educational ones are capable enough to structure social relationships and behavior. Their influences are not limited to the physical boundaries of the institution, but they grow and transcend the four walls of the institution and organizations. These influences are far-reaching and encompass all experiences, ranging from communication, interaction, social relationships, personal, and professional behavior.

Institutional building, used as a framework to understand higher education, offers a rich and significant insight. It explores the institution-building processes involved in making and sustaining these institutions. Institution building is about creating sustainable organizations which overtime continue to be guided by the mission and vision and have an abiding value (Karlo & Sharma, 2016:192-202). However, this approach has not received due attention from scholars and researchers, especially in the Indian context. There are few studies here and there, but in general, silence seems to be prevalent among Indian academia to conceptualize higher education organizations as institutions and understand the far-reaching implications of this notion. The lack of institutional perspective regarding higher education in the Indian context is a big gap. This realization has encouraged the authors of this paper to understand and analyze the NEP 2020 recommendations and UGC guidelines on the development of multidisciplinary institutions and fit these ideas into the prism of institution building.

NEPs Intent to Transform Higher Education Institution into Multidisciplinary Institutions

NEP 2020 ushers in a policy shift after a gap of around 30 years. It tries to address the issues of the present time. The recommendations provided by the document span from pre-primary to higher education institutions. At each level, some very drastic measures were suggested. One of them about higher education is to follow and adopt the multidisciplinary approach in higher education (Kumar, 2022: 6557-6561).

A Multidisciplinary Institution (MI) is defined as'an institution where courses are offered and research is carried out in all disciplines and streams such as science, technology, social science,

humanities, professional disciplines, and vocational education under a single institutional framework and governance and management. It is intended to provide holistic and multidisciplinary competencies for students by promoting flexibility to choose courses from diverse disciplines according to their interests and to promote research beyond the rigid boundaries set by disciplines (NIEPA, 2020:113).

Policymakers believe that the world is facing so many challenges now and that the most effective solutions may not come from one single disciplinary background. Issues have grown bigger and deeper, and they need to be analyzed comprehensively and in totality. The issues of environment, water crisis, sustainable development goals, and especially the challenges of education may not be addressed from one single frame of knowledge and skills. The situation demands that shared focus emerging from the plurality of disciplinary knowledge and skills should deal with these challenges of modern times. This is a multi-disciplinary approach based on a diverse set of perspectives. Also, students who are future citizens and nation builders cannot be productive enough by getting trained in a limited disciplinary approach. Considering these factors, NEP 2020 proposed multi-disciplinary programs to be included in higher education institutions. Reflecting on ground reality a 2020 NIEPA document mentions that'There are many colleges which are single discipline colleges such as Medical, Dental, physically handicapped, Ayurveda, Nursing, Home Economics, Teacher Education and Business Studies institutes. For multidisciplinary research and teaching purposes, single-discipline colleges will have to be merged with the university (NIEPA, 2020: 116).

The 4-year integrated program is a step in this direction. It was observed by the committee members of NEP 2020 that many stand-alone and specialized institutions exist in the country that are not equipped with the necessary disciplinary departments and operational facilities to offer multidisciplinary programs. In such cases, the policy has given a call to transform all these single-stream standalone specialized institutions into multidisciplinary institutions besides creating and establishing multidisciplinary institutions in each district of India by 2030, including newly created and transformed institutions.

The call to transform and establish multidisciplinary institutions is a part of the larger scheme of total transformation and overhauling of Indian high education institutions. This re-orientation is suggested to take place in a time-bound but phased manner. The process of transformation has begun already, and news has started coming from different corners of the country about implementing 4-year integrated programs and converting existing institutions into multi-disciplinary institutions. The instances where IITs have started 4-year integrated B. Ed. program, is one of the examples. This process will go through different phases and forms, such as the creation, establishment, structuring, transformation, and development of educational institutions.

As at the center of this major change is multidisciplinarity, one may find it relevant to address this idea before the discussion moves to the next part. Multidisciplinary education is an academic and pedagogical approach to developing multiple capacities in the intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical,

emotional, and moral domains, among the students inside and outside the classroom, by integrating formal and informal learning opportunities and teaching, research, and community engagements and promoting cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives and academic practice' (NIEPA,2022: 114). Multidisciplinarity brings together, combines, and integrates multiple disciplines as the name itself indicates. Research methodology, analysis, data, content, and so many other aspects can be integrated to get a wider perspective on certain pressing issues. Scholars from across the disciplines can collaborate on matters of prime importance, whether they are academic or pragmatic in nature. Scholars with distinct disciplinary backgrounds will be able to share their expertise and perspectives and will evolve shared approaches to solve real-life, complex, and contemporary issues in hand. The diverse perspectives on given issues have more reasons to be successful in addressing the brutal challenges of the time. Multidisciplinarity brings diverse perspectives on issues and most prominently, it questions the persisting academic silos among different departments and disciplines that have the potential to open new windows to unseen worlds and ideas. Multidisciplinarity in a big way pushes to end the disciplinary fragmentation so that the focus on the challenges of real-life issues can be sharper. Multidisciplinarity brings diverse perspectives on issues and most prominently, it questions the persisting academic silos among different departments and disciplines that have the potential to open new windows to unseen worlds and ideas. Multidisciplinarity in a big way pushes to end the disciplinary fragmentation so that the focus on the challenges of real-life issues can be sharper (Chai & Pak 2008:351-365)

The trend to adopt a multidisciplinary approach and transform specialized institutions into multi-disciplinary institutions is not a new idea, though it should be well recognized that NEP 2020 has made a significant push in this direction and made it a part of one of the major recommendations. Scholars around the world have woken up to the need for multidisciplinarity for a long, especially since the beginning of the 21st century (Kasturirangan, 2022). Some very relevant projects were taken, and studies were conducted because of this shared multidisciplinary approach. At the same time, institutions have started moving in the direction of transforming themselves into multidisciplinary institutions. For example, even before NEP was adopted and implemented, many technical and specialized institutions in the country started embracing different disciplines and other non-core disciplines. For example, IITs had departments of humanities and social sciences as well as management before NEP 2020 called for it. Highlighting this fact in no way undermines the value of work done by NEP 2020 or takes away credit from NEP for its bold call to transform all higher education institutions into multidisciplinary institutions. Institutions have already started to follow footsteps like IIT Delhi takes multiple initiatives towards implementing NEP 2020.

The model of multidisciplinary programs advanced by NEP 2020 is characterized by flexibility with special reference to curriculum. It offers options for multiple entry and exit. Students can continue the learning process while working in a real-life situation after taking exit from the course. It was also made feasible that the students can earn credits in online and offline mode/ plurality of modes and

these credits can be easily transferred from one institution to another where students want to shift through academic bank credits.

Critical Reflection: Is the Target Ambitious?

The call for introducing multi-disciplinary programs and institutions is not new but it is institutionalized on a notable scale with the NEP 2020 which advocated for a complete shift towards the multi-disciplinary institutions. There is no doubt about the relevance of this recommendation, but a host of factors play their roles between the intention and execution. It is argued that any target and the deadline must be accommodative of enabling factors as well as distracting factors that will crucially determine the feasibility of reaching the target on time. Some of the factors that will play a crucial role (which will be discussed in detail in the next section) include handholding and capacity-building of the stakeholders, including teachers and leaders who are required to play the role of institution builders.

The experience, if considered in any way a precedent of the future, suggests something different. The National Knowledge Commission ignited academic consciousness in 2009 when it said that the nation would create 1500 universities in India by the end of 2015 (NKC,2009: 14). It is to everyone's eyes that the target could not be met. Not being able to reach the defined target is a question mark to the credibility of promises, but that is not the only issue. The major problem is about the quality. Many institutions that are created at any given time lack the quality and element of sustainability; they are more visible in terms of infrastructure and less known in terms of academic excellence. Educational institutions should be the embodiment of the quality and characteristics that are meant for them. They should follow the due process and not only the tag of higher education institutions that they carry. In this light, when the projection made by NEP 2020 about the creation of multi-disciplinary institutions in each district by 2030 is seen, it looks ambitious though the target is appreciated. It requires structural institutional changes and supports to Institutions and teachers in this transition journey. Certain factors can make it happen, but they need to be well taken care of. That's why it demands scrutiny and analysis.

It is also worth mentioning that review is needed periodically to assess the progress internally at the institutional level as well as the national level regarding institution building. This monitoring may help to fix issues at various levels that arise during the implementation beforehand. The concern becomes significant at a time when the tendency is growing where colleges to be upgraded as universities just by changing the nomenclature without providing any meaningful support to them to grow as institutions. Such cases are reported in the media in alarming numbers.

Roadmap for the Transformation of HEI into MDI and UGC Guidelines

Transformation of higher education which is the main theme of this document simply suggests that some broad moves are awaiting on the path to transformation. The first among the major steps

vouched by the guideline is to characterize the single-stream stand-alone and specialized institution as multidisciplinary institutions that will offer broad-based and holistic education. This proposition has large implications for the nature and character of higher education institutions. This transformative measure paves ways to enhance institutional capacity to provide a platform for different disciplines to come together and offer multidisciplinary programs.

Some ways are suggested in the guidelines as per NEP 2020 recommendations which will facilitate the structural organizational, institutional, and procedural changes to realize the demand for multidisciplinary education keeping in mind the existing reality on the ground. It is suggested that those stand-alone, single-stream, and specialized institutions that are not in a position structurally to run multi-disciplinary programs should be merged with multidisciplinary institutions. It seems a practical suggestion because all such institutions may not be able to develop themselves in each time as multidisciplinary institutions due to financial, logical, and infrastructure limitations.

Another crucial step in this direction is engagement in the exercise of creating and adding new departments to materialize the cause of multi-disciplinary departments that will offer academic programs in multidisciplinary areas. Guidelines also aptly take the attention towards the serious engagement/ business of academic collaboration. Collaboration among institutions, scholars, faculty members, and administrative units will result in pooling the resources both in the forms of human and materialistic resources. Faculty and institutional expertise in respective areas, which remain many times underutilized within the four walls of the institution, will be shared with other institutions. Institutions can build cooperative partnerships and offer required support to each other institutions for the clusters and can engage in collaborative research for a smooth transition. In this journey of transformation, other measures include the 'student's orientation program' to make them aware of these changes such as multidisciplinarity, career opportunities, academic bank, credit, etc.

Given the vastness of the country and the complexities involved in the process of transformation, the journey towards multidisciplinary institutions must be gradual and in a phased manner. It won't look practical that all the institutions on the same day will be able to implement all the changes. The story of policy implementation in the last four years since the launch of NEP 2020 officially is a testimony to it. Looking closely at this journey towards the establishment of multi-disciplinary institutions shows that it will take three forms, processes, and approaches; they are the 'transformed' multidisciplinary institutions, 'created multidisciplinary institutions', and 'developing multidisciplinary institutions. The details are presented in the following lines.

The thrust area of the document is the transformation of higher education institutions into multidisciplinary institutions. It is to be understood that the process of transformation is instituting a shift in the life of the institution which must go through the phases of transformation. During this process, the existing institutions will be reshaped and re-oriented to suit the demands of multidisciplinarity. One can guess the existing institutions here will mean the single-stream stand-

alone and specialized institutions passing through this process. The existing institution will undergo a drastic and fundamental change in the nature and organizational character of these institutions. This will culminate in the expansion of institutions as well as impetus will be provided to move ahead of disciplinary silos and become truly multidisciplinary.

In comparison to the aspects of 'transformed' multidisciplinary institutions that work well with existing institutions, 'created' multidisciplinary institutions imply building institutions from scratch. It will lead to a new institution with a fresh mandate, organizational structure, infrastructure, and operational system. The authors would like to project the addition of new departments to the existing institution under this category. So basically 'created' multidisciplinary institutions will include both the creation of totally new institutions as well as the establishment of new departments within existing institutions. The creation of new institutions and departments may not be an easy task on any parameter, but they have the advantage of remaining free from facing the transitional resistance or cultural shock that can be recurring themes in the transformative journey of existing institutions towards new models and apparatus. Newly founded institutions and departments may consist of people who are on the same page from day one, unified and cohesive by the same mission, vision, and rigor.

Whether it is the process of transformation or creation, the next stage is always followed by the process of consolidation of what has been achieved, created, and established in previous stages. This phase can be appropriately considered as the developmental stage in the life of institutions. Institution building is not a one-time activity. The institutions that emerged out of the transformative and creation journey need continuous support, routine intervention, and regular involvement/ engagement. The institution that is newly born or transformed needs space and support for its nurturing. The developmental aspect of institution building is part of the institutional evolutionary journey. Creating and transforming institutions is one part of the institutional journey. The other aspect from a long-term point of view is the sustainability and quality of the institution. Strengthening the system and capabilities is an ongoing regular exercise. In its developmental journey, regular monitoring, evaluation of progress made, and tracking the cyclical journey of educational institutions in the light of institutional objectives and goals is a routine requirement. Another fact that must be kept in mind is that the developmental process takes place, incrementally and gradually, and it will continue for the whole life cycle of the institution- part of the total evolutionary journey.

Institution-building Process in MDI: Why focus on Institution-building?

Evaluating and assessing institutions does not take our attention beyond what is visible. The quality of institutions is equated with the manifestation of physical elements within the four walls of the higher education institutions. They may include prominent infrastructure, neatly maintained records, photos, and videos of the different events, the number of faculty recruited and their profile available on the online portal, the number of students enrolled in the institution, placement records, and research

output. Everything that can be beautifully quantified is considered as bright evidence of institution building. We tend to believe all those on their face value. This uncritically shallow attitude to accept tangibly manifested aspects as the significant milestones of institution building is questionable. These all aspects mentioned above are the outcome. The process of institution building can be seen behind the 'face value' and 'surface reading'. The institution building is a process-oriented approach. This confusion in the minds of the masses may be attributed to the fact that they may lack the analytical view about the fine distinction between processes embedded in institutions and the infrastructure that is associated with institutions. But the overall less attention paid to studying 'institution building' by Indian academia is a striking feature.

Conclusion

Educational Institutions fail for many external reasons, but a big reason is the lack on the part of internal machinery within the institutions to understand and follow the process of institution building. The machinery overlooks the principles of institution building in its evolutionary journey and establishes itself on superficial foundations. The neglect of the institution-building process in favor of fulfilling quantitative parameters is bound to lead to institutional failure. Those educational institutions that merely stand as infrastructural and architectural manifestations without appropriate alignment of their routine activities with the vision and mission and other dimensions of institution building will sink into oblivion and leave behind the legacy as mediocre institutions. The lackadaisical attitude shown by many Indian institutions toward strengthening the system on the line of institution building may accelerate their fall and they may end as degenerated institutions.

References

- Cawsey, T., Descza, G. &Ingols, C. 2015. *Organizational Change: An Action Toolkit 3e*. Sage Publication.
- Choi, B. C., & Pak, A. W. 2008. Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity in health research, services, education and policy: 3. Discipline, inter-discipline distance, and selection of discipline. *Clinical and investigative medicine. Medecineclinique et experimentale*, *31*(1), E41–E48. https://doi.org/10.25011/cim.v31i1.3140. pp351-364
- Govt. of India 2009. *National Knowledge Commission Report to the Nation 2006-2009*.
- Govt. of India 2020. *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Human Resource Development: New Delhi
- Kalro, A. H. & Sharma, E. 2016. 'Institution Building in Higher Education: IIMK& AU Experiences'. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 52 (2),* pp. 192-202
- Kalro, A., H., & Sharma, E. (2010). *Leadership in institutional building at IIM-K, Nurturing*

Institutional Excellence. Macmillan Publishing Ltd. Retrieved from https://www. researchgate. net/publication/263542011_Leadership_in_ Institution_building_at_IIMK

- Kasturirangan, K. 2022, July 07. Implementation of National Education Policy, 2020. Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Samagam: Special Address by Dr. K. Kasturirangan:07.07.22.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkelNe8sH3M&list=PLrni3waQLsoRSgYuw V4PaYVSrkUkHtqkD&index=2
- Kumar, A. 2022. 'Importance of National Education Policy-2020 In Imparting Education'. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6(2),6557-6561.*
- National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (2020). *NEP 2020: Implementation Strategies.* NIEPA: New Delhi.
- Ramarajan, L. 2014. 'Past, Present, and Future Research on Multiple Identities: Toward an Intrapersonal Network Approach'. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8:1, 589-659, DOI: 10.1080/19416520.2014.912379
- Rao, T. V., 1990. *Institution Building and Self Renewal Needs of Education Systems*. IIMA Working Papers WP1990-05-01_00942, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Research and Publication Department. Retrieved from https:// econpapers.repec.org/paper/iimiimawp/wp00942.htm
- University Grants Commission 2022. *Guidelines for Transforming Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into Multidisciplinary Institutions*. UGC: New Delhi

Bio Profile of the Author:

[1]Assistant Professor & Research Scholar,
Department of Education, Tezpur University
Email: mdasif@tezu.ernet.in

&

[2] PhD and Assistant Professor
Tezpur University, Assam
Pin-784028
Email: yeasmin85@gmail.com

Acknowledgement to the Peer Reviewers

Professor Mita Banerjee
Vice Chancellor of Kanyashree University
Nadia, West Bengal

Professor Debi Chatterjee
Retired Professor, Department of International Relations
Jadavpur University

Dr. Ranjana Banerjee
President of UWAsia; Membership and Extension officer of the National Association of Soroptimist International. Member in GWIs Fellowship Committee.

Dr. Disari Roy
Assistant Professor & Coordinator
Department of Women's Studies
Diamond Harbour Women's University

Dr. Tanusree Chakraborty
Associate Professor- Academic Delivery
Globsyn Business School

Asmita Basu
Assistant Professor
Army Institute of Management, Kolkata.

Dr. B. P Dutta
M.A. (Double), LL.M (1st. Class), Ph.D
Advocate, High Court, Calcutta

Professor Gourishankar Nag
Professor, Department of Political Science
Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University

Dr. Sanjukta Dasgupta
President, Executive Committee, Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library, Kolkata
Visiting Professor, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland (2018)
Honorary Visiting Professor, Dept. of English, Sister Nivedita University
Professor, Dept. of English (Retd.)
Former Dean, Faculty of Arts Calcutta University

Dr. Debasis Kumar Mondal, Ph.D
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Calcutta

Dr. Parama Chatterjee (Ukil)
Former Research Fellow
The Asiatic Society in Women's Studies (Prabhati Memorial),

Dr. Shubhamay Kisku
Assistant Professor Department of
Anthropology, University of Calcutta

Sucheta (Majumdar) Paul
Assistant Professor in Social Work, Professor-in-Charge,
Department of Social Work, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata.
Qualifications/Academia: M.S.W., Ph.D

Professor Joy Sen
Professor of Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Professor Samita Manna
ICSSR Senior Fellow
Department of Sociology, University of Kalyani,

Dr. G. Albin Joseph
Department of Social Work
Assam University (A Central University)

Dr.Krishnendu Roy
Assistant Professor & Head
Department of Education
Domkal Girls' College

Dr. Devalina Gopalan
Assistant Professor
The Department of English
Women's Christian College, Kolkata

Professor Pallab Sengupta
Chairman, State Resource Centre WB
Formerly President, The Asiatic Society
Formerly Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Professor in Bengali, Rabindra Bharati University

Dr. Runa Roy
Assistant Professor, Department of Economics
Goenka College of Commerce & Business Administration.

Biswajit Mahapatra, Ph.D,
Coordinator, Asian Study Centre & Associate Professor, Politics & International Relations, Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India,

Dr. Rajib Bhattacharyya,
Associate Professor in Economics,
Goenka College of Commerce and Business Administration,

Dr. Purabi Gangopadhyay
Resource Person, Japanese Language, School of Languages and Culture, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata
Joint General Secretary, Indo-Japan Welfare and Cultural Association, Kolkata.
Translator of Japanese Literature into Bengali and Essayist on the topic of Japanese Studies.

Mina Dan
Former Professor
Dept. of Linguistics
University of Calcutta

Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay
Maulana Azad Fellow, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata (An Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India)
Visiting Faculty, Presidency University, Kolkata
Guest Faculty, West Bengal State University, Barasat
Former Vivekananda Chair Professor of Social Science, University of Calcutta
Former 'Paresh Chandra Chatterjee Professor of History', Presidency University, Kolkata
Former Professor and Head, Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta

Dr. Moumita Gupta,WBES.
Assistant Professor,HOD,
Department of Anthropology,
Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam Government College

Sudeshna Lahiri, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Education, University of Calcutta

Amit Kumar Kisku
PhD (SOAS, University of London)
Professor
Department of Anthropology, Vidyasagar University

Srikanth Kondapalli
Professor in Chinese Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi,

Professor Dr. Suchitra Ray Acharyya
Retired Professor, Department of Sanskrit
University of Calcutta

Professor Anindya Jyoti Majumder
Department of International Relations
Jadavpur University

Dr. Saumitra Basu
Guest Faculty
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Education and Research Institute (Deemed University), Narendrapur,

Notes for Contributors

We accept contributions in four categories for the Journal of Kolkata Society For Asian Studies:

- Research Articles
  The original research papers submitted for consideration should not exceed 7000 words. It includes figures, charts, tables and references and excludes the abstract, key words and the bio-note of the author/s. Papers based on scientific study, review articles written in correct English and Bangla will be considered for publication.
- Research Notes:
  Informal items of topical interest (maximum 5000 words including endnotes and bibliography).
- Reports:
  Based on any survey or field study approved by any recognised University or Authorised research organization (maximum 5000 words including endnotes and references).
- Reviews of Social Science Scholarship:
  Books, Journals and other media (maximum 800 words), are also invited for reviews in the Journal.

Style Sheet for Research Article

1. Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate (hard copy) along with a softcopy. All correspondences regarding manuscripts should be submitted to:

   The Editor, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.
   Postal Address: 3/25/1, R. K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700042 Phone +91 9432490361
   Email: kspublication1@gmail.com Copy to: ksasianstudies@gmail.com

2. Manuscripts should be typed using a word-processing program like MS.
   Word with .doc/.rtf extension and also in pdf. format. Type the manuscript on one side of the paper. Leave double space between the lines, extra space between the sections and keep 1 inch (2.54 cm.) margins on all four sides of the paper.

3. Abstract should be provided before the article.

4. The number of Key Words should be up to 10.
5. The contributor's affiliations and his/her complete mailing address must be given at the end of the manuscript.
6. Endnotes should follow numerical order. Try to avoid footnotes.
7. As the journal will be mainly printed in Black, the authors are requested to make the charts, graphs and tables using Black and White combination only.
8. The references should be like:
   i. Embedded references (Phillipson 1992: 144)
   ii. Multiple references placed in alphabetical order '(Ellis 1994:10; Lenneberg 1967: 7; Pinker 1994: 54)'
   iii. Multiple references of the same author published in the same year arranged serially '(Pattanayak 2000a, 2000b)'

The detailed style of referencing follows:

a. Books:

Wirsing, G. 1972. Indian Experiment: Key to Asia's Future. Calcutta: Orient Longman.
Liu, J., H. A. Ross and D.P. Kelly. 2000. The Ethnographic Eye: An Interpretative Study of Education in China. New York : Falmer Press.

b. Articles in Edited Volumes:

Atkinson, J. M. 1987. Religions in Dialogue: The Construction of an Indonesian Minority Religion. In: R.S. Kipp and S. Rodgers (eds.), Indonesian Religions in Transition.
pp. 171-86. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

c. Articles in Journals:

Sonntag, S. K. 1996. 'The Political Saliency of Language in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh',
Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, 34 (2): 1-18.

d. Edited and Translated Volumes:

Zakaria, H. A. and H. A. Crouch (eds.). 1985. Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
Becker, C. 1923. Early History of the Catholic Missions in Northeast India (1598-1890), edited and translated by F. Leicht and S Karotemprel. 1989. Shillong: Vendrame.

e. Unpublished Works:

Kurasawa, A. I. 1988. 'Mobilization and Control: A Study of Social Change in Rural Java, 1942-1945.' (2 vols.)
Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Ithaca: Cornell University.
Mullins, D. 2001. 'Land reform, poverty reduction and HIV/AIDS'. Paper presented at the Southern African Regional Poverty Network conference on Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation in the Region, Pretoria, 12-14, March.

f. Primary Source Citations:

The location of the archive (the name of the town/village/city) and the country must be mentioned. Materials from personal archive should contain the name and location of the collector. If an audio/ audiovisual material is being used, the date/time and location of the recordings should be specified.

g. Website Citation:

http://en.mastersinleiden.nl/programmes/history-arts-and-culture-of- asia/en/introduction (accessed/ retrieved/updated on 5th May 2014)

Other specifications:

i. Use double quotation marks where necessary. Single quotation marks should be used only for a quotation within a quotation.
ii. In the text, the words from a regional language other than English which appear in a commonly used dictionary must be italicized. Proper names from all the countries and terms like 'et al.', 'ibid.', 'vis-a-vis' etc. should be written in Roman alphabet.
iii. A stop should be used after abbreviations ('ed.','vol.' etc.), contractions ('Dr.', 'Prof.' etc.) and between initials (as in 'J.S. Karan'). Do not use a stop in a contraction in capital ('UNESCO', 'USA' etc.).
iv. In the text, the numbers from one to nine should be in words rather than figures. However, 10 and above can remain in figures. Use 'thousands' and 'millions', avoid 'crores' and 'lakhs'. Dates and page numbers should be in full forms (like '2002-2007' and 'pp.125-127').
v. Attach each figure and table on a separate sheet of paper at the end of the article and arrange them serially. The titles should be short and crisp.
vi. Figures, tables, charts, graphs or photographs reproduced from any other source must obtain Copyright permission before reproduction.
vii. Diacritical marks should be consistent.

Glosses and Translations of Examples:

1. Language specific examples must be provided in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) or in Roman alphabet.
2. Examples from various languages other than English should be translated. Some examples may require a translation along with a word-for-word or morpheme-by- morpheme gloss.
3. The translation and the gloss should be placed under the example with proper indentation and alignment (in case of word-for-word or morpheme-by-morpheme gloss).
4. The grammatical categories in a gloss must be abbreviated
   For example,
   a) ad͡ʒ̵nek br.ʃ̺i hoye ʧ̺he.
      today lot rain be-pr.pf.3rd
      'Today there was heavy shower.'
   b) boneder ʧ̺hobi.
      sister-gen.pl. picture
      'Sisters' picture.'
5. The abbreviations must be given in a separate list.
   The paper/s submitted for consideration should not have been published before or under consideration for publication, anywhere in any language. The work must be approved by its author and the co-authors and also by the authorities of the place where the research was done. If the paper is accepted for publication in the present journal, it must not be published anywhere in any language without the proper written consent of the copyright holder.

For Papers in Bangla

The same style sheet should be followed for papers written in the Bangla language. Bangla font 'Avro' 'Kalpurush & Unicode' is preferred.

Off Prints: The first author of each paper will receive 5 off prints free of cost.

Notifications

This is to inform you that the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies accepts newly published book for its Review section.

The authors, who wish to get their books reviewed, should submit their books both in hard copy and soft copy. In absence of soft copy, the hard copy needs to be submitted in duplicate.

It is essential to submit the book with a covering letter clearly mentioning the purpose of submission. Kindly note that the book submitted for review will not be returned to the Author.

Kindly send the hard copies of the book to the following address: The Editor, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.

Postal Address:
3/25/1, R. K. Chatterjee Road,
Kolkata 700042
Phone: ++919432490361

Kindly send the soft copy of the book to the following Email Ids. prof.ranjana.ray@gmail.com
debasusharmistha@gmail.com

Copy to: kspublication1@gmail.com

RECENT PUBLICATION

'A Fiesta of Fifty Years of Indo-Bangladesh Relations :
Assessing the Varied Dynamics of Opportunities and Challenges'
Editor: Dr. Archita Ghose
Year: 2024, Published by
Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.
ISBN: 978-81-955545-8-4
ASIN: B0D9TY16M1 (Kindle Edition)

Relevance of the Universal Mission of the Bengali Renaissance
for a Sustainable Future for India and the World.
Editor: Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2024 Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Editor
ISBN: 978-81-955545-3-9

Banglar Nabajagaraner Prasangikata o Bishwavratrittwabodh
Editor: Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2024 Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Editor
ISBN: 978-81-955545-6-0

Traditional Clay-Arts of Bengal: A Comprehensive Museological & Folkloric Study
Author: Arpita Basu
Year 2023 : Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Author
ISBN: 978-81-955545-2-2

Exploring the Saga of India-Nepal Relations: Juxtaposing Issues
of Convergence and Divergence
Editors: Tridib Chakraborti Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2023 Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ISBN: 9788195554508

Research Methodology: Tools & Techniques in Social Science
Editors: Durga Basu Asmita Basu
December, 2022 Pub: Setu Prakashani, Kolkata Delhi © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ISBN: 9788195706051

Cultural Exchange through Folklore
Volume 1 and Volume 2
Editors: Sarit K. Chaudhuri Sarmistha De Basu Arpita Basu
Pub: Serials Publications (P) Ltd, New Delhi
© 2022, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies & Serials Publications (P) Ltd
ISBN: 9789391844035

Indian Relations with Sri Lanka and Maldives
(A Collection of Research Articles)
Editor: Sarmistha De Basu Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies December: 2021
Paper Back Edition, ISBN: 978-81-955545-1-5
E-Book Kindle Edition, ASIN : B09N2QB2NZ

Contours of India's Act East Policy: Opportunities, Challenges
and Futuristic Trend of Indo-ASEAN Partnership
Editors : Archita Ghose & Sarmistha De Basu
June : 2021 Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ASIN : B097NL92S2
E-Book, File size: 2386 KB/ Kindle Editlon

Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies, Postal Address : 3/25/1, R.K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata - 700042
Phone : +91-9432490361
Email : Ksasianstudies@gmail.com kspublication1@gmail.com
Website: www.kolkatasocietyforasianstudies.com www.jrksas.org

Printed at : The Saraswati Printing Works, 2, Guru Prosad Chowdhury Lane, Kolkata 700 006

Price: Rs. 600.00