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**Emerging India: Transitions in Politics, Society,
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Reclaiming Silenced Histories: Colonial Exploitation and Marginalized Voices in the Works of Shashi Tharoor

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Abstract

Colonial rule in India fundamentally transformed the political, economic, and cultural structures of the subcontinent. For decades, colonial historiography portrayed the British Empire as a civilizing force that introduced modernization, administrative efficiency, and infrastructure to India. However, postcolonial scholarship has increasingly challenged this narrative by highlighting the exploitative nature of imperial rule and the marginalization of colonized populations. This research paper examines colonial exploitation and the representation of marginalized voices in the works of Shashi Tharoor. Through a critical analysis of texts such as *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*, *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*, and *The Great Indian Novel*, the study explores how Tharoor challenges imperial narratives and reconstructs historical memory from the perspective of the colonized. Drawing upon postcolonial theoretical frameworks proposed by scholars like Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the paper investigates how Tharoor foregrounds the experiences of marginalized communities whose voices were historically suppressed within colonial discourse. The analysis demonstrates that Tharoor's writings serve as a powerful critique of imperial ideology by exposing the economic exploitation, cultural domination, and political oppression embedded within colonial governance. Furthermore, the paper argues that his work contributes significantly to contemporary debates about colonial memory, historical justice, and the reclamation of subaltern narratives. By revisiting colonial history through literary and historical analysis, Tharoor's works provide an important platform for recovering silenced voices and challenging enduring myths about the benevolence of empire.

Keywords: Colonial Exploitation, Marginalized Voices, Postcolonial Studies, British Empire, Historical Memory

Introduction

Colonialism remains one of the most significant forces shaping modern global history. The British Empire governed India for nearly two centuries, during which time the country experienced profound political, economic, and cultural transformations. While colonial

administrators frequently portrayed their rule as beneficial to India, many scholars and historians have contested this narrative by demonstrating that colonialism was primarily a system of exploitation designed to serve imperial interests.

The representation of colonial history has long been dominated by perspectives that privilege imperial authority while marginalizing the voices of colonized peoples. In recent decades, postcolonial scholarship has attempted to challenge these dominant narratives by emphasizing the experiences of those who lived under colonial rule. Within this intellectual tradition, the works of Shashi Tharoor occupy a significant position.

Tharoor's writings critically examine the legacy of the British Empire in India and question the notion that colonialism contributed positively to the development of the country. Through historical analysis, political commentary, and literary narrative, he exposes the structural inequalities and injustices embedded within colonial governance.

In works such as *Inglorious Empire* and *An Era of Darkness*, Tharoor provides detailed historical accounts of how colonial policies systematically exploited Indian resources and disrupted local economies. Meanwhile, his novel *The Great Indian Novel* employs satire and allegory to reinterpret Indian history and critique both colonial rule and its enduring influence. A central theme in Tharoor's writings is the recovery of marginalized voices. Colonial histories often neglected the perspectives of ordinary Indians, particularly peasants, laborers, and other socially disadvantaged groups. By highlighting their experiences, Tharoor challenges the traditional narrative that celebrates imperial achievements while ignoring colonial suffering.

This research paper explores how Tharoor's works contribute to the reclamation of these silenced histories. By examining the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of colonial exploitation, the study seeks to demonstrate how his writings provide an alternative perspective on the legacy of empire.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the representation of colonial exploitation in the selected works of Shashi Tharoor.
2. To examine how Tharoor's writings challenge dominant imperial narratives about British colonial rule in India.
3. To investigate the portrayal of marginalized voices within Tharoor's historical and literary texts.

4. To explore the relevance of postcolonial theory in interpreting Tharoor's critique of colonialism.
5. To evaluate the contribution of Tharoor's works to contemporary discussions about colonial memory and historical justice.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a **qualitative and analytical approach** based on textual interpretation and theoretical analysis. The study primarily relies on **close reading of selected works by Shashi Tharoor**, including *Inglorious Empire*, *An Era of Darkness*, and *The Great Indian Novel*. These texts are examined to identify themes related to colonial exploitation, historical representation, and marginalized voices.

The research also draws upon **postcolonial theoretical frameworks**, particularly the concepts developed by Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. These theoretical perspectives provide critical tools for analyzing the ways in which colonial discourse constructed representations of colonized societies and suppressed subaltern voices.

In addition to primary texts, the study incorporates **secondary sources such as scholarly books, journal articles, and historical studies** on colonialism and postcolonial literature. This interdisciplinary approach enables a comprehensive examination of Tharoor's writings within the broader context of colonial historiography and postcolonial criticism.

The methodology emphasizes **interpretive analysis rather than quantitative measurement**, focusing on how narrative strategies, historical arguments, and literary devices contribute to the representation of marginalized voices.

Analysis and Discussion

Colonial Economic Exploitation

One of the most prominent themes in Tharoor's writings is the economic exploitation of India during colonial rule. In *Inglorious Empire*, he argues that British policies systematically drained India's wealth through taxation, trade monopolies, and resource extraction. These policies transformed India from one of the world's leading economies in the eighteenth century into a largely impoverished colony by the time of independence.

Tharoor highlights the destruction of traditional industries, particularly the textile sector, which had once been globally renowned for its craftsmanship. British industrial policies favored the

import of manufactured goods from Britain while restricting Indian production. This led to widespread unemployment among artisans and contributed to economic decline.

The author also discusses the devastating impact of colonial famines. Administrative decisions often prioritized revenue collection and trade interests rather than the welfare of local populations. As a result, millions of Indians suffered from food shortages and starvation.

Cultural Domination and Colonial Ideology

Beyond economic exploitation, colonialism also involved cultural domination. British colonial authorities promoted Western values and institutions while portraying Indian traditions as backward and inferior.

Tharoor argues that colonial education policies encouraged the adoption of English language and culture, thereby creating a class of Indians who were trained to serve colonial administration. While this system produced a new intellectual elite, it also reinforced colonial hierarchies and undermined indigenous knowledge systems.

Through his analysis, Tharoor reveals how cultural imperialism shaped Indian identity and contributed to long-lasting psychological effects within colonized societies.

Literary Reinterpretation and Satire

In *The Great Indian Novel*, Tharoor employs satire and allegory to reinterpret Indian history. The novel reimagines historical events through a narrative structure inspired by classical Indian epics.

This creative approach allows Tharoor to critique colonial power while also examining the complexities of Indian political history. Satire functions as a powerful literary device that exposes the contradictions and absurdities of imperial authority.

By blending mythological references with modern political commentary, Tharoor creates a narrative that challenges conventional historical representations and provides space for marginalized perspectives.

Postcolonial Perspectives

The theoretical contributions of Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak provide valuable frameworks for understanding Tharoor's work. Said's concept of Orientalism explains how Western discourse constructed stereotypical representations of Eastern societies in order to justify imperial domination.

Spivak's notion of the subaltern highlights the difficulties faced by marginalized groups in articulating their voices within dominant power structures. Her famous question—"Can the subaltern speak?"—emphasizes the importance of recovering suppressed narratives.

Tharoor's writings align with these theoretical perspectives by challenging colonial discourse and emphasizing the experiences of colonized Indians.

Major Findings

The analysis of Tharoor's works reveals several important findings:

1. Colonial rule in India was characterized by systematic economic exploitation that contributed to widespread poverty and social disruption.
2. British colonial policies significantly weakened indigenous industries and agricultural systems.
3. Cultural domination played a key role in sustaining colonial power by promoting Western values while marginalizing indigenous traditions.
4. Tharoor's writings challenge imperial narratives by foregrounding the experiences of colonized populations.
5. Literary techniques such as satire and allegory enable Tharoor to reinterpret historical events and highlight marginalized voices.
6. Postcolonial theoretical frameworks provide valuable tools for understanding the significance of Tharoor's critique.

Conclusion

The legacy of colonialism continues to influence political, cultural, and historical debates in contemporary society. Through his writings, Shashi Tharoor offers a compelling critique of the British Empire and its impact on India. By exposing the economic exploitation, cultural domination, and political injustices embedded within colonial governance, he challenges the narrative that imperial rule was beneficial to the colonized.

Tharoor's work is particularly significant for its emphasis on marginalized voices that were excluded from colonial historiography. By recovering these silenced histories, his writings contribute to a more balanced and inclusive understanding of the past.

From a postcolonial perspective, Tharoor's critique represents an important effort to confront historical injustices and question the ideological foundations of empire. His work demonstrates

how literature and historical analysis can serve as powerful tools for reclaiming suppressed narratives and promoting critical engagement with colonial history.

Ultimately, the study of colonial exploitation in Tharoor's writings highlights the importance of revisiting historical narratives in order to recognize the experiences of those who were marginalized by systems of power.

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Digital Democracy and the Impact of Social Media on Politics

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Abstract:

Digital democracy refers to the use of digital technologies, particularly the internet and social media platforms, to enhance democratic participation, transparency, and governance. In recent years, social media has transformed political communication, citizen engagement, and electoral processes across the world. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), YouTube, Telegrams, Threads, and Instagram have enabled politicians to communicate directly with citizens and mobilize support quickly. At the same time, social media has raised concerns about misinformation, polarization, and manipulation of public opinion. This paper examines the role of social media in strengthening democratic participation as well as the challenges it poses to democratic institutions.

Keywords: Digital Democracy, Social Media, Political Participation, Online Activism, Political Communication, Misinformation, Democratic Governance.

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology has significantly influenced political processes and democratic governance. The concept of digital democracy has emerged as a result of the integration of information and communication technologies into political systems. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for political communication, activism, and public engagement.

In modern democracies, social media allows citizens to access political information, express opinions, and participate in debates instantly. Political leaders, parties, and activists increasingly use digital platforms to reach voters, promote policies, and organize campaigns. As a result, social media has reshaped traditional political communication and created new opportunities for democratic participation.

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally changed the functioning of modern democracies. The emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube has created new avenues for political communication and citizen engagement. These platforms enable instant access to political information and allow individuals to express opinions, debate policies, and participate in democratic processes.

Digital democracy refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to strengthen democratic practices. Governments, political parties, and civil society organizations increasingly rely on digital tools to communicate with citizens and encourage participation in governance. Social media has particularly transformed political campaigns and public discourse by enabling direct interaction between politicians and voters.

However, the growing influence of social media also raises serious concerns regarding misinformation, manipulation of public opinion, and the erosion of democratic values. Therefore, understanding the impact of social media on politics is crucial for evaluating the future of democratic governance.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research paper are:

1. To understand the concept of digital democracy.
2. To examine the role of social media in modern political communication.
3. To analyze the impact of social media on political participation and elections.
4. To identify the challenges and risks associated with social media in democratic Systems.
5. To suggest measures for responsible use of social media in politics.

Research Methodology

This study is based on qualitative and descriptive research methodology. The research primarily relies on secondary sources of data.

Source of Data

1. Books related to political science and digital democracy
2. Research journals and academic articles
3. Government reports and policy documents
4. Online sources and scholarly publications

Method of Analysis

The collected information has been analyzed using analytical and interpretative methods to understand the influence of social media on democratic processes and political participation.

Concept of Digital Democracy

Digital Democracy refers to the use of digital technologies, especially the internet and communication platforms, to strengthen democratic processes, increase citizen participation, and improve transparency and accountability in governance. It involves the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into political and governmental systems so that citizens can actively participate in public decision-making and political discourse.

In traditional democracies, citizen participation was mainly limited to activities such as voting in elections, attending public meetings, or engaging with political representatives. However, with the development of digital technologies, democratic participation has expanded beyond these traditional forms. Digital democracy enables citizens to communicate with government institutions, express their opinions, participate in policy discussions, and access public information through online platforms.

Digital democracy is closely related to the concept of e-governance, which focuses on the use of digital technologies by governments to deliver services and information efficiently. While e-governance emphasizes administrative efficiency and service delivery, digital democracy focuses on enhancing citizen engagement and political participation.

Key Feature of Digital Democracy:

1. Increased Citizen Participation

Digital platforms allow citizens to participate more actively in political processes. Online forums, social media platforms, and digital consultation tools enable people to share opinions, engage in debates, and influence policy decisions.

2. Transparency and Accountability

Digital technologies provide easier access to government information, budgets, policies, and decision-making processes. This openness increases transparency and allows citizens to hold governments accountable for their actions.

3. Direct Communication between Government and Citizens

Through social media and online communication tools, political leaders and government institutions can directly interact with citizens. This reduces the gap between policymakers and the public.

4. Access to Political Information

Digital platforms provide citizens with immediate access to political news, government announcements, and policy discussions. This improves political awareness and encourages informed decision-making.

5. Inclusive Participation

Digital democracy can give voice to marginalized groups and communities that may have limited access to traditional political platforms. Online spaces allow these groups to express their concerns and participate in political discourse.

Forms of Digital Democracy

1. E-Voting

Electronic voting systems allow citizens to vote using digital devices, which can increase voter participation and improve the efficiency of elections.

2. Online Public Consultation

Governments may use online platforms to gather public opinions on policies, laws, or development projects before making decisions.

3. Digital Political Campaigning

Political parties and candidates use websites, social media, and digital advertising to communicate with voters and promote their political agendas.

4. Online Petitions and Activism

Citizens can organize campaigns, sign petitions, and mobilize support for social or political causes through digital platforms.

Importance of Digital Democracy

Digital democracy plays a significant role in strengthening democratic governance in the modern world. It encourages political awareness, improves citizen engagement, and promotes transparency in government functioning. By providing accessible communication channels, digital democracy allows people to participate in political processes more easily and frequently.

However, while digital democracy offers many opportunities, it also raises concerns related to misinformation, digital inequality, cyber security, and manipulation of public

opinion. Therefore, it is important to develop strong regulatory frameworks and promote digital literacy among citizens to ensure the responsible use of digital technologies in democratic systems. Digital democracy has become increasingly important in the modern world where technology plays a central role in social and political life.

In conclusion, digital democracy represents an important evolution in democratic governance in the digital age. By utilizing digital technologies, governments and citizens can interact more effectively, leading to greater participation, transparency, and accountability. At the same time, careful management of digital platforms is necessary to prevent misuse and protect democratic values.

Role of Social Media in Politics

Social media has become a significant tool for political communication and public engagement. It allows political actors to share information, promote policies, and interact directly with citizens.

Political Campaigning:

Social media plays a significant role in modern political campaigning. With the rapid growth of digital technologies and internet access, social media platforms have become powerful tools for political communication, public engagement, and election campaigns. Political leaders, parties, and candidates use social media to reach a large number of voters quickly and effectively.

In the past, political campaigns mainly relied on traditional media such as newspapers, radio, television, and public rallies. However, the emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, Telegrams, Threads has transformed the way political campaigns are conducted. These platforms allow political actors to communicate directly with citizens, share information, and mobilize support during elections.

Social media has become a crucial tool in modern political campaigning. It allows political leaders and parties to communicate directly with voters, promote their policies, and mobilize public support effectively. Social media also encourages greater political participation, particularly among younger generations.

However, the misuse of social media through misinformation, propaganda, and data manipulation can threaten democratic processes. Therefore, responsible use of social media,

stronger regulations, and increased digital literacy are necessary to ensure that social media strengthens rather than weakens democratic systems.

Public Participation:

Public participation is one of the most important elements of digital democracy. It refers to the active involvement of citizens in political decision-making processes through digital technologies such as the internet, social media platforms, online forums, and government digital portals. Digital democracy has expanded the opportunities for citizens to participate in governance beyond traditional methods like voting or attending public meetings.

In modern democratic systems, digital platforms allow people to express their views, share opinions, discuss public policies, and engage with political leaders in real time. As a result, citizens are no longer passive observers of political processes but active participants who can influence decision-making. Citizens can express their views, participate in debates, and discuss political issues through social media platforms.

Political Awareness:

Social media plays a very important role in creating political public awareness in modern democratic societies. With the growth of the internet and digital communication technologies, social media platforms have become powerful tools for spreading political information and educating citizens about political issues, government policies, and democratic processes.

In earlier times, political awareness mainly depended on traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television. However, social media platforms now allow information to spread more quickly and reach a much larger audience. As a result, citizens can stay informed about political developments and participate more actively in democratic activities. Social media has become a powerful tool for promoting political public awareness in the digital age. It helps citizens access information, engage in political discussions, and participate in democratic processes more actively. By providing platforms for communication and information sharing, social media strengthens democratic participation and civic engagement.

However, to ensure that social media effectively promotes political awareness, it is important to address challenges such as misinformation, digital inequality, and online polarization. Encouraging responsible use of digital platforms and improving digital literacy can help maximize the positive impact of social media on political awareness.

Mobilization of Social Movements

Many social movements and protests are organized and promoted through social media networks. Social media has become a powerful tool for the mobilization of social movements in modern democratic societies. It enables individuals, activists, and organizations to organize collective actions, spread awareness about social and political issues, and encourage public participation. Through digital platforms, people can quickly communicate ideas, share information, and coordinate activities that promote social and political change.

In traditional forms of activism, mobilizing large groups of people required significant time, resources, and physical organization. However, with the development of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegrams, Threads and YouTube, mobilization has become faster, more accessible, and more widespread. Social media allows activists to reach a global audience and build support for social movements within a short period of time.

Positive Impact of Social Media on Democracy

Social media has become an important component of modern democratic systems. With the expansion of digital communication technologies, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, Threads and YouTube have significantly influenced democratic participation, political communication, and public engagement. The positive impact of social media on democracy can be understood through several key dimensions like that increased political awareness among citizens, enhanced transparency and accountability in governance, greater public participation in political discussions, improved communication between leaders and citizens, empowerment of marginalized communities

These developments strengthen democratic values by encouraging active citizen involvement.

Challenges and Risks of Social Media in Politics

Despite its advantages, social media also presents several risks to democratic systems.

Spread of Misinformation:

Social media has become a major source of political information in modern democratic societies. It allows citizens to access news, discuss political issues, and participate in public debates. However, along with its advantages, social media also creates serious

challenges for political systems. One of the most significant risks is the spread of misinformation.

Misinformation refers to false, misleading, or inaccurate information that is shared without proper verification. In the political context, misinformation can influence public opinion, create confusion among voters, and weaken trust in democratic institutions. Because social media platforms allow information to spread rapidly, false information can reach millions of people within a short period of time.

The spread of misinformation is one of the most serious challenges associated with the use of social media in politics. While digital platforms provide opportunities for greater political participation and access to information, they can also be misused to spread false or misleading content. Therefore, it is essential for governments, social media companies, media organizations, and citizens to work together to prevent misinformation and protect the integrity of democratic processes.

Political Polarization:

Political polarization refers to the growing division of society into groups with strongly opposing political views. In such situations, individuals tend to support only their own political ideology and reject or criticize opposing viewpoints. Social media platforms can sometimes intensify these divisions by shaping the way political information is shared and consumed. Social media algorithms often create ideological echo chambers that increase political divisions.

Manipulation of Elections:

Digital platforms can be used to influence election outcomes through targeted political advertising. Election manipulation through social media refers to the misuse of digital platforms to influence voters' opinions, spread misleading information, and affect the fairness of electoral processes. Such practices can undermine democratic values and reduce public trust in elections. While social media has improved political communication and voter engagement, it also poses significant risks to democratic elections. Manipulation through targeted advertising, misinformation, automated accounts, and foreign interference can threaten the fairness and credibility of electoral processes. Therefore, it is essential for governments, regulatory authorities, and digital platforms to develop effective policies and safeguards to ensure that social media is used responsibly in political campaigns and elections.

Privacy and Data Security:

The collection and use of personal data for political campaigns raise serious ethical concerns. Data privacy and ethical concerns are major challenges associated with the use of social media in politics. The collection and use of personal data for political purposes can influence voter behavior and threaten democratic fairness if not properly regulated. Therefore, it is essential to establish strong legal frameworks, ethical standards, and transparency mechanisms to ensure that digital technologies are used responsibly in political processes. Protecting citizens' privacy and maintaining ethical practices are crucial for safeguarding democratic values in the digital age.

Suggestions and Recommendations

To ensure responsible use of social media in politics, the following measures can be considered:

1. Strengthening digital literacy among citizens
2. Implementing regulations to control misinformation
3. Ensuring transparency in political advertising
4. Promoting ethical use of social media by political actors
5. Developing strong data protection laws

These measures can help maintain a balance between technological innovation and democratic values.

Conclusion:

Digital democracy has significantly transformed the relationship between citizens and political institutions. Social media platforms have created new opportunities for political participation, public debate, and transparency in governance. However, the misuse of social media through misinformation, manipulation, and data exploitation poses serious challenges to democratic systems. Therefore, it is essential to promote responsible digital practices, strengthen regulatory frameworks, and encourage informed participation in online political discourse. The future of democracy will depend on how societies manage the opportunities and risks associated with digital technologies.

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Determinants of Healthcare Choice: An Empirical Investigation of Patients Shifting from Public to Private Hospitals in Nagpur

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Abstract

The paper is an analysis of the factors that affect patient migration between the public and the privately operated hospitals in Nagpur. The research design adopted was quantitative, descriptive and analytical in nature and utilized primary data of 300 patients who were sampled using a structured questionnaire as Likert measures. The logistic regression analysis was used to recognize the key predictors of healthcare choice. The results indicate that the quality of services, waiting period, availability of a specialist, insurances, and household level affect the probability of shifting to the private hospitals greatly whereas the sensitivity of the costs is found to have a negative impact on the preference of private hospitals. Quality of the services appeared to be the most significant factor, which means that patients are more concerned with responsiveness, infrastructure, and perceived clinical competence, rather than cost factors. The paper identifies the operational inefficiencies within the public hospitals as the major push factors and the use of financial enablement through insurance in enabling the use of the private healthcare. The findings can be used as policy implications on how to transform the mixed healthcare system in Nagpur to enhance service delivery, minimise patient outflow, and help improve equitable access in the systematic.

Keywords: Healthcare Choice, Public Hospitals, Private Hospitals, Service Quality, Waiting Time, Insurance Coverage, Patient Preference, Nagpur.

Introduction

The Indian medical system is characterized by a bivalent government- private delivery system where the patients often change government and private hospitals as outpatient hospitals and inpatient centers. The policy discussions and microeconomic developments have shown an increasing use of the preference towards the privatist approach despite the role of the public sphere on the principle of universal access and affordability (Meleddu, Pulina, and Scuderi,

2020). In cities like Nagpur, it is important to comprehend why patients leave government hospitals to join the private hospitals in terms of the planning of resources, equity evaluation, and improvement of quality of services. Such shifts are determined by multidimensional factors which include structural factors (distance and waiting time), economic factors (out-of-pocket cost, perceived value), service attributes (technical competence, responsiveness, amenities) and patient factors (education, income, insurance coverage, and prior experience) (Victoor et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2019).

This research is an empirical study that examines the relative significance of these determinants to patients who have either switched or are making a choice between the public and the private hospitals in Nagpur. The paper will (a) aim to quantify the determinants predicting shifting behaviour by integrating patient survey data with multivariate modelling, (b) addressing heterogeneity by socio-economic groups, and (c) to make inference about local health policy and hospital management. Results will guide practitioners; both the municipal health planners as well as the hospital administrators controlling the outflow of the avoidable patients at the cost of the public institutions and instruct the practitioners on the quality aspect that patients value the most.

Literature review

One will find that a wide scanning of international literature reveals the existence of coherent determinants of provider choice themes. The scoping review by Victoor et al. (2012) summarised the evidence based on settings, and the authors concluded that patient choices are the results of the interaction of patient characteristics (need, socio-demographics), provider attributes (structure, process, outcome), and contextual constraints (varying weights) depending on the setting of application. Based on that framework, discrete choice and latent class research reveal heterogeneity in preferences: there are patients who focus on price and distance whereas others see perceived quality and reputability (Zhu et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2022).

The utility of the service and prompt response again and again are good predictors of preference in the private sector. Meleddu et al. (2020) demonstrate perceived tangibles (infrastructure), reliability, and staff empathy to be associated with the consumption of a private hospital

consumption in mixed-funding systems. The same is supported by empirical data in the low- and middle-income countries (LMICs): due to quicker accessibility, wait times, and specialists availability, the rate of uptake rises privately (Singh, 2022; Open Public Health Journal). Indian studies are also finding that patients move to the private hospitals despite the higher costs as the reputation of the physicians, the availability of specialists, and perceived competence drives the patients to those hospitals (Tambe, Awasthi, Kumar, and Roy, 2018; Malik, 2018).

Affordability and cost itself is complicated. Although people may pay more out of pocket in the private care, it is sometimes the case that patients pay more and are willing to pay more because they perceive quality to be better or their problem to be solved faster (Ghimire, 2024; Ullah, Hussain, and Alharthi, 2021). This relationship is moderated by insurance cover and household income: insured and higher-income patients indicate a greater movement to private providers (Meleddu et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021).

Previous experiences and word of mouth are routine social processes that dictate choice. Research indicates that the switching costs decrease with previous favourable experience and social networks have an effect on perceived safety and competence (Zhu et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2021). Trust (interpersonal (doctor) and institutional (hospital)) is thus instrumental and could vary drastically between the government and the private environment (Yan et al., 2022).

Geographic access and service availability factors are contextual and system factors that are universal. Studies of Indian states (Odisha, Assam, Kerala) indicate that the distance to the facility and the time of facilities opening or closing determine the choice of the patients to go to a state facility or a hospital, in urgent or specialised care cases they neglect state primary care and go to a private hospital (Paul, 2024; state studies mentioned below). The validity of this effect is also demonstrated in a comparative study, which suggests that one of the policy levers can be the enhancement of the quality of the public service to decrease the spending of citizens (Meleddu et al., 2020).

Numerous modern studies apply the mixed-method approach, discrete-choice experiment, and multivariate regression to the study of the heterogeneity of preferences and trade-offs between

attributes (Zhu et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2022). The measurements that should be made due to Nagpur in a case of empirical study are: perceived service quality (SERVQUAL dimensions), access (distance, waiting time), cost / insurance coverage, socio-demographics and prior experience/trust- after which logistic or choice-modelling methods should be applied to predict the determinants of shifting behaviour.

Objectives:

The paper will set out to investigate the factors that determine patient movement between public and private hospitals in Nagpur, how the service quality, accessibility, cost and socio-economic factors and previous experience influence the decision to change hospitals and how the factors affect these decision-making behaviors by the patients relativity.

Methodology:

The research design the study uses is a quantitative, descriptive and analytic study to investigate the factors that may have contributed to this shift of the patient to the private hospitals in Nagpur. A structured questionnaire will also be used in collecting primary data with Likert based items that will be given to 300 patients. Stratified random sampling will be applied to be representative among key major hospitals, and consumer groups, on a private basis.

Results and Discussion:

In the conducted study, the researcher presented the results of interviewing 300 patients in Nagpur who experienced both private and public hospitals. Descriptive statistics, mean scores, standard deviation and logistic regression were used to analyze the data to determine the determinants that contributed to the change of public to a private hospital.

Table 1 Determinant Influencing Hospital Shift

Determinant	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Service Quality	4.32	0.71	1
Waiting Time	4.18	0.83	2
Availability of Specialists	4.05	0.76	3
Infrastructure & Cleanliness	3.98	0.69	4
Doctor–Patient Interaction	3.90	0.88	5
Cost of Treatment	3.62	0.95	6
Proximity	3.41	1.02	7

The most significant determinant was service quality (Mean = 4.32) then waiting time (Mean = 4.18). The cost of treatment though important (Mean = 3.62) is less than the quality related factors. This shows that the patients can afford to spend more money on better service and accessibility.

Table 2 Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Shift to Private Hospitals

Variable	Beta (β)	Odds Ratio (Exp β)	p-value
Service Quality	0.842	2.32	0.000**
Waiting Time	0.691	1.99	0.001**
Insurance Coverage	0.588	1.80	0.004**
Income Level	0.472	1.60	0.012*
Cost Sensitivity	-0.315	0.73	0.041*
Constant	-1.276	—	0.002

Model Statistics:

- Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.48$
- Model Accuracy = 78.3%
- Chi-square (df=5) = 92.45, $p < 0.001$

As shown in Table 2, the logistic regression model is both statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 92.45$, $p < 0.001$) and its Nagelkerke R^2 is 0.48 which explains 48 per cent of the variance in the shifting behaviour of patients in Nagpur towards private hospitals. The best predictor is the quality of services (OR = 2.32, $p < 0.01$), and then there is the waiting time (OR = 1.99, $p < 0.01$), which shows that an improvement in the quality of services and a decrease in waiting time have a significant positive effect on the probability of shifting. The shift is also affected positively by the insurance coverage (OR = 1.80, $p < 0.01$) and income level (OR = 1.60, $p < 0.05$), indicating that people can use private hospitals as the economic level is high. On the contrary, cost sensitivity has a negative and significant impact (OR = 0.73, p less than 0.05), which means that patients who are very price-sensitive are less ready to use the private hospitals. Generally, the factors of quality and accessibility have more impact as compared to financial factors.

Table 3 Cross Tabulation

Insurance Status	Shifted to Private (%)	Continued Public (%)
Insured (n=162)	112 (69.1%)	50 (30.9%)
Uninsured (n=138)	64 (46.4%)	74 (53.6%)

Chi-square = 14.82, p = 0.000

There is a high association between insurance status and hospital choice ($p < 0.001$). There is a better inclination among the insured patients (69.1) to move to the private hospitals than the uninsured patients (46.4).

The empirical findings suggest that the quality determinants (service quality, waiting time, availability of specialists) are more powerful as compared to economic factors only. Insurance cover along with income serve as triggering factors in the transition to private hospitals. Cost is not as important but to be considered after the perceived service efficiency and clinical competence.

Discussion

The results of the present study are an empirical demonstration that end-users in Nagpur are more likely to switch to a private hospital once they have observed not only about the quality of the offered services but also about the efficiency of the operating facilities as well. According to the findings of the regression, the impact of the quality of the services on the healthcare choice is the strongest; next are waiting time and availability of specialists. This indicates that the patients do not just consider hospitals based on their affordability but according to their expectations of results, responsiveness, and the overall experience during care. The prevalence of quality-related determinants is consistent with patient-centered healthcare theories, in which the perceived competence, reliability, and responsiveness determine the choice of the provider.

The huge power of waiting time strengthens the thesis of operation inefficiencies in state hospitals as causative factors of patient migration. The patients seem to be fed up with long queues, waiting times and appointments booking backlog, which drives the patients to find way in the private institutions to offer quick services. This is an indication of a change in time-sensitive healthcare consumption habits particularly with the working populations (31-45 years) as they formed the majority demographic segment in the research.

The issue of insurance coverage was identified to be an effective enabling factor. The probability of insured patients preferring a private hospital was much greater, which supports the assumption of less financial risk protection leads to lower price and higher access to a perceived higher quality of care. This shows that health insurance spread can be inadvertently increasing the utilization in the private sector unless there is a corresponding increase in the transparency of the public hospitals. There was also a positive relationship with income level and it proved economic capacity to moderate healthcare choice behavior.

Interestingly, the cost sensitivity had a negative impact on the preference of a private hospital. It means that people that are extremely price-sensitive still resort to using publicly available facilities even though they worry about the quality. Consequently, although the patients are attracted to private hospitals by their high service quality features, the price is a final notch to under-income populations.

Policy wise, the results depict that there is a requirement of strategic interventions in the community hospitals, especially on enhancing responsiveness of the service, infrastructure, and the interaction between the patient and the doctor. This may also reduce the outflow of patients by strengthening human resources management, decreasing the number of waiting times using digital scheduling systems and increasing the cleanliness of the facilities. The absence of structural changes will cause the risk of the further rise of inequity in the public healthcare system because the patients with higher income and insurances will flock to the work of the private and economically disadvantaged population groups will be left to the relative overstraining meant of the public healthcare facility.

On the whole, the paper highlights the fact that the choice of healthcare in Nagpur represents a multidimensional decision-making model influenced by the perceived quality, accessibility, and economic enablement. Hospitals need to concentrate on the quality improvement initiatives in order to regain the confidence of patients and competitiveness in the mixed healthcare delivery system.

Conclusion

The research finds out that the change of public to private hospitals in Nagpur is largely driven by patients in perceived quality of service, waiting time, availability of specialists, and insurance facilities and not just due to costs as assumed. Clinical competence, responsiveness, and infrastructure were termed as the biggest determinant, thus revealing that patients consider

them as they make healthcare decisions. Waiting time can adversely influence hospital preference, and operational inefficiencies in state-owned hospitals can be pointed as one of the driving forces to do that. Enabling variables include insurance coverage and income level since it is through these two variables that access to private healthcare services can take place. Even though the cost sensitivity issue is still pertinent, it denies low-income and uninsured patients an opportunity to shift. In general, the results indicate that the process of healthcare choice is complex and is influenced by the perception of quality, accessibility, and financial ability in a hybrid healthcare delivery system.

Recommendations

- **The way to improve Service Quality in Public Hospitals:** Nagpur hospitals are supposed to focus on the quality of clinical services, hygiene, infrastructure, and customer-oriented care practices. Quality audits and implementing service quality measurement tools (e.g., SERVQUAL framework) can assist in monitoring the performance.
- **Operation Reforms to Reduce Waiting Time:** Digital appointment system and better management of the patients flow and enhanced staffing during the busiest hours can contribute greatly to reducing the waiting time and enhancing patient satisfaction.
- **Enhancing Specialist Availability:** Government hospitals can also improve deployment of specialists, availability of diagnostic facilities and reduce the number of people waiting to get a referral to improve patient migration.
- **Cooperation with Health insurance programs:** The public hospitals should be able to merge with the government and packages of private medical insurance to enable the advanced treatments to be financially viable to ensure that the insured patients have no reason to go outside of the public system.
- **Specific Assistance to Economically Underprivileged Categories:** Because the cost sensitivity influences patients with lower incomes, specific subsidies, transparent pay, and better services can be used to increase healthcare access equity.
- **Patient Experience and Trust Building Measures:** Medical and administrative trainings to staff on communication skills and empathy can help in enhancing the interaction between doctors and patients as well as the level of trust between patients and the hospital.

- **Monitoring and Performance Benchmarking of policies:** Nagpur health authorities need to come up with a performance benchmarking system between the public and private hospitals to determine the service gaps and create corrective actions.

With proper mitigation of structural inefficiencies and provision of a favorable quality of perception, public hospital may become more competitive, decrease unnecessary patient outflow, and advance equal healthcare provision in Nagpur.

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Barriers to Progress: Caste Inequality and Poverty in *Karukku***Sana Kausar**

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Abstract

Karukku is the powerful life story of Bama, a Dalit Christian woman from Tamil Nadu. It is published in 1992 and translated by Lakshi Holmstrom into English in 2000. This paper looks at *Karukku* to understand how caste and poverty stop Dalits especially children from getting equal opportunities. Bama's story shows how her community struggles to get basic rights, fair treatment, and access to education. No matter how talented or hardworking they are, the caste system pushes them down and offers no chance to rise. Because land, resources, and power are controlled by others, Dalit families have very few chances to improve their lives. Through simple but powerful experiences, *Karukku* reveals how discrimination affects everyday life and stops people from rising.

Key Words: Poverty, Social Inequality, Caste Discrimination, Marginalisation, Lack of Opportunities

Dalits are the most oppressed group in India's caste system. They face discrimination in many areas of life, like where they can live, which jobs they get, and how they receive education and healthcare. Even though caste discrimination became illegal in 1955, it continues because people follow these ideas from birth. Dalits, who make up about 17% of India's population, still suffer from poverty and social rejection.

Dalit children face the hardest time. Schools are supposed to accept all students, but many still avoid taking Dalit children or treat them badly. They may be forced to sit at the back, sit on the floor, or stay away from upper-caste students. Because of this unfair treatment, many Dalit children leave school early. But education is the most important way for them to escape this cycle of discrimination.

The Indian government uses reservation to support Dalits and other weaker groups. This means some seats in schools, colleges, and government jobs are kept especially for them, based on

their population. The rules for getting admitted or promoted are also made easier. As per the 2011 census, about 201 million people around 17% of India's population are Dalits.

Reservations have helped Dalits get good chances in education and jobs, but they have also made caste prejudice harder to remove. The gap between Dalits and upper-caste people is still so big that many Dalits even try to hide their identity to avoid being treated badly at work. This shows that people often care more about others' approval than about their own pride and respect.

During the freedom movement, leaders spoke against practices like Sati and child marriage, but they mostly ignored the suffering of Dalits. Only Dr. B.R. Ambedkar strongly fought for Dalit rights, but real changes did not take place. Because of this neglect, Dalit writers began sharing their own life stories to show the painful discrimination they face every day. For a long time, Dalits had very little access to good education or jobs. The Constitution later introduced reservations to help them, but many upper-caste people complained that it affects their merit.

An RTI report showed that only 19% of 17,000 companies followed the voluntary rule to support SC/ST hiring. Most companies avoid caste-based recruitment because they value "skills" over inclusivity. A 2012 survey also found that over 93% of corporate board members in India belong to upper castes. With such imbalance, it becomes hard to recognize or challenge the hidden bias that exists in corporate hiring.

Dalits still face segregation in many places and are often denied access to upper-caste areas, temples, and even water sources. In Radhanagar (Hooghly district), there are separate cremation grounds for Brahmins and non-Brahmins. In Waganagere village of Gulbarga district in Karnataka, 120 Dalit families were forced to use a well even after a dog had died in it. During festivals, they must bring their own plates and are served food separately.

In India, many Christians and Muslims still follow caste identities, even though their religions do not support the caste system. In *Karukku*, Bama shows how caste bias continues inside the Catholic Church, where she faces discrimination as a Dalit Christian nun. The caste system became even more fixed during British rule, when it was formally recorded and strengthened in society.

Bama shows how Dalit Christians, especially from the Paraiya community, continue to face caste discrimination even inside Christian institutions like churches. Although Christianity teaches equality, the old caste hierarchy still operates. Dalit Christians are given menial duties

such as sweeping the church, while women from higher castes wait until these tasks are done. When Bama questioned this unfair practice, the nuns dismissed her concerns and claimed that doing such work brings “special blessings from God.” This shows how religious leaders manipulate faith to keep Dalits in a lower position and make them accept discrimination as something holy.

The bias is visible in many areas of church life, separate seating, unequal treatment, and even separate burial grounds. Through these observations, Bama exposes the hypocrisy of institutions that preach love and equality but fail to practice them. Her narrative reveals that caste crosses religious boundaries, and Dalit Christians continue to struggle for self-respect and equal participation even within their own faith community.

Many modern Black women writers and Dalit women writers use their work to search for independence and define themselves. Bama’s autobiography clearly shows this journey of self-definition. As a leading Tamil Dalit woman writer, she uses her pen like *Karukku*, a sharp sword, to cut through the deep-rooted patriarchy and untouchability in society. Her writings openly discuss both gender oppression and caste discrimination, exposing prejudice not only in Hinduism but also in Christianity. At the same time, Bama’s work reflects the inner strength and unique voice of marginalized women, making her an important figure in Dalit feminist writing.

In *Karukku*, the Nallathanga’s story exposes how Dalit women suffer even within their own families. Nallathanga’s cries for help never reached her brother because his wife, Malli Alangaasi, hid the letters out of selfishness. Only during a famine does one final letter reach him, and he rushes to rescue his sister and her seven children, showing how desperate the situation had become. Yet when Nallathanga arrives at his home, she is cruelly turned away by his brother’s wife, Malli Alangaasi. This refusal of shelter reveals how easily compassion collapses, and how even family bonds can fail during moments of deepest crisis. Instead of feeling sympathy, Malli Alangaasi angrily throws the helpless family out, revealing not just personal cruelty but a wider social failure to support the poor during famine. The story becomes even darker when Nallathangaal, crushed by hopelessness, drops her children into a well, a place meant to give life, now turned into a symbol of death. Their fate shows how famine destroys families, breaks communication, and forces people into terrible decisions. The narrative criticizes a society that abandons its weakest member when they need help the most.

Even after getting into school, Dalit children often face physical and social abuse. They are sometimes denied basic things like drinking water and toilets that other students use freely. In *Karukku*, Bama also faces similar mistreatment, where she must silently follow the harsh orders of the head nun. Dalit students are often made to do menial tasks in school, and because of this constant humiliation, many of them drop out early.

Bama's request for leave to attend her younger siblings' First Communion shows how power and discrimination operate inside institutions. Even though the event was culturally important, the Principal and Warden refused permission, showing little understanding of personal or family needs. Bama's insistence on equal treatment reveals the hidden caste bias behind such decisions. Her struggle for leave becomes a symbol of a larger fight for equal rights. The fact that the authorities' decision followed rules blindly instead of considering culture, compassion, or fairness, exposing a serious lack of inclusivity in the system.

Bama insisting:

“...there cannot be different rules for different castes, only the same rules for everyone.”

(*Karukku* Page 22)

Bama's memories of the convent reveal how deeply caste discrimination was built into the institution. She was shocked to see how students from rich, upper-caste families were treated with respect, while Harijan girls like her were treated as inferior. Lower-caste students were made to sweep, mop, and clean, as if these tasks were naturally meant for them. This was not just economic inequality; it was a clear message that they did not deserve the same education or respect as their wealthier classmates. The constant insults and humiliations show how authority figures viewed lower-caste students as less than human. By assigning all the menial work only to them, the convent reinforced harmful stereotypes and kept caste hierarchies alive, even in a place meant for learning and moral growth. Bama's account exposes how such discrimination limits opportunities and crushes the self-worth of those already marginalized, revealing the harsh reality of caste bias hidden beneath religious and educational structures.

Apart from sexual violence by upper-caste men, Dalit women face many other forms of caste-based brutality. Their social position makes them more vulnerable to attacks and mistreatment. Even today, Dalit women have very low access to education, depend heavily on daily wage labour, and face discrimination at workplaces including unequal pay. They are pushed into the most unsafe and low-skilled jobs, where they suffer physical abuse, exploitation, and even

harmful superstitious practices used against them. This oppression is not new, it goes back to the Vedic period, and Dalit women continue to struggle with these rooted inequalities even today.

In *Karukku*, Bama shows how her community lives a life filled with nonstop hard work. Every day is spent doing tough agricultural tasks like ploughing, sowing, harvesting, and threshing. They also dig wells, carry heavy loads, and even climb mountains to gather firewood, anything that helps them earn a living. This endless labour reveals a harsh truth: survival depends entirely on hard work, leaving almost no time for rest, comfort, or ease.

Bama describes the economic inequality in her village, where most of the land is owned by the Naickers. Her community works for them as bonded labourers, showing how they have no control over their own livelihood. Because they depend on the Naickers for work, they remain trapped in poverty with very little chance to improve their lives or gain independence. This unequal power relationship keeps them stuck in the same generation.

In many big offices, Dalits are mostly found only in Grade D jobs like cleaning staff. They are largely absent from higher positions, the economy, and the media. The idea that everyone in India has equal access to jobs and education is not true for Dalits. Choosing candidates from Dalit and minority groups is a form of affirmative action, but without it, workplaces and institutions become even more unequal and discriminatory.

Because many Dalit students receive poor schooling, they often lack the skills needed for private-sector jobs. Competing with English-medium students becomes difficult, especially when companies expect strong communication skills. This creates low confidence and feelings of inferiority. As a result, even after years of reservations, Dalits are still barely represented in India's corporate sector.

Bama also points out that only a few families who work as teachers can live a slightly more comfortable life. This clearly shows that education and the better jobs that come with it, is a privilege available only to a small number of people. Because many in her community do not have access to education, they remain stuck in hard, low-paying work. This keeps them trapped in poverty across generations. Bama's description brings out how her people struggle every day, with very little chance to escape the hardships of their lives.

Bama's experience in *Karukku* clearly shows how the lack of opportunities traps children and their families in a life of struggle. The fact that children like her had to pick leftover groundnuts

just to survive shows that they had no better options. Instead of going to school, playing, or dreaming about a future, they were forced into hard and risky work at a very young age. Their fear of being chased away by the Naickers stresses how powerless they were. The land and resources were controlled by others, which meant Bama's community the community was left with no scope for advancement. Selling a handful of groundnuts for a little rice shows how limited their economic opportunities were; every day was about survival, not growth.

Working in the Naickers' fields under strict rules and the threat of punishment shows another layer of lost opportunity. When children are controlled, scolded, or beaten for simple mistakes, they lose confidence and freedom. Instead of being encouraged to learn or explore, they are trained to obey and endure.

Until the time that I was in the eighth class. I worked in my village in all these ways. All the time I went to work for the Naickers, I knew I should not touch their goods or chattels; I should never come close to where they were. I should always stand away to one side. These were their rules. I often felt pained and ashamed. But there was nothing that I could do. They belonged to a higher caste. They had the money. We had to listen to what they said. (*Karukku* page 53)

Bama's experience shows that her community was never given a real chance to be treated as equal human beings. The rules that stopped her from touching the Naicker's things or even going near them made it clear that equality was not possible in such a system. These rules were designed to remind her repeatedly that she belonged to a "lower" caste. Because of this, no matter how hard they worked or how respectfully they behaved, they were still seen as inferior. They were not allowed to share space, touch objects, or interact freely. This constant separation meant they could never break the barrier.

Bama's description of children working in matchbox factories in Madurai shows how childhood is stolen from the poor. Instead of going to school or playing, these young children spend their days sticking labels on matchboxes, making firecrackers, and handling dangerous chemicals. This kind of work is not only tiring but also unsafe and harmful for their health. The shift from helping in fields to factory labor shows how economic hardship forces even the youngest children into unsafe jobs. Because their families are struggling to survive, these children have no choice but to work. As a result, they miss the chance to learn, grow, and enjoy

the carefree moments that every child deserves. Bama's account makes us see how poverty and inequality rob children of their innocence, their safety, and their dreams.

Bama shows that her village has very few schools, which makes education difficult to access. Because of this lack of proper facilities and resources, many children are unable to study even if they want to. Poverty makes the situation even worse. Families struggling to survive often choose work over school for their children, not because they want to, but because they feel they have no other option. As a result, many children drop out of school. Bama shows how daily insults, unfair treatment, and lack of opportunities slowly break a person's confidence. She explains that, although reservation helps, it cannot remove deep-rooted caste prejudice. Her stories of heavy labour, unsafe work, and the struggle for self-respect show that Dalits are still fighting for basic human rights. *Karukku* teaches that real change will happen only when society truly treats everyone as equal in everyday life, not just in law. Until caste discrimination ends, Dalit communities will continue to feel they have "no chance to rise." Bama reminds us that justice and respect must reach every child.

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Ecocriticism and Climate Change in Kiran Desai's '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*'**Dr. Ananad Y. Bhaik**Associate Professor, Department of English
Taywade College, Mahadula-Koradi, NagpurEmail: anandbhaik73@gmail.com**Abstract**

Ecocriticism has emerged as one of the most dominant theoretical discourses in modern literary theory. Ecocriticism primarily deals with the interaction between literature and nature, and how literature reflects ecological issues like environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, and global climate change. As environmental issues continue to plague our planet, literary theorists are increasingly examining literature's role in ecological awareness and environmentalism. Kiran Desai's novel '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*' (1998) is a unique narrative that blends satire, humor, and symbolism with ecological issues and human interaction with nature.

The setting of this novel is in the fictional town of Shakhkot in India, and it revolves around the life of Sampath Chawla, who is feeling alienated from his family and society. Sampath is unable to cope with modern life, so he goes to stay in a guava tree in an orchard and refuses to come back into society. Sampath's unusual activities slowly start to attract people's attention, and they start treating him like a guru. As people start gathering around Sampath in search of guidance and miracles, the environment around him starts to become chaotic, which is an example of the ecological conflict that is evident in this novel.

This research paper aims to examine '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*' from an ecocentric perspective. It attempts to understand how the novel portrays nature, challenges anthropocentrism, and emphasizes the consequences of environmental exploitation. The guava orchard represents a symbol of ecological space, which provides refuge and freedom to the protagonist from the pressures of society. Nevertheless, the intrusion of villagers and commercialization of the orchard demonstrate the detrimental effect of human activities on natural ecosystems.

Moreover, the paper explores the relevance of the novel to the contemporary discourse on climate change and environmental sustainability. It is worth noting that the novel was written before the issue of climate change became a major theme in literary works. However, the

ecological themes discussed in the novel mirror some of the issues raised by the environmental crises of the present time. The novel, therefore, highlights the need for ecological awareness and sustainability.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Climate Change, Environmental Literature, Anthropocentrism, Ecological Awareness, Indian English Fiction

Ecocriticism and Climate Change in Kiran Desai's '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*'.

Introduction

The twenty-first century has been characterized by increasing concerns over environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, and biodiversity reduction. These issues have been at the core of discussions in the realms of science, politics, and society. However, environmental issues are not only scientific and political issues but also cultural and ethical issues that define the values and behaviour of the human species. Literature has been very instrumental in reflecting and influencing the cultural values of the environment. Therefore, environmental issues have been subject to literary analysis. One of the most significant contributions to the study of environmental issues in literature has been the creation of the field of ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the natural environment, with the objective of understanding the nature and manner in which environmental issues and ecological relationships are depicted in literary works. Ecocriticism aims to challenge the anthropocentric view of the universe, which holds that the universe and all matters in the universe revolve around the human species, and to create an ecological worldview that recognizes the interconnectedness of all living beings.

Indian English literature offers a wide scope for ecocritical analysis, as India's geography and environmental problems are complex. Indian English writers often include geographical settings like forests, rivers, villages, and cities in their works, which also deal with various social issues. Recently, Indian English writers like Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, and Kiran Desai have included ecological issues in their works, showing their concern about the relationship between human society and nature.

Kiran Desai's '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*' is a remarkable contribution to modern Indian English literature. Desai's novel offers a humorous and thought-provoking plot that

deals with social issues and the relationship between human beings and nature. The plot of the novel revolves around a young boy named Sampath Chawla, who lives in a fictional town called Shahkot. Sampath feels suffocated by social pressures and wants to escape from the pressures of modern society. One day, Sampath fails to adjust to social norms and gets into a guava tree in an orchard near his place. He stays in the tree and does not come down. Initially, Sampath's action seems to be an attempt to rebel against social norms.

This change in the orchard is an example of the central theme of ecological harmony versus interference by humans, which is discussed in the novel. This orchard, which was originally a peaceful place, is now congested and disorganized, which is an example of the effect of interference in the environment due to exploitation of resources by humans.

From an ecocritical point of view, it is clear that this novel has raised many important questions regarding the relationship between humans and their environment. The themes that have been discussed in this novel, including environmental exploitation, consumerism, anthropocentrism, and ecological balance, will be discussed in this research paper in order to show the contribution of "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard" to the field of environmental literature.

Theoretical Framework: Ecocriticism

The theoretical framework that will be used in the study is ecocriticism. Ecocriticism is a literary theory that came into being in the late twentieth century. It came into prominence in the 1990s when environmental literary studies were recognized as a scholarly discipline. Lawrence Buell, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Greg Garrard are some of the prominent scholars who have contributed significantly to the development of ecocriticism as a theoretical framework. Literary ecocriticism is a literary theory that deals with the representation of the natural environment in literature and the relationship between humans and nature. As Greg Garrard puts it, ecocriticism is an examination of the relationship between human culture and the physical environment.

Another important concept in ecocriticism is anthropocentrism, which is the idea that humans are the most important species on the planet Earth and that nature is intended for human use. On the contrary, ecocriticism emphasizes the importance of ecocentrism, which is the idea that all living things in the world have intrinsic value and that humans are part of a larger ecological community and must be in a balanced relationship with the natural world.

Another important concept in ecocriticism is the concept of environmental imagination, which is the idea that literature plays a critical role in our understanding of the environment. Literature portrays the environment in a certain way that affects our understanding and perception of the environment.

In literature, natural landscapes are often portrayed as symbolic spaces of transformation and self-discovery. Forests, gardens, mountains, rivers, and many more are often depicted as spaces where characters seek refuge from social constraints and connect with nature. These landscapes are also symbolic of alternative forms of living in contrast to modern consumerist society.

In ‘Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard’, the orchard is portrayed as a symbolic space of nature. It is a space of freedom from social constraints. It is also a space where the protagonist seeks peace. However, the novel also portrays the effects of human interference in nature.

Through the lens of ecocriticism, readers can gain a deeper understanding of Desai’s narrative as it portrays the exploitation of nature by humans and the need for a sustainable relationship with nature.

Representation of Nature in the Novel

Nature plays an important part in the narrative structure of ‘Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard’. The guava orchard, in particular, represents a symbol of harmony with nature and spirituality.

Initially, the setting of Shahkot, as described in the novel, was crowded, noisy, and socially restrictive. The setting of the novel mirrors the pressures of modern society, in which individuals are expected to adhere to social and professional norms. Sampath finds it difficult to conform to these norms and feels alienated from modern society.

His decision to climb the guava tree is a turning point in the story. The orchard setting creates a peaceful environment that is in stark contrast to the chaos in the town. Sampath finds a sense of freedom and peace in the company of the trees, birds, and animals.

The natural setting also helps Sampath to dissociate himself from the world and connect with nature. The orchard setting may be seen as a symbol of ecological sanctuary, where the human world is replaced by the natural world.

Animals also feature in the ecological setting. The orchard is home to monkeys, birds, and insects, which symbolizes the diversity of life in the ecological setting. This diversity also symbolizes the interconnectedness of all living things in the world.

However, this peaceful coexistence between humans and nature does not last long. As the villagers begin to visit the orchard and seek advice from Sampath, the natural environment becomes increasingly disturbed. The crowd brings noise, waste, and commercialization into the orchard, making it a chaotic social space.

Through this transformation, the novel portrays the effects of human interference on the natural environment. The orchard, which was once a symbol of natural harmony, becomes a disturbed environment.

Anthropocentrism and Environmental Exploitation

Anthropocentrism is one of the major themes in the novel. Most characters in the novel consider the environment as a source that can be used in the interests of human beings.

Mr. Chawla, Sampath's father, is a classic example of anthropocentrism in the novel. Instead of considering the orchard a natural environment, he considers it a source to earn money. When he realizes that many people are interested in visiting the orchard due to the supposed spiritual power of Sampath, he starts planning visits to the orchard and suggests that the visitors carry offerings.

As a result, the orchard becomes a tourist hub. Food stalls and drink stalls come up at the orchard, and the government tries to regulate the crowd. In this way, the orchard changes its natural look and becomes a polluted environment.

In the same way, the environment is exploited in the modern world. The natural environment is often used as a source to earn money in the form of a tourist hub, a place of industries, and so on. The monkeys in the orchard symbolize the resistance of nature to human domination. Their mischief interferes with the activities of the villagers, showing the conflict between human society and nature.

With these conflicts, Desai shows that anthropocentric attitudes toward nature can lead to its destruction. The novel shows that anthropocentric attitudes toward nature can lead to its destruction.

Climate Change and Environmental Awareness

Climate change is not specifically addressed in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, but the environmental issues are closely linked to the current problem of climate change. Climate change is caused by the activities of humans, such as industrialization, deforestation, and overexploitation of natural resources. These activities are a product of the anthropocentric view that the novel opposes.

Through the gradual disruption of the ecosystem in the orchard, the novel symbolically represents the environmental crises that are currently being experienced on the planet. The crowd that enters the orchard also symbolically represents the effects of modern development on the environment.

Sampath's retreat into the tree can also be seen as a symbolic rejection of consumer culture. By living in the orchard, Sampath is living a simple life that is in touch with nature. This is an alternative way of living that is not detrimental to the environment.

The novel therefore encourages the reader to think about their relationship with nature and the importance of ecological sustainability. Through the narrative in the novel, it is emphasized that there is a need to respect the limits of the ecosystem in nature.

Satire as Ecological Criticism

One of the most striking features of '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*' is the presence of satire. Desai uses satire in the novel to highlight the absurdity of human behaviour. The villagers' belief in Sampath's spiritual powers is a commentary on how society often tends to create myths around individuals. Their blind devotion to Sampath is a commentary on how easily humans are influenced by superstition.

On the other hand, the villagers' exploitation of the orchard is a commentary on the hypocrisy of seeking enlightenment in nature while exploiting it at the same time. Although the villagers

respect Sampath's relationship with nature, their activities disrupt the ecological balance of the orchard.

Through the satirical commentary in the novel, Desai encourages readers to think about the absurdity of human behaviour and how it affects nature. Although the novel is written in a satirical tone, it still manages to highlight the importance of respecting nature.

The Orchard as a Symbol of Ecological Balance

Guava Orchard is the central symbol of ecological balance in the novel. The orchard symbolizes a natural environment where different forms of life are in harmony. The trees give shelter to the birds and animals, while the environment provides a peaceful place for contemplation.

Sampath's decision to stay in the tree symbolizes his desire to break free from the artificial constructions of the modern world and connect himself to the natural world. Sampath's experience in the orchard symbolizes the idea that the health of the human being is closely related to the health of the environment.

Yet the disruption of the orchard symbolizes the idea that the balance of the ecosystem is easily disrupted. Even a small ecosystem is prone to damage if human activity becomes too intense.

Through the symbol of the orchard, Desai focuses the attention of the readers on the importance of protecting the environment from overuse.

Conclusion

Kiran Desai's 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard' creates a fertile ground for ecocritical analysis. The humorous narrative and symbolic imagery in the novel examine the intricate relationship between humans and the environment.

The guava orchard is a symbol of the harmonious relationship between the environment and the people living within it. The change in the environment due to the presence of tourists also symbolizes the harmful effect of anthropocentrism and the exploitation of the environment. The novel also examines the effect of modern society on the environment and the importance of a balanced relationship between humans and the environment.

Despite the fact that the book was published before the issue of climate change became a major theme in literature, the information contained in the book is still very relevant today. The book predicts some of the environmental issues that are affecting the world today and encourages the reader to change their attitudes towards the environment.

Ultimately, 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard' proves the importance of literature in the promotion of environmental awareness. The use of satire and stories to portray environmental issues encourages the reader to think about the environment and the importance of living sustainably.

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Remembering the Forgotten: Marginalised Voices in Toni Morrison's Novels

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Abstract:

Toni Morrison was a famous writer from the United States. She was born in 1931 in Ohio. When she was a child, her family and neighbours often told stories, sang songs, and shared folktales. These stories helped her become a great storyteller later in life. In her books, Toni Morrison wrote about the lives of Black people in America. She wrote about people who were often ignored in history and literature. These included enslaved people, poor families, women, and children. Her stories helped readers understand their struggles and feelings. Her characters are shown as real people with hopes, fears, and dreams. Through her writing, Morrison shared important stories from the past and gave respect to people whose voices were not heard before. In 1993, Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize in Literature. She was the first Black woman to receive this award. This paper studies how Morrison gives voice to people who were ignored in society. It looks at some of her famous books like 'The Bluest Eye', 'Sula', 'Song of Solomon', 'Beloved', 'Jazz', and 'Paradise'. The study explains themes like race, identity, memory, pain, and community, and shows how storytelling can help remember forgotten histories.

Keywords: African American Literature, Racism, Marginalization, Identity, Memory, Slavery

Introduction:

Before studying the novels of Toni Morrison, we should first understand the idea of **marginalisation**. Marginalisation means when some people are pushed to the edge of society. They do not get the same rights, chances, or respect as others. This often happens because of race, gender, religion, class, or culture.

In the history of the United States, **African Americans** suffered slavery for many years. They were treated unfairly and were not given freedom or basic rights. Even after slavery ended, many Black people still faced racism, segregation, and violence. Women also faced many problems. **Black women** had even more difficulties. They were treated badly because they were both Black and women. Poor people also struggled a lot. They often could not get good education, healthcare, or jobs. This made their lives harder.

In her stories, Toni Morrison writes about these problems. She shows how racism, poverty, and unfair treatment affect people's feelings, lives, and relationships. Her stories help us understand the pain and struggles of these communities.

Historical Background: African American Experience

In the past, many Africans were taken to the United States and forced to work as slaves. Slavery was legal until **1865**. Enslaved people were treated like property, not like human beings. Families were often separated. Men, women, and children had to work very hard without pay or freedom. After slavery ended, life was still unfair for Black people. Many laws kept Black and White people separate. These laws limited where Black people could study, work, and live. Some groups also used fear and violence against them. In the **1950s and 1960s**, many people started the '**Civil Rights Movement**'. They protested and fought for equal rights. Their efforts helped change some unfair laws.

Even after these changes, problems did not disappear completely. Many Black communities still faced poverty and unfair treatment. In her stories, **Toni Morrison** writes about these struggles. She shows how the past still affects people's lives today.

The Bluest Eye: The Pain of Self-Hatred

The Bluest Eye is a novel written by Toni Morrison and published in 1970. The story is about a young Black girl named Pecola Breedlove. She lives in a society where people think white skin, blond hair, and blue eyes are the most beautiful. Pecola has dark skin and brown eyes. Because of this, she starts to feel that she is not pretty and that people will not love her.

Pecola's biggest wish is to have blue eyes. She believes that if she had blue eyes, everyone would like her and treat her kindly. She thinks her life would become better.

The story shows how racism and unfair ideas about beauty can hurt a child. Pecola was not born hating herself. She begins to feel this way because of what she sees around her. People,

toys, and movies often show white beauty as the best. Slowly, Pecola starts to believe these ideas.

Pecola is also very poor and very young. Her family life is sad and difficult. Instead of love and care, she faces neglect and cruelty. This makes her feel lonely and weak. The novel also shows that sometimes people in a community do not help those who need it most. Some people laugh at Pecola or ignore her. Some even believe the same unfair ideas about beauty. Through Pecola's story, Toni Morrison asks readers to think about beauty, racism, and kindness. The novel teaches us that unfair ideas can deeply hurt people, especially children.

Sula: Breaking Social Rules

Sula by Toni Morrison is a story about two girls, **Sula Peace** and **Nel Wright**. They grow up together in a small Black community called the Bottom in Ohio. The story shows their friendship and how their lives become very different as they grow older.

Sula is a girl who does not like to follow the usual rules for women. She does not think that getting married and having children is the only goal in life. She leaves her town and travels to see the world. When she comes back, she still chooses to live in her own way.

Many people in the town do not like this. They think Sula is strange and selfish because she does not follow their rules. Some people even blame her for problems in the town. The community treats her like an outsider because she is different. Nel, on the other hand, lives in the way society expects. She gets married and tries to live a normal life. But she is not always happy. After her friendship with Sula breaks, she feels lonely and sad. Through these two characters, Toni Morrison shows that both choices are difficult. Sula's freedom makes her lonely, and Nel's normal life does not always make her happy.

The story teaches us that people should think carefully about society's rules and about being true to themselves.

Song of Solomon: Searching for Identity

Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison is a story about a man named **Milkman Dead**. He feels lonely and confused about who he really is. Even though his family has money, he does not feel happy or connected to others.

At first, Milkman only cares about himself. One day, he starts a journey to find a hidden treasure from his family's past. But during this journey, he learns more important things. He learns about his family, his ancestors, and their struggles.

When Milkman learns about his past, he begins to understand himself better. He realizes that knowing your family history helps you know who you are. Our past and our culture help shape our identity.

Stories, songs, and family memories also help keep culture alive. In the novel, these things help Milkman learn the truth about his family.

One important character in the story is **Pilate Dead**. She is wise, kind, and very different from others. She lives a simple life but knows many stories about the past. She helps Milkman understand his family and his roots.

In the end, *Song of Solomon* teaches that people need to know their past and their culture. This helps them understand themselves and feel connected to others.

Beloved: The Pain of Slavery

Beloved is a novel by Toni Morrison. It was published in 1987 and won the ‘Pulitzer Prize for Fiction’. The story was inspired by a real woman named Margaret Garner.

The story is about a woman named Sethe. She escapes from a place called ‘Sweet Home’, where she was kept as a slave. After escaping, she tries to live a peaceful life with her children. But her past still hurts her. One day, slave catchers come to take her and her children back. Sethe becomes very afraid. She does not want her children to live as slaves. In fear and pain, she makes a very sad decision and kills her baby daughter.

Many years later, Sethe lives with her daughter Denver. Their house feels haunted by the spirit of the dead baby. One day, a strange young woman named Beloved comes to their house. She may be the spirit of the baby who died.

Thus, the novel teaches that remembering history is important. By understanding the past, people can heal and build a better future.

Jazz: Love and Loneliness in the City

Jazz by Toni Morrison is set in Harlem during the 1920s. The story is about three people: Joe Trace, his wife Violet, and a young girl named Dorcas.

Joe falls in love with Dorcas. Later, he becomes very jealous and shoots her. At Dorcas’s funeral, Violet becomes very angry and tries to hurt Dorcas’s body. This shocking event affects everyone around them.

The story is told in a special way. It moves back and forth in time and shows different people’s thoughts. This style is like Jazz music, which changes and repeats in creative ways.

The novel also shows life in the city during a time when many Black people moved from the South to northern cities. They hoped for better jobs and freedom. But city life was not always easy. Many people felt lonely and struggled with problems.

Joe and Violet both carry pain from their past. Their marriage becomes weak because they feel distant from each other. Dorcas represents young people searching for love and excitement.

In the end, the story shows that people can learn from their mistakes. With kindness and understanding, they can slowly heal and rebuild their relationships.

Paradise: Conflict in a Community

Paradise by Toni Morrison tells the story of a small town called Ruby in Oklahoma. The town was built by Black families who wanted a safe place to live away from racism.

In Ruby, some powerful men control the town. They want everyone to follow strict rules and traditions. Near the town, there is a convent where several women live together. These women come from different places and have faced many problems in their lives.

The women in the convent live freely and support each other. But the men of Ruby do not trust them. They believe the women are causing trouble in the town.

Because of fear and anger, the men attack the convent. This violent act shows that even a community made to escape injustice can become unfair to others.

The convent women show another kind of community. They help and care for each other. They try to heal from their painful past.

The novel teaches that a good community should respect differences. People should treat others with kindness, understanding, and respect.

Themes of Race and Self-Hate

In many novels by Toni Morrison, racism is an important theme. Racism means treating people badly because of their race. Morrison also shows something called *internalized racism*. This happens when people start believing the bad things society says about them.

In the novel *The Bluest Eye*, a young girl named Pecola feels she is ugly because she is Black. She wishes she had blue eyes. She thinks blue eyes will make her beautiful. This shows how society's beauty rules hurt her feelings.

Morrison also shows that people sometimes judge others by their skin color, even inside the same community. This causes more pain and sadness.

But Morrison's stories also celebrate Black culture. She writes about music, stories, family memories, and community life. These things show the beauty and strength of Black identity.

Black Women's Voices

Toni Morrison often writes about the lives of Black women. She writes mainly for Black readers. She puts Black culture and experiences at the center of her stories.

The women in her novels are strong and complex. They are mothers, daughters, wives, and workers. Many of them face pain and hard times, but they also show courage and strength.

For example, Sethe in *Beloved* shows deep love for her child. Sula in *Sula* is brave and independent. Pilate in *Song of Solomon* is wise and understands her culture.

In the past, the voices of Black women were often ignored. Morrison gives these women a voice in her stories. She shows their thoughts, feelings, and struggles. Her novels show that Black women are strong, caring, and human.

Memory and Storytelling

Memory is very important in the novels of Toni Morrison. Many characters remember painful events from their past. These memories affect their lives. Morrison shows that talking about the past can help people heal.

In *Beloved*, the community helps Sethe face the ghost that troubles her. This shows that people often need help from others to overcome pain.

In *Song of Solomon*, Milkman learns stories about his family and ancestors. These stories help him understand who he is.

Storytelling is also a way for people to share their true history. It helps people remember their culture and their struggles.

Morrison's writing style is also special. She uses beautiful and flowing language. Her stories often sound like spoken stories that families pass down through generations.

Community and Isolation

In many novels by Toni Morrison, communities are very important. A community can help people feel safe and cared for. People can share their lives and feel they belong.

But sometimes communities can also be unfair. They may judge people who are different.

In *Sula*, the people of the town treat Sula badly because she does not follow their rules. In *The Bluest Eye*, the community does not help Pecola when she is suffering. In *Paradise*, fear and anger in the community lead to violence.

Morrison shows that communities are not perfect. People can make mistakes and hurt others. But she also shows that people can heal when they show kindness and understanding. Communities can become stronger when people care for each other.

Conclusion

The novels of Toni Morrison tell stories about people who were often ignored in history. These include poor families, enslaved people, strong women, children, and young men searching for who they are. In books like *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, and *Paradise*, she shows their struggles and their strength. Her stories teach that the past is important. People must remember history to understand the present and build a better future. Morrison also shows the power of storytelling. When people share their stories, their voices are heard. Her novels remind us that every person's life and story are important.

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German Indology and the Global Representation of Indian Culture**Shraddha Chauhan**

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Abstract

This paper examines the rise of German Indology and its role in shaping European perceptions of Indian culture through the study and translation of Sanskrit texts. German scholars, notably Friedrich Schlegel, August Wilhelm Schlegel, and Max Müller, approached Sanskrit with philological rigor and philosophical curiosity, producing translations that influenced literature, philosophy, and intellectual discourse in Europe. The study also explores the impact of these scholarly endeavours on diaspora communities, emphasizing how mediated representations of India contribute to globalized identity formation. Through institutional support, translation, and cross-cultural dialogue, German Indology facilitated the circulation of Indian knowledge and its integration into European intellectual life.

Keywords: German Indology, Diaspora and Global Identity, Indian Culture in Europe, Sanskrit Studies, European Intellectual History

1. Introduction

The study of Sanskrit and Indian culture in Europe gained significant momentum in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in Germany. During this period, intellectual currents such as the Enlightenment and Romanticism fuelled European curiosity about distant civilizations, with India emerging as a focal point of philosophical, literary, and spiritual inquiry. Sanskrit, as the repository of India's ancient literary and religious texts, was regarded as a key to understanding the origins of human thought, morality, and civilization. German scholars, motivated by both intellectual curiosity and aesthetic fascination, approached Sanskrit with a combination of philological rigor, literary analysis, and philosophical interpretation.

The rise of German Indology had implications beyond academia. It shaped European perceptions of Indian culture, creating idealized and sometimes romanticized images that circulated across literary, religious, and philosophical circles. Furthermore, these representations influenced Indian diaspora communities, providing frameworks for negotiating identity in foreign contexts. This paper examines the rise of Indology in Germany, the

translation of Sanskrit texts, the role of academic institutions, its influence on European culture, and its impact on diaspora and globalized identity. Through this exploration, the paper highlights the dual dynamics of cultural imagination and lived experience, demonstrating how scholarly inquiry contributes to the global circulation of knowledge and identity.

2. Objective

1. To analyse the historical emergence and development of German Indology as a scholarly field.
2. To examine the translation of key Sanskrit texts by German scholars and their impact on European intellectual and cultural life.
3. To explore the role of academic institutions and scholarly societies in supporting Sanskrit studies.
4. To assess the influence of German Indology on the Indian diaspora and the formation of globalized Indian identity.
5. To provide insights into how scholarly engagement fosters cross-cultural understanding and global circulation of knowledge.
6. Indian culture. Primary sources include translations of Sanskrit texts by German scholars such as Friedrich Schlegel, August Wilhelm Schlegel, and Max Müller, as well as their original scholarly writings and correspondences. Secondary sources include historical accounts, scholarly articles, and critical analyses of German Indology, diaspora studies, and globalization theory. The methodology emphasizes textual analysis, comparative study, and interpretive assessment to understand both the scholarly practices of German Indologists and their broader cultural implications.

3. Delimitation

This research focuses exclusively on German Indology from the late eighteenth to the nineteenth century and its engagement with Sanskrit texts. While acknowledging the broader European engagement with Indian culture, the study does not extensively cover British Orientalism or Indological scholarship in other countries. The scope is also limited to textual translations, institutional support, and cultural influence, and does not include detailed ethnographic or contemporary sociological analysis of Indian diaspora communities.

4. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and historical-analytical approach to examine the development of German Indology and its impact on the global representation of

5. Rise of Indology in Germany

German engagement with Sanskrit texts emerged as a systematic intellectual movement in the late eighteenth century. Unlike prior casual encounters with Indian manuscripts, German scholars sought to study Sanskrit rigorously, combining philology, literary criticism, and comparative philosophy. This movement was closely tied to Romanticism, which emphasized the study of ancient texts as a means to uncover universal truths and moral insights. Indian literature, in particular, was perceived as spiritually profound, aesthetically sophisticated, and ethically rich, offering insights that could inform European thought.

Friedrich Schlegel, a pioneer of German Indology, emphasized the literary and philosophical sophistication of Sanskrit works, arguing that India's poetry and philosophical texts were comparable, if not superior, to classical European works. His brother, August Wilhelm Schlegel, focused on translating Sanskrit drama and poetry, highlighting emotional universality and literary excellence. Together, the Schlegel's established networks of scholars and intellectuals who promoted Sanskrit studies across Germany.

Max Müller further solidified German Indology through meticulous translations of key texts such as the *Rigveda* and the *Upanishads*, combining scholarly precision with interpretive commentary. These translations rendered Indian philosophy accessible to European audiences and shaped academic discourse on religion, ethics, and metaphysics. German Indology, therefore, created a dual-layered representation of India: preserving linguistic and literary richness while also projecting an idealized, romanticized vision.

By mid-nineteenth century, universities such as Leipzig, Berlin, and Bonn institutionalized Sanskrit studies, offering courses, professorships, and dedicated libraries. This formalized structure ensured the continuity of research and established Indology as a recognized scholarly discipline, influencing both European intellectual culture and the ways diaspora communities perceived their heritage.

6. Translation of Sanskrit Texts by German Scholars

The translation of Sanskrit texts was central to German Indology and had a lasting global impact. Scholars such as Max Müller, Friedrich Schlegel, and August Wilhelm Schlegel produced translations that were both philologically rigorous and culturally influential. Müller's

translations of the *Rigveda*, *Upanishads*, and *Bhagavad Gita* introduced European audiences to Indian spirituality, philosophy, and ethics, highlighting the universal and moral dimensions of Sanskrit literature.

The Schlegel's focused on Sanskrit drama and poetry, emphasizing aesthetic forms, rhythm, and emotional universality, showing that Indian literature could resonate with European literary sensibilities. Their work influenced Romantic poets, philosophers, and intellectuals across Europe, including Goethe and Schopenhauer, who engaged with Indian texts to explore human consciousness, morality, and the sublime.

While translations mediated Indian texts through European frameworks, they facilitated the global circulation of knowledge, allowing diasporic communities to encounter representations of Indian culture that were recognized and valued in European intellectual circles. These translations offered both cultural anchors and symbolic frameworks for Indian migrants, shaping how identity was imagined in transnational contexts.

Key texts studied and translated included the *Rigveda* (religious hymns), the *Upanishads* (philosophical treatises), the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* (epic narratives), and Sanskrit dramas by Kalidasa, all of which provided insights into Indian ethics, aesthetics, and social structures. The careful study and translation of these works cemented India's presence in European intellectual life and fostered sustained cross-cultural engagement.

7. Academic Institutions Supporting Sanskrit Studies and Cultural Exploration

The rise of German Indology was closely linked to the establishment of academic institutions dedicated to Sanskrit studies and Indian culture. Universities such as Leipzig, Berlin, and Bonn offered structured programs with dedicated chairs in Sanskrit, philology, and comparative philosophy. These institutions provided rigorous training in linguistics, textual analysis, and historical context, enabling scholars to engage deeply with Sanskrit texts and produce high-quality translations.

Beyond universities, scholarly societies and journals, including the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences, facilitated collaboration, dissemination of manuscripts, and publication of research. Regular lectures, conferences, and publications ensured that the study of Sanskrit became a sustained scholarly enterprise rather than isolated personal interest.

Institutional support also encouraged broader cultural exploration. German scholars compared Indian philosophy with European religious and ethical systems, analysed literary structures,

and examined aesthetic principles, fostering a global perspective on Indian culture. Through universities and societies, Indology became a structured, enduring field, capable of influencing both European scholarship and diaspora perceptions of Indian heritage.

8. Influence on European Intellectual and Cultural Life

German Indology shaped European intellectual and cultural discourse profoundly. Translations and studies of Sanskrit texts inspired philosophers, poets, and writers, particularly during the Romantic era. Goethe drew on Indian aesthetics and ethical principles in his literary works, while Schopenhauer referenced the Upanishads to develop his metaphysical ideas on human suffering and desire.

Sanskrit literature also influenced European understanding of comparative religion, encouraging scholars to analyse the universality of spiritual and ethical principles across cultures. Indian epic narratives and philosophical treatises informed literary symbolism, narrative structures, and moral reflections in European works, creating an intercultural dialogue that extended beyond purely academic contexts.

These cultural engagements underscored the global significance of Indian knowledge, demonstrating that scholarly study could transcend borders and contribute to a shared intellectual heritage.

9. Impact on Diaspora and Globalized Identity

German Indology's influence extended to Indian diaspora communities, shaping perceptions of identity and heritage. Indian migrants in Europe encountered representations of their culture that emphasized spirituality, morality, and literary sophistication. These mediated perceptions became resources for negotiating identity, helping diaspora individuals navigate foreign cultural contexts while maintaining a connection to their heritage.

Diasporic communities engaged in cultural hybridity, blending lived experiences, inherited traditions, and global perceptions of India. Translated texts, scholarly commentaries, and European representations provided both anchors and interpretive frameworks, enabling diaspora members to assert, reinterpret, or adapt aspects of their heritage in response to local and global contexts.

Through this process, globalized Indian identity emerged as dynamic and negotiated. German Indology facilitated the circulation of cultural knowledge, highlighting the interplay between

scholarship, imagination, and lived experience, and underscoring the role of intellectual engagement in shaping transnational identities.

10. Conclusion

German Indology emerged as a transformative scholarly movement, connecting India and Europe through the study, translation, and interpretation of Sanskrit texts. Academic institutions and scholarly societies provided structural support, ensuring sustained study and cross-cultural dialogue. The influence of German Indology extended to the Indian diaspora, facilitating negotiation of identity, cultural hybridity, and engagement with transnational perceptions of heritage.

Its legacy illustrates the interplay between scholarship, imagination, and lived identity, showing how cross-cultural exploration contributes to globalized understanding of Indian culture. By bridging cultures, German Indology helped create a worldwide dialogue on literature, philosophy, and spirituality, emphasizing the enduring significance of scholarly inquiry in shaping both intellectual and cultural landscapes.

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Marginalized Voices in the Selected Novels of R. K. Narayan**Dr. Swapnil Ram Dahat**
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Email: srdahat@gmail.com**Abstract:**

The works of R. K. Narayan have been widely appreciated for their depiction of ordinary life in his fictional town of Malgudi, located in South India. However, underlying his simplicity and humour is his subtle exploration of social inequality and marginalized life. This paper aims to examine Narayan's depiction of marginalized life in his works, including his novels 'The Dark Room', 'The Guide', 'The Financial Expert', and 'The Vendor of Sweets'. By examining these works, it is clear that Narayan depicts the struggles of individuals who live on the margins of power, even as he presents an honest portrayal of India in the twentieth century.

Keywords: marginalization, Malgudi, gender inequality, Indian English literature, social hierarchy

1. Introduction

Indian English literature has been significant in portraying the social and cultural realities of the people of India. Among the early writers of Indian English literature, R.K. Narayan stands out to be one of the most important writers. His writings, which revolve around the life and people of the fictional town of Malgudi, offer vivid descriptions of the realities of life and the complexities of relationships.

Although R.K. Narayan has been recognized for his humorous writings, his works have been significant in portraying the social concerns of the people of the region. His writings have been based on the realities of life, with his characters facing issues such as poverty, gender discrimination, and cultural changes. Most of the characters in his writings have been from the marginalized sections of society and have been denied the power to express themselves.

The present paper seeks to analyse the manner in which the marginalized sections have been portrayed in the selected works of R.K. Narayan.

2. Theoretical Framework: Understanding Marginalization

The concept of marginalization is the social process by which certain groups and individuals are forced to the margins of society and denied equal opportunities and representation. Such groups and individuals include women, the poor, labourers, and those who do not conform to the norms of society.

The study of the works of marginalized groups and individuals in the context of literary studies helps us to analyse the reflection of social inequality in the works of writers. Writers often include the stories of the marginalized sections of society to show the constraints and limitations imposed by the norms and traditions of society, the economy, and the patriarchal society.

The works of Narayan offer a platform to analyse the issues of society, as the characters in his stories depict the various sections of society. Narayan's works do not include political criticism, but they do show the impact of social hierarchy on the lives of people.

3. Marginalization of Women

One of the major issues that are evident in the novels of Narayan is the theme of the marginalization of women in a patriarchal society.

Savitri in The Dark Room

Savitri, the character in the novel 'The Dark Room' by Narayan, symbolizes the struggles faced by women living in a patriarchal society. The patriarchal society in the novel is represented by the character Ramani, who is Savitri's husband. Ramani holds complete authority over the household and does not treat Savitri with much respect or consideration for her feelings.

This is evident when Ramani shows more affection towards another woman than towards Savitri. In protest, Savitri moves out of her home seeking independence. However, due to the circumstances of the society, Savitri is not able to lead an independent life and returns to her home.

Rosie in The Guide

A second instance of the oppressed female experience is evident in The Guide. Rosie, a budding dancer, fights against social oppression and domestic oppression from her husband. The latter does not value Rosie's artistry and is indifferent towards her.

Rosie's desire for a career as a dancer is a manifestation of her longing for personal freedom and expression. However, as the child of a devadasi, she suffers from social oppression. The

author depicts the experience of oppression as a clash between personal aspirations and social conventions.

4. Economic Marginalization

Another recurring issue in Narayan's novels is economic inequality. Some characters face challenges in maintaining economic stability in a competitive and unstable social environment.

Margayya in The Financial Expert

In *The Financial Expert*, Margayya starts as a small financial advisor to the villagers, assisting them in banking matters. However, due to a lack of resources, he is economically marginalized. Margayya's journey to becoming rich and then going bankrupt portrays the unstable nature of economic success and the challenges that economically ambitious individuals face in their quest for social mobility.

Jagan in The Vendor of Sweets

In the same vein, in 'The Vendor of Sweets', Jagan is a symbol of the traditional small businessman's efforts at coping with social change. Although he owns a thriving sweet shop, he faces problems of generational conflict when his son embraces Western values and repudiates traditional cultural values.

Jagan's character is a metaphor for the conflict between tradition and modernization, as well as cultural marginalization.

5. Representation of Subaltern Characters

Narayan's novels also show subaltern characters like servants, labourers, and inhabitants of villages whose voices are not heard in mainstream discourse. These characters may not appear in the novels for a long time, but they are important in showing the social structure of Malgudi. Their appearance shows that Indian society is hierarchical, with some social groups having limited power and freedom. Narayan's novels show that these characters are part of society, and their existence cannot be ignored.

6. Cultural Conflict and Social Isolation

In addition to gender and economic inequality, Narayan also portrays the issue of cultural isolation.

Characters in the novel who defy the norms face isolation.

Rosie's commitment to dance is one such issue that challenges the traditional role of women.

Similarly, the lifestyles of modern characters also face challenges in the form of conservative attitudes in the community.

Narayan's portrayal of these conflicts reflects the changing Indian society in the twentieth century, as traditional values were challenged by the emergence of modern values.

7. Narrative Style and Social Commentary

One of the unique aspects of the works of Narayan is the narrative style. Instead of directly commenting on the social issues, the author presents the social issues in the form of experiences and events occurring in daily life.

The use of humour, irony, and natural dialogue enables the reader to get a glimpse of the complexities of social issues without any direct moral commentary.

8. Conclusion

The novels written by R. K. Narayan provide an insight into Indian society through the characters he portrays. Although his works are appreciated for their simple and witty content, they are also reflective of the experiences of the marginalized sections of society.

Through his characters Savitri, Rosie, Margayya, and Jagan, Narayan brings into focus the issues faced by the marginalized sections of Indian society. Through his portrayal of these characters, it is evident that the experiences of the characters are reflective of the challenges faced by the people who are at the periphery of Indian society.

Thus, it is evident that the works of Narayan not only provide entertainment for the readers but are also reflective of the issues faced by the people of Indian society.

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One Nation, One Election: Analysis

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Abstract:

The concept of "One Nation, One Election" seeks to synchronize the electoral processes for the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies in India. Advocates of this proposal argue that unifying elections could significantly reduce the overall costs associated with campaigning and administrative efforts, making the electoral process more efficient. They believe that simultaneous elections could also alleviate the issue of policy stagnation, ensuring more stable and continuous governance by allowing elected representatives to focus on long-term policies rather than being preoccupied with frequent elections. Conversely, critics warn that this approach might pose threats to the fundamental principles of federalism by diluting the distinction between state and national issues. They highlight concerns regarding the complexities involved in managing electoral logistics and potential negative impacts on democratic representation, as regional issues might be overshadowed by national narratives. This article delves deeply into the feasibility, advantages, and obstacles associated with the implementation of synchronized elections in India, while reflecting on its broader social, political, and constitutional implications.

Keywords: One Nation, One Election, Logistical Challenges, Simultaneous Elections, Federalism, Constitutional Amendments, Economic Implications.

Introduction:

India boasts one of the most dynamic and comprehensive electoral systems globally, characterized by regular elections across various tiers of governance. These frequent elections ensure robust democratic participation and engagement among the populace. However, the overlapping schedules can often lead to electoral fatigue, disrupt governance, and incur substantial costs. The notion of "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) aims to synchronize these elections, potentially creating a more streamlined process while minimizing interruptions to governance and daily life.

Since its inception, the ONOE proposal has sparked intense discussions, gaining traction from political leaders and citizens alike. Although the idea has been on the table since the 1980s, recent advancements in political dialogue have revitalized interest in its feasibility and implementation. Proponents argue that aligning election cycles could enhance administrative efficiency and reduce resource wastage, while critics caution against potential ramifications on regional representation and democratic engagement. Ultimately, the debate continues to evolve as stakeholders debate the merits and challenges of this significant electoral reform.

Endorsement of Union Cabinet:

Nearly three months after the Union Cabinet endorsed the high-level committee's recommendations, led by former President Ram Nath Kovind, for simultaneous elections, two bills were passed on Thursday, December 12, 2024. One of these is a constitutional amendment bill designed to facilitate concurrent elections for the Lok Sabha and all state assemblies, while the other is an ordinary bill focused on synchronizing elections in Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu and Kashmir.

The Union Cabinet opted not to consider any draft legislation aimed at aligning local panchayat and municipal elections with Lok Sabha and assembly elections. This decision indicates that the government is taking a cautious approach to implementing simultaneous elections.

Parliament has the authority to legislate for holding simultaneous elections for all state and union territory assemblies alongside parliamentary elections without requiring consultation with state governments or approval from state assemblies. However, if the government intends to propose a bill that synchronizes local body elections or establishes a Single Electoral Roll through the Election Commission of India (ECI), it will need to secure the approval of at least half of the state legislatures before implementation can occur. The central government is anticipated to introduce The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, which seeks amendments to Articles 82, 83, 172, and 327, along with The Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in Parliament at the start of the following week. These bills may be reviewed by a Joint Committee of Parliament. The Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2024 includes regulations concerning Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Puducherry.

This legislation introduces a new Article 82(A), which pertains to simultaneous elections for the House of the People and all Legislative Assemblies, while also amending Article 83 (Duration

of Houses of Parliament), Article 172 (Duration of State Legislatures), and Article 327 (Authority of Parliament to establish election provisions for Legislatures).

The two legislative proposals aimed at enabling simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies include provisions for conducting "mid-term" elections in the event of a government dissolution. However, these mid-term elections would cover only the "unexpired" portion of the remaining five-year term.

According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons for The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, there is a pressing need for simultaneous elections due to escalating costs and prolonged processes associated with elections. The enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct during election periods significantly impedes ongoing development programs, disrupts normal public life, affects the functioning of public services, and channels manpower away from essential duties to manage election-related tasks. The proposed constitutional amendment indicates that the President will implement the 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) legislation on the first day of the Lok Sabha session following the next general elections, referred to as "the appointed date." This timeline suggests that the first simultaneous elections could occur in 2034, unless the central government chooses to conduct mid-term elections before the conclusion of its current five-year term.

Additionally, the Bill specifies that the terms of all Assemblies formed after the appointed date will be aligned with the five-year duration of the Lok Sabha, at which point simultaneous elections could be initiated. It also introduces the notion of an "unexpired" term, defined as the period between the dissolution of the House and the five years following the date of its first meeting, applicable in situations where the Lok Sabha or an Assembly is dissolved before serving its full term.

Historical Context:

The concept of conducting simultaneous elections is not a recent development in India. Between 1952 and 1967, the country observed a practice where the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections were held concurrently. This approach was aimed at streamlining electoral processes and reducing the frequency of elections, allowing for more efficient governance. However, this synchronization was disrupted as a result of premature dissolutions of both state assemblies and the Lok Sabha, resulting in a fragmented electoral landscape.

Despite the challenges faced in maintaining simultaneous elections, there have been intermittent efforts to reintroduce this practice in the Indian electoral system. Various stakeholders, including the Election Commission of India (ECI) and several think tanks, have periodically revisited the idea. They have engaged in comprehensive discussions and analyses to evaluate the feasibility and potential benefits of syncing elections, given that the Indian political landscape has evolved significantly over the decades.

The revival of simultaneous elections could potentially lead to reduced political campaigning, decreased expenditures for both the government and candidates, and more stable governance. Advocates argue that aligning Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections may minimize electoral fatigue among voters and promote higher turnout rates. As the conversation around election reforms continues, it remains to be seen whether India will once again embrace this approach and the implications it may have for the democratic process.

Literature Review: One Nation, One Election:

Historical Development of Simultaneous Elections: India's experience with simultaneous elections began with its inaugural general elections in 1952, 1957, and 1962, when elections for both the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies were held at the same time. Mishra (2018) notes that this alignment was disrupted in 1968-69 due to the premature dissolution of various state assemblies. This interruption led to the creation of distinct electoral cycles, which have influenced the present electoral system in India.

Justification for Concurrent Elections: Advocates, including the NITI Aayog (2017), argue that conducting simultaneous elections could alleviate financial pressures, reduce policy stagnation, and lessen administrative interruptions. Bhalla (2019) underscores the considerable demands that frequent elections impose on state resources, particularly concerning the use of security personnel and the operational capabilities of the Election Commission.

Legal Challenges: Kumar (2020) investigates the constitutional amendments needed to implement One Nation, One Election (ONOE), specifically addressing Articles 83, 85, 172, and 174. Enacting these amendments necessitates the synchronization of the terms for both the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, presenting both legal and logistical obstacles. The author also emphasizes the necessity of obtaining broad political agreement for such a substantial constitutional alteration.

Effects on Federalism: Critics, including Yadav (2021), warn that ONOE could threaten India's federal structure by concentrating political focus and sidelining regional issues. The article raises concerns about national narratives overshadowing the electoral landscape, potentially neglecting local governance requirements, especially in states with unique socio-economic conditions.

Global Comparisons: Chakraborty (2022) draws comparisons between ONOE and the electoral systems in countries like South Africa and Sweden, where simultaneous elections are common. While these cases illustrate cost efficiency and governance continuity, the author points out that their smaller geographical size and less diverse political environments sharply contrast with the complexities of India's political landscape.

Economic Consequences: A research study conducted by Rao and Singh (2019) emphasizes that holding separate elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies incurs significant expenses. Their analysis suggests that organizing synchronized elections could lead to savings amounting to billions, which could be redirected towards developmental projects. Nonetheless, the authors caution against prioritizing economic efficiency over the crucial aspect of democratic representation.

Democratic Representation and Accountability: Sharma (2023) argues that synchronized elections may create extended periods of non-representation in the event of mid-term dissolutions. The findings highlight that such lapses in representation could weaken democratic accountability, particularly in states grappling with political instability or governance challenges.

Logistical Viability: The Election Commission of India (2018) raised alarms about the logistical challenges associated with the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) initiative, particularly in overseeing an electorate of over 900 million across 28 states and eight Union Territories. The report emphasizes the urgent need for enhanced electoral infrastructure, including improved electronic voting machines and updated voter rolls.

Public and Political Response: A study by Joshi and Banerjee (2020) indicates that public opinion regarding ONOE is divided. While a substantial segment of the population supports the idea due to its potential economic advantages, there are persistent concerns about the risk of diminishing regional autonomy. Political parties, particularly those at the regional level, display

varying opinions, with many expressing fears over the loss of their influence in a synchronized electoral framework.

Implementation Suggestions: The Law Commission of India (2018) has recommended a phased approach for implementing synchronized elections, advocating for initial synchronization in a select number of states to evaluate its feasibility. This strategy, backed by Basu (2023), involves modifying electoral schedules over several cycles to align terms while maintaining the integrity of the democratic process.

Benefits of One Nation, One Election:

Cost Efficiency: Conducting separate elections demands considerable resources, including finances and manpower. Implementing One Nation, One Election (ONOE) can significantly reduce the expenses tied to election logistics and security measures, leading to optimal resource allocation. By consolidating elections, governments can save money and improve efficiency in managing the entire electoral process, making it more sustainable in the long run.

Governance Continuity: Frequent elections can create a scenario where governments become hesitant to enact bold policies due to the fear of voter backlash. By synchronizing elections, ONOE fosters a stable political environment that encourages steady governance and informed decision-making. This continuity allows governments to implement long-term strategies effectively, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the administration.

Reduced Electoral Fatigue: The relentless cycle of elections often leads to fatigue among voters and political parties alike. ONOE aims to alleviate this weariness by streamlining the electoral process, allowing greater focus on actual governance rather than constant campaigning. With fewer elections to contend with, stakeholders can engage more meaningfully in policy discussions and civic responsibilities, ultimately enriching the democratic experience.

Enhanced Security Management: Managing security for multiple elections across various states can pose significant logistical challenges. ONOE simplifies this task by consolidating the electoral process, allowing for more effective planning and deployment of security resources. With a unified approach, authorities can ensure a safer and more controlled electoral environment, thereby enhancing the overall integrity of the elections and public confidence in the process.

Challenges and Criticisms:

Impact on Federalism: The Indian Constitution grants states the autonomy to determine their electoral timelines. By synchronizing elections, this federal principle may be jeopardized, leading to a concentration of power within the central government and diminishing the authority of individual states to govern their own electoral processes.

Logistical Complexity: Coordinating simultaneous elections for over a billion voters across varied regions presents immense challenges. It necessitates exceptional levels of organization and the implementation of advanced technologies to manage the diverse electoral landscapes effectively.

Disruption of Democratic Cycles: In instances of mid-term dissolution or unexpected events, holding synchronized elections may result in certain states or constituencies lacking representation for prolonged durations. This could lead to gaps in political accountability and diminish the responsiveness of governance to local needs.

Political Dominance: Conducting simultaneous elections may disproportionately benefit national parties, resulting in regional issues and smaller candidates being overlooked. This scenario could marginalize local perspectives and undermine the representation of community-specific interests in the broader political discourse.

Overburdening the Election Commission: The Election Commission may find it challenging to manage the complexities associated with a single large-scale electoral event. This increased workload could strain its resources and capabilities, potentially leading to inefficiencies in conducting free and fair elections across various constituencies within the country.

Mid-term Representation Gaps: In instances of mid-term dissolution, constituencies can be left without representation for extended periods. This lack of elected officials during crucial times can weaken the voice of citizens, hamper effective governance, and limit the responsiveness of government services, ultimately affecting the well-being of the constituents.

Marginalization of Regional Issues: A focus on national narratives during elections could overshadow important state-specific issues and concerns. This dominance may result in policies that do not adequately reflect the unique needs and priorities of different regions, creating a disconnect between the government and the local populace.

Electoral Dominance of National Parties: The influence of regional parties may diminish, leading to a reduction in diversity in political representation. National parties could overpower

local voices, resulting in a homogenization of political perspectives that fails to address the unique interests and challenges faced by various communities across the nation.

Policy and Governance Stalemates: Aligning election cycles may necessitate adjustments to the terms of currently serving legislatures, either by extending or shortening them. Such changes could create instability and confusion, affecting governance and the smooth functioning of political institutions as they adapt to new electoral timelines.

Legal and Constitutional Hurdles: Implementing significant constitutional amendments would be essential, requiring widespread consensus among political stakeholders. Achieving such agreement poses challenges, as differing political interests and ideologies may complicate discussions, potentially delaying the introduction of synchronized election cycles and impacting the overall electoral process.

Increased Risks of Political Polarization: Synchronizing elections could exacerbate political tensions and polarization among parties. The competitive nature of campaigns might intensify, fostering an environment where dissent and conflict overshadow collaboration, ultimately damaging the quality of democratic discourse and governance within the political landscape.

Strain on Security Forces: Coordinating security for a nationwide election could impose extraordinary stress on law enforcement agencies. They would need to manage a vast array of duties and responsibilities to ensure voter safety and prevent disruptions, which may stretch their resources and capabilities thinner than ever before.

Risk of Voter Fatigue: Organizing a single, large-scale election might inundate voters with an excessive number of options, leading to confusion and fatigue. When faced with numerous choices simultaneously, individuals may find it challenging to make informed decisions, ultimately undermining the election process and impacting voter turnout.

Technology Reliance: Relying heavily on electronic voting systems and advanced logistical technologies introduces potential weaknesses. Technical malfunctions, cyberattacks, or outages could disrupt the electoral process, eroding public confidence. Additionally, over-dependence on technology might compromise the integrity of the election if systems fail or are manipulated.

Delayed Emergency Governance: In emergencies, such as natural disasters, the inability to conduct elections during ongoing crises can impede effective governance. When elections cannot be held as scheduled, decision-makers may struggle to respond adequately, creating gaps in leadership and swift resource allocation during critical times.

Potential for Higher Electoral Violence: The scale and complexity of one large nationwide election could heighten the risk of electoral violence, especially in sensitive areas with existing tensions. Increased political passions might ignite conflicts, potentially leading to violent confrontations among rival factions and escalating grievances within affected communities.

Economic Disruptions: Hosting a nationwide election could significantly impact the usual economic activities across the country. Businesses may close, supply chains could be interrupted, and labour forces redirected, leading to temporary economic slowdowns or complications in trade, especially surrounding election periods, thereby straining local economies.

Undermines Local Leadership: The prominence of national leaders and overarching issues in a nationwide election might overshadow local governance and its importance. Local concerns may be neglected, diminishing the significance of regional representation as citizens increasingly focus on national agendas, potentially creating disconnects between communities and their leaders.

Complicates Coalition Dynamics: Large-scale elections may create tensions within regional political coalitions, as smaller parties may feel marginalized. When national narratives dominate the discourse, it may strain existing alliances, leading to fragmentation or even conflicts among regional parties who might feel their interests are overlooked.

Challenging Voter Education: Teaching voters about the mechanics of multiple simultaneous elections can be a daunting task. Communicating complex information regarding various ballots and candidates within a condensed time frame may overwhelm citizens, ultimately complicating efforts to ensure that they are adequately informed, engaged, and ready to participate.

Resistance from Regional Parties: A lack of backing from state and regional political entities could impede efforts to forge consensus around a nationwide election. This resistance may stem from concerns about representation and resources, hampering collaboration and trust necessary for successfully navigating the electoral landscape, thus threatening unity.

Legal and Constitutional Hurdles:

Legal and constitutional challenges present significant obstacles to the implementation of ONOE. Major amendments to the constitution are essential, specifically regarding Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 327, to ensure that the terms of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies are

synchronized. Moreover, reaching a political agreement among various parties and regions adds another layer of complexity to this process. The diverse political landscape complicates efforts to establish a unified approach, making it difficult to garner the necessary support for such constitutional changes. Without a clear consensus, the pathway to implementing ONOE remains fraught with difficulties, potentially hindering progress and delaying important reforms needed in the governance structure. Forcefully pushing through legislation based solely on a dominant majority in both houses of parliament could have detrimental consequences for the federal and diverse nature of India's political system in the long term.

Global Perspective:

Countries such as South Africa and Sweden hold concurrent elections, presenting possible advantages. Nevertheless, their governance frameworks and political environments contrast sharply with India's multi-tiered and varied democratic system. Analysing these different electoral models offers important perspectives, while also emphasizing the distinct challenges that India may encounter. For instance, the efficiency and cost-effectiveness observed in these nations can be appealing, yet India's complexity in managing its diverse electorate requires careful consideration. Each country's unique history, culture, and political dynamics play a crucial role in shaping its electoral processes. Thus, while there are lessons to be learned from them, India's democratic fabric necessitates tailored solutions to address its specific issues and ensure effective governance.

Potential Solutions and Way Forward:

Phased Implementation: To evaluate the feasibility of the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) initiative without causing widespread disruption, a gradual rollout can be introduced. This approach would involve conducting synchronized elections in selected states initially, allowing for adjustments and improvements based on these early implementations before expanding to other areas. The phased method can help identify potential issues and refine the process for a smoother implementation across the country.

Strengthening Institutions: Improving the capabilities of the Election Commission and judicial systems is crucial for effectively managing the complexities associated with One Nation, One Election (ONOE). This includes providing additional training, resources, and support to these institutions, enabling them to handle the increased demand for oversight and

transparency. By bolstering these organizations, we can ensure that they are well-equipped to address challenges and uphold the integrity of the electoral process during the ONOE transition.

Public Awareness: To foster acceptance of the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) policy, it is vital to promote public awareness and engagement through open discussions and consultations with various stakeholders. Establishing a platform for dialogue allows citizens to voice their opinions, ask questions, and express concerns. This participatory approach can lead to greater consensus, alleviate misunderstandings, and minimize opposition, ultimately creating a supportive environment for the successful implementation of ONOE.

Technological Integration: Utilizing advanced technology for voter registration, electronic voting, and timely result dissemination is key to overcoming logistical challenges associated with One Nation, One Election (ONOE). By integrating digital solutions, we can streamline the electoral process, enhance accuracy, and ensure quick, reliable access to election data. Implementing such technologies not only improves efficiency but also instils confidence in the electoral system, helping to facilitate a smoother transition to ONOE across various regions.

Conclusion:

The "One Nation, One Election" initiative presents potential advantages while also posing notable constitutional, logistical, and political hurdles. Its successful execution requires meticulous planning, broad agreement among stakeholders, and a gradual approach to ensure that India's democratic values and federal framework are upheld. The discussion around ONOE highlights the necessity of finding a balance between enhancing administrative efficiency and maintaining the fundamental principles of representation and federal governance. Achieving this balance is crucial to ensure that the initiative does not compromise the democratic fabric of the nation while striving for improved electoral coordination. Ultimately, careful consideration of these factors is essential for fostering a harmonious and effective electoral system in India.

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Reclaiming the Screen: Gendered Bodies, Feminist Resistance, and the Art of Cinematic Subversion

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Abstract

Cinema is one of the most influential cultural forms in shaping social perceptions of gender, identity, and power. Historically, film industries across the world have reproduced patriarchal ideologies by representing women's bodies as objects of visual pleasure rather than agents of narrative action. Feminist film theory emerged as a response to these representations, critically examining the structures of cinematic language and advocating alternative forms of storytelling that challenge gender hierarchies. This paper explores the relationship between gendered bodies, feminist resistance, and cinematic subversion. It analyses how cinema constructs gendered identities through visual narratives and how feminist filmmakers disrupt these constructions through innovative cinematic strategies. Drawing upon key feminist film theorists and examples from global cinema, the study argues that feminist cinema functions as a site of resistance, where gender norms are questioned, bodies are reclaimed, and dominant narratives are reimagined. Through theoretical discussion and critical analysis, the paper demonstrates that cinematic subversion plays a crucial role in transforming visual culture and expanding the possibilities of gender representation in contemporary media.

Introduction

Cinema has long served as a powerful medium for constructing and circulating cultural meanings about gender, sexuality, and the human body. Through visual storytelling, film shapes the ways audiences perceive social identities and power relations. For decades, mainstream cinema—particularly commercial industries such as Hollywood—has been criticised for presenting women primarily through patriarchal frameworks that reduce them to objects of desire, passive romantic interests, or symbols of beauty. These portrayals reinforce gender hierarchies by privileging male perspectives and limiting female agency.

The concept of the **gendered body** is central to feminist critiques of cinema. Bodies on screen are not neutral representations of reality; rather, they are shaped by cultural ideologies and

cinematic techniques that assign meaning to gender. How bodies are framed, illuminated, and positioned within narratives contributes to broader social discourses about femininity, masculinity, and power.

In response to these representations, feminist scholars and filmmakers began challenging traditional cinematic structures during the late twentieth century. Feminist film theory emerged as an interdisciplinary field that examines how cinema constructs gendered subjectivities and how these representations can be resisted or transformed. Scholars such as Laura Mulvey, Teresa de Lauretis, and bell hooks have provided critical frameworks for analysing the relationship between visual pleasure, spectatorship, and gender politics.

At the same time, feminist filmmakers have experimented with alternative storytelling methods that challenge dominant visual regimes. These cinematic practices often involve disrupting traditional narrative forms, repositioning the camera gaze, and presenting women's experiences from new perspectives.

This paper examines three key dimensions of feminist engagement with cinema: the construction of gendered bodies in film, the development of feminist resistance within film theory and practice, and the strategies of cinematic subversion that challenge patriarchal narratives. By exploring these themes, the study highlights how feminist cinema transforms the representation of bodies and identities on screen.

Gendered Bodies and the Politics of Representation

The representation of bodies in cinema is deeply connected to cultural ideas about gender and power. Feminist scholars argue that the cinematic body is a social construct shaped by visual language and narrative conventions. Through techniques such as framing, editing, and camera movement, films create meanings that influence how audiences understand gender roles.

Historically, women's bodies have been presented in cinema as objects of visual pleasure. This phenomenon is often associated with what Laura Mulvey famously termed the “**male gaze.**” According to Mulvey, mainstream cinema positions viewers to identify with a heterosexual male perspective, where the camera functions as a voyeuristic gaze directed at female characters. Women become spectacles to be looked at, while male characters drive the narrative and embody agency.

This pattern is evident in many classical Hollywood films, where female characters are frequently introduced through slow camera movements that emphasize their physical

appearance. Costumes, lighting, and camera angles are designed to enhance their attractiveness and reinforce traditional ideals of femininity. Meanwhile, male protagonists are portrayed as active figures who control the narrative trajectory.

Such representations contribute to the objectification of women by reducing their identities to their physical bodies. The female body becomes a site of aesthetic consumption rather than a source of subjectivity or voice. Feminist scholars argue that these portrayals reflect broader patriarchal structures in society, where women's bodies are often regulated and interpreted through male authority.

However, the concept of the gendered body also highlights the potential for resistance. Bodies on screen can challenge cultural norms by presenting alternative identities, experiences, and forms of expression. Feminist filmmakers have sought to reclaim the representation of the female body by depicting it as a site of agency, emotion, and lived experience.

Feminist Film Theory and the Emergence of Resistance

Feminist film theory developed during the 1970s alongside broader feminist movements that sought to challenge gender inequalities in society. Scholars began analysing cinema not only as a cultural product but also as a system of representation that shapes social consciousness.

One of the primary goals of feminist film theory was to expose the ideological mechanisms that underpin mainstream cinematic practices. By examining narrative structures, visual techniques, and audience positioning, feminist scholars demonstrated how films reproduce patriarchal values.

Laura Mulvey's influential essay "**Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema**" (1975) marked a turning point in film studies. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory, Mulvey argued that mainstream cinema is structured around male desire. The cinematic apparatus encourages spectators to adopt a masculine gaze, turning women into passive objects of visual pleasure.

While Mulvey's work focused primarily on Hollywood cinema, other scholars expanded feminist film theory to address issues of race, class, and cultural difference. Bell Hooks introduced the concept of the "**oppositional gaze**," emphasizing that marginalized viewers—particularly Black women—may resist dominant cinematic perspectives by critically engaging with the images presented on screen.

Similarly, Teresa de Laureates emphasized the importance of narrative and subjectivity in feminist cinema. She argued that feminist films should not merely reverse traditional roles but should create new forms of storytelling that allow women to become active subjects within cinematic narratives.

These theoretical interventions inspired filmmakers to experiment with alternative cinematic practices. Feminist filmmakers began creating works that foreground women's voices, challenge visual objectification, and explore the complexity of gender identity.

Cinematic Subversion: Challenging the Visual Order

Cinematic subversion refers to the deliberate disruption of conventional filmmaking techniques in order to challenge dominant ideologies. Feminist filmmakers often use these strategies to question patriarchal narratives and create new modes of representation.

One important strategy involves reconfiguring the cinematic gaze. Instead of presenting women as objects to be observed, feminist films frequently align the camera with female perspectives. This shift allows audiences to experience the story through the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of female characters.

Another strategy involves disrupting narrative structures. Traditional films often follow a linear plot centered on male heroes and romantic resolution. Feminist cinema may reject these patterns by employing fragmented storytelling, open-ended narratives, or multiple viewpoints. These techniques challenge audiences to question familiar narrative conventions.

Visual experimentation is also a key feature of feminist cinematic subversion. Techniques such as unconventional editing, symbolic imagery, and experimental sound design create new aesthetic experiences that resist traditional cinematic norms. By breaking the rules of classical filmmaking, feminist directors create space for alternative forms of storytelling.

Documentary filmmaking has been particularly significant for feminist resistance. Feminist documentaries often focus on real-life stories of women, addressing issues such as labor exploitation, domestic violence, reproductive rights, and social inequality. By presenting authentic voices and lived experiences, these films challenge dominant narratives that marginalize women's perspectives.

Cinematic subversion therefore operates not only at the level of narrative but also through visual and aesthetic choices. These creative strategies enable filmmakers to challenge patriarchal representations and explore new possibilities for gender representation.

Intersectionality and Global Feminist Cinema As feminist film studies developed, scholars increasingly recognized the importance of intersectionality in analyzing cinematic representation. Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of social categories such as gender, race, class, and sexuality.

Early feminist film theory was sometimes criticized for focusing primarily on the experiences of white, Western women. Later scholars expanded the field by examining how cinema represents diverse identities across different cultural contexts.

Global feminist cinema includes films from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East that address gender issues within specific cultural and political environments. These films often explore themes such as colonialism, migration, and economic inequality alongside gender oppression.

Intersectional approaches emphasize that women's experiences are not uniform. Instead, they are shaped by multiple social factors that influence how bodies are represented and perceived. For example, women of color may face both racial stereotyping and gender objectification in cinema.

By highlighting these complexities, intersectional feminist cinema challenges simplistic portrayals of women as universal victims. Instead, it emphasizes resilience, agency, and the diversity of women lived experiences.

The Cultural Impact of Feminist Cinema

The influence of feminist cinema extends beyond academic debates into broader cultural and political spheres. By challenging dominant visual representations, feminist films encourage audiences to reflect on gender norms and social inequalities.

In recent decades, there has been a growing demand for greater gender diversity within the film industry. Advocacy movements and film festivals have highlighted the importance of supporting women filmmakers and promoting inclusive storytelling.

The rise of digital media and streaming platforms has also expanded opportunities for independent filmmakers to share their work with global audiences. These developments have allowed feminist cinema to reach wider audiences and contribute to ongoing discussions about representation and equality.

Contemporary films increasingly feature complex female protagonists and narratives that challenge traditional stereotypes. While the film industry still faces structural inequalities, the influence of feminist critiques has contributed to significant changes in how gender is represented on screen.

Conclusion

The exploration of gendered bodies, feminist resistance, and cinematic subversion reveals the powerful role cinema plays in shaping cultural understandings of gender and identity. Historically, mainstream film industries have reinforced patriarchal ideologies by presenting women as objects of visual pleasure and limiting their narrative agency.

Feminist film theory has provided essential tools for analyzing these representations and exposing the ideological mechanisms that sustain them. Through theoretical critique and creative practice, feminist scholars and filmmakers have challenged dominant cinematic structures and proposed alternative modes of storytelling.

Cinematic subversion serves as a key strategy in this process. By disrupting narrative conventions, reconfiguring the cinematic gaze, and experimenting with visual aesthetics, feminist filmmakers transform cinema into a space of resistance and innovation.

As global media landscapes continue to evolve, feminist perspectives remain vital for promoting more inclusive and equitable representations of gender. By reclaiming the screen and redefining the representation of bodies, feminist cinema contributes to broader struggles for social justice and cultural transformation.

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Voicing the Marginalized: A Study of Social Inequality in the Novels of Thrity Umrigar

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Abstract

Contemporary Indian English literature has increasingly foregrounded the voices of marginalized communities and the structural inequalities embedded in modern society. Among the writers who powerfully portray these realities is Thrity Umrigar, whose fiction offers a compassionate and critical exploration of class disparity, gender oppression, and social exclusion. Her novels depict the lives of individuals who exist at the margins of society, including domestic workers, impoverished women, and victims of patriarchal violence. This research paper examines the representation of social inequality and marginalized voices in selected novels such as *The Space Between Us*, *The Secrets Between Us*, and *Honor*. Using theoretical perspectives from postcolonial studies, feminist criticism, and sociological theory, the study explores how Umrigar portrays the intersection of class, gender, and cultural power structures. The paper argues that Umrigar's fiction functions as a powerful literary intervention that exposes social injustice while giving dignity and voice to marginalized characters. By illuminating the lived experiences of the oppressed, Umrigar contributes significantly to the discourse on social inequality in contemporary literature.

Keywords: marginalized voices, social inequality, feminism, subaltern studies, contemporary Indian fiction, class disparity

1. Introduction

Literature has long served as a powerful medium for representing the struggles of marginalized communities and exposing social injustice. Contemporary Indian English literature, in particular, has increasingly focused on the realities of class inequality, gender oppression, and cultural conflict in modern society. Many writers use fiction as a means of exploring the lives of those who remain invisible within dominant social structures.

Among these writers, Thrity Umrigar occupies a significant place for her empathetic portrayal of marginalized individuals. Born in Mumbai and later migrating to the United States, Umrigar's works often bridge the cultural and social experiences of India and the diaspora. Her novels explore themes such as migration, domestic labor, social injustice, and the struggles of women within patriarchal societies.

One of Umrigar's most acclaimed novels, *The Space Between Us*, vividly portrays the relationship between a wealthy Parsi widow, Sera Dubash, and her domestic servant Bhima. Through this relationship, Umrigar exposes the stark divide between social classes in urban India. The novel illustrates how wealth and privilege coexist alongside poverty and marginalization within the same social environment.

Similarly, in *The Secrets Between Us*, Umrigar revisits the lives of marginalized women and explores themes of education, friendship, and social mobility. The novel highlights the possibility of solidarity across class boundaries while acknowledging the persistence of social inequalities.

Another important work, *Honor*, addresses issues of gender violence and religious intolerance. The narrative focuses on a woman who becomes the victim of an honor-based attack for marrying outside her religion, thereby revealing the dangerous intersection of patriarchy and cultural conservatism.

This research paper analyzes how Umrigar's novels give voice to marginalized communities and critique social inequality. It explores the themes of class hierarchy, gender oppression, urban stratification, and the search for dignity among marginalized individuals. By examining these themes through the lenses of feminist and postcolonial theory, the paper demonstrates how Umrigar's fiction functions as both literary representation and social critique.

2. Theoretical Framework: Feminism, Postcolonialism, and Subaltern Studies

The study of marginalized voices in literature often relies on theoretical frameworks that analyze power structures and social hierarchies. Feminist criticism, postcolonial theory, and subaltern studies provide important perspectives for understanding the representation of marginalized communities.

The concept of the subaltern, developed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, refers to individuals who exist outside dominant power structures and whose voices are often silenced in historical and cultural narratives. Spivak's influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" argues that

marginalized groups are frequently denied the ability to represent themselves within systems of knowledge production.

Umrigar's fiction can be interpreted as a response to this question. By focusing on the lives of domestic workers, abused women, and socially excluded individuals, she provides a narrative platform through which these characters can articulate their experiences and struggles.

Feminist theory also plays an essential role in analyzing Umrigar's work. According to Judith Butler, gender identities are constructed through social practices and cultural norms rather than biological determinism. In many of Umrigar's novels, women confront rigid gender expectations that restrict their autonomy and reinforce patriarchal power.

The sociological theories of Pierre Bourdieu further illuminate how social hierarchies are maintained through economic and cultural capital. Bourdieu argues that individuals' access to resources such as education and social networks determines their position within society. In Umrigar's fiction, these disparities are clearly visible in the lives of characters from different social classes.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study examines how Umrigar's novels depict the intersection of gender, class, and cultural power structures.

3. Class Inequality and Domestic Labor

Class inequality is one of the most prominent themes in Umrigar's fiction. Her novels frequently portray the lives of domestic workers who perform essential labor within wealthy households yet remain socially invisible.

In *The Space Between Us*, Bhima works as a domestic servant for Sera Dubash. Despite her years of dedication and loyalty, Bhima continues to live in extreme poverty. She resides in a crowded slum and struggles to provide basic necessities for her family.

Umrigar portrays the everyday humiliations experienced by domestic workers. Bhima is prohibited from sitting on furniture or using the same utensils as her employer. These seemingly minor restrictions symbolize the rigid boundaries that separate social classes.

The novel also explores how poverty affects multiple generations. Bhima hopes that her granddaughter Maya will escape their circumstances through education. However, structural barriers and social discrimination make this aspiration difficult to achieve.

Through Bhima's experiences, Umrigar exposes the exploitative nature of domestic labor and the deep inequalities embedded within urban society.

4. Gender Oppression and Patriarchal Violence

Gender oppression is another central theme in Umrigar's novels. Women across different social classes face discrimination, domestic violence, and limited opportunities for independence.

In *The Space Between Us*, Sera Dubash suffers years of emotional and physical abuse from her husband. Despite her economic privilege, she is unable to escape the expectations imposed by patriarchal society.

Similarly, Bhima experiences domestic abuse and economic hardship. Her struggles highlight the intersection of gender and class oppression.

In *Honor*, Umrigar addresses the issue of honor-based violence. The novel tells the story of a woman who is attacked by members of her own community for marrying outside her religion. Through this narrative, Umrigar reveals how patriarchal traditions and communal prejudices can lead to extreme violence against women.

These stories illustrate how patriarchal norms restrict women's autonomy and reinforce gender inequality.

5. Urban Space and Social Stratification

Urban environments play an important role in Umrigar's depiction of social inequality. Cities such as Mumbai are portrayed as spaces where wealth and poverty coexist in stark contrast.

In *The Space Between Us*, the city is divided between luxurious apartments and overcrowded slums. This spatial segregation reflects the broader social hierarchy.

Urbanization has brought economic growth and modernization, but it has also intensified social disparities. While affluent families enjoy comfortable lifestyles, millions of urban poor struggle for survival.

Umrigar's vivid descriptions of city life highlight how social inequality is embedded within the urban landscape.

6. Education and Social Mobility

Education is often portrayed in Umrigar's novels as a potential pathway for social mobility. Characters from marginalized backgrounds view education as a means of escaping poverty and achieving dignity.

In *The Space Between Us*, Bhima dreams of providing education for her granddaughter Maya. She believes that schooling will allow Maya to break free from the cycle of poverty that has defined their lives.

However, the novel also reveals the limitations of education in a society marked by structural inequality. Social prejudice, economic constraints, and cultural barriers continue to hinder upward mobility.

Through these narratives, Umrigar emphasizes the importance of education while acknowledging the persistent obstacles faced by marginalized communities.

7. Empathy, Solidarity, and Human Connection

Despite portraying harsh social realities, Umrigar's novels also emphasize the importance of empathy and human connection.

The friendship between Sera and Bhima in *The Space Between Us* demonstrates how individuals from different social backgrounds can share experiences of suffering and resilience. Similarly, *The Secrets Between Us* explores the possibility of solidarity among women from different social classes. Through acts of compassion and mutual support, the characters attempt to challenge the boundaries imposed by society.

These narratives suggest that empathy can serve as a powerful force for social change, even within deeply unequal systems.

8. Narrative Techniques and Realism

Umrigar's literary style plays a crucial role in conveying the experiences of marginalized individuals. Her narratives are characterized by psychological realism, emotional depth, and vivid descriptions of everyday life.

By focusing on ordinary characters and their struggles, Umrigar creates a powerful sense of authenticity. Her storytelling invites readers to empathize with characters who might otherwise remain invisible in society.

This narrative approach allows Umrigar to transform individual stories into broader reflections on social inequality.

9. Conclusion

The novels of Thrity Umrigar provide a powerful exploration of social inequality and marginalized voices in contemporary society. Through her portrayal of domestic workers,

oppressed women, and socially excluded communities, Umrigar exposes the structural injustices that shape modern life.

Her fiction highlights the interconnected themes of class disparity, gender oppression, and the struggle for dignity among marginalized individuals. At the same time, her characters demonstrate resilience, compassion, and the capacity for empathy.

By giving voice to those who are often silenced, Umrigar challenges readers to confront social inequalities and imagine a more just and inclusive society.

Her works remain an important contribution to contemporary Indian English literature and to the broader discourse on marginalized representation.

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Challenges and Implementation of Government Primary Education in Maharashtra: A Descriptive Quantitative Study with Special Reference to Nagpur District

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Abstract

Primary education forms the foundation of any educational system in a country and plays a very important role in social and economic development. The government has introduced several programs in India including the right to education act (RTE), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as well as Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan to enhance the basis of universal elementary education. Even with these, there are still problems in various states such as in Maharashtra where infrastructural gaps, lack of finances, inefficiency of administration and lack of teachers pose challenges to the provision of education in an effective manner. The paper explores the issues of state primary school and its implementation in Maharashtra with Nagpur district. It was a descriptive quantitative design and 200 teachers in the government primary schools (rural and urban) were the participants in the study. Information about infrastructure, enrollment, teacher profiles, and perceptions of policy implementation was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. The analysis of data was performed with the help of descriptive statistics, correlation, and hypothesis testing methods (Chi-square and t-tests). The results found that there were major differences in rural schools and urban schools as regards to physical facilities, teaching materials, and classroom facilities. The research established that the financial allocation and administrative support are the determinants of the quality of the primary education. Issues pertaining to the teacher such as workload, lack of professional growth and incentives were also significant. This research finishes with policy suggestions that can be implemented to curb the problems of inadequate infrastructures, the empowerment of teachers, the establishment of efficient monitoring, and the involvement of communities. The results are part of the discussion on education development and can be used to guide the enhancement of the primary education in Maharashtra and other states in India.

Keywords: *Primary education, Maharashtra, Nagpur district, quantitative study, infrastructure, teacher challenges, educational policy*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Primary education is the basis of lifelong learning, skills acquisition and building human capital. It is known the world over as one of the most important factors of social mobility and national development. Included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) of the United Nations are the need to provide inclusive and equitable access to quality education and to facilitate the opportunity to learn throughout life. In the Indian case, primary education can be singled out as of particular importance because of the differentiation of socio-economic statuses and regional differences. The Maharashtra is one of the most industrialized states in India that has achieved significant achievements in literacy and school enrolment rates in the past 30 years. In the 2011 Census, the literacy rate of the state was 82.34% which is much higher as compared to the national average. Nevertheless, inequalities still exist in districts, rural territories, as well as among disadvantaged social groups, where the situation is usually worse. In spite of the state interventions in the form of schemes such as the Right to Education (RTE), the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) programme and the infrastructural support via Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), there are still a number of challenges that cannot be overcome to ensure the successful implementation of the primary education in Maharashtra. A special example of such a study can be Nagpur district which belongs to the region of Vidarbha. It is defined by both urban and rural settings, social-economic disparities and administrative complications. Although the city of Nagpur enjoys better infrastructure and teacher facilities, rural and tribal parts of the district are seriously lacking in the classroom, teachers and education resources. The analysis of Nagpur presents an illustrative image of how the primary education in the state has systemic issues.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Higher education, employment opportunities, and social equity have a direct implication on the quality of primary education. Although India has recorded almost 100 percent enrolment at the primary level, misbehaviours like student absenteeism, shortage of teachers, inadequate infrastructures and lack of finances still hamper the objectives of universal and quality education. The present research is meaningful due to several reasons:

1. It uses the Nagpur district as a case study to take a look at both rural and urban issues.
2. It employs a quantitative descriptive approach to data on 200 teachers that will add empirical data to theoretical discourse.
3. It examines certain assumptions regarding the interaction between infrastructure, finance, administration and educational performance.
4. It gives policy-based recommendations that are applicable to the state and central governments.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Maharashtra continues to experience a number of challenges in realizing the goals of universal and quality primary education despite the government expenditure and the reform of policy. The problems may be grouped into broad categories, namely, infrastructural shortcomings (ex: classes, bathrooms, electricity), financial, administrative, and teacher related. These issues are visualized in Nagpur district in terms of high dropout rates, irregular attendance of teachers, absence of teaching materials and difference between rural and urban schools.

1.4 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. What is the current status of infrastructure, enrolment, and teacher profiles in government primary schools in Nagpur district?
2. What are the major challenges faced by teachers in implementing primary education?
3. To what extent do financial allocation, administrative efficiency, and infrastructural facilities affect the implementation of primary education?
4. What measures can be suggested to improve the quality of government primary education in Maharashtra?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The research is confined to primary government schools within Nagpur district and teachers are the main respondents. Although the results are unique to Nagpur, they have general applicability to the other districts in Maharashtra and India that have the same challenges. It is on infrastructural, financial, administrative and teacher related, not the design of curriculum or pedagogical.

1.6 Structure of the Paper

The following is how the paper will be structured: Section 2 will have a literature review in detail. The objectives and hypotheses are described in section 3. The methodology of the research is described in Section 4. Section 5 has analysis and interpretation of data. In Section 6, the findings have been discussed concerning previous research. Section 7 provides the conclusion of the paper in terms of suggestions and policy implications.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical Framework of Primary Education

It is well noted that primary education is the building block of human capital formation and development of the country (Becker, 2009). The Human Capital Theory focuses on investing in education by ensuring the subsequent growth in productivity and the economy. In India, the education sector was transformed by the enactment of the Right to Education (RTE) Act (2009), where the right to education was one of the fundamental rights, and thus children between the ages of 6 and 14 years were expected to get free and compulsory education. As stated by Tilak (2018), primary education is not only a source of social mobility and equity, but also a contributor to literacy. Nevertheless, the implementation of these conceptual requirements into practice is a challenge because of the bottlenecks infrastructural, financial and administrative.

2.2 Infrastructure in Primary Education

The infrastructure is a key factor in determining the educational results. Research shows that access to toilets, libraries, and electricity as well as the number of classrooms have a direct impact on student enrolment and retention (Dreze and Sen, 2013; Sharma and Kulkarni, 2023). A report by UNESCO (2021) indicated that infrastructural deficiency in rural India still remains as a hindrance to good education. Mukherjee (2022) discovered that 38 percent of rural schools in Maharashtra do not have sufficient classrooms and 42 percent have sanitation problems. On the same note, Jha (2016) noted that learners in schools with inadequate facilities have a higher chance of dropping out.

2.3 Financial Constraints and Resource Allocation

Public funding is crucial in enhancing the primary education. A number of researchers have associated a lack of financial allocation with poor infrastructure, absence of teaching facilities, and ineffective teacher motivation (Kumar, 2019; Singh, 2024). Although Maharashtra has

been spending more in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Samagra Shiksha, there are problems with proper use of funds. According to a study conducted by Rao and Thomas (2017) bureaucracy and leakages tend to cause funds to reach schools in time. More recently Mehta (2023) found that the quality of education in different districts is significantly caused by financial under-provisioning.

2.4 Teacher Profile, Training, and Challenges

The education system is supported by teachers. Qualifications of teachers, and their absenteeism as well as their professional development have direct impact on learning outcomes (Kingdon, 2019). In their study of Maharashtra schools, Patil and Gaikwad (2020) discovered that due to teacher shortages in rural Nagpur schools, the pupil to teacher ratio was high hence impacting negatively on learning. Sharma and Kulkarni (2023) pointed out that numerous educators do not have the opportunity to engage in professional development on a regular basis. Furthermore, teachers are not satisfied with their work and avoid coming to work due to low wages, workload, and incentives (Srivastava, 2017).

2.5 Enrolment, Dropout, and Retention Patterns

Despite the rise in enrolment rates through various policies such as RTE and mid-day meal schemes, the rates of dropout are high in the disadvantaged areas. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER, 2022) by Pratham, even when the enrolment reached 97% throughout the country, after Class V, the dropout rates were higher among girls in rural areas. Deshmukh (2019) observed that children in Nagpur district belong to tribal communities, which means that they frequently end their education because of socio-economic pressures and absence of transport facilities.

2.6 Administrative and Policy Challenges

The efficiency of administrative implementation is vital in policy implementation. Tilak and Chand (2018) posit that school governance in India is not well decentralized thus it is ineffective in monitoring. Joshi (2020) pointed out in Maharashtra that corruption and accountability deficiency of administrators on the local level frequently restrain the effectiveness of government programmes. According to a 2024 study by Singh, there are also administrative bottlenecks such as sluggish teacher appointments and inefficient systems of inspection, which are still at the center of the issue.

2.7 Studies on Implementation of Primary Education in Maharashtra

Administrative implementation plays an important role in the efficiency of policy implementation. According to Tilak and Chand (2018), school governance in India is not effectively decentralized hence it is not effective in monitoring. In Maharashtra, Joshi (2020) indicated that corruption and lack of accountability of administrators at the grassroots often curbs the efficacy of the government programmes. A 2024 study by Singh additionally notes the administrative bottlenecks, which include slow teacher appointments and ineffective systems of inspection but are still at the heart of the problem.

2.8 International Perspectives

Similar challenges are also noted in research across the world. To give an example, Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016) discovered that the most indicative variables in enhancing learning outcomes in the developing countries are infrastructure and accountability of teachers. UNESCO (2022) emphasized that the absence of proper infrastructure and governance makes it impossible to meet the universal education targets. The experience of other countries such as Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2021) demonstrates that primary education results can be influenced by a robust involvement of the communities greatly, a concept that Maharashtra can learn.

2.9 Literature Gap

Based on the review, it can be noted that although various studies have been conducted on the problem of infrastructure, finance, teachers, and administration in primary education, there is still a lack of quantitative research aimed at analyzing the environment of Maharashtra in terms of its district level. In Nagpur district especially, there is a paucity of empirical evidence. The gap in the literature is filled by this study since it offers quantitative information on the 200 government primary school teachers and therefore offers a micro-level analysis with macro-level implications.

3. Research Objectives and Hypotheses

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The current research project aims at exploring the challenges and application of government primary education in Maharashtra and Nagpur district in particular. The goals have been framed

following thorough examination of current literature, government policies and concerns of the stakeholders.

The main objectives are:

1. To learn the theoretical notions of government primary school. Primary education has been termed as the foundation of literacy and life long learning. Since the research focuses on the theoretical foundation, it brings the focal point on the social mobility and human capital, which is influenced by primary education.
2. To examine the issues of primary education in Maharashtra. Although the state of Maharashtra has been comparatively well in terms of the education, there are still gaps in education between rural and urban regions. This task aims at determining the general issues of primary education at state level.
3. To determine the conditions of primary education in relation to the infrastructure, the enrolment and the teacher profile. This includes scrutinizing on the physical infrastructure present, the student enrolment and dropout trends, and pedagogical and professional backgrounds of educators.
4. To find out the issues in implementation of primary education in Nagpur district. This goal makes the analysis scope narrow down to a district level analysis and presents hints to the realities of implementation on government schools.
5. To establish the issues that teachers encounter in state primary schools. The primary education depends on teachers. This goal is aimed at workload, training, incentives, and professional contentment.
6. In order to propose the ways of improvement of primary education in Maharashtra. This objective is based on the empirical findings to give practical suggestions to the policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study

The research tests three major hypotheses derived from the identified challenges in primary education. These hypotheses focus on infrastructure, finance, and administration as the critical independent variables influencing implementation.

- **Hypothesis 1:**
 - **H0 (Null Hypothesis):** There is no difference in infrastructure facilities with the problem of primary education and its implementation in Maharashtra.

- **H1 (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant difference in infrastructure facilities with the problem of primary education and its implementation in Maharashtra.
- **Hypothesis 2:**
 - **H0:** There is no difference in finance with the problem of primary education and its implementation in Maharashtra.
 - **H2:** There is a significant difference in finance with the problem of primary education and its implementation in Maharashtra.
- **Hypothesis 3:**
 - **H0:** There is no difference in administration with the problem of primary education and its implementation in Maharashtra.
 - **H3:** There is a significant difference in administration with the problem of primary education and its implementation in Maharashtra.

These hypotheses indicate how major systemic variables (infrastructure, finance, and administration) are likely to be related to the dependent variable (implementation of primary education). By conducting quantitative tests of these hypotheses, the study goes beyond descriptive observations to statistically validated conclusions.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The research design followed in the study is a quantitative descriptive research design. This design is suitable because it enables a systematic measure, description and analysis of the difficulties in the process of implementing the government primary education. The quantification of teacher perceptions and their association with the infrastructure, finance, and administration make the study empirically rigorous.

4.2 Population of the Study

The population is made up of teachers in government primary schools in Nagpur district. The sampling method used to identify the teachers is the direct selection as teachers are the immediate executors of educational policies and have been subject to infrastructural and administrative problems.

4.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

- **Sample Size:** 200 teachers.

- **Sampling Technique: Stratified random sampling** was adopted. Teachers from both **urban and rural schools** were proportionately represented to ensure balanced insights.
- The stratification was necessary as rural and urban schools in Nagpur differ significantly in terms of infrastructure and student enrolment patterns.

4.4 Tools of Data Collection

The study used a **structured questionnaire** as the primary tool. It contained close-ended and Likert-scale questions (1–5) to capture teachers' perceptions. The questionnaire included sections on:

1. Infrastructure (classrooms, toilets, electricity, teaching materials).
2. Teacher-related issues (qualifications, training, absenteeism, workload).
3. Financial aspects (funding adequacy, utilisation).
4. Administrative aspects (monitoring, transparency, accountability).
5. Student aspects (enrolment, dropout, retention).

A pilot test was conducted with 20 teachers to ensure clarity and reliability of questions.

4.5 Data Collection Process

Data were collected from sampled teachers over three months. Permissions were sought from school authorities, and ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were maintained.

4.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The following statistical methods were employed:

- **Descriptive statistics:** Mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage distribution to summarise responses.
- **Cross-tabulation:** To identify patterns between urban and rural responses.
- **Correlation analysis:** To examine relationships between teacher perceptions of infrastructure, finance, administration, and implementation challenges.
- **Hypothesis testing:** Chi-square tests and independent-sample t-tests were applied to validate hypotheses.
- **Reliability test:** Cronbach's Alpha was used to test internal consistency of the questionnaire (acceptable threshold >0.70).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines:

- Respondents' identities were kept anonymous.
- Data were used strictly for academic purposes.
- Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time.

4.8 Limitations of Methodology

- The study is limited to government schools in Nagpur district and does not include private schools.
- The sample size of 200 teachers, while statistically valid, may not fully capture the diversity of challenges across Maharashtra.
- Data are based on self-reported responses, which may involve subjective bias.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample included 200 government primary school teachers, equally distributed between rural and urban schools.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Teachers (N=200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	92	46.0%
	Female	108	54.0%
Age (years)	21–30	28	14.0%
	31–40	74	37.0%
	41–50	65	32.5%
	51+	33	16.5%
Qualification	Graduate	117	58.5%
	Postgraduate	70	35.0%
	Others (Diploma)	13	6.5%
Teaching Experience	<5 years	42	21.0%

	5–10 years	63	31.5%
	11–20 years	68	34.0%
	20+ years	27	13.5%
Location	Urban	100	50.0%
	Rural	100	50.0%

Interpretation: The sample has balanced gender representation, with slightly more female teachers (54%). Most teachers fall in the 31–50 age bracket, with a majority holding graduate-level qualifications. Rural and urban teachers are equally represented, ensuring diversity of responses.

5.2 Infrastructure Facilities in Schools

Teachers were asked to rate infrastructural adequacy (classrooms, electricity, toilets, libraries, ICT) on a 5-point scale (1 = very poor, 5 = excellent).

Table 2: Infrastructure Facilities in Urban vs. Rural Schools (Mean Scores)

Facility	Urban (n=100)	Rural (n=100)	Overall Mean
Adequate Classrooms	3.8	2.6	3.2
Electricity Supply	4.1	2.4	3.3
Functional Toilets	3.9	2.8	3.4
Library Facilities	3.4	2.1	2.8
ICT/Smart Boards	2.9	1.7	2.3

Interpretation: Urban schools fare significantly better in infrastructure compared to rural schools. The most critical gaps are in **ICT facilities and libraries**, where rural schools lag behind.

5.3 Teacher-Related Challenges

Teachers reported their challenges using Likert-scale questions.

Table 3: Teacher Challenges (Mean Scores, 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Challenge	Urban Mean	Rural Mean	Overall Mean
High Pupil-Teacher Ratio	3.2	4.0	3.6
Lack of Training Opportunities	3.4	4.1	3.8

Workload and Administrative Burden	3.9	3.6	3.7
Low Salary/Allowances	3.0	3.7	3.3
Lack of Motivation and Incentives	3.1	3.9	3.5

Interpretation: Rural teachers face greater challenges in terms of pupil-teacher ratio and lack of training. Urban teachers report higher administrative burden, possibly due to larger enrolments.

5.4 Enrolment and Dropout Trends

Table 4: Enrolment and Dropout (as reported by teachers)

Indicator	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Overall (%)
Enrollment (6–14 years)	96.0	92.0	94.0
Dropout (before Class V)	6.0	14.0	10.0
Retention till Class VIII	90.0	82.0	86.0

Interpretation: enrolment is relatively high across both contexts, but dropout and retention rates are worse in rural areas, reflecting socio-economic and infrastructural barriers.

5.5 Financial Adequacy and Utilisation

Table 5: Teacher Perceptions on Financial Adequacy (5-point scale)

Statement	Urban Mean	Rural Mean	Overall Mean
Adequacy of School Grants	3.4	2.5	2.9
Timely Disbursement of Funds	3.1	2.4	2.7
Utilisation of Allocated Funds	3.2	2.7	3.0
Transparency in Financial Management	3.0	2.6	2.8

Interpretation: Teachers perceive financial inadequacy as a serious problem in rural schools, with delays and low transparency in fund allocation.

5.6 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Infrastructure vs. Implementation Challenges

- Independent-sample **t-test** between urban and rural infrastructure scores.
- Result: $t(198) = 5.84, p < 0.01$.

- **Interpretation:** Significant difference exists; hence, **H1 accepted**.

Hypothesis 2: Finance vs. Implementation Challenges

- Chi-square test (adequacy vs. dropout trends).
- Result: $\chi^2(4, N=200) = 18.3, p < 0.05$.
- **Interpretation:** Financial adequacy significantly influences dropout; hence, **H2 accepted**.

Hypothesis 3: Administration vs. Implementation Challenges

- Correlation between perceived administrative efficiency and teacher workload.
- Result: $r = -0.47, p < 0.01$.
- **Interpretation:** Negative correlation; poor administration increases workload and lowers effectiveness; hence, **H3 accepted**.

5.7 Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Cronbach's Alpha for 25 Likert-scale items = **0.82**, indicating high internal consistency of the questionnaire.

5.8 Summary of Findings

1. Rural schools significantly lag behind in infrastructure and financial support.
2. Dropout rates remain higher in rural areas despite high enrolment.
3. Teacher challenges differ — rural teachers lack training while urban teachers face administrative burden.
4. Hypothesis tests confirm that infrastructure, finance, and administration all significantly impact the implementation of primary education.

6. Discussion

The teachers in the government primary schools of Nagpur district form the population. The direct selection is the sampling technique that will be used in the identification of the teachers because they are the direct implementers of the education policies and have been affected by the infrastructural and administrative issues.

6.1 Infrastructure and Educational Outcomes

The results indicate that there are huge disparities present in infrastructure in rural and urban schools. The urban schools scored higher on classroom adequacy, electricity, toilets and ICT facilities as compared to the laggings of the rural schools. It aligns with Mukherjee

(2022) who discovered that infrastructural gaps are one of the most urgent issues in rural schools in Maharashtra. UNESCO (2021) also documented that poor infrastructure is directly related to the increased dropout rate especially in developing nations. This has been validated by our findings because it was found that the rural dropout rates were much higher (14) compared to urban schools (6). Hypothesis 1 being accepted supports its argument that infrastructure is not just a support variable but a determining factor in primary education effectiveness.

6.2 Financial Adequacy and Utilisation

Another very critical determinant that was identified was financial support. The teachers (mainly rural teachers) also pointed out inefficiency and lags in school grants, as well as poor openness in the use of the funds. These results are reminiscent of the conclusions of Rao and Thomas (2017), who highlighted the inefficiency of the fund delivery in Indian primary schools. The confirmation of Hypothesis 2 confirms the claim by Singh (2024), that poor financing results in social disparities in education. Moreover, our analysis reveals that financial poverty is closely related to the dropout trends, which underscores the application of appropriate and sufficient funding strategies.

6.3 Teacher-Related Challenges

The central aspect associated with education policy implementation is the role of teachers, whose issues have a significant impact on classroom performance. The researchers discovered that the rural teachers experience greater proportions of pupil teacher as compared to the urban teachers, and the urban teachers complained of administration and paperwork. Patil and Gaikwad (2020) indicated that the same trends occurred in Vidarbha where there was a shortage of teachers that adversely impacted learning. Sharma and Kulkarni (2023) also posited that teachers are not motivated and that the quality of their teaching is impeded by the absence of professional development. These views are supported by our findings, having rural and urban teachers focusing on different yet equally significant issues. This implies that the policies of teachers should be context-specific in terms of their response to the unique urban and rural issues.

6.4 Administrative Efficiency and Accountability

Administrative inefficiency was observed to raise the workload of the teachers, lower their morale and influence the effectiveness of implementation. The systemic problem of

bureaucratic inefficiency can be suggested by the negative correlation between administrative efficiency and teacher workload ($r = -0.47$, $p < 0.01$). This observation confirms Tilak and Chand (2018) who claimed that decentralisation and accountability are still poor in the administration of schools in India. Another finding made by Joshi (2020) is how corruption at the local level and absence of monitoring systems reduces the efficacy of the government programmes on the state and central level. Hypothesis 3 acceptance therefore highlights the necessity to have stronger governance structures and open monitoring mechanisms.

6.5 Enrolment, Dropout, and Retention

Although the enrolment rates were quite high (94% in total), the rates of dropouts and retention in the countryside were high. The results are consistent with those provided by ASER (2022), who have already indicated an increase in dropout rates once Class V is reached, especially in girls living in rural areas. Deshmukh (2019) also observed that in the tribal regions of Nagpur, children tend to end up with education because of poverty, lack of transport, and their parents working in the informal sectors. The data indicate that the access to education has been enhanced, but the retention is a very serious issue and requires some specific intervention, including transport facilities, scholarships, and community-engagement programmes.

6.6 Comparison with International Studies

The results of the study are also in line with the international research. Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016) demonstrated that infrastructure and accountability of teachers are international issues in developing nations. On the same note, Chowdhury (2021) emphasized that the inclusion of communities in Bangladesh enhanced the operation of schools greatly. Although such policies as School Management Committee (SMCs) exist in Maharashtra, their application is poor. Enhancing the role of the community would solve most of the issues found in this research.

6.7 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the literature in several ways:

1. It provides **district-level empirical evidence** from Nagpur, filling a notable gap in Maharashtra's primary education research.

2. It statistically validates the role of infrastructure, finance, and administration in influencing educational outcomes, moving beyond descriptive accounts.
3. It differentiates between **urban and rural challenges**, offering context-specific insights for policymakers.
4. It proposes actionable measures that are grounded in teachers' lived realities, thereby enhancing policy relevance.

6.8 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings have several implications:

- **Infrastructure:** Rural schools need urgent investment in classrooms, libraries, sanitation, and ICT tools.
- **Finance:** Allocation must be timely, transparent, and sufficient to meet school needs.
- **Teacher Development:** Regular training and incentives must be institutionalised.
- **Administration:** Strengthening monitoring and reducing bureaucratic hurdles can reduce teacher workload.
- **Community Role:** Encouraging parent-teacher associations and School Management Committees can improve accountability and retention.

7. Conclusion and Suggestions

7.1 Conclusion

The research was aimed at studying the issues and deploying government primary education in Maharashtra with Nagpur district as the centre. The study relied on 200 teachers of government primary schools to conduct a descriptive quantitative design and find out the state of infrastructure, financial sufficiency, administrative performance, teacher predicaments, enrolment, dropout, and retention. The results showed that, although the enrolment is comparatively high, the dropout is still an issue of immediate concern, particularly in rural regions. Infrastructure became one decisive factor as the rural schools were plagued with lack of enough classrooms, poor sanitation, poor supply of electricity and almost no ICT facilities. The role of finance was also crucial as teachers at the rural setting always reported inadequacy of funds, delays, and inefficient transparency in the use of funds. The issues surrounding teachers were varied: in rural areas, the teacher-pupil ratio

was high and the teachers had no chances to receive training, and urban teachers had to struggle with the work overload in the administrative service. Systemic governance was highly associated with administrative inefficiency that manifested itself in teacher burdens. The hypotheses that were tested proved that the infrastructure, finance as well as administration play a very important role in the primary education implementation in Maharashtra. The results of the study reflect the national and international findings and provide a micro-level Nagpur-based view. It highlights the fact that even with policy changes and funding efforts, even the good implementation of primary education still experiences a bottleneck on the ground.

7.2 Suggestions

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthening Infrastructure in Rural Schools

- Urgent investment is required in classrooms, sanitation, electricity, and library facilities in rural schools.
- ICT tools such as smart boards and computer labs should be introduced gradually, starting with cluster schools, to bridge the digital divide.

2. Enhancing Financial Support and Transparency

- School grants should be released on time to prevent disruptions in academic activities.
- Financial transparency can be improved through digital monitoring systems, ensuring that allocated funds reach schools without bureaucratic delays.
- Rural schools should receive additional grants under a need-based model rather than a uniform allocation formula.

3. Teacher Recruitment, Training, and Incentives

- The government should prioritise recruitment of teachers in rural Nagpur to reduce pupil-teacher ratios.
- Regular professional development programmes should be conducted, both online and offline, with special modules tailored for rural contexts.
- Incentives such as rural service allowances, housing facilities, and performance-based recognition can improve teacher motivation and retention.

4. Reducing Administrative Burden

- Excessive paperwork and non-teaching assignments should be minimised so teachers can focus on pedagogy.
- Decentralisation of school management should be accompanied by accountability mechanisms to avoid overburdening teachers.

5. Improving Retention and Reducing Dropouts

- Community-based awareness programmes should be launched to emphasise the importance of completing primary education.
- Transportation facilities and scholarships for children in tribal and rural areas can help reduce dropout rates.
- Special focus should be placed on gender equity, ensuring that girls continue their education beyond Class V.

6. Strengthening Administrative Efficiency

- Monitoring mechanisms should be enhanced through periodic inspections and independent audits.
- Capacity-building workshops should be organised for school administrators to improve governance at the grassroots.
- Reducing corruption and enhancing accountability in fund utilisation must be central to policy reform.

7. Community Participation

- School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) should be revitalised to involve communities in school management.
- Local NGOs and community organisations can be mobilised to support learning initiatives, particularly in marginalised rural areas.

7.3 Final Remarks

The results of this paper demonstrate that the obstacles to the roll-out of primary education are interconnected and multi-dimensional. The issues of infrastructure, finance, administration, and the problems of teachers cannot be discussed separately. But rather they have to be dealt by a combined policy strategy that guarantees synergies amongst the stakeholders. Whereas the example of Nagpur is an indication of the reality at the district level, the consequences are general and applicable in other regions of Maharashtra and

India. To serve its constitutional and developmental interest, reforms in the primary school must be focused, inclusive and attentive to the local interest. This research is a part of such process because it provides evidence based on empirically grounded evidence and practical measures of the policy. Further studies can be conducted with more districts or include student learning outcomes in the investigation.

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E-governance and Its Role in Modern Governance of India:**A Conceptual Overview****Dr. Kanchan H. Khawashi**

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Abstract

E-governance has become a significant instrument in transforming public administration and strengthening the relationship between the government and citizens in India. This paper presents a conceptual overview of e-governance and its growing role in modern governance. E-governance broadly refers to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve the delivery of government services, promote transparency, enhance accountability, and increase efficiency in administrative processes. The evolution of e-governance in India can be traced through early efforts, such as pilot projects, and national initiatives like the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) and Digital India. The paper examines how e-governance enhances transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in governance. It delves into the significant improvements in service delivery and administrative efficiency, contributing to better governance outcomes. Additionally, the role of e-governance in empowering citizens through increased access to information and services is highlighted. Despite its successes, e-governance in India faces several challenges, including the digital divide, cyber security concerns, infrastructure issues, and resistance to change. These barriers hinder the effective implementation of e-governance, particularly in rural and underserved regions. To illustrate practical applications, the study briefly examines successful initiatives such as the e-District project and various state-level e-governance programmes. The paper concludes by discussing the future prospects of e-governance in India, emphasizing the transformative potential of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT). It also offers policy suggestions aimed at addressing existing challenges and ensuring the sustainable and inclusive growth of e-governance in the country.

Keywords: E-governance, Digital India, Cyber-security, Transparency, ICT (Information and Communication Technology)

Introduction**Background of E-Governance**

E-governance refers to the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the administration of government services and the execution of governance processes. Over the past few decades, it has evolved as an important mechanism for modernizing public administration. The concept of e-governance began gaining global prominence during the 1990s, when governments recognized the transformative potential of digital technologies to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of governance systems (Heeks, 2003). E-governance involves a wide range of digital initiatives, including the digitization of government services, the use of data and information systems to support decision-making, and the promotion of transparency through online platforms. By integrating ICT into governance structures, governments seek to strengthen interactions among public institutions, citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders. The framework of e-governance is commonly categorized into four major interaction models: Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G), and Government-to-Employee (G2E) (Schuppan, 2009). These models facilitate more efficient delivery of public services, reduce administrative delays, enhance accountability, and promote transparency in governance. Moreover, e-governance initiatives contribute to greater inclusivity by expanding access to government services and information, particularly for marginalized and underserved communities (OECD, 2014).

Globally, the integration of ICT into governance was motivated by the need to increase the transparency of governmental processes, reduce corruption, and improve the accessibility of services. For example, Estonia, widely regarded as a pioneer in e-governance, has implemented comprehensive systems that allow citizens to access various public services online, such as voting and tax filing, in a seamless and secure environment (Sutcliffe, 2013). Similarly, Singapore's e-government system emphasizes the use of a centralized digital platform to deliver public services efficiently, ensuring that citizens can access government services and information through a single portal (Siau & Long, 2005). In India, the introduction of e-governance began as part of broader efforts to modernize public administration and address the issues of inefficiency, bureaucratic delays, and corruption that had historically plagued governance in the country. The Indian government's early adoption of ICT can be traced back to the mid-1990s, during which time various state governments and central ministries initiated

pilot e-governance projects to digitize public service delivery. These initial steps were largely fragmented and lacked a cohesive national strategy (Rai, 2008). Recognizing the potential of ICT to drive systemic change, the Indian government launched the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006, which aimed to transform India into an e-governed society by improving the delivery of government services through digital means (Singh, 2007). NeGP sought to address the challenges posed by India's large geographical size, socio-economic diversity, and limited infrastructure by promoting the use of ICT to make government services more accessible to the public, particularly in rural and remote areas (Bhatnagar, 2004). In 2015, the Indian government launched the Digital India programme, which focused on making government services available to citizens electronically, thereby promoting digital literacy, improving internet connectivity, and fostering the development of e-infrastructure. The initiative also aimed to increase transparency, reduce corruption, and provide a citizen-friendly approach to governance (Mehta, 2015). Digital India is a broad program encompassing not only the digitization of government services but also the promotion of a digital economy, where services such as banking, education, and healthcare are provided through electronic platforms (Kaur & Soni, 2018).

One of the key motivations behind the adoption of e-governance in India is the growing recognition that digital tools can bring about significant improvements in governance, particularly in fostering citizen engagement and participation. The traditional top-down model of governance, where citizens had little to no say in the decision-making processes, has been challenged by the introduction of digital platforms that allow citizens to interact directly with the government, voice their concerns, and provide feedback (Garg, 2017). Platforms like MyGov, launched in 2014, allow citizens to participate in the governance process by contributing ideas and providing feedback on government policies and initiatives (Jain & Sharma, 2019). Moreover, e-governance in India has proven to be instrumental in addressing various systemic issues, including inefficiency, lack of transparency, and the slow pace of public service delivery. With digital platforms, processes such as tax filing, application for government schemes, and the issuance of certificates (e.g., birth, death, and caste certificates) have been streamlined, thus reducing the time and cost for citizens while enhancing accountability in government agencies (Rajput & Prakash, 2020). However, despite the remarkable progress, the implementation of e-governance in India is still fraught with challenges such as the digital divide, cyber-security threats, and resistance to change from

government officials, and a lack of widespread digital literacy in rural areas (Kumar & Raj, 2018). Bridging these gaps remains crucial for realizing the full potential of e-governance in transforming governance in India.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this paper is to provide a conceptual understanding of e-governance in India and to examine its role in shaping modern governance practices. The study seeks to analyze how the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into governmental processes has contributed to improving administrative efficiency, transparency, and citizen-centric service delivery. Furthermore, the paper aims to explore the evolution and implementation of major e-governance initiatives in India and assess their impact on governance and public administration. By examining these developments, the study attempts to understand the broader implications of digital governance in strengthening democratic institutions and enhancing public participation.

Specifically, the study addresses the following objectives:

To analyze the significance of e-governance in the context of modern governance in India.

To examine how e-governance has improved transparency, public service delivery, and citizen participation.

To identify the key challenges in the implementation of e-governance initiatives in India.

To explore possible measures and policy approaches to overcome these challenges and strengthen digital governance.

Significance of the Study

E-governance plays a vital role in strengthening modern governance, particularly in a country like India where bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption have historically affected administrative effectiveness. By integrating digital technologies into governance processes, e-governance enhances transparency, improves service delivery, and encourages greater citizen participation in decision-making (Bhatnagar, 2004). Moreover, it supports the government's broader vision of **Digital India**, which aims to empower citizens through improved access to public services and the creation of a digitally connected society (Mehta, 2015). However, despite its potential, the journey toward successful e-governance implementation in India has been fraught with challenges, including issues related to digital literacy, infrastructure,

cybersecurity, and resistance to change within the public administration (Kumar & Raj, 2018). This paper explores these challenges while highlighting the promising future of e-governance in India, particularly with the advent of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain (Chauhan & Pandey, 2020).

Understanding E-Governance Definition and Key Concepts

E-governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) by government entities to improve the delivery of services to citizens, enhance transparency, increase participation, and streamline administrative processes. It serves as a bridge between citizens and government, allowing citizens to access services, participate in decision-making, and engage with public officials through digital platforms (Heeks, 2003). According to the United Nations (2016), e-governance is the use of ICTs to deliver government services, improve public sector efficiency, and foster better communication and collaboration with citizens and businesses.

E-governance can be broadly categorized into four models:

Government-to-Citizen (G2C): This model facilitates the interaction between the government and its citizens. Examples include e-filing of taxes, online application for government schemes, and digital certificates (e.g., passports and birth certificates) (OECD, 2014).

Government-to-Business (G2B): In this model, the government interacts with businesses to streamline processes such as licenses, registrations, and regulatory compliance. It aims to simplify the bureaucratic processes that businesses encounter when dealing with government agencies (Bhatnagar, 2004).

Government-to-Government (G2G): G2G e-governance facilitates the exchange of data and collaboration between various government departments and agencies at different levels of governance. It promotes the interoperability of government systems, thus improving overall governance efficiency (Schuppan, 2009).

Government-to-Employee (G2E): This model involves the use of ICT to improve the relationship between the government and its employees, ensuring more efficient management of payroll, human resources, and internal communications (Siau & Long, 2005).

These models illustrate how e-governance is multifaceted and influences various stakeholders in the governance process. As governments around the world move towards digital transformation, e-governance has become a key component in the modernization of the public sector.

Evolution of E-Governance Globally

The global evolution of e-governance can be traced through various stages, starting from the digitization of administrative functions to the full integration of ICT in governance. The initial phase of e-governance began in the 1990s when governments worldwide started adopting basic ICT systems for administrative purposes, such as record-keeping and tax management (Heeks, 2003). This phase was characterized by the automation of internal government processes, which resulted in greater efficiency within government departments. In the early 2000s, the focus of e-governance shifted towards improving the interaction between government and citizens. Countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom pioneered efforts in citizen-centric e-governance by launching online portals for public services and digital forms of communication between citizens and government bodies (OECD, 2014). These early initiatives highlighted the importance of creating user-friendly digital platforms for citizens to access services.

A significant milestone in the evolution of e-governance occurred with the development of the Digital Governance Framework in the European Union (EU), which provided a comprehensive model for the integration of ICT into public sector services, focusing on security, data privacy, and citizen participation (European Commission, 2016). Similarly, Estonia became a global leader in e-governance by implementing X-Road, a secure data exchange platform that enables different government agencies to share information while maintaining data privacy and security (Sutcliffe, 2013). By the mid-2010s, emerging technologies such as cloud computing, big data analytics, and blockchain began to shape the future of e-governance. These technologies offer

governments new ways to improve the security, transparency, and efficiency of public service delivery. For example, Blockchain is increasingly being explored for use in areas like digital identity verification and secure voting systems (Mettler, 2016). Moreover, Smart Cities and Internet of Things (IoT) applications have introduced innovative ways for cities to manage infrastructure, provide public services, and involve citizens in governance. Countries like Singapore and South Korea have pioneered smart city projects, integrating ICT in transportation, healthcare, education, and urban management (Siau & Long, 2005).

E-Governance in India

Evolution of E-Governance in India

The evolution of e-governance in India can be traced back to the early 1990s when the government recognized the need to modernize the public sector and make it more transparent and efficient. This initial phase primarily focused on automating administrative tasks within government departments, aiming to streamline internal processes. The Indian government's journey toward e-governance started with the introduction of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in 1976, which aimed to bring computers and technology into public administration (Bhatnagar, 2004). In 1999, the Indian government launched the E-Governance Action Plan, which was aimed at laying the foundation for broader e-governance initiatives in the country (Kumar & Raj, 2018). However, it was the introduction of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) in 2006 that marked a significant milestone in the country's e-governance journey. The NeGP aimed to provide a comprehensive approach to e-governance by focusing on a wide array of initiatives designed to improve the delivery of government services and enhance transparency across various levels of governance. The plan's key goals included improving access to public services, increasing efficiency, and reducing corruption by leveraging ICT to facilitate interactions between the government and its citizens (Singh, 2007).

Another milestone in the evolution of e-governance was the launch of the Digital India Programme in 2015. This initiative aimed to transform India into a digitally empowered society by enhancing internet infrastructure, increasing digital literacy, and promoting the digital delivery of government services (Mehta, 2015). The Digital India Programme sought to integrate e-governance into the broader governance framework by making services more accessible to the public, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Key E-Governance Initiatives in India

India has implemented several significant e-governance initiatives, which have contributed to the modernization of governance and improved citizen engagement. These initiatives focus on providing access to public services

through digital platforms, fostering greater transparency, and enhancing the efficiency of government operations. Some key initiatives include:

3.2a. National e-Governance Plan (NeGP): Launched in 2006, NeGP was designed to enhance government service delivery, improve administrative processes, and increase transparency. Under NeGP, various projects were launched, such as State Wide Area Networks (SWANs), Common Service Centers (CSCs), and e-District, to enable citizens to access government services online (Bhatnagar, 2004).

3.2b. Digital India Programme: The Digital India initiative focuses on increasing internet connectivity, digital literacy, and the digitization of government services. This includes projects like BharatNet, which aims to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to rural India, and eSign, a service that enables digital signatures for online transactions (Mehta, 2015). The MyGov platform, launched in 2014, allows citizens to interact with government officials, voice concerns, and participate in governance decisions, facilitating public engagement and collaboration.

3.2c. Aadhaar: The introduction of Aadhaar, a biometric-based identification system, has played a crucial role in the implementation of e-governance in India. By providing a unique identity to over a billion people, Aadhaar has enabled the delivery of government subsidies, benefits, and services directly to citizens, reducing fraud and increasing the efficiency of welfare programs (Sharma, 2017).

3.2d. e-District Project: Launched as part of the NeGP, the e-District project aims to offer online delivery of government services such as caste certificates, ration cards, and pension schemes to citizens in rural and remote areas. It has significantly reduced bureaucratic delays, enabling citizens to access services in a more timely and efficient manner (Kaur & Soni, 2018).

3.2e. GSTN (Goods and Services Tax Network): The GSTN is an online platform that simplifies the tax filing and payment process for businesses and individuals, aligning with the

government's push to digitize financial transactions. By integrating various state and central tax systems into a unified digital framework, the GSTN has improved transparency and reduced tax evasion (Jain & Sharma, 2019).

3.3 Benefits of E-Governance in India

The implementation of e-governance in India has significantly improved public administration and service delivery. By integrating digital technologies into governance processes, it has enhanced efficiency, transparency, and citizen engagement. Some of the major benefits include:

3.3a. Improved Access to Public Services:

E-governance has made government services more accessible, particularly for citizens in rural and remote areas. Digital platforms and initiatives such as Common Service Centers (CSCs) allow people to access services like land records, certificates, and welfare schemes without visiting government offices (Rajput & Prakash, 2020).

3.3b. Enhanced Transparency:

Digitization of government records and services has increased transparency and reduced opportunities for corruption. Citizens can track the status of applications and lodge complaints through online grievance redressal systems, promoting accountability in governance (Garg, 2017).

3.3c. Improved Efficiency and Reduced Red Tape:

Automation of administrative processes has streamlined government operations. Tasks such as issuing permits, processing applications, and distributing welfare benefits are now faster and more efficient, reducing bureaucratic delays (Rajput & Prakash, 2020).

3.3d. Increased Citizen Participation:

Digital platforms such as MyGov enable citizens to interact with the government, provide feedback, and participate in policy discussions, thereby encouraging greater public involvement in governance (Jain & Sharma, 2019).

3.3e. Cost Reduction:

The adoption of digital systems has reduced operational costs for government departments by

minimizing the use of paper, physical infrastructure, and manual processes, leading to more cost-effective administration (Bhatnagar, 2004).

Case Studies on E-Governance Implementation in India

India has implemented several ambitious e-governance initiatives, each aimed at improving governance, enhancing service delivery, and increasing transparency in public administration. This section explores three key e-governance projects that have significantly impacted governance in India: Aadhaar, e-District, and M-Governance. These case studies provide valuable insights into the role of digital technology in transforming public service delivery and the challenges associated with such large-scale initiatives.

Case Study 1: Aadhaar - Revolutionizing Identification and Welfare

As previously discussed, the Aadhaar initiative is one of the largest biometric identification systems in the world. It has had a profound impact on governance by ensuring that subsidies and services reach the correct beneficiaries, thus reducing fraud and improving transparency. Aadhaar has been integrated with numerous government schemes, such as Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) for subsidies and the Public Distribution System (PDS), to streamline service delivery.

Challenges:

Privacy concerns related to the biometric data collection.

Exclusion of marginalized communities, such as the elderly, homeless, and those without proper documentation.

Case Study 2: e-District - Transforming Service Delivery at the District Level

The e-District project is part of the **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)**, aimed at automating the delivery of government services at the district level. This initiative is intended to bring transparency, efficiency, and ease of access to services for citizens in remote and rural areas, where traditional service delivery mechanisms are often slow and inefficient.

Objectives of e-District:

Digitization of government services: e-District enables citizens to access a range of government services online, including certificates (birth, death, caste, etc.), pension schemes, and ration cards.

Single-window service delivery: Citizens can apply for multiple services through a single online portal, streamlining the process and reducing bureaucratic delays.

Challenges:

Infrastructure issues: In some rural areas, internet connectivity remains a significant challenge, hindering the smooth operation of e-District services.

Capacity building: Government employees needed adequate training to handle the new digital systems effectively, which was a resource-intensive process.

The e-District project is an example of how digitization at the district level can enhance governance by making government services more accessible and efficient for the public.

Case Study 3: M-Governance - Empowering Citizens through Mobile Technology

M-Governance (Mobile Governance) refers to the delivery of government services and information through mobile phones, leveraging the widespread use of mobile devices in India. With mobile penetration reaching over 90% in India (TRAI, 2020), M-Governance has become a critical tool for bridging the digital divide and empowering citizens, especially in rural areas.

Objectives of M-Governance:

Accessibility of services: M-Governance ensures that citizens can access government services and information from anywhere at any time via their mobile phones.

Real-time communication: Citizens can receive updates on government schemes, register complaints, and track the status of their requests in real-time.

Challenges:

Digital literacy: Despite high mobile penetration, many citizens, particularly in rural areas, lack the necessary digital literacy to fully utilize M-Governance services.

Access to smartphones: While mobile phone usage is widespread, smartphone penetration remains lower in rural areas compared to feature phones, limiting the effectiveness of mobile apps and online services.

M-Governance represents a significant shift towards mobile-enabled citizen engagement, providing a more efficient and accessible platform for government service delivery.

Comparative Analysis of Case Studies

Each of the three case studies- Aadhaar, e-District, and M-Governance—illustrates different dimensions of e- governance in India. While Aadhaar focuses on identity verification and direct service delivery, e-District targets the district-level automation of government services, and M-Governance empowers citizens by providing mobile access to government services.

Key Insights:

Infrastructure challenges: While all three case studies have faced infrastructure-related issues, particularly in rural areas, Aadhaar and e-District have been more dependent on physical infrastructure (biometric collection, internet access) compared to M-Governance, which primarily relies on mobile networks.

User accessibility: M-Governance stands out for its focus on making services accessible to users with minimal digital infrastructure. In contrast, Aadhaar and e-District have focused more on ensuring accessibility via institutional infrastructures, like government offices and biometric centers.

Transparency and accountability: All three case studies have enhanced transparency in governance, but Aadhaar has had the most substantial impact on reducing fraud and ensuring the accurate targeting of welfare schemes.

Challenges in E-Governance Implementation in India

Despite its numerous advantages, the implementation of e-governance in India faces several challenges related to infrastructure, digital literacy, and cybersecurity. These issues can limit the effectiveness and inclusiveness of digital governance initiatives (Garg, 2017). One major challenge is the **digital divide**, which refers to unequal access to digital technologies between urban and rural areas. Limited internet connectivity and low levels of digital literacy in many rural and remote regions prevent a large section of the population from fully benefiting from e-governance services (Rajput & Prakash, 2020). Another critical concern is **cybersecurity**. As government services increasingly move online, the risk of cyber-attacks, data breaches, and misuse of personal information also increases. Therefore, strong cybersecurity frameworks and data protection mechanisms are essential to safeguard citizens' information and maintain trust in digital governance systems (Sharma, 2017). Additionally, the successful implementation of

e-governance requires significant investments in technology, infrastructure, and capacity building. Governments must allocate sufficient resources and ensure proper training for public officials so they can effectively use and manage digital systems (Kaur & Soni, 2018).

5a. Digital Divide: One of the major obstacles to e-governance in India is the digital divide between urban and rural areas. While urban areas have relatively better access to the internet and digital services, rural areas often suffer from poor internet connectivity, limited infrastructure, and lack of digital literacy (Kaur & Soni, 2018). This divide hampers the equitable distribution of government services.

5b. Cybersecurity Concerns: With the increasing digitization of government services, cybersecurity has become a critical issue. Sensitive data such as personal identification information, financial records, and health data need to be protected against cyber threats. The lack of robust cybersecurity measures in some regions can lead to data breaches and the misuse of citizens' information (Sharma, 2017).

5c. Resistance to Change: There is also resistance to change within government departments. Bureaucratic inertia and a lack of training among government employees hinder the full-scale implementation of e-governance initiatives. The adoption of new technologies often faces delays due to the reluctance of officials to shift from traditional methods to digital platforms (Kumar & Raj, 2018).

5d. Infrastructure Constraints: The widespread implementation of e-governance requires significant investments in digital infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity, hardware, and software. Many regions, especially rural areas, still lack the necessary infrastructure to support widespread e-governance initiatives (Rajput & Prakash, 2020).

Future of E-Governance in India

The future of e-governance in India is closely linked to emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, and Internet of Things (IoT). AI can enhance decision-making and automate services, while Blockchain can improve the security and transparency of public service transactions (Chauhan & Pandey, 2020). The integration of IoT in governance could enable smart cities and efficient management of public resources, providing more sustainable and responsive services to citizens (Sutcliffe, 2013). Furthermore, increasing digital literacy through targeted training programs and expanding internet connectivity across the country will help bridge the digital divide. The government's continued investment in infrastructure, coupled

with an emphasis on creating a secure digital environment, will further enhance the scope of e-governance in India.

Key Areas for Future E-Governance Development

The future growth of e-governance in India depends on strengthening digital capacity, improving technology integration, and ensuring secure digital systems. The following areas are particularly important:

Enhancing Digital Literacy:

Despite improvements in digital infrastructure, many citizens—especially in rural areas—still lack the skills needed to use digital services effectively. Expanding digital literacy programs, including training through schools, community centers, and mobile platforms, will help bridge the digital divide and ensure wider participation in e-governance.

Expanding Mobile Governance (M-Governance):

With the rapid growth of smartphone usage in India, mobile platforms are becoming an important medium for delivering government services. Mobile-friendly applications can enable citizens to access services such as healthcare, education, financial assistance, and welfare schemes directly from their smartphones, improving accessibility and convenience.

Integration of Data and Digital Platforms:

Effective e-governance requires better coordination among government departments. Integrating databases and creating unified digital platforms will help streamline service delivery, reduce duplication, and improve policy implementation.

Strengthening Cyber security and Data Protection:

As governance becomes increasingly digital, protecting citizens' data and government systems from cyber threats is essential. Strong cybersecurity measures, advanced encryption technologies, and effective data protection laws are necessary to ensure privacy, security, and public trust in e-governance systems.

Findings of the paper

Based on the comprehensive analysis of e-governance in India, the following key findings have emerged:

7a. Technological Integration is Essential for Efficient Service Delivery: E-governance initiatives such as Aadhaar, e-District, and M-Governance demonstrate how technology can improve service delivery, reduce corruption, and increase transparency. However, the

integration of emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, and IoT will be crucial for optimizing public administration and enhancing the effectiveness of service delivery in the future.

7b. Challenges in Digital Infrastructure and Accessibility: Despite the expansion of digital infrastructure, significant gaps remain in rural areas, where access to the internet, smartphones, and electricity remains limited. These infrastructure constraints impede the full potential of e-governance, limiting the reach of government services to marginalized communities.

7c. Privacy and Security Concerns: The collection of personal data, as seen in the Aadhaar project, has raised concerns about privacy and data security. Ensuring robust cybersecurity measures and implementing strict data protection laws will be pivotal in maintaining public trust and securing sensitive data in future e-governance initiatives.

7d. Digital Literacy Remains a Barrier: A large section of India's population, especially in rural areas, lacks the necessary digital literacy to fully utilize e-governance services. Programs to improve digital literacy and increase awareness about e-governance will be crucial to ensure equitable participation and access to digital services.

7e. Mobile Governance is Key to Future Success: With the growing penetration of mobile phones, M-Governance presents a unique opportunity to deliver government services to a broader section of the population. Mobile apps and platforms can overcome infrastructure barriers and provide citizens, especially in rural and remote areas, with easy access to essential services.

7f. Need of Collaborative Approach: The success of e-governance requires collaboration between the government, private sector, and civil society. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and active citizen engagement in the design and implementation of e-governance programs will ensure that the services provided are relevant, efficient, and responsive to citizens' needs.

7g. Sustainability and Scalability of Initiatives: While many e-governance projects have demonstrated success on a small scale, their ability to scale up and sustain over time is crucial.

This requires careful planning, adequate funding, and continued investment in digital infrastructure, training, and capacity building for government employees and citizens alike.

7h. Role of Policy and Regulation: The future of e-governance in India will depend heavily on effective policies and regulatory frameworks. The government must continue to develop policies that promote innovation, protect citizen's privacy, and facilitate the digital transformation of public administration.

7i. Social Inclusion Must Be a Priority: E-governance initiatives should prioritize social inclusion to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable groups are not left behind. This includes addressing issues such as language barriers, accessibility for differently abled individuals, and providing digital access to underprivileged communities.

Conclusion

E-governance in India has become a key driver of modern, efficient, and transparent governance. Initiatives like Aadhaar, e-District, and M-Governance have improved citizen engagement, service delivery, and administrative accountability. However, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, infrastructure limitations, and cybersecurity risks must be addressed to realize its full potential. The future of e-governance lies in leveraging emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, IoT, and cloud computing, as well as expanding mobile governance, smart cities, and integrated data platforms. Ensuring inclusivity, bridging the digital divide, and strengthening data protection are critical for building public trust. Ultimately, e-governance is not merely digitizing services—it is about creating a citizen-centric governance model that promotes transparency, accountability, and equitable access to public services.

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**Marginalized Voice Against Colonial Intrusion and Cultural Collision
in Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's Selected Novels: A critical Study****Prof. Rajesh A. Chauhan****Ashok Moharkar Arts & Com. College, Adyal Dist. Bhandara****Dr. Anand Bhaik****Associate Professor, Taywade College, Mahadula-Koradi**

Abstract: -

This research paper solely seeks to trace those responsible factors, deliberately initiated by the colonizer in Kenya during colonial period, that cause conflicts between the inhabitants of the mother country and European in regaining the vanishing indigenous culture. As a matter of fact, social background such as the arrival of colonial prominence, cultural and religious interventions by missionary academy, restlessness against exploitative strategy and breakage of future dreams after independence. It creates preparedness in them to accelerate cultural collision against the Britisher through Mau Mau movement in order to reclaim the ancestor's old faith. It also scrutinizes to debate on the reasons behind clashes between both on land, domestic manners and conventional belief. It focuses on the attempts made by local people in re-establishing the forefather's ways of life and how do they deal with it. This discussion also centers how missionary school takes them away from past life and connects easily with a Europe – grown culture. At the same time, colonial education implants in them cultural consciousness and hatred feelings against Western values, consequently this awareness surely leads collision for sparing the lost local heritage in light of land encroachment, cultural assault, linguistic bondage and loss of identity.

This conflict begins between African and Western customs, indicating the tale of survival and dominance. It shortly occupies social, cultural, linguistic, religious and political issues when Kenya was ruled by the Englishman interacted among several major and minor characters portrayed in Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Petals of Blood* (1977). Conflict based on culture and religion between the colonized and the colonizer are taken into consideration to reach at a solid conclusion, exploring various facets which spoil the country's peacefulness. It provokes bloodshed and violence in the traditional society that often was operated as per the learned knowledge of their past. Missionary school, Colonial authority, anti-colonial resistance and

post-colonial disillusionment are verified and validated rationally throughout the paper based on the findings. It also discusses how the local people use the received knowledge of missionary education to raise a revolt against a process of colonization.

Keywords: - Colonial authority, missionary school, betrayal of the elite class, switching culture, revolutionary movement, disillusionment, colonization, De-colonization.

Introduction: -

Ngugi Wa Thiong'O is one of the most prominent literary figures in Africa, noted for explosive interpretation of both colonial and post-colonial era, unfolding misconceptions of the world regarding Africa with realistic presentation of social problems. He has contributed to every literary genre like drama, novel, short-story and essay. His literary career begins in childhood and it got matured in portraying things in a pros and cons manner. He has added a new parameter to African literature which is full of colonial pain, dispossession of land, disloyalty of Gikuyu people, communal conversion, Mau Mau revolutionary movement, and colonial exploitative policy. He regards himself as a representative of the Third World or subaltern literature. His literary writing awakes the world-famous scholars and academician to look at African literature positively. Biased mindset and misunderstanding have been rubbed out from European minds by realistic African portrayal.

He was born on the 5th January 1935 in Kamiriithu near Limuru. Being the son of Thiong'O Nduucu and Wanjika Wa Thiong'O, he completed primary education in birthplace from missionary school. Then he studied Karinga Independent School in Maanguu. Apart from the selected novels cited in Abstract, he also wrote *Devil on the cross*, *Matigari*, *Wizard of the Crow*. His all-novels center on colonial exploitation of Indigenous Gikuyu culture and perpetual struggles to free the nation from cultural slavery, purposely imposed on the local people. They also throw light on the real existence of African civilization by adding oral traditional stories and myths. He also measured his literary crafting in memoirs, short – stories and plays. His oeuvre internally deals with local faith, exploitation, politics, treacherous leadership, marginalization and so on. Putting it briefly, his work of art shrewdly functions as a beginning of de-colonization.

His writing style is very simple to understand as he abundantly employs Swahili and Gikuyu words to promote local languages instead of European English. He himself has

translated the art of work into English to remove language barriers so that literary corpus should be discussed at international platforms. It is only a way of communication to connect the world with Africa especially Kenya.

This paper argues conflicts which arise in defending native manners as anti-colonial resistance during colonial and post – colonial era, trying to read between the lines, portrayed in the happenings in the lives of major and minor characters in the chosen fictions. Indigenous values is a chief theme of every arts of works colonial tales and the mindset of African definitely revolve around it, experiencing a great loss of past life, unexpected conversion, betrayal of the rich, disintegration of the communities and possession of Western culture. Ultimately collision of culture takes place between the traditionalist and the convert, between the colonized and the white settler, between wiping past memory and adaptation of European ways of life. It leads violence, social discontentedness, forceful readiness to mould identify with the varying hours, killings, dispossession and acceptance.

Review of Literature: -

A numerous scholars have added their literary research portfolio with value able logical thoughts on Negugi Wa Thiong'O's literary corpus.

Md. A Ajmaul's Study entitled "*Colonial Politics and Cultural Identity in Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's select Novels*" deals with the investigation of condition after independence where no change comes as per their anticipation.

The thesis of *Kabir Ahmed* known as "*Politics and Arts in the Novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong'O and George Lamming: A comparative study*" explores the intellectual progress of the author, his audience and choice of forms. It debates on the growth of the writer under the influence of traditional culture.

Gibemisola Adeoti's research entitled: "*Demystifying the Future in Africa's (Un) vanishing Past*" focuses to find increasing difficulties of neo-liberalism and Westernization after post-independence.

Loban Omelia Erapu's "*A study of Ngugi Wa Thiong'O later Novels to Assess His Adaption of Dramatic Techniques and Gikuyu Oral Traditions to the Requirements of Fiction*" evaluates the impediments of communication of the author while employing traditional oral forms in the novels. It is specially used for "illiterate audience".

A brief review cited aforesaid concentrates on significant ideas and perspectives related to the topic under investigation. Gathering them collectively to conclude, it is crystal clear that all underlying research works are mainly dedicated to post – colonial study and stylistic techniques only, whereas this research paper covers pre – colonial recollections, colonial perspectives and post – colonial aftermath in relation to cultural collision.

The protagonist of *Weep Not, Child* is Njoroge, a schoolboy, who immaturely imagines that missionary academy can heal them from poverty and dispossession of indigenous values. His strong belief in colonial education is broken when his entire family members are cruelly harassed by Jacobo and Mr. Howlands. As Njoroge's father Ngotho, always motivates both family members and the local tribesmen to reclaim the lost land and the ancestor's old faith which have been hijacked and erased respectively by Westerners. In course of time Njoroge attempts to sort out the differences between the local people and the colonizer's agent but he doesn't succeed in doing so. Boro, Njoroge's brother, has already got involved in revolutionary activities run by Mau Mau movement to teach a lesson to the white settler. He works as a chief in the ridge and collects the people to bring consciousness against colonial exploitative policy in order to add more numbers to the local patriotic movement. He has experience of fighting World War II against other white people on the Europe continent. As he knows colonial secret strategy of war, he aptly uses it against the Britisher to give justice to the land. The fight of Ngotho, Njoroge and Boro against the Englishman is to release cultural bondage in order to reclaim the land and Gikuyu culture.

One thing is a note-worthy that Boro and Njoroge use the secret knowledge received from colonial academy against those who teach them. First of all, the existing colonial encroachment of the land of poor peasants and dispossession of the land are part of colonial policy for which not only two brothers along with father but also the entire society began to raise a voice against colonial injustice. Because they have been marginalized and exploited critically by the European. This cultural conflict is a reaction to such ill-doings by the marginalized class. In colonial period, farmers have to sell their land and forcibly work on the land of the white – settler at the cost of meagre amount.

The *River Between* is the best instance to discuss cultural collision between the two communities called as Kameno and Makayu. They reside on two different ridges, divided by the holy river, Honia. At one ridge, there is the residency of the people, believing in old faith

and conventional customs and at another ridge the converted people inhabits practicing and elevating Western culture. The traditionalists resist them as they are diverting simple people, demonstrating the evils of out-worn practices and customs.

Waiyaki, a protagonist, tries his best to integrate the two communities whereas no single community is ready to remix. Because they have religious idea logical differences, everybody regards themselves superior to other. Prominently speaking, Joshua, a colonial agent, spoils the mindset of the local people to allure towards Christianity, as he lives in a majestic way and this majesty is a sign of richness. Chege, Waiyaki's father, is an elderly man having deep knowledge of past life hence he always implants an indigenous awareness in the people so that they should not join to the group of Joshua. With the back –up of Reverend Livingstone, Joshua pulls many people to baptize them, forcing to give up traditional culture. As he thinks that ritual such as women's circumcision is illogical and hazardous, his daughter, Muthoni, is died of it. There is collision on ceremonial rituals and Western modernity. Chege is the representative of old faith and Joshua of modernity. There is a tug of war between old cults and modernistic reformation.

A Grain of Wheat interweaves the stories of treachery revolving around major characters in relation to flinging obstacles in the way of freedom fighting struggle and in the way of practicing traditional customs. Mugo is a protagonist noted for mysterious silence, he doesn't mix up with the society more but he is really a patriotic chap. All people get ready to celebrate Uhuru (Independence Day) publicly. Kenyan society is merged with Western culture called multicultural society. Everyone believes in their faiths as per need. The society was on the way of adopted modern reformation, influenced by the European. Independence Day celebration was fast coming, and everyone were excited to enjoy political liberty. Meanwhile Kihika is a revolutionary character who always opposes the existence of the European – the real and the converts. As missionary men and women were promoting Christianity in every corner of the nation, lot of people were switching their religion. Kihika's thoughts on the converts and European are explosive. He doesn't want to see them using the land of the native tribesmen people. Therefore he kills them everywhere and his killing people, surely disturbs social peacefulness and national integrity. Missionaries, the converts and colonial supports have been killed by him just to free colonial slavery from the country.

Kihika has become a dangerous revolutionary man for the existence of dual identities and multiculturalism that is swiftly growing in Kenya. Secretly Mugo watches his disturbing

actions as he supports the existing social changes because of colonialism. Kihika is secretly killed by Mugo and thus an anti-social man is finished in order to flourish a multi – cultural nation. His confession of Kihika's death finally declares him as betrayous native man. In fact, his unsuitable action is for welfare of Kenya especially in accepting dual identities and multiculturalism.

Gikonyo confronts an internal conflict after realization that his wife, Mumbi, had physical relationship with Karega, the convert. It is a complete violation of communal customs.

Petals of Blood is a post – colonial novel that examines cultural transformation and corruption by the elite ruling class. It is set in Ilmorog, once known for indigenous cultural customs but with the passing of time it has completely altered leaving the remains of conventional marks because of modernization and cultural amalgamation. Traditional Theng'eta has been commodified and commercialized and only past memories are present in the major character's minds. Domestic manners have been replaced by Western values. Even revolutionary importance of freedom fighters has been eliminated and they have to struggle for livelihood. Communal integrity has been finished, and the local people have nothing except remorse.

Wanja is the real daughter of domestic values, greatly honouring past memories she had enjoyed in childhood. In post – colonial period, her indigenous respect has been mortgaged to merge herself with dual identities as the matter of bread and butter. She uses her body as a source of income by entering in prostitution. Her avoidance to raise collision with other proves her prudence of living present life better rather than just pondering on Gikuyu past culture. She learns how to commodify Theng'eta, a traditional drink.

Abdulla and Munira also struggle to live in modern age as port – colonialism has ended up all communal ways of life. Abdulla doesn't get respect as he lost his leg during Mau Mau uprising. Munira plays as a school teacher. Almost characters face the same problem – livelihood, forgetting those sweet past recollections. But they fight against their internal conflict of old faith. They have no other option except amalgamating themselves with the westernized social atmosphere. Their realization is that Kenya has changed its root track and runs on another track, that is to say, annihilation of Gikuyu culture and growing European manners frankly adopted by the youth. It is a great pain for them as the local civilization has been dispossessed by the white settler's.

In a nutshell, Ngugi's the selected novels portray the agony of loss of local values, identify, names language in response to collision of traditions and cultures. Plain and internal conflicts are surely born from perpetuality of colonialism, advent of missionary education therefore social restlessness against the Britisher's policy raises its head which witnesses the disillusionment that post-colonial period fails to fulfill the future dream. Cultural collision takes place as a process of de – colonization that causes turmoil and violence in the society.

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Knowledge Management and Digital Transformation for Sustainable Growth in Emerging India: Evidence from Nagpur's Hospitality Sector

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Abstract

In the rapidly changing economic environment of India, service industries are experiencing significant transformation due to technological advancement and increasing competition. Among these industries, the hospitality sector plays an important role in supporting tourism, business activities and regional economic development. Hotels and restaurants today are not only required to provide quality services but also need to adopt modern management practices and digital technologies in order to remain competitive.

Knowledge management has emerged as an essential organizational practice that enables institutions to utilize the knowledge, experience and skills of employees effectively. In the hospitality industry, where service quality depends heavily on human interaction, the ability to share knowledge and learn from experience becomes highly valuable. At the same time, digital transformation has introduced various tools such as online reservation systems, digital payment methods and social media platforms which help hospitality businesses improve operational efficiency and customer engagement.

The present study explores the role of knowledge management and digital transformation in supporting sustainable growth of hospitality enterprises with special reference to Nagpur district in Maharashtra. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected through questionnaires from employees and managers working in selected hospitality establishments. Secondary data was obtained from academic publications and reliable online resources.

The findings indicate that organizations which promote knowledge sharing among employees and actively adopt digital technologies are able to improve service delivery and operational performance. The study suggests that the integration of knowledge management practices with digital transformation strategies can significantly contribute to sustainable growth of hospitality enterprises in emerging regional markets such as Nagpur.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Digital Transformation, Hospitality Industry, Sustainable Development, Emerging India, Nagpur District

1. Introduction

The Indian economy has undergone remarkable transformation during the last two decades. Rapid technological development, expansion of digital infrastructure and increasing global connectivity have influenced the growth of many service industries. Among these sectors, the hospitality industry has gained considerable importance because of its contribution to tourism development, employment generation and local economic growth.

Hospitality organizations, particularly hotels and restaurants, operate in an environment where customer expectations continue to evolve. Modern customers expect not only good service but also convenience, speed and digital accessibility. As a result, hospitality businesses must continuously adapt their operational practices and management strategies.

One of the major developments in modern organizational management is the growing importance of knowledge management. Knowledge management refers to the process through which organizations create, share and effectively utilize knowledge resources. In service-based industries such as hospitality, employees possess valuable knowledge related to customer interaction, service delivery and problem solving. When this knowledge is properly shared and utilized within the organization, it can significantly enhance service quality.

Another important factor influencing the hospitality industry is digital transformation. The adoption of digital technologies has changed the way hospitality businesses interact with customers and manage their internal operations. Online booking systems, digital payment platforms, mobile applications and social media marketing tools have become essential components of hospitality management.

Nagpur district, located in the central region of India, has witnessed gradual growth in hospitality activities due to increasing tourism, business travel and educational institutions. Therefore, examining how knowledge management practices and digital technologies influence hospitality enterprises in this region can provide valuable insights for sustainable business development.

2. Review of Literature

Scholars and researchers have widely recognized knowledge as a key resource for organizational success. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi, organizations that actively create

and share knowledge are more capable of innovation and continuous improvement. Knowledge creation processes enable organizations to develop new ideas and improve their services.

Davenport and Prusak highlighted that knowledge management involves identifying valuable knowledge within an organization and making it accessible to employees who need it. When knowledge flows freely across different departments, organizations are able to make better decisions and respond more effectively to challenges.

In the hospitality sector, knowledge sharing among employees is particularly important because service quality depends largely on employee performance. Frontline employees interact directly with customers, and their experience plays an important role in shaping customer satisfaction. Studies in hospitality management have shown that organizations which encourage communication, training and knowledge sharing tend to achieve higher service standards.

Digital transformation has also attracted considerable attention in recent research. Information technology applications have significantly influenced hospitality operations. Online reservation systems allow customers to book services conveniently from any location, while digital payment platforms ensure faster and more secure transactions.

Researchers have also emphasized the role of social media in promoting hospitality services. Platforms such as online travel portals and review websites enable customers to share their experiences, which influences the reputation and visibility of hospitality establishments.

Although many studies have examined knowledge management and digital technology separately, fewer studies have explored their combined role in supporting sustainable growth in regional hospitality sectors.

3. Research Gap

Existing literature highlights the importance of knowledge management and digital transformation in modern organizations. However, limited research has been conducted to understand how these two factors together influence the performance and growth of hospitality enterprises in emerging regional markets.

Particularly in cities such as Nagpur, where hospitality services are expanding gradually, there is a need to understand how knowledge sharing practices and digital tools contribute to improving service quality and organizational efficiency. The present study attempts to address this gap.

4. Objectives of the Study

The study has been conducted with the following objectives:

To examine the importance of knowledge management practices in hospitality organizations.

To study the adoption of digital technologies in hotels and restaurants.

To analyze the impact of digital transformation on service quality and operational efficiency.

To identify challenges faced by hospitality enterprises in implementing knowledge management and digital practices.

5. Research Methodology

The present research is descriptive in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data sources.

Primary data was collected from employees and managerial staff working in selected hotels and restaurants in Nagpur district. A structured questionnaire was used to gather responses related to knowledge sharing practices and the use of digital technologies in their organizations. A total sample of sixty respondents was selected using a convenient sampling method. The respondents included managers, supervisors and operational staff members who were actively involved in hospitality service delivery.

Secondary data was collected from academic books, research journals, conference proceedings and credible online resources related to hospitality management, knowledge management and digital transformation.

For analysis of the collected data, simple statistical techniques such as percentage analysis and tabular representation were used in order to interpret the responses in a meaningful manner.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Employee Opinion on Knowledge Sharing Practices

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	18	30%
Agree	30	50%
Neutral	7	12%
Disagree	5	8%

Interpretation

The results show that the majority of respondents believe that knowledge sharing among employees helps improve organizational performance. Approximately eighty percent of

respondents either strongly agree or agree that knowledge management practices positively influence service delivery.

Table 2

Use of Digital Technologies in Hospitality Establishments

Technology	Organizations Using Technology	Percentage
Online Booking System	46	77%
Digital Payment Methods	50	83%
Social Media Promotion	42	70%

Interpretation

The data indicates that hospitality establishments in Nagpur district are gradually adopting digital technologies. Digital payment systems are the most widely used technology, followed by online booking systems and social media marketing platforms.

7. Discussion

The analysis of the data indicates that knowledge management practices contribute significantly to improving service quality in hospitality organizations. Employees who are encouraged to share their experiences and service-related knowledge are better equipped to handle customer needs and operational challenges.

Digital transformation has further enhanced the operational capabilities of hospitality enterprises. Technologies such as online booking platforms and digital payment systems provide convenience to customers while also improving efficiency for businesses.

The study also highlights that organizations which combine knowledge sharing practices with digital technology adoption are better positioned to achieve sustainable growth and maintain competitiveness in the market.

8. Conclusion

The hospitality industry is an important component of India's growing service economy. In the context of emerging regional markets, hospitality enterprises must adopt innovative management practices and modern technologies in order to sustain growth and competitiveness.

The findings of the present study indicate that knowledge management practices such as employee learning, communication and knowledge sharing play a vital role in improving service quality. Digital transformation initiatives, including online booking systems, digital

payment platforms and social media marketing, further strengthen operational efficiency and customer engagement.

Therefore, hospitality organizations should actively promote a culture of knowledge sharing while simultaneously investing in appropriate digital technologies. The integration of these two factors can help hospitality enterprises achieve sustainable development and long-term success.

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One Nation, One Election in India: Rethinking Electoral Reform in a Federal Democracy

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Abstract

The idea of “One Nation, One Election” (ONOE) has gradually moved from being a policy suggestion to becoming a significant subject of debate in discussions on electoral reform in India. At its simplest level the proposal suggests that elections for the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies should be conducted simultaneously rather than at different points during the electoral cycle. Also, the idea appears straightforward and even attractive. Supporters frequently argue that such synchronization could reduce the financial burden associated with frequent elections, ease administrative pressures on electoral institutions, and prevent repeated disruptions in governance that occur when the Model Code of Conduct comes into force. Furthermore, proponents believe that holding elections together could streamline the administrative process and allow governments to focus more consistently on policymaking rather than on repeated electoral mobilization.

However, the issue becomes far more complex when examined more carefully. Critics have pointed out that elections in a federal democracy such as India perform functions that go well beyond the simple selection of governments. They create spaces for regional political voices to emerge, allow state-level issues to receive focused attention, and provide citizens with opportunities to evaluate governments operating at different levels of authority. From this perspective, synchronizing elections may have implications that extend well beyond administrative efficiency. It may alter the way voters engage with political issues and potentially reshape the balance between national and regional political discourse. The concept of simultaneous elections is not entirely unfamiliar to India’s political system. During the early decades after independence, elections to Parliament and state assemblies were conducted together between 1951 and 1967. At that time, the electoral cycle across the country was largely

synchronized, allowing voters to elect both national and state governments at the same time. However, this system eventually broke down due to political instability and the premature dissolution of several legislative assemblies. Over time, elections began to occur at different intervals across states, creating the staggered electoral cycle that characterizes Indian democracy today.

This paper examines the proposal of One Nation, One Election from several analytical perspectives. Rather than treating it simply as a technical reform, the discussion places the debate within a broader political and institutional context. Drawing on reports from institutions such as the Election Commission of India, NITI Aayog, and the Law Commission, as well as election expenditure data and recent institutional developments, the paper explores both the potential advantages and the deeper challenges associated with the proposal. In doing so, it attempts to understand how the idea of synchronized elections interacts with the broader principles of federalism, democratic accountability, and political representation.

Introduction

India is often described as the world's largest democracy, and in many respects this description is quite literal. The scale at which elections are conducted in the country is extraordinary. General elections involve hundreds of millions of voters distributed across diverse regions, languages, and social contexts. According to the Election Commission of India, the 2019 Lok Sabha elections included more than 900 million registered voters, making it the largest democratic exercise ever organized. Numbers such as these highlight the remarkable reach of democratic participation in the country, but they also reveal the immense administrative effort required to organize elections on such a scale.

Conducting elections in India involves establishing polling stations across vast geographical areas, training thousands of election officials, deploying large numbers of security personnel, and managing complex logistical arrangements involving electronic voting machines and other equipment. Such an extensive process naturally demands months of preparation and coordination among multiple administrative institutions. The Election Commission of India must ensure not only that elections are conducted efficiently but also that they remain free, fair, and accessible to voters across both urban and rural regions.

Over time, however, another issue has begun to attract increasing attention among scholars and policymakers. Because elections to the Lok Sabha and various State Legislative Assemblies

occur at different times, India often experiences an almost continuous cycle of electoral mobilization. One state completes its elections while another begins preparing for the next round. As a result, political parties, election administrators, and voters repeatedly enter campaign cycles throughout the year. This pattern has gradually led to concerns regarding the administrative and governance implications of such frequent elections.

From a governance perspective, the situation creates certain practical challenges. Whenever elections are announced, the Model Code of Conduct comes into force. This regulatory framework is designed to ensure fairness in the electoral process, but it also restricts governments from announcing new policies or development programs during the election period. Consequently, governance sometimes experiences temporary pauses while elections are being conducted. Over time, repeated election cycles may therefore affect the pace at which governments implement policy decisions. It is within this broader context that the idea of One Nation, One Election has re-emerged in policy discussions. At first glance, the proposal appears to offer a potential solution by aligning the electoral cycles of Parliament and state assemblies so that elections occur simultaneously once every five years. In theory, such synchronization could reduce administrative repetition and allow governments to focus more consistently on governance and development activities.

However, once the implications of such a reform are examined more closely, several questions arise. Elections in India are not merely administrative procedures; they are also political arenas where regional identities, local grievances, and diverse political interests find expression. If elections were synchronized across the country, it becomes necessary to ask whether national political narratives might overshadow state-level concerns. Alternatively, one might also ask whether voters would still be able to distinguish between national and regional political issues when casting their votes. These questions suggest that the debate surrounding simultaneous elections cannot be reduced to a matter of administrative efficiency alone. Rather, it touches upon the broader question of how democratic institutions should balance administrative practicality with political diversity and federal representation.

Another aspect that highlights the scale of electoral administration in India is the infrastructure required to conduct elections. According to the Election Commission's statistical reports, the 2019 general elections involved more than 10.37 lakh polling stations across the country. These polling stations were established under the guiding principle that voters should not normally

travel more than two kilometres to cast their vote. This principle reflects an important commitment to making democratic participation accessible to citizens across both remote rural areas and densely populated urban regions. At the same time, the size of the electorate has continued to grow steadily. By the time of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the number of registered voters had crossed 968 million. This expansion reflects both demographic growth and improvements in voter registration systems. As a result, electoral administration in India must constantly adapt to changing demographic realities while maintaining transparency and logistical efficiency.

Election Expenditure and the Growing Cost of Elections

One of the most frequently cited arguments in favour of simultaneous elections concerns the steadily rising cost of conducting elections in India. Over the years, election-related expenditure has increased significantly, affecting both the government and political parties. Supporters of electoral synchronization often point to this financial burden as one of the key reasons for reconsidering the existing staggered electoral cycle. The argument suggests that repeated elections require repeated mobilization of administrative machinery, security personnel, and electoral infrastructure, which inevitably leads to increased costs.

Official data released by the Election Commission of India indicate that the administrative cost of conducting the 2019 Lok Sabha elections was approximately ₹5,000–₹6,000 crore. This expenditure covered various logistical requirements, including the preparation of polling stations, transportation of election materials, training of election officials, and deployment of security personnel across the country. While these figures are substantial, they represent only the government's direct expenditure on conducting elections.

However, when the campaign spending of political parties and candidates is taken into account, the financial scale of elections becomes far more significant. According to estimates prepared by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), the total spending associated with the 2019 general elections exceeded ₹60,000 crore. This broader estimate includes campaign advertisements, public rallies, digital campaigning, transportation of political workers, and various forms of voter outreach undertaken by political parties.

Furthermore, more recent analyses suggest that election expenditure has continued to grow in subsequent elections. Reports from the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and the CMS 2024 Election Expenditure Report indicate that the 2024 Lok Sabha elections may have

involved total spending exceeding ₹1 lakh crore. If these estimates are accurate, the election would represent one of the most expensive democratic exercises ever conducted anywhere in the world. At first glance, such figures appear to strengthen the argument in favour of synchronized elections. If elections for Parliament and state assemblies were conducted simultaneously, administrative resources such as security personnel, election officials, and voting infrastructure would need to be mobilized less frequently. This could potentially reduce the direct costs borne by the state.

However, the issue is not entirely straightforward. Even if administrative expenditure declines, political parties may continue to invest heavily in election campaigns. In fact, one might argue that simultaneous elections could intensify political competition, encouraging parties to spend even larger sums in order to influence voters across multiple levels of government at the same time. Consequently, while the financial argument remains an important element of the ONOE debate, its implications require careful and nuanced examination.

Administrative and Logistical Challenges

When the administrative dimension of elections in India is examined more closely, the scale of the challenge becomes even clearer. Conducting elections in a country of India's size requires the coordination of vast numbers of individuals and resources. The Election Commission must ensure that voting infrastructure is accessible across remote rural regions, mountainous terrain, dense forests, and highly populated urban centres.

During the 2019 general elections, more than 10 million polling officials and security personnel were involved in managing the electoral process. These individuals were responsible for overseeing polling stations, maintaining law and order, and ensuring the integrity of the voting process. In addition, the Election Commission deployed approximately 1.7 million Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) along with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) devices across the country. The transportation, storage, and secure handling of this equipment required careful planning and coordination among multiple administrative agencies.

By the time of the 2024 elections, the administrative effort had expanded even further. Reports suggest that nearly 15 million polling personnel and security staff were deployed to manage the electoral process across the country. These figures highlight the enormous logistical complexity involved in conducting elections in India. Organizing elections of this scale requires months of preparation. Equipment must be transported safely to thousands of polling

stations, election officials must receive proper training, and security arrangements must be coordinated across multiple states. These logistical demands illustrate why debates about electoral synchronization often focus on administrative capacity and institutional readiness. Supporters of simultaneous elections frequently argue that conducting elections together could reduce the need for repeated administrative mobilization. Instead of preparing for elections in different states at different times, the Election Commission could potentially organize a single nationwide electoral exercise. Such an approach, it is argued, could streamline administrative planning and reduce the burden on election officials.

However, from another perspective, one might question whether such synchronization would simply concentrate the logistical burden into a single, much larger operation. Estimates suggest that nationwide simultaneous elections could require more than four million Electronic Voting Machines and VVPAT units, since voting machines would need to accommodate both parliamentary and state assembly ballots. In addition, the simultaneous deployment of Central Armed Police Forces across all states could create further logistical challenges related to resource allocation and security management.

Efficiency and Democratic Representation: A Larger Debate

Beyond the questions of cost and logistics lies a deeper theoretical issue concerning the functioning of democratic institutions. Political systems are often expected to balance several important goals simultaneously, including efficiency, accountability, and representation. The debate over One Nation One Election reflects this broader tension between administrative efficiency and democratic pluralism. From the perspective of administrative efficiency, simultaneous elections appear attractive. If elections occur less frequently, governments may be able to focus more consistently on governance and policymaking rather than electoral campaigning. Frequent election cycles can sometimes divert political attention toward campaign strategies, coalition negotiations, and political mobilization.

However, democracy also relies heavily on mechanisms of accountability. Regular elections provide citizens with opportunities to evaluate the performance of their political leaders and governments. When elections occur frequently, voters are able to express approval or dissatisfaction with government policies at regular intervals. India's federal political structure adds another important dimension to this debate. State elections often revolve around regional concerns that differ significantly from national political issues. When elections are conducted

separately, voters may evaluate state and national governments independently. This separation allows regional political parties and local political movements to articulate specific policy demands that may not receive attention in national electoral campaigns.

If elections are conducted simultaneously, however, national political narratives may dominate public discourse. Some scholars have suggested that this phenomenon could produce what is sometimes referred to as the “coattail effect,” where the popularity of national leaders influences the outcome of elections at the state level. In such situations, voters may align their choices across different levels of government, potentially reducing the visibility of regional political issues. Political scientists such as Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar have argued that Indian voters often demonstrate the capacity to distinguish between national and regional political choices when elections occur separately. If this observation is correct, synchronized elections could potentially alter the dynamics of electoral competition in ways that are not yet fully understood. This possibility highlights the need to consider not only the administrative consequences of electoral reform but also its broader implications for democratic representation.

Conclusion

The proposal for One Nation One Election represents one of the most significant debates in contemporary discussions about electoral reform in India. On one hand, the idea appears to offer certain practical advantages, including the possibility of reducing administrative repetition and lowering the cost of conducting elections. From this perspective, synchronized elections could potentially streamline electoral administration and allow governments to devote greater attention to policy implementation.

On the other hand, the proposal raises important questions about democratic accountability, federal balance, and the representation of regional political interests. Elections in India serve not only as mechanisms for selecting governments but also as platforms through which diverse social and political interests are articulated. Any reform that alters the structure of electoral cycles must therefore consider its potential impact on the broader democratic process.

Historically, India once conducted simultaneous elections, but political developments eventually disrupted that arrangement. Reintroducing such a system today would require careful consideration of constitutional, administrative, and political factors. Several

institutional discussions have suggested that implementing such reforms may require amendments to constitutional provisions such as Articles 83, 85, 172, and 356, which regulate the tenure and dissolution of legislative bodies.

Some scholars and policy institutions have also proposed a phased approach in which election cycles are gradually synchronized rather than immediately aligned across the entire country. Such an approach may allow policymakers to address administrative challenges while preserving the flexibility of India's federal system. Ultimately, the debate over simultaneous elections reflects a broader challenge faced by democratic systems around the world. The question is not simply how to conduct elections more efficiently, but how to design institutions that promote effective governance while preserving political diversity and democratic representation. The way this balance is negotiated in India will likely shape the future trajectory of its electoral system.

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Digital Economy and the Progress of the Cashless India Mission**Ms. Nirnaya Niraj Khobragade, Dr. Vijaysing B. Pawar****Dhanwate National College, Nagpur.****Email: nirnayakhobragade3@gmail.com**

Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed global economic systems, giving rise to what is commonly known as the digital economy. In India, the government has actively promoted digital transactions with the goal of reducing dependence on physical cash and strengthening financial inclusion. Initiatives such as Digital India, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Aadhaar-based identification systems, and financial inclusion programs have played a major role in accelerating this transition. The demonetisation policy introduced in 2016 further encouraged individuals and businesses to adopt electronic payment methods. This research paper evaluates the development of India's digital economy and examines the progress achieved under the Cashless India mission. The study relies on secondary data sources including government publications, academic studies, and financial industry reports to assess the expansion of digital payment systems and their impact on the economy. The findings suggest that India has made remarkable progress in digital payment adoption, particularly through the widespread use of UPI. Digital transactions have enhanced transparency, simplified financial activities, and expanded access to banking services. However, certain obstacles such as cybersecurity threats, limited digital literacy, and infrastructural challenges continue to hinder the complete transition to a cashless society. The paper concludes that sustained policy support, investment in digital infrastructure, and improved awareness programs are necessary to strengthen India's digital ecosystem and advance the vision of a cashless economy.

1. Introduction

The concept of the digital economy refers to economic activities that rely on digital technologies such as internet connectivity, mobile devices, electronic payment systems, and data-driven services. Over the past two decades, digital technologies have reshaped traditional economic structures and significantly improved the efficiency of financial transactions.

Countries across the world are increasingly adopting digital payment systems to minimise the use of physical cash and improve transparency in financial operations.

India has experienced substantial progress in the development of its digital economy in recent years. The government has introduced several initiatives aimed at encouraging electronic payments and strengthening financial inclusion across the country. Programs such as Digital India, Aadhaar, and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana have contributed to expanding banking services and promoting digital transactions. These initiatives have provided millions of citizens with access to formal financial services for the first time.

A major turning point in India's digital transformation occurred in November 2016 when the government announced the demonetisation of high-value currency notes. This policy led to a temporary shortage of cash and encouraged individuals and businesses to explore alternative payment methods such as mobile wallets, internet banking, and digital payment applications. As a result, the adoption of digital payment platforms increased significantly.

One of the most influential innovations in India's digital payment ecosystem is the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), UPI enables instant money transfers between bank accounts through mobile applications. It allows users to make payments, transfer funds, and conduct financial transactions quickly and securely using a smartphone. The simplicity and convenience of UPI have contributed to its rapid adoption across the country.

In addition to government initiatives, factors such as increased smartphone penetration, affordable internet services, and the growth of fintech companies have further supported the expansion of digital payments in India. Millions of individuals now use mobile payment applications for daily transactions, including shopping, bill payments, and money transfers. Despite these advancements, the transition toward a fully cashless economy remains a complex process. A large portion of the population still relies on cash, particularly in rural areas and informal sectors. Challenges such as inadequate digital infrastructure, low levels of digital literacy, and concerns regarding online security continue to affect the widespread adoption of digital payment systems.

This research paper aims to analyse the development of India's digital economy and assess the progress of the Cashless India mission. It also identifies the key challenges associated

with digital payment adoption and suggests possible strategies to strengthen India's transition toward a digital financial ecosystem.

2. Literature Review

A growing body of research has explored the evolution of digital payment systems and the role of government initiatives in promoting a cashless economy in India. Scholars and policy analysts have examined how technological innovation, financial inclusion policies, and regulatory support have influenced the growth of digital transactions.

Swami and Pillai (2023) conducted an analysis of India's digital payment infrastructure, focusing on platforms such as Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Their findings revealed a substantial increase in the use of electronic payment systems over the past decade. Among these platforms, UPI has experienced the fastest growth due to its ease of use and interoperability between banks.

Other researchers have emphasised the role of mobile technology in transforming India's payment landscape. The rapid increase in smartphone usage has enabled millions of users to access digital payment applications, making financial transactions more convenient and accessible. Studies indicate that mobile-based payment systems have reduced transaction costs and simplified financial processes for both individuals and businesses.

Government and institutional reports have also highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure in supporting the digital economy. The expansion of internet connectivity, along with initiatives such as the Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) application and Aadhaar-enabled payment systems, has significantly contributed to the growth of digital payments in India. These platforms have enabled users to perform financial transactions without requiring complex banking procedures.

Research studies examining consumer behaviour have shown that digital payment systems can influence spending patterns. Some studies have reported that users tend to spend more frequently when using digital payment methods due to their convenience and speed. This shift in consumer behaviour reflects the broader impact of digital financial technologies on economic activities.

However, existing literature also identifies several barriers to the adoption of digital payment systems. One major challenge is the digital divide, which refers to the unequal distribution of access to digital technologies. Factors such as income levels, educational background, and geographical location can affect an individual's ability to participate in the digital economy.

Additionally, concerns regarding cyber security and online fraud have emerged as important issues in the context of digital payments. As digital transactions increase, financial institutions must strengthen their security systems to protect users from cyber threats and data breaches.

Overall, the literature suggests that while India has achieved significant progress in building a digital payment ecosystem, further efforts are required to address technological and social challenges that may hinder the transition to a fully cashless economy.

3. Progress of the Cashless India Mission

The Cashless India initiative is a key component of the broader Digital India program launched by the Government of India. The primary objective of this initiative is to encourage digital transactions and reduce the dependence on cash-based financial activities.

Growth of Digital Payments

In recent years, India has witnessed a dramatic increase in digital payment transactions. Various payment systems such as mobile wallets, debit cards, credit cards, and internet banking have become widely used by consumers and businesses. Among these systems, UPI has emerged as the most influential platform driving the growth of digital payments.

Since its introduction in 2016, UPI has recorded exponential growth in transaction volume and value. The platform processes billions of transactions each month, making it one of the largest real-time payment systems in the world. Its ability to facilitate instant bank-to-bank transfers through mobile devices has made digital payments more accessible and efficient.

Financial Inclusion

Another important outcome of the digital payment revolution is the expansion of financial inclusion. Government initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana have enabled millions of individuals to open bank accounts and gain access to formal financial services.

Digital payment platforms allow individuals in remote areas to perform financial transactions without visiting physical bank branches. This has been particularly beneficial for rural populations and small entrepreneurs who previously faced difficulties accessing banking services.

Impact on Businesses

Digital payment systems have also transformed the business environment in India. Small businesses and local vendors increasingly accept digital payments through QR codes and mobile applications. This shift has improved operational efficiency and expanded customer reach.

Many small and medium enterprises have reported improved business performance after adopting digital payment solutions. Digital transactions reduce the need for cash handling and simplify accounting processes, which can enhance productivity and financial management.

Transparency and Economic Formalisation

Digital transactions create electronic records, which improve transparency in financial activities. This transparency helps reduce tax evasion and encourages businesses to operate within the formal economy. As more transactions move to digital platforms, governments can better monitor economic activities and strengthen financial regulation.

4. Challenges in Achieving a Cashless Economy

Although India has made considerable progress in promoting digital payments, several challenges continue to affect the complete transition to a cashless economy.

Digital Divide

A significant portion of the population still lacks access to smartphones, internet connectivity, or digital literacy. These limitations prevent many individuals from using digital payment platforms effectively.

Cyber security Concerns

The rise in digital transactions has also led to an increase in cyber fraud and online scams. Protecting users from such threats requires strong cybersecurity systems and continuous monitoring by financial institutions.

Persistence of Cash Usage

Cash remains widely used in several sectors of the Indian economy, particularly in small-scale businesses and informal markets. Many individuals still prefer cash due to familiarity and trust issues with digital systems.

Infrastructure Challenges

Limited internet connectivity and inconsistent electricity supply in certain rural areas can restrict the use of digital payment technologies.

5. Recommendations

To accelerate the development of India's digital economy, several measures can be implemented.

1. **Improvement of Digital Infrastructure** Expanding high-speed internet services and mobile network coverage in rural regions is essential to support digital payment adoption.
2. **Digital Literacy Programs** Government and educational institutions should organise awareness campaigns and training programs to teach citizens how to use digital payment systems safely.
3. **Enhanced Cyber security Measures** Banks and fintech companies must strengthen their security frameworks to protect users from fraud and cyber-attacks.
4. **Encouraging Small Business Participation** Providing financial incentives and technical support can encourage small businesses to adopt digital payment methods.
5. **Continuous Policy Support** Effective regulations and supportive government policies are necessary to maintain the growth and stability of digital financial systems.

6. Conclusion

India's digital economy has experienced rapid expansion over the past decade, driven by technological innovation and supportive government policies. The Cashless India mission has significantly promoted the adoption of digital payment systems, transforming the way financial transactions are conducted across the country.

The introduction of the Unified Payments Interface, combined with initiatives such as Digital India and financial inclusion programs, has created a strong foundation for digital financial services. Millions of individuals and businesses now rely on digital payment platforms for everyday transactions.

Nevertheless, achieving a completely cashless economy requires overcoming several challenges, including limited digital infrastructure, cyber security risks, and the persistence of cash-based transactions. Addressing these issues will require coordinated efforts from policymakers, financial institutions, and technology providers.

With continued investment in infrastructure, improved digital literacy, and effective regulatory support, India can further strengthen its digital economy and move closer to achieving the long-term goal of a cashless society.

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Crisis in Agriculture and Empowerment through Modern Technology**Ms. Divya B. Gehani**

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E-mail: - gehanidivi@gmail.com**Abstract**

Agriculture is a vital sector that supports global food supply and provides employment to millions of people, particularly in developing countries. In recent years, however, agriculture has been facing multiple challenges such as climate change, depletion of natural resources, fluctuating market prices, and rising production costs. These issues have created significant difficulties for farmers and threaten the sustainability of agricultural systems.

Modern technological innovations offer promising opportunities to address these problems and improve farming efficiency. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), and digital agricultural platforms are transforming traditional agricultural practices. This paper examines the major causes of the agricultural crisis and discusses how technological innovations can empower farmers and support sustainable agricultural development. The study emphasizes that the integration of modern technology with appropriate policies and training programs can improve productivity and reduces environmental impacts of the agricultural sector.

Keywords: Agricultural crisis, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, sustainable farming, farmer empowerment.

1. Introduction

Agriculture plays a pivotal role in economic development, food production, and rural employment. In many developing nations, a large percentage of the population depends on agriculture as their primary source of income. Despite its importance, the agricultural sector is experiencing significant stress due to a combination of environmental, economic, and social challenges.

Over the past few decades, agricultural productivity has been affected by changing climatic conditions, land degradation, and limited availability of water resources. These factors have made farming increasingly uncertain and difficult. In addition, rising input costs and unstable market prices have reduced profitability for farmers, particularly small and marginal producers.

Technological innovation has emerged as a key solution to many agricultural challenges. The use of digital technologies, data-driven farming methods, and advanced machinery can improve efficiency, reduce resource wastage, and enhance crop productivity.

This study explores the relationship between the agricultural crisis and technological innovation and highlights the importance of technology driven farming for sustainable development.

2. Literature Review

According to reports published by the Food and Agriculture Organization, climate variability has reduced crop yields in many parts of the world and increased the vulnerability of farmers to environmental risks. Similarly, studies have shown that changing climatic conditions also increase pest infestations and crop diseases, further affecting agricultural productivity (Liakos et al., 2018).

Another important factor contributing to the agricultural crisis is soil degradation. Soil fertility is essential for maintaining crop productivity, but excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has negatively affected soil health in many agricultural regions. Research indicates that unsustainable farming practices have resulted in nutrient depletion, erosion, and reduced soil quality, which ultimately leads to lower crop yields (Wolfert et al., 2017).

Rising costs of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery have increased the financial burden on farmers. Research suggests that price instability and limited access to credit have negatively affected the economic sustainability of farming activities (FAO, 2022).

3. Research Methodology

The present study is based on Primary and Secondary research methods. A qualitative and descriptive approach was used to analyze the available information and identify key trends in agricultural challenges and technological developments.

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this research study are:

1. To examine the major factors contributing to the agricultural crisis.
2. To analyze the level of awareness of modern agricultural technologies among farmers.
3. To study the adoption of modern agricultural technologies in farming practices.
4. To evaluate the impact of technology adoption on farmer empowerment.

3.2 Hypotheses of the study

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Awareness of modern agricultural technology positively influences technology adoption among farmers.

H2: Adoption of modern agricultural technology significantly improves farmer empowerment.

3.3 Sources of data collection-

i) Primary Data:

Primary data were collected directly from farmers using a structured questionnaire survey.

ii) Secondary Data:

Secondary data were collected from reliable sources such as research journals, government reports, agricultural statistics, books, academic publications, agricultural organization websites, and previous research studies.

3.4 Population and Sample Size

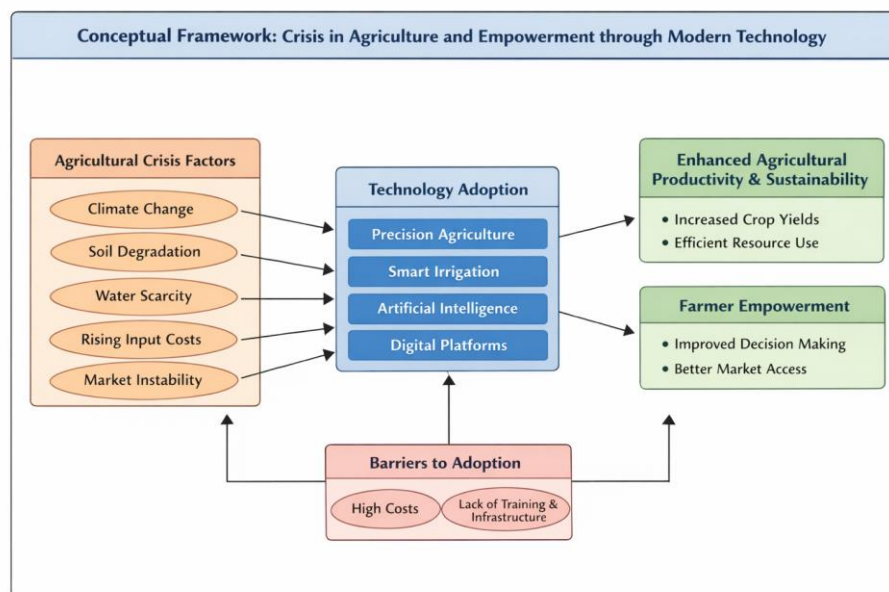
The population for this study consists of **farmers engaged in agricultural activities** of Nagpur Tahsil. A total of **100 farmers** were selected as respondents for the study.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study adopted **simple random sampling** to select the respondents.

4. Factors Responsible for the Agricultural Crisis

Figure No. 01- Conceptual Framework



- ✓ Climate Change
- ✓ Soil Degradation
- ✓ Water Shortages
- ✓ Rising Cost of Agricultural Inputs
- ✓ Market Uncertainty

5. Modern Technology as a Solution to Agricultural Crisis

- ✓ Precision Agriculture
- ✓ Smart Irrigation Systems
- ✓ Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics
- ✓ Drone Technology
- ✓ Digital Agricultural Platforms

6. Empowerment of Farmers through Technology

- i. Technology plays an important role in empowering farmers by improving their knowledge, productivity, and access to markets.
- ii. Digital tools enable farmers to obtain timely information that helps them make better decisions regarding crop planning and resource management.
- iii. Improved access to market information allows farmers to negotiate better prices for their products.
- iv. Digital financial services and agricultural insurance platforms also help farmers manage financial risks.
- v. In addition, technological innovations encourage sustainable farming practices that protect natural resources and maintain ecological balance.

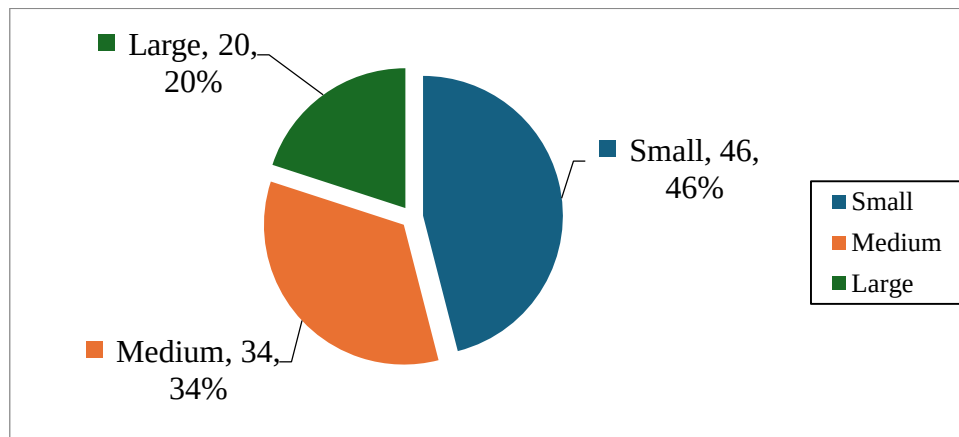
Data analysis and Interpretation

1) Farm Size Distribution

Table No. 01-Farm Size Distribution

Farm Size	Number of Farmers	Percentage
Small	46	46%
Medium	34	34%
Large	20	20%

Figure No. 02-Farm Size Distribution



Interpretation

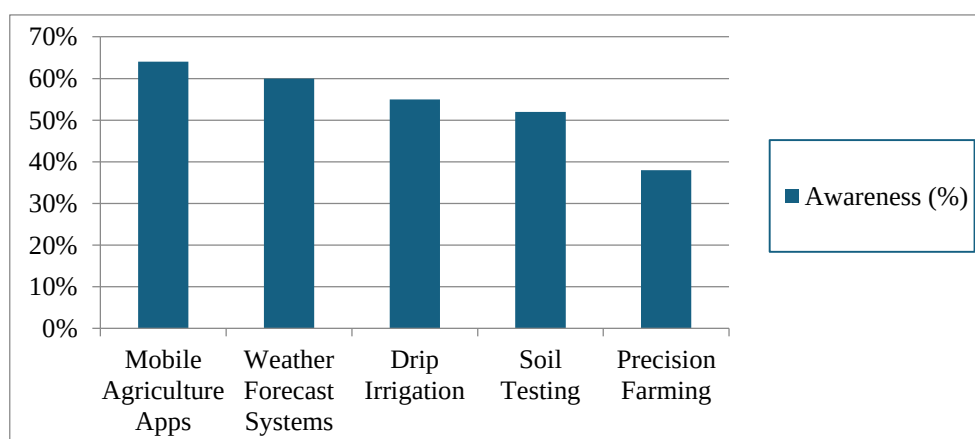
The data shows that **small farmers (46%)** represent the largest group, which reflects the agricultural structure in developing countries like India.

2) Awareness of Modern Agricultural Technology

Table No. 02- Awareness of Modern Agricultural Technology

Technology	Awareness (%)
Mobile Agriculture Apps	64%
Weather Forecast Systems	60%
Drip Irrigation	55%
Soil Testing	52%
Precision Farming	38%

Figure No. 03- Awareness of Modern Agricultural Technology



Interpretation

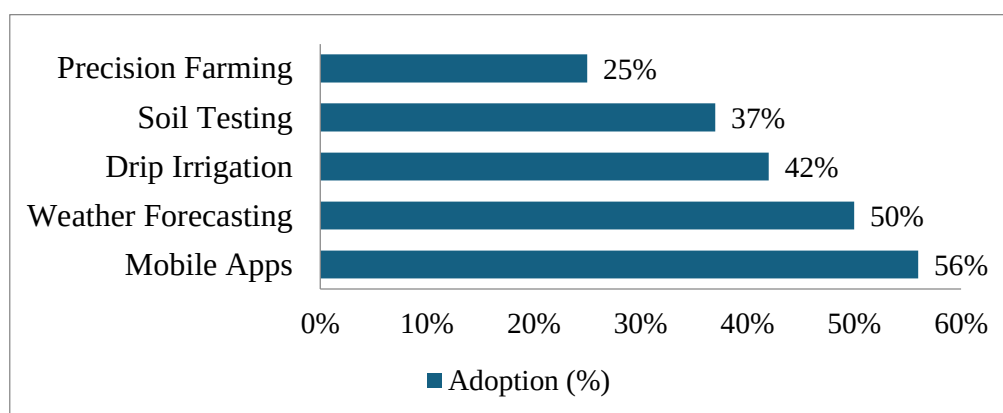
The majority of farmers are aware of **mobile agriculture applications (64%)** and **weather forecasting systems (64%)**, indicating increasing digital penetration in rural areas.

3) Adoption of Modern Technology

Table No. 03- Adoption of Modern Technology

Technology	Adoption (%)
Mobile Apps	56%
Weather Forecasting	50%
Drip Irrigation	42%
Soil Testing	37%
Precision Farming	25%

Figure No. 04- Adoption of Modern Technology



Interpretation

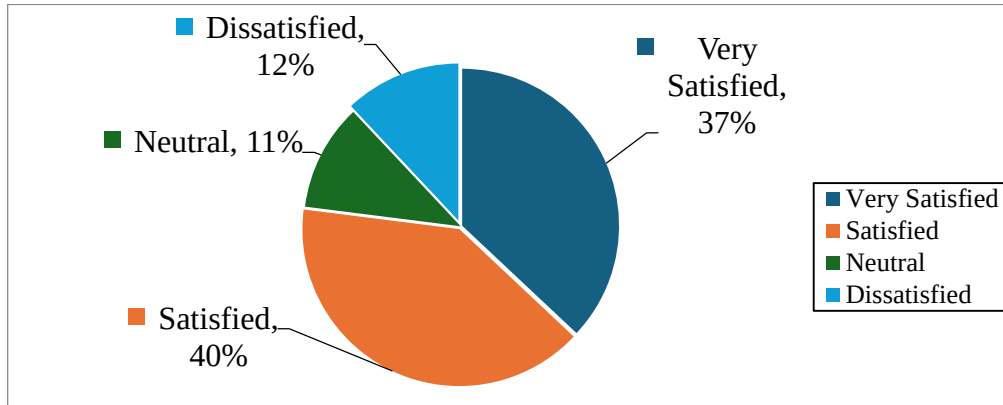
The majority of farmers are aware of **mobile agriculture applications (56%)** and **weather forecasting systems (50%)**, indicating increasing digital penetration in rural areas.

4) Farmer Satisfaction with Technology

Table No. 04- Farmer Satisfaction with Technology

Satisfaction Level	Percentage
Very Satisfied	37%
Satisfied	40%
Neutral	11%
Dissatisfied	12%

Figure No. 05- Farmer Satisfaction with Technology



Interpretation

A majority of farmers (**77% satisfied or very satisfied**) believe modern technology helps improve farming productivity and income.

Hypothesis Testing-

The above data, practical observations and analyzed data suggest that both the hypotheses are proved.

Conclusion

The agricultural sector is currently facing serious challenges that threaten food security and rural livelihoods. Environmental degradation, climate variability, rising input costs, and market instability has created significant difficulties for farmers.

Modern technological innovations offer practical solutions to many of these challenges. Precision agriculture, smart irrigation systems, artificial intelligence, drones, and digital platforms can significantly improve farm productivity and resource efficiency.

However, successful implementation of these technologies requires supportive policies, training initiatives, and investment in rural infrastructure. By combining technological innovation with sustainable farming practices, it is possible to overcome the agricultural crisis and create a more resilient and productive agricultural system.

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Skill Development as a Pathway to Employment: An Empirical Study of Unorganized Event Management Practices in Nagpur City

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment among youth remains a major challenge in India. Skill development has become an important approach to improve employability and create livelihood opportunities. The unorganized event management sector provides employment to many individuals through activities such as event planning, decoration, logistics, and technical support. This study examines the role of skill development in creating employment opportunities in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur. The research is empirical in nature and is based on primary data collected from individuals engaged in this sector. The findings indicate that skill development significantly contributes to improving employment prospects and income opportunities among youth involved in unorganized event management practices in Nagpur City.

KEYWORDS: Skill Development, Employment Opportunities, Unorganized Sector, Event Management Practices, Youth Employment, Nagpur City.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the major socio-economic challenges faced by developing countries like India, particularly among the youth population. Despite increasing levels of education, many young individuals struggle to find suitable employment opportunities due to a lack of practical skills and industry-relevant training. This situation highlights the importance of skill development as a key strategy for improving employability and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities.

In recent years, the event management industry has emerged as a rapidly growing sector, providing employment opportunities in areas such as event planning, decoration, logistics management, sound and lighting services, and hospitality support. A significant portion of this

industry operates within the unorganized sector, where many individuals work on a temporary or project basis. These activities are commonly referred to as unorganized event management practices.

Unorganized Event Management Practices in Nagpur City

Nagpur has witnessed a considerable increase in social, cultural, corporate, and entertainment events, which has created employment opportunities for many youths in the local event management sector. However, many workers involved in these activities lack formal training and professional skills, which may limit their employment stability and income potential.

Skill development plays a crucial role in enhancing the capabilities of individuals engaged in the unorganized event management sector. By acquiring relevant technical, managerial, and communication skills, workers can improve their efficiency, professionalism, and employment prospects. Therefore, understanding the role of skill development in creating employment opportunities in the unorganized event management sector is important.

In this context, the present study focuses on examining the role of skill development as a pathway to employment among individuals engaged in unorganized event management practices in Nagpur City. The study aims to explore how skill acquisition can contribute to improving livelihood opportunities and strengthening employment prospects in this emerging sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have examined the relationship between skill development and employment generation, particularly among youth in developing economies. According to International Labour Organization, lack of market-relevant skills is one of the major reasons for unemployment among young people, and vocational training plays a crucial role in improving employability and productivity.

Research by National Skill Development Corporation highlights that skill development initiatives can help bridge the gap between education and industry requirements by providing practical and technical training to the workforce. Such initiatives contribute significantly to enhancing employment opportunities and promoting economic development.

Studies on the unorganized sector indicate that it plays an important role in employment generation in India. According to reports by the National Commission for Enterprises in the

Unorganised Sector, a large proportion of the workforce in India is engaged in informal or unorganized activities where job security and formal training opportunities are limited.

In recent years, the event management industry has been identified as an emerging sector with growing employment potential. Previous studies suggest that event management activities such as event planning, decoration, logistics coordination, and technical services provide livelihood opportunities for many individuals, especially in urban areas.

However, existing research has largely focused on organized event management companies, while limited attention has been given to workers engaged in unorganized event management practices at the local level. Therefore, this study attempts to examine the role of skill development in improving employment opportunities among individuals engaged in unorganized event management practices in Nagpur.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1.To identify the skills required for employment in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur city.
- 2.To examine the role of skill development in generating employment opportunities for youth in the unorganized event management sector.
- 3.To analyze the relationship between skill development and employment opportunities in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur city.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H1: There is a significant role of skill development in generating employment opportunities for youth in the unorganized event management sector.

H2: There is a significant relationship between skill development and employment opportunities in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur city.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, based on a quantitative approach, to examine the role of skill development in generating employment opportunities for youth engaged in the unorganized event management sector. The study aims to identify the types of skills required and analyze how skill development contributes to employment opportunities among youth. The research focuses on youth working in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur City.

Research Design and Approach

A cross-sectional survey design is used to collect primary data from respondents at a single point in time. The study is structured to analyze the relationship between skill development and employment opportunities among youth working in the unorganized event management sector. This design allows the researcher to examine the current employment patterns, skill requirements, and the role of skill development in the sector.

Population and Sampling

The target population of the study consists of youth aged between 18 and 35 years who are engaged in unorganized event management activities such as event setup, decoration, sound and lighting arrangements, stage management, catering assistance, and other event-related services in Nagpur city.

To collect data from the respondents, a convenience sampling technique is adopted due to the informal and unorganized nature of the sector.

Sample Size: 100 respondents.

Sampling Area: Unorganized event management sector in Nagpur City.

Respondents: Youth working in various event management activities.

Data Collection

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire administered to the selected respondents. Secondary data is obtained from research articles, books, government reports, and relevant publications related to skill development and employment.

Data Analysis

The collected data is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with the help of statistical tools such as MS Excel or SPSS. These techniques help in examining the relationship between skill development and employment opportunities among youth working in the unorganized event management sector.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results are based on the analysis of data collected from 100 youth respondents aged 18–35 years engaged in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur. The findings indicate that various skills such as communication, teamwork, time management, and technical event-related skills play an important role in obtaining employment in the sector. The analysis also

shows that youth possessing higher levels of skills have better employment opportunities and relatively stable income patterns compared to those with limited skills. The study highlights that skill development contributes significantly to improving employment prospects among youth working in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur city.

CONCLUSION

The study emphasizes the importance of skill development in strengthening employment prospects for youth engaged in the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur. The sector provides flexible and accessible employment opportunities for young individuals; however, the availability of appropriate skills plays a crucial role in improving their work opportunities and career growth. The study suggests that encouraging skill-based training and awareness about professional competencies can help youth achieve better employment stability and contribute to the growth of the unorganized event management sector in Nagpur city.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote skill development programs for youth in the unorganized event management sector.
- Provide practical training in communication, teamwork, and event-handling skills.
- Conduct awareness programs to encourage professional skill enhancement.
- Facilitate collaboration with event organizations for hands-on experience.

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Digital Payment Adoption in India: The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust and Perceived Security

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Abstract

During the last decade, India's payment landscape has evolved dramatically, shaped by accelerated digital innovation, regulatory and policy interventions, and concerted efforts to broaden financial inclusion. Structural reforms, expanding digital infrastructure, and increased smartphone penetration have collectively redefined how individuals and businesses conduct financial transactions, fostering a shift from cash-based practices to technology-enabled payment systems. The accelerated proliferation of mobile-enabled payment platforms—most notably the Unified Payments Interface—has dramatically expanded both the scale and intensity of digital transactions nationwide. By enabling seamless, real-time fund transfers through smartphones, these platforms have simplified peer-to-peer payments, merchant transactions, utility bill settlements, and online purchases. The interoperability, low transaction costs, and round-the-clock accessibility of such systems have not only reduced reliance on cash but have also fostered greater participation from small businesses, rural users, and previously underserved populations, thereby reinforcing the momentum toward a digitally integrated payment ecosystem. Despite this exponential expansion, the adoption of digital payment systems remains uneven across diverse demographic and socio-economic segments. Variations in digital literacy, income levels, age, geographic location, and access to reliable internet infrastructure continue to influence usage patterns. Moreover, persistent concerns regarding data privacy, cybersecurity risks, fraud, and the reliability of digital platforms undermine user confidence. A lack of adequate awareness about grievance redressal mechanisms and data protection safeguards further intensifies apprehension, particularly among first-time and vulnerable users. Consequently, issues related to trust, privacy, and perceived security emerge as critical barriers limiting the universal acceptance of digital payment technologies. This study investigates the determinants of digital payment adoption in India, emphasizing the mediating role of consumer trust and perceived security. Drawing upon the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), this research develops and empirically tests a structural model linking perceived usefulness,

perceived ease of use, and social influence with digital payment adoption through trust and security perceptions. A quantitative survey was conducted among 428 active digital payment users across urban and semi-urban regions in India. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the data. The findings reveal that consumer trust and perceived security play a significant mediating role, bridging the relationship between technological determinants—such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, and social influence—and users' intention to adopt digital payment systems. These results underscore the critical influence of psychological assurance factors in shaping adoption behavior. This study advances the digital finance literature by incorporating psychological assurance constructs—specifically consumer trust and perceived security—within the context of an emerging economy. It provides actionable insights for fintech firms and policymakers, highlighting strategies to strengthen user confidence, foster wider adoption of digital payment systems, and promote inclusive digital financial participation across diverse demographic and socio-economic segments.

Keywords

Digital Payment Adoption, Consumer Trust, Perceived Security, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Financial Technology (FinTech), Unified Payments Interface (UPI), India, Emerging Economies.

Introduction

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped financial systems around the world. In emerging economies such as India, the rapid development of digital payment technologies has played a crucial role in improving financial inclusion and reducing dependence on cash-based transactions. Several factors have contributed to this transformation, including supportive government initiatives, increasing smartphone penetration, affordable internet connectivity, and continuous innovation within the financial technology (fintech) sector.

A major milestone in India's digital payment landscape was the introduction of the Unified Payments Interface. This system transformed the country's payment infrastructure by enabling real-time, interoperable, and cost-efficient digital transactions across different banking platforms. According to the Reserve Bank of India, the volume of digital transactions has grown steadily in recent years, with UPI accounting for a substantial share of retail payment activities. In addition, fintech applications such as Paytm and PhonePe have further accelerated

the adoption of digital payments by providing user-friendly interfaces and enabling seamless integration with a wide network of merchants.

Despite the rapid expansion of digital infrastructure, its presence alone does not guarantee universal adoption. Concerns related to cybersecurity threats, phishing attacks, misuse of personal data, and privacy breaches continue to influence consumer perceptions of digital payment systems. In many societies where confidence in digital technologies is still developing, these concerns may discourage individuals from fully embracing digital financial services. As a result, psychological factors such as trust and perceived security become critical elements in shaping consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions toward digital payment platforms.

To better understand these dynamics, this study examines how consumer trust and perceived security mediate the relationship between technological determinants and digital payment adoption in India. The research framework integrates the Technology Acceptance Model and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology with constructs related to trust and security. By combining these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing digital payment adoption within the context of an emerging economy.

Through this approach, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on financial technology adoption by highlighting the importance of both technological and psychological determinants in shaping consumer behavior. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and fintech companies seeking to strengthen trust, enhance security perceptions, and promote the wider adoption of digital payment systems in India.

Literature Review

Digital Payment Adoption in Emerging Economies

Digital payment systems refer to technological mechanisms that support the electronic movement of funds through mobile applications, online financial platforms, and point-of-sale infrastructure. In the context of developing nations, the adoption of digital payment technologies is closely connected to the promotion of financial inclusion, the creation of transparent financial processes, and the stimulation of sustainable economic growth. However, several barriers continue to hinder the widespread adoption of digital payments in developing

economies. Low digital literacy among users often limits their ability to navigate mobile applications or online platforms effectively. Infrastructure gaps, such as inadequate internet connectivity, unreliable electricity, and limited access to smartphones or point-of-sale devices, further restrict usage, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. Additionally, concerns regarding cybersecurity, data privacy, phishing attacks, and financial fraud contribute to a lack of consumer confidence in digital payment systems. Socio-cultural factors, including resistance to change, trust in cash-based transactions, and limited awareness of the benefits of digital payments, also play a critical role in slowing adoption. Collectively, these challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions, including user education, improved technological infrastructure, and robust security measures, to ensure broader acceptance and sustainable growth of digital financial services.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Proposed by Davis (1989), the Technology Acceptance Model identifies perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) as the principal determinants that shape users' acceptance and adoption of technological systems. Perceived usefulness (PU) refers to the extent to which an individual believes that using a particular system will improve their job performance, productivity, or overall efficiency. Perceived ease of use (PEOU), on the other hand, reflects the degree to which an individual expects a system to be free of effort, intuitive, and simple to operate. These two constructs together form the core of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), explaining why users decide to adopt or reject a technology.

Over the years, TAM has been widely validated across multiple domains, including online banking, mobile payments, e-commerce, and digital financial services. Empirical studies demonstrate that both PU and PEOU significantly influence users' behavioral intentions, which in turn affect actual system usage. For instance, in the context of mobile payment adoption, users are more likely to embrace digital wallets and UPI-based platforms if they perceive that these systems save time, reduce transaction costs, and simplify financial management. Similarly, PEOU has been shown to reduce resistance among first-time users by lowering the cognitive and operational barriers associated with digital transactions.

Moreover, TAM provides a foundation for integrating additional factors such as trust, security, social influence, and perceived risk, which are particularly relevant in emerging economies where digital payment adoption is still evolving. By extending TAM to include these

constructs, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of user behavior in digital financial ecosystems. Overall, the model continues to serve as a robust framework for studying technology acceptance and offers valuable insights for designing user-centric digital payment systems.

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), proposed by Venkatesh et al. (2003), builds upon the foundational concepts of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by integrating additional determinants of technology adoption. UTAUT identifies four key constructs that influence user behavior: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Performance expectancy refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a technology will help them achieve desired outcomes or enhance productivity. Effort expectancy captures the perceived ease associated with using the system, similar to TAM's perceived ease of use. Social influence reflects the extent to which individuals perceive that important peers, family members, or colleagues expect them to use a particular technology, highlighting the role of social norms in adoption decisions. Facilitating conditions represent the availability of organizational and technical resources, such as infrastructure, support, and guidance, that enable the effective use of technology.

UTAUT also emphasizes the moderating effects of variables such as age, gender, experience, and voluntariness of use, recognizing that technology adoption is influenced by both individual and contextual factors. The model has been widely applied in studies of information systems, e-learning, mobile banking, and digital payment adoption, demonstrating its robustness in explaining user intentions and actual system use. By encompassing both behavioral and environmental determinants, UTAUT provides a more comprehensive framework than TAM, allowing researchers to examine technology acceptance in diverse settings and across different demographic groups. In the context of emerging economies, UTAUT is particularly useful for understanding how social pressures, infrastructure limitations, and perceived usefulness interact to shape the adoption of digital financial services.

In collectivist societies such as India, social influence plays a significant role in shaping individuals' behavioral intentions toward adopting new technologies. People in these societies tend to prioritize the opinions, expectations, and recommendations of family members, peers, colleagues, and community leaders when making decisions. As a result, an individual's choice

to adopt digital services—such as mobile payments, online banking, or fintech applications—is often heavily guided by perceived social approval or disapproval. Social influence can enhance adoption by creating positive peer pressure and modeling technology use through trusted networks, while the absence of such support or negative social perceptions can act as a barrier to adoption. Furthermore, social influence interacts with other factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and trust, amplifying its impact on technology acceptance in contexts where collective norms and community values are deeply ingrained. In emerging economies like India, where personal recommendations and community validation are highly valued, understanding the role of social influence is essential for designing effective digital payment adoption strategies and fostering widespread technology acceptance.

Consumer Trust

Consumer trust refers to the willingness of individuals to rely on a service provider based on positive expectations regarding the provider's competence, reliability, and integrity (Gefen et al., 2003). In digital financial environments, trust plays a fundamental role because transactions occur in a virtual setting where users cannot directly observe the service provider or the underlying technological processes. As a result, users must depend on their confidence in the system and the organization managing it.

In the context of digital payment systems, consumer trust reflects the belief that the platform will perform transactions accurately, safeguard users' financial and personal information, and act in a responsible and ethical manner. When users perceive that a digital payment provider is reliable and committed to protecting their interests, they are more willing to engage in transactions and adopt the service. Conversely, a lack of trust can significantly hinder adoption, as users may fear financial loss, misuse of personal data, or fraudulent activities.

Digital payment environments are inherently characterized by uncertainty and perceived risk due to factors such as cybersecurity threats, data breaches, and online fraud. Under such conditions, trust functions as a psychological mechanism that reduces users' perceived vulnerability. By fostering confidence in the platform's reliability and security measures, trust mitigates users' concerns about potential risks associated with digital transactions. Consequently, higher levels of consumer trust positively influence users' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward adopting digital payment technologies.

Furthermore, trust is often strengthened through factors such as transparent security practices, effective customer support, regulatory compliance, and positive user experiences. When digital payment providers consistently demonstrate reliability and accountability, they build long-term relationships with users, thereby enhancing sustained usage and loyalty.

Therefore, we can say that consumer trust is a critical determinant in the adoption of digital payment systems, as it bridges the gap between technological functionality and user acceptance by alleviating perceived risk and fostering confidence in the digital financial ecosystem.

Perceived Security

Perceived security refers to an individual's belief that their financial and personal information is safeguarded against unauthorized access, misuse, or cyber threats. In the context of digital payment systems, security concerns play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior, as users often evaluate the potential risks associated with online transactions before adoption. When individuals perceive that a platform provides strong security measures—such as encryption, secure authentication, and fraud protection—they are more likely to trust the system and engage in digital transactions. Conversely, low perceived security can heighten fear of data breaches, financial loss, or identity theft, acting as a significant barrier to adoption. Consequently, enhancing users' perceptions of security is essential for promoting widespread acceptance and sustained use of digital payment platforms, particularly in emerging economies where digital literacy and trust in technology may still be developing.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have extensively investigated the determinants of digital payment adoption using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), relatively few studies have examined the mediating effects of consumer trust and perceived security, particularly in the context of emerging economies like India. Trust and perceived security are critical psychological factors that influence users' willingness to adopt digital financial services, as they shape perceptions of safety, reliability, and risk in online transactions. By overlooking these constructs, much of the existing literature fails to capture the full complexity of user behavior in digital payment adoption. To address this research gap, the present study proposes and empirically tests a mediation model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of how technological determinants influence adoption intentions both

directly and indirectly through trust and perceived security, providing deeper insights into the factors that drive digital payment adoption in the Indian context.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

The conceptual model proposes that:

- Perceived Usefulness influences Trust.
- Perceived Ease of Use influences Perceived Security.
- Social Influence affects Adoption Intention.
- Trust and Security mediate technological determinants and adoption.

Hypotheses

H1: Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on consumer trust in digital payment systems.

H2: Perceived ease of use positively influences perceived security.

H3: Social influence positively influences digital payment adoption intention.

H4: Consumer trust positively influences digital payment adoption intention.

H5: Perceived security positively influences digital payment adoption intention.

H6: Consumer trust mediates the relationship between technological determinants and adoption.

H7: Perceived security mediates the relationship between technological determinants and adoption.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative research design was adopted to test the hypothesized relationships. A structured questionnaire was developed using validated measurement scales.

Sample and Data Collection

Data were collected from 428 respondents across metropolitan and semi-urban cities in India. Respondents were active users of digital payment platforms. Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility constraints.

Measurement Instrument

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

- Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use (Davis, 1989)
- Social Influence (Venkatesh et al., 2003)

- Trust (Gefen et al., 2003)
- Perceived Security (Kim et al., 2008)
- Adoption Intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001)

Data Analysis Technique

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using AMOS/SmartPLS. Reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and mediation effects were assessed.

Results

Demographic Profile

The study surveyed 428 respondents who were active users of digital payment platforms across metropolitan and semi-urban areas in India. The demographic breakdown was as follows:

- **Gender:** 58% male, 42% female
- **Age:** 65% aged 21–35 years
- **Residence:** 70% urban, 30% semi-urban
- **Usage Frequency:** 85% reported daily use of UPI or mobile payment platforms

This demographic distribution ensures representation of both young, tech-savvy users and individuals from semi-urban regions, providing a comprehensive view of adoption patterns.

Reliability and Validity

The measurement model was evaluated for internal consistency and construct validity. **Cronbach's alpha** values ranged from 0.78 to 0.91, indicating strong reliability. **Composite reliability (CR)** exceeded 0.80 for all constructs, and **Average Variance Extracted (AVE)** values were above 0.50, confirming convergent validity. **Discriminant validity** was verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, ensuring that each construct was distinct from the others. These results demonstrate that the measurement scales were both reliable and valid for testing the conceptual model.

Structural Model Results

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis provided insights into the hypothesized relationships:

- **Perceived usefulness (PU) → Trust (TR):** $\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$
- **Perceived ease of use (PEOU) → Perceived security (PS):** $\beta = 0.48, p < 0.001$
- **Trust (TR) → Adoption intention (AI):** $\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$
- **Perceived security (PS) → Adoption intention (AI):** $\beta = 0.37, p < 0.001$

- **Social influence (SI) → Adoption intention (AI): $\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$**

Bootstrapping results confirmed that **consumer trust and perceived security partially mediate** the relationship between technological determinants (PU, PEOU, SI) and adoption intention. This indicates that while technological factors directly influence adoption, the presence of trust and security perceptions significantly enhances the likelihood of engaging with digital payment platforms.

Overall, these results highlight that in the Indian context, both technological attributes and psychological assurance factors are critical in driving digital payment adoption, emphasizing the need for fintech providers to balance system efficiency with trust-building measures.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that while technological factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and social influence are important determinants of digital payment adoption, they are not sufficient on their own. Psychological constructs—specifically **consumer trust and perceived security**—play a pivotal mediating role, bridging the gap between system functionality and users' behavioral intentions.

In the context of emerging economies like India, where digital fraud incidents and cybersecurity threats receive considerable media attention, trust becomes a decisive factor in adoption decisions. Users not only assess the functional benefits of digital payment systems but also evaluate the safety, reliability, and integrity of these platforms before engagement. The mediation analysis demonstrates that improvements in system usability enhance adoption indirectly by strengthening users' perceptions of security and trust.

These results underscore the importance of a dual focus for digital payment providers. Beyond ensuring technological efficiency and seamless functionality, fintech companies must prioritize trust-building strategies, transparent security protocols, and effective support mechanisms to address user apprehensions. Policymakers, in turn, should implement awareness campaigns and robust regulatory measures to foster confidence in digital financial services. Collectively, these interventions can accelerate digital payment adoption, particularly among first-time users and risk-averse populations, and facilitate more inclusive participation in the emerging digital economy.

Theoretical Implications

1. This study extends the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by incorporating consumer trust and perceived security as mediating constructs, providing a more comprehensive understanding of digital payment adoption behavior.
2. It contributes to the fintech and digital finance literature by offering empirical insights into psychological and technological determinants within emerging economy contexts, particularly in India.
3. The research validates the mediation effects of trust and perceived security, demonstrating that psychological assurance factors significantly bridge technological features and user adoption intentions, thereby enhancing theoretical models of technology acceptance.
4. Findings highlight the importance of integrating behavioral, social, and psychological constructs into technology adoption frameworks, offering a foundation for future model refinements in digital financial services research.

Practical Implications

1. Fintech firms should prioritize visible security measures, such as certifications, multi-factor authentication, and transparent encryption protocols, to strengthen users' perceived security.
2. Policymakers and government agencies should implement targeted cybersecurity awareness campaigns to educate users about safe digital transaction practices and reduce apprehensions regarding fraud.
3. Simplifying the user interface and streamlining transaction processes can improve perceived ease of use and security, particularly for first-time and less tech-savvy users.
4. Regulatory bodies and financial institutions should establish robust grievance redressal mechanisms and fraud reporting systems to enhance consumer trust and confidence in digital payment platforms.
5. Marketing strategies should leverage social influence and community validation to encourage adoption among collectivist user segments.

Limitations and Future Research

1. The study employs a cross-sectional design, limiting the ability to infer causal relationships between variables.

2. Convenience sampling restricts the generalizability of the findings across the broader population.
3. Future research could adopt longitudinal or panel study designs to examine changes in adoption behavior over time.
4. Further studies should focus on rural populations and underrepresented socio-economic groups to gain a more inclusive perspective on digital payment adoption.
5. Comparative research across multiple emerging economies can provide insights into cultural, regulatory, and infrastructural influences on adoption, enhancing the external validity of the findings.
6. Additional psychological factors such as perceived risk, self-efficacy, and habit formation could be integrated into future models to deepen understanding of digital financial behaviors.

Conclusion

This study examined the mediating role of **consumer trust** and **perceived security** in shaping digital payment adoption in India. The results confirm that technological determinants—perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and social influence—affect adoption both directly and indirectly through trust and security perceptions.

In emerging digital economies, fostering psychological assurance is as critical as providing technologically advanced systems. Trust and security perceptions enhance user confidence, reduce perceived risks, and promote sustained engagement with digital payment platforms. Consequently, policymakers and fintech firms must prioritize trust-building measures, enforce robust security protocols, and design user-friendly interfaces to support widespread and sustainable digital financial inclusion.

Overall, the study contributes to the literature by integrating psychological constructs with established technology adoption frameworks (TAM and UTAUT), offering actionable insights for both academic research and practical implementation in emerging economy contexts.

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**Economic Reforms and Social Change in India: An analytical study
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Abstract

After India adopted the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) reforms in 1991, the country experienced significant changes in its economic and social structure. These reforms transformed the Indian economy from a controlled and closed system into an open and competitive market economy. As a result, industrial development accelerated, the service sector expanded rapidly, foreign investment increased, and the adoption of digital technology created new employment opportunities.

These economic transformations have also influenced the social structure of the country. Urbanization, expansion of the middle class, spread of education, empowerment of women, and increased use of information technology have made Indian society more dynamic and progressive. In addition, India's demographic structure, particularly its large youth population, has created an opportunity to benefit from the “Demographic Dividend”.

The objective of this research is to analyze the social changes and economic progress in India between 1991 and 2025. The study examines the impact of economic reforms, digital transformation, infrastructure development, urbanization, and social empowerment on the country's development process.

The study reveals that India has made remarkable progress in economic development over the last three decades. However, several challenges such as unemployment, economic inequality, environmental degradation, and rural-urban disparities still persist. Therefore, there is a need to implement sustainable and inclusive development policies to ensure balanced growth in the future.

Keywords: Liberalization, Social Transformation, Economic Development, Digital Economy, Urbanization, Indian Economy, Demographic Dividend

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, India has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Economic growth, technological advancement, demographic advantages, and social transformation have significantly contributed to the development process of the country. The concept of “Emerging India” reflects not only economic expansion but also transformation in society, lifestyle, and opportunities.

A major turning point in India's modern development occurred in 1991 when the government implemented the economic reforms known as Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization (LPG). Before these reforms, India followed a mixed economic model with heavy government control over industries, trade restrictions, and limited foreign investment. These restrictions slowed economic growth and limited industrial competitiveness.

By the early 1990s, India faced a severe balance of payments crisis. Foreign exchange reserves were critically low, forcing the government to seek assistance from international financial institutions. In response, the government initiated economic reforms to stabilize the economy and promote growth. These reforms reduced government regulations, opened markets to global trade, and encouraged foreign investment.

Following the reforms, India witnessed rapid economic expansion. The service sector, particularly information technology (IT), telecommunications, and financial services, emerged as key drivers of growth. Industrial production increased, infrastructure expanded, and technological adoption accelerated.

India is now one of the largest economies in the world. According to recent estimates, India has become the fifth-largest economy globally. The growth of the IT sector, digital technologies, start-up culture, and service industries has significantly boosted economic activity.

At the same time, these economic developments have brought about substantial social changes. Urbanization has accelerated as people migrate from rural areas to cities in search of better employment opportunities. Education levels have improved, women are increasingly participating in the workforce, and the middle class has expanded rapidly.

India also possesses a unique demographic advantage. A large proportion of the population is young, creating the potential for a demographic dividend. If properly utilized through education, skill development, and employment generation, this demographic advantage can contribute significantly to economic growth.

By 2025, India's GDP is expected to exceed four trillion dollars, highlighting its increasing importance in the global economy. Therefore, analyzing the relationship between economic progress and social transformation in India becomes extremely important.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research are as follows:

- To examine the impact of post-1991 economic reforms on India's economic development.
- To analyse the major changes in India's social structure during the period 1991–2025.
- To study the effects of urbanization, education, and the expansion of the middle class on society.
- To understand the role of digital technology and the digital economy in economic progress.
- To identify the key challenges in India's social and economic development.

3. Research Methodology

This study is based on secondary data sources. The research uses statistical data and information collected from various government and international reports, academic journals, and published books.

The major sources of data include:

- Economic Survey of India
- Census of India Reports
- National Statistical Office (NSO) data
- World Bank Reports
- NITI Aayog Development Reports
- Research journals and academic publications

A comparative and analytical method has been used to examine the changes in India's economic and social structure between 1991 and 2025. Statistical data and reports have been analyzed to understand the long-term trends in economic growth and social development.

4. Economic Transitions in India

Over the past three decades, the Indian economy has undergone a dramatic transformation. Economic reforms opened new opportunities for industrial growth, global trade, and technological development.

4.1 Liberalization and Globalization

Economic liberalization reduced government control over industries and allowed private sector participation. Trade barriers were lowered and foreign investment was encouraged. These changes increased competition and improved the efficiency of Indian industries.

Globalization connected the Indian economy with international markets. Indian companies gained access to global technology, capital, and markets. As a result, exports increased and India became an important participant in global trade.

The IT and service sectors became the primary drivers of economic growth during this period.

4.2 Digital Revolution and the Economy

The digital revolution has played a crucial role in transforming the Indian economy. Rapid growth in internet connectivity and smartphone usage has significantly increased digital transactions and online services.

Digital payment platforms, online banking, and fintech companies have made financial transactions faster and more transparent. The development of digital infrastructure has also improved access to financial services.

India has become a global leader in digital payments. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system has revolutionized the payment ecosystem by enabling instant and secure transactions.

E-commerce platforms, digital marketplaces, and online services have expanded business opportunities and increased economic activity.

4.3 Start-up Culture

India has emerged as one of the leading start-up ecosystems in the world. Thousands of start-ups operate in sectors such as fintech, health tech, edtech, and e-commerce.

Government initiatives like Start-up India and Digital India have encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation. Young entrepreneurs are creating new businesses and generating employment opportunities.

The start-up ecosystem has also attracted large investments from global venture capital firms.

4.4 Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development has been a major focus of economic policy in recent years. Investments have been made in roads, railways, airports, ports, and logistics networks. Modern highways, metro rail systems, and improved transportation networks have facilitated trade and economic growth. Initiatives such as the National Infrastructure Pipeline and PM Gati Shakti Yojana aim to strengthen connectivity across the country. Improved infrastructure has enhanced productivity and supported industrial development.

4.5 Agricultural Transformation

Agriculture remains an important sector in the Indian economy. Traditionally, agricultural productivity was limited due to outdated farming techniques and inadequate irrigation.

In recent years, the use of modern technology, improved irrigation methods, digital marketplaces, and government initiatives have helped increase productivity. Programs such as e-NAM (National Agriculture Market) provide digital platforms for farmers to sell their produce and access better prices.

Agro-processing industries and value-added agricultural products are also gaining importance in the rural economy.

4.6 Growth of the Service Sector and Foreign Investment

The service sector has been the most significant contributor to India's economic growth. Information technology, banking, telecommunications, tourism, and financial services have expanded rapidly.

India's IT industry has gained global recognition and has become a major exporter of software services.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) has also increased significantly after economic liberalization. Large investments have been made in manufacturing, infrastructure, and technology sectors.

Economic Progress (1991–2025)

India's economy has grown rapidly since 1999. Economic reforms led to the expansion of industry, trade, and the service sector.

Year	GDP
1991	\$270 Billion (₹ 24.57 lakh crore)
2000	\$476 Billion (₹ 43.31 lakh crore)
2010	\$1.7 Trillion (₹ 154.7 lakh crore)
2025	Approx \$3–4 Trillion (₹ 3 to 4 lakh crore)

These statistics clearly indicate the remarkable growth of the Indian economy over the past three decades.

5. Social Transitions in India

Economic growth has been accompanied by significant social changes in India. Globalization, technological advancement, and education have transformed the structure of society.

5.1 Urbanization and Migration

Urbanization is one of the most visible indicators of social change. Large-scale migration from rural areas to cities has occurred due to employment opportunities, educational institutions, and better healthcare facilities.

Cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune have become major economic hubs.

Urban lifestyles are characterized by increased consumption, technological adoption, and diversified employment opportunities.

However, urbanization has also created challenges such as housing shortages, traffic congestion, slums, and environmental problems.

5.2 Expansion of the Middle Class

Economic growth has led to the emergence of a large middle class in India. Millions of people have moved out of poverty and entered the middle-income group.

The middle class plays a crucial role in economic development because of its purchasing power and participation in education, entrepreneurship, and investment.

Increased spending on housing, education, tourism, and digital services has boosted the consumption-based economy.

5.3 Youth Power and Demographic Dividend

India is one of the youngest countries in the world. A significant portion of the population is below the age of 35.

This youth population provides a major opportunity for economic growth through innovation, entrepreneurship, and productivity.

Government initiatives such as Skill India, Digital India, and Start-up India aim to equip young people with skills and employment opportunities.

However, unemployment and skill gaps remain major challenges.

5.4 Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment has become an important aspect of social development in India. Increased access to education and government welfare schemes have improved the socio-economic status of women.

Women are now actively participating in various fields such as administration, science, business, and politics.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have become powerful tools for empowering rural women by promoting financial independence.

Government programs like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have encouraged girls' education and gender equality.

6. Key Challenges in India's Development

Despite significant progress, India faces several challenges that need to be addressed.

- Unemployment and skill shortages
- Rural-urban development disparities
- Environmental degradation and climate change
- Economic inequality
- Inequality in education and healthcare access

Addressing these challenges requires sustainable policies, inclusive growth strategies, and strong governance.

7. Conclusion

India has experienced significant social and economic transformation between 1991 and 2025. Economic liberalization, increasing use of technology, urbanization, and the spread of education have accelerated India's development process.

India's youth power, growing middle class and digital economy are key pillars of the country's future progress. However, unemployment, economic inequality and environmental problems are significant challenges facing the country and it is imperative to address them effectively.

In the social sphere, Indian society is becoming more modern, dynamic and progressive due to factors such as urbanization, spread of education, expansion of the middle class and empowerment of women.

If India prioritizes social inclusion, sustainable development and innovation, it can emerge as a dominant economic and social force on the global stage in the future. This requires paying special attention to unemployment, economic inequality and environmental issues in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

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Impact of GST and New Tax Policy on Common People – A Study

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Abstract

Taxation policies play a vital role in the economic development of a country. In India, the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in July 2017 was one of the most significant indirect tax reforms. GST replaced multiple central and state taxes with a unified taxation system to simplify the tax structure and reduce cascading taxes. However, while GST aims to improve economic efficiency, it has also affected the cost of goods and services and the financial condition of common citizens. This research paper examines the economic burden created by GST and recent tax policies on ordinary consumers. The study analyzes the impact of tax changes on consumer spending, inflation, and household budgets using secondary data from government reports, journals, and research publications. The findings indicate that although GST has improved transparency and tax compliance, it has also increased the cost of certain goods and services, thereby affecting the purchasing power of common citizens.

The goods and Services Tax is a comprehensive indirect tax system implemented to simplify taxation and create a unified national market. It replaces multiple indirect taxes, improves transparency, and enhances tax compliance. GST aims to promote economic growth, reduce tax cascading, and strengthen the efficiency of the overall tax structure.

Keywords: GST, Tax Policy, Common Citizens, Economic Burden, Indirect Tax, India

1. Introduction-

The Government of India introduced GST on **1 July 2017** to simplify the tax structure and create a unified national market. This reform merged many indirect taxes into a single tax system and aimed to eliminate the cascading effect of taxes.

The Government of India introduced new tax reforms for 2025-26 to simplify the taxation system and improve compliance. The policy focuses on a new income tax framework, easier filing procedures, and better transparency. These reforms aim to reduce tax disputes, support economic growth, and make the tax system more efficient and taxpayer-friendly.

For the financial year 2025-2026, India tax policy focuses on easing the burden on the common man through a default, lower-tax new regime with increased exemption limits (no tax up to Rs. 4-7 lakh) and a higher Rs.75000/- standard deduction. Key benefits include reduced GST on household essentials and targeted duty cuts on items like electronics and medicine.

Taxation is one of the primary sources of government revenue and is essential for financing public welfare programs and economic development. Before the implementation of GST, India had a complex indirect tax system including Value Added Tax (VAT), service tax, excise duty, and other levies imposed by both central and state governments.

GST is considered one of the largest tax reforms in India since independence and affects almost every sector of the economy and every citizen as it is applied to goods and services consumed daily.

While GST has simplified taxation and increased transparency, debates continue regarding its impact on common citizens, particularly in terms of increased living costs and financial pressure.

2. Review of Literature

Several researchers have studied the impact of GST on the Indian economy.

- **Garg and Anand (2018)** found that GST improved transparency but initially created confusion among consumers.
- **Dey (2019)** concluded that GST increased prices of some services, affecting middle-class households.
- **Agarwal (2020)** observed that GST improved tax compliance and government revenue.
- **Kumar (2021)** highlighted that GST simplified taxation but created financial pressure on certain sectors.
- **Shambharkar and Tekade (2025)** Highlighted eliminating the cascading effect of taxes.

Several researchers have examined its economic impact from different perspectives. Studies highlight that GST replaced multiple indirect taxes such as VAT, excise duty, and service tax with a unified tax structure, thereby simplifying the taxation system and improving transparency.

According to Shambharkar and Tekade (2025) , GST has improved tax compliance, reduced tax evasion, and streamlined business processes by eliminating the cascading effect of

taxes. Their study also found that the reform helped strengthen government revenue and create a more organized taxation framework.

Other studies emphasize that GST has promoted a unified national market and improved ease of doing business by harmonizing tax rates across states and simplifying interstate trade. It has also encouraged digitalization in taxation through online registration, filing, and payment systems.

However, several scholars point out challenges associated with GST implementation. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have faced difficulties due to complex compliance procedures, multiple tax slabs, and technological issues in the GST network.

Overall, the literature suggests that while GST has significantly improved India's tax structure and economic integration, continuous policy adjustments are necessary to address implementation challenges and maximize its long-term economic benefits.

These studies indicate that GST has both positive and negative impacts on the economy and consumers.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To understand the concept and structure of GST in India.
2. To examine the new tax policies introduced by the government.
3. To analyse the financial burden of GST on common citizens.
4. To study the effect of GST on consumer spending and living costs.
5. To suggest policy recommendations to reduce the tax burden on citizens.

3. Research Methodology

This study is based on **secondary data** collected from:

- Research journals
- Government reports
- Articles and policy papers
- Economic surveys and websites
- Newspapers

The study adopts an **analytical and descriptive research approach** to evaluate the financial impact of GST and tax policies on common citizens.

4. Concept of GST

GST also known as the Goods and Service tax is defined as the giant indirect tax structures designed to support and enhance the economical development of India.

The Goods and Services Tax is a **comprehensive indirect tax** levied on the manufacture, sale, and consumption of goods and services across India. It replaced several central and state taxes to create a unified tax system.

A much talked about feature of GST in India was the GSTN. A specialized IT network which would match the outward supply transactions of the supplier at an invoice level with the inward supplies of the customer and allow input tax credit to the customer based on a matching concept.

GST operates through three components:

1. **CGST (Central Goods and Services Tax)** – Collected by the central government
2. **SGST (State Goods and Services Tax)** – Collected by state governments
3. **IGST (Integrated Goods and Services Tax)** – Collected on interstate transactions

The GST system has different tax slabs such as **5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%** depending on the nature of goods and services.

4. Impact of GST on Common Citizens

- Uniform tax system
- Reduction in Tax cascading
- Price changes in goods and services
- Transparency in Taxation
- Improved Availability of goods
- Digital and Cashless transactions
- Impact on daily expenses
- Economic growth Benefits

5. GST is actually more beneficial for customers as their tax burden and liability.

5.1 Increase in Cost of Certain Goods and Services

GST has increased the prices of some goods and services such as:

- Mobile bills
- Insurance premiums
- Banking services
- Restaurant services

These increases directly affect the monthly expenses of households.

5.2 Effect on Purchasing Power

Changes in indirect taxes influence the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** and the purchasing power of individuals. GST initially caused fluctuations in inflation and affected the cost of living for ordinary consumers.

Higher prices of goods reduce disposable income and increase the financial burden on middle-class and lower-income households.

5.3 Tax Burden on Essential Services

Many essential services such as banking, telecom, and insurance are taxed under GST. This increases the cost of services that are widely used by citizens.

5.4 Impact on Small Businesses

Small businesses and traders faced several challenges after GST implementation, including:

- Compliance procedures
- Digital filing requirements
- Increased accounting costs

These factors indirectly affect consumers through higher product prices.

5.5 Simplification of GST reforms 2025.

GST tax slabs in India:

- 5%
- 12%
- 18%
- 28%

These tax rates apply to different categories of goods and services.

Its relief for common People, Boost for Businessman and Businesses and growth for all.

- GST simplified to a Two-slab structure (5% & 18%)
- GST reform cut taxes on household essentials (soaps, toothpaste, Indian breads to 5% or Nil boosting affordability)
- Life-saving drugs, medicines reduced from 12% to Nil or 5% making healthcare affordable)
- Two-wheelers, small cars, TVs, ACs, Cement cut from 28% to 18% bringing relief to the middle-class.
- Farm machinery, irrigation equipment cut from 12% to 5% reducing farming costs.

- Tobacco, pan masala, aerated drinks, and luxury goods taxed at 40%.

6. Positive Effects of GST

Despite some challenges, GST has several benefits:

1. Simplification of the tax system
2. Removal of cascading taxes
3. Increased transparency
4. Creation of a unified national market
5. Improved tax compliance and revenue collection

Earlier, the total indirect tax burden on some goods was estimated at **25–30% before GST**, which GST aimed to reduce.

Simplification

7. Government Tax Policy and Recent Reforms

The government periodically modifies GST rates to reduce the financial burden on citizens. Recent reforms aim to simplify tax slabs and lower rates on daily-use items to stimulate consumption and economic growth.

These policy changes demonstrate the government's effort to balance revenue generation with public welfare.

8. Findings of the Study

The study reveals the following key findings:

1. GST simplified India's complex tax system.
2. Certain goods and services became more expensive under GST.
3. The financial burden is higher for middle-class and lower-income groups.
4. GST improved transparency and reduced tax evasion.
5. Periodic tax reforms are necessary to reduce the burden on citizens.

9. Suggestions

1. Reduce GST rates on essential goods and services.
2. Provide tax relief for low-income groups.
3. Simplify GST compliance for small businesses.
4. Increase awareness about GST among citizens.
5. Introduce targeted subsidies to protect vulnerable groups.

10. Conclusion

The introduction of GST marked a major transformation in India's tax structure. While it has simplified taxation and improved transparency, it has also created financial challenges for common citizens due to increased prices of certain goods and services. GST is a landmark tax reform in India that has transformed the indirect taxation system. While it has improved transparency and simplified taxation, it has also created financial pressure on certain groups of consumers. The government should balance revenue generation with consumer welfare to ensure inclusive economic growth.

Therefore, policymakers must continuously review tax policies to ensure that economic reforms benefit both the government and the public. A balanced taxation system that supports economic growth while protecting the financial stability of citizens is essential for sustainable development.

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How Can Integrating Technology into Classroom Instruction Enhance Student Engagement and Improve Academic Performance in English Classes?

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1. Abstract

This action research investigates the effect of purposeful technology integration on student engagement and academic achievement in English lessons. Conducted in a primary school context, the study explored the use of interactive digital tools, including ClassPoint, Blooket, Microsoft Forms, Likert scales, quizzes, and Chatter to enhance participation and learning outcomes. A technology-enhanced English unit was systematically planned to align digital tools with learning objectives and formative assessment strategies. Data was gathered through pre- and post-assessments, student surveys, assessment outcomes, and teacher reflections. Findings demonstrate that technology-enhanced instruction increased student motivation, on-task behaviour, confidence and ownership of learning, with notable benefits for reluctant learners. Overall, the results suggest that purposeful integration of digital tools can positively impact engagement, attainment, and teaching effectiveness in primary English classrooms.

2. Introduction

Context of the Study

This study was conducted in a English classroom within an international primary school, where students represent diverse cultural, linguistic, and academic backgrounds. English serves as the primary language of instruction, although many learners speak English as an additional language. The classroom is supported by access to digital technologies, including interactive whiteboards and student devices, allowing for the integration of technology into daily instruction.

Background and Rationale

Ongoing reinforcements and lesson observations revealed a noticeable variation in students' engagement during reading comprehension lessons. While some learners demonstrated confidence and active participation, others appeared disengaged, hesitant, or reliant on surface-level understanding of texts. These patterns suggested that traditional reading comprehension approaches were not fully addressing the needs of all learners. In particular, students who

required additional scaffolding or motivation were less responsive to teacher-led instruction and paper-based tasks.

Digital tools were identified as a potential means of addressing these challenges, as they offer interactive features, immediate feedback, and opportunities for differentiation.

Setting and Participants

The study took place within a structured English curriculum that prioritizes reading comprehension, critical thinking, and assessment-driven instruction. The participants included Year 6 students of mixed ability levels.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of digital tools in supporting student engagement and reading comprehension. Through systematic data collection and reflective analysis, the research aims to inform teaching practice, contribute to professional learning, and support the development of responsive, inclusive instructional strategies within the English classroom.

3. Literature Review

Student Engagement in English Lessons

Student engagement is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing academic achievement, particularly in literacy learning. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) conceptualize engagement as a multidimensional construct comprising behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components. In Year 6, high levels of engagement are essential for sustaining effort during extended reading and writing tasks.

Technology and Student Engagement

Existing literature highlights the potential of digital technology to enhance student engagement when integrated meaningfully into classroom practice. Higgins, Xiao, and Katsipataki (2012) found that technology can positively impact learning outcomes when it supports active learning and interaction rather than passive consumption. Similarly, Schindler et al. (2017) emphasize that technology-enhanced learning environments promote motivation and sustain attention.

Digital Tools in English Teaching

Beauchamp and Kennewell (2010) argue that technology can enhance reading comprehension through multimedia texts, support vocabulary development through interactive applications, and improve writing outcomes through collaborative platforms.

Purposeful Technology Integration

Despite its potential, research cautions that technology alone does not guarantee improved learning outcomes. Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2013) stress that effective technology integration depends on purposeful pedagogical design, teacher competence, and alignment with curriculum objectives. Mishra and Koehler's (2006) TPACK framework reinforces this view, emphasizing the importance of integrating technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge to maximize impact.

Summary of Key Literature

Collectively, the literature supports the intentional use of digital tools to enhance student engagement and academic outcomes in English lessons.

4. Clarifying My Action Research Project

This action research project was undertaken to explore how the integration of technology into English lessons could enhance student engagement and improve academic performance. Conducted within my own professional context, the study adopts a practitioner-researcher approach, allowing for reflective inquiry while directly addressing an identified area for improvement in teaching and learning. By investigating technology-enhanced pedagogical practices, the project aims to contribute to both personal professional development and wider school priorities related to digital learning.

Rationale for the Study

Initial teacher observations, pre and post assessment data indicated variations in student participation and noticeable attainment gaps, particularly in Reading Comprehension and SPaG outcomes. While students demonstrated confidence and enthusiasm when interacting with digital tools beyond the classroom, this same level of motivation was not consistently reflected during traditional, teacher-led lessons. This raised an important pedagogical question: Could the meaningful integration of technology help bridge this motivational gap and subsequently support improved academic progress?

Context and Participants

The research was conducted in mixed-ability Year groups within primary and secondary school that strongly promotes digital learning as part of its instructional ethos. The class included students for whom English is a first language as well as learners requiring additional support, ensuring diversity in learning needs. The school environment provided an advantageous setting

for this inquiry, with access to technological resources such as classroom devices and interactive platforms including ClassPoint, Chatter, and Blooket. These tools already formed part of the broader school digital strategy, making their integration both relevant and sustainable.

Intervention Design

Technology was embedded through intentional and systematically planned strategies across a sequence English lessons. Key approaches included:

- **Multimedia presentations and videos**
- **Online quizzes, polls, and interactive questioning.**
- **Collaborative digital platforms**

Each technological tool was deliberately chosen to align with the learning objectives and success criteria, ensuring that technology supported strong pedagogy and enhanced learning outcomes. The research was conducted on the principle that technology should act as a facilitator for deeper learning, creativity and active participation.

Data Collection Methods

A mixed-methods approach was employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the intervention. Quantitative data were gathered through pre- and post-assessment scores in reading comprehension and SPaG tasks, enabling comparison of academic performance over time. Qualitative data were collected through lesson observations, structured engagement checklists, student work samples, and informal student voice feedback.

Context and Participants

The research was conducted in mixed-ability classes within primary and secondary school that strongly promotes digital learning as part of its instructional ethos. The class included students for whom English is a first language, as well as learners requiring additional support, ensuring a diverse range of learning needs and abilities. The school environment provided a highly suitable context for this inquiry, with access to technological resources such as classroom devices and interactive platforms including Class Point, Chatter and Blooket.

Intervention Design

Technology was embedded through intentional and systematically planned strategies across a sequence of English lessons. Multimedia presentations and videos were used to introduce, visualize, and contextualize texts, supporting comprehension and the development of

background knowledge. Online quizzes, polls, and interactive questioning were employed to promote retrieval practice, assess understanding, and maintain real-time engagement during lessons.

Data Collection Methods

A mixed-methods approach was employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of intervention. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-assessment scores in reading comprehension and SPaG, allowing for comparison of academic performance over time. Qualitative data were gathered through lesson observations, structured engagement checklists, analysis of student work samples, and informal student voice feedback.

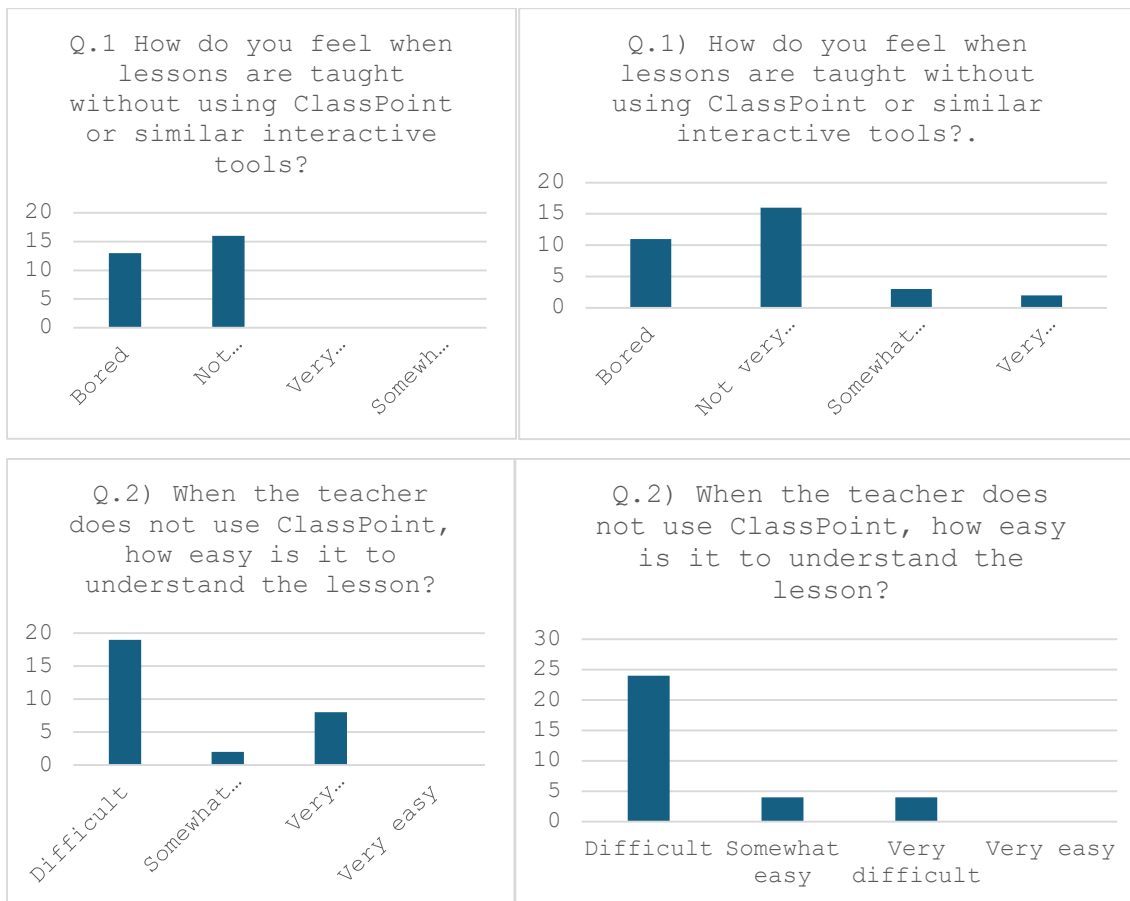
Impact of the ICT tools -Year 6 K						
Pen paper Assessment			ICT			
Topic	Assessment 1	Assesment 2		Assessment 1	Assesment 2	
0 to 2	3	9	12	0	0	0
3 to 4	6	5	11	0	0	0
5 to 6	5	8	13	1	3	4
7 to 8	17	7	24	19	9	28
9 to 10	0	2	2	11	19	30
Total	31	31	62	31	31	62
Pen paper Assessment			ICT			
Topic	Assessment 1	Assesment 2	paper Assessrn	Assessment 1	Assesment 2	ICT
0 to 2	10%	29%	19%	0%	0%	0%
3 to 4	19%	16%	18%	0%	0%	0%
5 to 6	16%	26%	21%	3%	10%	6%
7 to 8	55%	23%	39%	61%	29%	45%
9 to 10	0%	6%	3%	35%	61%	48%
Pen Paper Assessment			ICT			
0 to 2	19%	0%				
3 to 4	18%	0%				
5 to 6	21%	6%				
7 to 8	39%	45%				
9 to 10	3%	48%				

Impact of the ICT tools -Year 6 M						
Pen paper Assessment			ICT			
Topic	Assessment 1	Assesment 2		Assessment 1	Assesment 2	
0 to 2	1	1	2	0	0	0
3 to 4	5	3	8	0	0	0
5 to 6	19	8	27	1	4	5
7 to 8	9	18	27	26	9	35
9 to 10	0	4	4	7	21	28
Total	34	34	68	34	34	68
Pen paper Assessment			ICT			
Topic	Assessment 1	Assesment 2	n paper Assessme	Assessment 1	Assesment 2	ICT
0 to 2	3%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%
3 to 4	16%	10%	12%	0%	0%	0%
5 to 6	61%	26%	40%	3%	13%	7%
7 to 8	29%	58%	40%	84%	29%	51%
9 to 10	0%	13%	6%	23%	68%	41%
Pen paper Assessme			ICT			
0 to 2	3%	0%				
3 to 4	12%	0%				
5 to 6	40%	7%				
7 to 8	40%	51%				
9 to 10	6%	41%				

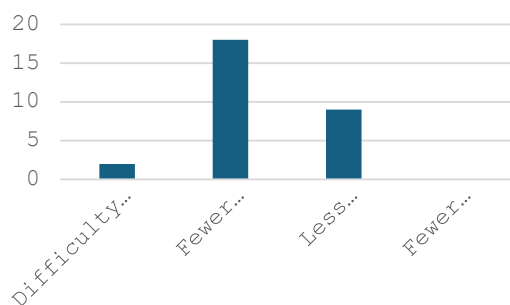
5. The Road Map of My Action Research Project

Introduction and Rationale

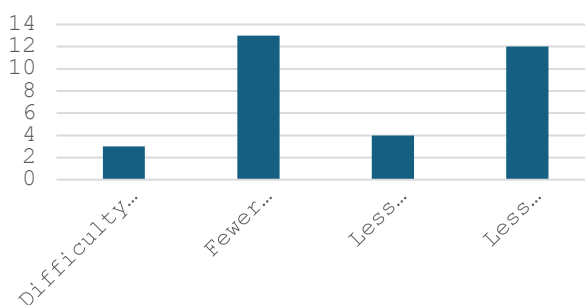
This action research project emerged from a sustained concern regarding uneven student engagement and inconsistent academic performance in a Year 6 English classroom. Despite carefully planned lessons and differentiated tasks, several students demonstrated low confidence, limited participation and reduced perseverance during extended reading and writing activities. Assessment data indicated a widening attainment gap between higher- and lower-achieving students.



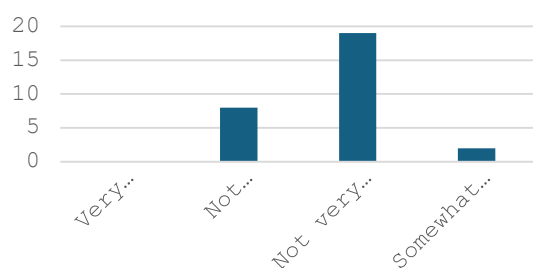
Q3. What challenges do you face when ClassPoint is not used?



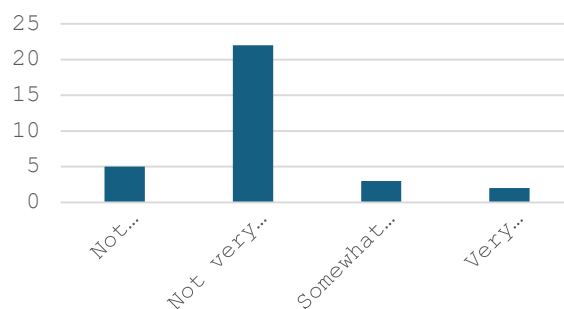
Q.3) What challenges do you face when ClassPoint is not used?



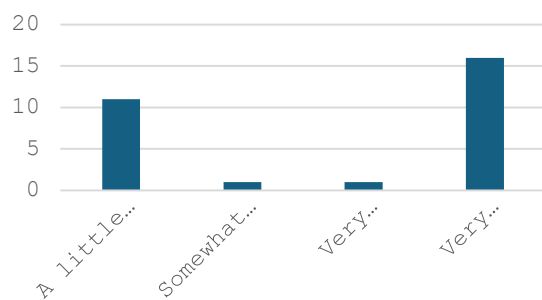
Q.4) When the teacher teaches without using ClassPoint or other technology tools, how confident do you feel to participate in class?



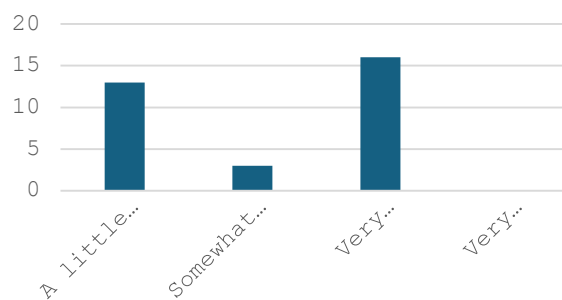
Q.4) When the teacher teaches without using ClassPoint or other technology tools, how confident do you feel to participate in class?

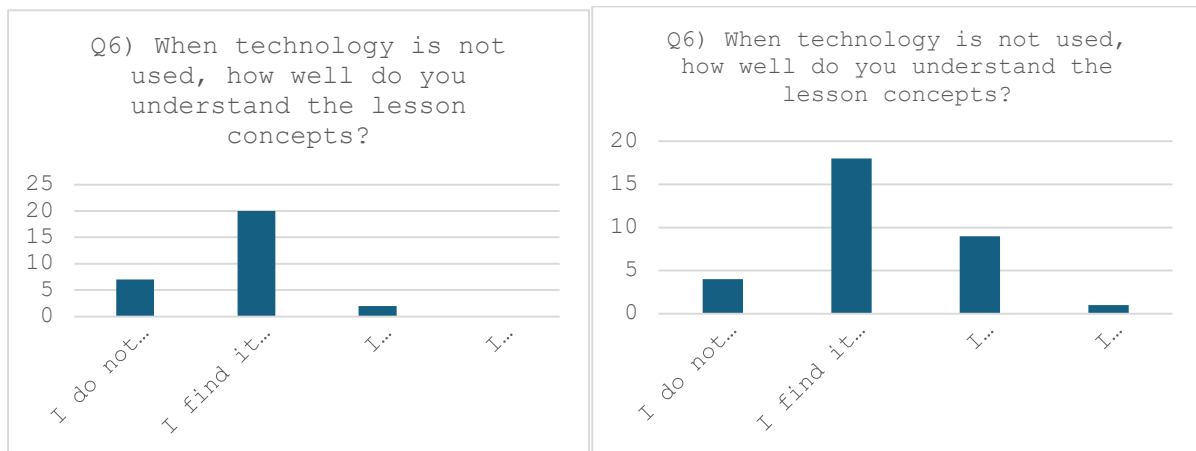


Q.5) What challenges do you face when ClassPoint is not used?



Q.5) What challenges do you face when ClassPoint is not used?





Why I Conducted the Study

- To address uneven engagement and declining motivation in English lessons
- To narrow the attainment gap between higher- and lower-achieving students
- To strengthen student confidence and participation
- To evaluate whether purposeful technology integration could improve academic outcomes

These findings confirmed that engagement and confidence were key barriers to progress, particularly for reluctant learners.

Critical Research Question

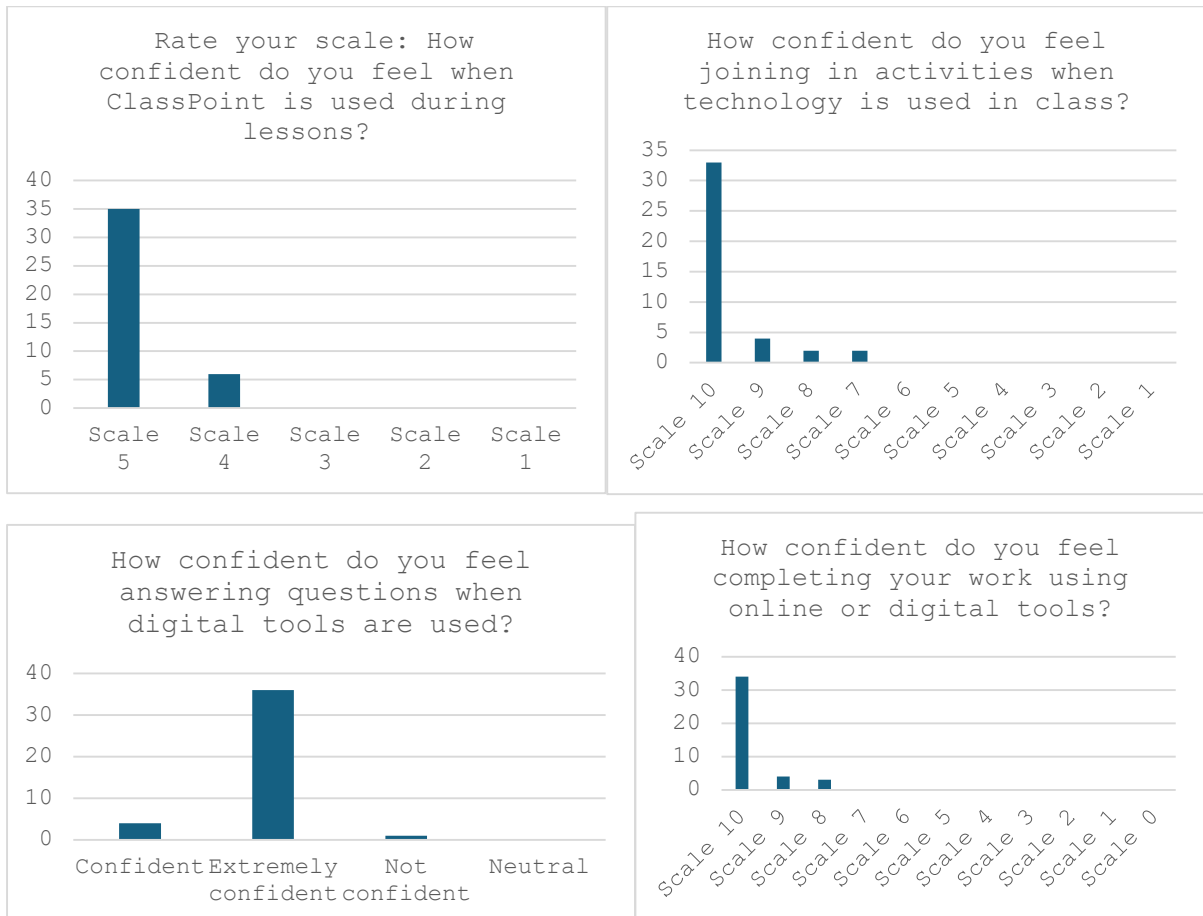
The project was guided by the following central question:

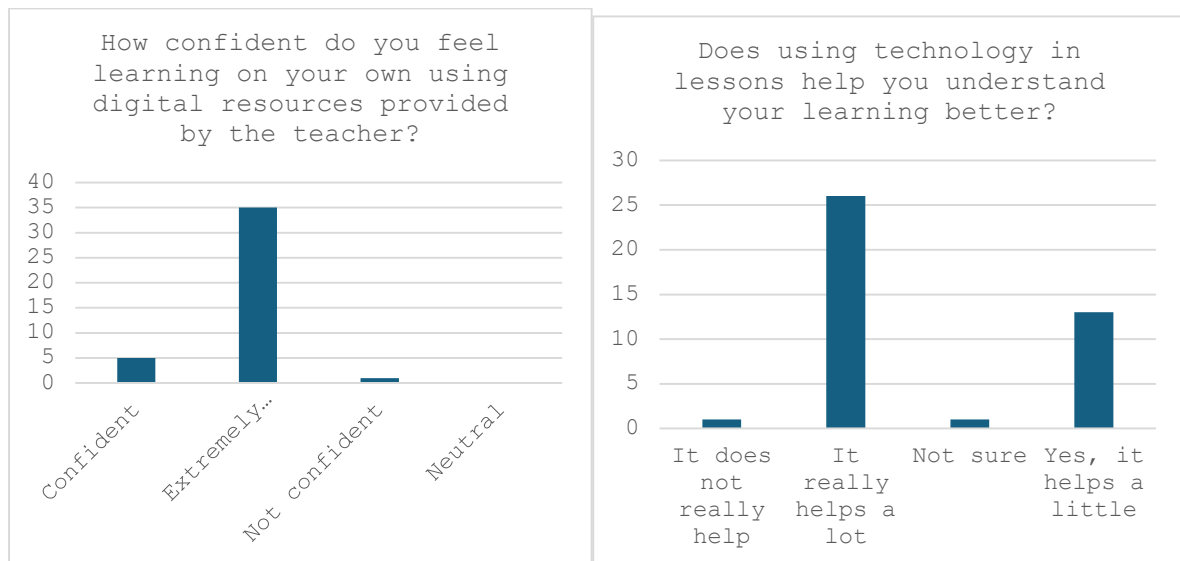
How does the purposeful integration of technology in English lessons impact student engagement and academic outcomes?

What Was Implemented and Analyzed

- Integration of digital tools (Class Point, Blooket, interactive quizzes, Likert-scale polls, collaborative writing platforms)
- Pre- and post-assessments in reading comprehension and writing
- Observation of engagement, participation, and on-task behavior
- Student voice data (surveys, reflections, interviews)
- Teacher reflective journals
- Comparative analysis of traditional versus digitally scaffolded tasks

Technology was not used as a reward or add-on. Instead, it was deliberately aligned with lesson objectives to support comprehension checks, formative assessment, collaboration, and feedback.





Context and Setting

Where the Project Took Place

The project was conducted in a mainstream primary school Year 6 classroom in an urban setting. The classroom was equipped with an interactive whiteboard, student devices (tablets/laptops), and internet access, enabling the consistent integration of digital tools within daily English lessons in Year 6. The school promotes inclusive education and values evidence-informed practice, making it an appropriate setting for action research.

Implementation and Emerging Change

During the action phase, a technology-enhanced English unit was implemented. Digital tools were embedded into daily instruction to promote interaction and reduce barriers to participation.

Almost immediately, observable changes in classroom dynamics emerged. Students who had previously avoided participation became more willing to contribute through interactive polls and whole-class quizzes. One student reflected, *"It feels easier to answer when everyone is answering together. I'm not scared of getting it wrong."*

This highlighted how technology fostered psychological safety and reduced anxiety, particularly for less confident learners.

Engagement and Participation Outcomes

Systematic lesson observations demonstrated a marked improvement in engagement levels.

- Active participation increased from **32% to 71%**
- Low engagement decreased from **27% to 8%**
- On-task behaviour improved during extended writing activities

Gender Spaces and Emerging India: Feminist Reading Through Simone De Beauvoir's Lens

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Abstract

The revolution of gender relation is one of the most symbolic aspects of social change in the contemporary societies. In emerging India is modifying cultural gender roles and creating newly spheres for the women's autonomy by speedy urbanization, education, economical activities and digital association. This paper investigates the concept of gender spaces enclosed by the context of Indian Society through the philosophical and feminist lens of Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvois's existential feminist theory point-out the gender identity is socially constructed and rolled by cultural norms, power in relation and institutional structure. This study explores how the literary narratives reflect the negotiation of women's identities, emotional autonomy and social freedom inside of undeveloped gender spaces. The socio-cultural transitions arising in emerging India, gender inequality, female subjectivity and battle for autonomy by spotting ideas of Beauvoir. The paper conclusively argues on the shifting dynamics of gender, identity and power in latest society.

Keywords

Gender spaces, Emerging India, Simone de Beauvoir, feminist existentialism, women's autonomy, gender identity.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, societies experiencing rapid social and economic development as the concept of gender has encountered symbolic revolution. Emerging India performs a complicated landscape where traditional, cultural norms coexist with modern ideals of equality, autonomy and individual freedom. The notion of gender spaces has become increasingly relevant to understanding how social structures shape roles, opportunities and identities of women.

Gender spaces refer to constructed, negotiated and sometimes contested to gender role for psychological spaces instead of to physical environments. History evidence found as women,

in many societies like India, have been confined to domestic and emotional spaces defined by patriarchal expectations. However, growing access to educational, employment and urban life has begun to challenge these traditional structures.

Simone de Beauvoir explored difficulties of love, power and desire inside of patriarchal societies. Her works remove curtain on how women often struggle to balance personal freedom with societal expectations. These certain themes sound strongly with the changing gender dynamics like women raising to negotiate new space of independence during confronting traditional norms in emerging India. Hence, this paper explores the concept of gender spaces within the broader framework of social revolution by using Beauvoir's feminist lens to interpret contemporary gender discourse.

Literature Review

Scholarly discussion on Simone de Beauvoir's philosophy and literary contributions have majorly designed feminist theory and gender studies. Her ideas analyzing gender relations with contemporary societies. Her works expose the structures that shape women's identities and restrict their autonomy. In Emerging India, her insights help illuminate the evolving nature of gender spaces as women challenge traditional roles and claim new opportunities for independence.

Toril Moi (1994) in her research work as *The Making of an Intellectual Woman*, insinuates Beauvoir's work in feminist philosophy and argues that her writing integrates existentialist thought with feminist critique. Toril Moi suggested that Beauvoir's literary texts portray women's struggles for autonomy and identity inside of patriarchal societies. Moi's opinion as Beauvoir's fiction should be considered as philosophical exploration of that lived experiences of women.

Margaret A. Simons (2006) in her research paper *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Critical Essays*, investigates Beauvoir's existential feminist approach towards freedom and identity. Simons contends that the tension between individual freedom and social constraints prescribed by cultural tradition as Beauvoir's highlights in her work. She analyzed how patriarchal institution creates limitation to women's opportunities for self-realization.

Uma Narayan (1997) in her research paper *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third-World Feminism* in the Indian context, she examines the intersection of gender, culture and colonial history. Narayan quarrel that feminist theory must account for cultural perfections

when analyzing gender inequalities in postcolonial societies. She concentrates how patriarchal culture and social regulations continue to influence women's experiences in India and similar countries.

Additionally, Nivedita Menon (2012) in her research paper *Seeing Like a Feminist*, examines contemporary gender debates in India. Further she investigates feminist discourse challenges intensely grounded social norms governing women's bodies, sexuality and social contribution. Menon explores Modern Indian society is inspecting importance shifts in gender relations due to education, activism and economic opportunities.

Despite broadly awareness on Beauvoir and feminist theory, relatively few studies have explored the concept of gender spaces in relation to emerging India through Beauvoir's philosophical framework. This study attempts to bridge gap by applying Beauvoir's insights to the socio-cultural transformations existing in contemporary Indian society.

1. Gender Spaces and Social Transformation in Emerging India

The revolution of gender relations is a crucial aspect of the broader social changes taking place in emerging India. New opportunities for women to participate in public and professional spaces has been created by economic development, urbanization and technological progress. These changes are challenging to traditional notions of gender roles and encourage greater female autonomy.

Beauvoir explained gender roles are socially constructed and shaped by institution. Narayan discusses over how feminist theory must consider cultural traditions in postcolonial societies like India. Menon examines contemporary gender revolutions and feminist debates in modern India through her research work.

However, in spite of developments, many patriarchal norms, regulations continue to shape women's experiences. Expectations regarding marriage, domestic responsibilities and moral behavior still influence how women navigate in social and professional environments. Beauvoir's feminist lens assists to explain these contradictions by emphasizing that social structures often attempt to maintain traditional power hierarchies even during periods of change.

2. Negotiating Identity and Autonomy

In emerging India, women are increasingly negotiating their own identities within the complex social environments. Education and employment provide opportunities for

independence and cultural expectations continue to influence personal choices and relationships.

Toril Moi highlights Beauvoir's exploration of lived experiences and identity formation of women. Simons also explains the tension between freedom and social constraints in Beauvoir's philosophy. Judith Okely (1986) focuses emotional dependency and women's struggle for independence in Beauvoir's narratives.

Gender identity in this context is not static but fluid, shaped by intersections of caste, religion and regional diversity. Modern English fiction frequently portrays this negotiation, depicting women who struggle with psychological fragmentation yet strive to reclaim agency and self-definition. Women attempt to assert their individuality while confronting societal pressures that define femininity in restrictive ways. Literature reflects these tensions by portraying female characters who seek autonomy and self-definition inside of evolving social context.

3. Literature as a Space of Resistance

Literature plays an important role in reflecting by questioning on the gender inequalities. Literary texts reveal the suspense dynamics of power that shape gender relations by depicting women's experiences and emotional struggles.

Debra Bergoffen (1997) analyzes how Beauvoir's work challenges patriarchal structures and represents women's experiences. Menon argues that feminist discourse questions social norms and empowers women. Toril Moi (1994) also suggests that Beauvoir's fiction becomes a space for expressing women's resistance and autonomy.

Beauvoir's works manifest that how literature can challenge patriarchal assumptions and create spaces for alternative identities and possibilities can be imagined. In the context of emerging India, these literary narratives contribute to broader discussion on gender equality, empowerment and social justice.

4. Feminist Criticism and Resistance

Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist framework, it creates question that how women are constructed as "the Other" within patriarchal systems that direct their roles in family, society and nationhood. Resistance emerges when women challenge these imposed identities by asserting autonomy, reclaiming public spaces and reshaping narratives of gender identity. Literature, activism and grassroots movements become crucial sites of this resistance and offering counter for discourses to dominant patriarchal ideologies. Modern English fiction,

for instance, often portrays women negotiating trauma and fragmentation while simultaneously carving out spaces of empowerment. Through feminist criticism these texts are not only critique systemic oppression but also envision possibilities for liberation what making resistance both an intellectual and existential act in emerging India.

5. Gender Space and Psychological Impact

In emerging India, gendered spaces in domestic, public or digital- carry profound psychological implications for women. The persistence of patriarchal norms often confines women to roles within the private sphere, limiting their autonomy and reinforcing traditional expectations. This spatial restriction generates psychological stress as women struggle to reconcile personal aspirations with societal demands. The fragmentation of identity, feelings of alienation and internalized oppression are common outcomes of navigating these contested spaces. At the same time the expansion of educational opportunities, workplace participation and feminist activism has opened new avenues for women to assert agency though these gains are frequently accompanied by resistance from entrenched cultural structures. Modern English fiction captures this duality, portraying female characters who endure trauma and psychological fragmentation while simultaneously striving for empowerment. Thus, gender spaces in India are not merely physical boundaries but sites of emotional struggle, where the psychological impact of patriarchy collides with the resilience of women seeking autonomy and self-definition.

Conclusion

The concept of gender spaces offers a significant framework for better understanding the evolving dynamics of gender relations in emerging India. With the feminist philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir, it becomes possible to explore how social institutions, cultural expectations and personal relationships shape women's identities and opportunities.

Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism provides a critical lens to understand the complexities of gender in emerging India. The negotiation between tradition and modernity, autonomy and oppression, identity and fragmentation reveal a dynamic landscape of feminist struggle. Modern English fiction amplifies these voices, offering nuanced portrayals of women's lived realities. The continuing relevance of Beauvoir's ideas for interpreting contemporary gender debates analytically presented in this paper. Nowadays, as India

experiences significant social and economical transformation, the negotiation of gender spaces remains central to discussion over equality, empowerment and democratic development.

Ultimately, the feminist reimagining of gender spaces in India is not only a critique of patriarchy but also a vision for inclusive furthers where women's autonomy and identity are fully realized. literature and feminist philosophy share valuable insights into the complex processes through women challenge traditional roles and create new possibilities for autonomy and self-expression. Therefore, building a more inclusive and progressive society in emerging India by recognizing and transforming gender spaces.

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From Congress Dominance to Coalition Politics: A Historical Study of Maharashtra Politics (1960–2019)

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Abstract

This paper examines the historical transformation of party politics in Maharashtra from Congress dominance to coalition politics between 1960 and 2019. In the decades following the formation of the state, the Congress occupied a central position in Maharashtra's political life through its organisational strength, leadership networks, and influence within regional institutions. Over time, however, this pattern of political dominance began to weaken as internal divisions within the Congress and the emergence of new political forces gradually altered the political landscape of the state.

The work approaches this transformation through a historical perspective rather than a purely electoral or quantitative analysis. It interprets the changing character of Maharashtra's politics through three broad phases: the consolidation of Congress dominance in the early decades after state formation, the fragmentation of the Congress system and the rise of regional political mobilisation from the late 1970s, and the emergence of coalition governments and competitive party alliances after the mid-1990s.

The paper argues that the rise of coalition politics in Maharashtra was not the result of a single political moment, but the outcome of a gradual historical process shaped by leadership realignments, organisational changes within political parties, and shifting patterns of political mobilisation. Taken together, these developments show how Maharashtra's politics moved from a dominant-party structure toward a more competitive coalition-based order by the early twenty-first century.

Keywords

Maharashtra Politics; Congress Dominance; Coalition Politics; Party System Transformation; Regional Politics in India.

Introduction

The political history of Maharashtra since the formation of the state in 1960 offers an important example of political change within post-colonial India. Created through the linguistic reorganisation of states, Maharashtra quickly emerged as one of the most politically influential regions in the country. As one of India's largest and economically significant states, Maharashtra has often played an important role in shaping broader political trends within the country. In the early decades after its formation, the political landscape of the state appeared relatively stable. For several decades afterwards, the Indian National Congress remained the central political force in Maharashtra and played a major role in shaping the state's political leadership.¹ For many years this dominance shaped the structure of political power and gave Maharashtra a system in which authority remained largely concentrated within a single party.

Yet the stability of this arrangement did not remain unchanged. Over time new political actors, regional movements, and shifting alliances began to alter the pattern of political competition in the state. Political leadership gradually became more diverse, and the influence of different parties began to expand. These changes did not occur suddenly. They developed slowly over several decades and reflected broader transformations within the political life of the state.

Understanding this transition is important for interpreting the evolution of Maharashtra's political system. While the early years of the state were marked by the strong organisational presence of the Congress party, later decades witnessed increasing political competition and the emergence of coalition governments. The movement from a dominant party structure to a more competitive political system represents a significant development in the history of the state's politics.²

This work explores the historical evolution of Maharashtra politics between 1960 and 2019. It argues that the transition from Congress dominance to coalition politics was the result of a gradual political process shaped by internal political divisions, the rise of regional political mobilisation, and the consolidation of opposition alliances. Rather than viewing these developments as isolated events, the study interprets them as interconnected phases in the broader transformation of the state's party system.

To examine this process, the paper analyses Maharashtra's political development through three historical phases. The first section discusses the period of Congress dominance during the early decades of the state. The second section examines the fragmentation of the Congress system and the emergence of regional political forces. The final section explores the development of coalition politics and the realignment of political alliances in Maharashtra. Together these sections trace the long-term transition that reshaped the political landscape of the state.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the foundations of Congress dominance in early Maharashtra politics.
2. To analyse the factors that weakened the Congress system in the state.
3. To study the rise of regional political mobilisation in Maharashtra.
4. To examine the emergence of coalition politics after the mid-1990s.
5. To interpret the long-term transformation of Maharashtra's party system between 1960 and 2019.

Review of Literature

Scholarly studies on Maharashtra politics have examined different dimensions of the state's political development since its formation in 1960. Much of the literature focuses on three related themes: the dominance of the Congress party in the early decades, the rise of regional political mobilisation, and the gradual emergence of coalition politics. Together these studies provide important insights into the historical transformation of the state's political system.

Several scholars have analysed the foundations of Congress dominance in Maharashtra. Rajni Kothari's concept of the "Congress system" offers a useful framework for understanding the early political structure of post-independence India. According to Kothari, the Congress functioned as a broad umbrella organisation that accommodated diverse political interests within a single party structure. In Maharashtra, this framework helps explain how Congress

maintained political stability while internal competition largely took place within the party organisation itself.

Other studies have explored the social and institutional basis of this dominance. Birmal and Lele highlight the role of Maratha political elites in shaping the leadership structure of the Congress in Maharashtra. Their work emphasises the importance of cooperative institutions and rural political networks in consolidating local influence. Similarly, Prashant Jadhav points to the role of elite political networks in sustaining Congress dominance during the early decades of the state's politics.

Another strand of scholarship examines the rise of regional political mobilisation and the weakening of the Congress system. Dipankar Gupta's studies of the Shiv Sena analyse how regional identity politics reshaped political competition in Maharashtra, particularly in urban centres such as Mumbai. Vaibhav Purandare's work also highlights the significance of Bal Thackeray's leadership in expanding the party's political influence.

Scholars such as Suhas Palshikar and Nitin Birmal have examined the broader transformation of Maharashtra's party system. Their studies suggest that the weakening of the Congress organisation, along with the consolidation of opposition alliances, gradually altered the pattern of political competition in the state. By the 1990s this process had begun to reshape Maharashtra politics, eventually leading to the emergence of coalition-based political arrangements.

Research Gap

Existing scholarship on Maharashtra politics has explored several important aspects of the state's political development. Studies have examined the nature of Congress dominance in the early decades after the formation of the state, the rise of regional political mobilisation, and the gradual emergence of coalition politics. These works provide valuable insights into different phases of Maharashtra's political history.

However, much of this literature tends to analyse these developments separately. Research often focuses either on the structure of Congress dominance, the growth of regional parties such as the Shiv Sena, or the dynamics of coalition politics in the later period. As a

result, the broader historical transition of Maharashtra's political system has not always been examined as a continuous process linking these developments across time.

This study addresses this gap by analysing Maharashtra's political evolution between 1960 and 2019 within a single historical framework. By examining the weakening of the Congress system, the rise of regional political forces, and the consolidation of opposition alliances, the paper seeks to explain how the state's politics gradually moved from dominant party rule to a coalition-based political structure.

Methodology

The analysis in this paper follows a historical approach to understand the evolution of Maharashtra's political system between 1960 and 2019. The analysis is primarily based on secondary sources. These include academic books, research articles, and scholarly studies on Maharashtra politics and party system transformation. Relevant newspaper reports have also been consulted to understand important political developments.

The study follows a chronological framework to interpret political change across different phases. Major political events, leadership developments, and institutional changes are examined within their historical context. This approach helps trace the political transition in Maharashtra.

Congress Dominance in Early Maharashtra Politics (1960–1978)

The formation of Maharashtra in 1960, following the linguistic reorganisation of states, created a new political arena in which regional leadership and party organisation began to shape the direction of state politics. In the early years after the creation of the state, political power was largely concentrated within the Indian National Congress. The party had already established a strong organisational presence in the region during the preceding decades, and this organisational advantage continued to influence the political structure of the newly formed state. As a result, the Congress quickly emerged as the principal political force in Maharashtra and remained dominant during the initial decades of the state's political history.³

The stability of Congress dominance during this period was closely connected to the role of influential political leaders who helped consolidate the party's organisational network across the state. Leaders such as Yashwantrao Chavan played a crucial role in shaping the early political direction of Maharashtra. Chavan's leadership helped establish a strong administrative

and organisational framework during the formative years of the state. Subsequent leaders, including Vasandrao Naik and Vasantdada Patil, continued to maintain the political strength of the Congress organisation. Their leadership contributed to the development of a political environment in which the Congress party remained the central axis of state politics for several years.

Another important factor that supported Congress dominance was the network of political and economic institutions that connected local leadership with the party organisation. In many parts of rural Maharashtra, cooperative institutions, particularly those associated with the agricultural and sugar sectors, became closely linked with political leadership. These institutions not only shaped economic activity in rural areas but also provided local political leaders with opportunities to build influence and organisational strength. Through these networks, political authority often extended beyond electoral politics and became embedded within local social and economic structures.⁴

Congress dominance did not eliminate political competition. In many cases, competition occurred within the Congress organisation itself rather than between different parties. Political factions emerged around influential leaders, and internal rivalries often shaped the dynamics of state politics. These internal divisions did not immediately weaken the overall dominance of the Congress party, but they revealed underlying tensions within the organisational structure.⁵

By the late 1970s, these internal political dynamics had begun to influence the broader political landscape of Maharashtra. Although the Congress organisation continued to hold a strong position in the state, factional competition and changing political alignments gradually created new conditions within the political system. These developments would eventually open space for alternative political forces and contribute to the transformation of Maharashtra's political structure in the following decades.

Fragmentation of Congress and the Rise of Opposition Politics in Maharashtra (1978–1995)

The political stability that characterised the early decades of Maharashtra politics began to weaken during the late 1970s. One of the most significant developments during this period was the fragmentation of the Congress organisation. Internal divisions within the party had

existed earlier, but they became more visible by the end of the decade. In 1978, Sharad Pawar broke away from the Congress and formed a separate political group. With the support of parties such as the Janata Party and the Peasants and Workers Party, Pawar established a coalition government known as the Progressive Democratic Front and became Chief Minister of Maharashtra. This development was historically important because it demonstrated that the political dominance of the Congress party could now be challenged through alternative political alliances.⁶

The consequences of the 1978 split extended beyond the immediate formation of a new government. It revealed that the internal unity of the Congress organisation had weakened and that regional leaders could mobilise political support outside the traditional party framework. The Progressive Democratic Front experiment also indicated that opposition parties were increasingly willing to cooperate in order to challenge Congress dominance. Although the coalition did not permanently displace Congress from power, it marked an early moment when political authority in the state began to move beyond the control of a single party. In this sense, the events of the late 1970s represented an important stage in the gradual transformation of Maharashtra's party system.

During the same period, changes were also occurring in the urban political environment of Maharashtra, particularly in Mumbai. The Shiv Sena, founded in 1966 under the leadership of Balasaheb Thackeray, gradually expanded its political presence during the 1980s. In its early years the party focused primarily on issues of regional identity and the protection of employment opportunities for Marathi-speaking populations in Mumbai. Over time it developed a network of local branches, or shakhas, which became an important organisational base for political mobilisation. These local networks enabled the party to maintain close contact with neighbourhood-level issues and to mobilise support among sections of the urban working class and lower middle classes.

Economic and social changes in the city also influenced this process. The decline of the textile industry and the major textile workers' strike of 1982 weakened older trade union structures that had previously been associated with Left and Congress politics. As these traditional labour networks declined, new forms of political mobilisation began to emerge within the city's changing social landscape. In this environment, the Shiv Sena was able to

expand its influence by addressing issues related to urban employment, regional identity, and local governance.⁷

Political developments at the national level further shaped the changing political landscape of Maharashtra. By the late 1980s the Shiv Sena began to incorporate elements of Hindutva politics, which was becoming increasingly visible in national political discourse. During this period the party also developed closer political cooperation with the Bharatiya Janata Party. This emerging alliance gradually strengthened opposition politics in the state and contributed to the formation of a more organised anti-Congress political front.⁸

The early 1990s represented a particularly turbulent phase in the politics of Mumbai and Maharashtra more broadly. National developments surrounding the Babri Masjid controversy and the demolition of the structure in 1992 intensified political tensions in several parts of the country. In Mumbai these tensions were followed by the communal riots of 1992–93, which had significant social and political consequences for the city. Although these events were part of broader national developments, they also influenced the local political environment and shaped patterns of political mobilisation within the state.

By the mid-1990s the cumulative impact of these developments had begun to transform the structure of political competition in Maharashtra. Congress remained an important political force, but its earlier dominance was increasingly challenged by emerging opposition alliances. The rise of regional political mobilisation, the expansion of alternative political organisations, and the growing cooperation between opposition parties gradually reshaped the political landscape of the state. These developments would soon lead to a major political shift with the formation of a non-Congress government in Maharashtra during the mid-1990s.

Coalition Politics and Political Realignment in Maharashtra (1995–2019)

The mid-1990s marked an important turning point in the political history of Maharashtra. In the 1995 Assembly elections the alliance between the Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata Party secured a majority and formed the government in the state. Manohar Joshi became Chief Minister, while Balasaheb Thackeray continued to exercise considerable political influence as the central leader of the Shiv Sena. Although a non-Congress coalition had briefly emerged earlier in 1978, the electoral outcome of 1995 represented a decisive shift

in the political balance of the state. It demonstrated that the long-standing dominance of the Congress could be effectively challenged through coordinated opposition alliances and marked a significant stage in the transformation of Maharashtra's party system.⁹

A further turning point came in 1999 when Sharad Pawar separated from the Congress and established the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).¹⁰ The creation of the new party altered the political landscape of Maharashtra because it divided the traditional Congress support base. The results of the Assembly elections that year produced a situation in which the Congress and the NCP formed a coalition government. This arrangement indicated that coalition politics had become a durable feature of governance in the state.

During the following decade Maharashtra was largely governed by the Congress–NCP coalition. Leaders such as Vilasrao Deshmukh, Ashok Chavan and Prithviraj Chavan served as Chief Minister at different phases of this period. While the coalition remained in power for several years, it also faced growing public criticism regarding governance issues and allegations of corruption within sections of the state administration. These controversies gradually weakened the credibility of the ruling alliance and contributed to political dissatisfaction among sections of the electorate during the early 2010s.

The Assembly elections of 2014 represented another moment of political transition. In the period preceding the election the established electoral alliances between major political parties in Maharashtra collapsed, leading the Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena, Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party to contest the elections independently.¹¹ The Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly and later formed the government with the support of the Shiv Sena. Devendra Fadnavis became Chief Minister and emerged as an important political leader during this period. His rise was also symbolically significant because he came from the Vidarbha region, whereas political leadership in Maharashtra had long been associated with leaders from Western Maharashtra.

Political developments continued to evolve in the years that followed. In the 2019 Assembly elections the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena contested as electoral allies against the Congress–NCP alliance. After the election results, however, disagreements regarding the sharing of political power led to the breakdown of the alliance between the two

parties. The Shiv Sena subsequently formed a new coalition government with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party, which came to be known as the Maha Vikas Aghadi.¹² This development illustrated the increasingly fluid nature of coalition politics in Maharashtra and highlighted how political alliances in the state had become more flexible by the late 2010s.

Conclusion

The political history of Maharashtra since the formation of the state in 1960 illustrates a gradual but significant transformation in the structure of party politics. The discussion in this paper shows that the evolution of Maharashtra's political system cannot be understood through isolated electoral events. Instead, it reflects a long historical process in which the dominance of a single political party slowly gave way to a competitive multi-party system. The early decades of the state were marked by the organisational strength of the Congress and the leadership networks that sustained its political authority. Over time, however, internal divisions within the party and the emergence of new political forces created conditions for a more competitive political environment.

The fragmentation of the Congress system during the late 1970s and 1980s represented a crucial stage in this transition. Developments such as the political realignment initiated by Sharad Pawar and the growing influence of regional political mobilisation altered the balance of power within the state. These changes did not immediately displace the Congress from its central position, but they gradually reshaped the political landscape. By the 1990s, opposition alliances and new political organisations had begun to challenge the earlier patterns of political dominance.

The period after 1995 marked the consolidation of this transformation. Coalition governments became an increasingly common feature of Maharashtra politics, reflecting a political system in which multiple parties competed for influence and authority. The formation of new alliances, the emergence of leaders from different regions of the state, and the changing electoral fortunes of established parties all demonstrated the evolving character of political competition. By the time of the political realignments that followed the 2019 elections, coalition politics had become firmly embedded within the political life of Maharashtra.

Collectively, these developments demonstrate how Maharashtra's political history reflects the broader transformation of regional party systems within post-colonial Indian democracy. The transition from Congress dominance to coalition politics illustrates how regional political dynamics, leadership changes, and institutional shifts can reshape the character of democratic competition over time. At the same time, this study also suggests several avenues for further research. Future work could examine the role of regional leadership networks, social coalitions, and economic institutions in shaping political change within the state. Such studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of how political systems evolve within India's diverse federal framework.

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India's Soft Power Foreign Policy: Expanding Growing Global Influence in the 21st Century

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Abstract:

India's growing role in international politics has increasingly highlighted the importance of soft power in its foreign policy. Soft power has emerged as a crucial dimension of International Relations in the twenty-first century. Unlike traditional hard power, which relies on military and economic coercion, soft power refers to the ability of a country to influence global actors through attraction, culture, political values, and foreign policy. The concept of soft power was popularized by Joseph S. Nye Jr. and has since become central to discussions of international influence. This research paper analysis the evolution of India's soft power strategy and its growing role in shaping global perceptions and diplomatic relations. Through qualitative analysis of contemporary initiatives such as the G20 New Delhi Summit 2023, the humanitarian outreach of Vaccine Maitri, and the promotion of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), the study evaluates India's emerging role as a soft power leader. The research also compares India's approach to soft power with that of China and assesses the opportunities and challenges India faces in expanding its global influence. The findings suggest that India's soft power is rooted in its cultural diversity, diaspora networks, democratic values, and technological innovations, which collectively enhance its international credibility and partnerships. However, structural challenges such as geopolitical competition, domestic socio-political issues, and resource constraints remain significant. The paper concludes that India's soft power strategy, if strategically integrated with its economic and diplomatic initiatives, has the potential to significantly reshape global governance and international cooperation in the coming decades.

Keywords: Soft Power, India's Foreign Policy, diplomacy, global Influence, International Relations.

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Introduction:

In contemporary International Relations, influence is no longer determined solely by military strength or economic dominance. Nations increasingly rely on non-coercive means of persuasion and attraction to achieve their foreign policy goals. cultural diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, and technological innovation to build influence and shape global perceptions. This phenomenon is broadly captured by the concept of soft power, introduced by Joseph S. Nye Jr. (Nye, 1990; Nye, 2004). According to Nye, soft power is the ability of a country to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion. Soft power, which refers to the ability of a country to shape the preferences and actions of others through cultural appeal, political values, and foreign policy rather than force or coercion (Nye, 2004).

India, one of the world's oldest civilization and the largest democracy, possesses significant soft power assets. India, with its civilizational heritage, democratic institutions, cultural exports, diverse religious heritage, globally popular film industry, traditional medicine systems extensive diaspora and technological innovations, has increasingly leveraged soft power as a strategic instrument of foreign policy (Blarel, 2012). Over the past two decades, Indian policymakers have increasingly recognized the importance of leveraging these resources to advance foreign policy goals.

India's rise as a global actor has brought renewed attention to the role of soft power in its foreign policy. As the world's largest democracy and one of the fastest-growing major economies, India possesses unique cultural, historical, and intellectual resources that contribute to its global appeal. These resources include ancient traditions such as yoga and Ayurveda, a vibrant film industry, democratic political values, and a large and influential diaspora. India's soft power is deeply rooted in its civilizational heritage (Verma, 2023). For centuries, Indian culture, religion, and philosophy spread across Asia through trade, migration, and intellectual exchange. In the modern era, the Indian state has increasingly incorporated these cultural resources into its diplomatic strategy. India's foreign policy has traditionally emphasized principles such as non-alignment, peaceful coexistence, and multilateral cooperation. Since the early twenty-first century, however India has increasingly incorporated soft power as a strategic tool in its global diplomacy. With its rich cultural heritage, global diaspora, vibrant democratic

institutions, and expanding technological capabilities, India possesses unique assets that enhance its ability to influence global narratives and partnerships (Verma, 2023).

India's global role has expanded significantly in the post-cold war era. Economic liberalization, rapid technological growth, and active participation in international institutions have increased its global standing. In this context, soft power has become an important diplomatic tool that complements India's strategic and economic capabilities. This research paper aims to analyse India's soft power foreign policy and its growing influence on global politics in the twenty-first century. The study examines the sources, mechanisms, and strategic implications of India's soft power in the contemporary international system. It explores how India leverages cultural diplomacy, technological innovation, and humanitarian initiatives to strengthen its international image and expand its diplomatic reach. This paper examines India's evolving soft power strategy and its implications for global diplomacy and its role in shaping the country's global influence in the contemporary international system. It explores key sources of India's soft power, analyzes recent diplomatic initiatives, and evaluates the opportunities and challenges facing India's soft power expansion.

In this research we adopt a qualitative, analytical and descriptive methodology to examine India's soft power diplomacy. The key research questions addressed in this paper include: What are the major sources of India's soft power? How has India incorporated soft power into its foreign policy strategy? What role do contemporary initiatives such as Vaccine Maitri, Digital Public Infrastructure diplomacy, and the G20 presidency play in enhancing India's global influence? What challenges and opportunities exist for India's soft power strategy in the future?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on soft power approaches to international relations. The concept of power has been central to the study of international relations. Traditionally, power was understood primarily in terms of military capability and economic strength. However, in the modern globalized world, the ability of a country to influence others through attraction and persuasion has become equally important. This form of influence is known as 'soft power'. Political scientist Joseph Nye introduced the concept of soft power in the late 20th century in his book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of

American Power” (Nye, 1990). According to Nye, soft power is the ability of a country to shape the preferences of others through attraction rather than coercion (Nye, 1990, Nye, 2004). Cultural influence, political values, foreign policy, and international reputation all contribute to soft power.

According to this framework, soft power arises from three main sources: 1. Culture – cultural practices and traditions that attract international audiences. 2. Political values – political systems and institutions that are admired globally. 3. Foreign policy – diplomatic actions that are seen as legitimate and cooperative. Countries can use these sources to influence global perceptions and build international partnerships. These elements create an environment in which other nations willingly cooperate with the influencing country. In recent decades, globalization, communication technologies, and the rise of transnational cultural flows have strengthened the importance of soft power. Governments increasingly invest in public diplomacy, cultural exchanges, education programs, and international development initiatives to enhance their global image.

Evolution of India’s Soft Power Diplomacy

India’s engagement with soft power is not entirely new. Historically, the spread of Buddhism, Indian philosophy, and trade networks across Asia represented early forms of cultural influence. Ancient Indian scholars, merchants, and monks helped disseminate cultural ideas across Southeast Asia and East Asia, establishing civilizational connections that continue today. However, modern soft power diplomacy began to emerge after India’s independence in 1947. India’s foreign policy during the Cold War emphasized principle such as non-alignment, peaceful coexistence, and anti-colonial solidarity. These values strengthened India’s moral authority among developing countries (Kugiel, 2017).

The establishment of institutions such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) helped promote cultural diplomacy through educational exchanges, scholarships, and cultural programs. India also used international forums to advocate for global peace, disarmament, and economic development. In the 21st century, India’s soft power strategy has become more structured and visible. Government initiatives have promoted yoga, Ayurveda, traditional knowledge systems, and cultural heritage globally. Over the past decade, India’s soft power strategy has become more coordinated and ambitious, particularly through diaspora engagement and international cultural initiatives (Srivastava, 2025).

Sources of India's Soft Power

India's soft power originates from multiple sources, including culture, spirituality, democratic values, socio-political factors, education, and the global Indian diaspora. India's cultural diversity and civilizational history is the foundation of its soft power. Indian art, music, dance, cuisine, and literature have gained global popularity. This heritage continues to shape global perceptions of India as rich in cultural diversity. Cultural diplomacy programs organized by Indian embassies and institutions promote these traditions worldwide and it is help introduce global audiences to Indian traditions. Additionally, India is also the birthplace of major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. These traditions have historically influenced cultural across Asia and beyond.

Yoga has become one of the most recognizable symbols of India's soft power. Practiced by millions around the world yoga promotes physical well-being, mental health, and spiritual balance. The United nations adopted India's proposal of International Day of Yoga in 2014. The resolution received support from 177 countries, highlighting global recognition of yoga as a universal practice. Since its adoption, International Yoga Day has been celebrated worldwide through public events, workshops, and diplomatic initiatives. These event reinforce India's image as a promoter of peace, health, and harmony. Yoga diplomacy has strengthened India's cultural influence and promoted its image as a center of spiritual knowledge. Global participation in yoga events demonstrates its widespread appeal and its role as a cultural bridge connecting India with diverse societies.

Another significant dimension of India's soft power is its traditional medical system, Ayurveda. Ayurveda emphasizes holistic wellness, preventive healthcare, and natural therapies. In recent years, Ayurveda has gained international recognition as part of the global wellness industry. It increasing popularity in foreign countries has strengthened India's cultural diplomacy and economic opportunities in health tourism and herbal medicine exports. India has also promoted other traditional knowledge systems under the AYUSH framework (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy). These initiatives aim to integrate traditional medicine with modern healthcare while strengthening India's cultural influence.

India's film industry plays a major role in shaping international perceptions of Indian culture. Bollywood films have audiences across Asia, Africa, Middle East, Latin America and Europe. Through music, storytelling, and visual imagery, these films introduce global

audiences to Indian traditions and social values. The growing popularity of Indian digital media and streaming platforms has further expanded India's cultural reach.

The Indian diaspora is one of the largest in the world and plays a crucial role in promoting India's global image. With over 30 million people of Indian origin living abroad, it represents one of the largest diaspora in the world. Members of the diaspora contribute to business, technology, academia, and politics in their host countries while maintaining cultural ties with India. Diaspora engagement has become an important element of India's foreign policy strategy. Through cultural events, entrepreneurship, and professional networks, diaspora communities help strengthen bilateral relations and enhance India's international Image.

Soft Power in India's Contemporary Foreign Policy

In recent years, India has integrated soft power more explicitly into its foreign policy strategy. The government has launched initiatives aimed at strengthening cultural connectivity with other regions. Projects such as "Project Mausam", which aims to revive historical maritime and cultural connections in the Indian Ocean region, illustrate how heritage diplomacy can support strategic objectives. India has also expanded its engagement in global institutions and international forums. Through initiatives such as climate diplomacy, digital public infrastructure sharing, and international development cooperation, India positions itself as a leader of the Global South. Cultural diplomacy is a key component of India's foreign policy. Through cultural exchanges, exhibitions, educational programs, and language promotion, India seeks to foster mutual understanding with other nations. Institutions such as ICCR organize cultural festivals, art exhibitions, and academic collaborations worldwide.

Education has become another significant pillar of India's soft power. India offers scholarships and training programs to students from developing countries. Programs such as the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) initiative provide capacity-building opportunities for foreign professionals. These initiatives strengthen diplomatic relations and create long-term goodwill. India's foreign policy increasingly incorporates humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. Initiatives such as disaster relief operations, vaccine distribution, and technical support to developing countries strengthen India's reputation as a responsible global actor.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a significant opportunity for India to demonstrate leadership through humanitarian diplomacy. In 2021, India launched the Vaccine Maitri

(Vaccine Friendship) initiative to supply COVID-19 vaccines to countries around the world. Through the program, India provided vaccines to neighbouring countries, African nations, and small island states. The initiative strengthened India's reputation as a responsible global actor committed to international cooperation. Scholars note that Vaccine Maitri significantly enhanced India's soft power by demonstrating solidarity with developing countries during a global crisis (Raj. & Singh, 2022). India's vaccine diplomacy also emphasized principles of global equity and humanitarian assistance. Unlike some forms of geopolitical aid, India's vaccine supply was largely presented as unconditional support rather than a strategic bargaining tool. This initiative reinforced India's long-standing foreign policy principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", meaning "the world is one family".

In recent years, India's technological innovations have become an important source of soft power. India has developed a unique 'Digital Public Infrastructure' (DPI) system that includes platforms such as Aadhaar digital identity system, 'Unified Payments Interface' (UPI) and 'DigiLocker' digital document system. These platforms have transformed governance and financial inclusion in India. UPI alone has facilitated billions of digital transactions and accounts for a significant share of real-time digital payments globally. India has increasingly promoted this model internationally, offering technological partnerships to developing countries seeking to improve digital governance and financial inclusion. Through the promotion of DPI, India positions itself as a leader in digital innovation and a provider of technological solutions for the Global South (Singh, 2023).

India's G20 Presidency in 2023 represented a major milestone in its diplomatic engagement. The summit allowed India to showcase its cultural heritage, development model, and diplomatic leadership. Analysts argue that the presidency significantly elevated India's diplomatic influence and global visibility. India used the G20 platform to promote several initiatives, including- Inclusion of the African Union in the G20, Promotion of digital public infrastructure, Climate change cooperation and Sustainable development initiatives. The summit was organized under the theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – One Earth, One Family, One Future" (Gupta & Bhardwaj, 2023; Ministry of External Affairs, 2023). Through cultural programs and nationwide meetings held in multiple cities, India demonstrated its cultural diversity and democratic openness. The G20 presidency thus served as a major exercise in multilateral soft power diplomacy.

Challenges to India's Soft Power Strategy

Despite its strong cultural resources, India faces several challenges in fully utilizing its soft power potential. One challenge is the lack of a centralized and coordinated strategy for cultural diplomacy. Multiple government agencies are involved in soft power initiatives, sometimes leading to fragmented efforts. Domestic political controversies, social inequalities, and governance issues can sometimes affect India's international image. Compared to major global powers, India invests relatively fewer resources in cultural diplomacy and international broadcasting.

India faces competition from other countries that actively promote their cultural influence, such as China's Confucius Institutes. Institutions aim to enhance China's cultural presence and influence global perceptions. The rise of emerging powers has intensified competition not only in economic and military domains but also in the realm of soft power. Among these emerging powers, India and China have adopted different strategies to enhance their international influence through cultural diplomacy, economic cooperation, and global engagement. While both India and China seek to expand their global influence, their approaches to soft power differ significantly in terms of ideology, implementation, and global perception. While China's strategy is highly organized and well-funded, critics argue that it sometimes lacks authenticity because it is strongly associated with government propaganda.

India's cultural influence, on the other hand, is often perceived as more spontaneous and society-driven. China has become one of the largest providers of international development finance through projects such as the 'Belt and Road Initiative'. This initiative involves infrastructure investments across Asia, Africa, and Europe. Through infrastructure financing and economic partnerships, China seeks to expand its global influence and strengthen economic ties with participating countries.

India's development diplomacy is more focused on capacity building, technical assistance, and humanitarian cooperation. Programs such as the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation initiative provide training and expertise to developing countries. Although India's financial resources are smaller than China's, its development partnerships often emphasize mutual cooperation rather than debt-based infrastructure investment. India has increasingly emphasized its role in global governance institutions such as the G20. During the G20 New Delhi Summit 2023, India promoted themes of inclusive growth, sustainable

development, and digital transformation. One of the major outcomes was the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20. This initiative strengthened India's image as a representative voice of the Global South. But China also plays a significant role in global governance institutions but often promotes alternative multilateral structures such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Nevertheless, addressing these challenges could significantly strengthen India's global influence.

Conclusion:

Soft power has become a crucial component of modern diplomacy, enabling countries to influence international relations through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. The transformation of international relations in the twenty-first century has elevated the importance of soft power as a tool of diplomacy. As globalization intensifies cultural exchange and technological connectivity, countries increasingly rely on attraction and persuasion to influence international outcomes. As the international system becomes more interconnected and multipolar, soft power will play an increasingly important role in shaping global relations. India, soft power represents both a strategic resource and a natural extension of its civilizational heritage. India's rich cultural traditions, democratic institutions, technological innovation, and global diaspora provide a strong foundation for soft power diplomacy. Over the past decade, India has increasingly incorporated these resources into its foreign policy strategy. However, realizing the full potential of India's soft power requires better strategic coordination, increased investment in cultural diplomacy, and consistent domestic policies that reinforce democratic values. India's ability to effectively leverage its cultural and intellectual resources will determine its influence in the evolving global order.

Through initiatives such as Vaccine Maitri, digital public infrastructure diplomacy, and leadership in global forums like the G20, India has demonstrated its ability to combine humanitarian, technological, and cultural diplomacy in international cooperation and represent the interests of developing nations. India's growing emphasis on digital innovation has also created new forms of soft power. By promoting digital public infrastructure models, India contributes to global discussions on digital governance, financial inclusion, and technological cooperation. However, the study also identified several challenges that may affect the effectiveness of India's soft power strategy. These include limited institutional coordination,

competition from other emerging powers, and the need to align domestic policies with international expectations.

Despite these challenges, the future prospects for India's soft power remain promising. The country's expanding economic influence, technological innovation, and cultural appeal are likely to enhance its role in global governance. From a theoretical perspective, India's experience demonstrates that soft power is not limited to cultural diplomacy alone. In the contemporary international system, soft power also includes technological leadership, humanitarian assistance, and multilateral cooperation.

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**Urban Heat Island as an Emerging Urban Environmental Disaster:
Role of Local Administration in Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies
in Maharashtra****Mamta Ramchandra Dohale****Research Scholar, Dhanwate National College, Nagpur****E-mail:-mamtadohale00@gmail.com**

Abstract: -

Rapid urbanization has significantly altered the environmental and climatic characteristics of cities across the world. One of the most prominent consequences of this transformation is the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect, in which urban areas experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural environments due to dense infrastructure, reduced vegetation cover, and anthropogenic heat emissions. In developing countries such as India, where urban growth has accelerated in recent decades, the UHI phenomenon has emerged as a critical environmental and public health challenge. This study examines the Urban Heat Island effect in the state of Maharashtra and evaluates the role of local administration in implementing mitigation and adaptation strategies. The research adopts a qualitative methodology based on secondary data collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, and policy documents published between 2022 and 2025. The analysis highlights that rapid land-use change, declining green spaces, and increasing energy consumption are major drivers of urban heat intensification. Research across Indian cities indicates that urban expansion has significantly increased temperature trends due to replacement of vegetation with heat-absorbing surfaces such as asphalt and concrete.

The findings show that local governments in Maharashtra have introduced several initiatives, including heat action plans, cool roof programmes, and urban greening projects. However, implementation challenges remain due to institutional fragmentation, financial constraints, and insufficient urban climate data. The study argues that strengthening urban climate governance and integrating climate considerations into urban planning are essential for improving resilience to heat stress. The research contributes to the growing literature on urban climate governance by highlighting the critical role of local administration in addressing urban heat risks in rapidly urbanizing regions.

Keywords: Urban Heat Island, Urban Governance, Climate Adaptation, Local Administration, Maharashtra, Urban Disaster

Introduction

Urbanization is one of the most significant socio-economic transformations of the twenty-first century. Cities across the world are expanding rapidly due to industrial development, population growth, and infrastructure expansion. While urbanization provides economic opportunities and improved access to services, it also generates several environmental challenges that threaten urban sustainability. Among these challenges, rising urban temperatures have become a growing concern for policymakers and researchers.

The Urban Heat Island (UHI) phenomenon refers to the condition in which urban areas experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural environments due to changes in land surface characteristics and human activities. Built-up surfaces such as concrete buildings, asphalt roads, and paved areas absorb solar radiation and release heat slowly during the night, resulting in elevated temperatures in cities. The loss of vegetation and water bodies further reduces natural cooling processes, intensifying thermal stress in urban environments.

The UHI phenomenon has become increasingly prominent in developing countries undergoing rapid urban expansion. Research suggests that urbanization significantly alters the energy balance of cities by increasing heat storage and reducing evapotranspiration processes. These changes lead to higher land surface temperatures and prolonged heat exposure, particularly during summer months.

India has experienced remarkable urban growth over the past few decades. According to recent studies, urbanization has contributed substantially to rising temperature trends across Indian cities. An analysis of temperature data across multiple urban centres indicates that urbanization has increased warming trends by nearly 60 percent in some regions due to declining vegetation cover and expansion of built-up infrastructure.

The state of Maharashtra represents an important case for examining the Urban Heat Island phenomenon. Maharashtra is one of the most urbanized states in India and includes major metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur. Rapid infrastructure development and industrial growth have significantly transformed the landscape of these cities. As a result, several urban areas in the state have recorded increasing temperatures and more frequent heat wave events.

Urban heat islands are increasingly recognized as a form of urban environmental disaster because they intensify climate risks, increase energy demand for cooling, and threaten public

health. Heat stress disproportionately affects vulnerable populations such as elderly individuals, outdoor workers, and residents of informal settlements.

Given these challenges, effective governance responses are required to mitigate urban heat risks. Local administrations, including municipal corporations and urban planning authorities, play a crucial role in implementing climate-responsive policies and adaptation strategies.

This study examines the Urban Heat Island phenomenon in Maharashtra and evaluates the role of local administration in mitigating urban heat through governance interventions and sustainable urban planning strategies.

Literature Review

The Urban Heat Island phenomenon has been widely studied by scholars across disciplines such as environmental science, urban planning, and climate studies. Over the years, researchers have examined various aspects of urban heat islands, including their causes, impacts, and possible mitigation strategies.

Early studies on urban heat islands primarily focused on measuring temperature differences between urban and rural areas. These studies demonstrated that urban environments tend to record significantly higher temperatures due to the presence of dense infrastructure and human activities (Adithya & Ramachandra, 2023).

Recent research has emphasized the relationship between land-use changes and urban temperature patterns. Kikon et al. (2023) found that the expansion of built-up areas and the reduction of vegetation cover are among the primary factors contributing to the intensification of urban heat islands. According to their study, cities experiencing rapid urban development often record higher land surface temperatures compared to less developed areas.

Another important factor discussed in the literature is the role of urban morphology. Urban morphology refers to the physical structure and spatial arrangement of buildings and streets within a city. Dense building clusters can restrict airflow and trap heat within urban environments, leading to increased temperatures (Nayak et al., 2023).

Vegetation plays a critical role in mitigating urban heat islands. Sridhar and Kulkarni (2024) highlight that urban green spaces such as parks, gardens, and roadside trees can significantly reduce surface temperatures. Vegetation provides shade and promotes evapotranspiration, which helps cool the surrounding environment.

Remote sensing technologies have also improved the ability of researchers to study urban heat patterns. Satellite-based thermal imaging allows scientists to analyze temperature variations across large geographic areas. Saikia et al. (2024) used remote sensing data to examine land surface temperature patterns and found a strong correlation between urban development and increasing heat levels.

The literature also emphasizes the importance of governance and policy interventions. Singh and Kumar (2023) argue that effective urban climate governance requires the integration of environmental considerations into urban planning policies. Municipal authorities must adopt climate-sensitive planning strategies to address environmental challenges associated with urbanization.

Overall, the literature suggests that the Urban Heat Island phenomenon is influenced by a complex interaction of environmental, social, and governance factors. Addressing this issue requires integrated planning strategies that combine environmental management, sustainable infrastructure development, and community participation.

Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyse the Urban Heat Island phenomenon as an emerging urban environmental disaster.
2. To examine the drivers of urban heat island formation in Maharashtra.
3. To evaluate the role of local administration in implementing mitigation and adaptation strategies.
4. To identify governance challenges and propose policy recommendations for sustainable urban heat management
5. To suggest sustainable policy measures for reducing urban heat risks.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on the analysis of secondary data. Information was collected from peer-reviewed academic journals, government policy documents, climate action plans, and environmental reports related to urban heat islands and climate governance.

The study focuses on Maharashtra due to its rapid urbanization and increasing exposure to extreme heat conditions. Major cities such as Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur were examined to understand the relationship between urban expansion and temperature variation.

Recent academic literature published between 2022 and 2025 was reviewed to ensure that the analysis reflects contemporary research developments. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns related to urban heat island drivers, governance responses, and mitigation strategies.

Urban Heat Island in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is one of the most urbanized states in India and has experienced significant economic and industrial growth over the past few decades. The expansion of built-up infrastructure has dramatically transformed the physical landscape of cities in the state.

Urban development has replaced natural land surfaces with impervious materials that absorb and store heat more effectively. Roads, buildings, and other infrastructure retain solar radiation during the day and release heat gradually at night, causing higher urban temperatures.

Cities such as Nagpur, Pune, and Mumbai frequently experience extremely high summer temperatures. Satellite observations indicate that built-up areas in these cities exhibit significantly higher land surface temperatures compared with surrounding rural landscapes.

Several factors contribute to the intensification of urban heat islands in Maharashtra:

Rapid Urban Expansion

Urban development has increased the proportion of built-up areas and reduced natural land cover.

Decline in Green Spaces

Urban expansion has led to loss of vegetation and open spaces that previously contributed to natural cooling processes.

Industrial and Transportation Activities

Vehicular traffic and industrial operations generate additional heat emissions within cities.

Climate Change

Global climate change has intensified heat waves and increased the frequency of extreme temperature events.

These factors collectively contribute to rising urban temperatures and increasing heat stress for urban residents.

Role of Local Administration in Mitigation Strategies

Local administrative institutions play a critical role in addressing environmental challenges associated with rapid urbanization. Municipal authorities are responsible for implementing urban planning policies, managing land use, and ensuring sustainable infrastructure

development. Their decisions significantly influence the intensity and distribution of Urban Heat Island effects within cities (Singh & Kumar, 2023).

One of the most important responsibilities of local administrations is urban planning and land-use regulation. Through zoning regulations and development control rules, municipal authorities can ensure that urban expansion occurs in a sustainable manner. Maintaining adequate green spaces, protecting urban forests, and promoting balanced land-use patterns can help reduce the accumulation of heat in densely populated areas (Kikon et al., 2023).

Another key strategy is the promotion of urban greening initiatives. Local governments can implement large-scale tree plantation programs, develop public parks, and establish green corridors along transportation routes. Vegetation plays a significant role in moderating urban temperatures by providing shade and facilitating evapotranspiration processes. Cities with higher vegetation cover generally experience lower surface temperatures compared to areas dominated by built infrastructure (Sridhar & Kulkarni, 2024).

Municipal administrations can also encourage the adoption of climate-responsive architecture and sustainable building practices. Building regulations can promote the use of reflective roofing materials, energy-efficient construction techniques, and green roofs. Such measures reduce heat absorption in buildings and contribute to improved urban microclimates.

In addition to infrastructure planning, local administrations are responsible for environmental monitoring and data collection. Establishing urban climate monitoring systems enables authorities to track temperature patterns and identify high-risk zones within cities. These data can support evidence-based policymaking and facilitate targeted interventions in areas experiencing severe heat stress (Saikia et al., 2024).

Local governments also play an important role in community engagement and awareness building. Public participation is essential for successful environmental initiatives such as tree plantation drives, waste management programs, and energy conservation campaigns. By encouraging citizens to participate in sustainable practices, municipal authorities can strengthen community resilience to climate-related challenges.

Finally, local administrations can collaborate with academic institutions, environmental organizations, and research agencies to develop innovative climate adaptation strategies. Partnerships between government bodies and research institutions can help cities adopt

advanced technologies and scientific approaches to address the Urban Heat Island phenomenon more effectively.

Challenges

Despite the growing awareness of urban heat risks, local administrations encounter several obstacles while attempting to implement effective mitigation measures. These challenges arise due to institutional limitations, financial constraints, and the rapid pace of urban development. One of the primary challenges is rapid and unplanned urbanization. In many cities, population growth and economic expansion lead to uncontrolled development. As new residential and commercial areas emerge, green spaces are often replaced by buildings and roads. This unplanned expansion makes it difficult for municipal authorities to maintain environmental balance and regulate urban heat (Kikon et al., 2023).

Another significant challenge is the lack of financial resources available to urban local bodies. Many municipal corporations operate with limited budgets, which restricts their ability to implement large-scale environmental initiatives such as urban forest development, climate monitoring infrastructure, and sustainable transport systems. Without adequate funding, it becomes difficult to carry out long-term climate adaptation programs (Bharath & Rajan, 2024). Institutional coordination is also a major issue in urban environmental governance. Managing urban heat requires collaboration among several departments, including urban planning, environmental management, public health, and transportation. However, lack of coordination among these departments often results in fragmented policy implementation and delays in environmental initiatives.

Another important challenge is limited public awareness and participation. Although environmental issues such as climate change and urban heat are widely discussed, many citizens remain unaware of their long-term impacts. Lack of awareness can reduce community participation in sustainability initiatives such as tree plantation programs, rooftop gardening, and energy conservation practices (Singh & Kumar, 2023).

The shortage of reliable environmental data also poses difficulties for municipal authorities. Accurate information regarding temperature patterns, land-use changes, and environmental indicators is essential for designing effective policies. However, many cities lack advanced monitoring infrastructure and scientific resources needed to conduct comprehensive climate assessments (Saikia et al., 2024).

Finally, political and administrative pressures sometimes influence urban development decisions. Infrastructure projects and real estate developments are often prioritized for economic growth, which may lead to the neglect of environmental considerations. Balancing economic development with environmental sustainability therefore remains a major challenge for local administrations.

Conclusion

The Urban Heat Island phenomenon has emerged as a significant environmental challenge associated with rapid urbanization and infrastructure development. In rapidly growing regions such as Maharashtra, increasing urban temperatures have raised concerns regarding environmental sustainability, public health, and energy consumption patterns.

This study highlights that the intensification of urban heat islands is primarily driven by factors such as loss of vegetation, expansion of impervious surfaces, transportation emissions, and dense urban morphology. These factors collectively alter urban microclimates and contribute to rising land surface temperatures.

Local administrative institutions play a vital role in addressing these environmental challenges. Through effective urban planning, environmental regulation, and community engagement, municipal authorities can implement strategies to mitigate urban heat impacts. Initiatives such as urban greening, climate-sensitive infrastructure design, and sustainable transportation systems are essential for reducing urban temperatures.

However, local administrations face several challenges including rapid urban expansion, financial constraints, institutional coordination issues, and limited environmental data. Addressing these challenges requires stronger governance frameworks, increased investment in climate adaptation strategies, and greater public participation.

Future urban development policies should prioritize environmental sustainability and climate resilience to ensure that cities remain liveable and environmentally balanced. By integrating scientific research, technological innovation, and participatory governance mechanisms, cities can effectively manage urban heat risks and promote sustainable urban growth.

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From Reform to Agency: The Institutional Legacy of Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade in Shaping Modern Indian Womanhood.

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This research paper explores the foundational contributions of Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade toward the holistic upliftment of women in late 19th-century India. While traditional historiography often categorizes social reform as a male-driven legislative process, this study argues that Ramabai and Ranade shifted the focus toward female agency and institutional autonomy. Through a comparative analysis of *Sharda Sadan* and *Seva Sadan*, the paper examines how these reformers addressed the physical, mental, and educational vulnerabilities of women, transforming them from passive subjects of tradition into active participants in the public sphere. Pandita Ramabai's radical intellectual critique of patriarchal structures and Ramabai Ranade's pragmatic emphasis on vocational self-reliance created a multifaceted blueprint for modern Indian feminism. By tracing the trajectory from colonial-era reform to contemporary gender empowerment, the study concludes that the emotional and professional liberties enjoyed by the modern Indian woman are deeply rooted in the institutional and ideological groundwork laid by these two icons. Their work remains a critical precursor to the democratic and egalitarian ideals enshrined in the modern Indian polity.

Keywords: Pandita Ramabai, Ramabai Ranade, Social Reform Movement, Female Agency, 19th Century Maharashtra, Institutional Autonomy, Modern Indian Polity, Feminist Historiography.

The 19th century in India is often celebrated as an era of "Renaissance," yet for a significant portion of the population, it was a period of profound systemic silencing. The status of women in colonial India was defined by what historian Uma Chakravarti terms "Brahminical Patriarchy"—a rigid structure where a woman's identity was entirely subsumed by her domestic roles as a daughter, wife, or widow.¹ Rituals such as *Sati*, the prohibition of widow remarriage, and the denial of formal education were not merely social evils; they were strategic tools used to maintain a specific social and caste order. While the early phase of the Social Reform Movement, led by figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Mahadev Govind Ranade, successfully brought these issues into the legislative halls, the discourse remained largely "top-

down." Women were the *objects* of reform—discussed and debated by men—but seldom invited to speak for themselves.²

It is within this vacuum of agency that Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade emerged as transformative figures. They shifted the trajectory of Indian reform from mere legislative advocacy to **institutionalized empowerment**. Their contribution to nation-building was not limited to abstract policy; it was found in the creation of "counter-spaces" where women could exist outside the shadow of male guardianship. These pioneers were responsible for moving the "women's question" from the private household into the public political sphere.³ By addressing the **physical** (safety), **mental** (intellectual growth), and **emotional** (self-worth) needs of women, they provided a holistic blueprint for liberation.

The historical impact of their work is most evident in their demand for professional representation. Pandita Ramabai's landmark testimony before the **Hunter Commission in 1882** was a revolutionary moment in the history of Indian education; she argued that the lack of female medical doctors and teachers was a direct barrier to women's upliftment.⁴ This argument laid the foundation for gender-sensitive policy-making in India. This paper argues that the contemporary Indian woman's professional liberty, emotional resilience, and political participation are not recent gifts of globalization, but are the hard-won dividends of the institutional battles fought by Ramabai and Ranade over a century ago. They did not just reform society; they reimagined the very definition of a female citizen in the "Emerging India."⁵

3. Contribution of Pandita Ramabai

Pandita Ramabai was not merely a social reformer but a revolutionary feminist who challenged the core of "Brahminical Patriarchy." Her approach was unique because she addressed the **holistic upliftment** of women—encompassing their physical safety, mental growth, and economic independence. At a time when most social reformers were advocating limited reforms such as widow remarriage or female literacy, Ramabai emphasized structural transformation of women's status in society. Her work therefore represented a radical departure from the paternalistic reform discourse of the nineteenth century.

3.1 Radical Critique and Intellectual Agency

Ramabai's most significant intellectual contribution was her book, *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* (1887). In this text, she exposed the systemic oppression of women within Hindu tradition, particularly the plight of child widows. She argued that a woman's life was

perpetually controlled by men, stating: **"To look upon her husband as a god... to be obedient to him in all things, never to covet independence."*⁶ Through this work Ramabai brought international attention to the condition of upper-caste Hindu widows. The book was widely read in the United States and Britain and helped generate financial support for her social initiatives in India. It also placed the issue of women's oppression within a global discourse on human rights and social justice. By critiquing these norms, she advocated for "Intellectual Agency," believing that women must be the masters of their own minds before they can change society.

She argued that true reform could not be achieved merely through legislative change but required a transformation in the mindset of society. In this sense, Ramabai anticipated later feminist arguments that education and consciousness-raising are essential tools of liberation.

Her critique was particularly significant because it came from within the Brahmin community itself. As a Sanskrit scholar who had received the title "Pandita," Ramabai used her intellectual authority to challenge patriarchal interpretations of religious texts that were often used to justify women's subordination

3.2 Institutional Revolution: Sharda Sadan and Mukti Mission

Ramabai moved beyond theory to practice by establishing **Sharda Sadan (1889)** in Mumbai and later the **Mukti Mission** in Kedgaon. Unlike other charitable works of the time, these institutions were designed for **self-reliance**.

- **Physical & Mental Upliftment:** She provided a safe refuge for widows who faced physical abuse or social ostracization.
- **Educational & Vocational Training:** Women were taught not just literacy, but "male-dominated" skills like printing, carpentry, tailoring, and even agriculture.⁷ By 1900, Sharda Sadan had successfully trained eighty women to earn an honorable living as teachers and nurses.⁸ This mode of living and earning was not just respectable but made the confident to take their own decisions .

3.3 Connection to Modern India and Government Policies

The blueprint of Ramabai's work can be seen in the architecture of modern Indian welfare states. Her life's work pioneered concepts that are now central to national policies:

- **The Dufferin Fund & Health Policy:** Ramabai's testimony before the **Hunter Commission (1882)**—where she demanded women doctors for women patients—directly influenced the creation of the *Dufferin Fund* for medical aid to Indian women.⁹ This was the earliest precursor to modern schemes like the **National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)**, which focuses on female health workers (ASHAs).
- **Safe Spaces:** Her *Mukti Mission* provided the philosophical foundation for modern "One-Stop Centres" (**Sakhi**) and **Swadhar Greh** schemes, which provide shelter and support to women in distress.
- **Vocational Empowerment:** The vocational training model of *Sharda Sadan* is reflected in the current **National Skill Development Mission** and "**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**" campaign, specifically the transition from simple schooling to skill-based "employment-readiness."¹⁰

By combining intellectual critique with institutional activism, she laid the foundations for later movements advocating gender equality in India.

4. Contribution of Ramabai Ranade

If Pandita Ramabai was the radical critic of the 19th-century social order, Ramabai Ranade was its most successful **pragmatic institutional builder**. Her work represents a crucial shift in the "Emerging India" narrative—moving from individual struggle to organized social service. While many reformers of the nineteenth century focused on theoretical debates about women's rights, Ramabai Ranade translated reformist ideals into sustainable institutions that continued functioning long after their founding. Her initiatives therefore represent the transition from moral reform movements to structured social service organizations in modern India.

4.1 The Transition from Domesticity to Public Service

Ramabai Ranade's journey is a testament to the "Mental Upliftment" of the modern Indian woman. Guided by her husband, Justice M.G. Ranade, she transformed from an unlettered child bride into a leader of the women's movement. However, her true contribution emerged after her husband's death in 1901. As historian Tanika Sarkar argues, Ramabai Ranade did not merely follow her husband's shadow but "negotiated a space for women's agency within the strictures of a conservative society."¹¹ In her memoirs, *Amachya Ayushyatil Kahi Athavani*, she highlights how education was the only tool to reclaim female dignity.¹²

What makes her contribution historically significant is that she represented the first generation of Indian women who entered the public sphere without completely rejecting traditional social structures. Instead of confronting society directly, she strategically worked within its cultural boundaries, gradually expanding women's access to education and public life.

For example, she organized women-only gatherings and literacy circles where women could learn reading, writing, and public speaking without violating prevailing norms of female modesty. These gatherings eventually evolved into organized women's associations that played an important role in the early twentieth-century women's movement in India.

4.2 Seva Sadan: The Cradle of Professionalism

In 1909, she founded the **Seva Sadan Society** in Pune. This was not just a shelter; it was a revolution in "Professional Upliftment."

- **Vocational Breakthrough:** Seva Sadan became the first institution in Western India to train women in **Nursing and Medical studies**. At a time when nursing was stigmatized, Ramabai Ranade worked to make it a respectable profession for Indian women.¹³
- **Public Participation:** Through the *Bharat Mahila Parishad*, she encouraged women to step out of their homes and participate in public debates and social service. This was the beginning of what we now call the "Public Agency" of Indian women.

4.3 Inspiration for Modern India and Government Initiatives

Ramabai Ranade's "Seva Sadan model" is the foundational pillar for several modern-day gender-centric policies in India:

- **Professional Nursing & Healthcare:** The professionalization of nursing in India owes its origin to her efforts. This is directly reflected in the **National Nursing and Midwifery Commission** goals and the modern emphasis on **ANM/GNM training** under the Ministry of Health.¹⁴
- **SHG and Vocational Training:** Her focus on making women "economically self-reliant" (*Atmanirbhar*) through small-scale vocational training is the spiritual predecessor to the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods**

Mission (DAY-NRLM) and the massive network of **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** across India today.¹⁵

- **Adult Literacy:** The evening classes and adult education programs she started are mirrored in current government initiatives like "**Saakshar Bharat**" and the **New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**.¹⁶

4.4 Historians' Perspectives and Personal Argument

Historians like **Geraldine Forbes** view Ramabai Ranade as the "bridge between traditional reform and modern social work." Unlike the radical friction often associated with Pandita Ramabai, Ramabai Ranade used "reform from within" to slowly expand the boundaries of what society allowed women to do.¹⁷ Her efforts contributed to the emergence of a new social identity for women in modern India—one that combined education, professional work, and social service. This model of socially responsible professionalism continues to influence contemporary discourses on women's empowerment in Indi

In my opinion, Ramabai Ranade's greatest legacy is the **normalization of the working woman**. She proved that a woman could be a "Sevika" (social servant) and a professional without losing her social standing. Every Indian woman today who balances a professional career with social responsibility is, in essence, an heir to the path cleared by Ramabai Ranade.

5. Two Paths to a Common Goal

To understand the full impact of these two reformers, one must analyze their methodologies through the lens of **Radicalism vs. Pragmatism**. While both women were contemporaries in the 19th-century Maharashtrian reform circuit, their strategic choices for women's upliftment differed significantly based on their personal ideologies and social positioning.

Aspect	Pandita Ramabai	Ramabai Ranade
Ideological Base	Radical critique of religious patriarchy; outside the Hindu fold.	Reform from within; working within the socio-religious framework.
Primary Focus	The marginalized widow and the "outcast" woman.	Vocational education and middle-class female professionalism.

Aspect	Pandita Ramabai	Ramabai Ranade
Institutional Tone	Individualistic and revolutionary.	Collective and service-oriented (<i>Sevika</i>).
Strategy	Disruption: Challenging the Shastras and state neglect directly.	Negotiation: Creating "Safe Spaces" that society would tolerate.

5.2 Analysis: The Radical and the Reformer

As historian **Uma Chakravarti** points out, Pandita Ramabai's choice to convert to Christianity and her blistering critique in *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* made her a "renegade" in the eyes of the orthodox Pune elite.¹⁸ Her work at *Mukti Mission* was an act of defiance—creating a self-sustaining "women's republic" that did not depend on male approval. This "Radical" approach was essential because it forced the society of that time to confront the darkest aspects of patriarchy that men refused to discuss.

In contrast, Ramabai Ranade adopted a "Pragmatic" approach. By founding *Seva Sadan*, she did not seek to burn the social bridge but to widen it so more women could cross. **Meera Kosambi** notes that Ranade's brilliance lay in her ability to frame nursing and teaching as "extensions of domestic care," which allowed conservative families to let their daughters enter the workforce.¹⁹ If Pandita Ramabai broke the doors down, Ramabai Ranade built the stairs that allowed thousands of women to climb into the professional world.

5.3 Common Ground: The Blueprint for Autonomy

Despite their different paths, both women converged on the most critical aspect of modern upliftment: **Financial and Intellectual Independence**. Both recognized that a woman without her own income is a woman without a voice. Whether it was the carpentry shops of *Mukti Mission* or the nursing wards of *Seva Sadan*, the end goal was the creation of an "Atmanirbhar" (self-reliant) woman. In the context of "Emerging India," this duality is still visible—we need both the radical activists who challenge the law and the institutional builders who implement social change on the ground.

6. Contribution to Modern India: From Reform to Rights

The legacy of Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade is not a closed chapter of history; rather, it is the living foundation upon which the **modern Indian female identity** is built. Their work transitioned the "women's question" from a matter of religious charity to a matter of **political and constitutional rights**.

6.1 The Genesis of Female Citizenship and the Constitution

The most significant contribution of these reformers to modern India is the shift toward **legal agency**. Pandita Ramabai's refusal to submit to the "Shastric" laws and her insistence on a woman's right to her own conscience directly prefigured the **Articles 14 (Equality before Law) and 15 (Prohibition of Discrimination)** of the Indian Constitution.²⁰ Historians argue that the suffrage movement in India, led by the Women's Indian Association (WIA) in 1917, was only possible because Ramabai and Ranade had already spent decades proving that women were capable of managing public institutions.

In "Emerging India," when we discuss the **Women's Reservation Bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023)**, we are seeing the final fruition of a seed planted by Ramabai Ranade when she organized the first clusters of women to speak at political conferences. She moved the Indian woman from the *Zenana* (private quarters) to the *Sabha* (public assembly).²¹

6.2 Professionalization and Economic Empowerment

The modern Indian woman's presence in the workforce—particularly in the healthcare and education sectors—is a direct result of the **institutional normalization** carried out by the *Sadans*.

- **The "Frontline Worker" Legacy:** Today's **ASHA workers** and **Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs)**, who form the backbone of India's rural healthcare, are modern-day iterations of the "Sevikas" trained by Ramabai Ranade. Her success in making nursing a respectable profession for upper-caste and middle-class women broke a thousand-year-old taboo regarding "touch" and "service."²²
- **Entrepreneurship and Skill India:** The self-sustaining model of the *Mukti Mission*—where women learned printing, weaving, and agriculture—is the historical blueprint for the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM)**. Modern India's push for **Women-**

led Development is an echo of Ramabai's insistence that a woman cannot be free until she owns the means of her own production.²³

6.3 Societal and Emotional Resilience

Beyond laws and jobs, their greatest contribution is the **psychological upliftment** of the Indian woman. By creating safe spaces, they taught women that their value was not tied to their relationship with a man (as a wife or daughter) but was inherent in their personhood. This "Feminist Consciousness" is what allows a modern Indian woman to seek legal recourse under the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)** or the **POSH Act (2013)**.²⁴ They provided the first examples of "Sisterhood" as a political and social tool, which has evolved into the millions of **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** that drive the rural Indian economy today.

6.4 The Unfinished Revolution

In my opinion, while India has emerged as a global power, the "Emerging India" of our dreams remains incomplete without a full return to the radical honesty of Pandita Ramabai and the patient institution-building of Ramabai Ranade. They taught us that social reform is not a one-time event but a continuous process of reclaiming space. Every time a woman in India chooses her education over an early marriage, or her career over social pressure, she is exercising the "Agency" that these two women fought to define.

7.From Agency to Equality: Final Reflections

The historical trajectory of "Emerging India" is inseparable from the ideological and institutional legacies of Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade. Their lives were not merely parallel narratives of 19th-century social work; they were the primary catalysts for a fundamental shift in the Indian social and political consciousness. By moving beyond the "top-down" male-led reform, they proved that for India to truly emerge as a modern nation, the Indian woman had to transition from being a silent object of pity to a vocal agent of change.

Pandita Ramabai's radical intellectualism challenged the structural roots of gender inequality, while Ramabai Ranade's pragmatic institution-building provided the practical machinery for female empowerment. Together, they addressed the holistic needs of women—providing physical safety through their *Sadans*, mental growth through secular education, and economic

dignity through vocational training. Their work dismantled the myth that women were incapable of public leadership or professional excellence.

In the contemporary context, the fruits of their labor are visible in every sphere of Indian life, from the legislative protections of the Constitution to the professional success of Indian women in medicine, education, and governance. As this paper has argued, the "Modern Indian Woman" is not a product of the 21st century alone but is the spiritual and professional descendant of these two pioneers. To study the contributions of Ramabai and Ranade is to study the birth of Indian democracy from the perspective of the marginalized. Their legacy remains a guiding light for the ongoing journey toward a truly egalitarian and inclusive Emerging India.

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Negotiating Tradition and Modernity in the Transformation of Social Stratification

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Abstract

The process of social stratification has undergone significant transformation with the transition from traditional to modern societies, yet inequality persists in new forms. In traditional settings, social status and life chances were largely determined by ascribed factors such as birth, kinship, caste, and hereditary privilege. The rise of industrialization, urbanization, and democratic governance expanded opportunities for mobility based on achieved characteristics like education, occupation, and income. Despite these changes, enduring disparities suggest that tradition and modernity coexist rather than replace one another. This study examines how traditional foundations of hierarchy are renegotiated within contemporary societies, leading to hybrid patterns of stratification. It analyzes the interaction between inherited status and modern opportunities, the mechanisms through which advantages are reproduced, and the extent to which modernization promotes genuine mobility. Using a mixed methodological approach based on secondary data and sociological literature, the research identifies both continuity and change. The findings indicate that while modernization has broadened pathways for advancement, entrenched social advantages continue to shape access to resources, opportunities, and power. Modern institutions often incorporate rather than eliminate traditional inequalities, producing new forms of exclusion alongside limited inclusion. By highlighting this complex interplay between tradition and modernity, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of contemporary stratification and ongoing inequality.

Keywords: Social Stratification, Modernization, Traditional Hierarchies, Social Inequality, Social Mobility, Cultural Capital, Hybrid Stratification, Social Change

1. Introduction

The term “social stratification” refers to a structured system of inequality in which individuals and groups are arranged hierarchically according to unequal access to resources, power, prestige, and opportunities. It exists in all societies, although its form and intensity differ

across historical periods and cultural settings. In traditional societies, stratification was largely based on ascribed status—positions assigned at birth and beyond individual control. Systems such as caste, feudal estates, lineage, and kinship networks shaped a person's occupation, social standing, marriage options, and overall life chances. These hierarchies were reinforced by religious doctrines, customary laws, and ideas of honor, purity, and hereditary entitlement, leaving little room for upward mobility.

The rise of modernization—characterized by industrialization, urban growth, market expansion, mass education, and democratic governance—brought profound social change. Modern institutions emphasized individual achievement, rational organization, and legal equality, seemingly weakening inherited status. Education became a major route to occupational advancement, markets rewarded skills and productivity, and democratic systems promoted equal citizenship. As a result, stratification was expected to shift from ascribed to achieved status, producing class systems based mainly on economic position. Yet, in practice, traditional hierarchies have not vanished; instead, they have been reshaped and absorbed into modern institutional structures.

Although modernization expanded opportunities, significant inequalities in wealth, status, and power remain, indicating that inherited advantages still matter. Traditional privilege often adapts to new contexts, allowing dominant groups to retain influence. Understanding how tradition and modernity interact is therefore crucial for explaining the persistence and transformation of inequality in contemporary societies.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Classical Perspectives

The classical sociological theories are the main source of understanding about stratification in society. Marx has explained inequality in terms of class differences in relation to ownership of the means of production. He has also argued that in a capitalist society, people are divided into those who own the means of production and those who sell their labor (Marx). Max Weber has also added to this theory by arguing that stratification in a society is multidimensional in nature, i.e., it is based on class, status, and power (Weber 926). The functionalist approach to understanding inequality has also suggested that there is a purpose to inequality in a society in terms of ensuring that capable people are in positions of greater importance in a society (Davis and Moore 243).

2.2 Modernization Theory

Modernization theory argues that social change results from the transition from traditional agrarian societies to modern industrial societies that are urbanized, technologically advanced, and bureaucratized. It implies that there will be a transition from status ascribed to an individual at birth to status earned by an individual based on their own merit, education, and occupation (Parsons 3). As societies become more specialized and rationalized, opportunities for mobility are expected to rise, resulting in an open social structure. However, it has been noted that modernization may not reduce inequality.

2.3 Critiques and Alternative Approaches

Several theoretical perspectives have also questioned the linear nature of the ideas of the modernization theory. Dependency theory, for instance, posits that the world's economic systems perpetuate inequality by maintaining the unequal relationship between developed and developing regions of the world (Frank 18). On the other hand, the idea of multiple modernities proposes that the process of modernization takes different paths, as influenced by culture and history, to enable the coexistence of traditional and modern social structures (Eisenstadt 2). Reflexive modernization highlights the unintended consequences of modernization, as they create new inequalities (Beck et al. 5).

3. Review of Literature

Max Weber's research on traditional societies used the term 'status groups' to indicate how hierarchy was influenced by factors other than economic differences, such as honor, prestige, and hereditary privilege (Weber 932). Louis Dumont's research on Indian caste systems also indicated that traditional societies were characterized by inequality rooted in religious beliefs about purity and pollution (Dumont 66).

Karl Marx's research on the development of industrial capitalism indicated how economic systems shape social relations to produce class conflict between bourgeoisie and proletariat, replacing traditional hierarchy with class exploitation (Marx). Goldthorpe's research on modern societies indicated how modernization had produced complex class structures with a growing middle class in industrial societies (Goldthorpe 41).

Pierre Bourdieu's research on modern societies indicated how inequality is reproduced through cultural, social, and symbolic capital to allow traditional elites to maintain their

positions in modern societies, even in egalitarian institutions such as education (Bourdieu 244). Davis and Moore's research on stratification indicated how hierarchy is functionally necessary to reward people to take up important positions in society (Davis and Moore 243).

Contemporary perspectives on hierarchy indicate how traditional societies are being replaced by new forms of inequality. Eisenstadt's theory of multiple modernities indicated how traditional hierarchy coexists with modern societies to produce complex forms of stratification (Eisenstadt 3). Beck's theory of risk societies indicated how new forms of inequality are being produced by technological risks (Beck 22). Giddens's research on globalization indicated how new inequalities are being produced by globalization (Giddens 64).

Grusky's research synthesizes all perspectives to indicate how modern societies are characterized by subtle forms of hierarchy in terms of class, race, and gender (Grusky 5).

4. Research Gap

There is already a great deal of research done on traditional hierarchy, industrial class formation, and modern inequality. Yet, many of these studies tend to focus on these periods in isolation from one another. Many assume a linear progression from tradition to modernity. There is less research done on how tradition actively adapts within modernity to produce new forms of hybridized hierarchy. This research will attempt to fill this theoretical gap by focusing on the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in terms of its implications for social mobility.

5. Dynamics of Contemporary Social Stratification

5.1 Persistence of Traditional Hierarchies

The results suggest that conventional hierarchies continue to affect interpersonal relationships, even in the context of modernization. Family background, kinship relationships, caste or lineage, and status acquired by birth are factors that continue to affect opportunities, marital relationships, and leadership positions in society. The empirical results suggest that those belonging to traditionally dominant groups are overrepresented in positions of power, whereas those belonging to marginalized groups are hindered by structural factors. The cases illustrate that social norms may perpetuate hierarchies, even in the face of formal equality.

5.2 Role of Education and Occupation

Education is seen as an important route to mobility; however, access to quality education varies. Statistics reveal that those from advantageous positions are more likely to

access prestigious educational institutions and high-status occupations. Occupational hierarchies also reveal stratification in terms of access to professional and managerial positions by those with economic and cultural capital. From the interview results, it is revealed that educational qualifications are not sufficient to ensure equal chances in life because of the importance of social networks in facilitating career progression.

5.3 Economic Transformation and Inequality

The economic growth and the expansion of the markets have brought new opportunities, but they have also increased income inequality. Some people have taken advantage of the opportunities presented by entrepreneurship, the technology sector, and the service sector, but others remain trapped in low-paying or precarious jobs. Statistical tables show the rising levels of wealth inequality and the persistent levels of poverty for vulnerable populations. This implies that the economy simply redistributes inequality rather than eliminating it.

5.4 Social Mobility Patterns

The patterns of mobility show both progress and limitations. While upward mobility is possible, for instance, through education and migration, it is not evenly distributed. Intergenerational data show that children from privileged backgrounds are more likely to maintain or enhance their position, while those from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to face mobility hurdles. Similarly, downward mobility for the lower-income groups during economic instability can be noted.

5.5 Urban vs Rural Differences

Urban areas, for instance, enjoy better access to educational and employment opportunities, hence a relatively higher level of mobility. However, there is a significant level of inequality within urban areas. On the other hand, rural areas have a high level of persistence of traditional social structures and limited economic diversification. Comparative analysis indicates a spatial inequality of modernization, thereby generating a stratification effect.

5.6 Emergence of New Elites

The research also highlights the emergence of new elites, comprising professionals, entrepreneurs, technocrats, and political elites whose social status is based on educational qualifications, wealth, and power, and not on traditional hereditary grounds. However, the

majority of the new elite still hail from privileged backgrounds, thus showing that nothing really changes.

5.7 Cultural Legitimization of Inequality

Cultural beliefs, values, and discourses are an important factor in the normalization of inequality. The findings of the interviews indicate that both the privileged and the underprivileged may accept the existing inequality as natural or justified, thereby not resisting inequality. This cultural normalization of inequality is an important factor in the persistence of inequality even in the face of social change.

The findings of the interviews indicate that the process of modernization has resulted in the development of complex forms of inequality in which traditional inequality coexists with new forms of economic inequality. The findings indicate that the process of modernization has not resulted in the replacement of traditional inequality by modern inequality, as suggested in the theory of modernization, but rather in the coexistence of both traditional and modern inequality in complex forms.

6. Continuity and Transformation of Social Stratification in the Context of Modernization

The results confirm the major theories of stratification and modernization. From a Marxian perspective, the results show that inequality persists as a function of continued structural divisions in access to resources. Weberian theory is also supported by the results, as the continued significance of status and power, in addition to class, is demonstrated. Bourdieu's theory, in terms of cultural and social capital, is also supported by the results, as access to education plays a significant role in inequality. Prior research has also demonstrated that in terms of the broader debate on modernization, traditional inequalities are transformed by modernization, creating hybrid forms of inequality where old and new inequalities exist side by side.

In terms of the broader debate on modernization, the results demonstrate that traditional inequalities are transformed by modernization, creating a system where old and new inequalities exist side by side. Economic growth, urbanization, and education have provided new opportunities for mobility, but at the same time, traditional inequalities based on access to resources, combined with cultural perceptions of meritocracy, have continued to have an impact. A key contradiction in the debate on inequality and development is that, in creating new opportunities, social inequality may also be reproduced, possibly at an even greater level.

7. Implications

7.1 Social Implications

The findings indicate that persistent and emerging inequalities shape everyday social relations, opportunities, and life chances. Continued influence of traditional hierarchies alongside modern economic divisions can lead to social fragmentation, limited social cohesion, and reduced trust between groups. Unequal access to education, employment, and resources may reinforce cycles of disadvantage, affecting family well-being, community participation, and overall quality of life.

7.2 Policy Implications

The study underscores the need for policies that address structural barriers rather than relying solely on formal equality. Targeted interventions in education, employment generation, social protection, and regional development are essential to reduce disparities. Policies should also ensure fair access to quality public services and promote inclusive growth so that benefits of modernization are more evenly distributed.

7.3 Implications for Equality and Social Justice

To achieve true equality and social justice, there is a need to tackle the effects of structural inequalities and cultural attitudes of hierarchy. Therefore, there would be a need to promote equal opportunities, tackle discrimination, and promote the role of rights-based institutions. There would also be a need to ensure the positive effects of inclusive development, especially to the disadvantaged and to create conditions for social mobility.

8. Conclusion

This study looked at the transformation of social stratification with the ongoing process of modernization. It found that inequality persists in complex forms. The main findings are that the traditional hierarchies of birth, family background, and status continue to affect access to education, work, and power, although new opportunities are created with modernization. Inequality persists in complex forms with modernization. Although modernization has created new opportunities for mobility, these opportunities are not distributed equitably, which has enabled the dominant groups to retain their position with their economic, cultural, and social resources.

This study contributes to sociological knowledge by showing that continuity and change coexist with modernization. Stratification does not disappear; it changes. It does not

change linearly from ascribed to achieved status; rather, we have hybrid forms of stratification today, where the modern and the traditional intersect. Stratification changes in its mechanisms but reproduces itself in its outcomes. It will be important to conduct longitudinal studies, comparative studies across regions, and the impact of globalization and technological changes to understand inequality in the future.

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Constitutional Challenges in Implementing One Nation, One Election in India Under the Constitution of India

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Abstract

The idea of One Nation, One Election in India refers to conducting elections for the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies at the same time. The proposal has received increasing attention in recent years as a way to reduce the frequent cycle of elections and the high expenditure associated with them. Supporters argue that simultaneous elections can help governments focus more on development and policy implementation rather than continuous campaigning. However, the implementation of this system raises several constitutional challenges under the Constitution of India. The Constitution provides separate terms and procedures for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies and therefore synchronizing their election schedules would require significant constitutional amendments. Another challenge arises when a government loses its majority before completing its term, which may lead to early dissolution and disturb the fixed election cycle. India's federal structure also makes the issue complex because states have their own political and constitutional autonomy. In this context, the proposal for One Nation, One Election requires careful examination of constitutional provisions, political consensus and institutional readiness before it can be implemented effectively.

Keywords: One Nation One Election, Indian Constitution, Electoral Reforms, Constitutional Amendments, Federalism in India, Lok Sabha and State Elections, Democratic Governance.

Introduction

India is known as the largest democratic country in the world, where elections are an essential part of the political system. The Constitution of India provides the legal framework for conducting elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies. After independence, elections in India were initially conducted simultaneously for both the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies. However, due to the dissolution of some assemblies and political changes over time, the election cycle became different for the Centre and the States. As a result, elections are now held at different times in various parts of the country. Frequent elections require significant financial resources, administrative arrangements, and security forces, which often affect the smooth functioning of government activities.

In this context, the idea of One Nation, One Election has been discussed as a possible electoral reform in India. The proposal suggests that elections for the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies should be conducted at the same time. It is believed that simultaneous elections could reduce election expenditure, save public resources, and allow governments to concentrate more on governance and development work. At the same time, the implementation of this proposal raises several constitutional and practical issues. The Constitution provides separate terms for different legislatures, and situations such as the fall of governments or early

dissolution of assemblies can disturb the election schedule. Therefore, the idea of One Nation, One Election needs careful examination in the context of constitutional provisions and India's federal system. This research paper explores the constitutional challenges involved in implementing One Nation, One Election in India and examines its implications for the democratic and federal structure of the country.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the concept and evolution of One Nation, One Election in India.
2. To analyze the constitutional provisions related to elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies under the Constitution of India.
3. To identify the major constitutional challenges involved in implementing One Nation, One Election in India.
4. To evaluate the impact of One Nation, One Election on India's federal structure and democratic governance.

Literature Review

B. R. Ambedkar (1949) highlighted the importance of stability and flexibility in the parliamentary system while discussing the framework of the Constitution of India. He emphasized that democratic institutions must remain accountable to the legislature and should allow provisions such as the dissolution of legislatures when necessary. His ideas are important in understanding the constitutional balance between stability and democratic processes.

The Law Commission of India (1999) examined the possibility of conducting simultaneous elections in its report on electoral reforms. The Commission observed that such a system could reduce election expenditure and administrative burden. However, it also noted that several constitutional amendments would be required to synchronize the election cycles of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

The Election Commission of India (2015) discussed the feasibility of simultaneous elections and stated that the idea could improve the efficiency of the electoral process. At the same time, the Commission emphasized the need for adequate resources, legal reforms, and administrative preparation before implementing such a system.

The NITI Aayog (2017) analyzed the concept of One Nation, One Election in relation to governance reforms. According to the report, frequent elections interrupt policy implementation and create administrative difficulties due to repeated enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct.

The Law Commission of India (2018) further examined the constitutional challenges associated with simultaneous elections. It highlighted that several constitutional provisions related to the tenure and dissolution of legislatures would need to be amended and that broad political consensus would be necessary.

Subhash C. Kashyap (2019) discussed the advantages and limitations of simultaneous elections from a constitutional perspective. He pointed out that while the proposal could reduce costs

and administrative pressure, it is important to protect the federal structure and democratic principles of the Constitution.

Research Methodology

This study uses a descriptive and analytical research methodology to examine the constitutional challenges involved in implementing the concept of One Nation, One Election in India. The descriptive method helps in explaining the concept, background, and development of simultaneous elections within the Indian electoral system. It provides an understanding of the existing election process and the constitutional provisions related to the tenure and functioning of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. The analytical method is used to critically examine the constitutional and institutional challenges that may arise in the implementation of this proposal. The study mainly relies on secondary sources of data such as books, academic journals, research papers, government reports, committee recommendations, newspapers, and reliable online sources. These sources help in understanding different viewpoints and discussions related to electoral reforms in India. Through the use of descriptive explanation and analytical evaluation, the study aims to present a clear understanding of the constitutional issues and the broader implications of implementing One Nation, One Election within the framework of the Constitution of India.

1. Meaning and Background of One Nation, One Election

The idea of One Nation, One Election refers to conducting elections for the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies at the same time across the country. Under this system, voters would elect representatives for both the central and state governments during the same election period. In recent years, this proposal has received significant attention in discussions related to electoral reforms in India. Supporters believe that such a system could simplify the electoral process and reduce the frequency of elections.

In the early years after independence, India followed a similar pattern of simultaneous elections. The first few general elections held in 1951–52, 1957, 1962 and 1967 were conducted for both the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies at the same time. However, due to political instability and the early dissolution of some legislative bodies, this cycle was disrupted. As a result, elections began to take place at different times in various states, leading to the present system where elections occur frequently throughout the country.

2. Constitutional Framework for Elections in India

The Constitution of India provides the legal framework for the conduct of elections and the functioning of legislative bodies. Article 83 of the Constitution states that the Lok Sabha normally has a term of five years unless it is dissolved earlier. Similarly, Article 172 provides that State Legislative Assemblies also have a tenure of five years unless dissolved before the completion of their term. These provisions ensure that elections are conducted periodically to maintain democratic governance.

At the same time, the Constitution allows flexibility in situations where governments lose their majority in the legislature. In such circumstances, the Lok Sabha or a State Assembly may be dissolved before the completion of its full term. Another important provision is Article 356, which allows the imposition of President's Rule in a state when the constitutional machinery fails. These provisions are important for maintaining constitutional order, but they also make it difficult to maintain a synchronized election schedule across the country.

3. Constitutional Challenges

One of the major challenges in implementing One Nation, One Election is the requirement of constitutional amendments. Since the Constitution currently provides separate terms for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, several constitutional provisions would need to be modified in order to synchronize their election cycles. Such amendments would require approval by Parliament and in some cases, ratification by the states.

Another challenge arises when a government loses its majority before completing its term. In parliamentary democracies, governments may fall due to political changes or lack of support in the legislature. When this happens, the assembly may be dissolved and fresh elections must be held. These situations could disturb the schedule of simultaneous elections and create difficulties in maintaining a fixed election cycle.

4. Administrative and Logistical Challenges

The implementation of simultaneous elections would also involve several administrative and logistical challenges. Conducting elections for the entire country at the same time would require extensive preparation by the Election Commission of India. A large number of electronic voting machines, polling stations and trained election officials would be needed to manage the electoral process smoothly.

Security arrangements are another important factor. Elections in India require the deployment of police forces and other security personnel to ensure peaceful voting. Organizing simultaneous elections across the country would require a significant number of security forces at the same time. Therefore, careful planning and coordination among different administrative agencies would be necessary to successfully implement this system.

5. Possible Advantages of One Nation, One Election

Supporters of One Nation, One Election argue that the system could reduce the financial burden associated with frequent elections. Elections in India require considerable expenditure from the government as well as from political parties. Conducting elections simultaneously could help reduce these costs and make the electoral process more efficient.

Another advantage is related to governance and policy implementation. Frequent elections often lead to the repeated enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, which restricts the announcement of new policies and development programs. If elections are conducted at the same time, governments may have more time to focus on governance and long-term development activities without constant election-related interruptions.

Conclusion

The concept of One Nation, One Election has become an important subject in discussions on electoral reforms in India. The proposal aims to conduct elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies simultaneously in order to reduce election expenditure, improve administrative efficiency, and allow governments to focus more effectively on governance and development. The idea is not entirely new, as India followed a similar system in the early years after independence.

However, the implementation of this proposal involves several constitutional and practical challenges. The Constitution currently provides separate terms and provisions for different legislatures, and situations such as early dissolution of assemblies or political instability can disturb the election cycle. Therefore, before implementing such a system, it is necessary to carefully examine constitutional provisions, ensure political consensus, and make adequate administrative preparations so that democratic principles and the federal structure of the country are preserved.

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Role of Gandhian Institutions in Social Transformation through Education and Health Care

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Abstract

As a social reformist, Mahatma Gandhi believed that the progress of society depends on moral development, education and good health. He claimed that social transformation could not be achieved only through political change and it required the active participation of people in constructive activities that improve human life. Education and health care were two important pillars of Gandhi's vision for building a just and humane society. Through various institutions established during his lifetime and those founded after his death, Gandhian principles have continued to influence social development in India and across the world.

The objective of this research paper is to examine the role of Gandhian institutions in bringing social transformation through education and health care. Gandhi established institutions such as Sabarmati Ashram, Sevagram Ashram, Gujarat Vidyapith and the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust to promote value-based education, community welfare, and rural development. These institutions emphasized character building, self-reliance, dignity of labour, and service to society. Gandhi also advocated preventive health care based on cleanliness, balanced diet, simple living and public awareness about sanitation.

After Gandhi's death, many institutions continued to work in promoting ethical education, community health and social justice accordance with his ideals. Organizations such as Sarva Seva Sangh, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Adim Jati Sevak Sangh, Mahatma Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission have contributed significantly to education, rural welfare, and health care. Institutions like Anandvan, SEARCH and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences demonstrate how Gandhian values can be applied to modern social problems. Their work shows that the integration of moral values with education and health services can lead to meaningful and sustainable social transformation.

The paper also discusses the influence of Gandhian ideals on international organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and the World Health Organization. These institutions promote peace, education and public health in ways that reflect many of Gandhi's principles.

Keywords: Gandhian institutions, social transformation, education, health care, nonviolence, rural development

Hypotheses

1. Gandhian institutions contribute significantly to social transformation by combining value-based education with community-oriented health care.
2. Institutions established after Gandhi's death have successfully adapted Gandhian principles to modern challenges in education, rural development, and health services.
3. The objectives and programs of global organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, WHO etc., reflect important elements of Gandhian philosophy.

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi is remembered not only as the leader of India's freedom struggle but also as a visionary thinker who emphasized moral and social transformation. Gandhi believed that political independence would have little value without social reform and ethical development. According to him, society could progress only when individuals developed character, discipline, and a spirit of service.¹

Education and health were central to Gandhi's vision of social reconstruction. He argued that true education must develop the complete personality of an individual. Gandhi explained this idea in clear terms when he wrote, "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit."² It reflects Gandhi's belief that education should go beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and should aim at character formation and social responsibility.

Gandhi also placed great importance on health and hygiene. He believed that the health of society depends largely on cleanliness, balanced diet, and disciplined living. In his writings on health, Gandhi advised people to adopt simple living and preventive health practices.³

To put these ideas into practice, Gandhi established several institutions that worked for education, rural development, and public health. These institutions became centres for social transformation and inspired many organizations in India and abroad. This research paper

examines the contribution of these Gandhian institutions in promoting education and health care for social change.

Gandhi's Vision of Social Transformation

Gandhi believed that true social change must begin with individual transformation. According to him, society cannot achieve peace and justice unless individuals practice truth and nonviolence in their daily lives.⁴

He therefore promoted constructive work as a means of social reform. Gandhi's constructive programme included activities such as basic education, village sanitation, promotion of khadi, removal of untouchability, empowerment of women and rural health care. Gandhi also stressed the need for service-oriented medical work. "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."⁵

Education was a key element of this programme. Gandhi developed the concept of Basic Education or Nai Talim, which combined intellectual learning with productive work. This approach aimed to remove the gap between manual labour and intellectual activity.

Similarly, Gandhi emphasized preventive health care. He believed that many diseases could be prevented through cleanliness, proper diet and physical activity. These ideas were implemented in the institutions he founded.

Gandhi's Concept of the Ideal Village

India lives in its villages.⁶ Gandhi believed that India's future depended on the development of self-reliant villages. He described the ideal village as a community where people cooperate with one another, maintain cleanliness, produce their own food and clothing, and participate in democratic decision-making. He quoted "My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants."⁷ In such villages, education would be closely linked with agriculture and local industries. Health care would focus on sanitation, nutrition, and preventive medicine.

Gandhi also encouraged the development of cooperative institutions such as cooperative farming, credit societies, and village industries. These institutions were meant to promote economic self-reliance and social harmony.

Institutions Established by Gandhi

One of the earliest institutions founded by Gandhi was Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad in 1917. The ashram served as a centre for spiritual discipline, social service and education. The

residents followed principles of simplicity, equality and manual labour. The ashram also organized programs for literacy, sanitation and rural development.⁸

Another important institution established by Gandhi was Sevagram Ashram in Wardha in 1936. Sevagram became a centre for Gandhian constructive work and rural experiments. It promoted village education, sanitation, and economic self-reliance.

Gujarat Vidyapith, founded by Gandhi in 1920, aimed to provide national education based on Indian values and social responsibility. The university encouraged students to participate in rural development programs and community service.

The Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust was established in 1945 in memory of Kasturba Gandhi. The trust focuses on rural women's education, maternal health, and community welfare.

Sevagram Ashram

Sevagram Ashram represents one of the most important examples of Gandhian constructive work. Gandhi moved to Sevagram in 1936 and used the village as a centre for implementing his ideas of rural development.

Education in Sevagram followed the principles of Nai Talim. Students were encouraged to learn through productive work such as spinning, agriculture, and handicrafts. This method aimed to develop self-reliance and respect for labour. Sevagram also became a centre for rural health initiatives. Villagers were encouraged to maintain sanitation and adopt healthy practices. Gandhi personally participated in cleaning activities to demonstrate the importance of hygiene. In later years, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences was established near Sevagram. This institution trains doctors to work in rural areas and emphasizes community health and preventive medicine.⁹ Gandhi's work at Sevagram represented a practical model of village development. B. R. Nanda observed that Gandhi's constructive programs were aimed at building self-reliant communities where education and social service were closely linked.

Sarva Seva Sangh and Gandhian Constructive Work

Sarva Seva Sangh was established in 1948 to coordinate Gandhian constructive activities in India. The organization promotes rural development, education, and nonviolent social change. It organizes training programs for social workers and supports grassroots movements working for social justice and community welfare. Sarva Seva Sangh also publishes literature on Gandhian philosophy and encourages youth participation in social service. Through its

activities, the organization continues to spread Gandhi's message of truth, nonviolence, and service.

Gandhi Peace Foundation

The Gandhi Peace Foundation was established in 1958 in New Delhi to promote research and education on Gandhian philosophy. The foundation conducts seminars, workshops, and training programs related to peace studies and social development.

It also publishes books and journals on Gandhian thought. Through educational activities, the foundation encourages dialogue, tolerance and nonviolent conflict resolution. Joan Bondurant have pointed out that Gandhian philosophy provides an effective framework for understanding peaceful methods of social change.¹⁰

Adim Jati Sevak Sangh and Tribal Welfare

Adim Jati Sevak Sangh was founded in 1948 by Thakkar Bappa to work for the welfare of tribal communities. Inspired by Gandhian ideals, the organization focuses on education, health care, and economic development among tribal populations.

Adim Jati Sevak Sangh runs schools, hostels, and health centres in tribal areas. It also organizes awareness programs on sanitation, nutrition, and preventive health care. These initiatives have helped improve living conditions in many remote regions.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) was established in 1956 to promote rural industries and employment. The institution reflects Gandhi's vision of self-reliant villages and decentralized economic development.

KVIC provides training and financial support for rural entrepreneurs. By generating employment and income, it helps improve the standard of living in rural areas. Such initiatives contribute indirectly to better education and health conditions in villages.

Mahatma Gandhi Smarak Nidhi

Mahatma Gandhi Smarak Nidhi was established in 1949 to continue Gandhi's constructive work after his death. The organization supports programs related to rural education, sanitation, and social harmony.¹² It also provides assistance to voluntary organizations working for community welfare. Through educational campaigns and training programs, the Smarak Nidhi promotes Gandhian values among youth and social workers.

Anandwan

Anandwan, founded by Baba Amte in Maharashtra, represents a remarkable example of Gandhian humanitarian work. Established in 1949, the institution was created to rehabilitate people suffering from leprosy who were often rejected by society.

Inspired by Gandhian values of compassion and dignity of labour, Baba Amte developed Anandwan into a self-reliant community. The institution provides medical care, education, and vocational training for its residents. Residents participate in agriculture, small industries and educational activities. The community demonstrates how marginalized individuals can rebuild their lives through collective effort and self-confidence.

According to Vikas Amte, Anandwan emphasizes empowerment rather than charity. Gandhian institutions like Anandwan represent living examples of ethical social transformation.¹³

SEARCH, Gadchiroli

An important contemporary example of Gandhian influence in rural health care is the work of the Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH) in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. Gadchiroli is one of the most underdeveloped and tribal-dominated districts in India, where health facilities were historically limited and infant mortality rates were very high. The organization was founded in 1986 by Dr. Abhay Bang and Dr. Rani Bang, who were deeply influenced by Gandhian ideals of service, simplicity, and community participation. SEARCH initiated the Home-Based New born Care (HBNC) model, developed through field research in tribal villages. In this model, trained village health workers visit homes, educate mothers about infant care, and provide basic medical support for newborns.¹⁴ This simple but effective intervention significantly reduced infant mortality in rural areas and has been adopted by the Government of India as part of national health policy. SEARCH also conducts research and awareness campaigns on issues such as alcohol addiction, malaria, tuberculosis, and reproductive health.¹⁵ These programs emphasize preventive health care, community education and local participation, which are central principles of Gandhian public health philosophy.

Gandhian Ideas and the National Education Policy 2020

Gandhi in Nai Talim explains that education should integrate **hand, head, and heart**, linking learning with productive work and moral development, which is parallel to NEP's vision. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 incorporates several ideas that resonate strongly with

Gandhi's educational philosophy. It emphasizes holistic education, which includes intellectual, physical, artistic and ethical development. NEP also promotes experiential learning, vocational education, and skill development.¹⁶

Another important aspect of NEP is the emphasis on mother tongue education in the early stages of learning. Gandhi strongly supported the use of Indian languages in education because he believed that students learn best in their native language. The policy also encourages community engagement and service learning, which reflect Gandhian ideals of social responsibility and national development.

Rural Health Care and National Disease Control Programmes

Independent India has launched several national health programs that reflect Gandhi's emphasis on preventive health care and community participation. The National Malaria Eradication Programme, launched in 1953, aimed to control malaria through mosquito control, public awareness and improved sanitation. Similarly, the National Leprosy Eradication Programme has significantly reduced the prevalence of leprosy through early detection and treatment. The Kala-azar elimination programme in Bihar and other states has focused on vector control, early diagnosis, and community health education.¹⁷

The government has also launched campaigns against diseases such as typhoid, tuberculosis, and dengue. These programs emphasize public health awareness, vaccination, sanitation, and improved living conditions.

Sanitation and Hygiene: Gandhi's Vision and Modern Campaigns

Sanitation was one of Gandhi's greatest concerns. He claimed that 'Sanitation is more important than independence'¹⁸. He repeatedly emphasized that people should take personal responsibility for keeping their surroundings clean.

In modern India, the Swachh Bharat Mission, launched in 2014, reflects this Gandhian vision of cleanliness and public health. The campaign aims to eliminate open defecation, improve waste management, and promote hygienic practices. Millions of toilets have been constructed in rural areas under this program. The campaign also promotes behavioural change through education and community participation. Such initiatives demonstrate how Gandhi's ideas about sanitation and hygiene continue to influence contemporary policies.

Rural Health Infrastructure in India

In recent years, India has strengthened its rural health infrastructure through programs such as the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and Ayushman Bharat. Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs), and village health workers play an important role in delivering health services to rural populations.

The Ayushman Bharat scheme includes the establishment of Health and Wellness Centres that provide preventive health care, maternal services, and treatment for common diseases.¹⁹ These initiatives reflect Gandhi's belief that health services should reach the poorest and most remote communities.

Influence of Gandhian Ideas on Global Institutions

Gandhian philosophy has inspired many international movements and institutions. The principles of peace, cooperation, moral education, and preventive health care as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi find significant reflection in the objectives and activities of major international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), UNESCO, and the World Health Organization (WHO). These institutions promote values that resonate strongly with Gandhi's philosophy of global harmony and human welfare.

United Nations (UN)

The United Nations was established in 1945 with the primary objective of maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights and encouraging cooperation among nations. It emphasizes peaceful conflict resolution, collective security and social development, ideals that align closely with Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and universal brotherhood. In recognition of Gandhi's contribution to peace and nonviolent resistance, the UN General Assembly declared 2 October, Gandhi's birth anniversary, as the International Day of Nonviolence in 2007. Today, the United Nations has 193 member states and works through various agencies and programmes to promote sustainable development, humanitarian assistance and global peace. These efforts reflect Gandhi's belief that lasting peace can only be achieved through cooperation, justice, and respect for human dignity.²⁰

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

UNESCO was founded in 1945 with the mission of building peace through international cooperation in education, science, culture, and communication. The organization believes that

“since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”²¹ This idea resonates strongly with Gandhi’s emphasis on moral and character education. UNESCO promotes education for sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and literacy programs across more than 190 countries. Through initiatives such as the Global Education Monitoring Report and peace education programs, UNESCO encourages the development of responsible global citizens. These efforts correspond closely with Gandhi’s concept of Nai Talim, which emphasized holistic education, social responsibility, and ethical development.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization, established in 1948, is the leading international agency for global public health. Its mission is to ensure the highest attainable level of health for all people. WHO works in over 150 countries and focuses on disease prevention, universal health coverage, maternal and child health, sanitation, and public health awareness. According to WHO reports, global vaccination programs supported by the organization prevent 2–3 million deaths every year. Gandhi consistently argued that cleanliness, balanced diet, and disciplined living are essential for maintaining good health. WHO’s emphasis on public health education and preventive medicine therefore reflects many of the principles that Gandhi advocated for healthy and self-reliant communities.²²

Conclusion

Gandhian institutions have played an important role in promoting social transformation through education and health care. Gandhi believed that true progress requires moral values, social justice, and concern for the welfare of all people.

Institutions established by Gandhi, such as Sabarmati Ashram, Sevagram Ashram, and Gujarat Vidyapith created practical models of education and community service. Organizations founded after his death, including Sarva Seva Sangh, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Adim Jati Sevak Sangh, KVIC, and Mahatma Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, have continued to expand this work. Institutions like Anandwan and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences demonstrate how Gandhian principles can be applied to modern challenges such as rural health care and social rehabilitation.

The influence of Gandhian philosophy is also visible in international organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and WHO. These institutions promote peace, education, and public health in ways that reflect Gandhi's ideals.

In the contemporary world, where societies face problems such as inequality, violence and health crises, Gandhian institutions offer valuable guidance. Their emphasis on ethical education, community participation and simple living provides a meaningful path toward sustainable and peaceful social transformation.

Recommendations

- a. Educational institutions should integrate Gandhian values such as nonviolence, social service and environmental responsibility into their curricula.
- b. Governments should collaborate with Gandhian organizations to strengthen rural education and community health programs.
- c. Universities should encourage research on Gandhian institutions and their development models.
- d. International organizations should promote Gandhian methods of nonviolent conflict resolution.
- e. More voluntary organizations and NGO should adopt Gandhian principles of service and self-reliance for sustainable development.

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**Politics of Displacement and Assertion of Identity in Hansda
Sowvendra Shekhar's Narratives****Lav Chavhan****Assistant Professor, Department of English****Vasantrao Naik Government Institute of Arts and Social Sciences, Nagpur**

Abstract:

The rising side-lined communities in India produced work, which has more and more pre-empted the concerns of dislocation, identity and resistance. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar is one Adivasi author who holds a prominent spot in the contemporary literature in terms of expressing the experiences of the Santhal community as they live. His publications particularly, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* and *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey* are an investigation into the politics of displacement because of industrialization, mining, migration, and state policies. In this paper, the author will analyze how the intersection of the land alienation, the cultural marginalization, the gendered exploitation, and identity claim is reflected in the narratives by Shekhar. Through the analysis of some of the chosen texts, the study is made to argue that in the fiction by Shekhar, the displacement is not just geographical but also cultural and mental. At the same time, his characters are wiped away using memory, narration, physical announcement and solidarity within the community. The paper places the work of Shekhar in the wider narrative of subaltern and Adivasi literature, and the ways in which his stories attempt to undermine the conventional discourse and attempt to establish an indigenous knowledge based on land and communal identity.

Keywords:

Dislocation, Adivasi Literature, Identity Politics, Santhal Community, Land Alienation, Resistance, Indigenous Assertion

Introduction

Discourse of dislocation takes up an important place in both the socio-political and the literary arguments of the present-day India. Since Augustine came to power, the focus of the country on industrialization, development of infrastructures, mining and urbanization has often caused the displacement of the local population. On the one hand, development is being portrayed as a sign of national progress; on the other hand, it has created root causes of imbalances especially among Adivasi people who deeply depend on land, forest, and

community. In this regard, literature emerges as a significant platform by which realities that have been lived are to be written down, prevailing narratives are to be challenged and marginalized identities take a stance.

The displacement in the stories of Shekhar is in no way a concern of physical moving. It functions under several levels such as the territorial, economic, cultural, and the psychological. The loss of the ancestral land to mining and thermal power plant as well as other development projects is the metaphor of the loss of ancient structures of identity. Land to the indigenous community is not so much a resource but a living being preserved to the spiritual beliefs, communal memory and social structure. Once this tie is destroyed, it does not only destroy the livelihood, but also causes cultural disintegration and identity crisis. In his novels like *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* and *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey*, Shekhar brings into the lens the effect of developmental induced dislocation on the social structure of the tribal societies. Industrializing projects are also a promise of work and modernization but in most cases, the exploitation and marginalization. This projection of development by the state governments is a contrast of life on the ground as experienced by the Adivasis of being dispossessed. It is this type of contrast that reveals the asymmetrical power relations enshrined in the politics of development for which Shekhar expresses his views.

It is also possible to interpret the politics of displacement in the writing of Shekhar in the context of the wider scope of the subaltern and postcolonial studies. The Indian Adivasi's have traditionally been marginal in the discourse of the nation. Their voices have been filtered usually by anthropologists, administrators or mainstream writers. Shekhar breaks this trend by putting narrative back in her own hands and showing the Adivasi subjectivity as an insider. His narration therefore follows an epistemic resistance and punches holes over the prevailing knowledge systems that have historically suppressed aboriginal voices. The research paper aims at discussing the way in which the politics of dislocation is played out in the texts of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar and the ways in which the politics of dislocation are interweaved with the activity of asserting identity. Through the interpretation of chosen texts, the research seeks to find out how through the messages of alienation of the land, cultural marginalization, gendered experiences, and resistance, Shekhar depicts it. It claims that his fiction takes displacement not as a victimhood narrative, but as an agency narrative and a communal one.

Thus, the paper becomes part of the growing literature on the Adivasi literature and it adds to the significance of the indigenous voices in shaping the new Indian literary discourse. In his skills of great story telling, Shekhar is not only capturing the socio-political truths of his people, but he is also certifying the resiliency and greatness of the Adivasi identity in the face of dislocation systematically.

Related works

The discussion of the dislocation, identity and Adivasi assertion in India has transformed due to interdisciplinary knowledge of sociology, anthropology, political science, history and literature studies. All the chosen works can be considered as a solid theoretical and contextual basis in the exploration of politics of displacement and identity formation in the modern Adivasi tales.

Kumar (2018) emphatically deals with identity politics in the Indian English literature, specifically Adivasi assertion. Kumar states that the writers of modern Adivasis resist the cliched image of Adivasis that characterizes them by regaining the power of narration. Identity is not represented as something static but in a form of dynamic negotiation based on the socio-political pressure. This strictly compares to what the literary works resemble in the sphere of indigenous consciousness. In the same manner, Mandal (2019) dwells upon Adivasi identity-in-resistance. Mandal argues that literature serves as a place of preserving culture and politics. Resistance may be expressed in different forms other than open rebellion but usually covert defiance, which is ingrained in everyday life. This meaning extends both resistance to movements and movements.

Sharma (2020) talks about postcolonial identity and marginalized self-alongside the focus on duality and negotiation between the world of tradition and modernity. The analysis of Sharma gives the theoretic understanding of the study of how the displaced people build identity in the shifting socio-cultural settings. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar had several scholars who directly dealt with his works. In *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, Bhaduri (2017) examines the identity of Santhals and resistance by interpreting the refusal of the protagonist to dance as a direct effect of symbolically not wanting to be moulded by culture as a commodity. Bhaduri would contend that Shekhar turns simple humiliation in the political statement. Rao (2018) discusses subaltern expression and indigenous assertion in Adivasi stories today; pointing out that Shekhar has done a commendable job in documenting the inner-community lives within

the community. Rao lays emphasis on narrative authenticity and linguistic hybrid Ness as elements of opposition. Gupta (2021) also analyses the theme of displacement and cultural assertion in the works of Shekhar who he suggests that in his narratives there is suffering and resilience. Gupta refers to land, body and identity as being interconnected.

Kaur (2022) analyses bodily politics in *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* and introduces a gender aspect in this study. Researcher says that the bodies of women are exploited and resisted at the same time unveiling the phenomenon that patriarchy and displacement are combined. In shekhar, Sen (2023) pays his attention to the spatial politics and analyzes the work by Shekhar through the prism of the contested spaces of land and body. This is because displacement is at once corporeal, as well as territorial, which supports the opinion that identity is embodied, as expressed by Sen.

Dislocation

Dislocation is a phenomenon that is very multifaceted and multi-dimensional in the Adivasi case. It stretches way beyond the process of moving out of a geographical region to another. The aboriginal communities more so those living in mining and forested areas are mostly displaced by state-initiated projects like mining, dams, thermal power plants, railway expansion's locations and industrial estates. Such initiatives are done in the pursuit of the national progress but they often fail to take into consideration the socio-cultural implications of the original inhabitants. Land does not consist of an economic property or physical assets to Adivasis. It is a manifestation of ancestry, spirituality, and identity. Their cosmology is based on sacred groves, cemeteries, riverbed and forests. This spiritual and emotional connectedness is broken during displacement leading to what can be considered as cultural and mental displacement. Individuals become deprived of not only residential places but also social circles, traditional jobs, and ritual activities of certain scenery. In this way, the dislocation will be turned into the process of economic impoverishment, social alienation, and identity crisis combined.

In addition to this, whenever they are displaced, Adivasis are most of the time relegated to the outskirts of the city or in the informal areas where they become targets of discrimination, exploitation and invisibility. Stress of immigration is common across generations, resulting in perpetual poverty and marginalization. Thus, dislocation should be perceived as a state of things and being.

Adivasi Literature

The Adivasi literature has become an important genre of writing that puts the voices and experiences of indigenous people in focus. As opposed to mainstream Indian literature that in history presented the tribal communities through the prism of an outsider, the Adivasi literature is based on self-representation. It utilizes oral traditions, folklore, mythology, folk songs and community memory to compose narratives that are affirmative of the indigenous worldviews. A high consciousness of ecology is one of the main peculiarities of Adivasi literature. Nature is not portrayed to be a backdrop; it is an active in human life. The social identity and the religious faith are interlaced with forests, rivers, hilly ranges and animals. This view is defiant of the current hegemonic anthropocentric discourses and anticipates a better relationship between people and nature.

The modern authors like Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar have been able to bring the Adivasi issues into the field of the Indian English literature. They juxtapose the domestic realities to the international audience by writing in English yet remaining with the indigenous sensibilities. Adivasi literature is implicitly thereby a cultural repository and a political announcement which insists on presence in an imaginative ground that had historical marginalised tribal voices.

Identity Politics

Politics of Adivasi are based on a history of exclusion and misrepresentation to create identity politics. Tribal communities have always been referred to as back-ward or primitive and in most cases. They are deprived of a sense of agency in determining their identity. Identity politics, thus, is an effort to gain narrative power and political visibility. Adivasi have a close linkage of the identity with land, language, rituals, and solidarity within the community. When these components are endangered by the policy of displacement or assimilation, identity assertion is one of the responses. Such statement can take the form of land rights claims, language and cultural festival or seats in government.

The identity politics is symbolic in literature. Characters uphold dignity by standing against humiliation, the maintenance of traditions or social systems that exploit people. The identity does not just exist but it is constructed and defended through story telling. Therefore, the identity politics is not a divisive but a healing process - it teaches to right what has wronged history and establishes the collective existence.

Santhal Community

Santhal community is one of the biggest and most historical Indian tribes. The Santhals also have a unique socio-cultural identity as noticed in the language they speak (Santhali), their colourful festivals such as Sohrai, Baha and a great deal of customary music and dance. Throughout history, the Santhal has not been exploited and most remarkably in the Santhal Rebellion in 1855 against the colonial oppression. In spite of this resistance, they have remained the victims of land alienation as well as the socio-economic marginalization. Displacement has also increased in the Santhals after the post-independence industrialization in mineral-rich regions. The Santhal group of people is an epitome of helplessness and strength in literature. They possess a coherent way of life, unrestricted spirit and a strong sense of land which makes up their identity. Transformation and migration are however a serious problem as they bring up tensions between tradition and change.

Land Alienation

One of the most stringent problems facing communities of Adivasi is land alienation. It is the sale of tribal land to non tribes, corporations or government agencies usually done through legal manipulation or even force. Even the protective laws that are meant to protect the land of the tribalists are at times poorly forced.

Adivasi does not have individualistic land ownership but rather communal. It is a mark of continuity of the ancestors and group survival. The alienation of land results in the loss of livelihood as well as social structure and spirituality by communities. Alienation often results on migration, reliance in waged labor and breakdown of culture. It is a representation of disloyalty and injustice in literary narratives as it reveals the unsatisfactory relations of power between the indigenous population and the already established institutions.

Resistance

Adivasi communities have been resisting both in the past and present. Since there have been organized outbursts as well as grassroots activities against mining projects, the indigenous groups have continually fought exploitation. The resistance can also be soft forms; others keep the language, rituals and resist cultural commodification. Symbolic gestures and personal rebellion tend to be the symbol of resistance in the literature. Those characters who are not ready to play along with the manipulative demands declare dignity and self-respect.

The protest, then, can be seen as a means of re-asserting authority in a powerless state. The resistance is not an individual one but group. Solidarity within the communities helps in the existence of struggle and hope. The marginalized groups use togetherness to make the weakness strength.

Indigenous Assertion

The effective reclaiming of identity, rights and narrative space is called indigenous assertion. It demands recognition of cultural practices, oral histories and ecological system of knowledge. The indigenous assertion focuses on co-existence with dignity unlike seeking assimilation into prevailing structures. Indigenous assertion in literature goes against hegemonic forms and proposes different epistemologies. Local knowledge, myths, and lived experiences are some of the forms of valid knowledge in which writers forge ahead. This statement is cultural and political. It is supposed to be recognized and respected. In conclusion, native claim turns literary work into an empowerment place. It transforms the story of victimization into strength, silence into speech and invisibility into visibility.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the phenomenon of dislocation and identity that are closely interrelated in the works of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar. It is made evident though *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* and *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupi Baskey* that the displacement in Adivasi life is not just about losing land. It also implies the loss of security, cultural backgrounds and belongingness. Land is used by the Santhal community as a thing that is associated with memory and tradition and identity. By depriving them in the name of development, they lose emotionally, and their culture no less than economically.

Meanwhile, the stories of Shekhar do not show Adivasi as the helpless victims. Instead, they demonstrate courage, pride and silent protests. His characters display their identity by refusing it, solidarity, narration and survival in the world. The sense of self-respect and cultural pride is rather strong even in the state of poverty and exploitation. To sum up, the stories of Shekhar are eloquent demonstrations of the fact that displacement can also seek to make indigenous people silent, yet it also enables a greater identity assertion to emerge. He uses his writing as the voice of the marginalized where he reminds the readers that Adivasi identity is not going anywhere as they are entrenched and determined to stave off every challenge.

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Shadow Banning: A New Threat to Digital Democracy

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Abstract

India is rapidly emerging as one of the world's largest digital societies with more than 900 million internet users. Social media platforms such as X, Facebook and Instagram have become key arenas for political discourse and public debate. However, the rise of algorithmic moderation practices has introduced a subtle yet powerful form of censorship known as shadow banning.

Shadow banning refers to the reduction of content visibility without notifying the user, thereby restricting the reach of posts while allowing users to continue posting normally. This research paper argues that shadowbanning represents a form of silent censorship that challenges the democratic spirit of Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and expression.

Using an Agent-Based Modeling (ABM) simulation, this study demonstrates how algorithmic reach reduction can significantly alter public opinion dynamics within social networks. The simulation shows that even moderate suppression of content visibility can create artificial consensus and distort democratic discourse.

Furthermore, the study compares India's Information Technology Rules (2021) with international regulatory frameworks such as the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA). The analysis reveals that India currently lacks legal provisions addressing algorithmic visibility restrictions.

The paper concludes by proposing a policy framework that includes mandatory notification of visibility reduction, algorithmic transparency audits, and the recognition of a "Right to Reach" within India's forthcoming Digital India legislation.

Keywords:

Shadowbanning, Algorithmic Governance, Digital Democracy, IT Rules 2021, Digital Services Act, Article 19(1)(a), Reach Reduction.

Introduction

The digital transformation of communication has fundamentally altered the nature of public discourse. Social media platforms now function as modern public squares where political discussions, activism, and civic participation take place. In India, the number of internet users has crossed 900 million, making social media a central space for democratic engagement.

However, alongside the growth of digital communication, new forms of content moderation have emerged. Unlike traditional censorship mechanisms that remove content entirely, modern platforms often employ algorithmic techniques that reduce the visibility of certain posts. This practice, commonly referred to as shadowbanning, allows platforms to suppress content without directly informing the user.

Shadowbanning represents a subtle yet powerful form of digital control. Users continue to publish content, but their posts fail to reach a wider audience due to algorithmic filtering. This invisible moderation mechanism raises important questions about transparency, accountability, and democratic participation.

In a democratic society, the ability to express ideas publicly is fundamental. When algorithmic systems quietly restrict speech visibility, they create a situation where users are unaware that their voices are being limited. This phenomenon has been described as “algorithmic gaslighting”, where individuals are left uncertain about whether their lack of engagement is due to audience disinterest or algorithmic suppression.

Therefore, examining shadowbanning within the Indian context is essential, particularly in relation to constitutional protections of free speech and the emerging regulatory landscape for digital platforms.

Need for the Study

The growing reliance on algorithm-driven platforms has significantly shifted the power dynamics of public communication. Technology companies now play an influential role in shaping information flows and public opinion.

Despite this reality, existing Indian regulations primarily focus on content removal, not content visibility manipulation. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 provide mechanisms for takedown requests and grievance redressal but do not address algorithmic suppression of reach.

This regulatory gap allows private platforms to exercise significant control over speech visibility without transparency or accountability. In the absence of clear legal safeguards, users have limited means to challenge potential visibility restrictions.

Consequently, studying shadow banning is crucial to understand its implications for democratic discourse, digital rights, and media governance in India.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research are:

- * To examine shadow banning as a form of algorithmic governance.
- * To analyze its impact on opinion formation in social networks.
- * To compare Indian regulations with international digital governance frameworks.

Research Questions

1. How does shadow banning influence information diffusion in social media networks?
2. Can algorithmic reach reduction alter collective opinion dynamics?
3. Does the current Indian regulatory framework adequately address visibility-based content moderation?
4. what kind of digital content is affected most by shadow banning?

Theoretical Framework

This research proposes the concept of Visibility Scarcity Theory.

According to this theory, the digital information ecosystem is characterized by an overwhelming abundance of content. In such an environment, the most valuable resource is visibility. Algorithms determine which content receives exposure and which remains hidden.

Therefore, the reach of a message becomes a critical component of free expression. If platforms secretly reduce the reach of certain users or ideas, they effectively limit participation in public discourse.

The study also draws on the concept of Algorithmic Folklore, which refers to the informal strategies users develop to interpret and manipulate opaque algorithms. When users suspect hidden moderation systems, they begin altering their behavior, leading to a chilling effect on speech.

Research Methodology

This study uses Agent-Based Modeling (ABM) to simulate interactions between users in a social media network. A scale-free network structure is used to replicate influencer-follower dynamics commonly observed in digital platforms.

*** Research Design**

An Agent-Based Model (ABM) was developed using the Python library NetworkX to simulate interactions between users in a social media network.

***Network Structure**

The network follows a Barabási–Albert scale-free topology, which closely resembles real social media systems where a small number of influencers have a large number of followers.

Key parameters include:

- Number of nodes: 2000 users
- Network type: Influencer–Follower structure
- Iterations: 500 simulations
- Time steps: 100 interaction cycles

*** Shadowban Variable**

A coefficient representing visibility reduction was applied to selected nodes to simulate shadowbanning.

This variable reduces the probability that content from certain users will appear in others' feeds.

*** Data Measurement**

The simulation measured:

- Content lifespan
- Opinion distribution across the network
- Engagement vs reach patterns

Data Analysis and Findings

The simulation results revealed several significant effects of algorithmic reach reduction.

Decline in Content Lifespan

When the visibility of posts was reduced by 50%, the viral lifespan of content decreased by approximately 74%. This suggests that shadowbanning can prevent political messages from gaining traction.

Shift in Network Opinion

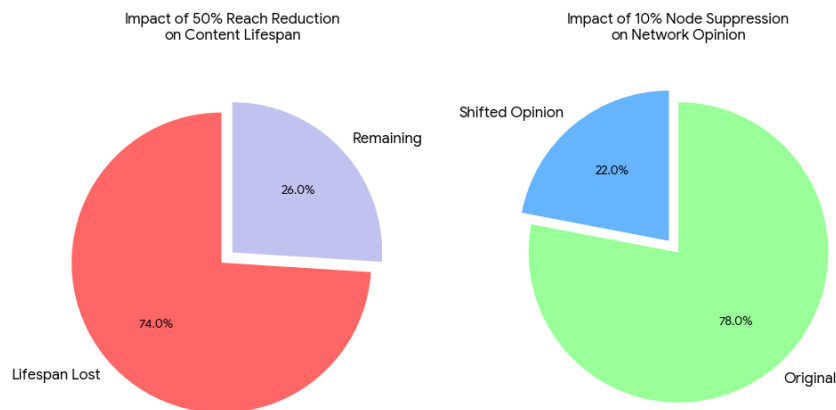
Suppressing only 10% of nodes representing a particular opinion resulted in a 22% shift in overall network sentiment toward the opposing opinion within 72 hours.

This demonstrates how algorithmic filtering can influence perceived majority opinions.

Engagement-Reach Disparity

Data visualization showed that shadowbanned users experienced a plateau effect where engagement (likes or comments) increased but reach remained stagnant.

This indicates the presence of an algorithmic ceiling limiting audience exposure.



Case Studies from the Indian Context

Farmers' Protest (2021)

During the farmers' protest movement, several activists alleged that hashtags related to the protest were temporarily suppressed or de-indexed. This raised concerns about algorithmic visibility control during political movements.

Political Satire and Content Labeling

Political satirists and commentators often face "Sensitive Content" labels on platforms. Such labels introduce friction that can significantly reduce user engagement.

Vernacular Language Bias

Many AI moderation systems are trained primarily on English datasets. As a result, content written in Indian languages such as Marathi, Tamil, or Bengali may sometimes be misclassified as harmful or abusive.

Comparative Legal Analysis

European Union Digital Services Act (DSA)

The Digital Services Act (2022) requires platforms to provide a Statement of Reasons whenever content visibility is restricted.

This ensures transparency and allows users to challenge moderation decisions.

Indian IT Rules (2021)

In contrast, India's IT Rules primarily address content takedown and grievance redressal mechanisms.

They do not explicitly address:

- Algorithmic reach reduction
- Shadowbanning
- Transparency of recommendation systems

This creates a significant regulatory gap.

Discussion

Shadowbanning raises important constitutional and democratic questions. The Supreme Court of India, in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* (2015), emphasized that restrictions on speech must be narrowly defined and legally justified.

However, algorithmic moderation systems operate as black boxes, making it difficult for users to understand or challenge visibility restrictions.

Without transparency mechanisms, shadowbanning can undermine the democratic principles of open debate and pluralism.

Conclusion

Shadowbanning represents an emerging challenge in the governance of digital communication. As algorithmic systems increasingly mediate public discourse, the need for transparency and accountability becomes more urgent.

The findings of this study demonstrate that even moderate reach reduction can significantly influence public opinion dynamics within social networks. Therefore, addressing shadowbanning is essential to protect democratic values in the digital age.

Policy Recommendations

1. Mandatory Notification System

Platforms should inform users whenever their content visibility is reduced.

2. Algorithmic Transparency Audits

Independent regulatory bodies should periodically audit platform algorithms.

3. Right to Reach Framework

Legal recognition of reach as an essential component of digital free speech.

4. Grievance Mechanism for Algorithmic Decisions

Users should have the right to challenge visibility restrictions.

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Recent Developments in Indian Classical Dance: Cultural Transformations and Artistic Innovation in Emerging India

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Abstract

The field of Performing arts in contemporary India appears to be at crossroads where tradition and innovation engage in dynamic dialogue. A vibrant process of reinvention is observed to be dominating the age-old practices in Indian performing arts. From classical dance forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi etc. adapting to global platforms, to experimental theatre movements and interdisciplinary collaborations, the contemporary scene reveals expansion in terms of themes, understanding of aesthetics, identity and audience engagement. Recent developments in performing arts are not just stylistic transformations but deeper negotiations with issues of gender, technology, cultural diplomacy, pedagogy and accessibility. This paper elaborates on how Indian classical dance ecosystem is redefining itself in the 21st century under the broad arena of various sub-themes. The research also explores the preservation and adaptation of traditional Indian dance forms, within modern society, analysing the challenges and opportunities that globalization presents.

Introduction

A significant transformation can be observed in the journey of Indian Classical dance forms, which have gradually evolved from temples to gaining recognition on the global stage. Indian Classical dance performances especially Bharatnatyam, were earlier restricted to temple performances where Devadasis used to present this art at the holy feet of the temple deity. Later, when different kingdoms were established, dance presentations slowly shifted to the courts of the king who used to patronage these dancers. There was also a period when a complete ban was imposed on such classical dance forms by the Britishers as these art forms narrated the stories of Hindu gods. However, with the dedicated efforts of dancers like T Bala Saraswathi and reformers like E. Krishna Iyer and Rabindranath Tagore, these dance forms were revived. The following aspects highlight some of the significant trends observed in contemporary classical dance practice:

- Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Practices
- Digital Transformation and Technology
- Performing Arts and Social Engagement
- Emerging Voices and Independent Artists
- Classical Dance Education and Pedagogies
- Inclusivity and Diversity in the Classical Dance Field
- Audience Evolution and Cultural Consumption
- Revival, Preservation and Reinterpretation of Classical Dance Traditions

Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Practices

The practice-based research method has become a notable move in the field of Indian Classical Dance. Several documented studies in journal such as *Studies in Dance Research* note how classical dancers have integrated multimedia, spoken word poetry, live painting etc. to reinterpret mythological narratives through contemporary lenses. The best example for this can be seen in dance-theatre productions of renowned artist Aditi Mangaldas, where Kathak vocabulary is placed in dialogue with contemporary movement, digital scenography and international lighting design. Similarly, Bharatnatyam productions by Anita Ratnam showcase the interaction of Bharatnatyam-based movements with martial arts, spoken language and multimedia projections. Some ethnographic accounts of urban dance collectives in cities like Mumbai, Pune, Chennai and Bengaluru reveal partnerships between classical dancers and theatre practitioners to address themes such as gender fluidity, ecological consciousness and urban alienation. These collaborations are much more beyond aesthetic experiments.

There are structured dialogues between disciplines, where the nattuvanar, composer, lighting designer etc. function as co-creator. Such observations demonstrate that inter-disciplinary practice in Indian Classical Dance today embraces collaboration while preserving the traditionalism in arts. Young classical dancers are thinking out of the box to come up with creative presentations and carve a niche for themselves in the field of Bharatanatyam. Prachi Save Saathi's recent dance production "When Walls dance" which is a live Jugalbandi between Bharatanatyam, Warli art and Immersive Animation, is worth mentioning in this context. Through this production, Prachi weaves a beautiful story of a little girl Champa, who belongs to the warli tribe and her beloved Champa tree. (Hirwade, 2024)



Fig no.1: Prachi Saathi presenting “When walls dance” at Pune

Digital Transformation and Technology

With changing trends in the field of performing arts, Classical dance spaces have also evolved from temples, Sabhas and auditoriums to digital platforms. Even in Kathakali dance form, which was earlier performed whole night depicting scenes from Ramayana and Mahabharata have now become compact and precise to last only for a few hours. Now, the days have come when performances have become shorter to some minutes or seconds maybe in the online platforms like Instagram Reels, YouTube shorts etc. Even though the performance's content and duration became less but it captured the online audiences. With the due pros and cons of these platforms, dancers and choreographers are implementing new techniques, experimenting and incorporating digital elements to enhance the viewing experience. Earlier, the spaces were art or performance-centric; now it looks more audience-centric. (Ramesh & Nagar)

Inclusivity and Diversity in the Classical Dance Field

Inclusivity is a practise or policy of including all types and groups of people. (vocabulary.com, n.d.) The recent developments in classical dance field show inclusion of diverse groups in terms of performances as well as training. The emergence of transgender performers, the opening of historically female-dominated forms to men, and modified training for people with disabilities are some important examples.

Mohiniyattam which is a classical dance form traditionally performed by women is slowly uplifting these gender-based restrictions. RLV Ramakrishnan, Jolly Mathew, Thomas Vo Van Tao, and KM Abu are some examples of male dancers practising and performing this art form professionally with passion and dedication. In fact, the efforts of Jolly Mathew have been

recognised by Cultural Ministry by awarding him Senior Fellowship in the dance form. Some traditionalists have even opposed RLV Ramakrishnan yet they contend that the dance form is universal.



Fig. no 2 Thomas Vo Van Tao, a rare male Mohiniyattam exponent from France

With trailblazers like Narthaki Nataraj—the first transgender person to get the Padma Shri award in 2019—leading the way, the inclusion of transgender people in the Indian classical dance industry is a developing movement. The researcher has personally attended the Natya Kala conference at Krishna Gana Sabha in Chennai in December 2024. A special segment of this conference featured Bharatanatyam performances by transgenders who were meticulously trained by Bharatanatyam exponent Shanmuga Sundaram. The group of transgenders included some auto drivers and some who were abandoned by their families.

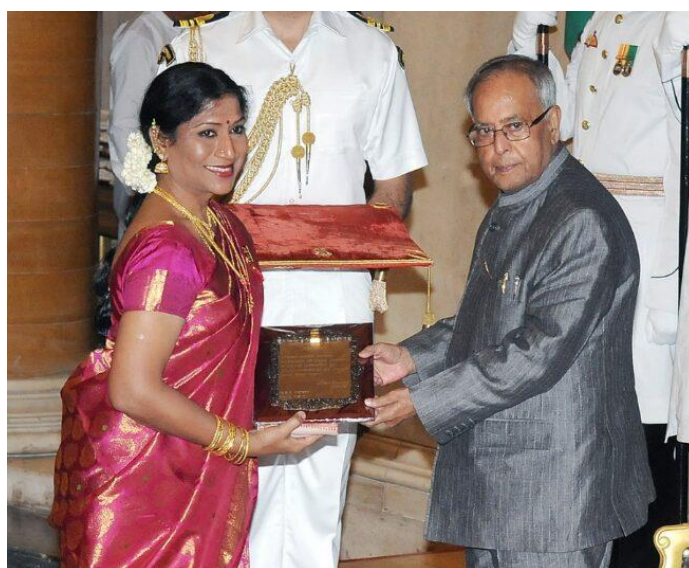


Fig no. 3 Bharatnatyam dancer and transwoman Dr. Narthaki Natraj receiving Padmashri award for her contributions in the field of Bharatanatyam

Classical Dance and Social Engagement

Art has always been a powerful mirror to society. Classical dance, with its sophisticated language of expression (Abhinaya) and hand gestures (mudras), is uniquely equipped to convey complex human emotions and narratives. It can tell a story of injustice, hope, or protest with a subtlety and emotional depth that words alone often cannot achieve, prompting audiences to reflect on important social issues. Even as a learner, your art can have a wonderful impact. You can participate in community outreach programmes, perform at charity events to help raise awareness, or volunteer to teach basic movements at local schools. Even creating a small, thoughtful choreography for a college festival on a social theme is a way to begin using dance as a voice for positive change. (Deka, n.d.)

Classical dance in India has long transcended the boundaries of aesthetic performance to emerge as a powerful medium of social engagement.

Classical Dance Education and Pedagogies

Historically, training in Indian classical dance was imparted through the Guru–Shishya Parampara. In this Parampara, the shishya was rigorously trained under the Guru while staying with them. In modern India, however, this traditional approach has gradually evolved into a hybrid educational model that combines institutional training, academic study, and technological integration.

- Some institutions like Nrityagram based near Bangalore have revived the residential pattern of Gurukul training system. It operates as a residential dance village where disciples undergo intensive training for several years under the close guidance of gurus.

Digital transformations

- Digital transformations in dance pedagogy are another major recent development in the field of classical dance. Contemporary dance pedagogy increasingly incorporates digital and in-person teaching methods. This approach allows students from diverse geographical regions to receive quality dance education without being limited by physical distance. Online masterclasses, workshops, and lecture demonstrations conducted by renowned teachers further contribute to the wider and easy transmission of classical dance traditions.
- Technology is playing a transformative role in classical dance. Choreographers are using digital tools to experiment with new movements and patterns, creating visually

striking performances. The use of lighting and projection technology enhances the stage environment, making performances more engaging and immersive. Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are also being explored, offering audiences innovative ways to experience classical dance. (Dr. D. Y. Patil School of Liberal Arts)

Emerging Voices and Independent Artists

In recent years, Indian classical dance has witnessed the emergence of independent artists and new creative voices who are redefining the traditional system of the art form. Young dancers today increasingly work as independent choreographers, producing thematic performances that explore contemporary issues. Even the traditional Bharatanatyam Margam has now become thematic. Dancers are exploring extraordinary themes through their Margam performances.

Some notable examples of dancers and exponents who have emerged as independent artists in recent years are mentioned below:

- Aditi Mangaldas has created productions that reinterpret Kathak aesthetics through contemporary stage design and thematic exploration.
- Navtej Johar is known for conceptual works that reinterpret classical themes and address questions of identity and social change.
- Rukmini Vijayakumar founded the Raadha Kalpa Dance Company, which encourages innovative Bharatanatyam productions and international collaborations.

The rise of emerging voices and independent artists reflects a shift toward creative autonomy and experimentation within Indian classical dance. By embracing new themes, digital platforms, and interdisciplinary collaborations, these artists are expanding the scope of classical dance while ensuring that the tradition continues to evolve in response to contemporary cultural contexts.

Revival, Preservation and Reinterpretation of Classical Dance Traditions

One of the primary challenges faced by classical dance today, is achieving the appropriate balance between maintaining traditional techniques and welcoming modernization.

In 2010, UNESCO listed several Indian dance forms, including Bharatanatyam and Kathak, in its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This recognition has raised awareness about the importance of preserving these dance forms and led to initiatives

like the Sangeet Natak Akademi providing grants and scholarships to support their study and practice. (D, 2024)

At the same time, reinterpretation has become an important aspect of contemporary classical dance practise. Many dancers today engage with classical vocabulary while exploring new thematic concerns such as gender identity, environmental awareness, social justice etc. Through innovative choreography and creative ways of story-telling, artists attempt to present traditional aesthetics in ways that resonate with present-day audiences. This process demonstrates the adaptability and vitality of classical dance as a living art form.

Conclusion

The historical journey of Indian Classical Dance – from temples to courtly patronage, through a period of decline and eventual revival has laid the foundation for its dynamic evolution in contemporary India. As discussed throughout the paper, classical dance today extends beyond performance and aesthetic expression, emerging as a meaningful medium for social engagement, education, and cultural dialogue. The pedagogical landscape of classical dance in India is also undergoing significant transformation. Hybrid learning systems, online workshops, and virtual lecture demonstrations have enabled students across geographical boundaries to engage with classical dance training and scholarship. Looking ahead, the future of classical dance in India appears promising and dynamic. As the art form continues to evolve, it is likely to witness further creative innovations, interdisciplinary collaborations, and pedagogical advancements. However, it is crucial that these trends and innovations remain within the boundaries of the dance form, with the ultimate goal being the conveyance of a message or Rasa-Nishpatti.

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The Grammar of Pain: Exploring Subaltern Consciousness in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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Abstract:

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* vividly portrays the intricate relationships of caste, gender, and history in postcolonial India. Through its distinct narrative style and powerful character development, the novel highlights the voiceless and oppressed—the subalterns—whose suffering is often overlooked by dominant structures. She is one of those authors who give voice to the voiceless people of Indian society. Through this novel, the author exposes the deeply ingrained casteism and social hierarchy prevalent in Indian society, particularly in Kerala. This paper examines how Arundhati Roy highlights a "grammar of pain" through the use of direct and actual language, silence of characters, memory, and fragmented time to convey subaltern consciousness. This paper presents the dirty reality of untouchable and low caste people. By focusing on Velutha, Ammu, Estha, and Rahel, the study reveals how personal trauma transforms into political statements and how literature can recover silenced histories.

Key Words: - Caste, Subaltern, Patriarchy, Gender-discrimination, Untouchable

Introduction

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, a significant work in Indian English literature, won the prestigious 1997 Booker Prize. This is her debut novel, but it brought her international fame and recognition. This award-winning novel is remembered for its dark picture of casteism, gender discrimination and sharp critique of social and political issues. Set in Kerala, the narrative merges personal and political experiences through a fractured family's viewpoint, exposing systemic oppression based on caste, gender, and class. "Her novel *The God of Small Things* brings out the submerged sounds of the subaltern in a touching manner." (Parveen and Rajesh 3) A key aspect of this novel is the portrayal of the pain and suffering of the subaltern. It goes beyond just physical or emotional suffering and it includes existential struggles. Subaltern's pain is expressed through what we can call a "grammar of pain." This

grammar challenges traditional syntax and chronological storytelling, reflecting the broken and suppressed nature of subaltern identity. This paper investigates how Roy represents subaltern consciousness, particularly through pain and resistance.

Theoretical Framework: Subaltern Studies

Subaltern Studies, led by Ranajit Guha and furthered by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, questions how dominant narratives represent or erase marginalized voices. Spivak's well-known question—"Can the Subaltern Speak?"—resonates throughout Roy's novel. The subaltern, a group marginalized socially, politically, and geographically, communicates not through direct speech but through silence, resistance, and embodied suffering. Subalterns don't have equal rights and power as common people possess. This framework guides our interpretation of Roy's characters, especially Velutha—an 'Untouchable' whose love and death form the emotional and moral heart of the novel. He is beaten to death only because of his emotional and physical attachment to a woman of the upper caste and society. "Subaltern literature emerged as a variety of social criticism that seeks to voice the priority of unequal and uneven processes of representation. It encompasses social issues such as race, gender, and ethnicity to include the representatives of humans whose lives have been hidden away in private diaries, parish registers or now not recorded at all." (Dang 118)

Velutha: The Subaltern Body and the Language of Suffering

Velutha, the Paravan carpenter, stands out as the most direct representation of subalternity in the novel. He is treated not as a human being but as an animal. The high-class people look at him as a filthy creature who needs to be shooed off and beaten. When Ammu's mother discovered her daughter's relationship with Velutha, she imagined the scene:

She thought of her naked, coupling in the mud with a man who was nothing but a filthy coolie she imagined it in vivid detail: a Paravan's coarse black hand on her daughter's breast....His particular Paravan smell. Like animals. Mammachi thought and vomited. Like a dog with a bitch on heat. (*The God of Small Things* 258)

These words highlight that she looks at Velutha not as a human being but as a filthy creature. Even the thought of Velutha, an untouchable, makes her so uneasy that she vomits. She dislikes him to such an extent that she considers him as a dog.

Being a protagonist in the novel, he grabs our attention. He suffers because he belongs to one of the lowest castes in the Hindu Caste System. Despite his talents and kindness, his

relationship with Ammu defies caste laws, leading to harsh consequences. His body becomes a site of state violence and caste punishment. The grammar of pain here is both physical—illustrated by the detailed, almost clinical portrayal of his tortured body—and symbolic, as his silence (he stops speaking after his arrest) creates a haunting void. Though he is right, he is not allowed to speak. Here, we remember an important question of Gayatri Spivak. She asks, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Yes, he cannot speak against social and caste discrimination. He cannot raise his voice against injustice against himself and others. He is brutally beaten and killed for the cause of having a mutual relationship with a woman of the upper caste. The author says, “They never did ask Velutha what had happened. There were no statements. No testimonies” (*The God of Small Things*). Roy does not clean up his suffering, compelling the reader to face the deep violence embedded in caste systems.

Ammu: Gendered Subalternity and Rebellion

Ammu is a victim of gender discrimination. She was born and brought up in an upper-class family, but she was denied a higher education only because of her gender. Her brother was given all the facilities and higher education, but she wasn't. Notice the words of the author: Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl, so Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with them. There was little for a young girl to do in Ayemenem other than to wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with the housework. (*The God of Small Things* 38)

She considers this restriction as a jail and wants to get freedom from it. Due to this, she searches desperately for an outlet for her captivity. In desperation, she finds a person in Calcutta and marries him. Her decision of marriage, taken in desperation, doesn't last long, and it breaks down after the birth of two children.

Ammu's identity as a divorced woman in a traditional Syrian Christian family makes her socially invisible. Her sexual freedom—shown through her relationship with Velutha—represents a challenge to patriarchy and caste norms. However, her rebellion is short-lived. Ammu faces shame, ostracism, and ultimately, her downfall due to the same system she fights against. Her suffering is depicted through fragmented memories and inner thoughts, illustrating how trauma reshapes language and identity. The 'grammar' in Ammu's context is shaped by silence and shame—the modes of expression permitted to women who defy social norms.

Estha and Rahel: Childhood Trauma and Fragmented Narration

Estha and Rahel, the twins at the emotional core of the novel, endure the lingering pain of caste and gender oppression. Their trauma—especially Estha’s sexual abuse and the twins’ separation—is conveyed through disjointed syntax, broken timelines, and poetic segments. The narrative reflects their confused consciousness, embodying a linguistic rebellion against standard storytelling. Their experience serves as a mix of personal and historical trauma, where the lines between past and present blur. Pain becomes both an individual burden and a shared legacy.

Language, Silence, and Resistance

Roy’s writing intentionally breaks down language—fragmenting words, creating new phrases, and playing with syntax—to reflect the collapse of meaning under oppression. This linguistic experimentation serves not just as a stylistic choice but as a political act: it opposes the straight, logical language of power and history. Silence also plays a vital role. Velutha’s silence at the end, Estha’s muteness, and Ammu’s unvoiced suffering all highlight how subalterns are stripped of their speech. Yet in Roy’s narrative, these silences convey much, prompting an ethics of listening rather than just interpretation.

The author uses a compressed language, a thrifty style to foreground the essential predicament of the socially oppressed people. Through her language, she discloses the naked truth of the coercive behaviour of Thomas, an inspector. When the inspector speaks with Ammu, “He stared at Ammu’s breast as he spoke. He said the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam police didn’t take statements from Veshyas or their illegitimate children” (*The God of Small Things* 8). Her straightforward style of writing underlines the drawbacks of society.

Conclusion

Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* crafts a powerful grammar of pain that expresses subaltern consciousness at its most raw. Through her characters’ suffering and silences, Roy critiques the systems of caste, patriarchy, and colonial inheritance that continue to affect Indian society. The novel’s fragmented structure, poetic language, and non-linear storytelling act as tools of resistance—ways to convey the untranslatable, to voice the unheard. In doing this, Roy creates a space for subaltern voices, asserting that while the subaltern might not always articulate in expected manners, they do express, endure, and resist.

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Gandhian Perspective in Skill-Based and Vocational Education

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Abstract

Education is widely recognized as a key instrument for personal development, economic growth, and social transformation. However, conventional education systems often emphasize theoretical knowledge and neglect practical skills necessary for productive employment. The educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi offers a holistic approach that integrates intellectual, moral, and vocational development. Gandhi proposed a model of education known as Nai Talim (Basic Education), which emphasized learning through productive work, dignity of labour, and self-reliance. Skill-based and vocational education were considered central elements of this educational philosophy. This paper examines the Gandhian perspective on vocational education and analyzes its relevance in contemporary educational systems. The study also explores the implications of Gandhian educational principles for modern policies such as the National Education Policy 2020. Using qualitative analysis of secondary sources, the research highlights how Gandhi's ideas can contribute to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The findings suggest that integrating Gandhian principles into modern education can promote employability, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development while fostering social equality and ethical values.

Keywords: Gandhian education, Nai Talim, vocational education, skill-based learning, self-reliance, experiential learning.

Introduction

Education is one of the most significant instruments for the development of individuals and societies. A well-structured educational system not only enhances intellectual abilities but also equips individuals with the skills necessary for economic productivity and social responsibility.

However, many modern education systems continue to emphasize academic knowledge while neglecting vocational skills and practical learning.

In the Indian context, the educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi provides an alternative framework that integrates knowledge, skills, and values. Gandhi believed that education should develop the body, mind, and spirit of individuals while enabling them to become self-reliant and socially responsible citizens.

Gandhi criticized the colonial education system introduced during British rule because it focused mainly on literary education and created a class of individuals detached from manual labour and rural life. To address this problem, he proposed an innovative educational model known as Nai Talim or Basic Education. This model emphasized learning through productive work, particularly craft-based activities such as spinning, weaving, agriculture, carpentry, and pottery.

Skill-based and vocational education were therefore central to Gandhi's educational philosophy. He believed that practical work could serve as the foundation for intellectual learning and character development. According to Gandhi, vocational education should not be viewed merely as job training but as a means of promoting dignity of labour, self-sufficiency, and social equality.

In contemporary times, the importance of skill-based education has gained renewed attention due to rising unemployment, skill gaps, and rapid technological changes. Educational reforms such as the National Education Policy 2020 emphasize experiential learning, vocational training, and multidisciplinary education—ideas that resonate strongly with Gandhian principles.

This paper examines the Gandhian perspective on skill-based and vocational education and explores its relevance for modern educational systems.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research are:

To analyze the educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

To examine the concept of skill-based and vocational education in Gandhian thought.

To understand the principles and features of Nai Talim.

To evaluate the relevance of Gandhian ideas in contemporary education systems.

To identify the implications of Gandhian educational philosophy for modern educational reforms.

Research Hypothesis

The present study is guided by the following hypothesis:

H₁: The integration of Gandhian principles of education, particularly Nai Talim, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of skill-based and vocational education in modern educational systems.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Gandhian educational principles have limited relevance in contemporary skill-based and vocational education.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. The research is based on the analysis of secondary data, including books, scholarly journals, educational reports, and academic articles related to Gandhian philosophy and vocational education.

Data Sources

The sources used in this study include:

Published works of Mahatma Gandhi

Academic research articles on Gandhian education

Reports on vocational education and skill development

Policy documents such as the National Education Policy 2020

Method of Analysis

The data collected from secondary sources were analyzed using conceptual and thematic analysis to identify key themes related to skill-based education in Gandhian philosophy.

Gandhian Philosophy of Education

The educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is deeply rooted in the principles of truth (Satya), non-violence (Ahimsa), and self-reliance (Swavalamban). Gandhi believed that education should aim at the holistic development of human personality.

According to Gandhi, education should:

Develop moral and ethical values

Promote social responsibility

Encourage self-discipline

Foster independence and creativity

Gandhi defined education as the all-round development of the individual, emphasizing the balanced growth of physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions.

He strongly criticized the prevailing education system for being overly theoretical and disconnected from real life. Gandhi believed that such education produced individuals who sought clerical or administrative jobs while neglecting productive work.

To address this issue, Gandhi proposed an educational approach that integrated manual work with intellectual learning.

Nai Talim: Gandhian Model of Education

Nai Talim, also known as Basic Education, was Gandhi's educational experiment aimed at transforming the traditional schooling system.

The core idea of Nai Talim was learning through productive work. Gandhi believed that education should revolve around practical activities that contribute to the economic and social life of the community.

Key Principles of Nai Talim

1) Craft-Centered Learning

In Nai Talim, a productive craft forms the central element of the curriculum. Activities such as spinning, weaving, and agriculture serve as the basis for teaching various subjects.

2) Learning by Doing

Students learn through practical experiences rather than passive classroom instruction.

3) Self-Reliance

Education should enable students to earn a livelihood and become economically independent.

4) Integration of Knowledge and Work

Manual labour and intellectual learning should not be separated.

5) Social and Moral Development

Education should cultivate values such as cooperation, honesty, and social responsibility.

Gandhian Perspective on Skill-Based and Vocational Education**1) Dignity of Labour**

One of the most significant aspects of Gandhian education is the emphasis on the dignity of labour. Gandhi rejected the social hierarchy that considered manual labour inferior to intellectual work.

By incorporating vocational skills into education, Gandhi sought to promote respect for all forms of labour and reduce social inequalities.

2) Self-Sufficiency and Economic Independence

Gandhi believed that education should enable individuals to become self-sufficient. Skill-based education provides practical competencies that allow individuals to generate income and contribute to economic development. Students trained in crafts and vocational skills can generate income and contribute to local economies.

3) Integration of Vocational Skills with Academic Subjects

Gandhi did not view vocational education as separate from academic learning. Instead, he emphasized the integration of both. In Gandhian education, vocational activities serve as the medium for teaching academic subjects. For example:

Mathematics can be taught through measurement and calculations used in crafts.

Science concepts can be explained through agricultural practices.

Language skills can be developed through written reflections on practical experiences.

This integrated approach makes education more meaningful and relevant to real life.

4) Education for Social Transformation

Gandhi believed that education should serve as a tool for social change. Skill-based education can promote social equality and empower marginalized communities. Vocational education provides opportunities for economic empowerment and social mobility. Thus, vocational education becomes a means of achieving social justice and equality.

Relevance of Gandhian Ideas in Contemporary Education

Despite being proposed nearly a century ago, Gandhi's ideas remain highly relevant in modern educational debates.

1) Addressing the Skill Gap

Many modern education systems emphasize theoretical knowledge but fail to equip students with practical skills. Many graduates today face unemployment due to lack of practical skills. Gandhian education emphasizes skill development and experiential learning, which can help bridge the gap between education and employment.

2) Alignment with Modern Educational Policies

Educational reforms such as the National Education Policy 2020 emphasize experiential learning, vocational education, and interdisciplinary approaches, reflecting Gandhian principles.

3) Promotion of Entrepreneurship

Skill-based education encourages entrepreneurship and self-employment, aligning with Gandhi's vision of decentralized economic development.

4) Sustainable Development

Gandhian education promotes local production, sustainable practices, and community development, which are essential for sustainable economic growth.

5) Rural Development

Gandhi's educational philosophy was closely linked with rural development. By teaching agricultural and craft skills, education could strengthen village economies and reduce migration to cities. Skill-based education can therefore contribute to balanced regional development.

6) Lifelong Learning

Gandhi also believed that education should continue throughout life. In the modern knowledge economy, continuous skill development and lifelong learning have become essential for adapting to changing technological and economic conditions.

Findings of the Study

The analysis of literature and Gandhian educational philosophy reveals several important findings:

Gandhian educational philosophy strongly emphasizes skill-based learning and vocational training.

Nai Talim integrates practical skills with intellectual development, creating a holistic education system.

Gandhian principles promote dignity of labour and self-reliance.

Modern educational reforms increasingly reflect Gandhian ideas.

Skill-based education inspired by Gandhian philosophy can address unemployment and skill gaps.

These findings support the hypothesis that Gandhian principles remain relevant in contemporary education.

Conclusion

The educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi offers a comprehensive and practical framework for integrating skill-based and vocational education into modern educational systems. Through the concept of Nai Talim, Gandhi emphasized the importance of productive work, dignity of labour, and self-reliance and community engagement. His approach sought to bridge the gap between knowledge and practical life by integrating vocational skills with academic learning.

In the contemporary world, where unemployment and skill gaps pose significant challenges, Gandhian principles provide valuable guidance for educational reforms. The integration of vocational training, experiential learning, and value-based education can help create a more inclusive and sustainable education system.

Therefore, incorporating Gandhian perspectives into contemporary education can help create more inclusive, practical, and socially responsible education system that prepares individuals not only for employment but also for meaningful participation in society.

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that Gandhian educational philosophy can significantly contribute to the development of effective skill-based education systems.

Therefore, policymakers and educators should consider incorporating Gandhian principles into modern education to promote holistic development, social justice, and sustainable economic growth.

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Role of Quick Commerce Platforms in Promoting Digital Payments in Nagpur

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Abstract:

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the retail and payment ecosystem in India. Quick Commerce (Q-commerce) platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, BB Now have emerged as an important extension of the e-commerce sector, offering instant delivery services and encouraging consumers to adopt digital payment methods. The present study aims to examine the role of Quick Commerce platforms in promoting digital payments among consumers in Nagpur city. The study follows a descriptive research design and is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms among 122 users of quick commerce platforms in Nagpur city. Secondary data has been collected from books, research journals, and online sources related to digital payments and E-commerce. The study focuses on understanding consumer usage patterns, preferred payment methods, and the extent to which quick commerce platforms influence the adoption of digital payment options such as UPI, mobile wallets and debit or credit cards. The collected data is analysed using appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage analysis and tabular & diagrammatic representation. The findings of the study are expected to highlight how quick commerce platforms facilitate convenient, fast, and secure digital transactions, thereby encouraging consumers to increasingly shift towards digital payment methods.

Keywords: Quick Commerce, Digital Payments, Consumer Adoption, Cashless Transactions, Digital India, Online Retail Platforms

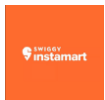
Introduction:

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the way consumers purchase goods and make payments in India. With the growing penetration of

smartphones, internet connectivity, and digital payment infrastructure, the country has witnessed a remarkable shift towards a cashless and digitally driven economy. Government initiatives such as **Digital India** and the increasing popularity of payment systems like **Unified Payments Interface (UPI), mobile wallets, and card payments** have accelerated the adoption of digital transactions among consumers.

In recent years, a new segment within the e-commerce industry known as **Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce)** has emerged and gained considerable attention in urban markets. Quick Commerce platforms focus on delivering groceries and essential items within a very short time frame, often within **10 to 30 minutes**. Platforms such as **Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, and BB Now (BigBasket)** have become increasingly popular among urban consumers due to their speed, convenience, and easy accessibility through mobile applications.

Q-COMMERCE PLATFORMS:



SWIGGY INSTAMART

BB NOW (BIG BASKET)

ZEPTO

BLINKIT

Picture from: www.google.com

One of the key characteristics of Quick Commerce platforms is their **integration of digital payment systems** within the ordering process. These platforms encourage customers to complete transactions using digital payment methods such as **UPI, debit or credit cards, and mobile wallets**. By simplifying the payment process and offering incentives such as discounts, cashback offers, and seamless checkout experiences, Quick Commerce platforms play a significant role in encouraging consumers to shift from traditional cash payments to digital transactions.

The increasing use of Quick Commerce platforms has therefore contributed to the broader objective of promoting **cashless transactions and strengthening the digital payment ecosystem in India**. As consumers rely more on these platforms for their daily grocery and household purchases, their exposure to and familiarity with digital payment methods also

increases. This shift not only enhances consumer convenience but also supports the national vision of building a **digitally empowered economy**.

Nagpur city, being one of the rapidly developing urban centres in Maharashtra, has witnessed a noticeable rise in the use of Quick Commerce platforms in recent years. The growing adoption of smartphones, improved digital infrastructure and changing consumer lifestyles have made these services increasingly popular among residents. However, there is limited research focusing specifically on how Quick Commerce platforms influence the **adoption of digital payments among consumers in Nagpur city**.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the **role of Quick Commerce platforms in promoting digital payments among consumers in Nagpur city**. The study seeks to understand the factors that motivate consumers to use digital payment methods while shopping on these platforms and to explore how such platforms contribute to the increasing trend of cashless transactions.

Review of Literature:

Lohariwala (2022), In “Factors Affecting the Adoption of Quick Commerce,” discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the adoption of QC platforms. Health concerns, lockdown restrictions, and the need for minimal physical contact shifted consumer behaviour toward valuing speed and convenience. The study notes that as consumers become used to rapid delivery, their expectations rise, making them less forgiving of service delays.

Research gate, Mohammad Affan Akhtar and Md. Rashid Farooqi, October 2022 In recent years, the convergence of technology and the COVID-19 pandemic has driven a significant shift in consumer behaviour towards app-based grocery shopping. Factors such as technology awareness, widespread smartphone and computer usage, and the need for convenience amid the pandemic have propelled the global e-commerce industry's remarkable growth. Online shopping, once limited, now offers diverse products, doorstep delivery, and various payment options, fostering consumer trust. The pandemic further accelerated the preference for online grocery shopping, emphasizing convenience, time-saving, and safety.

FICCI (2021) reports that over 60% of Kirana stores in India experienced a dip in daily sales after the rise of online grocery delivery apps. On the other hand, Q-Commerce has created partnerships with local stores through dark store models and gig-based deliveries reshaping the supply chain rather than replacing it entirely.

Kapoor et al. (2022) found that trust, time-saving, and availability of offers significantly influence consumer preference for Q-Commerce platforms. However, challenges such as order accuracy, service reliability, and privacy concerns still impact loyalty.

Burt & Sparks (2019) and **Grewal et al. (2020)** confirm that digital commerce has fragmented the traditional retail value chain. Small and medium retailers face margin pressures, reduced footfall, and an urgent need for digital transformation.

Objectives of the Study:

- **To examine the usage pattern of Quick Commerce platforms among consumers in Nagpur city.**
- **To analyse the extent of digital payment adoption by consumers while using Q-Commerce platforms.**
- **To identify the key factors that motivate consumers to use digital payments on Quick Commerce platforms.**
- **To evaluate the role of Q-Commerce platforms in promoting cashless transactions among consumers in Nagpur city.**
- **To examine the challenges faced by consumers while making digital payments on Q-Commerce platforms.**

HYPOTHESIS:

- Quick Commerce platforms have a significant role in promoting digital payments in Nagpur city.
- Convenience and faster checkout processes significantly influence digital payment adoption on Quick Commerce platforms in Nagpur city.
- Availability of digital payment options such as UPI, cards and wallets influences consumers adoption of digital payments in Nagpur city.

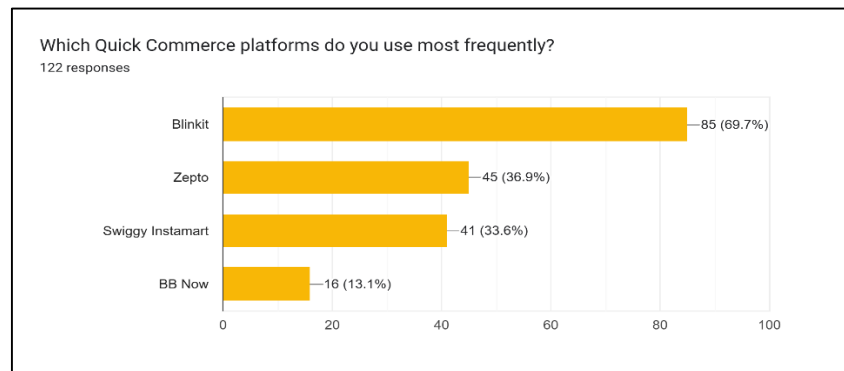
Research Methodology:

- **Research Design:** Descriptive Research Design
- **Population:** Consumers using Quick Commerce platforms in Nagpur city.
- **Sample Size:** 122 Q-Commerce Users Residing in Nagpur city
- **Sampling Technique:** Convenience Sampling Technique
- **Data Sources:** Primary and Secondary Data
- **Tool of Data Collection:** Structured Questionnaire (Google Form)

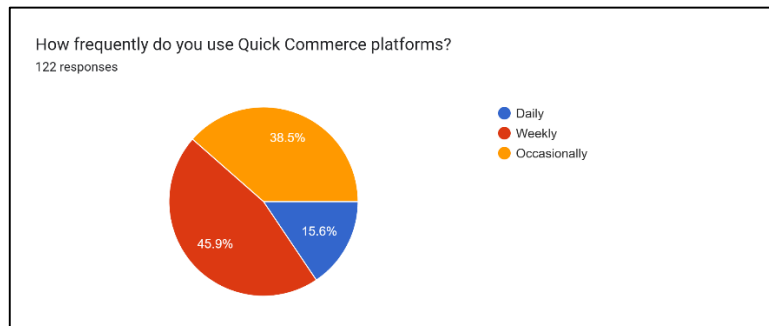
□ **Techniques of Data Analysis & Presentation:** Percentage Analysis, Chi-Square Test, Tables, Charts and Graphs.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

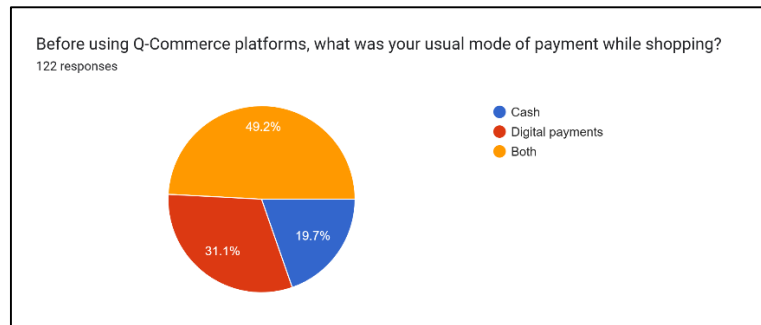
With the help of data collected, analysis and interpretations have been made and presented below:



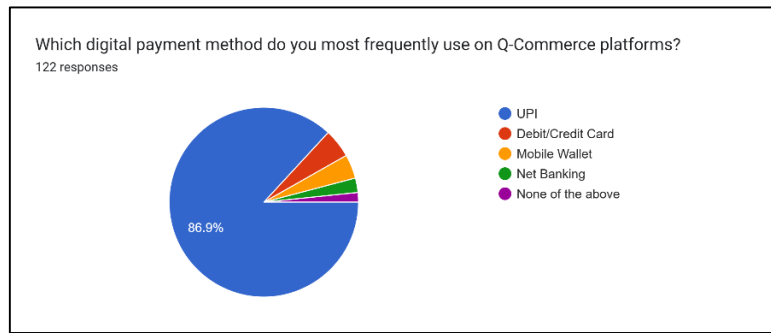
The above chart represents which Q-Commerce platform is the most frequently Used by the respondents in Nagpur city. It shows that majority of respondents prefer Blinkit and lowest preferred is BB Now.



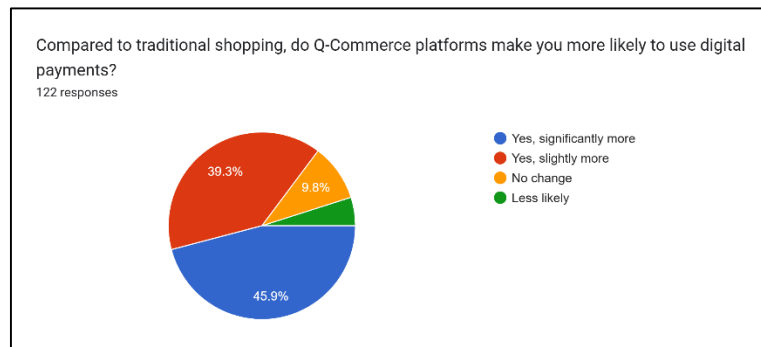
The above chart represents how frequently respondents use Q-commerce platforms. A significant portion of respondents use these platforms on weekly basis while some use them for daily basis.



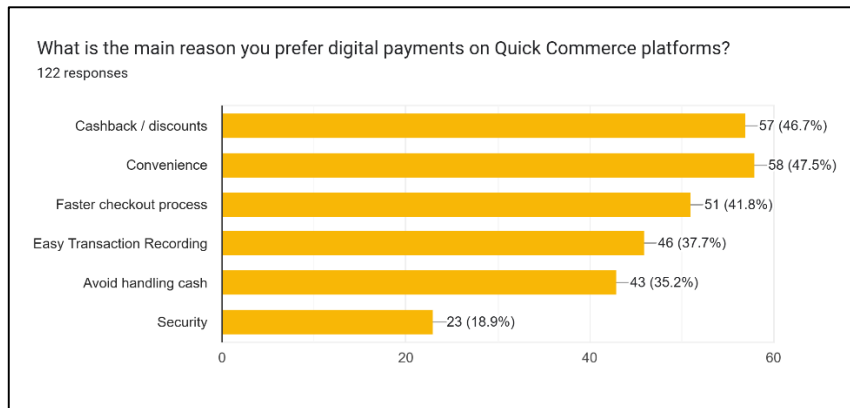
The chart shows the usual mode of payment used by respondents before using Q-Commerce platform and most of the respondents used both cash and digital payments methods.



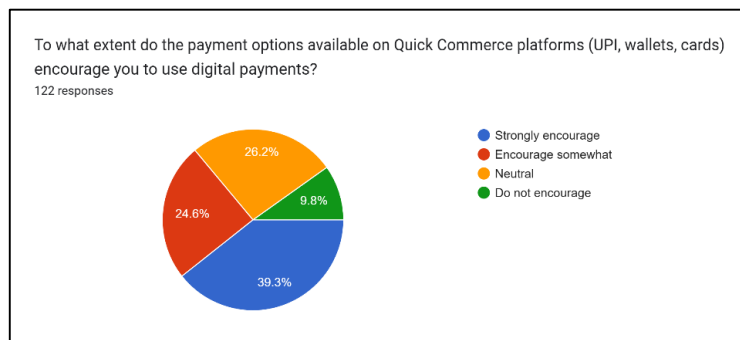
The chart shows that UPI is the most frequently used digital payment method on Q-Commerce platforms while very small proportion still uses cash on delivery.



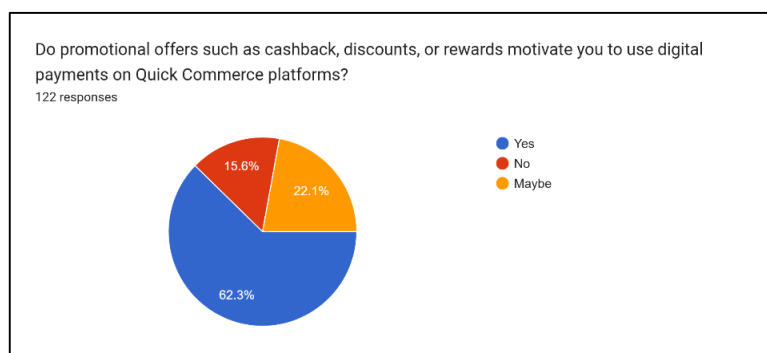
The chart indicates that a majority of respondents believe that Quick Commerce platforms significantly encourage the use of digital payments compared to traditional shopping methods.



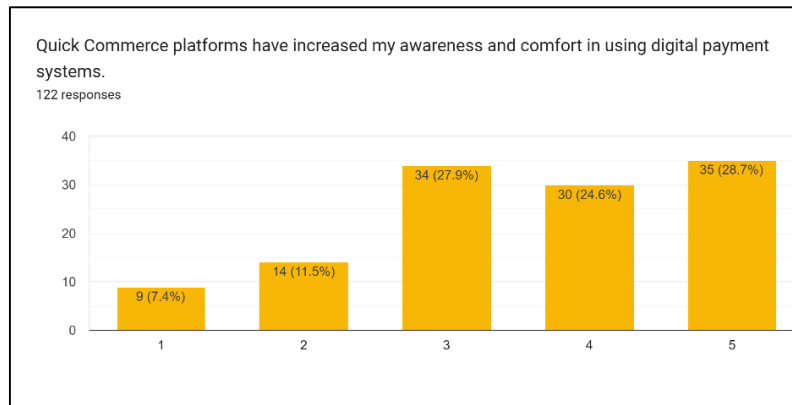
The chart shows that the main reasons respondents prefer digital payments on Quick Commerce platforms are **convenience, cashback and discount offer and a faster checkout process.**



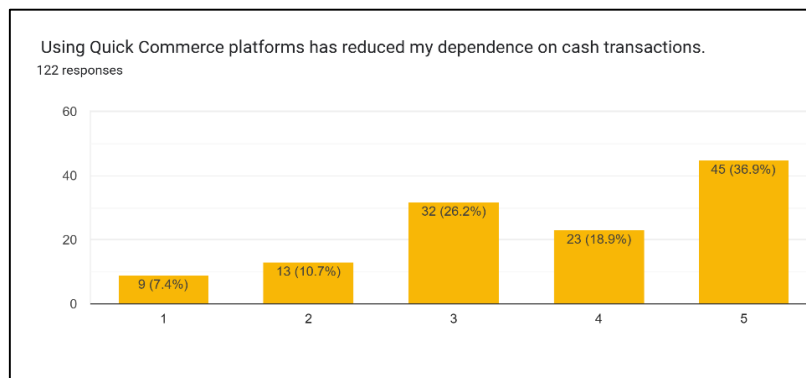
The majority of respondents **strongly agreed** that the payment options available on Quick Commerce platforms encourage them to use digital payments. Only a small proportion of respondents felt that these platforms do not encourage digital payment usage.



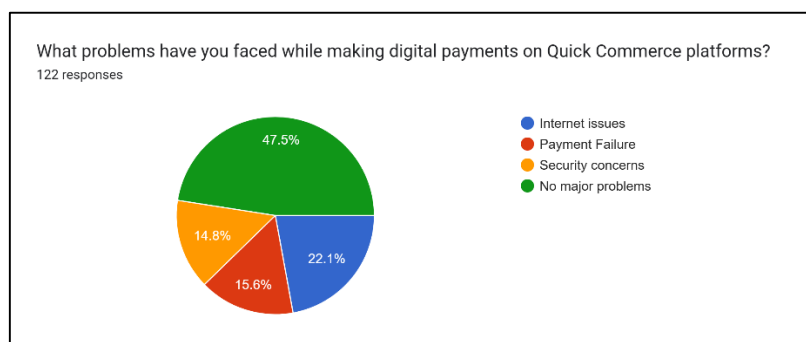
The chart indicates that **62.3% of respondents** agreed that promotional offers such as **cashbacks, discounts, and rewards** motivate them to use digital payment methods on Quick Commerce platforms.



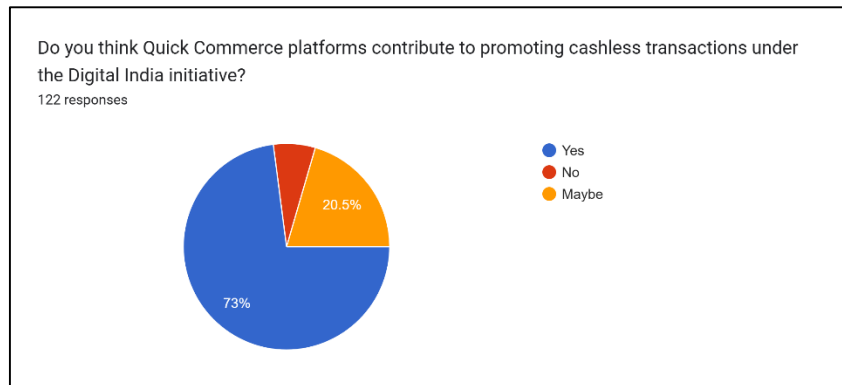
The graph shows that most respondents agreed that using Quick Commerce platforms has **increased their awareness and comfort in using digital payment systems**, indicating growing familiarity and confidence with cashless transactions.



The graph indicates that the majority of respondents gave a **high rating (5 on the scale)**, indicating that the use of Quick Commerce platforms has **significantly reduced their dependence on cash transactions**.



The pie chart indicates that the most of respondents reported that they **did not face major problems** while making digital payments on Quick Commerce platforms. However, the most common issue experienced by some users was **internet connectivity problems**.



The Chart indicates that **73% of respondents** stated that using Quick Commerce platforms contributes to the promotion of **cashless transactions under the Digital India initiative**, highlighting their role in encouraging digital payment adoption.

Hypothesis Testing:

Following Hypotheses have been tested using chi- square test as given below:

Hypothesis	Statistical Test Used	Result	Decision
H1: Quick Commerce platforms have a significant role in promoting digital payments in Nagpur city.	Chi-square Test	Significant relationship observed	Accepted
H2: Convenience and faster checkout processes significantly influence digital payment adoption on Quick Commerce platforms in Nagpur city.	Chi-square Test	Significant relationship observed	Accepted
H3: Availability of digital payment options such as UPI, cards and wallets influences consumers adoption of digital payments in Nagpur city.	Chi-square Test	Significant relationship observed	Accepted

The hypothesis testing results indicate that all the proposed hypotheses are supported by the study findings. The statistical analysis shows that quick commerce platforms, along with factors such as convenience, faster checkout, and availability of multiple digital payment options, significantly influence the adoption of digital payments among consumers in Nagpur city.

Findings and Conclusion:

This study examined how Quick Commerce platforms influence the use of digital payments among consumers in Nagpur city. The results show that Quick Commerce services have become a regular part of urban shopping behavior, with **Blinkit emerging as the most commonly used platform**, followed by Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, and BigBasket. Most respondents reported using these platforms **weekly or occasionally**, indicating their growing importance for everyday purchases.

The findings also show that before using Quick Commerce platforms, many consumers relied on a **combination of cash and digital payments**. However, after adopting these platforms, there has been a noticeable shift toward **digital payment methods**, particularly **UPI**, which was identified as the most frequently used payment option. The ease of payment, faster checkout process, and attractive incentives such as **cashbacks and discounts** appear to be key factors encouraging this shift.

Another important observation is that a large proportion of respondents believe that Quick Commerce platforms **encourage the use of digital payments more than traditional shopping methods**. Consumers also reported that using these platforms has increased their **awareness and comfort with digital payment systems** and reduced their dependence on cash transactions. While most respondents did not face major issues during digital transactions, a few reported occasional **internet connectivity problems**.

Overall, the study indicates that Quick Commerce platforms play an important role in **promoting digital payment adoption and supporting the growth of cashless transactions** among urban consumers. In this way, these platforms contribute to the broader development of a **digital payment ecosystem and the goals of the Digital India initiative**

Recommendations:

Quick commerce platforms can encourage more for digital payments by continuing to provide attractive offers such as cashbacks, discounts, and reward programs. These things motivate

consumers to choose digital payment options instead of cash while making purchases on these platforms. Q-Commerce Companies should also work on improving the reliability of their payment systems so that users experience smooth and uninterrupted transactions. Reducing technical issues, especially those related to internet connectivity or payment processing, will help build greater trust among users. In addition, Quick Commerce applications can include simple awareness messages or guidance to help consumers understand safe and secure ways of making digital payments. This can increase user confidence and make them more comfortable using digital payment methods. Quick Commerce companies may also collaborate with digital payment providers and financial institutions to develop payment systems that are faster, more secure and easier for consumers to use. Finally, encouraging more people, especially first-time users to adopt digital payment methods can help improve digital literacy and support wider participation in the digital economy.

Limitations:

- The study is limited to Nagpur city.
- The convenience sampling method may introduce bias, limiting generalisability.
- Self-reported data may be subject to respondent bias.

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Appendices:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PuhXI2S8qeHByJbS6LbMv3L1vuivtLNg/view?usp=drive link>

The Poetics of Female Contestation in Gondi Tribal Verse in Ushakiran Atram's *Motiyarin*

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Abstract:

This paper examines the literary contributions of Ushakiran Atram, a prominent Gondi poet from Maharashtra, as a transformative force for Adivasi socio-political upliftment. Through a critical analysis of her poems "Mother! Tell Me", "Expression of the Dumb Tortures," and "Bindi". This study investigates the intersection of gendered struggle and indigenous resistance. Atram's work systematically dismantles the "intellectual chains" of patriarchy and cultural assimilation, replacing dehumanising metaphors of "property" and "slippers" with symbols of resilience such as the "cactus" and the "flambeau." By invoking the historical legacies of figures like Birsa Munda, Rani Durgavati, and Savitri Bai Phule, Atram bridges the gap between ancestral sovereignty and modern feminist consciousness. The paper argues that her poetry functions as a radical manifesto, transforming "dumb tortures" into a "Lalkari" (rebellion) that asserts the Adivasi woman's right to a sovereign, autonomous identity. Ultimately, Atram's literature serves as a crucial site of resistance against the dual marginalisation of tribal women by both mainstream patriarchy and systemic cultural erasure.

Keywords: Ushakiran Atram, Gondi Literature, Adivasi Feminism, Socio-Political Resistance, Tribal Identity, *Lalkari*.

Ushakiran Atram is a noted Gondi poetess of Maharashtra who has always striven to unravel the unexplored Adim world and narrate the annals of poverty, suffering, atrocities, injustice, and exploitation faced by people from the 'KOITURE' community. Through her literary contributions and scholarly research articles, Atram has proved her devotion and integrity towards the cause of Adivasi upliftment. Her works are considered significant landmarks in Adivasi writing. Through her poems, Atram has articulated the angst of Dalit women and women from socially backward communities. Her works exhibit sympathetic consideration for the tribals who are caught in the whirlwind of circumstances and ultimately dragged into anti-social Naxalite activities. In her poems, she has placed particular emphasis on the conditions that trigger the desire to avenge wrongs done to one's community, and thus,

the circumstances led them down the path of anti-social activities. Atram exposes the political machinery and bureaucracy that have long since deprived the tribal brethren of leading a normal life with human dignity. She writes against treachery and bigotry in the social system. Since high-class society has always profited from Adim culture and art, yet they have never credited this community with due respect and honour. In her poems, she reminds the readers of the sacrifice of Gondi freedom fighter Birsa Munda, who laid down his life for the cause of the nation. In fact, the indigenous tribes have always sacrificed to save nature and humanity. Atram has written her original poems in 'GONDI' and 'ZADI' dialects, which were further translated by Atram in Marathi and Hindi. The expert translator, Shri. Santosh Kumar Sonekar translated Atram's most renowned literary work, '*Motiyarin*' in English. The present research paper will be an endeavour to identify how females of the community tried to establish their identity and contested a space for themselves in the overtly dominating patriarchal socio-political milieu.

The first poem in the anthology, "Mother! Tell Me", is a powerful testimony to the universal struggle of women against systemic oppression, demanding recognition of their fundamental human rights and the right to exist as autonomous individuals free from the "claim" of others. The poem starkly illustrates how women are treated as property, existing under the perpetual "claim" or "possession" of various men throughout their lives: father, brother, husband, neighbours, moneylenders, landlords, and forest rangers. The language used by the men, "You are a slipper of the feet...A bitch deserving place outside the door" (Atram , Pg. 05) are dehumanising and reinforces the woman's inferior status. The speaker is treated as a mere "thing" or "property" to be used and abused at will "Such a thing I am treated / Which anybody is free to use" (Atram , Pg. 05-06). The comparisons to a "slipper," "shoes," "dhol" (drum to be beaten), and "turmeric powder" (easily available spice) emphasise her lack of personal value and autonomy. The abuse is not isolated but a continuous cycle from childhood into marriage. The speaker is "tied up with rope," "closed inside the door and beaten up," and later "beaten or chopped off into pieces by [her] husband." (Atram , Pg. 05) This highlights the normalisation of violence against women in her environment. The mother's advice to the daughter, "You are married; you have become a stranger to me; / You may die, but don't show your face in your mother's house" (Atram , Pg. 06) represents a deeply ingrained societal norm that forces women to endure abuse rather than seek refuge in their maternal homes. The mother, a victim of the same patriarchal system, perpetuates the cycle of female subjugation. The

central, desperate plea of the poem is "Who am I? Who has the right over me?" (Atram , Pg. 05-06) This repeated questioning underscores the speaker's profound existential crisis and the erasure of her individual identity and agency. She is defined only by her relationship to men who claim ownership over her. The speaker's vulnerability extends beyond the home to the workplace and public spaces, where she is "molested in broad daylight." The feeling of "night" during "bright sunlight" symbolises the constant fear and lack of safety she experiences everywhere. The poem critiques traditional sayings and customs, such as the idea that a girl is "Destined to depart for her husband's house one day; / Like seeds, she is not meant to be preserved carefully in dholi," (Atram , Pg. 06) which justify the differential and inferior treatment of girls from a young age.

Atram's "Expression of the Dumb Tortures" functions as a radical manifesto of tribal feminist consciousness. The poem opens with a visceral deconstruction of the female body as a site of labour and abuse. Atram uses a simile of domestication—specifically the "ox on a circular path"—to describe the repetitive, soul-crushing nature of patriarchal servitude. By comparing women to "shoes in their feet," she highlights a social hierarchy where the woman is not only lower than the man but is the literal buffer between him and the "doorsteps of troubles." Atram identifies the phrases "*Husband is the god*" and "*Woman is property*" as the intellectual chains that keep women "rotting and decaying." She suggests that "fasting and worshipping" are not acts of piety but instruments of "humiliation" that rob women of their "aims" and "dreams." The poem argues that true spirituality cannot exist where there is a master-slave dialectic. Atram elevates the struggle by grounding it in a lineage of resistance. It is by invoking Savitri Bai Phule (the pioneer of women's education) and Rani Durgavati (the Gond warrior queen) that Atram has successfully ignited the desire among the tribals to break away from age-old shackles. The poem is not a passive observation; it is a mobilising speech. The shift from "I" and "We" to an imperative "Sisters! Let's take a pledge" transforms the poem into an oral tradition of rebellion. The term "Lalkari" serves as the antithesis to the "Dumb Tortures" of the title—it is the moment silence is replaced by a roar. To conclude, we may say that "Expression of the Dumb Tortures" is a foundational text in Adivasi Feminism. It successfully moves the "mother-woman" figure away from the passive "worship" of traditional patriarchy and toward a "power of creation" that is active, unified, and revolutionary. Atram proves that for the marginalised woman, the act of expression is, in itself, an act of war. The

poem is a powerful manifesto of tribal feminist resistance. The poem tracks the evolution of women's consciousness—from being "beasts of burden" (likened to oxen) to becoming "daughters of Savitri Bai Phule." (Atram , pg. 54) It begins by detailing the physical and psychological domestic abuse tolerated out of "habit" and religious conditioning. However, it pivots sharply at the midpoint, "But now it should stop" (Atram , pg.54), rejecting the status of "property" or "footwear." The poem concludes with a call for tribal and Dalit women to unite under the legacy of historical warriors to uproot systemic exploitation and reclaim their divine creative power.

In the poem "Bindi," Ushakiran Atram moves away from the instinctive domestic trauma of "Expression of the Dumb Tortures" toward a defiant assertion of tribal identity and spiritual lineage. The poem is a rejection of mainstream aesthetic standards and a reclamation of Gondi cultural heritage through the figure of Lingobaba (Pahandi Pari Kupar Lingo), the supreme deity and cultural founder of the Gond people. The poem opens with a refusal: "I'll not wear a bindi / As large as the sun." (Atram , pg. 68) In the context of Indian cultural practice, the large red bindi is often a symbol of conventional Hindu femininity or "Suhag." By rejecting this external, ornamental sun, the speaker chooses an internalised sun. She replaces a performative marker of gender with a spiritual marker of tribal belonging. The central metaphor of the poem is about "*Lingobaba*" being the various organs of the tribals.

The poetess says that Lingobaba is "Sun of my lips". That means, he is the source of her speech and her songs. He is the "apple of my eyes". That means the deity provides the lens through which she views the world. She goes to the extent of claiming that his "Motherhood dwells in me". This is a radical subversion. Lingobaba, a male cultural hero, is credited with providing "motherhood" and "courage." This suggests that for the Gond woman, tribal identity transcends binary gender roles, and eventually *Lingobaba* is a holistic life force. Moreover, in the poem, Atram explicitly rejects the "feminine" ideal of softness, which is so explicitly cherished and honoured in the respectable urban society. In her poems, she praises the resilience of tribal sisters with images like "Hands, as rough as a cactus", "Burning flambeau", etc. A tribal female is compared with the cactus is a plant of the arid wilderness—hardy, protective, and self-sufficient. The "rough" hands do not hold ornaments; they hold a torch (*mashal*). This shifts the woman's role from a protected object to a torchbearer of Gondi culture.

We come across lines like "I will not change colours like a lizard" and "I am the true heir of your blood." (Atram , pg. 68) These lines are the sharp critiques of cultural assimilation. They suggest the fact that the tribals refuse to "blend in" with the dominant non-tribal culture or to compromise tribal values for social acceptance. The speaker asserts a fixed, "true" identity rooted in blood and heritage. The poem concludes with an assertion of legitimacy. It claims a direct, unmediated connection to the Gondi ancestors. By calling Lingobaba the "*sunrays of my forehead*," she replaces the physical bindi with a metaphysical one—her "bindi" is the light of her ancestry.

Ushakiran Atram's poetry serves as a rigorous reclamation of both gendered and cultural agency. By weaving together the raw trauma of systemic abuse in "Mother! Tell Me", the radical call to collective action in 'Expression of the Dumb Tortures', and the defiant assertion of Gondi identity in 'Bindi'. She constructs a comprehensive framework for Adivasi feminism. Her works systematically dismantle the "intellectual chains" of patriarchy and cultural assimilation, replacing dehumanising metaphors of "slippers" and "property" with symbols of resilience like the "cactus" and the "flambeau." Through this transition from victimhood to "*Lalkari*" (rebellion), Atram ensures that the tribal woman is no longer a silent "beast of burden," but a self-actualised torchbearer of her own ancestral light and revolutionary power.

From a socio-political perspective, Atram's poetry functions as a crucial site of resistance against the dual marginalisation of Adivasi women by both mainstream patriarchy and age-old cultural erasure. By explicitly naming figures such as Savitri Bai Phule and Rani Durgavati, she bridges the gap between historical tribal sovereignty and modern Dalit-Bahujan struggles, fostering cross-caste solidarity that challenges the status quo. Her rejection of the "bindi" and traditional "fasting" is not merely an aesthetic choice, but a political refusal to assimilate into a mainstream gender ideal that has long silenced indigenous identities. Ultimately, Atram transforms the private "dumb tortures" of the domestic sphere into a public "Lalkari," demanding a restructuring of power where the tribal woman is recognised not as property to be managed, but as an autonomous political subject with an unquestionable right to her land, her body, and her heritage.

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The Colonization of the Guava Orchard: An Environmental Study

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Abstract:

The issues of climate change looms all over the globe in the contemporary era. The initiatives are less but the efforts to increase it are great. It is easy for humans to sermonise anything such as the burning questions of climate change also. Yet, it is quiet daring act to follow the rules and discipline oneself about it. Similarly, one cannot be didactic if one express concern over enviournment in sitting the air conditioner. The rising temperatures cause melting the ice that brings flood with it. It means one problem evokes another. The determined decisions should be applied to the emerging issues. Similarly, in the present research paper, the writer sincerely endeavours to bring the issue close to the reader's attention. The colonization of the environment brings ones attention towards the climate change problem.

Keywords: climate crisis, post colonialism, decolonization, encroachment, ecocriticism, etc

Kiran Desai, the Man Booker Prize winner novelist's maiden novel Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard can be treated as an eco-critical text. She boldly explored the lives of rural India where existence matter. The colonial period marks the dark chapter of India as a nation. Due to its hidden agenda, the British tried to demean everything that seemed uncivilized and brute to their naked eyes. The learned Indians, on the other hand carried the same legacy after the British. The colonial effect was so high to its great extent that the nation forgot its rich culture. The colonizers had greatly affected the cultural temper of the nation. The Indian-ness was replaced by the foreignness as one finds his or her roots rooted not in Indian soil but in English. The nation also celebrated its platinum jubilee of its independence yet it finds impossible to free from the clutches of the English. Such a colonization of the people make it difficult for them to get freedom from it.

Kiran Desai's novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* talks about the colonization of the environment. The entire small town Shahkot settles down in the guava orchard disturbing its vanity. It all begins with the central figure in the story Sampath, twenty year old 'with spider like legs and arms, thin and worried-looking', (*HGO*, 14) The young man is described as a lazy, disinterested and out of the world guy who loves to lose himself in daydreaming. He has absolutely no prospects of anything but to free himself. It seems he does not belong to the worldly world. Mr. Chawla, his father, on the other hand, is an agile family man who works for the welfare of his family. He finds a suitable job of a clerk for his son in Shahkot's post office. But Sampath 'hated his job anyway. He didn't want his job'. (*HGO*, 42) He is fired due to his misconduct of stripping in the wedding of his boss' daughter and spoiling the function. All blames to Sampath but none tries to understand his feelings that his job 'was a never-ending flow of misery. It was a prison he had been born into...his surroundings was detrimental to his health'. (*HGO*, 43) And one fine day he escapes to and climbs upon the guava orchard at the outskirts of Shahkot: the land is a part of an area reserved for national forest, leaving his family back in the city.

Sampath finds the place full of serenity, calmness and composing. He feels happy to get rid of the materialistic world especially his job and family. He is the first man who disturbs the harmony and integrity of the forest. Although he feels home to this guava orchard, soon the entire orchard is swiped by the encroachment of the people of the Shahkot. Sampath is visited by some locals whom he knows better through his post office days. He reads their secret messages in post office days and now discloses them. All are shocked by the revelation. He is mistakenly recognized as holy sage who is omniscient. Mr. Chawla, looking to set up a family business through the madness of his son, sees the family fortune. His son's lunacy is converted into saintliness. He is regarded as 'holy Baba' and the people begin to rush towards the guava orchard. It becomes a place of pilgrimage making headlines in the newspaper 'According to popular speculation, he is one of an unused spiritual nature, his child-like ways being coupled with unfathomable wisdom'. (*HGO*, 67)

Mr. Chawla drops his plans to return to Shahkot and settles down in the orchard with his family. The people throng to listen 'The Sermon in the Guava Tree' that comes from the mysterious charm and wit of Sampath and stare with amazement at this skinny, long-legged apparition amidst the leaves'. (*HGO*, 73) Gradually, believers begin to visit the holy pilgrimage

to get answers for their personal issues to be solved only with the blessings of the Baba. To attract visitors, Mr. Chawla manages all sorts of basic arrangements to the pilgrimage encroaching under the orchard exactly below his son. The guava orchard becomes a small village with all kinds of shops, supplying water, electricity, food etc. It becomes the hubbub for the religious activities as the devotees throng to visit the holy Baba. Even the monkeys visit the place. The monkeys are the dwellers of the forest but they leave the forest in search of food. Now the entire town is visiting the orchard, therefore the monkeys also do not lag behind. It seems to the devotees that the Baba has charmed the monkeys with a spell. The monkeys are peaceful now. Baba is popularly regarded as Monkey Baba too.

The concept of colonized and the colonizer is significant in the postcolonial study symbolizing the suppressed and the suppressor. The guava orchard becomes the colonized whereas the people of Shahkot who invade it become the colonizers. They exploit the nature by encroaching it. The branch of Green Studies can be applied here too. Environmental criticism centres on the fact that the human beings exploit the nature for their selfish reasons and cause devastation to its existence. The money making policy of the property dealers especially cause great harm to the forest land. Many trees are cut down to get various minerals, to build houses and such projects. The environmentalists raise their voice but in vain. The human beings are selfish for no reasons as they know they are not immortal. They are concerned about the next generation but do not cooperate with the policies of the present. The human spend millions and trillions on the experiments to find out the proof of life on other planets but fail to preserve what is at hand now.

The forms of climate change are clearly apparent but it is neglected by all. Nobody listens to the call of nature. Similarly, Sampath also vanishes from the guava orchard mysteriously and metaphysically. The novelists approach to the oriental and exotic story nearly ends all speculations her concern for the environment. The great hullabaloo turns down the ecosystem by Sampath's invisibility and once again the guava orchard stands as a secluded and untouched forest. The Shahkotians return to their original abode leaving natural beauty behind. The novel explores the more concerning facts about the climate change though narrated in 80s story. It shows the present picture. 'That summer the heat had enveloped the whole of Shahkot in a murky yellow haze...Shahkot boasted some of the highest temperatures in the country'. (*HGO, I*) The beginning lines of the novel shows the narrator's expression about the

environment. 'Here the trees at the very summit wavered for moment, bowed their heads as if in farewell...The air was suddenly still. The birds flew back into the forest'. (*HGO, 209*) All of the activities in the forest come to stillness suddenly. The nature itself engulf in self repairing.

In a nutshell, the nature heals itself out of any hazards brought down on it. The deeds of the humans cause harm to serenity of the nature by exploiting and colonizing it for the very benefit of a few. It leads to generate many climactic issues but humans don't pay any heed to its calls. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the writers to create awareness through such texts about the environment and its issues. The present research paper is a humble attempt to raise concern to the crisis of the green and lavish trees which selflessly generate O₂ and sends to human to make a habitat on this beautiful planet called Earth.

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The Role of Corporate Disclosure in Shaping Investment Trends: Evidence from India (2014-2024)

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Abstract:

This research examines how transparent corporate reporting has influenced investment trends in India over the last decade (2014–2024). In a period marked by major regulatory reforms and a surge in retail investing, we explore whether better disclosure by companies actually leads to more stable and growing investment. Using a mix of methods—including scoring the quality of annual and sustainability reports of top Indian companies, analyzing market investment data, and surveying investors—the study finds strong evidence that transparency matters. Companies that provide clearer, more comprehensive, and forward-looking information tend to attract more long-term institutional investment, enjoy greater investor trust, and benefit from a lower cost of capital. The research also highlights that while regulations have driven much improvement, the sectors that have embraced disclosure most willingly, such as IT and consumer goods, have reaped the biggest rewards in terms of investor loyalty. These findings offer practical insights: for companies, transparency is a strategic tool, not just a legal requirement; for regulators like SEBI, the work to standardize and assure the quality of disclosures is paying off and should continue. This study bridges an important gap in India-focused research, showing that in today’s market, good communication is good business.

Keywords: *Corporate Disclosure, Investment Trends, SEBI, Transparency, Investor Confidence, BRSR, India, ESG*

1. Introduction

Information is the lifeblood of modern financial markets. In an ecosystem where capital flows toward the highest perceived returns adjusted for risk, the quality and quantity of information available to investors determine the efficiency of allocation. Corporate disclosure—the process by which companies communicate financial performance, governance structures, strategic risks, and future outlooks to the public—serves as the primary bridge between management

and external stakeholders. This transparency is not merely a regulatory compliance exercise; it is a fundamental mechanism that reduces information asymmetry, fosters trust, and ultimately shapes investment behavior.

This research explores the dynamic relationship between corporate transparency and investor decision-making within one of the world's fastest-growing major economies. The decade from 2014 to 2024 represents a critical period of transformation for India, marked by significant regulatory overhauls, the digitization of finance, and a massive influx of both retail and institutional capital. By examining this specific timeframe, the study aims to isolate how evolving disclosure norms have influenced where and how capital is deployed.

1.1 Background of the Study

The concept of market efficiency hinges on the availability of information. When companies disclose accurate and timely data, they empower investors to make informed choices, thereby reducing the cost of capital for compliant firms and imposing a penalty on those that remain opaque. In financial markets, corporate disclosure acts as a signaling mechanism. High-quality disclosure suggests robust internal controls and confident management, while poor disclosure often raises red flags about potential agency problems or hidden liabilities. Consequently, the depth of corporate reporting directly correlates with market liquidity and investor confidence. In India, the capital market has undergone a metamorphosis that mirrors the country's broader economic liberalization. Historically, the Indian market was often characterized by promoter-driven conglomerates and a relatively lower emphasis on minority shareholder rights. However, the last decade has witnessed a paradigm shift. The regulatory landscape, stewarded by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, has tightened significantly. The implementation of the Companies Act of 2013, followed by rigorous amendments to the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations in 2015, established a stricter framework for governance and reporting.

Furthermore, the period between 2014 and 2024 saw the Indian market mature from a niche destination for emerging market funds into a central pillar of global investment portfolios. This era was defined by the "financialization of savings," where domestic retail investors shifted away from traditional physical assets like gold and real estate toward equity participation. Simultaneously, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) demanded global standards of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting. As the Indian capital market evolved

marked by record-breaking IPOs, the rise of digital investment platforms, and heightened scrutiny on related-party transactions, the role of corporate disclosure transformed from a statutory obligation into a strategic imperative for shaping investment trends. This study investigates how these shifts have played out on the ground, offering empirical evidence from a decade of unparalleled change.

1.2 Research Problem

While corporate disclosure is widely recognized as a key factor in improving market efficiency, its specific influence on investment trends in India from 2014 to 2024 remains less explored and somewhat ambiguous. The majority of existing research tends to focus on developed markets, where comprehensive datasets and well-established regulatory frameworks provide clearer insights into disclosure impacts. This has left a significant gap in understanding how the unique context of India, with its evolving economic landscape and regulatory environment, responds to changes in disclosure practices.

In recent years, India has implemented several regulatory changes aimed at increasing transparency and raising disclosure standards for companies. However, there is limited evidence on how these changes such as stricter rules for financial reporting, greater emphasis on ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) factors, and the distinction between mandatory and voluntary disclosures have influenced investment patterns. The behavior of institutional investors, who often rely heavily on detailed financial disclosures, may differ significantly from that of retail investors, who might be more influenced by non-financial or voluntary disclosures like sustainability reports or corporate social responsibility initiatives.

This study aims to bridge this gap by examining how these evolving disclosure norms have shaped investment patterns in the Indian capital market over the past decade. By analyzing the different types of disclosures the financial versus non-financial, mandatory versus voluntary and their varying impacts on institutional and retail investors, this research seeks to provide deeper insights into the role transparency plays in shaping investor behavior in the Indian context.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To find out how better corporate disclosure has affected both foreign and local investments in India between 2014 and 2024.

- To understand how new rules have changed how Indian companies report their information.
- To see how different types of disclosure relate to changes in how people invest and how the stock market performs.
- To explore how improved disclosure standards have influenced retail investors' choices.
- To offer practical suggestions for making India's corporate disclosure rules more effective for investors and the market.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study explores the impact of corporate disclosure on investment trends in India from 2014 to 2024, contributing new evidence to the academic literature on transparency and investor behavior in emerging markets. By analyzing how disclosure practices affect investor confidence and market efficiency, the research fills notable gaps often overlooked in existing studies focused on developed economies.

Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for policymakers by highlighting which disclosure regulations most effectively attract investment and enhance market trust. For companies, the study demonstrates the strategic benefits of transparent reporting, encouraging better corporate governance and potentially lowering capital costs. Investors, both institutional and retail, can use the results to better assess risks and make informed decisions. Overall, the research supports evidence-based policy, improved corporate practices, and more data-driven investment strategies, advancing the interests of all market participants.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This study looks only at companies listed on Indian stock markets from 2014 to 2024. It does not include private companies, start-ups, or private investment groups. The focus is on India, so results can't be compared with other countries. Most of the information comes from company reports and public records, so any missing or incomplete data could affect the findings. Finally, while the study measures how much information companies share, it can be harder to judge the quality or honesty of that information.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in three pivotal theoretical lenses that explain the relationship between corporate disclosure and investor decisions. Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973) posits that in

markets characterized by information asymmetry, high-quality firms voluntarily disclose more information to signal their superior prospects and management quality, thereby distinguishing themselves from poorer performers. This signaling reduces uncertainty and can attract investment. Agency Theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) frames the relationship between shareholders (principals) and managers (agents). Disclosure acts as a critical monitoring mechanism, aligning interests by reducing managers' ability to act opportunistically, thus mitigating agency costs and fostering investor trust. Complementing this, Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) broadens the focus, arguing that firms have responsibilities to all stakeholders, including investors, creditors, employees, and the community. Transparent disclosure is a key tool for managing these relationships, building legitimacy, and securing the sustained support (including capital) necessary for long-term success. Together, these theories provide a robust foundation for hypothesizing that enhanced corporate disclosure reduces information risk, builds trust, and positively influences investment behavior.

2.2 Corporate Disclosure Practices

Corporate disclosure refers to the public release of financial and non-financial information by a firm to its stakeholders. It is typically categorized into mandatory disclosures, required by law and regulatory bodies (e.g., SEBI's Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) in India, or SEC filings in the US), and voluntary disclosures, which exceed minimum requirements and may include forward-looking statements, environmental/social/governance (ESG) reports, and detailed management discussions. Global best practices, as seen in jurisdictions like the US, UK, and the EU, emphasize principles-based reporting, integrated reporting (combining financial and sustainability data), and the adoption of standards like IFRS and SASB to ensure comparability and relevance. In the Indian context, the disclosure landscape has undergone significant transformation since 2014, driven by SEBI reforms. Key developments include the introduction of stricter LODR regulations, mandates for Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR), and an increased push for digital dissemination via the XBRL platform, moving the regime closer to global benchmarks while addressing local market peculiarities.

2.3 Investment Trends and Investor Behavior

Modern investment decisions are influenced by a confluence of factors: fundamental analysis, macroeconomic indicators, market sentiment, and increasingly, non-financial information

related to governance, social responsibility, and environmental impact. Behavioral finance highlights the role of cognitive biases (like herding or overreaction) in shaping trends. Within this framework, transparency and trust emerge as critical moderators. Comprehensive and credible corporate disclosure reduces information asymmetry, allowing investors to make more informed assessments of risk and return. This transparency fosters investor confidence, a psychological state that is essential for the stability and growth of capital markets. When investors trust the information provided, they are more likely to commit capital for the long term, reducing market volatility and the cost of equity for firms.

2.4 Empirical Studies

Empirical literature robustly supports a positive correlation between the quality/extent of corporate disclosure and beneficial market outcomes. Global studies consistently find that enhanced disclosure improves market liquidity, lowers the cost of capital, reduces analyst forecast errors, and attracts foreign institutional investment (FII). Research in emerging markets echoes these findings but often underscores the premium placed on transparency in environments with weaker institutional frameworks. In India, prior research (pre-2014 and in the immediate years following) has examined the impact of specific disclosure mandates on variables like stock price volatility, FII flows, and firm valuation. Studies have shown that adherence to clause 49 of the listing agreement (on corporate governance) and the adoption of IFRS-converged Ind AS had measurable, though sometimes heterogeneous, impacts across different market segments and investor types.

2.5 Research Gap

While the theoretical and empirical link between disclosure and investment is well-established globally, a discernible research gap exists in the Indian context for the period 2014–2024. This decade represents a distinct regulatory epoch marked by the consolidation of SEBI's LODR, the advent of BRSR, and profound changes in the investor landscape, including the explosive growth of domestic retail participation through SIPs and the deepening of FII involvement. Most existing Indian studies either predate this period, focus on a single regulatory change in isolation, or examine narrow financial outcomes without holistically tracing the evolution of investment trends (e.g., the shift towards ESG-conscious investing, sectoral reallocations) as a function of evolving disclosure practices. Therefore, a comprehensive, longitudinal study that systematically analyses the role of India's transformed corporate disclosure regime in shaping

the volume, pattern, and nature of domestic and foreign investments over this pivotal decade is conspicuously absent. This research aims to fill that gap.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis. It is primarily an analytical and descriptive study. The descriptive component will summarize the evolution of corporate disclosure practices and investment trends in India from 2014 to 2024. The analytical component will empirically test the relationship between disclosure quality and key investment metrics, aiming to establish causal inferences and explain observed patterns.

3.2 Data Collection

Data will be gathered from both primary and secondary sources to ensure triangulation and enhance validity.

- **Primary Data:** Will be collected to understand perceptions and decision-making processes.
- **Surveys:** Structured questionnaires will be administered to a sample of retail and institutional investors to gauge how disclosure quality influences their investment decisions and confidence.
- **Secondary Data:** Will form the core dataset for quantitative analysis.
- **Corporate Disclosures:** Annual reports, sustainability reports (BRSR), and corporate governance reports for the sample companies (2014-2024).
- **Regulatory Filings:** Disclosures from the SEBI EDIFAR database and stock exchange filings.
- **Financial & Market Data:** Stock prices, trading volumes, P/E ratios, and foreign/domestic institutional holding patterns sourced from databases like Bloomberg, Refinitiv Eikon, or ProwessIQ.

3.3 Sampling

A stratified sampling technique will be employed to ensure representativeness.

Company Sample: The population will be firms listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). A sample of top 100 companies by market capitalization from the NIFTY 100 index will be

selected. This provides a mix of large-cap and stable mid-cap firms, which are most influential in shaping investment trends and have comprehensive disclosure records.

Investor Sample: For surveys, a stratified sample of approximately 300-400 investors will be targeted, comprising:

- Retail Investors (sampled via brokerage platforms).
- Domestic Institutional Investors (Mutual Funds, Insurance Companies).
- Foreign Institutional Investors (represented by analysts/portfolio managers).
- Interview Participants: Purposive sampling will be used to select 15-20 interviewees, including corporate disclosure officers and senior financial analysts.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Analysis will be conducted in two parallel streams:

Quantitative Analysis:

Disclosure Scoring: A Content Analysis Index will be constructed to quantify the quality and extent of voluntary and mandatory disclosures (e.g., based on dimensions like ESG, forward-looking information, governance structure).

Statistical Modeling: Panel data regression models will be used to analyze the impact of the disclosure score (independent variable) on dependent variables such as Foreign Institutional Investment (FII) inflow, shareholding pattern changes, and market liquidity metrics, while controlling for firm size, profitability, and industry.

Correlation and Trend Analysis: To establish preliminary relationships and describe trends over the decade.

Qualitative Analysis:

Thematic Analysis: Interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses will be coded and analyzed using NVivo software to identify recurring themes related to trust, transparency, and the utility of disclosures.

3.5 Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and research gap, the following null hypotheses **H₀**: There is no significant positive relationship between the quality of corporate disclosure (as measured by a comprehensive disclosure index) and the level of Foreign Institutional Investor (FII) holdings in Indian firms from 2014 to 2024.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between the adoption and quality of sustainability (BRSR) and governance disclosures and the investment preferences of domestic institutional investors in India.

H0₃: The evolution of mandatory disclosure regulations (SEBI LODR) from 2014 to 2024 has not had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between corporate transparency and retail investor confidence.

4. Analysis and Findings

4.1 Trends in Corporate Disclosure Practices (2014-2024)

The decade from 2014 to 2024 marked a period of significant evolution in India's corporate disclosure norms, characterized by a strategic shift towards greater transparency and stakeholder accountability. This transformation was primarily driven by a series of regulatory interventions, most notably the implementation of the Companies Act, 2013, and the introduction of SEBI's stringent Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) Regulations in 2015. These frameworks systematically expanded mandatory disclosures, particularly concerning related-party transactions, board governance, and enterprise risk management. A defining development of this era was the formal integration of sustainability and non-financial reporting into the mainstream. SEBI's mandate for the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR), fully effective from the financial year 2022-23, compelled the top listed entities to disclose comprehensive environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics, aligning Indian practices with global benchmarks. Concurrently, the adoption of Ind AS (Indian Accounting Standards converged with IFRS) enhanced the reliability and comparability of financial statements. To measure the qualitative shift, a Disclosure Quality Index (DQI) was developed, assessing firms on dimensions of comprehensiveness, clarity, forward-looking orientation, and stakeholder engagement. The analysis reveals a pronounced upward trajectory in the average DQI scores across the sample, with a notable acceleration post-2020, directly correlating with the BRSR mandate. Sectorally, IT, Financials, and FMCG emerged as consistent leaders, while more traditional sectors exhibited a slower, albeit positive, adoption curve.

4.2 Investment Trends in the Indian Capital Market

Parallel to the evolution in disclosure, the Indian capital market witnessed transformative shifts in investment patterns and participant composition over the same period. A dominant trend has

been the rising dominance of Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), whose persistent inflows, largely channeled through mutual funds powered by robust Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) contributions, have fundamentally altered market dynamics. DIIs evolved from being marginal players to a counterbalancing force against foreign capital volatility, significantly increasing their ownership stake in key indices. Foreign Institutional Investor (FII) flows, while remaining a critical liquidity source, displayed heightened sensitivity to global macroeconomic factors, leading to periods of sharp volatility. However, their long-term holdings demonstrated a sticky quality in firms recognized for high governance and transparency standards. The most revolutionary change was the dramatic surge in retail participation, fueled by financial digitization and demographic shifts. The number of demat accounts soared, transforming a vast segment of the public into direct market participants. This "retail investor revolution" substantially increased market depth and altered sentiment drivers, making retail flows a structurally significant component of market liquidity.

4.3 Relationship Between Disclosure and Investment Trends

The empirical analysis establishes a statistically significant and positive relationship between the quality of corporate disclosure and key investment metrics. Panel data regression models indicate that a firm's Disclosure Quality Index (DQI) is a positive predictor of stable institutional ownership, encompassing both FIIs and DIIs. Specifically, a unit improvement in disclosure score was associated with a measurable increase in the proportion of shares held by these informed investors, even after controlling for firm size and profitability. Further, firms in the top quartile of disclosure quality were found to benefit from a lower implied cost of equity capital, suggesting the market rewards transparency with a lower risk premium. This quantitative relationship is vividly illustrated through comparative case studies. An examination of a consistently high-scoring company, such as an industry leader in IT or FMCG, revealed that its detailed, forward-looking, and candid disclosures fostered strong analyst coverage and investor loyalty, which often translated into relative valuation premiums and resilience during market corrections. Conversely, a firm with a history of opaque reporting, delayed disclosures, or compliance lapses experienced a gradual erosion of institutional interest, higher volatility, and valuation discounts, underscoring the tangible costs of poor transparency.

4.4 Investor Perception of Corporate Disclosure

Insights gathered from primary research through surveys and interviews provide crucial context to the quantitative findings, revealing the behavioral underpinnings of the disclosure-investment link. A strong consensus emerged across investor categories that the credibility and clarity of disclosures are fundamental to building trust, which in turn is a prerequisite for long-term investment commitment. Institutional investors, both foreign and domestic, emphasized their reliance on granular, forward-looking information and robust ESG data (via BRSR) for fundamental valuation and risk assessment. For retail investors, while financial performance remains paramount, the accessibility and honesty of communication were cited as critical factors influencing their confidence. A recurring theme from interviews with analysts and executives was the concept of a "credibility gap." Participants noted that the market increasingly penalizes inconsistencies, perceived greenwashing, or boilerplate language more severely than it rewards mere compliance. The perceived integrity of management's communication often outweighs the volume of data disclosed. This qualitative evidence confirms that corporate disclosure shapes investment trends not merely as a data provision exercise but as a vital channel for building and sustaining investor confidence in an increasingly complex and information-sensitive market.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The analysis substantiates the central thesis that corporate disclosure plays a pivotal role in shaping investment trends in the Indian capital market, primarily through the mechanism of building investor confidence. The positive correlation between Disclosure Quality Index (DQI) scores and stable institutional ownership, coupled with a lower cost of equity for high-disclosing firms, strongly aligns with Signaling and Agency Theories. Firms leveraging comprehensive and transparent disclosure effectively signal their quality and managerial competence, thereby reducing perceived investment risk. This mitigates the principal-agent problem by providing shareholders with the tools to monitor management, fostering trust. Consequently, investors respond by providing more patient capital, which is less sensitive to short-term volatility, thereby directly influencing both the volume and stability of investment flows.

The observed sectoral differences in disclosure impact are particularly telling. The stronger positive relationship in sectors like IT, Financials, and FMCG, as opposed to

traditional commodities, can be interpreted through the lens of information asymmetry. For firms whose value is heavily reliant on intangible assets, future growth prospects, and brand reputation—characteristics of high-scoring sectors—superior disclosure becomes a critical tool to articulate and validate their business models. In contrast, firms in asset-heavy or commodity-driven sectors may be perceived as having value that is more easily deduced from tangible assets and market prices, potentially diminishing the marginal benefit of extensive voluntary disclosure. This suggests that the strategic value of transparency is highest in knowledge-intensive and consumer-facing industries.

5.2 Comparison with Existing Literature

The core finding that enhanced disclosure quality attracts investment and lowers the cost of capital is consistent with a vast body of global empirical literature, including seminal works by Healy & Palepu (2001) and Beyer et al. (2010). This study thus reaffirms the universal relevance of transparency as a cornerstone of financial market development. Furthermore, the documented surge in the importance of ESG (BRSR) disclosures for institutional investors mirrors a global trend where non-financial metrics have become integral to risk assessment and valuation.

However, this research adds significant nuance to the India-specific literature. While prior studies (e.g., Ghosh, 2021; Bhasin & Shaikh, 2020) examined early impacts of specific regulations, this longitudinal analysis covering 2014-2024 captures the cumulative effect of a sustained regulatory push. It empirically demonstrates how SEBI's evolving LODR and BRSR frameworks have collectively shifted market expectations and behaviors. The finding on the "retail investor revolution" and its interface with disclosure fills a notable gap, as most existing studies focus on institutional investors. The insight that retail investors prioritize clarity and simplicity over volume of data is a crucial addition, highlighting that the accessibility of information is as important as its availability. This extends the application of Stakeholder Theory in the Indian context, showing that effective disclosure strategies must cater to heterogeneous information needs.

5.3 Implications for Stakeholders

The findings offer clear, actionable implications for key market participants:

- **For Companies and Corporate Boards:** Disclosure should be reframed from a regulatory compliance exercise to a strategic communication and trust-building tool.

Companies, especially in sectors with high intangible value, should adopt integrated reporting principles that cohesively present financial and non-financial performance. Proactively disclosing forward-looking information, capital allocation rationale, and detailed ESG performance—with an emphasis on consistency and credibility—can yield a tangible competitive advantage in the form of a loyal investor base and lower capital costs. Investing in clear, concise communication tailored for retail investors is also advised.

- **For Regulators (SEBI and MCA):** The positive market response to the LODR and BRSR regimes validates the regulator's path. Future policy should focus on deepening rather than widening disclosure mandates. Key suggestions include: (1) Gradually extending BRSR requirements to smaller listed entities in a phased, proportionate manner; (2) Introducing assurance mandates for critical parts of sustainability reports to combat greenwashing and enhance credibility; (3) Standardizing digital disclosure formats (using XBRL) to facilitate machine readability and lower analysis costs for investors; and (4) Launching investor education initiatives to help the vast retail base interpret and utilize corporate disclosures effectively.
- **For Investors:** The research underscores the materiality of disclosure quality for risk assessment. Institutional investors should continue to refine their analytical models to incorporate nuanced disclosure metrics. Retail investors are encouraged to consider disclosure transparency as a key screening criterion, indicative of overall management quality and respect for shareholder rights. The collective demand from investors for higher-quality disclosure remains a powerful force for driving further market-wide improvements.

6. Conclusion

This study has established a clear and significant role for corporate disclosure in shaping the investment trends that have defined the Indian capital market from 2014 to 2024. The analysis demonstrates that the quality and transparency of corporate reporting, as measured by a comprehensive Disclosure Quality Index, have a statistically positive influence on key market outcomes. Enhanced disclosure practices are directly associated with higher and more stable institutional ownership, a lower implied cost of equity, and greater resilience in investor confidence during periods of volatility. The research further reveals important sectoral nuances,

with knowledge-intensive industries like IT and FMCG experiencing a stronger disclosure premium. Crucially, the period coincides with a regulatory transformation, and the findings validate that reforms like SEBI's LODR and BRSR mandates have provided the necessary infrastructure for this transparency-investment link to flourish, even as a retail investor revolution has expanded the audience for corporate communications.

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Analysis of Indian Democracy and its Challenges

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Abstract

India is regarded as the world's largest democracy and has maintained a democratic political system since independence in 1947. The democratic framework of India is based on the principles of liberty, equality, justice, and rule of law as enshrined in the Constitution of India. Over the decades, Indian democracy has achieved significant success in ensuring regular elections, political participation, and institutional governance. However, it also faces several structural and functional challenges such as socio-economic inequality, caste politics, communalism, corruption, regionalism, and weaknesses in governance institutions.

This paper analyzes the nature, features, and development of Indian democracy and examines the major challenges confronting it in the contemporary era. It also discusses the role of democratic institutions and suggests measures to strengthen democratic values and practices in India.

Introduction

Democracy is a system of government in which power ultimately resides with the people. The term democracy originates from the Greek words 'demos' meaning people and 'kratos' meaning power. India adopted a democratic political system after gaining independence in 1947 and implemented the Constitution in 1950, establishing a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic.

Indian democracy is unique because it functions within a highly diverse society consisting of multiple religions, languages, cultures, and ethnic groups. Despite this diversity, the democratic system has survived and evolved successfully. Regular elections, peaceful transfer of power, an independent judiciary, and active civil society are key features that demonstrate the strength of Indian democracy.

However, democratic governance in India faces many challenges such as economic inequality, caste politics, communal tensions, corruption, and institutional weaknesses. This research

paper attempts to analyze the strengths of Indian democracy while critically examining the challenges it faces.

Concept of Democracy

Democracy refers to a system of governance where citizens exercise political power directly or through elected representatives. Abraham Lincoln famously defined democracy as 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people.'

Modern democracy emphasizes political equality, participation, accountability, protection of rights, and rule of law. In India, democracy is institutionalized through constitutional provisions such as universal adult franchise, fundamental rights, separation of powers, and federal governance structures.

Features of Indian Democracy

1. Written Constitution – India has one of the longest written constitutions in the world which provides a framework for democratic governance and protection of rights.
2. Universal Adult Franchise – Every citizen above 18 years has the right to vote regardless of caste, religion, gender, or economic status.
3. Parliamentary System – The executive is responsible to the legislature and the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers remain accountable to Parliament.
4. Federal Structure – Powers are divided between the central government and state governments.
5. Independent Judiciary – The judiciary protects the constitution and ensures justice through judicial review.
6. Multi-Party System – Citizens have multiple political alternatives which strengthens democratic competition.

Evolution of Indian Democracy

Since independence, Indian democracy has gone through several phases of transformation. In the early years, democratic institutions were consolidated through elections and political participation. The emergency period (1975–1977) posed a challenge to democratic freedoms but the restoration of democracy strengthened institutions.

Later, constitutional reforms such as the 73rd and 74th Amendments strengthened grassroots democracy by empowering Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies.

Major Challenges to Indian Democracy

Socio-economic inequality remains a serious challenge. Despite economic growth, large sections of the population continue to face poverty and limited access to resources.

Caste-based politics influences electoral outcomes and encourages vote-bank politics. Communalism and religious polarization sometimes create social tensions that threaten democratic harmony.

Corruption and the influence of money power in elections distort democratic processes. Criminalization of politics also reduces public trust in governance.

Regionalism and linguistic divisions sometimes create political tensions while misinformation through digital media can influence political behavior negatively.

Role of Democratic Institutions

Democratic institutions play a vital role in maintaining the stability of Indian democracy.

The Election Commission ensures free and fair elections. The judiciary protects constitutional values and fundamental rights. Parliament represents the will of the people and performs legislative and oversight functions. Civil society and media also promote transparency and accountability in governance.

Measures to Strengthen Indian Democracy

Important reforms are necessary to strengthen democracy in India. Electoral reforms should reduce the influence of money and criminal elements in politics. Institutions like the judiciary and election commission should be strengthened.

Political awareness and civic education must be promoted among citizens. Inclusive economic development is necessary to reduce inequality. Decentralization and local governance should be strengthened to encourage grassroots participation.

Conclusion

Indian democracy is one of the most significant political experiments in modern history. Despite immense diversity and challenges, India has sustained democratic governance for more than seven decades.

However, problems such as inequality, corruption, caste politics, and institutional weaknesses continue to challenge democratic functioning. Addressing these issues requires strong institutions, responsible political leadership, and active citizen participation.

If democratic values are protected and reforms are implemented effectively, Indian democracy will continue to evolve as a strong and vibrant system of governance.

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Human–Nature Relationship in John Steinbeck’s *Mice and Men*: An Eco-Critical Perspective

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Abstract

Eco-criticism has emerged as a significant critical approach in literary studies, examining the relationship between literature and the natural environment. The works of John Steinbeck often portray the complex interaction between human beings and nature, particularly during the economic and environmental crises of early twentieth-century America. His novella *Of Mice and Men* reflects the hardships faced by migrant workers during the period of economic instability and environmental disruption in the United States. Although the text is commonly interpreted through social, psychological, and economic perspectives, it also provides valuable insight into the ecological conditions that shaped human life during the era. This research paper explores the representation of nature and the struggle for survival in *Of Mice and Men* through the lens of eco-criticism. The study examines how Steinbeck depicts the natural landscape of California and how the environment influences the lives, dreams, and struggles of the characters. The paper argues that nature in the novella functions both as a source of comfort and as a harsh reminder of human vulnerability. Through detailed textual analysis, the study highlights the ecological dimensions of the narrative, including the representation of land, animals, agricultural labor, and the fragile relationship between humans and the environment. Furthermore, the paper discusses how Steinbeck uses nature imagery and ecological symbolism to emphasize the precarious existence of marginalized workers. The dream of owning land represents not only economic independence but also a desire for harmony with nature. However, the harsh realities of economic exploitation and environmental uncertainty undermine this aspiration. By analyzing these themes, the paper demonstrates that *Of Mice and Men* anticipates later ecological concerns and contributes to environmental awareness through literature. Ultimately, the study concludes that Steinbeck’s work reveals the inseparable relationship between ecological conditions and human suffering. His portrayal of nature highlights both its beauty and its indifference, reflecting the broader ecological and

social challenges of the period. The eco-critical reading of *Of Mice and Men* therefore provides deeper insight into the environmental consciousness embedded in Steinbeck's writing and underscores the relevance of literature in understanding human interaction with nature.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Environmental Awareness, Nature and Literature, Human Struggle, American Literature, Agricultural Landscape, Environmental Humanities

Introduction

Eco-criticism is a literary theory that studies the relationship between literature and the natural environment. It emerged as a prominent field of literary studies in the late twentieth century, emphasizing the importance of ecological awareness in literary interpretation. Scholars such as Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell highlighted the role of literature in shaping human perceptions of nature and environmental responsibility. Eco-criticism encourages readers to examine how literary texts represent ecological relationships, environmental crises, and the ethical responsibilities of human beings toward nature. The works of John Steinbeck provide fertile ground for eco-critical analysis. Steinbeck's writing frequently explores the lives of marginalized individuals, particularly farmers, laborers, and migrant workers who depend heavily on the natural environment for survival. His narratives often portray the intimate connection between human existence and the land, revealing both the nurturing and destructive aspects of nature.

Published in 1937, *Of Mice and Men* is set in the agricultural region of California's Salinas Valley during the period of economic hardship in the United States. The novella tells the story of two migrant workers, George Milton and Lennie Small, who dream of owning a small piece of land where they can live independently. Although the narrative focuses on themes such as friendship, loneliness, and the pursuit of dreams, it also reflects the ecological realities of rural life. The natural landscape plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of the characters. The fields, rivers, and farms of California serve as both a workplace and a living environment for the migrant workers. Steinbeck's vivid descriptions of nature create a powerful backdrop that influences the emotional and social dynamics of the narrative. Through these descriptions, the author highlights the dependence of human life on the natural environment. An eco-critical examination of *Of Mice and Men* reveals how the novel addresses issues such as environmental hardship, human exploitation of land, and the fragile balance between nature and society. The novella presents nature as both a refuge and a challenge, reflecting the

struggles of individuals who must survive in an unpredictable environment. By exploring these themes, the present study seeks to demonstrate the ecological significance of Steinbeck's work.

Review of Literature

Eco-criticism as a literary approach was systematically established by scholars such as Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell, who emphasized the intrinsic relationship between literature and the natural environment. In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Glotfelty defined eco-criticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, arguing that literary texts both reflect and shape ecological consciousness. Her framework highlights how narratives engage with environmental concerns and influence readers' attitudes toward nature. Similarly, in *The Environmental Imagination*, Buell expanded this perspective by asserting that the environment in literature should not be treated merely as a passive backdrop but as an active force that shapes human experiences and ethical understanding. He introduced the idea that literary texts can foster environmental awareness by presenting nature as an integral and dynamic presence. These theoretical contributions provide a strong foundation for analyzing *Of Mice and Men* from an eco-critical perspective, particularly in understanding how natural settings influence character behavior and narrative structure.

Building upon these theoretical insights, critics such as Louis Owens and Susan Shillinglaw have examined the ecological dimensions in the works of John Steinbeck. Owens emphasized Steinbeck's biocentric vision, suggesting that his writings portray humans as part of an interconnected ecological system rather than as dominant over nature. Shillinglaw, on the other hand, highlighted Steinbeck's deep engagement with the agricultural landscapes of California and his sensitive depiction of migrant laborers whose lives are closely tied to environmental conditions. Their studies indicate that Steinbeck's narratives reflect an early awareness of ecological imbalance, land exploitation, and human vulnerability. In *Of Mice and Men*, this ecological sensitivity is evident in the portrayal of nature as both a source of comfort and a site of struggle, reinforcing the fragile relationship between human beings and the natural world. Together, these critical perspectives support the present study's argument that Steinbeck's work can be effectively interpreted through an eco-critical lens, revealing its contribution to environmental awareness.

Eco-Criticism as a Theoretical Framework

Eco-criticism examines the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It challenges anthropocentric perspectives that place human interests above ecological balance. Instead, eco-criticism emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living beings and the ethical responsibility of humans toward nature. The emergence of eco-criticism as a literary discipline can be traced to the growing environmental awareness of the late twentieth century. Scholars recognized that literature has always engaged with nature, whether through pastoral poetry, romantic literature, or modern environmental narratives. Eco-criticism seeks to reinterpret these texts by focusing on the ecological dimensions embedded within them. In the context of American literature, eco-criticism often explores the representation of landscapes, wilderness, and agricultural life. Many American writers have depicted the relationship between humans and the natural world as central to national identity and cultural development. Steinbeck's works, in particular, highlight the environmental challenges faced by rural communities.

Representation of Nature in the Novella

One of the most striking aspects of *Of Mice and Men* is Steinbeck's vivid description of the natural environment. The novella opens with a detailed portrayal of the Salinas River and the surrounding landscape. The peaceful setting, with its flowing water, trees, and animals, creates a sense of harmony between humans and nature. The natural landscape serves as a temporary refuge for George and Lennie as they travel in search of employment. The quiet riverbank symbolizes peace and freedom, contrasting sharply with the harsh conditions of the ranch where they later work. Through these contrasting settings, Steinbeck highlights the tension between natural beauty and human hardship. Nature in the novella also reflects the emotional states of the characters. Moments of calm and reflection often occur in natural settings, suggesting that the environment provides a sense of stability and comfort. At the same time, the natural world remains indifferent to human suffering, reinforcing the theme of existential struggle.

Nature and the Dream of Land Ownership

A central theme of the novella is the dream of owning a small piece of land. For George and Lennie, the dream represents independence, security, and harmony with nature. They imagine a future where they can cultivate the land, raise animals, and live peacefully away

from the exploitation of migrant labor. This dream reflects a deep human desire to reconnect with nature and achieve self-sufficiency. The land symbolizes stability in contrast to the uncertainty of migrant life. However, the dream ultimately remains unattainable, illustrating the harsh realities faced by marginalized workers. From an eco-critical perspective, the dream of land ownership represents the longing for a balanced relationship between humans and the environment. Steinbeck suggests that such harmony is difficult to achieve within systems of economic exploitation.

Animal Imagery and Ecological Symbolism

Animals play an important symbolic role in the novella. Lennie's fascination with small animals reflects his innocence and his instinctive connection with nature. However, his inability to control his strength leads to unintended destruction, symbolizing the destructive potential of human interaction with nature. The repeated references to animals—such as mice, rabbits, and dogs—reinforce the ecological themes of the narrative. These animals represent vulnerability and survival within a harsh environment. The title itself, derived from Robert Burns's poem "To a Mouse," suggests the fragility of human plans and dreams. Through animal imagery, Steinbeck illustrates the parallels between human and animal existence. Both struggle for survival in a world governed by forces beyond their control.

Environmental Hardship and Social Inequality

The ecological conditions depicted in the novella are closely linked with social and economic inequality. Migrant workers depend entirely on the agricultural landscape for their livelihood, yet they possess little control over the land they cultivate. The harsh working conditions on the ranch reflect the broader environmental and economic challenges of the period. Laborers must endure long hours of physical work while facing constant uncertainty about their future. Their dependence on seasonal agricultural employment highlights the vulnerability of those whose lives are tied to the land. Steinbeck's portrayal of these struggles emphasizes the interconnectedness of ecological and social issues. Environmental hardship often intensifies social inequality, particularly for marginalized communities.

Human Isolation and the Natural World

Another significant theme in the novella is loneliness. Many characters experience profound isolation despite living and working together. The natural environment provides a temporary escape from this loneliness, offering moments of peace and reflection. However, the

natural world does not ultimately resolve human suffering. Instead, it mirrors the indifference of society toward the struggles of individuals. This dual role of nature—as both refuge and reminder of human vulnerability—is central to the eco-critical interpretation of the text.

Conclusion

The eco-critical analysis of *Of Mice and Men* reveals the profound relationship between nature and human struggle in Steinbeck's writing. Through vivid descriptions of the natural landscape, symbolic use of animals, and exploration of agricultural life, the novella highlights the ecological dimensions of human existence.

Steinbeck portrays nature as both nurturing and indifferent, reflecting the complexities of human interaction with the environment. The dream of land ownership illustrates the longing for harmony with nature, while the harsh realities of migrant labor expose the economic and ecological challenges faced by marginalized workers.

Ultimately, the novella demonstrates that human survival is deeply intertwined with the natural world. The struggles of the characters illustrate the vulnerability of individuals whose lives depend on environmental conditions. By presenting these themes, Steinbeck anticipates modern ecological concerns and contributes to environmental awareness through literature.

An eco-critical reading of the text therefore enriches our understanding of the novella and highlights the importance of literature in addressing environmental issues. Steinbeck's work reminds readers that the relationship between humans and nature remains a fundamental aspect of social and cultural life.

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Ancient Indian Administration and It's Relevance in Modern Era**Miss. Alisha B. Khobragade****Research scholar, Vasant Rao Naik Government Institute of Arts and Social
Sciences, Nagpur****ABSTRACT**

Indian Administration has evolved from Indus valley civilization where king was all powerful with a council of ministers and other officials to help him run the kingdom. That means the system was decentralized. In the early vedic period, Aryans were organised into tribes. **'RAJAN'** was the head of the tribe. He was assigned with Purohita, Senani (Army Chief), Duta (Envoy) and Spash (Spies). Later, the systematic administrative model came up with the coming of Mauryans and Gupta dynasty.

This research paper gives valuable insights into the ancient administrative system and entails how it is relevant in today's world. The research Paper focuses on governance principles practised in those times and their implication in contemporary governance system.

KEY WORDS

Arthashastra, Welfare state, Local Governance, Diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

Administration, according to **E.N.Gladden**, "is a long and slightly pompous word, but it has a humble meaning, for it means, to care for or look after people, to manage affairs is determined action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose."³

D. Waldo defines administration as – "a type of cooperative human efforts that has a high degree of rationality."⁴

Today's Indian administration has evolved from the ancient practices and principles of the governance system which became the guiding light for the administrators who set up the system of contemporary India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1] Research Paper – THE EVOLUTION OF ANCIENT INDIAN ADMINISTRATION: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS – written by Dr.K.Gopi Naik – published in International Journal

³ Beluchi C Nwanisobi, Inienger Chia Christhopher, 'Definition Of Public Administration : various scholars' *American International Journal Of Buisness Management*, Vol.3.Issue9.September 2020, p.56

⁴ Ibid., p.56

of Multidisciplinary Educational Research focuses on administrative structure from Indus Valley Civilization to Gupta empire.

2] Research paper – ANCIENT INDIAN MODELS OF GOVERNANCE AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL SYSTEM – written by Parvez Shahid Ali – published in International Journal of Social Science and Educational Research focus especially on local governance and not much attention is paid to foreign policy.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the research paper on “ANCIENT INDIAN ADMINISTRATION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN MODERN ERA” involves an approach of gathering, analysing and integrating information from reliable sources.

DATA COLLECTION – collecting primary as well as secondary data from various reliable sources like books, journals, websites and research papers, etc.

DATA ANALYSIS - This involves interpreting the data collected with respect to administrative system of ancient India and finding its relevance in modern contemporary era.

OBJECTIVES

- 1] To understand what is Administration.
- 2] To find out the principles of Ancient Administrative System.
- 3] To extract valuable lessons and explore how it can be applied in today's contemporary world.

The Book called **KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA** became the prominent torchbearer for Mauryan administration. The Mauryan empire was divided into 4 provinces – TOSALI, UJJAINI, SUVARNAGIRI AND TAXILA, capital being Pataliputra. Thus, the ancient administrative system of India shows the principle of **DECENTRALIZATION**. Likewise, today, various countries like India have decentralized their administration. They have divided the administration as **CENTRAL** and **PROVINCIAL**. The provincial administration is further decentralized as zilla parishad, panchayat samiti and gram panchayat. Since mauryan times, village was the smallest unit of administration. In Mauryan era, village head was called **GRAMANI**. In Gupta era, he was called **GRAMIKA** who was assisted by village assembly. In today's India, village head is called **SARPANCH** and is assisted by **GRAMPANCHAYAT**.

The District Administration was in the hands of **RAJUKAS** like today's **District Collector**. In urban areas, there was a municipal Board with 30 members.

Moreover, they used to conduct **CENSUS** regularly like today. They used to take details like castes and occupations. Animals were counted too. Census in towns was conducted by municipal officials, especially to track the movements of both foreign and indigenous population. This is similar to the idea of **National Population Register**.

The Amatyas meaning ministers were appointed based on their qualification and capability. The king has to consult the ministers before taking any decisions. This is the most important thing to follow for the administration to have everyone involved in the task informed and consulted. Again, king used to appoint various types of spies to gain information from the kingdom. Today's administration also needs to get such information so that they will know what are people's needs.

Kautilya's Arthashastra talks about steps in planning (Mantra) –

***Karmanaarambhodayah purushdravyasampat deshkalvibhagah vinipatpratikarah
karyasiddhiriti panchango mantrah***⁵

It entails 5 steps –

1. Beginning the work / pilot project
2. Budget + manpower
3. Place and time
4. Problem and solution
5. Workdone

This even applies to today's administrative planning. For example, if we have to apply a scheme – firstly we need to run the project on pilot basis, then think about our project and manpower, decide the place and time, in the meantime new problems will arise, finding solutions to them and finally getting the work done.

Again, Arthashastra says –

Anasannaihi sah patrasampreshanen mantrayet⁶

⁵ Shri Vachaspati Gairola , ARTHASASTRA OF KAUTILYA AND THE CANAKYA SUTRA , (Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan, Varanasi, 2013) 1.10.14, p.46

⁶ Ibid., 1.10.14, p.47

Meaning the king need to have conversation with his ministers and distant governors to know the developments going on in their provinces.

Again, it says –

Aasannaihi sah karyani pashey⁷

This means the administrator has to go on the field physically to monitor the work.

In the times of calamity, Kautilya Arthashastra says the richer must be taxed more. special tax must be implied on them. This is similar to the concept of **PROGRESSIVE TAXATION**.

Arthashastra says –

sambalaihi tulyabalsankhyaihi wa balavatah sambhuy tishthet⁸

that means if we have an enemy more powerful than us, then we can make alliance with those countries which are harassed by the same enemy to make a front against it. For example,

1. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) comprising USA, India, Japan and Australia against China.
2. AUKUS – a trilateral security pact between Australia, UK and the USA.

In ancient India, artisans, merchants and bankers organized their own guilds and managed their own affairs. Organizations like FICCI, CII or local trade associations act as modern guilds, protecting the interest of traders and negotiating with the government.

King was the highest court of appeal in those times. He used to give judgement based on the advice of his council of ministers. In contemporary India, a person can appeal to President of India under article 72 of the Indian constitution for pardon. President too acts on the advice of council of ministers.

Kautilya Arthashastra mentions 5 types of Upayas or expedients –

upayaha samoppradanbheddandaha⁹

⁷ Ibid.,1.10.14,p.47

⁸ Ibid.,7.119-120.15,p.527

⁹ Shri Vachaspati Gairola , ARTHASASTRA OF KAUTILYA AND THE CANAKYA SUTRA , (Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan,Varanasi,2013)2.26.10,p.123

SAMA focuses on conciliation and diplomacy which is a need in today's world order. Diplomacy (**KUTNEETI**), conciliation, dialogue and building trust only can solve the conflicts between the states.

In addition to this, Kautilya Arthashastra implies –

Prajasukhe sukham radnyah prajanam tu hite hitam

naatmapriya hitam radnyah prajanam tu Priyam hitam¹⁰

which means that, in the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king, in their welfare, his welfare. This shloka put forth the idea of **WELFARE STATE**. Being included the **Directive Principles of State Policy** in its constitution, India is also a welfare state.

CONCLUSION

The research paper – “ANCIENT INDIAN ADMINISTRATION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN MODERN ERA” focuses on the administrative system especially of Mauryan era based on Kautilya's Arthashastra. The ancient administrative system entails the principles like welfare state, Local Self Governance, Dialogue and Diplomacy, making alliances, census, etc. which are relevant even today.

These principles can guide us to maintain peace and tranquility in today's volatile world. The local decentralized governance followed by ancient Indian administrators is the backbone of India's Administrative governance.

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¹⁰ Ibid.,1.14.18,p.64

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Challenges to Indian Democracy: An Analysis of the Constitutional Role of the Governor in India's Federal System

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Abstract

Since independence, the Constitution of India has provided a strong institutional framework that has enabled the functioning of democratic governance through elections, representative institutions and the rule of law. Despite this stability, Indian democracy continues to confront several structural challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, corruption and administrative inefficiencies that affect effective democratic participation. This paper examines the contemporary challenges to Indian democracy and critically analyses the constitutional role of the Governor within the federal structure.

In recent years, the role of the Governor has emerged as a subject of intense debate due to increasing instances of political disagreements between Governors and elected state governments. Such disputes have been reported in states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Telangana, Punjab and Delhi. Controversies have particularly arisen regarding the use of discretionary powers, the summoning of legislative assemblies, and delays in granting assent to bills. Judicial observations by the Supreme Court of India in certain disputes have also highlighted concerns regarding the deterioration of institutional dialogue. The paper argues that safeguarding democratic values in India requires greater clarity in constitutional practices, institutional accountability and reforms aimed at strengthening the neutrality and effectiveness of the Governor's office.

Keywords: Indian Democracy, Federalism, Governor, Constitutional Institutions, Democratic Governance.

Introduction

Democracy in India represents one of the most significant political experiments in the modern world. Since the adoption of the Constitution of India, the country has attempted to combine political representation, social diversity and constitutional governance within a federal framework. India's democratic system functions through a network of institutions that

include Parliament, state legislatures, the judiciary and various constitutional offices designed to maintain accountability and balance within the political system. The resilience of these institutions has enabled democratic continuity despite the country's vast social and economic diversity.

Within this constitutional structure, the office of the Governor occupies a distinctive position in the federal arrangement. The Governor acts as the formal head of the state and also serves as an institutional link between the Union and state governments. Although the position is largely expected to function according to the advice of the Council of Ministers, the Constitution also provides certain discretionary powers that may be exercised in specific situations. These provisions were designed to maintain constitutional stability, particularly during periods of political uncertainty.

In recent years, the functioning of the Governor's office has attracted considerable public and academic debate. Differences between Governors and elected state governments have raised questions regarding the interpretation of constitutional conventions and the balance between political authority and constitutional responsibility. Several instances of institutional disagreements have been observed in states such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Telangana, Punjab and Delhi. Judicial observations by the Supreme Court of India in some of these disputes have also emphasized the importance of maintaining institutional propriety and constitutional discipline.

Given these developments, examining the relationship between constitutional design and political practice has become increasingly relevant. Understanding the evolving role of the Governor and its implications for India's federal democracy is therefore an important area of scholarly inquiry.

Objectives of the Study

To examine the structural and institutional challenges affecting the functioning of Indian democracy.

To analyse the constitutional powers and responsibilities of the Governor within India's federal system.

To evaluate contemporary debates and reform proposals concerning the Governor's office.

Research Methodology

This study is based on qualitative and analytical methods using constitutional provisions, commission reports and secondary literature related to Indian federalism and the office of the Governor.

Concept of Democracy in India

Democracy in India is based on the principles established by the Constitution of India, which provides the foundation for representative government, protection of rights and accountable governance. Political democracy in India is reflected through universal adult franchise, regular elections and the participation of citizens in choosing their representatives. The system of free and fair elections and the presence of an independent judiciary help safeguard constitutional values and ensure that governmental power operates within the limits of the Constitution.

At the same time, Indian democracy also emphasizes social and economic transformation. The Constitution promotes equality of opportunity, social justice and welfare policies aimed at improving the conditions of disadvantaged groups. In this context, Dr B. R. Ambedkar argued that political democracy can succeed only when it is supported by social and economic democracy. Thus, the democratic framework in India seeks to combine political participation with broader goals of equality, justice and inclusive development.

Major Challenges to Indian Democracy**1. Poverty and Economic Inequality**

Despite economic growth, a significant section of the population continues to face poverty and economic inequality. Limited access to basic resources such as education, healthcare and employment opportunities restricts the ability of many citizens to participate fully in democratic processes. Economic disparities can therefore weaken the practical realization of democratic ideals.

2. Illiteracy and Lack of Political Awareness

Literacy and political awareness play an important role in strengthening democracy. When citizens lack access to education and reliable information, their ability to make informed

political choices becomes limited. This situation can reduce meaningful participation in elections and public decision-making.

3. Corruption

Corruption remains one of the major obstacles to effective democratic governance. When public officials misuse their authority for personal gain, it erodes public confidence in institutions and reduces the efficiency and credibility of administrative systems.

4. Unemployment and Youth Discontent

High level of unemployment, particularly among educated youth, have become a growing concern. Lack of adequate employment opportunities can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction among young citizens, which may affect their trust in democratic institutions and governance.

5. Regional Disparities

India's development has not been uniform across all regions. Differences in economic growth, infrastructure and social development between states and regions create inequalities that can influence political stability and democratic participation.

6. Administrative and Judicial Challenges

Effective democracy also depends on efficient governance and a responsive justice system. However, delays in judicial processes, bureaucratic inefficiency and instances of corruption within administrative structures often create obstacles to good governance and weaken citizens' faith in democratic institutions.

Constitutional Role of the Governor

The Governor holds an important position in the federal structure established by the Constitution of India. The Governor acts as the constitutional head of a state and performs functions similar to those of the President at the national level. Although the executive authority of the state is formally vested in the Governor, these powers are generally exercised on the advice of the Council of Ministers led by the Chief Minister.

Several constitutional provisions define the powers of the Governor. Article 153 provides for a Governor for each state, while Article 154 vests the executive power of the state

in the Governor. Under Article 163, the Governor normally acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers, except in certain situations where discretionary powers may be exercised. In the legislative sphere, Article 174 authorizes the Governor to summon and prorogue the state legislature, and Article 200 empowers the Governor to grant assent to bills passed by the legislature or reserve them for the President's consideration.

The Governor also performs executive, legislative and judicial functions. These include appointing the Chief Minister and other officials, overseeing administrative matters and exercising the power of pardon under Article 161. In extraordinary circumstances, the Governor may recommend the imposition of President's Rule under Article 356 if constitutional governance in the state breaks down. Thus, the Governor plays a significant constitutional role in maintaining the functioning of state administration and the federal system.

Issues and Controversies Related to the Governor

The office of the Governor has often been the subject of debate in India's federal system due to several institutional and political controversies. One major issue concerns delays in granting assent to bills passed by state legislatures. In some cases, Governors have taken considerable time to approve or return legislation, which has created tensions between the state government and the Governor's office.

Another frequently discussed concern is the perception of political bias. Critics have argued that Governors may sometimes act in a manner that appears to favour the Union government, particularly when the ruling party at the Centre differs from the party governing the state. Such perceptions raise questions about the neutrality expected from a constitutional authority.

Controversies have also arisen regarding the use of discretionary powers, especially during situations where no single party secures a clear majority in the state assembly. The decision of whom to invite to form the government in a hung assembly has occasionally led to political disputes and legal challenges.

Conflicts have also emerged in the field of higher education. In several states, disagreements between Governors and state governments have occurred over the appointment

of Vice-Chancellors and the administration of universities, as Governors often serve as the chancellors of state universities.

Another significant issue relates to the use of President's Rule under Article 356 of the Constitution of India. Historically, this provision has been criticised for being used for political purposes rather than strictly for addressing a genuine breakdown of constitutional machinery. These controversies have contributed to ongoing debates about the role, neutrality and accountability of the Governor within India's federal framework.

Reform Suggestions

Several committees and commissions have recommended reforms to improve the functioning and neutrality of the Governor's office within India's federal system. The Sarkaria Commission Report suggested that the appointment of a Governor should involve consultation with the Chief Minister of the concerned state to ensure greater acceptability and impartiality. It also emphasized that Governors should be individuals of integrity and should remain politically neutral while performing their constitutional duties.

Later, the Punchhi Commission Report proposed additional reforms, including the need for a fixed tenure for Governors and clearer guidelines regarding the exercise of discretionary powers. Such measures were intended to reduce ambiguity and prevent the misuse of constitutional authority. Similarly, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission recommended the development of a code of conduct to guide the behaviour and responsibilities of Governors.

In addition to these recommendations, several scholars and policymakers have suggested practical reforms such as establishing a reasonable time limit for granting assent to state legislation, improving transparency in gubernatorial decisions and strengthening judicial review of controversial actions. Reducing political interference in the functioning of the Governor's office is also considered essential for maintaining constitutional balance between the Union and the states.

Conclusion

Indian democracy has demonstrated significant resilience since Independence and continues to function through a strong constitutional framework and democratic institutions.

However, socio-economic inequalities, governance challenges and institutional tensions remain important concerns. Within this framework, the office of the Governor plays a vital constitutional role in maintaining the balance between the Union and the states.

In recent years, debates regarding the functioning of Governors have highlighted the need for greater clarity and accountability in the exercise of constitutional powers. Implementing the recommendations of various commissions and strengthening institutional norms can help ensure that the Governor performs duties in accordance with constitutional principles. Such reforms are essential for preserving federal balance and strengthening democratic governance in India.

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Skill-based & Vocational Education: Bridging the Gap between Learning and Livelihood

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Abstract

Skill-based and vocational education has emerged as a critical component of modern educational systems worldwide, serving as a bridge between academic learning and employability. This paper examines the current landscape of Vocational Education and Training (VET), exploring its impact on technical skills mastery, labor market outcomes, and the challenges facing implementation across different national contexts. Drawing on recent empirical studies and international assessment frameworks, the paper argues that effective VET requires systemic alignment between curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, industry partnerships, and institutional support structures. The introduction of initiatives like the OECD's PISA-VET represents a significant step toward evidence-based policy making in this sector. However, persistent challenges—including trainer readiness, infrastructural limitations, and the social perception of vocational pathways—continue to hinder the full potential of skill-based education. The paper concludes with recommendations for strengthening VET systems to meet the demands of rapidly evolving labor markets.

Keywords: Vocational Education and Training (VET), skill-based education, competency-based training, employability, labor market outcomes

Introduction

Formal education serves as a key driver of economic progress, playing a crucial role in personal and societal development by providing structured learning experiences and opportunities to acquire skills. Within this landscape, Vocational Education and Training (VET) occupies a unique and increasingly important position. Unlike general academic education, VET is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and the practical skills demanded by the job market, equipping students with hands-on experience and specialized competencies directly applicable to specific industries.

The significance of VET extends beyond individual employability. From a broader perspective, vocational education enhances human capital development by directly connecting with

technological standards, production processes, and work practices. For individuals, VET facilitates smooth entry into the labor market early in a career while also supporting long-term career stability through reskilling and upskilling opportunities that enhance adaptability to rapid technological changes.

Despite its importance, vocational education has historically received less attention in international educational assessments compared to academic tracks. This gap is now being addressed through initiatives like the OECD's PISA-VET, which aims to evaluate occupation-specific skills and employability competencies across multiple countries. This paper synthesizes current research to examine the effectiveness, challenges, and future directions of skill-based and vocational education.

The Impact of Competency-Based Training on Skills Mastery

The shift toward competency-based training (CBT) represents a fundamental transformation in how vocational education delivers skill development. Unlike traditional time-based models, competency-based approaches focus on ensuring that learners achieve specified levels of proficiency regardless of the time required.

However, the same study identified specific skill gaps requiring attention, particularly in Blueprint Reading and Quality Control. This finding underscores an important principle of competency-based approaches: they reveal not only strengths but also areas requiring curriculum enhancement. The continuous assessment inherent in CBT allows educational institutions to identify and address skill gaps more effectively than traditional models.

The effectiveness of competency-based training extends beyond technical skill acquisition. Research from Nigeria demonstrates that career-related practical skills training positively influences students' vocational identity, job search self-efficacy, and job search intention. This suggests that skill-based education contributes not only to technical competence but also to psychological readiness for workforce participation.

VET and Labour Market Outcomes

The relationship between vocational education and labour market outcomes has been the subject of extensive research. A comprehensive bibliometric analysis of VET literature spanning from 1965 to 2023 identifies four primary research clusters in the field: "vocational education and skill formation," "vocational training and labor market outcomes," "human capital and economic growth," and "apprenticeship contracts and training costs." This

categorization reflects the multifaceted nature of VET research and its connections to broader economic questions.

The labour market outcomes of vocational education vary across different institutional contexts. Research indicates that approximately one-third of individuals aged 25-34 in OECD countries have a vocational qualification as their highest education level. This substantial population segment underscores the importance of understanding how VET systems function and how they can be optimized.

However, the relationship between vocational education and employment outcomes is not straightforward. Studies suggest that the effectiveness of VET depends significantly on the alignment between training programs and actual labour market demands. When this alignment is strong, vocational graduates experience smoother school-to-work transitions and better early career outcomes. When alignment is weak, graduates may face skills mismatches that undermine the value of their qualifications.

The PISA-VET Initiative: A New Frontier in Assessment

A significant development in vocational education research is the OECD-led PISA-VET initiative, which aims to evaluate the skills of learners nearing completion of their VET programs across five occupational areas: Automotive Technician, Business and Administration, Electrician Craft/Industry, Healthcare (focusing on Nursing Assistants), and Tourism and Hospitality.

PISA-VET introduces several innovations that distinguish it from existing large-scale assessments. First, it targets a population—vocational students—that has been largely overlooked by previous international assessments. Second, it shifts the assessment focus from academic skills to occupation-specific competencies and employability skills. Third, it employs both digitalized simulations and hands-on demonstrations to enable more valid and realistic measurement of vocational competencies.

The potential benefits of PISA-VET are substantial. For policymakers, it will provide information on structural differences in vocational education systems and their impact on competencies. For institutions, it offers insights into curriculum effectiveness and areas requiring improvement. For students, exposure to such assessments provides realistic job previews that can inform career decisions.

However, the initiative also faces significant challenges. These include the diversity of VET systems across different countries, ensuring equity and inclusivity in assessment, and addressing variations in students' digital competencies that may affect test performance. The success of PISA-VET will depend on its ability to navigate these challenges while maintaining assessment validity across diverse contexts.

Challenges in VET Implementation

Despite growing recognition of vocational education's importance, implementation faces persistent challenges across different national contexts. Research from multiple countries reveals common obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of VET programs.

Physical and technological infrastructure represents another critical challenge. Inadequate workshops, obsolete equipment, and minimal digital facilities constrain the implementation of effective vocational training. These limitations are particularly acute in developing countries but affect vocational institutions across all contexts.

The rapid pace of technological change compounds this challenge. As industries adopt new technologies, vocational training institutions must continuously update equipment and curricula to remain relevant—a process requiring sustained investment that many institutions struggle to maintain.

Beyond institutional challenges, vocational education faces issues of social perception. Research from Germany examining adolescents' attitudes toward skilled trades found that "low degrees of practical self-efficacy, perceived approval from parents and peers, and limited knowledge about the skilled trades deter adolescents from apprenticeships." The study revealed a "disconnection from manual labour in academised societies," with many adolescents viewing trades as "generally attractive but personally ill-fitted occupations."

This perception problem extends to other contexts as well. Chinese research indicates that students' professional identity and career intentions significantly influence their educational outcomes and likelihood of persisting in skill-related careers. Students who choose vocational paths voluntarily demonstrate stronger professional identity and longer-term commitment compared to those who enter vocational education involuntarily.

Analysis of VET markets reveals concerning imbalances between course supply and labour market demand. Research using network analysis of Singapore's Skills Future data found "a notable concentration of VET supply in certain occupation sectors requiring general

skills, underscoring a disproportionate distribution of education supply for the labour market." Such imbalances represent a key factor in educational inequality and have implications for regional economic development.

Enhancing Vocational Education: Evidence-Based Approaches

Addressing these challenges requires multifaceted, evidence-based approaches that recognize the complexity of vocational education systems.

Research from China demonstrates that students' professional identity plays a crucial role in their educational outcomes and career trajectories. Students who choose vocational paths based on personal interest demonstrate significantly stronger long-term commitment to skill-related careers. Furthermore, improvements in learning experiences, satisfaction with training, and participation in practical innovation activities significantly enhance professional identity.

These findings suggest that vocational institutions should focus not only on skill transmission but also on cultivating students' identification with their chosen professions. This involves creating positive learning experiences, facilitating meaningful industry engagement, and helping students envision themselves as successful professionals.

Developing Comprehensive Competency Frameworks

The development of evidence-based competency frameworks represents another critical direction. Research on vocational educators in Zhengzhou, China, examined four essential competency domains and identified significant gaps between current proficiency levels and desired benchmarks, particularly in digital pedagogical integration and innovative teaching methodologies. The resulting enhancement program incorporated experiential learning, collaborative professional development, and formal training to address identified gaps.

Such frameworks must be context-sensitive while drawing on international best practices. They should address not only technical competencies but also pedagogical capabilities, digital literacy, and adaptability to changing industry requirements.

Enhancing Industry-Education Collaboration

The alignment between vocational education and labor market demands requires sustained industry engagement. Effective VET systems typically feature strong partnerships

between educational institutions and employers, ensuring that curricula remain relevant and that students gain authentic workplace experience.

However, such partnerships require institutional structures that facilitate collaboration. Optimizing vocational education requires promoting deep cooperation between schools and enterprises as an effective path for improving the quality of skilled talent supply.

Reconnecting Youth with Practical Skills

Addressing the social perception challenges requires intentional strategies to reconnect young people with practical skills. Research suggests that increasing practical learning in schools, facilitating social mixing between academics and tradespeople, and raising awareness about career opportunities in skilled trades could foster reconnection. Trusted influencers could help increase the social prestige of these professions through public communication.

Additionally, craft actors need to adapt VET to the preferences of young generations, and policymakers need to equip VET with similar resources as academic education—a recognition that addressing perception issues requires both cultural change and material investment.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Skill-based and vocational education stands at a critical juncture. As labour markets evolve rapidly due to technological change, globalization, and sustainability transitions, the demand for skilled workers in technical fields is increasing. Yet vocational education systems face persistent challenges in delivering high-quality training, maintaining relevance to industry needs, and attracting students to skilled career paths.

The research reviewed in this paper points toward several priorities for advancing vocational education. First, the shift toward competency-based approaches must be supported by comprehensive institutional transformation—not merely curriculum changes but also investments in trainer development, infrastructure, and assessment systems. Second, addressing perception challenges requires sustained efforts to reconnect young people with practical skills and elevate the social status of technical professions. Third, strengthening the evidence base for vocational education through initiatives like PISA-VET will enable more informed policy making and continuous improvement.

Ultimately, the future of vocational education depends on recognizing it not as an alternative to academic education but as a parallel pathway of equal value—one that prepares students not only for immediate employment but for lifelong learning and adaptation in a

changing economy. As the boundaries between academic and vocational learning continue to blur, educational systems must develop integrated approaches that combine theoretical understanding with practical capability, preparing students for meaningful participation in both work and society.

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Challenges to the Indian Democracy and Future Perspectives

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Abstract-

Democracy is a political system in which government is formed by the people for the people and implemented either directly or indirectly through its elected representatives. Democracy has been accepted as the best form of Government in the modern world but it has its own problems as most of the established democracies of the world have been facing. But every democratic country has different kind of challenges. India has the world's largest democracy with a strong parliamentary system of government instead of all it has been facing significant challenges in sustaining its democratic ideals which are the part of the Indian Constitution. The major issues include- social inequalities, caste, gender, widespread corruption, communalism, threats to freedom, economic inequalities, unemployment, Illiteracy, population explosion, regionalism and terrorism etc.

Hence there is a need to develop new proposals to reform democracy and to enjoy the real meaning of democracy as it is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The Right to Information Act is the best example that serves as a watchdog against abuse of democratic principles. The challenges to the Indian democracy may be tackled by way of positive movements or by the politically conscious citizens, some of the measures that can be taken to sustain a true parliamentary democracy in India include- high literacy rate, educating the masses about democratic rights and using them wisely and encouraging the feeling of integrity and fraternity among people.

Keywords- Democracy, Parliament, Constitution

Introduction—

As Abraham Lincoln defined democracy in his 1863 Gettysburg Address as "government of the people, by the people, for the people"¹. It means democracy is a government created by citizens, operated through their participation or representation and dedicated to serving their welfare and interests. It clearly indicates that in democracy the supreme authority is with people of that country and is operated through their direct or indirect participation in it. Although it has been accepted as the best form of Government in the modern

world, yet it has its own problems as most of the established democracies of the world face challenges but they vary from country to country.

India has the world's largest democracy with a strong parliamentary system of government. "A parliament is the supreme legislative body in a democratic government, responsible for making laws, representing citizens' interests and holding the executive branch accountable"². It derived from the French word *parler* means 'to talk', it signifies a place for discussion and representation. As Indian parliament consists of the President and two houses and this system is applied to states also. Instead of all India has been facing significant challenges in sustaining its democratic ideals which are the part of the Indian Constitution. Major issues include- social inequalities, caste, gender, widespread corruption, communalism, threats to freedom, economic inequalities, unemployment, Illiteracy, population explosion, regionalism, terrorism and environment degradation etc. These issues should be taken in care for a real enjoyment of democracy in India.

Analysis-

India has the largest democracy in the world and it is enshrined to the Indian Constitution. The Indian Constitution, which was approved by the Constituent Assembly on November, 26, 1949 and came into force on 26, January 1950. In India elections started with the 1951-52 general election and India was among the first post-colonial nations to adopt universal adult suffrage, granting all adult citizens equal voting rights. The constitution of India is the supreme legal document of the country and the longest written constitution in the world, it declares India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic. It establishes the framework that defines the fundamental political code, structure, procedures, powers, and duties of government institutions and also sets out fundamental rights, directive principles and fundamental duties of citizens. "The Constitution of India provides for a Parliamentary form of government both at the Centre and in the states. Articles 74 and 75 deal with the parliamentary system at the centre and Articles 163 and 164 in the states"³. The nature of Indian state declares India to be of a sovereign, socialist, secular democratic and republican polity, which means these words are the foundation of the Indian Constitution to fulfil the objectives like- justice, liberty, equality and fraternity and the source of authority of the constitution derives from the people of India. It means people of India of any caste, creed, religion, gender are all equal and having ultimate authority in themselves. So, democracy in

India has been changing according to the governments at the centre and more or less in states too.

As it is experienced that in ancient Greek city-states and also during the Vedic period in India, the people themselves used to assemble to decide the issues of governance,⁴ but due to population rise, this system almost got extinct except in a few Swiss Cantons where issues could still be decided by the people at large through their vote, means direct democracy. But in modern parliamentary system people rule the nation through their elected representatives.

The parliament of India is not restricted to law making only but this has been playing multiple roles related to governance like-supervising administrative work, national integration amendment of the constitution to keep it dynamic with the change in society, education and advisory role and overall leadership. India had been ruled for almost sixty years by the Indian National Congress (INC) party and the other major opposing party to the congress was Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). There are some other regional parties which represent their own states besides these two major parties. In Indian politics after many years the era of coalition government and coalition parties started, where in case any one party did not get the full majority in the elections would take the support of the other parties to form the government and it happened with INC and BJP, both the parties allied with other regional parties and recognized as National Democratic Alliance (NDA)⁵ and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA)⁶. In recent past again some changes have been seen in the formation of UPA. The other factor which affects and is seen in politics is criminal charges against politicians. In Indian political setup, there are several parties at national as well as regional levels, each party whether it is small or big is playing its own role for looking after the welfare of either themselves or the people that they represent and in election time blame game starts. So, the welfare of the masses are mostly ignored.

The challenges to the Indian Democracy are as follows: -

Poverty-India is becoming an economic superpower, but at the same time poor living standards are normal yet, means poverty is still seen in Indian society. Population-Indian population has reached up to an estimated 1.47 billion (appx.), which is one of the greatest challenges that has stopped the possible development of the nation to some extent. Corruption-is widespread in India, and India is ranked 91 out of 182 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2025 but its score has been improving

consistently⁷. Country like India where corruption takes the form of bribes, tax evasion and exchange controls etc. In this regard Right to information Act, 2005 has played a major role in unearthing various scams which are either politically motivated or any other forms and it is the major obstacle in the country's progress. Violence- violence in any form is wrong and should not be practised, but it's a normal phenomenon in India. India is a secular state but large-scale violence has been periodically taking place since independence.

In recent years communal tensions and religion-based politics have become more prominent in India which is taking a toll on its progress. India still faces significant challenges in education and has remained one of the priorities of the Indian government since independence, which needs to be improved by different initiatives of the government. Terrorism is also a biggest challenge to the Indian democracy The areas where a lot of terrorist activities take place are Jammu and Kashmir, Central India, Seven Sister States and Punjab. less Voter turnouts is also a major challenge to democracy which is seen in every election whether general election of Lok Sabha or states assembly elections, since voting is not a compulsory duty of the people, many people stay at home or just enjoy going out on the voting day, which is not good for free and fair democracy at all.

Indian judiciary system is very strong and keeps the democratic values alive which are enshrined in the Constitution of India. So, Judiciary should be free from government interference.

Media plays a watchdog role in democracy. As the fourth pillar of democracy, it keeps democracy vibrant by monitoring, reporting on policies and providing a platform for civic discourse. So, media should not be controlled for the sake of one's own interest. Environment degradation-like other countries, India too faces a wide array of environmental problems due to satisfy the basic needs of a large and growing population. So, conservation and improvement of the environment are vital for the survival and well-being of mankind⁸ and that must be a priority of the governments.

India attained independence on 15th August, 1947 and after that gave herself a constitution and became a Democratic Republic on 26th January, 1950 and has since been governed by this Constitution. It was really a commendable achievement, more particularly when one looks at some of the countries in neighbourhood and even around the world. India

established a systematic system of governance and a sound legal system for a democratic socialistic society where elections were held regularly and the popular mandate was respected. Thus, it can be said that the democratic system has been established and accepted as an indispensable part of the Indian political life but still it has to be recognized and realised in practice. As it is said that democracy is not a modern phenomenon, it was practiced in ancient Athens and in ancient India also, they laid down some of the fundamental principles of a democratic society which are very relevant even today in modern times.

Although, India has the world's largest democracy, but in reality, there are various challenges that are responsible for creating hindrance in the true functioning of democratic republic of India, lack of awareness amongst the Indian Citizens is also a cause. They are not participating in democratic setup and not using their rights wisely, which harm democracy at large and politicians take advantage of it. Moreover, most of the politicians join politics with a sole motive of maximizing their personal wealth. They know the fact that one day they will have to pay for their acts but still they continue their business of fooling people and making democracy a mockery. For example- ministers involved in scams such as 2G Spectrum, Common Wealth Games, Coal Block allocation,⁷ etc. it means that these political leaders make many promises during their election campaign but once they get elected, they forget to exercise their duties in a true sense. The different political parties make all the efforts to divert public opinion for their personal gains. Lastly, it could be said that Indian democracy even after 79 years of independence has given to people some self-centered and corrupt ministers who are ready to do any kind of scams for their welfare and using agencies like CBI, Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments at their own terms. Communal violence is also a great challenge to the democracy which is increasing with times.

Conclusion-

Despite facing significant challenges, people of India are fortunate enough to live in a democratic country like India, which has the largest democracy in the world, it means people of India have all kind of rights which are fundamental in nature and are given to all citizens of India, who enjoy it to the fullest according to their own capacity and interest.

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Adaptive Survival Strategies of Retail MSMEs in India under Increasing FDI Competition: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

The paper considers the adaptive survival mechanisms of retail Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India facing growing competition, which is a result of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The study takes a descriptive and analytical design that will use primary data that will consist of 120 retail MSME owners through structured questionnaires, and will be supported by the secondary data in forms of journals and reports. The results indicate that FDI has heightened competition especially in the pricing and retaining customers. Nevertheless, MSMEs are also struggling back with a strategy of digitalization, customer relationship management and service innovation. Regress analysis shows that the digital and customer-centric strategies are an effective approach to improve business performance and there is a significant difference in results. The paper finds that strategic flexibility and technological fit is the key to MSME survival under globalized retailing conditions. It also highlights the necessity to adopt enabling policy frameworks in order to make the MSME sector grow and be sustainable.

Keywords: MSMEs, Retail Sector, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Survival Strategies, Digital Adoption, Customer Relationship Management, Competitive Advantage

Introduction

The industry of MSME is an essential part of Indian economy as it provides a large share of employment opportunities, growth of GDP and development of any given region. In this industry, MSMEs in retail services constitute a good portion of unorganized retailing sector, which serves a wide range of consumer demands and supports local economies. After the period of economic liberalization and more so after the year 2010, there has been a gradual rise in the inflows into the retail sector in India due to the policy reforms and globalization trends (Mukherjee et al., 2011). The opening of FDI in single-brand and multi-brand retailing

has promoted the entry of multinational corporations and as such, the competition has increased and the form of retail environment has changed (Rajput et al., 2012).

Through FDI, there has been a paradigm shift in modernizing the retail industry in terms of better infrastructure, the efficiencies of their supply chain, and technology. The innovations have improved the consumer experience and efficiency in the operations of organized retail format (Manik and Singla, 2013). Nevertheless, the intensive growth of organized retail has also been a major threat to MSME retailers, especially as far as competition and price competitiveness, and market access are concerned (Nayak and Mahapatra, 2016). Small retailers are usually structurally disadvantageous due to deficiency of such factors as access to finances, deficiency of technological adoption, and weaker bargaining power limits their power to compete with large multinational organizations (Arora, 2014).

Organized and unorganized segments of Indian retail sector are given the dual nature where they exist and in some cases with different competitive advantages. The organizations that offer organized retailing profits on economies of scale, standardization and the ability to obtain raw materials globally, whereas the MSMEs depend on personalized services, customer proximity, and operational flexibility (Chawla, 2018). Such an imbalance in the structure prompts MSMEs to adopt techniques of surviving in the market. The strategies can be digital transformation, niche markets, customer relationship management, and cost management.

In addition, the regulatory environment surrounding FDI in retail has been changing substantially throughout the years with the objective of striking a balance between the advantage of foreign investment and protecting the local businesses. Local sourcing conditions and the ban on multi-brand retailing have been implemented by policy makers so as to protect the interests of MSME in the process of encouraging investment (Mukherjee et al., 2011). Irrespective of such attempts, issues of displacing small retailers and the growing market concentration remain popular (Arora, 2014).

With this respect, the critical role of how retail MSMEs have adapted to survive comes in being able to evaluate the resiliency of these MSMEs in a more competitive environment that has been influenced by FDI inflows. Although current literature has explored the macroeconomic and policy consequences of FDI, a small fragment of study has been made in regard to strategic responsiveness of firms in the long run perspective. Thus, the purpose of the current research is to examine survival and growth strategy of retail MSME in India in the face

of intensified FDI competition that gives insight into whether they will be able to overcome a structural change that will take place within the period 2010-2025.

Literature Review

The FDI literature in Indian retail industry is a multidimensional approach to the study of the subject, which includes economic perspectives, strategic perspectives, and policy perspectives. Mukherjee et al. (2011) highlighted the significance of gradual liberalization of FDI in retail noting that the gradual process of the implementation of the policies will enable the domestic enterprises to adjust to the growing competition. They found that it was necessary to strengthen supply chain infrastructure and enhance domestic sourcing to achieve inclusive growth.

Manik and Singla (2013) examined the implication of FDI in the retail industry through such strategic frameworks as SWOT analysis and Porters Five Forces model. The research found that FDI in the retail industry improves competitiveness and efficiency, but it poses a massive constraint in small-scale retail business because of the heightened competition in the market and their operations.

Rajput et al. (2012) observed the structural change in the retail industry after liberalization of FDI and discovered that the domestic retailers are forced to change to new strategies in order to compete effectively. The researchers defined the marketing innovations, business effectiveness, and consumer interaction as the critical factors of success in the changing retailing environment.

Nayak and Mahapatra (2016) concentrated on the topic of MSMEs and examined the dual effect that FDI has on small retailers. In their findings, they find that FDI helps in infrastructure development and gaining of technology, but it is also one of the causes that heighten competition and because of this reason; they have been faced with a challenge of low profit margins and loss of market share. The research has highlighted the roles of regulation in safeguarding the interest of MSMEs and fair competition.

The article authored by Arora (2014) examined the issues and opportunities revolving around FDI within the Indian retail industry critically. The paper has pointed out that multinational retailers have the advantage of the economies of scale and developed supply chain systems which might provide an unfair market environment to MSMEs. It indicated that

policy interventions are needed that can assist the small retailers with financial support, skills development and technological support.

The article by Chawla (2018) took its particular part in the literature because it concentrated on strategic adaptation to competition posed by FDI. The research hypothesized that MSMEs can increase their competitiveness through the use of innovative business models, enhanced customer service and local market knowledge. These campaigns would help small retailers to stand apart of the organized retail players and preserve their relevance in the market. More current studies, conducted by Ahmad (2023) looked at how the retail environment was changing regarding digitalization and globalisation. In the research, it was noted that the competition in the retail industry has been even further propelled by technological changes, such as e-commerce websites and online payment machines. It also highlighted the fact that MSMEs needed to implement digital utilities and new marketing approaches in order to survive such a dynamic environment.

In general, the literature reports that the effect of FDI on the retail sector is two-fold, as it presents growth and sustainability traits. On the one hand, with foreign investment organized retail has the advantages, on the other hand, MSMEs are under growing pressure to be more agile and innovative. Nonetheless, the literature on longitudinal study of response to FDI competition strategies of MSMEs is handling a significant gap. Majority of the research dwells on macro level effects or short term effects with little consideration on the overall firm level strategic reactions in the long term.

The proposed study is aimed at filling this gap by offering an in-depth analysis of adaptative survival techniques implemented by retail MSMEs in India, thereby providing an add-on to the current body of literature and a practical understanding of activities that could be recommended to a policy-maker and practitioners.

Objectives:

The paper seeks to examine the effects of FDI inflows on existence and increase of retail MSMEs in India, adaptive strategies implemented by these businesses, and quality of competition presented by organized retail, as well as assessing effectiveness of policy initiatives in the improvement of resilience and long term sustainability between 2010-2025.

Methodology:

The research design chosen in the study is descriptive and analytical research design and data collection has been done using primary and secondary data. Structured questionnaires will be used to collect primary data, which will be owners and managers of retail MSMEs, and the secondary data will be provided by journals, government reports, and RBI publications. A stratified random sampling method is used where a sample of 120 respondents is used.

Results and Discussion

This is analyzed on the basis of the responses obtained among 120 retail MSME owners/managers. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were applied on the data to comprehend how the FDI competition affects the survival strategy.

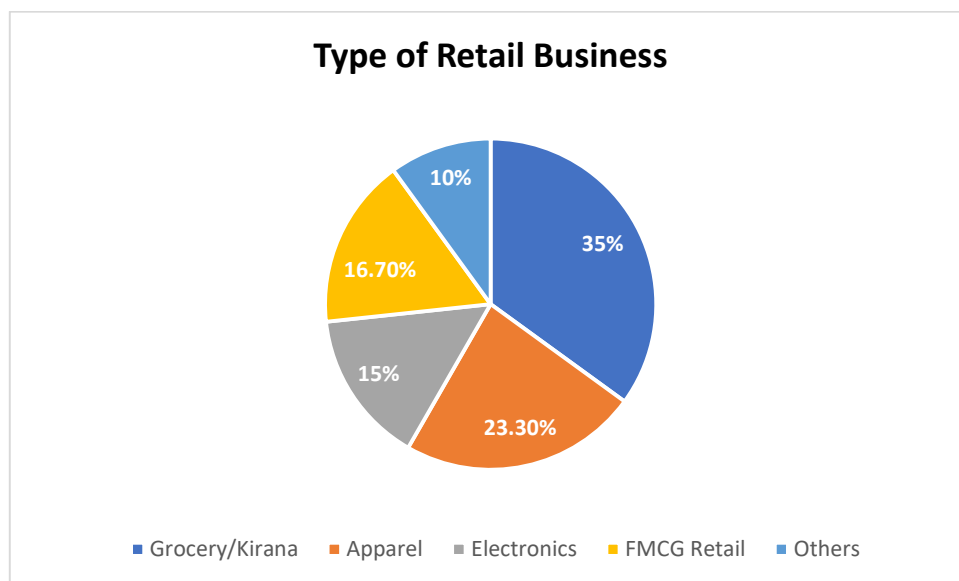


Fig. 1 Type of Retail Business

Most of the respondents (35 percent) are of grocery/kirana stores which shows that the MSMEs mostly are traditional retail outlets. The diversity of the industry is also characterised by apparel and FMCG segments, which make a large percentage.

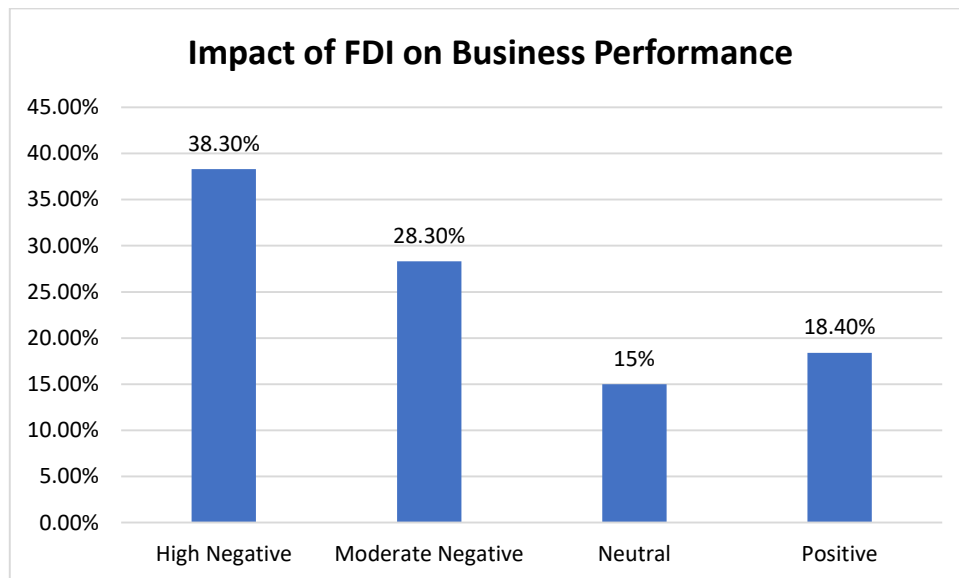


Fig. 2 Impact of FDI on Business Performance

Most people (66.6% of respondents) view FDI as negatively affecting their performance in business. This indicates that heightened competition by organized retail pressures greatly the sustainability of MSME.

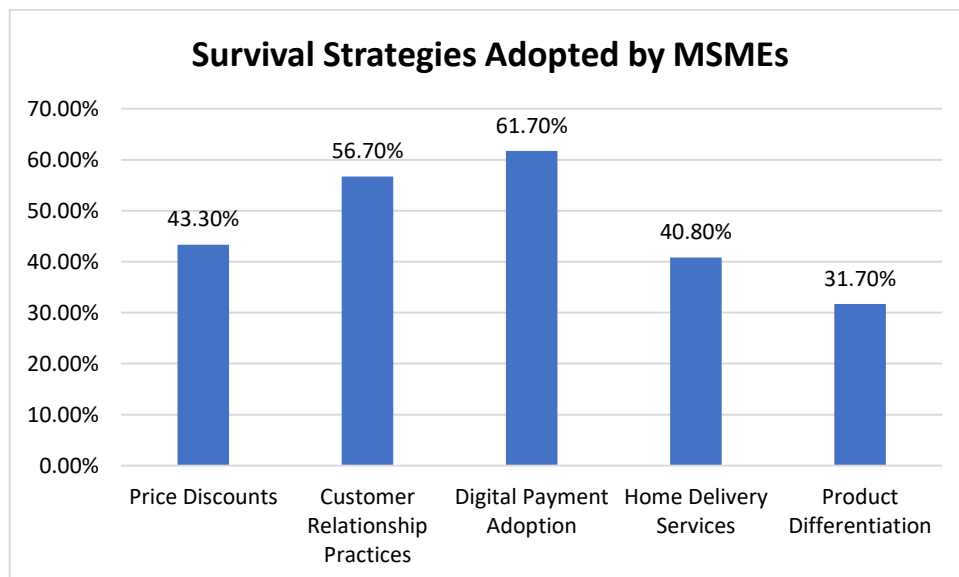
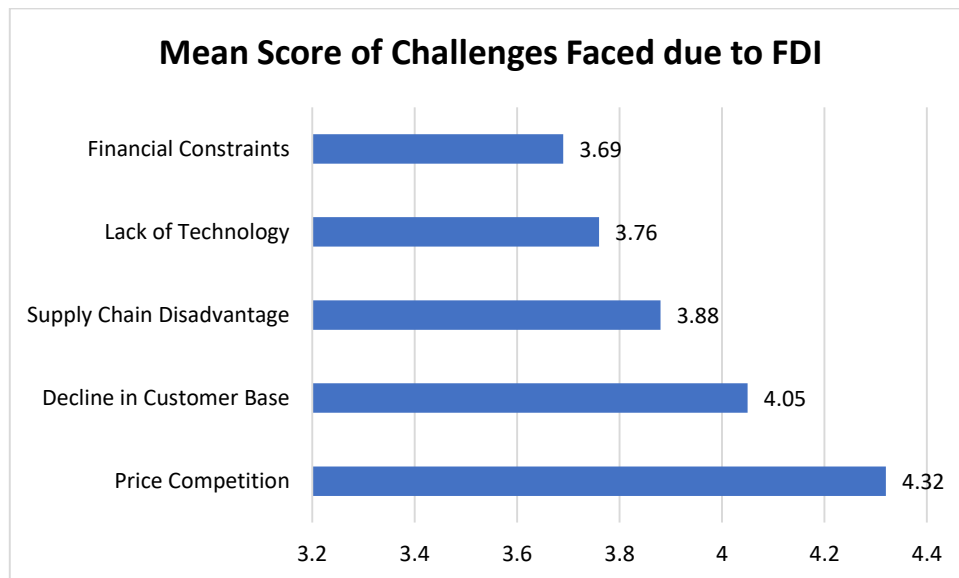


Fig. 3 Survival Strategies by MSMEs

Adoption of digital payment (61.7) and practices related to customer relations (56.7) are implemented the most, which means that the trend of MSMEs is turning toward modernization and customer-oriented mechanisms.

**Fig. 4 Challenges faced by MSMEs**

The most significant challenge is price competition (4.32) and then it is a decrease in the number of customers (4.05). This is to show that large retail chains exert high pressure on the prices of MSMEs.

Table 1 Impact of Survival Strategies on Business Performance

Variable	Beta (b)	t-value	Sig.
Digital Adoption	0.412	4.86	0.000
Customer Relationship	0.365	3.98	0.001
Price Strategy	0.221	2.54	0.013
Product Differentiation	0.184	2.11	0.036

R² = 0.58

Table 1 illustrates the findings of the multiple regression analysis of the issue of how different survival strategies affect business performance of retail MSMEs. The model shows a powerful explanatory ability in form of R² value of 0.58 meaning that 58 percent of the difference in business performance is described by the independent variables that are selected, namely, digital adoption, customer relationship practices, price strategy, and product differentiation.

Digital adoption has the most significant effect (b = 0.412, t = 4.86, p < 0.001), meaning that the performance outcomes of MSMEs that utilise digital means (online payments, e-commerce platforms, digital marketing, etc.) are much higher. This brings out the importance of

involvement of technology in the boosting of competitiveness in the market -system which is FDI-based.

A positive impact to customer relationship practices is also very significant ($b = 0.365$, $t = 3.98$, $p = 0.001$), which at the same time, indicates that personalized services and customer loyalty programs and direct engagement are important to business sustainability. It is manifested in the natural capability of MSMEs to have tight relationships with their customers. The price strategy variable ($b = 0.221$, $t = 2.54$, $p = 0.013$) has a moderate but statistically significant effect. Competitive pricing can be useful in retaining customers because of its relatively low coefficient, but it is possible that MSMEs, when competing with large organized retailers, will not be effective in competitive pricing on its own.

Likewise product differentiation ($b = 0.184$, $t = 2.11$, $p = 0.036$) is also positively and significantly impacting, meaning that it can be concluded that specializing or special products can be utilized to improve market positions but its effect is not as strong as the effect of digital and relationship strategies.

In general, the statistical significance of all variables ($p < 0.05$) proves that adaptive strategies are important in enhancing the performance of MSMEs. The results have shown that the most effective strategies of surviving are the adoption of technology and the focus on customers, whereas price competition and differentiation serve as supporting mechanisms.

Discussion

The study results are of great importance in understanding the dynamic world of the retail MSME sector in India where FDI competition is growing. The findings show that most MSMEs view FDI as an element of stiffened competition especially with the growth of the organized retail and multinationals. This is consistent with the previous research indicating that FDI, despite raising the efficiency and infrastructure, would generate a competitive asymmetry between the large organized participants (or large product suppliers) and the small retailers (Nayak and Mahapatra, 2016; Arora, 2014). Price competition and decreasing customer base as mentioned in the analysis further confirms the structural issues of the MSMEs.

In the study, the MSMEs are found to be not passive players in the market, but they are busy coping with the climatic market changes. Adopting the use of digital payment systems and the customer relationship practices are at high levels, and it means that the strategic change to modernization and customer-focused practices. Such results align with the view of Ahmad

(2023) who has noted that there is an increasing significance of digitalization and technology adoption in improving competitiveness within the retail sector. The powerful influence of the use of digital on the business performance also helps to argue that technological integration is becoming the necessity rather than the option to survive in the competitive retail environment.

Customer relationship management is another key success determinant of MSME. In contrast to the organized retail chains, MSMEs have some inherent strengths like the personalized service, the trust-related relations, and proximity to customers. The paper confirms the observation that the exploitation of these strengths makes a major contribution to the business performance and ends up validating the argument of Chawla (2018), who pointed out customer engagement and service differentiation as contemporary survival mechanisms of small retailers.

Even though the price strategy is established to be important, it has a relatively small effect, which implies that MSMEs cannot afford to depend on the price strategy as the only method of competing successfully and surviving. Organized retailers are at advantage of economies of scale thus are able to provide competitive pricing that can be hard to realise by small retailers. Such conclusion is consistent with the argument by Manik and Singla (2013) who asserted that competition in pricing usually favors MSMEs because they have limited operation scale and high cost of procurement.

Product differentiation is also a significant factor in the improvement of competitiveness but its effect is comparatively small. This implies that whereas they may be able to niche the markets with the aid of the unique or specialized products, this alone may not be adequate to allow MSMEs to create niche markets. Rather, the differentiation should be supplemented with other strategic programs like digital engagement and customer relationship management.

The regression findings also indicate that a mix of adaptive strategies has a significant contribution to the performance of MSMEs since it has a significant proportion of variance ($R^2 = 0.58$). This means that one of the major factors that determine survival in competitive business environment that is fueled by FDI, is strategic agility. The results endorse the wider theoretical approach of the Resource-Based View that lays stress on the significance of internal capabilities and strategic resources in attaining competitive advantage.

Politically, the paper highlights the importance of moderation in the area of FDI in retailing. Although FDI leads to sectoral development and modernization, it is also important to remember providing MSMEs with resources and support needed to compete successfully. Access to finance or availability of digital literacy and offering skill development programs can also make MSMEs more resilient. These findings agree with Mukherjee et al. (2011) who have suggested policy interventions, which enhance inclusive growth and liberalisation.

On the whole, this discussion has pointed out that FDI has a two-sided effect on the retail MSME sector both as a factor that facilitates modernization and a provider of competitive forces. The ability to implement innovative, technological, and customer-oriented strategies that are technology-driven is very vital to the survival and development of MSMEs. The research paper makes a contribution to the current literature by offering empirical data on strategic responses by MSMEs to competition that arises out of the FDI thus giving a valuable contribution to policy makers, researchers and practitioners.

Conclusions

The research concludes that the rising FDI inflows have redefined the Indian retail environment due to heightened competition and the move towards organized form of retail. Although this change has enhanced efficiency and consumer experience, it has rendered a big challenge to MSMEs especially in regards to pricing aspect as well as market retention. The results effectively show that the use of digital tools and customer-focused practices by MSMEs leads to their improved performance and resilience. Thus, the key to the survival in the present-day environment is less concerned with the established customs and more focused on the flexibility of strategic decisions and innovation as well as the efficient use of the available internal resources.

Recommendations

Considering the results, it can be suggested that digital transformation, involvement of e-commerce platforms, e-payments, and use of online marketing tools must be among the priorities of MSMEs to increase their competitiveness. Sustainability can also be enhanced by strengthening the customer relationship management and concentrating on niche markets. To enable MSMEs, policymakers need to establish favorable institutions like the availability of finance, skills development programmes and incentives to implement technology. Also, balanced FDI policies that guarantee equal competition, as well as, infrastructural and

institutional backing, are needed so as to develop an all-encompassing retail environment, wherein MSMEs can live and prosper amicably with organized retail.

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**Sexual Violence and Power Dynamics in the Poem *Leda and the Swan*:
A Study****Dr. Veena Ilame**
Assistant Professor,
Gundawar College, Nagpur**Abstract:**

Element of feminism is obviously very dominant throughout the poem because the stress on violence, rape, graphic descriptions, sudden attack and bestiality is very distinct from any form of the other analytical, critical reading of the poem. The helplessness of the girl is high-lighted to the fullest extent, but the animal (Swan) is never so grotesquely pointed out as an animal. He is really only named in the title. Most critics refer to it as “he” and God, sometimes even Zeus and Joe. Culling Ford produces almost a catalogue of pornography in ‘Leda’

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Power Dynamics, Feminism, Helplessness,

Yeats’ world popular poem *Leda and the Swan* is the poem in the form of a sonnet very successfully and perfectly composed. This poem depicts the violent rape of Leda by Zeus in Swan form as a sudden, brutal assault, blending sexual violation with mythological, world altering consequences. This poem is one of the most perfect poems ever written by W. B. Yeats. It was included in the volume, *The Tower*. The following lines in the poem display Yeats’ unique genius and his power of combination of words:

A SUDDEN blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

(“Leda and the Swan” 1-4.)

This poetic description provides most provoking sight of violence. This provides evident of violence by masculine against feminine. This aspect of his poetry fascinates us. The poem focuses on Leda’s helplessness, terrified state, and the overpowering nature of the divine, ultimately linking this act of violence to the destruction of troy and the start of a new historical era.

The poem opens with a 'Sudden blow' indicating an abrupt, forced attack rather than a seduction. Leda is depicted as a staggering girl, 'helplessness' and 'terrified' emplacing her lack of agency against the 'brutal blood of the air'. The imagery, such as the swan's webbed feet on her thighs and the bill gripping her neck, emphasizes the animalistic nature of the violation.

The violation is not merely a personal assault but a generative event that brings about 'the broken wall, the burning roof, and a tower' of Troy, linking sexual violence to war and historical disaster.

In the same manner, the poem under the title 'Leda and the Swan' composed by Yeats 1923 provides us interpretative stuff. This poem is exceptionally interesting and enjoyable. But it is equally difficult to comprehend it without genuine and sincere efforts. The poem is in the form of a sonnet, very successfully and perfectly composed. This poem is one of the most perfect poems ever written by W. B. Yeats. It was included in the volume, *The Tower*. The following lines in the poem display Yeats' unique genius and his power of combination of words:

How can those terrified vague fingers push
Above the staggering glory from her loosening thighs?,
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the starng heart beating where it lies?

("Leda and the Swan" 5-8)

The above lines pose great power to penetrate the very psyche of a woman's mind. This shows that such lines are very rare in the range of poetic world. It is because Yeats took great pains and was engrossed in powerful imagination. The artistic perfection, as has been pointed out by Elman, was achieved not spontaneously but through at least six stages of revision and modification.

The sonnet is very picturesque and shows dramatic presentation of the story of *Leda and the Swan* taken from the Greek mythology and therefore it is based on mythical background. In the light of this mythological Greek story, Leda was the mother of mankind; Zeus or Jupiter appears to her in the form of a Swan and he raped her. The girl was batheing naked in a pond when a big bird suddenly swoops down upon her, caresses her thighs and holds her nape with his beak and presses her helpless breast upon his breast.

This poetic description provides the most provoking sight of violence. This site provides evidence of violence by a masculine against feminine. The masculine here is none less than God Zeus. Thus the poem '*Leda and the Swan*' with a picture of Zeus, disguised as a swan, who descended with great force upon the girl, the girl was helpless and he took hold of her with an intention to rape her. Consequentially, the girl was shocked and terrified, and could hardly maintain her poise, irrespective of what the girl felt, the swan sets its dark webs on her thighs and established a close contact with her body. The whole action of the swan simply shows the power of the swan verses powerlessness of Leda.

Conclusion:

In this research paper, the researcher has tried to show the sexual violence and power dynamics of swan representing a male gender and Leda representing female gender where she stood helplessly. This poetic description provides the most provoking sight of violence. This site provides evidence of violence by a masculine against feminine. The poem shows Leda's helplessness as she shocked and terrified because of sudden and horrible attack of the Swan. The violation is not merely a personal assault but a generative event that brings about 'the broken wall, the burning roof, and a tower' of Troy, linking sexual violence to war and historical disaster

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Voices from the Margins: Gender Inequality and Female Subjugation in Kiran Nagarkar's "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three"

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Abstract:

Kiran Nagarkar's debut novel *Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three* (1974/198c) remains a landmark in Indian literature for its unflinching critique of gender inequality and patriarchal violence. This paper examines the novel's portrayal of female subjugation through the tragic trajectory of its protagonist, Pratibha—from victim of domestic brutality to martyr who exonerates her abuser. Through close analysis of the opening scene, where a brutal beating culminates in self-immolation, the paper argues that Nagarkar constructs a powerful critique of male hegemony that paradoxically silences the very voices it seeks to represent. The novel reveals how patriarchal structures are perpetuated not only through male violence but through female complicity and internalized subordination. The paper addresses the complexities of interpreting feminist themes.

Keywords: *gender inequality, patriarchy, domestic violence, tragic trajectory, male hegemony*

Kiran Nagarkar's 'Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three' is a milestone in the Indian English literature. It's fragmentary structure, it's dreamlike quality, it's refusal of linear narrative have made the novel most enduring and impactful. It's instinctive depiction of gender-based violence and the everyday operations of patriarchy in Indian domestic life makes vivid and brilliant case study in general.

The novel opens with a scene of such brutality that it remains difficult to read decades after its publication: Ajit, drunk and enraged, thrashes his wife Pratibha while his mother plays the role of mute spectator. When Pratibha, threatens to immolate herself, Ajit taunts her, and she carries out the act—only to die three days later after forgiving her husband in her dying declaration to the police. This sequence, which occupies merely the opening pages, establishes the thematic architecture upon which the entire novel rests: the normalization of male violence, the internalization of patriarchal values by women themselves, and the systematic erasure of female agency within structures of kinship and marriage.

This paper examines how Nagarkar's novel constructs its critique of gender inequality through two interconnected lenses: first, the representation of domestic violence as universal rather than unusual and second, the role of female involvement in continuing patriarchal norms. In dealing with these tensions, the paper suggests that 'Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three' remains an indispensable text for understanding gender inequality in modern India.

Gender Inequality and Male Hegemony: Theoretical Framework

Before turning to the novel itself, it is useful to establish the theoretical framework within which its treatment of gender can be understood. As Dr. Ashish Gupta notes in his analysis of the novel, "Gender discrimination is subject to the history of this whole universe. In the male dominant society the ratio of facing gender bias and patriarchy may differ but no one in this universe is untouched by this fact". This observation, while broad, points to the fundamental insight that underpins feminist criticism of patriarchy: that gender inequality is not a collection of isolated incidents but a structural feature of social organization.

Simone de Beauvoir's foundational work 'The Second Sex' provides a useful starting point for understanding the mechanisms of this inequality. According to Beauvoir, women's subordination is rooted in two interrelated factors: their exclusion from productive labour and their "enslavement" to reproductive functions, which in the past, women were forced to focus solely on motherhood and bodily needs, restricting their freedom.

In the Indian context, these global patterns of patriarchy assume specific cultural forms. The scholar Priyanka Singla's work on Nagarkar's 'Cuckold' demonstrates how the author engages with these specifically Indian manifestations of gender oppression, offering "a feminist retelling" that foregrounds female "agency, strength, and resilience" even within male-dominated societies. This attention to women's negotiated agency within constraint characterizes Nagarkar's approach across his work, from the medieval setting of 'Cuckold' to the contemporary rural poverty of his final novel 'Jasoda'. In contrast to the powerful and independent Draupadi in *Cuckold* who transcends patriarchal limitations, Pratibha's narrative focuses on a trajectory of inescapable annihilation."

Domestic Violence and Female Complicity in the Opening Scene

The novel's opening scene deserves unrelenting attention, for it captures the complex dynamics of gender inequality that the work as a whole explores. The scene is constructed with deliberate predictability: Ajit returns home late, drunk, and begins beating his wife. Pratibha's

first action is to close the door—not to protect herself, but to prevent neighbours from witnessing the violence and thereby damaging her husband's reputation. This gesture, almost instinctive, reveals the depth of her internalization of patriarchal beliefs: her fear is not for her own safety, but for the social standing of the man assaulting her.

When Ajit's mother attempts to intervene, she too becomes a target of his violence. Yet significantly, neither woman resists, nor do they seek help afterward. The mother-in-law "did not ask Ajit to stop his cruelty and brutality taking place in front of her eyes at her own house. Instead, she takes Ajit's behaviour to be normal as he is part of patriarchal hegemony and it permits him right to do anything and cross any limit and abusiveness". This normalization of violence—the assumption that a husband's right to beat his wife is simply a feature of the marital order—represents one of patriarchy's most insidious effects. Violence need not be explicitly justified; it need only be rendered unremarkable.

The undercurrent between the two women is particularly noteworthy. Rather than forming solidarity against their abuser, they exist in parallel subordination, each isolated in her grief and suffering. The mother-in-law, who has herself endured decades of patriarchal control, has not emerged as an ally but as someone who has learned to accept violence as inescapable. Her involvement is not active confirmation but passive acceptance—a survival strategy that nevertheless serves to disseminate the system that harms her. As one analysis notes, such women "are not aware of the unnecessary and needless violence" they bear, having "assumed it to be part of their life and culture".

This observation points to a crucial dimension of gender inequality that the novel illuminates: the way patriarchal structures reproduce themselves through the very subjects they oppress. In the novel, Nagarkar shows that women don't just suffer under patriarchy—they also help keep it going. From childhood, they are taught to accept their place, and then they pass these same lessons on to their daughters. It becomes a cycle that repeats generation after generation. The mother-in-law in the story is a perfect example. She has survived all these years by staying quiet and never fighting back. By including her character, Nagarkar makes it clear how deeply patriarchy affects everyone—even the women who seem to go along with it.

The Self-Immolation: Agency, Desperation, and the Limits of Resistance

Pratibha's self-immolation shows the novel's most disturbing moment and its most complex statement about female agency under patriarchy. The sequence reveals through

dialogue that exposes the psychological dynamics of abuse. After being beaten, Pratibha murmurs, "You hit me once more and I will set myself to fire. I am fed up. I've had enough; I don't want to live anymore". Ajit's response is not fear or concern but further provocation: "Why you whore! Are you trying to threaten me? So who's stopping you, you stupid bitch? Go on and do it if you have the fucking guts".

This exchange crystallizes the power dynamics of abusive relationships. Pratibha's threat is not a genuine suicide intention but a desperate attempt to assert some form of action, to make her husband recognize her suffering. Ajit's response exposes the futility of this strategy: within patriarchal logic, even the threat of self-destruction is read not as evidence of desperation but as insubordination to be crushed. When Pratibha does pour kerosene over herself, she continues to hope that Ajit will intervene, muttering, "I will teach you a lesson, just wait, you'll be sorry". The phrase "teach you a lesson" suggests that her act is intended as communication, as a final attempt to make him see her point of view.

Ajit's response—or rather, his non-response—shatters this illusion. As Pratibha burns, "yelling save me," he watches without acting, "a silent watcher of the incident". His inaction in this moment is more damning than his earlier violence: it reveals that her suffering, even at the extremity of death by fire, does not register for him as a call to action. She is, finally, not a person whose pain demands response but an object whose destruction can be observed with indifference.

Yet the novel complicates any simple reading of Pratibha as pure victim. Even as she lies in the hospital, burned over most of her body, her concern remains with her family. She tells the doctor, "I want to live... They need me, my children and my husband. He needs me too. You don't know, do you, that he had lost his mind and I made him all right again". And in her dying act, she gives a statement to police claiming that she committed suicide and that "no one is responsible for her condition," thereby protecting the man who killed her.

A typical feminist viewpoint might say that Pratibha's last actions show how completely she has absorbed the beliefs of a male-dominated society. She has internalized these ideas so deeply that she can no longer see herself as a victim. There's some truth to this. When she insists that her husband "needs" her and that she "made him all right again," it shows how much her identity depends on being a wife and caretaker. If she were to admit that he was guilty of hurting her, she would also have to admit that her whole life—all her sacrifices, all her

suffering, everything she believed about herself—was built on violence. That realization would be too painful to bear.

Beyond Pratibha: Gender Inequality as Systemic

While Pratibha's story dominates the novel's opening, "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three" extends its critique of gender inequality through a range of female characters. As Ashish Gupta notes, Nagarkar "had painted different shadows of women in his novel through her female protagonist Pratibha, Chandni, Prachinti, Aroti etc. to show gender discrimination, domestic violence and male hegemony". These characters span class and social position, suggesting that gender inequality cuts across other social hierarchies.

The novel's fragmentary structure reinforces this sense of systemic critique. By refusing linear narrative and instead presenting a collage of scenes and perspectives, Nagarkar suggests that gender oppression is not a single story but a universal feature of the social setting—visible in sights, in fragments, in the ordinary brutalities that punctuate daily life. The Goethe-Institute's description of the novel as a "modernist collage" in which "nothing has more or less significance than anything else" takes on new meaning when read through a feminist lens: the casual violence of the opening scene is not an exceptional incident but one moment among many, no more or less significant than any other, because violence is woven into the fabric of ordinary existence.

This structural choice also reflects a particular understanding of how patriarchy operates. Unlike dramatic, exceptional violence, the everyday workings of gender inequality are often invisible, normalized, unremarkable. By refusing to highlight Pratibha's story as a singular tragedy, Nagarkar insists that we see it instead as typical—as one instance of a pattern repeated countless times across Indian society.

Conclusion

Kiran Nagarkar's "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three" endures as a powerful meditation on gender inequality in modern India. Through its unflinching depiction of domestic violence, its exploration of female complicity in patriarchal structures, and its refusal to offer easy resolutions, the novel forces readers to confront the everyday brutalities that sustain male hegemony. Pratibha's story—from beating to immolation to dying exoneration of her abuser—encapsulates the tragic logic of a system that denies women agency while holding them responsible for maintaining the very structures that destroy them.

In the end, “Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three” remains essential reading for anyone seeking to understand gender inequality in Indian society. Its portrait of Pratibha—burning, dying, yet still proclaiming her husband's innocence—haunts the reader long after the novel closes, a reminder of the human cost of patriarchy and the terrible resilience of those who endure it.

Kiran Nagarkar's "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three" is still a very important novel for understanding how gender inequality works in modern India. It shows domestic violence in all its rawness, it looks at how women themselves sometimes end up supporting the very system that oppresses them, and it refuses to give us any simple answers or happy endings. It forces us to see the small, everyday cruelties that keep men in power. Pratibha's story captures this completely. She is beaten, she sets herself on fire, and in her final moments, she tells the police that her husband is not to blame. This is the twisted logic of the world she lives in: women are given no real power, yet they are expected to hold everything together—even the system that destroys them.

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Digital Transformation in Education in Library and Information Science

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Abstract

Digital transformation has revolutionized the education sector by integrating advanced technologies into teaching, learning, and information management processes. In the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), digital technologies such as digital libraries, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and learning management systems have transformed traditional library services into modern information systems. This research paper examines the role of digital transformation in LIS education, explores the technologies driving this change, and analyzes its impact on library services and information access. The study also investigates the benefits and challenges associated with digital transformation in libraries. Data were collected through a survey conducted among LIS students, librarians, and faculty members. The findings show that digital technologies significantly enhance information accessibility and learning efficiency, although challenges such as lack of technical skills and financial limitations remain. The study concludes that LIS education must continuously adapt to technological advancements to prepare future information professionals.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Library and Information Science, Digital Libraries, Information Technology, LIS Education, E-learning

1. Introduction

The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has dramatically transformed the educational landscape across the world. Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technologies into various aspects of organizations and institutions to improve efficiency, accessibility, and service delivery.

In the context of education, digital transformation has enabled the adoption of innovative teaching methods, online learning platforms, and digital information resources. Libraries, which are fundamental to academic and research environments, have also undergone significant changes due to digital technology. Traditional libraries that relied on printed materials and manual cataloguing systems are now evolving into digital knowledge centers.

Library and Information Science (LIS) education plays an essential role in preparing professionals who manage and organize information resources. With the rise of digital information systems, LIS education must incorporate technological skills, digital literacy, and information management techniques. Digital libraries, online databases, and institutional repositories are now widely used in educational institutions.

The integration of digital technologies has expanded the role of librarians from custodians of books to information managers, digital curators, and knowledge facilitators. This transformation requires updated curricula, new skills, and innovative learning approaches.

2. Review of Literature

Previous studies have highlighted the growing importance of digital technologies in library services and education.

Researchers have emphasized that digital transformation enhances accessibility to knowledge resources and improves learning experiences. Digital libraries provide users with instant access to information resources regardless of geographical location.

Studies have also examined the role of artificial intelligence and automation in improving library services such as cataloguing, indexing, and information retrieval.

Some scholars have pointed out that LIS education must evolve to include subjects such as digital library management, metadata standards, and information technology applications. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of training, and limited financial resources continue to hinder the implementation of digital transformation in many institutions. Overall, the literature suggests that digital transformation is essential for the development of modern libraries and information services.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the concept of digital transformation in Library and Information Science education.
2. To analyze the role of digital technologies in library services.
3. To evaluate the benefits of digital transformation in education.
4. To identify the challenges faced by libraries in implementing digital technologies.
5. To study the level of digital resource usage among LIS students and professionals.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive research design** to analyze the impact of digital transformation in LIS education.

4.2 Data Collection

Data were collected from both **primary and secondary sources**.

Sr. No.	Source	Description
01	Primary Data	Survey questionnaire distributed among respondents
02	Secondary Data	Books, journals, research articles, and websites

4.3 Sample Size

Sr. No.	Category	Number of Respondents
01	LIS Students	30
02	Librarians	12
03	Faculty Members	8
Total		50

4.4 Sampling Method

A **random sampling method** was used to select respondents from educational institutions.

5. Technologies Driving Digital Transformation in Libraries

Digital transformation in libraries is driven by several advanced technologies.

5.1 Digital Libraries

Digital libraries store electronic resources such as e-books, online journals, and multimedia materials. They provide remote access to information resources.

5.2 Artificial Intelligence

AI technologies assist libraries in providing intelligent search results, automated cataloguing, and user recommendations.

5.3 Cloud Computing

Cloud technology enables libraries to store and manage large digital collections while allowing remote access to users.

5.4 Learning Management Systems

LMS platforms such as Moodle and Google Classroom support digital learning and course management.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation**Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Sr. No.	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
01	18–25	22	44%
02	26–35	14	28%
03	36–45	8	16%
04	46+	6	12%
Total		50	100

Interpretation:

Most respondents belong to the 18–25 age group, indicating that the majority of participants are students.

Table 2: Role of Respondents

Sr. No.	Role	Frequency	Percentage
01	Students	30	60%
02	Librarians	12	24%
03	Faculty	8	16%
Total		50	100

Interpretation:

Students form the majority of the respondents, followed by librarians and faculty members.

Table 3: Use of Digital Resources

Sr. No.	Resource	Respondents	Percentage
01	E-books	35	70%
02	Online Journals	40	80%
03	Digital Repositories	28	56%
04	Online Databases	32	64%

Interpretation:

Online journals are the most frequently used digital resource among respondents.

Table 4: Impact of Digital Technologies

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
01	Strongly Agree	20	40%
02	Agree	18	36%
03	Neutral	6	12%
04	Disagree	4	8%

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
05	Strongly Disagree	2	4%
Total		50	100

Interpretation:

A majority of respondents believe that digital technologies significantly improve access to information.

7. Benefits of Digital Transformation in Libraries

Digital transformation provides several advantages:

- Improved access to global information resources
- Faster information retrieval
- Reduced dependence on printed materials
- Enhanced research and learning opportunities
- Better management of library collections

Digital technologies enable libraries to provide online services such as virtual reference assistance, digital repositories, and remote database access.

8. Challenges of Digital Transformation

Despite its benefits, digital transformation presents several challenges:

8.1 Lack of Technical Skills

Many libraries, especially in developing regions, lack reliable internet, modern hardware, or updated software systems. Without strong infrastructure, adopting digital tools like cloud catalogs or digital repositories becomes difficult. Many librarians require training to effectively use digital tools.

8.2 Financial Constraints

Digital transformation requires significant investment:

- Software subscriptions
- Digitization equipment
- Maintenance and upgrades

Limited budgets can slow or prevent implementation.

8.3 Digital Divide

Not all users have equal access to digital devices or the skills to use them. This creates inequality in access to information, which goes against the core mission of libraries.

8.4 Data Security Issues

Digital systems expose libraries to:

- Cyber attacks
- Data breaches
- Unauthorized access to user information

Protecting user privacy is a major ethical and technical challenge.

8.5 Copyright and Licensing Issues

Digitizing and sharing materials raises legal concerns:

- Copyright restrictions
- Licensing agreements for e-resources
- Intellectual property rights

Libraries must navigate complex laws to avoid violations.

9. Future Trends in Digital Transformation

The future of LIS education and libraries will be influenced by emerging technologies such as:

- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
- Big Data Analytics
- Block chain technology
- Virtual and Augmented Reality
- Smart libraries with automated systems

These innovations will improve information management and enhance user experiences.

10. Findings of the Study

The study reveals the following findings:

1. Digital technologies play a significant role in LIS education.
2. Online journals and e-books are widely used by students and researchers.
3. Digital transformation improves access to information resources.
4. Technical skill gaps and financial limitations are major challenges.
5. Libraries must adopt advanced technologies to remain relevant in the digital era.

11. Suggestions

To improve digital transformation in LIS education, the following steps are recommended:

- Provide training programs for librarians on digital technologies.

- Increase investment in digital infrastructure.
- Develop updated LIS curricula including emerging technologies.
- Promote digital literacy among students and faculty.
- Strengthen cyber security measures in digital libraries.

12. Conclusion

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped the landscape of education and library services. In the field of Library and Information Science, digital technologies have transformed traditional libraries into dynamic digital information centers. The integration of digital tools has improved access to knowledge resources, enhanced learning experiences, and expanded library services.

However, the successful implementation of digital transformation requires adequate infrastructure, skilled professionals, and supportive institutional policies. LIS education must continuously adapt to technological advancements to prepare future information professionals for the evolving digital environment.

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Climate Change and Ecological Consciousness: An Ecocritical Study of the Works of Amitav Ghosh

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Abstract

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing concerns of the twenty-first century, affecting ecosystems, societies, and global economies. Literature plays a crucial role in shaping environmental awareness by highlighting the relationship between human beings and nature. Ecocriticism, as an interdisciplinary field of study, examines how literary texts represent ecological concerns and environmental ethics. The works of Amitav Ghosh significantly contribute to contemporary environmental discourse by portraying ecological vulnerability and climate crises in different cultural and historical contexts. This paper analyzes selected works such as *The Hungry Tide*, *Gun Island*, and *Jungle Nama* to examine how they represent climate change, ecological imbalance, and the ethical responsibility of humanity toward nature. Through an ecocritical lens, the paper argues that Ghosh challenges anthropocentric attitudes and emphasizes the need for sustainable coexistence between humans and the natural environment.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Climate Change, Environmental Ethics, Sustainability, Climate Fiction

Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed unprecedented environmental crises, including rising global temperatures, melting glaciers, biodiversity loss, and extreme weather events. Climate change has become a global concern affecting both developed and developing nations. These ecological transformations have not only influenced scientific research and policy-making but also shaped literary and cultural studies. Ecocriticism, which studies the relationship between literature and the physical environment, provides a critical framework to understand how literary texts represent environmental issues and ecological ethics.

Among contemporary writers, Amitav Ghosh stands out as a prominent voice addressing climate change and ecological degradation. His literary works combine history, anthropology, mythology, and environmental awareness to explore the complex relationship

between human societies and nature. Ghosh's narratives frequently focus on fragile ecological landscapes such as river deltas, forests, and coastal regions, highlighting the vulnerability of both human and non-human life.

Through his novels and narrative poetry, Ghosh draws attention to the ecological consequences of colonial exploitation, industrialization, and modern development. His works emphasize that environmental crises cannot be understood solely through scientific data; they must also be examined through cultural, historical, and ethical perspectives. By integrating environmental concerns into literary narratives, Ghosh encourages readers to rethink the relationship between humanity and the natural world.

Ecocriticism and Climate Change in Literature

Ecocriticism emerged as an important theoretical approach in literary studies during the late twentieth century. Scholars such as Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell emphasized the need to analyze literature in relation to environmental issues and ecological awareness. Ecocriticism challenges anthropocentric perspectives that place human beings at the center of the universe and instead promotes an ecocentric worldview that recognizes the intrinsic value of nature.

"Global warming is perhaps the most important story of our time, yet it is absent from the literary fiction of our time."

In recent decades, climate change has become a major theme in literature, giving rise to a new genre often referred to as climate fiction or "cli-fi." These narratives explore the environmental consequences of human activities and imagine the social, political, and cultural implications of ecological disasters. Literary texts dealing with climate change often portray natural disasters, environmental migration, and the loss of biodiversity.

However, representing climate change in literature is not always easy because climate change operates on large temporal and spatial scales. Many writers struggle to depict its gradual and complex nature within traditional narrative forms. In this context, the works of Amitav Ghosh play a significant role because they successfully integrate environmental concerns with compelling storytelling.

Ecological Vulnerability in *The Hungry Tide*

"The sea has always been the Sundarbans' greatest threat and its greatest protector."

One of the most powerful representations of ecological vulnerability in Ghosh's fiction appears in *The Hungry Tide*. The novel is set in the Sundarbans, a vast mangrove forest located in the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. This region is known for its unique biodiversity as well as its extreme environmental conditions, including cyclones, tidal floods, and shifting river channels.

Through the character of Piya, a marine biologist studying the endangered Irrawaddy dolphins, the novel explores the delicate balance between human life and ecological systems. The Sundarbans is portrayed as a dynamic landscape where nature constantly reshapes human existence. The lives of the local inhabitants depend on the forest and rivers, yet they remain vulnerable to the unpredictable forces of nature.

The novel also highlights the social dimensions of environmental crises. Poor and marginalized communities living in the Sundarbans face displacement, economic insecurity, and environmental hazards. These challenges reveal how ecological disasters disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. By portraying the struggles of these communities, Ghosh emphasizes that climate change is not merely an environmental issue but also a social and political problem.

Myth and Environmental Ethics in *Jungle Nama*

Another significant ecological text by Ghosh is *Jungle Nama*, which retells the traditional legend of Bon Bibi, the guardian deity of the Sundarbans forest. This narrative blends folklore, mythology, and environmental consciousness to explore the moral relationship between humans and nature.

The story presents the conflict between human greed and ecological balance. Characters who attempt to exploit the forest without respecting its limits face severe consequences. The narrative thus conveys an important ecological message: human survival depends on maintaining harmony with nature.

By reviving indigenous myths and cultural traditions, Ghosh highlights alternative ecological perspectives that challenge modern industrial attitudes toward nature. These traditional belief systems often emphasize respect for natural forces and promote sustainable coexistence between humans and the environment.

Climate Migration and Global Crisis in Gun Island

In *Gun Island*, Ghosh expands the discussion of climate change from regional landscapes to a global context. The novel connects environmental disasters with human migration and global economic inequalities. Through the journey of the protagonist across different countries, the narrative reveals how climate change affects diverse regions of the world.

The world is changing, and strange things are happening everywhere.”

The novel depicts unusual natural events, displaced wildlife, and changing weather patterns as signs of ecological imbalance. These elements highlight the interconnectedness of global ecosystems and the far-reaching consequences of environmental degradation. Climate change is portrayed not as a distant threat but as a present reality shaping the lives of people across continents.

Critique of Modern Civilization

A recurring theme in Ghosh’s writings is the critique of modern civilization’s exploitative relationship with nature. Rapid industrialization, urban expansion, and capitalist development have intensified environmental degradation. Ghosh argues that contemporary societies often prioritize economic growth over ecological sustainability.

His narratives challenge the assumption that human beings can dominate and control nature. Instead, they emphasize the unpredictability and power of natural forces. Through vivid descriptions of storms, floods, and ecological transformations, Ghosh reminds readers that humanity is part of a larger ecological system rather than its master.

Conclusion

The works of Amitav Ghosh offer a profound literary exploration of climate change and environmental ethics. Through narratives set in ecologically fragile landscapes, Ghosh highlights the interconnectedness between human societies and natural ecosystems. His writings reveal that environmental crises are deeply intertwined with social inequality, historical exploitation, and global economic systems.

By combining storytelling with ecological awareness, Ghosh expands the scope of contemporary environmental literature. His works encourage readers to reconsider their relationship with nature and recognize the urgent need for sustainable practices. In the context

of global climate change, Ghosh's literature serves as a powerful reminder that human survival ultimately depends on maintaining ecological balance and respecting the natural world.

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Negotiating Diaspora and Postcolonial Identity in the Fiction of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

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Abstract:

Diasporic literature constitutes a significant branch of postcolonial studies as it foregrounds issues of migration, displacement, cultural conflict, and identity formation. The fiction of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni presents a nuanced and sensitive portrayal of the South Asian diasporic experience, particularly focusing on women negotiating identity in transnational spaces. This paper examines how Divakaruni's works engage with themes of hybridity, memory, gender, alienation, and self-discovery. Drawing upon postcolonial theories proposed by Homi K. Bhabha and James Clifford, the study analyzes selected texts such as *The Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of My Heart*, *The Vine of Desire*, *Queen of Dreams*, *Oleander Girl*, and *Arranged Marriage*. It argues that Divakaruni's characters inhabit an in-between cultural space where identity remains fluid and continuously negotiated. Through symbolism, myth, and magical realism, she challenges cultural binaries and foregrounds the resilience of diasporic women. Ultimately, diaspora is presented not merely as displacement but as a transformative process enabling the reconstruction of postcolonial identity.

Keywords:

Diaspora; Postcolonial Identity, Gender and Migration; Cultural Negotiation, Magical Realism

Introduction:

The concept of diaspora has gained critical importance in contemporary literary studies, particularly within the framework of postcolonial theory. Diasporic literature reflects the lived experiences of individuals and communities who reside away from their homeland and continuously negotiate their identity in unfamiliar cultural environments. These narratives capture the emotional, psychological, and cultural consequences of migration, revealing tensions between memory and change, belonging and alienation, and tradition and modernity. Among the most influential voices in Indian diasporic literature is Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, whose fiction offers a profound exploration of immigrant experiences, especially from a

gendered perspective. Her works primarily focus on Indian immigrants in the United States who struggle to balance traditional values with Western cultural expectations. Divakaruni's narratives are deeply rooted in postcolonial concerns, as they examine identity formation in the aftermath of colonial histories and global migration.

Diaspora, as conceptualized by James Clifford, extends beyond physical displacement to include emotional dislocation and cultural negotiation. It involves a continuous engagement with multiple locations and identities. Similarly, postcolonial identity is shaped by histories of colonial domination, cultural marginalization, and resistance. Homi K. Bhabha introduces the concept of hybridity and the "third space," where new identities emerge through the interaction of different cultures. This space destabilizes fixed notions of identity and allows for fluid and dynamic self-construction.

Divakaruni's fiction vividly represents this hybrid space where characters struggle to reconcile their Indian heritage with American cultural influences. As one of her characters poignantly expresses in *The Mistress of Spices*:

"I stand between two worlds, belonging fully to neither."

This statement encapsulates the essence of diasporic identity as an ongoing process of negotiation rather than a fixed condition.

One of the central concerns in Divakaruni's fiction is the emotional experience of migration. In *Arranged Marriage*, she presents women who migrate to the United States with dreams of happiness and independence but often encounter loneliness, cultural alienation, and domestic struggles. One character reflects:

"I crossed oceans for a better life, but I did not know how far I would drift from myself."

Such expressions highlight the psychological cost of migration and the challenges of adapting to a new cultural environment. The sense of isolation experienced by these women underscores the complexities of diasporic existence.

In *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*, the protagonists Anju and Sudha experience diaspora not only as geographical displacement but also as emotional fragmentation. Their movement between India and the United States reflects the diasporic condition of being suspended between two worlds. Anju's reflection-

"America changed me, but it could not erase the memories that made me"

illustrates the persistence of cultural identity despite geographical relocation.

Memory and nostalgia play a crucial role in shaping diasporic identity in Divakaruni's fiction. The homeland continues to exist in the memories of immigrants, influencing their sense of self. Cultural practices such as food, festivals, and language become means of preserving identity in foreign spaces. In *The Mistress of Spices*, spices function as powerful symbols of cultural memory and emotional healing. The protagonist Tilo remarks:

"The spices remember what we try to forget. They carry our stories across oceans."

This metaphor emphasizes how cultural memory sustains identity in conditions of displacement. Memory becomes both a source of comfort and a reminder of loss.

Hybridity is a defining feature of Divakaruni's representation of postcolonial identity. Her characters neither fully assimilate into Western culture nor completely reject their Indian heritage. Instead, they create hybrid identities that draw from both traditions. In *Oleander Girl*, Korobi's journey to uncover her origins leads her to embrace a multifaceted identity:

"I am made of many histories, many lands, none of them complete without the other."

This realization reflects Bhabha's concept of hybridity, where identity is constructed through cultural intersections. Language itself becomes a site of hybridity in Divakaruni's fiction. Although she writes in English, her narratives are infused with Indian cultural references, thereby challenging colonial linguistic hierarchies.

Gender is central to Divakaruni's exploration of diaspora. Women in her fiction often bear the burden of preserving cultural traditions while adapting to new environments. They face patriarchal constraints both within their homeland and in the host country. However, these women are not passive victims; they are resilient individuals who actively negotiate their identities.

In *Arranged Marriage*, female characters struggle against oppressive relationships but ultimately assert their agency. One protagonist declares:

"I will no longer live a life chosen by others. I will choose my own path."

Similarly, in *Sister of My Heart*, Sudha challenges societal expectations and asserts her independence. Migration becomes a catalyst for questioning patriarchal norms and redefining identity.

In *Queen of Dreams*, the protagonist Rakhi represents the second-generation immigrant who negotiates inherited cultural memory and contemporary American identity. Her struggle reflects the evolving nature of diasporic identity across generations. As she observes:

“My mother’s dreams are filled with India, but mine are shaped by the life I live here.”

This generational shift complicates the notion of belonging, making identity more fluid and layered.

Another distinctive aspect of Divakaruni’s fiction is her use of myth and magical realism. By incorporating elements of Indian mythology, she reclaims cultural narratives marginalized during colonial rule. In *The Mistress of Spices*, magical realism allows her to transcend Western rationalism and affirm alternative modes of understanding reality. Tilo’s assertion-

“Magic is not illusion; it is another way of truth”

challenges dominant epistemologies and asserts indigenous knowledge systems.

Myth and magic thus serve as tools of postcolonial resistance, connecting the past with the present and reinforcing cultural continuity.

While diaspora is often associated with loss and displacement, Divakaruni redefines it as a transformative experience. Her characters evolve through their struggles, reconstructing their identities in new cultural contexts. In *The Vine of Desire*, emotional turmoil leads to self-awareness and growth. Similarly, in *Oleander Girl*, Korobi’s journey results in a deeper understanding of her identity.

As one character insightfully remarks:

“We are not lost between worlds; we are shaped by them.”

This perspective reimagines diaspora as a space of possibility, growth, and self-realization rather than mere dislocation.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the fiction of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni offers a profound exploration of diaspora and postcolonial identity. Through her nuanced portrayal of immigrant experiences, she highlights the emotional complexities of migration, the persistence of cultural memory, and the transformative potential of hybridity. By foregrounding women’s voices, she emphasizes the gendered dimensions of diaspora, showcasing resilience, resistance, and self-discovery. Her use of myth and magical realism further enriches her narratives, challenging Western paradigms and asserting indigenous cultural frameworks. Ultimately, Divakaruni presents diaspora not as a static condition of displacement but as a dynamic process of negotiation and

transformation, where identity is continuously reshaped at the intersections of culture, gender, and transnational experience.

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Implementing the Action-Oriented Approach of the CECR in French in Foreign Language Classrooms at Nagpur University: Pedagogical Implications and Alignment with NEP 2020

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Abstract

This paper examines the implementation of the Action-Oriented Approach proposed in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) within the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) programme at Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University. In the context of recent reforms in Indian higher education, particularly the *National Education Policy 2020* (NEP 2020) and the competency-based orientation supported by the University Grants Commission, the Action-Oriented Approach offers a coherent and adaptable pedagogical framework. By positioning learners as social actors engaged in purposeful tasks, this approach aligns with national priorities such as experiential learning, skill development, and learner autonomy. The paper analyses the theoretical foundations of the approach, explores its practical implications for the FLE classroom, and discusses the institutional challenges involved in its implementation. It argues that the Action-Oriented Approach provides a viable pathway for modernising French language instruction in Indian universities while remaining consistent with national academic policy.

Keywords: Action-Oriented Approach, CEFR, French as a Foreign Language, NEP 2020, UGC, Indian higher education, task-based pedagogy.

Introduction

Foreign language teaching in Indian universities has long been shaped by examination-driven models of instruction. In many classrooms, French is still taught through a combination of grammar explanation, translation exercises, and written assessments. While this model has produced students with solid knowledge of grammatical structures, it has not always succeeded in developing confident speakers capable of functioning in real communicative contexts. The adoption of the *National Education Policy 2020* marks an important shift in Indian higher education. The policy emphasizes on learner-centred pedagogy, experiential learning, interdisciplinary engagement, and competency-based assessment. These priorities encourage

departments to rethink how languages are taught and assessed. In this context, the Action-Oriented Approach described in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), developed by the Council of Europe, offers a framework that is both internationally recognised and pedagogically forward-looking.

This paper focusses on a central question: how can the Action-Oriented Approach be meaningfully implemented in French language classrooms at Nagpur University in a way that aligns with NEP 2020 and UGC guidelines, while remaining sensitive to local institutional realities?

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach to examine the implementation of the Action-Oriented Approach in French language teaching at the university level. The research is based on an analysis of the pedagogical principles outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and their relevance to the reforms proposed under the National Education Policy 2020.

In addition to theoretical analysis, the study draws on classroom practices and teaching experiences within the Department of Linguistics, Foreign and Indian Languages at Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University. Examples of task-based classroom activities such as role plays, presentations, debates, and simulations of real-life communication are considered to illustrate how action-oriented pedagogy can be integrated into the Indian higher education context.

Theoretical Foundations of the Action-Oriented Approach

The Action-Oriented Approach represents an evolution of communicative language teaching. While communicative methods emphasised interaction and fluency, the CEFR goes a step further by conceptualising learners as “social agents” who use language to accomplish tasks in specific contexts (Council of Europe 9). Language learning, in this view, is not an end in itself but a means of participating in social, academic, and professional life.

A key concept in this framework is that of the task. A task is defined as any purposeful action undertaken by an individual to achieve a specific outcome. Importantly, tasks are not simply classroom drills disguised as activities. They mirror real-world actions: preparing a presentation, negotiating meaning in a discussion, drafting professional correspondence, or conducting research.

This perspective resonates strongly with socio-constructivist theories of learning, which emphasise collaboration, interaction, and contextualised knowledge. Rather than memorising rules in isolation, students develop competence by using language in meaningful situations. For Indian university learners, many of whom seek employment in multinational companies, education abroad, or careers in translation and tourism, this orientation has obvious relevance. It shifts the focus from mastering textbook content to developing functional communicative competence.

Convergence with NEP 2020 and UGC Guidelines

The principles of the Action-Oriented Approach align closely with the vision outlined in NEP 2020.

Experiential Learning

NEP 2020 promotes “learning by doing” and encourages project-based and inquiry-driven pedagogy. The Action-Oriented Approach naturally supports this principle through its emphasis on task completion. In a French classroom at Nagpur University’s Foreign Language Department, students might simulate an academic exchange, design a cultural presentation for a Francophone audience, or prepare a job application dossier in French. These activities go beyond theoretical knowledge and place students in situations that resemble real-life use of the language.

Competency-Based Education

The CEFR’s “can-do” descriptors provide a structured framework for evaluating what learners are capable of accomplishing at different proficiency levels. This aligns with the UGC’s growing emphasis on outcome-based education and measurable learning outcomes. Instead of focusing solely on grammatical accuracy, assessment can measure students’ ability to perform specific communicative acts.

Internationalisation and Global Standards

As Indian universities increasingly seek international collaborations, alignment with CEFR levels enhances transparency and global recognition. Students trained within this framework can benchmark their proficiency against internationally accepted standards, which strengthens the academic profile of the department. It also expands the opportunity window for the students as they are now trained on global standards.

Pedagogical Implications for the FLE Classroom at Nagpur University

Implementing the Action-Oriented Approach requires thoughtful adaptation rather than simple adoption.

Action-Oriented Tasks

Action-oriented tasks may include simulations of everyday situations such as shopping at a market or ordering food in a restaurant, completing administrative forms in French, learning about Francophone cultural practices, and participating in presentations or debates that require students to actively use the target language. At the Department of Linguistics, Foreign and Indian Languages, R.T.M.N.U, we have started to implement the Action-Oriented Approach to ensure that all the four language skills are touched upon and strengthened. Presentations, debates, role-plays and the simulation of real-world scenarios are accentuated to ensure that the students begin to put the target language in practice, thereby developing confidence in their language skills. In the Advance Diploma in French classroom, higher level tasks such as acting as local guides, and preparing a design for a two-day cultural and culinary itinerary for a visiting Francophone delegation to Nagpur, negotiating budget constraints and presenting their final dossier in French was successfully simulated.

The success of this approach could be witnessed in their ability and confidence in interacting with French native speakers during cultural events conducted at the Dept. of L.F.I.L in collaboration with Amicale, a French Language association of the Department. Students interact with the French invitees with alacrity, thanks to the practice they acquired during their classes.

Furthermore, pre-test and post-test before and after the application of the Action-Oriented approach was conducted in the academic session 2025-2026 and a positive trend was noted in the efficacy of the Action-Oriented approach as the students performed far well in the post-test evaluation.

Redefining the Role of the Teacher

In this model, the teacher acts less as a lecturer and more as a facilitator. Grammar remains important, but it is introduced as a resource needed to complete a task. For example, the past tense may be taught when students are required to narrate experiences, rather than as an isolated grammatical chapter.

This shift can be challenging, particularly for students accustomed to teacher-centred classrooms. However, gradual implementation, combined with clear guidance and structured reflection, can ease the transition.

This transition presents a real challenge in our classrooms at the Department of Linguistics, Foreign and Indian Languages at R.T.M.N.U. Time and again, we see students show a predilection for familiar translation exercises rather than jumping into practical, spoken French activities. It is tempting to think they simply want to stay in their 'comfort zone,' but this reluctance often runs much deeper. When we ask students to put down the textbook and express their own thoughts spontaneously, we are asking them to be vulnerable. This vulnerability frequently triggers Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), raising what linguists call the 'affective filter.' The discomfort they feel isn't just an avoidance of a difficult task; it's a very real psychological response to the fear of making mistakes in a new language. To help students past this hesitation, our job is to actively lower that anxiety. We can do this by designing tasks that are genuinely engaging, scaffolding the activities carefully, and showing students that we value their attempt to communicate far more than immediate grammatical perfection

Assessment Reform: Moving Beyond Traditional Examinations

Assessment remains one of the most sensitive areas in Indian higher education. While university regulations may still require summative examinations, formative and continuous assessment can be integrated alongside them.

Portfolios, oral presentations, group projects, and peer evaluation provide richer insights into communicative competence. These methods also reflect NEP 2020's call for reducing excessive reliance on high-stakes examinations.

Importantly, adopting CEFR descriptors for assessment encourages transparency. Students understand what is expected of them and can track their progress more clearly.

Institutional Constraints and Practical Considerations

The implementation of the Action-Oriented Approach at Nagpur University must account for practical constraints: large class sizes, limited contact hours, and fixed syllabi. Innovation must therefore be realistic.

Short, well-defined tasks can be incorporated within existing courses without overhauling the entire curriculum. Pair and group work can maximise student participation even in large classes. Professional development workshops for faculty can support the transition.

Institutional support is crucial. Without administrative backing, methodological innovation may remain isolated rather than systemic.

Conclusion

The Action-Oriented Approach of the CEFR offers more than a methodological alternative; it represents a shift in how language learning is conceptualised. By treating learners as social actors engaged in purposeful tasks, it bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication.

At Nagpur University, adopting this approach aligns closely with the goals of NEP 2020 and the competency-based orientation promoted by the UGC. While challenges remain, careful adaptation and gradual implementation can make the transition both feasible and beneficial.

Ultimately, the Action-Oriented Approach provides a framework through which French language education in Indian universities can become more relevant, dynamic, and internationally aligned without losing its academic integrity.

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Cashless India Mission: Role of Digitalization in improving Digital Economy its impact and progress

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1. Introduction

The rapid growth of Digitalization has brought significant changes to economic systems across the world. The integration of digital technologies into financial and commercial activities has transformed the way organizations operate and how transactions are conducted. The internet, mobile apps, cloud computing, and data analytics are examples of technologies that have changed conventional economic models and aided in the development of the digital economy. In many countries, the adoption of digital technologies has improved operational efficiency, increased transparency, and made economic services more accessible while also enabling innovative business models and modern service delivery mechanisms.

In India, the process of digital transformation has accelerated due to various government initiatives designed to strengthen digital infrastructure and encourage the adoption of electronic services. Among these initiatives, in order to increase internet connectivity, improve digital literacy, and provide government services online, Digital India has been instrumental. The development of digital financial systems and the nation's digital economy as a whole have benefited from these initiatives.

In this context, the Cashless India Mission has become a key tactic to encourage electronic financial transactions and lessen dependence on physical currency. The goal is to encourage people and companies to use digital payment methods like online payment platforms, digital wallets, and mobile banking. The development of advanced payment technologies, particularly the Unified Payments Interface and mobile applications like BHIM, has simplified financial transactions and improved their speed, security, and accessibility.

The movement toward a cashless economy gained additional momentum following the 2016 Indian demonetization, which encouraged citizens and businesses to adopt digital payment methods across different sectors wallets which are digital and also mobile banking. Consequently, digitalization has contributed to greater financial inclusion, enhanced transparency in financial dealings, and strengthened the overall economic framework.

This research paper therefore seeks to analyze the influence of digitalization on the expansion of the digital economy in India and to evaluate its role in advancing the objectives

of the Cashless India Mission. The study also focuses at the prospects, difficulties, and opportunities related to the nation's growing use of digital financial technologies.

Digitalization

Digitalization explains the adoption and use of digital technologies to transform organizational activities, business models, and service delivery systems. Technologies such as the internet, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics leads to improve operational efficiency, productivity, and decision-making processes.

In academic discussions, digitalization is often described as a process through which organizations and societies incorporate digital tools to restructure traditional methods of operation and generate new value. It differs from simple digitization, which only involves converting information into digital format. Digitalization focuses more broadly on utilizing digital technologies and data to enhance communication, streamline processes, and improve service delivery.

In the modern knowledge-based economy, digitalization has become an important driver of innovation and economic development. Organizations increasingly use digital systems to automate operations, manage workflows more efficiently, reduce operational costs, and enhance customer engagement. For example, businesses conduct transactions through online platforms, governments offer electronic governance services, and educational institutions use digital learning technologies.

Another important aspect of digitalization is the promotion of data-driven decision-making. Through digital systems, organizations can gather, store, and analyze vast amounts of data in exact time. Despite these benefits, digitalization also presents several challenges, including cybersecurity threats, concerns related to data privacy, and the requirement for adequate digital infrastructure and skilled human resources.

Overall, digitalization plays a significant role in transforming industries and improving operational performance while creating new opportunities for innovation and value creation in the digital era.

Digital India

Digital India is a major effort taken by the Government of India on 1 July 2015 under the leadership of Narendra Modi. The program focuses on transforming the nation in to the

knowledge driven economy and the society empowered by country by strengthening digital infrastructure and promoting the provision of services via internet channels.

The initiative is based on three key vision areas: giving digital infrastructure as a basic need for citizens, and also governance and services on demand, and empowering citizens through digital technologies. The program encourages the expansion of high-speed internet services with connectivity, mobile access, and also digital identity systems such as Aadhaar in order to make government services more accessible and efficient.

Digital platforms like UMANG and BHIM enable citizens to access government schemes, perform financial transactions, and obtain official documents electronically. Through such initiatives, Digital India seeks to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in governance while also promoting digital inclusion and economic development.

However, certain challenges remain, including insufficient digital literacy, cybersecurity concerns, and unequal access to internet services across regions. Efforts such as training programs through Common Service Centers (CSCs) have been implemented to increase awareness and encourage the usage of digital services, especially in rural areas.

Digital Economy

The term “Digital Economy” describes an economic structure that makes use of digital technologies and internet-based platforms play a central role in production, distribution, and consumption activities. It includes various forms of economic operations that rely on digital computing technologies such as e-commerce, online banking, digital payments, cloud services, and information technology.

In India, the expansion of the digital economy has been strongly supported by programs such as Digital India, which aim to strengthen digital infrastructure and encourage the use of online services. Payment systems like the Unified Payments Interface and applications such as BHIM have simplified and accelerated digital financial transactions.

The growing availability of smartphones and internet has encouraged businesses to shift toward online platforms for marketing, customer service, and product sales. As a result, the digital economy contributes to greater efficiency and productivity by lowering transaction costs, improving communication, and enabling innovative business models.

At the same time, the digital economy promotes the development of startups, digital financial services, and online marketplaces. Despite these advantages, issues such as

cybersecurity risks, concerns regarding data protection, and disparities in digital access remain significant challenges that must be addressed to ensure sustainable growth.

Impact of Digitalization on the Digital Economy in India

Digitalization significantly influenced growth of the digital economy in India. By introducing digital technologies and online platforms into economic activities, it has transformed traditional systems of production, service delivery, and financial transactions.

One of the most noticeable outcomes of digitalization is the rapid expansion of digital payment systems and electronic commerce. Technologies such as the Unified Payments Interface and applications like BHIM allow individuals to conduct financial transactions quickly and securely. Government initiatives including Digital India have further strengthened digital infrastructure and expanded internet connectivity, which supports the wider adoption of digital services.

In addition, digitalization has stimulated the development of startups, IT services, and online marketplaces, thereby created employment opportunities and improved the efficiency of business operations. Digital platforms also enable organizations to reach larger markets and enhance customer experiences through the use of data and technology. Nevertheless, difficulties such as gap in digital access between rural and urban regions, cybersecurity threats, a limited digital literacy among some groups of the population continue to affect the full realization of digitalization benefits. Despite these issues, digitalization remains an essential factor in promoting innovation, financial inclusion, and efficient service delivery within India's digital economy.

Cashless India Mission

The Cashless India Mission aims to promote electronic transactions and reduce reliance on physical cash in economic activities. Under this initiative, citizens, businesses, and government institutions are encouraged to adopt digital payment systems such as mobile banking, debit and credit cards, and internet-based payment platforms.

A cashless economy is a financial system where the majority of transactions took place online instead of paper currency. The concept gained significant attention in India following the 2016 Indian demonetization, which accelerated the use of electronic payment methods.

The government has also promoted the use of smartphone-based payment applications and digital banking services to make financial transactions faster and more convenient. Payment technologies such as UPI-based mobile applications allow individuals to transfer money instantly without visiting a bank branch.

Although the transition toward a cashless economy offers several benefits—including transparency, reduced corruption, and improved financial inclusion—additionally there are issues like limited internet access in some places, cyber security risks, and digital risks consequently. Therefore, continuous efforts are required to increase public awareness and strengthen digital infrastructure.

Role and impact of the Digital Economy in the progress of Cashless India Mission's

The digital economy is essential in achieving the objectives of the Cashless India Mission in India. By utilizing digital technologies such as the internet, smartphones, and electronic payment platforms, economic activities can be conducted efficiently without the need for physical cash.

One of the most important contributions of the digital economy is the development of modern digital payment systems. Platforms such as the Unified Payments Interface enable individuals to exchange funds quickly between bank accounts by mobile devices. Applications like BHIM have further simplified digital transactions and expanded their accessibility among users.

Moreover, the digital economy encourages the growth of online banking services, digital wallets, and e-commerce platforms, all of which support the widespread adoption of cashless transactions. Government programs such as Digital India have also improved digital infrastructure and increased awareness regarding electronic payment systems.

Digital technologies additionally contribute to financial inclusion by allowing individuals from rural and remote areas to use and utilize banking services through mobile devices. While challenges such as cybersecurity risks and bounded digital literacy remain, the expansion of the digital economy continues to strengthen the progress of the Cashless India Mission by making financial transactions more transparent, efficient, and convenient.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Digitalization and Economic Development

Research by Don Tapscott explains that the growth of the Digital Economy is largely driven by the adoption of digital technologies in economic activities. According to the study, digital networks and online platforms have changed conventional business models by facilitating quicker communication, more effective transactions and better information access. These developments contribute to innovation and economic growth in modern economies.

2.2 Digitalization and Productivity Growth

Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee emphasize that Digitalization significantly enhances productivity and organizational efficiency. Their research highlights that digital technologies like automation, artificial intelligence, and data analytics allow businesses to streamline operations and make better strategic decisions.

2.3 Impact of Digital Technologies on Economic Systems

Khan, Khan, and Aftab (2015) examined the role of digital technologies in economic development and international trade. Their findings suggest that digitalization strengthens economic performance by reducing operational costs, improving information flow, and enhancing global connectivity among businesses and consumers.

2.4 Digitalization and Government Initiatives in India

Athique (2019) analyzed the policy framework behind the Digital India initiative. The study concludes that this program has contributed a significant role in growing digital infrastructure, improving entrance to digital services, and encouraging the adoption of digital payment systems across India.

2.5 Digital Payments and Cashless Economy

Maurya (2019) explored the association between digital financial technologies and the development of a cashless economy. The research suggests that digital payment platforms improve transparency in financial transactions and help reduce illegal economic activities such as tax evasion and black money circulation.

2.6 Digitalization and Financial Inclusion

Kumar (2020) studied the impact of digitalization on economic development in India. The research indicates that digital technologies have increased employment opportunities, enhanced financial inclusion, and improved service delivery by providing citizens with easier access to digital platforms and financial services.

2.7 Demonetization and Digital Payment Acquisition

Studies related to 2016 suggest that Indian demonetization highlight that the policy accelerated the adoption of digital payment systems. The shortage of cash during the period encouraged both consumers and businesses to shift toward online transactions and electronic payment platforms.

2.8 Role of Digital Payment Systems

Research by Menon and Ramakrishnan (2019) explains that modern digital payment technologies have simplified financial transactions. Platforms such as the Unified Payments Interface allow instant bank-to-bank transfers through smartphones, making digital payments convenient and widely accessible.

2.9 Consumer Behavior toward Cashless Transactions

Aggarwal, Malik, Mishra, and Paul (2021) analyzed consumer attitudes toward digital payments in India. Their study found that factors such as convenience, transaction speed, and government initiatives significantly influence the acquisition of digital payment systems among consumers.

2.10 Digital Economy and Cashless India Mission

Several researchers have highlighted the importance of the Cashless India Mission in strengthening the digital economy. The mission encourages the use of mobile banking, digital wallets, and online payment systems. Applications such as BHIM have further simplified electronic transactions and increased the accessibility of digital financial services.

3. Research Objectives and Implications

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze the effect of Digital India on the Indian economy.
- To examine and compare consumer perceptions regarding the transformation from a cash-based economy to a cashless economy.
- To evaluate government initiatives promoting technological advancement and digital transactions.
- To identify socio-economic factors influencing citizens to adopt digital payment systems and cashless financial practices.

4. Research Design and Methodology

The present research adopts both descriptive and exploratory approaches. The study is primarily review-based, relying on secondary data sources to analyze the impact of digitalization and cashless transactions in India.

Secondary data has been collected from reliable sources including academic books, research journals, published articles, government reports, and online databases. Key statistical and economic information has been obtained from sources such as the Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy published by the Reserve Bank of India, reports published by NITI Aayog, and databases from the World Bank.

These sources provide valuable insights for evaluating the opportunities and challenges associated with digital payments and cashless banking in India.

5. Conclusion

Over the past decade, the Indian economy has experienced significant transformation due to the increasing integration of digital technologies. Major government India, Startup India, and Stand-Up India, along with economic reforms such as 3 execution of the Goods and Services Tax, have strengthened the role of technology in various sectors of the economy.

Several socio-economic factors—including rising disposable income, improved education levels, urbanization, and demographic advantages—have contributed to the increasing adoption of digital payment systems in India.

Advancements in digital payment technologies have also enhanced customer satisfaction and convenience, resulting in steady growth in digital transactions. These developments are gradually transforming the traditional banking model into a more technology-driven and customer-friendly system.

Government support and technological innovation continue to encourage the expansion of digital payments. Following demonetization, mobile payment platforms have gained widespread popularity. Two major categories of digital payment systems currently dominate the market: digital wallet-based platforms and UPI-based payment systems. While adoption has been particularly strong in metropolitan cities, government initiatives are increasingly focusing on expanding digital payment infrastructure in rural areas.

Overall, the growing use of technology and digital payment systems is expected to reduce corruption, improve transparency in financial transactions, and help curb the circulation of

black money. Digital wallets store funds electronically for quick payments, while Unified Payments Interface allows direct interbank transactions where payments are debited instantly from the consumer's bank account (Hanafi Zadeh et al., 2014).

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A comprehensive study of GST and its Impact on Indian Economy**Dr. Ankit Pusadkar**

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ABSTRACT:

Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a national tax that applies to the production, shipment, and consumption of products and services. The GST (Goods and Services Tax) is India's most significant tax reform since independence. The GST will benefit the Indian economy by increasing GDP. Prior to the taxation of goods and services (GST), India had several taxes that were indirect, including VAT, consumption tax, sales tax, Octroi, wealth tax, and others. However, most of these supplemental fees have been merged under a single umbrella. Following the implementation of the GST (formerly known as the Goods and Services Tax), India now has a separate, centrally controlled tax. Currently, different kinds of goods and services are subject to varying tax rates. Under the GST, both commodities and services would be subject to a single tax rate. GST is expected to provide an environment that is conducive to business. It will improve the government's financial standing and aid in lowering inflation. This essay investigates the concept of a goods and services tax and its impact on India's economy.

Keywords: Goods and Service Tax (GST), Indian Economy, Inflation, Tax.

INTRODUCTION:

Because it influences justice and efficiency, taxation has a big effect on the economy. While tax revenues fund spending on government on infrastructure and other public service development, an effective system should take income distribution into account. The Goods and Services Tax is referred to by the acronym GST. The current indirect structure of taxes will probably change completely as a result of the GST. Since 1947, it is regarded as one of the greatest important tax revisions. India had a complicated indirect tax system that was imposed independently by the central government and every state before the GST was put into place. GST will create a seamless national market and unify all indirect taxes. The market's dynamics are anticipated to change as a result of the GST (Goods and Services Tax), and it will be fascinating to see how companies adjust to this new tax legislation. The products and Services Tax (GST) would impose an expansive indirect tax on the purchase and consumption of goods

and services produced by manufacturers across the country, replacing taxes levied by the federal and state governments. GST is levied and collected each time products and services are bought or sold. Services and goods are subject to GST when actual consumption takes place. 160 nations have adopted the GST (Goods and Services Tax) since France did so in 1954. Most nations have an exclusive GST system; however, others have dual GST systems where taxes are imposed by both the government at large and the states. While "central GST" (CGST) encompasses taxes charged by the federal government, "state GST" (SGST) relates to taxes assessed by state governments. In India, we also have a double GST system that brings together the CGST and SGST.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The main goal for the GST is to replace existing taxes including tax on sales, vat, excise duties, and service tax, according to research by **A. Yadav (2017)**. Both producers and users of goods and services will be billed for it. It would be beneficial to look at how GST affects several areas of development, including production, housing, MSME, employment, impoverish reduction, the cost of EXIM exports, GDP, revenue from government, and agriculture.

K. Ajoy Kumar (2017) The purpose of this study is to clarify the benefits that the tax on goods and services provides to consumers, businesses, and the government, as well as the degree to which it affects economic growth. In developing countries like India, the system of taxes is very crucial to the expansion of the country's revenue, yet it is difficult to understand and calculate.

Dr. Yogesh K. C. Agrawal (2017): The impacts of the GST (Goods and Services Tax) on the Indian economy are examined in this study, which focuses on the public's uncertainty regarding the new tax. The purpose of this study is to clarify how the GST operates and how it has affected the Indian economy. Under the system of GST, everyone must pay output tax and is entitled for a credit on input tax paid. Only the value added is subject to the tax. The system of GST was unveiled on the first of July 2017, at a ceremony in the central hall of the parliament.

Sameera, Firoz, and Dr. S. Shaik (2015): This research study discusses the complete sales, consumption, and production taxes (GST) on goods and services on the national level. All of the other taxes that enterprises and organizations currently contribute to the government— such as tax on sales, tax on services, VAT, and so forth—will be combined under

one roof with the introduction of the GST. Unlike the existing system, which applies various tax rates to goods and services, the GST would have one rate of taxation for both. The objective of GST is to maintain a business-friendly climate in addition to enhancing government finances and increasing the transparency of the tax collection process.

"GST INDIA: A KEY TAX REFORM" is a 2015 paper by **M. Schrawat** and **U. Dhanda**. The GST (Goods and Services Tax) is one of India's most significant and long-overdue tax reforms. All additional taxes from the state, local, and federal governments along with the united economy will be included in this comprehensive tax framework, creating a seamless national marketplace. The primary subjects of this essay are the advantages of GST & the challenges India has encountered during its implementation.

According to **Nitin Kumar's (2014)** study "Goods and Service Tax-A Way forward," the implementation of the GST in India is expected to enhance an impartial tax structure that is unaffected by geographic location and help eliminate economic distortions caused by the nation's current indirect tax system.

E. Ahamed and **S. Poddar's 2009** paper, "Goods & Services Tax Amendments and Intergovernmental Consideration in India" states that the implementation of the GST will lead to an increase in the productivity and output of the Indian economy in addition to a more clear and transparent tax system. However, the GST's benefits depend on its rational design.

CONCEPTS OF GST:

The GST (Goods and Services Tax) combines all indirect levies. GST will combine indirect taxes levied by the state and federal governments to create one uniform tax. Throughout the added value cycle, it will be collected for both commodities and services. The model includes both the CGST and the SGST. SGST would replace state indirect taxes such as VAT, luxury tax, Octroi, and lottery and gambling tax, whilst CGST will cover central indirect taxes such as Excise Duty, Sales Tax, Service Tax, and Extraordinary Additional Duty on Immigration. GST includes IGST, also referred to as statewide goods and services tax. GST is a destination-based tax that examines interstate transactions of goods and services to ensure that the tax is received by the importing state. It is not an additional tax.

Basic customs duty, entertainment taxes imposed by Panchayats, municipalities, regional or district councils, liquor for consumption by humans, tobacco goods, crude oil, diesel, gasoline, gas from natural sources, and air turbine fuel are all excluded from GST.

Tax exemptions apply to taxpayers with a yearly revenue of up to the amount of Rs 20 lakhs (or Rs 10 lakh for North Eastern and specialized category states). Five tax categories comprise the GST slabs: 0 percent, 5 percent, 12 percent, and 28 percent.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study investigated additional information from articles, books, governmental publications, and websites about the Goods and Services Tax.

POSITIVE IMPACTS OF GST IN INDIA:

- The goal of the single taxation system known as GST is to do away with indirect taxes. There will now be a single taxation phrase that covers all indirect taxes.
- The approach lessens the burden on state and federal governments by combining indirect taxation at the federal and state levels.
- GST has reduced the cumulative effect of taxation on manufacturing industries and increased cost competitiveness for goods and services.
- Inflation has dropped and a more business-friendly environment has been created by raising the tax-to-GDP ratio.
- The public will be indirectly impacted by a unified tax system since it will lessen corruption.
- GST would offer a tax system free from corruption.
- Prices for consumer goods are expected to decline as manufacturing expenses are reduced.
- GST would eventually raise government revenue, which will strengthen the Indian economy.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF GST IN INDIA:

- The real estate sector was severely impacted by the implementation of GST.
- Most merchants avoid paying central excise tax by merely supplying the VAT. However, all dealers will now be required to pay GST.
- Short term impact of GST is likely to be detrimental for the overall economy.
- The GST is a confusing term in which double tax is replaced with one tax.

- GST will be a mixed veggie component bag for consumers, with some things becoming cheaper and others becoming more expensive.
- Services such as telecommunications, banking, and airlines will become more expensive.
- With the implementation of GST, internet purchasing would become more expensive.
- If the seller's profit margin increases, the prices of goods may rise as well.
- The ultimate customer will only pay the GST rate set by the last dealer in the supply chain, ensuring uniformity across states in India.
- Only the central government has the authority to levy and collect GST on supplies made during interstate business transactions.

OBJECTIVES OF GST:

1. To explore the concept of GST (Goods and Services Tax) and its impact on the Indian economy.
2. To Learn how the GST system will work in India.
3. To understand the pros and obstacles of GST in India.
4. To provide data for further GST research.

SECTOR WISE IMPACT OF GST:

Agriculture sector: India's GDP is mostly derived from the agricultural sector. It makes up about 16% of India's GDP. India might get its first national market thanks to GST. One country, one tax on agricultural products. By combining numerous levies into only one rate, the GST will help the agriculture industry.

Pharma: The pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors are supposed to benefit from GST. By resolving tax-related concerns, it will help industries. It will encourage medical travel, level the playing surface for producers of generic drugs, and simplify the tax code.

FMCG: The fastest-growing sector within the Indian economy is the FMCG industry. It is anticipated that the introduction of GST will lead to lower GST rates, which will lower the cost of consumer items.

Real estate: It is a significant area of the Indian economy. These industries have a big influence on Indian employment. Since GST isn't applicable to the transfer or sale of real estate, its effects upon real estate will be minimal.

Service Sector: Sixty percent of India's GDP comes from the service sector. The previous 15% GST rate on service has been raised to 18%. Consequently, the price of services like banking, telephones, and insurance will increase.

Textiles: Ten percent of India's annual exports come from the textile sector. Throughout the nation, they employ a large number of both skilled and unskilled people. Due to the addition of wool and cotton fibers, which were formerly tax-free, the GST rates is expected to be greater than it was. On the opposite hand, combining different taxes like Octroi, entrance tax, privilege tax, and so on might lower production costs. Despite some challenges, GST will ultimately help the sector.

CHALLENGE OF GST:

1. The GST must be implemented in every state.
2. The GST regulations ought to be clearer and more sophisticated.
3. GST is a destination-focused tax. The recipient who is intended of the products must be clearly specified.
4. More information regarding GST and its benefits needs to be shared.
5. GST is a for a long-time policy, so any benefits will only become apparent over time.

It will take some time for people to understand the ramifications.

CONCLUSION:

A single tax will take the place of multiple indirect taxes under the GST (Goods and Services Tax) laws. GST will boost India's GDP, according to study by the National Council of Economics and Statistics. GST could lower the fiscal deficit while raising revenue. All economic sectors—large, medium, and small enterprises, exporters, importers merchants, professionals, and consumers—would be instantly impacted by GST. It is anticipated that GST will increase tax collection and quicken India's economic growth by more evenly distributing the tax burden among manufacturing and services, leading to lower rates of taxation and fewer exemptions.

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**Urbanization, City Life and Fragmented Identity in Anita Desai's
Novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*****Dr. Shital Ghonmode**

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Abstract:

In Indian English fiction, urbanization is not just a background setting; it acts as a catalyst for conflict. It often forces characters to navigate the friction between old-world values and modern chaos. The intricate relationships between urban environments and psychological disintegration in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is explored. Set against the backdrop of post-independence India, it is shown in the novel how the metropolitan space of Bombay acts as a catalyst for the fragmented identity of the protagonist, Sita. The novel is a poignant portrayal of urban life in India, exploring the complexities of identity, alienation, and the human condition. In this novel, urbanization is portrayed as a chaotic, alienating force, contrasting sharply with the tranquil, mythical past of Manori Island. The protagonist Sita feels suffocated by Mumbai's materialistic, violent, and monotone life. It leads her to a desperate search for meaning and a psychological escape from her husband's indifferent, civilized world. This analysis reveals that Sita's alienation is not merely a rejection of domesticity, but a profound reaction to the sensory overload and moral decay inherent in the urban landscape. Her refusal to bring her fifth child into a violent world serves as the ultimate expression of a self-shattered by urban expression. This paper examines how Desai uses urban spaces to explore themes of identity, fragmentation, and dislocation.

Keywords: Anita Desai, Urbanization, City Life, Fragmented Identity, Alienation, Escape from the urbanized world, Generation Conflict.

Introduction

Urbanization and city life are common themes in Indian English novels. It reflects the country's rapid urbanization and its impact on individuals and society. Novels like Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* portray the alienating effects of city life, where individuals feel disconnected from their roots and community. Works like Desai's *The Village by the Sea* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of*

Loss explore the struggles of characters navigating multiple identities and cultural influences in urban settings. Novels like Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and R. K. Narayan's *The Dark Room* depict the impact of urbanization on traditional social structures and values. Novels like Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* highlight the stark contrasts between wealth and poverty in urban India. In Indian English Novels cities like Bombay are often depicted as a city of dreams, opportunities, and chaos, Calcutta is often portrayed as a city of intellectuals and artists, and Delhi is featured through contrast in its culture and economy.

Several events of great importance affect the very norms of living, and a complete reverberation of social standards happened in the middle of the twentieth century. The physical, the psychological, the political, and the economic aspects of life are exploited and altered to such a degree that is now beyond imagination. The change that came over is not the result of one or two days but of a continuous process. Among these, the changes that have appeared in modern society are important. The spectacular changes in society came in the way of life to such an extent that people started adopting and embracing the new modes. The old yearning for a simpler life full of satisfaction derived out of not any material gains but hard labor and unshakable belief in religion, gave way to mere complicated materialistic outlook. Demands increase, giving rise to an unquenchable thirst for more and more. Common life was no simpler but replaced by a desire for accumulation. The materialistic outlook soon resulted in a spiritual loss. The values and innocence of life went under the frenzied hurry for some sort of gain.

Objective

This study looks at how urbanization affects the mind in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* by Anita Desai. It shows how the city of Bombay is not just a setting but a force that intensifies Sita's inner struggles. The research focuses on her fragmented identity and how her sense of self becomes unstable under the pressures of city life, including noise, violence, and routine. It also explores how Sita's refusal to have a fifth child acts as a symbol of her protest against the moral emptiness of urban society, which highlights Desai's view that city life can harm both the mind and human values.

Research Problem Statement:

This study hypothesizes that the city of Bombay in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* affects the mind and identity of the protagonist, Sita. The urban environment, with its noise,

crowd, and materialism, makes her feel tense and disconnected. City life creates a sense of alienation and inner conflict in her. Sita's sense of self shakes because of these pressures. Her retreat to Manori Island shows her need to escape the city. Her refusal to have another child reflects her protest against the moral and emotional emptiness of urban life. Together, these actions show how city life impacts her identity and choices

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative and interpretative method. It mainly studies the novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* closely. Other sources include essays, articles, and studies about Anita Desai and Indian English literature. The analysis looks at important passages and themes like isolation, escape, and identity crisis. It also studies symbols and contrasts, especially between Bombay and Manori Island. The research focuses on this one novel. Its aim is to show how city life affects a person's mind and sense of self in modern Indian fiction.

Research Findings:

1. Urbanization and Alienation:

Anita Desai's portrayal of urbanization and city life is marked by a deep, often pessimistic, psychological exploration of the individual's struggle against a chaotic and alienating environment. Her works are particularly set in Calcutta and Bombay and the cities are portrayed as a monster that suffocates, isolates, and dehumanizes its inhabitants. Her dislike for the modern city atmosphere is reflected in her *Baumgartner's Bombay*. "The Calcutta of the black back streets, the steaming rubbish tips, the scarred tenements, its hunger, its squalor, its desolation" (Desai, *Baumgartner's Bombay*, 1988, p. 166)) Again, such words from Desai's other novel can be seen in the novel *Village by the Sea*, "Bombay is heavily industrialized, crowded and polluted. How much more pollution can we stand? (Desai, *The Village By The Sea*, 1982, p. 77) Her description of Bombay in *Baumgartner's Bombay* or *The Artist of Disappearance* or *The village by the Sea* is not much different from that of Calcutta or any other metropolitan city. Thus, the city becomes an embodiment of all that is foul and filthy in most of Desai's novels.

Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* again, portrays the dull, monotonous life in Bombay and the protagonist Sita's alienation and escape. The first part of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* entitled Monsoon 67, the novel portrays Sita, the female protagonist, as a rebel against the environmental crisis and her escape from the polluted city of Bombay to her

parental home on the island of Manori. The second part, Winter 45, depicts Sita's recollections of her pre-married life with her father and her siblings. The third part, Monsoon 67, is a continuation of part one. Desai has presented Bombay as an extremely polluted city and Sita tries to "to escape from the madness here, escape to a place where it might be possible to be sane again." ³² She finds that the city life offers only "threats of murder" (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 90). One may recall her description of another metropolitan city, Calcutta, in her 1965 novel *Voices in the City*. Here, the air is acrid and the open-drain is clogged with the torn platform tickets.

Desai's portrayal of Bombay (now Mumbai) highlights the city's role in shaping Sita's identity. The city's crowded streets, noisy apartments, and impersonal relationships contribute to Sita's sense of dislocation and fragmentation. (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 12) As Sita navigates these urban spaces, she struggles to reconcile her traditional values with the modern realities of city life. For instance, her decision to leave her husband and children to escape the city reflects her desire to reconnect with her roots and find a sense of belonging (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 56). The island of Manori, which serves as a foil to the city, represents a nostalgic longing for a simpler, more authentic way of life. Her experiences on the island highlight the impossibility of escaping the influences of urbanization and modernity. (Desai, *Where Shall We go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 78) Desai describes the urban environment of Bombay as 'polluted', 'cruel' and 'callous'. Sita views her life in the city as a 'meaningless existence, 'plagued by the 'threats of murder' and emotional void.

2. City Life and Fragmented Identity:

After her marriage, when Sita begins to live in the house of her husband's parents, she feels like a square peg in a round hole. She finds everyone disgusting and family life insufferable. Living in their age-rotted flat, they all live like pariahs. Sita fails to adapt herself to society at large and boldly flaunts its dehumanizing norms and values that have a stranglehold on its members and have relegated them to the state of animals. She finds most people living like animals. She says, "They are nothing-nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex, and money matter. Animals." (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, pp. 31-32) Raman, Sita's husband, is caught by Western civilization and culture in which he is fully involved, but such culture cannot give peace to mind of sophisticated girl Sita. The Indian family, which has

been based on the institution of marriage grew out of the traditional patriarchal family grounded in the rhythms of agricultural production. As the economy shifted from domestic production to business, and to the industry with the impact of industrial Revolution, a new kind of family life emerged with changes in religious cultural, economic organization and in the mindset of the middle- class woman.

Sita feels disconnected from her pragmatic husband, Raman, and her children, who are well-adjusted to the city. She perceives the city as a ‘madness’ and a human whirlpool’ where individuals are trapped in a monotonous, ‘civilized’ life. The city’s savage nature is highlighted through symbolic imagery, such as a swarm of crows representing urban society preying on a defenseless eagle representing Sita’s sensitive victimized self. City residents are depicted as valuing only ‘food, sex, and money.’ Sita, craving a connection to nature, sees her urban, “artificial life as a betrayal of her true self. Sita’s move to Manori Island is a desperate rebellion against this oppressive urban structure. However, her inability to find permanent solace there, and her subsequent return to Bombay, underscores the inescapable nature of modern existence.

Sita finds it difficult to stay in this city where “one may be attacked – one’s children may be attacked in the streets.” (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, 1975, p. 39) She can’t tolerate even when her own daughter, Menaka, “crumbled a sheaf of a new buds on the small potted plant she had been laboring to grow on the balcony.” (Desai, *Where Shall We go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 41) She could not “bear the sight of such unmistakable destruction” (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 41) of nature. There is no denying the fact that Menaka “had done it unconsciously, had not meant to destroy anything at all.” (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 41) Sita is much worried about the horror implied in the fact that “destruction came so naturally... Even the smallest Karan appeared to build a tier of blocks only for the pure, lustful joy of throwing it over with a great clatter, so much more enjoying the downfall than the architecture. (Desai, *Where Shall We go This Summer*, 1975, p. 41) Again Menaka, “tearing her paintings to strips and dropping on the floor,” (Desai, *Where Shall We Go this Summer?*, 1975, p. 42) shocks her very much. These small incidents symbolize the instinctive destructiveness present in human nature and Anita Desai makes her protagonist rebel against it.

Whatever Sita is, she finds her every existence threatened with tedium and boredom- a terrible existentialist problem that besets the sensitive individual in this world. Her husband engrossed in his business, and children growing independent, she feels struggling in the grip of the monster of boredom. But tragically enough her husband fails to comprehend how or why or with what she gets bored, Desai writes about the boredom of Sita beautifully: “.... she herself looking on it saw it stretched out so vast, so flat, so deep that in fright she scrambled about it, searching for a few of these moments that proclaimed her still alive, not quite drowned, and dead.” (Desai, *Where Shall We Go this Summer?*, 1975, pp. 33-34)

3. The Island of Manori: A Counterpoint to Urbanization:

Sita is sick of everything, everybody, her husband, her children, and their filmy way fight Menaka's cutting of flower buds in insensibly and tearing of Sunday water colors, Karan's senseless joy. So she feels the need for living on the island of Manori away from Bombay as she finds pollution and violence in this metropolitan city intolerable. The incident in which some crows try to make a meal of an eagle which is highly suggestive and evocative. The crows symbolize modern materialistic civilization, particularly modern city people who rejoice in exploiting the weak and the distressed. Sita is represented as a sensible human being who tries to save nature, symbolized by eagle but in vain. There was no park nearby, not a patch of green anywhere, and the children...played in the roadside dirt with their toy cars and trains, with pebbles and lumps of asphalt, while the ayahs gossiped and smoked, discussing their memsahibs, their lovers, and the cinema...There was a sudden sound like the screeching of brakes, a commotion – only it was not a common road accident but a clash and clamour of shouts and accusations, screams and shrill, tooting sounds as the argument gave way to action. (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, pp. 37-38) Naturally, during the period of her fifth pregnancy, Sita tries to protect her unborn child from the polluted atmosphere of Bombay and so takes refuge in the lap of nature in Manori – the island where she spent her pre-married life. She gets immense pleasure when the boat carrying her and her two children reaches the island. “Look how dark the island looks against the sky, the shining white sky. See how exciting it looks...At night, you see stars that you never can see in the city.” (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 17) When her daughter wants to know whether there are lamps, Sita replies: “Of course there will be lamps – real ones. Not electric bulbs but real lamps – lanterns. You see.” (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 17)

4. Conflict between two Generations:

The conflict between Sita and her uninvolved children is also seen in the novel. Both Menaka and Karan fail to adjust to the primitive life of Manori. They want to go back to Bombay to live the urban life. The sharp conflict between Sita and Menaka is also seen in the novel in which she discusses the science and opulence of art, Sita says: "Science cannot be as satisfactory. It is all-all figures, statistics, logic, science is believing that two and two make four-poooh." (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 85) She gives her argument and says, "It leads you to a dead end. There are no dead ends, now in art. That is something spontaneous, alive, and creative..." But Menaka does not agree with her mother and remarks: "That's all nonsense". (Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, 1975, p. 85) Sita has much more conflict in her sensitive and emotional mind, between the desire to leave the boredom and hypocrisy of middle class and showy, comfortable life. She had become fully tired of the hustle and bustle of human life full of passion, hypocrisy, and dishonesty. Karan and Menaka are two representatives of the present generation of mankind, accustomed to the polluted atmosphere of city life and unaware of the profound significance of nature for the survival of human beings on earth. Sita is the representative of those few sensible people still wishing to live in the lap of nature but can't help going back to Bombay from Manori, to a modernizing, industrializing city of India, from the pristine nature of Manori, unaffected by capitalist development because she cannot ignore her duties and responsibilities as a wife and a mother. But she'll "come back" (Desai, *Where Shall We Go this Summer?*, 1975, p. 144) again, again to the island.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* by Anita Desai presents urbanization and city life as deeply implicated in the fragmentation of individual identity. The metropolitan landscape of Bombay, marked by materialism, emotional sterility, and moral disintegration, becomes a site of alienation rather than fulfillment. Through Sita's acute sensitivity and growing disillusionment, Desai exposes the psychological consequences of a civilization driven by the pursuit of wealth and superficial comfort, where human relationships are reduced to mechanical interactions devoid of empathy and meaning. The contrast between the suffocating urban environment and the regenerative pull of nature, symbolized by Manori, underscores Sita's yearning for wholeness and authenticity. Her rebellion against familial and

societal norms reflects not only a personal crisis but also a broader critique of modern urban existence that erodes conscience, faith, and emotional depth. Ultimately, the novel reveals that in the face of relentless urban pressures, the individual psyche becomes fractured, struggling to reclaim identity and coherence in a world that prioritizes material gain over human values.

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Exploring Gender Space in the Novels of Sudha Murthy

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Abstract

The novels of Sudha Murthy explore the complexities of gender roles within Indian society, highlighting the struggles, aspirations, and transformations of women in patriarchal environments. Through simple narratives and realistic characters, Murthy portrays the socio-cultural limitations placed upon women and the gradual emergence of female agency. This research paper analyzes selected novels such as *Dollar Bahu*, *Mahashweta*, *House of Cards* and *Gently Falls the Bakula* to examine how Murthy constructs gender spaces that negotiate tradition, modernity, and empowerment. There is change in protagonist life from worse to win-win situation, from dependency to independency and then self-realization. The study argues that Murthy's works challenge patriarchal structures while simultaneously acknowledging the cultural realities of Indian society.

1. Introduction

Gender representation in Indian English literature has been an important area of literary criticism. Women writers have used fiction to highlight the social, emotional, and psychological experiences of women within patriarchal societies. Among these writers, Sudha Murthy occupies a significant place because her works portray ordinary women confronting everyday social constraints. Sudha Murthy is the renowned Indian writer, philanthropist and social worker. She is known for her simple, yet impactful writing style. Sudha Murthy's novels depicts new gender spaces by empowering female protagonist to transition from passive to active women who became self-independent breaking the traditional shackles of male dominated society, often navigating career and family simultaneously.

Murthy's novels often focus on middle-class Indian families, where gender roles are shaped by tradition, economic pressures, and societal expectations. Her narratives explore how women navigate these limitations while attempting to assert their individuality and independence. Many studies note that Murthy's female characters represent the transition from traditional submissive roles toward self-realization and empowerment. She critique Indian

society by highlighting the psychological and structural violence of patriarchy, dowry and consumerism, encouraging women to achieve financial independence and refine their roles marital and familial spaces.

Murthy does not completely reject tradition; instead, she advocates a balanced approach where women preserve cultural values while asserting their individuality.

2. Concept of Gender Space

The term *gender space* in literature refers to the social, physical, cultural, and psychological environments in which gender identities and roles are constructed and negotiated. Gender spaces applied to both men and women. It includes:

- * Social expectations imposed on men and women
- * Power relations within family and society
- * Opportunities for autonomy and self-expression
- * Cultural norms governing behaviour and identity

In literature, gender space is often represented through character relationships, narrative conflicts, and the transformation of social roles and this is depicted in the novels of Sudha Murthy. It is metaphorical division of areas into masculine and feminine reflecting patriarchal norms, struggle of women in male dominated society, self-identity. Though its literal meaning has changed over the time due to its complexities and social constructed characteristics to reinforce the traditional gender roles whether it's Mridula in the novel *House Of Cards*, Shrimarti in the novel *Gently Falls the Bakula* or Anupama in the novel *Mahashewta*. The entire female protagonist overcome the societal pressure and prove themselves as phoenix who restarts its life from ashes.

3. Representation of Women in Sudha Murthy's Novels

Murthy's novels depict women from diverse social backgrounds who struggle to balance tradition with personal aspirations. Her female protagonists are not extraordinary heroes but ordinary women facing realistic challenges. Across her novels, Murthy repeatedly addresses several gender-related themes Murthy's female characters frequently face patriarchal norms that restrict their freedom and decision-making. Education plays a crucial role in enabling women to achieve independence and confidence

Many critics observe that Murthy portrays women as individuals seeking dignity, independence, and recognition within patriarchal structures.

Her works emphasize:

- * Self-respect and independence
- * Education and economic empowerment
- * Emotional resilience
- * Resistance against social injustice

4. Gender Space in *Dollar Bahu*

In *Dollar Bahu*, Murthy explores gender roles within a middle-class Indian family influenced by economic aspirations and social status. The story contrasts two daughters-in-law—one living in India, Vinuta and another in the United States (Dollar Bahu) who is always favoured by her mother in law Gouramma but soon she realises the reality of life abroad is different. After returning from US, she understands her mistake and tries to mend her relationship with Vinuta, learning that love and respect are more valuable than dollars.

The novel reveals how women are evaluated according to economic value and family prestige rather than personal qualities. It also highlights the emotional struggles of women who attempt to maintain harmony within patriarchal family structures. Scholars have noted that the novel examines the psychological dimensions of female characters and their responses to societal expectations.

Through this narrative, Murthy critiques materialism and the commodification of women within family hierarchies. Murthy portrays gender roles through the characters of Jamuna and Vinuta highlighting the societal expectations and pressures on women in Indian families. The impact of wealth, complex women relationship, passive male characters and traditional expectation from women to prioritize family and household duties. The novel critiques these societal norms, emphasizing the need for empathy and understanding from their male partner.

5. Gender Space in *Mahashweta*

Mahashweta presents a powerful story of a woman suffering from social stigma due to leukoderma. The protagonist, Anupama, faces rejection from her husband and society after being diagnosed with a skin disease. The novel exposes several gender issues like social discrimination against women, not only by her family but also from society, all misbehaved with her, without any mistake of her. *Mahashweta* is an inspiring story of courage and resilience

in a world marred by illusions and betrayals. Sudha Murthy highlights the fragility of marital relationships through Anupama's story. Her husband love is conditional upon her physical appearance, instead of love and care she deserved, he abandons her when she needs him most. This is gender inequality as society and family expect everything from women but when she needs it, they change their point of view. The expectation that women must endure suffering silently but not ask for anything.

Despite these challenges, Anupama transforms herself through education and self-reliance. Her journey symbolizes the creation of a new gender space where women reclaim dignity and independence. The protagonists undergo a journey of self-realization, redefining her role beyond traditional expectations.

6. Gender Space in *Gently Falls the Bakula*

In *Gently Falls the Bakula*, Murthy maps gender spaces through Srimati and Shrikant's marriage. She explores the conflict between career ambition and marital relationships. The protagonist, Shrimati, sacrifices her personal aspirations to support her husband's professional success. The home becomes a site of expected sacrifice and emotional labor. The novel highlights public vs private dichotomy as Shrikant thrives in the professional world while Shrimati's identity gets limited to domestic boundaries. Later Shrimati steps out, join NGO and reconnects with education. This redefines her gender spaces from dependent to self-directed. She realizes the emotional emptiness of her life and begins a journey toward self-discovery. Critics note that the novel illustrates how social expectations often limit women's personal growth and identity within marriage. The novel ultimately highlights the importance of self-realization and emotional autonomy.

7. Gender spaces in *House of Cards*

House of Cards by Sudha Murthy explores gender spaces by contrasting traditional rural expectations with modern urban ambitions, detailing how patriarchal norms restrict women even within educated contemporary Indian households. Men are positioned as 'providers' in the public sphere, while women like Mridula are confined to 'caregiver' roles in the private space. The novel portrays the struggles of its female protagonist, Mridula, as she navigates the expectations placed upon her as a wife and mother, while also seeking personal fulfilment and autonomy. Through Mridula's journey Murthy critiques the patriarchal structures that govern

Indian society, highlighting the ways in which women are often expected to sacrifice their own desires and needs for the sake of families.

8. Narrative Style and Feminist Perspective

Murthy's writing style is characterized by simplicity, realism, and emotional depth. Unlike radical feminist narratives, her approach may be described as *moderate or cultural feminism*, where empowerment emerges through resilience and ethical strength rather than direct rebellion.

Her stories resonate with readers because they reflect everyday experiences of Indian women, particularly within middle-class households.

9. Conclusion

The novels of Sudha Murthy provide valuable insights into the evolving gender dynamics of Indian society. Through realistic narratives and relatable characters, Murthy highlights the challenges faced by women while also portraying their resilience and capacity for transformation.

By exploring themes such as identity, empowerment, and social expectations, Murthy creates literary spaces where women negotiate their roles and redefine their identities. Her works contribute significantly to contemporary Indian English literature by emphasizing the importance of dignity, self-respect, and gender equality.

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A Critique of Imaginary Homeland in the Light of Jhumpha Lahiri's The Namesake

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Abstract:

In modern age, immigration for work, family and study is a global phenomenon and it could produce diaspora literature, large in volume and diverse in perspectives. It is a new literature and narratives of travel, dislocation, displacement, uprootedness, and anxiety for identity, home and culture. Diasporic literature is written by many authors living outside their native land. They focused on themes of displacement, cultural identity, nostalgia, and the search for belonging. This explores on the 'in-between' experiences of negotiating life in a new host country while maintaining connections to a homeland. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, *The Satanic Verses*, V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, M. G. Vassanji's *The Book of Secretes* and Jhumpha Lahiri's *The Namesake* are the major works. These works often highlight the tension between or the blending of the culture of origin and the new environment. The diasporic literature basically emphasizes on the homeland's language, religious values, and cultural norms of diasporic people. It claims the critical attention, theoretical formation and relationships to culture of origin. In this research paper, the researcher has tried to show imaginary homeland in the light of Jhumpha Lahiri's *The Namesake*.

Keywords: Diasporic literature, Migration, Imaginary Homeland, Identity and Displacement, Alienation.

The word diaspora originates from the ancient Greek *diasperein*, meaning 'to scatter about' or 'to show over' it originally refers to the dispersion of Greeks and later the Jewish people, describing populations forced or choosing to leave their homeland. Diasporic novels are the translational as they follow characters who leave their home countries and settle in a new one. The novel *The Namesake* which is taken for study is a best example of a diasporic novel since it follows the lives of an immigrant Indian American family.

The Namesake, a novel by Pulitzer prize winning author Jhumpa Lahiri, is a novel of which mainly deals with the theme of self discovery. The novel follows the life of Gogol Ganguly from birth until middle age, chronicling his struggle to discover who is as a second generation immigrant. Gogol is a trouble kid and the main thing that irks him is his rather wacky name. While naming of Gogol, Lahiri writes: "Ashima and Ashok are not terribly concerned. After all, they both know, an infant doesn't really need a name. He needs to be fed and blessed, to be given some gold and silver to be patted on the back after feedings and held carefully behind the neck. Names can wait. In India parents take their name, the best possible name, was determined" (Lahiri, Jhumpa, pg. 25). At the age of eighteen, he changes his name to Nikhil, a name chosen by his parents to break free from his past, yet he continues to feel like an imposter as his friends and family still see him as 'Gogol'. This leads to an internal conflict where he feels like he is acting in a play, divided into two halves.

His father is the fan of the nineteenth century Russian writer Nikolai Gogol and slaps that name on a birth certificate for lack of better one when his son is born. Growing up, Gogol absolutely despises it. He sees his name for both the cause and the symbol of the way he feels as an Indian American, caught between the Bengali heritage of his parents and the American culture he lives in. In many ways, his odd name is the door through which Lahiri ushers us into the world of the Indian immigrant experience. In the novel as she writes: "I am not sure I follow you, Mr. Ganguli. Do you mean that Nikhil is a middle name? Or a nickname? Many of the children go by nicknames here. On this form there is a space ---". "No, no it's not a middle name," Ashoke says. He is beginning to lose patience. "He has no middle name. No nickname. The boy's good name, his school name, is Nikhil." Mrs. Lapidus presses her lips together and smiles." (Ibid, pg. 59). Diasporic literature explores on the 'in-between' experiences of negotiating life in a new host country while maintaining connections to a homeland. Here the little boy Gogol is totally confused because of his name. As Mrs. Lapidus presses her lips together and smiles. Lahiri's ambivalence over her identity was the inspiration for the ambivalence of Gogol, the protagonist of her novel, over her unusual name.

Despite the fact that Nikhil is Bengali name, and Gogol is an old Russian dude's last name. Nikhil is the name that, at this point, feels foreign to Gogol. After all, up until this point, he has only really interacted with his family, who has always called him Gogol. It's the only name he knows. His confusion stems from his struggle to reconcile his identity as a first

generations American with his parents' traditional Bengali heritage. The confusion is primarily triggered by his unique, unconventional pet name 'Gogol'. Which he feels is a constant burden and a symbol of his displacement between two cultures. The novel ultimately shows that Gogol's struggle is not about choosing one culture over the other, but finding a balance in a hybrid identity.

The readers will get a little tired of all the confusion. Of course, so is Gogol. In fact, he seems the most confused out of everyone by his names. The whole Gogol versus Nikhil his good name back- and-forth is a source of constant frustration, consternation and alienation for the protagonist. As Simon Turner writes about diasporic phenomenon in the following lines: "Diaspora is a deterritorializing and subversive phenomenon; it is simultaneously about fixing and stabilizing identities- often in relation to particular places/nations. Owing to this ambiguity, the ways in which diasporas have been conceptualized in studies of security and conflict - to the extent that they have been conceptualized at all – have also been ambiguous". Knott & McLoughlin, pg.97). It's the central question is that just who exactly is Gogol Ganguli? The following lines shows the confusion of his mind: "He hates having to wear a nametag on his sweater at Model United Nations day at school. He even hates signing his name at the bottom of his drawings in art class. He hates that his name is both absurd and obscure, that it has nothing to do with who he is, that it is neither Indian nor American but of all things Russian. He hates having to live with it, with a pet name turned good name..." (Lahiri, pg. 77). Gogol constantly battles his parents' expectations, rejecting their Bengali customs and pursuing a typical American lifestyle, including dating white women like Maxine. This causes a sense of guilt and feeling that his life as 'Nikhil' lacks authentic roots.

At first, it seems that Gogol is squarely in the Gogol camp. But doesn't seem like the happiest of kids, so may be he is already feeling the sting of being cultural outsider. When he starts school and his father tried to persuade Gogol to go by his good name, Nikhil, Gogol refuses, and we find out. There is a feeling of an 'outsider'. As Gauri Shankar writes in his book in the following lines: "Every entity has to undergo transformation to in the alien land but it is not voluntary, rather an imposed one; they have to suffer the trauma of self- transformation to survive and sustain; it is more a survival technic than a graft perse." (Jha, pg. 43). Gogol attempts to find stability through his relationships, using them as a shield against his insecurity. However, his marriage Moushumi, another first generation American, fails because it was

based on shared, yet superficial, nostalgia rather than true connection, leaving him feeling 'homeless' and 'divided'. The concept of imaginary homeland is a major and central to the immigrant experience. Depicting how characters' construct as idealized, 'imagined' version of India to survive and maintain their identity in a foreign land. Drawing on Salman Rushdie's notion that migrants create 'Indias of the mind' through fermented memories. Here, Lahiri shows how Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli use nostalgic rituals, food, and community to reconstruct a home away from homeland.

The American born children, Gogol and Sonia, however, view this homeland through a different lens. For them, Calcutta is not nostalgic, lived in a space but a place where they feel like foreigners. When Ganguli family moved to Kolkata for eight months, Gogol and his sister feel disconnected, highlighting that the 'imaginary homeland'. Of their parents is not their true home, cementing their identity as American – born not Indian. On the contrarary, Ashima's 'imaginary homeland' brings her comfort but also intensifies her loneliness, as she makes comparisons between the comfort pf her father's home in Calcutta and the cold, isolated life she often feels in America.

Conclusion:

Lahiri's novel portrays the imaginary homeland not as a weakness, but as a necessary, creative and sometimes painful and disturbing space that enables immigrants to live in two worlds simultaneously, resulting in a unique cultural hybridity. This type of work often highlights the tension between or the blending of the culture of origin and the new environment.

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The Lord of the Global Village and The Coffe Dam: A Comparative Narrative of Adivasi Displacement and Retaliation**Dr. Manoj Shankarrao Madavi**

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Mail id- manojmadavi2015@gmail.com**Abstract**

This paper examines two significant literary narratives—*The Lord of the Global Village* and *The Coffe Dam*—as critical representations of Adivasi displacement and resistance in contemporary India. Situated within the framework of postcolonial ecocriticism and subaltern studies, the analysis foregrounds how development-induced displacement disrupts indigenous lifeworlds while simultaneously generating forms of cultural and political retaliation. The paper argues that both texts articulate the tension between global capital and indigenous identity, yet they differ in narrative strategy, representation of agency, and ideological positioning. Written in a nuanced vernacular academic English, this study highlights how literary discourse becomes a site of resistance, memory preservation, and critique of hegemonic development paradigms.

Keywords: Adivasi, Displacement, Imperialism, Capitalism, Aestheticism, Existence**Introduction**

In the age of globalization, the idea of the “global village” often comes packaged with promises of progress, connectivity, and economic upliftment. However, for Adivasi communities in India, this so-called integration into the global framework has frequently resulted in displacement, marginalization, and cultural erosion. Literature emerging from or about these communities becomes an important tool to understand the lived realities behind the rhetoric of development. *The Lord of the Global Village* and *The Coffe Dam* are two such narratives that bring forth the harsh truths of displacement and the resilient spirit of retaliation among Adivasi populations. While both texts revolve around the theme of land alienation and exploitation, they adopt different narrative tones and strategies to depict resistance. This paper comparatively analyzes these works to understand how displacement is experienced and contested in Adivasi contexts.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis draws upon postcolonial theory, particularly the works focusing on subaltern voices, and ecocriticism, which examines the relationship between literature and the

environment. The concept of “development aggression” is central here, where state-led or corporate projects disrupt ecological balance and indigenous ways of life. Additionally, the notion of the “subaltern” helps us understand how Adivasi voices are often suppressed or misrepresented. These narratives attempt to recover those silenced perspectives, presenting resistance not merely as physical rebellion but also as cultural assertion.

Narrative Overview

The Lord of the Global Village

This narrative presents a sharp critique of globalization and its localized impacts. The “Lord” symbolizes the corporate and political nexus that governs the so-called global village. The story revolves around how multinational interests penetrate rural landscapes, transforming them into sites of extraction and profit. The Adivasi community, initially depicted as harmonious with nature, becomes subject to displacement through mining, industrialization, and infrastructural projects. The narrative voice often carries a tone of irony, exposing the hypocrisy of development rhetoric.

The Coffe Dam

The Coffe Dam centers around a specific development project—dam construction—which necessitates the evacuation of entire villages. The narrative is more grounded in realism, portraying the everyday struggles of displaced families. Unlike the abstract global forces in the previous text, this narrative focuses on bureaucratic machinery, engineers, and state officials as agents of displacement. The dam becomes both a literal and symbolic barrier—blocking not just water but also the continuity of cultural memory.

Displacement as Lived Experience

In both narratives, displacement is not merely a physical relocation but a profound disruption of identity, culture, and belonging. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, displacement is depicted as a gradual process. The intrusion begins subtly—with surveys, promises of jobs, and infrastructural development—before culminating in forced eviction. The narrative emphasizes how Adivasis are alienated from their own land through legal and economic mechanisms they scarcely understand.

On the other hand, *The Coffe Dam* presents displacement as immediate and violent. The urgency of dam construction leaves little room for negotiation. Villagers are uprooted with minimal compensation, often relocated to unfamiliar terrains that cannot sustain their

traditional livelihoods. Both texts highlight the inadequacy of compensation, which fails to account for the intangible losses—ancestral land, sacred spaces, and community bonds.

Representation of Power Structures

Power operates differently in the two narratives, though its effects converge on the marginalization of Adivasi communities. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, power is diffused and globalized. It is not embodied in a single antagonist but exists as a network of corporations, policymakers, and global institutions. This makes resistance more complex, as the enemy is not easily identifiable. Conversely, *The Cofferd Dam* portrays power in a more localized and tangible form. Government officials, engineers, and contractors act as visible agents of displacement. This allows for a more direct confrontation between the displaced and the authorities. The difference in representation reflects broader shifts in the nature of power—from centralized state authority to decentralized global capitalism.

Forms of Retaliation

In both *The Lord of the Global Village* and *The Cofferd Dam*, retaliation and resistance from indigenous communities do not come in just one form. They rise in many shapes—sometimes loud, sometimes silent, sometimes emotional, and sometimes openly confrontational. What makes these resistances powerful is that they are deeply rooted in the people's connection to land, memory, and dignity. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, resistance is often quiet but deeply meaningful. The Adivasi community does not always fight with weapons or violence; instead, they resist by holding tightly to their culture. They continue their rituals, songs, and oral traditions even when their land is taken away. This act itself becomes a form of rebellion. By refusing to forget their identity, they challenge the imperial forces that try to erase them. There is also a kind of inner resistance—characters question the promises of globalization and begin to see through the false dreams sold to them. Their awareness becomes a slow but steady form of retaliation. It is like saying, “You can take our land, but you cannot take our soul.”

On the other hand, *The Cofferd Dam* shows a more direct and visible kind of resistance. Here, the pain of sudden displacement leads to open protests and confrontations. The villagers question the authorities, resist evacuation, and sometimes stand physically against the forces that try to remove them. Their anger is not hidden—it comes out in collective voices. This resistance is born out of urgency, because their homes, fields, and sacred spaces are being

destroyed in front of their eyes. In such a situation, silence is not possible. Even when they are forced to move, their resistance continues through their refusal to accept injustice quietly.

Both novels show that resistance is not always about winning; sometimes it is about refusing to surrender completely. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, resistance is like a slow-burning fire—cultural, emotional, and intellectual. In *The Coffin Dam*, it is like a sudden flame—visible, intense, and confrontational. Together, they show that indigenous communities fight back in ways that match their situation, but the root remains the same: a deep love for their land and a strong will to protect their identity against imperialism and displacement.

A key focus of this comparative study is the idea of retaliation—not merely as rebellion but as a spectrum of responses ranging from subtle resistance to overt protest. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, retaliation often takes symbolic and cultural forms. The Adivasi community resists through storytelling, preservation of rituals, and collective memory. There is also an undercurrent of irony and satire, which serves as a critique of dominant narratives. In contrast, *The Coffin Dam* depicts more direct forms of resistance. Protests, confrontations with authorities, and even instances of violence emerge as responses to forced displacement. The narrative suggests that when dialogue fails, resistance intensifies.

Both forms of retaliation are significant. While one preserves identity, the other challenges authority. Together, they represent a comprehensive spectrum of Adivasi resistance.

Language and Narrative Style The use of vernacular-inflected English in both texts plays a crucial role in conveying authenticity. The narratives often incorporate local idioms, oral storytelling techniques, and culturally specific references. *The Lord of the Global Village* employs a more allegorical and symbolic style. Its language is layered, often requiring the reader to interpret deeper meanings behind seemingly simple expressions. *The Coffin Dam*, in contrast, adopts a straightforward and realist style. Its language is direct, reflecting the urgency and gravity of the situation. This stylistic difference influences how readers engage with the themes—either through critical reflection or emotional immediacy.

Ecological Dimensions

Both narratives underscore the intrinsic connection between Adivasi communities and their environment. Displacement, therefore, is also ecological destruction. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, environmental degradation is portrayed as a by-product of unchecked globalization. Forests are cleared, rivers polluted, and biodiversity threatened—all in the name

of progress. The Coffe Dam highlights how dam construction alters natural ecosystems. The submergence of land leads to loss of flora and fauna, disrupting the ecological balance that Adivasis depend upon. The ecological perspective reinforces the argument that development projects often ignore sustainable practices, prioritizing economic gains over environmental and cultural preservation.

Gendered Perspectives

An important dimension in both narratives is the gendered impact of displacement. Adivasi women often bear a disproportionate burden. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, women are depicted as custodians of cultural memory. Their resistance is subtle yet powerful, expressed through songs, rituals, and oral traditions. In *The Coffe Dam*, women face additional challenges—loss of livelihood, increased domestic responsibilities, and vulnerability in resettlement areas. Their voices, though less prominent, reveal the intersection of gender and displacement.

Comparative Analysis

A close and feeling-heavy reading of *The Lord of the Global Village* and *The Coffe Dam* shows not just two stories, but two wounds—deep, living, and still bleeding. These novels speak from the margins, from voices that are often pushed aside, and they bring out the harsh truth of what so-called “development” really means for Adivasi and Aboriginal lives. First thing is displacement. In both novels, displacement is not just about leaving land—it is like losing one’s own body. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, displacement happens slowly, like a disease that spreads without noise. Big companies come with sweet talk—jobs, roads, future—but behind that, they quietly take away forests and fields. People don’t even realise when their land slips from their hands.

In *The Coffe Dam*, displacement hits like a storm. The dam comes, water rises, and everything is gone in front of their eyes. Houses drown, memories drown, even the graves of ancestors drown. One is slow pain, the other is sudden shock—but both break the same heart. Now coming to imperialism—it is not old British rule here, but a new kind of rule. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, imperialism wears a modern dress. It is global companies, big money, and invisible power. The Adivasi man cannot even see who is controlling his life, but he feels the pressure. In *The Coffe Dam*, this power has a face—government officers, engineers, police.

They come with papers and orders, and they decide who will stay and who will go. Both novels show one thing clearly: the rulers have changed, but the system of control is still the same.

Cultural genocide is where the pain becomes very deep. In Adivasi and Aboriginal life, culture is not separate from land—it lives in the soil, in rivers, in forests. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, when land is lost, culture starts dying slowly. Festivals feel empty, songs lose meaning, and traditions become weak. In *The Coffer Dam*, culture is drowned completely in one go. Sacred places go under water, and with that, history itself disappears. It is not just land loss—it is life loss. The idea of stolen generation is also very strong here. Children in both novels grow up without proper roots. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, they are attracted towards city life and modern ways, slowly forgetting their own identity. It is like their minds are taken away. In *The Coffer Dam*, families are broken and scattered, so children grow without knowing their past. Their connection with ancestors is cut. This is not just loss—it is theft of memory.

Capitalism is the main force behind all this suffering. Both novels show how land is treated like a product, not like a living space. In *The Lord of the Global Village*, capitalism comes with a smiling face. It promises growth but gives emptiness. In *The Coffer Dam*, it comes in a hard form—demanding sacrifice for “national development.” In both cases, Adivasi and Aboriginal people are treated like obstacles, not humans.

At the deepest level, these novels raise existential questions. If land is gone, then who am I? Where do I belong? In *The Lord of the Global Village*, characters feel lost inside—they don’t know whether to hold on to tradition or move ahead with modern life. In *The Coffer Dam*, survival itself becomes a question—no land, no work, no identity. Life becomes uncertain, almost like floating without ground. But even in all this pain, there is a fire of resistance. It may be small, it may be quiet, but it is there. In memories, in anger, in refusal to forget. These novels do not just tell stories—they shake us. They make us feel that displacement is not just an issue, it is an injustice. And until this injustice is answered, the cry of these communities will not stop. While both narratives address similar themes, their approaches differ significantly:

Conclusion

The comparative study of *The Lord of the Global Village* and *The Coffer Dam* reveals the multifaceted nature of Adivasi displacement and retaliation. These narratives challenge

dominant discourses of development, exposing the human and ecological costs often overlooked. Through their distinct yet complementary approaches, the texts underscore the resilience of Adivasi communities. Retaliation emerges not just as resistance but as a reaffirmation of identity and dignity. In a broader sense, these narratives call for a rethinking of development paradigms—one that is inclusive, sustainable, and respectful of indigenous knowledge systems. Literature, in this context, becomes a powerful medium for advocacy and transformation.

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**Digital Democracy and the Role of Social Media as a Political Actor”:
Impact on Public Opinion****Mr. Vyankatesh V. Kahale**
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Abstract:

The emergence of digital communication technologies has transformed the nature of democratic participation, giving rise to what is often described as “digital democracy.” Social media platforms have evolved beyond communication tools into influential political actors capable of shaping public opinion, electoral behaviour, and governance discourse. This paper examines how digital platforms function as active participants in political processes and evaluates their impact on democratic structures and citizen perception. It explores mechanisms such as algorithmic amplification, micro-targeting, misinformation dissemination, and participatory engagement, while also addressing legal and constitutional concerns. Using a doctrinal and analytical approach, the study argues that while digital platforms enhance democratic accessibility, they simultaneously introduce structural vulnerabilities that may distort public reasoning and weaken institutional trust. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for balanced regulatory frameworks, digital literacy, and platform accountability to sustain democratic integrity in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital Democracy, Social Media, Political Actor, Public Opinion, Misinformation, Algorithmic Governance, Electoral Communication.

Introduction:

The concept of democracy has undergone a significant transformation with the integration of digital technologies into political communication. Traditionally, democratic engagement was mediated through institutions such as political parties, print media, and public assemblies. However, the rapid expansion of internet access and mobile connectivity has shifted this paradigm toward a digitally mediated public sphere. Social media platforms now serve as primary arenas where political discourse is created, contested, and circulated.

Digital democracy refers to the use of digital tools and platforms to enhance citizen participation, transparency, and governance. While these technologies have increased

accessibility and engagement, they have also altered the structural dynamics of political communication. Platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and WhatsApp no longer operate as neutral intermediaries but actively influence what information is visible and how it is interpreted.

Scholars have observed that the digital environment enables both participatory empowerment and systemic manipulation. Tucker et al. (2018)¹ note that social media can simultaneously promote democratic participation and facilitate large-scale political distortion. Similarly, Persily and Tucker (2020)² argue that digital platforms reshape political campaigns by enabling targeted messaging and data-driven persuasion. In this evolving landscape, social media must be understood not merely as a communication channel but as a political actor that actively shapes public opinion and democratic outcomes. This paper examines this transformation and its implications for modern democracy.

Review of Literature:

Contemporary research highlights the dual nature of digital platforms in democratic societies. On one hand, they facilitate broader participation and real-time interaction; on the other, they introduce risks related to misinformation, polarization, and manipulation. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017)³ demonstrate how false political information spreads rapidly through social media, influencing voter perception. Aral (2020)⁴ emphasizes that platform architecture amplifies emotionally engaging content, often prioritizing sensational narratives over factual accuracy.

Studies on polarization reveal that digital networks reinforce ideological divisions. Azzimonti and Fernandes (2023)⁵ show that social media structures intensify partisan clustering, reducing exposure to diverse viewpoints. Similarly, Cinelli et al. (2021)⁶ confirm the existence of echo chambers that isolate users within homogeneous belief systems.

The role of automation in political communication has also gained attention. Woolley and Howard (2016)⁷ describe computational propaganda as a mechanism through which automated systems manipulate public discourse. Bradshaw and Howard (2019)⁸ further document the global expansion of organized digital manipulation campaigns. Recent scholarship also focuses on algorithmic governance. Rodilosso (2024)⁹ argues that recommendation systems shape ideological exposure, often reinforcing extreme viewpoints. Xu, Qian, and Meng (2025)¹⁰

conceptualize misinformation as a systemic phenomenon embedded within platform infrastructures.

Collectively, these studies indicate that social media platforms function as active agents influencing political narratives, rather than passive communication tools.

Objectives of the Study:

To examine the concept of digital democracy and the evolving role of social media as a political actor

To analyze the mechanisms through which social media influence public opinion

To assess the impact of digital platforms on democratic accountability and political behaviour

To evaluate legal and constitutional challenges in regulating digital political communication

To propose measures for strengthening democratic resilience in the digital age

Research Methodology:

This study adopts a doctrinal and analytical research methodology, relying on secondary sources such as academic literature, policy reports, legal frameworks, and judicial decisions. The research emphasizes conceptual clarity and critical evaluation of existing scholarship.

No empirical surveys or field data are used. Instead, the study synthesizes existing knowledge to provide a structured understanding of how social media operates as a political actor within digital democracy.

Social Media as a Political Actor:

The transformation of social media into a political actor is rooted in its structural design and functional capabilities. Unlike traditional media, digital platforms operate through algorithm-driven systems that determine content visibility. Algorithmic amplification plays a central role in shaping political narratives. Gillespie (2014)¹¹ explains that algorithms act as gatekeepers, influencing which content gains prominence. As a result, political discourse is increasingly determined by engagement metrics rather than editorial judgment.

Another key mechanism is micro-targeting, where political actors use data analytics to deliver personalized messages to specific voter groups. Persily and Tucker (2020)¹² highlight that such targeted communication enhances campaign efficiency but raises concerns regarding transparency and voter autonomy. Misinformation dissemination further strengthens the political influence of social media. Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral (2018)¹³ demonstrate that false

information spreads faster and reaches wider audiences than verified content. This creates an environment where public opinion can be shaped by inaccurate narratives.

Additionally, user participation transforms citizens into active contributors to political discourse. Individuals now function as content creators, amplifiers, and interpreters of political information. This participatory nature blurs the boundary between political actors and the electorate. Thus, social media platforms not only mediate communication but actively shape political outcomes, fulfilling the role of a digital political actor.

Impact on Public Opinion:

The influence of social media on public opinion is both profound and multifaceted. Digital platforms shape not only what people think about but also how they interpret political realities. One major impact is agenda-setting. By prioritizing certain topics, platforms influence public attention and political priorities. The visibility of issues is determined by algorithmic engagement rather than societal importance.

Another significant effect is polarization. Bail et al. (2018)¹⁴ found that exposure to opposing views on social media can intensify ideological divisions. Echo chambers reinforce existing beliefs, reducing the possibility of constructive dialogue. Misinformation further distorts public perception. Lewandowsky, Ecker, and Cook (2017)¹⁵ explain that once false beliefs are internalized, they are resistant to correction. This leads to long-term distortions in public understanding. Social media also affects emotional engagement. Political content is often designed to evoke strong emotional reactions such as anger or fear. These emotions increase content sharing, amplifying its impact on public opinion.

In electoral contexts, these dynamics influence voting behaviour. Digital campaigns shape voter attitudes through targeted messaging and narrative framing, potentially affecting democratic outcomes.

Legal and Constitutional Challenges:

Regulating social media as a political actor presents significant legal challenges, particularly in democratic systems that prioritize freedom of expression. In India, Article 19(1)(a) guarantees freedom of speech, while Article 19(2) permits reasonable restrictions in the interest of public order and national security. The challenge lies in balancing these principles in the digital context. Judicial decisions such as *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* (2015) emphasize the importance of protecting online expression while preventing arbitrary

censorship. Similarly, Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) establishes privacy as a fundamental right, impacting data-driven political communication.

The Information Technology Act, 2000, and the Intermediary Guidelines, 2021, impose responsibilities on digital platforms, including content moderation and grievance redressal. However, enforcement remains difficult due to the transnational nature of social media. Encryption technologies, jurisdictional limitations, and rapid content dissemination complicate regulatory efforts. Excessive regulation risks undermining democratic freedoms, while insufficient regulation allows manipulation to persist. Thus, legal frameworks must strike a balance between protecting rights and ensuring accountability.

Findings and Suggestions:**Findings**

Social media platforms function as influential political actors rather than neutral intermediaries

Algorithm-driven systems amplify emotionally charged and polarizing content

Misinformation spreads rapidly and significantly shape public perception

Digital platforms contribute to ideological polarization and weaken deliberative democracy

Existing regulatory frameworks face challenges in enforcement and technological adaptation

Suggestions:

Digital Literacy: Educating citizens to critically evaluate online information

Algorithmic Transparency: Encouraging platforms to disclose content ranking mechanisms

Regulatory Balance: Ensuring proportionate and rights-based legal frameworks

Platform Accountability: Strengthening content moderation and misinformation detection

Institutional Coordination: Enhancing collaboration between government, judiciary, and technology platforms

Conclusion:

Digital democracy represents a transformative phase in the evolution of political systems, where technology reshapes the relationship between citizens, institutions, and information. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful political factors that influence public opinion, electoral behaviour, and democratic accountability. While these platforms enhance participation and accessibility, they also introduce structural vulnerabilities that challenge the integrity of democratic processes. Misinformation, polarization, and algorithmic manipulation pose significant risks to informed decision-making.

Sustaining democratic values in the digital age requires a multidimensional approach that combines legal regulation, technological accountability, and citizen awareness. The future of democracy depends not only on institutional frameworks but also on the resilience of the digital public sphere.

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Relevance of Arthur Koestler's Humour Theory to R.K. Narayan's Writings

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ABSTRACT:

Theory of Humour, as enumerated by Arthur Koestler is discussed to see if Narayan provides any insight into the nature of humour. On one hand, there is a variety of stimuli which rouse laughter or the comic feeling, and on the other hand, there are different types of responses. Koestler suggests that “at all times a component of malice, of debasement of the other fellow and of aggressive–defensive self–assertion has been recognized in laughter. Pertinent to note that the element of malice is not discernible in Narayan’s writings. What is evident is friendly teasing, and gentle exposure of human foibles and vanities. Koestler’s concept of bisociation envisages “a short-circuiting of two mental patterns”, wherein each is self-consistent and homogeneous. Some of Koestler’s ideas regarding his theory of the comic is useful in analysing the humour of Narayan.

Key Words : Nature of Humour, Variety of Stimuli, Different types of Responses, Koestler's concept of Bisociation, Continuous mild state of amusement in Narayan, Unique brand of humour.

Narayan’s humour does not ignore the sorrow and sadness of life, which are a perennial fixture in human existence. They are woven into the very soul of comedy. Be it the painful process of ageing or the passing away of a beloved grandmother or the bitter shattering of Jagan’s dreams and desires, all these events are an integral part of Narayan’s comic world. As an unavoidable feature of life, these are accepted not with fear or bitterness but with humility. The triumph of life over death, of good over evil is always ensured. Sorrow makes the characters humble and wise and much of Narayan’s humour is derived from this.

The complex situation has been accurately described by the Hungarian scholar, Arthur Koestler in his book *Insight and Outlook* where he quotes from Ribot’s “Psychologie des Sentiments”.

Laughter manifests itself in such varied and heterogeneous conditions – bodily sensations, pleasure, contrast, surprise, oddness, strangeness, baseness, etc. – that reduction of all these causes to a single one remains a very problematic undertaking. After so much work spent on such a trivial phenomenon, the problem is still far from completely explained (p.4).

There are two important reasons which lead to complications in explaining the occurrence of humour and laughter. On one hand, there is a variety of stimuli which rouse laughter or the comic feeling, and on the other hand, there are different types of responses. According to Koestler, the basic problem of the comic is: (a) to reduce, if possible, to one common source all causes of laughter, and (b) to reduce, if possible, to one basic process all forms of laughter (p.6).

Since “the basic muscular and respiratory processes which characterise laughter are specific and uniform”, Koestler has summarised these processes which draw a comic response. He has shown that all forms of laughter can be reduced to one basic process.

Koestler analyses humour from the points of view of several thinkers, philosophers, and writers down the ages:

Thus he (Koestler) points out that laughter is linked with ugliness and debasement according to Aristotle, whereas Cicero’s contention is that baseness and deformity constitute the ridiculous. Koestler further points out that Descartes considered laughter as a manifestation of joy which is mixed with surprise or hate or sometimes with both. Deformity takes first place in the list of laughable objects according to Francis Bacon. Koestler goes on to add that Hobbes thinks that laughter is nothing but sudden glory which arises from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves. This sudden eminency, when compared with the infirmity of others or with our own formerly, results in laughter. To Bain, laughter is apparent in achievement of superiority over a rival. Koestler shows that for Bergson, laughter is a corrective punishment inflicted upon unsocial

individuals. He further states that delight in suffering and contempt for the unfamiliar are the two elements in laughter according to Max Beerbohm. Koestler points out that McDougall believed in the evolution of laughter as an antidote for sympathy (qtd. in Deshmukh, *Diss.*, p.5).

Koestler suggests that “at all times a component of malice, of debasement of the other fellow and of aggressive – defensive self assertion has been recognized in laughter – a tendency diametrically opposed to sympathy, helpfulness, and identification of the self with others” (p.56). He further emphasizes that “whatever the composition of the emotional charge of the narrative, it will only produce comic effect if the aggressive component, however sublimated, dominates the opposite tendency” (p.57).

Here, it will be pertinent to note that the element of malice is not discernible in Narayan’s writings. What is evident is friendly teasing, and gentle exposure of human foibles and vanities. For instance, the egoistic Municipal Chairman, Natesh in *Waiting for the Mahatma* puts forth his claim to be Gandhi’s host, in a pompous manner:

I have spent two lakhs on the building, my garden and lawns alone have cost me twenty-five thousand rupees so far. What do you think I have done it for? I am a simple man, sir, my needs are very simple. I don’t need any luxury. I can live in a hut, but the reason I have built it on this scale is so that I should be able for at least once in my lifetime to receive a great soul like Mahatmaji. This is the only house in which he can stay comfortably when he comes to this town (p.38).

However, the Mahatma politely declines his offer and opts to stay in the slums. It is easy to imagine Narayan winking at the reader while writing about the Chairman with a bloated ego and a victim of self-deception but we can detect no malice or derision in Narayan. As K.V.S. Murti states in his essay ‘Monkey and Hanuman’: “Narayan’s comic is not satire directed against anybody; it is just a harmless exposition of human weakness or selfish absurdity, with impersonal sympathy, to amuse the readers” (qtd. in Dwivedi, *Studies in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English*, p.154).

Similarly, regarding the element of “debasement of the other fellow”, we find no sign of it in his writings. On the contrary, when a weak character like Nagaraj or an evil character like Vasu is discussed, we find that Narayan adopts a sympathetic and gentle approach, along with his usual, subtle touches of humour.

However, Koestler insists that among other factors in humorous narratives, there is a common factor, “usually a very faint impulse of aggression or defence manifested in malice, derision, self-assertion or merely as an absence of sympathy with the victim” (p.54). He also makes allowance for the fact that this element is sometimes too faint to be detected. But he holds that this “element of aggression, of detached malice” is essential for comic effect.

Koestler further says that “a long humanitarian evolution” has diluted or sublimated and rendered frequently unconscious the aggressive component. From this perspective, we may bracket Narayan’s humour at the bottom of the ladder of aggressive self-assertion since this aspect is almost absent or negligible in the works of Narayan. When Koestler describes this impulse “merely as an absence of sympathy with the victim”, we are unable to trace its relevance to Narayan’s writings. When Jagan renounces the world with his cheque-book in his hands in *The Vendor of Sweets*, we feel sympathetic towards him though the incongruity of the situation is quite apparent. The travails and discomfiture of TM in the story *Engine Trouble* amuse us but we still feel sympathetic towards him. Thus, there are many instances when we experience the comic feeling and still feel sympathy for the victim. We may feel exasperated with Nagaraj’s vacillating will in *The World of Nagaraj* but we never lose our sympathy for him. Thus we find that the ‘malice’ aspect of Koestler’s theory does not apply to Narayan.

Koestler draws a distinction between a comic episode or joke, and sustained humour. He feels that the former is due to the bisociation of two separate ‘associative streams’ into a ‘junctional flash’. The different forms of the comic – the joke, the witticism, the pointed anecdote – which have a single point, both culminate and terminate at the junction where the narrative meets the flash. “Beyond this limited realm lie the vast regions of humour – the caricature, the comedy, the humorous poem and epic – whose effects do not consist in a single explosions, but either in a series of explosions in quick succession or in a continuous mild state of amusement” (p.38).

Koestler’s concept of bisociation envisages “a short-circuiting of two mental patterns”, wherein each is self-consistent and homogeneous. These systems are called ‘operative fields’.

He specifies that the rules or laws which govern these fields are known as “selective operators of the field”. In sustained type of humour, there are repeated bisociative points. The narrative permanently moves close to, or along the line of intersection of the two fields.

Koestler states that: “The essence of the comic is the bisociation of two operative fields in a junctional concept which is a member of both... Frequently the selective operators of the two fields are partly or entirely, implicit and un verbalized; hence it is extremely difficult to sort them out or rather to realize that there are two different patterns entangled which have to be sorted out” (p.46).

In Narayan, we find ourselves mostly in a “continuous mild state of amusement”. Also, there are a few ‘flashes’, a ‘bisociation’ or “short circuiting of two mental patterns”. For example, when Nataraj asks Vasu if he had shot the tiger without a hunting licence, Vasu retorts, “The tiger didn’t mind the informality” (*Man-Eater*, p.59). We also find sustained type of humour in various comic episodes spread throughout his writings. Commenting on the blurring of the areas of difference, Dr. Deshmukh states that: “It is extremely difficult to realize and to distinguish the two different patterns which are entangled, both in the comic where there is a single point and in sustained humour” (p.8).

Koestler remarks that laughter is infectious and it is facilitated by convivial company. But he makes allowance for the fact that people chuckle to themselves while reading alone. He does not agree with Bergson’s view that our laughter is always the laughter of a group. Here, we are inclined to agree with Koestler since the subtlety of Narayan’s humour can be equally enjoyed when we are alone, and not merely when in convivial company.

Next, we will analyse another important observation made by Koestler: “Laughter or smiling frequently occurs in response to a stimulus which itself is not comic, but merely a sign or symbol for a comic stimulus, or even a symbol for a symbol” (p.72). For instance, he mentions symbols like catch phrases and fashionable idiomatic allusions to well-known comic events, which are symbolic hints for stimulating humour. Such allusions provoke laughter mainly due to their contrast or absurdity. By repetition, they become symbols or hints for the comic stimulus. The idea of a *Sanyasi* in the novels of Narayan like *The Bachelor of Arts*, *Mr. Sampath – The Printer of Malgudi* and *The Guide* is suggestive of this aspect. The *Sanyasi*,

according to Hindu philosophy is a holy man who spends his time either in contemplation of God or service to man, or both. It is expected that he should be a genuine seeker of God, and a selfless and truthful person.

However, in *The Bachelor of Arts*, the ascetic has no qualms about stealing flowers from the garden, claiming that it is for God's worship and in the later part of the novel, Chandran temporarily turns into a *sanyasi* after being disillusioned in love. In *Mr. Sampath – The Printer of Malgudi*, the miserly landlord makes himself out to be an ascetic and declares: "The true *Sanyasi* has no need to live on anything more than the leavings of God" (p.7). But at the same time, he is greedy for money and does not allow his tenants to drive any nail in the wall to hang pictures, fearing damage to his precious house. Thus, we see no sign of any renunciation on his part despite his claims of being a holy man.

In the second half of *The Guide*, Raju unwittingly finds himself thrust in the role of a holy man after his release from prison for forging Rosie's signature. He gradually adapts himself to that role since it guarantees him a steady supply of food from the villagers, and anonymity away from the probing eyes of the police. Thus, in the above examples, we find that the conventional image of a 'holy man' has been twisted and turned upside down.

It is, therefore, apparent that some of Koestler's ideas regarding his theory of the comic may be useful in analysing the humour of Narayan. At the same time, Narayan seems to plot his own unique brand of humour, independent of external influences. Many of his characters endear themselves to us due to their follies and undue aspirations. Humour is created when they try to fulfil those desires, and often fail to do so.

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Gender and Resistance in Postcolonial Literature**Dr. Rajesh N. Sonkusare****Assistant Professor, Department of English****Arts and Commerce College, Bhisi, Tah: Chimur, Dist: Chandrapur (M.S.)****Email: rajeshns87@gmail.com**

Abstract

Postcolonial literature has emerged as an important field for examining the cultural, political, and social consequences of colonial rule. Among the many themes explored in this body of literature, gender and resistance occupy a central position. Women in postcolonial societies often face multiple layers of marginalization shaped by colonial domination, patriarchal traditions, and social inequalities. This research paper investigates how gender functions as a powerful site of resistance in postcolonial literary texts. By analyzing selected works such as **Things Fall Apart** by Chinua Achebe, **Nervous Conditions** by Tsitsi Dangarembga, **A Grain of Wheat** by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and **The God of Small Things** by Arundhati Roy, the study explores how female characters challenge dominant power structures and negotiate identity within complex socio-cultural contexts. Drawing on postcolonial feminist theory, particularly the works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Ania Loomba, the research examines the ways literature provides space for marginalized voices and critiques colonial and patriarchal systems. The study also highlights the intersection of gender with race, class, caste, and cultural identity in shaping women's experiences in postcolonial societies. The paper argues that gender resistance in postcolonial literature is not merely thematic but transformative, enabling writers to reimagine social relationships and challenge historical injustices. Through narrative strategies and character development, postcolonial writers present women as active agents of resistance who reshape cultural narratives and contribute to broader struggles for equality and justice.

Keywords: Postcolonial literature, gender resistance, postcolonial feminism, patriarchy, identity, subaltern voices

1. Introduction

Postcolonial literature represents one of the most significant developments in modern literary studies. Emerging from the historical experiences of colonial domination and cultural displacement, this body of literature reflects the struggles of societies seeking to reclaim their

identities after the end of colonial rule. Writers from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean began to challenge dominant Western narratives by presenting alternative perspectives on history, culture, and power.

One of the most critical themes in postcolonial literature is the relationship between gender and resistance. Women in postcolonial societies often experience multiple forms of marginalization shaped by colonial legacies and patriarchal traditions. While colonialism imposed political and economic domination, it also reshaped social structures and cultural values, often intensifying gender inequalities.

In many colonial societies, women were excluded from political participation and confined to domestic roles. Colonial administrations frequently reinforced patriarchal systems by recognizing male leaders as representatives of indigenous communities. As a result, women were marginalized not only within colonial power structures but also within nationalist movements that emerged during the struggle for independence.

Postcolonial writers have addressed these issues by exploring the complex experiences of women within colonial and postcolonial contexts. Through literary narratives, they reveal how women resist social constraints and assert their identities in the face of oppression. Female characters in postcolonial literature often challenge traditional norms, question authority, and redefine their roles within society.

The concept of gender resistance in postcolonial literature is closely connected to postcolonial feminist theory. Scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have argued that colonial discourse often silenced the voices of women in colonized societies. By recovering these voices, postcolonial literature provides new ways of understanding the relationship between gender, culture, and power.

This paper examines how gender resistance is represented in selected postcolonial literary texts. By analyzing works by Chinua Achebe, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Arundhati Roy, the study explores how female characters negotiate identity and challenge dominant power structures. The paper argues that gender resistance in postcolonial literature plays a crucial role in reshaping cultural narratives and promoting social transformation.

2. Literature Review

Scholarly discussions on postcolonial literature have increasingly focused on the intersection between gender and colonial power structures. Early postcolonial critics such as

Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha examined how colonial discourse constructed cultural identities and maintained systems of domination. However, these early theoretical frameworks often paid limited attention to gender.

Postcolonial feminist scholars later expanded this discussion by emphasizing the importance of gender in understanding colonial and postcolonial societies. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" highlighted the difficulties faced by marginalized groups, particularly women, in expressing their voices within dominant discourses. Spivak argued that colonial and patriarchal systems often silenced women's experiences, making it necessary to rethink traditional frameworks of representation.

Similarly, Chandra Talpade Mohanty critiqued Western feminist scholarship for portraying women from developing countries as passive victims of oppression. She argued that such representations reproduced colonial stereotypes and ignored the diverse cultural and political contexts shaping women's lives. Mohanty emphasized the need to recognize the agency and resistance of women in postcolonial societies.

Ania Loomba further contributed to postcolonial feminist scholarship by analyzing how colonial ideologies intersect with gender relations. Her work demonstrates how colonialism reinforced patriarchal structures while also reshaping traditional social systems. Loomba's analysis highlights the complex ways in which colonial power influenced gender roles and cultural identities.

Recent scholarship has continued to explore these themes, particularly through the lens of intersectionality. Scholars argue that gender oppression cannot be understood in isolation but must be examined in relation to other social categories such as race, class, and caste. Studies of African and South Asian literature have shown how women's experiences are shaped by multiple forms of inequality and marginalization.

Contemporary research also emphasizes the role of literature as a space for articulating resistance and reimagining cultural identities. Postcolonial women writers such as Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Arundhati Roy have used narrative techniques to challenge patriarchal norms and highlight the struggles of women in postcolonial societies.

The literature review demonstrates that gender resistance has become a central focus of postcolonial literary studies. However, there remains a need for further research examining

how literary narratives represent women's agency and resistance within specific cultural contexts.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology based on textual analysis and theoretical interpretation. The primary objective is to examine how gender resistance is represented in postcolonial literary texts and how female characters challenge dominant power structures.

The research employs close reading as the main analytical technique. Close reading involves examining narrative elements such as characterization, symbolism, and thematic patterns to understand how meaning is constructed within literary texts. This method allows the researcher to explore subtle representations of gender relations and resistance strategies.

The study focuses on four major works of postcolonial literature: **Things Fall Apart**, **Nervous Conditions**, **A Grain of Wheat**, and **The God of Small Things**. These texts were selected because they represent different geographical and cultural contexts within the postcolonial world while addressing similar themes of gender and resistance.

The theoretical framework for the analysis is postcolonial feminist theory. This approach provides tools for examining how colonial histories intersect with gender relations and how women resist systems of domination. Concepts such as subalternity, intersectionality, and narrative resistance are used to interpret the selected texts.

Secondary sources were collected from academic databases including Google Scholar and Scopus-indexed journals. Recent research published between 2020 and 2025 was consulted to ensure that the study reflects contemporary debates in postcolonial and feminist literary studies.

Through this methodological approach, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of gender resistance in postcolonial literature.

4. Gender, Colonialism, and Patriarchal Power

Colonialism transformed social structures in many societies by introducing new systems of governance, education, and cultural values. These transformations often reinforced patriarchal power structures and limited women's participation in public life.

Colonial discourse frequently portrayed colonized women as passive and oppressed figures. Such representations served to justify colonial intervention by presenting imperial rule

as a civilizing mission. However, postcolonial writers challenge these stereotypes by portraying women as active participants in social and political struggles.

In many postcolonial texts, female characters confront both colonial domination and patriarchal traditions. This dual struggle reflects the complex realities faced by women in colonized societies. While colonial rule imposed external control, local patriarchal systems often restricted women's autonomy within their own communities.

The interaction between colonialism and patriarchy created new forms of inequality that continue to shape postcolonial societies. Literature provides a valuable lens through which these dynamics can be examined and critiqued.

5. Female Identity and Education as Resistance

Education frequently appears in postcolonial literature as a tool for empowerment and resistance. For many female characters, access to education represents an opportunity to challenge traditional gender roles and assert independence.

In **Nervous Conditions**, the protagonist Tambudzai views education as a pathway to freedom from poverty and patriarchal control. Her determination to pursue education reflects a broader struggle for self-determination and identity.

Similarly, other postcolonial texts portray education as a means of challenging colonial and patriarchal authority. Female characters who pursue education often gain new perspectives that enable them to question social norms and resist oppressive systems.

However, these narratives also reveal the limitations and contradictions of education in postcolonial contexts. While education can empower individuals, it may also reproduce colonial ideologies and cultural hierarchies. This tension highlights the complexity of resistance within postcolonial societies.

6. Narrative Voice and Literary Resistance

One of the most significant contributions of postcolonial literature is its ability to amplify marginalized voices. Through narrative strategies such as first-person narration and multiple perspectives, writers create spaces for women to articulate their experiences.

Women writers often use literature as a form of political expression. By depicting the realities of women's lives, they challenge dominant cultural narratives and expose systems of inequality.

The concept of narrative resistance refers to the ways in which storytelling can challenge established power structures. In postcolonial literature, narratives often disrupt traditional representations of gender and highlight the resilience of women who resist oppression.

Through these literary strategies, postcolonial writers transform literature into a site of cultural and political resistance.

7. Intersectionality and Social Inequality

The experiences of women in postcolonial societies are shaped by multiple forms of inequality, including race, class, caste, and ethnicity. Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding how these different factors interact to create complex patterns of discrimination.

In many postcolonial contexts, women from marginalized communities face greater challenges than those from privileged backgrounds. Literary narratives often reveal how social hierarchies influence women's opportunities and experiences.

For example, in South Asian literature, caste plays an important role in shaping gender relations. Similarly, in African literature, issues of race and colonial history influence women's social positions.

By examining these intersecting forms of inequality, postcolonial literature offers a more nuanced understanding of gender resistance.

Conclusion

Gender resistance remains a central theme in postcolonial literature. Through their narratives, writers expose the complex relationships between colonial history, cultural identity, and gender inequality.

Female characters in postcolonial texts often demonstrate resilience and agency as they challenge oppressive systems. Their struggles highlight the transformative potential of resistance and the importance of reclaiming marginalized voices.

Postcolonial literature therefore serves not only as a critique of historical injustice but also as a platform for imagining new possibilities for social equality and cultural transformation.

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Identity Crisis in Jhumpa Lahiri's Works: Diaspora and Urban Immigration

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Abstract

This paper examines the theme of identity crisis in Jhumpa Lahiri's works through the interconnected frameworks of diaspora and urban immigration. Lahiri's fiction presents a nuanced portrayal of Indian immigrants and their descendants negotiating identity within unfamiliar cultural landscapes. Through a close reading of *The Namesake*, *Interpreter of Maladies*, and *Unaccustomed Earth*, this study argues that identity is not a fixed construct but a fluid and evolving process shaped by displacement, hybridity, and urban alienation. Drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha, the paper demonstrates how Lahiri's characters inhabit a liminal space where identity is continuously negotiated, fragmented, and redefined.

Keywords

Identity Crisis, Diaspora, Urban Immigration, Hybridity, Cultural Displacement, Jhumpa Lahiri, Indian Diaspora, Urban Alienation, Second-Generation Immigrants

Introduction

In contemporary literary discourse, identity is increasingly understood as a dynamic and constructed phenomenon rather than a stable or essentialized category. The complexities of identity formation become particularly evident in diasporic contexts, where individuals are compelled to navigate between multiple cultural frameworks. Migration disrupts traditional notions of belonging, giving rise to psychological and emotional conflicts that manifest as identity crisis.

Jhumpa Lahiri's works provide a profound exploration of these tensions. As a diasporic writer, Lahiri focuses on the experiences of Indian immigrants in the United States, capturing the subtle yet powerful struggles associated with cultural displacement and adaptation. Her characters often find themselves caught between the expectations of their inherited culture and the realities of their adopted environment.

This paper explores how identity crisis emerges in Lahiri's fiction through the dual lenses of diaspora and urban immigration. It argues that the intersection of these forces produces a fragmented and hybrid identity, characterized by a constant negotiation between belonging and alienation.

Theoretical Framework:

Identity, Diaspora, and Hybridity. The concept of identity has undergone significant transformation within cultural studies. Stuart Hall reconceptualizes identity as a process of becoming rather than being, emphasizing its fluid and constructed nature. According to Hall, identity is continuously shaped by historical and cultural forces, making it inherently unstable.

Homi K. Bhabha's notion of hybridity further complicates this understanding. His concept of the "third space" refers to a liminal zone where cultural meanings are negotiated and new identities emerge. This space disrupts binary oppositions such as native and foreign, allowing for the formation of hybrid identities.

Diaspora and the Fragmentation of Identity Diaspora plays a central role in shaping identity crisis in Lahiri's fiction. First-generation immigrants experience a profound sense of displacement, leading to feelings of nostalgia and alienation.

Urban Immigration and the Experience of Alienation Urban environments play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of Lahiri's characters. Cities intensify feelings of alienation due to their anonymity and fast-paced nature.

Hybridity and the Negotiation of Self Hybridity emerges as a defining feature of identity in Lahiri's works. Characters negotiate between two cultural systems, resulting in fluid identities.

Memory, Nostalgia, and Cultural Inheritance Memory and nostalgia shape identity among immigrants. While they preserve cultural continuity, they also contribute to identity conflict.

Conclusion

Jhumpa Lahiri's works offer a compelling exploration of identity crisis within diaspora and urban immigration contexts. Identity emerges as fluid, evolving, and continuously negotiated.

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**Electoral Multipolarity and the Crisis of Minority
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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of a multipolar electoral system—where many political parties compete—on the representation of minority groups in India, with a specific focus on Maharashtra. In a "First-Past-The-Post" system, the presence of multiple parties often leads to "vote splitting," where minority votes are divided among several candidates, allowing a majority candidate to win with a small margin. This study classifies this phenomenon as a "Crisis of Representation." By evaluating election data from Maharashtra and comparing it with states like Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the paper describes how fragmented political landscapes often result in a lower percentage of minority legislators compared to their actual population. The study concludes that while multipolarity offers more democratic choices, it requires strategic alliances or specific electoral reforms to ensure that minority voices are not lost in the competition.

Introduction

In a large democracy like India, elections are the way people choose who will speak for them in the government. We use a system called First-Past-The-Post (FPTP). This means whoever gets the most votes in an area wins, even if they don't have more than 50% of the total votes.

This research focuses on Electoral Multipolarity, which simply means a situation where many different political parties (more than two) are competing for the same seats. While having many choices sounds like a good thing for voters, it often leads to a "Crisis of Representation" for minority groups, such as Muslims or Dalits. In states like Maharashtra, the political landscape is very crowded with parties like the BJP, Congress, two factions of the NCP, and two factions of the Shiv Sena, along with smaller groups like the VBA and AIMIM.

When so many parties ask for the same "secular" or "minority" votes, the community's voting power gets divided or "split." As a result, even in areas where minorities have a large population, they fail to elect their own leaders because their votes are scattered across four or five different candidates. This allows a candidate from the majority community to win with a very small margin of victory. This paper aims to study why this happens and how it creates a gap between the actual population of minorities and their actual number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. By comparing Maharashtra with states like Tamil Nadu—where parties form strong alliances—this study will show that "more parties" often leads to "less voice" for those who are already marginalized..

Keywords

Electoral Multipolarity, Minority Representation, Maharashtra Politics, Vote Splitting, First-Past-The-Post (FPTP), Political Fragmentation

Statement of the Problem

The problem is that in states like Maharashtra, the minority population (specifically Muslims, who make up ~11.5% of the state) is not represented proportionally in the Legislative Assembly. As the number of parties increases, the competition for the same "secular" or "minority" vote bank intensifies.

Research Question

Does the increase in the number of political parties (multipolarity) directly lead to a decrease or stagnation in minority representation due to the division of votes?

Review of Literature

Existing research on Indian elections suggests that the "First-Past-The-Post" system favors large, consolidated blocks. Scholars like Christophe Jaffrelot have argued that when minority votes are fragmented across multiple parties (like the INC, NCP, VBA, and AIMIM in Maharashtra), the community loses its collective bargaining power. In contrast, states with strong two-party alliances tend to see more stable, albeit limited, representation.

Hypothesis

"Higher electoral multipolarity in a district leads to a higher probability of minority representation crisis due to the fragmentation of the minority vote base."

Methodology

- Sample: Election results from the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha (2014 and 2019) and comparative data from Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
 - Measures: The primary measure is the Representation Gap—the difference between the population percentage and the percentage of elected MLAs from that community.
 - Method of Observation: A comparative analysis of "triangular" vs. "multipolar" contests in specific constituencies.
 - Statistical Analysis: Calculation of win-loss margins in constituencies with high minority populations.
 - Internal Validity: The study focuses on identical electoral rules (FPTP) across all states to ensure the comparison is fair.
 - External Validity: While the findings are specific to India, the logic of "vote splitting" can be applied to any country using a plurality voting system with many parties..
- Objectives

- To see how "many-party contests" affect minority winners in Indian states.
- To compare Maharashtra's situation with other states like Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- To find out if more parties lead to better or worse representation for minorities.

Comparative Analysis: Maharashtra vs. Other States

The impact of multipolarity varies depending on how regional parties behave.

State	Political Nature	Minority Representation Status
Maharashtra	Highly Multipolar (BJP, Shiv Sena-BT, Shiv Sena-UBT, NCP-AP, NCP-SP, Congress, VBA)	High Fragmentation: Because there are so many factions, minority votes often split between secular parties and smaller identity-based parties (like AIMIM or VBA). This sometimes results in fewer minority candidates winning.
Uttar Pradesh	Triangular/Multipolar (BJP, SP, BSP, Congress)	Consolidated Blocks: Despite having many parties, minorities often "tactically vote" for one major challenger (like the SP) to avoid splitting

		their power. This shows that multipolarity can be managed by the voters themselves.
Tamil Nadu	Bipolar Dominance (DMK and AIADMK alliances)	Alliance Power: Even though there are many parties, they all join two "poles" (alliances). Minority parties (like IUML or VCK) join these big alliances, which usually guarantees them a few seats and a voice in government.

Key Findings

- The Split Vote: In Maharashtra, the presence of many "secular" or "regional" choices can lead to a "spoiler effect." If three parties all want the minority vote, they might each get 15%, while a communal party gets 30% and wins the seat.
- The Role of Alliances: States like Tamil Nadu prove that multipolarity doesn't have to be a crisis if small minority parties join big coalitions. This gives them "bargaining power."
- The Representation Gap: In almost all multipolar states, the percentage of minority MLAs is lower than their percentage in the actual population. This is the core of the "Crisis."

Conclusion

The study of electoral multipolarity in Maharashtra, when compared to states like Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, reveals a significant "Representation Gap" for minority communities. The evidence suggests that while a multi-party system offers more democratic choices, it simultaneously creates a structural barrier for smaller groups under the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system. In Maharashtra, the fragmentation of the "secular" vote across multiple parties—such as the INC, NCP, VBA, and AIMIM—directly leads to "vote splitting," where minority-preferred candidates lose to consolidated majority blocks. This research proves that multipolarity without strategic alliances results in a crisis where the number of minority MLAs remains stagnant or declines, despite a growing population. Conversely, the "Tamil Nadu Model" shows that minorities can overcome this crisis by joining stable, pre-poll alliances that guarantee them a "seat at the table." Therefore, the study confirms the hypothesis that high

political fragmentation weakens the collective bargaining power of minorities. To solve this, the research proposes a new theory of "Strategic Consolidation," suggesting that minority groups must prioritize unified voting blocks over multiple independent candidates. Ultimately, for a democracy to be truly inclusive, the electoral system must ensure that "more parties" does not translate into "less voice" for the marginalized.

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Symbolic Perspective of Tragedy in the novels of Joseph Conrad and George Eliot: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This research paper explores the symbolic perspective of tragedy in the novels of Joseph Conrad and George Eliot, focusing on how both writers employ symbolism to represent human suffering and ethical responsibility. Literary devices help to highlight and explain the symbols used in a story and the complexity of the narrative. Both writers use symbolic structures to explore ethical failure, human suffering, and moral responsibility. Although they write in different historical and ideological contexts, Conrad and Eliot share a serious commitment to tragedy as a means of ethical inquiry rather than mere emotional effect. Their symbols, whether the ship, sea, darkness, city, river, or domestic space, operate as moral instruments that expose the limits of human understanding and social systems.

The study adopts a comparative method to examine selected works, including *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, *Silas Marner*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Middlemarch*.

The paper argues that tragedy in Conrad is largely shaped by public systems such as Imperialism and Political Power, where symbolic environments like the sea, jungle, and city reveal the collapse of ethical certainty. In contrast, Eliot presents tragedy within domestic and social relationships, where symbols such as the river, home, and family network express emotional conflict, sympathy, and moral responsibility. Critical debates, including the views of Chinua Achebe and F. R. Leavis, along with feminist ethical criticism, further illuminate how tragic symbolism functions as a form of moral questioning. Thus, tragic symbolism becomes a powerful tool for understanding the complexities of human experience.

Keywords: Symbolism, Tragedy, Imperialism, Comparative Analysis

Introduction

The comparative method adopted here is symbolic rather than purely historical or formal. Both writers converge in their understanding of tragedy as a human-made condition,

shaped not by fate alone but by social pressure and ethical compromise. This study undertakes a sustained comparative analysis of the symbolic perspective of the tragedy in selected works of Joseph Conrad and George Eliot. Mainly focusing on how each writer deploys symbolic structures to articulate the ethical, psychological, and social consequences of human failure. While Conrad and Eliot are rarely juxtaposed in traditional literary criticism due to their apparent differences.

Sometimes, particularly with subtle imagery, it's unclear if an author deliberately used symbolism or if readers are projecting meaning onto the text. This ambiguity isn't problematic, though. In fact, it's an intriguing aspect of symbols; the presence of symbolism in writing often depends as much on the reader's interpretation.

Colour symbolism plays a significant role in character development by reflecting emotions, traits, and transformations. Different colours may symbolize aspects of a character's journey. Symbolic colours often carry specific meanings and can symbolize emotions, ideas, or themes, enhancing the overall symbolism in a work. The most commonly used colour as a symbol in literature is black. It embodies the concept of duality, representing both light and dark aspects of human nature. Characters associated with black may showcase a blend of morality, with potential for both good and evil. The transition from darkness to light can symbolize hope and renewal. Darkness in *Heart of Darkness* functions as a symbol of moral emptiness rather than racial or geographical otherness. Marlow's observation that "the conquest of the earth... is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much" exposes the ethical hollowness underlying imperial rhetoric. Kurtz's final utterance, "The horror! The horror!" represents tragic self-recognition rather than redemption.

George Eliot locates moral darkness within social constraint. In *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie Tulliver's suffering emerges from social judgment rather than ethical failure. Eliot remarks that Maggie's nature demands "more tenderness and pity than is given to her," emphasizing the tragic cost of moral rigidity.

Tragedy is a human-made condition in Conrad's work. In his novels, tragedy is not imposed upon characters; it is constructed by human choices within flawed systems, whether imperial, political, or social. Conrad's symbolic method reveals how individuals become trapped within the very structures they inhabit. Symbolism often operates through '*spatial and environmental structures*' that expose the fragility of civilized identity. Recent Digital

Humanities projects focusing on South Asian literature illustrate both the promise and the limitations of spatial digital methods. Projects that map colonial and postcolonial travel narratives have successfully highlighted networks of movement and exchange. However, when similar techniques are applied to philosophically inflected texts, interpretive friction emerges.

Geographic Information System (GIS)-based studies, narratives, or novels structured around journeys. While mapping can show routes and nodes, it struggles to register the ritual temporality that gives these journeys meaning; transformation becomes movement. Such reduction is not merely technical but epistemological, reflecting a prioritization of exterior space over interior change.

Across *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), *Lord Jim* (1900), and *The Secret Agent* (1907), Joseph Conrad consistently rejects classical notions of tragedy rooted in fate or divine order. Instead, tragedy emerges as a human-made phenomenon, produced through moral failure, ideological distortion, social prejudice, and psychological self-deception. Conrad's tragic vision is not sudden or catastrophic but slow, accumulative, and symbolic, unfolding through everyday structures such as ships, domestic spaces, cities, and communal environments.

Tragedy arises in Eliot's work from the tension between individual desire and communal obligation, often within intimate domestic spaces. The symbolic environments in which these tragedies occur are not neutral backdrops; they actively shape human perception and action. Tragedy in her novel is no longer confined to kings or heroes but is "rooted in the ordinary processes of social life."

Conrad and Eliot exemplify this shift. Their tragic figures are Marlow, Kurtz, Jim, Verloc, Silas Marner, and Maggie Tulliver. They are not tragic because of supernatural fate but because they confront ethical limits within human systems they partially uphold and partially resist.

Material Symbols and Moral Disintegration

In *Heart of Darkness*, ivory symbolizes imperial greed and the moral erosion produced by colonial capitalism. Marlow observed that the word "ivory" rang in the air "like the word of a god," indicating how economic desire assumes religious authority within the colonial enterprise. "Ivory" thus signifies a system in which economic obsession supplants ethical responsibility and culminates in Kurtz's moral collapse.

George Eliot employs a parallel but inwardly directed symbol in *Silas Marner*. Silas's gold represents emotional isolation and spiritual deprivation rather than exploitation. Eliot describes the coins as his "sole object of love," revealing the tragic substitution of material security for human connection. While Conrad's ivory is destroyed through outward violence, Eliot's gold corrodes inwardly through solitude.

Direct Comparative Analysis: Joseph Conrad and George Eliot

Having examined Joseph Conrad's and George Eliot's symbolic tragic visions separately, it is now possible to place them in direct comparison. Although both writers explore tragedy through symbolism, they do so from very different positions. Conrad's tragedy grows out of public systems of imperialism, political violence, and masculine codes of honour. While Eliot's tragedy develops within the private life of family, memory, ethical responsibility, and emotional restraint. This section compares their symbolic methods to show how each writer uses tragedy as a form of ethical critique.

1.1 Public Tragedy vs. Domestic Tragedy

One of the clearest differences between Conrad and Eliot lies in the location of tragedy. Conrad's tragic worlds are public and external. Ships, rivers, cities, and empires form the background against which his characters collapse. In *Heart of Darkness*, the Congo River is not simply a natural space but part of an imperial system that destroys moral boundaries. The Congo River symbolizes psychological descent and imperial corruption. Marlow describes it as resembling "an immense snake uncoiled," suggesting both temptation and danger as he journeys inward toward moral disintegration.

In *The Mill on the Floss*, suffering unfolds within the family home, shaped by inheritance, memory, and social judgment. Eliot's symbols of home, river, hearth, and childhood spaces emphasize how tragedy grows slowly through misunderstanding and emotional neglect rather than sudden catastrophe.

This difference reflects each writer's ethical priorities. Conrad exposes how large systems dehumanize individuals, while Eliot reveals how ordinary moral failures quietly destroy lives.

1.2 Imperial Alienation vs. Ethical Sympathy

Another key contrast lies in how each writer treats human connection. Conrad's symbolic landscapes produce alienation. Marlow travels deeper into darkness and becomes increasingly isolated. In Conrad's fiction, symbols such as darkness, fog, and enclosed urban

spaces emphasize separation and moral emptiness. The sea in Conrad's work symbolizes uncertainty and danger. It represents the unpredictable forces of life and history. In *Lord Jim*, the sea is closely connected to Jim's tragic failure. Jim dreams of heroism, but the sea exposes his weakness during the Patna incident. His abandonment of the ship becomes a lifelong moral wound.

Eliot's tragic symbolism, however, is grounded in sympathy. Even when her characters fail or suffer, the narrative encourages emotional understanding. Silas is redeemed through care and responsibility. Maggie's tragedy is shaped by her capacity for deep feeling, not by moral corruption. The river Floss in *The Mill on the Floss* carries memory and emotional continuity, not just destruction. The River Floss symbolizes tragic inevitability, culminating in Maggie's death during the flood.

Where Conrad often suggests that systems erase ethical meaning, Eliot insists that moral responsibility remains possible even when tragedy cannot be avoided. This difference explains why Conrad's endings feel unresolved and bleak, while Eliot's, though painful, retain emotional dignity.

1.3 Masculine Collapse vs. Relational Suffering

Gender also plays an important role in their symbolic handling of tragedy. Conrad's tragic figures are often men struggling with ideals of courage, authority, and control. Kurtz's downfall represents the collapse of imperial masculinity.

Eliot, however, centres tragedy on relational suffering, particularly through women. Maggie Tulliver's tragedy arises from her emotional intelligence and moral sensitivity in a society that values restraint and obedience. Her suffering is not heroic failure but ethical excess; she feels too deeply for the world she inhabits.

This contrast highlights a deeper difference: Conrad exposes the danger of moral emptiness, while Eliot exposes the cost of moral feeling in an unyielding social order.

1.4 Symbolic Method and Narrative Tone

Conrad's symbolism often creates distance. Darkness, fog, and fractured narratives prevent clear moral resolution. His narrators struggle to explain meaning, reinforcing a sense of uncertainty. Tragedy emerges as something incomprehensible and unresolved.

Eliot's symbolism, in contrast, aims for moral clarity through emotional depth. Her narrators guide the reader toward ethical reflection. Even when outcomes are tragic, the narrative affirms the value of sympathy, memory, and human connection.

Thus, Conrad's tragedy questions whether meaning survives modern systems, while Eliot's tragedy asks how individuals should live ethically within social limits.

1.5 Transition to Critical Debate: Achebe vs. Leavis, Feminist Ethics, and Moral Ambiguity

This comparative analysis reveals that Conrad and Eliot approach tragedy from opposing directions: one outward and systemic, the other inward and relational. Yet both use symbolism to challenge complacent virtuous thinking. The next section will engage directly with critical debates, especially the opposition between Achebe and Leavis on Conrad and feminist and ethical criticism of Eliot, to assess how far each writer succeeds in turning tragic symbolism into moral insight.

The symbolic tragic visions of Joseph Conrad and George Eliot have generated sustained critical debate because both writers confront fundamental ethical questions about human suffering, responsibility, and social power. This section engages with three major critical frameworks: the Achebe and Leavis debate on Conrad, feminist ethical criticism of Eliot, and broader discussions of moral ambiguity in tragic symbolism. Rather than treating these critical voices as abstract theory, I used comparative analysis of how tragedy functions ethically in both writers.

Achebe vs. Leavis: Conrad and the Ethics of Darkness

The most influential and contentious debate surrounding Conrad centres on Chinua Achebe's critique of *Heart of Darkness* and F. R. Leavis's defence of Conrad's moral seriousness. Achebe famously condemns Conrad for reducing Africa to a symbolic backdrop for European self-examination. From Achebe's perspective, Conrad's "darkness" strips African characters of language, individuality, and history, turning them into instruments for Western drama. Tragedy, in this reading, is one-sided: European suffering is explored in depth, while African suffering remains silent and objectified.

Achebe's criticism is important because it exposes the ethical limits of Conrad's symbolic method. Conrad's use of darkness powerfully critiques imperial hypocrisy, yet it also risks repeating the very dehumanization it seeks to condemn. Africans appear as shadows,

gestures, or sounds rather than full moral agents. Tragic symbolism thus becomes ethically unstable and capable of critique, yet entangled in colonial assumptions.

Leavis, however, reads Conrad very differently. He argues that Conrad's power lies precisely in his moral intensity and refusal of easy meaning. For Leavis, *Heart of Darkness* exposes the emptiness of imperial ideals and forces readers to confront the fragility of civilization itself. Darkness is not Africa but the moral condition of Europe. Tragedy arises from the collapse of moral confidence rather than racial hierarchy.

When placed together, Achebe and Leavis reveal the double edge of Conrad's tragedy. Conrad exposes imperial corruption, yet he does so through symbolic structures that limit ethical inclusiveness. This tension is not accidental but central to Conrad's tragic vision: meaning collapses even as critique unfolds.

Sympathy vs. Ambiguity

When feminist ethics is placed alongside Conrad's moral ambiguity, the contrast becomes sharper. Eliot believes in the ethical power of sympathy. Her symbols guide readers toward understanding, compassion, and virtuous reflection. Even tragic endings affirm the value of emotional responsibility.

Conrad, by contrast, questions whether sympathy survives modern systems at all. His symbols suggest fragmentation rather than connection. Darkness, sea, and city do not heal; they expose limits. Where Eliot's tragedy educates the virtuous imagination, Conrad's tragedy destabilizes it.

This difference does not make one writer ethically superior. Instead, it shows how tragedy evolves across historical contexts. Eliot writes at a moment when moral coherence still seems possible within social life. Conrad writes at a moment when systems have outgrown ethical control. Taken together, these critical debates reveal that both writers use tragedy not as emotional spectacle but as ethical challenge. Conrad forces readers to confront virtuous collapse without consolation. Eliot asks readers to acknowledge suffering while preserving sympathy and responsibility.

Achebe reminds us that symbolic critique must not erase lived experience. Leavis reminds us that moral seriousness can exist without comfort. Feminist ethics reminds us that tragedy is often gendered and relational, not heroic or spectacular.

These critical voices deepen our understanding of how Conrad and Eliot transform tragic symbolism into a means of ethical questioning, one through ambiguity and exposure, the other through sympathy and moral attention. Despite their differences, both writers use tragedy to question how human beings live, judge, and care within the pressures of history, society, and power.

Ambiguity in Conrad's Tragic Symbolism

Beyond the Achebe and Leavis debate, Conrad's work is often defined by ambiguity. His symbols do not offer ethical resolution; instead, they produce uncertainty. Marlow cannot fully judge Kurtz. Jim cannot fully redeem himself. Tragedy in Conrad is not the punishment of evil but the exposure of moral blindness.

This ambiguity is reinforced by Conrad's narrative style. Fragmented storytelling, delayed revelation, and unreliable narrators prevent clear moral closure. Readers are left in a state of ethical discomfort, mirroring the characters' confusion. Tragedy thus becomes a condition of modern life, one in which moral certainty has eroded under political, imperial, and technological pressures.

Feminist Ethics and George Eliot's Tragic Vision

In contrast to Conrad, George Eliot's work has been strongly shaped by feminist and ethical criticism. Feminist critics emphasize that Eliot's tragedy is rooted in relational ethics rather than abstract moral codes. Her symbolic use of domestic space highlights how women's lives are constrained by emotional labour, social expectation, and moral responsibility.

In *The Mill on the Floss*, Maggie Tulliver's tragedy is not caused by moral failure but by moral intensity. She feels too deeply in a society that offers her no ethical flexibility. Feminist readings emphasize that Maggie's suffering exposes the gendered limits of Victorian morality. The river becomes a symbol not only of fate but also of emotional overflow, a force that cannot be contained within social boundaries.

Conclusion

Further studies may also explore the relevance of tragic symbolism in contemporary literature, showing how modern writers continue to represent moral conflict through symbolic spaces. Such research would demonstrate that tragedy in literature is not limited to classical forms but remains a living mode of ethical reflection.

Another possible direction is the use of interdisciplinary approaches, including digital humanities methods, such as spatial mapping of narrative settings, which may also provide new insights into how symbolic environments like the sea, city, village, and domestic space shape tragic experience, though such methods should be combined with close reading to preserve ethical and emotional depth.

The comparative study of Conrad and Eliot suggests that tragic symbolism continues to offer valuable insight into human responsibility and social pressure. Expanding this line of research will help to deepen our understanding of how literature reflects the changing conditions of human life while preserving the timeless question of how individuals struggle to live ethically within imperfect systems.

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Political Transition in India: A Comparative Study of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian National Congress

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Abstract

Political transition in India has been characterized by a gradual yet decisive shift from single-party politics towards competitive multi-party politics. This paper intends to explore the transition in the role of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC) in shaping the Indian political scenario, particularly in the period between 2009 and 2019. This study intends to analyze the role of these two prominent political parties in India in terms of their alternating roles in governing and being in opposition, along with their contrasting ideological, policy, and leadership approaches. This study has used a qualitative analytical method along with secondary data for the purpose of research. The results of the research indicate that, on the one hand, the INC-led politics in India was characterized by welfare-oriented and growth-oriented policies, while on the other hand, the BJP-led politics in India was characterized by strong leadership, nationalism, and centralized decision-making.

Keywords: Political Transition, Indian Democracy, Party System, Governance, Electoral Politics, BJP, INC, Ideology, Opposition Politics.

Introduction

The Indian political system has undergone tremendous transformation since gaining independence. For many years, the Indian National Congress has been in charge, defining the structure and framework of the system (Guha, 2017). However, the rise and consolidation of the Bharatiya Janata Party have been a major turning point in the history of Indian politics (Jaffrelot, 2019). This changeover from the Congress-led system to the competitive system, largely dominated by the BJP, has been the result of various structural, ideological, and electoral shifts.

The period between 2009 and 2019 has been crucial in understanding the transformation in Indian politics. The United Progressive Alliance, headed by the INC, was in power between 2004 and 2014, while the National Democratic Alliance, headed by the BJP,

took charge in 2014 and has been in power since then (Election Commission of India, 2019). This has been not only an electoral shift but also an ideological, institutional, and socio-political transformation.

The importance of this study lies in the assessment of how these two prominent parties have been functioning as ruling and opposition forces. This will provide a deeper understanding of the democratic forces at work (Mehta, 2018).

Research Objectives:

- To analyze the governance approaches of the INC and BJP during their respective tenures.
- To compare their roles as opposition parties.
- To examine ideological differences and their impact on policy-making.
- To evaluate the implications of political transition on democratic institutions.

Research Questions:

- How did the INC and BJP differ in governance style and policy priorities?
- What strategies did each party adopt while in opposition?
- What factors contributed to the political transition in India during this period?

Analysis and Discussion

1. Historical Context and Ideological Foundations

In order to understand political change in India, it is essential to understand the historical context of both the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The INC, being the leading party in the independence struggle in India, has established a wide-ranging ideology that is based on secularism, pluralism, and developmental politics. The party's ideology has been described as a form of "centrist consensus politics" that seeks to accommodate all social groups through welfare policies (Guha, 2017).

The BJP, on the other hand, has been based on the ideology established by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), promoting cultural nationalism and reclaiming national identity as a civilization. The party's ideology, described by the term "Hindutva," is based on national unity, cultural pride, and effective governance. While critics see this as promoting marginalization, supporters see this as a much-needed correction to secular appeasement.

The difference between these two ideological paradigms has been significant in policy formulations. While the INC's emphasis on social justice and redistribution is at odds with the BJP's commitment to growth-oriented development and national identity politics, ideological

clarity and consistency have been important factors in the BJP's ability to shore up support, as Chandra (2016) points out. In contrast, the INC's ideological breadth has sometimes undermined political messaging.

2. Governance Models and Policy Orientation

The governance styles followed by the INC-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) reflect different models of development and governance styles.

The governance style followed during the tenure of UPA-II (2009-2014) is described as a rights-based approach. The formulation and implementation of landmark policies such as the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act," "The Right to Education Act", and "National Food Security Act" reflect a focus on social welfare policies (Ministry of Finance, 2014).

However, this period was also faced with various governance challenges. The issue of corruption, as reflected by the 2G scam and coal allocation scam, led to a decline in trust in governance. The policy paralysis, which is also seen as a reflection of coalition problems, led to a decline in trust in governance (Mehta, 2018).

In contrast, the NDA regime (2014-2019) opted for a more centralized and efficiency-oriented approach. The initiatives of Digital India, Make in India, and Swachh Bharat Mission indicated an attempt towards modernization and structural reforms. The structural economic reforms, such as the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and demonetization, were attempts to formalize the economy and increase transparency (NITI Aayog, 2018).

Though these initiatives were appreciated for their boldness, there were also some negative critiques. The demonetization drive, for example, was criticized for creating economic disturbances and failing to curb the issue of black money. This shows how bold initiatives often come with their own economic costs.

Table 1: Comparative Policy Initiatives of UPA (2009–2014) and NDA (2014–2019)

Sector	UPA (2009–2014) Key Initiatives	Objectives	NDA (2014–2019) Key Initiatives	Objectives
Rural Employment	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural	Ensure livelihood security through	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana	Provide affordable

	Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	guaranteed wage employment in rural areas	(PMAY - Gramin)	housing to rural poor
Transparency & Governance	Right to Information Act (RTI) strengthening	Promote transparency and accountability in governance	Digital India Programme	Enhance e-governance, digital infrastructure, and service delivery
Food Security	National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013	Provide subsidized food grains to vulnerable populations	One Nation One Ration Card	Improve portability and access to food security benefits
Financial Inclusion	Expansion of banking services (No-frills accounts)	Increase access to financial institutions for marginalized groups	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)	Universal financial inclusion through bank accounts
Education	Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009	Ensure free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14	Skill India Mission	Enhance employability through skill development
Health	National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) expansion	Improve rural healthcare infrastructure	Ayushman Bharat Yojana	Provide health insurance coverage to economically weaker sections
Economic Reforms	Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) (initial phase)	Reduce leakages in subsidy delivery	Goods and Services Tax (GST)	Simplify indirect tax structure and improve compliance
Sanitation	Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan	Improve rural sanitation and hygiene	Swachh Bharat Mission	Achieve universal sanitation and eliminate open defecation
Industrial Development	National Manufacturing Policy	Boost manufacturing sector growth	Make in India	Promote domestic and foreign investment in manufacturing

Infrastructure	Bharat Nirman Programme	Strengthen rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, irrigation)	Smart Cities Mission	Develop sustainable and citizen-friendly urban infrastructure

Table 1 presents a comparative overview of the policy paradigms of the UPA (2009-2014) and the NDA (2014-2019) regimes in some of the key domains of governance. The policy paradigm of the UPA government can be characterized as rights-based and welfare-oriented, with a strong emphasis on social security measures such as employment guarantees, food security, education, and transparency through legislative instruments. In contrast, the policy paradigm of the NDA government may be seen as efficiency-oriented, economically reformist, and technology-driven, with a strong emphasis on financial inclusion measures, digital infrastructure creation, and structural reforms such as the GST. Although the UPA and the NDA regimes were preoccupied with similar developmental concerns, the policy response to these issues was quite distinct in nature.

3. Leadership, Political Communication, and Personalization of Politics

Leadership has emerged as one of the important variables in the political transition process in India. The leadership of the INC during the UPA period had a dual leadership structure, with the Prime Minister and party leadership sharing power. This leadership structure had been perceived as indecisive and lacking accountability (Mehta, 2018).

The leadership of the BJP, under the leadership of Modi, had ushered in a highly centralized leadership structure. Modi's leadership style combines strong executive leadership with effective political communication skills. Modi's ability to communicate with the masses through digital media, public rallies, and "Mann Ki Baat" had helped to boost political mobilization (Jaffrelot, 2019).

Digital political communication has emerged as one of the important variables in the electoral process in India. Social media communication had become an important variable in the electoral process in India. The BJP had seized the initiative in digital communication, helping the party to gain a strategic advantage over the INC, which had failed to adapt to digital communication.

4. Electoral Performance and Voter Behaviour

The change in voter preferences from 2009 to 2019 shows an important shift. The INC's success in 2009 was mainly because of rural welfare programs and the coalition framework. However, anti-incumbency, corruption charges, and economic grievances led to an unprecedented shift in voter support for the BJP in 2014. (Election Commission of India, 2019)

The success of the BJP lies in several factors. The party's focus on development, their strategies for campaigning, and their ability to showcase strong leadership were some of the key reasons for their success. The party was also able to mobilize support from diverse voter groups, including urban middle-class citizens, young voters, and first-time voters. (Chandra, 2016)

The other important reason for their success was the shift from identity politics to aspiration politics. The shift from traditional politics based on caste and other social attributes has been an important reason for their success. However, this does not mean that these traditional politics have diminished. Rather, these have been subsumed into broader discourses of nationalism and development.

The increase in voter turnout also shows an increase in voter participation. This shows an increase in voter participation and engagement with politics. However, this also shows an increase in political competition.

Table 2: Electoral Performance and Voter Turnout Trends

Election Year	INC Seats	BJP Seats	Voter Turnout (%)
2009	206	116	58.2
2014	44	282	66.4
2019	52	303	67.4

Source: Election Commission of India (2019)

5. Role and Effectiveness of Opposition

The role of opposition is of prime significance for the proper functioning of a parliamentary democracy. During the UPA-II regime, the BJP has played an active and assertive role as an opposition party, raising issues of corruption and bad governance. This has had an impact on shaping the politics of the country (Mehta, 2018). However, the role of INC as an opposition party after 2014 has been quite low. The diminished strength of INC has

affected their ability to play an important role in parliamentary politics. This has raised concerns about the power balance and the erosion of checks and balances of democracy (Jaffrelot, 2019).

The erosion of strong opposition also has implications for deliberative democracy. The parliamentary debates have lost their significance. The diminished role of opposition has raised concerns for strengthening institutional mechanisms for accountability.

6. Institutional and Democratic Implications

The political transition holds significant implications for India's democratic institutions. One of the areas of concern is the concentration of power in the executive branch. This may improve efficiency in the executive branch but may also have negative implications for institutional independence and federalism (Jaffrelot, 2019).

The other important aspect is the changing nature of the functioning of Parliament. There is a decrease in the number of sittings and an increase in disruptions. This is an indicator of the decline in the deliberative functioning of Parliament (Mehta, 2018).

The changing nature of Indian democracy is also related to the role of independent institutions. These include the judiciary, the Election Commission, and the media. There is an increased debate on their independence and accountability. This is an indicator of the overall implications of the changing nature of Indian democracy.

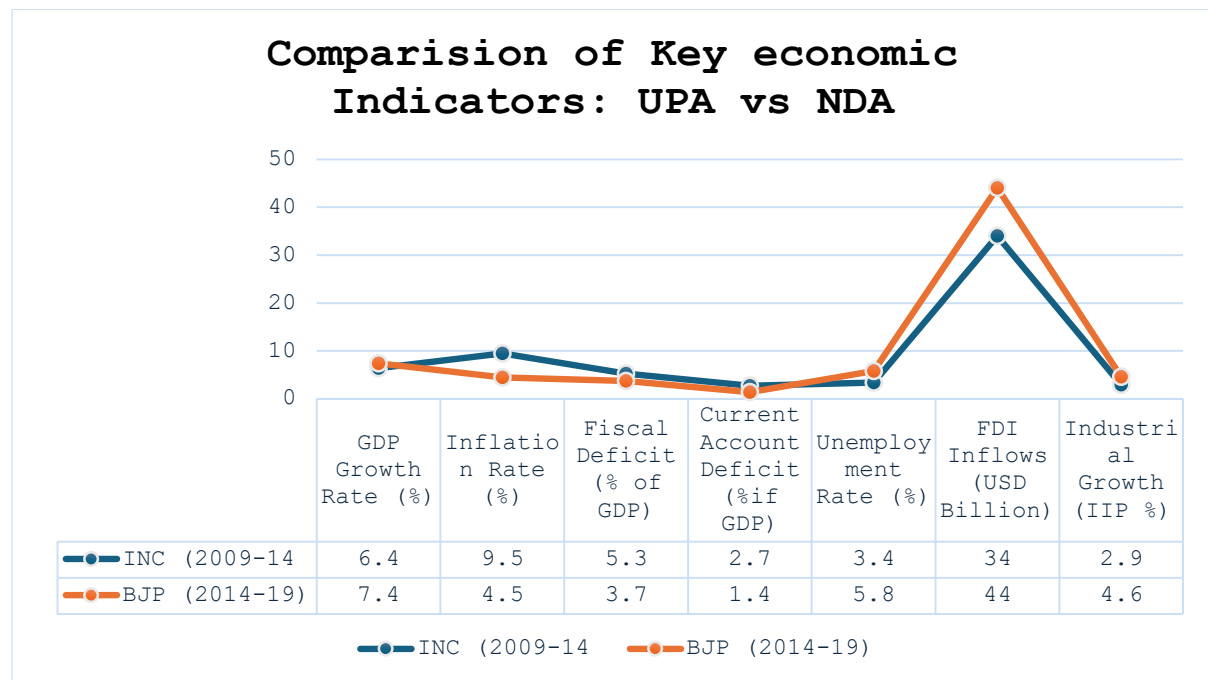
7. Economic Policy Orientation

The economic policies pursued by the INC and BJP governments represent two contrasting developmental philosophies. The policies pursued by the UPA government were based on the philosophy of inclusive growth, focusing on the welfare of the poor through policies aimed at employment generation, food security, and education, with the objective of reducing inequality (Ministry of Finance, 2014). On the other hand, the policies pursued by the NDA government, such as those aimed at improving ease of doing business, attracting foreign investment, and promoting entrepreneurship, indicated an attempt to shift the development path from the traditional state-led approach to a more liberalized approach (World Bank, 2020).

The success of the policies pursued by the Indian government also remains a matter of debate. The policies pursued by the NDA government, such as those aimed at improving inflation control and improving the fiscal situation, may be seen as having succeeded, but the policies pursued by the NDA government also generated concerns regarding the rising

unemployment and income inequality in the country, while the policies pursued by the UPA government may be seen as having succeeded in improving the social indicators, but they also generated concerns regarding the sustainability of the Indian public debt.

Graph: Key Economic Indicators during INC and BJP governance.



Source: Compilation of data from Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Statistics and World Bank Data.

The graph provides a visual representation of the macroeconomic indicators of both periods, UPA and NDA, and shows how there has been an improvement in these indicators. The NDA period has seen an increase in GDP growth, control of inflation, and fiscal discipline. In addition, it has seen an increase in FDI and industrial growth. However, there has also been an increase in unemployment. This shows that despite the improvement in these indicators, there is still an issue.

Conclusion

The transition in political governance in India, where the Indian National Congress party ceded power to the ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, is an indication of a significant change in the political governance of the nation. This is not limited to the political parties and their governance but extends to the ideological orientation and political governance that is in practice.

The analysis indicates that the political governance of the nation has changed from a welfare-oriented inclusivity model of governance promoted by the Congress party to a framework of governance promoted by the BJP party. This change is significant and has impacted political governance in the nation in many ways. However, there are critical issues that have been raised in the process.

The study points out the importance of the resilience of Indian democracy not just through electoral competition but also through the robustness of institutional checks and governance. Moving forward, there is a need to conduct more in-depth empirical studies on regional variations in politics, the role of digital political communications, and the socio-economic outcomes of such shifts in policies. This changing political scenario presents more opportunities for further research.

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Digital Narratives and the Reconfiguration of Identity in Contemporary English Literature

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ABSTRACT:

The digital revolution has radically transformed modes of communication, cultural production, and the construction of identity in the twenty-first century. Contemporary English literature increasingly reflects and interrogates these transformations through thematic engagement with social media, virtual environments, artificial intelligence, data surveillance, and algorithmic governance. Digital technology does not merely provide new subject matter; it fundamentally reshapes narrative form, authorship, temporality, memory, and reader engagement. This chapter examines how digital narratives reconfigure individual and collective identity in contemporary English literature. Drawing upon posthuman theory, media studies, cultural criticism, and narrative theory, it explores the fragmentation of selfhood, performative identity in networked spaces, the ethics of visibility, digital memory, surveillance capitalism, and artificial intelligence. The study argues that contemporary English literature functions as a critical space for negotiating technological modernity and for questioning the implications of living within data-driven societies. Ultimately, digital narratives reveal that identity in the digital age is fluid, relational, performative, and continuously reconstructed within technological systems that both empower and constrain human agency.

KEYWORDS: *Digital Narratives, Contemporary English literature, Identity, Posthumanism, Surveillance, Artificial Intelligence, Social Media, Virtuality, Memory, Network Society.*

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has witnessed unprecedented technological transformation. The rise of the internet, smartphones, social media platforms, artificial intelligence, and big data has reshaped not only communication but also the very structure of human identity. Individuals now inhabit both physical and digital worlds simultaneously. Social interactions, professional networks, intimate relationships, political participation, and even memory formation are mediated by digital technologies.

Contemporary English literature reflects this shift with remarkable sensitivity. Writers

increasingly situate their narratives within digital environments, portraying characters whose identities are constructed, curated, fragmented, and sometimes destabilized by online existence. The novel, traditionally associated with interiority and psychological depth, now grapples with hyperconnectivity, data visibility, and algorithmic surveillance. Digital realities challenge conventional narrative coherence, leading to experimental forms that incorporate emails, chat logs, hyperlinks, multimedia references, and nonlinear structures.

This chapter explores how digital narratives reconfigure identity in contemporary English literature. It argues that digital culture does not merely influence literary themes; it transforms narrative form and philosophical assumptions about selfhood. Identity becomes performative rather than essential, relational rather than autonomous, and technologically mediated rather than purely psychological. Through critical analysis, this study demonstrates that contemporary literature serves as a vital site for understanding the complexities of digital modernity.

1.Theoretical Framework: Identity in the Digital Age

To understand digital narratives, it is essential to situate them within theoretical discourse. Poststructuralist thinkers challenged the notion of a unified, stable self long before the digital age. Identity was reconceptualized as socially constructed, linguistically mediated, and culturally produced. However, digital technology intensifies this fragmentation.

Manuel Castells' concept of the "network society" describes a world structured by information flows rather than geographic boundaries. Identity becomes shaped by participation in digital networks. Similarly, Sherry Turkle's studies on online life demonstrate how individuals experiment with multiple selves through digital platforms. Posthuman theorists such as N. Katherine Hayles argue that information technologies destabilize traditional boundaries between human and machine, thereby challenging humanist assumptions of autonomy.

Contemporary English literature incorporates these theoretical shifts by portraying identity as dispersed across platforms and databases. Characters are defined not only by psychological depth but also by digital footprints, search histories, and algorithmic categorization. Thus, literature becomes a medium through which theoretical debates about selfhood are dramatized.

2.Digital Culture and Fragmented Selfhood

One of the defining features of digital modernity is fragmentation. Individuals maintain multiple online profiles across platforms—professional, personal, anonymous, curated. These profiles often present different aspects of identity, sometimes contradictory.

Contemporary novels portray protagonists navigating such fragmentation. The self is divided between public and private, authentic and performed, visible and concealed. Social media encourages selective self-presentation, reinforcing identity as performance. This performativity echoes earlier theories but gains new urgency in digital contexts where visibility is constant and measurable through metrics such as likes and shares.

Literary narratives reflect fragmentation structurally. Nonlinear storytelling, shifting perspectives, and embedded digital artifacts mimic the experience of browsing through hyperlinks. The narrative voice itself may appear unstable, reflecting the instability of digital identity.

3.Narrative Form in the Era of Hypertext

Digital culture transforms not only content but also form. Hypertext, with its nonlinear structure, challenges traditional narrative progression. Contemporary fiction often mirrors digital reading practices—fragmented, interactive, and nonsequential.

Some novels incorporate emails, text messages, blog posts, or social media updates directly into the narrative. These elements create layered storytelling that reflects digital communication patterns. The boundaries between author, narrator, and reader become porous. Readers engage in interpretive practices shaped by their own digital literacy.

This formal experimentation demonstrates that literature adapts to technological environments. The novel remains relevant by absorbing digital aesthetics and narrative techniques.

4.Social Media and Performed Identity

Social media platforms function as stages upon which identity is performed. Profiles are curated carefully; photographs are filtered; posts are edited for impact. Identity becomes a brand.

Contemporary English literature critiques this performative culture. Characters experience anxiety over visibility and validation. The desire for recognition coexists with fear of exposure. Online popularity may mask emotional isolation. Literature exposes the

psychological cost of constant self-monitoring.

The performative self also raises questions of authenticity. Is the digital self less real than the physical one? Or is identity always constructed? By dramatizing these dilemmas, literature deepens philosophical inquiry into authenticity in the digital age.

5.Surveillance, Power, and Algorithmic Control

Digital life is embedded within systems of surveillance. Governments, corporations, and platforms collect data continuously. Michel Foucault's concept of the panopticon becomes newly relevant in digital contexts.

Contemporary fiction frequently portrays characters aware of being watched. Surveillance shapes behavior. Algorithmic recommendations influence choices, subtly guiding preferences and perceptions. Identity becomes shaped by data profiling.

Literature critiques this loss of autonomy. Characters struggle against algorithmic categorization, seeking spaces of privacy and resistance. Thus, digital narratives reveal power structures underlying technological convenience.

6.Memory, Archive, and Digital Permanence

In pre-digital societies, memory was fragile and selective. In digital societies, memory becomes permanent and searchable. Online archives preserve conversations, images, and documents indefinitely.

Contemporary literature explores the emotional implications of this permanence. Characters are haunted by past posts resurfacing unexpectedly. The possibility of forgetting diminishes. Forgiveness becomes complicated when evidence remains accessible.

Digital memory also reshapes historical consciousness. Personal narratives intersect with global archives. Literature interrogates whether constant documentation enriches or burdens human experience.

7.Artificial Intelligence and Posthuman Identity

Artificial intelligence represents one of the most significant technological developments of our era. Contemporary English literature increasingly imagines AI not merely as tool but as character.

These narratives question what distinguishes human consciousness from machine intelligence. If AI can learn, create, and interact, what defines humanity? Posthuman identity emerges as a hybrid category.

Fiction exploring AI often reflects anxieties about replacement, dependency, and ethical responsibility. Literature becomes a laboratory for imagining future relationships between humans and intelligent machines.

8.Virtual Space and Embodied Absence

Virtual environments allow presence without physical proximity. Video calls, gaming platforms, and online communities create new forms of interaction.

However, virtual presence may also generate embodied absence. Characters experience disconnection from physical surroundings while immersed in digital spaces. Literature explores this paradox—connectivity coexisting with loneliness.

Virtual spaces blur distinctions between reality and simulation. Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulacra becomes relevant, as representation sometimes precedes experience. Literature interrogates whether digital mediation enhances or diminishes authenticity.

9.Language Transformation in Digital Communication

Digital communication reshapes language. Abbreviations, emojis, memes, and hybrid linguistic forms proliferate. Contemporary literature often incorporates such elements.

This transformation reflects broader cultural shifts. Language becomes faster, more visual, and interactive. Yet literature resists complete reduction to brevity. By integrating digital idioms into literary prose, writers negotiate between tradition and innovation.

10.Psychological Implications of Online Existence

Digital life influences mental health. Constant comparison, cyberbullying, and information overload contribute to anxiety and alienation.

Literary narratives portray characters experiencing identity crises triggered by online exposure. Validation metrics shape self-esteem. Literature becomes a site for examining emotional consequences of digital immersion.

11.Ethics, Privacy, and Moral Responsibility

Ethical dilemmas permeate digital culture. Data privacy, misinformation, online harassment, and AI bias raise urgent questions.

Contemporary English literature engages with these concerns by dramatizing moral conflicts. Characters confront decisions about disclosure, surveillance participation, and technological dependency. Through narrative, literature fosters ethical reflection.

12. Authorship and Reader Participation

Digital culture transforms authorship. Blogs, fan fiction, collaborative storytelling, and interactive fiction challenge traditional authorial authority.

Readers become participants. Literature evolves into dynamic exchange rather than fixed artifact. This participatory culture reflects democratization of narrative production.

13. Globalization and Digital Identity

Digital networks transcend geographic boundaries. Identity becomes transnational. Contemporary literature portrays characters navigating multicultural digital spaces.

Globalization intensifies hybridity. Individuals negotiate cultural belonging through online communities. Literature reveals both empowerment and cultural tension within digital globalization.

CONCLUSION

Digital narratives in contemporary English literature reveal profound transformations in identity, narrative form, and cultural consciousness. The self is no longer stable or singular; it is fragmented, networked, and mediated by technological systems. Literature responds by adopting innovative forms and by interrogating ethical, psychological, and philosophical implications of digital life.

Far from diminishing literary relevance, digital culture revitalizes it. Contemporary English literature remains an essential space for critical engagement with technological modernity. Through narrative exploration, literature enables reflection on who we are—and who we are becoming—in an increasingly digital world.

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Political Institutions and Democratic Processes: An Analytical Perspective

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Abstract

This chapter examines the nature and significance of political institutions and political processes in the functioning of modern democratic systems. Political institutions constitute the structural framework through which authority is organized and exercised, while political processes represent the dynamic interactions through which power is acquired, distributed, and legitimized. The chapter traces the historical evolution of political institutions from early forms of social organization to contemporary democratic governance. It discusses the essential elements of the state, the role of governmental institutions such as the legislature, executive, and judiciary, and the importance of political participation in ensuring democratic legitimacy. Special attention is given to the behavioural approach in political science, electoral processes in India, the role of judicial review, and the influence of pressure groups and social movements on policy making. The chapter argues that effective democratic governance depends on the proper functioning of political institutions combined with active citizen participation. Understanding the interaction between institutions and processes is therefore essential for analysing the dynamics of power and governance in modern political systems.

Keywords: Political Institutions; Political Processes; Democracy; Political Participation; Electoral System; Governance.

Political institutions have existed since the earliest stages of human civilization. In primitive societies, the life of early humans was largely governed by customs and traditions operating at different levels of social organization such as the family, clan, and tribe. Over time, concepts such as law, sovereignty, and political institutions evolved gradually. In ancient India, during the Vedic period, institutions such as the sabha, samiti, and vidhata served as important decision-making bodies. During the medieval period, political power was largely concentrated in the hands of a monarch or a small ruling elite. However, with the emergence of the modern welfare state, the significance and diversity of political institutions and processes have increased considerably.

The state is an abstract concept and is often used interchangeably with terms such as nation, society, country, or government. However, in political science, the state refers to a politically organized community established to promote common interests and satisfy collective needs. When people live together in society, they fulfill the meaning of Aristotle's famous assertion that "man is a social animal." Furthermore, when people live within a defined territory and organize themselves politically to achieve common goals, they embody his second assertion that "man is a political animal."

Society fulfills the human need for companionship, while the state addresses the problems that arise from social interaction. Historically, the state has existed wherever human beings have lived in organized communities. The state is generally understood to have four essential elements: population, territory, government, and sovereignty. Among these, government plays a crucial role because laws—considered the command of the sovereign authority—are created and implemented through governmental institutions such as the legislature, executive, and judiciary.

Human beings require the state to meet their diverse needs, while the state relies on political institutions to regulate and organize social life. Without such institutions, society would descend into disorder and anarchy. In the process of governing a state, the government performs various functions through political institutions. In the contemporary world, democracy is the most widely practiced form of government. Democratic systems include several key political institutions: the legislature, which makes laws; the executive, led by the President or Prime Minister, which implements policies and decisions; and the judiciary, which interprets laws and delivers justice. These institutions collectively uphold the fundamental principles and rules that govern the state.

Political institutions also determine how power is distributed within society. Power may be acquired through peaceful constitutional processes such as elections or through violent means such as revolutions or coups. Political processes therefore play a crucial role in determining the legitimacy of political institutions. When institutions are considered legitimate, citizens voluntarily obey the laws and fulfill their political obligations. In democratic systems, political processes must be structured in a manner that ensures citizens perceive authority as fair, just, and representative.

With the development of empirical approaches in political science, scholars began to place greater emphasis on political behavior and political systems rather than merely on formal institutions. It was recognized that politics could be better understood by analyzing the behavior of participants such as voters, legislators, bureaucrats, executives, and judges. Political analysis therefore involves not only the study of institutions and ideas but also the behavior of individuals and groups within and outside government structures, including elites and interest groups.

This shift in perspective encouraged the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach. As a result, fields such as political sociology emerged to examine political institutions, processes, and ideologies in relation to social structures and cultural patterns. Political sociology also studies the impact of political power and decisions on social life.

In modern democratic systems, political authority ultimately derives from the will of the people. The political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau therefore described government as the agent of the people. The people constitute the political sovereign, while elected representatives act as the legal sovereign, exercising authority on behalf of citizens. Since government functions as an agent of the people, it is expected to remain in power only as long as it serves public interests. If it fails to do so, citizens can replace it through periodic elections.

Public participation is therefore essential in ensuring that capable and responsible individuals attain positions of power. Governments must also remove barriers to political participation such as poverty, illiteracy, and social exclusion. In recent years, however, many democracies have experienced a decline in civic participation, particularly among young people who feel increasingly disconnected from traditional political institutions. This trend poses challenges for the functioning of democratic processes.

In the Indian political system, elections to the House of the People (Lok Sabha) are conducted through the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) electoral system. Under this system, the candidate who secures the highest number of votes in a constituency is declared the winner, even if the candidate does not obtain an absolute majority. For example, a candidate may win with only 25 percent of the votes if that number exceeds the votes received by other candidates. Critics argue that this system may result in representatives being elected despite lacking the

support of the majority of voters, thereby raising concerns about the representativeness of electoral outcomes.

Within the judicial system, the process of judicial review plays a vital role in protecting the rights and interests of citizens. Through judicial review, courts can examine the constitutionality of laws enacted by the legislature and actions taken by the executive. If these laws or actions violate constitutional provisions, the judiciary has the authority to declare them null and void.

In representative democracies, it is often observed that once political parties secure a majority and attain power, they may formulate policies that do not always reflect the preferences of all citizens. In such situations, pressure groups and interest groups mobilize public opinion and employ various democratic methods such as protests, petitions, and advocacy to influence policy decisions and protect their interests.

This demonstrates that the fundamental purpose of political institutions in a representative democracy is to serve society as a whole rather than merely advancing the interests of a narrow elite. Political institutions play a crucial role in shaping social, economic, and cultural life by influencing policy decisions, resource distribution, and patterns of social interaction. Moreover, there exists a close relationship between informal institutions, such as political culture and social norms, and formal institutions, such as constitutions and governmental structures.

The constitutional framework of a country determines the form of government it adopts, whether unitary or federal, presidential or parliamentary. Consequently, the policy-making process varies across different systems of government because the institutional structures and political dynamics differ. Political institutions provide the framework within which political processes take place, while political processes simultaneously influence and reshape institutions over time.

In India, elections are conducted within the framework of the electoral system administered by the Election Commission of India. Electoral outcomes can significantly influence the composition and ideological orientation of the government, which in turn shapes the country's public policies. If citizens believe that government policies do not adequately

reflect their interests, they may initiate social movements or democratic protests to pressure political institutions to adopt reforms.

For democracy to function effectively, political institutions must emphasize efficiency, transparency, and accountability in governance. Otherwise, democracy may remain limited to procedural aspects such as elections while lacking substantive democratic outcomes. When institutions fail to deliver meaningful results, the rule of law weakens, and citizens' rights and liberties may exist only on paper.

According to social contract theory, individuals agreed to establish the state in order to escape the state of nature—a condition characterized by lawlessness, chaos, and insecurity. By creating political institutions and processes, human beings sought to ensure order, justice, and stability. However, if these institutions become corrupt or fail to function impartially, society may again face conditions resembling the state of nature.

Therefore, understanding the relationship between political institutions and political processes is essential for comprehending the complexities of political life and the dynamics of power in society. Political institutions establish the structure and rules of governance, while political processes represent the actions and interactions that occur within those rules. Together, they shape the functioning and evolution of political systems.

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Effects of Yoganidra and meditation on specific physical and Mental variables in Secondary School students.**Prof. Dr. Lalita Chandratre****Dean of P.G. Department of Education, KaviKulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University,
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Abstract: -

Developing effective to practice yoganidra and meditation(Omkara). This study examined how health attitudes and perceived stress affected students in secondary schools in Haldia (Purba Midnapur District, West Bengal) intention to practice yoganidra and meditation.A total of fifty male and female students from Parbatipur Patitpabani High School were chosen at random from the group of students enrolled in the regular school for the current study. For the current study, the researcher chose physical and mental characteristics, such as stress, blood pressure, resting heart rate, and Stress. Prior to and following two weeks of yoganidra and meditation practice, the data were gathered. A paired t-test was used to assess the data. at the significance level of 0.05. The results of this study clearly show that two weeks of yoganidra combined with meditation practices significantly alter the physical and mental characteristics of both male and female students. The findings show that students' mental and emotional states are improved by meditation, which also improves their mental and physical health.

Keywords- Meditation, Yoganidra, Omkara, Pulse rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, stress, School Students.

Introduction: -

Yoga is a way to achieve total health, peace, bliss and wisdom. Physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of yoga help to make one's life purposeful, useful and noble("Effects of Pranayama with Meditation on Selected Physiological Variables of Male Students," n.d.).For centuries, meditation is being used as a medium to improve physical, psychological, emotional and mental well-being; it is also practiced to cope with severe and dreadful illness(Sharma et al., 2022).Meditation appears to affect the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system, which

regulates organs and muscles and controls automatic functions such as heartbeat, respiration, perspiration, and digestion(Erickson, 2016). A great number of studies have demonstrated the significant effects of such techniques in the treatment of mental disorders(Ferreira-Vorkapic et al., 2018). Symptoms of stress in childhood and adolescence are conditioned by stressful indicators such as lack of affection, negative family situation, school problems, poor interpersonal skills, and negative physical-body perceptions(González-Valero et al., 2019). According to Stanely Hall, adolescence is a period of great stresses and strains, storm and strife (Chauhan 1993)(Mohan, 2020). Breathwork comprises various practices which encompass regulating the way that one breathes, particularly in order to promote mental, emotional and physical health (Oxford English Dictionary)(Fincham et al., 2023). Beyond physical well-being, MBTs have positive effects on mental health(*S00737-024-01484-8.Pdf*, n.d.). Stress is largely a physical response and is described as a condition marked by symptoms of mental and physical tension or strain, such as depression or hypertension, that might arise as a reaction to a situation in which a person feels threatened or pushed, or both(*The_impact_of_academic_stress_on_the_aca.Pdf*, n.d.). Such autonomic imbalance is reflected in measures of heart rate variability (HRV), which have been positively associated with aerobic fitness,[2] resilience to stress,[3] and psychological and physiological flexibility[4] and negatively associated with cardiovascular disease,[1] stress,[1,5,6] neuronal atrophy,[7] negative affective states,[8] and maladaptive stress responses.[1](*Yoga_and_heart_rate_variability__a_comprehensive.2.Pdf*, n.d.). Yoga-Nidra and other yogic practices will play an important role in treating mental, physical, and psychological problems and improving cognitive abilities, and will help to connect with oneself(Nayak & Verma, 2023).The following two hypotheses were put forward in order to assess the potential connection between the use of meditation and secondary students' physical and mental health:

H1:- There is no significant Effect of Yoganidra on physical health.

H2:- There is no significant Effect of Meditation (Omkara)on mental health.

The Study's Objective: -

The following goals were thought to be served by the current study's findings: The findings would show if yoganidra combined with meditation practice may lead to desired improvements

in a few physical characteristics (resting pulse rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure) and mental variables (stress level) of students in secondary school.

Methods and Materials: -

The current study investigated whether participating in meditation training programs might raise physiological parameters like heart rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, and physical and mental stress levels. A quasi-experimental design was employed in this investigation. Fifty Parbatipur Patitpabani High School students, both male and female, were chosen as samples. The experimental group trained for two weeks, Monday through Saturday, for ninety minutes each day. Each subject's physical and mental characteristics were assessed after a two-week training session. Every test was performed precisely. Before and after testing, the samples were given all test-related data, including age (14–16). A pre-test and post-test randomized control group design with a quasi-experimental group was used for the current study. A suitable statistical method was used to analyze the collected data. Central tendency was measured using the mean, while data variability was measured using the standard deviation. The t-test was used to determine the significance of the difference between the pre- and post-test means.

RESULTS: -

H1:- There is no significant Effect of Yoganidra on physical health.

The researcher also aims to evaluate the impact of Yognidra on physical health of the students. Std Secondary School students' systolic, diastolic blood pressure and Pulse rate was measured. Further, the impact of Yognidra on decreasing the systolic, diastolic blood pressure and Pulse rate of the students was evaluated. The following hypothesis is formulated:

Paired t-test was performed at 0.05 significance level to evaluate the impact of Yognidra on reducing the systolic, diastolic blood pressure and Pulse rate of the students. The results are presented below:

Table 1:- Physical measurement.

Test	Pretest		Post test		t value	p value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Systolic Blood Pressure	108.12	14.6087	110.2	10.1116	-1.067	0.2912
Diastolic blood pressure	67.1	14.5914	75.08	12.6843	-4.0087	0.0002 ***
Pulse rate	93.02	19.8479	94.86	13.7885	-0.7651	0.4479

A paired t-test was conducted to compare pre-test and post-test values. There was a statistically significant increase in diastolic blood pressure ($t=-4.0087, p=0.0002$), However, no significant differences were observed in systolic blood pressure ($t=-1.067, p=0.2912$) and pulse rate ($t=-0.7651, p=0.4479$)

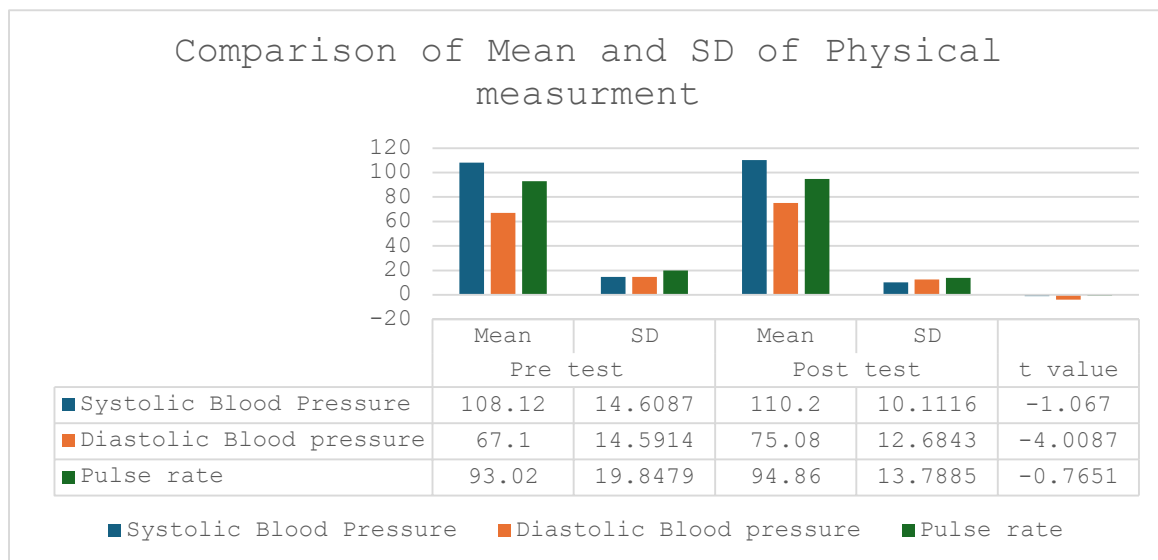


Fig 1 :- Bar diagram a comparison of Mean and SD of the physical variable.

H2:- There is no significant Effect of Meditation (Omkaara) on mental health.

Paired t-test was performed at .05 significance level to evaluate the Effect of Maditation (Omkaara) on reducing the stress of the students. The results are presented below:

Table 2:- Stress level measurement:-

Summary Statistics			
	n	Mean	SD
Stress_Pre_test	50	7.5000	2.8873
Stress_Post_test	50	5.8800	2.7228

- There is a **noticeable reduction in stress after the treatment.**
- The similar SDs indicate that the **change is not due to increased variability**, but likely reflects a real shift in central tendency.

Table 3: - Paired t –test

Paired t-test					
Null Value Considered: 0					
			sample estimate	confidence: 0.95	confidence: 0.95
t	df	p-value	mean of the differences	lower	upper
4.7769	49	1.6554e-05 ****	1.6200	0.9385	2.3015

Note:

*** The results are significant at 0.05 significance level

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the effect of the treatment on participants' stress levels. The results indicated that stress scores significantly decreased from pre-test ($M = 7.50$, $SD = 2.89$) to post-test ($M = 5.88$, $SD = 2.72$), $t(49) = 4.78$, $p < .001$. The mean reduction in stress was 1.62 points (95% CI [0.94, 2.30]).

The obtained results suggest that the intervention was effective in significantly reducing stress levels among participants. Overall, the findings provide strong evidence that the intervention led to a significant reduction in stress levels, supporting its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION: -

The findings and conclusions lead us to the conclusion that meditation improves students' emotional and psychological states as well as their physical and mental well-being. Pulse rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, and levels of physical and mental stress were all significantly affected by the two-week yoganidra and meditation training program. In order to enhance mental and physiological performance, such training may be advised. The study's encouraging findings may help athletes and psychologists become more physiologically and psychologically efficient. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle may be aided by a few minutes of practice each day. In order to sustain improved physical and mental health, the daily practice may also be included in programs for lifestyle adjustment and physical exercise.

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Ethical Permissions: -

No ethical approval code was disclosed by the authors.

conflict of interest

No one disclosed.

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Shaping Emotional Resilience and the Role of Native Language Self-Talk: A Framework for Immersive Technological Interventions in Urban India.

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Abstract

Urban India provides a dynamic environment where rapid social changes occur, numerous languages coexist, and mental health concerns continue to grow, specifically related to developing emotional resilience. While many have identified that self-talk plays a significant role in regulating emotions, few studies have explored how the native language used for self-talk affects individuals emotionally. Further exploration of these relationships may identify potential sources of insight and support for developing emotional wellness awareness.

Native-language self-talk can carry unique emotional and cultural meanings in multi-lingual environments; however, there remains limited discussion of integrating linguistic and psychological theories into the design of emerging immersive technologies (e.g., VR) as tools to engage with mental health issues.

This article develops a theoretical framework to examine the influence of native-language self-talk on emotional resilience and describes immersive technology as a framework to bridge the gaps between urban India and the previously unconnected disciplines of psychology and linguistics.

Building on literature from the cognitive, rational-emotive, linguistic, and resilience disciplines, this article integrates these disciplines to create a culturally grounded conceptual model for the development of future research and interventions.

Although the proposed framework will not establish causal links among the concepts, it will develop contextualized connections relevant to culturally and linguistically responsive mental health approaches.

1. Introduction

Urban India represents an increasingly dynamic and rapidly changing psychosocial environment that is characterized by increased pace of living, increased expectations to perform

at high levels, and an increasing number of sources of social and emotional stress. The rapidity of changes in this environment has made concerns about emotional resilience increasingly relevant for young adults in urban India who are faced with multiple and interrelated demands from academic and work obligations and interpersonal relationships. Although there is an increasingly widespread recognition of the need to address mental health issues, many people do not have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate psychological services that can effectively translate psychological theory into practice in urban environments.

In India, the country's deep linguistic heterogeneity has played a significant and generally overlooked role in how psychological experience is constructed. In most educational and workplace contexts, English (or other non-native languages) are often privileged over native languages; however, regardless of the language(s) that are spoken externally, individuals continue to express themselves internally using their first language. This internal expression, also known as self-talk, is one of the primary mechanisms through which individuals cognitively and emotionally process experiences, regulate their affect, and evaluate their own competence.

Cognitive and rational-emotive perspectives have long identified self-talk as a major factor in determining both emotional regulation and adaptive functioning. Self-talk, through repetition, creates belief systems, emotional responses and coping behaviors. However, until now, these perspectives have generally treated self-talk as if it were linguistically neutral and ignored the emotional salience of native language processing. Emotional resilience is defined as an individual's ability to effectively cope with stress and adversity and is directly linked to these internal processes related to native language use.

Additionally, technological advancements have provided new avenues for addressing the gaps in access to mental health care. Immersive technologies, including virtual reality, offer the opportunity to develop emotionally engaging and interactive environments that can be used to facilitate reflective psychological processes when grounded in theory. Such technologies may provide a method for accessing and utilizing internal dialogue in culturally and linguistically meaningful ways. This paper proposes a theoretical model that combines the concepts of native language self-talk, emotional resilience and immersive technologies in the context of urban India.

2. Rationale of the Study**Reasons for Studying Self-Talk**

Self-talk has been investigated from both a cognitive perspective and a rational-emotive perspective; however, the medium of self-talk has been examined theoretically very little. Within bilingual populations, internal dialogue often occurs in one's first language (native), while external communication may be expressed through another linguistic register. As such, there are significant implications of this difference on emotional processing and resilience that remain unexplored in traditional mainstream mental health literature.

In addition, immersive technologies have become increasingly prominent as a tool to engage with mental health issues. Many technology-based interventions emphasize either the novelty of the technology or the outcomes of the technology, without grounding the technology in an underlying theoretical model. Therefore, the motivation behind this research was to provide a conceptual link between theoretical models of psychology, linguistic processing, and immersion technology in a culturally-specific context. Through use of a framework-oriented approach, this research aims to contribute to the advancement of theory rather than examine the efficacy of an intervention.

3. Significance of the Study

This study has importance because it contributes to theory about emotional resilience, self-talk, and technology-based mental health frameworks. The study shows how indigenous language self-talk can be a cognitive way that people develop meaning from their emotions and regulate those emotions. Therefore, this study is especially important to urban India where there is linguistic diversity.

This study also adds to growing dialogue about immersive technologies by seeing these technologies as theoretical frameworks rather than just something that will be used directly. As such, this theoretical framework allows researchers and practitioners to design and implement research and intervention strategies that are culturally responsive and based upon psychological theories.

4. Objectives

The aims of this paper are as follows:

- I. To critically evaluate the conceptual understanding of self-talk in relation to native language.

- II. To investigate the association between self-talk using native language and emotional resilience.
- III. To assess the inadequacies of current mental health frameworks in terms of their failure to take into account linguistic factors.
- IV. To consider immersive technology as a framework to engage self-talk processes.
- V. To develop an integrated theoretical framework applicable to urban India.

5. Review of Literature

Existing studies suggest that self-talk is one of the main ways to regulate emotions and to evaluate cognitively. Rational-emotive and cognitive theories have also demonstrated how the evaluative nature of an individual's internal dialog affects his/her emotional outcome. Additionally, studies about language have shown that native languages carry greater emotional saliency than foreign languages, however this has been largely overlooked within psychological models of self-talk.

Resilience literature defines emotional resilience as a dynamic process (with appraisal and regulation strategies) that is affected by how individuals appraise their environment and regulate their responses to it. The integration of linguistics with existing resilience frameworks is relatively rare. Research about Immersive Technologies (e.g., virtual reality, video games), while demonstrating potential for experience-based applications, frequently does not incorporate cultural or linguistic considerations. These two areas of study, while potentially complementary, identify a gap that necessitates theoretically-integrated work.

6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposed in this study presents a model for understanding the relationships among native-language self-talk, emotional resilience, and immersive technology (i.e., virtual reality). The linguistic self-talk process was identified as the primary mechanism through which individuals internally appraise their emotions. Emotional resilience was defined as an individual's ability to respond to emotionally challenging situations; this ability was shown to be affected by the nature of the individual's internal language processes. Immersive technology was characterized as a facilitative environment in which individuals can engage in reflective consideration of their self-talk processes when they are theoretically based.

The conceptual framework presented does not imply that there are direct causal relationships among the three variables. Rather, the framework represents an attempt to organize and relate previously developed theories in order to provide a clearer understanding

of how various aspects of language and technology might interact within urban mental health environments

7. Discussion

The discussion section of this study reviews the theoretical implications of incorporating linguistically-based understandings of self-talk into studies of resilience. Native-language self-talk emerged as a potentially important aspect of emotional processing, but one that has been relatively unexamined. As such, the use of immersive technologies as a context for engaging in reflection about one's internal language processes could have the potential for culturally-sensitive engagement with internal dialogue processes.

Given the rapidly growing need for mental health services in urban India, where there is significant linguistic diversity, this perspective on the integration of linguistic and technological approaches to enhancing emotional resilience is timely. This perspective adds theoretical clarity to understanding the relationship among the three constructs, while also providing a degree of methodological caution to researchers who wish to investigate these issues empirically.

iii. Conclusion

In this theoretical study, we explored the relationship among native-language self-talk, emotional resilience, and immersive technology as a basis for developing an integrated framework for investigating the use of immersive technologies to enhance emotional resilience. We contribute to theory development in mental health psychology by emphasizing the importance of linguistics and contextual factors in our understanding of the emotional resilience process. The conceptual framework established here provides a foundation for further empirical investigation of the use of immersive technologies to develop interventions that are tailored to the needs of diverse cultural groups.

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Human–Nature Relationship, Myth, and Ecology: An Ecocritical Analysis of Easterine Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud*

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Abstract

Easterine Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud* is a significant work of Northeast Indian literature that brings together myth, ecology, and indigenous knowledge in order to imagine a world where human life is inseparable from the natural environment. Set against famine, drought, and communal suffering, the novel presents ecological disorder not merely as a physical crisis but as a moral, spiritual, and cultural rupture. This paper examines the text through an ecocritical framework, with particular focus on the human–nature relationship, the function of myth, and the representation of ecological crisis. It argues that Kire draws on Naga oral traditions and symbolic motifs, such as rain, river, seed, and storm, to challenge anthropocentric models of thought and to affirm a relational worldview in which nature possesses agency, memory, and sacred value. The paper further shows that myth in the novel is not escapist ornamentation but a mode of ecological knowledge through which the community interprets loss and imagines renewal. By linking environmental suffering with cultural amnesia and ethical failure, *Son of the Thundercloud* emerges as a powerful ecocritical narrative that advocates restoration through indigenous wisdom, collective responsibility, and renewed intimacy with the more-than-human world.

Introduction

Easterine Kire is one of the most important writers from Nagaland and a leading voice in Naga literature. Born in Kohima, Nagaland, Kire writes poetry, novels, short stories, and children’s books. Her writing is closely connected with Naga history, culture, folklore, and oral traditions. In 1982, she became the first Naga poet to publish in English, and her novel *A Naga Village Remembered* (2003) is known as the first Naga novel written in English. Her works often combine myth, memory, indigenous spirituality, and everyday life. Her writing helps to preserve Naga culture and also shows the close relationship between human beings, nature, and community life. She has received several honours for

her literary works, and through her writing, translation, and performances, she continues to introduce Naga stories, myths, culture and traditions to a wider audience.

Easterine Kire's *Son of the Thundercloud* holds an important place in contemporary Indian writing in English because it reimagines ecological awareness through Naga myth, oral tradition, and communal memory. The world of the text is characterised by famine, drought, prophecy, and spiritual expectation, and these elements make ecology central to the narrative itself. The present fiction frequently revisits the close relationship between land and life, illustrating ecological imbalance linked to suffering, displacement, and the erosion of older ethical worlds.

Theoretical Framework:

Devdutt Pattanaik, a famous mythologist, explains in *Culture: 50 Insights from Mythology* that mythology and culture are closely connected and keep shaping each other. According to him, stories not only entertain people; they also show the beliefs, values, and ways of thinking of a society. While comparing Western and Indian mythic ideas, he writes:

“The Western story celebrates a linear construct of life – with one beginning, one ending and one life in between. The Indian story celebrates a cyclical construct of life – with many beginnings, many endings and many lives in between. Thus, stories reflect the culture they emerge from, while reinforcing the culture at the same time” (Pattanaik, *Culture: 50 Insights From Mythology*, 5–6).

Easterine Kire's novel also shows that myth comes from culture and helps to preserve it. In the novel, storytelling is closely linked with everyday life, memory, and ecology. It becomes a way of understanding the relationship between human beings and nature.

Myth, as a cultural reality in the form of a story, shows the importance of storytelling in indigenous cultures. Indigenous writers highlight how stories are not separate from life but are closely connected to reality. Through storytelling, they establish a strong relationship between imagination and lived experience. This paper, through the lens of myth and ecology, examines how storytelling functions as a bridge between culture, reality, and environment. The present paper uses ecocriticism and mythology as its primary framework. Ecocriticism studies the relation between literature and the physical environment, but in the case of *Son of the Thundercloud*, it requires a form of ecocritical attention that is open to sacred indigenous cosmology and narrative forms in which myth carries ecological knowledge. The present research paper combines ecocriticism with an understanding of myth as ecological meaning-making and uses folklore and myth to challenge anthropocentric thinking.

Human–Nature Relationship

One of the strongest features of *Son of the Thundercloud* is its strong firmness that human life depends on a living relationship with nature. The villages in the novel are not just settings; they are ecological spaces where survival depends on rain, seed, soil, and the regular cycle of seasons. The importance of rain is shown in the prophecy that “the heavens would open and pour out rain” (Kire, 56).

Rain comes as grace, drought comes as suffering, and the land clearly responds to the condition of the people. This kind of representation moves away from modern human-centred thinking and instead presents a relational worldview in which human beings are only one part of a larger web of life. This idea becomes even clearer when read with Pattanaik’s *The Goddess in India: The Five Faces of the Eternal Feminine*. In this book, he connects the feminine with nature and explains that nature can both nurture and destroy. He writes: “The triumph is impersonal, non-judgmental. Nature kills everybody, not just the ‘bad.’ (167)

The human–nature relationship in the novel is also shaped by dependence and vulnerability. The river is not treated as a mere natural object, but as “our mother” (Kire, 55), which shows how deeply human life is tied to the natural world. In the same way, famine and drought are not distant or abstract conditions; they shape movement, loss, grief, and everyday life. *Son of the Thundercloud* also similarly presents nature. In the novel, nature gives life through rain, fertility, and renewal, but it also appears severe through drought, famine, and suffering. Pele’s journey through a broken landscape shows that ecological collapse damages both social continuity and emotional balance. In this sense, Kire’s ecological vision is deeply human without becoming human-centred. The novel shows that when the natural world is damaged, the whole community suffers, and the warning becomes clear in the fear that “the world could be wiped out by a second drought” (Kire, 65).

Myth and Ecological Meaning

“If myth is an idea, mythology is the vehicle of that idea. Mythology consists of stories, symbols and rituals that make a myth tangible. Stories, symbols and rituals are essentially languages. Languages that are heard, seen and performed. Together they construct the truths of the culture” (Pattanaik, *Myth = Mithya: Decoding Hindu Mythology*, xvi).

Myth is central to the novel’s ecological vision. Kire does not use myth as decorative folklore or as a romantic return to the past. Instead, myth functions as a mode of interpreting the natural world and the crises that threaten it. The prophecy of the “son of the thundercloud”, the figure of the spirit

tiger, and the cyclical pattern of rain, loss, and renewal all transform the narrative into a symbolic ecology. Through these structures, the novel suggests that myth preserves a deeper truth: that the world is animated, morally charged, and bound together by forces that exceed human control. Myth in the writings of Kire is a way of restoring the human–nature connection rather than escaping history.

Myth also allows Kire to recover indigenous ways of knowing. In this regard, the text challenges the view that myth is irrational or obsolete. Swu argues in her article “Easterine Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud*: Indigenous Wisdom and Ecological Harmony” that Kire’s storytelling demonstrates how ancient knowledge remains relevant to contemporary environmental concerns, and how Naga myths and folklore are repositories of ecological consciousness. Thus, myth in *Son of the Thundercloud* is ecological memory. It teaches reverence, warns against greed, and encodes an ethics of coexistence.

Ecological Disorder and Climate Change

Although *Son of the Thundercloud* is rooted in folklore and oral tradition, it also speaks clearly to the modern environmental crisis. In “A Reading of Easterine Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud* as an Anthropocene Discourse,” M. Angkayarkan Vinayakaservi and R. Abinaya argue that the novel reflects deforestation, overuse of natural resources, extreme drought, climate change, and habitat loss. Kire does not present these problems through scientific language. Instead, she shows them through famine, barren land, and a river that can no longer feed the people. That is why the villagers cry, “Our mother is dead! She can no longer feed her children” (Kire 55). This line makes ecological damage feel immediate and painful: when nature suffers, the whole community suffers with it.

What makes the novel especially powerful is that it is linked with human greed, cultural forgetting, and the breaking of shared values. A similar idea appears in Shruti Das’s study “Politics of Narration: Mythical Discourse in Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud*,” which points to the “famine of stories and songs” and the loss of hope. The novel itself connects destruction with moral failure when it describes forces that “thrive on fear and greed” (Kire, 48). So, climate disorder in the book is not just bad weather; it is also the result of damaged relationships between people, myth and land. At the same time, Kire does not leave the novel in despair. She imagines renewal through rain, rebirth, and restored ecological balance. In Mesanuo’s words:

“It’s called birthing, headman,” and her image of the earth giving birth to “trees, rocks, stones, and grain” (Kire, 46).

Thus, the novel presents the climate crisis as a lived and painful reality, but it also shows that healing becomes possible when human beings return to care, memory, and respect for the natural world.

Indigenous Wisdom and Restoration

The novel depicts ecological crisis with seriousness, and imagines restoration through indigenous wisdom. Kire does not propose a technological solution. Instead, she turns to ancestral memory, myth, ritual consciousness, and reverence for the land. Swu's reading is especially illuminating here because it presents indigenous wisdom in the novel as inherently restorative and capable of addressing contemporary environmental disorder. Kire retrieves an earth-based spirituality that modern generations are in danger of abandoning. Restoration in the novel therefore, means more than the return of rain or fertility; it means the recovery of a worldview in which humans know themselves as part of creation, not masters over it.

The novel's faith in renewal is not naïve. It arises out of famine, grief, and violence, and therefore carries moral weight. Kire suggests that survival depends upon humility before the natural world and attentiveness to inherited forms of ecological knowledge. In this way, *Son of the Thundercloud* offers a powerful alternative to exploitative modernity: a model of coexistence rooted in reciprocity, remembrance, and restraint.

Conclusion

This paper argues that *Son of the Thundercloud* presents the human–nature relationship as a sacred, reciprocal bond mediated by myth. In the novel, the ecological crisis is never merely material; it is also cultural and spiritual. Kire suggests that when communities lose their ethical and imaginative connection with the natural world, disorder enters both land and life. At the same time, the novel refuses despair. Through prophecy, rain imagery, oral memory, and the figure of the “son of the thundercloud”, Kire imagines ecological restoration as possible, though only through humility, faith, and renewed participation in indigenous ecological wisdom.

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73rd Amendment of the Constitution and role of women

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Abstract:-

In India, the Panchayat Raj generally refers to the system introduced by the constitutional amendment in 1992, although it is based upon the traditional Panchayat System of South Asia. In India, the Panchayat Raj now functions as a system of governance in which gram panchayat are the basic units of local administration. Participation in government work is an important channel for women to play their role in the administration of state and social affairs. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1993 is a landmark in the history of PRIs. The act provides for establishment of three tiers of Panchayat as units of local self government. Women active participation in politics, improved educational condition of society, spread health consciousness and widened women's own conception about themselves. They conceived themselves as good leader, administrator and good housewife as well. In Modern India, women have held high offices including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governor. This present paper highlights the role of women in PRIs.

Keywords:- Panchayati Raj, Democratic, Swaraj, Role, reservation.

Introduction:-

The political role of women as a subject for research is of recent origin in India. Important works on the national movement mostly fail to examine the significance of women's participation in the struggles. Accepting women's status within the family as an index of their own progress and mode.

Earlier, the reformers criticised particularly inhuman practices like widow immolation (sati), marriage of child brides to much older men, ban on remarriage of widows, and sought to promote some form of education for women.

Panchayati Raj refers to the system of self-governance in India under which modern democratic concept of Swaraj as propounded by Mahatma Gandhi is being developed to give proper shape to society and scenario, the term Panchayati Raj has been coined by Devnagri word Panchayat and Raj. Panch means five and yat means assembly; assembly of five. And traditionally the assembly used to settle and solve disputes among individuals and villages. Panchayati Raj as a system under government which enables a local body to do good for the development of villages or what we call Gram. Thus, leading to Gandhi's Gram-Swaraj that is central need of today's India and her inhabitants.

Motive behind formation of panchayat and practice of Panchayati Raj was meant to empower grassroots. The Balwant Rai Mehta and Ashok Mehta committees considered the need for involving women in the political and development processes through Panchayati Raj institutions by means of co-option. 1957 observed the implementation of this concept and in

1961 it brought a large change in social, cultural and economic scenario as well. But the aim has not yet been fulfilled as completely as it should have. Graph of achievement of Panchayati Raj and its success was rising but slowly. Idea of reservation for women in Panchayat election was visionary here the government was concerned about the increasing social evils in villages as like drinking liquor, gambling, education, pollution etc. And government thought women as the best solution to these problems because they have access to the heart of home in every villages.

Political opportunities may also be taken as the root of implementation of reservation for women. The reservation proved to be a milestone in progress and empowerment of women, and development of society women become an active participant of democratic society. The presentation and practice of their will in relation to eradication of traditional guilt in society is also countable. Women appreciated themselves, changed their priorities and worked hard to keep space with flying time. Survey in Indian states has clearly shown that women participation in Panchayat election doubled the result of Panchayat Raj. We can take example of Kerla ,Karnatka and our neighbour Bihar also, where women have changed the political arena and gave given new definition of progress changing their priorities. A manila Panchayat Samiti of Gulhi Kushaha (Bihar) States,“ Education Sanitation and health are our priorities.”

Panchayat Raj system was first adopted by the state of Rajsthan in Nagaur district on 2nd oct 1959. The second state was Andhra Pardesh , while Maharashtra was the Ninth state. State governments during the 1950s and 60s adopted this system as laws were passed to establish Panchayat in various states. It also founded backing in the Indian Constitution, with the 73rd amendment in 1992 to accommodate the idea. The Amendment Act of 1992 contains provision for devolution of powers and responsibilities to the panchayat ,both for the preparation of economic development plans and social justice, as well as for implementation in relation to 29 subjects listed in the eleventh schedule of the constitution, and the ability to levy and collect appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees. The Amendment act has added part IX to the Constitution of India entitled as ‘Panchayat’. The part consists of provision from Article 243 to 243-0. A new Eleventh schedule covering 29 subjects within the functions of Panchayat.

Various comities on Panchayati Raj

- Balwant Rai Mehta established 1957
- V.T. Krishnamachari 1960
- Takhatmal Jain Study Group 1966
- Ashok Mehta Comtee 1978
- G.V.K. Rao Committee 1985
- Dr.L.M. Singhavi Committee 1986
- P.K. Thoonghan Committee 1988

The national perspective plan for women (1988) asserted 30 percent reservation for women in decisions making levels at Panchayat Raj system. According 73rd amendment 33 percent of the elected members of the Panchayat have to be women. In a landmark imitative the BJP government is all set to bring a constitutional amendment to increase reservation for

women in gram Panchayat and urban local bodies from 33% to 50%. The government would bring a Bill to amend Article 234 (D) the Constitution to enhance the reservation. The Indian states Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tripura have implemented 50% reservation for women in PRIs. Currently 100% of elected members in Kodaserry Panchayat in Kerala are women.

The reservation of women in some states and disqualifying Panchayat leaders on the birth of a third child or absence of supersession dissolution rules stand in the working of Panchayat in their initial years of gestation

In Gandhi's science of swaraj, women appear as a collective representatives by means of which the superiority and inviolability of indigenous social tradition is demonstrated against the modern. The principal of Satyagraha and Ahimsa, Swadeshi and Sarvoda reflect a feminist critique of the powerful British State in India as inferior to swaraj.

Mahatma Gandhi :-“ Democracy requires everyone, man or women, to realize his or her responsibility. This is what meant by Panchayat Raj”.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar once said,” The Constitution is a dynamic document. It must be capable of growth and change.

The Women's Reservation Bill or The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008, is a lapsed bill in the Parliament of India which proposed to amend the Constitution of India to reserve 33% of all seats in the Lower house of Parliament of India, the Lok Sabha, and in all state legislative assemblies for women. The seats were proposed to be reserved on rotation and would have been determined by draw of lots in such a way that a seat would be reserved only once in three consecutive general elections.

73rd Amendment:-

The 73rd of the constitution step towards establishment of grass root democracy in the country. This amendment, to be precise, implies the following major changes in the area of development administration:

(a) Panchayat election has become mandatory and it has to be held at the interval of every five years as in the case of the state assembly and the Parliament. Even if the elected body is superseded, election has to be held within six months of the super session.

(B) 33 percent of the elected members of the Panchayats have to be women. Currently Over 20 states have passed legislation to reserve 50% seats for women in all three tiers of Panchayat Raj. Some states have made legal provision for 50% reservation for women among members band Sarpanchas : Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura and Uttarakhand. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand.

(c) Reservations of seats for scheduled castes and tribes has also been ensured based on the percentage of population of these groups.

(d) The Panchayat will have much bigger responsibilities in rising resources locally.

(e) The Panchayat will have power to prepare its own plan for which the government financial support will be available. In case of Jawahar Rojgar Yojna, 80 percent of such funds will go

directly to the village Panchayat, 50 percent of the district planned budget will go to the Zilla Parishad will divert the fund to the Panchayat Samiti based on their action plan.

In the history of Panchayat Raj, in India, on 24 April 1993, the Constitutional (73rd) Amendment Act came into force to provide Constitutional status to the Panchayat Raj institutions. This act was extended to Panchayat in tribal areas of eight states, namely: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan beginning on 24 December 1996. Currently, the Panchayat Raj system exists in all states except Nagaland, Meghalay and Mizoram, and in all Union Territories except Delhi. The State Election Commission conducts all elections to the Panchayat.

Constitutional provision :-

11th Schedule which contains 29 Functional items Part IX consists of provision there are Some Articles in Constitution of India

1. Gram Sabha - Article 243A
2. Constitution of panchayat - 243B
3. Composition of panchayat - 243C
4. Reservation of Seats - 243D
5. Power, Authority and responsibilities - 243G
6. Powers to impose taxes by, and Funds of the Panchayats 243 C
7. Finance Commission 243 I
8. Elections to the panchayats 243 K

Conclusion:-

As the old adages, "Behind every successful man there is a woman". When women are empowered whole families benefit and these benefits often have ripple effects to future generations. The World Bank and others have shown that increasing women's access to quality education, good jobs, land and other resources contributes to inclusive growth, sustainable development and long-term prosperity. India has one of the highest number of female politicians in the world.

To conclude the whole subject matter we can say social evil is a political phenomenon. Without purgation of politics social evils cannot be eradicated, our society can never be improved and weaker section cannot be mobilized. At present, Panchayat Raj System exists in almost all states in India except Nagaland, Meghalay and Mizoram as well as Delhi.

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1. Comparative government and Politics-

Act East Policy and India's Growing Influence in Southeast Asia: A Soft Power Perspective

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Abstract

India's engagement with Southeast Asia has increased significantly over the past three decades. Originally articulated through the Look East Policy in the early 1990s, India's approach to the region was primarily economic. Over time it evolved into the Act East Policy, reflecting a more proactive and strategic engagement with Southeast Asia. This paper analyzes India's growing influence in Southeast Asia through the lens of soft power. Drawing on Joseph Nye's theoretical framework, the study examines how cultural diplomacy, historical linkages, educational exchanges, diaspora networks and civilizational connections bolster India's regional engagement. Using qualitative analysis of secondary literature, policy documents, and institutional reports, the paper discusses that soft power has become a key dimension of India's Act East Policy. Despite challenges such as regional competition and implementation delays in connectivity projects, India's cultural linkage and diplomatic engagement continue to enhance its influence in Southeast Asia.

Keywords: Act East Policy, ASEAN, Soft Power, Southeast Asia, India's Foreign Policy

1. Introduction

The trajectory of India's foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has significantly shaped its engagement with Southeast Asia. Following economic liberalization in 1991, India launched the Look East Policy in order to expand economic cooperation and diplomatic ties with Southeast Asian countries (Muni, 2011). Over time, India's engagement evolved beyond trade relations to include strategic cooperation, security dialogue and cultural diplomacy. In 2014 the Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi upgraded this framework into the Act East Policy, signaling a more proactive approach to regional engagement (Naidu, 2016). Southeast Asia occupies a critical geopolitical position connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans and serves as a hub of global trade routes (Acharya, 2014). Consequently, strengthening ties with the region has become a major strategic priority for India. India's influence in Southeast Asia increasingly relies on soft power resources such as culture, education, historical ties and diaspora networks etc. According to Nye (2004), soft power refers to the ability of a country to shape the preferences of others through attraction rather than coercion. India's civilizational heritage and democratic values provide a foundation for such influence.

2. Literature Review

The concept of soft power introduced by Joseph Nye (2004) has become central to understanding modern international diplomacy. Unlike hard power, which depends on military or economic coercion, soft power depends on using cultural, political values and foreign policy legitimacy. In the context of India's foreign policy, several scholars have examined the country's eastward engagement. Muni (2011) argues that India's Look East Policy represented a strategic effort to reconnect with the Southeast Asian nations after decades of limited engagement. Raja Mohan (2013) underlines the geopolitical dimension of India's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region and emphasizes the importance of maritime cooperation. Scott (2015) interprets the Act East Policy as an expanded framework encompassing security cooperation, economic integration and diplomatic engagement. Pant (2016) and Rajagopalan (2019) also highlights the importance of regional partnerships and institutional cooperation with ASEAN states. Despite this extensive literature, fewer studies specifically analyze how India's soft power contributes to its influence in Southeast Asia.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach. It relies on secondary sources which include academic books, journal articles, government policy documents, and reports from international organizations. The data has been analyzed using descriptive and analytical methods to understand how India's soft power contributes to its regional influence in Southeast Asia.

4. India's Soft Power Engagement in Southeast Asia

4.1 Soft Power in the Context of India's Foreign Policy

The concept of soft power has become increasingly relevant in contemporary international relations. Introduced by Joseph Nye, soft power refers to the ability of a country to influence the behavior and preferences of other actors through attraction rather than coercion or economic forces. Unlike hard power, which relies on military or economic strength, soft power operates through cultural and political values, and diplomatic credibility.

India possesses significant soft power resources due to its rich civilizational heritage, democratic political system, pluralistic society, and cultural diversity. These elements have supported India to project an attractive image internationally. In the context of Southeast Asia, India's soft power plays an important role in strengthening diplomatic relations and enhancing its regional influence.

Under the framework of the Act East Policy, India has increasingly emphasized people-to-people connectivity, cultural diplomacy, and educational cooperation as instruments of engagement with Southeast Asian nations. This approach shows India's broader foreign policy strategy of combining strategic interests with cultural outreach.

4.2 Historical and Civilizational Linkages

One of the most significant foundations of India's soft power in Southeast Asia lies in the deep historical and civilizational connections between these two regions. These links date back more than two thousand years and were established through maritime trade, religious exchanges, and cultural interactions across the Indian Ocean.

Indian cultural and religious traditions, mainly Hinduism and Buddhism, played an important role in shaping the cultural landscapes of several Southeast Asian societies. Historical monuments, architectural styles, linguistic influences, and mythological traditions in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam show these long-standing connections.

These civilizational ties have created a sense of cultural familiarity and shared heritage between India and Southeast Asian nations. As a result, India is often perceived not as an external power but as a civilizational partner with deep historical roots in this region. This perception significantly enhances India's soft power and facilitates diplomatic engagement.

4.3 Cultural Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange

Cultural diplomacy represents a major component of India's soft power strategy in Southeast Asia. Through cultural exchanges, artistic collaborations, and public diplomacy initiatives, India promotes its cultural heritage and strengthens people-to-people ties with Southeast Asian societies.

Indian cultural traditions such as classical dance, music, yoga, and medicine have gained considerable popularity across Southeast Asia. International cultural festivals, exhibitions, and performances organized by Indian cultural institutions serve as important platforms for promoting India's cultural identity abroad.

Another important dimension of cultural diplomacy is the global popularity of Indian cinema, particularly Bollywood films. Indian films and television content have developed a vast audience in several Southeast Asian countries, contributing to the spread of Indian cultural influence and enhancing India's cultural visibility in the region.

In addition, cultural institutions and academic collaborations enable long-term cultural engagement. Such initiatives help foster mutual understanding and strengthen the social foundations of India's diplomatic relationships in Southeast Asia.

4.4 Education, Knowledge Diplomacy, and Academic Cooperation

Education and knowledge exchange forms another critical dimension of India's soft power diplomacy. India has actively promoted academic collaboration with Southeast Asian nations through scholarship programs, training initiatives, and institutional partnerships.

Students from Southeast Asia frequently pursue higher education in Indian varsities under various scholarship schemes sponsored by the Government of India. These educational

exchanges not only strengthen intellectual cooperation but also create long-term networks of alumni who maintain professional and cultural connections with India.

Knowledge diplomacy also includes cooperation in fields such as information technology, scientific research, and capacity-building programs. Through these initiatives, India contributes to human resource development in Southeast Asia while, at the same time, enhancing its reputation as a knowledge partner.

Such academic and educational engagement plays an important role in shaping perceptions of India among younger generations in Southeast Asia and contributes to long-term diplomatic goodwill.

4.5 Diaspora and People-to-People Connectivity

The Indian Diaspora represents another important instrument of India's soft power in Southeast Asia. Many communities of Indian origin reside in these countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, and Thailand. These communities serve as cultural bridges between India and their host societies.

Members of the Indian Diaspora actively contribute to economic development, cultural exchange, and diplomatic relations between India and Southeast Asian nations. Their participation in business, education, politics, and cultural activities increases India's social and cultural presence in the region.

People-to-people connectivity initiatives promoted under the Act East Policy further solidify these ties. Tourism, cultural visits, academic exchanges, and professional interactions help deepen mutual understanding and strengthen India's soft power influence.

4.6 Institutional Engagement and Regional Diplomacy

India's soft power diplomacy is also reinforced through its institutional engagement with regional organizations and multilateral forums. In particular, India's partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has become a central pillar of its engagement with Southeast Asia.

India participates actively in several regional forums, including the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). These platforms facilitate India to engage in dialogue on political, economic, and security issues while strengthening its diplomatic relationships with Southeast Asian countries.

In addition to diplomatic dialogue, India has launched several connectivity initiatives designed to enhance regional integration. Infrastructure projects and transportation networks linking India with Southeast Asia contribute not only to economic cooperation but also to a deeper social and cultural interaction.

4.7 Soft Power as a Tool of Strategic Influence

Although soft power primarily operates through cultural and ideological attraction, it has important strategic implications also. A positive national image and strong cultural ties facilitate countries to build trust and credibility in international relations.

For India, soft power complements its broader strategic ambitions in Southeast Asia. By promoting cultural engagement, educational cooperation, and diplomatic dialogue, India strengthens its partnership with regional countries and positions itself as a reliable and cooperative partner in this region.

In an increasingly competitive geopolitical environment, the ability to cultivate trust and goodwill through soft power becomes an essential component of foreign policy. India's civilizational heritage, democratic values, and cultural diversity provide a strong foundation for expanding its influence in Southeast Asia through peaceful and cooperative mediums.

5. Challenges

Despite these achievements, India's engagement with Southeast Asia faces several challenges too. Delays in infrastructure development projects and logistical constraints sometimes affect the implementation of connectivity projects. Additionally, Southeast Asia has become an arena of intense geopolitical competition among major global powers. India must therefore strengthen both its economic engagement and diplomatic presence in order to sustain its influence in the region.

6. Conclusion

The Act East Policy represents a huge evolution in India's foreign policy towards Southeast Asia. By integrating strategic cooperation with cultural diplomacy and economic partnerships, India has strengthened its regional engagement. Soft power resources such as cultural heritage, education and historical linkages play a crucial role in shaping India's positive image in Southeast Asia. In the long run, the continued expansion of people-to-people contacts, connectivity projects and institutional cooperation will further enhance India's influence in the region.

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Conceptual Art as Cultural Soft Power: India's Growing Global Influence in the 21st Century

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Abstract

In the 21st century, cultural production has become an important tool of international influence. India's contemporary art, particularly conceptual art, plays a significant role in shaping global cultural dialogues. Conceptual artists use installations, photography, text, performance, and multimedia practices to address issues such as identity, borders, ecology, gender, and globalization. Through international exhibitions, biennales, and digital platforms, Indian conceptual art has contributed to India's cultural soft power by projecting intellectual, creative, and socially engaged perspectives to the world. This paper examines how conceptual art functions as a cultural medium that enhances India's global presence and cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Conceptual Art, Globalization, Contemporary India, Art Education, cultural soft corner, Postcolonial Identity, Visual Culture

1. Introduction

The term **soft power**, introduced by Joseph S. Nye Jr., refers to the ability of a country to influence others through culture, values, and ideas rather than military or economic force. In the contemporary globalized world, cultural expressions such as cinema, literature, and visual arts have become powerful instruments of international engagement. Indian contemporary art has evolved significantly since the late twentieth century. Conceptual art, in particular, has emerged as a significant medium through which artists engage with social, political, and cultural issues. Unlike traditional art that focuses primarily on aesthetic objects, conceptual art emphasizes ideas, processes, and critical reflection.

Through international exhibitions and global art networks, Indian conceptual artists have contributed to India's cultural image and intellectual presence worldwide. Their works often address global concerns while remaining rooted in local cultural contexts.

2. Understanding Conceptual Art: From Object to Idea

Conceptual art prioritizes thought over form. The artwork may exist as text, performance, installation, documentation, video, or digital intervention. The physical object becomes

secondary to the intellectual proposition. Globally, artists such as Sol LeWitt and Joseph Kosuth emphasized that art need not be traditionally aesthetic; it can be analytical, philosophical, and linguistic.

In India, conceptual tendencies began emerging more visibly in the late 20th century but became fully articulated in the 21st century, particularly through installations, performance art, new media practices, and socially engaged art. Conceptual art in India does not merely imitate Western models; rather, it reinterprets them through postcolonial histories, indigenous knowledge systems, and contemporary socio-political realities.

3. Conceptual Art and Its Global Context

Conceptual art developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s as an artistic movement that prioritized ideas over traditional artistic forms. One of the key figures associated with this movement is Sol LeWitt, who argued that the concept behind the artwork is more important than the final object. In India, conceptual art began gaining prominence in the late twentieth century, especially after economic liberalization in the 1990s. Artists started exploring interdisciplinary practices that included installation, video art, performance, and digital media.

Indian conceptual art reflects complex issues such as migration, globalization, environmental crises, and political borders. By addressing universal concerns through culturally specific perspectives, Indian artists have contributed to global intellectual and artistic debates.

4. Conceptual Art and Cultural Soft Power

Cultural soft power operates through the attraction of ideas, creativity, and cultural narratives. Visual art exhibitions, museums, and international art fairs play a crucial role in shaping global perceptions of a nation's cultural identity. Conceptual art contributes to cultural soft power in several ways:

1. **Global Exhibitions and Biennales**
Indian artists regularly participate in major international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and the Documenta. These platforms enable artists to represent India's intellectual and cultural perspectives to global audiences.
2. **Cross- Cultural Dialogue**
Conceptual artworks often address universal themes such as migration, human rights, and environmental sustainability, encouraging dialogue between cultures. **Cross-Cultural Dialogue** refers to the interaction and exchange of ideas, values, traditions, and artistic practices between people from different cultures. In contemporary art, it helps artists communicate beyond national boundaries and create a global understanding of social, political, and cultural issues.
3. **Digital Circulation of Art**
The internet and digital media have expanded the reach of Indian conceptual art, allowing artists to share their works with global audiences. **Digital Circulation of Art**

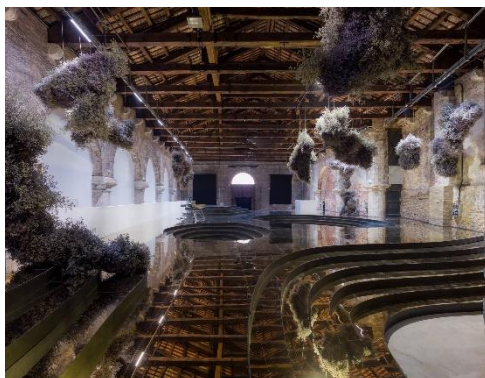
refers to the way artworks are shared, viewed, and discussed through digital technologies and online platforms. such as **Instagram**, **YouTube**, and **Facebook** allow artists, galleries, and museums to share artworks with audiences around the world. Through images, videos, virtual exhibitions, and live discussions, art can circulate beyond physical galleries and museums.



The **Kochi-Muziris Biennale** is the **largest international contemporary art exhibition in India**, held in Kochi, Kerala every **two years**. It started in **2012** and has become one of the most important contemporary art events in **South Asia**.



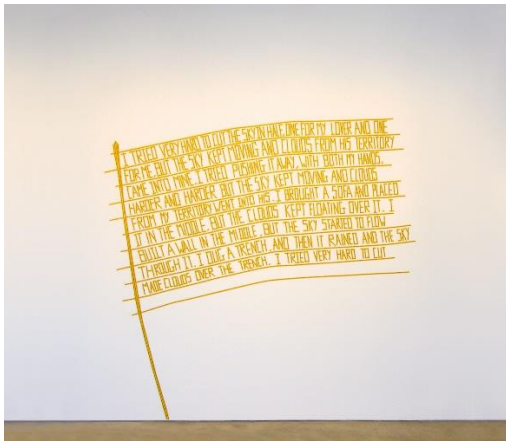
Venice, Italy, One of the most important international contemporary art exhibitions in the world. Each country presents artworks in its national pavilion. Includes installation art, conceptual art, video, performance, painting, and sculpture.



Kassel, Germany every five years. Focuses strongly on experimental and conceptual contemporary art. Artists from all over the world present large-scale installations, multimedia works, and political art.

5. Indian Conceptual Artists and Global Influence

Shilpa Gupta: Shilpa Gupta's work explores themes of borders, censorship, and national identity. Through installations and text-based works, she challenges political boundaries and questions ideas of freedom and surveillance. Her artworks have been exhibited internationally and contribute to global discussions on democracy and human rights.



- **There Is No Border Here (2005-06)**- A text-based installation questioning the idea of political borders and national boundaries.
- **Sound on My Skin**- A motion- flapboard installation that uses text and sound to explore censorship and human emotions.

Sheba Chhachhi: Sheba Chhachhi integrates photography, installation, and narrative to address feminist and ecological concerns. Her works often connect local environmental issues, such as river pollution, with global ecological debates, demonstrating how art can function as a platform for environmental awareness.



Subodh Gupta: Subodh Gupta is internationally known for his installations using everyday Indian objects such as stainless-steel utensils. His works transform ordinary domestic items into monumental sculptures that represent globalization, migration, and cultural identity. For example, Subodh Gupta transforms everyday Indian utensils into large-scale installations. These works operate conceptually- they speak about migration, labor, globalization, and Indian middle-class aspiration.



Similarly, **Nalini Malani** uses video installations and shadow play to address gender violence, mythology, and political trauma. Her works position Indian narratives within global feminist discourse.



6. India in the 21st Century: Globalization and Cultural Transformation

India's integration into global capitalism after economic liberalization in 1991 significantly transformed its cultural landscape. By the 21st century:

- Indian artists were participating in international biennales.
- Art markets expanded.
- Digital platforms increased visibility.
- Cross-cultural collaborations became common.

However, globalization also intensified debates about identity, nationalism, inequality, and cultural authenticity. Conceptual art became a powerful medium to question these transformations. Rather than celebrating globalization uncritically, many Indian artists use conceptual strategies to examine its contradictions- urban displacement, ecological crisis, labor exploitation, digital surveillance, and social fragmentation.

7. Democracy, Public Space, and Social Critique

India identifies as the world's largest democracy. However, democracy is not only a formal system of elections but also a lived experience of equality, freedom, and justice. Many conceptual artists critique:

- Freedom of expression
- Media control
- Social inequality
- Marginalized communities

8. Technology, Digital Media, and the Global Network

The 21st century is inseparable from technology. Social media, artificial intelligence, digital archives, and virtual exhibitions have transformed art production and dissemination. Indian conceptual artists increasingly use:

- Video art
- Digital installations
- Interactive media
- Internet-based projects

This shift reflects India's position as a technological hub. However, artists also question digital alienation, data surveillance, and virtual identity. Conceptual art becomes a medium to critically reflect on how technology shapes modern Indian society.

9. Conceptual Art and Global Cultural Diplomacy

Conceptual art has become an important component of India's cultural diplomacy. Government institutions, museums, and private galleries actively promote Indian contemporary art abroad. Organizations such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations play a role in presenting Indian art and culture internationally through exhibitions and cultural exchanges.

Additionally, art biennales and international collaborations help Indian artists interact with global audiences, strengthening India's cultural presence and intellectual influence.

10. Conclusion

Conceptual art has emerged as a significant cultural force in the twenty-first century. By combining innovative artistic practices with critical social engagement, Indian conceptual artists contribute to global cultural conversations. Their works address themes such as identity, ecology, gender, and political boundaries, connecting local realities with global concerns.

Through international exhibitions, digital platforms, and cultural diplomacy initiatives, conceptual art enhances India's cultural soft power and global influence. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, Indian conceptual art will continue to play a vital role in shaping global cultural dialogues and strengthening India's position in the international cultural landscape.

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DIGITAL DEMOCRACY AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICS

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Abstract:

Digital democracy refers to the use of digital technologies, particularly the internet and social media platforms, to enhance democratic participation, transparency, and governance. In recent years, social media has transformed political communication, citizen engagement, and electoral processes across the world. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), YouTube, Telegrams, Threads, and Instagram have enabled politicians to communicate directly with citizens and mobilize support quickly. At the same time, social media has raised concerns about misinformation, polarization, and manipulation of public opinion. This paper examines the role of social media in strengthening democratic participation as well as the challenges it poses to democratic institutions.

Keywords: Digital Democracy, Social Media, Political Participation, Online Activism, Political Communication, Misinformation, Democratic Governance.

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology has significantly influenced political processes and democratic governance. The concept of digital democracy has emerged as a result of the integration of information and communication technologies into political systems. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for political communication, activism, and public engagement.

In modern democracies, social media allows citizens to access political information, express opinions, and participate in debates instantly. Political leaders, parties, and activists increasingly use digital platforms to reach voters, promote policies, and organize campaigns. As a result, social media has reshaped traditional political communication and created new opportunities for democratic participation.

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally changed the functioning of modern democracies. The emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube has created new avenues for political communication and citizen engagement. These platforms enable instant access to political information and allow individuals to express opinions, debate policies, and participate in democratic processes.

Digital democracy refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to strengthen democratic practices. Governments, political parties, and civil society

organizations increasingly rely on digital tools to communicate with citizens and encourage participation in governance. Social media has particularly transformed political campaigns and public discourse by enabling direct interaction between politicians and voters.

However, the growing influence of social media also raises serious concerns regarding misinformation, manipulation of public opinion, and the erosion of democratic values. Therefore, understanding the impact of social media on politics is crucial for evaluating the future of democratic governance.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research paper are:

6. To understand the concept of digital democracy.
7. To examine the role of social media in modern political communication.
8. To analyze the impact of social media on political participation and elections.
9. To identify the challenges and risks associated with social media in democratic Systems.
10. To suggest measures for responsible use of social media in politics.

Research Methodology

This study is based on qualitative and descriptive research methodology. The research primarily relies on secondary sources of data.

Source of Data

5. Books related to political science and digital democracy
6. Research journals and academic articles
7. Government reports and policy documents
8. Online sources and scholarly publications

Method of Analysis

The collected information has been analyzed using analytical and interpretative methods to understand the influence of social media on democratic processes and political participation.

Concept of Digital Democracy

Digital Democracy refers to the use of digital technologies, especially the internet and communication platforms, to strengthen democratic processes, increase citizen participation, and improve transparency and accountability in governance. It involves the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into political and governmental systems so that citizens can actively participate in public decision-making and political discourse.

In traditional democracies, citizen participation was mainly limited to activities such as voting in elections, attending public meetings, or engaging with political representatives. However, with the development of digital technologies, democratic participation has expanded beyond these traditional forms. Digital democracy enables citizens to communicate with

government institutions, express their opinions, participate in policy discussions, and access public information through online platforms.

Digital democracy is closely related to the concept of e-governance, which focuses on the use of digital technologies by governments to deliver services and information efficiently. While e-governance emphasizes administrative efficiency and service delivery, digital democracy focuses on enhancing citizen engagement and political participation.

Key Feature of Digital Democracy:**1. Increased Citizen Participation**

Digital platforms allow citizens to participate more actively in political processes. Online forums, social media platforms, and digital consultation tools enable people to share opinions, engage in debates, and influence policy decisions.

2. Transparency and Accountability

Digital technologies provide easier access to government information, budgets, policies, and decision-making processes. This openness increases transparency and allows citizens to hold governments accountable for their actions.

3. Direct Communication between Government and Citizens

Through social media and online communication tools, political leaders and government institutions can directly interact with citizens. This reduces the gap between policymakers and the public.

4. Access to Political Information

Digital platforms provide citizens with immediate access to political news, government announcements, and policy discussions. This improves political awareness and encourages informed decision-making.

5. Inclusive Participation

Digital democracy can give voice to marginalized groups and communities that may have limited access to traditional political platforms. Online spaces allow these groups to express their concerns and participate in political discourse.

Forms of Digital Democracy**2. E-Voting**

Electronic voting systems allow citizens to vote using digital devices, which can increase voter participation and improve the efficiency of elections.

2. Online Public Consultation

Governments may use online platforms to gather public opinions on policies, laws, or development projects before making decisions.

3. Digital Political Campaigning

Political parties and candidates use websites, social media, and digital advertising to communicate with voters and promote their political agendas.

4. Online Petitions and Activism

Citizens can organize campaigns, sign petitions, and mobilize support for social or political causes through digital platforms.

Importance of Digital Democracy

Digital democracy plays a significant role in strengthening democratic governance in the modern world. It encourages political awareness, improves citizen engagement, and promotes transparency in government functioning. By providing accessible communication channels, digital democracy allows people to participate in political processes more easily and frequently.

However, while digital democracy offers many opportunities, it also raises concerns related to misinformation, digital inequality, cyber security, and manipulation of public opinion. Therefore, it is important to develop strong regulatory frameworks and promote digital literacy among citizens to ensure the responsible use of digital technologies in democratic systems. Digital democracy has become increasingly important in the modern world where technology plays a central role in social and political life.

In conclusion, digital democracy represents an important evolution in democratic governance in the digital age. By utilizing digital technologies, governments and citizens can interact more effectively, leading to greater participation, transparency, and accountability. At the same time, careful management of digital platforms is necessary to prevent misuse and protect democratic values.

Role of Social Media in Politics

Social media has become a significant tool for political communication and public engagement. It allows political actors to share information, promote policies, and interact directly with citizens.

Political Campaigning:

Social media plays a significant role in modern political campaigning. With the rapid growth of digital technologies and internet access, social media platforms have become powerful tools for political communication, public engagement, and election campaigns.

Political leaders, parties, and candidates use social media to reach a large number of voters quickly and effectively.

In the past, political campaigns mainly relied on traditional media such as newspapers, radio, television, and public rallies. However, the emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, Telegrams, Threads has transformed the way political campaigns are conducted. These platforms allow political actors to communicate directly with citizens, share information, and mobilize support during elections.

Social media has become a crucial tool in modern political campaigning. It allows political leaders and parties to communicate directly with voters, promote their policies, and mobilize public support effectively. Social media also encourages greater political participation, particularly among younger generations.

However, the misuse of social media through misinformation, propaganda, and data manipulation can threaten democratic processes. Therefore, responsible use of social media, stronger regulations, and increased digital literacy are necessary to ensure that social media strengthens rather than weakens democratic systems.

Public Participation:

Public participation is one of the most important elements of digital democracy. It refers to the active involvement of citizens in political decision-making processes through digital technologies such as the internet, social media platforms, online forums, and government digital portals. Digital democracy has expanded the opportunities for citizens to participate in governance beyond traditional methods like voting or attending public meetings.

In modern democratic systems, digital platforms allow people to express their views, share opinions, discuss public policies, and engage with political leaders in real time. As a result, citizens are no longer passive observers of political processes but active participants who can influence decision-making. Citizens can express their views, participate in debates, and discuss political issues through social media platforms.

Political Awareness:

Social media plays a very important role in creating political public awareness in modern democratic societies. With the growth of the internet and digital communication technologies, social media platforms have become powerful tools for spreading political information and educating citizens about political issues, government policies, and democratic processes.

In earlier times, political awareness mainly depended on traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television. However, social media platforms now allow information to spread more quickly and reach a much larger audience. As a result, citizens can stay informed about political developments and participate more actively in democratic activities. Social

media has become a powerful tool for promoting political public awareness in the digital age. It helps citizens access information, engage in political discussions, and participate in democratic processes more actively. By providing platforms for communication and information sharing, social media strengthens democratic participation and civic engagement.

However, to ensure that social media effectively promotes political awareness, it is important to address challenges such as misinformation, digital inequality, and online polarization. Encouraging responsible use of digital platforms and improving digital literacy can help maximize the positive impact of social media on political awareness.

Mobilization of Social Movements

Many social movements and protests are organized and promoted through social media networks. Social media has become a powerful tool for the mobilization of social movements in modern democratic societies. It enables individuals, activists, and organizations to organize collective actions, spread awareness about social and political issues, and encourage public participation. Through digital platforms, people can quickly communicate ideas, share information, and coordinate activities that promote social and political change.

In traditional forms of activism, mobilizing large groups of people required significant time, resources, and physical organization. However, with the development of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegrams, Threads and YouTube, mobilization has become faster, more accessible, and more widespread. Social media allows activists to reach a global audience and build support for social movements within a short period of time.

Positive Impact of Social Media on Democracy

Social media has become an important component of modern democratic systems. With the expansion of digital communication technologies, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, Threads and YouTube have significantly influenced democratic participation, political communication, and public engagement. The positive impact of social media on democracy can be understood through several key dimensions like that increased political awareness among citizens, enhanced transparency and accountability in governance, greater public participation in political discussions, improved communication between leaders and citizens, empowerment of marginalized communities

These developments strengthen democratic values by encouraging active citizen involvement.

Challenges and Risks of Social Media in Politics

Despite its advantages, social media also presents several risks to democratic systems.

Spread of Misinformation:

Social media has become a major source of political information in modern democratic societies. It allows citizens to access news, discuss political issues, and participate in public debates. However, along with its advantages, social media also creates serious challenges for political systems. One of the most significant risks is the spread of misinformation.

Misinformation refers to false, misleading, or inaccurate information that is shared without proper verification. In the political context, misinformation can influence public opinion, create confusion among voters, and weaken trust in democratic institutions. Because social media platforms allow information to spread rapidly, false information can reach millions of people within a short period of time.

The spread of misinformation is one of the most serious challenges associated with the use of social media in politics. While digital platforms provide opportunities for greater political participation and access to information, they can also be misused to spread false or misleading content. Therefore, it is essential for governments, social media companies, media organizations, and citizens to work together to prevent misinformation and protect the integrity of democratic processes.

Political Polarization:

Political polarization refers to the growing division of society into groups with strongly opposing political views. In such situations, individuals tend to support only their own political ideology and reject or criticize opposing viewpoints. Social media platforms can sometimes intensify these divisions by shaping the way political information is shared and consumed. Social media algorithms often create ideological echo chambers that increase political divisions.

Manipulation of Elections:

Digital platforms can be used to influence election outcomes through targeted political advertising. Election manipulation through social media refers to the misuse of digital platforms to influence voters' opinions, spread misleading information, and affect the fairness of electoral processes. Such practices can undermine democratic values and reduce public trust in elections. While social media has improved political communication and voter engagement, it also poses significant risks to democratic elections. Manipulation through targeted advertising, misinformation, automated accounts, and foreign interference can threaten the fairness and credibility of electoral processes. Therefore, it is essential for governments, regulatory authorities, and digital platforms to develop effective policies and safeguards to ensure that social media is used responsibly in political campaigns and elections.

Privacy and Data Security:

The collection and use of personal data for political campaigns raise serious ethical concerns. Data privacy and ethical concerns are major challenges associated with the use of social media in politics. The collection and use of personal data for political purposes can influence voter behavior and threaten democratic fairness if not properly regulated. Therefore, it is essential to establish strong legal frameworks, ethical standards, and transparency mechanisms to ensure that digital technologies are used responsibly in political processes. Protecting citizens' privacy and maintaining ethical practices are crucial for safeguarding democratic values in the digital age.

Suggestions and Recommendations

To ensure responsible use of social media in politics, the following measures can be considered:

6. Strengthening digital literacy among citizens
7. Implementing regulations to control misinformation
8. Ensuring transparency in political advertising
9. Promoting ethical use of social media by political actors
10. Developing strong data protection laws

These measures can help maintain a balance between technological innovation and democratic values.

Conclusion:

Digital democracy has significantly transformed the relationship between citizens and political institutions. Social media platforms have created new opportunities for political participation, public debate, and transparency in governance. However, the misuse of social media through misinformation, manipulation, and data exploitation poses serious challenges to democratic systems. Therefore, it is essential to promote responsible digital practices, strengthen regulatory frameworks, and encourage informed participation in online political discourse. The future of democracy will depend on how societies manage the opportunities and risks associated with digital technologies.

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Gendered Statecraft and Welfare: A Theoretical Analysis of the 'Veer Nari' Identity within Maharashtra's Police Rehabilitation Framework

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Abstract

This research paper presents a theoretical analysis of the 'Veer Nari' identity bestowed upon the widows of martyrs in the Maharashtra Police Force and the subsequent rehabilitation benefits. The state is often based on a patriarchal structure where the male is seen as the 'protector' and the female as the 'protected'. When a police personnel is martyred in the line of duty, his wife is granted a new social and governmental identity as a 'Veer Nari' (Brave Woman). This paper attempts to understand the changes in the social status of the woman due to this identity, the nature of government welfare schemes, and the gendered statecraft hidden within this process.

Keywords: Gendered Statecraft, Veer Nari, Maharashtra Police, Rehabilitation Framework, Welfare Schemes, Patriarchal Structure.

Introduction

The state is not merely a non-living mechanism that runs administration or creates laws; it is a living institution that rules over the social mind, instills specific values, and creates 'identities' for its citizens. According to political theory, the modern state has historically been 'gendered' in nature. Within this, the male is viewed in a fixed mold as the 'protector' and the female as the 'protected'. This division is not limited to the domestic level but is most prominent in the state's security forces, particularly the police and military.

By utilizing concepts like 'valor', 'bravery', and 'sacrifice', the state creates an emotional and respectful framework for its protectors. In this framework, the death of a man becomes a 'sacrifice', while the life of his wife thereafter becomes a part of the state's 'duty' and 'welfare policies'. While the 'Veer Nari' identity is considered a great honor in Indian society and the police force, a theoretical perspective reveals that it severs the woman from her own independent existence and permanently ties her to her husband's sacrifice.

Through this identity, the state creates a form of 'invisible control' over the woman's social and personal life. Once the 'Veer Nari' label is applied, a framework of specific behavior expected by society and the government is drawn around her affecting her mourning, attire, public conduct, and even future personal decisions like remarriage.

Research Objectives

- To expose the gendered statecraft behind the 'Veer Nari' identity.
- To study how welfare schemes become tools of 'social control' rather than just financial aid.
- To examine the 'Protector-Protected' theory based on the experiences of martyr widows in the Maharashtra Police.
- To analyze how a woman's autonomy is lost and how the state transforms her into an 'emotional symbol'.

Research Data and Analysis

This study is based on qualitative analysis. The data was collected from government resolutions (GRs) of the Maharashtra Home Department (2010–2024), Police Commemoration Day reports, and media interviews.

Table: Impact of Gendered Policies

Policy / Component	Actual Observation	Theoretical Analysis
Compassionate Appointment	80% of Veer Naris join as 'Police Constable' or 'Clerk' in place of their husbands.	The woman is viewed only as a 'placeholder' for her husband; her independent career is considered secondary.
Pension & Financial Benefits	Social pressure to maintain 'loyalty' to the husband (e.g., not remarrying) to receive benefits.	The state controls the woman's sexual and personal freedom in exchange for financial aid.
Government Ceremonies	Veer Naris are invited respectfully, and their grief is 'publicized'.	The state uses the woman's grief as an 'emotional tool' to burnish its own 'patriotic' image.
Housing	It is mandatory or convenient to stay in police colonies.	Living under the shadow of police discipline and surveillance limits the woman's private autonomy.

The data indicates that while the rehabilitation framework provides 'security', it promotes 'stereotyping' rather than 'empowerment'.

Conclusion

The theoretical analysis reveals that the state is not just a service-providing mechanism but an ideological structure based on gendered assumptions. The 'Veer Nari' identity, while providing social honor, traps the woman in a stereotypical image. When the state glorifies sacrifice, the burden of that sacrifice is inadvertently placed on the woman's shoulders. Her honor is based on her deceased husband's bravery rather than her own merits, making her independent citizenship and autonomy secondary. Rehabilitation should not be merely 'financial'; it must be 'empowering'. As long as the state does not free the woman from her husband's identity and view her as an independent 'professional' and 'decisive citizen', true rehabilitation will not occur. Recognizing the woman's full freedom to make life

decisions and providing opportunities based on her skills beyond the 'Veer Nari' identity would be the mark of a truly gender-sensitive state.

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An Ecocritical Study of And So I Roar: Ecofeminism, Climate Justice and Voices from the Global South

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Abstract

This paper explores *And So I Roar* by **Abi Dare** through the lens of Eco criticism, focusing on ecofeminism, climate justice, and the representation of voices from the Global South. The novel highlights how environmental degradation and gender oppression are interconnected, especially in rural African contexts. It shows how women and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by climate change despite contributing the least to it. Using ecofeminist theory, the study examines how patriarchal structures exploit both women and nature. The paper also discusses how the novel amplifies subaltern voices and challenges dominant narratives of climate discourse that often ignore the Global South. Ultimately, the study argues that Dare's novel is a powerful example of climate fiction that connects environmental concerns with social justice and human resilience.

Keywords

Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, Climate Justice, Global South, Gender, Environment, Climate Fiction

Introduction

In recent years, literature has increasingly engaged with environmental concerns, giving rise to ecocriticism as a major field of study. Ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the natural environment, focusing on how texts represent ecological issues and human interactions with nature. Climate fiction, or "cli-fi," has become an important genre in this context, highlighting the realities of climate change and its impact on human lives.

And So I Roar (2024), written by Abi Daré, is a significant contribution to climate fiction. The novel won the Climate Fiction Prize and brings attention to environmental and social issues in

rural Nigeria. It follows the journey of Adunni, a young girl whose life is shaped by both gender inequality and environmental crisis.

The novel is important because it shifts the focus of climate narratives from the Global North to the Global South. It shows that while countries in Africa contribute very little to global emissions, they suffer some of the most severe consequences of climate change. Through its storytelling, the novel connects environmental destruction with issues such as poverty, patriarchy and cultural beliefs.

This paper aims to analyze the novel using an ecocritical framework, focusing on three key aspects: Ecofeminism, Climate justice and Voices from the Global South

Theoretical Framework: Ecofeminism and Ecocriticism

Ecofeminism is a theoretical approach that links the oppression of women with the exploitation of nature. The term was first introduced by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. Ecofeminists argue that patriarchal systems treat both women and nature as objects to be controlled and exploited.

Scholars like Susan Griffin have emphasized that environmental destruction and gender inequality are deeply interconnected. Ecofeminism highlights how marginalized groups, especially women in developing countries, are more vulnerable to ecological crises.

In postcolonial contexts, ecofeminism also examines how colonial histories, economic exploitation, and cultural hierarchies contribute to environmental degradation. Studies show that ecofeminism focuses on the “subaltern” or marginalized voices who suffer under systems of power.

Ecocriticism, on the other hand, studies how literature represents nature and environmental issues. When combined with ecofeminism, it provides a powerful framework to analyze texts like *And So I Roar*, where environmental and social issues are closely linked.

Ecofeminism in *And So I Roar*

One of the central themes of the novel is the connection between the oppression of women and environmental crisis. In the rural village of Ikati, young girls are blamed for natural disasters

such as drought. This reflects a patriarchal mindset that uses women as scapegoats for ecological problems.

The novel portrays harmful practices such as forced marriage, gender-based violence, and even ritual sacrifice linked to environmental beliefs. These practices show how women's bodies are controlled in the same way that nature is exploited.

Daré clearly shows that the suffering of women is not separate from environmental issues.

For example:

- Drought leads to social panic
- Panic leads to violence against girls
- Girls become victims of cultural and patriarchal practices

This reflects ecofeminist ideas that both women and nature are treated as resources to be used and controlled.

The character of Adunni represents resistance. She challenges both gender oppression and the silence imposed on marginalized communities. Her desire for education symbolizes hope and empowerment. The novel also presents female solidarity through relationships between women. This sisterhood becomes a form of resistance against both patriarchy and ecological injustice. Such representation aligns with ecofeminist beliefs that collective action is necessary for change.

Climate Justice and Environmental Inequality

Climate justice is another important theme in the novel. It focuses on the unequal impact of climate change on different regions and communities.

The novel highlights a key issue:

Africa contributes very little to global carbon emissions but faces severe climate consequences. This imbalance reflects global inequality and injustice.

In *And So I Roar*, climate change is not presented as an abstract concept. Instead, it is shown through: Drought, Loss of livelihood, Displacement of communities and Social conflict. These

effects create a cycle of poverty and suffering. The novel shows how environmental issues are deeply connected to social and economic conditions.

Daré also challenges the dominant narrative of climate change, which often focuses on scientific data rather than human experiences. By telling the story of Adunni and her community, the novel humanizes climate change and makes it more relatable.

The concept of climate justice is further emphasized through the idea that those who suffer the most are often those who are least responsible. This injustice is central to the novel's message.

Voices from the Global South

One of the most important contributions of *And So I Roar* is its representation of voices from the Global South. Climate discourse is often dominated by Western perspectives, which overlook the experiences of marginalized communities. Daré's novel brings these voices to the forefront. It shows: Rural African life, Indigenous beliefs and Cultural responses to environmental crisis

The novel also challenges stereotypes about Africa by presenting complex characters and situations. It does not portray the community as helpless but highlights their resilience and adaptability.

Adunni's voice is particularly important. She represents millions of young girls who are denied education and basic rights. Her journey from silence to expression symbolizes the empowerment of marginalized voices.

The novel also shows how local knowledge and cultural practices interact with environmental changes. While some traditions are harmful, others provide ways of coping with ecological challenges. By focusing on these perspectives, the novel expands the scope of climate fiction and makes it more inclusive.

Intersection of Gender, Environment, and Culture

The novel shows that environmental issues cannot be separated from social and cultural factors. Gender roles, cultural beliefs, and economic conditions all influence how people experience climate change.

For example, cultural beliefs may lead to blaming women for natural disasters, while economic limitations prevent communities from adapting to environmental changes. This interconnectedness highlights the complexity of ecological issues.

The novel emphasizes that solutions to environmental problems must also address social inequalities. Without gender equality and social justice, environmental sustainability cannot be achieved. The novel demonstrates that environmental issues cannot be separated from social and cultural contexts. Gender, culture, and environment are deeply interconnected.

This intersectionality is a key aspect of ecofeminism. It shows that solving environmental problems requires addressing social inequalities as well. Daré's narrative highlights how power structures operate at multiple levels:

- Patriarchy controls women
- Economic systems exploit communities
- Global inequalities shape climate impacts

By addressing all these aspects, the novel provides a holistic view of environmental issues.

Narrative Technique and Symbolism

Daré uses multiple narrative techniques to convey her message effectively. The novel alternates between different perspectives, allowing readers to understand various experiences.

Symbolism plays an important role in this novel. Drought symbolizes both environmental crisis and social oppression. Silence represents marginalization. Voice represents empowerment and resistance. The title of the novel 'And So I Roar' suggests the breaking of silence. It reflects the idea that speaking out is a form of resistance against injustice.

The use of simple language and emotional storytelling makes the novel accessible to a wide audience. This is important for climate fiction, as it helps spread awareness beyond academic circles.

Conclusion

And So I Roar is a powerful example of how literature can address complex issues like climate change, gender inequality, and social justice. Through an ecofeminist lens, the novel reveals

the deep connections between the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women. The novel also highlights the importance of climate justice by showing how marginalized communities in the Global South are disproportionately affected by environmental crises. It challenges dominant narratives and brings attention to voices that are often ignored.

By combining emotional storytelling with critical themes, Daré creates a work that is both engaging and thought-provoking. The novel encourages readers to rethink their understanding of climate change and recognize the importance of social and environmental justice. The novel is not only a story of personal struggle but also a reflection of global issues. It calls for awareness, empathy, and action toward both environmental protection and social justice.

In conclusion, *And So I Roar* is not just a story about one girl's struggle; it is a voice for millions who are affected by the interconnected forces of patriarchy, poverty, and environmental degradation. It stands as a significant contribution to contemporary ecocritical and ecofeminist literature.

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Police Reforms in Maharashtra After Prakash Singh: A Nineteen-Year Assessment (2006–2026)

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Abstract: Two decades past the top court’s decision in *Prakash Singh versus Union of India*, changes within Indian policing remain uneven. Across states, adherence to the seven core orders varies widely. Looking closely at Maharashtra offers one view, tracking what shifted there from 2006 up until early 2026. Instead of only reading laws, this work weighs actual conditions alongside those rules. Each mandate gets scored: met completely, partly met, or left untouched.

Progress in Maharashtra feels patchy. A real shift happened under Directive 2, naming a DGP. By 2026, they picked someone cleared by UPSC, set a firm tenure and aligned with what the Supreme Court wanted. Yet elsewhere, change drags. Most directives barely moved at all. A commission for state security does exist, but it operates without real autonomy or power to enforce responsibility. Instead of stable positions, field agents face constant movement, transfers pop up regularly, masked as routine administrative moves. Big urban zones see a separation between investigative work and maintaining public order, though that shift skips rural posts entirely. Officers outside cities keep handling both duties at once, blending tasks meant to be distinct. While a Police Establishment Board appears on paper, top officials find ways around its recommendations without effort. Bodies meant to handle complaints against police do stand now, but they function without full freedom. Understaffing slows them down.

Though Maharashtra sets up official systems like many regions do, results often fall short. Appearances improve on documents, yet pushback remains firm, particularly around day-to-day freedom in decision-making. Simply launching organizations fails to shift how things work deep down. Independence matters just as much as stricter laws. Authority needs room to act, not just new guidelines sitting around. Real progress shows when systems work freely, not under constant control.

Keywords: Police reforms, Prakash Singh judgment, State Security Commission, police accountability, institutional autonomy, political interference, India

1. Introduction

In *Prakash Singh v. Union of India*, 2006, the Supreme Court outlined seven binding reforms to curb political interference and enhance police accountability.

1. State Security Commissions (SSC) with binding policy authority
2. Fixed-tenure DGPs selected from UPSC-vetted panels
3. Two-year tenure protection for field officers (SPs, DSPs)
4. Separation of investigation from law-and-order functions
5. Independent Police Establishment Boards (PEB) controlling transfers/promotions
6. Civilian Police Complaints Authorities (PCA) at state and district levels
7. National Security Commission for CAPF chief selection

These reforms were meant to make policing people-focused by limiting the executive discretion in transfers, establishing professional leadership in hiring and setting up accountability system. The implementation is still deplorable even after twenty years have passed on. The research of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), legal experts and scholarly researchers proves that there is no state that properly abides by all the orders. The paper revises compliance evaluation until 2025, determines systematic trends of resistance, and offers solutions.

2. Methodology

The researcher reviewed the level of compliance of the state of Maharashtra based on the analysis of state police acts, executive orders, CHRI compliance reports (2025), Supreme Court cases, government notification and investigative journalism between 2006-2025. All the directives were rated on a scale of three tiers:

- Fully Compliant: There are no gaps and the variable is implemented as directed by apex court.
- Partial: There is partial implementation and not exactly as apex court envisioned.
- Non-compliant: There is non-compliance to the directive envisioned by the apex court.

3. Findings: The Compliance Landscape of the state of Maharashtra

The data is compiled from Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2025), The Maharashtra Police (Amendment and Continuance) Act, 2014 and investigative journalism articles published from time to time.

3.1 Directive 1: State Security Commission (SSC)

Variable	Findings	Status
SSC Constituted	Even though Maharashtra formed a State Security Commission through the 2014 amendment act, its real function misses the mark compared to the Supreme Court's vision.	Partial
Prevents political interference	The Commission is headed by the Chief Minister or Home Minister, with most members from the executive or political class. Independent voices remain missing.	Non-Compliant
Policy guidelines issued	SSC in Maharashtra shows no evidence of actively setting broad policy or evaluating police performance. Its role stays advisory, not proactive.	Non-Compliant
Performance evaluation	No standardized or transparent performance evaluation mechanism exists as directed by the Court.	Non-Compliant
Annual report prepared	Annual reports are required but rarely produced or made public.	Non-Compliant
Placed before legislature	Reports are supposed to be tabled before the Legislature, yet there's no consistent record of this happening.	Non-Compliant

Note. Data compiled from Maharashtra State Security Corporation. (2024)

3.2 Directive 2: DGP Appointment

Variable	Findings	Status
UPSC panel selection	Maharashtra has finally aligned with court mandates by involving the UPSC in the DGP selection. In late 2025–early 2026, the state sent the list of eligible officers to the UPSC, which recommended a panel of three—ending years of bypassing the Commission.	Fully Compliant
Senior-most officer considered	The process now strictly follows seniority, empaneling the three senior-most eligible officers. To meet this standard, the state even repatriated officers like Sadanand Date from the NIA.	Fully Compliant
Merit-based empanelment	Applying refined 2024–25 criteria, clean service record, wide experience, and 25–30 years of service, the UPSC’s vetted merit list, not political preference, drove the final choice.	Fully Compliant
Minimum 2-year tenure	Importantly, the current DGP Sadanand Date (appointed Jan 2026) has been granted a fixed two-year tenure regardless of superannuation, marking a clear break from the earlier practice of acting DGPs and short-term extensions.	Fully Compliant

Note. Data compiled from Union Public Service Commission (2025) and Indian Express (2026).

Directive 3: Tenure Protection (Field Officers)

Variable	Maharashtra	Status
2-year tenure for SP	Under Section 22N(1) of the Maharashtra Police Act, SPs are supposed to get a normal two-year tenure. In reality, the government routinely cuts this short by citing “administrative exigencies” under Section 22N(2).	Partial
2-year tenure for DIG	DIGs are similarly entitled to a two-year term. While these transfers attract more scrutiny, mid-term moves still happen, especially during political transitions or in the name of “public interest.”	Partial
2-year tenure for IG	IGs heading ranges also have a statutory two-year tenure, but the executive effectively retains control through the Police Establishment Board, which often mirrors the government’s intent.	Partial
2-year tenure for SHO	At the ground level, SHOs and subordinate ranks technically have a two-year (extendable) tenure, but they remain the most exposed to local political pressure. Mid-term transfers are most frequent and most arbitrary, at this level.	Non-compliant

Note. Data compiled from The Maharashtra Police (Amendment and Continuance) Act (2014) and The Economic Times (2026).

3.4 Directive 4: Separation of Investigation

Variable	Maharashtra	Status
Investigation wing separated	On paper, Section 22O mandates separation of investigation and law-and-order. In practice, this is visible mainly in large Commissionerate's like Mumbai, Pune, or Nashik where Crime Branches exist. In rural districts and smaller stations, the same officers still juggle FIR investigations and bandobast duties.	Partial
Dedicated investigation staff	Although the law calls for dedicated investigative staff, officers are routinely pulled out for festivals, elections, or VIP security. There is no "locked-in" investigative cadre at the police-station level that is protected from law-and-order deployment.	Non-compliant
Independent chain of command	The Supreme Court had envisaged a separate investigation hierarchy up to the top. In Maharashtra, while cities have a Jt. CP (Crime), both wings ultimately report to the same Commissioner or SP making the separation administrative, not structural or functional.	Partial
Statewide implementation	In effect, separation is limited to urban A-grade stations and specialized units like CID, EOW, and ATS. Across most of the state's 1,100+ police stations, it remains largely unimplemented due to chronic manpower shortages.	Non-compliant

Note. Data compiled from Free Press Journal (2025).

3.5 Directive 5: Police Establishment Board (PEB)

Variable	Maharashtra	Status
PEB established	Maharashtra has formally set up a multi tier Police Establishment Board system. PEB 1 handles senior ranks, PEB 2 deals with Inspectors and Sub Inspectors, and district or commissionerate PEBs manage lower ranks, as provided under the State Act.	Fully Compliant
Transfers below DSP handled by PEB	On paper, PEB 2 and district level boards are empowered to decide transfers below the rank of DSP. In practice, while these boards make recommendations, final outcomes often depend on executive approval, particularly from the Home Department.	Fully Compliant
Promotions handled by PEB	The Supreme Court limited government interference to exceptional cases. However, Sections 22N(2) and 22F(3) allow the State Government to intervene in the name of public interest or administrative exigencies, provisions that are frequently used to override board decisions.	Partial
Govt override restricted	Although the Court directed that PEB decisions for officers below DSP should be binding, the State Act weakens this by stating that the competent authority shall normally act upon them. This wording creates a clear legal escape route.	Non-compliant
PEB recommendations binding	Since the boards are composed entirely of senior police officers and bureaucrats, with no independent members and no real check on executive authority, they often function more as a procedural formality than as an autonomous decision-making body.	Non-compliant

PEB independent functioning	Maharashtra has formally set up a multi-tier Police Establishment Board system. PEB 1 handles senior ranks, PEB 2 deals with Inspectors and Sub Inspectors, and district or Commissionerate PEBs manage lower ranks, as provided under the State Act.	Partial

Note. Data compiled from The Maharashtra Police (Amendment and Continuance) Act (2014) and The Times of India (2025).

3.6 Directive 6: Police Complaints Authority (PCA)

Variable	Maharashtra	Status
State PCA established	Maharashtra has a State Police Complaints Authority that is formally established and functioning in Mumbai. As of early 2026, it continues to receive a high volume of complaints, with filings increasing noticeably over the past year.	Fully Compliant
District PCA established	Divisional PCAs exist in places like Nashik, Pune, and Aurangabad, but they are often understaffed or lack permanent chairpersons. What the Supreme Court envisioned as a district level presence has, in practice, been centralized at the divisional level in Maharashtra.	Partial
Judge-headed PCA	The State PCA is headed by a retired High Court judge, with Justice Shrihari Davare being a recent incumbent. Divisional authorities are meant to be headed by retired District Judges.	Fully Compliant
Independent investigation	A major structural weakness is that the PCA has no independent investigative wing. It relies on police officers on deputation to investigate complaints against fellow officers, creating an obvious perception of conflict of interest.	Non-compliant

Binding authority	Most critically, the PCA's findings are only recommendatory. The State Government or the DGP's office can and often does choose not to act on the suggested disciplinary measures.	Non-compliant
PCA functional	Despite being operational, the PCA has been repeatedly criticized by the Bombay High Court for high vacancy levels and a growing backlog of cases. During 2025 and 2026, several divisional posts remained vacant, significantly limiting access for citizens in rural areas.	Partial

Note. Data compiled from Patil (2025).

3.7 Directive 7 (Central — Not applicable to State)

Not applicable to Maharashtra, but to whole country

4. Key Findings

- 1. The Paper Compliance:** Paperwork compliance show up everywhere in Maharashtra. Even after implementing the 2014 Amendment Act, functional status quo is maintained. The officials play clever moves, they twist small gaps in laws and often keep old power structures alive.
- 2. Systematic Executive Veto:** Take Section 22N, for instance. There are vague phrases hidden like “administrative exigency,” or “public interest”, that allows the state to override fixed tenure or discontinue Police Establishment Board’s recommendation at will. It functions as “escape clause”.
- 3. The Autonomy-Accountability Gap:** Autonomy versus accountability isn’t always clear. Bodies such as the SSC (autonomy) and PCA (accountability) seem to stand apart. Yet lacking real authority or dedicated investigation wings, they can only suggest actions instead of carrying them out. They largely become recommendatory rather than being regulatory.

- 4. Centralization of Redressal:** A problem remains as it is because most of the reform groups keep things too top-heavy. Instead of spreading out, outfits like the PCA and SSC stick to cities or regions, leaving rural areas behind. Even the apex court's push for local versions called District PCAs hasn't taken root in practice.
- 5. Compliance Divergence:** The apex court and other institutional and non-institutional actors are always keeping watch on activities taking place daily especially in a force like policing. High-profile position like DGP is always under watch. Hence, the state complies with Directive 2 i.e. appointment of DGP but the same state keeps low-level transparency in Directive 3-4.
- 6. Resource and Man-Power Constraint:** Not having enough human resources plays a big part too. Since officer numbers run low, the state fails to keep up with Directive 4. Hence, the same police are part of investigation and maintaining law-and-order, both.
- 7. Lack of Independent Composition:** Bodies like SSC and PEB rarely manage to escape from insights or scrutiny. The panel includes politicians and high-ranking police officials, which omits neutral viewpoints. Rather than remaining neutral, they end up supporting the interests of the Home Department.

5. Conclusion

One step forward, two steps back. That is how the situation appears in Maharashtra nearly nineteen years after the *Prakash Singh* verdict. Institutions such as the State Security Commission exist on paper, yet real autonomy often slips away in practice. Decision-making power remains concentrated at the top, leaving bodies like the Police Establishment Board underutilized and largely procedural. The Police Complaints Authorities, though formally established, appear fragile, structured more for compliance than for effective oversight.

Among the seven Supreme Court directives, one stands apart. Maharashtra has moved toward securing the appointment and tenure of the Director General of Police through the 2026 reform using UPSC procedures. Elsewhere, progress remains uneven. Field officers continue to face frequent transfers. Investigation and law-and-order duties remain intertwined rather than institutionally separated. Accountability bodies function with limited independence. Political influence continues to surface in postings and transfers, while staffing shortages

further strain implementation. Together, these conditions pull away from the Court's original intent.

There is also a quieter pattern beneath the formal structures. Institutions have been created, but many lack the authority, staffing, or independence needed to act meaningfully. Without enforcement power, bodies such as the State Security Commission struggle to shape policy or hold leadership accountable. The Police Complaints Authority faces similar limitations. Meanwhile, the Police Establishment Board, intended to professionalize transfers and promotions, remains vulnerable to broad phrases such as "public interest" or "administrative exigency," which allow exceptions to become routine. Rules exist, yet they are often sidestepped through administrative discretion.

If Maharashtra seeks genuine reform, legislative compliance alone will not be enough. Institutional authority must be strengthened, and access to accountability mechanisms must extend beyond major cities. Addressing staff shortages remains central to separating investigation from law-and-order functions. Limiting arbitrary transfers and ensuring transparency in postings would help restore confidence within the force and among citizens. Judicial oversight and legislative refinement, particularly closing ambiguous provisions, may gradually shift entrenched practices.

Ultimately, the challenge in Maharashtra is not the absence of legal frameworks but the gap between structure and practice. The institutions envisioned by the Supreme Court largely exist. What remains is enabling them to function independently and effectively. Without that shift, the *Prakash Singh* directives risk remaining partially implemented ideals, leaving police reform in Maharashtra incomplete and continually deferred.

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Unemployment in India and the Importance of the Skill India Mission

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Abstract

Unemployment remains one of the most significant macroeconomic challenges in India, affecting economic growth, income distribution, and social stability. Despite rapid economic expansion, the mismatch between workforce skills and industry requirements has intensified. This study examines the structural dimensions of unemployment in India and evaluates the effectiveness of the Skill India Mission in addressing employability gaps. Using secondary data and analytical methods, the paper identifies skill deficiency, demographic pressure, and technological disruption as major contributors. The study concludes that targeted skill development initiatives can significantly enhance employment outcomes and economic productivity.

Keywords: Unemployment, Skill India Mission, Employability, Labor Market, Economic Development

1. Introduction

Unemployment is a condition in which individuals who are capable and willing to work are unable to secure employment. In India, the issue is complex due to its large population, diverse economic structure, and evolving labor market dynamics. The persistence of unemployment, especially among youth, reflects systemic inefficiencies in education and skill formation.

1.1 Structural Dimensions of Unemployment

The study identifies that unemployment in India is primarily structural rather than cyclical. This is driven by systemic inefficiencies in education and skill formation.

1.2 Comparative Regional Data (State-wise Analysis)

While the national average provides a baseline, regional imbalances are a significant challenge.

Region/State Type	Estimated Unemployment Trend	Primary Cause
Industrialized States	Moderate	Technological disruption and automation.
Agrarian States	High (Seasonal)	Slow industrial expansion.
Northeast/Hilly Regions	High	Lack of awareness and limited industry collaboration.

2. Literature Review

Previous studies highlight that unemployment in developing economies is largely structural in nature. Research indicates that skill mismatch and inadequate vocational training systems are major barriers to employment. Government initiatives such as the Skill India Mission have been widely discussed as potential solutions to bridge this gap.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the nature and causes of unemployment in India
- To analyze the role of skill development in employment generation
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Skill India Mission
- To suggest policy improvements

4. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Secondary data has been collected from government publications, economic surveys, and institutional reports. Conceptual modeling is used to explain relationships between skill development and employment.

5. Theoretical Framework and Measurement

5.1 Unemployment Rate

$$UR = (\text{Unemployed} / \text{Labor Force}) \times 100$$

5.2 Labor Force Participation Rate

$$LFPR = (\text{Labor Force} / \text{Working Age Population}) \times 100$$

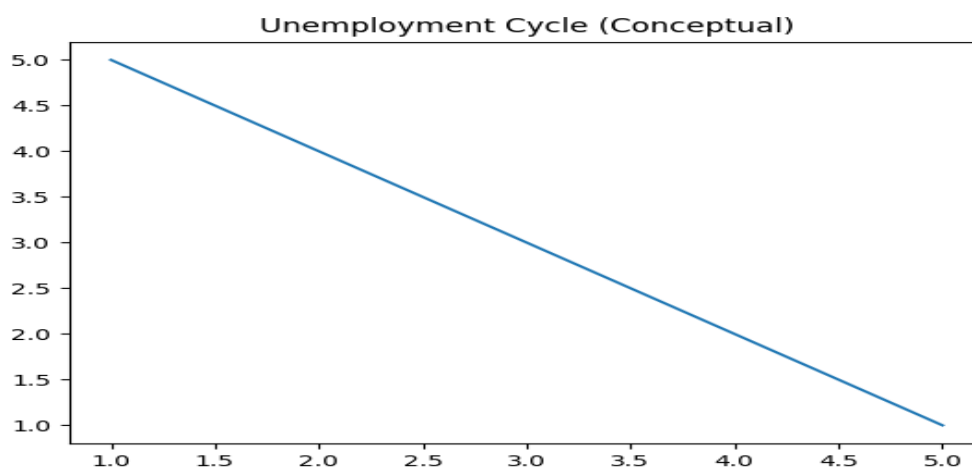
5.3 The Skill Gap Correlation

The relationship between skill development and unemployment is inverse; as skill proficiency increases, the structural unemployment rate decreases.

6. Causes of Unemployment in India

- Rapid population growth
- Skill mismatch
- Slow industrial expansion
- Technological advancement and automation
- Ineffective education system

7. Graphical Model: Unemployment Cycle



8. Impact of Unemployment

Unemployment leads to economic inefficiency, reduced income levels, increased poverty, and social instability. It also results in underutilization of human resources and hampers national productivity.

9. Skill India Mission

9.1 Overview

The Skill India Mission was launched in 2015 to enhance employability through large-scale skill development programs. It aims to align workforce capabilities with industry demands.

9.2 Key Initiatives

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)
- Sector Skill Councils

10. Graphical Model: Skill Development Impact



11. Discussion

The findings suggest that unemployment in India is primarily driven by structural factors rather than cyclical variations. The Skill India Mission has shown potential in improving employability; however, challenges such as training quality and industry linkage remain.

12. Challenges

- Lack of awareness among rural population
- Inconsistent training quality
- Limited industry collaboration
- Regional imbalances

13. Policy Recommendations

- Strengthen vocational education systems
- Enhance public-private partnerships
- Integrate digital and emerging technology skills
- Implement continuous monitoring mechanisms

14. Conclusion

Unemployment in India is a multidimensional issue requiring coordinated policy interventions. The Skill India Mission serves as a strategic initiative to address skill gaps and improve employment outcomes. Sustained efforts in quality training and institutional collaboration are essential for long-term success.

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“Agricultural Crisis in Saoner Tahsil: Challenges, Vulnerabilities, and Pathways to Resilience: A Comprehensive Research Analysis”

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Abstract

This research paper examines the multifaceted agricultural crisis in Saoner tahsil of Nagpur district, Maharashtra, within the broader context of Vidarbha's agrarian distress. Through analysis of secondary data, government reports, and recent policy developments, the study identifies key stressors including input scarcity, price volatility, groundwater depletion, and climate variability affecting farming communities. The paper evaluates the potential impact of the proposed ₹10,000 crore GAIL fertiliser complex as a transformative intervention while arguing that technological solutions alone cannot address structural inequities. Findings reveal that Saoner's agricultural challenges mirror regional patterns but possess distinct characteristics related to its agro-ecological setting and proximity to urban markets. The research concludes by proposing an integrated framework combining industrial investment, sustainable water management, crop diversification, and strengthened extension services to build long-term agricultural resilience.

Keywords: Agricultural crisis, Saoner tahsil, Vidarbha, fertiliser availability, farmer distress, sustainable agriculture

Introduction

Background

The agrarian distress in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra has attained national significance, with farmer suicides, debt traps, and recurrent crop failures dominating policy discourse for over two decades. Within this landscape, Saoner tahsil presents a unique case study—a primarily agricultural sub-district positioned at the intersection of traditional farming systems and emerging industrialisation pressures. Located approximately 35 kilometres from Nagpur city, Saoner benefits from urban proximity while

simultaneously grappling with the challenges confronting rain-dependent agriculture in semi-arid regions.

Agriculture remains the primary livelihood source for approximately 65% of Saoner's population, with small and marginal farmers constituting the majority of landholders.

Rationale and Significance

Understanding the agricultural crisis at tahsil level is essential because district-level analyses often mask intra-regional variations. Saoner's experience with agricultural transformation, input accessibility, and farmer distress may differ significantly from neighbouring areas due to its specific agro-ecological conditions, infrastructure endowment, and political economy.

Research Objectives

The present study aims to

1. Identify and analyse the key dimensions of agricultural crisis in Saoner tahsil
2. Examine the structural and contingent factors contributing to farmer distress
3. Evaluate the potential impact of the proposed fertiliser complex on local agriculture

Methodology

This research employs qualitative analysis of secondary sources including government reports, academic literature, newspaper archives, and policy documents. The study synthesises information from multiple sources to construct a comprehensive understanding of Saoner's agricultural challenges. Given the absence of primary survey data, the research relies on triangulation of published materials to ensure analytical rigour.

The Agrarian Landscape of Saoner Tahsil

Geographical and Demographic Context

Table 1: Demographic and Agricultural Profile of Saoner Tahsil

Indicator	Value	Source/Year
Total Geographical Area	850 sq km	Census 2011
Total Population	250,000	Census 2011
Rural Population	225,000	Census 2011
Population Density	275 persons/sq km	Census 2011

Number of Villages	170	Census 2011
Population Dependent on Agriculture	65%	Estimated, 2023
Average Annual Rainfall	950-1050 mm	IMD 2023
Operational Holdings< 2 hectares	68% of total holdings Agriculture	2015-16
Area under Marginal Holdings	32% of cultivated area Agriculture	2015-16
Groundwater Stage of Development	85% (Semi-critical to Critical)	CGWB, 2022

Saoner tahsil encompasses approximately 850 square kilometres in northeastern Nagpur district, bordering Madhya Pradesh. The region falls within the Wainganga basin and experiences tropical climate with average annual rainfall of 950-1050 millimetres, predominantly received during southwest monsoon months of June to September. However, rainfall variability has increased markedly over the past decade, with recurrent dry spells and occasional excessive precipitation disrupting cropping calendars.

The tahsil's population of approximately 250,000 persons (2011 Census) is distributed across 170 villages and one municipal council. Rural population density averages 275 persons per square kilometre, with agriculture serving as the primary economic activity. Landholding patterns reveal significant inequality: operational holdings below two hectares constitute 68% of total holdings but command merely 32% of cultivated area, reflecting the predominance of marginal and small farmers who remain most vulnerable to agricultural shocks.

Cropping Systems and Agricultural Practices

Table 2: Major Cropping Patterns in Saoner Tahsil (Kharif and Rabi Seasons)

Crop	Season	Area Coverage Trend	Primary Use	Irrigation Dependency
Cotton	Kharif	Stable to Declining	Cash crop / Industrial	Partially irrigated / Rainfed
Soybean	Kharif	Expanding	Cash crop / Oilseed	Partially irrigated / Rainfed
Pigeon Pea (Tur)	Kharif	Stable	Pulse / Food security	Rainfed
Sorghum (Jowar)	Kharif & Rabi	Declining	Food grain / Fodder	Rainfed / Residual moisture
Paddy	Kharif	Limited areas	Food grain	Irrigated (Pench command)
Wheat	Rabi	Limited	Food grain	Irrigated
Gram	Rabi	Limited	Pulse	Irrigated / Residual moisture
Vegetables	Both seasons	Expanding (near urban areas)	Cash crop / Urban market	Irrigated

Traditional cropping systems in Saoner have evolved through centuries of adaptation to local agro-ecological conditions. Kharif (monsoon) season dominates agricultural calendars, with cotton and soybean emerging as principal cash crops during the post-Green Revolution period. Pigeon pea (tur) serves as a important pulse crop intercropped with cotton or soybean, providing both nutritional security and soil fertility benefits through nitrogen fixation. Rabi (winter) cultivation remains limited by residual soil moisture and irrigation availability, though areas with access to borewells or canal irrigation cultivate wheat, gram, and vegetables. The Pench irrigation project provides partial coverage to villages along the Pench River corridor,

Dimensions of Agricultural Crisis

Table 3: Key Dimensions of Agricultural Crisis in Saoner Tahsil

Dimension	Specific Challenges	Impact on Farmers	Trend (Last Decade)
Input Scarcity	Erratic fertiliser availability, spurious seeds, inadequate pesticide quality	Yield reduction, increased costs, crop failures	Worsening
Price Volatility	Cotton and soybean price fluctuations, limited MSP implementation, trader concentration	Income uncertainty, distress sales, debt accumulation	Worsening
Groundwater Depletion	Water table decline (3-5 metres), borewell deepening (30-40m to 80-120m), well failures	Increased irrigation costs, reduced cropping intensity	Worsening
Climate Variability	Delayed monsoon onset, dry spells, intense rainfall events	Crop damage, yield instability, planning uncertainty	Worsening
Indebtedness	60% households in debt, average debt >₹50,000, informal credit at 24-36% interest	Asset alienation, distress, intergenerational debt	Persistent
Soil Degradation	Imbalanced fertiliser use, micronutrient	Productivity stagnation, input	Worsening

	deficiencies, organic matter decline	responsiveness decline	
Extension Gaps	Understaffed line departments, limited technical support, poor reach to smallholders	Technology adoption lag, suboptimal practices	Persistent

Input Scarcity and Quality Concerns

Access to quality agricultural inputs at affordable prices constitutes a fundamental challenge for Saoner's farmers. Fertiliser availability has historically been erratic, with periodic shortages disrupting nutrient application schedules and compromising crop yields. Seed quality emerges as another critical concern. While private sector participation has improved availability of hybrid seeds, reports of spurious seeds and varietal mismatches persist. Farmers purchasing cotton and soybean seeds from local dealers often lack recourse when crops fail due to seed quality issues.

Price Volatility and Market Integration

Agricultural markets serving Saoner exhibit classic features of imperfect competition. Farmers face concentrated buying power from local traders, limited price information, and inadequate storage infrastructure that forces distress sales immediately post-harvest. While the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) in Saoner town provides a regulated marketing channel, many farmers continue transacting with private traders who offer immediate payment but often at prices below competitive levels. Cotton farmers in Saoner have experienced particularly severe price fluctuations.

Groundwater Depletion and Irrigation Stress

Groundwater constitutes the primary irrigation source for Saoner's agriculture, but intensive exploitation has produced alarming depletion trends. Water table measurements from Central Ground Water Board indicate declines of 3-5 metres across much of the tahsil over the past decade, with particularly severe depletion in villages 远离 perennial river courses. Borewell depths have increased progressively from 30-40 metres in the 1990s to 80-120 metres currently, substantially elevating irrigation costs.

Climate Variability and Adaptation Constraints

Climate change manifests in Saoner through increased rainfall variability, rising temperatures, and more frequent extreme events. Analysis of meteorological data reveals trends toward delayed monsoon onset, increased frequency of dry spells during critical crop growth stages, and more intense precipitation events when rain occurs—patterns consistent with climate projections for semi-arid tropical regions.

Indebtedness and Farmer Distress

The cumulative effect of input cost escalation, price volatility, and production risks manifests in household-level indebtedness. While comprehensive micro-level data for Saoner specifically remains limited, regional patterns from Nagpur district indicate that over 60% of farm households carry outstanding debt, with average indebtedness exceeding ₹50,000 per household. Informal credit from moneylenders and traders continues dominating rural credit markets despite institutional credit expansion, with interest rates of 24-36% per annum common. Government debt relief programs have provided episodic relief but failed to address underlying structural issues.

The Proposed Fertiliser Complex: Potential and Limitations**Project Overview and Rationale**

The ₹10,000 crore fertiliser complex proposed for Saoner tahsil represents one of the largest industrial investments in Vidarbha's history. A joint venture between GAIL (India Limited), the Department of Fertilizers (Government of India), and the Government of Maharashtra, the plant is designed to produce 12.7 lakh tonnes of fertilisers annually, including urea and other essential inputs. Site selection processes have identified four potential locations—Khursapar, Jatamkhora, Jalalkheda, and Sawali Mohatkar—with finalisation expected based on land availability, infrastructure connectivity, and environmental clearances.

Potential Benefits for Agriculture

The fertiliser complex holds genuine potential to address certain dimensions of Saoner's agricultural crisis. Most directly, the plant would ensure reliable fertiliser availability for the region's farmers, eliminating periodic shortages that disrupt cropping schedules. Local production would reduce transportation costs, potentially lowering effective prices paid by farmers and improving input affordability.

Limitations and Unaddressed Challenges

Despite these potential benefits, the fertiliser complex cannot address fundamental dimensions of agricultural crisis. Input availability alone cannot resolve price volatility, groundwater depletion, or climate adaptation constraints. Farmers may gain improved access to fertilisers but remain exposed to market risks and production uncertainties that determine ultimate profitability. Perhaps most significantly, the project's emphasis on increasing fertiliser consumption may reinforce environmentally problematic agricultural practices. Saoner's agriculture already exhibits imbalanced fertiliser use, with excessive nitrogen application and neglect of micronutrients contributing to soil degradation.

Comparative Context: Saoner Within Vidarbha's Agrarian Crisis**Regional Patterns and Local Specificities**

Vidarbha's agrarian crisis has attracted substantial scholarly and policy attention, with studies identifying common patterns across the region's eleven districts. Cotton price volatility, groundwater depletion, input cost escalation, and inadequate institutional credit emerge as recurring themes in analyses of farmer distress. Saoner's proximity to Nagpur—a major urban centre with expanding economic opportunities—distinguishes it from more remote Vidarbha districts. This proximity enables some livelihood diversification through commuting and seasonal migration, potentially buffering agricultural income volatility.

Policy Responses and Their Limitations

State and central governments have implemented numerous programs addressing Vidarbha's agrarian crisis, with mixed outcomes. The Prime Minister's Package for Vidarbha (2006) following the farmer suicide crisis initiated comprehensive interventions including debt relief, irrigation investment, and livelihood diversification. Subsequent programs have continued similar approaches with varying implementation intensity.

Pathways to Sustainable Agricultural Resilience**Integrated Nutrient Management**

While the fertiliser complex will increase input availability, its benefits depend on complementary improvements in nutrient management practices. Soil testing services require strengthening to enable site-specific nutrient recommendations. Currently, soil testing laboratories serving Saoner operate below capacity, and farmers rarely access testing services due to distance, cost, and limited awareness. Mobile soil testing units and strengthened extension outreach could improve coverage, enabling more efficient fertiliser use.

Groundwater Governance and Irrigation Efficiency

Addressing groundwater depletion requires comprehensive reform of water governance. The current regime of near-unrestricted groundwater access with subsidised electricity creates perverse incentives for over-extraction. Policy reforms could include aquifer-level management institutions, electricity rationing with improved quality of supply, and incentives for water-efficient crops and irrigation methods. Micro-irrigation technologies (drip and sprinkler systems) offer substantial water savings but remain beyond reach of most smallholders without subsidy support.

Crop Diversification and Risk Management

Reducing dependence on volatile cotton and soybean markets requires promoting crop diversification toward higher-value and less water-intensive alternatives. Vegetable cultivation for Nagpur's growing urban market presents opportunities, but requires improved market linkages, cold chain infrastructure, and technical support. Pulses and oilseeds suited to local conditions could provide both nutritional security and market opportunities.

Conclusion**Synthesis of Findings**

The agricultural crisis in Saoner tahsil reflects multiple intersecting stressors including input scarcity, price volatility, groundwater depletion, and climate variability. While the proposed fertiliser complex addresses input availability—a genuine constraint facing farmers—it cannot resolve the deeper structural problems underlying agrarian distress. Sustainable solutions require integrated approaches combining industrial investment with institutional reforms, sustainable resource management, and strengthened support systems for smallholders. Saoner's experience demonstrates that agricultural crises manifest at local levels even within regions sharing common characteristics. Policy responses must be sensitive to such local specificities while addressing systemic issues that transcend administrative boundaries.

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One Nation, One Election: Analysis

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Abstract:

The concept of "One Nation, One Election" seeks to synchronize the electoral processes for the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies in India. Advocates of this proposal argue that unifying elections could significantly reduce the overall costs associated with campaigning and administrative efforts, making the electoral process more efficient. They believe that simultaneous elections could also alleviate the issue of policy stagnation, ensuring more stable and continuous governance by allowing elected representatives to focus on long-term policies rather than being preoccupied with frequent elections. Conversely, critics warn that this approach might pose threats to the fundamental principles of federalism by diluting the distinction between state and national issues. They highlight concerns regarding the complexities involved in managing electoral logistics and potential negative impacts on democratic representation, as regional issues might be overshadowed by national narratives. This article delves deeply into the feasibility, advantages, and obstacles associated with the implementation of synchronized elections in India, while reflecting on its broader social, political, and constitutional implications.

Keywords: One Nation, One Election, Logistical Challenges, Simultaneous Elections, Federalism, Constitutional Amendments, Economic Implications.

1. Introduction:

India boasts one of the most dynamic and comprehensive electoral systems globally, characterized by regular elections across various tiers of governance. These frequent elections ensure robust democratic participation and engagement among the populace. However, the overlapping schedules can often lead to electoral fatigue, disrupt governance, and incur substantial costs. The notion of "One Nation, One Election" (ONOE) aims to synchronize these elections, potentially creating a more streamlined process while minimizing interruptions to governance and daily life.

Since its inception, the ONOE proposal has sparked intense discussions, gaining traction from political leaders and citizens alike. Although the idea has been on the table since the 1980s, recent advancements in political dialogue have revitalized interest in its feasibility and implementation. Proponents argue that aligning election cycles could enhance administrative efficiency and reduce resource wastage, while critics caution against potential ramifications on regional representation and democratic engagement. Ultimately, the debate continues to evolve as stakeholders debate the merits and challenges of this significant electoral reform.

2. Endorsement of Union Cabinet:

Nearly three months after the Union Cabinet endorsed the high-level committee's recommendations, led by former President Ram Nath Kovind, for simultaneous elections, two bills were passed on Thursday, December 12, 2024. One of these is a constitutional amendment bill designed to facilitate concurrent

elections for the Lok Sabha and all state assemblies, while the other is an ordinary bill focused on synchronizing elections in Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu and Kashmir.

The Union Cabinet opted not to consider any draft legislation aimed at aligning local panchayat and municipal elections with Lok Sabha and assembly elections. This decision indicates that the government is taking a cautious approach to implementing simultaneous elections.

Parliament has the authority to legislate for holding simultaneous elections for all state and union territory assemblies alongside parliamentary elections without requiring consultation with state governments or approval from state assemblies. However, if the government intends to propose a bill that synchronizes local body elections or establishes a Single Electoral Roll through the Election Commission of India (ECI), it will need to secure the approval of at least half of the state legislatures before implementation can occur. The central government is anticipated to introduce The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, which seeks amendments to Articles 82, 83, 172, and 327, along with The Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in Parliament at the start of the following week. These bills may be reviewed by a Joint Committee of Parliament. The Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2024 includes regulations concerning Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Puducherry.

This legislation introduces a new Article 82(A), which pertains to simultaneous elections for the House of the People and all Legislative Assemblies, while also amending Article 83 (Duration of Houses of Parliament), Article 172 (Duration of State Legislatures), and Article 327 (Authority of Parliament to establish election provisions for Legislatures).

The two legislative proposals aimed at enabling simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies include provisions for conducting "mid-term" elections in the event of a government dissolution. However, these mid-term elections would cover only the "unexpired" portion of the remaining five-year term.

According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons for The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, there is a pressing need for simultaneous elections due to escalating costs and prolonged processes associated with elections. The enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct during election periods significantly impedes ongoing development programs, disrupts normal public life, affects the functioning of public services, and channels manpower away from essential duties to manage election-related tasks. The proposed constitutional amendment indicates that the President will implement the 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) legislation on the first day of the Lok Sabha session following the next general elections, referred to as "the appointed date." This timeline suggests that the first simultaneous elections could occur in 2034, unless the central government chooses to conduct mid-term elections before the conclusion of its current five-year term.

Additionally, the Bill specifies that the terms of all Assemblies formed after the appointed date will be aligned with the five-year duration of the Lok Sabha, at which point simultaneous elections could be

initiated. It also introduces the notion of an “unexpired” term, defined as the period between the dissolution of the House and the five years following the date of its first meeting, applicable in situations where the Lok Sabha or an Assembly is dissolved before serving its full term.

3. Historical Context:

The concept of conducting simultaneous elections is not a recent development in India. Between 1952 and 1967, the country observed a practice where the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections were held concurrently. This approach was aimed at streamlining electoral processes and reducing the frequency of elections, allowing for more efficient governance. However, this synchronization was disrupted as a result of premature dissolutions of both state assemblies and the Lok Sabha, resulting in a fragmented electoral landscape.

Despite the challenges faced in maintaining simultaneous elections, there have been intermittent efforts to reintroduce this practice in the Indian electoral system. Various stakeholders, including the Election Commission of India (ECI) and several think tanks, have periodically revisited the idea. They have engaged in comprehensive discussions and analyses to evaluate the feasibility and potential benefits of syncing elections, given that the Indian political landscape has evolved significantly over the decades.

The revival of simultaneous elections could potentially lead to reduced political campaigning, decreased expenditures for both the government and candidates, and more stable governance. Advocates argue that aligning Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections may minimize electoral fatigue among voters and promote higher turnout rates. As the conversation around election reforms continues, it remains to be seen whether India will once again embrace this approach and the implications it may have for the democratic process.

4. Literature Review: One Nation, One Election:

- **Historical Development of Simultaneous Elections:** India's experience with simultaneous elections began with its inaugural general elections in 1952, 1957, and 1962, when elections for both the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies were held at the same time. Mishra (2018) notes that this alignment was disrupted in 1968-69 due to the premature dissolution of various state assemblies. This interruption led to the creation of distinct electoral cycles, which have influenced the present electoral system in India.
- **Justification for Concurrent Elections:** Advocates, including the NITI Aayog (2017), argue that conducting simultaneous elections could alleviate financial pressures, reduce policy stagnation, and lessen administrative interruptions. Bhalla (2019) underscores the considerable demands that frequent elections impose on state resources, particularly concerning the use of security personnel and the operational capabilities of the Election Commission.
- **Legal Challenges:** Kumar (2020) investigates the constitutional amendments needed to implement One Nation, One Election (ONOE), specifically addressing Articles 83, 85, 172, and 174. Enacting these amendments necessitates the synchronization of the terms for both the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, presenting both legal and logistical obstacles. The author also emphasizes the necessity of obtaining broad political agreement for such a substantial constitutional alteration.

- **Effects on Federalism:** Critics, including Yadav (2021), warn that ONOE could threaten India's federal structure by concentrating political focus and sidelining regional issues. The article raises concerns about national narratives overshadowing the electoral landscape, potentially neglecting local governance requirements, especially in states with unique socio-economic conditions.
- **Global Comparisons:** Chakraborty (2022) draws comparisons between ONOE and the electoral systems in countries like South Africa and Sweden, where simultaneous elections are common. While these cases illustrate cost efficiency and governance continuity, the author points out that their smaller geographical size and less diverse political environments sharply contrast with the complexities of India's political landscape.
- **Economic Consequences:** A research study conducted by Rao and Singh (2019) emphasizes that holding separate elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies incurs significant expenses. Their analysis suggests that organizing synchronized elections could lead to savings amounting to billions, which could be redirected towards developmental projects. Nonetheless, the authors caution against prioritizing economic efficiency over the crucial aspect of democratic representation.
- **Democratic Representation and Accountability:** Sharma (2023) argues that synchronized elections may create extended periods of non-representation in the event of mid-term dissolutions. The findings highlight that such lapses in representation could weaken democratic accountability, particularly in states grappling with political instability or governance challenges.
- **Logistical Viability:** The Election Commission of India (2018) raised alarms about the logistical challenges associated with the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) initiative, particularly in overseeing an electorate of over 900 million across 28 states and eight Union Territories. The report emphasizes the urgent need for enhanced electoral infrastructure, including improved electronic voting machines and updated voter rolls.
- **Public and Political Response:** A study by Joshi and Banerjee (2020) indicates that public opinion regarding ONOE is divided. While a substantial segment of the population supports the idea due to its potential economic advantages, there are persistent concerns about the risk of diminishing regional autonomy. Political parties, particularly those at the regional level, display varying opinions, with many expressing fears over the loss of their influence in a synchronized electoral framework.
- **Implementation Suggestions:** The Law Commission of India (2018) has recommended a phased approach for implementing synchronized elections, advocating for initial synchronization in a select number of states to evaluate its feasibility. This strategy, backed by Basu (2023), involves modifying electoral schedules over several cycles to align terms while maintaining the integrity of the democratic process.

5. Benefits of One Nation, One Election:

- **Cost Efficiency:** Conducting separate elections demands considerable resources, including finances and manpower. Implementing One Nation, One Election (ONOE) can significantly reduce the expenses tied to election logistics and security measures, leading to optimal resource allocation. By consolidating elections, governments can save money and improve efficiency in managing the entire electoral process, making it more sustainable in the long run.

- **Governance Continuity:** Frequent elections can create a scenario where governments become hesitant to enact bold policies due to the fear of voter backlash. By synchronizing elections, ONOE fosters a stable political environment that encourages steady governance and informed decision-making. This continuity allows governments to implement long-term strategies effectively, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the administration.
- **Reduced Electoral Fatigue:** The relentless cycle of elections often leads to fatigue among voters and political parties alike. ONOE aims to alleviate this weariness by streamlining the electoral process, allowing greater focus on actual governance rather than constant campaigning. With fewer elections to contend with, stakeholders can engage more meaningfully in policy discussions and civic responsibilities, ultimately enriching the democratic experience.
- **Enhanced Security Management:** Managing security for multiple elections across various states can pose significant logistical challenges. ONOE simplifies this task by consolidating the electoral process, allowing for more effective planning and deployment of security resources. With a unified approach,

authorities can ensure a safer and more controlled electoral environment, thereby enhancing the overall integrity of the elections and public confidence in the process.

6. Challenges and Criticisms:

- **Impact on Federalism:** The Indian Constitution grants states the autonomy to determine their electoral timelines. By synchronizing elections, this federal principle may be jeopardized, leading to a concentration of power within the central government and diminishing the authority of individual states to govern their own electoral processes.
- **Logistical Complexity:** Coordinating simultaneous elections for over a billion voters across varied regions presents immense challenges. It necessitates exceptional levels of organization and the implementation of advanced technologies to manage the diverse electoral landscapes effectively.
- **Disruption of Democratic Cycles:** In instances of mid-term dissolution or unexpected events, holding synchronized elections may result in certain states or constituencies lacking representation for prolonged durations. This could lead to gaps in political accountability and diminish the responsiveness of governance to local needs.
- **Political Dominance:** Conducting simultaneous elections may disproportionately benefit national parties, resulting in regional issues and smaller candidates being overlooked. This scenario could marginalize local perspectives and undermine the representation of community-specific interests in the broader political discourse.
- **Overburdening the Election Commission:** The Election Commission may find it challenging to manage the complexities associated with a single large-scale electoral event. This increased workload could strain its resources and capabilities, potentially leading to inefficiencies in conducting free and fair elections across various constituencies within the country.
- **Mid-term Representation Gaps:** In instances of mid-term dissolution, constituencies can be left without representation for extended periods. This lack of elected officials during crucial times can

weaken the voice of citizens, hamper effective governance, and limit the responsiveness of government services, ultimately affecting the well-being of the constituents.

- **Marginalization of Regional Issues:** A focus on national narratives during elections could overshadow important state-specific issues and concerns. This dominance may result in policies that do not adequately reflect the unique needs and priorities of different regions, creating a disconnect between the government and the local populace.
- **Electoral Dominance of National Parties:** The influence of regional parties may diminish, leading to a reduction in diversity in political representation. National parties could overpower local voices, resulting in a homogenization of political perspectives that fails to address the unique interests and challenges faced by various communities across the nation.
- **Policy and Governance Stalemates:** Aligning election cycles may necessitate adjustments to the terms of currently serving legislatures, either by extending or shortening them. Such changes could create instability and confusion, affecting governance and the smooth functioning of political institutions as they adapt to new electoral timelines.
- **Legal and Constitutional Hurdles:** Implementing significant constitutional amendments would be essential, requiring widespread consensus among political stakeholders. Achieving such agreement poses challenges, as differing political interests and ideologies may complicate discussions, potentially delaying the introduction of synchronized election cycles and impacting the overall electoral process.
- **Increased Risks of Political Polarization:** Synchronizing elections could exacerbate political tensions and polarization among parties. The competitive nature of campaigns might intensify, fostering an environment where dissent and conflict overshadow collaboration, ultimately damaging the quality of democratic discourse and governance within the political landscape.
- **Strain on Security Forces:** Coordinating security for a nationwide election could impose extraordinary stress on law enforcement agencies. They would need to manage a vast array of duties and responsibilities to ensure voter safety and prevent disruptions, which may stretch their resources and capabilities thinner than ever before.
- **Risk of Voter Fatigue:** Organizing a single, large-scale election might inundate voters with an excessive number of options, leading to confusion and fatigue. When faced with numerous choices simultaneously, individuals may find it challenging to make informed decisions, ultimately undermining the election process and impacting voter turnout.
- **Technology Reliance:** Relying heavily on electronic voting systems and advanced logistical technologies introduces potential weaknesses. Technical malfunctions, cyberattacks, or outages could disrupt the electoral process, eroding public confidence. Additionally, over-dependence on technology might compromise the integrity of the election if systems fail or are manipulated.
- **Delayed Emergency Governance:** In emergencies, such as natural disasters, the inability to conduct elections during ongoing crises can impede effective governance. When elections cannot be held as scheduled, decision-makers may struggle to respond adequately, creating gaps in leadership and swift resource allocation during critical times.

- **Potential for Higher Electoral Violence:** The scale and complexity of one large nationwide election could heighten the risk of electoral violence, especially in sensitive areas with existing tensions. Increased political passions might ignite conflicts, potentially leading to violent confrontations among rival factions and escalating grievances within affected communities.
- **Economic Disruptions:** Hosting a nationwide election could significantly impact the usual economic activities across the country. Businesses may close, supply chains could be interrupted, and labour forces redirected, leading to temporary economic slowdowns or complications in trade, especially surrounding election periods, thereby straining local economies.
- **Undermines Local Leadership:** The prominence of national leaders and overarching issues in a nationwide election might overshadow local governance and its importance. Local concerns may be neglected, diminishing the significance of regional representation as citizens increasingly focus on national agendas, potentially creating disconnects between communities and their leaders.
- **Complicates Coalition Dynamics:** Large-scale elections may create tensions within regional political coalitions, as smaller parties may feel marginalized. When national narratives dominate the discourse, it may strain existing alliances, leading to fragmentation or even conflicts among regional parties who might feel their interests are overlooked.
- **Challenging Voter Education:** Teaching voters about the mechanics of multiple simultaneous elections can be a daunting task. Communicating complex information regarding various ballots and candidates within a condensed time frame may overwhelm citizens, ultimately complicating efforts to ensure that they are adequately informed, engaged, and ready to participate.
- **Resistance from Regional Parties:** A lack of backing from state and regional political entities could impede efforts to forge consensus around a nationwide election. This resistance may stem from

concerns about representation and resources, hampering collaboration and trust necessary for successfully navigating the electoral landscape, thus threatening unity.

7. Legal and Constitutional Hurdles:

Legal and constitutional challenges present significant obstacles to the implementation of ONOE. Major amendments to the constitution are essential, specifically regarding Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 327, to ensure that the terms of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies are synchronized. Moreover, reaching a political agreement among various parties and regions adds another layer of complexity to this process. The diverse political landscape complicates efforts to establish a unified approach, making it difficult to garner the necessary support for such constitutional changes. Without a clear consensus, the pathway to implementing ONOE remains fraught with difficulties, potentially hindering progress and delaying important reforms needed in the governance structure. Forcefully pushing through legislation based solely on a dominant majority in both houses of parliament could have detrimental consequences for the federal and diverse nature of India's political system in the long term.

8. Global Perspective:

Countries such as South Africa and Sweden hold concurrent elections, presenting possible advantages. Nevertheless, their governance frameworks and political environments contrast sharply with India's multi-tiered and varied democratic system. Analysing these different electoral models offers important

perspectives, while also emphasizing the distinct challenges that India may encounter. For instance, the efficiency and cost-effectiveness observed in these nations can be appealing, yet India's complexity in managing its diverse electorate requires careful consideration. Each country's unique history, culture, and political dynamics play a crucial role in shaping its electoral processes. Thus, while there are lessons to be learned from them, India's democratic fabric necessitates tailored solutions to address its specific issues and ensure effective governance.

9. Potential Solutions and Way Forward:

- **Phased Implementation:** To evaluate the feasibility of the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) initiative without causing widespread disruption, a gradual rollout can be introduced. This approach would involve conducting synchronized elections in selected states initially, allowing for adjustments and improvements based on these early implementations before expanding to other areas. The phased method can help identify potential issues and refine the process for a smoother implementation across the country.
- **Strengthening Institutions:** Improving the capabilities of the Election Commission and judicial systems is crucial for effectively managing the complexities associated with One Nation, One Election (ONOE). This includes providing additional training, resources, and support to these institutions, enabling them to handle the increased demand for oversight and transparency. By bolstering these organizations, we can ensure that they are well-equipped to address challenges and uphold the integrity of the electoral process during the ONOE transition.
- **Public Awareness:** To foster acceptance of the One Nation, One Election (ONOE) policy, it is vital to promote public awareness and engagement through open discussions and consultations with various stakeholders. Establishing a platform for dialogue allows citizens to voice their opinions, ask questions, and express concerns. This participatory approach can lead to greater consensus, alleviate misunderstandings, and minimize opposition, ultimately creating a supportive environment for the successful implementation of ONOE.
- **Technological Integration:** Utilizing advanced technology for voter registration, electronic voting, and timely result dissemination is key to overcoming logistical challenges associated with One Nation, One Election (ONOE). By integrating digital solutions, we can streamline the electoral process, enhance accuracy, and ensure quick, reliable access to election data. Implementing such technologies not only improves efficiency but also instils confidence in the electoral system, helping to facilitate a smoother transition to ONOE across various regions.

10. Conclusion:

The "One Nation, One Election" initiative presents potential advantages while also posing notable constitutional, logistical, and political hurdles. Its successful execution requires meticulous planning, broad agreement among stakeholders, and a gradual approach to ensure that India's democratic values and federal framework are upheld. The discussion around ONOE highlights the necessity of finding a balance between enhancing administrative efficiency and maintaining the fundamental principles of representation and federal governance. Achieving this balance is crucial to ensure that the initiative does not compromise the democratic fabric of the nation while striving for improved electoral coordination. Ultimately, careful consideration of these factors is essential for fostering a harmonious and effective electoral system in India.

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Deconstructing Gendered Trauma in Manju Kapur's *Home*: A Brief Study.

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Abstract:

Trauma may be caused by diverse causes. It is mostly related to the past memory or historical incident. Freud compares it with catastrophe that occurs during childhood. It remains comatose in the mind and forces one to think and react in a very strong way. The cultural process affects everyone right from how and what a person experiences in the childhood, and what kind of environment is given to him or her. If there is the slightest difficulty in the environment, the person feels uneasy. Such uneasiness also can lead to trauma. About the trauma, the forthcoming paper will explore the novel *Home*, and intends to analyze ManjuKapur's story from the perspectives of cultural and gender trauma studies.

Key Words: Tauma, Cultural, Gender, Patriarchy, Feminism etc

ManjuKapur's third novel *Home* (2006) is an engrossing story of family life, across three generations of Delhi shopkeepers. When their traditional business –selling saris – is gradually sidelined by the new fashion for jeans and stitched salwarkameez, the BanwariLal family must adapt. However, instead of branching out, the sons remain apprenticed to the struggling shop, and the daughters are confined to the family home. As envy and suspicion grip parents and children alike, the need for escape – whether through illicit love or in making of pickles or the search for education – becomes ever stronger. Very human and hugely engaging, *Home* is a masterful novel of the acts of kindness, compromise, and secrecy that lie at the heart of every family.

Moreover, BanwariLal's grandson, Vicky becomes a bone of contention. BanwariLal, Vicky's grandfather, feels guilty about what happened to Sunita and hence responsible for him, but his sons and their growing families have less reason to make space for Vicky. Of the two sons, Yashpal falls in love with beautiful Sona and employs astute emotional blackmail to get his

parents to accept her. The other son, Pyare Lal has a proper arranged marriage, and all the sons, daughters-in-law and, in due course, grandchildren pull their varying weights in the cramped family house and the family sari shop.

But the times are changing and, in the 1980s, the family is rife with tensions. With the death of the benevolent Banwari Lal, the shop was modernized and the family house was changed into self-contained flats. The joint family and even the business was fragmenting; the price of both cohesion and fragmentation was being paid in different ways by different characters. Of these, Nisha, Yashpal and Sona's beautiful daughter, are the brunt of the tensions that were tearing at the family, making home a site of manipulation, repression, even sexual abuse.

Home carries the universal significance in the people, regarding it, Hindustan Times writes: "In today's *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki* Age, Home is infused with bits-and-bobs that you find at once so recognizable. What begins like a short story, perhaps bringing your neighbors to mind, stretches to as many as 337 pages, with nuances that are at times rather singular, and at others, so universal" (Cover Page).

Therefore, we can say that the novel, though shorter, brings the innermost feelings of the people living in the modern world with the old-mannered people. Similarly, the female characters in the novel are not happy with the present system. The traditional society has been mainly dominated by the patriarchs. Male characters generalize the traditional system and want to manipulate women.

The novel has connection of three generations. It talks about the past history of India. During and after partition, many people moved from one place to another. They had to adjust them in the new culture in the novel way on the one hand; they had brought their own culture on the other. In this way, there is conflict between traditional people and the new or modern people.

Home like *Difficult Daughters* is set against the background of partition. She comments in the very beginning of the novel:

The Banwari Lal family belonged to a class whose skills had been sharpened over generations to ensure prosperity in the market place. Their marriages augmented, their habits conserved. From an early age, children were trained to maintain the foundation on which these homes rested. The education they received, the values they imbibed, the alliances they made had

everything to do with protecting the steady stream of gold and silver that burnished their lives. Those who fell against the grain found in their homes knives that wounded, and once the damage had been done, gestures that reconciled. (1)

LalaBanwariLal, a pragmatic head of thefamily, soon approves of his son's choice. This was not a democracy, in which freewheeling individualism could be allowed to wreck what was being so carefullybuilt. United we stand, divided energy, time and money are squandered. Sona, thewedded wife of elder son is inflicted with numerous taunts from her mother-in-law asshe is unable to bear any child for the family.

She relentlessly prays to god: "Please, Iam growing old, bless us with a child, girl or boy, I do not care, but I cannot bear theemptiness in my heart" (20).The growing up age changes her life style. She wants todiscontinue with her past life. She wants to change the life style with the growth ofher age.

Now the researcher intends to focus on the female characters and what they think about their positions in traditional society. In such a society, women are evaluated in terms of their power to produce children. Male characters think that women can be perfect only after they give birth to the children. Women worry when they are not able to produce children. The example can be drawn from the beginning of the novel in which two sisters, Mrs.SonaLal and Mrs.Rupa Gupta are childless:

"Mrs.SonaLal and Mrs.Rupa Gupta, sisters both, were childless. One was rich, the other poor, one the eldest daughter-in-law of a cloth-shop owner, the other the wife of an educated, badly paid government servant" (1). In these lines, it is noticed that women are judged in terms of their capacity to produce children. They are suffering from the traumatic situation. Infertility is one of the weaknesses of the female characters that do not lead them to spend their life successfully and happily. The property and education play very minor role in their life. Their status is determined by their fertility power. In the modern age, women are determined to fight against gender oppression within their own model of society.

Traditionally, women are considered to be inferior in all aspects in contrast to men. Women are deprived of getting equal access to leadership and decision-making positions.

Most of the female characters in the novel *Home* have traumatic situation. They are struggling with their life. They regard home to be the best place to get rid of the trauma. In the title "*Home*" we can see trauma lurked because it is the displacement from the fragmented mind to sympathize psychologically. Trauma of the past can be seen everywhere in the novel. When the characters are not happy or they are in dilemma they remember the past incident:

Sona protested for form's sake that Vicky was being spoiled, in her time nobody had heard of tutors. She didn't raise too many objections though, because in her heart she was grateful to him for her children. That she couldn't bear to see him was another matter. Her womb had opened when he came. (65)

She thinks that during the ancient time, women were called unsuccessful when they could not bear children. The same thing happens to her as she cannot become mother for several years. The trauma of the past always tortures. Therefore, she feels grateful towards her husband that he gives her children.

Cathy Caruth is one of the major theorists of trauma. She opines that trauma is incomprehensible by nature and by the same token it is referential as well. The subtlest fact concerning it is referential. She claims that victim of trauma, however, reluctant to express one's hidden traumatic truth, unknowingly reveals certain personal truth.

In the novel, because of traumatic situation, one cannot be happy completely in the present. The life becomes disorderly. The persons are anxious with their current life. It happens in the story of LalaBanwariLal when he goes to the past at the age of seventy: "LalaBanwariLal was now approaching seventy, but such was his heart, exclaimed the family, that he insisted on taking the boy to Bareilly himself.

They would travel by the train, spend the day there, and return the next morning" (75- 76). Even in his old age, he is not happy with the present life, but he remembers the childhood, which is the indication of trauma.

The main characters have been affected by PTSD in the novel since the time of partition in India. At that time, many people experienced violence and separation. The experience is not deleted from their mind though they do not realize consciously. It remains imprinted for a long time. Sometimes it passes to the next generation as the older generation may talk about it

several times with their children. The traumatic situation is experienced when Rupa provides love to Nisha:

As Nisha grew, Rupa bestowed careful love on her, mentally standing before the tribunal composed of her sister and brother-in-law, defending herself against neglect on the one hand and stealing the child's heart on the other. The business that had occupied her attention so successfully seemed more meaningful when she saw Nisha peering into the pickle jars, or testing the sweet and salty aam paper drying in the sun under an old muslin sari. (91)

She provides careful love to her because of the traumatic situation that she has experienced in her life that what would happen without the children. She thinks that the child leads her life to the successfulness and the meaningfulness.

As the traumatic situation covers one's mind one cannot live meaningful life. The life becomes meaningless due to the past experience. It does not lead one to the happy life. In the novel, we can experience such thing when: "The misery Sona felt at Raju's performance was exacerbated on parent-teacher day. Every year he did a little worse, belying his promises and her hopes and expectations. This perpetual disappointment drove to violence" (97). It is because of the trauma that she compares present situation to the past. The violence comes when there is conflict in the mental state.

Today, women have realized that they are oppressed by the men in their own place. Because of sexual harassment, betrayal, gender discrimination, and the like, female characters such as Nisha in the novel, Home, suffer from gender trauma. In order to tackle it, she is determined to be an independent woman. Not only Nisha other characters like Mrs.SonaLal and Mrs.Rupa Gupta have also the feeling of trauma of gender. Traditional society looks at women with different angles from that of men. Women are incomplete without the help of male counterparts. Males create such situation in their mind that women think that they cannot attain success without the assistance of males.

Kapur's Home depicts such characters who are feeling oppressed in the family and society. They have to act the role determined by the male society. Sona, for instance, has such feeling in her marriageable age. The text goes like this: "It was necessary for marriageable girls to

blossom during such occasions, it being likely that cast a glance and hold it steadily upon her person. Then it was hoped subsequent enquiries would yield result" (2).

There is no such fixed rule for the boys what they should do. However, for the women they should do according to the rules made by the patriarchal society. They feel frustrated, disappointed, betrayal and so on. They have realized psychologically what they have to do after marriage when they go to their in-law's house. For instance, Nisha follows the tradition as she has experience in her childhood. As she gets married she has to submit herself as a descent wife and daughter-in-law in the new house: "Nisha first touched her mother-in-law's feet, and then moved into the kitchen to see how the maid was managing. She was now a daughter-in-law, she had to anticipate responsibility, not wait for her lack of involvement to be pointed out" (321).

Kapur's characters are psychologically affected that they are weaker in every aspect not only from the male counterparts but also from the white educated women. The third world women are confined to their houses and their tiny problems like having children, spending luxurious life, serving the family and the like. These women only focus on children. Their life is complete only after they are able to produce children, otherwise, their husbands may marry for the second time. One of the main characters of the novel Rupa has also such view about children:

Look at me, thought Rupa. I also don't have children, or half the other things she has. From the time we were children, she was the special one, always noticed for her fairness, her prettiness, and every day I had to hear how well she would marry, while I would be lucky to find anybody, dark and ugly I was. (27)

It shows the women's narrow concept of their life and their position in the family. Women are thought to focus on the physical structure rather than their mental capability.

Therefore, ManjuKapur wants to show the plight of Indian women who have become the victim of the patriarchal values. She wants to subvert the traditional society and establish the new one where there is equality between men and women. The novel, Home is about the portrayal of the characters who want to escape from the traditional society and want to live modern life on their own. However, the trauma, the psychological crisis or wound does not allow them to adapt the new system in full-fledge.

Most of the female characters in the novel *Home* have traumatic situation. They are struggling with their life. They regard home to be the best place to get rid of the trauma. In the title "*Home*", we can see trauma lurked because it is the displacement from the fragmented mind to sympathize psychologically. Because of gender trauma, women are thinking themselves weaker in all respects in comparison to men. Their psychological periphery does not allow them to go beyond the perimeter they are provided by the patriarchal society. They feel that they are puppets of patriarchal world. They realize and assimilate that they are created for serving and making happy to male characters.

In conclusion, the novel depicts the male and female characters going through the various difficult adversity of life. They suffer in their own ways. Although male characters dominate women, the formers suffer in their own ways. They have to struggle in new place, which is completely new place for them. Partition has made their life traumatic. They are not able to remove the bitter past experience in the present time. Although they are attracted by modernism, traditional concepts do not allow them to adopt modernism. Women are suffering from the patriarchal society. There is dual psychological problem for them, one from the traditional concepts and another from the patriarchal society. Therefore, the modern women, daughter-in-laws of Banwari Lal family go beyond the familial values.

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Marginalized Voices: The Maltreatment and Exploitation of Young Girls in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*

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Abstract:

The *Women of Brewster Place* by Gloria Naylor is a powerful narrative that explores the struggles of African American women living in a marginalized urban community. Through interconnected stories, Naylor portrays how systemic oppression, poverty, racism, and patriarchy shape the lives of women and young girls. Among the most disturbing aspects of the novel is the maltreatment and exploitation of vulnerable girls who grow up in an environment marked by social neglect and limited opportunities. These young characters often experience emotional trauma, sexual exploitation, and societal disregard, which reflect broader issues of gender inequality and racial marginalization in American society.

Keywords: Marginalized voices, maltreatment, exploitation, racism, trauma, patriarchy

Naylor gives voice to characters who are often silenced by dominant social structures. The novel particularly highlights how young girls are deprived of protection and guidance, leaving them susceptible to abuse and exploitation. Their suffering is not merely personal but represents the intersection of race, gender, and class oppression. By portraying their experiences with sensitivity and realism, Naylor exposes the harsh realities faced by marginalized female youth while also emphasizing their resilience and desire for dignity.

Naylor has mentioned her views about society in which human being faces bad and a life of desperation and delusion through her novels. She wanted to break the rules of traditional society and wished to liberate herself which she presented in her first novel "*The Women of Brewster Place*". This first novel by Naylor won her National Book Award in 1983. This novel "*The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) became immensely successful. Her novels present female quest for status, respect and identity. Through the main characters of novels, Naylor explores the female mystique by a chain of robust female's characters who are protagonists in her novels. Naylor doesn't want young girls to be accepted as a mother, sister or wife only. She is of opinion that females hence their own life and identity they should not be treated inferior by males. They are individuals. She has created wonderful novels which motivates the black women and place black feminism on a higher place.

Her first novel, '*The Women of Brewster Place*' published in 1982 which brought her instant fame for its powerful presentation of the scramble of seven women who live in a spoilt urban

neighborhood. Naylor has made great efforts to present the Afro-American in general, and coloured females experience in particular Gloria Naylor has skillfully portrayed the experience of varied protagonists and the feelings of the seven African American females. These seven characters are deeply affected by racism and sexism. They are living in such a community where all bad things come to their fortune. These novel witnesses the issues of ramification, multifariousness and profundity of the Afro-American women the subtitle of the novel is "A Novel in Seven Stories" ingeminates this heterogeneity. In the interview with Angels Carabi, Gloria Naylor states, "By exploring the lives of different women in Brewster Place; I'm attempting to Create a microcosm of a certain experience, the black female experience in America... people tend to talk about "the black experience" lumping it all as one Mass searching for something to represent it. But there is nothing that can do that Because it is indeed so rich and so varied.... In Brewster Place I was hoping to give A little sample of different black females". (Carabi Angels, 27)

All the good and negative qualities of these middle class black females are presented very superbly by Gloria Naylor in her novel. She admires the singularity, beauty and personal identity of Afro-American women and at the same time she is courageous enough to apprise them to develop themselves, their life and to face their plight triumphantly. Gloria Naylor once gave interview to Virginia C. Fowler ennobles "A conversation with Gloria Naylor" she claims her works "Female-Centered" and gives the exact definition of the word feminism. She states: "Feminism in for me the simple belief that all human beings, regardless of gender, are equal. I believe that there is nothing that should be denied to me on this planet that isn't denied to any other human being. And I am not determined by the accident of my biology. Feminism to me is political, social, economic equality for all human beings. That's part one. Part two, I must as a feminist celebrate that which is female and love that which is female". (Fowler, 144) This statement of Naylor reminds us Elaine Showalter's idea and view about feminism.

Although this novel achieved a strong position in the convention established by black women writers, it has its own individual qualities which are unique in themselves. Naylor has used interconnecting stories to exhibit each woman's story. She skillfully researched the variety of black female experience. It is a story of seven women-Mattie Michael, Etta Mae Johnson, Kiswana Browne, Luciella Louise Turner, Cora Lee, Lorraine, and Theresa- who dig into how such matters as class and sexuality unify and divide each other. The novel as no clearly discernable character, theme, or setting. Each chapter throws light on a different character who experiences and pears conflicts within herself and as a result of her interactions with others. Out of the seven stories, six stories passed on the individual protagonist. The seventh story represents the entire society of Afro-Americans.

The main character of the novel Mattie struggles a lot in her life to survive on her own in a northern city with her young son, Basil. In her old age she is compelled to go to Brewster Place because she loses her home. To bail her son Basil who was accused of murder. Another

character is Etta Mae Johnson who is an aging femme temptress. She is confident lady who comes to Brewster Place to support her friend Mattie; she later lives with her forever. Mattie has a adopted daughter, her name is Liel who lives in despair because she is waiting desperately for the father of her child. Her husband has self home because during their controversy about his present hejira, their child accidently dies. These women protagonists whether Mattie Michael, Kishwana Browne, Etta, Mae Johnson, Lucielia, Cora lee or Theresa or Lorraine all face difficulties in their life. They became victim of patriarchal society. But in the end, they became aware of their unity and went through difficult situations in their lives and faced various troubles by each other's support.

Mattie Michael is the protagonist in the novel "The Women of Brewster Place". Her father loves her a lot in the beginning. Father worked hard to fulfill all the needs and desires of his daughter Mattie. He takes so much care of her. But one day Mattie reveals to her father that she is pregnant but does not want to talk about the person who impregnated her. Her father beats her savagely and wanted to know the name of "the man who had sneaked into his home and distorted the faith and trust he had in his child". Mattie was sexually abused by Butch who already warned Mattie to reveal his name to anybody. She, along with various other characters come to live in Brewster Place from her parents' home in the South. Mattie's father throws her out of home because she doesn't obey her father's order and doesn't reveal about Butch Fuller. It means if any female is against their father's or man's will, she will have to face problems in her father life, this incidents of Mattie shows us how male dominated society, is against females. She leaves her father's home Butch Fuller impregnated her. Her father warns Mattie about bad intention of Butch by saying that "Butch Fuller is a no-count ditch hound and no decent woman would be seen talking to him". (84)

After this incident Mattie doesn't wish to talk to Butch anymore. She becomes isolated in life and hardly spoke to Butch and does not really care about him. But one thing she keeps in mind, without any doubt that 'the baby didn't really belong to him'. She knows that her father will never comprehend his feelings and hence she decides to leave the house and not to reveal to her father about real cause behind her pregnancy. The father of Mattie construes her silence as her having selected: "This man's side against him, and in his fury, he tried to stamp out what had hurt him the most and was now brazenly taunting him-her disobedience". (66)

The event of Mattie's pregnancy and her father's brutal beating clearly shows that both men and women have different ways of childbearing. A father always expects from his children, especially from daughter that they should obey whatever the father orders. A woman should not oppose her man. On the contrary; A mother can be a good friend of her daughter. When Mattie commits mistake that time her mother understands her feelings and supports her mentally.

When Mattie gets severe beating from her father she decides to leave her hometown. She, in great frustration and pain goes to Ashville in North Carolina there Mattie works all the daylong to give all comforts to her son, Basil. She alone faces all obstacles in her life to raise her son, her inner strength supports her. The desire to provide bright future motivates Mattie to struggle in life. She wants to give best of life to her son. But instead of acquainting himself with the conflicts of his mother's life Basil falls into bad friendships. Living with coked people, Basil commits murder and is confined to jail. Mattie's only son Basil is an apple of her eye who doesn't support his mother but hurts her all the time Mattie sells her house to endure the bad situation and ultimately fetches up when life in Brewster Place.

Another character in the novel is Etta Mae Johnson who is close friend of Mattie from her childhood. She is bold and independent black female who doesn't care about society. She is a woman of frank nature, lives her life according to her own views and needs. She leaves her home also. Like her intimate friend Mattie, Etta doesn't want to live in such society where females have no dignity. Etta refuses to surrender to the southern racist system. She was compelled to follow social order, but Etta is adamant. Etta does want to live with one man forever but after a long life of gushing from one man to the next, Etta takes a decision to go Mattie's resident at Brewster Place. She thanks that in such place she will find some constancy. Etta comes home in the hope that there was no appropriate place in the entire globe for her to go. And no one is there in her life who will take care of her emotions. No one can love her truly and accept her with her demerits too. Etta knows very well that Mattie is her only friend who can accept her making no demands upon her, who has selfless love for Etta as a friend.

Etta desires for peace in life because after thirty five years of age she is not able to grab men. She knows that marriage is permanent and over lasting, but Etta doesn't care even though she is well aware with the fact that there can never be an eternal kinship with the man of her selection. She endorses herself and her life with great courage to exist. Etta's life is a tell of many ups and down. With following soft words, Gloria Naylor finishes the episode on Etta's story: "Etta laughed softly to herself as she climbed the steps towards the light and the love and the comfort that awaited her." (Megha Bharati, 67)

Another character who is the resident of Brewster Place is Kiswana. She is a middle class black woman who fights against her parents to agenzize and affirm her blackhood. She refuses her middle class background and moves to Brewster Place. Kiswana has her own identity, is different from all other characters of Brewster Place. Both Kiswana and her mother have different values and lifestyles. There is a great contradiction of ideas between mother and daughter. Kiswana is a woman who does not accept the rules and obligations on her by her friends and parents. On the contrary her mother Mrs. Browne believes in conventional values. They both argue they times and in fit of anger Kiswana calls her mother a white -man's nigger. Kiswana has no intellectual similarity with her parents. She considers that her parents imperviable to the sufferings of Afro-American people. The parents of Kiswana have antipathy

towards poor on the other hand Kiswana wants to live in the company of poor black people. Her parents are closer to white masters when she decides to assist poor and goes to Brewster Place. There she eagerly works for the isolated poor people and motivates them to have a positive life. We can easily notice the conflict between the two women when Kiswana selects her own name by her wish. She changes her name from Melanie which signifies her refusal of the Euro - centric culture and assertion of her dedication towards African heritage. Mrs. Browne is traditional women who never accept to address her daughter by her African name. But Kiswana is firm at her decision and tells her mother that no one has dare to call me Melanie.

After examining the above lines, one comes to know that Mrs. Browne postulates that Kiswana's given name, Melanie had great meaning as well as heritage too. Kiswana has refused to accept this name, it means indirectly she has disapproved of her own past too. Kiswana denounces her parents as well as their middle -class lifestyle and she accepts an African name. Later she leaves her college and shifts to Brewster Place to connect to the people who she mentions to as 'my people'. Eventually, Kiswana comprehends her previous history and battles with other Afro-American females. We can say in short that Gloria Naylor has presented the character of Kiswana after disciples of the Black power movement of the 1960s.

In a nutshell, we can conclude that women in Afro-American society could not revolt against patriarchal society and their tradition. Women are always considered inferior and mute passive and suppressive. No man can bear women to refuse their order.

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Economic Impacts of GST and New Tax Reforms in India (2026)

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Abstract

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is one of the most transformative fiscal reforms implemented in India. Introduced in 2017, GST replaced a complex indirect tax system with a unified structure, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and compliance. The recent GST 2.0 reforms (2025–2026) aim at simplifying procedures, improving digital infrastructure, and strengthening tax governance.

This research paper provides a detailed analysis of the economic impacts of GST and recent tax reforms in India. It evaluates macroeconomic indicators such as GDP growth, inflation, and revenue trends, along with sector-wise impacts on FMCG, automobile, MSMEs, agriculture, and services. The study uses secondary data and analytical tools such as trend analysis and comparative methods.

The findings suggest that GST has significantly improved tax compliance, reduced cascading effects, and strengthened the fiscal system. However, challenges such as compliance burden, technical issues, and awareness gaps still exist.

1. INTRODUCTION

The taxation system plays a crucial role in shaping the economic structure and fiscal stability of any nation. In India, indirect taxation historically consisted of a complex web of central and state-level taxes such as Value Added Tax (VAT), Service Tax, Central Excise Duty, Entry Tax, and Octroi. This fragmented system created significant inefficiencies, including tax cascading (tax on tax), high compliance costs, lack of transparency, and barriers to interstate trade. These challenges hindered the growth of a unified national market and affected overall economic efficiency. To address these issues, the Government of India introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on July 1, 2017, marking one of the most significant fiscal reforms in the country's history. GST is a destination-based indirect tax levied on the consumption of goods and services. It replaced multiple indirect taxes with a

single, unified tax structure, thereby simplifying the taxation system and promoting economic integration across states.

The primary objective of GST was to create a “One Nation, One Tax” system that eliminates tax barriers between states and enhances ease of doing business. By allowing seamless flow of Input Tax Credit (ITC) across the supply chain, GST reduces the cascading effect of taxes and ensures that tax is levied only on value addition. This has improved transparency, increased efficiency, and strengthened compliance mechanisms in the Indian economy. Since its implementation, GST has undergone several structural and procedural reforms to address initial challenges such as technical glitches, compliance burden, and rate complexities. In recent years, especially during 2025–2026, the government has introduced the concept of GST 2.0 reforms, which aim to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. These reforms focus on:

Rate Rationalization: Simplifying tax slabs to reduce classification disputes and improve clarity. Digital Compliance: Strengthening the GST Network (GSTN) with advanced technology

AI-Based Monitoring: Using artificial intelligence and data analytics to detect tax evasion and improve compliance

Simplified Filing Procedures: Reducing compliance burden, particularly for small businesses and MSMEs. These reforms reflect a shift towards a technology-driven and data-centric tax administration system, aligning India’s taxation framework with global best practices.

From an economic perspective, GST has had wide-ranging impacts on both macroeconomic indicators and sectoral performance. At the macro level, GST has contributed to improved tax buoyancy, enhanced revenue collection, and better fiscal management. It has also influenced key indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation rates, and government revenue trends. By formalizing the economy and increasing tax compliance, GST has expanded the tax base and strengthened the financial position of the government.

At the micro and sectoral level, GST has affected various industries differently. Sectors such as Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), automobiles, logistics, e-commerce, and services have experienced significant structural changes due to GST implementation. While large corporations have benefited from streamlined processes and reduced logistics costs, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have faced challenges related to compliance complexity and digital adaptation.

Despite its numerous advantages, GST is not without challenges. Issues such as frequent rate changes, compliance burden for small businesses, technical glitches in the GST portal, and lack of awareness among taxpayers continue to persist. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of GST.

In this context, the present research paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the economic impacts of GST and recent tax reforms in India (2026). It evaluates both the positive outcomes and existing challenges, while also examining the effectiveness of GST 2.0 reforms in enhancing economic growth and tax efficiency.

Overall, GST represents a transformative step towards modernizing India's taxation system. Its success lies not only in simplifying tax administration but also in fostering economic integration, transparency, and sustainable growth in the Indian economy.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India has attracted significant attention from researchers, policymakers, and international organizations. A large body of literature has examined its impact on economic growth, tax compliance, sectoral performance, and overall efficiency of the taxation system.

Early studies conducted after the implementation of GST in 2017 primarily focused on its structural advantages over the previous indirect tax regime. Researchers highlighted that GST successfully eliminated the cascading effect of taxes by enabling a seamless Input Tax Credit (ITC) mechanism across the supply chain. This led to improved transparency and reduced the overall tax burden on businesses and consumers.

Several empirical studies have analyzed the impact of GST on tax compliance and formalization of the economy. According to various research findings, GST has significantly

increased the number of registered taxpayers, thereby expanding the tax base. The introduction of digital filing systems and invoice matching has reduced tax evasion and enhanced accountability. Studies also suggest that the use of technology in GST administration has played a key role in strengthening compliance mechanisms.

Another important area explored in the literature is the effect of GST on logistics and supply chain efficiency. Prior to GST, interstate trade was hindered by multiple checkpoints and entry taxes, resulting in delays and increased transportation costs. Post-GST studies indicate a considerable reduction in logistics time and costs due to the removal of these barriers. This has contributed to the development of a more integrated national market and improved competitiveness of Indian industries.

The literature also provides insights into the macroeconomic impact of GST, particularly on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation, and government revenue. Some studies suggest that GST has had a positive effect on GDP growth by improving resource allocation and reducing inefficiencies in the tax system. Additionally, GST has contributed to better revenue mobilization for the government through enhanced compliance and a broader tax base. However, the short-term impact on inflation has been mixed, with some sectors experiencing price increases due to changes in tax rates.

Sector-wise analyses form a significant part of GST-related research. The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector has benefited from reduced tax rates and improved supply chain efficiency, leading to increased profitability. The automobile industry has experienced mixed outcomes, with some segments benefiting from lower taxes while others faced higher tax burdens due to the imposition of compensation cess. The services sector has generally seen an increase in tax rates compared to the pre-GST regime, affecting pricing and demand.

A considerable portion of the literature focuses on the challenges faced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). While GST has provided opportunities for market expansion and formalization, many MSMEs have struggled with compliance requirements, frequent return filing, and digital infrastructure issues. Researchers have emphasized the need for simplified procedures and capacity-building measures to support small businesses.

Recent studies (2023–2026) have started evaluating the impact of GST 2.0 reforms, which aim to address the limitations of the initial GST framework. These studies highlight the importance of rate rationalization in reducing classification disputes and simplifying the tax structure. The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics for tax monitoring has been recognized as a major step towards improving compliance and detecting fraudulent activities. Additionally, improvements in the GST portal and digital systems have enhanced user experience and reduced technical glitches.

International organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have also analyzed India's GST system. Their reports suggest that GST has improved India's ranking in ease of doing business and strengthened its fiscal framework. These organizations view GST as a critical reform that enhances economic efficiency, promotes investment, and supports long-term growth. Despite the overall positive outlook, the literature consistently highlights certain persistent challenges. These include:

Complexity in tax rate structure.

Frequent policy changes.

Compliance burden on small businesses.

Technical issues in the GST network.

Lack of awareness among taxpayers.

Researchers have suggested various policy measures to overcome these challenges, such as simplifying tax slabs, improving digital infrastructure, and providing training and support to small taxpayers.

Secondary data from Economic Survey, RBI, and GST portal (2016–2026) is used. Analytical tools include trend analysis and comparative study.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this research is to critically examine the economic implications of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the recent tax reforms introduced in India during 2025–2026. The study focuses on both macroeconomic and sectoral perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of GST's impact.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To Analyze the Structure of GST and Recent Reforms

This objective focuses on understanding the framework of GST, including its components such as CGST, SGST, IGST, and UTGST. It also examines the recent GST 2.0 reforms, including rate rationalization, digital compliance systems, AI-based monitoring, and simplified return filing. The study aims to evaluate how these reforms have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the tax system.

2. To Study the Macroeconomic Impact of GST

The study aims to assess the impact of GST on key macroeconomic indicators such as: Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Inflation rates. Government tax revenue. Fiscal deficit.

This objective helps in understanding whether GST has contributed to economic growth, price stability, and improved fiscal management in India.

3. To Examine Sector-wise Performance

GST has affected different sectors in varied ways. This objective focuses on analyzing the impact of GST on major sectors such as:

FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods) Automobile industry

MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) Agriculture sector

Service sector

The aim is to identify sector-specific benefits, challenges, and structural changes after GST implementation.

4. To Evaluate Tax Compliance and Formalization

One of the major goals of GST is to improve tax compliance and reduce tax evasion. This objective examines:

Increase in number of registered taxpayers Adoption of digital tax filing systems Reduction in informal economic activities

It also evaluates the role of technology and AI in strengthening compliance.

5. To Identify Challenges in GST Implementation

Despite its benefits, GST faces several challenges. This objective aims to identify key issues such as: Complexity in tax structure

Compliance burden, especially for

MSMEs Technical glitches in GST portal

Lack of awareness among taxpayers

Understanding these challenges is essential for policy improvement.

6. To Suggest Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, this objective aims to propose practical and effective policy suggestions to improve the GST system. These may include:

Simplification of tax rates Strengthening digital infrastructure Reducing compliance burden

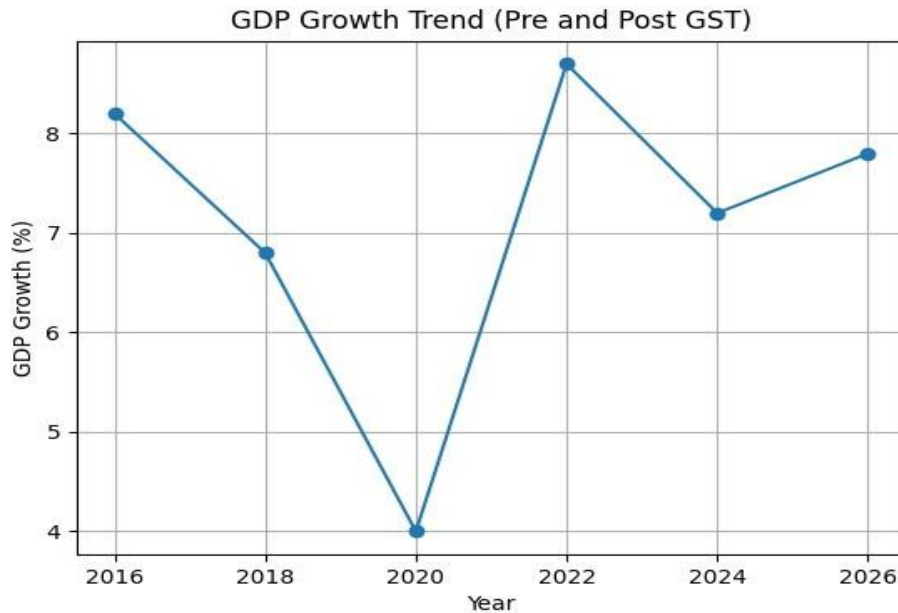
Enhancing taxpayer awareness and support systems

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an analytical and descriptive approach using secondary data from the Economic Survey of India, RBI reports, GST portal, and Ministry of Finance publications. It covers the period 2010–2026, divided into pre-GST (2010–2017) and post-GST (2017–2026). Various methods such as trend analysis, comparative analysis, graphical representation, and sectoral analysis are used to evaluate GST's economic impact. Trend analysis examines GDP, inflation, and revenue growth, while comparative analysis highlights structural changes before and after GST. Graphs are used for better visualization, and sectoral analysis helps understand industry-wise effects, ensuring a comprehensive and reliable evaluation of GST reforms.

5. GDP Growth Analysis

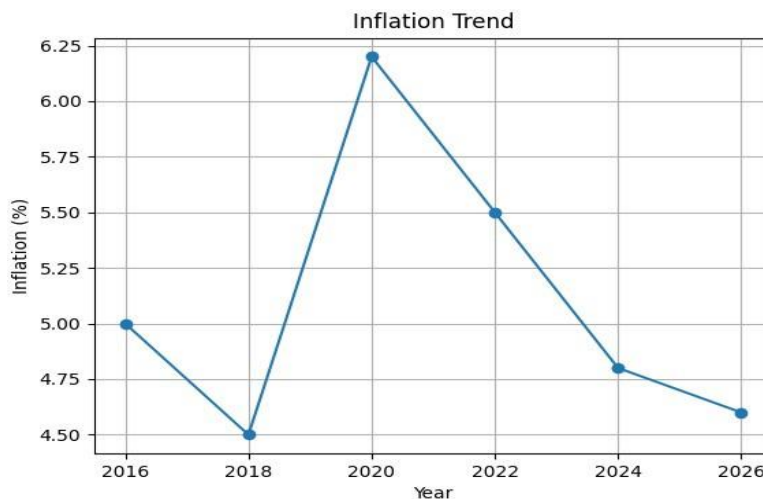
GST improved logistics efficiency and formalization, contributing to GDP growth.



4 The graph shows post-GST recovery and stable growth trend.

6. Inflation Analysis

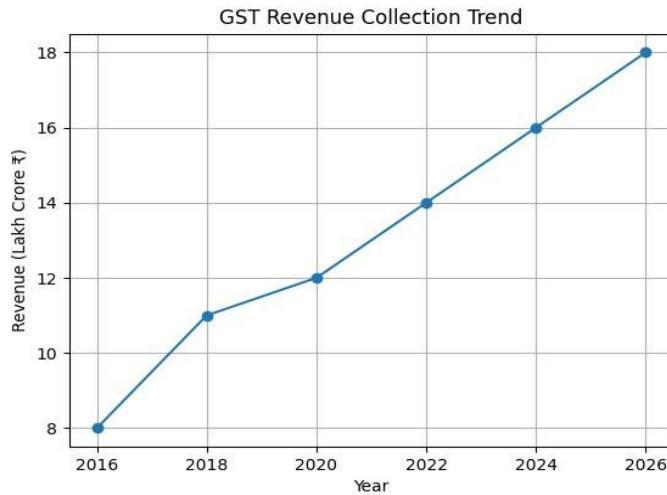
GST contributed to long-term price stability after initial fluctuations.



Inflation stabilized due to reduced cascading taxes.

7. GST Revenue

GST collections increased significantly due to improved compliance.



The upward trend reflects strong fiscal performance.

8. Sectoral Analysis

The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has led to significant structural changes across various sectors of the Indian economy. By eliminating cascading taxes and introducing a unified tax framework, GST has improved operational efficiency, enhanced transparency, and reduced overall costs of production and distribution.

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector has experienced notable gains due to GST. The removal of multiple indirect taxes has streamlined the supply chain and reduced logistics and warehousing costs. The abolition of interstate checkpoints has facilitated faster movement of goods, thereby improving distribution efficiency and reducing delivery time. These changes have contributed to lower product prices and increased consumer demand.

Similarly, the automobile sector has benefited from a reduction in the overall tax burden compared to the pre- GST regime. The simplified tax structure has improved pricing transparency and reduced the cost of vehicles, leading to a positive impact on demand. Additionally, manufacturers have been able to optimize their production and distribution strategies due to the elimination of state-wise tax barriers.

The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector has experienced a mixed impact. On one hand, GST has encouraged formalization and enabled access to input tax credit, which has improved competitiveness. On the other hand, the sector has faced challenges related to compliance burden, frequent return filing, and technological requirements. Despite initial difficulties, GST has gradually integrated MSMEs into the formal economic framework.

The agriculture sector, although largely exempt from GST, has benefited indirectly through improved logistics and supply chain efficiency. The removal of tax barriers has facilitated better market access for agricultural produce, thereby reducing wastage and improving price realization for farmers.

The service sector has also undergone significant transformation under GST. The introduction of a unified tax structure has simplified tax compliance for service providers operating across multiple states. This has reduced administrative complexities and improved the ease of doing business, thereby promoting growth in the sector.

9. Challenges of GST

Despite its transformative impact, the implementation of GST has been accompanied by several challenges that have affected its efficiency and effectiveness. One of the primary issues is the compliance burden, particularly for small and medium enterprises. The requirement of frequent return filing and complex procedures has increased administrative workload and compliance costs.

Technical issues associated with the GST portal have also posed significant challenges. Instances of server downtime, system errors, and difficulties in filing returns have disrupted business operations, especially during peak filing periods. These technical inefficiencies have hindered the smooth functioning of the tax system. Another major concern is the delay in refund processing, particularly for exporters and MSMEs. Delayed refunds have led to working capital constraints, affecting the liquidity and operational efficiency of businesses. This issue has been a persistent challenge since the implementation of GST.

Furthermore, the existence of multiple tax slabs has added to the complexity of the system. The classification of goods and services under different tax rates often creates confusion among taxpayers, leading to disputes and compliance difficulties.

In addition, a lack of awareness and understanding of GST provisions among small traders and rural businesses has limited its effectiveness. Many taxpayers face difficulties in adapting to digital compliance systems, highlighting the need for greater awareness and training initiatives.

10. Conclusion

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) represents a significant milestone in the reform of India's indirect taxation system. By replacing a fragmented tax structure with a unified and comprehensive framework, GST has enhanced transparency, improved compliance, and facilitated economic integration across the country.

The reform has contributed positively to economic growth by reducing logistics costs, improving supply chain efficiency, and expanding the tax base. It has also played a crucial role in stabilizing inflation in the long run and strengthening government revenue collection.

However, the effectiveness of GST has been constrained by several challenges, including compliance burden, technical issues, and delays in refund processing. These challenges have particularly affected small and medium enterprises, highlighting the need for continuous policy refinement.

The introduction of recent reforms, including digitalization and the use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, has strengthened the GST framework and improved its efficiency. Moving forward, further simplification of the tax structure, enhancement of digital infrastructure, and increased taxpayer awareness will be essential to maximize the benefits of GST.

In conclusion, GST has emerged as a powerful instrument for economic reform and growth in India. With sustained improvements and policy support, it has the potential to significantly contribute to long-term economic development and global competitiveness.

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Women, Power, and Silence: Gendered Negotiations in the Patriarchal World of Chinua Achebe

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Abstract:

African societies cherish long traditions and tough social mechanism. Many literary personalities have displayed these traditions in their literature. Chinua Achebe is one of the most prominent African writers. His literature explores the life, culture, and views of the people in Igbo society in Nigeria. Achebe often talks about power, tradition, and social change.

In many of his works, men enjoy supreme power. Women folk often appear dormant or limited in their roles. They are limited up to the home and children. They scarcely speak in public events. At the superficial level, it seems that women are voiceless. However, when one goes through the literature carefully, we can realize that women still cherish a kind of power. Their power is noiseless. It is observed in domestic life, religion, and emotional strength.

This paper shows how women folk survive in a male-dominated society in the pages of Achebe's novels. It primarily discusses in 'Things Fall Apart', but it also reflects in 'No Longer at Ease' and 'Arrow of God'. The paper explores the ways women face silence, how they exhibit strength, and how they influence societal structure even when men regulate public power. The research paper shows that women in Achebe's literary world are not only victims. They are also protectors of culture and family life. Deep strength and wisdom lies underneath their silence.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Masculinity, Gender roles, Family structure, Social rituals, authority, womenfolk, Earth Goddess etc.

Introduction

Chinua Achebe is one of the most remarkable voices in African literature. He portrays about the life of the Igbo community before and during British rule. His literary works explore life in villages, social rituals, religion, and familial relationship. Patriarchy is one of the significant themes in Achebe's work. Patriarchy signifies the system wherein men hold more power than women-folk. Men play the role of family head. They enjoy the authority to speak in public meetings. Men can control land and affairs of property. Women generally confined in the domestic space.

In Achebe's novels, the people in village community are strictly adhere to the traditions and rituals. The roles of men and women are specified by these traditions and rituals. In such society, men are considered to be strong, brave and successful farmers. Society expect from women folk that they should be limited to kitchen and utensil cleaning and brining up their children.

However, Chinua Achebe not ready to depict women as weak and passive. Having focused on his work, one can observe that women folk are still influencing the society in one way or the other. They shape the family. They are pivotal in continuing tradition and rituals from one generation to the other. They raise children, try to make them ideal citizen. They also play significant role in religion.

In the novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe narrates the life story of Okonkwo, a proud and powerful Person, who believes that displaying emotion is a sign of weakness. He doesn't want to be like his father. Because of this, he frequently behaves rudely with women-folk. Achebe puts it in these words, "Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand." (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 13). This statement confirms the strict hierarchy in power structure among the family members. Okonkwo holds control on his wives and children and thus fear prevails the household. In spite of this, women characters in the novel demonstrate their strength. Okonkwo's daughter Ezinma plays a very significant role in his life. His second wife Ekwefi is a figure of courage and strong love. Women therefore survive in a space between **power and silence**. They don't have authority to speak publicly in the society. Even though

they influence the emotional and cultural life of the society. In this paper the researcher, explores how women adjust their place in this patriarchal mechanism of the society. It looks into their silence, their suffering, and their hidden strength.

Patriarchy and Social Structure in Igbo Society

In the literary works of Chinua Achebe, the Igbo community is shown as a society that abides by strong traditions and clear social norms. These social norms regulate the day-to-day life of the people. These social norms guides people about their behaviour, about their work, how to work, and how to communicate with the other people. The traditions also fix the roles of men and women in the society. In many village community, men rush in the marketplace or in special meeting to discuss various issues. They discuss about disputes between families. They control the punishments for various crimes. They also decide how to make secure the village from enemies. Male elders and eminent males enjoy the privilege of attending these meetings. Women in Igbo society are not allowed to participate in such meetings. They are not allowed to raise their voices in such gatherings.

Titles are considered to be the matter of prestige for the men in Igbo community. A man gets titles by virtue of his hard work, success in agriculture and farming, bravery, and respect in the Igbo society. Titles symbolizes that a man is powerful and responsible. Members from women folk have no right to receive any title in the same way. Thus, men achieve higher social status in the village.

On the other side, women folk mostly perform their works in the domestic space. Their daily include kitchen work, raising their children, and maintaining the household neat and clean. They assist men in agricultural activities. In most of the cases, women are responsible to cultivate crops such as cocoyam, beans, and vegetables. Such cultivation supports the livelihood of family. Unfortunately, in spite of performing such hard work, the women folk do not deserve same respect as compare to men-folk, in Igbo society.

In the novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe delineates the way society values only masculinity, courage, power and success. In the novel, anything that seems feeble or soft is often called “womanly.” This proves that the society links strength with men and weakness with women. Achebe elaborates this idea in a clear line from the novel: “No matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children he was not really a man.” (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 53)

This quotationunearths the important belief in the society. A man is supposed to control his familial life. He must display supremacy over his wives and children. If he fails to do this, people may consider that he is weak. Because of this notion, many men experience pressure to behave strongly and strictly at all times.

Such expectation gives birth to problems in family life. Men always try to show their power by using rude words or even violence. Instead of showing kindness or patience, they began to behave in a strict and dominant way. They consider that such kind of behaviour will be responsible for getting them respect in the community.

The character of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*openly represents this kind of ideology. Okonkwo is a powerful and eminent farmer. He enjoys various titles and got respect in his village. Even though he is under constant fear of weakness. His father, Unoka, was a failure and lazy kind of person, due to which, Okonkwo fears becoming like his father.

Many of his actions are controlled by this fear. He always strives to show that he is strong and powerful. He thinks that showing emotion, kindness, or gentleness is a symbol of weakness. Consequently, he sometimes behaves strictly and rudely with his wives and children.

One significant event worth mentioning here during the ***Week of Peace***. The *Week of Peace* is a sacred period in the religious calendar of Igbo. During this time, it is expected that the community must live peacefully. People in the community must avoid anger, violence, and fighting. The villagers often survive under the impression that if they violet this rule, the Goddess Earth may punish the whole community by spoiling the crops.

But is it noticeable that, Okonkwo gets angry with one of his wives, and thus, violets the sacred rule. He beats her, in fury. Having violated the law of the *Week of Peace*, the priest of the Goddess Earth punishes him.

This moment violation holds a significance in the story. It signifies that Okonkwo's personal fury is an act of breaking the cared rules of Igbo community. Even though men enjoy supreme power

in the society, they are still supposed to honour religious traditions. No person, not even a powerful figure like Okonkwo, is above the religious laws of the Gods. The punishment itself is an important lesson for the community, which compels the people to think that the power should not be used recklessly, without limits. Even in a patriarchal society like Igbo, human behaviour is controlled by the sacred spiritual laws.

This episode also throws flood of light on the complex nature of Igbo community. On one side, it is observed that men have control over complete family affairs. On the other hand, the society honour and pay respect to peace and harmony. Religious notions, thus, support in maintaining balance in the community.

Women-folk, otherwise voiceless in public domain, are seriously linked to these spiritual traditions. The *Goddess Earth*, who is one of the most influential deities in the Igbo religious belief, is female. This proves that feminine power still holds significant place in the spiritual corpus of Igbo community. Thus, the depiction of Igbo community by Achebe is a complex one. It is a community where men enjoy visible power in politics and domestic life. At the same time, spiritual traditions and moral laws prompt people that power must be regulated and balanced wisely. Through this elaborated description of social environment, Achebe prompts readers to understand tradition, gender roles, and authority, to combine and work together in Igbo community. The mechanism allows men supreme authority, but it also generates tensions, pressures, and moral encounters within the society.

Silence and the Lives of Women:

Chinua Achebe, a novelist, portrays women as voiceless. They live a silent life, with no social participation in public discussions, planning, problem or solution. These activities are generally associated with men. They are engaged in all community work, discussion, planning, problem-solving, and decision-making. This system implies women's voices are rarely heard or say not heard. They have no role in decision-making, nor do they hold any political post.

This is the long-time followed social rule that the community follows to maintain order and harmony. It's not women's choice to remain quiet, but a societal obligation. It's predetermined by the society where women will speak and be silent at times. An example clarifies it more, stating that

whenever elders of the community gather to discuss village matters, women hear it from a distance, from home, without directly participating in it or speaking in front of any group.

Their silence must not be misunderstood by generalising that they don't hold any feelings or form any thoughts. According to Achebe, they think deeply and feel intensely. Their emotions appear in quiet moments, which exhibit deep emotions; they express them in homely spaces, converse with other women, and show simple gestures, which make the readers understand their hidden struggle. And when we talk about Achebe, he best deals with the craft; he portrays women through their struggles and simple actions.

One of the best examples can be drawn from the novel 'Things Fall Apart' when young Ekwefi, one of Okonkwo's wives, steps up to make a brave decision to leave her first husband and marry Okonkwo. This uncommon action of hers shows courage, strong will and independence at the same time. Though it was risky to make such a free will decision and live in a Patriarchal society, she followed her heart and risked the possible outcomes. She hoped for a happy life with Okonkwo initially, but soon she was surrounded by sorrow. She gave birth many times but could not keep any of her children alive. In Achebe's words, this is best stated as- "Ekwefi had borne ten children and nine of them had died in infancy." (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 75)

This rightly shows how much pain she held in her heart. Losing one child leaves a lady heartbroken, and she lost nine of her own kids, which left her utterly miserable. This is Achebe's master stroke in exhibiting women's quiet lives in their struggles and sufferings. This does not mean that she is weak. It is just that she does not openly share her grief with the public or complain in such spaces, but remain quite, holding her grief within. This is her choice, or maybe the traditionally followed social norms set by society for women. She keeps her pain to herself, unseen and unheard. She shows great emotional strength by her action of following daily chores, care towards her family and living life in her own way even after the heavy losses.

Ezinma, the only child who survived, becomes her deep love, her strength and a matter of constant worry too. As she was the only child and friend she had, she was equally very protective and conscious of her health and safety. She does not want to lose their beautiful, affectionate and friendly relationship as her daughter became the softer side of her life. With her, she could express, laugh, share, and basically live along with the harsh authority of patriarchal society represented through her husband.

Achebe's motive to picture the emotional world of women through this relationship is met correctly. Though his female characters have no control over public power. Yet they hold a strong influence in the home. Their love, care and patience they hold for their family is like nurturing the root to build a strong family tree. And this, ironically, is the life of many women in a patriarchal society. They suffer silently and smile for the world not to know their pain. They only exhibit courage, resilience and affection to the world they live in.

Achebe describes women as complex characters. They remain silent and powerless superficially. But when we read through their lives, they hold a hidden strength. They have developed their own weapons for survival; it's their patience, love and endurance. In fact, Ekwefi characterises the emotional struggle of women in the patriarchy. She holds a deep feeling, unbreakable love and hidden courage within her, which is depicted through the small actions and homely gestures. Her silence does not mean emptiness, but her strength in silent form.

Women and Spiritual Power

Generally, in Achebe's stories, women are not politically powerful, nor do they attend public meetings or contribute to decision-making. These are for men; for this reason, women appear weak socially. On the other side, he also characterised women as greater power, as important figures, by giving them a sacred place to practice decision-making. It is in the religious and spiritual world. The Igbo community believe in gods, spirits and sacred traditions, where they listen to a woman.

She is the most powerful female God. The *Goddess Earth*, also known as *Ani*. She holds huge respect in the community as she represents fertility and life. It is believed that she protects the land, controls the growth of crops and moral rules of the society. So they never bring the laws associated with her. They believe that yield is nice when the land is healthy and crops fail when Mother Earth becomes angry. Thus, they give due respect to the Earth goddess as she gives food and life to her people.

The Igbo religion means this feminine power as sacred and an epitome of justice and morality. For this reason, they perform traditional rituals to ask her forgiveness if someone goes against the law. Here comes the face-off of the notion- 'woman being weak'. In the spiritual world, she is the most

powerful energy. No one can survive without her blessing. That's why she has the most revered position in society.

Even the priestesses play a pivotal role in this religious system. They are the women who serve Gods and spirits. They are considered as Messengers of God who become the bridge between God and humans. Thus, people come, ask questions, seek guidance, and receive blessings for their lives. Her words are considered as words of god for which people listen to her carefully and give her a special kind of authority and respect.

Achebe, in his novel *Things Fall Apart*, introduces us to a priestess **Chielo**, who is an ordinary woman in appearance; her conversation, laughter, stories, and daily chores are all the same as those of other women. What makes her different from others is her serving the *Oracle of the Hills* and the Caves. Her impersonation changes completely when the spirit of Oracle talks through her. Villagers regard her as the voice of God and hence, listen to each word carefully and respect her deeply during this time, including the mightiest men. No one could dare interrupt, disobey, or challenge her message. This depicts spiritual power and authority as the supreme power.

The scene where Chielo walks to Okonkwo's door one night and asks for Ezinma, his daughter with Ekwefi, turns out to be the climax of the story, leaving the reader in utmost tension. Ezinma's parents couldn't oppose, as Chielo, the messenger of God, was meant to be speaking Oracle's voice. There was no intention of opposing God itself, but the worried mother followed Chielo, who was carrying Ezinma on her back to the forest wood that led to the shrine where the Oracle was served.

Through this scene, Achebe depicted spiritual authority as the strongest and most supreme over the other authorities. Okonkwo, who practised control and authority, being a core male of the patriarchal society, steps back when it comes to greater religious power. Achebe successfully convinces his reader that no political, physical or social power can show up above the spiritual power. This is the complex nature of power in the Igbo society, where a woman holds the highest position of respect and influences society by her decisions. Chielo is characterised as a normal figure exchanging roles when she is the most powerful as a priestess.

Conclusion:

Achebe balances the portrayal of women in his novels by silencing her in public and putting her maximum religious influence. He contrasts her role with having no political life nor attending any

public gathering to contributing in shaping the cultural and family life. She protects traditions, teaches children about beliefs and customs, takes part in rituals and ceremonies, hence maintaining the cultural life of the community. Even though she is not the leader of the public, but she is the highest spiritual authority through the depiction of Chielo as Earth goddess, who takes women's power in a different form.

While concluding Achebe's novel, one can say that women's world is not empty, but powerful, rich in meaning, beliefs, and strength to swallow all sorrows. A few authoritative roles like leading political and public gatherings, attending meetings, speaking in public spaces, controlling family authority, establish patriarchy, whereas women rarely speak in public but influence strongly in their quieter forms, which gets confirmed on reading his other works like *No Longer at Ease*, *Arrow of God*, which says women are not powerless.

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**Urban Dynamics and Existential Dilemma in the Selected Novels of Aravind Adiga's
The White Tiger and Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City:
Bombay Lost and Found***

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Abstract

This research paper undertakes a comparative literary analysis of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) and Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* (2004), examining how both texts negotiate the fractured terrain of Indian urban modernity. Drawing on theoretical frameworks of postcolonial urbanism, diaspora studies, eco-criticism, and subaltern theory, the article explores the existential crises generated by rapid urbanization, globalized identity, migrant displacement, marginalized voices, and environmental degradation. Integrating direct textual evidence within framework, the discussion reveals how both works construct the Indian city as a site of simultaneous promise and structural violence.

Keywords

Globalized identity, diaspora, immigrants, marginalized subjectivity, environmental degradation, urbanization, existentialism, ethics, subaltern theory, class and caste logic.

Introduction : The City as Existential Crucible

The modern Indian city occupies a paradoxical position in contemporary literature. It is simultaneously a theatre of aspiration and a machinery of destruction. In Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008), Balram Halwai journeys from the impoverished 'Darkness' of rural Bihar to the neon-lit corridors of Delhi and Bangalore, only to discover that upward mobility exacts

a catastrophic moral cost. Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* (2004) offers a parallel meditation, a diasporic writer's attempt to rediscover Bombay after years in New York, confronting a city that has mutated into something simultaneously familiar and ferociously alien. Both texts converge on a single existential question: what does it cost a person psychologically, morally, ecologically to survive the postcolonial metropolis?

Review of Literature

This research paper argues that Adiga and Mehta, working across the genres of literary fiction and creative non-fiction, produce a sustained critique of Indian urban modernity that encompasses class violence, diasporic dislocation, migrant precarity, marginalized subjectivities, and environmental degradation. Many renowned Indian English writers have gone through the lenses of postcolonial theory, diaspora studies, subaltern critique, and eco-criticism, both works constitute what might be called a counter-archive of urban India.

Urbanization and City Life: The Metropolis as Labyrinth

Adiga represents the Indian city as a space of violent contrast, where the glitter of globalized capital is built on an infrastructure of poverty and exclusion. Balram reflects early in the novel: "In the old days there were one thousand castes and destinies in India. These days, there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies" (Adiga 54). This binary maps directly onto the city's spatial organization the affluent sectors of South Delhi and Gurgaon glowing with electricity while areas like Laxmangarh and Dhanbad remain in perpetual 'Darkness.'

Mehta similarly catalogues Bombay's extremities of scale. He observes that the city 'asks you to choose. You are one of two people here: you are either one of the rich or one of the poor. There is no middle class in Bombay, not really' (Mehta 3). Both authors thus arrive at the same

structural diagnosis: the postcolonial metropolis does not dissolve pre-existing hierarchies; it intensifies and spatializes them. Urbanization, in these texts, is not a democratizing process but a mechanism for concentrating both wealth and suffering.

The physical city in both works is itself a text of power. Roads, electricity, clean water, and legal protection are distributed according to class and caste logics that predate urban modernity and survive its supposed rationalizations. Adiga's Balram notes with characteristic bitterness: 'You, young man, were looking for a shortcut. But in the darkness, there are no shortcuts' (Adiga 34), a line that operates at once literally and as urban allegory.

Urban Immigrants and Marginalized Voices: The Subaltern in the City

Balram Halwai is the archetypal urban immigrant arriving in Delhi with no capital beyond intelligence and resentment, inserted into the domestic economy of the rich as a driver and servant. His famous framing of the servant class as chickens trapped in a 'Rooster Coop' is one of the novel's most penetrating sociological observations:

The greatest thing to come out of this country in the ten thousand years of its history is the Rooster Coop. Go to Old Delhi . . . and observe the coop . . . The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the bodies of their brothers thrown into the back of the van. And they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. (Adiga 173–74)

This passage illuminates how the urban system produces its own self-policing among the poor a structure that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak might recognize as the discursive impossibility of subaltern speech: the servant class internalizes the master's logic so completely that resistance becomes almost unthinkable (Spivak 271).

Mehta's *Maximum City* offers an even wider gallery of urban margins. The bar dancer Monalisa, the gangster Ajit Singh, the communally scarred mill workers, and the sex workers of Kamathipura are all figures whom the city's official narratives render invisible. Mehta writes of bar dancers: 'They are the most vulnerable section of Bombay's working poor. They earn money, they send it home, they survive. The city takes what it needs from them and gives nothing back' (Mehta 214). His methodological commitment living within these communities for extended periods is itself an ethical insistence on their legibility and complexity.

The existential predicament of these figures lies in liminality, caught between a village that no longer fits and a city that never fully accepts. As Homi Bhabha argues, this 'in-between space' is not merely a condition of lack but a productive, if painful, site of identity negotiation (Bhabha 2). For Adiga and Mehta, however, the romantic potential of that liminality is consistently undercut by material violence.

Globalized Identity and Diaspora: The City Between Two Worlds

Mehta's positionality as a returning diasporic subject shapes the entire epistemology of *Maximum City*. He approaches Bombay having lived in New York, carrying what Arjun Appadurai calls the 'imagination' of a 'deterritorialized' subject one for whom place is always refracted through multiple elsewhere's (Appadurai 4). His return generates a mode of double vision: 'I grew up in Bombay. But I had been away for twenty-one years. When I came back, the city was a foreigner to me and I to it' (Mehta 3). This estrangement is productive precisely because it defamiliarizes what residents have normalized.

Adiga interrogates globalization from the other direction from below. Balram is acutely, bitterly aware of the global economy from his position as a servant. He observes his employer Ashok, who returns from America with liberal pretensions that do not alter the power dynamics of their

relationship in any significant way. 'The dreams of the rich and the dreams of the poor they never overlap, do they?' (Adiga 105). Globalization, Adiga implies, produces a cosmopolitan class whose values circulate globally while their exploitation remains stubbornly local.

Bangalore, where Balram eventually establishes himself, is coded throughout as India's global interface the outsourcing capital, the IT hub, the city that presents itself to the world as India's modernity. Yet Balram's insertion into this economy is achieved through crime, not meritocracy. The novel's savage irony is that globalization's promise of mobility is structurally accessible only to those who already possess capital social, economic, or educational. For Balram, the only route in is transgression.

Eco-Criticism and Climate Change: The Urban Ecological Body

Neither *The White Tiger* nor *Maximum City* positions itself explicitly as environmental literature, yet both are saturated with the symptoms of urban ecological crisis. An eco-critical reading reveals that environmental degradation in these texts is not incidental but structural distributed, like poverty itself, according to the logics of class and caste.

Adiga's descriptions of Delhi convey a city whose modernity coexists with systemic filth. The Yamuna River, sacred and supposedly protected, runs thick with industrial and domestic effluent. Balram describes neighbourhoods in the 'Darkness' as places 'where the mud was black and the smell was of sewage' (Adiga 14), while the enclaves of the rich are protected by walls, generators, and private water supplies. As scholars of environmental justice have long observed, ecological risk is never evenly distributed it pools in the spaces of the poor (Bullard 7).

Mehta's Bombay is similarly burdened. The monsoon celebrated in tourist imagery and Bollywood is experienced in the slums as catastrophe: 'Every year the city is drowned. Every

year the slums fill with water and the rich drive their SUVs to higher ground. The same city, different floods' (Mehta 52). This formulation anticipates the core insight of contemporary climate justice discourse: that climate vulnerability is not a natural condition but a produced one, manufactured by unequal urban planning and capital distribution.

Reading through Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's postcolonial eco-critical framework, both texts suggest that colonialism's extraction logic the treating of land and bodies as resources has been reproduced in the postcolonial city, which continues to extract value from its most vulnerable residents while offloading environmental costs onto them (Huggan and Tiffin 5). The urban poor of Adiga's and Mehta's cities are, in this sense, both economic and ecological subjects.

Existential Dilemma: Self, Ethics, and the Cost of Survival

The existential core of both texts lies in the question of what kind of self emerges from the experience of urban survival. Adiga's treatment is the more explicit and more brutal. Balram's murder of Ashok is framed not as an act of revolutionary violence but as a cold, calculated transaction freedom purchased at the cost of his family's lives and his own moral coherence. He writes: 'I'd like to say it was the night I became human. But it was more the night I left the human world behind' (Adiga 263). The city, Adiga implies, does not ennoble; it simply resets the hierarchy of predation.

Mehta's existential inquiry is more diffuse but no less disturbing. The gangster Ajit Singh, who has killed over forty men for the Bombay underworld, articulates his survival logic with terrifying lucidity: 'In this city, you are either the hunter or the hunted. There is no third option' (Mehta 157). What is striking is that this logic stripped of its extreme expression mirrors the structuring

condition of every marginalized figure in *Maximum City*: the bar dancer, the migrant worker, the riot survivor.

Albert Camus's conception of the absurd the confrontation between human desire for meaning and the world's silence is useful here (Camus 21). Both Balram and Mehta's subjects are absurd heroes of a specifically urban kind: they act, they transgress, they persist, in full knowledge that the city will not reward justice or punish injustice with any consistency. The existential dilemma is thus not whether to act, but how to act when the ethical coordinates that should guide action have been corroded by structural necessity.

Conclusion: Literature as Urban Counter-Archive

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* together constitute a powerful counter-archive to the triumphalist narratives of Indian urban growth. Where the language of development celebrates GDP figures and infrastructure investment, these texts speak of Rooster Coops, flooded slums, bar dancers abandoned by the state, and entrepreneurs whose success rests on murder. They do not deny the city's energy; they insist on accounting for who pays for it.

The urban immigrant, the diasporic returnee, the subaltern worker, the ecologically exposed poor, these figures, present throughout both texts, map the full contour of what urbanization actually produces when stripped of its official narratives. The existential dilemma that runs through both works how to survive, how to maintain selfhood, how to locate meaning within a system designed to deny it to most is not merely a literary theme. It is the lived condition of millions.

As urbanization accelerates across the Global South and as the pressures of climate crisis, economic inequality, and cultural dislocation intensify, the questions Adiga and Mehta raise

will only grow more urgent. Literature of this kind does not resolve these problems; it makes them legible, human, and impossible to dismiss.

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Disclosure of Information and Investor Decision-making in Development of Indian Financial Markets

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Abstract:

As the global financial markets are growing and the world is rapidly getting technologically advanced, the importance of information disclosure in terms of safeguarding of the investor interest and stability in the market is becoming essential. When it comes to the Indian financial system and disclosure practices, it is a critical tool to maintaining transparency and building investor confidence in capital markets that are controlled by one of the institutions, the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

The paper then defines the disclosure of information and its significance in the contemporary financial markets and examines how the legal regulations, technological processes and quality of information disclosed affects the investment decision-making process of investors. The paper examines through the analysis of a case and a review of related literature carried out both in India and abroad the practical use of information disclosure in enhancing market transparency, reducing information asymmetry, and making the investor decision making process in the markets like the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange of India more effective.

Keywords: *information disclosure, financial markets, investor decision-making.*

1. Introduction

The stability and development of financial markets in the environment of globalization and active informatization is not only determined by the circulation of capital and the efficiency of the market, but the quality and timeliness of information disclosure plays a significant role. Disclosure practices are very crucial in the Indian financial system to enhance transparency, investor confidence, and order in the market under regulatory supervision of the Securities and Exchange Board of India. Being one of the key processes of market functioning, information disclosure offers investors with the necessary information to make a choice, but it is also a key tool to ensure fairness and transparency in the financial markets [1]. It is against this changing financial environment that this paper seeks to discuss the dynamic relationship between the financial market information disclosure and investor decision making and its importance to the stability of the market and protection of the investor.

Owing to the swift development of information technology and the growing integration of international financial markets, information disclosure settlement has been significantly changed in form and content. Historically, disclosure practices were primarily undertaken in the form of periodic financial statements, annual reports and other official announcements

given out by companies listed in stock exchange like the Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange of India. Nonetheless, the introduction of internet, digital platforms and social media has led to companies and market players being able to spread and receive financial information at a faster and more efficient rate. This has increased the horizon of the disclosure of information and enhanced its access and timeliness. Simultaneously, it has also come with new issues, such as information overload, misinformation, or the issue of credibility and reliability of information that can be found publicly.

As important stakeholders in the financial market, investors are critical towards dictating the efficiency and stability of the operations in the market. Their decisions on investments directly affect the performance of the market as well as the price discovery and the distribution of financial resources. The quality and the transparency of information disclosure have a great impact on the possibility of the investors to assess the risk, evaluate the performance of the company, and make rational investment decisions. As a result, proper disclosure practices also make the difference in better investor confidence, improved market liquidity, and financial stability. It is due to this fact that the issues of the involvement of information disclosure in the decision-making of investors and the possibility of enhancing the quality of disclosure have become significant topics of interest in scholarly studies and financial regulation.

This paper thus looks at the behavioral change in the investor decision making when information is disclosed through different mechanisms and the factors that are at play in such changes. The research compares disclosure practices in local and overseas financial market using a combination of theoretical analysis, literature review, and case-based discussion. Besides, the paper examines the recent changes in disclosure policies and reporting policies, such as the regulatory frameworks that have been adopted by authorities, like the Reserve Bank of India and the Securities and Exchange Board of India, to offer the theoretical knowledge and policy suggestions to enhance investor protection and improvement of financial market practices.

Financial market disclosure of information has in the age of the information economy not only disappeared to be a crucial regulatory instrument, but is also a significant element in establishing transparent, fair and efficient markets. Through the analysis of the role and effect of information disclosure in modern financial systems, the research aims to help in understanding more about the effects of disclosure practices on the investor behavior and the performance of the market. The results will be intended to offer theoretical rationale as well as practical recommendations of how to improve the stability, transparency, and sustainable development of financial markets in future.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Financial Market Information Disclosure

2.1 Concept and Importance of Information Disclosure in Financial Markets As one of the basic mechanisms of financial market functioning, information disclosure is the process in the framework of which companies and other participants in the market inform the investors and other interested parties in a publicly accessible way. Such information usually consists of information about the financial status of a firm, its performance, exposure to risks and its corporate governance. This disclosure is intended to allow the investors and other stakeholders to have access to quality information that can guide them in making sound investment decisions and participation in the market [2].

The significance of information disclosure may be viewed in a number of ways. First, it is the source of necessary information to be analyzed and evaluated by investors that may help them to comprehend the real performance, financial stability and the possibility of future development of the enterprise better. The Indian financial market disclosure practices as stipulated by the regulatory

agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India, have given the listed companies the obligation to periodically release financial reports and corporate announcements through stock exchange markets such as the Bombay Stock Exchange, and the National Stock Exchange of India. This level of transparency assists in eliminating information asymmetry that exists between the firms and investors, builds investor confidence as well as leading to stability in the market in general.

Second, there should be good information disclosure that will facilitate the efficient operation of financial markets. The clarity of the disclosure system enhances market efficiency, as it gives investors the power to invest significantly better in business and projects with high growth potential and good financial results. This leads to efficient distribution of resources in the economy which contributes to sustainable economic development.

Moreover, the information disclosure also helps to enhance the corporate governance and the regulatory environment. Regulators and investors would therefore have a better view of the actions of the corporate management through transparent and standardized disclosure practices. This aids in avoiding misweaving of information, financial manipulations and fraudulent activities and also safeguards valid right and interests of investors. Finally, there should be a robust information disclosure system that promotes the creation of a fair, competitive and trusted financial market environment.

2.2 Theoretical Models and Frameworks of Information Disclosure

Signaling theory, agency theory, and market competition theory are the main information disclosure theoretical models [3]. These theoretical views describe the processes where information disclosure affects market behavior, corporate governance and economic efficiency.

According to signaling theory, information disclosure is a signal that is given by a company to the market, to give an insight on the financial health of the firm, as well as the performance of the firm in its operations, and future outlook. The companies make the investors see the real picture through releasing of financial reports, corporate announcements, and strategic information. These signals are interpreted by market members and their investment decisions adjusted to them, which makes market prices closer to the intrinsic value of companies traded on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange of India.

The agency theory is concerned with the conflict of interest that can happen between the corporate managers and the shareholders in the company governance system. Managers also have a tendency of seeking their individual interests that are not necessarily in the best interest of the shareholders. Information disclosure, in this regard, is a valuable tool of governance enhancing transparency and enhancing scrutiny by investors, regulators and other stakeholders. The regulatory frameworks created by the institutions like the Securities and Exchange Board of India obliges the companies to report the relevant financial and operational information, which helps to reduce agency costs, managerial opportunism, and increase the corporate value and market efficiency. The market competition theory highlights that information disclosure is important in enhancing fair and efficient competition among companies. Once information is highly accessible and in general there is a high availability of information investors are able to do comparisons between companies on the basis of the quality of product, the financial performance of the company, the quality of services and costs involved. This openness promotes the firms to enhance their performance in operations and high governance standards so as to secure investment. Consequently, the increased disclosure leads to the increase of market efficiency, innovation, and the economic growth.

These theoretical models offer a valuable guide on how disclosure policies in the information disclosure affect market forces and investor actions. Nevertheless, in practice, the performance of disclosure regimes can be differentiated in relation to the market structure, regulatory frameworks and institutional environment. This is why these theoretical models should be implemented and customized in the conditions of certain markets to obtain the effective investor protection and better financial market results.

3. Historical Development and Background of Information Disclosure **3.1**

Evolution of Traditional Information Disclosure Practices in Financial Markets As a fundamental mechanism of financial markets, information disclosure has evolved historically from informal verbal communication to formal written disclosure [4]. In the early stages of financial markets, information disclosure mainly relied on verbal agreements between trading parties and privately obtained information. This model often resulted in information asymmetry, making it difficult for investors to obtain accurate and comprehensive market information, thereby increasing investment risk and market uncertainty. With the development of financial markets and the growth of international trade, many countries began to formulate and implement laws and regulations on corporate information disclosure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These regulations require companies to disclose detailed information about their financial condition and business activities, such as balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements, at regular intervals. This process marks a shift in information disclosure from private transactions to a more transparent and standardized public disclosure model, aimed at improving market transparency and efficiency.

3.2 Impact of Technological Advancements on Information Disclosure Systems With the rapid development of information technology, especially the widespread use of the Internet and electronic communication technology, the methods and efficiency of information disclosure have been significantly improved. The expansion of digital platforms enables companies to disclose information directly to investors through their official websites and financial information systems regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India, greatly reducing the cost and time required for obtaining information. Investors can obtain the latest information about companies in real time through online reports, real-time market data, and electronic notifications available on stock exchanges such as the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange of India. This timely and accessible information disclosure significantly improves market efficiency and transparency. In addition, technological progress has also promoted innovation in the content and form of information disclosure. Modern information disclosure is no longer limited to financial data but also includes a wider range of information related to corporate governance structure, social responsibility, environmental impact, and risk management. The disclosure of these areas helps investors more comprehensively evaluate the overall risk and value of companies, further enhancing investors' decision-making ability and supporting the sustainable development of enterprises.

3.3 Changes in Legal and Regulatory Requirements for Information Disclosure in India With the globalization and increasing complexity of financial markets, the legal requirements for information disclosure in many countries are continuously evolving and adjusting. Traditionally, legal requirements for information disclosure mainly focused on the content and deadlines of financial reports and annual reports. However, with the development of financial markets, the diversified needs of investors, and the strengthening of market supervision, modern laws and regulations have begun to require information disclosure in more areas. For example, many countries have incorporated requirements for corporate social responsibility reporting, risk

disclosure, internal control systems, and independent auditing into their legal frameworks. These requirements aim to enhance the transparency of corporate governance and responsible business practices, protect investor interests, and prevent market manipulation and fraud. Therefore, as a core mechanism of financial markets, information disclosure has undergone significant development in terms of content, form, and legal and regulatory requirements with the changes of the times and advances in technology. This development not only promotes market efficiency and transparency but also provides investors with more accurate market information, supporting the stability and sustainable development of the global economy.

4. Relationship Between Investor Decision-Making and Information Disclosure 4.1 Overview of Investor Decision-Making Theories

The decision-making behavior of investors is influenced by various theories, including the efficient market hypothesis, behavioral finance, and information asymmetry theory [5]. The efficient market hypothesis states that market prices already fully reflect all publicly available information, so investors cannot use such information to obtain excess profits. In contrast, behavioral finance focuses on investors' psychological and behavioral biases, suggesting that investors may experience emotional reactions when processing information, which can affect their decision-making process. In addition, the theory of information asymmetry emphasizes that when one party in the market possesses more or more accurate information than the other, market efficiency may be affected, as information asymmetry can lead to an uneven distribution of resources, thereby influencing the fairness and efficiency of the market.

4.2 Impact of Information Disclosure on Different Types of Investors

Different types of investors have different reactions to and ways of utilizing information disclosure. Institutional investors typically have more resources and expertise to analyze and use disclosed information more deeply. They tend to conduct in-depth evaluations of corporate governance, financial condition, and future prospects. Individual investors may rely more on publicly disclosed information to make decisions, and they often pay more attention to the company's short-term performance and market reactions.

The impact of information disclosure on long-term investors may be more significant than on short-term speculators. Long-term investors are more concerned about the company's long-term development strategy, competitive advantages, and sustained profitability, so they pay greater attention to the company's long-term strategic planning and sustainable development reports. Short-term speculators, on the other hand, are more likely to focus on short-term market fluctuations and rapidly changing profit opportunities.

4.3 Investor Reactions and Behavioral Responses to Information Disclosure

Investors' reactions and behavioral patterns toward information disclosure cover the entire process from information acquisition to decision implementation. Firstly, investors obtain information through various channels, including the company's annual report, financial statements, announcement notices, and industry analysis reports. Secondly, investors analyze and interpret this information to evaluate the company's financial condition, risk factors, and future development potential. After information disclosure, investors may take different actions.

Active investors may increase or decrease their holdings of specific company stocks or bonds to reflect their expectations of changes in the company's prospects. Some investors may adjust their investment portfolios through open market buying and selling, while others may prefer to hold investments for the long term, especially when they are satisfied with the company's long-term strategy and governance structure. Therefore, information disclosure has a significant impact on the investor decision-making process, not only shaping investment strategies and behavioral patterns but also influencing market liquidity and the efficiency of capital allocation. By effectively

obtaining and analyzing information, investors can better evaluate risks and returns and make more rational and fact-based investment decisions.

5. Legal and Ethical Issues in Information Disclosure and Investor Protection 5.1 Role and Responsibilities of Financial Market Regulatory Authorities (e.g., Securities and Exchange Board of India)

Financial market regulatory agencies play a crucial role in information disclosure and investor protection [6]. Their main responsibilities include supervising and regulating the behavior of market participants and ensuring the timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of information disclosure in order to maintain market fairness and transparency. Regulatory agencies require listed companies and other market participants to comply with information disclosure regulations by formulating laws and guidelines, and they supervise and punish violations.

Regulatory agencies are also responsible for promoting a healthy investment environment, monitoring market activity and liquidity, and preventing market manipulation, insider trading, and other unethical practices. In addition, they bear the responsibility of educating investors, raising investor awareness, and protecting investor rights. By issuing guidelines, organizing training programs, and providing complaint resolution channels, they help ensure that investors can make rational investment decisions based on sufficient information.

5.2 Ethical Standards and Corporate Social Responsibility in Information Disclosure

Information disclosure not only involves legal compliance but also relates to the ethical standards and social responsibility of enterprises. Ethical standards require companies not only to comply with regulations when disclosing information but also to uphold principles of integrity and transparency in order to maintain investor trust and market stability. In the process of information disclosure, enterprises should provide accurate, complete, and timely information as much as possible and avoid intentionally concealing important facts or misleading investors. In addition, information disclosure also involves corporate social responsibility. Enterprises should recognize the impact of their information disclosure behavior on society, especially on investors and other market participants. Through honest and transparent information disclosure, companies can establish a positive corporate image and brand reputation, thereby enhancing market competitiveness and attractiveness.

In general, financial market regulatory agencies and enterprises share legal and ethical responsibilities in relation to information disclosure and investor protection. Regulatory agencies ensure market order and protect investor rights by strengthening supervision and regulation, while enterprises maintain market transparency and social credibility by adhering to ethical standards and fulfilling social responsibilities. These efforts collectively promote the development of healthy financial markets and sustainable economic growth.

6. Conclusion With the continuous development and transformation of global financial markets, the importance of information disclosure in safeguarding investor interests and maintaining market stability has become increasingly evident. This paper examines the influence of information disclosure on investor decision-making from the perspective of contemporary financial market development and considers current market trends as well as possible future directions. Firstly, the timeliness and transparency of disclosed information play a critical role in shaping investor decisions. As information technology continues to advance, investors are able to access and evaluate market information more quickly and in a more comprehensive manner, which strengthens their confidence in both enterprises and financial markets. For this reason, companies should make effective use of modern technological tools to enhance the efficiency and reliability of their disclosure practices. Secondly, legal and regulatory frameworks remain essential in ensuring

effective information disclosure. Regulatory authorities must continue refining disclosure regulations and standards so that companies provide accurate, reliable, and timely information. A well-structured regulatory environment enables investors to participate in financial markets with greater confidence and make informed investment decisions.

Furthermore, increasing awareness of corporate social responsibility has also influenced the quality and scope of information disclosure. Modern investors pay greater attention to sustainable development and responsible corporate behavior, which has raised expectations regarding transparency and ethical disclosure practices. As a result, companies should approach information disclosure with honesty and accountability in order to build long-term trust and stable relationships with investors. In addition, as financial markets become more globalized and interconnected, the standards and practices of information disclosure are gradually becoming more aligned across countries. The movement toward internationally comparable disclosure standards can improve the stability and predictability of the global investment environment, thereby supporting cross-border investment activities and international capital flows.

In conclusion, as financial markets evolve alongside technological progress, the role of information disclosure in influencing investor decision-making has become increasingly significant. Looking ahead, continuous improvement and innovation in disclosure practices will be necessary to meet changing market conditions and the growing expectations of investors. Such efforts will contribute to the development of financial markets that are more transparent, fair, and sustainable.

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Forests for the Future - The Imperatives of Sustainable Management

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ABSTRACT:

Forests are more than green expanses – they are living systems that sustain life, livelihoods and climate stability. From ancient sacred groves to modern conservation reserves, they reflect centuries of coexistence between people and nature. Yet deforestation, climate stress, and competing land demands threaten this balance. As global attention turns to sustainable growth, India's rise to the 9th position in forest area marks not an end, but a beginning – a call to manage these forests wisely for the future.

Sustainable Forest Management ensures forests provide ecological, economic, and social benefits for present and future generations, balancing conservation, livelihoods, and climate resilience through integrated, adaptive strategies.

INTRODUCTION:

Forests are more than green expanses – they are living systems that sustain life, livelihoods and climate stability. From ancient sacred groves to modern conservation reserves, they reflect centuries of coexistence between people and nature. Yet deforestation, climate stress, and competing land demands threaten this balance. As global attention turns to sustainable growth, India's rise to the 9th position in forest area marks not an end, but a beginning – a call to manage these forests wisely for the future.

As the world races to tackle climate change, tropical forests our greatest natural shields are facing unprecedented threats. A recent UNEP report highlights that the forests most vital to people are also the most at risk, urging that global investment in forest protection must triple by 2030 and increase six-fold by 2050.

At the same time, India has quietly marked a global milestone-rising to the 9th position in total forest area, according to the FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025. But this progress brings a deeper challenge: ensuring that forest expansion goes hand in hand with sustainability. The future depends not just on growing forests, but on managing them wisely – where conservation, community and climate goals move together.

CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT:

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is a holistic approach to managing forests that ensures the long-term conservation of ecological, economic and social values while maintaining biodiversity, productivity and resilience for present and future generations.

Core Principles of SFM:

- Maintain biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, and ecological resilience of

forests.

- Difference Between Traditional Forest Management and SFM
- Balance economic, social, and environmental objectives, ensuring equitable benefits for local communities and forest-dependent people.
- Promote sustainable yields, conservation of ecosystem services, and protection of soil and water resources.
- Include participatory planning, stakeholder engagement, and integration of scientific and traditional knowledge.
- Traditional Forest Management: Often focused primarily on timber extraction and maximizing short-term economic returns, sometimes with limited regard for ecological consequences or long-term sustainability.
- Sustainable Forest Management: Emphasizes multipurpose management, integrating conservation, social equity, and economic viability. SFM adopts adaptive, science-based approaches, considers climate change, and involves local communities in decision-making.

THE IMPERATIVES OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT:

The imperatives of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) are rooted in ecological, economic, and social- cultural dimensions, each critical for long-term forest health and human well-being.

1) Economic Imperatives

SFM provides a renewable source of timber, non- timber forest products, and ecotourism opportunities, supporting local and national economies.

Certification programs (e.g. FSC, PEFC) enhance market access and consumer trust, ensuring that forest products are sourced responsibly and sustainably.

Long-term economic stability is achieved by balancing resource extraction with conservation, ensuring that forests continue to provide economic benefits for future generations.

2) Social and Cultural Imperatives

SFM recognizes the cultural, spiritual, and recreational significance of forests for local and Indigenous communities, ensuring that their rights and traditional knowledge are respected and integrated into management practices.

Community engagement and benefit-sharing are vital for equitable development and social stability, fostering local stewardship and reducing conflicts over resource use.

Sustainable forestry supports livelihoods, food security, and rural development, contributing to broader social well-being and poverty alleviation.

3) Ecological Imperatives

SFM ensures the conservation of biodiversity, maintenance of ecosystem services (such as water regulation, soil protection, and carbon sequestration), and resilience against climate change and natural disturbances.

Protecting ecologically important areas, such as riparian zones and old-growth forests, is essential for sustaining wildlife habitats and natural processes.

Sustainable practices like selective logging, reforestation, and integrated pest management help minimize environmental degradation and support the regeneration of forest ecosystems.

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES:

From a global perspective, Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is driven by international consensus and collaborative frameworks, while national perspectives such as India's integrate these global standards with domestic priorities and initiatives.

1) International Initiatives

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) provides a global platform for dialogue, policy development, and voluntary national contributions, aiming to halt deforestation and promote sustainable practices worldwide.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regularly assesses global forest conditions, with the Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) tracking progress and guiding international action.

Certification systems like FSC, PEFC, and SFI set global standards for ecologically sound, socially equitable, and economically viable forestry.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UNFCCC recognize the crucial role of SFM in biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation, encouraging national commitments and financial support for sustainable initiatives.

2) India's Perspective and Government Initiatives

The Supreme Court (2024) adopted the dictionary meaning of '*forest*', not limited to government records. Joint Forest Management (JFM) programs empower local communities and promote participatory conservation, contributing to both ecological and social objectives.

Included reserved forests, protected forests, un-classed forests, private forests, and lands with tree cover or forest-like characteristics. Emphasized that the term applies irrespective of ownership (private or state). The Forest Fire Prevention & Management Scheme utilizes satellite technology and remote sensing to protect forests and ensure rapid response to fires.

India has made significant strides in SFM, achieving the 9th largest forest area globally and maintaining the 3rd position for annual forest area gain, as per the GFRA 2025.

The Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign mobilizes communities for tree plantation, fostering a culture of environmental stewardship.

Key government programs include the Green India Mission (GIM), which aims to enhance forest cover and ecosystem services through afforestation and restoration.

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

- Afforestation and Reforestation: Planting trees in non-forested and degraded areas to restore ecological balance and increase green cover.
- Carbon Sequestration and Climate-Smart Forestry: Managing forests to maximize carbon capture and build resilience against climate change.
- Controlled and Selective Logging: Harvesting only mature or diseased trees to maintain forest structure and allow natural regeneration.
- Sustainable Use of Non-Timber Forest Products: Harvesting products like honey, bamboo, and medicinal plants without harming forest ecosystems.
- Forest Certification and Monitoring: Ensuring responsible forest management through certification systems like FSC and continuous monitoring.
- Conservation of Biodiversity: Protecting endangered species and maintaining mixed forests to strengthen ecological resilience.
- Community-Based Forest Management: Involving local and indigenous communities in

forest decision- making and benefit-sharing.

- Agroforestry Practices: Combining trees with crops and livestock systems to enhance livelihoods and biodiversity.
- Integrated Forest Fire Management: Using prevention, early detection, and controlled burning to reduce the risk of destructive fires.
- Soil and Water Conservation: Adopting measures like contour bunding and check dams to prevent erosion and protect watersheds.

INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT 2023 - KEY STATISTICS:

1. Total Forest and Tree Cover:
8,27,357 sq. km (25.17% of India's geographical area)
 - Forest Cover: 7,15,343 sq. km (21.76%)
 - Tree Cover: 1,12,014 sq. km (3.41%)
 - Increase since 2021 Assessment: +1,445 sq. km
 - Forest Cover: +156 sq. km
 - Tree Cover: +1,289 sq. km
2. Top States (by Increase in Cover):
 - Top 4 (Forest + Tree Cover Increase)
 - 1) Chhattisgarh - 684 sq. km
 - 2) Uttar Pradesh - 559 sq. km
 - 3) Odisha - 559 sq. km
 - 4) Rajasthan - 394 sq. km
 - Top 3 (Forest Cover Increase)
 - 1) Mizoram- 242 sq. km
 - 2) Gujarat 180 sq. km
 - 3) Odisha - 152 sq. km
3. Largest Area-wise Forest & Tree Cover
 - Madhya Pradesh - 85,724 sq. km
 - Arunachal Pradesh - 67,083 sq. km
 - Maharashtra - 65,383 sq. km
4. Largest Area-wise Forest Cover
 - Madhya Pradesh - 77,073 sq. km
 - Arunachal Pradesh - 65,882 sq. km
 - Chhattisgarh - 55,812 sq. km
5. Percentage of Forest Cover (Highest)
 - Lakshadweep - 91.33%
 - Mizoram- 85.34%
 - Andaman & Nicobar Islands - 81.62%
6. Mangrove Cover: 4,992 sq. km
7. Total Carbon Stock: 7,285.5 million tonnes

EVALUATION:

1) Challenges in Implementing SFM

- **Institutional and Policy Barriers:** Weak or inconsistent government policies often fail to

incentivize sustainable practices, while regulatory frameworks may be poorly enforced or lack transparency.

- **Sealing and Capacity Building:** Most successful SFM initiatives remain small-scale pilots, and scaling up these efforts to cover larger regions is hampered by resource, technical, and organizational constraints.
- **Economic and Financial Constraints:** Many forest management agencies and local communities lack the financial resources to adopt sustainable practices, such as reforestation, pest control, and monitoring.
- **Ecological and Technical Challenges:** Climate change impacts, invasive species, and natural disasters increase the complexity of managing forests sustainably. The ecological functions of forests are often multifaceted, requiring specialized management to balance competing uses (e.g., timber, biodiversity, water, and carbon).
- **Social and Community Issues:** Local communities and indigenous groups are often excluded from decision-making processes, leading to conflicts over resource use and tenure.

2) Remedies or Pathways and Strategies for the Future

- **Technological and Innovative Approaches:** Leveraging satellite imagery, remote sensing, drones, and AI analytics enables real-time monitoring of forest health, deforestation, and biodiversity, supporting adaptive management and rapid response to threats.
- **Economic and Consumption Pathways:** Expanding market demand for certified, sustainably sourced forest products drives economic incentives for responsible management.
- **Policy and Governance Innovations:** Strengthening legal frameworks, aligning national policies with international standards (such as FSC, PEFC), and incentivizing sustainable practices through certification and market mechanisms are critical for systematic change.
- **Ecological and Landscape-Level Strategies:** Integrating rewilding-inspired forestry and genetic resource management ensures adaptation to climate change and long-term ecosystem vitality.
- **Community and Social Engagement:** Empowering local communities and Indigenous groups through participatory planning, traditional knowledge integration, and community-based monitoring fosters stewardship and resolves conflicts over resource use.

CONCLUSION:

Sustainable Forest Management ensures forests provide ecological, economic, and social benefits for present and future generations, balancing conservation, livelihoods, and climate resilience through integrated, adaptive strategies.

Forests are more than green expanses – they are living systems that sustain life, livelihoods and climate stability. From ancient sacred groves to modern conservation reserves, they reflect centuries of coexistence between people and nature. Yet deforestation, climate stress, and competing land demands threaten this balance. As global attention turns to sustainable growth, India's rise to the 9th position in forest area marks not an end, but a beginning – a call to manage these forests wisely for the future.

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Voices from the Margins: Gender Inequality and Female Subjugation in Kiran Nagarkar's "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three"

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Abstract: Kiran Nagarkar's debut novel *Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three* (1974/198c) remains a landmark in Indian literature for its unflinching critique of gender inequality and patriarchal violence. This paper examines the novel's portrayal of female subjugation through the tragic trajectory of its protagonist, Pratibha—from victim of domestic brutality to martyr who exonerates her abuser. Through close analysis of the opening scene, where a brutal beating culminates in self-immolation, the paper argues that Nagarkar constructs a powerful critique of male hegemony that paradoxically silences the very voices it seeks to represent. The novel reveals how patriarchal structures are perpetuated not only through male violence but through female complicity and internalized subordination. The paper addresses the complexities of interpreting feminist themes.

Keywords: gender inequality, patriarchy, domestic violence, tragic trajectory, male hegemony

Kiran Nagarkar's „Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three“ is a milestone in the Indian English literature. It's fragmentary structure, it's dreamlike quality, it's refusal of linear narrative have made the novel most enduring and impactful. It's instinctive depiction of gender-based violence and the everyday operations of patriarchy in Indian domestic life makes vivid and brilliant case study in general.

The novel opens with a scene of such brutality that it remains difficult to read decades after its publication: Ajit, drunk and enraged, thrashes his wife Pratibha while his mother plays the role of mute spectator. When Pratibha, threatens to immolate herself, Ajit taunts her, and she carries out the act—only to die three days later after forgiving her husband in her dying declaration to the police. This sequence, which occupies merely the opening pages, establishes the thematic architecture upon which the entire novel rests: the normalization of male violence, the internalization of patriarchal values by women themselves, and the systematic erasure of female agency within structures of kinship and marriage.

This paper examines how Nagarkar's novel constructs its critique of gender inequality through two interconnected lenses: first, the representation of domestic violence as universal rather than unusual and second, the role of female involvement in continuing patriarchal norms. In dealing with these tensions, the paper suggests that „Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three“ remains an indispensable text for understanding gender inequality in modern India.

Gender Inequality and Male Hegemony: Theoretical Framework

Before turning to the novel itself, it is useful to establish the theoretical framework within which its treatment of gender can be understood. As Dr. Ashish Gupta notes in his analysis of the novel, "Gender discrimination is subject to the history of this whole universe. In the male dominant society the ratio of facing gender bias and patriarchy may differ but no one in this universe is untouched by this fact". This observation, while broad, points to the fundamental insight that underpins feminist criticism of patriarchy: that gender inequality is not a collection of isolated incidents but a structural feature of social organization.

Simone de Beauvoir's foundational work „The Second Sex“ provides a useful starting point for understanding the mechanisms of this inequality. According to Beauvoir, women's subordination is rooted in two interrelated factors: their exclusion from productive labour and their "enslavement" to reproductive functions, which in the past, women were forced to focus solely on motherhood and bodily needs, restricting their freedom.

In the Indian context, these global patterns of patriarchy assume specific cultural forms. The scholar Priyanka Singla's work on Nagarkar's „Cuckold“ demonstrates how the author engages with these specifically Indian manifestations of gender oppression, offering "a feminist retelling" that foregrounds female "agency, strength, and resilience" even within male-dominated societies. This attention to women's negotiated agency within constraint characterizes Nagarkar's approach across his work, from the medieval setting of „Cuckold“ to the contemporary rural poverty of his final novel „Jasoda“. In contrast to the powerful and independent Draupadi in *Cuckold* who transcends patriarchal limitations, Pratibha's narrative focuses on a trajectory of inescapable annihilation."

Domestic Violence and Female Complicity in the Opening Scene

The novel's opening scene deserves unrelenting attention, for it captures the complex dynamics of gender inequality that the work as a whole explores. The scene is constructed with deliberate predictability: Ajit returns home late, drunk, and begins beating his wife. Pratibha's first action is to close the door—not to protect herself, but to prevent neighbours from witnessing the violence and thereby damaging her husband's reputation. This gesture, almost instinctive, reveals the depth of her internalization of patriarchal beliefs: her fear is not for her own safety, but for the social standing of the man assaulting her.

When Ajit's mother attempts to intervene, she too becomes a target of his violence. Yet significantly, neither woman resists, nor do they seek help afterward. The mother-in-law "did not ask Ajit to stop his cruelty and brutality taking place in front of her eyes at her own house. Instead, she takes Ajit's behaviour to be normal as he is part of patriarchal hegemony and it permits him right to do anything and cross any limit and abusiveness". This normalization of violence—the assumption that a husband's right to beat his wife is simply a feature of the marital order—represents one of patriarchy's most insidious effects. Violence need not be explicitly justified; it need only be rendered unremarkable.

The undercurrent between the two women is particularly noteworthy. Rather than forming solidarity against their abuser, they exist in parallel subordination, each isolated in her grief and suffering. The mother-in-law, who has herself endured decades of patriarchal control, has not emerged as an ally but as someone who has learned to accept violence as inescapable. Her involvement is not active confirmation but passive acceptance—a survival strategy that nevertheless serves to disseminate the

system that harms her. As one analysis notes, such women "are not aware of the unnecessary and needless violence" they bear, having "assumed it to be part of their life and culture".

This observation points to a crucial dimension of gender inequality that the novel illuminates: the way patriarchal structures reproduce themselves through the very subjects they oppress. In the novel, Nagarkar shows that women don't just suffer under patriarchy—they also help keep it going. From childhood, they are taught to accept their place, and then they pass these same lessons on to their daughters. It becomes a cycle that repeats generation after generation. The mother-in-law in the story is a perfect example. She has survived all these years by staying quiet and never fighting back. By including her character, Nagarkar makes it clear how deeply patriarchy affects everyone—even the women who seem to go along with it.

The Self-Immolation: Agency, Desperation, and the Limits of Resistance

Pratibha's self-immolation shows the novel's most disturbing moment and its most complex statement about female agency under patriarchy. The sequence reveals through dialogue that exposes the psychological dynamics of abuse. After being beaten, Pratibha murmurs, "You hit me once more and I will set myself to fire. I am fed up. I've had enough; I don't want to live anymore". Ajit's response is not fear or concern but further provocation: "Why you whore! Are you trying to threaten me? So who's stopping you, you stupid bitch? Go on and do it if you have the fucking guts".

This exchange crystallizes the power dynamics of abusive relationships. Pratibha's threat is not a genuine suicide intention but a desperate attempt to assert some form of action, to make her husband recognize her suffering. Ajit's response exposes the futility of this strategy: within patriarchal logic, even the threat of self-destruction is read not as evidence of desperation but as insubordination to be crushed. When Pratibha does pour kerosene over herself, she continues to hope that Ajit will intervene, muttering, "I will teach you a lesson, just wait, you'll be sorry". The phrase "teach you a lesson" suggests that her act is intended as communication, as a final attempt to make him see her point of view.

Ajit's response—or rather, his non-response—shatters this illusion. As Pratibha burns, "yelling save me," he watches without acting, "a silent watcher of the incident". His inaction in this moment is more damning than his earlier violence: it reveals that her suffering, even at the extremity of death by fire, does not register for him as a call to action. She is, finally, not a person whose pain demands response but an object whose destruction can be observed with indifference.

Yet the novel complicates any simple reading of Pratibha as pure victim. Even as she lies in the hospital, burned over most of her body, her concern remains with her family. She tells the doctor, "I want to live... They need me, my children and my husband. He needs me too. You don't know, do you, that he had lost his mind and I made him all right again". And in her dying act, she gives a statement to police claiming that she committed suicide and that "no one is responsible for her condition," thereby protecting the man who killed her.

A typical feminist viewpoint might say that Pratibha's last actions show how completely she has absorbed the beliefs of a male-dominated society. She has internalized these ideas so deeply that she can no longer see herself as a victim. There's some truth to this. When she insists that her husband "needs" her and that she "made him all right again," it shows how much her identity depends on being a wife and caretaker. If she were to admit that he was guilty of hurting her, she would also have to admit that her whole life—all her sacrifices, all

her suffering, everything she believed about herself—was built on violence. That realization would be too painful to bear.

Beyond Pratibha: Gender Inequality as Systemic

While Pratibha's story dominates the novel's opening, "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three" extends its critique of gender inequality through a range of female characters. As Ashish Gupta notes, Nagarkar "had painted different shadows of women in his novel through her female protagonist Pratibha, Chandni, Prachinti, Aroti etc. to show gender discrimination, domestic violence and male hegemony". These characters span class and social position, suggesting that gender inequality cuts across other social hierarchies.

The novel's fragmentary structure reinforces this sense of systemic critique. By refusing linear narrative and instead presenting a collage of scenes and perspectives, Nagarkar suggests that gender oppression is not a single story but a universal feature of the social setting—visible in sights, in fragments, in the ordinary brutalities that punctuate daily life. The Goethe-Institute's description of the novel as a "modernist collage" in which "nothing has more or less significance than anything else" takes on new meaning when read through a feminist lens: the casual violence of the opening scene is not an exceptional incident but one moment among many, no more or less significant than any other, because violence is woven into the fabric of ordinary existence.

This structural choice also reflects a particular understanding of how patriarchy operates. Unlike dramatic, exceptional violence, the everyday workings of gender inequality are often invisible, normalized, unremarkable. By refusing to highlight Pratibha's story as a singular tragedy, Nagarkar insists that we see it instead as typical—as one instance of a pattern repeated countless times across Indian society.

Conclusion

Kiran Nagarkar's "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three" endures as a powerful meditation on gender inequality in modern India. Through its unflinching depiction of domestic violence, its exploration of female complicity in patriarchal structures, and its refusal to offer easy resolutions, the novel forces readers to confront the everyday brutalities that sustain male hegemony. Pratibha's story—from beating to immolation to dying exoneration of her abuser—encapsulates the tragic logic of a system that denies women agency while holding them responsible for maintaining the very structures that destroy them.

In the end, "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three" remains essential reading for anyone seeking to understand gender inequality in Indian society. Its portrait of Pratibha—burning, dying, yet still proclaiming her husband's innocence—haunts the reader long after the novel closes, a reminder of the human cost of patriarchy and the terrible resilience of those who endure it.

Kiran Nagarkar's "Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three" is still a very important novel for understanding how gender inequality works in modern India. It shows domestic violence in all its rawness, it looks at how women themselves sometimes end up supporting the very system that oppresses them, and it refuses to give us any simple answers or happy endings. It forces us to see the small, everyday cruelties that keep men in power. Pratibha's story captures this completely. She is beaten, she sets herself on fire, and in her final moments, she tells the police that her husband is not to blame. This is the twisted logic of the world she

lives in: women are given no real power, yet they are expected to hold everything together— even the system that destroys them.

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Reflections of Gandhi's Nai Talim in Skill-Based and Vocational Education in the 21st Century

Abstract

Education plays a vital role in shaping individuals and building socially responsible societies. Any investment in education is a valuable contribution and can be considered an asset for both the present and the future. The nature and quality of future generations largely depend on the curriculum and methodologies adopted in the education system. However, contemporary education often progresses rapidly without adequately assessing the outcomes of various experimental approaches. As a result, education is frequently disconnected from the realities of life, leading to the dilution of core social values. In this context, it is essential to revisit the educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi proposed a unique approach to education known as Nai Talim or Basic Education, which emphasizes learning through productive work, self-reliance, and the integration of intellectual, physical, and moral development. He strongly believed that education should be closely linked with real-life experiences and community needs rather than being limited to theoretical knowledge. In the twenty-first century, educational systems worldwide are increasingly emphasizing skill-based learning, vocational training, and experiential education to meet the demands of rapidly changing economies. These developments highlight the continued relevance of Gandhi's educational philosophy in the modern context. This paper examines the reflections of Nai Talim in contemporary skill-based and vocational education. By analyzing Gandhi's writings and scholarly interpretations, the study explores the relationship between Nai Talim and modern educational approaches such as experiential learning, entrepreneurship education, and vocational training. The paper also discusses the relevance of Nai Talim in the context of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It concludes that Gandhi's philosophy continues to provide valuable insights for developing an education system that promotes dignity of labour, self-reliance, and holistic development in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Nai Talim, Gandhi, vocational education, skill development, experiential learning, NEP 2020

Introduction

Education has always been regarded as a powerful instrument for social transformation and human development. The aims of education have been determined by philosophical, social, cultural, political and economic norms of society. According to Rigveda, "education is something which makes one self reliant and selfless". Ancient Indian concept of education laid emphasis on higher knowledge, freedom from ignorance, salvation and self realisation.¹ In modern societies, education is expected not only to impart knowledge but also to develop practical skills, ethical values, and social responsibility among individuals. With the rapid expansion of technology and globalization, the nature of employment and economic activity has changed significantly. As a result, education systems are increasingly focusing on skill development and vocational training to prepare students for the challenges of the modern world.

In India, the discussion on skill-based education has deep historical roots. Mahatma Gandhi introduced the concept of *Nai Talim* or Basic Education in 1937 as an alternative to the colonial system of education. Gandhi believed that education should integrate intellectual learning with productive work and should help individuals become self-reliant and socially responsible.² He criticized the colonial education system for promoting rote learning and alienating students from their cultural and social environments.

Gandhi proposed that crafts and productive activities should form the foundation of education. Through activities such as spinning, weaving, agriculture, and carpentry, students could learn various academic subjects in a practical and meaningful way. This approach aimed to develop not only intellectual abilities but also practical skills and moral character. Gandhi's educational philosophy was deeply connected with his broader vision of social and economic transformation. Gandhi believed that education should promote equality, dignity of labour, and community development. By integrating manual work with intellectual learning, *Nai Talim* sought to eliminate the social stigma associated with physical labour.

In the twenty-first century, many education systems are adopting similar ideas through experiential learning, vocational training, and entrepreneurship education. Governments and international organizations emphasize the importance of skill development in addressing unemployment and promoting sustainable development. These developments demonstrate the continuing relevance of Gandhi's educational philosophy.

This research paper examines the reflections of *Nai Talim* in contemporary skill-based and vocational education. It also explores the connection between Gandhi's educational ideas and India's National Education Policy 2020.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

- 1.To examine the philosophy and principles of Gandhi's *Nai Talim*.
- 2.To analyse the characteristics of skill-based and vocational education in the twenty-first century.
- 3.To identify similarities between *Nai Talim* and modern educational approaches.
- 4.To evaluate the relevance of *Nai Talim* in contemporary educational reforms, including NEP 2020.

Hypotheses

- 1.Gandhian *Nai Talim* has a significant positive relationship with modern skill-based and vocational education in the 21st century.
2. The integration of productive work with intellectual learning (as proposed by Mahatma

Gandhi in Nai Talim) enhances students' self-reliance, employability, and holistic development.

3. The principles of Nai Talim are significantly reflected in India's National Education Policy 2020, particularly in promoting experiential learning, vocational training, and dignity of labour.

Concept and Philosophy of Nai Talim

Nai Talim emerged as a response to the limitations of colonial education in India. Gandhi believed that the existing education system produced individuals who were disconnected from their communities and dependent on government employment. He therefore proposed an education system that would integrate productive work with intellectual development.

According to Gandhi, education should be closely related to the daily life of the learner. He argued that a true education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances"³ This statement highlights Gandhi's belief that education should reflect the social and economic realities of society.

One of the most important principles of Nai Talim was the integration of craft with education. Gandhi believed that productive work could serve as the medium for teaching various academic subjects. For example, mathematical concepts could be learned through measurements in carpentry, while scientific principles could be understood through agricultural activities.⁴

Another important aspect of Nai Talim was the emphasis on self-reliance. Gandhi believed that education should enable individuals to earn their livelihood and contribute to the economic development of their communities. By learning practical skills, students could become economically independent.

The dignity of labour was also a central theme in Gandhi's philosophy. Gandhi argued that manual labour should be respected and valued equally with intellectual work. According to J. C. Kumarappa, Gandhi believed that productive work in education would help remove the social hierarchy that devalued manual labour.⁵

Nai Talim also emphasized moral and social development. Gandhi believed that education should cultivate values such as truth, non-violence, cooperation, and social responsibility. These values were essential for building a just and harmonious society.

Skill-Based and Vocational Education in the 21st Century

The twenty-first century has witnessed rapid technological and economic transformations. As industries evolve, the demand for skilled workers has increased significantly. Consequently, education systems across the world are emphasizing vocational education and skill development. Skill-based education focuses on practical abilities, technical competencies, and problem-solving skills.⁶ Vocational education provides specialized training in specific trades or

professions such as engineering, healthcare, agriculture, and information technology. Experiential learning has become a key component of modern education. Students learn through hands-on experiences, projects, internships, and workplace training. This approach enhances the practical relevance of education and improves employability.

Another important feature of modern vocational education is collaboration between educational institutions and industries. Such partnerships help ensure that curricula remain aligned with technological advancements and labour market needs.

Gandhi anticipated many of these developments by advocating an education system that combined intellectual learning with productive work.⁷ Gandhi believed that education should prepare individuals not only for employment but also for responsible citizenship.

Reflections of Nai Talim in Contemporary Education

a. Learning by Doing

The principle of learning by doing is central to Nai Talim. Gandhi believed that practical activities enhance understanding and encourage creativity. Modern educational approaches such as project-based learning and experiential education reflect this principle.

b. Integration of Education and Work

Nai Talim integrated productive work with academic learning. Similarly, modern vocational education combines classroom instruction with practical training in workshops and industries.

c. Promotion of Self-Reliance

Gandhi emphasized that education should make individuals economically independent. Modern education systems promote entrepreneurship and innovation, encouraging students to create employment opportunities for themselves and others.

d. Dignity of Labour

Gandhi strongly advocated respect for manual labour. Gandhi viewed productive labour as an essential component of social equality and national development. Contemporary vocational education also emphasizes the importance of skilled professions.

e. Community-Oriented Education

Nai Talim encouraged students to participate in activities that benefited their communities. Modern educational programs increasingly incorporate community service and social engagement, reflecting Gandhi's vision.⁸

Nai Talim and the National Education Policy 2020

The principles of Nai Talim find significant reflection in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy emphasizes experiential learning, vocational education, and the integration of practical skills into mainstream education. NEP 2020 aims to introduce vocational training from the school level and promote hands-on learning through internships and skill development programs.⁹ This approach closely resembles Gandhi's idea that education should be connected with productive work and real-life experiences. The policy also emphasizes multidisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and the development of life skills, which align with Gandhi's vision of holistic education. By encouraging respect for vocational professions and promoting skill development, NEP 2020 reflects several key aspects of Nai Talim. Thus, Gandhi's educational philosophy continues to influence contemporary educational reforms in India.

Relevance of Nai Talim in the Modern Educational Context

The philosophy of Nai Talim remains highly relevant in the twenty-first century. One of the major challenges facing modern education systems is the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills. Nai Talim provides a framework for bridging this gap by integrating education with productive work.

Another challenge is unemployment among educated youth. Many graduates struggle to find jobs because their education does not provide the practical skills required by industries. Skill-based education inspired by Nai Talim can help address this problem. Furthermore, modern societies require individuals who possess creativity, critical thinking, and social responsibility. Nai Talim promotes these qualities by encouraging experiential learning and community engagement.

Abul Kalam Azad emphasized that education should develop both intellectual abilities and social consciousness.¹⁰ Gandhi's philosophy reflects this vision by combining moral values with practical skills. Thus, Nai Talim continues to offer valuable insights for building an education system that promotes inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Conclusion

Gandhi's philosophy of Nai Talim represents a holistic approach to education that integrates intellectual learning with practical skills, moral values, and social responsibility. Although it was proposed in the early twentieth century, its principles remain highly relevant in the contemporary world.

Modern educational reforms emphasizing experiential learning, vocational training, and entrepreneurship reflect many aspects of Gandhi's educational philosophy. The National Education Policy 2020 also incorporates several ideas that resonate with Nai Talim, such as skill development, vocational education, and hands-on learning.

By promoting self-reliance, dignity of labour, and community engagement, Nai Talim provides

a valuable framework for addressing the challenges of modern education systems. Gandhi's educational vision therefore continues to inspire efforts to create an education system that is practical, inclusive, and socially meaningful.

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ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF GST AND NEW TAX REFORMS IN INDIA.

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ABSTRACT

GST is known as Goods & service tax. It is an indirect tax. GST implemented in India on 1 July 2017. it is replacing a range of pre-Existing taxes like Vat, service tax, central excise duty entertainment Tax & Octroi India, has four types of GST, SGST, CGST & IGST it Is known as four pillars of GST.

The GST regime has a laid the foundation for a seamless national market, reshaping India's tax landscape and driving economic growth. In this process the GST council has demonstrated flexibility in responding to challenges by

Frequently reviewing & amending policies the dynamic approach Allowed for course carreetians ensuring that the tax system envolved to meet the needs of business & the economy .

Keywords :- GST, Regime, PILLARS, SGST, UGST, IGST

Introduction- GST is the indirect tax GST means goods and Service tax . In India GST was enacted as the 101 constitution Amendment Act 2016, parliament passed by 122 nd constitutional amendment bill 2014 , Ratified by the states and receiving Presidential assent . Therefore while the bill was implemented GST into the Indian constitution is the 101st

France was the first country to implement the goods and sevice tax in 1954. This is value added tax system was introduced in France to reduce tax evasion and other countries such as Russia, china and Canada have science adopted similar

System the purpose of this tax is to introduce a tax system that would eliminated the cascading effect of taxes and reduce tax evasion.

Goods and service tax took India by a storm it brought in one nation one tax. Concept to indirect tax under one umbrella and faciliated Indian business to be globally competitive.

The Indian GST regime is structured for efficient tax collection reduction in corruption Easy interstate movement of goods and service tax. India has four types of GST

- 1) SGST
- 2) CGST
- 3) IGST
- 4) UGST

GST is a destination based tax which means the tax is collected at the point of consumption rather than at the point of origin. The old GST regime has four tax slabs 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% depending on the types of goods and services. The new 2026 GST regime GST (2.0), Implemented from September 22, 2025, overhauls India's tax structure into a simpler system,

KEY CHANGES EFFECTIVE IN 2026

- Reduced slabs- the 12% and 28% rates are largely removed with most items moved to 5% or 18%
- Lower taxes on Essentials- Daily – use items, dairy and processed foods generally attract lower rates,
- Luxury / sin goods (40%) – higher 40% GST Applies to pan masala, tobacco, aerated drinks high end cars and yachts.
- Construction and Auto- cement reduced to 18% many consumer electronics and cars reduced from 28% to 18%.
- Exemption- Health and life returns are simplified with faster refunds for business.
- Compliance- Registration and returns are simplified with faster refunds for business.
- This new structure is designed to be more consumer-centric, aiming to lower costs for the common man.

SGST- In India states GST is a tax levied by state government on the interstate supply of goods and services. Dual tax structure destination based tax subsumed state taxes, state specific legislation, Revenue source for states

CGST- The central goods and service tax is levied by the Central Government of India on the supply of goods and service within a single state or union territory. It is one of the four component of the goods and service tax.

IGST- The Integrated goods and services tax is a tax levied on the interstate supply of goods and service in India. It is collected by the central government and is also applicable on import and exports. IGST was introduced to simplify Interstate Trade ensure tax neutrality across state and prevent the cascading effect of taxes that existed under the previous tax regime

UTGST- Union Territory Goods And Service tax is a component of goods and service tax system. It is levied on the supply of goods and service within Union Territories that do not have their own state legislature and is charged alongside the Centre goods and service tax (CGST) for local transaction.

Objective of the study-

- Remove interstate Trade barriers.
- Uniform tax Structure.
- Eliminate the Cascading Effect of Taxes.
- Avoid tax on tax

- Provide seamless input tax credit.
- Enhance tax compliance and transparency.
- Improve efficiency and Economic growth.

ECONOMICS IMPACT ON GST- The goods and services tax

- The impact of GST on various sectors are:
- GST on Retailers, Distributor, and Manufacturing Sector.
- Impact of GST on Agricultural Sector .
- Impact of GST on Textile Sector.
- Impact of GST on Entertainment Industry .
- Impact of GST on Automobile Sector.
- Impact of GST on Export-Import Sector.
- Impact of GST on Education Sector .
- Impact of GST on Real Estate.

Comprehensive Sectoral Breakdown of Rate Adjustments

The reform package has a broad and deep impact across numerous sectors of the economy.

- **Essential Goods:** GST on a wide range of daily-use items has been reduced from 18% or 12% to 5%.⁴ This includes household essentials like soaps, hair oil, shampoos, and toothpaste, as well as packaged foods such as biscuits, pasta, namkeens, and cornflakes.
- **Consumer Discretionary:** *Goods that previously fell under the 28% slab have been moved to the new 18% standard rate. This brings significant relief to the middle class, with items like air conditioners, televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines becoming more affordable.*⁵ Similarly, small cars with engine capacity below 1200cc and two-wheelers below 350cc have seen their rates cut from 28% to 18%.
- **Core Industries:** The manufacturing and construction sectors are major beneficiaries. The GST on cement has been a landmark reduction from 28% to 18%, a change expected to accelerate infrastructure development and spur demand in the real estate sector.⁵ GST on commercial goods vehicles (trucks and buses) has also been reduced from 28% to 18%, a move that will lower logistics and transport costs.
- **Services Sector:** The GST on a variety of services has been reduced to improve affordability for the common man. Hotel stays with a tariff of up to ₹7,500 per day now attract a 5% GST, down from 12%.⁵ Services such as gyms, salons, barbers, and yoga centers have also seen a significant reduction from 18% to 5%.
- **Agriculture and Rural Economy:** The reforms provide targeted support for the rural economy. GST on farm machinery, irrigation equipment, fertilizers, and their key inputs has been slashed from 12% or 18% to 5%.³ This is expected to significantly reduce farming costs and encourage the adoption of modern, sustainable farming practices.

A comprehensive summary of the rate changes is provided in the table below.

Table: GST Rate Changes Across Key Sectors

Sector/Product/Service	Previous GST Rat	New GST Rate	New Slab
Household & Essentials			
Soaps, Shampoos, Toothpaste	18%	5%	Merit
Packaged Foods (biscuits,)	12% or 18%	5%	Merit
UHT Milk, Paneer, Indian	5%	0%	Exempt
Consumer Discretionary TVs, ACs, Refrigerators	28%	18%	Standard
Small Cars (<1200cc)	28%	18%	Standard
Bikes (≤350cc)	28%	18%	Standard
Core Industries Cement	28%	18%	Standard
Commercial Goods Vehicles (trucks)	28%	18%	Standard
Services Hotel Stays	12%	05%	Merit
Salons, Gyms, Yoga	18%	05%	Merit
individual Health & Life Insurance	18%	0%	Exempt
Agriculture & Healthcare Farm Machinery, Tractor	12%	05%	Merit

Research Methodology-

A Research Methodology for goods and service tax (GST) Primarily uses the secondary data Research approach involving the collection and analysis of existing data from sources like government reports (Ministry of finance GST council CBIC)

National and international journal, books, reputable new outlets and company publication to study GST concept.

Data collection-

- **Secondary data-The core of GST research relies on secondary data.**
- **Sources –**
- **Government publication**
- **Academic and Professional**
- **Books and articles.**
- **News and Business Sources.**

Research techniques***Exploratory Research-**

To define the research objective and gain a broad understanding of GST

***Descriptive Research-**

To provide detailed insights into specific aspect

Such as the implementation of GST or its impact on various sectors

***Comparative Research-** Use to compare GST systems return filling procedures or compliances mechanisms across different countries or regions.

Analysis***Analysis of statistical Data-**

Examining data on GST collection compliance rates and tax revenue .

***Case studies-** Analyzing if GST specific examples of GST challenges or successes particularly for small businesses.

***Literature Review-**

Synthesizing existing Research and Data to identify key issues challenges and best practices.

Application

***examining policy changes-** understanding the evolution of GST laws and their implications.

***Assessing impact -Evaluating the effects of gst on businesses consumers and the economy such as changes in prices ease of doing business and economic growth**

***Identifying challenges-**

Highlighting practical difficulties faces by business in adopting and complying with the GST system.

DATA ANALYSIS-

A data analysis of Indian goods and services tax reveals robust revenue growth improves compliance through digitalization and positive economic impact though challenges like tax evasion persist a recent 2025 of the GST

***RECORD ANNUA GROWTH-**

Total GST collection reached a record Rs 22.08 crore in the 2024-25 in financial years a 9.4% increase over the previous fiscal year

***HIGHEST MONTHLY COLLECTION-**

In April 2024 at RS 2.10 lakhs crore up in Sep 2025 at RS 1.89 lakhs crore up 9.1%

***STEADY MONTHLY AVERAGE-**

Monthly collection for FY 2024-25 rise to /- 1.84 lakh crore a significant increase for /- 1.68 lakh crore in FY 2023-24.

***BROADENED TAXPAYER BASE-**

Of active GST taxpayer has grown from 65 lakh in 2017 to over 1.53 crore as of June 2025.

***CONCLUSION-**

The most significant tax reform in India is GST bringing about transparency, efficiency & conformity in tax administration the increase in revenue collection & the rise in the NO. of taxpayers indicate positive growth trends,

GST in India is a landmark tax reform that unified the country indirect tax system, replacing a complex web of central & state taxes with a single, comprehensive levy.

Despite initial challenges during its implementation in 2017 the system has evolved to promote economic integration increase tax compliance & streamline business operations.

***BIBLIOGRAPHY-**

This research paper has been done with the help of different books, magazines journals & website, my supervisor has also suggested, I visited many sites & following many journals like

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Digital Democracy and E-Governance in Road Transport: A Study of FASTag under the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways

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Abstract

The rapid integration of digital technologies into governance has fundamentally transformed public administration, leading to the emergence of digital democracy and e-governance. In India, this transformation is particularly visible in the road transport sector through the implementation of **FASTag**, an electronic toll collection system designed to improve efficiency, transparency, and user convenience. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution, institutional framework, operational structure, and socio-economic impact of FASTag under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. Adopting a qualitative methodology based on secondary data, the research evaluates the contribution of FASTag to traffic management, environmental sustainability, and governance reforms. The study also highlights challenges such as technological constraints, digital inequality, and data privacy concerns. It concludes that while FASTag represents a significant milestone in digital governance, its long-term effectiveness depends on addressing systemic and infrastructural limitations.

Keywords - Digital Democracy, E-Governance, FASTag, Public Policy, RFID Technology, Road Infrastructure, Digital Payments, Governance Reform

1. Introduction

The digital transformation of governance has significantly altered the manner in which public services are designed and delivered. Traditional administrative systems, often characterized by bureaucratic delays and limited transparency, are increasingly being replaced by technology-driven frameworks that emphasize efficiency, accountability, and citizen participation. Digital democracy, in this context, extends beyond electoral engagement and encompasses the broader use of digital tools to enhance governance processes.

In India, the road transport sector plays a crucial role in facilitating economic

development, regional integration, and national connectivity. However, conventional toll collection systems were historically inefficient, leading to prolonged waiting times, increased fuel consumption, and revenue leakages. These inefficiencies not only affected commuters but also imposed significant economic and environmental costs.

The introduction of **FASTag** represents a transformative shift toward digitization in this sector. Implemented under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, FASTag utilizes RFID technology to enable automated toll payments, thereby reducing manual intervention and improving operational efficiency. This study examines FASTag as a critical instrument of e-governance, highlighting its role in enhancing transparency, accountability, and service delivery within the road transport system.

2. Objectives of the Study

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

1. **To analyze the evolution and implementation of FASTag** in India, with particular emphasis on policy development and technological adoption.
2. **To examine the institutional framework** involving the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, National Highways Authority of India, and National Payments Corporation of India in the execution and management of FASTag.
3. **To evaluate the impact of FASTag on road transport efficiency**, including traffic flow, fuel consumption, and logistical performance.
4. **To assess the role of FASTag in enhancing transparency and accountability** in toll collection and governance systems.

3. Review of Literature

The existing body of literature on e-governance underscores the transformative potential of digital technologies in public administration. Singh (2021) argues that digital platforms significantly enhance transparency by reducing human intervention and discretionary decision-making. Similarly, Kumar and Sharma (2020) highlight the role of electronic toll collection systems in improving operational efficiency and reducing congestion.

International studies, particularly those conducted by the World Bank (2019), demonstrate that automated toll systems contribute to improved traffic management and efficient revenue collection. In the Indian context, Jain (2022) provides empirical evidence indicating that FASTag has led to reduced travel time and enhanced fuel efficiency.

Patel and Mehta (2021) emphasize the integration of digital payment systems with infrastructure development, suggesting that such integration enhances both efficiency and accountability. Institutional reports from the National Highways Authority of India and the National Payments Corporation of India offer detailed insights into the operational and financial mechanisms of FASTag.

However, the literature also identifies several challenges, including issues related to digital inclusion, technological reliability, and data security. These concerns highlight the need for a balanced and critical evaluation of digital governance initiatives.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative and analytical research design**, relying primarily on secondary data sources to examine the implementation and impact of FASTag.

4.1 Data Sources

The study is based on data collected from:

- Policy documents of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- Reports published by the National Highways Authority of India
- FASTag documentation from the Indian Highways Management Company Limited
- Settlement and transaction frameworks from the National Payments Corporation of India
- Academic journals, books, and government publications

4.2 Analytical Approach

The study employs:

- **Descriptive analysis** to explain the functioning of FASTag
- **Interpretative analysis** to evaluate its governance impact
- **Comparative analysis** to contrast traditional and digital toll collection systems

4.3 Scope and Limitations

The research focuses on macro-level policy analysis and does not include primary data collection. While it provides a comprehensive understanding, micro-level variations in implementation are not covered.

5. Evolution and Institutional Framework of FASTag

The development of FASTag is closely linked to India's broader digital transformation initiatives, particularly under the Digital India programme. Initially introduced on a pilot basis, FASTag gradually expanded across national highways and was made mandatory for most vehicles in 2021.

The implementation of FASTag involves a multi-institutional framework. The Indian Highways Management Company Limited plays a central role in operational management under the supervision of the National Highways Authority of India. Financial transactions are facilitated through the clearing and settlement systems established by the National Payments Corporation of India.

This collaborative framework reflects a convergence of infrastructure management and financial technology, representing a key feature of modern governance systems.

6. Structure and Functioning of FASTag

FASTag operates through RFID-enabled tags affixed to vehicle windshields, which are linked to prepaid wallets or bank accounts. When a vehicle passes through a toll plaza, RFID readers detect the tag and initiate an electronic transaction.

The process involves:

- Automatic detection of the vehicle
- Transmission of transaction data
- Deduction of toll charges from the linked account

This system minimizes human intervention, reduces transaction time, and enhances operational efficiency. Its interoperability across multiple toll plazas ensures seamless travel for users.

7. Impact on Road Transport and Governance

The implementation of FASTag has resulted in significant improvements across multiple dimensions.

7.1 Traffic Efficiency

FASTag has reduced waiting times at toll plazas, leading to smoother traffic

flow and decreased congestion.

7.2 Environmental Sustainability

Reduced idling time has contributed to lower fuel consumption and decreased vehicular emissions, supporting environmental sustainability.

7.3 Economic Efficiency

Improved logistics efficiency has reduced transportation costs and enhanced supply chain performance.

7.4 Governance and Transparency

The digital nature of transactions ensures transparency, reduces revenue leakage, and facilitates better monitoring and accountability.

8. FASTag as an Instrument of Digital Democracy

FASTag exemplifies the practical application of digital democracy by integrating technology into governance processes. It enhances transparency through digital records, promotes accountability through real-time monitoring, and facilitates citizen engagement by enabling direct interaction with digital systems.

Furthermore, the data generated through FASTag transactions supports evidence-based policymaking, thereby strengthening governance mechanisms.

9. Challenges and Critical Issues

Despite its advantages, FASTag faces several challenges:

- **Technological Issues:** System errors and infrastructure limitations
- **Digital Divide:** Limited access and awareness among certain population groups
- **Data Privacy:** Concerns regarding the security of user data
- **Operational Constraints:** Issues such as incorrect deductions and tag blacklisting

10. Conclusion

The implementation of FASTag under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways represents a significant advancement in India's journey toward digital governance. By integrating technology with infrastructure, FASTag has enhanced efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the road transport sector. However,

addressing challenges related to technological reliability, inclusivity, and data security remains essential for ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, the success of FASTag highlights the crucial role of a visionary ministry that promotes innovation, policy support, and inter-agency coordination to drive digital transformation. Continuous system upgradation—through improved digital infrastructure, robust cybersecurity frameworks, and user-friendly mechanisms—is necessary to keep pace with evolving technological demands.

Overall, FASTag serves as a strong model for the effective integration of digital technologies in public administration and significantly contributes to the broader vision of digital democracy in India.

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