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डॉल्फिन प्रिंटोग्राफिक्स, 4 ई/7, पाबला बिल्डिंग, झंडेवालान् एक्सटेंशन, नई दिल्ली में मुद्रित।
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- * शोध-पत्र प्राप्त होने के उपरांत शोधार्थी के पास ईमेल / व्हाट्सएप्प या फोन के माध्यम से शोध-पत्र प्राप्ति की सूचना दी जायेगी।
- * शोध-पत्र प्राप्त होने के उपरांत सम्पादक-मंडल द्वारा इसे सम्बन्धित विषय के विशेषज्ञ (रीव्यूवर) के पास भेजा जायेगा। जिसका विषय विशेषज्ञ द्वारा विधिवत मूल्यांकन एवं परीक्षण / संशोधन किया जायेगा। तदुपरांत सम्पादक मंडल के पास प्रकाशनार्थ प्रेषित किया जायेगा।
- * विषय विशेषज्ञ / सम्पादक मंडल के पास शोध-पत्र के प्रकाशन / संशोधन का पूर्ण अधिकार होगा।
- * कोई भी शोध-पत्र सम्पादक मंडल / रीव्यू पैनल द्वारा पूर्णतया मूल्यांकन के उपरांत ही प्रकाशित किया जायेगा।
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- * लेखक से अनुरोध है कि शोध-पत्र वॉकमैन चाणक्य 905 या क्रुतिदेव फॉन्ट में वर्ड या पेजमेकर में टाइप (टङ्कण) करारकर शोध-पत्रिका के ई-मेल पर प्रेषित करें।
- * शोध-लेख हिन्दी अथवा संस्कृत भाषा में न्यूनतम 1500 शब्द एवं अधिकतम 3000 शब्द तक मान्य है तथा इसके साथ लेखक का पद-नाम, कीवर्ड्स, सारांश एवं सभी संदर्भ के साथ स्वयं की फोटो (छवि-चित्र) अत्यन्त अनिवार्य है।
- * प्रकाशनार्थ प्राप्त लेख सलाहकार परिषद् एवम् संपादक मण्डल की अनुमति के पश्चात् स्तरीय होने पर ही प्रकाशित होगा।
- * शोध-पत्र भेजने के बाद उसे प्रकाशित करने हेतु किसी भी तरह का दबाव स्वीकार्य नहीं होगा। शोध-पत्र में यदि चित्र का प्रयोग हुआ है तो उसे भी अवश्य प्रेषित करें।
- * 'वाक् सुधा' किसी भी तरह के परामर्श का स्वागत करती है, इसलिए अपनी प्रतिक्रिया अवश्य दें।
- * यह स्पष्ट किया जाता है कि शोध पत्र में प्रस्तुत तथ्य शोधकर्ता के अपने विचार हैं तथा सलाहकार परिषद् एवं सम्पादक मण्डल का इसमें कोई सरोकार नहीं होगा। इसके लिए शोधकर्ता स्वयं उत्तरदायी है।
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- * प्रत्येक अङ्क पत्रिका की वेबसाइट पर अध्ययन हेतु उपलब्ध रहता है।
- * अपेक्षित आर्थिक सहयोग अथवा अंशदान के लिए हम आपके अत्यंत आभारी रहेंगे।
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- * आगामी अङ्क में प्रकाशनार्थ लेख आमंत्रित हैं। यदि आप लेख टाइप करा कर भेजने में असमर्थ हैं तो हस्तलिखित प्रति पत्रिका में दिये गये पत्र-व्यवहार के पते पर भेज दें।
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अनुक्रमणिका

<i>Editorial</i> -----	vii	India's Digital Media Strategy in Central Asia: Countering Russia and China -----	72
समकालीन हिंदी कविता में प्रतिरोध का स्वर	1	<i>Dr. Nand Kishor</i>	
कुणाल भारती		Transforming Urban Waste Management: A Case Study of Lucknow's Integrated and Sustainable Approach -----	80
The Importance of a Parental Exam Before Having Children: A Holistic Approach to Family Planning -----	9	<i>Vaishali Rathi / Sagarika Behura / Priya Chaturvedi</i>	
<i>Himanshi Chugh</i>		Commerce, Community and Faith: Virji Vohra, Merchant of 17th Century Gujarat -----	87
Intersectionality of Gender and Tribe: A Rights Discourse -----	14	<i>Mohd. Dilshad</i>	
<i>Sarita Bhoi</i>		The Role of International Organizations in Addressing Global Social Issues: Evaluating Effectiveness and Limitations -----	93
स्वतंत्र भारत की राजनीतिक विडंबनायें :		<i>Priya Chaturvedi / Hukam Singh Meena</i>	
'बकरी' नाटक के संदर्भ में	19	Environment Impact of Bisalpur Dam: An analysis -----	102
चित्तरंजन कुमार		<i>Prof. R. N. Sharma / Pushkar Singh Bagaria</i>	
Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Physics Education: A Literature Review -----	23	Women's Participation in Community Development: Policy Analysis in Delhi -----	109
<i>Shraddha Yadav</i>		<i>Priya Chaturvedi / Bidya Bhushan</i>	
Perspective on Immersive Technologies in Education: VR, AR, MR -----	31	Impact of Labour Migration on Sustainable Livelihood: A Case Study of Bihar -----	118
<i>Vandana Singh</i>		<i>Bidya Bhushan / Priya Chaturvedi</i>	
The Interplay of Social Media, Human Rights and Constitutional Law in India -----	35	Developmental Contextual Perspective of Bullying : Understanding from the students' Vocabulary and Their Persepectives -----	124
<i>Harendra Singh</i>		<i>Swati Sharma / Prof. Renu Malaviya</i>	
Women Prisoners Resistance and Assertion in Colonial North Western Provinces and Oudh (1870–Early 20th Century) -----	39	The Role of Women in Tribal Resistance: A Gendered Study of Birsa Munda's Tribal Movement -----	131
<i>Nityaasha Pratap</i>		<i>Dr. Shobhika Mukul</i>	
A Psychological Comparison of Impulse Buying Behavior Between Working and Non-Working Women -----	46	Organic Farming in Haryana: Policy Initiatives, Farmer Perceptions, and Sustainability Perspectives – A Literature Review -----	134
<i>Monik Jaiswal/Dr. Shishir Srivastava/Prof. Ram Milan</i>		<i>Vaishali Rathi / Mukul Dhankhar</i>	
Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education: Trends and Future Directions -----	54	Navigating the Policy Crossroads: Innovation and Privacy in a Digitally Driven Society -----	142
<i>Shiwani / Dr. Mukesh Kumar</i>		<i>Mukul Dhankhar / Vaishali Rathi / Sagarika Behura</i>	
हिमांशु जोशी के कथा साहित्य में पर्वतीय जनजीवन ..	65	The Role of National Green Tribunal and Supreme Court in Protecting the Forests in India -----	149
सीमा		<i>Mukul Dhankhar/Sagarika Behura / Vaishali Rathi</i>	
'झाड़ी' कहानी संग्रह की कहानियों में व्यक्त मध्यवर्गीय बोध	68		
मंदेश शर्मा			

Narrative Traditions of Pali Texts and Their Influence on Literary Pedagogy in Hindi and English Studies -----	155
<i>Avinish Prakash Singh</i>	
Ascertaining the role of Agrarian Culture in the Economic Transformation: Response from India's Historical Experience -----	163
<i>Pankaj Kumar Soni</i>	
इक्कीसवीं सदी का किसान जीवन और किसान विमर्श	170
<i>दिनेश कुमार</i>	
Buddhist Philosophy and Modern Science : A Reinterpretation of the Principle of Cause and Effect -----	173
<i>Sharanpal Singh</i>	
Reclaiming the True Essence of Yoga: A Review of the Misinterpretation of Yoga as Merely Asana and Pranayama -----	178
<i>Satyavir Singh Naulakha</i>	
अज्ञेय का आंतरिक द्वन्द्व और संघर्ष : संदर्भ 'हीलीबोन की बत्तखें'	182
<i>डॉ. नीलम कुमारी</i>	
Cultural, Sensory, and Regulatory Factors Explaining the Culinary Marginalization of Licorice (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>) in India versus Its Popularity in Western Confectionery -----	185
<i>Karthikeyan K / Raj Barat Rajasekar</i>	
Green Bonds : Investor Appetite and Pricing Efficiency -----	189
<i>Bhavya Khanduja</i>	
Shaping Perspectives: Exploring the Impact of Social Media Advertising on Urban Teenagers' Buying Behavior -----	195
<i>Neelam Meena</i>	
केदारनाथ सिंह की कविताएँ : प्रेम और सौन्दर्य की परिभाषाएँ	202
<i>डॉ. सुनीता दुरंगल</i>	
नयी कहानी आन्दोलन के परिप्रेक्ष्य में 'परिन्दे' कहानी का समग्र मूल्यांकन	206
<i>धनंजय दुबे</i>	
Prominent Spiritual Figures and Their Critical Approach to Life & Self-Realization -----	210
<i>Dr. Purnima Priyadarshi</i>	

The Digital Newscast: How Delhi University Students are Redefining Information -----	215
<i>Toyaz Kumar Singh</i>	
स्नातक स्तर की छात्राओं पर परामर्श सत्र की प्रभावशीलता का अध्ययन	219
<i>डॉ. दिनेश कुमार</i>	
An Examination of the Buddhist Principle of Compassion and its Relevance in the Contemporary World -----	222
<i>Luu Thanh Tung</i>	
Politicization of Caste in Uttar Pradesh (1947-2000) -----	228
<i>Ratandeep Tripathi</i>	
हिंदी कहानियों में राष्ट्रीयता का बोध	234
<i>डॉ. राजकुमार राजन / डॉ. सायमा इकबाल</i>	
अनछुए भावों का संसार और 'अकाल में सारस'	240
<i>डॉ. सुनीता दुरंगल</i>	
Climate Change, Resource Rush, and the Emerging Geopolitics of the Arctic: Sovereignty Gaps, Indigenous Impacts, and the 'Arctic Paradox' -----	244
<i>Maanya Kamble</i>	
समकालीन हिंदी उपन्यास और स्त्री विमर्श : नीलेश रघुवंशी के विशेष संदर्भ में	250
<i>संजू</i>	
धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण पर आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा की दृष्टि	257
<i>रतन कुमार दास</i>	
हिन्दी रंगमंच के विकास में लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल का अवदान.....	264
<i>डॉ. प्रमिला</i>	
महिला सशक्तिकरण और समकालीन युग.....	268
<i>डॉ. सायमा इकबाल / डॉ. राजकुमार राजन</i>	



सम्पादकीय

सफल, सुरक्षित और ऐतिहासिक अंतरिक्ष अभियान से सकुशल लौटे शुभांशु शुक्ला। शुभांशु अंतरिक्ष में जाने वाले दूसरे भारतीय बने। 1984 में आज से ठीक 41 वर्ष पहले अंतरिक्ष यात्री राकेश शर्मा अंतरिक्ष में गए थे। राकेश शर्मा से तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री इंदिरा गांधी ने पूछा था कि वहां से हमारा भारत कैसा दिखता है? उसके जवाब में राकेश शर्मा ने कहा था- “सारे जहां से अच्छा...” उसी तरह शुभांशु शुक्ला जब अंतरिक्ष में थे तो प्रधानमंत्री मोदी से बात करते हुए शुभांशु ने कहा, यहां से भारत बहुत भव्य और बड़ा दिखता है। अनेकता में एकता का भाव साकार होता है। अब शुभांशु शुक्ला लौट आए हैं। उनका स्पेसक्राफ्ट कैलिफोर्निया में उतरा। भारत के लिए यह बहुत बड़ी उपलब्धि है। स्वदेशी प्रयासों से अंतरिक्ष में उतरना इसरो की महत्वपूर्ण परियोजना एवं लक्ष्य है। मिशन ‘गगनयान’ की दिशा में यह पहला कदम है। 1969 में बने भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (इसरो) के लगभग 60 वर्षों के गौरवपूर्ण सफर में यह तथ्य सर्वविदित है कि ‘इसरो’ ने जो ठाना है वह किया है। चाहे सबसे कम खर्च में चंद्रयान या मंगलयान हो या सेटेलाइट प्रक्षेपण की बात हो। ‘इसरो’ अपने मानव स्पेस मिशन में भी मितव्ययता का उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करना चाहता है।

बहरहाल, 18 दिनों के चुनौतीपूर्ण अंतरिक्ष अभियान के पश्चात भारत के ग्रुप कैप्टन शुभांशु शुक्ला और Axiom-4 मिशन की टीम की अंतरराष्ट्रीय अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन (ISS) से सुरक्षित वापसी मानव इतिहास की एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि है।

यह अभियान न केवल भारत के लिए बल्कि सम्पूर्ण विश्व के लिए अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान के नए द्वार खोलता है। इसकी सफलता वैज्ञानिक सामर्थ्य, तकनीकी उत्कृष्टता और मानवीय साहस का प्रतीक है। भारतीय वायुसेना के गौरव, ग्रुप कैप्टन शुभांशु शुक्ला अंतरिक्ष से धरती पर मंगलमय आगमन, ये केवल वापसी नहीं, भारत के विज्ञान और संकल्प की एक नई विजय कथा है। पृथ्वी पर लौटने के बाद शुभांशु शुक्ला ने पृथ्वी पर गुरुत्वाकर्षण के साथ फिर से तालमेल बिठाने का अपना अनुभव बताया। उन्होंने कहा- धरती पर लौटने के बाद मैंने फोटो लेने के लिए मोबाइल मांगा। जिस समय मैंने मोबाइल पकड़ा, मुझे लगा वह बहुत भारी है।

एक और घटना के बारे में उन्होंने बताया-मैं अपने बिस्तर पर बैठा था। मैंने अपना लैपटॉप बंद किया और बिस्तर के किनारे खिसका दिया। मैंने सोचा वह हवा में तैरता रहेगा। शुरु है, फर्श पर कालीन बिछी थी इसलिए कोई नुकसान नहीं हुआ। शुभांशु शुक्ला का Axiom-4 मिशन 25 जून को फ्लोरिडा के कैंनेडी स्पेस सेंटर से लॉन्च हुआ था और 15 जुलाई को पृथ्वी पर लौटा। इस ऐतिहासिक अभियान में भारत के लगभग 550 करोड़ रुपये खर्च हुए। जैसे कि मैं पहले भी कह चुका हूँ कि शुभांशु शुक्ला का यह अध्ययन बहुत ही उपयोगी साबित होगा। अंतरिक्ष में जीवन को समझने के लिए शुभांशु ने एक साथ कई प्रयोग किए हैं। इसका मकसद यह समझना था कि शून्य गुरुत्वाकर्षण में जीवन कैसे प्रभावित होता है। इन प्रयोगों में माइक्रोएल्ली, बीजों का अंकुरण जैसे विषय शामिल थे। सूक्ष्म जीव पर अध्ययन से यह समझने में मदद मिलेगी कि जीव अत्यधिक तापमान पर कैसे जीवित रह सकते हैं। इस मिशन की सफलता भारत के आगामी मानव युक्त अंतरिक्ष मिशन “गगनयान”, जो कि 2027 तक प्रस्तावित है, के लिए भी एक आत्मविश्वासवर्धन के रूप में कार्य करेगी। साथ ही इस वैश्विक अभियान में भारत की सहभागिता भारतीय प्रतिभा का वैश्विक पटल पर सशक्त प्रदर्शन है। स्पेस टूरिज्म और स्पेस मार्केट में अपनी हिस्सेदारी के लिए भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन की यह उपलब्धि मील का पत्थर साबित होगी, साथ ही विकसित भारत बनाने की दिशा में यह एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है। ग्लोबल थॉट पत्रिका की तरफ से शुभांशु शुक्ला को इस अभूतपूर्व उपलब्धि के लिए हार्दिक बधाई एवं इसरो को कोटि-कोटि अभिनन्दन। ग्लोबल थॉट के आगामी अंकों के लिए शोधार्थी एवं वरिष्ठ अध्यापकों से गुणवत्तापूर्ण आलेख आमंत्रित हैं। आपके सुझाव एवं सलाह की प्रतीक्षा में।

— डॉ. राजेश कुमार
उपसंपादक



कुणाल भारती

समकालीन हिंदी कविता में प्रतिरोध का स्वर

शोध सारांश : प्रतिरोध समकालीन कविता का मुख्य स्वर रहा है। वैसे तो कविताएँ सदियों से प्रतिरोध को व्यक्त करता रहा है। समकालीन हिंदी कविता में अभिव्यक्त प्रतिरोध पहले से इस रूप में भिन्न है कि; यह कविताएँ मनुष्य के जीवन और उससे जुड़ी समस्याओं को संपूर्णता में देखती हैं। यह कविताएँ पहले की कविताओं से इस रूप में भी अलग हैं कि; यह कविताएँ आजादी के बाद की कविता हैं। आजादी के बाद की हिंदी कविता जिसे आमतौर पर समकालीन कविता के नाम से जाना जाता है, उसके पीछे मुख्य वजह यह है कि भारत के परिप्रेक्ष्य में 'भारत की आजादी' ही वह मुख्य विभाजक रेखा है जहाँ से साहित्य के स्वरूप में परिवर्तन होता है। यह परिवर्तन सत्ता हस्तांतरण के बाद की सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं सांप्रदायिक गतिविधियों को पहली बार संवैधानिक परिप्रेक्ष्य देखती है या देखने का भरसक प्रयास करती है। इस तरह देश में संविधान के लागू हो जाने के साथ जो एक उत्सव, उत्साह, उमंग, उर्जा, आकांक्षा की लहर चली थी वह ज्यादा दिनों तक नहीं टिक सकी। समकालीन हिंदी कविता उसके टूटने, बिखरने, झूठा साबित होने के कारणों एवं उसके कर्णधारों के कथनी एवं करणी के छद्म के विरुद्ध सघन प्रतिरोध अभिव्यक्त करता है।

बीज शब्द : प्रतिरोध, समकालीन, संविधान, कविता

कोई भी साहित्य समकालीन तभी हो सकती है, जब उस साहित्य की संवेदना, विचार, दृष्टि एवं चिंतन में प्रतिरोध मौजूद हो। प्रतिरोध के बगैर कोई भी साहित्य समकालीन नहीं हो सकती है। जिस साहित्य का भाव प्रतिरोध को दर्ज नहीं करता है, वह साहित्य समकालीन समय में लिखे जाने के

बावजूद समकालीन साहित्य नहीं कही जाएगी। अतः वैसे साहित्य समकालीन समय में लिखे जाने के बावजूद कालगत सीमाओं से बंधा होगा या फिर वैसे साहित्य को समकाल या वर्तमान काल का साहित्य ही कहेंगे, न कि समकालीन साहित्य। अतः समकालीन साहित्य के लिए प्रतिरोध एक अनिवार्य शर्त है।

समकालीन हिंदी कविता का मुख्य स्वर प्रतिरोध है। "प्रतिरोध शब्द एक प्रकार के विरोध का सूचक है जो दृष्टिगोचर होने वाले शोषण, किसी भी प्रकार की परिसंपत्तियों, सुविधाओं, हकों और अधिकारों को नकारे जाने या वंचित किए जाने के विरुद्ध प्रकट होता है।" स्पष्ट है कि प्रतिरोध किसी भी तरह से वर्चस्व एवं शोषण के विरुद्ध दर्ज असहमति है। यह असहमति मनुष्य एवं मनुष्यता को बनाए व बचाए रखने के प्रक्रिया में अभिव्यक्त होती है। आजादी के बाद एवं संविधान के लागू हो जाने के बावजूद; भारत की बहुसंख्यक जनता जो 'हम भारत के लोग' का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं, हाशिए का शिकार हो गया। आजादी के बाद देश में बदलाव एवं विकास की जो लहर चली थी उसने प्रत्येक वर्ग, वर्ण, जाति, नस्ल, लिंग, समूह एवं समुदाय को समता, समानता, स्वतंत्रता, साझेदारी का सपना दिखाया था। वह सपना जब टूटने, बिखरने एवं झूठा साबित होने लगा। आजादी के सपने और संवैधानिक प्रावधान दोनों कुछ खास लोगों एवं वर्गों के हितों की सुरक्षा का चाबी बन गया। समकालीन हिंदी कविता उन्हीं प्रतिगामी, आमजन विरोधी शक्तियों के विरुद्ध सघन प्रतिरोध रचती है।

समकालीन कविता पर विचार करने से पहले 'समकालीन' शब्द पर विचार-विमर्श करना समीचीन होगा। समकालीन

का शाब्दिक अर्थ होता है-वर्तमान काल का, एक ही समय का, आधुनिक, एक समय में होने वाला, उसी समय होने वाला, सहवर्ती, युगपत्, समसामयिक, कंटेंपररी, बराबर काल का इत्यादि। इससे यह स्पष्ट है कि समकालीन में एक समय अवधि या समसामयिक या आधुनिक समय, जीवन, दुनिया, दर्शन, चिंतन, विमर्श, दृष्टि, त्रासदी के संदर्भ शामिल होंगे।

कविता के संदर्भ में जब हम समकालीन शब्द पर विचार करते हैं, तब यह स्पष्ट होता है कि समकालीन किसी कालखंड विशेष का सूचक न होकर, उस प्रवृत्ति विशेष का सूचक है जो 'कालगत' अर्थ से कहीं अधिक 'मूल्यगत' अर्थ को आत्मसात करता है; जहाँ कवि अपने समय के सवालों से साक्षात्कार करते हुए प्रतिरोध को दर्ज करते हैं। अतः "समकालीन होने का अर्थ सिर्फ समय के बीच होने से नहीं है। समकालीन होने का अर्थ है समय के वैचारिक और रचनात्मक दबावों को झेलते हुए, उनसे उत्पन्न तनावों और टकराहटों के बीच अपनी सर्जनशीलता द्वारा अपने होने को प्रमाणित करना। समकालीन लेखक की पहचान यही हो सकती है कि अपने समय के सवालों के प्रति वह किस तरह प्रतिक्रिया करता है और अपने लेखन में उन सवालों के लिए जो जगह वह निर्धारित करता है, उन सवालों के प्रति वह कितना गंभीर है, कहीं न कहीं इन सबसे ही उसकी समकालीनता सुनिश्चित होती है।"¹² इस प्रकार हम कह सकते हैं कि वैसी कविता जिसकी संवेदना अपने समय के गंभीर सवालों से टकराती हुए सशक्त प्रतिरोध को प्रस्तुत करता हो, वह समकालीन कविता है। अतः समकालीन कविता समय का अतिक्रमण करते हुए सामाजिक यथार्थ की सच्चाई, युगबोध, जीवन बोध, इतिहास बोध आदि को समसामयिक संदर्भ के मूल्यगत अर्थ में अभिव्यक्ति करती है। "समकालीन शब्द यह बताता है कि काल के इस प्रचलित खंड या प्रवाह में मनुष्य की स्थिति क्या है? इसे उलटकर कहें तो कहेंगे कि मनुष्य की वास्तविक स्थिति देखकर या उसे चित्रित करके ही हम समकालीनता की अवधारणा को समझ सकते हैं। शर्त यही है कि लेखक आज के मनुष्य के अंकन में वस्तुगत यानि उसके चित्रण की विधि कोई भी हो लेकिन उसमें जो मानव-बिम्ब उभरता हो वह वास्तविक जीवन के निकट हो।"¹³ इस तरह देखें तो समकालीन का अर्थ मनुष्य एवं उसके जीवन के वास्तविक चित्र एवं चरित्र का वर्तमान समय-संदर्भ में सामने लाना है। उसकी वास्तविक जीवन दशा, दिशा एवं महत्व का बिना किसी लाग-लपेट के प्रस्तुत

करना है और उसका सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं सांप्रदायिक जीवन के परिप्रेक्ष्य में उचित मूल्यांकन करना है। साथ ही उन्हें अपने हक एवं अधिकारों के प्रति सचेत-सजग करना भी समकालीनता की पहचान है। अतः "समकालीनता मानव-भविष्य के प्रति पक्षधरता का दूसरा नाम है।"¹⁴

समकालीनता की अवधारणा एवं उसके मूल्यगत अर्थ पर विचार करें तो यह स्पष्ट होता है कि अपने कालगत सीमाओं का अतिक्रमण करते हुए वे सभी कवि जिनकी कविताओं में मानव-भविष्य की पक्षधरता सुरक्षित है, समकालीन कवि कहे जा सकते हैं; मसलन सरहपा, गोरख, खुसरो, कबीर, रैदास, तुलसी, मीरा, निराला आदि। वैसे हिंदी साहित्य में आमतौर पर साठोत्तरी कविता को 'समकालीन कविता' से अभिहित किया गया है जहाँ छोटे-बड़े कई काव्यांदोलन भी देखे जा सकते हैं। लेकिन व्यापक अर्थों में 'समकालीन कविता' को आजादी के बाद की हिंदी कविता के रूप में या फिर प्रगतिवादी काव्यांदोलन के दौर से जोड़ कर देख सकते हैं, क्योंकि प्रगतिवादी काव्य आंदोलन के कई सारे महत्वपूर्ण कवि आजादी के बाद भी काव्य रचना के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय रहे हैं। और तो और उस कवि की कविता की संवेदना भी एक सीमा तक समकालीन मूल्यों को आत्मसात करती है। इस तरह समकालीन हिंदी कविता जिसे साठोत्तरी हिंदी कविता भी कहते हैं, उसे एक दशक पीछे तक की सीमाओं से जोड़ कर देखा जा सकता है।

यह स्पष्ट है कि समकालीन हिंदी कविता का मुख्य स्वर प्रतिरोध है। बदलते सामाजिक जीवन एवं बदलती सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं सांप्रदायिक व्यवस्था के साथ प्रतिरोध के स्वरूप में भी बदलाव आया। अब प्रतिरोध सत्ता-उच्चव्यवस्था, वर्चस्व या प्रभुत्व के छल-छद्म के विरुद्ध तक ही सीमित नहीं रह गया है, बल्कि अब प्रतिरोध जीवन, जगत, विचार, भाव, दृष्टिकोण, मान्यता, संस्कृति आदि की जड़ता के विरुद्ध भी अभिव्यक्त होने लगा है। इसी कड़ी में अस्मितामूलक विमर्श की कविता समकालीन हिंदी कविता की सबसे बड़ी एवं नई उपलब्धि है। साठ का दशक जहाँ समकालीन कविता का केंद्रीय बिंदु है, वहीं नब्बे का दशक विमर्शों की दुनिया का प्रस्थान बिंदु है। इस तरह समकालीन हिंदी कविता सत्ता-व्यवस्था, गरीबी, भुखमरी, राजनीतिक छल-छद्म, अवसरवाद एवं मूल्यहीनता,

सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक वर्चस्व, धार्मिक-सांप्रदायिक उन्माद, रूढ़ एवं जड़ मान्यताओं आदि से आगे बढ़ कर अस्मिता की पहचान एवं अस्तित्व के संकट के प्रति भी मुखर नजर आती है। इस मुखरता को दलित, स्त्री, आदिवासी, अल्पसंख्यक आदि विमर्शों की कविताएँ गति एवं शक्ति प्रदान करती हैं।

समकालीन शब्द को लेकर पहले ही स्पष्ट किया गया है कि समकालीनता का संबंध किसी कालखंड से न होकर प्रवृत्ति विशेष से है। फिर भी उक्त शोधालेख में संदर्भों का चयन साठ के बाद की लिखी गई कविताओं को दृष्टि में रख किया गया है। “समकालीन कविता में 1965 के पूर्व वितृष्णा या घृणा (Disgust) से सम्बन्धित शब्दों का बाहुल्य है। राजकमल चौधरी के ‘मुक्ति प्रसंग’ में इसे देखा जा सकता है। इसके पूर्व ‘नयी कविता’ के वृत्त में अन्तःसंघर्ष और अन्तर्द्वन्द्व से सम्बन्धित शब्द अधिक मिलते हैं, अवसाद, पीड़ा, घुटन, मूल्य द्वन्द्व आदि। 1962 के बाद हिन्दी कविता में, प्रतिबद्धता, समांतरता, आक्रोश, पक्षधरता, क्रान्ति, सम्बद्धता (एंगेजमेण्ट), चिन्ता, आम आदमी, सर्वहारा, गुरिल्ला-चेतना, प्रगतिशीलता, ध्वंस, नव-वामपंथ, वाम संस्कृति, विद्रोह, समकालीनता जैसे शब्दों का प्रयोग बढ़ता है।”¹⁵ इस तरह सन् साठ के बाद भारतीय सामाजिक एवं राजनीतिक व्यवस्था में परिवर्तन व संघर्ष का एक नया दौर शुरू होता है। ये वही समय है जहाँ भारत-चीन युद्ध में भारत की पराजय, नेहरू की मृत्यु, आजादी से मोहभंग आदि घटनाक्रम एक युग के अंत की घोषणा करता है। फिर एक नया दौर शुरू होता है जहाँ देश में एक ओर भुखमरी, बेरोजगारी, बेकारी, असमानता, सांप्रदायिक तनाव आदि अपने चरम पर पहुँच गई थी, वहीं दूसरी ओर नेताओं की सत्ता लोलुप भावना, अहंकार, आक्रमकता, अवसरवाद, मूल्यहीनता आदि भी अपने शिखर पर थी। इस बीच एक पूरी पीढ़ी आजाद भारत में पली-पुसी, लेकिन उसके सामने जो सपनों का भारत था वह क्लेश से भरा हुआ था। उस क्लेश से बाहर निकलने एवं अपने-आप को प्रमाणित करने का एक ही रास्ता था प्रतिरोध। रघुवीर सहाय अपने ही देश में बेगानी हो गई जनता को बोलने के लिए प्रेरित करते हैं। ‘आत्महत्या के विरुद्ध’ शीर्षक कविता में बोलने के प्रभावकारी महत्व को रेखांकित करते हुए लिखते हैं—

“कुछ होगा कुछ होगा अगर मैं बोलूँगा
न टूटे न टूटे तिलिस्म सत्ता का
मेरे अन्दर एक कायर टूटेगा टूट

मेरे मन टूट एक बार सही तरह
अच्छी तरह टूट मत झूठमूठ ऊब मत रूठ
मत डूब सिर्फ टूट”¹⁶

हमारा डर ही सत्ता का हथियार है। प्रतिरोध के लिए डर का त्याग आवश्यक है। डर का त्याग हो इसके लिए बोलना जरूरी है। जब हम बोलना शुरू करते हैं, तब हम अपने अधिकारों के लिए लड़ना शुरू करते हैं। इसलिए जरूरी है अपने भीतर के आवेग को शब्द दिया जाए। उसे बोला जाय, ताकि प्रतिरोध को जिन्दा रखा जा सके। बोलना जनता का मौलिक अधिकार है। भारतीय संविधान भी इसकी इजाजत देता है। रघुवीर सहाय जनता की चुप संस्कृति को तोड़ने पर जोर देते हैं। चुप होने का मतलब है शोषण की स्वीकार्यता। इसलिए कवि बोलने पर बल देते हैं। आदमी जब बोलेंगे, तब वह सोचें-विचारेंगे भी। सोचने-विचारने की क्षमता का बोध होना ही बोलने की सार्थकता है, प्रतिरोध है।

कवि अपने समय को दर्ज करते हैं और समय के साथ हो रहे उन सभी जरूरी एवं गैर-जरूरी परिवर्तनों को भी जो की आमजन के लिए जरूरी है। इसलिए कवि कविता लिखते हैं। कवि का मानना है कि इस व्यवस्था से लड़ने से पहले अपने-आप को प्रमाणित करना होगा, क्योंकि प्रमाणिकता की यह राह चेतना पैदा करती है। निहत्थी जनता सत्ता एवं व्यवस्था की ताकत को विवेक के सहारे ही पराजित कर सकती है। सर्वेश्वर ‘पथराव’ शीर्षक कविता में लिखते हैं—

“मैं जानता हूँ पथराव से कुछ नहीं होगा
न कविता से ही।
कुछ हो या न हो
हमें अपना होना प्रमाणित करना है।”¹⁷

‘अपने होने को प्रमाणित करना’ एक सशक्त माध्यम एवं समकालीन बोध है विरोध और प्रतिरोध का। इसलिए कवि कविता लिखने को जिम्मेदारीपूर्ण काम मानते हैं। वे कहते हैं कि “मैं यह जानता हूँ कि कविता से समाज नहीं बदला जा सकता। जिससे बदला जा सकता है वह क्षमता मुझमें नहीं है। फिर मैं क्या करूँ? चुप रहूँ? उसे खुश करने का नाटक करूँ, भड़की करूँ? वह मेरे मान का नहीं। सच तो यह है कि मैं कविता लिखकर केवल अपना होना प्रमाणित करता हूँ। मैं यह मानता हूँ कि हम जिस समाज में हैं, जिस दुनिया में हैं वहाँ हमें अपना होना प्रमाणित करना है।”¹⁸ अपने समाज के प्रति कवि का यह दायित्वबोध ही उन्हें जनता के करीब लाता है

जहाँ वे अपनी कविता के माध्यम से आम आवाम में सामाजिक-राजनीतिक चेतना का बोध पैदा कर पाते हैं। यह बोध ही प्रतिरोध है।

समकालीन हिंदी कविता की भाव एवं भाषा को जिन कवियों ने अपने प्रतिरोध से व्यापक आयाम दिए हैं, उनमें धूमिल का नाम अग्रणी हैं। धूमिल कविता को सड़क से उठा कर संसद तक पहुँचाने का काम किए हैं। वे अपने समय के उन कवियों में से हैं जो 'अकवितावादी' काव्य आंदोलन के प्रभाव से मुक्त होकर प्रतिरोध की कविता लिखने लगते हैं, जहाँ मूल्य भी है और जीवन भी। धूमिल तमाम तरह की जड़ता एवं यथास्थितिवाद से आगे बढ़कर एक नए प्रजातंत्र की तलाश करते हैं। वे बदहाल होती जा रही सामाजिक-राजनीतिक स्थितियों पर आक्रोश व्यक्त करते हैं। वे राजनीतिक विसंगतियों, सत्तालोलुप समाज व्यवस्था, निरंकुश शासनतंत्र, लोकतंत्र के हत्यारे आदि के प्रति जनता को आगाह करते हैं। वे उन्हें अपनी उकताहट, ऊब, उदासी, एकरसता, बेचैनी, कमजोरी आदि को तेज हथियार में बदलने की बात करते हैं। वे आम आवाम को प्रतिरोध के लिए प्रेरित करते हैं। वे आम जन को संबोधित करते हुए 'पटकथा' शीर्षक कविता में लिखते हैं—

“अपनी आदतों में
फूलों की जगह पत्थर भरो
मासूमियत के हर तकाजे को
ठोकर मार दो
अब वक्त आ गया है कि तुम उठो
और अपनी ऊब को आकार दो”⁹

यह जो भाव, भाषा एवं तेवर है उनकी कविताओं में, यही उनको अपने समकालीन कवियों से अलग भी करते हैं; उन्हें समकालीन मूर्धन्य कवि के रूप में स्थापित भी करते हैं।

राजेश जोशी समकालीन हिंदी कविता के समकाल के कवि हैं। वे आज भी काव्य लेखन के क्षेत्र में सक्रिय कवि के रूप में अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज करते हैं। वे आज की सत्ता की तानाशाही और उसकी बर्बरतापूर्ण नीतियों को रेखांकित करते हैं। वे कहते हैं कि इस व्यवस्था में निरंकुश सत्ता के विरुद्ध जो भी बोलेंगे, वो मारे जायेंगे। यह जन विरोधी सत्ता-व्यवस्था अपना विरोध सुनने को तैयार नहीं है। आजादी के बाद से राजनीतिक सत्ता के बदलती रही, सरकारें बदलती रहीं; लेकिन

सरकार का चरित्र अब तक नहीं बदला है। सत्तर के दशक से, आजादी के सत्तर साल बाद भी सरकार की मनुष्य विरोधी नीतियों के विरुद्ध जो बोलता है 'प्राकृतिक मौत' मारा जाता है जैसा कि रघुवीर सहाय अपनी कविता में लिखते थे। सत्ता सच का सामना करने से डरती है। सच की अभिव्यक्ति प्रतिरोध को दर्ज करता है। राजेश जोशी लिखते हैं—

“जो इस पागलपन में शामिल नहीं होंगे
मारे जाएँगे
कटघरे में खड़े कर दिए जाएँगे, जो विरोध में बोलेंगे
जो सच-सच बोलेंगे, मारे जाएँगे”
.....
“सबसे बड़ा अपराध है इस समय
निहत्थे और निरपराध होना
जो अपराधी नहीं होंगे
मारे जाएँगे।”¹⁰

आम जन का निहत्थे और निरपराध होना, इस समय का सबसे बड़ा अपराध है। ऐसे लोग आए दिन सामाजिक, राजनीतिक एवं धार्मिक वर्चस्वों का शिकार होते हैं और मारे जाते हैं। यह सत्ता-व्यवस्था इतनी उग्र, क्रूर और ताकतवर है कि अकेले संघर्षरत व्यक्ति को तुरंत तोड़ डालती है। आम जनता का सत्ता-व्यवस्था के विरुद्ध विरोध, उसके मौत का कारण बन जाता है। यह व्यवस्था अपनी आलोचना स्वीकार नहीं करती है और आलोचना करने वाले किसी भी समाज, संस्था और व्यक्ति को छोड़ती भी नहीं है। यहाँ सत्ता और व्यवस्था के विरोध का मतलब है अपनी मौत को निमंत्रण देना।

इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि समकालीन कविता अपने संपूर्ण भावबोध, मूल्य व विचार में प्रतिरोध को समाहित किया हुआ है। इस युग के तमाम कवियों की कविताओं में सामाजिक-राजनीतिक विसंगतियों, मूल्यों का विघटन, शासन तंत्र की विफलता, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, गरीब, भुखमरी जैसी समस्याओं के प्रति आक्रोश, असहमति व नकार व्यक्त हुआ है। यही वह समय है जब हिंदी साहित्य में विमर्श शुरुआत होती है जहाँ स्त्री विमर्श, दलित विमर्श, आदिवासी विमर्श अपनी अस्मिता, अस्तित्व व अधिकार को बचाए एवं बनाए रखने के लिए प्रतिरोध करते दिखाई देते हैं। प्रतिरोध की यह परंपरा आज भी अपनी अस्मिता, अस्तित्व व अधिकार को स्थापित करने की लड़ाई लड़ रहा है। इस संदर्भ में देखें तो कात्यायनी अपनी

कविताओं में पितृसत्तात्मक समाज में पुरुषवादी वर्चस्व और स्त्रियों के प्रति बरती जा रही उपेक्षा का प्रतिरोध करती है। इस संबंध में वे लिखती हैं—

“ओखल में धान के साथ

कूट दी गई

भूसी के साथ कूड़े पर

फेंक दी गई।

वहाँ अमरबेल बनकर उगी।

झरबेरी के सात कँटीले झाड़ों के बीच

चम्पा अमरबेल बन सयानी हुई।

फिर से घर आ धमकी।”¹¹

स्त्रियाँ केवल सामाजिक उपेक्षा का शिकार नहीं हुई है। उसे पारिवारिक एवं आत्मीय उपेक्षा का दंश भी सहना पड़ा है। आज जब स्त्रियाँ खुल कर अपनी अस्मिता, अस्तित्व और अधिकार की बातें करती हैं, तो यहाँ भी प्रतिक्रियावादी शक्तियाँ उसे दबाने का प्रयास करता है। अपने परिवार में सात भाइयों के बीच यानी सात कँटीले झाड़ों के बीच चंपा अपनी अस्मिता एवं अपने अस्तित्व की लड़ाई लड़ती है। जीवन के प्रति चंपा की अनाहत जिजीविषा ही उसे प्रत्येक प्रतिगामी व विपरीत परिस्थितियों से लड़ने की शक्ति देती है। लेखिका चंपा के माध्यम से उन तमाम स्त्रियों की पीड़ा, परेशानी, विवशता, विडंबना, उपेक्षा, प्रताड़ना आदि को प्रस्तुत करती है जो आज भी अपने समाज एवं परिवार के बीच अपनी अस्मिता, अपने स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व एवं अधिकार के लिए लड़ रही है।

यही हाल दलित विमर्श व आदिवासी विमर्श से जुड़े कवियों और लेखकों का है। वे लोग जब अपनी स्वतंत्र अस्मिता, अस्तित्व और अधिकार की बातें करते हैं। सदियों से जड़ित वर्ण व्यवस्था एवं जाति व्यवस्था के विरुद्ध तर्कसंगत पक्ष रखते हैं। जबरन हड़प का विरोध करते हैं। अपनी भाषा, संस्कृति व सामाजिक पहचान की बात करते हैं; तब इनके विरोध को, इनकी मांग को, इनकी आवाज को दबाया जाता है और उन्हें प्रगति विरोधी करार दिया जाता है। उन्हें असभ्य कह कर तथाकथित भद्र समाज के द्वारा अपमानित किया जाता है। इन सब यातनाओं-प्रताड़नाओं के बावजूद अच्छी बात यह है कि वे लोग अपनी अस्मिता, अस्तित्व और अधिकार के प्रति सजग हैं। अपने संघर्ष को जारी रखे हैं। उनकी रचनाओं में प्रतिरोध बार-बार अभिव्यक्त होता रहा है।

दलित समाज आज भी सामाजिक व सांस्कृतिक बराबरी

के लिए संघर्ष कर रहा है। उन्हें समाज के प्रत्येक चौराहे पर अपनी योग्यता बार-बार साबित करना पड़ता है। बच्चा लाल ‘उन्मेष’ ‘कौन जात हो भाई?’ शीर्षक कविता के माध्यम से उस रूढ़ सामाजिक-ढाँचे एवं जड़ सांस्कृतिक मान्यताओं व्यंग्य करते हैं। इस कविता में वे लिखते हैं—

“कौन जात हो भाई?

‘दलित हैं साब!’

नहीं मतलब किसमें आते हो?

आपकी गाली में आते हैं

गंदी नाली में आते हैं

और अलग की हुई थाली में आते हैं साब!

मुझे लगा हिंदू में आते हो!

आता हूँ न साब! पर आपके चुनाव में”¹²

यह कविता सारे पुछल्ले भाषणबाजियों, राजनीतिक उदारवादियों, तथाकथित भद्रसमाज के ऊपर तमाचा है जो मुख्यधारा की बात करते हैं, अवसर की समता व समानता की बात करते हैं, अस्पृश्यता उन्मूलन का दावा करते हैं, विकास और विज्ञान की बात करते हैं और वह सिर्फ बात करते हैं।

समकालीन हिंदी कविता अपने व्यापक-विस्तार के बावजूद आदिवासी आवाज को अभिव्यक्त करने में असमर्थ रही है। समकालीन साहित्यिक विमर्श से पूर्व भी स्त्री एवं दलित संवेदना को लेकर थोड़ी बहुत कविता समकालीन हिंदी काव्य परंपरा में दिख जाती है, लेकिन आदिवासी संवेदना को लेकर कविताएँ नहीं के बराबर दिखती हैं। अस्मितामूलक विमर्श के अंतर्गत समकालीन हिंदी कविता में आदिवासी विमर्श की कविताएँ प्रमुखता से देखने को मिल रही है। आदिवासी समाज से जुड़े कवियों, कवयित्रियों एवं लेखकों ने आदिवासी संवेदना को लेकर महत्वपूर्ण कविताएँ लिखे हैं और लिख रहे हैं। वे जल, जंगल, जमीन के साथ-साथ अपनी भाषा, संस्कृति, रीति-नीति आदि की अस्मिता एवं अस्तित्व बनाये एवं बचाए रखने की लड़ाई लड़ रहे हैं।

जसिंता केरकेट्टा आदिवासी विमर्श लेखन की महत्वपूर्ण लेखिका है। उनकी कविता अपने समय के वर्चस्वकारी शक्तियों से टकराती हुई प्रतिरोध को दर्ज करती हैं। वे अपनी कविता में सदियों के उस दर्द को बयाँ करती हैं जो तथाकथित सभ्य समाज की देन है। ‘मेरे हाथों के हथियार’ शीर्षक कविता में लिखती हैं—

“माँ ने बस इतना कहा :

‘हम लड़ रहे हैं

अपनी जमीन

और अपना वजूद बचाने के लिए

मेरे बाद तुम्हें भी लड़ना होगा।’

.....

आज मैं लड़ रहा हूँ

माँ के सपनों को बचाने के लिए।

लड़ रहा हूँ,

उस दर्द के साथ

जो मेरे सीने में गहरे खुदे हैं।”¹³

पीढ़ियों का यह संघर्ष आज भी जारी है। पूँजीपतियों की हिमायती यह सत्ता-व्यवस्था निर्मम तरीके से आदिवासियों के मूल निवास को खत्म किए जा रही है। उनके प्रतिरोध की आवाज को दबाने के लिए, उन्हें नक्सली बता कर मार दिया जा रहा है। इस अमानवीय तरीके से केवल उनका निवास ही खत्म नहीं हो रहा है, बल्कि उनकी सामूहिकता, उनका विश्वास, उनकी आस्था, उनकी संस्कृति, उनकी भाषा, उनकी मान्यता भी खत्म हो रही है। उनके जीवन का मूल आधार खत्म हो रहा है।

इस कविता में लेखिका लैंगिक भेद-भाव को भी चुनौती देती नजर आती है। वे अपनी अभिव्यक्ति को किसी व्याकरणिक-ढाँचे के साँचे में ढाल कर प्रस्तुत नहीं करती, बल्कि उस ढाँचे को भी तोड़ती हैं।

समकालीन हिंदी कविता में आदिवासी विमर्श की कविताएँ अपने उन्हीं जीवन मूल्यों को बचाने, अस्मिता की रक्षा एवं जीवन व अस्तित्व की सुरक्षा के लिए संघर्ष कर रही है। ‘जल, जंगल, जमीन’ के साथ-साथ अपनी भाषा, अपनी संस्कृति, अपने रहन-सहन आदि को बचाए एवं बनाए रखने के लिए संघर्ष कर रही है, प्रतिरोध कर रहा है।

वर्तमान समय में बहुत से युवा कवि अपनी कविताओं के माध्यम से राजनीतिक-सामाजिक-आर्थिक वर्चस्व के खिलाफ कविता लिख रहे हैं।

उनकी कविताओं में भ्रष्टाचार, भाई-भतीजावाद, अवसरवाद, मूल्यहीनता, मनमानेपन के विरुद्ध प्रतिरोध बिना किसी लाग-लपेट के व्यक्त हो रहा है। जल-जंगल-जमीन के प्रति अपनी आत्मीयता व्यक्त करते हुए राही डूमरचीर की कविता ‘अभी नहीं कहना है तुमसे से’ उस भद्रलोक का

प्रतिरोध करती है जिन्होंने प्रकृति को साधक के रूप अभिव्यक्त ना कर, उसे बाधक माना है। राही डूमरचीर अपनी कविता में लिखते हैं—

“रिश्ते का बोझ पहाड़-सा लिये घूमने वाली

अपने आस-पास की दुनिया को

पहाड़ बोझ नहीं प्यार है—

कहना चाहता हूँ

पहाड़ को हिंदी के मुहावरों से छुड़ाए बिना

भाषा में कैसे बरत पाऊँगा अपने प्यार को

यह कितना अजीब सौन्दर्यबोध है,

‘हमारे बीच एक जंगल है जो मिलने नहीं देता’ कहने वाले प्रकृति के अप्रतिम सौन्दर्य के कवि हो गए”¹⁴

कवि यहाँ अपने परिवेश को नकारात्मक अर्थों-मुहावरों में संदर्भित करने वाले साहित्य और साहित्यकार का प्रतिरोध करते हैं। उन पर व्यंग्य करते हैं। यहाँ पहाड़ वर्षों के उस संघर्ष की अभिव्यक्ति है जिसके मूल में प्रतिरोध है और यह प्रतिरोध आमजन को साहस व संघर्ष के लिए प्रेरित करता है; साथ ही प्रकृति को नई दृष्टि से देखने का नजरिया भी प्रदान करता है।

ठीक इसी तरह का प्रतिरोध अपने सघन अर्थों में मोहन मुक्त की कविता ‘बिम्ब’ में देखने को मिलता है। मोहन मुक्त हिंदी कविता में प्रयुक्त बिम्ब—गिद्ध, भेड़िए, लकड़बग्घे, लोमड़ी, सियार, कुतिया, उल्लू आदि को नकारात्मक अर्थों से मुक्त करा कर, नए अर्थ संदर्भों में प्रस्तुत करते हैं और लिखते हैं—

“तुम्हारी भाषा ने उस कविता की हत्या की है

जो रहती थी तुमसे पहले इस धरती पर

तुम्हारे बिंबों ने बाँध दिया उन सब नदियों को

जो बहती थीं तुमसे पहले इस धरती पर”¹⁵

इस तरह देखें तो आज की समकालीन कविता उन सभी कवियों एवं उनकी अप्राकृतिक गढ़े गए बिम्बों की कविता का भी खंडन करती है जहाँ प्राकृतिक बिम्बों को खलनायक की तरह प्रस्तुत किया जाता रहा है।

हमारी सामाजिक संरचना ऐसी बन चुकी है कि हर चीज हाथ से फिसलता जा रहा है। जीवन का हर मोड़ संघर्षों से खचाखच भरा पड़ा है।

हर कोई एक-दूसरे को ढकेलकर आगे बढ़ना चाहता है, एक-दूसरे का हाथ पकड़कर नहीं। जीवन की इस आपाधापी

में अपनी अस्मिता व अस्तित्व को वही बचा पाते हैं जिनके भीतर प्रतिरोध जिंदा है। प्रतिरोध उन्हीं के भीतर जिंदा है; जिनके भीतर विचार है, संवेदना है, साहस व संघर्ष की नैतिक क्षमता है। राकेश शर्मा अपनी कविता 'कैक्टस के फूल' में मनुष्य के साहस, संघर्ष, संवेदना व अदम्य जिजीविषा रेखांकित करते हैं।

वे इस कविता में लिखते हैं—

“मौतों की एक लंबी व अंतहीन श्रृंखला में भी
हम बचे रहे
उस रेगिस्तानी घास कैक्टस की तरह
उजड़ते-उखड़ते हुए भी जमे रहे आखिर तक
ताकि हमारे सपनें जिंदा रहें
और वे खिलें एक दिन
कैक्टस के फूल की तरह”¹⁶

कवि का विचार है कि परिस्थितियाँ चाहे जैसी भी हो मनुष्य को अपना संघर्ष अंतिम समय तक जारी रखना चाहिए। उनकी संवेदना कैक्टस की तरह लचीली हो ताकि किसी भी परिस्थिति व परिवेश में अदम्य जिजीविषा बरकरार रहें। कवि जीवन में आने वाले उतार-चढ़ाव को भी महत्व देते हैं। उनका मानना है कि यह उतार-चढ़ाव ही मनुष्य की संवेदना को मजबूत बनाती है और उन्हें विपरीत परिस्थितियों से लड़ने की शक्ति देता है।

यह स्पष्ट है कि समकालीन हिंदी कविता का संसार वृहत एवं व्यापक है। इसके भीतर कई छोटे-बड़े काव्यांदोलन एवं काव्य-प्रवृत्तियाँ हैं। एक शोधलेख के भीतर सभी की प्रस्तुति संभव नहीं है। इसलिए विभिन्न कालखंडों, काव्यांदोलनों एवं प्रवृत्ति विशेष के कवियों एवं कवयित्रियों के कुछ नाम यहाँ प्रस्तुत हैं जिनके रचनात्मक अवदान से समकालीन हिंदी कविता का मूल्य निर्मित होता है – नागार्जुन, केदारनाथ अग्रवाल, त्रिलोचन, मुक्तिबोध, शमशेर, रघुवीर सहाय, सर्वेश्वर, धूमिल, मंगलेश डबराल, अरुण कमल, वीरेन डंगवाल, रमाशंकर यादव विद्रोही, गोरख पाण्डेय, आलोक धन्वा, सुरेन्द्र स्निग्ध, ओमप्रकाश वाल्मिकी, महादेव टोप्पो, विनोद कुमार 'शुक्ल', राजेश जोशी, विष्णु नागर, असद जैदी, कुमार अंबुज, कात्यायनी, अनामिका, निर्मला पुतुल, कंवल भारती, कविता कृष्णपल्लवी, अनुज लुगुन, जसिंता केरकेट्टा, अदनान खलिफ दरवेश, विहाग वैभव....।

इस तरह हम देखते हैं कि समकालीन हिंदी कविता में

प्रतिरोध का स्वर मुख्य रूप से अभिव्यक्त हुआ है। प्रतिरोध का यह स्वर अपनी कालगत सीमाओं का अतिक्रमण करता समसामयिक जीवन सन्दर्भों को मूल्यगत दृष्टि प्रदान करता है। यह स्पष्ट है कि आजादी के सपने आज भी अधूरे हैं, रोटी और भूख आज भी प्रदर्शन की वस्तु बना हुआ है। राजनीतिक सत्ता-व्यवस्था में अवसरवाद, मूल्यहीनता, स्वार्थपरकता अपने चरम पर है।

प्रत्येक विचारधारा एक सीमा के बाद पाखंड का शिकार हो चली है। विमर्शों की दुनिया में एक उम्मीद तो दिखाई देती है, लेकिन वह आम जनता को अपने प्रतिरोध में पूरी तरह शामिल नहीं कर सका है। स्पष्टतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि समकालीन हिंदी कविता में अभिव्यक्त प्रतिरोध अपने उद्देश्य में संघर्षरत है। यह संघर्ष आम जनता को प्रत्येक प्रतिगामी शक्तियों के विरुद्ध बोलने का साहस, प्रतिरोध करने का साहस, अपने को प्रमाणित करने का विवेक एवं स्वविवेक के आधार पर चयन की स्वतंत्रता का साहस प्रदान करता है।

निष्कर्षतः हम कह सकते हैं कि समकालीन हिंदी कविता में प्रतिरोध मनुष्य एवं उसकी मूलभूत समस्याओं और उसके जरूरी विचारों को पूरी सघनता से प्रस्तुत करता है। प्रतिरोध की यह सघनता उस विचार की अभिव्यक्ति है जहाँ आमजन की संवेदना, उसका साहस एवं संघर्ष प्रस्तुत हुआ है।

वैसे तो उस प्रतिरोध का निर्वाह प्रत्येक युग, काव्यांदोलन एवं विमर्श में पूरी सार्थकता के साथ हुआ है। लेकिन समकालीन हिंदी कविता उससे एक कदम आगे बढ़कर भाषा, शिल्प, बिम्ब-प्रतीक, विचार, दर्शन आदि के स्तरों पर भी प्रस्तुत हुआ है। समकालीन हिंदी कविता में प्रतिरोध साहित्य की चेतना है। यहाँ चेतना या प्रतिरोध से तात्पर्य उस समझ, संवेदना, साहस, संघर्ष, विचार, जन-प्रतिबद्धता, पक्षधरता एवं दृष्टि से है जो गहन, सूक्ष्म, सच्ची एवं यथार्थ हो। कविता में प्रतिरोध की भूमिका इन्हीं अर्थों में संदर्भित किया जाता है। समकालीन हिंदी कविता में भी प्रतिरोध की अभिव्यक्ति इन्हीं रूपों में हुआ है। समकालीन हिंदी कविता में प्रतिरोध की यह अभिव्यक्ति लगातार जारी है। अतः हम कह सकते हैं कि समकालीन हिंदी कविता में सशक्त प्रतिरोध प्रस्तुत हुआ है और हो रहा है।

सीनियर रिसर्च फेलो

हिन्दी विभाग

पटना विश्वविद्यालय, पटना

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Himanshi Chugh

The Importance of a Parental Exam Before Having Children: A Holistic Approach to Family Planning

Abstract

Parenting plays a crucial role in shaping future generations, but today, there is no formal system to assess whether individuals are mentally, emotionally, and psychologically fit to raise children. This paper advocates for the introduction of a parenthood license, akin to a driving license, to ensure only competent individuals are entrusted with raising the next generation. Drawing from research in criminal psychology, developmental psychology, and social behaviour, this study explores how neglectful, abusive, or psychologically unstable parenting contributes to rising crime rates, social instability, and moral degradation. The paper suggests that a structured parental assessment, prior to conception or adoption, could help create a safer and more responsible society, mitigating generational cycles of abuse and violence.

Keywords: Parenthood License, Child Development, Criminal Psychology, Juvenile Delinquency, Parental Assessment, Social Stability, etc.

Introduction

Parenting is one of the most influential roles in shaping an individual's moral, emotional, and social foundation. Yet, in many societies, there is no prerequisite for becoming a parent. Unlike obtaining a driver's license where individuals must prove their competence there are no formal assessments to ensure that prospective parents can raise children in a stable and nurturing environment. This lack of formal

evaluation has contributed to a rise in juvenile delinquency, violent crime, and mental health issues.

This paper proposes the establishment of a parenthood license, which would ensure that individuals are psychologically stable, financially capable, and emotionally mature before they are allowed to conceive or adopt children. The objective is not to control reproduction but to ensure that children are born into stable environments that foster their well-being. Considering existing research on crime and juvenile delinquency, there is a strong correlation between neglectful or abusive parenting and future criminal behaviour.

The Connection Between Unfit Parenting and Crime

Research in criminal psychology consistently shows that early childhood trauma, neglect, and exposure to violence are among the leading causes of antisocial and criminal behaviour. Many violent offenders and serial criminals have backgrounds marked by parental neglect, abuse, or psychological instability. The following statistics reveal the concerning link between poor parenting and criminal outcomes:

- 75% of violent criminals report having experienced childhood abuse or neglect (National Institute of Justice).¹
- 80% of serial killers had psychologically unstable or abusive parents (Psychology Today).²
- A study of juvenile delinquents found that children raised in unstable households were 4 times more

likely to commit violent crimes³.

If a parenthood licensing system were introduced, individuals with histories of violence, abuse, or psychological disorders could be required to undergo therapy, parenting education, and stability assessments before they are allowed to raise children. Such proactive intervention could help break cycles of abuse, neglect, and violence at the root level, potentially reducing crime and social instability.

A Parenthood License: What It Should Assess

The introduction of a parenthood license would not be about controlling who can or cannot have children. Rather, it would ensure that those who choose to become parents are mentally, emotionally, and financially prepared for the responsibilities that come with raising a child. The criteria for obtaining a parenthood license could include:

1. **Psychological Assessment:** Screening for mental disorders, extreme aggression, or violent tendencies that could impact a child's upbringing.
2. **Financial Stability Check:** Ensuring that parents can provide for the child's basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, education, healthcare).
3. **Parental Education Program:** Mandating courses on child development, conflict resolution, and healthy parenting techniques to equip parents with the knowledge needed to raise children effectively.
4. **Criminal Background Check:** Preventing individuals with violent criminal records or histories of child abuse from becoming parents unless they have undergone rehabilitation.
5. **Emotional Maturity Evaluation:** Assessing whether prospective parents are emotionally mature enough to provide a loving and stable environment for their children.

These criteria ensure that individuals who undergo the licensing process are fully capable of providing a nurturing, safe, and stable home for their children.

The Driving License Analogy: Why Parenting Should Be Regulated

The rationale behind requiring a parenthood license draws a clear analogy to the requirement for a driver's license. Just as driving a vehicle can pose a danger to others if done irresponsibly, unprepared

parents can cause irreparable harm to their children, which can have long-term societal implications. An unqualified or abusive parent can contribute to a cycle of violence, trauma, and criminality in the child, who may grow up to perpetuate these issues in society.

The parenthood license is not about restricting individual freedoms but about ensuring accountability and responsibility in one of the most critical roles within society. Just as we regulate who is allowed to drive on public roads for safety reasons, we should also regulate who is allowed to raise children, as the consequences of poor parenting can be far-reaching and affect not only the immediate family but also the broader community.

Case Laws and Precedents While the concept of a parenthood license does not yet exist in any jurisdiction, there are various legal precedents and case laws that highlight the importance of responsible parenting and the state's role in protecting children from neglect and abuse.

1. **Shivani (Minor) v. State of Haryana (2010):** In this case, the Punjab and Haryana High Court ruled that the state has a duty to intervene in situations where children are subjected to neglect, abuse, or unsafe environments. This ruling emphasized the role of the state in ensuring that children are raised in environments conducive to their well-being, thus supporting the need for parental regulation⁴.
2. **S. K. v. State of Rajasthan (2012):** This case involved a custody battle in which the Court emphasized the mental and emotional stability of the parents when deciding the best interests of the child. The Court ruled that a child's welfare should be the primary consideration, highlighting the importance of responsible, well-prepared parenting⁵.

These cases underline the idea that the state has a vested interest in ensuring that children are raised in safe, nurturing environments, which strengthens the argument for a parenthood license.

Research Questions

To frame the research and offer a structured understanding, the following research questions will be explored:

1. What are the primary components of a parental exam before conception, and how do they impact the health of both parents and children?
2. How does a holistic approach to family planning, encompassing genetic, environmental, and psychological factors, influence the outcome of pregnancy and child health?
3. What role do socio-economic and cultural factors play in the acceptance and implementation of parental exams in different parts of the world?
4. How can awareness and access to parental exams before conception be improved to ensure a healthier society?

Hypothesis

This paper hypothesizes that preconception parental exams, when performed systematically as part of a holistic approach to family planning, can significantly reduce the risk of hereditary diseases, promote better fertility outcomes, and enhance the overall health and well-being of both parents and their children. Furthermore, integrating factors like genetics, environmental exposure, and mental health into preconception care leads to a higher likelihood of healthy pregnancies and child development.

Policy Recommendations

The successful implementation of a parenthood licensing system would require a multifaceted approach, involving collaboration between various stakeholders such as governments, healthcare systems, social services, and the community. The following recommendations outline practical steps to help integrate this concept into policy frameworks:

• Pilot Programs and Gradual Rollout:

The introduction of a parenthood licensing system should be gradual and based on pilot programs. These programs could be implemented at a local or regional level to test the feasibility and effectiveness of the system. A phased approach would allow authorities to identify potential challenges, assess public response, and adjust the program before wider implementation.

For example, a pilot program could be initiated in a select urban or rural area where prospective parents voluntarily undergo a pre-parenthood assessment as part of family planning services. Data

from these programs could provide valuable insights into the system's effectiveness, the potential barriers to access, and how the system is perceived by different demographics.

• Integration with Existing Social Services:

A parenthood licensing system should not be seen as an isolated initiative but rather as a part of a broader social services network. By linking parental exams to existing healthcare and social services, the system could be more seamlessly integrated into society. For example, healthcare professionals in maternal and child health services, community outreach programs, and family planning clinics could be trained to incorporate pre-parenthood health assessments as a routine service.

Furthermore, partnerships between healthcare providers, social workers, and educational institutions could help raise awareness about the system and encourage participation. These partnerships would also provide a platform for social services to offer additional support, such as counselling for individuals who may face psychological barriers to conception or those in need of fertility assistance.

• Community Involvement and Awareness Campaigns:

One of the most critical factors in implementing a parenthood licensing system is fostering public awareness and acceptance. Engaging communities in discussions about the benefits of pre-parenthood health checks and encouraging voluntary participation would help alleviate concerns about government control over family life. Community-based campaigns, including workshops, seminars, and media outreach, could educate individuals on the importance of preconception health and how parental exams could improve the health outcomes for both parents and children.

Additionally, the involvement of respected community leaders, educators, and healthcare professionals in advocating for this system can help overcome cultural barriers and ensure that the policy is accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic background.

Ethical Considerations

The introduction of a parenthood licensing system

raises several ethical questions, particularly regarding fairness, non-discrimination, and the protection of individual rights. These concerns must be addressed carefully to ensure that the policy does not inadvertently harm vulnerable populations or violate fundamental human rights.

- **Ensuring Fairness and Equal Access:**

A critical ethical consideration is ensuring that the parenthood licensing system does not discriminate based on factors such as race, gender, socio-economic status, or disability. It is essential that the system be designed to provide equitable access to all prospective parents, particularly in marginalized or vulnerable communities who may already face barriers to accessing healthcare.

To prevent discrimination, a parenthood licensing system must be inclusive, offering resources and assistance to individuals from all walks of life. This could be achieved through the provision of subsidized or free services for low-income families, ensuring that no one is excluded based on financial limitations. Additionally, the system should be designed with cultural sensitivity, recognizing and respecting the diverse beliefs and values of different communities.

- **Protecting Reproductive Rights and Autonomy:**

The ethical principle of autonomy respecting individuals' right to make decisions about their own bodies is a core concern when considering any system that regulates reproduction. A parenthood licensing system must strike a balance between promoting child welfare and respecting individual reproductive rights.

It is crucial that the system does not become coercive or invasive. Participation in the pre-parenthood exams should remain voluntary, with individuals free to make their own decisions about starting a family. No person should be compelled to undergo health checks or genetic screening against their will. Any attempt to force individuals into compliance with state-run policies risks undermining the autonomy of parents and could lead to unintended negative consequences, such as stigmatization or the infringement of personal freedoms.

- **Prioritizing Child Welfare Without Overstepping Boundaries:**

At the heart of a parenthood licensing system is

the desire to improve child welfare by ensuring that parents are prepared physically, emotionally, and financially to raise a child. However, ethical concerns arise when child welfare policies become overly paternalistic, placing the state in a position where it can dictate or control who is allowed to become a parent.

A key ethical principle here is the **best interests of the child**, which should always be the primary consideration when creating policies related to parenthood. However, this must be weighed against the need to protect individuals' rights to privacy, autonomy, and freedom from unnecessary government intervention.

- **Balancing Genetic Screening and Reproductive Autonomy:**

Genetic testing and counselling are vital aspects of a pre-parenthood exam, especially for detecting inherited disorders. However, the ethical implications of genetic testing must be considered. For example, concerns about eugenics—the potential to select or reject certain traits or conditions—may arise, especially if the system inadvertently encourages parents to avoid children with certain genetic predispositions.

It is essential that any genetic screening be framed in a way that respects individual decision-making and is used as a tool for informed choice, not coercion. Information gathered during genetic counselling should be kept confidential and not used for purposes beyond providing guidance to prospective parents.

- **Public Accountability and Transparency:**

Finally, for a parenthood licensing system to maintain public trust, transparency and accountability are critical. The public must be assured that the data collected during parental exams is used only for its intended purpose and is not misused or shared with third parties. This requires strict data protection laws and mechanisms to ensure that individuals' rights are safeguarded throughout the process.

Conclusion

The quality of parenting has a direct impact on the future of society. Without proper preparation, children raised in unstable, violent, or neglectful environments are more likely to become the next generation of criminals, abusers, or psychologically

unstable individuals. The introduction of a parenthood license could help reduce crime, improve mental health, and create a more responsible, ethical society. Just as society mandates a driving license for road safety, it should also mandate a parenthood license to ensure the generational safety of future societies.

This paper calls for further discussion, research, and policy development around the concept of

parental assessments to ensure that only individuals who are psychologically, emotionally, and financially competent are entrusted with the responsibility of raising children. By taking these steps, society can foster a healthier, more stable, and morally responsible future.

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Sarita Bhoi

Intersectionality of Gender and Tribe: A Rights Discourse

Abstract

The gender and the tribal identity intersected to give unique difficulties to tribal women in India. They feel even more marginalized due to the intersecting oppression on account of their gender as well as their aboriginal nature. The article is a bid to discuss the plight of tribal women not forgetting the roles of patriarchal customs, the burden of modernity and the outlook of mainstream values. Although there are legal provisions that are provided to safeguard women and communities of the tribes, the implementation of the provisions are lacking. Their vulnerability is exacerbated by factors such as lack of access to education, economical marginalization and denial of land rights. In addition, some problems related to maternal and reproductive health, and the need to be culturally sensitive to healthcare is also a topic under discussion. The article ends with the argument on the poor representation of tribal women in political arena and the impact of developmental projects on cultural roles. The paper supports the concept of empowering tribal women as the bearers of culture at the same time propagating the notion of equality between the genders. What is needed is a full scale intersectional approach to a framework that attends to cultural preservation and gender justice towards tribal women.

Keywords:

Intersectionality and the situation of Tribal

Women, Gender Discrimination, Marginality and Patriarchal Norms, Socio-economic Issues and Cultural Preservation.

1. Introduction to Intersectionality:

Intersectionality is a type of frame through which one comprehends the intersections involving different parts of an individual identity (gender, caste, tribe, and socio-economic status among others) that add up to distinct advantages or disadvantages. The concept of intersectionality was developed by Kimberle Crenshaw in the late 1980s and it is used to further an analysis of social categories that are not studied in isolation but whose co-existential characteristics define different experiences of people, especially the marginalized groups. To illustrate, women in the tribal parts of India are not only affected by issues concerning their gender. Their social and economic aspect, coupled with their tribal identity forms a compounded nature of oppression which is exclusive to them. Looking at the interface of gender and tribe helps us to understand how these women are marginalized by the society. This is because such holistic examination enables us to penetrate the intricacies surrounding their struggles which ordinarily remain unnoticeable when viewed only as gender issues or ethnic allegories. The fact that tribal women face issues that occur along several layers is important in formulation of policies that can properly contain or solve these problems (Crenshaw, 1989).

II. The Need for Intersectionality in India

The Indian tribal women undergo gender as well as ethnic discrimination which is closely intertwined to form a dual disadvantage. Tribal communities tend to be marginalized historically, socio-politically, and economically and when this is combined with gendered discrimination then the challenges of tribal women are worsened even further. Patriarchal practices in tribal societies limit the freedom of women, affect their bargaining power, resources, and their status in general in families, as well as in the community. But it is not only on the ground of Gender-based oppression that they are not taken in. Tribal communities are mostly ignored by the mainstream society hence these women languish at the lowest level of the society. The gender and tribal identity combination create a net of discrimination which experienced restricted education, health care and economic development opportunities. Girls are also not sent to school in the rural tribal regions as there is a cultural bias which favors the education of boys as well as lack of infrastructure. Another important problem is that of healthcare- tribal women do not receive the proper care of the mother as well as in most cases, the care provided is culturally insensitive. They also experience economic problems, when tribal women are not allowed to possess lands, are exploited in informal spheres, and are forced to get the wages under unexpected working conditions. By these crosscutting factors, India will be able to start making effective policies that counter these compounded obstacles. This necessitates the fact that gender together with ethnicity should be taken into account in policy formulation so that tribal women should be identified and given a chance to do away with the problems they experience that are unique (Yadav, 2011).

III. Gender and Tribal Identity Challenges Faced by Tribal Women

Tribal women in India have a mix of gendered as well as tribal specific problems. Their situation is further worsened by their marginalization by the mainstream society, absence of resources, and very strong cultural acts that constrain them. One of the

greatest barriers on tribal women is the aspect of education. There are few schools in the remote areas or those that lack resources that are required to help them to offer quality education. The tribal girls are also denied the opportunity to attend school by beliefs of culture that stipulate more emphasis on education of boys than girls. This illiteracy leads to low literacy levels, and this limits their chances of social mobility and jobs. Another aspect where tribal women have their own problems is healthcare. Tribal groups are geographically isolated and do not always have a developed healthcare system, and women in such regions are particularly prone to the issues that lead to a wide maternal mortality rate since they do not get quality prenatal and delivery care. Also, the women in the tribes might not be confident to turn to mainstream healthcare providers to receive assistance since they might lack knowledge and the respect of the cultures of the tribes (Panda, 2009). Tribal women are yet to be economically mainstreamed. Most of them work in agricultural fields or as house helps and little is realized about their contributions. They are not always land owners and that indeed cripples their financial and economic autonomy and keeps them having to depend on men of the family. The absence of land ownership also excludes the tribal woman in many development schemes where land owners usually benefit in such schemes. Further, tribal women are underrepresented in political organisations both at the local and national level. Although tribal communities have legal provisions, tribal women are not allowed to access such areas, and continue to be subsumed in their voices being heard decision-making (Rao, 2016).

The Complexity of Tribal Women's Identity

Gender and tribal meet to produce a position that is considered as complex and at times, contradictory to the identity of tribal women. Women in a few tribal societies play major roles in society and exercise a great amount of power. As an instance, in a society where people practise matrilineage, women are usually heads of family and possess family wealth and land. The growing weight of the patriarchal culture however has lowered their decision-making roles and even their power in the community of where they

reside (Saxena, 2012). Such gender shifting roles in the tribal societies have been exacerbated by the influence of the outside forces on modernization that has resulted in loss of the tribal way of life. This is because as these women lose their traditional cultural roles, they are left out of their indigenous communities and the general society hence they have other identity and belonging challenges.

IV. Legal Framework

International Conventions on Indigenous Rights and Gender Equality

International Legal instruments such as the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the United Nations (2007) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have played a key role in acknowledging right of indigenous women. Such principles emphasize that these frameworks must cover both gender inequality and indigenous rights, as they intersect. In spite of such international commitments the implementation of such rights in India has been poor. The tribal women frequently fail to enjoy these universal safeguards being provided at the national level as they are not so strong. The consideration to implement these international norms into the Indian law is urgent and there is a necessity to make these legal principles available to the tribal women on ground (Panda, 2009).

Constitutional Provisions for Tribal Rights in India

India's Constitution includes provisions for the protection of Scheduled Tribes (STs), particularly through affirmative action policies aimed at improving their access to education, employment, and political participation. Articles 15, 46, and 244 prohibit discrimination based on caste and tribe, and provide positive discrimination to ensure tribal communities are represented in these key areas.

However, these constitutional safeguards are often poorly implemented at the grassroots level, primarily due to entrenched caste and gender hierarchies. For example, the Forest Rights Act (2006), which aims to provide land rights to tribal people, often excludes women from benefiting from these protections, despite

the fact that they are primary land users in many tribal communities (Rath, 2016).

V. Socio-economic Factors

Education Access:

Tribal women follow rather limited access to one of the greatest instruments of empowerment, which is education. Tribal areas have no schools and the travel distance is long, which causes inconvenience to girls in attending classes. The inequality is also contributed by culture norms that value the education of boys more than girls. Being deprived of education, tribal females lack an opportunity to escape the stigmatized position and become involved in economic, social, and political processes (Chandran, 2015).

Economic Marginalization:

The tribal women are not required in most of the formal sectors of the economy, and most of them are reduced to low paying, informal employment. Their labor whether in the field, household work, or forest works is underpaid and they are not respected or under law. Moreover, they are not subjected to land ownership rights, which brings no few development schemes and economic upward mobility options to their feet. It is one of the greatest causes of economic vulnerabilities among tribal women due to lack of land rights. Whilst the passing of the Forest Rights Act (2006) aimed at ensuring that the tribal people got land rights, land ownership and inheritance remains inaccessible to many tribal women; this leaves them financially dependent on their men folk (Mahapatra, 2013).

VI. Health and Well-being

Maternal and Reproductive: Health Tribal women in India have a major problem of maternal health. Healthcare facilities are also rare in remote tribal regions, and women do not find opportunities to benefit ultra-basic maternal care services. This causes high cases of maternal mortality, which is highly disproportional in comparison with the country average. Tribal women are also unable to access services that are culturally sensitive and thus, they miss out on getting required care during pregnancy and

childbirth (Bhatia, 2013).

Mental Health Problems: Mental health became a topic that is important to tribal women and particularly those who undergo various forms of discrimination. Mental health problems are usually caused by poverty, gender-based violence and social marginalization, but mental health services are poor in tribal regions. The issue of stigma with regard to mental health is also very rampant, and, hence, makes the tribal women even less enthusiastic about seeking help. These women require culturally competent mental care, which will treat the issues they face (Sundari, 2017).

VII. Political Representation

Tribal Women in Local Governance

Tribal women and tribal communities are underrepresented at the local governance although the Indian Constitution allows reserved seating to the tribal community. Paternalist societal values, illiteracy, and financial dependency on male relatives in families do not allow many women in tribes to engage fully in political developments. It is vitally important to empower tribal women to make them more active in local governance so that the needs peculiar to them could be taken into account (Rao, 2016).

VIII. Cultural Preservation and Change

Impact of Development on Tribal Cultures

The mining and dam building plus urbanization projects have greatly affected those who belong to

the tribal communities. Such developments tend to kick tribal women out of their ancestral places and interfere with their conventional lifestyle. The wastage of the natural reserves, like forests, has also been detrimental to the tribal communities since most of the tribal women rely on these resources as sources of their income. Tribal women need to be given power as a means of maintenance of their culture. Inclusion of women in acts of development is an activity that not only jeopardizes women rights, but also poses a danger to the use and maintenance of tribal traditions and practices (Sundari, 2017).

Conclusion:

Gender and tribal identity produces a complex of tribal women problems in India, as it intersects with gender. Their lives are determined by the two forces, namely, the patriarchy in their societies and the marginalization of their tribes to the rest of society. These problems cannot be solved using a one-dimensional strategy that fails to consider gender justice and the special needs of tribal households. By means of intersectoral and intersectional strategy, India may be capable of empowering tribal women by providing them with education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and political representation. This will not only make their lives better but it will also enable them to keep their cultures and traditions to posterity.

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डॉ. चित्तरंजन कुमार

स्वतंत्र भारत की राजनीतिक विडंबनायें : 'बकरी' नाटक के संदर्भ में

‘बकरी’ सर्वेश्वर दयाल सक्सेना का एक महत्वपूर्ण राजनैतिक नाटक है, जिसमें आजादी के बाद की भारतीय राजनीतिक व्यवस्था की छद्म और उसके जन विरोधी एवं लोकतंत्र विरोधी चरित्र पर प्रहार किया गया है। यह नाटक विशेषकर ग्रामीण जनता पर लादी गई धर्मांधता और उसमें होने वाले शोषण और उत्पीड़न का चित्रण करने के साथ ही जनवादी चेतना का भी प्रसार करता है। टुच्ची राजनीति आडंबरपूर्ण थोथे धर्म से गठजोड़ करके आम आदमी के शोषण की ऐसी मजबूत क्रूर और अभेद व्यवस्था बनाती है कि जनता स्वयं को बकरी बनाकर खुद-ब-खुद अपनी बलि देने को आतुर होती है-यह नाटक इसी विडंबनापुर स्थिति का चित्रण करता है।

“अपने जिन नेताओं पर विश्वास करके भारतीय जनता ने तन-मन और धन से उनका साथ दिया था, आजादी के बाद उनसे ही विश्वासघात पाकर निरंतर छले जाकर उस आम जनता ने दूसरी निराशा की नियति स्वीकार कर ली। सबसे बड़ी विडंबना यह रही कि जिस महात्मा गांधी ने सत्य और अहिंसा की राजनीति का आदर्श प्रस्तुत किया, लेकिन गांधी के उन्ही आदर्शों को बकरी बनाकर परवर्ती राजनीतिज्ञ दुहते रहे और अपना स्वास्थ्य बनाते रहे।” (जयदेव तनेजा, समकालीन हिंदी नाटक और रंगमंच, पृष्ठ संख्या 28)

स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के दौरान सेवा, त्याग और बलिदान राजनीतिक मूल्य थे और उनके नेता गांधी जी सुचिता और नैतिकता की प्रतिमूर्ति थे। उस समय यह सुखद स्वप्न देखा गया था कि आजादी के बाद देश में आदर्श जनतंत्रात्मक व्यवस्था वर्गहीन सामाजिक व्यवस्था, समाजवादी अर्थव्यवस्था स्थापित होगी। परंतु स्वाधीनता के बाद ये स्वप्न एक-एक कर

टूटने लगे। फलतः जनमानस में आशा और उत्साह के स्थान पर धीरे-धीरे निराशा, अशांति और अनिश्चितता व्याप्त होने लगी। ‘बकरी’ नाटक में भारतीय स्वाधीनता की उस तलछट का चित्रण है जो समय बीतने के साथ और गहरी होती चली गई।

विदेशी दासता से मुक्ति वस्तुतः भारत की निरीह जनता के लिए अपने नेताओं द्वारा छले जाने की शुरुआत थी। शासन बदल गया, लेकिन उसका स्वरूप नहीं बदला, रंग बदल गए लेकिन उसका स्वरूप नहीं बदला। पहले सांपनाथ का शासन था अब नागनाथ का शासन हो गया। जो दमन और अत्याचार अंग्रेजी शासन द्वारा आम जनता पर किया जाता था वह अब भारतीय शासकों द्वारा होने लगा। ‘बकरी’ नाटक के प्रारंभ में ही राजनीति के जन विरोधी और जनतंत्र के छद्म को विद्रोही नट ने मंगलाचरण में ही उधार दिया है

“पांच देव सम पांच दल लगी ढोंग की रेस
जिनके कारण हो गया देश आज प्रदेश।”

(बकरी, सर्वेश्वर दयाल सक्सेना, पृष्ठ संख्या-9)

भारतेंदु की ‘अंधेरनगरी’ जिस प्रकार सत्ता के सनातन चरित्र का पर्दाफाश करता है उसे आगे विस्तार देने का काम सर्वेश्वर की ‘बकरी’ नाटक ने किया है। डॉ. ब्रजराज किशोर के अनुसार, “यह नाटक स्वतंत्र्योत्तर भारतीय राजनीति में आए व्यापक छल, प्रपंच और गांधी जी के नाम पर अपने स्वार्थ को बनाने की प्रवृत्ति का पर्दाफाश करता है।” (डॉ. ब्रजराज किशोर, हिंदी नाटक एवं रंगमंच समकालीन परिदृश्य संख्या-142)

अब्दुल बिस्मिल्लाह के अनुसार, “नाटक सत्ता के झूठे जनतंत्रवाद को और उसके घिनौने चरित्र को बड़ी निर्ममता के

साथ उद्घाटित करता है। अपनी नाट्य प्रक्रिया में व्यंग्य और कटाक्ष को हथियार की तरह इस्तेमाल करता है।” (हिंदी नाटक और रंगमंच, संपादक डॉ. रामकुमार वर्मा, पृष्ठ संख्या-136)

ज्योतिश्वर मिश्र के अनुसार “भ्रष्ट तरीकों से सत्ता प्राप्त कर विभिन्न राजनीतिक दलों के स्वार्थी राजनेताओं ने आजादी और जनतंत्र के लाभ से आम आदमी को वंचित कर दिया। इनकी करतूत से भ्रष्टाचार, शिष्टाचार और जीवन का अंग बन गया।” (स्वातंत्र्योत्तर हिंदी नाटक मूल्य संक्रमण)।

डॉ. कुसुम लता के अनुसार, “यह नाटक समय के साथ गहरी होती स्वाधीनता के तलछत तथा क्रमशः कठोर होते सामाजिक राजनीतिक अन्याय के विरुद्ध एक आम आदमी की तकलीफ तज्जजनित्र क्रोध एवं आक्रोश का यथार्थ दस्तावेज है।” (स्वातंत्र्योत्तर पारंपरिक रंग प्रयोग, पृष्ठ -96)

आजादी के बाद भ्रष्टाचार की गंगोत्री राजनीति से ही निकली। विधायक निधि, सांसद निधि के दुरुपयोग के साथ ही मंत्रियों के घोटाले की अनगिनत फेहरिस्त हमारे सामने है। कभी जीप घोटाला, बोफोर्स घोटाला, हवाला घोटाला, अलकतरा घोटाला, पशुपालन घोटाला, पेट्रोल पंप आवंटन घोटाला, राष्ट्रमण्डल खेल आयोजन में घोटाला, सृजन घोटाला, व्यापम घोटाला इत्यादि। सरकार का मुखिया धृतराष्ट्र बना हुआ है और कौरवों की सेना पूरे देश में उत्पात मचा रही है और लगातार सत्य का चीर हरण कर रही है। स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन के दौरान जहां लोग राजनीति में सेवा और त्याग की भावना से आते थे वहीं आजादी के बाद ये राजनीतिज्ञ जन सेवा के लिए राजनीति में नहीं आते बल्कि मेवा खाने के लिए आते हैं। वे दौलत से अपने लोक के साथ-साथ परलोक भी सुरक्षित कर लेना चाहते हैं। इन्हीं राजनेताओं का चरित्र चित्रण नट के इस गीत में दिखाई देता है-

दौलत की है दरकार ये सरकार आपको
सबको उजाड़ चाहिए घर बार आपको
मक्कारी ढोंग, छल फरेब आप बांटिये
बदले में मगर चाहिए एतबार आपको
आदत जो पड़ गई है वह अब छूटती नहीं
कोई शिकार चाहिए हर बार आपको।
(सन्दर्भ : बकरी, पृष्ठ संख्या -31)

इन नेताओं ने लूट का धन देश में तो रखा ही है, साथ ही विदेशों में भी काले धन के रूप में जमा कर रखा है। एक

अनुमान के अनुसार स्विस् बैंक में भारतीयों द्वारा रखा गया काला धन भारत के कुल जीडीपी का 44 परसेंट है। एक तरफ आम जनता फटेहाल है और दाने-दाने को मोहताज है तो दूसरी तरफ राजनेता लूट खसोट में मगन है। यह विडंबना नहीं है तो और क्या है? सूखा अकाल कुछ भी रहे इन नेताओं का शोषण चक्र निरंतर चलता रहता है। अधिकार लिपसा ने इन्हें नृशंस तानाशाह बना दिया है। अंग्रेजों के शासन का उद्देश्य भारतीय धन को लूटकर ब्रिटेन को समृद्ध करना था, इसलिए वे जनता पर करों का भारी भोज डाले हुए थे। फलतः उनके शासन की शुरुआत ही अकालों से हुई और समापन भी 1943 के बंगाल के अकाल से हुई। अंग्रेजों के पूरे शासन काल में बार-बार अकालों का पड़ना प्राकृतिक से ज्यादा मानवीयकृत थी। ‘बकरी’ नाटक में सूखा, महामारी और अकाल की स्थिति में भी राजनेताओं द्वारा जनता से धन की उगाही करते हुए दिखाया गया है। गांधी जी ने अंग्रेजी शासन को पैशाचिक कहा था, लेकिन आजादी के बाद की शासन व्यवस्था क्या कम पैशाचिक है? जहां डाकूओं और लुटेरों द्वारा शासन व्यवस्था अपहृत कर ली गई है। राजनीति का अपराधीकरण और अपराध का राजनीतिकरण भारतीय राजनीतिक व्यवस्था की मूल पहचान बन गई है।

‘बकरी’ नाटक में धर्म, शोषण और नेतागिरी का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले तीन पात्र जब व्यवस्था के रखवाले सिपाही को भी अपने शोषण के षड्यंत्र में शामिल करके एक ग्रामीण स्त्री विपत्ति की सामान्य सी बकरी को गांधी जी की विशिष्ट बकरी बनाकर अपने लिए तमाम सिद्धियां जुटानेवाली कामधेनु और जनता को हरे-भरे चारागाह के रूप में बदल डालते हैं। यह उन्हीं की मेहरबानियां का नतीजा है कि आज -

गोली बोले धाएं-धाएं
जनता बोले काएं-काएं
नेता बोले भाएं-भाएं
हर गली में साएं साएं।

नागार्जुन ने भी स्वातंत्र्योत्तर भारतीय राजनीतिक व्यवस्था की तुलनात्मक छवि का चित्रण अपनी कविताओं से किया है-

“सत्य स्वयं घायल हुआ गई अहिंसा चूक
जहां-था दगने लगी शासन की बंदूक।”

(सन्दर्भ : नागार्जुन, शासन की बंदूक कविता)
शासन का स्वरूप हमेशा दमनात्मक रहा है, जहां पहले

मुट्टी भर अंग्रेज दमन के सहारे भारत पर दो सौ सालों तक शासन किया और भारतीयों में फुट और बैर फैलाया। आजादी के बाद भी मुट्टी भर लोग सत्ता को अपनी ताकत और अत्याचार से अपहृत कर लिया है और लोगों के बीच धार्मिक भेदभाव, क्षेत्रवाद और जातिवाद फैलाकर उन्हें बांटने का प्रयास किया है। सत्ता पर कब्जा पाने के लिए वे तरह-तरह के हथकंडे अपनाते हैं – कभी धर्म, कभी झूठे आश्वासन का तो कभी डंडे का। पहले विपत्ति की बकरी को गांधी जी की बकरी बनाकर हड़पते हैं और विरोध करने पर विपत्ति को भारत सुरक्षा कानून के तहत जेल भेज देते हैं। समकालीन भारतीय राजनीति में भी अबुझ जनता के बीच इंदिरा गांधी का दैवीकरण किया गया तथा उन्हें दुर्गा और काली का अवतार भी बताया गया। जब उनकी तानाशाही के विरुद्ध जनता खड़ी हो गई तो ‘आपातकाल’ की घोषणा करते हुए ‘मीसा एक्ट’ के अंतर्गत लोगों को जेल भेजा गया। ‘बकरी’ नाटक में भी जब युवक इन टुच्चे राजनीतिज्ञों के विरुद्ध आवाज उठाता है तो उसे भी भारत सुरक्षा कानून के तहत जेल भेज दिया गया। यह स्थिति आज भी घटित हो रही है। पिछड़े और अभावग्रस्त आदिवासियों को निजी चिकित्सा मुहैया कराने वाले डॉक्टर विनायक सेन को देशद्रोही करार कर उम्र कैद की सजा दी जाती है। आज भी सरकार की आलोचना करने पर लोगों को देशद्रोह के अभियोग का सामना करना पड़ता है।

यह विडम्बना ही है कि 1860 में अंग्रेजों द्वारा बनाया गया कानून स्वतंत्र भारत में भी बिना किसी संशोधन के लागू है। क्या सरकार की गलत नीतियों का विरोध करना देशद्रोह है? क्या यही लोकतंत्र है? क्या यही राष्ट्रवाद है जिसमें व्यक्ति की गरिमा का सम्मान नहीं है? क्या जनता के मौलिक अधिकारों की रक्षा वास्तव में सरकार कर रही है? पुलिस प्रशासन और न्यायपालिका सभी राजनीतिक व्यवस्था एवं सरकार को ही मजबूत करने का उपक्रम बन गई है। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के कई पूर्व मुख्य न्यायाधीशों पर भ्रष्टाचार के आरोप लग चुके हैं, यहां तक कि एक पीठासीन जज के घर से करोड़ों के नोट मिले हैं। निचली अदालतों का क्या कहना है? जिस न्यायाधीश को भगवान की उपाधि से संबोधित किया जाता है उनका यह कृत्य विडम्बना नहीं है तो और क्या है? गांधी जी ने एक बार कहा था कि राज्य एक आवश्यक बुराई है क्योंकि अराजकता रोकने के लिए राज्य का होना जरूरी है। लेकिन क्या वास्तव में अराजकता रुकी है? यह लूट-खसोट क्या अराजकता की

पुष्टि नहीं करते हैं? ‘बकरी’ नाटक में बकरी फण्ड तथा बकरी संस्थान इत्यादि संस्थाएं भ्रष्टाचार को ही पुष्ट करती हैं। क्या आजाद भारत में आकस्मिक निधि भविष्य निधि का दुरुपयोग नहीं हो रहा है? विभिन्न संस्थान और संघ क्या जनता के कल्याण के नाम पर फंड का दुरुपयोग नहीं कर रही है? जनता बाढ़ और सूखा में फंसती है तो राजनेता और नौकरशाह राहत के नाम पर लूट-खसोट ही करते हैं। स्वतंत्रता के बाद आम आदमी का अपने सपनों से मोह भंग हो गया। डॉ. कुसुम लता ने इस नाटक की कथावस्तु के पीछे आम आदमी की आर्थिक तंत्र की कमजोरियों को जिम्मेदार मानती है। उन्होंने आम आदमी के बदहाली का अर्थशास्त्रीय विवेचन करते हुए कहा है कि “भारत में अर्थतंत्र का निर्माता आम आदमी है, भोक्ता कोई और। भोक्ता और निर्माता के बीच कोई सेतु नहीं है।” (डॉ. कुसुमलता, स्वातंत्र्योत्तर पारंपरिक रंग प्रयोग)

यह विचारनीय है कि आजादी के बाद का भारत गांवों में बसता है एवं कृषि तथा इससे संबंधित उत्पाद आम आदमी का मूल पेशा है। लेकिन सरकार आजादी के बाद द्वितीय पंचवर्षीय योजना में कृषि की जगह भारी उद्योगों की स्थापना पर बल दिया। फलतः कुछ खास क्षेत्र ही विकसित हुए और पिछड़े राज्य और पिछड़ते चले गए। फलतः एक ही देश में दो-दो देश उभर आए – एक ‘भारत’ जो कि पिछड़ा है और दूसरा ‘इंडिया’ जो कि विकसित है।

यह गौरतलब है कि एक भूखे व्यक्ति के लिए राष्ट्रवाद के कोई मायने नहीं है। एक भूखा कभी भी अपने देश पर गर्व नहीं कर सकता। लोकतंत्र एक ऐसा तंत्र है जो जनता का, जनता के लिए और जनता के द्वारा बनाया गया है। लेकिन क्या यह स्वतंत्र भारत पर लागू होता है? जवाब होगा-बिल्कुल नहीं। यह राजनीति एक ऐसा भ्रष्ट तंत्र है जो भ्रष्ट लोगों का भ्रष्ट लोगों के लिए और भ्रष्ट लोगों के द्वारा बनाया गया तंत्र है जिसमें, आम जनता के लिए कोई जगह नहीं है। क्या यही गांधी का ‘स्वराज’ था? या भारत की विनम्र को ही दर्शाता है। यह अभी काम विडम्बनापूर्ण नहीं है कि आजादी की लड़ाई में सभी भारतीय तिरंगे के लिए जान तक दे देते थे, लेकिन आजादी के बाद आम आदमी अपने घर पर तिरंगा नहीं लगा सकता था। क्या आम आदमी द्वारा तिरंगा फहराने से किया या पवित्र हो जाती? जनता को यह अधिकार 2003 में प्रसिद्ध उद्योगपति नवीन जिंदल के प्रयासों से सर्वोच्च न्यायालय द्वारा दिया गया। क्या राष्ट्रवाद एवं देश का भाग्य-विधाता ये मुट्टी भर भ्रष्ट

राजनीतिज्ञ है? इस संदर्भ में रघुवीर सहाय की ये पंक्तियां काफी प्रासंगिक हो जाती हैं-

“राष्ट्रगान में भला कौन, वह भारत भाग्य विधाता है
फटा-सुथन्ना पहने, जिसका गुण हरचरना गाता है।”

अंग्रेजों से मिली आजादी को ही आजादी नहीं कहते हैं। जब तक देश का एक-एक आदमी इसे दिल से महसूस नहीं करेगा तब तक आजादी झूठी है। अदम गोंडवी के अनुसार-

“सौ में फिलहाल जब सतर आदमी नाशाद है
दिल पर रखकर हाथ कहिए देश क्या आजाद है?”

‘बकरी’ नाटक में राजनीतिक विडंबनाओं के साथ ही इसके समाधान की तरफ भी सर्वेश्वर बढ़ते नजर आते हैं। उनकी रचनाएं सोदेश्यपूर्ण रही हैं, इसीलिए ‘बकरी’ में भी वे शोषण मुक्त समाज की रचना की तरफ बढ़ते नजर आते हैं। यह संघर्ष जब तक सामूहिक नहीं होगी तब तक व्यवस्था नहीं बदली जा सकती है। इसीलिए जब युवक और विपत्ति अकेले विद्रोह करते हैं तो उन्हें दवा दिया जाता है। लेकिन जब उनका संघर्ष सामूहिक हो जाता है तब आतातयियों का खत्म होता है। 1977 में संपूर्ण क्रांति की लहर चली थी इसीलिए कांग्रेस के साथ-साथ खुद इंदिरा गांधी भी चुनाव हार गई। ‘बकरी’ नाटक की भूमिका- दृश्य में ही जनसाधारण को लड़ने का तरीका बताया गया है। लेखक की दृष्टि में लड़ाई का सबसे बड़ा आधार आत्म बल है। नट का कथन है-

“अनल कंठ में भरो, सकल कायरता जड़ता जारो जनमन संशय हरो-दैन्य दानव दूरदिन सहारो।”

नाटककार जनमन संशय हरण कराकर कायरता तथा जड़ता को समाप्त करके ही जनमन में नई चेतना भरना चाहता है।

समग्रतः का सकते हैं कि यह नाटक आजादी के बाद की राजनीतिक विकृतियों एवं छल का पोल खोलती है, जिससे देश की राजनीतिक विनम्र है सामने आती है। इसी कारण जनता में मोह भंग की भावना पैदा हुई जिसकी वजह से देश को कई समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ा। क्षेत्रवाद, सांप्रदायिकता, जातिवाद एवं नक्सलवाद इसी राजनीतिक छल एवं छद्म के फलस्वरूप पैदा हुई। सर्वेश्वर ने शोषण मुक्त समाज के निर्माण को सर्वोच्चता दी और जनता के सामूहिक संघर्ष की वकालत भी की। जनता के संघर्षशीलता के कारण ही सरकार को कई बार झुकना पड़ा इसके उदाहरण भरे पड़े हुए हैं। जैसे जेसिका लाल हत्याकांड, निर्भया कांड में जनता के भारी विरोध के फलस्वरूप सरकार को दोषियों के खिलाफ जल्द से जल्द कार्रवाई करनी पड़ी। साथ ही सरकार किसानों के विरुद्ध लाये कानून और कई अन्य जन विरोधी कानून को भी किसानों एवं जनता के दबाव से वापस लिया। इसीलिए मुक्ति सामूहिक संघर्ष से ही संभव है एक-एक व्यक्ति के व्यक्तिगत संघर्ष से नहीं।

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Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Physics Education: A Literature Review

Abstract:

Physics, as a foundational pillar of STEM education, underpins major advancements in engineering, technology, and applied sciences. However, its abstract theoretical nature, complex mathematical formulations, and limited real-world contextualization often make it challenging for learners—particularly at the secondary and higher secondary levels—to stay engaged and motivated.

This comprehensive literature review synthesizes research conducted between 2000 and 2025 on the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in physics education. It critically examines theoretical frameworks, ICT tools, implementation models, empirical studies, and global practices. Drawing from 50 academic sources, the review explores how ICT reshapes pedagogy, enhances conceptual understanding, and supports the cognitive and affective development of learners.

To improve teaching-learning processes worldwide, the results provide a well-organized road map for the successful and long-term integration of ICT in physics education. The purpose of this evaluation is to help researchers, educators, and legislators make well-informed choices that will advance relevant, technologically enabled physics education.

Keywords: ICT in education, physics pedagogy, STEM education, educational technology, simulations, virtual laboratories, AI in education.

Introduction:

Physics is a foundations science and a gateway to careers in engineering, technology and applied sciences. Physics education has long been challenged due to its non-concrete nature or concepts, mathematical complexity and outdated instructional models that often fail to engage students effectively.

To shift towards a more student-centred and engaging approach, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has emerged as an important component of innovative teaching and learning practices within the physical sciences, ICT tools present unique opportunities to enhance students' understanding of complex concepts, foster engagement and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world applications (Sharma, Gupta & Aggarwal, 2023).

ICT offers a number of tools such as simulations, virtual laboratories, artificial intelligence that can considerably improve conceptual clarity and learner participation and engagement. In today's digitally driven education era, it is important to integrate these ICT tools effectively for purposeful and outcome-driven learning experiences. This literature review evaluates research from 2000 to 2025 on the integration of ICT in physics education, providing pedagogical frameworks, experiential understanding and empirical data. This review considers the social, cultural and infrastructural context that may influence ICT implementation and providing an organized framework for the systematic adoption of technology

in physics pedagogy worldwide. This comprehensive review adopted a qualitative elements of systematic review, thematic content analysis and comparative case study analysis. The ultimate goal is to holistically understand how ICT has been used in physics education across diverse geographical and educational settings from 2000-2025.

Sources were identified through structured keyword searches in academic databases including Springer Link, Research Gate, and Google Scholar using terms like 'ICT in physics education', 'virtual labs in science teaching', 'AI in physics classrooms', and 'TPACK and physics'. Date filters (2000–2025) were applied to refine the search. Over 140 publications were initially screened by title and abstract. Inclusion criteria involved: (a) relevance to physics or STEM education, (b) a focus on ICT tools or pedagogy, (c) publication between 2000 and 2025, (d) English language, and (e) either peer-reviewed journal articles or conference papers. Studies lacking methodological clarity, theoretical grounding, or measurable outcomes were excluded. The final sample consisted of 50 rigorously vetted documents. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify major patterns across domains such as student achievement, teacher development, ICT tool categorization, barriers, and educational equity. Data were coded manually and corroborated through inter-source comparison to enhance validity and reliability. This qualitative design allowed a contextual understanding of ICT practices and policies. Limitations included potential publication bias and language restriction to English. Based on the literature review following research questions and research objectives are made.

Research Questions:

1. What ICT tools and pedagogical models are most effective in physics education?
2. How does ICT impact learners' cognitive and affective outcomes?
3. What challenges hinder successful ICT integration?
4. What recommendations can enhance the sustainability of ICT use in physics instruction?

Research objectives:

- * To evaluate theoretical and empirical

contributions on ICT in physics education.

- * To examine the effectiveness of ICT tools across various educational levels.
- * To explore the role of teacher competency and training models.
- * To propose systemic recommendations for ICT implementation

Methodology:

This study adopts a qualitative review methodology, synthesizing literature published between 2000 and 2025. Sources were selected based on relevance, peer-reviewed status, and empirical or theoretical contribution. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were included from databases such as Springer Link, Research Gate, Google Scholar. Over 50 documents—spanning journal articles, conference proceedings, and theses—were reviewed.

Population, Sample and Inclusion criteria:

The population includes students and teachers at secondary and tertiary levels. The sample includes studies with interventions using ICT tools such as simulations, virtual labs, AI platforms, and gamified environments. Only studies published between 2000–2025, with clear methodological design and measurable educational outcomes, were included.

Pedagogical framework for ICT integration:

Pedagogical frameworks serve as essential blueprints in guiding the purposeful integration of ICT in physics instruction. It also takes into account the infrastructure and sociocultural factors that affect ICT deployment, offering a well-organized road map for the global acceptance of technology in physics education. This comprehensive evaluation uses a qualitative research synthesis approach, integrating aspects of comparative case study analysis, thematic content analysis and systematic review. The main objective choosing years 2000 to 2025 is so that we could have a comprehensive understanding of how ICT is being used in physics education across different educational settings and geographical regions. For instance, redefining teacher practices, we can involve students in creating virtual experiments, by augmentation, we can engage them in ways that replace traditional circuit diagrams with interactive

digital simulations. ICT tools have also been effectively integrated into the widely used SE instructional model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate), popular in inquiry based science learning. In this framework, simulations and videos stimulates student interest (“Engage”). Virtual laboratories facilitate practical inquiry (“Explore”), multimedia-rich presentations promotes deep understanding (“Explain”), guided activities strengthens deep knowledge (“Elaborate”) and digital quizzes or concept maps gain insight (“Evaluate”). Studies by Shivam (2022) and Ndiokubwayo et al (2020) confirmed the effectiveness of integrating ICT within this instructional framework for physics education.

Furthermore, pedagogical models like People-Process-Product (P3) model and Khan’s Eight-Dimensional framework provides a new dimension, emphasizing broad-based implementation of ICT that involves stakeholders, learning modules evaluation methods, technological reliability and scalability. P3 model and Khan’s Eight-Dimensional framework strongly aligned to large-scale ICT implementation efforts within regional or national educational contexts.

ICT tools in physics education:

Over the past years, a number of ICT tools have been used to support physics education to facilitate personalized learning, maximize visualization and increase student engagement. Students are now performing simulated experiments across difficult physics topics including optics, electricity, quantum physics using virtual laboratories such as PhET and Labster. According to Kornilov and Khanina (2020), these virtual platforms are particularly beneficial in educational settings lacking physical lab equipment simulation software such as Tracker has simplified abstract kinematic concepts and now learners can analyze and visualize motion through real-world video footage. Students can import videos, track movements, construct graphs demonstrating displacement velocity and acceleration. This method mediates the gap between practical observation and theoretical equations, covering the topics like projectile motion, free-fall and harmonic oscillations.

Artificial Intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and personalized virtual tutoring systems provide adaptive learning experiences, with real-time feedback and question generation supporting tailored instruction. Despite Intermittent inaccuracies these AI tools foster self-directed learning and enhance inquiry-based approaches when integrated effectively with curriculum goals (Bruneau et al., 2024)

Now a days, gamified learning platforms-such as Kahoot:, Quizizz, Classcraft and various mobile applications – have become very popular and it boosts student engagement. These engaging tools promote cooperation, competition, instant feedback, thus aiding the students interest in learning physics concepts.

Additionally, immersive technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are evolving as innovative and impactful teaching tools in physics education. Through these applications, students substantially enhance spatial understanding and retention of physics such as gravitational fields, atomic structures and 3D vectors.

There have been specific studies done in many countries from 2000 to 2025 that give us valuable knowledge about how we have adopted ICT tools and applied within local contexts in physics education for example, Orone (2023) found that Virtual Laboratory-Based Instruction (VLBI) in public secondary schools in Kenya improved student performance by an average of 18% particularly in topics such as waves and electromagnetism. The study also depicted that VLBI promote students’ independent learning capabilities, clarifies abstract concepts and minimizes their dependency on teachers.

In Pakistan, Afzal et al. (2020) measured the influence of mobile application and LMS-based e-learning modules for physics students preparing for higher studies. The visualization through virtual lab significantly boosted and student engagement especially in optics nuclear physics.

However, persistent issues such as digital literacy gaps and language barriers were particularly noticeable in rural communities.

Bruneau et al. (2024) explored the effectiveness

of employing ChatGPT as an instructional assistant in high school physics classes in Vietnam. Although ChatGPT showed moderate success in answering conceptual questions, its accuracy in mathematical problems required substantial improvement. Nevertheless, it effectively stimulated students' curiosity and provided notable support in bilingual or resource-limited classroom environments.

In Uzbekistan, a nationwide e-learning platform was launched by the Ministry of Higher Education to support physics lab work at the university level. Faculty received specialized training in digital teaching methodologies. Khujanazarov et al. (2022) reported significant improvements in student outcomes, particularly when multimedia and 3D modeling tools were integrated into mechanics and thermodynamics courses.

Across Europe, various Erasmus+-funded initiatives fostered international collaboration by leveraging digital repositories, open-source physics software, and virtual reality experiments. A longitudinal investigation involving 14 universities demonstrated sustained advancements in students' skills related to experimental design and the quality of physics laboratory reports.

Impact analysis: Student learning and Engagement:

Teacher readiness is a cornerstone for meaningful ICT integration. Despite the availability of technology, its effective use often depends on educators' confidence, competence, and instructional design skills. Kotoka and Kriek (2023) found that while many teachers rated their ICT skills highly, their students did not perceive those skills translating into effective classroom practice—highlighting a gap between self-efficacy and actual performance. Training programs structured around the TPACK framework have shown promise. These programs emphasize the interplay between content knowledge (physics principles), pedagogy (constructivist and inquiry-based methods), and technology (ICT tools). Workshops, collaborative design sessions, and microteaching with peer feedback were found effective in increasing teacher fluency in digital instruction. Beyond technical tutorials, in-service training must

incorporate scenario-based learning, in which educators use blended learning models or digital simulations to interact with real-world classroom problems. Digital pedagogical literacy is further enhanced by reflective practice and teacher coaching, including peer mentoring and post-lesson evaluations. Mentorship-based digital pedagogy approaches, which combine asynchronous modules with peer-led facilitation in real time, have been embraced by nations such as South Korea and Finland. In addition to being scalable, these methods encourage a digitally professional culture in the educational system. Obstacles to the successful incorporation of ICT in physics education:

Barriers to effective ICT integration in physics education:

Despite its potential, pedagogical and structural obstacles frequently prevent ICT from being fully integrated into physics education:

Infrastructure Deficits: Unreliable electricity, a shortage of working computers, and inadequate internet connectivity are common problems in rural and low-income schools. Opportunities for blended or simulation-based learning are significantly diminished by these infrastructure deficiencies.

Digital anxiety and teacher resistance: ICT is still viewed with skepticism by some educators who believe it to be disruptive or unrelated to the major curricular standards. Others suffer from digital anxiety, which impairs implementation because it is a dread or uneasiness associated with utilizing new technologies.

Curricular Misalignment: A lot of national curricula are still inflexible and primarily emphasize summative evaluation and rote learning. This makes it difficult to implement constructivist, inquiry-based activities that are aided by ICT. This might lead to underutilization of even well-designed ICT resources.

Assessment incompatibility: Conventional tests frequently fall short in capturing ICT-cultivated abilities including creativity, teamwork, and digital literacy. Schools are deterred from implementing ICT-intensive pedagogies by the lack of alternative evaluation systems.

Language and Accessibility Barriers: In multilingual societies, lack of localized content limits ICT integration.

Moreover, students with disabilities face accessibility challenges due to limited adaptive digital resources.

Recommendations:

Key recommendations include:

1. Policy and Governance: Ministries of Education should embed ICT in national education policies, allocate funding for device procurement and internet expansion, and develop guidelines for blended and virtual physics curricula (Ramaila, 2025; Khujanazarov et al., 2022).

2. Curriculum Development: Curriculum planners should include simulations, interactive platforms, and AR/VR modules as core instructional resources—not as supplementary tools. These should align with learning objectives and be evaluated through formative, skills-based assessments (Shivam, 2022; Okono, 2023).

3. Teacher Preparation and Training: Governments and institutions must adopt TPACK-structured training models and support mentorship programs for ICT competence (Kotoka&Kriek, 2023; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). In-service workshops should be mandatory and reflect classroom-relevant digital challenges

4. Assessment Reform: Introduce competency-based and project-based assessments to evaluate digital literacy, collaboration, and problem-solving rather than memorization (Afzal et al., 2020). Use e-portfolios, digital lab notebooks, and simulation reports as alternative evaluation tools.

5. Inclusive ICT Access: Deploy localized and multilingual digital content to support learners in diverse settings. Adapt ICT resources for learners with disabilities by integrating screen readers, subtitles, and adjustable visual formats (Kuzmenko et al., 2022; Kornilov & Khanina, 2020).

6. Research and Development: Universities will need to work with EdTech companies and AI developers to create digital tools for physics and test them in real world learning environments. Learning outcomes, system-wide scalability, teacher

acceptance should all be monitored in mixed-methods and Longitudinal research (Bruneau et al., 2024; Ndiwokubwayo et al., 2020)

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the use of ICT tools in Physics such as virtual laboratories, simulations, AI-driven tutoring systems and gamification enhanced the learners conceptual understanding and engagement from 2000 to 2025. These tools have become essential elements in effective Physics instruction. But technology alone does not assure for better academic achievements; rather, it achieves the maximum impact when combined with the pedagogical frameworks such as SAMR, SE and TPACK.

It is equally important to provide continuous teacher training and strong organizational policies to maximize the potential of these technological tools. The ongoing issues of poor infrastructural support, obsolete curriculum, Educators using outdated methodologies and traditional assessment methods poorly aligned with digital learning-must be tackled through structured interventions to realize ICT's full educational potential. This review highlights the countries that give foremost attention to inclusive policy-making, targeted teacher training and curriculum digitization have experienced transformative change in physics pedagogical impact, thus enhancing physics teaching effectiveness.

ICT promote inquiry-based learning, clarify abstract concepts through practical visualizations (simulations, virtual labs) and cater to diverse educational needs, it holds catalytic potential for physics education globally. The successful implementation of ICT requires a comprehensive, systematic approach aligning infrastructure, inclusive policy, teacher readiness, technological innovation and pedagogical *practices* with strategic investments and research-informed improvements, ICT promises significant progress in inclusivity, efficiency and learner engagement with physics education worldwide.

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Vandana Singh

Perspective on Immersive Technologies in Education: VR, AR, MR

ABSTRACT

As the technology is rapidly growing at a very fast pace its influence can be directly observe in every aspects of life. Technology is influencing every sector of life and one of the major sectors which is transforming through inculcation of technology is education. Evolution from traditional methods to practicing more advance teaching methods in order to render teaching learning process more effective has been an area of keen interest. Immersive technology is one such attempt to bring a new dimensions in the fields of education. In this study bibliographic review have been done to present a wholesome overview on immersive technologies in relation to education.

KEYWORDS

Immersive technology, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Mixed Reality, Extended Reality

1. INTRODUCTION

More recently, immersive technologies have started to gain popularity and have a remarkable potential in education. These technologies refer to technology that attempts to induce the perception of being physically present in a non-physical world through the means of a digital or simulated world or, on the other way around, seeing and interacting with virtual elements added to the physical reality. By appealing to the students sight, touch, and smell immersing technology provides a convincing simulation

of the real world. The technical goal of immersive technologies is to replace real sense perceptions by the computer-generated ones, creating a sense of immersion. Immersive technology is technology that blurs the boundary between the physical and virtual worlds and enables users to experience a sense of immersion. Immersive technology, including augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), is increasingly pervasive in our daily lives. (Suh, A., & Prophet, J. 2018). Extended reality comprises the trio of virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality. In education the immersive technology ease the teaching learning process as it brings scientific concepts to life with augmented reality. Using augmented reality to generate tornadoes, funnels can now be brought into the classroom so students can experience these devastating storms up close. Alternatively, students can take an AR tour of the hive to see its inner workings and explore how bees work together to support their community. The practical inculcation which is demand of present education gets fulfilled through use of immersive technologies in education. The immersive experience takes place using virtual reality headsets, intelligent wearables, head mounted devices like gloves or controllers, some popular ones are oculus Rift, Microsoft HoloLens, Samsung Gear VR, HTC Vive.

Types of immersive technologies in education and their concepts:

1.Virtual reality (VR): Technology that

generates an interactive virtual environment designed to simulate a real-life experience. (Lee, Chung et al. 2013), Virtual reality implies a complete immersion experience that shuts out the physical world. Using VR devices such as Class VR headsets, 360 VR, users can be transported into a number of real-world and imagined environments. Immersive VR Users are required to wear a head-mounted display and are completely encompassed by the virtual environment. In an immersive VR environment, user responses can be observed and recorded in a controlled situation. Cave Automatic Virtual Environment (CAVE) is an example of immersive VR.

2. Augmented reality (AR): AR adds digital elements to a live view often by using the camera on a smartphone. Examples of augmented reality experiences include Snapchat lenses and the game Pokemon Go. Technology that enables users to engage with virtual information superimposed on the physical world. This mediated immersion places digital resources throughout the real world, augmenting users' experiences and interactions. (Dunleavy, Dede, & Mitchell 2009); (Rochlen et al. 2017) Few AR apps used in education are Quiver, 3D Bear, SkyView Lite, AR Atom Visualizer for ARCore, Animal SafariAR, Photomath, Catchy words AR, JigSpace, Complete Anatomy 2021, Adobe Aero, solAR, Math Ninja AR, Google Lens and many more.

3. Mixed reality (MR): Mixed reality (MR) is a type of hybrid environment, where interactive virtual objects can be mapped to the physical environment, blending the real and the virtual. The recent advances in MR have high potential to play an important role in various fields, especially in education. It involves a type of hybrid system that involves both physical and virtual elements. Many experts describe mixed reality as a sliding scale between a fully physical environment with no virtual elements, and a completely virtual environment. MR devices can be classified according to the role played in the real and virtual environments and can be placed on a continuum that goes from AR to VR. New images may be placed in a real space in such a way that they can interact, to some extent, with what is real in

the physical world we know. The definition of the characteristics of MR is still valid many years later. An application of MR within the reality–virtuality–continuum has a higher share of real elements, e.g., virtual objects that reside in the real world can be classified as AR. In contrast, physical objects integrated into the virtual world are referred to as augmented virtuality (AV). Despite the definition of MR evolving, it is still possible to observe the major characteristics of MR.

Application of immersive technologies in education

- The SkyView app allows students to explore space with an AR overlay of the night sky. SkyView allows anyone to point her mobile device upwards and identify stars, constellations, planets and even satellites.
- Learn about animal internal organs by dissecting a frog in biology class. This process was disgusting to us and very frightening to the frog! The Froggipedia app now allows students to explore the frog's internal organs via his AR technology in the app
- Microsoft HoloLens has developed a way for medical students and clinicians to use mixed reality to learn about the human body. Students can get their blood flowing, isolate and magnify parts of the human body, understand anatomy, and even go inside to learn how to treat various medical conditions.
- The 1943 Berlin Blitz 360°, produced by the BBC's Immersive VR Education, uses real footage of the nighttime raid on Nazi Germany to give students an idea of what it was like to witness a momentous historical event. Tell you.
- Most teachers can't take their students to Everest Base Camp or the Louvre, but they can do both in a highly immersive series of Google Expeditions excursions.
- If you've ever wanted to practice your speech in front of a virtual audience before going on stage, put on your virtual reality goggles and you can do just that. Virtual Speech helps improve your speaking skills with an immersive and realistic

virtual reality simulation.

- The VR Museum of Fine Art on Steam allows users to see world-class paintings and sculptures, including the Mona Lisa, up close without fighting crowds or protective glass.
- Learning a language can feel very theoretical from reading books, but virtual reality learning software providers like Mondly can provide an immersive language learning experience without having to travel to a foreign country. increase. Mondly's VR world allows you to have real conversations with real people, making language learning more effective and more likely to last.

Benefits

- Engaging: Direct experience generate an effective way to captivate those students who struggle, or it can just provide another opportunity to boost the engagement during lessons at school. Creation of engaging environment can be established.
- Universal: Regardless of social, economic or geographic disparities, MR at school brings together people and encourage human interaction. Brings a universal concept in education.
- Multi-purpose: Immersive technology can be used to teach any topic, because it is easier to see and hear something instead of having it explained, above all with abstract concepts.
- Faraway world: Through immersive technology can travel Faraway worlds, students and teachers can go back in time, interacting with objects, animals or human beings that are no longer existing: dinosaurs and primitives get a new, more realistic image in learners' minds.
- Special child's education: Those Students who are unable to hear and can only see the immersive technology can be a boon to them.
- Fostering creativity: Technological driven education allow students to think creatively.
- Accesible learning material: virtually the learning aids will not be a limitation.

Challenges

- Motion sickness: This is characterized by an

aversive sense of discomfort, disorientation, nausea, vomiting, etc. Motion sickness is common in users of headmounted display systems for immersive technology. (Munafoetal. 2017), (Coxon et al. 2016)

- Cost of equipments: Unaffordable price range may create anxiety issues among students.
- Physical discomfort: Some people report that using head-based displays causes physical discomfort. In the case of hand-based displays, some users report that they experienced discomfort in cases when they had to hold the device at eye level to view an immersive environment. (Goh et al. 2016), (Datcu et al. 2015)
- Cognitive overload: When the size of the display screen is limited, it constraints the amount of information presented and overwhelms the user (Goh et al.2016)
- Distracted attention: Immersive technology often fails to balance a user's attention distribution between the virtual and the physical spaces, causing them to engage with the virtual information and technology excessively, and to ignore the real environment or learning process. (Chang et al. 2014)

Conclusion

Immersive technologies have plenty of attributes that make them appealing for education. First, they have an inherently interactive nature, which allows a more experiential learning Secondly, it can make abstract concepts and ideas more clear which is one of the requirements of subjects like sciences, mathematics . Thirdly, In special education, for students having only vision sense it can be immensely effective. Lots of Promising benefits in fields of education are associated with entering of immersive technologies but likewise it has its cons associated with it as well , as the technology driven education involves more technological gadzets for longer period of time use, so there harmful effects on the human body and its impact on students Pyscological, behavioural, cognitive, domain can be researched

upon. Also AR/VR do not always seems to create a positive user experience. It leads to cognitive overload/fatigue, physical discomfort, motion sickness. Customization according to the needs of the students and keeping in mind the curriculum a proper inculcation and implementation of immersive

technology can prove more beneficial in field of education.

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The Interplay of Social Media, Human Rights and Constitutional Law in India

Abstract

This is a study which is based on dynamic and complicate relationships between the social media, human rights and constitutional law in India. They are more evident with the spread of social media. Although such platforms create avenues to organize action and discussion, they bring a certain number of legal and ethical difficulties. The current paper will review the Indian constitutional and legal system, discuss judicial trends and point out the effects of government regulation on human rights. The paper gives practical solutions in the form of recommendations to strike a tradeoff of the freedom and accountability in the digital media environment.

Keywords:

Constitutional law, Human Rights, social media, Digital Ecosystem, Freedom of Speech, Right to Life

Introduction

The world largest democracy-India has experienced a digital revolution in the form of a fast penetration of the internet and a sharp growth in the use of social media. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have revolutionized the way people share and receive information and have promoted real-time communication, citizen journalism, and massive actions. These mediums are used as political platforms, a source of social change (like the anti-

CAA protests and the farmers protest) and emergency system.

Meanwhile, such digital instruments have brought about new burdens. They have facilitated hate speech, fake information, online bullying, and spying and many are usually done by the vulnerable and rebellious voices. The world has become more digitally monitored and their data are collected by both the government and the corporations, which questioned privacy breach and the right of free expression. The discussion has been intensified by legal fights on the regulation of content, it is based on localization of data and the responsibility of the platform that hosts that content.

The Indian Constitution which has strong provisions of the fundamental rights acts as starting block in measuring the effect of social media in civil liberties. These key democratic values can be summarized in articles 19, 21 and 14 that also need to be upheld and modified to the digital age. "Regulations like the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 have caused this aspect of gained and conceded freedom and control to be a center of legal inquiry".

Thus, the current paper explores the changing significant role of social media in developing the discourse of society and impacting the legal interpretation of constitution rights in India. It aims at balancing matters between the legal theory and the digital realities through policy frameworks, judicial

developments and implications on the society. This study underlines the necessity of a human rights based approach toward digital governance that preserves the democratic values and encourages digital inclusivity.

The relationship that exists between technology, governance, and human right demands a healthy examination of the constitutional ideals in India as we usher into the era of social media. The paper examines the digital adaptation of the constitutional law and evaluates the implications on human rights, as well as provide recommendations to reform it.

Research Questions:

- How does social media influence the enforcement and exercise of constitutional rights in India?
- What are the existing legal and judicial mechanisms governing digital expression and data privacy?
- How do state regulations and platform policies align or conflict with fundamental rights?
- What reforms are needed to ensure the protection of human rights in India's digital ecosystem?

Methodology:

Legal Analysis: Review of the Indian Constitution, Information Technology Act, 2000, and judicial precedents for example *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* and *Puttaswamy v. Union of India*.

Case Studies: Examination of real-world examples including internet shutdowns in Kashmir, the 2021 Twitter-government conflict, and digital surveillance cases.

Content Analysis: Evaluation of social media content moderation practices, government takedown orders, and platform transparency reports.

Secondary Data: Academic literature, government documents, and NGO reports.

Interconnection between Social Media, Human Rights, and Constitutional Law:

The interaction of social media with human rights and constitutional law is once again one that is both complex and dynamic. The social media serves as a contemporary public space during which people present their views, stage demonstrations, and be accountable to institutions. This is more or less similar

to the rights given by the Indian Constitution especially the freedom of expression and speech given by Article 19 (1) (a). Social media also puts more emphasis on the right to information and the right to participate in the democratic processes.

Yet this cost increase of online interaction regularly goes in conflict with the limitations imposed by constitutional and legislative statutes. As an example, the state can seek to restrict the rights of those who express their views on state activities through the legislation on sedition, the maintenance of order, or national security when the users circulate information critical of the government. "This puts the extent and limitations of Article 19(2) in doubt, where it is written that there are reasonable restraints that can be imposed on the freedom of speech. The courts such as in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*, has tried to define these limits but yet there is ambiguity and excessiveness".

Another pillar of the human rights, privacy, has been made extremely vulnerable to the digital world. "The most significant and landmark move by the Supreme Court in the case of *Justice K.S. Union of India* established right to privacy being inherent to the Article 21". However, as practices of data breach, metadata surveillance, algorithmic profiling by states and corporations continue to increase, this right is continuously at stake. "Social media platforms are information centers which would tend to use their user behavior to make commercial gains even when they are not informed about it".

The law is also to address the matters of digital inclusion and access. A digital divide also indicates structural disparities because the less privileged groups of people are usually hindered to play a full role in cyber environments. The provision of equality before the law, embodied in Article 14, should be applied to the digital environment where all citizens should be able to equally exercise their rights without being discriminated or disproportionately loaded.

In addition, the moderation of content by the social media captures challenging issues of due process and accountability. Although there is no direct relationship of the private platforms to the constitutional norms, the gatekeeping responsibility

creates some sort of a quasi- constitutional duty on the part of the private platforms. This requires more transparent norms and democracy control.

Finally, the interplay between human rights and constitutional law offers a lens in which one can review and react to the issues generated by social media. Such interconnectivity should inform regulation and court decision-making as well as action by citizens to maintain democratic principles in the digital era.

Deep Analysis:

1. Freedom of Speech (Article 19(1)(a)): The social media has transformed the means by which people go about the right to freedom of speech by offering real-time platforms of public debate, political activism, and social criticism. Nonetheless, the use of its laws including sedition, UAPA and Section 69A opposes criticism and causes it to take place in secret. The requests to takedown of a platform such as Twitter and Facebook are often not transparent by the government. The intervention by the courts like the case of Shreya Singhal gave some restraint to the arbitrary censorship yet ambiguous provisions in Article 19(2) can still be manipulated. Additionally, chilling effects arise when people censor themselves because of coercion by the law, and this suppresses the democratic discourse.

2. Right to Privacy (Article 21): The algorithm and the surveillance tools take advantage of the digital footprints on social media, putting privacy at risk. Confirmation of privacy as a fundamental right in Puttaswamy by the Supreme Court not only offered a constitutional armour but it has had a toothless execution due to the lack of a comprehensive data protection legislation. The right to anonymous speech of an individual is violated by state surveillance programs and requirements of traceability (e.g. the IT Rules, 2021). In addition to that, data practice of the companies with regard to user data is usually hidden sharing with third-party data being vulnerable to unauthorized profiling and behavior manipulation.

3. Fair Trial and Social Media Trials: The social media has regularly turned in to a court of people. Big trials, such as the Aryan Khan drug case or the death of Sushant Singh Rajput, demonstrated the power of trial by media, which allegedly uses viral

posts and hashtags to shape the opinion of the masses, which distorts and biases investigations and intimidates the judiciary. This discredits the right of presumption of innocence and the rights to free and fair trial. There have been cases when the courts step in and issue warnings on prejudicial reporting, but there are no extensive guidelines on social media usage during trials, which are currently going on.

4. Digital Inequality and Marginalized Communities: Digital divide is the contrary to the social media as the equalizer. Most of the non-urban, tribal, and low-income groups do not have access to the high-speed internet and digital literacy. Even connected users, being marginalised actors (Dalits, women, and other religious minorities) are subjected to targeted hate speech, trolling, and are excluded by dominant discourses. Learned on discriminatory data, algorithms tend to ignore or down-rank their contents. Social media is not only a contributor to structural inequality but without suitable precautions; it further increases the reality of structural inequality.

5. Platform Accountability and Government Overreach: Governments and the civil society usually conflict with the form of pressure on the social media intermediaries. And although the IT Rules 2021 are to achieve the regulation of content, the traceability and the requirement of compliance officers within the rules also sounded the alarm on censorship and excess regulation. Meanwhile, such sites as Meta and Twitter have been accused of inconsistent moderation and lack of methods of redress. Enforcement is made difficult by the power asymmetry between the international information technology companies and national law, as it can leave the users vulnerable.

Recommendations:

Implement a comprehensive data protection law: Based on the concepts of consent, accountability, and the rights of the user.

Minor IT laws: make takedown orders judicially reviewable and secure encryption.

Enhance Institutional checks: Establish autonomous digital rights commissions which will regulate the content.

Improve Transparency of the Platform: Require transparent publication of a report on the

actions of content moderation and notification of governments.

Digital Literacy: Introduce specific programs of online rights and duties awareness.

Conclusion:

India is at a turning point where constitutional principles and value are on the one hand and digital innovation on the other hand. Democratic discourse can be enhanced through social media, even though, with no controls to be put on that media, it will lead to the weakening of rights. The court system has been very instrumental in supporting the liberties, however, there is a need to be more vigilant in policy affirmation and institutional in order to defend the spirit of the Constitution. Due to the emergence of the online world as the extension of the civil one, India will face the need to adjust to human rights approach in governance and make the foundational values of the digital sphere remain freedom, dignity, and justice.

The relationship among social media, human right, and constitutional law is a challenge and opportunity on its own. On the one hand, it may support transparency, transform communities, and support a democratic practice. Conversely, it is a dire threat to privacy, equality and due process. To deal with these, there needs to be a stable regulatory landscape that maintains the constitutional decency, has human dignity in mind, and has rights enforced in both the physical and virtual realms. Only in such a way India can embrace the full potential of digital revolution and safeguard the principles it was based on in its Constitution.

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Nityaasha Pratap

Women Prisoners Resistance and Assertion in Colonial North Western Provinces and Oudh (1870–Early 20th Century)

Abstract

Between 1870 and the early decades of the twentieth century, the colonial penal system in India underwent profound reforms aimed at establishing discipline, reform, and social control in the North Western Provinces and Oudh (modern Uttar Pradesh). Within this system, women prisoners—often labeled as deviant, criminal, or “other”—were subject to gendered regimes of punishment and surveillance designed to reinforce both British colonial authority and indigenous patriarchal norms. Yet despite these multiple layers of repression, evidence from prison reports, petitions, and memoirs indicates that many incarcerated women found ways to resist and assert their dignity. This article critically examines these processes of subjugation and resistance, placing them in dialogue with historical debates on the nature of criminality, victimhood, and state power. By drawing on works such as Priyam Singh’s *Victims or Criminals?* (1996) and the analyses of scholars such as Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, as well as theoretical frameworks derived from Foucault and Goffman, this study argues that the practices of resistance among women prisoners reveal a complex “subaltern agency” that complicates traditional narratives of colonial domination.

1. Introduction

Colonial administrators in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh instituted a modern penal system intended not only to punish offenders but also to “reform” them in accordance with British notions of discipline, order, and morality. For women—already

marginalized by an indigenous patriarchal order—the imposition of colonial penal discipline carried an added burden. Many women who ended up in jail were not only criminals as defined by the colonial state but also subjects of a gendered regime that reinforced their supposed inherent weakness and moral deviance.

Over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a body of evidence has emerged that suggests these women, far from being passive victims, engaged in various forms of resistance. Their acts of defiance—ranging from legal appeals and hunger strikes to more subtle forms of cultural and interpersonal assertion—challenged the dominant narratives of criminality and subjugation. This article sets out to examine the historical record of such resistance, explore the conditions under which these practices emerged, and engage with debates among historians about the ways in which colonial law and penal administration produced both repression and the possibility of subaltern assertion.

2. Colonial Penal Reforms and the Gendered Logic of Punishment

2.1. *The Transformation of Traditional Punishment*

The period from 1870 onward saw the rapid institutionalization of modern prisons in India. In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, annual reports on prison conditions (compiled in documents such as the *Annual Reports on the Condition and Management of Jails in the North-Western Provinces*, available in various archives) attest to a systematic drive by colonial officials to codify prison discipline and introduce reforms aimed at

“rehabilitation” as much as punishment. These measures, however, were not applied uniformly. The emerging legal codes—the Indian Penal Code of 1860 and later the Prisons Act of 1894—prescribed different forms of punishment that were often laden with assumptions about the criminality of different groups.

Women, in particular, were assumed to be morally and physically inferior and more prone to “deviance” when they stepped outside the strict confines of female propriety. Legal prescriptions frequently relied on notions of shame, honor, and propriety that resonated with indigenous ideas of gender but were now reinterpreted by the colonial state. As Priyam Singh’s seminal study *Victims or Criminals?* (1996) argues, the colonial penal apparatus often “criminalized” behavior that, in the precolonial context, might have been seen as a transgression or a temporary aberration rather than an inherent defect.

2.2. Gendered Ideologies and the Construction of Female Criminality

The colonial regime’s reliance on a binary of “victim” versus “criminal” was profoundly shaped by prevailing gender ideologies. Women were expected to be the guardians of family honor and moral purity, and any deviation from these ideals was interpreted as evidence of inherent defectiveness. In the North Western Provinces and Oudh, colonial documents and administrative correspondence reveal that female offenders were not only punished for their crimes but were also publicly shamed in order to reassert the social order.

Scholars such as Suruchi Thapar Björkert have argued that the colonial penal system, while aiming to “reform” its subjects, also operated as a tool of social control by marking certain women as “other” (Thapar Björkert 1998). This process of “othering” was central to the debates among historians regarding the extent to which colonial punishment was driven by racial, caste, and gender hierarchies. The labeling of women prisoners as either “victims” of circumstance or as inherently criminal became a central theme in subsequent historical analyses, a debate that continues to influence our understanding of colonial legal practices today.

3. Women Prisoner’s Experiences in the Colonial Context

3.1. Incarceration and Daily Life

Women in colonial prisons experienced conditions that were marked by overcrowding, strict surveillance, and a punitive regime that extended beyond physical punishment. Daily routines were regulated not only by the state’s rules but also by gendered expectations. For instance, female prisoners were often segregated from their male counterparts and subjected to additional restrictions on movement and communication. Health reports and prison administration documents from the period reveal that women were sometimes denied even the most basic amenities, reinforcing their status as expendable subjects within the colonial state.

Yet within these harsh conditions, women developed coping mechanisms that enabled them to retain a sense of identity and solidarity. Informal networks of support emerged among inmates, and even small acts—such as sharing personal narratives or engaging in communal prayer—became sites of resistance against the dehumanizing conditions of confinement.

3.2. Resistance Through Legal Appeal and Rhetorical Defiance

One of the more visible forms of resistance among women prisoners was the use of legal rhetoric and appeals. In several documented cases, women petitioned against corporal punishment, demanded better conditions, or challenged their categorization as “habitual offenders.” These appeals were not only legal maneuvers but also rhetorical acts aimed at reclaiming their dignity. By engaging with the very language of colonial law, these women implicitly questioned the moral and legal basis upon which they were confined.

For example, archival records from Oudh reveal that some women, when subjected to public punishment, submitted petitions that invoked principles of fairness and natural justice. These petitions often referenced both indigenous moral codes and British legal precedents, thereby creating a hybrid discourse that challenged the authority of the prison administration. This legal assertion can be seen as a form of resistance that, while working within the state’s

own frameworks, subverted its gendered assumptions.

3.3. *Collective Action and Hunger Strikes*

In addition to individual legal appeals, collective actions such as hunger strikes and coordinated non-compliance have been documented. Although these events were often suppressed by prison officials, reports from the period recount instances where groups of women prisoners united in protest against inhumane conditions. In one notable case recorded in Priyam Singh's study, a group of women in Oudh embarked on a hunger strike that forced the colonial administration to negotiate improvements in their treatment.

Such collective actions served multiple functions. Not only did they disrupt the normal routines of the prison system, but they also created public awareness—at least among sympathetic administrators and reform-minded officials—about the plight of women prisoners. While the colonial state typically portrayed these protests as signs of disorder, many modern historians interpret them as early manifestations of subaltern resistance.

3.4. *Cultural and Symbolic Assertion of Identity*

Within the confines of prison walls, women prisoners also engaged in less overt forms of resistance by asserting their cultural identities. Storytelling, singing, and religious observances became acts of self-affirmation that challenged the homogenizing narratives of the colonial state. In an environment where their individuality was systematically erased, these cultural practices allowed women to reconstruct their identities on their own terms.

The act of preserving cultural memory—whether through oral histories, clandestine performances, or even personal letters—has emerged as a crucial theme in recent historical debates. Scholars have argued that these practices were not merely “survival strategies” but active forms of resistance against both colonial and patriarchal regimes. They enabled women to claim space, however small, in a system designed to render them invisible.

4. **Case Studies: Resistance in Action**

To understand the breadth and depth of resistance among women prisoners in the colonial North Western Provinces and Oudh, it is instructive to consider

several case studies drawn from archival research and secondary literature.

4.1. *The Hunger Strike of Oudh (circa 1890s)*

One of the most frequently cited examples is the hunger strike that occurred in a central jail in Oudh during the mid-1890s. Faced with severe overcrowding and punitive measures that denied them basic hygienic and nutritional standards, a group of women prisoners organized a hunger strike that lasted several days. Contemporary newspaper reports and prison records indicate that this protest forced prison authorities to reconsider their policies and negotiate certain improvements in the conditions of confinement.

The hunger strike is emblematic of a form of collective resistance that not only challenged the authority of the prison administration but also forced a public debate on the treatment of women in the penal system. Historians such as Priyam Singh argue that this incident should be read not as an isolated occurrence but as part of a broader pattern in which female resistance in prison settings disrupted the colonial state's narrative of order and control.

4.2. *Legal Appeals Against Corporal Punishment*

In another case from the early twentieth century, a well-documented legal appeal was lodged by a female inmate in the United Provinces. Subjected to a particularly severe form of corporal punishment for a minor infraction, the prisoner petitioned the local magistrate on the grounds that the punishment was excessive and violated the principles of natural justice. Although her appeal did not result in immediate relief, it set a precedent for later challenges and contributed to a gradual rethinking of punishment policies in colonial jails.

This case is often referenced in debates on the “criminalization” of female behavior in colonial India. While some historians have argued that such appeals were rare and ineffective, others see them as important markers of subaltern assertion and the early emergence of feminist critiques of the penal system.

4.3. *Collective Protests and the Assertion of Cultural Identity*

Another dimension of resistance can be found in the use of cultural practices as acts of defiance. In several instances, women prisoners organized clandestine gatherings to recite poetry, share folk

songs, and perform rituals that celebrated their heritage. These gatherings, though often suppressed by prison authorities, served as a means of preserving a collective identity that was under constant threat from both colonial repression and patriarchal social norms.

One account from a female prisoner's memoir—cited in later scholarly works—describes how a group of inmates, isolated in a separate wing of a central jail in Oudh, organized weekly recitations of traditional ballads that recounted stories of valor and resistance from precolonial India. This act of cultural remembrance was not only a form of personal catharsis but also a subtle political statement: it reaffirmed a sense of self that was inherently resistant to the narratives of degradation imposed by colonial authorities.

5. Historical Debates on Women, Crime, and Resistance

The study of women prisoners' resistance in colonial India has generated extensive debate among historians and feminist scholars. Two central lines of argument have emerged: the debate over whether these women should be considered primarily as victims of state and social oppression or as active criminals who transgressed established norms, and the discussion over how their acts of resistance should be interpreted within broader theories of state power and subaltern agency.

5.1. *Victims or Criminals? Reassessing Female Incarceration*

Priyam Singh's influential work *Victims or Criminals?* (1996) challenges the binary categorization that has long dominated colonial legal discourse. Singh argues that the criminalization of women in the North Western Provinces and Oudh was not simply a matter of individual moral failure; rather, it was produced by a combination of colonial interventions, economic exploitation, and the imposition of foreign legal frameworks that misinterpreted indigenous social practices. According to Singh, many women who ended up in jail were forced into criminality by circumstances beyond their control—poverty, coercion, and the disruption of traditional support networks all played a role.

Historians continue to debate the extent to which

colonial policies contributed to this “criminalization” of women. Some argue that the strict application of the Indian Penal Code and the Prisons Act was inherently repressive toward women, while others contend that even within a more liberal legal framework, patriarchal norms would have produced similar outcomes. This debate has important implications for understanding subaltern resistance: if women prisoners are seen primarily as victims, their acts of defiance become a means of reclaiming agency; if they are seen as criminals, then their resistance must be read as a contestation of a stigmatized identity.

5.2. *Theoretical Frameworks: Foucault, Goffman, and Beyond*

The dominant theoretical lenses through which scholars have analyzed colonial penal systems include Michel Foucault's concepts of disciplinary power and Erving Goffman's study of total institutions. Foucault's idea of the “docile body” and the “multiform production of power relations” provides a useful starting point for understanding how colonial prisons functioned as instruments of control. However, critics have argued that Foucault's binary division between the powerful (the administration) and the powerless (the inmates) is insufficient for explaining the complex dynamics within colonial jails—especially when a third group, such as women prisoners, asserts its agency.

Goffman's analysis of total institutions has also been applied to colonial prisons, but his work—originally based on observations of Western asylums and military prisons—has limitations when addressing the gendered experiences of Indian women. Feminist scholars have extended these frameworks by emphasizing the intersection of gender, caste, and colonial power. For instance, Suruchi Thapar Björkert's research highlights that the “colonial jail” was not only a site of punishment but also a space where contested identities were negotiated, with women often engaging in what can be called “subaltern agency” to challenge the prescribed order.

5.3. *Debates on Resistance and Subaltern Agency*

Recent historiography has begun to question earlier portrayals of women prisoners as passive subjects. Instead, scholars now argue that the very conditions of incarceration created opportunities for resistance. Whether through legal appeals, hunger

strikes, or cultural affirmation, women prisoners developed strategies to assert their dignity and challenge the dual oppressions of colonial rule and patriarchal order. This perspective is reflected in the work of scholars such as Anand Yang, Clare Anderson, and others who have documented instances of “everyday resistance” within colonial institutions.

Debates continue over the relative effectiveness and visibility of these acts of resistance. Some scholars maintain that while acts of defiance did occur, they were largely isolated and ultimately failed to disrupt the overall structure of colonial power. Others argue that these forms of resistance were emblematic of broader subaltern movements that would later shape postcolonial debates on gender and justice. This latter interpretation underscores the idea that resistance in colonial jails was not merely reactive but had lasting political and social implications.

6. Women Prisoner’s Assertion Through Identity Formation and Cultural Resistance

6.1. *Reclaiming Identity Through Oral and Cultural Practices*

In the oppressive environment of colonial jails, where strict surveillance and rigid routines sought to erase individual identity, women prisoners developed alternative forms of self-expression. Oral histories, folk songs, and traditional storytelling emerged as key strategies for asserting a distinct female identity. These cultural practices allowed inmates to counter the stigmatizing narratives imposed by both the colonial state and local patriarchal customs.

For example, in one documented case from a jail in Oudh, inmates organized secret recitations of regional ballads that recounted historical episodes of resistance against oppression. Such gatherings provided a space for the rearticulation of identity, fostering solidarity among women and serving as an implicit critique of the punitive measures imposed upon them. By sustaining these practices, women prisoners not only maintained a connection to their cultural heritage but also forged a collective memory that challenged the monolithic narratives of criminality.

6.2. *Negotiating Family and Social Ties from Within*

The disruption of traditional family structures was

a frequent consequence of incarceration. Yet many women prisoners worked to maintain or even redefine familial bonds despite their confinement. Some used correspondence, secret meetings, and even symbolic rituals to sustain connections with the outside world. These acts of negotiation were forms of resistance against the totalizing power of the state, which sought to sever prisoner’s ties with their social identities.

In a notable example, a group of inmates in the United Provinces organized a clandestine ritual on the anniversary of a local festival. This event not only reaffirmed their cultural identity but also served as a reminder of their status as members of a community, rather than as isolated criminals. Such activities, though subtle and often suppressed, represent a powerful assertion of agency and a refusal to be completely defined by the punitive categories of colonial law.

7. Case Studies in Resistance and Assertion

7.1. *The Hunger Strike at an Oudh Jail*

One of the best-documented instances of collective resistance occurred in an Oudh jail in the mid-1890s. Faced with overcrowded conditions, poor sanitation, and harsh disciplinary measures, a group of women prisoners launched a hunger strike that lasted several days. Archival records and contemporary newspaper reports detail how the protest forced prison officials to engage in negotiations—resulting in incremental improvements in the treatment of female inmates. This case illustrates the dual nature of resistance: on one level, it was a direct challenge to the administrative apparatus; on another, it constituted a broader appeal for recognition of the human rights of women.

7.2. *Legal Appeals and Petitions Against Corporal Punishment*

In another notable case from the early twentieth century, a female prisoner in the United Provinces submitted a petition against the imposition of corporal punishment. Citing both British legal principles and indigenous moral traditions, she argued that the punishment was not only disproportionate but also dehumanizing. Although her appeal was ultimately rejected by the local magistrate, the case sparked public debate and is frequently cited by scholars as evidence of women prisoner’s capacity to use the law as a means of self-assertion. This legal contestation

challenges the view that female criminality was simply the product of inherent moral weakness; rather, it highlights how state-imposed punishment could be contested on legal and ethical grounds.

7.3. *Cultural Assemblies and the Preservation of Oral Histories*

A series of clandestine cultural assemblies documented in later memoirs and oral histories provide another window into the resistance of women prisoners. In one instance, women in a central jail organized weekly gatherings in which they recited traditional poems and folk songs. These assemblies were not merely acts of cultural preservation; they were overt acts of defiance against a system that sought to strip them of their identity. By maintaining and reinterpreting these cultural expressions, the women created a counter-narrative that celebrated resilience and challenged the colonial discourse of criminality.

8. **Debates and Interpretations in Historiography**

The analysis of women prisoner's resistance in colonial North Western Provinces and Oudh has generated robust debate within the academic community. Two principal questions have animated this discussion:

8.1. *Were the Women Primarily Victims or Active Agents?*

Some early historiographical approaches tended to portray women prisoners as passive victims—subjugated by the dual forces of colonial oppression and indigenous patriarchy. In this view, their “criminality” was seen as a consequence of coercion, poverty, and systemic injustice. Priyam Singh's work, *Victims or Criminals?* (1996), is emblematic of this interpretation, arguing that many of these women were driven to criminal behavior by circumstances beyond their control.

Conversely, more recent scholarship has emphasized the active agency of these women. Feminist historians argue that by engaging in legal appeals, organizing protests, and asserting cultural identities, women prisoners transformed their suffering into a form of resistance. This perspective, which draws on theoretical frameworks such as Foucault's “multiform production of power” and Goffman's studies of total institutions, suggests that resistance

was embedded in the very conditions of incarceration. Thus, the debate is not simply whether these women were victims or criminals but whether they can be understood as subaltern agents who negotiated spaces of autonomy even under extreme repression.

8.2. *The Role of Colonial Discourse in Constructing Female Criminality*

Another contentious debate centers on the role of colonial discourse in defining and enforcing norms of female behavior. Historians have long noted that colonial administrators relied on racial and gendered stereotypes to justify harsh penal measures. The colonial legal apparatus often conflated moral transgression with criminality, effectively “othering” women who did not conform to prescribed ideals of femininity. Scholars such as Daniel J. R. Grey have argued that these practices not only punished behavior but also constructed a discourse of female deviance that persisted well into the twentieth century.

This debate has significant implications for understanding resistance. If the criminalization of women was primarily a product of colonial ideology, then acts of defiance must be read as challenges to a constructed narrative rather than simply expressions of inherent criminality. In this light, the legal appeals and cultural practices of women prisoners become important counter-narratives that contest the legitimacy of colonial and patriarchal representations.

9. **Theoretical Implications: Revisiting Foucault and Goffman**

The experiences of women prisoners in colonial North-Western Provinces and Oudh compel historians to revisit and revise dominant theoretical frameworks concerning power, punishment, and total institutions. Michel Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power—especially his ideas of the “docile body” and the “panopticon”—has provided valuable insights into how modern institutions function. However, Foucault's model is often critiqued for its binary depiction of power as solely flowing from the administration to the inmate.

Erving Goffman's work on total institutions further underscores the ways in which institutions such as prisons aim to erase individual identity and enforce conformity. Yet both theorists largely overlooked the complexities introduced by gender. Feminist scholars

argue that the case of women prisoners illustrates a more multifaceted interplay of power. Rather than being mere passive recipients of discipline, many female inmates negotiated subtle forms of resistance—thus complicating the notion of total subjugation.

For instance, the hybrid legal rhetoric used in appeals against corporal punishment reveals that even under the strictest disciplinary regimes, women could reclaim a measure of subjectivity. This “in-between” space challenges the notion that the prison system was a closed, all-encompassing institution. Instead, it suggests that colonial penal power was inherently unstable, subject to contestation both from below and from within the institution itself.

10. Conclusion

The study of women prisoner’s resistance and assertion in the colonial North Western Provinces and Oudh from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century reveals a complex tapestry of subjugation and defiance. On the one hand, the modern penal system introduced by the British was designed to enforce discipline and reform by imposing rigid, gendered standards of behavior. On the other hand, these very conditions fostered spaces for resistance—through legal appeals, collective protests, and cultural practices that affirmed a distinct female identity.

Historical debates continue to oscillate between

readings of these women as passive victims of an oppressive system and as active agents who contested and subverted that system. The work of scholars such as Priyam Singh and Suruchi Thapar Björkert has been instrumental in highlighting how colonial legal and penal practices contributed to the criminalization of women while simultaneously providing them with tools for resistance. Theoretical frameworks from Foucault and Goffman, when reinterpreted in light of feminist critiques, further reveal that power in colonial institutions was not monolithic but was produced through contested practices that allowed for subaltern assertion.

In sum, the legacy of resistance among women prisoners in colonial North Western Provinces and Oudh is a testimony to the enduring human capacity to claim dignity in the face of structural violence. Their struggles—documented in archival petitions, oral histories, and critical studies—offer valuable lessons for contemporary debates on gender, justice, and state power. Understanding these dynamics enriches our comprehension of colonial history and contributes to ongoing discussions about how modern institutions can both oppress and inadvertently empower the marginalized.

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Monik Jaiswal

A Psychological Comparison of Impulse Buying Behavior Between Working and Non-Working Women

Abstract

Impulse buying is a prevalent consumer behaviour characterised by spontaneous, emotionally driven purchases and contributes to nearly 40% of overall retail spending. In this study, we investigate the nuanced differences in impulse buying tendencies between working and non-working women. Drawing upon a mixed-methods design, we collected data from 400 women (200 employed full-time and 200 non-working, including homemakers and part-time workers) aged 25–55. Quantitative measures using standardised scales (Impulse Buying Tendency Scale, DASS-21, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale) were complemented by semi-structured interviews to elucidate contextual influences. Our analyses indicate that working women exhibit more frequent impulse buying, largely driven by stress mitigation and the allure of hedonic rewards, whereas non-working women are more susceptible to purchasing motivated by social influences and boredom. Moreover, psychological variables such as self-esteem and perceived behavioural control significantly moderate these consumption behaviours. These findings underscore the importance of tailoring financial literacy programmes, ethical marketing, and consumer protection strategies to account for employment status-related vulnerabilities.

Keywords: Impulse Buying, Consumer Behaviour, Working vs. Non-Working Women, Psychological Drivers, Mixed Methods, Financial Literacy

1. Introduction

Impulse buying—defined as spontaneous, unplanned consumption that bypasses rational deliberation—is not simply a financial decision but a multifaceted psychological process influenced by emotional arousal and situational triggers. In contemporary consumer society, such behaviour has profound economic implications, accounting for up to 40% of retail transactions in many developed markets. Despite the extensive literature on demographic correlates of impulse buying, there remains a notable gap in examining how employment status shapes the psychological underpinnings and behavioural outcomes among women.¹

Women, as a demographic group, inhabit diverse roles that significantly impact their purchasing decisions. On one hand, working women, who balance professional responsibilities with personal lives, confront unique stressors and enjoy a measure of financial autonomy that may predispose them towards compensatory hedonic consumption. On the other hand, non-working women often experience different social and emotional dynamics that can render them particularly sensitive to external stimuli such as peer behaviour and domestic monotony. This divergence invites a systematic comparison of impulse buying behaviour across employment statuses.

This study is guided by two central research questions:

- 1) How do psychological drivers of impulse buying differ between working and non-working

women?

- 2) What role do employment-related factors—such as constraints on time, financial autonomy, and social exposure—play in influencing these behaviours?

By utilising an integrated theoretical framework that combines the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model with Clapperton's hedonic-utilitarian approach to consumer behaviour, this paper provides novel insights into the interplay between employment status and impulse buying. The outcomes are expected to inform both consumer education initiatives and ethical marketing practices that consider the heterogeneous psychological profiles of women in different employment contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Impulse Buying: Psychological Foundations

Impulse buying is traditionally conceptualised as an affect-driven process in which consumers experience a vacillation between cognitive restraint and emotional arousal. Initial models proposed by Rook (1987) posited that impulse purchases are primarily the result of spontaneous emotional triggers that bypass systematic, goal-oriented decision-making. This perspective was subsequently extended by Baumeister (2002), who highlighted the role of diminished self-control in facilitating indulgent consumption. Neuropsychological studies offer compelling evidence that these acts are associated with dopamine-mediated reward pathways, yielding temporary hedonic gratification (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991). Such findings suggest that impulse buying can serve as an emotional coping mechanism—alleviating stress and providing momentary pleasure in the face of psychological demands.²

Recent studies have emphasised the complexity of these internal processes. For instance, the role of stress and cognitive overload in depleting self-regulatory resources has been well documented, implicating this depletion in higher susceptibility to impulse purchases. Furthermore, the interplay between mood states and impulsivity has been central to understanding why individuals sometimes find themselves engaging in purchases that are later

regretted. Taken together, these studies underscore that impulse buying is not merely a result of external marketing tactics but is deeply embedded in the psychological fabric of consumer behaviour.

2.2 Employment Status and Consumer Behaviour

The impact of employment on consumer behaviour has been explored across a range of studies, yet only a few have explicitly compared working versus non-working women in the context of impulse buying. Working women are likely to experience “time poverty,” a state characterised by a scarcity of discretionary time, which paradoxically may lead to compensatory spending behaviour. Under the pressures of professional commitments and high cognitive demands, impulse purchases may emerge as a form of emotional self-care, offering a brief escape from the rigours of daily work-life. This demographic also benefits from a higher disposable income, further facilitating such purchases.

Conversely, non-working women—who may include homemakers or those working part-time—generally have more flexible schedules and potentially greater exposure to domestic and community environments. The social context within which these women operate can intensify the effects of peer influence and social comparison. Research by Bakewell and Mitchell (2004) indicates that non-working women are particularly prone to purchases triggered by boredom or the desire to align with social expectations. This suggests that the psychological landscape that underlies impulse buying in this group is distinctly different, driven less by stress and more by the need for social engagement and emotional stimulation.

2.3 Hypothesis Development

Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Working women report higher levels of impulse buying that are predominantly driven by stress relief and the availability of disposable income. The compensatory nature of such behaviour aligns with findings that link occupational stress with hedonic consumption.³

H2: Non-working women exhibit higher rates of impulse buying prompted by boredom and social

influence. This is reflective of a context where prolonged idle time and heightened social interactions foster a more reactive purchasing environment.

H3: Self-esteem and perceived control moderate the relationship between employment status and impulse buying. Higher levels of self-esteem and stronger feelings of control may reduce the frequency of impulse purchases by fortifying individuals' capacity to counter emotional triggers.

By integrating these hypotheses with the dual theoretical frameworks of the S-O-R model and the hedonic-utilitarian approach, this study aims to bridge the gap between macro-level socioeconomic factors and micro-level psychological dynamics in impulse buying behaviour.⁴

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Participants

This investigation employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. A purposive sample of 400 women, stratified by employment status, was recruited between 2023 and 2024. The working cohort included 200 women engaged in full-time professional occupations, while the non-working cohort comprised 200 homemakers or part-time workers (working fewer than 15 hours per week). This age-stratified sample (25–55 years) was chosen to capture a broad spectrum of consumer behaviour while minimizing cohort effects.

3.2 Instruments and Measures

Quantitative assessment was conducted using three psychometrically validated instruments:

- 1) Impulse Buying Tendency Scale (IBTS): Developed by Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), the IBTS measures the frequency and intensity of impulse purchases. Participants rate statements on a Likert scale, allowing for quantification of impulsive consumption patterns.
- 2) Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21): As conceptualised by Lovibond (1995), this scale provides a measure of the emotional states—particularly stress and anxiety—that may precipitate impulsive purchasing patterns.
- 3) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: A widely used

instrument designed to assess an individual's self-worth and self-acceptance. This scale is essential in understanding the moderating effects of self-esteem on impulse buying behaviour.

In addition to these standardized scales, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the contextual and experiential aspects of impulse buying. Participants were prompted with questions such as, "Describe a recent instance of an unplanned purchase and the emotions associated with it," allowing the collection of rich, qualitative data that could further illuminate the underlying drivers of consumer behaviour.

3.3 Data Collection Procédure

Data were collected over a six-month period. Participants first completed a battery of online self-report questionnaires, after which a subset of 40 participants (20 working and 20 non-working women) was randomly selected for in-depth interviews. Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of participants and transcribed verbatim for subsequent thematic analysis using NVivo software.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of demographic characteristics and baseline measures on the IBTS, DASS-21, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Hierarchical regression analyses were then performed to examine the relationships between employment status, psychological factors (stress, self-esteem), and impulse buying frequency. Mediation analysis was conducted to explore the moderating role of self-esteem and perceived control on the established relationships.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Transcripts were read and re-read to identify patterns and emergent themes. Initial coding was conducted independently by two researchers to ensure reliability, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Codes were subsequently grouped into thematic categories that reflected the distinct experiential narratives of working versus non-working women regarding impulse buying.

Triangulation with quantitative findings was achieved by examining whether qualitative themes supported or expanded upon statistical trends.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study received ethical clearance from the institutional review board of the hosting research institution. All participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was strictly maintained by anonymising responses. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, ensuring adherence to ethical research principles throughout the study's duration.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Findings

The sample (N = 400) was composed of 200 working and 200 non-working women with a mean age of 39 years (SD = 8.2). Descriptive statistics revealed that, on average, working women scored significantly higher on the IBTS scale compared to non-working women (M_working = 3.82, M_non-working = 3.45; $p < 0.05$). A series of hierarchical regression models were specified to test the proposed hypotheses.

Working Women:

Regression analyses for working women indicated that stress levels, as measured by the DASS-21, were a significant predictor of impulse buying frequency ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$). Disposable income further accentuated this relationship, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.45$. Additionally, the moderating variable of self-esteem (assessed via the Rosenberg scale) was found to significantly buffer the effect of stress on impulse buying (interaction term: $\beta = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$). These findings corroborate the notion that working women may engage in impulsive purchases as a form of stress regulation and hedonic indulgence.

Non-Working Women:

For non-working women, boredom emerged as a principal factor influencing impulse buying behaviour ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). Further, social media influence contributed significantly to impulse purchase tendencies in this group ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$). Unlike their working counterparts, non-working women exhibited a less pronounced relationship between

disposable income and impulse buying, suggesting that financial factors are less salient in explaining their purchasing patterns. Overall, these data support the hypothesis that psychosocial triggers, such as the desire for social validation and alleviation of routine boredom, are paramount among non-working women.

A summary of the hierarchical regression analyses is presented in Table 1.

Variable	Working Women (β)	Non-Working Women (β)
Stress (DASS-21)	0.32 ($p < 0.01$)	0.15 (ns)
Disposable Income	0.45 ($p < 0.01$)	0.10 (ns)
Boredom	0.12 (ns)	0.41 ($p < 0.001$)
Social Media Influence	0.08 (ns)	0.29 ($p < 0.01$)
Self-Esteem (Moderating)	-0.18 ($p < 0.05$)	-0.22 ($p < 0.05$)

Table 1. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Impulse Buying Tendencies

4.2 Qualitative Insights

A thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews revealed several consistent themes across the two cohorts. Working women frequently described impulse buying as an emotionally charged reward system. For example, one participant noted that an unplanned purchase often served as “a small treat after a stressful day at the office,” thereby alleviating accumulated tension. This theme of “reward-based purchasing” was linked to the psychological construct of stress alleviation and was frequently mentioned in tandem with discussions of limited leisure time and the quest for quick pleasure.

In contrast, non-working women often framed unplanned purchases as a social ritual, emphasizing the desire for social interaction and validation. A common narrative among these participants was that shopping served as a “social activity” wherein peer influence and in-store promotions played pivotal roles. The dimension of boredom was also significant; many non-working women described prolonged periods of inactivity or monotony during which impulse buying provided a welcomed disruption from routine. Thus,

while working women viewed impulse buying as a compensatory mechanism for emotional exhaustion, non-working women were more inclined to view it as a socially imbued or boredom-alleviating behaviour.

4.3 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings offers a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play. The statistically significant relationship between stress and impulse buying for working women aligns with qualitative reports of shopping as a form of self-reward following high-pressure workdays. Similarly, the prominence of boredom and social cues in the qualitative data for non-working women substantiates the regression findings where these factors emerged as key predictors of impulsive behaviour. The convergence of these two data sources not only validates the research methodology but also enriches theoretical interpretations of impulse buying within diverse employment contexts.

5. Discussion

5.1 Employment as a Psychosocial Determinant of Impulse Buying

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that employment status is an influential psychosocial determinant of impulse buying behaviour among women. Working women, burdened with the dual pressures of professional responsibility and limited leisure, appear to engage in impulse purchases as a deliberate strategy for emotional regulation. The presence of higher disposable income and the need for instant gratification after stressful work days potentiate this behaviour. This aligns with the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework, wherein the stressful work environment (stimulus) heightens internal emotional dysregulation (organism), culminating in compensatory hedonic consumption (response).

Conversely, non-working women appear to derive impulse buying behaviour from different psychosocial triggers. Their increased leisure time and heightened social engagement predispose them to environments replete with peer influence and marketing cues. The impulse buying behaviour among

these women is less about coping with stress and more about overcoming the ennui and social isolation that can emerge from less structured daily routines. The hedonic-utilitarian model supports these findings by suggesting that purchases by non-working women serve not only functional or utilitarian needs but also provide significant hedonic rewards, such as social validation and personal enjoyment.

5.2 Moderating Role of Self-Esteem and Perceived Control

A central insight from our analysis is the moderating role of self-esteem and perceived control in mitigating impulse buying behaviour. For both working and non-working women, strong self-esteem was inversely correlated with the frequency and intensity of impulse purchases. These findings suggest that individuals with higher self-worth are better equipped to resist external triggers that promote unplanned spending. Perceived control, which encompasses an individual's belief in their ability to regulate behaviour, emerged as a protective factor. Thus, enhancing self-esteem and perceived control may prove to be effective strategies in moderating impulse buying.⁵

5.3 Policy Implications

The divergent drivers of impulse buying identified here have several policy and practical implications:

For Employers:

It is advisable for organisations to implement comprehensive wellness programmes aimed at reducing workplace stress. By fostering an environment that alleviates chronic stress, employers may inadvertently decrease employees' reliance on impulse buying as a compensatory behaviour. For instance, initiatives such as mindfulness training, flexible working hours, and stress management workshops can contribute to better emotional regulation among working women.

For Retailers:

Marketers and retailers have a responsibility to adopt ethical targeting practices. Recognising that impulse buying propensity among non-working women is partly driven by social influence, marketing strategies should avoid exploitative promotions and overemphasis on peer validation. Retailers could

instead focus on educational campaigns that promote mindful consumption and highlight the value of planned purchases.

For Policymakers:

Government agencies and consumer protection bodies should consider tailoring financial literacy programmes to address the distinct vulnerabilities of different demographic groups. Policies designed to enhance consumer awareness about the psychological underpinnings of impulsive spending could help reduce the adverse financial consequences associated with such behaviour. Moreover, micro-level interventions that promote self-regulatory skills among consumers might mitigate the effects of impulsive consumption across both employment groups.

5.4 Implications for Consumer Education and Ethical Marketing

The insights drawn from this study underscore the need for targeted consumer education programmes that incorporate psychological theories of impulse buying. For working women, financial education should emphasise strategies for stress management and budgeting, particularly focusing on the risks associated with unplanned expenditures. In contrast, educational initiatives for non-working women could benefit from a focus on developing critical skills to navigate social pressures and resist persuasive advertising tactics.

Ethical marketing practices that proactively consider these differences can also contribute to healthier consumer behaviour. By designing campaigns that respect consumer autonomy and promote informed decision-making, companies can play a crucial role in preventing the exploitation of psychologically vulnerable consumers.

5.5 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this study makes a significant contribution to understanding the role of employment status in impulse buying behaviour, several limitations should be acknowledged:

Cross-Sectional Design:

The cross-sectional nature of this study constrains causal inferences. Future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to better

establish temporal relationships and causal pathways.

Self-Report Measures:

The reliance on self-report scales may introduce biases associated with social desirability and recall inaccuracies. Journal-based or observational studies could provide additional insights into impulsive behaviours.

Cultural Specificity:

Given that the sample was drawn from a specific cultural context, the generalizability of the findings to different geographical or cultural settings remains an open question. Future studies could implement cross-cultural comparisons to assess the universality of the observed trends.

Scope of Psychological Variables:

Although this research integrated key constructs such as stress, self-esteem, and perceived control, other factors—such as personality traits, emotional intelligence, and situational self-regulatory mechanisms—could further illuminate the complexities underlying impulse buying. Incorporating additional variables in future models may provide a more holistic understanding of consumer behaviour.

6. Conclusion

This paper set out to explore the psychological divergences in impulse buying behaviour between working and non-working women. By employing a mixed-methods design and integrating well-established theoretical frameworks such as the S-O-R model and hedonic-utilitarian approaches, we have demonstrated that employment status significantly influences both the frequency and the drivers of impulse purchases.

For working women, impulse buying emerges predominantly as a coping mechanism to offset workplace stress and to secure quick bursts of hedonic pleasure. The availability of disposable income further reinforces this behaviour. In contrast, the impulse buying behaviour among non-working women appears to be largely fuelled by boredom and the influence of social networks. Both groups are susceptible to the effects of diminished self-regulatory capacities, yet the moderator effects of self-esteem and perceived control provide a critical buffer against these tendencies.

The study's findings carry important implications

for multiple stakeholders. Employers can reduce stress-driven impulse buying through tailored wellness programmes, while retailers and policymakers are encouraged to design ethical marketing strategies and financial literacy interventions that reflect the unique needs of different consumer segments. Ultimately, understanding the interplay between employment status and impulse buying behaviour offers a pathway to more effective consumer protection policies and a more empathetic approach to marketing practices in today's complex economic landscape.

By deepening our understanding of the psychosocial dynamics underlying impulse buying, this research contributes to both academic dialogues and practical interventions aimed at fostering responsible

consumption. The insights derived here highlight the need to consider individual differences when designing public policies and corporate marketing strategies, ensuring that interventions are both equitable and effective.

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Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education: Trends and Future Directions

Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in higher education is transforming the academic ecosystem, promoting personalized learning, intelligent feedback systems, administrative automation, and predictive analytics. This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of AI research in higher education, based on Scopus-indexed articles published between 2020 and mid-2025. Employing Biblioshiny for R and guided by the PRISMA model, the study investigates scientific production trends, co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence, thematic evolution, and regional research contributions.

Findings reveal a significant rise in AI-related educational research post-2022, peaking in 2023, with China emerging as the leading contributor, followed by the USA, Australia, and the UK. Prominent themes include generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT), machine learning, e-learning, and adaptive technologies. Thematic mapping identifies “higher education” and “generative AI” as motor themes, indicating their centrality and developmental maturity, while “artificial intelligence” and “education” remain foundational. Additionally, co-authorship networks highlight distinct regional clusters with limited cross-collaboration, underscoring the need for more inclusive and globally representative research.

The study contributes valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers by identifying key contributors, collaboration patterns, and future research avenues. It emphasizes the

importance of ethical AI governance, inclusive educational strategies, and interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure equitable and sustainable AI integration in higher education. While the study is limited by its exclusive reliance on the Scopus database and bibliometric tools, it provides a strategic roadmap for shaping the next generation of research and policy in AI-enhanced education.

Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence (AI), Higher Education, Bibliometric Analysis, Generative AI (ChatGPT), Educational Technology Trends.

1. Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in higher education is reshaping academic landscapes worldwide, enabling personalized learning, intelligent tutoring, predictive analytics, and administrative optimization. Universities and educational institutions are increasingly adopting AI technologies to improve teaching methodologies, monitor student performance, automate assessment, and support decision-making processes (Holmes et al., 2022; Luckin et al., 2016). These innovations are particularly significant in the post-pandemic era, where digital transformation and hybrid learning models have become central to educational resilience and quality.

While the applications of AI in education are rapidly evolving, the scholarly discourse surrounding this transformation is also expanding. Researchers have explored AI’s impact on student engagement, ethical concerns, faculty readiness, and institutional capacity (Selwyn, 2019; Dhamija & Dhamija, 2025;

AlZaabi & Masters, 2025). However, the literature remains fragmented across multiple disciplines, and the volume of research continues to grow without a clear mapping of intellectual progress or thematic convergence.

Despite the proliferation of studies on AI in educational settings, there is limited bibliometric evidence focused specifically on AI in higher education. Most bibliometric or systematic reviews either address general educational technology trends or focus on AI in broader K-20 contexts. As a result, there is a lack of structured insight into how research on AI in higher education has evolved over time, which themes have dominated the discourse, and which regions, authors, and institutions are leading contributions. Understanding these trends is critical for shaping future research agendas and guiding informed policy-making.

To address this gap, the present study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis using Scopus-indexed publications on AI in higher education. The key objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the annual scientific production trend in the domain of AI in higher education.
2. Analyze co-authorship and collaboration patterns to understand research network structures.
3. Perform keyword co-occurrence and thematic analysis to map the intellectual and conceptual structure of the field.
4. Evaluate citation patterns and co-citation networks to identify key publications and thematic clusters.
5. Suggest directions for nascent research and undiscovered areas to guide future scholarly investigation.

With the help of a bibliometric approach, this paper provides a systematic overview of the expansion, current trends, and future potential of research related to AI in higher education, consequently leading to a more comprehensive understanding of this evolving academic domain.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the literature review on AI in higher education. The research methodology is explained in Section 3. Section 4 presents the

descriptive and co-occurrence bibliometric technique results of generating an understanding of the literature interrelationships and characteristics. Section 5 documents the implications of this study. Finally, Section 6 concludes with the main implications and scope for future research.

2. Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence (AI) integrated with higher education results in the transformation of pedagogical approaches, resulting in the enhancement of student engagement and the reshaping of institutional practices (Airaj, 2024). As we know, AI technologies are expanding continuously, academicians and researchers are highly focused on their capacities to bring an educational revolution, along with acknowledging the ethical challenges they pose (Aad & Hardey, 2025). The thematic literature review here synthesizes the latest scholarly work to provide a coherent understanding of the multifaceted role of AI in higher education, as well as using bibliometric analysis to outline the key trends and existing challenges in this domain.

The AI technologies should be integrated into pedagogical frameworks for improving the teaching and learning processes (Innocenti, 2025). Research emphasizes the importance of AI-generated feedback as a mechanism to enhance the engagement of students and elevate their academic performance. By applying theoretical frameworks such as Engeström's activity theory, researchers have described that AI feedback serves as both a motivational tool as well as a scaffolding structure, enhancing comprehensive understanding of students and improving the quality of their submissions. This lineate with a paradigm shift toward learner-centered education, where AI systems provide educational experiences as per the individual needs (Zapata et al., 2025). Moreover, AI optimization algorithms help in customizing the course delivery according to different learning styles, which results in enhancing academic outcomes and streamlining administrative functions, leading to adaptive, scalable learning environments (Xu, 2025).

Recent studies highlight a surging demand for digital literacy and AI competence within educational curricula, discovering a significant gap between the

availability of advanced AI technologies and students' capability to use them in professional practice. This digital difference emphasizes the utmost need for a tailored educational approach to equip students with the required proficiency to succeed in AI-related contexts, especially within medical or technical fields (AlZaabi & Masters, 2025).

The perceptions of academic staff toward AI, especially large language models like ChatGPT, are another important theme (Airaj, 2024). Educators have a dual stance about AI, appreciating its pedagogical advantages, such as improved teaching efficiency, while voicing concerns about issues like academic integrity, excessive reliance on technology, and inadequate institutional support. This uncertainty emphasizes the need for robust training programs and comprehensive policy frameworks in order to support the ethical and effective adoption of AI in the educational framework, maintaining a balance between its opportunities with potential risks (Dhamija & Dhamija, 2025).

The equitable implementation of AI in higher education is the emerging field of focus, which involves research developing governance frameworks that promote inclusivity and prevent unintended negative consequences, while also leveraging AI to enhance educational opportunities for all students (Aad & Hardey, 2025). This emphasizes the need to ensure fair access to AI technologies and establish ethical supervision to orient their uses as per the institutional values and societal responsibilities. Such actions aim to address differences and promote educational practices for inclusivity, addressing AI's capabilities to either widen or narrow digital disparity depending on its implementation strategy (Medina-Vidal et al., 2025).

Application of AI in higher education is a complicated, multidirectional task that includes curriculum development, individual learning, ethical considerations and institutional framework. Still, there are ongoing challenges like unequal access to technology, lack of enthusiasm among faculty members, the absence of strong policy frameworks and the need for ethical and accountable AI management. These issues, highlighted through

bibliometric analyses, showcased the need for continuous research to explore the dynamic range of AI in higher education. Such efforts are helpful to maximize its benefits while addressing potential pitfalls, ensuring a sustainable and equitable educational future.

3. Research methodology

This study employed the Scopus database due to its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature in science, technology, and social sciences. Scopus is widely used in bibliometric studies for its robust metadata and citation tracking capabilities (Yadav et. al, 2022). For this research paper PRISMA model was used, and on that basis, inclusive and exclusive criteria were used as shown in Table 1. Bibliometrics Analysis using Biblioshiny software (Airaj, 2024) (Aria, M., & Cuccurullo, C., 2017).

Scopus String used for this research paper

(TITLE-ABS-KEY (("artificial intelligence" OR "AI")) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (("higher education" OR "tertiary education" OR "universities"))) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Artificial Intelligence") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Higher Education") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Machine Learning")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))

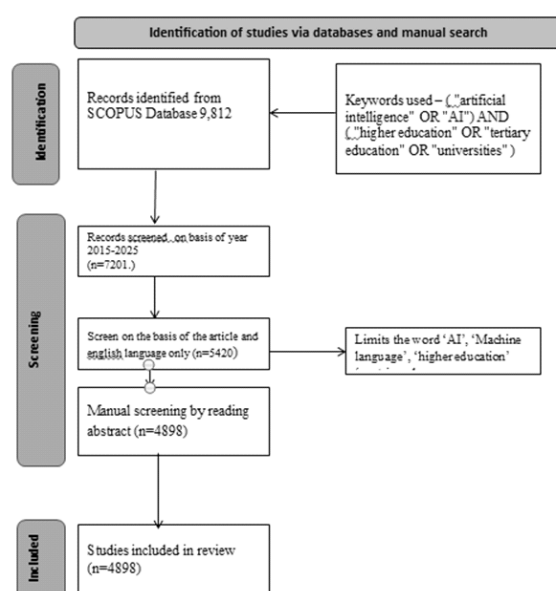


Figure 1. PRISMA

4. Analysis

4.1 Annual Scientific Production

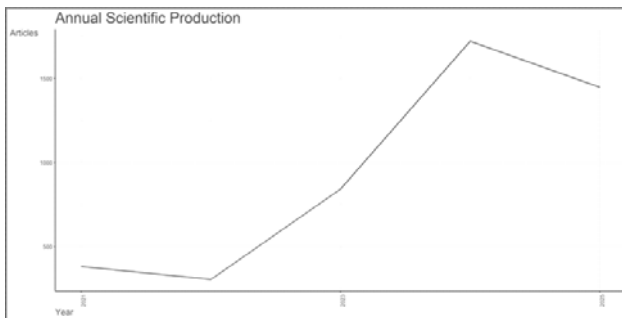


Figure 2. Annual Scientific Production
Source: Biblioshiny

The above figure is a line graph entitled “Annual Scientific Production”. It mainly represents the number of articles related to a particular research field published over a series of years. The x-axis in the graph represents the years, and the y-axis indicates the number of articles. The x-axis spans from 2020 to 2025, where the data points are plotted annually, also indicating that the 2025 data point is partial, reflecting that publications up to mid-year have been only considered in this study (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The y-axis measures the number of articles published in this specific research domain with increments up to 2000, indicating that within the specified period, a significant volume of research outcomes have been obtained. As shown in Figure 2, the number of articles published is relatively low and stable, nearly around 200-300 articles from 2020 to 2021, but shows a noticeable increment around 2022, with a sharp rise continuing through 2023, with approximately 1800 articles at its peak. This indicates an upsurge in research activities about emerging topics or technological advancements related to AI (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). After 2023, as shown by the graph, the trend declines slightly, with the number of articles dropping to around 1400 by 2025 which means a potential stabilization or shift in research focus has occurred (Chen, 2006). A heightened interest in the field of artificial intelligence or its applications (e.g., in education or technology) can be reflected by the sudden increment from 2022 to 2023, which remains consistent with the themes identified in earlier

visualizations. Global events, financial aid, or technological advancements could be the reason behind this upsurge. (Glänzel & Schubert, 2004). Post-2023 shows a decline in the trend, which might suggest saturation in the market, a shift in the focus of research areas, or inadequate data for 2025, as it is given the mid-year cutoff. Thus, the “Annual Scientific Production” graph gives a pictorial vision about significant rise in article output from 2022 to 2023, reaching at around 1800 followed by a slight decline by mid-2025. This trend indicates that from 2022-2023 was a period of rapid growth in research activities which were potentially linked to the fields like artificial intelligence, with a possible stabilization or redirection of the research areas in recent years.

4.2 Word cloud



Figure 3: Word Cloud
Source: Biblioshiny

This word cloud represents the thematic focus of research within a field, shown in Figure 3. Here, it is related to artificial intelligence, with a significant emphasis on its integration into higher education. As shown in the figure, words like “machine learning” and “deep learning” are very prominent, suggesting that these techniques are the focal point of AI advancements, which are also aligned with the prior co-word network’s findings. The inclusion of “ChatGPT” highlights the recent impact of generative AI models, consistent with trends observed in the thematic map (Glänzel & Schubert, 2004).

The size of each word corresponds to its frequency or importance, with larger words indicating higher prevalence. In this case, the word cloud centres on “artificial intelligence,” suggesting it is a dominant theme, with surrounding terms like “higher education,” “machine learning,” “deep learning,” and “chatgpt”

reflecting related subtopics. Below is a detailed explanation, presented in a cautious academic tone suitable for an APA-style research paper, including proper citations. The central term is “artificial intelligence,” is the largest and most prominent word, positioned centrally, indicating it is the primary focus of the analyzed literature. Its size suggests a high frequency of occurrence, underscoring its foundational role in the research domain (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Next keywords such as “higher education,” “machine learning,” “deep learning,” and “chatgpt” are prominently displayed, with their sizes reflecting significant but lesser frequency compared to “artificial intelligence.” These terms suggest key areas of application or development within the field (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). “Higher education” and “chatgpt” may indicate a focus on AI applications in educational settings, particularly with generative AI technologies, while “machine learning” and “deep learning” point to technical methodologies (Chen, 2006).

In fact, the varying font sizes create a hierarchy, with “artificial intelligence” as the core concept, surrounded by related themes. Smaller or less distinct words (e.g., “deep learning”) may represent emerging or less dominant topics, though their presence still signifies relevance (Leydesdorff & Welbers, 2011). Thus, further analysis with detailed frequency data and broader datasets would enhance the understanding of these trends.

4.3 Three-field plot

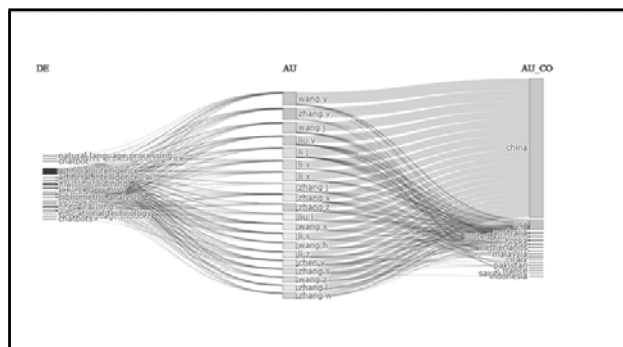


Figure 4. Three- Field Plot
Source: Biblioshiny

The three-field plot, a visualization technique used

in bibliometric analysis to represent the relationships among three distinct variables, as shown in Figure 4. In our study, we have taken keywords (DE), authors (AU), and countries (AU_CO).

The left field lists keywords such as “natural language processing,” “artificial intelligence (ai),” “bibliometric analysis,” “chatbots,” and “teaching technology” which represents that they are the central topics or themes that has been extracted from the referred literature, where the width of the flows indicates towards their occurrence or frequency (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

The middle field in the diagram enlists authors such as “wang y,” “zhang y,” “liu y,” “li y,” and “wang j” and the amount of their contribution in the field related to AI can be reflected by the width of the author bands showing that “wang y” and “zhang y” appearing as key contributors evident from the thicker flows (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

The right field includes list of countries including “china,” “usa,” “australia,” “united kingdom,” “malaysia,” “pakistan,” and “Indonesia” and the extent of research output of these countries are reflected by the width of the country bands where “china” is dominating with a significant wider flow. (Chen, 2006).

The curved lines (flows) connecting the fields are the representation of the connection between keywords, authors, and countries. For example, “artificial intelligence (AI)” and “natural language processing” are strongly associated with authors like “wang y” and “Zhang Y,” who are connected with “China.” This indicated that researchers from China, particularly these authors, have a prominent role in research areas related to AI (Glänzel & Schubert, 2004).

Other connections between “bibliometric analysis,” “Liu Y,” and “China” indicate that methodological studies have been focused, while the connection between “teaching technology” and “chatbots” to a wide range of countries like “USA” and “Australia” hint towards diverse educational applications.

As it is evident from the figure “China” emerges as the leading country in AI-related research having a

prominent number of authors like “wang y,” “zhang y,” and “liu y,” who are significantly associated with keywords such as “artificial intelligence” and “natural language processing” and this dominance may reflect China has significantly invested in AI research (Leydesdorff & Persson, 2010). Other countries like the USA, Australia have also contributed to other educational concepts like “teaching technology,” suggesting global efforts in this research area.

However, this three-field plot mainly refers to a research domain related to artificial intelligence, with a significant focus on AI and its applications in education and technology, which is consistent with the previous thematic and co-word analyses. China’s dominance in this domain is very well reflected in the strong associations between Chinese researchers and AI-related keywords. Keywords like “chatbots” and “teaching technology” indicate the involvement of multiple countries, showing an international interest in incorporating AI in educational settings and for pedagogical purposes.

Thus, this three-field plot provides a clear picture of the research efforts in this area, which is led by Chinese researchers like “wang y” and “zhang y” in AI and natural language processing, with “china” as the leading country. Educational applications, such as “teaching technology” and “chatbots,” signify the other international collaboration involving countries like the USA, Australia, and others. Future studies should explore longitudinal data to assess the evolution and emerging trends in this area.

4.4 Co-Word Analysis

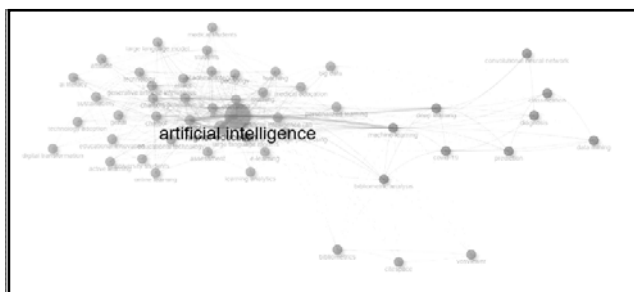


Figure 5: Co-Word Analysis
Source: Biblioshiny

The co-word network diagram is used for mapping the theoretical framework of a particular research field based on keyword co-occurrence, as shown in Figure 5. This diagram consists of nodes that represent keywords such as “artificial intelligence,” “machine learning,” “deep learning,” and “e-learning” and edges indicating their co-occurrence in publications (Callon et al., 1991).

The colors and sizes of nodes reflect the strength and clustering of related topics. In the figure, “artificial intelligence,” is the central node, that serves as the focal point, along with other keywords surrounding it and grouped into different clusters. Other keywords like “large language model,” “convolutional neural network,” and “bibliometric analysis,” are also prominent in the diagram that signifies diverse subtopics within this specific field.

The lines connecting these nodes indicate frequency of keywords in the literature, where the strength of association between these keywords are denoted by the thickness or density of edges. So, in this figure a Strong connection is evident between “artificial intelligence” and terms like “machine learning” and “deep learning” with a thick line (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

Multiple color-coded clusters are used to divide the diagram into different areas for instance here green, red, and blue groups suggests distinct thematic fields. The green-coloured cluster focuses on “artificial intelligence,” as it includes various education-related terms like “e-learning,” “online learning,” and “educational advancements,” that clearly shows the vital role of AI in educational contexts. Terms like “convolutional neural network,” “classification,” and “diagnosis,” are featured by red cluster pointing towards the importance of AI in medical science and technical fields. The blue cluster includes words like “bibliometric analysis” and “citespace,” that represents several methodological tools which are used to analyze the literature itself (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Thus, in the above diagram “Artificial intelligence” acts as the hub which is linked with diverse subfields and appears as a unifying theme across educational, medical, and analytical applications (Chen, 2006). The green cluster emphasize on e-learning and students

depicting its relevance to higher education, while the red and blue clusters reveal vast application and analytical approaches of AI.

This co-word analysis discusses the multifaceted significance of artificial intelligence as a central theme associating various educational innovations, technical applications, and bibliometric methodologies. Future research should incorporate longitudinal data to track the evolution of these themes.

4.5 Thematic Map

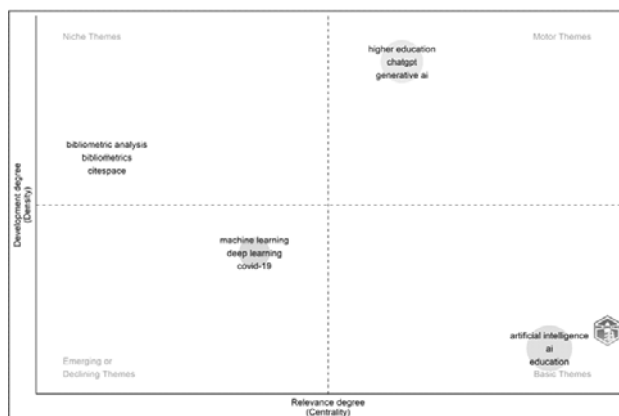


Figure 6: Thematic Map

Source: Biblioshiny

The thematic map analysis is used to visualize the development and relevance of research themes within a specific field, in this case, it is related to artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education as shown in Figure 6. The map is divided into four quadrants based on two axes: “Development Degree (Density)” on the vertical axis and “Relevance Degree (Centrality)” on the horizontal axis. These axes help classify research themes into four categories: Niche Themes, Motor Themes, Emerging or Declining Themes, and Basic.

The vertical axis is the “Development Degree,” which indicates Density that represents how well a particular research field is developed and internally correlated, indicating that it is a well-developed and specialized topic within the literature. The horizontal axis is the “Relevance Degree,” which denotes Centrality, that reflects the degree of interaction of a theme with other themes, suggesting its importance and influence within the broader research field (Cobo

et al., 2011).

Quadrant I (Upper-Left Quadrant)–It is known as Niche Themes represents High Density and Low Centrality. This quadrant includes topics that are highly advanced and specialized but have limited interaction with other research areas. Here, “bibliometric analysis,” “bibliometrics,” and “citespace” are denoted as niche themes. As per the map, these tools and methods are advanced techniques that are used for mapping and analysis of relevant literature, indicating research efforts in this area that are focused but isolated. Their position in the map suggests that they are well-developed and advanced within their niche but may not yet have significantly influenced the broader aspects of AI or higher education research.

Quadrant II: Upper-Right Quadrant: It is known as Motor Themes, which represents High Density, High Centrality. This quadrant consists of themes that are well-developed and highly relevant, which drive further research in the field. The map here enlists “higher education,” “chatgpt,” and “generative ai” as motor themes because these topics are central to the field, and have strong relationship with other research areas also. Specifically, “higher education” and “generative ai” (e.g., ChatGPT) point towards a strong and influential focus on the degree to which AI technologies, specifically these generative models, are acting as a boon in the reformation of educational practices and policies in higher education settings.

Quadrant III: Lower-Left Quadrant: It is known as Emerging or Declining Themes which represents Low Density, Low Centrality. This quadrant includes those themes that are either emerging which means less developed but growing potentially, or declining, meaning they are losing relevance. The map does not explicitly list themes here, implying a lack of clear emerging or declining topics based on the current analysis. This absence may suggest that the field is currently dominated by established themes rather than new or fading ones, though further longitudinal studies would be needed to confirm this (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

Quadrant IV: Lower-Right Quadrant: It is

known as the Basic Themes, which represents Low Density, High Centrality. This quadrant lists all the foundational topics that are significantly relevant to the field but not yet highly specialized. “Artificial intelligence,” “ai,” and “education” are identified as the basic themes by the map as these terms represent the foundational concepts grounded in the field, suggesting that AI and its implementation in educational context is the main centre of research but still it is in its infancy stages of. Their placement in the map indicates that these themes have a very broad spectrum for further research.

Thus, this thematic map provides a picture that AI and its application in higher education, specifically generative AI technologies like ChatGPT, are the emerging field for research, while advance AI and educational concepts are still grounded. Niche areas like bibliometric analysis support specialized studies, but as they have limited centrality this suggests that there is a need of more integration with mainstream themes. Longitudinal trends to validate these findings and identify emerging topics can be the future scope of this research.

Thus, this thematic map illustrates that AI in higher education, particularly through generative AI technologies like ChatGPT, is a driving force in current research, while broader AI and education concepts remain foundational. Niche areas like bibliometric analysis support specialized studies, but their limited centrality suggests a need for greater integration with mainstream themes. Future research should explore longitudinal trends to validate these findings and identify emerging topics.

4.6 Co-authorship network

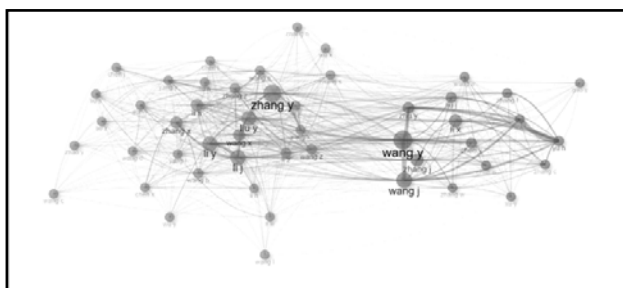


Figure 7: Co-Authorship Network
Source: Biblioshiny

The co-authorship network is a tool that is frequently implemented in bibliometric analysis in order to identify the collaborative association among researchers within a specific academic field, as shown in Figure 7. It consists of nodes that represent individual researchers or authors and edges indicating co-authorship linkage. The nodes are coded with colours red and blue, forming red and blue clusters that suggest distinct research communities or subfields are present.

Each node represents a researcher or author, labeled with their names or initials e.g., “zhang y,” “wang y,” “liu y” and the size of the nodes may correlate with the number of publications or the extent of collaboration of that researcher, though this is not explicitly specified in the image (van Eck & Waltman, 2014). As it is evident from the diagram, “Zhang Y,” “wang y,” and “Liu Y” are prominent researchers in this specific field because they are centrally positioned with large-sized or more connected nodes, pointing towards their significant roles as key contributors within their networks.

The lines connecting the nodes represent the co-authors’ relationships. The density and thickness of these edges signify the frequency or strength of collaboration, where thicker or more numerous lines mean a strong partnership exists between them (Newman, 2004).

The entire diagram is divided into two main clusters: a blue cluster on the left and a red cluster on the right, and this division reflects that there exist various research communities having limited cross-cluster collaboration. For example, “zhang y” and “liu y” are at the central position in the blue cluster, while “wang y” and “wang j” dominate the red cluster, suggesting their respective group-specific leadership (Chen, 2006).

Researchers like “zhang y” and “wang y” are centrally positioned within their clusters, indicating that they are the hub for collaboration and have a prominent and influential role within their respective groups.

The separation between blue and red clusters signifies the differences existing in the focus of research, institutional affiliations, or geographic regions where extra relevant data would be required to substantiate

this (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Thus, this co-authorship network diagram provides a structured collaborative landscape of the specific research field, featuring two main communities under the leadership of key contributors such as “zhang y” and “wang y.” It clearly signifies that these researchers are playing pivotal roles in fostering collaboration within their groups by providing insights into the social dynamics of the field. Future studies should incorporate longitudinal data and additional variables to deepen the understanding of these relationships.

5. Implication

This study provides several important implications for researchers, educators, policymakers, and institutional leaders working in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its integration with higher education. The bibliometric mapping of AI in higher education is helpful in providing a detailed overview of current research trends, prominent researchers in this field, and emerging thematic areas for future research. It also helps the new scholars in identifying the most productive authors, institutions, and countries that are continuously working in this domain. Emerging research priorities can also be revealed through the thematic clusters and keyword analysis, which will help in guiding future academic inquiry toward underexplored but high-impact areas such as ethical AI, adaptive learning algorithms, and inclusive educational technologies.

Practical Implications of this study for Higher Education institutions like universities and colleges can use the findings to align their technological strategies with global research trends. Insights into high-frequency themes, such as personalized learning, intelligent tutoring, and learning analytics, can inform decision-making on AI integration into teaching and administrative processes. Understanding the regional and institutional distribution of research also supports benchmarking and strategic planning, particularly for institutions in developing regions aiming to enhance their digital transformation capabilities.

For educational policymakers and funding agencies, the study provides evidence-based guidance

on where to direct resources and support. The citation and co-authorship networks highlight where academic momentum is building and which topics warrant further investment. This is especially useful for shaping national strategies on AI in education, developing AI literacy programs, and ensuring equitable access to AI-powered tools across diverse learner populations.

The study uncovers gaps in the existing literature, particularly in interdisciplinary collaboration and governance frameworks for AI in education. These findings point to the need for cross-sectoral innovation involving education technologists, data scientists, and pedagogical experts. Encouraging research in these directions could accelerate the development of ethical, scalable, and context-sensitive AI solutions in higher education settings.

The analysis also reflects some disparities in research contributions across countries, emphasizing the need for more inclusive and globally representative AI education research. This gives a hint towards more South-South and North-South collaborations and suggests that in order to address the local educational challenges, it is important to have cooperation in developing AI capabilities on an international level.

6. Conclusion

A comprehensive analysis and a clear landscape of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its uses in higher education is provided by this Bibliometric analysis, which focuses on the emerging trends, prominent contributors, various thematic areas, and collaborative networks in this field. This study examines publications indexed in the Scopus database, sheds light on the degree of research interest in this domain that has evolved, and which areas are gaining momentum in this field. The findings of this study give a coherent idea about the various growing themes, such as individual and self-paced learning, intelligent feedback systems, predictive analytics, and ethical dilemmas, indicating that this domain provides a mature and multidisciplinary environment for further research.

The analysis also reveals that certain institutions and countries are playing a dominant role and forming robust collaboration networks, taking this field to its

heights. However, this study also gives an idea about geographic disparities that exist due to a lack of significant contributions from various developing nations and thus, suggests that in order to have AI integration in higher education systems worldwide, there is a requirement for more inclusive research strategies and knowledge-sharing platforms globally.

In spite of several contributions, this study also has a few limitations. First, it is based only on the Scopus database, which is comprehensive, but various relevant publications from other significant sources, such as Web of Science, Google Scholar, or institutional repositories, have been excluded. Second, the study has used the bibliometric techniques that only focus on analysing the literature quantitatively and thus, do not provide any insights about the quality of the content of individual studies. Third, the latest emerging trends and current publications may not yet have had enough time to gain citations, which leads to underrepresentation in influence metrics.

Future scope for research in this domain could be the incorporation of multiple databases like Web of Science, Google Scholar, or institutional repositories in order to gain a more holistic view of the research landscape. In addition to this, bibliometric analysis could be combined with systematic or content analysis that would help in getting a deep insight of various pedagogical strategies, their implementation

challenges, and several ethical issues associated with AI in higher education. Exploration of comparative studies across different demographic regions, discipline-specific implications, and long-term impacts of AI on learning equity, student proficiency, and teacher roles in AI could be some other fields for further research. In order to ensure an ethical and integrated implementation of AI technologies in the education framework, another approach can be to explore policy and legal frameworks and regulatory guidelines. Future research should explore longitudinal trends to validate these findings and identify emerging topics.

In conclusion, this study gives a vision with clarity, foresight, and strategic intent about a detailed roadmap for new researchers, educators, and policymakers, helping them to dive deep into the rapidly expanding field of AI in higher education.

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सीमा

हिमांशु जोशी के कथा साहित्य में पर्वतीय जनजीवन

पर्वतीय अँचल देश के अभिन्न अंग है। प्राकृतिक दृष्टि के साथ-साथ धार्मिक दृष्टि से भी इनका बड़ा महत्त्व है। यहाँ हिमाच्छादित पर्वत श्रृंखलाएँ हैं, तो कहीं हरे-भरे पहाड़, कहीं सदानीरा नदियाँ प्रवाहित हो रही हैं तो कहीं स्वच्छ निर्मल जल से भरे सरोवर। अनेक सुरम्य पर्यटन स्थल भी इन्हीं अँचलों में बसे हैं।

ऐसा ही एक पर्वतीय राज्य है उत्तराण्ड। यहाँ की ऐतिहासिक परम्पराएँ व संस्कृति वैभव सम्पन्न व विशिष्ट रही हैं। माना जाता है कि आर्यों के आगमन से भी पूर्व यहाँ गन्धर्व, किन्नर, किरात, खस जैसी कई जातियाँ निवास करती थीं। अनेक महान ऋषि मुनियों की तपस्थली भी यहीं थी। प्राचीन ग्रन्थों के अनुसार कुमाऊ को मानसखण्ड और गढ़वाल को केदारखण्ड कहा जाता था। वैदिक काल के प्रसिद्ध दो वंश चन्द्र वंश व सूर्य वंश का सम्बन्ध भी इसी प्रान्त से रहा है। कुमाऊ मण्डल के अन्तिम शासक चन्द्रवंश के ही राजा थे। तब कुमाऊ शब्द चंपावत व उसके आस पास के क्षेत्रों तक ही सीमित था। जैसे जैसे चंदों का राज्य विस्तार बढ़ा कुमाऊ के आकार में भी परिवर्तन आता रहा फिर धीरे-धीरे अल्मोड़ा व नैनीताल को भी कुमाऊ में मिलाया गया। अंग्रेजों के समय में तो देहरादून तक का क्षेत्र किस्मत कुमाऊ कहलाता था।

अनेकों वर्षों तक चंद राजाओं ने यहाँ शासन किया। अनेक धार्मिक स्थलों का निर्माण किया। अनेक सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों को प्रोत्साहित किया और यहाँ प्रशासनिक व्यवस्था का आरम्भ भी किया। और फिर एक दिन यहाँ गोरखाओं का शासन हो गया। लगभग पच्चीस वर्ष तक गोरखा भी यहाँ रहे। यहाँ की सीधी-सादी जनता पर अनेक अत्याचार किये और

यहाँ का सारा धन लूटकर अपने देश ले चले। गोरखों के अत्याचार से विवश लोग अपना घर-बार छोड़कर विस्थापितों सा जीवन जीने हेतु विवश रहे। और फिर एक दिन अंग्रेजों ने इस क्षेत्र पर अपना कब्जा कर लिया। “मि. गार्डनर ने एक घोषणा निकाली (3 मई 1815) कि कुमाऊ अंग्रेजी राज्य में मिलाया गया। अल्मोड़ा के नागरिकों से कहा गया कि वे अपने-अपने घरों को लौटे और अपने-अपने काम धन्धों में लग जाये। 30 अप्रैल 1815 को गोरखा ने अपना सामान बाँधकर कूच का डंका बजाया और 14 मई को शर्तनामे के अनुसार झूलाघाट होकर डोटी को गये।” इसके पश्चात् एक के बाद एक कमिश्नर आये जिन्होंने यहाँ शासन किया। अनेक विकास कार्य किये। भूमि सुधार कानून बनाये, डाक व तार विभाग की स्थापना की, क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं को भी प्रोत्साहित किया। जगह-जगह कारखाने खोले। अनेक भवनों के निर्माण भी किये। सड़कें बनायी, अस्पताल खोले, यहाँ अनेक विकास किये।

अंग्रेजों के समय में प्रत्येक हिमालयी राजा किसी ने किसी मैदानी भाग का हिस्सा था। भिन्न-भिन्न परिस्थितियों व आवश्यकताओं के कारण विकास की दौड़ में पर्वतीय अँचल पीछे रह जाता। इसलिए अनेक वर्षों से पृथक राज्य की माँग उठती रही। अनेक आंदोलन भी हुये। भूख हड़तालें भी की गयी तब जाकर उत्तराखण्ड देश का 27वाँ हिमालयी राज्य बना।

“9 नवम्बर 2000 के दिन उत्तरांचल नाम से इस क्षेत्र को एक पूर्ण राज्य का दर्जा प्राप्त हो गया। जिसके प्रथम राज्यपाल के रूप में महामहिम सुरजीत सिंह बरनाला तथा प्रथम मुख्यमंत्री

के रूप में नित्यानंद स्वामी ने पद ग्रहण किया।¹²

साहित्य के क्षेत्र में इस पर्वतीय अँचल का उल्लेख प्राचीन काल से होता आया है। कहीं उतरापथ, कहीं स्वर्गभूमि, तपोभूमि नामों से इसका उल्लेख जगह-जगह मिलता है। रामायण, महाभारत से लेकर पुराणों, स्मृतियों में इसका वर्णन है। संस्कृत साहित्य के महान कवि कालिदास की अनेक रचनाओं की पृष्ठभूमि यही अँचल रहा। बाणभट्ट ने यहीं रहकर अनेक ग्रन्थ रचे। अनेक विदेशी यात्रियों ने यहीं की भूमि पर यात्रा वृत्तान्त रचे। यहाँ की भाषा का इतिहास भी बड़ा गौरवशाली रहा है। कुमाऊनी भाषा की उत्पत्ति तेरहवीं शताब्दी के आस पास मानी जाती है। चंदवंश के अनेक शिलालेख व ताम्रपत्र इसी भाषा में लिखित हैं। जार्ज ग्रियर्सन के भाषा सर्वेक्षण में भी यहाँ के अनेक कुमाऊनी पंडितों ने स्थानीय भाषा के लिखित उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किये हैं।

प्राचीन काल से ही इस भाषा में साहित्य सृजन होता आया है। और वर्तमान समय में भी अनेक साहित्यकार इस परम्परा को आगे बढ़ाने का कार्य कर रहे हैं। ऐसे ही एक साहित्यकार हिमांशु जोशी भी हैं। जिनका जन्म 4 मई 1935 को अल्मोड़ा जिले के जोस्यूडा गाँव में हुआ। प्रारंभिक शिक्षा खेतीखान नामक कस्बे से प्राप्त कर उच्च शिक्षा हेतु कई किलोमीटर दूर नैनीताल गये। उस समय यह यात्रा पैदल ही पार करनी थी क्योंकि यातायात का अभाव था।

हिमांशु जोशी ने पर्वतीय जनजीवन, वहाँ व्याप्त विषमताएँ, वहाँ के जीवन संघर्ष को बड़े निकट से देखा, परखा और जिया। उनका अधिकांश कथा साहित्य पर्वतीय जनजीवन के विविध पक्षों को समेटे है। कहीं शिक्षा, रोजगार व पलायन की समस्या है तो कहीं नारी के जीवन संघर्ष, कहीं प्रकृति प्रदत्त व व्यवस्थाजन्य विषमता है तो कहीं भाषा व संस्कृति से विमुख होता पर्वतीय समाज। और कहीं धार्मिक एकता व परम्पराओं में बंधा समाज भी और कहीं देश सेवा हेतु सर्वस्व समर्पित करता युवावर्ग भी।

हिमांशु जोशी के पिता स्वतंत्रता सेनानी रहे और परिवार में अनेक लोग क्रान्तिकारी। पिता की जेल यात्राओं का प्रभाव भी परिवार पर पड़ता रहता। यही कारण है कि उनकी अनेक रचनाएँ क्रान्तिकारियों की गाथा से प्रेरित हैं। जिनमें देश के लिए त्याग, समर्पण और सर्वस्व समर्पित करने का साहस है। 'जलते हुये डैने' के शिवदा हो या तपस्या के रथीन बाबू, सुराज के गागि का व परमानंद पंडित हो, अरण्य का मानी,

वरस बीत गया का अनंत, काँछ का भवानसिंह फौजी या फिर कगार की आग का देवराम। सभी ने अपना जीवन देशहित में होम किया है। सपनों के शिखर तक के बुडज्यू का कहना है पहाड़ का शायद ही कोई गाँव ऐसा हो जहाँ के लड़के फौज में न हो। वे कहते हैं, "अकेले पिथौड़ागढ़ जिले में जितने लोग मिलिट्री में हैं उतने शायद भारत के किसी अन्य जिले में हो।"¹³

पर्वतीय जीवन में संघर्ष अधिक है। इन्हीं संघर्षों व अभावों का प्रभाव हिमांशु जोशी के जीवन पर भी रहा। आर्थिक अभाव के कारण आगे विधिवत न पढ़ सके। ट्यूशन पढ़ाकर आगे की पढ़ाई जारी रखी। लेखन को इसलिए चुना क्योंकि इसके लिए अधिक संसाधनों की आवश्यकता न थी। विषम भौगोलिक बनावट व यातायात सुविधाओं के अभाव के कारण शिक्षा यहाँ चुनौती है। फासला अन्तराल जैसी अनेक रचनाएँ इसका प्रमाण हैं। "पढ़ने को मन तो बहुत था पर पढ़त कैसे? दो वक्त की रोटी का ही जुगाड़ नहीं था तो फिर फीस कहाँ से भरता किताबें कैसे खरीदता।"¹⁴

अनेक क्रान्तिकारियों का भूमि होने के कारण भी अंग्रेजों ने इस स्थान को विकास से वंचित रखा। मगर यहाँ के लोगों ने हार नहीं मानी। सामूहिक प्रयासों के द्वारा सड़कों का निर्माण किया। आज भी यहाँ की सरकारें रोजगार स्थापित करने के अनेक प्रयास कर रही हैं। यहाँ की धरती खनिज पदार्थों से भरी है। प्रकृति ने भी बहुत कुछ प्रदान किया है। लीसा उद्योग, टसर उद्योग, पिरोल पाण्डे जैसे अनेक योजनाओं के प्रयास जारी हैं।

यहाँ की कृषि वर्षा पर आधारित है जबकि अनेक सदानीरा नदियों का प्रवाह यहीं से होता है। फिर भी वह प्रदेश प्यासा रह जाता है। इस प्रदेश की सबसे बड़ी समस्या पलायन है। जो गोरखों के समय आरम्भ हुआ था। आज भी उसमें परिवर्तन नहीं आया। प्राकृतिक रूप से सम्पन्न होने के बावजूद भी यहाँ आर्थिक विपन्नता हमेशा से व्याप्त रही। इसी कारण यहाँ का युवा शहरों का रूख करता रहा है। विगत वर्षों में आठ लाख लोगों ने पहाड़ छोड़ा है जिसमें 42 प्रतिशत युवा है। ये आंकड़े उतराखण्ड सरकार के आंकड़ें हैं। कोई घर जा रहे वृद्ध हिमांशु जोशी से कहते हैं कि अभी भी पहाड़ में कुछ नहीं बदला सब वैसा ही है। "तरक्की वरक्की सब वैसी ही ठहरी कागजी अच्छा मैं तुमसे ही पूछता हूँ – दिल्ली में ऐसा कौन सा होटल है जिसमें पहाड़ी बैरे आज भी काम नहीं करते।"¹⁵

उतराखण्ड माँ सती पार्वती नंदा व नैना की धरती है। यहाँ के कण-कण में मातृशक्ति का वास है। यहाँ की नारी के समक्ष विषम से विषम परिस्थितियाँ भी घुटने टेकती नजर आती है। यहाँ की महिलाओं ने अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर भी अपनी पहचान बनायी है। तीलू रोतैली, गौरा देवी, बछेन्द्री पाल, कबूतरी देवी, जसुली अम्मा जैसी अनेक महिलाओं ने यहाँ का नाम रोशन किया है। वैसे तो नारी सम्पूर्ण विश्व के मानव समाज की आधारशिला है। नारी के बिना समाज की कल्पना तक नहीं की जा सकती। लेकिन पर्वतीय जीवन में नारी का अहम भूमिका रही है। यहाँ पुरुषों से अधिक दायित्व उसी के हिस्से है। वह सुबह सवेरे उठकर घर के सारे काम करती है। पशुओं की देखरेख, बाल बच्चों व वृद्धों की सेवा भी वही करती है। जंगलों व खेतों का काम भी उसी के जिम्मे है। हिमांशु जोशी के कथा साहित्य में पर्वतीय नारी के विविध रूप मिलते हैं। कहीं उसकी स्थिति दयनीय है तो कहीं अत्याचार का विरोध करने का साहस भी और कहीं तो वह समाज की बनी बनायी लीग के भी विरुद्ध खड़ी हो जाती है। कहीं उसमें अपार ममता, स्नेह व प्रेम भरा है, पर के लिए स्व का विसर्जन करने की क्षमता विद्यमान है, तो कहीं स्वाभिमान के लिए लड़ मरने की भी कगार की आग की गोमती, अरण्य की कावेरी, सुराज की बड़ी बहू, काला दरिया की उदुलि, सजा की। भावना अंतहीन की काकी कुछ ऐसे ही प्रमाण है। “कई बार आत्महत्या का विचार आया, सोचा-दुल्ल के अगास को छूते ऊँचे पेड़ पर रस्सी बाँधकर लटक जाए। हजार झंझटों से छुटकारा मिल जाएगा पर कुनू का निरीह चेहरा बीच में दीवार की तरह आ खड़ा होता।”⁶ गोमती तो आत्महत्या न कर सकी पर सुराज की बड़ी बहू का शव एक दिन पेड़ पर ही लटका मिला।

यातायात की सुविधाओं के अभाव के कारण स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएँ यहाँ चुनौतीपूर्ण रही और पलायन का एक कारण स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएँ भी रहा। अंतहीन के गिरीश दा को समय पर उपचार मिलता तो शायद वे बच जाते। ‘बुझे दीप’ के वृद्ध को अस्पताल से बुलावा तब आया जब उन्हें मरे छः माह बीत गये। आँखें कहानी के बाबा उपचार के कारण अपनों के बीच उपेक्षित सा व्यवहार सह रहे थे।

सम्पूर्ण भारत की तरह इस अँचल में भी वृद्धों की दशा दयनीय ही है। ‘इस बार बर्फ गिरी’ की वृद्धा की देखरेख उस समय होती है जब चंपावत से पेन्सन लाने का समय करीब हो। अरण्य की वृद्धा रात को जंगल काटकर खेत बना रही हैं जिस दौरान उसे गोली तक लग जाती है। अंतहीन की वृंदा सड़कों पर पत्थर व तखत ठोकर गुजारा करने को विवश है। दाह के ताऊ जी पाई-पाई को मोहताज है। गाँव के गाँव खाली हो चुके हैं। घरों में सिर्फ वृद्धों ने ही दरवाजे खोल रखे हैं।

सभी को आस थी सड़कें बनेंगी तो विकास होगा। मगर इन्हीं सड़कों के रास्ते पहाड़ों तक वह भी पहुंच रहा है। जो नहीं पहुंचना चाहिए था पिता पुत्र साथ बैठकर शराब पी रहे हैं। विकास के नाम पर सिर्फ पहाड़ खोखले हो रहे हैं। व्यक्ति अपनी संस्कृति, भाषा व मूल जड़ों से विमुख होता जा रहा है। आज समूचा पर्वतीय अँचल भविष्य की ओर आशा भरी दृष्टि से टकटकी लगाये हैं। उसके मन में कई सपने हैं। यहाँ का मानव मानव ही रहे। उसमें सरलता, सहिष्णुता हमेशा विद्यमान रहे। प्रकृति ने जिस रूप में उसे जितना प्रदान किया है वह उसका सम्मान करता रहे।

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मंदेश शर्मा

‘झाड़ी’ कहानी संग्रह की कहानियों में व्यक्त मध्यवर्गीय बोध

‘झाड़ी’ श्रीकांत वर्मा का पहला कहानी संग्रह है। श्रीकांत वर्मा नई कहानी आंदोलन के एक महत्वपूर्ण लेखक थे। उन्होंने अपनी पहली कहानी ‘बहिन जी’ नाम से (1954-55, लिखी। यह कहानी उनके संपादन में प्रकाशित ‘दिशा’ में छपी। यह कहानी लेखक की सहज आपबीती प्रतीत होती है; जिसमें कहानी कला का अभाव है। किशोर जीवन में देखे गये प्रेम के स्वप्न की यह कहानी पढ़ने के बाद पाठक यह उम्मीद भी नहीं कर पाता कि यह कहानीकार बाद में ‘झाड़ी’, ‘अरथी’, ‘ठंड’, ‘घर’ आदि जैसी ऐतिहासिक कहानियाँ लिख सकता है। इन कहानियों में कथ्य और शिल्प न केवल अनूठा और बेजोड़ है, बल्कि कहना चाहिए नई कहानी आंदोलन के दौरान बहुत कम नियमित और सिद्धस्त कहानीकारों ने ऐसी कहानियाँ लिखी जिन्होंने मध्यवर्गीय जीवन को एक आयना दिखाया।

प्राचीन काल से ही समाज का विभाजन वर्ग के आधार पर ही हुआ है। भारतीय समाज हो या अन्य कोई वैश्विक समाज सभी में उच्च और निम्न वर्ग का भेद प्रत्यक्ष रूप से देखा गया है। परंतु औद्योगिक कुआन ने एक नवीन अर्थतंत्र को जन्म दिया जिससे एक नया वर्ग उदय हुआ जिसे मध्यवर्ग कहा जाने लगा। यह वर्ग सर्वाधिक जनसंख्या को अपने अंतर्गत समेटे हुए था। कालांतर में इसके दो अन्य भेद हुए जिन्हें निम्न मध्यवर्ग तथा उच्च मध्यवर्ग में विभाजित किया गया

चूंकि उद्योगों का विकास शहरों में हुआ तो इसमें सलंगन आबादी भी शहरी होने लगी। अर्थात् शहरों की तरफ पलायन बढ़ा, और इस मध्य वर्ग के नए समूह को शहरी मध्यवर्ग कहा जाने लगा। जिसकी अपनी नवीन समस्याएँ थीं।

साहित्य में समाज का प्रत्यक्ष रूप से स्थान मिलता है। इसी प्रकार वर्मा जी के साहित्य में भी मध्यवर्ग स्पष्ट रूप से देखा जा सकता है। वे स्वयं लिखते हैं कि “भारतीय निम्न मध्यवर्ग का अपना नरक है।” बरसों की बेरोजगारी, गंदी और गुबारभरी गलियों में खेलते बच्चे, समय पर फीस न चुका पाने की विवशता, बिन ब्याही जवान लड़कियाँ, रोज दफ्तर से घर और घर में घुसा आता पड़ोस इस नरक की अपनी कविता है, अपनी कहानी है। जिसे बड़ी आसानी से ‘निम्न मध्यवर्ग का अपना साहित्य’ के नाम से पुकारा जा सकता है।

यह मुख्यधारा नहीं है, हिन्दी कविता की मुख्यधारा से जुड़ी हुई है। हिन्दी कविता की मुख्यधारा महानगर की अब, अकेलेपन, पराजय और नैराश्य को संबोधित करती है।

यही सब अकेलापन, पराजय और नैराश्य इनकी कहानियों में भी दिखता है। अपनी कहानियों के पीछे का सच बताते हुए वे कहते हैं कि- मेरी कहानियाँ मेरी कविताओं का ही विस्तृत रूप हैं।

“कविता लिखते हुए मेरे हाथ सचमुच काँप रहे थे। तब मैंने कहानियाँ लिखना प्रारंभ किया-यह सोचकर कि रचना से रचना की यह कंपन्नता कुछ कम होगी, और यह सच है, कि मैंने कथा साहित्य के बतौर जो कुछ लिखा मेरी आत्महीनता कम हुई। क्योंकि जैसे जैसे मैं लिखता गया संसार में पैठता गया। संसार में पैठना ही मुक्ति है। प्रवेश गिरफ्तारी नहीं आजादी है।”

‘झाड़ी’ कहानी संग्रह में उनकी चौदह कहानियाँ संकलित हैं। वे चौदह कहानियाँ ठंड (1961), झाड़ी (1960), उसका

क्रॉस (1960), परिणय (1960) सोचने वाला जानवर (1960), अनुगूँज (1960), साथ (1961), दूसरे के पैर (130) प्रस्थान (1901), दुपहर (1962), कल (1962), ट्यूमर (1962), प्रेम पत्र (1962) शवयात्रा (1905) हैं।

झाड़ी कहानी संग्रह की ये कहानियाँ मध्यवर्गीय जीवन के सहज बाह्य दृश्य को ही नहीं अपितु मानसिक स्तर पर होने वाली क्रिया-प्रतिक्रियाओं को भी अपने विषय के रूप में समेटे हुए हैं। इन कहानियों में मध्यवर्गीय बोध का कौन सा स्वरूप स्पष्ट नजर आता है यह क्रमशः कहानियों के अनुसार आगे/नीचे स्पष्ट है।

ठण्ड : ठण्ड इस संग्रह की सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण कहानियों में से एक है। आगे चलकर 1985 में श्रीकांत वर्मा का पाँचवाँ कहानी संग्रह ठंड नाम से ही छपा। यह कहानी एक निम्न मध्यवर्गीय परिवार की शाम को कहीं जाने की कथा को अपने अंदर समेटे छोटी सी कहानी है। यद्यपि इस कहानी की कथावस्तु इतनी विस्तृत नहीं है इसके बावजूद इसने किसी मध्यवर्गीय परिवार का पूरा हाल कह सुनाया है। कहानी में आये वाक्यांशों से स्पष्ट रूप से उनकी बाह्य वेश-भूषा का पता चलता है। जैसे कि दोनों ने कई जगह रफू किये गरम कोट से अपनी देह को बुरी तरह जकड़ रखा था। उसने अपनी टोपी ठीक की और कलाई में बंधी एक मैले-पीले डायल वाली घड़ी में समय देखा।

‘मैले’ पीले डायल वाली घड़ी तथा रफू किया गरम कोट दर्शाता है कि इनकी आर्थिक स्थिति ठीक नहीं है फिर भी इनके ख्याल टोपी, कोट तथा घड़ी पहनने के हैं। निम्न मध्यवर्ग भले ही निम्न वर्ग के करीब होता है परंतु वह स्वयं को उनसे दूर रखने का भरसक प्रयत्न करता है। यह सब इसी का परिणाम है।

कहानी में यह परिवार चार जगह दालसेव की पुड़िया बनवाता है। पंक्तियाँ इस प्रकार हैं कि लड़के ने फुरती के साथ मूँगफली की चार पुड़ियाँ बनाई और उसकी ओर बढ़ा दीं। उसने सबसे पहले छोटे लड़के को दी, फिर बड़े को, फिर स्त्री को, फिर आखिर में स्वयं ली। यहाँ पुड़ियाँ देने का क्रम याद रखने योग्य है। यह बड़े से छोटे का अंत से शुरू का क्रम किसी औपचारिकता के लिए नहीं किया गया है। बल्कि यह क्रम परिवार की आर्थिक असुरक्षा का बोध कराती है। यदि अंत में पैसे शेष न बचे तो परिवार का सबसे बड़ा सदस्य छूटे न कि सबसे छोटा।

झाड़ी : ‘झाड़ी’ कहानी संग्रह की सबसे महत्वपूर्ण कहानी झाड़ी ही है। झाड़ी कहानी का मुख्य पात्र ‘अखिल’ अपने बचपन में घर के पास एक कांटों की झाड़ी को पार नहीं कर पाता है। बाद में बड़ा होकर वह उस झाड़ी को तो आरामदायक तरीके से पार कर लेता है। परंतु वह जिस ऑफिस में काम करता है वहाँ उसका मन नहीं लगता। यह प्रतिदिन सोचता है कि इस्तीफा दे दे परंतु वह ऐसा नहीं कर पाता। इस घटना को याद कर वह झाड़ी उसे बार-बार याद आती है। एक दिन हिम्मत करके वह इस्तीफा दे देता है ठीक वैसे ही चमत्कारी अंदाज में जैसे झाड़ी पार की थी। घर जाकर जब वह यह बात ‘उमा’ (उसकी पत्नी) को बताता है तो वह उससे प्रश्न करती है कि “क्या सचमुच तुम काम छोड़ आये हो?” उसे स्पष्ट दिख रहा था कि उमा इस निर्णय से खुश नहीं है। वह उसे झूठ बोलता है-“नहीं, मैं केवल मजाक कर रहा था। वह सीधा अपने दफ्तर गया इस्तीफा फाड़ा तथा पुनः उसी काम पर लग गया।

एक मध्यवर्गीय व्यक्ति का जीवन एक झाड़ी को पार नहीं कर पाता उसे बेरोजगारी का भय रहता है। साथ ही साथ परिवार की जिम्मेदारी भी। यद्यपि यह कहानी में स्पष्ट है कि जो काम अखिल कर रहा है वह उसे पसंद नहीं है। इसके बावजूद वह परिवार की जिम्मेदारी के लिए यह काम करता है। मध्यवर्ग का व्यक्ति उच्च वर्ग जैसी सोच तो रखता है लेकिन हिम्मत नहीं कर पाता क्योंकि उसे जो मिला है वह उसे खोना नहीं चाहता।

मध्यवर्गीय व्यक्ति अपने स्वयं के निर्णय में भी बाहरी लोगों की राय चाहता है। और जब वह कोई काम नहीं कर पाता तो भी वह स्वयं को दिलासा देता है। वह अपने से नीचे के लोगों को देखकर स्वयं को उनसे बेहतर सिद्ध करने में लग जाता है। कहानी में भी यह स्पष्ट दिखाया गया है। जब वह झाड़ी पार नहीं कर पाता और जो लोग वह झाड़ी पार कर हँसते हैं तो उनको देखकर वह दुखी होता है। वह स्वयं को उनसे बेहतर दिखाने के लिए सोचता है कि वे या तो झाड़ी के उस पार हैं या उनके चारों ओर कुछ है ही नहीं। और वह इस नतीजे पर पहुँचता है कि दरअसल उनके आसपास कुछ है ही नहीं। उनकी तुलना में अपने इर्द-गिर्द कुछ होने के विचार पर उसे गर्व होता है और वह अनुभव करता है कि वह उनसे बड़ा है।

उसका क्रॉस : इस कहानी में व्यक्ति की मानसिक थकान तथा बोझ को दिखाया गया है। व्यक्ति अपने जीवन में इतना

परोशान है कि उसे लगता है कि सब लोग उसे मारना चाहते हैं। इस कहानी में एक व्यक्ति स्वयं ही सोचता है कि उस पर हमला हुआ है जबकि यह सिर्फ उसका भ्रम था। एक मध्यवर्गीय व्यक्ति की सबसे बड़ी पूँजी होती है उसकी इज्जत। जिसका दंश वह हर जगह भरता है। मैं एक इज्जतदार आदमी हूँ। मुझे दूसरों को इस तरह गालियाँ नहीं देनी चाहिए। गालियाँ देकर होगा भी क्या।

इस कहानी में एक आम मध्यवर्गीय व्यक्ति के जीवन को भी दर्शाया गया है, कि किस तरह किसी दूसरे को किसी की जिंदगी से मतलब नहीं है। यह इसलिए नहीं कि उन्हें सच में मतलब नहीं बल्कि इसलिए क्योंकि दूसरों को दुख आपसे बड़े लग रहे हैं। उसे खयाल आया कि उन सबने उसकी मार से अपनी नजर चुरा ली है और सब इस तरह अपने अपने काम पर चले गये थे, जैसे कुछ हुआ ही नहीं। मनत्यवी!

कहानी के अंत में स्पष्ट संकेत हैं कि सबके जीवन के दुख एक दूसरे से अधिक हैं।

परिणय, ट्यूमर और प्रेम पत्र—श्रीकांत वर्मा की कहानियों में बाहरी मध्यवर्ग और उसकी समस्याएँ अपने पूर्ण रूप में दिखायी देती हैं। इन तीनों कहानियों में जिंदगी में थकान, ऊबाऊपन तथा संबंध विच्छेद नजर आता है। परिणय कहानी में नजर आता है कि व्यक्ति अपने जीवन के कार्यों से इतना थक गया है कि अब उसे खुद का बुढ़ापा नजर आने लगा है। वह सब चल रहे हैं परंतु पहुँच कहीं नहीं पा रहे। इस समस्या को स्पष्ट करने वाली पंक्तियाँ इस प्रकार हैं। वह उस ठोस ठस इमारत की गोल गोल चक्करदार सीढ़ियाँ उतरता हुआ थकान अनुभव कर रहा है, जैसे उनकी इच्छा ही मर गयी हो। उतरना और उतरते ही जाना। क्या इन सीढ़ियों का अंत कभी न होगा (10) उर्मि की ओर जाते हुए उसने अकस्मात अनुभव किया, वह वर्षों से उसकी ओर चल रहा है मगर कभी उसके समीप नहीं पहुँच सका है।

‘ट्यूमर’ कहानी में भी यह अकेलापन स्पष्ट रूप से नजर आता है। शहर में आदमी हमेशा किसी न किसी के साथ तो होता है परंतु वह विल्कुल अकेला होता है। कोई किसी को समझने का प्रयत्न नहीं करना चाहता। सभी को अपना काम, अपनी समस्याएँ बड़ी लगती हैं। यही कारण है कि संबंध अच्छी तरह से नहीं चलते।

प्रेमपत्र कहानी में भी यही ऊबाऊपन तथा काम को टालने की इच्छा ही नजर आती है। व्यक्ति रोज एक ही काम करता

करता इतना नीरस हो जाता है कि वह चाहकर भी कोई काम नहीं कर पाता। इस कहानी में लेखक स्वयं ही माना जा सकता है। क्योंकि पात्र नहीं दिया है तो ऐसा माना जा सकता है। हालांकि वह सर्वनाम उसने उसके लिए प्रभुपत किया है। वह रश्मि को पत्र लिखना चाहता है परंतु वहीं टालमटोल करता रहता है।

साथ, दूसरे के पैर, प्रस्थान, दुपहर और कल

वर्मा जी की ये कहानियाँ 1961 और 1962 के काल की हैं। इन सभी कहानियों में जीवन की अस्त-व्यस्थता स्पष्ट रूप से नजर आती है। व्यक्ति अपने काम के दबाव में है। वह अपने स्वयं के परिवार को भी समय नहीं दे पा रहा है। ऐसी स्थिति में संबंधों में अलगाव की समस्या पैदा होती है। व्यक्ति अंदर ही अंदर बहुत कुछ सोचता है परंतु वह अपनी बात किसी से कहे ऐसा आसपास कोई व्यक्ति नहीं पाता। साथ कहानी को ये वाक्यांश पूरी स्थिति बताते हैं। “मगर मालूम पड़ता है उसने आजीवन आत्मग्लानि के साथ विवाह किया था।”

“अपनी हार के क्षण में वह झुंझलाने लगा और उसे अपने-आप पर गुस्सा आने लगा उसने तय किया कि वह तकलीफ उठाता जायेगा और रति को यह अनुभव कराकर रहेगा कि उसकी तकलीफों के लिए वह जिम्मेदार थी।”

व्यक्ति एक दूसरे को नीचा दिखाकर आत्मसंतुष्टि के भाव से परिपूर्ण होना चाहता है। यह भाव ‘आप का बंटी’ उपन्यास में अजय और शकुन के बीच भी है जिसके कारण पूरा परिवार उस देश को झेलता है।

निराशा का भाव पूरे संग्रह की लगभग सभी कहानियों में है। व्यक्ति के आवश्यक वस्तुओं की पूर्ति बड़ी ही मुस्किल से होती है। ऐसी स्थिति में क्रोध, द्वंद्व और पराजय का भाव सबके मन में रहता है। उच्च वर्ग जहाँ मेहनत करके किसी चीज का भोग करने की सोचता है क्योंकि आर्थिक असुरक्षा नहीं होती। वहीं दूसरी ओर मध्य वर्ग प्राप्त वस्तु को भविष्य की कसौटियों पर कसेगा। भविष्य की चिंता, समाज की चिंता, बुरे भले की चिंता, सभ्यता, संस्कृति, मान-सम्मान तथा पूर्वजों की प्रतिष्ठा का बोझ ढोते-ढोते अंत में निराशा ही हाथ लगती है। इसी कारण सभी कहानियों में मुक्ति की ओर अग्रसर भाव सामान्य रूप से मिलता है।

सोचनेवाला जानवर –

इस कहानी का नायक एक तांगा चालक है। उसने ताँगा खरीदने के लिए कर्ज लिया है। उसका छोटा लड़का मुस्तफा

एक फसाद के कारण जेल में है। वह व्यक्ति आर्थिक विपन्नता के कारण उसकी जमानत नहीं करा पा रहा है। परंतु उसे इस बात से अधिक दुख इस बात का है कि बाप दादों की इज्जत भी गयी। जो कभी उसके खानदान में न हुआ वह भी होकर रहा। उसकी बुआ उसे काफी दिन बाद देखती है तथा उसे बताती है कि वह जवानी में ही बुढ़ा गया है। मध्यवर्गीय व्यक्ति पारिवारिक रिश्तों में इतना घुला-मिला रहता है कि वह उनसे ऊपर उठने की कल्पना भी नहीं करता। कहानी में उसे भ्रम होता है कि उसका बेटा जो मृत्यु को प्राप्त हो चुका है उसे पीट रहा है।

निम्न मध्यवर्गीय परिवार की स्थिति ऐसी होती है कि आवश्यकता की पूर्ति करना भी मुश्किल होता है। वह यह बात जानते हुए भी कि शरीर पर ध्यान देना अनिवार्य है, पहले कर्जा चुकाने की सोचता है। व्यक्ति का पूरा जीवन संसाधन जुटाने में ही चला जाता है। अंत में वह व्यक्ति जानवर बन जाता है। जानवर वह भी बोलने तथा सोचनेवाला जानवर। जिस तरह जानवर का काम भोजन, काम तथा निद्रा होती है ठीक वही कार्य जिम्मेदारियों से दबे मध्यवर्गीय व्यक्ति का होता है।

अनुगूँज -

इस कहानी में मुख्य समस्या के रूप में अकेलापन है। एक व्यक्ति जो अपने अकेलेपन को दूर करने के लिए खेल

दिखाता है। उसके पास भीड़ होती है। लेकिन अंत में सब के सब चले जाते हैं। कहानी की पंक्तियां स्पष्ट करती हैं कि- फिर धीरे-धीरे वे सभी चले गये। वह उन्हें दूर जाता देखता रहा। उसकी समझ में नहीं आया वे सब कहां जा रहे हैं। और वह भी किसी ओर चला क्यों नहीं जाता। यह पंक्ति कि वह भी किसी और चला क्यों नहीं जाता कहानी का सार है। दरअसल हर कोई बाहर जाना चाहता है। ऐसी जगह जहाँ कोई उसे समझे वह महज जानवर बनकर न रह जाये।

निष्कर्षतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि- श्रीकांत वर्मा का सम्पूर्ण साहित्य मध्यवर्गी चेतना से परिपूर्ण है। झाड़ी कहानी संग्रह की समस्त कहानियों में भय, अकेलापन, पलायन, मुक्ति, आक्रोश तथा संबंध विच्छेद देखे जा सकते हैं। 1947 के बाद भारत आजाद हुआ और साथ ही साथ वास्तविक विकास की नींव रखी गयी। भारत सरकार ने पहली पंचवर्षीय योजना (1951-56) में प्राथमिक क्षेत्र पर बल दिया। दूसरी पंचवर्षीय योजना (1956-61) में सरकार ने उद्योग पर बल दिया। इसी क्रम में जूट मील, खदान, स्टील प्लांट तथा अन्य उद्योगों के लिए जो श्रम शक्ति की आवश्यकता थी वह शहरों में बसी। जिसने शहरी मध्यवर्ग को जन्म दिया। यह कष्ट, पीड़ा, अकेलापन, उबारूपन तथा बेचैनी इसी वर्ग की है।

शोधार्थी, हिन्दी विभाग
दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

संदर्भ ग्रंथ

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Dr. Nand Kishor

India's Digital Media Strategy in Central Asia: Countering Russia and China

Abstract

As Central Asia transitions into a digitally interconnected region, global powers intensify their efforts to wield influence through both hard and soft powers. India, with its deep civilizational values and recent strategic interests, is slowly warming up to the use of digital media as a tool to implement influence in order to counter the long-standing influence of Russia and the aggressive expansion of the digital and informational borders of the Chinese. This paper will give an in-depth review of the Indian approach to digital media in Central Asia in terms of its motifs, mechanisms, adversaries, and a wider geopolitical picture. The performance and opportunities of the initiatives of India to influence the informational space of one of the strategic regions of Eurasia are evaluated based on the authoritative sources and current advances in the field.

Key Words: Digital media, Central Asia, Geopolitical influence, Russia, China, India, - Strategic interests

1. Introduction

Central Asia has become an inseparable global arena of international rivalry over the last thirty years due to its specific geography, its natural resources spread in the region, as well as its geopolitical interconnection between the European continent and countries of Asian areas (Starr, 2005). Heretofore perceived as a periphery state in the region, India has now started exploring use of digital media as one of the utility tools in strengthening its influence. This trend can be explained by intrinsic drivers (e.g., energy security, political alliances, and counterterrorism) and the external requirement to offset the Russian media

control and the massive Chinese expansion in the online realm. What happened since the beginning of the twenty-first century and the game called the so-called Great Game in Central Asia is the fact that the power in the region is not limited by the traditional ability to make campaigns based on military forces being committed together with the resources and people through the economic corridors or cultural missions. Rather, digital media, constituting of interconnected news services, social media, electronic learning, and electronic governance has emerged as a first line in the construction of perception, value, and strategy narratives. What India wants, hence, is much more than being able to get hold of energy or being able to establish trading connections but to develop an informational presence resilient to match its democratic spirit. This working paper examines the history, key players, interests and strategies that characterize India as being involved in digital media Within Central Asia. It can also explain the limitations that India has vis a vis Russia and China, an evaluation of the potentiality of the cooperative approach, and the suggestions on how it can strengthen its strategic position in this changing environment.

Strategic Importance of Central Asia

The five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, possess extensive natural resources, including oil, natural gas, and critical minerals, making the region indispensable for energy security and economic development (Starr, 2005). Geographically, Central Asia serves as a bridge connecting South Asia with Europe and East Asia, thus becoming a pivotal

arena for the contemporary “Great Game” as competing powers vie for influence (Sachdeva, 2006).

Central Asia’s security environment remains fragile due to ethno-political tensions, militant extremism, and the destabilizing effects of developments in neighboring Afghanistan. For India, these factors directly impact national security, especially through concerns over terrorism and the spread of extremism into South Asia (Romaniuk 2001). Consequently, India’s strategic interests in Central Asia encompass energy cooperation, trade connectivity, security collaboration, and diplomatic influence, with digital media representing a vital modality for achieving these goals.

The Digital Sphere in Central Asia: Dominance of Russia and China

Historically, Russia’s deep-rooted cultural and political ties translated into considerable control over the region’s media and digital infrastructure. Russians remain the lingua franca in much of Central Asia, and Russian media outlets and social platforms dominate the digital space, propagating narratives consistent with Moscow’s geopolitical objectives (Joshi 2001). The Russian government’s robust approach to cyber governance, combined with its cultural affinity, consolidates its digital soft power in the region.

China’s footprint in Central Asia has expanded dramatically under the Digital Silk Road initiative, an extension of the Belt and Road Initiative. Through investments in telecommunications infrastructure, e-commerce platforms, and digital governance frameworks, China is rapidly embedding its technological ecosystem in Central Asia (Sachdeva, 2006). The Chinese state’s emphasis on digital sovereignty and information control allows the propagation of authoritarian-aligned narratives, shaping public opinion through censorship and surveillance mechanisms.

Other actors such as the European Union, the United States, and Turkey also contribute to the digital landscape by promoting open Internet principles and media development, but their influence remains comparatively fragmented (Sen, 2023).

India’s Evolving Diplomatic Strategy: From Cultural Outreach to Digital Media Engagement

India’s engagement with Central Asia has traditionally prioritized cultural diplomacy, leveraging shared historical ties, educational exchanges, and the

popularity of Indian cinema and music (Ministry of External Affairs, 2017). Bollywood films and Indian television have fostered positive perceptions among Central Asian audiences, laying the groundwork for a deeper engagement.

Recognizing the growing centrality of digital platforms, India is repositioning its strategy of harnessing digital diplomacy as a strategic tool for influence. This entails disseminating Indian content through social media, streaming services, and local-language digital media to reach the youth and diverse demographics, thereby amplifying Indian narratives and values in a dynamic, accessible format.

Historical Roots: Cultural, Linguistic, and Educational Ties

India’s relationship with Central Asia is rooted deep in history and shaped by centuries of cultural exchange and mutual influence along the ancient Silk Road. Long before the current nation-states took shape, there existed a vibrant corridor of commerce, ideas, and civilizations, stretching from North India to the Central Asian steppe. Goods, philosophies, and technology flowed in both directions through this corridor. The shared legacy included not only tangible trade, such as textiles, spices, and horses, but also the spread of Sufi traditions and spiritual philosophies that would leave enduring marks on the cultures of both regions. Sufi saints and scholars migrated across borders, nurturing a culture of tolerance and intellectual exchange that resonates with the historical consciousness of Central Asian societies (Starr, 2005).

This foundation of interconnectedness became especially salient during the Soviet era, when India’s pragmatic ties with the USSR facilitated a steady flow of students, educators, and professionals between India and the then-Soviet Central Asian republic. Indian technical and medical expertise was highly prized, and many Central Asians trained at Indian universities returned home with lasting positive impressions. As Chenoy (2000) notes, these education and technical exchanges cemented mutual respect and an enduring soft spot for Indian culture, visible even today in the region’s urban centers. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, these links took on a new life and urgency, as the five Central Asian republics sought to rediscover their place in the international system.

India responded by leaning into the distinctive assets of its soft powers. Bollywood cinema has rapidly gained popularity among Central Asians, who found in its music, stories, and aesthetics both entertainment and cultural familiarity. Food, yoga, and spiritual teachings followed, often showcased through lively Indian cultural festivals hosted in key cities such as Tashkent and Almaty. Academic exchanges and scholarship programs have further deepened these links, facilitating the rise of a generation of Central Asians with personal and intellectual ties to India. As documented by the Ministry of External Affairs (2017), these efforts have constructed a unique and largely positive perception of India, especially among the urban middle class.

Digital Turn: Recognizing the New Arena

Nonetheless, along this long history, Indian interaction was occasionally less organized and coherent as it is in the case of Russia or more recently China where the state is more engaged. The strategy of India in this respect came of increased urgency with the digital revolution, which took place in the 2010s and was greatly stepped up with the COVID-19 pandemic. The popularization of the smart phones and rapid Internet has changed the mechanism of the Central Asian people consumption of news, entertainments, and education. Policy debates and the opinion of the population have also started transferring to the internet space, with its dangers and benefits of outside influence. Overtime, India found out that digital media played a significant role in the formation of modern views and outcomes of the policy in Central Asia. The nation has transformed its traditional resources involving the application of digital content delivery by the use of streaming networks and social sites. The Bollywood movies became available online in vernacular languages and the virtual education and academic webinars encouraged new people-to-people interactions. The social media bridged the gap because Indian diplomats and independent thinkers were able to disseminate their cultural diplomacy in a more direct manner, which dealt with misinformation in a better way. The relationship with the Central Asian broadcasting houses and education channels has also increased, including the production of digital content with partners and further spread of such content to local populations. Most interesting of all perhaps, India

began exploiting its IT and e-governance track record, which had been established over huge domestic scale, as the basis of digital diplomacy. The digital reinvention enabled by the digital upskilling of its Central Asian partners and providing them with scalable technological solutions that respond to regional requirements was an indication of what the future should hold in place of traditional outreach, and that included nothing less than having traditional ties firmly rooted in the realities of the 21st-century information age (Sen, 2023; Ministry of External Affairs, 2017).

India's Digital Media Strategy in Central Asia

The digital media policy India has adapted in Central Asia has now evolved to a wise and multi-faceted one, as it provides a direct reaction to the challenges and opportunities offered in a region that has long been controlled informational hegemony of Russia and active digital expansion of China. This policy is essentially not about Indian television broadcasting or posting Bollywood movies to other platforms. What India has done instead is consciously pursue the policies of pluralism, diversity and emotional localization so that its digital presence can actually hit home on the day to day lives of Central Asian people. On the one hand, India understood that cultural exports could not be based on monolith structures of culture. The previous model (the mere distribution of in-language movies or plain news) was not only very constrained, but also inefficient. Indian digital content is now adapted carefully by being dubbed, subtitle or rewritten in Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Russian. The fact that the localization is given such prominence is less of a technical matter and more of appreciation of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Central Asian region. Stories stir audiences when characters struggle with social issues to which audiences are sensitive. The stories have to be set in places the audiences know. An example would be as such, where the Indian dramatic narrative series translated in Uzbek and published on the leading domestic streaming websites and do not only generate more daily traffic, but now features as the subject of family discussions and youth culture. On the same note, Indian elearning programs dedicated to technical and language training are gaining popularity among an increasing number of Central Asian students, providing easy access to new information and, most

importantly, reliable sources of information besides those in Russia and China (Sen, 2023).

Parallel to this content-centric strategy is India's determination to provide an alternative narrative amidst the binaries that have long shaped digital debates in Central Asia. Where Russian media appeals to nostalgia and regional stability and Chinese content champions technocratic modernization, India seeks to present a hopeful third path. Core Indian messages highlight the values of democratic governance, respect for diversity, and the promise of a pluralistic society—principles that contrast with the centralized, often opaque, digital models favored by both Moscow and Beijing (Sen, 2023). Digital diplomacy tools, such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations' (ICCR) ongoing series of digital lectures and embassy-hosted webinars, invite Central Asian audiences into dialogue about governance, entrepreneurship, and pluralism rooted in lived Indian experience. The tone is a partnership and not a prescription. Furthermore, India uses international forums to encourage local governments to adopt transparent, multilingual, and participatory models of digital governance, underlining the universal value of a multi-stakeholder digital future.

Collaboration lies at the heart of the next pillar: educational exchange and digital coproduction. Indian public broadcasters, including Doordarshan and Prasar Bharati, have found common causes with regional partners, such as Kazakhstan's influential Khabar Agency. Their jointly produced material, spanning wellness, technology, and cultural documentaries, creates space for reciprocal learning and dialogue. Platforms such as SWAYAM and the National Digital Library give students in Central Asia get the access to a world of Indian online courses and the digital scholarship and virtual academic forums promote person-to-person connectivity as opposed to state-to-state connectivity. Such initiative is useful in creating a generation of Central Asians whose India is not a far-off country but a real contemporary existence. Potentially, one of the most radical aspects of the Indian digital plan is the possibility of technical cooperation based on its hard-earned experience as an IT superpower. In addition to content, India is exporting actual competencies and Digital Infrastructure of the public sphere to the region and facilitating the development of the local everyday

digitality, which includes health, government, and business. The new standards of efficiency and confidence in public services have been established thanks to collaborations with the ministries of communication and education in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, which allowed deploying better e-governance platforms and even biometric identity projects (Sen, 2023). Indian IT companies joint ventures with the regional governments (in solving the issues regarding to data analytics of the public and original urban electronic planning) can be observed as having a realistic approach to the solution to problems, which goes much beyond soft power and proceeds to the stages of deep partnerships in development. This strategy is humanized at each step and flavored by the realization that in the digital age, partnerships have to be defined by a human touch as well as an ability to communicate with empathy and trust rather than a technical expertise alone. Indian flexibility and openness of digital projects and capacity-building initiatives are frequently discussed by Central Asian partners, frequently in comparison to the more inflexible and top-down methods of smaller major powers (Ministry of External Affairs, 2017). This could be a start-up hackathon or a collaborative documentary that looks at shared history or a digital literacy workshop that would keep citizens safe against internet scams: these are examples of programs that help cement the impression that India is was not involved in the region as an opponent but as a partner interested in collective prosperity.

However, India's path is not without challenges. The sheer scale of Russian language infrastructure and the aggressive rollout of China's Digital Silk Road present technical and cultural obstacles. India's careful focus on adaptation, partnership, and incremental building of trust represents long-term investment. It is precisely this patient, human-centered method—a refusal to impose, a willingness to listen, and a celebration of diversity—that gives India a distinct and arguably sustainable advantage.

India's current digital media strategy in Central Asia is defined by its prioritization of content that is both local and pluralistic, its building of democratic and developmental narratives, its embrace of collaborative educational and media projects, and its transfer of technological skills and platforms for

regional modernization. These interwoven pillars represent more than just tactical choices; they are a reflection of a deeply held conviction that digital influence, in the end, is about empowering people, bridging divides, and nurturing enduring relationships—person to person and nation to nation. With every new collaborative project, translated drama, or co-developed digital platform, India is helping author a new chapter in Central Asia's digital future, one grounded in mutual respect, pluralism, and sustainable progress.

Challenges to India's Digital Outreach

The digital outreach in India has some multidimensional challenges that are both geopolitical, technological, infrastructural, and social and these need a multidimensional approach to solve the same. In essence, India does not have an extensive digital presence due to the domination and managing of digital landscapes by the outside world coupled with internal infrastructural and literacy deficiency. First, the ingrained presence of the Russian network of digital platforms, along with the strict information flow containing held by Moscow, does not allow the Indian-origin digital content to cross the border and limits the Indian-origin digital soft power in Russia and pro-Soviet digital space. This concern is further complicated by an increasingly closer Russia-China strategic relationship, which limits India in the foreign policy manoeuvrability of the digital realm and mandates the adherence of a stringent balance regarding its approaches to the engagement. Consequently, such partnerships make Indian attempts to increase the digital presence in Eurasian geopolitics complex (Sen, 2023; Sachdeva, 2006). Second, China is a key in the Indian digital outreach. The marshalling of funds by China in technological infrastructure in the South Asia and Eurasia regions has developed a technological dependency on which India has to tread cautiously. The Chinese stringent censorship policy also limits the room to practice free flow of information, which presents challenges to India to exercise free and open digital narrative. This monitoring and interference of the digital stream restricts the ability of India to promote itself and its digital philosophy within the digital space of the region (Sachdeva, 2006).

Internally, the Indian digital infrastructure is not

balanced, and the subpar level of connectivity can be found in rural and peripheral areas where some population has little access to the internet and slow connectivity. The digital divide continues, despite some ambitious government schemes in the framework of the Digital India campaign, including the development of broadband penetration with such projects as BharatNet. To give an example, rural Internet penetration and digital literacy is significantly lower than the urban one, with the estimates willing rural Internet access of only 25 percent or so and more than 60 percent in urban regions (Kumari, 2025; IJCRT, 2025).

This digital divide is further made worse by socioeconomic gaps, frequent power cuts and lack of digital equipments at community centers and schools. Such barriers in infrastructures impede successful outreach and online service, thus reducing the capability of India to embrace the digital space as a tool of development and good governance. In addition to this, India is undergoing a serious strain on issues that pertain to digital literacy and inclusion. Poor digital literacy particularly on the part of the marginalized groups including women, rural, and tribal population limits the adoption and success of digital services. Government initiatives such as PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan), specifically endeavour to enhance digital literacy with outreach, sustenance and inclusivity challenges (IJCRT, 2025). This brings about a situation whereby the more significant part of the population is digitally isolated and thus has the limited capacity to use the digital infra-structure to drive economic and social empowerment in India. There is a major problem of security and trust. The rapid growth of digital technologies in India was also accompanied by the growth of cybersecurity-related threats, as the number of related incidents is over a million in the recent years and the supply of cybersecurity talent is insufficient. With the current legal frameworks that have been previously renewed or replaced, including the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, the privacy in data use is still worrying as we see questions emerging regarding its application and how it is abused (Drishti IAS, 2025). These security vulnerabilities weaken the trust of the digital platforms by the common people and are places that threaten the stability of the digital

ecosystem in India.

Finally, the geopolitical balance that India must maintain between Russia and China, along with growing relations with Western countries, adds complexity to India's digital outreach. Trade imbalances and difficulties arising from Western sanctions on Russia further restrict cooperation in the technology and digital sectors, complicating India's strategic choices and partnerships (Sen 2023).

Opportunities and Catalysts: Making Digital Inroads in Central Asia

India's evolving digital media engagement in Central Asia arrives at a historically opportune moment as the region seeks diversified partnerships that can support their aspirations for autonomy, economic modernization, and information sovereignty. Central Asian elites and civil societies are becoming increasingly aware of the limits imposed by Russia's lingering political and informational control, as well as the growing technological dependencies arising from China's assertive Digital Silk Road initiatives. In this context, India's democratic heritage, combined with its pragmatic technological advancement and track record of respecting national sovereignty, positions it as a highly attractive alternative for Central Asian stakeholders (Starr 2005).

The distinctiveness of India's value proposition lies in its democratic norms of governance and pluralistic information ecosystem, which contrast sharply with the Soviet-era nostalgia often invoked by Moscow or the authoritarian digital surveillance and censorship models promoted by Beijing. Researchers such as Romaniuk (2001) document how, given a choice, many Central Asian students, young professionals, and entrepreneurs prefer to migrate educationally or work with India or Western countries rather than Russia or China. This preference stems not only from India's rising stature as an education hub, but also from its comparatively open digital environment, which fosters innovation and grassroots content creation without intrusive censorship. Independent bloggers and digital activists in Central Asia have expressed favor for Indian-driven digital platforms and tools, describing them as more accessible and less restrictive for locally generated content, nurturing a more vibrant and diverse digital culture (Romaniuk, 2001; Sen, 2023).

Complementing this democratic allure, India's contribution to Central Asia's digital economy and skill-building initiatives offers concrete avenues for development and modernization. Many Central Asian governments have publicly declared digitization a strategic priority to leapfrog traditional development challenges. In this effort, India's experience with scalable and affordable digital solutions has gained particular relevance. Its innovations, such as Aadhaar, the world's largest biometric digital identity system, have proven the feasibility of deploying low-cost, high-impact digital public infrastructure that maintains robust privacy frameworks and citizen agencies. Alongside Aadhaar, India's (UPI) revolutionized digital payments by providing interoperable, real-time financial transactions accessible even to rural populations. These models resonate strongly with Central Asian decision-makers seeking to modernize government services, healthcare delivery, and commercial ecosystems without excessive dependence on external vendors often linked to geopolitical rivals (Sen, 2023).

Joint training programs and technology transfer partnerships have further activated this agenda. India has conducted workshops focused on cybersecurity, fintech innovation, digital public administration, and AI-powered public health systems tailored specifically for Central Asian officials, technologists, and civil society. These programs not only build local skills and institutional capacity but also foster goodwill by demonstrating India's commitment to sustainable, collaborative development rather than coercive dominance. As Sen (2023) highlights, such efforts reflect a diplomatic approach that synergistically harnesses India's soft power and technical competence, positioning India as a partner invested in shared success rather than merely a provider of technological goods.

Beyond economic modernization, India's engagement addresses a pressing and shared concern: regional stability. Central Asia's geopolitical environment remains fragile due to threats such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, radicalism, and disinformation campaigns, all of which imperil economic growth and social cohesion. Recognizing these overlaps, India initiated digital counterterrorism workshops and joint online surveillance programs,

collaborating with Central Asian security agencies and regional partners to amplify resilience against such threats. These projects often incorporate digital forensics, open-source intelligence gathering, and information integrity protocols designed to combat extreme influences while respecting sovereign rights and legal norms (Ministry of External Affairs, 2025; Sen, 2023).

This pragmatic security cooperation complements India's broader diplomatic narrative by advocating responsible digital governance and transparent data management. By assisting Central Asian governments in developing cybersecurity frameworks that respect civil liberties and enable open information flows, India advances the normative vision of a secure yet free digital space, striving to reconcile national security imperatives with the imperatives of democratic freedom and pluralism. India's digital media strategy in Central Asia benefits from a constellation of favorable factors: a shared desire among regional elites for greater autonomy from traditional power centers, India's lived experience as a democracy navigating technological modernization, its offer of tangible, scalable digital public goods and skill-building mechanisms, and aligned interests in maintaining regional security through cooperative digital means. Together, these opportunities represent not just a policy opening but also a strategic window for India to entrench itself as a credible, innovative, and trusted partner. Continuous efforts that emphasize cultural sensitivity, regional collaboration, and respect for local governance realities will be crucial for translating these opportunities into durable influence across Central Asia's evolving digital landscape.

Streaming Indian Media in Central Asia

India's digital media strategy in Central Asia has seen notable case studies and initiatives that showcase its evolving efforts to deepen influence and foster connectivity in a region historically influenced by Russia and increasingly influenced by China's digital expansion. Among the most prominent developments in 2022-23 were partnerships between major Indian streaming platforms and regional telecom companies, which led to the debut of Hindi and Tamil films on Kazakh and Uzbek Over-The-Top (OTT) services. Initiatives like the "Bollywood Nights" film seasons, featuring subtitled and regionally tailored content,

reported a significant 15-20% increase in viewership specifically among the critical 18-34-year-old demographic segment, illustrating both strong youth engagement and cultural resonance (Sen, 2023).

In the educational technology sector, Indian online learning platforms, including Coursera partners, SWAYAM, and popular Indian YouTube educators, have experienced tangible growth in enrollments from Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Following the disruptions and heightened digital adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian embassies in the region facilitated digital scholarship contests focused on STEM fields and liberal arts, with winners gaining admission to online summer schools hosted by Indian universities. These programs bolster people-to-people exchanges and create enduring academic linkages between India and Central Asia (Observer Research Foundation 2023).

Technological cooperation has also advanced through collaborations, such as those between Uzbekistan's Digital Government Agency and India's Digital India Corporation. This partnership has worked on biometric ID pilot projects and the development of streamlined digital public service applications, demonstrating India's practical contribution to Central Asia's e-governance modernization. Further, Kyrgyz tech startups have signed memoranda of understanding with Indian software companies to co-develop agricultural data platforms, indicating promise for joint innovation aimed at addressing local economic sectors through technology (Observer Research Foundation, 2023).

Beyond content and technology, India's influence extends to academic and media exchange. Annual virtual summits such as the "Young Central Asian Leaders" convened by Indian think tanks allow for meaningful dialogue among emerging regional policymakers, intellectuals, and entrepreneurs. Additionally, Indian-authored opinion pieces published on Central Asian English-language portals contribute to shaping the perspectives of an increasingly cosmopolitan urban audience, thereby influencing policy debates and public discourse beyond official government communication (Observer Research Foundation, 2023).

To amplify the impact, strategic recommendations

suggest the institutionalization of India's digital media outreach through the creation of a flagship digital diplomacy agency. This proposed body would integrate governmental, corporate, and independent efforts into a unified framework, similar to globally respected organizations, such as the British Council or Goethe-Institut, but with a strong digital focus. By consolidating resources and expertise, India can elevate both the scale and coherence of its digital engagement across Central Asia.

Another key recommendation involves enhancing localization and collaborative storytelling. Authentic engagement requires more than simple translation; it necessitates the "co-creation" of content together with regional voices. Joint production of documentaries, social campaigns, youth-oriented podcasts, and training programs that empower Central Asian digital creators and journalists to use Indian platforms foster sustainable grassroots narratives that resonate deeply at local levels.

Moreover, India's participation in global and regional forums, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (BRICS) and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), positions it to advocate for multipolar digital governance. Prioritizing pluralistic, decentralized standards supporting open-source technology, privacy protection, and resistance to monopolistic or authoritarian models, India's diplomacy advances its vision of Internet sovereignty aligned with democratic principles.

Finally, investing in digital infrastructure and connectivity is an indispensable part of India's forward strategy. Collaborations with regional governments and multilateral institutions to develop digital corridors

linked to physical infrastructure projects, such as the International North-South Transport Corridor, would enhance resilience and expand access. This holistic approach combines trade, transport, and information flow to strengthen India's connectivity footprint in Central Asia.

Collectively, these case studies and strategic priorities reflect India's intention to build a digitally engaged, culturally sensitive, and technologically innovative partnership with Central Asia, providing a democratic and pluralistic alternative to the dominant Russian and increasingly influential Chinese digital ecosystem.

Conclusion

Central Asia's digital future is defined today, and the choices regional states make concerning informational infrastructure, digital norms, and external partnerships will resonate for decades. India's engagement, although challenged by the overwhelming presence of Russia and China, stands apart in offering democratic, human-centric, and technologically robust alternatives.

The next decade will likely witness intensified competition for narrative dominance, digital standards, and the hearts and minds of Central Asian citizens. India must therefore combine sustained investment in digital content, smart partnerships, technological capacity-building, and principled advocacy for open digital societies. By doing so, India can secure both strategic objectives and enduring goodwill in Central Asian societies, contributing to a more balanced, plural, and connected Eurasian region.

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Transforming Urban Waste Management: A Case Study of Lucknow's Integrated and Sustainable Approach

Abstract

Solid waste is a major issue faced by rapidly developing cities in India. In this paper, we will examine how the city of Lucknow has stood its waste management system in recent years. The paper is premised on reports, data, and documents published in the media. It gives concentration on the primary measures by the city. These are establishing door to door garbage collection with the help of electric transportation, continual following of the garbage trucks and creating new waste processing facilities.

Cleaning of old wastes at the Shivri landfill has been one of the biggest success. By bioremediation process, the city extracted almost 18.5 to 19 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste. This assisted in cutting down pollution and reclaiming of land. The city has as well established a control and command post to oversee the waste management and collection.

Lucknow came up with new user charge program, where individuals pay depending on the type of property. This has been useful in increasing finances and enhancing services. The city has also entered into a collaboration with the privately owned companies and other departments within the government. These campaigns have resulted in the improved cleanliness, participation of citizens, and healthier environment.

Such other states as Andhra Pradesh have been interested in duplicating this model. The paper demonstrates that a combination of technology, proper planning, the involvement of the people and sound policies could translate to massive changes towards

waste management. The example of Lucknow is a good lesson to other cities who are interested to go green and become cleaner.

Introduction

India is under rapid urbanization, which has resulted in a steep rise in producing municipal solid waste (MSW), creating severe environmental, health, and governance issues. Cities, being the major consumption and people densities centers, are failing in adopting an efficient and sustainable waste management system. As a reaction to this accumulating crisis, national programs such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Smart Cities Mission have made a point to stress the importance of making waste management more integrated, technology-driven and community-inclusive.

The city of Lucknow which is the capital of Uttar Pradesh and a Smart city in India has become an interesting case study of change in the management of waste in the city. The city with an average daily waste generation of 2,000-2,200 metric tonnes was experiencing acute problems associated with un-segregated waste collection, inefficient transportation, and legacy waste that is stacked up in landfill areas such as Shivri. Yet in the recent years, the city has also resorted to a number of innovative decisions, which are door-to-door gathering with the use of electric vehicles, monitoring of garbage fleets in real-time, treatment of old garbage through bioremediation, and automated systems of user-fees.

This document is a description of a case study of

the dynamic scale of waste management system in Lucknow. It reviews the manner in which the combination of infrastructural development, policy changes, technological interventions and citizen interaction has resulted in increasing the efficiency of operations, environmental condition and financial sustainability. Using the case of Lucknow, the study will give real-life answers and lessons that can be applied in other urban settlements that are aspiring to change to a cleaner and more resilient waste model.

Literature Review

Municipal solid waste (MSW) management has been a major area of scholarly interest because of the developing nations like India witnessing rapid urbanization and population growth. To curb the rising burden of urban waste, scholars and policy-analysis experts have pointed out the necessity of innovative, sustainable, and scalable waste management approaches that can promote the more effective management of urban wastes (Gupta et al., 2015; Sharma & Bansal, 2019).

• Smart Cities and Waste Management Innovations

The development of the urban governance towards smart technologies has become an irreversible trend. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and Smart Cities Mission promoted by the Government of India promote the idea of digitized and citizen-friendly methods of urban management of wastes. Singh and Kumar (2021) cite that the integration of real-time tracking mechanism, sensor-based bins, and command-control centers have aided in enhancing transparency and efficient operations in waste management.

Such transition can be seen in how Lucknow, under its Smart City initiative, has incorporated electric vehicles (EVs) as a door-to-door collection strategy, real-time tracking of its fleet, and the possibility of user fees being paid digitally. Such technological interventions are in line with the study by Rathi (2007) which highlighted that technology, together with strong policy enforcement, can play a great role in improving the urban sanitation results.

• Legacy Waste and Bioremediation Techniques

In India, especially in old and overflowing landfill

sites, legacy waste has been a major problem. According to the study by Awasthi et al. (2020), bioremediation has become a viable and environmentally sustainable way of cleaning and regenerating legacy waste. In Lucknow, the Shivri site is aligned with the global best practice in bioremediation through the idea that using waste energy can work in favor of the environment where waste is redirected into compost, RDF, and useful land.

The efficacy of bioremediation not only helps in rehabilitating the environment but also forms a part of urban resilience. Research findings by the CSIR-IITR (2025) affirm that bioremediation technologies are effective in cleaning up contaminants in leachates and eliminating air pollution levels hence making the urban ecosystems healthier and safer.

• Policy Reforms and User Engagement

The success of any solid waste management program considerably depends on policy structures. A number of researchers (e.g., Joshi & Ahmed, 2016; Narayana, 2009) emphasize that decentralized governance, public-private partnerships (PPP) and user-based fee models contribute to increased financial sustainability and the involvement of the community.

The shift towards inclusive and participatory governance in Lucknow is evidenced by the new introduction of the slab-based user charge and ensuring the inclusion of informal workers in the rubbish collection ecosystem. Chaturvedi et al. (2022) assert that these initiatives enhance compliance, minimize resistance, and origins a feeling of ownership within citizens.

• Replicability and Inter-State Learning

Successful models should be replicated to make a difference nationwide. The horizontal knowledge transfer in Indian urban systems can be indicated by inter-city cooperation, like Andhra Pradesh implementing components of the waste management scheme in Lucknow. Banerjee (2023) reports that scalable practices should rely on institutional capacity alignment, access to finances, and technological viability.

Research Objectives

- Examine Lucknow's integration of infrastructure,

technology, and policy in modern MSW management.

- Analyze operational data, including backlog clearance and fresh waste processing.
- Evaluate outcomes—environmental, social, institutional—and extract transferable lessons.

Research Methodology

In this study, the qualitative case study method is used to examine how solid waste management has been transformed in the city of Lucknow. The case study approach is well suited to comprehension of the more complicated, real-life intervention processes in urban governance where in the process, stakeholders, technologies and the outcomes of such interventions can be more thoroughly explored.

Data Collection Methods

The research relies on the use of an integrated form of secondary data material, which makes it easy to acquire a multi-dimensional and broad insight into the waste management system in Lucknow. These include:

Government Document and Reports:

Relevant official publications like the Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC) Budget 2025-26, Swachh Bharat Mission Guidelines and CSIR-IITR Environmental Monitoring Reports were consulted to obtain data on policy changes, financial expenditure as well as performance. **Press Releases and News Articles:** Reputable national dailies such as *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, and digital portals provided real-time updates on infrastructure developments, stakeholder involvement, and state-level cooperation (e.g., Andhra Pradesh delegation visit). **Institutional Data and Technical Documents:** Sources such as the **Lovkown Electric Mobility Plan (2022)**, **Invest UP**, and **MoSPI-CPCB statistics** were used to understand environmental impact, fleet electrification, and national-level benchmarks.

Data Analysis Techniques The collected data was analyzed using a **mixed qualitative–quantitative approach**, combining descriptive analytics with thematic interpretation. **Quantitative Analysis:** Key performance indicators were extracted and examined, including: Daily municipal solid waste (MSW) generation and processing

capacities. Legacy waste clearance percentages. CO₂ emissions reduction from EV adoption. Budgetary outlays and user fee recovery metrics. Qualitative Thematic Coding; thematic analysis was done to bring out repeating patterns and dominant themes that include: Incorporation of technology in MSW governance. Financial changes and creativity in policymaking. Stakeholder Involve and Citizen Participation. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL impacts

Case Selection Rationale

Lucknow was selected because it was proven as a successful city under Smart Cities Mission with visible improvements in bioremediation, infrastructure set up, policy framework and digital governance. The zero-garbage goal set by the city and the fact that it was already recognized as a model that can be replicated by every other Indian state make it well-grounded to be considered a case in point.

Lucknow's Waste Management System

The Lucknow strategy to handle municipal solid waste (MSW) provides an interesting pattern of change via incorporated infrastructure, policy and technological sophistications. Lucknow being a rapidly expanding metropolis and a planned Smart City has engaged in implementing strategic reforms to cope with the increasing level of waste management and in adopting the objective of Swachh Bharat Mission and Sustainable Development Goals.

• Daily Waste Generation and Processing Capacity in Lucknow

Parameter	Quantity
Daily Waste Generation	2,000–2,200 MT
Daily Processing Capacity	2,100 MT
No. of Processing Units	3
Location	Shivri

(CSIR-IITR (2025). *Environmental Monitoring of Lucknow's Landfill Restoration Projects*.)

• Waste Composition and Segregation

As of 2016, a study found that around 45 percent of the generated waste in Lucknow is biodegradable, then 31 percent plastic and paper waste, and rest inert and miscellaneous. The present composition

highlights the dire necessity of no less drastic action in introducing source segregation and decentralized composting programs to adequately respond to the magnitude of organic waste in the city.

• **Timeline of Key Policy and Infrastructure Reforms**

Year	Reform/Initiative	Impact
2022	Electric Vehicle Fleet Initiated	Low-emission collection
2023	Command-and-Control Center Operational	Real-time tracking & coordination
2024	Legacy Waste Bio-remediation Begins at Shivri	Land reclamation & pollution control
2025	Slab-Based User Fees Implemented	Financial sustainability

(Hindustan Times (2025). “Mayor Completes 100 Days; Waste Management Achievements in Lucknow.”, Resustainability (2025). “Technological Advancements in Lucknow’s Swachhata Abhiyan.”)

• **Legacy Waste Remediation and Shivri Plant Upgradation**

Bioremediation of legacy waste of 18.5-19 lakh metric tonnes heaped in the Shivri landfill is one of the most ambitious elements of Lucknow waste strategy. By the beginning of 2025, the processing of more than 10 lakh metric tonnes of bioremediation methods had been utilized that saved nearly 15 acres of the land. This reclaimed land has been landscaped and converted into the usage of the masses. The city has also established three processing units of waste which have a capacity of about 700M tonnes daily making it possible to process 100 percent of the daily waste produced.

• **Budget Allocation for Waste Management (2025-26)**

Budget Category	Allocation (INR Crore)
Roads and Sanitation (Total)	Rs. 800
Waste Services Only	Rs. 600
Civic Infrastructure (incl. C&D)	Rs. 144
Smart City Environment – SWM Projects	Rs. 173

(Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (2024). *Swachh Bharat Mission Reports*, Financial Express

(2025). “NTPC Partners with Lucknow on Green Power Projects.”)

• **Technological Integration and Collection Systems**

Lucknow’s collection and transportation network has undergone significant modernization through the deployment of GPS-enabled electric vehicles (EVs) for door-to-door collection across municipal zones. The EV fleet, numbering between 150 and 747 vehicles, is monitored in real-time through a centralized command-and-control center. To reduce leakage and odor, sealed compactor trucks and capsule-type transfer stations have been introduced, each capable of handling up to 29 metric tonnes per trip. These innovations have improved operational reliability and environmental compliance.

• **Financial Reforms and Policy Measures**

In June 2025, the city also rolled out a slab-based user fee system, suggesting correlating waste charges with property magnitude and application. The monthly charges start at 50 Rupee to 100 Rupee and there are discounts on making the payments digitally in advance. Such user charges have facilitated revenue collection at the same time enhancing accountability by residents. Also, in the Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC) 2025-26 budget, sanitation and road infrastructure were budgeted at 800 crore with 600 crore being dedicated particularly to waste management services. More financing was also raised with smart city funding and environmental funding.

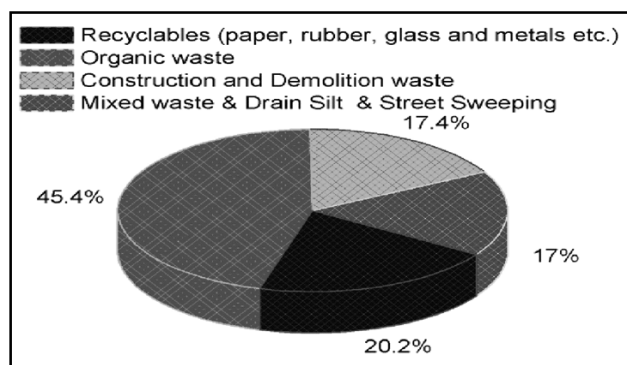
• **Public Engagement and Institutional Capacity**

The success of Lucknow’s waste management system has also been driven by community involvement and institutional strengthening. The municipal workforce, comprising over 8,500 employees, includes women and informal sector workers who have been formally integrated into the collection system. Regular Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns have increased public awareness and compliance with waste segregation norms. The city’s model has gained national recognition, with Andhra Pradesh government officials visiting Lucknow to study and potentially replicate its waste practices under the Swachh Andhra

initiative.

- **Composition of MSW in Lucknow (2016)**

A pie chart detailing the percentage composition of municipal solid waste in Lucknow—showing major categories like organic waste (~45/ %), paper/plastics (~31/ %), and inertmaterials—in 2016.



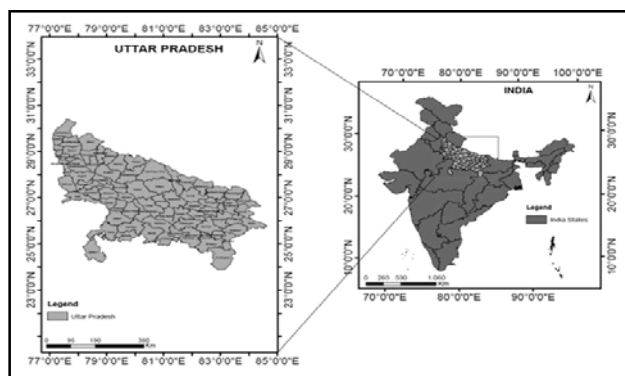
Source: Verma, A., Kumar, A., & Singh, S. (2019). Application of Multi-Linear Model for Forecasting Municipal Solid Waste Generation in Lucknow City. *Current World Environment*, 14(3), 549–558.

- **EV Investment & Emissions Savings in Lucknow's Waste Fleet**

From the Lovkown Electric Mobility Plan (2022), Tables 12 & 13 present:

- * Estimated costs and operational savings of replacing 490 e 3 wheelers and 200 mini trucks in waste collection with electric vehicles (INR 6.61/ Cr investment yielding INR 17.7/ Cr savings).

- * CO₂ reductions: ~705/ t annually Invest UP.



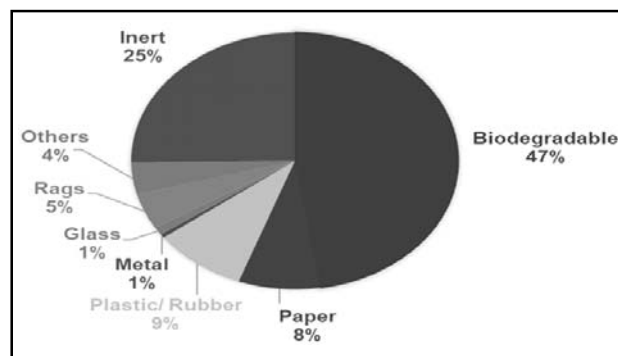
(Source: PwC & Smart City Mission. (2022). *Clean Energy Mobility Plan: Lucknow*. Government of Uttar Pradesh.)

- **From CPCB/MoSPI (2020–21 data):**

From CPCB/MoSPI (2020–21 data):

- * Total MSW generated: 160,038/ TPD; 95.4/ % collected, of which:

- ~50/ % treated,
- ~18.4/ % landfilled,



(Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). (2024). *Solid Waste Management in India: Statistical Compendium*. Government of India.)

Legacy Waste Remediation & Shivri Plant Upgrade

Volume Processed: Over 10 lakh MT (53%) of the initial 18.5–19 lakh MT legacy pile has been cleared via bioremediation since January 2024. Capacity Expansion: Three plants each processing H²/ 700/ MT/day, totaling 2,100/ MT/day, fully functional since early 2025. Reclamation & Byproducts: ~15 acres of reclaimed land (now landscaped) and conversion of waste into RDF, coarse soil, compost, and inert material for infrastructure. Energy & Environmental Infrastructure: Plans for on-site 2,000/ TPD waste-to-energy plant and a solar power facility in collaboration with NTPC. Eco-Remediation Infrastructure: Use of 2,000/ TPD bioremediation machines, leachate treatment, 24/ ×/ 7 CCTV monitoring, and greenbelt creation to mitigate pollution.

Fresh Waste Collection & Transportation

EV Fleet: Deployment of 150–747 zero-emission electric vehicles across zones for door-to-door collection, complemented by Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) and multiple transfer stations. Compactor Stations: Introduction of sealed capsule-

type transfer facilities processing ~29/ MT per trip to reduce leaks and odour. Open Vehicles Enforcement: Stricter actions against non-compliance (open trucks spreading rubbish).

Financing & Policy

Slab-based User Fees: Since June 21, 2025, households pay Rs/ 50–100/month based on property tax: approx. 40% pay ¹ 50. A 10% digital payment discount was offered initially.

- Budget Allocations: 2025–26 LMC budget included ¹ 800/ Cr for roads and sanitation (Rs 600/ Cr specifically for waste services).

- Additional civic infrastructure funds: ¹ 144/ Cr (including C&D processing).

- Smart-city & environment: ¹ 500/ Cr (¹ 173/ Cr specifically earmarked for solid waste, transfer stations) via Finance Commission and other sources.

Stakeholder Engagement & Replicability

- AP Delegation Visit: Andhra Pradesh officials visited Lucknow's Smart City command center, Shivri plant operations, MRF, and C&D facility (300/ T/ day) for replication in Swachh Andhra initiative.

- Institutional Capacity: Municipal workforce (~8,500 staff) with emphasis on inclusion of women and informal workers. IEC campaigns increased compliance and awareness.

Discussion

Operational Efficiency: Integrated EVs, compactors, and real-time tracking have improved collection reliability—though gaps remain, such as drain clogging and inconsistent collection in some wards.

Environmental Benefits: EVs and sealed transport vehicles reduce emissions and public nuisance. Bioremediation, leachate treatment, and greenbelt initiatives significantly lower pollution. Financial Sustainability: Tiered-user fees and large-budget allocations enable ongoing investments.

Scalable Model: Lucknow's infrastructure is inspiring inter-state adoption—Andhra Pradesh is replicating its systems.

Challenges & Risks: Ensuring 100% operational compliance, maintaining zero-open transport, completing energy plant integration, and sustaining user participation require continuous oversight.

Lucknow's recent innovations in waste management showcase a holistic approach combining infrastructure, policy reforms, technology, and community engagement. The commissioning of the Shivri Plant and legacy waste remediation indicate a significant improvement in environmental health, evident from the reclaimed land and clean surroundings. The introduction of RFID- and GPS-enabled electric collection fleets, alongside MRFs and sealed compactors, addresses core urban issues like spillage, odour, and leakages.

More importantly, financing through tiered-user fees and substantial budgetary allocations help maintain sustainability and scalability. Engagement with informal workers and targeted IEC campaigns have created an enabling environment for smoother public cooperation. Inter-state delegations (such as from Andhra Pradesh) signal Lucknow's success as a replicable model.

Still, challenges persist. Sustaining high rates of source segregation, ensuring regular monitoring of fleet operations, expanding the material recovery capacity further, and transitioning to energy recovery (e.g., waste-to-energy and solar power generation) will require continuous oversight and adaptation. Continued training of staff, periodic community feedback loops, and data transparency will further enhance long-term performance.

Policy Implications & Recommendations

- Strengthen Governance Frameworks: Develop statutory guidelines for MSW operations that encourage PPPs and facilitate technology adoption across cities.

- Promote User Accountability: Expand slab-wise user fees and incentivize waste segregation at source (e.g., tax rebates for composting, discounts for timely payments).

- Integrate Circular Economy Practices: Expand composting and RDF use in nearby industries; ensure materials recovery networks are financially sustainable.

- Leverage Data & AI: Develop predictive models using collected data to optimize fleet movement and identify hotspots of poor compliance.

- Encourage Inter-City Cooperation: Foster

knowledge exchange programs for successful replication of best practices across India.

Conclusion

Lucknow's waste management transformation illustrates that urban centres can pivot toward a sustainable and circular model of MSW handling. The city successfully integrates modern engineering solutions with socially inclusive policies and financial viability. These innovations — door-to-door EV-based collection, bioremediation of legacy sites, and a digitized command-and-control system — not only improve cleanliness and public health but also align with national missions like Swachh Bharat and the

Sustainable Development Goals. The Lucknow case provides a pragmatic blueprint for other cities looking to tackle similar challenges and underscores that with robust policy support and local capacity-building, urban India can achieve its zero-garbage aspirations.

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Mohd. Dilshad

Commerce, Community and Faith: Virji Vohra, Merchant of 17th Century Gujarat

Abstract

This paper examines the commercial activities and socio-religious influence of Virji Vohra, a prominent Jain merchant of 17th century Surat. Through extensive analysis of English East India Company records and contemporary European accounts, this study demonstrates how Vohra's business acumen and strategic positioning enabled him to dominate Gujarat's maritime trade while maintaining significant influence over both European trading companies and local merchant communities. The paper explores the intersection of commerce, community leadership, and religious obligations in early modern Indian mercantile society.

Introduction

Virji Vohra, a distinguished Jain businessman of Surat, exemplified the sophisticated commercial networks that characterized 17th century Gujarat's maritime trade. Generally maintaining positive relations with the Mughal authorities, he was proficient in both Persian, the court language, and Gujarati. He possessed substantial capital resources that allowed him to engage in wholesale trade with Persia, Arabia, East Africa, and the Red Sea region, where he maintained his own commercial agents.

The career of Virji Vohra is extensively documented in thirteen volumes of the English East India Company records edited by William Foster. Until his demise in the 1670s, Vohra sustained close affiliations with the English Company, providing a comprehensive record of his commercial endeavors.

The Dutch East India Company's documents also highlight Vohra's extensive business dealings with them. He functioned as the Company's principal credit provider and a significant buyer of its imported products.¹ The French traveller Thevenot, who visited India in the 1660s, formed a friendship with Virji Vohra in Surat. In his book, he recounts the financial losses incurred by the prominent trader due to Shivaji's assault on Surat in 1664.² This information provides insight into Vohra's capital reserves and his ability to withstand significant losses.

Personal Background and Religious Authority

There are no details available about his family except for one Jain tradition which states that his daughter was a follower of the Anchal *gaccha* of the Shvetambara Jain sect. K.H. Kamdar, for the first time, pointed out that Vohra was a Sthanakvasi Jain of the *gachhiya* group and may have been a member of the Shrimali-Oswal-Porwal caste grouping. Besides his commercial activities, Vohra was deeply involved in religious affairs and served as a sanghapati/Sanghvi³ of his community. "Those who wanted to take *diksha* had to seek his permission, and without it they were not allowed. Virji Vohra constantly checked the knowledge of *agam* literature of those seeking *diksha*, and if he as well as the order was satisfied, he would give his assent for *diksha*."⁴

Civic Responsibilities and Community Engagement

Regrettably, both European and indigenous sources provide no insight into his lifestyle. However,

it is evident that he endeavored to fulfill his civic obligations. During the catastrophic famine of 1630-32, he allocated grain and prepared meals for the starving and destitute.⁵ Similar to his contemporaries in the Jain community, he generously supported the socio-religious activities of his group. His investments in quicksilver and vermillion were substantial. Quicksilver was used widely in the process of refining gold and its conversion to vermillion was used in great quantities in Hindu-Jain households and religious establishments for ritual purposes.⁶ The public posturing of morality required at the community level was contrary to the business skills and cunning exercised by the Jain *banias* with their customers and competitors. The acquisition of wealth was highly desired. Even the European trading companies did not dare to challenge his authority.

Commercial Network and Operations

According to the English records, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, Virji Vohra had started his career as a wholesale trader. He maintained a large organizational network of commercial interests. Representatives and branches of Virji Vohra were active at Bharuch, Baroda, Ahmedabad, Agra, Golconda, Burhanpur, Nandurbar, the Konkan and the Malabar coasts.⁷ His agents were active in the port towns of the Middle East and Southeast Asian countries.⁸ This strategic placement of agents allowed him to procure commodities directly from their production sources at significantly lower prices, thus enabling him to outbid competitors in pricing these goods. He possessed vessels as well.⁹ His ability to establish a vast trade organization stemmed from the substantial capital available to him.¹⁰

Relations with the English East India Company

Virji Vohra's engagements with the European trading companies bring out his business skills and might, highlighting the strength of the Indian mercantile class in the seventeenth century. The first reference to Virji Vohra appears in the records of the East India Company. On March 22, 1619, it recommended the bearer, 'HackaParracke, beeinge servant Virgee Vora (Virji Vohra), merchante of this citie', to the 'courteous usage' of all English ships.¹¹ Thus the Company gave permission for him to use all the English ships. Another

reference from the same year indicates that Virji Vohra gave twenty-five thousand mahmudis to the English as a loan.¹²

Virji Vohra always maintained a bargaining edge with the English Company. In 1625, the East India Company found Deccan pepper available in Surat to be better than that elsewhere, and ordered larger quantities. Thus the president of the factory agreed with 'VergeeVora', 'a merchant of this towne' to purchase from him Deccan pepper worth £10,000 at the rate of 16 mahmudis per maund, but Virji demanded the rate of 16¼ mahmudis per maund and as part of the same bargain he also wanted twenty-five chests of the available coral of the Company at a price which could seriously damage the expected profits of the company. To keep an upper hand in the bargain, Virji Vohra accumulated all the pepper bought by 'the Dacanne merchants' who were not permitted to sell it to anyone else. The Company tried to avoid Virji's terms of trade. It sent its broker 'Hirgee' (Hariji) secretly to Deccan with bills of credit worth Rs. 4,000 to explore other possibilities. But the Company broker failed to obtain any pepper as 'VirgeeVora' had already offered the Deccani merchants a quarter of a mahmudi per maund higher than the English could tender. The Company could get the pepper only when Virji Vohra slightly modified his terms and the English also feared that the Dutch would step in to secure the pepper.¹³

Strategic Leverage and Market Manipulation

Whenever required, Virji Vohra never hesitated to flex his muscles against the Company to gain favor for himself or the trading community of Surat. In December 1628, some principal merchants of Surat brought to the port far more goods than could be loaded on the English ships for transportation to *Gombroon* (Bandar Abbas), a town on the Persian Gulf. When the Company officials hesitated to load all the goods, Hari Vaisya and Virji Vohra, on behalf of all the traders, threatened that, unless all the goods be taken, they would ask for immediate repayment of all their debts owed by the Company. The Company could not do so due to lack of cash. Ultimately, the Company decided to defer the dispatch of one ship 'Hart' to England, to send it with the rest

of the surplus goods to Persia.¹⁴

The trading network of Virji Vohra spread over north India as well. English Factors at Agra informed the president and Council at Surat in 1628 about the receipt of the letter of credit (*hundi*) for twenty thousand rupees. But they could not use it initially as the *wakil* (representative) of Virji Vohra did not encash the letter of credit immediately. Moreover, for the encashment he demanded 'bottowe' (*bhatta*)¹⁵ or discount of at least three if not four percent which was found by the Company to be too high. The same letter explains the context of this maneuvering for the extraordinary rate of letter of credit by the representative of Virji Vohra. In fact, this was the time when Shah Jahan was going to take the reins of the Mughal Empire and this transition phase was not seen as conducive for such financial and trading transactions.¹⁶

Despite such experiences, the English Company depended upon the services of Virji Vohra. In 1630 the Council at Surat asked the factors at Agra for a larger stock of indigo than usually required. They enclosed a bill of exchange for twenty-five thousand rupees drawn upon 'VimgeeKica (Bhomji Kaka) the vakall (*wakil*, agent) who hath also furnished us with a letter of credit to the amount of 25000 for your further supplies upon all occasions'.¹⁷ In 1633, the Company Council at Surat decided to accept an offer from Virji Vohra for their amber beads and fine corals. For the amber beads he had to pay six and a quarter rupees per seer after three and a half months. He was supposed to discharge the debt for the beads in the form of rupees at Ahmedabad and in the form of mahmudis at Surat. He purchased fifty-six chests at the cost of eight and three quarter rupees per small seer, four chests at the cost of nine and a half rupees per seer and thirty-two chests at four rupees per seer.¹⁸ It seems that the price of the coral was decided on the basis of its quality. The company council at Surat was weary of his unprofitable correspondence and they decided to shake his monopoly by degrees and tried to move towards more favorable offers. Thus it was decided by the Company to accept an offer made by "Tappidas Sheroff" of 9½ rupees per seer for 30 chests of fine coral.¹⁹

Monopolistic Practices and Market Control

In 1634, the English factors of Surat reported back to England that they had decided to sell some corals to merchant Tapi Das with apprehensions as it could offend Virji Vohra. The English Factory President, William Methwold and his council were of the view that:

*The potency of Virjee Vorah (who hath been the usual merchant, and is now become the sole monopolist of all European commodities) is observed to bear such sway amongst all the inferior merchants of his town that when they would often times buy (and pay greater prices) they are still restrained, not daring to betray their intents to his knowledge and their own sufferance, in as much that the time and price is still in his will and at his own displeasure.*²⁰

Virji Vohra carried so much clout that even two years after this coral transaction, Tapi Das could not dare to admit that he had purchased that coral, as he feared offending Virji Vohra. The coral remained in the East India Company warehouse.²¹ In fact, most of the merchants and the English were constantly apprehensive of Virji Vohra's influence:

*VirgeeVora by reason of our continuall mighty ingagements, must not be displeased in any case. I confess him to bee a man that hath often supplied our wants in Suratt with moneys, for his owne ends. Notwithstanding, I hold him to have bynn the most injurious man to your trade in all the Mogulls dominions; for what ordinary Banian merchant dare come to the English Howse to look upon corall or any other commodity, hee by his potencie and intimacy with the Governor forgeth somewhat or other against the poor man, utterly to ruine him: so that no merchant in the towne dare displease him by comeing to our house to look upon any commodity, except some or other sometimes whome he sends purposely to bid for a commodity (that hee is about) little or nothing, onely to make us weary of our commodities. He knoweth that wee (in regard of our extreameingagement) must sell, and so beats us downe till we come to his owne rates; and this hath hymn his proceedings this many years.*²²

In 1642, Virji monopolized the coral trade with the help of the Mughal governor. His influence was such that all other merchants did not dare to visit the English Factory. The English Company noted that, as long as the Company remained indebted to moneylenders like Virji Vohra, their trade would remain unstable.²³ The versatility of the commercial magnate comes out through his interface with the Europeans. The English Factors always knew that Virji Vohra was 'the most injurious man' for their trade. He was also a costly creditor who supplied their wants in Surat with moneys for his own ends.²⁴

Extended Commercial Operations

Virji Vohra had a presence at Burhanpur also as John Drake was ordered by the Council at Surat to deliver letters to 'cassidas' (Kasi Das), the vacquile (*wakil* / agent) of 'VirgeeVorah', and to 'Culliangee' (Kalyanji), the broker.²⁵ It seems that, at times, the British also used the proxy of Virji Vohra to purchase goods from their competitors and Vohra was also allowing the British to use his goodwill. In 1635, when the 'Overseer General [the Viceroy] at Goa desired a supply of copper, 900 quintals were to be bought from the Dutch (by the name of VirgeeVorah)'.²⁶ Sometimes the English Company had to take a favor from Virji Vohra to avoid the pressures of his agents. John Drake and the Factors at Ahmedabad were ordered by the Surat Council to forward a 'cheet' from Virji Vohra ordering his agents not to press the Factors for payment.²⁷

Political and Administrative Relations

Under Shah Jahan's reign, the Virji Vohra trading house significantly influenced the economy. He was a business entrepreneur in Surat who gained prominence alongside Ishaq Beg, who subsequently became the Governor of Surat.²⁸ The English frequently utilized the services offered by Virji Vohra for transferring substantial sums of money from Surat to Agra via *hundis*.²⁹ He imposed a substantial surcharge, discount, or variance in exchange rates for the transmission of mahmudis, pagodas, and various currencies in rupees. His letters of credit to the English assisted them multiple times during their financial adversities. In 1647, he funded the English Company's expedition to Pegu in Burma and provided a

substantial sum.³⁰

Furthermore, as the leader of the Mahajan group, he held supreme authority within the organization. On other occasions, he acted as an intermediary between his *mahajan* community and the government. Officials summoned him to provide counsel on commercial issues. He was informed of governmental choices impacting the interests of his group.

Conclusion

Virji Vohra's career illuminates the sophisticated commercial networks and complex power relationships that characterized 17th century Indian Ocean trade. His success derived from the strategic integration of substantial capital resources, extensive geographical networks, and astute political relationships with both Mughal authorities and European trading companies. Through careful analysis of his business practices, we observe how indigenous merchants navigated the challenges and opportunities presented by expanding European commercial presence while maintaining dominant positions within established trading systems.

Vohra's story demonstrates that early colonial commercial relationships were characterized by mutual dependence rather than simple European dominance. His ability to consistently dictate terms to the English East India Company, manipulate market conditions, and maintain monopolistic control over key commodities reveals the continued strength of Indian mercantile capitalism during this transitional period. The English Company's repeated acknowledgment of their dependence on his financial services, despite recognizing his "injurious" impact on their trade, underscores the practical limitations of European commercial power in early 17th century India.

The integration of Vohra's commercial activities with his religious and civic responsibilities reflects broader patterns within Jain merchant communities, where business success was expected to support both religious institutions and community welfare. His role as sanghapati demonstrates how commercial wealth translated into religious authority, while his charitable activities during the 1630-32 famine illustrate the social obligations associated with mercantile prosperity.

Vohra's extensive use of financial instruments such as hundis, bills of exchange, and letters of credit reveals the sophistication of Indian commercial and banking practices. His ability to coordinate complex multi-regional transactions, maintain agents across vast geographical areas, and provide substantial credit facilities demonstrates the advanced state of indigenous financial systems well before the consolidation of European colonial control.

The documented tensions between Vohra's monopolistic practices and English commercial interests highlight fundamental conflicts between established Indian trading patterns and emerging European corporate structures. While the English sought competitive markets and standardized pricing, Vohra operated within traditional frameworks that emphasized personal relationships, community obligations, and hierarchical market control.

This case study contributes to our understanding of early modern Indian commercial history by demonstrating how successful indigenous merchants

adapted to changing political and economic conditions while maintaining essential elements of established trading practices. Vohra's career reveals the agency and resilience of Indian commercial networks during the early phases of European expansion, providing important correctives to narratives that overemphasize European commercial dominance in this period.

Further research into similar merchant careers and commercial networks would enhance our understanding of the complex processes through which traditional Indian trading systems eventually gave way to colonial economic structures. The extensive documentation of Vohra's activities in European sources suggests that many comparable figures await scholarly attention, potentially revealing additional dimensions of Indo-European commercial interaction during this crucial transitional period.

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1. It is stated that in 1668 Virji Vohra and Haji Zahid had in stock enough quicksilver and vermilion to satisfy the requirements of the 'Whole country for many years', *EFI*, 1668-9. p. 24.; Jawaidd Akhtar, "Mercantile and Financial Operations of Virji Vohra", the Great 17th Century Merchant of Surat', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 57th Session, Madras, 1996, p. 318.
2. Jean De Thevenot, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 22.; Virji Vohra, the richest merchant and banker of his time. The English had dealings with him as early as 1617, and he was the Company's largest creditor in Surat. He had agents at Agra, Ahmadabad and other places. In 1643, the Court of Committees sent an iron chest from Nuremburg' as a present to Virji, Pant, *The Commercial Policy of the Moguls*, p. 137. He died probably in 1677, and is frequently mentioned in the letters of the time (W. Foster, *The English Factories in India*). Thevenot's statement that Virji was a "Banian" leaves no doubt about his religion.
3. The leader of a Jain sangha was called *sanghpati*. According to *Shatrunjayamahatamaya* the most pious act is to take out a *sanghyatra* (community pilgrimage) and only then is a *sanghpati*'s life treated as being successful.
4. Keshavlal H. Kamdar, Surat Bandarno Karodahipati Mahajan Virji Voro, *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1968. Pp. 276-9.
5. Samay Sundar, Satyasia Dushkal Varnan Chhatasi, p. 508.
6. B.G. Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century: A Study in Urban History of Pre-Modern India*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1979. P. 139.
7. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1642-45)*; *EFI*, 1637-41, p. 42.
8. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1637-41)*, pp. 235, 288.
9. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1618-21)*, p. 86.
10. Keshavlal H. Kamdar, "Surat Bandarno Karodahipati Mahajan Virji Voro", *Journal of*

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11. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1618-21)*, p. 86.
 12. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1651-54)*, p. 30.
 13. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1642-45)*, p. 94.
 14. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1642-45)*, p. 300.
 15. Hindi *bhatta*, discount or difference in exchange over the amount in transaction.
 16. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1642-45)*, p. 234.
 17. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1630-33)*, p. 56.
 18. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1630-33)*, p. 301.
 19. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1634-36)*, p. 24.
 20. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1634-36)*, p. 24.
 21. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1636-36)*, p. 218.
 22. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1642-45)*, p. 108.
 23. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1642-45)*, p. 108.
 24. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1655-60)*, p. 369.
 25. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1634-36)*, p. 55.
 26. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1634-36)*, p. 100-1.
 27. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1634-36)*, p. 274.
 28. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1618-21)*, p.86.
 29. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1624-29)*, p. 190.
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The Role of International Organizations in Addressing Global Social Issues: Evaluating Effectiveness and Limitations

Abstract

A more globalized world faces global social challenges like poverty, inequality, epidemics, refugee displacement, and climate change, and they require international collaboration to address. International organizations (IOs) such as the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and many regional organizations have become central players in resolving these transnational problems. The paper critically evaluates the role of international organizations in developing, funding, and enabling cross border social development programs. It investigates their capacity to create consensus, draw on resources, enforce norms, and deliver on humanitarian aid to vulnerable groups. It examines the history of the development of IOs and case studies in areas such as health (l.g., the role of WHO in the fight against COVID-19), education (l.g., the role of UNESCO in international literacy drives), and poverty reduction (l.g., the role of the World Bank in Social Safety Net insurances). Although these organizations have facilitated a considerable achievement on enhancing health indicators, alleviable of abject poverty, and empowering gender equity, their performances are usually limited by political whims, power disparity, financial reliance and absence of enforcement procedures. This paper maintains that although IOs have been influential in determining global social governance, it is usually hindered by bureaucratic stasis, sovereign interests and the influence of

powerful member states. In addition, their top to bottom strategies occasionally do not interface with the political base realities and only a little interventional sustainability is realized. With an assessment of the institutional weaknesses/strengths of IOs, the paper postulates a more responsible, comprehensive, and answerable system of international cooperation in social matters. This paper will point out that global governance should undergo changes in order to lay more emphasis on democratization, accountability and equity in the betterment of the future outcome of the international bodies on the universal societal matter as far as justice and human development are concerned.

Keywords: International Organizations, Governance, United Nations, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, etc.

Introduction

The process of globalization has changed the social, economic and political landscape of the world radically. Although it has facilitated heightened levels of interconnectivity, trade, and cultural exchange, it has also created intricate and mutually dependent social problems beyond national borders. Issues like poverty, gender inequality, forced migration, global health/environmental crises and humanitarian catastrophes have taken shapes that cannot be resolved one country at a time. International organizations (IOs) have also become widely regarded as important instruments of collective action and collaboration in this respect (Mingst, 2009). Since United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies to

international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), these institutions are core in the fashioning of world agendas and reaction towards social challenges (**Shai, 2019**).

The 20th century with its legacy of two world wars as well as ideological conflicts of the cold war period witnessed the establishment of some of the most crucial global organizations established in the promotion of peace, political stability, and human development. Multilateral governance was set in motion by the formation of the United Nations in 1945 with a wide mandate to preserve international peace and security and to foster social development (**Ikedinobi, 2025**). Agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and others came to be central in combating health emergencies, reconstruction efforts in post-conflict status in addition to fostering education, gender equality and poverty alleviation. Also, international financial organizations such as IMF and World Bank were incorporated to combine economic stability and expand the economy, which directly affected the social situation in low-income and medium-income countries (**Forster, 2020**).

These organizations serve as a platform of negotiation, fixing standards, sharing of knowledge, capacity development and technical supports. They are also involved in the financing and carrying out megaprojects and policy interventions worldwide. As an example, the WHO has been instrumental in eradicating smallpox globally and remains pivotal in leading pandemic control efforts, including that of the COVID-19. Likewise, UNHCR has responded to millions of marvelled individuals in the climate change-driven crises brought about by wars and persecution with resettlement help. UNESCO has spearheaded global literacy movements and initiatives it has done in terms of equal access to education in the field of education (**Pasternak, 2023**).

Yet, despite such contributions, international organizations undergo increasing criticism concerning the effectiveness, practical impacts, and legitimacy of their activities. They have enjoyed significant success in isolated areas, but they have variable success in producing sustained and inclusive results. Critics point

out that structural and political constraints inhibit the majority of IOs to take any autonomous action or engage in effective decision-making (**Sommerer, 2022**). Resource distributions, agendas, and priorities may be affected by power asymmetries among different member states, in particular, between the donating and receiving countries. The preponderance of powerful states in the decision-making, the kind of permanence the members of the security council in the UN or the governing structures of the IMF and the World Bank, there is an issue of equity and representation (**Deacon, 2007**).

Moreover, the bureaucratic character of most international organizations may be frequently ineffective, redundant and unrelated to the local dynamics. Their interventions are usually technocratic or top-down based which does not necessarily consider the opinions of grassroot communities or the lack of connection with local institutions and civil society. Humanitarian emergencies may also be complicated by the competing state sovereignty and humanitarian international norms in the form of delayed or impeded access to the affected people in conflict areas or in countries with authoritarian regimes (**Rittberger, 2019**). The global environment international organizations have to work in is even more volatile because of increasing nationalism, geopolitical conflicts and climate crises, and contracting civic spaces. Such tendencies have endangered the principles of multilateralism and collaboration which IOs are based on. One example includes the withdrawal of certain states in international contracts, reduction on resources or even conscious withdrawal by states in global institutions detrimental to the strength of the IOs to execute their mandates. This paper seeks to evaluate critically the contribution of international bodies to dealing with global social issues with emphasis on an evaluation of their roles as well as something that they cannot do. It looks at the institutional process by which IOs operate and the limitations that exist by examining specific cases and policy implementation into health, poverty, schools and refugees. It even examines ways in which reform in international governance and encouragement of more participatory, transparent and more equitable international systems might improve the effectiveness of these organizations. Lastly, in a world where cooperation is vital and necessary, it is

important to learn the strengths and weaknesses of the international organizations. The future of IOs as they relate to the construction of a more just and sustainable world will be measured by their capacity to be adaptive, innovative and inclusive in approaches.

Global Social Issues and the Mandate of International Organizations

Global social issues in the 21st century have become more intricate, dependent on one another, and time-sensitive. These challenges are severe lack of money, starvation, sex discrimination, involuntary displacement, child exploitation, world health crisis, illiteracy, and environmental destruction. They do not distinguish between national boundaries and are more likely to influence several countries at once, which is why they need to be dealt with at once, coordinated, and multilateral. In this regard, international organizations have become key players in terms of finding, tackling, and dealing with such challenges. Their mission is grounded in their peacekeeping, social justice, human rights, and sustainable development missions across international borders (**Hurd, 2017**). The United Nations (UN) remains the most notable common international organization mandated to solve the global social matters. The charter, which it was founded under in 1945, similarly focused on peace and security, but added an explicit call to social improvement, enhancing standards of living, and acknowledging human rights. The UN and its specialized agencies like the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations High Commissioner of refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have over time evolved institutional capabilities to operate within the various social sectors (**Michael Barnett, 2004**). These organizations are instrumental in-service provision, advocacy of marginalized groups, as well as agenda-setting at the global level e.g., the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its offshoot, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The social process is also influenced by international financial institutions (such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (IMF)), which are predominantly economic, but whose financial investments in socially-based programs help build a community in terms of poverty alleviation, education, health, and infrastructure. Their structural

adjustment programs and conditional loans have the direct implication on the developing countries structurally in terms of massive implications, both good, and bad to the social welfare systems and services provided to the people. On the same note, international organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO) acts on a global scale to help ensure labor rights, living wages, and safe working environments that address problems like child labor, gender discrimination, and modern slavery (**Forster, 2020**).

These bodies act under mandates which provide normative and operational power to them. They formulate normative frameworks, guidelines, and standards that normatively describe how the world global social issues will be understood and approached. As an example, WHO establishes international standards regarding health and disease prevention, whereas UNESCO develops education structures and policies that can be adapted by member states. On the operational level, these entities tend to interact directly with national governments, civil society, and local institutions to execute programs, disburse funds, and offer humanitarian aid (**Kenneth Abbott, 2010**). Partnerships and diplomacy are the foundations of functions of international organizations as well. They perform the role of facilitating between the donor country and the recipient country and mediate interests, holding them accountable and ensuring policy coherence. This is especially apparent in times of humanitarian disasters - e.g. after natural disasters, contagious diseases, or following conflicts - when international organizations coordinate responses to disasters, aid delivery as well as offering protection to vulnerable groups. They also tend to ensure that whatever emergencies are taking place anywhere are captured globally; otherwise, they would remain overlooked or obscure (**Pogge, 2007**).

Nevertheless, it is not an easy task to meet this requirement entirely. The missions of these organizations are occasionally distorted by political interference, donor-led priorities, and powerful state dominance. In addition to that, strains between national sovereignty and global regulation often restrict the extent of intervention. In spite of these challenges, international organizations are important to the development of global discourses on social justice, the mobilization of resources to marginalized groups,

and the enforcement of international commitments by states (**Mingst, 2009**). International organizations as well have broadened their involvement with non-state actors in recent decades, involving NGOs, private companies, and grassroots movements. This transition signifies the increasingly perceptible realization that global social problems cannot be solved with a single-stakeholder approach. International organizations are critical points of connecting global policymaking to local reality when addressing gender equality, preventing human trafficking, or responding to pandemics such as COVID-19 (**Sofia Lopes, 2025**). The scope of these organizations does not remain fixed; it changes in accordance with the new global tendencies and crises. The credibility and performance of international organizations depend not exclusively on their premises but also on their flexibility, inclusivity, and their impact on life outcomes of the most vulnerable human beings in the world.

Effectiveness of International Organizations

International organizations have been instrumental in how the world responds to social challenges and some of them have been found to mediate between governments, civil society, and transnational communities. Their success can be gauged in several ways- their ability to influence policy, their response to crisis situations, their ability to set standards, their performance at delivery of services and their ability to develop capacity (**Pasternak, 2023**). International organizations have, in most forms, been crucial in mobilization of resources, coordination of efforts across the world, and raising awareness to social problems that are otherwise forgotten. The capacity of international organizations to create and maintain international focus on social justice and development priorities is one of the strongest indicators of the successfulness of their operations. The very creation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 and their progression into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 showcases how the institutions like United Nations can develop the global agendas that coordinate the actions of governments, non-profits, and donors (**Sommerer, 2022**). These frameworks, rather than acting as guiding ideals alone, have acted as a monitor to track provisions, promote openness, and create political drive in the main social areas such as education, healthcare, gender equality, and poverty alleviation.

International organizations have a normative impact on many countries that have adjusted their national development plans towards the SDGs.

The international bodies have also been useful in the coordination of the emergency response to the crisis which would not be easily taken care of by a single country. An example is the World Health Organization (WHO) that has been on the forefront in coordinating the health emergencies worldwide such as the Ebola outbreak in the West Africa region and the COVID 19 pandemic (**Sofia Lopes, 2025**). Nevertheless, despite its failures, WHO has managed to deliver technical guidance, coordinate the scientist's efforts, and help in the distribution of vaccines and medical equipment to regions that need them most. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in a similar vein has proven to be very instrumental in securing, sustaining and providing food, shelter and legal aid when there is forced migration caused by war or natural calamity. The other effectiveness indicator would be development and implementation of international norms and conventions. The International labour organization (ILO) has come up with various labour standards which have been adopted by the member states affecting the domestic labour laws and working standards all over the world (**Michael Barnett, 2004**). The normative abilities of international agencies can be observed in conventions against child labor, forced labor, and discrimination at work that tend to compel some changes in the policies even at the domestic level. IOs have also served in most instances to establish dialogue and collaboration among nations that hold different political ideals as neutral grounds of multilateral negotiation and peace-building.

Moreover, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other global financial organizations have injected highly needed funds and policies to the third world countries. These bodies have allowed structure formations, delivery of societal services and stabilization of economies of countries with notable limitations in terms of finances. These have been felt in the social investment projects of theirs such as in the education and water and sanitary areas and in healthcare which have been measured as influencing the quality of life of millions of the population (**Hurd, 2017**). They have contributed to enhancing the local capability to deal with complex development

issues through the provision of not only funds, but also technical knowledge, training as well as monitoring systems. Another role of international organizations, which demonstrate its effectiveness, is connected with gathering information, research, and spreading knowledge. Non-governmental agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF, create information systems that are recognized and used globally to inform policymakers as well as researchers. These institutions have enhanced a better comprehension of the social matters through provision of evidenced based information and best practices across countries **(Pogge, 2007)**. Such a role becomes particularly essential in such a world where policy by data is becoming the prevailing order.

But they are not only effective because they are institutional but also because they have the capacity to generate trust and legitimacies among member states and citizens. The efficient international organizations are the ones that stay connected to global and local requirements, adaptable to the highly dynamic conditions, and are open in their activities. Once they find this balance, they will be able to become strong forces of equity, inclusion, and sustainability at the global level **(Ikedinobi, 2025)**. Although it is constrained, international organizations have over the years contributed significantly towards the enhancement of international social outcomes. They are successful because of not only direct interventions but the models of cooperation, accountability and long-term development. Because the world struggles with transnational social crises, relevant, innovative and inclusive turned out to be the main factor each of these organizations can survive to benefit the global social justice.

Limitations and Criticisms of International Organizations

Although international organizations have an extensive mandate and are globally recognized, limitations can be massive, which limits the effectiveness with which global problems can be dealt with. They are highly influential in establishing global agendas and orchestrating responses, although the efforts of such bodies are often rally-crippled by political, financial, structural and operational predicaments. These limitations have received criticism in the academic and policy spheres over the years, which identifies a disconnect between intentions and

outcomes on the ground. The lack of enforcement ability is one of the major criticisms of international organizations. The majority of them function within the context of state sovereignty, which implies that international norms, conventions or policies are usually adhered to at will **(Kenneth Abbott, 2010)**. Although institutions such as the United Nations, World Health Organization or the International Labour Organization have the authority to issue advisory and even put pressure on Western diplomacy, they cannot force states to do what they do not want to do unless supported by influential member states or treaties which are binding. Such restriction is particularly acute when time matters and the necessary response to an emergency situation is blocked by geopolitical interests and slow-downs in reaching the consensus. As an example, the lack of a prompt reaction or any action whatsoever by the international community in the instance of the Rwandan genocide or the Syrian refugee crisis has been branded as one of the greatest returns policy failures in history, proving that the political stagnation of larger powers can cripple a functionality of institutions.

Very closely related to this is the imbalance of the big state, especially in the body of an organization such as the United Nations Security Council or the International Monetary Fund. These institutions tend to remind the political and economic structure of the post-World War II arrangement in which the power of decision-making and input of funds is vested with a small group of developed states **(Hurd, 2017)**. The opponents criticize that this asymmetry of power thwarts democratic representation and the voices of Global South. Smaller or the wealthier countries could be at the mercy of the agendas of the larger ones or run the risk of being marginalized in the international policy matters altogether. Consequently, most international programs can be built up on the interests of the dominant and not the requirements of the weak.

The limited funds also compromise the capacity of the international organizations to implement what they promise. A great proportion of agencies rely on voluntary contributions made by member states which may be erratic or politically driven. During recession or nationalistic periods, states can decrease their funding promises and have a budgetary deficit which influences the program provision, employee occupancy and even medium term planning. Such

financial vulnerability undermines the maintainability and expandability of measures, notably in low-income households or war-stricken territories depending on the external assistance and know-how greatly **(Sommerer, 2022)**. Most international institutions are also bedevilled by bureaucracies. The administrative set-ups of these bodies are usually intricate and require several strata of coordination and this may hinder swiftness in decision making and responsiveness. Although they are designed to enforce accountability and facilitate cross border cooperation, such structures at times lead to redundancy of mandates and responsibilities, duplication of effort and competition inside the agencies. Besides, implementation at the field level may be deficient of the contextual knowledge whereby the application of standardized and global solution is done, with minimal interactions to the local communities, cultures and governance systems. Such a top-down process does not only hinder success but also breeds the idea of neocolonialism or foreign imposition **(Kenneth Abbott, 2010)**.

The other weakness is the accountability problem. In the case of national governments, accountability is delivered by way of democratic means, as they are answerable to the people they govern. International bodies are not necessarily so. Most of them may have internal audit and evaluation systems, but these systems are neither always open nor transparent. This democratic deficit may destroy trust when failure in service delivery or corruption allegation arise. Incidences of scandalous activities by peacekeeping forces, mismanagement of aids or mismanagement of crises have in some instances harmed the credibility of even the most renowned organizations **(Zürn, 2018)**. The sustainability of most of the international initiatives has also been questioned by some skeptics. The long-term transformation is often not centered on the program but instead the short-term project, donor or political milestones. The problem is that once outside financing is over, there is a chance that locals will not be able to support progress as their institutions lacks capacity and resources. This makes it a dependency model other than actual empowerment and enabling changes to take place **(Rittberger, 2019)**. Also, there is the tendency to consider quantitative results of the project more often, like how many schools are set or how many people were

vaccinated, rather than social inclusion, community ownership, or behavioral change.

In recent years, the credibility of international organizations has been undermined by the increased level of nationalism, geopolitical division and decline of multilateralism. The scope of cooperation should also reduce due to withdrawing of states into international agreements or the doubtfulness of the relevance of global governance institutions. The tendency risks hitting back decades of the joint efforts in solving the problems of unsolved social issues worldwide. Altogether, notwithstanding all the importance of international organizations to help resolve transnational issues, they cannot be considered impervious to criticism. They are founded on structural inequalities, political factors, and institutional inflexibilities and so their limitations go to the very foundations of their work **(Rittberger, 2019)**. Dealing with such deficiencies will stipulate not solely internal reformation but also renewed world-wide effort toward equity, inclusivity, and joint authority.

Examining the Role of International Organizations

The role of international organizations in solving global social problems can be described best in the particular case studies illustrating their work, successes, and sophisticated challenges existing in reality. Global health, education, labor rights, poverty alleviation, and humanitarian crises, among other issues described in the five following cases, reflect accurately the multifaceted nature of the roles these bodies play and the contradictions between their mandates and restrictions.

The World Health Organization (WHO) occupies a leading position among the institutions of global health governance, and its performance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic exposed it to unprecedented attention and criticism. Since the pandemic began in late 2019 and early 2020, WHO has been at the helm of organizing responses across the globe via issuing health advisories, technical guidance, and diagnosing, treatment instructions. It also supported the sharing of information in real-time between governments, scientists, and public health institutions. WHO also undertook such initiatives as the Solidarity Trial, to evaluate the effectiveness of treatments, and participating in securing vaccine equity worldwide with the COVAX program, in partnership with GAVI and

CEPI (**Sofia Lopes, 2025**). The organization has, however, experienced considerable criticism, including on its perceived slowness in declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and its treatment of initial Chinese data. Members like the United States against the Trump administration accused WHO of being excessively dependent on powerful states and unattached. This scandal highlighted the political susceptibility of international organizations who depend on the cooperation of member states and also funding. However, the actions of WHO were necessary in order to establish coordinated dialogue globally, standardize the operations of public health, as well as make sure that lower-income countries did not entirely lag behind when it comes to preparing and responding to the pandemic (**Sofia Lopes, 2025**).

The other important case is that of the progressive campaign of UNICEF on girls education that is now at the heart of international campaigns on gender equity and poverty reduction cycles. Certain communities found in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where girls have been denied access to education because of cultural, economic and infrastructural barriers are some of the areas where UNICEF has been instrumental in their policy change effort, sensitization of communities, and mobilization of resources. Programs such as the Campaigns of Let Us Learn and Back to School have enabled millions of girls to gain primary and secondary school education usually by associating themselves with local NGOs and National governments, and other multilateral institutions. UNICEF has not only worked at the enrolment front but also on the enhancement of quality in education, training to the teacher fraternity, menstrual hygiene management, and provision of safe learning environments (**UNICEF, 2025**). The measurable positive results are improved attendance at school, declaration of decline of child marriage, increase in literacy levels among the girls. Notwithstanding such achievements, some problems still exist. The persistent inability to make progress is based on structural inequalities, persistent conflict and the lack of political will to do so in certain states. Furthermore, certain critics state that in most cases the education campaigns are often framed in accordance with a Western-centric model that is unlikely to be consistent with local knowledge systems

or culture (**UNICEF, 2025**). However, UNICEF has played a notable role in passing on the girl's education to the development world and making it to stay in the Sustainable Goals.

Another strong case of global participation in a global humanitarian emergency is the one facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR has organised one of the largest refugee responses of the recent past since the civil war outbreak in Syria in 2011. Since there are above 6 million irrevocably displaced Syrians and above 5 million refugees who are accommodated by the neighboring nations which include Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, UNHCR has fostered the tremendous volunteer of humanitarian assistance such as shelter, feeding, healthcare service, and schooling (**Stevens, 2015**). The agency has been trying to enroll refugees and safeguard the legal rights together with representing their integration or resettlement. It also partnered with host countries to widen the services and infrastructure at a great strain. Nevertheless, the crisis has brought out the shortcomings of international mechanisms of protecting refugees. The system of resettlement all over the world is both under-financed and politically controversial. Numerous refugees have had to bear extended displacement and extend to no clear path to sustainable resolutions since voluntary returns have not been secure and third-country resettlements are constrained. Refusal to accept refugees has also seen some host governments put pressure pushing back long-term stay of refugees, and this has resulted in coercive deportation policies or fewer legal rights. UNHCR has been successful in orchestrating aids but it has little powers of enforcing refugee laws when countries in which the refugees seek refuge use their national interests. However, its use in addressing one of the most acute human displacement crisis in the world highlights why humanitarian activities should be multilateral (**Stevens, 2015**).

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers the World Bank developed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) which have been a transformational but contentious influence in national policy frameworks in the Global South; in the area of economic development and poverty reduction. PRSPs were initiated in the late 1990s and aimed to synchronize national poverty reduction strategy, debt relief and development assistance. To qualify to benefit under

the HIPC, countries had to prepare PRSPs that clearly presented how aid would intake on poverty, open-up the innards, and encourage the participation of citizens. Such papers were made conditions to the granting of concessional loans and grants by the international financial institutions **(Rittberger, 2019)**. On the one hand, PRSPs enhanced development planning accountability and promoted governments to liaise with the civil society and marginalized groups. In a few countries, PRSPs have resulted in an increased spending on social services that include health, education and rural development. Conversely, critics have also said that PRSPs were not only crafted by the interests of donor institutions but also the local demands. Public sector investment was often at the expense of continued emphasis on macroeconomic stability, neoliberal reforms of privatization and deregulation. As it actually happened, the citizen participation was not always accepted (there was a limited space allocated to it) and the priorities expressed by the grass-roots were not always observed in the implementations of the given frameworks. Hence, being moved by a PRSP model, on the one hand, contributed to the institutionalization of the focus on poverty in the development financing, on the other, it highlighted the conflicts between external pressure on policies and the national control.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has also been at the center stage to drive decent work and labour rights all over the world through its decent work agenda. This initiative is aimed at promoting 4 strategic objectives including creation of employment, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue. The Decent Work Agenda, adopted in 1999, has been able to shape labor policies over 100 countries and offer a platform in dealing with informal labor, gender inequality, and labor exploitation **(Rittberger, 2019)**. Tripartite cooperation between governments, employers and workers institutions enables ILO to promote the realization of the labor laws, the introduction of minimum wages, the spread of social protection, and the combat against child labor. The agenda has particularly played a crucial role in promoting the rights of labor on the greater development agenda including in the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal-8). Nonetheless, implementation is poor. The informal jobs still constitute the prevailing large portion of the labor

market in a significant number of countries, and acting upon the norms of labor is insubstantial. In many cases, the global supply chains are outside the oversight of national governments or even the ILO, and, therefore, workers of the garment, agricultural, and construction industries are regularly exposed to the violation of their rights **(Hurd, 2017)**. Additionally, the fact that conventions and recommendations issued by the ILO are based on consensus-building also means that they are not necessarily binding and always enforced. Nevertheless, the organization has done well in establishing international standards and raising awareness on the issue of decent work as being at the heart of social justice.

These case studies collectively expose the limitations as well as the strengths of the role of the international organizations in addressing the multi-faceted global socio-social issues. Although both bodies have contributed significantly on their respective areas, there has always been an interruption of such contributions in terms of political interest, structural constraints, as well as the development gap between establishment of policies and actual implementation. However, they are still invaluable players in the quest to achieve equitable, sustainable, and coordinated responses to the most concerning social concerns of the world.

Conclusion

In a realm where challenges are increasingly interconnected and dependencies are shared, the role of international organizations as a means to resolve global social challenges is gaining acuteness. In terms of health crises, the lack of education, refugee displacement, economic inequality, and labor exploitation, these associations have become essential mechanisms of collaboration, rule-making, and international mobilization of resources. Their practices have shown the significance of multilateralism in defining comprehensive responses and practicing of human rights, particularly to those exposed populations generally neglected by market-based or state-centered solutions. At different points of history, organizations like the World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank, and International Labour Organization have presented themselves working tirelessly to present frameworks, expertise, and operational support to alleviate some of the most severe social problems of our age.

Whether in response to coordinating a global pandemic, promoting girls education, working with refugees in protracted crisis, advising on strategies to eliminate poverty, or establishing global labor standards, these organizations have developed a vocabulary of accountability and community in an otherwise de-centered international system. Their existence has frequently served to keep social justice considerations in sight on global political programs and provide visibilities that allow the global prohibition of the experiences of deprived communities some subsequent echo in global conferences. Nevertheless, we must not ignore the weaknesses and criticism that these institutions have to address. Effectiveness, political neutrality, representativeness, and implementation capacity questions exist continually. Local ownership and responsiveness have been compromised by the influence of powerful states, funding dependencies, bureaucratic inefficiencies and even a one-size-fits-all development model. Social problems are historically based on past injustices and structural inequalities and thus, in many cases, are beyond the capabilities of technocratic or externally imposed solutions. As a result, international

organizations are necessary but not all-powerful. Their initiatives need to be constantly reviewed and readjusted to the changing global environment, the increasing level of populism, dwindling civic spaces, and the increasing South-South collaboration. Despite the weaknesses, the solution to this conundrum is not to walk away and leave these institutions but to make them stronger by improving their democratization, inclusiveness and their adaptability to the local reality. Their advantage in terms of bringing together stakeholders, exchanging best practices and developing global norms is unrivalled. Greater accountability and participatory multilateralism can restore the legitimacy and effectiveness of international institutions, whose endeavours retain the capacity to positively influence the highly intertwined social issues of today.

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Environment Impact of Bisalpur Dam: An analysis

Abstract

The Bisalpur Dam, located in Rajasthan, India, serves as a vital water source for irrigation and drinking purposes. However, its construction and operational activities pose several environmental challenges. This paper examines the impacts of the dam on water quality, air quality, noise pollution, waste management, and biodiversity. Construction activities can lead to water contamination due to accidental spills and poor waste management. Dust emissions from demolition, excavation, and machinery operation, along with increased vehicular movement, significantly affect air quality. Noise levels rise during construction, impacting nearby communities and workers. Proper management of solid and sewage waste is crucial to prevent land and water pollution. The dam's construction can also disrupt local ecosystems, affecting biodiversity. Mitigation strategies such as robust waste management, dust suppression measures, noise control, and habitat restoration are essential to minimize these impacts. This study emphasizes the importance of addressing environmental challenges to ensure the sustainable development of the Bisalpur Dam.

Keywords: Environmental impact, Water quality, Air quality, Noise pollution, Waste management, Biodiversity, Mitigation strategies, Construction activities, Sustainable development.

Introduction

The Bisalpur Dam, located in Rajasthan, India, is a major water resource project aimed at providing irrigation and drinking water to several districts.

Constructed on the Banas River, it plays a crucial role in addressing water scarcity in the region. While the dam offers substantial benefits, including water supply and agricultural support, it also poses several environmental challenges that need to be addressed for sustainable development.

This paper seeks to analyze the environmental impact of the Bisalpur Dam, focusing on key areas such as water quality, air quality, noise pollution, waste management, and biodiversity. Understanding these impacts is essential for developing effective mitigation strategies and ensuring that the benefits of the dam are realized without compromising environmental integrity.

The significance of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of both the positive and negative aspects of the dam's construction and operation. By highlighting potential environmental risks and proposing practical solutions, this research aims to contribute to a more sustainable and balanced approach to large-scale infrastructure projects like the Bisalpur Dam.

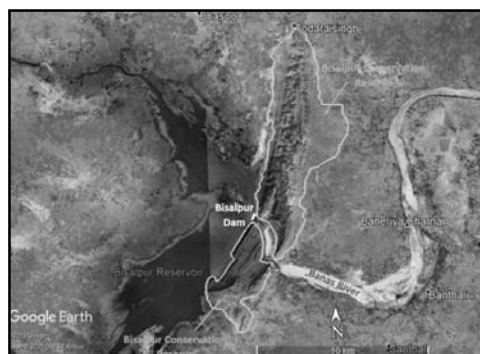


Figure 1: Location of Bisalpur Dam

The Bisalpur Dam across Banas river, a tributary of Chambal river was constructed in the year 1999 to create irrigation and drinking water supply capacity. The dam is located in Tehsil Toda Raisingh, near Bisalpur in Tonk district of Rajasthan. The dam supplies drinking water to the tune of 11.1 TMC to Jaipur and en-route villages and 5.1 TMC to Ajmer and en-route villages. Besides, irrigation supplies from the dam is of the order of 8 TMC to 81000 ha command area in Tonk, Todaraisingh, Uniyara and Deoli tehsils through 51 Km long right main canal and 18.65 km long left main canal. The nearest town is Deoli which is situated on Jaipur- Kota NH-12. Nearest airport is Jaipur, which is 185 km away from Dam and nearest Railway station is Bundi, which is 85 km from Dam. Distance of Bisalpur Dam from district Headquarter Tonk is about 72 km. Nearest Highway to Project is Jaipur-Kota State Highway (SH 52). The Project site is 19 km from Santhali village on SH 52 and 25 km from Deoli Tehsil. Salient features of the project area are reported below:

Table 1: Summary of Bisalpur Dam

Project	Bisalpur Drinking cum irrigation Project
River	Banas
Location	25°55' 22.14" / 75°27' 21.16"
Geographical Area	113723 hact
Cover Area	81800 Ha
Annual Water Supply	458.72 MCM
Catchment Area	27726 sq km
Main Dam	
Type	Masonry Gravity Dam
Length	574 m
Top Elevation	322.50 m
Lowest river bed elevation	295 m
Deepest Foundation level	283 m
Spillway	
Type	Ogee Spillway
Length	338 m
Location of spillway	Central spillway
Crest level	302.3 m
Number of bays	18
Discharge capacity at MWL	29046 cumec
Size of spillway gate	15 m wide and 14 m high
Reservoir	
Maximum water level	316.345 m
Full Reservoir Level	315.5 m
MDDL	295 m
Live storage	938.62 MCM
Gross storage	1095.84 MCM

Reservoir spread area	212.3 sq km
Date of start of construction	25-01-1985
Date of completion	11-06-1996
Date of first impoundment	11-08-2004

*Source: Water Resources Department,
Government of Rajasthan*

Data Collection and Methodology

To comprehensively analyze the environmental impact of the Bisalpur Dam, a robust data collection strategy is essential. The primary data collection will involve field surveys to gather firsthand information on water quality, air quality, noise levels, and biodiversity. Additionally, interviews and questionnaires will be conducted with local residents, workers, and stakeholders to collect qualitative data on the perceived impacts of the dam. Environmental monitoring equipment will be installed to measure real-time parameters such as water pollutants, air pollutants, and noise levels.

Secondary data collection will include a thorough literature review of existing research studies, environmental impact assessments, and government reports related to the Bisalpur Dam and similar projects. Data from government and non-governmental organizations' reports will be analyzed to gain insights into environmental quality and social impacts. Historical data on water quality, air quality, and biodiversity will be sourced from relevant databases and archives to provide context and identify trends.

Methodology

The methodology for analyzing the collected data involves several steps. Quantitative analysis will be conducted using statistical tools to analyze numerical data from field surveys and environmental monitoring. This includes calculating averages, variances, and trends in water and air quality, as well as noise levels. Qualitative analysis will involve thematic analysis of responses from interviews and questionnaires to identify common themes and patterns in perceptions and experiences.

Impact assessment will include a comparative analysis of current environmental data with historical data to identify changes and trends. Geospatial analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will map the spatial distribution of environmental impacts, such as areas affected by dust emissions, water pollution, and noise pollution. Risk assessment will evaluate potential risks to human health and the

environment based on the analyzed data.

Mitigation strategies will be developed to address identified environmental impacts, such as implementing waste management systems, dust suppression measures, and noise control techniques. Policy recommendations will be offered to policymakers for improving environmental management practices related to the Bisalpur Dam.

The validation process will include peer review to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings and methodologies. Stakeholder consultation will also be conducted to validate the results and gather feedback on proposed mitigation strategies. This comprehensive approach aims to provide a detailed assessment of the environmental impacts of the Bisalpur Dam and propose effective measures to mitigate these impacts.

Discussion

The project area's land use and environmental features were studied using GIS methods. Upstream of the dam, there is a waterbody (the reservoir), while downstream, both sides have forests, farmland, and some communities. However, as stated in Chapter 2 of the project description, all activities will only take place at the dam itself, and there won't be any changes made outside the current dam limits. There are four villages located within 5 km downstream of the dam: Tharoli, Rampura, Botunda, and Rajmahal.

Ambient Air Quality and Noise

Right now, there isn't any specific information about air quality and noise levels at the Bisalpur Dam project site. But when people visited the area, they noticed that it seems to be mostly free from air and noise pollution. There are a few reasons for this. First, the dam is located far from busy neighborhoods, roads, and factories, which usually cause pollution. Second, the road to the dam is private and not open to the public, so there are fewer cars and people around. During the visits, it was observed that there weren't any major sources of pollution, leading to clean air and quiet surroundings. Because of this, the air quality and noise levels are likely to be within the safe limits set by environmental rules, which helps protect the nearby environment.

Water Quality

The surface water quality of the Bisalpur Dam has been monitored extensively by the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme of the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board over a period of ten months

from January to October 2019. The data reveals that the water quality is fairly good, suitable for various uses after appropriate treatment. Specifically, during February, March, and April, the water samples fell under Class 'A' according to the Water Quality Criteria of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), meaning it is fit for drinking without conventional treatment but after disinfection. The remaining samples for other months were classified as Class 'B', which indicates suitability for organized outdoor bathing. The CPCB's designated best use classification system helps in setting water quality targets and planning restoration programs, ensuring that the highest quality use of a water body is maintained. The presence of a good water quality in the dam is crucial as it ensures the water can be used for drinking and other purposes, benefiting the local population and sustaining the ecosystem.

Natural Hazards

The chances of natural disasters like flooding and earthquakes happening at the Bisalpur Dam site are considered low. The project is built to manage a flood flow of 33,800 cubic meters per second (cumec). The Central Water Commission (CWC) has updated this number to 35,212 cumec, which is a small increase of 4.18% and not seen as a big deal. The dam is located in earthquake zone II, according to the Bureau of Indian Standards [IS 1893 (Part I): 2002]. This classification divides the country into four seismic zones (II, III, IV, and V), with Zone II being the least active and Zone V being the most active. The design of the dam takes this seismic classification into account, making sure it can handle the types of earthquakes that might occur in Zone II.

BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Flora and Fauna

Rajasthan has one of the smallest areas of natural forests in India, covering just 16,629.51 square kilometers, which is only 4.86% of the state's total land area (India State of Forest Report, FSI, 2019). The biggest type of forest in the state is the Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests. The area around the Banas River, where the Bisalpur Dam is situated, is home to many animals. The forests and streams in this area provide good habitats for various wildlife, such as Black Buck, Wolf, Jackal, Hyena, Rhesus Monkey, Blue Bull, Indian Fox, and Indian Palm Squirrel.

The region near the Bisalpur Dam is also known for its rich bird diversity because of the large water

body. There are many nesting sites along the banks of the Banas River. A study by Meena et al. (2019) found 176 different bird species in the area, which belong to 61 families, including 60 water bird species and 116 land bird species.

The activities planned for the project will only take place at the dam site, so there shouldn't be any direct harm to the nearby plants and animals. However, since the Bisalpur Conservation Reserve is close by, a Biodiversity Conservation Plan will be created to address any possible indirect effects on the plants and animals in the reserve. This plan will help keep the ecological balance and protect the biodiversity of the area during and after the project activities.

Fish & Fisheries

The Bisalpur reservoir is home to a bustling fishery that plays an important role in Rajasthan's economy. According to Banyal and Kumar (2015), researchers found 21 different fish species in the area, which belong to eleven families and seven orders. The most common group was Cypriniformes, with 11 species, which is typical for freshwater fish diversity. Following that, there were 4 species from Siluriformes, 2 from Perciformes, and one species each from Osteoglossiformes, Synbranchiformes, Beloniformes, and Clupeiformes. Moreover, the Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary is situated about 45.50 km away from the Bisalpur Dam. Figure 1 shows how close the sanctuary is to the dam, emphasizing their spatial relationship.

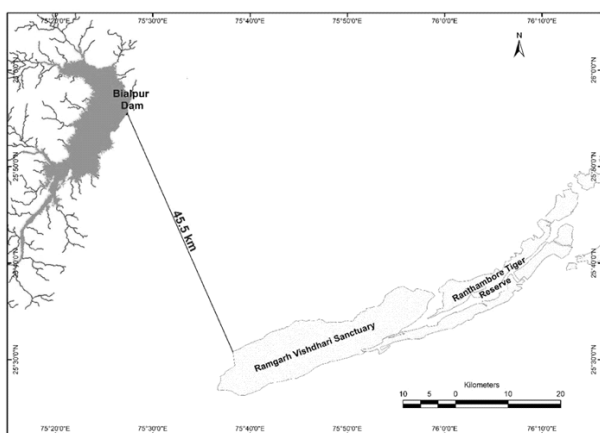


Fig 1: The location of Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary in relation to Bisalpur dam

Conservation Reserves

The Bisalpur Conservation Reserve, situated in close proximity to the Bisalpur Dam, was declared in

2008 by the state government, covering an area of 48.31 sq km. This reserve was established to conserve species such as Black Buck, Wolf, Jackal, and Hyena, among others. Conservation Reserves are designated to protect landscapes, seascapes, flora, fauna, and their habitats while ensuring that the rights of people living within these reserves are not affected.

As per the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard 6 (ESS6), the Bisalpur Conservation Reserve is classified as "Natural Habitat." This classification underscores the importance of preserving the biological diversity and ecological integrity of the area.

The Bisalpur Dam project does not propose any activities within the Conservation Reserve, thus no direct impacts on the reserve are anticipated. However, to address any potential indirect impacts on this "Natural Habitat," a Biodiversity Conservation Plan will be prepared. This plan will outline measures to mitigate any adverse effects on the flora and fauna in the surrounding area.

In terms of geographical proximity, the location of the Bisalpur Conservation Reserve relative to the Bisalpur Dam is illustrated in Figure 1. This highlights the spatial relationship between the project site and the conservation area, emphasizing the need for careful environmental planning.

The creation of the Conservation Reserve and its management under the Biodiversity Conservation Plan will ensure that the natural habitat remains protected, supporting the conservation of diverse species and maintaining ecological balance in the region.

Impacts on Environment

Impact on Physiography

The Bisalpur Dam has been operational for over 15 years and the current interventions are focused on civil and electromechanical works aimed at enhancing its operation and safety. These activities are concentrated at the dam itself and include the extension of downstream retaining walls on both banks. This localized approach ensures that there will be no changes to the region's physiography, maintaining the natural landscape as it is. Since the interventions do not involve any significant excavation or land reshaping activities, the physiographic stability of the region will remain intact.

Moreover, the minimal and focused nature of these interventions means that there will be no significant

environmental impacts on the broader region. By adhering to environmental regulations and focusing on existing structures, the project ensures that the natural topography is preserved, supporting sustainable development practices. Overall, the proposed works are designed to improve the dam's functionality without affecting the surrounding physiography, maintaining the area's environmental integrity.

Impact on Land or Geology

The planned project at the Bisalpur Dam will take place entirely within the current dam area, so there won't be any need to buy new land, which helps lessen the effects on the land and its geology. For the construction, materials like earth, rocks, and sand will be taken from already working and approved mines and quarries. The amount of these materials needed is quite small, which helps to further limit any impact on the land. The waste created during construction is expected to be very little and will be handled properly, either by reusing it or disposing of it for filling or leveling. During the design stage, we will focus on using resources wisely, making the most of materials from digging and construction waste for building wall foundations. This way, we can avoid dumping too much and keep the construction area small. This method makes sure we are being environmentally friendly throughout the project, which fits with our goals for sustainability.

Impact on Soil

The work being done at the Bisalpur Dam, especially with things like extending the walls, will have a big effect on the land. This includes digging up the ground, taking away the top layer of soil, and temporarily storing the dirt that's been dug out. Other repair areas will also change the soil because of actions like taking away old rip-raps and putting in new ones, fixing steps, and spills that can happen during certain construction processes. Using heavy machinery can also mess with the soil, making it compacted and less healthy. There's also a chance that soil could get contaminated if there are leaks or spills from fuels and chemicals. This shows how important it is to have strong soil protection and management plans to lessen these effects and promote better construction practices.

Muck Disposal

The activities that create construction waste at the Bisalpur Dam include digging for the foundation

of retaining walls, taking out broken rip-raps, fixing things like steps and parapet walls, treating areas with honeycombs upstream, and repairing the spillway crest. Even though these tasks are mostly about repairs and we don't have exact numbers for the debris, it's not likely to be a big problem for disposal. Still, it's really important to get rid of all the construction waste and dirt in a proper way to protect the soil. This means following good waste management practices, making sure to reuse, recycle, or throw away waste in the right places to lessen the impact on the environment.

Impacts on Water Resources

The Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board has been keeping an eye on the water quality of Bisalpur Dam as part of the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme. They gathered data over ten months, from January to October 2019, and found that the water quality is quite good. Measurements like pH, dissolved oxygen, and contaminant levels were all within safe limits, which means the water is mostly safe for drinking and farming. This information highlights how crucial it is to have strict environmental rules during construction to avoid harming the water quality.

Impact on Ambient Air Quality

The air quality around Bisalpur Dam has been checked, and there are some worries. Recent information shows that the Air Quality Index (AQI) in Bisalpur is labeled as "Unhealthy," with a PM_{2.5} level of 72.1 µg/m³, which is 14.4 times higher than what the World Health Organization recommends for a year. This means that people living there should stay away from exercising outside and find ways to limit their exposure to outdoor air pollution. The air quality in the area is generally clean and not heavily affected by major human activities. However, if construction work isn't managed well, it can create a lot of dust. This dust can spread to nearby places because of activities like tearing down buildings, digging, using construction machines, and more cars on local roads. When earthworks happen, they can disturb the soil and create dust, especially when it's windy. Dust can be released at any time, day or night, not just when construction is happening. How much dust is produced and where it goes depends on how long the work lasts, where it takes place, the weather, and how well dust control methods are applied.

Gases released during construction come from

the machines, tools, and trucks that are used to move materials. Most of these trucks run on diesel, which means they let out harmful gases like carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides. These gases can really hurt the air quality near construction sites. Plus, when more vehicles are on the road during construction, it can make the air even worse, especially in areas that are already sensitive. To help reduce these problems and keep the environment safe, it's important to have good emission controls and use cleaner fuels. The amount of pollution usually goes down the farther you are from the road, so the villages closest to the construction will feel the biggest impact. Since the project is already up and running and there won't be any changes to how it operates, we don't expect any negative effects on the air quality during this phase.

Impact of Noise and Vibration

Construction work at the Bisalpur Dam will definitely create a lot of noise, mainly from the vehicles and machines being used. This noise will be louder during the construction time, but it will mostly stay around the areas where the work is happening. The roads leading to the site will also have more noise because of the extra traffic. The sounds from the construction equipment can be dangerous, especially for the workers who are using these machines and those who are close by. Being around high noise levels for a long time can seriously affect their health, so it's really important to have good plans in place to manage and reduce the noise. Some ways to do this include giving workers personal protective equipment (PPE) like earplugs or noise-canceling headphones, checking the noise levels regularly, and creating work schedules that limit how long workers are exposed to loud sounds.

To effectively manage noise, it's important to take these steps. Providing workers with PPE, such as earplugs or noise-canceling headphones, is one way to help. It's also crucial to keep an eye on the noise levels at the construction site and to set up work schedules that reduce the time spent in noisy conditions. Using newer, quieter machines and keeping the equipment well-maintained can also help lower the noise. These actions will not only protect the health of the workers but also help lessen the noise for people living nearby.

Impact of Waste Generation

During the busiest time of construction, around

190 migrant workers are expected to live near the Bisalpur Dam. To take care of this group, proper sanitation and waste management systems will be set up in the labor camps. If there isn't a good plan for managing solid waste, it could lead to serious environmental problems like pollution of land and water, bad smells, and health issues. The arrival of workers and service providers will create sewage and solid waste, so it's important to have a solid waste and sewage management plan from the beginning to keep public health and the environment safe. Waste produced during construction will be handled according to the Solid Wastes Management Rules from 2016.

Since the project mainly focuses on repairs and renovations, the amount of construction and demolition waste, like debris and dirt, is expected to be low. However, it's still important to dispose of all this waste properly to avoid harming the soil and land, following the Construction and Demolition Waste Rules from 2016 and a Muck Management Plan. The work involving machines, like fixing and replacing hoists and ropes, will create different types of waste, including hazardous and non-hazardous materials. So, having a planned way to dispose of these wastes is very important. The contractor also needs to provide first-aid and basic medical services on-site, while managing any bio-medical waste to prevent serious problems. The Water Resources Department (WRD) and the contractor will create a specific plan for disposing of muck, debris, and solid waste, ensuring there are enough disposal sites available. This organized approach will help reduce environmental impacts and keep safety and hygiene standards high.

Recommendations

- **Sanitary and Solid Waste Management:** Establish comprehensive sanitary and solid waste management facilities in labor colonies to manage the waste generated by approximately 190 migrant workers. Ensure compliance with the Solid Wastes Management Rules, 2016 to prevent land and water pollution, odor issues, and health risks.
- **Sewage Management:** Develop comprehensive sewage management systems to handle the waste generated by the labor force. This will help maintain public health and environmental standards.
- **Construction Waste Management:** Follow the Construction and Demolition Waste Rules, 2016, and prepare a Muck Management Plan to manage

the minimal construction and demolition waste. Properly dispose of all debris and muck to prevent adverse soil and land impacts.

- **Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention:** Implement a Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention Plan to optimize the use of resources such as water and power. This will minimize environmental impacts and enhance sustainability.

- **Noise Management:** Implement effective noise management strategies, including providing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as earplugs or noise-canceling headphones for workers, regularly monitoring noise levels, and scheduling work to limit prolonged exposure to high noise levels.

- **Air Quality Control:** Employ best management practices to control dust and gaseous emissions. This includes using modern, quieter machinery, maintaining equipment, and implementing dust control measures to protect air quality and reduce pollution.

- **Biodiversity Conservation Plan:** Develop a Biodiversity Conservation Plan to mitigate potential indirect impacts on the Bisalpur Conservation Reserve. This will help protect the flora and fauna in the surrounding area.

- **Water Quality Protection:** Implement best practices for spill prevention, waste disposal, and sediment control to prevent contamination of surface and groundwater. Properly manage and monitor construction activities to protect water quality.

- **Hazardous Waste Management:** Develop a pre-planned disposal strategy for hazardous and non-hazardous wastes generated from electro-mechanical work. This includes safely handling and disposing of hazardous materials to minimize environmental risks.

- **Medical Facilities:** Ensure that first-aid and basic medical facilities are available at the construction site. Manage bio-medical waste properly to avoid serious health impacts.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage with local communities and stakeholders to address their concerns and ensure transparency throughout the project. This will help build trust and support for the project.

Implementing these recommendations will help manage environmental impacts effectively, ensuring that the Bisalpur Dam project is carried out sustainably and responsibly.

Conclusion

The Bisalpur Dam project, centered on repair and enhancement activities, is meticulously planned to minimize environmental impact while adhering to stringent standards. By focusing on comprehensive waste management, pollution control, and sustainable resource use, the project ensures that construction activities do not significantly disrupt the local land, water, or air quality. The influx of approximately 190 migrant workers will be managed with adequate sanitary and waste facilities, maintaining public health and environmental integrity. Special measures, including the Biodiversity Conservation Plan, will safeguard nearby conservation areas. Overall, the project exemplifies a balanced approach to infrastructure development, prioritizing environmental conservation and social responsibility to ensure long-term regional benefits.

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Women's Participation in Community Development: Policy Analysis in Delhi

Abstract

The involvement of women in community development is an important symbol of inclusive governance as well as sustainable urban development. Within the multicultural and fast-urbanizing environment such as Delhi, the information regarding how women enter into community formation needs to be examined with supports having a more detailed answer of presents policies, institutional processes, and socio-cultural processes. The paper is a critical policy analysis of the scope, form, and success of women in community development in Delhi. It assesses major governmental programs like the Delhi State Rural Livelihoods Mission (DSRLM), Mahila Panchayats, Self Help Groups (SHG) and forums of participation, like Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and Mohalla Sabhas.

In spite of the progressive policy framework and the presence of schemes that aim to empower women there still exists a huge gap between the policy making and its implementation on the ground. The role of women in local forms of governance is disproportionately low, most of the time representative, and reflective of socio-economic hierarchies. Also, structural issues, including time poverty, safety, inaccessible digital infrastructure, and deeply rooted patriarchal expectations, prevent meaningful women (especially women in marginalized groups) participation.

This paper shows how women have multiple roles as a negotiator, service provider, and micro-entrepreneur and also local leader through their

case study of JJ clusters, South Delhi neighborhoods, and NGOs such as Mahila Panchayats. It also points out that even though the participation of women in activities that govern communities is on the rise, women rarely contribute to the decision-making process and policy results. The paper finishes by providing actionable recommendations, such as institutionalizing the use of gender audit, enhancing female capacity to assume leadership positions, bettering the use of infrastructure to provide safety and accessibility by the population, and finally, incorporating gender disaggregated data in policymaking. The research highlights that representation of women in community development is not only essential but a question of equality, transparency, and social transformation in the contemporary governing urban environment of Delhi.

Key words: women's, Community Development, Representation, NGO etc.

Introduction

The art of community development entails enabling people through participation to raise the standard of life in their localities, towns, and cities. It is a participatory process that underlines local ownership, participatory planning, and an active civic body. In this paradigm, the inclusion of women is not an additional factor needed to achieve gender equity but also leading towards resilient, inclusive, and representative communities. In Indian cities- especially megacities such as New Delhi- the contribution of females in the creation and maintenance of community growth has become an area of focus

among policymakers and the civil society. However, with the constitutional provision of gender equality and various policy measures to empower women, their practical participation at the community level is always patchy, uneven, and more a mere representation.

Delhi, being a capital city of India and one of the most populated cities in the world, is a very special case study in analyzing the role of women in community development. Delhi, as a city state with complicated forms of governance, multiple scales (such as municipal corporations, state-level departments, and informal settlements and resident welfare associations), is a product of opportunity and inequity. The variety of women experiences in Delhi is a continuum-based on class, caste, religion, education and availability of public infrastructure. These varied realities have impacts in relation to their participation in the civic and developmental processes effectively. Although women in the higher classes and middle classes (who have associations such as Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and school committees) can apparently be represented, women in unauthorized colonies, slums and even farther-flung and urban villages encounter severe structural and cultural obstacles to getting a voice.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments established the concept of democratic decentralization in India, with all the requirements to integrate women in the local governance. But the particular administrative system of India with Panchayati Raj Institutions not present in much of the rural areas and urban local bodies lacking autonomy has given an uneven outcome in implementing such mandates in Delhi. Even though schemes such as the National Policy for Women (2001), the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) as well as the Delhi Gender Budgeting Initiative have even established frameworks to make development gender friendly, such policies fail to empower people at the grass root level most of the time. Policymaking thus continues to be disjointed with practical results.

Moreover, the prevailing development paradigms tend to feature infrastructure, economy and top-down centred planning in preference to community-based and people centred solutions. On certain models, the women are at best seen at the periphery through token representation, collection of data or even as passive beneficiaries of welfare instead of co-actors.

The often-absent role of women in the field of water management, waste management, primary education, and health, amicable dispute resolution in the neighborhoods and environmental sustainability are not captured in the development discourse. Absence of recognition of these contributions leaves the greater objectives of community development in this case equity, inclusivity and empowerment unfulfilled.

On this basis, it is desirable to have a critical look at how policies, whether at the national or local levels, allow or limit the involvement of women in the realm of community development in Delhi. This involves the study of official mechanisms such as Restaurant Industry and Movie Foundation, besides informal systems such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Mahila Panchayats, local NGOs operating in bastis (slum clusters) and urban villages. It is also important to have insight into how such issues as public safety, mobility, digital access, unpaid care work, patriarchal norms interact with the civic participation of women.

The following paper will therefore set out to carry out a policy-based investigation of the role of women in community development in Delhi. It examines the structural, institutional and socio-cultural dimensions of which women engage in developing their neighborhoods and which provide them access to governance platforms. Based on policy review, case studies, and critical thinking on various government programs such as the Delhi State Rural Livelihoods Mission (DSRLM), Bhagidari Scheme, and Mission Shakti, the proposed study points out the gains gathered so far and the obstacles that still exist.

Specifically, the paper contends that although the roles of women in the development of communities are increasingly being recognized, the existing difference between representation and effective participation is wide. Women can be brought into the community discussion forums, where they are not allowed to make decisions and have the means to make a difference. The real participation should not only be in terms of numbers but also equal voice, utility of resources and responsibility by the governing institutions.

After all, women should be allowed to contribute to community development because it is not just a female matter, but rather the focal point of gaining democracy in governance, social justice, and even proper development. The example of Delhi gives a

good perspective to look through to study the interaction where urban policy and grass roots realities clash or not in this matter. By opening up these dynamics, the current study aims at providing evidence-based policy suggestions that urban governance in Delhi is more inclusive in not only Delhi but also other cities in India facing analogous problems.

Historical and Policy Context

The role of women in community development in Delhi has developed in context of a wider national and urban policy environment, which has changed through the development of the city over time to include an analysis of how the community development has been aided by the national policy environments. State owned and top down characterised the development agenda in India in the first few decades after independence thus leaving little room for community. Application of active participation of women was not heard of. Technocratic preoccupations of infrastructure, industrialization, and economical growth became the dominant perspective of development wherein women were sometimes reduced to be mere benefactors instead of the subjects themselves. This tendency had profound impact on the development of the urban governance in such cities as Delhi where high-level planning and bureaucratic execution of this planning process took precedence over local decisions and involvement.

The specific system of governance of Delhi has been instrumental in the development of the course of women in the local development. Delhi has not had any three-tier Panchayati Raj system as other Indian states because it is largely urbanized. This has limited the powers of several constitutional provisions particularly in having women representation guaranteed by safe quotas in local self-governance. Without Panchayats, it was left to other components of urban governance to facilitate participation by citizens, to include, amongst others, urban local bodies (i.e. the Municipal Corporations), neighbourhood-based institutions (i.e. Resident Welfare Associations or RWAs or Mohalla Sabhas). Nevertheless, such platforms have not been characterised as very helpful in terms of gender quotas and have over the years not been fully accommodative to women, especially in the marginal socio-economic classes. What female presence in such spaces has in general been episodic

and symbolic, due to education, class, and social capital, rather than organized political admission.

Nevertheless, inspired by these limitations there have been remarkable policy milestones to initiate the inclusion of women in the developmental process. The event that marked a serious step towards gender mainstreaming in the various sectors was the introduction of the National Policy of empowerment of women in the year 2001. It valued the role of women in governance and in activities at the community levels. At the urban settings such as Delhi, this policy nurtured the establishment of local level institutions that had the capacity to involve women in making decisions in the field of education, health, livelihood, and basic services. The actual practice, however, has been interspersed and it has not been easy in most cases owing to inertia and division of effort among different departments.

The introduction of a participatory governance system like the Bhagidari Programme, officially introduced in the early 2000s, was one of the evident changes in the policy scene of Delhi. This program aimed at establishment of partnerships between government and citizens in form of RWAs and civil society organizations which allowed people to have a platform through which they could have a say over local governance. The reality however is that during the Bhagidari Programme, it became more of a middle- and upper-middle-class participation with the women in the said categories becoming more willing to participate as they clearly had more access to time, education, and resources available. With women in the poorer and marginalized societies, their inability to gain formal official existence and being bottomed down by male decision-makers restrained them to get into these places.

At much about the same period, mission that were attempted at the national level started to affect the urban development in Delhi approaches Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM). Locally operationalized as the Delhi State Rural Livelihoods Mission (DSRLM), those programs induced the creation of such Self-Help Groups (SHGs) among women of the urban poor, who were promoted to engage in small scale economic activities, community organization, and leadership. These actions started to create significant room in which women should not only engage in the economy, but also in society, as

they are being equipped with rights consciousness, budgetary knowledge as well as learn how to work as a collective. However, they have been integrated to formal urban governance nevertheless at a low level and SHGs have the operation more of supportive systems rather than being decision making processes.

The city has also been trying to integrate being gender sensible using such tools like gender budgeting. Delhi gender budgeting system started in the mid-2000s in a bid to make its partnership between the state and women. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of this tool has been dampened by the fact that there have been no effective monitoring mechanisms and also, the inability to get data in a disaggregated manner so that they could be used to plan at the local levels. It still happens that gender budgets are just a piece of paper and not a structural financial policy especially within a community reducing it to the act of implementation.

Civil society has plugged some of the gaps which were being created by government programs and has helped create an important medium of the translation of policy to practice. Other organizations such as Jagori, SEWA Bharat and Action India have been involved in the capacity building of women, the development of community-based networks and in the lobbying of gender sensitive urban planning. These are contributing to a gradual increase in women leaders in informal settlements, bastis, and unauthorised colonies who are breaking the established gender norms and bargaining with authorities in having access to basic amenities and identity. Nonetheless, their attempts, fail to work most of the time, due to the absence of institutional support, absence of long term funds, and formal accountability systems.

Although there has been an increment in policy dispensation to address the role of women in community development in Delhi, the difference between the intention and actual delivery is still very large. Structural issues facing women like insecurity in public areas, reduced mobility, being heavy loads of unpaid care work, and social restrictions are some issues still faced by women, which constrains their involvement in governance procedures. Practically, community development programs might seem to include everyone but the reality is that the programs are unable to establish enabling environment to ensure that women can contribute in a meaningful and equally

manner.

The history and the politics behind the involvement of women in community development in Delhi show a scenario of contrasting optimism with lack of inclusions. Although the policy frameworks and the legal framework have changed and evolved in line with gender inclusiveness, the legal and policy implementations in the ground remain subject to addressing institutional fragmentation, institutional barriers regarding socio-cultural differences, and institutional barriers of inequities based on classes. This context is very important to evaluate the impact of women participation on the platforms of community building and what needs to be done to make their role more audible, visible and effective.

Forms and Levels of Participation

The involvement of women in the community development in Delhi is in various forms which are sometimes complex depending on their socio-economic status, cultural background, information accessibility and structural design of government platforms. The forms of participation do not just take one form and are not of the same level, but vary widely from informal everyday involvement with the neighborhoods issues to more institutionalized participation in neighborhoods structures. Although policy frameworks are visualizing participatory governance, the everyday experience of many women in Delhi informs us of multiple manifestations of participation, ranging between symbolic presence to engaging in leadership roles.

Most comprehensively, the informal networks involve a large population of women as they are involved in community development in Delhi. These must be neighborhood-based support groups, ad hoc committees on sanitation, child welfare, and school, or joint ways of responding to urgent local problems like supplying water and disposing wastes and threats to public safety. Although such activities may not be reflected in actual policy discourses, they are essential to ensuring urban communities maintain their own social identities. Women will do the job in organizing the mohalla cleanliness drives, bargaining with the local authorities to provide them with services and be the first respondent in case of crisis. Such positions, albeit not necessarily officialized, make the daily backbone of a community resiliency.

In institutionalized forms, women are engaged in

Self-Help Groups (SHGs), School Management Committees (SMCs), Mahila Panchayats and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs). Moreover, SHGs especially have gained attraction as an urban poor women led mechanism of economic and social mobilization. SHGs promote both individual money independence and group confidence through savings, microcredit and business enterprise in groups. Nevertheless, as they are establishing a fabric of solidarity, SHGs tend to be marginal in the decision-making processes, and they have minimal contact points with ward-level planning or the urban governance.

Women, especially mothers, form part of the SMCs, in the context of Right to Education in educational premises. The utilization of these bodies gives chances to members of the community to participate in the management of the public schools. But their effectiveness tends to be determined by awareness, the state of literacy and the inclination of the school authorities. Women members in most instances are not trained and the institutions do not support them to make significant contributions.

The existence of a type of justice: The Mahila Panchayats (which many times are organized by the NGOs), an exclusive community based justice and advocacy system created in the low income and informal settlements. On these forums, women have a chance to solve their disputes, share experiences when it comes to settling gender-based violence, and defend their rights. Along with being casual by nature, Mahila Panchayats have managed to attain social legitimacy in a number of localities, and have started shaping up the discourse in society and better delivery of services.

Due to the increased involvement in RWAs, which are mostly found in the middle-class and upper-middle-class neighborhoods, women are presented with a platform on which they can participate in the process of civic planning as well as governing their neighborhoods. These platforms however are male dominated and are socio-economically exclusive. The participation or inclusion of women is mostly seen in portfolios that are confined to areas that are cultural or welfare oriented rather than in portfolios that are of authority or management of finances.

Acts of participation thus range on a continuum, where on one end lies the spectrum of mere

attendance to active agency, and the other scale is one of mere symbolic inclusion and transformative leaders. Although there are women who can actually influence decisions and shape agendas, a considerable number of women are left out in the periphery of formal structures. Full-scale participation is still prevented by structural barriers, including time limitations caused by non-paid domestic activities, mobility challenges, inability to use digital space and patriarchal patterns. Women in every corner of Delhi are ensuring this representation through the gaining of agency in both the formal and informal aspects related to their spaces and are thus working towards a more inclusive and vibrant community development process.

Policy Analysis: Strengths and Shortcomings

The policy framework that governs the role of women in the community development of Delhi has been through much change especially in the past 20 years. Various programs, institutional efforts at national and state entrances have been launched so as to promote female participation and participatory growth. Yet, regardless of the existence of the good-willed regulations, the real results on the ground are even, fragmented and characterized by the abysmal socio-economic inequality. Policies have allowed community participation and inclusion of all genders to a great extent, but these activities do not count as much as the others do not help in converting or bringing their vision into action. These strengths and weaknesses are even more elaborate on closer examination, as the example of Delhi exemplifies the complexity of governance which exists in the city and the gap in implementation and policy making that still exists.

Among the major strengths is it is a formal recognition of the female role of governance and development. The association of Delhi with broader national policy including; the National Policy for Women (2001), Mission Shakti and the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) has been providing a basis to promote women leadership at the local governing board level. An example is that under the Delhi State Rural Livelihoods Mission (DSRLM) thousands of women in urban poor have been organized into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to participate in income generation, savings and developing skills. These groups have facilitated not only enhancement of economic hardship but also

acted as a point of collective identity and leadership. On the same line have been efforts, such as the Mission Shakti and the Mahila Panchayats that have enabled women to resolve their conflicts, legal awareness and participation within the society especially with the support of NGOs.

Besides the programmatic interventions, institutional mechanisms like gender budgeting have been acquired in the Delhi government in order to distribute the resources more fairly. The concept of gender budgeting is simply that a given percentage of public spending on government should tangibly muster gains among women and girls, particularly in areas that matter most such as health, education and housing. Although the practice constitutes a breakthrough in achieving gender-sensitive governance, it has in most cases been constrained by unavailability of disaggregated data, poor impact assessment and insufficient harmonization of information across the departments. Unless accompanied by clear account-ability systems and capacity-building of the implementation level, there is a danger of running the process of gender budgeting into the ground and making it a mere decorative exercise instead of a means of transformation.

The other potentials are the formation of participatory bodies like Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs). The citizens including women get the opportunity to play a role in the decision-making during discussions of city services, infrastructure, and schools in these forums. Nevertheless, the same social stratifications of classes and genders typically found in the society at large can appear in such platforms. In RWAs, as an example, it is common to find that middle-class men occupy the leadership of such institutions and that the women are normally involved in only welfare-based activities but not in any strategic or financial decision making. Women are further excluded in governance processes in low-income neighborhoods and in informal settlement where they do not have formal RWAs or where the SMCs do not play effective roles.

The continuous weakness of Delhi policies is reflected in the fact that no gender representation is compulsory in various bodies of urban governance. When compared to the 73rd Amendment, wherein there is a reservation of women constituting one-third

of the local village Panchayats, it is a fact that quotas on grounds of both gender are not strictly adhered to in urban governance in the context of Delhi. Consequently, the representation of the women population more tends to rely on voluntary initiatives or NGO initiatives as against structural requirements. In cases where we have women, their participants will mostly be passive or even symbolic lacking actual power of decisions. Such disparity is compounded by absence of leadership training, legal literacy and institutional help that can assist women to transition out of player to puncher in terms of participation.

Further, policies do not necessarily go to the structural issues to ensure women can contribute significantly in community development. Unpaid care work, time poverty, unsafety-related limited mobility, and digital exclusion are some of the factors that are hardly factored into policymaking and course of action. As an example, even though SHGs might facilitate women to become a part of small enterprises, until they have proper child care, safe transport system to travel, or a market access their economic activities are limited. On the same note, although schemes can stimulate attainment in community forums, meetings tend to arrange at certain times or places where women are not entitled to get because of their culture or logistical barriers.

The weak policy coherence is also supported by the fragmented structure of administrative organization in Delhi. This is because several agencies are deployed with overlapping mandates in areas that lack coordination such as the Municipal Corporations, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the Government of NCT Delhi. This presents bureaucracies in participation by communities and hinders the manoeuvrability of women as they work through the governance systems. Sanitation, housing, or skill development programs based on interdepartmental collaboration is notorious regarding delays, multiplication, and lack of accountability.

In spite of such deficiencies, the positive policy outcomes can be found. Women in regions where NGOs and government departments collaborated closely have found the opportunity to have an input in the local planning, survey the services, as well as they have been capable of resolving any conflicts in the most effective way. An example is Mahila Panchayats in North and East Delhi that have become critical areas

where women come to discuss matters concerning domestic violence, avail of welfare measures and bargain with the police and the municipal authorities. These models indicate that a combination of policy, capacity-building, institutional support, and local leadership allow women to act as transformation agents in community development.

The policy arena in Delhi provides a combination of forward-looking purpose and structural constraints. Although the structures of women engagement have been established, their implementation has been through the lens of inequality, among other institutional divisions, and minimal grassroot involvement. Women participation in community development must be more than visible, it must be meaningful as well as realistic and sustainable through a more integrated, community based realism and intersectional approach.

Case Examples from Delhi

The involvement of women in community development cannot be understood without referring to theory and moving instead to the gritty reality of people whose visions translate into reality at the local level. In Delhi, with its fragmenting structures of rule and multiplicity of communities, women have become central actors of change in many contexts, ranging from squatter colonies to middle-class housing areas. Their areas of influence are conflict resolution and health advocacy, urban planning and environmental action. The examples of two cases, presented below in Delhi, show what this participation can be and demonstrate what opportunities and difficulties are incorporated into their work.

Within the urban villages of East Delhi, women Mahila Panchayats organized by the NGO Action India have generated informal but strong spaces in which women can deal collectively with domestic violence, dowry harassment and local disputes. The community all-women forums do not have any legal status but they are highly socially legitimate. Women who go through this program become literate in the legal environment, learn to negotiate, and manage to represent themselves and other women in the society. Gradually, they not only manage to neutralize conflicts among the family members, intervening in cases of abuse and also put local law enforcers under pressure to take the complainants (women) more seriously. These Mahila Panchayats form a local tradition of lower a justice system and a participatory governance,

particularly in societies where official legal instruments are usually unreachable or even frightening.

In one of the biggest unauthorized colonies in Delhi, Sangam Vihar, women who belong to the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) formed as part of the Delhi State Rural Livelihoods Mission (DSRLM) have chosen to take the reins of the community development themselves. These women have had a few opportunities to access formal services and as such, they have banded together to initiate micro-enterprises in the form of tailoring industries, food production activities and disposal of household waste. With the collaboration with the NGOs and municipal bodies, they have launched door-to-door campaigns on the issue of waste management and hygiene which have contributed to the improvement in the health of people and the local environments. Further, their financial independence has seen the household to have more say and some women even getting into school committees and local planning boards. Although the limited access to markets and infrastructure limits their work, it is an excellent way in which economic empowerment can be used as a means of accessing full civic engagement.

The most outstanding instance is Bawana resettlement colony where women were trained through a support group named Jagori under the Safe Cities Programme and started conducting safety audit in their areas. These women would trace the selected communities, where there was low lighting, unsafe walking paths, and other areas where people were most likely to be harassed in the streets, and send their results to the local government and the city planners. Their evidence-based advocacy has had the effect of installing of street lights and repairing of broken infrastructure and establishing of safer school-going routes of girls. In this scenario, women were able to make themselves heard in the process of creation of urban safety policies and infrastructure, regaining their place in the streets. Their contribution to gender-inclusive urban planning was also a model as to the participation and feminist governance of cities in the future citywide practices in general.

The case of women in Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in middle-class neighbourhood in Mayur Vihar has shown that gendered participation could change across classes and contexts. In this case, literate and comparatively privileged females have

assumed the role of managing RWA executive committees, managed sanitation campaigns, water conservation programs, and cultural festivals that manage to act as avenues of civic learning. They have also been seen to head petitions over metro construction noise, traffic control, and zoning schools. Although they have greater access to decision-making than their counterparts in the informal settlements, in these areas as well, women have had to fight off internally, gender prejudice and male culture of enterprises. Nevertheless, having put in place, these women have used their networks and their knowledge of the law to become active in planning and policy participation in municipalities.

One of the lesser-known but important programs is the School Management Committees (SMCs) that are in operation in state schools in the state of Delhi in the framework of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. One example that can be given was in Govindpuri where women, who at the outset were being in such committees as mere spectators, have come over a period of time to be vocal in their support to improving the schools. After receiving training by civil society organizations, they started keeping track of the attendance levels of the teachers, championing improvements in the infrastructure and dealing with the concerns such as gender-based bullying and levels of drop-out among adolescent girls. Their involvement has contributed to the change in the way parents especially mother figure is viewed as not being the consumer of education services but a major part of educational ecosystem. Through this approach, the women have facilitated the involvement of school and communities hence making the education sector have governance that is more responsible and accountable.

These studies collected as case studies portray in unison the dynamics and complexities involved in women contributors in the community development sector within Delhi. Women in low-income informal settlements as well as those in middle-level residential colonies are not only the known beneficiaries of policy but also interpolators, executors, and modifiers of policy. They operate within institutional gaps through their ingenuity and usually making use of communal action and informal leadership and external collaboration with NGOs or state programmes. However, these examples also demonstrate that participation is not always empowering as it depends

on larger social arrangements, institutional alliances as well as the capacity of the policies to embrace diversity and complexity.

All these examples emphasize the idea that successful community development should focus on the voice of women as real figures, and not as abstract representatives, having the ability to bring inclusive, responsive, and just urban futures.

Policy Recommendations

- Make sure that the least parts of women members in the RWAs, School Management Committees, ward committees among other urban local bodies is not only considered as members, but also as a platform of leadership where they can add their voices during the decision making.
- Offer women the scope of knowledge with the granting of the right to law, municipal administration, and provision having much training in the right to fight the active participation of the civic affairs.
- Treat Mahila Panchayats as the genuine community forums and link them to the local mechanism of governance. Offer Self-Help Groups does not to empower them in non-economic roles in the society such as finance legal and infrastructural support.
- Establish participatory projects, specifically safety audit, community mapping and regional consultations Target specifically to engage women and in the slums and resettlement areas in the urban area.
- Install community crches and make the public transport system safer and more accessible to women because these two are significant obstacles to a regular participation in the types of unpaid care work and mobility.
- Conduct targeted digital literacy campaigns among women in the under privileged areas and introduce the same in online complaint redressal platforms, government apps and civic engagement websites as well.
- All planning and monitoring at the community level should include the gender-disaggregated data in calculating the actual levels of participation by women as well as to identify the gaps in outreach or inclusion.
- NGO work, by the civil societies and the local governments should be encouraged so that trust obstacles are filled with superb outcomes of doing work with initiatives of women participation by not impassive but consistent use of handholding and

amazing interaction.

- Give small payments or official rewards to women who might be participating in the community committees or even having some income under the urban development programs especially in the poor section.
- Civic educate and gender awareness, on levels of schooling and above should be incorporated in circles so as to allow the up-coming generation of females to be well aware and well informed on the channels of an active female citizen.

Conclusion

The involvement of women in community development is not only a democratic requirement but also a catalyst force that alters urban governance, social equity and community empowerment at the grassroots level. Within the Delhi urban setting where there are stark disparities and an ever-changing urban civic settlement, women have shown great strength and martial in informal settlement, resettlement colonies and middle-class areas of residence. Using the Mahila Panchayats, Self-Help Groups, School Management Committees, or Resident Welfare Associations, their presence does more than pay lip service. They represent some participatory connection to the definition of citizenship of new forms at the local level, which is redefined around the concepts of power, access, and responsibilities.

Even having those inspiring examples, the participation of women in the civic life remains to be hindered by several structural and cultural barriers.

Patriarchy, time poverty caused by unpaid care demands, illiteracy in laws, bad support by institutions and movement restrictions still inhibit their efficient participation. Moreover, most government policies are top-down and do not fully accommodate the voice of women in planning, implementation and evaluation. The involvement, in the absence of authority or acknowledgment, may transform into the act of performance instead of an instrument of change. Policy should not just be token, but it must represent female empowerment in action to be agents of community development. It has to deal with the real-life issues that women encounter, equip them with ability to participate effectively and acknowledge their role through institutional means. The direction of inclusive format of urban development in the city of Delhi is not only about providing infrastructural improvement or service delivery, but rather on governance systems that are pro-gender responsive and considers community driven agenda. Delhi can only achieve a more equitable and participatory development model in which women are not only listened to but also listened to, not only consulted but also empowered by engaging in women leadership, in developing enabling policy environments, and in developing partnerships between the state and the civil society.

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Bidya Bhushan*



Priya Chaturvedi**

Impact of Labour Migration on Sustainable Livelihood: A Case Study of Bihar

Abstract

Labour migration has emerged as a major livelihood activity of millions of people in the state of Bihar, which has been in the grip of poverty, less employment and insufficient industrialization. The creation of sustainable local jobs is restricted and agricultural security is declining with environmental issues, causing migration (both seasonal and permanent) to become a survival strategy. The paper provides an insight to such a complex situation as labour migration and sustainable livelihood in Bihar based on demographic data, government reports, and insights gained in the field. The positive economic effects of migration can be observed through the remittances that sustain the household consumption, education, housing and health care. Remittances have contributed to alleviating poverty in the countryside and helped to strengthen financial stability in a number of households. In other instances they have facilitated livelihood diversification and small investments. Even the women left behind have become partially empowered since they are usually left to run households and finances when their males are away. Migration is, however, a problem with long-term sustainability. Migrant workers are generally unfavorable towards exploitation, poor labor conditions and social protection. The extended men absence affects the family hierarchy, causes emotional stress, and even strengthens the gender discrimination in some cases. The

environment and agricultural activities are negatively affected as households which are dependent on the remittances slowly abandon farming. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of this migration-based economy due to the sudden loss of jobs of millions of workers with no savings or lifeline. The paper concludes that migration alleviates needs in the short term, but does not guarantee sustainable livelihood unless it is complimented with acts of systemic transformation. These are developing skills, safe migration systems, job creation in rural areas, gender-sensitive policies, and investment in local social and ecological systems. In the case of Bihar, the shift in people viewing migration as an opportunity and not being a necessity will be the leading indicator in creating a more resilient and sustainable future.

Keywords

Labour, Migration, livelihood, Sustainability, Bihar, etc.

Introduction

Bihar, one of the most populous and historically rich states of India, has been struggling with structural underdevelopment and massive poverty despite different policy interventions and state economic reforms. A State with a population of more than 120 million as per 2011 census (but now estimated to be greater), Bihar is predominantly a rural State, with almost 89 percent of its citizens living in villages and largely dependant on agriculture and informal labour. But the agrarian sector of the state is low in

productivity, has small and fragmented landholdings, frequent natural calamities, like flooding and drought, and does not have modern infrastructure. Such circumstances combined with limited industrialisation and with the weak investment made by the private sector have grossly restricted the access to stable and gainful employment in the state. In this context, labour migration has emerged as a highly prevailing and invasive livelihood strategy of Bihari households. Emigration, especially among the male population was not a relatively new phenomenon in Bihar, as labourers were sent to work as indentured labourers to the British colonies during the colonial times. In the modern world, migration has not only increased but also diversified by the destination, sector, and duration. Bihari labor is in virtually every part of India-the farms of the Punjab to the building sites of Mumbai and the factories of Gujarat, and increasingly, to overseas destinations including the Gulf and Malaysia. The migration of labour in Bihar now is both a process of economic necessity and instrument of hope and social emancipation. It also offers essential money transfers within a family, letting it cover essential needs and make investments in education, housing, and health. But such dependency on migration also has multiple socio-economic and ecological side effects, which cast doubt over its sustainability. These problems have included the vulnerable nature of migrant labour, the gendered social harms, destruction of domestic labour, and environmental depletion of sustainable livelihood.

Labour Migration in Bihar: Historical and Contemporary Landscape

The situation with labour migration out of Bihar has extensive historical and socio-economic basis. As part of the colonial era, Bihar served as a source of indentured labourers to British colonies in Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago, Fiji, Suriname, and Guyana. These were forcibly recruited under exploitative contracts to fulfil the labour deficits in the sugarcane plantations and other colonial businesses. This colonial migration can be seen even today in the sizable presence of Indian origin people in such countries who trace their roots back to Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The patterns of migration after Indian independence in 1947 changed, and the driving force,

however, still lied in endemic poverty, landlessness, and social inequality in Bihar. Migration continued to accelerate as a result of the Green Revolution, which transformed agriculture in states like Punjab and Haryana during the 1960s and 1970s, creating huge labour demand in those rich states. There was an influx of Bihari workers, famous in history for their hard labor and cheap wage demands, into these states especially in agricultural and building construction jobs.

The rate of out-migration in Bihar has remained one of the highest in the country since the 1970s. The 2011 Census of India recorded that over 4 million had left Bihar in search of jobs or employment. The Economic Survey of Bihar (2022-23) states that the number of migrants who are currently employed outside the state could be nearly 10 to 12 million. Migration has also spread beyond the limited states in the north to cover major metropolitan and industrial centres such as Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, Bengaluru, and Chennai. Bihari migrants are now increasingly finding employment in the Gulf countries especially the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. The magnitude of migration in Bihar is mostly male-centered, but the number of women migrants is on an increasing trajectory mostly in domestic and care-giving jobs. Seasonal migration is common particularly those that are caused by agricultural lean seasons, when outflows are the highest usually after the Kharif harvest (October/November) and before the Rabi sowing (February/March). Majority of migrants work in informal, low-skilled sectors: construction, brick kilns, hotel and restaurant services, textile mills, and small manufacturing units. These are industries notorious of having exploitive work conditions and hours, inadequate shelter, and deficient social security. Nevertheless, Bihari migration persists regardless of these strains of dislocation because there is ongoing local distress. Structural conditions of lack of industrialisation, lack of skilled employment opportunities, poor infrastructural development and environmental vulnerabilities such as frequent floods in North Bihar and drought in South Bihar regions has all added to the structural forces behind the migration. Migration has hence become a socio-economic physicality of Bihar, deeply rooted in the life course of peri-urban or rural household.

Economic Impacts and Remittance Economy

The direct and visible positive impact of labour migration in Bihar is the inflow of financial remittances from migrants to their families back at home. Remittances are also vital in supporting the rural economic situation, offering the much-needed income to households that lack access to local jobs or scholarships or viable land. In several instances, the remittances have not only helped poor households sustain their day-to-day needs, but have also helped move them to higher heights, albeit in lopsided and complicated avenues. In the 2020 report by the Reserve Bank of India on internal remittances, Bihar is listed as one of the three states receiving a majority of internal remittances in the country along with Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. The report has pointed out that more than 30 percent of remittances made in Bihar are by three states, namely, Delhi, Maharashtra and Punjab. There is also an inflow in the amount of foreign remittances in rural Bihar due to the increased rate of international migration to the Gulf countries which appears mainly through the formal banking systems and informal hawala system. Remittances are the main or only source of income of most of the families of many small towns in Punjab especially, Siwan, Gopalganj, Madhubani, Katihar, Darbhanga and Supaul districts. The wages of migrants are usually much higher than those that can be gained at a small scale of farming, daily labour or petty trade at home. Migration has since formed a major pillar of livelihood operation with some households sending two or more male members in an effort to maximize the level at which they receive money. The most common expenses in which remittances are allocated are in lifestyle ordering of food, clothing, fuel, health expenditure, and education of children. Saving is normally used by the families to upgrade their house material which was originally thatched to concrete (pakkamakaan), buy consumer durable goods, finance the marriage expenditure, and send the children to private institutions. The social advances and long-term financial stability, in some instances, are experienced through remittances that have allowed land acquisitions, debt settlement, or rent of agricultural land thus stabilizing social status.

Nevertheless the development of productive

means of deploying the remittances in business, agricultural innovation or skills are not very widespread in Bihar. In cases, repatriate migrants have established small stores as well as making investments in transport and then in fowl and milk farming. However, such cases are not common. Constraints such as a deficiency of financial literacy and unacceptable access to credit, unacceptable lack of reliable infrastructure and weak connections between remittance users and government support programmes are other major mops. In addition to this, inflow of remittances has in parts induced consumption/dependent behaviour because household spend more on consumption using the money sent by migrant household have less interest in participating in local labour or local occupations. Such reliance at times leads to demotivation among the young generation who are only interested in leaving and moving on perhaps in exchange of nothing. In general, although the remittances sent by the labour migration have certainly led to the improvement in poverty levels and material living conditions in Bihar, their ability to generate sustainable economic transformation and to diversify livelihoods of the population has not been fully realised. The realisation of this potential would need concerted attempts in financial education, development of infrastructure, skill development and supportive institutional services to the migrant sending communities.

Impact on Agriculture and Local Employment

Labour migration has also had significant and mixed effects on the agricultural sector and local job market in Bihar. Although it is essential in providing significant financial aid in terms of remittances and alleviating some pressure on the strained local amenities, it also helps create structural changes in the rural job markets, agrarian and local economic realities, and their sustainability. On the one hand, emigration of surplus labour force can relieve demographic pressure upon small and fragmented farmlands. In other situations, this has contributed to a slight increase in farm wages particularly in busy times of the year like sowing and harvesting when manual labour is scarce. The shrinking of the local labour force frequently demands the employment of wage labourers at more elevated daily wages, which,

theoretically, may enhance incomes of those remaining at home.

This optimistic picture is, however, subverted with the lack of working-age male population, who can be seen as the backbone of agrarian labour in Bihar. The long and repeatedly continuing migration cycles have caused serious labour shortages at critical agricultural times. This has led to a situation whereby many farming households have either leased out their land to other people, planted reduced area of land or land left idle. Such a local trend is especially noticeable in flood-prone districts such as Darbhanga, Khagaria in which seasonal disasters and seasonal migration have resulted in the abdication of formerly productive agricultural lands. Women, the aged family members and children are pooled in agricultural work in higher and higher proportions, especially in migrant-sending families. They are under-equipped in the context of their emerging agricultural burden, in terms of physical stability, training and access to mechanization. This change has also caused a small contribution in ensuring the presence of women in agriculture but with little or no participation in decision-making and land ownership. This commonly leads to the production of a feminized labour burden which is often not compensated with an agreeing quantity of recognition socially or economically.

The other trend that is also worrying is the surrender towards the ancient way of farming among the migrating families. As such families rely more on the external remittance, they are less likely to keep agriculture as a sustainable way of exceeding livelihood. The focus moves on consumption as opposed to production and there is a gradual diminishment of traditional agrarian knowledge and diversity of crops. Traditional practices of organic farming, intercropping, or indigenous seed saving will also begin to suffer as communities start to become more focused on immediate financial income through migration. Government welfare and employment schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which ensures 100 days of wage employment to rural households per year have not succeeded in absorbing available workforce. Based on Bihar rural development department data (2022), on average,

45 employment days were allowed under MGNREGA despite the approved amount being 100 employment days per house. The existence of corruption, delays in paying the wages, low-level of transparency, and improper execution has caused it to lose its credibility as a trustworthy employment outlet. Migration is the fall back position of many especially the landless labourers and small farmers who do not get regular employment at the local place. Moreover, the rise of climate change and repeated shocks in the environment, like unseasonal rains and detrimental droughts have increased the ameliorous insecurity of farming and further motivate migration. In this way, although labour migration provides the temporary economic support to the rural households in Bihar, its effects on the agriculture and local jobs cannot be separated without reference to sustainability, equity, and resilience.

Social Costs and Challenges

Although labour migration is economically beneficial to the migrant households in Bihar, it is a complex phenomenon that is accompanied with a series of social costs and psychological burdens. The chronic and frequently cyclical loss of adult male members within the household has a tremendous impact on family dynamics, gender roles and inter-generational bonds and the emotional wellbeing of those that are left behind. Emotional and psychological distress is one of the worst felt; especially in women and children. Lack of husbands or fathers over a long period of time affects the household. Children are being brought up without any constant paternal care and it has influence on all aspects of their growth and development-the motivation of children to school, discipline and emotional growth of children. Mothers are then left the task of not only running a home but also of emotional labour to grieve as single parents-without institutional or communal support. In most instances, old grandparents are recruited to take care of grandchildren further straining aged dependents.

The implications of these findings are multi-dimensional to the women. Migration might bring in the benefits of remittance, and some ability to deal with household finances and make simple decisions, but this benefit is not always equally spread. Empowerment is usually dependent on education,

caste and the extent of the available social support. Women of demeaned Dalit or Mahadalit groups suffer a lot of social stigma when they are perceived to not be playing the conventional gender roles. They end up being easily exploited, harassed, and socially watched. Without men, they are also more vulnerable to land cases, domestic violence and even inheritance related cases which they are completely unequipped to deal with on their own.

It has even changed the whole of the rural landscape in Bihar, especially in flood-affected districts such as Darbhanga, Saharsa, Khagaria and Supaul, as there has been a mass out-migration. The villages are becoming occupied by old persons, very young, and women due to which scholars coin the term as 'ghost villages' or left behind communities. This shift undermines the classical networks in the community providing solidarity, which used to form the lifeline of the rural support structure. Relatively smaller number of able bodied men available, a village council (panchayat) becomes an inactive participant and overall social capital of society is weaker. The very necessities such as the local schools and primary health centres end up becoming non-existent since nobody wants to go there, they are lowly staffed and thus generally neglected in terms of administrative upkeep. A 2021 field study by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in various North Bihar districts revealed that more than 60 percent of women in the migrant populations experienced an upsurge in mental stress, insecurity and social isolation due to the necessity of running households in crisis-prone areas. The lack of emotional support and the burden of responsibilities to organize the education of children, aged parents-in-law, and decisions related to land come under great psychosocial pressure.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 added these social vulnerabilities to a very sharp scenario. Millions of Bihari migrant workers who have been working in big cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Surat were left with no wages, shelter and food with the sudden nationwide lockdown. The reverse migration which followed made over 2 million of them move back to Bihar in a matter of months according to Bihar government estimates. Most of them returned to their home countries with no money, a pile of debts, and

major trauma, be it emotional or financial. The crisis also demonstrated how shaky and exclusory the economic system that depends on migrations was. In rural Bihar, this contributed to greater unemployment and even social tension, as well as greater insistence on local guarantees of jobs and food security provisions. These problems, in the end, point to the fact that there is a need to have state-supported safety nets, gender-sensitive policies, and more robust rural governance structures that will absorb the social impacts of out-migration and contribute to a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development ecosystem.

Gendered Dimensions of Migration

Migration effects gendered effects are also outstanding. Historically male migration out of Bihar made the patriarchal positions even stronger, and women were assigned to stay home and take care of families. The long run or permanent migrations, however, are becoming more numerous and thus a shift is being necessitated. Women in the migrant households are becoming more efficient in controlling finances, guiding children in education and participating in village level decision making/village level decision making institutions such as Panchayati Raj, Institutions and Self- Help Groups. However, this change is full of contradictions. Women in India are generally denied access to land and most castes are restricted in their mobility, women also, lack access to information, credit or the market. When women migrate on their own, they end up in unregulated and low paid jobs like domestic work, garment factories and care giving. Such Employments are usually exploitative, sexual in nature and lack any legal protection particularly when the services of intermediaries or even placement agents are used. A woman always moves on the margin of risk, therefore migration is a questionable pursuit even after empowerment and exploitation co-exist.

Environmental and Structural Implications

Environmental impacts are also eminent as structural dependency on migration. As the focus on agriculture decreases, less money is spent on sustainable agriculture including organic farming, watershed design or soil protection. In addition, higher remittance-based consumption, including building

concrete houses, buying motorbikes or generators, also contributes to environmental impact in the countryside. Moreover, loss of village participation through migration-induced absenteeism undermines community participation in group work such as how to take care of irrigation canals, the utilization of common property resources, or during disaster preparation. Given that climate risks like floods, droughts, and heatwaves are growing in a state like Bihar where migration is the only survival option, the migration-livelihood-climate nexus must be brought to the attention of policymakers urgently.

Conclusion

Labour migration is one of the components of livelihood in Bihar. It is critical in providing income to millions of families who are able to get out of direct poverty, obtain improved services and on occasion invest in intergenerational mobility. Nevertheless, this kind of economy based on migration is precarious. Migration can provide temporary economic stability, but in most cases, it entrenches structural fragilities in fields of education, health, agriculture, gender equity, and social solidity. It is an immediate need to have a

wide-sweep policy intervention in converting migration into a sustainable livelihood behavior. These are supposed to include the reinforcement of skill development process, safe migration channels, greater social protection to migrant families, and local jobs facilitation by way of rural industrialisation and climate resilient agriculture. The rights of migrants and their involvement in the welfare programs in cities in a way that they are not viewed and used as disposable labour but rather have dignity and entitlements are equally important. As is the case of Bihar, that despite being a significant source as well as destination of migrants, a balanced developmental approach that will give people choices (to stay or migrate) as opposed to being driven in it by compulsions instead, will be instrumental in establishing sustainable and dignified livelihoods of the next generation.

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Prof. Renu Malaviya**

Developmental Contextual Perspective of Bullying : Understanding from the students' Vocabulary and Their Persepectives

Abstract

In the present study, Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Types of Bullying included in the research are physical bullying, cyber bullying, verbal and non-verbal bullying. The study has attempted to explore the stakeholders' perception about different roles in bullying i.e. Child who bullies, Child being bullied and Bystander. Eleven schools have been selected from East Delhi. 15 students per class have been taken through random sampling. 45 students (from 7th, 9th and 11th) per school will be taken as sample. There will be 495 students in total from 11 schools of East Delhi. Questionnaire was self-developed by the researcher in which closed ended and open ended both type of questions was included to collect responses from the students. The students' responses helped the researcher to understand the developmental Contextual Perspective of Bullying.

Key Words: Bullying, Factors, Developmental Contextual Perspective

Introduction

Olweus (1993) defines **bullying** as physical, verbal, or psychological intimidation that intentionally causes fear, distress, or harm to a victim. It involves an **imbalance of power**—either physical or psychological—where a more powerful individual repeatedly oppresses a less powerful one over time. Importantly, mutual conflict between individuals of equal strength does **not** qualify as bullying. Hymel et

al. (2003) distinguish **bullying from general aggression**, emphasizing three key components:

1. **Intent to harm**
2. **Power imbalance**
3. **Repetition**

Intentional abuse of power is central to bullying and sets it apart from other forms of aggression. Olweus (1993) further explains bullying as a situation where a student is **repeatedly exposed** over time to negative actions by one or more peers. According to a World Health Organization (WHO) study reported by Currie (2012), bullying affects children aged 10, 13, and 15 across 43 countries and occurs in various forms:

- **Physical** (e.g., hitting, shoving, property damage)
- **Verbal** (e.g., name-calling, threats, insults)
- **Emotional** (e.g., exclusion, rumor-spreading, humiliation)
- **Cyberbullying** (e.g., online harassment through messages or posts)

Vaillancourt and Trinh (2010) found that social and verbal bullying are the most common. Bullying often begins in preschool, peaks during middle school, and typically declines in adolescence (Currie, 2012; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Craig (2009) reported that approximately 13% of children and adolescents worldwide experience bullying during their school years. Bullying not only violates a child's right to a safe educational environment, but also severely impacts their academic performance, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, and relationships.

Espelage and Swearer (2003) identify four key roles in bullying:

- Bully
- Victim
- Bully-victim
- Bystander. In present study three roles of bullying are considered. They are bully, victim and bystander.

Types of Bullying in the Present Study

In this study, bullying is defined as **intentional and repeated aggression** that causes harm or discomfort through:

- **Physical bullying:** Hurting the body or damaging belongings (e.g., hitting, stealing, destruction of property) (Olweus, 1993; Kuzma, 2010).
- **Verbal bullying:** Using words to harm (e.g., name-calling, threats, spreading rumors) (Olweus, 1993; Kuzma, 2010).
- **Non-verbal bullying:** Social exclusion, betrayal of trust, or damage to reputation without direct speech (Olweus, 1993; Kuzma, 2010).
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment via digital platforms such as texts, emails, or social media (Olweus, 1993).

Understanding Bullying from Developmental Contextual Perspective

The Developmental Contextual Perspective emphasizes how some children (bullies) learn to exert power and aggression over others (victims), leading to distress and entrapment for those victimized. It highlights the developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence that drive children to explore social behaviour, power dynamics, and deviance (Ayer, 1999; Pellegrini, 2004; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001).

This perspective integrates both developmental (child's behaviour, social cognition, and problem-solving) and contextual (strained parental and peer relationships) interventions. It also considers risk and protective factors shaping diverse developmental pathways in children's use of power and aggression. Nansel (2001) notes that peer norms and social understanding evolve over time, often reducing bullying by the end of high school. Vaillancourt et al. (2003) emphasize variability among those who bully, while Olweus (1993) and Swettenham (1999) describe them as less empathetic, dominant, and aggressive. According to Roland & Idsoe (2001) and Vaillancourt (2003), these children often lack social competence, show impulsivity, and experience emotional distress or strict control at home—factors

that may lead them to become both bullies and victims. Since bullying is a form of aggression, such behaviour often extends across various contexts.

In this study, the **Developmental Contextual Perspective** refers to the challenges children face while navigating power and deviance, shaped by relationships within key social settings like family and peers. The study draws on both developmental and contextual dimensions to understand these behaviours.

One research objective is to explore **stakeholders' perceptions of bullying roles:** Bully, victim and Bystander. This paper focuses on **students' perceptions**, analyzed through vocabulary used by students from Grades 7, 9, and 11—representing elementary to senior secondary levels. A purposive sample of **429 students** from **11 East Delhi schools** participated. A **self-developed semi-structured questionnaire** with both open- and closed-ended questions was used to gather data.

Language - Prediction of Emotions and Psychological Construction

Lisa Feldman Barrett's Conceptual Act Theory (CAT) (2014), a psychological constructionist theory of emotion, proposes that language plays a central role in shaping emotional experiences. Language supports the development and use of conceptual knowledge, which helps individuals interpret bodily sensations and external stimuli within a specific context. According to CAT, complex emotions such as anger, fear, or disgust are psychological constructions that emerge from the combination of more basic elements: bodily sensations, exteroceptive input (e.g., visual or auditory cues), and learned emotion concepts. In the present study, students' responses were analyzed and categorized based on the emotional, social, and psychological meaning conveyed through their language in the context of bullying and its roles (bully, victim, bystander). Language served as a medium to interpret and access emotional and psychological dimensions of bullying.

Words for Bullies

The researcher asked the students to write down the three words that immediately come to their mind when they visualize a bully. A large number (171 out of 429 students) of responses in the form of a variety of words emerged. Responses of the students were categorized and further used to understand the bully through a developmental contextual perspective.

Twelve categories emerged from the responses of the students.

1. Characteristics representing sense of power in bully

An attempt was made to group those words which were indicating strong negative feelings and emotions in the bully which may indicate the students' perception of the reasons/factors of an individual.

Rude/ anger/disrespectful/aggressive/ dominant/ arrogant / fighting/annoying/ harsh/ attitude/ hater / full of hatred/ hot blooded / Hitler /impulsive/popular/ repulsive.

2. The factors behind an individual to become a bully

Words which were indicating the social disconnect of an individual from the people around them are collected.

alone / introvert/ broken from inside/ personal problem

3. The negative perception of students for bully

The students also stated many words which were the negative attributes they perceived related to the personality of the bully.

Absent minded/ making fun / ignorant/ brainless/ carefree/ dumb/ idiot/ illmannered/ immature/ irresponsible/ stupid/ spoiled/ over pampered/ naughty

4. The psychological state of bully

Another grouping of words that emerged from the total responses in the form of words for the bully could be identified under the psychological state of the bully. The psychological state is the mental and emotional state of an individual in that time frame.

Attention seaker/ depressed/emotionally disturbed/ frustrated/ashamed/ possessive/ insecure/ jealous/ mentally disturbed / shameless/ guilty.

5. Negative feelings of students for bully

An attempt was made to group those words which were indicating the negative feelings of students when they thought about bullying.

Disturbing /irritating / freak/enemy/ offensive / outcast/ not worthy of living/ scary/ should go to hell/ disgrace/ sadist/ stone-hearted /toxic / crooked/cunning/ cruel/ clever/ abuser/disgusting/ evil/ heartless/ insane/ jerk/ mean/ madboy / merciless/monster/ narcissist/ nonsense/negative/ pathetic/psychopath/ quirky/ rascal/ruthless/

reckless/ malice/ harmful for others.

6. Actions of bully representing ways of bullying

Another grouping of words that emerged from the total responses in the form of words for the bully could be identified as the actions or ways through which bullying is executed amongst students.

Bullied/ body shamer/ biased/ cyberbully/ fat / fun from bullying/ Sunio / taunts/ teaser/ threatening/ troubling/trolling/starker/ inappropriate language / inappropriate touching/ Gian.

7. Expression of superiority in bully

The group those words which were indicating the perception of a bully as a superior individual. Practicing superiority has been used as an attack mechanism to bring fear upon an individual.

Extrovert/ conversionist/confident/ fake superimacy/ inferiority/ complex/ superiority complex.

8. General behaviour of the bully with students

The words representing the behaviour of the bully with their classmates were grouped under this category. An attempt was made to collect all words representing behaviour issues in daily classroom settings. Bullying is often an expression of the bully's self confidence or lack thereof.

Not respectable / discouraging/ indiscipline/ unacceptable/ insensitive/ in considered /intolerable / insignificant/ misbehaving/ mischievous/ unaccepted/uneducated/punishable/ obscene behaviour / bad behaviour.

9. Personality traits of the bully

Another grouping of words that emerged from the total responses in the form of words for the bully could be identified under the personality traits of the bully. The words indicate the self-concept of the bully which is highly responsible for their behaviour.

Skill behaviour/popular/intelligent/ self-centered/ selfish/ self-obsessed/ self obnoxious/ senseless/ short minded/ short tempered/ not mature/ not helpful/ narrow minded egoistic/ greedy/ grumpy/egocentric

10. Explaining the intent of suppression in bully

The words were categorized together on the basis of representing the intent of suppression in a bully for the victim. Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes harm to another person.

Influential/ fearless/bad emphasis/ obstinate /

judgmental/over-powering/over confident masculine/ boss / sigma male/ strength/ suppressive/ want to be cool /strong/ stubborn/ avenge/confident

11. Weaknesses in bully which they want to hide

Some of the reasons why bullying takes place include institutional and cultural causes as well as social and family issues. The personal history of someone who bullies others is also a reason why they do so.

Weak / was bullying/wrong/lack of self control/ fear of non-conformity/ failure / downtrodden culprit/ teaser/ bad in 'studies.

12. Social traits related to bully

Group of words which were indicating the social traits of the bully. Examining social traits associated with bullying behaviour highlights how social competence and emotional regulation affect aggressive behaviour.

Unmoored / uncompassionate/ unfriendly/ unkind/ unethical

Words for Victim

When the researcher asked the students to write down the three words that immediately come to their mind when they visualize a victim. A large number (188 out of 429 responses) of responses in the form of a variety of words emerged. Responses of the students were categorized and further used to understand the victim through a developmental contextual perspective. In the present study, the responses given by students were analysed and further categorized on the basis of emotional, social, and psychological sense developed by words in the context of bullying and the role of an individual as a victim involved in it. Nine categories emerged from the responses of the students.

1. Reasons of becoming a soft target

Categorization on the basis of representing the reasons for becoming a soft target. The leading character trait among victims of bullying is non assertiveness. Non-assertive students communicate through their body language and the way they speak that they lack self-confidence and that they're less likely to stand up to the bully or report the incident.

Voiceless/ unsafe/soft target/ taunted/ threatened/ afraid / avoids attention/awkward/ beat the bully/ betrayed/blackmailed by bully/ bullied for color, shape, voice and height/

embarrassed/emotionally vulnerable/ tortured/ exploited/forced/victim/ targeted/ get teased/ getting pressurized/isolated / name calling/ nobita/ name calling/ overpressure/ pressurized/ soft target

2. Emotional state of victim

An attempt was made to group those words which were indicating their emotional state and their behaviour expressing their emotions as a victim.

Soft hearted /strong /tolerant/ unique/ angry / annoyed/ be brave/ be confident/ be kind / calm mind/caring/cool/ silent/minded/communicate/ cooperative/ shy/ cultured/ determined/ disciplined/sensitive/ dominating/fearless/friendly/ good behaviour/ honest/ humble /innocent / introvert

3. Strengths of victim

The responses of students mentioned some words indicating their nature which seems as a factor (by the bully to victimize) responsible for their tolerating nature and not raising their voice against bullying.

Better in studies/ conscious/ different from others/ good in studies/ intelligent/ silent topper

4. Factors of tolerating and not raising voice

The words were categorized together on the basis of representing the reason for getting bullied and that is the academic strengths of an individual due to which the bully tries to suppress them with their actions intentionally.

Not brave/not-confident/ not smart/ suppressed/ pityful/ anxious/alone/ attention seeker/bearer/ brainless/ child have bad deeds in mind/ childhood trauma/ coward/useless/ crying depressed/ deprived/desperate/ easily dominated/ easily threatened/easy target/ weak/faultless / feable/ feminine / foolish/ fragile/ frightened/frail / frustrated/ hopeless/ timid/ weak/ idiot/ irritated/ lonely/looser/naïve/ petrified/ stupid/ weak/ nerd / poor grades

5. Ways of responding by victim as per students

The group of words suggesting the victims about ways through which a victim should respond against victimization or bullying.

Call the adult people/ discuss your experience with your friends/ don't be quiet/ punish who bullies/ don't encourage / don't make being bully a habit/ fight back/ follow the one which bullies / ignore the person who bully /get motivated / get strong/ ignore the person who bully/ need to raise

voice

6. Inappropriate Reaction

Another grouping of words that emerged from the total responses in the form of words for the victim could be identified under the ways through which a victim reacts inappropriately when bullied.

Can't do anything / can't do anything in proper way/ can't live his life/ can't speak for himself/ controlled/ clint/didn't tell anyone/ don't take stand for themselves/ doesn't raise their voice/ doesn't share feelings/ doesn't have courage to stop/ genetic issues/lack of confidence/ no fight back

7. Socialization / social construct of victim

Words indicating the ways individuals are socialized or socially constructed by their immediate environment and the people involved in their life (peer, family, school, etc).

Demotivated / discouraged / excluded/ exhausted / helpless/horrified/ignored/ need love and support/ non assertive/not accepted/ oppressed / troubled

8. Effects of bullying on victim

Words identified under this category are stating effects of bullying on the victim which are observable signs that can be observed in the victim, these are signs that a child is being bullied may be physical, emotional, behavioural, social, or academic or can have short- term and long-term effects of bullying on an individual who has been victimized.

Feel suffocated / feeling weaker/feels helpless / feels inferior/ full of sorrow/health issue/ hurt/ insecure/ insomnia/ low self -esteem/ mentally disturbed/not strong in mental health/overthinker/ patient/ physically challenged / retarded/ scared/ scared from bully/ self doubting/ sick/ stressed/ submissive/ worried

9. Psychological traumas developed in victim

Another grouping of words that emerged from the total responses in the form of words for the bully could be identified under the category of psychological trauma. Psychological trauma (also known as mental trauma, psychiatric trauma, emotional damage, or psych trauma) is an emotional response caused by severe distressing events.

Merciless / miserable/ self harm

Words for Bystanders

When the researcher asked the students to write down the three words that immediately come to their

mind when they visualize an individual who observes the incidence of bullying but does not participate (Bystander). A large number (205 out of 429 students) of responses in the form of a variety of words emerged. Responses of the students were categorized and further used to understand the bystander through a developmental contextual perspective. Seven categories emerged from the responses of the students.

1. FEAR OF BEING TARGETED IN BYSTANDER

Another grouping of words that emerged from the total responses in the form of words for the victim could be identified under the category stating fear of being targeted. This category includes words that represent the fear of bystanders being bullied when an incidence of bullying is taking place.

Afraid / avoids/trouble/ being bullied/ betrayed/ cannot fight/careless/coward/depressed/ don't have courage/doesn't fight/doesn't want to involve in such issues / don't participate so he well not beaten up/ targeted or bullied/ fear of being frightened / hesitate/ innocent / insecure/ biased/ keep quite/ lack of confidence/mind on business/ neglecting/not courageous/ not brave/ not strong/ overthinker/ pees pressure/powerless / sad /scared/ shocked /traumatic/timid/victim of bullying

2. Bystanders who are not taking action

An attempt was made to group those words which were indicating the non-reactive nature of bystanders. In this category, those words are categorized which are about the non-participative nature of bystanders during bullying.

Weak/ unconcerned / unbothered/ untreatable /absent minded /alone/awkward/ blind/can't take stand for anyone/witness / casual/ confused/ demoralized/dependent distant/ doesn't pay attention/doesn't want to interfere/ don't mind/ don't support /drama/dumb/ self centered/ easy going/escape from problem/fed up/ foolish/ funny

3. Bystanders who are in favor of bully

Another grouping of words that emerged from the total responses in the form of words for the victim could be identified under the category stating active-destructive behaviours of the bystander. Such bystanders contribute to the bullying dynamic by reinforcing the bully's actions.

Also bully/anti-social/ audience/ bad/ arrogant/

biased towards the bully/ can be a friend of bully/ characterless/cheap/ cold blooded/ too harsh/ clever/consider bullying ignorable/ considered as bully/ criminal/ Crood behaviour/ cruel /deaf/ doesn't like to say anything in their friend group/ doesn't report or raise their voice/ traitor/double faced/ enjoys bullying/ equal participate

4. Suggestions by students for bystanders

The responses received from the data representing three words by students for bystanders were observed and further categorized under the group of words suggesting the bystanders about ways through which a bystander should respond against victimization or bullying.

Ask them not to bully/ at least tell to an elder/ be careful/ beat the person/ can inform silently/ fight to continue and last longer /immediately call adults/ imagine yourself getting bullied/ need to help/record and report to trusted adult/reply back/ raise their voice/ stop it/ stand for yourself/tell a teacher

5. Positive intent of the bystander

Further categorization was done under the group of words promoting positive intent of the bystanders and ways through which a bystander may respond against victimization or bullying.

Anonymously try to inform/doing both good and bad work/ forced to help others/ help the bullied

6. Positive characteristics of bystander

The words were categorized together on the basis of representing the reason for getting bullied and that is the positive characteristics of bystander. There are many studies concluding that bystanders do not react as they are calm and have good intentions.

Vigilant/ believe Gandhiji's rule / calm in nature/doesn't involve in bad company / eager/ focused/ gentle / good observer/ have sharp mind/ intelligent/introvert/ keen observer/ kind hearted/ less talkative/ matured/ responsible citizen/ self experienced /self conscious/social person/talk politely

6. Social construct of bystander

Words which indicated the ways individuals are socialized or socially constructed by their immediate environment and the people involved in their life (peer, family, school, etc).

Child trauma/ discipline community/ family

pressure/isolated/ no one to believe and support them / told not to interrupt

7. Past experience of bystander

This category captures how past experiences influence bystanders' reactions when witnessing bullying. Exposure to bullying, whether as a victim or a witness, can leave lasting psychological effects, impacting how bystanders respond in future situations.

Hasn't healed of Gandhiji's rule/ stoic

Findings With Implication

The rich vocabulary shared by students to describe bullies, victims, and bystanders offers deep insight into their emotional, social, and psychological worlds. These reflections provide a powerful foundation for teachers, counsellors, and schools to rethink their roles and responsibilities in addressing bullying more effectively.

Understand the Emotional Vocabulary of Students

Students use strong emotional language to describe bullying, indicating that they deeply feel and internalize these experiences.

Implication:

- Teachers and counsellors need to listen to student language more attentively.
- Use students' vocabulary in awareness programs to help them feel understood and validated.
- Incorporate emotional literacy programs to help students label, understand, and manage these emotions constructively.

Design Tailored Interventions for Each Role (Bully, Victim, Bystander)

The data shows unique psychological, social, and emotional profiles for bullies, victims, and bystanders.

Implication:

- Provide individual counselling, focusing on self-regulation, empathy, and identifying hidden pain or unmet needs.
- Build assertiveness training, peer support systems, and reinforce their academic or moral strengths.
- Empower them through bystander intervention training, showing how they can safely report or interrupt bullying.

Foster a Safe, Inclusive School Climate

The repeated use of words like *unsafe, afraid, unheard, excluded*, etc., by students reflects a school environment that can feel threatening or isolating.

Implication:

- Schools must build a culture of psychological safety where speaking up is safe and supported.
- Establish clear anti-bullying policies, anonymous reporting systems, and regular check-ins with students.

Amplify Student Voice in School Policy

Students clearly have strong, insightful opinions and suggestions about what should be done.

Implication:

- Create student-led anti-bullying committees.
- Use student suggestions (like “call an adult,” “raise your voice,” “don’t encourage bullies”) to shape policy and peer-led interventions.

Train Educators in Trauma-Informed and Empathy-Based Practices

The words associated with victims and bystanders point to trauma, emotional isolation, and fear of judgment.

Implication:

- Professional development for staff should include modules on:
 - * Recognizing trauma responses
 - * Supporting mental health
 - * Building empathy in classrooms
 - * Non-punitive discipline strategies

Build Resilient Peer Networks

Words like *excluded*, *helpless*, *voiceless*, *betrayed*, and *alone* highlight the social disconnection experienced by victims and bystanders.

Implication:

- Design programs that encourage positive peer bonding, such as:
 - * Circle time

- * Buddy System

- * Peer mentors

- * Collaborative group projects

- Schools should foster a sense of belonging in every child.

Leverage Positive Traits of Bystanders for Systemic Change

Students identified bystanders as intelligent, responsible, calm, and observant, even though they may not act.

Implication:

- Equip these students with the confidence, tools, and school backing to take safe action.
- Recognize and reward bystander intervention publicly to set a **social norm**.

Conclusion

Students’ understanding of bullying evolves with age, expanding from physical acts to include verbal and social forms. Their perception of bullies is largely negative, often linked to personality flaws or psychological issues. Victims are seen as passive sufferers shaped by social norms that discourage speaking out. Bystanders are viewed as silent due to fear and learned avoidance, reflecting a culture of non-intervention. These words collected from the data can serve as valuable indicators for developing a checklist to help identify individuals involved in different roles within bullying dynamics.

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Dr. Shobhika Mukul

The Role of Women in Tribal Resistance: A Gendered Study of Birsa Munda's Tribal Movement

Abstract

The tribal movements in colonial India emerged as powerful expressions of indigenous resistance against British exploitation, socio-religious coercion, and feudal oppression. While historical narratives have often centered male leaders, particularly figures like Birsa Munda, the critical contributions of tribal women have received limited scholarly attention. This article investigates the significant yet overlooked role of women in tribal resistance movements, with a special focus on the Ulgulan led by Birsa Munda in the Chotanagpur plateau during the late 19th century. Through a gendered lens, the study highlights how Munda women actively participated as mobilizers, protectors of indigenous culture, messengers, and occasional combatants. Using oral histories, ethnographic data, and archival accounts, the article brings forth the agency of tribal women who challenged colonial and patriarchal structures simultaneously. It argues for the inclusion of women's narratives in the historiography of tribal uprisings and demonstrates how their contributions were essential to the moral and spiritual strength of the Munda rebellion. This research not only reclaims a silenced part of history but also reinforces the necessity of gender-inclusive frameworks in tribal studies.

Keywords

Tribal women, Birsa Munda, Ulgulan, colonial resistance, gendered history, Adivasi movements, indigenous agency.

Introduction

The historiography of tribal movements in colonial

India has often centered on male leaders, inadvertently eclipsing the significant contributions of tribal women. One such movement is the Ulgulan (Great Tumult), spearheaded by Birsa Munda in the Chotanagpur region between 1895 and 1900. The movement sought to resist the British colonial system, Christian missionary influence, and the exploitative zamindari (landlord) system. Though Birsa Munda is rightly remembered as a revolutionary figure, the contributions of tribal women who acted as mobilizers, caretakers of tradition, and often as resisters themselves remain insufficiently recognized.

This paper explores the role of women in tribal movements, with a particular focus on the Ulgulan. Through an interdisciplinary approach incorporating subaltern historiography, feminist theory, and tribal oral traditions, it argues that tribal women were not passive bystanders but active participants in shaping and sustaining the movement.

Tribal Society and the Position of Women

Tribal communities in India, especially those in central and eastern regions such as Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh, are organized along kinship, clan, and territorial lines. Women in these societies, unlike in many patriarchal agrarian caste societies, traditionally enjoy relatively more autonomy in matters of land, labor, and marriage (Xaxa, 2008). Their roles in agriculture, craft production, and domestic rituals place them at the center of tribal life. Women not only contribute to the economic life of the community but are also custodians of cultural

heritage. They play a vital role in maintaining oral traditions, folk songs, religious practices, and healing rituals that form the basis of tribal identity.

This precolonial social fabric underwent radical transformation under British colonialism. The introduction of permanent settlement systems, forest laws, and revenue policies marginalized tribal communities, particularly women, who became increasingly vulnerable to displacement and violence. Missionary activities also attempted to replace indigenous belief systems, often undermining the status and roles of women in tribal religions and customs (Oddie, 1998). The imposition of patriarchal norms from both colonial administrators and mission institutions disrupted the relative autonomy tribal women had previously enjoyed.

The Ulgulan Movement: Context and Objectives

The Ulgulan, or Great Tumult, was a millenarian movement that arose out of widespread discontent among the Munda tribes. The colonial encroachment into tribal lands and the introduction of exploitative tenurial systems like begari (forced labor), bonded servitude, and forest restrictions were catalysts for rebellion (Tudu, 2006). Birsa Munda emerged as a spiritual and political leader who envisioned a return to a golden age of tribal autonomy and justice. His message combined elements of indigenous faith, resistance to Christianity, and calls for the restoration of traditional Munda rights to land and governance (Guha, 1983).

The movement was deeply spiritual and socio-political. It aimed not just at the overthrow of exploitative structures but also at the moral rejuvenation of tribal society. Birsa declared himself as a prophet and messiah, proclaiming the coming of a new era free from oppression, sin, and colonial domination. His vision was one of both divine redemption and political liberation. The movement spread rapidly, gaining followers across the Chotanagpur plateau, and was eventually met with harsh military suppression by the British. While Birsa Munda is celebrated as the hero of the movement, the collective participation of the community, including women, ensured its strength and reach.

Women's Participation in the Ulgulan

Women in the Ulgulan movement were not mere spectators; they were actively involved in various capacities that were critical to the sustenance and effectiveness of the rebellion. One of the primary areas where women contributed was in preserving and propagating cultural and spiritual values. As custodians of oral traditions, they played a key role in reinforcing Birsa's messages during communal gatherings, festivals, and domestic rituals. Through songs, dances, and storytelling, they helped in spreading the ideological underpinnings of the Ulgulan. This cultural transmission was vital in keeping the spirit of resistance alive among the people.

Another significant role played by women was as messengers and organizers. Their familiarity with the terrain and their relative invisibility in the eyes of colonial authorities allowed them to carry information, instructions, and even food supplies between rebel groups without attracting attention. This role was both risky and strategic. In several oral accounts, women are remembered for their bravery in navigating dangerous routes and escaping colonial patrols.

Women also engaged in economic resistance. As primary agricultural laborers, they organized boycotts against working for landlords or in colonial projects. They also resisted forced labor by hiding in forests, feigning illness, or sabotaging crops intended for colonial use. Their collective refusal to cooperate with exploitative systems disrupted local economies and demonstrated the power of passive resistance.

In some instances, women were involved in direct confrontations. They armed themselves with household tools, accompanied men in raids, or defended villages from colonial forces. Colonial reports and missionary writings occasionally mention the participation of women, although often in a dismissive tone. These sources rarely capture the intensity and bravery exhibited by women in resisting arrests or protecting their community members.

Importantly, the involvement of women in the Ulgulan was not just supportive but ideological. They internalized and contributed to the vision of a free and just society that Birsa Munda advocated. Their participation reflected a shared consciousness that

transcended gender roles. This engagement was often driven by their own experiences of suffering under colonial oppression, displacement, and cultural disintegration.

Gender and Resistance: A Subaltern Perspective

Drawing on subaltern historiography (Guha, 1983), this paper asserts that tribal women's roles must be understood beyond colonial archives. These archives, produced largely by British administrators and missionaries, often ignored or trivialized women's resistance. Thus, oral traditions, community memory, and gender-sensitive ethnographies are indispensable sources for reconstructing these narratives.

By framing the tribal woman as both a subject and an agent, we challenge the conventional binaries of passive-victim versus heroic-leader. The Munda women's resistance was neither peripheral nor accidental—it was central to the Ulgulan's endurance and ideological clarity. Their roles reflected deep interconnections between gender, culture, and politics in tribal life.

Contemporary Relevance and Legacy

The legacy of women in Birsa Munda's movement continues to inspire contemporary tribal activism, particularly in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Modern tribal women leaders and organizations draw upon the symbolic and historical strength of Ulgulan to address issues of displacement, mining, forest rights, and gender-based violence (Ekka, 2011).

Recognizing the historic participation of women allows for more inclusive policymaking and justice-driven narratives today.

Additionally, tribal literature, folklore, and cultural programs in these regions are increasingly focusing on reviving the memory of women who were part of the resistance. This has not only created a sense of pride among Adivasi women but also challenged dominant narratives that render them invisible in national history.

Conclusion

The tribal movement led by Birsa Munda was not merely a masculine expression of anti-colonial resistance but a community-based rebellion in which women played vital, though often unacknowledged, roles. From preserving cultural traditions and spreading ideology to engaging in active resistance and martyrdom, women were foundational to the Ulgulan. The historical neglect of their contributions reflects broader patriarchal biases in both colonial documentation and postcolonial historiography. Through a critical, interdisciplinary lens, this paper has attempted to restore the gendered dimension of tribal resistance, arguing that a complete understanding of Birsa Munda's movement necessitates the inclusion of its female participants.

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Organic Farming in Haryana: Policy Initiatives, Farmer Perceptions, and Sustainability Perspectives – A Literature Review

Abstract

Organic farming has emerged as a sustainable alternative to conventional agriculture, gaining increasing attention in policy discourse and rural development strategies across India. Haryana, a state with a predominantly agrarian economy, has initiated several programs to promote organic practices. This systematic literature review critically examines existing research on organic farming in Haryana, focusing on three key dimensions: policy initiatives, farmer perceptions, and sustainability outcomes. The review analyses peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and empirical studies published between 2000 and 2025, following a structured methodology for literature selection and thematic synthesis. Findings indicate that while state and central governments have introduced various schemes and certification mechanisms, the adoption rate remains limited due to challenges such as market access, yield concerns, and knowledge gaps. The review identifies critical research gaps and suggests future directions for enhancing the adoption and impact of organic farming in Haryana. The paper aims to inform policy makers, researchers, and agricultural stakeholders about the current landscape and potential of organic agriculture in the region.

Introduction Background

Organic farming has increasingly gained global prominence as a sustainable alternative to conventional agriculture. It emphasizes

environmentally friendly practices, biodiversity conservation, and the reduction of synthetic inputs.

In India organic farming has significance because of the potential to improve long term agricultural sustainability, reducing the dependency on chemical fertilizers and pesticides and also the potential to restore the soil health.

Haryana, a state in the northern India is well known for its high productivity in crops like sugarcane, wheat and rice. But the usage of excessive chemical inputs declining soil fertility and also raising concerns about the sustainability of its current agricultural model. In response to all these problems Organic farming has been recognized as a potential strategy towards facing these challenges while ensuring long term productivity as well as ecological balance.

Objectives of the Review

The most important objective of this study is to critically examine the existing literatures specifically related to organic farming in Haryana with reference to specific focus on: farmer perceptions, sustainability perspectives and the policy initiatives. Firstly, this study aims to examine the various national and state level policy and programmes of that are already implemented in the state of Haryana. Secondly it tries to explore the perceptions of farmers, their behavioural patterns and and motivation regarding adoption of the organic farming also to find out what are the challenges they encounter (lack of technical knowledge, access of market and economic issues). Finally, this study tries to evaluate the sustainability implications of the organic farming in Haryana by

examining its environmental, social and economic impacts.

Methodology

Search Strategy

To conduct a comprehensive and unbiased analysis of the already existing literatures, a systematic search strategy has been implemented to find out the relevant literatures on organic farming in Haryana. various research and academic database was used (JSTOR, Google scholar, Web of science, Scopus).

A set of selected keywords and Boolean operators was used to retrieve relevant studies. Few primary search terms are “Haryana agriculture”, “Organic farming”, “farmer perception”, “sustainability” and “India”.

Selected Existing literatures that are published between 2000-2025, while including the foundational and recent development or contributions to the field.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

For the inclusion criteria only those literatures are added like governmental published report, peer-reviewed, academic dissertations etc. And for the exclusion criteria was applied to eliminate those literatures that did not meet the standards of academic rigor or relevance.

Review Process

To ensure transparency, methodological rigor and replicability a proper systematic review process was followed. The selected studies were documented using PRISMA (preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses) outlines the number of records screened, identified and assessed for eligibility and then included in the review. This particular approach enhances the transparency of the process of article selection.

The extracted data included details such as the **author(s), year of publication, study location, methodology, and major findings** relevant to the themes of policy initiatives, farmer perceptions, and sustainability.

To evaluate the methodological quality and reliability of the included studies, **quality assessment tools** were applied. Tools such as the **Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP)** checklist and the **Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI)** critical appraisal

tools were used where appropriate, depending on the nature and design of the studies.

Policy Initiatives and Government Support

National and state-level policies (e.g., PKVY, NPOP, state subsidies).

Saini & Meena (2024) Surveying 100 farmers across Haryana, this mixed-methods study identified major economic and marketing deficiencies. Gaps include insufficient production scale, poor storage infrastructure, limited state-led promotional outreach, volatile pricing, and undue logistical expense.

Kaushik & Kundu (2024) This study surveyed 150 organic farmers from eastern and western zones of Haryana to assess knowledge levels and constraints. Although over 40% of participants had high awareness of organic practices, institutional outreach remained weak.

Garg & Garg (2024) This Universal Research Report assessed consumer awareness of organic products in Haryana, noting that policy messaging (e.g., NPOP) has begun influencing demand. However, rural consumer penetration remains limited, and price sensitivity remains high.

Kaushik & Kundu (Extension Journal, 2024) Building on their knowledge survey, this research delved into systemic factors affecting adoption. The findings reaffirmed constraints in production, certification, and marketing, especially among mid- and small-scale farmers.

Heena et al. (2024) – Resource Use Efficiency in Organic Wheat Production Applying a Cobb-Douglas production function to data from 120 organic wheat farmers in Haryana, this study analysed input-output dynamics.

Elizabeth Jose & K. Ponnusamy (2023) – Farm Diversification Programmes in Haryana This case based review assessed diversification trends across Haryana’s agro-ecological zones, highlighting how state-led incentives, subsidy programs, and training have encouraged farmers to supplement cereals with allied enterprises like dairy, pulses, and oilseeds.

Kumari, Kashyap & Ravisankar (2022) This study evaluated Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Haryana as key intermediaries for scaling

organic farming under government schemes like PKVY.

Satish Kumar & Mahabir/ S. Jaglan (2022) – Crop Diversification and Farming Patterns Analyzing data from 234 farm households across Haryana, this study found that organic adopters— especially those with smaller land holdings and higher education—are significantly more likely to practice crop diversification.

Kumari et al. (2022, Indian Farming) An extension of their FPO analysis, this article highlights persistent organizational weaknesses despite policy frameworks. It stresses the importance of **statelevel technical institutions** and hands-on support to FPOs to ensure that certification, training, and market aggregation translate into real farmer benefits IJFMR.

Ghanghas et al. (2021) In a multi-district study (Hisar, Sirsa, Bhiwani, Kurukshetra, Sonipat, Yamuna nagar), Ghanghas et al. examined farmers’ experiences with organic farming in Haryana during 2019– 20.

Chetri, Sharma & Ilavarasan (2021) – ICT and Climate Adaptation Capacity of Farmers

Although not specific to organics, this study of 463 Haryana farmers across six districts examined how access to information and ICT tools enhances adaptive capacity to climate risk.

Shehrawat et al. (2020, ARCC Journals) A targeted review of PKVY implementation in Haryana found **poor farmer awareness** and low operational efficiency. Despite allocated resources, on-ground adoption remained minimal due to weak institutional coordination, insufficient field-level mobilization, and fragmented program management.

Guthula et al. (2020) Using multi-agent simulation, this policy modeling study demonstrates that onesize-fits-all schemes lack sensitivity to Haryana’s diverse agro-ecological zones.

Shehrawat et al. (2016) Focusing on Sonipat and Hisar, Shehrawat and colleagues investigated the challenges associated with organic certification and market infrastructure. They surveyed 120 farmers, finding that nearly 90% lacked awareness of organic bio-inputs and improved practices, while poor market linkage and cumbersome certification procedures significantly impeded adoption.

Government Press Report (2013) A government announcement detailed a pilot initiative establishing organic village clusters (~200 acres each) across 19 districts in Haryana. These clusters aimed to provide training in biofertilizer and vermicompost production, alongside promised financial incentives.

Financial Express (2009) A decade ago, Haryana’s horticulture department collaborated with private certified agencies to convert approximately 3,200 hectares into organic orchards. This early intervention showcased institutional willingness to diversify into organic practices.

Times of India Reports (2025)

• **Report 1:** Announced launch of dedicated natural-farming grain markets in Gurgaon, offering ¹ 30,000 subsidies per farmer for native cow–based farming models aligning with chemical-free systems.

• **Report 2:** Detailed creation of organic produce markets in Gurgaon/Hisar, financial support for branding, lab testing facilities, and procurement mechanisms.

S. No.	Author(s) & Year	Focus Area	Key Findings	Implications
1	Financial Express (2009)	Early Horticulture Organic Conversion	~3,200 ha brought under organic horticulture via govt. private collaboration; limited scaling thereafter.	Early interest existed, but lacked sustained institutional followup.
2	Govt. Press Report (2013)	Organic Village Clusters	Pilot clusters (~200 acres each) with bio-input training were initiated; weak post-launch evaluation.	Importance of monitoring and evaluating pilot programs.

3	Shehrawat et al. (2016)	Certification and Market Access	~90% of 120 farmers unaware of bio-inputs; faced cumbersome certification and poor market linkage.	Streamlining certification and institutional marketing is essential.
4	Guthula et al. (2020)	Policy Simulation & Regional Diversity	One-size-fits-all models in Haryana poorly fit diverse agroclimatic zones.	Policies must be agro-region-specific for better impact.
5	Shehrawat et al. (2020)	PKVY Policy Review	Found poor farmer awareness, weak mobilization, and fragmented program management in PKVY scheme.	Strengthen fieldlevel coordination and training.
6	Ghanghas et al. (2021)	Barriers to Adoption	Farmers appreciate soil health benefits but cite lack of price support and incentives; dominant chemical farming impedes transition.	Policy must ensure economic viability through price assurance and outreach.
7	Chetri, Sharma & Ilavarasan (2021)	ICT and Climate Adaptation	ICT access improves resilience and adaptive capacity; small-holders lack access.	Expand ICT tools in organic farming for climate-smart practices.
8	Satish Kumar & Jaglan (2022)	Diversification & Resilience	Organic adopters show more crop diversification, enhancing ecological and income resilience.	Promote diversified cropping systems, especially in rainfed areas.
9	Kumari, Kashyap & Ravisankar (2022)	Role of FPOs in Organic Scaling	Despite support under PKVY, FPOs lacked technical and organizational capacity.	Provide technical assistance and build FPO capabilities.
10	Kumari et al. (2022)	FPO Policy	Organizational weaknesses persist even with frameworks; limited benefits for farmers. Support Failures	Strengthen institutional linkages for certification and marketing.
11	Jose & Ponnusamy (2023)	State Support for Diversification	Government subsidies and training encourage farm diversification; cereal monoculture still dominant.	Expand diversification to programs to monoculture-prone districts.
12	Kaushik & Kundu (2024)	Awareness & Extension Barriers	~40% of surveyed organic farmers had high awareness; poor institutional outreach remained.	Localized extension and simplification of certification needed.
13	Kaushik & Kundu (2024)	Institutional Gaps in Extension	Systemic production, marketing, and certification constraints found among small/mid-size farmers.	Simplify procedures and strengthen FPO– extension links.
14	Saini & Meena (2024)	Economic & Marketing Constraints	Inadequate market access, subsidy, promotion, and infrastructure weakened organic profitability.	Need state-backed investment and better value chains.
15	Garg & Garg (2024)	Consumer Awareness	Urban demand rising due to health/environment motives; rural consumer awareness low.	Focused campaigns and demand-aligned supply needed.

16	Heena et al. (2024)	Input Efficiency in Organic Wheat	Positive yield impacts from labor, FYM, irrigation; overuse of seeds and bio-pesticides.	Train farmers on optimal input allocation.
17	Yadav et al. (2024)	Organic Demand Forecast & Consumer Behavior	Health benefits main motivator; price, promotion, and inconsistency affect demand.	Strengthen consumer education and improve supply chain predictability.
18	Times of India (2025, Report 1)	Subsidy for Natural Farming	Rs. 30,000 support for native-cow based models aligns with zerochemical farming.	Financial incentives may boost participation if welltargeted.
19	Times of India (2025, Report 2)	Organic Produce Markets	New organic markets and lab facilities opened in Gurgaon/Hisar.	Market infrastructure crucial for connecting producers with buyers.
20	Times of India (2025, Report 3)	Political Support	Chief Minister endorsed natural farming and organic subsidies publicly.	Political will key to scaling organic practices and awareness.

Farmer Perceptions and Adoption Behavior

Motivations for and Against Organic Farming Adoption

Farmers' decisions to adopt organic farming are influenced by a range of socio-economic, environmental, and personal factors. Many adopters are motivated by concerns about soil degradation, pesticide exposure, and long-term sustainability.

Socio-Economic adopter's vs non-adopters

The adopters are generally having medium to large land holdings and are better educated than the non-adopters. They generally show a better level of awareness regarding environmental issues.

Perceived Challenges

Though farmers getting proper policy support still they face access to organic markets and procurement facility. They also face challenges relating to price instability. Most of the farmers have the perception towards organic farming is being costly, time consuming, complicated and no certainty.

Role of Training, Cooperatives, and Extension Services

For shaping farmers perception towards organic farming institutional support plays a very vital role. Along with these government supported camps and farmer cooperatives play a very vital role. However, the reach and effectiveness of these institutions remain inconsistent across districts.

Sustainability Perspectives

Environmental Sustainability

Multiple studies have confirmed that organic farming in Haryana contributes to long-term ecological health, although adoption remains limited. Agro-ecological assessments have revealed that in both Haryana and Punjab, more than 90% of cropland suffers from deficient soil organic carbon and poor structure—highlighting the critical need for soil rehabilitation through organic practices (e.g., compost, crop rotation).

Economic Sustainability

Economic evaluations from a nationwide PKVY impact study indicate that input costs declined by approximately 14–17% for major crops like wheat, paddy, and soybean when farmers transitioned to organic methods. Although yields dropped by 6–9%, modest profit increases were recorded: up to 5.6% for paddy and 3.2% for soybean MDPI.

Social Sustainability

Social dimensions of sustainability in Haryana's organic context include improved farmer health, strengthened

community livelihoods, and enhanced local agency. Reductions in pesticide exposure contribute to safer working conditions and reduced health risks.

Discussion

Synthesis of Key Findings Across Themes

Across the literature, three major trends emerge:

1. Policy Initiatives Are Well-Intentioned but Weakly Implemented

While frameworks like PKVY, NPOP certification, and state subsidies are in place, farmers report limited awareness, certification complexity, and inadequate price support as barriers to uptake (Shehrawat et al., 2016; Kumari et al., 2022; Saini & Meena, 2024).

2. Farmer Perceptions Are Mixed—Health and Soil Gains vs Markets and Yield Concerns

Farmers appreciate organic farming for soil health and health benefits, but concerns about possible yield drop during transition, lack of certified markets, and knowledge gaps about inputs limit their adoption behavior (Ghanghas et al., 2021; Kaushik & Kundu, 2024) *The Times of India*.

Emerging Patterns and Contradictions

Pattern: Environmental sustainability consistently improves on organic farms—especially soil health and biodiversity. However, economic outcomes vary. While national-level studies show reduced input cost, Haryana-specific studies (e.g. Ohlan, 2010) report yield weight loss without price premiums, limiting profitability. Contradiction: Some farmers report organic yields (particularly wheat) exceeding state averages (45% of surveyed farmers).

Contribution of this Review to the Broader Field

This systematic literature review offers several contributions:

Integrated thematic synthesis: By linking policy, perceptions, and sustainability, the review bridges disciplinary silos and presents an inclusive understanding of organic agriculture in Haryana. Identification of lacunae: It highlights key research gaps such as longitudinal studies, smallholderspecific frameworks, and interdisciplinary evaluations that combine ecological, economic, and social dimensions.

Policy relevance:

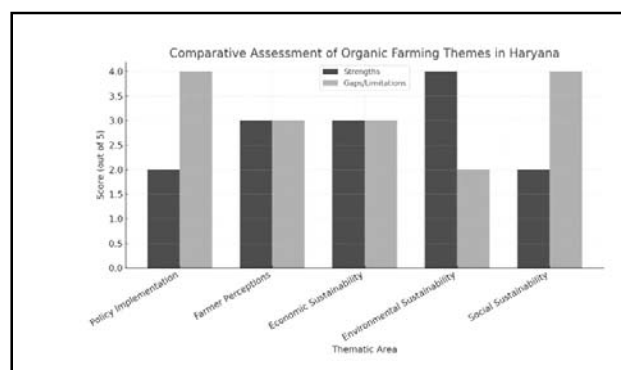
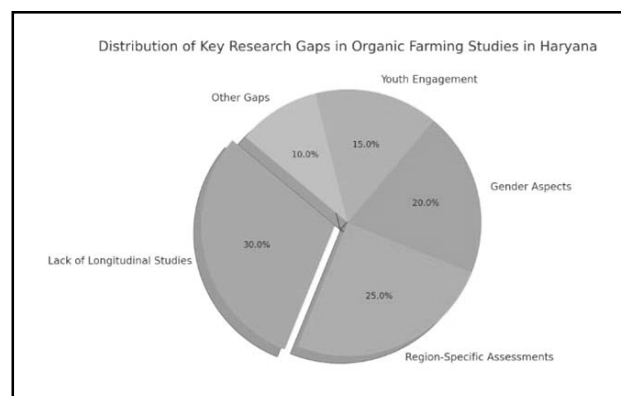


Figure: Comparative Assessment of Organic Farming Themes in Haryana

(Source: Synthesized from reviewed literature including Shehrawat et al. (2016), Roul et al. (2020), Kaushik & Kundu (2024), and PKVY evaluation reports.)

Environmental sustainability shows the strongest outcomes due to well-documented ecological improvements. Policy implementation and social sustainability show the most significant gaps due to poor execution and limited community-level integration.



based on synthesized data from secondary sources including Shehrawat et al. (2016), Roul et al. (2020), Saini & Meena (2024), and Kaushik & Kundu (2024).

Based on a comprehensive synthesis of the literature, several major research gaps have been identified that hinder the complete understanding and effective advancement of organic farming in Haryana.

The most prominent gap, accounting for **30%** of reported concerns, is the **lack of longitudinal studies** that can track the long-term impact of organic practices on soil health, crop yields, and farmer livelihoods. Current research largely provides cross-sectional data, limiting insight into sustainability over time. **Region-specific assessments** represent another significant gap (**25%**), underscoring the need for localized analyses that consider Haryana's agro-ecological diversity and district-level variations.

Additionally, **gender-related dimensions** of organic farming are significantly underrepresented in the literature (**20%**). Women's contributions—often crucial in organic input preparation and local marketing—remain undocumented in most empirical studies. Likewise, **youth engagement** in organic agriculture, which accounts for **15%** of identified gaps, requires focused inquiry to understand their perceptions, aspirations, and the barriers they face. The remaining **10%** of the gaps include overlooked areas such as post-harvest value chains, access to organic inputs, and the efficacy of certification systems.

Gaps in Literature and Future Research Directions

Lack of Longitudinal Studies

Most existing studies are cross-sectional in nature, offering only a snapshot of farmer perceptions, policy impacts, or sustainability outcomes. There is a pressing need for longitudinal research that tracks changes in productivity, environmental indicators, and farmer behaviour over extended periods.

Need for Region-Specific Impact Assessments

Much of the existing literature generalizes findings across broad regions or draws insights from national-level evaluations. Haryana's unique agro-ecological conditions, cropping patterns, and socioeconomic dynamics warrant localized impact assessments. District-wise studies can help tailor policy recommendations.

Underexplored Dimensions: Gender and Youth Perspectives

The role of women and youth in organic farming remains significantly under-researched. While anecdotal evidence suggests that women often participate in organic input preparation and local marketing, their specific motivations, constraints, and contributions have not been systematically studied.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review has explored the multi-dimensional aspects of organic farming in Haryana, focusing on policy frameworks, farmer perceptions, and sustainability outcomes. The findings reveal that while organic farming is gaining policy traction at both the national and state levels—through initiatives like the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)—the actual adoption in Haryana remains limited due to implementation gaps, insufficient farmer support, and infrastructural barriers.

For the policy makers, the effectiveness can be increased by implementing the schemes with region specific strategies, providing direct access to market and extension services. With proper training, equipment, incentives and market infrastructure there is a growing opportunity towards sustainable agriculture by the farmers.

In conclusion, there is huge potential of organic farming towards contributing to Haryana's sustainable agriculture. For this there is need for coordinated effort, proper research and successful implementation at the grassroot level with evidence based planning and inclusive stake holder engagement.

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Navigating the Policy Crossroads: Innovation and Privacy in a Digitally Driven Society

Abstract : Innovation of technology and privacy afforded to a person or an individual is a convoluted developing policy question in the contemporary fast-changing digital world. With the realization of the strength of data-driven technologies in stimulating economic growth and social development by both the government and the private firms, issues about safeguarding personal data and the right of privacy have been given more magnitude. This paper critically looks at the policy conflicts that come into play when encouraging innovation versus ensuring privacy within the digital transformation context with specific reference to the legal and regulatory limits of digital transformation. By comparing the global and Indian data protection policies, such as the GDPR and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, in a comparative study, the researcher states that both strict adherence to privacy rights and the freedom of innovation should apply. The emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, fintech and digital health platforms are also discussed in the paper to learn the consequences of such technologies on privacy. These results present the power of intelligently rationalized policy, virtuous governance, and privacy-by-design to move towards a digitally inclusive but rights-respecting future.

Keywords: - Artificial Intelligence (AI), Right to Privacy, Indian Data Protection Law, IT Act 2000, Data Privacy

Introduction

The 21st century has been marked by an unmatched proliferation of technological growth with

the digitalization of innovation sitting at the centrepiece of economic growth, societal registration, and regulation. Artificial intelligence, big data analytics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and blockchain are the technologies that have transformational power and provide society with new solutions to various spheres such as healthcare, finance, education, and the field of government. But this swift digital change has also come accompanied by a very pressing issue; the loss of individual privacy in the cause of advancement.

Due to the spread of data-driven platforms, there have been mass gathering, analysing, and selling of personal data. Although these practices do occasionally allow individuals to enjoy a better usage, targeted services, and efficiency in operations, they put them at serious risks such as breach of data, surveillance, profiling and loss of control over their personal information.

This study aims to discuss the conflict between novelty and confidentiality in a web-based world. It also examines the way in which national and cross-jurisdictional regulatory frameworks are currently struggling to reconcile this tension in policy, focusing both on the emerging data protection regime in India and international norms like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The research question will be to determine the ability of present laws and institutional processes that facilitate the conflict between economic innovation and personal freedom.

Governments have been on a tight rope to endeavour at becoming leaders in digital innovation without necessarily compromising civil liberties to

achieve this seemingly elusive goal. This paper relates to the necessity of a more subtle approach, which would not only encourage the development of technology but also make sure that the notion of privacy is not neglected in the digital era. The central questions about the inquiry are as follows: Is it possible to unite innovation and privacy? What are the potential policy mechanisms in order to have this balance? But how do such nations like India keep up to make sure that the digital growth does not imply the sacrifice of citizen rights?

Literature Review

D Acquisto et al (2015) consider how to make privacy by design in big data analytics, stressing how it is important to build privacy protections into the flow of the information that is being analyzed and discuss the technical approaches, including ways to anonymize data and search encrypt.

Smirnova & Travieso Morales (2024) critically examine the implementation of GDPR to businesses, outlining technical, legal, organizational, and regulatory obstacles, in the case of small and medium enterprises in particular.

In their article, Barati (2023) provide a narrative study dealing with privacy issues of Open Government Data (OGD) initiatives and point to a risk of re-identification, its inconsistency with fair information practices, and the necessity of risk-based approaches.

Buil Gil et al. (2022) carry out a systematic evaluation of the features and privacy/security risks associated with smart home devices and recommend ways to mitigate those threats, such as unauthorized access, data breaches, and the risk of intrusions.

Haque et al. (2021) evaluate the applicability of blockchain GDPR, deconstructing clashes between data removal rights and data immutability and classifying articles of GDPR applicable to blockchain solutions in various industries such as the IoT sector and healthcare.

Lefouili, Madio & Toh (2023) look in detail at how privacy regulation can indeed lead to better outcomes without necessarily being detrimental in terms of innovation quality with evidence in form of a working paper.

The bibliometric review by Alaassar, Mention & Kryzhanivska (2025) of digital innovation literature

proposes a research agenda in the future and outlines the significant research directions already described in literature, which is useful in framing the dynamics of innovation in your research.

Digital Innovation (2021) conducts a review of 227 articles of various disciplines to carve out a new conceptualisation of digital innovation and a specification of the five main areas of research.

In a machine-generated literature review, Gupta (2025) also follows the development of privacy and data protection issues across the world, highlighting the challenges of consent and the fragmented nature of jurisdictions over the past thirty years.

The use of privacy-friendly and trustworthy technologies is highlighted by Springer Collection (2025). It emphasizes user-cantered design, anonymization, debiasing, and long-term trust, and urges integrative studies of those topics.

Afridi & Kumar (2024) merge systematic and bibliometric studies to analyse the area of consumer perceptions of privacy in the use of blockchains that sheds light on the situation of trust, technology and privacy.

D Acquisto et al. (2015) (based on the previous research on privacy by design) repeat the idea of big data with privacy and the focus on privacy-by-design approaches in big data procedures. This was repeated to emphasize its relevance—perhaps mention can be made of counting, as a complete reference, but not of duplication in counting.)

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical approach informing the paper encompasses the dynamics of the triple helix of technological innovation, data privacy, and the policy governance within a digital-driven society. The three elements are closely linked together and tend to have conflicting priorities that necessitate great policy manoeuvres. The development and the use of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, big data analytics, blockchain, and the internet of things, have increasingly become a crucial force in the economic development, service provision, and social change, which is characterized by technological innovation.

In this instance, data privacy means the right of an individual to manage his/her personal information such as the way it can be collected, stored, shared,

and used. Concerns with privacy have intensified with surveillance, poorly designed consent protocols and monetization of personal data, which has increased with complex and data intensive digital ecosystems.

Policy governance involves both legal and regulatory as well as ethical structures and policies that seek to balance interests between encouraging innovation and upholding the rights of the individuals. Example laws include the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 in India.

The conceptual framework therefore places policy governance between the two extremes of spectrum, i.e. technological innovation and data privacy as the balancing factor. It understands that a sensitive, dynamic and open policy in digital advancement is demanded, one that does not just encourage the innovation but also leaves no chance towards the violation of the essential right of privacy. The framework will then be applied in the analysis of the study and it will form the foundation of how effective the current provisions are, what is lacking and what measures should be adopted to strike a sustainable balance between innovation and privacy in the digital era.

Legal and Policy Context

The interaction between innovation and privacy is profound; it is highly mediated by the policies and legal frameworks used in regulating digital ecosystems. With the rapid development of new technologies, there is the current struggle between countries to make use of the same and at the same time devise laws that safeguard the privacy of the individual without suppressing innovation. In this section we have discussed both the Indian and international laws that influence data protection and digital development debate.

International Frameworks

The European Union published the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018, which is regarded a milestone in the field of data protection legislation around the globe. It highlights transparency, accountability and user consent and provides an opportunity to process data lawfully either in the interest of the general population or in the commercial interest. The robust user rights provision, data

minimization, limitation of purpose, and regulations related to cross-border data transfer in GDPR are the facts that cause GDPR to be emulated by many countries in the world. It aims at finding a middle ground between personal data protection and business innovation in a controlled business environment.

The other notorious international tool is the OECD Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data that offer guiding principles like limitation of collection, data quality, limitation and security safeguards.

Indian Framework

The Indian legal counter to the digital transformation has changed throughout the years. First such legislation in the cyber area came in the form of the Information Technology Act, 2000 which dealt with a few elements of data protection. The law did not include a detailed plan on data privacy, but with emphasis on cybercrime and electronic commerce.

One of the major changes in policies took place as India enacted the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) that would become the first comprehensive act that solely focuses on personal data protection in India. The Act lays down main principles which are lawful processing, limitation of the purpose, data minimization and collection of data through the consent. It even goes to the extent of instituting a Data Protection Board that will monitor the compliance and redress systems. Although the DPDP Act will go some way towards mirroring the global norms, it has been facing criticisms due to the generic nature of exemption given to government agencies.

With regards to innovation, various institutions such as NITI Aayog have been aggressively involved in the promotion of the generation and implementation of emerging technologies. By the means of projects like National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence and establishment of innovation sandboxes in fintech and health-tech industries NITI Aayog helps startups and businesses in experimentation of new solutions in a sandbox environment.

Even with such developments, India has a very critical policy dilemma, which seeks answers to the question of how to have a flourishing digital economy and at the same time respecting the privacy of their

citizens. Privacy-by-design ideas should be more deeply embedded, state surveillance should be more regulated, and the population held more accountable in order to have a more egalitarian and viable digital policy.

Emerging Technologies and Their Impact

The emergent technologies have promptly spread over the economy with all its segments allowing unprecedented access to innovations, efficiency and individualization. These developments, however, have also brought with them severe issues concerning privacy of individuals, data security, and moral governance. Because technologies are turning more data based and automated, the privacy issue is gaining deeper and more complex ramifications.

Artificial intelligence (AI) versions of surveillance and facial recognition are one of the most discussed technologies in this respect. Governments and private actors are growing in the utilisation of such tools to provide security, identification and to analyse behaviour. Although these systems have the potential to increase the level of community security and ease the restriction of access, they are usually implemented without visible regulation or the consent of people involved. This poses the threat of population surveillance, mistaken identification and infringement to the right of privacy, especially where facial recognition is implemented in places with crowds or in proactive police work.

The same thing happens when it comes to the development of fintech and health-tech platforms which redefined the way financial services and healthcare can be provided. Digital payment systems, lending applications, telemedicine and health wearables depend on the personal and sensitive information. Without strict precautions, people can be financially excluded, subject to discrimination, or victimized on the basis of their data profile.

The education technology (EdTech) sector, whose development has been highly active during and past the COVID-19 epidemic, also raises special issues. The EdTech platforms tend to gather and manage data concerning children (academic results, behavioural models, and personal data). This poses questions to the long-term consequences of data profiling, soundness of the processes through which parents'

consent to data collection, and the moral obligation of firms with access to the data of the minors.

Multiple privacy risks are manifested with regards to these areas. Data breach remains one of the biggest threats where personal and sensitive data have frequently been revealed either as a result of weak cybersecurity or as a part of an attack. An emerging issue, the second one to be discussed, is the concept of consent fatigue: a lowering of the same value of user consent in digital spaces as people are regularly asked to accept voluminous, complicated privacy policies, without necessarily knowing what they precisely entail.

Over and above technical and legal aspects, ethical concerns are raised by these developments. Developers and companies are increasingly being questioned on moral responsibility to make sure that technologies can respect human dignity, autonomy and rights.

The Policy Dilemma: Innovation vs Privacy

With the digital revolution transforming economies and societies globally, a universal question is now faced by policymakers around the world: how can policymakers ensure innovation and at the same time protect the right to privacy. Both these goals are critical to a virtuous cycle of digital progress, but they are regularly brought into conflict. On the one hand, innovation flourishes where data move freely, where experimentation is allowed and where disincentives to innovation are kept low. Conversely, privacy requires draconian protection under the law, openness and the right to control his/her personal information which can at times act as a drag to the development of technology.

Regulatory sandboxes, that allow startups and other technology firms to test new products and services in a controlled environment with reduced regulatory demands, have become a popular innovation-friendly policy implemented by many governments. There is also the use of policies that include financial incentives, incubation, and lower compliance regulations applied to emerging business so as to develop a competitive edge and promote faster digital expansion. These types of strategies electrify the atmosphere of experimentation and risk-taking needed to achieve technological advances.

This policy dilemma centers on the tension between the common good and the rights of an individual. Policymakers must often contend with maintaining the rights of citizens to privacy and data sovereignty and in doing so, ultimately come up with the collective elements of better health care systems, efficient delivery of services by the government as well as national security. Although data-driven styles of governance are associated with the use of efficiency and individual customization, they are usually fraught with surveillance-like operations that cannot be used to negate the freedoms of individuals. This conflict is further complicated in the democratic political systems, where privacy is highly regarded in the constitution.

Innovation and privacy are the two poles and so, tools such as data localization, anonymization, and ethical AI have been revealed as the methods having the capability of mediating between the two sides of the spectrum. Data localization requirements may include processing and storing data about users in the country where the company operates, providing more control and responsibility over it, but cannot be an operational inconvenience of a global business. The barriers to anonymization have some success, but it depends on the rigor and contexts since the anonymization reduces the likelihood of individual identification but assists with data analysis.

Finally, it is important that the policy dilemma should be resolved in a non-arbitrary manner and it should not throttle innovation on the one hand and on the other hand should not restrict privacy. It requires dynamic legal laws that change with technology, consultations involving many stakeholders with varying opinions, and governance paradigm based on principles that emphasize ethical principles over all other motives including economic ones.

Comparative Policy Analysis

Different countries and their governance models also differ considerably regarding how they balance innovation and privacy as they compete to become world leaders in the digital economy. Comparative case studies of digital policy approaches around the world show a great variety of policies, with varying focus on privacy or innovation initiatives or data ecosystem as controlled by the state.

The European Union (EU) has taken the position of privacy-first, and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has operated as a global standard with regard to data protection. It gives consumers the vast rights over their personal data, and makes it too much to the data controllers and the processors including the restrictions of cross-border transfer of data. Although there are speculations by critics that the GDPR could involve startups in additional compliance costs, the rule is laudable in terms of requiring high standards of accountability as well as inviting trust in the digital ecosystems. The example of the EU shows that high levels of privacy protection are not disadvantageous to innovation with strong legal rules and individual-rights-based regulation.

Conversely, the United States operates an innovation-first model in which there is a sectoral approach to regulation of data. Though some industries like healthcare or finance fall under such Federal laws as HIPAA or GLBA, there is no national data protection law in the U.S. Rather, innovation is usually given primary importance, and the technical sphere has a rather high degree of operating freedom. Such an environment has helped in the development of some of the most powerful companies in terms of technology in the world. Lack of robust privacy protections, however, has also given rise to surveillance, and monopolistic concerns on the part of the population.

Instead, a state-controlled strategy is reflected in China, where the control is integrally related to national security and political control over data. The collection, storage and use of data are governed by laws like the Cybersecurity Law, the Data Security Law and the Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL). Although the PIPL presents certain aspects of GDPR protection, information is under considerable control of the state as well. China is highly dependent on government-driven innovation that is aided by the state access of massive data stores.

This is a more middle ground and mixed model in India, which tries to sway toward the requirements in digital innovation and privacy. With the introduction of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, India has recorded a major step towards having its data governance. The Act contains the provisions of

consent, data fiduciaries, and grievance redressal with there being some exemptions by the government. At the same time, India is still committed to innovation and NITI Aayog can be seen as one of the drivers of such interaction with the National AI Strategy and the establishment of fintech and health-tech regulation sandboards.

There are multiple best practices and lessons which appear across these models. The EU is an excellent role model of incorporating privacy as a right which has support by legal enactments. The U.S. talks both of the necessity of the successful innovation ecosystem and pays attention to the dangers of the regulation fragmentation. The Chinese system proves that the high rate of innovation can be achieved in conditions of the strict control of the state, sacrificing personal liberties.

To sum it up, there is no single model that may be taken as the optimal one, and a hybrid approach that incorporates global best practices that meet the needs of privacy-by-design, regulatory flexibility, and transparent data governance and ethical oversight may be the most effective way societies transiting a cross made of innovation and privacy.

Recommendations

In the endeavour to achieve an effective milieu between technological advances that enhance innovations and privacy in a digital society, multiple policy interventions are required. To begin with, it is necessary to take into account extensive changes in the current data protection policy. The reforms undertaken should focus on innovation and even the rights of a person by incorporating privacy protection into the heart of new technology. Strong data governance models must also be formulated-the data collection process, data use, and sharing process must be transparent, accountable, and fair.

Digital literacy and the impact has on the digital literacy ecosystem is also extremely important when it comes to the role of public awareness. By teaching people about their rights to their information, the process of consent, and the dangers of using digital

tools, one can turn their future decisions into more educated ones and encourage responsible use of technology. Last, promoting ethical innovation using mechanisms such as privacy-by-design can mean that privacy requirements are minded already during the initial phases of technology development. Such a strategy not only increases user confidence but also helps ensure sustainable, long lasting innovation in a digital age.

Conclusion

This research has addressed the multidimensional interaction between innovation and privacy regarding the implementation of changing digital technologies and the regulatory environment. With the use of comparative policy analysis, it is understood that the various nations have varying positions in their approach two extreme ends of very strong privacy protection and strong protection against intrusion on privacy, which can be seen of the European Union, focus on encouraging innovation, state-controlled model, and the evolving hybrid strategy and approach mostly seen in China and India.

The conclusions about the dire necessities of a worthily balanced policymaking tool that is not an either-or factor in understanding innovation and privacy as antithetical but mutually beneficial aims are therefore apparent.

Moving forward, it can be recommended that future studies ideally will attempt to consider the future implications of measuring the success of the existing regulatory regimes, learn more about how new technologies may affect the current approaches such as generative AI, and determine ways to increase cross-border cooperation on data governance.

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The Role of National Green Tribunal and Supreme Court in Protecting the Forests in India

ABSTRACT

The forests are essential for the survival of all living beings. They are important for our life as they provide oxygen, food, shelter, fuel, and means of livelihood. India's forest ecosystems are important for the biodiversity and ecological stability but this is challenged by the change in land usage and industrialization. There are some institutions which plays a pivotal role in balancing the environmental protection with the development such as the supreme court of India and the National green tribunal. This study will examine the development of forest laws in India. by reviewing landmark judgements of supreme court and NGT orders this paper conducts a comprehensive analysis how these institutions hold environmental provisions and promote sustainable development and intergenerational equity.

This paper examines the SC strategic application of constitutional articles to enhance the right to a healthy environment **Articles 21, 48A, and 51A(g)**, while incorporating the principle of public trust doctrine. The national green tribunal plays a significant role in enforcing the Forest Conservation Act 1980 which promotes afforestation, and ensures speedy and effective disposal of environmental cases. Judicial initiatives have impacted forest protection, but their effectiveness is constrained by jurisdictional complexities, widespread non-compliance and legislative rollbacks. A relevant example of these difficulties is the recent enactment of the forest (Conservation) Amendment Act 2023 which relaxes limitations on the diversion of forest land. As a result,

this paper promotes a re-calibration of forest governance that balances institutional accountability, a logical legislative framework, judicial mandates and sustainable strategic reforms.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian Forest which approximately covers 21% of the country's geographical area, are vital for the planet, supporting human life, healthy environment, biodiversity and mitigate climate change, provide clean air and water, offer livelihood resources like medicine and timber. Sadly, these forests have suffered as a result of development projects like road and dam construction, and mining. India has a robust legal system but the effective enforcement is still insufficient, which leads to unsustainable forest resource exploitation. Since 2010, The Indian judiciary has stepped in to reinterpret constitutional clauses and environmental laws in order to resolve the issues and redefine the forest governance. The contribution of the supreme court and national green tribunal in forest protection and their influence in the environmental policy will be investigated in this research.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To explore the constitutional, statutory, and institutional framework that empower the Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal NGT in forest governance.

- To analyse landmark judgments and orders passed by these bodies in the context of forest protection.

- To analyse landmark judgments and orders passed by these bodies in the context of forest protection.
- To assess their intervention's advantages and disadvantages.
- To determine the institutional and legal weaknesses in the forest governance of India.
- To suggest institutional and policy changes for better forest protection.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a research methodology this paper employs a doctrinal research methodology. The primary sources will include supreme courts judgements, national green tribunal directives and legislation like environmental protection act of 1986, national green tribunal act of 2010 and forest conservation act of 1980. In addition to discussing recent legal changes to highlight the new trends and challenges in environmental governance. A comparative analytical framework has been used to evaluate the roles of the supreme court and national green tribunal.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

I. The legal literature recognizes the judiciary's significant impact on India's environmental governance. The principles of environmental constitutionalism, where issues pertaining to right to healthy environment as stipulated in Article 21 of the Constitution are taken up in court, can help strengthen the admission against forest neglect by the administration. This legal approach interprets statutory systems from a right based perspective into making forest protection easier as a public good ecological integrity is being elevated by this "green constitutionalism" movement.

II. Vikas Sharma's (2024) recent article the evolution of environmental jurisprudence through the judgements of the national green tribunal critically examined the NGT's influence on the development of Indian environmental law. The author highlights how the important rulings have strengthened environmental regulations, expanded access to justice and improved theories of accountability. They argue that by addressing enforcement gaps left by statutory organizations, the NGT has become a crucial platform for upholding ideas like pollution control, environmental impact assessment and the preservation of forest and biodiversity.

III. Divan and Rosencranz's important work, *Environmental Law and Policy in India* (Oxford), discusses the precautionary principle. This principle was developed by the Supreme Court and later adopted by statutory bodies, especially the NGT. It is argued that gaps in statutory enforcement have been filled through judicial reasoning. A practical system of environmental governance has been shaped as a result. It is also shown that advancements in forest protection have been driven by needs identified by the judiciary, rather than by foresight in legislation.

IV. Shyam Divan (2020) has shown that the focus has shifted from only human rights to caring for nature too. In this view, the rights of forests and other natural places are recognized, and they are seen as needing legal protection on their own. This change is important because it challenges the way development has often focused only on people, and it encourages us to think about how nature should have a place in our laws and society. Divan's work shows that the courts have moved beyond just applying environmental rules—they are now looking at ways to genuinely protect nature.

V. Justice Leila Seth (2014) talks about how courts have started playing a bigger role in protecting the environment. She says this happens mostly when the government does not act, especially in saving forests. She admits that there is a problem when judges begin making policies, since that is usually the job of the government. But she also feels that if forests are harmed in ways that can never be fixed, then the courts stepping in is often the only way to save them. In her view, this shows why judges sometimes need to step up and take charge of protecting forests.

VI. Sathe (2002) explains how the Supreme Court has played a key role in shaping environmental policy. In some landmark cases, such as *Godavarman*. Here, the Court kept a close eye on the Central Empowerment Committee (CEC) to monitor how forests are being utilised. His study shows that the courts went beyond just judging—they also assumed administrative roles, combining decisions with policy actions. With the acknowledgement that such judicial steps were practical, he was concerned that such actions might not remain within the parliament's control. And then he still believes that judicial activism is much needed and essential while protecting the

environment, especially when the government fails to act.

VII. Menon and Kohli (2011) explain that the Court expanded the meaning of “forest” to also cover lands that were not officially marked as forests. This move stopped mining and industrial projects on millions of hectares and forced state governments to rethink how forests are used. It is said that while the way land is managed in India has been completely changed by this shift, problems for tribal communities and their rights have also been caused. To address this, it is suggested that the rules be made clearer and aligned properly with the Forest Rights Act of 2006.

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The Indian forest protection system is based on the combination of constitutional obligations, a set of laws, court decisions and institutions. What was originated as a colonial regulation, now gradually developed into a more powerful regime through the Constitutional revision and more thoughtful decisions made by the court system. All these developments have ensured that forest and environmental protection have been at the center of national refocus over time. The next section examines the major provisions of the Constitution and important environments related law that are now determining forest conservation in India.

5.1.Key Constitutional Articles for Forest Protection

In India, the legal and policy picture is not the only one: enshrined in our Constitution is the protection of forests. The existence of three important articles 21, 48A and 51A(g) gives assurance that the government and citizens share the responsibility in taking care of the environment.

5.2. Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

One of the major legislations of India that protect forest land is the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980. Before the forest could be cleared, diverted, or used in any other non-forest matter, approval of the Central Government must be made. It is the law which has contributed to the reduced rate of forest loss due to development projects. One of the major provisions of the Act is the Compensatory Afforestation which provides that new trees will have to be planted to replace the ecological effects of cutting down of

forests. The courts including even the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal (NGT) have used this Act to query and counter unlawful clearance of forest land over the years.

5.3. Indian Forest Act, 1927

Indian Forest Act is a colonial era act to a plan that divides the forest into three categories, namely the Reserved, Protected, Village forest. Forest regulatory powers under the law give the influence in the access, use and control of the forests to very broad powers to the forest officials. Although it has traditionally acted as the mainstay of forest administration in India, the Act has always been criticised as too exclusionary, and failing to make sufficient allowance of the rights of the people living in forests. Such issues are reflected in the new legislation, e.g. Forest Rights Act of 2006 gave greater authority to local people. Other sections of the 1927 Act have since been transformed after the independence although some of them can still be felt in the current management of the forests.

5.4. Forest Rights Act, 2006 (Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Recognition of Forest Rights Act)

The Forest Right Act (FRA) was introduced to rectify the injustice the tribal and forest dwelling communities in India have suffered over generations. It provides them the rights to use and manage the forest land and motivates the population on managing the forests collectively, rather than leaving the population out of the forest. The Act has been successful to some extent in making local communities have greater say in the governance of forests and it has also been used to counter the influence of past laws that neglected the representation of local communities, or relegated, them.

5.5. Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

The Environment protection act of 1986, which came after the Bhopal gas tragedy aims at empowering the central government of India in protecting and cleaning up the environment. Although this is not exclusive to forests, it provides the regulation on biodiversity conservation, preservation of forest cover and eco-sensitive areas. The Act has gained momentum over the years to the extent that it is no longer mere rule-book — it has evolved to become an instrument that can be used to defend forests and

to hold decision-makers accountable, with people, their lawyers, and even the courts increasingly using it to hold governments and illegitimate businesses in check.

6. JUDICIAL INTERVENTION BY THE SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court of India has taken the center stage in the progression of the forest governance with judicial activism and environmental jurisprudence. By deciding on the PILs, which bring to light the inactivity of the executive, taking action to protect the forests, which has significant and valuable legal and ecological implications.

6.1. T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India (1996–Present)

The case has become the turning point of the forest laws in India. It was all a small PIL (Public interest litigation) seeking to conserve forests in Tamil Nadu but it became a movement in the entire country to better conserve forests. Another ruling by the court in 1996 was very crucial as the law defined the term forest as land that looked and behaved like a forest, rather than just the land that the government had recorded in its books and registers. This decision had effect of halting all diversion of forest land without the sanction of the Supreme Court under penal terms to state and interests of the private sector.

Also, the case led to the formation of the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) that would aid the Supreme Court in the matters of forest. Supreme Court began to do not only making the decisions. It played an active role in conservation as it gave an order to plant trees, order illegal mining to be ceased and offered safe corridors to be used by animals. This became a novel approach to governance and in many respects the Court itself became a leading body in the manner we treat the environment.

6.2. M.C. Mehta Cases and Expansion of the Environmental Jurisprudence

The environmental lawyer M.C. Mehta has been very instrumental in transforming the functional dynamic of forest and environmental legal provisions in India. In numerous landmark rulings, he made the courts defend nature.

An example is in the case of M.C. Mehta v. Using the concept of the Public Trust Doctrine, the Supreme Court relied on the approach as advanced by Kamal

Nath (1997). This implies that the forests, rivers, and other things in nature are not declared as simply belonging to the government. They are a common good and the government must manage such on our behalf, and on the behalf of future generations. They are not to be utilized just to get money in case such use harms nature.

6.3. Lafarge Umiam Mining v. Union of India (2011)

It involved the permission of cutting piece of forest land to mine limestone in Meghalaya. The Supreme Court gave the green light to the mining but it laid down significant regulations. It explained how Forest Advisory Committees were required to enact such decisions in accordance with the right guidelines and that the objections of people needed to be heard prior to making such decisions.

Lafarge judgment brought back to mind the precautionary principle (be careful and avoid harm prior to its occurrence) and sustainable development (use but avoid destruction of resources to be used in the future). It attempted to ensure that giving the forest clearances was more organised and not as random.

7. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (NGT)

NGT was established in 2010 in form of the NGT Act. They are a specially constituted court and treat only environmental cases. Its primary work is to provide fast, fair and professional judgment in matters of the environment.

The NGT ensures the rights of people against the environment are enforced, relief and compensation where damage is perpetuated and ensures that the development takes place in a non-destructive or sustainable manner.

7.1. Institutional and Legal Framework of the NGT

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) looks into civil cases that deal with important environmental issues under laws like the Forest (Conservation) Act and the Environment (Protection) Act. The NGT has both judges and environmental experts, so its decisions are based not just on law but also on technical knowledge.

Unlike normal courts, the NGT does not strictly follow the usual court procedures. Instead, it works on the idea of natural justice, which makes it faster

and more flexible in handling cases. It can also take up urgent forest and conservation matters on its own (*suo motu*).

To make justice more accessible, the NGT has set up regional benches across the country, especially helpful for forest-rich and remote areas.

7.2. Key Forest-Related Interventions by the NGT

The NGT (National Green Tribunal) has played an important role in giving big decisions to stop deforestation and reduce damage caused by uncontrolled development. Some key cases are:

T.N. Godavarman v. Union of India (NGT Monitoring): The NGT set clear rules for planting more trees (afforestation) and removing encroachments on forest land, supporting what the Supreme Court had already started.

Sterlite Industries case: Although mainly about pollution, the NGT also looked at how the company's activities were harming forests and the wider environment.

Save Mon Region Federation v. Union of India (2012): The NGT stopped a hydroelectric project in Arunachal Pradesh because it would have hurt forest ecosystems and the proper environmental study (EIA) was not done.

The NGT has also acted strongly against illegal sand mining in forest riverbeds, pointing out how it destroys forests and wildlife habitats.

8. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Significant efforts have been made in the protection of forests by the Supreme Court and the NGT but the task is yet to be complete. The first is a big issue in that their orders are not implemented correctly always due to slow bureaucracy, ineffective inter-department coordination as well as political pressure. Consequently, the unauthorized mining, forest encroachments and unabated deforestations continue to take place despite the plain court judgments.

In addition, the NGT has at many times overlooked the community rights as granted through the Forest Rights Act, 2006, which presents a vacuum in the participation in democracy.

Lastly, some prior protections have been undermined by new legislation, such as the Forest (Conservation) Act Amendment, 2023, and this can prove to be a setback to the effectiveness of the courts

even in the long-run as similar laws tend to preside as they did in the past.

9. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The paper demonstrates that the Supreme Court and NGT have contributed to the strengthening of the law of protection of forests in India through such concepts as a sustainable development (a development that does not harm nature) and the precautionary principle (action taken to prevent harm). They have filled the gaps left due to failure of government agencies, and established new levels of forest protection.

Such attempts are not without their boundaries too. Decisions made by the court do not always concern the locals hence this limits them. In the top-down approaches, the rights and voices of these communities living in the forests could be trampled over. Moreover, such landmark judgments are not equally applicable throughout the country since some states are more resourceful or politically hampered.

With the increase in forest disputes as a result of climate change and biodiversity loss, the need to have a more decent governance pattern of governance arises. This has to be a mix of judicial action, scientific knowledge, as well as participation by the local community. Ultimately, effective forest protection would require participatory protective laws and notion of ecological justice-justice to both society and environment.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In India, the judicial system has been very instrumental in safeguarding the forest through the Supreme Court and this is because; the national green tribunal (NGT) was formed and entertains the case in India that concerns the forest. Their proactive measures have been used to fill some of the gaps in forest preservation as environmental degradation and loss of forests increases. In the case of T.N. Godavarman, the Supreme Court came up with a clear directive redefining what was to be called a forest and had laid up some significant safeguards on forest usage and management. Nonetheless, there is still an issue. The pursuance of judicial orders is not always taken in an appropriate manner, the local governance is ineffective, and the Forest Rights Act (2006) is never involved in the activities of NGT, which restrains the rights of communities. On top of this, new

developments such as Forest Conservation Amendment Act, 2023 are threatening to erode the gains already appreciated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Laws such as the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 must include such vital principles as the precautionary principle (prevention of damage before it occurs), intergenerational equity (protecting nature to benefit future generations), the public trust doctrine (the resources belong to the people, not the government). This will prevent abrupt moves by the government and hold laws in line with the court judgments.
- 2 Connect NGT and Forest Rights Act: Currently, the NGT is not allowed to address cases of the right to forest-dwelling communities under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The legal amendment or judicial pronouncement should fill this gap so that the NGT can defend not only forests but also the rights of inhabitants living in forests.
- 3 More effective follow up: This will help to ensure that orders passed by the Supreme Court of India and National Green Tribunal are effectively implemented through establishment of

independent local bodies such as forest protection committees.

- 4 Greater community involvement: The court is not supposed to rely alone on experts but, instead, consider other alternatives, including the promotion of participatory governance. The involvement of local India, like Gram Sabha, Van Panchayats, and Tribal council could be a game changer itself in the decision made about the protection of forests acts.
- 5 Officer and judges training: Officer and judges working in the forest are expected to be trained as well on how to manage forests in a climate-friendly manner, the rights of indigenous people, and environmental justice on a regular basis.
- 6 Green Benches in High Courts: Green Benches: Special Green Benches must be established in High Courts and hear only environment and forest related cases.

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Avinish Prakash Singh

Narrative Traditions of Pali Texts and Their Influence on Literary Pedagogy in Hindi and English Studies

Abstract:

The Pali language and its literature, particularly the narrative traditions (such as Jataka tales, Sutta Pitaka, and Vinaya Pitaka), form a crucial link in Indian and world literature. This article analyzes the structure and morality of Pali narratives and their influence on Hindi folk tales, didactic literature, and Bhakti-era writings. It also explores their role in literary pedagogy in Hindi and English studies, relevance in modern critical theories (Narratology), and re-reading in the context of globalization, multicultural education, and the digital age. The study reveals that Pali narratives not only convey ethical values but also strengthen cultural dialogue between East and West.

Keywords:

Pali literature, Jataka tales, narrative tradition, literary pedagogy, Hindi literature, English studies, narratology, multicultural education, globalization, digital humanities

The earth is a dwelling for all creatures, yet for humans it becomes a living world through language. Animals see only food, water, and shelter, but humans fill the earth with experiences by words. Language turns soil into world, silence into dialogue—a river where memory flows, traditions sail, and emotions rise. Other creatures' sounds vanish, but human speech shines like immortal stars, reminding us that love, compassion, and cooperation are the true paths of humanity.

When words collect memories and emotions, they become literature mirror of consciousness and

ornament of sensitivity. Language sculpts humanity; if deprived of human glow, it darkens like a cobweb. Literature's depth lies in words, the eternal witnesses of humanity. Thus, language is humankind's greatest revolution, source of all others. In this evolution, 'Pali' holds a pivotal role. Rooted in Magadhi—the dialect used by Buddha—it preserves the most authentic form of his words. From 6th BCE to 3rd CE it flourished, spreading Buddhism, especially under Ashoka, whose edicts gave it cultural permanence. As noted, "Pali is the vehicle of the Theravada canon and the foundation of Buddhist literature."¹

Pali literature blends religion, philosophy, and life-view. Its Tripitaka—Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidhamma—forms the base. The 'Sutta Pitaka' conveys ethics and compassion through dialogues and parables. 'Jataka tales', recounting Buddha's former births, offer moral teaching along with narrative beauty. The 'Abhidhamma Pitaka' explores Buddhist philosophy and mental processes as metaphysical reflection.

The greatest feature of Pali literature is its simplicity and clarity. The language is used in a way that directly communicates with the common people. This is why Pali literature combines didacticism with literary quality. It contains stories, dialogues, and narratives in such a form that deeply influenced the storytelling tradition of Sanskrit, Apabhramsha, and Hindi literature later on. The importance of this literature is not limited to religious perspective; it is also a living document of Indian culture and society. Pali texts depict ancient Indian life—the social structure, economic relations, women's status, ethical codes of

conduct, and human values—all are indicated in detail. This is why Pali literature influenced not only Indian languages but also languages like Sinhalese, Burmese, Thai, and Bengali through its narrative tradition. Thus, Pali language and its literature assure us that it was not merely a religious language but the foundation of human civilization and literary consciousness. Just as language creates the world for humans, Pali language created a new world in the entire Asian cultural consciousness.

Narratives

The literal meaning of the word ‘Aakhyān’ is—to describe an incident, event, or story. In literature, a narrative is the form in which a historical, mythological, religious, or social event is presented through story, dialogue, or parable. It not only describes the event but also conveys the embedded lessons, values, and cultural consciousness. In Taranath’s Vachaspathyam dictionary, first part, it is said— “Aakhyayate aneneti aakhyānam”² The narrative tradition in Indian literature is extremely ancient. The Vedas, Brahmana texts, and Upanishads contain many narratives, where sages’ dialogues, sacrificial incidents, and philosophical ideas are presented in story form. The Mahabharata and Ramayana are also called ‘narrative-based epics’ because their core form is constructed from narratives of events and incidents.

Describing the permanent role of narratives in traditions connected to history and puranas, it is said in Sahityadarpana— “The Mahabharata and Ramayana are given the name aakhyān because they are plot-like accounts—narrative compilations of facts, characters, and tendencies.”³ The Mahabharata and Ramayana were called ‘aakhyān’ because events, characters, and human tendencies are presented in them in story form. These texts are not merely religious or mythological but also an orderly description of life’s diverse situations and human behavioral characteristics. Furthermore, Dr. S. K. De says that, “‘Aakhyān’ is a literary genre that transmits history, culture, philosophy, and morality in story style. It is not only entertaining but also a mirror of life values.”⁴ According to Dr. S. K. De, aakhyān is not just a story but a means to convey history, culture, philosophy, and morality to society through narrative.

It provides the reader with entertainment as well as awareness of life’s truths and values.

Narratives in Pali Texts

Pali texts are not just a gallery of religious sermons but a vibrant reservoir of story-culture. The narratives embedded in them are lamps for the common mind, teaching life that religion is not a bound formula of philosophy but a flower blooming in conduct. Jataka tales are truly the bright crown of this tradition—where each story sings the song of compassion, each incident lights the lamp of friendship, and each conclusion proclaims the message of tolerance. Simple plots, life-consistent characters, and instructive conclusions make them accessible to every segment of society.

While Sanskrit remained the language of elite culture, Pali narratives became the river-streams of folk language. Their dialogues and parables flowed as nourishing streams in the roots of story-literature in Hindi, Apabhramsha, and many Indian languages. These narratives contain not only religious ideals but also glimpses of society—gentle links of family, women’s status, relations between power and the public, all reflected here. Beyond borders, these stories illuminated Sinhalese, Burmese, Thai, and Tibetan literature. Thus, the Pali narrative tradition is not just an explanation of religion but a lighthouse of culture, scattering light across ages.

The most important feature of Pali literature is its narrativity. The literature of Buddhism did not remain limited to abstract and philosophical analysis but delivered life values to society through stories, parables, and incidents. Hence, the narrative tradition holds a central place in Pali literature.

Jataka Tales: Structure, Morality and Narrative Craft

The broadest form of narrative tradition in Pali literature is Jataka tales. These present events from Buddha’s previous births in story form. The structure of Jataka tales is generally found in three sections—prologue (which hints at an event from the current life), main story (the tale of the previous birth), and epilogue (where it is clarified how a character from that birth is connected to Buddha or his disciples in the present birth).

The primary purpose of Jataka tales is the promotion of morality. They convey ideals like mercy,

compassion, friendship, non-violence, cooperation, and restraint in a simple and entertaining story form. The narrative craft is straightforward, but the use of drama, dialogue, and parables makes the stories impactful. This is why Jataka tales did not remain limited to religious education but deeply influenced folk tales and subsequent literary traditions. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi says that “Jataka literature has influenced the storytelling tendency of Indian folk life at a deep level.”⁵ In fact, Jataka tales have left a deep imprint on the narrative tradition and folk mind of Indian society. The roots of the storytelling that developed in folk life are embedded in Jataka literature. Thus, Jatakas are not merely Buddhist religious texts but have played an important role in shaping India’s narrative creation and folk culture.

Role of Narratives in Vinaya and Sutta Literature

The other major dimension of Pali literature is the Vinaya and Sutta Pitakas. The Vinaya Pitaka, while outlining Buddhist rules, uses narratives and incidents to explain their moral and practical contexts, making them accessible to monks. The Sutta Pitaka presents teachings through dialogues, parables, and stories, allowing listeners to grasp both theory and practical guidance. This narrative approach made Buddhist teachings relatable and helped Buddhism develop as a people’s religion.

Influence of Jataka Tales on Hindi Folk Tales, Didactic Literature and Bhakti Literature

Jataka tales preserved in Pali literature are considered the most important part of the Buddhist narrative tradition. These tales provide moral teachings based on incidents from Buddha’s previous lives. Jataka literature presents various dimensions of life—patience, compassion, altruism, integrity, and sacrifice—in symbolic stories in simple folk language.

These narratives have directly and indirectly influenced several streams of Hindi literature, especially folk tales, didactic tales, and Bhakti literature. Acharya Shukla believes that, “The compassion and mercy of Jataka tales appear in Bhakti-era poetry as the sentiment of compassion in the devotion between devotee and God.”⁶ means, The compassion and mercy embedded in the Jataka tales re-emerge in the poetry of the Bhakti movement

in a transformed form. In the Jatakas, these values appear as ethical conduct and concern for the welfare of others; in Bhakti literature, the same sentiment is spiritualized as compassion within the intimate relationship of love and devotion between the devotee and God.

Influence on Hindi Folk Tales

Hindi folk tales represent the culture and social life of the common people. Their main purpose is not just entertainment but also to express the moral and social consciousness of folk life. The structure of Jataka tales was also based on this folk-oriented tendency. For example, Sasapanna Jataka (rabbit donating its body) or Kapi Jataka (monkey self-sacrifice for the group) resemble the sacrifice and altruism-dominant tradition of Hindi folk tales. Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has also mentioned that “Jataka literature has influenced the storytelling tendency of Indian folk life at a deep level. The structure of many Hindi folk tales resembles Jataka narratives.”⁷

Influence on Didactic Literature

The greatest impact of Jataka tales has been on Hindi didactic tales. Works like Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, Betal Pachisi, and Singhasan Battisi show Jataka literature’s narrative craft and instructive elements directly. Like Jatakas, they add didactic conclusions at the end of plots. Many episodes, such as the greedy Brahmin, foolish donkey, turtle and swans, etc., resemble Jataka tales. In this context, Dr. Ramesh Chandra Sharma writes that, “The roots of Indian didactic literature can be traced to Jataka narratives, because Jatakas are the seed tales from which Panchatantra and Hitopadesha were later created.”⁸ means, The beginnings of Indian didactic and moralistic literature lie in the Jataka stories. As the foundational narratives, the Jatakas provided the thematic seeds and narrative patterns that eventually gave rise to classics like the *Panchatantra* and the *Hitopadesha*. Thus, the Jatakas are not only Buddhist moral tales but also the ancestral source of India’s larger tradition of ethical and instructive storytelling.

Influence on Bhakti Literature

The imprint of Jataka narratives is deep on Bhakti-era Hindi literature, especially Kabir and Tulsidas. Kabir’s sakhis and pads express deep truths in folk language like Jataka tales. They use parables and

metaphors to present life's truths in a simple and instructive style. The "didacticism" of Jataka tales can be easily seen in Kabir's words. The narrative arrangement of Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas and its moral-educational aspect also connect to the Buddhist narrative tradition. The values of compassion, mercy, sacrifice, and service that are sharp in Tulsi's poetic consciousness match the moral vision of Jataka literature. Acharya Shukla writes that, "The flow of compassion and public welfare in the Bhakti movement had inspiration from the Jataka tradition as well. The morality and teaching of Jatakas provided Bhakti poets with a simple means of expression."⁹ In fact, the deep flow of compassion, mercy, and public welfare seen in the Bhakti movement drew inspiration from Jataka tales. The inherent morality and educational vision in Jatakas gave Bhakti poets an easy and effective medium to express their emotions. Thus, the Jataka tradition played an important role in value-formation and the human concerns of Bhakti literature.

Thus, Jataka tales proved to be sources of inspiration for many streams of Hindi literature. The structure of folk tales, the instructive style of didactic literature, and the folk-oriented expression of Bhakti-era poetry bear a deep imprint of Jataka literature. The Jataka tradition not only gave Hindi literature narratives but also provided it with a foundation of human values and life-vision that remains relevant today.

We can see the above characteristics as follows

Jataka Tales and Hindi Folk Tales :

Many stories from Jataka literature survive in Hindi folk tales almost in the same form.

जातक कथा	कथावस्तु	हिंदी लोककथा में रूप	संदर्भ
ससपण्ण जातक (No. 316)	खरगोश अपने शरीर का दान करके अतिथि का स्वागत करता है।	उत्तर भारत की लोककथाओं में 'दानशील खरगोश' की कथा, जो अपनी जान देकर दूसरों का पेट भरता है।	Cowell, E.B. (Ed.), <i>The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births</i> , Vol. III, Cambridge, 1897.
कपि जातक (No. 407)	वानरराज अपने प्राणों की आहुति देकर दल को बचाता है।	बुंदेलखंड और बिहार की लोककथाओं में "वानर राजा का बलिदान" प्रचलित है।	शुक्ल, रामचंद्र, हिंदी साहित्य का इतिहास, पृ. 112.
कुरंग जातक	हिरण अपनी बुद्धिमत्ता से राजा को नीति सिखाता है।	"बुद्धिमान हिरन" की कहानियाँ उत्तर भारतीय लोकसाहित्य में प्रचलित हैं।	द्विवेदी, हजारीप्रसाद, भारतीय साहित्य की भूमिका, पृ. 118.

जातक कथाएँ और नीति-साहित्य (पंचतंत्र/हितोपदेश)

नीति-साहित्य का शिल्प और उद्देश्य जातक कथाओं से मिलता है।

जातक कथा	कथावस्तु	नीति-कथा में रूप	संदर्भ
कपोत जातक (No. 491)	लोभी शिकारी कबूतरों को जाल में फँसाता है, वे सामूहिक प्रयास से बच निकलते हैं।	पंचतंत्र की "कबूतर और जाल" कथा सामूहिक एकता का महत्व।	Patrick Olivelle (Tr.), <i>The Panchatantra: The Book of India's Folk Wisdom</i> , Oxford, 1997.
गद्धभ जातक	गधा शेर की खाल ओढ़कर खेतों में चरने जाता है, पर रेंकने से पकड़ा जाता है।	हितोपदेश की कथा "गधा और शेर की खाल।"	शर्मा, रमेशचंद्र, भारतीय नीति साहित्य की परंपरा, पृ. 95.
कच्छप जातक	कछुआ अपनी वाचालता से स्वयं को संकट में डालता है।	पंचतंत्र की "वाचाल कछुआ" कथा संयम का संदेश।	Edgerton, F., <i>The Panchatantra Reconstructed</i> , Harvard, 1924.

जातक कथाएँ और भक्तिकालीन साहित्य

भक्ति कवियों ने जातक कथाओं की तरह दृष्टांत और लोक-नैतिकता का उपयोग किया।

जातक कथा	संदेश	भक्तिकालीन साहित्य में समानता	संदर्भ
महासुप्प जातक	करुणा और दया को सर्वोच्च मान।	कबीर की साखी : “करुणा बिना धर्म नहीं” जातक परंपरा की करुणा से मेल।	शुक्ल, रामचंद्र, हिंदी साहित्य का इतिहास, पृ. 114.
ससपण्ण जातक	आत्मबलिदान और परोपकार।	तुलसीदास की पंक्ति “परहित सरिस धरम नहीं भाई।”	तुलसीदास, रामचरितमानस, अयोध्याकांड.
कपि जातक	लोकमंगल हेतु प्राणोत्सर्ग।	भक्तिकालीन ‘संत परंपरा’ में जनकल्याण के लिए त्याग का आदर्श, विशेषकर कबीर और दादू की वाणी।	द्विवेदी, हजारीप्रसाद, कबीर, पृ. 152.

Use of Pali Narratives in Hindi Literary Pedagogy

Including Pali narratives, especially Jataka tales, in the Hindi curriculum enhances value-based education by teaching universal human values. Tales like the *Sas-Pandit Jataka* and *Mahasuppa Jataka* cultivate compassion, sacrifice, cooperation, and environmental awareness. Their simple, engaging style develops literary sensibility, narrative skills, and empathy through storytelling, role-play, and dramatization. Pali literature bridges classical Buddhist teachings and Hindi traditions, influencing works like *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesha*. Classroom methods such as reading, discussion, dramatization, and comparative study with saint-poets like Kabir and Tulsidas reinforce moral and cultural learning. Overall, Jataka tales enrich both language instruction and ethical education.

In fact, the inclusion of Pali narratives in Hindi curriculum will not be limited to literary study but will also aid in students’ character-building, enhancement of human values, and development of social consciousness. Prof. Om Prakash Mishra writes in his book “Pali Literature and Indian Culture” that, “Jataka narratives are not just religious sermons but carriers of social and educational values, which develop life-vision and sensitivity in students.”¹⁰ In fact, Pali literature is not merely a compilation of religious discipline but reflects the deep imprint of Indian culture and diverse traditions of social life. Especially, Jataka tales present life-values, folk-religion, and moral education in narrative style.

Influence of Pali Narratives on English Literature

The narrative tradition of Pali literature, especially Jataka tales and Sutta literature, began coming into contact with European and English scholars in the nineteenth century. At that time, Oriental Studies were emerging in Europe, with keen interest in studying ancient languages and literature of India, China, and Central Asia. Sanskrit was considered the mother of Aryan languages and research began on it, but soon scholars’ attention turned to Pali as well, because this language was the foundation of Buddhist scriptures and the Jataka tales preserved in it were an unparalleled repository of ancient Indian society’s morality, faith, and cultural consciousness.

In 1857, Viggo Fausbøll published the English translation of Ten Jātaka Stories. This work later expanded into six volumes as *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births* (1877–1896). This great text introduced European readers to Jātaka literature in a systematic way for the first time. Afterward, T. W. Rhys Davids and his wife Caroline Rhys Davids established the Pali Text Society (1881), which systematically edited, translated, and published Pali texts. Through this institution, texts like *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, and *Aṅguttara Nikāya* became available in English translations. The

narrative traditions embedded in these texts began to be deeply integrated into Western literary and philosophical discourse.

Its impact on English literature was multifaceted. On one hand, the structure and morality of Jataka tales influenced Victorian-era children's literature, moral narratives, and instructive stories. On the other hand, English administrators and missionaries working in colonial India began to see these narratives as a tool to understand Indian society. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, these Buddhist tales started being compared to the parables of the Bible and Greek myths. In the field of Comparative Literature, scholars attempted to show that the instructive structure of Jataka tales is akin to Greek Aesop's Fables or Christian Bible stories.

Anthropologists and comparative religion scholars like E. B. Tylor and Max Müller also viewed these narratives in the context of "world literature." By the beginning of the 20th century, Buddhist narratives began influencing Western philosophical thought—especially concepts of compassion, impermanence, and the middle path. The clear influence of Pali Suttas and Jataka tales can be seen in Arnold's poem *The Light of Asia* (1879). This poetry created a cultural image of Buddha and Buddhist narratives among literary readers in Europe and America.

Thus, the narrative tradition of Pali literature not only contributed to English literature as moral tales but also initiated a robust stream of dialogue between "East and West" in world literature. The presence of Buddhist narratives in English literature deepened the tradition of moral-educational literature on one hand and provided new expansion to the fields of Comparative Literature and comparative religious studies on the other.

Relevance of Buddhist Tales in Modern English Criticism Theory (Narratology)

Buddhist tales, especially Jataka tales, Suttas, and Vinaya texts, are highly relevant to modern narratology for their narrative structure, form, and character construction. They operate on story and narration levels, using frame and embedded narratives, while employing flashback techniques aligned with Genette's temporal theory. Characters, like Buddha as compassion and Devadatta as jealousy, reflect

Propp's narrative functions. Multi-layered storytelling and translations across languages illustrate intertextuality. Ethically, these tales foster moral sensitivity and dialogic interaction, resonating with Nussbaum, Booth, and Bakhtin. Thus, Pali narratives remain enduring models for narrative form, ethics, intertextuality, and modern critical theory.

Literary Pedagogy and Pali Narratives

The narrative tradition of Pali texts (especially Jataka tales, Sutta literature, and Vinaya literature) is not only religious or philosophical but also extremely important from literary and educational perspectives. Modern educational trends like Narrative-based Learning, Value Education, and Critical Pedagogy make these narratives extremely useful for teaching in literary classrooms. A. K. Warder says that "The narrative traditions of Pali texts shaped early Indian pedagogy, embedding ethical instruction within engaging stories."¹¹ In fact, the narrative traditions of Pali texts deeply influenced ancient Indian pedagogy. In these tales, moral education is presented not in a mere didactic form but through interesting and engaging stories, making knowledge acquisition easy and effective for students.

Pali narratives can be effectively used in literary classrooms to teach narrative structure, character, and moral lessons. Comparing Jataka tales with Hindi folk tales, Panchatantra, or English fables fosters intercultural understanding. Role-play and dramatic adaptation help students experience characters and internalize values like compassion, non-violence, sacrifice, and equality. In Hindi education, they illuminate folk, didactic, and Bhakti traditions; in English, nineteenth-century translations by Rhys Davids and Fausboll introduced them to Europe for comparative and world literature studies. Tales like *Samja Jataka* and *Vessantara Jataka* cultivate value orientation, critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, and global ethical awareness.

Contemporary Relevance: Importance of Pali Narratives in Globalization and World Literature Studies

The narrative tradition of Pali literature, especially Jataka tales, Vinaya literature, and Sutta literature, are not merely historical or cultural heritage in today's globalized intellectual landscape but have become an

integral part of contemporary literary discourse and world literature studies. With globalization, multicultural perspectives and international dialogue in literary studies have been promoted. In this process, the importance of Pali narratives has emerged even more deeply. K. R. Norman writes that, “Pali narratives do not remain confined to religion; they become part of the literary imagination of South Asia.”¹² Pali narratives did not remain limited to religious boundaries but deeply influenced the literary consciousness and creative imagination of South Asia. In other words, these narratives went beyond religious teachings to establish a permanent place in the stream of folk tales, literature, and cultural life.

Pali narratives remain relevant today on several levels. Through translation and global circulation, they have become part of world literature. As Joseph Walters observes, Jataka tales shaped not only Asian literature but also European folk narratives and modern children’s stories. In a globalized world, Pali narratives promote compassion, altruism, truth, and non-violence, supporting international ethics, cultural dialogue, and peace-building, as emphasized by UNESCO’s preservation efforts. Critically, they illustrate how literature transcends national boundaries; David Damrosch notes that world literature thrives through circulation and reception, a role fulfilled by Pali texts via Buddhist dissemination and translations. Educationally, these narratives nurture empathy, coexistence, and critical thinking. Martha Nussbaum highlights their value in teaching moral reasoning and multicultural awareness. Thus, Pali literature has evolved from ancient heritage to active instruments of world literature and ethical, value-based learning across cultures.

Role of Pali Narratives in Intercultural and Multicultural Education:

Pali literature, including Jataka tales, Dhammapada, Vinaya, and Sutta texts, serves as a vital tool for intercultural pedagogy and multicultural education. As Surendra Kumar Dey notes, narrative preserves cultural memory, transmitting values and traditions across generations.

These narratives promote universal values such as compassion, truth, and justice, fostering dialogue, coexistence, and respect for cultural diversity. Heinz

Bechert highlights their global ethical character, while James A. Banks emphasizes their role in nurturing equality and cultural understanding. Martha Nussbaum also recognizes such texts as essential for cultivating world citizenship.

In education, Pali narratives develop moral reasoning, empathy, social responsibility, and cultural tolerance. Amid contemporary conflicts and cultural tensions, they provide effective tools for intercultural dialogue and peace education. UNESCO underscores that literature encourages dialogue and tolerance. Thus, Pali narratives enrich learning beyond academics, guiding students toward ethical awareness, global citizenship, and shared human values.

Re-reading Pali Narratives in the Digital Age and E-Learning

In the digital era, Pali narratives like Jataka tales and Sutta literature reach global audiences via online archives, digital libraries, and multimedia platforms, enhancing accessibility and interpretation. Resources such as SuttaCentral, Digital Pali Reader, and Sacred Texts Archive provide searchable texts, parallel translations, and lexical tools. E-learning platforms like Coursera, edX, and YouTube Education present these narratives through lectures, animations, and quizzes, fostering engagement with moral, cultural, and philosophical dimensions. Digital approaches enable new readings, including feminist, postcolonial, and ecological perspectives, while text analysis and network visualization reveal structure and intertextuality. Thus, Pali narratives support critical thinking, global dialogue, and multicultural education.

Conclusion

The Pali narrative tradition extends far beyond its religious and historical origins, representing a cultural, moral, and educational heritage that continues to hold significance in contemporary times. Through Jataka tales and Pali Suttas, it portrays the complexities of human life, moral dilemmas, and social realities, reminding us that stories can shape collective consciousness as powerfully as doctrines. Its teachings—compassion, patience, altruism, and coexistence—carry timeless relevance, offering solutions to present-day global challenges such as violence, intolerance, and environmental crisis. At the

same time, this tradition serves as a cultural bridge, linking Hindi folk and Bhakti literature with English comparative and world literature, thereby fostering dialogue between East and West, religion and literature, tradition and modernity. Ultimately, Pali narratives are not relics of the past but a living heritage

that enriches pedagogy, literary criticism, multicultural education, and digital humanities, ensuring their enduring inspiration and relevance in today's academic and cultural contexts.

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Pankaj Kumar Soni

Ascertaining the role of Agrarian Culture in the Economic Transformation: Response from India's Historical Experience

Agrarian development is one way of capturing changes in developing and under-developed countries. In such countries, agrarian development is closely linked to the question of livelihood and economic well-being and to the persisting inequality.

It is a unanimously accepted that poverty and inequality have been increasing in India since the introduction of new economic policy in the early 1990s. In the light of the impact of changing economic policies during the last few decades in the era of neoliberalism with the notion that India would become a global leader and would be successful in economic transformation, but India failed to achieve the targets it made and the agricultural development remained a far dream due to the negligence of agricultural sector.

This paper examines the performance of **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** through case studies in the context of the growing demand for finance in the agrarian sector. Established with the primary aim of protecting farmers from the exploitation of moneylenders, these societies have played a crucial role in rural credit delivery. They also provide an institutional alternative to address emerging challenges such as contract farming in the corporate sector.

The analysis highlights how the agrarian sector, during this period of transition, offers insights into potential pathways for achieving the national objectives of **accelerated growth, inclusiveness, and the reduction of poverty and hunger**. In doing so, the paper explores the broader role of the **cooperative movement** in agricultural development.

Credit institutions, by ensuring access to timely and affordable finance, hold significant potential for promoting accelerated and sustainable agricultural growth. Since the welfare of the Indian economy is deeply rooted in agricultural progress, the recognition of agrarian development as central to state development becomes imperative. In this context, the paper situates the status of agrarian development within a historical framework and argues that the goal of *growth with inclusiveness* can only be realized when agricultural growth is both rapid and widely shared, with credit agencies serving as key enablers.

The Question of Agrarian Development

The economic development of most countries is unbalanced in the sense that not all sectors grow at the same pace simultaneously. Given the importance of agriculture in the economic development, India accepts the policy of 'Agrarian development' with special attention on agriculture. Agrarian development, during the last 60 years, has been a principal question of the Indian economy. Recognizing the role that availability of adequate infrastructure facilities plays in the acceleration of the economic development of agricultural, industrial and tertiary sectors. Recent years, after the independence a lot of priority has been given to rural sectors such as power, transport, communication, credit etc. during the plans.

Agrarian development may be broadly classified into two interrelated components:

(i) Economic Development – encompassing transport and communication, power, irrigation, credit,

marketing, storage and processing, as well as allied activities such as animal husbandry, dairying, and fisheries.

(ii) Social Development – covering education, health, research, and extension services.

From a socio-economic perspective, the infrastructure of rural India presents a unique development scenario. While progress has been uneven, the process of development remains continuous, and in certain areas, it has accelerated over time. Notably, improvements in agricultural productivity during the early stages of economic development hold critical importance, as they provide the foundation for sustained growth and future industrial expansion.

It is evident that multiple factors play a crucial role in rural development, among which **credit** stands out as a key driver. Access to credit not only enhances agricultural production but also improves the standard of living of the rural population. In fact, credit serves as a unique resource, enabling farmers to use additional inputs and capital equipment in the present while deferring repayment to future earnings. By facilitating the adoption of modern technologies, credit has accelerated the **commercialization of agriculture**, gradually transforming it into a more capital-intensive sector.

Agriculture, as the **largest sector in India**, continues to be the lifeline of the national economy and will likely remain so in the foreseeable future. It contributes nearly **one-fifth of GDP**, sustains the livelihood of about **two-thirds of the population**, provides direct employment to approximately **234 million people** (cultivators and agricultural laborers), and underpins the agro-based industries. Beyond its economic contributions, agriculture is also central to addressing **social concerns** such as food and nutritional security, employment and income generation, poverty alleviation, gender equity, ecological balance, and environmental sustainability. Its role in ensuring national food security during times of crisis and in reinforcing India's sovereignty is widely acknowledged.

The adoption of modern agricultural technologies has propelled India from a period of **chronic food shortages in the 1960s**—when the country

imported 8–10 million tonnes of food annually—to an era of **self-sufficiency, buffer stocks, and even food exports by the 1990s**. Since 1950, productivity gains have been substantial: **3.3 times in food grains, 1.6 times in fruits, 2.1 times in vegetables, 5.6 times in fish, 1.8 times in milk, and 4.8 times in egg production**.

As Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru famously observed, *“Everything else can wait, but not agriculture.”* At independence, India faced acute food shortages, compelling imports to meet basic needs. Addressing this challenge became a national priority, with a strong focus on raising farm productivity through the development of infrastructure, agricultural research, and education. These measures laid the foundation for India's remarkable strides in agricultural growth and food security.

Agrarian Development and Credit

The grit and perseverance of Indian farmers have played a pivotal role in transforming agriculture from its fragile state at the time of independence into a resilient production system that has enabled the nation to achieve food security. Yet, despite this macro-level success, the nutritional security and overall well-being of a large proportion of farming households remain a pressing concern for policymakers and planners. Over the past six decades, numerous programmes and policy initiatives launched by both the central and state governments have contributed to agricultural development. However, their benefits have not been evenly distributed, and the economic conditions of farmers in many regions remain stagnant, largely due to limited coverage and inadequate reach across all sections of the farming community.

We now examine the performance and prospects of Indian agriculture, its achievements and emerging challenges. The performance of Indian agriculture through half a century of planned economic development is broadly characterized by three phases-

- Ist phase- Pre Green- Revaluation period (1947-1969)
- IInd phase- Green- Revolution period to Pre-Liberalization period (1969-1990)
- IIIRD phase- Post- Liberalization period to till now (1990-2012)

Credit has acted as a powerful catalyst in agricultural development by enabling investments in irrigation facilities, farm mechanization, energization of pump sets, land improvement, moisture conservation, horticultural plantations, and forestry. Both investment credit and production credit have supported a large number of farmers in adopting **high-yielding variety (HYV) seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides**, thereby enhancing productivity. Similarly, allied activities such as **animal husbandry, dairy, poultry, and fisheries** have received a significant boost through improved access to credit.

In recent years, credit availability has also extended to **post-harvest infrastructure and high-technology ventures** in areas such as floriculture, mushroom cultivation, aquaculture, tissue culture, and agro-processing, marking a diversification of agricultural activities and creating new opportunities for rural transformation.

It is generally recognized that the development and modernization of agriculture is largely a question of resources, and therefore, effective arrangements for agricultural credit are essential. Credit allows farmers to extend their control over resources beyond their ownership, enabling them to access and utilize opportunities for growth. In essence, credit involves the mobilization of savings—whether by intermediaries or the government—and their transformation into capital for productive use. While credit itself is not capital, it provides farmers with the financial command necessary to undertake investments that would otherwise remain beyond their reach.

Most developing countries seeking to strengthen their agricultural sectors have established rural financial institutions to channel credit for rural development. Credit serves as a powerful accelerator of agricultural growth, provided it is adequate in volume, affordable, and development-oriented. Without such credit, the limitations of self-financing often confine farmers' investments to marginal improvements within traditional technologies. However, meaningful technological transformation requires not only access to credit but also **institutional innovations and reforms in financial systems**, so that poor yet efficient farmers can secure external financial assistance to adopt modern practices. Thus, credit,

in conjunction with new technology and complementary inputs, becomes a decisive factor in driving agrarian development.

The emphasis on credit as an instrument of agricultural development is based on several perspectives¹, some of these perspectives like that

(a) Schumpeterian Perspective- This identifies innovation as the critical element in the economic development and credit as an essential organizing instrument which enables the innovator to bid resources away from other activities.

(b) Market Reform Perspective- This is based on the view to set a link between the credit and marketing in all transactions of the farmers to save them from the middleman.

(c) Public Credit Institutions Perspective- These institutions are viewed as third perspectives which are considered to act as the partner of the farmer to supervise and based on the equality and social justice.

(d) Income Transfer Mechanism Perspectives- In this perspective, credit has been regarded as income transfer mechanism to remove the inequalities in income distribution in the rural areas.

In the presence of these perspectives the demand for agricultural credit² arises due to,

1. *Problem of accessibility*
2. *Lack of timing between the realization of income and act of expenditure*
3. *Negligence of remoteness of formal institutions vis-à-vis neighborhood of collateral credit institutions &*
4. *Lumpiness in the investment in fixed capital formation.*
5. *The above are issues in credit availability, they do not show the reasons for the need of credit.*

The supply of agricultural credit comes from two sources³

1. *Institutional source which is constituted by Schedule Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperatives.*
2. *Non-institutional source, which are primarily moneylender.*

Discuss the problems here first: like low or no availability of credit for farmers (or marginal or small farmers) and then start discussing solutions. The

problem of agriculture credit is colossal as compared to requirements. The main problem is to develop a suitable source of agricultural credit availability on easy terms, i.e., at reasonable rates of interest without rigorous requirements of security and with no irksome formalities. This can be done by extending the benefits of cooperatives to the small and marginal farmers in the country. The commercial banks can also be persuaded to give a rural bias to their lending operations. Under multi-agency approach for provision of finance for agriculture and allied activities, the rural credit delivery systems in the country are cooperatives, commercial banks including regional rural banks. There is very active support provided by the central and state governments and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gives overall direction to rural credit and the financial support to the National Bank for its operation⁴.

In short, the multi-agency approach has led to the building up of the institutions for purveying rural and agricultural credit. However, it is imperative to emphasize that it is due to the Reserve Bank of India's efforts in terms of strengthening of cooperatives, an introduction of the system of priority sector lending by commercial banks, and establishment of Regional Rural Banks. All these measurement has led to institutionalizations of rural and agriculture credit.

Since independence, the central objective of India's agricultural credit policy has been the **gradual replacement of moneylenders with institutional sources of credit** and the **lowering of interest rates**. This policy was designed not only to ease the credit constraints on agricultural growth by expanding the demand for production credit but also to function as an **income-transfer mechanism in favor of poor farmers**.

India's supply-led approach to rural credit yielded significant outcomes in terms of non-farm growth, employment generation, and rising rural wages. The share of institutional credit in the total debt of rural households increased from **7.2% in 1951 to 17.3% in 1962**, and further to **61.2% in 1982**. By 1991, it had risen to about **66%**, reflecting the increasing dominance of formal financial institutions in rural credit delivery. However, this share declined slightly to

61.1% by 2002, indicating a partial resurgence of non-institutional sources in meeting rural credit needs.⁵

Cooperative Movement as Credit Tool of Agrarian Development

Cooperative development has long been recognized as a vital strategy for poverty alleviation, income enhancement, improvement in living standards, empowerment of people, and fostering harmonious relationships among diverse groups. In the immediate aftermath of independence, India adopted the policy of a *mixed economy*, wherein the private and public sectors were both accorded significant roles in the process of planned development. Within this framework, cooperatives were envisioned not merely as instruments to strengthen the economic foundation of the nation, but also as vehicles for building a new social order grounded in equity and justice.

While inaugurating an International Seminar on Cooperative Leadership in South East Asia, organized by the International Cooperative Alliance in November 1963, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru emphatically declared:

"My outlook is to convulse India with the cooperative movement or rather with cooperation, to make it, broadly speaking, the basic activity of India in every village as well as elsewhere, and finally, indeed, to make the cooperative approach the common thinking of India."

The vision Nehru set forth for a vibrant co-operative movement has remained only partially realized, losing much of its momentum, especially after the economic reforms of the early 1990s. Yet, in a country where more than two-thirds of the population still resides in rural areas, agriculture continues to serve as the backbone of growth and development. Within this context, the cooperative system has long been a critical pillar of rural transformation, offering vital services in credit, production, processing, and marketing.

Today, cooperatives extend across the nation, encompassing nearly **230 million members**. India's cooperative credit network is not only the largest in the world but also continues to provide more agricultural credit than commercial banks, underscoring its central role in sustaining the agrarian economy.

This shows loans advances by various financial

institutions from 1970-71 to 2004-05. Even if the growth figures are adjusted for inflation, the performance remains impressive. Till the nationalization of scheduled commercial banks, cooperative institutions were the only source of formal institutional credit in rural areas. Total cooperative credit increased from Rs. 744 crore in 1970-71 to Rs 27295 crore in 2000-2001. The above 3-4 paragraphs are good. You can probably focus on them or strengthen them.

The dynamic changes in India's economic landscape, driven by financial sector reforms and rapid technological advancements in agriculture, are set to pose several complex policy challenges in the 21st century. On one side, a market-driven economy coupled with capital-intensive technologies is likely to generate a greater demand for agricultural and rural credit. On the other, Rural Financial Institutions may increasingly deprioritize rural lending, raising concerns about their own viability and, in turn, further limiting credit access for the poor. This scenario underscores the urgent need to strengthen the rural credit structure—either by revitalizing and nurturing the existing institutions or by reinforcing them with new mechanisms, particularly through cooperatives.

The cooperative credit system is broadly divided into two components:

1. Production Credit (Short-Term Credit Structure):

- **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS):** Base-level institutions directly serving farmers.
- **District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs):** Intermediate-level institutions coordinating with PACS.
- **State Cooperative Banks (SCBs):** Apex-level institutions providing leadership and refinancing support.

2. Investment Credit (Long-Term Credit Structure):

- **State Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Banks (SCARDBs) – Unitary Structure**
- **State Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Banks (SCARDBs) – Federal Structure**

- **Primary Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Banks (PCARDBs)**

After Independence, cooperative has been adopted as an important instrument of economic development especially for the welfare of the small farmers and weaker sections of the community. Every successive economic plan of the country specified the role of cooperatives as institutional vehicles for socio-economic transformation of the country particularly of rural India.

Today, cooperatives have emerged as a strong economic force, dedicated to serving farmers, artisans, and other weaker sections of society for their socio-economic upliftment. With a nationwide presence and a federal structure, the cooperative movement has made a visible impact across multiple sectors of the Indian economy.

In rural India, **credit cooperatives** play a pivotal role in meeting farmers' financial needs by providing production credit, marketing support, and post-harvest services. Currently, cooperatives contribute nearly **45 percent of agricultural credit** in the country. They also play a key role in input supply, accounting for around **35 percent of fertilizer distribution**.

Beyond credit, other forms of cooperatives—such as **marketing, processing, and producer cooperatives**—have become equally significant. They facilitate the marketing of agricultural commodities like food grains, jute, and cotton. In agro-processing, cooperatives contribute nearly **60 percent of total sugar production**, hold about **11 percent of the total spindle capacity in the textile sector**, and bring nearly **58 percent of the nation's handlooms** under their fold.

Thus, while credit cooperatives form the backbone of rural financing, other types of cooperatives collectively strengthen production, processing, and distribution, making the cooperative movement a comprehensive instrument of rural and economic transformation.

The primary objective of the agrarian credit system is to ensure the timely and adequate flow of credit for agriculture and allied activities, thereby enabling farmers to fully benefit from developmental opportunities. For decades, cooperatives have played

a central role in extending credit for seasonal agricultural operations and other rural needs. However, the demand for agricultural credit has consistently exceeded the capacity of cooperatives to meet it.

To bridge this gap, a **multi-agency approach** was adopted. Following the nationalization of banks, commercial banks expanded into rural areas, extending credit to farmers and other segments of the rural economy. This expansion was designed to **supplement the role of cooperative banks**. Subsequently, **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** were established to further strengthen rural credit delivery, with a special focus on weaker sections of society, including small and marginal farmers, sharecroppers, tenant cultivators, and landless laborers.

Over the years, public sector banks and RRBs have opened an extensive network of rural branches, and together they now account for nearly **two-thirds of the total outstanding agricultural credit** in the country.

For the development of agriculture, credit is the important factor. Credit is provided in rural India through formal and informal sources. To avoid the negative impact of the informal source, it was realized to promote formal credit institutions. Cooperative, Scheduled Commercial Banks, and Regional Rural Banks are the main institutions which provide credit to villagers. But cooperative is the first institution which set up in India by cooperative law which implanted in 1904. Cooperative holds a major share in rural credit after independence. After the nationalization of Scheduled Commercial Banks, the importance of cooperative goes down. But the importance of cooperative is always in the developing country to achieve the target of social welfare. Cooperative is the only institution which based on the principle of equity and ignores the aspect of profitability. Cooperative is the shield of weaker section, small and marginal farmers.

Cooperatives have played a significant role in rural India, particularly in the provision of credit to small and marginal farmers. They were originally established to protect farmers from the exploitation of moneylenders and to ensure timely access to production credit at reasonable interest rates. The

Cooperative Credit Societies Act of 1904 laid the foundation for this movement, which was later expanded through the **Cooperative Societies Act of 1912**, enabling the formation of cooperatives beyond credit activities.

After independence, the **Reserve Bank of India conducted a comprehensive survey on rural credit**, the findings of which were published in 1954. The report famously declared: *“Cooperatives have failed, but cooperatives must succeed.”* This statement underscored the importance of cooperative development as an integral part of India’s planning process.

Recognizing the need for cooperatives to be **self-reliant, autonomous, and democratic**, the Government of India appointed several committees to review and strengthen the cooperative sector. Based on their recommendations, numerous steps were taken to improve cooperative institutions, particularly **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)**, in order to make them more effective instruments of rural credit delivery.

The progress of cooperatives credit institutions presented a mixed picture from 1980 to till now. There has been much progress quantitatively but there are also numbers of indicators which point the lacunae in its development. Cooperative credit institutions consist of three-tier structures where PACS exists in the base of this system. The performance of PACS gives the sign of the health of cooperative credit institutions. The performance of PACS is measured on the basis of different types of variable. This study tries to measure the performance of PACS on the basis of some predefined variables.

The way forward

On the basis of these finding, we suggest some policy which helps to revival of cooperatives-

(1) To attain and retain the financial viability of cooperatives societies, it must be essential to give a special attention on the functioning of these societies. As the recommendation of Vaidyanathan Committee, all necessary steps should be taken to implement the rural package. This package brings a new encouragement to these cooperatives societies.

(2) As this study state that cost management of cooperatives societies rapidly increase. This problem

arises due to the lack of training, education and unaware of new information technologies. So, a special awareness programme has launched for the people which they benefited maximum from these societies.

(3) There is a lot of research essential to improve the condition of the performance of cooperatives societies. But then there is no sufficient data for the research and some table have dropped in new data series. So, data must be collected on the basis of old series as collected in 1980. These data series give a comparative result which used to short out the problem of cooperatives societies.

(4) As the recommendations of the committee for the improving the financial system, a vibrant and competitive financial system able to sustain with a view of enhancing efficiency, equity, and profitability. But the nature of cooperatives societies is different from other financial institutions. Cooperatives are highlighting more on the equity rather than efficiency and profitability. So, in view of this matter, there is need to special policy to improve the performance of cooperatives societies.

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दिनेश कुमार

इक्कीसवीं सदी का किसान जीवन और किसान विमर्श

समकालीन उपन्यासों में किसान के सामाजिक पहलू पर विस्तार से वर्णन मिलता है। किसान अपने सामाजिक सम्बन्धों से बंधा हुआ होता है। समाज में रहते हुए वह सभी तरह के रीति-रिवाजों का निर्वाह करता है। शादी-ब्याह, त्योहार, अनुष्ठान इत्यादि कार्यों को समय-समय पर करता रहता है। एक किसान के लिए अपनी इज्जत और मर्यादा सबसे प्रिय होती है, उसी इज्जत और मर्यादा के लिए वह जीवन भर निरंतर संघर्ष करता है। वह अपनी इज्जत का मरते दम तक रक्षा करता है। प्रेमाश्रम उपन्यास में जर्मींदार का कारिंदा गौस खाँ जब किसान मनोहर की पत्नी को धक्का देकर गिरा देता है और उसकी पत्नी मनोहर से उलाहना देती है। मनोहर को यह बात बर्दास्त नहीं होती है और गौस खाँ की हत्या की योजना बनाकर उसी रात अपने बेटे के साथ मिलकर हत्या कर देता है। किसान अपने स्वाभिमान और आत्म-सम्मान के लिए हमेशा तत्पर रहता है। आजादी पूर्व इस आत्म-सम्मान की लड़ाई वह जर्मींदार और उनके कारिंदों से लड़ता था, जबकि आजादी के बाद उसे यह लड़ाई सरकारी अमला से लड़ना पड़ता है। कर्ज के बोझ में दबे होने के कारण बैंक द्वारा बार-बार नोटिस देना, घर की कुर्की के भय से वह आत्म-सम्मान की लड़ाई में जब हार जाता है तो आत्महत्या कर लेता है। इस तरह की आत्महत्या का लंबा सिलसिला महाराष्ट्र, पंजाब, आंध्र प्रदेश, तमिलनाडु राज्य में देखा जा सकता है।

हिन्दी में ग्रामीण जनजीवन से सम्बन्धित उपन्यास भी लिखे गए जिनमें किसान जीवन का बखूबी वर्णन किया गया है। भारतीय किसान का जीवन बहुत ही दरिद्रता, ऋणग्रस्तता एवं असहनीय कष्टों से भरा हुआ है। महाजनी सभ्यता का

जाल अंग्रेजों ने भारत में फैलाया था। अकाल, कृषि की पैदावार का कम मूल्य, कर का बोझ आदि के कारण किसानों की दशा दिन-प्रतिदिन गिरती जा रही थी। नई व्यवस्था से किसानों को भारी संकटों का सामना करना पड़ा। शिवपूजन सहाय, मुंशी प्रेमचन्द, फणीश्वरनाथ रेणु, नागार्जुन, भैरवप्रसाद गुप्त, डॉ. बाबूराम, संजीव, सुनील चतुर्वेदी, पंकज सुबीर आदि उपन्यासकारों ने अपने उपन्यासों के माध्यम से किसान आन्दोलन का यथार्थ चित्रण किया है।

वर्तमान दौर में साहित्यिक रचनाएँ तो बहुत लिखी जा रही हैं लेकिन उनमें से कुछ ही ऐसी होती हैं, जिन्हें पढ़ने के बाद पाठक समाज की उन सच्चाईयों से अवगत हो पाता है, जिन सच्चाईयों को जानते हुए भी वो अज्ञान बना रहता है। वाकई में रचना वही जिसे पढ़कर पाठक सामाजिक यथार्थ से रूबरू हो साथ ही मन में कुछ यथार्थ प्रश्न आए और उन प्रश्नों के कुछ हद तक उत्तर भी। कुछ रचनाएँ ऐसी भी होती हैं, जिन्हें पढ़ने के बाद पाठक के मस्तिष्क में अनेक सवाल उथल-पुथल करने लगते हैं और उन सवालों का उत्तर खुद से ढूँढने की कोशिश भी करने लगता है। साहित्य सिर्फ पाठक का मनोरंजन ही नहीं करता है बल्कि समाज के यथार्थ से भी रूबरू कराता है।

राजू शर्मा का उपन्यास 'हलफनामे' 2007 में प्रकाशित हुआ था। इस उपन्यास में किसान आत्महत्या के कारणों की पड़ताल करने का प्रयास किया गया है। उपन्यास का मुख्य पात्र मकई राम पेशे से बिजली मिस्त्री है। उसका पिता स्वामीराम एक किसान है। पानी खेती का वजूद है बिना पानी की व्यवस्था के खेती की कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती है।

पानी का संकट किसान के लिए जीवन का खतरा बन जाता है। स्वामीराम एक के बाद एक कई बोरिंग कराया लेकिन बोरिंग सफल नहीं हो पाती है। इस कारण से उसकी आर्थिक स्थिति खराब हो जाती है। सरकार की तरफ से भी कोई मदद नहीं मिलने के कारण उसकी मनोस्थिति अवसाद में चली जाती है। इसलिए वह आत्महत्या को जीवन का अंतिम विकल्प के रूप में चुन लेता है। जीवन का अंत करके जहां स्वामीराम का जीवन संघर्ष खत्म होता है वहीं से मकई राम का संघर्ष शुरू होता है। शासनतंत्र की निर्दयता और असंवेदनशीलता का वृत्त इस उपन्यास की धुरी है। “किसान जब आत्महत्या करता है तो वह जिंदगी और मौत के बीच अवसाद पूर्ण चुनाव नहीं है, बल्कि जिंदगी के लिए संघर्ष की आजादी का लोप है। मौत का चुनाव किसान नहीं करता बल्कि तंत्र उसका जीने का अधिकार छीन लेता है।”¹

पिता के आत्महत्या के बाद मकई राम अपनी जिंदगी में अलग-थलग पड़ जाता है। उस कठिन स्थिति में उसका दोस्त सुदर्शन अपनी समझदारी और ज्ञान से मकई राम को किसानों के संघर्ष से परिचित कराता है। पत्रकार पी. साईनाथ समेत अर्थशास्त्रियों के वक्तव्यों को लेकर चर्चा करता है। हताश और मायूस मकई राम के जीवन में सुदर्शन अपने ज्ञान से बाहरी दुनिया से परिचित कराता है।

महावीर प्रसाद द्विवेदी को 1908 में ही किसानों की समस्या का आभास हो गया था, तभी तो वह अपनी रचना ‘सम्पत्तिशास्त्र’ में लिखते हैं कि “जहाँ तक जमीन की उर्वरा या उत्पादक शक्ति की सीमा का अतिक्रमण नहीं होता वहीं तक अधिक खर्च करने से लाभ हो सकता है। आगे नहीं। उत्पादकता की सीमा पर पहुँच जाने पर खर्च बढ़ाने से लाभ के बदले उलटा हानि होती है। अंततः फल यह होगा कि पैदावार बढ़ाने की कोशिश में, अधिक पूंजी लगाने और अधिक मेहनत करने पर भी. फी आदमी हिस्सा कम पड़ेगा। धीरे-धीरे यह हिस्सा और कम होता जायेगा। यहाँ तक कि दो-चार वर्ष पैदावार की अपेक्षा खर्च बढ़ जायेगा और उन पन्द्रह आदमियों का गुजारा मुश्किल से होगा। उन्हें जमीन छोड़कर भागना पड़ेगा।”²

शिवमूर्ति का ‘आखिरी छलांग’ किसान जीवन पर केन्द्रित उपन्यास है। जो प्रेमचंद की परंपरा की ही एक कड़ी दिखती है। ‘आखिरी छलांग’ उपन्यास का कथानक परस्पर उलझी हुई किसान जीवन की अनेक समस्याओं का जंजाल है। कथानक का आधार पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश का ग्रामांचल है। इसका नायक

पहलवान एक किसान है। उसके सामने विरासत में मिली तथा नयी विकास नीतियों के कारण निर्मित अनेक समस्याएँ हैं। वह अपनी सायानी बेटी के लिए दो साल से वर खोज रहा है, बेटे की इंजीनियरिंग की फीस का जुगाड़ नहीं हो रहा है, तीन साल से गन्ने का बकाया नहीं मिल रहा है, सोसायटी से खाद के लिए लिया गया कर्ज चुकता नहीं हुआ है। हर दूसरे महीने में ट्यूबवेल के बिल की तलवार सिर पर लटक जाती है। ऐसी कई समस्याओं को पहलवान किसान के माध्यम से कथाकार ने अपने उपन्यास में उठाया है। शिवमूर्ति ग्रामीण रचनाकार हैं। उन्होंने किसानों की समस्याओं को समझा तथा उनकी समस्याओं को महसूस किया है। पहलवान महसूस करता है कि जैसे नहर के पेट भीतर सिल्ट भर जाती है उसी तरह किसान की तकदीर में भी साल दर साल सिल्ट भरती जा रही है।

किसान जीवन को ही केंद्र में रखकर पंकज सुबीर ने ‘अकाल में उत्सव’ उपन्यास की रचना की है। इस उपन्यास में ग्रामीण जीवन और विशेषतः किसानों की जिंदगी पर बहुत करीने से रोशनी डाली गई है। किसान की सारी आर्थिक गतिविधियाँ कैसे उसकी छोटी जोत की फसल के चारों ओर केन्द्रित रहती हैं और किन उम्मीदों के सहारे वे अपने आप को जीवित रखते हैं, यह उपन्यास का कथानक है। ‘रामप्रसाद’ के माध्यम से पंकज सुबीर बताते हैं कि आम किसान आज भी मौसम की मेहरबानी पर किस हद तक निर्भर है। “मौसम के उतार-चढ़ाव के साथ ही किसानों की उम्मीदों का ग्राफ भी ऊपर-नीचे होता रहता है। किसान इन उतार-चढ़ाव के बीच अपने आप को कोसता रहता है। मैंने नहीं जाना जेठ की लू कैसी होती है और माघ की वर्षा कैसी होती है। इस देह को चीर कर देखो, इसमें कितना प्राण रह गया है, कितना जख्मों से चूर, कितना ठोकरों से कुचला हुआ। उससे पूछो, कभी तूने विश्राम के दर्शन किये, कभी तू छांह में बैठा। उस पर यह अपमान और वह अब भी जीता है, कायर, लोभी, अधम। उसका सारा विश्वास जो अगाध होकर स्थूल और अँधा हो गया था, मानो टूक-टूक उड़ गया है।”³

संजीव जी ने ‘फाँस’ उपन्यास की रचना की जिसका केन्द्र बिन्दु भी किसान को रखा गया है। जो 21वीं शताब्दी के किसान जीवन का बड़ा सटीक वर्णन करता है। उन्होंने दिखाया है किसान किस प्रकार अपने परिवार की आधारभूत जरूरतों को भी पूरा नहीं कर पाता। देश व संसार का भरण-पोषण

करने वाले किसान के लिए खेती हमेशा से ही घाटे का सौदा रही है। वर्तमान समय में तो यह फाँस बन गई है, जो धीरे-धीरे उसे मौत की तरफ धकेल रही है। किसान कर्ज लेकर अपने परिवार को भरण-पोषण करता है। बड़ी कठिनाई से अपने परिवार की मूलभूत आवश्यकताओं को पूरा कर पाता है। वहीं दूसरी तरफ उदारीकरण और वैश्वीकरण के दौर ने तो किसान को अपंग बना दिया है। किसान कर्ज लेकर फसल उगाता है और जब वह अपनी फसल बाजार में लेकर जाता है, तो वहाँ भी उसकी दुर्दशा ही होती है। किसान कर्ज लेता है फिर भी कड़ी मेहनत करता है परन्तु उसका पूरा जीवन अभावों में चला जाता है और अन्त में अपने उत्तराधिकारी के लिए वह कर्ज हो छोड़कर जाता है। 'फाँस' उपन्यास में कर्ज में डूबे किसान के अभावग्रस्त जीवन का एक संजीव चित्रण किया है। कर्ज व अभाव के कारण गरीब किसान मरने के लिए मजबूर है। भर पेट खाना भी उसे नसीब नहीं होता स्वस्थ और शिक्षा प्राप्त करना उसके लिए दूर की कौड़ी है। इसके साथ ही दहेज की चिंता किसान को जीते जी मार देती है। वह अपने उत्तराधिकारी को उत्तराधिकार में देता है उसे वही कर्ज और अभावों से भरा

जीवन।

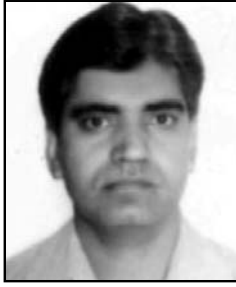
निष्कर्ष रूप में कहा जा सकता है कि हिन्दी साहित्य के उपन्यास परम्परा में किसान जीवन की समस्याओं को लेकर उपन्यास प्रेमचंद पूर्व युग ये ही लिखे जाते रहे हैं। किन्तु उन्हें एक पुख्ता जमीन प्रेमचंद युग से ही मिली या यूँ कह सकते हैं कि प्रेमचंद के आगमन ने ही हिन्दी उपन्यास को मानव जीवन की वास्तविक समस्याओं से जोड़ने का कार्य किया। मानव जीवन की अनेक समस्याओं में से प्रमुख रूप से किसान जीवन की समस्याओं को प्रेमचंद ने अपनी रचना का प्रमुख आधार बनाया और किसान और उनके जीवन की समस्याओं पर जो भी उपन्यास रचे जा रहे हैं प्रेमचंद आज भी उनके प्रेरणास्रोत बने हुए हैं। आज इक्कीसवीं सदी में भी किसानों पर केन्द्रित उपन्यासों की रचना की जा रही है। किसान तो समस्याओं से आज भी जूझ ही रहा है हाँ उनके शोषण के तरीके बदल गए हैं।

शोधार्थी

राज ऋषि भर्तृहरि मत्स्य विश्वविद्यालय
अलवर

सन्दर्भ सूची

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Buddhist Philosophy and Modern Science : A Reinterpretation of the Principle of Cause and Effect

Abstract

The principles of Buddhist philosophy, such as *anicca* (impermanence), *anattā* (non-self), *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination), relativity, and *śūnyatā* (emptiness), not only provide a profound understanding of life and the cosmos but also serve as foundational principles for modern physical sciences. These principles elucidate that nothing in the universe is permanent or independent; every entity and event depends on other factors, and their true nature is *śūnya* (empty). Once the cause ceases, their existence also ceases. Buddhist philosophy presents a scientific perspective that every phenomenon in the world is bound within a cycle of cause and effect. The teachings of the Buddha are based on logic and experience. In the *Kālāma Sutta*, he emphasized verifying and accepting any doctrine only after observation and validation, rather than relying solely on tradition, scriptures, logic, or the words of a revered person. The principles of *anicca* and *anattā* highlight the transience and essencelessness of objects and events. The doctrine of *śūnyatā*, propounded by Nāgārjuna, further deepens these insights.

This research paper analyzes the parallels between Buddhist philosophy and physical sciences, demonstrating that the Buddha's principles serve as foundational concepts for science. The Buddha, even in the nascent stages of physical sciences, clarified that every

phenomenon has a cause, and by investigating these causes, one can reach the truth. Thus, Buddhism is presented as a scientific approach rooted in reason and experience.

Key Words: *anicca*, *anattā*, *paṭiccasamuppāda*, relativity, *śūnyatā*, *avijjā*, *saṅkhāra*, *nāma-rūpā*, *vedanā*, *taṇhā*, etc.

Introduction

The principles of Buddhist philosophy, such as *anicca* (impermanence), *anattā* (non-self), *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination), relativity, and *śūnyatā* (emptiness), not only introduce a profound understanding of life and the world but also serve as a foundation for comprehending the mysteries of the cosmos and facilitating scientific discoveries. These principles assert that nothing in the universe is eternal (*nitya*); everything is impermanent (*anicca*). Nothing possesses an independent existence; its existence depends on certain causes, and its fundamental nature is *śūnya* (empty). Once the cause ceases, the existence also ceases. In reality, all existence is *śūnya*. Thus, all phenomena and entities are interdependent, bound within a complex cycle of cause and effect. Buddhist philosophy provides a scientific foundation and an awakened perspective to understand these complexities. Similarly, the aim of physical sciences is to comprehend the causes and effects of natural phenomena. Both disciplines operate on the principles of cause and effect in their respective domains. Although Buddhist spirituality

and sciences may belong to different realms, they are not contradictory; rather, the principles of Buddhist philosophy genuinely serve as a foundation for sciences. Hence, Buddhism is referred to as a scientific religion, not one based on superstition. This research paper analyzes the parallels between Buddhist philosophy and physical sciences, demonstrating their relevance to physics.

Scientific Approach and Truth Verification in Buddhism

All the teachings of the Buddha are based on reason and experience. Teachings based on blind beliefs or superstitions cannot be considered the Buddha's teachings. In the *Kālāma Sutta*, addressing the Kālāmas, the Buddha said, "O Kālāmas, do not accept something merely because it is heard, because it is received through tradition, because it is supported by many, because it is written in scriptures, because it aligns with logic, because it aligns with justice, because it appears acceptable superficially, because it aligns with favorable beliefs or views, or because it is spoken by a revered teacher." He further emphasized that one should accept a teaching only after thorough observation and re-examination, ensuring it is validated by wise individuals¹. Thus, Buddhism does not accept anything that does not stand the test of reason and experience.

Truth can have two bases: first, the fundamental nature of any phenomenon or entity beyond words and concepts; second, truth is that which is independent, beyond time and space, and eternal. According to Buddhism, the truth of this material world is that all phenomena and entities are conditional, lacking independent existence, and are interdependent. Their true nature is *śūnya*. Through principles such as *paṭṭiccasamuppāda*, relativity, Nāgārjuna's doctrine of *śūnyatā*, *anicca*, and *anattā*, Buddhism elucidates this truth. In essence, Buddhist philosophy provides a scientific perspective for viewing life, the world, and the universe. Let us try to understand these principles of truth verification systematically:

Aniccatā (Impermanence)

Every material object, event, mind, thought, or emotion is subject to change; nothing is eternal (*nitya*). *Aniccatā* is a foundational principle of Buddhist philosophy. It states that everything—material objects, events, mind, or emotions—is impermanent (*anicca*). However, this change is not random; it occurs every moment. No phenomenon remains the same for even two moments². Sometimes, when a result manifests, it appears as if things have changed suddenly, such as a person dying from a heart attack. In reality, the heart attack is the result; the process leading to it has been progressing moment by moment. *Khaṇikavāda* (momentariness) illustrates that change is not sudden but occurs every moment. Nothing "is"; everything is "becoming."

Anattāvāda (Non-Self)

This refers to the absence of a permanent self (*attā*). Nothing transfers unchanged from one life to another. Every material object or event is conditional, and its arising or cessation is part of a continuous process of change. Every material entity is composed of two or more elements, and their combination is conditional, part of an ongoing process of change. These elements have no independent existence³.

Paṭṭiccasamuppāda (Dependent Origination)

Paṭṭiccasamuppāda is the cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy, also known as the principle of relativity or cause and effect. The Buddha explained it as follows: "*Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti. Imasmiṃ uppade idaṃ uppajjati, imasmiṃ nirodhe idaṃ nirujjhati.*" This translates to, "When this exists, that exists; when this does not exist, that does not exist. When this arises, that arises; when this ceases, that ceases."⁴ This verse clarifies that all entities, events, and conditions are interdependent, arising due to specific causes. Nothing in the material world has an independent existence; its presence is due to a cause, and when the cause ceases, the existence ceases. This is its *saṅkhārata* (conditioned nature). The Buddha explained this through the twelve links (*dvādaśa nidānas*): *avijjā* (ignorance), *saṅkhāra*

(formations), *viññāṇa* (consciousness), *nāma-rūpa* (name-and-form), *saḷāyatana* (six sense bases), *phassa* (contact), *vedanā* (feeling), *taṇhā* (craving), *upādāna* (clinging), *bhava* (becoming), *jāti* (birth), and *jarā-maraṇa* (aging and death).

1. **Avijjā** (Ignorance): Ignorance is the misapprehension of reality, of four types: perceiving the impermanent as permanent, the non-self as self, the painful as pleasurable, and the impure as pure⁵. According to Buddhism, *avijjā* is the root cause of birth and all suffering.
2. **Sanḅhāra** (Formations): The mental impressions of past actions that create conditions for future events. *Avijjā* causes various formations to arise in the mind.
3. **Viññāṇa** (Consciousness): Refers to the consciousness that recognizes, utilizes, and remembers phenomena. It is of eight types: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness, defiled mind-consciousness, and storehouse consciousness. Different *saṅkhāras* give rise to different forms of *viññāṇa*.
4. **Nāma-Rūpa** (Name-and-Form): The embryonic state of a being in the womb, where it exists as a rudimentary form. *Viññāṇa* gives rise to *nāma-rūpa*.
5. **Salāyatana** (Six Sense Bases): The six sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind) through which a being interacts with the world.
6. **Phassa** (Contact): Interaction through the sense faculties.
7. **Vedanā** (Feeling): Contact gives rise to feelings, which are inevitable. Feelings are of three types: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral⁶.
8. **Taṇhā** (Craving): Feelings give rise to craving, which is of three types: *kāma-taṇhā* (craving for sensory pleasures), *bhava-taṇhā* (craving for existence), and *vibhava-taṇhā* (craving for non-existence). Pleasant feelings lead to *kāma-taṇhā* and *bhava-taṇhā*, while unpleasant feelings lead to *vibhava-taṇhā*⁷.
9. **Upādāna** (Clinging): Craving leads to clinging, the pursuit of what is craved.

10. **Bhava** (Becoming): Clinging leads to the state of becoming, the condition of achieving what was clung to.

11. **Jāti** (Birth): Becoming leads to birth.

12. **Jarā-Maraṇa** (Aging and Death): Birth inevitably leads to aging and death.

This exemplifies *paṭiccasamuppāda*, illustrating that “when this exists, that exists; when this arises, that arises,” highlighting the cause of phenomena.

Principle of Relativity

The principle of *paṭiccasamuppāda* is also called the principle of relativity because the existence of any material phenomenon is not its true form but a relative form, conditioned by circumstances. The circumstance causing its existence is itself caused by prior circumstances. Similarly, the present form serves as the basis for future circumstances. Thus, no form is real; it is part of a continuous process of change, reflecting only its relative form in the present⁸.

Śūnyatā (Emptiness)

Śūnyatā does not mean “nothingness” but denotes the essencelessness and non-substantiality of material objects or events. *Śūnyatā* is a profound understanding of truth that destroys *avijjā* (ignorance) and leads to *prajñā* (wisdom). The great philosopher Nāgārjuna propounded the doctrine of *śūnyatā*, reinterpreting the Buddha’s principles of *paṭiccasamuppāda* and *anattāvāda*⁹. When two or more elements come together due to circumstances, it appears as if an object is formed. However, the formation is itself a circumstance, serving as the basis for future circumstances. When the elements disperse, the object ceases to exist, just as it did not exist before the circumstance that caused its formation. Once the cause ceases, no object or event retains existence. This is a continuous process without pause, revealing the essencelessness of phenomena and the lack of independent existence of any entity. This process is called *śūnyavāda*, encompassing interdependence, cause-and-effect, relativity, and *anattāvāda*.

Concept of Causation in Buddhism and Physics

The Buddha, through his teachings on *aniccatā*, *anattāvāda*, and *paṭiccasamuppāda* (cause and

effect), introduced these principles when physical sciences were in their infancy. At a time when people attributed all phenomena, from cosmic events to earthly occurrences, to invisible divine powers, the Buddha, alongside the materialist Cārvāka, rejected notions of sin, merit, rebirth, or divine intervention. However, unlike Cārvāka, who did not propose a scientific theory, the Buddha asserted that suffering is not without cause; it has a cause, and by eliminating the cause, suffering can be eradicated. He denied the permanence of anything, declaring all to be impermanent and conditional. Through *paṭiccasamuppāda*, he explained that every phenomenon, large or small, is conditional and interdependent, lacking independent existence.

In reality, all the Buddha's principles are foundational to physical sciences, encouraging the investigation of causes behind phenomena. If the concept of causation is removed from physical sciences, scientific progress becomes impossible. Other religions prioritize divine power, with all phenomena revolving around it, often contradicting physical sciences. In contrast, the Buddha's principles and teachings are rational, experiential, and aligned with science.

Conclusion

Although Buddhist philosophy and sciences

belong to different domains, the principles of *anicca*, *anattā*, and *paṭiccasamuppāda* propounded by the Buddha are used to attain the highest state of mental development or the ultimate truth, *nibbāna*. Yet, there is a deep similarity between the two in their concepts of truth, cause and effect, and relativity. Buddhist philosophy, particularly through *aniccatā*, *anattāvāda*, *paṭiccasamuppāda*, relativity, and *śūnyatā*, elucidates fundamental concepts foundational to physical sciences. It emphasizes that all physical and mental phenomena are bound within a cycle of cause and effect, lacking independent existence. The Buddha rejected divine-based assumptions, prioritizing reason, experience, and validation. The principle of *paṭiccasamuppāda* clarifies that all phenomena and conditions are interdependent, holding significant relevance in modern physics, such as quantum mechanics and cosmic processes. The Buddhist principle of *aniccatā*, which speaks of constant change, aligns with scientific studies of the transience of atoms, subatomic particles, and energy.

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Reclaiming the True Essence of Yoga: A Review of the Misinterpretation of Yoga as Merely Asana and Pranayama

Abstract

Yoga, an ancient Indian discipline grounded in holistic spiritual and philosophical principles, has been widely reduced in modern times to a set of physical postures (asanas) and breathing exercises (pranayama). While these components hold value, the essence of Yoga lies beyond physical fitness, encompassing ethical living, mental discipline, and self-realization. This paper critically reviews the misinterpretation of Yoga in contemporary contexts, particularly its commercialization and reductionist portrayal in the West and urban India. Drawing upon classical texts such as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Vyasa's commentary, and Swatmarama's Hatha Yoga Pradipika, this paper explores how Yoga's comprehensive framework—comprising Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi—has been overshadowed by a health-centric approach. The paper further examines cultural and media influences contributing to this trend and suggests integrative measures to restore Yoga's original purpose as a spiritual science for self-transcendence.

Keywords

Yoga, Patanjali, Asanas, Pranayama, Spirituality, Commercialization, Philosophy

Introduction

Yoga, derived from the Sanskrit root 'yuj' meaning 'to unite,' signifies the union of the individual consciousness with the universal

consciousness. This profound spiritual practice, which evolved thousands of years ago, was never intended to be a mere physical fitness regime. In the modern world, however, Yoga is often misrepresented as a tool for body toning or stress relief, ignoring its core aim of self-realization and liberation (moksha). While global popularity has led to increased awareness and health benefits, it has simultaneously resulted in the commercialization and superficial understanding of Yoga. Yoga studios, fitness chains, and social media influencers primarily showcase complex asanas, promoting a distorted view that physical flexibility equals mastery of Yoga. This review aims to critically evaluate these misconceptions while emphasizing the classical framework defined by Patanjali and other sages, which underscores Yoga as a systematic path to mental clarity and spiritual liberation.

Classical Definitions of Yoga

To understand the misinterpretation of Yoga, it is crucial to revisit its original definitions in classical texts. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, composed around the 2nd century BCE, form the cornerstone of yogic philosophy. The second sutra, 'Yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodha,' translates as 'Yoga is the cessation of fluctuations in the mind.' This definition shifts the focus from external postures to internal mastery over thoughts and emotions. Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga outlines eight interconnected limbs: Yama (ethical disciplines), Niyama (personal observances), Asana (posture),

Pranayama (breath control), Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (absorption). These steps collectively aim at self-purification and inner stillness rather than physical perfection. Vyasa, in his commentary, reinforces that asanas and pranayama are preparatory practices to steady the body and mind for deeper meditative states. Swatmarama's Hatha Yoga Pradipika, written in the 15th century CE, integrates physical postures with breath regulation, yet its ultimate goal remains Raja Yoga—a state of spiritual awakening and union with the self.

The Philosophical Foundation

Yoga is not a religion but a science of consciousness, encompassing metaphysical, ethical, and psychological dimensions. The foundation lies in Sankhya philosophy, which explains the duality of Purusha (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (matter). Yoga seeks to liberate Purusha from the entanglement of Prakriti through disciplined practice. Ethical principles like non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), and self-discipline (tapas) are indispensable aspects of Yoga. By neglecting these tenets, modern interpretations reduce Yoga to a fitness trend, stripping it of its transformative potential. Classical Yoga emphasizes inner renunciation, mental equipoise, and attainment of kaivalya (absolute independence), which cannot be achieved through physical postures alone.

Misinterpretation in Modern Times

The globalization of Yoga, particularly in the 20th century, contributed to its reductionist portrayal. Teachers like T. Krishnamacharya, B.K.S. Iyengar, and Pattabhi Jois introduced Yoga to Western audiences with adaptations suitable for physical well-being. While their contributions were significant, subsequent generations of practitioners, especially in the fitness industry, commercialized Yoga by emphasizing body-centric practices. Yoga studios mushroomed globally, marketing Yoga as a weight-loss technique, a stress-buster, or an elite lifestyle choice. The media further exacerbated this trend, showcasing Yoga through glamorous advertisements and social media influencers who

display challenging postures as symbols of expertise. In urban India, despite the resurgence of interest in indigenous traditions, Yoga is often confined to asanas and pranayama sessions in schools, gyms, and corporate wellness programs, with little emphasis on Yama, Niyama, or meditation.

Consequences of the Reductionist View

The superficial interpretation of Yoga has profound implications:

- **Loss of Spiritual Depth:** Yoga's essence as a spiritual discipline for liberation is overshadowed by its physical benefits.
- **Cultural Misappropriation:** Western commercialization often strips Yoga of its philosophical roots, leading to cultural dilution.
- **Limited Benefits:** While asanas and pranayama improve physical health, the neglect of meditation and ethical living fails to deliver holistic well-being.
- **Psychological Misconceptions:** Many assume flexibility equals mastery, fostering competition rather than self-awareness.

Restoring the Authentic Meaning of Yoga

Yoga, rooted in the Sanskrit term *yuj* meaning “to unite,” is an ancient discipline aimed at harmonizing body, mind, and spirit. Traditionally, Yoga represents a holistic path toward self-realization and liberation (*moksha*), as codified by Maharishi Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*. Patanjali defined Yoga as “*Yogaścitta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*”—the cessation of mental fluctuations. This definition makes it evident that the essence of Yoga lies in controlling the mind, not merely in mastering physical postures. However, modern practice often reduces Yoga to asanas and pranayama, neglecting its ethical, philosophical, and meditative components. To preserve its integrity, deliberate efforts must be made to restore Yoga's authentic meaning.

Integration of the Eight Limbs of Yoga:

Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga—comprising Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi—presents a comprehensive spiritual framework. Present-day Yoga education

and teacher training programs need to incorporate these eight limbs in their true spirit. While asana and pranayama prepare the body and breath, practices such as pratyahara (sense withdrawal) and dhyana (meditation) foster inner stillness and self-awareness. Ethical principles like non-violence (*ahimsa*) and truthfulness (*satya*) form the foundation of Yoga and must be taught alongside physical practices to ensure holistic development.

• **Role of Institutions and Policy Makers**

Renowned Yoga institutions such as the Bihar School of Yoga, Kaivalyadhama, Sri Sri University, and global organizations like the Art of Living can play a pivotal role in reorienting public perception. These institutions should design curricula that highlight Yoga's spiritual and ethical essence. Moreover, policy makers can ensure that Yoga introduced in schools and universities is not limited to physical exercises but also includes philosophical discourse, mindfulness, and meditation practices.

• **Responsible Media Representation**

Media and social platforms significantly shape popular perceptions of Yoga. Unfortunately, many influencers and brands focus on acrobatic poses, promoting Yoga as a fitness fad rather than a spiritual discipline. Restoring authenticity requires responsible media representation—showcasing meditation, breathing practices, and ethical principles as central components of Yoga. Campaigns emphasizing Yoga's mental health benefits, stress management potential, and role in spiritual well-being can counter the superficial portrayal.

• **Encouraging Research and Scholarly Work**

Academic research plays a critical role in redefining Yoga in the modern context. Universities, scholars, and wellness organizations should publish studies highlighting Yoga's impact on mental health, emotional resilience, and spiritual growth. Journals and conferences should prioritize works that discuss Yoga beyond physical health, emphasizing its psychosomatic and metaphysical dimensions.

Conclusion

Yoga, in its most authentic essence, is far more than a series of physical exercises or breathing techniques. It is a profound spiritual discipline that offers a systematic approach to self-mastery, inner peace, and ultimate transcendence. The original purpose of Yoga, as articulated by Maharishi Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*, is succinctly captured in the aphorism *Yogaścitta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ* – the cessation of mental modifications. This definition underscores the fact that Yoga is primarily concerned with the mind and its fluctuations, not with external aesthetics or postural perfection. When Yoga is reduced to a mere fitness regimen, its transformative potential diminishes significantly, and its role as a path to liberation (*moksha*) is obscured.

The modern misinterpretation of Yoga—emphasizing flexibility, strength, and visual appeal—reflects a shift from its inward, meditative focus to an outward, performance-based practice. While physical health benefits are an important byproduct, they were never intended to be the ultimate goal. By focusing narrowly on asanas and, to some extent, pranayama, contemporary practice overlooks critical aspects such as Yama (ethical restraints), Niyama (personal observances), Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (absorption), which are integral to Patanjali's eightfold path. This reductionist view robs Yoga of its holistic framework, turning it into a fragmented practice devoid of its spiritual and ethical underpinnings.

To restore Yoga's true essence, a multidimensional approach is necessary. Educational systems must go beyond physical postures and incorporate philosophical teachings and ethical principles. Yoga teacher training programs should prioritize the traditional framework, ensuring that instructors impart the complete philosophy of Yoga rather than a diluted, fitness-oriented version. Institutions such as Bihar School of Yoga, Kaivalyadhama, and Sri Sri University can play a transformative role by leading research, developing curricula, and creating

awareness programs that emphasize the authentic purpose of Yoga.

Media also holds a critical responsibility in shaping public perception. Instead of showcasing Yoga as a glamorous trend or a competitive sport, visual and digital platforms should highlight its meditative practices, mental health benefits, and role in ethical living. Campaigns that focus on mindfulness, compassion, and inner balance can help counteract the prevalent misconception that Yoga is merely a physical endeavor.

Ultimately, the revival of Yoga's holistic essence requires a collaborative effort involving scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and the general public. Yoga must be presented as a science

of consciousness—a discipline that integrates physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions to harmonize the individual with the universal. By reclaiming its authentic meaning, Yoga can once again serve its original purpose: guiding humanity toward inner freedom, mental clarity, and ultimate self-realization. When practiced in its complete form, Yoga transcends the limitations of fitness culture and emerges as a timeless spiritual path capable of transforming individuals and societies alike.

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डॉ. नीलम कुमारी

अज्ञेय का आंतरिक द्वन्द्व और संघर्ष : संदर्भ 'हीलीबोन की बत्तखें'

निर्मल वर्मा के अनुसार—“हमारे युग में खासकर हिन्दी के चिन्तन-साहित्य में अज्ञेय का लेखन महत्वपूर्ण है, नारों और अति सरलीकृत फार्मूलों के घटाटोप वातावरण में वह बहुत कुछ देते हैं, जो एक बार फिर हमारा विश्वास मनुष्य के विवेक और शब्द की गरिमा में प्रतिष्ठित करता है। यदि आज हम उसकी अवहेलना करते हैं, उसे अप्रासंगिक मानकर आगे बढ़ जाते हैं, तो यह न केवल अज्ञेय की सीमाओं पर क्रूर टिप्पणी है, बल्कि उस अभागी मनःस्थिति पर भी, जिसमें आज हम जीते हैं।”¹ डॉ. प्रेम सिंह के अनुसार—“भारतीय साहित्य-जगत में अज्ञेय का होना एक महत्वपूर्ण घटना थी। और अब उनका न होना भी एक घटना है। उनका लेखन उनके सम्पूर्ण व्यवस्थित और निरंतर साधना करने वाले वे अकेले रचनाकार थे और अब उन जैसा अन्य कोई नहीं है। अपने लम्बे साहित्यिक जीवन में रचनाकार की स्वतंत्रता और गरिमा के मूल्य पर उन्होंने जबरदस्त आग्रह बनाए रखा। उन्होंने जिन विचारों, अवधारणाओं और मूल्यों को पकड़ा, अपने चिन्तन और साहित्य में पूरी निष्ठा के साथ उन पर बल देते रहे। ऐसी निष्ठा अब कहां देखने को मिलेगी।”²

सच्चिदानंद हीरानंद वात्स्यायन अज्ञेय 1911-1987 बीसवीं शताब्दी के महत्वपूर्ण रचनाकार थे। उन्होंने साहित्य की तमाम विधाओं में रचना की। डॉ. प्रेम सिंह के अनुसार—“वे एक अध्ययनशील व्यक्ति थे। उनके रचनात्मक व्यक्तित्व के पीछे गहन और विशाल अध्ययन और चिन्तन का बल था। पश्चिम के साहित्य के साथ-साथ अपने यहां के धर्म, दर्शन, संस्कृति और साहित्य का गहन अध्ययन-मनन उन्होंने किया था। उन्होंने यह कहा भी है कि पढ़ने-लिखने में जितना समय वे लगाते हैं अन्य कोई भारतीय लेखक नहीं लगाता।”³

अज्ञेय का जन्म 7 मार्च 1911 को उत्तर प्रदेश के कुशी नगर जिले में हुआ था। उनके पिता पुरातत्वविद् थे। उनके पिता का व्यावसायिक कार्य के कारण देश के अनेक भागों में जाना होता था, जिसके फलस्वरूप अज्ञेय की शिक्षा-दीक्षा भी देश के अनेक शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में हुई। अज्ञेय को इसी कारण कई भाषाओं हिंदी, फारसी, बांग्ला, तमिल, संस्कृत, फ्रेंच, जर्मन आदि ज्ञान हो गया। अनेक संस्कृतियों को आत्मसात करने का उनको मौका मिला। उन्होंने सोशलिस्ट रिपब्लिकन आर्मी, क्रांतिकारी संगठन में शामिल हो गए। 1930 में भगत सिंह को जेल से भागने में मदद करने के आरोप में अज्ञेय को गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया और उन पर राजद्रोह का आरोप के कारण चार वर्ष की सजा हुई। जेल में उन्होंने साहित्य की रचना की। जिसको प्रेमचंद द्वारा संपादित पत्रिका ‘हंस’ में ‘अज्ञेय’ नाम से प्रकाशित किया गया।

अज्ञेय का पहला कविता-संग्रह ‘भगनादूत’ 1933 में प्रकाशित हुआ। चिंता, तार सप्तक, इत्यलम, हरि घास पर क्षण भर, बावरा अहेरी, अरी ओ करुणा प्रभामय, आंगन के पार द्वार, पूर्वा, कितनी नावों में कितनी बार, क्योंकि मैं उसे जानता हूं, सागर मुद्रा, पहले मैं सन्नाटा बुनता हूं, महावृक्ष के नीचे, नदी की बैंक पर छाया, सदानीरा, और 11, ऐसा कोई घर आपने देखा है, मारुथल आदि। कहानी-संग्रह में विपथगा, परंपरा, कोठरी की बात, सरनार्थी, जय डोल अमर वल्लरी तथा अन्य कहानियाँ, कड़िया तथा अन्य कहानियाँ, अचूते फूल तथा अन्य कहानियाँ, छोरा हुआ रास्ता, लौटती पंगडंडियां आदि। उपन्यासों में शेखरः एक जीवनी, नदी के द्वीप, अपने-अपने अजनबी। इनके अतिरिक्त अज्ञेय ने यात्रा-वृत्तांत, आलोचना, अनुवाद आदि साहित्य लिखा। उनको ‘आंगन के पार द्वार’ के लिए

साहित्य अकादमी-1964, 'कितनी नावों में कितनी बार'-1978 के लिए ज्ञानपीठ, भारत-भारती और स्वर्ण पुष्पांजलि आदि पुरस्कारों से सम्मानित किया गया है।

अज्ञेय ने प्रारम्भ से नये और पुराने के संबंधों को लेकर पहल की ताकि दोनों के बीच एक सामंजस्य स्थापित किया जा सके। प्रेम सिंह इस संबंध में कहते हैं कि -“नये और पुराने के बीच बहुत हद तक सही-सही और उपयुक्त रिश्ता क्या हो, इसकी चिंता शुरू में ही हमें अज्ञेय में लक्षित होती है। उनका पहला निबंध संग्रह 'त्रिशंकु' इसी की गवाही देता है। नये और पुराने के बीच रिश्ते की चिंता उनके समय की केन्द्रीय 'थीम' थी। आज हम तीव्रता से यह महसूस करते हैं कि नये और पुराने के बीच जो रिश्ता होना चाहिए था-या चाहिए, उसमें गड़बड़ हो चुकी है। अज्ञेय क्या इस गड़बड़ को ठीक कर देते हैं? आधुनिक-प्रतिभा और जातीय-प्रतिभा के बीच रिश्ते की जांच-पड़ताल में वे उतरे हैं और अपने ढंग के समाधान भी उन्होंने प्रस्तुत किए हैं।”¹⁴

अज्ञेय द्वारा रचित 'हीलीबोन की बत्तखें' एक महत्वपूर्ण एवं प्रसिद्ध कहानी है। मैंने इस कहानी को केन्द्र में रखकर रचनाकार अज्ञेय को समझने की कोशिश की है। यह कहानी रचनाकार के आंतरिक द्वन्द्व को रेखांकित करती है-“और कोई और गहरे देखता तो अनुभव करता कि सहसा उसके मन पर भी कुछ शिथिल और तन्द्रामय छा गया है।”¹⁵ हिन्दी साहित्य में अज्ञेय एक ऐसे रचनाकार हैं जो किसी विषय की गहराई से पड़ताल करते हैं। अज्ञेय पर हमें अस्तित्ववाद तथा मनोविश्लेषणवाद का प्रभाव दिखता है। अज्ञेय विषय की पकड़ बहुत गम्भीरता तथा गहराई से करते हैं और अज्ञेय की यही विशेषता उन्हें बेजोड़ बनाती है। अज्ञेय को पढ़ना और समझना एक जैसे कठिन काम है। परंतु पाठक जब अज्ञेय को पढ़ता है तब क्रम में समझना शुरू करता है।

'हीलीबोन की बत्तखें' कहानी में हीलीबोन की मनःस्थिति को अभिव्यक्ति मिली है-“हीली की खुली आँखें भीतर की ओर को ही देखने लगीं -जहाँ भावनाएँ ही साकार थीं, और अनुभूतियाँ ही मूर्त।”¹⁶ हीली जो एक पर्वतीय प्रदेश में रहती है। अज्ञेय उस पर्वतीय क्षेत्र का उसके विजन का उसकी प्राकृतिक सौंदर्य का चित्र तथा उसकी उदासीनता का चित्र भी खींचता है। अज्ञेय कहानी में जैसे ही प्रवेश करते हैं वैसे ही आइथेम प्रदेश का चित्रण करने के साथ हीली की मनोदशा में भी प्रदेश करते हैं। उसके जीवन के एकांकी-पन, रीते-पन में अज्ञेय पहले ही पंक्तियों में प्रवेश करते हैं। जब हीली झाड़ू से

बुहारने के बाद घर के पिछवाड़े उस झाड़ू को रखने जाती है। तब वहाँ भीतर से लाल मिट्टी काई के आवरण से झाँकती प्रतीत होती है। यहीं से ही कहानीकार बहुत कुछ बताने में समर्थ ही नहीं बल्कि पूरे अधिकार के साथ कहानी में प्रवेश करता है।

अज्ञेय हीली के बारे में आगे बताते हैं कि वह खासिया जाति से संबंध रखती है। खासिया जाति में स्त्री प्रधानता है। यहां स्त्रियाँ अनुशासन में रहती ही नहीं बल्कि अनुशासन चलाने वाली है। यह जाति मुख्य रूप से मेघालय में निवास करती हैं और असम आदि के कुछ हिस्सों में रहती हैं। इनकी भाषा ऑस्ट्रो-एशियाई परिवार के मोन-ख्मेर समूह से संबंधित है। अधिकांश खासिया ईसाई हैं, किंतु हिंदू और मुस्लिम समुदाय के भी कुछ लोग मिलते हैं। हीली इसी स्त्री प्रधान समाज की नेत्री है। परंतु अज्ञेय हीली के बारे में आगे कहानी गढ़ने के क्रम में बताते हैं कि उसके पिता दीवान थे। इसलिए हीली उस प्रदेश को चलाने वाली थी। हीली तीन संतानों में सबसे बड़ी थी और वह चौंतीसवें वर्ष में थी। वह चूँकि परिवार में बड़ी है इसलिए वह उत्तराधिकारणी नहीं बल्कि उत्तरदायिनी है। यहां बड़ी लड़की को न विवाह करने का अधिकार है और न ही सम्पत्ति में उसका अधिकार है, जबकि उसकी छोटी बहन को सम्पत्ति मिलती है।

यहाँ से कहानीकार अन्य मानसिक संताप की ओर इशारा करते हैं। अब हीली उस प्रदेश में जहाँ शाम ढलते-ढलते परिपार्श्व तो दिखाई देता है परंतु फूलों का या छोटी प्राकृतिक वस्तुओं का सौंदर्य फीका पड़ जाता है-“क्यों रंग ही पहले बूझता है, फूल ही पहले ओझल होते हैं, जबकि परिपार्श्व की एकरूपता बनी रहती है?”¹⁷ इस ओर भी इशारा करते हुए भी अज्ञेय यह बताने की कोशिश करते हैं कि हीली जैसे व्यक्ति कैसे धुँधले पड़ जाते हैं। चाहे मातृसत्तात्मक समाज के नियम ही क्यों न हो। लेकिन वे नियम ऐसे हैं जो एक व्यक्ति के भीतर बहुत कुछ तोड़ देते हैं और उसे उदासीन बना देते हैं। वह बत्तखें पालती हैं। बहुत सुंदर सफेद बत्तखें हैं। वह उनकी देखभाल करती है।

यहाँ एक बात और ध्यातव्य है जिसके विषय में अज्ञेय यह भी बताते हैं कि उस गाँव में युद्ध के दौरान बहुत सारे लोगों का आना हुआ-“इस घर में न सही, पर खासिया घरों में अकसर पलटनिया अफसर आते हैं-यह हो नहीं सकता कि आपको बिल्कुल मालूम न हो।”¹⁸ उससे बहुत कुछ अन्य लोगों में बदलाव आया परंतु हीली ऐसी दशा में भी ज्यों की त्यों खड़ी है। किसी भी व्यवस्था के कठोर नियम किसी भी व्यक्ति को

एक अलग मनुष्य के रूप में बनाते हैं। टूटी हुई आशाएं व्यक्ति को बहुत परेशान कर सकती हैं।

कहानी में हीली फिर तब देखती है कि उसकी बत्तखें में से एक को नरलोमड़ी ने खा लिया तो वह शांत पर्वत पर चिल्लाती है। उसी समय वहां से कैप्टन दयाल जा रहे होते हैं। वो सुन कर दौड़े आते हैं जब सारा परिदृश्य देखते तो वह हीली से कहते हैं कि शाम को आएंगे वहां रुकेंगे और जब रात में लोमड़ी आएगी तो उस मार देंगे। वे रात में गोली चलाते हैं नरलोमड़ी घायल होकर वहां से चला जाता है। फिर हीली और कैप्टन दयाल खून के निशानों पर पार करते ही उसे देखने जाते हैं।

अंत में उन्हें नरलोमड़ी एक गड्ढे में मिलता है वहां वह मरा हुआ था। तथा मादा लोमड़ी और उसके तीन बच्चे कुनकुना रहे थे। वे दुख में थे तभी कैप्टन दयाल हीली से कहता है कि वे इन चारों को मार डाले तो वहां से हीली चुपचाप आ जाती है आकर अपनी बत्तखें को अभागिन कहकर मार डालती है। एक-एक करके ग्यारह की ग्यारह बत्तखें को मार डालती है, स्वयं अचल मूर्ति की स्थिति में पहुँच जाती है-“खम्भे के सहारे एक अचल मूर्ति बैठी है और पैरों के पास खून से रंगी डाओ पड़ी है।”⁹ और जब दयाल आता है तो उसे ‘हत्यारे’ के नाम से संबोधित करती है। अब फिर वहां प्राकृतिक विजन दिखाई देता है।

प्रस्तुत कहानी में अज्ञेय ने उस मनःस्थिति को पकड़ते हैं जिसमें एक के जीने के लिए दूसरे का मरना जरूरी है। चूंकि हीली अपने निजी जीवन में इसका शिकार है। इसलिए हीली अभागिन कहकर जाओ से बत्तखों का एक एक करके सिर काटती चली जाती है। हीली हालांकि बत्तखों को जिनसे बहुत प्रेम करती है। मारती है पर वह अन्यायी था हत्यारिन नहीं दिखती बल्कि पाठक की संवेदना का पात्र हीली बनती है कि जिस व्यवस्था में वह पूरी तरह समर्पित हो गई। उसके हिस्से कुछ न आया। पाठक हीली को एक अपराधी के रूप में नहीं देखता। अज्ञेय ने हीली के मानसिक चरित्र का सूक्ष्मता से वर्णन किया है। दयाल हीली को समझाने की कोशिश करते परंतु फिर दोबारा वही विजन वही पर्वतीय विजन अंत में दिखाई नहीं देता है।

इस कहानी के संवेदनात्मक पक्ष में देखा जा सकता है कि ‘व्यक्ति जिम्मेदारियों की सलीब’ को ढो रहा है और वह उनसे छुटकारा पाना चाहता है। वह मनुष्य होने के अधिकार की तरह जीना चाहता है। वह जीना चाहता है। जहाँ कोई भी ऐसी रोक-टोक नहीं न हो जो उसके मनुष्य होने को रोक सके। वह मनुष्य पहले है बाद में वह कोई भी हो सकता है। इसलिए मनुष्य होने की सहजता, सरलता, साधारणता को उससे नहीं छीना जाना चाहिए।

अतः अज्ञेय हीलीबोन की बत्तखें कहानी के माध्यम से एक बहुत बड़े सवाल को पाठक के समक्ष प्रस्तुत करते हैं कि क्या जीवन में ऐसी परिस्थितियों से या परम्पराओं, रूढ़ियों, नियमों आदि से व्यक्ति को अपने-पन से अलग कर लेना चाहिए। इसलिए जब हीली अपनी बत्तखों की गर्दन काटती है तब वह एक अन्य तरह का भी अत्याचार कर रही होती है। जिससे अन्ततः ऐसी परिस्थितियों न बनें कि कि कोई अपनी सबसे प्यारी चीजों को ही खत्म कर दे। पर हीली के प्रति फिर भी पाठक के मन में सहानुभूति की ही भावना जाग्रत होती है। वास्तविकता में कहानी एक भीतरी व्यक्तित्व जो कि वास्तविक स्त्री से हमारा परिचय कराती है। दूसरी तरफ सच्ची व्यवस्था के लिए एक वर्ग को जैसे बलि चढ़ा देती है।

डॉ. प्रेम सिंह अज्ञेय की आंतरिक प्रतिभा को स्पष्ट करते हुए कहते हैं-“अज्ञेय की प्रतिभा का एक विशिष्ट रूझान था। वह यह कि उनकी प्रतिभा का स्रोत भीतर की ओर खुलता था। अपने समस्त चिन्तन-मनन और व्यापक जीवनानुभवों के बावजूद वे अपने से बाहर कम देख पाए। यह उनकी प्रतिभा का विशिष्ट रूझान ही था कोई ज़िद नहीं। वे अपनी आत्मानुभूति को ही अपनी रचनात्मकता का आधार बनाकर चले और उसी का ही व्यापकतर और नवीन प्रस्तावना करते चले गये।”¹⁰ “अज्ञेय का साहित्य पढ़ते समय मुझे हमेशा यह अहसास होता रहा है कि उनके साहित्य में प्रतिफलित आशय बहुत इकहरा और आत्म-निष्ठ है।”¹¹

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सन्दर्भ सूची

1. रमेश ऋषिकल्प, अज्ञेय का चिंतन, पृ.-आमुख
2. प्रेम सिंह, अज्ञेय चिंतन और साहित्य, पृ.-09
3. वही, पृ.-09
4. वही, पृ.-10

5. विश्वहिंदीजन, साइट, ‘हीली बोन् की बत्तखें’, अज्ञेय
6. वही 7. वही 8. वही
9. वही
10. प्रेम सिंह, अज्ञेय चिंतन और साहित्य, पृ.-10
11. वही, पृ.-11



Karthikeyan K* Raj Barat Rajasekar**

Cultural, Sensory, and Regulatory Factors Explaining the Culinary Marginalization of Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) in India versus Its Popularity in Western Confectionery

Abstract

Indian licorice called mulethi, is associated in Ayurvedic contexts as a medicinal plant while in Western countries licorice has developed into a flavouring agent in the confectionery industry. The disassociation reflects historical differences in cultural contexts, sensory acceptance and as a result regulatory treatment. Indian confectionery is rich in diary and natural sugar flavouring, rarely accommodating bitter notes while having a regulatory classification under medicinal licensing limits. On the contrary, Western confectionery consists of historical relevance between medicinal and culinary elements of licorice creating the prevalence of candy having licorice as a mainstream flavouring.

Key Word

Culinary, Licorice, India versus

Introduction

Licorice is a perennial plant belonging to the '*Leguminosae*' family. This herb is scientifically termed as '*Glycyrrhiza glabra*' and '*Yashtimadhu*' in Ayurveda; coming along with its historical roots and manifold usage medicinally as well as gastronomically. The plant's pleasant sweetness derives from a compound called '*Glycyrrhizin*' and its brown colour from the presence of '*Flavonoids*'. Popularly used as aculinaryingredient in western culture, it parallellyserves its main purpose as a medicinal plant in India, used to treat an extensive range of health

issues. In Indian context it is extensively known as mulethi and is a medyarasayana i.e., list of medicinal plants with health benefits mentioned in Ayurveda. Majorly these plants are known to augment Buddhi (wisdom) and facilitate the treatment of mental disorders. (Bhandari and Ojha, 2023)

Literature Review

In Germany, Hans Riegel, founder of Haribo produced licorice sticks and more alike products dating back to 1922. The production of licoricepowder and syrup in western foodis often used in pastries, candies and also garnishing. Amarelli, an Italian licorice production house, dates back to 1731 with their infamous tin candies. (Becchi, 2021)

With the aforesaid information, licorice remains a medicinal plant in India rather than a culinary ingredient. The ever-thriving nature of licorice as a flavour in Western confectionery in contrast with Indian delicacy is due to a gap with context to culture, taste preference and industrial regulations.

Raw materials of historical confectionary were exported from the Mediterranean and the Middle East; sugar, citrus fruits, nuts etc. These foreign high costing ingredients were given exclusive status in confectionery thus becoming a decorous activity. (Day, 2017) A varied range of desserts like pastries, biscuits, candies and other baked goods were popularised and presented to be eye-catchers i.e., focused on looking appealing.

Quoted, an article by Scientific American dated

1929, “It will probably surprise many of our readers to know that licorice has other uses than medicine and confectionery....In childhood days most of us have chewed licorice root. The slender sweet sticks were sold for a penny a piece.... doctors have prescribed licorice to ease our coughs and sore throats.” In 17th century England an Arab medicine called *diapenidion* consisted of one of its ingredients as licorice to treat coughs and ulcers. Although sugar is an important component of confectionery, the Persians and Arabs considered it a medicine for treating colds. (Day, n.d) This context shows the steady impact of sweeteners as an integral part of medicinal heritage throughout the world, partially arising from Asian countries.

In 18th century America, the use of sugar candies was prescribed to as medicine where the herbal medicines were suspended in sugar to make the unpleasant taste more ingestible. After the civil war the price of sugar deflated, medicinal and confectionary trade came about as separate industries, creating a new demand for sweets. The candy industry saw increased demand over the 19th to 20th century and continues to globalise its growth. Licorice is popular in the form of candy; the candy market has reached \$15.3 billion in the United States as of 2023. (Rothstein, 2024) Western confectionery traditions in context of candy evolved through flavours of apothecaries that turned into sweet candy makers.

Indian confectionery relies on traditional recipes, freshness and regional influences. Each region comes with its own *mithai* (sweet), northern parts with ladoos, jalebi, halwa rich in ghee and khoya, eastern parts with rasgulla, rasmalai consisting of cottage cheese, southern part with mysorepak, payasam and western part with pedas, gulab jamun, basundi full of dry fruits. These sweets are flavoured with ingredients like saffron, pista, rose etc. and are high in dairy products. (Srivik Management Consulting and Lowcalsugars, 2025) Even if there is room for licorice flavouring, the commonly seen notes in Indian confectionery are sweet whereas licorice has bitter-salty profiles, making it unpopular amongst the cuisine.

In Indian culture *Mulethi* is Ayurvedically associated with healing sickness rather than savouring. With context to Indian Ayurveda, the association of food is based on sensory factors. Fresh taste promotes *health* whereas those with bitter palates fall under *junk*. Eastern cultures specify taste to be intrinsically embedded in healthiness. While Western foods have capitalised on agricultural products to increase value, the content of sugar and fats is raised at par to fulfil superior taste perception. This is in context to a study conducted with American participants, concluding that in contrast to Indians, Americans with-held a stronger preference with the food's taste rather than vitality making their branding strategies associated to taste preferences rather than healthiness. (Dube et al., 2016) Indian sweets rely on traditional sugary ingredients like jaggery whereas the sweetness of licorice is different from what is expected in the sweets.

Conclusion

The licorice industry in India markets it as ‘mulethi’ under Ayurvedic and medicinal licensing, needless to mention it is also sold as a flavouring agent. Due to this the Indian licorice cultivation is focused towards pharmaceutical buyers and western confectionery manufacturers. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lists licorice as a food flavouring where as Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) lists licorice under ‘Vitamins, minerals and trace elements allowed to be used in Food for special medical purpose.’ Therefore, regulatory factors affecting the use of licorice in India is due to the collective fusion of historical cultural and sensory facets.

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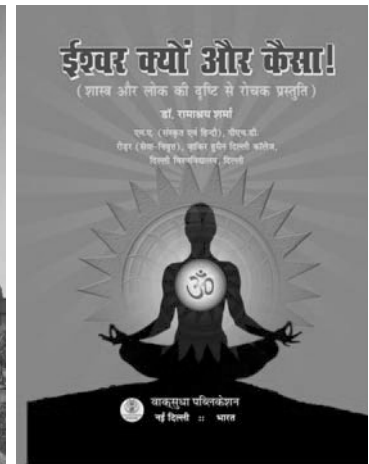
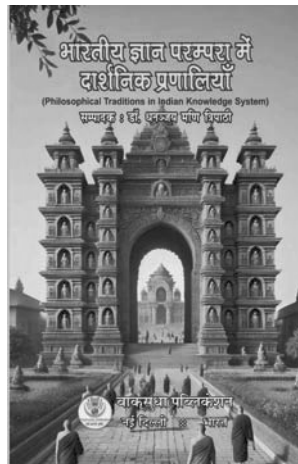
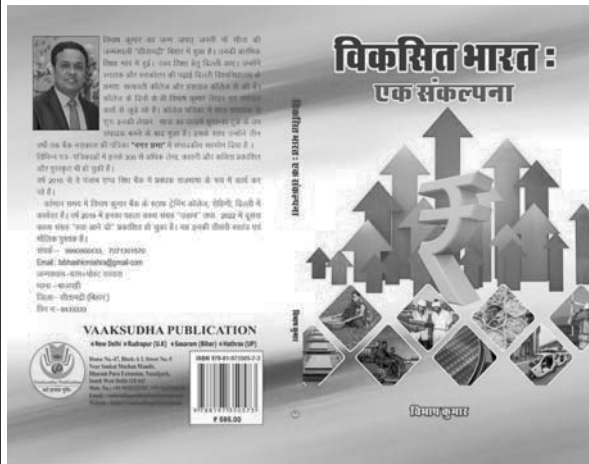
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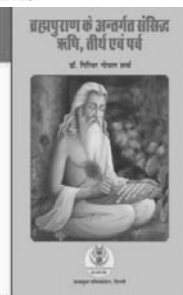
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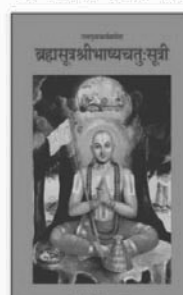
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Bhavya Khanduja

Green Bonds : Investor Appetite and Pricing Efficiency

Abstract

The Green bonds are the debt instruments created to fund projects with measurable benefits to environment, such as renewable energy, clean transport, and sustainable infrastructure. Since their introduction in 2007, they have moved from a niche product to a dynamic segment of global capital markets. This paper explores two central questions: What drives the strong demand for green bonds among investors, and are these instruments priced efficiently compared with conventional bonds? The study investigates investor motivations, which range from achieving stable financial returns to demonstrating environmental responsibility and enhancing institutional reputation. It also examines the phenomenon of the “geranium,” where green bonds often trade at a premium, reflecting slightly lower yields than similar non-green bonds. The analysis suggests that this pricing trend is shaped not only by environmental values but also by risk management, policy incentives, and long-term portfolio strategies. The paper concludes by identifying challenges such as standardization, transparency, and greenwashing risks and highlights opportunities to strengthen the credibility and efficiency of green bond markets.

1. Introduction

Climate change has shifted from a distant concern to an urgent global challenge. Rising temperatures, erratic weather, and ecological stress already disrupt economies and societies. Addressing these issues demands massive investment in low-carbon technologies, resilient infrastructure, and sustainable

practices. Neither governments nor private enterprises alone can meet this financing gap; capital markets must play a pivotal role.

1.1 Background and Evolution of Green Bonds

Amid this backdrop, green bonds have become a vital financial instrument. Structurally, they resemble conventional bonds: investors provide capital to issuers governments, corporations, or development banks and receive periodic interest plus principal repayment at maturity. Since then, issuance has grown rapidly across regions and sectors. Sovereign states, multinational corporations, municipalities, and financial institutions now issue them in multiple currencies, making green bonds central to sustainable finance. Their rising popularity reflects a growing perception that financial returns and environmental responsibility can coexist.

1.2 Research Problem and Objectives

Key questions remain: Who buys green bonds, and why? For some, they offer secure, stable investments, for others, reputational or ethical value. Another question concerns pricing: Do green bonds trade on par with traditional bonds, or does the recurring “geranium” a price premium leading to slightly lower yields reflect structural differences? This paper examines these questions systematically: it traces the evolution and key features of green bonds, explores investor profiles, and evaluates pricing efficiency with a focus on geranium. It also discusses challenges and future directions for ensuring that green bonds remain credible, efficient, and aligned with climate goals.

Primary objectives include analyzing investor

appetite across market segments, assessing pricing efficiency versus conventional bonds, and reviewing regulatory support for market growth. The study seeks to measure the greenium while identifying factors affecting liquidity and price discovery. Secondary goals involve understanding investor categories' influence, the impact of standardization on confidence, and providing policy recommendations for market transparency and efficiency.

1.3 Scope and Significance of the Study

This research analyzes global green bond markets, with emphasis on developed markets in Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific, where data allows robust analysis. The study covers 2008–2024, reflecting the market's development from inception to mainstream adoption (Mertzanis, C., & Tebourbi, I. 2025). The findings have practical value: investors gain insights for better allocation and risk assessment; issuers optimize financing and reduce costs; policymakers receive guidance for balancing growth, investor protection, and environmental standards. The study contributes to sustainable finance literature by presenting empirical evidence on market microstructure effects specific to green bonds. Such insights are critical for scaling green finance to meet the estimated \$4–6 trillion annual climate financing need by 2030, while ensuring capital markets remain efficient and impactful.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Meaning and Types of Green Bonds

These Bonds are debt instruments which proceed exclusively to fund or refinance beneficial projects, as outlined by the ICMA principles. These principles include four key elements: designated green use of proceeds, project evaluation and selection processes, tracked allocation of funds, and transparent reporting on environmental impacts (Serena Fatica, Roberto Panzica, Michela Rancan, 2021). Corporate green bonds fund private environmental initiatives while retaining debt flexibility. Supranational and municipal green bonds address international and local environmental needs. Structural forms include use-of-proceeds bonds, where only specific projects are green; green revenue bonds, backed by environmental project cash flows; and green project bonds, directly tied to specific assets. Each carries distinct risk-return profiles, influencing investor

preferences, pricing, and market liquidity.

2.2 Theories Relevant to Investor Behavior (Signaling, Stakeholder, ESG)

Signaling theory explains how environmental certification and third-party verification communicate issuer credibility, reducing information asymmetry. These signals help investors distinguish genuine sustainability from “greenwashing,” affecting demand and pricing. Stakeholder theory extends investor motivation beyond risk-return trade-offs by including environmental and social objectives. Some investors accept lower yields, viewing environmental benefits as added value. Institutional investors also face stakeholder pressure to integrate ESG factors in portfolio management (Awa et al. 2024). For green bonds, it highlights how environmental performance influences credit analysis and borrowing costs, creating positive feedback loops for sustainable finance development.

2.3 Pricing Mechanisms in Green Financial Instruments

Green bond pricing reflects both conventional credit risk factors and green-specific demand dynamics. Core components include credit spreads for default risk, liquidity premiums for

Trading constraints, and green premiums or discounts tied to investor preference. The “greenium” describes yield differentials where bonds trade at higher prices and lower yields (negative greenium) when demand is strong, or at lower prices (positive greenium) when liquidity or confidence is lacking (Agliardi E, Agliardi R, 2021). Efficient pricing relies on market depth, transparent disclosure, and arbitrage that aligns green and conventional bond prices. Greater participation, standardization, and active trading enhance price discovery and minimize persistent mispricing.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Global Trends and Market Size

The global market has surged since its inception, with issuance rising from \$11 billion in 2013 to over \$500 billion in 2023, reflecting a compound annual growth rate above 40%. This expansion stems from increasing participation across sovereign, corporate, and supranational issues, with significant growth in Asia-Pacific alongside Europe and North America (ESG Institute, 2024).

Corporate bonds now represent ~50% of issuance, sovereign 25%, and supranational/municipality the rest. Europe leads with 45% of issuance, followed by Asia-Pacific (30%) and North America (20%). Sector allocation is concentrated in renewable energy (35%), sustainable transport (20%), energy efficiency (15%), and water management (10%). While aligned with climate goals, literature notes underinvestment in areas like nature-based solutions and circular economy, indicating diversification potential as green taxonomies broaden.

3.2 Investor Appetite: Key Drivers and Barriers

Investor demand is driven by regulatory mandates for ESG integration, evolving fiduciary duties, and recognition of climate-related financial risks. Institutional investors, especially pension funds and insurers dominate due to long-term liabilities aligning with green projects. Studies show institutions with sustainability reporting requirements, persistent oversubscription (3–5x vs 1.5–2x for conventional bonds), pricing transparency concerns, inconsistent certification standards, and liquidity constraints in secondary markets.

3.3 Pricing Efficiency: Empirical Evidence

Evidence on pricing efficiency is mixed. European studies often find a negative greenium of 2–7 basis points for sovereign and supranational bonds, reflecting lower yields for green assets. Corporate bonds show varied results, from –10 to +15 basis points, influenced by credit quality and market conditions (Cortellini, G., & Panetta, I. C. 2021). Panel data highlights heterogeneity: developed markets show consistent negative greenium, while emerging markets often display premiums due to weaker institutional bases and regulatory gaps. Time series analysis reveals early volatility and later convergence toward negative greenium as markets mature. During crises, greenium compresses as liquidity and credit factors outweigh environmental preferences, showing that pricing benefits are conditional on market stability and development.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Data Sources of Green Bonds

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of green bond market

data with qualitative assessment of regulatory and structural factors. The quantitative dataset covers 2,500+ green bond issuances (2008–2024) to analyze pricing patterns, investor demand, and market evolution. Key data sources include Bloomberg for pricing and issuance, Refinitiv Eikon for investor composition and trading, and Climate Bonds Initiative databases for certification and use-of-proceeds data. Secondary data involve central bank reports, industry surveys, and regulatory filings (Janda et al. 2023). The design integrates cross-sectional comparison of green vs. conventional bonds at selected time points and longitudinal analysis tracking individual bond performance under varying market conditions. Matched-pair analysis ensures comparable credit ratings, maturity, and market contexts.

4.2 Variables and Measurement

Investor demand is measured using oversubscription ratios, order book analysis (institutional categories such as pension funds, insurers, asset managers, central banks), and secondary market trading volumes (Chui Zi Ong et al. 2020). Pricing spreads are evaluated using yield-to-maturity differentials between green and conventional bonds, adjusted for credit risk (CDS spreads), duration (effective duration), and liquidity (bid-ask spreads). Greenium measurement follows

established models with clustered robust errors. Control variables include issuer metrics (credit ratings, ESG scores), bond features (maturity, coupon, currency), and market conditions (interest rates, credit spreads, equity volatility). Green-specific controls cover certification type, use-of-proceeds category, and verification status.

4.3 Analytical Techniques

The analysis applies fixed and random effects panel regressions to account for unobserved heterogeneity and systematic differences. Two-stage least squares (2SLS) address potential endogeneity between pricing and issuance decisions. Event study methodology examines market reactions to key regulatory or structural events using abnormal return calculations and both parametric and non-parametric significance testing. Propensity score matching (PSM) mitigates selection bias by pairing green and conventional bonds with similar characteristics. Difference-in-differences (DiD) estimates pricing

impacts before and after specific policy changes, supporting causal inference. Robustness checks include alternative matching, control group definitions, and sensitivity analysis for confounding factors (Austin, 2011).

5.1 Determinants of Investor Demand (ESG Mandates, Risk Perception, Returns)

ESG mandates are the primary driver of institutional investor interest in green bonds, with evolving regulations such as the EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) and EU Taxonomy shaping allocation strategies. These mandates create sustained demand as institutions aim to ensure compliance while managing portfolio risks (Balp G, Strampelli G. 2022). Risk perception increasingly links climate-related risks with long-term investment performance.

Physical risks (e.g., extreme weather, sea-level rise) and transition risks (policy changes, technological shifts) threaten conventional assets, indirectly favoring green bonds. Return expectations extend beyond yield, factoring risk-adjusted benefits from climate risk mitigation and regulatory alignment. Evidence shows institutional investors often accept minor yield concessions when green bonds enhance mmdiversification or hedge climate risks. However, sensitivity to returns differs: ESG-driven institutions are less yield-focused compared to traditional return-oriented investors.

5.2 Role of Institutional vs Retail Investors

Institutional investors dominate, contributing 85–90% of primary demand and most secondary trading. Pension funds and insurers show high interest due to long-term liabilities and responsible investment mandates (Zenno, Y., & Aruga, K. 2022). Asset managers lead in volume, driven by ESG-focused products, though their allocations can fluctuate with green bonds' relative performance. Retail participation is limited by high minimums, platform access, and product complexity. Yet, new offerings like green bond ETFs and retail-denominated issues are gradually expanding access.

5.3 Trends in Subscription Rates and Secondary Market Activity

Green bonds exhibit strong primary market demand, averaging 3.2× oversubscription versus 1.8× for conventional bonds. Europe leads with 4.1×,

followed by Asia-Pacific (2.9×) and North America (2.7×). Concentration is high, with top 10 investors comprising 40–50% of allocations. Domestic investors represent 60–70% of local currency demand. Secondary trading remains 20–30% lower than comparable bonds due to buy-and-hold strategies and limited supply. Liquidity has improved since 2020 with increased market maker activity and tighter spreads, declining from 8–12 basis points to 3–5 (Alekneviien, 2025).

6. Pricing Efficiency Assessment

6.1 Greenium: Concept and Global Evidence

The greenium the yield gap between green and similar conventional bonds indicates pricing efficiency and investor willingness to pay for environmental benefits. Global evidence shows a mostly negative greenium, meaning green bonds trade at premiums (lower yields). European markets exhibit the strongest negative greenium: -4.2 bps for sovereign and -2.8 bps for corporate bonds (2018–2024). Country-level differences are notable: German sovereign green bonds show -6.5 bps, French -4.1 bps, and Italian -2.3 bps, reflecting variations in market maturity, regulation, and investor demand. Corporate green bonds display more fluctuation:

investment-grade averages -1.8 bps, while high-yield averages +2.4 bps, suggesting pricing benefits concentrate among stronger issuers, with weaker ones facing investor caution (Khan, Muhammad & Vismara, Silvio. 2025).

6.2 Comparative Analysis: Green vs Conventional Bonds

Beyond yield, green bonds show lower volatility during market stress, with return standard deviation 12–15% below conventional bonds. Credit spread beta averages 0.87 for green versus 1.03 for conventional, reflecting lower systematic risk and possible flight-to-quality effects. Liquidity analysis shows wider bid–ask spreads (4.7 bps vs 3.2 bps), but large transactions have less price impact, indicating efficient institutional execution despite lower day-to-day liquidity.

6.3 Market Liquidity and Price Discovery Mechanisms

Green bond liquidity is shaped by concentrated investors, limited supply, and niche market makers. Trading volume averages 65% of conventional bonds,

though trade sizes are 40% larger, reflecting institutional dominance. Price discovery is efficient for sovereign green bonds but weaker for smaller or lower-rated corporate issuers with limited coverage (Tomczak, 2024). Since 2020, electronic platforms (e.g., MarketAxess, Bloomberg) boosted transparency and reduced costs, with trading volumes up 180% (2020–2024) and bid–ask spreads narrowing by ~1.5 bps.

7. Challenges and Policy Implications

7.1 Regulatory and Disclosure Challenges

Regulatory fragmentation complicates global green bond growth as issuers face divergent standards and disclosure rules. The EU's detailed framework (EU Taxonomy, Green Bond Standard) contrasts with more flexible, principles-based regimes elsewhere, increasing compliance burden for multinational issuers and investor due diligence complexity (Chen, X., & Long, W. 2023).

Disclosure quality remains inconsistent: ~35% of green bonds lack full impact reporting, and 25% provide only basic allocation data. This information gap undermines confidence and hinders accurate pricing. Enforcement is also weak; most jurisdictions lack specific penalties for greenwashing, relying on general securities laws that do not fully address environmental finance misuse, creating reputational and market trust risks.

7.2 Standardization of Green Bond Frameworks (ICMA, EU Taxonomy)

ICMA Green Bond Principles, covering use of proceeds, project selection, management, and reporting, underpin over 90% of global issuance but remain voluntary, leading to interpretation variability. The EU Taxonomy is the most detailed attempt at standardization, with six environmental objectives and strict eligibility thresholds. However, its prescriptive nature may deter issuers, especially in uncovered sectors (Schütze, F., & Stede, J. 2021). Other regions adopt looser models: China includes fossil fuels, while ASEAN emphasizes flexibility, creating fragmented markets and limiting cross-border fungibility.

7.3 Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Investor Confidence and Pricing Transparency

Global harmonization should aim for core standard convergence with regional flexibility. Coordination via IOSCO and FSB can reduce

compliance costs and boost confidence. Mutual recognition between key markets would further enable cross-border flows. Mandatory disclosure should set minimum impact, allocation, and monitoring requirements, using standardized formats to improve comparability and lower due diligence costs. Blockchain-based reporting could enhance real-time transparency. Secondary market improvements require market maker incentives, broader electronic trading, and uniform documentation. Central bank purchase programs and selective tax incentives may strengthen liquidity and investor participation.

8. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The green bond market has rapidly matured, evolving from a niche product to a mainstream fixed income segment. This study finds investor demand driven by regulatory mandates, risk perceptions, and environmental preferences, creating structural demand beyond current supply. Persistent oversubscription and negative greenium in developed markets reflect willingness to accept lower yields for environmental benefits (Gabr, Dina & Elbannan, Mona. 2023).

Pricing efficiency has improved with market maturity, reducing volatility versus conventional bonds. Yet, limited secondary liquidity, disclosure gaps, and regulatory fragmentation still constrain efficiency and hinder large-scale climate finance mobilization. Policy progress, including the EU Green Bond Standard and expanded sustainability disclosure, shows positive momentum. However, harmonizing standards across jurisdictions remains critical for transparency and investor confidence. Mandatory disclosure and robust impact measurement frameworks are key next steps. Future research should examine pricing–impact linkages using panel data, analyze cross-country regulatory impacts on performance, and apply behavioral finance to understand investor decision-making (Deschryver, P., & de Mariz, F. 2020). Experimental studies on disclosure formats and certification schemes could refine market design. Integrating climate risk models into green bond valuation offers another avenue, enabling better assessment of their hedging role against physical and transition climate risks.

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Neelam Meena

Shaping Perspectives: Exploring the Impact of Social Media Advertising on Urban Teenagers' Buying Behavior

Abstract

The growth of social media platforms has completely altered the context of advertising and redefined the way products and lifestyles are sold to younger generations. The ease with which advertising is integrated into their digital interaction is particularly affecting urban teenagers who represent one of the most prolific user groups. In this paper, the author will discuss how social media advertising influences the purchasing behavior of urban teenagers and how individualized content, influencer marketing, and algorithm-based recommendations influence consumer choices. This paper believes that social media advertising is not passive type of product advertising but plays active role in the creation of identities, aspirations and social validation among teenagers. City youths perceive branded products as attributes of prestige and belonging and tend to equate ownership with being accepted by peers. The influence of psychological processes, such as a fear of missing out (FOMO), social proof, and emotional involvement on advertisement success are enhanced and lead to an increased susceptibility to impulsive purchasing. In the meantime, the becoming of influencers cancels the distinction between peer-to-peer recommendation and commercial promotion, transforming such a form of persuasion into a strong but indirect one. Although the effects of social media advertising are positive, including exposure to a variety of ideas, boosting youth entrepreneurship, and social cause promotion, concerns emerge. The negative aspect of targeted advertising manifests itself through the problem of consumerism, unrealistic

beauty or lifestyle ideals, privacy breaches, and financial pressure. With trends like viral campaigns and promotions by influencers seen across the world, it is also easy to understand how the advertisements are able to manipulate the consumption of teenagers without regard to culture. Lastly, the study notes that the influence of companies in shaping the thinking of adolescents is not a responsibility held by corporations alone, but also by society.

Key words : Social Media, Purchasing Behaviour, Urban Teenagers, etc.

Introduction

Advertisement business has since shed the old traditional print media, radio, television and converted into a one-stop market, which portrays the life of the consumer age in the computerized era. Social media was by far one of the most potent processes that have reshaped the audience-brand relationship due to the variety of forces that influenced it. Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok, Snapchat and YouTube are not a place where people spend their time watching a movie or laughing anymore, but it is an energized market where people can see advertisements which they can easily blend with their content. This has been worst with the urban teens spending megalons of time on the internet and being very trendy on the internet. The culture that triggers desires, identity and decision making are more important than the source of product information to this group of people social media advertising. Such realities and urbanization in India and other third world societies has created a cohort of digitally networked young people who are now more connected to smart phones, the internet than

they have never been before. Teens in the city are not passive fans and viewers of the advertisement: in social media life, they are active self-sharers, no less than the storywriters. Social media may give these people a feeling of belonging, confirmation, celebrity and ads are more likely to be interested in these desires. This merged mechanism of socialization and marketing has wiped out the boundary in the personal and business world, advertisement is more lifelike and easier. Whether it is an influencer package, viral challenge or a small amount of interactivity, these teens are bombarded with strategies designed to help shape the way they consume.

Specifically, the personal nature of social media advertising is what makes it especially effective among urban teenagers. What makes these digital avenues possible is algorithm-driven content, offering customized content whenever people discuss something online, see online history and interests not as opposed to the form of traditional adverts and content being sold out to the masses. Teens thus will get exposed to advert that they are interested in and want to consume and buy that advertised product. Such adverts leave people with the impression of belonging and keeping up with the times, whether it is fashion and beauty, gaming, and technology, thus leading to the act of impulse buying. Simultaneously social media aspirational values foster the urge of teenagers to follow or belong to the trend and social norms through self-identification.

It is a commercial phenomenon and a cultural social phenomenon that realizes the broader processes. Less obviously, the examples of social media advertisement show how teenagers view themselves and each other, and form their identities and what they perceive as cool and successful. It is these, social media advertisements that are likely to popularize beauty, a lifestyle/ world of success, which these simple adolescents perceive to be the best that they can witness on the social media which is available in the city. This encompasses a superb feedback loop where brands are all selling to one another as well as developing opinions and cultures. Because this has done so as to build new business craze, anybody can access the current trends no matter where in the world it is, it has also brought an alarm at excess use and materialism and at the mental health of young users.

The Rise of Social Media Advertising

The last 20 years have witnessed among the most sweeping revolutions in the history of the advertising world. Social media advertising is one of the most influential factors that influence consumer behavior because it is originally designed as an add-on business tool. The introduction of the new social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Tik Tok, and YouTube has not only altered how the brands communicate with their target audience, but it also modified the entire understanding of the meaning of the definition of marketing communication as under whole. The advertisement done by social media now becomes not just the advertisement products but the advertisement of such products becomes quite a serious part of the creation of the culture stories and also the creation of the form of lifestyle and even the sphere of politics. Social media advertising is based on the fact that individuals may be approached where people are most active. Let us dumb down to the social media which, unlike the ancient days of advertising through TV, newspaper or billboard, will deliver the intended message to the target audience in under seconds, using their personal desk gadgets and in a very interesting fashion. It is much stronger, and much more common as a result of this ease of access. Better still, it can be customized. To ascertain highly targeted ads, algorithms are employed to examine the conduct of users, which include browsing conduct, search conduct, likes, and on-line discussion. This kind of accuracy will help users view ads relevant to them and will have a chance to view ads and make a purchase.

Social media advertising is also very effective because of its interactivity. The conventional type of advertisement was mostly one-way, and the brands would deliver the messages to a passive audience. On the contrary, social media is a two-way communication. Consumers are able to like, comment, share and directly engage with the brands, and in most cases, they build the story behind the products. The interactive relationship creates a feeling of inclusivity and loyalty. This interaction, to teenagers and younger viewers, seems to blur the distinction between entertainment, friendship, and marketing, and it makes advertisements less intrusive and more natural. The emergence of influencers is another reason why the

meteoric rise of social media advertising occurred. Influencers are not traditional celebrities that are recalled as distant people, but are commonly seen as relatable and authentic in their experience. The followers believe in their words and more so the teenagers that regard them as role models. With a mere product promotion by a trendy influencer, a wave can instantly begin, and the sales will reach huge numbers in hours. This has catapulted influencer marketing to form the core of social media advertising plans, and brands are paying a lot of money to partner with brands in multiple niches like fashion, fitness, games, and beauty.

Viral content is also another positive feature of social media advertising. A new campaign may go viral and capture millions of users across geographies within a few days or hours. Through social media, companies are getting international coverage with very little capital set aside as compared to the traditional systems where companies had to set aside very large amounts of capital to purchase television time or printing space. Hashtags, challenges, memes, and short videos have already become a handy thing to attract attention, in particular, among urban teenagers. Viral campaigns also allow consumers to be advertisers because they help distribute material with their systems.

One of the typical characteristics of this increase is the change in consumer expectations. Social media has reduced the selling process of advertising into a story telling process. Today, individuals desire brands to have values, contribute to the social issues, and speak and write in a natural manner. Sustainability, inclusivity, social justice causes have gained unprecedented popularity, and consumers (especially younger ones) make their buying decisions based on their personal values. This has compelled businesses to be more moral and transparent in their advertising methods, and has enabled businesses to be responsible in areas of conflict in speech and action. In spite of these positive issues, there are no adverse shares of critique of the social media advertisement. Concerns are increasing over privacy and data abuse and the psychological toll of being subjected to 24-hour-a-day advertising. The skewed lives that the influencers and brands create around teenagers make them more vulnerable to impulse purchasing, unrealistic

aspirations regarding the lifestyle they reflect in Instagram and feelings of insecurity. It leads to even more issues due to an addictive personality of social media sites that ensure that the user wastes even more time on the Internet and, as a result, watches more advertisements. It has also started to attract the interest of governments and regulating authorities, who have implemented regulations regarding transparency, sponsored content disclosure, and data privacy. The fact is also when the platforms and advertisers need to be moral.

Through social media advertising, there have been openings (opportunities) that are democratic. The companies and businesspeople can now afford to toy with tools that can get them to the same level as other larger companies. An innovation will aid a nearby brand to connect with the appropriate people and build committed residential with the minimal amounts of finance. This type of democratization has led to the introduction of new markets and has also led to innovations, in an already crowded online space, as businesses seek to stand out. The ease with which analytics and customer reviews can be created to quickly realign advertising plans also provides social media a gravitational pull over more conventional advertising strategies.

Online advertising in social media forms a part of the next generation technology. Depending on what is being advertised, AI, AR and VR will be the most interactive types of adverts that people will shift their attention to the advertisement. One-on-one shopping with interactive features of embedded characteristics is already a trend which next 10 years promises to be. With increasingly more and more convergent integration between digital payments and e-commerce, it is once again social media that is emerging as the one-stop-shop people find, interact with and shop in all singularly. A larger change in communication, consumer culture and technology has much in common with social media advertising. It has given it a business dimension, empowered the customers and transformed the marketing frontier. The influence in question, on the contrary, does not rest on pits, to which, again, one must add not to be misapplied and to save the state of mind too. It is evident that in the ongoing process of evolution of advertising we shall find that this process, being related

to the influence of consumer conduct, shall also be related to the influence of social and cultural conduct. Translation into real relationships, social media advertising that can be translated into a digital first world is far more than just selling stuff on social media.

Consumer Identity and Aspirational Culture

The case of the urban teens is that, it is not only the process of consumer, but it does it conjunctively with identity building. They are named on the sneakers it is covered with, its jeans or jeans with us are in fashion or a new smart phone can turn into a social behavior visualization and say they are. This form of culture is enabled by advertising merchandise through social media as the entry to a life they would like to have.

By using a fashion advertisement in Instagram, it is not only possible to advertise a shoe, but also to relate it to an image of popularity, self esteem and acceptance by peers. Similarly, food delivery apps also market comfort, modernity and luxury along with the food. According to the teenagers, these symbols are defined within their peer circle whereby possession of advertised products is associated with social acceptance. These aspirational cues are particularly sensitive to teenagers in the city because of the diversity of cultural influences that teenagers experience. Social media is international, so the same trend can be influenced by a fifteen-year-old in Delhi or Nairobi as by one in New York or London. This interdependence will strengthen the functions of advertising that elevates it beyond a local to transnational mediator of teenage desires.

Psychological and Emotional Influences

The advertisement through social media as a form of persuasion works since it can appeal to a psychological and emotional appeal. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable since this is the stage of their development, during which, self-image and peer acceptance hold the greatest value. One of the most popular psychological processes at work is the fear of missing out (FOMO). In some cases, an advertisement introduces a product as something novel, something that looks to be the best of the trend or a problem and it gives a feeling of urgency to buy. Because of their insecurity of being shunned, the teens will purchase items without thought to remain in that group. Equally, social evidence when adolescents see

other people or influencers endorse a product enhances the perception that a product is valuable. A lot depends on emotions as well. Humor, music and storytelling advertisements also engage the teens on a more personal level and can more easily create associations that are easier to recall than a direct piece of product information. Nonetheless, one such short Tik Tok video with catchy music may be more memorable than a simple commercial. Such psychological attachments influence the value and needs thoughts in teens in a subtle manner.

The Role of Influencers and Peer Culture

This is likely the most important feature of social media advertisement: the key role of the influencers. Influencers may appear more like peers than traditional celebrities: likable, relatable, part of lifestyle. Young people in the city do not see them as a dream that they cannot reach but as a model whom they can associate with and who has the same life experience and ambitions. What makes influencer marketing particularly effective is that it is hard to tell where the advertisement and the reality intersect. A beauty vlogger demonstrating how to use a product in a casual setting or a gamer talking about the new gear in a more professional manner is more convincing than a professional television advert. Teenagers also believe these recommendations because it is made as a personal suggestion and not company communication.

Peer culture also helps in this. The teenagers in the city and their friends and classmates can easily rate themselves against each other most of them are also being subjected to the same online trends. This generates circles of verification: when one teenager spends money on the product promoted by an influencer, other teens will be influenced accordingly, and more of their communities will demand it.

Positive Impacts of Social Media Advertising

Despite the many negative impacts of advertising on the youth, which most critics do point out, there are positive things that should be mentioned. Teenagers can be exposed to new ideas, cultures and opportunities through social media advertising. Campaigns to make products, social causes, or learning materials environmentally friendly will help develop responsible consumption behaviours. It is also through advertising that the innovation and entrepreneurship among the teens themselves is

promoted. The quantity of city children who create material, comment on products and even collaborate with brands is rising, making advertising a source of revenue and a skill-building activity. To make this point, the young influencers will likely finance their education or personal projects through product endorsement. Advertisements can also open the eyes of teenagers on innovations that, in fact, benefit their lives such as mental health apps, online learning platforms, or inexpensive fashion brands. In these cases advertising is not a device of persuasion, but one of facilitation.

Negative Impacts and Challenges

Although it has numerous benefits, social media advertising leads to many problems when it comes to the well-being of teenagers and consumer culture.

First, it promotes materialism and consumerism. Young people can also begin to relate their self-image to buying branded products and this breeds a sick competition and frustration. This kind of consumerism can lead to a family being strained financially, particularly when teenagers are pushing their parents into purchasing expensive items.

Second, the advertising business tends to support unrealistic ideals of beauty, prosperity, or lifestyle. In the case when urban teenagers are continuously exposed to the pictures of the perfect bodies, perfect skin, or luxurious lifestyle, they can get the idea of the unrealistic standards in their minds. This may add to the problem of anxiety, low self esteem or body image disorder.

Third, another issue is that algorithm-based advertisements are also manipulative, and this is an ethical concern. Teenagers are not fully aware of the tracking and use of their online behavior to target them with certain products. The privacy and informed consent concern the absence of transparency.

Lastly, advertising over social media promotes the idea of impulse purchasing. Discounts, limited-time deals or flash sales produce a feeling of urgency that supersedes logical decision making. Efforts to fool teenagers are more likely to succeed because they are only beginning to master financial literacy.

Case Studies and Global Trends

It has been constantly proven that city teenagers are strongly influenced by the advertising in social networks. According to a 2022 survey of the Global Web Index, 54 percent of Gen Z respondents own a product they have bought after viewing it posted on social media. In India, a 2023 report of digital consumer behavior established that teenagers in large metropolitan areas such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore are the most rapidly expanding age group to purchase fashion and food online, and that Instagram and YouTube marketing heavily affect this group. The challenges of Tik Tok have brought a wave of demand across the beauty products to gadgets globally. An example of how content marketing is combined with consumerism is the Tik Tok Made Me Buy It trend. In the US and other European countries, green fashion influencers have led the campaign to make teenagers resort to thrift shopping or using greener products, which suggests that advertising can also trigger socially responsible attitudes.

Table -1

Metric / Insight	Statistic (India, Teens & Youth)
Social media users aged 16–24 reluctant to view ads	Teens (16–24) represent the largest group <i>not</i> wanting to see social media ads
Social media users in India (Jan 2023)	467 million users aged 18+, accounting for 40.2% of the adult population
Shopping frequency among youth (Mumbai region study)	52% shop at least once a month; 12% shop once a week
Dominant online purchase categories	Clothing: 58%, Food items: 18%, Cosmetics: 15%
Social media influence on buying behavior (India)	Nearly 87% of respondents say social media influences their buying behavior

Daily social media usage (all users, incl. teens)	Average time spent: ~2.4 hours per day on social media
Teen demographics on social media	Users aged 13–19: ~31% of total social media users in India
Instagram reach in India	~517 million active users; significant portion are teens
Social commerce growth in India	Projected CAGR of 55–60% (2020–2025), market expanding from \$1.5–2 bn to \$16–20 bn

The effect of social media advertisement on the purchasing patterns of urban teenagers in India is extensively connected to the extensive development of online activities in the nation. Even though a rather significant proportion of Indian teens aged 16–24 are not especially inclined towards seeing social media ads, exposure appears to be virtually inevitable due to the sheer ubiquitousness of these platforms. India now has about 467 million adults on social media and it is almost natural to expect the same to be applied to the teenage population who have nearly ubiquitous access to smartphones and in fact most areas have an almost universal internet connection. This overload on the Internet has transformed social media into an inescapable object of lives of teenagers in communications, entertainment, or shopping.

The manner in which the youth in India do their online shopping also reflects how social media has played a role in consumer behavior over time. More than half of teens who were surveyed make at least one visit to the Internet store each month, the most frequented types of shopping areas among these teens being clothing, food and cosmetics, i.e., areas where social networking sites are actively promoted. As the ad becomes part of the daily extended scroll feed, the viewing-buy process becomes too easy. The validity of this relationship can be linked to the fact that the majority of the surveyed customers in India are aware of the fact that social media has decisive effect on their purchasing trends. Since teens spend up to 2.4 hrs/day on these sites, the commercial cannot actually be considered peripheral, but instead it has been absorbed as part of their social-cultural landscape.

Thus, the Instagram platform is currently one of the most powerful in India. With such massive attentiveness, a comparatively big segment of teenagers also in it, this could possibly make a brilliant launchpad of impact over the consumer choice making procedure by teaming up with the influencers, placing spot advertisements in them, and applauding the content that would preach regarding the style of life to prefer. The shift towards a purchase decision process that increasingly relies on platform-based and integrated advertisements can be underscored by the rise of social commerce, which is projected to experience a compound annual growth rate of up to 60 percent. The distinction between social interaction and consumerism is not clear in the instance of urban teenagers and in the vast majority of cases, impulse purchases are affected by the atmosphere of immersive advertising that the adolescents lead in the context of their daily lives.

Conclusion

Social media advertising has a significant effect and this is not whether it should or should not be but how to manage it. The media literacy of teenagers should be developed. To learn how to identify the means of persuasion and how to distinguish the real and the fake wants and needs, adolescents have to be educated to be suspicious of advertisements in schools and by parents. Meanwhile, brands have a mandate of creating ethical advertisements. Advertising can prevent unhealthy stereotypes and unrealistic ideals, through fostering authenticity, transparency and inclusiveness in advertisements. Regulators should also offer directives to prevent exploitation of teenage consumers especially in the field of data privacy. Teenagers can also be motivated to experience self-awareness through their involvement in discussions about consumer culture. To improve their relationship with advertising, urban teenagers can also learn to consider why it is necessary to buy this or that product. Social media advertising has become one of the biggest factors that dictate the buying behavior of teenagers in towns. It may determine what the teenagers purchase, how they construct their identities and relationships with others, in its personalization and culture of influencer and emotivity. The positive side of self-inspiration, publicity and wise decisions can not be overlooked, however, one cannot forget about the

negative results of consumerism, unrealistic expectations and impulsive buying.

Lastly, the effect of social media advertising is not always possible and this too depends on the ratio of persuasion and awareness. Media literacy, ethical advertising practices, and critical thinking can help society to make social media advertising an empowerment tool rather than a manipulation tool. Since the urban teens have only started finding their

lives in a world where entertainment and advertisement are so closely connected, it is not only the duty of a corporation to impact their opinion but also a collective one.

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डॉ. सुनीता दुर्गल

केदारनाथ सिंह की कविताएँ : प्रेम और सौन्दर्य की परिभाषाएँ

प्रेम और सौन्दर्य मानवीय सभ्यता, संस्कृति, तहजीब के इतिहास में अपनी एक अलग ही भूमिका निभा रहे हैं। सदियों बीतने पर भी इंसान अनजाने ही प्रणय के बंधनों में बांधा, खींचा चला जाता है सौन्दर्य की ओर। अनादि काल से ही प्रेम अपने परिवर्तित रूप की कहानी गाता रहा है। वह प्रेम जो कभी पावनता, पवित्रता, मर्यादा के बंधनों में बंधा, तो कभी त्याग, उत्सर्ग व समर्पण में पन्हा पाता है। रामकथा में राम-सीता का प्रणय मर्यादित नजर आता है, कृष्ण-राधा और गोपियों के प्रेम में सौन्दर्य अपनी पराकाष्ठा पर है जहाँ, आकर्षण, श्रृंगार, संयोग, वियोग, उलाहना सभी एक संग मौजूद नजर आते हैं वहीं कालिदास की शकुंतला का प्रणय एक इंतजार में बंधा अपनी परिभाषा गढ़ता है। यदि बात करें केदारनाथ सिंह की कविता की तो यहाँ प्रेम बेहद सहज स्वाभाविक से लगने वाले अनुभव में रच दिया गया, कवि कहता है-नये दिन के साथ / एक पन्ना खुल गया कोरा / हमारे प्यार का (एक नये दिन के साथ, 1958)

उन्हें प्यार है उस अस्तित्व से जो उन्हें उनके होने के एहसास से हर पल जोड़ता है। केदारनाथ सिंह ने अपनी कविताओं में प्रेम और सौन्दर्य को मानवीय जीवन की बेहद सहज स्थितियों से तलाश कर रचा है जहाँ किसी भी तरह का बनावटीपन या उथलापन नजर नहीं आता है। जीवन को कोई भी बेहद सहज-सी घटना उन्हें प्यार की सीमाओं में बांधकर सौन्दर्य की महत्ता बयां करने के लिए बाह्य करती है जहाँ प्रणय कुछ इस तरह शब्द बद्ध होता है जो सौन्दर्य की महीन परिभाषा गढ़ रहा है वे गाते हैं-

तुमने छुआ

जैसे धूप में धीरे-धीरे
उड़ता है भुआ
और अन्त में
जैसे हवा पकाती है गेहूँ के खेतों को
तुमने मुझे पकाया
और इस तरह जैसे दाने अलगाये जाते हैं भूसो से
तुमने मुझे खुद से अलगाया ('तुम आयी', यहाँ से देखो, पृष्ठ 16)

केदारनाथ सिंह की कविता में प्रेम महज नारी के प्रति या अपनी प्रिया के प्रति ही सीमित नहीं रहा, उन्हें, प्यार है प्रकृति की हर उस घटना से जो उन्हें सौन्दर्य के नए मापदंड सौंप रही है। वे किसी एक परिभाषा के दायरे में अपने प्रणय सौन्दर्य को नहीं रच रहे थे, वे हर पल परिवर्तित प्रकृति के रूप सौन्दर्य को भी प्रणय में बांध रहे थे। कहीं वे ढलती सांझ से प्यार कर बैठते हैं तो कहीं बांसों, बबूलों, बादलों की पंक्तियों से उन्हें प्यार हो जाता है। ढलती सांझ के सौन्दर्य को वे कुछ इस तरह बयां करते हैं-

याद आने की शाम
भूल जाने की शाम
की जा जाकर लौट-लौट आने की शाम
को चेहरे पर उड़ते से भावों की शाम

(‘शाम बेच दी हैं’ - अकाल में सारस, पृष्ठ 24)

सिर्फ इतना ही नहीं वे अपने प्यार पलों का इजहार जब करते हैं तो समस्त सृष्टि जैसे गा उठती है। एक सौन्दर्य अपने हर उस हाल को स्पर्श करते ही स्वरित होते हैं ये एहसास-
उसका हाथ

अपने हाथ में लेते हुए मैंने सोचा

दुनिया को

हाथ की तरह गमे और सुंदर होना चाहिए

(‘हाथ’, अकाल में सारस, पृष्ठ 20)

यहाँ प्यार की मौजूदगी जीवन के उस सौन्दर्य की चाह कर रही है जो बेहद नाजुक हो कोमल हो और सुंदरता से परिपूर्ण हों / प्यार की ये परिभाषा उन पलों को गढ़ रही है जो वास्तविकता को बदलना चाहते हैं। मानवीय जीवन की हलचलें, विडंबनाओं से दूर केदारनाथ सिंह प्यार की बदलती अनुभूतियों के स्वर दे रहे थे। जीवन के हरेक दंश-दर्द पीड़ा, तनाव, थकान कोलाहल से थका हरा इंसान जब अपने प्रणय में पन्हा पाता है तो सृष्टि का विस्तार ऐश्वर्य, सौन्दर्य पावनता के गीत गाता है।

जिंदगी की भागम भाग, उलझनों, बेचौनियों, बौखलाहटों तकलीफों के बीच भी केदार जी अपने प्रणय को सुरक्षित रख लेते हैं। केदार जी का भावलोक जो रच रहा है वह उन्हें आधुनिक जीवन के खालीपन, अजनबीपन, अकेलेपन से दूर ले जाता है एक ऐसी दुनिया में जो बेहद सुकून के पलों से सिमटी हुई है। वे रच देते हैं एक पूरी की पूरी शाम की कहानी जो प्रणय-सौन्दर्य की बेहद खूबसूरत अभिव्यक्ति है -

आज शाम

सीधे धान की मंजरियों तक चलें

हम सीधे वहीं पहुँचे

जहाँ चावल

दाना बनने से पहले

सुगन्ध की पीड़ा से छटपटा रहा हो

(एक छोटा सा अनुरोध, अकाल में सारस, पृष्ठ 12)

उनका प्रणय कहीं उलाहना देता नजर आता है तो कहीं अचानक ही रूठ सा जाता है, पर फिर सौंप देता है अपना समूचा अस्तित्व ही - वे गाते हैं -

एक सुबह मैं उठूँगा

मैं उठूँगा पृथ्वी - समेत

जल और कच्छप- समेत मैं उठूँगा

मैं उठूँगा और चल दूँगा उससे मिलने

जिससे वादा है कि मिलूँगा

(‘जिससे वादा है’, जमीन पक रही है, पृष्ठ 24)

भावों की सहजता में छिपा प्रणय का अर्थ केदार जी जिस सादगी से व्यक्त करते हैं वे मिलन पलों के सौन्दर्य को कुछ यूँ

बयां करता है -

तुम हँसी

जैसे तट पर बजता हो पानी

तुम हिली

जैसे हिलती है पत्ती

जैसे लालटेन के शीशों में

(तुम आयी जैसे छीमियों में धीरे-धीरे आता है रस, पृष्ठ 16 जमीन पक रही है) जीवन की इस आपाधापी में केदार जी का कवि कुछेक उन वस्तुओं की ओर ध्यानाकर्षित करता है जो रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी का हिस्सा है। लालटेन, पंखा, खिड़की, दरवाजे, शीशा, लैम्पपोस्ट, सुई, धागा, जूते, मौजे, पैन्, पेंसिल, सभी को वे अपने प्रणय पलों में बेहद नजदीक से परखने लगते हैं, जिस ओर हम देखने से बचना चाह रहे हो, वे उसी ओर देखने के लिए बाध्य करते हैं। प्रिया का आना यदि उनके लिए छीमियों में आते रस की तरह नैसर्गिक है तो वहीं उसका सौन्दर्य भी बेहद सहज है। किंतु उसके जाने से जिस तकलीफ का इजहार कविता में होना चाहिए वही कहीं खो सा गया है, बेहद सहज होकर अपने प्रणय की हर बात वे मान लेते हैं और रच देते हैं-

मैं जा रही हूँ - उसने कहा

जाओ - मैंने उत्तर दिया

यह जानते हुए कि जाना

हिंदी की सबसे खौफनाक क्रिया है।

(जाना, यहाँ से देखो, पृष्ठ 20)

जहाँ जितनी सहजता से वे अपनी प्रिया को जाने की इजाजत दे रहे हैं वहीं जब वे चट्टान पर लिखते हैं कोई नाम तो प्यार कुछ तरह शब्दबद्ध होता है-

उस पर लिखा दो वह नाम

जो तुम्हारे अंदर गूँज रहा है

वह नाव बच जाएगी

(चट्टान को तोड़ो वह सुंदर हो जाएगी, यहाँ से देखो, पृष्ठ 24)

जो गूँज रहा है वही प्यार है - जो नजर आता है वही एहसास है जिन्हें रचता केदार जी का कवि प्यार की नयी परिभाषा को गढ़ रहा है। वे जीते हैं पूरी शिद्दत के साथ उन अनकहे, अनगढ़े पलों को जो एक दांस्ताँ कहते हैं, कवि गाता है-

पथराए तारों की जोत डबडबा गई

मन की अनकही सभी

आँखों में छा गई

सुना क्या न तुमने

यह दिल जो धड़का दिया

(‘रात पिया पिछवारे’, ‘अभी बिल्कुल अभी’, पृष्ठ 36)

कहीं इसी प्यार को वे उसकी पूर्णता में हवा के बहने में
ढूँढ़ लेते हैं जब हवा बौराई सी बहती है खण्डहरों की ओर और
उखाड़ फेंकती है झाड़ों-झाँखाड़ों को वह प्रिया सी हो जाती है-

मुंह पर पत्ते रखकर

हँसती ही जाती थी

हँसती ही जाती थी

ओझल हो जाने तक

(मार्च की सुबह, अभी बिल्कुल अभी, पृष्ठ 32)

केदार जी का कवि अपने प्रणय को शहर के दर्द से भी
रूबरू करवाते हैं जहाँ घटित होने वाली हरेक घटना में एक
अजीब सा शोर है जो गांव की उनकी प्रेमिका के लिए वे कुछ
इस तरह बयाँ करते हैं-

इस शहर में धूल

धीरे-धीरे उड़ती है

धीरे-धीरे चलते हैं लोग

धीरे-धीरे बजते हैं घंटे

शाम धीरे-धीरे होती है

(बनारस यहाँ से देखो, बदलते मौसम के साथ, पृष्ठ 36)

उनका प्यार भी प्रकृति के सौन्दर्य में खोया - दूर उड़
जाता है उड़ते बादलों के संग, बह जाता है नील दिशाओं की
ओर ज्वार के दूर तक फैले खेतों में, महुआ के वनों में दूर
उड़ते बगुलों के संग तो कभी थककर ठहर जाता है बांस वनों
की चरमर करती ध्वनियों में तो कहीं किसी लोकगीत की धुन
पर अपने हर विश्वास को संजोकर झूम उठता है और स्वर
पाते हैं ये भाव-

एक लोकगीत की अनुकृति में

आम की सोर पर

मत करना वार

नहीं तो महुआ रात भर रोयेगा जंगल में

कच्चा बांस भी कभी काटना मत

नहीं ले सारी बाँसुरियाँ

हो जायेगी बेसुरी

(औसू का वजन, पृष्ठ 36)

केदार जी का कवि अपने प्यार को उसकी समग्रता में

बयाँ करता है, वे जिस पल को जी रहे हैं और जैसा जी रहे हैं
वैसा ही बयाँ भी कर रहे हैं अपने प्यार को आग्रह कर रोकना
चाहकर भी जब वे रोक नहीं पाते तो उस विदाई को कुछ इस
तरह बयाँ करते हैं जहाँ वे सौंप देना चाहते हैं वह सब कुछ जो
उनके एहसासों में हैं, वे थाम लेना चाहते हैं उस क्षण की और
बांध देना चाहते हैं अपनी प्रिया के आँचल में रुको, आँचल में
तुम्हारे

यह समीरन बाँध दूँ

यह टूटता प्रण बाँध दूँ

पर रुको तो

पीत पल्ले में तुम्हारे

फसल पकती बाँध दूँ

यह उठा फागुन बाँध दूँ

... ‘प्यार’ यह आवाज

पेड़-घाटियों में खो गई है।

हाथ पर, मन पर, अधर पर पुकारों पर

... यह डूबता दिन बाँध दूँ!

पर सुनो तो - खुले जूड़े में तुम्हारे

बौर पहला बाँध दूँ। हाँ, यह नियंत्रण बांध दूँ।

(विदा गीत अभी बिल्कुल अभी, पृष्ठ 10)

प्यार की यह अभिव्यक्ति पूरे हिन्दी साहित्य में नजर नहीं
आती है। अनछुआ सा प्यार यहाँ अपने सौन्दर्य को कुछ अलग
ही ढंग से स्वर दे रहा है। यहाँ केदार जी का प्यार मांसल नहीं
है रीतिकालीन कवियों की तरह और न ही अमूर्त है - छायावादी
कवियों की तरह - वह जिस परिभाषा में बंधा है वह नयी
कविता की हर गहराई को बयाँ कर रही है। जहाँ जो कुछ शेष
है वह है प्यार, और प्यार की पवित्रता, जो अपनी मर्यादा का
उल्लंघन नहीं करती है। आँचल में हल्दी सी बंधा प्यार फसल
हो जाता है। फागुन को बांधने के स्वर में मिलन की उत्कंठा
उत्कर्ष पर नजर आती है। मिलन के गीत गाता कवि अपनी
प्रिया के खुले जूड़े में पहला बौर बांधने की मंशा जाहिर करता
है जो नियंत्रण है-प्यार को समर्पित करने का जीवन के विविध
अनुभवों को खुद में समेटे केदार जी का कवि प्रेम को रचते
हैं। जिसे वे प्रकृति में भी तलाश लेते हैं-प्रकृति उन्हें प्यार
करने की कई वजह दे रही है-नदियों की तट पर उठती लहरें
उन्हें प्रेमिका की हंसी लगती है वे कहते हैं-तुम हंसी जैसे तट
पर बजता हो पानी, भावों की सहजता में खोया मन प्यार की
कुछ नयी परिभाषा इस तरह गढ़ता है-

‘तुमने जहाँ लिखा है ‘प्यार’।

वहाँ लिखा दो सड़क

फर्क नहीं पड़ता

मेरे युग का मुहावरा है

फर्क नहीं पड़ता

(‘सड़क’ – यहाँ से देखो, पृष्ठ 16)

केदार जी की कविता में प्रेम हर अंदाज में मौजूद हैं उन्हें प्यार है प्रकृति की हर अदा से। वे खेतों, पगडंडियों, टपकते महुआ, सर्द हवालों, गुनगुनाती नदियों, लकड़ी की गंध, धान की मंजरियों, हल्दी की गंध, बाल, कंटीली झाड़ियों कपास के फूलों, पपीहे, झींगुरों, गेहूँअन सांप, ठिठरती रातों पूसों की सर्द रातों, धान के खेतों बरसते सावन, अगहन, आषाढ़, पूरब दिशाओं की ओर उड़ते सारसों सभी से प्यार करते हैं, उन्हीं की खुशियों में शामिल हो जाते हैं और हर बरस चले आते हैं अपने ‘गाँव’ जो शहर में बस जाने के बाद पीछे छूट गया है। वही वे जीते हैं उस प्यार को जो कभी प्यार में मदमस्त गीत गाता है – तो कभी प्रकृति के दर्द को अपना ही दर्द मान गाते हैं। कुछ ऐसे ही एहसास ‘दाने’ कविता में नजर आते हैं जहाँ आधुनिक जिंदगी की हरेक सच्चाई कैद कर दी गई है, ये दर्द सिर्फ दानों का नहीं, आधुनिक जीवन का दर्दनाक सच बनकर मानवीय रिश्तों, अकेलेपन अजनबीपन पर भी सवाल उठा रहा है। वे गाते हैं—
नहीं हम मण्डी नहीं जायेंगे
खलिहान से उठते हुए

कहते हैं दाने

जाएंगे तो फिर लौटकर नहीं आएंगे

जाते-जाते कहते जाते हैं दाने

अगर लौटकर आये भी

तो तुम हमें पहचान नहीं पाओगे

(अकाल में सारस, दाने, पृष्ठ 24)

ये वे दर्द है जिसे प्यार में खोया इंसान महसूस कर सकता है— दानों का दर्द मानव जीवन के अस्तित्व के संकट की ओर भी इशारा कर रहा है।

यहाँ दाने ही महत्त्व के नहीं और अपितु महत्त्व का है— पहचान का संकट, जो इंसान को इसमें से दूर कर रहा है। ऐसे में कहा जा सकता है— केदार जी का कवि अपनी कविताओं में सिर्फ प्यार तक सीमित नहीं है – वे बात करते हैं उस प्यार के जरिए मानवीय जिंदगी की हकीकत की जो आधुनिकता की स्पर्धा भरी जिंदगी में हर इंसान को तोड़ तो रही है पर बोलता कोई नहीं है। प्रकृति अनकहे प्यार की कहानी रच रही है जहाँ रिश्ते-नाते सभी प्यार के अनछुए स्पर्श में अपना अस्तित्व तलाश रहे हैं ।

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धनंजय दुबे

नयी कहानी आन्दोलन के परिप्रेक्ष्य में 'परिन्दे' कहानी का समग्र मूल्यांकन

हिंदी गद्य विधाओं में 'कहानी' सबसे सशक्त विधा बन कर उभरी है। विगत नब्बे वर्षों में हिंदी कहानी ने जो आशातीत प्रगति की है, वह उत्साहवर्द्धक है। अन्य सभी गद्य विधाओं की अपेक्षा आज की कहानी में युगबोध की क्षमता सर्वाधिक परिलक्षित होती है।

स्वतन्त्रता प्राप्ति के कुछ समयान्तराल पश्चात् 'नयी कहानी' के रूप में एक ऐसा कहानी आन्दोलन अस्तित्व में आया, जिसने कहानी के पारंपरिक प्रतिमानों को नकार दिया, और अपने मूल्यांकन के लिए नयी कसौटियां निर्धारित की। 'स्वतंत्रता मिल जाने पर भारतीय मानस में एक नयी चेतना, नये विश्वास और नयी आशा आकांक्षा का जन्म हुआ। उसे एक बदला हुआ यथार्थ मिला जिसने सामाजिक सम्बन्धों, मूल्यों, मान्यताओं और आदर्शों को नया सन्दर्भ प्रदान किया।'¹

स्वाधीनता प्राप्ति की घटना ने समय एवं साहित्य को अवलोकित करने का समस्त दृष्टिकोण ही परिवर्तित एवं बदल कर रख दिया। यह समय एक संक्रांति का युग था सधः प्राप्त स्वाधीनता की चकाचौंध भरी रोशनी में आबद्ध होकर भी तत्कालीन भ्रष्ट व्यवस्था से मोहभंग का अंधेरा घिरने लगा था।

यह मोहभंग की स्थिति थी। एक ओर साहित्यिक स्तर पर कथा साहित्य का रीतिकाल और सामूहिकतावाद अड़ा खड़ा था, जहां व्यक्तिगत कुंठाएं जीवन यथार्थ को नकार रहीं थीं, या समूहगत प्रचारवाद व्यक्ति की सत्ता को दबोच रहा था, दूसरी ओर राजनीतिक स्तर पर भ्रष्टाचार, वैमनस्य एवं गुटबाजी हावी थी। इन सबका मूल्य चुकाने पर विवश था-मध्य एवं निम्न वर्ग, जो खुद आदर्श एवं यथार्थ के इस द्वंद्वात्मक अंतर्विरोध के

मध्य स्वयं को टूटा एवं ठगा हुआ महसूस कर रहा था। वह इन समस्त विसंगतियों आत्मसात् करने पर मजबूर था, क्योंकि उसके पथप्रदर्शक की भ्रष्टपथानुगामी हो गये थे। कमलेश्वर के शब्दों में- "विभाजन, मोहभंग, यांत्रिकता, विसंगतियाँ, परिवारों का विघटन, राजनीतिक भ्रष्टाचार और व्यापक असन्तोष के बीच जो मनुष्य साँस ले रहा था, जिसका समकालीन साहित्य जवाबदेही से कतरा रहा था, या जिसके आन्तरिक और बाह्य संकट को अभिव्यक्त नहीं दे पा रहा था, वह मनुष्य इतिहास के क्रम में अपने पूरे परिवेश को लिये दिये एक अवरूद्ध राह पर सम्भ्रमित और चकित खड़ा था।"²

ऐसे समय में जब नयेपन एवं नव्यवाद की जो लहर पहले कविता में अभिव्यंजित हुई वही लहर कहानी में भी 'नयी कहानी आन्दोलन' के रूप में परिणत हुई। इसका प्रथम चरण तब अस्तित्व में आया जब 1956 में 'कहानी' पत्रिका का 'नवलेखन विशेषांक' प्रकाश में आया। हिन्दी साहित्य जगत में इस विशेषांक की व्यापक चर्चा एवं सहर्ष स्वागत के फलस्वरूप कहानी की आधारभूत नींव का निर्माण संभव हो सका। "कहानी : नववर्षाक इसलिये भी उल्लेखनीय है कि इसी में पहली बार स्पष्टतः प्रश्न के रूप में 'नयी कहानी' की बात उठायी गई।"³

नयी कहानी आन्दोलन के प्रमुख कथाकारों ने अपनी रचनाओं का लक्ष्य नये भाव बोध एवं यथार्थ पर आधारित अनुभव का चित्रण करने को माना। उन्होंने कहानी पर किसी भी प्रकार के बाह्य तत्व एवं उपदेशात्मक सिद्धान्तों के आरोपण का अस्वीकार किया। डॉ. देवीशंकर अवस्थी के शब्दों में- "पिछली कहानी की तुलना में आज का कहानीकार अधिक

जटिल यथार्थ को अभिव्यक्त करता है, नयी कहानी अधिक जटिल संश्लिष्ट और उलझी हुई है। उसमें वर्णन पर, रचे हुये कथानक पर नहीं, बल्कि विश्लेषण पर, किसी विशिष्ट भावदशा के चित्रण पर अधिक आग्रह है। बल्कि नये कहानीकार ने क्रमशः कथानक, चरित्र चित्रण, क्लाइमैक्स आदि पुरानी रूढ़ियों को छोड़ दिया है, उनके स्थान पर वह जीवन की किसी भी अनुभूति को अथवा उसके एक बिन्दु, एक विशुद्ध मनःस्थिति घटना अथवा भावदशा अथवा विचार को लेकर कहानी लिख सकता है और लिखता है।” वस्तुतः यदि हम नयी कहानी के नयेपन अथवा सार्थकता पर विचार करें तो यह बात दृष्टिगत होती है कि नयी कहानी में कथ्य एवं शिल्प सम्बन्धी नयेपन के साथ ही साथ नये जीवन मूल्यों की अभिव्यक्ति भी इसे भावुक एवं सूक्ष्मदर्शी बनाती है। “नयी कहानी में स्थूल कथानकों के स्थान पर सूक्ष्म कथा तंतुओं को प्रधानता मिली, सांकेतिकता, प्रतीकात्मकता और बिम्बात्मकता का प्राधान्य हुआ।”⁵

डॉ. नामवर सिंह के शब्दों में—“इससे स्पष्ट हो सकता है कि एक समर्थ कहानीकार किस प्रकार जीवन की छोटी-से-छोटी घटना में अर्थ के स्तर-स्तर उद्घाटित करता हुआ उसकी व्याप्ति को मानवीय सत्य की सीमा तक पहुँचा देता है। ऐसे अर्थ गर्भत्व को मैं सार्थकता कहता हूँ।”⁶

नयी कहानी ने पुरातन साहित्य के रूढ़ प्रारूपों, कथ्यगत एकरसता एवं इससे उत्पन्न साहित्यिक जड़ता को दूर किया। वस्तुतः नयी कहानी रचनाकारों के जीवन के भोगे हुये यथार्थ का एक जीवन्त दस्तावेज है, जो उनके आस-पास के समाज में व्याप्त विसंगतियों को बिना कोई पिष्टपेषण के पाठक के समक्ष यथावत प्रस्तुत करता है। यही नयी कहानी के नयेपन को उजागर करता है।

वस्तुतः नयी कहानी में आधुनिक जीवन का संत्रास पूर्ण वातावरण, तनाव एवं घुटन की मार्मिक व्यंजना की गयी है। डॉ. गणपति चन्द्र गुप्त के शब्दों में—“नये कहानीकार का क्षेत्र मुख्यतः आधुनिक उच्च मध्य वर्ग है जिसमें परम्परागत आस्था एवं नैतिक मूल्यों के विघटन के फलस्वरूप दाम्पत्य एवं पारम्परिक जीवन का भी झस दृष्टिगोचर होता है। नयी कहानी में दाम्पत्य जीवन की प्रायः सभी स्थितियों एवं पारिवारिक जीवन की विसंगतियों का चित्रण अनुभूतिपूर्ण शैली में हुआ है जहाँ तक शिल्प और शैली, नया कहानीकार इसमें पूर्णतः सहजता पर बल देता है।”⁷

नयी कहानी वास्वत में आधुनिक परिप्रेक्ष्यों एवं कालगत परिस्थितियों का सम्यक रूप से चित्रण करती है। कमलेश्वर के शब्दों में—“नई कहानी में आधुनिकता का समावेश नहीं है—वह स्वयं आधुनिकता से जन्मी है। यह पुरानी कहानी का संशोधित रूप नहीं, पुरानी कहानी की विरल नई उद्भावनाओं की श्रृंखला में एक विपुल कृतित्व की धारा का उन्मेष और प्रयाण है।”⁸

नयी कहानी के प्रतिनिधि कथाकारों में निर्मल वर्मा प्रमुख रचनाकार के रूप में जाने जाते हैं। नामवर सिंह ने इन्हें नयी कहानी आन्दोलन का प्रथम रचनाकार एवं इनके कहानी संग्रह ‘परिन्दे’ को नयी कहानी की प्रथम रचना माना है। वे कहते हैं—“फकत सात कहानियों का संग्रह ‘परिन्दे’ निर्मल वर्मा की ही पहली कृति नहीं है बल्कि जिसे हम ‘नयी कहानी’ कहना चाहते हैं उसकी भी पहली कृति है। समकालीनों में निर्मल पहले कहानीकार है जिन्होंने इस दायरे को तोड़ा है—बल्कि छोड़ा है; और आज के मनुष्य की गहन आन्तरिक समस्या को उठाया है।”⁹

निर्मल वर्मा की परिन्दे कहानी मानव मन की उन विसंगतियों एवं भावुक कमजोरियों को उजागर करती है, जो मनुष्य को अपने पाश में आबद्ध करके रखती है। परिन्दे मानव मन के उन करुण एवं त्रासद मनोभावों की मार्मिक व्यंजना है जिनसे पाठक उन पात्रों के मर्मस्पर्शी कथासूत्र में बंध कर उनकी वेदना एवं मनोव्यथा को जमीनी स्तर पर महसूस कर पाता है। परिन्दे कहानी का कथ्य लतिका, मृत गिरीश नेगी, मि. ह्यूबर्ट एवं डॉ. मुकजी। इन्हीं पात्रों के इर्द-गिर्द बुना गया है। इस कहानी का हर एक पात्र किसी ना किसी रूप में पीड़ा एवं मनोव्यथा का एक करुण भाव लिये हुये है, जिसने इस भिन्न कथासूत्र को एकरूप कर पाता है। देवी शरण अवस्थी के शब्दों में—“कहानी में एक ‘वातावरण’ छाया है जो पात्रों की आन्तरिक गतियों और मनःस्थितियों को व्यक्त करता है या हर पात्र अपने वातावरण की सम्पृक्त उपज है। इस कहानी का आस्वादन इस वातावरण के धरातल पर ही संभव है।”¹⁰

लतिका अपने अतीत से मुक्ति को बेचैन है, परंतु फिर भी अपने पूर्व मृत प्रेमी की असामयिक मृत्यु की वेदना उसे सालती रहती है, परंतु ये निर्मल वर्मा की किस्सागो प्रवृत्ति की निपुणता है कि वह उसके मन में व्याप्त अंतर्विरोध को किस बखूबी से चिन्तित करते हैं। यथा—“ललिका को लगा कि जो

वह याद करती है, वही भूलना भी चाहती है, लेकिन जब सचमुच भूलने लगती है, तब उसे भय लगता है कि जैसे कोई उसकी किसी चीज को उसके हाथों से छीने लिये जा रहा है, ऐसा कुछ जो सदा के लिये खो जायेगा... दिन महीने बीत जाते हैं, और वह उलझी रहती है, अनजाने में गिरीश का चेहरा धुँधला पड़ता जाता है, याद वह करती है, किन्तु जैसे किसी पुरानी तस्वीर के धूल भरे शीशे को साफ कर रही हो। अब वैसा दर्द नहीं होता- तब उसे अपने पर ग्लानि होती है। वह फिर जानबूझकर उस घाव को कुरेदती है, जो भरता जा रहा है, खुद-ब-खुद उसकी कोशिशों के बावजूद भरता जा रहा है।¹¹

यहाँ लतिका की आत्मग्लानि एवं उसकी अतीत की व्यथा की कितनी मार्मिक एवं मनोवैज्ञानिक शाब्दिक व्यंजना प्रस्तुत की गई है।

वस्तुतः निर्मल वर्मा ने इस कहानी में अपने समस्त पात्रों के माध्यम से उस गहन चिन्ता एवं व्यथा से जो अतीत के दुखद प्रसंगों से उद्भूत होती है, परिचय कराया है एवं इससे मुक्ति की गहन छटपटाहट एवं मानसिक द्वंद्व की हृदयस्पर्शी अर्थछाया सभी पात्रों की उक्तियों में परिलक्षित होती है। नामवर सिंह के शब्दों में-“स्वतंत्रता या मुक्ति प्रश्न, जो समकालीन विश्व साहित्य का मुख्य प्रश्न बन चला है, निर्मल की कहानियों में प्रायः अलग-अलग कोण से उठाया गया है। एक तरफ से देखा जाये तो ‘परिन्दे’ की लतिका की समस्या स्वतंत्रता या मुक्ति की समस्या है। अतीत से मुक्ति, स्मृति से मुक्ति, उस चीज से मुक्ति ‘जो हमें चलाये चलती है और अपने रेले में हमें घसीट ले जाती है।’ इन कहानियों में प्रायः सभी व्यक्ति चरित्र अपने अतीत की स्मृति से मुक्त होने के लिये प्रयत्नशील है। सारी कहानियाँ इसी मुक्ति की पीड़ा की मार्मिक अभिव्यंजना है।¹²

निर्मल वर्मा की इस कहानी में कलात्मक अभिव्यक्ति का सौन्दर्य पूर्ण एवं सधा हुआ प्रयोग है। इस कहानी में प्रकृति एवं वातावरण के साथ उनके चरित्रों का तातदात्म्य एवं समरसता कहानी के कथ्य को और भी खूबसूरती से उभारती है। लतिका का अकेलापन एवं उसकी खामोशी प्रकृति के उपादानों के स्वर में मुखर हो उठी हैं। लतिका के एकान्तवास की गहन पीड़ा एवं संत्रास उसके आस-पास के वातावरण में व्यंजित हो उठता है। देवी शंकर अवस्थी के शब्दों में-“उसकी यह एकरसता, उस वातावरण और परिवेश की होती है। यहां न

घटना है न स्थिति केवल एक मुखर चिन्तन है जिसके माध्यम से अनकेलेपन की परतें, स्तर-स्तर खुलते जाते हैं।¹³

नामवर सिंह निर्मल वर्मा की इस कथा रचना प्रक्रिया के विषय में लिखते हैं-“निर्मल की कहानियों में प्रभाव की गहराई इसलिये है कि उनके यहाँ चरित्र, वातावरण कथानक आदि का कलात्मक रचाव है। निर्मल के मानव चरित्र प्राकृतिक वातावरण में किसी पौधे, फूल या बादल की तरह अंकित होते हैं गोया वह प्रकृति के ही रंग है।¹⁴

‘परिन्दे’ कहानी में संगीतात्मकता एवं संगीत के सहारे कथासूत्र का प्रवाह बनाये रचना ये दो तत्व भी प्राप्य हैं। ये कहा जा सकता है कि इस कहानी की रचना धर्मिता में संगीत भी एक अविभाज्य तत्व है। नामवर सिंह क शब्दों में-“व्यथा की गहनता में निर्मल के पात्र प्रायः खामोश रहते हैं। उनकी खामोशी व्यक्तित्व का एक अभिन्न अंग है। उनका मौन पियारों के अन्दर का मौन है जिसकी एक-आध ‘की’ पर कभी-कभी लेखक की अंगुली का हल्का सा दबाव पड़ता है।¹⁵

वस्तुतः ‘परिन्दे’ कहानी मानव मन की उस व्यथा एवं संत्रास की अभिव्यक्ति है जो अतीत की दुखद घटनाओं में निहित होती है।

उपर्युक्त सभी विचारों के सारतत्व के रूप में बस यही कहा जा सकता है कि नयी कहानी के आलोक में ‘परिन्दे’ कहानी इसके समस्त मानदण्डों पर खरी उतरती है। इस कहानी में वो सारे तत्व एवं सूक्ष्म यथार्थ की अभिव्यंजना समाप्ति है, जो नयी कहानी के आधार बिन्दुओं में निहित है।

वस्तुतः ‘परिन्दे’ कहानी पाठक के मन पर एक सशक्त प्रभाव डालने में पूर्णतया सक्षम है। इस कहानी में समस्त मानव मात्र की चिरन्तन समस्या का अत्यंत भावस्पर्शी एवं मार्मिक चित्रण प्रस्तुत किया गया है जो एक व्यथित एवं स्मृतिपाश में आबद्ध मन को आगे बढ़ने से रोकती है।

समग्रतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि ‘परिन्दे’ निर्मल वर्मा की अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण एवं हृदयस्पर्शी रचना है, जो नयी कहानी आन्दोलन की आधारभूत रचनाओं में एक सशक्त एवं जीवन्त हस्ताक्षर बन कर उभरती है।

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सन्दर्भ सूची

1. हिन्दी आलोचना की पारिभाषिक शब्दावली – डॉ. अमरनाथ, पृ. 192
2. नयी कहानी की भूमिका – कमलेश्वर, पृ. 17
3. नयी कहानी सन्दर्भ और प्रकृति – देवीशंकर अवस्थी, पृ. 334
4. वही, पृ. 119
5. हिन्दी आलोचना की पारिभाषिक शब्दावली – डॉ. अमरनाथ, पृ. 193
6. कहानी नयी कहानी – नामवर सिंह, पृ. 26
7. वही, पृ. 63
8. वही, पृ. 67
9. साहित्यिक निबन्ध – गणपति चन्द्र गुप्त, पृ. 435
10. नयी कहानी की भूमिका – कमलेश्वर, पृ. 152
11. कहानी नयी कहानी – नामवर सिंह, पृ. 52
12. नयी कहानी सन्दर्भ और प्रकृति – देवीशंकर अवस्थी, पृ. 199
13. श्रेष्ठ हिन्दी कहानियाँ – सम्पादक खगेन्द्र ठाकुर, पृ. 93
14. कहानी नयी कहानी – नामवर सिंह, पृ. 53
15. नयी कहानी सन्दर्भ और प्रकृति – देवीशंकर अवस्थी, पृ. 200



Dr. Purnima Priyadarshi

Prominent Spiritual Figures and Their Critical Approach to Life & Self-Realization

Abstract: According to Charles Darwin, Mankind has been evolving from at least 315000 years or say from age of Homo sapiens. This human evolution is also a part of natural evolution process on this earth. At the advance stages of human evolution, human started to search the source of self or Atman and slowly human consciousness expanded and still expanding indefinitely and unlimitedly. At these evolutionary phases those who found their true self within, they became a source or guide to self-realization for others whose heart were burning to know themselves. And this didn't happened as crowd or in groups. This self-realization happens in one out of millions. But once one is self-realized, then thousands of others are pulled by his gravity. They are not human. They are of different race. And we can count them of this rare race on our fingers because they are just rarest of rare. It has been tried here to surface about few of them and their approach towards the life finding the true self.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a brief study of few of them self-realized figures and their approach towards the life and self-realization. I call them spiritual figures because they are not limited to humans and this living worldly organism, they are more than what a human can understand. They are life itself or existence itself.

Everyone is unique and has their own path on which one has to walk alone in this world. So experiences are also unique. Later their way to point out the path to others (who wants to know their true

self) are also unique to every another spiritual masters.

1. Krishna

Krishna is one of the most lovable being in India as a God. His followers have been in millions since his Avatar came in existence. He is loved everywhere. Or can say he is love himself. His idol is always smiling, never serious, looks always pleasing and blissful and full of life. Always playing the flute on notes of life and love. His devotees have lovingly given him most numbers of different names based on his Leelas, some most popular are Hari, Govind, Madhav, Pitambar, Kishan, Girdhari etc. His devotees chant his name without any strict rituals. His aura is tremendous and engrossing and encompassing even when his bodily avatar is not on earth now. He is said to be complete avatar in a human form. No human can be more than him, not even near to him in human character and personality. He is complete. He is complete because he accepts every aspect of life. He faces every aspect of life with grace and full presence of his being without being touched by the outcome of happenings. He is like lotus, who blossoms in mud but untouched by mud. Nobody can ignore him.

Being a son: Krishna is a naughty child who can steal and break Hand is and eat butter and still loved by all villagers. At the very teen age of 11 years he went to Mathura to free his parents from Kansa's prison. He fought Kansa, killed him and freed his parents.

Being a lover: He is a passionate lover who is empty vessel without Radha. They don't marry to

each other and separated in the worldly means but still they are worshiped as supreme lover.

Being a warrior: He was a fierce warrior with all kind of warfare capabilities and could win any kind of war. He fought many wars and defeated many big warriors like Kamsa, Putna, Vakasura, Sishupala etc. to protect his family and his villagers.

As a mentor or guide on path of Dharma and Karma: Prior to Mahabharata war He tries to stop the war by visiting Kauravas in whatever possible ways. But when the war becomes inevitable, Arjun denies to fight their family members who were with Kauravas, Krishna gives that mighty Updesh (sermon) of Gita. When he says this is your Dharma to fight, it doesn't mean he wants this bloody war. He simply means "this fight is in your way, you are Kshatriya so you have to face it. Don't expect whether you will win or lose, that outcome is not in your hand. Only your karma is in your hand so get up and to face this and fight". Still Arjun doesn't get convinced and doesn't get that courage to fight his own family members and friends and guru in opponent's camp, then Krishna shows his immense form and says "ultimately all these persons who are here at war will be killed by me even if you don't fight because once born always dies. All creatures are born from me and dies and again immersed in me. I am the source of this life. I am super consciousness or Parambrahman. So don't fear, come to me and do your job and be assured that the right thing will happen only. But that right thing is not any person dependent and can't be judged by one or few person. This is in favour of whole mankind. Therefore drop all your fears and hesitations and come to face the life."

Conclusion : In all senses and parameters of a human form (through which a human mind can understand), Krishna is complete, a Purna Avatar (a complete reincarnation). His life teaches to accept and live the life fully with joy and love without expectation. Right things will happen at right time and this is the ultimate design of that supreme lord or super-consciousness. We are part of his Leela (play) or only he is as a whole and last truth.

2. Gautam Buddha

Gautam Buddha is said as grandfather of

meditation. He comes in the lineage of Buddha. Buddha is not a person. Buddha is entitled to whom who have reached the peak of self-realization, or who is back to the very source of life or enlightened. Many Buddhas happened before Gautam and after Gautam, but Gautam Buddha is a rare phenomenon in mankind history. Not because he can be measured as more enlightened. It is because He was able to speak the truth with immense effect on human minds. He was able to convey the direction of path to the source of existence with high clarity. Enlightenment happens in One out of hundreds of millions, but pointing to the path of the enlightenment is a more rare art. Mostly enlightened ones become silent after self-realization. Not because they don't want other to know or they feel extra ordinary about themselves, it is because this profound experience can be experienced only when one goes through that path. It is not a knowledge to get by reading Vedas or by listening any Pravachan (sermons). So when an enlightened master is able to point out that path with most possible clarity then he must be the level of Buddhas.

Gautam left his wife and child at midnight in search of truth of this life and purpose of his existence. He asked many Pundits and scholars of his father's empire about his purpose of existence and the burning eagerness to know the truth of life but no satisfactory answer received. So in the search of truth of life he left his family and home keep moving one place to another places, one Spiritual guru to another guru. Tried Yoga, Asans, Kriyas and Mantras but still not succeeded. When one day his last guru admitted that he doesn't know more and he already taught whatever he knew, he became disheartened. His desire to know the self or become enlightened was falling. In the night of full moon he was sitting at the bank of Niranjana river under the Bodhi tree. And with the setting of last star in the sky the desire to know the true self also dropped. Then the being remained only and he became enlightened. The water droplet merged into the ocean and ocean merged into the droplet. He becomes Buddha. After weeks of silence, he decided to teach the lessons of path of Dharma and gave the first sermon at Sarnath so that people alleviate human suffering. His main teachings were on Dharma, Ahimsa & compassion. He

opposed social system of discrimination, caste system and animal sacrifice. His teachings were rooted into expanding consciousness with compassion.

Meditation method: Gautam Buddha didn't emphasize on too many meditation methods. He says only one technique is enough and can work if practiced consciously. This meditation technique is called Vipassana, a Sanskrit word which means to see things as they really are. To see things without judgement and discrimination and even without naming. This levitates the human consciousness to a higher level and different dimension.¹

Conclusion: Gautam Buddha is a rare happening in mankind history. His main teaching is about transcending the human mind to a different realm by using human suffering. He says there is no God, even no soul. Only Shunya exists and he is that Shunya. Buddha calls it Anatta. Anatta means no-self, no soul in any living being. His teachings are practiced and followed by millions across the world.

3. La Tzu

La Tzu also called as Laozi, born in 571 BC in China is the father of Tao religion. La Tzu didn't declare Tao as any religion or any doctrine to be followed but by his disciples. He lived a very ordinary and simple life, grounded and rooted with nature. He says simply live, make no plan, and make no eagerness to arrive anywhere. A good traveller has no certain fixed plan and is not intended for arriving anywhere. There is no need to run behind anything. There is no so called time, it is manmade concept. Nature is never in hurry and all things accomplished.

La Tzu doesn't give any philosophy or doctrine. He doesn't even give any meditation technique to his disciple. He simply lives and does his daily work with full awareness. He says be content with what you have been given and enjoy it up to the fullest. He says don't search yourself outside, don't ask about yourself to others. Search inside of yourself, you will find the answer, you know what you are and what you want.

La Tzu is considered as a profound master of Tao. Tao means flow of universe. The universe has no defined path and no laws and life is simply happening within it. Similarly La Tzu is practitioner of 'no path' or 'going beyond' the man made established

definitions and categories of life. He is embodiment of experimental truth and emphasizing the transmission of energy rather than only words. Osho says "*La Tzu is existing beyond categories and who is transcended all labels and types, like the vast sky. The 'no-path' was the path La Tzu followed*".²

La Tzu wrote only one book that is 'Tao Te Ching'. Tao Te Ching is the central divine text of Taoism. But this was also written not on his own wish but great insisting of their disciples. He says that what can be said is not truth. This is the introduction for the book. Truth is inexpressible and can be lived and experienced only. It simply makes you alert: now words will follow, don't get trapped in the words meanings. The Tao can be communicated but only in silence between being and being, it can be communicated when one is with master. Not even practicing anything, just being with the master.

Conclusion: "*The Tao that can be told of is not the Absolute Tao*". A master like La Tzu knows very well that truth can't be said, but the very effort to say it will provoke, will bring the suppressed fire in you to the surface. And once the fire surfaces, a search, an enquiry starts within to know the truth. Now he has shook and awaken you for further journey towards the ultimate path.

4. Rabi'a al-Adaviyya

Rabia is considered as one of the greatest Sufi mystic and master. She was the first female Sufi master in Islam. She stands at very top in the lineage of Sufism. Many spiritual masters like Farid al-Din and Osho regarded her at the level of Buddha. *Buddha in the form of female body*.

Rabia born in Basra, Iran (714 – 801 CE) also known as Hazrat Rabi'ah al-Basri. She was born into a very poor family where not even a piece of cloth available to cover her with, no lamp for night light. She was the fourth child of her parents. During the sleep of her father, Prophet Mohammad came into his dreams and said, "Don't be worried. You have been blessed with a daughter who will be one of the greatest saint of this world. She will be an inspiration for millions."

Rabia has been considered as the symbol of divine love towards the supreme lord in Sufism tradition.

Her spirituality is marked as trusting and loving relationship with divinity which supersedes and fills all other gaps & concerns. She is a fierce lover, fully consumed by divine love.

Once Spiritual Master Osho was asked by one of his disciple: *If truth can't be delivered in words, then why have all the enlightened masters used words?*

Osho gives a parable in answer:

The great mystic, Rabia of Basra, was immensely beautiful. And a beauty not of this world. Once a rich young man from Iran comes to Basra. He asks people, *"Is there anything you have in your village which is out of the world, what is very unique and special here?"*

The People of that village tell him. *"Yes, you are at right place, the most beautiful woman of the world lives in our village!"*

That young man becomes very interested and asks, *"Where can I find and see her? Would she become agree to meet me?"*

All those villagers laugh and say, *"Yes, Well, in a brothel! She lives in brothel!"*

He reaches the place as villagers told. The guard asks him for fee, he pays the fee and go inside the room. The room is very simple. He finds a woman is there and praying. What a beauty she is! She is more beautiful than his dreams and imaginations. She has the beauty with grace. By only being there, there is a strong aura of her surrounded him in which he is getting drowned. He forgets for what reason he has come there. He loses himself and sits beside her in the same praying posture of hers. Now his heart is wide open, open to the God.

Even after passing of few hours, the intensity of that feeling is still very high and he feels like he is in heaven. Now he realizes that this is not a human's body beauty, this is beauty of God. God is present in front of him and he is getting absorbed in it. There is nothing more left to achieve or to arrive. This is it.

And then Rabia opens her eyes, those lotus eyes, and he looks into them, and there is no woman in front of him – he is facing God. And this way the whole night passes, as if it was only a moment.

When many hours passed and now he has to leave. He says to Rabia, *"You are master. Order*

me anything, ask me anything to do. What I can do for you."

She says, *"I have only one little request."*

He asks, *"Please order?"*

Rabia says, *"Please don't tell this experience to anybody and whatever you have seen here. Let the people come here to me. Let them get trapped in my beauty. This is a trap only to pull them towards God. Beauty can also be the path to the God. But don't tell them about this and let them enter here themselves. People can come easily to a whore in a brothel. It is easier to men to enter into a brothel than going to a mosque or temple. So this way is also a fine way to enter the God's place."*

He says, *"Oho, so this is the secret of this village. The whole village knows the secret of the divinity of your beauty, yet nobody tells about his experience."*

Rabia laughs and says, *"Yes, I take the promise from all of them".³*

Conclusion: Rabia used every worldly means, even her beauty as a trap. Many spiritual masters used their belongings or skills as a trap. And one can be trapped only if he/she gets attracted towards that trap, so every trap looks beautiful and marvellous. Just like Buddha's words, Krishna's flute and Meera's dance and songs. As much as one comes close to that trap, one will start forgetting those traps and starts merging with God.

5. Ramakrishna Paramhams

Ramakrishna is considered as a rare mystic who accepted all spiritual paths with same grace. He is child of God whose heart is full of love and devotion. He often acted like madman in devotion for that ultimate. He used to forget himself during answering questions related to spirituality and reached Samadhi many times a day. Most of the times he lived in full of ecstasy.

Devotion to Kali: Ramakrishna is known as one of the biggest devotee of Goddess Kali. It is reported that he used to talk to her all the times. Even before eating he offers the first bite to Kali. It is also reported that Ramakrishna's spiritual practices to embody Goddess Kali, resulting in the unusual physical

phenomenon of women like walking, his breasts enlarging and menstruating, which many spiritual masters considered a miracle demonstrating a mystic's ability to transcend ordinary bodily limitations.

Enlightenment: Even though he was engrossed with devotion and love of Goddess Kali, he kept feeling something missing inside. At the end of his life due to this burning eagerness to know that missing part of that ultimate divine he approached to a profound Guru Totapuri. Totapuri asked him to cut down Kali's head by a sword when she emerges in front of him. He asks from where he could find sword. Totapuri indicated that bring the sword from the same place where you find Kali. Then Ramakrishna starts to worship Kali, and when she appears in his mind, he receives a sword also in his hand and cut the head of Kali. And in this very moment his duality was gone. Now he was alone, without Kali, but a complete being. Now there was no need to go outside to seek the ultimate. Now that old Ramakrishna was not there. Now only being is there which is whole existence in itself.⁴

Conclusion: All prominent non-dual spiritual

masters try to point out towards the one which is ever-present, endless, eternal, boundless consciousness. They emphasises that human mind perceives that eternal divinity outside as individual in the form of duality. Consciousness is like sky and thoughts of mind are like clouds. But when the grace of an enlightened master showered, the clouds of this duality disappears. Then only sky remains. The sky never goes anywhere, only clouds or human mind keeps appearing and disappearing. Sky or consciousness is always present. So every Spiritual master has his own unique path whether it is meditation or Love and devotion. Paths are many but goal is same. The enlightened ones never talk about human made religions like Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism and social norms of morals and immoral values. They simply say that live the life at the fullest like wildflower whose fragrance flows without discrimination into the jungle. This is the pathless path, the way of Tao, the way of universe or life itself.

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Toyaz Kumar Singh

The Digital Newscast: How Delhi University Students are Redefining Information

Walk through the campus of Delhi University, and you'll see a familiar sight: students, heads bowed, absorbed in the glow of their smartphones. While many might assume they're lost in a sea of memes or chat apps, a recent exploratory study reveals something far more significant. This generation is getting their news and shaping their understanding of the world, not through traditional media, but through a new kind of digital newscast. The modern information landscape is a complex and ever-evolving ecosystem, characterized by the convergence of traditional media platforms and the rapid ascent of digital technologies. For younger generations, particularly university students who have grown up as digital natives, the methods of news consumption and the criteria for information credibility are fundamentally different from those of their predecessors. This shift presents a critical area of study, as it impacts not only how information is disseminated and received, but also the civic and intellectual development of a key demographic.

The survey, which investigated the media habits of DU students, paints a vivid and compelling picture of a seismic shift in how young people consume information. The findings highlight a definitive move away from platforms once considered dominant, and a rise in the power of visual, short-form, and peer-driven content. The data provides a nuanced picture, showing that while certain traditional media sources may be experiencing a decline in regular readership, their perceived authority and trustworthiness remain surprisingly resilient, particularly when contrasted with

the platforms that students rely on most heavily for day-to-day information. This report will explore the implications of these trends for media organizations, educators, and society at large as we navigate an increasingly fragmented and digitally-driven world.

The Dominance of Digital Platforms

The data from the survey shows a clear hierarchy of platforms, with three standing far above the rest. The most popular choice for news among the students surveyed was YouTube, used by a staggering 66.1%. The platform's dominance is a testament to the power of video storytelling. For today's students, news is no longer a static headline; it's a dynamic broadcast. News channels and independent journalists on YouTube offer everything from live coverage and recorded segments to in-depth explainers and investigative series. The ability to search for specific topics and watch a detailed report on a complex issue makes it an unparalleled source for immersive and accessible information.

Coming in second with 58.7% is Instagram. Once exclusively a photo-sharing app, it has evolved into a rapid-fire news service. Instagram thrives on short-form content, with news headlines distilled into eye-catching graphics, and stories and Reels delivering quick, digestible updates. The platform's algorithm is designed to curate content based on individual interests, making the news experience feel both personal and timely.

The third most popular platform, and arguably

the most interesting, is WhatsApp, with 48.6% of students using it for news. Although it's a private messaging app, its role as a news conduit is immense. This is the realm of what is often called "dark social"—the sharing that happens in private groups and one-on-one chats. News links, videos, and articles are frequently passed along within trusted social circles. The strength of WhatsApp lies in its peer-to-peer nature. When a friend or family member shares a news story, it carries a built-in layer of trust that a traditional news outlet might not have, making it a powerful, though sometimes risky, channel for information.

The Fading Old Guard and the Generational Decline in Newspaper Readership

While new platforms are on the rise, others are falling by the wayside. Twitter, once the king of real-time breaking news, was cited by only 21.1% of students. While it still holds value for tracking live events, its high-speed, text-heavy format and often chaotic nature appear less appealing. The most dramatic decline is reserved for Facebook and LinkedIn, which both registered a mere 11%. For years, Facebook was a major news source, but its credibility has suffered due to misinformation concerns.

The survey's findings on newspaper reading habits paint an even clearer picture of a generational shift. When students were asked if they regularly read newspapers, a striking 60% of the respondents answered in the negative. This means that out of the total student population surveyed, only a minority—specifically 30%—indicated they were regular newspaper readers. An additional 10% reported reading newspapers occasionally, but the vast majority of participants are clearly not engaged with print journalism on a consistent basis.

During the more in-depth qualitative discussions and interviews that accompanied the survey, it became even more apparent that this trend is heavily age-dependent. The majority of the students who stated they do not read newspapers were under 21 years old. For these individuals, news is not something they seek out from a single, static source, but rather a constant flow of information that comes to them through notifications, algorithms, and personalized feeds.

The Paradox of Trust: Credibility vs. Consumption

While the survey data on reading habits points to a significant disengagement with newspapers, a deeper look into the students' perceptions reveals a compelling paradox. When asked about the trustworthiness of different information sources, particularly concerning a serious topic like the law, the results were unexpectedly in favor of traditional media. All 850 students who participated in the survey answered this specific question, and a substantial majority—78%—stated that they trust newspapers more than social media for information related to the law. This finding is remarkable, as it stands in stark contrast to the low readership rates. It suggests that while students may not be consuming newspapers regularly, they still hold them in high regard as a credible authority.

The reasons for this trust are deeply rooted in the foundational principles of traditional journalism. Students likely perceive newspapers as institutions with established editorial processes, a commitment to fact-checking, and a clear chain of accountability. For a topic as sensitive and complex as the law, this perceived rigor is invaluable. Social media, on the other hand, is a free-for-all, where information is often unverified and driven by algorithms that prioritize engagement over accuracy.

The remaining 22% of students who indicated a greater trust in social media for legal information present an intriguing counter-narrative. This group may represent a segment of the student body that views information through a different lens, valuing the speed and accessibility of social media. This small but significant group highlights the ongoing evolution of trust, where credibility is not solely defined by institutional authority but can also be built on personal relationships and perceived authenticity within a digital community.

Perceived Effectiveness: The Dominance of Social Media

Further complicating the relationship between students and media is the data on perceived effectiveness. While newspapers are considered more trustworthy, they are not seen as the most effective channel for legal awareness. The survey asked

students to identify which medium they believed was most effective for raising legal awareness among their peers. The results clearly indicated that social media was considered the most effective by a significant margin, with 56.0% of respondents selecting it as their top choice. Newspapers, despite their high trust rating, were a distant second at 25.3%.

This paradox can be explained by examining the different metrics by which students define "effectiveness." For many, effectiveness is not about credibility, but about reach, virality, and format. Social media platforms are engineered for mass dissemination. An infographic summarizing a new law or a short video explaining a legal concept can reach thousands, if not millions, of people in a matter of hours.

In contrast, newspapers face several challenges that limit their "effectiveness." While they provide detailed and credible information, access is often restricted by paywalls. The format is also less conducive to quick, on-the-go consumption. This gap between trust and effectiveness highlights a critical challenge for communicators: how to leverage the reach and immediacy of social media without falling prey to its inherent risks of misinformation.

The Role of Other Media Channels

The survey also provided insights into the perceived effectiveness of other traditional media channels, further solidifying the dominance of social media in the student consciousness. Both television and online news portals were perceived to have an even lower impact on legal awareness, with each receiving only 9.3% of the votes. This low score for television is particularly telling, as it was once the dominant medium for mass communication. The most striking finding among the other channels was the negligible impact of radio. Historically, radio has played a significant role in information dissemination, but its near-zero impact on the surveyed student population underscores its complete obsolescence as a primary source of news for this demographic.

This tiered hierarchy of effectiveness—social

media, followed by newspapers, and then a group of trailing others—provides a clear road map for anyone seeking to engage with this demographic. It indicates that while traditional sources still hold a special place for serious, credible information, they are no longer the primary engine of awareness.

Conclusion and Future Implications

The survey of Delhi University students reveals a complex and paradoxical relationship with media. A vast majority of students have largely abandoned traditional newspaper reading in favor of more dynamic and accessible digital platforms. The age-based findings make it clear that this is a generational trend that is likely to continue and deepen, posing a significant challenge for legacy media institutions.

On the other hand, the survey highlights a crucial distinction between consumption habits and perceived credibility. While students may not be reading newspapers, they overwhelmingly trust them for serious, high-stakes information like legal awareness. Simultaneously, the very platforms that are seen as most effective for raising awareness—social media—are those that are least trusted. This gap creates a significant challenge for all stakeholders. The challenge lies in leveraging the reach and speed of social media without compromising the credibility that is the hallmark of traditional journalism.

Looking ahead, the future of media consumption will likely not be a simple replacement of one form with another. Instead, it will be a hybrid ecosystem where different platforms serve different purposes. Social media will continue to be the primary engine for awareness and discovery, while trusted traditional sources will serve as a crucial layer of verification and in-depth analysis. For media organizations and communicators, the path forward requires a nuanced strategy: to be present on the platforms where the audience is, but to consistently point them back to credible, well-researched content.

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डॉ. दिनेश कुमार

स्नातक स्तर की छात्राओं पर परामर्श सत्र की प्रभावशीलता का अध्ययन

सर्वप्रथम इस संसार में ईश्वर ने धरती और स्वर्ग का निर्माण किया और धरती पर अपनी सर्वोत्कृष्ट रचना में मानव को बनाया। मानव ने कालांतर में धर्म और विज्ञान के सहारे अपना विकास किया 'किन्तु इस धर्म और विज्ञान के विकास का माध्यम शिक्षा को बनाया। शिक्षा के द्वारा ही मानव ने अपने जीवन में गुणवत्ता लायी जो उसकी अपनी आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप है। क्योंकि जीवन एक संघर्ष है इसलिए इस संघर्ष में उसे अनेक समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ता है और इन समस्याओं के समाधान का मार्ग केवल शिक्षा ही द्वारा प्राप्त किया जाता रहा है, और भविष्य में भी किया जायेगा। इससे स्पष्ट होता है कि शिक्षा ही एक ऐसी कुंजी है जिसके द्वारा हम अपने जीवन में आने वाली समस्याओं का समाधान खोज सकते हैं और अपने जीवन को बेहतर बना सकते हैं। अतः मानव जीवन में आयु वर्ग, सामाजिक स्थिति, आर्थिक स्थिति या फिर भौगोलिक स्थित के आधार पर आवश्यकताएं, समस्याएं बदलती रहती हैं इसलिए उसके अनुसार शिक्षा का स्वरूप भी बदलता रहा है। आज 21वीं सदी में लगभग सभी बुद्धिजीवी इस बात पर सहमत हैं कि अगर भारत के 6 से 14 वर्ष के लगभग छः करोड़ बच्चे अशिक्षित रह जाते हैं और बेरोजगारों एवं अर्द्धबेरोजगारों की फौज बढ़ती रहेगी तो यह एक गहन चिंता का विषय है। देश में जहां एक ओर कौशल सम्पन्न लोगों की भारी कमी महसूस की जा रही है वहीं दूसरी ओर बड़ी संख्या में लोग बेरोजगार हैं। यदि कुछ समय तक यही स्थिति बनी रही तो सामाजिक असंतोष बढ़कर क्रांति का स्वरूप ले लेगा। प्राचीन काल से मूल्य आधारित शिक्षा के आधार पर विश्व गुरु रहा यह भारत

देश जहां लोग विदेशों से शिक्षा ग्रहण करने के लिए आते थे, वहीं भारत आज अपनी शिक्षा को विश्वस्तर पर असफल देख रहा है। निश्चित रूप से इसके लिए समाज में व्याप्त कुछ तत्व ही जिम्मेदार हैं जो शिक्षा के उद्देश्य को पूरा करने में बाधा उत्पन्न कर रहे हैं। इन कुछ प्रमुख अराजक तत्वों में से एक है मूल्य विहीन शिक्षा। आधुनिकता की चकाचौंध में शिक्षा का स्वरूप व उद्देश्य कहीं छिप सा गया नजर आता है। सरकारी एवं गैर सरकारी संस्थाओं में शिक्षा व्यापार का एक अद्वितीय साधन बनकर रह गया है। जिस गति से मूल्य विहीन शिक्षा का विस्तार और प्रभाव बढ़ता नजर आ रहा है उससे यह प्रतीत होता है कि राज्य और केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा किए गये शिक्षा सम्बन्धी सभी प्रयास दिखावा मात्र बनकर रह जायेंगे।

इस प्रपत्र में शोधार्थी ऐसी ही परिस्थिति के अनुसार शिक्षा द्वारा अपने जीवन को बेहतर बनाने के लिए पूर्वांचल की छात्राओं को व्यवसाय सम्बन्धी परामर्श सत्र देकर उसकी प्रभावशीलता जानने का प्रयास किया है।

शोध के उद्देश्य :

इस प्रपत्र के निम्नलिखित उद्देश्य हैं-

1. एक समूह विशेष को व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों के बारे में जानकारी प्रदान करना।
2. व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों के बारे में समूह विशेष के विद्यार्थियों एवं अध्यापकों के बीच अंतःक्रिया स्थापित करना।
3. समूह विशेष पर परामर्श कार्यक्रम की प्रभावशीलता ज्ञात करना।

शोध प्रविधि :

प्रस्तुत अध्ययन में आंशिक प्रयोगात्मक शोध प्रारूप का प्रयोग किया है। प्रश्नावली द्वारा प्राप्त प्राप्तांकों के आधार पर दो समान समूह को निर्मित किया जिसमें एक नियंत्रित अथवा प्रायोगिक समूह तथा दूसरा स्वतंत्र समूह रखा गया। प्रायोगिक समूह को पांच दिन तक विभिन्न गतिविधियों के द्वारा व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों के बारे में जानकारी तथा परामर्श दिया गया तदोपरान्त छठवें दिन दोनों समूहों से पुनः एक प्रश्नावली द्वारा आंकड़े प्राप्त किए गये। और उनका मध्यमान ज्ञान करके तुलना की गयी।

न्यादर्श :

गुलाब देवी महिला स्नातकोत्तर महाविद्यालय, बलिया के स्नातक स्तर को 20 छात्राएं प्रत्येक समूह में रखी गयी हैं।

उपचार:

प्रथम एवं द्वितीय दिन: डेढ़ घण्टे तक चलने वाली इस कक्षा के दौरान व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों जैसे-बी.एड., बी.टी.सी., एल.एल.बी. पॉलिटेक्निक व अन्य पाठ्यक्रमों में प्रवेश प्रक्रिया, न्यूनतम योग्यता, पाठ्यक्रम की अवधि, शुल्क, परीक्षा प्रक्रिया एवं उसके उत्तीर्ण करने के बाद सेवाओं में चयन प्रक्रिया आदि के बारे में विस्तार से बताया गया।

तृतीय दिन :

उपरोक्त विभिन्न व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों से सम्बन्धित किसी भी प्रकार की जिज्ञासा, संदेह या अन्य कोई भी प्रश्नों का समाधान विषय विशेषज्ञों द्वारा प्रायोगिक समूह के साथ किया गया। इस दिन भी अवधि डेढ़ घण्टे ही रखी गयी।

चतुर्थ दिन :

इस दिन प्रायोगिक समूह को डेढ़ घण्टे तक लघु अवधि एवं दीर्घ अवधि के व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों जैसे सिलाई, कढ़ाई, व्यूटीशियन, मेंहदी, पेंटिंग आदि से सम्बन्धी विभिन्न बिन्दुओं पर कक्षा चलायी गयी जिसमें इस तरह के पाठ्यक्रमों को चलाने वाली विभिन्न संस्थाओं जैसे NIOS, UPRTOU तथा IGNOU के साथ-साथ अनेक गैरसरकारी संगठनों के बारे में भी बताया गया।

पंचम दिन :

इस दिन भी शंका समाधान एवं परामर्श सत्र संचालित करके छात्राओं का समस्याओं एवं शंकाओं का समाधान किया गया।

छठवां दिन :

स्वतंत्र समूह एवं प्रायोगिक समूह का प्रश्नावली द्वारा मूल्यांकन, अंकन एवं तुलनात्मक अध्ययन किया गया।

प्रश्नावली :

प्रश्नावली में खुले प्रश्नों की एक श्रृंखला है जिसमें आठ प्रश्न हैं जो निम्नलिखित हैं-

- 1.बी.एड. पाठ्यक्रम के बारे में बताएं?
- 2.बी.टी.सी. पाठ्यक्रम पर अपने विचार प्रस्तुत करें?
- 3.एल.एल.बी. करने की योग्यता, प्रवेश प्रक्रिया, समयावधि पर प्रकाश डालें?
- 4.पॉलिटेक्निक के बारे में अपने विचार रखें?
- 5.ITI के बारे में आप क्या जनते हैं?
- 6.कम्प्यूटर कोर्स के प्रति अपने विचार दीजिए? इससे जीवन को कैसे आगे बढ़ाया जा सकता है?
- 7.व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रम से आप क्या समझते हैं?
- 8.व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रम की न्यूनतम योग्यता, अवधि, प्रवेश प्रक्रिया के बारे में बताएं?

आंकड़ों का संकलन-

उपचारात्मक कक्षा प्रारम्भ होने के पूर्व दोनों समूहों के निर्माण के बाद प्रायोगिक समूह को 5 दिन तक पढ़ाया व सिखाया गया। छठे दिन पुनः दोनों समूहों से प्रश्नावली की सहायता से आंकड़े एकत्रित करके, अंकन किया गया और इसका मध्यमान ज्ञात किया गया। जो तालिक में दिया गया है।

तालिका

	उपचार के पूर्व	उपचार के बाद
समूह-एक (स्वतंत्र)	15	18
समूह-दो (प्रायोगिक)	15	34.5

विश्लेषण एवं व्याख्या :

उपरोक्त प्रायोगिक अध्ययन से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि परामर्श सत्र के पूर्व दोनों समूहों के प्राप्तांकों के मध्यमान समान थे जबकि परामर्श सत्र के उपरान्त प्रायोगिक समूह का मध्यमान 15 से बढ़कर 34.5 हुआ जबकि स्वतंत्र समूह का 15 से बढ़कर 18 ही हुआ। अर्थात्, परामर्श सत्र का छात्राओं पर धनात्मक प्रभाव पड़ा। जो छात्राएं कुछ पाठ्यक्रमों के पूरा नाम, प्रवेश प्रक्रिया, अध्ययन काल आदि के बारे में नहीं जानती थी वे इस सत्र से लाभान्वित होकर उक्त के बारे में

जान गयीं।

निष्कर्ष एवं परिणाम :

उक्त कार्यक्रम का छात्राओं पर धनात्मक प्रभाव पड़ा जिससे प्रेरित होकर उक्त महाविद्यालय में कैरियर काउंसिलिंग सेल का गठन भी हो चुका है जिसमें समय-समय पर उसी

महाविद्यालय तथा अन्य महाविद्यालय के योग्य अध्यापक बिना किसी भुगतान के कार्यक्रम में आते हैं।

एसोसिएट प्रोफेसर
गुलाब देवी म.पी.जी. कालेज
बलिया

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Luu Thanh Tung

An Examination of the Buddhist Principle of Compassion and its Relevance in the Contemporary World

The Interrelationship between Wisdom and Compassion in Buddhism

That is to say, Mahāyāna Buddhism is the relationship between wisdom and compassion. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the goal is not merely to relieve our own pain and suffering, but to transform ourselves into compassionate beings that are capable of healing the pain of everyone, everywhere. Among the beliefs of Mahāyāna Buddhism is that bodhisattvas walk among us today, inspiring us to dedicate our lives to the service of others. While Buddhist and other spiritual teachers may embody this ideal, anyone can be a bodhisattva, whether in a lifetime of service or moments of generosity. Celebrities who donate their fortune, heroic caregivers who put their own lives at risk or our suspiciously selfless next-door neighbour may all be bodhisattvas. Generosity is so powerful. These are the steps of developing a generous heart and mind. Start small with something simple like giving one person at a time the physical things they require, then go deeper by coming from the heart and giving love and protection from fear. And finally, give profound support. The practices of generosity naturally lead to compassion. It is a very profound spiritual teaching, we discover our natural wealth by giving away. It is the exact opposite of what we normally think, which is that we can only find wealth by grasping, by taking. Here, through our attitude of being generous, we discover real wealth, inner wealth. And then we are the wealthiest of all people

because when we have this generous attitude, we find we have wealth; we find we have enough. Generosity is so incredibly powerful and transformative.

However, Compassion is among the primary transcendent virtues of Buddhism, as it is for each of the world's authentic religions. Hence, compassion with wisdom means understanding that our compassion has little value if we only offer loving kindness to those we like, in situations which we might benefit from. Wisdom is understanding that our freedom is dependent on applying compassion equally, to everyone, at all times. Therefore, They are often described as two wings of a bird, wisdom and compassion must be developed in unison if we are to soar to great heights.

1. Buddhist Wisdom

Buddhist wisdom is the ability to see things as they are known as *prajñāpāramitā* in Sanskrit. Actually, we see things as we are or we were so distracted we do not see much of anything at all. When we do look around, what we mistake for reality is an illusion, colored by our past experiences, conditioning, personal preferences and emotions. However, *Prajñā* goes beyond refuting the four extremes through analysis. This highest wisdom is not just taking another standpoint, another view. It is stepping out of that very desire to get a grasp on reality by nailing it down to one thing. Wisdom is to remain open and relaxed, without any standpoint whatsoever.

However, Prajñāpāramitā unravels the mystery of life. We begin to understand life beyond the notions of existence and non-existence, this or that, both or neither. We begin to understand the ungraspable nature of everything – dynamic through and through. At the same time, all of that is one undefinable, but clearly experienced reality. The mind infused with Prajñāpāramitā relaxes the wish to position itself, to be someone or something within this field of life. And that's liberation. Freedom is just being without any need to affirm separateness or a standpoint. This open, nondual presence is wisdom. And this develops with the mindfulness of mental calm and awareness of growing insight. Besides, with meditation, we develop this non-dual understanding of reality. We cut through our mistaken beliefs and learn how to rest in the simplicity of being without a standpoint. So, through the practice of meditation, we learn to become more aware and discerning. When we can see each moment, just as it is, we also become more accepting. By letting go of attachment and aversion, we become more capable of being present with each moment, just as it is. Thus, we develop right view, in that we take responsibility for and accept the laws of karma and its effects. With wisdom, we should practice right view and the understanding that the real cause of happiness is working on ensuring the happiness of others. And so we turn to the practice of compassion. Wisdom is the key to understanding why, and provides us with the awareness we need to stay on track.

Furthermore, wisdom is known as seeing clearly how things truly are. In order to see clearly, we need to examine all the concepts we hold onto. When a concept arises in the mind, we have to look behind the concept and investigate. When we look behind that label, we won't see anything that isn't changing. There is appearance, and appearance is constantly changing. Wisdom is recognizing and understanding that there is no permanent, unchanging existence. It doesn't mean you throw away your intellect and all the labels. One could say the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice is to fully integrate wisdom into every one of our

actions. However, wisdom is revealed when at last we are able to drop our attachments, aversion and ignorance and accept reality as it is in this moment.

In addition, according to Buddhism there are four types of wisdom. Rather, there are four things we never forget once we finally become wise. First, we remember impermanence. All things arise, last for a while, then dissipate. It is largely our failure to remember this that leads to pain and suffering. One of the most powerful things about being alive is that we're directly confronted with change. We were confronted with the fact that we stand on a ground that is constantly shifting; we are breathing air that is constantly changing. That is truly all we need to become fully alive. Hence, people talk about mindfulness and we recognize that everything is change, facing impermanence, this impermanence that stretches from the stars right down to every cell, every fiber of my being and opening our hearts fully to it is recognizing the reality of life.

Second, we remember the four noble truths and the true cause of dissatisfaction or suffering. The Four Noble Truths are central to Buddhism and illuminate the essence of the Buddha's teachings. The first truth states that suffering exists, in the sense that impermanence and uncertainty lead to dissatisfaction. The second truth states that craving, fueled by ignorance, is the cause of suffering. The third truth states that the end of suffering is possible through the cessation of craving. The fourth truth presents the Noble Eightfold Path, a set of practices for developing wisdom and ethical living, as the path to end suffering.

Third, we remember the concept of non-self. That is, there is no unchanging, separate self that stands on its own, alone and untouched by everything else in existence. Finally, we never forget that it is only our continued remembrance of these that can fulfil our desire to live in complete peace, our desire for liberation. The experience of selflessness that can arise from your meditation practice does not prevent you from having self-compassion or boundaries. But instead of reacting habitually, you have options. We can look at the

situation with wisdom and intelligence and humor. So, we can recognize that we were lost in our habitual notions of self-identity and someone came along and popped our bubble.

Therefore, through understanding of these three wisdoms is not merely an intellectual exercise, but an intuitive experience that guides how we behave in the world. By accepting the uncertainty of the truth of impermanence we cease clinging to objects, including our mistaken belief in a separate self. As we let go of craving we give up on our attempts to manipulate the world in an effort to achieve happiness. So, we become kinder, more compassionate, accepting and relaxed. However, the accumulation of wisdom is holding this recognition in the background and seeing everything through that insubstantial lens—recognizing it now, keeping it in your mind now, and experiencing through that lens right now. Wisdom confirms the importance of accumulating merit through positive actions and positive conduct; it drives home why merit is so important.

2. Compassion as the Method

Compassion is the foundation of all goodness. It is beyond culture, beyond language, beyond religion, beyond time, and beyond space. It is also beyond humanity because other species demonstrate this quality as well. No matter how fierce and aggressive some of them may be towards other species, they are compassionate and loving to their own young. Hence, compassion becomes a source of motivation. In Mahayana Buddhism, compassion is the primary motivation for every effort we make towards personal awakening. In our current state of delusion, our capacity to help free others is limited. We are motivated to progress along the path because as we grow, we become increasingly capable of helping those around us.

However, Compassion is also the method by which we awaken. By practicing compassion in thought, word and deed, we open our hearts wherein lies our inner wisdom. This isn't always easy. The discomfort of compassion arises as we become increasingly aware of the pervasiveness of suffering. Fortunately, wisdom and compassion

are there for us to bring ease to this realization. We recognize we are fundamentally good because we are fundamentally compassionate. We like compassion. We like good things. We like happiness. We don't like suffering. We naturally lean towards goodness and happiness and distance ourselves from the bad things. This demonstrates that the fundamental nature of every being is good. Not only that, we humans have the ability to take mindful action and expand our compassion: we can make good into better, and better into best.

In addition, understanding your own functioning means that when you see someone else in a similar situation, rather than reacting to or judging them, you see them as family. Nothing helps more than compassion. Compassion is the concern for other's well-being. We cannot have compassion without having empathy for others. Others are more visible to you; you're no longer ignoring them and their difficulties. The more you think about others, the more that disproportionate importance of self is reduced. Compassion is actually very, very powerful because it is the cure for fear—the one force that can subdue the biggest tyrant, the biggest problem that threatens to dominate our lives. So that, in a nutshell, is the direct connection between compassion and fear.

3. Development of Compassion and Wisdom

Compassion and wisdom are not actually developed, we can say that they are discovered. These virtues exist within us and always have. Meditation, however, helps us cultivate greater awareness of these qualities so we may invite them to the forefront of our daily lives, where wisdom and compassion help inform right action. Compassion and wisdom arise simultaneously, and we can work on both, together. In which, wisdom and compassion as we become more aware of the truth of this moment. and the call of our own hearts. Compassion arises as we realize the certainty of our interconnectedness, that your wellbeing is directly related to mine. With continued practice, we come to see wisdom and compassion as two sides of the same coin. Neither exists without the other, and neither can come first. Joined together

they give rise to bodhicitta, the skillful blending of both.

Besides, there are a wealth of contemplative Buddhist practices which meditators have used for thousands of years to better embody the compassion and wisdom at the center of our being. Hence, compassion, meditation and loving-kindness meditation and the four immeasurables—each serves as a foundation compassion and wisdom. Outside of meditation, ethical behaviour is an equally important method of cultivating compassion and wisdom. It is also the end result. So that, we are wisdom, a clear understanding of the true nature of reality and compassion that embraces all beings in response to suffering; and power, the energy through which wisdom and compassion accomplish the benefit of others. The teachings on Buddha nature are extraordinarily cheerful, powerful, and important, yet at the same time they are easy to misconstrue. Because of this, it can be very helpful to connect them with the teachings on non-self or emptiness.

In a way, everything exists because of Buddha nature: the samsaric cycle of confusion and suffering as well as the freedom of nirvana. Buddha nature cannot be elsewhere; it cannot be manufactured. Dharma practice is necessary, but not to transform us into buddhas or to make our Buddha nature any stronger or purer. Our innate potential for awakening is already pure, strong, and enlightened. All we need to do is practice and stop believing in the fictions. Hence, Buddha nature is present in every sentient being, meaning each of us has equal potential to become a Buddha. We may think of the Buddha as a historical figure who has come and gone. But when Siddhartha Gautama became enlightened, he realized at once that all beings everywhere have the Buddha within. To trust in our Buddha nature is to have faith that we have just as much capacity as anyone to someday be free from our pain, fundamentally connected to joy despite life's ups and downs. Everything it is that we seek is already within us. Bit by bit, through the practice of meditation, getting quiet, being still, connecting to the body and listening, we can begin to hear the call of Buddha nature that comes from

within.

Therefore, everything that calls us to practice, everything we perceive, is potentially the voice of Buddha nature, inviting us to pay attention. Even our pain, suffering and dissatisfaction, by guiding us toward meditation, is part of the enlightened voice within. Just as the sun shines evenly on everything within its path, we are invited to embrace the entirety of our experience. Each of us is capable of finding lasting freedom from suffering, by remembering who we really are. To become a Buddha is to identify as the radiant, warm and giving sun versus the storms that sometimes cloud her over. Buddha nature mind cannot be stained by samsara, and that's why enlightenment is possible here and now. When we recognize this, we know with confidence that all beings, high or low, human or not, female or male, god or demon -- all are equally pervaded by Buddha nature, the fundamental nature of all beings, and therefore are equally worthy of our concern and respect.

Furthermore, the nature of mind is such that there is always the potential to experience the world subjectively or objectively, relatively or ultimately. The two truths coexist. In our moments of perception, however, the relative and ultimate do not coincide. As practitioners, we are either functioning within the dualistic framework of subject and object, or the mind has opened into non-dual awareness. And in Buddha, the state of enlightenment, all extraneous elements have been removed. Only the jewel remains, radiating extraordinary compassion and wisdom. But the Buddha is right here at home. Buddha nature cannot be elsewhere; it cannot be manufactured. Dharma practice is necessary, but not to transform us into buddhas or to make our Buddha nature any stronger or purer. Our innate potential for awakening is already pure, strong, and enlightened. All we need to do is practice and stop believing in the fictions.

So, the human heart is basically very compassionate, but without wisdom, compassion will not work. Wisdom is the openness that lets us see what is essential and most effective. As human beings, we all try our best to bring about a world

based on kindness and compassion. The problem is not with the world, or with other people, but with ourselves. Wisdom is innate in us; it is not something that can be bought, heard or received from outside. But our involvement with the external environment and the distraction of our own emotions causes a kind of layering or veiling that prevents us from observing ourselves carefully. We do not give ourselves enough time and space to use our innate wisdom to observe ourselves before we act. When we want to generate compassion, we ultimately end up working with our own emotions. We discover that any situation which overwhelms us does so to the degree that we solidify it. So without wisdom, compassion will not work. Wisdom is what enables us to be unconditioned and unbiased in our actions. With wisdom, we are not limited to a single cause or purpose; we do our best in a given situation, and then we move on.

Therefore, without wisdom, we too often become focused on one single problem or issue, which we think is the most important thing. But we live in a world that is populated by human beings, and as long as there are billions of human beings at work, there will not be a single thing that everyone accepts. There will be many things that are not done or said exactly the way that you like. Wisdom teaches us that these differences should not cause us to pull back. They should not stop us from exercising our compassion with even greater strength and motivation. A society based upon peace, harmony, wisdom and compassion is not going to come about unless each person begins with themselves. The human heart is basically very good, very generous, and very compassionate. But it may not always work together with wisdom. The result is that we have many people ready to go out and change the world for the better, but who still view philosophy, religion, and politics according to what they like, according to what they want.

In addition, wisdom requires that we work with the inner self, in order to act in accordance with the basic goodness we all have. When we meet with obstacles or difficulties, we can use them to develop

more inspiration, for if we sincerely value kindness and caring, that belief will give us the courage to overcome all obstacles. Wisdom is being able to use obstacles in this way. Otherwise, wisdom becomes some sort of museum piece, and we end up collecting philosophies, logics and teachings just like people who collect old furniture. Realizing the innate wisdom in every human being must begin with training the self. To break through ignorance requires breaking through ignorance in all of its forms. Ignorance is not something that comes from others. Ignorance is something that comes from the projection of the self. In Buddhist philosophy, we speak a lot about illusion, which refers to how human ignorance, or the human mind, creates a lot of external phenomena, and how once that illusion is created, we see it as very solid and permanent.

However, the best wisdom is that which you have the courage to apply to yourself. The wisdom of all the world's traditions needs to be nurtured and cared for, not collected. Our innate wisdom needs to be developed, understood and sharpened. Each person must develop the quality of fearlessness so that wisdom can cut through their ignorance. The best wisdom is that which you have the courage to apply to yourself. Only then can you really understand human beings as they are. Then you can give yourself and others the chance to grow individually, to think as they want. All of us need space to develop. We can all learn together to some degree, but the transformation of the world must begin within ourselves. Compassion and wisdom need to function together, combined with skilfulness, tolerance and patience.

Furthermore, meditation practice was the medicine that helped me overcome that fear and hopelessness. In meditation, by relating simply and honestly with your mind, you slowly make friends with yourself and learn to accept who you are. While it might be painful, it is a hugely powerful step. Meditation practice taught me how to live in the present moment, how to live life to the fullest. Being in the moment has taught me more than I could ever imagine. Meditation is a vast topic, but all Buddhist meditation practices are based on two

elements: resting the mind and looking at the nature of whatever arises. These are often referred to as mindfulness and awareness. Buddhist meditation techniques range from extremely complex and outrageously exotic to almost non-existent. But at the core of each method is resting, looking, or both.

Therefore, when we meditate, we are training ourselves to be present to each moment without judging or allowing ourselves to be fascinated or repelled by what arises. We are able to meet each

moment, each challenge that appears, with equanimity because we can access the essence of each moment as it truly is. By relating to our minds moment by moment with non-judgment and awareness, we discover that even situations, thoughts and emotions that we might ordinarily find unacceptable hold spaciousness, creativity and peace.

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Ratandeep Tripathi

Politicization of Caste in Uttar Pradesh (1947–2000)

Introduction

Uttar Pradesh (UP), the most populous state in India, has remained at the epicenter of Indian politics since independence. Its political landscape has been profoundly shaped by caste—a deeply entrenched social reality in Indian society. Between 1947 and 2000, caste transitioned from being merely a social stratifier to becoming a powerful political tool. The politicization of caste in UP has influenced party formation, electoral mobilization, governance strategies, and policy discourse. This article critically examines the historical trajectory and phases of caste-politics convergence in UP during this period, identifying key actors, developments, and consequences.

I. Post-Independence Phase (1947–1967): Dominance of Congress and Latent Caste Politics

Congress and Upper-Caste Hegemony

In the immediate aftermath of independence, Indian politics was largely dominated by the Indian National Congress, especially in UP. The Congress projected itself as a party of national integration and development, advocating secularism and socialism. However, beneath this ideological veneer lay a caste hierarchy. The party leadership and bureaucracy in UP were predominantly composed of upper castes—mainly Brahmins, Thakurs, and Kayasthas.¹

Dalits and backward castes had minimal representation in leadership roles. While Congress incorporated Scheduled Castes (SCs) into its fold through co-optive welfare measures, such inclusion

remained tokenistic.² Thus, although caste was not overtly politicized, it silently structured political participation and resource allocation.

Political Passivity of the Lower Castes

During this period, the political consciousness among Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Dalits remained low. Leaders like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar attempted to awaken the Dalit masses through independent platforms such as the Scheduled Castes Federation, but their influence in UP was limited. The Hindu Code Bill and reservation debates created caste-based political undercurrents, but they rarely translated into electoral assertions in UP until later.

II. Early Assertion Phase (1967–1980): Fragmentation and Emergence of Backward Caste Politics

Decline of Congress and Rise of Caste-Based Mobilization

The 1967 general elections marked a turning point. For the first time, Congress faced serious opposition in UP. The formation of the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD)—a coalition of non-Congress parties—exemplified emerging caste-based alignments. Political players like Chaudhary Charan Singh strategically mobilized OBCs and peasant castes, particularly the middle peasantry like Yadavs, Kurmis, and Jats.³

Charan Singh's advocacy of agrarian reforms and anti-urban elite rhetoric struck a chord with backward castes. His opposition to English education and urbanization was seen as an attempt to assert the values of the rural middle class.⁴ This era witnessed the crystallization of the backward-forward caste

binary in political discourse.

Dalit Mobilization and BAMCEF

Parallel to OBC assertion, the Dalits also began organizing politically. The formation of the Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) by Kanshi Ram in 1978 signaled a new phase. BAMCEF was not an electoral party but a socio-political organization aimed at uniting the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities under a shared identity of historical oppression^[^5]. It laid the ideological foundation for a future Dalit-centric political movement in UP.

III. The Mandal Era and Caste Explosion (1980–1990): Caste Becomes Central to Politics

The Mandal Commission and Political Upheaval

The most decisive moment in caste-politics integration came with the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations in 1990 by Prime Minister V.P. Singh. Although a national development, it had profound implications for UP. The announcement of 27% reservation for OBCs in central services ignited a political churning, especially among upper castes who felt disenfranchised.⁶

This period saw the emergence of caste as a primary electoral identity. The Janata Dal and its offshoots—like the Samajwadi Party (SP) under Mulayam Singh Yadav—mobilized the OBC vote bank. Mulayam Singh's identity as a Yadav and his political outreach to OBCs solidified a new axis of power in UP, where backward castes began dominating the political narrative.⁷

Emergence of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

Simultaneously, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) under Kanshi Ram and later Mayawati emerged as a formidable force representing Dalit interests. Unlike earlier Dalit politics that relied on upper-caste patronage, the BSP offered autonomous political representation. The slogan “Bahujan Hitay, Bahujan Sukhay” encapsulated a new vision of Dalit empowerment.⁸

The BSP challenged not just Congress and BJP but also the OBC-led parties. The famous slogan “Tilak, Tarazu aur Talwar – Inko maaro joote chaar” reflected its strong anti-upper caste stand in the early years.⁹ This rhetoric resonated with Dalits who had historically faced exclusion and humiliation.

IV. The 1990s: Identity Consolidation and Caste Coalitions

Mandal vs Mandir: Polarization of Politics

The 1990s also saw the rise of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The movement, while framed as a religious mobilization, had strong caste undertones. BJP's core support came from upper castes, and the Mandir agenda appealed to their cultural insecurities following Mandal.¹⁰

The state witnessed communal tensions culminating in the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. This event polarized the electorate along religious as well as caste lines. SP and BSP positioned themselves as protectors of secularism and social justice, while the BJP emerged as the champion of Hindu nationalism. Caste became intricately linked with religious identity in electoral narratives.

SP-BSP Dynamics and Social Engineering

In 1993, SP and BSP forged an alliance to defeat BJP, showcasing an experiment in OBC-Dalit unity. They campaigned on the slogan “Mile Mulayam-Kanshi Ram, Hawa mein ud gaye Jai Shri Ram.” The alliance won power, and Mulayam Singh Yadav became Chief Minister.¹¹ However, deep-rooted mistrust and an infamous guest house incident in 1995—where Mayawati was allegedly attacked by SP workers—led to a break-up.

After this, Mayawati steered BSP towards ‘social engineering’—a strategy of forging alliances with Brahmins and other upper castes to expand the support base. This was a pragmatic shift from confrontation to coalition, reflecting the maturing of caste politics in UP.¹²

V. The Second Phase of Social Engineering and Strategic Realignment (1995–2000)

Mayawati's Social Engineering Strategy

Following the collapse of the SP-BSP alliance in 1995, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), under Mayawati's leadership, entered a transformative phase. The party strategically reoriented its approach to caste mobilization. Mayawati, with Kanshi Ram's ideological backing, launched the concept of “Bahujan + Sarvajan”—a blend of Dalits with select upper-caste and minority groups.¹³

The BSP realized that sole reliance on the Dalit

vote (~21% in UP) was insufficient for capturing power. Hence, they reached out to Brahmins, Banias, and even Thakurs through calibrated messaging and candidate selection. This was a significant shift from the earlier antagonistic slogans aimed at upper castes.¹⁴

This phase saw the famous slogan, “Haathi Nahi Ganesh Hai, Brahma Vishnu Mahesh Hai”, portraying the party symbol (the elephant) in mythological terms to appeal to Hindu sentiment, especially among the upper castes.¹⁵ This rebranding diluted the anti-upper caste image and made BSP palatable to broader caste coalitions.

Mayawati’s Tenure as Chief Minister

In 1995, Mayawati became the first Dalit woman Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh with outside support from the BJP. This alliance was paradoxical—BSP stood for Dalit assertion while BJP represented upper-caste Hindu consolidation. However, it served both parties’ interests. The BJP could project itself as inclusive, and BSP gained administrative legitimacy.¹⁶

Mayawati’s brief tenure focused on symbolic assertion of Dalit pride—renaming districts after Dalit icons, building Ambedkar parks, and promoting Dalit officers in bureaucracy. While critics accused her of tokenism, these measures had a strong psychological impact on marginalized communities.¹⁷

Politics of Representation and Bureaucracy

Another aspect of caste-politics integration was seen in the bureaucratic appointments and governance structure. Chief Ministers began allocating key administrative positions based on caste equations. “Thakur-Brahmin axis” in bureaucracy was challenged by the rise of OBC and Dalit officers, especially under BSP and SP regimes.¹⁸

Political power was now not just about electoral wins but also about representation in civil services, police, and state commissions. This institutionalization of caste identity reflected deep-rooted politicization at all levels of governance.

VI. Socio-Political Consequences of Caste Politicization

Empowerment and Inclusion

The most visible outcome of caste politicization was the democratization of power. Historically marginalized groups—Dalits and OBCs—found

space in legislative assemblies, political parties, and even chief ministerial posts. UP became one of the few states to produce OBC (Mulayam Singh Yadav) and Dalit (Mayawati) Chief Ministers by the 1990s.¹⁹

Political visibility also led to greater policy focus on rural development, social justice, and targeted welfare schemes. Reservations in panchayats, employment schemes for SCs/STs, and increased funding for educational institutions catering to backward communities were outcomes of this new power structure.

Identity Politics and Vote Bank Consolidation

However, the flip side of caste politicization was the entrenchment of identity politics. Political parties began viewing communities as “vote banks” rather than citizens. Campaigns often appealed to caste pride, historical injustices, or ancestral leaders rather than developmental visions.

The caste-wise distribution of tickets became a norm. Each party prepared caste arithmetic: how many Jatavs, Yadavs, Brahmins, etc., would vote and what caste the candidate should belong to. This commodification of caste identity further fractured social cohesion.²⁰

Caste Violence and Polarization

Caste-based political mobilization also led to inter-caste tensions and occasional violence. Assertion by Dalits was often met with upper-caste backlash, especially in rural areas. Land disputes, inter-caste marriages, and quota benefits led to localized caste clashes.²¹

Moreover, the Mandir-Mandal divide sharpened fault lines. Dalits and OBCs often found themselves on the opposite side of upper-caste-led Hindu consolidation. Thus, while caste assertion brought visibility, it also fostered mutual suspicion and polarization.

VII. Role of Caste-Based Political Parties

Samajwadi Party (SP)

Founded by Mulayam Singh Yadav in 1992 after a split in Janata Dal, SP positioned itself as a party of social justice and backward caste empowerment. Its core support base comprised Yadavs, Muslims, and other backward castes.²²

The SP’s political strategy included opposing Hindutva politics, resisting privatization, and promoting

reservation for OBCs. Mulayam Singh's opposition to the Babri demolition and his "Maulana Mulayam" image won him minority votes, creating a durable M-Y (Muslim-Yadav) alliance.²³

However, SP also faced criticism for favoritism towards the Yadav community in police postings and public jobs, which alienated non-Yadav OBCs.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

Under Mayawati, BSP transitioned from protest movement to ruling party. Its ideological foundation, laid by Kanshi Ram, stressed on "social transformation and economic emancipation" of Bahujans (SCs, STs, OBCs, and minorities).

The BSP focused on symbolic assertion, such as statues of Dalit icons, as well as realpolitik through alliances with both BJP and Congress when needed. Despite criticism for its upper-caste alignments, BSP succeeded in broadening Dalit political imagination.²⁴

VIII. Electoral Trends and Caste Equations in UP (1952–2000)

1952–1967: Congress dominance with upper-caste support and marginal inclusion of Dalits.

1967–1989: Rise of regional parties like Bharatiya Kranti Dal and Janata Dal representing OBC interests.

1990–1993: Mandal effect; consolidation of OBC vote behind SP and JD, Dalits behind BSP.

1993–2000: Experiments in coalition politics; SP-BSP combine, BJP-BSP combine, caste-religion overlap intensified.

This timeline reflects how electoral outcomes became increasingly tied to caste mobilization, with voters aligning along caste lines rather than policy preferences.

IX. The Role of Leadership and Charismatic Mobilization

Leaders played a key role in caste politicization. Charan Singh, Kanshi Ram, Mayawati, and Mulayam Singh Yadav crafted caste-based political narratives that resonated deeply with their communities.

Charan Singh represented peasant OBC assertion and anti-Congress rural identity.

Kanshi Ram introduced the concept of "Bahujan" unity and ideological activism.

Mayawati embodied symbolic Dalit pride and executive power.

Mulayam Singh Yadav mastered backward-

Muslim coalition politics with grassroots charisma.

These leaders became not just political figures but symbols of identity for their respective communities.

X. Comparative Reflections and Broader Implications

Caste as a Tool of Empowerment and Division

The politicization of caste in Uttar Pradesh (UP) from 1947 to 2000 reveals a dual character. On one hand, it empowered marginalized communities, enabling Dalits and OBCs to rise in politics, bureaucracy, and civil society. On the other, it institutionalized caste as the primary axis of identity, often sidelining developmental, economic, and issue-based politics.

While democracy demands representation, caste politics in UP tended to reduce representation to tokenism or vote arithmetic. Instead of empowering all backward sections, it often led to the dominance of specific sub-castes, such as Yadavs among OBCs or Jatavs among Dalits.²⁵

Shift in Political Culture

The long-term impact of caste politics was a shift from ideology to identity, where parties based their legitimacy more on the caste of candidates and voters than on coherent policies or manifestos. Electoral success became a function of caste-based coalition engineering rather than public service delivery.²⁶

Moreover, caste-based parties, once seen as vehicles for social transformation, began resembling the very elite structures they opposed—hierarchical, centralised, and status-quoist. The BSP's alliances with BJP and the SP's dynastic politics show how caste mobilization often morphed into elite bargaining.

XI. Intersectionality: Caste, Class, and Religion

Caste-Class Overlap

In many rural parts of UP, caste hierarchies also mirrored class hierarchies. Land-owning castes like Thakurs, Brahmins, and Yadavs held not just political but economic dominance. Dalits and lower OBCs remained landless or marginal farmers. Thus, while caste assertion brought political visibility, economic inequality persisted.²⁷

The use of caste in politics often failed to address structural economic reforms, like land redistribution or agrarian wage justice. As a result, many subaltern

castes, despite being mobilized, did not benefit economically.

Caste and Religion: A Fragile Equation

Another dimension was the overlap between caste and religious identity. The BJP's Hindutva politics tried to unify Hindus under a single religious banner, diluting caste differences. However, this unity was often superficial. Dalits and backward castes remained excluded from temple hierarchies and upper-caste Hindu rituals, leading to contradictions in BJP's social engineering.²⁸

Parties like SP and BSP tried to counter this by building Dalit-Muslim or OBC-Muslim alliances, but communal tensions (e.g., post-Babri riots) disrupted these fragile equations. Caste and religion thus operated in both synergistic and conflictual ways in UP politics.

XII. Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

Institutionalization of Caste Census and Quotas

The caste politics of this period laid the groundwork for demands for caste census and sub-categorization of OBCs. Parties began advocating for reservation within reservation—for non-Yadav OBCs, non-Jatav Dalits, etc., to address intra-group inequalities.²⁹

These debates continue into the 21st century and reflect how caste, far from becoming irrelevant, has become administratively and politically institutionalized.

Changing Nature of Caste Alliances

Post-2000, parties like BJP adopted new strategies of non-dominant caste inclusion, targeting Nishads, Mauryas, and Kurmis through welfare schemes and symbolic representation. This second-generation caste engineering was made possible due

to the groundwork laid between 1947 and 2000.³⁰

Meanwhile, urbanization, education, and migration have partially diluted caste boundaries, but in electoral politics—especially in rural UP—caste remains a powerful mobilizing identity.

XIII. Conclusion

The period between 1947 and 2000 in Uttar Pradesh's political history is marked by the gradual transformation of caste from a static social identity into a dynamic political resource. What began as upper-caste domination under Congress evolved into a more competitive, fragmented, and participatory political order involving OBCs, Dalits, and minorities.

The Mandal era redefined caste as a rights-based claim rather than a stigma, while the BSP and SP ensured that marginalized communities were no longer passive recipients but active claimants in state power. Yet, this transformation was not without flaws—vote bank politics, intra-caste inequalities, and communal overtones marred the emancipatory potential.

Thus, the politicization of caste in UP reflects a paradox: it democratized access to power for the marginalized, but also hardened identities, perpetuated divisions, and commodified representation. Its legacy continues to shape Indian politics in the 21st century, making UP not just the heartland of electoral politics but also the crucible of caste democracy.

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डॉ. राजकुमार राजन*



डॉ. सायमा इकबाल**

हिंदी कहानियों में राष्ट्रियता का बोध

‘राष्ट्रियता’ की अवधारणा आधुनिक युग की देन है। यद्यपि राष्ट्रियता की भावना व्यावहारिक तौर पर भारतीय सभ्यता में प्राचीन काल से विद्यमान है, लेकिन राष्ट्रियता की सैद्धान्तिकी हिन्दी कहानियों में आधुनिक युग में अपना आकार ग्रहण करता है। राष्ट्रियता को ‘राष्ट्रवाद’ से भी चिन्हित किया जाता है। ‘राष्ट्रवाद’ के केंद्र में ‘राष्ट्र’ है। राष्ट्र अंग्रेजी शब्द 'NATION' से बना है। ‘राष्ट्र’ एक भौगोलिक ईकाई है, जो एक खास सीमा क्षेत्र में रहकर अपने आपको परिभाषित करता है लेकिन राष्ट्रवाद के व्यापकता में राजनीतिक भावना दबी रहती है, जिसका केंद्र बिंदु ‘राजनीतिक स्वाधीनता’ है। राष्ट्र एक भौगोलिक ईकाई है, जो एक-दूसरे के भावनाओं से जुड़े रहते हैं। राष्ट्र में व्यक्ति व्यक्ति के बीच सामुदायिक एकता की भावना प्रबल होती है। अपने राष्ट्र के प्रति अगाध प्रेम और श्रद्धा की भावना राष्ट्रियता की मूल भावना है।

‘राष्ट्रियता’ की अवधारणा ‘फ्रांस की राज्य क्रांति’ से प्रारंभ होते हुए दुनियाँ के विभिन्न देशों में फैल चुकी है। जर्मनी और इटली में ‘राष्ट्रियता’ की उग्र भावना से फासीवाद का उदय हुआ था। यह अवधारणा सकारात्मक और नकारात्मक दोनों परिप्रेक्ष्य में संभव है। राष्ट्र के प्रति उग्र भावनाएँ नकारात्मक भाव जगाती है, जबकि राष्ट्र के प्रति सम्मान, श्रद्धा, प्रेम सकारात्मक भाव की तरफ ले जाती है। “राष्ट्रियता अथवा राष्ट्र निर्माण में जिन तत्त्वों का योगदान होता है, प्रायः वे ही तत्त्व राष्ट्रवाद के विकास में सहायक होते हैं। इन तत्त्वों में समान भौगोलिक क्षेत्र, समान नस्ल, समान सांस्कृतिक संबंध, समान भाषा और समान राजनीतिक संगठन प्रमुख हैं।”¹ निश्चित रूप से किसी भी राष्ट्र के निर्माण में उस राष्ट्र की

‘राष्ट्रियता की भावना’ का विशेष महत्त्व होता है।

भारत में ‘राष्ट्रियता’ का बोध ‘1857 के स्वाधीनता आन्दोलन’ से प्रारंभ माना जाता है। उस आन्दोलन में स्वाधीनता की आकांक्षा और पराधीनता से मुक्ति का लक्ष्य था। ‘राष्ट्रियता’ में स्वाधीनता का विशेष महत्त्व होता है। एक पराधीन राष्ट्र में स्वाधीनता की आकांक्षा उसे राष्ट्रियता की ओर ले जाती है। किसी भी राष्ट्र के विकास में उस राष्ट्र की राष्ट्रिय बोध का होना अनिवार्य शर्त है।

भारतीय चिन्तन धारा में ‘राष्ट्रवाद’ की अवधारणा ‘सर्वसमावेशी’ है। ‘अतिथि देवो भवः’ जिस देश की विराट संकल्पना हो, वहाँ राष्ट्रवाद ‘इन्क्लूसिव’ ही होगा। ‘राष्ट्र’ शब्द का प्रयोग सर्वप्रथम वेदों में उद्धृत होता है। “अपने वेदों में राष्ट्र संबंधित उल्लेख केवल एक ही स्थान पर आया है, ऐसा नहीं है। वेद चार हैं। उसमें सामवेद को छोड़कर ऋग्वेद, यजुर्वेद और अथर्ववेद में कुल मिलाकर मोटे तौर पर अगर देखा जाए तो 72 स्थान पर राष्ट्र का उल्लेख आता है।”² ऐसा नहीं है कि सिर्फ वेदों में यह शब्द आया है बल्कि ‘चाणक्य’ ने अपने ग्रंथों में भी ‘राष्ट्र’ की चर्चा की है। दरअसल भारतीय चिंतन पद्धति ‘संलग्नता के सर्वव्यापी बोध’ में है। जहाँ यूरोपीय जीवन पद्धति प्रकृति और मनुष्य को जीवन को दो भिन्न दृष्टियों से देखता है, वहाँ भारतीय चिन्तन दृष्टि दोनों को एक-दूसरे का पूरक समझती है। प्रकृति मनुष्य का दुश्मन नहीं बल्कि उसका साहचर्य है। भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद मनुष्य, प्रकृति और वसुदेव कुटुम्बकम् पर निर्मित है। राष्ट्रवाद को लेकर जो विमर्श भारत में है, दरअसल वह यूरोपीय विमर्श का हिस्सा है। यूरोपीय जीवन पद्धति और भारतीय धारणा में बुनियादी फर्क

है। यूरोपीय सामाजिक संरचना में जाति-व्यवस्था नहीं है, आर्थिक संरचना में वर्ग विभाजित राष्ट्र है। यह वर्ग आधारित संरचना भी पेशा से संलग्न नहीं रहा, इसलिए राष्ट्रवाद के नाम पर संपूर्ण राष्ट्र एकमत आसानी से हो जाता है। भारतीय सभ्यताओं में सामाजिक संरचना का वर्गीकरण जातियों में विभक्त है, यह विभाजन इस हद तक है कि प्रत्येक जाति अपने से नीचे एक और जाति ढूँढ़ लेने में गौरव का अनुभव करता है। “निस्सन्देह, भारत की वृहद सांस्कृतिक परम्परा के अन्तर में जाति व्यवस्था के चलते कठमुल्लापन, जड़वाद, अपरिवर्तनशीलता और असहाय विषमता फले-फूले। ऐसे अमानवीय तत्त्वों को धर्म और परम्परा की शास्त्र-सम्मत वैधता प्राप्त हुई और सत्ता का पूर्ण समर्थन मिला। उनके विरोध में जो आंदोलन चले, वे भी उसे दुर्बल बनाने में असफल रहे।”³ राष्ट्रवाद की यूरोपीय अवधारणा भारत में वैसा ही नहीं है, जैसा वहाँ है। भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद औपनिवेशिक शासन के विरोध के कारण उद्भव हुआ था, जबकि यूरोपीय राष्ट्रवाद राज्यों के निर्माण और संप्रभुता को सुरक्षा पर केंद्रित था।

राष्ट्रवाद एक ऐसे वैचारिकी में विश्वास करता है, जो यह मानता है कि राष्ट्र की अपनी अस्मिता, पहचान के साथ-साथ राष्ट्र को राज्य के समान्तर होना चाहिए। राष्ट्रवाद भौगोलिक सीमा को राष्ट्रीयता से जोड़ता है। राष्ट्र की आत्मनिर्भरता आत्मरक्षा से भी बढ़कर होता है। राष्ट्रवाद के सिद्धांत स्वतंत्रता को अति महत्वपूर्ण मानता है। उन सिद्धांतों में न्याय का स्थान सभी के लिए बराबर है। ऐसे उपलब्धियाँ को सर्वोपरि माना जाता है, जो राष्ट्र के निर्माण में सहायक हो। किसी भी राष्ट्र की पहचान उसकी सांस्कृतिक पहचान से भी है। सांस्कृतिक चेतना राष्ट्रवाद की ऐसी दृष्टि है, जो किसी भी राष्ट्र के नव-निर्माण में सहायक सिद्ध होता है।

राष्ट्रवाद का अभ्युदय 19वीं सदी के शुरुआत से माना जाता है, कुछ विद्वान् 18वीं सदी के अंत से भी इसकी शुरुआत मानते हैं। दरअसल राष्ट्रवाद की अवधारणा फ्रांसीसी क्रांति की देन है। अमेरिकी स्वतंत्रता को भी कुछ विद्वान प्रस्तावित राष्ट्रवाद के अभ्युदय के रूपों में प्रस्तावित करता है। राष्ट्रवाद के सशक्त प्रतीकों में राष्ट्रीय गीत, राष्ट्रीय गान, उस राष्ट्र की परम्पराओं, मिथकों, राष्ट्रीय भंडा उसकी पहचान है। राष्ट्रवाद एक ऐसा भाव है, जो राष्ट्र में रहने वाले लोगों के लिए उसकी एकता की प्रतिबद्धता को सीमा क्षेत्र में बाँधता है। जिस तरह लोकतंत्र को यूरोप से आयातित माना जाता है, उसी तरह

राष्ट्रवाद को भी यूरोप की देन माना जाता है। राष्ट्रवाद के प्रतिपादक के रूप में जर्मन राष्ट्रवादी विद्वान् जॉन गॉटेन्ड हर्डर को माना जाता है, जिन्होंने सर्वप्रथम ‘जर्मन राष्ट्रवाद’ को स्थापित किया था। राष्ट्रवाद की आलोचना भी होती है क्योंकि सांस्कृतिक विविधता राष्ट्रवाद में खत्म होने की संभावना रहती है। साथ ही अल्पसंख्यक समूहों की स्वायत्तता पर बड़ा खतरा शुरू हो जाता है। राष्ट्र की विशाल परंपराओं के समूह में छोटे परम्पराओं पर बड़ा संकट खड़ा हो जाता है। जो जमीनें, जंगल और जल क्षेत्र पर आदिवासी का अधिकार होता है, उसको छीनकर राष्ट्रीय संसाधन घोषित करना ‘राष्ट्रवादी’ दृष्टि नहीं हो सकती है।

राष्ट्रवाद राष्ट्र की उन मूल्यों को स्थापित करता है, जो राष्ट्र की हितों की सुरक्षा करता है। अपने राष्ट्र के प्रति वफादार रहना, राष्ट्रीय प्रेम, राष्ट्रीय एकता, राष्ट्रीयता की पहचान होती है। राष्ट्रीयता का आधार उस राष्ट्र के लोगों के पारस्परिक प्रेम, सौहार्द, एकता की प्रतिबद्धता में होती है। किसी भी राष्ट्र की राष्ट्रीयता की भावना ही उस राष्ट्र को सर्वोच्च बनाता है। राष्ट्र के प्रति समर्पण और निष्ठा उस राष्ट्र को महान बनाता है। राष्ट्रवाद के उद्देश्यों में राष्ट्र की संप्रभुता की रक्षा सर्वोपरि होता है। हमारे देश में राष्ट्र की पहचान राष्ट्रीय प्रतीकों में भी है। भारतीय सभ्यता भारतीयता में सुरक्षित है। भारतीयता का आत्मबोध हमारे अतीत और परम्पराओं में स्थित है। भारतीय बहुविध संस्कृति का देश है। विविधता में एकता उसका अभिन्न हिस्सा है। हमारे यहाँ अलग-अलग नस्लें, जातियाँ, वर्ग, सम्प्रदाय सभी एक साथ अपनी-अपनी संस्कृति की अस्मिता बोध के साथ रहते हैं। विभिन्न परम्पराएँ, रीति-रिवाज, पर्व, त्योहार के बावजूद राष्ट्रवाद के सूत्र में बंधना भारतीय प्रकृति की विशिष्ट विशेषता है। भारतीय संस्कृति में ‘संलग्नता का सर्वव्यापी बोध’ है। हम लोग सभी वर्गों, सम्प्रदायों से प्रकृति प्रदत्त जुड़ते हैं। जिसका आवरण ऊपर से नहीं बल्कि भीतरी अंतश्चेतना से प्रेरित है। हमारे राष्ट्र में भाषाई विविधता हर भौगोलिक इकाई में परिवर्तित हो जाता है, यह भाषाई विविधता राष्ट्रवाद की प्रमुख इकाई है। राष्ट्र के प्रति यह एक ऐसी भावना है, जो भिन्न-भिन्न भाषाओं, बोलियाँ के बावजूद हमें ‘राष्ट्रवाद’ में एकीकृत कर देता है। भारतीय जनमानस में कई तरह की असमानताएँ हैं, फिर भी एकता है। ‘राष्ट्रवाद’ के अन्तर्गत यह गैर-बराबरी सामाजिक संरचना ‘सामाजिक न्याय’ के समन्वय में सम्मिलित हो जाता है। भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद कई

उतार-चढ़ाव से गुजर चुका है, भारत कई छोटे-छोटे रियासतों का समुच्चय रहा है लेकिन आजादी के बाद हमारे राष्ट्रवादी नेताओं ने भिन्न-भिन्न रियासतों को एकीकृत करने में सफल हुए। यह एकीकृत भावनाएं राष्ट्रवाद का अभ्युदय है।

भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद का उभार औपनिवेशिक काल से प्रारंभ होता है। जब ब्रिटिशर्स दो सौ वर्षों से हमारे देश पर शासन कर रहा था। हमारा देश अंग्रेजों का गुलाम था। अंग्रेजों के द्वारा जिस तरह से हुकूमत चलाया जा रहा था, वह अन्याय एवं शोषण का केंद्र था। अंग्रेजों के शोषणकारी नीतियों से भारतीय जनमानस में घनघोर असंतोष फैल रहा था। भारतीय जनमानस में यह संदेश फैल रहा था कि हमारा जनतंत्र गुलामी के जंजीरों में बंधा है। अंग्रेजी हुकूमत हमारे देश का शोषण करके अपने खजाने भर रही थी। उनकी शोषणकारी नीतियों से भारत और भी गरीब होते जा रहा था। भारतीय आम जनता पर टैक्स इस तरह लगाये जा रहे थे, जैसे भारतीय जनता और सरकार के बीच कोई सरोकार ही नहीं हो। ऐसी परिस्थितियों में जनता के अंदर एक आत्मस्वाभिमान का भाव जगना स्वाभाविक हो जाता है। पराधीनता का बोध मनुष्य को पीड़ा से भर देता है। असहाय जनता के पास खोने के लिए कुछ बचा नहीं था, जबकि पाने के लिए पूरा संसार। अपने संसार को एक नई ऊँचाई देने के लिए भारतीय जनमानस में एक नई उमंग और उत्साह का संचार हुआ। यह उत्साह स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन के रूप में 'भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद' का उद्भव और उदय का कारण बना। 'भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद' का यह प्रथम राजनीतिक उद्भव भारतीय सभ्यता में 'इतिहास का हस्तक्षेप' था। यह हस्तक्षेप पराधीनता से मुक्ति और स्वतंत्रता की आकांक्षा थी। स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन ने भारतीय अस्मिता बोध को जगा दिया। भारतीय अस्मिता बोध 'राष्ट्रवाद' की प्रथम सीढ़ी है। भारतीय जनमानस 'राष्ट्रवाद' के बैनर तले स्वाधीनता आंदोलन की लड़ाई लड़ी। यही कारण था कि भारतीय सामाजिक संरचना में विभिन्नता होते हुए भी 'राष्ट्र' के नाम पर सभी एकजुट हो गए। स्वाधीनता आंदोलन ने 'राष्ट्रवाद' के नाम पर एकता और देश के प्रति समर्पण की भावना जगाने में सहायक सिद्ध हुआ। स्वाधीनता आंदोलन में राष्ट्र के अतीत के गौरव को नायक के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया। 'भारतीय राष्ट्रवाद' का प्रभाव मनुष्य जीवन के विभिन्न पहलुओं में दिखाई देता है। स्वाधीनता के बाद 'भारतीयता का बोध' सर्वव्यापी रूप में उभरा और यह भावना जीवन के विविध क्षेत्रों के हिस्सेदार बने। खासकर साहित्य, कला, संस्कृति, सृजन में

राष्ट्रवाद की अनुगूंज सुनाई देने लगा। हिन्दी कहानियों में राष्ट्रवाद का उभार इन्हीं कारणों से हुआ है।

स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन में 'राष्ट्रवाद' की भावना को जन-जन तक पहुँचाने में 'हिन्दी' भाषा की बहुत बड़ी भूमिका रही है। भारत में 'हिन्दी' भाषा में यह सामर्थ्य है, जो भाषाएँ बहुसंख्यक जनता तक 'राष्ट्रवाद' के संदेश को जन-जन तक पहुँचा सके। हिन्दी भाषा संप्रेषण का सबसे सशक्त माध्यम था क्योंकि हमारे देश में बहुत बड़ी जनसंख्या हिन्दी में बोली और समझी जाती है। हिन्दी भाषा साहित्य और पत्रकारिता के माध्यम से ना केवल एकता स्थापित किया बल्कि जन जागृति फैलाने का भी माध्यम बना। उस समय के साहित्यकार साहित्य के साथ-साथ पत्रकारिता भी करते थे। साहित्यकार अपनी रचनाओं में 'राष्ट्रवाद' की भावनाओं को जागृत करते थे और राष्ट्रीय स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के लिए प्रेरित भी करते थे। राष्ट्रीय स्वाधीनता आंदोलन में हिन्दी साहित्य ने ब्रिटिश शोषण और दमनकारी नीतियों के विरुद्ध संघर्ष की प्रेरणा दी। महात्मा गाँधी हिन्दी के प्रबल समर्थक थे, उन्होंने स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के अभिव्यक्ति के लिए हिन्दी भाषा का चयन किया क्योंकि हमारे राष्ट्र में हिन्दी ही एकमात्र भाषा है, जो राष्ट्र को एकता के सूत्र में बाँध सकता है। इसलिए भाषा के रूप में हिन्दी की प्रतिबद्धता राष्ट्रीय एकता में निहित है।

हिन्दी साहित्य में 'भारतेन्दु युग' को आधुनिक काल का प्रवेश द्वार कहा जाता है। आधुनिक युग को गद्य काल भी कहा जाता है। हिन्दी साहित्य में गद्य विधा की भाषा खड़ी बोली हिन्दी हो गई। कथा साहित्य की रचनाएँ खड़ी-बोली में अभिव्यक्त होकर राष्ट्रीय एकता की प्रतीक बन गई। भारतेन्दु का व्यक्तित्व 'पुनर्जागरण' का पर्याय है। उन्होंने साहित्य के माध्यम से पुनर्जागरण की जागृति को सामान्य जन तक पहुँचाया। वे देश की राजनीति को साहित्य की रचनाओं में उद्धृत किए। "भारतेन्दु के बारे में कहा जा सकता है कि वे ऐसे भक्त थे जो समकालीन राजनीति पर पूरी दृष्टि रखते थे और उनकी स्वप्न इस पूरी स्थिति में से निष्पन्न होती है।"¹⁴ भारतेन्दु युग में गद्य साहित्य में सबसे अधिक नाटकों का सृजन हुआ। नाटक की विशिष्टता उसकी पठनीयता और दृश्यावलोकन में है। इसलिए उसकी पहुँच साक्षर और निरक्षर लोगों तक थी। कथा साहित्य की विभिन्न विधाओं में नाटक, एकांकी, उपन्यास, कहानी, रेखाचित्र, संस्मरण, आत्मकथा आदि है।

गद्य साहित्य का एक महत्वपूर्ण एवं सशक्त माध्यम हिन्दी

कहानी भी है। हिन्दी कहानी को अंग्रेजी साहित्य में 'शार्ट स्टोरी' कहा जाता है। हिन्दी कहानी छोटी मुँह बड़ी बात करती है। "हिन्दी की प्रारम्भिक कहानियों में वर्णनात्मकता प्रमुख थी। देश और काल का उपयोग सामान्य शैली में प्रस्तुत था। किन्तु आगे चलकर चलकर हिन्दी कहानी में विषय वस्तु और शिल्पगत परिपक्वता में विविधता परिलक्षित होने लगी।"⁵ हिन्दी कहानी की संवेदना और शिल्प, सामाजिक मूल्यों की प्रतिबद्धता है, जो जनता की संचित प्रतिबिम्ब की तरह परिवर्तित होते रहते हैं। हिन्दी कहानी के कई प्रकार परिलक्षित होते हैं। आंचलिक कहानियों में आंचलिकता का विशेष महत्व होता है। उसका नायक 'अंचल विशेष' होता है। जबकि चरित्र प्रधान कहानियों में कोई व्यक्ति विशेष नायक होता है। प्रेमचंद हिन्दी कहानी के केंद्र में है। उनकी कहानियाँ परम्परागत कहानी लेखन को एक नई ऊँचाई तक ले गईं, कहानियाँ लेखन में प्रेमचंद ग्रामीण परिवेश की संवेदनाओं को सरलता एवं सहजता के साथ रचते। वे जीवन मूल्यों की आदर्शवादिता को स्थापित करते हैं। उनकी कहानियाँ आज के दौर में जहाँ सामाजिक आदर्श को स्थापित करता है। वहाँ उनके मूल्यों की आवश्यकता होती है। "प्रेमचंद की कहानियाँ अपने विधान में उनके उपन्यासों से अधिक निर्दोष है। जीवन के हर पक्ष के चित्र उनमें अंकित हुए हैं। कुल मिलाकर समकालीन जीवन के प्रति दृष्टि कही जा सकती हैं और पारिवारिक जीवन के आदर्श यहाँ भी केंद्र में हैं।"⁶ प्रेमचंद जिस समय कहानी लिख रहे थे, वह समय भारत का पराधीनता का दौर था। ब्रिटिशर्स हुकूमत भारत का शोषण तो कर ही रहा था, उसके साथ-साथ मानसिक गुलामी उसके नीतियाँ का अहम् हिस्सा था। भारतेन्दु युग और उसके बाद के युगों में 'राष्ट्रवाद' की जो अनुगूँज साहित्य में प्रवाहित होती है, वह भारतीय राष्ट्रीय स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के लिए 'मील का पत्थर' साबित हुआ। नाटकों के माध्यम से निरक्षर जनता तक पहुँचना और उनको राष्ट्रीय स्वाधीनता के प्रति अलख जगाना एक राष्ट्रीय चेतना का प्रतीक था। राष्ट्रीय स्वाधीनता आंदोलन जो गाँधी जी के नेतृत्व में चल रहा था, उसका सीधा प्रभाव प्रेमचंद के लेखन में है। जनता पर बढ़ता टैक्स के कारण उत्पन्न आर्थिक संकट भारत पर बोझ बनता जा रहा था, यह उल्लेख प्रेमचंद की कहानियों में है।

हिन्दी कहानियों में राष्ट्रीयता का बोध पुनर्जागरण की देन है। पुनर्जागरण काल हिन्दी साहित्य का भारतेन्दु युग से माना जा सकता है। वह युग गद्य साहित्य का प्रारम्भिक युग भी है।

भारतेन्दु युग में 'स्वतंत्रता' का बोध साहित्य के लिए प्रेरणा का प्रमुख-स्रोत है। आधुनिक युग में 'कहानी' साहित्य की विधाओं में सबसे प्रबल एवं सशक्त में से एक है। कहानियों की संवेदना जब राष्ट्रीयता की भावधारा में समन्वय हो जाती है, तब राष्ट्रीयता की भावना का उत्कर्ष होता है। प्रेमचंद की प्रथम कही जाने वाली कहानियाँ, जो 1907 में 'जमाना' में प्रकाशित हुई थी। यह कहानी उनका कहानी संग्रह 'सोजे वतन' में संकलित है। 'दुनिया का सबसे अनमोल रत्न' कहानी में राष्ट्रीयता का बोध सरलता एवं सहजता से दृष्टिगोचर होता है। "दुनिया का सबसे अनमोल रत्न एक प्रेम कहानी है, बिल्कुल परम्परागत प्रेम कहानी जिसमें एक प्रेमिका अपने प्रेमी से विवाह करने के लिए शर्त रखती है कि वह उसके लिए दुनिया का सबसे अनमोल रत्न लाकर दे तभी वह उससे विवाह करेगी। राष्ट्रप्रेम इस प्रेम कथा की अंतर्धारा है।"⁷ 'दिलफिगार' कहानी का नायक है। नामक उस अनमोल रत्न को ढूँढ़ने निकल पड़ता है। ढूँढ़ते-ढूँढ़ते वही भारत के सरहदों में प्रवेश कर जाता है। वहाँ उसे एक भारतीय सैनिक खून से सना हुआ दिखाई पड़ता है। दिलफिगार के वहाँ पहुँचते ही वीर सैनिक ने कहा 'मैं अपनी माँ का बेटा' और 'भारत का सपूत' हूँ।" 'दिलफिगार' उस वीर सपूत सैनिक के खून का कतरा अपने हथेली पर लेकर अपने प्रेमिका को देता है। उसकी प्रेमिका उसे अपना लेती है और कहती है, 'यही है दुनिया का अनमोल रत्न'। प्रेमचंद की यह कहानी देशभक्ति एवं राष्ट्रीयता से प्रेरित है।

प्रेमचंद की अन्य कहानियों में 'यही मेरा वतन है' एक ऐसी कहानी है, जो एक ऐसे भारतीय व्यक्ति की कथा है, जो बहुत ही कम उम्र में अमेरिका चला जाता है। लेकिन अमेरिका में रहते उए अकूत सम्पत्ति उसे संतुष्टि नहीं दे पाता है। पुनः भारत वह लौट आता है। '90' साल के उम्र में लौटते हुए बदलते भारत को देखकर उसकी राष्ट्रीय भावना देश को आजाद कराने की इच्छा प्रबल हो जाती है। 'रानी सारंधा' राष्ट्रीय प्रेम से उद्भूत कहानी है। कहानी में सारंधा का देश के प्रति आत्मस्वाभिमान, देश प्रेम और अंग्रेजों के प्रति विद्रोह की भावना का फलीभूत होना 'राष्ट्रीयता' की भावना का सशक्त होना है। स्वाधीनता आंदोलन गाँधी जी के नेतृत्व में चल रहा था। उसी समय गाँधी जी के विचारों को साहित्य में खासकर कहानियाँ में उस समय के कहानीकारों ने अपनाया। प्रेमचंद की कहानियों में राष्ट्रीयता का बोध यथार्थ के रूप में है।

उनकी अनेक कहानियाँ राष्ट्रीयता के बोध को जागृत करती हैं। उनमें हैं सांसारिक प्रेम और देश प्रेम, शतरंज के खिलाड़ी, जेल, पत्नी से पति, जुलूस, पंच परमेश्वर, नमक का दारोगा आदि कहानियाँ हैं। प्रेमचंद की कहानियों में देश प्रेम और राष्ट्रप्रेम का भाव उनकी गाँधीवादी दृष्टि को उजागर करती है।

बहुत कम कहानियाँ लिखकर अमर कहानीकारों में चन्द्रधर शर्मा 'गुलेरी' की गिनती होती है। चन्द्रधर शर्मा 'गुलेरी' हिन्दी साहित्य के सशक्त गद्यकार और गंभीर चिंतक भी हैं। 'गुलेरी' जी हिन्दी में तीन कहानियाँ लिखकर अमर हो गए, उनमें से 'उसने कहा था' कालजयी कहानी है। 'उसने कहा था' प्रेम और राष्ट्रीय चेतना के संदर्भ को प्रथम विश्वयुद्ध की पृष्ठभूमि में लिखी गई है। कहानी का मुख्य किरदार लहना सिंह प्रेम में दिए गए वचन को निभाहने के लिए अपना जीवन का त्याग कर देता है। कहानी के कथाओं में राष्ट्रीयता का भाव युद्ध के माहौल, खंदकों, टंड, कीचड़ ओर गोलियों के बीच सैनिकों के संघर्ष का यथार्थ चित्रण करता है। "कहानी की संरचना की दृष्टि से चन्द्रधर शर्मा 'गुलेरी' की कहानी 'उसने कहा था' विकास के सामान्य नियम के रूप में नहीं, बल्कि अपवाद के रूप में सामने आती है।"⁸ गुलेरी जी की कहानियाँ 'उसने कहा था' आज भी हिन्दी साहित्य की अमर कहानियों में शृंखलाबद्ध है।

1857 का राष्ट्रीय आंदोलन प्रथम स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन है। उन आंदोलन का राष्ट्रीय प्रभाव भारतीय जनमानस पर गहराई से पड़ा था। हिन्दी साहित्य में बेचन शर्मा 'उग्र' को इसका ऐतिहासिक बोध था। इसलिए उग्र ने इस आंदोलन से प्रभावित होकर कई कहानियाँ लिखी थी, उनमें हैं - रेन ऑफ़ टेरर, नादिरशाही, एक भीषण स्मृति, कालकोठरी आदि कहानियाँ हैं।

विश्वम्भरनाथ शर्मा 'कौशिक' की कहानियों में स्वाधीनता आंदोलन की अनुगूँज सुनाई देती है। 'लीडरी का पेशा' (1924) और 'स्वतंत्रता' (1929) में स्वाधीनता आंदोलन का उल्लेख हुआ है। जयशंकर प्रसाद के कहानियों में राष्ट्रीय चेतना का प्रभाव लक्षित होता है। उनकी ऐतिहासिक दृष्टि कहानियों को वर्तमान के लिए उपयोगी बना देता है। "छायावाद-युग के अनंतर हिन्दी-कहानी के आरंभ में प्रगतिवादी और व्यक्तिवादी प्रवृत्तियाँ दिखायी दीं।"⁹ स्वतंत्रता के बाद हिन्दी कहानियों में 'राष्ट्रीयता का बोध' अज्ञेय, इलाचंद्र जोशी, यशपाल, विष्णु

प्रभाकर, अमृतराय, मोहन राकेश, राजेन्द्र यादव की कहानियों में उद्भूत है।

समकालीन दौर में हिन्दी कहानियों में भूमंडलीय संस्कृति एवं राष्ट्रीय अस्मिता का बोध है। बाजारवाद, उदारीकरण के प्रभाव से भारतीय सम्भता में जो सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रवाद का जन्म हुआ है, आज की कहानियाँ इसके पक्ष लिखी जा रही है।

उत्तर-आधुनिकता के दौर में हिन्दी साहित्य में अस्मितामूलक विमर्श का दौर चल रहा है। उनमें दलित विमर्श, आदिवासी विमर्श और स्त्री विमर्श प्रमुखतः साहित्य के केन्द्र में है। दलित विमर्श की वैचारिकी अम्बेडकर के विचारों से आकार ग्रहण करता है। सदियों से जो वर्ग हाशिए पर रहा है, उस वर्ग में जब राजनैतिक, सामाजिक आत्मविश्वास का उभार आया तो अपने अनुभव को स्वयं लिखकर यह प्रमाणित किया कि उनके अंदर भी प्रतिभा है। "दलित लेखक का निजी मूलतः सामाजिक और राजनीतिक होता है। दलित लेखक का आख्यान निज से आरंभ जरूर होता है लेकिन निजी के दायरे में रहता नहीं है। वह हमेशा सामाजिक-राजनीतिक दायरे में विचरण करता है।"¹⁰

आदिवासी विमर्श और स्त्री विमर्श भी अपनी-अपनी अस्मिताओं को संरक्षण करते हुए अपनी निजता को सुरक्षित करता है। आज के दौर में दोनों विमर्श राष्ट्रीयता की भावना को राष्ट्र के प्रति समर्पित करता है। 'राष्ट्र' को सर्वोपरि मानते हुए अपनी रचनाओं में अपने अनुभव को राष्ट्र के अनुभव से सामंजस्य कर रहा है।

हिन्दी कहानियों में राष्ट्रीयता का बोध भारतीय सभ्यता का यथार्थ चित्रण है। आधुनिक युग से प्रारंभ होकर हिन्दी कहानियाँ कई मार्ग से गुजरकर यहाँ तक पहुँची है। हिन्दी कहानी का यह अनुभव संसार निसंदेह राष्ट्र के प्रति प्रेमभाव होते हुए राष्ट्रीयता के बोध को जागृत करने में अग्रणीय भूमिका में है। हिन्दी कहानी अपनी सामर्थ्य एवं सीमा में राष्ट्रीय चेतना की अभिव्यक्ति है।

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सन्दर्भ सूची

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डॉ. सुनीता दुरंगल

अनछुए भावों का संसार और 'अकाल में सारस'

‘अकाल में सारस’ केदारनाथ सिंह की रचनाओं में सर्वाधिक अपनी ओर खींचती है जो अपनी एक अलग भूमिका अदा कर रही थी। समीक्षात्मक कृति में केदारनाथ सिंह समेट लेते हैं अपना पूरा का पूरा वजूद, जहाँ-जो शहरों की भागमभाग से दूर अपनी एक अलग दुनिया रच रहा है। जो है जैसा है वैसा ही-को रचते हुए केदारनाथ सिंह गढ़ लेते हैं कुछेक नए बिंब, नए प्रतीक, नए भाव लोक में जो अब तक अछूता ही रहा, जिस और हम देखने से बचना चाह रहे हो उसी ओर केदारनाथ सिंह की अकाल में सारस काव्य रचना का संसार खींच ले आता है। और एक स्वर सुनाई पड़ता है-

हम मंडी नहीं जाएंगे।

खलिहान से उठते हुए

कहते हैं दाने

जायेंगे तो फिर लौटकर नहीं आएँगे

जाते-जाते

कहते जाते हैं दाने

अगर आये भी

तो तुम

पहचान नहीं पाओगे। (दाने, पृष्ठ 16)

अबतक शायद हो किसी अन्य कवि का ध्यान इस अनकहे सच की ओर गया हो, यहाँ न सिर्फ बिंब नए हैं अपितु है आधुनिकता की वो बेनकाब सच्चाई जो दोनों के स्वर में स्वरित हो रही है। इतना ही नहीं आलोच्य कविता संग्रह में नए विचारों, नए अनुभवों के साथ-साथ गढ़ लिए केदार जी ने नए शब्द, नए रंग, नए-नए बिंब। क्योंकि केदार जी का मानना है- ठंड में नहीं मरते शब्द/वे मर जाते हैं साहस की कमी से... में

केदार जी का कवि बचा लेता है। हर एक शब्द को उसकी पूरी गरिमा के साथ, जो अपने समय का अनसुना सच बयां करते हैं ‘बालू के स्पर्श से हैं ये शब्द जो छटपटाहटे पैदा करते हैं। आलोच्य कविता संग्रह में नजर आते हैं ‘चूल्हों जिनसे आती है धीरे-धीरे आँच, बबूल के काँटे-जो बारिश के बाद आ जाते हैं, जिंदी चीलें, योझे दढ़ियल बरगद, कटी फसलें धान की सूखी पत्तियों, उन पत्तियों से आती गंध, आकाश के तारे, जलकुम्भी, सरसों के फूल दियासलाई, काठी, काले काल कौए, मुहवाये घड़े की आवाजें, लाल चीटियाँ, गेहूँ, कुँए, सारस, सारसों की क्रंकार स्वर ध्वनियों, दूब जो झुलस गई है। कठफोड़वा, दीमक, धान की मंजरियों, आटा, दाल, नमक, पुदीना, दिये की कँपकँपी, अथाह सन्नाटा, सियारों के फेफकारने की आवाजें, बिच्छू, डूबता दिन, तिबयाई धूप, पके हुए ज्वार के दूर तक फैले खेत, पगडंडियाँ, चिड़ियाँ, दसबजिया लालटेन, इंद धनुष, ईटे। ‘अकाल में सारस’, कविता संग्रह जहाँ एक ओर जीवन हर भावों अनुमतियों को अपने से समेट रहा है वही व्याख्या कर रहा है उन विश्वासों की जो आज भी भारतीय सभ्यता संस्कृति का हिस्सा हैं। वे विश्वास जो लोक से जुड़े हैं जो पनपते हैं एक पिता के स्वरों में। तो कभी मान्यताओं से आ जुड़ते हैं। कविता स्वर दे रही है उन विश्वासों को जैसे कहती हो अगर कभी लाल चीटियाँ दिखाई पड़े तो समझ जाना आँधी आने वाली है, सियारों की आवाजें सुनाई न पड़े तो समझ जाना बुरे दिन आने वाले हैं, कभी अंधेरे में अगर भूल जाना रास्ता तो ध्रुवतारा पर नहीं सिर्फ दूर से आने वाली कुत्तों के भौंकने की आवाज पर भरोसा करना, बुध को उत्तर कभी मत जाना, न इतवार को पच्छिम। केदारनाथ सिंह का

कवि मन इन विश्वासों को उन एहसासों से जोड़ रहा है। जो आहिस्ता, आहिस्ता कहीं पीछे रहे हैं किंतु केदार जी अपनी कविता में इन विश्वासों को न सिर्फ गढ़ रहे हैं अपितु स्थापित भी कर रहे हैं।

ये लोक अवधारणाएँ, लोक का सच, लोक मान्यताएँ अपना नया अस्तित्व बना रही हैं 'अकाल में सारस' में। इतना ही नहीं इन विश्वासों मान्यताओं से जुड़े मिथक, प्रतीक, बिंब, अपने हर रंग में अपनी ओर ध्यान खींच रहे हैं। लाल चीटियों, सियारों की आवाजें, ध्रुवतारा, पूर्व पश्चिम दिशा, कुत्तों को भौंकना, न जाने कितनी ही कहानियों में नजर आते हैं किन्तु जब ये केदार जी की कविता का हिस्सा बनते हैं तो परिपाटीबद्ध नियमों का उल्लंघन कर अपने समय के शब्द बन जाते हैं। जिनकी ओर अक्सर ध्यान नहीं जाता किन्तु केदार जी की कविता अनायास ध्यान खींच लाती है। कुछ-कुछ वैसे ही जैसे अकाल के बाद भी बची रह जाती हैं 'दूब'। अपने समय की गहराईयों को नापती दूब-जो बची रह गई है अकाल के दंशों को झेलती जहाँ सब छोड़ चले गए हैं, चीटें, चीटियाँ बिलों को छोड़ गए हैं, 'अकाल में दूब' कविता इसी भाव को कहती है जहाँ एक पिता का विश्वास अकाल में भी कायम रहता है वे मानते हैं-सुना नहीं कभी / दूब मगर मरती नहीं / ऐसा अकाल पड़ा / कि दूब तक झुलस जाये। ('अकाल में दूब', पृष्ठ 8)

यही विश्वास मानवीय अस्तित्व से बंधा है केदार जी एक ऐसा बिंब 'दूब' के जरिए गढ़ते हैं, जो मानव संस्कृति पर मंडराते खतरे से आगाह कर रहा है। वे बचा लेना चाहते हैं 'दूब' को और सारी की सारी मानवीय अस्मिता की। दूब का बचा रहना और उसकी तलाश करती केदारनाथ सिंह की कविता अपने समय को बेचैनियों को रच रही है। क्योंकि अभी बहुत कुछ है। अगर बची है दूब यही कुछ है जो दूब के जरिए रचा जा रहा है। 'अकाल में सारस', 'फलों में स्वाद की तरह', 'सूर्यास्त के बाद एक अंधेरी बस्ती से गुजरते हुए', 'कुछ सूत्र जो एक किसान बाप ने बेटे को दिये', 'अकाल में दूब', 'अकाल में सारस', 'अंत', 'ओ मेरी उदास पृथ्वी', 'रास्ता', 'सड़क पर दिखे गये कवि त्रिलोचन', 'आँकुसपुर', 'भर जायेगा बहुत कुछ', 'एक लंबे अंतराल के बाद', 'गंगा को देखकर', 'बालू का स्पर्श', 'पर्वस्नान', 'न होने की गंध', 'लोककथा', 'एक कविता-निराला को याद करते हुए', 'नये शहर में बरगद', 'पूँजी', 'फिर बजी घंटी', 'वह', 'आना', 'दूसरे शहर में', 'रसोईघर में चाकू', 'जन्मदिन की धूम',

'जिद' जैसे कविताओं के जरिए केदार जी का कवि बहुत कुछ ऐसा रचा है जिसमें वे कर आते हैं। शहर से गाँव तक को यात्राएँ-जिनसे जुड़ी हैं 'असंख्य यादें', समय के दंश, बेचैनियाँ, कुछेक सुखद एहसास लोकमान्यताएँ विश्वास, जीवन की व्यस्तताएँ, गाँव से आती चिट्टियों का इंतजार लोककथाएँ और भी न जाने कितना कुछ है जो केदार जी गढ़ रहे हैं।

इस संग्रह में 'अकाल में सारस' में जहाँ शहर अपनी सारी व्यवस्तताओं के साथ मौजूद है-एक ऐसा शहर, जहाँ गाँव से आई चिट्ठी भी चौराहे पर पढ़ रहा है कवि, जो नदी ने भेजी है। इतनी व्यवस्तता शहर में ही हो सकती है यह भली भाँति जानते हैं केदार जी, जैसे शहर से गूँजता है खाली पर वैसी ही गाँव 'चकिया' से आई चिट्ठी में गूँज रहा था। एक ही शब्द चकिया-चकिया। जो छोटा सा है भले ही है पर प्यारा सा लगता रहा कवि को देर तक। गाँव से आई इस चिट्ठी में न दिन, न तारीख, न सिरनामा बस ऊपर कोने में / एक बूंद की तरह टँका था... गाँव का नाम-चकिया। केदार जी कविता में यही वह गाँव है। जिससे दूर होने का एहसास उन्हें जीवनपर्यंत खलता रहा। वे जी लेते हैं गाँव को अपने रचना संसार में, जिसे वे गढ़ रहे हैं अकाल में सारस में। गोद में दूर तक फैले धान के खेत ही खेत खलिहान कटी फसलें, आम की मंजरियाँ, धान की सूखी पत्तियों की गंध, जलकुम्भी, मेमने, गीत गाती गुनगुनाटी नदी, कठफोड़वा, कच्ची पगडण्डियों, आम के वृक्ष, महुआ, महुआरनें, देस, देसावर और नजर आता है- 'फसल कट चुकी है / बोझ बांधे जा रहे हैं- यही वह एहसास है जिन्हें अकाल में सारस में केदार जी बोझो की तरह बाँध बाँध कर संजो रहे हैं। केदार जी जो भी रच रहे हैं वह सब अचानक महत्व का हो जाता है भले ही वह अकाल में तीन बजे दिन में आने वाले सारस हो, जो अकेले नहीं आए हैं झुंड के झुंड चले आये हैं-एक के बाद एक, ये छा जाते हैं पूरे के पूरे आसमान पर जिन की क्रोंकार से भर जाता है सारा का सारा शहर, इतना ही नहीं, इन सारसों के आने में भी केदार जी का कवि उस गंध को महसूसता है जो धान की सूखी पत्तियों की गंध है जिसे वे सारस अपने साथ उड़ा लाये थे, जो शायद पानी की तलाश में आये थे-पानी को खोजते, दूर-देसावर तक जाना था उन्हें एक संकेत कर रहे हैं केदार जी-इस तलाश के जरिए जो मानव की आने वाले संकट से बचा लेना चाह रहे हैं-पानी की खोज के जरिए जो अभी शेष है-

'अकाल में सारस' में लोककथाओं के नायक भी ठीक

वैसे ही, मौजूद है जैसे शहर में बरगद का पेड़ा। ये नायक कौन हैं वे जो वैवाहिक सरसों में पूर्वी प्रांतों में अपनी भूमिका अदा करते हैं, जो आज भी गाँव के हिस्से हैं बड़ई, धोबी, नाई, कुम्हार सब तो हैं 'अकाल में सारस' में और तो और एक है आंकुसपुर, जहाँ से धड़धड़ाती हुई ट्रेन गुजरती है पर रुकती नहीं है-रुकती सिर्फ दसवजिया है और एक सवाल पीछे छोड़ जाती है-क्यों? आखिर क्यों/फिर पृथ्वी पर क्यों हैं आंकुसपुर-यही सवाल केदार जी हर बार पूछते हैं। कुछ है, जो छूट गया है कुछ है जो समय को रफ्तार के साथ आगे बढ़ा रहा है वो जो कुछ छूट रहा है यही बेचैनियाँ केदार जी को परेशान करती हैं-अपने होने के एहसास चाहे वे गाँव हो या शहर-दोनों के बीच बढ़ते अंतराल केदार जी की कविता के मुख्य स्वर है। जिसे वे हर संभव प्रयास से कम करना चाहते हैं-अंतरालों को भरने का प्रयास केदार जी की 'अकाल में सारस' की हरेक कविता में महसूस किया जा सकता है जिन्हें वे कभी प्यार के गीत में रच रहे हैं तो कभी नए बिंब, प्रतीक मिथकों के रंग में ढाल रहे हैं।

अकाल में सारस- का कवि जाने कितने अनछुए अनुभवों को रच रहा है वे रच रहा है कभी एक इंतजार को, तो कभी एक प्यारे से अनुरोध को। वे करते हैं किसी के आने का इंतजार और जिंदगी की तमाम व्यस्तताओं के बीच भी बचा लेते हैं एक अनुरोध की - आना / जब समय मिले / जब समय न मिले / तब भी आना / ... दिनों को चीरते-फाड़ते। और वादों की छिज्जियाँ उड़ाते हुए / आना / आना जैसे मंगल के बाद / चला आता है बुध। ('आना' - पृष्ठ 24, अकाल में सारस) किंतु यह आना अनायास ही अपनी व्यस्तताओं के साथ मानवीय रिश्तों के बीच बढ़ते अंतराल की एक बार फिर से उकेर देता है। अकेलापन, अजनबीपन संत्रास और जिंदगी के दंश झेलता इंसान भले ही किसी के आने का इंतजार करें किंतु जल्द ही एक एहसास उस इंतजार को पुनः दूरियों में बदल देता है जो आज की जिंदगी का बेबाक सच है जिसे केदार जी कुछ इस तरह रच देते हैं- 'यही हुआ था पिछली बार/ यही होगा अगली बार भी / हम फिर मिलेंगे / किसी दूसरे शहर में / और ताकते रह जाएंगे / एक-दूसरे का मुँह। (दूसरे शहर में, पृष्ठ 32)

मानवीय संबंधों में आए हर बदलाव को केदार जी महसूसते हैं और एक अनछुआ सा एहसास उन्हें एक मासूम सी संतुष्टि दे जाता है जहाँ वह संबंधों की नजदिकियों की एक नयी

परिभाषा गढ़ देते हैं- 'वह है / है / और चकित हूँ मैं / कि इतने बरस बाद / और इस कठिन समय में भी / वह बिल्कुल उसी तरह / हंस रही है / और बस / इतना ही काफी है ('वह', अकाल में सारस, पृष्ठ 36)

जिंदगी के हर अनुभव को केदार जी ने अकाल में सारस में जीया है जहाँ यदि शहर मौजूद है वही गाँव भी इनकी कविता में अपनी मौजूदगी दर्ज करते हुए अपने से जुड़े हर सच को बयाँ करता है। वे शहरों की विषमताओं, जटिलताओं, उलझनों से जब खुद को निकालना चाहते हैं तो चले आते हैं अपने गाँव में उस गाँव में - जहाँ सुकून है, जहाँ हर कोई उनका अपना है- और हाठ, बाजारों की हलचलों को खुद में सिमटे वे मिलने चले जाते हैं थैले-डोलचियों को किनारे रखकर धान की मंजरियों से - वे पहुँच जाते हैं वहाँ जहाँ - 'हम अपने - थैले और डोलचियाँ / रख दे एक तरफ / और सीधे धान की मंजरियों तक चलें।... आज शाम / हम सीधे वहीं पहुँचे / एकदम वहीं / जहाँ चावल / दाना बने से पहले / सुगंध की पीड़ा से छटपटा रहा हो / कैसा रहे / बाजार न आए बीच में / और हम एक बार / चुपके से मिल आएँ चावल से/ मिल आएँ नमक से / पुदीने से। ('एक छोटा सा अनुरोध', पृष्ठ 42, अकाल में सारस)

इन शहरों ने हम सबसे बहुत कुछ छीन लिया है। इसी छीन लिए गए को केदार जी बचा लेते हैं और जी लेते हैं पूरे के पूरे गाँव को - जो उन्हें ताउम्र बेहद प्रिय रहा है। गाँव जहाँ हलचलें हैं एक ताजगी है, कोई अपना सा हैं - पर शहर हजारों घर होने पर भी विरान से हैं, भले ही ये शहर हजारों चेहरों से भरा हुए हैं पर हैं सुनसान केदार जी कुछ ऐसा ही सन्नाटा 'छोटे शहर की एक 'दोपहर' कविता में फैला हुआ महसूस करते हैं - 'शब्द सारे धूल में / व्याकरण, सारे ढोंगे / किस कदर खामोश है चलते हुए व लोग /... सिर्फ कौआ एक मंडराता हुआ - सा व्यर्थ / समूचे माहौल को कुछ दे रहा है अर्थ... ('छोटे शहर की एक 'दोपहर' पृष्ठ 56, अकाल में सारस)

शहरों की अपनी एक कहानी कहती केदार जी की यह कविता उस सच को बयाँ करती है जहाँ इन भीड़ भरे शहरों में हर व्यक्ति अकेला है हर एक-दूसरे से अनजान है- यहाँ यदि नजर आता भी है तो सिर्फ व्यर्थता जो मंडराती है भय की तरह। अजब सा भाव संवेदन है केदार जी का। यहाँ शहर की जिंदगी की व्यस्तता ही महत्त्व भी नहीं है अपितु जिस कौए को हम अब तक सिर्फ गाँव की जमीन पर लोक कथाओं में

अमंगल, अशुभ, निरर्थकता का प्रतीक मान कर देख रहे थे वह कौआ पूरे के पूरे शहर के अर्थ को समझा देता है अपनी व्यर्थ सी उड़ान से/ वे गढ़ देते हैं उस सच को जो शहर में सन्नाटे सा फैला हुआ है। और सिर्फ सुनी जा सकती है। एक नदी की आवाज जो शहरों तक फैली है और अपने होने की गवाही दे रही है। वे कहते हैं- कभी सुनना/ जब सारा शहर सो जाए / तो किवाड़ों पर कान लगा / धीरे-धीरे सुनना / कहीं आस-पास / एक मादा घड़ियाल की कराह की तरह / सुनाई देगी नदी। (पृष्ठ 52 'नदी' - अकाल में सारस) केदार जी असंख्य अनछुए से अनुभवों को संसार इस संग्रह में रच देते हैं चाहे वे गाँव से जुड़े बिंब प्रतीक हो या मिथक या फिर शहर की व्यस्त जिंदगी में अपने ओर बरबस ध्यान खींचते किसी कोने में पड़े जूते हो, जो किसी सभा की समाप्ति पर अपने होने को बयाँ कर रहे हैं जैसे समूचा मानव अस्तित्व हो वे जूते- 'सभा उठ गई / रह गए जूते / सूने हाल में दो चकित उदास / धूल भरे जूते /.... कितना अजीब है/कि वक्ता चले गए / और सारी बहस के अंत में / रह गए जूते। ('जूते', पृष्ठ 12, अकाल में सारस)

यहाँ ये जूते जो धूले भरे हैं उदास भी और साथ चकित भी

शहरों की सच्चाई को बेनकाब कर रहे हैं और दर्शा रहे हैं कि छूटने के क्रम में व्यक्ति क्या कुछ छोड़ देता है- वह इन शहरों की सभाओं में अपनी उपस्थिति तो दर्ज करता है। पर कुछ अपने अस्तित्व व अपनी पहचान को खोता जा रहा है। जूते जैसे एक नए बिंब को केदार जी अपनी रचना का हिस्सा बनाया है यहाँ, यह सिर्फ बिंब ही नहीं प्रतीक भी है, मानव जीवन की सच्चाई का जहाँ व्यक्ति का अस्तित्व धूल में सने जूते सा होकर मटमैला, उपेक्षित व उदास सा हो रहा है- शहरों ने व्यक्ति को हर सुविधा दी है किंतु व्यक्ति से उसका होना छीन लिया है, छीन लिया है उसका पूरा का पूरा वजूद और अब वह भी उपेक्षित सा है जूतों की तरह / कहा जा सकता है। केदार जी ने अकाल में सारस के जरिए अपने समय के हर उस सच को बयाँ किया है जो आज भी विचारणीय विषय है चाहे वे भावों अनुभूतियाँ हो या ग्राम्य जीवन की बेनकाब सच्चाईयाँ सभी को नये बिंबों, नये प्रतीकों से गढ़ा है केदार जी ने।

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Maanya Kamble

Climate Change, Resource Rush, and the Emerging Geopolitics of the Arctic: Sovereignty Gaps, Indigenous Impacts, and the ‘Arctic Paradox’

Introduction

“The Arctic is not so much a region as a dream: the dream of a unique, unattainable, and compelling attractive world. It is the large imaginary place” (McGhee, 2005, p. 10)

Humanity has been differentially united in the experience of the impact of Climate Change. Global warming, rising sea levels, heat waves, and tsunamis, among others, have become common phenomena, having increased at an unprecedented rate. Bearing both massive economic and human costs, Climate Change is a transnational issue that requires a cooperative approach to find solutions (adaptation and mitigation strategies). However, as the case of the Arctic has shown, Global Warming and the resultant melting of the ice caps have created greater possibilities for economic growth and exploitation since the Arctic is home to large quantities of untapped natural resources such as hydrocarbons, as well as other Critical Mineral Resources.

This opportunity, however, has been accompanied by challenges spanning across multiple dimensions, including geopolitical challenges and even the possibility of further exacerbating the impact of Climate Change. It has also led to a transformation in how the Arctic region itself is perceived and how its prospects are understood. Its impact has transformed from regional to global, one of which is the opening up of new economically lucrative sea routes, such as the Northern Sea Route and others. These can significantly reduce the economic cost and time in

shipping between the Northern and Eastern parts of the world.

However, what will be interesting to note is that as the potential for resource access in the Arctic increases in an era of resource scarcity and demand for growth, who will ultimately win the race to the Arctic? And if someone does win, would it be fair to understand the Arctic as a no-man’s land?

Literature Review

Defining the Arctic

The Arctic Region’s growing importance in discourse is a recent phenomenon, having been favoured deeply by Climate Change and its impacts. The growing opportunities are accompanied by the melting of glaciers in the Arctic and the scarcity of resources globally, such as natural gas, coal, and other mineral resources, such as Nickel. With the growing requirement for these resources to support carbon-intensive economic progress and the demand-supply mismatch in their current availability, the need for new sources and sites is of critical importance. Further, the possibility of shortening the trade routes via the opening of new ones in the Arctic also supports the mobility of these potential resources, alongside trade between the North and the East, typically carried out through the Suez Canal.

The Arctic has been defined variously by different scholars and practitioners based on its use. Largely, the Arctic is perceived in terms of the various countries that border the Arctic Sea. These include the state of Alaska in the United States of America, parts of

Denmark, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Russia. These are also the critical players in the region, as members of the Arctic Council formed in 1996. The region is also inhabited by many indigenous groups from Greenland and North America.

The Arctic is also defined locationally by the 66°33'N latitude, known as the Arctic Circle. This latitude defines the southern extent of the Arctic region. Another way of defining the region includes permafrost. Widespread biodiversity and fisheries are also one of the defining features of the Arctic region. However, there still exist some regions in the Arctic Sea that have not been subjected to political and cartographic divisions and splits.

McGhee attempted to diverge from the environmental and geographical descriptions of the Arctic. Delving into the human aspect of the history of the Arctic, he made an attempt to make the region more familiar to the rest of the world by portraying the similarity of the concerns, problems, and ambitions of the people of the Arctic with the rest of the world. He attempted to debunk the Western fantasy of the Arctic region (McGhee, 2005).

However, the Arctic has many associated perceptions and connotations. Steinberg, Tasch, and Gerhardt employ the term 'Imaginariness' to refer to the various groupings of ideations and imaginations surrounding the Arctic. These help a researcher delve into the question of how an Arctic country can be defined from the standpoint of different stakeholders in the region. This debunks the notion of a monolithic ontology and epistemology of the region, enabling one to imagine beyond the economic and security paradigms. They identified six imaginaries in their book, including stakeholders such as Indigenous groups, states comprising the Arctic region, and the non-Arctic states (Steinberg et al., 2015).

Resource Geography of the Arctic

The major resources available in the Arctic include hydrocarbon resources such as natural gas and coal reserves, mineral ores such as iron and nickel, alongside forest products and fisheries. Steinberg highlighted that oil and gas constitute the crown jewels of the natural resources available in the Arctic

(Steinberg et al., 2015). In the 2006 'Economy of the North Report' of the Arctic Council (ECONOR Report), it was noted that the amount of undiscovered petroleum in the Arctic was equivalent to 390 million barrels of oil equivalents, accounting for about 23.9 per cent of undiscovered petroleum reserves. This only adds to a supply of petroleum constituting 16.2 per cent of global production of oil and gas from the Arctic alone. Collectively, the discovered and undiscovered sources constitute approximately 10 per cent of global oil production (2006).

Alaska, the Norwegian Sea, and West Siberia in the Republic of Komi account for the largest reserves of undiscovered coal according to the ECONOR Report. The northeastern part of the Greenland region is also expected to bear potential reserves. Further, it has been noted that additional reserves can also be found in regions where discoveries of large reserves have been made but have, however, remained unextracted due to lack of infrastructure (2006).

The ECONOR Report also noted that while the region has manifold mineral resources, they have remained largely unexploited due to inaccessibility (2006). A Special Publication Report of the Geological Survey of Norway states that metal mining has historically been an important industry in the regions of Alaska and Canada, dating back as far as the late nineteenth century. In contemporary times, the Red Dog Group of Mines has been one of the largest producers of zinc. In Canada, the Cantung Mine holds the largest reserves of Tungsten after China. Greenland is also replete with coal reserves (Boyd et al., 2016). Other important minerals found in the region include gold, silver, uranium, and diamonds. These are critical resources for mainstream and essential industries.

The race for fisheries has also intensified as the glaciers have melted and large stocks of fish have moved towards the North. This has been accompanied by stringent international fishing regulations. While fishing has been practiced by the indigenous communities of the Arctic region since time immemorial, the region has also been subjected to commercial fishing for a long time. However, this has

led to challenges of over-fishing and the rising demands by indigenous groups for traditional rights of access to fish, the access to which has been restricted by international fora and law. Further, since fish are a 'moving resource', international law is replete with loopholes (Steinberg et al., 2015).

However, as has been noted by Steinberg and others, such an imaginary is one upheld by government officials, NGOs, and industries in the Arctic region and even beyond. Such an imaginary entails a perception of the Arctic as a global common harbouring multiple resources, the ownership of which will belong to the one who reaches and exploits them first (Steinberg et al., 2015).

Impact of Climate Change on the Arctic

The Arctic region is popularly regarded as the 'global barometer'. Climate change, through its impact on the Arctic region, altered the fate of the whole globe. The phenomenon of 'Polar Amplification' or 'Arctic Amplification' is responsible for the current position of the Arctic.

Since then, multiple studies have been conducted to compare the rate of Arctic heating relative to the global average warming. They suggested that Arctic amplification was two or three times higher than the global average (Ono et al., 2022) (Yu et al., 2021). However, in another study, it has been suggested that since 1979, Arctic Amplification has actually been four times higher than the global average warming (Rantanen et al., 2022).

Arctic amplification can be attributed to multiple factors such as albedo feedback and increased heating of the ocean, ocean feedback, decreasing European air pollution, and Asian aerosol levels as a result of successful mitigation strategies, among others (Rantanen et al., 2022). However, the diminishing ice cover has had varied consequences for the region and the world as a whole. The region's indigenous populace has suffered an alteration in their cultures and lifestyles due to climate change (Duyck, 2015). Coastal villages are disappearing, hunting habitats are in danger, and traditional migration routes have been altered (Steinberg et al., 2015).

However, there has been an unexpected impact of climate change in the Arctic region, which is the

opening up of new trade routes as well as easier access to mineral and wildlife resources. It has also led to an increase in the prospects for agriculture in the southern part of the Arctic (Steinberg et al., 2015). This has been referred to as the 'Arctic Paradox' (Botselier et al., 2018).

Global Warming and Economic Prospects in the Arctic

The economic prospects of the Arctic region resulting from Global Warming and Climate Change are intrinsically linked to the resources that have been untapped in the Arctic on one hand, and the opening up of shorter trade routes such as the Northern Sea Route, the North Western Passage, and the Arctic Bridge route, among others, on the other hand. While this article has already explored the resource potential of the Arctic region, this portion will delve into the potential of new trade routes and existing ones that have emerged owing to the Arctic Paradox.

Historically, the importance of trade between the East and the West has been noted, traditionally carried out through the Suez Canal and the Cape of Good Hope. However, with the melting of ice caps and glaciers in the Arctic, a new opportunity has emerged for the shipping and freight industry to cut back on its economic cost and time taken for the transportation of goods.

Sharma conducted a comparative study of the economic costs associated with the trade carried out through the Suez Canal trade route and the Arctic trade routes between Northern Europe (Rotterdam) and the Far East (Shanghai), intending to explore the viability of Arctic trade routes. He does so through a comparison of profits incurred from various routes. He noted in his work how, for instance, in comparison to the Suez Canal Route, the use of the Northern Sea Route for trade between Rotterdam in Europe and Shanghai in China will lead to a 22 percent reduction in distance, while the North Western Passage will lead to a decrease of 15 percent. These have associated decline in costs and increase in profits based on bunker prices, and the type of container used, among other factors (Sharma, 2017).

What is important to note in findings such as these is that the opening up of these trade routes, either as

year-round access or prolonged access during the year, would have a two-fold benefit. Firstly, it would enable greater access to the potential mineral and hydrocarbon resources that are expected to be tapped in the region. Secondly, it would help bring down the overall cost of international trade in other commodities, as businesses and states would be able to cut down on transportation costs.

However, these situations, while presenting an economically lucrative future, still paint a grim picture. This is owing to the fact that increasing trade intensity and carbon intensity would only add to the current problems of climate change and global warming, driven by anthropogenic causes. Hence, the larger question is one of whether such growth can actually be defined as growth.

Signs of Resource Colonialism in the Arctic

Colonialism, while experienced differently by different parts of the world, is united by the fact that the colonial project in these regions was initiated for resource extraction, and was able to maintain itself through a continuous drain of wealth of the colony. This was implicit in the colonial ontology that everything beyond their borders was a no man's land, access and control of which depended on who reached and exploited them first. A very similar trend has also been emerging in the post-colonial world by the current global powers. This is exemplified by the case of the role of China in Africa.

A significant case is the issue of deep-sea mining in the Pacific Ocean. It represents a continuing colonial exploitation of the resources and indigenous communities in the region. The resources are extracted without any respect for the rights of indigenous communities, consent, or even fair compensation. This represents a case of neo-colonialism. This further perpetuates the inter-generational inequality that emerged in the region owing to the colonial and post-colonial experiences. Neo-colonialism represents a pattern of loss in the region. The corporations of the West that undertake these activities are much economically stronger than the island states, creating an asymmetrical power dynamic and negotiation between the two, forcing these states and groups to choose between the worst alternatives (Hita, 2023).

A similar trend has also been observed in the challenges being faced by the indigenous communities of the Arctic. An example is the Sami community of reindeer herders. This is also the last indigenous group in the European Union. Even the establishment of green industries can be harmful to these regions and communities, alongside the environment and biodiversity. For instance, the establishment of wind farms to run the turbines of sustainable steel plants and other green industries requires more land, which would lead to encroachment into the calving and grazing areas of the reindeer. Further, no consent or say of the indigenous groups is considered in decision-making. They are stripped of their position of stakeholdership in the region (Orange, 2022).

The 'Race for the Arctic' is a phenomenon observed in many issues, such as the grab for resources, including the attempts to dominate the new sea routes in the Arctic, among others. However, all of these issues are rooted in the consideration of the Arctic as 'no man's land' that is open for grabs. Instances exemplifying the aforementioned phenomenon include Russia planting its flag on the sea bed of the North Pole in early 2023, the establishment of a scientific observatory by China, the use of nuclear ice breakers to open up sea routes by Russia, and armament of the region during the Cold War, among others. It is a race to gain dominance in the region by the Arctic and Non-Arctic states alike (Duxbury, 2020).

However, this race creates 'sovereignty holes', demonstrating the area where Arctic states exercise their sovereignty in the region (Steinberg et al., 2015). These are located in the oceanic area beyond the 200 nautical miles limit of the states' exclusive economic zones, where mineral deposits and fisheries are found. However, these sovereignty holes are legal issues that become enmeshed with geography. Evidence for this is found in the popularity that has been garnered by the Norwegian territory of Svalbard, where even non-Arctic states are provided with freedom to engage in scientific exploration and economic activities under the Spitsbergen Treaty of 1920, emerging as a way for the non-Arctic states to exploit sovereignty holes

in the region. Other ways for the non-Arctic states to exploit sovereignty holes in the region are the use and dominance in the Arctic Sea Routes and contacts and agreements with indigenous groups in the region, which become a way to undercut national governments of the region (Steinberg et al., 2015).

Conclusion

While the various studies that have been conducted have discussed the colonial impact of the Arctic Paradox on the region and states of the Arctic, the neocolonial impact on other parts of the world has not been delved into. The race for resources generates a power asymmetry between states, implicated by the very existence of a 'race' for the Arctic. However, with the current division of powers and resources between the states, it is the developed countries of the First World that have an upper hand

in tapping into the resource frontier presented by the Arctic. This access would only add to their power and wealth, strengthening the current status quo.

In this paper, we looked at the broad contours of defining the Arctic region and how the impact of climate change and its interaction with global power politics create complexities that bear both neocolonial consequences and degradation of the environment. Hence, shifting the very approach and ontology of policies underlying how we deal with these crises is imperative. Herein, it is crucial to recognise the value of cooperation over conflict between nations to arrive at more egalitarian solutions.

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संजू

समकालीन हिंदी उपन्यास और स्त्री विमर्श : नीलेश रघुवंशी के विशेष संदर्भ में

शोध सार

समकालीन हिंदी साहित्य में स्त्री विमर्श एक अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण और प्रासंगिक विषय के रूप में स्थापित हुआ है। स्त्री विमर्श का उद्देश्य स्त्री के जीवन की वास्तविकताओं, उसके संघर्षों, सपनों और अस्मिता की खोज को साहित्यिक और सामाजिक विमर्श के केंद्र में लाना है। प्रस्तुत शोध-पत्र में नीलेश रघुवंशी के उपन्यास “एक कस्बे के नोट्स” और “शहर से दस किलोमीटर” का विश्लेषण किया गया है। इन उपन्यासों में यह प्रतिपादित होता है कि स्त्री का जीवन केवल गृहस्थी और पारिवारिक दायित्वों तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि वह सामाजिक, आर्थिक, मानसिक और भावनात्मक स्तरों पर निरंतर सक्रिय और संघर्षशील है।

इन उपन्यासों की स्त्री पात्रें पुरुष प्रधान समाज द्वारा गढ़ी गई परंपराओं और मान्यताओं से टकराकर अपने अस्तित्व और आत्मसम्मान की खोज करती हैं। वे केवल शोषण और वंचना की प्रतीक नहीं हैं, बल्कि आत्म-संघर्ष और आत्मनिर्भरता के बल पर अपनी स्वतंत्र पहचान गढ़ने वाली सशक्त चेतनाएँ हैं। यहाँ यह भी स्पष्ट किया गया है कि स्त्री की वास्तविक स्वतंत्रता का आधार आर्थिक आत्मनिर्भरता है। जब तक स्त्री शिक्षा और आर्थिक दृष्टि से सक्षम नहीं होगी, तब तक वह अपने जीवन के निर्णय स्वतंत्र रूप से नहीं ले पाएगी। आधुनिकता और औद्योगीकरण ने स्त्री को अवसर तो दिए हैं, परंतु पितृसत्तात्मक मानसिकता उसकी राह में आज भी बड़ी बाधा बनी हुई है।

नीलेश रघुवंशी के उपन्यासों की विशेषता यह है कि उनमें स्त्री जीवन का चित्रण केवल व्यक्तिगत पीड़ा तक सीमित नहीं

रहता, बल्कि व्यापक सामाजिक यथार्थ का दर्पण प्रस्तुत करता है। ये रचनाएँ पाठकों को सोचने पर विवश करती हैं कि स्त्री की अस्मिता और अधिकारों की उपेक्षा क्यों की जाती है और उसके जीवन को सार्थक बनाने के लिए किन उपायों की आवश्यकता है। अतः यह निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि स्त्री विमर्श केवल साहित्यिक प्रवृत्ति न होकर सामाजिक परिवर्तन का सशक्त माध्यम है।

बीज शब्द – समकालीन हिंदी उपन्यास, स्त्री-विमर्श, स्त्री अस्मिता, आत्मसम्मान, आत्मनिर्भरता, आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता, पितृसत्ता, परंपरा और आधुनिकता, स्त्री स्वतंत्रता, स्त्री पहचान, स्त्री संघर्ष, स्त्री अधिकार, सामाजिक असमानता, नारी मुक्ति, शिक्षा और स्त्री, पारिवारिक भूमिका, स्त्री संवेदना, नारी-पुरुष संबंध, स्त्री आत्म-खोज, सामाजिक चेतना।

मूल आलेख

नीलेश रघुवंशी के उपन्यास ‘एक कस्बे के नोट्स’ और ‘शहर से दस किलोमीटर’ में उन्होंने भारतीय समाज में स्त्रियों के जीवन की गहराई और उनकी समस्याओं को दिखाने की कोशिश की है। इन उपन्यासों में उन्होंने सिर्फ यह नहीं बताया कि स्त्रियों की परिवार में क्या भूमिका होती है, बल्कि यह भी दिखाया है कि समाज में उनका मानसिक, भावनात्मक और अनुभवात्मक जीवन किस तरह से प्रभावित होता है। यही कारण है कि स्त्रियों का जीवन अक्सर परेशानियों, निराशा और संघर्षों से भरा हुआ दिखाई देता है। उनके उपन्यासों की स्त्री पात्र समाज द्वारा बनाए गए झूठे मानकों और परंपराओं का विरोध करती हैं। वे लगातार इनसे लड़ती रहती हैं और अपनी स्वतंत्रता, पहचान और अस्तित्व की तलाश में प्रयासरत रहती

हैं। लेखिका ने स्त्रियों के जीवन के संघर्ष को बारीकी और गहराई से दिखाया है। चाहे उनका आंतरिक जीवन हो, उनकी इच्छाएँ हों या उनका प्रतिरोध—सबको लेखिका ने बहुत सजीव ढंग से चित्रित किया है। इन उपन्यासों में यह स्पष्ट किया गया है कि पुरुष प्रधान समाज की बनाई हुई व्यवस्थाएँ स्त्री को कमजोर और बेबस बना देती हैं। धीरे-धीरे स्त्री अपने ही जीवन से ऊबने लगती है और यही सब उसे जीवन को बोझिल और नर्क जैसा महसूस कराता है। इस सबका दोष अक्सर स्त्री पर ही डाला जाता है, जबकि असल में यह समाज की सोच और परंपराएँ हैं जो उसके जीवन को दुखी बना देती हैं। आज के समय में एक स्त्री के लिए शिक्षा, स्वतंत्रता, समानता और सम्मान की राह आसान नहीं है। समाज हमेशा उससे भावनाओं, आत्मनिर्भरता और आत्म-अभिव्यक्ति की उम्मीद करता है, लेकिन उसे उसके बुनियादी अधिकारों से वंचित है। जैसे शिक्षा, स्वतंत्रता या समान अधिकार पुरुष प्रधान समाज के कब्जे में माने जाते हैं। यही कारण है कि स्त्रियों को लगातार संघर्ष, प्रतिरोध और अपने अधिकारों के लिए लड़ना पड़ता है।

नीलेश रघुवंशी ने अपने उपन्यासों में स्त्रियों के जीवन को केवल शोषण या दुःख तक सीमित नहीं दिखाया, बल्कि उनके आत्म-साक्षात्कार और आत्म-खोज की यात्रा को भी दर्शाया है। वे स्त्रियों के जीवन के हर पहलू पर ध्यान देती हैं—उनके संघर्ष, बाधाएँ, सपने और उनके जीवन में पैदा हुई मानसिक व सामाजिक बीमारियों तक। साथ ही वे स्त्रियों के सुख, शांति और नई सोच की आवश्यकता पर भी जोर देती हैं। उनके उपन्यासों में स्त्री-पुरुष संबंध एक अहम् विषय रहा है। उन्होंने दिखाया कि किस तरह प्रेम, विवाह और पारिवारिक जिम्मेदारियों के बीच फंसी स्त्री का जीवन जटिल हो जाता है। स्त्री-पुरुष संबंधों में होने वाले तनाव और परिवार की समस्याओं को उन्होंने गहराई से उभारा है। उन्होंने यह भी बताया कि किस प्रकार प्रेम और परिवार की आड़ में स्त्री की स्वतंत्रता और इच्छाओं को दबा दिया जाता है। उसके पास अपनी क्षमताएँ और सपने तो होते हैं, लेकिन उन्हें जीने का अवसर नहीं मिलता। उनके पात्र सिर्फ घरेलू जीवन तक सीमित नहीं हैं, बल्कि राजनीति, समाज और अर्थव्यवस्था से भी जुड़े हैं। वे स्त्रियों के मानसिक, भावनात्मक और सामाजिक जीवन को बहुत गहराई से सामने लाती हैं। वास्तविक अर्थों में देखा जाए तो नीलेश रघुवंशी के उपन्यासों की स्त्री पात्राएँ स्त्री

जीवन की सजीव झलक और उसकी अभिव्यक्ति का प्रमाण प्रस्तुत करती हैं। उनके उपन्यासों में नारी पात्र केवल बहुआयामी ही नहीं बल्कि अनुभूतिपरक और संवेदनशील दृष्टिकोण के साथ सामने आते हैं। लेखिका अपनी रचनाओं में स्त्री पात्रों को सक्रिय और निर्णायक भूमिका प्रदान करती हैं, जो परिवार और समाज में अपनी स्थिति व नियति के संबंध में स्पष्ट दृष्टि और योजना का निर्माण करते हैं। नीलेश रघुवंशी अपनी कहानियों के माध्यम से आम लोगों को स्त्रियों के जीवन की गहन सच्चाइयों से अवगत कराती हैं। यह स्पष्ट होता है कि स्त्री जीवन केवल निजी विषय नहीं बल्कि एक सतत सामाजिक प्रक्रिया है, जिसमें समाज का हर पहलू और उससे जुड़ी धारणाएँ परिलक्षित होती हैं। अपनी रचनाओं द्वारा वे पाठक को यह सोचने पर विवश करती हैं कि हमारा समाज स्त्रियों के प्रति किस प्रकार का व्यवहार करता है और उनके अधिकारों की उपेक्षा क्यों की जाती है। इस प्रकार वे यह भी रेखांकित करती हैं कि स्त्री जीवन की सहजता और सार्थकता के लिए किन उपायों की आवश्यकता है।

नीलेश रघुवंशी का स्त्री जीवन पर यह दृष्टिकोण न केवल हिंदी साहित्य में एक नई पहचान बनाता है, बल्कि स्त्री संवेदना और सामाजिक चेतना दोनों को प्रखर बनाता है। स्त्री जीवन का उनका चित्रण वास्तविकता के धरातल पर आधारित है, जिसमें गृहस्थ जीवन से जुड़े पहलुओं, स्त्री स्वाभिमान और आत्म-सम्मान की खोज, परंपरा और आधुनिकता की टकराहट, स्त्री भावनाओं की जटिलता तथा आत्मनिर्भरता की ओर उसके प्रयत्नों को गहराई से अभिव्यक्त किया गया है। स्त्रियों का जीवन सीधा-सादा प्रतीत होता है, किंतु उसमें संघर्ष और विरोधाभासों की भरमार है। वे कभी परिवार, कभी समाज और कभी कार्यक्षेत्र में चुनौतियों का सामना करती हैं। शिक्षा संस्थानों से लेकर कार्यक्षेत्र तक स्त्रियों को जिन बाधाओं, असमानताओं और शोषण से गुजरना पड़ता है, वह उनके अस्तित्व और जीवन की असलियत को सामने रखता है। यही अंतर उन्हें अपनी जीवन-दृष्टि को समझने और समाज के अन्य आयामों से भिन्न पहचान देने का अवसर प्रदान करता है।

नीलेश रघुवंशी कहती है कि कोई और व्यक्ति, चाहे वह परिवार का सदस्य हो, समाज हो या फिर अन्य कोई, स्त्री की पीड़ा को पूरी तरह समझ ही नहीं सकता। जब वह अपने दुख-दर्द को भी किसी के सामने प्रकट नहीं कर पाती, तब

यह तकलीफ और गहरी हो जाती है। स्त्री का जीवन सिर्फ शारीरिक कष्टों तक ही सीमित नहीं होता, बल्कि परिवार और समाज उसे मानसिक रूप से भी दबाव और कष्ट में डालते रहते हैं।

स्त्री और पुरुष को अलग-अलग भूमिकाओं में बाँटने से ही यह धारणा पैदा होती है कि औरत का जीवन केवल पुरुष के लिए ही बना है। स्त्री के जीवन का असली उद्देश्य या तो पुरुष के प्रेम में देखा जाता है या फिर उसे पुरुष के साधन के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जाता है। इसी वजह से स्त्री का जीवन अक्सर असंतुलन और संघर्ष से भरा हुआ होता है। उसकी स्वतंत्रता और व्यक्तित्व हमेशा दबा दिए जाते हैं और वह हार-जीत के चक्र में फँसी रहती है। उसके शारीरिक जीवन और भावनात्मक स्थिति दोनों पर ही समाज की अपेक्षाओं का बोझ डाला जाता है। यही कारण है कि उसे हमेशा त्याग और बलिदान के जाल में उलझा दिया जाता है। जब व्यक्ति की नैतिकता सिर्फ व्यक्तिगत स्तर पर सीमित रहती है, तो उसका संबंध समाज की सामूहिक नैतिकता से कट जाता है। परिणामस्वरूप यह निजी नैतिकता तो व्यक्ति के लिए फायदेमंद बनती है, लेकिन समाज के लिए हानिकारक सिद्ध होती है। ऐसे में व्यक्तिगत और सामाजिक नैतिकता के बीच टकराव पैदा होता है। आज की परिस्थितियों में सामाजिक दबावों ने व्यक्ति की मानसिक स्थिति को इतना बदल दिया है कि ईमानदारी, नैतिकता और सहानुभूति जैसे मूल्यों का महत्व कम हो गया है और वे केवल सिद्धांत भर रह गए हैं।

नीलेश रघुवंशी ने अपनी लिखी पंक्तियों में स्त्री की वास्तविक स्थिति को स्पष्ट करते हुए लिखा है कि “उन्हें बचपन में पढ़ाई का अवसर नहीं मिल पाया। रोज स्कूल जाने की बजाय उन्हें घर के कामों में उलझा दिया जाता था। उनके पास अच्छे कपड़े तक नहीं होते थे और उन्हें घर के कामों और दूसरों की देखभाल में ही लगा दिया जाता था। उनके दुख और अभाव को किसी ने समझने की कोशिश नहीं की, यहाँ तक कि उनके मासूम सपने भी दबा दिए गए।”

अपनी बहन शिवा का वर्णन करते हुए लेखिका कहती हैं कि बचपन में उसकी माँ अक्सर उसकी चोटी आड़ी-टेडी कर देती थी, किंतु यह उसे तनिक भी नहीं भाती थी। छोटी अवस्था में उसकी माँ उसे हमेशा समझाती कि “जब तुम बड़ी हो जाओगी, नौकरी करोगी और माँ से दूर चली जाओगी, तब भी तुम्हारी चोटी कौन सँवारेगा?” यह प्रसंग स्त्री के जीवन के

यथार्थ को गहराई से उद्घाटित करता है। वह आगे लिखती हैं कि जैसे पृथ्वी पर वर्षा के बिना भूमि फटकर तपने लगती है, वैसे ही स्त्री का जीवन भी निरंतर संघर्ष और अभावों से ग्रस्त रहता है। यदि परिवार का सहारा न हो तो उसकी स्थिति ऐसी हो जाती है जैसे पाँच एकड़ की भूमि में बुवाई से पहले ही फसल को भस्म कर देने वाली लपटें उठ जाएँ। यह उदाहरण बताता है कि स्त्री का जीवन तभी पुष्ट हो सकता है जब समाज में उसे उचित अधिकार और अवसर प्राप्त हों।

अम्मा का कथन—“अपनी जमीन यदि अपनी न हो, तो दूसरों से अपेक्षा क्या रखना? खाली हाथ आए थे और खाली हाथ ही चले जाएँगे।” समाज की कठोर सच्चाई को उजागर करता है। भूख और पेट की पीड़ा वह दुष्चक्र है जो पूरी दुनिया को निरंतर परिभ्रमण कराता रहता है। यही कारण है कि स्त्री की भूमिका केवल गृह-गृहस्थी तक सीमित कर दी गई है, और वही उसकी संपूर्ण दुनिया बना दी गई है। समाज ने उसे परिवार से आगे सोचने की अनुमति ही नहीं दी, उसकी जिम्मेदारी केवल परिवार तक बाँध दी गई है।

स्त्री जब अपने जीवन में स्वायत्तता और आत्म-सम्मान की बात करती है, तो उसका तात्पर्य केवल जीने का अधिकार ही नहीं होता, बल्कि जीवन के प्रत्येक क्षण में स्वतंत्र निर्णय लेने की क्षमता भी होता है। आत्म-सम्मान उसके लिए मात्र एक शब्द नहीं, बल्कि संपूर्ण जीवन का आधार है। यदि उससे उसकी स्वायत्तता छीन ली जाए, तो वह केवल परिवार और समाज द्वारा थोपी गई इच्छाओं पर आधारित जीवन जीने को विवश हो जाती है। समाज निरंतर स्त्री के मूल्य और अधिकारों को सीमित करता है और उससे उसकी इच्छा और निर्णय की स्वतंत्रता छीन लेता है। तब प्रश्न उठता है कि बिना उसकी सहमति के उसका जीवन कैसा होगा? क्या वह जीवन वास्तव में उसका अपना होगा? और क्या वह अपने आत्म-सम्मान के साथ जी पाएगी? यही वह क्षण है जब स्त्री अपने अधिकार और स्वायत्तता को पहचानती है और समझती है कि उसका सम्मान तभी सुरक्षित रहेगा जब उसे अपने निर्णय स्वयं लेने का अधिकार मिलेगा।

मनुष्य का आत्म-सम्मान उसकी स्वतंत्रता और स्वायत्तता से जुड़ा होता है। मनुष्य के जीवन के बारे में यह कहा गया है कि जन्म और मृत्यु के बीच का समय ही उसकी असली अवधि है। समाज या धार्मिक मान्यताओं जैसी बाध्यकारी बातों में अपने अस्तित्व की संभावना की अनदेखी होती है

और यही कारण है कि मानव जीवन को एक ठोस आधार देने के लिए उसकी इच्छा और स्वतंत्रता पर बल दिया गया। अकेलेपन और बेबसी की पीड़ा ने मनुष्य को जीवन की निरर्थकता और अनिश्चितता के प्रश्नों से जूझने पर मजबूर किया। मृत्यु की निश्चितता और जीवन की अस्थिरता को देखकर वह अक्सर निराश और भयभीत हो जाता है। मनुष्य को आत्मबल तभी प्राप्त होता है जब वह अपने आत्म-सम्मान की रक्षा के लिए संघर्ष करता है। आत्म-सम्मान बिना प्रयास के नहीं मिलता। जब मनुष्य अपने अधिकारों और मूल्यों के लिए डटकर खड़ा होता है तभी उसे असली आत्म-सम्मान मिलता है।

कुछ विचारकों ने कहा है कि आजादी मिलने के बावजूद महिलाओं की स्थिति में बहुत बड़ा बदलाव नहीं आया। उनका जीवन अब भी आर्थिक परिस्थितियों से गहराई से जुड़ा हुआ है। शिक्षा और अधिकारों के विस्तार के बावजूद स्त्रियों का वास्तविक अस्तित्व पूरी तरह से स्थापित नहीं हो पाया। इसलिए महिला लेखिकाओं ने स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के बाद स्त्रियों के जीवन की विविधता को दिखाने और उनकी स्थिति को रेखांकित करने का प्रयास किया।

कुछ अन्य पंक्तियों में यह बताया गया है कि “किसी भी स्वतंत्रता की शुरुआत आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता से होती है। जब तक व्यक्ति आर्थिक रूप से आत्मनिर्भर नहीं होता, तब तक वास्तविक रूप से वह स्वतंत्र नहीं हो सकता।” इसलिए आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता को बहुत महत्वपूर्ण माना गया है। जब औरतें आर्थिक रूप से स्वतंत्र होकर समाज में सक्रिय होने लगीं तो उनके सामने नई-नई समस्याएँ भी आने लगीं। उनके व्यवहार और सोच में बदलाव दिखाई देने लगा। जहाँ पुरुषों के लिए आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता और आत्मसम्मान को सहज माना जाता था, वहीं स्त्रियों के लिए इसे स्वीकार करना कठिन था। लेकिन यह स्पष्ट था कि स्त्रियों के लिए भी आत्मसम्मान और सम्मान पाने के लिए आर्थिक रूप से सक्षम होना जरूरी है। इसी संदर्भ में कहीं यह सवाल उठाया गया “क्यों मुझे कमतर समझा जा रहा है? क्या घर में परायी बनकर बैठी जवान होती लड़की को कभी तवज्जो मिलेगी?”

इस सवाल के पीछे गहरी पीड़ा छिपी है। स्त्री बार-बार सोचती है, खुद से सवाल करती है कि आखिर क्यों उसे अपनी इच्छाएँ दबानी पड़ती हैं? क्यों उसे दूसरों के आदेशों पर चलना पड़ता है? वह चाहती है कि कोई उसके मन की

सुने, उसकी जरूरतों को समझे। अपने परिवार के रिश्तेदारों, छोटे-बड़े चाचाओं-मामाओं के बीच वह अपनी पहचान ढूँढ़ने की कोशिश करती है, लेकिन उसे बार-बार वही पुराने ढर्रे पर लौटा दिया जाता है। इसी तरह, लेखिका नीला कंवर ने भी एक जगह लिखा है कि “पुराने जमाने की औरतें अपनी बेटियों को पहचान दिलाना चाहती थीं, लेकिन उन्हें मौके नहीं मिलते थे। आज की औरतें चाहती हैं कि उनकी बेटियाँ पढ़ें, आगे बढ़ें और समाज में अपनी जगह बनाएँ।” वे चाहती हैं कि बेटियाँ भी आधुनिक शिक्षा पाएँ और स्वतंत्र जीवन जीएँ। यहाँ तक कि अगर किसी स्त्री को यात्रा करने का अवसर मिले तो उसे वही करना चाहिए जो पुरुष करते हैं। जिस तरह पुरुष अपनी पसंद की जगह जाते हैं और खुलकर जीते हैं, वैसे ही स्त्रियों को भी अवसर मिलने चाहिए। अगर ऐसा नहीं होगा, तो उन्हें हमेशा दूसरों की छाया में जीना पड़ेगा।

आत्मसम्मान किसी भी इंसान के लिए बेहद अहम् होता है। यह आत्मनिर्भरता से जुड़ा है। आत्मनिर्भर होने पर ही स्त्री स्वतंत्र होकर अपने फैसले ले सकती है। यही आत्मनिर्भरता उसे अपने जीवन को बेहतर बनाने का रास्ता दिखाती है। जब वह अपने आत्मसम्मान की रक्षा करती है, तभी उसे समाज में असली पहचान और मान मिलता है। किसी भी मनुष्य के लिए आत्मनिर्भर और सम्मानजनक जीवन जीने हेतु आर्थिक रूप से मजबूत होना बहुत जरूरी है। यदि व्यक्ति आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर है तो वह न तो आत्मनिर्भर रह सकता है और न ही समाज में अपनी प्रतिष्ठा व आत्म-सम्मान को बनाए रख सकता है। इसलिए आर्थिक स्थिरता जीवन के हर क्षेत्र से जुड़ी हुई है।

मनुष्य एक संवेदनशील प्राणी है। वह केवल बाहरी परिस्थितियों पर प्रतिक्रिया नहीं करता बल्कि उनसे सीखकर उन्हें अपने अनुसार ढालने की क्षमता भी रखता है। यानी वह अपने अनुभवों से नई परिस्थितियाँ बनाता है और बार-बार कोशिश करता है कि अपने जीवन को बेहतर बनाए। यही कारण है कि मनुष्य अपने ज्ञान और संवेदनशीलता के कारण निरंतर आगे बढ़ता है। जब वह अच्छे-बुरे की पहचान करता है, तो उसमें विवेक का विकास होता है। जीवन में अच्छे और बुरे दोनों तरह के अनुभव मिलते हैं सुख-दुख, खुशी-गम, प्रेम-घृणा, सम्मान-अपमान, सफलता-असफलता आदि। इन सभी अनुभवों के बीच मनुष्य का बौद्धिक और भावनात्मक संतुलन बहुत मायने रखता है। यदि उसकी भावनाएँ नियंत्रित

हों और वह विवेक से काम ले, तो जीवन की मुश्किल परिस्थितियाँ भी उसे नहीं तोड़ पातीं।

मनुष्य का असली बोध तब होता है जब वह यह जानता है कि जीवन में क्या अच्छा है और क्या बुरा। यह ज्ञान उसे आत्मनिर्भर बनने और सही दिशा चुनने में मदद करता है। आत्मनिर्भर बनने के लिए आर्थिक रूप से सक्षम होना आवश्यक है। इसके साथ ही शिक्षा और व्यवहारिक बुद्धि भी चाहिए ताकि वह अपने जीवन की जिम्मेदारियों को स्वयं निभा सके। जब व्यक्ति आत्मनिर्भर बन जाता है, तो वह केवल अपने लिए ही नहीं बल्कि दूसरों के लिए भी सहायक बनता है। आत्मनिर्भरता से जीवन में आत्मविश्वास और संतोष आता है। यही कारण है कि महान लेखिका आशा पणने ने भी लिखा है कि यदि व्यक्ति आत्मनिर्भर है तो गरीबी, दुख या कठिनाइयाँ उसे हरा नहीं सकतीं।

उदाहरण के तौर पर, यदि किसी महिला का पति नहीं है और वह अकेली है, तो भी यदि वह आत्मनिर्भर है तो अपने परिवार की देखभाल कर सकती है। भले ही परिस्थितियाँ कठिन हों, लेकिन आत्मनिर्भर होने के कारण वह टूटती नहीं बल्कि संघर्ष करके जीवन को आगे बढ़ाती है। अर्थात्, आत्मनिर्भरता ही जीवन की असली शक्ति है। यह मनुष्य को साहस देती है, कठिन परिस्थितियों से लड़ने का आत्मबल देती है और उसे समाज में सम्मानपूर्वक जीने लायक बनाती है।

स्त्री की भूमिका केवल परिवार तक ही सीमित नहीं रहती, बल्कि उसे घर-परिवार की देखभाल करने के साथ-साथ परिवार की इज्जत बनाए रखने का दायित्व भी निभाना होता है। उसकी परंपरागत जिम्मेदारियाँ इतनी गहराई से जुड़ी रहती हैं कि जीवन के हर पड़ाव पर वह इन्हीं के अनुरूप आगे बढ़ती है। विवाह, व्रत-त्योहार और सामाजिक रीति-रिवाजों में भी उसका स्थान निश्चित होता है। इन परंपराओं के कारण स्त्री त्याग, बलिदान, समर्पण और सहनशीलता जैसे गुणों की प्रतीक बन जाती है। इन्हीं विशेषताओं से उसे समाज में मान-सम्मान और परिवार में सहारा मिलता है।

समय के साथ परंपराएँ और आधुनिक मूल्यों का आपस में मेल होता गया। आधुनिकता का अर्थ है पुरानी परंपराओं और मान्यताओं को नई सोच, वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण, तर्क और बदलते विचारों के साथ जोड़ना। जब औद्योगीकरण और तकनीकी विकास बढ़ा तो इसके प्रभाव से समाज में आधुनिक

चेतना का प्रसार हुआ। शिक्षा और रोजगार के नए अवसर भी सामने आए। आधुनिकता के आने के बाद स्त्रियों को भी अपनी पहचान बनाने का अवसर मिला। अब वह केवल परिवार तक सीमित न रहकर समाज के अन्य क्षेत्रों जैसे विज्ञान, व्यवसाय, राजनीति और प्रशासन में भी अपनी जगह बनाने लगी। आधुनिक सोच ने स्त्रियों को आत्मनिर्भर और आत्मसम्मान के साथ जीने की प्रेरणा दी। इस प्रकार यह कहा जा सकता है कि आधुनिकता ने स्त्रियों के जीवन में नई दिशा और नई संभावनाएँ खोली हैं। इससे उन्हें अपने अधिकारों को पहचानने और समानता की ओर बढ़ने का मौका मिला है। आज की स्त्री नई परिस्थितियों और नई चुनौतियों को स्वीकार कर अपनी जगह खुद बना रही है, क्योंकि वर्तमान समाज अब प्रगतिशील सोच और समानता की राह पर आगे बढ़ना चाहता है।

स्त्री परंपरा और आधुनिकता के बीच उलझी रहती है। नीला रघुवंशी भी 'स्त्री' की ही तरह है। वह पुराने संस्कार और नए विचारों के बीच फँसी रहती है। उदाहरण के लिए, अगर कोई पुलिस वाला उससे पूछे कि "आप खाने के बारे में क्यों पूछ रही हैं?", तो वह कहेगी "आप भी थोड़ा सा चख लीजिए।" यानी बिना झिझक वह सबको समझाने और दिखाने की कोशिश करती है। लेकिन कई बार जब वह खुद चीजों को समझने की कोशिश करती है, तो उसमें सफल नहीं हो पाती। खुशबू से वह खुद को पहचानने लगती है और सोचती है कि उम्र बढ़ने पर लोग पहचान नहीं पाएँगे।

भगवतीचरण वर्मा ने भी लिखा है कि "हिंदू समाज ने औरत को जो रूप दे दिया है, उसी वजह से उसके जीवन में कई सीमाएँ आ जाती हैं। औरत को हँसना-खेलना, अपनी इच्छाओं के बारे में सोचना, या खुलकर जीना बहुत मुश्किल बना दिया जाता है।"

'स्त्री' भी यही महसूस करती है कि "वह कभी अपने लिए जी ही नहीं पाई। उसका शरीर, मेहनत, सब कुछ दूसरों के लिए ही काम आता है। उसे लगता है कि अगर वह व्यापारी होती तो झूठ बोलकर भी अपना काम चला लेती, लेकिन औरत होने की वजह से हमेशा त्याग, फरेब और झूठ से दूर रहना पड़ता है।"

वह कहती है कि "आज मेरी किसी पर निर्भरता नहीं है। किसी से मुझे ममता या सहानुभूति नहीं मिलती। मैं बस लोगों की जिंदगी देखती हूँ, पर उसमें शामिल नहीं हो पाती।" यानी

‘स्त्री’ की सबसे बड़ी समस्या यह है कि वह खुद भी नहीं जान पाती कि आखिर उसकी जिंदगी की असली चाहत क्या है। नीलेश रघुवंशी भी ‘स्त्री’ की तरह जीवन के इन्हीं सवालों और संघर्षों से जूझती हुई नजर आती है।

स्त्री का जीवन बहुत जटिल और दुखों से भरा होता है। उसके जीवन की सच्चाई कभी-कभी बहुत कठोर लगती है। उसके दुख, भावनाएँ और अनुभव उसके आस-पास के माहौल पर निर्भर करते हैं। उसके जीवन में सुख-दुख की लहरें हमेशा आती रहती हैं। स्त्रियों के मन में परिवार और समाज से मिली अपेक्षाएँ और अनुभव ही छिपे रहते हैं। उनके दिल में त्याग, बलिदान, सेवा और प्रेम भरा होता है। वे अपनी इच्छाओं और दुखों को दबाकर परिवार की रक्षा करती रहती हैं। लेकिन इस चुप्पी के पीछे उनकी अनगिनत इच्छाएँ और सपने छिपे रहते हैं। विवाह के बाद औरत को अपना घर छोड़कर पति के घर जाना पड़ता है। उसे अपनी पहचान और नाम तक बदलना पड़ता है। विवाह के बाद उसका नाम मिटकर पति और उसके परिवार की पहचान बन जाती है। धीरे-धीरे औरत को अपने अनुभव से यह समझ आ जाता है कि पुरुष उससे ज्यादा अधिकार चाहता है, और उसका स्थान पुरुष के पीछे ही रहता है। यही कारण है कि समाज में औरत को आज भी बराबरी का हक नहीं मिल पाया है। फिर भी औरत दूसरों को ममता, न्याय और प्रेरणा देती रहती है। वह हर तरफ से त्याग करती है, लेकिन उसे उसका सही स्थान और सम्मान नहीं मिल पाता।

सामाजिक ढाँचे का टूटना कभी धीमे-धीमे तो कभी तीव्र गति से होता है। किंतु इसका केवल विध्वंसक पक्ष ही नहीं, अपितु एक सृजनात्मक और रचनात्मक पक्ष भी विद्यमान है। यदि कोई स्त्री वास्तव में सम्पूर्णता के साथ स्वयं को मुक्त करने का प्रयास करती है, तो उसका यह प्रयत्न केवल उसके लिए ही नहीं, अपितु पुरुषों के लिए भी प्रेरणास्रोत बन सकता है। वस्तुतः सच्ची मुक्ति तभी संभव है जब स्त्री और पुरुष दोनों एक साथ स्वतंत्र हों, एक-दूसरे की पीड़ाओं को समझते हुए, एक-दूसरे के अस्तित्व को स्वीकारते हुए आगे बढ़ें। तभी समाज में वास्तविक सामंजस्य और संतुलन स्थापित हो सकता है।

परिवार की संरचना में स्त्री की भूमिका अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। वह केवल भावनात्मक दृष्टि से ही नहीं, बल्कि हृदय और आत्मा के स्तर पर भी परिवार से जुड़ी रहती है। वही स्त्री जब

अपने जीवन को सार्थक बनाने हेतु सम्मान की खोज करती है, तो उसके भीतर यह आकांक्षा जागृत होती है कि उसे केवल भावनात्मक ही नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक और बौद्धिक स्तर पर भी वही सम्मान, वही प्रतिष्ठा प्राप्त हो, जो पुरुष को सहज ही मिल जाती है। स्त्री चाहती है कि उसे पुरुषसत्तात्मक मानसिकता की जंजीरों से मुक्ति मिले, वह परिवार की मोहग्रस्त बंधनों से भी स्वतंत्र हो सके।

स्त्री की यह स्वतंत्रता केवल व्यक्तिगत नहीं, वरन् सामाजिक और पारिवारिक दृष्टि से भी आवश्यक है। जब वह अपने हृदय की भावनाओं और अपनी आत्मा की आंतरिक पुकार को अभिव्यक्त करती है, तभी वह वास्तविक अर्थों में स्वतंत्र कहलाती है। यही कारण है कि साहित्य में बार-बार स्त्री की इस मुक्ति की बात उठाई गई है। उदाहरणस्वरूप, यदि वह किसी के समक्ष अपने हृदय की बात कहने का साहस न कर पाए, तो उसकी पीड़ा और गहन हो जाती है। पारिवारिक संवादों में भी यह स्पष्ट झलकता है कि स्त्री के विचारों को हल्के में लिया जाता है, किंतु उसकी संवेदनाएँ कहीं अधिक गहरी और जीवन्त होती हैं।

स्त्री का यह संघर्ष केवल निजी जीवन तक सीमित नहीं है। जब वह शिक्षा और करियर की ओर अग्रसर होती है, तब समाज उसके मार्ग में अनेक बाधाएँ खड़ी करता है। फिर भी, उसका संकल्प, उसकी जिजीविषा और आगे बढ़ने की आकांक्षा उसे आगे धकेलती है। वह अपने लिए ही नहीं, आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए भी मार्ग प्रशस्त करती है। उसकी शिक्षा, उसका करियर, उसके सपने—ये सब उसकी स्वतंत्रता के वाहक बन जाते हैं।

साहित्यकारों ने बार-बार यह स्पष्ट किया है कि स्त्री का जीवन तभी पूर्ण होगा जब उसकी भावनाएँ, उसका श्रम, उसकी सृजनशीलता और उसकी पहचान—सबको समान रूप से स्वीकारा और सम्मानित किया जाएगा। केवल परिवार और समाज के बंधनों में बँधी रहने वाली स्त्री अधूरी है। वह तभी पूर्णता को प्राप्त करती है, जब उसे समान अधिकार, समान अवसर और आत्म-अभिव्यक्ति का पूरा-पूरा अधिकार मिले।

पारिवारिक जीवन में स्त्री का स्थान केवल एक जिम्मेदार सदस्य का नहीं, बल्कि त्याग और बलिदान की देवी के समान माना जाता है। प्रस्तुत प्रसंग से स्पष्ट होता है कि किस प्रकार एक बहन, विवाह के पश्चात् अपने नए परिवार में रमते हुए भी निरंतर कर्म, सेवा और समर्पण में लीन रहती है। वह

घर-परिवार की गतिविधियों में इस प्रकार व्यस्त रहती है कि उसके श्रम और तपस्या से घर की रौनक, अनुशासन और आत्मीयता बनी रहती है।

स्त्री का यह स्वरूप अत्यंत मार्मिक है। वह केवल दायित्व निभाने वाली नहीं, बल्कि परिवार की आत्मा के रूप में कार्य करती है। उसकी उपस्थिति से घर के प्रत्येक कोने में जीवन का संचार होता है चूल्हे पर रोटियाँ सेंकती उसकी छवि, गवाक्षों से आती रोशनी में उसके श्रम से भीगी काया, और अनवरत चलने वाला उसका स्नेह सब मिलकर एक अद्भुत चित्र प्रस्तुत करते हैं। यह समर्पण ही उसे परिवार और समाज के लिए शक्ति-स्रोत बना देता है।

फिर भी, यह भी उतना ही सत्य है कि परिवार और समाज उसकी अनुभूतियों, भावनाओं और संवेदनाओं को प्रायः मान्यता नहीं देते। स्त्री को उसके त्याग और श्रम के कारण पूजा तो जाता है, किंतु उसके व्यक्तित्व और स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व को अक्सर अनदेखा कर दिया जाता है। यही कारण है कि स्त्री अपने वास्तविक सम्मान और मान्यता की खोज में निरंतर संघर्ष

करती है।

नीलेश रघुवंशी के उपन्यासों में स्त्री की यही छवि बार-बार उभरकर सामने आती है एक ऐसी छवि, जो घर-परिवार के लिए आधार-स्तंभ तो है, किंतु अपने अधिकार, अपनी अस्मिता और अपनी स्वतंत्र पहचान के लिए जूझती रहती है। लेखिका का मानना है कि स्त्री का जीवन केवल शारीरिक श्रम और मानसिक दबाव में ही नहीं, बल्कि उसके भीतर पल रहे आत्म-संघर्ष में भी प्रतिबिंबित होता है।

अतः यह कहा जा सकता है कि स्त्री का संघर्ष बहुआयामी है। वह एक ओर परिवार को संजोती है, तो दूसरी ओर अपने अस्तित्व और सम्मान की तलाश में निरंतर प्रयत्नशील रहती है। उसका जीवन केवल दूसरों के लिए नहीं, बल्कि स्वयं के लिए भी संघर्ष और संकल्प का पर्याय है।

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सन्दर्भ सूची

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रतन कुमार दास

धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण पर आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा की दृष्टि

सार-संक्षेप

मानव सभ्यता के विकास में धर्म केवल आस्था का विषय नहीं रहा, बल्कि वह सामाजिक व्यवस्था और राजनीतिक संरचना को वैधता देने का माध्यम भी बना। भारत के प्राचीन इतिहास में धर्म ने सामाजिक नियंत्रण का महत्वपूर्ण उपकरण बनकर कार्य किया। इसी संदर्भ में आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा, जिन्हें प्रख्यात मार्क्सवादी इतिहासकार माना जाता है, ने अपने लेखन और शोध में धर्म की भूमिका को आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि से देखा। उनका मानना था कि धर्म ने केवल आध्यात्मिक जीवन ही नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक असमानताओं, वर्गीय शोषण और वर्ण-व्यवस्था को बनाए रखने में भी निर्णायक भूमिका निभाई। मानव सभ्यता के विकासक्रम में धर्म का स्थान अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण रहा है। प्रारम्भिक समाजों में धर्म केवल आध्यात्मिक आस्था का विषय नहीं था, बल्कि वह सामाजिक व्यवस्था और सत्ता-प्रणाली का भी एक अनिवार्य अंग था। धर्म ने मनुष्य के आचार-विचार, जीवन-शैली और कर्तव्यों को निर्धारित किया तथा उसे एक निश्चित सामाजिक ढाँचे में बाँधने का कार्य किया। इस प्रकार धर्म ने केवल विश्वास या भक्ति का माध्यम न रहकर, सामाजिक नियंत्रण का भी प्रभावी उपकरण बनने की भूमिका निभाई।

भारतीय इतिहास में धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण का संबंध बहुत गहरा रहा है। वेद, उपनिषद, धर्मशास्त्र, महाकाव्य और पुराण जैसे ग्रंथों में जीवन के प्रत्येक क्षेत्र के लिए आचार-संहिताएँ प्रस्तुत की गईं। मनुष्य के जन्म से लेकर मृत्यु तक के संस्कारों को धार्मिक रीति-नीतियों से जोड़ दिया गया। इन व्यवस्थाओं ने समाज में व्यक्तियों के आचरण को नियंत्रित किया और उन्हें

परंपरागत मान्यताओं का पालन करने के लिए बाध्य किया।

इसी संदर्भ में आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा की दृष्टि अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। उन्होंने धर्म को केवल अध्यात्म का साधन मानने के बजाय, उसे एक सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक और राजनीतिक संरचना का हिस्सा माना। उनका मानना था कि धर्म ने प्राचीन भारतीय समाज में असमानताओं को वैधता प्रदान की और सामाजिक नियंत्रण का वैचारिक आधार तैयार किया। विशेष रूप से ब्राह्मणवादी धर्म ने वर्ण-व्यवस्था, जातिगत भेदभाव और श्रम विभाजन को स्थायी बनाने का कार्य किया।

बीज शब्द- धर्म, जाति, वर्ण व्यवस्था, प्राचीन, शोषण, राजनीतिक, आध्यात्मिक।

आचार्य शर्मा विशेष रूप से प्राचीन भारत के सामाजिक और आर्थिक इतिहास के अध्येता थे। उनकी दृष्टि का केंद्रबिंदु यह था कि इतिहास की वास्तविक गति को समझने के लिए समाज की भौतिक परिस्थितियों, उत्पादन पद्धतियों और वर्गीय संबंधों का अध्ययन करना आवश्यक है। “वे मानते थे कि समाज की संरचना का आधार अर्थव्यवस्था और उत्पादन संबंध हैं। धर्म, राजनीति, संस्कृति और विचारधारा इन उत्पादन संबंधों से उत्पन्न अधिरचना (superstructure) हैं।”¹ इस दृष्टि से धर्म केवल आस्था या विश्वास नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक-आर्थिक संरचना को वैधता देने का साधन था। उन्होंने वैदिक साहित्य, उपनिषद, धर्मशास्त्र, पुराण, महाकाव्य, शिलालेखों और विदेशी यात्रियों के वृत्तांतों का गहन अध्ययन किया। इन स्रोतों को उन्होंने केवल धार्मिक ग्रंथ न मानकर, समाज-आर्थिक ढाँचे को समझने के साधन के रूप में देखा। उदाहरण के लिए, मनुस्मृति को उन्होंने केवल धर्मशास्त्रीय ग्रंथ न मानकर, उस

समय की सामाजिक असमानताओं और नियंत्रण-व्यवस्थाओं का वैचारिक दस्तावेज कहा।

सामाजिक नियंत्रण का आशय उन साधनों और संस्थाओं से है, जिनके द्वारा समाज अपने सदस्यों के आचरण को नियंत्रित करता है। धर्म, परंपरा और रीति-रिवाज सामाजिक नियंत्रण के प्राथमिक साधन रहे हैं। भारत में धर्म ने न केवल लोगों को आचार-विचार की मर्यादा में बाँधा, बल्कि समाज को वर्ण, जाति और आश्रम व्यवस्था में विभाजित कर शोषणकारी ढाँचे को वैधता दी। आचार्य शर्मा का तर्क है कि धर्म का उद्देश्य केवल आध्यात्मिक शुचिता नहीं था, बल्कि वह सामाजिक-राजनीतिक व्यवस्था को स्थिर रखने का औजार था। धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण का संबंध मानव इतिहास में अत्यंत पुराना और गहरा है। जब समाज का संगठन छोटे-छोटे समूहों और कबीलों से आगे बढ़कर जटिल रूप लेने लगा, तब आवश्यक हो गया कि समाज के सदस्यों के आचरण और व्यवहार को किसी साझा नियमों और मान्यताओं के आधार पर नियंत्रित किया जाए। यही भूमिका प्रारम्भ में परंपराओं, रीति-रिवाजों और बाद में संगठित धर्म ने निभाई। सामाजिक नियंत्रण का आशय उन तंत्रों और साधनों से भी है जिनके माध्यम से समाज अपने सदस्यों के आचरण को नियंत्रित करता है। यह नियंत्रण प्रत्यक्ष भी हो सकता है (जैसे दंड, नियम, कानून) और अप्रत्यक्ष भी (जैसे परंपरा, रीति-रिवाज, धार्मिक विश्वास)। धर्म मुख्य रूप से इसी अप्रत्यक्ष सामाजिक नियंत्रण का माध्यम रहा, जिसने लोगों के जीवन के हर पहलू पर असर डाला। धर्म ने यह तय किया कि कौन-सा आचरण पुण्य है और कौन-सा पाप। इस तरह उसने मानव व्यवहार को नियंत्रित करने का नैतिक ढाँचा तैयार किया।

भारतीय समाज में धर्म ने वर्ण और जाति-व्यवस्था को वैधता दी। लोगों की सामाजिक स्थिति को दैवी इच्छा या पूर्व जन्म के कर्म से जोड़कर असमानताओं को स्थायी बना दिया गया। धार्मिक मान्यताओं ने अधीन वर्गों में यह विश्वास पैदा किया कि उनका कर्तव्य सेवा करना और आज्ञा मानना है। विद्रोह या अवज्ञा को पाप और अधर्म घोषित कर दंडनीय ठहराया गया। धर्म ने शासकों को ईश्वर का प्रतिनिधि या धर्म का संरक्षक बताया। इससे प्रजा पर राज्य का नियंत्रण और अधिक मजबूत हुआ। वैदिक और उत्तर वैदिक काल से ही धर्म को समाज के हर क्षेत्र से जोड़ा गया। “व्यक्ति के जीवन को आश्रम-व्यवस्था और संसार-धर्म के माध्यम से बाँधा गया।

जन्म से मृत्यु तक के संस्कार (संस्कार-परंपरा) को धर्म से जोड़कर यह सुनिश्चित किया गया कि कोई भी व्यक्ति धर्म से बाहर जाकर स्वतंत्र जीवन न जी सके। उदाहरण के लिए, विवाह केवल धार्मिक संस्कार न होकर सामाजिक नियंत्रण का माध्यम था, जो वर्ण-शुद्धि और जातिगत मर्यादा बनाए रखने का साधन बना।”²

आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा मानते हैं कि धर्म का मूल उद्देश्य केवल आत्मा की मुक्ति या ईश्वर-भक्ति नहीं था, बल्कि वह सामाजिक ढाँचे को स्थिर और नियंत्रित रखने का साधन था। उनके अनुसार धर्म एक प्रकार का वैचारिक औजार (Ideological Weapon) था, जिसके द्वारा प्रभुत्वशाली वर्ग ने अधीन वर्गों को नियंत्रित किया। कर्म और पुनर्जन्म का सिद्धांत इसका सबसे बड़ा उदाहरण है इसने यह धारणा मजबूत की कि मनुष्य की सामाजिक स्थिति पूर्व जन्म के कर्मों का परिणाम है, इसलिए उसे विद्रोह करने के बजाय अपनी स्थिति स्वीकार करनी चाहिए। धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण की अवधारणा से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि भारतीय समाज में धर्म केवल पूजा-पाठ या ईश्वर-भक्ति का साधन नहीं रहा, बल्कि उसने लोगों के जीवन पर गहरा अनुशासन थोपने का कार्य किया। यही कारण है कि आचार्य शर्मा धर्म को एक सामाजिक-राजनीतिक संरचना मानते हैं, जिसने असमानताओं को धार्मिक आधार प्रदान किया और शासक वर्गों को वैधता दी।

ऋग्वैदिक समाज अपेक्षाकृत अधिक समानतावादी था, परंतु उत्तर वैदिक काल तक आते-आते वर्ण-भेद और असमानता गहराने लगी। यज्ञ और देवताओं की आराधना को सामाजिक और आर्थिक नियंत्रण का उपकरण बनाया गया। ब्राह्मण वर्ग ने धार्मिक अनुष्ठानों के माध्यम से समाज में अपना विशेषाधिकार स्थापित किया। शर्मा बताते हैं कि यज्ञ केवल धार्मिक अनुष्ठान नहीं था, बल्कि यह शासक वर्ग के वैभव, संपत्ति के वितरण और अधीन वर्गों को नियंत्रित करने का माध्यम भी था।

भारतीय इतिहास में वैदिक काल को अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण माना जाता है, क्योंकि इसी काल में भारतीय समाज की धार्मिक और सामाजिक नींव पड़ी। आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा के अनुसार वैदिक युग में धर्म केवल ईश्वर-भक्ति का साधन नहीं था, बल्कि वह समाज को नियंत्रित और संचालित करने का प्रभावी औजार भी था। प्रारम्भिक ऋग्वैदिक समाज अपेक्षाकृत जनजातीय और सामूहिक स्वरूप का था। यहाँ धर्म का स्वरूप

बहुदेववादी (Polytheistic) था इंद्र, अग्नि, वरुण, सोम आदि देवताओं की पूजा होती थी। यज्ञ और स्तुति गान सामाजिक जीवन का अंग थे, जो सामूहिक सहयोग और सामाजिक एकता बनाए रखते थे। हालाँकि, यह धार्मिक व्यवस्था धीरे-धीरे सामाजिक भेदभाव और नियंत्रण का माध्यम बनने लगी।

यज्ञ ऋग्वैदिक और उत्तर वैदिक दोनों ही कालों में धर्म का मुख्य अंग था। प्रारम्भ में यज्ञ सामूहिक होते थे, लेकिन उत्तर वैदिक काल में वे जटिल और महंगे हो गए। ब्राह्मण वर्ग ने यज्ञ के अनुष्ठानों पर अपना नियंत्रण स्थापित किया और उन्हें सामाजिक व आर्थिक शोषण का साधन बनाया। आचार्य शर्मा लिखते हैं कि यज्ञ केवल धार्मिक अनुष्ठान नहीं थे, बल्कि वे राजनैतिक वैधता और सामाजिक नियंत्रण के उपकरण थे। उदाहरण के लिए, राजसूय और अश्वमेध यज्ञ राजा की सत्ता और प्रभुत्व को वैध ठहराने का माध्यम बने। “ऋग्वैदिक काल में समाज में पेशागत विभाजन तो था, पर वह कठोर नहीं था। उत्तर वैदिक काल तक आते-आते वर्ण-व्यवस्था स्थायी और कठोर रूप लेने लगी। ऋग्वेद का पुरुषसूक्त (दसवाँ मंडल) इस प्रक्रिया का प्रतीक है, जिसमें समाज के चार वर्णों को एक ब्रह्मांडीय पुरुष के शरीर से उत्पन्न बताया गया। ब्राह्मण मुख से, क्षत्रिय भुजाओं से, वैश्य जंघाओं से, शूद्र पाँव से। इस प्रकार सामाजिक असमानता और श्रम विभाजन को धार्मिक और दैवी आधार दे दिया गया। वैदिक साहित्य और धर्मशास्त्रों में शूद्रों को निम्नतम स्थान दिया गया।”³

ऋग्वैदिक समाज में वर्ण-भेद अपेक्षाकृत लचीला था और पेशे बदलने की गुंजाइश थी। लेकिन उत्तर वैदिक काल तक आते-आते वर्ण-व्यवस्था कठोर और जन्म-आधारित हो गई। पुरुषसूक्त में वर्णों की उत्पत्ति को ब्रह्मांडीय और दैवी बताकर इसे “प्राकृतिक” और “धर्मसम्मत” सिद्ध कर दिया गया। इस प्रकार धार्मिक आधार पर असमानता को स्थायी और वैध बना दिया गया। यज्ञ और कर्मकांड अत्यधिक जटिल और महंगे होते गए, जिन्हें केवल ब्राह्मण ही संपन्न करा सकते थे। इससे ब्राह्मणों ने समाज पर वैचारिक और धार्मिक प्रभुत्व स्थापित कर लिया। धर्मशास्त्रों में यह प्रचारित किया गया कि ब्राह्मण ही “धरती पर देवता” हैं और उनका सम्मान समाज का कर्तव्य है। आचार्य शर्मा लिखते हैं कि यह “विचारधारात्मक प्रभुत्व” (Ideological Domination) का उदाहरण है, जिसने समाज को आज्ञाकारी बनाए रखा। धर्म ने न केवल ब्राह्मणों का वर्चस्व स्थापित किया, बल्कि क्षत्रियों की सत्ता को भी

वैधता दी। राजसूय, वाजपेयी और अश्वमेध जैसे यज्ञों के माध्यम से राजसत्ता को “दैवी अधिकार” का स्वरूप दिया गया। राजा को “धर्म का संरक्षक” माना गया, जिससे उसके शासन को पवित्र और अविवादित बताया गया। वैश्य वर्ण को कृषि, व्यापार और पशुपालन का कार्य सौंपा गया। वैश्य समाज की रीढ़ थे, लेकिन धार्मिक और सामाजिक दृष्टि से वे ब्राह्मण और क्षत्रियों के अधीन रहे। शूद्रों की स्थिति सबसे निम्न थी उन्हें केवल सेवा और श्रम तक सीमित रखा गया। धर्मशास्त्रों और ब्राह्मणिक ग्रंथों ने शूद्रों को शिक्षा, वेदपाठ और यज्ञ-भागीदारी से वंचित कर दिया। आचार्य शर्मा बताते हैं कि शूद्रों की इस स्थिति को “दैवी आदेश” बताकर स्थायी कर दिया गया, ताकि वे विद्रोह न करें। उत्तर वैदिक काल में कर्म और पुनर्जन्म की अवधारणा प्रमुख रूप से उभरी। यह धारणा दी गई कि मनुष्य की वर्तमान स्थिति उसके पिछले जन्म के कर्मों का परिणाम है। इससे समाज के निम्न वर्गों और शोषितों में आज्ञाकारिता और संतोष का भाव पैदा हुआ। आचार्य शर्मा के अनुसार यह सिद्धांत सामाजिक असमानताओं को धार्मिक वैधता देने का सबसे शक्तिशाली उपकरण था। उत्तर वैदिक समाज में स्त्रियों पर धार्मिक नियंत्रण और कठोर हो गया। शिक्षा और धार्मिक अनुष्ठानों में उनकी भूमिका घटती गई। विवाह को केवल धार्मिक संस्कार ही नहीं, बल्कि पितृसत्ता को मजबूत करने का माध्यम बना दिया गया। इस प्रकार धर्म ने स्त्रियों की स्वतंत्रता सीमित कर उन्हें अधीन स्थिति में बनाए रखा। “आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा का निष्कर्ष है कि उत्तर वैदिक काल में धर्म ने सामाजिक विभाजन को कठोर किया। वर्ण-व्यवस्था और कर्म-सिद्धांत ने असमानताओं को स्थायी बनाया।”⁴ धर्म ने ब्राह्मण और क्षत्रिय वर्ग के प्रभुत्व को वैध ठहराया, जबकि वैश्य और विशेषकर शूद्र को अधीनस्थ स्थिति में बाँध दिया। इस प्रकार धर्म ने समाज को नियंत्रित करने और शोषण को स्थिर करने का कार्य किया। उत्तर वैदिक काल धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण के इतिहास में निर्णायक चरण था। इस काल में वर्ण-व्यवस्था का कठोर संस्थानीकरण हुआ, कर्म-सिद्धांत और पुनर्जन्म की अवधारणा ने असमानताओं को धार्मिक आधार दिया, और धर्म ने शासक वर्गों को स्थायी प्रभुत्व प्रदान किया। आचार्य शर्मा की दृष्टि से यह काल भारतीय समाज में वर्गीय शोषण और सामाजिक नियंत्रण की जड़ों को मजबूत करने वाला दौर था। आचार्य शर्मा बताते हैं कि राज्यसत्ता और धर्मसत्ता ने मिलकर शासक वर्ग के हितों को सुरक्षित किया।

धर्मशास्त्रों ने राजा को “धर्म का संरक्षक” घोषित किया और प्रजा को आज्ञाकारी रहने का आदेश दिया। मनुस्मृति जैसे ग्रंथों ने ब्राह्मण वर्चस्व और क्षत्रिय सत्ता को वैध ठहराया। अशोक और गुप्त काल में धर्म का प्रयोग साम्राज्य को वैध ठहराने और प्रजा पर नियंत्रण के लिए हुआ।

भारतीय इतिहास में धर्म और राज्यसत्ता का संबंध अत्यंत गहरा और परस्परवलंबी रहा है। राज्य की स्थिरता और वैधता के लिए धर्म का सहारा लिया गया, वहीं धर्म के संरक्षण और विस्तार के लिए राज्यसत्ता ने अपने संसाधन उपलब्ध कराए। आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा के अनुसार, धर्म और राज्यसत्ता का यह गठबंधन सामाजिक नियंत्रण की प्रक्रिया को और अधिक सुदृढ़ बनाने वाला था। धर्मशास्त्रों में राजा को केवल शासक ही नहीं, बल्कि “धर्म का संरक्षक” (धर्मपालक) बताया गया।

मनुस्मृति के अनुसार, राजा ईश्वर द्वारा नियुक्त है और उसका प्रमुख कर्तव्य “धर्म की रक्षा” करना है। इस धारणा ने राजा को दैवी स्वरूप प्रदान किया, जिससे उसकी सत्ता को प्रश्नातीत और पवित्र माना गया। आचार्य शर्मा लिखते हैं कि इस प्रकार धर्म ने राज्यसत्ता को वैधता दी और प्रजा को आज्ञाकारी बनाए रखने का कार्य किया। वैदिक परंपरा में विभिन्न प्रकार के यज्ञ राजसत्ता की पुष्टि के लिए किए जाते थे। राजसूय यज्ञ राजा के सार्वभौमत्व का प्रतीक। अश्वमेध यज्ञ राज्य की सीमाओं और साम्राज्यवादी महत्वाकांक्षाओं को वैधता प्रदान करने वाला। वाजपेयी यज्ञ राजा की शक्ति और अधिकार को पवित्र बनाने वाला। इन यज्ञों में ब्राह्मणों की केंद्रीय भूमिका थी, जिससे धर्म और राजसत्ता का गठबंधन और मजबूत हुआ। प्राचीन भारत में कानून और धर्म (धर्मशास्त्र) गहराई से जुड़े हुए थे। समाज के लिए जो नियम बनाए जाते थे, वे धार्मिक भाषा और आधार में प्रस्तुत किए जाते थे। धर्मसूत्रों और स्मृतियों ने केवल नैतिक आचरण ही नहीं, बल्कि राजनीतिक और आर्थिक गतिविधियों के लिए भी दिशा-निर्देश दिए। इस प्रकार धर्मशास्त्र सामाजिक और राजनीतिक जीवन दोनों को नियंत्रित करने का साधन बने। “मौर्य सम्राट अशोक (तीसरी शताब्दी ई.पू.) ने धर्म को शासन का आधार बनाया। उसने “धम्म” (Dhamma)⁵ की घोषणा की, जिसके अंतर्गत नैतिक उपदेशों, अहिंसा, दया और सहिष्णुता पर जोर दिया गया। यद्यपि अशोक का धम्म तुलनात्मक रूप से मानवीय और सार्वभौम था, फिर भी यह राज्यसत्ता को वैचारिक समर्थन देने वाला था। आचार्य शर्मा कहते हैं कि अशोक ने धर्म का प्रयोग राजनीतिक एकता और

साम्राज्य की स्थिरता के लिए किया। गुप्त काल (चौथी पाँचवीं शताब्दी ईस्वी) में ब्राह्मणवाद और राज्यसत्ता का गठबंधन और गहरा हुआ। गुप्त शासकों ने वैदिक धर्म, पुराणों और संस्कृत साहित्य को संरक्षण देकर अपने शासन को “दैवी और पवित्र” बताया। ब्राह्मणों को भूमि दान (अग्रहार दान) देकर उन्हें सामाजिक और आर्थिक शक्ति प्रदान की गई। इस प्रकार धर्म ने गुप्त शासकों की सत्ता को वैधता दी और बदले में राज्य ने ब्राह्मणों को संरक्षण प्रदान किया। आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा का तर्क है कि धर्म और राज्य का गठबंधन शोषणकारी वर्गों के हितों की रक्षा करता था। ब्राह्मणों और क्षत्रियों ने मिलकर एक ऐसी व्यवस्था बनाई, जिसमें धर्म ने सामाजिक असमानताओं को नैतिक और दैवी रूप दिया, जबकि राज्य ने उसे बल और प्रशासनिक शक्ति से लागू किया। इस गठबंधन ने शूद्रों, दासों और स्त्रियों को अधीन बनाए रखने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। धर्म और राज्यसत्ता का गठबंधन भारतीय इतिहास की एक स्थायी प्रवृत्ति रही। यज्ञ, धर्मशास्त्र और सम्राटों के धार्मिक प्रयोगों ने राजसत्ता को वैधता दी, वहीं धर्म को राज्य का संरक्षण प्राप्त हुआ। आचार्य शर्मा की दृष्टि में यह गठबंधन समाज में प्रभुत्वशाली वर्ग के हितों को सुरक्षित करने और शोषण को स्थायी बनाने का प्रमुख साधन था। आचार्य शर्मा ने विस्तार से बताया कि शूद्रों और दासों को सामाजिक नियंत्रण की सबसे कठोर परंपराओं के तहत रखा गया। शूद्रों को शिक्षा और धार्मिक अनुष्ठानों से वंचित रखा गया। उनके लिए “धर्म” का अर्थ केवल सेवा, श्रम और आज्ञाकारिता था। धर्मशास्त्रों ने शूद्रों की स्थिति को “दैवी आदेश” के रूप में वैधता प्रदान की। इस प्रकार धर्म ने वर्गीय शोषण को स्थायी और पवित्र बना दिया। आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा ने अपने लेखन में बार-बार इस बात पर जोर दिया है कि भारतीय समाज में धर्म ने शूद्रों और दासों की अधीनता को न केवल स्वाभाविक बताया बल्कि उसे “दैवी इच्छा” और “कर्मफल” के रूप में उचित ठहराया। यह धर्म द्वारा सामाजिक नियंत्रण का एक गहरा रूप था, जिससे समाज की असमानताओं को स्थायित्व मिला। ऋग्वेद के पुरुषसूक्त में शूद्रों को ब्रह्मा के चरणों से उत्पन्न बताया गया, जबकि ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय और वैश्य को क्रमशः मुख, भुजाओं और जंघाओं से। इसका अर्थ यह था कि शूद्रों का स्थान हमेशा “निचला” और “सेवक” के रूप में ही रहेगा। मनुस्मृति और अन्य धर्मशास्त्रों में शूद्रों के लिए कठोर नियम बनाए गए : वे वेदपाठ नहीं कर सकते थे। उन्हें धार्मिक यज्ञ और शिक्षा से

वंचित रखा गया। उनका प्रमुख कर्तव्य ऊँची जातियों की सेवा करना था। आचार्य शर्मा के अनुसार, धर्म ने शूद्रों की सामाजिक हीनता को स्थायी बनाने का कार्य किया और उनके लिए उन्नति के द्वार बंद कर दिए। वैदिक और उत्तरवैदिक काल में दास (दास, दासी) समाज का हिस्सा थे। दासों का कार्य खेतों, घरों और यज्ञादि में शारीरिक श्रम करना था। धर्मशास्त्रों ने दासप्रथा को उचित ठहराया और कहा कि यह “पूर्व जन्म के पापों” का फल है। मनुस्मृति में कहा गया है कि स्त्री को कभी स्वतंत्रता नहीं मिलनी चाहिए “बचपन में पिता के अधीन, युवावस्था में पति के अधीन और वृद्धावस्था में पुत्र के अधीन।”⁶ धार्मिक तर्कों के सहारे स्त्रियों को शिक्षा, संपत्ति और सामाजिक अधिकारों से वंचित रखा गया। आचार्य शर्मा इस व्यवस्था को “पितृसत्तात्मक नियंत्रण” का हिस्सा मानते हैं। शूद्रों, दासों और स्त्रियों की स्थिति को उचित ठहराने के लिए कर्म और पुनर्जन्म का सिद्धांत सबसे शक्तिशाली उपकरण था। यह विचार फैलाया गया कि वर्तमान जीवन की हीन स्थिति पिछले जन्म के कर्मों का परिणाम है। इसलिए अपने “धर्म” का पालन करना ही मुक्ति का मार्ग है। आचार्य शर्मा लिखते हैं कि यह धार्मिक विचारधारा शोषित वर्गों की विद्रोही चेतना को निष्क्रिय कर देती थी और उन्हें आज्ञाकारिता के लिए प्रेरित करती थी। आचार्य शर्मा की दृष्टि में यह धार्मिक नियंत्रण शोषण और असमानता को स्थायी बनाने की सुनियोजित प्रक्रिया थी। ब्राह्मणवाद धर्म के नाम पर विचारधारात्मक प्रभुत्व का प्रतीक था। उसने कर्मकांड, पुनर्जन्म और पाप-पुण्य की अवधारणाओं के माध्यम से अधीन वर्गों को नियंत्रित किया। “कर्म और पुनर्जन्म” के सिद्धांत ने यह प्रचारित किया कि किसी की सामाजिक स्थिति उसके पूर्व जन्म के कर्मों का परिणाम है। शर्मा लिखते हैं कि यह विचारधारा दासों और शूद्रों की विद्रोह की संभावना को दबाने का साधन बनी।

आचार्य शर्मा कहते हैं कि यह तनाव वर्ग-संघर्ष का रूप लेता था, जो कभी प्रत्यक्ष विद्रोह के रूप में और कभी वैचारिक आंदोलनों के रूप में सामने आया।

छठी शताब्दी ईसा पूर्व में बौद्ध और जैन धर्म का उदय हुआ। इन आंदोलनों ने वेद, यज्ञ और ब्राह्मणवादी श्रेष्ठता को चुनौती दी। बुद्ध ने जाति-विभाजन और यज्ञ-व्यवस्था का विरोध किया तथा समानता और करुणा पर बल दिया। महावीर ने अहिंसा, तपस्या और सभी जीवों की समानता का संदेश दिया। आचार्य शर्मा के अनुसार, ये आंदोलन सामाजिक नियंत्रण

के ब्राह्मणवादी स्वरूप के विरुद्ध जनता की असंतुष्टि का परिणाम थे। बौद्ध और जैन धर्म के अलावा अनेक श्रमण परंपराएँ उभरीं, जिन्होंने “कर्मकांड और ब्राह्मणवादी”⁷ वर्चस्व को नकारा। लोकधर्म, जनजातीय विश्वास और ग्राम-देवताओं की पूजा भी ब्राह्मणवादी धर्म के नियंत्रण से बाहर थीं। आचार्य शर्मा इसे “धार्मिक प्रतिरोध” की श्रेणी में रखते हैं, जहाँ निम्नवर्ग अपनी सांस्कृतिक पहचान बनाए रखने का प्रयास करता था। मध्यकाल में भक्ति आंदोलन ने धर्म के सामाजिक नियंत्रण को चुनौती दी। कबीर, रैदास, मीरा, नानक आदि संतों ने जातिवाद और ब्राह्मणवादी वर्चस्व का विरोध किया। उन्होंने सीधे ईश्वर से संबंध की बात की और कर्मकांड तथा मध्यस्थता को अस्वीकार किया। भक्ति आंदोलन ने शोषित वर्गों को सम्मान और सामाजिक चेतना दी। आचार्य शर्मा के अनुसार, भक्ति आंदोलन धार्मिक समानता और वर्ग-संघर्ष की अभिव्यक्ति था, जिसने धर्म को नियंत्रण के बजाय मुक्ति का साधन बनाया। धर्म के विरुद्ध आंदोलनों ने ब्राह्मणवादी धर्म को भी कई बार पुनर्गठित होने के लिए बाध्य किया। बौद्ध और जैन धर्म के उदय के बाद ब्राह्मणवाद ने पुराणों और भक्ति को अपनाकर स्वयं को नया रूप दिया। इसी प्रकार, भक्ति आंदोलन ने भी धर्म को अधिक लोकाभिमुख बनाने पर प्रभाव डाला। आचार्य शर्मा का तर्क है कि यह धार्मिक पुनर्गठन वास्तव में वर्ग-संघर्ष की प्रतिक्रिया थी। धर्म एक ओर शोषणकारी वर्गों का हथियार था, लेकिन दूसरी ओर वही धर्म प्रतिरोध और संघर्ष का मंच भी बना। शोषित वर्गों ने जब भी विद्रोह किया, उन्होंने धार्मिक विचारों का सहारा लिया। बौद्ध धर्म ने करुणा और समानता का संदेश दिया, भक्ति ने जाति और कर्मकांड का विरोध किया, लोकधर्म ने ब्राह्मणवाद से बाहर आस्था का विकल्प दिया। आचार्य शर्मा मानते हैं कि धर्म को केवल सामाजिक नियंत्रण का उपकरण मानना अधूरा होगा। धर्म ने समय-समय पर सामाजिक आंदोलनों और वर्ग-संघर्ष को जन्म दिया, जिसने समाज में बदलाव के स्रोत प्रदान किए। उनका दृष्टिकोण द्वंद्वात्मक है धर्म शोषण का साधन भी रहा और प्रतिरोध का मंच भी। धर्म ने भारतीय समाज में वर्गीय असमानताओं को वैधता दी, लेकिन इन्हीं असमानताओं ने धर्म के विरुद्ध आंदोलनों को जन्म दिया। बौद्ध, जैन और भक्ति आंदोलन ऐसे ही संघर्षों की अभिव्यक्ति थे। आचार्य शर्मा की दृष्टि में, धर्म और वर्ग-संघर्ष का यह द्वंद्व भारतीय इतिहास की गतिशीलता को समझने की कुंजी है। शर्मा की दृष्टि मुख्यतः मार्क्सवादी थी, इसलिए वे

धर्म को उत्पादन संबंधों से उत्पन्न अधिरचना के रूप में देखते थे। उनकी आलोचना यह है कि उन्होंने धर्म के सकारात्मक पक्ष जैसे सामाजिक एकता, सांस्कृतिक समन्वय, और लोकधर्म की परंपराओं को अपेक्षाकृत कम महत्व दिया। फिर भी उनका योगदान यह है कि उन्होंने भारतीय इतिहास में धर्म को केवल आध्यात्मिक नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक नियंत्रण और शोषण की संरचना का अंग बताकर इतिहास-दृष्टि को नया आयाम दिया। आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा की धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण संबंधी व्याख्या भारतीय इतिहास की समझ में एक महत्वपूर्ण आयाम जोड़ती है। उन्होंने धर्म को केवल आध्यात्मिक या धार्मिक आस्था के रूप में नहीं देखा, बल्कि उसे समाज के भौतिक आधार, वर्गीय संरचना और शोषणकारी संबंधों से जोड़कर समझाया। फिर भी, उनकी इस दृष्टि की कुछ आलोचनाएँ और सीमाएँ भी सामने आती हैं।

आचार्य शर्मा ने धर्म और राज्यसत्ता के गठबंधन पर जोर दिया, लेकिन कुछ इतिहासकारों का कहना है कि यह संबंध हमेशा एक समान नहीं था। उदाहरण के लिए, अशोक का “धम्म” ब्राह्मणवादी परंपरा से अलग था। इसी तरह, भक्ति और सूफी आंदोलनों ने राजनीति से दूरी बनाए रखी। इससे पता चलता है कि धर्म और राज्यसत्ता का संबंध कई बार जटिल और बहुआयामी था। शर्मा का दृष्टिकोण धर्म को मुख्यतः स्थिर और शोषणकारी रूप में प्रस्तुत करता है। आलोचकों का तर्क है कि धर्म निरंतर बदलता और नए रूप ग्रहण करता रहा है। बौद्ध, जैन, भक्ति और सूफी आंदोलनों ने धर्म को नया अर्थ दिया, जिसे केवल “सामाजिक नियंत्रण”¹⁸ की संज्ञा देना अपर्याप्त है। कुछ विद्वानों का कहना है कि आचार्य शर्मा का विश्लेषण मुख्य रूप से मार्क्सवादी यूरोपीय इतिहास-दृष्टि से प्रभावित है। भारतीय धर्म और समाज की जटिलताओं को उसी पैमाने पर मापना हमेशा उपयुक्त नहीं होता। उदाहरण के लिए, पश्चिम में “चर्च और स्टेट” का संघर्ष था, जबकि भारत में धर्म और राजनीति का संबंध अलग ढंग से विकसित हुआ। आचार्य शर्मा की दृष्टि धर्म के शोषणकारी और नियंत्रक पक्ष को स्पष्ट करती है, जो महत्वपूर्ण है। लेकिन इसके साथ ही धर्म के सांस्कृतिक, आध्यात्मिक और सुधारवादी पहलुओं को भी समझना आवश्यक है। आलोचक कहते हैं कि यदि दोनों पक्षों को मिलाकर देखा जाए, तो धर्म की अधिक समग्र व्याख्या संभव होगी। आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा की दृष्टि धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण को ऐतिहासिक संदर्भ में समझने

के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। उन्होंने धर्म को केवल आस्था नहीं, बल्कि वर्गीय संरचना और सत्ता-संबंधों का उपकरण बताया। यद्यपि उनकी व्याख्या पर एकांगी और अत्यधिक भौतिकवादी होने का आरोप लगाया जाता है, फिर भी यह भारतीय इतिहास की असमानताओं और सामाजिक नियंत्रण को समझने की ठोस आधारभूमि प्रदान करती है।

आचार्य रामशरण शर्मा की दृष्टि भारतीय इतिहास की समझ में एक नया और महत्वपूर्ण आयाम प्रस्तुत करती है। उनके अनुसार, धर्म केवल आध्यात्मिक आस्था या ईश्वर-भक्ति का साधन नहीं था, बल्कि यह सामाजिक असमानताओं को वैध बनाने और वर्गीय नियंत्रण स्थापित करने का प्रभावी उपकरण भी था। वैदिक और उत्तर वैदिक काल से लेकर मध्यकालीन भारत तक, धर्म ने समाज की संरचना और सत्ता-संबंधों को नियंत्रित करने में निर्णायक भूमिका निभाई। शर्मा के विश्लेषण में यह स्पष्ट होता है कि ब्राह्मण और क्षत्रिय वर्गों ने धर्म का उपयोग अपने प्रभुत्व को स्थायी बनाने और शूद्रों, दासों तथा स्त्रियों को अधीन बनाए रखने के लिए किया। यज्ञ, कर्म और पुनर्जन्म के सिद्धांतों ने धार्मिक वैधता प्रदान की, जबकि राज्यसत्ता और धर्म का गठबंधन इसे बल और प्रशासनिक शक्ति से लागू करता रहा। इसके परिणामस्वरूप भारतीय समाज में असमानताएँ और शोषण लंबे समय तक स्थायी बने रहे। साथ ही, आचार्य शर्मा यह भी दिखाते हैं कि धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण के खिलाफ प्रतिरोध भी उभरा बौद्ध और जैन आंदोलन, भक्ति परंपरा, श्रमण परंपराएँ और लोकधर्म इस प्रतिरोध के प्रमुख उदाहरण हैं। ये आंदोलनों ने शोषित वर्गों की सामाजिक चेतना बढ़ाई और धर्म के नियंत्रक स्वरूप को चुनौती दी। इसलिए धर्म का इतिहास केवल प्रभुत्व और नियंत्रण का नहीं, बल्कि विरोध और परिवर्तन का भी है। हालाँकि, उनकी दृष्टि पर आलोचना भी होती है। धर्म के सकारात्मक, सांस्कृतिक और आध्यात्मिक पहलुओं को उन्होंने सीमित रूप में देखा, और उनकी व्याख्या अधिकतर भौतिकवादी और वर्ग-केन्द्रित रही। फिर भी, उनका योगदान यह स्पष्ट करता है कि धर्म और सामाजिक नियंत्रण के माध्यम से समाज में असमानताओं को कैसे वैधता मिली और कैसे वर्गीय सत्ता संरचना मजबूत हुई।

सहायक प्राध्यापक (इतिहास विभाग)

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बिहार

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डॉ. प्रमिला

हिन्दी रंगमंच के विकास में लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल का अवदान

हिन्दी नाटक के लिए नवीन राहों, सम्भावनाओं के अन्वेषक के रूप में डॉ. लाल का साहित्य जगत् में महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान है। आजादी के पश्चात् हिन्दी नाटक को पुष्ट करने में इनकी महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही है। भारतेन्दु और प्रसाद के पश्चात् रंगमंच से विच्छिन्न हुई नाट्य परम्परा के रंगसूत्रों को पकड़कर नाट्यधारा को वेगवान रखने वाले नाटककारों में अग्रणी नाटककार के रूप में डॉ. लाल को माना जाता है।

प्रतिभा सम्पन्न नाटककार और हिन्दी रंगमंच को पूरी तरह समर्पित डॉ. लाल ने एक लम्बी रंगयात्रा तय की है। नयी पीढ़ी के जिन नाटककारों ने हिन्दी नाटक को कथ्य और शिल्प की दृष्टि से नयी चेतना, नई दृष्टि और कला की नई प्रखरता प्रदान की है, उनमें लाल का नाम विशेष रूप से महत्त्वपूर्ण है। अपनी नाट्य साधना में उन्होंने विषय और शिल्प के धरातल पर अनेक प्रयोग किए हैं। अन्य नाटककारों में इतनी विविधता दिखाई नहीं पड़ती। “नाट्य से उनका तात्पर्य नाटक की पाण्डुलिपि से लेकर दर्शक तक उसे सम्प्रेषित करने की सम्पूर्ण प्रक्रिया है।”¹

भारतीय नाट्य एवं रंगदर्शन की परम्परा विश्व की सर्वाधिक गरिमायुक्त एवं महान् परम्पराओं में से एक है, किन्तु दुर्भाग्य से आधुनिक हिन्दी रंगमंच का विकास इस परम्परा से नहीं हो पाया। यह सुदृढ़ परम्परा वर्षों तक विदेशी शासन के कारण शून्य हो गई। इसके पश्चात् पारसी नाटक कम्पनियों के व्यावसायिक नाट्य-प्रदर्शनों का वर्चस्व रहा। जिसके फलस्वरूप नाटक और रंगमंच के प्रति रचनात्मक दृष्टि भी पनपने न पायी। पारसी रंगमंच की व्यावसायिक प्रवृत्ति को समझकर भारतेन्दु हरिश्चन्द्र ने तीव्रता से नाटक और रंगमंच के

अनिवार्य सम्बन्ध को ध्यान में रखते हुए हिन्दी रंगमंच को संजीवनी प्रदान की। भारतेन्दु हिन्दी नाट्य परम्परा के आदि पुरुष बने किन्तु उनकी परम्परा भी शीघ्र ही लुप्त हो गई। पुनः साहित्यिक या पाठ्य और रंगमंचीय नाटकों के त्रिम वर्गीकरण से उत्पन्न गतिरोध के कारण हिन्दी रंगमंच का विकास अवरुद्ध रहा।

स्वतंत्रता के पश्चात् आधुनिक हिन्दी नाटक और रंगमंच का महत्त्वपूर्ण चरण आरम्भ हुआ। परंपरा, प्रयोग, प्राचीन और नवीन, पूर्व और पश्चिम सभी रंग दृष्टियों के सम्यक अध्ययन की नयी शुरुआत होती है। इस परिवर्तित व्यापक और रंग-चेतना के भीतर हिन्दी नाटक के क्षेत्र में कई नाटककार आए, जिनमें लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल का महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान है। उन्होंने नाटकों को सीधा रंगमंच से जोड़ा है। रंगमंच की दृष्टि से अपने नाटकों को नए आयाम दिए हैं। नाटक और रंगमंच को एक दूसरे का कार्य-कारण भाव मानते हुए रंगमंच के विभिन्न पक्षों पर अपने समीक्षा ग्रंथों तथा स्वतंत्र लेखों में रंगमंच सम्बन्धी चिंतन प्रस्तुत किया है। उनका यह रंग-चिंतन ऐसे रंगकर्मी का है जो नाटक लेखन के साथ उसे रंगमंच पर ले जाकर अभिनीत करता है, उसका दिग्दर्शन कर पूरे रंगमंच को आत्मसात भी करता है। इसलिए उनके रंगबोध में जीवंतता है, प्राणों की शक्ति है।

हिन्दी रंग-परिदृश्य पर एक साथ ये अनेक रूपों में अवतरित होते हैं—नाटककार, अभिनेता, निर्देशक एवं नाट्य-समीक्षक। एक समीक्षक और चिंतक के रूप में उन्होंने नाटक और रंगमंच के विविध अंगों का सूक्ष्म विवेचन किया। वर्षों से उपेक्षित और तिरस्कृत पारसी हिन्दी रंगमंच का ऐतिहासिक

महत्त्व रेखांकित किया। उन्होंने यह प्रतिपादित किया कि पारसी-रंगमंच से हिन्दी रंगमंच क्षेत्र में किसी न किसी रूप में रंगमंच जीवित रहा तथा इसने दर्शकों की नाट्य-रुचियों को भी जीवित रखा। समूची हिन्दी नाट्य परम्परा में वे पहले नाटककार हैं जिनमें हिन्दी की मौलिक नाट्य रचना के मूलाधार और रंग-शक्ति तथा नाट्य संभावनाएँ धीरे-धीरे विकसित होकर प्रकट हुई। लाल के नाट्य व्यक्तित्व को हिन्दी की नाट्य परम्पराओं ने जितना प्रभावित किया उतना ही उनके परिवेश ने भी। वे ऐसे रंगचिन्तक हैं, जिन्होंने नाटक को उसके सम्पूर्ण अर्थ में लिया है।

नई रंग चेतना से सम्पन्न नाटककारों में अग्रणी लाल के समूचे रंग-चिन्तन के केन्द्र में रंगमंच है। रंगमंच अपनी प्रकृति में संश्लिष्ट कला है, इसका आधार नाटक रूप में ही है नाटक में से आकार ग्रहण उसी में विलीन हो जाता है। लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल का सर्वाधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण अवदान नाटककार के रूप में ही है अतः उन्होंने नाटक को सीधा रंगमंच से जोड़ा है। जिस समय उन्होंने नाटक लिखना आरम्भ किया उस समय हिन्दी रंगमंच के पास आधुनिक चेतना और शिल्प युक्त नाटकों का अभाव था। जो नाटक उपलब्ध थे। ये भी रंगमंचीय मूणों से शून्य थे। ऐसे समय में लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल ने अपनी उर्वर प्रतिभा के अक्षय कोश से निरन्तर एक से एक श्रेष्ठ रंगमंचीय संभावना पूर्ण नाटकों की रचना कर हिन्दी रंगमंच पर मौलिक नाटकों की दरिद्रता को दूर किया।

नाटक और रंगमंच को एक दूसरे का कार्य-कारण भाव मानते हुए उन्होंने रंगमंच के विभिन्न पक्षों पर नाट्य भूमिकाओं एवं अपने समीक्षा ग्रन्थों में तथा स्वतंत्र लेखों में रंगमंच सम्बन्धी चिन्तन प्रस्तुत किया है। यह चिन्तन एक ऐसे रंगकर्मी का है जो नाटक लेखन के साथ उसे रंगमंच पर ले जाकर अभिनीत करता है, उसका दिग्दर्शन कर पूरे रंगमंच को आत्मसात भी करता है। इसलिए उनके रंगबोध में जीवन्तता है, प्राणों की शक्ति है और इसी शक्ति को हिन्दी रंगमंच प्रदान किया।

लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल की रंग चेतना का आधार प्रारंभिक जीवन में स्थानीय लोकनाट्यों के प्रति विशेष आकर्षण, रंगमंच में सक्रिय भूमिका तथा भारतीय रंगमंच के साथ-साथ पाश्चात्य रंगमंच का गहन अध्ययन भी रहा है। नरनारायण राय के अनुसार-“लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल ही वह पहले नाटककार हैं जिन्होंने अपने गहन अध्ययन और अनुभवों से यह अनुभूति पाई कि नाटक का सृजन केवल लेखन के घरातल से ही पूर्ण नहीं

होता। वह अपनी सम्पूर्णता प्राप्त करता है मंच पर, अभिनेताओं द्वारा दर्शकों के सामने प्रस्तुत होकर इसकी अभिव्यक्ति सम्पूर्णता इसका प्रस्तुतीकरण है।”¹² लाल का उद्देश्य न कथा कहना है और न ही बताना। वे अपनी गहन व्यापक अनुभूति को नाटयानुभूति में परिवर्तित कर प्रेक्षक तक सम्प्रेषित करना चाहते हैं। डॉ. लाल ने गहन अर्थों के साथ नाट्य जगत को नई शब्दावली प्रदान की। रंगमंच के लिए ‘रंगभूमि’ शब्द को उपयुक्त माना। रंगभूमि शब्द केवल शब्द परिवर्तन नहीं बल्कि पराई भावभूमि से अपनी जड़ों की ओर लौटने व परम्परा से जुड़ने की यात्रा है, जिससे लोक और जन से जुड़ सके। रंग का अर्थ है-‘उल्लास’। डॉ. लाल की दृष्टि में आनन्द, उल्लास, उत्साह ही रंग है जो नाटक का प्राणतत्त्व है। रंगभूमि- जहाँ कोई रंग प्रकट कर रहा हो। रंग ड्रामा में सम्भव नहीं। रंग तो भूमि का तत्त्व है। मंच से रंग का कोई सरोकार नहीं है रंग ही भूमि है। भूमि ही रंग है ऐसी लाल की मान्यता है।

लक्ष्मीनारायण ने ‘दर्शक को रंगमंच’ का अनिवार्य अंग माना है। लाल की रंग दृष्टि में दर्शक ‘नाट्य-वृत्त’ का महत्त्वपूर्ण बिन्दु है। समूचा रंग व्यापार उसी से आरम्भ होकर उसी में समाहित हो जाता है। मंच पर रचित नाटक के मूल भाव को ही दर्शक ग्रहण करता है। इसलिए- “रंगमंच में दर्शक को रसरंजक कहा गया है। स्पष्ट है कि लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल दर्शक को रंगमंच का अविभाज्य अंग समझते हैं। रंगलीला में दर्शक को सहभागी बनाकर ही नाट्यकार सफल हो सकेगा- ये निचोड़ उन्होंने अनुसंधान से ही पाया। ‘लीला नाटक’ लाल की नाट्य-दृष्टि की मौलिक खोज है, जिसमें दर्शक को अपनी रंगलीला में सहभागी बनाया जाता है। यहाँ दर्शक निष्क्रिय नहीं, बल्कि नाट्य व्यापार का सक्रिय अंग होता है। गीत, संगीत, नृत्य, कथा इस ‘लीला- नाट्य’ शिल्प के आधार हैं। रंगमंच के क्षेत्र में उन्होंने बहुत से प्रयोग किए हैं। ‘नाट्य शैलियों के परिप्रेक्ष्य में उन्हें भारतीय रंगतत्त्व का अन्वेषक’ कह सकते हैं।

डॉ. लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल के बहुआयामी रंग व्यक्तित्व में ‘रंग-प्रशिक्षक’ के रूप में एक सशक्त भूमिका उभरकर आती है। रंगमंच सम्बन्धी गतिविधियों को तीव्र करने के उद्देश्य से डॉ. लाल द्वारा इलाहाबाद में जनवरी 1958 में अव्यवसायिक स्तर पर ‘नाट्य केन्द्र’ की स्थापना एक महत्त्वपूर्ण कार्य था। इस संस्था की विशेषता थी कि वर्ष में कतिपय नाटकों के प्रदर्शन के साथ-साथ नाट्य-कला का प्रशिक्षण भी यहाँ दिया

जाता था। 'नाट्य केन्द्र के प्रमुख उद्देश्य इस प्रकार थे।'¹⁴

1. स्थायी और सुव्यवस्थित रंगमंच का निर्माण और विकास।

2. कलात्मक प्रस्तुतीकरण एवं नाटक में रंगमंच के विभिन्न अंशों को व्यावहारिक शिक्षण तथा अभ्यास के माध्यम से रंगमंच में रुचि रखने वाले उत्साही समाज को नाट्यकला विषयक समुचित मर्यादा एवं संस्कार देना।

इस नाट्यकेन्द्र में अध्ययन व प्रशिक्षण के निम्नांकित विभाग थे—

- i. रंगमंच (प्रकृति तथा इतिहास) पश्चिमी तथा भारतीय
- ii. नाटक तथा नाट्य-पाठ
- iii. अभिनय
- iv. निर्देशन
- v. रंगशिल्प (मंच, प्रकाश वस्त्र-विन्यास तथा रूपसज्जा)

नाट्य केन्द्र इलाहाबाद की स्थापना उन्हीं के प्रयासों से हुई, जहाँ पर नाट्य-प्रदर्शन के अतिरिक्त रंगमंच प्रशिक्षण की भी व्यवस्था की जाती थी। हिन्दी रंगमंच को इस संस्था का योगदान अप्रतिम है। दिल्ली में भी संवाद नामक नाट्य संस्था की नींव डाली जो उनके सक्रिय रंगकर्म का एक उदाहरण है। अनेक नाटकों का प्रदर्शन संवाद के माध्यम से किया गया। नाट्य केन्द्र के माध्यम से लाल आधुनिक रंगमंच का सम्पूर्ण विकास चाहते थे और इस महत्वपूर्ण अभिमान को वे पूरे देश में गतिशील बनाना चाहते थे। पर्याप्त साधनों के अभाव में भी अभूतपूर्व उपलब्धि प्राप्त करने में वे सफल रहे।

डॉ. लाल की रंगमंच के प्रति अपराजेय आस्था का तटस्थ मूल्यांकन करते हुए इलाचन्द्र जोशी भी लिखते हैं—“बिना किसी साधन के उन्होंने प्रयाग में एक एमेचर नाट्य मंडली की स्थापना की। उसके लिए ऐसे अभिनेताओं और अभिनेत्रियों को तैयार किया, जिनका अभिनय कला से कभी कोई वास्ता नहीं रहा।”¹⁵ उन्होंने सिद्ध कर दिया कि लगन होने पर असंभव भी संभव किया जा सकता है। नाट्य संस्था के माध्यम से उन्हें मंच और दर्शक मिले। व्यापक व्यावहारिक प्रशिक्षण का अवसर मिला, जिससे प्रशिक्षण कार्य को भी गति मिली।

डॉ. लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल ने दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में नाट्य-शिक्षक के रूप में हिन्दी नाटक और रंगमंच का व्यावहारिक पाठ्यक्रम आरम्भ कर उसे रंगमंचीय अध्ययन से जोड़ा जिसके फलस्वरूप नाटक अब केवल साहित्यकृति मात्र न होकर रंगमंचीय भी बने। प्रदर्शन के अभाव में नाटक

की कोई अर्थवत्ता नहीं होती। इसी श्रृंखला में लाल के नाटक देश भर के अनेक छोटे-बड़े प्रसिद्ध नाट्यदलों द्वारा मंचित हुए हैं, जिनमें 'नाट्यकेन्द्र', 'संवाद दर्पण', दिशान्तर अभियान तथा राष्ट्रीय-नाट्य विद्यालय प्रमुख दल हैं। इन प्रदर्शनों से एक ओर अभिनेताओं को अभिनय का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ वहीं निर्देशकों को अपनी सृजनात्मक प्रतिभा के उपयोग का अवसर मिला। इन प्रदर्शनों से दर्शकों की नाट्य रुचियों संतुष्ट और परिष्कृत हुई।

डॉ. लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल व्यक्तित्व एवं कृतित्व में बहुमुखी प्रतिभा के द्योतक हैं। वैसे तो उन्होंने सभी विधाओं में साहित्य रचना की है परन्तु रचनाकार की दृष्टि से उनका सबसे सशक्त रूप उनके नाट्यकार का है। एक ओर तो लाल ने अपने नाटकों को रंगमंच से जोड़ा दूसरी ओर समय-समय पर अनेक प्रयोग कर आवश्यकतानुसार कथ्य और शिल्प में भी परिवर्तन किए। नाटकों के द्वारा भारतीय रंगमंच की जीवन्त परम्पराओं को अपने नाट्य लेखन में नए सन्दर्भ दिए। इनकी नाट्य-कृतियों का रंगमंच पक्ष एवं साहित्य पक्ष दोनों श्रेष्ठ बिन्दुओं पर प्रतिष्ठित है। एक सशक्त नाटककार, कुशल अभिनेता सफल निर्देशक तथा सजग समीक्षक की भूमिकाओं में इन्होंने सम्पूर्ण अर्थों में हिन्दी नाट्य को आधुनिक बनाया। लाल परम्परा से कटे नहीं बल्कि परम्परा निर्वाह के साथ-साथ आधुनिकता को प्रकाशित किया। सतत् सक्रिय रहकर 'युग-सत्य' को विभिन्न कोणों से देखते परखते, उसकी प्रयोगधर्मी नाट्याभिव्यक्ति लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल को एक बहुआयामी विशिष्ट रंग व्यक्तित्व प्रदान करती है।

इस रूप में लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल का हिन्दी रंगमंच को ऐतिहासिक योगदान है। अंततः कह सकते हैं कि लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल स्वातन्त्र्योत्तर हिन्दी नाटक और रंगमंच के महत्वपूर्ण हस्ताक्षर हैं। नाटककार निर्देशक, अभिनेता के रूप में उन्होंने हिन्दी रंगमंच को अनेक रूपों में अपना योगदान दिया, उसे समृद्ध किया। रंगशिल्प के प्रभावी उपादानों की खोज कर मंच-प्रस्तुति को सार्थक और प्रभावशाली बनाने की दिशा में प्रयास किया। किसी भी कल्पनाशील अभिनेता व निर्देशक के लिए उनके नाटक तथा उनका चिन्तन असीम संभावनाओं के साथ पथ-प्रदर्शक के रूप में आगे ले जाने वाले हैं। सक्रिय रंगकर्म के विभिन्न रूपों और अवसरों से प्राप्त उनके अनुभव हिन्दी रंगमंच के विकास की सुदृढ़ पीठिका है। उन्होंने हिन्दी रंगमंच के क्षेत्र में एक प्रयोगशील रंगकर्म के अभावों की पूर्ति

का सार्थक प्रयास कर, हिन्दी रंगमंच को नई दिशाएँ की हैं।
निस्सन्देह हिन्दी रंगमंच के विकास में डॉ. लक्ष्मीनारायण लाल
का अवदान अविस्मरणीय है।

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सन्दर्भ सूची

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डॉ. सायमा इकबाल*



डॉ. राजकुमार राजन**

महिला सशक्तिकरण और समकालीन युग

प्राचीन भारतीय समाज में, महिलाओं को एक सम्मानित स्थान दिया जाता था और उन्हें देवी के रूप में सम्मानित किया जाता था। हालाँकि, मध्य युगीन काल के दौरान, उनकी स्थिति में काफी गिरावट आई। उन्हें मुख्य रूप से घरेलू भूमिकाओं में माना जाने लगा, जो बच्चों के पालन-पोषण, देखभाल और घरेलू कर्तव्यों के लिए जिम्मेदार थे। पारंपरिक मान्यताएँ कि पुरुष सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र से संबंधित थे जबकि महिलाएं घर के निजी क्षेत्र तक ही सीमित थीं, पीढ़ियों से बनी हुई हैं। इसके विपरीत, आधुनिक युग में विविध राष्ट्र-निर्माण गतिविधियों में महिलाओं की भागीदारी में वृद्धि देखी गई है, जो भारत की सामाजिक प्रगति में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देती है। पिछले कुछ दशकों में महिलाओं की सामाजिक स्थिति में उल्लेखनीय सुधार के बावजूद, लैंगिक समानता के संबंध में लगातार चुनौतियाँ बनी हुई हैं, जिससे गहन विमर्श की आवश्यकता है। विरोधाभासी रूप से, स्वतंत्रता और पुरुषों और महिलाओं के बीच समानता की संवैधानिक मान्यता के बाद भी, इस सिद्धांत को व्यवहार में पूरी तरह से महसूस नहीं किया गया है। भारतीय महिलाओं को घर के भीतर और बाहर भेदभाव का सामना करना पड़ता रहा।

महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण के लिए एक ऐसे समाज और राजनीतिक माहौल के निर्माण की आवश्यकता है जहाँ महिलाएं प्रभुत्व, शोषण, हिचकिचाहट, भेदभाव और पारंपरिक रूप से निर्धारित संरचनाओं में एक महिला होने से जुड़े सामान्य उत्पीड़न के डर के बिना अपना जीवन जी सकें। समाज के विकास के लिए महिलाओं का सशक्तिकरण एक आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि यह विकास के लिए उपलब्ध मानव संसाधनों की गुणवत्ता

और मात्र दोनों को बढ़ाता है। महिलाओं की स्थिति को बढ़ाना और उनका सशक्तिकरण कई विकास कार्यक्रमों की सफलता में निर्णायक भूमिका निभा सकता है और सकारात्मक सामाजिक परिवर्तन ला सकता है। महिला सशक्तिकरण न केवल अपने स्वास्थ्य और कल्याण को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए बल्कि पूरे परिवार की भलाई के लिए भी आवश्यक है।¹ पैलिनी थुराई के अनुसार, “महिला सशक्तिकरण वह प्रक्रिया है जिसके द्वारा समाज के विकास की प्रक्रिया में राजनितिक संस्थाओं के द्वारा महिलाओं को पुरुषों के बराबर मान्यता दी जाती है।”²

भारत में महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण के लिए संवैधानिक प्रावधान और वैधानिक निकाय

भारतीय संविधान की प्रस्तावना, मूल अधिकार और कर्तव्य एवं नीति निर्देश तत्वों में लिंग के आधार पर समानता के सिद्धांत को प्रतिपादित किया गया है। संविधान में न केवल महिलाओं को समानता का अधिकार दिया गया है, वरन् राज्यों को महिलाओं के हित संवर्धन के लिए उचित कदम उठाने की शक्ति प्रदान की है।

भारत का संविधान न केवल महिलाओं को समानता प्रदान करता है, बल्कि राज्य को महिलाओं के पक्ष में सकारात्मक भेदभाव के उपायों को अपनाने का भी अधिकार देता है ताकि उनके सामने आने वाले संचयी सामाजिक-आर्थिक, शिक्षा और राजनीतिक नुकसान को बेअसर किया जा सके।

भारत के संविधान द्वारा महिलाओं को दिए गए मुख्य विशेषाधिकार इस प्रकार हैं:³

संविधान की प्रस्तावना :

* संवैधानिक कानून के तहत, महिलाओं को पुरुषों के समान

अधिकार हैं ताकि वे देश के प्रशासन में प्रभावी ढंग से भाग ले सकें।

मूल अधिकार

- ★ **अनुच्छेद 14** कानून के समक्ष समानता और कानून के समान संरक्षण के सामान्य सिद्धांतों का प्रतीक है।
- ★ **अनुच्छेद 15** (1) और (2) राज्य को किसी भी नागरिक के साथ केवल धर्म, नस्ल, जाति, लिंग, जन्म स्थान या उनमें से किसी एक या अधिक पहलुओं के आधार पर भेदभाव करने से रोकता है। अनुच्छेद 15 (3) राज्य के लिए महिलाओं और बच्चों के हितों की रक्षा के लिए विशेष प्रावधान बनाना संभव बनाता है।
- ★ **अनुच्छेद 16** राज्य के अधीन किसी भी पद पर रोजगार या नियुक्ति से संबंधित मामलों में सभी नागरिकों के लिए अवसर की समानता का प्रावधान करता है।

नीति निर्देश तत्व

- ★ **अनुच्छेद 39** राज्य से अपेक्षा करता है कि वह पुरुषों और महिलाओं के लिए आजीविका के पर्याप्त साधनों का समान अधिकार सुनिश्चित करने की दिशा में अपनी नीति निर्देशित करे [अनुच्छेद 39 (ए)], और पुरुषों और महिलाओं दोनों के लिए समान काम के लिए समान वेतन [अनुच्छेद 39 (डी)]।
- ★ **अनुच्छेद 42** राज्य को न्याय और काम की मानवीय स्थितियों को सुरक्षित करने और मातृत्व राहत के लिए प्रावधान करने का निर्देश देता है।

मौलिक कर्तव्य :

- ★ **अनुच्छेद 51ए** (ई) प्रत्येक नागरिक को महिलाओं की गरिमा के लिए अपमानजनक प्रथाओं का त्याग करने का आदेश देता है।

महिलाओं के लिए आरक्षण

- ★ **अनुच्छेद 243 डी (3) और अनुच्छेद 243 टी (3)** पंचायतों और नगर पालिकाओं में महिलाओं के लिए बारी-बारी से विभिन्न निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों को आवंटित की जाने वाली कुल सीटों के कम से कम एक तिहाई आरक्षण का प्रावधान करता है।
- ★ **भारत के संविधान का एक सौ छठा संशोधन** : संविधान (128वां संशोधन) विधेयक, 2023 को लोकसभा, राज्य विधानसभाओं और दिल्ली विधानसभा में महिलाओं के लिए सभी सीटों का एक तिहाई आरक्षण देने के लिए 19

सितंबर 2023 को लोकसभा में पेश किया गया था। 28 सितंबर 2023 को पारित, उसी दिन जारी अपनी राजपत्र अधिसूचना के साथ, संशोधन लैंगिक समानता और शासन में महिलाओं के अधिक प्रतिनिधित्व के लिए एक मजबूत प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाता है। हालांकि, कानून अगले परिसीमन अभ्यास के बाद ही प्रभावी होगा।

- ★ **राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग (NCW)** की स्थापना जनवरी 1992 में राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग अधिनियम, 1990 के तहत महिलाओं के अधिकारों की सुरक्षा और संवर्धन के लिए की गई थी। इसका मुख्य उद्देश्य महिलाओं के लिए संवैधानिक और कानूनी प्रावधानों की समीक्षा करना, आवश्यक सुधार सुझाना और शिकायतों के निवारण में मदद करना है। वर्षों से, आयोग ने महिलाओं पर हिंसा और भेदभाव के मामलों में सक्रिय हस्तक्षेप किया, बाल विवाह जैसे मुद्दों को उठाया और दहेज निषेध अधिनियम तथा पीएनडीटी अधिनियम जैसे महत्वपूर्ण कानूनों की समीक्षा की। आयोग ने पारिवारिक महिला लोक अदालतों, परामर्श, कार्यशालाओं और जागरूकता कार्यक्रमों का आयोजन कर महिलाओं को सामाजिक, आर्थिक और कानूनी रूप से सशक्त बनाने तथा लैंगिक समानता को बढ़ावा देने का कार्य किया है।

भारत में कानूनी अधिकार महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण की एक मूलभूत नींव के रूप में कार्य करते हैं, जो भेदभाव का सामना करने, शोषण से सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने और सामाजिक, आर्थिक और राजनीतिक क्षेत्रों में समानता को बढ़ावा देने के लिए एक संरचित ढांचा प्रदान करते हैं। कुछ प्रमुख अधिनियम इस प्रकार हैं :—

- ★ **महिलाओं के खिलाफ घरेलू हिंसा (Protection of Women from Domestic Violence) अधिनियम, 2005⁴** 26 अक्टूबर 2006 से लागू हुआ। इस अधिनियम का उद्देश्य पत्नी या महिला लिव-इन पार्टनर को पति, पुरुष लिव-इन पार्टनर या उनके रिश्तेदारों द्वारा होने वाली हिंसा से सुरक्षा प्रदान करना है। यह कानून बहनों (अपनाई गई बहनों सहित) और माताओं तक भी सुरक्षा का दायरा बढ़ाता है। अधिनियम के तहत घरेलू हिंसा में शारीरिक, यौन, मौखिक, भावनात्मक या आर्थिक प्रकार का वास्तविक दुर्व्यवहार या इसके धमकी शामिल हैं। इसके अलावा, पीड़ित महिला या उसके रिश्तेदारों से अवैध दहेज मांगने

के रूप में होने वाला उत्पीड़न भी घरेलू हिंसा की परिभाषा में आता है।

- ★ **महिलाओं के कार्यस्थल पर यौन उत्पीड़न (रोकथाम, निषेध और निवारण) अधिनियम, 2013** भारत में एक कानून है जो महिलाओं को यौन उत्पीड़न से सुरक्षा प्रदान करता है और शिकायत दर्ज करने तथा उचित उपाय प्राप्त करने की प्रक्रिया सुनिश्चित करता है। इस अधिनियम के अनुसार, यौन उत्पीड़न का अर्थ किसी भी अवांछित यौन कृत्य या व्यवहार से है। अधिनियम यह अनिवार्य करता है कि नियोक्ता **आंतरिक शिकायत समिति (ICC)** का गठन करें ताकि ऐसी शिकायतों का समाधान किया जा सके। इसका मुख्य उद्देश्य सभी कार्यस्थलों पर महिलाओं के लिए सुरक्षित, समान और समावेशी वातावरण सुनिश्चित करना है।
- ★ **आपराधिक कानून (संशोधन) अधिनियम, 2013**, 2012 के दिल्ली सामूहिक बलात्कार मामले के बाद पारित किया गया एक महत्वपूर्ण कानून है, जिसका उद्देश्य महिलाओं के प्रति बढ़ते यौन अपराधों को रोकना और पीड़ितों को न्याय प्रदान करना है। इस अधिनियम ने भारतीय दंड संहिता (IPC), भारतीय साक्ष्य अधिनियम और दंड प्रक्रिया संहिता में कई महत्वपूर्ण संशोधन किए, जिससे यौन अपराधों और जघन्य अपराधों के लिए कड़ी सजा का प्रावधान किया गया। इसके तहत घूरने और पीछा करने जैसे कई नए अपराध भी परिभाषित किए गए, और इन अपराधों के लिए सजा का कड़ाई से पालन सुनिश्चित किया गया।
- ★ 21 जून 2019 को विधि और न्याय मंत्री रविशंकर प्रसाद ने लोकसभा में **मुस्लिम महिला (विवाह अधिकार संरक्षण) बिल, 2019**⁵ पेश किया, जो 21 फरवरी 2019 को जारी अध्यादेश का स्थान लेता है। यह बिल तलाक-ए-बिद्दत और अन्य प्रकार के इर्रिवोकेबल तलाक को अपराध मानता है, जिसके लिए तीन वर्ष की जेल और जुर्माना निर्धारित किया गया है। बिल में मेजिस्ट्रेट को जमानत देने का अधिकार, पीड़िता के अनुरोध पर अपराध को शमनीय करने की व्यवस्था, साथ ही मुस्लिम महिलाओं के लिए गुजारा भत्ता और अवयस्क बच्चों की कस्टडी सुनिश्चित करने की व्यवस्था शामिल है, जिससे उनके कानूनी और सामाजिक अधिकारों की सुरक्षा होती है।

- ★ **हिंदू उत्तराधिकार (संशोधन) अधिनियम, 2005** भारत में महिलाओं के संपत्ति अधिकारों के क्षेत्र में एक महत्वपूर्ण सुधार था। इस संशोधन के तहत बेटियों को जन्म से ही संयुक्त पारिवारिक संपत्ति में सह-हिस्सेदार बनने और समान रूप से विरासत में हिस्सा पाने का अधिकार प्राप्त हुआ। इस बदलाव ने न केवल महिलाओं की आर्थिक स्थिति को मजबूत किया, बल्कि लैंगिक समानता की दिशा में भी महत्वपूर्ण कदम उठाया, जिससे महिलाओं को पुरुषों के समान संपत्ति अधिकार सुनिश्चित हुए और भारतीय परिवारों में सामाजिक और आर्थिक समानता को बढ़ावा मिला।

महिला सशक्तिकरण हेतु प्रमुख सरकारी योजनाएं और कार्यक्रम

भारतीय सरकार ने लैंगिक समानता को बढ़ावा देने और महिलाओं को व्यापक तथा दीर्घकालिक तरीके से सशक्त बनाने के लिए विभिन्न योजनाएँ और नीतिगत उपाय लागू किए हैं। इन प्रयासों का उद्देश्य महिलाओं की उच्च गुणवत्ता वाली शिक्षा तक पहुँच बढ़ाना, स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं विशेष रूप से मातृत्व एवं शिशु स्वास्थ्य को सुदृढ़ करना तथा कौशल विकास और रोजगार के अवसरों का विस्तार कर आर्थिक आत्मनिर्भरता सुनिश्चित करना है। इसके अतिरिक्त, लक्षित वित्तीय समावेशन कार्यक्रम महिलाओं की उद्यमिता क्षमता और आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता को प्रोत्साहित करते हैं, जबकि कानूनी सुधार और संरक्षण तंत्र लैंगिक हिंसा और भेदभाव का मुकाबला करते हैं। ये सभी पहल मिलकर महिलाओं की राष्ट्र निर्माण में सक्रिय भागीदारी, सामाजिक-आर्थिक खाई को पाटने और उनके सर्वांगीण विकास को सुनिश्चित करती हैं। सरकार द्वारा शुरू की गई कुछ मुख्य नीतियाँ और कार्यक्रम इस प्रकार हैं :

बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ⁶

भारत सरकार की इस प्रमुख पहल का उद्देश्य घटते बाल लिंग अनुपात को दूर करना और लिंग-आधारित लिंग-चयनात्मक उन्मूलन को रोकना और बालिकाओं के अस्तित्व, संरक्षण और शिक्षा को बढ़ावा देना है। यह योजना भारत सरकार की सबसे प्रभावशाली सामाजिक पहलों में से एक बन गई है। यह उपलब्धि भारत के विकसित भारत 2047 के दृष्टिकोण के साथ प्रतिध्वनित होती है और महिलाओं के विकास से महिलाओं के नेतृत्व वाले विकास की ओर व्यापक वैश्विक परिवर्तन को दर्शाती है। बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ (बीबीबीपी) पहल को

मिशन शक्ति के तहत शामिल किया गया है, जिसका उद्देश्य महिलाओं की सुरक्षा और सशक्तिकरण सुनिश्चित करना है, जिसे 15वें वित्त आयोग चक्र (2021-2022 से 2025-2026) के दौरान लागू किया जाएगा **मिशन शक्ति** को दो प्रमुख उप-योजनाओं में संरचित किया गया है-⁷

★ **संबल** : मिशन शक्ति का संबल घटक **वन स्टॉप सेंटर** (ओएससी) और **महिला हेल्पलाइन** (181) जैसे उपायों के माध्यम से महिलाओं की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने का काम करता है यह मामूली विवादों, उत्पीड़न के मामलों और अधिकारों से संबंधित चिंताओं को निष्पक्ष और सुलभ तरीके से हल करने के लिए एक सामुदायिक मंच नारी अदालत की भी शुरुआत करता है।

★ **समर्थन** घटक राहत और पुनर्वास के लिए शक्ति सदन, कामकाजी महिलाओं के लिए सुरक्षित शहरी छात्रवासों के रूप में सखी निवास और बाल देखभाल सहायता के लिए पलना-क्रेच केंद्र प्रदान करके महिला सशक्तिकरण पर ध्यान केंद्रित करता है। साथ में, ये पहल महिलाओं की गरिमा और भागीदारी के लिए एक सुरक्षित, सक्षम वातावरण का निर्माण करती हैं।

प्रधान मंत्री कौशल विकास योजना

सरकार महिलाओं पर विशेष ध्यान देने के साथ सभी नागरिकों के लिए कौशल विकास और व्यावसायिक प्रशिक्षण पर अधिक जोर दे रही है। कौशल विकास और उद्यमिता मंत्रालय (एमएसडीई) ने कार्यबल में महिलाओं की भागीदारी को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कई योजनाएं और कार्यक्रम शुरू किए हैं। महिलाओं को उद्योग 4.0 से जुड़े उभरते क्षेत्रों जैसे कि आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस, 3 डी प्रिंटिंग और डेटा एनालिटिक्स के लिए कौशल से लैस करने के प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं, साथ ही वेल्डिंग और अश्वटोमोबाइल मैकेनिक्स जैसे पारंपरिक क्षेत्रों में प्रशिक्षण को बढ़ावा दिया जा रहा है, यह सुनिश्चित किया जा रहा है कि वे आधुनिक और पारंपरिक दोनों तरह के रोजगार के अवसरों के लिए तैयार हों।⁸

जननी सुरक्षा योजना⁹

राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण स्वास्थ्य मिशन (एनआरएचएम) के तहत 12 अप्रैल 2005 को शुरू की गई जननी सुरक्षा योजना (जेएसवाई) एक सुरक्षित मातृत्व पहल है जिसका उद्देश्य आर्थिक रूप से वंचित गर्भवती महिलाओं के बीच संस्थागत प्रसव को प्रोत्साहित करके मातृ और नवजात मृत्यु दर को कम

करना है। यह योजना सभी राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों में संचालित है, जिसमें विशेष रूप से कम प्रदर्शन करने वाले क्षेत्रों पर जोर दिया गया है। जेएसवाई की एक प्रमुख विशेषता मान्यता प्राप्त सामाजिक स्वास्थ्य कार्यकर्ताओं (आशा) की भागीदारी है जो सरकार और हाशिए पर रहने वाली गर्भवती महिलाओं के बीच महत्वपूर्ण मध्यस्थ के रूप में काम करते हैं, विशेष रूप से दस प्राथमिकता वाले राज्यों में, जिससे मातृ स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक पहुंच मजबूत होती है।

प्रधानमंत्री मातृ वंदना योजना

1 जनवरी, 2017 से मातृत्व लाभ कार्यक्रम को राष्ट्रीय खाद्य सुरक्षा अधिनियम, 2013 के अनुसार प्रधानमंत्री मातृ वंदना योजना (पीएमएमवीवाई) के नाम से देश भर में लागू किया गया है इस योजना के माध्यम से, पात्र गर्भवती महिलाओं और स्तनपान कराने वाली माताओं को उनके पहले जीवित बच्चे के लिए 5,000 रुपये का प्रत्यक्ष नकद हस्तांतरण प्राप्त होता है, बशर्ते वे विशिष्ट मातृ और बाल स्वास्थ्य स्थितियों को पूरा करें। संस्थागत प्रसव के बाद जननी सुरक्षा योजना (जेएसवाई) के लाभों के साथ, प्रत्येक महिला को कुल मिलाकर लगभग 6,000 रुपये प्राप्त हो सकते हैं।¹⁰

पोषण अभियान¹¹

माननीय प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा 8 मार्च 2018 को आरंभ किया गया **पोषण अभियान** भारत सरकार की एक प्रमुख पहल है, जिसका उद्देश्य बच्चों, किशोरियों, गर्भवती महिलाओं और स्तनपान कराने वाली माताओं के पोषण स्तर में सुधार करना है। यह अभियान कुपोषण से निपटने के लिए पोषण की गुणवत्ता, उसकी पहुँच और जागरूकता पर विशेष जोर देते हुए पोषण वितरण के तरीकों में बदलाव लाता है। साथ ही, यह विभिन्न क्षेत्रों को जोड़कर एक ऐसा सहयोगी तंत्र विकसित करता है जो स्वस्थ आदतों को बढ़ावा देता है, सामुदायिक कल्याण को सशक्त करता है और लोगों की प्रतिरोधक क्षमता को मजबूत करता है।

निर्भया कोष¹²

भारत सरकार ने महिलाओं की सुरक्षा बढ़ाने वाली पहलों का समर्थन करने के लिए निर्भया कोष की स्थापना की। इसके तहत, 1 अप्रैल, 2015 को शुरू की गई वन स्टॉप सेंटर (ओएससी) योजना, हिंसा का सामना कर रही महिलाओं को एकीकृत सेवाएं-पुलिस, चिकित्सा, कानूनी, परामर्श और आश्रय प्रदान करती है। 704 से अधिक ओएससी देश भर में

काम करते हैं, जो तीन लाख से अधिक महिलाओं की सहायता करते हैं।

महिला ई-हाट

महिला उद्यमियों को अपने उत्पाद प्रदर्शित करने और बेचने के लिए एक ऑनलाइन मंच प्रदान करता है। इस पहल को मजबूत करने के लिए सरकार ने सरकारी ई-मार्केटप्लेस (GeM) और राष्ट्रीय लघु उद्योग निगम (NSIC) द्वारा संचालित ई-मार्केटप्लेस जैसे प्लेटफॉर्म को भी बढ़ावा दिया है। महिला ई-हाट पर पंजीकृत विक्रेताओं की सूची खाद्य प्रसंस्करण उद्योग मंत्रालय, सूक्ष्म, लघु और मध्यम उद्यम मंत्रालय (MSME) तथा वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय को उपलब्ध कराई गई है ताकि उनके बाजार से जुड़ाव और व्यापारिक अवसरों को बढ़ाया जा सके।¹³

STEP (महिला प्रशिक्षण एवं रोजगार समर्थन कार्यक्रम)¹⁴

महिला प्रशिक्षण एवं रोजगार समर्थन कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य महिलाओं की आत्मनिर्भरता और स्वायत्तता बढ़ाना है, जिससे उनकी उत्पादकता में सुधार हो और वे आय सृजन गतिविधियों में संलग्न हो सकें। यह आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर महिलाओं को कृषि, पशुपालन, डेयरी, मत्स्य पालन, हथकरघा, हस्तशिल्प, खादी और ग्राम उद्योग, रेशम उद्योग, सामाजिक वन और बंजर भूमि विकास जैसे पारंपरिक क्षेत्रों में कौशल विकास और प्रशिक्षण के अवसर प्रदान करता है, ताकि वे अपनी आजीविका और आर्थिक भागीदारी को सशक्त बना सकें।

सुकन्या समृद्धि खाता योजना¹⁵

भारत सरकार ने 4 दिसंबर 2014 को बालिकाओं में छोटी बचत को प्रोत्साहित करने के उद्देश्य से 'सुकन्या समृद्धि खाता' योजना की शुरुआत की, जिसका नियम 3 दिसंबर 2014 को राजपत्र में अधिसूचित हुआ। सुकन्या समृद्धि खाता (SSA) योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य भारत में बालिकाओं के लिए वित्तीय सुरक्षा और बचत को प्रोत्साहित करना है। 'बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ' अभियान के अंतर्गत शुरू की गई यह योजना माता-पिता या अभिभावकों को प्रोत्साहित करती है कि वे अपनी बेटियों की शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य और विवाह जैसी भविष्य की आवश्यकताओं के कारण लिए नियमित रूप से बचत करें। यह योजना उच्च ब्याज दर और कर लाभ प्रदान करके परिवारों के सामने आने वाली आर्थिक चुनौतियों को कम करने, दीर्घकालिक बचत की संरति विकसित करने और बालिकाओं को उनके भविष्य के लिए सशक्त और सुरक्षित

बनाने का लक्ष्य रखती है।

प्रधानमंत्री उज्ज्वला योजना (PMUY)¹⁶

प्रधानमंत्री उज्ज्वला योजना (PMUY) भारत सरकार के पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय द्वारा 1 मई, 2016 को शुरू की गई एक प्रमुख पहल है। इसका मुख्य उद्देश्य स्वच्छ ईंधन तरलीकृत पेट्रोलियम गैस (एलपीजी) उपलब्ध कराना है, विशेषकर गरीबी रेखा से नीचे (BPL) की महिलाओं को, ताकि पारंपरिक प्रदूषणकारी ईंधन जैसे लकड़ी, कोयला और गोबर के उपलों का उपयोग कम हो सके। यह पहल महिलाओं के स्वास्थ्य, सुरक्षा और सशक्ति को बढ़ावा देती है, क्योंकि इससे घरेलू वायु प्रदूषण कम होता है और ईंधन एकत्र करने की कठिनाई घटती है। PMUY के तहत पात्र महिलाओं को निःशुल्क एलपीजी कनेक्शन प्रदान किए जाते हैं, साथ ही पहली रिफिल और चूल्हे के लिए वित्तीय सहायता दी जाती है, जिससे स्वच्छ ईंधन के व्यापक उपयोग को प्रोत्साहन मिलता है।

महिला सशक्तिकरण के परिणामों से पता चलता है कि महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना एक समान, न्यायपूर्ण और प्रगतिशील समाज के निर्माण के लिए अनिवार्य है जो आर्थिक और सामाजिक विकास के माध्यम से सभी के कल्याण में योगदान देता है। यह पितृसत्तात्मक व्यवस्थाओं को तोड़ने, समान अवसरों की पेशकश करने और ऐसे वातावरण का निर्माण करने से जुड़ा है जिसमें महिलाएँ सम्मान और गरिमा के साथ बढ़ सकें। भारत में महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण का एक विशिष्ट लक्ष्य है, जो लैंगिक दृष्टि से निर्धारित है। इसका उद्देश्य भारत में महिलाओं के समान अवसरों से वंचित किए जाने, अवमूल्यन, विस्थापन और अंतिम रूप से उन्हें तिरस्कार योग्य बनाने जैसी स्थितियों को समाप्त करना है। वास्तविक सशक्तिकरण प्राप्त करने के लिए भारतीय महिलाओं को परंपरागत सामाजिक मानदंडों और पितृसत्तात्मक तर्क केंद्रित संरचनाओं की बाधाओं को पार करते हुए कठिन रास्ता तय करना होगा।

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