

# **Evolving Convergences:**

## **Contemporary Approaches to Humanities, Commerce and Social Sciences**

Editor-in-Chief  
**Dr. Sujatra Bhattacharyya**

Editor  
**Dr. Poulami Roy**

*Published by:*



**NETAJI NAGAR COLLEGE**

170/436, N.S.C Bose Road, Regent Estate  
Kolkata-700092

First Published on

**June, 2026**

By

# **Netaji Nagar College**

Kolkata – 700092

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**ISBN: 978-93-5810-055-6**

(Hardback)

**Price: 699.00**

Title of the Book:

## **Evolving Convergences:**

**Contemporary Approaches to Humanities, Commerce and Social  
Sciences**

**Editor-in-Chief:**

**Dr. Sujatra Bhattacharyya**

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Language: Multiple (English & Bengali)

Publisher and Type Setter:

**Amitrakshar Publishers**

**Cover design by:**

**Sandipan Dutta and Amitrakshar Publishers, Kolkata**

Multiple Fonts

Page No.:234

**Website: [www.amitrakshar.co.in](http://www.amitrakshar.co.in)**

Email id: [amitraksharpublishers@gmail.com](mailto:amitraksharpublishers@gmail.com)

Phone number: 9735768900

Printed and Distributed by:



**Office: 1/199, Jodhpur Park, Gariahat Road, Kolkata- 700068**

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# **Evolving Convergences:** **Contemporary Approaches to Humanities,** **Commerce and Social Sciences**

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**NETAJI NAGAR COLLEGE**  
170/436, N.S.C Bose Road, Regent Estate  
Kolkata-700092

*Printed and Distributed by:*



**MITRAKSHAR®  
PUBLISHERS**  
AN ISO 9001:2015 / GMIS 9913:2011 / FSC®



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## Editorial

In contemporary academic discourse, interdisciplinary research has emerged as an essential mode of intellectual inquiry, encouraging meaningful dialogue across diverse fields of study. *Evolving Convergences: Contemporary Approaches to Humanities, Commerce and Social Sciences* has been envisioned within this spirit of interdisciplinary engagement. This volume reflects the academic vision and research-oriented spirit of Netaji Nagar College, an undergraduate institution that has continually encouraged scholarly engagement and the cultivation of innovative ideas across disciplines.

The publication of this book marks a significant milestone for the institution as it celebrates the attainment of its ISBN number for the academic session 2025–2026. More than a formal academic achievement, this development symbolizes the institution's growing commitment to fostering research culture, publication practices, and intellectual exchange within the broader academic community. The initiative also reaffirms the institution's belief that meaningful education extends beyond classroom learning and must engage with contemporary social, cultural, and economic realities through sustained academic exploration.

This edited volume brings together scholarly contributions from the fields of Humanities, Commerce, and Social Sciences, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in contemporary research and higher education. This volume comprises peer-reviewed articles that foreground diverse themes, methodologies, and critical perspectives, creating a meaningful space for intellectual exchange across disciplines. The publication has been further enriched by the valuable guidance and academic insight of the esteemed members of the Editorial Board, whose thoughtful observations have contributed significantly to its quality. A distinctive feature of the volume is its bilingual character, as it includes research articles in both English and Bengali, reflecting the institution's commitment to inclusivity, linguistic diversity, and broader academic engagement.

The title 'Evolving Convergences' aptly captures the central vision of the book. It suggests a continuous movement towards

## *Evolving Convergences*

intellectual collaboration, where different disciplines intersect and influence one another in productive ways. The contributors to this volume represent emerging as well as established academic voices, whose works collectively address significant questions related to society, culture, economy, identity, and intellectual transformation.

As editors, we believe that research and publication are essential to the growth of critical thinking and academic excellence. This volume has therefore been envisioned not only as a collection of scholarly writings but also as a platform for encouraging future research and interdisciplinary dialogue. The publication process has been actively supported by the members of the Journal and Publication Subcommittee, IQAC and the Research Cell of Netaji Nagar College, whose collective efforts and academic commitment have played an important role in shaping this work. We sincerely express our gratitude to all contributors, reviewers, faculty members, and well-wishers for their valuable cooperation and intellectual support. It is hoped that this volume will contribute meaningfully to contemporary scholarship and further strengthen the institution's growing culture of research and academic publication.

Editor-in-Chief:

**Dr. Sujatra Bhattacharyya**

Editor

**Dr. Poulami Roy**

Date: 30.04.2026

Place: Kolkata

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(Affiliated to University of Calcutta)**

# The Death of the West is not the Death of the World

Abesh Mitra<sup>1</sup>



## Abstract

**D**eath and dying have long fascinated both medical and philosophical fields, often viewed through a lens of 'biopolitical modernity'. The contemporary idea of death, intertwined with absolutism, presents an 'absurd limit'.

This paper critiques this view of death as a final problem to be hidden or transcended, through Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, employing a critical posthumanist framework. It contrasts Western humanist notions with Yoruba cosmology, where life, death, and afterlife exist within a relational continuum among the living, the dead, and the unborn. Rather than merely a cultural clash, it interprets colonial intervention as an ontological rupture disrupting this interconnected order. Drawing on Frantz Fanon and Achille Mbembe, it explores how biopolitical and necropolitical forces fracture indigenous subjectivity. Ultimately, it argues that Yoruba metaphysics reimagines death as relational and generative, challenging neoliberal closure and transcending Eurocentric humanism.

**Keywords:** *Death, Life, Posthumanism, Postcolonialism, Necropolitics*

## Introduction and Methodology

Colonial and normative frameworks have shaped human and 'nonhuman' subjectivity, influencing both life and death. This paper aims to decolonize death and Indigenous subjectivity through Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. Methodologically, it employs a theoretically informed close reading of the play alongside historiographic analysis of Western attitudes toward death, revealing the ideological foundations of humanist rationality. Drawing on Michel Foucault, it positions modern death within biopolitical governance, extending this

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through Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. Engaging Frantz Fanon and Rosi Braidotti, the paper critiques colonial humanism and interprets Yoruba cosmology as a relational ontology that challenges closure.

I) Death in the West

Death is commonly conceptualized as 'the end of life'. Modern medical technology has elevated the sanctity of life and reduced death as 'unnatural'.

"The fear of death is universal ... This fear, combined with a 'westernized' worldview that emphasizes life preservation ... has led to the perception of death as a taboo—something modernity has yet to overcome." (Rickens)

Such views on 'life' and 'death' are rooted in humanistic rationality, which prioritizes reason in governing human life, originating from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century Italy and England.

In the early modern period death became more individualized. The fear of death, intensified by frequent Plague outbreaks, led to a concealed approach to death, contrasting with the earlier public nature of dying.

The European Renaissance witnessed epistemological shifts with rationalist philosophers like René Descartes and Sir Francis Bacon, leading to cultural changes that viewed death as an 'open secret'. In this period, "The act of dying became an important personal experience" (San Filippo). Sir Thomas Browne's influential *Hydrotophia* initiated an "objective" study of death, focusing on the individual while acknowledging social connections. He treated graves as "the material manifestations of the futility of remembering", asserting that only in "names", or texts, did memory reside (Williams 18). Thus, the individual gained renewed significance, though relational ontologies persisted.

In the eighteenth century, Western thought shifted towards a more 'objective' analysis of death, away from theocratic views. Philippe Ariès noted that during this era, "thy death" emerged, where death became 'exalted' and 'dramatized', with less concern for one's own death and more focus on the deaths of others. This marked a transition from a communal understanding of death to a personal one, intensifying emotions and 'interiorizing' grief. The deceased were viewed as unique individuals capable of rational thought, echoing Descartes' notion of "cogito ergo sum," emphasizing

### *Evolving Convergences*

doubt as inherent to existence. This period represented a significant humanist perspective, introducing mind-body dualism, where the mind symbolized rationality and scepticism, while the body represented sensory experience.

By the twentieth century, however, death entered the phase of “forbidden death.” It was increasingly concealed within hospitals, removed from domestic and communal spaces. The rise of medical science, coupled with declining confidence in organized religion, transformed death into a privatized event. Despite technological advances designed to prolong life, death became culturally taboo—something to be postponed, hidden, and managed rather than confronted.

This concealment of death is inseparable from the rise of ‘biopolitics’. According to Michel Foucault, “biopolitics can be understood as a political rationality which takes the administration of life and populations as its subject: ‘to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order’.” (Adams) The power which resides behind such political motivations is termed ‘biopower’. Foucault distinguishes between sovereign power- characterized by the right to “take life or let live”- and modern biopower, which operates by fostering life or disallowing it to the point of death. Unlike overt repression, biopower functions through normalization, categorization, and optimization of bodies, helping in population management through the institutionalization of production, discipline and optimization of life. (Visible in hospitals, schools, etc.) Foucault’s concept exposes the foundation of modern governance in ‘first world’ spaces.

Neoliberalism in the late 20th and 21st centuries expands biopower by framing life as an economic resource. Bodies are regulated through both prohibition and encouragement; certain behaviours and health practices are promoted for labour efficiency, while others are considered deviant. Life must not only be preserved but also invested in, transforming biopower into market logic where health is a moral obligation and efficiency is valued. In this context, death becomes ‘forbidden’ as it threatens productivity and market value, leading to its medicalization and concealment to uphold capitalist ideals.

Thus, within dominant strands of modern Western humanism, death becomes framed as an interruption of productivity and

rational selfhood, thereby acquiring an aura of abnormality or threat. It is both subjected to rational scrutiny and pushed beyond visibility. In elevating human life to a hierarchically superior position- detached from ecological and communal entanglements- neoliberal modernity constructs death as a hurdle to be overcome or a taboo to be concealed.

II) Yoruba Death

The Yoruba people are a West African ethnic group and one of Nigeria's major ethnic groups, alongside the Igbo and the Hausa. Yoruba cosmology does not follow a linear narrative regarding death, which is crucial for averting 'epistemic violence'. Instead, this section focuses on interconnected conceptual nodes: the ontology of the Yoruba body, the cosmology of the Living-Dead-Unborn, and the role of death in preserving Yoruba social order. By examining this, we can juxtapose Western and Yoruba metaphysics.

The Yoruba have a rich cosmology centred around a supreme spirit, 'Olodumare', who is deeply connected to humanity. Additionally, there are around 400 lesser gods known as 'Orisa', with present-day people considered their descendants, able to interact with them.

The world is divided into two sections: 'Aye'/ the living world, and 'Orun'/ the other world, which, although separated by death, is not impenetrable. Each individual plays a particular part to sustain the link between the two sections of the world, which encourages a spirit of belonging within a cosmic totality.

The dominant Yoruba concept of the body is that of a congeries of body, soul, destiny, journey and heart/mind. Destiny is not only dependent upon the body, but also on forces beyond its control. Thus, it is a network rather than a Cartesian duality, and does not exhibit the universalities of the Eurocentric 'Self' and resists the anthropocentric claim of the human becoming a geological force capable of affecting all life on this planet. This aligns with Pramod K. Nayar's treatment of the 'human' who is looked at "as an instantiation of a network of connections, exchanges, linkages and crossings with all forms of life. Its roots lie in disciplines and philosophies in which modes of describing/ascribing difference and categorizations ... historically, whether in philosophy or political science- that create The Human as a category have been

revealed to be exclusionary.” (14)

In Yoruba metaphysics, life, death, and reincarnation are intrinsically linked, contrasting with the Eurocentric view of existence. Initially, for the Yoruba in southwestern Nigeria, death was a transitional phase in a cyclical existence and not a separation. It was viewed as a vital part of life, sustaining social order, where ancestors were embodied by the living, and dying created space for the unborn. The ritual suicide that is represented in Soyinka’s play is an accepted ‘performance’, necessary for the sustenance of the ‘cord’. It implies the development of the community in the face of a precarious future.

To clarify, Yoruba ontology does not need critical posthumanism to define it. What, for instance, Braidotti claims about the body being a relational assemblage has long been conceptualized by Yoruba metaphysics, where the body is not autonomous in the liberal sense, but a cosmologically embedded node in a continuum. My usage of critical posthumanism is to stage a resonance instead of claiming that the Yoruba body ‘needs’ it. The body is, thus, a critical posthumanist subject, “a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity... a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable”. (Braidotti 49) It is not superior to the community, but partially accountable for both the human and the community as “Posthuman subjectivity expresses an embodied and embedded and hence partial form of accountability, based on a strong sense of collectivity, relationality and hence community building.”(Braidotti 49)

Yoruba cosmology views death as a relational transition within a cosmic continuum, while colonial modernity signifies political domination and ontological disruption. Colonial governance (in 1945 Nigeria) fractures the Yoruba social order, linearizing its cyclical time. In this context, Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* dramatizes two competing ontologies of death rather than merely depicting a clash of cultures. In the foreword of the play, Soyinka writes, “The Colonial Factor is an incident, a catalytic incident merely. The confrontation in the play is largely metaphysical, contained in the human vehicle which is Elesin and the universe of the Yoruba mind - the world of the living, the dead and the unborn, and the numinous passage which links all:

transition.” (Soyinka 2) Although reasonable, such a treatment risks romanticising the Yoruba culture and portraying it as a stagnant, transcendental space, separate from material elements. The social structures of Yoruba villages were hegemonic and sacrificial, encompassing the King, the horseman, the people and above all, the cosmos. Whether Elesin Oba’s performance of the ritual of death is a cosmological coercion or a wilful act is a tension which remains unresolved.

In the play, the Yoruba ritual involves the horseman's suicide one month after the king's death. Elesin Oba's role is to commit suicide to preserve the ‘cord’ between the living, the unborn, and the dead. Elesin describes it as, “Coiled

To the navel of the world is that Endless cord that links us all  
To the great origin... The trailing cord will bring me to the roots.”  
(Soyinka 14)

The Yoruba body exists within a network of ‘beings’ emphasizing the ritual’s role in sustaining Elesin’s soul and the community in the cosmological order, as highlighted by the ‘market’ women. They tell Elesin, “The world is in your hands.” (Soyinka 14)

The essence of being a horseman is understood as a way of existence, a part of life, not hidden due to its conventionally negative connotations of suicide and death. The community appeals to the horseman’s role and functionality instead of his personal individuality. “WOMAN: You ignorant man. It is not he who calls himself Elesin Oba, it is his blood that says it. As it called out to his father before him and will to his son after him. And that is in spite of everything your white man can do.” (Soyinka 26)

Elesin’s body (a transitional organism in the network of the living-dead-unborn) resonates with Braidotti’s posthuman subject, who is a “transversal entity encompassing the human ... the animals and the earth as a whole”. (Braidotti 82) It is imperative to the sustenance of the Yoruba community that Soyinka portrays. The ‘death’ of one member of the community making space for new life, is based upon the understanding that the world is a complex network of immanent relationships, which should be sustained, even when material conditions do not favour it. This further resonates with Braidotti’s idea of posthuman subjectivity, which is “not the exclusive prerogative of anthropos; secondly, that it is

not linked to transcendental reason... and lastly, that it is based on the immanence of relations.” (82) This highlights the contrast between Elesin’s subjectivity and that of a Eurocentric subject who embodies transcendental reason and humanist rationality.

The play moves from the attempt to achieve metaphysical sustenance (Elesin’s ritual) to an intrusion of the Eurocentric violence of linearity and rationality (Pilking’s intrusion) and ultimately to a resistance which re-asserts posthuman and post-colonial subjectivity (Olunde’s sacrifice). Thus, not only the bodies within the play but also the structural aspects of the play itself act as a network that collapses upon the removal of the mentioned nodes.

Although Elesin’s desire to die and to marry before the ritual seems to be at odds. (Even Iyaloja warns him of succumbing to sensual desire because the future of the community depends on him: “You wish to travel light. Well, the earth is yours. But be sure the seed you leave in it attracts no curse.” (Soyinka 18)) It can be read as an affirmation of abundance before stepping into ancestorhood/death which is not the end of life, but a moment of transition. This transitional phase is not treated with despair, and the marriage can be read as a materialistic way of ensuring continuity. In Yoruba cosmology, life and death coexist, resisting the universality of Eurocentric individualism. The concept of death being an affirming and generative process resonates with Braidotti’s understanding of it. According to her, “Life is desire which essentially aims at expressing itself and consequently runs on entropic energy: it reaches its aim and then dissolves... The wish to die can consequently be seen as the counterpart and as another expression of the desire to live intensely... Eros and Thanatos... are really just one life-force that aims to reach its own fulfilment.” (134)

After the completion of the ritual, the ‘non-human’ does not lose agency and keeps affecting the community’s future. The body, though transitional, is not inert flesh. It’s a carrier of life force whose material ‘end’ is necessary for the community to witness. The materiality of Elesin’s impending death (a way for him to assert his subjectivity) is heightened by his desire to marry. Elesin claims, “My vital flow, the last from this flesh is intermingled with the promise of future life...When earth and passage wed,

the consummation is complete only when there are grains of earth on the eyelids of passage.” (Soyinka 30) The boundary between metaphysics and materiality is blurred as the earth represents his sensuality, and the passage represents the transition through death, resisting the Eurocentric duality of mind-body. The agency of the ‘non-human’ and its relation to the ‘human’ runs parallel to what Braidotti defines as ‘posthuman vital materialism’, which “displaces the boundaries between living and dying” (Braidotti 134) and resists the risk of drowning ontology into excessive critical theory.

The colonial factor, though, according to Soyinka, not as imperative as the cosmological disruption, is necessary to understand the competing ontologies and ideas of death. The scene which introduces Simon Pilkings, the District Officer, marks a significant transition from the ritualistic nature of the previous scene. This scene is characterized by a mimicry of the native customs: “A tango is playing from an old hand-cranked gramophone and, glimpsed through the wide windows and doors which open onto the fore stage verandah are the shapes of SIMON PILKINGS and his wife, JANE... They are wearing what is immediately apparent as some form of fancy-dress.” (Soyinka 19)

When Pilkings hears about Elesin Oba’s impending ritual suicide, he says, “You think you’ve stamped it all out but it’s always lurking under the surface somewhere.” (Soyinka 20) Initially, he believes the ritual is murder and is amazed to discover that it’s suicide. He finds the intentional loss of life abnormal and wants to stop it, prioritizing his arrival at the European club ball. This is because his epistemological base rests on a Eurocentric humanism, which considers death to be ‘forbidden’ and places a strong emphasis on preserving life, which collides with Elesin’s and the community’s understanding of existence. Pilkings considers his epistemological foundation as superior to that of the native’s metaphysics; thus, he is at ease inflicting discursive and materialistic violence upon the natives. He terms them as “Sly, devious bastards” (Soyinka 23) before deciding to lock up Elesin for the night. He assumes an epistemic universality and forcibly applies it to the natives, which is a sheer misunderstanding of the latter’s metaphysical beliefs. Such epistemic arrogance arises out of the belief that everything that the native world has to offer is either evil or irrational. Fanon

claims that the colonized state is a Manichean world representing a fictional duality of all good and all evil. Simon Pilkings “paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil...He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces.” (Fanon 41) He sees the customs as the epitome of absolute evil, and himself as the protector of ‘rational’ life.

Pilkings’ treatment of native customs traps the colonized in a static identity rooted in dehumanization. Fanon argues that this is necessary for the colonizers to impose an exclusionary humanism, which prevents the natives from regaining their lost sense of self. “Fanon seeks nothing less than the complete overthrow of a humanism based on exclusion and traditional categorizations. In its place he seeks a humanism in which difference is respected.” (Nayar 43) Developing such a ‘post’-Eurocentric humanism, requires the native to assert their subjectivity, exactly what Pilkings interrupts. It is crucial to understand that although Pilkings operates within a ‘biopolitical rationality’, his interruption becomes ‘necropolitical’. Achille Mbembe describes necropolitical power as “the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximally destroying persons and creating death-worlds, that is, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to living conditions that confer upon them the status of the living dead.” (92) Pilkings’ interruption represents the state’s sovereignty to dictate who must die and who must live and under what conditions. The district officer disguises his exercise of state power and imprisons Elesin in a broken cellar. This relocation, from a ritual space (market) to the state space (cellar), is an additional marker of ‘necropower’ which marks what Mbembe calls ‘topographies of cruelty’.

Even upon Olunde’s reiterations, Pilkings fails to acknowledge that “there are things you cannot understand — or help.” (Soyinka 41) The intervention destroys the honour and subjectivity of Elesin, as well as that of his whole community, and jeopardizes their future in the Yoruba world order by breaking the ‘endless cord’.

This is highlighted by Elesin’s conversation with Pilkings in the

cellar,

“ELESIN: The night is not at peace ghostly one... You have shattered the peace of the world forever. There is no sleep in the world tonight.

PILKINGS: It is still a good bargain if the world should lose one night’s sleep as the price of saving a man’s life.

ELESIN: You did not save my life District Officer. You destroyed it.” (Soyinka 44)

Elesin also says, “The world is set adrift and its inhabitants are lost... there is nothing but emptiness.” (Soyinka 45) The ‘network’ that the community depends upon is broken, which reorders native existence, which resonates with how necropower “proceeds by a sort of inversion between life and death, as if life was merely death’s medium.” (Mbembe 38) Here, physical life becomes the medium for communal ‘death’.

The destruction of subjectivity is resisted by Olunde’s arrival and subsequent suicide. Olunde, a ‘hybrid’ subject, educated within Western modernity, fully understands the biopolitical logic which renders suicide barbaric, yet he rejects its claim to universality. That helps him in exposing the hypocrisy of the Eurocentric episteme. When questioned about the barbarity of ritual suicide by Jane, Olunde replies, “Is that worse than mass suicide? ... what do you call what those young men are sent to do by their generals in this war? Of course you have also mastered the art of calling things by names which don’t remotely describe them.” (Soyinka 39) He understands that the English way of ‘survival’ lacks respect for the different ways in which it can be practiced. Additionally, Olunde is aware of both epistemic and physical violence that people are subjected to daily; he says, “I know now how history is made.” (Soyinka 39)

Olunde’s character aligns with that of the disillusioned post-colonial intellectual as theorized by Fanon. “In the first phase, the native intellectual ... has assimilated the culture of the occupying power... In the second phase ... disturbed; he decides to remember what he is... Finally in the third phase... the (native) will... shake the people... The native intellectual... will realize that you do not show proof of your nation from its culture but ... in the fight which the people wage” (Fanon 179). After coming back, he acknowledges that he never realised the significance of his

culture before leaving. “But I found out over there ... And I will never give it up.” (Soyinka 39) His characterization is at the third Fanonian stage, seeking to resist through a ‘violence’ which is affirmative and regenerative, and radically restructuring Fanon’s idea of violence as a ‘cleansing force’ for the colonized.

While Elesin ‘fails’, Olunde resists Pilkings’ exercise of necropower by committing suicide. He asserts that individual choice can defy state power. When he says, “I have no father, eater of left-overs” (Soyinka 43), Olunde “tears himself away from the swamp that may suck him down” and accepts all consequences, embodying the defender of his people’s past (Fanon 218). His death is “a seminal fragment of a larger humanity...grappling with the inevitability of a never-ending time” (Mbembe 187), a sacrifice that involves “complex negotiations” with “dominant norms” (Braidotti 35). Ultimately, Olunde’s act reimagines a community affected by colonial rupture, rooted in a conscious ethical decision instead of preordained cosmological roles. The community is transformed into a ‘hybrid’ one, sustained through loss and rupture, which affirms relational ontology, but retains the tensions between continuity and rupture, and between resistance and subjugation.

### Conclusion

This paper has tried to argue that Yoruba metaphysics treats death as relational and generative, resisting Eurocentric humanism and closure, through Wole Soyinka’s *Death and the King’s Horseman*. The first part analyses Western perspectives of death, while the second part contrasts the Yoruba perspectives on death, life and ontological existence through a close reading of the play. I have drawn upon Rosi Braidotti’s critical posthumanist lens, Frantz Fanon’s decolonial theories and Achille Mbembe’s theories on the governance of marginalized bodies to strengthen my arguments. The tragedy is not of Elesin’s failure or Olunde’s sacrifice, but of the imposition of an epistemology which forbids the reimagination of existence beyond ‘rationalist’ terms, and can only be resisted through the assertion of subjectivity. Soyinka’s play argues that subjectivity cannot be disentangled from metaphysics; to colonize death is to colonize existence. Thus, decolonization, an ontological project, restores relationality against the liberal humanist notion of individuality.

Although I have examined the connotations of death in the Yoruba culture within the colonial context, my paper leaves areas for future research, some being the exploration of gendered bodies in Yoruba metaphysics and a critical analysis of Olunde's transculturalism. I believe such studies are important for the reimagination of the human beyond strict boundaries and to contribute to broader conversations about power, representation and knowledge.

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## ‘বিদ্রোহী’ : শতবর্ষ পরে

ড. অগ্নিমিত্র ঘোষ<sup>১</sup>



‘বিদ্রোহী’ ‘অগ্নিবীণা’ (১৯২২) কাব্যগ্রন্থের কবিতা। প্রথম প্রকাশ ‘মোসলেম ভারত’ পত্রিকায় (১৩২৮ কার্তিক, সম্পাদক : মোজাম্মেল হক)। নলিনীকান্ত সরকার সম্পাদিত সাপ্তাহিক ‘বিজলী’র ১৩২৮ পৌষ, সংখ্যাতেও কবিতাটি প্রকাশিত হয়। এছাড়া কবিতাটিকে পাওয়া যায় ‘প্রবাসী’র ১৩২৮ মাঘ এবং ‘সাধনা’র ১৩২৯-এর বৈশাখ সংখ্যায়।

১৯২১-এর জুলাই-আগস্ট মাস থেকে ৩/৪ সি, তালতলা লেনের বাসাবাড়িতে আস্তানা গাড়েন মুজাফফর আহমেদ ও কাজী নজরুল। ঋতু বদলাচ্ছে, ঠাণ্ডা পড়ছে একটু একটু; একদিন রাতে তক্তাপোষে শুয়ে অকাতরে ঘুমোচ্ছেন মুজাফফর আহমেদ অথচ নজরুলের চোখে ঘুম নেই। রাত শেষ হয়ে ভোর হবে হবে নজরুল নিজেরই অন্তরের অভিঘাতে অস্থির হয়ে উঠলেন, একটি খাতা আর পেন্সিল নিয়ে লিখতে শুরু করলেন –

‘বল বীর

বল উন্নত মম শির।

শির নেহারি আমার নতশির ওই শিখর হিমাধির।

বল বীর’ – ...

‘কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম স্মৃতিকথা’ গ্রন্থে মুজাফফর আহমেদ লেখেন, ‘সকালে ঘুম থেকে উঠে মুখ ধুয়ে এসে আমি বসেছি এমন সময় নজরুল বলল, সে একটি কবিতা লিখেছে। পুরো কবিতাটি সে তখন আমায় পড়ে শোনালো। ‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতার আমি প্রথম শ্রোতা...’। স্মৃতিকথায় তিনি আরো লেখেন, ‘এখন থেকে চুয়াল্লিশ বছর আগে নজরুল কিংবা আমার ফাউন্টেন পেন ছিল না। দোয়াতে বারবার কলম ডোবাতে গিয়ে তার মাথার সঙ্গে হাত তাল রাখতে পারবে না, এই ভেবেই সম্ভবত সে কবিতাটি প্রথমে পেন্সিলে লিখেছিল’।

কবিতার দ্বিতীয় পর্বটি ধরিয়ে দেয় প্রকাশের গতি, রক্তবেগ তরঙ্গিত মস্তিষ্কের চলন, কবির স্নায়ুর কম্পন, হৃদস্পন্দন। আগ্নেয়গিরির লাভার মতো কবিতাটি বেরিয়ে এসেছিল। মনে পড়ছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছবির কথা। অবনীন্দ্রনাথের কাছে যা ছিল ভলক্যানিক ইরাপশন। বেরিয়ে আসার তাগিদটাই সেখানে বড়। সংঘমের বাঁধ ভেঙে ফেলার উন্মাদনাই মুখ্য।

কবিতাটি লিখে পাঠকের থেকে মুক্ততা, বিস্ময়, শ্রদ্ধা যেমন পাচ্ছেন, তেমনি তার কপালে জুটছে ঈর্ষা, পরিহাস, কটাক্ষ। ছড়াচ্ছে গুজব, গাল-গল্প, আক্রমণ,

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ব্যঙ্গ-প্যারোডি। সজনীকান্ত দাস সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ দত্তকে দলে টানতে চাইলেন ‘বিদ্রোহী’র বিরুদ্ধে। কিন্তু সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের সমর্থন পেলেন না। কবি সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের কাছে প্রশয় না পেয়ে সজনীকান্ত আশ্রয় নিলেন ব্যঙ্গ কবিতার। ‘শনিবারের চিঠি’তে প্যারোডি লিখলেন। নাম ‘আমি বীর’। তার একটি অংশ এইরকম -

‘আমি ভাঙ্গি বেধি ও চেয়ার/আমি করি না কারেও কেয়ার  
হৃদি নিয়ে আমি ছিনিমিনি খেলি/লাখ লাখ তরুণীর/  
আমি বীর’।

মোহিতলাল হঠাৎ আবিষ্কার করলেন তাঁরই লেখা ‘আমি’ নামক একটি গদ্যরচনাকে বিনা স্বীকৃতিতে অপহরণ করেছেন কবি। এই গদ্য এক সময় তিনি নাকি নজরুলকে পড়ে শোনান। মোহিতলালের এই চুরির অভিযোগকে গুরুত্ব না দিয়ে মনিলাল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় ‘মোসলেম ভারতে’র সম্পাদককে লিখলেন, ‘মোহিতলাল ও কাজী সাহেবের ঐ দুটি রচনার মধ্যে মিল আছে এবং নাইও। তার প্রধান কারণ, এর একটি কবিতা, অপরটি গদ্য। কিন্তু দুই কবির মধ্যেই যে এক প্রেরণা, এক চিন্তা ও এক চাঞ্চল্য কাজ করিয়াছে তাহা দুটি লেখা একসঙ্গে পড়িলেই বোঝা যাইবে। দুই বিভিন্ন সময়ে দুই বিভিন্ন কবি কেমন করিয়া একই সুরে বীণা বাজাইয়াছেন তাহাও লক্ষ্য করিবার বিষয়। এই দুই রচনার ভাব ও ভাষার এমন একটি আশ্চর্য মূলগত সাদৃশ্য আছে তাহা পাঠককে সন্দেহান করে বটে কিন্তু তাহাতে কোনটিরও রসভোগের ব্যাঘাত জন্মায় না’।

তাছাড়া অনেকেই তখন জানতেন না মোহিতলালের ‘আমি’ প্রবন্ধটিও ক্ষেত্রমোহন বন্দোপাধ্যায়ের ‘অভয়ার কথা’ শীর্ষক একটি প্রবন্ধের ভাবসম্পাদ আত্মসাৎ করে লেখা। যেটি ‘আমি’ প্রকাশের এক বছর আগে ‘মানসী’ (১৩২০ বঙ্গাব্দ) পত্রিকাতে প্রকাশিত হয়। মোহিতলাল যোগ দিলেন নজরুল বধ-কাব্যের কোরাসে কণ্ঠ মেলাতে। তিনি লিখলেন – ‘দুষ্ট খোকাও বিদ্রোহ করিতে পারে বটে, কিন্তু সে বিদ্রোহে যে নৃত্য আছে তাহা নাটকের নৃত্য নয়, দুঃশাসন শিশুর দৌরাঙ্কের উল্লাস হিসেবেই তাহা উপভোগ্য’।

শুধু মুখে নয়, পত্রপত্রিকা জুড়ে তখন চলছে ‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতার উদ্দেশ্যে ব্যঙ্গ-বিদ্রুপ, কটাক্ষ। অপছন্দের উচ্চারণ তখন দিকে দিকে। নজরুলের কাব্যাদর্শের বিরোধী কবি গোলাম মোস্তফা ‘সওগাত’ পত্রিকায় (১৩২৮ মাঘ) ‘নিয়ন্ত্রিত’ শিরোনামে একটি দীর্ঘ কবিতায় কিছু উপদেশ দেন নজরুলকে। যা লিখলেন তার দুই একটি বাণী উচ্চারণ করি।

‘ওগো বীর।

সংযত কর, সংহত কর, উন্নত তব শির।...’

বোঝা যায়, তাঁর এই হিত উচ্চারণ ‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতার ছন্দরীতি অনুকরণ করে লেখা। তিনি শুধু উপদেশ দিলেন না নজরুলের ঔদ্ধত্যেরও সমালোচনা করলেন।

‘বিদ্রোহী ওগো বীর

হৃদয় মেলিয়া চেয়ে দেখো ভাই মন করি সুস্থির’। -

আরো এক বছর পর ‘ইসলাম দর্শন’ পত্রিকার কার্তিক ১৩২৯ সংখ্যায় নজরুলের

বিরুদ্ধে শুরু হলো মৌলবাদী আক্রমণ। সম্পাদক আব্দুল হাকিম অতি-কুৎসিত ভাষায়, আশ্রাব্য ছন্দে লিখলেন ‘বিদ্রোহ দমন’ কবিতা।

‘ওগো বীর

অসংযত বিদ্রোহী অধীর’।

আরো একটি বিদ্রূপ ওই একই পত্রিকায় মোহাম্মদ গোলাম হোসেনের নামে ‘প্রলয়ের ভেরি’ শিরোনামে নিয়ে অগ্রহায়ণ ১৩২৯-এ বেরোলো।

‘তুমি অহংকার মত ইবলিস

তুমি রুদ্র পিশাচ শয়তান খাবিস’।

এই বিদ্রূপের সার্কাসে একটি ব্যতিক্রমী নাম হোসেন ইসমাইল শিরাজী। তিনি ‘ছোলতান’ সাপ্তাহিকে (২৫ মাঘ ১৩৩০) ‘পরিচয়’ নামের একটি কবিতা লিখলেন। যেটি ‘বিদ্রোহী’র দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হলেও ‘বিদ্রোহী’র প্রতিবাদ নয়। শিরাজী সাহেব মুসলমান সমাজকে তার অতীতের কথা স্মরণ করিয়ে জেগে উঠতে আহ্বান জানালেন।

‘বলবীর উদাত্ত কণ্ঠে আমি বীর মোসলমান

আল্লাহ ভিন্ন জানিনা অন্য, আমি চির নিষ্ঠুর প্রাণ’।

আবার ‘বিদ্রোহী’র জনপ্রিয়তায় ‘বিদ্রোহী’র অনুকরণে অনেকেই কবিতা লিখতে শুরু করলেন – শৈলেন্দ্র কুমার মল্লিক লিখলেন ‘বিদ্রোহী বীর’ কবিতা। কেউ কেউ মনে করেন সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ দত্তের ‘যৌবন’ কবিতাটি ‘বিদ্রোহী’র অনুপ্রেরণায় লেখা।

কাজী আব্দুল ওদুদ মনে করেন, কবিতাটিতে পরিকল্পনার পূর্ণাঙ্গতা নেই। ‘প্রবাসী’তে তিনি লেখেন, কবিতাটির আবেগ স্রষ্টার হাতে নিয়ন্ত্রিত নয়। ‘প্রগতি’র সম্পাদকের কাছে কবিতাটি ফাঁকা আওয়াজ বলে মনে হয়। অনেকে বলেন, লক্ষ্যভ্রষ্ট যৌবনের গতি চঞ্চলতা এই কবিতা। আবার কেউ বলেন, ‘বিদ্রোহী কবি’ বড় আশায় তাল ঠুকে নকল পৌরুষের অভিনয় করতে দাঁড়িয়েছিলেন। বোঝা যায়, রসজ্ঞ বাঙালিরা এই কবিতাটি সর্বাংশে গ্রহণ করতে পারেননি।

‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতায় বিদ্রোহের সাথে সাথে নবযুগের পদধ্বনি শোনা গেছে। বাংলার সমাজ ও রাজনৈতিক জীবনে পৌরুষ এবং জাগরণের মন্ত্র যেন এই কবিতা। এই কবিতা নতুন বাঙালি সমাজ সৃষ্টির উন্মাদনা – যা অসাম্প্রদায়িক ধর্মীয় সংকীর্ণতা বিরোধী। সাম্রাজ্যবাদী ইংরেজ শাসকদের সিংহাসন টলিয়ে দিতে চায় এই রচনা। বুঝতে অসুবিধা হয় না, পরাধীনতার লাঞ্ছনা, অসহ্য দারিদ্র্য ও দুঃখ-কষ্ট, সমাজের ভাঙামি, ধর্মের ও রাজনীতির নামে অসংখ্য রকমের শোষণ কবিকে ব্যথিত করেছে। তাই রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক ইত্যাদি সমস্ত অসাম্যের বিরুদ্ধে তিনি সোচ্চার। তিনি তাঁর সংকল্প বজরুপে ঘোষণা করেন, বলেন – শোষণ, উৎপীড়ণ, অত্যাচারের বিরুদ্ধে তিনি বিরামহীন সংগ্রাম চালিয়ে যাবেন। সবরকম অন্যায-অত্যাচারের বিরুদ্ধে গর্জে ওঠা এই কবিতায় হিন্দু-মুসলমান দুজনেরই এত পুরাণ প্রসঙ্গ ঢুকেছে যে ব্রিটিশ সরকার একে রাজদ্রোহও বলতে পারছে না। বলতে গেলে ধর্মের উপর হাত দেওয়া হবে। এক কথায় বিদ্রোহীকে তারা বাগে আনতে পারছে না।

আসলে কবিতাটি পরাধীন ভারতের মর্মস্তুদ জ্বালা ও বিদেশী শাসকদের সীমাহীন অত্যাচারের বিরুদ্ধে বজ্রকণ্ঠে প্রতিবাদ জানিয়ে সমগ্র বাঙালি চেতনাকে একীভূত করে ব্রিটিশ শাসনের ঘুম ছুটিয়ে ছিল এবং তার বাচিক জনপ্রিয়তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কাব্য রসিক বাঙালী মানসের তৃষণও তৃপ্ত করেছিল।

অত্যাচারীর বিরুদ্ধে আর কোনো বাঙালি কবি এমন ভাষায় চ্যালেঞ্জ জানাননি। সামাজিক উৎপীড়নের বিরুদ্ধে এমন শপথ আর কারো মুখে শুনিনি। এর অভ্যন্তরীণ উন্মাদনা এবং উদ্বেলিত ভাবাবেগ নিঃসন্দেহে বাংলাকাব্যে নতুন সংযোজন। দেশ-বিদেশের পুরাণ থেকে নানা প্রসঙ্গ টেনে এনে স্বশিক্ষিত কবি শুধুমাত্র আত্মজ্ঞানের পরিচয় দিচ্ছেন না, তিনি একটি অসাম্প্রদায়িক পরিমণ্ডল নির্মাণ করে নবীন প্রজন্মকে একত্রিত করে শোষণমুক্ত ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ বাংলার স্বপ্ন দেখাচ্ছেন। লক্ষণীয়, শব্দের কাব্যিক বিন্যাসের মাধ্যমে কবিতাটিতেও প্রাণের সঞ্চারণ হচ্ছে, ওজস্বিতা ও আবেগের ভূবন সৃষ্টি হচ্ছে। কবিতায় এক বিদ্রোহী বিপ্লবীকে দেখি, আপসহীন সংগ্রাম যার লক্ষ্য। কবিতায় কোন উপদেশ নেই, নেই কোন রহস্যের আলোআঁধারি। কবি স্পষ্টবাক, রীতি তার বজ্রতার। প্রচারধর্মী মনভঙ্গি, লাভাবর্ষী ভাষা। যুগের উন্মাদনা, উচ্চগ্রামে বাঁধা রণোন্মাদনা, শান্তি-অশান্তি, প্রেম-বিদ্রোহ, আশা-নিরাশা, সুন্দর-অসুন্দর, মঙ্গল-অমঙ্গল সবই পাশাপাশি রাখেন। লক্ষণীয়, একটা টান-সামঞ্জস্য নির্মাণের চেষ্টা।

কবিতাটিতে ধ্বংস ও সৃষ্টির জয়জয়কারের খেলায় মেতেও কবি বিদ্রোহী ঘোষণার মূল উদ্দেশ্যটি ভোলেন না। অগ্রাহ্য করেন না মাটি আর মানুষের কথা, সমাজের কথা, নিজের পায়ের নিচে শক্ত পাথুরে জীবনের কথা। তাই লেখেন -

‘মহাবিদ্রোহী রণক্লাস্ত

আমি সেইদিন হব শান্ত,

যবে উৎপীড়িতের ক্রন্দনরোল আকাশে বাতাসে ধ্বনিবে না

অত্যাচারীর খড়্গ-কৃপাণ ভীমরণভূমে রণিবে না -

বিদ্রোহী রণক্লাস্ত

আমি সেই দিন হব শান্ত’।

এই নিছক দরদ অথবা মানবতা নয়, এ হলো মানুষের দুঃখ-দুর্দশা-যন্ত্রণার সঙ্গে একাত্ম হয়ে যাওয়া। সাম্যবাদী চেতনায় উদ্বুদ্ধ তার কাব্যভাষা। তবে নিরীশ্বরবাদী সাম্যবাদ কবির নয়। তার সাম্যবাদের এক প্রান্তে সাম্রাজ্যবাদের শাসন ও শোষণমুক্ত ভারতের স্বপ্ন, অপর প্রান্তে সর্বস্তরের শ্রমজীবী মানুষ এবং বধিষ্ঠ জনসাধারণের অর্থনৈতিক ও সামাজিক মুক্তি।

‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতাটিতে তেজদীপ্তগর্জনমুখরতার অন্যপ্রান্তে ক্লাস্ত-করুণ চিত্ররচনার কল্পনাশ্রয়ী মনের মেতে ওঠা চোখ এড়ায় না। পথিক কবি চিরক্ষুদ্র হিয়ার কাতরতা, ব্যথা, কুমারীর প্রথমপরশ, গোপন প্রিয়ার চকিতচাহনি, চপল মেয়ের ভালোবাসা প্রণয়ের সুরে বাজিয়ে চলেন। কামনা-কণ্টকিত-বোধ উত্তীর্ণ ভাবনা সেখানে নেই - অতৃপ্তি সেখানে স্পষ্ট।

নজরুলের এই ক্রোধ, ধিক্কার, আক্রমণ মোহিতলালে দেখি প্রজ্ঞাশানিত, যতীন্দ্রনাথে ব্যঙ্গবক্র, প্রমথ চৌধুরীতে বুদ্ধিঋদ্ধ। নজরুল প্রজ্ঞার, ব্যাঙ্গের, বুদ্ধির সব নির্মোক খুলে সরাসরি কবিতার ফ্রেম ভেঙে জীবনের মধ্যে ঢুকে

পড়েন। কবি বিদ্রোহ ও ভাঙনের উল্লাসের মধ্যে এক অন্ধ প্রলয় শক্তির গান গেয়ে ওঠেন। রাজনৈতিক ও সামাজিক কল্যাণবোধের মধ্যে দিয়ে মনের সেই উপলব্ধিকে মাঝে মাঝে শাসন করলেও সৃষ্টি ক্ষণে ক্ষণে তার সেই অদক্ষিণ বিরূপ রুদ্ররূপ দেখান। ‘ফান্ডামেন্টাল ইভিলে’র এরকম সাক্ষাৎলাভ বাংলা কবিতায় দুর্লভ।

হিন্দু ও ইসলাম পুরাণ কবিতাটিতে পাশাপাশি থাকার ফলে সাধারণ হিন্দু-মুসলিম পাঠক রচনাটিকে তাদের অনায়াস বিচরণ ক্ষেত্র হিসেবে নির্বাচন করেন। বাংলা সাহিত্য বিপুল সংখ্যক মুসলমান বাঙালিরও নিজের সাহিত্য - এই বোধ সৃষ্টি করার প্রয়োজন ছিল। মুসলিম সাহিত্যের তরফে একটা আন্দোলন তৈরি করতে কবিতাটি অগ্রণী ভূমিকা নেয়। কবির লক্ষ্য তখন মুসলমানদের পৃথক করা নয়, তাদের নিজস্ব ভাব-কল্পনা সহ মূল স্রোতে অঙ্গীভূত করা। এই ঐতিহাসিক দায়িত্বটি কবি নজরুল সযত্নে পালন করেন।

বাংলায় নবযুগের আবির্ভাবে ইংরেজি জানা নগরবাসী বাঙালির জন্য নবীন সাহিত্যের দ্বার উন্মুক্ত হলো। শিক্ষিত, অল্প শিক্ষিত, অনভিজাত অগণিত জনসাধারণ যারা বুদ্ধিজীবীদের উচ্চমঞ্চে উঠতে অসমর্থ তাদের কাছে কবি বাংলা কবিতাকে নিজস্ব সম্পত্তি করে তোলেন। কাব্যপাঠ যখন বুদ্ধিজীবীদের মধ্যেও সংকীর্ণ হচ্ছে, শুদ্ধতা খুঁজছে, তখন নজরুল এর উল্টো পথে হেঁটে বিষয়টিকে আরো প্রসারিত করেন। ‘বিদ্রোহী’ তার একটি অন্যতম প্রমাণ। সামাজিকতা, রাজনৈতিকতা কবিতার পক্ষে ধিক্কার যোগ্য - এটা তিনি ভাবেননি। আত্মকেন্দ্রিকতা নির্মাণের বিরোধী তিনি। কবিতাটিতে ‘আমি’ শব্দটি বারবার এনে নতুন জটিল সময়ের স্বতন্ত্র শ্রী-কে ধরতে চাইলেন। ফলে ‘আমি’র আত্মকেন্দ্রিকতা ভেঙে পড়ল। ‘বিদ্রোহী’র উচ্চারণগুলো উঠে আসে কবির সমস্ত সত্তাকে মথিত করে। তাঁর চিন্তা যাপনের সঙ্গে নিবিড় এক সামঞ্জস্যের মধ্যে দিয়ে অনুভূতিগুলো দেশজ ভূখণ্ড থেকে আলো নেয় বলেই উচ্চারণগুলিকে মনে হয় মানুষের প্রবাহিত মনুষ্যত্বের আলোকবর্তিকা। তখনই জীবনের সকল মন্দ-ভালোর প্রবেশাধিকার তৈরি হয় শুদ্ধ কবিতার জন্মিতে।

১৯০৯-এ শুরু হয় ফিউচারিজামের তত্ত্ব। মারিনোভি ইতালির ‘ফিগারো’ পত্রিকায় লেখেন ‘প্রথম ইশতেহার’। তারপর ফ্রান্স, জার্মানি, রাশিয়াতে ফিউচারিজামের তত্ত্বে বিশ্বাসী কবিদের দেখা যায়। এই কবিদের বিদ্রোহের প্রধান লক্ষ্য ছিল উনিশশতকীয় প্রথাগত কাব্যভাষা। তারা মনে করতেন কবিতার ভাষা হবে চড়া, অস্থির। কোলাহল আর অশাসিত প্রবৃত্তির উৎসারণ থাকবে সেই ভাষায়। সুমিত পরিমার্জনার চেষ্টিত প্রসাধন থাকবে না।

Anti-poetry-র ধারণাও দেখা দিল তখন। রাশিয়াতে মায়াকোভস্কি বললেন, ‘কবিতার ভাষা হবে কর্কশ, রুঢ় শব্দের সমন্বয়। গোলাগুলির ভাষার সমান্তরাল হবে কাব্যভাষা। থাকবে চিৎকার, উদ্বেজনা, কোথাও টানা হবে না কোন রাশ’। মায়াকোভস্কি ১৯১২ সালে একটি দীর্ঘ কবিতা লেখেন, নাম - ‘জনসাধারণের রুচির গালে এক খাপ্পড়’। এ সবই স্বীকৃত হয় ১৯০৯ থেকে ১৯৩০ পর্যন্ত।

Anti-poetry-কে পাঠক গ্রহণ করে কবিতার বিরুদ্ধতা বলে নয়, কবিতার এক রূপবন্ধ হিসেবে। Anti-poetry-র নিদর্শন বীরেন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের রচনায়

পাওয়া যায় – ‘মুগ্ধীন ধড়গুলি আহ্বালাদে চিৎকার করে রঙ্গিলা রঙ্গিলা’। কিন্তু নজরুলের কাব্য ভাষা Futurist Anti-poetry ধরনের নয়। কবি রাবীন্দ্রিক কাব্যভাষা থেকে একটু আলাদা হতে চান। আমরা পশ্চিমী-রীতির কাব্যভাষাকে নব্যরীতির উজ্জীবন বলে সাধুবাদ জানাচ্ছি। অথচ নজরুলের কবিতাকে ‘শ্রুতিপীড়ক’ কাব্যভাষায় গড়া বলছি, এটা আমাদের কাব্যভাষা ধারণার অনড় সংস্কার।

‘Some Imagist Poets’ নামে ছ’জন imagist কবির একটি সংকলন প্রকাশিত হয় ১৯১৫ সালে। সংকলনের ভূমিকায় এই কবিরা কবিতা রচনার ছ’টি নিয়ম নির্দেশ করেন। এই ছয়-সূত্রের সম্মিলিত অভিধা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে ‘Imagist Manifesto’ নামে পরিচিত। এই ছ’টি সূত্রের প্রথম সূত্রটি ছিল শব্দ প্রয়োগ নিয়ে।-

‘To use the language of common speech but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly exact, nor the merely decorative word.’

শব্দ প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে যথার্থের ওপরেই জোর দেওয়া হয় বেশি। যেকোনো শব্দই কবিতায় প্রয়োগযোগ্য – যদি তা কবিতার পক্ষে যথাযথ হয়। ‘সুন্দর’ শব্দ দিয়ে কবিতা লেখা হবে – এই ধারণা থেকে সরে আসাই এই সূত্রের মূলকথা। ‘শ্রুতিপীড়ক শব্দ’ জাতীয় কোন ধারণাই এই সূত্রে প্রশ্রয় পায়নি। কবিতার ভাষায় প্রযুক্ত শব্দকে প্রাথাসিদ্ধ কোমল করা নয়, নতুন শ্রুতিতে অভ্যস্ত করে তুলতে হবে পাঠকের কানকে – এই ছিল নতুন কাব্য-ধারণার শিক্ষা।

নজরুলের কাব্যভাষায় আরবি-ফারসি শব্দের প্রয়োগ আমরা সকলেই দেখছি। বাংলায় আরবি-ফারসি শব্দের আগমন-শ্রোত খ্রিস্টীয় ত্রয়োদশ শতকের শুরু থেকে পাঠান ও মুঘল শাসনের সূত্রে। কালক্রমে কোনো কোনো শব্দ একেবারেই মিশে গেছে বাংলা ভাষার সঙ্গে। যেমন – বিদায়, হাওয়া, নাম, লাল, কম ইত্যাদি। এই জাতীয় শব্দ বাদ দিলে আরবি-ফারসি শব্দের প্রয়োগ সাধারণত ঘটেছে অনেকটাই বিষয়ানুরোধে, বিশেষ আবহ গড়ে তোলার জন্য। পশ্চিম-এশিয়ার ইসলামিক সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গে বাঙালির যোগ সাতশো বছরের। বঙ্কিম-রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপন্যাস-গল্পে আরবি-ফারসি শব্দের ব্যবহার চোখে পড়ে খুবই। ‘সবুজপত্র’-এ ১৯১৪-১৯২১-এর মধ্যে ওমর খৈয়ামের ‘রুবাই’-এর অনুবাদ এসে পড়েছে বাঙালির হাতে। হাফিজের কবিতাও বাঙালি কবিরা তখন পড়ছেন। বাংলা কবিতাতেও কিছুটা লেগেছে এই হাওয়া, রক্ত-গোলাপ রঙিন সুরার আমেজ। সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ, মোহিতলালের মৌলিক কবিতাতেও এই সুর ও দৃশ্যমালা প্রত্যক্ষ করা যাচ্ছে।

জন্মসূত্রে নজরুল এই সংস্কৃতির পরিচয় পান আরো গভীরভাবে। বাঙালি মুসলমানের ভাষায় স্বাভাবিকভাবে হিন্দুর বাংলাভাষার তুলনায় আরবি-ফারসি শব্দের ব্যবহার বেশি। পুরাণ ও ইতিহাস অনুষঙ্গেও আরবি-ফারসি শব্দের ব্যবহার জরুরি মনে করলেন মুসলমানেরা। নজরুল গোড়া থেকেই তাঁর কবিতায় এইসব শব্দ ব্যবহার শুরু করেন। তিনি তাঁর কবিতায় বেশ কিছু নতুন ব্যাপার ঘটালেন –

ক) সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ, মোহিতলালের মত মধ্যপ্রাচ্যীয় পরিবেশ গড়ে তোলার প্রয়োজন ছাড়াই সাধারণভাবে সংস্কৃত মূল বাংলা আর দেশজ শব্দের সঙ্গে

একমাত্রায়, এক মূল্যে আরবি-ফারসি শব্দের প্রয়োগ করলেন। ধর্ম নির্বিশেষে বাঙালি পাঠককে তিনি গ্রহণ করতে বাধ্য করেন সেইসব শব্দ। যেমন -

‘ভবিষ্যতের নই নবী’,  
‘দিব্যি আছিস খোসহালে’  
‘ঢেকে রেখে ঘরে ছেলের লাশ’  
‘পরোয়া করিনা বাঁচি বা না-বাঁচি’।  
(‘আমার কৈফিয়ৎ’) ইত্যাদি।

‘Imagist Manifesto’-র সূত্রাবলীতে শব্দ সম্পর্কে এই নীতি ধার্য হয় ১৯১৫ তে। নজরুল তা না পড়লেও, নিজের কাব্যপ্রাণনা থেকে নিজেই পৌঁছে যান এই সিদ্ধান্তে।

খ) ইংরেজি শব্দের যোজনার ক্ষেত্রেও তাঁর একই নীতি।

‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতা থেকে দৃষ্টান্ত নেওয়া যাক -  
‘আমি চির দুর্দম, দুর্বিনীত, নৃশংস  
মহাপ্রলয়ের আমি নটরাজ, আমি সাইক্লোন, আমি ধ্বংস’।

X X X X X

‘আমি অনিয়ম উচ্ছৃঙ্খল

আমি দলে যাই, যত বন্ধন, যত নিয়ম-কানুন শৃঙ্খল।

আমি মানি নাকো কোনো আইন,

আমি ভরা-তরী করি ভরা-ডুবি,

আমি টর্পেডো আমি ভীম ভাসমান মাইন’।

অনেকগুলো তৎসম শব্দ এই অংশটিতে - দুর্দম, দুর্বিনীত, নৃশংস, মহাপ্রলয়, নটরাজ, ধ্বংস, উচ্ছৃঙ্খল, বন্ধন, ভীম। একই অনুভব নিয়ে এরই পাশাপাশি উচ্চারিত ফারসি ‘আইন’ আর ‘কানুন’; সেইসঙ্গে ইংরেজি শব্দ - সাইক্লোন, টর্পেডো, মাইন। শব্দগুলোর প্রয়োগ স্বাভাবিক, কোন উদ্দেশ্যে নয়। বৈদেশিক ইঙ্গিত পরিমণ্ডল গড়ে তোলা বা সামাজিক ইতিহাসের প্রসঙ্গ নির্দেশ - ইত্যাদি। প্রতিটি শব্দই এখানে পেয়েছে সমমূল্য, সমতল ও সমবেগ।

গ) যে শব্দ কবির প্রয়োজন ও যথার্থ বলে মনে হয় কাব্যোপলব্ধির বাহক হিসেবে সেই শব্দই তিনি ব্যবহার করেন। উচ্চারিত সেই শব্দ কেমন শোনাবে, তা নিয়েও ভাবেন না। এটা একটা কাব্য সংস্কার, এখান থেকে বেরোতে চান তিনি।

ঘ) কবি শব্দের সম্প্রদায় বিভেদ মানতেন না, তাই প্রায়ই দেখা যায় একটি তৎসম শব্দের পাশে বা কাছাকাছি একটি আরবি বা ফারসি শব্দ রেখে এক আশ্চর্য টান-সামঞ্জস্য তৈরি করছেন। একই দীপ্তিতে বলমূল করে উঠছে দুটি শব্দ। পরস্পরের শরীরে বিচ্ছুরিত হচ্ছে আলো। প্রজাতিগত ভিন্নতা আছে বলে যেন তারা বেশি করে একাত্ম। যেমন -

‘তাজী বোরবাক আর উচ্চৈঃশ্রবা বাহন আমার/

হিম্মত - হেঁষা হেঁটে চলে’।

বোরবাক হল কোরাণ কথিত দিব্য-অশ্ব। প্রলয়ের দিনে হযরত মহম্মদ ইশ্বর সকাশে যান এই ঘোড়ায় চড়ে। উচ্চৈঃশ্রবা ভারতীয় পুরাণ কথিত স্বর্গীয় তুরঙ্গম - উঠেছিল সমুদ্রমস্থল থেকে। এই দুই অলৌকিক ঘোড়া আমাদের বিহ্বল দৃষ্টির

সামনে দিয়ে তীর গতিতে উড়ে যায় কোনো এক মহাবিপ্লবের আদর্শলোকে। ভেদ রেখা মুছে যায় সম্প্রদায়ের। হিন্মত-হুয়া - আরবি সংস্কৃত সমাসবদ্ধ পদটির তেজদীপ্ত অভিনবত্বে আমরা স্তম্ভিত হই।

ঙ) ‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতায় কবি নরক আর দোজখ শব্দ দুটি পাশাপাশি রাখেন, পংক্তি তৈরি করেন এইভাবে -

‘ভয়ে সপ্তনরক হারিয়া দোজখ

নিভে নিভে যায় কাঁপিয়া’।

এই একই সুরের টানে পরপর এসে পড়ে ‘মন্দির’ আর ‘কাবা’। - ‘এই হৃদয়ের চেয়ে বড় কোনো মন্দির কাবা নাই’।

চ) কবিতাটির আরেকটি চরণে কবি পাঠককে অভিভূত করেন। জীবন-মগ্নন করে উঠে আসা গরল অমৃত মেশানো এক দ্রবণে, যার স্বাদ অপূর্বা ভয়ংকর বিরুদ্ধতা আর ভীষণ প্রতিকূল পরিস্থিতির মুখোমুখি দাঁড়িয়েও এই ধূলির ধরণী ঝরিয়ে দিতে পারে মুগ্ধ-মধুর মায়া। কবি লেখেন -

‘আমি জাহান্নামের আগুনে বসিয়া/হাসি পুষ্পের হাসি’।

‘জাহান্নাম’ আর ‘পুষ্প’ - এই দুটি শব্দের সমরেখ বিন্যাস ছাড়া এমন সৌন্দর্য সৃষ্টি সম্ভব হতো না।

ছ) নজরুল কবিতায় নাম শব্দ (proper noun) ব্যবহার করতেন। তার মধ্যে প্রচুর পৌরাণিক শব্দ থাকতো। তিনি কাব্য ভাষায় পুরাণ প্রসঙ্গ গেঁথে দিতেন। সেখানে হিন্দু ও ইসলামী উভয় পুরাণের নমুনা থাকতো।

‘আমি বজ্র আমি ঈশান-বিষাণে ওঙ্কার

আমি ইস্রাফিলের শিঙ্গার মহা-হুঙ্কার’,

আবার লেখেন -

‘ধরি বাসুকির ফনা জাপটি

ধরি স্বর্গীয় দূত জিব্রাইলের আগুনের পাখা সাপটি’,

প্রতিটি শব্দের সঙ্গে জড়িয়ে আছে পৌরাণিক অনুষঙ্গ। পাঠক সেই পুরাণ কথার সঙ্গে পরিচিত কিনা তা নিয়ে চিন্তা করবার অবকাশ কবির নেই। পাঠককে যোগ্য পাঠক ধরে নিয়েই পুরাণ-অনুষঙ্গ-বাচক শব্দগুলো প্রয়োগ করেন। এর ফলে বেড়ে যায় কবিতার বিস্তার। পরশুরাম, ভৃগু, ব্যোমকেশ, গঙ্গোত্রী, দুর্বাশা, বিশ্বামিত্র, নটরাজ ইত্যাদি শব্দযোগে কবিতা পায় নতুন রূপ। চেঙ্গিস, আরফিয়াস শব্দগুলো নিয়ে আসে প্রভূত বৈচিত্র্য।

জ) আমরা জানি নজরুলের কবিতায় ব্যবহৃত শব্দ তৎকালীন কবিতা পাঠকের কাব্যরুচিকে আঘাত করে। পাঠক মনে করেন এর কারণ অসতর্কতা ও পরিমার্জনার অভাব। কিন্তু আমাদের মনে হয়, নজরুলের শব্দ প্রয়োগ সম্পর্কে ভাবনাটাই ছিল ভিন্ন গোত্রের। আবার এটাও ঠিক তার ধৈর্যের অভাবও ছিল। অবশ্য কখনো কখনো তিনি রচনার ভাষা পুনর্বিবেচনা ও পরিমার্জনাও করেছেন। পত্রিকাগুলিতে যখন ‘বিদ্রোহী’ প্রকাশিত হয়, তখন দেখা যায় -

‘ছুটি ঝড়ের মতন করতালি দিয়া

হাসি হাহা হাহা হিহি হিহি

কাজী বোরবাক আর উচ্চৈঃশ্রবা বাহন আমার

হাঁকে চাঁহঁ হাঁহঁ চাঁহঁ হঁ'।

‘অগ্নিবীণা’ প্রকাশিত হলে সেখানে পরিবর্তিত হলো এই চতুষ্পদীর দ্বিতীয় ও চতুর্থ পংক্তি। দ্বিতীয়টি হল –

‘স্বর্গ মর্ত্য করতলে’

চতুর্থ পংক্তিতে এল –

‘হিম্মত-হুঁষা হেঁকে চলে’।

ঝা) ‘বিদ্রোহী’ কবিতায় অসংখ্যবার কবি ‘আমি’ সর্বনামটি ব্যবহার করেন –

‘আমি বাগ্গা, আমি ঘূর্ণি’,

‘আমি সৃষ্টি, আমি ধ্বংস’,

‘আমি উন্মাদ, আমি উন্মাদ’ – ইত্যাদি।

আমেরিকার কবি হুইটম্যানের কবিতার সঙ্গে এখানে মিল খুঁজে পাওয়া যায়।

হুইটম্যান লেখেন – ‘I celebrate myself’.

নজরুলের celebration-এর ভাষা হলো –

‘আমি আপনারে ছাড়া করিনা কাহারে কুর্নিশ’।

হুইটম্যান লেখেন –

‘Whoever degrades another degrades me’.

নজরুল বলেন –

‘একের অসম্মান

নিখিল মানবজাতির লজ্জা সকলের অপমান’।

নজরুলের রচনায় হুইটম্যানের সুর উপলব্ধি করে মনে হয়, কবি, হুইটম্যান সযত্নে পড়েছিলেন।

ঞ) ‘বিদ্রোহী’তে কবি বিদ্রোহী এবং রোমান্টিক দুই-ই। ‘ইশ্রাফিলের শিঙ্গার মহাহংকার’-এর সঙ্গে কবি মেশান ‘চলচপলার হিল্লোল বা কাঁকনচুড়ির কনকন’। তাৎপর্যে স্বেয় খুঁজে পাওয়া মুশকিল। হয়তো এটাই তিনি চান। কিন্তু দুর্গতদের জন্য তাঁর হৃদয় রঞ্জাজ্ঞ। –

‘যবে উৎপীড়িতের ক্রন্দনরোল

আকাশে বাতাসে ধনিবে না

অত্যাচারীর খড়গ কৃপাণ

ভীম রণভূমে রণিবে না

মহাবিদ্রোহী রণক্লান্ত আমি সেইদিন হব শান্ত’।

এই কাব্যভাষায় হেঁকে আছে, গতি আছে, অসংখম আছে। কখনো মনে হচ্ছে এ ভাষা প্রতিভাবান বালকের ভাষা। এ ভাষার বয়স বাড়েনি। কবির ভাষায় উচ্ছৃঙ্খলতা, আতিশয্য, শৈথিল্য, রসের ক্ষীণতা, রূপের হীনতা, রুচির স্থলন যদি থেকেও থাকে তবু বলবো তাঁর ক্ষেত্রে এটাই স্বাভাবিক। যদি কেউ বলেন, তাঁর যৌবনের তরলতা ঘন হল না কখনো, জীবনদর্শনের গভীরতা তাঁর কাব্যকে রূপান্তরিত করলো না। যে সম্পদ নিয়ে তিনি জন্মেছিলেন কবিতায় তার পূর্ণ-ব্যবহার হল না, শুধু যেন আত্ম-অচেতন মনের হেলাফেলা, অনেক ফেলাছড়া, অনেক অপচয়; তবু বলবো, নতুন কাব্যভাষা নির্মাণে এ মুহূর্তে এমন কবিই জরুরি ছিল। তাই তাঁর সবটাই স্বাভাবিক।

কিন্তু প্রশ্ন হল, কেন কবিতাটি আজও প্রাসঙ্গিক? সত্যিই কি এই কবিতা পাঠের প্রয়োজন ফুরিয়েছে? না, অবশ্যই না। আজকের রাজনৈতিক ভণ্ডামি, অনাচার, ভ্রষ্টাচার আর সাম্প্রদায়িক হানাহানির যুগে এই কবিতার বড়ো প্রয়োজন।

শতবর্ষ পরে, আজকের পাঠক যারা বহু দেশী-বিদেশী কবিতা পড়ে মনকে শুধু পরিশীলিত, পরিমার্জিত করেননি মনকে বিস্তৃতও করেছেন, তারাও কবিতাটি পড়বেন। যদিও তারা দেখবেন রচনায় মনন-প্রতিভা, অনুশীলিত সুস্থিরতা নেই, নেই কবিতার অন্তর্নিহিত শক্তি, বিশেষ দেশকালের সঙ্গেই এ কবিতার একান্ত সম্পর্ক, বাক-নির্মিতিতে তাৎক্ষণিকতার প্রকাশ, চমৎকার অথচ মনোত্তীর্ণ নয় এ রচনা। তবু এই কবিতার মধ্যেই তারা খুঁজে পাবেন –

১. সামাজিক ও অর্থনৈতিক সাম্যের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইয়ের বার্তা। ২. বানী-বিন্যাসে কীভাবে পাল্টে যেতে পারে মন এবং ৩. কীভাবে কবিতা আত্মবিশ্বাস বাড়ায়, ভরসা করতে শেখায়, পথ নির্দেশ করে, সচেতন করে, সহর্মিতা সৃষ্টি করে।

এই কবিতাটি বিরোধ-সমন্বয়ের সাধনায় এমন একটি আদর্শকে উচ্চ স্থাপন করে, আজকের সমাজে যার মূল্য অপরিসীম। তমসাচ্ছনতার প্রাচীর ভেঙে মুক্ত চিন্তার আবির্ভাবের সুরে ‘বিদ্রোহী’ তাই আজও প্রাসঙ্গিক।

# আধুনিক গণতন্ত্রে, জাতীয়তায়, রাষ্ট্রচিন্তার জগতে অভিনব - রাজা রামমোহন রায়

অমিত নন্দী।



অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর মাঝামাঝি সময় পর্যন্ত স্কটল্যান্ডের ক্ল্যান শাসিত গণতন্ত্র, আয়ারল্যান্ডের সেপ্ট শাসিত গণতন্ত্র এবং বঙ্গদেশে উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর গোড়া পর্যন্ত যোথ পরিবার শাসিত গণতন্ত্র কোনটাই আধুনিক জাতিগত বোধের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত গণতন্ত্র নয়। তবে স্কটল্যান্ড এবং ওয়েলসের বিভিন্ন ক্ল্যান শাসনের প্রতিপত্তি ধ্বংস করে এবং সামন্ত শাসন লোপ করে যেমন ব্রিটিশ নেশানের জন্ম হয়েছে ঠিক তেমনই রাজপুত, মারাঠা ও মোঘল বংশগত সাম্রাজ্য ও সামন্ত শাসন লোপ করে নতুন জাতীয়তাবোধের জন্ম উনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে হয়েছিল তার আগে নয়। অষ্টাদশ-উনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে নবজাগৃত জাতীয়তার উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত গণতন্ত্রের কাছে মধ্যযুগীয় রাজতন্ত্র আঘাত পায় যেমন-টমাস ক্রমওয়েলের সময়ে আংশিক রূপে ইংল্যান্ডে এবং সম্পূর্ণরূপে ফরাসি বিপ্লবোভারতবর্ষে এই বীজ বপন করেন রাজা রামমোহন রায় এবং সর্বপ্রথম যে ধারার মধ্য দিয়ে এই জাগরণ পরিপূর্ণতা লাভ করে বঙ্গ দেশ তথা ভারতবর্ষে, তার নাম ব্রাহ্ম আন্দোলন।

মানব সভ্যতার ক্রমবিকাশ লক্ষ্য করলে দেখা যায় গড়ার দিকে মানুষ তৈরি করেছিল পরিবার, গোত্র, গোষ্ঠী, গণ। এই সমস্ত বিভিন্ন সমবায়গুলি থেকে তৈরি হতো জাতি এবং বিভিন্ন জাতির সমষ্টি থেকেই তৈরি হতো জাতীয়তাবাদ। পৃথিবীর প্রায় সমস্ত জায়গাতেই প্রাথমিকভাবে এই সমস্ত উদাহরণগুলো দেখা গিয়েছিল। ভারতবর্ষের ক্ষেত্রেও ঠিক একই রীতি চালু ছিল। প্রাচীন এই গণতন্ত্র মূলক গোষ্ঠীগুলি যখন রাষ্ট্রে পরিণত হচ্ছিল তখন ওই প্রাচীন গোষ্ঠীগুলির ক্ষমতা লোপ করে ব্যক্তিগত রাজতন্ত্রের ক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি পায়। এইভাবে মানব সভ্যতার ক্রমবিকাশে পৃথিবীর সর্বত্রই রাজতন্ত্র ও সাম্রাজ্য তন্ত্রের কঠিন শাসনে প্রাচীন বংশগত বা গোষ্ঠীগত গণতন্ত্র লুপ্ত হতে থাকে। একইভাবে নির্বাচন প্রথা ছিল গণতান্ত্রিক যেমন-আমেরিকার রেড ইন্ডিয়ান দের মধ্যে এবং আসামে খাসিয়াদের মধ্যে এই প্রথা চালু ছিল। পৃথিবীতে আজও যে সমস্ত প্রাচীন উপজাতিয় সভ্যতা রয়েছে তাদের মধ্যে এই আদিম গণতান্ত্রিক ব্যবস্থা প্রচলিত রয়েছে কিন্তু এই আদিম গণতন্ত্র প্রথা কখনোই আধুনিক গণতন্ত্র প্রথার প্রমাণ নয়। বঙ্গদেশে পঞ্চায়েত প্রথা, দাক্ষিণাত্যে গ্রাম শাসন বা অন্যান্য জায়গায় সমষ্টিগত শাসন ও নির্বাচন প্রথার রূপ দেখে অনেকে অনুমান করেন এ দেশে গণতন্ত্র অতি প্রাচীন, এমনকি বৌদ্ধ যুগে সজ্জ ব্যবস্থা পরিচালনা সেটা আধুনিক

গণতন্ত্রের তুলনায় কিছু অংশে কম ছিল না কিন্তু সেই প্রথাও রামমোহন পরবর্তী সময়ে লুপ্ত হয়ে গেছিল। এই গণবোধ বা গণতন্ত্র ভারতের অতি প্রাচীনকাল থেকেই আছে কিন্তু সেটা আধুনিক রাষ্ট্রসংঘ বা বিভিন্ন গোষ্ঠী শাসনের নির্বাচন প্রণালী কে আধুনিক গণতন্ত্র বলা যাবে না।

ফরাসি বিপ্লব পরবর্তী যুগে যাকে জাতীয়তাবাদ বলে, রামমোহনের পূর্বে ভারতবর্ষে তার অস্তিত্ব ছিল না। শিখ, রাজপুত, মারাঠা এই সমস্ত জাতিগুলি পরস্পর পরস্পরের বিরোধী ছিল এবং নিজ নিজ সম্প্রদায় বা গোষ্ঠীর স্বার্থের জন্য সাম্রাজ্য গঠনের সামন্ত দলপতি ছিল মাত্র। ধর্মে শংকরাচার্য বা রাষ্ট্র গঠনে শিবাজীর মত ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে রামমোহন রায় কেবলমাত্র হিন্দুর প্রাধান্য প্রতিষ্ঠার চেষ্টা করেনি। কারণ শিবাজীর যে দূরদৃষ্টি ছিল না, রামমোহনের সেটা ছিল তাই শিবাজী ভারতীয় জাতি গড়ে তুলবার চেষ্টা একবারও করেননি। তিনি রাজপুতদের দিকে ফিরে তাকাননি, পাঞ্জাবে হিন্দু ও মুসলমানের সমন্বয়ে যে নতুন শক্তি গড়ে উঠতে পারে সেই দূরদৃষ্টি তার মধ্যে আসেনি। এখানে শিখ, রাজপুত, মারাঠা সকলের শত্রু ছিল এক কিন্তু তারা পরস্পর পরস্পরের বন্ধু হতে পারেনি, তাই নিজেদের মধ্যে সুদৃঢ় বন্ধনও তৈরি হয়নি। সেজন্য রামমোহন রায় নিজেই লিখেছিলেন “এদেশে প্যাট্রিওটিসম বা দেশপ্রেম কোনদিনই ছিল না”। যদিও কারো কারো ধারণা আছে জাতীয়তাবাদ এ দেশের পুরাতন ইতিহাস যা রামমোহনের পূর্বে এমনকি মারাঠা, রাজপুতনা ইতিহাসেরও পূর্বে এর অস্তিত্ব ছিল যেমন রাজস্থানের ইতিহাস লক্ষ্য করলে দেখা যাবে চিতরের মহারানার প্রতি তাদের গোষ্ঠীর বা অঞ্চলের বা জাতির সংঘবদ্ধতা ছিল সুদৃঢ় কিন্তু সেটা নতুনও নয়। এই একই রকম উদাহরণ আমরা মধ্যযুগের ইউরোপে সামন্তদের মধ্যেও দেখতে পায় কিন্তু এই সমস্ত আঞ্চলিকতার রীতি এবং অষ্টাদশ ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে স্বদেশপ্রেম এই দুটো জিনিস এক নয়। ভারতবর্ষের বিভিন্ন প্রদেশের মধ্যে একাত্তরবোধ দূরের কথা, রাজপুত জাতীয়তা বা দেশপ্রেম, তাদের বংশ গৌরবকে অতিক্রম করে কোনদিনই সমগ্র রাজস্থানকে তারা এক করতে পারেনি। একই জিনিস আমরা ফিউডাল যুগে, ইউরোপে ক্ল্যান এর প্রতি অন্ধ আনুগত্যের নিদর্শনের মধ্যেও দেখতে পায়। তাই পরবর্তীকালে যে ন্যাশানালিজম তার সঙ্গে এর কোন সম্পর্ক নেই।

ভারতে পৌরাণিক যুগের কবিদের মুখে মুখে যেমন-সূর্যবংশ, চন্দ্রবংশের গৌরবের কাহিনী রচিত হয়েছিল ঠিক পরবর্তীকালেও বিভিন্ন স্তূপ, শিলালিপি বা তাম্রশাসনে রাজাদের ব্যক্তিগত বা বংশগত স্মৃতি খোদাই করা হয়েছিল। একইভাবে রাজপুত চারণের মুখে সেই একই ধারা অর্থাৎ মহারানা বা বিভিন্ন রানার কীর্তি ও গৌরব কাহিনী ধ্বনিত হয়েছিল কিন্তু কখনোই সমগ্র রাজস্থানের মাহাত্ম্য বা জাতীয়তা তাদের মধ্যে প্রকাশ পায়নি। অর্থাৎ অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর পূর্ববর্তী ভারতবর্ষে যে সমস্ত ছোট বড় সাম্রাজ্য গড়ে উঠেছিল সেগুলি কখনোই জাতীয়তাবাদের পরিচয় দেয় না, সেটা অশোকের সাম্রাজ্যবাদ হোক বা বাদশা আকবরের সাম্রাজ্য গঠন হোক বা রাজপুত, মারাঠাদের আঞ্চলিক সাম্রাজ্য হোক। কেননা আমরা যদি শিবাজীর মৃত্যুর পর মারাঠা সাম্রাজ্য দেখি সেখানে দেখবো সিন্ধিয়া, হোলকার, ভোসলে বিভিন্ন মহারাষ্ট্রীয় সামন্ত সর্দাররা নিজ নিজ অঞ্চলে প্রধান হয়ে গিয়েছিলেন। ভারতীয় জাতীয়তা বোধের চেতনা

দুরের কথা সমগ্রভাবে মহারাষ্ট্রীয় জাতি বোধের চিহ্ন সেখানে পাওয়া যায়নি তাই বলা যায় সাম্রাজ্য গঠন মানেই জাতি গঠন নয়।

১৮৩৮ সালে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের বোস্টন শহরে রামমোহনের ইউনিটেরিয়ান শিষ্য উইলিয়াম অ্যাডাম সাহেব রামমোহন রায়ের জীবন ও কীর্তি সম্বন্ধে বলেছিলেন “he would be free or not be at all....Love of freedom was perhaps the strongest passion of his soul...freedom not of action merely but of thought”। আসলে রামমোহন রায় যখন এদেশে জন্মেছিলেন সে সময় দেশের সমাজ, ধর্ম এতটাই কুসংস্কারে আবদ্ধ ছিল যে সেই জায়গা থেকে পরিব্রাজ্য পাওয়ার চেষ্টা হয়তো কিছুটা হয়েছিল বা হচ্ছিল কিন্তু রামমোহন রায় এসেছিলেন একজন ত্রাতা হিসেবে। এই কুসংস্কারের কিছু উদাহরণ দিলে বিষয়টি পরিষ্কার হবে যেমন—সে সময়ে এদেশে মানুষ কেনাবেচা হতো কুড়ি টাকায়, সম্পত্তি হস্তান্তর হওয়ার সময় সম্পত্তি ভুক্ত গোলাম দলের মালিকানা বদলে যেত, সে সময়ে আঁতুড় ঘরে নবজাতক শিশুকে পেঁচোয় পেতো, গ্রামে গ্রামে যুবকদেরকে ডাইনিরা জাদু করত, কলকাতা মহানগরীতে রক্ষিতার পরিচয়ে বাবুদের পরিচয় হতো, সে সময়ে শক্তি মন্ত্রের উপাসক বামাচারিরা প্রচুর পরিমাণে মদ মাংস খাওয়া কে উপাসনার অঙ্গ রূপে গ্রহণ করতেন, সে যুগে কুলীন মেয়েদের বিষ খাওয়ানো হতো, কন্যা সন্তানকে গঙ্গার জলে বিসর্জন দেওয়া হতো, জীবন্ত বিধবা মহিলাদের ধর্মের নামে জ্বলন্ত চিতাতে হত্যা করা হতো। সেই সময়ে স্বাধীনতা যার প্রাণস্বরূপ সেই রামমোহন রায় স্বাধীনতা লাভের জন্য ইংরেজদের বিরুদ্ধে বা মারাঠা ও শিখদের সঙ্গে কোন রকম যোগ না দিয়ে প্রাচ্য এবং পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার সমন্বয়ে চিন্তা বিপ্লবের পথ ধরেছিলেন। এতদিন ভারতবর্ষে কোনরকম দার্শনিক, ধর্মগুরু বা কোন বীরের অভাব হয়নি কিন্তু যেটা হয়নি সেটা হলো ধর্ম, দর্শন, রাষ্ট্র, সাহিত্য সকলকে একসঙ্গে মিলিয়ে এক্য করবার চিন্তাভাবনা। রামমোহন ছিলেন সেই মনীষী যিনি সর্বভারতীয় এক্যমন্ত্রে উদ্বুদ্ধ করেছিলেন।

রামমোহনের ব্রাহ্মসভা কেবলমাত্র ধর্ম বিষয়ক ছিল না বরং তা ছিল মহাজাতি গঠনের ক্ষেত্রে এক এক্যমূলক পথ নির্দেশ। তার এই ব্রাহ্ম মন্ত্র কোন সম্প্রদায়িক ধর্মমন্ডলীর মন্ত্র ছিলনা। এটি সর্বভারতীয় হিন্দু, মুসলিম, খ্রিস্টান ধর্ম নির্বিশেষে সার্বজনীন জাতীয়তা উদ্বোধনের মন্ত্র ছিল। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে ব্রাহ্ম আন্দোলন তারই পরিচয় দেয়। একমাত্র রামমোহন ব্রাহ্মসভাতে সমস্ত ধর্মের মানুষকে এক করে আন্দোলন চালিয়ে যাওয়ার বা এক্যকরণের চেষ্টা করেছেন। হিন্দু যেমন স্বীকার করে শুদ্ধি, মুসলমান মানে কলমা পাঠ এবং খ্রিস্টানরা জর্ডনের জলে বিশ্বাস করেন, তাই কোন আলাদা আলাদা সত্তা নয় তিন ধর্মকে নিজস্ব জায়গায় প্রতিষ্ঠিত করে এক সার্বজনীন মাত্রা ফুটিয়ে তুলতে চেয়েছেন সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষে। ইংরেজরা সমগ্র ভারতের মধ্যে একই শাসনতন্ত্র, একই আইন প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেও রামমোহন রায় বাইরে থেকে সমস্ত ভারতীয়দের একই আত্মীয়তার মধ্যে জাগিয়ে তুলতে চেয়েছেন, যেটা এর পূর্বে ছিল না। কবীর, দাদু, চৈতন্য, মীরাবাই বা রামকৃষ্ণের মত পরম ভাগবত রামমোহন ছিলেন না। তিনি ছিলেন একজন যুক্তিবাদী মানুষ, আবার কোনো দার্শনিকের মতো দর্শনশাস্ত্রও তিনি রচনা করেননি। সাধারণচার্য, ব্লগভ বা পতঞ্জলির মতো রামমোহনের যদি

কোনো অনুরাগী বা ভাষ্যকার থাকতো যিনি হিন্দু, মুসলমান এবং খ্রিস্টান ধর্মকে সুচারুভাবে ব্যাখ্যা ও বিশ্লেষণ করতে পারতেন তাহলে নিশ্চয়ই রামমোহনের সমস্ত চিন্তাধারা এবং লিখিত বইগুলি থেকে এক নতুন ধরনের দর্শন বা স্কুল অফ ফিলোসোফির দৃষ্টান্ত আমরা পেতাম। আসলে তিনি ছিলেন একজন গৃহস্থ মানুষ এবং তার লক্ষ্যই ছিল ইহকালে(সংসারে) থেকে পরকালের(পরবর্তী সময়ে)উন্নতি।তাই গুরুদাস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বলেছিলেন—“one thing,I believe,we all will be agreed upon—all sects,whether orthodox Hindus or progressive brahmos, whether Mahomedans or Christians —that to Rammohun Roy is due the credit of forcibly pointing out to learned Hindus that religion does not require to be a yogi,a suttee,or to go to the forest,but that home and society are the best surrounding of appropriate worship”.

ঊনবিংশ শতকে বঙ্গদেশের সমাজ,ধর্ম এবং রাজনীতিতে যে ব্যাপক সংকটময় পরিস্থিতি তৈরী হয়েছিল,সেখান থেকে বের করে আনার জন্য রামমোহন রায় সমস্ত জাতির মানুষকে ব্রাহ্মবাদের মাধ্যমে একীকরণের চেষ্টা করেছিলেন এবং সেজন্য তিনি প্রাচীন হিন্দু ধর্মের শাস্ত্রকে হাতিয়ার করে কুসংস্কারের বিরুদ্ধে সোচ্চার হয়ে ওঠেন।এর পাশাপাশি তিনি পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার আদব-কায়দা,আইন,সংস্কৃতি সবই গ্রহণ করেছিলেন।কারণ সে সময় ইউরোপে ফরাসি বিপ্লব থেকে উদ্ভূত উদারনীতিবাদ সারা ইউরোপ জুড়ে সংক্রমণের মতো ছড়িয়ে পড়েছিল।সেই উদারনীতিবাদ বা জাতীয়তাবাদ রামমোহনের পূর্বে দেখা যায়নি,যা ছিল সেটা আঞ্চলিকতা। তাই সেই উদারবাদ বা জাতীয়তা ছড়াতে গেলে বা সমস্ত ভারতীয়দের একীকরণ করার জন্য প্রথমে দরকার ধর্মীয় ভেদাভেদ লোপকরা, তারপর একজাতি গঠন, তারপর জাতীয়তাবাদ। সেই সংকল্প সাধনের জন্য তিনি ব্রাহ্মসভা তৈরি করেছিলেন।যদিও তার পরবর্তীকালে ব্রাহ্মসভা বিভক্ত হয়ে যায় এবং তার মূল আদর্শ থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়ে যায়।কিছু মানুষের মধ্যে এই ভাবধারা প্রসারিত হলেও সর্বভারতীয় সফলতা সেভাবে আসেনি।তবে এই সময়ে ভারতবর্ষে বিভিন্ন সংগঠনের উত্থান,ছোটখাটো বিদ্রোহ এবং আরো পরে ১৮৮৫ সালে জাতীয় কংগ্রেসের হাত ধরে সারা ভারতবর্ষ জুড়ে ছড়িয়ে পড়ে জাতীয়তাবাদ।তবে রামমোহনের প্রথম যে আদর্শ,যার দ্বারা বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় মানুষকে ব্রাহ্মসভা নামক এক সংস্থার ছাতার তলায় নিয়ে এক্যবদ্ধ জাতি গঠন সেটা সম্ভব হয়নি।যাই হোক এই ধর্মীয় এক্যকরণের চেষ্টা,গণতান্ত্রিক ভাবধারা,জাতীয় চেতনার মতো ভাবধারা তার চিন্তায় এবং কাজে ফুটে উঠেছিল তার আগে সেরকম কোনো উদাহরণ আমরা পায়নি।সে জন্য আধুনিক ভারতের অগ্রদূত হিসাবে,স্রষ্টা হিসাবে আমরা রামমোহনকে আজীবন স্মরণ করব।

### সহায়ক গ্রন্থ:

যোগানন্দ দাস,রামমোহন ও ব্রাহ্ম আন্দোলন,সাধারণ ব্রাহ্মসমাজ

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# Confinement and Resistance: Exploring the Intersections of Gender, Nature, and Disability in *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Ankita Mookherjee<sup>1</sup>  
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## Abstract

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) is a pioneering feminist work in American literature which explores gender norms of 19<sup>th</sup> century America through the intersectional lens of nature, gender, and disability. Through a critical reading, my paper explores how the protagonist's experiences of confinement and oppression reflect the societal norms and expectations placed on women, particularly those with disabilities, in patriarchal societies. I seek to analyze how "hysteria" became a blanket term for a host of 'women-centric' mental health issues and 'rest-cure' became a tool for lodging oppressive patriarchal structures. Autobiographical in parts, the story explores the narrator's postpartum depression which is diagnosed as a medical condition and is used to justify her confinement and to limit her agency. Through the narrator's struggle with her illness and the lack of empathy from her physician-husband, the story highlights the ways in which mental disability is often misunderstood and pathologized within patriarchal structures. My analysis would seek to reveal the complex dynamics of power, identity, and resistance through the historical context of pathologization of female mental illness. I would be using Disability Studies, Crip theory as well as Ecofeminism as theoretical methodology while offering insights into the experiences of women with disabilities in marginalized spaces.

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**Keywords:** *Gender, Nature, Disability Studies, Crip Theory, Ecofeminism.*

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* is a compelling exploration of gender oppression, medicalization, and psychological confinement. Written in an era when women's mental health was often dismissed as 'hysteria,' the story critiques the role of medical institutions in reinforcing patriarchal norms. The protagonist's forced isolation under the guise of treatment parallels societal tendencies to regulate female agency, particularly among women with disabilities. This paper investigates how nature—both as a thematic element and a site of imagined liberation—intersects with gendered oppression, shaping the protagonist's descent into madness and eventual resistance.

### **Historical Context and the Pathologization of Female Mental Illness**

The term "hysteria" originates from the Greek word *hystera*, meaning "uterus," reflecting ancient beliefs that women's mental and emotional disturbances were linked to their reproductive organs. As early as Hippocrates (5th century BCE), medical theories suggested that the uterus could "wander" through the body, causing psychological distress—a concept known as the "wandering womb." This association between women's mental health and their biological functions persisted through centuries, influencing how female suffering was interpreted.

In the 19th century, hysteria became a catch-all diagnosis for a range of symptoms in women, including anxiety, depression, irritability, and even resistance to societal norms. Physicians largely attributed these issues to female sexuality, reproductive functions, and emotional instability, rather than considering external social factors such as lack of agency, economic dependence, and patriarchal control. Hysterical women were often perceived as irrational, overly emotional, and in need of male supervision, leading to medical interventions that reinforced gender oppression.

During the 19th century, hysteria was commonly diagnosed among women, reinforcing stereotypes that positioned them as fragile and irrational. This gendered medical discourse not only de-legitimized women's autonomy but also justified oppressive treatments like the "rest-cure". Developed by Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell<sup>1</sup>, the "rest-

cure” mandated isolation and inactivity, further exacerbating mental distress rather than alleviating it. Women undergoing this treatment were often confined to their rooms, denied contact with family and friends, and discouraged from writing, reading, or engaging in creative activities. Mitchell’s approach, which was widely popular, disproportionately affected women because it was believed that their mental instability stemmed from overstimulation and excessive activity. The treatment aimed to render women passive, obedient, and dependent—further entrenching patriarchal control. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the narrator’s confinement in a secluded room—her interactions strictly limited—mirrors this historical reality. Her lack of agency and the dismissal of her suffering highlight the ways in which patriarchal medical practices systematically silenced and controlled women. The protagonist undergoes this oppressive regimen, highlighting its destructive effects: instead of aiding her recovery, the forced inactivity exacerbates her psychological distress, ultimately driving her to madness.

The narrator’s struggle with possible postpartum depression<sup>2</sup> is framed as a medical condition warranting restriction, rather than compassionate treatment. Her husband, a physician, exerts complete control over her well-being, dismissing her concerns and enforcing absolute submission. This dynamic highlights the broader issue of how disability—particularly mental health disabilities—is misunderstood and pathologized within patriarchal structures. Women experiencing mental illness are often subjected to additional layers of oppression, their suffering framed as irrational rather than legitimate. Gilman emphasizes that much of the harm caused by this woman’s medical treatment—her “rest cure”—has to do with the way her voice is silenced. The narrator is not allowed to participate in the formulation of her treatment and diagnosis, as the following quotation demonstrates:

John laughs at me of course...

And what can one do? If a physician of high standing, and one’s own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous breakdown, —a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do? My brother is also a physician and also of high standing, and he says the same thing...

Personally, I disagree with their ideas. Personally, I believe that congenial work with excitement and change would do me good. But what is one to do? (39)

Several of Gilman's later fictional works repeat this struggle in which a male-dominated medical establishment attempts to silence women. In works like *The Vintage* (1916), *The Crux* (1911), and *Dr. Clair's Place* (1915), male physicians prescribe restrictive diagnostic "sentences" (often verbal/physical treatment regimens) for their female characters. But in some of these works, women doctors and patients counter these restrictive diagnoses through the use of reading and writing to achieve mental and physical health. In Gilman's writing the patient is not exclusively read by her physician; she also reads her own disease and participates in the formulation of her diagnosis.

In reading Gilman's works about disease, pathology, medicine and treatments, the medical language used becomes a form of discourse to reflect on social reality and experience. Her works reflect many nineteenth-century beliefs about women's "essential" medical disposition and treatment by the medical establishment and demonstrate that medical knowledge is to a great extent socially constructed—an ideological apparatus that often defines women as silent, powerless, and passive.

### **Confinement as a Mechanism for the Production of Disability**

The protagonist's physical isolation within a nursery—both a treatment space and an institutional-like cell—quintessentially embodies the concept of "misfitting." According to Garland-Thomson, disability emerges as an interaction between bodies and environments that reject or confine difference. In the story, the very architectural choice of a nursery—a space meant to symbolize care but engineered to suppress liberation—mirrors this dynamics. The environment itself is an active agent in producing disability: the natural expressions of distress inherent in the protagonist are not validated but pathologized. What might be a natural call for recognition and support is instead re-framed as a deviation from sanity, reinforcing the idea that her altered mental state is a defect born of an oppressive setting.

However, throughout the text, nature acts both as an oppressive force of confinement and a symbol of resistance. While the narrator is physically confined to an indoor space, she increasingly

fixates on the wallpaper—a surreal, shifting entity that embodies her psychological turmoil. The intricate patterns within the paper become her escape, reflecting a natural disorder at odds with rigid domestic expectations. Additionally, her yearning for the outdoors signifies an instinctive desire for liberation. The contrast between confined domesticity and untamed nature underscores the suffocating rigidity of gender norms.

As the narrator's mental state deteriorates, she ultimately subverts the constraints imposed upon her. Her identification with the woman 'trapped' within the wallpaper signals a pivotal moment of resistance—she no longer passively accepts her confinement but actively dismantles its oppressive hold. By tearing down the wallpaper, she symbolically rejects patriarchal authority, though the cost is her complete psychological break. This climax serves as a powerful critique of forced medical confinement and the denial of female autonomy.

### **Disability and Crip Theory**

*The Yellow Wallpaper* is not only recognized for its feminist critique of 19th-century gender norms and medical practices but my paper reconsiders the text through the lens of Disability Studies and Crip Theory, arguing that the protagonist's experience is not simply one of mental illness but also a case study in the social construction of disability. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson<sup>3</sup>, Lennard J. Davis<sup>4</sup>, and Tobin Siebers<sup>5</sup>, the analysis examines how the protagonist is subjected to enforced "normalcy" and how her body and mind are disciplined by oppressive medical and patriarchal systems.

The short story presents a stark narrative of confinement and psychological decline that—under Disability Studies and Crip Theory—can be read as a critique of the ways in which society constructs and controls disability. While the protagonist's descent into madness is traditionally read in feminist terms, it also speaks to the broader social dynamics of labeling and marginalization that underpin the diagnosis of mental disability. By considering the insights of Garland-Thomson, Davis, and Siebers, the analysis foregrounds the text's depiction of censorship, misfitting, and the politics of diagnostic language.

### **Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and the Politics of Misfitting**

Garland-Thomson challenges conventional understandings of

disability by emphasizing the concept of ‘misfitting’—the idea that disability emerges from the interaction between bodies and their environments, rather than from inherent deficits. She argues that cultural, social, and institutional norms create environments in which certain bodies ‘misfit’ and are consequently marginalized. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the protagonist’s confined space and the rigid expectations of 19th-century womanhood produce a similar misalignment between her embodied experiences and the cultural ideals of productivity and sanity. Her internalized inability to ‘fit’ into these prescribed roles is rendered visible through her fixation on the wallpaper and her eventual psychological breakdown.

#### **Lennard J. Davis and the Critique of Normativity**

Lennard J. Davis’s work interrogates the notion of the “normate,” or the culturally constructed idea of the normal, non-disabled body. For Davis, the insistence on normalcy is a powerful tool of social control, marginalizing those who deviate from the expected model of physical and mental functioning. In Gilman’s narrative, the rest-cure prescribed to the protagonist functions as an instrument to forcibly “normalize” her behavior. Her forced inactivity and isolation are not therapeutic in nature but disciplinary measures aimed at erasing her difference. Davis’s critique reveals how the medical and domestic institutions of the period actively produced and reinforced a narrow standard of normalcy, positioning the protagonist’s mental distress as a defect to be corrected.

#### **Tobin Siebers and Disability as a Social Construct**

Tobin Siebers emphasizes that disability is not merely a biological or medical condition but is deeply embedded in social power structures. His work on disability aesthetics and identity argues that what is constructed as “abnormal” is a reflection of social, cultural, and political anxieties. Siebers contends that labeling a condition as pathological serves to create and maintain hierarchies in which deviations from the norm are stigmatized. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the protagonist’s declaration of her mental state—as observed by her physician-husband and the clinical establishment—functions as an administrative tool to limit her agency and individuality. Her eventual rebellion against imposed treatment protocols can be read as a radical re-assertion of subjectivity, one that challenges the very categories of normal and abnormal defined by a patriarchal society.

The protagonist's experience in *The Yellow Wallpaper* can be read as a powerful metaphor for the institutionalization of the "disabled" self. Her confinement in the nursery—designed to be both a prison and a treatment space—illustrates the ways in which environments are engineered to suppress dissent and deviation. Using Garland-Thomson's idea of misfitting, one can see her forced isolation as an environment that actively produces disability. The narrative demonstrates that when the body's natural expressions of distress are met with oppressive corrective measures (like the rest-cure), what might have been a natural cry for recognition is instead pathologized and rendered as a defect.

Under the rest-cure, the protagonist's natural impulses and desires are not only ignored but suppressed. Lennard Davis's critique of normativity is evident here: the treatment is less about healing and more about enforcing a rigid model of behavior. The prescribed inactivity and sensory deprivation aim to "normalize" her body and mind, yet paradoxically, they contribute to her disintegration. The forced passivity removes any possibility for resistance, confining her within the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable according to the era's gender and mental health norms. This process exposes how therapeutic interventions, rather than liberating the individual, can become instruments of social control that reinforce ableist and patriarchal hierarchies.

### **Reclaiming Subjectivity and Challenging Ableist Narratives**

Tobin Siebers's insights into the politics of disability alert us to the ways in which labeling the protagonist's behavior as "hysterical" or "lunatic" functions as a strategy to de-legitimize her experiences. By constructing her mental state as a defect, society not only silences her but also disqualifies her claims to autonomy and identity. However, as her fixation on the wallpaper intensifies, the act of decoding its chaotic patterns becomes a form of resistance—a reclaiming of subjectivity in the face of oppressive medical discourse. The tearing down of the wallpaper, then, can be understood not as a symptom of complete madness but as a deliberate act of defiance against the confines of socially constructed normalcy.

Analyzing *The Yellow Wallpaper* through the lenses of Disability Studies and Crip Theory—as informed by Garland-Thomson's concept of misfitting, Davis's critique of normativity, and

Siebers's analysis of socially constructed disability—reveals the text as a potent commentary on the production and regulation of difference. The narrative exposes how oppressive systems use medical diagnosis and prescribed treatments not to heal but to enforce conformity and control. In doing so, Gilman's work challenges the reader to reconsider the power dynamics inherent in the categorization of disability, urging a re-imagining of care that recognizes the complex interplay between individuality, difference, and social justice. This analysis not only highlights the intersections of gender, disability, and power but also invites further questions about how historical modes of oppression continue to influence contemporary perspectives on mental health and embodiment.

### **Ecofeminism and the Symbolic Role of Nature**

Ecofeminism argues that the domination of nature and the subjugation of women are interlinked facets of patriarchal power. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, nature is not simply the backdrop for the narrative; it functions as a dynamic symbol for both the inherent vitality of the self and the natural forces denied to the oppressed. By reading the text through the ecofeminist perspectives of Carolyn Merchant<sup>6</sup>, Greta Gaard<sup>7</sup>, and Val Plumwood<sup>8</sup>, one can see how Gilman uses nature imagery and symbolism to critique the rigid social structures that confine women—transforming a domestic space into a site of both environmental and personal rebellion.

### **Carolyn Merchant: *The Death of Nature* and the Death of Women**

Carolyn Merchant's seminal work, *The Death of Nature*, argues that the rise of mechanistic science led to a dual domination—nature was reduced to a resource to be exploited, and women were similarly cast as passive, controllable entities. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the wallpaper's organic, shifting pattern can be read as a manifestation of wild nature—an uncanny presence that the narrator both despises and feels inexplicably drawn to. The wallpaper's "undulating" designs disturb the sterile, controlled domestic environment, symbolizing the disruptive and reclaiming power of nature that resists the imposition of order by patriarchal society. The narrator's increasing identification with the chaotic forms on the wallpaper echoes Merchant's critique of the modern urge to dominate and suppress natural (and by extension, feminine)

vitality. Instead of being celebrated as life-affirming, nature here is labeled as mad and dangerous—a direct parallel to how women’s inner lives were delegitimized during the period.

**Greta Gaard: Revaluing the Natural and Embodied Experience**

Greta Gaard’s ecofeminist scholarship emphasizes the importance of reclaiming nature as a site of embodied experience and empowerment rather than one of domination. Gaard contends that the cultural narrative that links women inherently to nature is often used to justify their subordination by implying inherent passivity or irrationality. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the natural imagery is ambivalent. On one hand, the narrator is confined indoors, removed from the restorative embrace of the natural world—a confinement that symbolizes the broader societal effort to keep women away from their inherent strength and creative potential. On the other hand, her psychedelic preoccupation with the wallpaper is a yearning to reconnect with a more fluid, natural state of being. This duality aligns with Gaard’s argument that nature, when reclaimed as a source of lived experience, can serve as a potent counter-narrative to imposed social orders. The wallpaper becomes an intermediary between the forbidden natural impulse and the restrictive, artificial reality of domestic life, suggesting that the suppression of nature is synonymous with the suppression of self.

**Val Plumwood: Beyond Dualisms and Embracing Interconnectedness**

Val Plumwood’s work challenges the dominant Western dualisms—such as nature versus culture and rationality versus irrationality—that underpin much of patriarchal thought. Plumwood argues that these binaries serve to devalue the natural and the feminine as “othered” or lesser. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the strict separation between the civilized (rational) self and the wild (irrational) other breaks down as the narrator’s inner life collapses under the weight of enforced conformity. The wallpaper, with its intricate, almost organic patterns, becomes a metaphor for the living, interwoven nature of human consciousness that defies neat categorization. As the narrative develops, the physical confinement imposed by the domestic space mirrors the psychological confinement resulting from a worldview that prizes rigid, hierarchical dualisms.

Plumwood's perspective encourages a reading of the text where the breaking down of the wallpaper's orderly façade represents the possibility of transcending these dualisms—suggesting that liberation can be found in acknowledging our interconnectedness with nature rather than in its exploitation and suppression.

Using Eco-feminism as a critical framework reveals that *The Yellow Wallpaper* is not only a feminist critique of patriarchal medical practices but also a profound commentary on the disenchantment with nature as a site of authentic expression. Drawing on Carolyn Merchant's critique of the mechanistic domination of nature, Greta Gaard's emphasis on reclaiming embodied natural experience, and Val Plumwood's call to transcend dualistic hierarchies, the story exposes the cultural project of silencing and containing both the natural world and female subjectivity. The wallpaper, with its organic, unruly design, becomes a potent symbol of the natural force that resists subjugation—a force that Gilman suggests, if acknowledged, could lead to more integrative and just forms of care and creativity.

An integrated disability studies and ecofeminist reading of *The Yellow Wallpaper* exposes how Gilman's text functions as a potent commentary on the production and regulation of difference. The narrative lays bare the ways in which environments—both physical and discursive—can serve to generate a “disabled” self by pathologizing natural expressions of distress. Therapeutic interventions such as the rest-cure are revealed not as neutral acts of care, but as deliberate strategies to enforce conformity and maintain established power hierarchies. By challenging the oppressive constructs of normalcy, the text invites us to consider a reimagined conception of care—one that recognizes individual complexity, resists pathologization, and values difference rather than stigmatizing it. This comprehensive reading thus not only highlights the intersections of gender, disability, and power within the narrative but also raises enduring questions about how historical modes of oppression continue to shape contemporary perspectives on mental health and embodiment of gender.

#### **Notes**

1. Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell was a renowned American physician and neurologist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is best known for his work on neurology and his development of the “rest cure”, a treatment

approach that was widely used for patients with nervous disorder. The treatment involved complete isolation, rest and strict diet. This treatment was often prescribed for women who were diagnosed “neurasthenia”, a condition characterized by fatigue, anxiety, and depression. However, the excessive restrictions imposed on patients has been widely criticized for its potential to exacerbate symptoms and limit patient’s autonomy. The “rest cure” has also been seen as a reflection of the patriarchal attitudes of the time, with male physicians exerting control over female patients.

2. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was reportedly suffering from postpartum depression that eventually became the impetus for *The Yellow Wallpaper*. She is believed to have taken extensive notes about her symptoms, however, when she sent a letter describing her symptoms to the famous nerve specialist S. Weir Mitchell, he claimed it only proved self-conceit and promptly condemned her to the “rest cure”, which expressly prohibited women from reading and writing about anything, including themselves or their illness.

3. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson is an American scholar and professor of English at Emory University, specializing in disability studies and feminist theory. Her works have significantly contributed to the development of disability studies as a field. Some of her key publications include *Extraordinary Bodies* (1997), *Staring: How We Look* (2009), *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (1996) among others. Garland-Thomson’s work emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing individuals with disabilities, promoting inclusivity, and challenging societal norms.

4. Lennard J. Davis is a prominent scholar in the field of Disability Studies. He is a professor of English, Disability and Medical Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is known for his work on disability theory, culture and literature.

5. Tobin Siebers was a renowned American professor of literature, art, and design at the University of Michigan. His key concepts include disability as a valuable resource for artistic expression, the concept of disability aesthetics as well as the concept of complex embodiment, highlighting the intricate relationships between bodies, environments, and cultures.

6. Carolyn Merchant is a prominent environmental historian and philosopher. She is a Professor Emerita of Environmental

History, Philosophy, and Ethics at the University of California, Berkeley. Merchant has made significant contributions to the development of eco-feminism, exploring the intersections of feminism, environmentalism, and social justice.

7. Greta Gaard is a prominent eco-feminist scholar and activist who has contributed significantly to the development of ecofeminist theory, exploring the relationship between the oppression of women and the degradation of the environment.

8. Val Plumwood was an Australian philosopher and environmentalist known for her work in ecofeminism and ecological humanities. Plumwood's work critiques the dualisms that underpin Western thought, such as human/nature and reason/emotion, arguing for a more integrated approach to understanding the world.

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# Decolonial Futurity and Speculative Resistance: A Bhattacharyan Reading of Surveillance Capitalism and Neoliberal Coloniality in Samit Basu's *The City Inside* and Yoss' *A Planet for Rent*

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## Abstract

**T***his article examines how two speculative novels from the Global South: Samit Basu's *The City Inside* (2022) and Yoss's *A Planet for Rent* (2015), imagine decolonial futures amid ecological collapse and new forms of domination. With reference to Sourit Bhattacharya's decolonial reading method in *Postcolonialism Now: Literature, Reading, Decolonising* (2024), we focus on the rubrics of ecologies and futures. Basu's near-future Delhi is ravaged by climate breakdown and total digital surveillance; characters respond with small, everyday acts of defiance that quietly open pathways to liveable worlds. Yoss's linked stories satirise a ruined Earth rented out to alien "xenoids," where humans survive through cunning, black-market schemes, and sharp mockery of their new colonial masters. Ecological crisis appears not as rupture but as the latest chapter in ongoing colonial extraction. Yet both novels locate hope in Global South realities rather than Western models of progress. When read together, the two novels show similar strategies of speculative resistance to surveillance capitalism and neoliberal coloniality. The comparison demonstrates the analytical power of Bhattacharya's framework for cross-regional work and contributes to emerging discussions of postcolonial futurisms. Above all, it shows how speculative fiction can move beyond warning and actively help us envision practical, just futures.*

**Keywords:** decolonial futurity, speculative resistance, surveillance

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*capitalism, neoliberal coloniality, Global South futurisms, postcolonial ecocriticism*

In the recent years postcolonial studies have shown growing interest in what scholars describe as ‘new futurisms.’ This emerging inquiry examines how writers from the Global South turn to and use speculative fiction to explore the questions surrounding sustainable and liveable futures. They do so against the backdrop of climate crises, environmental collapse, and persistent forms of domination that continue the familiar colonial patterns in their present. The field now pays close attention to how literature from regions such as South Asia and the Caribbean reimagines resistance and hope in the face of surveillance capitalism and neoliberal power.

This article contributes to those conversations through a close comparative reading of two significant works. The first is Samit Basu’s *The City Inside* (published in 2022), a near future novel set in a climate stressed Delhi. The second is Yoss’ *A Planet for Rent* (published in 2015), which is a collection of linked stories that functions as a novel, and calls upon the relevant Cuban experiences to depict a world rented out to alien powers after ecological ruin. The present analysis draws on the decolonial reading framework developed by Sourit Bhattacharya in *Postcolonialism Now: Literature, Reading, Decolonising* (2024), especially the categories of ecologies and futures. In this way, both texts develop and show comparable forms of speculative resistance against neo-colonial systems of control and exploitation. Characters in both works push back against systems of control and exploitation, as they open pathways toward decolonial futures rooted in Global South realities, and not following Western models of progress. By placing these South Asian and Caribbean texts alongside each other, the article highlights shared experiences of ongoing coloniality while respecting their distinct regional voices. It demonstrates the value of Bhattacharya’s reading and method for cross regional analysis, and adds to current debates in postcolonial futures. In doing so the article shows how speculative literature does more than warning us of crises. It actively suggests and guides readers to imagine practical ways to build better worlds.

Bhattacharya sets out a fresh approach. To reading South Asian postcolonial texts, including novels, poems, and films from

countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. These works, written after independence from British rule, often adopt what he calls “catastrophic realism.” In this style, authors blend realistic details with magical, experimental, or imaginative elements to reveal how major crises, such as famines, rebellions, and states of emergency, continue to shape everyday lives long after colonial rule ended. He further encourages “reading for decolonising.” Instead of reading simply for pleasure, readers could and should examine these texts closely for the experiences of minorities (lower-caste, subaltern, people below the poverty line, even women), stories of migration, lingering traumas, damaged natural ecologies, and hopeful dreams of a fairer future. He stresses the value of careful, attentive reading alongside comparisons with postcolonial writing from Africa and other regions. This kind of a reading reveals the connected nature of struggles across postcolonial societies. For Bhattacharya, such engagement with literature becomes an act of unlearning old colonial habits of thought, and supporting the ongoing fight for justice. Books (literary texts) or other visual media/cultural texts turn into quiet but powerful tools for creating a kinder, more equitable world. Bhattacharya moves beyond older postcolonial critique and analyses, and calls for a method of reading that is actively decolonial. This method treats reading as a form of praxis. It links literary texts directly to material histories of oppression and to ongoing anticolonial struggles. It involves close and comparative analysis that pays attention to real world conditions rather than abstract theory alone. At the heart of his method are five broad rubrics: minorities, migrations, traumas, ecologies, and futures. These allow readers to examine how postcolonial literature represents lived experiences of inequality and resistance. For this article, the focus falls on two of them in particular. The rubric of ecologies explores how texts deal with climate crisis, environmental destruction, and the ways these issues continue colonial patterns of looting, plundering and control. The rubric of futures looks at how writers imagine liveable alternatives. It asks how characters or communities work toward sustainable worlds that break free from neoliberal and neo colonial systems.

Bhattacharya points out that decolonising here is not the same as the separate field of Decolonial Studies. Instead, it is a practical

process of unlearning and rebuilding. It highlights internationalist solidarity across the Global South, while respecting local differences. The method works well on reading speculative fiction. Such writing does not just show problems. It creates imaginative spaces where resistance could take shape, and where new possibilities for justice and survival could emerge. In this way Bhattacharya's framework turns literary analysis into a tool for thinking about real change in the present day. This article applies the method on the two chosen novels to reveal their shared strategies of speculative resistance.

Let us now talk about Samit Basu's (b. 1979) *The City Inside*. The text immerses readers in a near-future Delhi already living through multiple overlapping ends. Heat waves, toxic air, and chronic water shortages define daily life. Those who can afford it venture out only in full-body protective suits, while others queue at public taps that regularly erupt into violence. The wealthy retreat behind sealed enclaves with private supplies, echoing older colonial logics of resource hoarding and spatial segregation. This ecological violence is inseparable from the novel's surveillance capitalism: Our main character, Joey, works as a Reality Controller, shaping the multimedia "Flows" of an online celebrity (who was also her former partner, Indi), while wearable devices and wellness apps constantly monitor citizens' movements and moods. Yet Basu refuses pure dystopia. Through Joey and coworker Rudra's tentative alliances and small acts of defiance: questioning official narratives, protecting vulnerable immigrants, quietly subverting the system, the novel gestures toward decolonial futurity. These acts of defiance are not grand revolutions, but modest, everyday gestures rooted in the realities of caste, class, and urban survival in the futuristic Delhi.

Yoss' (José Miguel Sánchez; b. 1969) *A Planet for Rent* is a set of linked stories that are woven together like a novel. It shows the Earth in the near future, after complete ecological collapse. Humans have ruined the planet through their greed and poor management. Advanced aliens called xenoids have stepped in to take control. They pose themselves as rescuers, but quickly turn the world into a vast tourist destination for their own pleasure. The opening pages set the tone with a sarcastic advertisement:

"For Rent, One Planet

*Evolving Convergences*

Step on up, ladies and gents, right this way!  
But only if you're xenoids, it goes without saying.  
We don't want any humans ...

One whole planet, with its oceans and its mountains, with its glaciers and its deserts, with its plains and its forests ...

For rent, one planet that's lost its way in the race for development, that showed up at the stadium after all the medals had been handed out, when all that was left was the consolation prize of survival ...”

Yoss presents the planetary ecological crisis as a new chapter in the familiar history of colonial resource exploitation, now on a cosmic scale. The xenoids sink the entire continent of Africa as a warning after humans try to fight back with nuclear weapons. They then declare that humans can no longer govern themselves, or are wise enough to use their own resources. The planet is turned into a carefully preserved nature park for alien visitors, while most humans live in poverty on the edges. Environmental recovery happens partially, but only to serve profit of the colonizer. The land, air, and seas become commodities for the wealthy xenoids, who come for holidays and adventures. This mirrors older colonial patterns, as we have seen happening in our own country, India. Our own precious riches, assets and people being used up for the benefit of the European colonizers.

The same system of colonial domination brings intense surveillance and neoliberal control. A Planetary Tourism Agency and its human helpers, known as sepoys, enforce strict rules. The humans are commanded to serve the aliens often through degrading work such as acting as ‘social workers’ (a coded term for prostitution) to keep the visitors happy. Everyday life involves constant monitoring black market deals and the threat of punishment for any sign of independence or resistance.

Yet, the stories point to speculative resistance under the futures rubric. Characters fight back through cunning and small-scale defiance. Some run illegal emigration scams in rickety spaceships. Others use satire and underground networks to mock the system or carve out tiny spaces of freedom. One narrator draws a direct parallel to history noting that Queen Elizabeth II only sent her last viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, to give the Indian subcontinent its independence, when she could no longer control it. The same

logic applies here. As long as the xenoid Englishmen and their Planetary Tourism Agency sepoys continue to control Earth, there will be no independence. The characters do not stage dramatic revolutionary acts. Instead, they rely on small, practical acts of survival, cunning, and satire.

In this way Yoss draws on Caribbean and Latin American realities to create a sharp satire. His text uses ecology and planetary rent to expose how coloniality returns in new neoliberal forms. At the same time, it shows how speculative fiction can pave the way towards possible decolonial futures. The resistance may be limited and satirical, but it keeps alive the idea that human beings can still imagine and work toward something better even under total domination. In his text, characters resist through their clever schemes, underground networks, and sharp satirical commentary. Some run illegal emigration scams in old spaceships, while others use underground networks and sharp taunting to survive and keep hope alive. One narrator even compares the situation to historical independence, stating that true freedom only comes when the controlling power can no longer hold on.

Reading the two novels together through Bhattacharya's rubrics of ecologies and futures reveals several clear parallels. Both novels treat ecological collapse as a direct continuation of earlier colonial practices of exploitation and unequal resource use. In Basu's text, the line where it is mentioned that people had known that the end would come upon them at any moment, but had not realised that it would arrive with so many different options, captures the layered crisis in a futuristic Delhi, where constant heat waves and severe water shortages turn everyday life into a struggle. Crowds gather at public water points only to face violent mobs and police crackdowns while the wealthy hide behind sealed enclaves (which ironically, might refer to the saying about falsely secure people living in glass houses), with private supplies and full body protective gear, on demand. These visuals to the readers, show how environmental damage grows from decades of unequal resource use and unjustified corporate hoarding. The land and water become tools of division rather than shared support in a way that echoes older colonial practices, of looting and plundering without care for the people or the place. Yoss' text presents the same idea on a planetary scale. The colonizers/xenoids keep only

those parts of the earth ‘beautiful’ and ‘healed,’ which serves their enjoyment and vacations. Resources being used up for the benefit of outsiders, while the local community are marginalized and left in poverty, on the edges of their own planet.

The key difference between Basu and Yoss lies in tone and focus. Basu stays close to the realistic details of future urban life in Delhi, with its tensions of caste, class and daily survival. Yoss uses broad planetary satire to reflect on Caribbean and Latin American histories of ‘outside powers’ and their exploitation. When viewed through Bhattacharya’s method mentioned above, the two texts create a model of internationalist solidarity across the Global South. They honour the distinct voices of each region while showing how speculative fiction can point toward decolonized futures that are sustainable and just. In this way the novels do more than describe crises. They invite readers to imagine practical paths to better worlds with the foundation in Global South realities rather than ideas borrowed from elsewhere.

In placing Samit Basu’s *The City Inside* and Yoss’ *A Planet for Rent* side by side, this article has shown how speculative fiction from the Global South can do far more than give the readers a visual of what crises of all levels could look like. Through Sourit Bhattacharya’s decolonial reading method and its areas of ecologies and futures, the two texts highlight quiet but meaningful forms of resistance that open up possibilities for more just and sustainable days ahead. They turn surveillance capitalism and neoliberal control into chances for characters to reclaim spaces of freedom, and to dream of sustainable ways of living. Ecological collapse in both texts never feels like the final nail in the coffin. Rather, it becomes the ground from which hope for decolonization can grow, rooted in the real experiences of South Asian and Caribbean spaces. This comparative reading adds a new voice to the growing field of new futurisms in postcolonial studies. It shows how Bhattacharya’s approach helps us see solidarity across geographic and geo-cultural spaces, without erasing their unique and separate histories and voices. Works like these of Basu and Yoss do not simply warn of what might go wrong. They point toward what might still be possible when people refuse to accept the world as it is given to them, even when they cannot fully control the situation. By showing characters who choose small

acts of defiance and imagination, Basu and Yoss remind us that change often starts with everyday courage. They create a sense of quiet optimism in readers. Even in the most controlled and damaged settings the human desire to imagine something better stays alive. In the hands of Global South writers like Basu and Yoss, speculative fiction becomes a gentle, yet, firm act of creation. This kind of writing shows that liveable and decolonized futures are not distant dreams. They are already taking shape in the stories we tell and the small acts of resistance we carry forward.

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## পরিবেশ দূষণ ও মানব স্বাস্থ্য

ড. ভজন চন্দ্র বর্মণ<sup>১</sup>



সারসংক্ষেপ:

পরিবেশ দূষণ বর্তমান বিশ্বের অন্যতম প্রধান সমস্যা, যা মানুষের স্বাস্থ্য এবং সামগ্রিক অস্তিত্বের জন্য মারাত্মক হুমকি। মানুষ তার এই উন্নত জীবনকে আরো উন্নত করার বাসনায় সৃষ্টি করেছে নানা বৈজ্ঞানিক উপকরণ। বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি মানুষকে বহু আরাম ও সুবিধা প্রদান করেছে, সভ্যতাকে অনেক দূর এগিয়ে নিয়ে গেছে। কিন্তু এই বিজ্ঞানের কারণে পরিবেশ তার স্বাভাবিকতা হারিয়ে কৃত্রিম ও অস্বাভাবিক হয়ে উঠেছে, মানুষের প্রতি প্রতিশোধপরায়ণ হয়ে উঠেছে এবং বর্তমান প্রজন্মের কাছে এক জ্বলন্ত সমস্যা হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। পরিবেশকে দূষিত করে মানুষ আজ নিজের অস্তিত্ব নিজেই বিপন্ন করে তুলছে। পরিবেশ দূষণ শুধুমাত্র তাৎক্ষণিক রোগ নয়, বরং ক্যান্সার, প্রজনন স্বাস্থ্যের ক্ষতি, মায়বিক ব্যাধি এবং শিশুদের বিকাশজনিত সমস্যার অন্যতম প্রধান কারণ। সরকার পরিবেশ দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার জন্য নানান রকম পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছে। কিন্তু কেবলমাত্র সরকারি পদক্ষেপই যথেষ্ট নয়। দূষণমুক্ত পরিবেশ পেতে দেশের প্রত্যেকটি নাগরিককে সচেতন হতে হবে। তবেই আমরা পরিবেশকে সুন্দরভাবে গড়ে তুলতে পারবো। আমরা আমাদের স্বাস্থ্য সুরক্ষিত রাখতে পারবো এবং পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের জন্য একটি সুন্দর, দূষণমুক্ত পরিবেশ রেখে যেতে পারবো।

**মূলশব্দ:** পরিবেশ দূষণ, জীবাশ্ম, বাস্তুতন্ত্র, গ্রিনহাউস গ্যাস, অল্লবৃষ্টি, বায়োমেডিক্যাল বর্জ্য

**ভূমিকাঃ**

একসময় পরিবেশের আনুকূল্যে পৃথিবীতে জন্ম নিয়েছিল মানুষ তখন পৃথিবীর বেশিরভাগ অংশ ছিল গাছপালায় ঢাকা। জনসংখ্যা ছিল খুবই কম। তারপর জনসংখ্যা বেড়েছে। বনভূমি ধ্বংস করে ধীরে ধীরে মানুষ গড়ে তুলেছে উন্নত সমাজ ব্যবস্থা। মানুষ তার এই উন্নত জীবনকে আরো উন্নত করার বাসনায় সৃষ্টি করেছে নানা বৈজ্ঞানিক উপকরণ। বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি মানুষকে বহু আরাম ও সুবিধা প্রদান করেছে, সভ্যতাকে অনেক দূর এগিয়ে নিয়ে গেছে। কিন্তু এই বিজ্ঞানের কারণে পরিবেশ তার স্বাভাবিকতা হারিয়ে কৃত্রিম ও অস্বাভাবিক হয়ে উঠেছে। স্বার্থাশ্বেষী মানুষ আজ নিজেই নিজের কবর খুঁড়ে চলেছে। মানুষ নির্বিচারে নিজেদের স্বার্থে প্রকৃতিকে ব্যবহার করছে। মানুষ এমন সব কার্যকলাপে লিপ্ত হচ্ছে যা পরিবেশকে বিপন্ন করে তুলেছে, পরিবেশকে দূষিত

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করে তুলছে।এর ফলে প্রকৃতিও নানা দুর্যোগের মাধ্যমে মানুষের প্রতি প্রতিশোধপরায়ণ হয়ে উঠেছে, বর্তমান প্রজন্মের কাছে এক জ্বলন্ত সমস্যা হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে।মানুষের লোভের পরিমাণস্বরূপ শিল্প কারখানা থেকে নির্গত গ্যাস ও জঞ্জাল পরিবেশকে দূষিত করে তুলেছে। পরিবেশকে দূষিত করে মানুষ আজ নিজের অস্তিত্ব নিজেই বিপন্ন করে তুলেছে।

### **পরিবেশ দূষণের ধারণাঃ**

পরিবেশ দূষণ শব্দটি আজ আমাদের জীবনে ভয়ঙ্কর রূপ নিয়ে দেখা দিয়েছে। যখন কোনো কারণে পরিবেশ তার স্বাভাবিকতা হারায় অথবা পরিবেশের বিভিন্ন উপাদানের কাঙ্ক্ষিত মাত্রা নষ্ট হয়ে যায়, তখন সেই পরিবেশ জীবজগতের জন্য অস্বস্তিকর ও অসহনীয় হয়ে ওঠে।এই অস্বাভাবিক বা অস্বাস্থ্যকর পরিবেশই হল পরিবেশ দূষণ। মানুষের বিভিন্ন কার্যকলাপ (যেমন—শিল্পায়ন, জীবাশ্ম জ্বালানি ব্যবহার, বর্জ্য নিক্ষেপ) বা প্রাকৃতিক কারণে পরিবেশের স্বাভাবিক উপাদানসমূহ যখন ক্ষতিকর ও অনুপযোগী হয়ে ওঠে, তখন তাকে পরিবেশ দূষণ বলে। বায়ু, ভূমি, জল বা মাটির ভেত, রাসায়নিক বা জৈবিক বৈশিষ্ট্যের যেকোনো প্রতিকূল পরিবর্তনকে পরিবেশ দূষণ হিসেবে সংজ্ঞায়িত করা হয়। দূষক হলো কঠিন, তরল বা গ্যাসীয় পদার্থ যা স্বাভাবিক পরিমাণের চেয়ে অধিক ঘনত্বে উপস্থিত থাকে এবং যা মানুষের কার্যকলাপ বা প্রাকৃতিক ঘটনার ফলে উৎপন্ন হয়। দূষক পদার্থ প্রাকৃতিক এবং মানবসৃষ্ট উভয়ই হতে পারে। নিষ্কাশনের ক্ষেত্রে এগুলি জৈব-বিয়োজনযোগ্য বা অজৈব-বিয়োজনযোগ্য এবং গঠনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রাথমিক বা মাধ্যমিকও হতে পারে।

ভারতের কেন্দ্রীয় দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড (Central Pollution Control Board of India) অনুযায়ী, পরিবেশ দূষণ হলো এমন কোনো কঠিন, তরল বা গ্যাসীয় পদার্থ (শব্দ সহ) যা পরিবেশে এমন ঘনত্বে বা পরিমাণে উপস্থিত থাকে যা মানুষ, জীবজন্তু, উদ্ভিদ, সম্পত্তি বা বাস্তুতন্ত্রের জন্য ক্ষতিকারক হতে পারে। এটি জল, বায়ু, এবং ভূমির স্বাভাবিক গুণমান নষ্ট করে।

জাতিসংঘ পরিবেশ কর্মসূচি (UNEP) এবং জাতিসংঘের পরিসংখ্যান বিভাগ (UNSD) অনুযায়ী, পরিবেশ দূষণ হলো পরিবেশগত মাধ্যমে (বায়ু, পানি, মাটি) এমন পদার্থ বা তাপের উপস্থিতি, যার প্রকৃতি, অবস্থান বা পরিমাণ অবাঞ্ছিত পরিবেশগত প্রভাব সৃষ্টি করে। এছাড়া, দূষক পদার্থ উৎপন্ন করে এমন যে কোনো কার্যকলাপও এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত।

### **বিভিন্ন প্রকার দূষণ ও মানব শরীরের উপর সেগুলির প্রভাবঃ**

পরিবেশের ভারসাম্য সৃষ্টিকারী ক্রিয়াকলাপের ফলই হল দূষণ। দূষণের প্রকারভেদগুলোর মধ্যে রয়েছে বায়ু দূষণ, পানি দূষণ, তেজস্ক্রিয় দূষণ, মাটি ও প্লাস্টিক দূষণ ইত্যাদি।পরিবেশের তিনটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ উপাদান হলো মাটি, জল ও বায়ু। বর্তমানে মানুষের কার্যকলাপের কারণে এই তিনটি উপাদান প্রতিনিয়তই দূষিত হচ্ছে। যে হারে দূষণের পরিমাণ দিনে দিনে বাড়ছে, তাতে ভবিষ্যতে মানুষ সুপরিবেশের মধ্যে নয় দূষণ কবলিত পরিবেশের মধ্যে বেঁচে থাকবে। দূষণের চিত্র এতটাই ভয়াবহ যে প্রতি বছর লক্ষ লক্ষ মানুষ দূষণজনিত কারণে আহত বা নিহত হচ্ছে। এই দূষণ জনজীবনকে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত করছে, প্রচুর জীবন

ধ্বংস করছে। দূষণের মধ্যে বায়ু দূষণ, শব্দদূষণ, প্লাস্টিক দূষণ, জল দূষণ, মাটিদূষণ, নদী দূষণ ও বর্জ্য অব্যবস্থাপনার প্রভাব মানুষের উপর সবচেয়ে বেশি।

বায়ু দূষণঃ বর্তমানে দূষণগুলোর মধ্যে বায়ু দূষণের ভয়াবহতা সবচেয়ে বেশি। ২০২৫ সালে প্রকাশিত দ্য ল্যানসেট কাউন্টডাউন অন হেলথ অ্যান্ড ক্লাইমেট চেঞ্জ (The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change) প্রতিবেদনে বলা হয়েছে, ২০২২ সালে ভারতে বায়ু দূষণের কারণে প্রায় ১.৭২ মিলিয়নের অকাল মৃত্যু হয়েছে। এই অকাল মৃত্যুগুলোর একটি বড় অংশ জীবাশ্ম জ্বালানি (কয়লা, পেট্রোল) ব্যবহারের ফলে সৃষ্ট দূষণের কারণে ঘটেছে। ভারতের বায়ু দূষণজনিত মৃত্যুর হার উন্নত দেশগুলোর তুলনায় ১০ গুণেরও বেশি। ল্যানসেট রিপোর্ট অনুসারে, এই বায়ু দূষণের কারণে স্বাস্থ্য খাতে এবং উৎপাদনশীলতা কমে যাওয়ায় ভারতের জিডিপি (GDP) প্রায় ৯.৫ শতাংশ অর্থনৈতিক ক্ষতি হয়েছে। উত্তর প্রদেশ, মহারাষ্ট্র, রাজস্থান, বিহার এবং পশ্চিমবঙ্গে বায়ু দূষণজনিত মৃত্যু সবচেয়ে বেশি রেকর্ড করা হয়েছে। স্টেট অফ গ্লোবাল এয়ার ২০২৫ (State of Global Air 2025) রিপোর্ট, যা ২০২৩ সালের তথ্যের ওপর ভিত্তি করে তৈরি, সেখানে ভারতে বায়ু দূষণজনিত মৃত্যু ২০ লাখ (2 million) ছাড়িয়ে গেছে বলে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে। জীবাশ্ম জ্বালানি (কয়লা, তেল ও প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস) পোড়ানোর ফলে, শিল্পকারখানা, দহন, অপরিষ্কৃত নগরায়ন, ঘনঘন রাস্তা খনন, ড্রেনের ময়লা রাস্তায় পাশে উঠিয়ে রাখা, যানবাহন থেকে নির্গত বিভিন্ন ধরনের বস্তুকণা, অ্যাশ, ধূলিকণা, সীসা, কার্বন, কার্বন মনোক্সাইড, সালফার অক্সাইড, নাইট্রোজেন অক্সাইডসমূহ এবং কার্বন ডাই-অক্সাইড প্রতিনিয়তই দূষিত করছে বায়ু। বায়ুদূষণের ক্ষণস্থায়ী সমস্যাগুলোর মধ্যে নাক মুখ জ্বালাপোড়া করা, মাথা কিম কিম করা, মাথা ব্যাথা, বমি বমি ভাব ইত্যাদি অন্যতম। ফুসফুসের ক্যান্সার, হাঁপানি, ব্রংকাইটিস, যক্ষা, কিডনির রোগ, উচ্চ রক্তচাপ, জন্মগত ক্রটি, মানসিক স্বাস্থ্যের ওপর প্রভাব, হার্ট অ্যাটাক, যকৃত সমস্যা, গর্ভবতী মায়েদের ওপর প্রভাব, চর্মরোগ ও নিউমোনিয়া ইত্যাদি দীর্ঘস্থায়ী রোগ হয়।

শব্দ দূষণঃ সহনশীল মাত্রার (সাধারণত ৮৫ ডেসিবেলের উপরে) চেয়ে বেশি তীব্র শব্দ মানুষের স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবেশের ওপর যে ক্ষতিকর প্রভাব ফেলে, তাকে শব্দ দূষণ বলে। যানবাহনের হাইড্রলিক হর্ন, সড়ক যানবাহন, রেল ও নৌযানের হর্ন, ইমার্জেন্সি হর্ন, ক্রটিপূর্ণ যানবাহনের বা মেশিনের যান্ত্রিক শব্দ, যত্রতত্র মাইকের ব্যবহার, রাজনৈতিক সমাবেশ, ওপেন কনসার্ট, উৎসব বা উদযাপনে ফাটানো বাজি ও পটকার বিকট আওয়াজ, ভ্যাকুয়াম ক্লিনার, ব্লেন্ডার, জেনারেটর বা এয়ার কুলারের শব্দ, ভবন নির্মাণ, কারখানা থেকে নির্গত উচ্চ শব্দ দূষণের জন্য দায়ী। বিশ্ব স্বাস্থ্য সংস্থার মতে, ৭০ ডেসিবেলের কম শব্দমাত্রা জীবের জন্য ক্ষতিকর নয়, তা কতক্ষণ বা একটানা যত সময় ধরেই শোনা হোক না কেন। একটানা ৮ ঘণ্টার বেশি সময় ধরে ৮৫ ডেসিবেলের বেশি শব্দে থাকা বিপজ্জনক হতে পারে। জাতিসংঘ পরিবেশ কর্মসূচি (United Nations Environment Programme) ফ্রন্টিয়ার্স রিপোর্ট ২০২৫ অনুযায়ী, উচ্চ

শব্দদূষণ দীর্ঘস্থায়ী মাথাব্যথা, অনিদ্রা, উচ্চ রক্তচাপ, হৃদরোগের ঝুঁকি এবং শ্রবণশক্তি হ্রাসের কারণ। এটি মানুষের মানসিক সুস্থতার ওপর মারাত্মক প্রভাব ফেলে। শব্দ দূষণ শহুরে প্রাণী যেমন- পাখি, ব্যাঙ এবং পোকামাকড়ের যোগাযোগের পদ্ধতি ব্যাহত করে, যা তাদের বেঁচে থাকার জন্য হুমকিস্বরূপ।

**প্লাস্টিক দূষণঃ** প্লাস্টিক দূষণ এখন কোনো নতুন বিষয় নয়। এক সময় প্লাস্টিক বলতে শুধু পলিথিন ব্যাগ, বোতল ইত্যাদিকে ধরা হতো, কিন্তু প্রকৃত পক্ষে প্লাস্টিকের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে ক্ষতিকর হলো মাইক্রোপ্লাস্টিক, যা বর্তমানে মাইক্রোবিডস নামে খুব পরিচিতি লাভ করেছে। ফেইসওয়াস, ডিটারজেন্ট, সাবান, বডিওয়াস, টুথপেস্ট ইত্যাদিতে প্রচুর মাইক্রোবিড পাওয়া যায়। প্লাস্টিক ও মাইক্রোবিডসের ফলে মানুষ থাইরয়েড, হরমোনের অতিরিক্ত ক্ষরণ, কিডনি রোগ, চর্মরোগ ইত্যাদি সমস্যাতে ভোগে। এছাড়া এর কারণে সামুদ্রিক প্রাণির (তিমি, পাখি) খাদ্য চক্রে প্লাস্টিকের উপস্থিতি ও ভক্ষণের ফলে মৃত্যু হয়। নদী নাব্যতা হারায়, ভূ-গর্ভস্থ পানি দূষিত হয়, মাটির উর্বরতা হ্রাস পায়। ২০২৫ সালে ভারতের পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রক এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট গবেষণা সংস্থাগুলির রিপোর্ট অনুযায়ী, ভারত বার্ষিক প্রায় মিলিয়ন টন (9.3 million tonnes) প্লাস্টিক বর্জ্য তৈরি করছে, যা বিশ্বব্যাপী প্লাস্টিক বর্জ্যের প্রায় ২০ শতাংশ। উৎপন্ন প্লাস্টিকের প্রায় ৮১% সংগ্রহ করা হলেও, প্রায় ১৯% বর্জ্য পরিবেশে (মাটি, জল) মিশে যাচ্ছে বা পুড়িয়ে ফেলা হচ্ছে। গড়ে প্রতিটি ভারতীয় বছরে প্রায় ১১ কিলোগ্রাম প্লাস্টিক ব্যবহার করে। ভারত বিশ্বের অন্যতম প্রধান সমুদ্র উপকূলীয় প্লাস্টিক দূষণকারী দেশ হিসেবে চিহ্নিত হয়েছে।

**নদী দূষণঃ** নদী দূষণের মূল কারণ ৭০-৮০ ভাগ শিল্প কারখানা গড়ে উঠেছে নদীকে কেন্দ্র করে। এছাড়া কারখানাগুলো শুধুমাত্র দিনের বেলায় ইটিপি (Effluent Treatment Plant) চালু রাখে এবং রাতে তা বন্ধ করে অপরিশোধিত বর্জ্য সরাসরি পরিবেশে বা নদীতে ফেলে দেয় যেটা একটি অত্যন্ত গুরুতর পরিবেশগত অপরাধ। পৌর কর্তৃপক্ষ পরিশোধন ছাড়া পয়ঃপ্রণালীর বর্জ্য নদীতে ছেড়ে দেওয়ার ফলে নদী দূষিত হচ্ছে। জাহাজ নির্মাণ ও মেরামতের সময় উৎপন্ন বর্জ্য, নদী পথে চলাচলকারী জাহাজ, লঞ্চ, স্টিমার, ট্রলারের লিকেজের ফলে কয়লা ও তেল, আরোহী কর্তৃক কঠিন বর্জ্য ও পয়ঃপ্রণালীর, কৃষিকার্যক্রমের ফলে আগত রাসায়নিক এবং নদীর পাশে গড়ে ওঠা জনমানুষের অপরিষ্কৃত স্যানিটেশন ব্যবস্থা ও গৃহস্থলী বর্জ্য, নদী দখল করে গবাদি পশুর বাসস্থান নির্মাণ ইত্যাদি ও নদী দূষণের জন্য দায়ী।

**অপরিষ্কৃত বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনাঃ** যে কোনো এলাকার হোটেল ও রেস্টুরেন্ট এর আবর্জনা, শিল্প কারখানা হতে উৎপাদিত আবর্জনা, মেডিকেল বর্জ্য, রান্নাঘরের পরিত্যক্ত আবর্জনা, হাটবাজারের পচনশীল শাকসবজি ইত্যাদি বর্জ্যের অন্যতম উৎস। বর্জ্যের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে বেশি ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ মেডিকেল বর্জ্য। যেখানে সেখানে ময়লা-আবর্জনা উন্মুক্তভাবে ফেলে রাখায় বাতাস ও মাটি দূষিত হচ্ছে, অপরিষ্কৃতভাবে বর্জ্য স্তূপীকরণের ফলে আশেপাশে দুর্গন্ধের পাশাপাশি দেখা যায় মশা, মাছি ও পোকামাকড়ের মাত্রাতিরিক্ত উপদ্রব। বর্ষা মৌসুমে বর্জ্যগুলোর অবস্থা হয় আরো ভয়াবহ। বর্ষা মৌসুমে সময় মত বর্জ্য অপসারণ

না করায় বর্জ্যসমূহে দ্রুত পচনপ্রক্রিয়া শুরু হয়, পঁচা বর্জ্য থেকে তরল, কালো রঙের দুর্গন্ধযুক্ত রস তৈরি হয়। এই রস বৃষ্টির পানির সঙ্গে নদীনালাতে এবং মাটির বুনটের স্থানের মধ্য দিয়ে গ্রাউন্ড ওয়াটারে গিয়ে মিশে গিয়ে ভূগর্ভস্থ জল দূষিত করছে। ফলে বাড়ছে পানিবাহিত রোগ ও বিভিন্ন স্বাস্থ্যঝুঁকি। কেন্দ্রীয় দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড Central Pollution Control Board of India) ২০২৫ সালের রিপোর্ট অনুযায়ী ভারতজুড়ে প্রতিদিন প্রায় ৭৪৩ টন বায়োমেডিক্যাল বর্জ্য উৎপন্ন হচ্ছে। এসব বর্জ্য নাড়াচাড়াই যারা জড়িত তাদের প্রায় সবাই কোনো ধরনের নিরাপত্তা উপকরণ যেমন- গ্লাভস, গামবুট, মাস্ক ইত্যাদি ব্যবহার ছাড়াই কাজ করে, যা কর্মীদের স্বাস্থ্য ঝুঁকির জন্য দায়ী।

**দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার জন্য সরকার কর্তৃক গৃহীত পদক্ষেপঃ**

দূষণের ক্ষতিকর প্রভাব থেকে পরিবেশকে রক্ষা করার জন্য, বিশ্বজুড়ে অনেক দেশ বিভিন্ন ধরনের দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ এবং এর ক্ষতিকর প্রভাব প্রশমিত করার জন্য আইন প্রণয়ন করেছে। পরিবেশ দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ এবং একটি টেকসই ভবিষ্যৎ গড়ার লক্ষ্যে ভারত সরকার বিভিন্ন সময়ে বেশ কিছু গুরুত্বপূর্ণ আইন, নীতি এবং কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করেছে। ২০২৪-২০২৬ সালের তথ্য অনুযায়ী, দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণে সরকারের প্রধান পদক্ষেপগুলো হলঃ ন্যাশনাল ক্লিন এয়ার প্রোগ্রাম, গ্রেন্ডেড রেসপন্স অ্যাকশন প্ল্যান, যানবাহন দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ, দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ কেন্দ্র সার্টিফিকেশন, রাস্তা রিডার, জল দূষণ প্রতিরোধ ও নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইন, ওয়েটল্যান্ড বা জলাভূমি সংরক্ষণ, প্লাস্টিক ও বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা, স্বচ্ছ ভারত মিশন, পরিবেশ আইন (সংশোধন) ২০২৬ ইত্যাদি। তবে সরকারি পদক্ষেপেই যথেষ্ট নয়। পরিবেশ দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ বা রোধ করার ক্ষেত্রে মানুষের ভূমিকা অপরিহার্য এবং সর্বোচ্চ। বলা যায়, পরিবেশ দূষণের প্রধান কারণ যেমন- মানুষ, তেমনি এর প্রতিকারের মূল চাবিকাঠিও মানুষের হাতেই। ব্যক্তিগত, সামাজিক এবং রাষ্ট্রীয়—প্রতিটি স্তরেই মানুষের সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণ পরিবেশের ভারসাম্য ফিরিয়ে আনতে পারে। পরিবেশের প্রতিটি উপাদানের (মাটি, পানি, বায়ু) ওপর মানুষের প্রভাব ব্যাপক। তাই, প্রতিটি মানুষের সচেতন ও ছোট ছোট পদক্ষেপই ভবিষ্যতে বড় ধরনের ইতিবাচক পরিবর্তন আনতে পারে।

**উপসংহার**

সারা বিশ্বে পরিবেশ দূষণ উদ্বেগজনক পর্যায়ে পৌঁছেছে। নগরায়ন, শিল্পায়ন এবং অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের ফলে শক্তি ব্যবহার ও বর্জ্য নিঃসরণ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। বিশ্ব পরিবেশ দূষণ, যেমন গ্রিনহাউস গ্যাস নিগর্মন ও অক্সিজেন, সেইসাথে জল দূষণ ও বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনাকে আন্তর্জাতিক জনস্বাস্থ্য সমস্যা হিসেবে গণ্য করা হয়। দূষণগুলো আমাদের জীবনের সাথে এমনভাবে জড়িত আছে যে, আমরা দূষণ নিয়ে এখন আর মাথা ঘামাতে রাজি নই। প্রতিদিনই কোনো না কোনো দূষণ নিয়ে খবরের কাগজে ছাপা হয়। কিন্তু তাও আমরা সচেতন নই। সরকার পরিবেশ দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার জন্য নানান রকম পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছে। কিন্তু কেবলমাত্র সরকারি পদক্ষেপই যথেষ্ট নয়। দূষণমুক্ত পরিবেশ পেতে দেশের প্রত্যেকটি নাগরিককে সচেতন হতে হবে। তবেই আমরা পরিবেশকে সুন্দরভাবে গড়ে তুলতে পারবো। আমরা আমাদের স্বাস্থ্য সুরক্ষিত রেখে

## *Evolving Convergences*

পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের জন্য একটি সুন্দর, দূষণমুক্ত পরিবেশ রেখে যেতে পারবো।

### **তথ্যসূত্রঃ**

দ্য ল্যানসেট কাউন্টডাউন অন হেলথ অ্যান্ড ক্লাইমেট চেঞ্জ' ২০২৫ সালের  
প্রতিবেদ

স্টেট অফ গ্লোবাল এয়ার ২০২৫

কেন্দ্রীয় দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ বোর্ড ২০২৫

জাতিসংঘ পরিবেশ কর্মসূচি ফ্রন্টিয়ার্স রিপোর্ট ২০২৫

ভারতের পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রক রিপোর্ট ২০২৫

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## An ‘Allurer’s’ Meld: Delineating Soft Power Basics within India’s Foreign Policy

Bipasha Ghose Dastidar<sup>1</sup>



**Abstract:**

**I**nternational politics has been grabbing headlines with its share of struggles and stories of reigns among various countries. This brings forth the concept of ‘soft power’ which speaks of authority through persuasion or getting things done from others following a style one wants. The term ‘soft power’ had been doing the rounds earlier although one cannot ignore the popularization it gained since the coming of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014. The article has been an effort to delve deeper into soft power accompanying the essentials like culture, Bollywood, music, Yoga, cuisine, diaspora to name a few which have been working behind the concept and the latter’s effect within Indian foreign policy circles all that would enable India to make a headway in reign reckonings.

**Keywords:** *Soft Power, Bollywood, Music, Yoga, Cuisine, Diaspora*

The term ‘power’ in the age of global information specifically harps upon the concept of being feared and loved both at the same time. It throws light on the winning hearts and minds strategy which highlights power moreover the power contest and the ways of dealing with varied supremacy calculations. Power relates to influencing one’s behaviour in order to get the outcomes one wants. This might involve the use of threats to coerce, the use of payments to induce and attraction to achieve the desired consequences. This also brings into notice the fact which speaks of gaining results without commands or in other words the objectives and their legitimacy turn to be the focus therefore making the

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way for wanted outcomes without coercion. Therefore, it can be said that hard power involving military and economic strengths applicable through intimidations and incentives remains important although it brings along another facet referred to as 'soft power' or the 'second face of power'. The essence of soft power lies in attraction in a way that other countries follow, shaping others preferences in order to get the results one wishes. Noteworthy within this concept has been the combination of attraction and stimuluses in democracies which come in close connection of the former with intangible assets like culture, charismatic personality, political values, policies and institutions to name a few. The importance of soft power lies in persuasion capable of making people move according to one's own preferences or in other words affecting others behaviour to get preferred results.

### **Understanding a 'Softer Cogency': The Compact View**

The vitality of understanding of soft power calls for studying the sources on which the former is based upon. True to a great extent, one of the primary sources of soft power happens to be culture moreover, for it increases chances of getting conclusions one needs owing to the fact that the former encourages common welfares and morals. Another such source has been the governmental policies which possess a strong connection with soft power. This also brings into notice those policies appearing to be indifferent to others having a narrow outlook towards national interests that can easily undercut soft power's effectiveness. The values practised by governments within domestic rings, international institutions and in foreign policy have the power to appeal or repel others choices although one cannot overlook the thin line of demarcation existing between hard power and soft power resources.

Soft power, first coined by Joseph Nye helps other nations to structure their preferences or interests in accordance to one's nations. This holds true for India which has significantly used soft power elements within its foreign policy as evident through its initiatives of connectivity, non-reciprocity to name a few. India's focus on aspects like culture, education, diaspora, music, food, religion, styles, etc have been successfully demonstrating the country's soft yet powerful image within the world.

The story of a different India has found its recognition through the soft power appeal of the country. Culture has been an

important pillar of India's soft power as expressed through Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hence calls for inventiveness fostering comprehensive appeal. Creativity across margins or to be more specific, content backed by adequate institutional support and policies finding audiences worldwide emerged as the hour's need. Noteworthy within this context remains Bollywood, whose massive reach outside the globe contributes to soft power generation. Indian films, music, choreography along with storytelling have been establishing linkages with the people's mindset therefore influencing the former. Bollywood movies have created a huge impact overseas as got visualized with the first global release of *Aan* in 1952. Films strongly influence thereby showcasing India's culture. *RRR*, a big-budget and special effects film has gained immense popularity across the global forum which earned it the Golden Globes nominations thus expanding its reach into Hollywood. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the film festivals providing a gateway for interaction of ideas, promote collaboration thus leading to formation of new opportunities. Cultural diplomacy can best be expressed through these film festivals amidst various contradictions all which culminate in soft power generation on part of the country. This brings us to another aspect concerning soft power namely music targeting global listeners. As against this background, arrive Grammys where India made its mark with names like Ustad Zakir Hussain and Shankar Mahadevan's fusion band Shakti been awarded the Best Global Music Album in 2024. Ustad Zakir Hussain has been a recipient of Grammys in 2009 for his 'Global Drum Project'. In addition to the above, *RRR*'s song 'Naatu Naatu' been awarded the Best Original Song at the 95<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards simultaneously sharing it with 'Elephant Whisperers' in the Best Documentary Short Film Category have been successfully demonstrating the stronger influence of Indian cinema worldwide along with carving the way for soft power's impact in Indian foreign policy.

The other element which has been a chief soft power source for India is Yoga. A vital measure towards securing a healthy and peaceful environment, Yoga has been hugely acclaimed all over the world moreover since 2015 with the UN Declaration of International Day of Yoga on June 21 following an appeal put forward by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A primary

tourist attraction, Yoga acts as an important enhancer when it comes to generation of revenue, foreign exchange increase all therefore culminating in India's projection worldwide. The practice of Yoga has been spreading largely across countries including the West, the US being the largest, as witnessed in sessions by names like Kate Hudson, Richard Gere, Jennifer Aniston to name a few. Yoga has been pushing forward a non-aggressive India, a peace believer working towards accelerating goodwill of other countries.

Besides this, cuisine emerges as another constituent relating to soft power generation. This refers to promoting one's own culture to others through its culinary affluence. Gastrodiplomacy enhances cross-cultural understanding which gets visualized when the thing refers to India being a home to vibrant cultures, dialects, cuisines thus contributing a great deal to the country's soft power. As against this milieu, India-US relations can be an example demonstrating culinary diplomacy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's maiden visit to the US in 2014 endorsed the entry of pure vegetarian theme in US State dinner accompanying the advent of millet-based dishes endorsing Prime Minister Modi's weightage to millets. Therefore, came in International Year of Millets in 2023, serving as a soft power strategy where world leaders were introduced to millet-based dishes subsequently turning the latter into a primary arena of attraction. Soft power diplomacy through cuisine had been doing the rounds often, as witnessed during Prime Minister Modi's visit to the US when 'Saar' a New York based restaurant introduced millets into their dishes thereby accelerating India's drive for health and wellness towards a wider audience. Besides the above, a New Jersey restaurant's initiative of introducing a 'Modi Thali' had been significant in solidifying greater relations between India and the US. This health drive was seen during the G20 summit in India where foreign delegates had been offered dishes associated with sound well-being, the dishes ranging from main course to desserts had a dash of fitness, one of the key roads helping soft power on New Delhi's part.

Nonetheless, one cannot forget the role of Indian diaspora as one of the prime workings regarding India's soft power. A huge pool of talent and skilled workforce, Indians overseas or Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) have been a major boost behind India's stronger ties internationally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for

‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas’ has been underlining the impact of NRIs who have been working to achieve greater levels and is a reminder of the fact where stress upon the amount of contribution they have been putting in other countries. Notable within this context has been the US where ranks of prominence have been names like Sundar Pichai, Google CEO, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella all within the Indian diaspora in America. Prime Minister Modi’s dialogues with diaspora, one of his signature strategies, has garnered attention and appreciation as well from Indians living abroad. The former marked its beginning in 2014 with his maiden US visit where a sea of people gathered at Madison Square, New York to listen to Prime Minister Modi’s words. The primary factor behind this has been Prime Minister’s applause for Indian techies working in various multinational corporations, their efforts behind rising investment potentials all striving to create their own forte within the intercontinental spectrum. Soft power being highlighted in this aspect, the Indian diaspora has been influencing policies within the country of their residence apart from opening the doors for better opportunities on New Delhi’s part.

Keeping in mind foreign policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s programmes like Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas have been of importance owing to platforms for honouring and acknowledging the contribution of diaspora overseas and within Indian circles simultaneously. More recently, during the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas on January 9, 2025 Prime Minister Modi’s inauguration of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express for enabling Indian diaspora to visit places of religious and historical importance. Similarly, Indians in Trinidad and Tobago accompanying their energies to spread India’s culture while adhering to their roots received huge praises from Prime Minister Narendra Modi subsequently with the introduction of OCI cards to the 6<sup>th</sup> generation of Indians in Trinidad and Tobago during his visit to the country in 2025. Therefore, it can be said that these public contacts or people-to-people ties and exchanges have been the nucleus of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or ‘The World Is One Family’ where the central crux lies in an efficient teamwork among all within the different sectors, the energy and efforts culminating in India’s evolution. Summarily then, the conception called power needs to be identified in and as according to the changing situations in India’s foreign

policy. Power relates to heaviness which has been prevalent although it brings into forefront another facet linked to allure namely soft power. The latter's effect has been seen in many arenas as mentioned earlier although there are a number of other aspects which need to be looked into when it revolves around soft power and its help for maintaining ties with other countries. However, it needs to be remembered that soft power does not diminish the importance of hard power, rather it needs to be seen whether the actions of hard and soft power are able to survive the challenges emerging within New Delhi's foreign policy scenario all which would make India successful in its journey towards being the numero uno or leading power amidst the global stage.

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## প্রাচীন পূর্ব রাজস্থানের কয়েকটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রত্নস্থলের ভূদৃশ্য ও সাংস্কৃতিক পরিমণ্ডল

দেবাশীষ দাস<sup>1</sup>



ভারতীয় উপমহাদেশে বর্তমান রাজস্থান রাজ্যটি উত্তরে হরিয়ানা, পশ্চিমে গুজরাট, দক্ষিণ ও দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব দিকে মধ্যপ্রদেশ এবং পূর্বদিকে উত্তরপ্রদেশ রাজ্যের সীমানায় অবস্থিত। ভৌগলিক দিক দিয়ে আধুনিক রাজস্থান রাজ্যটিকে দুটি ভাগে ভাগ করা যায়-আরাবল্লী পর্বতমালার পশ্চিমে মাড়ওয়ার এবং পূর্বদিকে মেবার। পশ্চিমদিকের মাড়ওয়ার অঞ্চলের এক অংশ হরিয়ানার সমভূমির অন্তর্ভুক্ত; এবং পশ্চিম অংশে বিস্তৃত রয়েছে থর মরুভূমি। অন্যদিকে পূর্ব দিকস্থ উপঅঞ্চলটি মূলত দক্ষিণ দিকে মালব সমভূমির সম্প্রসারিত অংশ যা, উত্তরাংশে থর মরুভূমি এবং যমুনা সমভূমির মধ্যবর্তী সংযোগ অঞ্চল হিসেবে বিবেচিত হয়। রাজস্থানের পশ্চিম দিকের ভূপ্রকৃতির একটি বিশাল এলাকা জুড়ে রয়েছে মরুভূমি। এই অঞ্চল উষর রক্ষ শুল্ক। তুলনামূলকভাবে রাজস্থানের পূর্বদিকের ভূপ্রকৃতি ভিন্ন প্রকৃতির এবং কৃষিকাজের পক্ষে সামান্য হলেও উপযোগী। কৃষিক্ষেত্রে ধান ও গম উৎপাদনের পাশাপাশি বৃষ্টিপাতের সন্মততার কারণে জোয়ার ও বাজরার উৎপাদন পরিলক্ষিত হয়। কারণ এটি সম্প্রসারিত মালব মালভূমির অংশ। রাজস্থান একটি মরু-অঞ্চল হলেও এই অঞ্চলে নগরায়ণের প্রক্রিয়ার প্রভাব পরিলক্ষিত হয়। পাশাপাশি তামা ও লৌহের মতো প্রাকৃতিক খনিজ সম্পদের প্রাচুর্য বিভিন্ন নগরকেন্দ্রগুলির সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যিক যোগাযোগ সম্ভব করে তুলেছিল।

এই অঞ্চলের অতীতের আরেকটি সংযোজন হল পূর্ব রাজস্থানের স্বতন্ত্র সাংস্কৃতিক ক্ষেত্রের নির্মাণ যা কিনা নানাভাবে বিশেষতঃ বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় আদান প্রদানের এবং দৃশ্যমান চিহ্নকের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপিত হয়েছে। শুল্কপ্রায় ভূপ্রকৃতি, খনিজ সম্পদ এবং নদী ও বৃষ্টিপাতের স্বল্পতা, মরুভূমি কৃষি ব্যবস্থা প্রাচীন রাজস্থানে এমন ভাবে প্রযুক্তি ও বাণিজ্যের বিকাশ ঘটিয়েছিল, যা নগরায়ণের পক্ষে যথেষ্ট সহায়ক হয়েছিল। মৌর্য, কুষাণ এবং গুপ্ত যুগের সাংস্কৃতিক ও প্রশাসনিক প্রভাব এই অঞ্চলের প্রধান প্রাচীন নগরকেন্দ্র যেমন বেরাট, নাগরী, ভাণ্ডারজ, লালসট, কোলভি প্রভৃতি অঞ্চল গুলিতে প্রতিফলিত হয়েছে। সীমিত কৃষিজ উৎপাদন বাণিজ্যকে অর্থনৈতিক প্রয়োজন হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠা করে এবং নগর বাজারের পূর্বসূরী হিসেবে কাজ করে। আলোচ্য

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প্রতিবেদনে তিনটি প্রাচীন গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নগরকেন্দ্রঃ বৈরাট, সাম্ভার, রাই এবং নাগরীর প্রত্নস্থল রূপে ঐতিহাসিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক গুরুত্ব নিয়ে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে।

**সূচক শব্দঃ** বৈরাট, সাম্ভার, রাই, নাগরী, প্রত্নস্থল, পূর্ব রাজস্থান, সংস্কৃতি।

গ্রাম, শহর, অঞ্চল অথবা দেশের ধারণা মূলত “স্থান” সংজ্ঞায়নের ওপরে ভিত্তি করে গড়ে ওঠে। তবে স্থানের ধারণা নির্দিষ্ট বা শাস্বত বাস্তুব নয়—এটি মানুষের দ্বারা নির্মিত এবং সময়ের পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে স্থানের আকৃতিও পরিবর্তিত হয়। স্থান গঠিত হয়, পরিবর্তিত হয়, আবার ধ্বংসও হয়ে যায়। দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার বিগত প্রজন্মের বহু ঐতিহাসিক একটি অঞ্চলকে নির্দিষ্ট করার জন্য প্রথমে একটি ভৌগোলিক সীমা নির্ধারণ করতেন এবং তারপর সেই সীমানার মধ্যে মানুষের অভিযোজনের একটি বর্ণনা রচনা করতেন। এই ধরণের বিশ্লেষণ সাধারণত নদী উপত্যকা, পর্বতমালা ইত্যাদি প্রাকৃতিক ভূদৃশ্যের উপর ভিত্তি করে গড়ে উঠত, যা মানুষের জীবন ও অঞ্চলের সঙ্গে অঙ্গঙ্গী ভাবে জড়িত হয়ে থাকতো। এই ধারণা দৃশ্যমান ও পরিমাপযোগ্য বিষয়গুলির ওপর নির্ভরশীল হলেও এখানে সেই সকল ধারাবাহিক ঘটনা প্রবাহ উপেক্ষিত হয়ে থাকতো যা কোন অঞ্চলের বিস্তার, সঙ্কোচন বা বিলুপ্তির পিছনে ভূমিকা রেখেছিল।

বর্তমানে অঞ্চলের ধারণা কেবল ভৌগোলিক ক্ষেত্র রূপে নয়, বরং সাংস্কৃতিক ঘটনার ভিত্তিতে নির্মিত হচ্ছে। অঞ্চলের ধারণাগুলি ক্রমবর্ধমানভাবে ঐতিহাসিক স্মৃতি, ভাষাগত ঐক্য, অভিন্ন সংস্কৃতি এবং জাতি তথা সম্প্রদায়ভিত্তিক বিষয়ের উপর নির্ভর করে। সাংস্কৃতিক অঞ্চলের সীমারেখা প্রায়ই ভাষাগত বা ঐতিহাসিক অঞ্চলের সীমা থেকে আলাদা হয়, যা প্রমাণ করে যে “অঞ্চল” ধারণাটি একসাথে বস্তুগত এবং বিষয়গত। প্রাচীনকালে বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলের সংযোগের মাধ্যম হিসেবে পথের বিকাশ ঘটেছিল। এই প্রাচীন পথগুলি সভ্যতার বিকাশ ও বিস্তারের যোগসূত্র রূপে ভূমিকা পালন করতো। মূলত বণিক, সাধু সন্ন্যাসী, পরিব্রাজক এবং বিভিন্ন অভিযানকারী বহিরাগত গোষ্ঠী এই পথের সূত্র ধরেই যাতায়াত করতো। প্রাচীন রাজস্থানে পর্বত, নদী, মরুভূমি বা বনাঞ্চলের মতো প্রাকৃতিক বাধা যাত্রাপথের একটি নির্দিষ্ট এবং নির্ধারিত দিককে চিহ্নিত করে দিত যে পথ ছিল তুলনামূলক সহজগম্য নিরাপদ এবং সংযোগ রক্ষাকারী। সুউচ্চ পর্বত কেবল কিছু নির্দিষ্ট স্থানে অতিক্রম করা যেত, আবার কিছু উপত্যকা বা গিরিপথ বণিক, যোদ্ধা বা তীর্থযাত্রীদের প্রধান ব্যবহৃত পথ হয়ে ওঠে। নদী পারাপারের সময় যাত্রা বিরতির প্রয়োজন হতো, যা শহরের বিকাশের কারণ হয়ে ওঠে। আবার কখনও বন পরিষ্কার করেও পথ তৈরী করা হতো। প্রাচীনকালে প্রাকৃতিক পথগুলি চলাচলের মাধ্যম হলেও ধীরে ধীরে পরিবহন ব্যবস্থা ও বাণিজ্যের বিকাশের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সুগম্য যাত্রাপথ নির্মাণ হতে শুরু করে।

প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক খননকার্যের মাধ্যমে খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব দ্বিতীয় সহস্রাব্দে দক্ষিণ পূর্ব রাজস্থানের আহার-গিলুন্ড প্রভৃতি স্থানে বসতি স্থাপনের প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায়, যা মালব ও গুজরাতের সঙ্গে সাংস্কৃতিক ভাবে যোগাযোগ গড়ে তুলেছিল। সাহিত্যিক ও প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক সাক্ষ্য থেকে জানা যায় খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব দ্বিতীয় ও প্রথম

সহস্রাব্দে ঘগ্নর নদীর তীর অনুসরণ করে ইন্দো-আর্য ভাষা গোষ্ঠীর সম্প্রসারণ বা বিস্তার ঘটেছিল। পাণিনির সময়ে (আনুমানিক খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব ৫০০ অব্দ) উত্তরাপথের কথা জানা যায় যা তাম্রলিপ্ত বন্দরকে চম্পা, পাটলিপুত্র, বারাগসী, প্রয়াগ, সাকেত, কান্বকুজ, মথুরা, হস্তিনাপুর, সাকল, তক্ষশীলা, পুষ্কলাবতী, কপিশা, বহ্লিক এবং কাশ্মীরের মত নগরগুলির সঙ্গে যুক্ত ছিল। অপর একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পথ ছিল যা আনর্ত, আবু পর্বত মধ্যমিকা ও আহার'কে স্পর্শ করে উত্তর দিকে অগ্রসর হতো। খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব দ্বিতীয় শতকে গ্রীকরা মধ্যমিকা অঞ্চল দখল করতে সম্ভবত এই পথ ব্যবহার করেছিল। এই প্রধান পথগুলির কয়েকটি স্বীকৃত শাখা ছিল। এর একটি আবু থেকে পূর্বদিকে পুষ্কর, নালিয়াসার, বৈরাট, রাই, নগর প্রভৃতি স্থান অতিক্রম করত। অন্য পথটি সম্ভবত মুক্তিকাবতী অতিক্রম করে উত্তরাপথের সঙ্গে যুক্ত হতো।

পূর্ব রাজস্থানের বৈরাট ও নাগরীর মতো অঞ্চলের প্রাচীন নগরকেন্দ্রগুলি মৌর্য, কুষাণ এবং গুপ্ত সাম্রাজ্যের সঙ্গে সংযোগের নিদর্শন প্রাপ্ত হয়। কৃষিকাজের অপ্রতুলতার জন্য কারণে এবং খনিজ সম্পদের উপস্থিতির কারণে বাণিজ্যিক ও অর্থনৈতিক সংযোগ গড়ে ওঠে যে কারণে বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলগুলির মধ্যে পারস্পরিক সাংস্কৃতিক যোগসূত্র তৈরী হয়। নগরকেন্দ্রের উত্থান এবং রাষ্ট্রগঠনের প্রক্রিয়ার সঙ্গে বণিক সম্প্রদায়ের ক্রমবিকাশ গভীরভাবে জড়িত। ভৌগলিক উপাদান তথা প্রশাসনিক সক্রিয়তা, অর্থনৈতিক ভিত্তি ও সাংস্কৃতিক সত্তা বিভিন্ন ভাবে প্রাচীন পূর্ব রাজস্থানের এই নাগরিক ভূদৃশ্যকে রূপদান করেছিল।

পূর্ব রাজস্থানের আলওয়ার, ভরতপুর, করৌলি প্রভৃতি স্থানে ধান গম উৎপাদনের পাশাপাশি জোয়ার ও বাজরারও উৎপাদন পরিলক্ষিত হয়। কৃষির পাশাপাশি এই স্থানে একদল বিশেষ ভ্রাম্যমাণ পশু প্রজননকারী ও গবাদিপশু পালনকারী গোষ্ঠী উপস্থিতির কথা জানা যায়। এছাড়াও একদল ভ্রাম্যমাণ বণিক সম্প্রদায়ের কথা জানা যায়, যারা এই সকল ভ্রাম্যমাণ পশু পালক ও প্রজননকারীর সঙ্গে যুক্ত ছিলেন এবং কিছু কিছু ক্ষেত্রে এদের যাত্রাপথকেও অনুসরণ করতেন বণিক সম্প্রদায়ের মানুষেরা। এর বাইরেও একদল কারিগরের কথা জানা যায় যারা স্থায়ীভাবে অবস্থান করত। পূর্ব রাজস্থানের প্রাপ্ত বিভিন্ন খনিজ এবং ধাতুবিদ্যার এই সকল কাঁচামালগুলি দীর্ঘমেয়াদী ভিত্তিতে কারিগরদের জন্য লাভদায়ক রূপে গণ্য হয়েছে যা গঙ্গা যমুনা দোয়াব অঞ্চল, মালব, গুজরাট, হরিয়ানার মত প্রতিবেশী অঞ্চলগুলির সঙ্গে যোগাযোগের পথ তৈরী করেছে।

পূর্ব রাজস্থানের জনবসতির ভিত্তি রূপে নিদর্শন রূপে বিভিন্ন তাম্রাশ্মীয় ক্ষেত্র সমূহে ধাতুবিদ্যা ও ধাতব শিল্পের নিদর্শন সমূহ পরিলক্ষিত হয়। এই ক্ষেত্রগুলি উত্তরপূর্ব রাজস্থানের অংশ সমূহ গণেশ্বর-যোধপুরা এবং দক্ষিণপূর্ব রাজস্থানের অংশ সমূহ আহাড়-গিলুন্দ নামে পরিচিত হয়। উক্ত অঞ্চল সমূহ খনিজ তাম্র উৎপাদন সূত্রে বালেশ্বর এবং ক্ষেত্রী অঞ্চলের সঙ্গে সংযোগ স্থাপন করেছিল। প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক দিক থেকে উপযুক্ত ও প্রত্যাযিত তথ্যসমূহ প্রাচীন রাজস্থানের তাম্রাশ্মীয় সংস্কৃতির প্রেক্ষাপটে এই অঞ্চলের তাম্রখনির গুরুত্বকে

নির্ধারণ করে। গণেশ্বর- যোধপুরার ৮০টিরও বেশী তাম্রাশ্মীয় ক্ষেত্র প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে যা কারুশিল্পীদের ধাতুবিদ্যার দক্ষতার জন্য সুপরিচিত ছিল। এই ক্ষেত্রস্থলগুলি শিখর, জয়পুর, বুনুবুনু জেলা জুড়ে বিস্তৃত ছিল। আহাড গিলুন্দ তুলনামূলক ভাবে গণেশ্বরের চেয়ে বড়। দক্ষিণ পূর্ব রাজস্থানের বানস ও বেরাচ নদীর তীরবর্তী স্থানে আহাড সংস্কৃতির বিকাশ ঘটে। বিভিন্ন প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক ক্ষেত্র থেকে প্রাপ্ত তীরের ফলা, ছুরি, কুঠার এবং বিভিন্ন দৈনন্দিন উপযোগী বস্তুসমূহ যেমন বালা, অঞ্জনশলাকা, আয়না প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক সাক্ষ্যের ভিত্তিতে জানা যায় আনুমানিক খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব তৃতীয় সহস্রাব্দে রাজস্থানে তামার ব্যাপক ব্যবহার পরিলক্ষিত হয়। তামার পাত এবং তামার ধাতুমলের প্রাপ্তি স্পষ্টত প্রমাণ করে যে ২৫০০ খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব থেকে ১৯০০ খ্রিষ্ট পূর্বাব্দ পর্যন্ত আহাড-গিলুন্দ অঞ্চল তাম্র বিগলনকারী এবং ধাতুবিদ্যায় পারদর্শী কেন্দ্ররূপে যথেষ্ট প্রসিদ্ধ ছিল। গিলুন্দ এবং বালাথালে ইষ্টক দ্বারা নির্মিত মানব বাসস্থানের নিদর্শন প্রাপ্ত হয় যার মাধ্যমে নাগরিক বসতির আভাস মেলে। পশ্চিম মালবের কায়থা নামক স্থানে প্রাপ্ত তামার তৈরী কুঠারে অঙ্কিত চিহ্নের সঙ্গে গণেশ্বরে প্রাপ্ত কুঠারে অঙ্কিত চিহ্নের মধ্যে যথেষ্ট নিকট সাদৃশ্য রয়েছে। এর দ্বারা অনুমিত হয় কায়থা সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গে গণেশ্বর- যোধপুরা সংস্কৃতির মধ্যে পারস্পরিক সংযোগ ছিল।

খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব ষষ্ঠ শতকে রাজস্থান কিভাবে রূপান্তরের ইতিহাসের ক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেছিল তা নিয়ে যথেষ্ট মতানৈক্য রয়েছে। সেই সময়ের সবচেয়ে বড় চিহ্নক হল মহাজনপদের প্রতিষ্ঠা। এই মহাজনপদের রাজতান্ত্রিক এবং অরাজতান্ত্রিক এই দুই প্রকারের অবস্থান পরিলক্ষিত হয়। দ্বিতীয় নগরায়নের সূচনাকাল থেকে এবং বৌদ্ধ ও জৈন ধর্মের ন্যায় প্রচলিত ধর্মমত বিরোধী বিভিন্ন সম্প্রদায়ের আবির্ভাবের সময় থেকে এই বিবর্তন প্রকট হয়। খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব ষষ্ঠ শতকের পর থেকে সমাজব্যবস্থার কাঠামোর বিবর্তন ও নাগরিক সমাজের অবস্থান পরস্পরের সঙ্গে সম্পৃক্ত ভাবে অবস্থান করেছে এবং এই বিবর্তন ধারা বংশপরম্পরা থেকে রাজ্যব্যবস্থার সূচনা ঘটিয়েছিল। এই প্রক্রিয়ার ফলে মুদ্রার প্রচলন ও সাহিত্যিক উপাদানের বৃদ্ধির সঙ্গে বিশেষ ভাবে যুক্ত ছিল যা সমাজের একটি তুলনামূলক সরল অবস্থা থেকে তুলনামূলক জটিল পর্যায়ে রূপান্তরের জন্য দায়ী ছিল। এই উল্লেখযোগ্য পরিবর্তনসমূহ প্রথম এবং সবচেয়ে স্পষ্টভাবে গাঙ্গেয় উপত্যকায় দেখা যায়। পরবর্তীকালে রাজনৈতিক তথা সামাজিক, অর্থনৈতিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক জীবনে অনুরূপ পরিবর্তন গাঙ্গেয় উপত্যকাকে অতিক্রম করে বিশেষ করে উপদ্বীপীয় অঞ্চল সমূহে আনুমানিক খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব দ্বিতীয় শতক থেকে দেখা যেতে শুরু করে। তবে এই পরিবর্তন সমগ্র উপমহাদেশে সর্বত্র একরৈখিক ভাবে ঘটেনি।

মৎস্য জনপদ যা বর্তমান জয়পুরের নিকটবর্তী অঞ্চলে অবস্থিত যার উল্লেখ বৈদিক সাহিত্য, বৌদ্ধ সাহিত্য তথা মহাকাব্যে প্রাপ্ত হয়। মৎস্য অঞ্চলের আঞ্চলিক রাজনীতির উত্থানের ক্ষেত্রে কৃষি উৎপাদনশীলতার সহায়ক ভূমিকা ছিল কিনা সে বিষয়ে অনুধাবন করা বিশেষ প্রয়োজন। মহাভারতে কৌরবদের দ্বারা মৎস্য রাজা বিরাটের বিপুল সংখ্যক গবাদিপশু লুণ্ঠনের বর্ণনা থেকে বোঝা যায় যে এই মহাজনপদের প্রধান সম্পদভিত্তি সম্ভবত গাঙ্গেয় উপত্যকার কৃষিজ

উদ্বৃত্ত নয় বরং পশুপালন মূলক কার্যকলাপের ওপর নির্ভরশীল ছিল। (এক্ষেত্রে মহাভারতের রচনাকাল নিয়ে বিতর্ক থাকলেও একথা স্বীকার করা হয় যে প্রাক মহাজনপদের উপস্থাপনা মহাভারতের মধ্যে ছিল) অনুমান করা যায় যে মৎস্য অঞ্চলটির সঙ্গে করু অঞ্চলের মধ্যে যোগসূত্র গড়ে উঠেছিল, যা বর্তমান দিল্লী-হরিয়ানার কাছে অবস্থিত ছিল।

প্রাচীন পূর্ব রাজস্থানের বিভিন্ন প্রত্নক্ষেত্রগুলি খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব তৃতীয় শতাব্দী বা তার নিকটবর্তী সময় থেকে কিভাবে পারস্পরিক সাংস্কৃতিক আদানপ্রদান তথা বিভিন্ন প্রশাসনিক, ধর্মীয়, সামাজিক ও অর্থনৈতিক বিষয়ের ওপর ভিত্তি করে নিজস্ব সাংস্কৃতিক পরিসর গড়ে তুলেছিল এবং খনি অঞ্চলের উপস্থিতি এবং খনিজ সম্পদের ব্যবহার কিভাবে এক একটি আঞ্চলিক পরিধির মধ্যে নিজস্ব ভৌগলিক অস্তিত্বকে স্বকীয় করে তুলেছিল এবং প্রশাসনিক আধিপত্য এবং ধর্মীয় বিশ্বাস অঙ্গাঙ্গীভাবে জড়িত হয়ে কিভাবে একটি অঞ্চলকে প্রভাবিত করে পাশ্চাত্য অঞ্চলের মধ্যে সাংস্কৃতিক যোগাযোগ গড়ে তোলে সেই আলোচনাই এই অধ্যায়ের প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয়।

### বৈরাটঃ

আধুনিক বৈরাট শহরটি পূর্ব থেকে পশ্চিমে প্রায় ৫ মাইল এবং প্রস্থে প্রায় ৩ থেকে ৪ মাইল একটি উপত্যকার মধ্যে অবস্থিত, যা পাহাড়ের তিনটি সমকেন্দ্রিক পরিসীমা দ্বারা বেষ্টিত, বৈরাট অঞ্চলটিতে দুটি নদী, বৈরাট নালা যা উত্তরদিকে প্রবাহিত হয়ে বাণগঙ্গা নদীতে মিলিত হয়েছে এবং বাঙ্গল নালা মূলত দক্ষিণাভিমুখে প্রবাহিত হয়েছে। বৈরাট অঞ্চলটি পূর্ব রাজস্থানে অবস্থিত, রাজস্থান মরু অঞ্চল রূপে পরিচিত হলেও পূর্ব রাজস্থানের ক্ষেত্রে ‘মরু’ শব্দটি প্রযোজ্য নয়, বরং এই অঞ্চল সমূহ জনবসতিপূর্ণ এবং খনি সমৃদ্ধ রূপে চিহ্নিত। পূর্ব রাজস্থানের বৈরাটে অশোকের অনুশাসন (আনুমানিক ২৭২-২৩৩ খ্রিঃ পূঃ) শুধুমাত্র ভূতপূর্ব মৎস্য জনপদকে সুবিশাল মৌর্য সাম্রাজ্যের অন্তর্ভুক্ত করার কথাই শুধু বলে না, তার চেয়েও আরও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এই অনুশাসনটিতে খুব স্পষ্টভাবে অশোককে ‘মগধের রাজা’ বলে অভিহিত করা হয়েছে। ভূতপূর্ব মৎস্য জনপদ সমৃদ্ধশালী এবং কেন্দ্রীয় এলাকা রূপে প্রসিদ্ধ ছিল যা অশোকের সময় মৌর্য সাম্রাজ্যের অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয় যদিও তাঁর শিলালিপিতে এই অঞ্চলের পূর্ব পরিস্থিতির কথা কোন ভাবে উল্লিখিত হয়নি। রাজা অশোক নিজের সাম্রাজ্যের বিশালতা সম্পর্কে যথেষ্ট সচেতন ছিলেন (মহলাকে হি বিজিতে RE XIV) এবং মৎস্য জনপদও সেই বিশালাকার সাম্রাজ্যের অন্তর্ভুক্ত ছিল। তাই অনুমান করা যায় কাথিয়াবাড় উপদ্বীপের সঙ্গে উত্তর-পূর্ব রাজস্থানের একটি যোগাযোগ সূত্র গড়ে উঠেছে এবং গিরনারে অশোকের শিলালেখ প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। কাথিয়াবাড়ের সঙ্গে বৈরাটের উপভাষাগত সাদৃশ্য রয়েছে। বৈরাটের আশেপাশের অঞ্চলটি দিল্লী ও মথুরার সঙ্গে সংযোগ স্থাপন করতে পারে, দিল্লীর বাহাপুর অঞ্চলে অশোকের লঘু শিলালেখ প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে, যেখান থেকে একথা অনুমান করা যেতে পারে। মীরাট অঞ্চলের সঙ্গে বৈরাটের যোগাযোগের পথ রয়েছে যা দোয়াবের মিলনস্থলে অবস্থিত। যার থেকে অনুমিত হয় পূর্ব রাজস্থান মৌর্য শাসনকালে গঙ্গা-যমুনা দোয়াব এবং কাথিয়াবাড় উপদ্বীপ

উভয়ের সঙ্গে যুক্ত ছিল। তাই অনুমান করা যায় বৈরাট মৌর্য সাম্রাজ্যের যে চলাচল পথের (সম্পদ, শিল্পসামগ্রী এবং এর সঙ্গে সম্পৃক্ত জনসমষ্টি ও ধর্মীয় প্রচারক) একটি মিলন স্থলে অবস্থিত।

### বৈরাট থেকে অশোকের শিলালেখ প্রাপ্তি

উনবিংশ শতকে প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক চর্চার ওপর ভিত্তি করে বৈরাট অঞ্চলে সম্রাট অশোকের দুটি শিলালেখ প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। ১৮৪০ খ্রিষ্টাব্দে ক্যাপ্টেন সেমুর বার্ট বৈরাট অঞ্চল থেকে প্রস্তর খণ্ডের ওপর খোদিত শিলালেখ আবিষ্কার করেন যা বর্তমানকালে এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি অফ বেঙ্গলে সংরক্ষিত রয়েছে। যে কারণে এটি কলকাতা-বৈরাট শিলালেখ নামে পরিচিত। ক্যাপ্টেন বার্টের রিপোর্ট অনুসারে এই শিলালেখটি ধূসর গ্রানাইট পাথরের ওপর অমসৃণ প্রস্তর খণ্ড যার দৈর্ঘ্য প্রায় দুই ফুটের মতো। বৈরাট থেকে প্রাপ্ত শিলালেখটি পর্যালোচনা করে দয়ারাম সাহানী বলেছেন যে এটি ছিল মৌর্য সম্রাট অশোকের একটি রাজাঙ্গা যা তিনি জনসাধারণ ও বৌদ্ধ সংঘের ভিক্ষুদের প্রতি করেছিলেন। বিজাক কি পাহাড়ি থেকে ৮টির মধ্যে ৬টি অঙ্ক চিহ্নিত মুদ্রা প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে যা বর্তমানে বিরাটনগর মিউজিয়ামে সংরক্ষিত রয়েছে। মুদ্রাগুলির গায়ে সূর্য, ষড়ভুজকার চিহ্ন, ষাঁড়, সর্প ইত্যাদি বিশেষ চিহ্ন পরিলক্ষিত হয়। তাছাড়াও মুদ্রাগুলিতে মানবাকৃতি ও বৃক্ষের আঁকার বিশিষ্ট চিহ্ন পরিলক্ষিত হয়। এই সকল চিহ্ন গুলি মগধ সাম্রাজ্যের মুদ্রার চিহ্নের পরিচয় বহন করে। পরবর্তীকালে বিভিন্ন সংস্কার ও নির্মাণের সময় প্রত্নস্থল থেকে প্রাপ্ত ২৮ টি ইন্দো-গ্রীক মুদ্রার সাথে ৮ টি অঙ্কচিহ্নিত মুদ্রা এবং অনুজ্জল লাল মৃৎপাত্রের সন্ধান প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। অনুমান করা যায়, বিজাক কি পাহাড়ী অঞ্চলটি ইন্দো-সিথিয়ান প্রভাবিত একটি অঞ্চল ছিল এবং মৌর্য পরবর্তী যুগে এখানে ইন্দো-গ্রীক শাসনের প্রভাবও পরিলক্ষিত হয়।

একদিকে বাণিজ্যিক যোগসূত্র, সংযোগ সংক্রান্ত কেন্দ্রবিন্দু এবং শিল্প বাণিজ্য নির্ভর কেন্দ্র রূপে অঞ্চলটির বিকাশ ঘটানোর কারণে জনবসতির বিস্তৃতি ঘটে। বিভিন্ন বৌদ্ধ চৈত্য ও স্থাপত্যের উপস্থিতি ও লক্ষণ দেখে অনুমিত হয়, মৌর্য যুগে এই অঞ্চলটি একটি নগর রূপে পরিগণিত হতো এবং অঞ্চলটিতে উল্লেখযোগ্য ভাবে ক্রমবর্ধমান জনসংখ্যা ছিল। বৈরাট অঞ্চলে পর্বতমালার উপস্থিতিতে নগরটি সুরক্ষিত ছিল এবং স্থায়ী বসবাসকারী সাধারণ মানুষেরা বৌদ্ধ সংঘের প্রতি পৃষ্ঠপোষকতা দান করেছিলেন। আধুনিককালে বিভিন্ন প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক গবেষণার ফলে প্রাক ঐতিহাসিক প্রত্নস্থল খেরা কি ধানি থেকে বিভিন্ন পেশাগত গোষ্ঠীর উপস্থিতির কথা জানা যায়। বৈরাট থেকে প্রাপ্ত মৃৎপাত্রের ওপর গবেষণা করে জানা গেছে এখানে কুমোরের চাকায় তৈরি অনুজ্জল লোহিত মৃৎপাত্রের তিনকোণা হাতল ও সূঁচালো মুখবিশিষ্ট মৃৎভাণ্ড, ঢাকনায়ুক্ত পাত্র ইত্যাদি পাওয়া গেছে। খ্রিষ্টীয় প্রথম শতকে উত্তর ভারতের বিভিন্ন প্রত্নক্ষেত্র থেকেও একই ধরনের মৃৎপাত্র প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে।

### সান্তারঃ

খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব তৃতীয় শতাব্দী থেকে সন্তার পূর্ব রাজস্থানের একটি প্রধান নগরী ছিল তা বিভিন্ন প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক খননকার্য দ্বারা প্রমাণিত হয়েছে। সন্তারের অঞ্চলের

ক্ষেত্রে যে ভূ-রাজনৈতিক গুরুত্বের কথা অনুধাবন করা যায় তা হল কেবল লবণ উৎপাদনকারী অঞ্চল হিসেবেই নয় পার্শ্ববর্তী এলাকাগুলির মধ্যেও অবধা বাণিজ্যিক যোগসূত্র গড়ে তুলেছিল। চাহমান বংশের রাজধানী রূপে শাকস্তরী অঞ্চলের প্রশাসনিক ও ভৌগলিক গুরুত্ব ছিল অপরিসীম। পূর্ব রাজস্থানে অবস্থিত হওয়ার পাশাপাশি এই অঞ্চল শেখাওয়াতি অঞ্চলের সিকার জেলা এবং নাগৌর জেলার সঙ্গে যুক্ত ছিল। যার ফলে সমগ্র পশ্চিম রাজস্থানের সঙ্গে বিশেষ করে যোধপুর-বিকানের অঞ্চলের মধ্যে পারস্পরিক যোগসূত্র গড়ে তুলে পেরেছিল। প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক হেন্ডলি সান্তার অঞ্চল থেকে প্রাপ্ত পোড়া ইটের সঙ্গে নাগৌরে প্রাপ্ত পোড়া ইটের মধ্যে সাদৃশ্য লক্ষ্য করেন। এছাড়া সান্তারে প্রাপ্ত হাড় বা হাতির দাঁতের তৈরী বাল্য গুলির সঙ্গে পালি অঞ্চলে প্রাপ্ত বাল্য যথেষ্ট সাদৃশ্য রয়েছে। পালি প্রাচীন ও আধুনিক উভয় সময়ের একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য বাণিজ্য কেন্দ্র এবং পালির সঙ্গে সান্তারের এই বাণিজ্যিক যোগাযোগ সান্তারের সীমানা অতিক্রম করে পশ্চিম রাজস্থানের দিকে প্রসারিত করেছিল। অর্থাৎ সান্তার প্রাচীন পূর্ব রাজস্থানের একটি যোগসূত্র স্থাপন কারী একটি অঞ্চল যা পার্শ্ববর্তী অঞ্চল সমূহের মধ্যে সাংস্কৃতিক যোগসূত্র নির্মাণ করেছিল। এই ধারণা আরও সুনিশ্চিত হয় সান্তারে প্রাপ্ত ২০০ টি মুদ্রার মধ্যে দিয়ে যার মধ্যে ৬ টি অক্ষচিহ্নিত মুদ্রাও রয়েছে। দয়্যারাম সাহানী অঞ্চলটিকে পুনঃ অনুসন্ধান করে বলেছিলেন যে সান্তারের কালানুক্রমিক ধারা বেরাট এবং রাই-এর মতো স্থান গুলির সঙ্গে সাদৃশ্যপূর্ণ।

রাইঃ

রাইয়ের অবস্থান টঙ্ক অঞ্চলের নেওয়াই এর কাছে, যা পূর্ব রাজস্থানের আধুনিক জয়পুর শহরের দক্ষিণে অবস্থিত। এটি দুটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সংযোগরেখার মধ্যস্থলে অনুকূল ভাবে সংযুক্ত। একটি সংযোগ রেখা জয়পুর-টঙ্ক-বৃন্দিকোটাকে একটি রেখা দ্বারা যুক্ত করেছে যা মালব অভিমুখে প্রসারিত হয়েছে। এবং অন্য একটি সংযোগরেখা জয়পুর ও তার পার্শ্ববর্তী অঞ্চলের সঙ্গে মিলিত হয়ে শেখাওয়াতি অভিমুখে প্রসারিত হয়েছে। সংযোগ ব্যবস্থার দিকে যদি আলোকপাত করা যায় তবে রাই সান্তারের আরও বেশী উন্নত পর্যায়ে অবস্থান করতো। রাই অঞ্চলটিতে সান্তারের তুলনায় অধিক পরিমাণে মুদ্রা পাওয়া গেছে। এর মধ্যে ৩০৭৫ টি রৌপ্য অক্ষ চিহ্নিত মুদ্রা, ৩০০ টিরও বেশী মালবীয় মুদ্রা, ১৪ টি মিত্র মুদ্রা, ৬ টি সেনাপতি মুদ্রা, ৭ টি বাপু মুদ্রা, অ্যাপোলডোটারের একটি খণ্ডিত মুদ্রা, ১৮৯ টি অলিখিত বা খোদাই বিহীন তাম্র মুদ্রা এবং কিছু পরবর্তী ইন্দো সাসানীয় মুদ্রা প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। 'মালব জনপদ' এর নামাঙ্কিত সীসার একটি সীলমোহর প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে যা ইঙ্গিত দেয় মৌর্য প্রাধান্যের পর এই অঞ্চলটি মালবের অরাজতাত্ত্বিক শাসন কাঠামোর অধীনে চলে যায়। এক্ষেত্রে লক্ষণীয় যে মৌর্য শাসন ব্যবস্থার পতনের পরে মালবদের গোষ্ঠীতাত্ত্বিক শাসন ব্যবস্থার প্রভাব বৃদ্ধি পেতে থাকে। সেনাপতি ও মিত্র মুদ্রার আবিষ্কার মথুরা এবং পাঞ্চালের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগের ইঙ্গিত দেয়। কে.এন.পুরী (১৯৩৮-৪০) দয়্যারাম সাহানির পরে রাই অঞ্চলে খননকার্য সম্পাদন করেন এবং তিনি দেখেন যে রাই লৌহ ও ধাতুশিল্পের পাশাপাশি পুঁতি নির্মাণেও যথেষ্ট খ্যাতি অর্জন করেছিল।

কে.এন.পুরী তার প্রতিবেদনে উত্তরভারতীয় কৃষ্ণ চিহ্ন মুৎপাত্রে কথ্য উল্লেখ করেছেন যা প্রাক মৌর্য ও মৌর্যকালীন অস্তিত্বকে চিহ্নিত করে। রাইয়ের প্রধান উল্লেখযোগ্য মুদ্রা গুলির মধ্যে অন্যতম বচ্চঘোষ-এর মুদ্রা যিনি সেনাপতি বা প্রারম্ভিক কোন সামরিক প্রধান বলে নিজেকে অভিহিত করেছেন। কে.এন.পুরী এই মুদ্রাগুলিকে খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব তৃতীয়-দ্বিতীয় শতকের বলে নির্ধারণ করেছেন যদিও দীনেশ চন্দ্র সরকার এই যুক্তিতে দ্বিমত পোষণ করে মুদ্রাটিকে খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব প্রথম শতকের বলে অনুমান করেছেন। তাঁর মতে এটি সম্ভবত সাতবাহনকালীন কোন অর্ধ-স্বাধীন প্রাদেশিক শাসকের মুদ্রা হতে পারে।

### নাগরীঃ

প্রাচীন পূর্ব রাজস্থানের অন্যতম আদি ঐতিহাসিক স্থান নাগরী। এই অঞ্চলটি জয়পুর ও চিতোরের মধ্যবর্তী স্থানে অবস্থিত যা ঝালওয়ার ও কোটার দিকে সম্প্রসারিত। চিতোর পেরিয়ে এই পথটি উদয়পুরের মধ্যে দিয়ে গুজরাটের দিকে প্রসারিত হয়েছে। এই পথ কেবল পূর্ব রাজস্থানের সঙ্গে মালব বা গুজরাটে যাতায়াতের পথ হিসেবেই সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল না বরং এই পথ হিসার-রোহতক থেকে মালব ও গুজরাট পর্যন্ত একটি সরলরেখায় বিস্তৃত ছিল। যবনদের দ্বারা মধ্যমিকা অবরোধের বিষয়ে পতঞ্জলির মহাভাষ্যের বক্তব্যের মধ্যেও এই পথের উল্লেখ দৃঢ়ভাবে উঠে এসেছে। তবে সংশ্লিষ্ট শাসক দেমেক্রিয়াস অথবা মেনান্দার ছিলেন কিনা সে নিয়ে মতবিরোধ আছে। পতঞ্জলির মহাভাষ্য যা আনুমানিক খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব দ্বিতীয় শতকের রচনা এবং যা শুঙ্গ শাসন কালের সমসাময়িক। শাকল বা আধুনিক শিয়ালকোট ছিল মিনান্দারের রাজধানী ফলে নাগরীর ওপর আক্রমণ পাঞ্জাবের দিক থেকে এসেছিল বলে অনুমিত হয়। আবার অন্যদিকে দেমেক্রিয়াস খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব তৃতীয় ও দ্বিতীয় শতকের সঙ্ক্ষিপ্ত শাসক ছিলেন যা মৌর্য ও শুঙ্গ যুগকে নির্দেশ করে। তবে দিমিক্রিয়াসের রাজধানীর সঙ্গে মধ্যমিকার সরাসরি কোন সম্পর্ক ছিল কিনা তা নিয়ে বিতর্ক আছে কিন্তু মিনান্দারের রাজধানী শাকল ছিল এ বিষয়ে কোন সন্দেহ নেই। মহাভাষ্যে একই সঙ্গে সাকেত ও প্রাচীন অযোধ্যার ওপর যবন আক্রমণের কথা বলা হয়েছে।

এ.সি.এল.কার্নাইল ১৮৭২ খ্রিষ্টাব্দে নাগরী অঞ্চলটিতে অনুসন্ধান করেন এবং পরবর্তীকালে ১৯২০ সালে ভাণ্ডারকর এই অঞ্চলটি অংশিকভাবে খনন করেন। প্রাপ্ত ধ্বংসাবশেষের মধ্যে রয়েছে একটি বৌদ্ধ স্তূপ, পোড়ামাটির মূর্তি, ছাঁচে তৈরী ফলক, শিবি জনপদের অঙ্ক চিহ্নিত মুদ্রা এবং আনুমানিক খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব পঞ্চম শতকের ছাঁচে তৈরী ইষ্টক, ফলক ও টালি। নাগরী ও চিতোরগড়ের আশেপাশে বিভিন্ন বৌদ্ধ স্তূপের উপস্থিতি এই অঞ্চলে বৌদ্ধ ধর্মের গুরুত্বকে নিরূপিত করে। হাতিবাদা শিলালেখটি নাগরীর নিকটে আবিষ্কৃত হয় যা চিতোরগড় থেকে প্রায় ১৩ কিলোমিটার উত্তরদিকে অবস্থিত। ঘোষুন্ডি শিলালেখটি (খ্রি.পূ ২য় শতক) চিতোরগড়ের ৪.৮ কি.মি. দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমে আবিষ্কৃত হয়েছে। এটি তিনটি অংশে আবিষ্কৃত হয়েছে যার একটি অংশ ঘোষুন্ডির একটি প্রাচীন কুপে আবিষ্কৃত হয়েছে, অন্য অংশ দুটি যথাক্রমে ঘোষুন্ডি ও বাস্‌সির মধ্যবর্তী সীমানায় এবং তৃতীয়টি প্রাচীরের একটি ফলকে

প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। ঘোষুন্ডি থেকে যে শিলালিপি প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে তা প্রাক-মৌর্য শৃঙ্গ যুগের ব্রাহ্মী লিপি ও সংস্কৃত ভাষায় লেখা, যার আনুমানিক সময়কাল ২০০ থেকে ১৬০ খ্রিষ্টপূর্ব অব্দের বলে অনুমান করা হয়। হাতিবাদা নামক স্থান থেকে প্রাপ্ত একটি আয়তাকার স্থাপত্য যা বাসুদেব-সঙ্ঘর্ষণের উদ্দেশ্যে নির্মিত দেবালয় বলে প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিক প্রমাণ পাওয়া গেছে। রিমা হুজা মন্তব্য করেছেন আনুমানিক খ্রিষ্ট পূর্ব তৃতীয় থেকে প্রথম শতকে রাজস্থানের উক্ত অংশে বৌদ্ধ ধর্মের পাশাপাশি বৈষ্ণব দেবতার উপাসনা প্রচলিত ছিল।

নগরায়ন হল পরিবেশগত এবং সাংস্কৃতিক উপাদানের জটিল আন্তঃক্রিয়ার ফল। প্রাচীন পূর্ব রাজস্থানের নগরায়ন পর্যায়ে লক্ষ্য করলে দেখা যায় যে প্রতিটি পর্যায়ে কিছুটা সমাপাতিত (overlapped) চরিত্র সহ একটি স্বতন্ত্র পরিবর্তনশীল বৈশিষ্ট্য সহ বিদ্যমান। প্রাক এবং প্রায় ঐতিহাসিক পর্যায়ের বসতিগুলি খনি অঞ্চলকে কেন্দ্র করে তামার আকরিক এবং ধাতু বিগলন প্রক্রিয়ার মধ্যে দিয়ে তা ব্যবহারযোগ্য করে তোলার কৌশলের মাধ্যমে সমসাময়িক নগর গুলির মধ্যে সংযোগ গড়ে তুলেছিল। গোষ্ঠী ভিত্তিক শক্তিশালী আঞ্চলিক রাজ্যগুলির বিকাশের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে পূর্ব রাজস্থান বৃহত্তর রাজনৈতিক শক্তির প্রভাবাধীন হয়ে পড়ে। মৎস্য জনপদ, কুমাণ, মৌর্য এবং গুপ্ত শাসকরা ধর্মীয় তীর্থস্থান, মুদ্রা নির্মাণ কেন্দ্র, প্রশাসনিক কাঠামো প্রয়োগ এবং শিল্পকলার মতো সাংস্কৃতিক বৈশিষ্ট্য নিয়ে নগরগুলিকে উন্নত করে। প্রতিটি উপঅঞ্চল ও নগরকেন্দ্রকে নিবিড় ভাবে পর্যালোচনা করলে আরও স্বতন্ত্র বৈশিষ্ট্য আন্তঃআঞ্চলিক সংযোগ অনুধাবন করা যায়। ভৌগলিক পরিবেশ, প্রযুক্তিগত ব্যবহার, বাণিজ্যপথের নির্মাণ ও প্রসার এবং উদীয়মান রাজশক্তির বিকাশ ও বিস্তার জটিল ঘন জনবসতিপূর্ণ অঞ্চল নির্মাণে সহায়তা করেছে। রাজনৈতিক আধিপত্য, বাণিজ্যপথ এবং কৌশলগত অবস্থানের কারণে বেরাট, রাই, নাগর, সান্তার প্রভৃতি নতুন নগরকেন্দ্রের বিকাশে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে।

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# The Effectiveness of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in India: A Trend and Recovery Rate Analysis (2017–2024)

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## Abstract

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), implemented in 2016, was envisioned as a comprehensive solution to India's growing corporate insolvency challenges. This research assesses its operational effectiveness over an eight-year period (2017–2024) by examining key indicators such as admitted cases, closures, and recovery outcomes for Corporate Debtors (CDs). The analysis draws entirely on secondary data published in the Quarterly Newsletters of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI). Using Excel for data organization and Python for analytical modeling, the study employs trend analysis and correlation techniques to explore the relationships among these indicators. Findings reveal an upward trajectory in case volumes alongside a noticeable decline in recovery rates over time. These results highlight increasing systemic pressures within the IBC mechanism and offer empirical insights that can inform future policy reforms aimed at enhancing its efficiency and improving creditor outcomes.

**Keywords:** The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), Corporate Debtors (CDs), Admitted Cases, Clouser Cases & Recovery Rate.

## I. Introduction

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), enacted in 2016, marked a paradigm shift in India's approach to resolving corporate financial distress. Designed to streamline and expedite the insolvency resolution process, the IBC aimed to enhance creditor confidence, improve recovery rates, and support overall

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financial stability. Over the years, the Code has been increasingly relied upon by stakeholders—particularly financial creditors—to recover dues from defaulting companies through a time-bound legal framework (Valecha & Xalxo, 2017).

Prior to the implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in 2016, India's framework for resolving insolvency and bankruptcy was fragmented, time-consuming, and largely ineffective. Multiple laws governed corporate defaults, including the Sick Industrial Companies Act (SICA), the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act (RDDBFI), and the Companies Act, among others. These overlapping legislations often led to procedural delays, inconsistent outcomes, and low recovery rates for creditors. The absence of a unified system not only hampered the resolution process but also contributed to the accumulation of non-performing assets (NPAs) in the banking sector. Creditors faced prolonged legal battles, while defaulting firms remained stuck in limbo, unable to either revive or exit the market efficiently. As a result, investor confidence declined, and the financial ecosystem grew increasingly strained.

Recognizing these shortcomings, the Government of India introduced the IBC as a consolidated legal framework aimed at ensuring timely resolution of insolvency cases, maximizing value for stakeholders, and improving the ease of doing business. Administered by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), the Code introduced a time-bound mechanism for insolvency resolution—initially set at 180 days—and gave priority to creditor-driven processes through the formation of the Committee of Creditors (CoC) (Mittal & Khan, 2024).

Since its inception, the IBC has witnessed a rising number of admitted cases each year, reflecting its growing adoption as a mechanism for debt resolution. However, despite the increasing number of insolvency proceedings initiated under the Code, questions remain about its effectiveness—particularly in terms of actual recoveries and timely closures. Policymakers and financial institutions have voiced concerns about the mounting backlog of ongoing cases and the apparent decline in average recovery rates over time.

## **II. Literature Review**

**Singh (2024)** presents a comparative analysis of insolvency laws in India and developed economies, emphasizing the evolving nature of India's insolvency framework under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). While systems like the U.S. Chapter 11 Bankruptcy allow debtors substantial autonomy in

restructuring, often resulting in extended and costly proceedings, India's IBC is more structured and creditor-driven. The United Kingdom's administration process and India's Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) share a common goal of business rescue through creditor committees and professional oversight. Similarly, Germany's Insolvency Plan Procedure and India's resolution process both highlight the critical role of creditor approval and judicial supervision. Australia's voluntary administration regime finds a parallel in India's Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process (PIRP), focusing on early resolution through debtor-creditor collaboration. Canada's Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) offers flexible out-of-court restructuring akin to India's mechanisms like Schemes of Compromise or Arrangement. Collectively, these comparisons indicate that while India's insolvency framework aligns with international standards in principle, it remains uniquely shaped by its domestic legal and economic context. Continuous adaptation of global best practices is essential for enhancing the robustness and efficiency of India's insolvency regime.

**Jain (2024)** analyzes the transformative impact of the Supreme Court's 2023 ruling that upheld the constitutional validity of initiating insolvency proceedings against personal guarantors of corporate debtors under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016. This decision has significantly bolstered lenders' efforts to recover dues, especially from promoters who had extended personal guarantees. Notably, the judgment removed legal roadblocks that had delayed proceedings due to extensive litigation, thereby enabling the faster resolution of cases and increasing creditor recoveries. The study highlights that, as of December 2023, 2,467 applications involving over ₹1.71 lakh crore in debt had been filed, with the majority (over 86%) initiated by creditors. Although the actual realization—₹91.27 crore from 21 approved repayment plans—remains limited, the appointment of resolution professionals (RPs) in 1,065 cases is seen as a step toward speeding up the process. Jain also cites notable cases like that of Subhash Chandra of Zee Entertainment to illustrate how the Supreme Court's ruling has intensified accountability among personal guarantors. The article notes that, despite a relatively low approval rate of repayment plans, the fear of asset loss among guarantors and procedural reforms by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)—such as assigning a common RP for both corporate debtors and personal guarantors—may lead to improved outcomes in the near future. Overall, the ruling marks

a significant shift in India's insolvency landscape by reinforcing lender rights and integrating personal guarantors more effectively into the resolution framework.

**The IBBI Working Paper (WP 01/2021)** explores the rising financial stress within India's corporate sector, particularly in the post-COVID-19 context, where increased indebtedness and leverage have raised concerns about the sector's overall financial health. Recognizing the global trend of heightened corporate borrowings, the study emphasizes the importance of identifying early signs of credit stress through firm-level indicators such as increased debt levels, rising interest burdens, and declining profitability. The research underscores the potential spillover effects of corporate distress on the banking sector, highlighting the need for timely policy interventions. By analyzing longitudinal data on corporate financials, the paper aims to measure the extent of vulnerability in India's corporate landscape and understand how these stress patterns have evolved over time, thereby contributing to a more informed approach to managing financial stability.

The study by **Shikha and Shahi (2021)**, under the IBBI Research Initiative, provides a detailed assessment of the delays in the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) in India, highlighting systemic and procedural inefficiencies that hamper timely resolution. The research examines stage-wise delays using data from 1,189 companies and a survey of insolvency professionals, revealing that a majority of the delays occur during the approval of resolution plans by the Committee of Creditors (CoC) and the Adjudicating Authority. The study finds that complexities across sectors, lack of market participants for stressed assets, non-cooperation by corporate debtors, and poor documentation contribute significantly to procedural delays. Interestingly, while insolvency professionals perceive a link between the size of debt and resolution time, the data does not support this correlation. Moreover, the trend of CoC favoring upfront payments and rejecting resolution plans with higher haircuts results in a high number of liquidations. These insights underscore the need for capacity enhancement in insolvency institutions, improved market mechanisms for distressed assets, and a shift in focus from mere recovery to sustainable revival of businesses.

**Renuka Sane's (2019)** working paper highlights the critical need for an effective personal insolvency framework within the broader structure of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016. While the corporate insolvency provisions have been

implemented, the personal insolvency sections remain largely unnotified, posing a regulatory gap in addressing distress among individuals with business debt or those serving as personal guarantors. The study outlines the unique characteristics of the Indian credit market and argues that the absence of a robust personal insolvency mechanism undermines the Code's overall objective. Emphasis is placed on the necessity for well-crafted subordinate legislation and a supportive institutional ecosystem, including the efficient functioning of Debt Recovery Tribunals, Information Utilities, insolvency professionals, and advisory services. The paper concludes that unless these institutional and regulatory prerequisites are adequately developed, the intended benefits of the IBC, especially in terms of holistic financial resolution, may remain unrealized.

### **III. The Objectives of The Study**

The study attempts to analyze the annual trends in admitted, closed, and ongoing insolvency cases under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in India from 2017 to 2024. Our study puts emphasis on evaluating the relationship between the number of insolvency cases admitted and the recovery rate. Apart from this, our paper assesses the effectiveness of the IBC in ensuring creditor recovery over time.

### **IV. Research Methodology**

#### **1. Source of Data:**

This study is based on secondary data, sourced from the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Quarterly Newsletters, which are publicly available at <https://ibbi.gov.in/en/publication>. The data spans the period from March 2017 to March 2024. For brevity, this study considers only Corporate Debtors (CDs).

#### **2. Variables Used:**

To analyze year-wise patterns, the study uses the following variables:

**Year** – representing the time period from 2017 to 2024 to observe trends over the years.

**Number of Admitted Cases** – total insolvency cases admitted each year.

**Number of Closed Cases** – total cases resolved or closed each year.

**Number of Ongoing Cases** – total cases still under resolution each year.

**Recovery Rate** –  $(\text{Total amount recovered in cases referred under IBC} / \text{Financial Creditors Total amount involved in cases referred under IBC}) * 100$

### 3. Tools and Techniques

- Microsoft Excel was used for initial data compilation, tabular formatting, and basic statistical summaries.
- The data analysis and visualization were conducted using Python, particularly with libraries such as pandas, matplotlib and statsmodels
- The following statistical techniques were employed:
- Trend Analysis: To observe year-wise patterns in admitted, closed, and ongoing cases, as well as in the recovery rate.
- Correlation Analysis: To assess the degree of association between the number of cases and the recovery rate.

### 4. Data Processing

- The raw data was cleaned and structured into a tabular format using Python.
- A rolling 3-year moving average was also calculated to smooth fluctuations in the Recovery Rate trend and enhance interpretability.
- Visualizations were created to support trend identification and regression interpretation. A trend analysis diagram was plotted using Python's visualization libraries to show the movement in admitted cases, closures, and recovery rate from 2017 to 2024.

## V. Data Analysis and Findings

**Table V.I : Numerical Correlation Matrix**

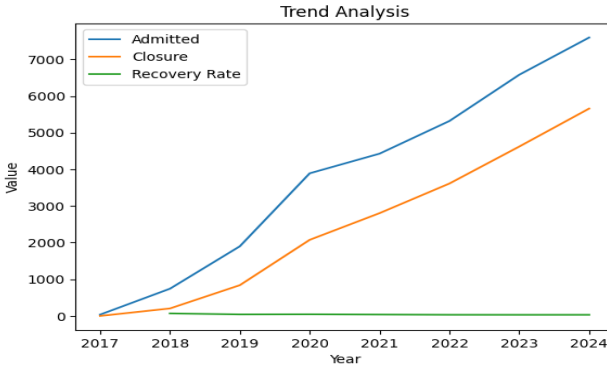
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>1.000000</b>	<b>0.991396</b>	<b>-0.857395</b>
<b>Closure</b>	<b>0.991396</b>	<b>1.000000</b>	<b>-0.827991</b>
<b>Recovery Rate</b>	<b>-0.857395</b>	<b>-0.827991</b>	<b>1.000000</b>

Source: Authors' calculation using Python and Data sourced from Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Quarterly Newsletters.

#### **Interpretation:**

The numerical correlation matrix highlights a very strong positive relationship between the number of cases admitted and the number of closures ( $r = 0.991$ ), indicating that as admissions increase, closures also tend to rise in close proportion. Furthermore, both admitted and closure figures exhibit a strong negative correlation with the recovery rate ( $r = -0.857$  and  $-0.828$  respectively),

suggesting that higher volumes of cases may be inversely related to recovery outcomes. This could reflect systemic burdens or delays in resolution as caseloads grow. These findings underscore the interdependence between admission, closure, and recovery performance in the observed dataset.



### V. Figure I. Trend Analysis (2017–2024)

Source: Authors’ calculation using Python, based on data from the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Quarterly Newsletters.

#### Interpretation:

The line plot illustrates three key trends;

- **Admitted Cases:** There is a sharp and consistent rise in the number of admitted corporate insolvency resolution processes (CIRPs), from 37 in 2017 to 7,596 in 2024. This trend reflects a growing reliance on the IBC mechanism over time.
- **Closure of Cases:** The number of resolved/closed cases also increases steadily but lags behind admissions, indicating a mounting backlog or longer resolution timelines. From 1 closure in 2017, the number rose to 5,658 in 2024, suggesting that although resolution mechanisms are improving, they are yet to match the pace of incoming cases.
- **Recovery Rate:** Despite the rising number of closures, the Recovery Rate exhibits a declining or stagnant trend, hovering around 69.7% in 2018 to a lower 32.1% in 2024.

#### Findings

- There is a very strong positive correlation between the number of cases admitted and the number of closures ( $r = 0.991$ ), indicating that an increase in admitted cases is closely associated with an increase in closures.

## *Evolving Convergences*

- A strong negative correlation exists between the number of cases admitted and the recovery rate ( $r = -0.857$ ), suggesting that higher admissions are linked to lower recovery performance.
- Similarly, the number of closures also shows a strong negative correlation with the recovery rate ( $r = -0.828$ ), indicating that a greater number of closures may correspond with reduced recovery effectiveness.
- Admitted Cases: There has been a sharp increase in CIRP admissions, rising from 37 in 2017 to 7,596 in 2024, indicating growing reliance on the IBC framework.
- Closure of Cases: Closed/resolved cases have also increased—from 1 in 2017 to 5,658 in 2024—but at a slower pace than admissions, suggesting a potential backlog or extended resolution timelines.
- Recovery Rate: Despite more case closures, the recovery rate has declined from 69.7% in 2018 to 32.1% in 2024, highlighting diminishing returns for creditors over time.

### **VI. Conclusion & Recommendation**

The analysis of insolvency trends under the IBC from 2017 to 2024 reveals a significant rise in admitted cases, indicating increased institutional reliance on the Code. However, the rate of case closures has not kept pace, pointing to a growing backlog and operational strain within the resolution system. Correlation analysis further reveals a strong positive relationship between admitted and closed cases, while both show a strong negative correlation with the recovery rate. This suggests that as case volumes increase, the efficiency and effectiveness of recovery outcomes decline. Overall, while the IBC has become a central mechanism for addressing insolvency, its performance in ensuring timely and adequate creditor recoveries appears to have weakened over time.

To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the IBC process, it is recommended that institutional capacity be strengthened through increased manpower, specialized insolvency benches, and streamlined procedures. Efforts should also focus on improving the timelines and quality of resolution to prevent erosion in recovery values. Additionally, integrating technology-driven monitoring systems and establishing performance benchmarks for insolvency professionals could help address delays and optimize outcomes for stakeholders.

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# Promoting Awareness of Transgender Rights by Professional Development and Teacher Education

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## Abstract:

Particularly in India after the historic National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (2019), the awareness of transgender rights has greatly increased in recent years. But the translation of these legal clauses into inclusive educational methods is still only partially possible. This study investigates how professional development and teacher education may help to deepen knowledge of transgender rights and encourage inclusive classroom environments. The research examines institutional reports, academic publications, and policy documents using a qualitative technique depending on secondary data. The data show that, mostly as a result of insufficient teacher training, a lack of inclusive curriculum, and socio-cultural biases, there is a continuous disconnect between policy and practice. The research finds that including gender diversity into teacher preparation and guaranteeing ongoing professional development are both absolutely vital for building inclusive and fair educational settings.

**Keywords:** Transgender Rights, Teacher Education, Inclusive Education, Gender Diversity, Professional Development

## Introduction:

Education is a strong tool for encouraging equality, social justice, and inclusion. The National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India's historic ruling confirming transgender individuals' constitutional rights and acknowledging them as a third gender helped to accelerate awareness of transgender rights in India. The  
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Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (2019), which forbids prejudice in education and requires inclusive policies, reinforces this legal acknowledgment.

These changes notwithstanding, transgender pupils still encounter discrimination in educational settings. Research indicate that they frequently experience bullying, exclusion, and a lack of institutional backing, all of which impair their psychological well-being and academic involvement (Kosciw et al., 2021; Greytak et al., 2009). This shows a distinct disparity between policy structures and how they are carried out.

Teachers are very important in closing this divide. They affect student attitudes and classroom environments as they are socialization and learning facilitators. Many educators, nevertheless, lack enough training and expertise to properly handle gender diversity (Meyer & Keenan, 2018).

While inclusive education is stressed in the National Education Policy 2020, including transgender issues into teacher preparation is still scarce. Consequently, this study looks at how teacher training and continuing education can help instructors understand transgender rights and support inclusive teaching methods.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Conceptualizing Inclusion for Transgender:**

Increasingly framed as a systemic and structural problem rather than just one of student variety, transgender inclusion in education has been conceived. Modern research contends that educational establishments are profoundly rooted in cisnormative systems where binary ideas of gender are institutionalized and normalized. Bartholomaeus and Riggs (2017) assert that such structures make transgender identities invisible or illicit, hence reinforcing exclusion on several levels, including school culture, instruction, and curriculum.

Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2020) extend this argument and call for gender-expansive pedagogies that reject essentialist ideas of gender and inspire teachers to embrace more flexible and inclusive definitions of identity. These points of view fit with more general demands for a whole-school approach, one whereby inclusion is woven into daily educational activities rather than just policy language. Therefore, transgender inclusion should be viewed as a transforming process that calls for rethinking the epistemological underpinnings of education itself.

#### **Experiences of Transgender Students:**

Empirical studies regularly record the underprivileged experiences of transgender pupils in educational environments.

Large-scale research like the National School Climate Survey show that transgender students experience unusually high rates of bullying, harassment, and discrimination (Kosciw et al., 2021). These challenging surroundings not only weaken pupils' feeling of security but also impair their academic involvement and performance.

Greytak et al. (2009) earlier studies further show that such bad events exacerbate higher dropout rates and increased absenteeism among transgender youngsters. Scholars also point out the more subtle types of exclusion present in classroom procedures beyond obvious prejudice. Francis (2017) contends that by silencing gender diversity in curricula and classroom communication, hetero normative expectations are strengthened, hence marginalizing transgender identities.

Taken together, these studies underline the urgent need for educational settings that are not just physically safe but also emotionally and socially affirming for transgender pupils.

#### **Teachers' Roles and Attitudes:**

Although their attitudes and readiness remain of utmost importance, teachers have a major influence on creating inclusive classroom environments. Meyer and Keenan (2018) point out that many teachers feel uneasy and uncomfortable when discussing gender variety mostly because of insufficient training and absence of institutional support. Often this causes inconsistent answers to transgender inclusion-related topics or avoidance.

Mangin (2022) points out several inclusive teaching techniques, including affirmative gender identities, inclusive language, and energetic combat of prejudiced conduct. Still, the adoption of such techniques is inconsistent, reflecting bigger structural flaws in teacher training.

Importantly, socio-cultural expectations and institutional environments shape teacher attitudes rather than only development. Therefore, promoting inclusive education calls for both skill growth and insightful consideration of personal beliefs and prejudices; thus, teachers become active agents in the transformation of society.

#### **Curriculum Gaps and Teacher Education:**

The poor inclusion of transgender topics in teacher education curricula is a recurrent worry in the research. According to Airton (2013), debates on gender diversity are frequently avoided or treated carelessly, which causes pre-service teachers to lack critical involvement.

Similarly, Payne and Smith (2014) find that many teacher

education programs fail to give pupils enough chance to learn the skills and knowledge needed to handle LGBTQ+ issues properly. This disparity hinders upcoming educators from meeting the needs of transgender pupils, hence perpetuating exclusion cycles.

These results indicate that teacher training should take a thorough and integrated approach rather than one of tokenistic inclusion, where gender variety is incorporated throughout courses, teaching techniques, and assessment systems.

**Institutional and Policy Obstacles:**

Although inclusive policies are in place, institutional and structural obstacles prevent their consistent execution. According to DePalma and Atkinson (2009), there is a persistent policy practice discrepancy whereby official promises to inclusion are not shown in daily school activities.

Reports from UNESCO (2016) especially emphasize the absence of well-defined standards, monitoring tools, and accountability systems in educational institutions. This usually causes unequal and fragmented implementation of inclusive strategies.

Furthermore impeding inclusive practice implementation are institutional constraints like scarcity of resources, lack of training possibilities, and lack of supportive leadership. These difficulties highlight how crucial it is to implement institutional culture, curriculum, and policy in line through systematic changes.

**Perspective of Theory:** Several important theoretical frameworks inform the study of transgender inclusion in education. Butler (1990) argues that queer theory questions binary views of gender and emphasizes the socially created character of identity. From this angle, teachers are urged to challenge traditional ideas and use inclusive methods.

Crenshaw's (1989) introduction of intersectionality offers a viewpoint on how several identities such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status combine to influence people's experiences. Examining the many difficulties faced by transgender pupils calls especially for this framework.

Freire's (1970) notion of critical education moreover frames education as a means of social change, therefore highlighting teachers' responsibility in fighting oppression and advancing equality. These theoretical viewpoints provide a solid basis for understanding and promoting transgender inclusion in education taken together.

**Rationale of the Study:**

Legal systems encourage transgender rights, yet educational approaches remain discriminatory. Lack of the necessary training

among teachers to deal with gender diversity results in a mismatch between policy and reality. As a transformational means to encourage inclusion, this research emphasizes teacher education.

**Research Objectives:**

- To examine how teacher education helps to increase awareness of transgender rights.
- To find out places where educators lack sufficient preparation.
- To look at how professional development helps to advance inclusive education.
- To advise teachers on how to include transgender rights into their training.

**Research Questions:**

- How does teacher training influence awareness of transgender rights?
- What challenges do teachers face in putting inclusion into practice?
- How effective are professional development programs?
- Which approaches may improve teacher ability?

**Methodology:** This investigation uses a qualitative research approach based on secondary data. Data were gathered from policy papers, peer-reviewed journal papers, books, and reports from worldwide organizations like UNESCO. To find important trends and observations, a thematic study was undertaken. Below is a systematic Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

**Inclusion Criteria:** The following criteria were used to include studies in the review:

- Topical Relevance
- Studies focusing on transgender, LGBTQ+, gender diversity, or intersectionality in education
- Example: Transgender People and Education
- Educational Context
- Research conducted in school, teacher education, or policy contexts
- Includes classroom practices, school climate, and curriculum
- Policy and Legal Frameworks
- National and international legal/policy documents related to transgender rights and education
- Example: Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019
- Empirical and Theoretical Contributions
- Qualitative, quantitative, reports, and theoretical works
- Includes foundational theories such as Gender Trouble

- Time Frame Flexibility
- Includes both classical and recent works (1989–2022) for conceptual depth
- Credible Sources
- Peer-reviewed journals, books, government documents, and reputed organizations (e.g., UNESCO, GLSEN)

**Exclusion Criteria:** The following criteria were used to exclude studies:

- Irrelevant Topics
- Studies not related to gender identity, LGBTQ+ issues, or education
- Non-Educational Contexts
- Research focusing only on medical, clinical, or non-educational domains
- Lack of Scholarly Rigor
- Non-peer-reviewed articles, blogs, or opinion pieces
- Duplicate or Redundant Studies
- Repeated findings without additional insights
- Non-English Publications
- Studies not available in English (due to analysis constraints)
- Limited Accessibility
- Sources with unavailable full text or insufficient data

**Discussion and Findings:**

The analysis of secondary data produces results that are critically synthesized here and set within more general theoretical and policy discussions on inclusive education. The debate emphasizes how curriculum design, institutional systems, teacher preparation, socioeconomic influences, and policy frameworks all interact to determine transgender inclusion. To improve depth of interpretation and clarity, each subject is backed by analytical tables.

**Policy Practice Disparity:** The results show a consistent and widespread disconnect between inclusive policy frameworks and their application inside educational settings. Although legal and policy tools support non-discrimination and equality, their implementation into teaching techniques is disjointed and erratic (UNESCO, 2016).

In the Indian context, despite the progressive stance established by National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India and the National Education Policy 2020, implementation

difficulties still exist because of inadequate institutional readiness and absence of operational guidelines.

**Table 1: Discrepancy between Policy Provisions and Classroom Implementation**

Dimension	Observed Issue	Evidence	Implication
Policy Intent	Strong legal and policy support	N A L S A ( 2 0 1 4 ) , NEP (2020)	Foundation for inclusion exists
Implementation	Weak execution in institutions	UNESCO (2016)	Need for monitoring systems
Institutional Readiness	Lack of clear guidelines	P o l i - c y - p r a c t i c e disconnect	Structured implementation strategies required

This table emphasizes that while inclusive laws give a solid legal basis; their real application is still variable. Teacher training and institutional changes can help to bridge this disconnect by converting ideas into practical structures.

**Insufficient Teacher Training:** Important conclusion drawn from the literature is that instructors are not ready enough to handle gender diversity. Programs for teacher education sometimes lack thorough interaction with transgender concerns, which causes educators' knowledge gap (Airton, 2013).

**Table 2: Gaps in Teacher Preparation for Gender-Inclusive Education**

Aspect	Current Status	Issue Identified	Required Intervention
Curriculum Content	Minimal focus on gender diversity	Knowledge deficit	Integrate transgender studies
Pedagogical Training	Limited inclusive strategies	Lack of classroom readiness	Practice-based training
Teacher Awareness	Low exposure	Reinforcement of bias	Sensitization programs

According to this table, teacher education courses

lack depth in treating gender variety. Equipping instructors with inclusive skills depends on updating training methods and curriculum.

**Impact of Socio-Cultural Standards:** Socio-cultural standards that support gender binaries and heterosexual expectations have a great impact on teachers' attitudes (Francis, 2017). These prejudices endure in teaching methods without careful consideration.

**Table 3: Impact of Socio-Cultural Factors on Teachers' Perceptions and Practices**

Factor	Impact on Teachers	Outcome in Classroom	Suggested Approach
Gender Norms	Reinforce binary thinking	Exclusion of diversity	Critical pedagogy
Cultural Beliefs	Resistance to inclusion	Bias in interaction	Reflective practice
Social Conditioning	Internalized stereotypes	Marginalization	Awareness training

This data shows that teachers' behavior is greatly shaped by socio-cultural factors. Tackling these issues requires thoughtful and analytical teaching strategies in teacher education.

**Significance of Professional Development:** Enhancement of teachers' skills depends on ongoing professional development. Studies show that conventional techniques are less successful than experiential and reflective learning strategies (Meyer et al., 2015).

**Table 4: Effectiveness of Professional Development Approaches in Promoting Inclusion**

Component	Traditional Approach	Effective Approach	Outcome
Training Type	One-time workshops	Continuous programs	Sustained learning
Learning Method	Lecture-based	Experiential learning	Better engagement
Skill Development	Limited	Reflective + practical	Improved inclusion practices

This table makes clear that consistent and practical

professional development greatly improves teachers' capacity to include inclusive policies.

**Pedagogical and Curriculum Gaps:** Including transgender people in courses helps to create invisibility and exclusion by reinforcing them (Snapp et al., 2015). Inclusive teaching calls on using several viewpoints into the methods of instruction.

**Table 5: Limitations in Curriculum and Pedagogical Practices for Inclusion**

Area	Current Situation	Gap Identified	Improvement Strategy
Textbooks	Lack of representation	Invisibilization	Inclusive content
Teaching Methods	Traditional approaches	Lack of diversity focus	Inclusive pedagogy
Classroom Interaction	Limited dialogue	Silence on gender issues	Open discussion

This table highlights that curriculum and pedagogy must evolve to include diverse identities, thereby promoting awareness and acceptance among learners.

**Institutional Barriers:** Institutional challenges such as lack of infrastructure, weak policy enforcement, and limited administrative support hinder inclusion (UNESCO, 2016).

**Table 6: Institutional Constraints Affecting Transgender Inclusion in Education**

Barrier	Description	Impact	Solution
Infrastructure	No gender-neutral facilities	Exclusion	Inclusive infrastructure
Policy Enforcement	Weak implementation	Ineffective inclusion	Strong monitoring
Administrative Support	Limited commitment	Teacher constraints	Leadership engagement

The table demonstrates that institutional barriers significantly limit inclusive practices, emphasizing the need for systemic and administrative reforms.

**Transformative Role of Teacher Education:** Despite the challenges, teacher education holds transformative potential to

foster inclusive practices and critical awareness (Freire, 1970).

**Table 7: Transformative Potential of Teacher Education in Promoting Inclusion**

Dimension	Role	Impact	Outcome
Knowledge	Gender awareness	Improved understanding	Inclusive mindset
Pedagogy	Critical teaching	Challenging biases	Equity in classrooms
Practice	Reflective approach	Teacher empowerment	Supportive environment

By encouraging critical thinking, inclusiveness, and social justice in educational practices, teacher education can be seen in this table to be a change agent.

Ultimately, the results show that a sophisticated interplay of rules, teaching methods, cultural norms, and institutional structures determines transgender inclusion in education. Although policy frameworks provide a vital foundation, their success relies on effective implementation supported by well-prepared teachers and flexible institutions.

The inclusion of analytical tables highlights even more how crucial teacher training and professional development are for closing the policy-to-practice gap. Including inclusive curricula, reflective teaching methods, and continuous training helps educational institutions progress toward establishing fair and supportive learning environments for transgender pupils.

**Conclusion:**

This research makes clear that real inclusion in education depends on teachers' knowledge of transgender rights developed via professional development and teacher training. Though progressive legal systems like the National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India and the National Education Policy 2020 offer a solid basis, their influence is constrained by institutional backing, teacher readiness, and implementation gaps.

The results show that teachers are very important in putting policies into practice, but often they don't have enough training, they have biases based on their culture, and they don't have inclusive curriculums, which makes it hard for them to do this. Important techniques to give teachers the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for inclusive education are curriculum reform, reflective pedagogy, and ongoing professional development.

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# Exploring the Idea of Motherhood as Shaped by Societal Ordeal and Generational Trauma: A Reading of Arundhati Roy's 'Mother Mary Comes to Me'

Jayita Ghosh<sup>1</sup>



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*“A song of love is a sad song  
A song of love is a song of woe  
Don't ask me how I know”*

(Song: 'Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo'; Roy, 2025, p. 323)

**Abstract:**

**T**he paper looks forward to explore the concept of motherhood as exhibited in the narrative of Arundhati Roy's autobiographical text 'Mother Mary Comes to Me' in the light of societal malpractices, traumas and ordeals that consciously or unconsciously condition one and equip one to transmit the same in some form or the other on to the next generation. Trauma turns out to be a by-product of social conditioning and it shapes one's identity and influences one's way of conceptualising notions. Roy's autobiographical text 'Mother Mary Comes to Me' in this case focuses on her visionary, radical, dominating, straightforward, unconventional, unputdownable and often abusive, scornful yet lovable and enterprising mother Mrs. Mary Roy, who is undoubtedly a woman of substance and also a victim of societal ordeal. The paper attempts to explore the complex undercurrents of Mary Roy's relationships with her children while parallelly probing into the societal abuses that made herself as well as the writer victims of generational trauma, shaping their individual concepts of motherhood.

**Key words:** mother, motherhood, daughter, children, abuse, trauma, complexity, society, writer, author

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## *Evolving Convergences*

While scrolling down Instagram lamely one evening, I was riveted by Arundhati Roy's saying in one clipping of her interview curated by the page of Female Poet's Society, where the author says, "for me, part of the battle of surviving as a woman in India has been to laugh, and it's a militant laugh that I have. You're not gonna take away that from me. The ideas that I'm just gonna fight these battles and suffer and be a martyr and be quivering with moral outrage, that's not me." And Roy says that she has not been indoctrinated to be a submissive woman, like the one "that sacrifices, that suffers, the one that lays oneself down as a doormat," unlike the majority of women in our country because she had a "crazy mother". As a viewer and content consumer I was instantly drawn towards the idea of that "crazy mother" and lately, a fascinating reading experience of Roy's autobiographical text about her mother introduced me to that "crazy" woman. The term "crazy" more than in the sense of insane and erratic, presented Mother Mary to be fantastic in her own way despite having infinite idiosyncrasies.

Mrs. Mary Roy is ". woven through it all, taller in my mind than any billboard, more perilous than any river in space, more relentless than the rain, more present than the sea itself" (Roy, 2025, p. 1) as states the writer while struggling to process the demise of her mother. In spite of hailing from a Syrian, Christian family in Kerala, Mary Roy ended up not wanting the church because the church doctrines went against her rights and will. As a broke with two kids, a son and a daughter, estranged from her alcoholic and addicted husband, who served once as an assistant manager on a secluded and distant tea estate in Assam, Mary Roy transported with her two kids as a single mother to Calcutta, to be followed by Ootacamund or Ooty, all the way to South to seek refuge in her father's cottage. But after a few months, out of the blue arrived Mary's mother and her elder brother G.Isaac from Ayemenem, their native village in Kerala to unflinchingly evict Mary along with her kids from the cottage at Ooty, claiming that Travancore Christian Succession Act does not approve daughter's rights over her father's property. Added to that Mary is reminded time and again that she has defamed the sanctity of the church, scandalizing the Syrian Christian community by marrying a Bengali Hindu, defying the disapproval of her parents. Mary as a daughter too had witnessed the atrocity of her father who was a senior government official, an imperial entomologist working under the British Government in Delhi, who never flinched to hit and abuse his wife. He got separated from his wife and delinked

all connections with his children. So Mary Roy herself had to deal with such disconcerting affairs on the family front and had been a victim of abuse herself. Roy interestingly comments on her mother's spontaneous affinity towards disparagingly illtreating her son, the writer's elder brother Lalith Kumar Christopher Roy, often referred to as LKC as a way of purging out her pent up rage against patriarchy in general that inflicted on her infinite abuse and torture. The author says, "Mrs. Roy directed all her fury against men, her idea of men (her father, husband and brother in particular), on her son. My brother LKC, from the time he was only six or seven years old, for even the smallest mistake or slip -up she would call him a male chauvinist pig." (Roy, 2025, p.40). However, Mary's fury against her son no less belittles her wrath against her daughter, the author. But it had "an entirely different quality and texture", "more ambiguous, but no less harsh" that gained clarity and that the author got "accustomed to" in due course of time as she grew up. (Roy, 2025, p.45) LKC has thus also been a victim of generational trauma, who was haunted by the fear of losing his father all the more than his sister since his childhood, constantly being subjugated and trampled by his mother's outrageous fury. If the report card from the boarding school in the Nilgiris where the children were sent after the completion of their primary education at Mary's own school, marked the boy as an "average" student, the mother's lurid rage would lose all its control. She would awaken the boy in the middle of the night and would speak with him derisively in whispers to prevent other children in the hostel from waking up and she would beat him until her wooden ruler would break. Like a dead mule, with dregs of drowsiness still smeared in his eyes the little boy would remain silent while being thrashed, spanked and beaten hard. And even when he was a teenager the mother would not be reluctant to insult him saying that he was an ugly and stupid boy and that "if I were you, I'd kill myself." (Roy, 2025, p.44) He refrained from retaliating or protesting directly by arguing with her but the sense of trauma bulged within him to make him want to leave his mother for good at some point of time. Roy observes that as kids too, the siblings were never encouraged to freely interact or mingle because the mother suspected them to be hatching some kind of conspiracy against her. As pointed out by the author, "She did everything to keep us separated." (Roy, 2025, p. 52) And her brother did not feel sad when she passed away unlike the author who was "undone" (Roy, 2025, p.53) because in spite of being abused and traumatized she loved her mother who was both her "shelter" and "storm". In the land which has a long

drawn legacy and history of patriarchy and son-worship, where practices of infanticide and female foeticide was familiar and in a land where men overpowered women in terms of social and familial privileges, LKC , was the only man at Mary's disposal whom she could punish " for the sins of the world" . The author states, "The way she was with him has queered and complicated my view of feminism forever, filled it with caveats." (Roy, 2025, p.44)

The trauma that the author experienced is no less. While the author thinks that her brother was the most abused, LKC thinks that Mrs. Mary Roy treated nobody perhaps as badly as she treated her daughter. At a very early age of post eighteen, the author decided to leave home and get detached from the shelter of Mrs. Roy, her mother cum banker as often reminded to the children by Mary. Fighting against all odds, braving all the slings and arrows of life and battling against debilitating asthma attacks Mrs. Mary invested in the children expecting good returns against the same. She used to remind this to the children time and again. After completing her high school at sixteen years, Roy left for Nizamuddin to take the entrance exam for the School of Architecture. She was absolutely a newcomer to Delhi and was yet to get acquainted with the city's food, culture, language, this and that. She only knew about the house of her mother's older sister Mrs. Joseph. Deep down the sense of trauma that she experienced as a child made her realize so much about the complexities of her relationship with her mother. She says "I left my mother not because I didn't love her, but in order to be able to continue to love her. Staying would have made that impossible." (Roy. 2025, p.4) Mary Roy was not eager to know about her daughter's whereabouts and never behaved in a familiar way as mothers usually do. As the author states, "she loved me enough to let me go". (Roy. 2025, p.4) Much later she used to visit her mother as an independent woman but at the time when a child needs the parental support the most, she decided not to seek the same. She just felt the need to distance herself from her mother .The act of writing this book perhaps helped the reconciliation of her younger and the adult selves . While the former loved Mary Roy out of insecurity, some kind of childish fear and helplessness, devoid of much logical reasoning, the latter loved her with a sense of wisdom, in a mature way yet in a helpless, miserable way and that too from a safe distance. As she grew up she came to realize that she should look at her mother even from perspectives that are not solely hers, or colored primarily by her personal experiences. The objective stance with which she learnt to see Mrs. Roy helped

her value the lady as an individual. According to Roy it is this ability to explore such labyrinths and multiple facets that made her a writer. She says, to quote her, “To bridge the chasm between the legacy of love she left for those whose lives she touched, and the thorns she set down for me, like little floaters in my bloodstream-fish hooks that still catch on soft tissue as my blood makes its way to and from my heart – is why I write this book.” (Roy, 2025, p. 7)

The author would often be mimicked and taunted in a ridiculous way by her mother, when she used to get angry with her and that would go to the extent of mimicking even what she would wear. The mimicry would cast the author as ludicrous, and she would develop an impression of herself being absurd and silly. As a mother Mrs. Mary Roy never encouraged much of physical intimacy with her children and perhaps felt annoyed to be hugged. As a chronic asthma patient she would often trigger the fear in her daughter’s mind that she might die any day. And she would question her how she would be surviving. Roy was introduced to the idea of “finality, of death and dying” (Roy, 2025, p.33) at a very impressionable age by such bleak conversations that her mother used to invite. And Roy as a child would process that trauma with a ready solution she could think of. Her mind would retort that she would be her organ -child and would breathe for her. The author says “I tried to breathe for her in ways she wasn’t aware of. I became one of her valiant organs, a secret operative, breathing my life into hers.” When she was a student at her mother’s school at Kottayam, she would often search for mothers like hers among the parents of other children but would never find a single one. She would shudder at the thought and concept of “father” when she witnessed how the husband of a neighbour behaved gruffly with his wife at their child’s birthday party where Roy was invited. She felt relieved at the absence of her father and considered fathers to be “extremely risky proposition”. (Roy, 2025, p.37). Mrs. Roy had always projected her husband to her children as a “Nothing Man”, inane, glib, having no respect for truth and she was bold enough to leave him for good. Mary Roy as a mother was dominating and she would often dictate her daughter what to wear, taking an imperative decision about the fabric and even the style and getting it crafted by the local tailor irrespective of the daughter’s choice. Her commanding and imposing presence would often project her as “crazy” to others as in the case of JC in this memoir. Despite all her “gangsterism” as the author observes, Mrs Roy never transgressed the line of sexual probity, which as a graceful woman she “kept bottled up” (Roy, 2025, p.83). While that suited

her temperamental and explosive attitude, that also made her flagrantly hostile to “every whiff or rumour of sexual affection or attraction between anybody” (Roy, 2025, p.83) including non-human entities too like dogs, roosters and other creatures. This hostility got reflected before the author time and again as with her growing up anything and everything about her would enrage and flare up Mrs. Roy. But it reached its climax when Dido, the pet dog of the author, was ordered to be shot by Mrs. Roy because she mated with a street dog. The experience of processing Dido’s absence was a deep trauma for the author. Mrs. Roy exhibited her overpowering anger in many other ways and on many occasions and the examples are plenty to be enumerated here. When Mr. Baker arrived at the school as a guest the author was assigned the task of laying the table in the teachers’ dining room and to remain present to interact with him. However the author was severely insulted and criticized by Mrs. Roy for her fault for placing the tea cups instead of the coffee cups. The insults she hurled at her included the usual ones went uncouth with the use of terms like ‘whore’ and ‘prostitute’ and the display of it being a public one young Roy would get splintered into pieces out of extreme shame, hurt and shock and her brother could almost spot an ‘Exorcist’ in his mother. But it cannot be denied that along with that Exorcist, Mrs. Roy harboured an unusual, substantial and universal sense of motherhood. That could be bold and unsettling but something infinitely constructive too. Young Roy got acclimatized to that and later in her life she felt that she gets “disconcerted by conventional, loving families, by their version of normality. They seemed to belong to a kind of alternative reality, sealed off from mine. I didn’t envy them; I didn’t long to be a part of them.” (Roy, 2025, p.111) Such a realization also shaped the author's concept of motherhood. She could never settle for a perfectly settled zone, but kept running and kept embracing disturbances, abiding by her free will. However, that didn't stop her from being a mother to Pradip’s children. Beyond biology, she could be a friend to the children after their mother’s demise and her affection was no less.

The narrative shifts from Roy’s early self to a more mature self with her gaining understanding about her mother’s social conditioning. It is a shift for the readers too as we the readers also reconcile the two selves of ours, the one that may initially hate Mrs. Roy as a mother and the latter one that felt for her as a mother. While the author once got desperate to get rid of Mrs. Roy’s trap, she ended up in loving her and coming back to her. The sense of motherhood Mrs. Roy inculcated in her consciously

### *Evolving Convergences*

or unconsciously is imposing and unique. She could fight against all odds because she was the daughter of Mrs. Roy, reckless like a storm. And as a mother Mrs. Roy was perhaps the first person to know that her daughter has a writer's heart. She was a woman who would never compromise and settle down for dealings saying "let it be". As a Syrian Cristian, not getting the support of the church, as a divorcee disconnected from her alcoholic husband, as a single mother of two kids knowing not how to fend for them with just a Bachelor's degree in Education, as a daughter of estranged parents and as a refugee in her father's cottage or relative's houses, her trials and tribulations were ample. The mother that she became, no matter how complex and how ruthless, was a social construct, hardened and steeled by ordeals. But her glories too knew no bounds. She fought for the equal inheritance rights for Christian women in Kerala going against the Travancore Christian Succession Act and won it, as a single mother she managed to grab hold of a teaching job at a local school, she was enterprising enough to seek permission for just sitting in the classes at an all-white school called Lushington, run by the British missionaries to absorb their innovative ways of teaching at primary level, she started a school on her own from scratch with the help of Mrs. Mathews at Kottayam in 1967, a school that expanded in leaps and bounds overcoming its initial shortage of space when three acres of wilderness was bought on a barren bald hill to get transformed and engineered into a school by the most innovative architectural craftsmanship of Laurence Wilfred Baker. It made the building for the new campus and Mother Mary became its owner and headmistress. It's almost like a developmental novel that she made out of her life. Although her relation with her brother G Isaac was a love-hate one, she later on managed to evict him from his father's ancestral house fighting a case against him. The school in due course would turn up into a unique one touching and transforming lives of many students. While Mrs. Roy was an escape route for her girl students whom society always dictated to remain demure and compromising, she taught boys in her school to be considerate and respectful men and never conditioned them as per the norms of socially acclaimed patriarchy. She raised "sweet men" freeing them from the burden of gender constructs and raised radical women instilling in young girls the spirit of revolution. The author thus says that she gave them spines and wings and had set them free. The author sounds befitting as she says "she was the burning flame of courage and defiance. She lit their path. She showed the way. Not so for me. My escape route

always circled back to what I was trying to escape from.” (Roy, 2025, p.88). So no matter how stern her reflection of love was, she harboured benevolence in her heart as mothers do.

Roy was taught how to think, how to celebrate her freedom, how to be defiant against the deprivation of freedom and how to be a writer by Mrs Roy. She gave her daughter exposure to Shakespeare, Kipling, Nabokov, and A. A. Milne while encouraging young Roy to write her heart out in a language that she can internalize. She criticized and resented her but has always encouraged her to speak up for what it is and be bold enough to do so. The author acknowledges “this was the power she had always had over me. She could break my heart and mend it too with a snap of her fingers. I wanted to kiss her and tell her how much I loved her .But I didn't. I just said, ‘Thank you.’ I mean thank you for knowing that your daughter has a writer's heart.” (Roy, 2025, p.153). So Mary Roy epitomizes revolution herself. At every crossroads of life, whenever the author had to make some decision, Mrs. Roy’s influence on her has been a ready tool and the author remains grateful for all such gifts bestowed on her by her mother.

The author is glad that her mother has not been typically motherly in the usual sense of the term as society constructs and she acknowledges that she could deal with difficult situations in her life, no matter how untenable, because she has been the daughter of Mrs. Mary Roy, the most eclectic woman she met in her life. Transforming the readers’ stance about Mrs. Roy, through her narration and capturing the intricacies of her character has not been easy, but the author has excelled, proving her brilliance in this context. The complexity and the ambivalence of her relationship with her mother as reflected through her narrative, has touched the reader's hearts deeply enough to make them feel for her. Arundhati Roy tells in an interview that her mother has been the most extraordinary woman in her life because she was not a great mother .Interestingly her not being a great mother is something that the author admires. Such an admiration on her part developed gradually with her gaining maturity when she realized that she must “undaughter” herself to appreciate her mom. Even this has not been an easy task as Mrs. Roy’s outrageous wildness has caused a lot of physical harm to the author and her brother. But she gradually realized that even the pain that she deliberately inflicted on her children had its roots in her own sufferings that she received from her society and family. And it is this realization that makes Roy a writer in the true sense of the term. So the memoir gives the readers a different flavour of motherhood and

daughterhood at the same time, something unconventional. And it also instills a kind of learning in us that sometimes interpretations of certain conditions and notions vary when seen from perspectives other than the subjective or personal ones. And a writer must see and analyze things likewise. So the author could embrace that unconventional sense of motherhood and could find shelter and eternal love in her mother despite her being the tumultuous storm.

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# A Study on the Investment Preferences of Employees in the Tourism Sector of Darjeeling with Reference to Mutual Funds

Lakpa Tashi Sherpa<sup>1</sup>



## Abstract:

**T**ourism plays a vital role in the economic framework of hill regions such as Darjeeling, generating employment and supporting livelihoods across multiple service sectors. However, employees in this sector often face financial instability due to seasonal income fluctuations and limited access to structured financial planning. This study examines the investment behaviour of tourism sector employees in Darjeeling, with a particular focus on their preference for mutual fund investments. Using primary data, the study identifies dominant investment avenues and highlights the gap between awareness and participation in market-linked instruments. The findings reveal a strong inclination toward traditional and low-risk investment options, while mutual fund participation remains limited despite its potential benefits.

**Keywords:** Mutual Funds, Tourism Sector, Awareness and Market-linked Investments.

## Introduction

Darjeeling, one of India's most renowned hill destinations, relies significantly on tourism as a primary driver of its economy. The region attracts a large number of domestic and international tourists each year, creating extensive employment opportunities for the local population. A substantial portion of the workforce is engaged in tourism-related activities, including hotels, lodges, restaurants, travel agencies, transport services, and various small-scale businesses such as souvenir shops and local vendors. While tourism provides an essential source of livelihood, it is also characterized by seasonal fluctuations, which directly affect the

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income stability of those dependent on it (Bhaduri, 2015).

Employees working in the tourism sector often face irregular income patterns due to variations in tourist inflow across different seasons. Peak tourist periods generate higher earnings, whereas off-seasons can lead to significantly reduced income or even temporary unemployment. This inconsistency contributes to financial insecurity and limits the ability of individuals to engage in systematic financial planning and investment. Moreover, the absence of stable income streams often leads to cautious financial behaviour, where individuals prioritize immediate consumption and savings over long-term investments (Ritchie & Goeldner, 1994).

Mutual funds, as professionally managed investment instruments, offer several advantages such as diversification, liquidity, affordability, and the potential for long-term wealth creation (AMFI). They are particularly suitable for small investors who may not have the expertise or resources to invest directly in capital markets. Despite these benefits, the adoption of mutual funds among tourism sector employees in Darjeeling appears to remain limited. This gap may be attributed to low awareness levels, perceived risks, lack of trust, and inadequate access to financial intermediaries.

### **Literature Review**

**Ranganathan (2006)** conducted a study in Mumbai to examine the fund selection behavior of individual investors toward mutual funds, surveying 100 educated investors. The findings indicated that most investors preferred open-ended growth schemes due to their flexibility and potential for higher returns. The study highlighted that the primary reasons for investing in mutual funds include attractive returns, safety of investment, liquidity, capital appreciation, tax benefits, professional fund management, and diversification advantages. Additionally, it was observed that investors place significant importance on published information and reports related to mutual funds, considering them crucial for making informed investment decisions. This research underscores the factors influencing mutual fund preferences among educated urban investors.

**Swami (2019)** The study reveals that mutual funds, now accessible to the general public, have the potential to promote inclusive financial development and economic progress. However, the analysis also indicates that many investors perceive mutual funds as high-risk and low-return instruments, offering limited benefits for tax planning. This perception, coupled with the complexity

of the mutual fund investment process, may contribute to their relatively low popularity. A lack of adequate understanding among investors further discourages participation, highlighting the need for increased awareness and simplified investment procedures to boost investor confidence.

**Jaiswal (2023)** noted that the mutual fund distribution landscape is undergoing a significant transformation driven by evolving technology, shifting investor preferences, and regulatory updates. The industry is witnessing a rise in direct investment routes, with growing participation from smaller distributors. Traditional financial distribution channels are also adapting to these changes, reflecting a broader shift in how mutual funds are accessed and promoted. This evolving environment suggests a more dynamic and inclusive distribution system, encouraging innovation and increased competition across various segments of the mutual fund market.

**Yadav (2023)** The study highlights that the mutual fund industry plays a pivotal role in the nation's economic growth by offering accessible investment avenues, especially for small and retail investors. As a vital financial instrument, mutual funds have seen rising popularity due to advantages such as tax benefits, capital appreciation, liquidity, and ease of management. The analysis reveals that investor awareness, investment goals, and intent to invest are key determinants influencing mutual fund participation. Equity funds are identified as the most preferred investment option. Although individual investments may be modest, investor interest remains strong. To sustain this trend, asset management companies must focus on investor education, embrace technological advancements, and view innovation as a strategic tool for continued growth and investor trust.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

- To analyse the investment preferences of tourism sector employees in Darjeeling.
- To examine the level of participation in mutual fund investments.

#### **Methodology**

The study is based on primary data collected from tourism sector employees in Darjeeling. A structured questionnaire was used to gather responses related to investment choices. The total sample of 50 includes employees from hotels, lodges, travel agencies, and allied services.

The data collected from 50 respondents has been analysed using the simple ranking method to identify and interpret their

investment preferences and patterns.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table: Investment Preferences of Respondents**

Mu-tual Fund	Prov-ident Fund	Shares	Insur-ance Scheme	Real Es-tate	Gold	Chit Fund	Fixed Deposits (Bank, Post Office Saving, National Savings Certificate, etc)
6	4	10	18	6	12	2	32
12%	8%	20%	36%	12%	24%	4%	64%

#### **Interpretation:**

The data clearly indicates that Fixed Deposits are the most preferred investment option, with 32 respondents (64%) choosing this avenue out of 50 respondents. This reflects a strong preference for safety, guaranteed returns, and liquidity among tourism sector employees.

Insurance schemes rank second 18 respondents (36%), suggesting that financial security and risk coverage are important concerns for individuals facing uncertain income patterns.

Investment in Gold (24%) and Shares (20%) shows moderate participation. Gold remains culturally and financially significant, while shares attract a smaller group willing to take higher risks.

Mutual Funds, despite their growing importance, have been chosen by only 6 respondents, i.e. 12%. This highlights limited awareness or hesitation due to perceived risk and lack of financial knowledge.

Similarly, Real Estate 12% participation is low, likely due to high capital requirements. Provident Fund 8% and Chit Fund 4% show minimal preference, indicating either limited access or declining trust in informal systems.

#### **Discussion**

The findings suggest that tourism sector employees in Darjeeling are largely risk-averse investors. Their preference for traditional investment instruments such as fixed deposits and insurance schemes is influenced by income instability and lack of financial literacy.

This behaviour reflects a broader issue within semi-organised sectors, where modern financial instruments have not fully penetrated despite policy efforts.

#### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that while tourism sector employees actively engage in savings and investment activities, their choices are largely confined to low-risk, traditional avenues. Mutual fund

participation remains significantly low, indicating a gap between availability and adoption.

To enhance financial inclusion and promote better investment practices, there is a need for:

- Financial literacy programmes
- Awareness campaigns about mutual funds
- Simplified investment processes
- Accessible advisory services in hill regions

Encouraging systematic investment in mutual funds can help employees achieve long-term financial stability and wealth creation, especially in sectors characterised by income uncertainty.

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# Corporate Failures and the Role of Different Corporate Governance Mechanisms

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**Abstract:**

**T**he framework of corporate governance provides the guidelines as to how the company should be governed such that it can fulfill its goals and objectives in a manner that adds to the value of the company and is also beneficial for shareholders, creditors and other stakeholders in the long run. Functioning of corporate governance system in a business enterprise is conducted through different mechanisms like board of directors, composition of the board, audit committee, independence of the audit committee members etc. Lack of effective functioning of these mechanisms has resulted into corporate failures and loss of stakeholders' confidence across the globe. In the present study mode of functioning of different corporate governance mechanisms has been mentioned. Some cases of corporate failures happened in different countries and how inefficient functioning of corporate governance mechanisms is responsible for such debacles have also been analysed. Different initiatives undertaken by the regulatory authorities to improve functioning of corporate governance system have been highlighted in the last section of the study.

**Key Words :** Corporate Governance, Corporate Governance Mechanisms, Corporate Failures, Agency Problem, Audit Committee

**Introduction**

In case of joint stock company, the business is funded with finance provided by the common people and other stakeholders. These providers of finance do not engage themselves in the day to day activities of the business. Consequently, it becomes impossible for them to supervise as to how the company is managing their funds and giving them return on profit earned by investing

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funds in productive ventures. In such situation the managers of the business act as agents to look after the interests of the stakeholders. In many cases the managers give priority in fulfilling their personal interests over the interest of the actual owners of the business. This is known as ‘Agency problem’. With a view to protect the interests of the stakeholders corporate governance system operates in a business through different mechanisms and efficient functioning of a business depends on how the governance mechanisms function.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present study are :

- To highlight on the importance of corporate governance system in ensuring smooth functioning of a business entity by protecting stakeholders’ interest and maximizing stakeholders’ value;
- To understand the mode of functioning of different corporate governance mechanisms ;
- To analyse some cases of corporate failures happened in different countries and to explore how malfunctioning of governance mechanisms is responsible for such corporate failures;
- To study various preventive measures taken by the regulatory authorities in different countries to ensure efficient functioning of corporate governance mechanisms.

### **Importance of Corporate Governance**

The Cadbury Committee (1992, p. 15) defined corporate governance as “the system by which companies are directed and controlled.” Similarly, the OECD (2015, p. 9) stated that corporate governance involves the relationships among a company’s management, board, shareholders, and other stakeholders while providing the structure for achieving organizational objectives. One of the important functions that corporate governance system is expected to perform relates to ensuring that timely and accurate information is disclosed on all material matters regarding the financial situation, performance and long-term viability of the company. High-quality financial reporting is essential for the efficient and effective functioning of the capital markets. The failure in corporate governance can lead to failure in financial reporting. There have been numerous instances of high-profile corporate failures in recent years in which corporate governance deficiency was the main culprit. In an effective system of governance various requirements are to be fulfilled in respect of composition of board of directors, independence of directors,

size and composition of audit committee etc. Proper fulfillment of all these requirements is believed to have a direct impact on the quality of functioning of the entity. In absence of an effective corporate governance mechanism generation of false accounting information, aggressive earnings management, restatement of financial information, internal control failures may happen which will raise question regarding integrity of the operation of the business.

### **Different Corporate Governance Mechanisms**

In a business entity corporate governance system functions through different mechanisms to ensure implementation of the principles of good governance and thereby accountability, transparency in the functioning of corporations are achieved. With a view to understand the role of corporate governance in attaining corporate goals of maximizing stakeholders' satisfaction and value discussion on the mode of functioning of different corporate governance mechanisms is very important.

i) **Board of Directors:** The board of directors acts as an important corporate governance mechanism by providing strategic direction and monitoring managerial actions to safeguard shareholders' interests and thereby prevents concentration of power (Cadbury Committee, 1992; OECD, 2015).

ii) **Board Composition:** An effective corporate governance framework requires an appropriate balance between executive and non-executive directors, as independent and non-executive directors are considered more effective in protecting shareholders' interests, particularly those of minority shareholders (OECD, 2015).

iii) **Board Meetings:** Regular board meetings held at prescribed intervals strengthen board oversight and improve monitoring of corporate functioning and decision-making processes (OECD, 2015).

iv) **CEO Duality:** Combining the roles of Chief Executive Officer and Chairman may lead to concentration of power, conflicts of interest, and weaker board monitoring functions (Cadbury Committee, 1992).

v) **Board Multiple Directorship:** Directors serving on multiple boards accumulate broader experience and expertise, which may enhance the quality of board deliberations and governance practices (OECD, 2015).

vi) **Audit Committee:** Audit committees play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of financial reporting and ensuring auditor independence, thereby reducing the likelihood of fraud and

earnings manipulation (Blue Ribbon Committee, 1999; OECD, 2015).

vii)**Audit Committee Size:** The effectiveness of audit committees is influenced by their size and composition, as larger committees with adequate expertise may contribute to improved financial reporting quality (DeZoort et al., 2002).

viii)**Audit Committee Meetings:** Frequent audit committee meetings strengthen oversight of financial reporting practices and internal control systems within organizations (Xie et al., 2003).

ix)**Accounting Expertise of Audit Committee Members:** Corporate governance principles emphasize that audit committee members should possess financial literacy and accounting expertise to ensure high-quality financial reporting (Sarbanes-Oxley Act, 2002).

x)**Independence of Audit Committee Members:** Independence of audit committee members enhances effective monitoring and improves the credibility and reliability of financial reporting (OECD, 2015).

xi)**Ownership Structure:** Ownership structure significantly influences corporate governance and financial reporting quality, as institutional ownership often strengthens managerial monitoring and reduces earnings management practices (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

xii)**External Auditors:** External auditors improve the credibility and reliability of financial statements by independently certifying the accuracy of financial information disclosed to stakeholders (Cadbury Committee, 1992).

xiii)**Audit Fee and Non-Audit Fee Ratio:** Excessive dependence on non-audit services may impair auditor independence; therefore, maintaining an appropriate balance between audit and non-audit fees is essential for good governance practices (OECD, 2015).

xiv)**Government:** Governments establish legal and regulatory frameworks within which companies operate, and compliance with such regulations forms an integral part of effective corporate governance (OECD, 2015).

xv)**Media:** Media plays an important governance role by disseminating information regarding corporate activities and influencing corporate reputation and accountability (Dyck & Zingales, 2002).

### **Corporate Failures in Different Countries Due to Malfunctioning of Corporate Governance Mechanisms**

In this part of the present study some cases of corporate failures happened in different countries have been presented. How

malfunctioning of different corporate governance mechanisms is responsible behind those corporate debacles has also been explored.

1. **Enron(US, 2001)**: Enron Corporation ,specialized in energy sector , had been employing Special Purpose Entities(SPEs) to suppress debt and to record inflated profit. Subsequently the corporation resulted into largest corporate bankruptcy in the US. The causes behind such scam were lack of supervision on the part of the board of directors leading to conflicts of interest. In addition, Arthur Anderson, the auditor of the company, overlooked fraudulent accounting practices carried out by the company by compromising with the principle of auditor's independence.
2. **Worldcom(US, 2002)**: Worldcom, an American telecommunications corporation inflated its assets by more than 11 billion dollars using unethical accounting methods. The company practiced classification of normal spending as investments resulting into showing of inflated profit and asset value. Inadequate internal control and lack of proper monitoring by the board were the prime reasons behind the fraudulent operations. Functioning of the internal auditors was also manipulated which created a conducive climate to occur such frauds.
3. **Parmalat(Italy, 2003)** : In 2003, Parmalat, an Italian dairy firm was found to have committed large scale financial misappropriations by concealing a deficit of 14 billion euro through the use of fraudulent bank papers and following various unethical off balance sheet creative accounting mechanisms. The fraud was masterminded by the CEO of the company and the board. Auditors failed to identify and prevent the fraudulent activities. Internal control systems were inadequate and intentionally manipulated due to lack of independent functioning of the authorities of the company.
4. **Olympus Corporation(Japan, 2011)** : Olympus Corporation, a Japanese firm recognized for its expertise in optical and digital precision technologies. In 2011, the company involved in a controversy of deliberate hiding of 1.7 billion dollar in losses by adopting dubious accounting methodologies. Different financial instruments and consecutive acquisitions were practiced by the executives of the company to conceal company's losses. Lack of effective supervision by the board over the years and inadequate internal control practices were the causes for which investors were misled. The fraudulent

- actions were facilitated also due to inability of the company's auditor to detect huge financial inconsistencies.
5. **Greensill Capital(UK, 2021):** The British Company engaged in rendering financial services mainly focusing on supply chain financing and working capital solutions. In March 2021, the company experienced substantial shortage of funds that resulted into failure. The debacle happened due to lack of expertise of the board members in assessing financial risks and taking appropriate steps to manage such risks. Lack of adequate internal control and supervision to assess and manage risk were other aspects of corporate governance deficiencies responsible for such corporate failure.
  6. **Satyam Computer Services(India, 2009):** Satyam Computer Services emerged as one of India's top IT services firms offering consulting, software development and outsourcing services. In 2009, the founder of this Indian firm, Ramalinga Raju confessed to inflating the company's financial statements by 1.5 billion dollar. The prime cause behind happening of this corporate fraud was ineffectiveness of the functioning of the audit committee and inadequate board supervision over the activities of the audit committee. The auditor of the company also played role in multiplying the impact of the fraud and consequently the interests of the investors and other stakeholders were substantially violated.
  7. **Kingfisher Airlines(India, 2012):** The Indian airlines company faced significant financial turmoil and consequently burdened with significant amount of outstanding debts. The company ceased operations in 2012. The downfall of the airline company may be attributed to poor financial management, inefficient internal controls and an excessively ambitious expansion plan.
  8. **Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services(India, 2018):** IL&FS, an Indian financial services and infrastructure development corporation emerged into financial crisis caused due to company's excessive borrowings and risky financial management practices. The company embarked on a number of risky ventures and for that incurred a huge amount of debt which the company was unable to pay. Board's lack of effective supervision along with misleading optimistic financial outlook were the areas of corporate governance failures responsible for the debacles.
  9. **Yes Bank(India,2020) :** Yes bank, an Indian financial institution engaged in providing financial services, retail, corporate and investment banking. They also provided asset

management services. The bank faced problem regarding non-performing loans and insufficient financial disclosure regarding services of such loans. The problem was created due to lack of ability of the bank on asset management and proper assessment of related risks. Inefficient board supervision towards these issues also aggravated the failure of the company.

- 10. Adani Group(India, 2023):** In 2023, Adani group was complained on the issue of accounting irregularities, overvaluation of assets and concealment of debts. The management of the company was accused for presenting misleading optimistic financial outlook. The concerning issues regarding malfunctioning of corporate governance which lead to the crisis of the company were lack of independence of the board and limitations in internal controls. Absence of effective supervision of the board on the above issues allowed the company to continue the malpractices.

#### **Measures Taken by the Regulatory Authorities to Improve Functioning of Corporate Governance Mechanisms**

Occurrences of corporate failures in different countries have compelled the regulators to take preventive measures in the following areas :

- **Enhancement of Internal control systems-** Major factor responsible for the happening of corporate debacles is lack of functioning of internal control system. Accordingly, regulators have prescribed installation of different protocols to improve internal control system to check occurrences of frauds along with periodical review regarding adequacy of such measures;
- **Strengthening Oversight Functions of the Board** – It has been a lesson to the regulators from the happening of corporate failures that board’s oversight role needs to be strengthened. Scrutiny of financial reports through audit committee, mitigating conflicting interests and adoption of proper risk management systems are the thrust areas which have been identified by the regulators for tightening oversight role of the board;
- **Enhancement of Auditors Independence** : If auditors’ working environment can be made more independent, chances of occurring scams in the companies can be reduced. When auditors will be allowed to function independently then stakeholders can expect rendering of better professional services by the auditors. The areas which have been given substantial emphasis for improving auditors’ independence

are segregation of auditing services from consulting services, prevention of conflicts of interest, installation of working environment where auditors will not have to compromise with their impartial role.

- **Improvement in the quality of the Financial Reporting Standards** – Availability of quality financial reporting standards ensures supply of reliable and timely financial information to different stakeholders. Improving quality in the financial reporting practices by the companies by adopting better standards can reduce the chances of investors being deprived of accessing proper information regarding actual financial health of the business enterprise. Accordingly, regulators have taken various measures to overhaul the quality of financial reporting standards;
- **Safeguarding the Role of Whistleblowers** – In many cases whistleblowers timely functioning prevents occurrence of corporate failures. Regulators have considered that whistleblowers role is to be further improved in giving timely signal to prevent happening of different corporate scams. Providing secure avenues for reporting, safeguarding whistleblowers from reprisals and ensuring that concerns of whistleblowers will be dealt with due emphasis have been the major concerns of the regulators;
- **Reforms in Corporate Governance Norms** – With the happening of corporate failures at an accelerated pace and with a view to adopt better corporate culture in the functioning of the enterprises, various corporate governance reforms committees have been established in different countries. All such committees have given various recommendations which have been considered by the government and other regulatory authorities to ensure effective implementation by the companies.

### **Conclusion**

Analysis of different corporate failures and aligning factors responsible for such failures with the inefficient functioning of corporate governance mechanisms have necessitated undertaking of more stringent measures towards tightening of different norms which control the operation of the corporate governance system in business enterprises. Strict adherence with such norms as promulgated by the regulatory authorities functioning in different countries will ensure better rendering of services by the corporate entities to different stakeholders. If stakeholders' interests are properly safeguarded by improving risk management

techniques, reinforcing audit systems and introducing a culture of responsibility and ethical behavior their confident involvement with the businesses will be further improved.

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# Sold to Scrolled: Algorithmic Humour and the Afterlife of Popular Indian Commercials in the Age of Instagram Memes

Dr. Poulami Roy<sup>1</sup>



**Abstract:**

**T**he cultural trajectory of popular Indian commercials has undergone a remarkable transformation in the age of social media. Once confined to the temporal boundaries of television broadcasting, these advertisements now circulate endlessly across Instagram as memes — recontextualised, parodied, and collectively reimaged by digitally active audiences. This paper examines how algorithmic humour operates as a primary mechanism through which Indian commercial texts are dismantled, remixed, and granted an unexpected cultural afterlife on Instagram. Accounts such as @mad\_over\_marketing, @theindianidiot, and @rvcjinsta offer rich, observable sites where this meme-ification unfolds, breathing new cultural meaning into advertisements like Fevicol’s iconic portrayal of unbreakable bonds, Cadbury Dairy Milk’s beloved cricket commercial, and the enduring “Washing Powder Nirma” jingle. These digital afterlives speak to something deeper than media consumption — they reflect a collective negotiation of nostalgia, satire, and shared consumer memory.

Drawing on Henry Jenkins’ framework of Convergence Culture and Limor Shifman’s scholarship on internet memes, this paper examines the cultural logic behind such reappropriations, exploring how meme-making transforms formerly one-way corporate messaging into participatory, communal storytelling. In doing so, it argues that the meme ecosystem surrounding Indian advertising constitutes a distinctive media loop — one

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*where commercial intent dissolves into collective humour, audience agency, and cultural memory, effectively redrawing the boundaries between entertainment, brand communication, and shared cultural identity.*

*Keywords: Ad Memes, Participatory Media, Internet Humour, Cultural Memory, Convergence Culture*

### **Introduction**

In the densely layered world of digital media, few cultural artefacts travel quite as far — or as unexpectedly — as the Indian television advertisement. Crafted originally for the 30-second slot between prime-time programmes, these commercials were engineered to sell products. Yet, something far more enduring was being built alongside the product pitch: a shared cultural vocabulary, instantly recognisable across generations, languages, and socioeconomic divides. From the adhesive permanence evoked by ‘Fevicol ka jod’ to the domestic warmth of ‘Washing Powder Nirma’, Indian advertising has long functioned as a kind of emotional shorthand — a national archive of collective memory embedded in jingles, slogans, and familiar faces.

What no advertiser in the 1990s could have anticipated, however, is that these very commercials would one day be dismantled, remixed, and redeployed as ‘memes’ on Instagram — stripped of their original intent, yet more culturally alive than ever. This paper investigates that phenomenon. It examines how popular Indian television commercials are experiencing a vivid second life on Instagram through meme-ification: a process by which advertisement texts are decontextualised, humorously reframed, and circulated as units of participatory digital culture. Through the lens of Instagram meme pages such as @mad\_over\_marketing, @theindianidiot, @officialhumansofcinema, and @rvcejinsta, the paper maps the cultural logic, emotional registers, and critical dimensions of this transformation.

Drawing on Henry Jenkins’ theory of Participatory Culture (2006) and Limor Shifman’s framework for understanding internet memes (2014), this study argues that the meme-ification of Indian advertising represents more than mere internet humour. It constitutes a significant shift in the relationship between media texts and their audiences — one where consumers are no longer passive recipients of commercial messaging but active co-authors of cultural meaning. Advertisements, in this context, are not simply remembered; they are reclaimed, questioned, and creatively reimagined in ways that reflect broader socio-cultural currents of nostalgia, satire, and collective identity.

**From Broadcast Logic to Participatory Culture:**

For much of the twentieth century, the television advertisement operated within what communication scholars describe as a broadcast logic — a one-directional flow of carefully constructed messaging from producer to consumer (McQuail, 2010). Indian commercials were no exception. They were emotionally deliberate, narratively tight, and strategically targeted. A Dhara cooking oil advertisement from the early 1990s, in which a young boy runs away from home only to return upon smelling jalebi frying in the kitchen, was designed to communicate warmth, family, and the sensory comfort of home. A Cadbury Dairy Milk advertisement, in which a woman breaks into a spontaneous dance on a cricket field after her partner scores a boundary, was crafted to associate chocolate with uninhibited, joyful celebration. A Raymond suiting advertisement deployed the archetype of The Complete Man — poised, emotionally refined, and nationally proud — to sell not just fabric but an aspirational masculine identity.

These advertisements succeeded on their original terms. But they also, perhaps inadvertently, created something that outlived their campaigns: cultural touchstones. And it is precisely these touchstones that Instagram’s meme culture has seized upon.

Henry Jenkins, in his landmark work *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006), argues that the defining feature of contemporary media culture is not simply technological convergence but a fundamental reorganisation of audience behaviour. Where older models of media consumption positioned audiences as passive spectators, participatory culture involves them as active contributors who “interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3). The meme pages that now populate Instagram — dedicated to reinterpreting and satirising Indian advertising — exemplify this participatory dynamic in its most creative and culturally embedded form.

When @theindianidiot repurposes a screenshot from the classic Fevikwik fisherman advertisement — in which one fisherman secretly uses adhesive to trap fish underwater — and overlays it with a caption reading “When you don’t study the whole year but still top using the Fevikwik strategy”, the original commercial ceases to function as an advertisement and becomes a template. It is now a metaphor for academic shortcuts, bureaucratic workarounds, or, depending on the caption, any act of cunning improvisation in daily Indian life. The adhesive is no longer the product; it is the punchline. The advertisement has been repurposed as a vehicle for

social commentary that its original creators never intended — and that is precisely what makes it culturally generative.

Nostalgia, Affect, and the Meme as Memory Vessel:

One of the most significant forces animating the meme-ification of Indian commercials is nostalgia — not as sentimentality alone, but as what media scholar Svetlana Boym (2001) terms ‘reflective nostalgia’: a mode of engagement that acknowledges the past’s distance while finding meaning in its fragments. Instagram’s meme ecosystem has become a particularly fertile site for this kind of nostalgic engagement, drawing heavily on the visual and auditory iconography of 1990s and early 2000s Indian television. The *Dhara Jalebi* advertisement offers a compelling case study. On @officialhumansofcinema, the clip has been reworked into split-screen reels that pair the original footage with contemporary audience reaction videos, generating responses such as “Why does this hit harder than any web series?” — a comment that speaks to the advertisement’s continuing emotional resonance decades after its original broadcast. What is significant here is not simply that people remember the advertisement, but that the meme format activates a form of affective participation: viewers are invited not merely to recall a past media experience but to reflect on what it meant to them, and to share that reflection publicly.

The *Cadbury Dairy Milk* cricket advertisement has undergone a similarly generative transformation. On @mad\_over\_marketing, the iconic scene of the dancing woman has been remixed with captions such as “When you finally submit that thesis” or “When the WiFi reconnects after two hours”, accompanied by TED Talk-style voiceovers that frame the moment as a discourse on spontaneous joy and personal agency. What was once a product endorsement is now a meme template — a reusable cultural grammar that users deploy to articulate their own small triumphs. Limor Shifman’s analysis of internet memes in *Memes in Digital Culture* (2014) is instructive here. Shifman defines memes as groups of digital items that share common characteristics of content, form, and stance, and that are “created with awareness of each other and circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users” (Shifman, 2014, p. 7). Crucially, she situates memes not merely as texts but as practices — social acts of participation that simultaneously express individual creativity and collective belonging. In the context of Indian advertising memes, the practice of recontextualising a familiar commercial image becomes a way of asserting one’s membership in a shared cultural community while simultaneously putting that community’s

inherited meanings to new use.

This is what distinguishes the meme-ification of Indian commercials from mere parody. It is not simply that these advertisements are being laughed at; they are being used — as raw material for the articulation of contemporary experience, identity, and critique.

**Satire, Critique, and the Deconstruction of Advertising Ideology:** Beyond nostalgia, Instagram memes also deploy Indian advertising as a site of ideological critique — a place where the assumptions, hierarchies, and anxieties embedded in commercial messaging can be made visible, challenged, and collectively interrogated. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the meme-ification of fairness cream advertisements.

The *Fair & Lovely* (now rebranded as Glow & Lovely) campaigns of the 1990s and 2000s were structured around a deeply problematic promise: that lightening one's skin tone would unlock professional success, romantic desirability, and social mobility. These advertisements were not incidental to Indian media culture; they were, for many viewers, formative. On @rvcjinsta, archived footage of such commercials now circulates alongside captions such as “Before feminism hit the subcontinent” or “Achievement unlocked: light skin = job guaranteed” — satirical framings that transform what was once aspirational messaging into an object of collective critique. Crucially, the comment sections beneath such posts frequently contain testimonies from users who recall how these advertisements shaped their own self-perception growing up, turning the meme into a site of both humour and retrospective reckoning.

Similarly, the long-running *Lijjat Papad* advertisements — featuring the brand's beloved bunny mascot in scenarios of cheerful domestic productivity — have become fodder for memes that probe the gendered assumptions underlying the original campaigns. The image of an animated rabbit enthusiastically promoting a crunchy snack, when paired with ironic millennial captions about parental expectations or the anxieties of job interviews, does something more than generate laughter: it defamiliarises the advertisement, inviting audiences to notice what the original took for granted.

This satirical function of memes aligns with what cultural theorist Stuart Hall describes as oppositional reading — the practice by which audiences decode media texts in ways that directly challenge their preferred or intended meanings (Hall, 1980). Instagram meme culture, in this sense, institutionalises the oppositional reading as a form of popular entertainment. The meme page becomes not just a comedy platform but a space of vernacular cultural criticism,

where the ideological freight of commercial messaging is publicly unpacked and contested.

Shifman's concept of the 'meme pool' — a collective cultural repertoire accessible to and modified by all participants — is particularly apt here (Shifman, 2014, p. 44). No single user owns the *Fair & Lovely* meme template; it circulates freely, accumulating new layers of meaning with each iteration. This collective authorship is central to the critical power of these memes: the critique is not attributable to any one individual but emerges from the aggregated creativity of a community.

### **Algorithmic Humour and Platform Logic:**

It is important, however, to situate this participatory and critical activity within the material conditions of the platforms that host it. Instagram is not a neutral carrier of cultural expression; it is a algorithmically governed environment in which visibility is shaped by engagement metrics, posting frequency, and the platform's own shifting logics of amplification and suppression (van Dijck, 2013). The humour that circulates most effectively on Instagram is, in a meaningful sense, algorithmically mediated humour — content that has been optimised, consciously or otherwise, for the kinds of rapid engagement (likes, shares, saves, comments) that the platform's algorithm rewards.

This has specific implications for how Indian advertising is memefied. Content that triggers recognition — a familiar jingle, an iconic visual, a widely recalled slogan — tends to generate rapid, high-volume engagement, because it simultaneously activates individual memory and communal belonging. The *Washing Powder Nirma* jingle, for instance, is culturally overdetermined in the Indian context: it has been part of the national soundscape for decades, functioning across class, language, and regional contexts. When a meme page deploys this jingle in a new context — say, as the soundtrack to a satirical comment on political messaging or consumer gullibility — the engagement it generates reflects not just amusement but the deep cultural embeddedness of the original commercial. Algorithmic visibility, in this case, is a function of cultural resonance.

José van Dijck's analysis of what she calls 'platform society' is instructive here. Van Dijck argues that digital platforms do not merely mediate social interaction; they actively shape it, structuring what kinds of communication become visible, what kinds of content get amplified, and what kinds of cultural practices become normative (van Dijck, 2013, p. 29). Instagram's meme culture around Indian advertising is, in this light, a product

not only of audience creativity but of platform architecture — a creative practice that has evolved in dialogue with algorithmic constraints and affordances.

This does not diminish the cultural significance of meme-ification; it complicates it. The meme is simultaneously an act of audience agency and a form of platform-native content production, shaped by the economic logic of engagement that governs Instagram's ecosystem.

**Conclusion: The Reincarnation of the Commercial Text**

In the age of Instagram, the Indian television advertisement has undergone a genuinely remarkable transformation. Designed for temporal brevity and commercial purpose, these advertisements have acquired a cultural afterlife that their original creators neither anticipated nor controlled. Through the process of meme-ification — driven by nostalgia, humour, satire, and the platform logics of participatory digital culture — they have been refashioned into something more complex: repositories of collective memory, vehicles for social critique, and raw material for vernacular creativity.

What emerges from this analysis is not simply a story about digital culture's appetite for the familiar. It is a story about power — about who gets to determine the meaning of a media text, and how audiences assert their own interpretive authority over messages that were never designed to be questioned. As Jenkins reminds us, participatory culture does not emerge from passive consumption but from active, creative engagement with the texts that circulate through our media environment (Jenkins, 2006, p. 256). The meme pages of Instagram have become one of the most vibrant sites of such engagement in contemporary India, transforming the legacy of broadcast advertising into a living, contested, and deeply human cultural conversation.

The meme, in this context, is not the death of the advertisement. It is, as this paper has argued, its reincarnation — and perhaps its most culturally honest form.

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# Teaching and /Translating English Literature: The Teacher in a Plurilingual Classroom

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## Abstract

**I**n the twentieth and twenty-first century with globalization and the ever-broadening reach of the media, literary study has witnessed various challenges and at times it even came on the brink of losing its relevance. In order to sustain itself literature and literary studies stepped into trans literary dialogue and reinvented itself by tagging on to cultural studies, postcolonial studies, translation studies and so on. The most important understanding of literature is the fact that it relates to the world through language and it enters into the world of another's imagination through language. Thus, language plays a very pivotal role in literature. Taking the cue from this it can be said that in a multi lingual country like India translation plays a sacrosanct role in order to engage with literatures written in different languages and communities. This paper will try to understand not only the significance of translation in comprehending the different literatures in Indian languages but also analyze the role translation plays while teaching literature in the classroom. As a teacher of literature in a rural college of West Bengal, I will talk about the role translation plays in order to disclose the world of literature to the students and also how the existence of us, the teachers, is predicated not only on teaching literature but also translating it in the classroom at the same time.

**Keywords:** Literature, classroom, translation, plurality, pedagogy.

Literary Studies in the twentieth and twenty first centuries witnessed various challenges and to establish its validity it reinvented itself by stepping into trans disciplinary dialogue and broadened its scope by tagging itself with various specialisations like cultural studies, postcolonial studies, gender studies, Dalit

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studies, translation studies, environment studies and so on. Thus, literary study was reinvented on the grounds of utility and social responsibility. This paper is a simple endeavour not to look at the impulses leading to the multi-disciplinary areas of literary study but to analyze and understand how translation plays an important role to engage with literatures written in different languages within a plural social scenario like India and also to interrogate how translation becomes a practical method and pedagogical practice of teaching English literature in the classroom in rural and semi-rural areas in West Bengal. The paper specifically focuses on West Bengal because of the author's first-hand experience but she presumes it is a pan Indian phenomenon when it comes to teaching English literature in undergraduate institutions located in the rural and semi-rural areas of India. At a later point in this paper, what is exactly meant by plural/plurality when it comes to the Indian socio-lingual and cultural scenario will be discussed at length for the time being let us understand the importance of English both as a language and as an academic discipline in India in general and West Bengal in particular.

The study of English literature till to this day is the most sought-after course at the undergraduate level in India. It needs to be understood that English is not just (an)other language but it is a language that comes with the heavy baggage of the language of the colonial masters and thus by default, it becomes the language of power, status and to a greater extent it is related with earning more money. Thus, it becomes an undeniable fact that history and the expectation of economic opportunities have led to the ever-rising popularity and an almost humungous demand for English literature among aspiring Indian students at the undergraduate and post graduate levels. At this stage it also needs to be specified that by enrolling in the English Literature course a large number of students come to class with the assumed idea that it will improve their speaking ability in English. This again evince the idea of superiority associated with English. It is a known fact that colonial rule was the harbinger of the English language and literature in India. As mentioned in the historic 'Minute on Indian Education' of Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1835 the reason behind the introduction of English in the Indian classroom was to facilitate the administrative mechanism and wield political power in the colony. It is said in the 'Minute' "We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue... The English tongue is that which would be the most useful to our native subjects... We must at present do our best to form a class

who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect..” (Macaulay 12-13). Thus, it became language through which politico economic, moral and cultural superiority was asserted over the colonised people of India. It can also be argued here that the English language found a ‘new’ home that too a hospitable one in the Indian soil and even after independence English not only functions as the lingua franca among people of different communities in India but also as one of the most popular courses at the graduate and post graduate levels (Puthiyedath 6). The reason for which has already been specified in this paper. The most important question when it comes to teaching English at the undergraduate level (and it is again reiterated that it is particularly with respect to colleges primarily situated in rural and semi-rural areas in India) is how do the teachers reach out and make sense to students who are mostly first generation literates and who studied both in the secondary and higher secondary levels at schools where English was not the medium of instruction and hence their comprehension of English is not at par with an English speaking individual. Also being first generation learners in rural and semi-rural areas these students are far away from even listening to or reading English in their mundane lives. Thus they lack not only the speaking skill but also the skill of comprehension when it comes to the English language. But before interrogating this let us first see how translation plays an important function in a plurilingual context to create a dialogue between literatures written in different languages.

It goes without saying in a plurilingual society translation plays a significant role not only when it comes to the study of literature but also in the day-to-day livelihood of the people. The act of translation becomes a lived experience in a plurilingual context where a person not only speaks and understands more than one language but she even thinks, ruminates and prays in more than one language that too at the same time. Here one can refer to a very interesting scenario from our daily experiences, when one worships she recites the ‘mantras’ in Sanskrit and immediately after that when she is praying for her personal desires, she is asking for it in her ‘mother tongue’. Thus there is a constant movement/dialogue between two languages in the day-to-day parlance. If one looks at the Indian tradition then it is surprising to note that Sanskrit and later on Pali Prakrit, Persian and the different Indian bhashas existed side by side. As Indra Nath Choudhury says, “Being polyglots we use more than one language while speaking or even

thinking” (113). “Polyglottism in ancient India, was responsible in the development of translating consciousness among the Indians” (Choudhuri 113). The phrase “lokopichanuvada” which means ‘translatability’ explains the historical length of existence of India’s translating consciousness (Choudhuri 113). He even gives the example of Gunadhya’s *Brhatkathā* (8<sup>th</sup> Century CE), a book of stories which is written in the Paisāci language spoken by the people of North-western India. A part of this book was translated into Sanskrit by Somadeva entitled *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Again, Kshemendra translated in 7500 Sanskrit slokas and called it *Brhatkathāmanjari* (Choudhuri 114). What is important to note here is the fact that as Indra Nath Choudhuri says this is the first book translated into Sanskrit from any other Indian languages (114). There have been instances of translations of various texts during the Bhakti movement also and with the coming of colonial rule in India translation activity witnessed a boom, where different Sanskrit texts literature, philosophy, law started to be translated from Sanskrit to English and other European languages. In the Indian context the term for translation is ‘anuvāda’ and it comes from the Sanskrit root word “vad” which means to say. ‘Anuvāda’ literally means to say later. Thus to say later clearly means that it is linked with creativity and not just mechanical repetition. Indranath Choudhuri says that ‘anuvāda’ is “repetition of what is enjoined by a vedic text with a different wording” (115). But here repetition is not just a literal word-by-word rendering of the original text into the translated one. As Choudhuri says in the Indian paradigm the reader is “never a passive receiver of a text” (115). The rasa and dhvani theories indicate that the reader or receiver may have multiple aesthetic experiences and therefore a text does not produce a single invariant reading. This above discussion shows that translation has remained an important activity in the Indian context primarily because of her plurilingual nature. It becomes very natural to translate the different Indian bhasha literatures either into English or any other Indian bhashas when one needs to create a dialogue with and understand the nuances of a particular bhasha literature. The ideal case would be to learn the bhasha which one wants to engage with but it is certainly not always possible to learn the languages every time one wants to engage with a different bhasha literature. Thus translation becomes a sacrosanct way of understanding, comprehending and investigating the different Indian bhasha literatures. It can be certainly said that in the academic world of a plurilingual nation translation becomes the only way out to read literatures written in

the different Indian languages.

The most striking element in the Indian context of plurilingual existence is the arrival of English language and its presence as the lingua franca of the country. We are not only dealing with the different Indian bhashas but also with a foreign tongue which came with the extra baggage of colonial superiority. Although there have been various debates stating that the English language has been indigenised and the so-called 'Indian English' is a 'new' English which has lost the connection of her ancestral home yet the fact remains that English is the language of our colonial masters and therefore it automatically wields power and superiority. The knowledge of English and of English literature and the ability to speak the language is still considered lucrative in the socio-cultural context of our country. Given this situation it automatically becomes clear that every Indian is at least bilingual where she speaks her 'mother tongue' and English even if that English is in bits and pieces. There are several instances where one sees that she speaks or at least understands more than two languages at the same time. It is generally the combination of the mother tongue, English and Hindi, it could also be Sanskrit or any other Indian bhashas. If one looks at the plurality of the Indian social matrix then it would be noticed that she has a very ambivalent existence as far as her language is concerned. The individual speaks one language at home, she chooses another when she moves among her friends and peers, again another in the educational institution or the workplace and still another when she participates in religious activities. Thus every Indian plurilingual individual is moving among more than two languages in her mundane fields and she is hearing out all these languages sometimes at the same time. Again, when this individual is thinking about something she could be ruminating in all these languages and in her mind a constant activity of translation from one language to another continues. Translation thus becomes not only important for us but it is a way of life for the plurilingual Indian. The Indian situation creates a very interesting space where an individual grows up hearing a diversity of languages which makes her plurilingual, this bestows on her an easy fluidity of movement from one language to another.

The last part of this paper will talk about and analyze the experiences of being a teacher of English literature in a rural college in West Bengal and how translation becomes a quintessential practice to teach in the classroom. The majority of the students are first generation literates and they studied in schools where the medium of instruction was the mother tongue,

i.e., Bānglā. Given the colonial hangover the students pursue honours in English literature as they assume it will make them stand in good stead in their future life and will also help them in choosing a career. The problem or rather one would say the strange situation in which the teacher is thrown into is when she goes to teach in the classroom. Spending a couple of minutes in the classroom and interacting with her students she understands that giving lectures in English will do no good to these students. Thus, the only way out to make herself comprehensible to her students is to fall back on translation. Although one might here say that teaching literature written in (an)other language always entails an act of translation since the teacher has to actually translate (an)other culture, experiences, literary tradition and aesthetics to the students. Thus, translation becomes a method of teaching in the class. Further, in these classes comprising students whose comprehension skills of English language is pretty low texts from British literature, American literature, Afro American literature, Indian literatures other than Bānglā, African literatures and Caribbean literature, the different theories of literature all have to be mostly translated into the mother tongue i.e., Bānglā in order to make the students understand the nuances of the texts. The teacher of English literature thus in the postcolonial rural college classroom has no other option but to translate her lectures into the ‘mother tongue’ and use the English language sparingly when she is trying to make the students comprehend the texts. To enhance levels of mutual communication translation becomes imperative in these classrooms. Translation therefore provides the method for both reading and listening to the ‘other’. In order to make the self (in this case the teacher) and the ‘other’ (the text) heard within the precinct of the rural and semi-rural classroom of English literary study translation becomes a very important strategy of pedagogy. Teachers in other parts of India witnessing similar situations will agree with the above observation that they are impromptu translators (if that term may be allowed to be used), because teachers in these situations have to translate instantaneously to make the students understand what the teacher is saying and along with it what the text is saying. It can be argued that this is where the “translating consciousness” (Choudhuri 113) that has been discussed earlier in the paper comes in to play. The teacher in these classrooms can very comfortably shift from one language to the other because she is within a plurilingual situation listening to different languages since her birth. One can earnestly feel that teachers of English literature in this scenario could survive such

conditions because of our unique linguistic and literary heritage where the co-existence of various languages for centuries have made us natural translators. In a plurilingual context like India translation becomes a very crucial activity not only in the daily lives of the people but also a typical pedagogical practice in the teaching of English literature. The experience of the author of this paper in teaching English literature in the rural college classroom for six years has taught her that the English literature teacher cannot afford to have a myopic vision of restricting herself to using the English language only in her classroom interaction but she has to be a comfortable translator in order to reach out to her students and make them comprehend the nuances of the various texts included in their English literature curriculum. Translating a text while teaching in the classroom becomes not only a critical activity where the teacher is decoding the text but it is also a creative activity where she is simultaneously converting the text in to (an)other language. Thus the translation activity makes the teacher both a critic and a creative person at the same time. It can be said that our plurilingual existence has also extended to our classroom teaching where the ability to speak and understand more than one language at the least is a necessity.

Translation creates a bridge between two or more cultures and languages thereby it becomes a way of making connections. This ability of translation to connect with (an)other is very crucial when seen from the perspective of the rural and semi-rural classroom teaching of the English literature. The personal experience of the author of this paper has revealed time and again that when the text is read and analyzed with the help of translation student participation and creative engagement with the text on the part of the student increases in the classroom. The students become more focused on the text and they make efforts to interact thereby better their analytical skills. This analytical reading on the part of the student, no doubt, gives them the opportunity to develop the skills of creative reading. Teaching and learning English literature with the help of translation thus becomes a far more pleasurable activity and not a mere mechanical one. Learning and teaching English literary texts through translation makes the students engage with a foreign culture and language in conjunction with their own language and culture. Thus by teaching English literary texts through translation enables the students to comprehend literary production in relation to their linguistic and cultural location. Teaching English literature through translation thus creates a connection or communication between the culture and language

of the text and that of the student. Translation as a pedagogical activity in teaching English literature in the classroom helps to locate the student in relation to the English language. She understands that reading and analysing literature is a holistic process and it cannot be done in isolation. The act of translating the English literary text to make it comprehensible in the rural and semi-rural classroom opens up the possibility of viewing the text and its culture in conjunction with the culture where the student is located. She understands that reading the literature of (an)other culture and language is not an alienated process rather reading literature is always, at the least, dialogic. Translation as a technique both of teaching and of reaching out to students in the rural classrooms of the English literature course evince that both teaching and reading the literary text is a way of exploring connections and communication between different cultures and languages. Literature cannot be read in isolation neither can it be put into water-tight compartments depending on language. Teaching English literature in the classroom through translation re-establishes that reading literature is not monologic; at best it is dialogic with various standpoints and the reconciliation of various points of views.

The primary role played by literature is to hear the other. In order to hear and understand (an)other there must be a willing engagement with differences. Plurality demands a perspective that would view the self not as an individual but as a human existing in a society in relation to other humans. Plurality evince that nothing is one-sided and it attempts to understand (an)other's perspective by hearing the voices of the other. Pluralism enables to take "cognizance of the immense diversity that characterizes our world" (Chanda 120). Human beings share the world with others, who are different from each other. Our relations with others depend on our ability to understand, accept and negotiate the difference that we encounter, whether it is through practical/physical or literary/imaginative contact (Chanda 120). Translation as an activity is quintessential as it helps to not only hear but also understand (an)other. It not only dissolves linguistic barriers but also helps to move beyond cultural barriers. Teaching and learning English literature in the classroom then become a mutual process as both (the teacher and student) tries to hear and understand (an)other. So teaching and learning English literature, in this context, through translation makes it possible to listen to the other. The translating activity makes it possible to relate to the other thereby make both the teaching and learning process enjoyable

and relational. The pluralist viewpoint prompts us to see reality as constituted by interaction between many subject positions. Thus, relations between beings originate in and are sustained by the human will, and directed by the human's ethical sense, i.e., how he or she is socialized to relate to an Other. Unity is thus not imposed, given or decreed – rather solidarity, relations and active engagement, create collectives, which form the plurally perceived world (Chanda 120). Translation activity has become a part of our being in the plural context; it is a way of living, a method of teaching for the Indian plurilingual teacher of English literature. She has to teach and translate simultaneously in order to hear and understand (an)other thereby make the teaching learning process a meaningful one.

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## D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* as an autobiography: A Comparative Study

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**Abstract:**

This paper examines D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* through the lens of autobiography while questioning the limits of such a reading. It first addresses two dominant critical approaches to the novel — the psychological reading centered on the Oedipus complex and the autobiographical reading that treats the text as personal confession — and argues that both risk reducing the work's fictional complexity. Using Lawrence's own letter to Edward Garnett, biographical parallels between the Morel and Lawrence families, and the mirrored relationships of Paul/Jessie-Miriam and Paul/Alice-Clara, the study traces how Lawrence reshapes lived experience into art rather than direct record. Freudian theory is applied not because Lawrence had read Freud, but because the novel independently illustrates similar patterns of maternal attachment, sexual division, and emotional conflict. The paper concludes that *Sons and Lovers* is autobiographical only in a limited, fictionalized sense: it borrows the shape of Lawrence's early life and relationships, yet transforms them to explore broader tragedies of love, civilization, and the divided modern self.

**Keywords:** D. H. Lawrence, autobiographical novel, Oedipus complex, bildungsroman, Freudian criticism

There have been two traditional approaches to *Sons and Lovers*, one of which examines the novel as a psychological text focusing on the concept of oedipus complex; the second of which treats it as an autobiographical text. The first approach risks reducing the novel to a case history, and the second undermines the effectiveness of the novel as a fiction by considering it as a confessional autobiography. Modern criticism has not been in favour of biographical interpretation of literary texts for the reason that when writers use material from their own lives they shape it for a purpose other than confessional or personal record. Nonetheless

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much commentary on *Sons and Lovers* has been dominated by the autobiographical issue because the novel is so clearly based on the pattern of bildungsroman by offering clues as to how Lawrence has viewed his emotional and aesthetic maturation, and critics have been regularly forced into the awkward corner of both accepting and denying the importance of the issue. Gamini Salgado in the first case book insisted that this novel should not be read as a personal apologia but over the third of his introduction is taken up with the problem. (Salgado, Gamini. *Sons and Lovers: A Casebook*). *Sons and Lovers* is as autobiographical as Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*. John Middleton Murry rightly observes that *Sons and Lovers* appears as the gesture of a man who makes the heroic effort to liberate himself from the matrix of his own past (Murry, Thomas. *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence*). So we can consider *Sons and Lovers* truly as an autobiographical novel but in a strictly limited sense.

No reading of *Sons and Lovers* can neglect the explanation D.H. Lawrence himself offered for it in a letter to Edward Garnett, his literary mentor on 19 November 1912, the day after he had sent the completed manuscript of the novel to the London publisher Duckworth for whom Garnett was a reader. It follows this idea:

A woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class and has no satisfaction in her own life. She has had a passion for her husband so the children are born of passion and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers-first the eldest then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother- urged on and on. But when they come to manhood they can't love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives and holds them... As soon as the young men come into contact with women there is a split. William gives his sex to a fribble and his mother holds his soul. But the split kills him because he doesn't know where he is. The next son gets a woman who fights for his soul-fights his mother. The son loves the mother- all the sons hate and are jealous of the father. The battle goes on between the mother and the girl with the son as object. The mother gradually proves stronger because of the tie of blood. The son decides to leave his soul in his mother's hands, and, like his elder brother go for passion. He gets passion. Then the split begins to tell again. But almost unconsciously, the mother realises what is the matter and begins to die. The son casts off his mistress, attends to his mother dying. He is left in the end naked of everything, with the draft towards death. "*It is a great tragedy, and I tell you I have written a great book. It is the tragedy of thousands*

*of young men in England .”* (Boulton, James and Margaret. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*), and Lawrence changed the title from *Paul Morel* to the more generalising *Sons and Lovers*.

If we make a comparative study we find a close resemblance between Paul Morel, the protagonist and D. H. Lawrence, the creator. There exist certain written documents by Lawrence and his sister Ada that establish the close resemblance of Walter and Gertrude Morel with Arthur and Lydia Lawrence. Lawrence's father was married to the grand daughter of a Nottingham lace manufacturer as Mr. Morel did and just like Paul's parents Lawrence's parents had frequent quarrels which made Mrs. Morel to despise her husband. It was an endless battle between Lydia's sophistication and Arthur's coarseness, between her middle class pretensions and his animal-like zest for life. They violently quarrelled with each other causing a terrible fright to the children. Lawrence described to a friend how he saw his parents marriage: *"Their marriage life has been one carnal bloody fight. I was born hating my father as early as ever I can remember... This has been a kind of bond between me and my mother. We have loved each other almost with the husband and wife love, as well as filial and maternal."* (Boulton, James and Margaret. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*). Mrs. Lawrence turns to her sons after her disillusionment in marriage. In this novel the elder son of Mrs. Morel, William (Arthur) was her favourite but after the death of him in London at a very young age Mrs. Morel turns to her younger son Paul (David) in order to fill the emotional void of her. A serious attack of pneumonia at the age of seventeen brought his mother very close to him and the special kind of bond was born between them. In *Family Romances* Freud remarks *"the influence of sex is already in evidence for a boy is far more inclined to feel hostile impulses towards his father than towards his mother and has a far more intense desire to get free from him than from her."* (Freud, Sigmund. *Family Romances*). In this sense the tragedy for Paul Morel and 'thousands of young men in England' is that this is not a childhood phase but a condition which seems to carry on into later years partly because their mothers dissatisfied with their own sexual relationships in marriage have actively transferred their sexual desire on to their sons. This desires cannot be expressed and acted upon because they are incestuous and incest is a major taboo. The mothers react by sublimating their feelings into other forms of desire: possessiveness towards, or claims to power over the son. Freudian ideas are now-a-days fairly familiar, particularly the notion of the male infant developing an oedipus complex in

which he realises that his parents have a sexual relationship and consequently becomes jealous of the father. (Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*). However when Lawrence wrote this novel *Sons and Lovers* he had not studied Freud closely and had not become fully acquainted with the theory of oedipus complex. And yet this novel does illustrate to a large extent, the theory which has been propounded by Freud, through the relation of Mrs. Morel (mother) and William (elder son) and Mrs. Morel (mother), and Paul (younger son).

The love affair of Lawrence and Jessie serves as the basis for the love affair of Paul and Miriam both on its positive and negative sides. A conflict soon developed between Lawrence and Jessie because she was inclined towards the sexual relationship with Lawrence without marriage. In this novel the relationship between Paul and Miriam is exactly the same because Miriam is Puritanical by temperament. Eventually Paul was able to establish sexual relationship with Miriam in spite of her disinclination like Lawrence. Miriam is not exactly a picture of Jessie chambers but a composite character with elements of several real women in Lawrence's life. These women included Helen, Louie and Agnes Halt. In this novel Miriam represents the spiritual love. Afterwards Lawrence began in an affair with a married woman by the name of Alice Dax. Alice was deeply interested in the campaign which was then going on in favour of the rights of women. Eventually Alice had broken off her adulterous relationship with Lawrence. In this novel Paul-Clara relationship tells the same story. Clara is not only modelled on Alice Dax but also upon certain other women in the life of Lawrence. These persons were Miss Corke and Miss Burrows. In this novel Clara represents the carnal love. The relation between Paul and Miriam is a kind of spiritual love, yet nothing but his oedipus complex prevented him from marrying her. Both Mrs Morel and Miriam desire Paul's love and affection and it ate up the self of Paul. The tormented soul of Mrs. Morel said: 'She'd leave me no room, not a bit of room' and Paul made a distance with Miriam to console his mother by frankly admitting that he could only give Miriam his friendship nothing more. On the other hand Clara's physical attraction also failed to bring Paul out of his psychological complexity. Mrs Morel's miseries and Paul's emotional crisis ended with the tragic death of Mrs Morel. Paul who gave morphia with night milk to her mother whispered mournfully: ' My love, my love- oh, my love'. The real agony was that he had nowhere to go. Freud explaining how certain individuals who are divided into two directions about sex develop

a kind of physical importance in relationships summarises:

" where they love they do not desire, and where they desire they cannot love. They seek objects which they do not need to love in order to keep their sensuality away from the objects they love". ( Freud, Sigmund. *On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love*). 'Love' here means sexual love as opposed to mere affection, and Freud's description holds for Paul Morel where he loves (for example his sexual relationship with Miriam) he doesn't desire; where he desires (i.e his mother) he can't love. He seeks women whom he doesn't need to love (Miriam, Clara) in order to keep his sensuality away from the woman he does love (his mother). In this context it should be mentioned that some of the events of the novel are not wholly based on the real life incidents of D. H. Lawrence which often led to confusion. Jessie Chambers whom Lawrence had sent a draft of the novel was disappointed because she felt that the novel had not accurately portrayed the real story of her relationship with Lawrence. (Chambers, Jessie. *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*). Moreover D. H. Lawrence got married with Frieda von Richthofen and both of them remained together until the death of Lawrence. (Semansky, Chris. *Critical Essays on Sons and Lovers*). The portrayal of Paul in this novel is a fairly authentic portrayal of Lawrence himself but in an any complete sense. It is hardly surprising that psychoanalytic of *Sons and Lovers* have been extremely popular in the history of criticism of the novel.

*Sons and Lovers* is a book about modern civilization as well as about forms and perversions of love, but for Lawrence problems of civilization must always be focused on problems of personal relationships. Lawrence himself said, "*the autobiography in it had been fictionalized*" (Lawrence, David Herbert. *Sons and Lovers*, 1913). Lawrence told Jessie Chambers that this book was not truth in the literal sense of the world but *an adoption from life as all art must be*. (Black, Michael. *The Early fiction*).

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# Generations at Crossroads: Aging, Authority, and Youth Resistance in *Shontaan* (2024)

Saddam Hossain<sup>1</sup>



## Introduction

Generational conflict generally means the disagreement leading to arguments that arise between people of different age groups, often between older and younger generations. This conflict typically emerges from differences in values, beliefs, lifestyles, communication styles, and attitudes shaped by the distinct historical, social, and cultural contexts that each generation experiences while growing up. For example, older generations may value tradition, hard work, and stability, while younger generations might prioritize innovation, flexibility, and social progress. These differing priorities can lead to misunderstandings in families, workplaces, and society at large.

Bengali cinema has been a key economic and social institution. A definitive history of Bengali cinema presents an alternative understanding to the currently influential notion of the Hindi film as the “Indian” or “National” cinema.

Generational conflict, a tension between different age groups over values, choices, and lifestyles, has long been a central theme in Bengali cinema. These films often reflect the evolving socio-cultural landscape of Bengal, highlighting the friction between tradition and modernity, duty and freedom, collectivism and individuality.

In Bengali films, generational conflict is often portrayed through the parent-child relationship, where the older generation holds on to traditional beliefs, while the younger generation seeks personal freedom and modern values. This conflict is rooted in broader issues like arranged marriage vs. love marriage, joint

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family vs. nuclear family, gender roles, and career choices. A classic example is *Apur Sansar* (1959), where Satyajit Ray gently shows generational transition through Apu's life. His journey reflects a shift from following traditional expectations to making his own choices and building his own identity. The conflict is quiet but meaningful, showing how Bengali middle-class values were gradually transforming over time. In contrast, recent films like *Shontaan* (2024) by Raj Chakrabarty show these conflicts in a more direct and emotional way. The film highlights how communication between parents and children often breaks down, even when both sides care about each other. This emotional distance is shown through arguments as well as quiet unspoken moments, highlighting the complexity of familial bonds.

In these stories, parents are usually shown as symbols of sacrifice, duty, and tradition, while children represent the impulse of change, independence, and global influence. So, generational conflict in Bengali films is not just about family problems—it reflects larger changes in society.

### ***Shontaan* (2024)**

*Shontaan* (2024), directed by Raj Chakrabarty, is a poignant Bengali family drama exploring the strained relationship between aging parents and their self-centred son. Mithun Chakraborty portrays Saradindu, a devoted father who, after being humiliated by his son Indranil (Ritwick Chakraborty) for seeking financial help for his ailing wife's surgery, takes legal action against him. The courtroom becomes a battleground for familial duty and moral reckoning, with Subhashree Ganguly delivering a compelling performance as the lawyer Indrani. The film delves into themes of generational neglect and parental sacrifice, culminating in a tragic yet redemptive resolution that underscores the enduring bonds of family.

### **Research Objectives**

- To critically examine the representation of generational conflict in *Shontaan* (2024).
- To analyse how character values, behavioral patterns, and interpersonal relationships construct and reflect generational divides in the selected films.
- To investigate the use of parent-child relationships as a narrative framework for articulating tensions between aging authority and youth resistance.
- To assess the role of tradition and modernity in shaping

intergenerational tensions and identity formations within the narratives.

**Multigenerational Family Systems Theory:**

The multigenerational transmission process describes how small differences in the levels of differentiation between parents and their children lead over many generations to marked differences in differentiation among the members of a family. This theory emphasizes that pattern of behaviour, emotional functioning, and relationship dynamics are passed down through generations. It explains how emotional dysfunction or conflict in one generation may affect future generations if not addressed.

In *Shontaan* (2024), the parents- Saradindu Bose and Meghamala Bose sacrifice everything for their children Indranil, which leads to emotional fusion (a concept from Bowen), where personal identity is lost in the family role. The children, once grown, reject this fusion in harsh ways. But Indranil's neglect and selfishness may represent behaviours modelled by previous generations, illustrating Bowen's multigenerational transmission process. The emotional trauma and bitterness faced by Saradindu and Meghamala hint at unresolved patterns of abandonment and ingratitude, which may repeat in the children's future families.

Scene (15:32 – 15:45)

Indranil to Saradindu: *“Ha jantrona to hochche mayer... seta ma ke bolte dao..tumi somane bole jachcho..satti baba...kobe je sense hobe tomar”*

This emotional scene from *Shontaan* captures the multigenerational tensions centering around the accident faced by Meghamala during Durga Dashami. Indranil, the son of Saradindu and Meghamala, who was busy with his friends, partying, had no time for his elderly parents. He was busy enjoying his life with his wife and friends. He barely picked up the call from his parents. When he picked up his father's call he informed him about her mother's accident. When Indranil reached the hospital, Meghamala denied being in pain and agreed to what Indranil said showing her immense love and trust on his son. She, being the mother tried to prove to herself that what his son will decide, will be the best for her. While Indranil being non-chalant about his mother's accident, was in a rush to go back to his party. He thought that her operation would be a waste of money and tried to avoid it by mentioning about second opinion. Meghamala, though was in pain, ignored it continued to ask Indranil about his health and that of his son, too showing that a child might ignore his parents but parents overlook

their own problems to take care of their child.

Scene (17:20 – 18:00)

Saradindu to Indranil: *“Tor maa er gall bladder er operation e sob taka khorcha hoye geche”*

Indranil to Saradindu: *“Are sala! Oi taka ta puro khorcha kore bose acho”*

This scene focuses on the emotional and financial strain faced by Saradindu Bose when his wife met an accident and doctor suggested knee replacement. Saradindu is a middle-class man for whom arranging 4 lakhs was impossible and his son, who neglected his parents' avoided operation because for him, spending so much money for his parents seemed unimportant. He tried to ignore the topic, telling them about second opinion. When he got to know that they have spent the Mediclaim for his mother's gall bladder operation, he expressed his disgust to his father. He did not want to take any responsibility of his parents, failed to understand their emotions and tried to postpone his mother's much needed knee replacement.

Scene (44:18 – 48:25)

Saradindu to Indranil: *“Mane kaj kore promotion pcchis na?”*

Indranil to Saradindu: *“Sudhu kaj kore ajkal ar promotion pawa jay? Tumi baire berou na, takiye dekho taholei bujhbe, duniya ta palte geche.”*

Indranil to Saradindu: *“Uff ami na jntm tumi manbe na. Baba eije tomar ei values ache na kono du paisa dam nei. Ekta help chaichi korte parcho na. Saradin Pablo Pablo Pablo. Ei to lege gelo to Pablor, ki korle amar cheler haat ta puriye dile to. Ekta kaj, Baba ekta kaj tumi thik kore korte paro na jate ektu hekpful hou? Ektu upokar hoy?”*

This scene captures a strong generational and ethical conflict between Saradindu and his son Indranil. Indranil approaches to his father, asking for a favour and quickly shifted the discussion of knee replacement. He asked his father to take help from one of his father's friends, belong from ruling political party. But Saradindu has moral and ethical values which he can never cross and fortunately he cannot change himself. Indranil failed to have those and wouldn't hesitate to take help from Sarit Uncle. His father denied to help and Indranil burst out in anger. While Saradindu believes that promotion doesn't require any unethical reference, hard work is enough, his son Indranil believes that it requires networking, influence and others. There is a strong conflict between the values of father and son. His father wants him to be morally correct while Indranil just wants to get a promotion

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even by breaking morality and ethics.

Scene (51:27 – 52:41)

Saradendu to Indranil: “*Actually 12 bachar chesta korar por ei reunion ta hochche jani na er pore sabra sathe dekhao hobe ki na*”.

Indranil to Saradendu: “*Ekta din adda na mere amar ekta help korte parchona. please. I shall be obliged... cholo ami tomake metro station e pouche dichchi...r e cholo tumi metro er ac khete khete chole jabe..chinta koro na ami pouche dichchi...cholo cholo...*”

This scene from Shontaan is loaded with selfishness. Saradindu had a school reunion was possible after 12 years of trying. He was way too much excited to visit that reunion. Suddenly Indranil arrives to their flat and asks his father to go to his flat and wait for his wife Riya who has forgotten to take the house key with her. He orders his father to go and wait in their flat as Indranil has an important meeting to attend. To him his father’s reunion has no value and it’s waste of time. Rather he thinks helping him is more important. He showed that he has no respect for his father’s happiness. He forced his father to go to their flat. Saradindu being extremely helpless had to listen to his son. He let go of his much awaited to reunion to help his son. It reflects how his father has no voice in front of his son just because they on him. He couldn’t protest, he couldn’t refuse, and rather he had to agree to what his son demanded.

Scene (59:47 – 1:02:17)

Saradendu to Indranil: “*Babui, Tor maa r cholte parche na re... kono rokome wheel chair e.*”

Indranil to Saradendu: “*O diyechhe wheel chair...bhalo koreche... wheel chair chara to mayer hata chola control e kora jacche na.*”

Saradendu to Indranil: “*Dr. bolchen...*”

Indranil to Saradendu: “*O Dr. Bolbei. Tumio fot kore office e keno chole ele? Phone korte amake. aar eita ki jama pore eshecho? Ekta bhadrostro jama porbe to! keno koro e rokom? e sob sympathy adayer cheshta? e gulo pore ghure berao? odbhut!*”

Saradendu to Indranil: “*Tui amake 3 lakh taka dhar dite parbi ?*”

Indranil to Saradendu: “*Dhar? Eta abar ki natok? Dhar niye ki korbe tumi? Maa er operation?*”

Saradendu to Indranil: “*Toke ami je bhabei hok diye debo.*”

Indranil to Saradendu: *Koto shodh korbe, chukiye debe amar jana ache. Amake na charo baba...amake charo! Amar khoroch samparke tomar kono idea nei- ei je natun gari ta kinlam, bari r gari miliye koto taka emi tomar kono dharana ache? Charo! Ei*

*Evolving Convergences*

*je Pablo ke jei school e dilam...aaj kale ekta school e bachchader admission e eto taka lage kono to idea nei. Ki kore thakbe? chele ke to bina paisai manush koriye dile.*

Saradendu to Indranil: *Dekh khub dorkar na hole ami ekhane ashtam na.*

Indranil to Saradendu: *Bollam toh! bolechi toh second opinion nebo , pain killer dao toh, pain killer diye dao.*

Saradendu to Indranil: *Tui bujhte chaichis na kno this is an emergency.*

Indranil to Saradendu: *Emergency er jonno taka rakhe manush. Tomar taka koi? Taka nei kno?*

Saradendu to Indranil: *Amar sorbosso lagiye diyechi toke manush korar jonno. Karon tor bhobissyot chilo amader kache the biggest emergency.*

Indranil to Saradendu: *Eta emergency na investment? Haan? Tumi toh invest korecho. Tarpor mota kore shoodh tulbe bole. Etake bole good investment. Ishoper golper shonar dim para hash. Pet ta Jodi kete daona ar kintu dim pabena. Sob kintu fokka. Maa er operation er jonno ki korbo boloto? Bati hath e rastay giye bosbo?*

Saradendu to Indranil: *Byass. Byasssss*

Indranil to Saradendu: *Eki. Ki j korona. Ki clumsy na tumi uff.*

Saradendu to Indranil: *Sorry*

Indranil to Saradendu: *Eta abar ki?*

Saradendu to Indranil: *Glass er dam. Kom hobe hoyto. Keep the change.*

This scene reflects deep emotional confrontation of a father to his son. The conversation is between Saradindu and Indranil regarding Meghamala's knee replacement. Saradindu visited Indranil's office to request him to lend him 4 lakhs as it is a medical emergency. But that disgusted Indranil. He made fun of his father's financial condition and added that giving him money will be a loss. He started explain his father about his lavish lifestyle, his expenses to maintain his status. He wanted to get rid of all the responsibilities of his parents showing his selfishness, his lack of ability to understand his parent's emotions. He even said that his father's appearance, his shirt embarrassed him and probably it's a trick to show people that he is financially unstable to gain sympathy. He disrespected his father in his office. He showed that his parents are an unimportant baggage for him which he wants to get rid of. His unavailability for his parents is clearly portrayed from his behaviours.

Scene (1:12:53 – 1:14:19)

Indranil to Saradendu: *“Naa aste kotha bolar toh kono karon nei.*

*Sobai januk. Ekjon baba tar cheler against e case koreche. Khete paona naki? Dibbi toh ekta shundor jamakapor pore bose bose adda marcho. Jotto bekar er dol. Tomar ki chai jno? Attention. Tumi baba hisabe ekta drishtanto khara korte chao.”*

Saradendu to Indranil: *“Abar obhodrota korle chor mere tomay bhodrota sekhabo. You have heard it loud and clear.”*

Indranil to Saradendu: *“Accha. Acha. Shune niyechen to sobai Ei bhodrolok k ami disown korchi. Pore keu amay dosh deben na. Khub mamla mokoddomar sokh na, I’ll see you in court. Mone thake jano.”*

Indranil got to know that his father filed a case against him. He threatened Saradindu in front of his flat members. He insulted other elderly members as well. This shows how he did not care about the social prestige of his father. He also insulted others which shows how he doesn’t respect people elder than him.

Scene (1:46:50 – 1:48:00)

Indranil to Saradendu and Meghamala: *“Na na shono shono shono, shono na, accha kothay ki bolte hoy sense ache tomader? Kono sense ache? Ekta kotha bolbena kintu Riya r baba maa er samne. Sudhu hashbe ar khabe. Ar kono kotha bolbena. Ki kore bhable bolo toh amr biye hobe ei abashoner oi dhojamarka community hall e. Shono eta amar biye five star e reception hobe, ar nahole ami biye korbona. Thikache. Bhebe nao ki korbe.”*

Meghamala and Saradindu were middle class and they have spent their life in a very minimal way. But Indranil had bigger dreams, rather show off. He wanted to show off in front of the society. He mocked his parent’s decision of arranging his reception part in their apartment’s community hall. He wanted to throw a party in a five star hotel. He was even embarrassed of his parent’s appearing which shows lack of empathy towards them. Indranil was always self-centred and never bothered to understand his parents. His mother decided to sell her gold jewellery which was a valuable piece for them. Saradindu mentioned that they would lose everything but a mother’s love and wish to fulfil her son’s stopped Saradindu. They have put every last savings of themselves to fulfil the demands of their son. But in return they never got any respect back from Indranil. He was busy in his own world dealing with high class people, leaving behind his old, sick parents.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The Bengali film *Shontaan* (2024) powerfully depicts the emotional and psychological tensions arising from generational conflict within Indian families. The films explore the communication gap, changing values, and emotional alienation that often emerge

between the older and younger generations in contemporary society. *Shontaan* (2024) presents a more intense and dramatic portrayal of generational conflict. It focuses on the sacrifices made by parents for their children, and how those sacrifices are often forgotten or undervalued once the children become independent. The film sensitively portrays how the elderly often feel neglected, despite their continued emotional investment in their children's lives. The film raises questions about duty, gratitude, and emotional responsibility within the family. The children's growing detachment and the parents' silent suffering reflect a deep emotional divide, which serves as a critique of the erosion of traditional familial values in the face of modernization and materialism. It presents a poignant commentary on the evolving parent-child relationship in Bengali society. The film emphasizes that generational conflict is not just about differing opinions or values, but about emotional needs, recognition, and mutual respect. *Shontaan* (2024) serves as a warning against neglecting one's roots and relationships. This story resonates with audiences by presenting relatable situations that mirror real-life family dynamics.

In conclusion, *Shontaan* (2024) highlights the emotional complexity of generational conflict in Bengali families, using cinematic narratives to reflect societal changes. This research serves as reminders of the importance of empathy, open communication, and emotional presence in bridging generational gaps. These films not only entertain but also educate, encouraging viewers to reflect on their own familial bonds and the timeless need for love and respect across generations.

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# The Power Sector Reforms in Northern India: An Impact Analysis

Dr. Sanjukta Niyogi<sup>1</sup>



## Abstract:

**T**he objective of this study is to assess the impact of Power sector reform in India on Northern region. This study has been attempted to search whether the reforms in power sector have any significant impacts on economy focusing on selected economic variables. For the said purpose this study focuses on 9 states of Northern region of India and data has been collected on power sector and various economic variables from the Central Electricity Authority and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) respectively, for the period of 1991 to 2020. Three composite panel indexes have been constructed and panel data analysis techniques are applied here. The results show that the energy reform has positive impact on North Indian economy. The power reform index has relationship with both economic indicator index and utility index. The study has been concluded that the reform of energy sector has been significant impact on overall economy of the northern part of the country.

*Key Words:* Power reform index, Economic Indicator Index, Utility Index, Robust, Impact of Reform.

*Jel Code:* Q01, Q02, Q04, Q05.

## 1. Introduction

Energy is the leading source for upliftment of economic growth and development. After 1991 India started economic reform and the Govt. had taken most of the crucial sectors such as telecommunication, infrastructure, industry, by road communication, railway, and lastly power sector. However, the major challenges the power sector had to face during this time period were immense pressure on energy demand with very less energy generation, lack of installation capacity of power, widespread inefficiency, huge transmission and distributional loss. To overcome all these shortcomings that the GOI have taken

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various reform policies from the very beginning. The GOI after a certain time period allowed the private participation in power sector for its development. After liberalisation, in 1991, Govt of India allowed the private companies to enter electricity market especially installation capacity, generation and distribution sector to encourage greater private investments for increasing efficiency through competition. Later period, electricity comes under in concurrent list. The basic targets of the power ministry are policy formation, execution of such policies, increasing private as well as public investments, maintain the administration of thermal power plant and various sub-sectors of power sector such as installation capacity, generation, transmission and distribution, which are the pillars of power sector. For this reason, all power sector reform policies are based on these three parts of sub-sectors. After implementation of various power reform policies, power installation capacity, generation, and transmission have grown gradually over the time. The basic problem of the Indian power sector from the initial period was huge supply shortage with excess demand pressure. Addressing this supply demand mismatch problem was the basic target of all power reform policies up to late 90s. After privatisation in Indian power sector the efficiencies have been improved due to competition. The Electricity Act 2003 (EA 2003) is the game changer energy reform policy in India. Installation capacity of renewable energy and its generation have been taken place in India in the post Electricity Act 2003. Power generation, power installation, and power transmission have been grown rapidly after 2003. Hence, this study assesses the impact of reform on economy especially on Northern states of India.

This study has constructed a power reform index using three pillars of power sector such as power installation capacity, power generation, and power transmission. The power reform index has been constructed to capture overall changes in power sector due to reform. indicate energy demanded and actually energy supplied or transmitted. In this study year after 2003 impact of the reform have been assessed.

This study focused on north part of India because in northern part of India there is huge states variation in respect of geographical area as well as energy generation, energy installation capacity, transmission and lastly variations in energy consumption as well. The 9 states from Northern region are being considered in this study namely Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), Haryana, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Punjab, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan,

Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh (UP).

### **1.2. Review of relevant literature**

The required adequate motivation to discover the impact increasing power consumption on economic growth and development of the said economy have given by separate considerable empirical as well as theoretical literatures. The relationship between energy consumption and economic growth for the period of 1972 to 2006 in China has been empirically tested by Wang et al. (2011). Energy intensity is very high in China and limitations on energy usage distort GDP per capita as well as economic growth. Ghosh (2002) has explored the relationship or in other words impact of per capita electricity consumption during the period 1950s to 1997 on GDP of the economy. Narayan et al. (2003) have been investigating the impacts of electricity consumption on employment and real GDP of Australia. Similarly, Mozumder and Marathe (2006) have been tried to explore the relationship between electricity consumption and per capita GDP of the Bangladesh. Again, Pao and Fu (2013) dealt with impacts of clean and non-clean energy consumption on economic growth in Brazil and the study periods was from 1980 to 2009.

### **2. Objective of The Study**

The present study tries to analyse whether the reform policies of Indian power sector might create any impact on economy as a whole specially on Northern zone of India during the study period 1991 to 2020.

### **3. Data Source**

This study takes some major states of Northern zone of India such as Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, UP, Uttarakhand. This study is based on Indian power sector and state per capita GDP data in Northern region of India. The power sector stands upon four basic pillars such as power installation capacity of Northern zone, power generation of Northern zone, power transmission and distribution of Northern zone, power consumption of Northern zone.

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1) Construction of Three Index Namely Composite Power reform index, Utility Index, Economic Indicator Index by Using Robust Method for Northern Region of India**

A composite index of Power Reform, Utility, Economic Indicator of Northern region of India has constructed after using of robust index method. For construction of Indexes the study has been

considered the method of UNDP Goal Post.

#### **4.2) UNDP Goal-Post method**

In our data set several variables have different measurement units and if our keen interest to measure variation between states, the study has to consider normalisation of our data set of nine states of north. In this study for normalisation UNDP Goal-Post method have been considered

#### **4.3) Index Construction**

First, to compose index the study has to normalised all indicators after that we have to assign a suitable weight to them to construct a composite index. After normalisations of all variables in this study the simple average of respective normalised variables has been taken for index construction. In this study three index are constructed on Northern region such as

- I) Power reform index of Northern Region
- II) Economic Indicators Index of Northern Region
- III) Total Utility Index of Northern Region.

##### **4.3.1) Power Reform Index of North**

For construction of power reform index normalised of installed capacity, normalised of generation, normalise of transmission have been considered. After normalisations of tree variables, the simple average of these three variables has been taken.

##### **4.3.2) Economic Indicator Index of North**

For construction of economic indicator index normalisation of the variables such as per-capita GDP, per capita industrial energy consumption, per capita energy consumption for all sector except industrial consumption have been taken. The simple average of these three variables has been calculated for construction of index.

##### **4.3.3) Utility Index**

In the case of construction utility index normalisation of four variables such as per capita domestic energy consumption, per capita heavy industrial consumption of energy, per capita light and medium industry energy consumption, per capita commercial energy consumptions are being considered. The simple average of these four normalised variables has been calculated.

In this study the equations have to be estimated for impact assessment of energy reform in India.

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta X_{it} + u_{it} \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Where  $y$  is the dependent variable,  $\alpha$  is the intercept term,  $x_t$  is the set of independent variables,  $u_{it}$  is the disturbance term. With in  $X_{it}$   $i$  indicates nine cross sections units  $t$  denotes time series unit. Here,  $i$  is state and  $t$  is year.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

### **5.1 Preliminary Results**

Table 1 shows summary statistics of all variables. Second row of Table 1 provides mean of the variables; third row provides standard deviation of the variables. Table 1 provide minimum and maximum of the variables. Table 1 also displays number of observations (n) and number of states (N).

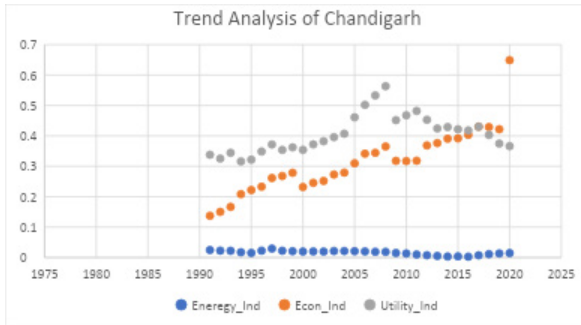
**Table 1: Summary Statistic**

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum	n	N
Installation Capacity	0.2329	0.2107	0	1	254	9
Generation	0.2534	0.2272	0	1	259	9
Transmission	0.4111	0.2887	0	1	258	9
Per Dom	0.2628	0.2096	0	1	259	9
Per Comm	0.2308	0.2593	0	1	259	9
Per Indus	0.2096	0.1895	0	1	249	9
Per Indus (hv)	0.1870	0.2276	0	1	270	9
Per Indus (L&M)	0.2742	0.2280	0	1	259	9
Per Utility	0.3257	0.2374	0	1	258	9
Per GDP	0.2367	0.2157	-0.075	1	259	9

Source: Author

Next, trend analysis of selected variables of each state is displayed in charts as follows:

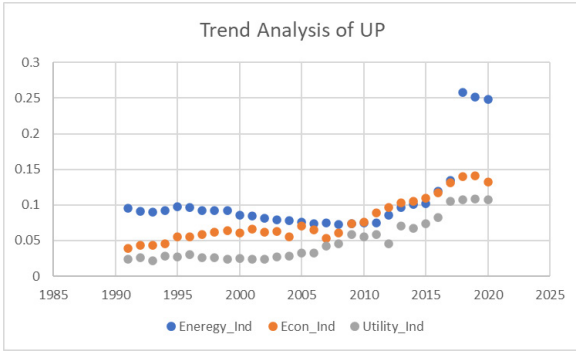
**A) Chart 1: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index, Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Chandigarh.**



Source: Author

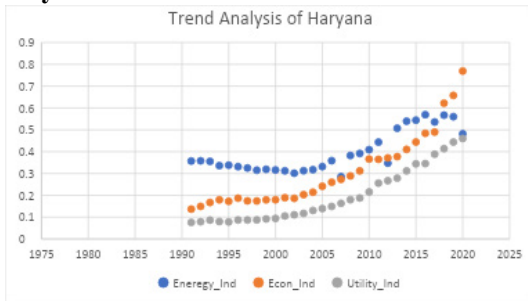
**B) Chart 2: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index,**

**Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Uttar Pradesh.**



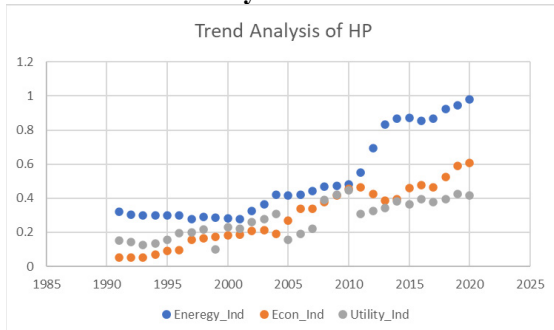
Source: Author

**B) Chart 3: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index, Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Haryana.**



Source: Author

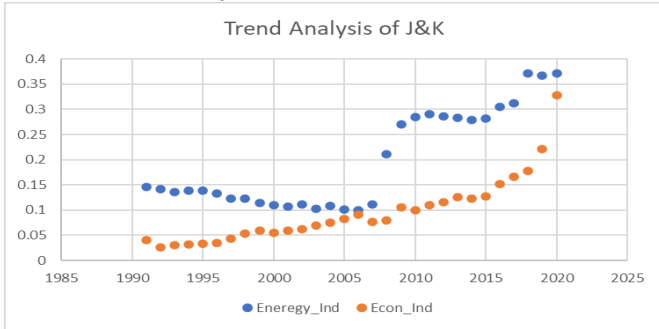
**D) Chart 4: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index, Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Himachal Pradesh.**



Source: Author

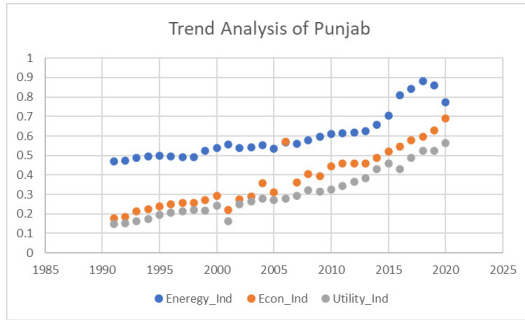
*Evolving Convergences*

**E) Chart 5: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index, Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Jammu and Kashmir.**



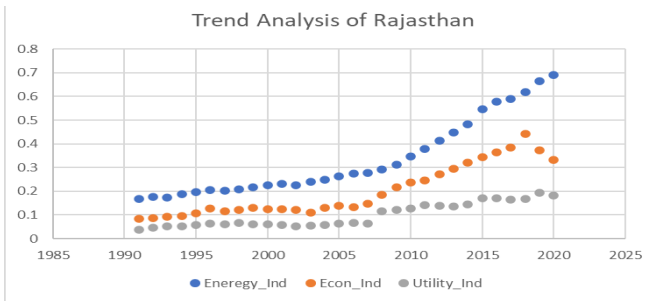
Source: Author

**F) Chart 6: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index, Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Punjab.**



Source: Author

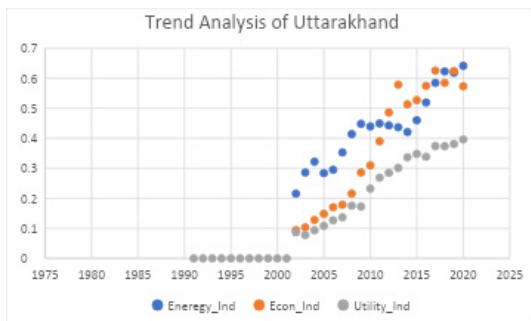
**G) Chart 7: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index, Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Rajasthan.**



Source: Author

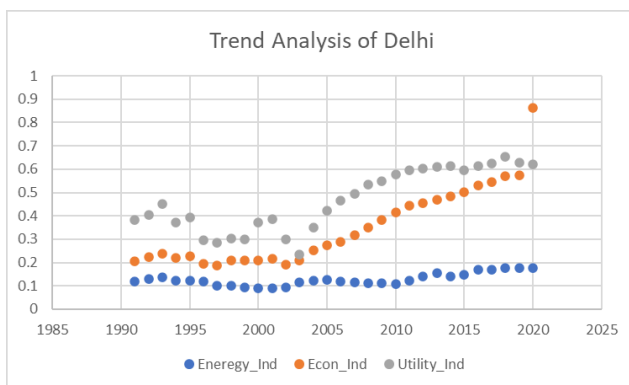
**H) Chart 8: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index,**

## **Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Uttarakhand.**



Source: Author

## **D) Chart 9: Trend Analysis of Power Reform Index, Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index of Delhi.**



Source: Author

Chart 1 to 9 exhibit trend analysis of indexes of nine states of North part of India. The above charts show an approximate smooth upward direction movement of power reform index curves for more or less all states. Similarly, the economic indicator index and utility index also move upward direction except Chandigarh. This more or less smooth upward curves indicate approximately a steady growth rate of these three indices. From the charts 1 to 9, we can conclude that after the reform year 2003 for most of the states there is positive and higher growth rate for all three Indices.

### **1.2 Main Results and Discussion**

Table 2 shows the estimated results of the relationship between economic indicator index and utility index with power reform

index in fixed effect and in random effect models. Using Hausman  $\chi^2$  this study selects fixed effect model (FEM) comparing random effect model (REM) in panel data analysis, and results indicate that FEM is more suitable than REM (Table 3). Table 3 shows the coefficient of power reform index is positively significant at 1% level for both economic indicator index and utility index. The constant term is only significant at 1% level. In case of economic indicator index, as 1 point of power reform index rise that will affects economic indicator index by 0.788 point, while 0.503 point of utility index increases as 1 point of power reform index rise.

**Table 2: Estimated Relationship between Power Reform Index with Economic Indicator Index and Utility Index for Northern Region of India.**

Variables	Economic Indicator (Model 1-FEM)	Utility_ Index (Model 2-FEM)	Economic Indicator (Mode 3- REM)	Utility Index (model 4- REM)
C	0.0269* (1.79)	0.0893*** (7.80)	0.0361 (0.91)	0.0896* (1.75)
Power_ Reform_ index	0.7875*** (16.82)	0.503*** (14.33)	0.7579*** (16.47)	0.4989*** (14.07)
R-squared (with in)	0.5319	0.4520	0.5319	0.4520
R_ Squared between	0.2043	0.0071	0.2043	0.0071
R Squared overall	0.2894	0.0220	0.2894	0.0220
F stat	282.99***	205.38***		
Wald chi2			271.15***	198.06***
Sigma_u	0.1475	0.1817	0.1080	0.1485
Sigma_e	0.09293	0.07053	0.09293	0.0705
Rho	0.7158	0.86714	0.5745	0.8161
Hausman $\chi^2$			12.00***	19.52***

Note: ‘\*\*\*’, ‘\*\*’ and ‘\*’ denote level of significance at 1%, 5% and 10%, respectively.

Source: Author

Table 2 the results are expressed in equations as

$$\text{Economic indicator}_t = 0.0269 + 0.7875 \text{ power index}_t \dots\dots\dots (5)$$

$$\text{Utility Index}_t = 0.0893 + 0.503 \text{Power index}_t \dots\dots\dots (6)$$

The result has suggested due to various energy reform policies in economy the Indian power sector has reorganised, also efficiencies of power sector has increased as a result the economic variables such as per-capita state GDP, per capita energy consumption of utilities and industries have affected positively. Thus, the Power sector reform has a positive significant impact on economy especially the northern part of the country. In the case of utility index, also the power sector reform impacted. Utility of four different categories have impacted due to reform in power sector positively.

### **7. Conclusion**

This study of the power sector reforms of northern zone of India have empirically investigated impacts on economy from 1991 to 2020. Several economics techniques such as panel data regression fixed effect random effect model, panel data regression with dummy, panel data regression with dummy interaction have been applied to find out existence of the connectivity between variables, such as for bi-variate between power reform index and economic indicator index and similarly between power reform index and utility index and finally between all economic variables with power reform index and its components have been measured. This study reports that reforms in power sector of Northern region creates long term effects on economy as a whole. Hence from this study it can be concluded that the implementation of various energy reform policies has a positive significant long-term impact on Indian economy especially on northern part of India.

\*No fund allocated from any financial institutions.

\*Conflict of interest: No.

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## Dokra craft of Dariapur : A heritage of Bengal

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### Abstract:

**A** tiny village Dariapur , near Gushkara ( District- Purba Bardhaman) is a place where Dokra or Dhokra, a traditional craft practiced since the Indus Valley Civilisation is nurturing and preserving a proud heritage of Bengal . Around 60-65 families are residing there and struggling to survive amidst poverty and misery. As such no sponsorship from any quarters is available and the newly launched Viswakarma Yojna by Central Government is almost unknown to them . I have visited the place recently and interviewed a few of them to understand their art, life and agony. A comprehensive planning is required to nurture and provide social security to these craftsmen.

**Key words:** Dokra, Artisan, Tribal, Community, folk-culture.

### Dokra : A civilizational tradition

Dokra is a traditional form of metal casting practiced for over 4000 years and is believed to date back to the Indus Valley Civilization, where the earliest use of bronze in the subcontinent has been found. Dancing Girl, a bronze statue recovered from the Mohenjo-daro region is an example of this. This statue is a paradigm of today's Dokra made using the lost-wax technique.

### Themes of Dokra

The term 'Dokra' is used to denote a nomadic group spread across the states of Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. They are from a tribal community whose specialty of work is strength and accuracy in designing; brassware products made through the lost wax process. The motifs depicted in their creations come from folk culture, while elephants, horses , owls , Hindu God and Goddesses especially Debi Durga , Lakshmi , Saraswati, Ganesh,

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Krishna with Radha are the most popular depicted creations . Not only do these designs look stylish, but also carry certain cultural connotations with them. Though a lot of artisans today have started making items such as candle stands, ashtrays, and pen stands, ear rings , they still keep the folk motifs intact.

Like any tribal community, folklore is a part of the Dokra art history as well, while also incorporating the major festivals celebrated in the respective region .

The Dokra arts are frequently used in religious rituals in households, starting with idols placed in the family temples and also used in interior decoration in drawing rooms. The Dokra art is unique because while most of the metal craftsmen are associated with hammering to mould the metal, the Dokras simply employ the lost wax technique. It is a conventional process of making metalware using casting, forging, or shaping and has been implemented in Indian craft for ages.



According to the available records, there was no difference between an artist and a craftsman in ancient India. Each group of craftsmen, such as the architects, poets, sculptors, painters, carpenters, and weavers were organized in guilds. The craftsmen learnt the nuances of their profession from masters and continued to promote the craft with every passing generation.

Religious aspects are intricately involved with the Dokra craft. Like any other folk tradition, before commencing any work, the Dokra artisan or group of Dokra artisans would worship and offer prayer using copper, brass, and other ferrous metals to the divine architect Visvakarma.

Several technical details regarding the *Madhu Chestan Vidhan*, or lost wax technique have been described in the ancient Indian texts for making solid or hollow idols. It has a huge repository of

details regarding metal work, such as the type of material that is to be used in the metal casting, the tools to be used, the temperature to be achieved, and other important details. For instance, the Śilparatna has described the use of tamarind wood, bamboo, and metals such as copper and brass for preparing the tools.

### **The Dokra Artist Community**

In Gourangpur Village ( now at Paschim Bardhaman ) at the border of Burdwan- Birbhum , there is a place , ‘ Dhekur Garh’ , where a community was living engaged in similar craft . We may consider this also as a reason of naming this craft as ‘ Dokra’ of Dariapur Community .

Originally, the castes associated with manufacturing, and artists in general were considered Sudras, which is the fourth and lowest caste according to the *Varna* system in Hinduism. During the early vedic period, these arts and crafts belonged to the Vaisya class, but over time this occupation was taken up by the artisan class, particularly Sudras. However, these craftsmen have remained socially immobile, contributing to the fact that their craftsmanship in metals was important heritage but socio economically not enriching the community .

The technique is named after the Dokra Damar tribes of West Bengal which is the traditional blacksmith community. These people have adopted a semi-nomadic lifestyle and are now found in places like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh, which are recognised as the tribal areas of India. In Dariapur , they are known as Karmakars , position in societal hierarchy is yet to be determined .



**Birsa Munda Statue In Dokra**

Lost wax casting tradition seems to be a natural tradition of India, which has been passed on through generations of master craftsmen. However, there is a traditional sophistication in styles and techniques, even when using modern techniques in their production are significantly different from the prehistoric, although the crafts themselves nowadays have a specific pattern, colour, form, and methods distinguishing their originality.

**The process :** The Dokras use the lost wax casting process to manufacture brass articles and images. This technique entails making a wax prototype of the item, coating it with terracotta, followed by melting the wax, a cavity is made around the terracotta model through which molten metal is poured to produce the final product.

The process of casting can be divided into four main stages: molding, casting, and finishing; and the other includes modelling. All the stages are critical so that every aspect of the finished product is visually appealing and correctly operational.

Although the basic technique is the same, there are regional variations in Dokra depending on the availability of materials. The Dokra artistes first make a clay model out of wax, which is then replaced with molten metal, either brass or bronze, through a lost-wax metal cast.

The casting is done using two kinds of processes – the traditional, hollow-casting method and solid casting. Solid casting is predominant in Telangana, whereas hollow casting is used in Central and Eastern India.

Initially, a core model of clay is made out of riverbed clay or local soil mixed with coal dust and rice husk. A mixture of beehive melted wax, melted tar and resin from local trees like the Dammar gum tree is fashioned into discs, this wax mixture is then made into strings by hand. Nowadays, a metal and wooden press is used to make wax strings, although artisans say these break easily and hence prefer traditional methods. Originally, only beeswax was used for this process. Today, paraffin wax or candle wax is easily available.

The clay model is decorated with these wax strings to make fine details and decorations by hand on the Dokra piece. In the hollow-casting method, this model is covered in layers of soil, sand, and jute and then sundried.

The solid-casting method uses a solid wax core instead of a clay core, thus making a clay or wax funnel with an opening on top.

Through the top, scrap metal pieces of brass/bronze are inserted, which melt into the mould through a firing process, traditionally known as annealing. Furnaces are prepared by heating wood and coal pieces.

After cooling, the cast is then carefully removed and demoulded to obtain the metal casted Dokra piece. Larger pieces of Dokra require extensive use of metal and wax, and these are made by experienced craftsmen.

### **Contemporisation of Dokra and problems associated with the craft**

Present-day Dokra artisans make numerous products, which include religious icons, utensils, artistic crafts, home decor items, as well as jewellery. The craft has also found a new market with urban customers who love the traditional models and workmanship of the craft.

Although the Dokra products are still in great demand, the craft encounters various problems regularly. Most of the present-day Dokra communities are not financially sound, many families had to abandon the craft and seek wage employment in the manufacturing industries or large cities like Kolkata in order to meet their daily needs. Besides the reduction of potential rural markets, artisans today have less product variation and have started looking for new markets with the help of government and voluntary organizations. The organization of crafts around certain geography has always had a social importance concerning the differentiation of the work and quality of production.

### **The Stylization and Symbolisms of Dokra Artistic Perception**

Dokra art is thoroughly meaningful, it embodies major beliefs, practices, and even life experiences of the community crafting it. The motifs are mainly the subjects from mystic nature, legends and myths, where subjects like elephants, horses, and owls are depicted frequently. These animals, however, are not only ornamental but are also loaded with symbolic connotations. For instance, the elephant has been used widely to symbolize strength or wisdom, and the owl to symbolize vigilance, and prosperity, among other attributes.

Further, any depiction is usually seen in the manner of everyday activities of women grinding corn, and men hunting or dancing. Through such depictions, the community have captured their way of life on metal. Originally this community belongs to Tribal community and hence they are innovative in their creations with

a basic reverence to the Mother Nature.

### **General Perspectives of the Cultural and Religious Importance of Dokra**

Some tribes in India have even used Dokra products as religious symbols during celebrations or even worship. They are thought to be imbued with this power and that is why they are used for worship both at home and in the public domain. Religious and ritualistic use of Dokra also helps to relate the people within the community, as the making of the products as well as their usage involves the efforts of several families, artisans, and even the whole community in general.

### **Interview with Rabibal Karmakar , a Dokra artisan of Dariapur**

**1. How many families are living in this village of Dokra ?**

Answer : 60-65 families, but 20-25 families are only engaged in this craft .

**2. Have any agricultural land to till ?**

Answer :No , most of us are living on this craft .

**3. What are the materials required for this craft ?**

Answer : Brass, Wax, Pitch , Wood and Coal, dhuno , polishing machine .

**4. From where you are procuring these ?**

Answer : Mainly Gushkara Market.

**5. Any Government help or support ?**

Answer : No, Authorities are assuring many things , but nothing is in reality.

**6. Where you are marketing these product ?**

Answer : Peoples are coming here to purchase the artefacts, we are also supplying to the traders in Sonajhuri hat, Amar kutir(Santiniketan), Kolkata, but no such network is there for marketing .

**7. What about education of your children?**

Answer : They are enrolled in the nearby School , but most of them are drop outs and no graduate is there in the community. After leaving school, they support us in making the artefacts.

**8. Any recognition from Government ?**

Answer : Yes , five artists have been awarded with the award from the President, but nothing changes.

**9. What is your monthly income ?**

Answer : No certainty is there. Very difficult to survive. We

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are not even receiving Rs 8000 per month given to other artists.

### **10. Is it true that many of you are alcohol addicts ?**

Answer : Earlier it was , yet now a few only are there , the evil has gone .

### **11. What is your demand ?**

Answer : We need capital, Cooperatives , social security and marketing network. Just you see condition of our house, rain pouring during rainy season. We are not getting the benefit of Government Schemes made for artists.

### **12. What are your products ?**

Answer : Idols of God and Goddess especially Durga, Ganesh, Saraswati, Elephant, Krishna, Radha, deer, Owls, Santal Couple and whatever order received, we could customise the same.

### **13. Why the price is apparently on higher side ?**

Answer : Because of labour and efforts required in the job.

### **14. Are your next generation is interested in continuing this craft?**

Answer : Unless Government is doing something for our survival, they will leave this profession to survive .

### **15. I have seen an Art Gallery and Sale Complex at the entry of your village. Is it functioning ?**

Answer : No, now it is closed and being used for tuition classes to our children .



### **Rabilal Karmakar, a Dokra artist displaying his art with his family members**

**Conclusion :** The poverty of the artists and apathy of the Central as well as State Government are toughest hurdles in their progress . A few of them were awarded by the Hon'ble President

of India and visited foreign countries also . But misery remains. Most of their children are drop outs from the nearby School and none has graduated , although the Gushkara Mahavidyalaya is only 3 kms away. Earlier most of them were victims of alcoholism and a major part of their hard earned money siphoned off in this social evil . Recently, awareness has been developed and they are awaiting for a comprehensive plan to revive this heritage craft . Another problem is their social status, though their position is in the lowest rank of the society , but they are yet to be recognized as Scheduled Caste or OBC as their title is Karmakar . NGOs may consider this area as a potential field to improve the quality of life of these artists. But the principal responsibility is of the Central as well as State Government to plan a comprehensive strategy to train them with induction of modern technology and through providing capital, loan with low interest and an effective network for marketing their products . IIM , Kolkata may associate itself to facilitate its popularity in the global market.

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# Reception of Selected YouTube Vlogs and Videos for Mental Health Support on University Graduates in Kolkata: A Study

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**Abstract:**

*Mental health has always been a taboo in our society. Its vitality these days, especially after the post-Covid period, is rapidly escalating. Mental disorders can be acquired genetically or may result from exposure to extreme adverse feelings, like anxiety, dejection, rivalry, insecurity, inferiority or superiority complex and at times as a result of disturbing family background. Mental health is crucial because it is the core foundation for an individual to adapt to their social environment. Understanding its sensitivity and importance, it requires ample public awareness. Additionally, the negative stigma acquired from society often leads to discriminatory attitudes and ill-treatment toward those dealing with mental illness. The advent of the New Media, notably 'YouTube', has unleashed potential and emerged as a foundation for exploring ways to fight loneliness and depression. It is a personal assistant providing video blogs, content, and online communities. YouTube is accessible to people at all levels of literacy. . YouTube has somewhat proven itself as a reliable friend next door. With the help of YouTube videos, one can quickly check the probable symptoms of diseases, depression, or mental illnesses and use it for informal entry-level counselling to formal mental healthcare treatment as needed. The study tries to fill the research gap by exploring the consumption of YouTube video content and its reception among tertiary students in Kolkata using mixed methods i.e content analysis of Bengali YouTube videos with keywords like "mental health," "mental illness," and "depression"*

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*among teenagers on algorithm basis and conducted a pilot study through survey method using convenience sampling technique, among college and university students, trying to explore their usage, time spent, implications, and behavioural changes while seeking mental health support through YouTube video content. This study highlights the popular topics on mental health-related content available in YouTube. It also identifies viewer engagement by analysing the number of views, subscriptions, comments, likes, and dislikes of selected topic-based video content each from 10 selected relevant YouTube channels on a random basis. YouTube video channels with more than 10,000 subscribers and videos with more than 10,000 views are considered for selection for analysis. The study finds that there are ample resources of mental health support video materials on YouTube, including vlogs by patients, personal stories, videos from medical professionals and psychiatrists, counselling by psychologists, and motivational videos to combat the initial stages of mental illness, loneliness, and depression. It is found that viewers also share and utilize experiences through this participatory media, which helps them in decision-making. The study reflects that YouTube has an unprecedented positive influence on its viewers.*

**Keywords:** *YouTube, Mental Health, Depression, Vlogs, Students.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Mental health has always been a taboo subject in society. Its vitality these days, especially after the post-Covid period, has surged. Mental disorders can be acquired genetically or may result from exposure to extreme adverse feelings, like anxiety, dejection, rivalry, insecurity, inferiority or superiority complex and at times as a result of disturbing family background. Mental health is crucial because it is the core foundation for an individual to adapt to their social environment. Understanding its sensitivity and importance, it requires ample public awareness. Additionally, the negative stigma from society often leads to discriminatory attitude and ill-treatment toward those dealing with mental illness. This reciprocation makes many people with mental disorders vulnerable and reluctant to seek help and choose to end their lives. The World Health Organization, in its June 2022 report, highlights the urgent need to identify and support mental health care. It states, "No health without mental health." Here, 'YouTube' appears as 'Aladdin's Magic Lamp' in combating this crisis. New media, notably 'YouTube', has unleashed potential and emerged as a foundation for exploring ways to fight loneliness and depression. It acts as a personal assistant providing video

blogs, content, and online communities. YouTube is accessible to people at all levels of literacy and economic background since it's a free platform. Launched on February 14, 2005, as a video-sharing platform, owned by Google, it is the second most visited website, Google Search Engine being the first. It has expanded its reach through mobile apps to access a broader audience. YouTube has somewhat proven itself as a reliable friend next door. With the help of YouTube videos, one can easily check the probable symptoms of diseases, depression, or mental illnesses and use it for informal entry-level counseling to formal mental healthcare treatment as per need. There are popular Bollywood movies like 'Dear Zindagi (2016)', 'Tamasha(2015)' which have skillfully identified and portrayed the vitality of Mental health among teenagers and the role of Social media to combat the stigma. With the rise of this participatory new media i.e Social media, it has given birth to new terms '*Narrowcasting*' and '*Netnography*'. Narrowcasting means creating and disseminating information and contents for specific group of mass or specialized audience section. Netnography (Villegas, 2022) is an extension term for ethnography where, online communities and cultures are studied. It includes online data collection from various sources like Social media platforms, vlogs n blogs, portals to develop insight and explore the trends and shifting nature of the social media and its audiences, their individual behaviours, ways of interaction and information consumption patterns.

### **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

YouTube being a massive repository of online video contents, how much popular it is in terms of utility and reliability regarding mental health awareness among the post-secondary students of Kolkata.

### **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

**RQ1.** How often do post-secondary students in Kolkata engage with YouTube videos on mental health (views, comments, likes, dislikes, subscriptions)?

**RQ2.** What types of mental health-related content do they watch and prefer to implement most?

**RQ3.** Who are the primary content creators of these videos and Vlogs?

**RQ4.** How comfortable are the post-secondary students in discussing mental health or sharing related YouTube contents with friends, relatives etc.?

**RQ5.** How much time do the post-secondary students in Kolkata spend watching YouTube videos for mental health support, and

what are the perceived benefits in seeking help?

**4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

1. **To identify** popular types of mental health-related video contents on YouTube and viewers' engagement.
2. **To find** out the potentialities of YouTube as a platform for informal entry-level mental health counseling to identify the need for formal mental healthcare treatment.
3. **To explore** the consistency, credibility and acceptance of YouTube mental health support video content among the post-secondary students of Kolkata.
4. **To study** the frequency and effectiveness of YouTube Vlogs and videos in promoting mental health-related awareness among the post-secondary students of Kolkata.
5. **To understand** the role of YouTube in reducing the stigma related to mental health issues in society and promoting mental health awareness among selected group of students.

**5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

A literature review acts as a base for constructing new research. It helps in identifying the research gap; formulating new ideas and areas to conduct the research. It provides an overview of the knowledge related to the topic and increases the research papers credibility. The relevant literature review for my research paper is furnished below:

**Auliah, A. N. (2023)** The author studied the Potency of the YouTube channel named "Being Human" in boosting Perception of mental health issues among the students of Communication Studies at UIN North Sumatra. The outcome of the research reveals that the YouTube channel "Being Human" Proficiently contributes towards mental health awareness for the above mentioned subject, which strengthens the theory of communication effectiveness. However, the study also mentions that, network and server issues are a massive threat and challenges the wholesome performance of the YouTube Channel. To combat this crisis they sometimes use other modes of social media to inform and update their viewers of the temporary crisis and ensure recovery at the earliest.

**(Baquero, 2018)** The study speaks of depression as a catalyst to other health issues and can even result of death. The study delves upon the importance of early detection of mental illness to save a life. The author researched and talked about the popular forms and most viewed mental health related contents on YouTube to combat mental illness through a cross sectional study design. It was found that viewers use this communication channels to participate, reveal their inner voice, relate to the generality of the problem,

gain support, and combat the social stigma and step ahead towards self-care. YouTube is omnipresent to people at all levels of literacy. Furthermore the study states, videos where people share their own experiences of how they won battles against depression receive most views and appreciation comments.

**(Gordon et al., 2015)** This study possesses a negative inclination towards portrayal of ‘psychiatry’ on YouTube. The reason is unclear or possibly due to anonymous authorship. The findings state it is difficult for the YouTube users to distinguish between authentic and misleading information. Thus it is uncertain how the stigma related to psychiatric illnesses and their treatment is eradicated. Though the negative representation of psychiatry on YouTube remains questionable, it is apparent that YouTube content has a significant global impact and this should be acknowledged by Psychiatrists, professional organizations, and healthcare providers to inform and educate the youth about health care communication.

**(Diamantaki & Ziavras, 2022)** The study throws light on the experiences of YouTube viewers’ engagement with mental health professional’s videos and autopathography content and certifies these two types as most on-demand video content types. In view of the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the 8 Dimensions of Cyber psychology of Avatar Identity frameworks, the study recognized YouTube as a virtual psychological space influencing human thoughts, behaviors and emotions of active users. The findings suggests YouTube content acts as an alchemist on viewers’ mental health opening gateway to move for formal counseling if and when needed or a reliable liaison for informal online counseling.

**(Ziavras & Diamantaki, 2024)** The study delves upon the mental health scenario and its therapeutic needs among the youth with reference to Covid-19 pandemic. It looks and suggests for a blended solution through accessing both traditional therapy as well as daily interactions with social media contents, YouTube in particular to nurture mental health. The research paper finds out that YouTube has high potential to act as an informal counseling health toolkit to bring about positive therapeutic change.

**(Sangeorzan et al., 2019)** This research is about exploring the impact of YouTube Vlogging to serve as a therapy to users suffering from mental illness, depression, combating the feelings of isolation. As per the researcher, individuals suffering from mental ill health are the ones who are more likely to be engaged with online social networking, sharing their intimate mental health experiences through vlogging or participating in the comments section of related YouTube videos. The study claims to be the

first empirical report that states, the act of vlogging about mental health/illness tends to motivate recovery of individuals fighting for the same.

**(Balcombe & De Leo, 2023)** According to this research paper, YouTube contents serve as a fantastic tool for bringing positive change in behavior of individuals having mental illness through informal counseling, chances of bias or malpractice of misinformation can be a threat. Inappropriate and risky video contents must be monitored thoroughly since teenagers and adolescents are prone to vulnerability. Thus the research finds and suggests YouTube assistance to be more concerned about quality check, privacy and safety check filtration.

**(Bakøy, 2023)** The study is about a vlogger named Norwegian, who personally experienced the stigma of depression and started creating vlogs to combat as well as help others like her to overcome this situation. The study says, interaction between vloggers and their viewers generates a feeling of oneness, friendship and intimacy since the vloggers engagement with their viewers through comments is dynamic and caring, resulting in a feeling of personal coach and guide to combat mental illness, assuring privacy.

**(Choi et al., 2021)** Here there researcher recognises effective strategies to utilise YouTube videos related to mental health to assist college students dealing with mental illness. Since it's a societal stigma, most do not feel like talking about their mental health in physical communication modes like with family and friends. The study tried to identify the trend and related videos on demand and how they help transform the mental health towards betterment of college students on both short and long term basis. The findings say, students prefer to consider personal story sharing and experiential knowledge more useful. They believe this provides them ample information and guidance for self-help without consulting professionals.

**(Foster, 2013)** This dissertation delves upon the potential of YouTube as an interactive media in developing knowledge, behavior and attitude about mental health and how this platform is being utilized by mental health care organizations in disseminating valuable information. Findings reveal that YouTube serves as a huge reservoir of mental health related video based contents providing interpersonal connection yet protecting privacy concerns. The result also says that the largest categories of videos on demand are related to depression and bipolar disorder. The users seem to largely rely on videos that provide suggestions by professional expertise in respective fields.

**(Devendorf et al., 2020)** The article suggests depression is caused either by biological inherence or through environmental influence. YouTube can be taken into account to study its potential to identify and minimize depression through informal counseling by reliable video contents. The paper is based on YouTube video content analysis that announces that individuals who are dealing with submissive depression and mental illness, both chronic and easily treatable ones, can be guided through effective YouTube video contents.

**(Sharma & Dey, 2020)** The paper inspects the algorithm and MLT to understand the frequency and recommendations of depression related YouTube video contents based on viewers probable preferences. It invigilates whether the recommended contents are triggering to a depression afflicted victim. The research claims to achieve 83% accurate results. The study also found out that viewers with a depressed psyche tend to watch videos pertaining to depression to procure validation of their own. The tool developed by the researchers of this paper tries to identify inappropriate contents for the users and warns them at once and directs them towards the right contents.

#### **6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

An exploratory research design is used in this study to investigate the reception of YouTube Vlogs and videos as a source of mental health support among post-secondary students in Kolkata. The research implements both Qualitative and Quantitative methods and is fragmented into two main parts: content analysis of YouTube videos and a pilot study using a short survey on college and university students of all four quadrants of Kolkata through Convenience Sampling technique. The samples are college and University students and YouTube videos. Kolkata can be fragmented into North, South, East and West respectively, and thus a sample size of 100 students from colleges and Universities namely Netaji Nagar College, Seth Anandram Jaipuria College, Khudiram Bose Central College, Jadavpur University, University of Calcutta, Aliah University, Rabindra Bharati University are taken for survey. The research is based on both primary and secondary data collected from survey and YouTube video contents. The videos are based on keywords having -mental health, mental illness, depression, motivation to combat mental illness. Channels with more than 10,000 subscribers are taken into account with selective videos having more than 10,000 views on algorithm basis. Data Collection is done through content analysis of relevant YouTube videos and surveys on selected samples of size- 100

through online questionnaires (Google Forms).

**7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION:**

1. Consent from all survey participants is taken while recording their responses.
2. Confidentiality of all respondents is maintained.
3. Collected data is solely used for research purposes with cent percent authenticity and integrity.

**8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

THE SPIRAL OF SILENCE THEORY

Proposed by German researcher Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in 1984, this theory states that people who do not comprise the majority holding similar thoughts and public opinion i.e whose views differ from the dominant views of the society are compelled to keep their opinions and views to themselves for fear of rejection and getting expelled from the mass through isolation.

Here, social media plays a massive role to give voice to the voiceless, protecting their individuality and privacy. The unique characteristic of new media i.e Ubiquity helps its users in transaction of information and opinion. For instance, YouTube's comments section acts as a virtual public sphere to eradicate the social stigma of mental illness or mental health support.

NUDGE THEORY: INFLUENCES THE BEHAVIOUR

This theory is proposed by Richard Thaler in his book, 'Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness' published in 2008. The theory is about inducing positive reinforcement to influence the decision making and bring about positive behavioural change of an individual through implied suggestions.

Here, the YouTube videos showcasing personal experiences and self-counselling Vlogs, recovery of mental health of others or motivational videos influence its audience to identify his or her own mental discomforts and heal them without making it public.

NETWORKED PUBLICS THEORY

Mizuko Ito introduces the concept of 'networked publics' to denote a set of socially, culturally, and technologically interconnected developments that have multiplied the growing engagement with digitally networked media.

Social media, a by-product of new media, has gained enormous momentum as a medium of virtual open forum for socializing and communicating with friends and acquaintances. This virtual network and technological determinism has restructured the mode of communication and information dissemination, creating separate personified zones for likeminded publics. Breaking the

geographical communication barriers, it has unleashed scopes for endless possibilities. ‘Networked publics’ theory can help us analyse the dynamics of participants’ engagement.

**AFFECTIVE DISPOSITION THEORY**

Arthur A. Raney, in his book named ‘The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects’ talks about Affective Disposition Theory (ADT). It explains how a viewer’s emotional inclination influences their thoughts, behaviors, and overall consumption and contentment of media narratives. The theory comprises three psychological components: the inclination formed toward characters, emotional responsiveness to the atrocities and setbacks of those characters, and the viewer’s enjoyment of the climax of the narrative.

Personal choice based YouTube Video contents on mental health provides its viewers with ample space and satisfaction to extract information at their own ease.

**9. DATA COLLECTION**

SL NO.	NAME OF THE YOUTUBE CHANNEL	LINK	JOINING DATE ON YOUTUBE	NUMBER OF SUBSCRIBERS	TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF VIDEOS	Date when viewed for analysis
1	SOMOY TV	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@somoynews360">http://www.youtube.com/@somoynews360</a>	21.10.2015	23.9M subscribers	Bangladesh Government Approved Popular Reliable News Source by Company Name : "SOMOY Media Limited	198,957 videos; 16,148,644,480+ views	15.6.24
2	@DrMekhalala - Sarkar	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@DrMekhalaSarkar">www.youtube.com/@DrMekhalaSarkar</a>	11.06.2012	136K subscribers	Associate Professor (Psychiatry), National Institute of Mental Health, Dhaka	221 Videos; 9,720,218 views	15.6.24

### *Evolving Convergences*

3	Dr. Nabil	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@Drnabil999">www.youtube.com/@Drnabil999</a>	08.11.2021	6 8 4 K subscribers	Doctor and psychological counselor	406 videos; 44, 348, 678 views	15.6.24
4	Dr. Kushal	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@IamDr.Kushal">www.youtube.com/@IamDr.Kushal</a>	09.08.2020	3 1 4 K subscribers	Psychiatrist	382 videos; 34, 784 904 views	15.6.24
5	MEDITIPS	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@MEDITIPS">www.youtube.com/@MEDITIPS</a>	25.08.2020	4 6 9 K subscribers	Medical tips and advices by Doctors	649 videos; 40, 273 907 views	15.6.24
6	YouTube channel of Anandabazar Patrika	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@AnandabazarOnline">www.youtube.com/@AnandabazarOnline</a>	17.02.2015	7 8 9 K subscribers	Anuttama Banerjee, Psychiatrist	8 , 5 8 7 video; 306, 956, 988	15.6.24
7	Doctorola TV	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@DoctorolaTV">www.youtube.com/@DoctorolaTV</a>	10.11.2015	1.41M subscribers	Health awareness	771 videos; 146, 178, 542 views	15.6.24
8	Gourab Tapadar	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@GourabTapadar">www.youtube.com/@GourabTapadar</a>	11.04.2012	1 . 6 8 M subscribers	Motivational Speaker	215 videos; 73, 515 075 views	15.6.24
9	Together Forever With Mrinal Chakraborty	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@togetherforeverwithmrinal6661">www.youtube.com/@togetherforeverwithmrinal6661</a>	19.05.2020	4 3 . 5 K subscribers	Mental Toughness Trainer	549 video; 1, 720, 866 views	15.6.24
10	Health Inside	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/@HealthInsideBangla">www.youtube.com/@HealthInsideBangla</a>	6.07.2020	758K subscribers	Motivational Speaker	1 , 2 2 2 videos; 88, 328, 372 views	15.6.24

## Evolving Convergences

SL NO.	NAME OF THE YOUTUBE CHANNEL	SELECTED VIDEO LINK	TOPIC	TYPE VIDEO/VLOG	UPLOADING DATE	NUMBER OF VIEWS	NO. OF LIKE/DISLIKE	NUMBER OF COMMENTS	Date when viewed for analysis
1.	SOMOY TV	<a href="https://youtu.be/WyyguHopUMI?si=SLYkGH5YNLrElyMs">https://youtu.be/WyyguHopUMI?si=SLYkGH5YNLrElyMs</a>	Depression	Narrative short documentary	5.02.2022	437K	17K likes	855	15.6.24
2.	SOMOY TV	<a href="https://youtu.be/ITsxj5xi-uG8?si=LWYHpPbo9PS-vivnx">https://youtu.be/ITsxj5xi-uG8?si=LWYHpPbo9PS-vivnx</a>	Student Mental Health	News Story	29.10.2022	20,472	587	57	15.6.24
3.	SOMOY TV	<a href="https://youtu.be/XRIs2I-FIQog?si=Whk3TD8ykj9UcbfP">https://youtu.be/XRIs2I-FIQog?si=Whk3TD8ykj9UcbfP</a>	Depression: Symptoms, Causes, Treatment	Narrative Documentary	6.08.2022	483K	17K	1,174	15.6.24
4.	@DrMekhalaSarkar	<a href="https://youtu.be/8VZ-YK-oDX-s?si=vov7AoUbow-a7wlpq">https://youtu.be/8VZ-YK-oDX-s?si=vov7AoUbow-a7wlpq</a>	Mental Health	Psychiatry (Therapeutic) by Professional Doctor	05.09.2021	756,637	11K	1,232	15.6.24
5.	@DrMekhalaSarkar	<a href="https://youtu.be/J-svc2urPQ?si=zpEC-mAtODLYW GKJZ">https://youtu.be/J-svc2urPQ?si=zpEC-mAtODLYW GKJZ</a>	Social Anxiety	Psychiatry (Therapeutic) by Professional Doctor	06.03.2021	53,139	1.6K	331	15.6.24
6.	Dr. Nabil	<a href="https://youtu.be/JJFsoEXTNg-g?si=0H-1B5-z6KSz6HDC">https://youtu.be/JJFsoEXTNg-g?si=0H-1B5-z6KSz6HDC</a>	Mental Health	Therapeutic, tips to reduce tension	30.03.2022	1,004,863 (1M)	27K	848	15.6.24
7.	Dr. Nabil	<a href="https://youtu.be/wySKNDpa-wk?si=xYcboQjXSRhy-Jmcl">https://youtu.be/wySKNDpa-wk?si=xYcboQjXSRhy-Jmcl</a>	Depression	Therapeutic Vlog	20.01.2022	417,110	15K	427	15.6.24
8.	Dr.Kushal @LifeSpring Limited	<a href="https://youtu.be/lyTZ8UUpyAw?si=K0qTBHsYCIDShKcx9">https://youtu.be/lyTZ8UUpyAw?si=K0qTBHsYCIDShKcx9</a>	Psychiatry	Personal interactive Vlog	06.08.2022	114,668	2.9K	366	15.6.24

## Evolving Convergences

9.	Dr.Kushal @LifeSpring Limited	<a href="https://youtu.be/MvSExWXIUQ?si=dSxKdrikaIXvaiNA">https://youtu.be/MvSExWXIUQ?si=dSxKdrikaIXvaiNA</a>	Mental Health	Personal counseling Vlog	17.05.2022	298,150	5.9K	518	15.6.24
10.	Dr.Kushal @LifeSpring Limited	<a href="https://youtu.be/iOXI6-UIv7k?si=kwpn8mVSI2EiY8JA">https://youtu.be/iOXI6-UIv7k?si=kwpn8mVSI2EiY8JA</a>	Clinical Depression	Personal counseling Vlog	18.03.2024	14,707	596	132	15.6.24
11.	MEDI TIPS	<a href="https://youtu.be/plNI SBpJ9HM?si=ZWeDs4IBRX0hGB1">https://youtu.be/plNI SBpJ9HM?si=ZWeDs4IBRX0hGB1</a>	Depression : Treatment & Symptoms	Dr. Kedar Ranjan Banerjee    Psychiatrist	22.05.2022	543,355	10K	724	15.6.24
12.	YouTube channel of Anandabazar Patrika	<a href="https://youtu.be/o2BZuJf7us8?si=DJgefPr-SZK9Ljss">https://youtu.be/o2BZuJf7us8?si=DJgefPr-SZK9Ljss</a>	Mental Health (মন ভুলে নেই! কী করে বলব)	Anutama Banerjee, Psychiatrist	15.01.2024	32,627 views	1K	74	15.6.24
13.	Doctorola TV	<a href="https://youtu.be/kTmSvChVeKM?si=CcwiVSf_ZglqwQ60">https://youtu.be/kTmSvChVeKM?si=CcwiVSf_ZglqwQ60</a>	Mental illness in youth	Psychological Disorders	30.12.2018	73,826 views	1.2K	59	15.6.24
14.	Gourab Tappadar	<a href="https://youtu.be/hV5Q9WZnofo?si=68CXPap5cMBsv-O6">https://youtu.be/hV5Q9WZnofo?si=68CXPap5cMBsv-O6</a>	Control your mind	Motivational Speech	26.12.2020	1.4M	151K	6,338	15.6.24
15.	Together Forever With Mrinal Chakraborty	<a href="https://youtu.be/mH7NujNnFx0?si=Cg7cRNKSUpbOssiV">https://youtu.be/mH7NujNnFx0?si=Cg7cRNKSUpbOssiV</a>	Mental Toughness Trainer	Release Anxiety and Depression through Trance	02.11.2021	29,830 views	1.5K	86	15.6.24
16.	Health Inside	<a href="https://youtu.be/dsMAoWn Cvbs?-si=R4Rh_Lh1C5bn4md">https://youtu.be/dsMAoWn Cvbs?-si=R4Rh_Lh1C5bn4md</a>	Dr. Nilanjana Sanyal	Motivational Speech	12.10.2020	1.1M	38K	1,246	15.6.24

### 10. DATA ANALYSIS

Analyzing the data collected from selected YouTube Videos as tabulated above, the findings are:

- I. Most videos related to mental health were uploaded to YouTube during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic period between 2020 and 2022.
- II. While searching for YouTube video based contents related to mental health with keywords ‘Mental Illness’, ‘Depression’,

## *Evolving Convergences*

‘Motivational’, it is found that most videos are on ‘Depression’ which highlights the demand for videos on depression above all related topics.

- III. The analysis identifies that most views are received by motivational and therapeutic videos.
- IV. Shockingly the study also discovers that, though these types of video contents receives ample amount of views and subscriptions, yet the comments section is not justifiably equivalent, which suggests that there is still a stigma about mental illness or depression which resists the users from their self-expression with the fear of being identified and loss of privacy before the society.

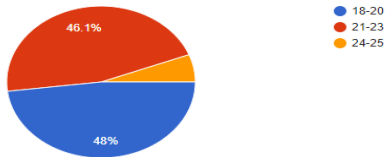
### ***11. EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTUBE VLOGS AND VIDEOS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AMONG POST-SECONDARY (DEGREE) STUDENTS OF KOLKATA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY***

#### ***SURVEY REPORT IN PIE CHART FORM***

##### ***1.***

What is your age?

102 responses



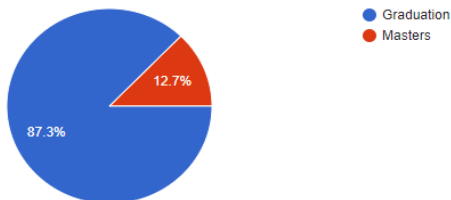
#### **PIE CHART-1 (AGE)**

Analysis: It is found that 48% of the respondents are of age between 18-20 years. This comprises the majority. Rest 46% are of age between 21-23 years. Remaining is aged between 24-25 years.

##### ***2.***

Pursuing Degree

102 responses



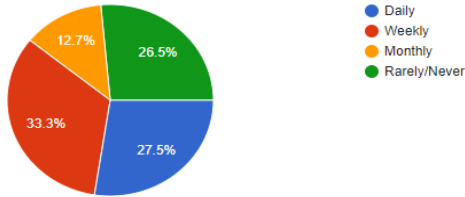
### **PIE CHART-2 (EDUCATION)**

Analysis: A thumping majority of respondents are pursuing graduation i.e 87.3%. Rest 12.7% are Masters Students.

3.

How frequently do you watch YouTube videos related to mental health?

102 responses



### **PIE CHART-3 (FREQUENCY OF WATCHING RELATED YOUTUBE VIDEOS)**

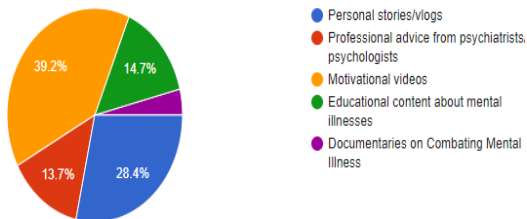
Analysis: Apparently the mandate appears fractured. But a close look at the graph will suggest that 33.3% i.e the majority watches YouTube Videos related to mental health on weekly basis, followed by 27.5% on daily basis. The remaining 26.5% and 12.7% of respondents watch these types of videos either rarely or on a monthly basis.

4.

Which type of mental health-related content do you most frequently watch on YouTube?



102 responses



### **PIE CHART-4 (TYPES OF RELATED VIDEOS WATCHED IN YOUTUBE)**

Analysis: Almost 40% of the respondents have opted for motivational videos as most frequently watched among the given options. Rest 28.4%, 15%, 14% and others have opted for Personal Vlogs, Professional advice from Psychiatrists and psychologists,

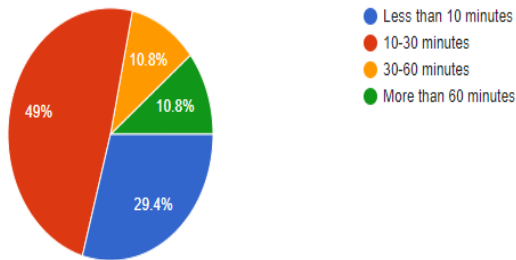
## *Evolving Convergences*

Educational content and Documentaries related to the subject respectively.

5

How much time do you approximately spend watching mental health-related videos on YouTube at a time?

102 responses



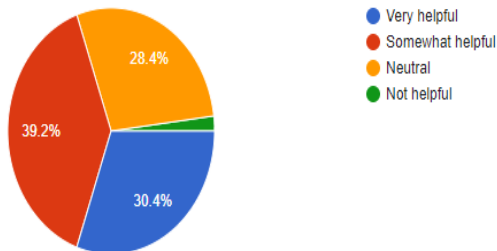
### **PIE CHART-5 (WATCHING HOURS)**

Analysis: The overall rating denotes that a thumping majority (almost 50%) watches mental health related videos for 10-30minutes. 29% of respondents' watches less that 10min. The remaining 11% watches 30min to more than 60min respectively.

6.

Do you find YouTube videos on mental health helpful in understanding your own mental health conditions?

102 responses



### **PIE CHART-6 (USEFULNESS)**

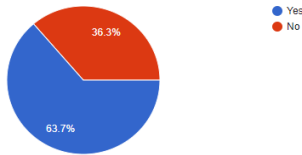
Analysis: Almost 40% says they find it somewhat helpful in analysing and understanding one's own mental condition. 30.4% says it's very helpful. 28% respondents' are of neutral viewpoint.

## *Evolving Convergences*

7.

Have you ever taken any action (like self therapy or seeking professional help) based on the information or motivation gained from YouTube videos?

102 responses



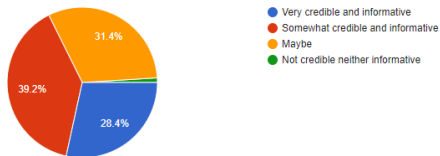
### **PIE CHART-7 (ACTION TAKEN BY VIEWERS)**

Analysis: A Whooping majority of 64% have responded that they have taken action based on the information or motivation gained through YouTube Videos. Remaining 36% are of passive opinion.

8.

low credible and informative do you find the mental health information provided by YouTube videos?

32 responses



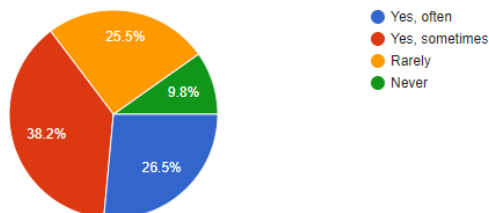
### **PIE CHART-8 (CREDIBILITY OF VIDEO CONTENTS)**

Analysis: This response is identical to question no. 6; here too almost 40% says they find the YouTube video contents somewhat credible and informative. 28% say it's very credible and

in

Do you respond and engage to (like, comment, subscribe) YouTube channels that provide mental health content?

102 responses



### **PIE CHART-9 (VIEWERS' ENGAGEMENT TO YOUTUBE CHANNEL)**

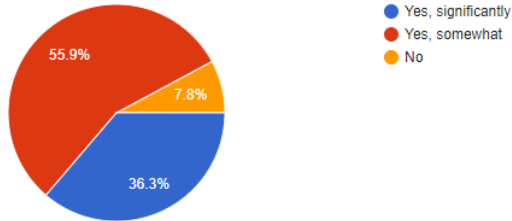
## *Evolving Convergences*

**Analysis:** A 26.5% of the respondent says they often participates and engage to YouTube Videos through like, comment and subscribes. 38% of respondents say they sometimes participate. Remaining 25% and 10% rarely and hardly participate respectively.

10.

Do you feel that YouTube videos on mental health have reduced the stigma about mental health issues in society?

102 responses



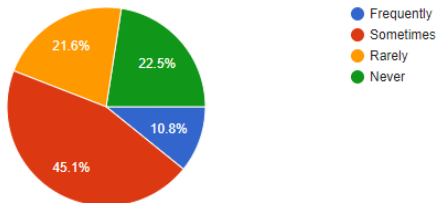
### **PIE CHART-10 (MENTAL HEALTH AS A STIGMA IN SOCIETY)**

**Analysis:** 36% of the respondent says YouTube has been extremely effective in reducing Mental Health stigma in society. However a majority of 56% are of the opinion that YouTube has somewhat reduced the stigma about mental health in society. Rest 8% are of passive opinion about it.

11.

How often do you share mental health-related YouTube videos with others (friends, family, social media)?

102 responses



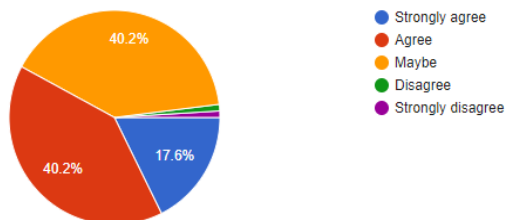
### **PIE CHART-11 (SHARING RELATED YOUTUBE VIDEOS)**

**Analysis:** A thumping majority says they sometimes share mental health related videos with others; 22% say never, 21% say rarely and rest 10% say it's very frequent.

12.

Do you agree YouTube is an effective platform for personalized mental health support for post-secondary students?

102 responses



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**PIE CHART-12 ( EFFECTIVENESS)**

Analysis: Out of 102 respondents, 40.2% are of similar opinion as ‘agree’ and ‘maybe’ towards YouTube’s effectiveness for personalised mental health support. 18% say they strongly agree with it. Rest, the percentage of disagree and strongly disagree are negligible.

**12. SURVEY REPORT:**

Analysing the overall survey report, it can be concluded that though the findings positively supports YouTube as an effective video based content sharing and consuming medium and its ample usefulness among post-secondary students, there are slight traces of doubtful and inconsistent approaches as well, which identifies that though the research participants are quite benefited and regular in consuming and application of mental health related video vlogs and contents in their personal life, yet, majority is reluctant about discussing about mental illness or mental health related issues among friends, colleagues and relatives or sharing related contents with them. This indicates the stigma related to mental health or mental illness related issues in society, though reduced to some point by help of Social media, especially YouTube platform, has not been eradicated totally but under process towards a better acceptance.

**13. FINDINGS:**

The findings of the research paper are divided into two parts based on data collection, one from the content analysis of selected YouTube videos and the other from the survey.

Content analysis reveals that:

- i. Most videos related to mental health were uploaded to

YouTube during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic period between 2020 and 2022.

- ii. While searching for YouTube video based contents related to mental health with keywords ‘Mental Illness’, ‘Depression’, ‘Motivational’, it is found that most videos are on ‘Depression’ which highlights the demand for videos on depression above all related topics.
- iii. The analysis identifies that most views are received by motivational and therapeutic videos.
- iv. Shockingly the study also discovers that, though these types of video contents receives ample amount of views and subscriptions, yet the comments section is not justifiably equivalent, which suggests that there is still a stigma about mental illness or depression which resists the users from their self-expression with the fear of being identified and loss of privacy before the society.

Data collected and analysed from the survey generates the following result:

- i. Most respondents belong from the age group 18-20.
- ii. The majority are college students who have turned up for the survey.
- iii. The majority of respondents say they watch mental health related videos on YouTube daily or on a weekly basis.
- iv. Regarding the type of videos they watch most related to mental health are found out to be motivational, followed by personal Vlogs.
- v. Almost 50% of respondents are of the opinion that they watch mental health related YouTube videos for 10-30 minutes.
- vi. Regarding the utility of YouTube videos related to mental health, the majority says its somewhat helpful, the rest says it’s very helpful.
- vii. A thumping majority of 64% of respondents are of the opinion that they have taken action guided by YouTube videos in their personal lives.
- viii. Regarding the credibility of YouTube videos, most say it’s somewhat credible and informative, which suggests that YouTube must review their contents.
- ix. Respondents say they sometimes engage themselves through likes , shares and comments in YouTube videos related to mental health videos, which indicates the prevailing stigma.
- x. However, 56% of respondents say YouTube as a social media has helped reduce the stigma and has high potential to eradicate its future.

Assembling the overall findings from the study it can be stated that YouTube is a highly successful platform to bring positive change in society if initiatives are taken for its further development by specialists and social media analysts. It has high potentials yet to be explored in distinct future.

**14. LIMITATIONS:**

1. Though the data is original and first hand, collected through convenience sampling techniques the study is limited to post-secondary students in Kolkata and hence generalization is not totally convenient.
2. The algorithms of YouTube content might affect the consistency of the content analysis.
3. Small sample size reduces generalizability of results.
4. Limited time frame to conduct the research.

**15. RECOMMENDATION:**

1. To encourage more credible Vlogging related to Mental Health through YouTube.
2. To support professional volunteers to create video based YouTube contents in imparting authentic knowledge on Mental Health.
3. Effective filtration of fact checking of YouTube contents to generate useful and not triggering contents.
4. Measures in maintaining User Generated Content.
5. Encourage more interaction and participation, alongside monitoring negative and abusive comments on video's comment sections so that it does not traumatise its users.
6. Celebrity and influencers initiatives to eradicate this stigma. Eg- Deepika Padukone's mental health organisation- '*The Live Love Laugh Foundation*' and her YouTube Channel 'Deepika Padukone' which features contents related to mental health, shares her personal experience of depression, gives insight related to her foundation's initiatives and activities to combat mental illness and depression.

**16. CONCLUSION:**

Mental health is a highly stigmatized issue in our society. A person detected with mental illness is looked upon in a discriminated view by the people of the society; even his/her own family and friends. This makes the individual suffering from mental illness or depression reluctant to speak about the discomfort which generates deadly results. The Covid pandemic has exacerbated symptoms of depression among teenagers through lack of physical interaction, employment related tension. Preferring to be lonely is

also a sign of mental illness. However, with the advent of new media and technologies and the growth of YouTube as a video sharing and interactive platform, it has proved itself as a boon or to say Aladdin's Magic lamp, and the genie is always ready with solutions. Through YouTube's free, informal and personalised service, now most treatments can be done and diseases can be diagnosed at the initial stage and helps in decision making for further formal treatments. It also provides information to choose how to treat the disease. Renowned and authentic sources provide information either through personal vlogs or through organisations and institutions. Thus, from the data collected and analysed, conclusion can be drawn that YouTube is a very effective platform and has high potential in the future. More research should be made on it to utilize its highest potentials.

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## Between Home and Host: Trauma and Identity Formation in Shauna Singh Baldwin's 'Montreal 1962'

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**Abstract:**

**T**he South Asian Diasporic Women have been subjected to constant othering and oppression in their host land. The focus of the paper is on the traumatic experiences of the Indo-Canadian Diasporic women and how they form a fragmented identity throughout their life and what will be discussed in the course of the paper, taking into account the theory of Homi K Bhabha. The fictional representation of women and their attempt to hold on to their homeland in the short story of Shauna Singh Baldwin offers ordinary characters with whom we can connect and experience trauma. The story "Montreal 1962" in *English Lessons and Other Stories* by Shauna Singh Baldwin shows that patriarchal dominance and subjugation of women at home and host land have been ongoing. The diasporic women faced oppression throughout their lives in the host land. Within these shackles, how women form their identity is the central focus of the paper.

**Keywords:** *Diaspora, Women, Indo-Canada, South-Asian, Trauma*

Like any other diasporic group, the Indo-Canadian diasporic women also have their own history. The stories and narratives that emerge from the diaspora are the result of particular experiences. The writers chosen to narrate these experiences belong to different time periods, and hence their experiences are also diverse. But since the attitude of the Canadian nation has not changed much in all these years, will the experiences be really different? Has Canada finally changed its attitude towards the diasporic women? Women who share a common origin and also hold onto their "origin" may react differently to the concept of migration and to the place they are migrating to. The way they portray the society

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of their new “home” depends largely on their experiences and observations. What these writers choose to keep and omit, and how they deal with identity formation. How living a life as an immigrant affects them psychologically while trying to be a part of the Indian community is an issue that shall be dealt with in this paper through the short story.

The South Asians in Canada often find the extremely cold climate echoing the harsh social environment. Within this environment, immigrants feel doubly marginalized—firstly because they have immigrated and secondly because they belong to minorities. Mainstream Canadians often judge South Asians as the wrong kinds of immigrants or pass subtle racial comments, making them feel alienated. These everyday realities shape the lives of South Asian Canadian writers.

This paper deals with the fictional representation of women and their attempt to hold on to their homeland in the short story of Shauna Singh Baldwin. The text offers ordinary characters with whom we can connect and experience trauma. The story “Montreal 1962” in *English Lessons and Other Stories* by Shauna Singh Baldwin shows that patriarchal dominance and subjugation of women at home and host land have been ongoing. The diasporic women faced oppression throughout their lives in the host land. Within these shackles, how women form their identity is the central focus.

The text mentioned asks the readers to remember the trauma in the process of working through loss. “Working through” is a term found in Psychoanalysis and Trauma Studies, which talks about a multi-step procedure of going back to the place of the wound, realizing or coming to terms with what actually happened, and finally accepting it and letting go. Freud and historian Dominique La Capra are of the view that “working through” is a healthy process as the subject visits the past not to hold on to it but to let it go (LaCapra, 2002). The subject is reminded of the trauma by visiting the site of its occurrence, only to forget it forever. Therefore, the aim of “working through” is to build a binary between the traumatic past and the healthy present so that they do not overlap with each other. In “working through,” says La Capra, one has a clear distinction between the past and the present, thus individuals in the process remember incidents that had happened to them in the past and which can bear resemblance with situations in the present but aren’t identical (LaCapra, 2002).

Thus, in order to heal from the trauma, one has to go through this complicated process of remembering and forgetting.

It is a complicated form of remembering and forgetting that is necessary for healing. However, what makes the study and the eventual analysis of the texts interesting is that all the issues about the diaspora are understood through the trauma, grief, and battle of women. It is also necessary to add that, besides being texts of Hindu-Sikh tension and the diasporic subjects' struggle to cope with the new nation, the texts are essentially about the women diasporic subjects' struggle for identity formation. The women characters who will be discussed are primarily immigrant women who followed their husbands or relocated to the new land in the hope of forming a "home" and identity through education and work. But, needless to say, all these women were subjected to the same fate of constant othering (Ruprai, 2013). This paper would focus on explaining how these women, through their constant negotiations, create a space of their own, a space that Homi K Bhaba describes as the third space, a hybrid existence. The wives in the tales are seen in the constant effort to build a "home" that would be "modern" and "new" as should be in the host land, yet should echo the comfort of the homeland left far behind. It is here that the women are expected to take the most challenging role of upholding the best of both worlds in the four walls of the concrete building. In the words of Sandhya Rao, the image of knitting and cooking, which serves as a metaphor for the experiences of these women, links all these experiences to the narration of diasporic sensibilities of remembering and recollecting the past. Though the choice of relocating from one place to the other is primarily a male one, the duty of retaining values, traditions, and memories of the old home left behind is still a feminine duty (Mehta, 2015).

As a result of the experiences faced by the women, they acquire an in-between space or the third space as pointed out by Homi Bhabha. The two tragedies present to the readers a diasporic individual who is not only a hybrid subject caught between the othering of the two nations but also the one who has been dejected and excluded by both the home and the host land. Thus, they acquire an in-between space, with no land to call their own. Caught between the two tragedies, these individuals form an identity that is often fragmented and distorted. This, in a way, also hints at the place these individuals occupy in the national imagery and also the incapability of the Canadian nation to include these South

Asian diasporic subjects into the mainstream Canadian society. Since the time of their arrival, the immigrants have been made to feel alienated and othered (Bhabha, 2013). The constant feeling of not belonging and of being rejected affects them psychologically. As a result, they create an imaginary homeland for themselves. They keep going back to this imaginary space to feel a sense of belonging and mental peace. Since the othering of the Diasporic subject is so prevalent across the world, the wish to return to the original homeland and the creation of the imaginary homeland are almost synonymous with the diasporic subjects' identity formation.

An attempt to hold on to one's own religious identity as a part of identity formation can be seen in the short story "*Montreal 1962*" by Shauna Singh Baldwin. The story has been narrated both from the first and second person narratives and is about the humiliation that a husband and wife have to face when they landed or emigrated to Canada in search of jobs. Baldwin admits that her family had to face similar humiliation, so her parents returned to India soon after she was born. Baldwin recollects that her father went back to India because it wasn't fun being a Sikh in Canada in the 1960's. So, he decided to return, thinking that India would let him wear a turban without any question or ethnic attacks.

Another example of ethnic attack or humiliation in the story is that new Canadians ridicule the Indian traditional wear, the saree, by calling it a 'bed sheet' and 'a curtain'. But the protagonist here shows her agency by being steadfast in her decision to heart the save and upholding her Sikh tradition (Baldwin, 1999). The narrator, that is, the wife, goes to describe the washing of the turbans, and in doing so, as most immigrants do, she also gets immersed in memory, and nostalgia takes over her. Her reminiscences find voice in her words when she says,

I placed each turban in turn on the bubbly surface as my mother and her must have done before me, that their men might face the world proud. I drained the tub, and new colors swelled – deep red, dark black, mud, rust, orange, soft purple, and jade green (Baldwin, 1999).

The whole act of washing and preparing a turban for her husband was her attempt to keep the bonding intact with her national and ethnic heritage. Thus, this act of holding on and of preserving her identity, her struggle to do so in an alien land, shows what feminists have argued, and as Sandhya Rao says, in

the narration of diaspora, that it is a particularly feminine task of collecting, remembering, and documenting memories and images of the tradition that has been left behind. The onus of relating memories of home, of recreating them within new lands remain vividly feminine (Mehta, 2015). Soon enough, she takes up a job to shoulder the responsibility of setting up a comfortable new life in Canada. To protect her ethnic identity, I say her ethnic identity because, as per patriarchal society, after marriage, there is no bigger duty of a wife than protecting husbands from all odds. Hence, she is adamant that at no cost should her husband cut his “*kesh*” (Hindi for hair) and remove his turban, as that is of great pride and honor to a Sikh man. Her firm will be better understood through her words when she says she will not let him cut his strong rope of hair and roam without a turban in that alien land, where everybody is a stranger to them (Ruprai, 2013). Her traditional self speaks the following words,

The knot my father tied between my Chunni and your turban is still strong between us, and it shall not fail you now (Baldwin, 1999).

Through her strong words and her firm decision, she creates an identity for herself, an identity that would safeguard the Sikh heritage in the foreign land. Going back to the homeland would have been an easier escape, but I decided to stay in the foreign land for economic prosperity. The woman here creates a “third space” for herself in the host land, as said by Homi K. Bhaba, the space created by immigrants for forming their own identity and to hold on to their community ethics through shared interest or language. “Third space” explains the uniqueness of each person as a “hybrid” (Bhabha, 2013).

A close reading of the diasporic characters would take us back to the Second Wave Feminist argument of “The Personal is the Political,” where feminists argued that there was an underlying connection between personal experiences and larger social and political struggles and structures at work. This holds when reading Baldwin's female character. The struggle of the women, her trauma, alienation, and oppression is an outcome of the greater violence that was at work in this case the partition of 1947, the Khalistan movement. The experiences of loss are shared, where the whole South Asian women diasporic community was mourning and struggling to build up from the broken pieces, a homeland of their own. Thus, the traumatic personal experiences are a part of the

political events that are at work, resulting in a violent reality that is quite painful and glossing over the naked truth of raw, soul-searing violence to spare everyone the misery implied in such a situation.

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# Border Disputes & Global Implications: India-China Relations In an Era of Uncertainty

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**Abstract:**

**T**he enduring border disputes between India and China represent one of the most complex and strategically significant territorial conflicts in contemporary international relations. Rooted in colonial era boundary ambiguities and compounded by geopolitical rivalry, these disputes span multiple sectors along the un demarcated Line of Actual Control (LAC). This article tries to examines the major contested regions, including Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh and further evaluates their strategic significance. The study further argues that unresolved territorial disputes between nuclear armed states pose a critical risk to global stability, particularly in an era of shifting power balances and multipolar competition.

**Keywords:** Border-disputes, Realism, Security Dilemma, Geopolitics, Aksai Chin, Arunachal Pradesh, Galwan Valley.

## INTRODUCTION

The India-China border dispute represents a structurally embedded conflict within contemporary international relations, where territorial contestation converges with shifting power hierarchies and regional order formation. Extending along the undefined Line of Actual Control (LAC), the dispute encompasses strategically salient regions such as Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, whose significance lies less in symbolic sovereignty and more in their contribution to strategic depth, connectivity, and military advantage. Consequently, the Himalayan frontier functions as a critical geopolitical interface between two rising powers.

Therefore, from the standpoint of Realism, the persistence of the dispute reflects the imperatives of survival and power maximization

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under conditions of anarchy. Both India and China interpret territorial control as integral to their broader strategic positioning, embedding the border issue within a wider framework of power politics and regional competition. This logic is further reinforced by the dynamics of the Security Dilemma, wherein measures intended to enhance security—such as military deployments and infrastructure expansion—are perceived as threats by the opposing side, generating reciprocal escalation.

Thus, it can be stated that the India-China border dispute cannot be just reduced to a discrete bilateral disagreement, rather, it reflects a broader structural condition shaped by geostrategic imperatives, competitive power politics, and mutual insecurity. Situated within an evolving multipolar order, this contest remains a significant determinant of regional stability and a latent source of escalation within the wider architecture of global security.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In order to understand the historical context, it is necessary to understand the deep-rooted nature of the India-China border dispute. Therefore, historical events, colonial legacies and differing interpretations of borders have contributed to the complexity and persistence of the issue, making it one of the most challenging bilateral issues between the two Asian giants. Thus, it can be said that the India-China border dispute is a complex and longstanding issue involving territorial claims, historical grievances and strategic interests. It primarily revolves around the boundary demarcation between the two countries, particularly in the Himalayan region. Here's an elaboration on various aspects of this dispute:

- **Historical Context:** The roots of the border dispute can be traced back to the colonial era when British India and Qing Dynasty China had differing interpretations of the border in the Himalayan region. The British-administered princely state of Jammu and Kashmir which later became part of India and Tibet which was under Chinese influence further added complexities to the issue.
- **Post-Independence Era:** After India gained independence from Britain in 1947 and China underwent its own revolution, both countries inherited the border issue. The disagreement intensified when India's political map was drawn in 1950, reflecting its claim over the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, including the Aksai Chin region, which China claim as its own.
- **Border Wars:** The disagreement escalated into armed

conflict in 1962, known as the Sino-Indian war, primarily over disputes in the Himalayan border regions. The war ended with a Chinese victory, and China retained control over Aksai Chin. However, the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the de facto border, was not clearly demarcated, leading to continued tensions.

- **Numerous resolutions have been attempted:** Since the war, both countries have engaged in numerous rounds of negotiations and agreements to resolve the border dispute. The most significant of these was the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in 1993, followed by Confidence -Building Measures (CBMs) and other agreements. However, these efforts have not resulted in a permanent solution.
- **Recent Tensions:** In recent years, tensions along the border have flared up periodically. One of the most significant incidents occurred in 2020 in the Galwan valley, where clashes between Indian and Chinese troops resulted in casualties on both sides. This incident led to a renewed focus on the border issue and strained bilateral relations.
- **Geopolitical Implications:** The India-China border dispute has broader geopolitical implications, as both countries are major regional powers with significant influence in Asia and beyond. It intersects with other geopolitical issues such as the Indo-Pacific rivalry, competition for natural resources and strategic alliances in the region.

Thus, it can be stated that the India-China border dispute is a multifaceted issue with deep historical roots, complex geopolitical dynamics, and significant implications for regional stability. Despite decades of negotiations and occasional agreements, the dispute remains unresolved, contributing to ongoing tensions between the two countries.

### **MAJOR SINO-INDIAN BORDER CLASHES SINCE 1962**

The boundary dispute between India and China represents a classic case of geopolitical rivalry shaped by territoriality, strategic competition, and historical ambiguity. Stretching roughly 3,500 kilometers along the Himalayas, the contested frontier is divided into three sectors-eastern, western and middle-each reflecting distinct dynamics of conflict and cooperation.

- **1962 Sino-Indian War: Key Events, Casualties and Consequences:** The Sino-Indian War of 1962 was a short but deeply impactful military conflict, triggered by escalating tensions along both the eastern and western

- sectors. On October 20<sup>th</sup> 1962, Chinese troops launched a two-front attack; across Aksai Chin and in the Tawang region of Arunachal Pradesh. Despite India's numerical strength, it was ill-equipped and poorly prepared for high-altitude warfare.
- Within weeks, China had advanced deep into Indian territory, capturing key positions before declaring a unilateral ceasefire on November 21, 1962, and retreating along the eastern front while retaining control over Aksai Chin. The war resulted in over 3,000 Indian casualties and prisoners of war, dealt a severe psychological blow to India, and led to a rapid military modernization program in the following decades.
  - **Recurrent Skirmishes Post -1967: Nathu La, Cho La (middle sector):** Despite efforts to normalize relations, border tensions remained alive. In 1967, India and China engaged in heavy fighting at Nathu La and Cho La in Sikkim. After arguments over New Delhi's attempts to construct an iron fence to put an end to what it saw as repeated Chinese incursions into its territory, Indian authorities claim PLA troops launched an attack and fighting ensued, including the exchange of artillery fire. After various skirmishes, the Indian Army repelled the PLA. New Delhi claims 80 Indian soldiers lost their lives and reported roughly 400 Chinese deaths.
  - **1975 Tulung La Incident (eastern sector):** The Tulung La Incident was a brief but significant clash that occurred on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1975 near Tulung La in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, along the disputed alignment of the Mc Mahon Line. During a routine patrol, an Indian Assam Rifles unit was ambushed, resulting in the death of four soldiers. India described the incident as an unprovoked attack, whereas China claimed that Indian troops had crossed into its territory, reflecting enduring differences in boundary perception. Many scholars interpret this episode as a product of boundary ambiguity and the security dilemma, where routine defensive patrols are misread as threats. Importantly, it is regarded as the last fatal exchange of fire between India and China prior to recent tensions, and it underscored the risks inherent in an un demarcated frontier, contributing to later confidence-building agreements aimed at preventing escalation.
  - **1987 Sumdorong Chu Valley Standoff (eastern sector):** In 1984 India established an observation post in the strategic

Sumdorong Chu Valley in Arunachal Pradesh, while China also worked to build permanent structures in the area. In retaliation, the Indian government moved large numbers of troops to the valley and granted statehood to Arunachal Pradesh, angering the Chinese government, which claims the region as “South Tibet.” In mid-1987, thousands of PLA troops were estimated to have begun massing in the area. The standoff ended without casualties after Beijing and New Delhi engaged in diplomacy to deescalate the situation, culminating with a visit to Beijing by then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

- **Daulat Beg Oldi Sector:** In April 2013, Chinese and Indian militaries faced each other along the LAC. PLA troops intruded the Daulat Beg Oldi sector and set up camp. The intrusion was followed by a three weeks military standoff. The Daulat Beg Oldi sector is 19 kilometers across the LAC. The sector is an important military base of Indian Army. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) soldiers during the standoff set up tents 300 meters from Chinese troops. After the PLA troops’ withdrawal from Daulat Beg Oldi sector, they stopped at Chumar area in Ladakh. PLA troops dismantled the tents of Indian soldiers in Chumar (Chumar borders Himachal Pradesh). The Chumar standoff lasted for 21 days.
- **2014 Demchok Standoff (Western Sector):** Occurred in December 2014 and coincided with a meeting in New Delhi between General secretary Xi and prime Minister Modi. The Indian government claims the PLA was constructing a road inside Indian territory, while the Chinese government objected to India constructing a canal in Demchok, which China claims as part of Tibet. Both sides dispatched approximately 1,000 troops and a standoff ensued. After approximately 20 days, PLA troops withdrew from the area.
- **2015 Burtse Incident (Western Sector):** Occurred in September 2015 when Indian troops destroyed a watchtower, China was building close to a mutually agreed-upon patrolling line. The incident was defused after a series of meetings between Chinese and Indian commanders.
- **Doklam 2017: Bhutan’s Sovereignty and strategic Highland:** One of the most high- profile recent flashpoint occurred in June 2017, when Indian and Chinese troops faced off in the Doklam plateau- a tri-junction between India (Sikkim), China (Chumbi Valley), and Bhutan. The

standoff was triggered when China began constructing a road near Doka La, which Bhutan claimed violated its territorial sovereignty (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). At Bhutan's request, Indian troops intervened to halt the construction. China viewed India's move as a breach of its territorial control and demanded withdrawal.

The standoff lasted for 73 days and drew global attention due to the risk of escalation between two nuclear powers. For India, Doklam's significance lay in its proximity to the "Chicken's Neck" Siliguri Corridor, a narrow strip connecting mainland India to its northeastern states. Any perceived encroachment here could have severe strategic implications for India's territorial integrity.

Eventually both sides agreed to disengage, but the episode revealed the fragility of the status quo and underscored the lengths to which India would go to defend Bhutanese interests and its own geostrategic buffer. According to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), "expeditious disengagement of border personnel at the face-off site at Doklam has been agreed to and is ongoing" (MEA, 2017). In parallel, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying confirmed that Indian troops had withdrawn and indicated that Chinese forces would continue to patrol the area, stating that "China will continue to exercise sovereignty rights to protect territorial sovereignty" in accordance with historical boundary norms.

- **Galwan Valley 2020: Ambiguity, Casualties, and the First Bloodshed in Decades:** In June 2020, the Galwan Valley clash in eastern Ladakh marked a dangerous new chapter in the Sino-Indian relations. For the first time in 45 years, India and Chinese troops engaged in brutal hand-to-hand combat-without the use of firearms-resulting in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and an undisclosed number of Chinese personnel. The confrontation took place near the confluence of the Shyok and Galwan rivers, where both countries maintained conflicting interpretations of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Despite multiple rounds of military talks prior to the clash, Chinese troops reportedly erected structures in areas India considered under its control. The use of melee weapons-iron rods, nail-studded clubs, and stones-was a brutal reminder of how serious the disagreement had become despite no bullets being fired.

This incident shattered illusions about the peaceful management of the border and raised serious questions about the credibility of prior confidence-building frameworks, notably the 1993 and 1996 Protocols on Peace and Tranquility. The Galwan Clash demonstrated that these agreements-intended to prevent hostilities along the Line of Actual Control- could be rendered ineffective under escalatory pressure. As reported by *The Economic Times*, “China through its military action at Galwan in Ladakh.....has violated three key bilateral agreements-1993, 1996, and 2013-that have been central to maintaining peace and tranquility on the disputed line of Actual Control” Scholars have similarly argued that “all the agreements were now effectively left in tatters” following the June 2020 skirmish, revealing the fragility of previously accepted mechanisms.

### **BORDER TENSIONS & POWER POLITICS IN THE AFTERMATH OF GALWAN (2020-2026)**

The 2020 Galwan Valley Clash represented a structural break in Asian geopolitics, transitioning the India-China relationship from a framework of “managed friction” to one of competitive interdependence and militarized stability. As of April 2026, the bilateral dynamic is defined by a fragile rapprochement, where tactical disengagement on the border has not yet translated into a strategic de-escalation of the border rivalry.

**The Breakdown of the CBM Framework (1993-2020):** For nearly three decades, the bilateral relationship was governed by a series of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)- most notably the 1993 and 1996 agreements-which mandated that neither side use force or firearms and prohibited large-scale military exercises near the Line of Actual Control (LAC). However scholarly analysis suggests that the Galwan Clash invalidated these protocols. The conflict replaced the policy of “ring-fencing” with a new Indian doctrine: “Border peace is the prerequisite for normalcy” and therefore this shift caused a fundamental realignment in New Delhi where China is officially viewed as the primary strategic threat. Besides, as the transition from “patrolling” to “defending” the frontier began in 2020 when China’s multi-point incursions in Ladakh were met by India’s mirror deployment of over 60,000 troops. This created a security dilemma where defensive infrastructure projects, such as India’s DS-DBO Road, were perceived by Beijing as offensive threats to its interests in Aksai Chin.

**The 2024-2025 “Kazan-Tianjin Consensus”:** The Scholars analyze the October 2024 patrolling agreement not as a peace

treaty but as “Tactical Modus Vivendi”. The 2025 Tianjin meeting between leaders signaled a “Fragile Rapprochement” driven by domestic economic pressures. China’s slowing growth and India’s need for specific supply chain components led to a mutual decision to “thaw” diplomatic channels without resolving the core territorial disputes. Again just before the BRICS Summit in Kazan, both nations reached a consensus to restore patrolling rights at critical “legacy” friction points in the Depsang Plains and Demchok. This allowed troops to return to their pre-April 2020 positions in these specific sectors.

**The “New Normal” of Frontier Militarization (2026):** Despite diplomatic thaws, the physical environment along the 3488 km LAC has undergone a permanent transformation into a high-tech, militarized frontier.

1. **Dual-Use Infrastructure:** China has solidified its “effective control” through the construction of over 600 Xiaokang Villages-civilian settlements designed for dual-use of military purposes-along the LAC.
2. **Indian Counter-Asymmetry:** India has responded with the Vibrant Villages Program and the completion of strategic all-weather projects like the Sela tunnel (2024) and updated helicopters in the middle sector. These ensure that India no longer faces the logistical disadvantage that existed in 2020.
3. **The Persistence of Cartographic war:** As of April 2026, friction persists in the eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh). Beijing’s continued practice of “standardizing” place names- most recently a sixth list in early 2026-remains a significant point of divergence that India rejects as “fictitious” and “mischievous”.

**Economic and Strategic Synthesis: The 2026 Equilibrium:** As of April 2026, the relationship operates under a “dual-track” approach. Both sides are moving forward on thorny boundary issues while pursuing a broader pragmatic easing in the relationship to manage domestic economic pressures. However, the scholars argue that this is a “Cold Stabilization”. India’s strategy remains a form of “limited hard balancing”-deepening ties with the QUAD and the US to constrain Chinese hegemony while maintaining a seat at the BRICS and SCO tables to preserve its influence in the Global South.

Economically the relationship presents a complex pattern of interdependence despite political friction. Trade between the two countries has continued at significant levels, even as India

has imposed selective restrictions in sectors linked to national security and digital governance. Besides this domestic economic imperative further shape this equilibrium. Both countries face internal pressures related to growth, employment, and post-pandemic recovery which incentivize stability in external relations. Consequently, their policies reveal a pragmatic balance between security concerns and developmental priorities. Thus, in this context it can be said that the 2026 scenario represents a condition of managed rivalry rather than normalization. The coexistence of military preparedness, economic linkage, and diplomatic engagement highlights the complexity of India-China relations. Therefore, without a significant breakthrough in boundary negotiations or a broader geopolitical shift, this pattern of competitive coexistence is likely to endure.

### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

A sustainable approach to managing India-China border tensions requires a multidimensional strategy.

- A more sustainable approach to managing tensions between India and China lies in shifting from ad hoc crisis responses to institutionalized prevention mechanisms. Existing arrangements, particularly the Border Defense Cooperation Agreement, need to be operationalized through dependable communication infrastructure, frequent military-to-military contact, and clearly articulated protocols for de-escalation. Strengthening such mechanisms can help contain localized incidents before they acquire strategic significance.
- Another priority is addressing the persistent ambiguity surrounding the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The lack of a shared understanding of the boundary has repeatedly contributed to confrontations. Advancing a process of clarification -through exchange of maps and mutually agreed patrolling guidelines- could reduce misperceptions without necessitating an immediate final settlement. In this sense, stability can be pursued even in the absence of full resolution.
- Adopting reciprocal disengagement strategies, including buffer zones and limitations on forward deployments, can reduce immediate tensions while maintaining strategic stability.
- At the political level, sustained high- level engagement remains indispensable. Informal Summit Diplomacy -exemplified by the Wuhan Summit and the Mamallapuram Summit- demonstrates that leadership -driven dialogue can stabilize relations even during periods of heightened tensions. Institutionalizing such engagements, rather than treating them as exceptional, would

provide continuity and strategic direction to bureaucratic and military channels.

- Engagement within forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization may provide avenues for cooperation and mitigate adversarial dynamics.
- Another critical dimension is managing the economic interdependence. Thus, it can be said that a balanced economic strategy would allow both states to safeguard national security interests without undermining mutual economic benefits.
- Expanding Track II diplomacy and academic exchanges parallelly can play subtle yet significant role in reducing mistrust. Besides interactions among scholars, former officials, and policy communities can generate alternative perspectives which can challenge entrenched narratives and contribute more to informed policy environment.
- Finally, it can be mentioned that some collaborations can be made in areas such as climate change, global trade, and development finance, which can act as stabilizing factors in an otherwise competitive relationship.

## **CONCLUSION**

In broader perspective it can be stated that the relationship between India and China reflects the complexities of interaction between rising powers in an uncertain global order. However, the Galwan Valley clashes highlighted the fragility of peace along the border, but the underlying issues extend beyond territory to the questions of power, influence and strategic trust.

Even so, it can be said that the relationship is shaped by a mix of rivalry and engagement, where cooperation in certain domain continue to coexist with rivalry, thus reflecting a complex balance between conflict and engagement. Thus, from this standpoint it can be said that this duality makes long-term stability dependent not on immediate solutions but on careful and continuous management of tensions.

Ultimately from this perspective it can be said that the future of India-China relations will somehow depend on their ability to navigate differences responsibly, as their interaction will play a pivotal role in shaping regional stability and the evolving global landscape.

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# Digital Mentorship Frameworks Encouraging Continuous Professional Development of Teachers under NEP 2020

Madhumita Teli<sup>1</sup>



## Abstract

To meet the changing needs of 21st-century education, the National Education Policy 2020 stresses the change of teacher education and continuous professional development (CPD). In this perspective, digital mentorship has evolved into a key tactic for enhancing teacher abilities, pedagogical creativity, technical integration, and lifelong professional growth. This paper critically discusses digital mentoring structures that promote teacher's ongoing professional development under NEP 2020. Drawing on current research on teacher mentoring, educational technology, online learning communities, and digital pedagogy, the study investigates how technology-enabled mentorship networks might support individualized instruction, cooperative learning, introspective practice, and real-time professional assistance. The study examines the conceptual basis, execution approaches, possibilities, problems, and policy consequences connected with digital mentorship models inside the Indian educational environment. Inclusivity, accessibility, teacher independence, and sustainable professional learning ecosystems receive special focus. The research also emphasizes how data analytics, artificial intelligence, virtual cooperation tools, and digital platforms might improve the growth of teachers. The results indicate that supported by strong institutional infrastructure and policy execution, digital mentorship can greatly increase teacher effectiveness, professional confidence, instructional quality, and student learning outcomes. The study comes to the conclusion that including organized digital mentoring systems into teacher education policies might greatly help to enable the effective implementation of NEP 2020 and the building of a future-ready educational system in India.

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**Keywords:** *Digital Mentorship, Continuous Professional Development, Teacher Education, NEP 2020, Educational Technology, Online Mentoring*

### **Introduction**

The National Education Policy 2020, which the Indian government introduced, signals a significant change in the country's educational system. The policy aims to change educational practices by putting a lot of emphasis on holistic learning, using many different subjects, being flexible, including everyone, encouraging critical thinking, and using technology in the classroom. NEP 2020 gives teachers more professional power because it sees them as the basis of educational quality and national growth (Government of India, 2020).

The intellectual, emotional, social, and moral growth of students depends critically on teachers. But the duties of teachers have drastically changed due to the fast changing educational scene driven by globalization, technical breakthroughs, digital learning settings, and shifting pedagogical expectations. Teachers are not expected to only provide subject material; rather, they must assist experiential learning, promote creativity, include technology, promote teamwork, and develop problem-solving abilities among students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Responding to these developments, maintaining teacher effectiveness and educational relevancy now depends on ongoing professional development (CPD). Continuous professional development means that teachers are always working to improve their knowledge of how to teach, their skills as a professional, their methods of teaching, and their ability to use technology throughout their careers (Avalos, 2011). Good CPD encourages teachers to think about their work, build confidence, come up with new ideas for teaching, and continue learning throughout their lives.

Traditional teacher training programs, though, sometimes lack frequent workshops, contextual relevance, adequate follow-up help, and opportunities for collaboration (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Therefore, educational systems all around the world are investigating technology-enabled professional learning models that provide teachers with flexible, cooperative, and sustainable growth possibilities.

In this setting, digital mentorship has become a creative and game-changing method of developing teachers. Digital mentorship is the act of experienced teachers using technology to guide, help, and work with other teachers through online channels, virtual communities, webinars, digital communication tools, and

collaborative learning environments (Johnson & Davis, 2020). Unlike conventional mentoring models limited by time and location, digital mentoring promotes ongoing communication, resource sharing, peer cooperation, and customized learning possibilities.

Particularly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, when educational organizations all around the world moved to online and mixed learning settings, was the importance of digital mentoring. Changing to virtual classrooms, internet student engagement, and digital pedagogies presented teachers with hitherto unheard-of obstacles. Digital mentoring and professional learning networks were crucial in assisting teachers in adapting technologically and developing emotional resiliency during this period (Trust et al., 2020).

NEP 2020 strongly advocates the integration of technology into education and emphasizes continuous professional development for teachers. The policy calls for regular in-service training, better digital literacy, peer learning, and teacher cooperation via online tools (Government of India, 2020). By offering accessible, adaptable, and learner-centered professional support networks, digital mentorship structures support these goals.

Under NEP 2020, the current study investigates digital mentoring systems that foster teachers' ongoing professional development. The research examines conceptual foundations, implementation techniques, obstacles, policy ramifications, and potential future directions linked with digital mentorship models in Indian education. The study adds to the ongoing debate on creative teacher development methods meant to improve educational change in the digital era.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The major objectives of this study are:

- To examine the role of digital mentorship in continuous professional development of teachers under NEP 2020.
- To analyze the conceptual framework and major components of digital mentorship models.
- To explore the opportunities and challenges associated with digital mentorship for teacher development.
- To identify implementation strategies for effective digital mentorship programs.
- To suggest policy recommendations for strengthening digital mentorship initiatives in Indian education.

### **Research Questions**

- How can digital mentorship frameworks support continuous

professional development of teachers under NEP 2020?

- What are the major characteristics and components of effective digital mentorship models?
- What challenges affect the implementation of digital mentorship in teacher education?
- How can educational institutions ensure sustainability and effectiveness in digital mentorship programs?

### **Rationale of the Study**

Teacher quality remains one of the most influential determinants of educational effectiveness and student achievement. In the context of rapid technological transformation and changing pedagogical demands, teachers require continuous opportunities for professional learning and skill enhancement. NEP 2020 recognizes this necessity and places strong emphasis on continuous professional development, technology integration, and teacher empowerment.

Despite policy emphasis, conventional professional development models often fail to provide sustained support, individualized learning opportunities, and collaborative engagement for teachers. Many professional development programs are short-term, theoretical, and disconnected from classroom realities. Furthermore, geographical barriers, resource constraints, and unequal access to training opportunities continue to affect teacher development in India.

Digital mentorship offers a promising solution by enabling flexible, collaborative, and continuous professional learning environments. Through digital platforms, teachers can access mentorship support, educational resources, peer collaboration, and reflective learning opportunities irrespective of geographical location. However, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to understanding the role of digital mentorship frameworks within the implementation context of NEP 2020. Therefore, this study is significant in exploring how digital mentorship can strengthen teacher professional development and contribute to educational transformation in India.

### **Understanding NEP 2020 in the Context of Teacher Development**

NEP 2020 presents a comprehensive vision for educational reform in India by emphasizing learner-centered, competency-based, and multidisciplinary education. The policy recognizes teachers as the backbone of the education system and advocates substantial reforms in teacher education and professional development.

One of the major objectives of NEP 2020 is to improve teacher quality through continuous learning opportunities and professional empowerment. The policy recommends that teachers participate in at least 50 hours of continuous professional development annually to enhance pedagogical practices, leadership skills, assessment strategies, and technological competencies (Government of India, 2020). This reflects a shift from isolated training events toward sustained and practice-oriented professional learning.

The policy further highlights the integration of technology into education through digital platforms, virtual learning environments, online assessments, and educational applications. Teachers are expected to become proficient in using digital tools for classroom instruction, communication, collaborative learning, and resource development. Consequently, teacher professional development programs must also evolve to include digital pedagogies and technology-enabled learning approaches.

Another important aspect of NEP 2020 is the promotion of teacher autonomy, innovation, and reflective practice. Teachers are encouraged to design contextual learning experiences, adopt experiential teaching methodologies, and engage in collaborative professional communities. These objectives align closely with digital mentorship frameworks that facilitate peer learning, collaborative problem-solving, and continuous reflection. Furthermore, NEP 2020 aligns with global educational priorities emphasizing lifelong learning, digital literacy, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. International educational reforms increasingly recognize the importance of collaborative professional learning networks and technology-enabled teacher support systems (OECD, 2019). Digital mentorship frameworks therefore represent an effective mechanism for operationalizing NEP 2020 objectives within the contemporary educational environment.

### **Conceptual Framework of Digital Mentorship Models**

Digital mentorship refers to a technology-mediated professional relationship in which experienced educators support the professional growth and development of teachers through online communication, collaboration, feedback, and resource sharing. It combines mentorship principles with digital technologies to create accessible, flexible, and continuous professional learning experiences.

The conceptual framework of digital mentorship is rooted in social constructivist learning theory, collaborative learning, reflective practice, and adult learning principles. According to

Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, learning occurs through social interaction and guided participation (Vygotsky, 1978). Digital mentorship facilitates such interaction by connecting teachers with mentors and professional communities through virtual platforms.

A major component of digital mentorship is the use of online communication platforms such as learning management systems, webinars, virtual meeting applications, discussion forums, and collaborative workspaces. These platforms enable mentors and mentees to engage in regular communication, instructional discussions, and collaborative activities irrespective of physical location.

Another significant component is personalized professional learning. Digital mentorship frameworks can assess teachers' learning needs, instructional challenges, technological competencies, and professional goals to design individualized learning pathways. Personalized mentorship improves teacher engagement, confidence, and relevance of professional learning experiences (Johnson & Davis, 2020).

Digital mentorship also incorporates virtual collaboration and professional learning communities where teachers exchange ideas, discuss challenges, share instructional resources, and collaboratively develop innovative teaching strategies. Such collaborative environments strengthen professional relationships and promote collective learning cultures within educational institutions.

Reflective practice constitutes another important dimension of digital mentorship. Through reflective journals, recorded teaching sessions, online discussions, and mentor feedback, teachers critically examine their instructional practices and identify areas for improvement. Reflective engagement enhances self-awareness, pedagogical refinement, and professional growth (Schön, 1983).

Additionally, digital mentorship frameworks increasingly utilize data analytics and artificial intelligence to monitor teacher progress, identify developmental needs, and provide targeted support. These technologies enable evidence-based decision-making and enhance the effectiveness of professional development initiatives.

### **Role of Digital Mentorship in Continuous Professional Development**

Digital mentorship plays a transformative role in supporting continuous professional development of teachers by creating

flexible, collaborative, and technology-enabled learning environments.

One of the most significant contributions of digital mentorship is personalized professional learning. Teachers differ in their instructional experiences, subject expertise, technological competencies, and contextual challenges. Digital mentorship allows mentors to provide individualized guidance based on specific professional needs and career goals. Personalized learning pathways enhance the relevance and effectiveness of professional development activities.

Digital mentorship also strengthens collaborative learning cultures among teachers. Through online professional learning communities, educators can engage in collaborative discussions, share innovative teaching practices, exchange resources, and solve instructional challenges collectively. Such collaboration promotes professional networking and reduces isolation among teachers, particularly those working in remote areas.

Another important advantage is the provision of real-time feedback and instructional support. Mentors can observe recorded classroom sessions, conduct virtual observations, and provide immediate constructive feedback regarding teaching methodologies, classroom management, assessment strategies, and student engagement techniques. Timely feedback enables teachers to reflect upon and improve their practices continuously.

Digital mentorship further promotes lifelong learning and professional adaptability. Teachers can access webinars, online courses, digital libraries, research databases, and professional development resources according to their schedules and learning preferences. This flexibility encourages continuous engagement in professional learning activities.

Research indicates that technology-enabled mentoring positively influences teacher efficacy, instructional innovation, and student outcomes (Gao & Li, 2021). Teachers who participate in collaborative digital mentorship programs demonstrate improved confidence, pedagogical competence, and readiness to integrate technology into teaching-learning processes.

### **Implementation Strategies for Digital Mentorship Programs**

The successful implementation of digital mentorship frameworks requires strategic planning, institutional support, technological infrastructure, and continuous evaluation.

Firstly, educational institutions must design structured mentorship programs aligned with NEP 2020 objectives. Clearly defined goals, mentorship guidelines, mentor responsibilities,

timelines, and evaluation mechanisms are essential for ensuring program effectiveness.

Secondly, capacity-building initiatives should be organized to develop digital literacy and mentoring competencies among teachers and mentors. Training programs must include online communication skills, technology integration, collaborative learning strategies, and reflective mentoring practices.

Thirdly, institutions should utilize robust technological platforms such as learning management systems, mobile applications, cloud-based repositories, and virtual conferencing tools. These platforms should be user-friendly, accessible, multilingual, and adaptable to diverse technological contexts.

Another important strategy involves developing individualized mentorship plans based on teachers' professional needs, subject specialization, and contextual realities. Personalized mentorship increases teacher engagement and supports meaningful professional growth.

Continuous monitoring and feedback mechanisms are also necessary for improving mentorship quality. Surveys, peer evaluations, self-assessment tools, mentor reflections, and performance analytics can provide valuable insights regarding program effectiveness and areas requiring improvement.

### **Challenges in Implementing Digital Mentorship**

Despite its significant potential, digital mentorship faces several challenges in implementation.

One major challenge is the digital divide, characterized by unequal access to internet connectivity, digital devices, and technological infrastructure. Teachers in rural and economically disadvantaged regions often encounter barriers in accessing online mentorship resources and professional learning opportunities.

Another challenge involves limited digital literacy among teachers and mentors. Some educators may lack confidence or competence in using digital technologies effectively, thereby affecting their participation in mentorship activities.

Resistance to technological adoption also presents difficulties. Teachers accustomed to traditional professional development methods may perceive digital mentorship as complex or burdensome. Fear of technology and lack of institutional encouragement can further hinder participation.

Quality assurance is another concern in digital mentorship programs. Variations in mentor expertise, commitment levels, communication skills, and mentoring approaches may result in inconsistent professional learning experiences.

Additionally, inadequate policy implementation, insufficient funding, and lack of administrative support can weaken the sustainability and scalability of digital mentorship initiatives.

### **Strategies for Addressing Challenges**

Addressing implementation challenges requires coordinated efforts from governments, educational institutions, policymakers, and technology providers.

Improving digital infrastructure is essential for ensuring equitable access to mentorship opportunities. Investments in internet connectivity, digital devices, educational software, and technological resources are necessary, particularly in rural and underserved regions.

Comprehensive digital literacy training programs should be organized for teachers and mentors. Such programs must focus not only on technical skills but also on fostering positive attitudes toward technology integration and online collaboration.

Educational institutions should develop inclusive and accessible mentorship platforms compatible with smartphones and low-bandwidth environments. Multilingual interfaces and user-friendly designs can further improve participation.

Standardized mentorship guidelines, mentor training programs, and evaluation frameworks are important for ensuring consistency and quality across mentorship initiatives.

Finally, sustained institutional support, policy commitment, and dedicated funding are crucial for strengthening digital mentorship ecosystems and promoting long-term sustainability.

### **Impact Assessment of Digital Mentorship Models**

Digital mentorship frameworks can significantly influence teacher performance, instructional quality, institutional culture, and student learning outcomes.

Teachers participating in digital mentorship programs often demonstrate improved pedagogical competence, technology integration skills, reflective practice, and classroom innovation. Continuous professional support enhances teacher confidence and professional identity.

Student outcomes may also improve indirectly through enhanced teaching quality, increased learner engagement, and more effective instructional strategies. Research suggests that professionally supported teachers are better equipped to create learner-centered and inclusive educational environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Digital mentorship can further strengthen institutional cultures by promoting collaboration, innovation, peer learning,

and reflective engagement among educators. These collaborative professional cultures contribute to organizational growth and educational effectiveness.

Long-term impact assessment should include teacher retention, job satisfaction, leadership development, and sustainability of professional learning communities. Data-driven evaluation systems can help institutions monitor mentorship effectiveness and continuously improve program implementation.

### **Policy Implications**

The integration of digital mentorship into teacher professional development requires strong policy support and strategic educational planning.

Educational policies should formally recognize digital mentorship as an essential component of teacher development programs. National frameworks can provide standardized guidelines regarding mentorship structures, mentor selection, professional competencies, and evaluation mechanisms.

Governments and educational institutions must allocate dedicated financial resources for technological infrastructure, mentor training, digital content development, and program administration. Sustainable funding models are essential for large-scale implementation.

Public-private partnerships involving educational institutions, technology companies, and non-governmental organizations can support innovation, resource development, and technological advancement in digital mentorship initiatives.

Policies should also encourage the integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, adaptive learning systems, and learning analytics into mentorship frameworks to enhance personalization and effectiveness.

Continuous policy review, research, and evidence-based evaluation are necessary for ensuring that digital mentorship initiatives remain responsive to evolving educational needs and technological developments.

### **Conclusion**

Digital mentorship frameworks represent a transformative approach to continuous professional development of teachers under the National Education Policy 2020. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement, changing pedagogical expectations, and increasing emphasis on lifelong learning, digital mentorship offers flexible, collaborative, and sustainable opportunities for teacher growth and professional empowerment. This study highlights that digital mentorship enhances personalized

learning, collaborative engagement, reflective practice, instructional innovation, and technological competence among teachers. By transcending geographical and institutional barriers, digital mentorship democratizes access to professional learning opportunities and supports inclusive educational development. However, the successful implementation of digital mentorship requires addressing challenges related to digital infrastructure, technological literacy, quality assurance, institutional support, and policy implementation. Strategic investments, standardized frameworks, mentor preparation, and collaborative partnerships are essential for strengthening digital mentorship ecosystems. Aligned with the vision of NEP 2020, digital mentorship has the potential to revolutionize teacher professional development in India by fostering continuous learning, innovation, and educational excellence. Future research should further explore the long-term impact of digital mentorship on teacher effectiveness, student achievement, institutional transformation, and educational equity across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

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