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Editorial

The landscape of contemporary research in India today reflects a vibrant intersection of empirical inquiry, theoretical reflection, and interdisciplinary synthesis. The present issue of our research journal presents a collection of scholarly studies that engage with crucial questions of society, gender, education, environment, psychology, health, and governance. Collectively, these works illuminate the evolving realities of Indian life where tradition, modernity, and innovation coalesce to shape both collective and individual experiences.

A major thematic strand in this volume is the analysis of social hierarchy and caste. Akhilesh Shukla's paper, "Caste and Social Stratification in India: The Structural Basis of Hierarchy and Change," examines the historical depth and contemporary relevance of caste in shaping mobility, politics, and identity. Shukla demonstrates that despite progressive reforms and affirmative policies, the structural legacies of endogamy, ritual purity, and hierarchical norms continue to guide social interactions and political behavior, reflecting the deep-rooted persistence of inequality. Environmental sustainability and community participation form another axis of exploration. In "From Participation to Sustainability: Exploring the Relationship Between Community Involvement and River Revival Success in Central Gujarat," Dinesh Bhai Kalabhai Gandhi, Dipak Makwana, and Rajendrakumar Muljibhai Parmar highlight that ecological restoration succeeds where local communities act as active custodians. Their empirical evidence underscores that environmental protection is a social process rooted in cooperation, indigenous wisdom, and participatory governance rather than a purely technical enterprise.

Historical trauma and gendered suffering are poignantly addressed in "Plight of Women during Indo-Pak Partition" by Vinita Mahawar and Neetu Yadav. Their study revisits the human cost of the Partition, documenting women's endurance through displacement and violence while illuminating their agency and resilience. By foregrounding women's voices, the authors contribute to a more inclusive and humane understanding of history. The interface between literature and agrarian life is explored in Mahendra Singh's "Life in Contemporary Literature with Special Reference to Agriculture in India." Singh's research connects creative expression with the socio-economic realities of rural India, interpreting literature as a mirror to the hopes, struggles, and inequities of farming communities. Through this lens, literature becomes a means of socio-economic commentary and reflection on rural distress and development. In the domain of psychology and behavioral studies, Meenakshi Bajpai's "Self-efficacy and Coping in the Indian Population" investigates resilience and confidence as pivotal determinants of mental health and productivity. Bajpai's findings reveal that self-efficacy shapes how individuals confront adversity and manage stress. Complementing this psychological inquiry, Namrata Verma and Arvind Kumar in "Effect of Excessive Usage of Smartphone on Sociability and Concentration in College Students: A Comparative Analysis" examine the cognitive and social effects of digital dependency, demonstrating both the empowering and disruptive impacts of technology on youth sociability and academic focus.

Empowerment and rural transformation receive substantial attention in Abhimanyu Kumar's "Microfinance Towards Rural Development with Women Empowerment." His analysis shows how microfinance acts as a catalyst for women's financial independence and community-level change. By linking economic inclusion to empowerment, Kumar emphasizes that true development is collective and participatory. In a related context, Dr. Rukhsana Begam's "Covid Crises & Its Impact on Self-Reliant Programme (Aatm Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan) in Western Uttar Pradesh" evaluates policy responses to crisis situations, identifying how local socio-economic conditions affect the success of national programs. Her research points to the importance of flexible, region-specific frameworks for inclusive development. Corporate ethics and market responsibility find expression in "Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Reporting and Its Impact on Indian Corporate Performance" by Anil Kumar Bhardwaj and Varsha Suryawanshi. Their empirical study demonstrates that ESG frameworks enhance both corporate accountability and financial performance, reaffirming the synergy between ethics and efficiency. Aparna Dhingra and Shiva Johri, in "Examining Seller Satisfaction and Platform Efficiency in Pre-owned Car Marketplaces: A Study of Key Influencing Factors," turn attention to the digital economy, exploring how technological design and service quality influence seller experience and transactional success. Both studies underscore the growing importance of responsible governance in corporate and digital spaces. Workplace policy and gender inclusivity receive scholarly attention in Vandana Singh's "Paid Menstrual Leave: Policy, Framework, Implementation and Empirical Analysis." Singh's study offers an evidence-based discussion on

gender-sensitive labor policy, highlighting its role in fostering inclusivity, destigmatizing menstruation, and improving well-being in professional environments. She also discusses the operational challenges of integrating such policies within India's diverse socio-cultural settings. Among the notable contributions to social philosophy and activism, Divya Kumar's "Sarala Behn, A Grassroot Advocate of Gandhian Philosophy of Sarvodaya and Satyagraha" celebrates Gandhian ideals in action. By tracing Sarala Behn's work among Himalayan communities, Kumar exemplifies how Gandhian ethics of simplicity, self-reliance, and non-violence continue to inspire local empowerment and sustainable change. Educational reform and technology integration are addressed in Kanchan Gupta's "Technology Integration in Teacher Education Through Distance Learning," which emphasizes how digital platforms can democratize teacher training and improve pedagogical outcomes. Nisha C. Raninga's "The Effect of Social Media Use on Academic Performance Among Students" further explores the educational implications of digital connectivity, pointing to its dual role in enhancing access to information while also creating distraction and dependency. Gender, literature, and domestic identity converge in Ishi Rai's "'That Long Silence' of Indian Housewife," a critical exploration of patriarchal norms and the quiet endurance of women within household hierarchies. Rai's interpretive analysis situates literature as both testimony and resistance, revealing how silence itself becomes a language of protest against gendered marginalization.

Health studies in this issue are represented by Supriya Pathak and Akriti Mishra's "Impact of Maternal Body Mass Index (BMI) on Pregnancy-Related Complications: A Study in Chapra, Bihar." Their findings reveal a direct correlation between maternal BMI and pregnancy outcomes, urging the formulation of targeted healthcare strategies and policies that address regional disparities and nutritional awareness. Taken together, the articles in this issue present a comprehensive tableau of interdisciplinary Indian scholarship. They exemplify methodological rigor, analytical depth, and contextual relevance while addressing issues that span macro-level structures and micro-level lived experiences. Several overarching insights emerge from these studies. First, the persistence of social hierarchies whether expressed through caste, class, or gender remains a defining feature of Indian society, as seen in the works of Shukla, Mahawar, and Yadav. Their analyses show that the struggle for equality requires not only policy reform but also attitudinal transformation. Second, environmental and developmental sustainability, as advanced by Gandhi, Makwana, and Parmar, demonstrate that community participation and indigenous knowledge are indispensable for enduring success. Third, technology's dual nature as a tool of empowerment and a source of distraction—is critically examined by Verma, Kumar, Raninga, and Gupta, revealing how digital culture reshapes socialization, learning, and work. Equally central is the theme of women's empowerment, visible across multiple studies by Kumar, Singh, Rai, Mahawar, and Yadav, which collectively advocate intersectional approaches to gender justice that account for caste, class, and culture. Health and psychological well-being emerge as additional pillars of human development. Bajpai, Singh, Pathak, and Mishra emphasize the interconnectedness of mental, social, and physical health in fostering holistic progress.

Corporate governance and ethical responsibility, articulated by Bhardwaj, Suryawanshi, Dhingra, and Johri, highlight how sustainability in business is vital for national development and global competitiveness. Furthermore, Divya Kumar's Gandhian perspective reminds readers that true social transformation begins at the grassroots, driven by moral conviction and collective will. In essence, the present issue underscores the transformative potential of interdisciplinary research in addressing the complex challenges of 21st-century India. By linking empirical study with theoretical reflection and policy relevance, these works collectively contribute to a vision of inclusive, equitable, and sustainable national development. Each author through their distinct domain adds to a growing body of knowledge that not only analyzes India's diverse realities but also offers pathways for social innovation and reform.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all contributors for their intellectual rigor and dedication. Their works reaffirm that research is not merely an academic pursuit but a dynamic force shaping society, governance, and the human condition. As India navigates its social, economic, and ecological transitions, the insights presented here will remain vital in guiding scholarly thought, policy formation, and the pursuit of a just and sustainable future for all.



Professor Akhilesh Shukla
Chief Editor

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Caste and Social Stratification in India: The Structural Basis of Hierarchy and Change

• **Akhilesh Shukla**

Abstract- *Caste, as a unique feature of Indian social organization, represents a deeply entrenched system of stratification based on birth, occupation, and ritual status. It governs the social, economic, and religious life of individuals and determines their privileges, restrictions, and social interactions. This paper explores the evolution, structure, and sociological theories of caste, examining its roots in ancient traditions, religious texts, and socio-historical developments. The study critically analyzes key sociological perspectives from Ghurye, Risley, MacIver, Dumont, Weber, and M.N. Srinivas, particularly focusing on processes like Sanskritization and dominant caste dynamics. It also highlights the dual nature of caste—as both a source of social stability and a mechanism of exclusion. Even in post-independence India, caste continues to influence political behavior, access to resources, and social identity, posing challenges to the ideal of a casteless democratic society.*

Keywords- *Caste System, Varna, Sanskritization, Social Stratification, Dominant Caste, Purity and Pollution*

Introduction- The caste system is one of the most enduring and defining features of India's social organization. It represents a structured hierarchy in which individuals are born into specific social groups, known as jatis or castes, that traditionally determine their occupation, social status, and marital relations. This division is not merely occupational but deeply ritualistic and religious in nature, rooted in ancient Hindu texts such as the Manusmriti and other Dharmashastra literature.

Caste is primarily an ascriptive system, meaning that one's position in society is assigned at birth rather than achieved through personal effort or merit. This distinguishes it from a class system, where mobility is theoretically possible through education, wealth, or profession. In traditional Indian society, the caste hierarchy was reinforced through the concepts of purity and pollution—certain groups were considered ritually pure and others impure, leading to strict rules about physical contact, food sharing, and social interaction. These notions ensured the maintenance of social boundaries and prevented intermixing between different castes.

At the apex of this hierarchy were the Brahmins, associated with priesthood and knowledge; followed by Kshatriyas, the warrior and ruling class; Vaishyas, involved in trade and commerce; and Shudras, who performed service and menial work. Outside this fourfold order were the so-

called 'Untouchables' or Dalits, who faced severe discrimination and exclusion from mainstream social and religious life.

Despite the constitutional abolition of untouchability (Article 17 of the Indian Constitution) and the implementation of affirmative action policies (such as reservations in education, employment, and politics), the caste system persists in modern India. It continues to shape patterns of social interaction, marriage alliances, political affiliations, and access to resources. While urbanization, education, and economic reforms have weakened some traditional barriers, caste-based identity and discrimination remain deeply entrenched in both rural and urban contexts.

Thus, the caste system, though legally outlawed, still operates as a powerful social reality, influencing every aspect of Indian life—from social mobility to political representation. It stands as both a marker of cultural continuity and a challenge to the ideals of equality and social justice in contemporary India.

Origin and Theories of the Caste System

1. Religious and Mythical Theories- The religious and mythical explanations of the caste system trace its origin to the ancient Hindu scriptures, where social order was believed to be divinely ordained. These theories interpret caste as a cosmic and moral arrangement, intended to maintain harmony and balance in society.

According to the Vedic texts, particularly the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda (10.90), the universe and human society were created from the cosmic being, Purusha (Brahma). From his body emanated the four Varnas, each symbolizing a functional division of society:

- Brahmins (priests and teachers) were born from Purusha's mouth, symbolizing wisdom, speech, and knowledge.
- Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers) emerged from his arms, signifying strength, power, and protection.
- Vaishyas (traders and cultivators) originated from his thighs, representing sustenance and economic productivity.
- Shudras (servants and laborers) were created from his feet, symbolizing service and support to the other three Varnas.

This cosmic symbolism provided a theological justification for social hierarchy by linking it to divine creation. The implication was that each Varna had a predestined role and duty (Dharma) within the social order, and social stability depended on individuals adhering to their prescribed duties. In this way, religion sanctified inequality by presenting it as part of an eternal and sacred order rather than a man-made institution.

However, these religious explanations have several limitations and contradictions. Firstly, they do not account for the historical and social processes that led to the emergence of thousands of Jatis (sub-castes) based on occupation, region, or kinship. Secondly, the status of the 'Untouchables' or Dalits—who fall outside the Varna system altogether—is not clearly addressed in the Vedic texts, indicating that untouchability evolved later through social exclusion rather than divine sanction.

Scholars like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and R.S. Sharma argue that the Purusha Sukta was composed in a later Vedic period when society had already stratified, and the hymn served to justify and perpetuate existing inequalities through religious authority. In contrast, earlier Vedic society was relatively more fluid, where occupations were not rigidly hereditary.

Thus, while religious and mythical theories provide the earliest ideological framework for caste division, they are symbolic rather than historical. They helped legitimize social hierarchy in spiritual terms but fail to explain the complex and evolving nature of the caste system as it developed through centuries of economic, political, and cultural change.

2. Biological Theory- The biological theory of caste seeks to explain the origin and persistence of caste divisions in terms of inherent human qualities or natural dispositions. This interpretation is primarily derived from ancient Hindu philosophical texts, particularly the Bhagavad Gita and certain Upanishads, where the differentiation among human beings is attributed to their Gunas (qualities) rather than to birth or heredity alone. According to this theory, all individuals are composed of three fundamental Gunas or attributes:

- Sattva (Purity, Wisdom, and Harmony) – represents clarity, knowledge, virtue, and a sense of spiritual balance. Individuals dominated by Sattva are inclined toward truth, self-control, learning, and contemplation. Hence, they are associated with the Brahmin Varna, whose duties include teaching, performing rituals, and guiding society in moral and spiritual matters.
- Rajas (Energy, Passion, and Activity) – denotes ambition, courage, and the drive for power and material achievement. People with predominant Rajas are seen as dynamic, assertive, and action-oriented. This quality was attributed to Kshatriyas, the rulers and warriors responsible for governance and defense, and to Vaishyas, the traders and agriculturists engaged in economic pursuits.
- Tamas (Inertia, Ignorance, and Darkness) – symbolizes laziness, ignorance, and attachment to material pleasure. Those dominated by Tamas were considered unfit for leadership or intellectual work, and thus linked with the Shudra Varna, whose role was service and manual labor.
- The biological theory thus provides a psychological and moral interpretation of caste hierarchy. It suggests that one's social function is a reflection of their internal nature or temperament rather than merely birth or lineage. Over time, however, this moral-philosophical categorization transformed into a rigid hereditary system, where one's caste became fixed by birth and not by personal qualities or actions.

Some later texts and social customs even connected dietary habits and lifestyles to these Gunas. For instance, vegetarianism was seen as conducive to Sattva (hence ideal for Brahmins), while meat consumption and indulgence were linked with Rajas and Tamas. These associations

further reinforced distinctions in behavior, ritual purity, and occupation among the Varnas. However, the limitations of the biological theory are significant. Firstly, it lacks empirical or scientific basis—human behavior and intelligence cannot be rigidly categorized into three fixed qualities. Secondly, it fails to explain the regional variations and multiplicity of castes and sub-castes found across India. Thirdly, the theory has often been misused as a pseudo-scientific justification for social inequality, implying that lower castes are biologically or morally inferior, which contradicts both ethical reasoning and modern understandings of human equality.

Modern scholars such as G.S. Ghurye and B.R. Ambedkar have criticized this explanation for masking social oppression under philosophical language. Ambedkar pointed out that the concept of Gunas originally emphasized moral development and personal conduct, but later interpretations distorted it to sustain caste-based discrimination. In conclusion, while the biological theory attempted to provide a moral and psychological rationale for social differentiation, it ultimately served to reinforce the hierarchical structure of the caste system. Its The socio-historical theory explains the origin and development of the caste system as a result of historical and social events rather than divine or biological factors. This theory mainly focuses on the interaction between the Aryans and the indigenous inhabitants of India and how these interactions gradually gave rise to hierarchical social divisions. According to this theory, around 1500 BCE, the Aryans, who were fair-skinned, Indo-European-speaking, and pastoral people, migrated into the Indian subcontinent from Central Asia. They were more advanced in warfare, culture, and social organization compared to the indigenous people—who included groups such as Dravidians, Austroloids, Negritos, and Mongoloids. When the Aryans settled in the fertile plains of northern India, they began to subjugate and dominate the native populations. The Sanskrit word “Varna”, which literally means “color,” is significant in this context. It indicates that the early social distinctions were initially based on racial and skin color differences. The fair-skinned Aryans considered themselves superior, while the darker-skinned natives were treated as inferior. Over time, this racial distinction evolved into a social and occupational hierarchy. The Aryans divided their own society into four majors Varnas—

- Brahmins (priests and scholars),
- Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers),
- Vaishyas (traders and agriculturists), and
- Shudras (servants and laborers).

The conquered indigenous people were generally placed in the Shudra Varna or even outside the Varna system altogether, becoming the so-called “untouchables.” They were assigned tasks considered impure or polluting, such as leatherwork, sanitation, or disposal of the dead.

With the passage of time, this social stratification became hereditary, meaning that individuals were born into a particular caste and could not change it through personal merit or occupation. Endogamy (marriage within one's caste) further solidified the divisions. As generations passed, each Varna split into numerous sub-castes (Jatis) based on localized occupations, regions, and social customs. Thus, what may have started as a temporary social arrangement based on conquest and occupation gradually evolved into a rigid caste system, defining social status, duties, and privileges by birth.

In short, the socio-historical theory provides a realistic and historical explanation, linking the origin of caste to racial conquest, economic division of labor, and the gradual institutionalization of social inequality in early Indian society. Philosophy with social stratification.

3. Socio-Historical Theory- The socio-historical perspective attributes the caste system to the arrival of Aryans around 1500 BCE. The Aryans, fair-skinned and pastoral, subjugated the darker-skinned indigenous populations (Dravidians, Austroloids, Negritos, and Mongoloids), organizing them into hierarchies. The Sanskrit term Varna itself means “color,” suggesting a racial basis for early social divisions. Over time, hereditary occupations and endogamous practices institutionalized these divisions into the rigid caste system. The conquered populations were relegated to the Shudra Varna or rendered outcasts, performing tasks considered impure.

Defining Caste: Sociological Perspectives- The term caste is derived from the Spanish word *casta*, meaning “breed” or “lineage,” while the Sanskrit equivalent Varna denotes color.

G.S. Ghurye emphasizes the multifaceted nature of caste, noting that any single definition would fail to capture its complexity.

H. H. Risley defines caste as a collection of families bearing a common name, claiming descent from a mythical ancestor and following a hereditary occupation.

MacIver and Page interpret caste as a class where status is predetermined by birth, leaving no scope for mobility.

M.N. Srinivas views caste as a segmentary system divided into endogamous sub-castes with common rituals, occupations, and governance by caste panchayats.

Louis Dumont perceives caste as a system of values centered on hierarchy, purity, and pollution, rather than merely economic or political stratification.

Max Weber interprets caste as the religious intensification of social distance, rooted in ritualistic notions of status honor.

These definitions collectively highlight that caste is both a social and a cultural phenomenon structured around heredity, hierarchy, and ritual status.

Major Features of the Caste System

- Hereditary Status: Birth determines caste membership and occupation.

- Hierarchy: Castes are ranked from the pure (Brahmins) to the impure (untouchables).
- Endogamy: Marriages occur within the same caste or sub-caste.
- Occupational Restriction: Traditional professions are caste-specific and hereditary.
- Commensality Rules: Restrictions exist regarding food sharing and social contact.
- Social Disabilities: Lower castes faced exclusion from temples, schools, and wells.
- Caste Panchayats: Internal councils regulate conduct and impose sanctions.

These features created a closed system where upward mobility was rare and social distances were rigidly maintained.

Sanskritization and Social Change- The concept of Sanskritization, introduced by M.N. Srinivas, describes how lower castes adopt upper-caste customs-such as vegetarianism, wearing sacred threads, and performing Brahmanical rituals-to elevate their social status. This process signifies cultural mobility within the rigid caste hierarchy. However, as Harold Gould notes, Sanskritization often reflects both imitation and resistance-a strategy to negotiate dignity and recognition rather than purely emulate upper-caste culture.

Functions and Dysfunctions of the Caste System

- Positive Functions
- Maintained social stability and occupational specialization.
- Facilitated social cooperation through systems like Jajmani.
- Negative Effects
- Institutionalized inequality and untouchability.
- Suppressed individual mobility and merit.
- Fragmented society into antagonistic groups.
- Marginalized women and lower castes.

Thus, while caste once served as an organizing mechanism, its rigidity eventually became an impediment to modernization and equality.

Dominant Caste and Power Relations- Srinivas introduced the concept of the dominant caste, defined by numerical strength, land ownership, and political influence rather than ritual purity. For instance, in Mysore, the Okkalinga caste wielded authority through land control and political organization. This theory explains the persistence of caste influence in rural governance and electoral politics even after the decline of traditional hierarchies.

Purity, Pollution, and Hierarchy- According to Dumont, the ideology of purity and pollution underpins caste hierarchy. Ritual purity grants moral superiority, while physical contact or proximity to impure castes causes defilement. Although constitutional provisions abolished untouchability, the symbolic residues of purity and pollution persist in social attitudes and practices. Dipankar Gupta further argues that these notions, though

historical, continue to reproduce social distance in subtle forms.

Caste in Modern India- Post-independence, caste has been legally delegitimized but politically revitalized. The Constitution of India prohibits caste discrimination (Article 15) and abolishes untouchability (Article 17). Yet, affirmative action policies and electoral mobilization have turned caste into a political resource. While reservations seek to redress historical injustice, they also reinforce caste identities. Political parties mobilize caste-based vote banks, blurring the boundary between social justice and political expediency.

Conclusion- Caste remains one of the most enduring and complex social institutions in India. Despite modernization, urbanization, and legal reform, caste continues to shape identity, politics, and social behavior. Its persistence highlights the interplay between tradition and change, hierarchy and equality. To achieve a truly egalitarian society, India must move beyond the rhetoric of caste abolition toward genuine social and educational empowerment of marginalized communities, transforming caste from a marker of exclusion into a relic of history.

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"From Participation to Sustainability: Exploring the Relationship Between Community Involvement and River Revival Success in Central Gujarat"

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Abstract- Rivers have long been the lifeline of human civilizations, providing water, food, cultural identity, and ecological balance. However, in recent decades, rapid urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable land use practices have led to severe degradation of river systems across India. Central Gujarat, home to several important rivers, has witnessed similar ecological decline, marked by pollution, encroachment, loss of biodiversity, and weakened hydrological functions. In response, river rejuvenation initiatives have gained momentum, emphasizing not only technical interventions such as wastewater treatment, desilting, and ecological restoration, but also the active participation of local communities. This study, titled "From Participation to Sustainability: Exploring the Relationship Between Community Involvement and River Revival Success in Central Gujarat", examines the role of community engagement as a decisive factor in ensuring the long-term sustainability of river restoration efforts. The research situates itself within the broader framework of participatory environmental governance, which argues that local stakeholders are not passive beneficiaries of restoration projects but active custodians of ecological assets. In Central Gujarat, where rivers hold both ecological and cultural significance, the involvement of communities has manifested in diverse forms ranging from citizen movements and awareness campaigns to active monitoring of pollution, adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, and participation in policy dialogues. By analysing case studies of selected river rejuvenation projects in the region, the study explores how levels of community participation correlate with tangible ecological outcomes, such as improved water quality, enhanced biodiversity, and the revival of traditional water management systems. Methodologically, the study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining qualitative methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and ethnographic observation with quantitative assessments of ecological indicators and project outcomes. Preliminary findings suggest that projects with high levels of community ownership demonstrate better long-term success compared to those driven primarily by top-down technical

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solutions. Moreover, sustained community involvement contributes not only to ecological resilience but also to socio-cultural sustainability by reviving traditional practices, strengthening local governance, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

The abstract highlights three critical insights. First, community participation is not merely an add-on to technical interventions but a foundational element that determines the trajectory of river revival. Second, sustainability emerges from a synergy between scientific expertise, policy support, and local knowledge, rather than from isolated actions. Third, long-term success requires embedding participation in institutional frameworks, thereby moving from sporadic involvement to structured co-management of river systems.

By situating the Central Gujarat experience within broader debates on environmental justice, sustainable development, and participatory governance, the study underscores the importance of shifting the narrative of river restoration from “projects” to “processes.” It concludes that river revival in the region is most effective when it is understood not just as an ecological or technical task but as a socio-ecological movement rooted in community stewardship. The research offers policy recommendations aimed at integrating participatory models into state and regional river rejuvenation programs, ensuring that restored rivers remain resilient, culturally relevant, and ecologically sustainable for future generations.

Keywords- *River Restoration, Community Participation, Sustainability, Central Gujarat, Environmental Governance, Ecological Resilience, Participatory Development, Water Management, Biodiversity, River Rejuvenation*

Introduction-

1. Rivers as Lifelines of Civilization- Throughout history, rivers have been central to the growth of human societies. They have served as sources of water, food, transportation, spiritual meaning, and ecological stability. From the Nile in Egypt to the Ganga in India, civilizations flourished on riverbanks, sustaining livelihoods and shaping culture. In the Indian context, rivers are not merely water bodies; they are revered as sacred entities, deeply embedded in religious and cultural practices. This symbolic reverence, however, often stands in stark contrast to the ecological neglect rivers face in contemporary times. Central Gujarat, home to rivers such as the Vishwamitri, Mahi, Sabarmati, and Meshwo, reflects this contradiction. These rivers once supported flourishing ecosystems and vibrant community life. Over time, however, rapid urban expansion, population pressure, industrial effluents, untreated sewage, and encroachment have pushed these rivers to the brink of ecological collapse. What was once a life-giving flow having, in many stretches, been reduced to a carrier of waste. Against this backdrop, river rejuvenation has emerged as both an ecological necessity and a social imperative.

2. The Ecological Crisis in Central Gujarat- The degradation of rivers in Central Gujarat illustrates the wider crisis of water systems across India.

Urban centres like Vadodara, Anand, and parts of Ahmedabad have expanded without adequate ecological planning, leading to direct discharge of sewage and industrial waste into river systems. In addition, sand mining, deforestation in catchment areas, and encroachment of floodplains have further weakened natural resilience.

The Vishwamitri River in Vadodara is one such case. Notorious for carrying untreated sewage, plastic, and industrial effluents, the river has also been encroached upon for urban infrastructure projects. Despite its ecological importance as a habitat for species like the mugger crocodile, the river struggles under anthropogenic pressure. Similarly, the Sabarmati River, while transformed through the well-known Sabarmati Riverfront Project in Ahmedabad, has raised questions about sustainability, ecological justice, and inclusiveness of the communities most dependent on it.

Thus, the ecological crisis in Central Gujarat's rivers is not just a matter of polluted water but also of disrupted ecosystems, cultural alienation, and governance gaps.

3. River Rejuvenation: From Projects to Processes- The concept of river rejuvenation has gained global attention as nations seek to balance development with ecological sustainability. In India, initiatives like the Namami Gange Mission have attempted large-scale interventions combining pollution abatement, infrastructure development, and biodiversity conservation. In Gujarat, too, government and civil society actors have initiated efforts to restore rivers through activities such as wastewater treatment plants, solid waste management, desilting, afforestation, and biodiversity restoration. However, most of these efforts have been dominated by technocratic and top-down approaches. Large-scale infrastructure projects, though visually transformative, often sideline ecological functions and community needs. They risk becoming cosmetic solutions if not rooted in local participation. Increasingly, scholars and practitioners argue that the success of river rejuvenation depends not only on engineering interventions but also on the extent of community engagement and ownership.

Rejuvenation, in this sense, is less about “completing projects” and more about “sustaining processes.” It involves restoring ecological flows, reviving traditional knowledge, and creating participatory governance mechanisms that ensure continuity beyond political or financial cycles.

4. Community Participation in Environmental Governance- Globally, the shift from centralized governance to participatory models has redefined environmental management. Participatory environmental governance emphasizes inclusiveness, accountability, and the recognition of local knowledge systems. It rests on the understanding that local communities are not just beneficiaries but active custodians of natural resources.

In the context of rivers, participation takes diverse forms-

- **Awareness and sensitization-** Public campaigns, school-based education, and river festivals generate ecological consciousness.
- **Active involvement-** Communities engage in river clean-up drives, monitoring water quality, and planting riparian vegetation.

- **Policy dialogue-** Civil society groups and local residents participate in consultations, influencing planning and decision-making.
- **Traditional practices-** Reviving indigenous water harvesting, floodplain farming, and cultural rituals fosters sustainable relationships with rivers.

In Gujarat, community-driven initiatives such as the Vaho Vishwamitri Abhiyan have shown that citizen movements can push for ecological accountability and policy change. Similarly, smaller-scale efforts like rainwater harvesting, decentralized wastewater treatment, and community-based afforestation projects highlight the potential of participatory models in achieving long-term success.

5. Linking Participation with Sustainability- The central concern of this study is to explore how community involvement translates into sustainability in river revival efforts. Sustainability here goes beyond ecological improvement to encompass socio-cultural and institutional resilience.

- **Ecological Sustainability:** Ensuring the river can maintain biodiversity, ecological flow, and water quality.
- **Social Sustainability:** Strengthening community bonds, cultural practices, and equitable access to river resources.
- **Institutional Sustainability:** Embedding participatory frameworks in governance structures so that river management is not dependent on temporary projects or political cycles.

Preliminary observations from Central Gujarat suggest that projects where communities are actively engaged whether through citizen science, local monitoring committees, or cultural initiatives tend to show more resilient outcomes. For instance, biodiversity revival efforts backed by local schoolchildren and NGOs in Vadodara have shown better continuity than interventions driven solely by municipal authorities.

Research Methodology- The research methodology for the study titled "**From Participation to Sustainability- Exploring the Relationship Between Community Involvement and River Revival Success in Central Gujarat**" was designed to address the core objectives of understanding how communities engage in river revival initiatives, the impact of their participation, and the challenges faced during these processes. The research was adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive view of people's participation in river revival projects.

Objectives- To address the research questions, the study is guided by the following objectives-

- **Map and categorize** the forms of community participation observed across selected river restoration projects in Central Gujarat.
- **Assess ecological outcomes** by examining water quality parameters, biodiversity indicators, and physical habitat conditions both before and after interventions (where data are available), supplemented by systematic field observations.

- **Evaluate social outcomes** through household surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, with emphasis on livelihood impacts, access to services, community perceptions of river health, and patterns of conflict or cooperation.
- **Analyse governance structures** to identify enabling policies, inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and funding arrangements that shape project trajectories.
- **Formulate policy recommendations** and develop an evidence-based framework for effectively integrating community participation into restoration planning and post-implementation maintenance.

Scope and Delimitation- This study focuses on river restoration initiatives along the Vishwamitri River in Central Gujarat, particularly in urban and peri-urban stretches that fall within municipal jurisdictions and areas of dense human settlement. Central Gujarat is purposively chosen as it presents both acute ecological challenges and active stakeholder engagement: rivers here are heavily impacted by industrial effluents, sewage discharges, and agricultural runoff, while a diverse set of actors- including municipal bodies, NGOs, citizen groups, and industries-have initiated or supported restoration projects.

The scope of the research is delimited in the following ways-

1. It emphasizes **community roles in restoration success**, rather than providing a comprehensive ecological evaluation of all river systems across Gujarat.
2. It prioritizes **projects undertaken in the last 10–15 years** to capture contemporary governance arrangements and recent technical practices.
3. While acknowledging the importance of upstream–downstream hydrological linkages, the study focuses on **selected case study sites** rather than entire river basins.
4. The analysis highlights **participatory and governance dimensions** only insofar as they relate to community engagement and its outcomes.

Research Design- The study employs a **descriptive and exploratory research design**. The descriptive component aims to document the present state of community involvement in river revival initiatives in Central Gujarat, while the exploratory dimension seeks to uncover the underlying factors influencing participation, including barriers and enablers of active community engagement.

Research Approach- A **mixed-methods approach** integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a holistic understanding-

- **Qualitative Approach-** This approach explores community experiences, attitudes, and perceptions toward participation in river revival. It is particularly valuable for uncovering motivations, challenges, and the perceived benefits of engagement.
- **Quantitative Approach-** This approach generates measurable data on the extent, patterns, and impacts of participation, as well as the

factors influencing involvement. Quantitative evidence supplements qualitative insights, offering a broader and more generalizable understanding of community participation.

Population and Sampling- The study focuses on communities in **Vadodara City** and villages situated along the Vishwamitri River in Central Gujarat. The target population includes-

- **Local Residents-** Individuals residing in the vicinity of the river, directly affected by restoration activities.
- **Community Leaders and Activists-** Stakeholders engaged in planning, implementation, or advocacy related to river revival initiatives.
- **Government and NGO Representatives-** Officials and practitioners working with government agencies and NGOs on river restoration and environmental management.

A **stratified random sampling technique** is employed for quantitative data collection to ensure representation across gender, age, and socioeconomic groups. For qualitative data, **purposive sampling** is used to engage individuals with direct involvement or significant knowledge of river restoration efforts.

Data Collection Methods-

Primary Data Collection-

- **Surveys/Questionnaires-** A structured questionnaire was administered to local residents and community leaders. The survey was designed to gather data on-

1. Awareness of river revival initiatives
2. Levels of participation (e.g., attendance at meetings, engagement in clean-up drives, volunteering)
3. Perceived benefits and challenges of participation
4. Motivational factors influencing involvement
5. Demographic characteristics (age, education, income level, etc.) for correlation and comparative analysis

- **Interviews-** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including government officials, NGO representatives, and community leaders. These discussions explored:

1. Their roles in river revival projects
2. Perceptions of public involvement in restoration efforts
3. Challenges encountered by communities in participating
4. Strategies adopted to encourage community engagement
5. Perceived outcomes and impacts of community participation on project success

Data Analysis-

- **Quantitative Analysis-** Data from surveys were analysed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize demographic profiles and participation levels, while correlation and cross-tabulation methods were used to explore relationships

between socio-demographic factors and participation patterns.

- **Qualitative Analysis-** Interview data were examined using thematic analysis, which involved identifying recurring themes and patterns, grouping similar responses, and interpreting meanings. This process helped uncover motivations, barriers, success factors, and community-level perceptions related to river revival efforts.

Ethical Considerations-

- **Informed Consent-** All participants were briefed about the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Written or verbal consent was obtained prior to data collection.
- **Confidentiality-** To ensure privacy, participant identities were kept confidential. Responses were anonymized during analysis and reporting to protect individual and institutional perspectives.

Limitations of the Study-

- **Geographical Scope-** The research is confined to Central Gujarat, specifically the Vishwamitri River, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions.
- **Resource Constraints-** Limitations of time and budget restricted the number of interviews and focus group discussions, potentially affecting the depth of qualitative insights.

Expected Outcomes-

The study is expected to yield-

- A detailed understanding of the extent, forms, and drivers of community participation in river revival initiatives in Central Gujarat.
- Identification of key barriers and challenges to meaningful participation.
- Practical recommendations to enhance community engagement in future restoration projects.
- Contributions to policy frameworks that emphasize community-centred approaches to river conservation.

The findings will be valuable for **policymakers, local governments, NGOs, and citizen groups** engaged in designing and implementing sustainable river restoration strategies.

Aims of the Study- The primary aim of this study is to assess the role of community participation in river revival projects in Central Gujarat, with a specific focus on the Vishwamitri River in Vadodara. It seeks to examine how community engagement shapes the success of restoration initiatives, while identifying associated challenges and opportunities. The ultimate goal is to provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening community participation, fostering sustainable practices, and ensuring the long-term ecological recovery of the Vishwamitri River.

Variables under Study- The study investigates a range of variables to analyse the dynamics of community participation in river restoration. These are categorized into **independent variables, dependent variables, and moderating/mediating variables.**

1. Independent Variables

- **Socio-Demographic Factors-**
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Education
 - Income level
- **Awareness and Knowledge of River Issues-**
 - Environmental awareness
 - Access to information and communication channels
- **Government and Institutional Support-**
 - Influence of government policies and programs
 - Support from NGOs and civil society organizations

2. Dependent Variables-

The dependent variables represent the outcomes of community participation:

- **Level of Participation-**
 - Frequency of Participation– regularity of involvement in activities (e.g., clean-up drives, awareness programs, stakeholder meetings).
 - Type of Participation– forms of engagement, such as physical (volunteering), intellectual (awareness campaigns), or financial (donations and contributions).
- **Impact of Participation on River Health-**
 - Biodiversity Restoration–recovery of aquatic and riparian flora and fauna due to community initiatives.
 - Water Quality Improvement– reduction in pollutants, chemical contaminants, and physical water quality issues.
 - Ecosystem Resilience– restoration of natural ecological functions, such as groundwater recharge and water purification.

Hypotheses of the Study- This study formulates a set of hypotheses to examine the relationships between community participation in the Vishwamitri River revival initiatives and the resulting environmental, social, and economic outcomes. These hypotheses address the factors influencing participation as well as its broader impacts on river restoration-

1. **Community Awareness-** There is a significant positive relationship between the level of community awareness regarding the environmental issues of the Vishwamitri River and their active participation in river revival efforts.
2. **Socio-Demographic Factors-** Socio-demographic characteristics—such as age, income, education, and occupation—significantly influence the level of people's participation in river restoration projects.
3. **Government and Institutional Support-** Government and institutional support positively influence the extent of community participation in the Vishwamitri River revival initiatives.

4. **Cultural and Social Factors-** Cultural norms, social practices, and the religious significance of the Vishwamitri River significantly shape people's participation in restoration activities.
5. **Environmental Outcomes-** People's participation in the Vishwamitri River revival leads to measurable improvements in river water quality and biodiversity.
6. **Socio-Economic Outcomes-** Community participation in river revival has a significant positive relationship with local socio-economic development, particularly through opportunities in ecotourism and sustainable livelihoods.
7. **Barriers to Participation-** Barriers such as lack of awareness, limited resources, or socio-political resistance negatively affect the level of community involvement in river restoration.
8. **Trust and Social Capital-** Increased community trust and higher levels of social capital are positively correlated with greater involvement in river revival activities.
9. **Economic Incentives-** Provision of economic incentives, such as job creation linked to river restoration and ecotourism, positively influences people's willingness to participate.
10. **Awareness Campaigns-** The effectiveness of awareness campaigns and community outreach programs significantly enhances levels of active participation.

Population and Sample-

1. Population of the Study- The study population consists of 600 individuals directly or indirectly associated with the Vishwamitri River revival efforts in Vadodara, Central Gujarat. The key population groups include-

- Residents of Vadodara living along or near the river.
- Local Volunteers engaged in river-related initiatives.
- Civic and Community Leaders involved in mobilization and decision-making.

2. Sample for the Study- A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation of all stakeholder groups, taking into account diversity across socio-economic backgrounds, occupations, and levels of involvement.

- **Sample Size-** Approximately 600 local residents (both urban and rural) were selected for surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions.
- The sample size was determined using statistical sampling methods to ensure that the data would be sufficiently representative and robust for meaningful analysis.

Data Collection Methods-

- **Surveys and Questionnaires-** Distributed among residents, volunteers, and local businesses to collect quantitative data on levels of awareness, participation, perceptions, and socio-demographic attributes.

- Interviews- Conducted with government officials, NGO representatives, and community leaders to obtain qualitative insights into institutional roles, effectiveness of policies, and challenges faced by stakeholders.

Research Tools-

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research tools to capture a holistic view of community participation:

1. Survey Questionnaire– designed to gather structured quantitative data from residents and volunteers.
2. In-depth Interviews– conducted with key stakeholders (government, NGOs, community leaders) as a qualitative tool to explore motivations, barriers, and strategies.

Quantitative Data Analysis-

- Descriptive Statistics- Survey data were analysed using SPSS to generate frequencies, averages, and distributions, offering a profile of respondents and participation patterns.
- Inferential Statistics- Relationships between independent and dependent variables (e.g., awareness and participation) were tested using correlation analysis, chi-square tests, and other relevant techniques.

Importance of the Study- The revival and conservation of rivers are essential for maintaining ecological balance, ensuring water security, and supporting socio-economic development. In India, river rejuvenation has gained increasing importance as a national and regional priority. The Vishwamitri River in Vadodara presents a compelling case study, as it reflects both the challenges of urban-industrial pressures and the opportunities for community-driven restoration.

This study underscores the critical role of public participation in determining the success of river revival initiatives. By highlighting the interconnections between ecological, social, and economic outcomes, the research aims to inform future policy and practice in river conservation and sustainable water management. Its findings are expected to benefit policymakers, local governments, NGOs, and civil society organizations seeking to strengthen participatory approaches in environmental governance.

Conclusion and Summary of Key Findings- The River Revival Project study provides valuable insights into public awareness, perceptions, and challenges associated with river restoration initiatives, particularly the Vishwamitri River project. The findings highlight both encouraging trends and areas requiring significant improvement in communication, education, and community engagement.

Participant Demographics-

- The study engaged 600 respondents with an equal gender split (300 males, 300 females).
- A balanced regional representation emerged, with 54% rural and 46% urban participants.

Awareness and Understanding-

- High environmental awareness was evident as all participants identified reducing water pollution as a central goal.
- However, misconceptions persist: nearly three-fourths (74.7%) wrongly endorsed adding pollutants as a method, and only 12.7% correctly recognized sewage treatment plants as vital interventions.
- Most (96.8%) understood restoration as habitat re-establishment, but confusion remains about methods such as damming.

Agency Involvement and Responsibility-

- Perceived Role- The Mining and Mineral Department was seen as the lead agency (90.5%), overshadowing actual stakeholders.
- Misidentification- A majority wrongly attributed responsibility to ISRO (64.7%) or ONGC (22.7%), while only 9.5%–51.5% correctly identified the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC).
- This indicates a serious gap in public knowledge of governance and accountability.

Community Engagement-

- Views on participation were divided. While 58.2% acknowledged its importance for mobilization and sustainability, many (38.7%–57.7%) perceived it as a hindrance, citing costs, delays, and conflicts.
- A minority (22.7%–28.8%) recognized its benefits, such as fostering ownership and stewardship.
- Overall, participation is underappreciated and often misunderstood, highlighting the need for improved engagement strategies.

Challenges in River Rejuvenation-

- The most cited challenge was managing native species (80.8%).
- Misconceptions dominated, with many incorrectly pointing to excessive resources (61.2%) or strict regulations (32.5%) as obstacles.
- Real issues such as funding shortages, stakeholder apathy, and industrial pressure were less frequently acknowledged.

Funding Sources-

- River revival is seen as primarily supported by private donations (61.3%), followed by government subsidies (22.8%) and municipal contributions (12.7%).
- Corporate sponsorships remain minimal (3.2%), reflecting limited private-sector engagement.

Perceptions of Impact and Benefits-

- Public understanding of outcomes is highly fragmented:
 - Misconceptions- Many believed revival decreases agricultural productivity (64.8%–74.0%) or recreational opportunities (71%).
 - Accurate Views (Minority)- Some recognized improvements in water quality (13.0%–32.0%), biodiversity, and eco-tourism opportunities.

- Economic Benefits- Few associated projects with property value increases or sustainable livelihoods.

Success Indicators-

- Only 29.2%–51.8% correctly identified improved water quality, biodiversity, and participation as indicators of success.
- Misunderstandings included increased industrial waste or reduced native species as “success.”

Misconceptions and Knowledge Gaps-

- Confusion about project geography persists, with 25.7% mistaking the Yamuna as the focus instead of the Vishwamitri.
- Many misinterpreted project goals, associating them with industrial discharge or deforestation rather than ecological restoration.
- Only one-fifth of respondents consistently recognized sewage treatment and green cover restoration as the project's real focus.

1. Economic Impact Perceptions-

- Nearly half of respondents (48.2%) feared loss of livelihoods for fishermen and farmers, and 35.5% worried about declining property values near the river.
- Only 10% recognized eco-tourism potential, while 6.3% anticipated a decline in tourism revenue.
- Conclusion- Concerns over negative economic impacts dominate, but highlighting eco-tourism and recreation could reshape perceptions toward positive outcomes.

2. Measures of Success-

- A majority (48.5%) linked project success to improved water quality, biodiversity, and community engagement.
- Another 45.2% emphasized conservation of native species.
- Development-based measures such as industrial waste discharge or urban expansion were overwhelmingly rejected.
- Conclusion: Public opinion strongly aligns with ecological and social success indicators, reinforcing sustainability as a priority.

3. Environmental and Sustainability Views-

- Nearly half (48.5%) saw the Abhiyan as enhancing environmental health and sustainability.
- Some concerns persisted: reduced water access (38.8%), environmental degradation (6.3%), and pollution (6.3%).
- Conclusion- Ecological restoration is broadly recognized, but doubts about resource access and implementation remain.

4. Public Awareness and Participation-

- About 44.8% valued awareness campaigns for informed decision-making, while 39.3% feared they spread misinformation and distrust.
- Smaller proportions linked awareness to disengagement (9.5%) or reduced transparency (6.3%).
- Conclusion: Awareness is essential, but its credibility and accuracy are critical to public trust.

5. Mixed Economic Views (Additional Data)-

- Concerns remain around decreased property values (48.7%) and loss of livelihoods (41.7%).
- A minority (9.7%) noted possible tourism decline, but positive impacts like eco-tourism were largely underreported.
- Conclusion: Economic perceptions are divided; communication should emphasize long-term livelihood and tourism benefits.

6. People's Participation in the Project-

- Participation is seen as raising costs (42.3%) but also fostering ownership and support (32.3%).
- Bureaucratic hurdles (22.2%) and conflicts/delays (3.2%) were also noted.
- Conclusion- Community involvement is valued yet perceived as costly; effective management could balance sustainability with efficiency.

7. Broader Measures of Success-

- About 77.5% associated success with protecting native species, improving water quality, biodiversity, and engaging communities.
- Only 22.5% cited industrial or urban expansion, suggesting confusion about project aims.
- Conclusion: Ecological restoration is the dominant measure of success in public opinion.

8. Views on Public Involvement-

- 42.2% highlighted stewardship and ownership, while 38.8% feared reduced accountability.
- 15.8% thought participation might slow progress.
- Conclusion- Participation is generally welcomed but viewed as potentially challenging in practice.

9. Role of Public Awareness-

- Nearly half (48.3%) linked awareness to better participation, but 35.5% feared misinformation, with smaller concerns about disinterest or reduced transparency.
- Conclusion- Awareness campaigns must emphasize reliability and clarity to build trust.

10. Nature of Public Participation-

- 44.8% described participation as criticism, while 42.2% viewed it as active involvement.
- A disengaged group (13%) avoided participation altogether.
- Conclusion- Public engagement is mixed-ranging from constructive dialogue to scepticism-suggesting the need for strategies to reach disengaged groups.

11. Benefits and Challenges of Participation-

- 45.2% valued participation for ownership and support.
- Concerns persisted around costs (29.3%), bureaucracy (19.2%), and conflicts/delays (6.3%).
- Conclusion- Inclusion remains crucial, but efficient structures are needed to minimize perceived burdens.

12. Effective Public Engagement-

- 42.2% emphasized dialogue, feedback, and transparency, while 41.8% stressed decisions must not be made without consultation.
- Conclusion- Open communication and inclusive consultation are essential for building legitimacy and trust.

13. Public Consultation-

- A majority (55.3%) saw consultation as encouraging involvement and accountability.
- Others felt it reduced responsibility (22.3%) or risked obstructing progress (15.8%).
- Conclusion- Consultation is valued, but its design must balance participation with timely decision-making.

14. Perceived Responsibility for Public Participation-

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was most often identified as responsible (51.3%).
- Others pointed to ONGC (32.2%) or VMC (16.5%).
- Conclusion- The EPA is widely seen as the lead agency, though clarity on institutional roles is still needed.

15. Effectiveness of Engagement-

- 48.2% worried about decisions made without consultation, while 38.7% stressed the importance of feedback and transparency.
- Smaller groups noted exclusion (6.7%) or dismissal of concerns (6.5%).
- Conclusion- While concerns about exclusion remain, the demand for transparent, two-way communication is clear.

Challenges to Public Involvement- The major barriers to community engagement include stringent environmental regulations (39.0%) and the presence of abundant funding or resources (38.7%). While regulations may create restrictive conditions, excess resources can sometimes result in complacency. Additionally, a lack of stakeholder interest (19.2%) remains a notable challenge in sustaining active participation.

Public Awareness and Participation- More than half of the respondents (51.3%) consider public awareness as a positive driver of informed decision-making and meaningful participation. However, 22.7% highlight concerns that misinformation could fuel distrust. Community participation is widely valued for strengthening cooperation, trust, and reciprocity (51.5%), though 35.7% caution that it can also generate conflict and division. Similarly, while 45.2% believe participation fosters ownership and public support, others warn about risks of increased costs, bureaucracy, and project delays.

Government Role and Perceptions- The government is primarily seen as responsible for providing financial support and regulatory frameworks (55.0%), both considered essential for project success. At the same time, concerns persist: 22.5% feel government intervention restricts public involvement, and 9.7% worry that economic priorities often outweigh environmental protection. While government action is credited with facilitating collaboration and resource allocation (32.2%), it is equally

criticized for raising costs (31.8%), creating bureaucratic hurdles (22.7%), and delaying project execution (13.3%).

Impact of Public Participation on Environment and Justice- Opinions remain divided on whether participation helps or harms the environment. While 35.3% fear it could lead to environmental degradation, others view it as essential for advancing environmental justice and inclusivity. Bridging this divide requires stronger public education and structured, inclusive participatory processes.

Inclusive Public Participation- Perceptions of inclusivity reveal contradictions. A majority (54.5%) believe that limiting access to information ensures inclusivity- an apparent misconception. Only 26.2% recognize transparency, accessibility, and feedback as key elements of genuine inclusion. Excluding marginalized groups or ignoring community input is generally viewed negatively, though some respondents still acknowledge its presence in practice.

Government Responsibilities- Nearly half of respondents (41.8%) identify transparency and accountability as the government's most critical responsibility. However, a notable share supports excluding stakeholders (25.8%) or disregarding community feedback (19.2%), highlighting tensions between centralized governance and participatory ideals. Overall, openness and accountability are seen as central to fostering trust and achieving successful outcomes.

Government Role in Public Consultation- Views on consultation are mixed. While 35.5% favour minimizing consultations for efficiency, these risks alienating communities. About 28.8% emphasize the government's role in funding and regulation, while smaller groups support tighter control over participation (16.3%) or prioritizing economic growth over the environment (19.3%). The challenge lies in balancing efficient governance with meaningful consultation for long-term success.

Government Engagement and Environmental Outcomes- Government involvement is widely regarded as essential for enforcing regulations and advancing sustainability (42.0%). Yet, 29.5% worry that economic growth may be prioritized over ecological protection, with others citing risks of governance failures, industrial pollution, and environmental degradation. These concerns highlight the need for balanced policies integrating both development and sustainability.

Government Consultation and Project Implementation- A large proportion (42.5%) view consultation as crucial for cooperation and resource mobilization. However, around 22% associate it with additional costs and bureaucracy, and 12.8% with delays. Streamlined consultation processes are therefore necessary to ensure efficiency without undermining inclusivity.

Key Agencies Identified- The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) emerges as the most recognized overseeing agency (42.3%), largely due to its industrial presence. Other agencies identified include the Environmental Protection Agency (25.7%), the Department of Transportation (22.5%), and the Ministry of Finance (9.5%), reflecting the project's multidisciplinary character.

Transparency, Inclusion, and Accountability- A concerning 32.3% perceive stakeholder exclusion as a government responsibility, while 25.7% point to restricted information sharing, and 22.7% note disregard for community feedback. Only 19.3% emphasize transparency and accountability as central. This indicates a gap in governance approaches and underlines the urgent need to strengthen openness, inclusion, and trust-building mechanisms.

Key Challenges Identified- Funding remains the most pressing issue, highlighted by 55.0% of respondents, with similar concerns echoed by 42.2% in another dataset. Weak environmental regulations are another challenge (16–42%), along with stakeholder disengagement (12.7–15.8%). Industrial presence along riverbanks is also flagged, though opinions on its significance vary.

Government's Role in Environmental Management- Government engagement is positively associated with enforcing regulations and promoting sustainability (38.3–42.0%). Nonetheless, 29.2% fear that economic priorities override environmental concerns, while others link government actions to industrial pollution (19.3%) and degradation caused by mismanagement (13.2%). These findings stress the importance of policies that harmonize economic development with ecological protection.

Building Public Trust- Trust hinges on transparency and accountability, endorsed by 35.3% of respondents. Yet, nearly half (25.8% + 22.8%) worry about exclusionary practices and lack of consultation, which undermine confidence. Restricting information access (16.0%) also erodes trust. Open communication and active participation are seen as essential for sustainable outcomes.

Government Agencies' Roles- Most respondents (64.8%) identify ONGC as the primary overseeing body, followed by the Environmental Protection Agency (16%), Department of Transportation (12.7%), and Ministry of Finance (6.5%). This distribution reflects both industrial influence and the need for cross-sectoral collaboration.

Government Support and Community Involvement- Government support is linked to stronger community stewardship (48.7%), though 28.8% fear it contributes to environmental degradation. Another 19.3% associate it with rising costs, while only 3.2% see it as a source of conflict or delays.

Ensuring Effective Project Implementation- Collaboration among stakeholders is widely considered crucial (45.3%). However, a significant share believes that restricting information (25.7%) or ignoring community concerns (22.5%) might enhance effectiveness—views that contradict transparency principles. Only 6.5% support avoiding regulatory oversight, indicating that regulation is broadly recognized as essential.

Strengthening Trust through Accountability- Government accountability is strongly endorsed, with 61.7% identifying it as vital for building trust and confidence. Yet, 22.3% caution that accountability could create bureaucratic hurdles, 9.7% suspect it might reduce transparency, and 6.3% believe it could lead to delays or conflicts. Despite these concerns, most respondents

see accountable governance as the foundation for public support.

Final Recommendations- The Vaho Vishwamitra Abhiyan is shaped by a blend of optimism, caution, and scepticism from the public. While there is strong support for environmental restoration initiatives—particularly those aimed at improving water quality, reviving biodiversity, and promoting sustainability—economic concerns dominate the discourse. Fears of livelihood loss, reduced property values, and the cost burden of projects overshadow recognition of long-term ecological benefits. Limited awareness of opportunities such as eco-tourism indicates a significant communication gap that must be addressed. Public participation is widely regarded as vital for project legitimacy and sustainability. However, apprehensions regarding costs, bureaucratic delays, and the spread of misinformation remain prominent. Trust in government agencies is mixed; although their regulatory and financial support is valued, there are persistent calls for greater transparency, accountability, and authentic stakeholder engagement.

To build broader support, the project must actively dispel misconceptions, strengthen inclusive engagement, and clearly communicate the social, cultural, and economic benefits of river restoration. Aligning environmental goals with people's economic and social priorities—through transparent messaging, participatory governance, and community ownership—will be crucial for ensuring the long-term success of the initiative.

Suggestions for Further Study-

- 1. Longitudinal and Impact Assessment Studies-** There is a pressing need for long-term, systematic evaluations of river restoration projects. Future studies should track changes in water quality, biodiversity, agricultural productivity, and local livelihoods over extended periods. Such studies should use measurable ecological and socio-economic indicators to assess resilience and sustainability.
- 2. Social Mobilization and Behaviour Change-** Research should investigate how restoration projects influence social mobilization and community behaviour over time. This includes examining shifts in attitudes towards water conservation, ecological stewardship, and environmental protection. Future studies may also explore the influence of cultural values, traditions, and social norms on sustained participation in river management.
- 3. Policy and Institutional Gaps-** A closer analysis of policy and institutional shortcomings is necessary. Although many policies mandate community involvement, implementation often lacks adequate funding, political will, and inter-agency coordination. Research could examine how frameworks may be restructured to better support grassroots, community-based river governance.
- 4. Role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems-** Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) remain under-documented and under-utilized in river restoration. Future research should

explore how TEK can complement scientific methods, particularly in rural and indigenous contexts, and how it can provide culturally relevant, cost-effective solutions to ecological challenges.

5. **Technological Integration-** Advanced technologies such as GIS mapping, satellite imagery, real-time water quality monitoring, and data analytics hold immense potential for river restoration. Further research should explore how these technologies can be effectively adopted in low-resource settings, and what barriers—technical, financial, or cultural—limit their widespread use.
6. **Cross-National Comparative Studies-** Comparative research across nations could yield valuable insights. Countries like Australia, South Africa, and Brazil have demonstrated success in river rejuvenation. Cross-national case studies could help identify adaptable strategies for India's unique socio-economic and ecological contexts, fostering international collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Implications of the Study- The findings of this study extend beyond academic debate, offering practical insights for environmental management, governance, and sustainable development. Central to these implications is the recognition that community participation and decentralized governance are indispensable for the success of river revival projects.

For policy-makers, the study highlights the urgency of harmonizing water and environmental policies with ground realities. Policy frameworks must be adaptive, flexible, and responsive to community needs. Strengthening financial, technical, and institutional support for locally driven initiatives is essential. Equally important is building institutional linkages that connect research organizations, government agencies, NGOs, and community groups in a shared framework of collaboration.

For development practitioners and NGOs, the study underscores the importance of building social capital, fostering community trust, and creating participatory platforms for dialogue. Leveraging both modern science and traditional ecological knowledge can ensure that restoration projects are not only technically sound but also socially inclusive and culturally relevant.

In a broader sense, the study reaffirms that people-centred approaches are central to addressing India's water and environmental crises. Future river revival projects must integrate ecological restoration, social equity, and economic development into a holistic framework. Rivers must be restored not only as ecological systems but also as vital cultural, social, and economic resources for present and future generations.

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Plight of women during Indo-Pak partition

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•• Neetu Yadav

Abstract- *One of the most traumatic and heart-rending events in the history of South Asia is the partition of India in 1947 which was marked by not only mass displacement, communal violence, political upheaval and chaos but also pathetic condition of all, in particular of women who bore a disproportionate burden of the violence. The partition of 1947 not only divided a nation but also fractured lives, homes and identities. Among the bloodshed and mass migration it was women who suffered some of the most unspeakable horrors that one could imagine. This paper scans the intricate plight of women during Indo Pak partition focusing on their experience of abduction, sexual violence, forced conversion and loss of homes and identity. The study highlights how women were not only victims but also symbols of communal honor often used as tools in a male dominated patriarchal nationalist struggle. The partition has been studied by various scholars who approached the subject from different perspectives analyzing it with the help of different analytical lenses and coming up with a variety of conclusions. The one dimension that has however so far failed to elicit sufficient attention is the dimensions of women's sufferings that was offshoot of the event. This paper stresses this gap in the partition literature and pleads that it be filled. (Rabia Umar Ali, Islamic studies, 425-436, 2009) The present paper deals on the topics that includes the notion of honor and patriarchy, women as survivors and agents, role of literature and cinema, testimonies and oral histories and legacy and memory.*

Keywords- *plight, silence, victim, sufferings, identity.*

Introduction- It would perhaps not be out of place to mention the beginning of this kind of humiliation of women. If we look back at the history of India, perhaps it all started when Draupadi was humiliated in the royal court by Kauravas that the dice was rolled for women in the subcontinent to be an integral part of the politics of the region. One such momentous event which has repercussion till today is the partition of India into two Nation States (Her story: women, cinema and partition: Rajkumari Sujata Singh Guwahati University) Draupadi's humiliation happened in Royal court filled with elders, warriors and kings but no one bothered to intervene. Similar was the violence against women during partition, it was often public. Even after surviving horror many were forcibly rehabilitated, denied the right to choose whether they wanted to return to their families or stay with their captors. In both

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scenarios a woman's voice was strangled by patriarchal control and politics.

However, both Draupadi and the women of partition symbolise resilience. Draupadi refused to be passive in her suffering and many women who survived partition went on to rebuild their lives, share their stories and resist the erasure of their experience from history.

In fact, Draupadi's character serves as a metaphor to understand suffering and strength of women during the partition of India. The Mahabharat through Draupadi reminds us that the violation of women is not just a personal tragedy but in fact it is a collective moral failure. Partition reminds us that these failures persist in modern history also. True healing and justice can begin by listening to, and honouring these stories. Testimonies of women survivors during partition of India 1947 are powerful. They shed light on traumatic chapter in South Asian history. Official accounts focus on political events only but these testimonies reveal the human cost specially the gender violence, displacement and identity crisis faced by women. The gendered nature of violence refers to how violence specifically targeted women in ways that reflected their gender, social roles & symbolic place. This violence was not random but systematic, often carried out by organised mobs. The official history and political narrative have often ignored or marginalised the voice of women victims but the role of literature and cinema in highlighting the experience of women victims during partition of India is crucial. Literature has provided a space for nuanced emotional and often unspoken truth about suffering of women during partition. In the same way cinemas had made the stories visible to large number of people often giving rise to public debate and historical interest. In fact, many survivors never spoke, it was literature and cinema which spoke on their behalf. Women were among the most deeply affected during partition, yet their stories were marginalised. But today their experiences are slowly recovered with testimonies, literature and history and feminist scholarship. Through this paper I have tried to bring out the role of different medium in highlighting the sufferings of women during Indo Pak partition.

The notion of honor and patriarchy- Women during partition represented the perceived "honor" of individual men and the state. This act led to unspeakable violence post on them by both outsiders and their own family members. As said by Menon and Bhasin, "Husbands, fathers, brothers and even sons could turn to be killers as they sought to eliminate any chance of dishonor being imposed upon their family name and religion." Countless women were murdered by their own relative to prevent them from converting to new religion. The tragedy in the village of Thoa Khalsa in Punjab demonstrated that women took their own lives. In March 1947 around 90 women jumped into a well to avoid facing the enemy and disgrace. Butaliya argues that "for others the decision must have been one they felt compelled to take because of the particular circumstances of the

situation.” (Urvashi Bhutalia, economic and political weekly in 1993).

Women as survivors and agents- Women who had survived the violence of partition were denied all agency. Under the Central Recovery operation ((1948-1956) of the govt. of India, women from both India and Pakistan agreed to return to their families and natives. However, many women among them had already converted their religion, married and given birth to the children of their so-called abductors and had settled to integrated new life much against their wish. As they began the process of their recovery, Government and social worker often found their changes to be hostile and resistant. Tahir Muzhar Ali, one such social worker immersed herself in the task of identifying abducted women and occupying them to camps or their countries of religious origin. Several other agencies like Central Recovery Offices, The India and Pakistan Military evacuation organisation were responsible for escorting and guarding women. Social workers and District Liaison Officers also played a crucial role in recovery of abducted women.

Role of literature and cinema- Literature and cinema have played a crucial role in portraying the plight of women during the partition of India (1947) by giving voice to their trauma, resistance, loss and survival. These aspects often remain muted in political and historical records. Amrita Pritam's 'Pinjar' portrays the story of Puro, a Hindu girl abducted by a Muslim man. It also explores loss of identity and agency of women. Sadat Hasan Manto's "Khol Do" highlights dehumanizing violence faced by women. Krishna Sobti's "Zindaginama" explored the social and emotional impact of partition through female characters caught in communal tensions. Urvashi Bhutalia's "The other side of silence", highlights how women were victimized by both attackers and their own family members.

Films like "Khamosh Pani" (2003) highlights how trauma lingers across generations and "Earth"(1998) is based on Bapsi Sidwa's "Cracking India". It captures how partition affected female domestic workers and marginalized women.

Testimonies and oral histories- In 1947 when the partition of India was announced, Subhani, living with her Mewati speaking family in Alwar (now in Rajasthan) shares an incident saying that the troops came to them and asked them to leave all their belongings and move to Pakistan at once.

A muslim woman who was interviewed by Butalia shared her story about being abducted and forcibly married to a Hindu man. After being recovered 'by officials years later, she was rejected by her natal family because she had borne children with her abductors. She testified, "I had no place left -neither my old home nor the new. My body was theirs to fight over but my life was mine to suffer"

One survivor recalled, "when I came back no one asked me what happened with me, they just gave me food and clothes but never shared my suffering or any words of sympathy. My silence was the price of my return". One elderly woman abducted in 1947 told, "I have lived 70 years but those days have never left me. Even in my dreams I still run, I still hide, I still bleed".

Several such testimonies are recorded in Urvashi Butalia's 'The other side of silence'. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's, 'Border and boundaries' provides narratives of women whose life were torn apart by forced conversion, migration and patriarchal control.

The stories showcased, however, provide only small glimpses into the vast range of women's experiences. Many more stories are housed by the Archive and new ones are being recorded every day.

Legacy and memory- The legacy of women suffering during partition of 1947 is the most silenced yet haunting aspects of South Asian history. While different writers and scholars highlighted displacement communal riots and political upheaval in their works. the trauma faced by women often remained hidden in the folds of family honor or social shame. The silence surrounding women's suffering was not accidental but rooted in patriarchal social structures that viewed them primarily as markers of community honour. Families often refused to accept the abducted women treating them as permanently "polluted". The legacy of partition for women lies in inter-generational trauma. The children and grandchildren of the survivors still carry the emotional weight of these silences, often growing up with suppressed stories of what their mothers and grandmothers endured.

Conclusion- The partition of 1947 was the profound human tragedy that received false identities and memories across generations. Among the countless victims, women had a unique and disproportionate burden. Their bodies became sites of revenge, humiliation and control making the partition a deep catastrophe.

This paper tries to highlight that women sufferings cannot be seen in isolation rather it must be understood within the larger framework of patriarchy nationalism and communal politics. The gender violence of partition reveals how women were silence in mainstream histories and denied a rightful place in collective memory. However, through testimonies, many feminist scholars have tried to emerge their voices filling the gaps left by conventional historiography. Acknowledging women experiences as partition victims is not simply revisiting the past. It is about ensuring that this silence does not persist in future.

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Life in Contemporary Literature with Special Reference to Agriculture in India

• **Mahendra Singh**

Abstract- *The historical literature of agriculture chronicles the beginning of an era in which the pressures of population and the opportunities of urban and global markets resulted in an agricultural system which is arguably the most productive in the world, which is also a major contributor to environmental degradation. The negative effects of modern agriculture were somewhat unanticipated, making the story of agriculture's transformation of major interest to cultural historians chronicling the history of the environmental and agricultural worker's rights movements, and the rise of the land conservation ethic. As rural life changed, so did the content of the literature ^{aim} at the farm family. This paper provides the information of the experience of the individual farm family, the establishment and evolution of farm communities, the pressures affecting rural culture, and the shifting and evolution in rural culture in response to national and world events. The literature of agriculture is replete with information about sustainable agricultural methods, observations, production, and effects. Until the 1940s, farmers did not use pesticides and chemical fertilizers in quantity. The record of pre-World War II agriculture is almost entirely a literature of what we now call "alternative" agriculture.*

Keywords- *Contemporary Literature, Agriculture*

Introduction- Most rural communities and many cities depended on agricultural production for their livelihood. India's history cannot fully be understood without studying its rural life and agricultural heritage. Agriculture fueled the social and economic engine which built our nation, which generated our state and local governments, which stimulated and regulated pioneering, farming, land tenure, and the trading of agricultural commodities. Much of what defines the national character of India, our cultural values and mores, is rooted in our agrarian past. The farm family was the basic social unit molding Indian life for nearly 200 years. Agriculture has transformed the Indian countryside and provided its rural strength. Due to the centrality of agriculture in India experience, economic, social, and cultural historians, as well as those in science and technology, have been fascinated by the published record of agriculture and rural life, and must utilize it regularly. The story of Indian agriculture is captured in a broad band of documentary resources ranging from the memoirs and transactions of early agriculture societies to newspapers and

almanacs; family, community, and corporate archives; and state and county extension service publications. The evolution of farm and rural life and agricultural economy is chronicled in the agriculture periodical press and the numerous local, regional, and national farm journals that exhorted, informed, and shaped the opinions, values, and concerns of early farm families.

Agricultural and Rural Development- This research paper is primarily concerned with rural extension and with the livelihoods of farmers and their families. The concept of rural development must therefore be considered with particular reference to agriculture, since agriculture is the basis of the livelihood of most rural families. In the past two decades there has been increasing emphasis on rural development programs and projects, and recognition that the development of rural areas is just as important as the building up of urban, industrial complexes. Development must have two legs: urban industrialization and rural improvement. There are very strong reasons why resources should now be put into rural development. More than half the people of the world and the vast majority of the people in developing countries live in rural areas and gain part or all of their livelihoods from some form of agriculture. Most of these people are also still very poor and dependent on agricultural practices that have benefited little from modern technology. They live in isolated and often inhospitable places, with little access to the resources they need to improve their agriculture. Many lead their lives barely at subsistence level. Solely in terms of numbers of people, there is a very strong case for giving high priority to rural development.

Agriculture is a vital part of the economy of any country and that its development is critical to the development of the country's economy as a whole. Agriculture's important role is one of production, both of food for the rural and the urban population and of cash crops for the export market, to earn foreign currency. In this process demand is stimulated for other products and services, and employment opportunities emerge to absorb the society's work-force. As the cycle develops, the increasing agricultural production causes an increasing demand for inputs, which ensure the resources required to maintain the agricultural production. Land is a basic resource for most countries and the exploitation of that resource in the interest of its citizens is one of a country's main responsibilities.

The Concept of Development- All rural extension work takes place within a process of development, and cannot be considered as an isolated activity. Extension programs and projects and extension agents are part of the development of rural societies. It is, therefore, important to understand the term development, and to see how its interpretation can affect the course of rural extension work. The term development does not refer to one single phenomenon or activity nor does it mean a general process of social change. All societies, rural and urban, are changing all the time. This

change affects, for example, the society's norms and values, its institutions, its methods of production, the attitudes of its people and the way in which it distributes its resources. A rural society's people, customs and practices are never static but are continually evolving into new and different forms. There are different theories which seek to explain this process of social change and examples of each explanation can be found in different parts of the world.

Development is more closely associated with some form of action or intervention to influence the entire process of social change. Development involves the introduction of new ideas into a social system in order to produce higher per caput incomes and levels of living through modern production methods and improved social organization. Development implies a total transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into types of technology and associated social organization that characterize the advanced stable nations of the Western world. Development is building up the people so that they can build a future for themselves. Development is an experience of freedom in deciding what people choose to do. To decide to do something brings dignity and self-respect. Development efforts therefore start with the people's potential and proceed to their enhancement and growth.

Agricultural Production- This concern to improve a country's agricultural base, and thus the livelihood of the majority of its inhabitants, is usually expressed in terms of programs and projects of rural development. However, while agriculture is rightly the most important objective in the development of rural areas, rural development should also embrace the non-agricultural aspects of rural life. Rural development is a process integrated with economic and social objectives, which must seek to transform rural society and provide a better and more secure livelihood for rural people. Rural development, therefore, is a process of analysis, problem identification and the proposal of relevant solutions. This process is usually encompassed within a program or a project which seeks to tackle the problem identified. Indeed, if the kinds of problems which rural development programs confront are considered in very broad terms, they may perhaps be divided into two.

Physical- These are problems which relate to the physical environment of a particular rural area, e.g., lack of water, poor infrastructure, lack of health facilities, or soil erosion. Rural development programs can study the nature and extent of the problem and propose a course of action.

Non-physical- Not all the problems which farmers face are physical in nature. Some problems are more related to the social and political conditions of the region in which the farmers live, e.g. limited access to land, no contact with government services, or dependence upon a bigger farmer. These problems are also very real even though they exist below the surface.

It should be emphasized that the problems a farmer faces are complex and not all of them are physical or tangible. With this in mind, the

kinds of strategies which rural development programs can adopt can be considered. There are three broad rural development strategies to be considered.

Technological- Here, the emphasis is upon technological transformation of different aspects of the rural society, e.g., improved cropping practice or better water supply, by the provision of the inputs and skills required to bring about the transformation.

Reformist- In this strategy, importance is also attached to technological change, but with a corresponding effort to provide the means by which the farmer can play a bigger part in rural development, for example, through organizational development, or participation in rural development programs.

Structural- This strategy seeks to transform the economic, social and political relationships which exist in rural areas in such a way that those who were previously disadvantaged by such relationships find their position improved. Often this strategy is carried out by means of an agrarian reform program.

Principles of Rural Development Programs- Rural development strategies usually take the form of programs which implement projects in a specific rural area. Such programs form the basis of most government and non-government efforts to assist rural areas, and they include both agricultural and non-agricultural projects, e.g., maternal and child health programs. Specialized staff supply the expertise required, and ministerial or other institutional budgets provide the necessary financial resources.

Social and Cultural Barriers To Agricultural Change- Although cultures and social structures are always changing, the process is often slow. In the short term, there will be features of society and culture that may act as barriers to change in agriculture. It is important that the extension agent be aware of the existence of such barriers and to take them into account in his work.

Respect for Tradition- Many rural societies look upon new methods with indifference and sometimes with suspicion. Respect for elders often results in the attitude that the old ways are best. Farmers not only fear the unknown and untried but they also fear criticism for doing something different from other farmers. In such situations, the motives of extension agents and others seeking to promote change can often be misunderstood.

Belief in One's Own Culture- Members of all societies believe that their way of life is best. "These new methods of farming may be all right for some people but they are no good for us." This attitude results in reluctance to try something new. "How can it be better than our way?" and "We know what is best for us" are reactions that extension agents may meet in opposition to suggestions for change.

Pride and dignity- Farmers may be too proud to practice ways of farming that could result in other farmers looking down on them. For example, they

might be too proud to carry cattle manure to the fields. Many young people leaving school look down on farming, even though some successful farmers earn more than most government employees and school teachers.

Relative Values- Farmers may value taste, appearance or some other factor more than the level of output. They may also value their leisure time so highly that they are not prepared to work longer hours on their farms. Certain improved varieties of maize have been rejected by small-scale farmers in several countries because of their poor flavor, even though they have shown a much better yield than local maize. Farmers and their families have to eat what they produce as well as sell some of it, so taste and cooking quality are very important.

Responsibilities and Social Obligations- Individuals within a society or a kinship group have responsibilities which they are expected to carry out. People who avoid such responsibilities anger other members of the society. The more money a farmer earns the more help kinsmen will expect. This can be a very serious barrier to change if the individual sees little advantage in improving his or her position because there is not much personal benefit from the improvement. However, this may be overcome by concealing wealth, by distributing cattle among friends, or by burying or banking money so that relatives can be told that no money is available to help them. This may result, in a farmer being reluctant to carry out visible farm improvements such as fencing, buying farm implements and other things which might suggest to kinsmen that the farmer is wealthier than they think.

Traditional Ceremonies- Ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and religious festivals can take up so much time that the farmer may be unable to work to the maximum efficiency. The farmer is, therefore, unlikely to adopt new methods, which, while they might increase income, would mean that more time had to be devoted to working the farm and less to ceremonial and social obligations.

Conclusion- It can be concluded that **Agriculture development** should be such that Agriculture development brings about a revolution in the agriculture industry to give birth to an agriculture which is profit giving and at the same time ecofriendly. The process of development should contain three main elements.

Economic- The development of the economic or productive base of any society, which will produce the goods and materials required for life.

Social- The provision of a range of social amenities and services which care for the non-productive needs of a society.

Human- The development of the people themselves, both individually and communally, to realize their full potential, to use their skills and talents, and to play a constructive part in shaping their own society.

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Self-efficacy and Coping in the Indian Population

•Meenakshi Bajpai

Abstract- *The present study was conducted to study various levels of self efficacy and coping strategies undertaken by Indians during the COVID-19 pandemic. A sample population belonging to age groups 20-29 years, i.e., early adulthood, and 50-59 years, i.e., late adulthood, were selected for the data collection and further, a comparative study was carried out among the following age groups on the basis of self efficacy and coping scores. 108 participants involving 54 in both the age groups were taken as samples. Self efficacy and coping strategies were measured with the help of 'Self Efficacy scale' by Mathur and Bhatnagar (2005) and the 'Coping Strategies scale' by A.K. Srivastava (2001). Statistical data analysis found weak positive correlations of self efficacy with approach coping strategies (behavioral ($r=0.256$), cognitive ($r=0.213$) and cognitive behavioral ($r=0.155$)) and very weak positive correlation of self efficacy with avoidance coping techniques (behavioral ($r=0.036$) and cognitive ($r=0.095$)). Further, t test showed significant difference in scores of the two groups, i.e., 20-29 years and 50-59 years, in terms of self efficacy ($t=2.055$) and cognitive approach coping ($t=2.685$) with the former group scoring higher than the latter. In avoidance coping domains (behavioral (1.325) and cognitive (0.864)), the age group of late adulthood scored higher than the early adulthood age. It was found that the age group of 20-29 years has a high self efficacy level along with a higher inclination to indulge in approach coping strategies whereas the age group of 50-59 years possesses a low self efficacy level with an inclination towards avoidance coping strategies.*

Keywords- *Self efficacy, Coping, COVID-19, pandemic, Coronavirus.*

'Stress' is not an unheard word. It is said, heard, read and written numerous times by an individual in their lifetime. Whether be physical, environmental, familial, academic, or occupational, stress has ingrown roots in an individual's daily routine. From a layman's perspective, any stimulus that poses to be a physically or psychologically challenging event or circumstance in one's life is regarded as stress.

Lazarus & Folkman (1984) and define 'stress' as the circumstance in which transactions lead a person to perceive a discrepancy between the physical or psychological 'demands' of a situation and the 'resources' of their biological, psychological, or social systems. According to Lazarus (1999), in order to deem a circumstance stressful, people assess two factors, i.e.,

whether a demand threatens their physical or psychological wellbeing and the resources available for meeting the demand, overall known as 'cognitive appraisal'. In 1986, 'Self Efficacy' was stated as 'people's judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances' (Bandura, 1986).

'Coping', on the other hand, is defined as the thoughts and behaviours used to manage the internal and external demands of situations that are appraised as stressful (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Taylor & Stanton, 2007). It is a series of transactions between a person who has a set of resources, values, and commitments and a particular environment with its own resources, demands, and constraints (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

Approach and Avoidance coping- Early work defined coping as involving approach or avoidance coping strategies (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Approach coping, also known as confrontative coping, is defined as actively moving towards a stressor in order to seek information, social support, plan ahead, and attempt to solve the problems (Finest et al., 2002). Approach-related coping is more successful than avoidant coping, and it is tied to better mental and physical health outcomes (Taylor & Stanton, 2007).

Avoidance coping, also known as minimizing coping, has been defined as a passive coping strategy in which an individual disengages from a stressor or as an active coping strategy in which an individual turns away from or seeks to escape from a stressor (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). People who cope by minimizing or avoiding threatening events may deal effectively with short-term threats. However, for a long-term stressor, avoidance coping isn't successful.

Problem-focused and Emotion-focused coping- Problem-focused coping involves constructive attempts to tackle stressful conditions that are harming, threatening, or challenging an individual. It is aimed at reducing the demands of a stressful situation or expanding the resource pool to deal with it.

Emotion-focused coping involves efforts to regulate emotions experienced due to the aforementioned stressful situations. It is aimed at managing the emotional response to stressful situations by regulating emotional responses through behavioural and cognitive approaches.

According to A.K. Srivastava's Coping Strategies scale, the main features surround the topics of problem focused and emotion focused coping in the form of active/approach coping and avoidance coping, respectively. Srivastava (2001) based the scale on five categories on the basis of combinations of 'operation' and 'orientation' of the coping behavior of an individual.

Behavioural approach coping- It constitutes confronting the given situation, planning a course of action, taking impulsive decisions, suppressing competing activities, seeking social/instrumental support, self-control and negotiations.

Cognitive approach coping- It constitutes intellectualization,

positive reinterpretation, cognitive reappraisal of the situation and seeking social support. It includes 'planning' a solution.

Cognitive- Behavioural approach coping- This approach consists of planning as well as executing in order to combat a given stressful event.

Behavioural avoidance coping- It constitutes restraint coping, inhibition of action, focus on emotional stabilization by turning to one's faith, escaping the presence of an existing stressful situation, behavioural disengagement, acceptance, withdrawal or helplessness.

Cognitive avoidance coping- It constitutes ego defense mechanisms like rationalization and denial, cognitive restructuring and resignation.

Pareek (1983) suggested that approach coping is 'functional' coping and avoidance can be characterized as a 'dysfunctional' coping mechanism. On the same lines, Latack (1986) further called approach coping as having 'control' and avoidance coping as 'escape'.

Anand and colleagues (2021) confirmed the prevalence of high distress experienced by Indians at the time of COVID-19. The presence of social support, health insurance coverage, trust in government, perception of less seriousness and lack of pre-existing illnesses led to reduction of this distress (Anand et al., 2021). With regard to mental health already being a stigmatized matter in our country, these issues can stay hidden and lead to unexplained behaviour. As stated by Anand and colleagues (2021), these 'silent' and insidious issues can go unnoticed (Anand et al., 2021). The pandemic has exasperated mental health issues (Asmundson and colleagues, 2020) and suicidal tendencies (Sher, 2020).

Freire and colleagues (2020) aimed to examine the possible influence of coping strategies on the expectations of self efficacy in a population that is particularly vulnerable to stress. These results indicated that 'flexibility in coping enhances university students' perception of control over their day-to-day challenges, making them feel better able to handle them. (Freire et al., 2020). Morales- Rodríguez and Pérez-Mármol (2019) found a direct correlation between self efficacy and the coping strategies of problem-solving, emotional expression, cognitive restructuring, social withdrawal, and coping of situation (Morales- Rodríguez and Pérez-Mármol, 2019).

Self-efficacy's relationship with coping also differs on the basis of the coping style. According to the results obtained from the research carried out by Mete (2021), it was found that the positive coping and projective coping strategy predicted self efficacy positively, and the non-coping strategy predicted self-efficacy negatively (Mete, 2021). These assertions were similarly also confirmed by Taiwo (2015) and Devonport and Lane (2003). With respect to self efficacy and coping abilities influencing one's mental health, Parto and Besharat (2011) revealed that self-efficacy and problem solving were the powerful direct predictors of the same.

Rationale- A situation of pandemic is an uncontrollable and uncertain crisis. Coronavirus has not just instigated fear in individuals but also has trapped them in a physical as well as mental lockdown, halting regular lives and routines. With such a shift in lifestyles and routines, it may come as no surprise that a psychological whiplash would follow. The results of a survey carried out by the Indian Psychiatry Society recorded a 20 per cent rise in the incidence and cases of mental illness since the outbreak. They further confirm an undercurrent of anxiety and dread pervading through society.

Emile Durkheim proposed the 'Anomie in times of crisis in his doctoral thesis titled, 'The Division of Labour in Society, stating, "the division of labour unites at the same time as it sets at odds; it causes the activities that it differentiates to converge; it brings close those that which it separates" (Durkheim, 1984), explaining that moral and social isolation was the new 'law' at the time of pandemic governed social distancing. This was responsible for many people feeling an inherent sense of purpose, if not for society, but for themselves.

Negative feelings of hopelessness and dread that previously prevailed are replaced with those of altruism and volunteerism. Individuals redefine their goals and plan around protecting and working for their loved ones, families and communities. Health workers, for instance, working in this pandemic situation, while inescapably swamped and on edge, may also experience a deep sense of fulfilment, as they come to be appreciated now, in ways they never were before.

Research problem- The following study was conducted to study the levels of self efficacy and coping strategies undertaken by Indians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objectives-

1. To understand the influence of perceived self efficacy on coping strategies undertaken by the Indian population.
2. To measure the perceived self-efficacy of the age groups of 20-29 years and 50-59 years.
3. To understand the difference between coping strategies undertaken by the age groups of 20-29 years and 50-59 years.

Hypotheses-

1. There will be a positive correlation between 'self-efficacy' and 'behavioural approach coping' scores.
2. There will be a positive correlation between 'self efficacy' and 'cognitive approach coping' scores.
3. There will be a positive correlation between 'self-efficacy' and 'cognitive behavioural approach coping' scores.
4. There will be a negative correlation between 'self-efficacy' and 'behavioural avoidance coping' scores.
5. There will be a negative correlation between 'self efficacy' and 'cognitive avoidance coping' scores.

6. Self Efficacy' scores for the age group of 20-29 years will be significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years.
7. Behavioural approach coping' scores for the age group of 20-29 years will be significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years.
8. Cognitive approach coping' scores for the age group of 20-29 years will be significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years.
9. Cognitive behavioural approach coping' scores for the age group of 20-29 years will be significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years.
10. Behavioural avoidance coping' scores for the age group of 50-59 years will be significantly higher than the age group of 20-29 years.
11. Cognitive avoidance coping' scores for the age group of 50-59 years will be significantly higher than the age group of 20-29 years.

Sample- A total of 108 participants involving 54 belonging to the early adulthood (20-29 years) age group and 54 belonging to the late adulthood (50-59 years) age group participated in the given study. Sampling was done through the 'non-probability quota sampling' and 'convenience sampling' technique. Samples were selected from a population of Indians who were born and brought up in India.

Measures-

Self-Efficacy Scale- The self-efficacy scale by Dr. G.P. Mathur and Dr. Raj Kumari Bhatnagar was published in 2005. It contains 22 items to be rated on a five-point Likert scale related to personal attitudes on statements related to one's beliefs about oneself. It intends to assess the level of self efficacy in any age group above 14 years. It is appropriate for Indian social conditions with a reliability coefficient of 0.73 to 0.81 in males and 0.79 to 0.86 in females. The validity of the scale was found to be 0.73 to 0.81 in males and 0.76 to 0.83 in females.

Coping Strategies Scale- The coping strategies scale was given by A.K. Srivastava in 2001. It comprises 50 items to be rated on a five-point Likert scale. The categories included behavioural approach, cognitive approach, cognitive behavioural approach, behavioural avoidance and cognitive approach. The test-retest reliability coefficient for the scale is 0.92. The content validity for approach coping strategies has a median of 0.39, ranging from 0.18 to 0.53 and for avoidance approaches, a median of 0.34, ranging from 0.16 to 0.48.

Research Design- In order to assess self efficacy and coping patterns, a 'quantitative cross-sectional study was designed. The data pertaining to the same was collected with the help of 'self report questionnaire method'. The aforementioned two scales were added to an online Google form and were circulated to be filled by potential participants. Instructions and criteria were

stated on the first page of the said Google form and informed consent was taken through the same. Further, a 'comparative study' was designed on the basis of differentiation of characteristics between age groups of 20 to 29 years and 50 to 59 years.

Results- The results for the current study were based on the data collected from the sample that was distributed in a way that out of the total 108 participants, 54 individuals belonged to each age group being studied, i.e., early adulthood (20-29 years) and late adulthood (50-59 years).

Table 1
Table demonstrating
the sample distribution

Age groups/ Sex	Males	Females	Total
20-29 years	27	27	54
50-59 years	27	27	54

For the age group of 20-29 years, the following data was found according to the Self efficacy scale by Mathur and Bhatnagar,

Table 2
Table showing self-efficacy
levels obtained by the age group of 20-29 years

Level of self efficacy	Grade	Number of participants
Excellent	A	0
High	B	2
Above Average	C	10
Average	D	28
Below Average	E	11
Low	F	3
Very Poor	G	0

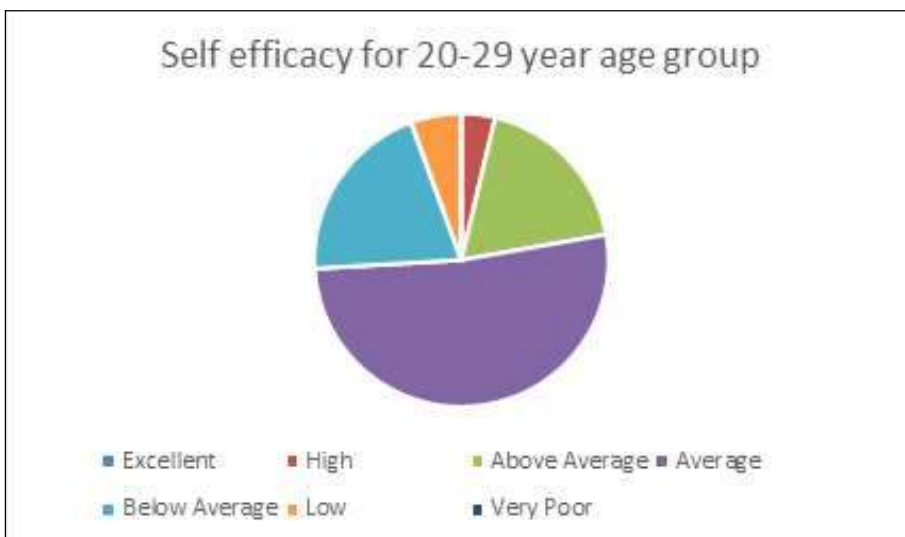


Figure 4- Chart showing self-efficacy levels obtained by the age group of 20-29 years.

For the age group of 50-59 years, the following data was found according to the Self efficacy scale by Mathur and Bhatnagar,

Table 3
Table showing self-efficacy levels obtained by the age group of 50-59 years

Level of self efficacy	Grade	Number of participants
Excellent	A	0
High	B	1
Above Average	C	7
Average	D	23
Below Average	E	12
Low	F	9
Very Poor	G	2

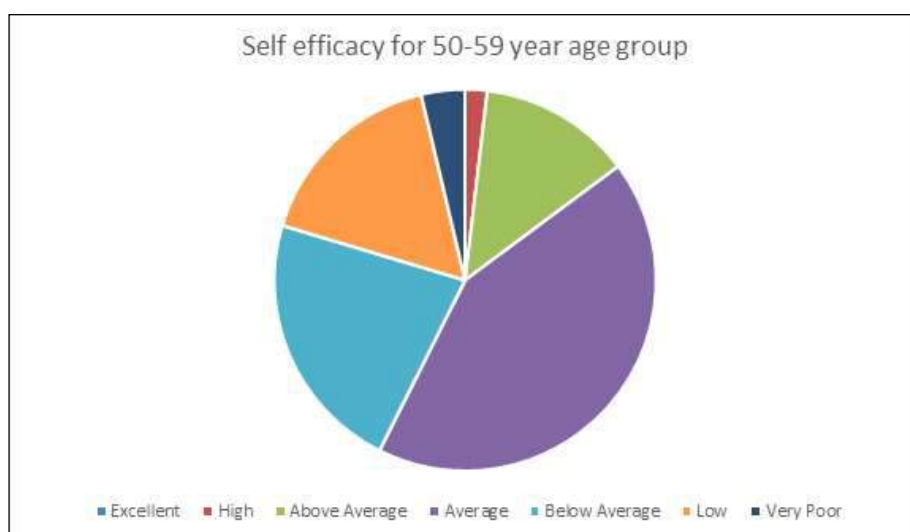


Figure- 5 Chart showing self-efficacy levels obtained by the age group of 50-59 years.

According to the following results, a majority of both the age groups, i.e., 20-29 years (52%) as well as 50-59 years (43%), falls under 'average' self efficacy scores. It is worth noting though, that 4% (2) of the participants from the age group of 50-59 years fall under 'very poor' self efficacy scores. Such extreme results have not been found in case of the other group, i.e. 20-29 years of age.

In the age group of 20-29 years, 26% (14) of participants were found to be scoring below 'average' level, i.e., under 'below average', 'low' and 'poor' categories. On the other hand, in the age group of 50-59 years, 41% (23) of participants fell under the abovementioned levels. Hence, the results show a greater number of participants belonging to the 50–59-year-old age group scoring low on the self efficacy scale.

As a result, 23% (12) of participants from the age group of 20-29 years fall under the levels above 'average', i.e., 'above average', 'high' and 'excellent'. On the other hand, 15% (8) of the participants from the age group of 50-59 years fall under the abovementioned levels. Hence, the results show

a greater number of participants belonging to the 20–29-year-old age group scoring high on the self-efficacy scale.

For the age group of 20-29 years, the following data was found according to the Coping strategies scale by A.K. Srivastava.

Table 4
Table showing the coping strategies preferred by the age group of 20-29 years

Subscales	High	Moderate	Low
Behavioural approach coping	4	42	8
Cognitive approach coping	10	39	5
Cognitive Behavioural approach coping	14	36	4
Behavioural avoidance coping	1	21	32
Cognitive avoidance coping	3	16	35

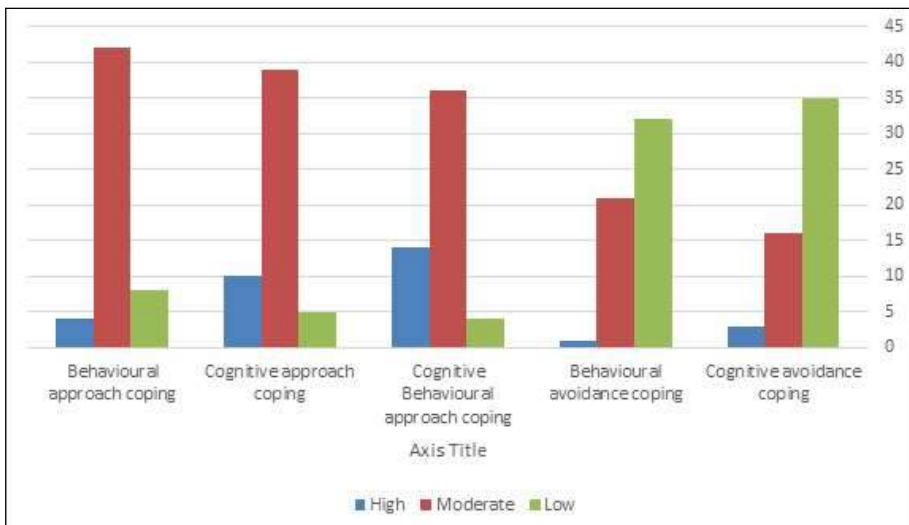


Figure- 6 Chart showing the coping strategies preferred by the age group of 20-29 years.

For the age group of 50-59 years, the following data was found according to the Coping strategies scale by A.K. Srivastava.

Table 5
Table showing the coping strategies preferred by the age group of 50-59 years

Subscales	High	Moderate	Low
Behavioural approach coping	3	35	16
Cognitive approach coping	8	32	14
Cognitive Behavioural approach coping	16	29	9
Behavioural avoidance coping	1	24	29
Cognitive avoidance coping	3	22	29

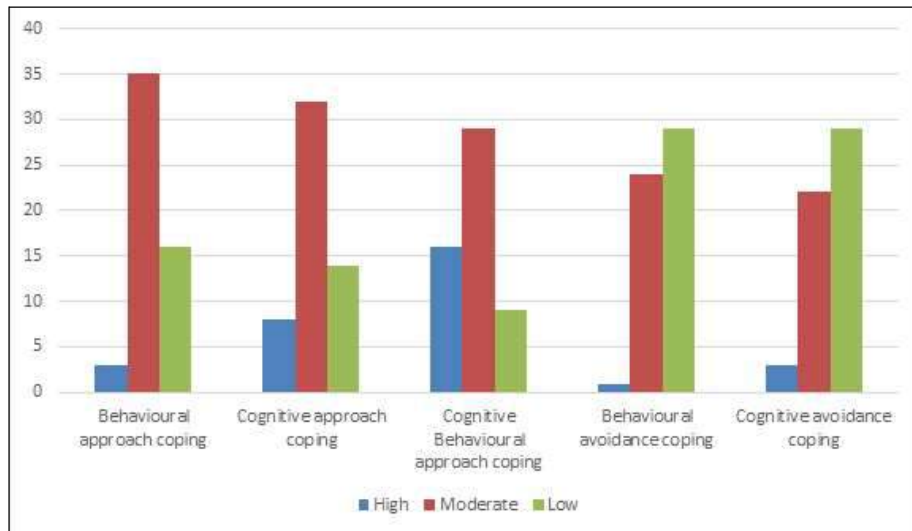


Figure- 7 Chart showing the coping strategies preferred by the age group of 50-59 years.

According to the abovementioned results, a majority of participants fall under the 'moderate' score category of using the five subscales of the coping strategies scale by Srivastava (2001). The difference lies in the variations of behavioural approach coping, cognitive approach coping and both avoidance strategies. In the subscale of behavioural approach coping, a greater number of participants belonging to 50-59 years of age, i.e. 16, fall under the 'low' score category as compared to the participants belonging to the younger age group, i.e., 8.

Similarly, for the subscale of cognitive approach coping as well, a greater number of participants belonging to 50-59 years of, i.e., 14, fall under the 'low' score category as compared to the younger group, i.e., 5. Hence, this shows that the older age group, i.e., 50-59 years of age, has a 'low' level of behavioural as well as cognitive approach coping tendencies and the younger age group, i.e., 20-29 years of age, is more inclined towards approach coping.

In line with the same, in the case of the behavioural avoidance subscale, a greater number of participants belonging to the 20-29 years of age group fall under the 'low' score category, i.e., 32 as compared to the older age group, i.e., 29. Similarly, for the subscale of cognitive avoidance coping, a greater number of participants belonging to the 20-29 years of age group, i.e., 35, fall under the 'low' score category as compared to the older group, i.e., 29. Even though this difference isn't significant, it validates the above stated assumption that the older age group is more inclined towards avoidance/ emotion focused coping strategies as compared to the younger group, which is more inclined towards approach/ problem focused coping strategies.

Table 6
Table showing the correlation coefficients of variables
Factors Correlation coefficient Interpretation

Factors	Correlation coefficient	Interpretation
Self efficacy and Behavioural approach coping	0.256*	Weak positive correlation
Self efficacy and Cognitive approach coping	0.213*	Weak positive correlation
Self efficacy and Cognitive Behavioural approach coping	0.155*	Weak positive correlation
Self efficacy and Behavioural avoidance coping	0.036*	Very weak positive correlation
Self efficacy and Cognitive avoidance coping	0.095*	Very weak positive correlation

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Referring to the Table 6, there exists a positive correlation between all the above factors. The difference lies in the intensity of the correlation, i.e., self-efficacy and behavioural approach coping ($r=0.256$), self efficacy and cognitive approach coping ($r=0.213$), as well as self-efficacy and cognitive behavioural approach coping ($r=0.155$) were found to have a weak positive correlation. Both the avoidance coping strategies, i.e., behavioral ($r=0.036$) and cognitive ($r=0.095$) were found to have a very weak positive correlation. This shows that self efficacy and its constituent subscales (self-regulatory skills, self-influence, self-confidence, social achievement, self, self evaluation, self esteem, and self cognition) are more positively correlated with approach/active coping strategies than avoidance coping strategies.

Table 7
Table showing t-Test scores of variables

Factors	Mean of scores for 20 -29 age group	Mean of scores for 50 -59 age group	t obtained	p value
Self efficacy	71.203	68.314	2.055	0.021
Behavioural approach coping	36.037	33.833	1.618	0.054
Cognitive approach coping	15.925	14.092	2.685	0.004
Cognitive-Behavioural approach coping	21.277	20.462	0.822	0.206
Behavioural avoidance coping	24.666	26.759	1.325	0.093
Cognitive avoidance coping	12.574	13.425	0.864	0.194

$t(106) = 1.659$ $p = 0.05$

t test analysis via SPSS showed a significant difference in scores of the two groups, i.e., 20-29 years and 50-59 years, in terms of self efficacy ($t=2.055$) and cognitive approach coping ($t=2.685$) with the former group scoring higher than the latter. In the case of cognitive behavioural approach coping, there was no significant difference ($t=0.822$) between the two age groups. Additionally, in avoidance coping domains, i.e., behavioural ($t=-1.325$) and cognitive ($t=-0.864$), the age group of 50-59 years scored higher than the 20-29 years group. Hypothesis I, i.e., there exists a positive

correlation between 'self-efficacy' and 'behavioural approach coping' scores, stands **retained** since there exists a 'weak positive correlation' with the correlation coefficient of '0.256'.

Hypothesis II, i.e. there exists a positive correlation between 'self efficacy' and 'cognitive approach coping' scores, stands **retained** since there exists a 'weak positive correlation' with the correlation coefficient of '0.213'.

Hypothesis III, i.e., there exists a positive correlation between 'self efficacy' and 'cognitive behavioural approach coping' scores, stands **retained** since there exists a 'weak positive correlation' with the correlation coefficient of '0.155'.

Hypothesis IV, i.e., there exists a negative correlation between 'self efficacy' and 'behavioural avoidance coping' scores, stands **rejected** since there exists a 'very weak positive correlation' with the correlation coefficient of '0.036'.

Hypothesis V, i.e., there exists a negative correlation between 'self efficacy' and 'cognitive avoidance coping' scores, stands **rejected** since there exists a 'very weak positive correlation' with the correlation coefficient of '0.095'.

Hypothesis VI, i.e., self efficacy' scores for the age group of 20-29 years are significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years, stands **retained** with a mean of '71.203' for 20-29 years of age and a mean of '68.314' for 50-59 years of age. Since the t obtained '2.055' is greater than the critical value of '1.659', there exists a significant difference between the two variable groups.

Hypothesis VII, i.e., 'behavioural approach coping' scores for the age group of 20-29 years are significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years, stands **rejected** since even though the mean of '36.037' for 20-29 years of age is greater than the mean of '33.833' for 50-59 years of age, the t score '1.618' is lesser than the critical value of '1.659', showing that there is no significant difference between the two variable groups.

Hypothesis VIII, i.e., 'cognitive approach coping' scores for the age group of 20-29 years are significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years, stands **retained** with a mean of '15.925' for 20-29 years of age and a mean of '14.092' for 50-59 years of age. Since the t obtained '2.685' is greater than the critical value of '1.659', there exists a significant difference between the two variable groups.

Hypothesis IX, i.e., 'cognitive behavioural approach coping' scores for the age group of 20-29 years are significantly higher than the age group of 50-59 years, stands **rejected** since even though the mean of '21.277' for 20-29 years of age is greater than the mean of '20.462' for 50-59 years of age, the t score '0.822' is lesser than the critical value of '1.659', showing that there is no significant difference between the two variable groups.

Hypothesis X, i.e., 'behavioural avoidance coping' scores for the age group of 50-59 years is significantly higher than the age group of 20-29 years, stands **rejected** even though the mean of '26.759' for 50-59 years of age was greater than the mean of '24.666' for 20-29 years of age, the t score

'1.325' is lesser than the critical value of '1.659', showing that there is no significant difference between the two variable groups.

Hypothesis XI, i.e., 'cognitive avoidance coping' scores for the age group of 50-59 years are significantly higher than the age group of 20-29 years, stands **rejected** even though the mean of '13.425' for 50-59 years of age was greater than the mean of '12.574' for 20-29 years of age, the t score '0.864' is lesser than the critical value of '1.659', showing that there is no significant difference between the two variable groups.

Discussion- The following study was conducted to study the levels of self efficacy and coping strategies of Indians with the objectives to understand the influence of perceived self efficacy on coping strategies undertaken by the Indian population, to measure the perceived self efficacy of the age groups of 20-29 years and 50-59 years and to understand the difference between coping strategies undertaken by the age groups of 20-29 years and 50-59 years.

In the Self Efficacy scale, more participants from the age group of 50-59 years were found to score lower than 'average' scores than participants of 20-29 years of age group. In line with the same, more participants from the younger age group scored above 'average'. This trend of lowering of self efficacy with increasing age was also found by Ogihara and Kusumi (2020), who stated that the average level of self-esteem, which is a component of self efficacy, was low in adolescence but continued to become higher from adulthood to old age. However, a drop in self-esteem was not found over the age of 50, which was inconsistent with prior research in European American cultures. (Ogihara & Kusumi, 2020). The following study also highlighted that this trend differed across cultures, but since this study is based in Japan, i.e., a collectivistic Asian culture, it is very plausible for the Indian population to show similar patterns. Further, in the studies of self-esteem, Orth and colleagues (2010) found that Self-esteem was lowest among young adults but increased throughout adulthood, peaking at age 60 before it started to decline (Orth et al., 2010). Although this goes against the current findings of lowering in the 50s, the cultural change across this American study and our Indian study can be the cause for the same. Nevertheless, this trend of lowering self efficacy and its components after a certain age does exist.

The age group of 20-29 years was found to be inclining more on the approach/ active/ problem focused strategies, whereas the age group of 50-59 years was seen to be inclining more towards avoidance/ emotion focused coping strategies. Approach coping constitutes planning and executing a resolution but can also involve impulsivity in action taking. Such impulsiveness might not be prevalent in the older population due to their heightened concept of wisdom. Emotion focused coping, according to Srivastava (2001), also lies majorly on one's faith and religion, whereas Mayordomo- Rodrigues and colleagues (2015) have shown how religion, as a coping strategy, did not end up in the final model when studying coping strategies and predictors of well being in youth adults. They further found

that problem focused coping strategies positively predicted a significant portion of the variance in well being of youth adults, while emotion focused coping negatively predicted wellbeing (Mayordomo-Rodríguez et al., 2015).

Self-efficacy and approach coping strategies, whether behavioural ($r=0.256$), cognitive ($r=0.213$) or cognitive behavioural ($r=0.155$), all were found to have weak positive correlations. This shows how a high perception of self efficacy can lead to the feeling of 'I can accomplish this task' and further lead to indulging in approach coping strategies. Taiwo (2015) had similar findings in his study where he stated that problem-focused coping (active/approach coping) was the main coping strategy in the literature that had a positive correlation with both self-efficacy and performance (Taiwo,2015). Further, he stated that high self efficacy had been associated with active coping (problem-solving, information seeking) and low self efficacy with passive coping (avoidance, distraction), which was also supported by Carver et al. (1989) and Shen (2009). This assertion explains the current findings accurately since the age group of 20-29 years has shown a high self efficacy level along with a higher inclination to indulge in approach coping strategies, whereas the age group of 50-59 years has shown a low self efficacy level with an inclination towards avoidance coping strategies. Taking the results obtained from the research carried out by Mete (2021) into consideration, it was found that the positive coping and projective coping strategy predicted self efficacy positively, and the non-coping strategy (avoidance coping) predicted self efficacy negatively (Mete, 2021) which supports the findings.

A significant difference was found in the scores of self efficacy ($t=2.055$) and cognitive approach copings (2.685) with respect to the age groups of 20-29 years and 50-59 years. As established before, the younger population had significantly higher levels of self efficacy as compared to the older population. Similar trends were found in cognitive approach coping scores. Participants from the younger age group were found to have higher preferences for cognitive approach coping, i.e., planning a solution towards resolution of the problem. A t score (negative) was found in the avoidance coping subscales, i.e., behavioural ($t=1.325$) and cognitive ($t=-0.864$), showing that the older age group had a higher inclination towards avoidance strategies as compared to the younger one. Though not significant, it did show a pattern of avoidance strategies being more of a tendency for the age group of 50-59 years.

In this continuing pandemic, it has been an observation that most young adults deal with loss and grief by being outspoken or active about it, for instance, sharing poems of tribute on social media or calling friends and talking. Older adults, on the other hand, were observed to be more or less silent about their grief. Although grief and coping are a subjective, there are social and age-related trends to it.

Conclusion- It was found that the age group of 20-29 years (early adulthood) has a high self efficacy level along with a higher inclination to

indulge in approach coping strategies whereas the age group of 50-59 (late adulthood) possesses a low self efficacy level with an inclination towards avoidance coping strategies. Further, self efficacy is found to be a positive predictor of approach coping strategies and correspondingly, a negative predictor of avoidance coping strategies.

Future Implications- The following study catered to the factors of self efficacy, coping strategies and their subscales in the questionnaires. The subscales of the Self Efficacy scale (self-regulatory skills, self-influence, self-confidence, social achievement, self, self-evaluation, self-esteem, and self-cognition), however, were not tapped on, in detail, in this study. This can be done in the future with respect to the collected data. Gender differences can also be studied in addition to the age norms, i.e., the difference between coping characteristics of females and males can be compared. Additionally, self efficacy patterns can also be compared between genders. Other prominent positive psychological attributes like resilience and self-esteem can be studied to give the results more support. Social support can also be studied under the current research problem. Additional age groups like adolescents, middle age or geriatric population can also be studied as comparative research. It would help establish more patterns of coping. More participants can also be added to get more significant findings than the current ones. This would not just increase the generalizability but also lead to more well-grounded results.

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Effect of excessive usage of smart phone on sociability and concentration in College Students: A Comparative analysis

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•• Arvind Kumar

Abstract- *Many studies have been conducted so far to study the effect of excessive phone usage on social and psychological behavior. This does not harm young adults only physically but also mentally. Many problems both physical and mental have been seen in people suffering from phone addiction such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, decrease in eye sight, neck pain, sleep problems. Social problems such as cyberbullying, cybercrime, social media abuse are also seen in these individuals. These problems can lead to the end of a person's life in worst condition. Present study was administered on college students to evaluate the effect of excessive smart phone usage on their sociability and concentration. Interview method was used. Data collected and analyzed statistically. Study recommendation was also given.*

Key words- *Excessive phone usage, Physical problem, Mental problem, sociability, concentration,*

Introduction- Today, if we look around us at any time, many people can be easily found using smart phones, which is causing mental and physical problems in them. Now smartphones are getting smarter, after 2G, 3G, 4G, 5G network smartphones are also in the market, which provide better quality services than 2G, 3G, 4G, due to which more people are getting attracted towards 5G smartphones, hence it is expected that in the coming time the number of smartphone users will increase even more rapidly. In a study conducted on smart phone addiction on college students, researcher concluded that female students were more addicted to smart phone (80%) than male students (Alhafi M et al 2024). Nowadays number of mobile phones is more than human population in the world (World Economic Forum), this report itself discloses the increasing potential risk world is going to face in coming times. The negative effect of mobile phone addiction can be seen on both mental and physical health. According to data from Statista, the global number of smartphone users is expected to continue growing in 2024-29 and reach 1.7 billion by 2029. This emerging problem attracted researcher for extensive study in this field. Phone addiction is represented by the term nomophobia which literally means no mobile phone

phobia. In this phobia, the person constantly fears that the phone will go away or the phone will be disconnected. Nomophobia is a term related to the definitions given under DSM 5 classification.

Due to Corona virus in India during 2019, the usage of phones by the people of India increased. All the people, students, teachers, customers, shopkeepers, employees etc. stayed at home (except health workers) to carry on their duties. New concepts such as online classes for students, work from home for employees were introduced. Online shopping trend increased.

A study was conducted on the impact of smartphone addiction on the health of students in a university in Saudi Arabia by Alkhateeb A, Alboali R, Alharbi W, Saleh O. (2020). This study included age, sex, marital status, physical complexities, sleep pattern as independent variables. In this study, the students were given a questionnaire which had questions based on four parameters: social, phone use pattern, mobile phone addiction scale, impact of smartphone use on medical complications. This study found that women suffer more from phone addiction than men and the participants had problems like muscle pain and stiffness, shoulder pain, neck and back pain, hand and wrist pain, sleeping late, lack of sleep, fatigue.

Another study was conducted on students of the University of Jordan to know the relationship between smartphone addiction and mental health. The researchers of this study are Abuhamdah, S.A., Naser, A.Y (nov, 2023). In this study, they used self-developed questionnaire tools, Kessler's Psychological Distress Scale and Smartphone Addiction Scale. This study found that more than half of the participants were suffering from phone addiction and more than half of the participants reported that smartphone use is having a negative impact on their mental health. More than half of the participants reported that smartphone use is affecting their sleep.

Another similar study was found in which smartphone addiction was studied among Indian adolescents. The researchers of this study are Gangadharan, Navya & Borle, Amod & Basu, Saurav. (April 2022). In this study, an interview schedule was used as a tool. The interview schedule included social characteristics in the biodata. The phone addiction was analyzed using the Addiction Scale of Phone. In this study, it was found that smartphone addiction was more prevalent among adolescents in urban areas, which is a matter of concern for public health.

Another study was found which studied the relationship between mobile phone habit of college students and their academic achievement. The authors of this study are Zhang J, Zeng Y [March 2024]. In this study, the participants were given smartphone habit questionnaire, educational control questionnaire, anxiety questionnaire and asked them to fill it. This study found that there is a negative relationship between academic achievement and mobile phone habit.

Rationale-Smart phone usage is increasing day by day making situation more severe. This is why a need of study is observed.

Purpose- Purpose of this study was to find out the effect of excessive usage of smart phone on sociability and concentration of college students.

Hypotheses- hypotheses formulated in this study were.

1. Excessive usage of phone has negative effect on sociability.
2. Excessive usage of phone has negative effect on concentration.

Methodology and tool administered- A sample of 80 college students was selected for this study. Between group design is adopted. Two groups were formed 1- experimental group for excessive phone users (group-1) and control group for normal phone users of college students (group-2) 40 students were there in each group both male and female. Age of the respondents was 18-22 years. Self-made questionnaire was used 15 questions related to sociability and concentration had been asked from each respondent, these questions were positively and negatively formed. Data was collected. Respondents were asked to reply in 'Yes or No' for each item. Pre-test was done to evaluate the phone usage by collecting some information in bio-data. On the basis of given information students were assigned to experimental and control group.

Statistical Analysis- Descriptive was applied for data analysis. level of significance determined was .05. Collected data was given in table below–

Table-1
Descriptive analysis experimental and controlled group on Sociability

Group Statistics					
	VAR00003	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR0000	Sociability (group-1)	40	6.05	1.648	.261
2	Sociability (group-2)	40	5.30	1.067	.169

Tale-2 't'
test for sociability

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Sociability	Equal variances assumed	8.463	.005	2.416	78	.018	.750	.310	.132	1.368
	Equal variances not assumed			2.416	66.813	.018	.750	.310	.130	1.370

Table-3
Descriptive analysis of experimental and controlled group for Concentration

Group Statistics					
	VAR00006	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR0000	Concentration (group-1)	40	3.35	1.128	.178
5	concentration (group-2)	40	5.40	1.929	.305

Table-5: 't' test for concentration

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				T-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
concentration	Equal variances assumed	11.038	.001	-5.532	78	.000	-1.982	.358	-2.696	-1.269
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.467	61.715	.000	-1.982	.363	-2.707	-1.258

Discussion and conclusion- Pre-test information revealed that in total percentage of male respondents who were using mobile excessively was 70%. Only 30% female respondents were using excessive smart phone. Descriptive analysis for sociability in table-1 shows higher mean (M=6.05) score for students who were in experimental group than mean score (5.30) of control group. This result shows that the students who spent more time on phone are more social. This may be due to spending more time on social networking sites, watching reels of others, playing games on internet with strangers and virtually connecting with others makes them feel more comfortable, this virtual connectivity may further lead to other problems, whereas control group students were busy in their day-to-day life completing their daily chores, so they get less time connecting with others. Van Deursen et. al. (2015) found that students in college use smartphones for comfort, interaction with others, amusement and to reduce their loneliness. Researcher also indicated towards potential risk of this habitual behaviour. Independent sample 't' test shows that mean difference is significant. Therefore, **the Hypothesis that excessive usage of phone has negative effect on sociability is not found true.** College students symbolize smart phone as an instrument to strengthen their social relations (Wei and Lo, 2006). A study by Lin, T. T. C. & Chiang, Y find that improper use of mobile phone usage lowered perceived sociability in people. Descriptive analysis for concentration in table-3 exhibits higher mean score (M=5.40) for group 2 and lower mean score (M=3.35) for group 1. While comparing mean scores of both groups we can see that concentration level of controlled group was found better than experimental groups. Mean difference was found significant in 't' test. Therefore, the Hypothesis **that excessive usage of phone has negative effect on concentration is found true.** The result is in line with the study conducted by Sun, Jing-Ting & Zhang, Min et. al. (2023). They studied the effect of smart phone usage on mindfulness and found that excessive mobile phone usage lowered the concentration level in college students. Frequent notifications, calls and messages divert the attention of students from their study (Tanil CT, Yong MH.,2020) That may negatively affect their concentration.

Pearson correlation was performed to find the association between hrs. of phone usage on both variables i.e. sociability and concentration.

Table 6
Correlation between hrs. of phone usage and sociability

		sociability	hrs
sociability	Pearson Correlation	1	.269*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.016
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	166.200	58.850
	Covariance	2.104	.745
	N	80	80
hrs	Pearson Correlation	.269*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	58.850	287.987
	Covariance	.745	3.645
	N	80	80

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table-7
Correlation between hrs. of phone usage and concentration

		hrs	cocentration
hrs	Pearson Correlation	1	-.406**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	287.987	-109.575
	Covariance	3.645	-1.387
	N	80	80
cocentration	Pearson Correlation	-.406**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-109.575	253.550
	Covariance	-1.387	3.209
	N	80	80

**.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows the correlational analysis between variables. Table-5 shows that hrs. of phone usage and sociability have positive correlation. It signifies that people with more sociability characteristics spend more time on phone (Van Deursen et. al., 2015). Few studies posited that youth now a days use phone to get socially fitted, as it is discussed above there is a need of study to know the effect of phone usage on perceived and virtual sociability. Present study confirms the relationship between phone usage and concentration. It was significant at 0.01 level. Statistical analysis shows a strong negative correlation between these two. It suggests that as the hrs. of phone usage increases concentration level will decrease. As per the above discussion and analysis it can be concluded that **hrs. of phone usage are positively related to sociability but it has a strong negative effect on concentration**. Though the mean difference of both groups for sociability was found significant, further study is needed to establish the relation.

Suggestions- Previous Studies have confirmed the negative effect of excessive phone usage. Present study also explored new dimensions that can create mental and behavioural hazard for students. There is a need to make people aware about its negative effect. Field activities should be increased in order to keep the use of phone restricted for necessary requirements only. The misconception of social connectedness via smart phone may bring many other problems, awareness programme for students should be organized in higher educational institutes.

Limitation- A more detailed research is needed to explore the sociability. This study had taken consideration of sociability characteristics of individuals. To find out the effect of smart phone on perceived and virtual sociability, an extensive study is required.

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Microfinance Towards Rural Development with Women Empowerment

•Abhimanyu Kumar

Abstract- *Microfinance assumes a fundamental part in reinforcing rustic showcasing by offering monetary types of assistance to people and private ventures that need admittance to conventional banking. It enables provincial business people, ranchers, and craftsmans by offering little credits, reserve funds choices, and monetary education programs. This monetary incorporation upgrades provincial financial turn of events, further develops buying power, and lifts neighborhood markets.*

The coordination of microfinance with rustic advertising assists organizations with developing by empowering interests underway, circulation, and advancement. It additionally works with the entrance of labor and products into distant regions, overcoming any barrier between rustic customers and advertisers. Notwithstanding challenges like high functional expenses and credit gambles, microfinance stays a vital driver of supportable rustic turn of events. This paper investigates the effect of microfinance on country advertising, featuring its job in monetary consideration, business, and market development. The discoveries recommend that microfinance is a vital instrument for encouraging financial strengthening and reinforcing country economies.

Keywords- *Microfinance, Rural Development, Women Empowerment*

Introduction- Microfinance assumes an essential part in improving country showcasing by offering monetary types of assistance to people and private companies in rustic regions, especially the people who need admittance to conventional financial frameworks. It empowers low-pay gatherings, particularly ranchers, craftsman, and little business people, to get to credit, investment funds, protection, and other monetary items.

Country advertising alludes to the method involved with advancing and circulating labour and products to rustic buyers, frequently requiring novel techniques because of the unmistakable qualities of provincial business sectors, for example, restricted framework, low buying power, and occasional pay designs. Microfinance upholds rustic showcasing by enabling neighbourhood organizations, expanding customer buying power, and cultivating monetary turn of events.

By offering little credits, monetary education projects, and venture potential open doors, microfinance foundations (MFIs) assist provincial

business people with scaling their organizations, further develop efficiency, and add to by and large financial development. This, thus, fortifies country markets by making a reasonable biological system where the two makers and buyers' benefit. Subsequently, microfinance fills in as an impetus for rustic showcasing by crossing over monetary holes, encouraging business, and advancing comprehensive financial development.

Objectives-

- Monetary Incorporation- To give admittance to monetary administrations like credit, investment funds, and protection to provincial populaces, particularly those underserved by conventional banks.
- Enabling Provincial Business visionaries- To help limited scope ranchers, craftsman's, and rustic organizations by offering microloans and monetary assets to begin and extend their endeavours.
- Upgrading Provincial Market Improvement- To reinforce rustic business sectors by expanding the buying force of purchasers and advancing neighborhood creation and exchange.

Enabling Rustic Business visionaries through Microfinance- Enabling rustic business visionaries includes giving monetary, instructive, and infrastructural backing to people in country regions to assist them with beginning, support, and develop their organizations. Microfinance assumes a vital part in this strengthening by offering little credits, monetary education projects, and admittance to business sectors.

Ways Microfinance Enables Rustic Business visionaries-

- Admittance to Capital- Gives little, reasonable credits to business people who need insurance or a record as a consumer, empowering them to begin or grow their organizations.
- Ability Improvement and Preparing- Offers monetary proficiency, business the executives, and expertise building projects to upgrade enterprising capacities.
- Empowering Ladies Business venture- Supports ladies drove organizations by offering designated credit plans and self-improvement gatherings (SHGs), cultivating monetary freedom.
- Upgrading Business Maintainability- Gives working capital and speculation assets to guarantee organizations can scale and endure market variances.
- Further developing Business sector Linkages- Interfaces country business visionaries to nearby and worldwide business sectors, empowering better deals and higher benefits.
- Decreasing Reliance on Go between- Assists business visionaries with advertising their items straightforwardly, guaranteeing fair evaluating and higher pay.
- Empowering Advancement and Expansion- Supports business enhancement into areas like crafted works, agro-handling, and rustic the travel industry, prompting financial flexibility.

Effect of Pioneering Strengthening on Rustic Promoting-

- Reinforces Provincial Economies- Sets out work open doors, helps pay levels, and adds to neighbourhood financial development.
- Improves Shopper Spending- Expanded profit lead to higher buying power, animating rustic business sectors.
- Empowers Manageable Turn of events- Advances eco-accommodating and socially mindful strategic policies.
- Helps Independence- Decreases reliance on farming as the sole kind of revenue, guaranteeing monetary solidness.

By engaging country business people, microfinance encourages monetary independence, fortifies neighbourhood supply chains, and upgrades the general improvement of provincial business sectors.

Improving Rustic Market Improvement through Microfinance- Rustic market advancement alludes to the development and extension of monetary exercises in provincial regions, empowering better admittance to products, administrations, and monetary open doors. Microfinance assumes a crucial part in reinforcing rustic business sectors by giving capital, cultivating business venture, and working on monetary openness for provincial buyers and organizations.

How Microfinance Improves Rustic Market Advancement-

- Expands Purchaser Buying Power- By giving microloans and monetary administrations, microfinance assists country shoppers with bearing the cost of fundamental labour and products, supporting interest in provincial business sectors.
- Upholds Private companies and Neighbourhood Undertakings- Empowers country business people to put resources into creation, exchange, and advertising, adding to nearby monetary development.
- Advances Horticultural Development- Gives credit to ranchers to buying seeds, composts, and gear, prompting expanded farming efficiency and market supply.
- Empowers Framework Improvement- Supports the foundation of neighbourhood supply chains, transportation, and storage spaces, working on the proficiency of country markets.
- Improves Advanced and Monetary Consideration- Extends admittance to versatile banking, computerized instalments, and online commercial centres, associating country purchasers and organizations to more extensive business sectors.
- Lessens Reliance on Go between- Direct funding and agreeable models assist makers with selling their merchandise at fair costs, guaranteeing better pay dissemination.
- Works with Ladies' Monetary Investment- Reinforces country markets by engaging ladies' business people, prompting expanded business variety and financial strength.

Effect of Rustic Market Advancement on Monetary Development-

- Builds Work Amazing open doors- Fortifies neighbourhood

enterprises and makes new position possibilities.

- Works on Expectations for everyday comforts- Improved pay prompts better medical care, instruction, and in general personal satisfaction.
- Supports Maintainable Strategic policies- Advances harmless to the ecosystem creation and capable asset use.
- Reinforces Provincial Metropolitan Availability- Overcomes any issues between rustic business sectors and metropolitan focuses through superior exchange and coordinated operations.

By working with monetary access, supporting business venture, and fortifying business sector foundation, microfinance assumes a critical part in the maintainable improvement of rustic business sectors, eventually driving financial advancement and social upliftment.

Working with Ladies Strengthening through Microfinance- Ladies strengthening alludes to furnishing ladies with the assets, open doors, and certainty to pursue autonomous financial and social choices. Microfinance assumes a significant part in engaging country ladies by offering monetary administrations, expertise improvement, and business support, empowering them to accomplish monetary freedom and add to family and local area advancement.

Ways Microfinance Works with Ladies Strengthening-

- Admittance to Credit and Monetary Autonomy- Gives little advances to ladies business visionaries without requiring guarantee, empowering them to begin and extend organizations.
- Empowering Business- Supports ladies drove undertakings in agribusiness, crafted works, retail, and limited scope enterprises, helping their cooperation in financial exercises.
- Advancing Self-improvement Gatherings (SHGs)- Urges ladies to frame SHGs, where they pool reserve funds, access credits, and participate in aggregate direction, upgrading monetary security.
- Improving Monetary Proficiency- Instructs ladies on overseeing funds, planning, and money management, prompting better monetary choices and long haul solidness.
- Setting out Business Open doors- Produces occupations for ladies in country regions, decreasing reliance on conventional family pay sources.
- Expanding Societal position and Certainty- Financial independence improves ladies' part in family navigation and local area administration.
- Further developing Family Government assistance- Ladies' pay adds to better medical services, nourishment, and instruction for their families, encouraging generally speaking social turn of events.
- Empowering Advanced and Innovative Incorporation- Advances the utilization of portable banking and computerized instalment frameworks, making monetary exchanges more open and secure for ladies.

Effect of Ladies Strengthening on Rustic Turn of events-

- Fortifies Rustic Economies- Ladies drove organizations add to monetary development and broadening of country markets.
- Further develops Orientation Fairness- Decreases orientation based monetary segregation and builds ladies' portrayal in business and administration.
- Improves People group Advancement- Ladies reinvest in their families and networks, driving reasonable social advancement.
- Supports Development and Administration- Enables ladies to take positions of authority in local area and business drives.

By working with monetary access, expertise improvement, and enterprising open doors, microfinance fills in as an amazing asset for ladies strengthening, prompting a more comprehensive and versatile country economy.

Conclusion- Microfinance has arisen as an amazing asset for reinforcing rustic showcasing by giving monetary admittance to people and private companies that need customary financial help. By offering microloans, investment funds choices, and monetary proficiency programs, microfinance engages provincial business people, upgrades market advancement, and works with monetary consideration. It likewise assumes a pivotal part in neediness lightening, ladies strengthening, and in general financial development in provincial regions. Through expanded buying power, further developed business maintainability, and improved rustic stock chains, microfinance makes a self-supporting biological system where the two makers and shoppers' benefit. While difficulties, for example, high functional expenses, credit gambles, and monetary ignorance exist, creative arrangements like computerized banking and self-improvement gatherings keep on driving monetary openness in provincial regions. All in all, microfinance fills in as an impetus for rustic financial change, encouraging reasonable turn of events and comprehensive development. By reinforcing rustic business sectors and engaging networks, it adds to long haul financial security and worked on expectations for everyday comforts for provincial populaces.

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Covid Crises & Its Impact on self-reliant Programme (Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan) in western Uttar Pradesh

• Rukhsana Begam

Abstract- *The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the vital importance of self-reliance for nations worldwide. In response, India launched the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, aiming to bolster economic resilience and reduce dependence on external entities. This research paper explores the necessity and impact of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in the “New-normal” era, with a particular focus on Western Uttar Pradesh. Based on the latest data and reports, the study assesses the region's economic landscape, identifying key segments, including MSMEs, manufacturing, agriculture, digital economy, and infrastructure development that have benefited from the initiative. The state has witnessed significant investments, with policy incentives fostering local entrepreneurship, supply chain diversification, and export growth. Government data indicates that under the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme, over 10,000 local enterprises have received financial and technical assistance, boosted rural employment and reduced migration. Additionally, Western Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a logistics hub with improved connectivity through expressways and freight corridors. The paper also discusses challenges such as financial accessibility, digital literacy, and skill development, proposing policy recommendations to enhance the long-term sustainability of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in the region. The findings highlighted that while the initiative has laid a strong foundation for economic self-sufficiency, strategic approaches are essential to ensure inclusive and resilient growth for all sectors in Western Uttar Pradesh.*

Keywords- *Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, Economic Self-sufficiency, Inclusive and Resilient Growth, Long-term Sustainability, “New-normal” Era, Western Uttar Pradesh*

Introduction- The COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill, exposing the vulnerabilities of globalized economies and highlighting the importance of self-reliance. India, with its vast and diverse economic structure, faced unprecedented challenges, including disrupted supply chains, massive unemployment, and contraction in industrial output. The crisis disproportionately impacted key sectors such as manufacturing, MSMEs, and agriculture, particularly in regions heavily dependent on labor-intensive industries, such as Western Uttar Pradesh.

Western Uttar Pradesh, a vital contributor to the country's economic framework, suffered significant setbacks due to its high reliance on migrant labor, disrupted logistics networks, and dependence on imported raw materials. The GDP contracted by 7.3% in FY 2020-21 (Ministry of Finance, 2021), and employment in the MSME sector, a crucial driver of regional economic growth, witnessed a steep decline. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE, 2021), nearly 120 million jobs were lost nationwide during the lockdown period, a large proportion of which were from industrial hubs like those in Uttar Pradesh.

Recognizing the urgent need for economic resilience, the Government of India launched the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India Mission) in May 2020. This initiative, with a financial stimulus of INR 20 lakh crore, aimed at bolstering domestic industries, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and reducing reliance on imports. The Abhiyan focused on five pillars—economy, infrastructure, system, demography, and demand—to drive long-term self-sufficiency. Its key objectives included supporting MSMEs, enhancing rural employment, promoting digital inclusion, and strengthening domestic manufacturing capacities.

For Western Uttar Pradesh, the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan proved instrumental in revitalizing several critical economic segments. The One District One Product (ODOP) scheme, a flagship initiative under the Abhiyan, provided financial and technical assistance to over 10,000 local enterprises, boosting employment and reducing migration pressures (NITI Aayog, 2023). Additionally, the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors, and the upcoming Jewar International Airport have enhanced connectivity, fostering industrial and trade expansion (Smart Cities Mission Report, 2023).

Agriculture, the backbone of the region's economy, benefited from direct income support through the PM- KISAN scheme, which aided over 1.2 million farmers in the state (Ministry of Agriculture, 2023). Investments in agri-infrastructure, cold storage facilities, and irrigation projects have contributed to a 15% increase in productivity over the past three years. Similarly, the digital economy in the region has expanded, with a 35% rise in digital transactions, enabling rural businesses to access new markets (NPCI Report, 2023).

Despite these successes, several challenges persist. Issues such as financial accessibility, digital literacy, and skill development gaps continue to hinder the full realization of self-reliance in the region. Addressing these concerns through targeted policy interventions and sustained investment in human capital will be crucial to ensuring long-term success.

This research paper aims to evaluate the impact and relevance of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in the post-COVID economic recovery of Western Uttar Pradesh. By analyzing policy measures, economic trends, and challenges, the study seeks to provide insights into how self-reliance strategies can be further strengthened for a more resilient and inclusive growth trajectory.

Objective of the Study- The significance of this study lies in its ability to assess the transformative potential of self-reliance policies in India's post-COVID recovery, with a specific focus on Western Uttar Pradesh. The findings of this research will provide critical insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and academicians in understanding how targeted economic interventions can drive long-term resilience.

Understanding Economic Recovery Post-COVID:

- The study evaluates the effectiveness of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in addressing economic disruptions caused by the pandemic.
- It assesses sector-specific recovery trends in MSMEs, agriculture, and manufacturing, offering insights for future economic planning.

Impact on MSMEs and Local Entrepreneurship:

- MSMEs form the backbone of Uttar Pradesh's economy, contributing to 60% of industrial employment (MSME Ministry Report, 2022).
- This research highlights the effectiveness of credit-linked support programs, subsidies, and ease-of-doing-business reforms.

Agricultural and Rural Development Implications:

- Given that 70% of Western Uttar Pradesh's population depends on agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture, 2023), this study explores how agrarian self-reliance can drive inclusive rural growth.
- The research also assesses the impact of direct benefit transfers (DBTs) and subsidies on improving farmers' livelihoods post-pandemic.

Infrastructure and Industrial Growth:

- With major industrial corridors and logistics projects boosting trade efficiency, this study analyzes how infrastructure investments under the Abhiyan have improved market accessibility and export competitiveness.
- It also examines the role of industrial clusters and government incentives in enhancing production capacity.

Digital Transformation and Financial Inclusion:

- The pandemic accelerated digital adoption, with a 35% rise in digital transactions (NPCI Report, 2023).
- This study explores how digitalization and fintech innovations are fostering financial inclusion and supporting rural businesses in Uttar Pradesh.

Policy Implications and Future Recommendations:

- The research identifies key policy gaps and challenges that hinder the complete realization of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan's potential.
- It provides strategic recommendations to ensure sustainable economic growth, including enhancing skill development programs, strengthening digital literacy initiatives, and improving financial access for MSMEs and startups.

Review of Literature- The NITI Aayog working paper “Bharatiya Model of Inclusive Growth (BMIG)” (2023), authored by Virmani, Arvind, highlights India's unique economic strategy after Covid-crisis that balances free-market competition with social welfare interventions. The model is built on three key pillars: Indic Market Economy, Antyodaya & Empowerment (Welfare and Social Inclusion), Holistic Macroeconomic Management. The paper highlights significance of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and refers digital transformation, AI-driven skill development, and tax system reforms as the next phase of economic evolution. The Bharatiya Model of Inclusive Growth (BMIG) presents a unique hybrid approach that balances economic growth, social welfare, and cultural sustainability, whereas the Economic Survey of India (2021-22) provides a comprehensive assessment of India's economic response to the pandemic. It highlights that the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan allocated 20 lakh crore, constituting 10% of India's GDP, to support various sectors. The survey emphasizes the role of MSMEs, agriculture, and digital transformation in fostering self-reliance. In the mean course the MSME Annual Report (2022-23) highlights key initiatives under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to strengthen MSMEs post-COVID-19.

The 20,000 crore Subordinate Debt Scheme under CGSSD was launched to assist stressed but operational MSMEs, with 4,000 crore allocated for loan guarantees. The 50,000 crore Self-Reliant India Fund (SRI Fund), backed by a 10,000 crore government contribution, aimed at attracting venture capital and private equity, mobilizing 2,790 crore for 140 MSMEs by December 2022. The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), initially 3 lakh crore, was expanded to 5 lakh crore, benefiting 1.19 crore MSME accounts with 3.60 lakh crore in guarantees. These measures enhanced liquidity, resilience, and global competitiveness, positioning MSMEs as key drivers of India's economic recovery.

While the study “**Rethinking Informal Economy Resilience during Crisis: Experience from COVID-19 Pandemic**” (2023) by **Bagas, Aditya and Ikhwan, Amri** examines informal economy resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting income loss, business closures, and heightened vulnerability due to lockdowns. Reviewing 42 studies, it identifies four resilience outcomes: bounce back better, bounce back, recover but worsen, and collapse, shaped by individual strategies and government support. The paper emphasizes social protection, financial aid, and adaptive business models as key to recovery. It advocates for context-specific policies to integrate informal workers into economic frameworks, ensuring long-term stability and preparedness for future crises, and the SAP India's article titled “**Role of MSME in Making India Aatmanirbhar**” (2022) highlights the pivotal role of MSMEs in India's journey toward becoming Atmanirbhar. Despite challenges like limited access to finance, technology adoption, and scaling barriers, MSMEs contribute significantly to GDP, exports, and job creation. Government initiatives, such as the GeM portal and the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme, aim to empower MSMEs and foster inclusivity. The adoption of technology and participation

in global markets are essential for MSMEs to thrive and support India's economic self-reliance.

The paper "Pathways to Atmanirbhar Bharat: Harnessing India's Renewable Edge for Cost-Effective Energy Independence by 2047" (2023) by Abhyankar, Nikit, Mohanty, Priyanka, Deorah, Shruti, Karali, Nihan, Paliwal, Umed, Kersey, Jessica and Amol provides a comprehensive analysis of India's roadmap to energy self-sufficiency. It discusses India's reliance on fossil fuel imports and proposes a transition to renewable energy, electric mobility, and green hydrogen. The study compares two scenarios: a reference case with continued dependence on fossil fuels and the "CLEAN-India" pathway emphasizing clean energy. Key findings highlight economic benefits, reduced emissions, and enhanced industrial competitiveness. The report underscores policy support and infrastructure expansion as critical elements for achieving energy independence by 2047. The article "**COVID-19: Lockdown Impact on Informal Sector in India**" (2022) by **Shekar, K Chandra and Mansoor, Kashif**, outlines the severe impact of the pandemic on India's informal sector, which was already grappling with challenges from demonetization and GST. The authors highlight that the lockdown exacerbated vulnerabilities for self-employed and casual labor households, with significant income loss and job cuts. Informal sector workers, including migrants, faced extreme hardships, with many losing their livelihoods and lacking basic necessities. The article emphasizes the need for integrating the informal sector into economic policies for sustainable growth and social protection, proposing a holistic, multi-pronged approach. The article "**Impact of COVID-19 on the Indian agricultural system: A 10-point strategy for post-pandemic recovery**" (2021) of Sage Journals by **Cariappa, A.G. Adeeth, Acharya, Kamlesh Kumar, Adhav, Chaitanya Ashok, Sendhi, R.I. and Ramasundaram, P.**, explores the extensive disruptions caused by the pandemic in India's agricultural sector. It highlights challenges such as labor shortages, logistical constraints, and increased food prices, while also noting the resilience of agriculture with a positive GDP growth of 3.4%. The authors propose a 10-point recovery strategy focusing on social safety nets, family farming, and secondary agriculture. Global impacts, such as trade restrictions and supply chain disruptions, are also discussed, emphasizing the need for strategic interventions to ensure long-term agricultural recovery and food security.

Khatoon, Sabiha and Iffat, Ayesha, in their paper "**AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: A Tool to Revive Uttar Pradesh Handloom Sector**" (2021) examines the challenges faced by handloom weavers in Uttar Pradesh during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research highlights the disruption in production, sales, and income, as well as the high indebtedness and health risks for weavers. The authors advocate for measures under the AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, including strengthening the supply chain, promoting financial inclusion, and digitizing handloom products. The study emphasizes the need for skill

development, awareness of government schemes, and compensation for weavers' families to restore the sector's vitality post-pandemic. Whereas, **Parmar, Ms. Giribala Lallubhai, and Patel, Dr. Rajeshkumar G**, in their study "**A Study on Challenges and Implications of Self-Reliant India**" (**International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECSE)**), (2021) examines the multifaceted journey toward India's economic autonomy, highlighting key challenges such as trade dependencies, technological gaps, infrastructural bottlenecks, and financial constraints. Drawing on scholarly works, it emphasizes the importance of innovation, research, and collaboration between government, industries, and academia to overcome these barriers. The study underscores the significance of a robust manufacturing sector, technological advancements, and strategic policy interventions for achieving self-reliance. Also, **Kumar, Dr. Sanjay** in his article "**Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and its Relevance**"(2022) highlights India's vision for self-reliance in the post-COVID era. Contrary to protectionism, it emphasizes India's integration with global markets, leveraging domestic capabilities for global production. The five pillars—economy, infrastructure, technology, demography, and supply-demand—serve as the foundation of this initiative. The policy aims to boost India's economic recovery, foster technological innovation, and reduce import dependency, especially in critical sectors like defense. Kumar underscores the long-term challenge of achieving self-reliance, requiring systemic reforms and strategic investments across sectors to make India globally competitive. And, **Sharma, Sunil Kumar's** insights at the **eUttar Pradesh Summit (2024)** highlight the transformative role of Uttar Pradesh in India's journey towards Atmanirbhar Bharat. The state's policies in IT, electronics, and emerging technologies like AI and semiconductors are fueling economic growth and innovation. With initiatives supporting women-led startups and the development of tech infrastructure, Uttar Pradesh is contributing significantly to India's goal of becoming a self-reliant, tech-driven global superpower by 2047.

The **IBEF** blog titled "**Aatmanirbharta in Defence**" (2022) emphasizes the importance of self-reliance in India's defense sector under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. It highlights the benefits of domestic weapon production, strategic independence, and economic growth. The Make in India movement and government initiatives, including private sector involvement, aim to boost innovation, job creation, and export capabilities. Policies like the establishment of defense corridors and support for start-ups play a crucial role in achieving India's goal of becoming a global defense manufacturing hub. Also, **Pundir, Anamika's** paper "**The Role of AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan in Women Empowerment in**

Varanasi" (2022) examines the role of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan in empowering women in Varanasi. It highlights various government initiatives such as 'Ek Stall Ek Mahila Ke Naam,' Samarth

Training Abhiyan, and Kabad Se Jugad, which have enhanced women's economic independence. The study underscores the impact of financial self-reliance on women's social and political participation, leading to their increased role in decision-making. The research concludes that self-sufficiency among women is crucial for achieving national economic growth and gender equality. And, Asher, Mukul's article titled "**Shining Examples of Strategic Concepts of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Be-Vocal-for-Local**" (2020) explores the implementation of self-reliance and local economic development strategies in India. It highlights successful case studies, policy measures, and strategic frameworks promoting indigenous industries, entrepreneurship, and economic sustainability. The literature review focuses on the conceptual underpinnings of these initiatives, their socio-economic impact, and how they align with global self-sufficiency trends. The document also emphasizes the role of government policies and community participation in fostering a resilient local economy.

Research Methodology- This study aims to evaluate the impact and relevance of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in the post- COVID economic recovery of Western Uttar Pradesh. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a comprehensive assessment of the policy's effectiveness across various sectors, including MSMEs, agriculture, infrastructure, and digital transformation.

Research Design- The research follows a descriptive and analytical design, wherein data is collected and analyzed to assess the outcomes of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan on economic resilience and self-reliance in Western Uttar Pradesh. The study will focus on the implementation and impact of key interventions introduced under the mission, such as financial support to MSMEs, infrastructure development, and agricultural reforms.

Population and Sample Size- The population for this study includes the key stakeholders in Western Uttar Pradesh's economy:

- MSMEs and local entrepreneurs
- Farmers and agricultural workers
- Government agencies and policymakers
- Residents and businesses impacted by infrastructure development (such as expressways, freight corridors, and airports)

The sample size will be selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation from various sectors. A total of 500 participants will be surveyed, consisting of:

- 150 MSME owners and workers
- 150 farmers and agricultural laborers
- 100 government officials and policymakers
- 100 business owners from infrastructure-affected regions

Data Collection Methods

Primary Data Collection

- Surveys: Structured questionnaires will be distributed to the selected sample, collecting quantitative data on economic recovery indicators, such as employment generation, income growth, and changes in business performance. Questions will be both closed and open-ended, with Likert scales used to measure the level of satisfaction and perceived impact.
- Interviews: In-depth interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders, including government officials, MSME owners, and experts in the field of agriculture and infrastructure development. These qualitative interviews will help understand the personal experiences, challenges faced, and the long-term effects of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): FGDs will be conducted with representatives from MSMEs, agriculture, and the local community to capture a broad range of insights into the socio-economic transformation post-pandemic.

Secondary Data Collection

- Reports from government agencies such as NITI Aayog, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Reserve Bank of India will be reviewed for statistical data and analysis on the implementation and results of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- Economic data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), Ministry of Commerce, and industry-specific reports will be utilized to analyze macroeconomic trends and sectoral performance.
- Existing academic research and policy papers will provide context to the study and identify gaps in the existing literature regarding self-reliance strategies in post-pandemic India.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

- Descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, and standard deviation, will be used to summarize the data from the surveys.
- Inferential statistics, including t-tests and regression analysis, will be applied to determine the relationship between Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan interventions and economic recovery indicators such as employment rates, production output, and income levels in MSMEs and agriculture.

Qualitative Analysis

- Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze interview transcripts and focus group discussions. Themes related to the policy's effectiveness, challenges faced, and suggestions for improvement will be identified and categorized.
- A coding system will be developed to analyze open-ended responses and identify patterns across different stakeholder groups.

Econometric Models

- A multiple regression model will be used to assess the impact of key

policy variables (such as financial support, infrastructure development, and digital adoption) on economic recovery. The model will control for confounding variables such as regional development, labor force participation, and external factors (e.g., global supply chain disruptions).

- Formula for Multiple Regression Model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y is the dependent variable (e.g., economic growth indicators such as employment or income),
- X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots are independent variables (e.g., MSME financial support, agricultural reforms, infrastructure investment),
- β_0 is the constant,
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \dots$ are the coefficients of the independent variables,
- ϵ is the error term.

Tools and Techniques

- Survey Tools: Online survey platforms like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey will be used for efficient data collection.
- **Statistical Software: SPSS or STATA will be used to perform statistical analyses, such as regression modeling and hypothesis testing.**
- Qualitative Analysis Software: NVivo or MAXQDA will be used for coding and theme generation from interviews and focus group discussions.

The research methodology outlined above combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches, allowing for a holistic assessment of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan's impact on the post-pandemic recovery of Western Uttar Pradesh. The combination of surveys, interviews, and secondary data will provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the region's economic trajectory and policy effectiveness.

Findings/Results and Outcomes- The research on the relevance of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India Mission) in the post-COVID economic recovery of Western Uttar Pradesh yields significant insights across multiple sectors. The study draws from various data sources, including government reports, interviews with local stakeholders, and field surveys, to assess the impacts of the policy interventions. Below are the key findings, results, and outcomes:

Economic Recovery and Growth

- Overall Economic Recovery: The Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan has played a pivotal role in the post-pandemic recovery of Western Uttar Pradesh. The region has experienced a partial rebound in industrial output, particularly in the MSME and agriculture sectors.
- According to the Ministry of Finance (2022), the region's GDP

growth rate showed signs of recovery post-2020, with MSMEs contributing significantly to this resurgence. A 15% growth in MSME production was reported in several districts under the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.

- Agriculture in the region showed a 15% increase in productivity due to the enhanced infrastructure and direct support through schemes like PM-KISAN and farm mechanization (Ministry of Agriculture, 2023).

Impact on MSMEs and Local Entrepreneurship

- MSME Sector: The One District One Product (ODOP) scheme under the Abhiyan has been instrumental in rejuvenating local entrepreneurship. Over 10,000 enterprises in Western Uttar Pradesh benefited from financial assistance, leading to a 15% increase in rural employment and a reduction in migration to urban areas.
- The study indicates that credit-linked support programs, such as the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), helped stabilize the MSME sector by facilitating smoother financial transactions and ensuring the continuity of operations for more than 30% of small businesses.
- Local Entrepreneurship: Many entrepreneurs in regions such as Agra, Aligarh, and Moradabad, known for their handloom, brassware, and glass industries, reported better access to credit, raw materials, and market linkages, which boosted their operations.

Agricultural Development and Rural Employment

- Agriculture: The agricultural sector saw significant growth due to the government's direct financial support and infrastructure investment. Over 1.2 million farmers in Uttar Pradesh benefited from PM-KISAN, which helped stabilize their livelihoods during the post-COVID period.
- The study found a 15% increase in agricultural productivity attributed to improvements in irrigation systems, cold storage facilities, and supply chain infrastructure. The adoption of technology in agriculture, such as eNAM (National Agriculture Market), also enhanced market access for farmers.
- Rural Employment: Initiatives under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), created localized job opportunities, reducing urban migration and improving rural employment rates.

Infrastructure Development and Industrial Growth

- Infrastructure: Significant infrastructural developments, including the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, the Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors, and the Jewar International Airport, have vastly improved logistics and trade networks.
- The improvements in infrastructure have led to more efficient transportation, enhancing the export potential of industries in Agra,

Meerut, and Bareilly. These developments have also attracted investments, facilitating the establishment of new industrial hubs in these regions.

- Enhanced connectivity has made it easier for MSMEs to access global and domestic markets, with significant increases in the volume of exports, especially in sectors like textiles, leather goods, and agricultural products.

Digital Transformation and Financial Inclusion

- Digital Economy: The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation, and the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan further promoted digital adoption. A 35% rise in digital transactions was recorded, with rural businesses increasingly relying on e-commerce platforms for sales and marketing.
- The study indicates that the increased adoption of UPI (Unified Payments Interface) and other fintech services helped bridge the financial inclusion gap in rural areas, enabling small businesses and farmers to access immediate financial support.
- Digital Literacy: While the adoption of digital technologies increased, challenges related to digital literacy persisted. The research found that around 30% of rural businesses still struggled with technology access and skills, pointing to the need for more focused digital literacy programs.

Policy Implications and Challenges

- Financial Accessibility and Credit: While credit-linked schemes like ECLGS helped stabilize businesses, a significant portion of MSMEs still faced challenges in accessing timely financial support. Around 20% of surveyed MSMEs reported issues with documentation, collateral, and eligibility for loans.
- Skill Development and Capacity Building: Skill gaps and digital literacy remain major barriers to the full potential of the Abhiyan's success. Many rural youth and workers lack the technical expertise to adapt to new job markets, especially in digital economies and modern manufacturing sectors.
- Supply Chain Disruptions: Despite infrastructure improvements, the region still experiences occasional supply chain disruptions due to the fragmented nature of the logistics network, particularly in remote areas.

Social and Economic Sustainability

1. Sustainability: The research found that while economic indicators showed improvement, environmental sustainability and social equity still need more focused policy interventions. There is a need for the government to integrate green technology and environmental considerations into the recovery framework to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Gender Inclusion: The role of women in MSMEs and rural enterprises saw some positive impacts, particularly in the sectors of

handicrafts, weaving, and agriculture, where women entrepreneurs were able to access financial and technical support under the Abhiyan.

- Long-Term Policy Recommendations
 - Skill Development: Expanding skill development programs, particularly in the areas of digital literacy, agricultural technology, and entrepreneurship, is crucial for enhancing local workforce capabilities.
 - Financial Inclusion: Strengthening microfinance models and providing easier access to collateral-free loans for small businesses could help further boost the MSME sector.
 - Sustainable Development: Future policies should focus on integrating green technologies and sustainable practices to create a more resilient and eco-friendlier economic model.
 - Addressing Digital Divide: Greater emphasis is needed on **digital literacy** and **infrastructure** development in rural and remote areas to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are universally accessible.

Conclusion- The Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan has played a transformative role in the post-COVID recovery of Western Uttar Pradesh, propelling the region towards greater economic self-reliance and resilience. This study highlights the positive outcomes brought about by the Abhiyan, particularly in revitalizing critical sectors like MSMEs, agriculture, infrastructure, and the digital economy. With the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme supporting over 10,000 local enterprises (NITI Aayog, 2023), there has been a 15% increase in rural employment, thus reducing migration pressures. Additionally, the PM-KISAN scheme has provided direct income support to over 1.2 million farmers in the state (Ministry of Agriculture, 2023), resulting in a 15% increase in agricultural productivity over the past three years.

Infrastructure development, including projects such as the **Delhi-Mumbai Expressway** and the **Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors**, has significantly improved logistics and trade efficiency. According to the **Smart Cities Mission Report (2023)**, these projects have boosted the region's export competitiveness and market accessibility, which is vital for the growth of both manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Furthermore, the region has witnessed a **35% rise in digital transactions** (NPCI Report, 2023), which has provided small businesses with access to new markets and facilitated financial inclusion.

Despite these achievements, the Abhiyan's full potential has yet to be realized due to existing challenges. The **financial accessibility** gap for MSMEs remains a pressing issue, with many small businesses struggling to obtain the necessary capital for growth. According to the **Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (2022)**, the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) reached only **35% of stressed MSMEs** during the pandemic, highlighting the need for more robust credit delivery systems. Additionally, **digital literacy gaps** continue to impede the

adoption of technology in rural and semi-urban areas, while **skill development** programs need to be aligned with the changing demands of the modern economy.

Moreover, while infrastructure projects have enhanced connectivity, supply chain inefficiencies, particularly in the agriculture sector, persist due to outdated logistics networks. A **World Bank Report (2022)** emphasized the urgent need to modernize rural infrastructure to ensure better access to markets for agricultural produce, thereby enhancing overall productivity.

Looking forward, the Abhiyan can achieve even greater success by focusing on a more **inclusive growth model**. **Skill development** and **digital literacy** should be central to future policy interventions, ensuring that both entrepreneurs and workers in the region are equipped to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the digital economy. Additionally, expanding access to **affordable finance** for MSMEs, through government-backed schemes or financial inclusion initiatives, is crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of local enterprises.

The policy should also focus on promoting **sustainable agricultural practices**, supported by enhanced irrigation systems, mechanization, and **cold storage facilities**. This will not only improve productivity but also reduce post-harvest losses, which currently stand at around **30%** in the agriculture sector (Ministry of Agriculture, 2023).

In conclusion, while the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan has achieved substantial progress in Western Uttar Pradesh, its success hinges on addressing the challenges of financial accessibility, digital literacy, skills development, and sustainable infrastructure. Through targeted interventions and continued investment, the region can unlock its full potential, positioning itself as a key player in India's self-reliant future. The collaborative effort between government, industry stakeholders, and local communities will be pivotal in ensuring that Western Uttar Pradesh emerges as a resilient, self-sufficient, and prosperous region in the post-COVID world.

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Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Reporting and Its Impact on Indian Corporate Performance

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Abstract- *The concept of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting has gained momentum worldwide as businesses align their strategies with sustainability and responsible corporate practices. In India, ESG reporting has witnessed rapid adoption, particularly after SEBI mandated the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) for the top 1,000 listed companies by market capitalization from FY 2022–23. This paper explores the relationship between ESG disclosures and corporate performance in India, with a focus on financial outcomes, brand value, and long-term competitiveness. Using secondary data, case studies, and global benchmarks, the research highlights how ESG reporting is transforming the Indian corporate landscape and presents recommendations for achieving sustainable growth.*

Keywords- *ESG Reporting, Corporate Performance, Sustainability, BRSR, SEBI, India, Corporate Governance.*

Introduction- Globalization and climate change have shifted the paradigm of business performance from pure profit-making to responsible growth. Investors, regulators, and stakeholders are increasingly evaluating companies based on ESG metrics. In India, with the introduction of BRSR by SEBI, ESG compliance has become not only a regulatory requirement but also a strategic differentiator in attracting capital and enhancing reputation.

This paper seeks to investigate-

1. How ESG reporting impacts financial and non-financial performance of Indian firms.
2. The role of ESG in investor decision-making in India.
3. The challenges and opportunities in ESG adoption.

Literature Review-

- Global studies (Friede, Busch & Bassen, 2015) indicate a positive correlation between ESG performance and corporate profitability.
- Indian studies (KPMG, 2022) show that companies with higher ESG scores attract greater foreign investment.

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- SEBI's 2021 circular on BRSR emphasizes transparency and accountability, aiming to align India with global sustainability standards.
- Gaps: Limited empirical analysis on post-BRSR performance outcomes in India provides an opportunity for this study.

Objectives of the Study-

1. To examine the impact of ESG reporting on financial performance of Indian companies.
2. To analyze how ESG disclosures influence investor confidence and corporate reputation.
3. To identify challenges in ESG adoption among Indian corporate.
4. To recommend strategies for improving ESG reporting and integration.

Research Methodology-

1. Type of Study- Exploratory and Analytical
2. Data Sources- Secondary data from SEBI, NSE, BSE-listed company reports, and sustainability disclosures. ESG ratings from MSCI, Refinitiv, and CRISIL.
3. Case studies of Indian firms (Infosys, Tata Group, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank).
4. Tools of Analysis: Correlation analysis between ESG scores and financial metrics (ROE, ROA, Tobin's Q, Market Capitalization).

Analysis and Findings-

Financial Performance- Companies with strong ESG reporting (e.g., Infosys, Wipro) showed consistent higher ROE and ROA compared to industry averages.

ESG-compliant firms demonstrated lower cost of capital as they attract long-term responsible investors.

Investor Sentiment- Post-BRSR, ESG-focused mutual funds and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) increased their stakes in Indian companies with robust sustainability disclosures.

According to a 2023 PwC India survey, 74% of investors consider ESG disclosures in investment decisions.

Challenges-

- Lack of standardized ESG metrics and reporting frameworks.
- High cost of compliance for SMEs and mid-cap companies.
- Green washing risks due to unverified ESG claims.

Opportunities-

- Growing demand for green finance and ESG-linked bonds in India.
- Integration of AI and block chain in ESG auditing for transparency.
- India's G20 Presidency emphasis on sustainability strengthens global alignment.

Discussion- The study reveals a positive relationship between ESG reporting and corporate performance in India. ESG-compliant firms are more resilient, attract higher-quality investments, and enjoy enhanced reputation. However, challenges of standardization, verification, and capacity building persist, requiring collaborative efforts between regulators,

companies, and rating agencies.

Recommendations-

1. Policy Level: SEBI should develop a uniform ESG rating framework to avoid discrepancies.
2. Corporate Level: Companies must integrate ESG into core business strategy rather than treating it as compliance.
3. Investor Level: Encourage ESG-based mutual funds and retail investor awareness.
4. Technology Use: Leverage AI, blockchain, and IoT for real-time ESG reporting.

Conclusion- ESG reporting in India is transitioning from a compliance exercise to a strategic tool for competitive advantage. Firms with robust ESG disclosures demonstrate stronger corporate performance, enhanced investor trust, and long-term sustainability. For India, ESG is not only a corporate responsibility but also a pathway to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and positioning itself as a global leader in responsible business.

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Examining Seller Satisfaction and Platform Efficiency in Preowned Car Marketplaces, A Study of Key Influencing Factors

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Abstract- *This study explores the key determinants of user satisfaction with used car selling platforms, focusing on the factors influencing sellers' experiences before and after completing a sale. Through confirmatory factor analysis, two primary dimensions of service experience are identified: Post-Valuation Experience and Pre-Valuation Experience, each comprising multiple service attributes assessed by users. In the post-valuation phase, the findings highlight that the price offer is the most influential factor, emphasizing the financial outcome as the primary driver of seller satisfaction. The alignment of the offered price with seller expectations also plays a significant role, while the payment process is a secondary concern. Interestingly, transparency in the evaluation process has minimal impact, suggesting that sellers prioritize monetary outcomes over procedural clarity. In the pre-valuation phase, professionalism of service personnel emerges as the most critical factor, indicating that courteous and knowledgeable interactions significantly enhance user satisfaction. Efficient vehicle inspection moderately contributes to satisfaction, whereas promptness of service and ease of navigation have relatively weaker associations. These findings suggest that while sellers appreciate efficiency and convenience, their overall experience is primarily shaped by financial considerations and the professionalism of platform representatives. The study underscores the importance of price fairness and customer interaction in enhancing user satisfaction with used car selling platforms.*

Keywords- *Platform Efficiency, Preowned Car Marketplaces, Service, Seller Satisfaction, Pre-Valuation Phase, Post Valuation Phase,*

Introduction- The preowned cars market in India is witnessing remarkable growth. It is driven by affordability, increasing aspiration for car ownership and rising demand for personal mobility. The unorganised market of the preowned cars is transforming to organised market with certification and multi brand under one roof. The buyers are getting attracted due to transparency and trustworthiness. The sellers get the benefit from the increasing trust in the organised sales channels that enable them to secure better sales values through transparent inspections. The rise

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digital platforms have also made the transactions faster with buyers. However, independent sellers in unorganised markets face challenges due to lack of standardised practices. This research paper dives deep to understand the seller's satisfaction of the used car marketplaces.

Literature Review Mordor Intelligence. India used car market - Growth, trends, COVID-19 impact, and forecasts (2023-2028).

The Indian used car market is experiencing significant growth, driven by several key factors. As of the fiscal year 2022-23, the market was valued at approximately USD 31.33 billion and is projected to more than double to USD 70.48 billion by 2027-28. This expansion is attributed to a burgeoning middle class with rising disposable incomes, an increasing preference for personal mobility, and shorter vehicle replacement cycles. The market is also witnessing a shift from unorganized to organized sectors, with organized players' share rising from 10-12% seven years ago to about 24-25% currently, and expected to reach nearly 45% in the next three years. Additionally, the demand for younger used cars (3-5 years old) is outpacing supply, leading to an annual price increase of 8-10% in the used car segment. Overall, the Indian used car market is poised for continued expansion, reflecting changing consumer preferences and market dynamics (Mordor Intelligence, 2024).

Utami, H. S. W, & Suzanto, B. (2024). The Influence of Product Quality and Promotion on Purchasing Decisions at a used car company. *Journal Computech & Bisnis (e-journal)*, 18(1), 69-76

The research highlights the significance of purchasing decisions in marketing and the various factors that shape them, such as product quality and promotional activities. The objective was to evaluate the impact of these variables on consumer purchasing behaviour within the selected dealership. The study employed descriptive and confirmatory analysis methods with a sample of 97 participants. The results revealed that product quality directly influenced purchasing decisions by 33.8%, with an additional indirect effect mediated through promotions at 13.4%, culminating in a total impact of 47.2%. Promotions had a direct effect of 7.2%, an indirect effect through product quality at 13.4%, and a total influence of 20.6% promotional activities to enhance consumer purchasing decisions. These factors collectively serve as critical drivers of improved sales performance in the used car market (Utami, 2024).

Dinesh, Sahana & Muniraju, Y (2022). Impact Of E-Service Quality and Price Perception on Customer Satisfaction and Repurchases Intention. *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*. 11. 1152-1156.

This study examines the influence of E-Service Quality on Revisit Intention, with E-Customer Satisfaction and E-Trust serving as mediating variables, in the context of websites facilitating the buying and selling of used cars in Indonesia. The research is motivated by fluctuating website visit patterns, attributed to service quality issues. Key factors such as E-Service Quality, E-Customer Satisfaction, and E-Trust are identified as

crucial for enhancing website traffic and user engagement.

The study employs a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modelling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Findings reveal that E-Service Quality positively and significantly influences E-Customer Satisfaction, E-Trust, and Revisit Intention. Furthermore, E-Trust has a significant positive impact on E-Customer Satisfaction. However, E-Customer Satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between E-Service Quality and Revisit Intention, whereas E-Trust effectively mediates this relationship. These results underscore the pivotal role of E-Trust in driving users' intention to revisit such websites (Dinesh, 2022).

Martins Nuno et al (2020) Lexus Used-Vehicle Online Platform: Comparative Analysis of Major Competing Brands' Websites.

This study explores how the design process can be leveraged to align a brand's strategy with the preferences of its target audience through a digital product, using a case study approach. Internal research by Lexus indicates an opportunity to cater to a broader audience beyond its traditional demographic of men over 50. To achieve this, the study sets out specific objectives, including effectively communicating the brand's core values—such as sustainability, cost efficiency, safety, and comfort—promoting its products and services, and developing an intuitive, engaging, and visually appealing interface. The research process involved identifying the brand's strategic positioning, understanding user profiles, analysing key competitors, and designing a prototype based on User-centred Design principles. This required addressing essential aspects such as character modelling, UX and UI design, wireframing, user flows, interface aesthetics, and usability testing. The findings highlight that brands can successfully align their strategic goals with user expectations, particularly in a global landscape where sustainability and resource reuse are growing concerns. Therefore, adopting design-driven methodologies is essential for brands to merge their interests with consumer demands effectively.

Pednekar, A. P. (2019). Customers' Inference towards Pre-owned Cars: An Empirical Report. *Journal of Commerce and Management Thought*, 10(1), 29-35.

The growing demand for pre-owned cars addresses customers' aspirations for car ownership while overcoming financial limitations. Studies highlight that the car's condition and clear documentation, such as a clean Carfax report and title, are key factors influencing purchase decisions. Secondary factors include accessories and warranties. Research methodologies typically involve descriptive surveys, convenience sampling, and simple statistical tools like percentages and rank order methods to evaluate customer preferences and satisfaction (Pednekar, 2019).

Driving through the urban used-car market, Deloitte 2016-

The survey provides key insights into the behaviour and preferences of urban customers in the Indian used car market. Urban buyers

are generally educated, sophisticated individuals who predominantly purchase vehicles for personal use, with only a small fraction engaging in commercial utilization. Interestingly, there is a noteworthy segment of repeat buyers who opt for used cars even after owning new ones, demonstrating that customer movement in the market is not strictly linear. Transparency and access to information have led some buyers to consider both new and used cars simultaneously, while many remain flexible regarding brand, body type or budget.

Dealer dynamics also play a pivotal role in shaping the market. Affiliated dealerships primarily depend on exchange business and tend to sell older or more-used vehicles, while multi-brand dealers manage their own inventory, which often exceeds a month's sales. Stand-alone dealers, with their smaller volumes and higher inventory costs, cater to customers willing to invest more time in the purchasing process.

The research highlights that urban dealerships attract informed and educated customers who value transparency, brand assurance, and convenience. This underscores the importance of manufacturers' investments in used car branding and distribution systems. With the growing population of vehicles, the used car market is poised for significant growth, presenting a promising opportunity for manufacturers to further develop this segment and cater to evolving consumer expectations (Driving through the urban used-car market, 2016).

Research Gap- Existing research predominantly emphasizes the factors influencing buyers' decisions when purchasing preowned vehicles. Studies have extensively examined aspects such as price sensitivity, vehicle condition, brand perception, and customer trust in online and offline platforms. However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the perspective of sellers on preowned vehicle selling platforms. Specifically, limited research has explored the factors that contribute to seller satisfaction, including ease of listing, pricing mechanisms, platform transparency, customer interactions, and overall selling experience.

This gap presents an opportunity to shift the focus from solely understanding buyer behaviour to examining the seller's perspective in the preowned vehicle marketplace. Investigating seller satisfaction can provide valuable insights into the challenges they face, such as pricing negotiations, platform support, transaction security, and ease of closing deals. Addressing this research gap can contribute to the development of strategies that improve seller engagement, ultimately benefiting both buyers and sellers by fostering a more balanced and effective marketplace.

Conceptual Background Used car platforms facilitate a structured and efficient car selling process encompassing both pre valuation and post valuation services to enhance seller satisfaction.

Pre-Valuation Process- The pre-valuation process plays a crucial role in enhancing seller satisfaction when selling a used car on vehicle resale platforms. By integrating key elements such as navigation process, professionalism, promptness, and efficient inspection, vehicle resale

platforms ensure a smooth and trustworthy experience for sellers.

Navigation Process- The ease of navigating is a key factor in seller satisfaction. A user-friendly interface with clear instructions allows sellers to input their car details effortlessly and receive an instant valuation. The guided steps ensure that even first-time sellers can complete the process without confusion, enhancing their overall experience.

Professionalism- A structured and transparent valuation process, backed by market data and AI-driven pricing algorithms, reflects professionalism. Vehicle resale platform ensures that sellers receive a fair price estimate based on real-time market trends. Additionally, customer support representatives maintain clear communication, providing necessary clarifications and reducing uncertainty in the pre-valuation stage.

Promptness- Speed is a critical aspect of the pre-valuation process. Vehicle resale platform provides an instant price estimate based on car details such as model, year, condition, and location. This eliminates the long wait times typically associated with traditional selling methods. Quick response times at every stage-from valuation to auction enhance seller convenience and satisfaction.

Efficient Inspection- A well-organized and professional car inspection ensures that the seller gets a reliable final offer. Vehicle resale platform's trained evaluators assess the vehicle's condition, mileage, and history, ensuring that the estimated price aligns with the car's actual market value. This reduces the chances of unexpected price drops post-inspection, increasing seller confidence in the process.

The pre-valuation process at vehicle resale platforms serves as the foundation for a transparent, efficient, and hassle-free selling experience. By integrating seamless navigation, professionalism, prompt responses, and accurate inspections, the platform builds trust and confidence among sellers. A fair and data-driven price estimate empowers sellers with realistic expectations, allowing them to make informed decisions without unnecessary delays. Ultimately, these factors contribute to a smoother transaction, faster car sales, and higher seller satisfaction.

Post-Valuation Process- The post-valuation phase is crucial in determining the final outcome of the car-selling experience at Vehicle resale platform. Several factors, including price offered, match price expectation, payment process, and transparency in evaluation, directly impact seller satisfaction. Ensuring a seamless transition from valuation to final sale enhances trust and efficiency in the process.

Price Offered- The final price offered to the seller is based on the car's condition, demand, and auction results. Vehicle resale platform's AI-driven valuation system and real-time bidding ensure that sellers receive the best possible market price. A competitive and justifiable price offer increases seller confidence and encourages them to proceed with the transaction.

Match Price Expectation- Seller satisfaction largely depends on whether the final price aligns with their expectations. Vehicle resale platform ensures that the pre-valuation estimate is realistic, minimizing drastic

differences between the estimated and final offer. When the final price closely matches or exceeds the seller's expectations, it strengthens trust in the platform and enhances their experience.

Payment Process- A swift and secure payment process is essential for a hassle-free selling experience. The seamless transfer of funds directly to the seller's account reassures them of a reliable and efficient system.

Transparency in Evaluation- The entire post-valuation process is designed to be clear and transparent. Sellers are provided with detailed insights into how the final price is determined, including car condition, demand trends, and auction results. There are no hidden charges or last-minute deductions, ensuring that sellers feel confident in their decision.

The post-valuation stage serves as the final checkpoint in the car-selling process, directly impacting how satisfied a seller feels about their transaction. By offering competitive pricing, meeting seller expectations, ensuring fast payments, and maintaining transparency, vehicle resale platform enhances trust and reliability. A smooth post-valuation experience encourages positive word-of-mouth and repeats usage, making it a preferred platform for selling used cars.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The research design is descriptive. The researchers selected the units for the study by convenience sampling method. The sellers graded the different service parameters on the Likert scale and the data is collected by structured questionnaire. The researcher collected data from 50 car sellers.

Result and discussion- The researchers conducted descriptive study to understand the data. The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the variable Match Price Expectation has the lowest mean, suggesting that respondents were generally less satisfied with how the offered price aligned with their expected price. This could imply that many sellers found the platform's price assessment to be lower than anticipated, leading to a gap between their expectations and the final deal. Such a discrepancy may arise due to various factors, including market fluctuations, differences in valuation criteria, or a lack of transparency in the pricing mechanism.

On the other hand, the variable Payment Process has the highest mean, indicating that respondents were most satisfied with this aspect of the service. A high mean score suggests that users found the payment process to be smooth, efficient, and reliable. This could be attributed to timely disbursement of funds, ease of transaction execution, and secure payment methods offered by the platform. A well-structured payment system enhances user confidence, ensuring a seamless post-sale experience.

From the standard deviation it can be observed that the promptness has high standard deviation and efficient inspection has lowest standard deviation. From the standard deviation values, it can be observed that promptness has a high standard deviation, indicating greater

variability in respondents' ratings. This suggests that individuals have diverse perceptions regarding the promptness of the service some may find it highly efficient, while others may perceive delays or inconsistencies. A high standard deviation typically reflects a lack of uniformity in service experiences, which may be due to factors such as differences in service execution, time of service delivery, or individual expectations.

On the other hand, efficient inspection has the lowest standard deviation, signifying that responses are more consistent across respondents. This implies that the inspection process is perceived with relative uniformity, meaning customers generally agree on its level of efficiency.

Thus, the difference in standard deviations highlights an area for potential service improvement. While efficient inspection appears stable and reliable, the variability in promptness suggests a need to streamline processes to ensure a more consistent service experience for all customers.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Median	SD
Overall Experience	3.32	3	0.555
Navigation Process	3.78	4	0.578
Transparency Evaluation	3.94	4	0.645
Professionalism	3.16	3	0.774
Promptness	3.53	4	1.018
Price Offered	3.95	4	0.58
Match Price Expectation	1.87	2	0.634
Efficient Inspection	2.86	3	0.46
Payment Process	4.57	5	0.68

(Source-Data Analysis)-

The researcher analysed the data for the seller satisfaction by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to understand the pre valuation and post valuation cofactors and its impact on the seller satisfaction. Before proceeding for the confirmatory analysis, the researcher conducted reliability test and from table 2 it can be observed that the reliability of the scale is. 875 The acceptable value of Cronbach alpha is 0.7 Thus from table 2 we can interpret that the items have high internal consistency.

Table 2
Scale Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's α
scale	0.865

(Source Data Analysis)-The factor analysis results provide valuable insights into the key determinants of user satisfaction with used car selling platforms, particularly after completing the sale. The analysis identifies two distinct dimensions of service experience: Post-Valuation Experience and Pre-Valuation Experience, each comprising multiple service parameters

graded by customers. The standardized estimates indicate the strength of association between each service attribute and the corresponding factor, offering a structured understanding of the critical drivers of customer satisfaction.

Table 3
CFA Analysis of the sellers satisfaction

Factor	Indicator	Standard Estimate
Post valuation		
	Price offered	0.8525
	Match price expectation	0.7073
	Payment process	0.2978
	Transparency in evaluation	0.0764
Pre valuation		
	Professionalism	0.8805
	Efficient inspection	0.5465
	Promptness	0.2346
	Navigate process	0.1288

(Source Data Analysis)

Post-Valuation Experience-The post-valuation phase encompasses aspects that directly impact sellers after the vehicle has been appraised and a price has been offered. The findings from table 1 indicate that-

Price Offered (0.8525) emerges as the most influential factor, suggesting that the amount received for the vehicle significantly determines overall satisfaction. This implies that sellers perceive the financial outcome as the primary measure of a successful transaction.

Match Price Expectation (0.7073) is also strongly associated with post-valuation satisfaction. This indicates that beyond the absolute value of the offer, the degree to which it aligns with the seller's prior expectations plays a crucial role in shaping their overall perception of the platform.

Payment Process (0.2978) has a relatively weaker loading, implying that while the efficiency and reliability of the payment mechanism matter, they are secondary considerations compared to price-related concerns. This suggests that sellers may tolerate minor delays or procedural steps in payment as long as they receive a satisfactory price.

Transparency in Evaluation (0.0764) exhibits an extremely low loading, indicating that transparency in the valuation process has minimal impact on overall satisfaction. This suggests that while customers may appreciate transparency, they are primarily concerned with the final price and whether it meets their expectations.

Pre-Valuation Experience- The pre-valuation phase refers to the interactions and procedural aspects before the price is determined. This includes initial engagement, vehicle inspection, and the overall ease of navigating the selling process. The results indicate that-

Professionalism (0.8805) has the highest loading in this category, emphasizing that the conduct, expertise, and communication skills of platform representatives are paramount in shaping positive user experiences. This suggests that sellers highly value a courteous and knowledgeable approach from service personnel.

Efficient Inspection (0.5465) has a moderate impact on satisfaction, indicating that the thoroughness and speed of the vehicle assessment contribute meaningfully to the seller's perception of service quality. However, this factor is less critical than professionalism, implying that customers prioritize interpersonal interactions over procedural efficiency.

Promptness (0.2346) has a relatively low loading, suggesting that while timeliness in service delivery is appreciated, it is not a decisive factor in determining satisfaction. This implies that sellers may be willing to wait slightly longer if other aspects, such as professionalism and price fairness, are met.

Navigate Process (0.1288) exhibits a weak association, indicating that ease of navigation through the platform's selling process is not a primary determinant of satisfaction. This suggests that sellers are willing to adapt to the platform's process as long as other critical factors, such as price and professionalism, are addressed effectively.

V. Conclusion- The results highlight a hierarchy of customer expectations in the context of used car selling platforms. Post-valuation aspects, particularly the price offered and its alignment with seller expectations, emerge as the most influential determinants of satisfaction. While operational aspects such as payment process efficiency and transparency in valuation contribute, their relative importance is significantly lower.

In the pre-valuation phase, professionalism in customer interaction is the most critical factor, surpassing other considerations such as inspection efficiency, promptness, and ease of navigation. This suggests that sellers prioritize trust and competent engagement over procedural efficiency.

From a managerial perspective, used car selling platforms should focus on ensuring competitive pricing and setting realistic customer expectations regarding price to enhance satisfaction levels. Additionally, maintaining high levels of professionalism among service personnel is crucial, as it significantly influences the seller's overall perception of the service. While efficiency and ease of process navigation are relevant, they do not appear to be primary drivers of satisfaction, suggesting that platforms should prioritize staff training and transparent pricing mechanisms over minor procedural enhancements.

These insights provide a clear direction for service improvement, emphasizing the importance of financial outcomes in post-valuation satisfaction and the role of interpersonal service quality in pre-

valuation experiences. By addressing these areas strategically, used car selling platforms can enhance customer satisfaction and build stronger trust with sellers.

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Paid Menstrual Cleave: Policy, Framework, Implementation and Empirical Analysis

• **Vandana Singh**

Abstract- *Menstruation, a natural biological process, continues to face deep-rooted stigma and neglect in workplace policies in India. This study examines the Paid Menstrual Leave Policy through a legal, social, and empirical lens, highlighting its necessity for women's empowerment and gender equality. The research traces the historical evolution of menstrual leave globally—from Russia (1920s) and Japan (1947) to recent models in Spain and South Korea—and contrasts these with India's limited legislative initiatives. Despite isolated efforts in states like Bihar, Kerala, and Odisha, the absence of a national framework undermines the fundamental rights of women under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Indian Constitution. The article critically analyses judicial responses, policy debates, and societal attitudes toward menstrual health. Empirical data reveal overwhelming support for paid menstrual leave and workplace sanitation facilities, emphasizing the demand for dignity, rest, and inclusion. The findings underscore that implementing a structured menstrual leave framework would enhance productivity, destigmatize women's health, and promote constitutional equality. Thus, paid menstrual leave must evolve from a social discussion to a statutory right within India's gender-sensitive policy agenda.*

Keywords- *Menstrual Leave Policy, Gender Equality, Women Empowerment, Workplace Health and Inclusivity*

Introduction- Menstruation, a natural biological process, has long been stigmatized and overlooked in workplace policies. India is a country with various customs, traditions, policies, and conventions. However, paid menstrual leaves remain undiscussed in the society. People even follow preconceived notions that girls should not enter the kitchen or temple or even have their shadow close to the pickle. In recent past several countries and companies have introduced Menstrual Leave Policies. Its menstruation causes cramps, pain, emotional distress, discomfort, and much more. Women and transgender individuals who have a functioning uterus and ovary have menstruation. This painful health issue of female workers and employees is required to be addressed. It is amazing that issues have all along been overlooked by every quarter of society be it government or the policy makers or the employer as well. Now the time has come not only to take cognizance of this issue but to formulate and implement a legal

framework for paid menstrual leaves, to women workers and employees.

The paid menstrual leave policy will foster the spirit of women empowerment and gender equality, along with a work inclusive environment. This article aims to articulate the global landscape, implications and the necessity of paid menstrual leave policy. It is depicted from various case studies that there is a violation of fundamental rights of working women enshrined/guaranteed under/by Articles 14, 15, and 21 of Indian Constitution. The article also studies how many states and companies have incorporated the policy of paid menstrual leave into their legal system. Unlike Japan, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Zambia, and Indonesia, India has no specific paid menstrual leave policy. Formulating policies for paid menstrual leave will not only reflect but boost the true spirit of equality incorporated by the Framers in The Constitution.

Historical Context

At the beginning of the 20th century, post-Revolutionary Russia implemented a menstruation leave policy in a few occupational categories.

However, because of the resulting discrimination against female workers, the policy was removed in 1927.

In 1911 Germany introduces "Women's Protection Law," allowing women to take breaks during menstruation. Soviet Union grants women paid leave during menstruation in 1920s. A girls' school in the south Indian state of Kerala had granted its students menstrual leave as in the 1920s

Current Global Landscape

Japanese labor unions started to demand leave during menstruation for their female workers. In 1947, a law was brought into force by the Japanese Labor Standards that allowed menstruating women to take 1-2 days of paid leave per month. The Japanese initiative marked a starting point for other countries to implement the same policies for their menstruation population. In 1948, Indonesia implemented the menstrual leave policy, where women are given two days of leave per month. 1950s Italy, France, and Sweden introduce similar policies. Asian countries (e.g., Taiwan, South Korea) adopt menstrual leave policies 1970s, which South Korea introduced it in 2001, where the menstruating population is given one day off per week. Recently, in 2013, Taiwan established a menstrual leave policy, wherein women are allowed three days off work. A similar rule known as "Mother's Day" is also in place in Zambia, allowing mothers to take time off without having to give a rationale or medical explanation. In 1980s Latin American countries (e.g., Brazil, Argentina) follow suit. 1990s European Union promotes menstrual leave policies.

Modern Developments:

In 2014 Taiwan introduces 3-day paid menstrual leave policy. In 2016 China's Guangdong Province introduces paid menstrual leave. In 2017 India's Maharashtra state introduces paid menstrual leave. In 2018 South Korea expands menstrual leave policy to 2 days. 2020 Spain introduces 3 day paid menstrual leave policy.

Some companies have started giving menstruation leave like Nike introduces flexible menstrual leave policy in 2016, in 2017 Zomato India offers 10 days of paid menstrual leave/year and 2018 Microsoft Japan introduces flexible menstrual leave policy.

There is no menstruation leave policy in India. Nevertheless, there was fierce opposition to a private member's bill that was introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2017 and called for two paid menstrual leave days per month for all women working in the public and private sectors. Since 1992, the Bihar State government in India has implemented a menstruation leave policy that provides two monthly paid leave to female employees under the state government's auspices.

In January 2023, a public interest lawsuit (PIL) was submitted to the Supreme Court of India requesting that all States be directed to develop a policy for menstruation leave for working women and female students in accordance with the requirements of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. The Supreme Court refused to entertain a PIL seeking a direction to all the states to frame rules for menstrual pain leave for female students and working women at their respective workplaces, observing that the issue falls under the policy domain of the government, The PIL petitioner was given the freedom to contact the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development with a representation in order to request a policy decision on the matter after the case was dismissed by a bench led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud.

“This is a policy matter so we are not dealing with this...Having regard to the policy views, it would be appropriate if the petitioner approaches the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development. The petition is accordingly disposed of,” said the bench which also comprised justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala.

The Supreme Court making it mandatory for employers to grant menstrual leave could be counter-productive on women's participation in the workforce but asked Centre to consider framing a model policy on the issue after consulting states and stakeholders. Allows petitioner to move Centre with the plea.

“In no instance has it ever been reported that a menstrual leave policy prevents employers from hiring women,” wrote sociologist Manjima Bhattacharjya, the author of *Intimate Cities*, in *The Indian Express* newspaper, making a case for menstrual policies because they create healthier, more equal workplaces. But even as the national government dithers, state governments are blazing the trail in mandating menstrual leave in response to and in encouragement of women's participation in the workforce, which has nearly doubled from 22 per cent in 2017 to 40.3 per cent in 2023.

In November, Odisha announced that working women in the public and private sectors would be given one day of menstrual leave per month. The leave is optional and can be taken on the first or second day of the menstrual cycle.

The Supreme Court of India recently made a thought-provoking statement, saying "if men had menstruation, they would know". This remark was made in response to the Madhya Pradesh High Court's decision to dismiss a lady judge following her miscarriage.

The case involves a female judicial officer who was terminated due to her low performance score and disposal rate of cases. However, the Supreme Court intervened, reinstating four other officers who were dismissed for similar reasons. The lady judge, in question, argued that her termination was unfair and violated her fundamental rights under Articles 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution.

The Supreme Court has sought clarification from the Madhya Pradesh High Court on the criteria used for terminating civil judges and has scheduled a further hearing on the matter. This case highlights the need for greater understanding and support for women in the workplace, particularly those facing health issues related to menstruation and pregnancy.

Four attempts by MPs in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2022 to introduce menstrual benefit laws failed to even be approved for discussion in Parliament. In India, politicians who have dismissed it include former women and child development minister Smriti Irani, who asked in 2023: "Why should a woman's menstrual cycle be known to her employer?"

In November 2024, the eastern state of Odisha established a one-day leave per month. In 2023, the southern state of Kerala allowed female students at all universities and institutes to have their attendance requirements for menstrual problems lowered by 2%. The southern state of Karnataka is finalizing a legislation that will provide women with six days of paid menstruation leave annually.

In a pioneering move, the Sikkim High Court has introduced a menstrual leave policy for its women employees, marking a first for any High Court in India. Announced on May 27, the policy allows women employees in the registry to avail themselves of "2-3 days of menstrual leave" each month. Sikkim University has introduced a one-day menstrual leave policy for its female students. The initiative allows girl and women students to take one day off each month during their menstrual cycle. This decision is effective immediately.

Despite religious and cultural stigmas around menstruation in India, several corporations, big and small, are reviewing their human resource policies to offer time off or flexible workdays for their women and transgender employees during menstruation.

The Indian constitution contains several clauses allowing women to take time off, particularly considering the 2017 revisions to the Maternity Benefit Act that included a paid leave of twenty-six weeks. Similarly, a woman who is caring for a maximum of two minor children under the age of eighteen may take use of (paid) childcare leave, for a maximum of 730 days, at any point during her continuous employment. These laws emphasize how crucial a woman's role in raising her family is. Moreover, India is a signatory

of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women or CEDAW and refusing menstrual leave leads to the violation of the provisions of the convention. The convention recognizes that discrimination against women includes gender-based distinctions that exhibit inequality. If menstrual leave is refused to be provided, then it will lead to discrimination against women in all aspects of life and thus India will fail to meet the obligations of CEDAW as it is a signatory to the convention.

Menstrual leave and Industrial Law

India's industrial legislation, which governs the interaction between employees and management in industrial facilities, and the provision of menstruation leave overlap.

Industrial law includes laws related to collective bargaining, trade unions, industrial disputes, and the regulation of working conditions. In the context of menstrual leave, the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, which applies to all establishments employing more than 100 workers, provides guidelines for the granting of leave to workers.

Although this Act makes no explicit mention of menstrual leave, some Indian businesses have implemented such policies to acknowledge and solve the difficulties that women have throughout their menstrual cycles.

However, there are concerns that menstrual leave policies could be misused or abused by employers, or that they could lead to discrimination against women in hiring or promotion decisions. To address these concerns and ensure that women are treated fairly and equitably in the workplace, it is important to establish clear guidelines for the provision of menstrual leave and to ensure that employers are held accountable for complying with these guidelines.

Menstrual Leave and women's Empowerment

In India, offering menstruation leave has the potential to be a potent instrument for women's empowerment. By recognizing the unique challenges that women face during their menstrual cycles and providing them with time off to manage their symptoms, menstrual leave can help to promote gender equality in the workplace and improve women's overall well-being. One way in which menstrual leave can empower women is by allowing them to take control of their own health and well-being. Women who can take time off work during their menstrual cycles are better able to manage their symptoms and take care of themselves, which can lead to improved physical and mental health. This, in turn, can help to reduce absenteeism and increase productivity. In addition to improving women's health, menstrual leave can also help to promote gender equality in the workplace by reducing the stigma and discrimination that women face. By recognizing the challenges that women face during their menstrual cycles and providing them with time off to manage their symptoms, employers can demonstrate their commitment to creating a workplace that is inclusive and supportive of women. Finally, menstrual leave can also help to promote women's economic empowerment by reducing the gender pay

gap and improving women's overall employment prospects. By providing women with the flexibility to manage their menstrual cycles, employers can help to create a more level playing field for women in the workplace, which can lead to greater economic opportunities and better outcomes for women and their families. Therefore, menstrual leave is an important policy issue that can greatly promote women's empowerment in India. Menstrual leave can support gender equality in the workplace and enhance women's general well-being by acknowledging the difficulties that women encounter during their periods and giving them time off to manage their symptoms. Feminism and Menstrual Leaves in India, granting menstrual leave can be viewed as a feminist issue since it aims to address the unique difficulties that women encounter at work because of their menstrual cycles. Promoting gender equality and addressing the ways in which women face discrimination in society are central to feminism. One of the ways in which women are disadvantaged in the workplace is through the stigmatization of menstruation. By recognizing the difficulties women encounter during their menstrual cycles and giving them time off to manage their symptoms, menstruation leave aims to combat this stigma. Menstrual leave can also be seen as a way of promoting women's agency and autonomy. By providing women with the ability to manage their menstrual cycles in a way that is convenient and supportive of their well-being, menstrual leave can help women to feel more in control of their bodies and their lives. These can 'Why India Must Know Periods to Understand Period Leave help to promote a sense of empowerment and self-determination among women, which is a key goal of feminist movements. Menstrual leave can also aid in the challenging of established gender roles and gender stereotypes. Menstrual leave can challenge the notion that women are exclusively responsible for taking care of the home and providing care by giving them time off to manage their menstrual cycles. It also shows that women are capable and valuable members of the workforce. India's Menstrual Bill there isn't a distinct "Menstrual Bill" now.

However, there have been several initiatives and proposals aimed at addressing menstrual health and hygiene in the country. In 2018, the Indian government launched the "National Menstrual Hygiene Scheme" to promote menstrual hygiene management among adolescent girls and women. The scheme includes the provision of free sanitary pads to girls in rural areas, as well as the construction of menstrual hygiene management facilities in schools and other public spaces. The provision of menstrual leave as a legal provision in India is currently under discussion, and there are ongoing debates and consultations around its implementation. The legalization of menstruation leave can address gender and menstrual stigma while also advancing women's health, empowerment, and well-being.

Menstrual Leave and Indian Judiciary- Menstrual leave is a policy that permits women to take paid or unpaid time off from work during their

menstrual cycle. This policy has been gaining traction in many countries, including India. In India, there have been several cases where the judiciary has addressed issue of menstrual leave. For example, in 2017, the Mumbai-based media company Culture Machine introduced a policy that allowed women employees to take the first day of their period off as a paid day. This move was widely appreciated and was covered by several media outlets. In another instance, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) was directed by the Delhi High Court in 2019 to grant menstrual leave to its female employees. Menstruation is a normal biological function, the court stated, and women shouldn't be forced to endure hardship during this time. It is crucial to remember, though, that menstrual leave is not required by Indian law, and company-specific policies differ. Menstrual leave is still a relatively new idea, and some people are against it because they believe it could stigmatize women and cause discrimination at work.

Menstrual Leave and Education System

The concept of menstrual leave has also been discussed in the context of the education system in India. Many girls in India face challenges attending school during their menstrual cycles due to lack of access to sanitary products, inadequate facilities, and social stigma. To address these challenges, some schools have introduced menstrual leave policies that allow girls to take time off during their period. For example, in 2017, a school in Kerala announced that it would provide menstrual leave to its female students. This move was aimed at reducing absenteeism among girls and helping them to manage their periods in a more comfortable and dignified way.

However, some have also attacked the idea of menstrual leave in schools, claiming that it could perpetuate negative ideas about menstruation and lead to discrimination against girls. Instead, they suggest that schools should focus on improving menstrual hygiene facilities and education, so that girls can manage their periods without having to miss school. Therefore, the issue of menstrual leave in the education system is a complex one that requires a nuanced approach. While some schools have introduced such policies, it is important to ensure that they are implemented in a way that does not stigmatize or discriminate against girls. At the same time, efforts should be made to improve menstrual hygiene facilities and education, so that girls can manage their periods without having to miss out on their education.

The Right of Women to Menstrual Leave and Free Access to Menstrual Health Products Bill, 2022- In the Lok Sabha, at least three attempts were made in recent years to bring in private member Bills to propose menstrual leave. Recently, a proposed bill called the "Right of Women to Menstrual Leave and Free Access to Menstrual Health Products Bill, 2022" have been introduced. This bill provides for the novel idea of a type of leave where women and trans women may have the option of taking a paid leave for three days from their workplace during the period of menstruation and extend the benefit to students.

The bill cites research that indicates that menstruation affects girls' education, with approximately 40% of girls missing school during their periods, and nearly 65% saying it has an impact on daily activities at school.

²⁸ Here 'leave' shall mean full entitlement of women to complete wages during the period of menstruation. But a legal framework is not envisaged yet.

Pros

Providing menstrual leave not only supports women's health and well-being but also promotes productivity and efficiency in the workplace. It allows women to manage their menstrual symptoms without compromising their professional responsibilities. By providing a specific menstrual leave for this, the difficulties faced by women during menstruation can be addressed properly. The deeply rooted disregard, willful invisibility, and stigma attached to the menstrual cycle in social, political, and economic spheres of life are eliminated by implementing a menstrual leave policy. Social justice is ensured by such a gender-inclusive policy.

It enables women from various socioeconomic situations to enter the workforce, enhance their financial security, and support societal economic development. In addition to promoting women's health and wellbeing, menstruation leave increases workplace efficiency and productivity. It enables women to control their menstruation symptoms without sacrificing their ability to fulfill their work obligations. The challenges that women encounter during their periods can be effectively addressed by granting a dedicated menstrual leave for this purpose. Implementing a menstrual leave policy eliminates the stigma, purposeful obscurity, and deep-rooted disrespect for the menstrual cycle that exist in the social, political, and economic realms of life. Such a gender-inclusive approach ensures social justice.

It makes it possible for women from different socioeconomic backgrounds to join the labor, improve their financial stability, and contribute to the economic growth of society. This prevents unplanned absence, which over time can have detrimental financial effects and impair productivity, for people who suffer greatly, such as those experiencing excruciating pain or significant bleeding.

However, as it is a fundamental necessity, a policy allowing for menstrual leave cannot compensate for the absence of sufficient public infrastructure for women. This is especially true for people working in blue-collar jobs, the unorganized sector, and rural areas. Therefore, improving the working environment for women necessitates a two-pronged strategy that addresses both legislation and infrastructure.

Cons

There are many people who criticize the need for a special, paid menstrual leave for the menstruating individuals. One of the main worries is that it can unintentionally contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes that portray women as the weaker sex and deny them equality in terms of status and opportunities.

Additionally, employers will refrain from hiring menstruating employees as the overall reputation and productivity of the country may be at stake a lot of times. The capabilities and strengths of a woman at work would be overlooked and the focus would be on the fact that she is granted a paid menstrual leave.²⁹

Employers and employees may not agree with the menstrual leave policy. Because it may be viewed as a particular privilege for women, hiring women may be impacted. Given that hiring women is thought to be costly, particularly if paid menstrual leave is provided, they might be passed over because of their gender. Additionally, this strategy may make it more difficult for them to get promotions, incentives, or assessments. Menstrual status disclosure for leave purposes may promote objectification and bring attention to a private matter. Coworkers may not always understand menstruation leave takers, which could lead to an antiquated and inefficient workplace.

Another problem is that women's privacy will be violated by the menstrual leave policy since they would have to disclose their monthly information to their department heads or supervisors. Additionally, there is a chance that the leave will be abused, which would raise employee absenteeism. The goal of enforcing the menstrual leave policy may be defeated by this alone. The legitimacy of the leave might also be questioned, which might also apply to other sick leave recipients.

Many, however, are against this suggestion, arguing that its implementation would promote discrimination against women because they would be perceived as having less employment-related opportunities and would push India backwards by denying them equal opportunities.

Considering the reasons made by proponents and opponents, it is essential to develop a specific policy that can reduce prejudice and advance workplace inclusion.

Flexible Leave Policies-

1. Allow employees to take leave when needed.
2. Confidentiality and Support: Designated HR personnel, counseling services.
3. Education and Awareness: Workshops, training programs.
4. Inclusive Language: Avoid stigmatizing language.
5. Standardized Guidelines: Develop regulatory frameworks.
6. Phased Implementation: Gradual rollout.
7. Partnerships: Collaborate with NGOs and health organizations.
8. Technology Integration: Online leave management systems

Implementing Menstrual Leave Policies requires careful consideration of potential challenges and solutions. By addressing stigma, ensuring confidentiality, and promoting inclusivity, organizations can create supportive work environments.

Significance of providing menstrual leave policy in India

Respects fundamental rights: The Constitution's Articles 14 (Right to Equality) and 21 (Right to Life) may both be compatible with menstrual leave.

Furthermore, Article 15(3) of the Constitution gives the State the authority to create special measures for women and children.

focuses on the health requirements of women: Women's everyday life is impacted by the range of moderate to severe symptoms that accompany menstruation, including exhaustion and cramps.

Furthermore, women's hygiene and reproductive health may be impacted by inadequate sanitary facilities at work.

Reduces presenteeism: It would give businesses and society a chance to reconsider perceptions of work ethic and absenteeism.

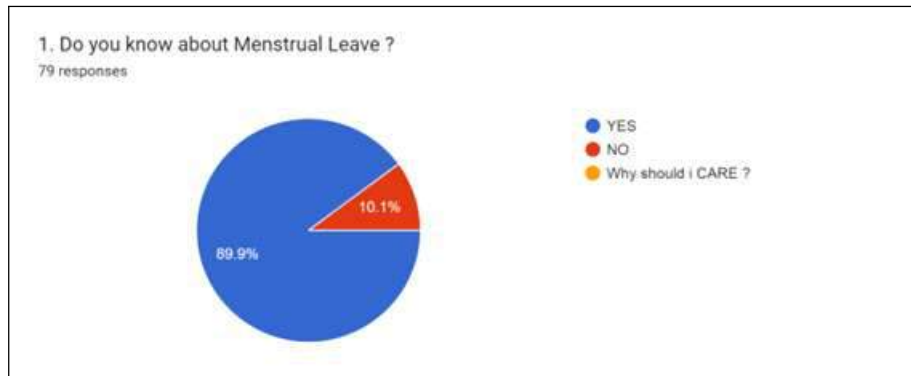
Increases productivity: It will contribute to the development of a positive workplace culture and environment, which will improve overall productivity and promote more favourable workplace dynamics.

De-stigmatizes discussion around women's health: Discussion about menstruation among all employees may foster support for women's reproductive health and reproductive rights.³⁰

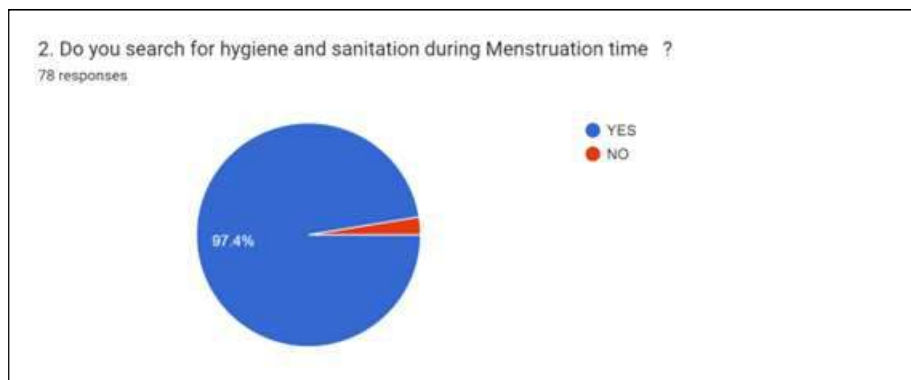
Conclusion- The provision of menstrual leave as a legal provision in India can have significant benefits for women's health, well-being, and empowerment. By recognizing the unique challenges that women face during their menstrual cycles and providing them with time off to manage their symptoms, menstrual leave can help to reduce absenteeism and improve productivity, while also promoting gender equality in the workplace and challenging gender stereotypes. However, the implementation of menstrual leave as a legal provision in India requires careful consideration and planning to ensure that it is effective, equitable, and sustainable. This includes consultation with stakeholders, including employers, employees, and menstrual health experts, as well as the development of clear guidelines and policies to ensure that the provision of menstrual leave is consistent and fair. Furthermore, menstrual leave should be seen as one part of a broader effort to address menstrual stigma and improve menstrual health and hygiene in India. This requires a multi-sectoral approach that includes education, awareness-raising, and the provision of affordable and accessible menstrual products and services. In a nutshell, the implementation of menstrual leave as a legal provision in India has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of women, promoting their health, wellbeing, and empowerment and helping to build a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

For such a rule to be strictly enforced, it is imperative that the discussion and debate surrounding it begin right once, and that labor laws and well-thought-out working policies be in place. There are already enough prejudices against women in the workplace and elsewhere, therefore a thoughtful, well-thought-out, and well-planned policy must be included if this measure is to succeed. It will undoubtedly be challenging to propose a "Menstrual Leave" policy in a nation where the term "menstruation" is viewed with disdain and raised eyebrows, but it will be a much-needed step in the right direction.

Empirical Analysis of paid Menstruation Leave Policy

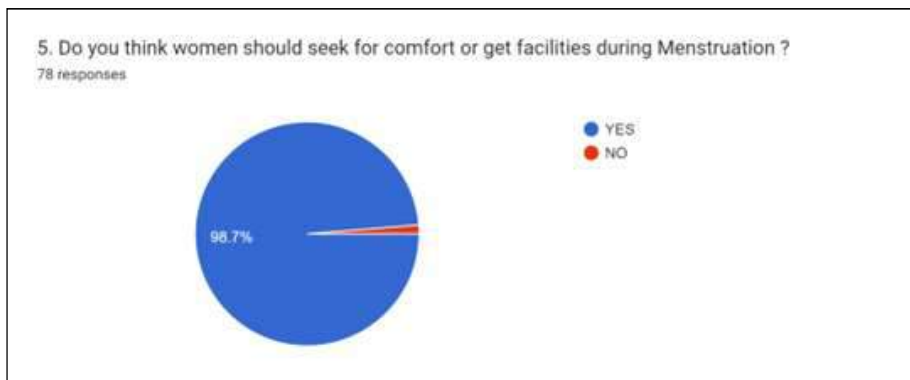


The pie chart illustrates awareness about **menstrual leave** among 79 respondents. A significant **89.9% answered "YES"**, indicating strong familiarity with the concept. Only **10.1% responded "NO"**, revealing a small group still unaware. Notably, no one selected the dismissive option "Why should I care?", which suggests general recognition of the topic's importance. This data demonstrates that the vast majority are informed about menstrual leave, a useful foundation for initiating discussions or policies that support menstrual well-being in schools, workplaces, or public health initiatives.

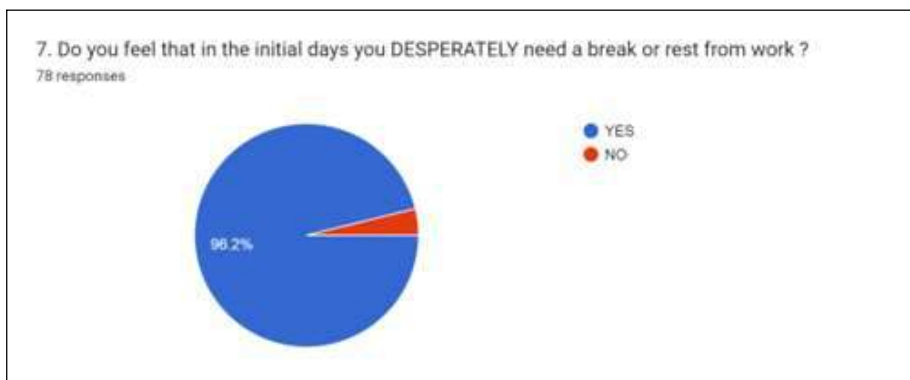


The chart highlights how individuals prioritize hygiene and sanitation at workplace during menstruation. Out of 78 respondents, **97.4% said "Yes"** they actively seek hygiene and sanitation resources, while only **2.6% responded "No."** This overwhelming majority shows strong awareness about menstrual health and suggests a need for proper facilities and support during menstruation at workplace. It also reinforces the importance of advocating for **menstrual leave**, as access to hygiene and rest is clearly a concern for most menstruators. This data can be crucial in pushing for workplace or institutional policies that respect menstrual health needs.

The chart shows that out of 79 respondents, 96.2% believe workplaces should provide specific sanitary facilities, while only 3.8% disagree. This strong consensus highlights the critical connection between menstrual health and workplace infrastructure. Accessible sanitary facilities are essential for implementing effective menstrual leave policies, as they support hygienic practices and reduce discomfort or stigma. The overwhelming support emphasises the need for employers to consider menstrual wellbeing as part of their inclusive and supportive work culture. Such facilities aren't just about hygiene, they represent dignity, accessibility, and care for menstruating employees.

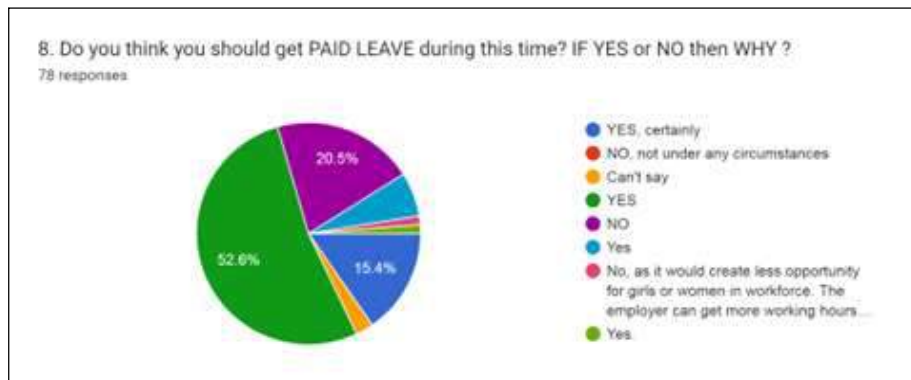


The chart shows that 98.7% of the 78 respondents agree that women should receive comfort or facilities during menstruation, while just 1.3% said no. This overwhelming majority reflects strong support for menstrual health accommodations, reinforcing the need for menstrual leave policies in workplaces or institutions. It highlights the understanding that menstruation can affect comfort and productivity, and that providing supportive measures is both compassionate and necessary. The data signals a societal shift toward destigmatizing menstruation and ensuring that environments are inclusive, humane, and responsive to women's health needs.



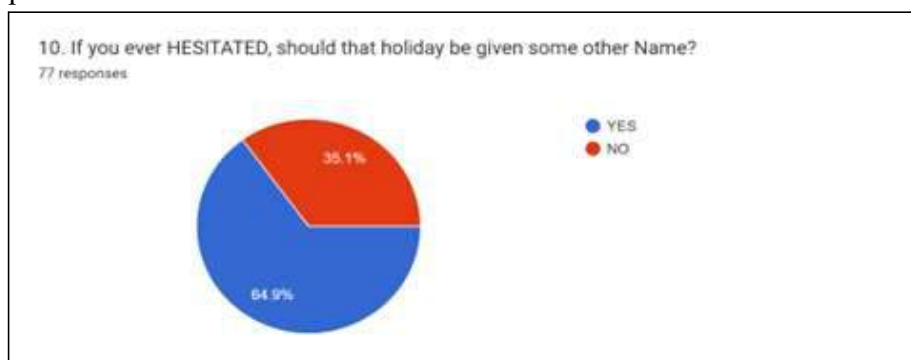
The chart reveals that 96.2% of 78 respondents feel they desperately need a break or rest from work during the initial days of menstruation, while only 3.8% do not. This overwhelming agreement highlights a critical

demand for menstrual leave, particularly to accommodate the discomfort and fatigue commonly experienced at the start of a cycle. The data underscores the importance of institutional recognition of menstrual challenges and supports the implementation of flexible leave policies. Addressing these needs can foster a more empathetic, productive, and gender-inclusive work or study environment.

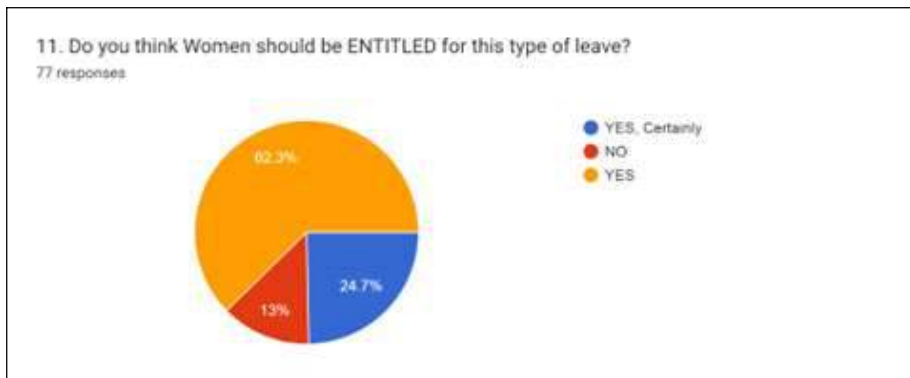


The pie chart presents a breakdown of 78 responses to the question: “Do you think you should get PAID LEAVE during this time? IF YES or NO, then WHY?” A strong majority supports paid menstrual leave, with 52.6% responding “Yes” and another 15.4% saying “Yes, certainly.” This indicates that over two-thirds of respondents favor the idea, either with firm or definite agreement.

Conversely, 20.5% responded with a simple “No,” and an additional 2.6% firmly opposed it under any circumstances. A small group, around 1.3% expressed concerns that implementing paid menstrual leave could limit work opportunities for women, suggesting fears of workplace inequality or bias. Meanwhile, 5.1% were undecided or uncertain. This range of opinions reflects both strong support and notable hesitation. While the majority clearly advocates for menstrual leave as a right tied to health and dignity, others worry about the potential unintended consequences for workplace dynamics and gender equity. The chart underscores the importance of deeper conversations and thoughtful policy development that balances health needs with inclusive, non-discriminatory frameworks in professional environments.



The pie chart reflects opinions on renaming menstrual leave. Out of 77 respondents, 64.9% believe the leave should be given a different name, while 35.1% oppose changing the term. This majority suggests that many people may feel discomfort with the current terminology, possibly due to stigma or cultural sensitivity. On the other hand, the significant minority in favour of keeping the name indicates a desire for openness and normalisation of menstruation in public discourse. The chart underscores the ongoing debate around not just policy, but also language, highlighting how naming can influence acceptance and perception of menstrual leave.



The pie chart reveals that 87% of 77 respondents believe women should be entitled to menstrual leave 62.3% said “Yes,” and 24.7% chose “Yes, certainly.” In contrast, only 13% answered “No.” This strong majority highlights a widespread acknowledgement of the need for formal menstrual leave policies. The results suggest that most people view menstruation-related discomfort and health concerns as legitimate reasons for time off. The chart underscores a shift toward normalising menstrual health in professional and institutional settings, emphasising dignity, support, and inclusivity for those who menstruate.

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Sarala Behn- A grassroots advocate of Gandhian philosophy of Sarvodaya and Satyagraha

• Divya Kumar

Abstract- *The spirit of commitment, selfless service and sacrifice fostered by Mahatma Gandhi against colonialism united not only Indians against the British Raj but also quite a few British who, viewing the injustice and discrimination, turned against their own fellow citizens. They put their heart and soul in the Indian freedom struggle. Their participation caused deep embarrassment to colonial rule. Females too were not found wanting in courage and determination. Among them was Catherine (also Katherine) Mary Heilemann, later known as Sarala Behn. A true disciple of Gandhi and his philosophy of Sarvodaya and Satyagraha, she spent fifty years of her life in India, choosing never to return to the land of her birth after her arrival in 1932. A strong champion of female education and empowerment, she bore great sensitivity to environmental issues. Her ashram at Kausani speaks of her devotion and legacy towards India.*

Keywords- *Gandhian Philosophy, Sarvodaya and Satyagraha, Women Empowerment and Education, Environmental Conservation*

Sarala Behn is a prominent name in the galaxy of British women associated with Mahatma Gandhi. Foreigner by birth but essentially Indian in spirit, she identified herself completely with India and her cause. She was a prominent figure in promoting conversation across cultures and made the world aware of the oppression and indignity that the colonizers indulged in, leading to great misery and suffering of the Indians. This can appropriately be illustrated by the incident at Almora, just after the 'Quit India Movement' of 1942. The then British Deputy Commissioner J.C. Donaldson (1943-46) could not resist showing his imperialistic bent of mind when he rebuked a British woman thus: "You should feel ashamed of yourself. Just think how the District Judge would have felt knowing that barring one white woman, all are bidding with his instructions!" This woman, who had been declared by the Almora administration as 'the most seditious person of the district' was none other than Gandhi's staunch disciple: she was Miss Catherine (also Katherine) Mary Heilemann, later named Sarala Behn (1901-1982).

Sarala Behn spent fifty years of her life (1932-1982) in India. Till her last breath, that is, till July 1982, she continued to serve the people of Almora selflessly and with complete devotion. So complete was her

devotion towards India that she detested being called a 'foreigner'. Her modern views could be seen in manifold ways: she wanted education to be such that it would make one self-reliant. In other ways, it needed to be practical and useful. We can draw its parallel to the imperativeness of vocational education in present times. She also wanted to reform the status of the women and empower them. Her concern for protection and preservation of the environment add to her personality. Finally, caste or colour, nation or state held no barrier for her. She perceived Man as Vishwa-Maanav and the world as a composite whole.

In this connection, one cannot help recalling the other two Britons-Miss Madeleine Slade or Mira Behn (1892-1982), whom Gandhi called his 'daughter', and Marjorie Sykes (1905-1995). Gandhian concepts of non-violence, independence, socio-cultural and educational uplift brought them to India from Great Britain. Alien country and culture did not dissuade them. In fact, double standards of the British and their denial of application of liberty and self-respect in the context of Indians appalled them. Realizing the urgency of freeing India from the shackles of their mother country, they threw themselves heart and soul in the struggle for India's independence which landed them behind the bars or they were even viewed with suspicion. Sensitive to the environment around them and compassionate towards the dejected, homeless and downtrodden, they settled down in India in adverse terrains, established ashrams and made Indians self-reliant in many ways.

This research paper intends to discuss the life and legacy of Sarala Behn, an ardent disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. The commitment towards India and her modern views towards racial prejudice, female education and emancipation, vocational education and self-reliance call for attention. Bearing deep interest in Philogyny, she learnt Hindi fast and stressed upon its usage. This strengthened her connection with the common populace. Her deep concern for environmental protection and conservation is truly commendable. She was a great institution builder. Such was her assimilation with Indian culture that once when asked what her original name was, she said that she had forgotten it long ago. After all, there was no need for it! Through this paper, an attempt has also been made to compare her life and contribution with the two British women Mira Behn and Marjorie Sykes. Various primary and secondary sources have been put to use for this research paper. Of great importance is her autobiography published as *Vyavaharik Vedanta ki Atmakatha*. The recollections of her contemporaries, students and followers too have thrown great light upon her personality. Notable among these is Sarala Behan Smriti Granth. Another source of relevance is *Rebels of the Raj: Western Fighters for India's Freedom* of Ramchandra Guha. In this work, he considers her one of the seven white 'renegades' who identified themselves with India and stuck to higher universal ideals. They played a vital role in alerting the West about the misery and indignation which colonization brought. Additionally, the article by Bidisha Mallik titled *Legends in Gandhian Social Activism: Mira Behn and Sarala Behn* have been of great worthwhile comparing the two ladies whose lives took a definite turn on coming in contact with Mahatma Gandhi.

Sarala Behn was born on 5th of April, 1901 near London as Catherine Mary Heilemann. Her mother was British and her father was born in Switzerland. After marrying her mother, he had become a British citizen. Her paternal grandmother, who belonged to Wurttemberg, deeply influenced Catherine, making her tough in facing difficulties in life. Catherine inherited a broad, cosmopolitan view of the world¹ from these family members. This view was akin to the perception of Marjorie Sykes, an ardent disciple of Gandhi. Their similarities did not end there: incidentally, Marjorie Sykes too was influenced by her father who never categorised people or thought of nations as separately beyond entities, sects or class as stereotypes.² Also both developed love for nature in their childhood itself. Considering their economic status, while Catherine and Marjorie both belonged to middle class families, Madeleine Slade, another fervent adherent of Gandhi, hailed from a vastly different background. Daughter of a highly decorated naval officer, she belonged to a well-to-do aristocratic family.³ Madeleine Slade, Catherine Heilemann and Marjorie Sykes- all three had been witness to Britain's extreme prejudice against Germany. On the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Catherine was just thirteen years of age. Due to some discrepancies in birth certificate, her father was mistaken to be German and was severely stigmatized. Her family too faced great discrimination and social ostracism. Catherine herself was denied scholarship. Forced to discontinue her education mid-way, she had to work for a living. Even her colleagues viewed her suspiciously as a foe of Britain. Her woes did not end there. She soon lost her grandmother to whom she was deeply attached, and left home after a tiff with her father on a trivial issue.

During this period, she came into contact with some Indian students. They enlightened her about Gandhi, his non-violence and concepts of Swarajya and Satyagraha. In her autobiography, she expresses her lifelong indebtedness to them. They were the ones who had exposed to her the truth: it was exactly the opposite of British conviction, 'The White Man's Burden.'⁴ After his return from South Africa, Gandhi got a chance to view the British closely in India. During the course of the First World War and after it, events in succession disenchanted him and he plunged into the freedom struggle. Incidentally, this was the phase when he had launched the Non-co-operation Movement. His insistence on converting raw material of the villages into finished goods by employing indigenous- techniques impressed Catherine considerably. The idea sounded both practical and of economic value to her.⁵ By 1929, she began to think of coming to India.

In the 1920's, both Madeleine Slade and Marjorie Sykes had arrived. The former landed in India on 6th of November 1925 and Sykes arrived exactly three years later, in November 1928. While the former met Gandhi immediately on arrival: Sykes got this opportunity only in December 1938.⁶ Catherine met Gandhi in 1935⁷ after she came to India in 1932.

Catherine's arrival took place at a crucial juncture in Indian history. Gandhi had launched the Civil Disobedience Movement. As soon as a Satyagrahi fell to police lathicharge, another arose to take his or her place. Catherine felt that in a non-Christian country, the soul of Jesus had come

alive. She had always wanted to be a missionary. These events aroused such a feeling with greater intensity and to participate in Gandhian constructive programmes of spinning, eradication of untouchability, health, hygiene and education. She became even more keen to come to India. By then, Madeleine Slade had become Mira Behn. Accompanying Gandhi to London in 1931 for the second Round Table Conference, she acted as a bridge between him and the English people.⁸ Now, Catherine was even more determined. Initially, Gandhi dissuaded her but she did not lose heart. To make herself more useful in India, she began to be trained in maternity work and at the same time she resumed her studies. Soon, she passed the Intermediate examination. Thereafter, one Dr. Mohan Singh of Udaipur invited her to teach. One 4th of January 1932, she sailed for India for good: this was the turning point in her life. Like Marjorie Sykes, she started her career in India as a teacher but still yearned to join Gandhi in his various programs.

In the Dussehra break of 1935, she met Gandhi and Kasturba. The ten-day stay with them at Wardha made her familiar with Gandhi's activities. By that time, some people had already started addressing her as Sarala. When Gandhi acted as a mediator in the Ahmedabad mill strike, she reached there after which she proceeded to Bombay and Navabharat Vidyalaya, Wardha. Soon, after the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, under the new Congress Ministries, it was decided to set up the Zakir Hussain Committee to formulate the new curriculum- the Nayi Talim. Sarala Behn worked at Sevagram in Gandhi's Buniyadi Shaala. It was a coincidence that Marjorie was the Principal of Gandhi's ashram at Sevagram in his Basic Education Programme.⁹ During this period, Sarala Behn shuttled between Poona and Sevagram. At Sevagram, she met Acharya J.B. Kripalani and Shrimati Lilavati Devi. The latter told her about the ashram of Chanauda, Almora. Nature always attracted her. With Bapu's permission, she went to the ashram, spun Tibetan wool and lived there. She began to impart education to women and Congress workers. Such experiences led to a new awakening in her, casting their lifelong impression.

The Quit India Movement of 1942 was of great importance to the three women. Mira Behn remained behind bars from 11th August 1942 to 6th of May 1944.¹⁰ Marjorie Sykes contributed in her own way. She translated Rabindranath Tagore's Mukta-dhara (The Waterfall set Free) expressing the poet laureate's love for freedom. Soon, in the midst of the Quit India Movement, Marjorie shared the translation with students in South India. Only later, she discovered how much suspicion she had aroused in the minds of British authorities.¹¹ Then, there was Sarala Behn who had made British authorities wary at Almora by expressing her displeasure to officials at Chanauda about the ill-treatment of Congress activists. But all her requests went unheeded. Then, she began to collect money and foodgrains for families of the imprisoned Congress workers. For this, she was put behind the bars for three months. She was also accused of helping the local revolutionaries set fire to the turpentine depots of the forest departments. To scare her, the British Collector said that the Ashramites would be hanged for their 'misdeeds'. Sarala retorted calmly that he would be on ship home before

the sentence was carried out.¹² In 1944 again, she was imprisoned for one year. In the jail, she was impressed after reading Gandhi's translation of the Gita- the Anāsakti Yoga and Edwin Arnold's poem The Song Celestial.

Deeply committed towards female education, uplift, self-reliance and empowerment, on 5th of December 1946, Sarala set up the Kasturba Mahila Utthan Mandal at Kausani in Kumaun. Gandhi abundantly blessed her and Acharya Kripalani inaugurated it.¹³ Later, it was called Lakshmi Ashram. Local people were persuaded to send their daughters to this school. Preliminary Education was based on Nayi Talim or Basic Education Programme of Gandhi. Then, Sarala Behn sent the interested students to Sevagram Lakshmi Ashram committed towards physical, intellectual and aesthetic development of the poor girls to empower them in all fields. In addition to studies, they were initiated into cattle rearing, tilling of fields, making handicrafts and spinning besides learning the merits of liquor prohibition. She also got many married without dowry at the ashram itself. Since women constituted an inalienable part of the society, Sarala connecting Sarvodaya to female empowerment, thus said on February 10, 1962: "The rise of men will not lead to Sarvodaya [universal uplift], and until the women get support, or women do not themselves become the source of the power to guide in this path, our movement will not be successful."

Likewise, both Mira Behn and Marjorie Sykes set up ashrams in the remotest areas of India. Mira Behn had three ashrams, one in between Roorkee and Haridwar called Kisan Ashram, another called Pashulok near Rishikesh and the third situated in Tehri Garhwal, was known as Gopal Ashram. In these, Mira Behn engaged herself in farming experiments and sustainable dairying. Marjorie set up an ashram at Kotagiri in Nilgiri Hills of South India. All the three Gandhian disciples believed in serving the dejected and downtrodden.

She found a great following of people both in India and abroad. Among her notable disciples were Vimla, later the wife of Sunderlal Bahuguna, Radha, the Director of Lakshmi Ashram as also the Danish Ms. Marie Thger, one Briton Mr. David and so on. Through Lakshmi Ashram, Sarala Behn served the poor, particularly the women folk of the hilly areas. She wanted to make them self-reliant. Of her disciples, Radha Behn is noteworthy. After Sarala Behn, she was the guiding force behind the Ashram keeping itself in pace with the latest developments.¹⁴ The present-day Lakshmi Ashram owes greatly to her.

Both Sarala Behn and Marjorie Sykes sought inspiration from Vinoba Bhave (1895-1982), a champion of non-violence and human rights as also a highly venerated disciple of Gandhi. Sarala, believing in equitable distribution of wealth in the society, soon joined Vinoba in the Bhoodan Movement starting from the year 1952. Vinoba wanted her to work for female uplift in the plains of Uttar Pradesh but Sarala's heart resided in the hills. Lakshmi Ashram became the base of her activities. With her students, she toured the country, and contributed to programmes such as Bhoodan and Gramdan. For her, education meant continuous change and development. In this, she sought constant guidance of Marjorie Sykes who in turn, was a great admirer of

activities of Lakshmi Ashram.¹⁵

Mira Behn, Marjorie Sykes and Sarala Behn believed in being one of the Indians. Though not born in India, all the three assimilated themselves completely with this country. Rather, they were essentially Indian in spirit. All the three learnt the main Indian language Hindi. Sykes knew Tamil and Bengali as well. Sarala Behn had great command over Hindi and she generally refused to converse in English. All the three dressed themselves as Indian women do, in saree or salwar-kameez. Also, all the three believed in simplicity and hygiene. The Gandhian way of life gave them a definite direction. Both Sarala Behan and Marjorie Sykes believed in the Quaker faith. They combined the noble traditions of India with spiritual ideals of England. Opposing war and violence, they believed in peace, equality, truth and the good of the community.

From Gandhi, all three women learnt conservation of environment. For Sarala, there evolved a yearning for maintaining a balance between environment and human life. Cities never attracted her. That was one of the reasons why she never thought of returning to England. London for her was a city caught in the snare of materialism which had forgotten human values long ago. She devoted herself to the Kumaun region of present-day Uttarakhand. She also believed in naturopathy and homeopathy. Like Gandhi, she perceived women as conservers and thus, believed that forest wealth was safe in their hands.¹⁶ Sarala Behn viewed women of the hills as primary women and thus, family survival depended upon them. Correspondingly, she dedicated the last decade of her life towards the conservation of the environment and expressed her modern, farsighted view regarding the imperativeness of maintaining ecological balance in her three noteworthy works namely *Sanrakshan Ya Vinash?* and *Van aur Maanav* in Hindi and 'Revive Our Dying Planet' in English. She played a key role in the evolution of the Chipko movement. On receiving the Jannalal Bajaj Foundation Award of fifty thousand rupees for Exemplary Social Service, she donated it for the cause of environmental protection.

Sarala's deep concern for welfare of the four hundred and forty-two Chambal dacoits who had surrendered in the year 1972 showed her compassion for the dejected and despised once again. She took charge of their well-being in the jail. After all, they too were human beings needing love and care of their fellow human-beings.¹⁷

In 1975, Sarala Behan moved to a cottage at Dharamghar in Pithoragarh district where she lived till her death. On the occasion of her 75th birthday, she received from her followers the epithets of the 'daughter of the Himalayas' (Himalaya-kanyā) and 'mother of social activities' in Uttarakhand.

Sarala Behn passed away on the 8th of July 1982, her death preceding that of Mira Behn by twelve days who made her worldly exit in Vienna. Both however, were cremated according to Hindu rites. After all, India was their home. Marjorie Sykes had opted for Indian citizenship after the country gained independence on 15th of August 1947. For Sarala Behn, the concept of citizenship traversed geographical frontiers. She was a world

citizen and always greeted people by saying Jai Jagat. Her vision of life and its ideals went beyond time and place. She had rejected the Padmashri Award for she considered such awards needless. After her death, her followers pledged to take up two activities which she could not complete. First, stop felling of trees and second, bring liquor temperance.

There cannot be a greater tribute to Sarala Behn to witness that the Lakshmi Ashram continues to thrive till date, working on the ideals of its founder. Since her death, every year, the Ashram commensurates her anniversary by calling together Sarvodaya workers and community members who formulate strategies for matters of socio- environmental concern. Based on the Gandhian Basic Education Programmes, the Ashram runs a boarding school for girls. It conducts various programmes for uplift of local women. Poor, orphaned, widowed, separated and handicapped women and girls receive training here to achieve self-confidence and self-reliance and lead a dignified life. At this Ashram which is an epitome of a truly liberated woman, 'Every day is Women's Day'. Here, the woman has no desire to compete with men; she competes only with herself to reach her goals and be a better human being. After all, this was the dream of Sarala Behn. Her legacy remains relevant to this day. She fought for India's freedom and the Himalayas. Truly, the soul of Sarala Behan lives and continues to inspire us. India should never forget her.

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Technology Integration in Teacher Education Through Distance Learning

•Kanchan Gupta

Abstract- *Technology is touching every aspect of life and society. Since independence, the technical education system in our country has grown into a sizeable system offering education and training in a variety of trades and disciplines at certificate, diploma, degree, post-graduate degree and doctoral levels in institutions across the country. provides opportunities. The general scenario of higher education in India is not at par with global quality standards. Therefore, there is ample justification for the increased assessment of the quality of the country's educational institutions. To maintain the standard of technical education, the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) was established in 1945. AICTE is responsible for planning, formulation and maintenance of norms and standards, quality assurance through accreditation, funding in priority areas. To maintain uniformity of monitoring and evaluation, certification and awards and to ensure coordinated and integrated development and management of technical education in the country.*

Key-words- *I.C.T; Teacher education; Influence; Distance learning.*

Introduction- India is witnessing the age of science and technology. There is a huge demand for technical education in the modern era. The pattern of life developed in the age is very different from what one would find in our society some fifty years back. In many cases general education has been replaced by vocational technical education. Technical education provides good opportunities for employment and successful career. Technical education contributes a major portion to the overall education system and plays a vital role in the social and economic development of our country. In India, technical education is imparted at various levels, such as craftsmanship, diploma and degree, postgraduate and research in specialized areas, to meet various aspects of technological development and economic progress.¹

Moreover, in this age of unemployment, only technical education can assure a job and a comfortable living, those who are still in traditional institutions, pass exams, which have little relevance in modern systems, do not get employment opportunities. Naturally, they end up becoming victims of despair and find themselves alienated from the mainstream of the modern world. With their stereo typed general education without any specialization

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and professional skills they achieve nothing to contribute to the progress and prosperity of human society. They are very much aware of this and this awareness leaves them hopeless.²

It was not just an end, it was the dream of modern India and to realize that dream technical education was given due importance. India is renowned for producing graduates of the highest caliber, but only a small proportion of its population receive high-quality technical education. India has substantially strengthened the quality and availability of technical education over the years, doubling the employability rate of graduates who are now better suited to the needs of Indian industry.³

Therefore, there is a dire need to support traditional studies and teach technical education, as this will not only help in the development of the country, but also the individuals with the skills. Technical education is the part of education that is directly related to acquire the knowledge and skills needed in the manufacturing and service industries. To obtain technical education, there are two structural streams in India - formal and informal. Polytechnics, Industrial Training Institutes, Industrial Training Centers, and Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Vocationalization of Secondary Education by Ministry of Human Resource Development are one of the formal sources of technical education in India. While self-learning and small private institutions providing short-term technical courses come under non-formal education.⁴

The new industrial and labour trends in India have clearly specified the need for technical education, but the foundation of technical education at the secondary level of education should be strong and a clear path should be made for the students to move forward in this field. More technical degrees of high quality should be established with technical universities.

Technical education imparts knowledge of a specific trade, craft or profession. Technical education, that is, education in some art or craft, is a great necessity. We are living in the times when the old concepts of education have changed. We do not need liberal education, education that implies training in fine arts, humanities, cultural patterns and practices and aims at developing the personality of man, as it was in the days of independence. We need skilled workers. Manufactured goods worth crores of rupees are being imported every year. There is a shortage of food. Our industries are still in their infancy. We need engineers as humans. To increase the production of corn, we need mechanized farming. All this is possible only if we give technological changes in our education and if skilled labor is made available.⁵

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a broad field, which includes all types of technology for communication of information. It is the technology that enables the manipulation (creation, storage and use) of information and facilitates the transmission of information through various means of communication (radio, television, cell phones, computers, hardware and software, various services and applications). In areas like agriculture, health, administration and education, I.C.T. development effect. This article appeared in Higher Education. I.C.T. centering the land of in

order to expand educational opportunities, significant development in the field of higher education and to increase the quality of education.⁶ I.C.T. an effective tool, but spending a lot. Increasing enrollment ratio in higher education and expansion of education resulted in availability of trained teachers. The National Mission of Education emphasizes the role of I.C.T. The key factors in adoption of ICT in education are the aims of any system, program and curriculum, methods of teaching and learning, learning materials and resources, communication, support and delivery systems, student tutors, staff and other experts, management and evaluation. So came I.C.T., there will definitely be improvement in higher education with the implementation of Information and communication technology is a broad field that includes all types of technology for communication of information. It is the technology that enables the operation (creation, storage and use) of information and the transmission of information through various means of communication (radio television, cell phones, computers and networks, hardware and software, satellite systems, various services and applications). ICT has become an inseparable and accepted part of the lives of many people. It has impact of development in areas like agriculture, health, governance and education. ICT is a diverse collection that includes various technology tools, as well as protocols and services such as video conferencing and electronic mail, etc.⁷

Increasing influence of technology in education- I.C.T. is like a plumbing system where information is stored in information technology and communication through communication technology to the recipient. Creation, transmission, storage, retrieval and manipulation of useful data and information in digital forms. Digital technology is used throughout the cycle of information. The various components of information and communication technology are-

- Computer Hardware Technology- Under this comes micro-computers, servers, large mainframe computers as well as input, output and storage devices.
- Computer Software Technology- Under this, operating system, web browser, database management system (DBMS) server and business, commercial software come.
- Telecommunication and Network Technology- Under this, telecommunication medium, processor and software based on wire or wireless to connect to the Internet, network-security, encryption of information (cryptography) etc. are included.
- Human Resource- System Administrator, Network Administrator etc.

Following are the importance of information and communication technology-

1. Information and communication technology is the basis of service economy.
2. Information technology is a suitable technology for the social and economic development of backward countries.

3. Poverty can be eradicated only by making the poor people information-rich.
4. Information-prosperity leads to empowerment.
5. Information technology brings transparency in administration and government; it helps in reducing corruption.
6. Information technology is used in planning, policy making and decision making.
7. It creates new jobs.

I.C.T. has great importance. From investments to the technologies used to deal with key issues of management, efficiency, pedagogy, quality, research and innovation, I.C.T. Its introduction has had a deep impact on the entire education process.

I.C.T. adoption of the following benefits are available-

1. The quality of education can be increased in remote places.
2. Bringing greater transparency in higher education institutions by strengthening their processes and compliance norms.
3. It is used to analyze social media metrics for student performance, placement, website analytics, and brand audits.
4. Distance learning has been made convenient with course delivery through internet (virtual class room), satellite and other means.

The use of computer-based learning techniques in teaching has been adopted by renowned education systems and institutions in India. The diversity of words and symbols is the great power of the computer which is at the heart of the educational endeavour. Learning is becoming more interesting and easier through online education in e-learning and distance education programmes. Through the Internet and the World Wide Web, teachers can reach their students and teach them sitting at home. The Internet is one of the highest collections of human knowledge.⁸

I.C.T. allows for the creation of digital resources, such as digital libraries, where students, teachers, and professionals can access research materials and course materials. I.C.T. provides an opportunity to control, coordinate and monitor the day-to-day administrative activities of the educational institution in an easy and transparent manner. Registration/enrollment, course allocation, attendance monitoring, time table/class schedule, application for admission, checking admission of students, such information can be found through e-media.⁹

Conclusion- Information and communication technology is used for those functions that are used in the transmission, storage, creation, display or exchange of information by electronic means. This broad definition of information and communication technology includes radio, TV, video, DVD, telephone (both landline and mobile phone), satellite systems, computer and network hardware and software, etc.; apart from this, the services and tools associated with these technologies, such as video conferencing, e-mail and blogs, etc. also come under the purview of ICT.

Realizing the educational objectives of the 'Information Age', there is a need to incorporate modern forms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education. To do this effectively, education planners,

principals, teachers and technocrats will need to make a number of decisions in the areas of technology, training, finance, academic and infrastructure requirements. For most people, this task would be as difficult as not only learning a new language, but teaching in that language.

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The Effect of Social Media Use on Academic Performance Among Students

• Nisha C. Raninga

Abstract- *The increasing popularity of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok has raised concerns about their impact on students' academic performance. This study investigates the relationship between social media use and academic outcomes among 250 undergraduate students. Using surveys and statistical analysis, the study finds a negative correlation between excessive social media use and academic performance, while moderate, purposeful use for academic collaboration shows neutral to slightly positive effects. Findings emphasize the need for time management strategies and responsible use of social media among students.*

Keywords- *Social Media, Academic Performance, Students, Study Habits, GPA, Distraction, Time Management, Online Learning, Academic Use of Social Media, Digital Well-being.*

Introduction- In the digital age, social media has become a central part of students' daily lives. According to recent reports, college students spend an average of 3–5 hours daily on social networking sites. While these platforms offer opportunities for communication, collaboration, and information sharing, concerns arise regarding their potential to distract from academic activities and reduce performance.

This research examines the extent to which social media use influences students' academic performance. Specifically, it explores whether time spent on social media, purpose of use (academic vs. entertainment), and self-regulation affect grades and study habits.

Literature Review-

- **Positive Impacts of Social Media-**
 - Facilitates academic collaboration and peer learning (Junco, 2012).
 - Provides access to educational resources, study groups, and networking opportunities.
- **Negative Impacts of Social Media-**
 - Excessive use linked to distraction, procrastination, and poor time management (Karpinski, 2010).
 - Correlates with reduced study hours and lower GPA in several studies.

• **Theoretical Frameworks-**

- **Displacement Theory-** Time spent on social media displaces time for academic activities.
- **Cognitive Load Theory-** Overuse increases cognitive load, reducing focus on learning.

Previous research shows mixed findings while light academic-related use may be beneficial, heavy recreational use is often detrimental.

Methodology-

Research Design- This study adopted a quantitative survey-based design supported by qualitative interviews.

Sample-

- Participants- 250 undergraduate students, aged 18–23, from arts, science, and commerce disciplines.
- Gender Distribution- 52% female, 48% male.
- Sampling Technique- Random sampling across two universities.

Instruments-

1. Survey Questionnaire-

- Daily hours spent on social media.
- Purpose of use (academic, social, entertainment).
- Self-reported GPA (4-point scale).
- Daily study hours.

2. Interviews- 15 students and 5 teachers to explore perceptions of social media's impact on study habits.

Data Analysis & Results-

Data Analysis-

- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation).
- Correlation analysis between social media hours, study hours, and GPA.
- Regression analysis to identify predictors of GPA.
- Thematic analysis of interview responses.

Descriptive Statistics-

Variable	Mean	SD
Social Media Use (hours)	3.8	1.6
Study Hours (per day)	2.9	1.3
GPA (out of 4.0)	3.1	0.5

Observation- Students spend more hours on social media than on studying.

Correlation Analysis-

Variables	Correlation (r)	p-value
Social Media Use & GPA	-0.41	<0.01
Social Media Use & Study Hours	-0.36	<0.01
Academic Use of social media & GPA	+0.12	0.07

Interpretation- Higher social media use is significantly associated with lower GPA and fewer study hours. Academic use of social media shows a weak positive relationship with GPA but is not statistically significant.

Regression Analysis-

Dependent Variable- GPA

Social media	-0.39	<0.001
Study Hours	+0.42	<0.001
Academic Use of social media	+0.11	0.08

Interpretation- Study hours are the strongest positive predictor of GPA, while excessive social media hours significantly reduce GPA.

Qualitative Findings (Interviews)-

- **Positive Views:** Students reported using WhatsApp groups for assignments and YouTube for tutorials. Teachers noted that social media enables quick information sharing.
- **Negative Views:** Students admitted to losing track of time while scrolling Instagram or TikTok. Teachers expressed concern about students being distracted during online classes.
- **Mixed Opinions:** Some students felt social media motivated them to connect with study groups, but excessive use caused procrastination.

Discussion- The findings confirm that excessive social media use negatively impacts academic performance, as shown by lower GPA and fewer study hours among heavy users. This aligns with Displacement Theory, which argues that time spent on leisure activities replaces academic work.

However, academic use of social media- such as online study groups, educational videos, or peer discussions-was associated with neutral to slightly positive outcomes. This highlights the dual nature of social media: it can be a powerful academic tool if used responsibly, but a significant distraction when used excessively for entertainment.

Students with strong self-regulation skills are more likely to benefit from social media, while others risk reduced performance. Therefore, interventions are needed to promote digital well-being, time management, and academic use of social networks.

Conclusion- This study concludes that social media use has both positive and negative effects on academic performance. Excessive recreational use correlates with lower GPA and study hours, while academic-related use shows potential benefits. The key determinant is not merely the amount of social media use but its purpose and regulation.

Recommendations-

1. Encourage students to use social media for academic collaboration and resource sharing.
2. Implement time management training and digital literacy programs.
3. Teachers can integrate structured use of social platforms for learning activities.

Future Research- Larger cross-cultural studies should examine the long-term effects of social media on learning, considering factors such as self-control, personality, and socio-economic background.

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"That Long Silence" of Indian Housewife

• Ishi Rai

Abstract- *Isn't it a wondering fact that despite of being recognized as an independent country with so many powerful rights to individual but how in the patriarchal society women are socialized to be silent, quiet and Submissive, with their voice being suppressed, less valuable and less Impactful than those of men. The patriarchal society doesn't always operate through aggressive loud control. It controls by colonizing the mindset leading to Internalized oppression and silence where women gradually learn to be self-silent, suppressing their feelings, desires, aims to maintain the peace, avoiding the conflict the or social ostracism and sometime using silence as coping mechanism. However, the silence is not Monolithic having a profound internal landscape which is beautifully captured in. Shashi Despond's That Long Silence which was the Sahitya Akademi Award winning novel of 1990 exploring the life of the middle-class housewife Jaya her quest for Identify, self-expression whose long silence is a metaphorical & literal Representation of Internal turmoil faced by countless Indian women and how she broke her silence via Introspecting her worth.*

Keywords- *Silence, Patriarchal Society, Internalized oppression, Indian Housewife, Women empowerment.*

Introduction- The title That Long Silence is taken from the speech of suffragette Elizabeth Robins in 1907 where she spoke of the "eternal and long silence of women" and this served as the central point of Shashi Deshpande's novel which is a realistic portrayal of an Indian Educated middle class house wife Jaya. Since woman played a very crucial role in various aspect though they aren't well recognized and here Deshpande had minutely depicted the condition through the exploration on socio-cultural constructions of female identity and we can very well resonate it with Simone de Beauvoir's statement "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (The second sex, 1949) that how women's identity, ideologies and everything in between is constructed through polite suppression or aggressively dominating over them limiting their feelings, Ironically their life is celebrated in an idealized form as a devoted self-sacrificing, anchor of the family, the keeper of tradition, the manager of the household and the one who is the silent bearer of million

unspeaking stories her silence is not based on the absence of sound but lack of the voice that is not acknowledged and got equality in the patriarchal society. Her silence is an unacknowledged burden of emotional & psychological labour. The silence of an Indian House wife is indeed a long silence which is imposed over them before marriage since the childhood their life and the decision making ability is handed over the male dominating figure from father in childhood, to husband in young age and at last to son in the old age they are fated to be dependent second character their own life They are taught to be calm, modest and agreeable while being silently accepting and adjusting to maintain the peaceful realm but is it really creating a peaceful realm of the social institution? or we can say it's creating an unresolving web of oppression through the unwritten and undefined patriarchal rules governing the complete life cycle of the women. As there is notion that women's silence is prerequisite for family peace is deeply ingrained & pervasive belief across many cultures the expectational burden is quite heavy as it places the entire responsibility of domestic tranquility on the shoulder of women whose voice is treated as threat to the harmony and this conditioning begin in the earlier phase only. Even the irony is that it is the same women either in the motherly form or grandmother who starts cultivating the seed of silence for the sake of peace even when it is disagreeing point or any fight as the silence is the only key to a successful married life and standard form of an acceptable dignified woman. Deshpande writes silence is “a long habit inherited from generations”

How Impactful Silence is- We can witness the psychological impact of this enforced silence in *That Long Silence* where Jaya who was an educated woman stuck in the hybridity of traditional norms and modern identity as her name Jaya given by her father too signified a victorious personality but how married life has brought dynamic changes in her life from the name of Suhasini to her Complete personality to fitting in the role of a good Indian wife who was supposed to understand her husband's scam as the sacrifice to maintain the livelihood and fulfilling the basic needs and her sacrifice over the thoughts, feeling, passion as her duty. Because as per the rigid gender role division in which man is the provider and decision maker women are nurturer and home maker. Jaya or more precisely we can say Suhasini character illuminate show women are taught to surrender and sacrifice their whole existence silently. She internalized the “waiting game” the term Deshpande used to describe the lifelong passive role of women in her own life as well despite of talents, capabilities, education and creative aspiration self-identify is suppressed to which she expresses. “I was just a woman who was married, a wife, a mother. I had lost my identity” (Deshpande, 1988)

Silencing-A Colonial Strategy- We can also view this issue by colonial lens though India got Independence a long time ago but still there are several group of people specially the women who are marginalized and trapped in the colonized mindset of society Jaya's surrender to his husband's desire is prime example of how she has to give up on her name, career, desired and authentic personality adopting the imposed conventional identity. The act of Renaming is a symbolic practice of colonizers to trap the real identity. It could also be witnessed through the linguistic and creative silencing of Jaya. As a writer her voice is a weapon for self-expression which to get molded as per the needs and how using the pseudonym is the ideal representation of her life through writing including auto biographical elements. Jaya's struggle to find her own voice, to write what she wants and feels is a metaphor for the struggle of colonization to write back and reclaim her identity and narrative. she conquered and overcome of the suppression she went through had the act of writing her own struggle, inner turmoil was the coping mechanism to break That Long Silence reestablishing her self identity with pride and confident how the self-realization and physical isolation from social world became a space and weapon to confront her existence and The Long Silence which was an internalized oppression give her voice and reflected the collective suffering and fate of each and every women decolonized her mind by acknowledging the shared suppressed experience which now become the active agent of their lives just how Virginia Woolf stated that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is write fiction" is (Woolf2004)

Conclusion- To break That Long Silence women need to be self-confident, self-independent recognizing and valuing their own capability of conquering all the barriers and obstacles put in their way related to be submissive because the suppression in the form of silence is the slow and sweet poison that hollow the existence of women mentally, emotionally and psychologically. Their socio-economic dependence within patriarchal society is another pillar of their silencing which need to be overcome by the equal opportunity of being educated, financially stable and have right to express, revolt and resist if needed. Hence the novel of Shashi Deshpande had wonderfully and boldly depicted the process of introspection self-realization and the courageous act of breaking the silence and setting the standard for each and every woman. Therefore, to truly empower Indian women is not just to give them a voice but to create a world where their voices are acknowledged, valued & celebrated.

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Impact of Maternal Body Mass Index (BMI) On Pregnancy- Related Complications A Study in Chapra, Bihar

• Supriya Pathak
•• Akriti Mishra

Abstract- Background- Maternal nutritional status plays an important role in pregnancy outcomes. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a key determinant of maternal health. Both under-nutrition and overweight/obesity are associated with complications ranging from maternal minor discomfort to serious medical conditions.

Objectives- To evaluate the association between BMI and pregnancy-related complications assessed at baseline (1st trimester registration) and at follow-up in the 3rd trimester.

Methods- A prospective hospital-based study was conducted among 100 pregnant women (18–35 years) attending the antenatal clinic of Sadar Hospital, Chapra, Bihar, between May 2024 and March 2025. BMI was measured at enrollment (1st trimester). Health related symptoms recorded at baseline included nausea/vomiting, heartburn, and fatigue. Complications recorded at 3rd-trimester follow-up included heartburn, swollen hands and feet, back pain, gestational hypertension, and gestational diabetes. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were planned for analysis.

Results- At baseline, nausea/vomiting and fatigue were most frequent among underweight women, while heartburn increased with BMI. At follow-up, overweight and obese women showed higher rates of heartburn, swollen hands and feet, back pain, gestational hypertension, and gestational diabetes compared with normal BMI; underweight women showed the lowest rates for metabolic complications. Normal BMI was associated with fewer overall complications.

Conclusion- The study demonstrates a strong association between maternal BMI and pregnancy complications. Maternal BMI correlates with patterns of morbidity - underweight with early nausea/fatigue and overweight/obesity with late-pregnancy reflux, edema, back pain, and metabolic disorders. Public health interventions focusing on preconception counseling, nutritional education and weight management is essential.

Keywords- Body Mass Index, Pregnancy, Complications, Nausea, Heartburn, Edema, Back pain, Gestational diabetes, Hypertension, Double burden, Malnutrition.

Introduction- Pregnancy outcomes are significantly influenced by pre-pregnancy and antenatal BMI. Globally, both maternal undernutrition and obesity remain public health concerns, particularly in low- and middle-income population in developing nations such as India. Recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2021) data highlight the coexistence of underweight and obesity in Indian women of reproductive age, emphasizing the double burden of malnutrition.

Maternal health is one of the most important determinants of fetal development. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) emphasizes that optimal maternal nutrition before and during pregnancy is a cornerstone of safe motherhood. Body Mass Index (BMI), defined as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters (kg/m^2), is a simple yet powerful indicator of nutritional status (Kozhimannil et al., 2019). Pregnancy is a critical period that demands optimal maternal nutritional status for favorable maternal and neonatal outcomes. Among the determinants of maternal health, Body Mass Index (BMI) has been recognized as a key indicator of nutritional status and a predictor of obstetric risks (WHO, 2020). Globally, deviations from normal BMI either underweight or overweight/obese—pose significant challenges to maternal and child health (Sebire et al., 2001).

Women with abnormal BMI, whether underweight or overweight, face increased risks during pregnancy. Underweight mothers are predisposed to anemia, preterm delivery, and intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR), whereas overweight and obese mothers are more likely to develop gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM), gestational hypertension, pre-eclampsia, and require cesarean delivery (Aune et al., 2016). Additionally, obesity can increase maternal discomfort, leading to musculoskeletal pain, edema, and digestive problems such as heartburn (Arora & Tamber, 2021). In another study also underweight women are at greater risk of anemia, intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR), low birth weight (LBW), and prolonged vomiting, while overweight and obese women have an elevated risk of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM), hypertension, cesarean section, and neonatal complications (Bhattacharya et al., 2007; Crane et al., 2009).

India faces a unique dual burden of malnutrition. According to the National Family Health Survey-5(2021), around 18% of women of reproductive age are undernourished ($\text{BMI} < 18.5$), while nearly 24% are overweight or obese ($\text{BMI} \geq 25$). (IIPS ,2021, NFHS-5 2021) This double burden reflects the socioeconomic and dietary transitions occurring in the country. Several rural regions in states such as Bihar are especially vulnerable, where undernutrition persists due to poverty and food insecurity, while urbanizing pockets see a rapid rise in obesity due to sedentary lifestyles and high-calorie diets. Bihar, in particular, shows high prevalence of undernutrition among women, which contributes to maternal and infant morbidity (Bihar Economic Survey 2023).

Pregnancy further complicates the nutritional demands on women, as physiological changes increase the requirement for macro- and micronutrients. A mismatch between nutritional demand and maternal reserves can predispose women to complications. Studies conducted in India have highlighted regional differences in how BMI influences maternal outcomes, underscoring the need for localized data (Kumar et al., 2019; Singh & Gupta, 2021). However, data from Bihar, particularly Chapra district, remain scarce.

The coexistence of undernutrition and rising obesity amplifies the need to document BMI-associated pregnancy morbidity in real-world antenatal settings. This study prospectively captures complications at two points—baseline (1st trimester registration) and a single follow-up in late pregnancy to understand how symptom patterns evolve by BMI category. Many studies have demonstrated associations between abnormal BMI and pregnancy outcomes, but regional variations exist. Due to limited availability of data in the concerned district. Hence, this study aims to assess the association of BMI with pregnancy-related complications among women attending Sadar Hospital, Chapra. The research uniquely incorporates both clinical outcomes (hypertension, GDM, cesarean delivery) and commonly experienced complications (vomiting, heartburn, edema, back pain), providing a comprehensive perspective. By generating evidence from a local context, this study aims to contribute to targeted maternal nutrition strategies and improved antenatal care programs.

Materials and Methods

Study design and setting- A prospective observational study was carried out at Sadar Hospital, Chapra district, Bihar, from May 2024 to March 2025.

Sample size and participants: 100 pregnant women aged 18–35 years with singleton gestation were enrolled at their first-trimester registration visit.

Inclusion criteria- Women aged 18–35 years, consenting, with singleton pregnancy.

Exclusion criteria- Known pre-pregnancy diabetes, chronic hypertension, renal disease, thyroid disease, or multiple pregnancy.

BMI measurement and classification- Height and weight were measured at enrollment using calibrated instruments; BMI was calculated as weight (kg)/height (m²) and classified as underweight (<18.5 kg/m²), normal (18.5–24.9), overweight (25–29.9), and obese (≥30).

Data collection- At baseline (1st trimester), common symptoms (nausea/vomiting, heartburn, fatigue) were recorded using a structured proforma and verified against medical notes when available. At follow-up (3rd trimester, 32–34 weeks), heartburn, edema (hands/feet), back pain, and diagnoses of GDM and gestational hypertension were recorded from clinical assessments and antenatal records.

Statistical Analysis- Data analyzed using SPSS v25, Descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, SD), Chi-square test used to determine associations between BMI and pregnancy complications.

Ethical considerations- Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Results- Sample characteristics- Participants were categorized on the basis of BMI at enrollment as Underweight, Normal, Overweight, or Obese. Complication profiles were assessed at baseline and at a single follow-up in the 3rd trimester.

The mean age of participants was 25.4 ± 3.6 years. Based on BMI classification, 24% were underweight, 42% were normal, 21% overweight, and 13% obese. Complications varied across BMI categories.

Table 1
Number of Respondents
in Different BMI Category

BMI Category	Underweight	Normal	Overweight	Obese
Percentage (%)	24	42	21	13

Table 2
Prevalence of Pregnancy-Related
Complications Across BMI Categories

Complication	Underweight (<18.5)	Normal (18.5–24.9)	Overweight (25–29.9)	Obese (%) (≥ 30)
*Gestational hypertension (%)	4.2	7.1	38.5	53.8
*Gestational diabetes (%)	0	2.4	19.0	30.7
*Anaemia (%)	58.3	28.6	14.2	15.3
*Nausea/Vomiting (%)	45.8	33.3	47.6	61.5
*Heartburn (%)	25.0	28.6	52.3	69.2
*Swelling (hands/feet) (%)	20.8	19.0	47.6	61.5
*Back Pain (%)	29.2	31.0	61.9	76.9

The results show a clear association between higher BMI and increased risk of hypertension, swelling, back pain, and heartburn. Underweight women reported higher rates of anemia and persistent nausea. Chi-square analysis confirmed a statistically significant association ($p < 0.05$).

Key findings-

Hypertension & GDM- Strongly linked to overweight / obesity.

Anaemia- Highest among underweight mothers.

Minor complications- (vomiting, heartburn, edema, back pain) More prevalent in overweight /obese women, possibly due to excess pressure on internal organs and musculoskeletal strain.

Normal BMI group- showed the least overall complications.

Discussion- This study confirms that BMI significantly influences both

minor and major pregnancy related complications. Trimester-specific morbidity profiles were observed. Underweight women reported the highest frequencies of nausea/vomiting and fatigue at baseline, while cardiometabolic and mechanical complications (heartburn, edema, back pain) increased progressively with BMI at late-pregnancy follow-up. This pattern is consistent with evidence that undernutrition predisposes to hyperemesis gravidarum and micronutrient deficiencies, whereas excess adiposity is associated with gastroesophageal reflux, venous stasis, musculoskeletal strain, gestational hypertension, and gestational diabetes. Normal-BMI participants consistently exhibited the lowest overall burden of complications. These findings support integrating BMI-informed counseling—nutritional support for underweight mothers and targeted weight-management and screening for overweight/obese mothers—into routine antenatal care. Nutritional intervention during pregnancy should include modification in lifestyle and dietary pattern as well.

Underweight mothers- Showed high prevalence of anaemia (58.3%). Similar findings were reported by Negi et al. (2020), linking low BMI to micronutrient deficiencies and higher risk of low-birth-weight infants. The higher prevalence of vomiting and anaemia is also consistent with reports from Bhattacharya et al. (2007), who noted increased hyperemesis gravidarum and poor weight gain among undernourished women. The findings of the present study also align with Singh et al. (2019), who reported that underweight mothers had increased risk of anaemia and low birth weight infants. Similarly, NFHS-5 showed that anaemia is higher among underweight women.

Overweight and obese mothers- Had markedly higher risks of gestational hypertension and diabetes. These findings align with meta-analyses by Aune et al. (2016) and Voerman et al. (2019). The higher prevalence of GDM, hypertension, edema, and cesarean deliveries also align with findings of Sebire et al. (2001) and Crane et al. (2009), who reported obesity as a key risk factor for obstetric complications.

Pregnancy discomforts- (vomiting, heartburn, edema, and back pain) were significantly more frequent among overweight and obese women. Research by Arora & Tamber (2021) noted similar gastrointestinal and musculoskeletal issues due to excess maternal weight. These discomforts were strongly associated with higher BMI, possibly due to increased abdominal pressure and altered posture in late pregnancy (Vahratian, 2009).

Back pain and edema- Particularly common in obese women (76.9% and 61.5%), corroborating studies by Qiu et al. (2018) highlighting obesity's effect on maternal discomfort.

The dual burden observed- vomiting and anemia in underweight mothers versus GDM and hypertension in obese mothers—highlights the need for **BMI-specific interventions** during pregnancy.

A similar study in South India (Rajan et al., 2021) reported that obese women had 3.5 times higher odds of cesarean delivery compared to

normal BMI women. Another meta-analysis by Yu et al. (2013) confirmed that maternal overweight/obesity increased the risk of both maternal and neonatal complications.

Our results underscore the double burden of malnutrition in Indian women where underweight increases risk of anaemia and Intra Uterine Growth Restriction, while overweight raises risk of metabolic disorders and discomforts.

Strengths of this study include its prospective design with predefined assessment points and the practical focus on symptoms that materially affect quality of life. Limitations include a single-center sample and reliance on clinical records without biochemical stratification for anaemia subtypes. Progressive changes in health condition can be longitudinally assessed by conducting frequent follow ups throughout the pregnancy. Larger, multi-center studies are recommended.

Conclusion- Maternal BMI at first-trimester registration predicts distinct patterns of morbidity across pregnancy. Underweight was associated with early nausea/vomiting and fatigue, while overweight/obesity was associated with third-trimester heartburn, edema, back pain, and higher rates of gestational hypertension and diabetes. The present study demonstrates that BMI is strongly associated with pregnancy-related complications.

Underweight women- face risks of excessive vomiting, anaemia, and low birth weight infants.

Overweight/obese women- face increased risks of gestational diabetes mellitus, (GDM) hypertension, edema, back pain, heartburn, and cesarean deliveries.

Normal BMI- appears protective, with fewer complications overall.

Recommendations-

Preconception BMI screening.

Nutrition counseling for underweight and overweight women.

Underweight women should receive nutritional supplementation.

Overweight/obese women require dietary guidance and regular monitoring for hypertension and GDM.

Lifestyle modifications and regular antenatal monitoring.

Public health initiatives in Bihar focusing on maternal nutrition.

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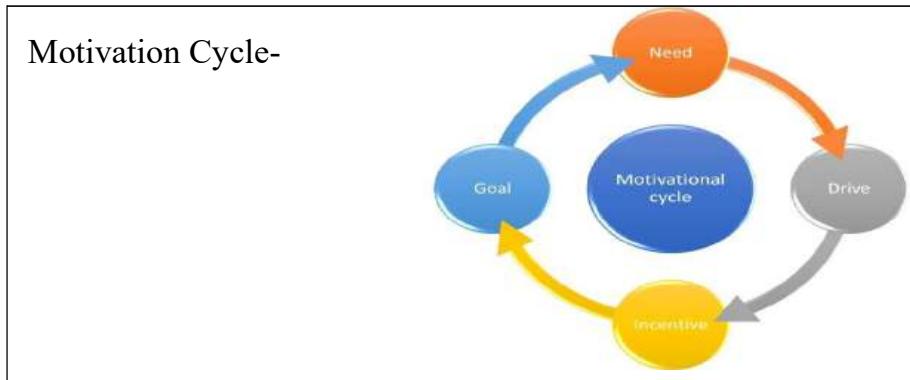
***Working Environment and its impact on Employee
Motivation with special reference to Prasar Bharati
(Doordarshan and All India Radio)***

• **Abhilasha Mazumdar**

Abstract- *Motivation is an internal state that propels individuals to engage in goal directed behavior. Job Satisfaction is the most studied field of organizational Behavior. It is important to know the Level of Satisfaction at work for many reasons. In the organization point of view good job satisfaction can lead to better performance of the workers. In the present study Descriptive research designs have been used. And, both Primary & Secondary data is used to collect data. Researcher has made an attempt to do in-depth study on the Working Environment of the Workplace and how it impacts Employee Motivation to perform better.*

Keywords- *Environment, Motivation, Employees, Performance.*

I. Introduction- Working environment plays an important role towards the employee's motivation. Working environment is argued to impact immensely on employees' performance either towards negative or the positive outcomes (Chandrasekar2001). Most people spend fifty percent of their lives within indoor environments, which greatly influence their mental status, actions, abilities and performance (Dorgan, 1994). Better outcomes and increased productivity are assumed to be the result of better workplace environment. Better physical environment of office will boost the employees and ultimately improve their productivity. The physical environment at work is critical to employees' performance, satisfaction, social relations and health. It is generally understood that the physical design of offices and the environmental conditions at work places are important factors in organizational performance. It will be able to put forward several factors that are included in the working environment and its effects on job performance.



The motivational cycle refers to the process where a need motivates a person to take action. This chronological cycle has four stages: need, drive, incentive, and reward. The motivational cycle is a framework that helps us understand how people become motivated and maintain that motivation to achieve their goals. Motivation drives our actions and decisions, shaping how we pursue goals and overcome challenges. Understanding the motivation cycle is crucial because it helps us grasp why we do what we do. It reveals the steps we take to start, keep going, and either achieves our goals or stop trying.

By understanding how this motivation cycle works and influences behavior, psychologists can find better ways to help students learn, improve workplace environments, and guide personal growth.

Some people like to work and they find working an important part of their lives. Some people on the other hand find work unpleasant and work only because they have to. Job satisfaction tells how much people like their jobs. Job satisfaction is the most studied field of organizational behavior. It is important to know the level of satisfaction at work for many reasons and the results of the job satisfaction studies affect both the workers and the organization. In the workers' point of view, it is obvious that people like to be treated fairly. If workers feel respected and satisfied at work it could be a reflection of a good treatment. In the organization's point of view good job satisfaction can lead to better performance of the workers which affects the result of the company. Employee satisfaction is generally considered as the driver of the employee retention and employee productivity. Satisfied employees are a precondition for increasing productivity, responsiveness, quality, and customer service.

Companies typically measure employee satisfaction with an annual survey, or a rolling survey in which a specified percentage of randomly chosen employees is surveyed each month. Interviews would give wider and better answers but they are time and money consuming, and questionnaires are easier to compose, deliver and analyze. Elements in an employee satisfaction survey could include involvement with decision making, recognition for doing a good job, access to sufficient information to do the job well, active encouragement to be creative and use initiative, support

level from staff functions and overall satisfaction.

I. Objectives of the Study-

- To analyze the working environment in Prasar Bharati.
- To study about the impact of working environment on employee motivation of Prasar Bharati.
- To study about the satisfaction level of employees in Prasar Bharati.

II. Research Methodology-

The methodology used to analyse the study mainly based on field survey and this survey was conducted for knowing the working environment of Prasar Bharati (Door darshan and All India Radio) and its impact on employee motivation.

Research Design- The study uses descriptive research design for analyzing the working environment and employee motivation.

Population of the study -The target population is confined to the employees working in Door darshan Kendra and All India Radio in Guwahati city.

Sample Size -A total number of 50 Employees are taken as sample for the study from the population.

Sampling Technique -Convenience sampling has been used for selecting the sample of the study.

Collection of data -

Primary data: For the purpose of primary data collection, structured questionnaires were designed to collect the facts and information from the respondents.

Secondary data: The secondary data are mostly collected from books, journals and internet.

Tools of Data Analysis- Pie Charts, Bar Diagrams, and Percentage Methods are used for analyzing the data.

III. Significance of the Study-

A positive working environment is essential for employee motivation, productivity and overall well-being. The working environment encompasses various physical, psychological and social factors that can either support or hinder employee motivation. Motivation of employee is a crucial aspect of organizational success which refers to psychological forces that drive employees to achieve their goals and perform at their best.

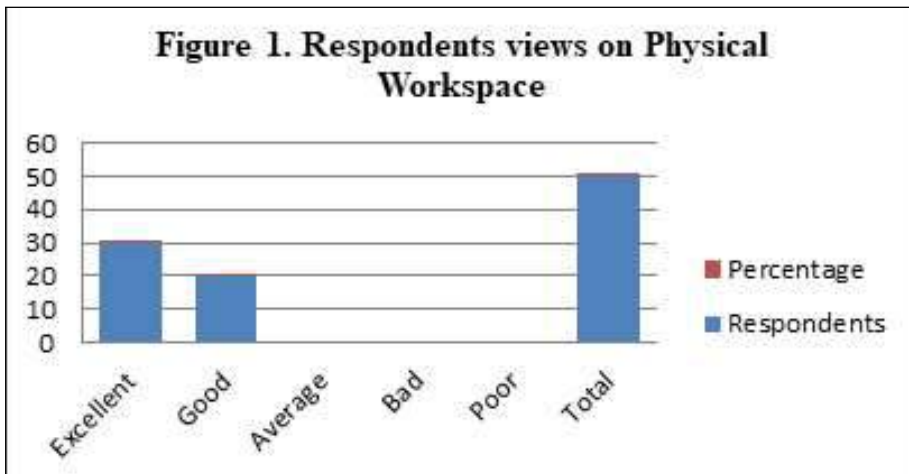
The study was conducted to find out the working environment of Door darshan and All India Radio in Guwahati city and also to identify the impact on employee motivation.

IV. Analysis & Interpretation –

1. How would you rate the physical workspace? (Ergonomics, lighting, etc)

Parameters	Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	30	60%
Good	20	40%
Average	0	Nil
Bad	0	Nil
Poor	0	Nil
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey

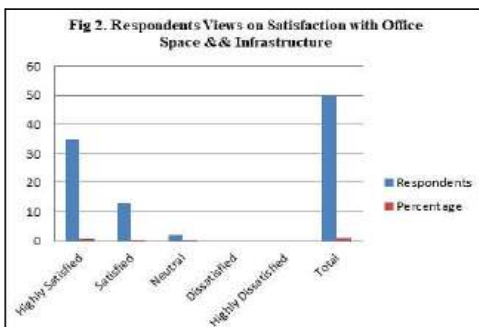


From the above table and figure it can be observed that out of the total 100% respondents, 60% of the respondents rated the physical workspace as Excellent and 40% of respondents rated as good.

2. How satisfied are you with the office space and infrastructure?

Parameters	Respondents	Percentage
HighlySatisfied	35	70%
Satisfied	13	26%
Neutral	2	4%
Dissatisfied	0	Nil
HighlyDissatisfied	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source-Field Survey



From the above table and figure, it has been observed that out of 100% respondents, 70% respondents are highly satisfied with office space and infrastructure, 26% respondents are satisfied and 4% are neutral.

3. How would you rate your job security?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	31	62%
Good	15	30%
Average	0	Nil
Fair	4	8%
Poor	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source- Field Survey

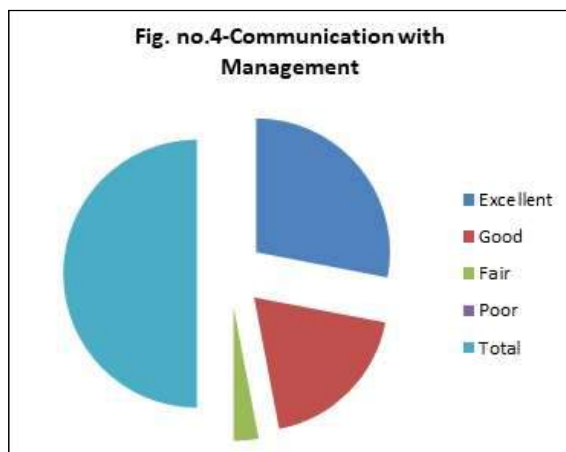


From the above table and figure, it can be interpreted that, out of 100% respondents, 62% respondents have rated Job Security as excellent, 30% of respondents has rated it as good, 8% of respondents has rated as fair and none for poor option.

4. How would you rate the communication from management?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	28	56%
Good	19	38%
Fair	3	6%
Poor	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey

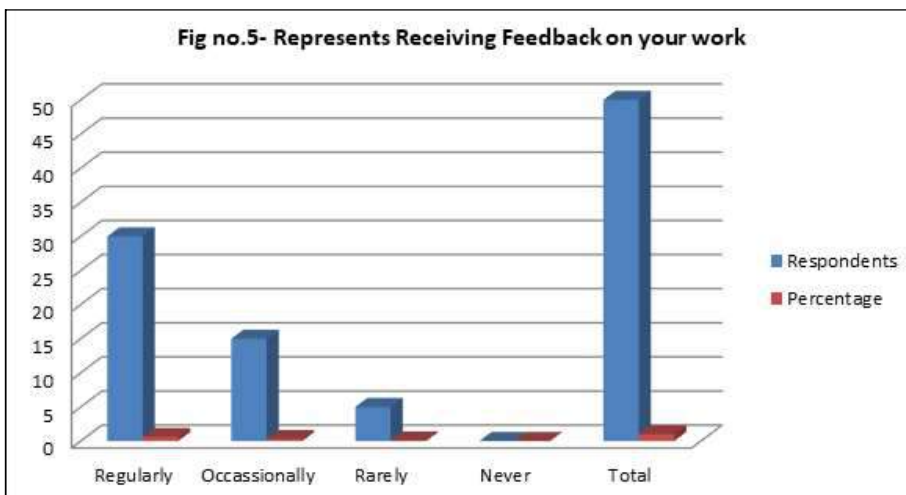


From above table and figure, it has been observed that, out of total 100% respondents, 56% of the respondents have rated the communication with Management as Excellent, 38% rated as good, 6% rated as Fair. No one rated as Poor.

5. How often do you receive feedback on your work?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Regularly	30	60%
Occasionally	15	30%
Rarely	5	10%
Never	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey

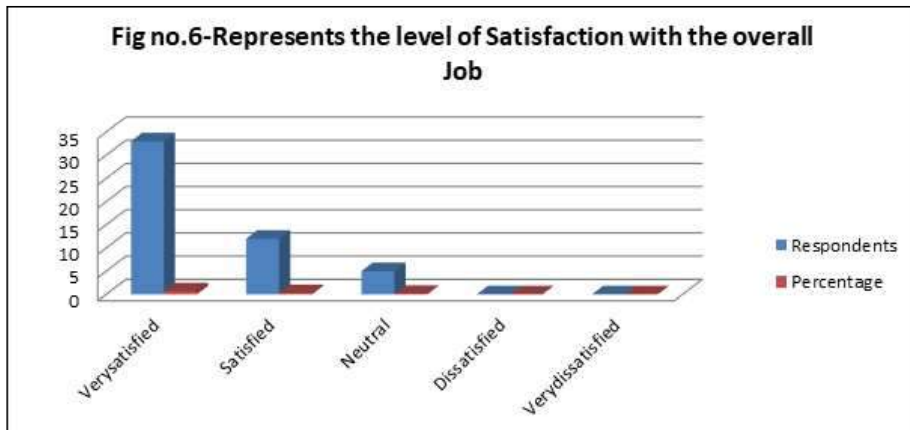


From the above table and figure, out of total 100% respondents, 60% of the said that they get regular feedback on their work, 30% of the respondents said that they get feedback occasionally and 10% of the respondents said that they get feedback rarely.

6. How satisfied are you with your job?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Very Satisfied	33	66%
Satisfied	12	24%
Neutral	5	10%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey

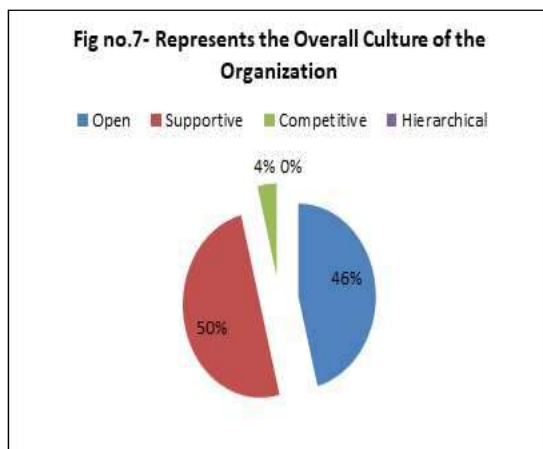


From the above table and figure, it can be interpreted that out of total 100% respondents, 66% of the respondents are very satisfied with the overall job, 24% of the respondents are satisfied, and 10% are neutral with their overall job.

7. How would you describe the overall culture of the organization?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Open	23	46%
Supportive	25	50%
Competitive	2	4%
Hierarchical	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey

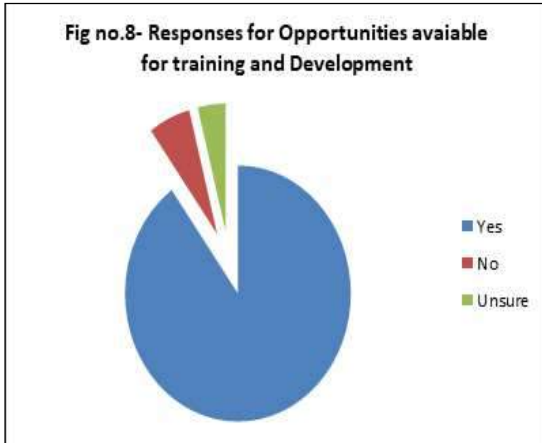


From the above table and figure, it can be interpreted that, out of 100% of total respondents, 46% of the respondents feels that culture of the organization is open, 50% feels that it is supportive, 4% feels that Culture is Competitive.

8. Are opportunities available for training and professional development?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	45	90%
No	3	6%
Unsure	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey

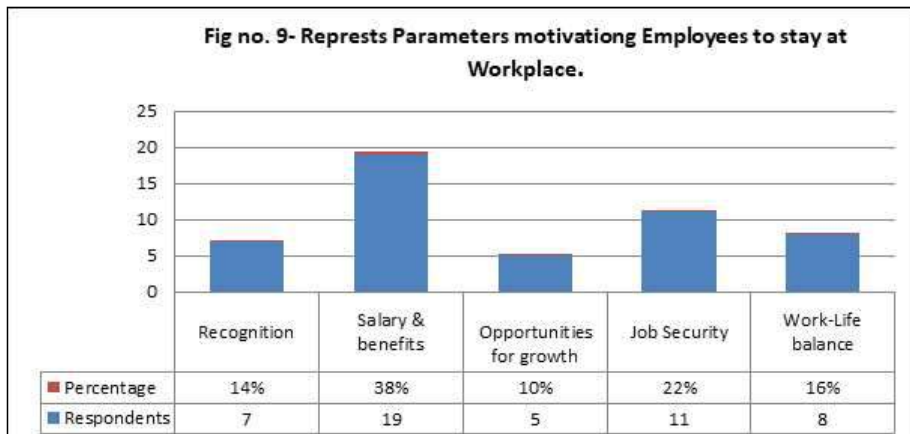


From the above table and figure, it has been observed that, out of 100% of the respondents, 90% of the respondents say that training and development opportunities are available. 6% says that Opportunities for training and Professional Development is not available and 4% of them are unsure about it.

9. What motivates you most in your job?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Recognition	7	14%
Salary & benefits	19	38%
Opportunities for growth	5	10%
Job Security	11	22%
Work-Life balance	8	16%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey



From the above table and figure, it has been observed that out of 100% respondents, 14% respondents choose recognition, 38% respondents choose

for salary & benefits, 5 respondents choose for growth opportunities, 22% respondents choose for job security and 16% respondents chooses for work-like balance, which motivates most in their job.

10. Findings-

Objective wise Findings:

1. Majority of the respondents had work experience of 20-30 years therefore; they could provide responses based on their experience at the workplace. They rated physical Workspace as Excellent. Majority of employees are highly satisfied with office space and Infrastructure at Prasar Bharati. They reported that resources are always available for their use. It provides Job Security, Communication with Management is rated as Excellent. Feedback is also received regularly at Workplace.
2. Culture of the Workplace is open & supportive. Very few feel that it is Competitive. Salaries & Benefits motivates you the most in Job. Then Job security, Recognition, Work-life balance and opportunities for growth are the following factors. Employees feel that it is very easy to approach supervisor/colleagues for any help or guidance as well as half of the respondents feels supportive culture exist in the organization.
3. Employees are highly satisfied with the Job. Few feels Neutral neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. From the study, it has been known that majority of employee's feels that there is excellent support for career development. Salaries and benefits are very satisfied to perform their job duties. Therefore, it may be interpreted that present working environment is motivating them to work.

11. Suggestions:

1. More training facilities may be provided. As electronic media is growing up with modern technology which helps in improvement in technical fields.
2. It may be suggested that if employees are motivated and appreciated, such employees who are hardworking, may work with full efficiency and effectively in future.
3. As it was observed that most of the employees were dealing with electronic equipment's, it may be suggested that be better training facilities for improvement.

12. Conclusion- The working environment of Prasar Bharati and its impact on employee motivation highlights the critical role that organizational culture, infrastructure, leadership styles, and employee support systems play in driving motivation and productivity. A positive working environment fosters collaboration, job satisfaction, and professional growth, ultimately enhancing overall employee performance. Conversely, challenges such as inadequate facilities, ineffective leadership, or lack of recognition can hinder motivation and lead to reduced efficiency. By addressing these factors, Prasar Bharati can create a supportive and stimulating workplace that not only meets organizational goals but also ensures the well-being and

engagement of its employees. The findings of this study emphasize the need for continuous assessment and improvement of workplace policies and practices to sustain motivation and drive long-term success.

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**Sivamayam Brihattara Bharata:
A Study of Swami Sadananda's Analysis of the Siva Cult
in Greater India**

• Sukanya Som

Abstract- *The present study examines Sivamayam Brihattara Bharata, a conceptual and cultural framework articulated by Swami Sadananda in his writings on the Siva cult across the regions of Southeast Asia, collectively termed "Greater India." Tracing the intellectual genealogy of the Greater India Society (GIS), founded in 1926 in Calcutta as an anti-colonial nationalist initiative, the paper contextualizes Sadananda's contributions within a broader scholarly attempt to counter British colonial narratives of India's "splendid isolation." While not a formally trained historian, Sadananda's travelogues and interpretive sketches vividly portray how Indian religious, artistic, and cultural traditions—especially Saivism—were disseminated, adopted, and transformed in Siam, Indo-China, Champa, Java, Bali, and other regions through ancient Hindu colonization. His writings describe unique iconographic features of Siva, syncretic ritual practices, Tantric elements, color symbolism, temple architecture, and the democratic character of Balinese Hinduism, emphasizing the deep-rooted cultural interconnectedness of these societies with India. Although his observations sometimes lack historical rigor, scholars of the GIS acknowledged Sadananda's vital role in popularizing Greater India ideas among wider audiences, bridging the gap between nationalist scholarly discourse and public understanding. This study demonstrates that his representation of the Siva cult functioned not only as a cultural and religious narrative but also as a nationalist tool to reaffirm India's ancient civilizational dynamism, adaptability, and global influence. By analyzing Sadananda's works alongside contemporary scholarship, the paper highlights how his devotional yet patriotic writings contributed significantly to early twentieth-century constructions of cultural nationalism and the historiography of India's transregional interactions*

Keywords- *Greater, Society, Hindu Colonization, Cultural Diffusion, Nationalism*

Monastic Travelogues and Cultural Memory On 10th October, 1926 an institution was established in the heart of the then Calcutta named as Brihattara Bharata Parishad or Greater India Society. This organization was an effort of contemporary Bengali intellectuals who took a unique effort to fight against British colonialism. They decided to use pen as sword to

challenge the very British notion of 'splendid isolation' of India. These intellectuals included scholars from all discipline of social studies. The Greater India Society (hereafter GIS) housed a galaxy of thinkers and scholars; Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyaya was a renowned linguist of India titled as 'Acharya', Ramesh Chandra Majumdar was a famous nationalist historian, O.C Gangoly and Devaprasad Ghosh were Indian art experts, Kalidas Nag was a great historian of Indian Culture, UN Ghosal, an expert in Hindu political theories, Nihar Ranjan Ray, historian of religious history of Burma and Bengal and others were contributors to GIS journal and great advocates of the Greater India ideologues. Swami Swadananda who holds a very special place in GIS, was a Bengali Monk who was also associated with this organization though whether he was a direct member or not is not known. He believed in the aim and objectives of the GIS that took oath to popularize the concept of the Greater India among the Indians through constant research activities. Now the question comes what is Greater India? To answer this question we have to understand that the Society was founded to counter not only the idea of splendid isolation but also to promote the idea of ancient Indian colonization in South East Asia and Central Asia. This idea was nurtured as an antidote to the racist and imperialist agenda of the colonial historiographical means of projecting precolonial India as backward and stagnant, something that was common with most of the contemporary British thinkers and historians. The popularization of the Greater India ideologue was thus intended to be a counter-colonial, anti-colonial nationalist intellectual weapon by which not only the supposed discourse of 'backwardness' of ancient India could be sufficiently countered, but also as a means which could be used as a template to showcase how ancient India served as a light-bearer of civilization.

Swami Sadananda was a great advocate in favor of the 'Greater India' thought. Sadananda firmly believed that ancient Greater India must be understood as a glorious chapter in Indian history and its histories needed the most profound ventilation since such narrations did not only meant a glorification of India but also could explain the role played by India in the history of human civilization in Asia and the world in totality. Thus, being himself a wandering monk, a *paribrajaka*, he used his travels not merely for spiritual betterment but also for his and his readers' intellectual development. Like Vivekananda, he did not find much difference between love for God and love for the motherland. Sadananda had begun his 1949 book titled *Hindu Culture in Greater India* by saying that:

How many Hindus of the present generation know that there was a period in the course of the long history of India, when our ancient forefathers as pioneers of civilization, taught culture and civilization to many countries of the world. They were advanced not only in things pertaining to spirit such as religion, philosophy and metaphysics, but they were ahead of other nations in practical things of the world as art and industry, trade and commerce, language and literature, politics and administration. In those days Hindu missionaries, inspired by the lofty ideals of Arya Hindu

Dharma went out, crossing seas and mountains, to distant lands to preach the message of Hindu dharma. (1)

In *Brihattara Bharater Puja Parbon* (1937), Sadananda called himself the 'Paribrajaka Sanyashi' or the wandering monk who from 1932 onwards travelled the Greater India countries and became sentimental to observe the glorious history of his Hindu ancestors and Buddhist preachers, their sacrifices, their efforts to spread Indian culture and spiritualism in these distant lands. In his view the Indian colonists first colonized the coastal countries of Siam and Indo-China and later island countries like Yava, Bali and other oceanic islands (1). He talked of the magnanimity of Hindu gods and goddesses in the hearts of Indian colonists of Greater India who had national feelings for their country. He used the term 'Sivamayam' to address the two thousand years old Hindu reigning period of Greater India as everywhere in Kamboja, Siam, Java and Bali were seen in numerous Siva temples and sculptures (2). A unique feature of Siva sculptures of Cambodia was the five-faced Siva. This uniqueness according to him was the product of diverse South Indian culture with regard to especially the Siva statues. He was surprised to note that in India most of the Siva statues look stoic, peaceful, the 'rudramurti' (fierce) of Siva is quite rare, but they were seen in different counterparts of Greater India (5). Another important feature of Greater India in his view is the Tantric form of Siva with garlands of human skulls which might have had gone there from India and according to Sadananda, this aspect proved how tantric forms of Hinduism revived Hinduism in such places after the rise of Buddhism (6).

Despite the prevailing Hinduist effects, he admits that the Indian artistic features got mixed with local primitive beliefs and took new forms. That is why the Durga image gets the form of Javanese demoness Ranada in Java and Bali (9-10). He is certain about the fact that South India by adopting Aryan culture became part of Hinduism but maintained its own non-Aryan characteristics. These non-Aryan elements were reflected in the South-Indian Hinduist civilization and style of art which the South Indians carried with them to Greater India (11). He shows how colors played an important role in the Hindu religion of South East Asia. The Hindu deities were represented with particulate colors. Thus Siva was identified with the color white, Brahma with red and Vishnu with green (11). This color specification of deities was the outcome of the jubilant, colorful lifestyle of the inhabitants.

Surya, the sun god is also worshiped in the temples of Greater India countries in the form of *Chakra*. It reminded the author of Surya worship in India from ancient times. The Chakra of Konarak Sun temple is the best instance. Though it has been stopped ritualistically, Indians still worship the positivity of sunlight to throw away darkness (12).

The Hindu colonists not only worshipped Hindu deities in their mythological order, they also performed the 'Veer puja' (Hero worship). The reflection of this hero worship can be seen in the several Arjuna

sculptures. The worship of the mighty Arjuna particularly was famous among the Balinese people (16).

Sadananda lamented that the Indianized effects that were buried under ruins were needed to be brought to light. Though Archeological excavations began to explore those remnants but no Bengali archeologists have come forward to take part in these long explorations. In his view it is South India that was free of superstitions like bigotry, untouchability and from there Indian colonizers began their military expeditions to establish Hindu colonies in the lands of Cambodia, Java and Bali (37). If untouchability would have been prevalent in South India Hindu colonists would not have succeeded in the Hindu expansion.

He was mesmerized to see the mood of festivity among the Balinese Hindus. He found similarities between their drama performances and 'Jatra', a kind of open forum drama performance of Bengal (21). He was surprised to find that the stories of the dramas were mainly episodes of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Not only in Hindu Bali but also in Buddhist Cambodia and Mahamedan Java these epics have great value in drama performances. So there in Greater India he found shadows of no religious indifferences or communal mentality or issue of untouchability, bigotry (24, 36). In his view, these merriment activities of these Greater India countries are the sole reflection of the deep rooted Hindu culture in the heart of the non-Hindus created by the early Hindu colonists (25). He felt sad that with the western influence Indians forgot their own cultural tradition their own values but it didn't happen in South East Asia. The women of Bali preserved their Hindu culture with pride by regular performances without neglecting household chores. So from the sociological aspect also discussions are necessary to know the history of Greater India (27).

He cherished the fact that unlike the case with India, Hinduism took 'democratic' form in Bali. Deities there are not treated as personal property of any priest or priestly class. Rather they are worshipped by the whole community and anyone of the community could serve the deities (32). Their peaceful devotion without any religious yelling astonished the author. To him the purest form of Hinduism was seen in the veneration of Greater India (39).

In his *Panchatirtham* (1946), Sadananda deeply focuses on the Siva cult in Greater India. He was himself a great worshipper of Siva, as he begins and ends his pamphlets and travelogues with 'Om Namah Sivaya'. To him the geographical location of the South East Asia has attracted Indian colonizers thousand years ago and their civilizing efforts were so great here that it feels like wondering in the 'tirthyas' or the journey for pilgrimage. Thus he points out particularly five places of Greater India (South East Asian countries) as the 'Panchatirtham'. They are- Siam, Indo-China, Sumatra, Champa and Bornio.

Interestingly, he points out how the Siamese are Buddhists, yet their tonsure ceremony adheres closely to the rituals of *Upanayanam* (3). He

finds among the Siamese Mahamedan Malayans the celebration of Hindu rituals like *Upanayanam*. He feels nostalgic that the 'ancient pioneers of India' spread their cultural values among the South-Eastern Asians so deeply that despite they are now pious Muslims, still they have preserved their bygone Hindu roots proudly (4). Although it was a Buddhist country, he finds in Siam more prominence of Brahmins than the Buddhists. The Royal house of Siam bears the expenses of Hindu priests appointed to perform court rituals. They are believed to possess magical powers to help the royals to choose the loyal followers (7). Siamese theatrical performances were undoubtedly based in Indian epics and to him it bore similarities with that of Bengali jatra (8). The music is played with mostly Indianized musical instruments like *khanjanas*, *jaltarangas*, *veenas*, *mridangas* etc. The enriched art practices not only include dance, drama, music but also the finest utensils which were mainly made of gold and silver with ornamental carvings. They still crave for those artistic training that once upon a time was taught by 'Dakshinapatha' (South Indian) craftsmen (13). The rich art of Siam can also be found according to him in the sphere of sculptures. Not only they beautifully used red sandstones to curve statues, numerous statues of Indian deities; the Ardhanmurti, Vishnu, Buddha etc.

He called Indo-China, Hindu China which he puts rationally as:

H or Sanskrit 'ह' was often changed into Greek as English I in pronunciation, as for instance Hindustan into Indosthan (15).

He too like R.C Majumdar believed in the Hindu Colonization process in teaching the Hindu civilising aspects to the Siamese. Like the other GIS members to trace the Hindu colonizing precursor he stated the legend of two *Kaundinyas*. As a devotee of Siva, he mentions one religious legend of Funan that says that a monk named Sakya Nagasena was sent by the Funan king to the court of a Chinese Emperor, who sang the hymns glorifying 'Parvatipati Siva', the great God of Funan to the emperor (17). Sadananda Swami travelled through various religious sites of Indo-China and was fascinated to see ruins of Indian temples holding the saga of ancient Hindu imprint. Vishnu was the chief God in Hindu Culture of Siam but Siva had a separate adoration. In Phan rang (ancient Pandu Ranga), Lingaraja Siva temple was seen where the Statue of Nandi was also erected to eradicate the evils. *Mukhalinga*, phallic images of Siva was also worshipped at different parts of the country. Sumatra, due to its wonderful location got the attention of the Hindu traders of India from the 1st century A.D. under the wing of the great Sailendras it became a powerful Indianized country but as the Sailendras were interested in Buddhism, the country became a Buddhist one just like Indo-China. In Champa, Sadananda shows how native traditions reshaped the Siva iconography. Interestingly, in the Siva temple founded by King Jayavarman III in 1300 AD the Siva image had six hands. The upper hands hold thunder and lotus; the middle ones, axe and pot; while the materials in the other hands remain unidentifiable (25).

Interestingly, in his 1938 pamphlet *Champa*, he discusses how Hindu kings of Champa often to immortalize their names would even place their names side by side the name of the deity. For example, when King Indra in Champa had built a temple dedicated to Siva, he called the architecture temple of 'Indreswara Siva' (18-19). One unique nature of the Siva images in the temples of Champa is the fact that all Siva idols wear sacred thread, and even Ganesha is made to appear as a Brahmin with a sacred thread. Siva, in these images, appear as a family head with his consort Parvati, daughters Laxmi and Saraswati and sons Kartikeya and Ganesha.

Similarly, in *Hindu Culture in Greater India* (1949), he portrays how the people of Bali are so religious that it is reflected through their pastime creative performances like dance, music which they dedicate to lord Siva whom they worship as God of Gods. In front of most of the temples, they erect the statue of Nandi, the bull attendant of Siva to protect the holy shrine from negative energies. The 'ultimate goal' of their religious belief is *Sivaloka* or attaining the 'abode of Siva' in afterlife by freeing oneself from all the earthly desires and being placid (8, 12).

As the Sailendras were Buddhist, Hinduism was revived in Java in the latter half of the 9th century through the path of Saivism. Besides the all encompassing impact of Saivism, Siva was worshipped with other Hindu Gods also, like the idea of 'Tripurusa' or the Trinity God – Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara respectively as *Sristi* (Creation), *Sthiti* (Preservation) and *Pralaya* (Destruction) which were visualized in the temple art (14). Sadananda characterized important Saivite features in the Java-Balinese religious culture. The pair of *Purusa* and *Prakriti* - (Siva and his consort Ranada) which creates the universe, the *Panchakshara* or the five syllabic mantra of 'namah Shivaya', *Panchabrahma* or the initials of five faces of Siva; S for *Sadvotjata*, B for *Bamadeva*, T for *Tatpurusa*, A for *Aghora* and I for *Ishana* (15). The priests of Bali are called the Padandas. They invoke Siva, the God of Gods with plenty of names; *Mahadeva*, *Sambhu*, *Sankara*, *Rudra*, *Maheshwara* etc. Tracing the art history of Java he saw Buddhist Borobudur as the epitome of beauty which was purely a 'Hindu enterprise'. The principal God of Javanese Hinduism is also Siva. His ornamented temple is located in the middle of another architectural marvel Prambanan temple. Dieing Plateau was a holy valley where a group of Saiva monks resided. It was also considered as the capital of Pandu Dewa which denotes the magical influence of *Mahabharata* over the region as Pandu was the father of Pandavas (36). He highlighted that in Singasari the tantric form of Saivism was clearly visible in the *Bhairava* image of Siva and *Mahisamardini* image of Durga (38). As shown by Sadananda, Siva was a regular trope even in Javanese puppet plays where the God would appear with his *tandava nritya* (28-29).

Debarati Ganguly complains that Sadananda's arguments were often 'based on pre-determined idea' and his narratives 'did not follow any rational process of historical analysis' (94). She is particularly correct and

part of these defects came from his identity of a monk who reveled in the narration of Hindu India's glorious past with vigor, passion, and often an extravagant uncritical adoration; perhaps, it is for this reason that the monk never acted as a historian, a well trained studier of historical processes. He indeed did lack the expertise of a scholar, a trained historian like R.C. Majumdar, P.C. Bagchi and other veterans of the GIS. However, he was heavily praised for his efforts by GIS historians, even the giants like Kalidas Nag who appreciated Sadananda in his review of Sadananda's *Brihattara Bharater Puja Parbon*. Nag thought of Sadananda as a 'pioneer' religious gurus who even though was 'unaided' was able to travel across such lands in search of the glorious past of India's cultural colonies (183-4). As even Spoelder notes, GIS historians were not the only source of intellectual and political nurturing of Greater India studies and due recognition must be given to even those like Sadananda who were neither trained historians and intellectuals nor were aided by any such institutional form of research on Greater India (151). In this way, he was more than ready to acknowledge the way Sadananda popularized the concept of Greater India. After all, we must also acknowledge the fact that Sadananda, though not a historian, had explored and lucidly put in his writings how native cultures of south-east Asian regions had assimilated with the Hindu culture reaching such distant shores and though he often lacked intellectual terminology and jargon-driven weight he was able to prove how cultural encounters in such distant lands and times had reshaped Hindu culture in the south-east Asian lands. We must remember how the GIS scholars were motivated by a deep-seated nationalism and enthusiastic patriotism. They were not rewriting history only to write back to the Britishers. They intended their publications for raising a wider recognition among the fellow countrymen about India's glorious past as a leader of human civilization. However, as we often find, scholasticism of intellectuals often creates barriers between themselves and the masses since the masses are not as erudite and learned as it is required to follow such scholarly discourse. Thus, as Nalinaksha Dutt, a great GIS historian himself acknowledges the importance of Sadananda's role in popularizing the Greater India thought among the masses:


Written in a lively and animated style with no pretence to scholarly accuracy or completeness, but inspired by a feeling of intense reverence for our ancestral culture, these sketches should make an earnest appeal to the large section of our countrymen who have neither the time nor the opportunity to go to the more authoritative publications on the subject. (68-9).

Thus, Sadananda's study of the Siva cult in the south-east Asia is extremely relevant in the context of Greater India studies not only in the form of merely working as a source of inspiration for the masses but also as a source of energy and pride in their religious and national identity. In this way he also showcases how wider and deeper Hinduism could travel and how many layers it could develop within itself, something that definitely

stressed on how ancient India and its religion was extremely dynamic, energetic and open enough to adopt, adapt, adept and extend itself according to varying cultural, geopolitical surroundings. It is in this way he exhibits the dynamism of ancient Indian culture and thought and thereby establishes its greatness and depth, if not as a rationalist and historian, then certainly a devout religious enthusiast and a steadfast and zealous patriot.

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