Special Papers

Museums and the Repatriation of Cultural Property: Colonialism and the Politics of Return

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Abstract: This paper examines the legal and philosophical debates regarding the repatriation of cultural property from the colonized world that are currently located in western museums focusing on artifacts from Sub-Saharan African Africa that are currently housed in Europe. We will then discuss how the debates around the restitution have both drawn from, and inspired global politics movements for racial justice that have foreground the materiality of politics and the political imagination.

Introduction:

A much - discussed scene from the 2018 film *Black Panther* addresses the ethical issues surrounding the practices of the acquisition and display of cultural artifacts from the colonized world in western museums (Cascone, 2018). Set in the fictitious "Museum of Great Britain" that is clearly meant to represent the British Museum in London, we see Eric "Killmonger" Stevens standing in front of a museum display looking at a selection of African artifacts. A white middle - aged woman – a museum curator presumably – walks up to him and offers, rather condescendingly, to tell him about the objects. The first two that she mentions references artifacts that have been central to repatriation claims in recent years – 16th and 19th century masks that belong to the Edo people of Benin, and the Bobo Ashanti tribe in Ghana respectively. The curator then launches into an erroneous explanation of the provenance of a war hammer at which point she is first corrected by Killmonger and then informed that he was going to take the object away. When she protests that the piece is not for sale, he asks her "How do you think your ancestors got these? Do you think they paid a fair price? Or did they take it… like they took everything else?" In the dramatic and violent events that follow, Killmonger and his waiting team take off with the hammer, killing the curator and several members of the museum security staff.

There are echoes of this scene in an actual event that took place in the year following the release of the film. In 2019, five activists were arrested and charged for the attempted theft of a funeral staff from Chad that is housed at the Quai Branley museum in Paris (Rea 2020). Their leader was the French Congolese activist Emery Mwazulu Diyabanza who went on to stage similar attempts to remove African artifacts from two other museums in France and the Netherlands. When questioned, Diyabanza asserted that he had come to claim the property of Africa that had been acquired by European colonists through loot, pillage and deceit in the 19th and 20th centuries. In both the cinematic and the real worlds, thus, the

message conveyed is that the European museum is an illegitimate and illegal space that is deeply and irrevocably connected to the violence wreaked by colonialism.

It is striking that both the film, and the politically charged symbolic acts by Diyabanza took place in the aftermath of important developments as far as the return of colonial-era artifacts by European museums to former colonies is concerned. While the claims for the repatriation of these artifacts are certainly not new they have been strengthened by several important developments that have taken place in the last decade. In 2017, the French President Emmanuel Macron announced at the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso that the creation of conditions "for the temporary or permanent return of African heritage to Africa" was a top priority for his government (Rea, 2017) It bears noting that while Macron's speech attracted a great deal of publicity and attention, other European governments and museums have acknowledged the legitimacy of repatriation claims in recent years, and have begin the process of returning artifacts to their places of origin albeit with less fanfare. (Burack, 2023).

While the demands for the repatriation of cultural objects is by no means restricted to Africa and extends to practically every part of the formerly colonized world, the case of Sub-Saharan Africa is different from cases where source nations continue to hold a very large number of cultural artifacts within their territorial boundaries as in the case of Egypt or India. Almost the entire material heritage of this region is now located in museums in the west, severing its people from any tangible remains of their history.

In this essay, I will analyse the philosophical and legal arguments made by those on opposing sides of the debates surrounding the repatriation of artifacts from the colonized world that are presently located in European museums. Critics of repatriation argue that once started, the process will empty western museums, and more importantly, uphold the notion of culture as national patrimony, rather than belonging to the world. As we shall see, These scholars argue that museums in the west have the funding and infrastructure to house and preserve these artifacts, and significantly, are spaces where the visitor is encouraged to understand these materials as truly global treasures, unfettered by a narrow nationalist gaze. On the other hand, proponents of repatriation claim that what is elided in this argument is the violence at the heart of the colonial project.

The paper will then discuss an important phenomenon at the present historical juncture. Calls for repatriation are intertwined with the emergence of two inter-related developments in the west, and in particular, the United States. The first is the Black Lives Matter movement that seeks to critique structural racism in American society, with a particular focus on police brutality that has historically been directed

overwhelmingly at African Americans. The second are the acrimonious, even violent debates about how to deal with the material remnants of uncomfortable, difficult pasts that are linked inextricably with slavery, colonialism and racism. For instance, in both Europe and America, there has been a clamour of opinions on what to do with statues of persons who supported and facilitated slavery such as Confederate generals in the American South. In the age of social media that is saturated with the visual, global solidarities have emerged that draw connections between different and distinct political arenas and histories that challenge racism in different ways. This cross-pollination has energized and radicalized these movements, but have also revealed the limits of the policies and discourse around repatriation that emanate from governments and museums in the west. Thus, while initiatives for the restitution of cultural artifacts to their original homes have grown, there continues to be a sense of impatience, even anger at what is understood as the unresolved trauma of colonialism.

The Debates Around Repatriation: Colonial Violence versus The Cosmopolitan Museum

Even as critics of repatriation continue to make their case, the increasing acceptance by European museums of the voluble arguments made by academics and activists regarding the legitimacy and ethical value of repatriation claims has to a certain extent pushed opponents into a corner. However, while muted, these critiques continue to influence both policy and public opinion, particularly because they are voiced by influential persons from the art world including museum curators and directors, and art historians. They argue that an understanding of cultural artifacts as possessing national identities and the notion that the national character of objects is the basis on which claims to ownership are made by governments of formerly colonized countries. For instance, James Cuno, the art historian and curator who is the President of the influential Paul Getty Trust, argues that these claims to cultural ownership are based on an idea of culture as essentialized and static, with objects being used by nation states to bolster modern political identities by asserting often false continuities with a glorious and powerful past, linkages which may not have any actual historical value. Cuno makes a strong case for the idea of the "encyclopedic museum" exemplified by institutions like the Louvre or the British Museum which are currently home to a huge number of artifacts acquired from French and British colonies respectively. For Cuno, this fact is less important than the pedagogic role that these places play today, arguing that they produce cosmopolitan viewers by encouraging the visitor to see, analyse and compare artifacts from different parts of the world at the same time (Cuno, 2012)

Cuno's idea of cultural property as the enduring legacy of humankind, and not of individual nation states versus the view that sees it as representing a national cultural heritage is one that is both reflected in, as well as constituted by long legal debates on the subject. In his seminal work on the laws governing cultural property, the legal scholar John Merryman discusses a landmark international convention, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict that was passed in 1954 (referred to as "Hague 1954"). This convention engaged with debates in the 19th century on how to deal with the protection of the cultural heritage of belligerents – that is nations or individuals at war with each other. By the end of the Second World War, the issue of the protection of cultural property acquired particular significance in the light of its deliberate destruction by the Nazis all over Europe. Hague 1954 specifically argues for individual international responsibility to deal with this problem; that within their criminal jurisdictions, nations were obliged to try and punish persons of whatever nationality who breached the convention. Which is to say that every country has the responsibility of punishing those who are accused of destroying cultural property, not just the nation of the offender. Thus, for instance, if a German was accused of destroying Polish property, he could be tried and punished by Britain or France or Switzerland. This notion of the international protection of cultural property is one that scholars like Merryman and Cuno subscribe to –the idea that culture belongs to humankind, and that everyone, regardless of nationality has an investment in its protection and preservation.

Not surprisingly, Merryman has deep reservations about the most This is the basis of the most important international agreement on cultural property the Convention on the Means of Preventing and Prohibiting the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property of November 14th, 1970. The convention seeks to inhibit "illicit" or illegal international trade in cultural objects based on the argument that a nation's cultural heritage is impacted adversely and decontextualized when it leaves its borders. Merryman points out that most source nations are so abundant in cultural artifacts, that insisting on repatriation means nothing other than an assertion of ownership. By rendering sale, exchange and loan illegal, the convention prevents the cultures of the world from viewing and understanding each other on the one hand, but also fosters a corrupt black market on the other. Further he argues that these nations do not have the resources or the facilities to care for, preserve and display these objects which means that they might potentially be damaged or even destroyed – something that would be a tragedy for all humankind. (Merryman, 1986)

There are many glaring shortcomings in the idea of cultural internationalism as espoused by the critics of repatriation. Most critical, historical studies of museums would counter the understanding of the museum as proposed by Cuno as a scientific, objective, detached space that is entirely produced through an idealistic encounter between the object and the viewer (Bennett, 2017). This vast body of scholarship argues that museums are spaces of social control, that the selection of objects, displays and curation narrates the past in particular power- laden ways that impact the understanding of the viewer. Indeed, the notion of the cosmopolitan, encyclopedic museum is in fact uncomfortably close to those posited by European colonialists at the height of imperialism in the late 19th and 20th centuries. At this time, museums and exhibitions in places like France and Britain showcased the cultural, natural and industrial products of their colonies for the entertainment and education of the public in Europe. These projects were meant to collect, classify and categorize the world, making it understandable to the European public who would gaze interestedly at products of the colonized world that were organized for viewers in hierarchical ways that always reaffirmed the superiority of the western world. And finally, it is not entirely true that source nations have an endless hoard of cultural artifacts. It might be true of India or Egypt, but this does not account for places like Sub Saharan Africa where the vast majority of its material heritage is located in the west that means that people from this region are denied a tangible relationship with their own material pasts.

At the same time, it is important not to entirely decry this perspective as representing an un-self reflexive liberal agenda that believes entirely in the emancipatory potential of the market, and does not take into account issues of power. I would argue that with all the problems in the critique of repatriation by Cuno and others, they highlight the very real dangers of exclusive nationalist claims over these cultural artifacts. While it is true that in recent times non-state actors have been increasingly involved in calls for repatriation, the main spokespeople in this regard are primarily national governments. As we well know, these are aggressively nationalist times, and the museum in the post-colony has to embody the national identity, often defined in exclusive and hegemonic ways. Certain pasts are reified as defining a relationship with the political and cultural present; objects are fitted into narratives that are suitable to the modern nation state, and are rejected if they cannot be accommodated. Writing about the National Museum in Delhi for instance, Kavita Singh has argued that the organization of artifacts in this space allows for the creation of a narrative of a centralized Hindu state, while sidelining the years of Muslim political rule in India. (Singh, 2002) It also bears noting that returned objects go not go back to their original site of use in a temple or a palace, they are now placed in museums, where curators have the burden of representing them as culturally significant to the nation, the idea of which may have meant little

to their makers. And finally, to return to Cuno and Merryman's arguments, while there are undoubtedly patronizing presumptions behind the accusation that museums in Asia and Africa cannot take care of their own cultural heritage, there are a startling number of examples of neglect and the decay of artistic and cultural artifacts in institutions in the Global South.

Importantly, what is missing in arguments for cultural internationalism is a discussion or even an acknowledgement of the violence of colonialism, either in connection with the acquisition of individual objects or in terms of the larger structures of colonial rule that enabled these transfers. In recent years, this is an aspect of that has engaged an increasing number of museum administrators in so-called encyclopedic museums in the west who have attempted to address this issue through careful and sensitive curation that contextualizes the multiple histories of these objects including that related to their presence in these spaces. In other words, these new curatorial practices are centrally concerned with making the issue of the provenance of objects known to the viewer including the history of how and why it was transferred from its place of origin to the museum where it is presently located. (Shelton, 2000).

In a recent book entitled *Brutush Museums*, Dan Hicks, an anthropologist, archeologist and the curator of the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford has argued that in the final instance curation, however progressive in intent and content, is ultimately a limited exercise and that the true decolonization of museums can only take place through the absolute and irrevocable return of these objects to their original homes. Hicks argues that the new self-reflexive modes of curation inevitably throws the spotlight back on the museum and its personnel which then both become the subject and object of enquiry. Hicks, whose main concern are the Benin bronzes made by the Edo people in the kingdom of Benin in present day Nigeria which was looted by British forces in 1897 forefronts the issue of colonial violence in his whole hearted support of the complete restitution of African cultural artifacts. Importantly – and this is something that we will come back to – he takes material objects extremely seriously arguing that the brutality of European colonialism in Africa lay in the violation of the inalienability of sacred, royal and powerful artifacts such as the ones found in Benin. Which is to say that we have to take the pillaging of Africa's cultural material heritage seriously, not just as a side effect of empire but as a central technology of colonialism in which museums were complicit in brutality, and still are to this day. For Hicks, museums exist in the present, rather than merely narrating the past. In their present form they facilitate the continuation of the violence of colonialism, they are spaces where the past is enacted over and over again, and from which there is no escape (Hicks, 2020)

This emphasis on the significance and politics of materiality, and a focus on the violence of colonialism is also emphasized in the Savoy- Saar report, a document made all the more remarkable because it was commissioned by Emmanuel Macron after his speech in Burkino Faso. Written by two academics, economist Felwine Saar, and historian Bénédicte Savoy, the report particularly focuses on the European and in particular the French relationship with Sub Saharan Africa. Savoy and Saar insist that the phrase restitution carries with it the ethical dimensions of the return of material heritage acquired through the colonial encounter and is preferable to the term repatriation which refers to calls by governments to give back objects that they see as belonging to them. The text by Saar and Savoy defines colonization as a crime against humanity arguing that " the products of colonization are the fruits of crime, and every taking from Africa during the colonial period is illegitimate. European museums are unwittingly the public archives of the colonial system (Savoy-Saar Report, 2019, 2) In this understanding, the restitution of cultural artifacts allows for the building of future equitable relations between countries rather than reinforcing the hierarchies between them and in contrast to the position taken by Cuno and others, argues that this would not result in the isolation of cultural property but would rather allow for the creation of a broader and more inclusive universalism that includes Africa.

Several points in Savoy and Saar's text are particularly noteworthy. First, as we know from the scholarship on colonialism as cultural conquest, they do not make a distinction between the direct seizure of objects during war and that acquired by other means. The collection cultural objects by Europeans by whatever means is understood as an explicitly political act that sought to establish control over native societies through an archive of colonial knowledge that inevitably processed and understood native culture through a Eurocentric lens. As Saar and Savoy point out, people like academics, and institutions like European museums were active participants, and not mere spectators in this process. And finally, once again, like Hicks' work, the report pays particular importance to the materiality of these objects. The fact that these artifacts not present in Africa meant that African youth in particular were deprived of a connection with their history and heritage, and a crucial material medium through they could forge their identities.

Conclusion: Material Pasts and Contemporary Politics

As I said in the beginning, it is somewhat paradoxical that the acceptance of the legitimacy of claims for restitution to address the wrongs of colonialism by European states and museums has been accompanied by what appears to be continuing public dissatisfaction with the process, the attempted theft

from the Paris museum by Emery Diyabanza being the most spectacular example of this disquiet. There are several concrete reasons for this – for one thing, actual repatriation of objects is an extremely slow process, with only a minute fraction having been transferred so far. This is due both to the legal hurdles in different countries regarding the return of cultural property but also because of the opposition of some politicians who fear the demise of the their own cultural institutions if they are emptied of colonial-era artifacts. Second, even the most ambitious plans for restitution inevitably involve investigations into whether a particular object was obtained legitimately or not. In other words, for example, was it obtained through war, and deceit or received as a gift from a native ruler? This vision of restitution does not adequately take into account the structures of colonial power that enabled the transfer of objects to Europe, not just as loot, but as gifts. This present understanding is based on the problematic notion that the agency of the colonized is free and unfettered when an object is given away voluntarily.

The importance of restitution in the public imagination, and the feeling that not enough is being done to facilitate it is also due to the fact that calls for repatriation, particularly to Africa, have been inspired by, and now inextricably linked to popular movements challenging structural racism that emanated from the United States in the form of the Black Lives Matter movement but which has now become a global phenomenon. So it is striking that when Emery Diyabanza went on trial for the attempted theft at the Quai Branley museum in Paris, he claimed that he was inspired by the protests that followed the killing of George Floyd in the United States.In May 2020, George Floyd who was a 46-year-old black man was killed by a white policeman in Minneapolis while being arrested for allegedly using a counterfeit note. His death reignited the Black Lives Matter movement with huge waves of protests against police brutality and violence that is disproportionately directed at African Americans in the United States. The struggle against entrenched structural racism in the US has a particular history and character but has resulted in echoes all over the world, both in Europe and in Africa. Bénédicte Savoy, one of the authors of the Saar report has argued that the Black Lives Matter movement has produced a psychological change in the public that has ignited calls for a post-racist society in which restitution would play an important and central role (Shaw, 2020). More work is needed to think about how in a digital age where the world is brought together by social media, the language, visuals and message of the Black Lives Matter movement was able to travel at lightening speed, and bring together disparate geographies and political contexts.

I want to end by coming back to the centrality of material objects to global politics at the present time As we have seen, the restitution of Africa's cultural heritage has become a key element of the global appropriation of the Black Lives Matter Movement. But the materiality of the past is also an everyday

political issue. The heightened calls for restitution of cultural artifacts have coincided for instance with the controversy over about how to deal with uncomfortable and different remnants of the past whether in the form of statues of colonialists like Cecil Rhodes in universities all over the world or those of Confederate generals who supported slavery that adorn parks and other places of civic importance all over the American South. In 2017, a year before Macron's announcement in Burkino Faso, there were violent protests in Charlottesville in Virginia about the city's plan to take down the statue of Robert E. Lee that I just mentioned earlier. The debate about these statues took place in both the academic and popular register. The American Historical Association, the country's premier association of professional historians issued a statement that argued that these memorials to a slave-owning past needed to be taken down because they were not deserving of the civic honour of standing in prominent places in American cities and towns. Instead these statues needed to be re-contextualized and to be reinterpreted with historical expertise. The AHA explained that these figures were not built in the immediate aftermath of the American Civil War, but in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a period of mandated segregation and legal disenfranchisement of African Americans, and then later in the mid 20th century coinciding with the Civil Rights movement. The statues therefore did not represent the times the figures lived in, they were built as symbols of white supremacy in order to counter the growing strength of emancipatory political movements. (American Historical Association, 2017)

Even while historians argue that the place for the material remnants of problematic pasts is in the museum, the issue continues to be a deeply acrimonious, conflicted and even violent one as far as the general public is concerned. On the one hand, they are those – including the former American President Donald Trump – who have argued that the taking down of statues such as those of the Confederate generals amounts to an erasure of history, while others demands the removal, even the destruction of these memorials. In Europe as well, there have been recent demands to remove statues of controversial figures from the colonial era including slave traders and politicians including King Leopold II and of Belgium recently even the seemingly untouchable Winston Churchill. The demand that states and society at large deal with these objects speak to the importance of materiality to politics and political struggle. These artifacts are understood as not merely representing or symbolizing the past; instead they are enmeshed in, and influence and define present day politics. The strength of the recent calls for the restitution of cultural property has drawn from this understanding of the significance of material objects in addressing racism and the legacy of colonialism.

My attempt in this paper has been to understand the issue of the restitution of cultural property through the specific case of Africa. As we have seen the legal and ethical debates regarding repatriation

has had a long history amongst museum administrators and scholars that I have attempted to highlight. Although we have not had time to tackle the issue today, the specificities of different histories of colonialism have also impacted both the character of the conversations about repatriation, and the policies being put into place by the cultural institutions of different European countries to return cultural artifacts to their places of origin. What makes the present historical moment particularly interesting is that the issue of the restitution of Africa's material tangible heritage has split over into the public realm, and has become a part of a global political movement against the violence of racism in its diverse

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Neorealist Filmmakers in Italian Cinema: 1940s and 1950s

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Neorealism, also known as Neorealismo in Italian, was a reaction against the artificiality of Fascist and pre- Second World War films. It first appeared in Italian cinema in the 1940s and 1950s as an effort to reorient films. The paper deals with the films of some of the noted neorealist filmmakers of Italian cinema as the role of neorealist directors and the films they made during that period is integral to the quest for understanding neorealism. Neorealism first appeared as a result of these filmmakers' search for truth and their profound moral conviction, despite the fact that their artistic ideals and subject-matter treatments varied. Their commitment to the cause of portrayal of reality and the socio-economic conditions prevalent in their country not only deglamorized the cinema but made it more meaningful and purposeful. One will not only discuss the major neorealist directors and their works - Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio De Sica and Luchino Visconti but also the minor ones - Alberto Lattuada, De Santis, Luigi Zampa, Pietro Germi etc. At the same time, we'll talk about Federico Fellini and his films, whose adaptation and personalization of the neorealist aesthetic were so extensive that he was once considered as a traitor to the movement. We will have the chance to understand neorealism - its tenets, aesthetics, and goals - thorough examination of their films and the reasons they filmed them.

The term neorealism (Italian *Neorealismo*) which has been defined and redefined by so many socio-historians and film theoreticians in their ongoing discussions was a marked force in the Italian cinema of 1940s and early 1950s. Neorealism, which first appeared in Italian cinema during the 1940s and 1950s, not only represented a reaction against the artificiality of Fascist and pre- Second World War filmmaking, but also a departure from previous escapist amusement known in Italy as "white telephone" pictures (Valicha, 1988, 10-15). According to Valicha (1988, 10-15),

neorealism aimed to reorient film's portrayal of daily life by capturing events within their historical context and emphasizing social groups and individuals who had never previously been the subject of cinema. The role of neorealist filmmakers and the films they made during that period is integral to the quest for understanding neorealism. Neorealism first appeared as a result of these filmmakers' quest for truth and their great moral conviction, despite the fact that their artistic ideals and subject-matter treatments varied. Their commitment to the cause of portrayal of reality and the socio-economic conditions prevalent in their country not only deglamorized the cinema but made it more meaningful and purposeful. We will talk about the lesser neorealist filmmakers, such as Alberto Lattuada, De Santis, Luigi Zampa, Pietro Germi, etc. in addition to the greater ones, such as Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio De Sica, and Luchino Visconti, and their works. At the same time, we'll talk about Federico Fellini and his films, whose adaptation and personalization of the neorealist aesthetic was so extensive that he was once referred to as a traitor to the neorealism movement. We will have the chance to understand neorealism - its tenets, aesthetics, and goals - thorough examination of their films and the motivations behind their creation.

It's crucial to note that in the 1930s, Visconti collaborated with French filmmaker Jean Renoir, a member of the French poetic realism movement, on the film *Toni* (1934), which academics consider to be the forerunner of the Italian neorealist movement. Neorealism undoubtedly benefited from the social and gloomy realism of poetic realism. *Toni* was based on an Italian immigrant who committed murder because of his fascination with a lady while living in France. Renoir used amateur performers, filmed the movie on location, and kept the original music. The film's genuine image is grainy or rough, and the soundtrack's crackling effect adds to the documentary-like authenticity of the production (Hayward 2004, 202).

The Precursors

De Sica's *I Bambini ci Guardano (The Children Are Watching Us,* 1942) depicted the tribulations of family life with truthfulness and openness which resulted in a strong displeasure from the Fascist establishment (Robinson 1981, 233). Themes including a difficult upbringing, a heartless marriage, infidelity, and suicide were all shown. These concepts contradicted official fascist propaganda, which claimed that in a fascist state there would be no unhappy children, no adulterers, because only men would engage in extramarital affairs while women had to suffer, and no suicides because suicide was anti-fascist (Liehm 1986, 47). The subject matter of the film transgressed the boundaries of the Fascist cinema and offered a transition to the neorealist period.

One of the earliest initiatives to alter the course of Italian film was Alessandro Blasetti's *Quattro Passis fra le Nuvole* (*Four Steps in the Clouds*, 1942). Even though it was about a poor, unmarried, pregnant peasant girl, it showed some little-known aspects of Italian society. The sceneries of - regular individuals on a bus who are weary and unattractive; old and messy buses travelling on rough roads; pictures of poor communities; miserable girl; a traveling salesman unable to make ends meet were new to the Italian screen. But in the second half of the film, comic interludes prevail and film ends on a happy note. De Santis called it as a use of 'direct realistic language' (Quoted in Liehm 1986, 49). Although it was far too early to speak about neorealism, *Four Steps in the Clouds* made an effort to alter the course of Italian cinema.

In 1943, Antonio Pietrangeli, the scriptwriter of *Ossessione* (*Obsession*) coined the term neorealism when talking about *Ossessione* which was made in 1942 (Hayward 2004, 201). *Ossessione* signifies the beginning of a style that was neorealist in idea and application. Because of censoring issues, this movie wasn't very widely recognized at the time. However, it undoubtedly set Italian film on a new path, which was subsequently polished and typified by Roberto Rossellini's *Roma Citta Aperta (Rome Open City)*.

Trio of Rossellini, De Sica and Visconti

The three great Italian filmmakers of the post- Second World War period, Visconti, Rossellini, and De Sica, had a thirst for realism and a pressing need to link oneself to reality. Their aesthetic concepts and treatment of the subject - matter were widely divergent but their shared desire to portray reality led to the origination of a style that became, with its abiding ethical commitment, the unifying agent of the movement referred to as neorealism. With the passage of time, apart from these three directors, others too were influenced by the neorealist 'style commitment' or 'style as ethics'. Some of them who tried to incorporate neorealist principles in their own individual ways were De Santis, Alberto Lattuada, Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, Luigi Zampa, Pietro Germi and Reneto Castellani. Rossellini's apt remark about the application of neorealist principles in the divergent individual styles of various directors' sums up the whole issue: 'There are many types of neorealism. Everyone has their own. It is an ethical approach. It was an attempt to understand myself in a phenomenon.' (Bondanella 1993, 102).

Mira Lehm argues that the term "Neorealism" best describes the period between Rossellini's "unique heavenly view of reality" and Visconti's "stylized interpretation of reality as history and culture." However, as Italian society, which was characterized by shared sorrow, became more diverse and complex, De Sica's humanistic vision of reality became more closely aligned with the post-war cultural and political climate and lost some of its potency (Liehm 1986, 73). However, De Sica imbues his characters with the potential and strength of love. De Sica embraces and spreads the humanitarian spirit across the globe. De Sica is gifted with the capacity and desire to articulate and represent a profound sense of human life, as well as a delightful elegance of expression and gesture that, in his own unique way, serve as a compelling testament to people. De Sica's humanistic attitude is shown by the characters in his films Ricci (Ladri di Biciclette /Bicycle Thieves, 1948), Toto (Miracolo a Milano/ Miracle in Milan, 1953), and Umberto D (Umberto D, 1952). Andre Bazin

compliments it in high terms, stating that there was a hidden pessimism and an unavoidable melancholy in De Sica's universe. One can never express enough gratitude to him since it contains the call for others to experience his exquisite and undeniable humanity (Bazin 1971, 101–102). De Sica and his style of humanity were evident in his films relating to the period of our study.

> The neorealist tenor of Rossellini's works stems from his interest in people and their plights, or as he put it himself, "man and that adventure, unique to all, which is life" (Armes 1971, 89). The source of humanism of Rossellini was not a Marxist philosophy but the Catholic faith. Contrary to Visconti, who neglects the religious side of Sicilian life in *La Terra Trema* (*The Earth Trembles,* 1948), Rossellini constantly exhibits concern with the behaviour of saints, priests and believers in his films – *Roma Citta Aperta* (*Rome Open City,* 1945) and *Paisa* (*Neighbour,* 1946). His two films *Stromboli* (*1950*) and *Viaggio in Italia* (*Voyage to Italy,* 1954) conclude with what is virtually a religious conversion. One of Rossellini's popular descriptions of neorealism is in terms of the Christian doctrine of loving one's neighbour and for him there is no contradiction between freedom and Christianity. In his opinion, to live life from the position of Catholicism in no manner suggests prejudice or absence of objectivity as when people talks of freedom, the first thing they include is freedom within certain confines but he discovers in Christianity an enormous power; it is because the freedom is absolute. One of the motivating forces of Rossellini's artistic vocation is his yearning to be free from the constraints of conventional dramatic structure. It is the foundation of one of his foremost achievements, his contribution in the deliverance of cinema from the grip of an aesthetic based on 19th century novel and the well - made play. Rossellini criticizes the continuity of narrative and says that he hates the rational continuity of the theme. The explanatory shots are essential to arrive at the central event but he, by nature, is disposed to exclude and pour contempt on them (Armes 1971, 90-91). This conscious lack of narrative continuity in the structure of the film is evident in *Paisa* (1946) and in the final parts of *Germania Anno Zero*

(*Germany Year Zero,* 1948) where he succeeds in sustaining a lengthy sequence depending solely on the power of the image.

The guidelines of Rossellini's aesthetics are in line with a worldview that has been specifically tailored to *mise en scene*. While De Sica's is mostly a method of feeling, Rossellini's style is a way of seeing. Rossellini's set is constructed such that the viewer may take the thing from outside. This does not imply a lack of understanding or emotion, but rather that this outer approach gives us a crucial ethical and metaphysical aspect of one's relationships with the outside world (Bazin 1971, 62). To understand the aforementioned concepts, it is necessary to contrast how children were treated in Rossellini's film *Germania Anno Zero* (*Germany Year Zero*) with De Sica's films *Ladri di Biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*) and Sciuscia's (*Shoeshine,* 1946).

> Luchino Visconti, the maker of *Ossessione* (*Obsession*, 1942) and *La Terra Trema* (*The Earth Trembles*, 1948) was another major neorealist director whose works bear a testimony to his commitment and approach. *Ossessione* was a forerunner to the neorealist approach a type of cinema opposed to the 'white telephone' films and hopeful bourgeoisie intrigue of the official cinema (Bazin 1971, 62). In his views towards film structure, he was unlike Rossellini as Visconti kept faith in the shaped narrative that exhibits advancement of plot and character over a period of time. In a way, his films were planned in terms of sequences rather than of shots and he needed time, above all else, too for his story to progress and reach its climax. *La Terra Trema* has an intense stylistic unity that is further aided by its classic simplicity of form. Visconti uses simple techniques like repetition and the spacing of scenes to a wonderful effect. In *La Terra Trema*, the source of narrative style of Visconti lies in inspiration drawn from the adapted novel of Verga *I malavoglia.* Geoffrey Nowell Smith argues that Visconti has carried over from *La Terra Trema* and the legacy of neorealism and his respect for the tough, intractable, documentary detail and the accurate geographical and historical background is as important for one's perception of his work as the type of themes that surface from the narrative and the manner in which it is portrayed (Nowell Smith 1968, 12).

Federico Fellini

Federico Fellini has often been accused by the critics for departing from neorealist principles. This personal and imaginative use of various skills and techniques, he learnt during his stint as script writer and assistant director to neorealist master Rossellini, has been attacked and termed as 'betrayal of neorealism' by Zavattini (Budgen ed. 1966, 29). Andre Bazin comes in support of Fellini and claims that it is ridiculous and outrageous to reject him a place among the neorealists. Obviously, what De Sica shares with Rossellini and Fellini is not the deep meaning of their films, but the pride of place they all give to depicting reality at the expense of dramatic structures. Bazin claims that neorealism is not the private asset of any one ideology. Regarding Fellini's contribution to the neorealist aesthetic, Bazin comments that it is possible to see Fellini as a director who goes too far within this neorealist aesthetic, who goes excessively far and finds himself on the other side. We now perceive figures not between the objects, but transparently *through* them (Bazin 1971, 87-88).

The pivotal moments that show how things change for the better, and the main dramatic expressions only convey continuity links in Fellini's films, while the truly important and illuminating scenes are found in the lengthy explanatory sequences that appear to have no bearing on the revelation of the "action" proper. This is accomplished in *I Vitelloni* by the midnight strolls and aimless beach strolls and in La Strada (The Road) by the visit to the convent. Fellini's departure from rigid neorealist aesthetic can be seen in three of his 1950s films - *I Vitelloni* (1953)*, La Strada* (*The Road*, 1954) and *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria,* 1957). They are seen as 'sign-posts out of the movement proper' and methods of expanding and revising the genre so that it could eventually widen its influence to other styles, other ideas of filmmaking (Bazin 1971, 87-88).

De Santis and Lattuada

De Santis, maker of *Caccia tragica* (*Tragic Hunt*,1947) and *Riso Amaro* (*Bitter Rice*, 1948) describes that his standpoint with regard to realism implies a 'transfiguration of reality.' He does not fully agree to Rossellini's theories: putting one's camera between real walls can easily lead to sheer surface realism. Art is not the duplication of simple documents. In his political approach and his style, De Santis associates himself more with Visconti: he likes to plunge himself in tradition, articulate the existing aspirations of the public through its traditions. Moreover, he argues, many Italian filmmakers happen to re-find the Italian tradition of melodrama and that applied to him as well (Philip Kolker 1983, 83). De Santis's *Rome, 11 o'clock* (1951) was based on a news item that appeared on January 15, 1951 relating to when more than hundred women applied for a single typist job, the staircase collapsed causing one's death and leaving seventy seven injured. But the film lacked artistic commitment and was completely unconvincing and unimaginative (Armes 1971, 97). Another neorealist film of 1951 was *Bellissima* of Luchino Visconti in which Anna Magnani played the character of a poor Roman woman who, after having dreamt of a future as an actress for her little daughter, understands and realizes with bitterness, in the face of reality, the futility of every sacrifice.

Alberto Lattuada's two films *Il Bandito (The Bandit,* 1946) and *Senza Pieta (Without Pity,* 1947) deal with the phenomenon of violence which was both unavoidable and fatal to those involved in the turmoil of post Second World War Italy. The two films are penetrating testimony of indecision and social volatility, violence and rebellion and in the background of contemporary revolutionary circumstances in which Italy found it in the forties (Liehm 1986, 96).

Lattuada studies the necessity of violence which, in his opinion, ensues when the absence of equilibrium at the heart of society pushes man into unfamiliar paths and forces him to deal with conflicts which trouble and rupture his life. *The Bandit*'s early scenes are deeply rooted in contemporary circumstances and

there are similarities with defeatist atmosphere of pre-war French film like Marcel Carne's *Quai des Brumes* (*Port of Shadows*) made in 1938 (Armes 1971, 102). But later it delves into conventional melodrama. His sense of affinity with opera and melodrama in his conception of cinema brings him, in the context of neorealist movement, stylistically much closer to Visconti and De Santis than to the naturalistic Zavattini, but he lacks their marked commitment. Lattuada adapted neorealist ideals to his favourite genre, the stories of unhappy love. His protagonists, carrying aspirations of immortal passions, were transferred to authentic environments and their sorrows unveiled against the backdrop of postwar Italy and social unrest (Liehm 1986, 85-86)

Senza Pieta (Without Pity, 1947) also has a close link with immediate contemporary reality with the film set in the port of Leghorn, postwar centre of drug-trafficking, smuggling, prostitution and black-marketeering. A tragic love story of two social outcasts - an Italian girl driven into prostitution and an American black soldier - it depicts a vivid picture of one of the least pleasant aspects of liberated Italy: violence, crime and corruption. Regarding the conflict between filmmakers' mission and the concessions to commercial pressures, Lattuada comments:

> that the artist must work towards, authenticity, and the clarification of ideas, must contribute to progress, struggle against conformity, seek modesty and humbly - that goes without saying - to say the things he feels capable of contributing to the redressing of errors, must be a guide, a 'detector' for society, but must not in any case be transformed into a mere instrument of Political propaganda (Quoted in Armes 1971, 104).

Keeping up his apolitical stand, Lattuada, during his involvement with neorealist movement seems to have tried systematically to avoid making films that can be given any ideological label. To most critics, the major strength of Lattuada's neorealist work lives in its sharp and powerful capturing of the realities of the postwar Italy, though he is

overtly never satisfied merely to record with newsreel style photography.

Others

Another director Luigi Zampa blended the neorealist approach with his own predilection for farcical comedy. *Vivere in Pace (To live in Peace,* 1946) of Zampa was a typical Italian style comedy, particularly adopting neorealist patterns. The film is unified by a fascinating humanistic message "let's love each other, we are all brothers!" Zampa indicates in the end, and that was precisely what the postwar world wanted to listen (Liehm 1986, 85).

Pietro Germi tried to implant the neorealist trend into the mainstream of the film industry. He attempted to draw a sizable audience to films that were socially conscious by incorporating elements of traditional action flicks. In the 1948 novel *In Nome Della Legge (In the Name of Law1948*), *Germi* examines the social tensions in a Sicilian community where a wealthy landowner governs. He depicts the juvenile misbehaviour of the postwar age in his earlier movie *Gioventu Perdute (Lost Youth, 1946),* which has a topic more akin to De Sica's Sciuscia (*Shoeshine, 1946*). The film, *The Path of Hope* (1950), opens with an arresting scenario of a strike; the mine owners have chosen to stop it because it is not lucrative; the workers attempt to seize the shafts but are forced to flee (Marcia Landy ed. 2001, 25–45). *The Path of Hope* presents an important aspect of Italian life - emigration. The film narrates the tale of a group of Sicilian emigrants who travel across the country to the French border hoping to find work there. The neorealist technique adopted by Germi was the foreground - background action juxtaposed with crowd scenes (Liehm 1986, 100-101). Rossellini considered filmmakers such as Zampa, Germi, Comencini or Castellini as 'popularizes' who came behind the real innovators. They were possibly more

significant, as they spread neorealism, far and wide, and perhaps with better clarity and were more extensively understood (Liehm 1986, 101).

Cronaca di un Amore (Chronicle of a Love, 1951) by Michelangelo Antonioni portrays a love story between a man of modest social origins and a married lady of the high society of Milan. While watching the film, the grayish photography and the plot of the story persuade us to recall *Ossessione* of Visconti. Andre Bazin commented that 'neorealist is a good way to define a Michelangelo Antonioni film like *Cronaca di un Amore* because the filmmaker did not rely on expressionism from outside the characters; instead, he based all of his effects on how they lived their lives, even 'how they laughed and cried.' They are 'trapped in the plot's labyrinth like laboratory rats being led through a maze.' (Bazin 1971, 66).

Carlo Lizzani's first film *Achtung Banditi* (1951) also tried to revive the neorealist ideals, especially the thematic matrix of neorealism, the antifascist resistance. Lizzani opposed the Zavattini's theory about the present as the sole source of art; he suggested the concept of history as a unifying agent of the past, present and the future. He hoped that neorealism, could be revived if it reverted back to its original inspiration - the resistance. In his later films, he continued to address the present through the stories set in the past (Liehm 1986, 99).

Earlier Renato Castellini made *Due soldi di speranza* (*Two Cents Worth of Hope*, 1952) which also deviated from the neorealist ideals. Millicent Marcus argues that though Castellini used non - professional actors, a real location, local language, unobtrusive camera work, and a natural story, his persistence on happy ending indicated arbitrary, superficial remedies for the very unyielding social troubles his narrative vowed to investigate (Marcus 1986, 123)

In a way, the focus was also on the intent of the filmmaker to deal with the existing reality rather than only on technical considerations or neorealist characteristics. Neorealism affected the films in 1952 - 53 even if the social circumstances that characterized it at the beginning had drastically changed. During these times, episodic films, begun by A. Blasetti's *Altri Tempi* (*Times Gone By,* 1952) assume much significance. Carlo Lizzani's *Cronaca di Poveri Amanti (Poor Lovers Report*, 1953) set in the Florence of 1920 when Fascism violently oppressed and annihilated the last vestiges of opposition also makes interesting observations of the past. Luigi Comencini's *Pane, Amore E Fantasia* (*Bread, Love and Fantasy,* 1953) was first of a successful series built around the amorous adventures of Vittorio De Sica who is the central character in all these films. The film is more about love and lust rather than bread and it clearly departs from the neorealist principles towards comedy and fantasy.

Thus, it can be said that in addition to the contributions of Rossellini, De Sica, and Visconti, the exploration of neorealist principles by numerous other directors, including *Fellini, Lattuada, Zampa, and Germi*, resulted in a significant expansion of the subject matter of neorealist cinema and the depiction of an increasing number of contemporary issues. These films don't provide in-depth analysis, and most only touch on different aspects of postwar Italian society. Nevertheless, it was important that they attested to the presence of difficulties. The general urge to depict as many aspects of life as possible in films was there in not just the neorealists but also their fellow travellers. As a result, the themes were shifted, and the depressing and troubled post-war era was replaced with a less acute social reality that had faith in the future.

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•*Paisa* (*Neighbour,* 1946)

• *Sciuscia* (*Shoeshine,* 1946)

• *Caccia tragica* (*Tragic Hunt*, 1947)

• *Riso Amaro* (*Bitter Rice*, 1948)

• *Ladri di Biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves,* 1948)

• *Germania Anno Zero* (*Germany Year Zero,* 1948)

• *La Terra Trema* (*The Earth Trembles,* 1948)

• *Stromboli* (*1950*)

• *Bellissima* (1951)

• *Cronaca di un Amore (Chronicle of a Love,* 1951)

• Umberto D (*Umberto D,* 1952)

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Muslim Political Behaviour in Uttar Pradesh Assembly Election, 2022: An Interface of Electoral Choice, Hindutva Politics and A Muslim Political Party

Noon, roti nahi khayenge, Darri nahi Bichhayenge!
Patang ko jeetayenge
(Will not eat salt and chapatti, no more useless job in other parties.
We will help Kite, the symbol of AIMIM, win)
(AIMIM slogan in UP's election, 2022)

Manjur Ali

Understanding of Muslims Electoral Behaviour: A Brief

Since the beginning of electoral politics in India, the question of political preference by individuals and communities, legitimacy of policy and government, agenda of the political parties, and other various aspects of the electoral process have been scrutinised by scholars. In this process, minorities, primarily Muslims' political actions and attitudes have also been regularly analysed. Imtiaz Ahmad (1967), C.P. Bhamabari (1972), Moin Shakir (1980), Gurpreet Mahajan (1991), Omar Khalidi (1993), Irfan Engineer (1995), Zoya Hasan (2000, 2004 & 2012), Hilal Ahmad (2019), and others have extensively commented on the Muslims situation in the electoral process.

2014 onward ushered a new interpretation of Muslim electoral behaviour into the political discourse. It has two critical features – Muslim vote as a community, and they are anti-BJP. However, statistical facts completely exposed the 'myth of en bloc' voting of Muslims. They vote for not only all the secular parties but also BJP in the 4-8 per cent range. However, the BJP does not recognise the varied voting pattern among Muslims and harps on the theory of en bloc voting. "There has been research which disproves Muslim en bloc voting. Nevertheless, it is unlikely to be digested as practical experience negates such theories construed through preconceived hypotheses (Sinha 2017)." The desired consequence of such exposition has been the consolidation of 'Hindu votes' in favour of the BJP.

At the beginning of the election in India, nation, region, and secularism played a significant role in mobilisation. However, with time, the 'politicisation of caste,' 'rise of plebeians', and the

strengthening of Hindutva forces in the political sphere, religion, and caste have been leading the mobilisation of votes in India. "Election is a system in which different groups and categories are available for mobilisation regarding their collective interest. In the case of India, caste and religious identity are supposed to be mobilisation tools (Mahajan and Joseph 1993, 1953)." Today, at least in north India, where BJP draws its maximum support, religious mobilisation has been defining feature of the election. Among the northern State, Uttar Pradesh has given tremendous political strength to the BJP. Hence, studying the State and electoral behaviour of Muslims in the context of communal polarisation is a relevant scholarly task.

Muslim votes in Uttar Pradesh (UP) have always been the crucial base for secular parties. They stood with them and tried to assert their role as an autonomous group whenever possible. Since independence, Muslims have adopted three options to be relevant in politics – own political parties, interest/pressure groups, and join secular parties sympathetic to their cause (Khalidi 1993, 43). The rise and failure of a different political party in UP have been discussed later in this paper. The action and the outcome of interest/pressure groups have been complex and sometimes brought political elimination to the community's doorstep. For instance, the pressure group led the significant mobilisation of the community around the Shah Bano case and played an important role in galvanising right-wing mobilisation. The most successful strategy has been the political allegiance to the secular parties.

However, it was noticed that, since 2014, secular parties have slowly and gradually abandoned the Muslims' interest in the State despite these parties still being electorally preferred. In this context, the entry of All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) in Uttar Pradesh foregrounds the necessity to test the electoral strategy of the Muslims. This paper has analysed the presence of AIMIM in the 2022 assembly election as a vocal advocate of Muslim interests and the community's political choice.

History of Political Allegiance and Failed Experiment

We can categorise Muslim politics in Uttar Pradesh in four phases – 1951-1985, 1989-1996, 2002-2012, and from 2017 onwards. The first phase includes the dominance and fall of the Indian Congress Party (INC) in Uttar Pradesh Muslims. Second and third phase deals with the rise of identity politics. This was the rise of *Mandal* and *Kamandal* politics. During the second

phase, one can see the ascendency of Hindu-right politics in Uttar Pradesh. Third, the *Mandal* remained dominant. The fourth phase saw the return of Hindu-Right politics in a significant way.

As argued earlier, except in the 1967 and 1977 elections, Muslims 1985 voted and supported the INC. They were part of the Congress umbrella social alliance. At the same time, they were critically engaging and negotiating with the ruling party for the community's welfare. Finally, the Muslims left the 'Grand Old Party' in favour of identity-based political parties like the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Never have they supported Jana Sangh or its successor Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in UP. BJP also has not any winning Muslim representative under its fold.

Until 2017, 51.2 per cent of total Muslim representatives come from the western part of the state. 33.5 per cent representative has been from the eastern part. The minority-concentrated constituencies have helped to bolster their representation in the assembly. Whenever communal polarisation occurs in the state, Muslim representation decreases. For instance, the 1967, 1991, 1993, and 2017 assembly elections have seen lower Muslim representation.

Now it is a cliché political statement that there has been a deficit in the total political representation. For instance, in 2017, there was a deficit of almost 53.6 per cent. In 1991 and 1993, the deficits were 52.5 and 43.5 per cent, respectively. Muslims had the best performance in 2012 when the deficit was reduced to 9.6 per cent. Muslims voted until 1985 to the Congress, then shifted to the SP, a Janata Dal (JD) successor in UP and the BSP. However, despite voting for such secular parties, the status of Muslims has not improved as it should have.

For instance, based on the 68th NSSO round explain that the incidence of poverty in Uttar Pradesh is highest among SCs (40.87), followed by Muslims (34.88). In the urban area, the incidence of poverty is higher than in rural areas for Muslims, i.e., 36.35 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively. The region-wise analysis of poverty reveals that central Uttar Pradesh's Muslims are worse off than their Western and Eastern partners. In rural areas of Central parts, 63.6 per cent of Muslims are poorly followed by Southern (39 per cent, Bundelkhand region), Eastern (33.3), and Western (24.4), respectively. In urban localities, Muslims of UP's central

parts are lagging, with 45 per cent population coming under poverty. Regarding Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE), Muslims are generally far behind High caste Hindus.

The socio-economic backwardness of Muslims has, occasionally, galvanised a section of the community to ask what went wrong. Why are Muslims lagging compared to other communities? What has been the role of their elected representatives? What has been the role of the representative of their community? Is it due to systemic discrimination? So on and so forth. UP's history, the rise of Muslim Majlis from 1968 onward under A.J. Faridi, was founded on Muslims' backwardness under the Congress regime.

Dr Faridi was concerned about the rising inequality among the Muslim community, communalism, and treatment of Urdu and Minority institutions in the state. He argued that neither Congress nor Mrs. Gandhi could protect the Muslims. They should take the necessary steps for their protection. "But disillusion has set in for many of us, he says. To be a Moslem is to be disillusioned now. We are angry because, for many years, we tried the Congress party; he went on, referring to Mrs. Gandhi's party. We voted for them and failed to achieve what we wanted. At the moment, Moslems are trying to find out who can deliver the goods (Weinraub 1973)."[i] For his political purpose, Dr Faridi designed broader agenda to attract the other community, mainly today's Jatav. The main objectives of Muslim Majlis were as follows:

> (1) To awaken the political sense among the 85 per cent oppressed and backward people like Muslims, Harijans etc so as to enable them face the oppressors and exploiters, (2) uniting the Muslims, who are scattered and victims of inferiority complex, under the banner of Muslim Majlis and removing their sense of inferiority complex, (3) to struggle for protecting and safeguarding the life, property honour, culture and civilization, language, religious beliefs and places of Muslims, (4) to try to remove political, economic, social and educational backwardness of Muslims, (5) to try to remove communalism from the country with the help of secular-minded non-Muslims, (6) to try to create a society and atmosphere in the country so as to enable every citizen to lead a peaceful and respectable life, (7) to oppose and fight against the government policy based on injustice, inequality, bias and prejudice and set up a secular system in the country, and (8) to try to prevent poor and weaker people in the country from exploitation by capitalists and oppressive rulers.

Nevertheless, scholars have identified the reasons for the failure of Muslim Majlis in Uttar Pradesh. Muslim Majlis was a loose federation of various organisations. Thus, it needed more

unified leadership. Other than that, the fragmentary nature of the Muslim community, with its regional and local specificity and the small and scattered Muslim votes in most electoral constituencies, made it fall apart. Besides, the path of 'contest mobility' was strewn with difficulties because democratic political institutions do not always lend themselves to being used by minority groups to defend their interests.

Revival of the Condition in the State and New Political 'Messiah'

In the first decade of the new century, Sachar Committee Report (SCR) findings have resurfaced the question of Muslims' backwardness and its linkage with the political empowerment of the community. It has been noticed that the period after the release of the reports witnessed the mushrooming of Muslim-centric political parties (Ali 2013). For instance, the Peace Party of India (2008), Welfare Party of India (2011), Awami Vikas Party (2012), Popular Front of India (2006), Rashtriya Ulema Council (2008), People's Democratic Conference of India (West Bengal led by Maulana Siddiqullah Chaudhary). The new name in the list of political parties looking to address the questions of Muslims' backwardness is All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM). The Hyderabad-based party seeks to expand its base to pan-India while voicing the socio-economic conditionality of Muslims.

Currently, acceptance of this party is more at the psychological level. The growing acceptance of the party is not only due to the economic exclusion of Muslims but the threat to their existence since 2014. Since 2014, with the rise of the BJP in power at the Union and many states of India, Muslims have started facing attacks on their identity, which is now culminating in the clarion call of genocide[ii]Within seven years, the perception has been created among the majority that the mere sight of Muslims in public spaces threatens the collective life of Hindus. It has been termed 'politics of fear by Hindu nationalists' (Anand 2011).[iii] Hence, they must be eliminated.[iv] In between, members of right-wing groups lynched many Muslims. There has been an attack on Muslims' cultural identities. They have been marginalised through the anti-Muslim campaign in the form of Love Jihad, Land Jihad, Population Jihad, Mazar Jihad, and so on. Lastly, Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was introduced. In combination with NRC, it can disfranchise Muslims as a citizen of the country and put the individual whose name appears on the 'D' list in detention centers bereft of any rights.

Muslims resisted such a government move and, in the process, a larger share of the community politically educated themselves. The protestors noticed the eerie silence of the majority and secular parties. CAA protest has created a chasm between political parties and Muslims. A section of the Muslims is now convinced that no one exists for them. 'They are alone' was the foremost learning for the community. To these Muslims, AIMIM has given them the confidence to raise their concern without any fear. In short, the psychological acceptance of AIMIM in UP is more to do with the failure of secular politics rather than the rise of the BJP.

AIMIM in UP

Currently, in the Seventeenth Lok Sabha, AIMIM has two Members of Parliament (MP). The Alliance with Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) in Maharashtra in 2019 made AIMIM win the Aurangabad seat. The election slogan was Jai Bhim and Jai Mim. The alliance victory re-emboldened the pan-India dream of AIMIM. Before this, AIMIM contested the Bihar Assembly election in 2015. The party contested only six seats of Seemanchal. The victory was elusive. Party took participation in UP's 2017 election and contested 38 seats with little over 2 lakh votes. After that, AIMIM contested local bodies, Municipal elections in 2017 and won 30 seats, and the 2021 party won 22 seats for the post of district council members in UP's panchayat election. On another 50 seats, the party was runner-up.

In the General election of 2019, AIMIM contested in three states – Telangana, Maharashtra, and Bihar. It won each seat from Maharashtra and Telangana with 0.72 and 2.80 per cent of valid votes. The party did not win a seat in Bihar but secured 0.73 per cent of valid votes. However, in the assembly election of Bihar in 2020, the party contested 20 seats and secured 5 out of 6 seats in Seemanchal areas. With this, the party is all set to contest around 100 seats in Uttar Pradesh, mainly the Muslims dominated assembly seats.

Entry to Uttar Pradesh has always been challenging for the party. Among the many factors, two are prominent here. The first hindrance comes from secular parties in the state. Each election since 2014 has been termed vital for the secular party, which does not want division of anti-BJP votes, to which Muslims share the most significant share. They propagate AIMIM as the 'Vote *Katuwa*' (vote divider) party and have not favored its participation in north Indian

states. In fact, during the Akhilesh regime from 2012-2017, Asaddudin Owaisi was denied holding rallies six times by the administration.[v] AIMIM has been termed as the B team of BJP because the division of votes led to a victory of the BJP's candidates. However, AIMIM has an answer to those questions now.

AIMIM UP president Shaukat Ali, in 2019, placed that the party did not contest the General election to defeat the BJP with no division of secular votes. However, secular parties failed to stop BJP in the state, and BJP received 4.285 core of valid votes, i.e., 49.97 per cent, with 62 out of 80 parliamentary seats. AIMIM now blatantly questions the erosion of the social base of 'secular parties' to the BJP. 'Why can't they do politics and mobilise their Hindu social groups' argued a leader of AIMIM in the state during an interview. 'We were not there in the 2014 and 2019 general election, why they (secular parties) could not beat the communal parties', argued another activist of AIMIM.

Now, let us look at the data of the 2017 election to find out the impact AIMIM created against secular parties. Out of 36 seats contested by AIMIM in 2017 in the state, merely six seats of party presence created difficulty for secular parties. The major seats were Moradabad Nagar, Pharenda, Mehdawal, Shrwasti, Tanda, and Kanth. The major split happened because the SP and BSP fought the election separately. When they (SP-BSP) joined hands in 2019, it was expected from the observers of the Indian election that by withholding 40 per cent of the vote share, the *mahagathbandhan* (grand alliance) would be able to defeat the BJP. The opposite has happened.

The second obstacle comes from BJP. AIMIM's national president Asaduddin Owaisi has been the most hated figure by the BJP's activists and has been termed divisive and separatist. Surendra Singh, a BJP MLA from Balia, Uttar Pradesh, called Owaisi a 'Political Terrorist' in June 2021. A seer group protested against Owaisi's meeting on a trivial issue on September 7, 2021, in Ayodhya. The banner used Faizabad instead of Ayodhya. Nevertheless, AIMIM contested 95 seats in the 2022 assembly election.

Strategy

Initially, AIMIM and smaller parties like Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) and Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (PSP) were to contest the election in an alliance. However, both

partners joined SP's alliance AIMIM left without partners. After that, the party declared it would contest the upcoming assembly election on 100 seats. Meanwhile, it was in the news that All India Muslims Personal Law Board (AIMPLA) member Sajjad Nomani wrote a letter to AIMIM's chief Owais to contest the election in an alliance. He also suggested that the party should contest, with full force, only those seats where the winning probability is higher. However, Owaisi refused that has received any such letter. A similar suggestion by Syed Sarwar Chisti, a Khadim in Ajmer Sharif, was doing rounds on social media, arguing that what AIMIM's chief is saying is correct. However, his party should contest the election where winnability is higher. Syed Sarwar also suggested that the Muslims of UP vote for any candidate, irrespective of party, which has better prospects against BJP candidates.

After participating alone for some time in UP, AIMIM declared its alliance with Babu Singh Kushwaha and Waman Meshram's Bharat Mukti Morch (BMM) under the banner of Janbhagidari Morcha (JBM) led by Kushwaha. The alliance declared that it should be contesting the election on 403 seats of UP and argued that the alliance is open to other progressive forces. The alliance also declared that if won, there would be two Chief Ministers (CM) – an OBC and a Dalit. Also, there will be three Dy. CM includes one from the Muslim community. This was done to shun the Muslim image of the party.

To further the secular image of the party and hold constitutionalism as the guiding principle, AIMIM gave the ticket to non-Muslims. Initially, Manmohan Jha (Sahibabad), Vinod Jatav (Hastinapur), Vikas Srivastava (Ramnagar), Lalita Kumari (Nagina, SC), and Bhim Singh Baliyan (Budhana) were declared candidates on AIMIM ticket. This further boosted the claim of the party's inclusiveness.

Election Agenda and its Impact on Muslim Votes and Secular Parties

Economic backwardness, lack of political leadership, dominant majoritarian environment, and treating Muslims as a pariah by the secular parties were major agendas that AIMIM had consistently raised in the election. Party had clubbed these variables of marginalisation as '(*na*)insaafi' (injustice) against the Muslims of UP. While interviewing the individual supporter of the party, reference to the Sachar Committee Report (SCR) and Ranganath Mishra Committee Report has come up frequently. "*aap ne sachar report dekhi hai, hum musalmano*

ki halat daliton se bhi kharab hai (have you seen Sachar Report, Muslims' situation is even worse than Dalit)", said a party worker during fieldwork. How a report can change the political discourse and impact the political positioning can be made out from this. These reports act as a base to expose the opponents' claims and create political space in 'contested mobility' in a democracy.

To highlight the economic and administrative marginalisation, AIMIM roped scholars working on Muslim issues to prepare a new report for the upcoming state election. On 7th January 2022, the party organised a conference on "Situating Development of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh Policy Implication" in Lucknow. The conference idea was to discuss the deprivation of Muslims from various dimensions, which include education, health, financial inclusion, land holdings, MSME, and others. The report pointed out that the condition of Muslims in UP is worse than in India. They are primarily at the bottom regarding significant indicators of socio-economic development in the state. The finding gives the party members a convenient edge while discussing with the opposition.

There have been Muslim MLAs from the SP and BSP and many years of Congress rules in the state, but still, they do not consider developing the community. This has been a standard charge against Muslim leaders who belong to secular parties. These community leaders are loyal to the parties rather than to the community. A disempowered leader cannot empower their community. A. Owasi called them a leader who is used for ''[vi] (literary means unfolding mats, referring to the menial jobs) in meetings of these secular parties. Thus, when Owasi talked about the lack of political leadership, he meant empowered leadership from the community who can raise its voice on institutional platforms regarding the rights of Muslims. The charges had some element of truthfulness. During the initial rule of Congress at Union and State, Muslim representatives were either keeping silent and supporting their parent parties or politicizing threats to Muslims' cultural practices. Aligarh minority status, Urdu as a medium of instruction in education and government jobs, and Muslim Personal Laws have dominated the Muslim leadership's agenda.

An analysis of Muslims' representative performance in the SP government (2012-17) revealed that in the sixteenth assembly of the state, there were 68 Muslim MLAs. However, they were unable to push for community welfare agenda. Samajwadi Party (SP) had 43 Muslim MLAs

alone. However, they have yet to raise their voice in favour of the community at the policy level. In the assembly, the most active INC MLA was from Jaunpur, who raised questions about the minority. In the next assembly, a BSP's MLA from Bhinga (Shrawasti) was seen as active in the first sitting. However, his priority was something other than the community. He just raised one question regarding the forceful closer of meat shops in his constituency.[vii] It can be said that Muslim MLAs have less on raising a question about the community issue in the assembly. The winning of MLAs might influence the commoner Muslims psychologically. However, if they fail to bring substantive change at the policy level to benefit the community, they are not up to the mark. In the election, AIMIM raised this issue.

Next on the agenda was dominant religious majoritarianism in the state. The Party and its chief, on several occasions, have proclaimed that it aims to defeat BJP as it thinks that Muslims have been suffering at the hand of the police and their business are getting destroyed by the regime. "Muslims will never be safe under BJP. It is because of the BJP that Muslims are seen with suspicion. The BJP is destroying the Muslim community's businesses. Where is '*sab ka saath, sab ka vikas*' [together, for everyone's growth]? Why is the government not developing Gyanvapi mosque [in Varanasi] and Ajmer dargah?"[viii] Scholars have captured this phenomenon in UP's politics. "The marginalisation due to the rise of religious majoritarianism has had a cascading consequence on the involvement of Muslims in electoral democracy, as community representation in the state legislative assemblies and the Parliament is declining, raising important queries about the future of Muslim political representation in the Indian democracy (Santhosh and Paleri 2021, 2-3)."[ix]

At this point, one can argue that BJP's Hindutva is the only ideological force working at the social and political levels in the state. It had successfully weaved Hindutva unity in the election through non-Jatav, non-Yadav, and non-Muslim votes. The persuasiveness of Hindutva ideology was so emphatic that the political positioning of the major opposition party like SP followed majoritarian narratives. Some examples include flaunting *gada* (mallet), promise to construction of Parshuram statues, and removing Muslims from the public spectacle on the party's platform. It was a practical strategy of the party to counter the BJP. However, UP has not seen any ideological battle or resistance from SP or BSP in the last five years. AIMIM continuously targeted SP for its political posturing.

As per data, it has been previously mentioned that in the 2017 assembly election, AIMIM was not organised but affected six assembly seats. This time, as claimed by the state president, the party had a booth-level presence across the state. Combined with aggressive campaigning on social media by youth with a great orator as national president and emotional sentiment to break free from the oppressive regime, had a chance to spoil the winnability of secular parties on specific seats. As was expected, a significant share of votes shall be going to SP, which is perceived as the only challenger to the BJP. A larger share of Muslims voting for SP allows the party's leaders to call Owaisi, a vote divider and B team of BJP. AIMIM countered those allegations by arguing that secular parties depend on the Muslim vote to defend secularism. "Secularism is not the Muslims' only responsibility, " said A. Owaisi. The statement resonates with many political scientists who claims that the secularisation process also depends on the majority community's behaviour. If the majority community does not rise to the occasion, then the marginalisation of Muslims will further precipitate. This could have a long-term impact on India's politics. One such impact would be the galvanisation of Muslims under AIMIM to defend not only their democratic and constitutional rights but religious and cultural rights. The ramification of the second part cannot be envisaged or counted right now.

Outcome

Against the 2017 election, in 2022, AIMIM received 450929 votes, i.e., 0.49 per cent of the vote share. The number of votes has doubled for AIMIM without any seat gain. Nevertheless, the party spoiled the chances of the SP and RLD alliance on a few seats, such as Bijnor, Nakur, Kursi, Sultanpur, Aurai, and Shahganj, according to a few political commentators. The perception is based on the vote difference between SP and BJP alliances and the vote received by AIMIM. It is thought that AIMIM has dented Muslim votes, and without it, Muslims would have voted for the SP alliance, which may have ensured the alliance's victory.

But, this analysis does not present a clear picture and shift the blame on AIMIM. We need to look at the performance of other political parties contesting the election. They have damaged the chance of the SP alliance. For instance, in Nakur, BSP candidate Sahil Khan received 20.36 per cent of valid votes, i.e., 55,112. In Shahganj, BSP candidate Indar Dev has received 20.32 per cent of votes, i.e., 48,957. In Sultanpur, the BSP candidate has 10.26 per cent of the votes, i.e., 22,521. INC's Firoz Khan has received 2655 votes. In Aurai, BSP candidate has 28,413

votes. INC's candidate has 2694 votes. VIP's candidate has 2499 votes. SP, BSP, INC, and AIMIM have fielded Muslim candidates in the Moradabad Nagar seat. Here, BSP received 14013 votes. INC's candidate got 5351 votes. If we add up the votes of these parties, it would have ensured the victory of SP and RLD. Dharam Singh Saini lost the election from Nakur because his community opted for BJP. RLD's candidate Neeraj Chaudhary lost the election because Jat did not vote for the SP alliance as expected. In Kursi, Rakesh Kumar Verma, son of late Beni Prasad Verma, lost because Kurmi titled toward BJP in the majority. On the other hand, Muslims consolidated behind SP in an unprecedented way. The CSDS post-poll data highlighted that around 79 per cent of Muslim voters supported SP and 46 per cent in the 2017 assembly election.

Conclusion

The massive victory of the BJP in the election has many implications for AIMIM and the community itself. Despite overwhelming support to a party, they needed help to make a government. Without a broader social base, secular parties cannot form a government. They have miserably failed to bring together and form a social alliance. Thus, making the Muslim vote worthless with a danger of being categorised as only anti-BJP votes. This will sustain the Hindu voters' irk against the community. The invincibility of the BJP in the near future may ignite rethinking among the community about their electoral behaviour in the state. In a state of confusion and pursuit of security, Muslim voters may move in various directions. Scattering is impending. This also includes their inclination toward the BJP, although in shorter strength. Muslims in UP would be leaderless and representiveless voters without any 'poll promise' from political parties.

On the other hand, this situation would not help AIMIM at the state level. The reason is the political knowledge/experience of Muslim voters in the state. Uniting as a community for election has not been serving any purpose. Supporting AIMIM would further exclude them as a minority. They would look for a social alliance for their survival.

Notes

i Bernard Weinraub, The New York Times, Oct. 25, 1973.

ii Hindu Mahasabha leaders call their supporters to be ready to kill at least two million Muslims in a three days conferences in Haridwar. On April 3, 2022, in a meeting of Hindu Mahapanchayat in Burari, New Delhi, the call for violence against Muslims was repeated. Again on Oct. 9, 2022, in a public meeting in Loni, UP, it was argued by the ruling party leaders that violence would be used against the "Jihadi" Muslims.

iii Dibesh Anand, 'The Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear', 2011.

iv The continuous threat has been used against Muslims. However, the recently concluded Dharm Sansad in Haridwar, organized by Juna Akhada from 17 to 19 December 2021, called to kill as many as 20 lakhs Muslims to declare India a Hindusrashtra.

v 18th March 2016, Deccan Herald.

vi This political categorization of Muslims in secular parties by AIMIM is slang which means a meaningless political act of Muslim activists in favour of secular parties without proper reward or empowerment.

vii Uttar Pradesh's Assembly debate revealed the participation and its nature.

viii https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/uttar-pradesh-assembly-polls-2022/story/muslims-never-safe-under-bjp-rule-asaduddin-owaisi-uttar-pradesh-polls-1889458-2021-12-19

ix Santhosh and Paleri, "Crisis of Secularism and Changing Contours of Minority Politics in India", *Asian Survey*, 61(2), 1-29.

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Snow Festival in Jahalman, Himachal: Experiencing the State and Identity through Performing Indigeneity

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the act of performing indigeneity through an ethnographic account of the Snow Festival in Jahalman, Himachal Pradesh, India held on February 2021. Through the Snow festival, the paper reflects on the attempts of the State to homogenise cultural activities. A major contradiction is highlighted that performing indigeneity, which perpetuates the stereotype of primitivism, in this scenario is utilised to promote tourism which in turn would contribute to transcend material backwardness. It is further argued that the success of the event is a function of the level of cooperation of the people depended on what is at stake and how people experience the State in their everyday life. Considering these factors, the paper explores the aspect of how the Snow Festival then becomes a site to understand how the State is experienced and identities are constructed; through such performances manufactured to create a spectacle. It is further investigated to know whether or not the act of performing in a cultural event brings out the element of agency of those who are active participants.

Keywords: tribal identity, Scheduled tribe, performing indigeneity, everyday State

Introduction

The paper gives an account of Swanglas, a Scheduled Tribe community and their participation in the Snow Festival held in Jahalman, Lahaul & Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh. Under what circumstances or situations people intend to adopt and perform the stereotypical image of their community as a tribe. In order to understand involvement of various stakeholders in this act, one has to go back to first understand how the term 'tribe' is reified along with the stereotypes as primitive, wild, the 'Other'. Participant observations and interviews were the methods employed. Analysing how the Snow Festival took place in early winter months of 2021, this paper aims to show how Swangla tribe is not homogenous and what are the ways different stakeholders contributed to the event, what were their motivations behind it?

How the State is involved in the Snow Festival will be understood through analysis of how the Swanglas experience State: (1) the idea of State and (2) the tangible, transactional side of the everyday State. While the State attempts to flatten out the differences and project a certain picture of the tribal community to the prospective tourists, promoting the exotic image of the Swangla, this study shows how different interests were associated with the event. Despite criticism of performativity and how Swangla were portrayed in the Snow Festival, I highlight here that their performance of indigeneity is a well-informed choice, within their own worldview of the State, the interests they seek of it are valid in its own right.

Contextualising Tribal Performativity

Politics around making claims for acquiring Scheduled Tribe status has led to reification of the stereotypes about the Scheduled Tribe community, where the aspiring communities wish to fit into the criteria loosely mentioned by the State, which includes the pre-requisites such as primitive technology, simple economy, distinct culture, geographical isolation and shyness of contact[1]. These claims include memorandums submitted to the government on how 'backward' the community is and therefore, needs State intervention to protect their culture and requires State assistance to bring development. To make a symbolic statement, many such groups engage in a display of indigeneity or 'tribalism', by wearing traditional attire, bringing instruments, artifacts, folk music and dance performances during processions to make demands to the State or gain media attention. The study of Bagada Day by Heidemann(2014) is one evidence. In the name of preserving tribal heritage, there are moments where tribal communities are encouraged by the government or NGOs to 'perform indigeneity' (Berger 2014; Graham & Penny 2014). To attract tourism, various State Governments advertise tribal pockets of their State as tourist destinations under eco-tourism: make tourists either watch them from distance for example, the Jarawas of Andamans, or interact with them and enjoy their performances of dance and music at a cost, for example, Kalbeliya dancers of Rajasthan, Muria dance in Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh (Prévôt 2004). Pamphlets by the State tourism boards and other local tourist businesses have pictures of 'tribes' as central theme; notes Prévôt in the State of Chhattisgarh (2014, figure 2-207). Karnik (1998) observes the site of a Warli girl not getting a crayon of choice, as she is only supposed to do Warli Art. The need to produce Warli art at the cost of killing all natural instincts which does not fit the ideal image. Thus unravels the harsh consequences of museumising tribes (288).

Media contributes majorly in stereotyping and reifying tribal identity. Tribes in media are exclusively either portrayed in their traditional attires, in groups merry-making, or in dense forest or deserted lands, all indicative of their Otherness, their distinctiveness and their distance from the mainstream. Skaria identifies, the underlying discourse of the 'opposites- primitive and modern' that is constantly at play in representing the tribes, is a legacy of the coloniser

(Skaria 1997, 728). It was purely a colonial enterprise to project tribes as the wild child that needed paternalistic care and protection. On an administrative front the presence of 'codified law, recorded in black and white, became the basis of ranking societies. Measured by this yardstick, the 'tribes fared very badly' as they followed 'customary law[s]' (ibid.,731). Therefore, the colonisers created a narrative of celebrating the wilderness of tribes by referring to them as 'noble savage' to justify their administration of tribal people and their land (ibid., 733). This 'colonial paternalism' still echoes in the contemporary media representations and reportage regarding the tribal population. Bhattacharya (2017) notes, that in *The Hindu* newspaper in 2013 a news relating to women and land rights in the Lahaul region of Himachal Pradesh had as its central photograph a 'lone North-western Himalayan woman' clad in her traditional attire *(cholu)* in the midst of a vast field with the caption 'Gone with the Wind': Women's Land Rights in Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti are denied to them' (Bhattacharya 2017, 31). Bhattacharya states that such a representation uses the metaphor of contrasting 'the stark beauty of the mountains' with the primitive, discriminatory and 'unjustified tribal laws' and draws from the existing notions of tribal 'remoteness' in order to validate the distance between the customary laws of the tribes and those of the 'postcolonial state' (Bhattacharya 2017). This leading national newspaper not only 'romanticises the region' through visual representation but its written content also creates a discourse that seeks 'state intervention' to end the primitive 'customary law' denouncing women's land rights in the tribal region of Lahaul and 'save tribal women from tribal men' (Bhattacharya, 2017, 31). In this manner a frame of the 'other', who is 'primitive' and 'uncivilised' as opposed to the cultured and privileged majority is created to represent tribal lives.

The Odisha Government organises Tribal Fair in the city of Bhubaneswar which Berger (2014) observed. He calls it an exhibition or display, as tribes are brought and asked to perform their folk dance, build the traditional round house, just to display these tribal features. While in their village they often wear oriya short sarees, only for the event wearing traditional *kisalo* is mandatory. The traditional round house is rarely seen in Gadaba villages but has to be on display. Such fairs show how the medium or infrastructure is invisibilised (Bolter & Grusin, 2000) for satisfying the 'convention' (Fiske 1982) about tribes.

While we establish the performing indigeneity scenario thoroughly and that there are various reasons for it- voluntary or compulsory; the dilemma here is about whether such moments be called cultural objectification and performativity or a step towards social recognition and multiculturalism? What is the agency of the performer here when we talk of performing indigeneity? Is the performance only for targeted audience and calculative gains or does it evoke any emancipatory experience to the performer? Will the performer be performing a similar act, if no one is watching, what will it choose when there is no compulsion, no interest?

Experiencing the Everyday State: On-ground Account of the Snow Festival

The Snow Festival was organised by the State (Lahual Administration) all over the Lahual district of Himachal Pradesh. It commenced from 26th January 2021 in Keylong, district Head Quarter, to different parts of the district. A two-day cultural event at different regions/ Panchayat wise, led to the success of the festival as the longest ever celebrated tribal event from 26th January to 31st March, 2021. The Lahaul administration is awarded the SKOCH-silver award for the success of this event.

This is clear from the fact that it was with the State intervention that the Snow Festival was organised. But apart from its role in organizing, in the consecutive sections of the paper I bring out ethnographic insights about the working of Snow Festival in Jahalman. An attempt is made to make sense of not just the material presence and role of the State but the idea of the State the people hold while engaging in such an event which I previously mentioned can be seen as a performance- 'performing indigeneity'[2].

Hansen & Stepputat (2001) evoke the arguments made by Bourdieu(1999) in their book States of Imagination to establish that the State itself wishes to escape the image of it and engages in controlling the 'thought of the State' by employing *capital étatique* (state capital). State capital includes four types of capital, (1) violence, (2) economic capital (taxes and regulations), informational capital (curricula, copyrights, validation of knowledge) and (4) symbolic capital (juridical discourse, nomination, validation, etc.). The notion of state capital helps to understand that 'State not only strives to be a state for its citizen-subjects, but it also strives to be a state for itself and is expected by populations, politicians, and bureaucrats to employ 'proper' languages of stateness in its practices and symbolic gestures' (Hansen & Stepputat 2001, 6).

While the understanding of Bourdieu of the State and state capital as well as Foucault's Governmentality are important theoretical tools to understand the State, equally useful is to shift the focus from the State to the everyday experience of citizens/subjects which can be called 'experiencing the State'. Fazal (2016) highlights how anthropology has largely contributed to theorise the ways in which people make sense of the State as institution, process and a larger political idea. There are contradictions and complementarities in how the State wishes to project itself and how people think of it to be.

Akhil Gupta (1995) analyses on how the common people in his study in the village of Alipur makes sense of the State. He brings out the divided understanding of State the people hold which is largely due to their in-person interaction with the lower-level bureaucracy, like the clerk in the office, or Asha and Panchayat Secretary, which is seen to be indulging in corrupt practices. Even local vernacular newspapers would cover incidences of scams and bribery overtly

naming the official. Thus, the imagination of the immediate state officials to be corrupt is established. This does not change the ubiquitous imagination of the State in principle as benevolent. The overall image of the State which is intangible to the common man of Alipur rests in the idea perpetuated by state capital as well as national media, where State is not overtly criticised. Thus, when we see through the lens of everyday life, the experience of state is multipronged. The social elements-caste, class, other affiliations and prejudice, in varying degrees may play a role in how one experiences and negotiates this everyday State, thus Akhil Gupta (2016) rightly calls the boundary between State and society a blurred one.

Fuller & Benei (2009, 26) point out that the obsession of current scholarship with resistance is so striking that the ordinary people who are not resisting the State but using 'the system' in the best possible way they can are often overlooked. They emphasise on the centrality of everyday structures and institutions in the modern Indian imagination of the State.

Performing Tribal Identity: An Ethnographic Account

At the site of fieldwork, Jundha village has thirty-four households. It was noticed during the fieldwork how important Women Collectives (Mahila-Mandal) are inspite of being only a registered society (under the Societies Registration Act of 1860). It is not directly a government body but has been instrumental in the overall disbursing of news related to government policies, NGOs or related to any local affair.

The media coverage of the Snow Festival has been at two levels: The first form of news coverage items was on how collectively the Snow Festival in Lahaul was an idea of the Lahual Administration and read more on the success of the celebrations. It includes interviews and statements of the State politicians and bureaucrats. The national level media channels and newspapers covered this form of news reporting.

The second form of news coverage was in the Himachal section of popular newpapers, and in social media put up by local collectives. Various videos of spectacular processions and performances were circulating in the open access platforms. But this paper attempts to bring out the experience of the participants of the Snow Festival focusing only on the Jahalman region one as I was personally involved at various stages of the event as a member of the Jundha village and a helping member of Mahila-Mandal. This level of intimate membership was not possible to achieve in other regions thus, analysis is limited to event held at Jahalman. Despite my best efforts, my identity as a woman may alter how I interpret things that happened, and I wish to put that in front of the readers.

Deciding on Responsibilities

On 31st January, 2021, Sakshi, was serving her term as Jundha Mahila-Mandal Pradhan(head), gets a call from the Village Panch to give a call to Mahila-Mandal members to collect for urgent work. In 2021, winter was milder and snowfall was only a few centimeters, much less than the usual three to four feet (1feet = 12inches). It is a peculiar feature of Mahila-Mandals of Lahaul that even men are seen as participating on behalf of the female of the household. Proxy male member has all the powers and roles to do which otherwise that woman was assigned. This is done to evade a fine of hundred rupees, rule made by the Mahila-Mandals themselves. Amaru, a middle-aged farmer, a contractor and an active *karyakarta* (party-worker) was also present as proxy.

Jundha Mahila-Mandal is a part of Jahalman Panchayat and on agreement to participate in the event, a group of women were asked to attend the meeting at the Jahalman Senior Secondary School. Women were shying and the men who came as proxy took charge of decision-making finalised what shall be done. In Jahalman already other Mahila-Mandals present of various Panchayats.

The organizing committee was all-men. It included the school principal, Mr. Pal, Prem, the admin of Event WhatsApp-group, Kaku, Jahalman Panchayat Pradhan, and Amaru mentioned above. A two-day event was to be organised, 1st day would be sports meet for traditional games- archery, knitting, *Chholo*(board game). Mahila-Mandals were encouraged to participate in games and next day was cultural event, Mahila-Mandals have to actively participate in hospitality, arrange food for the Chief Guest, other bureaucrats and journalists. The Mahila-Mandal participants were to dorn traditional attire and dance from a distance to the venue where everyone settles and each procession will have own flex boards for identification. Every Mahila-Mandal was divided by themes based on traditional festivals which they had to enact through instruments, artifacts, dance, music, however possible. Amaru convinced Jundha Mahila-Mandal representatives to portray *Jundha-Dashe Jater*, a traditional winter-festival of Jundha village which used to be celebrated until 1979, the year *Glacier[3]* destroyed the area, where it used to be celebrated.

An emphasis on portraying culture was made explicit. Jundha Mahila-Mandal began to plan out everything. Compulsory attendance as dance practice goes on was ensured and heavy fine for absenteeism. There was hesitancy in women to perform in public and only ten women danced, others arranged fire, corrected them and encouraged them. The village school teacher, Priya *Madam* volunteered as choreographer. I also participated as a helper of the mahila-mandal and was made to be part of performance. Women participated in the entire show for primarily two reasons-(1) they have to, a sense of compulsory duty (2) there were rumours that the best dance gets a monetary reward.

Day of performance

On 5th February, womenfolk collected to have their dress-rehearsal. Call came from the organisers for women to participate in sports events. It created chaos and some performing women also went to participate in games. Media coverage was also noticed that day. After noticing how the media was covering the show, and everyone sharing pictures of the show on facebook, those who hesitated to participate looked eager to join, or at least be visible in the procession. Every woman was well-dressed, wearing their best *cholu*. Even when the theme of *Dashe* was finalised, nobody in the village had a clear idea on what exactly the festival used to be like.

The village elders were asked, they faintly remembered participating as children or young adults and their narratives were together brought up to put up a show. This work was done by Amaru. A shiva-ling of snow called *Rash*, was built by village men every year in the month of *Magha* after *Fagli* (major festival). The village priest (*Bhat*) would initiate the festival by doing rituals and then the entire village headed by men of *Bhat*-family and other men of the village and then everyone else would form a chain and take rounds of the rash. This was to be enacted. The ground where processions were brought, the organizing committee with the help of men had a big *Rash* for the performance of Jundha *Dashe*.

Every Mahila-Mandal group was standing with their flex boards, in traditional fashion to welcome the chief guest. In an interview taken of Devi, Pradhan of Jahalman-Gadbog[4] Mahila-Mandal, I was told how they looked at the Snow Festival as an emancipatory event where their Mahila-Mandal participated as a separate community and while they were standing in the front for the welcome, they were told by upper-caste Swangla women to vacate the spot. She told me how she replied back assertively, *'humesha hume peeche rakhte ho, ab toh aage aane do'* (we were always forced to the last, let us now come to the forefront). She also informs me about how they are only ten households and still managed to participate in every activity, even winning at few games.

There were many DSLRs and phone cameras flashing on us. On camera women were hesitant to explain about their themes, because neither was the theme decided by them, nor were they told about the significance. The Chief-Guest appreciated the themes and called that snow festival a success as it has brought back traditions citing the rejuvenation of *Dashe* after decades.

Hope and Dreams as the festival concludes

The Chief Guest gave a speech congratulating the Jahalman Panchayat for the success of the Snow Festival. He shared the vision of the Government to encourage tourism in the valley. He congratulated everyone on bringing traditional

artifacts, jewellery, food, dance and rituals in front of the camera which would connect them in the coming years to world tourism who will be attracted by portrayal of their unique lifestyle. He chided some Mahila-Mandals for not bringing their musicians like other Mahila-Mandals. They relied on recorded music which he found less-authentic, especially for a stage set to display 'tribalism'. It was then the women actually realised the real motive of organizing the Snow festival. Each Mahila-Mandal was allocated a sum of ten thousand each, turned out to be the monetary motivation for dance performance was a manufactured lie spread only to make women perform diligently.

The Snow Festival brings out different kinds of involvement and different levels of hopes people have out of it. The newspaper items consider this to be a mere tribal festival which came into force because of the Lahual Administration, women were seen actively participating and that is all. The organizing work done through donations and Mahila-Mandal budget, major role of women in execution while minimal presence in decision-making, the participation of Jahalman-Gadbog Mahila-Mandal to make their presence count are distinct ways the State is made sense of in this paper.

As there was minimal intervention by the State administration, direct involvement of State actors throughout was not visible but the entire efforts were directed towards the State. To the Jundha Mahila-Mandal women, State is the Chief Guest, the bureaucrats and their relationship with them is transactional; serving and hospitality in return of monetary benefits for the Mahila-Mandal and the village. This is their everyday experience of a tangible State. Kapila (2008) describes the relationship between the Gaddi- another scheduled tribe community of Himachal Pradesh - and the state as 'extractive.' She states that the Gaddi know 'what can and should be derived from the state as an entitlement' (Kapila 2008, 128). Swangla women also in their lifeworld imagine the transactional aspect of State and 'perform' to derive from the State the desired entitlement.

A unique case of motives and hopes comes from the case of Jahalman-Gadbog Mahila-Mandal women who see the event as a space for assertion of identity. They participated in every activity to mark their presence. To them visibility in the eye of the State was their primary aim for participation. Only local newspapers had a mention of Jahalman-Gadbog Mahila-Mandal on winning prizes in activities. Can this be seen as a step towards asserting their identity? To what extent was this realised is questionable. The State only aimed at giving stage to the community as a singular tribal identity, directed towards promoting tourism by making a spectacle of their traditional attire, festivals and artefacts, which as seen was not even a part of their everyday lived experiences. Lived differences and experiences were not taken into consideration, only the stereotypes were put out for the prospective tourist to see. In the coming years, the State government aims to makie it a National-level event. It will not be surprising then to see in future

tourists come to the valley and return disappointed for not getting a single picture with a group of dancing tribal women as this was merely a manufactured spectacle, a performance.

Flash Floods, 'Wrath of Gods': Reconsidering the moral legitimacy of Snow Festival

On 27th July, 2021, Cloudburst and Flash floods in many regions of Lahaul were reported. Pattan Valley witnessed huge damages; Jahalman bridge was washed away caused huge losses as connectivity was hampered for transportation of ready crops. It is very rare for this semi-arid region to experience heavy rainfall. Again, on 13th August, another calamity was witnessed. A landslide blocked the river Chenab and Tadang village, part of Jundha Panchayat submerged underwater for a few hours damaging crops, cattle and few houses. Such incidents made people question new developments that happened in the region.

The *shamans* expressed that these calamities are a manifestation of the wrath of Gods, who disapprove of the snow festival. It was said that the Gods are angry that religious rituals are being staged. Secondly, winter is the period of God worship and silence, folk-dance and music events disturb the natural order of the region. While the success of the Snow Festival 2021 was celebrated, the same event is under scrutiny and its future now seems doubtful. This leads to question the extent the State manages to homogenise cultural activity or intervene with the moral universe of the people. The idea of the State is well-placed in society but in the everyday there are ever-staying contestations within social institutions and competing worldviews.

Conclusion

The paper begins by first delving into understanding performativity in the context of tribal communities which was observed by their participation in Tribal Fairs and festivals managed by State, NGOs or sometimes by themselves. Scholars like Karnik (1998) call such performances as ways of museumizing tribes, there are scholars like Heidemann (2014) who call it cultural objectification, a voluntary choice of a community to externalise their culture, through displays like procession and memorandums. The ethnographic insights establish the multiple ways in which State is imagined by different stakeholders. Accordingly, they had corresponding expectations of what possible benefits can participating in the Snow Festival bring to them. Later, at the time of calamity, their trust on Gods and omens preceded their faith and loyalty towards the State- idea and form, complicating the unilinear idea that State successfully homogenises culture and people in the name of development. It can be inferred here that one cannot outrightly reject the act of performing indigeneity as museumization, as in the world of Swanglas they are well aware of the benefits such performance brings them and it does not interfere with their imagination of profits and modernization, rather to

them it will serve as means towards it. Thus, it can be concluded that the scheduled tribes have learned to 'colonise the State' (Corbridge 2000, 82).

Notes and References:

1.Lokur Committee, 1965

2.concept by Graham & Penny (2014)

3.avalanche/snow-storm colloquially termed glacier

4.women of drum-beating community, *Shipi*s separated from Jahalman Mahila-Mandal to form Jahalman-Gadbog Mahila-Mandal.

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[1] Lokur Committee, 1965

[2] concept taken from,Graham & Penny, (2014)

[3] Avalanche/Snow storm colloquially called glacier

[4] women of drum-beating community, *Shipi*s separated from Jahalman Mahila-Mandal to form Jahalman-Gadbog Mahila-Mandal.

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Kartarpur Corridor and India-Pakistan Relations: Analysing the Challenges of Cross-Border Terrorism in South Asia

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Abstract

Terrorism is a significant issue that has an impact on many countries' foreign policies as well as interstate relations, making it the primary concern for global security in modern politics. The fact that there is substantial disagreement over the definition and interpretation of the term, which results in diverse implications, presents a huge issue for nation-states in combating terrorism. With multiple issues with its South Asian neighbour dominating India's bilateral, regional, and international agenda, Pakistan has always had a crucial role in India's foreign policy choices. The article covers the ways in which both countries see terrorism, in general, and cross-border terrorism, in particular, and its impact on dialogue mechanisms and confidence-building measures. The Darbar Sahib Gurdwara in Kartarpur, Pakistan, situated on the river Ravi's western bank and about 4.5 kilometres from the Indo-Pakistan border, is the subject of the article's analysis. Lastly, the article also argues in favour of emphasising the cultural confidence-building measures for regional integration in South Asia.

Keywords: Cross-border terrorism, Confidence-Building Measures, India-Pakistan Bilateral Relationship, Regional Integration, Kartarpur Corridor.

Introduction

The relationship between India and Pakistan, the two most important countries in South Asia, is characterised by a persistent period of adversity stemming principally from their unresolved territorial issues, which have their roots in the Partition in 1947. Due to a history of wars and ongoing border disputes, the non-resolution of these disputes has increased the extent of the overall conflict between the two countries. The non-traditional genre clearly puts terrorism at the forefront and has made it the most important bilateral problem between the two countries.

Cross-border terrorism develops into a significant national security concern that affects one state's foreign policy response to another in inter-state relations, particularly between countries that share land borders. Simply said, cross-border terrorism refers to any movement or action that involves individuals, lethal or explosive weapons, or any other substance of a potentially dangerous nature with the intent to kill, injure, or destroy property. Cross-border terrorism may also include state-sponsored terrorism, in which a state directly or indirectly aids a specific terrorist organisation in attaining its objectives by giving military, political, or financial support. While the state's resources, tools, and training benefit the terrorist group, the latter finds achieving a particular foreign policy goal easier without any outside help or overt intervention. However, the peace procedures and confidence-building measures between any two countries are adversely impacted by such operations.

With regard to India and Pakistan, two South Asian neighbours, the problem of cross-border terrorism has led to hostility, tension, conflict, and even war over the years. Cross-border terrorist attacks against India have made relations between New Delhi and Pakistan challenging, in addition to a complicated border issue. With both nations achieving nuclear capabilities, the power dynamics between them have the potential to reach dangerous proportions. Numerous researchers have tried to understand the dynamics of bilateral ties and their consequences on regionalism while observing the development of these two post-colonial governments in an unstable and conflict-prone South Asian region. These theoretical analyses have taken into account both conventional security challenges, such military might and conflict, as well as unconventional ones, like cross-border terrorism, a lack of collaboration between these two belligerent governments, and the significance of perceptions toward one another.

The growth of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and its reliance on terrorist groups to fight India as a proxy coincided. Nuclear weapons, cross-border terrorism, tensions over Jammu & Kashmir, and military tensions all contribute to bilateral tensions between India and Pakistan, Additionally, the views of terrorism in both nations are divergent. For as long as it has supported terrorism against India, particularly in the Jammu & Kashmir region, Pakistan has offered an ambiguous rationale.

With the aforementioned context, the increased political and military tension between the two nuclear powers creates the possibility of providing greater insight into India's Pakistan policy and the latter as component to India's neighbourhood-first stance. It also analyses the impact of cross-border terror activities on confidence-building measures and peace processes, such as the linking of the Dera Baba Nanak Sahib (India) and the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur (Pakistan) through the Kartarpur Corridor. Lastly, it stresses over the significance of non-military and non-nuclear measures between India and Pakistan, which will help reduce the tension between both nations, eventually leading to a well-integrated South Asia.

Roots of Antagonism between India and Pakistan

Border disagreement

Since India's independence, it has routinely been the target of cross-border terrorist attacks through both land and maritime borders, especially those coming from Pakistan, which has seriously threatened the nation's security. This has made the issue of cross-border terrorism important in India's foreign policy. India has been identified as the eighth most affected (or vulnerable) state to terrorism by the Global Terrorism Index 2020 (The Institute for Economics and Peace 2020, 8) presenting a major national security challenge for New Delhi. Numerous terrorist organisations from Pakistan have frequently used the 3,323 km long border between India and Pakistan, which also encircles the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, and the current union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, as a point of entry into Indian territory (Ministry of Home Affairs 2021, 1). Pakistan has been a safe haven for several major terrorist outfits such as *Lashkar-e-Omar*, *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, *Jaish-e-Mohammad*, *Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen* (also known as *Harkat-ul-Ansar*), *Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami*, and *al-Badr* (Swami 2013, 110-112). Pakistan has also been successful in smuggling terrorists into India; some of them have now founded terror organisations in Kashmir with Islamic principles, such as *Hizb-ul-Mujahideen* and *Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen* (ibid). As evidenced by multiple acts of terrorism, including the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 and the Mumbai Attacks in 2008, India has accused Pakistan of supporting terrorist organisations in their efforts to sow discontent within India's borders. Despite an overall drop in significant terror attacks in India since 2011, according to

SATP statistics, assaults in India with direct or indirect linkages to Pakistan continue to be a problem for the Indian government (Ojha 2021, 39).

Understanding and perspectives on the Kashmir problem vary between the two nations. According to Ganguly and Hagerty, India maintained that including Kashmir was crucial because the Muslim-majority state would serve as evidence of India's fundamental commitment to civic, secular nationalism and the viability of a Muslim-majority state inside a secular government. What Indians saw as essential to the unity and integrity of secular India was likewise centred on this. If India abandoned Kashmir, other states might have the option of declaring their independence or joining Pakistan. Kashmir is important to Pakistan because it represents the idea that Pakistan's identity would be incomplete without the absorption of Kashmir. For Pakistan, Kashmir has become significant for a number of reasons, including its cultural and religious unity, the rivers that flow from Kashmir as water sources, the value of its ecosystem, its strategic location as a link between Pakistan and China, and, most importantly, the issue of human rights and international law. These elements support the idea that Pakistan's ingrained strategic culture is based on apprehension about Indian regional hegemony. Different political philosophies also exacerbated competitiveness and mistrust.

Difference between India and Pakistan on the definition of terrorism

Terrorism has emerged as the most significant global security concern in contemporary politics and a major issue that impacts many nations' inter-state relations and foreign policies worldwide. The fact that there is substantial disagreement over the definition and interpretation of the term, which results in diverse implications, presents a huge issue for nation-states in combating terrorism. Bruce Hoffman describes terrorism as the intentional instillation of fear through the use/threat of force in an effort to bring about political change (Hoffman 2006, 2-3). Hoffman believes that the goal of a terrorist act is to have psychological ramifications that extend beyond the actual causalities from the attack (ibid, 40). The United Nations defined terrorism as any act that is 'intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act' (United Nations 2005). According to India's Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002, terrorism is any act that aims to

undermine India's unity, integrity, security, or sovereignty or instil fear in its target population (Government of India 2008, 11). In a similar vein, the Pakistan Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance, 1999 classifies someone as a terrorist if their actions have the potential to sow terror or foster a sense of fear and insecurity in the minds of others, if they use bombs, dynamite, or other explosives in a way that results in the death or injury of an individual or group, or inflicts significant property damage (Pakistan Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance 1999). It is also difficult to construct a common understanding of terrorism due to the fact that it exists in a variety of forms and dimensions. In modern times, almost every act of crime or violence is linked to terrorism, giving rise to a variety of connotations like narco-terrorism, eco-terrorism, cyber-terrorism, etc., as well as a variety of forms like religious terrorism, ethno-nationalist/separatist terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism, etc. (Underhill 2014, 6).

Pakistan is the primary source of the issue of cross-border terrorism in India's foreign policy discourse. In the case of both nations, the disparities in how terrorism is perceived and interpreted have been blatantly visible, frequently acting as a roadblock in the peace process between the two countries (Harshe 2003, 3621-3625). India has expressed concern about cross-border terrorism, which the government claims is sponsored and supported by Pakistan, especially in Jammu and Kashmir (Noor 2007, 65-84). However, Pakistan has not only shown reluctance to address the issue but has instead praised terrorists in Kashmir as "freedom fighters" and their activities as "freedom struggle," while conflating the discussion on cross-border terrorism with the larger Kashmir issue, which Pakistan views as an unfinished agenda of the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 (Cheema 2015, 47). New Delhi, on its part, continues to view Pakistan as a safe haven for numerous terrorist groups and has put conditions on the resumption of talks until Islamabad stops supporting transnational terrorism (Markey 2007, 93). This policy approach is in line with New Delhi broader objective of providing support to the global war against terror and in the country's efforts to draw attention to countries that serve as safe havens for terrorist organisations.

Impact of cross-border terrorism on the confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan: A Case of the Darbar Sahib Gurdwara, Kartarpur

One thing that stands out between India and Pakistan is that these terror strikes are preceded by a peace process or bilateral conversation, which later undermines the peace effort. The Pakistani infiltration in Kargil in 1999 came after the Lahore Summit in 1998. When the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks occurred, Asif Ali Zardari, the newly elected president of Pakistan, was seeking to improve trade ties with India as well as find solutions to the Jammu and Kashmir conflict. The linking of the Dera Baba Nanak Sahib (India) and the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur (Pakistan), separated by a distance of only 6.3 kilometres through the Kartarpur Corridor in November 2018 highlights the probable cooperation between India and Pakistan, despite the hostile relationship shared between the two ever since their independence in 1947 (Singh 2020, 1). The Gurdwara is located in the village of Kothe Pind of the district Shakargarh in Narowal of Punjab, Pakistan.

The Darbar Sahib Gurdwara, Kartarpur, has immense significance amongst the Sikh community that dates to the early 16th century as Guru Nanak assembled the Sikh *panth* or community (Bainiwal 2020, 2). The desire to allow Indian Sikh pilgrims access to the corridor leading to Kartarpur Sahib was brought up during the former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's historic 1999 visit to Lahore. However, it could not be brought up for the final agreement, possibly due to the intrusion at Kargil in 1999. Similar to this, the construction of the corridor was once more on the list in 2004 when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Captain Amarinder Singh, the Chief Minister of Punjab, discussed the same (Shukla 2019, 3). Then, in 2008, the then-cabinet minister Pranab Mukherjee visited the Dera Baba Nanak to evaluate the project's sustainability (Sethi 2018). At this time, a significant obstacle in the corridor's construction was the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

In 2018, Subramanian Swamy, Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) leader argued that the construction of the corridor could pose security threats to India as the Indian government's decision could be misused by terrorists due to lack of proper checking. Furthermore, he suggested Indian Ministers to not travel to Pakistan in order to attend any kind of event, as Pakistan did not allow Indian Diplomats to accompany them to the religious place (Outlook Web Bureau 2018).

However, a problem with the establishment of the Kartarpur corridor was the issue of terrorist training activities in the border district of Narowal in Pakistan's Punjab province (Sura 2019). The agencies were also concerned about the spread of the Pakistani mobile network into Indian territory, which extends up to 3–4 kilometres (ibid). This is because drug traffickers and anyone engaged in anti-national activities can use Pakistani sim cards to access this network.

After the Pulwama terror attack on February 14, 2019, in which 41 members of the CRPF were killed, there were new tensions between the two neighbours. With its training bases in Balakot, *Jaish-e-Mohammed* claimed responsibility for the strike. The Indian Air Force destroyed these camps in retaliatory airstrikes. After one of the Indian pilots, Abhinandan Varthaman, was taken prisoner by Pakistani forces, the relationship was perceived as exceedingly hostile. Pakistan tried to defuse tensions between India and Pakistan by returning the Wing Commander in accordance with the Geneva Convention after seeing pressure from the major powers to act responsibly. More significantly, SAARC members feared a nuclear escalation because ties between India and Pakistan after Pulwama were perceived as being on the verge of war. Pakistan has voiced strong disapproval of India's decision to investigate more innovative and technical ways to completely utilise India's share of water under the Indus Water Treaty. Nevertheless, hundreds of Sikhs travelled to Pakistan to celebrate Guru Nanak's 550th birthday at the Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan, after the Kartarpur Corridor's successful completion, which attracted attention from all over the world.

Impact of cross-border terrorism on the regional integration of South Asia

Since their independence, relations between India and Pakistan have been tumultuous and marked by suspicion and antagonism. In some cases, their interactions were rather cordial. They occasionally succeeded in negotiating bilateral agreements that contributed to reducing tension and advancing peace in the region, such as the Shimla Agreement (1972), the Indus Water Treaty (1960), or the acceptance of the international tribunal's ruling on the Rann of Kutch. However, other than these sparred cases, their interactions have become antagonistic toward one another.

Over the years, nuclear weapons, terrorism, and external factors such as the involvement of the USA and China are the three main factors influencing the strategic relationship between India and Pakistan (Sasikumar 2019, 155). Four major wars—1947–1948, 1965, 1971, and 1999—as well as other crises have resulted from the rivalry between neighbours. The anti-Indian militant organisations *Jaish-e-Mohammad* (JeM) and *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT) are examples of how Pakistan has adopted an asymmetrical approach to 'bleed India via a thousand cuts' (Aarten 2020, 216). The four wars were lost, and more importantly, East Pakistan was lost in one of them, which led to a shift from traditional methods of fighting India to non-traditional ones. This was a difficulty for India because it was crucial for India to maintain its nuclear threshold while developing a successful counterterrorism strategy to counteract Pakistan's irregular warfare. The discussion about the likelihood of a major confrontation in the region, which had been simmering since the late 1980s, intensified in 1998 when both sides openly acquired nuclear weapons (Ganguly 2016, 12).

Cross-border terrorism is still a major point of dispute between Pakistan and India. The close ties between the military, intelligence, and terrorist organisations of Pakistan like *Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami*, to mention a few, in addition to the assistance sought by Pakistan from other countries in the world negatively impacts its relationship with India (You 2019, 116). The Indian government has generally responded to cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan by boosting the troop presence along the shared borders with Pakistan, cutting off communication with Pakistan, and also by engaging in conflicts with Pakistan. However, in the South Asian region, both nations have adopted a nuclear deterrence strategy.

It is clear that British India's partition in 1947 left a partial territorial separation, which serves as a major cause of tension between India and Pakistan. However, a thorough examination of the India-Pakistan conflict reveals that rivalry for control of the region is also a major source of stress, in addition to territorial disputes (Paul 2006, 601). Political conflicts and a dearth of economic incentives have made it challenging for the SAARC to expand since its formation in 1985. Even after 35 years since the association's founding, its goal to advance peace, harmony, and economic growth through pooling resources and fostering trust between the parties is still

far from being fulfilled (Nag and Bandyopadhay 2020). Due to the fact that all of its members border India, South Asia is Indo-centric (Dash 2008, 46). Given that India is the most populated country in the region of South Asia and that it has the greatest geographical area, this is another factor contributing to the mistrust among its neighbours. Because of this view, it is challenging to compromise on the level of sovereignty necessary for successful regional integration. The tight political relationship between the two largest SAARC states, India and Pakistan, which has a history of wars over territory disputes, particularly that of Kashmir, is one of the key reasons why cooperation in the region has been difficult to achieve. Under addition to harming their bilateral relations, the tensions between India and Pakistan also put the regional identities of other smaller South Asian countries in danger. Other SAARC states also have disputes with one another over territory disputes, identity concerns, and relations with foreign powers, in addition to the tensions between India and Pakistan (Khokhar 2020). More or less, this protracted political confrontation has affected the founding members of SAARC's strategy, which is to avoid discussing bilateral and contentious topics purposefully. In addition to these political concerns, the absence of intra-regional trade incentives among the member countries has hampered SAARC's development.

Additionally, the SAARC process has been on hold since 2016, particularly in the wake of India's Uri incident. Terrorists from a base in Pakistan claimed responsibility for the assault. More importantly, Pakistan has supported terrorist acts against India in the past; therefore, the 2016 incident was not the first. In response, India decided to scale down its attempts to improve regional cooperation until Pakistan stops carrying out its cross-border terrorist activities. Additionally, Pakistan's sponsored cross-border terrorists must no longer get outside backing.

Conclusion

Disputes between India and Pakistan are primarily related to geography, religion, identity, or philosophy. One of the main causes of the territorial dispute is that Pakistan and India have been unable to agree on a solution for the state of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). Additionally, these South Asian neighbours' identities and religions are irreconcilable. Pakistan's weak political-administrative structure and civil-military interactions serve as a fertile ground for the growth of state-sponsored terrorism in the nation. Furthermore, it is still

obvious that Pakistan's failure in its overt operations against India has forced the former to turn to covert and indirect warfare in order to pursue its objectives. Even the very existence of numerous components makes finding a lasting solution difficult. More crucially, the Kartarpur Corridor must be viewed through a religious dimension other than one of politics or economics. Additionally, considering that both nations have similar historical backgrounds, India and Pakistan should work on cultural confidence-building methods rather than solely on nuclear ones so that people may relate to these efforts for good relations. There is an urgent need to shift from the traditional patterns of behaviour that have existed between India and Pakistan ever since their independence, as this has led to the spread of certain narratives which are adding to the already hostility. The creation of new and positive narratives is required as they might introduce new patterns of interaction. Along with this, both nations need to have a healthy and fruitful dialogue to curb terrorism that has impacted both since their inception. The mistrust which has been generated between the two neighbours will take efforts and patience to wither away. New areas of confidence-building measures, especially in the cultural, social, and economic aspects, are needed as they will increase the areas of positive interactions. With regard to cross-border terrorism in South Asia, the member countries should come up with a common definition of terrorism, as this will lead to an improved counterterrorism mechanism. At the same time, adopting new measures will reduce the chances of a wrong analysis of the intentions of one nation towards another. These steps will improve India-Pakistani ties and, in the long run, will promote the integration of South Asia, which has historically been defined by power and territorial sovereignty rather than by market or community. Each South Asian nation has a strong feeling of its own sovereignty, which makes them sensitive to questions of borders and territories.

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Conversion and Resistance: Mapping the Trajectory of Christianization, Colonization and Cultural Transformation of the Angami Nagas

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Abstract

The perpetuation of British colonization in the indigenous areas of India was cemented upon the penetration of Christianity. Among the multiple groups of indigenous people inhabiting North East India, the imposition of Christianity on the Nagas had ushered as a threat to the "rich ethnic background and manifold religious characteristics of the region" (Malekandathil et al. 2016, 102).

Among the different Naga tribes, the Angami Nagas were the most remarkable group to resist against the processes to Christianization and Colonization and it took a long time for the missionaries to convert them into Christianity. The process of the conversion was working at the slowest rate among the Angami Nagas and as "late as 1971, after nearly a century of intense missionary proselytization, only 12% of the Angami population appeared in baptismal records, and only 40% identified themselves as Christians in census returns" (Eaton 1997, 267).

The paper engages critically with the colonial methods of Christianization and the indigenous modes of resistance and subsequent acceptance of the Christian religion by the Angami Nagas. It situates the indigeneity of the Angami Nagas as a cultural landscape that was distinctively colourful and heterogeneous, and resilient enough to manifest resistance to the process of Christianization till the last quarter of the twentieth century. The paper critiques the trajectory of socio-cultural and spiritual change of the Angami Naga society that was materialised over the course of two centuries through the process of Christianization. The research paper also endeavours to situate the distinctiveness of the Angami Naga religious beliefs that were discarded as 'superstitious' and 'irrational' by the colonial dictions.

Keywords: Angami Naga, Christianization, Culture, Indigeneity, Resistance, Transformation

The political and economic ambition of the British colonizers in India was perpetuated by the penetration of Christian religion and ethics into the ambit of diverse indigenous groups inhabiting the impenetrable hill tracts, virgin forests and almost all remote areas of the subcontinent. The pattern of colonizing mission of British administrators in the North-East India is no exception. Among the multiple groups of indigenous people inhabiting North East India, the specificities of the diverse ethno-cultural and religious practices of the Nagas had to undergo an absolute sway of the colonizer through a series of religious and administrative reforms and enactments. The Nagas, consisting of around eighty tribes with a population of about three and a half million, are scattered all over the Indo-Burmese International border. Among the most diverse group of people, Nagaland is one of the most important regions to get transformed by Christianity as "with roughly 1.8 million, Nagaland has the highest number of Christians" (Malekandathil et al. 2016, 105). The interlacing of the Western ideologies of Christianity and the methods of indigenisation of the foreign religion seemed to efface the connotations of existing indigenous identities, making the religious and spiritual practices of the past Naga generations obsolete and thus altering almost all forms of socio-cultural practices permeated within the tenets of the indigenous religions.

A slanting gaze at the colonial history of Nagaland unfolds that commercial interests and the discovery of the tea plantations if Assam (then) led to the colonization of the region. The British administrators first came into contact with the Nagas in 1832 in search of a road link between Manipur and Assam, an expedition that was led by Francis Jankins and Robert Pemberton (Thong, 2016). Among all the Naga tribes, Angami Nagas were one of the first clans that the British first came into contact with and from the very beginning of their encounter with the Angamis, the British authority were apprehensive of the race (Mills, 1854). The result of the encounter between the Nagas and the British colonizing forces was violent and the account of Angami resistance is commendable. The early British intrusive expeditions between 1832 to 1880 was defined by violent colonial measures and any form of resistance from the Angamis were termed as 'savage', 'unruly' or 'wild' (Yonuo 1976, 76). The subsequent phase of colonization between 1880-1947 was defined by the working of the British administrators at the Naga Hills whereby almost all existing indigenous socio-political structures were superseded by the colonial structures (Elwin, 1969).

The socio-cultural representation of the Angami Nagas is defined by their rich heritage of animistic religious faith, oral tales and folklores. However, the colonial accounts of the Nagas recorded by the American missionaries and British administrators did not pay much respect to the Naga identity as they were represented as savage, unruly, fierce 'headhunters', and 'very low in the scale of civilization' and in 'dire need of civilization and Christianity' (Thong 2016, 9). The oral Angami Naga tradition and dearth of

written record of their history led to a perception among the colonial thinkers that the Nagas are inept in high thinking (Hutton, 1969) and that their belief system is devoid of any moral code (Mills, 1854).

It is evident from the mechanisms of colonial canonisation that "Christian proselytization in the Naga Hills grew apace with, and under the umbrella of, the British Raj" (Eaton 1997, 250). The inaccessible hill regions of the North-East India during the early phase of the colonial invasions had lured a number of missionaries and though "there were a few visitations made by Roman Catholic missionaries to the region in the past, it was Protestant mission bodies which first established mission work in the region in the mid- nineteenth century" (Malekandathil et al. 2016, 105). And the civilizing mission of the missionaries continued under the territorialisation of denominations until the decolonization of India (Malekandathil et al. 2016, 105). The various denominations define their influence on the North East and also Nagaland, and the "three denominations are the Baptist Church, established by the American Baptist Mission, followed by the Roman Catholic Church, and finally the Presbyterian Church, followed by the Welsh Presbyterian (formerly Calvinistic Methodist) Church mission" (Malekandathil et al. 2016, 105). Richard M Eaton (1997, 250) rightly observes that "this was the society that was for more than a century encountered and interacted with both British imperialists and American missionaries".

The colonial registers of history relied on the process of discarding the existing forms of religions as 'superstitious' and meaningless by imposing their own religion on the Nagas. The religious and spiritual orientations of the traditional Naga worldview was entrenched in their innate understanding of the bioregion of the Naga Hills and a concomitant practice of subsistence agriculture, agrarian economy and cultural practices stemmed from such religious structures. The spiritual orientations of the animistic religions that were primarily built on the acknowledgement of the flora and fauna of the bioregion entailed a harmonious worldview that defines the socio, economic and cultural fabric of the society. The need for sustenance of the humans, diverse species of animals and the non-human world also configured the local mythological orientations that necessitated an anti-anthropocentric worldview of togetherness and mutual harmony of humans and nature. The colonial method of discarding the existing indigenous religious practices as superstitious and the proclamation that "the Nagas had no religion", and that "they would want a religion, and that we might just as well give them our own" (Jameston 1896, 43) manifest the colonial nature of the entire history of proselytization of the Nagas. The 'barbarian' or 'savage' subjects in need of western intervention and reform have been repeatedly registered by the colonial administrators who were working at the Naga Hills. The British administrator E. W. Clark (1978, 45), while expressing his colonial hopes to

'civilize' the Nagas said that the Nagas are "the easiest to Christianize" since "they are by far the most part pure pagans" and they "are sitting in gross darkness" in dire need of enlightenment.

The Christian missionaries and the agents of colonization thought it to be very important to transform the Naga 'uncivilized' society by introducing the western elements of civilization such as literacy, western clothes, Christian religion, class structure and a hierarchical pyramid model of governance of the society (Thong, 2016). The role of the British and American missionaries in perpetuating the process of colonization is undeniable and the simultaneous activities of the British administrators and American missionaries ensured the establishment of colonization in the Naga Hills. Because,

> other than political agents, the contribution of the American Baptist missionaries with medical facilities and other welfare activities also worked as a potential mechanism in brining the Angamis under British authority because the Angamis at that stage did not make the distinction between British and American interests but saw them both as one race – the 'White Man' (Sanyu 2016, 113).

Interestingly though the American Baptists set their foot on the Naga Hills closely followed by the British administrators, it took as late as till the 1930s for the process of their evangelism to have any significant impact on the lives of the Angami Nagas.

Conversion of the Nagas into Western Christianity has been one of the primary westernizing agents of the Colonizing forces (Thong, 2016). The process of Westernization went hand in hand with colonial and missionary enterprises in the Naga Hills and everywhere else in Northeast India. Westernization, which was often equated with civilization, became one of the most important projects of the American Baptist missionaries. Dana Albaugh records the account of the American missionaries and British administrators like Major Jenkins who felt that "some of his barbarous subjects might be in need of a spiritual reformation" (Thong 2016, 49). The 'barbarous subjects' are the indigenous Angami Naga people who have been repeatedly defined in dehumanising rhetoric by both the American missionaries and British administrators. And the 'spiritual reformation' of the indigenous 'subjects' was materialised at the cost of erasing the indigenous spiritual orientations that regarded their own bioregion with a sense of reverence and were steadfast in their belief on a collective identity of their own.

Among the different Naga tribes, the Angami Nagas were the most remarkable group to resist against the processes to Christianization and Colonization. The early decades of strong resistance by the Angami Naga have been repeatedly referred to in almost all the monographs and documentaries by both British administrators and the American Baptists. Richard M Eaton (1997) in his comparative analysis of the

conversion of the various Naga groups into Christianity points out that the Ao Nagas were the first group to be proselytized significantly between the 1880s and 1950s. The rapid transformation of the Ao Nagas into Christianity worked as a catalyst for the transformation of the other Naga groups into Christianity. Similar to the Ao Nagas, the Sema Nagas also converted into Christianity quite rapidly during the same period. But it was the Angami Nagas who were extremely resistant to the process of proselytization and it took a long time for the missionaries to convert them into Christianity. As pointed out by the noted scholar Lalsangkima Pachuau, "Christian growth did not take place until the third decade of the twentieth century among the Angami and Lothas" (Malekandathil et al. 2016, 108).

The first Baptist mission headquarter was established in the heart of the Angami land Kohima in 1878 that also used to be the headquarters of political and social activities of the Naga Hill Districts. With this establishment the Angamis were annexed into the structure of the British India and the diverse linguistic groups were reduced down to a particular script that was introduced by the foreign missionaries. This reductionist process resulted in the erasure of a volume of linguistic practices that would gradually be obliterated due to the prevalence of the Roman Script. But the process of the conversion was working at the slowest rate among the Angami Nagas and as "late as 1971, after nearly a century of intense missionary proselytization, only 12% of the Angmai population appeared in baptismal records, and only 40% identified themselves as Christians in census returns" (Eaton 1997, 267).

The introduction of Christianity into the inroads of Angami Naga life was interspersed with the moral ambiguity regarding the negotiation of the traditional Naga ways of life with the teachings of Christianity. Also, situating the perceptual understanding of the Angami Naga agrarian cosmology and spirituality within the Christian tenets turned out to be a challenging factor for the missionaries. For the conversion of the Ao Naga, Sema Naga and other Naga groups, translation of the Old Testament and the New Testament and an indigenisation of the Christian concepts of God and spirituality remained the most important tools of proselytization of the indigenous clans. The Ao concept of *Tsungrem* stands for the all encompassing supreme spirit that could be connected with the Christian concept of an all encompassing 'God' and the Sema concept of *Alhou* would also stand for the Supreme Being that could be equated with the Biblical connotations of an all powerful God. And the manifestation of both *Tsungrem* and *Alhou* share the components of might and valour of the Biblical male God. But the Angami *UKepenopfü* manifests an earth-centred indigenised feminine agrarian goddess who is the creator of humankinds, and the missionary attempts to connote the attributes of a male Christian God in the Angami translation of Bible resulted in a lack of acceptance and deferred its assimilation into the Angami Naga society. The translation of Matthew

during the 1880s by Stanley Riverburg made reference to Jehovah to encompass the meaning of the generic term God. The concept of Jehovah and the God of the New Testament was not only alien to the Angami Nagas, but was also regarded with suspicion. And the lack of acceptance of this foreign generic term of God, implied to invoke the spiritual devotion of the Angami Nagas hindered the acceptance of Christianity among the Angami Nagas.

The next attempts of revised translation took place in 1918 by Reverend Tanquist who attempted to erase the elements of foreign manifestations and replaced the Jehovah with the Angami *Ukepenopfü*. The conflict regarding the nature of the masculine Christian God and the feminine Angami name assigned to describe the Christian theological orientations did not meet with much success. And as far the Angami concept, an absence of the father figure from the religious orientations is remarkable, since it was believed that the husband of *Ukepenopfü*, the goddess had wandered off to the Indian plains. The method of translation was again revised in 1922 by Tnaquist and Rivenburg and the generic term Jehovah was once again used instead of *Ukepenopfü* to refer to the Supreme God (Philip 1983, 84). The various revisions and confusion among the missionaries regarding the proper method of translating and indigenising the Christian essence of God and the nature of Creation defines the unwillingness and delayed acceptance of Christianity by the Angami Nagas.

During the initial phase, the Angami converts observed beliefs and practices imbued with Christianity as well as the traditional religious elements. Although the Angami converts attended Christian prayers and religious services, they did not fully understand the implications of their new faith. They continued the practice of indigenous spirit worship and the observance of various traditional animistic religious rituals and festivals secretly or openly. Their orientation to the environment and the traditional Naga structure of society thus did not undergo any significant transformation during the early years. The converts of the second and later generations however acquired a better understanding of Christian tradition and gradually started to regard their own spiritual and religious orientation with suspicion. With this, there came about a marked change in tribal faith regarding supernatural existence of the spirits and indigenous deities. Their rituals of paying obeisance to all the traditional deities were replaced by their new found adherence to an omnipresent benevolent Semitic God. This shift in faith led to a change in relation to their communication with their own bioregion and community that reflected a marked departure from their traditional attitude towards nature. In view of this, the earlier religious practices and customs which were associated with various phases of economic activities were also given up. British administrator John Hutton in his 1921 monograph expressed his concern for the rapid transformation of the Naga culture. He says, "old beliefs

and customs are dying, the old traditions are being forgotten, the number of Christians or quasi-Christians is steadily increasing, and the spirit of change is invading and pervading every aspect of village life" (Hutton 1969, vii).

A look at the religious and spiritual views of the traditional Angami Nagas reveal that the 'polytheist, pantheist' (Thong 2016, 177) Naga religious view believes in the existence of supernatural beings as inherent part of their collective psyche. The chief of all spirits (*terhoma)* is the Angami deity relating to agriculture *Kepenopfu̠* which is generally spoken of with the possessive suffix as *UKepenopfü.* The 'pfu' termination is an indication that the spirit is female. This spirit is regarded as the creator of the living beings. But this is not an all-powerful creator of both the living beings and the universe. The word Kepenopfu literally means "birth spirit". Kepenopfu is regarded as the ancestress of the human race. She also appears in the legend of the diverse origin of the Naga and the plainsman, where she is described as the ancestress of men who has a mysterious husband of superhuman attributes (Hutton, 1969). Kepenopfu is represented as the beneficent and nurturing feminine creator, a concept quite immune to the general pagan image of a malevolent God.

According to the animistic spiritual belief of the Angami Nagas, the non-human animals are brought by the spirit known as *terhoumia.* Chief among the *terhoumia* is *Rutzeh*, who is evil and who is generally held responsible for sudden deaths of people. There is also the mischievous forest spirit *Telepfu*, who ensnares men, women and children if they stray into or near the inhibited sacred forests. *Tekhu- rho*, is a very powerful deity who is the god and guardians of tigers and leopards and is also responsible for the disappearance of hunters in the jungle.

There are many benevolent *terhoumia* as well. *Maweno,* the deity of fruitfulness is also a female deity and is known to visit farmers to bless them with good crops; *Apeyi*, is a sort of fairy who lives with humans in their homes and solicits prosperity in the homes; *Tsükho* and *Dzüraw*ü, are male and female spirits respectively who are dwarfs, and live in the forests and are guardians of the wild animals. Hutton (1969) also recorded a belief in *Rhopfü*, a female benevolent spirit that accompanies every human being. Such kind of belief system where the different benevolent and malevolent deities are regarded as the protective guardians of the wellbeing of the humans, non-humans and the jungle proved to be one of the major factors for the Angamis to resist their conversion to the Christian ethics.

The conversion into Christianity led to a total deviation from this indigenous religious belief system and a transformation of the related values that the Angamis were holding close to for such long. The Christian ethics of rationality and transcendence made them perceive their own spiritual orientations in evil terms. J.

H. Hutton (1969) refers to this phenomenon in his study on the Angami Nagas. Hutton points out that spirits (*terhoma)* in Angami society are of ambiguous nature, some benevolent and some malevolent, but all meant to protect the sustainable balance of the human-nature-supernatural nexus. But, "the missionaries in their blindness teach the Angami convert to regard all *terhoma* as evil, and mission-taught Nagas are in the habit of translating the generic *terhoma* into English or Assamese as 'Satan' " (Hutton 1969, 180).

The project of proselytization and westernization resulted in the forced hybridization and cultural homogenization that wiped out the multiplicity and specificity of the experiences of the indigenous Angami Nagas (Thong, 2016). Among the multi-layered changes that redefined the moral fabric of the Christian Angami Nagas, the change of sartorial preference in favour of the western missionaries at the cost of giving up of the indigenous sartorial practices is a significant one. Whereas the strong resistance of the early generations of Angami Nagas is re-emphasised by every writers and historians, the act of imitation of the western Baptist missionaries would mostly rely upon the imitation of the western clothes, social patterns and behavioural patterns.

People who had accepted Christianity during the first phase of proselytization had to wear the Assamese jacket and body cloth. There was a significant westernization noticed among the groups of converts who accepted Christianity later as they had to wear conspicuous European dress like long shirts, mauve coats, khaki shorts, white blouses that would be imported from the plains (Clark, 1978). Giving up on the indigenous sartorial preferences was one of the primary requisites that had been conditioned to 'westernize' the converts. The traditional indigenous clothes and accessories such as bangles, traditional earrings, headdresses, shawls and many other accessories were prohibited since the western religious viewpoint regarded them to be associated with the practice of the worship of the 'devil'. With the prohibition of indigenous clothing the specific cultural values assigned to the different cultural artefacts were also butchered by the missionaries and colonials, "both government and the Mission have in the past been guilty of encouraging...to...discard the old dress" (Mills 1854, 76).

The village *morung* that used to be a significant component of the village structure and welfare of indigenous activities gradually started to lose its relevance as the male converts were forbidden to stay in the *morung*. Though the British translators have translated the morung as 'bachelor's house', the cultural significance attached to the concept of morung is much more than that. A morung is a building or house where the unmarried young men would stay together and learn about the traditional rituals, stories, songs, dances, social values, handicrafts and the social discipline. The morung served as a symbol of the indigenous structure of the Naga society. The fading importance of the *morung* in the society also led to a

metamorphosis in the group activities and annual feasts of the Angami Nagas. Chritopher Furer-Haimendorf (1946, 52) attests to the colonial disregard of the indigenous laws and social structures, "the missionaries encourage their converts to disregard tribal laws and customs even in spheres not directly connected with religion".

Another very important cultural component of the Angami Naga festivities and group ceremonies was the *azü*, or rice beer, that was eventually prohibited by the Baptist missionaries as non drinking was considered to be a virtue of the Christian (Clark, 1978). The "seed of conversion...which missionaries bring" (Hutton 1969, viii) ensured the prohibition of the animistic religious practices, drinking rice beer and other cultural practices that eventually necessitated the erasure of the cultural practices of the Angami Nagas.

The activities of the Baptist missionaries in Nagaland were greatly affected after the decolonization of India in 1947. As the secessionist claims for the political freedom of Nagaland from the independent India grew stronger, the Indian government intervened and in 1955 all foreign bodies were expelled from Nagaland, including the American missionaries. The political resistance and claims of self-determination from the Indian government became the major factor during the 1970s and 1980s and the recourse to Christianity became one of the important tools to express the non-subscription of the Nagas to the identity of Indian nationhood. The Naga act of massive conversion to the religious identity of their erstwhile colonizers was meant to register their resistance against the immediate colonizer, that is, India.

However the prolonged association with Christianity over the centuries have resulted in an internalisation of Christianity among the most of the Naga groups, and Angami Naga is no exception. The mass subscription to the Christian belief during the Naga nationalist movement and the previous history of Christianization by the colonizers and American missionaries have made the Christian religious and spiritual views deeply weaved into the Naga thoughts and expressions. For the Angami Nagas, though the rate of conversion is the slowest among all Naga groups, but the impact of Christianization and colonization has been indelible. The Angami Naga world has been thoroughly disoriented and reconfigured under the impact of Christianization and colonization. Though the hope of complete revival is rare, but is not completely lost and the Pan-Naga movements have ensured an approach of re-visiting the lost cultural and social values. The emerging literary writings by Temsula Ao, Easterine Kire, Monalisa Changkija and social research by the Naga scholars like Charles Chasie, Visier M. Sanyu shoulder the responsibility to revive the lost traditions by archiving and displaying their indigeneity as forms of resistance against the homogenous absorption of Naga identity by the nation state of India and westernization.

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Solid waste in India: Testing the Environmental Kuznets Curve Hypothesis

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Abstract

This study examines the Kuznet curve hypothesis for solid waste using cross-sectional data for 2020 from 28 Indian States and 5 Union Territories. The study used the cross section approach i.e., Ordinary Least Square (OLS) to examine the connection between India's per-capita Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and solid waste production. The Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) theory is not validated, according to our research, for solid waste produced in Indian states and union territories. We discovered a positive value for β3 (Coefficient of GSDP Cube), which is also highly significant, in addition to the positive value of β1 (Coefficient of GSDP) and the negative value of β2 (Coefficient of GSDP Square). This suggests that solid waste and GSDP in Indian states have an N-shaped relationship. Furthermore, the relationship is not affected by the control variable. This shows that even if trash generation decreases after economic growth reaches a particular level, it then increases as economic growth continues to rise. The necessity to establish efficient solid waste management plans grows as a result of this outcome.

Keywords: Solid waste, Environmental Kuznets Curve, Environmental degradation, Regression.

Introduction

Solid waste disposal is ranked as the second-most important issue facing the modern world by the United Nations Development Programme, 1997 (Zhu et al., 2008). According to Wilson and Velis (2015), the globe produces 7-9 billion tonnes of solid wastes (SW) each year. India's population growth and rapid industrialization, which result in a massive migration of people from the

countryside to cities in search of better opportunities, produce tonnes of solid waste every day. As the country aspires to become an industrialized nation, this is likely to get worse in the near future (Bundela et al., 2010; Sharloy et al., 2008). According to recent estimates from the government, Indian cities produce 65 million tonnes of trash annually. According to Sharloy et al. (2008), India now produces eight times more SW than they did in 1947. According to the Ministry of Finance, municipalities would need more than 1400 km2 of land each year by the end of each year to properly dispose of solid waste, which is nearly the combined size of Hyderabad, Chennai, and Mumbai (Kalyani and Pandey 2014).

Waste generation rate are influenced by economic development, urbanization, people's habit, local climate. In general, the amount of solid trash produced increased with economic growth and urbanization rates. Since urbanization and income levels are closely associated and as disposable incomes and living standards rise, so do consumption of goods and services and waste generation. It is difficult to put sustainable waste management ideas into practice in India due to the varying rates of rubbish generation and changing garbage composition. The management of municipal solid waste utilizing the appropriate technology will be significantly impacted by the nature of the trash (Sharma and Jain, 2019). The physical makeup of the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) evolved through time along with changes in lifestyle, population expansion, consumption patterns, and the nation's economic growth, as seen by a comparison of garbage produced between 1996 and 2005 (Zhu et al., 2008; Mani and Singh, 2016). Glass, paper, and plastic are appearing more and more frequently in trash. Between 1996 and 2011, consumption of paper and plastic surged by almost 280 per cent and 1200 per cent respectively (Sharma and Jain, 2019). This tendency suggests that the creation of a recovery and recycling system would be a good alternative.

Along with its increasing quantities and changing nature, waste is a problem that has an inadequate waste management system as a primary cause. Management of municipal garbage should encompass efficient treatment of solid wastes from waste generation to final disposal in order to correct the situation. Both nationally and internationally, the issue of waste management has received the proper attention. Effective waste management was one of Agenda 21's main concerns, and the 1992 Rio Conference served as the catalyst for the emergence of a global consciousness

(Ramachandra and Bachamanda, 2008). The Indian government has also implemented new technology and undertaken a variety of regulatory initiatives since the 1960s to promote appropriate management of solid waste (CPHEEO, 2016).

Current scenario of Solid waste management in India:

The 2016 revisions to the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules mandate door-to-door collection of segregated wastes. According to the 'Swachhata Sandesh Weekly' report, 81,135 out of 84,475 wards in India had 100 per cent door-to-door garbage collection as of January 2020 (Singh 2020). Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have recently put Global positioning System (GPS), Geographic Information System (GIS), and Global System for Mobile Communication in their trucks in order to speed up monitoring and decrease time spent collecting waste from secondary sources for waste disposal (Singh 2020).

Further the use of incineration technology to handle solid wastes including MSW and industrial solid waste, among others, and produce energy has been widely used and well established in India (Ministry of New And Renewable Energy, 2021). However, because of low calorific values (800-1000 kcal/kg), high energy intensity, as well as other environmental dangers, the thermal processing of MSW and biodegradable garbage appears to be impractical for Indian MSW and those of other developing nations (Mandpe, Kumari and Kumar, 2018; Agnihotri, 2022).

Researchers and policymakers acknowledge that rapidly rising SW is driving the ecosystem to deteriorate, raising health risks and other socioeconomic issues (Tinmaz and Demir 2005). Due to financial limitations and a lack of appropriate technology to process and dispose of ever-increasing trash, India's solid waste management is currently experiencing a crisis phase (Saxena, Srivastava, and Samaddar, 2010). To salvage the situation, municipal waste management should include effective processing of solid wastes from waste generation through final disposal.

The association between the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and solid waste in Indian States is identified using environmental economics theory and the conceptualization of solid waste

as an indication of environmental degradation. Theoretical research on the relationship between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and environmental degradation demonstrates that while environmental degradation has negative long-term effects when GDP grows to a certain level, environmental degradation actually decreases as GDP grows (Panayotou, 1993, 1997). The Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) is the name given to this phenomenon. According to the EKC, environmental degradation initially rises with an increase in GDP but then drops once economic growth reaches a specific threshold. An inverted U-shaped curve can be seen on the graph between GDP and environmental deterioration. It is known as the EKC because of its resemblance to the Kuznet curve, which illustrates the connection between income and income inequality (Dinda, 2004). Few studies have been done in India, despite the fact that many have been done internationally to examine the EKC between GDP and solid wastes/municipal solid wastes. In light of the EKC theory, this study's initial goal was to investigate the connection between solid waste and GSDP using cross-section data from Indian states. Second, population has been added as a control variable to counteract the potential omitted variable bias. Thirdly, the presence of EKC has been tested using cross section analysis (OLS estimator), and the Breusch and Pagan test has also been used to determine whether or not heteroskedasticity is present.

Objective

This paper's main goal is to investigate the Environmental Kuznet Curve for solid waste produced in India.

Literature Review

The Kuznet curve hypothesis is frequently applied in macroeconomics, environmental economics, and other related topics (Grossman and Krueger, 1995). The inverted U-shaped relationship between environment and income level was suggested by the Kuznet curve in 1955. The Environmental Kuznet Curve proposed a inverted U-shaped link between environmental deterioration and GDP per capita. It claims that environmental deterioration rises with an increase

in GDP per capita up to a certain degree (a turning point), after which it falls with an increase in GDP. The name of the EKC is derived from the presented graph's similarity to the Kuznets curve.

Numerous researches that used panel, time series, and cross-section data with a variety of nations explored the EKC. In their analysis of 43 developing countries, Narayan and Narayan (2010) discovered an inverted U-shaped link between CO2 and GDP per capita, supporting EKC. In a similar manner, Zhang et al. (2017) looked into the EKC theory for economic growth and water pollution in China between 1990 and 2014. Their research has supported the evidence for an inverse U-shaped association between growth and water pollution.

The focus of this essay is on solid waste, which is used as a sign of environmental deterioration. We therefore focus on the empirical research that assessed the Kuznet Curve (WKC) or the Kuznets hypothesis on various forms of trash generated. Cole et al. (1997) explored the EKC hypothesis using cross-section panel data from 13 OECD countries from 1975 to 1990 and solid waste generation as one of the environmental indicators. The author couldn't find any proof to support the EKC theory. Managi and Kaneko (2009) conducted a similar analysis of the relationship between GDP per capita and solid waste for China for the years 1992 to 2003; using the GMM estimator, they found no evidence of EKC. Raymond (2004) used Ordinary Least Square (OLS) to analyse the EKC for 128 countries in 2002, and their findings supported the inverted U-shape EKC between GDP per capita and solid waste. Khajuria et al. (2011) found evidence to support an inverted U-shaped EKC for municipal solid waste and Gross Domestic Saving (GDS) in another study they conducted for India. Due to the existence of only two samples beyond the turning point, this study was unable to demonstrate the robustness of the conclusion. Using data from 50 nations in the Pan-European region, Kusch and Hills (2017) discovered that a 1000 dollar increase in GDP at buying power parity resulted in a 0.5 kilogram rise in e-waste. In a related study conducted by Awasthi et al. (2018) for 28 European nations between the years of 2009 and 2014, it was discovered that every 1000 units of GDP at purchasing power parity resulted in an increase in e-waste of 0.27 kg. All of these studies, along with one conducted for European nations by Namlis and Komilis (2019), have supported the existence of a significant positive association between e-waste and GDP per capita. The empirical findings of the waste Kuznets curve generally

do not correspond with the WKC hypothesis. The WKC theory is supported by contradictory data, and there is ongoing discussion surrounding this idea in general.

This study attempted to investigate the EKC hypothesis for solid waste generation and GSDP per capita for Indian states in 2020 against this background.

Methodology

Using the Kuznets curve hypothesis as our main model, we analyze the nature of the link between solid waste and GSDP for Indian states. The cubic word is used to visualize the inverted U-shaped curve. The following describes the cubic model that accounts for the inverted U-shaped EKC:

$$SW_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(GSDP_{i,t}) + \beta_2(GSDP_{i,t})^2 + \beta_3(GSDP_{i,t})^3 + \beta_4 X_{i,t} + u_{i,t} \tag{1}$$

Where SW is the amount of solid waste produced each day in tonnes, GSDP is the gross state domestic product (per person), X stands for the explanatory factors that may have an impact on solid waste generation, u is the error term, and i and t, respectively, stand for the nation and time period.

The signs of coefficients β_1, β_2, and β_3 dictate how the curve will look.

If $\beta_1 > 0$, $\beta_2 < 0$, and $\beta_3 = 0$, that is, GDP per capita is positive and statistically significant and GDP square is negative and statistically significant, indicates an inverted U-shaped relationship between GDP and solid waste, supporting the EKC.

If $\beta_1 < 0$, $\beta_2 > 0$, $\beta_3 = 0$ then there is a U-shaped relation between GDP and solid wastes. This expresses an alternative viewpoint to the EKC hypothesis. According to this theory, environmental degradation initially becomes better as the economy expands, but after a while it starts to get worse as the economy expands even more (Fan & Zheng, 2013).

If $\beta_1 > 0$, $\beta_2 < 0$, $\beta_3 > 0$ then there is an N shaped link between GDP and solid waste, which suggest that beyond a certain point environmental degradation will rise further.

Dependent variable- Solid waste generation, measured in tonnes per day for each state in India, serves as the study's dependent variable. According to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, solid waste is any material that is discarded and includes solid, liquid, semisolid, or contained gaseous material. It also includes other sludge from wastewater treatment plants, water supply treatment plants, or air pollution control facilities.

Independent variable- The GSDP per capita is taken as an independent variable based on prior research. In order to test the EKC hypothesis, GSDP per capita square and GSDP in cubic term are added to the regression model.

Control variable- In order to capture the impact of demographic pressure on solid wastes, which is frequently utilized in the literature, we control for population in our regression in order to analyze the strength of the association between solid wastes and GSDP per capita. The earlier research came to the conclusion that when population grows, consumption patterns grow along with it, which causes enormous amounts of garbage and other byproducts to be produced and, ultimately, causes environmental deterioration. So, we anticipate that there will be a positive correlation between population and solid waste.

Data

Our study is based on cross-section data for India that was gathered for the year 2020 for all 28 states and 5 Union territories. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) collects information on the amount of solid waste produced in each state in tonnes per day, while the National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, collects information on the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices (in billions of rupees) and the Census Report of India provides information on population numbers.

Result and Discussion

The correlation scores between the variables are displayed in Table 1. GDP and solid waste generation have a significant, positive association that is statistically significant at the 1 per cent

level. At 1 per cent of significance, population and solid waste are also positively and significantly associated.

Again OLS is employed in this study because it successfully addresses the heteroskedasticity issue. This method employs two models for comparative analysis: the fundamental model (Model 1), which only comprises the explanatory variables GSDP, GSDP Square, and GSDP Cube; and the population-based model (Model 2), which also includes a control variable in the regression equation.

The result of OLS for estimating EKC for solid waste is presented in the Table 2. As stated above, the existence of EKC is indicated by a positive value of β_1 and a negative value of β_2, but in our study, Model 1 reveals that in addition to positive values for β_1 (GSDP Coefficient) and β_2 (GSDP Square), we also have positive values for β_3 (GSDP Cube), which are also highly significant. This suggests that there is an N-shaped relationship between solid waste and GSDP in Indian states. We added population as a control variable to our regression model (Model 2) in order to verify the results of Model 1 because the association between solid waste and GSDP can be influenced by other variables. The resulting GSDP square and cube coefficients are nearly identical to those in Model 1, which strengthens the case for an N-shaped link between solid waste and GSDP. Therefore, neither model is compatible with the EKC hypothesis. This outcome is consistent with a comparable study by Sriyuktha, (2018), in which per capita income was compared to CO_2 emission as a proxy for environmental deterioration to determine the association. An N-shaped association between per capita income and CO_2 emission was discovered by the study. The population coefficient, which relates to the control variable, has the anticipated positive sign and is statistically significant at the 1 per cent level. Furthermore, the model does not exhibit heteroskedasticity, as indicated by the p-value for the Breusch Pagan test (BP).

The concept of an N-shaped curve was discovered in the 1990s, contrary to what many scholars believed to be the case. However, numerous investigations have established the existence of N-shaped curves. Sulphur dioxide and economic development were utilized by Grossman and Krueger (1995) and Panayotou (1997) to demonstrate the EKC, but they discovered an N-shaped link. In their study, Lee et al. (2009) shown that while an N-shaped curve is identified when the

cubic model is used, an inverted U-shaped curve is discovered when the quadratic model is used. The N-shaped EKC fundamentally asserts that there is once again a positive association between economic development and environmental deterioration as economic development develops to a certain level, providing the shape of an N.

Discussion

Study has not found any evidence of EKC for economic growth and solid wastes. Against the statement given by various economists for EKC this study shows that with economic development environment deteriorates (solid waste-proxy) further. In proportion to the rise in economic growth and urbanization the annual waste generation has been observed to increase, and problems relating to disposal of waste have become matter of concern as more land area is required to accommodate waste (Kumar et al, 2009). The government is not paying enough attention to this significant problem of trash generation, and as a result, it is getting worse every day and endangering both human health and the environment. However, there are other factors that should also be taken into consideration, including the rate of garbage collection and how these wastes are handled. An efficient waste management system can generate income through recycling and reuse in addition to reducing the volume of improperly managed solid waste. . Efforts are needed in the country to increase the effectiveness of reducing, collecting, reusing and recycling of solid wastes.

This may still seem worrisome even though our studies support the EKC concept. According to the EKC theory, exploitation of natural resources is appropriate up until the curve hits its turning point because economic expansion is a remedy for environmental deterioration. However, this viewpoint completely disregards the irreversibility of environmental damage. Even after reaching a turning point, the ecosystem may continue to degrade if irreparable harm has already been done. This persistence is equally crucial for the production of solid waste and its many kinds as it is for CO_2 emissions. Mismanagement of garbage and its growing volume will contribute to the spread of countless diseases. Therefore, it is important to take waste generation reduction measures now rather than waiting for high growth levels. The creation of a time-targeted action plan at the global, national, local, and regional levels for the management of municipal solid waste by each town and city is a crucial service and a required duty of municipal authorities in the face of economic

expansion. Additionally, a rise in per capita income or economic growth cannot be the only element in the fight against environmental degradation; a number of other factors, such as environmental consciousness, environmental regulation, institutional capacity, and financial stability, also have an impact on pollution levels. In this sense, households, NGOs, and the government all play important roles in raising environmental quality. Remember that the cost of environmental degradation is passed down from one generation to the next. As a result, reducing environmental degradation can be accomplished by taking quick action, such as increasing environmental awareness and passing environmental rules.

Conclusion

Using the econometric technique GMM estimator, this study investigated the relationship between solid wastes and GDP for India over the years 2010–2022. To test the robustness of the conclusion, the regression model also includes the population number as a control variable. The results indicate that the EKC is not appropriate for this investigation; an N-shaped curve has been discovered. Because of the N-shaped curve, solid wastes will rise more rapidly as GDP rises. This demonstrates that solid waste's negative effects on the environment and public health cannot be constrained by growth. We all know that when money rises, so does consumption, which occasionally leads to an increase in waste production.

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Table1. Correlation Matrix

Variable	SW	GDP	POP
SW	1.000		
GDP	0.962**	1.000	
POP	0.752**	0.753**	1.000

Source-Authors finding

Note- ** is statistically significant at 1% level.

Table2. The result of OLS for estimating EKC for solid waste

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	2.484**	2.688**
GSDP	8.02**	8.248**
GSDP^2	-1.204*	-1.189*
GSDP^3	1.21**	1.932*
Population		8.435**
Brusch pagan- test	0.63	0.59
R-Square	.925	.928
Adj.R-Square	.918	.918
F-Statistics	120.084**	89.98**

Note-* and ** is statistically significant at 5% and 1% respectively.

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Developing Functional Assessment Scale for Educational Programming of Visually Impaired Students in Yemen

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Abstract

Students with special needs, such as visually impaired (VI) students, have several problems and challenges before, during, and/or after their educational programs to achieve school success like other rights. The main issue in private or integrated education schools is that the level of skills and academic achievements is deficient because some teachers do not have the necessary knowledge, skills, and expertise to satisfy the students' personal, particular demands. We conducted a qualitative research to build and standardize a scale: Developing Functional Assessment Scale for Educational Programming of VI Students in Yemen, as it focuses on the most crucial required functional skills. The study focuses on the essential functional skills needed for VI students based on previous studies and the expanded and additional curriculum for VI students, which has its foundation in previous research works and collected special-education experiences. Teachers have a strategy of assessment, and, in this study, there is a diagnosis of issues that identify the level of the needed functional skills for VI students. Moreover, based on them, a customized instructional strategy is standardized, where functional skills are the cornerstone of successful education in contemporary special education to improve education and training for VI students regarding students' competence, safety, and independence. The ability of these instructors to diagnose and evaluate students with special needs and create available (IEP) plans in special and inclusive schools is also the most critical component of educational programs for students with disabilities, especially visual disabilities. The present study constructs and standardizes functional assessment scale for developing educational programs for VI students.

Introduction

Students with visual impairment find it difficult to understand their schools' teachings since congenitally VI people have limited ability to create concepts because they lack all the necessary sensations. They also struggle with having a third-dimensional or spatial perception. They will not possess adequate conceptualization, imagination, and spontaneous fantasy, and dreams are too illogical for them to handle since reasoning becomes impaired without defined thoughts. Regardless of whether the VI student is in a resource room, special class, or inclusive educational program, the educator, teacher, parent, or social worker of the VI should be a significant part of the assessment team. Educational programming is simply defined as "the development of educational programs". In this research, educational programming refers to a systematic method of organizing and delivering educational services for VI students, individually or in groups, to meet their functional needs for daily functioning. With the perceptions and experiences of teaching through history, educators have recognized that the needs of students with visual impairment extend beyond what the traditional classroom curricula offer, as they are in need of functional skills. The expanded core curriculum (ECC) provides a framework to address these needs. It has become more difficult for school staff to accommodate and adapt for children with severe disabilities (VI students) to attend the primary general education curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

The selection of the topic is followed by refining it into a research problem, which includes definitions of all terms that could otherwise be misinterpreted. These definitions help establish the frame of the reference, with which the researcher approaches the problem and logically underlying the investigation and directs the data-gathering process.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to construct and standardize a functional assessment scale for educational programming that can be used to assess the functional skill levels of VI students and guide special educators to create individualized education plans (IEPs) for those students.

The Hypothesis of the Study

There is a significant difference in the functional skills of VI students before and after implementing the functional assessment scale. In the present study, the null hypotheses will be tested.

Significance and Need of the Study

- To provide an educational activity that stimulates the abilities and possibilities of a student with visual disabilities and others around to reach the highest level of stimuli and behavioral responses in educational situations, programs must be designed to overcome and adapt to the environmental problems, difficulties, barriers, and challenges. This environment includes many functional skills for VI students.

- To develop a strategy to overcome these barriers in that the teachers can provide the conditions for an inclusive learning environment for VI students. A program that the multidisciplinary team can create aids VI youngsters to move effectively, safely, and independently if these issues are identified and addressed. As a result, the study's main goal is to improve the evaluation of functional skills for the VI.

Methodology

The descriptive and analytical research approaches were used in this study because the suggested research framework is based on past studies in the functional assessment scale for the educational programme of VI people.

This study, consequently, focuses on the functional assessment scale for the educational programme of the VI and evaluates its effectiveness. The quantitative approach is applied and conducted on the teachers of VI students who recently worked in special and inclusion schools from four cities, namely Sana'a, Ibb, Aden, and Hadhramaut, all of which have a larger number of VI students.

Construction of the Functional Assessment Scale

The construction of the functional assessment scale contains the following four steps:

1. The first step is based on the construction of the first draft version of the scale. In this step, 37 relevant studies and assessment scales were reviewed to find out the variables, sub-variables, and items for constructing the first draft form of the scale of the current research. A total of 8 variables, 15 sub-variables, and 364 items were identified.

2. The second step is based on the construction of the second draft version of the scale. In this step, phone interviews with a sample of 10 special educators who currently work in special and inclusive schools were conducted. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire was sent to 40 special educators and parents of children with visual impairment to find out the local needs and requirements. Accordingly, the scale's first draft form was adjusted in response to their local demands and requirements in the Yemeni context. Furthermore, the second draft form of the scale was modified.

3. The third step is the construction of the third draft version of the scale. In this step, the opinions and suggestions of 16 qualified and experienced academic experts, who currently work in the sectors of special education, curriculum, teaching techniques, educational measurement and evaluation, and Islamic education, were used to modify the second draft version of the scale. Accordingly, the third draft version of the scale was framed.

4. The fourth step is the pilot study to finalize the scale structure. In the final step, a pilot study with 30 special teachers, who currently work in special and inclusive schools, was carried out to form the final draft of the scale using the third draft of the scale. According to the procedures followed in this stage, all the required modifications, such as eliminating, merging and revising, modifying, and adding items, have been made, and the final version of the scale was finalized, as shown in the table below.

Final Functional Assessment Scale for Developing Educational Program of VI in Yemen.

| Domains	Sub-domains	Number of the Items
1st domain: Psychomotor Skills (PsS) (54 items)	-Gross Motor Skills (GM) -Fine Motor Skills (FM) -Spatial Awareness (SA)	-20 (10 items for each age group), -20 (10 items for each age group),

		-14 (7 items for each group).
2nd domain: Perceptual Skills (PeS) (48 items)	-Sensory Awareness (SnA) -Environmental Awareness (EA) -Temporal Awareness (TA)	-20 (10 items for each age group), - 14 (7 items for each group). -14(7 items for each group).
3rd domain Cognitive Skills (COS) (48 Items)	-Cognitive Skills (COS) -Language Skills (COLS)	-24 (12 items for each group). -24 (12 items for each group).
4th domain Socio-emotional Skills (SES) (64 items)	-Socio-emotional Awareness (SEA) -Daily Living Skills (DLS) -Orientation and Mobility Skills (O&M)	-20 (10 items for each age group), -24 (12 items for each age group), -20 (10 items for each group).
5th domain Compensatory Academic Skills (CAS) (20 Items)	-Compensatory Academic - Skills (CAS)	-20 (10 items for each group).
6th domain Vocational Training Skills (VTS) (20 Items)	-Vocational Training Skills (VTS)	-20 (10 items for each group).
7th domain Assistive Technology Skills (20 Items)	- Assistive Technology Skills (ATS)	-20 (10 items for each group). ``
8th domain Religious Education Skills (RES) (60 Items)	-Knowledge Skills (KS) -Practical Skills (PS) -Social Skills (SS)	-20 (10 items for each group). -20 (10 items for each group). -20 (10 items for each group).

Sample of the Study

The respondents in this study were chosen using a multi-stage purposive sampling technique. In nature, this technique is a non-probability methodology. In the first stage, four cities representing the north (Sana'a and Ibb) and the south (Hadhramaut and Aden) of Yemen were chosen to be involved in the current study. Special and inclusion schools were chosen located in the selected cities in the second stage, and in the final stage, a purposive sample of teachers who teach VI students within the selected schools was chosen. Before determining the sample size, the availability of teachers, their desire to participate in the study, their accessibility, and their available time for data collection were all taken into account. Four cities representing the south, the north, and the middle of the Republic of Yemen have been chosen to be involved in the current research. The following Figure 1 describes the study sample based on the locations.
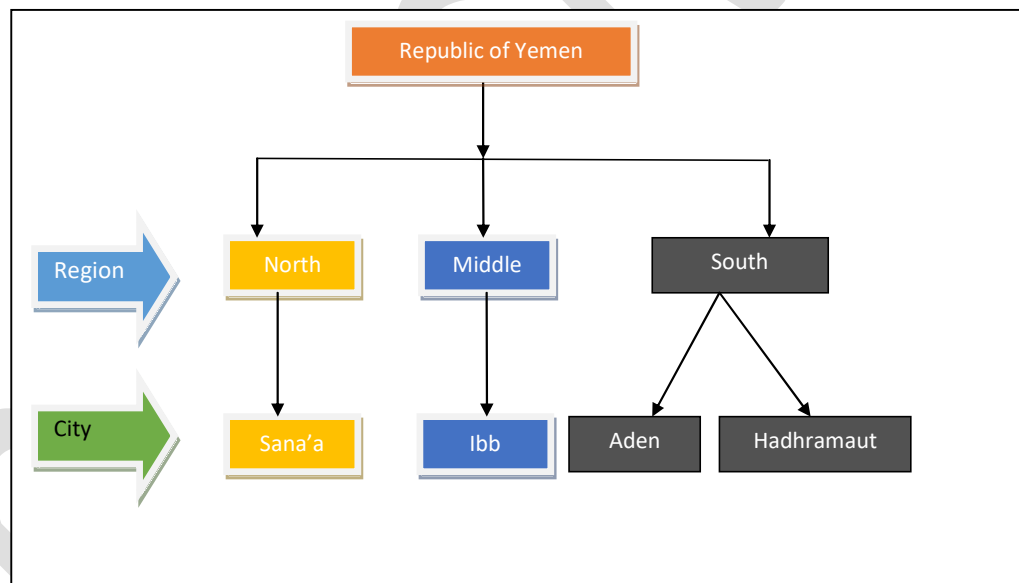
Findings of the Validity

The types of validity that are used in this study are Inter-correlation and Construct validity (Convergent validity, Nomo-logical validity, and Discriminated validity).

The results of the Inter-correlation of domains and FAS composite exposed that the correlation coefficient values of the FAS range from (0.72 to 0.96), and the inter-correlation values range from (0.56)

to (0.96). All inter-correlation values of all domains are significant (p<0.01), which indicates that the FAS has good internal structure validity.

The results of the Construct validity show that all items except (7, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 14) items of the Social Application Skills sub-domain have loaded to their particular sub-domains and domains, and their loading values exceeded the suggested value (0.50). Also, the Composite Reliability (CR) of all sub-domains is greater than the suggested value (0.70); in addition, all values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) have exceeded the suggested value (0.50) for all sub-domains, which confirmed the convergent validity of all sub-domains. All p values of all items of all sub-domains are less than 0.001, which is confirmed the nomological validity of the sub-domains. All values of the Maximum Shared Squared Variance Value (MSV) and Average Shared Value (ASV) values are less than the AVE's values for all the sub-domains. In addition, the correlation matrix and square root of AVE, so all square root of AVE of variables included in this research are more than the suggested value of (0.70), and values of the correlation matrix are below the values of the square root of AVE for all sub-domains which confirms the existence of discriminate validity.

This indicated that all domains and sub-domains included in the proposed function scale significantly contributed to the construction of the Functional Assessment Scale, and it is concluded that the scale has well construct validity.

Findings of the Reliability

The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha in two stages, first with a data set of 60 respondents for the pre-test and a data set of 60 respondents for the post-test. In the second stage, with 322 respondents, the reliability values for the pre-test ranged from 0.93 to 0.97, the reliability values for the post-test ranged from 0.89 to 0.97, and the reliability values for the primary data set 322 ranged from 0.95 to 0.99. Also, the value of the FAS composite is 0.99, which confirms that all the sub-domains have excellent internal consistency reliability.

Findings of Pre-Test and Post-Test

● There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to gross motor skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is a significant difference that has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to fine motor skills, and the effect size was medium.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to spatial awareness skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Sensory Awareness Skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Environmental Awareness Skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is a significant difference that has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Temporal Awareness Skills, and the effect size was a high effect.

- There is a significant difference that has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Cognitive Skills, and the effect size was a high effect.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Language skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Socio-emotional Awareness Skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is a significant difference that has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Daily Living Skills, and the effect size was a high effect.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Orientation and Mobility Skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Compensatory Academic Skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Assistive Technology Skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Vocational Training skills, and the effect size was small.

- There is a significant difference that has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Religions Knowledge Skills, and the effect size was a high effect.

- There is a significant difference that has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Religions Practical skills, and the effect size was a high effect.

- There is no significant difference has been found between the pre-test and post-test with regard to Religions Social skills, and the effect size was small.

Findings of the Descriptive Analysis of the VI Students' Demographic Profiles

- A descriptive analysis of the VI Students' demographic profiles (N=322) indicated that most respondents were male patients (75%) and female patients constituted (25%) had given their opinion concerning FAS.

- The majority of the respondents constituted (71%) fall under the age group of 6-10 years, and (29%) of the respondents were in the age group of 11-17 years.

- The analysis of the type of schools of the respondents showed that the majority of the respondents (57.1%) were from Specialist Schools, and (42.9%) belonged to inclusive schools.

Findings of the Descriptive Statistics of FAS

- The descriptive analysis of the Gross Motor Skills indicated that the highest mean score value (4.26, SD=1.23) was with the statement of body parts (head, torso, and limbs) and mobility excellent texture, and the lowest mean score value (2.74, SD=1.75) was with the statement of has the ability to play VI golfing.

- The analysis of mean scores for the dimension of Fine Motor Skills revealed that the statement of capable of easily opening and closing bottles has the highest mean score (3.90, SD=1.46), and the lowest score was with a statement of using the Perkins machine to print his homework (2.96, SD=1.74).

- With respect to the spatial awareness skills, it showed that the statements of identifying where things are located, using the terms north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west, e.c.t. had the highest mean score (4.25, SD=1.34), and the lowest score was with the statement of naming the location directions such as east, west, north, and south (3.16, SD =1.65).

- Among the Sensory Awareness Skills, the statement of recognizing by hand and foot the locations of objects, landmarks, and signs in the room (window - door - chair) had the highest mean score (4.34,

SD=1.24), and the statement recognizes places through smells such as beneficial smell like restaurants, and a harmful sewage smell was scored as the lowest mean score (3.36, SD=1.66).

- The descriptive analysis of Environmental Awareness Skills revealed that the statement explains the importance of public places (schools, hospitals, gardens, etc.) had the highest mean score (3.69, SD=1.57) and the lowest mean score (3.25, SD =1.66) was with the statement of the Able to describe the difference between mountains, valleys countryside, the city in his own language.

- Among the Temporal Awareness Skills domain, the statement of estimating the faster time to reach the required destination by bus or walking in accuracy had the highest mean score (3.72, SD=1.57), and the statement of countess how many hours in a day, how many minutes in an hour, and how many seconds in a minute was scored as the lowest one (3.20, SD=1.74).

- Among the cognitive skills domain, the statement puts letters in their correct places in the alphabet's shape games had the highest mean score (3.97, SD=1.45), and the statement recognizes its environment and describes objects and places with easily accessible landmarks was scored as the lowest one (3.20, SD=1.66).

- The descriptive analysis of the language skills domain revealed that the statement responding to banter and comedy with suitable bodily expressions had the highest mean score (3.75, SD=1.56), and the lowest mean score (3.52, SD =1.60) was with the statement of smiles or laughs and related this behavior to the accompanying situations.

- Among factors of Social and Emotional Awareness Skills, the statement solves a lot of educational problems that are faced had the highest mean score (4.01, SD=1.48), and the lowest mean score (3.36, SD=1.70) was given by the statement interests with children and playing with them or harassing and hurting them.

- The descriptive analysis of Daily Living Skills revealed that the statement recognizes drinking water in public places and drinks had the highest mean score (3.74, SD=1.56), and the lowest mean score (3.08, SD =1.74) was with the statement uses healthy habits in the practice of daily living skills.

- The descriptive analysis of orientation and Mobility Skills indicated that the statement of using self-protection skills in his orientation and mobility had the highest mean score (3.27, SD=1.64) and the lowest mean score (2.75, SD =1.75), with the statement recognizes others in the environment based on their foot movement sound.

- Among the Compensatory Academic Skills domain, Reads Braille same teacher reading time had the highest mean score (3.07, SD=1.77), and the lowest mean score (2.39, SD=1.67) was given by the statement of Reads Braille texts with high sensory efficiency (audio and tactile combined).

- The descriptive analysis of Assistive Technology Skills indicated that the statement applies some electronic games for the VI had the highest mean score (3.08, SD=1.76), and the lowest mean score (2.32, SD =1.62) was with the statement of explains how to use the Tayler board to solve and write arithmetic problems.

- The descriptive analysis of Vocational Education Skills indicated that the statement describes the importance of work in achieving independence and building the future of the family had the highest mean score (3.75, SD=1.54) and the lowest mean score (2.84, SD =1.72) was with the statement of applies transition and adapting in the classrooms to new situations.

- Among the Knowledge Skills domain, Capable the role-playing the steps of performing the Hajj in Mecca applied had the highest mean score (3.65, SD=1.61), and the statement gave the lowest mean score (3.42, SD=1.67) explains that the word Islam means peace and coexistence with Muslims and non-Muslims.

- The descriptive analysis of practical skills indicated that the statement explains the principles in the field of transactions between people (the cohesion of relations between family members - respect for others - etc.) had the highest mean score (3.70, SD=1.58) and the lowest mean score (3.19, SD=1.75) was with the statement evaluates behaviors, the skill of whether verbal or actual, with themselves, their peers, and others in an elegant manner.

- Among Social Application Skills domain, Practices honesty in dealing with others had the highest mean score (3.69, SD=1.61), and the lowest mean score (2.90, SD=1.82) was given by the statement 'has the ability to plan and organize activities and invest and maintain time'.

Results of the Study

• The objective of the research is to create and standardize a functional assessment scale that can be used to assess VI students' developmental levels and to assist and direct special educators in the

development and implementation of educational programs for VI students or children. This section summarizes the major vital steps or stages that were carried out in this study.

- Psychomotor skills (Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills, Spatial Motor Skills), Perceptual Skills (Sensory Awareness Skills, Environmental Awareness Skills, Temporal Awareness Skills), Cognitive Skills (Cognitive Skills, Language Skills), Socio-emotional Skills (Socio-emotional Awareness Skills, Daily Living Skills, Orientation, and Mobility Skills), Compensatory Academic Skills, Vocational Training Skills, Assistive Technology Skills, and Religious Educational Skills (Knowledge Skills, Practical Skills, Social Skills) are the main key domains and sub-domains that included in the Functional Assessment Scale to be used for determining the developmental levels of the educational programs for VI students or children in Yemen and help the special educators in terms of preparation and implementation of the same.

- To identify the research gap and frame the research problem statement, a review of pertinent research and studies from various national and international journals, including established scales and measurements, was done in the first phase. The lack of an existing functional assessment scale for creating educational programs for VI students or children in Yemen has been identified as a research gap for the current study. As a result, it was discovered that such a scale must be created in order to meet the needs of such VI students and children.

- The domains, sub-domains, and their items were discovered in the second phase. In order to evaluate the identified sub-domains and their items as well as to make the necessary changes and modifications in the first draft of the VI students. Functional Assessment Scale based on the Yemen context to meet the local needs and requirements, two focus groups, and interviews with ten experts were conducted with 40 parents and special educators. As a result, some modifications have been made to the first document of the VI students' Functional Assessment Scale.

- The content, applicability, and design of the scale items were reviewed in the third phase by a group of ten specialists who are currently working in the fields of special education, curriculum and teaching strategies, educational measurement and evaluation, and the second draft of the VI students Functional Assessment Scale has been modified in accordance with this.

- Using the third draft of the VI students, pilot research was carried out in the fourth phase with two separate groups, each containing 30 respondents. Pre-test and post-test results from the Functional

Assessment Scale were used to examine the acquired data, which was then subjected to a paired t-test. The functional assessment scale for VI students, which has 334 items and eight domains, and 17 sub-domains, was also finalized.

Conclusion

The outcomes are the final result of data analysis utilizing various statistical techniques available in SPSS. The results are presented in the direction of analysis. There are 17 sub-domains and eight measured domains in this scale.

Three sub-domains compensate for the first domain, psychomotor skills: (gross motor, fine motor, and spatial skills). Three sub-domains make up the second domain, "Perceptual skills" (Awareness of the senses, the environment, and temporal Awareness). Cognitive Skills, the third domain, is divided into the following two sub-domains: (Cognitive Skills-Language Skills.). The fourth domain is socio-emotional skills. Social and emotional skills, daily living skills, and orientation and mobility skills are divided into these three sub-domains. Compensatory academic skills are the sixth domain, a separate domain. "Assistive Technology Skills," a separate domain. In the sixth domain, there is just one domain accessible: Vocational Training Skills and the seventh domain is a single domain. Three sub-domains, including Religious Education skills, build up the final domain (Mental Skills-Practical Skills-Social skills). The Functional Assessment Scale was developed over a period of two stages, totaling two of the scale, with a total of 2 objectives. The first stage covers the construction of the scale, while the second one deals with the standardization of the scale.

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Behind the Superhero Masks: An Analysis of Select COVID-19 Comics about Healthcare Professionals

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Abstract

Graphic medicine, a discipline under health humanities, is 'the intersection between the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare'. Coined by British physician and comic artist Ian Williams in 2007 to create this website ("What Is 'Graphic Medicine'? | Graphic Medicine" 2021). It is noteworthy that the Medical Humanities movement promotes the framework and application of literature in investigating illness from the viewpoints of practitioners and patients in many medical schools. This study has been undertaken to examine the negative repercussions of the superhero discourse on the professional and psychological aspects of the lives of healthcare professionals. It intends to prove that the risks undertaken by HCWs in the pandemic era is normalised in society. This study combines two disciplines superhero genres and graphic medicine. It examines how these disciplines play a decisive role in healthcare. The present study analyses the text using Derrida's theory of deconstruction and the theory of normalisation to reach its findings. The purpose of this study is to offer useful insights about reading and analysing COVID-19 comics.

Keywords- superhero genre, graphic medicine, discourse, deconstruction, normalisation, COVID-19 comics, pandemic literature

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc around the world. The virus quickly spread over the world in the weeks that followed, causing governments in afflicted nations to enact lockdown measures. High rates of sickness and death, individual financial troubles, stress connected to known and particularly unknown knowledge, and fear of the uncertainty regarding continued impact are the

detrimental consequences. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant loss of human life around the world and poses an unprecedented threat to public health, food systems, and the workplace.

Healthcare workers (HCWs) are at the epicentre of COVID-19's unprecedented catastrophe. They encounter obstacles in managing COVID-19 patients, minimising infection spread, creating appropriate short-term measures, and formulating long-term plans. HCWs must also continue to serve non-COVID patients while still fulfilling personal obligations, such as caring for their families and themselves. They reported symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, burnout, depression, and anxiety that were allegedly linked to healthcare workers' job activity during and up until years after epidemic. Similarly, amid the current global health crisis, reports of the mental toll on healthcare personnel have arisen on a regular basis.

Although becoming a hero can be voluntary in some cases, many nurses have been forced into it, particularly through procedures like mandatory re-deployment to COVID units or testing centres. The financial implications of heroism for nurses, many of whom rely on their work to make ends meet, are unknown. Heroic nurses are supposed to face and overcome any situation on their own, relieving the government of the burden of creating structural changes, which is the only way to adequately solve this dilemma. The limitations of the hero discourse remain ambiguous and vulnerable to exploitation by those in power if they are not questioned.

As the pandemic worsens and healthcare institutions struggle to stay afloat, leaders and decision-makers continue to use the hero narrative to persuade nurses to labour in increasingly dangerous and inequitable conditions. The long-term effects of nursing stress and strain in COVID-19 times are likely to be disastrous, and they will eventually cost society, which needs a healthy, resilient, and sustainable nursing workforce. Nursing staff retention, particularly in high-acuity areas and long-term care, emotional exhaustion, occupational-induced illnesses, and nurses permanently departing the field are all factors to consider. Nursing and society must allow the hero rhetoric to distract them from their ongoing efforts to achieve formal supports for nurses, such as patient-to-nurse ratio limitations and opportunities for rest from gruelling labour (Maben and Bridges 2020, 15-16).

This study analyses the effects of the superhero discourse on nurses and healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the professional and psychological aspects of their lives through a comparative study of various comics depicting nurses as heroes and those made by or about their actual experiences. The study looks into the COVID-19 comics of the first phase of the COVID pandemic

published between 2019 and 2021 across the world. The first phase of the pandemic was a period of uncertainty, white lies and darkness. The medical field was in the process of discovering the virus and taking measures to stop its spread across the world. This article analyses COVID-19 comics about and by nurses, reading from the perspectives of the section that was taken for granted. The comics *Covid Chronicle Vol 1: A Nurse's Anguish in the ICU, Keep Fighting, The Vitals: True Nurse Stories* and *How One COVID-19 Nurse Navigates Anti-Mask Sentiment* are analysed.

Most healthcare workers are psychologically resilient individuals who have been taught and experienced in dealing with disease and death. Prior to the current COVID-19 pandemic, however, the mental health and psychological well-being of this group were already recognised as major healthcare issues, as evidenced by the rising incidence of stress, burnout, depression, drug and alcohol addiction, and suicide among all groups of health professionals in many countries. High-stress jobs combined with the particular demands of the COVID-19 crisis have undoubtedly increased the risk of mental health problems among frontline healthcare workers, with early reports from around the world indicating increased rates of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidality.

Health-care experts and comics artists use the medium of comics to educate readers about the virus, its mechanism of transmission, and the essential precautions and safety measures (such as hand washing, sanitising, and masking) to stop COVID-19 from spreading. In the guise of comics, health-care experts express their opinions and worries regarding COVID-19. While different nurses and physicians demonstrate diverse approaches to dealing with the problem, Shirlene Obuobi, a health-care practitioner, shares the vulnerabilities and fears she experiences throughout the epidemic. Other health-care workers, such as 'incendavery' on Instagram, express concern about the need to carry documents to justify leaving their homes for work. Instead of seeking sanctuary in depression and destructive machismo, these innovators share their sentiments and their vulnerabilities.

Ian Williams, an English general practitioner and one of the pioneers of graphic medicine, posts comics on Instagram that depict his life as a father and a clinician during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recurring image of a cup with the phrase 'Keep calm and drink tea' subtly emphasises the physician's personal need to remain calm and relaxed, despite the fact that Williams is represented as attending a call from a patient suffering from mental instability. While carefully inquiring about the patient's well-being, the physician must maintain a comforting demeanour.

Shirlene Obuobi, a resident physician at the University of Chicago Medical Center who goes by the handle Shirlywhirlmd on Instagram, has been turning her experiences caring for COVID-19 patients into comics. It exposes health-care employees' fears of becoming infected, as well as the stress of being forced to deal with an unforeseen circumstance, which is ironically ignored in normal workplace interactions. She depicts a terrified health-care worker who admits that she is 'genuinely scared' of becoming sick and spreading the illness to her family members (Callender et al. 2020,1061-63).

Gallows humour is a phenomenon that is well-known among health workers, and it is the subject of Shirlene Obuobi's comics. It's commonly used to deal with more upsetting emotions and bring levity to difficult situations. The juxtaposition of internal and exterior dialogues can be visualised directly in comics, and Obuobi's COVID-19 comics make use of this versatility to depict opposing viewpoints. Her more frenetic, emotional characters are more relatable and portray the reality of being a front-line health-care practitioner, as opposed to the images of stoic, heroic health-care workers that predominate in the general media and other comics, particularly those by Marvel Studio. Her comics also depict the pain and pride of working as a resident physician amid a pandemic that has disrupted her training and, at times, called into question her calling to medicine.

Covid Chronicle, Vol 1: A Nurse's Anguish in the ICU demonstrates the situation in hospitals during the outbreak of the pandemic. It realistically narrates the hardships faced by healthcare workers when COVID-19 was reported in various parts of the world. In the comic, the hospital decided to convert every ward except maternity and oncology to ICU spaces to treat COVID patients. This makes nurses attend COVID patients willingly or unwillingly. The past eleven days have turned their professional lives topsy-turvy. They are professionals trained in handling various situations, but this sudden outbreak and their little knowledge about the virus made them terrified.

Lack of proper medical facilities and supplies leads to various hygiene issues among healthcare professionals. They faced an acute shortage of masks, PPE kits and hand gloves. The safety material provided by the authorities is of poor quality and is unable to protect them from being infected. The comic *Covid Chronicle, Vol. 1: A Nurse's Anguish in the ICU* draws attention to this problem. The nurse in the comic elucidates her concern about reusing a PPE for three days in a row. The texture and smell of PPE and masks change after continuous use. As per the instructions in the N95 box, they are supposed to dispose of it and use a new one after every interaction with a patient. But for them, every piece of mask and PPE counts. It is the only way to fight the virus and reduce the chance of bringing into their homes. But its reuse

can cause various health issues. The most essential needs of healthcare professionals are not satisfied by the government. This adversely affects their professional lives.

Keep Fighting, a comic strip by Joseph Lee discusses the harsh situations faced by nurses during the pandemic. It demonstrates how their lunch breaks have changed from leisure time when they chat and enjoy themselves with their colleagues to lonely tight schedule. They get barely ten minutes to gobble down their food. They are dreadfully exhausted by their hectic schedule and have no concern for their health.

Popular comics endorse a different perspective as opposed to real life narratives. When these comics are contrasted with the Marvel comic *The Vitals: True Nurse Stories* these difficulties are recognised and later ignored. It mentions the dilemmas faced by nurses like the constant neglect of the public to follow the safety measures and the hectic schedule where they have to rush from one patient to the next without relaxation. It urges nurses and healthcare workers to neglect their professional adversities and emerge as warriors who save the world. They ought to be used to these hardships, and it teaches them how a nurse ought to behave. This indicates that nurses are no longer treated as fellow humans. A glorification of the healthcare worker's sacrifice is perceptible in the comics.

The hostile attitude of the public towards the precautions and safety measures issued by the health care department in turn drastically affects the professional lives of health care workers. *How One COVID-19 Nurse Navigates Anti-Mask Sentiment* reveals how laymen seems oblivious to the horrors happening every hour of every day. It puts on view the public's protest against the use of masks and sanitizers. The nurse in the comic named Agnes attempts to make people aware of the necessity of using masks and sanitizers and the worst scenarios in hospitals.

The number of hospital patients with severe illnesses and the number of fatalities are made worse by this neglect. This, in turn, will affect healthcare workers' work and also increase the number of COVID cases among healthcare workers. The deaths of fellow workers will adversely affect nurses' professional lives and this is realistically depicted in the comic *Covid Chronicles, Vol. 1: A nurse's anguish in the ICU.*

Healthcare workers, especially those who may come into contact with suspected or confirmed cases, are under a great deal of stress from COVID-19 because of the high risk of infection, inadequate protection, loss of control, lack of experience in managing the disease, overwork, negative feedback from patients, perceived stigma, significant lifestyle changes, quarantine, and less family support. These factors increase

the risk of psychological issues in healthcare workers, such as dread, anxiety, depression and insomnia, all of which can have a severe impact on work productivity and long-term well-being.

Fear of contracting the virus and transmitting it to their loved ones is an important psychological tension confronted by nurses. It is talked through in the comic *Covid Chronicles, Vol. 1: A nurse's anguish in the ICU* where the nurse reuses PPE and masks because that is the only way to prevent infecting themselves and others. The nurse Agnes Boisvert takes care not to carry any of the hospital stuff to her home in *How One COVID-19 Nurse Navigates Anti-Mask Sentiment*. A resident physician at the University of Chicago Medical Center, Shirlene Obuobi, also analyses this in her comics.

The psychological impact of the pandemic deaths on HCWs is a topic of concern in these comics. The multitude of deaths occurring in front of the nurses led to mental breakdowns. They are psychologically trained to face these adversities but the uncertainty caused by this virus is immense. The nurse Jessica in the comic *Covid Chronicles, Vol. 1: A Nurse's Anguish in the ICU* states, 'It is emotionally exhausting to see people deteriorate right in front of your eyes- despite of all of your efforts' especially when they have a personal rapport with the patients. In one of the comics by Joseph Lee, he demonstrates how nurses are helpless in front of COVID patients to help them communicate with their families before their deaths.

Infodemic misinformation and disinformation propagated by the media negatively affected nurses and healthcare workers during the pandemic. During the early phase of the outbreak of the pandemic, the media disseminated unscientific facts about the virus. The first story in *The Vitals: True Nurse Stories, Cut Through the Noise,* shows how media and public protests against the use of masks adversely affect those who use them 24x7. The media created panic among people and healthcare workers, not psychological support. It was disheartening for these people who actually knew the situations at hospitals. *The Vitals: True Nurse Stories* propagates the idea that nurses should ignore and overcome these obstacles and focus on their work. But the comic *How One COVID-19 Nurse Navigates Anti-Mask Sentiment* demonstrates that it is arduous for the nurses to disregard the news and it leads to mental breakdowns.

Another hurdle confronted by nurses was managing both worlds- hospitals and homes. It was mentally hard for them to prepare their psyche to switch between these two places. In *Covid Chronicles, Vol. 1: A Nurse's Anguish in the ICU,* the ICU nurse Jessica articulates the time she needs to 'psych myself up to leave the car' for the hospital. Similarly, she struggles to prepare her mind after the night shift to go home. The ICU nurse Agnes Boisvert in *How One COVID-19 Nurse Navigates Anti-Mask Sentiment,* expresses

her anguish at being in an ICU and its loudness. The alarm fatigue is horrible and haunts her even after she reaches her home.

Feeling vulnerable, losing control, having concerns about health of oneself and others, changing working patterns or routines, feelings of personal danger, being isolated and lacking the necessary supplies to conduct their work (Wong et al. 2005,13-18) create anxiety and stress among healthcare workers. In order to provide psychological support, improve mental health support services, and increase mental healthcare worldwide, a better understanding of psychological burden across different groups of healthcare workers during this era is critical.

The risk of exposure to COVID-19 is particularly significant because of the nature of the work done by nurses at the patient's bedside. Many of them experience physical and mental weariness, quarantine, and exposure to illness. The team caring for the patients must possess not only physical strength but also tenacity and mental stability. In order for nurses caring for the health and lives of those affected to cope with the stress they are currently experiencing and continue in their duties, adequate support and psychological help are crucial. Healthcare professionals are increasingly in need of support and psychological aid as a result of the present pandemic catastrophe as they strive every day to protect the health and lives of patients who are suffering from COVID-19.

The super-heroic image thrust upon nurses and healthcare workers pays no heed to their personal, psychological and professional adversities. It is high time to provide proper clinical resources and psychological support rather than picturing them as heroes. The deconstruction of the superhero image of nurses is indispensable to preserving their basic human rights.

Our heroes have a significant and subtle impact on both our individual and collective identities. The selected hero performs the role of a mirror, reflecting the group's idealised self back to them in a concentrated form that is nearly superhuman. Superheroes are created to establish an ideology as supreme and noble. People are unknowingly made to admire their qualities. Superhero and villain demarcate good and evil. The qualities of heroes are established as noble and refined, while those of villains are degraded.

The idea of nurses as superheroes creates an organised environment for new nurses, forcing them to hide their genuine emotions and adopt 'super heroic' traits. The psychological traumas that nurses went through during the pandemic are undermined by superhero comics like *The Vitals: True Nurse Stories*. It highlights

the duty-bound nurse, who is portrayed as an example to imitate. Politicians and society use heroism as a tool to hold the healthcare community accountable for the problem. These brave angelic nurses will become villains if they make a mistake.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global planning and resources, and the care of nurses underwent multiple unanticipated reversals. The targets of verbal and physical abuse, employment and financial discrimination and public condemnation have occasionally been nurses and other healthcare professionals. Due to their continual presence, compassion, and expertise, nurses have a critical role in influencing healthcare outcomes for all patients. This is the hidden message propagated by superhero comics. The global health crisis exposed the plethora of systemic health disparities and highlighted their importance. According to these comics, even when their own lives are in danger and others try to mute their screams to whispers, nurses always answer the call.

The real-life comics by or about nurses are undercut by the superhero image disseminated through comics and other media. *The Vitals: True Nurse Stories* claims to deal with the real-life stories of nurses and other healthcare workers, but it idealises these real struggles. The healthcare workers in this comic tend to place their duty above all their personal hardships, family and emotions. The only priority is their COVID patients. Sacrifice is highlighted and attributed to nurses in *The Vitals: True Nurse Stories.* Fighting against an unknown intangible villain virus without any selfish motive and overcoming the hardships associated with it is the image it propagates.

Marvel Comics, one of the 'big two' publishers in the comics industry, has tremendous authority and influence on the masses. Marvel publishes more than 40 per cent of all comic book sales in the United States, giving it by a substantial margin the biggest market share. Marvel superheroes have greatly impacted society, the media, and pop culture. In the situation of pandemic, people always want to depend on someone or place the responsibility of the whole crisis on someone. These images transmitted through the media provide an escapism for the people to hand over the burden to the section of healthcare. The superhuman qualities of nurses overpower the human nature of these people in this comic.

Most healthcare professionals are taught to prioritise patients. Because they could feel guilty about taking care of themselves or fear criticism from others, therapists do not always prioritise their own needs. However, engaging in self-care activities may be essential for health professionals to manage the responsibilities, workload, and demands of their line of work and to achieve a better balance or integration

between work and leisure time—as well as to safeguard their health, well-being and satisfaction with both their work and overall life. According to research, effective self-care practises include a range of tactics spanning the physical, social, and emotional self-care domains, as well as self-awareness, self-compassion, and the practise of altruism.

Therefore, it is crucial to offer the medical team essential mental health support during these times. In times of crisis, overwhelming workload, or difficult working conditions, healthcare personnel in the medical and mental health sectors should be provided with psychological first aid in addition to long-term assistance through readily available mental health support programmes.

CONCLUSION

The present study shows how the caregivers are forced to treat the COVID patients and they stressfully tackle their fears. Lack of proper medical facilities and infrastructure adversely affects their professional lives. The public exhibits a hostile attitude towards the safety measure, which in turn increases the number of COVID patients. This affects their work and mental stability.

Caregivers experience numerous psychological problems like stress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. Many factors contribute to this. The fear of contracting the virus is one of them. They are apprehensive about infecting their loved ones. The deaths of co-workers and patients can also add to their stress and tension. Misinformation propagated through the media regarding the virus is another factor. The protest of the masses regarding the use of masks disheartened this section of people who use PPE and masks throughout the day.

Some comics express the difficulty faced by healthcare professionals in managing their personal and professional lives. They try hard to adjust their psyches to their hectic schedule. This leads them to a vulnerable situation where they find themselves losing control.

A deeper knowledge of the psychological burden experienced by various groups of healthcare workers today is essential if we are to provide psychological assistance, enhance mental health support services, and expand mental healthcare globally. The super-heroic image that is forced onto nurses and other healthcare professionals pays no attention to their psychological, professional, or personal struggles. Instead of portraying them as heroes, it is time to offer appropriate professional services and psychological support.

A structured environment is created for new nurses by the notion that they are superheroes, compelling them to conceal their true feelings and take on 'super heroic' characteristics. Heroism is a weapon used by politicians and society to make the medical profession responsible for the issue.

By examining the effects of superhero discourse on the professional and psychological lives of healthcare workers, the study examines the negative implications of extolling nurses as superhumans. For the sake of healthcare professionals' survival and benefit, it is made plain that such a notion needs to be dismantled. There is further scope for COVID-19 comics and superhero healthcare. The research done through this study provides insights for a better understanding of COVID-19 comics and the pandemic era.

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The Spectre of Demographic Change and the Dilemma of Delimitation in Assam

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Abstract

The current delimitation drive in Assam which is being done on the basis of 2001 census has instilled a great deal of concern among Assamese citizens and political parties because of the communal demographic change in the state. BJP as ruling party in the state has taken advantage of the situation to do the political manoeuvring and to create narratives which favours its political agenda in the state. In this article, authors have made an attempt to critically analyse various debates, contestations and policy decisions taken in conjunction with the ongoing Delimitation process in Assam which can have far reaching impact on the politics of the state.

Keywords

Assam, Delimitation, Communal Demographic Change, Electoral Politics, Indigenous Rights, Identity Politics.

Introduction

In a representative democracy, elections play an important role in forming a government. Although, elections in modern times are guided by the principle of 'one man, one vote, one value', it has largely been played on communal lines or ethnic basis which perplexes the aforementioned principle. The election of such nature incentivize the ruling regime to influence the process of delimitation of electoral constituencies in such a way that the community having close affinity with the ruling regime holds a greater electoral strength in a newly created electoral constituency. Theoretically, basic impetus to redraw or readjust the electoral constituencies emerges because of the change in population, mostly for increase in the population. In a representative democracy, an elected representative is supposed to represent such number of people which he/she can adequately represent, albeit, the terms of such adequacy differ from country to country. Delimitation/Redistricting/Redistribution as it is referred to in various countries of the world is the periodic redrawing of electoral boundaries, usually constituencies in representative system are either single-member constituencies or

uniformly small multimember constituencies which are utilized to elect representatives (Handley and Schrott, 2008). Delimitation of electoral constituencies, if not done in an impartial way (sometimes even if done impartially) can create new equation in the incumbent electoral politics. Therefore, the process of delimitation in any representative democracy ignites fear and simultaneously excitement in both the electors and the elected. The aforementioned statement stands true in the case of Assam where the Election Commission of India is carrying out delimitation exercise. The delimitation exercise has generated mixed reaction from various political and non-political circles in the state which this paper tries to analyze and make sense of.

Delimitation in Assam and India: A historical review

Although, the world over in representative democracies, the increase in the population is followed by a redrawing of electoral constituencies and redistribution of seat in the legislature, but in India, which previously had three delimitations (1952,1962,1972), the population was growing at such an exponential rate that it created an angst amongst the ruling elites of the country because of which they decided to put a freeze on the delimitation process by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976. The freeze imposed on the delimitation process is particularly to be seen in context of the support provided by the then union government to the population control measures it had taken. The Constitution of India specifies, "constituencies should be redrawn in such a way so that there is more or less equal population seat ratio in all the assembly constituencies within the state, and also to have more or less equal population seat ratio for all parliamentary constituencies within the country" (Kumar, 2003). The 42nd Amendment Act froze the delimitation process in India till the 2001 census of India. After a hiatus of three decades, Delimitation Act 2002 was passed in parliament and created a delimitation commission for redrawing of the electoral boundaries throughout the country. Later , the 84th Amendment Act of 2001 and 87th Amendment Act of 2003 set the following mandate for the commission: (1) There shall be no change in the overall existing seats allocated to different states in the Lok Sabha on the basis of 1971 Census, until the first census to be taken after the year 2026; (2) The overall existing seats in the legislative assemblies of all states shall also remain same as allocated on the basis of 1971 Census, until the first census to be taken after the year 2026; (3) Taking the 2001 census as the basis, the number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in the state legislative assemblies and Lok

Sabha shall be redone (4) The parliamentary and assembly constituencies of each state shall be re-delimited on the basis of the 2001 Census and once delimited, constituencies shall remain fixed, until the first census to be taken after the year 2026 (5) The delimitation of constituencies shall be done in such manner that population (on the basis of 2001 Census) of each parliamentary and assembly constituency in a state shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the state (Kumar, 2009). By the provision of law, delimitation in India has to be carried out only after decadal census, this means that freeze till 2026 would amount to the initiation of new delimitation process only after the 2031 census (Kumar, 2003).

The delimitation commission which was established in the year 2002 completed its work in 2008. The commission had done the delimitation for the entire country except for the states of Jammu and Kashmir (now a union territory), Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland. On 8th February 2008, by a presidential order, Government of India deferred the delimitation exercise in these states citing security reasons and a threat to unity and integrity of India. In Assam, the delimitation exercise under the Delimitation Act 2002 was first suspended after a stay order by the Gauhati High Court in the case of Shri Ram Parsad Sarmah and Ors. Vs. UOI & Ors. (PIL No. 62/2007). Later the Supreme Court of India had put a stay on the orders of Gauhati High Court, however, the Government of India did not proceed with the delimitation exercise in the state again, as it was apprehensive that the exercise might arouse strong resentment in the people of the state. the process of delimitation in Assam had evoked strong opposition in the State, and there had been a large number of protests against it. Different political parties, student bodies had while opposing the delimitation process, launched as many as 113 agitational programmes. One of the main reasons behind the opposition to the delimitation process in Assam was the non-update of (National Register of Citizens) NRC which was supposed to reflect the true population configuration of the state. The then State Government was of the view that the delimitation process in Assam should be kept in abeyance until the situation improves. In account of all the apprehensions expressed in the state of Assam, the Government of India on 8th of February 2008 by a presidential order deferred the delimitation exercise in the state until the further orders (The Gazette of India, 2008).

Demographic change and politics in Assam

To understand the delimitation dilemma in Assam we need to trace the long history of anxiety over the demographic change, indigenous rights and politics in the state. In a heterogeneous society like Assam, religious identity and its prevalence have become the new pillars of electoral politics. The elections of 2016 and 2021 for the State Legislature, and the 2019 Lok Sabha election all witnessed high religious polarisation. A key issue for the electoral campaigning in elections recently have been the communal demographic shift as reported by the censuses, especially the census report of 2011 which highlighted a significant increase in the Muslims population in certain districts of Assam. The subject of demographic change and immigration of East Bengal origin Muslims is not new to Assam; it was a significant issue throughout the political discourses of 1930s and 1940s, when the Sylhet district of modern-day Bangladesh was also a part of Assam. The genealogy of mass East-Bengal origin Muslim immigration into Assam lies in the colonial era politics. The immigration took place in two phases. The initial phase commenced from the time when the British annexed Assam and ranges until 1937 when the first provincial government in the state was formed. During this phase, the British administration directly patronised the immigration of Bengali Muslim peasants into Assam for enhancing the revenue generation from the province. The second phase encompasses the time period of 1937 to 1946 when the Muslim League provincial government led by Muhammad Saadullah in Assam facilitated mass Muslim immigration from then East-Bengal into the state on the pretext of 'Grow More Food' programme. It is alleged that the real intention behind the programme was to make Assam a Muslim majority province (Nath, 2021). In this regard, the recent remark of Assam's Chief Minister, Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, is very interesting, he blamed Saadullah of importing a sizeable Muslim population from then East Bengal which led to the alteration of the demography of Assam. He levelled; the decisions taken by Saadullah during his times are still harming the people of the state. Lamenting the situation, he maintained that damage done to the Assamese '*Jati*' (community) by such policy has still not been compensated (TOI, 28, July 2021).

"Illegal immigration" and "Demographic change" have been two of the most frequently used topics in the politics of Assam since the 1930s. Indigenous rights and identity were always

presented as something at perils due to the state's changing communal demographic composition. The two converging ideologies of "Assamese nationalism" and "Hindu nationalism" in Assam's electoral politics also emerged as a result of this problem. Beginning in the 1930s, Assamese nationalism emerged predominantly along the linguistic lines due to the rivalry between Bengali Hindus and Assamese people to accord official language status to their respective languages (Mishra, 1999). On the other hand, "Hindu nationalism" represented the larger Hindu identity debate with regard to indigenous rights in Assam. in the recent times, while Hindu nationalism emerged as a significant factor in Assam politics, the imbalanced population growth between Hindus and Muslims in Assam have lessened the relevance of Assamese nationalism. Akhil Ranjan Dutta, highlighting the trajectory of such transition, argues in his book, *Hindutva Regime in Assam: Saffron in the Rainbow;*

"A political fear psychosis was nurtured in a planned way by projecting how, in a near future, Assam's politics may go out of the control of the Assamese people and the 'Bangladeshis' may become the real political masters of the state. Such a campaign was already gaining momentum in the state, with leading nationalist organizations like the AASU projecting such apprehensions for quite a long time now. This was fully appropriated by the BJP in the campaign, and it was successful in transmitting this fear psychosis to almost all indigenous communities in the state." (Dutta, 2021).

According to 2011 census of India, Hindus make up 61.47 percent of the population in Assam, followed by Muslims-34.22 percent and Christians-3.74 percent. Of Assam's 34 districts, Hindus are predominant in 23 of them, while Muslims in 11 (Census Report, 2011). However, the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) report indicates a higher fertility rate among Muslims than among Hindus and Christians. This raises concern among the native people about their future in state politics. According to the NFHS-5 report, Assam has a total fertility rate of 1.9 children per woman, which is lower than the replacement rate. Although the State's fertility rate for women has steadily decreased, however, the fertility rate for Muslim women (2.38) is the greatest compared to other groups, including Hindu (1.59), Christian (1.47), and others (1.54). The NFHS-5 survey findings indicate that Muslim women are more likely to have 0.8

more children than Hindu women and 0.9 more children than Christian women (Chaudhury, 2021). By comparing the three consecutive census data, it is observed that the Muslim population in Assam has increased by 6% between 1991 and 2011. According to current census data from 2001 and 2011, Assam experienced the fastest rate of Muslim population growth among all Indian states, rising from 30.9 percent in 2001 to 34.2 percent in 2011.

The March towards the Delimitation of Constituencies in Assam and ongoing Contestations:

The afore-given information demonstrates the region's residents' fundamental anxiety quite clearly. In contrast to other states, Assam faces a delimitation difficulty. In Assam, anxiety over delimitation emerged because of imbalanced demographic change as well as the fear that locals may eventually lose political power. Nevertheless, following the order of Union Ministry of Law and Justice, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has started the process of delimitation of constituencies in Assam. Subsequently, the ECI had directed the Chief Electoral Officer of Assam to take measure for issuing a complete ban on creating new administrative units in the state with effect from 1st January, 2023 (The Assam Tribune, 28 December, 2022). However, on 31st December, 2022, the Assam Cabinet have merged the four newly created districts again with their parent districts, a day ahead of Election Commission's deadline to stop such administrative policy changes in the state. The newly created districts Biswanath, Hojai, Bajali and Tamulpur were remerged with Sonitpur, Nagaon, Barpeta and Baksa districts respectively. Beside these, fourteen other localities in the state also had their boundaries redrawn. The timing of this decision has evoked suspicion at the various level. The state's other two largest political parties, the Indian National Congress (INC) and the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), asserted that the cabinet took this decision with an eye towards the delimitation exercise and for the benefit of the BJP, which is currently in power (Assam Tribune, January 1, 2023). Amidst the criticism, vindicating the move, the CM of Assam, argued that decision was taken only for the Purpose of administrative convenience (The Assam Tribune, January 1, 2023). This move along with the statement of the CM like, "population should not be the only factor in delimitation in Assam." (Assam Tribune, January 2, 2023), has particularly brought the entire process of delimitation into the public consciousness and

turned the same into a subject of contentious debate. The decision of merging four districts has latent political overtones because districts play a significant role in the proceedings and the results of the delimitation process. To decipher the government intention, it is imperative to look into the move from the prism of the census figure of 2001 and 2011, which highlights a communal demographic rationale behind it. Bajali, a Hindu majority area is merged with Barpeta, a Muslim dominated district. Similarly, Hojai an area consists of sizeable Hindu Bengalis, often regarded as a consolidated vote bank of the BJP in the region is also merged with Nagaon, a Muslim majority district. Similarly Hindu dominated Biswanath district is merged with Sonitpur where the Muslim population is growing rapidly. Likewise, Tamulpur, a Hindu majority district, is amalgamated with Baksa district, a major fiefdom of Bodoland politics which also has a substantial Muslim population of 14% (Pisharoty, 2023). The pattern in the changing of district boundaries clearly hints at an attempt to influence the delimitation process as well as to weaken the Muslim community's electoral strength in the state.

Previously when BJP was in the opposition, it asserted that an authentic National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam should be carried out and completed before the delimitation exercise takes place, so that all illegal immigrants could be identified (January 2, 2023, The Assam Tribune). Ironically, today when the BJP is in the power, both in the state and the centre, delimitation is being carried out without a full and final update of NRC in Assam. Commenting on the issue of delimitation and NRC the CM of Assam expressed his displeasure with the outcome of current NRC and maintained that the delimitation could be the exercise which would safeguard the state's future (The Assam Tribune, 2nd January, 2023). By the above statement, Sarma has rhetorically delve into the contours of identity politics, invoking the narratives of indigenous insecurity and protection from growing Muslim population in the state. The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) which has had a history of influencing politics in the state also welcomed the delimitation. The Chief advisor of AASU, Dr. Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharya while endorsing the delimitation in the state also appealed that the recommendation of the 'Clause-6' of the Assam Accord should also be taken care of, to ensure the political interest of the indigenous people. In this context, delimitation process in Assam is seen as a tool of retaining the prominence of indigenous people over the politics of Assam,

simultaneously, deferring its meaning beyond the mere readjustment of constituencies, making it a quagmire of identity politics and gerrymandering.

Although, by an amendment to the constitution it is mandated that the current delimitation should be carried out on the basis of 2001 census data, but the basis of the recent delimitation in the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was 2011 census. The INC, AIUDF and Raijor Dal, three main opposition parties in the state expressed concern over the usage of two different censuses for delimitation in Assam and Jammu & Kashmir. Raijor Dal's chief, Akhil Gogoi opined that the delimitation in Assam should be conducted after 2031 census as the freeze year of 2026 is nearby. In this regard, it is interesting to note that 2021 Census has remained dormant because of the Coronavirus pandemic and is postponed till October, 2023. By a constitutional mandate next delimitation in India after the Delimitation of 2008 could take place only after the year 2026. If in case, the 2021 census is released during or after the end of freeze year of 2026, it may lead to new political choices by the government that will be in the power at the centre. It may immediately go for the delimitation and not wait until 2031, if they find the census report beneficial to their political interests. Coming back to the state and the current delimitation exercise in Assam, Akhil Gogoi, who usually stands in opposition to BJP and its Hindutva politics also expressed his fear in a near communal fashion when he said his home constituency, Sivasagar, which has a substantial population of Ahom people (a community that he also belongs to) will no longer remain an Ahom-dominated constituency, (The Assam Tribune, 28th December, 2022). The growing Muslim population in Assam has always been a matter of anxiety among Assamese people but with the formation of BJP government in Assam, a fusion of old indigenous sentiment of "*Jati, Mati aaru Bheti*" (home, land and hearth) and hardline Hindutva narrative has been observed. The result of such fusion could be seen in the various eviction drives in the state which many allege to be targeted. Although, such drives are carried out on the pretext of secular intention, they mostly affect a particular community, *Miya Muslims*- a colloquial term for the Bengali Muslim community. The politics in the state has become highly polarised, in which even the constitutional act of delimitation is seen to be causing further polarisation.

The current delimitation discourse has also thrown light on issue of reservation of seats in the Assam state legislative assembly. Although, BJP as a national party has had a history of reluctance towards reservation (Chinnaiah, 2003), but in Assam, BJP led by Himanta Biswa Sarma is eyeing reservation as a 'reserved strategic action' to counter the growing presence of Muslims in the state legislature. Contextualising his and his party's intention, Sarma said, he would not mind sacrificing his home constituency if the seat is reserved for the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in the larger interest of the indigenous people of Assam (Mazumdar, 2023). The ECI has not released any final guidelines and methodologies for readjusting the constituencies in Assam (Parashar and Yande, 2022). In such state of ambiguity, could 2008 Delimitation Draft proposal of Assam be of any use to ECI in carrying out the delimitation now, as the basis of both is the census of 2001. As per the proposed 2008 Delimitation of Assam Draft the number of reserved seats in the State Legislative Assembly for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was supposed to increase from 8-9 for SCs and 16-19 for STs (Zaman, 2023). BJP's sole ambition in the event of such increment would be to push reservation to such constituencies where there is a very less prospect of it winning a seat or in other words, reserving the constituencies where Muslims are electorally powerful entity. Besides these, there has been an important political demand brewing in the state for quite a long time. Six communities of Assam, namely- Tai-Ahom, Koch-Rajbongshi, Moran, Motok, Chutia and Tea Tribe (Adivasi) collectively comprising more than 30% of the state electorate, has been demanding for ST status, the member of these communities are the followers of Hinduism with few exceptions. Granting ST status to these communities was one of the major promises of BJP ahead of the 2016 state Assembly election. In this regard, state government has even agreed in principle to send a recommendation to centre for the same (Press Trust of India, September 27, 2021). Albeit, the central government which has a decisive role in the matter has kept the demand in limbo. If in case these communities are granted ST status, the number of ST population in the state will rise significantly, it will have a crucial impact on the political equation in the state. With the rise of ST population, the number of reserved seats for STs in the State Legislative Assembly and parliamentary seats from the state will also need to be proportionately increased. There is a possibility that BJP may in future grant ST status to these communities before some other delimitation is carried out, to secure its electoral and

political interest in the state and simultaneously to reduce Muslim political influence in the politics of Assam.

Conclusion

The present delimitation drive in Assam which is being done based on the basis of 2001 census has instilled a great deal of concern among Assamese citizens and political parties because of the communal demographic change in the state. The BJP as the ruling party in the state has taken advantage of the situation to do the political manoeuvring and to create narratives which favours its political agenda in the state. The various move taken and narratives propagated by the BJP as discussed above in conjunction with Delimitation exercise in Assam has also drawn criticism from various political and non-political organisations and is referred to as a tacit attempt of gerrymandering. It could be argued, that these moves will help in the consolidation of BJP's power in Assam both electorally and in terms of propagating a hegemonic Hindutva narrative, especially in the forthcoming 2024 election. The strengthening of Hindutva narrative in Assam also has a wider implication for federal political structure, as Assam like many other states of India has fallen under the tight grip of the web of saffron politics. Earlier, Assam used to be viewed from the prism of core-periphery politics in which it was located at the periphery, but now Assam itself has become one of the core spaces for Hindutva experiment. In an interesting state of affair, the legacy of identity politics in the state has been hijacked by the BJP in a very well calibrated manner, it is now leveraging on the sentiments of the indigenous people of Assam by projecting the afore-discussed moves as an indirect, but effective policy for protection of indigenous rights and interests. All these moves and narratives of the BJP has furthered the representation of Muslims, especially Bengali Speaking Muslim as dreadful other in the political milieu of the state. Beside the consolidation of BJPs political prospect, an indirect, but an apparent outcome of the debates and moves related to Delimitation exercise in Assam has been the growing political relevance and popularity of the current Chief Minister of the state, Himanta Biswa Sarma in the eyes of the people of Assam as a man of actions as well as in the federal political domain as a working man for Hindus.

Notes:

NRC: The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register maintained by the Government of India for the state of Assam which includes all the citizens and their detailed information. It is expected that through a proper NRC the genuine residents of the state could be identified. The register for Assam, for the first time was prepared after the census of 1951.

Grow More Food: 'The Grow More Food' programme was initiated during the second world war to augment the food production capacity of the province in order to combat food shortages and supply sufficient food for the British soldiers. Saadullah then premier of Assam, gathered thousands of Bengali Muslim peasants from then East Bengal and settled them in Assam under this initiative.

Clause-6 of the Assam Accord: The Clause-6 of the Assam Accord talks about the constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguard to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.

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Constructed Past and Stigmatised Present: The Meos Before and After 1947

Altaf Hussain

Abstract

Aftermath the uprising of 1857, the colonial state constructed a novel social and legal category to classify millions of Indians as 'in-born' criminal tribes. But the available literature on the various aspects of this theme is confined to colonial India, ignoring the stimulus and continuation of such colonial stigma and stereotypes in post-Independent India. The focal aim of this article is to examine the firstly colonial construction of criminality and in what way such notions and stereotypes continue after 1947 in the context of Mewati peoples. This is a vital aspect of this paper as it traces how the colonial state stigmatised Mewatis or Meos in the colonial period, unending in post-independent India.

Key Words: Criminal, Criminal Tribe, Criminal Tribe Act, Colonial India, Meos, Mewati, 1947.

Introduction

Following the rebellion of 1857, the colonial state constructed a 'social dishonour' and novel and unprecedented lawful categories to classify millions of Indians as the 'criminal tribe'.[1] The idea of 'inborn criminals' and CT- a defamatory term, was introduced in colonial India to control, discipline, and policing those communities who were, as claimed, 'involved and committed to the organised commission of non-bailable offenses.' Further, to control and surveillance such Indian natives the British government passed the first Criminal Tribes Act[2] in 1871 and mainly extended it to North-Western Province and Punjab. In the 1924 Act, all the amendments to the CTA 1871 were merged, and the act was stretched to the whole of India. It is estimated in 1947, there were more than a hundred tribes, constituting more than three million people and around one percent of the total population in India that were declared as CTs.

The existing literature on CTs is mainly concerned with the question that why certain groups were classified as CTs in British India. Existing work also stated that the construction of criminality in British India is a colonial and modern phenomenon.[3] Many scholars[4] have recently studied the construction and impact of criminality in a particular community. A very recent and different work was done by Anastasia Piliavsky (2015) on this theme. She traces the ancestries and roots of such concepts and practices in pre-colonial India. Piliavsky explains and rationalises her views by studying the Kanjars of Rajasthan. More recently, Sarah Gandee's (2018) work inspects the post-colonial life and

status of the CT in the region of Punjab. She mainly looks at how post-Independent India deals with the colonial category of classification in its lawmaking, informal, and substantial practices even after the eradication of CTA.

Thus, the available literature on the various aspects of this theme is confined to colonial India, ignoring the continuation of such colonial stigma and stereotypes in post-Independent India. The key aim of this article is to study the firstly colonial construction of criminality and in what way such notions and stereotypes continue in post-independent India in the context of Mewati peoples. This is a vital aspect of this paper as it traces how the colonial state's stereotypical criminal image of Mewatis or Meos continued after 1947.

Mewat as a Cultural Region

Mewat is a notable and important area in the history of north India. Mewat is known for long confrontations against various states in India. "Mewat, or land of Meos, does, find a place, a conspicuous one in the history of northern India during the three centuries of Muslim rule preceding the Mughal Empire. During those times, Mewat constituted a distinct geographical as well as a political entity." (Amir Ali (1970, 19). This is important to note that Mewat is not an administrative division[5]. In present-day practice, the term Mewat basically means an area 'where the Meos live.' Thus, in the present milieu, it is tough to determine the Mewat boundaries as Meos are scattered over the districts of the three states, namely, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. So, Mewat is more combined into a social, geographical, and cultural entity than any geographical border. The following lines are prevalent and widespread about Mewat that

इत दिल्ली उत आगरो, अलवर और बैराठ।
कालो पहाड़ सुहावणो, जाके बीच बसे मेवात।

नू तो सारी जात ही, बसां एक ही साथ।
(अपर) मेव घणी तादात मे, नू बाजे मेवात॥

(The Verse suffices, 'Where is Mewat'? From Delhi to Agra, From Mathura to Bairat where the black charming hills (Aravali range) stand, 'here lies Mewat.'. The next line specifies that "though various castes or Jati exist in Mewat together, the Meo caste is in more numbers hence known as the Meos of Mewat."

Meos of Mewat

Meos are one of the important social groups of Mewat. There are various views about the ancestries of Meo society. The Meos claim that they belonged to the Rajput clan of the Hindu Society. Meos are also considered upper caste in the Mewat region by Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Like their descents, there are several understandings about their Islamisation, but it is clear from existing works that the Meos embraced Islam over a long period of time.

The process of complete Islamisation among them is not complete till today, even after the prolonged presence of Tabligh Jama'at among the Meos of Mewat. Politically Mewat or Meos were under the British in Gurgaon, Naruka Rajputs in Alwar, and Jats rule in Bharatpur in the 19th century.

Colonial Knowledge: Construction of Meos Criminality

Colonial rule classified millions of the Indian population as the CT, and to prove and rationalise such classifications, historical evidence, and organised records of their past were formed through the making of colonial knowledge. It was one of the strategies by which colonial rule rationalised their rule and classified and controlled the native population. Sanjay Nigam (1991) rightly stated that it is important to study the construction of criminality in the context of "colonial power and the development of colonial knowledge." (Nigam, 1991, 132). This colonial strategy is manifest in making colonial knowledge about the Meos of Mewat. Colonial ethnographers-cum-officials created colonial knowledge and history about the Meos of Mewat in the sense that they can create lawless, predatory, turbulent, and stereotypical criminal images of Meos of Mewat. The colonial understanding and reasoning of Meos criminality were based on the colonial construct, selective interpretations, and de-contextualised history of Meos of Mewat. The colonial ethnographers[6] generally rationalise Meos criminality on the similarity in the name of *pal*[7] and the character of the Meo-Mina community. Colonial ethnographers formulated their views about Meos based on a story of a legend, the marriage of a Meo boy named Dariya Khan, and a Mina girl Sasibadni Mina[8]. For example, Major P.W. Powlett in Alwar Gazetteer stated that

> "The Meos claim to be of Rajput origins, but there are grounds for believing that many springs of the same stock as the Minas. The similarity between the word Meo and Mina suggests that the former may be a contradiction of the later. Several of the respective clans are identical (Singal, Nai, Pundlot, Dingal, and Balot), and the story of one Dariya Meo and his lady Sasbadni Mina seems to show that they formerly intermarried." (Powlett, 1878, 38)

The Dariya Meo and Sasbadni Mina legend was questioned by various scholars.[9] Still, colonial ethnographers created a dominating view that they were from the same race and had familiar criminal characters. This shows how colonial knowledge enabled the colonial state to impose its legislation and ideas by creating a history of the native population. Further, to rationalised Meos violent and criminal character, colonial ethnographers repeatedly write about the Meo-Mina's common origin to sustain its reliability. Interestingly, the construction of Mina criminality was also not the center of colonial crime control policy but the creation of a partial inspection of colonial knowledge. (Mark Brown, 2004)

Colonial administrator-cum ethnographers further linked the common origin of Meos and Minas with a shared predatory character. For example, R.V. Russell stated that the "Muhammadan branch of the Mina tribe belonging to the country of Mewat. They were also formerly robbers by occupation, and though they have improved, they are still

noted cattle-lifters." (Russell, 1916, 256). William Crooke writes that an important branch of robber tribes was that of the Meos, or Mina**,** whose headquarters were in the wilder parts of Rajputana, with branches in Punjab, Central India, and the United Province. (Crook, 1907, 143). So, like other colonial ethnographers William used the term Meo-Mina interchangeably. Hence, it is evident that based on the common origin of Meo-Mina, colonial ethnographers linked them with their predatory and criminal activities to prove and rationalised the criminal character of both Meo-Minas.

Further, the early Indo-Persian accounts about Meos were significant sources of information for creating colonial knowledge and the history of Meos. This is evident from the colonial ethnographers who repetitively quoted early Indo-Persian accounts to prove the criminality of this community and their lawless activities since early times. For example, W.H. Sleeman (2019, 322) writes about Mewatis that "depredations had gone on for centuries. Sultan Balban, who reigned from A.D. 1265 to AD 1268, temporarily suppressed them by punishments of awful cruelty, flaying the criminals alive, etc." Powlett also stated that the "Meos were during the Muhammadan period of power always 'notorious' for their turbulence and predatory habits" (Powlett, 1878, 37). So, the early Persian accounts were a significant source of information for the colonial state to mention and highlight the Meos turbulent and predatory characters since early Indian history.

The main argument of this paper is that an immediate reason for Meos criminalisation was their strong resistance and mass participation in the rebellion of 1857. Because this was the first direct conflict between the Meos and the colonial state since the first half of the 19th century when the Gurgaon district came under colonial rule. In the revolt of 1857, no symbols of British authority were to be seen throughout the Gurgaon district. Budha Prakash noted that in "Mewat, the sturdy and warlike Mewatis came out in large numbers and formed a *dhar* (a crowd turned into somewhat organised gatherings) to overthrow the British rule. The Meos of Mewat opposed the Britisher tooth and nail." (Budha Prakash, 1967, 85). Later British suppressed the Meos and other Mewatis with full force and restored the British authority in the Gurgaon district. No doubt Meos paid a heavy price for their participation in the 1857 rebellion. Meos were not only killed and hanged but their land was confiscated in accordance with the British acts. Heavy fines were imposed on the individuals and rebel villages. More importantly, Meos active and mass participation in the revolt of 1857 become the main rationale for the British to classify Mewatis as CT. This is evident from the perspective of colonial officials[10] who depicted Meos as a violent, bloodthirsty, robber, and lawless community. For instance, Watson and Kaye mentioned that

"The Mewatess have not by any means a good reputation as a tribe. They are, according to a local report, like the Goojurs, thieves and cattle stealers, and have the vices of Mohmedans without the virtue of Hindoos. They further added that in the mutiny and rebellion, in some districts, especially around Agra, they were more troublesome even then the Goojurs, adding to their original 'evil disposition the bloodthirstiness of the Mahomedan fanatics." Watson and Kaye, 1869, item 201).

William Crook also stated that "in the 1857 mutiny, Meos and the Gujars of the Upper Daub were notorious for their turbulence and seriously impeded the operation against Delhi. The Meos and Mewatis, however, retained their character for turbulence." (Crook, 1908, 313). But, for the Meo community, their involvement in the rebellion of 1857 was an act of bravery, loyalty, Hindu-Muslim harmony, and a contest against colonial rule. It is also evident from pre-1857 colonial records that Meos were barely cited in the colonial documentation about criminal activities. But certainly, in the post-1857 uprising, Mewatis became a key unease for the colonial state. Even colonial ethnographers used selective proverbs to justify Meos violent and criminal character and the subsequent suppression by the British. Thus, this paper argues that the participation of the Meos in the rebellion of 1857 was the main reason for their characterisation as a CT. It is important to note not only Meos or Mewatis but many other tribes (Bawrias, Sansi, and Korvas) also took part in the revolt of 1857 and were classified as CT.

This work also investigates whether the juridical-legal records and administrative and police documents during colonial India confirm Meos or Mewati's criminality. This study found that no empirical evidence in pre-1857 India would give us details about Meos robbers and lawless activities. On the contrary, Lt. Col. Lockett (1831) prepared a predatory report of Rajputana in 1831. He noted that there had not been grievances against Mewati regarding their robber acts, either the minister of Alwar or the people. Like Lockett's information, WH Sleeman (2019) also noted that Mewatis or Meos were incapable of mischief on a large scale in the Gurgaon district in the first half of the 19th century. Thus, hardly any colonial records in the pre-1857 period mentioned the criminal and lawless activities of Meos of Mewat.

When the recommendations were taken from various levels of colonial officials and provincial governments on the introduction of the CTA in 1871, not a single colonial official highlighted the lawless and robber activities of the Meos. Surprisingly, Meos or Mewatis were not mentioned even a single time by any colonial officials regarding their criminal activities in the whole discussion on the introduction of CTA. Mr. F O Mayne, who was Inspector General of Police of North-Western Provinces and a main colonial mind in the making of CTA, 1871, sent a schedule 'A,' a list of the 29 CTs of North-Western Provinces Meos or Mewatis find no mention in Mayne's list of CTs in Schedule 'A[11]' This is adequate to prove that Meos or Mewatis were not even in discussion among colonial officials for criminal activities, still, they were classified as CT.

It is important to note that when colonial officials were discussing the idea of CT and the enactment of CTA to restrict such communities, Col. Hervey came out with a report on the predatory activities of Rajputana. Harvey's report (1866) did not confirm any large-scale Meos involvement in criminal and robber activities in the 1860s. S.T. Hollins (2005) collected information from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and various standard British works on multiple aspects of CTs in the 1920s. When he prepared the list of CTs of the United Provinces, he wrote separate

chapters about the various tribe and castes but not about the Meos of Mewat. Yet, Mewatis were brought under the CTA, in 1911, in the United Province. More importantly, Mr. Christie who was the judge of Gurgaon district in the 1880s stated that "I would not classify Meos with criminal 'character.' Crime is not looked upon them as a 'legitimate pastime.' It does not occupy anything like the foremost place in their minds as a means of existence." (Channing, 1882, 84-85) Sir John Malcolm also stated that Meos or Mewatis were "stigmatised as robbers and bandits and found that they were admitted to being faithful and courageous guards and servants to those in whose service they engaged." (Malcolm, 1823,174-75). But such divergent views by the colonial officials and administrators were undermined by the British ethnographers. So Meos or Mewatis construction as a criminal tribe was largely based on colonial stereotypes, misinterpretation of Mewatis history, the colonial notion of Meo-Mina common origin, and Mewatis participation in the rebellion of 1857.

Meos or Mewatis Criminal 'Stereotype' in Post-Independent India

It is notable to note that the colonial stigmatised criminal image of Meos remains in post-independent India as well. For instance, a very well-known sociologist and anthropologist S.L. Sharma mentions their life as "Meo's predatory tradition." (Sharma, 1969, 148). Sharma and Srivastava also remark that it was the "predatory habits and plundering acts of Meos which caused their perpetual strained relationship with the Muslims." (Sharma and Srivastava, 1967, 75). Amir Ali defines Mewatis as "prone to prowling, theft, and robbery." (Ali, 1970, 78).

It is important to note that after India gained independence, a CTA inquiry committee (1949-50) was formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India. This committee was formed to repeal the CTA 1924. In the general note about the Mewatis and Meos of Mewat, the committee found that they are notified as a CT in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The Committee members primarily relied on the British ethnographers for the origin and lawless activities of Meos of Mewat. This report also accepted the common origin of Meo-Mina.

Bhawani Shankar also wrote an important work on the socio-economic life of the criminal tribe of Northern India. He also stated that "Minas together with Meos, are allied both in name and race. Both draw their origin from clans that are identical in name. A story is extant of the Sisbadani Mini which shows that Minas and Meos used to intermarry." (Bhawani, 1949, 14). So, the Meo-Mina common origin and criminal character continue in post-Independent India. This reflects that the colonial understanding of the origin of the Meos and their character continued in post-Independence India.

The Meos or Mewati people are still labelled with stereotyping name-calling such as 'highway robbers,' 'vehicle lifters,' 'cattle rustlers,' 'thieves' 'criminals,' 'notorious Mewati gangs,' 'thugs of Mewat.' People in neighbouring cities have a very negative and criminal image of the Mewati people. Many people do not even want to travel to the

Mewat region due to stereotypes and negative images about Meos in negbouring districts and media. Overall, in the post-independent era, the idea of Meos being recalcitrant continued, and there are still stereotypes against Meos of Mewat in public, police, administration, and media.

Role of Media in Meos Stigmatised Criminal Image after 1947

Media has also played a negative role in stigmatised Mewati people. Headlines in the newspapers are very troubling regarding Mewatis. For instance, a leading newspaper in India writes about Meos and Mewat.

"Historically, Mewat has been the hotspot of bloodletting and criminal activities. The impoverished and parched region, sandwiched between Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur, has been known as the badland as early as the 12th century when Delhi Sultans ruled the region. It has been said that Meos from Mewat often raided and plundered the neighboring urban centers when the rain failed. This process, some believe, still continues." (India Today, 2010)

Source: https://epaper.patrika.com/rajasthan/alwar/2021-7-6/10/page-1.html

Inappropriately colonial terms like 'Thugs of Mewat' are used for the Mewati population, which is not much different from colonial stereotypes. It is very unfortunate that Mewat still struggles with the stereotypical image of the 'Mewati gang,' 'Mewati thugs,' and 'robbers and dacoits.'

So, the colonial 'stereotypes' continues in post-independent India though legally Mewatis are a de-notified community after 1952. They continued to labelled 'criminals' in independent India. Though Mewatis were freed from their derogatory colonial constructed identity in 1952. But the behavior of police and society did not change regarding them even after 1947. They still have been looked upon with suspicion and hatred in neighboring areas. Social stigma regarding Mewatis is the main obstacle in the way of their getting into the mainstream and national growth.

This paper also resolutely argues that Mewat must be in the discussion for its backwardness, not some petty theft and robber acts. Though Mewat region is very close to Gurgaon and Delhi still various data shows that Mewat is the lowest in all the human and development indexes in Haryana. Their literacy rate is lowest in Haryana. The standard of living and essential infrastructure facilities in the domain of education, health, and public services are lowest in the case of Mewat. This gap continues to increase as no serious attention is paid to the development of this region by the government since 1947.

No doubt, backwardness, poverty, low literary rate, lack of job opportunities, the large size of individual families, lack of modern industries, population boom, lack of irrigation facilities, and the inconsistent landscape led to Mewati youth towards crime in the National Capital Region. But the rate of crime in Mewat is still less compared to the very prosperous and developed districts of Haryana. This paper replicates that criminal gangs also exist in other communities, though they are more resourceful and prosperous compared to the Mewati people. But not a particular community and region is portrayed and highlighted by the state and media as 'thugs' and 'gangs' of specific communities and regions.

Conclusion

Thus, the colonial administrators-cum-ethnographers created the criminal image of the Meos by associating with the Minas by citing the marriage legend of Darya Khan (Meo) to Sasbadni Mina and the resemblance in the social system and mode of life. Further, Meos nature of hostility mainly in the rebellion of 1857, was the prompt cause for the classification of Meos as a CT. Further, Meos 'stigmatised' criminal image constructed by the British continues after 1947. Mewatis along with other communities like Bawaria, Kanjar, and Sansi, tribes are still paying the huge price for this 'criminal' stigma. Even after seven decades of India's independence Mewatis or Meos continue to bear the imprint of prejudice of the present and constructed of the past. The Meo community and Mewat as a region have still been unable to overcome such colonial stereotypes. Meos commonly accept that Mewatis are stigmatised as criminal and lawless due to their long history of resistance against the various states in Indian history.

Notes and References

[1] . Hereafter as CT

[2] . Hereafter as CTA

[3] . Santosh Abrham (2001, 151-157), Bhawani Shankar (1949, 1-14), Mark Brown (2004, 192-194), K.M, Kapadia (1952, 99-125), Sher Singh Sher (1965, 238-265), Sanjay Nigam (1990, 131–164), Anand A Yang (1985, 1-25).

[4] . Mark Brown (2004, 192-93), Meena Radhakrishna (2008, 188-192), Santosh Abraham (2011, 152-153).

[5] . Though Mewat district was created in Haryana in the year 2004 by the Haryana government. Nuh is its headquarters, but still where Meos lives mainly in various tehsils of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh known collective as Mewat.

[6] . W. Crooke (1975, 485) H. A. Rose (1911,79-83) Denzil Ibbetson (1916, 179) P.W. Powlett, (1878, 38). A. Cunningham, (1885, 27-28)

[7] . lineage or bigger unit consisting of several *gotras*

[8]. For more information see Mayaram, (2003, 243-245) appendix.

[9] . P. C. Aggarwal (1971, 33-34), Shail Mayaram (2003, 140-150), Surajbhan Bhardwaj (2016, 122).

[10] . J. Forbes Watson and John William Kaye (1869, item, 201), Powlett, (1878, 37-38) William Hunter (1892, 108) W. Crooke (1908, 313)

[11] . For more information See, Legislative Department Proceedings, No, 1871, Nos. 57.

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NUTRITIONAL PROFILE OF UNDER-FIVE CHILDREN AND ITS DETERMINANTS: A STUDY OF GOSABA BLOCK OF INDIAN SUNDARBAN

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Abstract

Childhood malnutrition adversely affects the normal physical and mental growth of the child and at the same time it increases the mortality and morbidity tendency of the child. As per the NFHS-5 (2019-21) report, the rate of child malnutrition in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal has increased in comparison to previous years. With this in mind, the present paper opts to scrutinize the issue of malnutrition among under-five children in Gosaba block of the district. The purpose of this research is to explore the nature and dimension of nutritional profile of under five children with regard to stunting, underweight and wasting as well as to identify the determinants of this status. Based on cluster sampling and purposive sampling method, about 300 children aged 0-5 years has been selected for nutritional assessment in terms of anthropometric indices, such as stunting, wasting, underweight. Attempts have also been made to find out about their socioeconomic and demographic conditions, feeding and child care practices, and condition of maternal and child health through questionnaire based interview method. Z-score method has been used to assess the anthropometric measurements. In addition chi-square test have also been used to analyze the relationship of anthropometric indices with various determinants of childhood undernutrition. The study reveals that the state of child nutrition in this area is not at all satisfactory. A major portion of children suffer from malnutrition. Out of total children, 74.41 per cent are suffering from stunted, about 38 per cent are underweight and 15 per cent children affected by wasting respectively. It is also clear that various socio-demographic and child health indicators are found to be significantly affecting child nutrition.

Introduction:

Children nutrition is a mirror, which reflects the level of social and economic development of a country. Globally in 2020, 149 million or 22 per cent children under 5 were estimated to be stunted (low height for age), 45 million or 6.7 per cent were estimated to be wasted (low weight for height), and 38.9 million were overweight or obese (WHO, 2021). According to NFHS-5 (2019-21) report in India, 36 per cent of children under age of five years are stunted, while 32 per cent children are underweight and 19 per cent are wasted. As per UNICEF report, malnutrition accounts for 69 per cent of under-five child deaths in India (Economic Times, 2019).

The picture of child nutritional status is not very satisfactory in the case of West Bengal and South 24 Parganas. As per the NFHS 5 report, the rate of child malnutrition in South 24 Parganas has increased in comparison to previous years. In this district, stunting, wasting, and underweight rates increase by 9.7 per cent, 1.2 per cent and 4.2 per cent respectively over the previous year (2015-16).

In this context the present study focus on the determinants of nutritional profile of below five children of Gosaba block of Indian Sundarban, South 24 Parganas district.

Objectives:

The major objectives of this paper are as follows -

1. To explore the anthropometric profile of children below 5 years of age with regard to stunting, underweight and wasting in the rural areas of Gosaba block, South 24 Pargans, West Bengal.
2. To find out the association between anthropometric measurements and background characteristics of children in the study area.
3. To examine the association of maternal nutrition with the nutritional profile of their offspring.

Study Area:

Gosaba CD block is located at 22°09'55"N and 88°48'28"E. It is a deltaic block of Canning Sub-division of the Sundarban region under South 24 Parganas. The total area of the block is 296.73 km² or 114.57 mile². There is no urban area in this block, the region is entirely rural in nature. According to 2011 Census of India, the total population of this community development block is 246,598 which is about 3 per cent of the total district population out of which 51.06 per cent are male and remaining 48.94 per cent are female population. The population density and sex ratio of this block are 831/km² and 959 respectively and also the percentage of child population and child sex ratio are 11.29 and 981 respectively. This block possess 1 rural hospital, 3 primary health center, 38 Primary Health Sub center and 15 maternity and child welfare center.

Methodology and Database:

Target Group:

Children under five years and their mothers are the target population of this present study. About 300 children and mother were selected for the study.

Sampling procedure:

The present study aimed to determine the nutritional profile of children aged five and below in Gosaba block of Indian Sundarban. Health Infrastructure Index (HII) value has been determined in the 13 blocks of Sundarban under South 24 Parganas. It was observed that the HII value is the lowest in Gosaba block among the 13 blocks. On the basis of HII, the entire block is divided into four clusters, namely Gram Panchayets with High HII, Gram Panchayets with Medium HII, Gram Panchayets with Low HII and Gram Panchayets with Very Low HII. A total of 300 children-mother pair were randomly selected from all the GPs.

Data collection:

Data on various socio-economic, demographic and child's birth characteristics were collected from the parents of sample children using structure questionnaire and face-to-face interview method. Children's height and weight are also measured to create an anthropometric profile of them. The linear growth has been measured with the help of measurement tape and the weight was measured by digital weight machine. The WHO standard reference was used to determine the nutritional profile of children, such as moderately and severely stunted, wasted and underweight. According to WHO, if the children's height-for age/height-for-weight/weight-for-height z-score is below -2 SD, than they are considered as moderately malnourished and if the z-score value is below -3 SD, than they are considered as severely malnourished.

Data Analysis:

The surveyed data has been analyzed through various statistical techniques and hypothesis testing method. Here some descriptive statistics, Z score and Chi square method were used for data analysis. The anthropometric indices have been calculated with the help of Z score method. Also chi-square test was used to show the association of anthropometric measurements with different socio-demographic and child health indicators. The statistical treatments of data have been accomplished through the software 'IBM-SPSS Statistics 26', Microsoft Excel 2013.

Result and Discussion:

Anthropometric profile of under-five children

Table 1: Distribution of children by Anthropometric Indices and Composite Index for Anthropometric Failure (CIAF)	
Category	Percentage of Children

With the help of various anthropometric measurements it is very easy to determine the level of malnutrition and very easy to know whether the growth and development of children is going well or not. Table 1 shows that of the total under-five
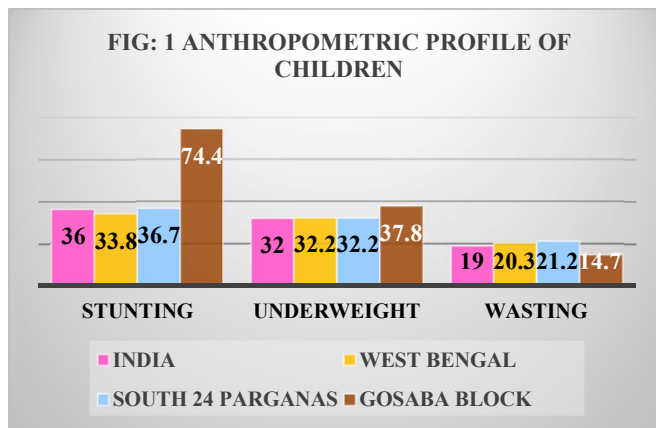
Healthy Children	18.60
Stunting only	74.41
Moderately Stunted	21.41
Severely Stunted	53.00
Underweight only	37.59
Moderately Underweight	23.03
Severely Underweight	14.56
Wasting only	14.72
Moderately Wasted	6.97
Severely Wasted	7.75
Stunting + Underweight + Wasting	6.97
Stunting + Underweight	33.72
Stunting + Wasting	8.14
Underweight + Wasting	10.46
Source: Primary Survey, 2022	

FIG: 1 ANTHROPOMETRIC PROFILE OF CHILDREN

children, 74.41 per cent are stunted, of which 21.31 per cent are moderate stunted and 53 per cent belong to severe stunted group. The average HAZ (Height-for-Age Z-score) value is -3.1190 ± SD 2.6917. Most of the children have a HAZ value below -2 Standard Deviation from the WHO referenced median. According to NFHS-5 (2019-21) the stunting rate of children in the study area is exceedingly higher than in India (36per cent), West Bengal (34per cent), and South 24 Parganas (37per cent).

The study also reveals that about 38 per cent children are underweight and out of which 23 per cent are in moderate underweight category and remaining about 15 per cent are suffering from severe underweight. The average value of WAZ (Weight-for-Age Z-score) is -1.6206 ± SD 1.5049. It turns out that the underweight rate of children in the study area is about 5.62 per cent higher than West Bengal (32per cent), and South 24 Parganas (32.2per cent).

In the matter of wasting it is clear that, 6.97 per cent children belong to moderate wasting category and about 8 per cent of children are in severe wasted stage. The mean value of WHZ (Weight-for-Height Z-score) is 0.3520 ± SD 2.7137. In the case of wasting it is seen that the rate of wasting in the study area is lower than in India (19.3 per cent), the state (20.3 per cent), and the district (21.2 per cent).

From the above discussion it is observed that, a major portion of children are suffering from more than one form of anthropometric failure. The Composite Index for Anthropometric Failure (CIAF) showed a higher prevalence of malnutrition. Table-1 revels that, overall 18.60 per cent children are not effected in any form of malnutrition and reaming are 81.40 per cent suffering from one or more than more than one form of anthropometric failure. It is also clear that 33.72 per cent children are suffering from both stunting and underweight, 8.14 per cent are affected by both stunting and wasting, whereas 10.46 per cent suffering from both wasting and underweight. Here again it is also seen that 6.97 per cent children have all these (stunting + underweight + wasting) forms of anthropometric failure.

Determinants of malnutrition among children under five years of age

Physical Characteristics of the study population and its relation with children nutritional profile:

In this study children from 0 to 5 years have been selected as sample population and the age of the children is considered in months. The average age of the children is 27.52 months ± SD 17.92. Here it is seen that most of the children (47 per cent) are 2 years of age or less. The data also indicates that the number of boys are slightly more than that of girl children (boys 53 per cent and girls 47 per cent). The average height of the children is 78.14 ± SD 16.38 cm. and maximum concentration of children was observed between 70 to 90 cm height ranges, about 38 per cent. The mean weight ± standard deviation is 10 kg ± SD 3.21.

Table 2: Distribution of Anthropometric indices of Children by their Demographic and Physical characteristics								
			Stunting		Underweight		Wasting	
Factors	**Category**	**n (per cent)**	**Percentage of Stunting Within Individual Category**	**'p' value**	**Percentage of Underweight Within Individual Category**	**'p' value**	**Percentage of Wasting within individual category**	**'p' value**
Child's age (months) (n=258)	1-12	57 (22)	82.5	**0.019****	26.3	**0.077***	10.5	0.141
	12-24	65 (25.2)	84.6		40.0		12.3	
	24-36	48 (18.6)	60.4		41.7		25.0	
	36-48	53 (20.5)	67.9		32.1		11.3	
	48-60	35 (13.6)	71.4		54.3		17.1	
Child's sex (n=258)	Boys	137 (53)	79.6	**0.044****	43.1	**0.054***	11.7	0.215
	Girls	121 (47)	68.8		31.4		18.2	
	<50	5 (2)	100.0	**0.000*****	20.0	**0.085***	60.0	**0.001*****

Child's height (cm) (n=258)	50 to 70	81 (31.4)	91.4		46.9		4.9	
	70 to 90	97 (37.6)	84.5		38.1		15.5	
	>90	75 (29)	41.3		28.0		21.3	
Child's weight (kg) (n=258)	<5	5 (2)	100.0	**0.000***	60.0	**0.000***	60.0	**0.013**
	5 to 10	136 (53)	83.8		47.1		15.4	
	10 to 15	103 (40)	68.9		29.1		13.6	
	>15	14 (5)	14.3		0		0	
* p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01 Primary Survey, 2022								

Table-2 explain the association between anthropometric failures and children's physical characteristics. It turns out that, the relationship of stunting and underweight with child's age, sex, height and weight is statistically significant. On the other hand, strongly significant association is found between wasting and child's height and weight. The present study expound that, child's age is one of the essential definitive of their nutritional profile and also associated with child's stunting and underweight rate at 0.05 and 0.1 level of significance respectively. Here it has been noticed that the underweight rate continues to increase as children get older. It can be seen here that both stunting and underweight are more prevalent among girls than boys (Table 2) and statistically significant relationship of child's sex is present with them. The anthropometric indices used in the study require child's present height and body weight. That is why it is very common to see that child height and weight are strongly associated with anthropometric measurements.

Socio-economic characteristics and nutritional profile of children

Out of 190 respondents higher proportion of people belong to Hindu religion (71 per cent), and also out of total surveyed respondents it is observer that 47.36 per cent of the total respondents are SC and 20 per cent belongs to ST category.

Table 3: Distribution of Anthropometric indices of Children by their Socio-Demographic characteristics								
			Stunting		Underweight		Wasting	
Factors	Category	*n* (per cent)	Percentage of Stunting Within Individual Category	'p' value	Percentage of Underweight Within Individual Category	'p' value	Percentage of Wasting within individual category	'p' value
Religion	Hindu	135 (71.05)	74.8	0.957	39.3	0.115	14.8	0.938
	Muslim	50 (26.31)	74.0		54.0		16.0	
	Christian	05 (2.63)	80.0		20.0		20.0	

Caste	SC	90 (47.37)	72.2	0.841	34.4	**0.049****	13.3	0.727
	ST	38 (20)	78.9		52.6		18.4	
	OBC B	03 (1.58)	66.7		0		33.4	
	GENERAL	59 (31.05)	76.3		50.8		15.3	
Mother's Age	<25	98 (51.58)	69.4	0.165	35.7	**0.068***	17.3	0.484
	25-29	55 (28.95)	78.2		47.3		16.4	
	30-34	28 (14.74)	78.6		46.4		10.7	
	35-39	09 (4.74)	100		77.8		0	
Mother's Educational Status	Illiterate	22 (11.58)	90.9	0.148	50.0	**0.002****	22.7	0.614
	Primary level	45 (23.68)	75.6		60.0		11.1	
	Secondary level	89 (46.84)	74.2		42.7		16.9	
	Higher secondary	29 (15.26)	69.0		17.2		13.8	
	Graduate level	05 (2.63)	40.0		0		0	
Father's Educational Status	Illiterate	27 (14.21)	81.5	**0.076***	70.4	**0.000*****	22.2	0.451
	Primary level	38 (20)	76.6		57.9		15.8	
	Secondary level	83 (43.68)	75.9		38.6		14.5	
	Higher secondary	19 (10)	57.9		21.1		15.8	
	Graduate level	21 (11.05)	81.0		19.0		4.8	

n=190   * p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01
Primary Survey, 2022

The study shows that the rate of stunting and wasting is maximum among children in the Christian community followed by Muslims and Hindus, and Muslim children were found to be maximum percentage of underweight than others, however there is no significance association among religion and children's malnutrition. Caste is also an important indicator that determines child's underweight and there also found a significance relation between them (p<0.05). The proportion of underweight and stunted children were the highest among ST category.

It was found that, the mean age of mothers and fathers was 25 years and 31 years respectively. A major portion of mothers are below 25 years (52 per cent). Mother's present age has a significant relation with child's underweight status (p<0.1) (Table 3). The proportion of underweight is less (35.7 per cent) among children of teen-age mothers compared to children of mothers aged 35 to 39 years (77.8 per cent). Generally older mother have other children except the sample child, so they cannot properly monitor the health of all children which increases the risk of malnutrition among children.

Adequate parental education is an essential regulator to determining child health and nutrition. In the case of mother's educational status, it turns out that, most of the mothers belong to secondary

level of education (about 47 per cent). Also about 12 per cent mothers are illiterate and 24 per cent mothers have primary level of education. On the other hand, in the matter of father's educational qualification, 18.42 per cent fathers have primary level of educational qualification and 13.68 per cent fathers belong to illiterate. It is clear from the collected data that, most of the parents have secondary level of educational qualification. Very few of them possess graduate and above graduate level of education.

The present study revealed that, parent's education has statistically significant association with stunting and underweight ($p<0.01$ and $p<0.05$). The prevalence of stunting and underweight are relatively low in children whose parents are both literate. On the other hand, these tendency are more noticeable in children whose one parent is literate or both are uneducated (Safikul Islam, 2015). The current study express that, the proportion of underweight and stunting are much higher among illiterate and primary educated mothers. The study reveals that paternal education also have a statistically significance relation with stunting and underweight.

House type is an important social determinant of children's underweight ($p<0.01$) and stunting ($p<0.05$) and have strong significant relation with them. The amount of malnourisherd children are much less among the children living in Puccha houses than Kaccha and Semi-Pucca houses.

The present study shows that, malnutrition rate is comparatively higher in nuclear families than in joint families. Although, in this case, only statistically significant relation of family type with wasting has been proved ($p<0.05$).

The toilet facility in house is one of the basic necessities. Out of total respondent about two (2 per cent) per cent reported that they haven't own toilet facilities in their houses. They often use the neighbor's toilet or choose open field for sanitation. The survey found that about 71 per cent house hold have a toilet, but it is still in its rudimentary stage. It has been found that children who don't have toilet at home are more likely to be malnourished.

Table 4: Distribution of Anthropometric indices of Children by their Socio-Economic characteristics					
Factors	**Category**		**Stunting**	**Underweight**	**Wasting**

		n (per cent)	Percentage of Stunting Within Individual Category	'p' value	Percentage of Underweight Within Individual Category	'p' value	Percentage of Wasting within individual category	'p' value
Family Type	Nuclear	159 (83.68)	74.8	0.939	43.4	0.629	17.6	**0.042****
	joint	31 (16.31)	74.2		38.7		3.4	
House Type	Katcha	59 (31.05)	71.1	**0.022****	39.0	**0.008*****	15.3	0.628
	Semi-Pacca	93 (48.94)	82.8		52.7		17.2	
	Pucca	38 (20)	60.5		23.7		10.5	
Type of Toilet	No Toilet facility	05 (2.63)	80.0	0.957	60.0	0.428	20.0	0.770
	Rudimentary	135 (71.05)	74.8		44.4		14.1	
	Finished	50 (26.31)	74.0		36.0		18.0	
Monthly Income	<5000	62 (32.63)	75.8	0.497	43.5	0.917	12.9	0.327
	5000-10,000	95 (50)	76.8		43.2		18.9	
	>10,000	33 (17.37)	66.7		39.4		9.1	

n=190   * p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01
Primary Survey, 2022

According to survey it turns out that the income of most families is moderate. This data also reveals that only few families have comparatively higher incomes than others. As per the survey, it is clear that, about 32.6 per cent households have monthly income less than Rs. 5000 and 17 per cent families have income more than Rs. 10,000. It is also seen that with the increase in monthly income, the prevalence of malnutrition in children decreases, but no significance relation has been proved in this case.

Children's birth history and feeding practices

Due to various free services in government hospital, most of the mother choose the government hospital for their delivery (73 per cent). Also in the study area normal delivery (74 per cent) is more common than caesarean. The amount of underweight (75 per cent) and wasting (25 per cent) are much higher among children who have been delivered at home environment without proper medical procedures and the help of trained health workers. At 1 per cent significance level term of delivery has associated with child's underweight (p<0.01). Generally, mothers who have a caesarean delivery are generally more aware of the health of themselves and their babies. They

tend to focus on antenatal and postnatal care more than mothers of babies born through normal delivery.

Table 5: Distribution of Anthropometric indices of Children by their Birth Characteristics								
			Stunting		Underweight		Wasting	
Factors	**Category**	***n* (per cent)**	**Percentage of Stunting Within Individual Category**	**'p' value**	**Percentage of underweight Within Individual Category**	**'p' value**	**Percentage of wasting within individual category**	**'p' value**
Place of delivery	Hospital	139 (73.15)	77.0	0.188	43.2	**0.004*****	11.5	**0.060***
	Nursing home	35 (18.42)	62.9		25.7		25.7	
	home	16 (8.42)	81.3		75.0		25.0	
Term of delivery	Normal	141 (74.21)	76.6	0.317	48.9	**0.003*****	14.2	0.483
	Cesarean	49 (25.79)	69.4		24.5		18.4	
Initiation of breastfeeding	Within 1 hour	144 (75.79)	73.6	0.514	45.8	0.282	18.1	0.135
	Fed in 1st day	36 (18.94)	75.0		33.3		8.3	
	Fed after 1st day	10 (5.26)	90.0		30.0		0	
Exclusive breastfeeding (months)	<6	59 (31.05)	78.0	**0.081***	42.4	0.638	11.9	0.828
	6	106 (55.79)	74.5		45.3		17.0	
	>6	08 (4.21)	37.5		25.0		12.5	
	Still in the exclusive breast feeding period	17 (8.95)	82.4		35.3		17.6	
Complementary Feeding (months)	<=3	24 (12.63)	58.3	**0.093***	41.7	0.169	12.5	0.951
	4 to 6	59 (31.05)	79.7		54.4		14.0	
	>6	90 (47.37)	72.2		37.8		16.7	
	Not introducing	17 (8.95)	88.2		31.6		15.8	
n=190　　* p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01 Primary Survey,2022								

In the study, the feeding practice of the children is divided into three major categories, namely, initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding. Early initiation of breastfeeding after birth protects the newborn from various infection and reduces the rate of morbidity and mortality and for the current study, it also has a significance association with children stunting status. From the table 5, it is clear that about 76 per cent children were found to be fed breast milk with in 1 hour from their delivery. Some babies were deprived of breast milk as soon as they were born due to various physical problems of them and their mothers in later stages of delivery.

It is clear from the collected data that, 31 per cent had 'exclusive breastfeeding period' of less than six months. Close to 56 per cent children had an exclusive breastfeeding period of 6 months and 4 per cent of children had this period of more than six months. It turns out that, babies whose exclusive breastfeeding period had less than six months are more prone to stunting (78 per cent). On the other hand, children who have an exclusive breastfeeding period of more than six months, this tendency is much less.

Breast milk alone is not enough for the growth and development of a baby at the age of six months or more. In this case, the baby needs breast milk as well as complementary foods. The data shows that most babies are supplemented after the age of six months (47per cent). A social norm has responsible for this issue. According to the Bengali social custom, a "Rice Ceremony (*Annoprason*)" is held at the age of six months and after this ceremony the child is first given rice or other complementary food. Complementary feeding is also have a significance association with stunting. The stunting rate is 58 per cent for children with a complementary period of three months or less, 80 per cent for those with a complementary feeding period of 4 to 6 months, and 72 per cent for children with a complementary feeding period of more than 6 months.

Maternal characteristics and children's nutritional status:

Table 6: Distribution of Children's Anthropometric Profile by Maternal Nutritional Status									
Children Nutritional Status	**Stunting (per cent)**			**Wasting (per cent)**			**Underweight (per cent)**		
Maternal Nutritional Status	**Yes**	**No**	**'p' Value**	**Yes**	**No**	**'p' Value**	**Yes**	**No**	**'p' Value**
Underweight	83	17	0.417	14	86	0.682	58	42	**0.048****
Normal Weight/ Healthy Weight	72.5	27.5		16.5	83.5		42	58	
Overweight	73	27		11	89		31	69	
* p <0.1, ** p <0.05, *** p<0.01									

Primary Survey, 2022

A child completely dependent on their mother from birth. In that case, children's nutrition and health are largely controlled by mothers and it also related to mother's health status. It was found that, the mean age of mothers is 25 years and their average age of marriage was 17 years. In this area the mean height and weight of mothers ware 148±6.55 cm and 49±9.45 kg respectively.

The nutrition status of mothers has been determined with the help of Body Mass Index (BMI). Mother's average BMI is 22.28. It is found that about 19 per cent mothers were underweight and 23per cent mothers were overweight. Again, among this 23 per cent overweight, 16 per cent belong to obesity class-1, only 2 per cent belong to obesity class-2 category and remaining 82 per cent belong to pre-obesity period. According to NFHS-5 the underweight rate is 9.1per cent and overweight is 1.8per cent greater than district average.

Nutritional condition of Children is closely associated with their mother's nutritional profile. According to the study maternal nutritional status have a statistically significant association with children's underweight status. Also mother's height and weight have significant relationship with children's stunting and underweight status respectively at <0.05 level of significant (Table 6).

Conclusion:

Overall it appears that a large proportion of children in this block are malnourished, about 52 per cent suffering from more than one form of anthropometric failure and close to 7 per cent have all these (stunting + underweight + wasting) forms of anthropometric failure. The result of chi- square test reveals that various socio-economic and demographic variables have a profound effect on child nutrition. In order to reduce the risk of malnutrition, the following issues can be emphasized, for example, increase health education or nutritional knowledge should be increased among the parents through various training; emphasis should be placed on ensuring the availability of nutritious supplementary foods to the children; child growth should be monitored periodically and

appropriate child health measures should be taken; sanitation facility and personal hygiene practice need to be improved.

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Development and Displacement: Plight of the Project Affected Communities in Nagaland

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Abstract: *The social problems related to Development-Induced Displacement has often been discussed among scholars and academicians questioning the impact of development projects such as dams, mines and urban infrastructures which is mostly responsible for the livelihood decline among the affected communities. This paper focuses on the affected communities of the Doyang Reservoir in Nagaland, North-East, India, in aftermath of resettlement in particular. This paper uses a mixed-method of explorative and descriptive methods to understand the social and economic outcomes for the PAPs (Project Affected Persons) prior to the construction of the Doyang Hydro Electric Project in Nagaland. It aims to uncover the impact of development-induced displacement on the socio-economic aspect of livelihood and the general perception of people towards change.*

Keywords: Agriculture, Development, PAPs (Project Affected Persons), Resettlement.

Introduction

Development-Induced Displaced in most cases result in the socio-economic decline for the displaced population because the relocated communities face the task of restoring livelihoods amidst new and often less favorable, geographical, environmental, social and economic conditions (Cernia, 2008; Scudder, 2005). Development Projects such as mines, hydro-electric dams and urban infrastructures have important implications for local communities that can range from new employment opportunities and improved public services to environmental degradation, poverty and displacement. Displacement is a significant element of development projects as an estimated fifteen million people per year are forced from their homes to make way for infrastructure development and construction of such projects (Cernia and Mathur, 2008). Therefore, the

challenge lies in the implementing projects that achieve national or regional development goals while also generating positive socio-economic outcomes for the affected populations. The present paper is focused on the affected communities of the Doyang Reservoir in Nagaland, North-East, India, in aftermath of resettlement in particular. Doyang Hydro Electric Project in Nagaland was originally approved by the MHA at an estimated cost of Rs.166.66 crores (February, 1988 price level) under the NEC Plan, in July, 1989. This project was taken up for implementation in July 1989 by NEEPCO. The time-frame for completion of the project was stipulated for 5 years and 1 month i.e. the project, was to be completed by August 1994 (NEC Journal 1997). The Doyang dam was formally inaugurated on 2002. The challenges to such investigations hold key elements in understanding the social problem from the ground reality. The paper specifically probes into the primary data obtained from the researcher's fieldwork conducted in the year 2019-2020 keeping in mind the context of both before and in the aftermath of the construction of the dam while questioning the parameters of cultivation in area and the capacity of yield. The paper also seeks to address recurring outcomes and challenges posed by development projects to the affected communities' particular to the Doyang reservoir in Nagaland.

Study Area and methodology

The study area is limited to five villages in Wokha district, Nagaland namely Pangti, Old Changsu, New Changsu, Asha and Ekhyoyan village, out of which 316 households/respondents were selected from fifteen percent of the total population (Population Census 2011) of the five villages respectively. The data were collected with the help of questionnaire-cum-interview schedule for household survey and primary group interviews. For the analysis of data on the variables predicting the outcomes of development induced displacement, regression correlation was adopted and Likert Scale analysis for the opinions on the compensation as well as on factors that determined the state of resettlement to different locations.

Figure No.1
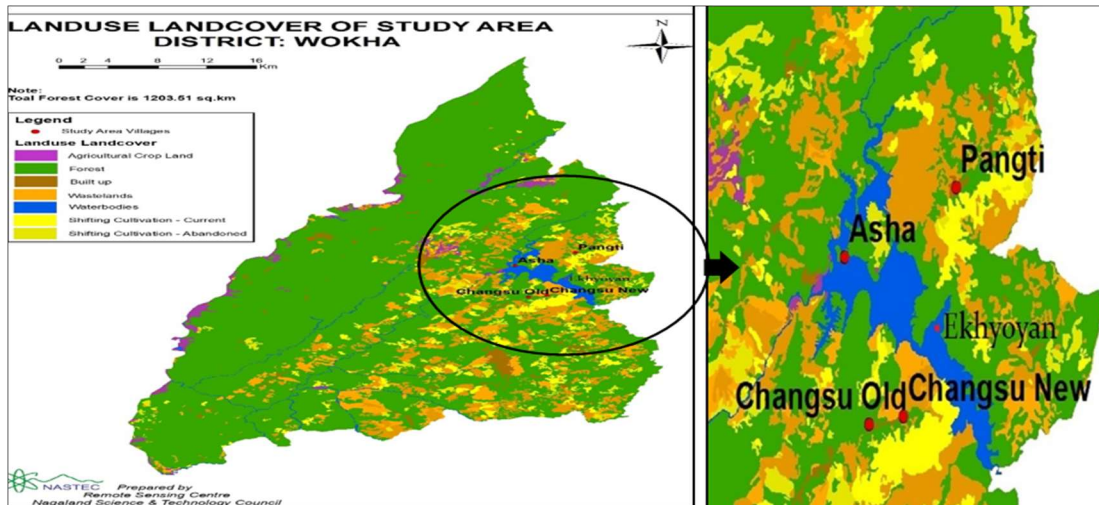
Source: *Map prepared by NASTEC: Sample Villages indicated by legend in red dot.*

Agriculture Before and after the construction of the dam

Agriculture being the backbone of the community, especially the rural community's dependence on agriculture for their livelihood both before and after resettlement, the study has selected the variables on the area of cultivation and yield of production before (approximately before 1990) and after the construction of the dam (after 2002) for data analysis. The research question addressed in this section is whether the construction of the dam has had any impact on agriculture affecting the yield specifically. Owing to the vast attributes of livelihood in the agricultural aspect, the regression correlation in this study has been narrowed down to detect any changes in the area of cultivation and yield of production on the basis of mean average.

Dependence on agriculture before the construction of the dam

Table no.1.Regression and Correlation Analysis between AoC1 and YoP1 before the construction of the dam					
YoP1	Coefficient	S.E	t.stats	P value	'r'
Intercept(a)	0.939	0.041	22.933	0.000	0.998
AoC1(b)	0.990	0.010	103.380	0.000	
Significance level is 0.05 *AoC1 stands for Area of Cultivation in the past* *Yop1 stands for Yield of Production in the Past*					

Between units of AoC1 (X) and YoP1 (Y) obtained by the Regression Equation as: Y=0.939+0.990X. The Correlation coefficient 'r' shows that there is a very high positive correlation (r=0.998). Since the above variables were used to analyze on the data presumed to a period before the construction of the dam (before 1990), the regression equation shows that with every unit change in the AoC1 (area of cultivation), the YoP1 (yield of production) was expected to change by 0.990 times.

<div align="center">Dependence on agriculture after the construction or at present times</div>

Table no.2. Regression and Correlation Analysis between AoC2 and YoP2 at present times					
YoP2	Coefficient	S.E	t.stats	P value	'r'
Intercept(a)	-0.194	0.048	-4.000	0.000	0.953
AoC2(b)	1.066	0.021	50.107	0.000	
Significance level is 0.05 *AoC2 stands for Area of Cultivation at present times* *Yop2 stands for Yield of Production at present times*					

Between units of AoC2 (X) and YoP2 (Y) obtained by the Regression Equation as: Y= -0.194+1.066X. The Correlation coefficient 'r' shows that there is a very high positive correlation (r=0.953). Since the above variables were used to analyze on the data after the construction of the dam (after 2002), the regression equation shows that with every unit change in the AoC2 (area of cultivation), the YoP2 (yield of production) is expected to change by 1.066 times.

Monthly Income *vs* Multiple Occupation

The concept of economic livelihood outcome is a vast scope of analyzing all livelihood indicators, however in this study the concept has been narrowed down to a simple economic analysis between variables of multiple occupation and monthly income of the household. The idea behind the concept of multiple occupation stems from the occupational status of the respondents and more importantly from the sources of the respondent's monthly income that are variably sourced from the agricultural echelons and others as such. This data analysis aims to answer, whether or how far the respondent's monthly income is influenced by engaging in multiple occupations.

Between units of multiple Occupation (X) and monthly Income (Y), the results obtained by regression correlation indicated that there is a very high positive correlation (r=0.410), with the Regression Equation as: Y=0.858+0.163X. The above regression equation shows that with every unit change in the multiple occupation, monthly income is expected to change by 0.163 times the change in multiple occupation.

Empowerment by resettlement vs Empowerment by education.

The concept of empowerment after resettlement as an impact by development has been understated in this study to analyse the people's perception towards change. A modest question as to whether the respondents feel any inclination towards education after resettlement has been addressed in this section. On this note, the people's perception to feel empowered by resettlement has been tested with their perception to feel empowered by education on the basis of mean average.

Between units of Empowerment by Resettlement (X) and Empowerment by Education (Y), the correlation coefficient 'r' revealed that there is a very high positive correlation (r=0.232) obtained by the regression equation as: Y=0.994+0.267X. The above result shows that with a positive change in being empowered by resettlement, empowerment by education is expected to change by 0.267 times the change in the empowerment by resettlement.

Results and Discussion:

Impact on Agriculture

The data analyzed for the impact of development on agriculture found that, of the 316 total households, 265 (83.9 per cent) were dependent on agriculture before the construction of the dam and therefore, the area of cultivation, yield of production, only amounts to that particular 83.9 per cent that were dependent on agriculture before the construction of the dam.

In the aftermath of the construction of the Doyang reservoir, the data informs us that only 255 (80.7 per cent) respondents were dependent on agriculture at present times and therefore the

variables of the area of cultivation and yield of production corresponds to that particular 80.7 per cent that were dependent on agriculture after the construction of the dam.

Results obtained from the regression correlation tests presents the analysed data on the area of cultivation (Independent Variable) and yield of production (Dependent Variable) both before and after the construction of the dam the data implies that in both the tests there is a positive correlation and both cases being significantly related (p = 0.00), however, the only difference is in the 'r' value whereby the area of cultivation and yield of production before the construction of the dam (r =0.998) is higher than the 'r' value (0.953) between the area of cultivation and yield of production at present times. Further speculation to the results indicated that out of 83.9 per cent (dependent on agriculture before the construction), an average (37.8 per cent) of the respondents cultivated 5-9 acres of land ($\bar{x}$=3.8264) with a yield of production around 0.70-1.00 metric tonne ($\bar{x}$=4.7283) before the construction of the dam. In comparison to this result, out of 80.7 per cent (dependent on agriculture at present times), an average (42.5 per cent) of the respondents cultivate 1-3acres of land ($\bar{x}$=2.0471) with a yield of production between 0.10-0.30 metric tonne ($\bar{x}$=1.9882) after the construction of the dam. Data sourced from primary group interviews informed the study that before the construction of the dam, the affected communities primarily practiced wet cultivation, and the affected communities mostly shifted to Jhum cultivation after the construction of the dam. The findings along with the past reference of the affected communities reveals that despite the visible decrease in both the area of cultivation as well in the yield of production after the dam construction, the yield has been greatly affected more than the area of cultivation substantially. This shows that development-induced displacement has a significant impact on the affected communities in this study especially on agriculture.

Economic Impact

The study selected two important variables such as the multiple occupation and the monthly income of the respondents for testing the economic impact in this context. The variable of multiple occupation was drawn from the data analysis of the occupational status of the respondents. The study found that 42 per cent of the respondents were engaged as farmers only, while 22.8 per cent

identifies with the occupation of a farmer and engaged in different sources of income generation, 9.2 per cent as manual workers that also occasionally seek jobs outside of the native place, 8.9 per cent as farmer cum fisherman and 1.9 per cent as fisherman only. The data also shows that apart from the 7 per cent of the respondents being employed in stable jobs the other 7.6 per cent represents the homemakers and those elderly sections of the society.

The income variable or the monthly income of the respondents was analysed under five attributes which revealed that, 73.1 per cent of the respondents' income falls under the category of ₹10,000 and below, followed by 19 per cent of respondents with ₹10,001-20,000, another 7 per cent earning ₹20,001-30,000, 0.6 per cent of respondent's monthly income amounting to ₹40.001 and Above and 0.3 per cent with a monthly income between ₹30,001-40,000.

The results of the data analysis obtained from the regression correlation between units of monthly income (IV) and multiple occupation (DV) indicated that there is a significant (0.000) relationship between the two variables to predict a high correlation ('r' value) of 0.410. This finding is an important aspect to the economic well-being of the affected communities, wherein, the increased changes in the threshold of multiple occupation, the increase in income levels is most certain. In the meantime, the study cannot rule out the possibilities to the vast dimensions of agricultural activities to that of the economic outcomes whereby, the stability in the yield of production can be enough to sustain the farmer without having to explore other means of income or be a farmer with multiple occupations, and similarly the income level of a poor yield may have triggered the farmer to look for more ways to generate income. In whichever the case, the ultimate question is whether it is a positive or a negative outcome, and in this study, based upon the result it is evident that there is a positive influence of multiple occupation on the monthly income of the respondents.

Empowerment as an impact of development

The conceptual analysis to the paradigms of empowerment among the Project Affected Communities in this study has been narrowed down to two important factors which influenced the study to draw an inference towards understanding the people's perception towards change. The data analysed revealed that 88.6 per cent of the respondents feel empowered due to re-settlement.

Findings further suggested that the local community in the new rural settlement enjoyed better fishing and farming activities as compared to the native communities. The study found that 70.9 per cent of the respondents, especially those re-settled in different locations feel empowered in terms of education due to resettlement.

The study through the regression correlation between empowerment by education (DV) and empowerment due to resettlement (IV), found that there was a significant relationship (0.001) rendering for a high correlation of 0.187. This finding indicates that the people are aware of the importance and need of education, their resettlement played a vital role in the surge for obtaining or even to provide education to their younger generations resulting in their empowerment by education whilst the majority being dependent on agriculture. On this note, it can be better understood that the people's perception towards change can be influenced by their personal preference to education and also it can further impact their holistic perceptions of an envisioned resettlement. Based on the results, according to this particular study, the people's perception to education indicates a positive result, meaning if the people feel empowered by resettlement, it can influence their perception to feel empowered by education. The limitations of the study to uncover more in-depth data on the underlying factors of analyzing empowerment in general suggests that the findings drawn from this section firmly stands as a culture and content specific to the affected communities of the Doyang reservoir. Based on the economic impact, the inference of this finding can be reflected in the respondent's motivation to engage in more occupations not only to secure monthly income but also to provide education for the children. In other words, the aspect of empowerment in this context also compliments to the economic progress and wellbeing of the respondents.

Mode of Compensation

The respondents of the study stated that the compensation was received in the form of cash money. It also revealed that majority of the households received the compensation for their loss after waiting for years. The data collected for this response through interview draws out that most of the affected communities in general received the compensation for their loss after a period of

4years to 7 years and so on. Furthermore, during the initial stages of area measurement, verification of the affected households, individual holdings, and the release of cash money compensation varied from one village to the other affected villages.

The data on the opinions of the PAPs on the compensation was carefully analysed with the help of Likert Scale, which has a five point scale ranging from 1-5 namely as 1 for 'Strongly Disagree', 2 for 'Disagree', 3 for 'Neutral', 4 for 'Agree' and 5 for 'Strongly Agree'. Based on the mean score obtained from the Likert scale analysis on five statements designed for the Likert scale analysis whether or if; the compensation was worth the loss of land, helped in the quest for relocation/resettlement, lack of knowledge on the topic of compensation, whether it did not assist in the quest for relocation/resettlement or was not worth the loss; the study found that on an average the respondents were moderately satisfied with the compensation. ($\bar{x}$=3.74, 3.75, 3.24, 2.26, 2.25) (SD=1.25, 1.32, 0.65, 1.31, 1.25). For instance, in this study to compute the summary statistics of $\bar{X}$=3.7, and S_x=1.25, the equation formula is given by,

$$\bar{X} = \frac{1}{n}\Sigma_{i=1}^{316}X_i, S_x^2 = \frac{1}{n-1}\Sigma_{i=1}^{316}(Xi - \bar{X})^2 \text{ and } S_x = \sqrt{S}\frac{2}{x}$$

According to the secondary sources from archived documents and primary data with regard to the compensation, the study found that majority of the affected households received only 75 per cent of the compensation which was the reason why they found it unfair on the part of the project negotiations with their initial promises to the affected community. The study also found that cash compensation was released prior to agitation and strikes via installment basis of five phases, pertaining to the five phases of land measurement process. Furthermore, data sourced from documents/archived reports showed that, there was additional land loss from the affected land owners other than the measured land acquisition and affected land which still remains unjustified, apart from earlier standing queries about the 25 per cent of the remaining compensation.

Changes to resettlement of households

Data drawn from primary group interview with a group of respondents helped the study to understand the social class and status of the people who migrated to new settlements outside the

native land, data obtained from fieldwork indicated that those employed under the state/central government sector, middle/working class migrated to other towns, another comprised of literate individuals, families that depended on seasonal employment who migrated or moved to new settlements. In the process of resettlement induced by development, there are many reasons which can directly or indirectly influence on the decision of the affected population to consider resettlement outside of the native settlement.

The study found out that some of the respondents still resettled in the native village while being challenged on similar instances as those who resettled in different locations. With the help of Likert scale analysis the study probed into as to what could be the possible reasons that led the PAPs to resettle to different locations during the process and the data revealed the following results:

Social Stability: According to the results drawn from Likert Scale analysis, the study found that, on an average the respondents were moderately influenced by social factors in resettlement ($\bar{x}$=3.85, 3.77, 2.42) (SD=0.78, 0.76, 0.81). The above results clearly indicate that some of the factors for leaving the native land was the importance of social stability in the aspect of starting a life in the urban area through job opportunities, to raise the younger generation availing modern facilities and to gain citizenship of urban towns/rural locations.

Economic Stability: Based on the mean score analysed from the Likert scale analysis, the study found that on an average the respondents were moderately influenced by economic factors in their resettlement ($\bar{x}$=4.29, 4.0, 3.76, 3.13, 2.84) (SD=0.82, 0.87, 1.04, 1.46, 1.37).

From the highest mean score of both socio-economic aspects (3.85<4.29) the study found that economic factors had more influence over the PAPs to leave their native place in search of job opportunities and of similar economic importance like educational facilities, land purchase in urban areas and for future business investments. The results indicate that both socio-economic factors moderately ($\bar{x}$=3.85) if not highly ($\bar{x}$=4.29) influenced the peoples' much needed solutions to their problems and aided in their plans during the initial process of their resettlement.

Challenges incurred by the Project Affected Communities after resettlement:

This section deals with the challenges of the Project Affected Communities especially of those that were resettled near or within the proximity of the dam site. It also draws out some of the persistent

challenges of the Project Affected Communities in the new settlement which are briefly highlighted as under.

- **Connectivity:** As per the findings, of the two new rural settlements i.e., Asha and Ekhyoyan villages, the former has road connectivity whereas Ekhyoyan village still lacks in road connectivity. In order to reach the new village, one has to take the route from either the mid-way of Wokha-Merapani road estimating around 14 km from Wokha and reach the village by boat or arrive at the fishermen hub/Juncture (*Voro-Emen*) located in the foothills of Pangti Village at 22 km and ply to the new settlement by boat.

- **Threat from wild animals and elephants:** According to the respondents, villagers and farming communities are vulnerable to threat on both land and homes due to the unpredictable passage tracks of wild elephants that destroy everything in their way. This matter has been threatening the farming communities that depend their livelihood on agriculture. There has been cases where both fields and homes were annihilated by wild elephants around the vicinity of the reservoir or dam site.

- **Challenges of House Reconstruction**

  Addressing the problems or challenges of the affected communities in their house-reconstruction, the study also found that 83.9 per cent of the respondents felt the need to construct a new house in the new settlement ($\bar{x}$=1.16), (SD=0.36). The study also found that majority (72.8 per cent) of the respondents agreed that construction of dam has resulted in shortage in accessing of forest resources like firewood, bamboo and other items needed for house reconstruction ($\bar{x}$=1.27),(SD=0.44). Some of the important and indigenous bamboo and tree species (list of bamboo and tree species identified in local names) that have become a limited forest resource for the purpose of house construction are *Bambusabalcooa, Dendrocalamus* bamboo family ranging from *Gigantues* (baby bambooshoot also consumed as an indigenous cuisine), *Hamitonii, Hookeri* and *Schizotachyum* family such as *Dollooa* and *Polymorphum,* which hold basic primary value for house construction and also utilized in specific and handicraft items such as making bridges, roofing, ceilings, walls, fencing, water containers, mugs, pipes, mats and in domestic home utilities like baskets and boxes, walking sticks for the old and needy etc.

Upon further investigation for the forest resources that were considered to have significance in materials, it was found that many common timber species of the *Castanopsis, Heterophyllum, Duabanga* (in local languages known as Epvü, Zhukhvü, Meshang, Rulum, Ayachan, Wonsu, Onü, Toro, Tükothi, Otyak, Orüng, Khokshü) were used for multiple range of purposes. Their dependence on the available forest resources which continued to ail in their home reconstruction and necessities on this aspect, shows how forest resources can play an important role even after the re-settlement, especially those who continued to hold membership to the native places and were able to access to the Common Property Resources (CPRs).

Conclusion

The findings obtained from this study suggests that investigation of sufficient resources in a compensation-based land acquisition can either benefit or worsen the conditions of households displaced or affected by large infrastructure projects in general. This paper shows us that development can also lead to a negative impact on those poorer sections of the society that continue to face the harsh realities, challenged by the volatile nature of the changing environment. The study therefore draws out one of the weakest spot of the economic outcomes and reality which the affected population lives by, the fact that the per capita income of the state stands at (₹127714 of 2019-2020, Nagaland Economic Survey 2019-2020) and results indicated that 73.1 per cent of the respondents stands nowhere near the average income of the state proving that the process of development induced displacement and resettlement is still playing a crucial role to the affected population, especially the agrarian population.

Although, it is contrasting to compare the state per capita income to the average income of the affected communities, this finding is another clue to understanding the economic progress of the affected community, as the per capita income can be used to determine the average per-person income for an area and also to evaluate the standard of living and quality of life of the population. The inevitability of the negative impact of development among the project affected communities cannot be negated or refuted in this case as the impact is clearly reflected in their economic aspect of yield output and lower levels of income. On the ensuing question of whether the affected

communities had a positive or negative resettlement, it is evident from the findings that development has resulted in lingering discrepancies over the socio-economic aspect of the people, especially on the economy of the affected communities. The challenges posed by the new settlement and the counter-risk strategies to those challenges remains to be an exceptionally unexplored research area beyond the scope of this study. There is definitely a need for extensive round of data collection for understanding the determinants of whether compensation or other related benefits are sustained for a longer period of time in the aftermath of the construction of the dam. The study through the mentioned findings encourages future research areas and concerns dealing beyond the scope of this study to appreciate more in-depth findings which may bring new ideas and concepts in understanding the vast impact of development-induced-displacement outcomes.

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Rethinking Urbanization, Reviving Wetlands: A Study on Wetland Loss and Environmental Degradation Between East Kolkata Wetlands and Konnagar-Hindmotor Wetlands Due to Urbanization, West Bengal

Arpita Chaudhury Aich and Bela Das

Abstract

Wetlands play a vital role in maintaining earth's ecosystem. Wetlands of international importance Si.e., Ramsar sites as well as Geographically Isolated Wetlands (GIW) perform various ecological services like maintaining nutrient regulation, run off and storm surge mitigation etc. East Kolkata wetlands (EKW), a Ramsar Site is a setting example of resource recovery where there is transfer of the sewage and storm water into the fishpond locally known as 'bheris' for sustainable aquaculture, horticulture. It is also known as the 'Kidneys of Kolkata'. Similarly, small isolated wetlands which are not ramsar sites, also known as Geographically Isolated Wetlands (GIW)'s also perform important ecological functions like localised runoff and storm surge mitigation, pollution catching power-houses, thereby providing ecological security to the stakeholders directly and indirectly. West Bengal also has a number of GIW's namely Konnagar-Hindmotor wetlands, Berunanpukuria etc. However, recently unregulated developmental activities in terms of urbanization has brought a massive change in the functioning of these wetlands. Thus, the study aims to identify the economic activities and understand ecological importance of the East Kolkata Wetland and the Konnagar-Hindmotor Wetlands. Link the relation between the generation of income and employment from the products produced through sewage fed aquaculture in case of EKW. It also aims to highlight the unregulated peri-urbanisation towards these wetlands which is destroying not only the critical areas of environment, but also is taking a toll on the livelihoods of the stakeholders. For achieving these objectives GIS techniques have been used over time periods i.e.,1986-2019 to see a substantial decline in the area of wetlands.

Keywords: Ecological Services, Sewage fed fish ponds, Infilling, Urbanization, Livelihood loss, East Kolkata wetlands, Konnagar-Hindmotor Wetlands

Introduction

Wetlands play an important role in balancing the earth's ecosystem. Wetlands of International importance i.e. as classified by Ramsar Sites as well as the Geographically Isolated Wetlands (GIW)'s are responsible for maintaining the ecological balance of the ecosystem. Nutrient regulation, run-off control, storm surge mitigation are few of the major ecological functions control which is performed by the wetlands. etc..

The wetlands in the Eastern fringe of the city, is popularly known as the East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW). The wetlands which are present to the east of Calcutta comprises of a large number of water bodies distributed across the districts of South and North 24 Parganas. This wetland ecosystem which is put to multifunctional use is spread over 12,500 hectares. It is called the "Kidneys of Kolkata" as it purifies the wastes generated by the city of Kolkata (Banerjee, S., et.al. 2017). East Kolkata wetlands, a Ramsar Site is a setting example of resource recovery where there is transfer of the sewage and storm water intothe fishpond locally known as '*bheris*' for sustainable aquaculture, horticulture. This region constitutes a part of the South Bengal "ecotone" (Berkes, F. 2009). The East Kolkata Wetland represent the remains of the marshy salt water lakes which once extended beyond the present international boundary of Bangladesh (Bhattacharya, S., et.al. 2012).

The historical background about the discovery of the East Kolkata Wetlands dates back to the time of British Rule when the eastern fringe of the city of Kolkata were covered with swampy salt lakes serving as the spill area of Bidhyadhari River. With the geomorphological change in the delta building process in south Bengal, many distributaries and re-distributaries were cut off from the main channel (Dey, D., et.al, 2018). Advent of human infrastructure and interference fastened the process of silt deposition in the Biyadhari River, making the Bidyadhari fully defunct with all its spill water lakes. Thus, the drainage problem of Kolkata was solved with the transferring of waste and storm in the lakes in the eastern fringe of the city (Kumar, R., et.al., 2016).

The East Kolkata Wetlands serves important ecological as well as consumptive functions.

The important ecological functions are as follows:

• Absorption and treatment of the huge volume of sewage and wastewater and urban solid and air wastes of Calcutta in the most efficient, economical and natural way (Bos, J.J., et.al. 2013)

• Fulfillment of the requirement of fish, vegetables and food grains in the city (Chakraborty, P., et.al.,2015);

• Absorbing the pollution from Kolkata Municipal Commission, and purify the air that citizens breathe;

• Storm-water and flood water the flood waters that the monsoon brings to the city;

• Provide a habitat for a variety of flora and fauna and living organisms endemic to wetlands (Bhattacharyya, A., et.al. 2007).

• Maintain the micro-climatic condition of the region;

• Maintaining the delicate ecological balance in a fragile environment and eco-system;

The East Kolkata wetlands also serve important consumptive functions. They are as follows:

• By generation of direct employment: The stakeholders who are directly dependent on the EKW for their livelihood like fishermen, farmers.

• Generation of indirect employment to those who are selling the products which were bought from the direct beneficiaries.

• Serving poor communities with cheap fresh fish and vegetables.

• Waste Recycling Region (WRR): Conversion of urban waste into urban wealth as through the economic activities which has mushroomed along these wetlands.

On the other hand, Geographically Isolated Wetlands(GIW)'s are defined as wetlands which has not apparent surface water connectivity to perennial rivers, streams, seas or ocean. They are mostly surrounded by drier pastures.

Differences in regional geography, slope, hydrology, climatic conditions have led to the formation of these wetlands. Wetlands which are on old flood plains which were once inundated by seasonal rivers have been left isolated because change in river course. These wetlands are now the most vulnerable wetlands as they are surrounded by land use practices of man, uplands area and are being infilled at an enormous rate for construction of infrastructural facilities.

Wetlands serves as biogeochemical hotspots, but in case of Geographical Isolated Wetlands, they have extremely few legal protections owing to their isolation from jurisdictional waters.

West Bengal has many Geographically Isolated wetlands (GIW's) namely Berunanpukuria, Barotir Beel, Konnagar-Hindmotor Wetlands. The paper is centered around the Konnagar hindmotor wetlands as the ecological importance of these wetlands is immense. The wetlands are part of the older deltaic plain of the Hooghly river. These wetlands offer many ecosystem services relating to storm water passage, maintenance of biodiversity, generation of livelihood etc. However, many people do not realize the importance of these isolated wetlands are and are infilling these wetlands due to developmental infrastructure work relating to urbanization. There are many types of Geographically Isolated Wetlands including in natural setting and man-made wetlands. The wetlands are also being created on vernal pools, potholes, playas etc. On active flood plains GIW's are also found which are also known as 'Depressional wetlands' riparian floodplains. Konnagar hindmotor wetlands are such depressional wetlands on the fertile riparian floodplain of Hooghly river basin.

Location of the wetlands:

The EKW is situated about 5 km from the eastern edge of Kolkata. It lies within latitudes 22 degrees 25 minutes to 22degrees 40 minutes north and longitudes 88 degrees 20 minutes to 88 degrees 35' minutes. The average elevation is 2 to 5 meters (m) above mean sea level. The sloping of Kolkata is generally in the eastern side and the EKW is located in the eastern side of Kolkata. The wetland covers an area of 125 kilometers square including salt marshes, fish farms, sewage farms, settling and feeding ponds.

The East Kolkata wetlands generally experiences tropical monsoon type of climate with hot and humid summer and dry winter. The region experiences a heavy monsoon between june to September with a mean annual rainfall of 160 cm. The EKW region is a matured part of river Hooghly, and the sub surface lithographic sediments are mostly of Quaternary Fluviatile sediments. The region is having continuous quaternary acquifer (Sahu and Sikdar 2011) with a depth of water table at approximate 8meters (Kundu et al. 2007).

Whereas the Konnagar-Hindmotor wetlands is located in the Sreerampore subdivision of the Hooghly district. The geographical coordinates are as follows 23 degrees 01 minutes 2 0 seconds North to 22 degrees 39 minutes 3 2 seconds North, 88 degrees 30 minutes 1 5 seconds East to 87 degrees 30 minutes 2 0 seconds East.

Objectives

- To identify the economic activities and understand ecological importance of the East Kolkata Wetland and the Konnagar-Hindmotor Wetlands.

- To find out the relation between the generation of income and employment from the products produced through sewage fed aquaculture in case of EKW.

- To identify the effect of unregulated peri-urbanisation towards these wetlands on the livelihoods of the stakeholders.

Methodology

• Primary data: In-depth interviews of the stakeholders who are involved in these wetlands were taken. Around 250 stakeholders were interviewed for East Kolkata wetlands. Around 30 respondents were surveyed for Konnagar-Hindmotor Wetlands.

• GIS techniques namely LULC change have been used over time periods i.e.,1986-2019 to see a substantial decline in the area of wetlands.

• Secondary data relating to census and urbanization was also connected from various secondary sources

Results and Discussions

From the primary interviews and secondary literature and data synthesis, it has been found that The East Kolkata Wetlands offers provisioning services, regulating services and cultural services .The economic importance of East Kolkata Wetlands is huge. It is estimated that per year about 3,000 tonnes of fish and 150 tonnes of vegetables are produced in these wetlands. The paddy fields in the wetlands (many of which are irrigated by the effluent water of the fisheries) produce 15,000 metric tons of paddy annually.

On the other hand, Konnagar-Hindmotor wetlands it is important for cultivation of water caltrop, fisheries. The Konnagar-Hindmotor wetlands not only provide provisioning services like food, forage, fodder, but also regulating services where for it is used as a passage for the stormwater from various municipalities of Hooglhy namely Bhadreshwar, Chapdani, Sreerampore, . These wetlands are also offering supporting services like habitat for biota, waste dumping, grazing lands for cattle etc.

The city of Kolkata generates about 600 million liters of sewage daily that is carried into the EKW through the natural gradient of the city (from west to east).

The Dry Water flow and the Storm Water Flow from the city of Kolkata undergoes many processes of filtration which is being transferred to 264 fisheries to produce 3000 tonnes of fishes every year (Chaudhury, A., Das, B 2022) .The passage of the water flows is being described which are generated from the transcripts of respondents surveyed

The dry water flow and storm water flow along with raw sewage generated from Kolkata municipal orporation is dumped in Anaerobic ponds. In the anaerobic ponds, solids are removed which are channelized as fertilizer in agrarian fields. The waste water without solids are now transferred to facultative ponds where algae feeds on the waste water. From the facultative ponds, water is now used for fishing which are locally known as 'Bheri's. The fishes produced from these *bheris* are source of fresh supply of fishes to the city of Kolkata everyday,

Not only sewage fed fisheries use the waste water but it is also used in production of fresh vegetables and fruits in and around Dhapa area of Kolkata. Thus the process of resource recovery can be summed up through a following diagram. Thus East Kolkata Wetlands acts a resource recovery system where waste water from the city is converted to wealth.

Land Use and Encroachment:

The land use pattern of the EKW can be summarised in the following ratio.

47 per cent i.e. 5852 hectare area is the sewage fed fisheries, 38 per cent i.e. 4718 hectare area is used for sewage fed agriculture.

Over the years there has been massive areas of encroachment of the East Kolkata Wetlands because of the peri-urban growth surrounding the wetlands. For infrastructural development, acres and acres of wetlands have been in-filled since 1953 .

The chronology shows the infilling of the wetlands

- In 1953-1967 180acres of wetlands namely in the Dhapa, Mominpur and Krishnapur areas which was a part of East Kolkata Wetlands was infilled by NEDECO for formation of Saltlake and to release the population pressure from Kolkata.

- In 1972 around 1650 acres of waterbodies from East Kolkata Wetlands were infilled in the areas of Patuli and Baisnabghata by WBHIDCO for the creation of East Kolkata Township.

- In 1999 again 33 wetlands nearly 3075 acres of land was converted to jungles of concrete for expansion of East Kolkata Township by HIDCO.

- From 1980 to 2014 113 acres of land which was a part of EKW in the area of chingrighata was again infilled for widening of Eastern Metropolitan Bypass (E.M bypass) for easy traffic movement by KMDA.

- Since 2014 local promoters have been infilling the wetlands near Uttar Ponchannogram and the acres of lands being infilled gets unrecorded.

From satellite imageries it has been calculated and noticed that there has been a substantial decline in the per centage of Wetlands owing to the peri-urbanization in the adjoining areas to EKW.

- In 1986, the total wetland area available was 41.065 square kilometers i.e. 30.64 per cent while other land elements constitutes 92.925 square kilometers of area.

- In 1999, the total wetland area went down to 35.279 square kilometers i.e. 26.32 per cent from 41.065 square kilometers i.e. 30.64 per cent in 1986, while the share of other land elements increased to 98.711 square kilometers of area from 92.925 square kilometers of area.

- In 2015, drastically the total wetland area went to 33.082 square kilometers i.e. 24.68 per cent out of other land elements which constitutes 98.711 square kilometers of area

- Thus for the last 30 years, there has been a substantial fall in the per centage of wetlands left.

A primary survey of the area around Chingrighata was conducted and an astonishing detail came into being. The *captain's bheri* (under the Fishermen's Cooperative Society Ltd) and the *Nona Bheri* in Chingrighata which is a part of East Kolkata wetlands have been fragmented at such a level that only a meagre portion of it left due to construction of the Metropolitan Township and the construction of Eastern Metropolitan Bypass. Only a meagre portion is left along the Metropolitan Township and the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass which once encompassed the entire area before the anthropogenic activities started filling the *Bheris* which is a part under east Kolkata wetlands. And according to the local labourers of captain's *Bheri* a considerable portion around 40 sq. feet of the B*heri* will be filled due to the expansion of Eastern Metropolitan bypass under JNURM .

Fig. 6 showing LULC change of East Kolkata Wetlands (1984-2015) owing to urbanization

The East Kolkata Wetlands is home to the marsh mongoose and the amphibian species. There has been a considerable decline in the number of mollusca species as well from 25 in 1989, the number has dwindled to 10 in 2004. This declining trend in fish, mammal, amphibian and mollusca species can be attributed to large-scale human intervention and rampant conversion of the wetlands in the name of urban development (Dey, D., et.al., 2013). The eastward expansion of Kolkata by filling up the East Kolkata Wetlands has disturbed the ecological balance and functions of the waste recycling region. This has resulted in the decline of bio-diversity associated with the wetlands (Dey, D., et.al, 2018).

With the infilling of wetlands, there has been shift in the livelihood of the stakeholders of the East Kolkata Wetlands. Around 220 stakeholders of East Kolkata Wetlands were interviewed and it was

found that nearly 56 per cent of the respondents have forcefully shifted their livelihood from pisciculture to informal sector and 44 per cent of the total stakeholders have shifted their livelihood at their own will. The Captain's Bheri had a workforce of around 4000 labour and fisherman in the late 1970's. However, after the construction of metropolitan township and the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, a huge chunk of captain's Bheri have been in filled hence a large number of people lost their livelihood options. The present workforce has been reduced to 35. The wage rate is round Rs. 160-180 per day.

Those who have lost their basic livelihood from the wetlands, have undergone a occupational change. They presently work as daily labourers, masons, rickshaw pullers, security guards in apartments for their daily livelihood. The women who worked in activities other than fishing which was mainly done by males, works now as domestic helps.

Nearly 44 per cent of the total surveyed stakeholders have suffered from economic loss by the shift in their livelihood and 27 per cent of the total surveyed stakeholders think that they have been benefitted due to the shift in their livelihood pattern as their present and future generation is not interested in pisciculture or farming from the waste water fed wetlands.

The Konnagar-Hindmotor wetlands are also facing the brunt of sub-urbanization. The burgeoning population on Kolkata has resulted people to shift to the suburbs where the cost of living is little lesser. The Uttarpara-Sreerampore zone has been witnessing a very steep rise in population over the years. Wetlands infilling has become a talk of town for the local as well as big real estate agents. For the Konnagar-Hindmotor Wetlands, due to the rampant infilling up of the wetlands owing to large residential projects , the stakeholders of the wetlands are suffering. The fisherman community, fruit cultivators and the collectors of medicinal plans have shifted their livelihood. Only 2 per cent of the stakeholders are involved and dependent on this wetland for their livelihood.

Conclusion

Uncontrolled population growth since 1980's, rapid peri-urbanization, infrastructure development to cater the burgeoning growth of population, rural-urban migration, land conversion, climate change and pollution have already exerted immense pressure on the wetlands.

Conservation and Management of the wetlands is the need of the hour. The waterlogging problem in Salt-lake and New Town-Rajarhat area clearly shows the adverse effect of uncontrollable of East Kolkata has adversely affected the drainage system of Kolkata. Water logging problem in the eastern part of Konnagar-Hindmotor area due to change in micro geomorphology of the area owing to illegal infilling of the wetlands have clearly shown the adverse effects of uncontrolled urbanization.

Few of the management techniques that can be followed for proper conservation and management of the wetlands are:

Constant and regular monitoring to understand changes in physical, environmental, economic and social characteristics of EKW is needed. Official documentation of traditional knowledge of the functions and benefits of the EKW and Konnagar-Hindmotor wetlands may be made. All developers and real estate agencies may ensure zero encroachment by creating active participation of government and real estate community. Participation of indigenous people in decision making/planning committees is necessary to ensure inclusion of their invaluable knowledge in conservation action. The older local people may motivate their younger counterpart on the values of the traditional practices, and how livelihood shift (to newer jobs) can dilute the legacy of the system.

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Gendered Family Narratives: A Critical Analysis of Tamil Popular Mega Serials

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Abstract

Serial viewing is part and parcel of many households in India, especially the regional language serials based on family issues. The increased smartphone usage among women has amplified the access to the mega serials via different applications. Most of the prime-time narratives of any regional language television channel are built across the family conflicts, the consequences, the related sufferings, and strategies to mitigate them effectively. Serial descriptions of family issues attract women audiences to a more considerable extent for various gratifications. Unlike films, the prominent roles are done by lead women characters to attract a larger women audience. Predominantly the serial narratives in the Indian context center women as the main characters, the traditional daughter-in-law or contemporary working women, or typical homemakers; whichever role it is, the plot revolves around women. The primary clutch of the serial narratives lies in upholding family cultural and traditional values and virtues. However, families in the Indian context are built on patriarchal societal norms, which can create gendered family conflicts. This paper identifies the narrative patterns of gendered family conflicts and their consequences in select Tamil language mega serials.

(**Keywords**: Gendered Family Narratives, Tamil Mega Serials, Superwoman Syndrome, Narrative Analysis)

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Introduction

Watching mega serials is part and parcel of the everyday activities of people from various walks of life. The popularity of Indian soap operas is widespread among many viewers, with prime-time episodes drawing families, homemakers, and other people to spend their days at home glued to the television sets (Ragahavan 2008: 2). Many households, especially in rural Tamil Nadu, depend on TV as their major source of entertainment. Use of smartphones and online television channels have increased the access to view mega serials at desired time being an added advantage. Indian popular culture is predominantly associated with films and film music; however, television entertainment via smartphones has further increased its potential to influence the viewers. The country's TV sector is more than twice as large and is the world's third largest TV market behind the United States and China (Harrington 2019:37). Fictional narratives and soaps became an inevitable part of entertainment for every household after *Hum Log*, the first soap, gained popularity (Kumar, 1998: 26, Harrington, 2019: 37). Today, the television industry has developed several reality shows and mega serials targeting the youth and women. In India, mega serials are consumed on a daily basis in different languages across the nation and access to digital gadgets has increased its use and scope. Hindi language serials are produced on par with films, and are dubbed into Tamil and other regional languages for consumption to a larger extent.

Mega serials grew at a tremendous rate, predominantly, they were family melodramas that occupied the prime-time slots in most of the entertainment channels. They had plots that consisted of open-ended narratives easy to include sub-plots for continuing episodes—the plots were primarily on family relationships, conflicts, struggles, and everyday lives. Major mega serials had plots predominantly narratives on family conflicts and resolutions highlighting the role of an ideal daughter-in-law in Indian society. Women's roles in cultural practice and passing on values to future generations are stressed in these mega serials with household fights towards attracting women's audience (Anitha, 2014: 2). Irrespective of the socio-demographic factors,

women, predominantly homemakers lead the list in terms of their engagement with mega serials on a daily basis. The serials are telecasted daily, sometimes prolonging for years together. The narratives employing gendered family conflicts reinstate patriarchal norms and values. This paper tries to understand the nature of gendered family conflicts constructed in the narratives of select Tamil language mega serials.

Gendered Family Narratives and Conflicts

The family is one of the primary social institutions of society with multifaceted functions. It is a social unit created by marriage as per the norms of society. However, the basis of marriage lies in two individuals of different families coming together to live their life together. Different families mean different cultures, religions, classes, and geographical regions. This consists of differences, struggles, development, affection, togetherness, and bonding among the two individuals toward developing a family in the long run. The differences can also complicate the relationships leading to family conflicts. It is a group of individuals that reside together and manage their family as a single unit, typically consisting of parents and their children. Families designate roles and responsibilities to their members based on societal norms. In patriarchal societies, families adhere to more apparent gender divisions with prescribed roles for both men and women members of the family. Active disagreements between family members can result in family conflicts. Conflict is a fight between competing values and claims for limited position, power, or resources (Aye et al., 2016: 150). Male domination, gender-based discriminatory practices, enforcement of gender norms, gendered violence, abuse, and assault are identified as predominant causes of family conflicts concerning gender. Violent behaviors on the women in a family are primarily justified and permissible to a 'certain' extent, including beating, slapping, verbal abuse, and emotional abuse. Beyond laws, polygamy, dowry practices, honor killings, sex-selective abortions, early marriages, denial of equal wages, underestimating girl child education, and so on still predominantly do exist. Due to family relationships' complexity,

conflicts can be physical, verbal, sexual, financial, and psychological. Especially, gendered family conflicts can be more detrimental to the well-being of the entire family and society. Reinstating gender stereotypes, prejudices, or biases can result in gender inequality affecting society. Representations of gender in media can have a lasting impact on society's perception of gender.

Literary and visual narratives, to a more significant extent, explored the potential of storytelling in addressing conflicts in human lives. The term 'narrative' refers to a story about an event or occurrence with a storyline with a defined beginning and ending point, offering sequential and causal coherence about the world and the experience of a group (Bruner, 1990; Laszlo, 2008; Bar-Tal, Oren and Nets-Zehngut, 2014: 664). Family narratives are built upon family conflicts in the mega serials that predominantly revolve around women lead characters who are constructed as the 'ideal women' upholding gendered norms. This subtly justifies and glorifies discrimination and related inequalities. These are gendered family conflicts and are predominantly found in top-rating mega serials. It helps construct identities, recognize commonalities and differences, and promote unity in diversity among different groups under conflict. Fair and ethical representation of gender and related issues is essential to building a gender-sensitive and gender-equitable society. Narratives on family issues are expected to be instigating values of love, affection, togetherness, collective strengths, recognition of differences, and complementing developments. However, the commercialization of narratives involving crime, violence, and sexual content has diluted the importance of narrative influences on human lives. The media and entertainment industries globally are highly commercialized in the market race towards ratings, especially the mega serials. It is vital to analyze gender constructions using the Gender-Based Approach (GBA). It allows the researcher to understand the issues with a gender lens toward gender-equal representation of issues.

When comparing film narratives with TV serials, research shows that popular film narratives are gendered with more screen time and space for lead male characters than lead female characters. Representation of gender-based issues in mass media platforms has predominantly been prejudiced and biased. The patriarchal social values existing in society are reflected and constructed in popular film and television narratives. Women are confined to family, romantic, and song sequences, whereas male characters are found to take the lead role in the film narrative. Contrary to films, the lead characters in a television mega serial are predominantly women, sharing more screen time and space. Every entertainment channel telecasts serials regularly targeting homemakers. So, the central theme of these mega serials is mostly family melodramas. However, to top the list of television ratings and retain the same, the mega serials invariably have narratives on family issues. The plots and subplots are family-related conflicts, relationship complications, misunderstandings, power, status, and struggles towards setting them right. The narratives are centered and based on the women characters and their emotions of anger, love, depression, loss, and so on. Here the lead women roles are daughters-in-laws struggling to satisfy the gendered family norms prescribed for a married woman. The mega serials' main plots are conflicts and resolutions occurring among the family members. However, Chandrasekar and Aatman (2017: 60), identify prime time soap operas as an untapped pool of talent towards mass education on gender equality and sustainable development. Any form of mass media has the potential of positively influencing the society, so interventions towards ensuring gender sensitive narratives in mega serials can be a great tool towards gender sensitization.

Objectives and Methodology

Popular Tamil television channels like Sun TV, Star Vijay, Zee Tamil are the top players in mega serial telecasts. As per the BARC ratings in February 2023, out of the top 20 Tamil mega serials, 11 are telecasted by Sun TV, four by Zee Tamil, and five by Star Vijay channels. These mega serials are made in Tamil and dubbed into other south Indian languages like Kannada,

Malayalam, and Telugu, or they are remade or dubbed from these languages. The top-rated serials are telecasted in six Indian languages: Tamil, Telugu, Kanada, Malayalam, Marathi, and Bengali. Most top-rated mega serials consist of family-oriented plots primarily involving romance, emotions, sentiments, crime, violence, and struggle for status, power, and wealth. Daily engagement with mega serials is typical in most households in Tamil Nadu. Women and children predominantly view mega serials telecasted during the prime-time slots. Thus, it is vital to understand the nature of gender discourse through these serials. The primary objective of this paper is to explore the nature of themes constructed in Tamil mega-serial narratives on family issues. Using purposive sampling, select prime-time mega serials on family narratives telecasted on Tamil television channels were chosen for the study. A qualitative content analysis was done to identify the recurring patterns of gendered family conflicts across the serials. The dominant patterns of gendered family conflicts were identified based on the related codes for categorizing the content. The prominent patterns were grouped and analyzed using the gender-based approach, identifying the themes of naturalizing, justifying, and glorifying patriarchal gender norms, victim-blaming, and perpetrator-excusing themes.

Findings

Recurring Patterns of Gendered Family Conflicts

Nearly 90 percent of the serials taken for discussion contain a lead woman character, mainly from an economically weak background and possessing the qualities of a 'superwoman'. The *lead women characters* are shown to be very talented, 'superwoman' managing or facing any challenge successfully. The predominant family conflicts in the plots are based on the characters of *rich mothers* aspiring educated rich girls for their sons (*the lead male character*) as a daughter-in-law. However, everything changes; the originally arranged marriages, either for the male or female, are stopped due to issues like dowry, character assassinations, failed promises of families, love affairs, astrological predictions, etc. The twist results in the *lead male characters*

marrying the *lead woman character* who either works as their company staff or servant made in their homes to safeguard the 'honor' of the family. The remaining part of the story is how the *lead woman character* wins the heart of her husband, mother-in-law, and the entire family through her 'superwoman' character. Sequences reinstating gendered rituals like watching the bride in her house, performing rituals of hosting feasts honoring gendered differences, and hosting celebrations with expenses borne by the woman's family are part of almost every mega serial.

The *antagonists* of the majority of the serials are women, who are wealthy and educated, determined to revenge the *lead woman characters* for marrying the hero, who would have otherwise been a prospective partner for the *woman antagonist*. Family conflicts are constructed on the need for the woman antagonist to go to any extent to break the marriage and wait to unite with the *lead male character*. The *woman antagonists* reside in the close vicinity of the family and constantly create problems and challenges for the *lead women's character* by preventing her from leading a happy life. In many of the serials, the mother-in-law, the woman antagonist, and people related to them are the problem makers who take the story forward with newer challenges and twists. The entire conflict in the family revolves around the **retention of the marriage ties** of the *lead woman character* in her family. Overall, the newly married lead male and female characters are under constant attacks from the antagonist within the family, trying to separate them for different reasons like property, status, remarriage, family honor, etc.

The narratives of the mega serials do have gender-sensitive constructions to a certain extent. Few of the serials are based on the struggles of assertive and confident women characters. It highlights how women are targeted by different societal norms, people, and laws when assertive. Constructions on assertive women sometimes lead to overhyped 'superwoman' in many narratives. It portrays women ready to sacrifice their well-being for the sake of their husbands

and in-laws. This constructs and reinstates the images of 'ideal women' and puts forward unrealistic role models. Thus, the entire narratives consist of different forms of gendered conflicts in the main and sub-plots of the Tamil mega serials, which are discussed below,

1. Conflict to retain a marital relationship

As discussed, most of the narratives are built on the sudden and unexpected weddings of the lead characters, which are not welcomed by family members or either of the partners themselves. Every mega serial consists of the main plot involving couple conflicts – like lead female characters facing issues in the consummation of the marriage. They are shown patiently waiting for the husband to take a liking to them for years. They sleep on the floor and face negligence, hate, and verbal abuse from their husband – awaiting everything to change. They also face enquires on her relationship with her husband from family members and pretend to be happy. This creates the subplot of struggle towards acceptance by the in-law's family members. Female characters struggle to impress the husband and his relatives to prove themselves as ideal daughter-in-law, adhering to traditional sociocultural norms. The characters perform socially constructed gender roles and take pride in the performance. When any character deviates from the traditional role, conflict situations are constructed towards ridiculing the characters. The entire episodes revolve around the following family conflicts towards the retention of marriages. The lead woman characters are shown to face any level of humiliation silently and eagerly, waiting for even a small closeness and emotional togetherness with the husband. For this, the lead woman characters are shown to be adhering to all norms subscribed to being a 'Superwoman' within the context of gendered expectations. This degrades the very dignity of women in the serials and emphasizes women are to withstand any humiliation and gendered practices to retain their marriages.

2. Conflicts over power and control

The fight for power and control of the family, related wealth, and decision-making form part of the subplot. The two significant conflicts related to power and control are conflicts towards control of wealth and conflicts towards getting the attention of the lead male character. The conflicts are primarily between the woman protagonists and woman antagonists, the co-sisters, mother-in-law, and relatives plotting for wealth control. Conflicts between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are primarily towards caring and gaining the attention of the *lead male character*. It is portrayed as a power relation between the two, and related conflicts form part of the larger narrative. The conflicts include fighting for kitchen control, competition in cooking tasty food, adhering to the gender norms, and comparison of sacrifices by the two women characters.

3. Conflicts based on binary oppositions

The construction of binary oppositions is part and parcel of every serial narrative, primarily, the good and evil - the extremely good protagonists versus the extremely bad antagonist. Uneducated, conventional superwoman, good in managing domestic chores versus educated business tycoons with evil thoughts full of revenge, manipulation, and lacking morals. Binary oppositions justify and glorify the gendered 'ideal', and 'superwoman' constructions and condemn educated women and their assertions.

4. Conflict over self-dignity

The *lead female characters'* self-dignity is under constant attack in the serial narratives. They are ridiculed for a mismatch of personalities with the lead male character and his family members, for not performing the gendered rituals, for demands for dowry, and so on. They face insults, comparisons, and verbal abuse on status and personality. Belittled for lack of English knowledge and modern outlook in dressing, they face abuses on framed charges of theft, missing domestic

chores, care work, being condemned for not having a child after marriage, and so on. This conflict over self-dignity questions the existence of women as mere human beings. The characters are pushed to a situation to equip themselves with the 'superwoman' traits. The related stress, mental conflicts, and sacrifices are ignored in the entire process of narration. The parents and siblings of the lead female characters are humiliated by the in-laws on different occasions for different reasons. The lead woman character is shown to withstand any form of humiliation. Towards meeting the expectations of the spouse and family members the life aspired by women characters do not find a place in the narratives.

5. Conflict over superstitious beliefs

The lead woman character is forced into a conflict situation to prove her love for her husband by undertaking complex and superstitious tasks to save her husband from forthcoming dangers or affected dangers. Like, narratives on undertaking missions into no human land to bring rare herbs towards saving the husband and superficial beings preventing her from performing complex rituals – the plots that can prevent the scientific temper.

6. Woman Vs. Woman Conflicts

Lead women characters are envied by the woman antagonists who plot against the lead woman characters to chase them away from the existing marriage bond. The woman antagonists vehemently plot plans to disrupt the family equilibrium. Newer forms of problems are created – like spoiling food cooked by the lead character to taint her name, preventing her from performing crucial rituals, blaming her for unexpected events, branding her inauspicious, and so on.

7. Conflict Resolution

In the end, the conflict resolutions come without realizing gender rights. Reconciliation takes place to bring the narrative to equilibrium towards a smooth ending. The losers are

predominantly female characters irrespective of class, social status, age, education, etc. The lead women characters though shown to assert their stands at different points are often silenced, citing family well-being. Forgiving and accepting subjugation is constructed as a way of life for women characters.

8. Winners of Conflicts

Amidst the presence of narratives on gendered family conflicts, very few narratives show assertive and confident female characters. They show the problems women characters face due to asserting their rights; however, they are shown to win the conflicts with sheer determination. The positive narratives are coming up here and there, however, the bowl is full of stereotypical narratives with very few glimpses of alternative narratives of hope and empowerment. These winners of conflicts do not escape the 'superwoman' syndrome. A study by Asifa (2021: 128) shows that women viewers felt that narratives on domestic violence and its consequences had created awareness among their family members. Its viewers can also identify strategies for managing family conflicts and positive mediation.

Discussion and Analysis
Consequences of Representation of Gendered Family Conflicts

The analysis shows the following four major themes concerning the representation of gender in Tamil mega serials.

1. Reinstating Patriarchal Norms

The analysis shows that the Tamil mega serials reinstate and normalizes gender-based discriminatory practices that lead to the subjugation and subordination of women characters. The continuing forms of gender-based discrimination suffered by women are not even considered to be an issue of importance. It is part and parcel of the so-called everyday life of women in the cultural and traditional setup across the country. Gender-based discrimination has been

normalized as a traditional and cultural practice. In many instances, the lead women characters are shown to get annoyed by discriminatory practices, however, they are controlled and advised on the importance of upholding the patriarchal norms. Also, all characters, male and female, perform socially constructed gender roles in terms of constructing their identities. Costumes, characters, roles, careers, and so on reinstate the gendered norms and identities. The characters perform gender in their everyday roles in the mega serials. This performativity is justified and glorified by appreciating and acknowledging the characters within the narratives. The entire process can be dangerous in terms of normalizing patriarchal norms as part and parcel of people's everyday lives.

2. Victimization as a narrative strategy

Victimization of women characters forms the central narrative plot by gaining the audience's attention and empathy for the lead woman characters. In almost all serials, the lead woman characters face victimization for different reasons and remain silent. The analysis shows that the narratives normalize violence against women as a mundane act within the family. Unlike in film medium, physical violence by male characters is minimal in mega serials, yet, the women antagonists use men to perpetuate and are used as tools. The violence against women characters is mainly in the form of verbal and psychological abuse. Normalization of verbal abuse by both men and women characters in the serials makes the victim silent. This can emphasize a culture of verbal violence as part of family life. Most of the time, silence is used as a narrative tool to take forth the episodes, but it fails to identify the abuse as a violation of the rights of women characters. The victimization discourse also includes subplots of victim blaming, perpetrator excusing, and plots pitching women against women. Victim-blaming narratives blame the affected women characters as the reason for all the conflicts in the family. The character which is already affected is further subjected to violence and victimization. Subplots excuse the perpetrators for being a man, like it is okay for a man to have an extra-marital affair, excuses

polygamy, infidelity, and so on. In addition, the lead male characters are not shown to share household chores, child care, and elder care. These are specifically designated gender roles for women in the serials. When the woman characters do not adhere to the norms, they are condemned and targeted for their behavior. Amidst all the above, one of the subplots existing in almost all mega serials is pitching women against women. The antagonist, mostly women characters, would go to any extent to destroy the peace, well-being, and entire life of the protagonist woman character. So victimization by women is highly dramatized as a sensation tool in the narration.

3. Construction of Social Reality

The construction of social reality based on unrealistic occurrences is part of any fiction. Mega serials construct unrealistic superwoman models. These 'superwomen' are shown to be angels in showering love and affection on the family's well-being, sacrificing their well-being and preferences. They are shown as mighty warriors facing any challenges maintaining a clear and straightforward path proving to be a 'superwoman'. Everything is managed by the superwoman', be it family chores, cooking, cleaning, child care, work-life balance, career-oriented, or heading the family. Such portrayals can create enormous demands of taking more responsibilities by women expecting them to be 'superwomen' no matter what they lose. Another notable construction of social reality is upholding superstitious beliefs. Narratives create compulsions for the lead woman character to undertake risks beyond imagination – like going to lonely forests to collect herbs that can cure their husbands' ailments, performing superstitious rituals, and so on. These constructed realities can justify and instill superstitions as a usual way of living.

4. Narratives of Assertion and Empowerment

Serial narratives on gendered family conflicts also have a lighter side of its influence. Viewers can actively negotiate meanings with the content they consume by seeing the causes and

consequences of family conflicts. Discussions with similar viewers occur among women at places they meet during their daily activities. The reflections can also enable the viewers to identify potential solutions for the conflicts. According to Ahmed and Khalid (2012: 5), viewers' real-world relationships may improve after witnessing relationships and marriages fall apart due to misunderstandings and inappropriate behavior of serial characters. Narratives on assertion and empowerment are coming up but are not sufficient. They yet require more clarity regarding gender equality and social change in addressing gendered family conflicts.

CONCLUSION

As per the 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), it is essential to achieve gender equality for the sustained development of society. Media plays a prominent role in communicating the SDGs to the common public. However, this study shows that entertainment and popular forms of media lag in contributing to the SDGs beyond their obligation toward building a gender-equal society. The media and entertainment industry across India's states must take serious note of their obligation to the 5th SDG on gender equality. Beyond the commercialization of the television industry, it is vital to address to society gender conflicts through mass media outlets. In the case of mega serials, it undermines gender-based development and reinstates stereotypical gender norms. Though there are a few exceptions, most content is not promising and can negatively influence viewers. The content broadcasting authorities should take serious note of the importance of communicating gender equality and ensure gender-sensitive communication across the entertainment platforms towards addressing the SDGs on gender equality.

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Post colonial conflict in India: with special reference to United Liberation Front of Asom

Chandana Bhattacharjya

Abstract

India has witnessed many post-colonial conflicts within its own territory. The main reason behind these conflicts is the dissatisfaction of the Indian citizens towards the government. The question of identity plays big role in the rising of these conflicts. With the passing years these conflicts took the form of insurgent movements. Insurgency is a violence driven extra-constitutional method to espouse certain goals which the perpetrator believes is the only language that the political masters would listen to. The problem with insurgency is that it does not have the control over violence and becomes its clientele as it transits from domestic to international level. The United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was officially formed on 7th April, 1979 at Sibsagar in Assam. It can be best described as an insurgent group as it fulfills the various characteristics of insurgency, because insurgency is a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group uses all socio-political resources and violence and often gets involved in a protracted political military activity. The formation of ULFA paved the way for endless terror in the region. The current paper will try to look into the issues that lead to the emergence of ULFA and the responses of the government towards it.

Key words: Insurgency, State, ULFA, Terror.

Introduction

The problem of insurgency is one of the most significant questions confronting modern states. We can find insurgency everywhere in the modern welfare state. Insurgency mostly starts due to the political and social dissatisfaction of a particular group of people or community. Insurgency aims to overrule the present establishment of the state which it thinks is a dominant government. Insurgency has certain dependent variables like state's exploitations, lack of control over resources, corruption and so on. As they confront the state, they have to constantly rely on arms

and other sophisticated weapons which the insurgent organizations procure from the countries. It also paved the way for arm race which generates terror and violence. In 1990 Edward Azar, brought up a theory of protracted social conflict. According to him, a protracted social conflict is 'the prolonged and violent struggle by communal groups for some basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation' (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall. 2005:84). He defines four sets of conditions or sources of protracted social conflict: 1) the communal content of a society, 2) human needs, 3) role of the state and governance and 4) international linkages. For Azar, 'community' is a politicized group whose members share ethnic, religious, linguistic or other cultural identity characteristics. Azar theory of conflict is relevant for the context of North-East India, as protracted social conflicts arises mostly in multi-communal societies, which are formed through a process of colonization and divide and rule policies, where states have incorporated a multitude of communal groups, or through inter communal struggle (Kolas, 2009:41). In India we can find many ethnic groups and communities who are not similar to each other in terms of their culture and tradition. These differences headed to the growth of insurgency in most of the parts of the country as soon as it got independence. The north-east Indian states are also not exceptional to it. The conflict between the insurgent groups and the state creates law and order situation in the region which leads to gross human rights violation and terror among the masses. The establishment of United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) during 1979 brought fresh tensions in Assam. The insurgent group believes in scientific socialism. Their idea of nationalism based on self determination. From the day of its establishment till date ULFA faces numerous smacks from Indian National Army, which led to surrender, arrest and also death of many ULFA cadres. The raise of ULFA starts an era of conflict and terror in Assam. Human rights are being violated by both ULFA and the government. Both sides used extensive violence to show their power to each other. From 1980 to 2010 the situation in Assam was grim due to the ULFA conflict. It is only after the detaining of top ULFA leaders in 2010 the situation somehow calm down in Assam though it is not fully peaceful even now. In this paper the author will try to look into some of the historical events that helped in ULFA's outbreak and the role of government in combating it.

Legacy behind the formation of Assamese identity:

The Ahoms ruled Assam for more than 600 years. In this long period, Assam has developed its own culture and political beliefs. Emergence of Sankardev and the Neo Voishnavite movement brought a lot of changes to the Assamese society. A greater Assamese nationality emerged within that period. Assam was an independent state before the British came to India. British took over Ahom Kingdom from the Burmese forces by signing the historical Yandaboo treaty in the year 1826. During India's independence movement against the British the people of Assam took part actively. After India's independence, many leaders of Assam thought that Assam would become an independent state again. But Assam came under India, which was strongly opposed by people like Ambikagiri Raichoudhury. He said that Assam had its own identity and resources to lead an independent status (Misra, 2000:82). He was amongst the first intellectuals who had his own distinct idea about Assamese nationalism. Along with him there were other leaders like Jnananath Bora and Gauri Shankar Bhattacharjya who advocated Assamese nationalism. The Ahoms influenced the people of Assam to a large extend. The patriotism showed by Ahom general Lachit Borphukan during the famous war of Saraighat against the mighty Mughals inspired many Assamese youth to form a distinct identity for the people of Assam. Even now Lachit Divas is celebrated as a day of bravery and courage. The raise of Assamese identity helped in establishing an extremist group in Assam in the late 90s. The geographical difference from the main land India, strong desire of some tribal groups to make an independent state before India's Independence, the breakdown of Ahom Kingdom, immigration, the growing nationalist feelings amongst the middle class of Assam, the nature of India's government, feeling of deprivation of the people of Assam and the various movements against imperialism in other parts of the world are some of the most important reasons of the birth of ULFA (Talukdar, Kalita, 2011, 3)

Confusion during Grouping Plan:

During the time of cabinet mission Assam including the entire North-Eastern states was grouped under group C. All states which come under group C was supposed to be included in Pakistan and

most of the leaders of Indian National Congress were agreed to it. It was Gopinath Bordoloi who strongly opposed it. He started protesting against it and Mahatma Gandhi supported him. After that only, the entire province was retained in India. This incident created distrusts in the minds of the people of Assam regarding the intention of central government towards the region. The freedom fighters from the region were saddened after this event. Many of them openly spoke about their grievances and the betrayal of the central government. The confusion during grouping plan also created an attitude against the central government in the minds of the people of the region.

The outbreak of Naga insurgency:

The demand of an independent Nagaland by the people of Nagaland also played an important role in creating the feeling of alienation in the minds of a large section of peoples from Assam. Ambikagiri Raichoudhury was one of those few Assamese leaders of his period who had sympathy for the Naga cause. In a telegram to the Naga National Council Raichoudhury expressed his support for the Naga struggle for self determination (Misra, 2000:87). Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was the first insurgent group of North-Eastern states of India. It was formed in 1980 by Thuingaleng Muivah and his followers in opposition of the Shillong Accord in between the government of India and the Naga leader Zapu Phizo. NSCN started acting against the government of India and Nagaland government which started a new warfare in between the insurgent group and the government. NSCN was able to generate a huge support base for it amongst the Naga tribe. The heroic image of the NSCN inspired the young generation of Assam to take the path of insurgency. Most of the ULFA cadres got their military training in the NSCN camps at Burma and Kachin in the initial stage of ULFA. The first connection of ULFA with undivided NSCN was established in 1982 in an interior village of Ukhrul District of Manipur where the NSCN agreed to provide training to the ULFA cadres (Mahanta, 2013:73). ULFA also had a good relation with the Kachin Independent Liberation Army of Myanmar. They had established most of their camp in Myanmar and Bhutan border. ULFA wanted to make itself strong and powerful like United National Liberation Front (UNLF) of Manipur and NSCN of Nagaland. The extremist groups were trying to revise and reconstruct history in order to build up their

theoretical base that North-East India had always been a free land and the inclusion of North-East into British India was based on dishonesty and fraud (Misra, 2000:62).

Assam Movement:

The result of historic Assam Movement influenced the ULFA leaders in making the organisation stronger and aggressive. The Assam movement was started by All Assam Students Union (AASU) in the year 1979 against the illegal migration of Bangladeshi people to Assam. The movement was successful in generating mass support and impulsively people from all over Assam joined the movement. It was the huge mass movement in the North-Eastern region of India after its independence. At the same time in the same year ULFA was formed in the historic Rang Ghar of Sivasagar district of Assam. With the Assam movement ULFA also started gaining popularity. ULFA supported the cause of Assam movement but was not happy with the Assam accord which was the outcome of the Assam movement. After Assam movement ends the leaders of the movement formed a political party named as Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) which was the first regional political party of Assam and formed the government in the year 1985. ULFA started gaining more popularity during this period as most of the ministers are having empathy towards ULFA. The popular view among the masses of Assam at that time was that with the support of ULFA, AGP came to power. ULFA boys enjoy enormous power inside and outside of the government in Assam during AGP's first term. The corruption, ineptitude and nepotism within the AGP helped ULFA to become popular among the masses. The first regional political party of Assam had many external problems, which damaged the image of the party in the minds of Assamese people. ULFA took advantage of it and become a household name in Assam. AGP slipped into two divisions due to the clashes between Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and Home Minister Bhrigu Kumar Phukan in 1990. ULFA at that time tried to impose their sympathizers as the candidates of AGP and examined the situation very carefully. As a regional party AGP shared a common ideological space with ULFA that is the Assamese nationality. AGP was incapable of effectively challenging ULFA (Baruah, 2009: 251-274). ULFA also succeeding

in blackmailing AGP ministers against whom there were charges of corruption. This situation helped ULFA in getting more popularity among the masses. But due to the continuous violence from the side of ULFA it was banned by the central government on 1990 under the 'prevention of unlawful activities act of 1967'. After 1990 Assam witnessed a decade full of violence and terror due to the clash between the security forces and ULFA.

Support from Neighbouring States:

The geographical location of Assam is a strong reason for the identity crisis of Assam. The eco-political conditions of the neighbouring states of Assam are also responsible for conflict in Assam. The neighboring countries of India supported ULFA from the initial stage. After its formation in 1979, ULFA sought support and help from the neighboring countries of Assam. Pakistan and Bangladesh both helped ULFA from the beginning. They took the advantage of the large-scale unrest, violence and break-down of law and order particularly in Assam and in the North-East in general. They used to help the insurgents financially and by providing sophisticated arms. Though there is no proper evidence of such things. The nexus between ULFA and ISI of Pakistan was a matter of concern for the central government of India (Das, 1994:44). ULFA took shelter in Bangladesh and the government of Bangladesh also provided free roaming to the ULFA cadres in Bangladesh. In the Assam movement the issue of illegal migrant from Bangladesh was the most prominent issue, but ULFA was mainly against of those people who are coming from the other parts of India to Assam than the people of Bangladesh. This stand of ULFA helped them in making a good relation with Bangladesh. Pakistan always wanted to make disturbances in India, when the organisation like ULFA comes out it is willing to help these organisation against India.

Support from Assamese Middle Class:

The Assamese middle class which is mostly consists of the intellectuals extend their support to ULFA from its initial stage. The ULFA members were given the name as 'our boys' by a section of journalist who continuously wrote on the support of ULFA (Baruah, 2009:148). The news

papers like Budhbar and Pratidin were pro to ULFA's ideology and tried their best to spread it among the masses. In Budhbar which was a weekly newspaper edited by late Mr. Parag Das it has one special column where the ULFA ideologue like Rajen Sarma and Sunil Nath used to write about the ideology of ULFA and why it is important to support ULFA for the masses of Assam. Parag Das was a popular and brave journalist from Guwahati Assam who supported ULFA cause till his death (Mahanta, 2013:110). He was killed by secret killers in 1996. He was even got arrested under the TADA act but did not stop writing about ULFA. He had established one human rights association in Assam called Manab Adhikar Sangram Samiti (MASS) the association had a pro ULFA stand. Through his books like Swadhinotar Prostab (which is banned later by the government), Rastradruhir Dinlipi and Nisidho Kolom aru Annanya he makes people to think on the issue of Assamese nationality.

Ideology of ULFA

ULFA believes in scientific socialism. Their idea of nationalism based on self determination. ULFA follows the ideas of Mao-Ze-Dong through which it wants to create the idea of Assamese nationalism. The faith of ULFA on Mao has provided them a new turn than that of Assam Movement. Referring to ULFA's claim to scientific socialism, M.S. Prabhakara writes, " characterizing itself as a party committed to scientific socialism, ULFA maintains that its aim of liberating Assam and making it independent is only the first stage of its two stage revolution the second and final stage being implementation of the principle of scientific socialism. The literature that is available from the organization suggests that it has a fairly simple notion of what is scientific socialism all about" (Misra, 2000:147). ULFA's commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah believes that the idea of scientific socialism can help in minimizing the gap between the rich and the poor (Bhattacharjya, 2013:141). He is inspired by the writings of Mao-Ze-Dong and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman of Bangladesh. Paresh Baruah learns from the writings of Mao that patience and sacrifice are the most important component of a revolution and from Rehman he learns how diplomatic tools can gives success to a revolution (Bhattacharjya, 2013:141).

ULFA also talks about integrating all the tribes and communities of Assam in one of their publication in the year 1992. During its initial years ULFA's ideologue like Rajen Sarma and Sunil Nath had tried to be in touch with the people on important issues through the columns of some regional papers. But the precedence of the armed wing must have marginalised the ideologues, some of whom eventually left the organisation. Giving more importance to the military aspect of the struggle often lead to a lack of proper ideological orientation of the cadres and this short coming was adequately revealed when section of those who had opted out from the organization started collaborating with the police and military even in getting their former comrades gunned down (Misra, 2000:154). Though they talked about scientific socialism in their behavior the idea of regionalism is more visible. ULFA was not clear about its ideology. They are silent regarding many important issues such as what will be the foreign policy of Assam if it gets independence, what will be its relation with the neighbouring countries. In many a times, the organisation contradicts its own ideology (Das, 2014:51). In the course of time, ULFA failed to prove itself as an ideologically strong organization. ULFA has not given any clear view regarding its ideology in any of its publication which is published in the public domain. The supremacy of the arm wing over the political wing diverted ULFA from its ideological basis. The cadres of the organization started involving in killing innocent people, extortions, kidnapping etc. The lack of strong political wing and theoretical knowledge and availability of arms led ULFA to a point where their ideology is completely missing.

The reaction of the government towards ULFA:

In north-east India, government tries to resolve the violent conflict through conflict management and Conflict suppression. The conflict management theorists see the violent conflicts as an ineradicable consequence of difference of values and interests within and between communities (Mahanta, 2011:157). The propensity to violence arises from the existing institutions and historical relationships as well as from the established distribution of power. Resolving such conflict is viewed as unrealistic the best that can be done is to contain and manage them and seldom

to reach a historic negotiation in which violence may be laid aside and normal politics continued (Mahanta, 2011:158).

The Union as well as the States Government of India takes these movements of secessionism with serious concern. They treat these issues as a great threat towards the national integration of India. The central government of India believes in tackling these issues with strong hands and no mercy is shown against those who engage in these kinds of activities. Indian state takes these issues as anti-state and anti-integration. These activities are being banned through various laws passed by the Indian parliament. Union government gives strict instructions to the state governments to deal strongly with insurgent movements. Union government spends lots of money in dealing with these insurgents. The yearly budget of India spends highest money in the defense sector of the country. It has been viewed by most of the social scientist of the country that using Army in the internal matter of the state creates more problem. Army is trained to act against the outside enemy of a nation. So using them against its own citizen creates a wrong impression on the minds of the people, which leads to further conflict. In India, insurgency is there in most of its states. In every state, the reason of the conflict is different, to tackle these conflicts the mechanisms should also be different but the Indian state uses same kind of mechanism in dealing with all the different conflict. The state governments are highly depended on the central government in taking measures for the internal problem of the state. Without understanding the gravity of the problem the state government follows the laws and technique prepared by the officials of the central government. The responses of the state governments towards the demands of the insurgents are always using hard core measures. In the case of ULFA the response is the same.

The activities of ULFA were at its height during AGP's first term in 1985-1990. ULFA was very popular at that time. Both ULFA and AGP are maintaining good relations with each other. The officials who are being appointed by the government are the people who are backed by ULFA leaders. ULFA manage to maintained cordial relations with the bureaucracy of the state. ULFA's network was so strong at that time that it has association even with the state intelligence. It was difficult for the AGP government to take action against ULFA as most of its leaders had personal relations with ULFA leaders. By the end of AGP's first term ULFA spread its network in

Assam. ULFA collected a huge amount of money from the tea garden management at that time. In 1990 when Chandrasekhar led government came to power in the centre it dismisses AGP government, imposed presidential rule in Assam and launched army Operation Bajrang against ULFA in 1991. This was the first army operation against ULFA. After that two more army operation was launched against ULFA they were operation Rhino in 1991 and Operation All Clear in 2001. These three operations weakened ULFA to a large extend. Most of its top leaders either got killed or arrested in the hands of the Indian army.

ULFA was totally broken after the third Army Operation. In the year 2005, ULFA initiated talks with the government of India from its own side and formed People's Consultative Group (PCG). The discussion between PCG and government of India ended into a failure after having third rounds of talks, as both the Government and ULFA violated the norms of the peace process. Another peace initiative was taken up by the 28 battalion of ULFA in the year 2008 when the battalion announces cease fire with the Government (Mahanta, 2011:158). The A and C company of the battalion declared cease-fire with the government and the cadres of the groups started living in the designated camps of Kakopathar. The most important event which changed the position as well as divided ULFA in to two sections happened when the top brass of ULFA leaders including its Chairmen, Deputy Commander-in- Chief, Foreign Secretary and Finance Secretary were arrested by Bangladesh Army in the border areas of Bangladesh in the year 2010. The arrested leaders were handed over to India are now indulging in peace process where the Commander-in-Chief of ULFA Paresh Baruah opposes the talks and declares the other group as unconstitutional according to the constitution of ULFA.

Conclusion:

The post colonial terror in Assam is not a good sign for the development of the region. Due to ULFA conflict Assam remain less developed in comparison to the other states of India. Assam is full of natural resources but the decades long violence and terror marginalised its economy to a large extend. With the passing years ULFA's support base has declined among the masses of

Assam. They have realised that not conflict but only peace can develop the state. Continuous use of violence by ULFA, killing of innocent and native people and internal dispute in the organisation leads to huge dissatisfaction among the masses of Assam. The Assamese people felt that they are being betrayed by ULFA in the name of Assamese nationalism. This helps the government in bringing ULFA to the discussion table. The present scenario in Assam regarding the peace process with ULFA is no clear enough. Even after 10 years of discussion no output has come out. One section of ULFA is yet to start the dialogue. Joining of both the fiction of ULFA to the peace process is important for a successful outcome of the entire process. Government of India should take some initiative so that other group also come and join the peace process. This can end the year's long conflict in Assam. From the side of the government it is necessary to address fundamental issues of relations between the various communities, citizenship issues and distribution of land and to stop arm race in the area. They can also establish an early warning mechanism and the build a people-centered administrative approach which will be factored into its conflict-resolution strategy to prevent the recurrence of violence and bring in sustainable peace to Assam and north-east India.

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Women's Vulnerabilities during Flood: Drawing Lessons from Char Chapori Regions of Assam

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Abstract

Based on the field exploration in the Char Chapori areas of Barpeta district of Assam in April 2022, the proposed article aims to capture women's vulnerabilities in the flood prone regions of the state of Assam in India. The challenge of flood and displacement has increased in magnitude due to hydroelectric projects, big dams and climate change. These problems pose severe challenges for habitation, livelihood and human security. The vulnerability quotient of marginalised groups, women and poor residing in the ecologically vulnerable areas are highest as their livelihood is dependent on climate sensitive resources such as farming, forest and river water. In India, the intersectionality of gender and poverty makes women particularly susceptible to the consequences of degrading environmental and climatic change. In light of these facts, this article addresses the predicament of flood induced vulnerabilities and its specific impact on women, the strategies that women adopt to cope and mitigate and the challenges in this process.

Keywords: gender, flood, women's vulnerability, climate change, Char Chapori region

Introduction:

Over 12 percent of India's land is vulnerable to floods and river erosion and 25 million Indians will be at risk of catastrophic flooding by 2040, a six-fold increase from the 3.7 million who faced the threat between 1971 and 2004 (India Spend Team 2019). States like Assam are flooded practically every monsoon, with catastrophic floods occurring at least every four years, eroding about 7.4 percent of the overall landmass since 1950 (Government of Assam). The National Commission on Floods estimates that 31.05 lakh hectares, or 40 percent of Assam's total land area of 78.5 lakh hectares, are subject to flooding of which *Char* areas that constitute five percent of Assam's land are the worst impacted (Government of Assam). This represents roughly 10 percent of the nation's entire flood-prone areas. From 1998 to 2015, floods affected about 30 percent of Assam's territory, or 22.54 lakh hectares, according to a report from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) (Sumedha, 2022). The increased frequency of

floods have been attributed to hydroelectric projects and dams in Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan that altered the course of the river and the rising impact of climate change (Rampini, 2022, p.1920).

Disasters like floods impact women and men differently due to the socially-structured, culturally-shaped gender-differentiated roles. Gendered role restricts women's access to the resources, socioeconomic skills, access to early warning to be prepared for impending danger, hence accentuating their fragility. Unfortunately, the policy discourse and adaptation strategies are uninformed of gendered dimensions of flood, natural disasters and displacement. The scope of this study includes highlighting the gendered impact of flood induced vulnerability in the *Char Chapori* regions of Assam with an aim of inducing gender sensitivity in policy discourse to better address the vulnerabilities of the impacted communities.

Research Methodology: This work attempts to foreground the gendered impact of flood on women in the regions of Assam based on the field exploration in *Char Chapori* areas of Barpeta district in April 2022. *Char* and *Chapori* are colloquial Assamese words for the tract of land surrounded by Brahmaputra river and are basically river islands. This paper combines the field observations based on semi structured interviews and discussions with 30 men and women residing in the Barpeta district to understand how gender differential shapes vulnerability. This district was selected as a field site due to the highest concentration of permanent and semipermanent Chars. The research questions taken up in this study are: What are the specific ways in which floods impact women? How do deeply entrenched patriarchal structures impact on the efforts towards coping and adaptation? Why are wider debates imbued with gender constructs, portray women as just the vulnerable victims and hardly take cognizance of women as active agents of social change?

Gender and Flood: An Assessment

Floods have been a rampant feature of the north east region of India, particularly Assam. Despite the fact that Assam has endured numerous destructive floods throughout its history, catastrophic floods have become frequent following the earthquake that occurred in the 1950s. Since then, disastrous floods have occurred in 1954, 1962, 1972, 1977, 1984, 1988, 1998, 2002,

2004, 2012 and most recently in 2019 2020 and 2022 (Bania, 2022,p.2). In recent times the problem has been compounded by a combination of ill planned developmental models, hydroelectric projects, big dams and embankments (Gohain 2008, p.19; Baruah 2012, p. 41; Sharma 2018, p.317). The rising impact of climate change is further aggravating the adversity (Rampini 2022, p.1920). The role of flood in defining the life and living of the impacted communities has been widely documented. However, it is crucial to map how gender differential shapes and magnifies the vulnerability index of women in such contingent situations. The burdens of environmental degradation and climate change are disproportionately shared by the vulnerable and marginalized sections (Singh, 2020, p.230). Women and poor people in the developing countries lack sufficient resources and the capacity to cope and adapt and will be at higher risk as highlighted by the Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007). In patriarchal societies, socially structured gender-differentiated roles of men and women and gender hierarchies create economic, social, political, and cultural barriers for women in the society. Women's ability to adapt is constrained by the pervasive societal gender injustices that result in disparities in property rights, information access, employment opportunities, and resource ownership and control (Parekh, 2008). Climate change has a compounding effect on women's pre-existing vulnerabilities such as state of inequality, lower income, and hindered access to resources and information (Mawby & Applebaum, 2020, p.210). A general state of illiteracy, low socioeconomic skills, hindered access to assets, lack of access to early warning danger preparedness amplify women's fragility (Brody, Demetriades & Esplen, 2008,p.2). They fare poor in disaster preparedness, mitigation, rehabilitation and on the other adaptive capacities.

A disproportionately high number of women and girls constitute the world's poor and marginalised due to pervasive gender inequalities and multiple poverty-inducing disadvantages (Brody, Demetriades & Esplen, 2008, p.2). Most of the poor live in rural areas with agriculture and associated activities as the main source of livelihood. Women are the primary caregivers in India as in many countries and are responsible for everyday management of goods for sustenance like food, drinking water, fuel, medicinal plants and so on. It must be mentioned here that women cannot be seen as a homogenous group. The impacts are not experienced uniformly by all women as they are mediated by specificities such as women's caste

affiliations, economic status, geographical location, education level, types of employment, access to market and so on. In this way, vulnerability of women is shaped by the intersection of these social stratifiers with gender identity.

The Case Study of the Char Chapori Region

A pattern of gender differentiation and women's vulnerabilities in the disaster process, in terms of risk, preparedness and responses have been well documented by WHO reports (WHO, 2002). Britton (1986, p.254) noted, "Disaster is a social product; vulnerability is contingent on social preconditions". Physical, mental, and cultural characteristics all have a part in coping with the crisis. For example, the tribal women *Mishing, Deori, Sonowal* and *Kacharis* of Majuli, the largest river island of the Brahmaputra river, feel at ease in the water. They are able to swim, manage boats and rafts, and live in traditional stilted buildings *Chang Ghars* that are suitable for the flood-prone terrain. Paddy harvesting is done by women in fields that are submerged in water. The water level is quite high during early floods, but women paddle through the river and stay submerged for long periods of time. Women from other cultures, on the other hand, are not prepared to live and thrive in this type of situation. Several women have been married into the villages from locations that are not flood-prone or are not as severely hit by floods and they are unprepared to cope in such areas. It is difficult for them to cope in a new scenario and with new effects, and as a result, they are more vulnerable than others. Living in dwellings on temporary raised platforms, they endure floods by remaining confined to their homes, sometimes standing on the raised platforms for weeks, and then starting over after the floods have subsided (Sen, Deka, Farzia et al., 2018).

The Brahmaputra creates *Chars* or small sandy islands that constitutes around five percent of Assam's total land area. During floods, suspended particles and the bed load combine to generate these almond-shaped formations. Flood and accompanying erosion dictate the fate of their residents on a regular basis, as chars are in a continuous flux, people relocate at least once every six-seven years as the braided river channels change their layout (Chakroborty, 2012, p.21). People have to build lifestyles in order to cope with the river's moods, which Dutta-Lahiri and Samanta (2013, pp.18-19) refer to as "Dancing with the rivers." This fact is

corroborated by the statement of one of the respondent from the *Char* area of Barpeta region in her interview that "they have organised their lives as per the mood of the river."[1] With a population of 25 lakh (as per the socioeconomic survey 2002-2003), Char dwellers are not visible to policymakers and are not considered a priority. 2002-2003 is the only survey organized by government agencies available for char areas (Directorate of Char Development Area). The struggle for survival is made more difficult by the fact that, due to repeated floods and cultivable erosion, land has dropped from 70 percent to 67.13 percent from 1992-93 to 2002-03 (Chakroborty, 2012, p.23). According to government records 6, 03, 754 bighas of char areas in nine districts of Assam were encroached upon in the last several years (Reporter, The Sentinel 2017).

The marginality of people residing in this area is compounded by the problems of land. For example, many respondents from the *Char* region during discussions reflected that on the one hand most of them lack legal papers of land entitlement, on the other hand, there has been a gradual decrease in the amount of cultivable land available per person.[2] Land, a vital resource for sustenance, has become a major source of conflict following floods, as a vast area of land has been buried in water, making identification and delineation of landowners difficult in the lack of formal paperwork that leads to conflict (Zaman, 1991, p. 673). Land, a vital source of income, provides stability and dignity to those who possess it, yet women own just approximately 10 percent of the land in Asia (Rao, 2011; Udas & Goodrich, 2018). This situation is extremely acute in *Char* regions where women barely own land entitlement. While being landless causes a variety of problems for the populace, another issue that arises with displacement is the citizenship issue unique to Assam. The question of keeping their citizenship identity documents is still the most crucial one for these Assamese citizens during the flood. For these people, losing their documents even in the event of a major flood could ultimately result in losing their citizenship, the fear shared by many men and women during the interviews.[3]

In post-flood conditions, access to health, education, sanitation, drinking water, and livelihood remains an issue as 91 percent of the population lacks access to safe drinking water. As a result, residents in the char areas are compelled to drink contaminated water, eat contaminated food,

and spend the majority of their time in an unclean and unhealthy environment. Women respondents from the field also stated that they carry additional burdens with in the family for arranging water, providing food and caregiving to the family.[4] Due to the sanitation demands specific to pregnancy and menstruation, the scarcity of clean water during floods further threatens hygiene and health for women and girls. Women often face significant stress and even health difficulties as a result of social stigmas surrounding menstruation and modesty norms that restrict them from attending to their needs. In Assam's Chars, for example, barely 1.4 percent of the population has access to proper toilet facilities (India Exclusion Report, 2019). The state sponsored welfare programmes and initiatives for health, nutrition, education, and financial independence do not reach these places.

Women have a tough time keeping the home running during and after floods, such as maintaining or disassembling the house as needed, cooking, finding drinking water, and managing the livestock. Moving cattle to higher ground, such as an embankment, is difficult during peak floods, while storage of fodder and a lack of cash compel the sale of a valued asset. With low personal assets, women shoulder the weight of household recovery by working as a labourer and selling or mortgaging possessions, including jewellery. Though men usually migrate to cities for livelihoods, women are largely restricted to their houses and rarely leave their villages. In this way their options are constrained as reported by them in the interviews.[5] The intersectionality of gender, class, and caste makes poorer and lower caste women even more vulnerable during and after disasters. Poor women may fall into the trap of sexually gratifying males in order to acquire aid or help, or to meet the requirements of their families. They are more likely to become victims of human trafficking as a result of psychological trauma, challenges, poverty, and a lack of career possibilities (Niaz, 2009, p.369).

Flood induced migration is gendered and socially embedded. The decision to migrate, which is usually made by men, causes psychological and emotional trauma for women because they bear the brunt of the responsibility of survival in a vulnerable environment with minimal resources. The example of Bangladeshi women relocating to India's *Chars* exemplifies this. In their studies on *Chars*, Kuntala Lahiri Dutt and Gopa Samantha (2013, p.131) noted that

women in interviews said they were better off in Bangladesh, where family and support networks were more extensive.

Flood and the Policy Discourse

The government has implemented both structural and non-structural measures to address and alleviate the flood problem. Embankments, Dams and Reservoirs, Natural Detention Basins, Channel Improvement, Catchment Area Treatment/Forestry, etc. are examples of structural measures. The non-structural measures include flood forecasting and warning, reservoir regulation, flood insurance and so on (See The Flood Hazard Atlas for Assam state, 1998-2015). Building embankments and dams are two controversial initiatives, while other policies are not well carried out in practice (Jharna and Siddique, 2023, p.6). The rapid release of a significant volume of water from numerous dams in eastern Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, etc. led the flood damages to multiply. In many instances, embankments are washed away and inflict abrupt destruction. Assam's economic growth has been halted by floods, which have been a persistent issue. This has led to dissatisfaction, fear, and frustration among the populace reflected from the protests against big dams (Gohain 2008, p.19; Baruah 2012, p.45; Sharma 2018, 317). In order to address the flood damage and associated internal displacement, it is now vital to implement reforms in the political, administrative, and intellectual spheres (Jharna, 2020). Floods must be addressed in a way that goes beyond simple infrastructure improvements and incorporates stakeholders from riverine communities into inclusive strategies. It's important to realise that river flooding is a natural occurrence that doesn't necessarily turn into a catastrophe (EPW Engage, 2021, p.12).

As far as public policies on flood are concerned, women are often 'voiceless' or lack the ability to express themselves in appropriate forums. The relationship between those who regulate water and those who are governed must be reflected in policy. However, it is crucial to understand that if the perspectives of the "governed," or the people whose lives revolve around these rivers, are not incorporated in policy creation, it will be impossible to accomplish environmentally just and sustainable practices (Sen, Deka, Farzia et al. 2018). Wetland and local water bodies should be revitalised in Assam. This will help the drainage system, which

can act as an outlet for surplus water and prevent water logging (Sumedha, 2022). Widely suggested solutions have been the requirement of stabilisation of the river, along with a coordinated response to the flood disaster. However, this appears a remote possibility as captured by Saikia's remarks from 1991 report that "the idea of a regulated Brahmaputra is simply a chimera" (Saikia, 2019). Moreover, it is important to live in harmony with the rhythm of the river, as Bania correctly pointed out (Bania, 2022, p.7).

The policy discourse must recognise that the people of impacted areas can also be active agents of change and not merely passive victims. The evidence can be noticed from the fact that various communities have existed in harmony with their surroundings despite environmental challenges. Over a period of time they develop methods of coping mechanisms and adaptation techniques based on local knowledge systems that may vary depending on geographical, cultural and societal circumstances. Certain indigenous tribes have adapted successfully to river movements by living in that environment or relocating temporarily, thanks to their water and river-centric culture and flood-plain dwelling, as well as their traditional knowledge. The ability to understand signals about the presence of rains and floods, the practise of traditional medicine and healing systems, knowledge and skills in swimming and manufacturing rafts and boats, house construction, fishing, and crop cultivation were all part of this indigenous expertise (Drabo & Mbaye, 2011, p.3).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be remarked that the flood has a distinct gendered impact, making the poor women of India poorer and increasing their vulnerability quotient. In order to be effective, the adaptation policies must embrace a conscious gender approach, factoring in the different dimensions of vulnerability. Informal institutional reforms, in which individuals at the community level become change agents, must be included in the policy agenda to improve the poor and vulnerable people's ability to adapt to natural disasters like flood. In Bihar, for example, an informal institution known as the 'Chakroya Vikas Pranali' was established to negotiate a set of regulations governing the usage of local land and water resources. The Mishing tribes of Assam are a good example of a resilient culture since they built their homes on machans, or raised bamboo platforms, to protect themselves from the yearly floods. Women

should also have an important part in policy formation and decision-making in the country. Efforts at the community level would aid in reducing the effects of climate change and environmental degradation (Roy & Venema, 2002;p. 78; Agarwal, 1997, 119). However, in order to include women and their experiences, it is critical that local and informal institutional arrangements reflect men and women's distinct demands, roles and responsibilities.

Notes and References

1. Based on the interview with the respondent from the field work in Char Chapori regions in Barpeta district conducted in the month of April 2022 by the authors.

2. As reported in the interviews with the respondents from the field work in Char Chapori regions in Barpeta district conducted in the month of April 2022 by the authors.

3. One of the most important indicators of citizenship identification is documentation. The acquisition of documents is also blatantly gendered. It is evident that women with low levels of education, poverty, and administrative procedural unfamiliarity are more likely to lack an ID.

4. Not just in Char Chapori regions, but this fact of additional burden and drudgery of women is a general feature observed all over India due to patriarchal settings and gendered roles of women and men.

5. The dynamics related to migration are different for women. The prolonged male migration from the rural poor raises the work demands on women and exacerbates their survival challenges.

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Reservation Policy in India- A Review

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Abstract

Reservation policy of government of India has been a topic of discussion among scholars, academicians, policy makers and laymen for many years after independence. Constitutional provision of reservation for backward castes has borne many benefits such as raising quality of life and standard of living of the target group. But they are still way behind the so-called upper castes in terms of representation at prominent leadership positions of government, public and private sectors of employment. Besides lack of sufficient representation, the backward castes suffer from frequent attacks and violence from upper caste individuals. Now, it seems that the backward castes are being targeted for being privileged in the case of getting reserved seats in employment at different sectors. So-called upper castes, though not all of them economically richer compared to backward castes, still believe themselves superior to backward castes in social status. In the present paper an attempt is made to review the effects of reservation policy particularly its effect on reducing caste-consciousness among Indian citizens. The author has given some suggestions for reducing caste-consciousness and resulting prejudice.

Keywords: caste, reservation, education, employment, equality

Constitutional policy of reservation is one of the many vital provisions of constitution which is mistakenly perceived as an end rather than as means to some better achievement (CPR India Mission). According to Khurana, such mistaken view is not only seen among those who oppose reservation policy but also among beneficiaries of reservation.[1] India is a land of many discrepancies. We can witness sharp differences in many spheres of life like standards of living, economic status, religious activities, clothing patterns, food choices etc. Geographical and

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[1] Khurana, N. (2017, November). The Way Forward for Caste-Based Reservations in India, *The Wire,* 2-3.

climatic conditions are vastly responsible for differences in clothing and food choices but economic disparity and social status disparity has roots in its social structure.

Indian history dates back to Indus valley civilization (3300-1300 BCE, Cristalinks.com) but caste system has its birth in Vedic period (1500-1100 BCE) when Aryans entered India with their own social system which was initially called Varna system and later turned into evil caste system which is largely responsible for economic and social inequality among present day Indian Hindus. Humiliating (to some sections of the society and humanity at large) caste system has many unique features that no other system of inequality has any similarity in the world. In this system there are four Varna's (*chaturvarna)* that have hierarchical structure with regard to social status. The Varna is at the top is called Brahman which had a traditional role of teaching and preaching. No other caste was allowed to perform activities or roles of Brahmans and if anybody tried to do so had to go through rigorous punishment. Second Varna, Kshatriya had people who had strongly built bodies hence were responsible for protecting community from outsiders' invasion and waging war, if required against enemies. Third Varna, Vaishya consisted of people who were good in business looked after trade, merchandise, and money-lending. Fourth Varna was Shudra (today's OBC's) which had people who were peasants and labourers who looked after agriculture and breeding as their primary occupations. The caste system had a fifth arrangement (not Varna) to the system which was called untouchables. These were people who were despised and hated for their 'impurity'. They were considered worse than animals. The untouchables' duty was to do menial, degraded and impure work. They were banned from performing any religious practice. As a result of having negligible material wealth they had many ill and crippled people among them. Their other occupations included hunting, arrow making, wood-work, execution and animal disposing. The untouchables were subjected to most discrimination against at the hands of nearly all upper four sections (Verna's). They were denied dignity of their life. The practice of untouchablity is still in place though in less severity and with differences in rural and urban life. The practice of untouchability left millions of so called untouchables with lack of respect, even internalised contempt of oneself. For the untouchables, there didn't seem to be any way to escape one's destiny of being slave to others.

It was only in the late nineteenth century British India that a provision of reservation for representation came into being when in 1874 the state of Mysore reserved 20% posts of state police department for Brahmins and remaining 80% for non Brahmins, Muslims, and Indian Christians. But the real effort and hope of liberation for shudras and untouchables came into being when Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, known as father of social revolution in India, suggested to Hunter commission, first Indian Education commission to inquire and investigate into the condition of education system, particularly primary education, that "one of the most glaring tendencies of Government system of high class education has been the virtual monopoly of all the higher officers under them by Brahmins. Phule further notes, If the welfare of Rayat (common masses) is at heart, if it is the duty of the government to check a host of abuses, it behoves them to narrow this monopoly day by day so as to allow a sprinkling of the other castes to get into the public services". Afterwards some attempts by revolutionary Indian thinkers like Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, paved the way forward for constitutional arrangements of reservation in areas like legislation, public services and education. Indian constitution came into operation from 26th January 1950 in which provision for joint electorates with reserved seats for SC's (Scheduled Castes) and ST's (Scheduled Tribes) in Lok sabha as well as state legislature was made vide article 330 & 332. This provision was limited only for 10 years vide article 334. It is article 16 (4) that provide reservation to all backward classes who are not adequately represented in the public services. Article 15 (4) empowers the state to make special provisions in favour of backward classes in matters of education

There are many misunderstandings about government's reservation policy among forward castes and also among backward castes, among educated as well as illiterate, among men as well as women. According to Khurana (2017) who has done a survey in Indian states of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh found that 52% of 1,270 adults in Delhi and 72% of 1,473 adults in UP have not heard of "reservations" or "*aarakshan*". She further found that only 38% of women in Delhi and 16% of women in UP had heard of it, compared to 56% of men in Delhi and 39% of men in UP. Among educated (beyond class X) adult men and women, 74% in Delhi and 61% in UP have heard of reservations. Among those who studied (up to class X or less), 29% of adults in Delhi and 20% of adults in UP have heard of reservations. In case of beneficiaries in Delhi, only 37% of adult Dalit men and women have heard of

reservations. UP also presents quite an abysmal situation. Only 19% of adult Dalit men and women have heard of reservation. Khurana concludes that, the implication of this lack of awareness about reservations is not just concerning but also a big challenge to achieving the goal of social equality in India. One of the most widespread misunderstandings about reservation policy is that people believe that reservation is provision of providing jobs to backward caste individuals who are less intelligent and less meritorious than the forward caste individuals. To reduce such misconceptions, it will serve to understand objectives of reservation policy. There are six objectives of reservation policy. *First* is to provide *protection* to backward classes from being discriminated on the basis of caste in the fields of education, employment and law making thus ensuring the availability of opportunities. *Second* is reservation in lok sabha, state legislatures and public services are expressly meant to ensure *representation* of backward classes in law making, policy making and also in their implementation by government and administration. *Third* is *exclusion* of those social groups who are over represented in government and administration so as to reduce the scope of abuse of their monopoly. *Fourth* is to integrate OBC's, SC's & ST's with each other as well as to integrate them with rest of the Indian society. *Fifth* is to take steps for abolishing the various Varna's and caste based social order. And *sixth* is establishing social and economic democracy by ensuring social justice. The objectives of reservation policy clearly show that reservation is not meant to provide jobs but to ensure sufficient representation in public services. *Second* misconception is that reservation, relaxation and concession are same. Those who are anti-reservationists mostly oppose relaxations (mistaking it as reservation) that are part of reservation without knowing the difference between the two. Different state governments have some parameters of relaxation given to reserved category candidates in order to ensure their participation. These parameters are – cut off marks, age, number of attempts, and fees structure. Reserved category candidates usually get benefits in these four areas of relaxation which is a matter of trouble for anti-reservationists. But instead of opposing the relaxation they tend to oppose reservation policy. Here, it should be noted that the provision of reservation is constitutional while the provision of relaxation is a much later added part by respective states and centre to facilitate. *Third* misconception is a widespread belief that reservation was meant only for ten years but it is still in place after sixty years of independence. Those having this belief hardly know that the kind of reservation that was

meant only for ten years was political reservation, that is, number of seats reserved for MLA's and MP's in legislative assemblies and Lok Sabha. Other types of reservation, reservation in education and employment, are not covered in this provision. It is the article 334 of the constitution that states the cease of the said provision after ten years of commencement of constitution. *Fourth* misconception is 50% ceiling of reservation. Many believe that reservation cannot exceed 50% of total seats available in all areas of reservation but as is the case, many states have crossed this mark with the justification of proportional representation of population in the respective state. Tamil Nadu has total count of reservation to 69%, Maharashtra has 68%, Chattisgarh- 58%, Madhya Pradesh-73%, Rajasthan-68%. It should be noted that Other Backward Classes (OBC), (earlier Shudras) constitute 52 % population of the entire country. Different states have given reservations to OBC's in different numbers but no state has given them their exact share that is 52% of the total seats. No state has even given more than 27% reservation to OBC's; hence depriving almost equal number of members from availing benefits of reservation. *Fifth* misconception is equating social backwardness with economic backwardness. Many believe that there is poverty in every caste but only individuals from SC, ST& OBC are the beneficiaries of reservation. Here, the difference between social backwardness and economic backwardness need to be addressed. Social backwardness is the cause of educational backwardness, economic backwardness and economic deprivation. Makers of constitution rightly believed that if social backwardness is removed there won't be any difficulty in economic progress. The poverty seen among SC, ST & OBC categories is the result of discrimination and inequality they suffered at the hands of forward castes while poverty among forward castes is due to their individual reasons, not due to social backwardness. Social backwardness among SC, ST, OBC is a *group* phenomenon whereas economic backwardness among forward castes is an individual phenomenon.

A study was done by Savitribai Phule Pune University and Jawaharla Nehru University on ownership of assets in which they found that 41% of total assets are owned by upper caste Hindus while 7.6% is owned by Hindu SC's and lowest 3.7% by Hindu ST's. Despite this government of India has secured 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in the year 2019. There is no authoritative study showing the effect of reservation policy on the standard of living and social status of SC's, ST's & OBC's but according to Shah and

co-authors (2006) there have been important improvements in living standards of backward castes in recent decades, but that equal treatment has certainly not been achieved. We tend to witness atrocities being done quite frequently to members of SC including women and other backward groups.

Merit Vs Efficiency:

Article 335 of the Indian constitution mentions efficiency, not merit. There are major differences between the two that need to be understood. Merit can be seen on the score card in terms of marks or grade while efficiency cannot be seen on paper but on actual ground in the form of performance output. Merit is quantitative while efficiency is qualitative. Merit is theory while efficiency is application; merit is acquisition of knowledge and information while efficiency is application of acquired knowledge. A candidate scoring more marks is regarded as meritorious while the one scoring less marks is regarded as less meritorious. But such comparison is valid only when other factors like soc-economic status, social backwardness, family environment, education of parents etc are constant in both the groups. According to a study by Deshpande and Weisskopf (2015) who studied the impact of reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) on productivity and efficiency in the Indian railways between 1980 and 2002[2]. They compared zones and periods of time with higher numbers of SC and ST employees with those with lower numbers, keeping other variables constant. They found no negative impact on productivity and efficiency in any area, and some positive effects in some areas of work. One of the authors speculate that "individuals from marginalized groups may be especially highly motivated to perform well when they attain decision making and managerial positions, because of the fact that they have reached these positions in the face of claims that they are not sufficiently capable and they may consequently have strong desire to prove their detractors wrong". In yet another study Bhavnani and Lee studied whether affirmative action worsen bureaucratic performance of IAS officers recruited through affirmative action in comparison with others who were recruited without any affirmative action in the area of implementation of anti-

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[2] Deshpande, A., & Weisskopf, T. E. (2014). Does affirmative action reduce productivity? A case study of the Indian railways. *World Development*, *64*, 169-180.

poverty program called mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Their results suggest that minority officers recruited through affirmative action perform no worse than others while minority officers recruited without affirmative action perform slightly better than others. The authors further note that equity does not come at the cost of efficiency.

Equal Participation: An ideal proposal

No fragmented society can make progress; it should have nearly all, or their representatives in the proportion of their population, productive adult population involved in nation building one way or the other. Great sociologist Emile Durkheim [3]in his popular book, *Suicide* mentions two kinds of suicide that can be seen as two extreme ends on a hypothetical scale of social inclusion. One end is egotistical suicide and the other is altruistic suicide. According to him, Egotistical suicide can take place when a person believes himself or herself to be above and greater than the society. In this state of mind he finds himself detached from others; since other are no equal to him, he tries to separate himself from others. In this state of being, since he has achieved nearly all goals that were significant to him, he is unable to find any 'good' reason to live further and ultimately commits suicide. The other type, altruistic suicide is more relevant for our purpose. Durkheim is of the opinion that altruistic suicide is a phenomenon of inferior society. He explains Indian tradition of *Sati* is a form of altruistic suicide, where grieving widow finds her existence meaningless without her husband. She had to commit suicide by burning herself alive with her deceased husband. Durkheim is also of the opinion that suicide in military is also an altruistic suicide. Personnel serving in military have less scope for their personal life. For them interests of their nation is of primary importance. With the sense of loss of their personal identity and ambition, they may lose interest in life and may find it easy to end their life. The same principle can be applied to all those backward castes of Indian society who don't find themselves to be important individuals of their country. They have less significant role to play in social life than others; who are not taken into consideration in matters of importance

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[3] Durkheim, E. (2005). *Suicide: A study in sociology*. Routledge, 166-260

and who have suffered humiliation and lack of any dignity for thousands of years. Their life becomes unimportant in comparison of others; hence they may develop dislike of their life. The choice of suicide becomes easier compared to the insults and hardship in their life as has happened in case of suicide of Mumbai medical college student, Payal Tadvi. Lack of participation of majority of its people in important social activities will have dual loss to any government. One is loss of life of the left out individuals and the other is lack of progress of nation as a result of lack of participation of majority of the people in important areas of development. Thus, any government, particularly where democracy is in place, should try to give opportunity to each and every section of its population to participate in major areas of development like education, employment, business and politics. It is only by providing equal opportunity to participate in these areas that any nation can think about development. Reservation based on proportion of particular group in total population of the country should be provided for ensuring equal participation in government as well as private sectors of employment and education. Even if it crosses hypothetical 50%mark, it won't affect development of the country as suggested by studies by Deshpande &Weisskopf and Bhavnani & Lee[4]. The following scheme is suggested for considering revision of reservation policy in India.

Table-1. Showing suggestive reservation for different groups as per their proportion in total population

Social Category	Percentage of population in the country	Suggested Participation	
		Males	Females
Forward caste groups- Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Rajput, Thakurs, Vaishyas, Baniyas	16%	8%	8%
Religious Minorities	8%	4%	4%

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[4] Bhavnani, R. R., & Lee, A. (2018). Does Affirmative Action Worsen Bureaucratic Performance? Evidence from the Indian Administrative Service, 10-14.

OBC, NT, DNT	52%	26%	26%
SC	16%	8%	8%
ST	8%	4%	4%

Adapted from: Constitutional Policy of Reservation, CPR India Mission (2019), 15

As shown in table 1, providing equal opportunity to each sections of the population based on their proportion in the total population will be a significant step towards creating social equality in India.

Change of Mindset: Reducing caste consciousness

Caste system, like other systems of social categorisation is man- made. Dr. Ambedkar called Indian caste system *a division of labourers, rather than labour*.[5] Constitution of India gave its citizens right to engage in any profession of their choice. At present, after 60 years of independence, caste-specific professions have reduced to a great extent but not the caste-consciousness. Caste of a person still plays an important role to judge an individual's capability. If a person happens to be a member of so-called higher/forward caste, he or she is regarded as superior in many characteristics than other, backward caste individuals. His or her caste becomes primary criteria of his merit or credibility. Conversely, a person, even if better in many desirable skills than the forward caste person, is rejected and dejected as being unworthy of achieving anything desirable. Even in present day, the moment a person starts introducing himself or herself, others start guessing about his caste based on his surname. The other more relevant information that he provides become receding compared to his name (caste). As if caste is on their mind all the time, its applications can be seen from

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[5] Roy, Arundhati. *The doctor and the saint: Caste, race, and annihilation of caste: The debate between BR Ambedkar and MK Gandhi*. Haymarket Books+ ORM, 2017.168-239.

choosing a mate to finding a restaurant for food. Directly or indirectly such behaviour is fuelling casteism and making it stronger day by day. This in turn leads to fragmented society and as mentioned earlier, a fragmented society cannot make progress. In order to make progress and grow as a one nation, reducing caste-consciousness remains one of the major objectives before policy makers of this country. To reduce caste- consciousness, efforts should be made on both governmental and personal levels. Any Government, by using its mechanism of law making and policy making can help reduce caste-consciousness to some extent but major changes can take place when the efforts are taken by individuals. One way of making it possible is when the *other* person introduces himself or herself we should see his or her capability, qualifications, interests and all other relevant skills while not caring about his caste. We can also see similarities and differences in him and other such individuals in terms of character strengths. As some psychological literature show, individuals throughout the world are more similar than different (Baumgardner, & Crothers, 2009)[6]. Knowing this we may come to know that he and the other (forward caste) person are similar in many human qualities. This may reduce hatred towards him and his caste. Another psychological remedy for reducing caste-consciousness is a popular *contact hypothesis*. Hundreds of studies have been done on contact hypothesis since its first introduction by great psychologist Gorden Allport who believed that sufficient contact with the other race or prejudiced person will help reduce prejudice and foster better relationships with them.[7] Majority of the studies have confirmed Allport's assertion that fulfilling conditions (given by Allport) contact leads to reduction in prejudice. One such study has been done by Barnhardt (2010) in Hyderabad, India.[8] She studied whether having religiously different neighbours affect attitude about other religion and also preference of inter-religious living. She had Hidus and Muslims as study groups and found that increased proximity and

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[6] Steve, Baumgardner, and Crothers Marie. *Positive psychology*. Pearson Education India, 2014, 105-133

[7] Allport, Gordon Willard, Kenneth Clark, and Thomas Pettigrew. "The nature of prejudice." (1954), 488-490.

[8] Barnhardt, S. (2009). Near and Dear? Evaluating the Impact of Neighbor Diversity on Inter-Religious Attitudes. *Unpublished working paper*, 19-28.

interaction affect attitudes. Greater exposure to Muslims improves Hindus' explicit attitude towards Muslims and also increases their willingness to stay with Muslims. Such arrangements in home town planning by government can help in reducing discrimination based on caste and religion. Being known about such studies caste-conscious individuals can introspect about which groups of individuals' caste they are mostly prejudicial about and try to spend some time with them in order to have realistic perceptions about them. Hence, in order to understand each other and have a truly equal society where no one feels inferior to others and no one treats others as inferior, even physically and mentally handicapped ones are treated fairly, and women are perceived equal to men then only ideal of equal society is possible. If caste system is man-made then it can be unmade and a new egalitarian system can be created to live happily.

Concluding Remarks:

In the present paper an attempt has been made to understand and discuss nature of reservation policy of India-its past, present and possible future. Considering historical roots of inequality in the form of Varna system which gave birth to caste system has been discussed. Reservation policy has been discussed with reference to its backdrop of caste system. Foundation of reservation policy in India was laid down by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule who tried to bring to the notice of British government disproportionate representation of Indians in the state services. There has been an argument in case of merit of backward caste individuals. They are seen as less meritorious compared to other (forward castes) caste members. But as is given in Indian constitution, efficiency is more important. A study by Deshpande and Weisskoff (2014) also shows that railway employees of backward castes are not less in efficiency; in fact they are slightly better than those who are employed without the benefit of reservation. Further, the importance of equal participation considering proportion of every caste in society has been discussed by discussing Durkheim's idea of altruistic suicide. As per the proportion of different castes and categories in total population, a new suggestion in the form of increased participation of OBC has been given. Lastly, two techniques, change in priorities when facing a stranger and contact hypothesis have been discussed for reducing caste-consciousness. It is suggested that reducing caste-

consciousness may greatly help in reducing and religion related discrimination and lead to more equal society.

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Decision Making and Women Empowerment: Women Component Plan vs. Microcredit Self-Help Groups

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Abstract

This paper analyses the decision-making capacity acquired by two groups of women empowerment initiatives, namely, Women Component Plan (WCP), Kerala and Microcredit Self-Help Groups (MSHGs), Tamil Nadu. With 233 women participants from each programme, an interview schedule collected information on household, family, personal and community decisions of women as being part in their programmes. The inference of the study was that majority of the women belonging to WCP made choices of their own in real terms and in case of MSHGs, women were jointly taking part in decisions along with their male partners. Spousal sole decisions are very few in both the programmes.

Key words: Decision-making; Microcredit-Self Help Groups; Women Component plan; Empowerment

Introduction

Women empowerment is not a new claim yet it persists to evolve through every new arenas it come across. The progressive development of women, which we term 'empowerment', is marked by the acquired power and freedom of an individual within the existing structure beyond its oppressing bodies (Inglis 1997). As put by Gandhi in 1947, freedom and power is not men's weapon of rule, it is also the tool of women to lead her life peacefully in her own way. When empowerment has numerous ways of defining it, the real task lies in the way it is measured. Policy approaches have shifted from the concept of 'welfare' to 'development' and to 'empowerment' in over the past thirty years (Kumar 2021). The emphasis now is on women's inclusion in decision-making, bargaining power, self-directive, autonomy and their involvement in policy framing (Narayan 2005, 3). Sole decision-making or being part in the process is something that is looked over by feminist writers, activists, learned professionals, and development thinkers for empowering women. This is highlighted when women are active in household decision-making and are being empowered and advance their

family (Misra et al. 2021). Now, the task rests in enquiring how women receive such high-end capacity, decision-making within her regular chores.

Women empowerment initiatives in India

For the above said task to gain decision-making power women are provided with numerous initiatives. Specifically, in India since independence, there are abundant empowerment initiatives that are brought front by every government for the inclusive development of women (Ministry of Women and Child Development 2022). Since Fifth five year plan, the focus have shifted from women survival to women's advancement as of setting up National commission for women, reservation of seats in local bodies, endorsing international convention to secure equal rights to women, and adopting sessions of gender equality and development. The ninth five-year plan significantly altered the lives of women and created a full development environment through economic and social policies, and giving equal access to participation and decision making in social, political and in economic scenario (Ministry of Women and Child Development 2015). Such are the two programmes, Women Component Plan (WCP) in Kerala and Microcredit Self-Help Groups (MSHGs) in Tamil Nadu. Among the states in India, Kerala has the greatest sex ratio, following which Tamil Nadu stands the second state with higher sex ratio (Census of India 2011). These states with a large female population are undertaking a number of women empowerment initiatives to improve the status of women. The above mentioned two programmes have been considered for its impact on women empowerment and gaining her social acceptance in the family and at the community level.

Women Component Plan (WCP), Kerala

As the ninth and tenth five year plan of India envisioned gender mainstreaming as its important objective, then raised a component called Women Component Plan (WCP). The objective of the plan was to empower women and transform the real institutions of local governance. It was mandated that at least ten per cent of funds to be allocated for women-specific programmes from all departments in Kerala. WCP was that programme which pooled all women centric resources together for ensuring improvement in the income and status of women. WCP has very specific guidelines that can be included in the plan as housing schemes for women headed families, and development of micro enterprises owned by women, among which there shouldn't be any involvement of adult males. WCP projects are organised and implemented through SHGs, Kudumbashree,

neighbourhood groups and cooperative societies (Institute of management in Government 2015) which are more effective as they yield benefits to the women and community at large. A review was done on WCP and it was recognized at the local government level with some marked achievements (Khan et al. 2001, 5). The felt needs of the people were realised through local body formulated projects, addressing of strategic gender needs, selecting of disadvantaged beneficiaries among women, ensuring women participation in all spheres of WCP activities, capacity building, enhancement of decision making powers and considerable enrichment of confidence in making decisions were some of the chief achievements made by WCP (Vanishree 2008, 8-10).

Microcredit-Self Help Groups, Tamil Nadu

Similar to WCP, the value and applicability of SHGs were acknowledged from ninth five year plan for carrying out grassroot development initiatives. In spite of the establishment of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh in 1975 and National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) in 1986, SHGs' connection with bank and credit system did not develop until 1992. After getting linked with banks and other financial institutions, SHGs turned to be a microcredit providing SHGs that aims for the growth and development of women involved in the programme. A Microcredit-SHG consists of ten to twenty homogenous group who voluntarily join with a shared interest and their social interaction, credit, and savings are the tools of empowerment. Likewise Davidson and Sanyal in 2017 examined the social network of microcredit SHGs and found that it has given them access to more resources and reduced gender disparities. Bose in 2013 explored the economic empowerment of women through SHGs in the northern districts of Tamil Nadu and found that the women's income rose when they joined SHGs and did not stop there but also benefitted family and community. SHG guidelines are framed in such a manner that every activity of the group like conducting group meetings, prioritising loan applications, fixing repayment schedule and rate of interest and maintenance of books are all carried out by women themselves. This shows the indirect pragmatic way of making women, the decision makers in all activities she is involved in (Commissionerate of Town Panchayats 2020) and it also encourages the collective identity of women in bringing confidence to her and provide her with social and individual space to survive (Nielsen and Tripathy 2020).

Review of Literature

An impact study on a microcredit program was conducted to analyse the empowerment of women in Vietnam. Women of the study perceived that household finances and purchase of small personal items must be made by them individually and to jointly decide on the family planning (Dineen and Le 2015). Another perception of women were seen by Kumar and Maral in 2015 who noticed women taking part in decisions regarding daily expenses, personal expenses, savings, social activities and health issues but they were not part in asset building, children education and family disputes and settlement. Most of the working women in this study jointly took decisions on household issues in comparison to non-working women. It was also found that there is a significant association between access to resources and socio-economic status on women's participation in family decision-making (Khare 2022). All these show some form of segmentation in decision-making process and traditional role carried in households. Yet it was seen that self-reliance in managing activities and decision-making ability at household were reflective through self-help group effectiveness. This was inferred when examining women SHG structure and functions in terms of their financial performance, self-reliance and decision-making ability at household (Kumar et al. 2018). Another study enquired the control of income earned by SHG beneficiaries which is a dimension of economic empowerment and concluded that 50 per cent were spent by the respondents themselves and 30 per cent were jointly decided with husbands (Husain et al. 2013). All studies have highlighted that women's active role in decision-making only decides her empowerment level and, we pursue further to test the autonomy enjoyed by women of two empowerment initiative programmes in the study.

Methodology

The study undertaken for the purpose of realising the decision-making capacity of women who are part of WCP and MSHGs programme is a comparative study between the two programmes. Primary data were collected from 233 respondents from WCP and MSHGs each among three regions and blocks in Malapuram district of Kerala and Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu respectively. Multistage random sampling technique was implemented to sort out the samples from the population. An interview schedule enquiring into the basic socio-demographic characters, decisions on household purchases and management, family decisions, decisions on personal life and community development were taken into account. Descriptive analysis were carried out and

results are qualitatively interpreted with field experience of the researcher and has been discussed for further outcomes.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic profile of the respondents

As a cross-sectional study, districts from two states were taken into consideration and details regarding the respective empowerment initiatives were collected. To brief out, a detailed description of the essential characteristics are let as follows. Starting with age, majority of the respondents are found crowded under the age categories 30 – 49 in both the programmes which indicate the active participation of married middle-aged women into the empowerment initiatives for their family growth and for self-development. Results were quite unsatisfactory when respondents of WCP belonging to Christian Community and MSHGs belonging to Muslim community were failed to cover. This spurs the doubt on availability of the respondents in particular categories; however it is to be noted that religion did not make any significant impact on the decision-making ability of the respondents in either of the programme. Stunning results came out in knowing the educational qualification of the respondents where 18 per cent of MSHG members were illiterate who did not attend formal schooling but in case of WCP, all the respondents had minimal level of school education. But among the MSHG respondents who had undergone formal schooling, three-fifth had completed secondary level of 10th or 12th, whereas in WCP, parallel three-fifth had completed only their primary schooling. Community-wise categorisation showed that both the programmes were largely popular among OBCs making maximum contribution, yet the study did not fail to cover SCs and STs who accounted around one-sixth of the samples collected. When relating the type and head of the family, results were quite usual for its patriarchal nature displaying that majority being nuclear families among MSHG, still a total of four-fifth were headed by male members in the family and the case was similar in WCP too. WCP had higher number of joint family nearly to three-fourth, again it too had majority headed by their male members. Same results were carried for ownership of house too, where majority of women belonging to both the programmes claimed living in their own houses but the ownership was either ancestral or by their spouses. Following the major demographic description, further analysis has been made on decision-making capacity of women in following sections.

Decision-Making Capability of WCP and MSHG members

Women's decision making index has been calculated based on freedom of movement, involvement in family matters, decision in purchase of home assets and family planning (Pandey et al. 2021) and also education and employment of women were important in determining the empowerment and involvement in family decision-making (Yusof 2015). Same is emphasised by Misra et al. 2021 when measuring women's decision-making in household, economic, and society which established that empowerment is ensured with household decision making and by her position in family. The interview schedule of the study contained twenty-five items denoting various household, family, personal and community practices, purchases and management that is carried out by a marginal family as their regular course of life as notified by the above mentioned studies. Likert scale with three points were used to analyse the decision-making capability of the women respondents and the reliability score with Cronbach's alpha has been attained as 0.85.

Overall results have stated that women of WCP have showed higher decision-making power in relation to their male partners. In all management, WCP women had stood in par with their counterparts in family; also they take joint decisions with their partners. A similar finding was attained in West Bengal saying that SHG women with higher decision making level emphasise joint decisions in family achieving peace and equality in the development of the family (Pal 2014). Very few WCP women, that is, less than 15 per cent rely on their spouses for decisions at the household, family or community level.

However, in case of MSHG, it is to be noted that women jointly take decisions and it is not considered a sole business. This is aided in another study where majority of the decisions are jointly done and even if they're seem to be sole decision-maker, they are one who live in solitude and have no choice (Sharma and Kota 2019). But in cases of household management for MSHG women, like buying of groceries, house maintenance, making regular savings and having control over expenditure, most of the women handle it alone without male interruption. These results are supported in an intervention programme concluding that majority of women decided on food preparation and purchases, health care but less power in household purchases (Haque et al. 2022); and a Malaysia's microcredit programme displayed women making household economic decisions along with their spouses as their involved in small scale economic activities (Al-Mamun et.al 2014). This was true even in the case of MSHG women, as three-fourth of the respondents were involved in some kind of income-earning as being involved in agricultural related, microenterprises, craft based work or even as daily wage earners. In continuing the findings of MSHG, another study in Bhutan using quantitative and qualitative

surveys investigated women's participation in domestic decision-making process and showed that gender equality was ensured in social and household life of women (Sariyev et.al 2020).

Weird result has come out when MSHG women rely on their spouses for their personal growth and development and do not make individual decisions even in cases of expressing their will, visiting their parents or friends, spending their leisure time or to opt for their job. As the same is reinforced by Misra et al. in 2021 saying that her freedom of movement is restricted due to unsafe environment and cultural practices, but is contradicted in findings of Yogendrarajah in 2013 who saw women's decision-making in visiting their relative's house and taking care of themselves having a positive moderate relationship with empowerment.

The difference between both the programmes is the key that is to be highlighted which reveals that when half of the WCP women enjoy autonomy in decision-making, similar half of the population belonging to MSHG has shared their negotiating power with their spouses and one-fourth of MSHG women have given the deciding authority exclusively to men. Similar to it, in a study taking Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) in Pakistan, Lassi et al. enquired into the empowerment of women and its indicators in 2021. The examination concluded that over half of the population was empowered and less than 40 per cent participated in joint decision-making. But less than 10 per cent of women participated in sole decision-making which again proved the results of MSHG. It is true when minor decisions of educating children were left to women but most major decisions like buying an asset remain in the hands of men (Kumar 2013). Among the internal dimensions of decision-making, all the constructs have shown higher percentage for WCP members than MSHG members, yet it is fair to apprehend that even among MSHG all the constructs have displayed joint decisions to be in balance with rest of the results which indicates a growing freedom for women under the programme. In general, both the empowerment programmes are doing its task of vesting women with power and making them conscious of rights in terms of their mundane activities and also allowing them to participate at the community level.

Decision-making and other variables

While relating decision-making with age of the respondents, it was observed that in both cases, as women grow older, their joint decision-making power increases. Even though all the age categories of women in WCP symbolise autonomy in negotiating, highly concentrated middle aged groups (30-49) of MSHG has indicated

only jointness as opposing any individual decisiveness. As the findings convey, religion, community, education, type, head and size of the family or even number of years being part in the WCP programme do not have any difference in the decision-making power of them. This is exactly contradictory to a study by Haque et al. in 2022 who found that decision-making is influenced by women's age, education, number of children, and size of the family. All the categories have marked individual freedom of women in deciding things at the household, family, personal and at community level. Probably, this can be attributed for the literacy rate of Kerala in general or in specific that women undergoing minimal of education and having decision-making power are able to decide for their children's education too. This is supported in a study by Luz and Agadjanian when they examined the relationship between rural women's decision-making and enrolment status of primary school-age children in Mozambique in 2015. It was inferred that women with higher levels of decision-making autonomy have a stronger say in preferring daughters' schooling.

In regard with type of family, women claim more autonomy on husband income and self-decision in terms of career, family tour or physical mobility when they are in nuclear family set up and if they are also an earning member (Khare 2022). This holds true in our study as WCP women living in joint family and/or if the head of the family is their in-laws, then the decisions are jointly held by WCP women along with their counterparts, whereas in rest cases of nuclear family it is solely relied upon women only.

When it comes to MSHG, as opposing the WCP findings, at the same time in line with overall summary, all the sub-categories had shown that decisions are jointly taking place in concern with both male and female members of the household. Specifically to mention, in joint families and in families whose headship is a man, decisions are most likely to be taken by spouses and few instances among the same had proven to be taken together. In the remaining all other classifications, women of MSHG are considered and consulted while taking decisions for the welfare of the family and for themselves but are not fully relied upon to play the role individually. This finding is also supported by a study that took place in Ghana where it is was found that women do not take individual decisions as they are shaped by patriarchy and cultural gender roles in household but they tend to use tricks on men to get the decisions in favour of them and even if women do participate in household decision-making, men remain the sole authority (Fuseini et al. 2019).

As stated above, women belonging to the study do not have ownership of their dwelling place or any other land in possession. Yet, women of WCP have claimed higher rights in decision-making and women of MSHG have relative joint rights. This is in contrary with a proved hypothesis, which states women's ownership of

land solely or jointly is associated with women's participation in financial and reproductive decision-making (Behrman 2017).

Conclusion

The study analysed the decision-making capacity of women belonging two different empowerment initiative programmes that are organised and funded within the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Respondents of the study had clearly emphasised their role in decisions within the household for their self, family and also at the community level. The findings have clearly stated that women into both the programmes, in general have shown improved level of decision-making and they have found out their ways of coming out of their traditionally bounded patriarchy. Intriguing specifically, it is to be noted that women of WCP are even more privileged in deciding than women of MSHGs which might be due to its literacy level and traditional matrilineal structure found in Kerala. Even if the study had exclusively covered the dimensions of decision-making, the influencing characters for the dependent variable is found limited. A detailed description over the cultural and family practices and on the traditional gender roles within the household is required for making further interesting results from the study. Yet the study has remained an eye opener in comparing different programmes that are entitled to accomplish empowerment to women which might be further developed.

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Crime, Capital and Character: The Godfather and the Politics of Gangster Movies in India

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This paper deals with the history and politics of Indian cinema through the prism of Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather. As in the rest of the world, The Godfather influenced a significant number of movies, including some official remakes, in India. In addition to incorporating the thematic and cinematic aspects of The Godfather, these movies also inherited the strong cultural, social, political and economic commentary of The Godfather. The paper analysis how each Indian film that The Godfather inspired spoke to its immediate socio-political context and how did it adapt the moral and ethical questions raised in The Godfather to the Indian reality. The paper will also enlist these moral and ethical questions raised by The Godfather before delving deep into the Indian reality.

Keywords: Cinema, Identity, Culture, History, Godfather, Crime, Capitalism.

Introduction

The Godfather, based on a novel by Mario Puzo and directed by Francis Ford Coppola, is considered one of the greatest classics of Hollywood. *The Godfather* was followed by a sequel in 1974, titled *The Godfather II*, the first sequel to win the award for Best Picture at the Oscars. Subsequently, Coppola made a third film titled *The Godfather III* in 1990, completing the trilogy. This trilogy, especially the first two movies, is highly regarded worldwide. The first movie was voted the second greatest movie of all time by a poll conducted by the American Film Institute in 2007, while the second movie occupied the thirty-second spot in the same ranking. The influence of *The Godfather* is evident from the pervading nature of its style, themes and methods in almost every gangster movie consequently made, both within Hollywood and across the globe.

This paper explores the significance of *The Godfather* for world cinema and popular culture, particularly in the history of Indian cinema. Such an understanding would necessitate understanding political, sociological, economic and cultural contexts operating within a spatial and temporal domain, both within The Godfather and around it when it was released in 1972, which would be done in the first part of the essay. The second part will

look at the influence *The Godfather* has exerted on films in India and the socio–political, economic and cultural contexts of the adaptations of *The Godfather* in India.

The Godfather: The Saga

The Godfather is a story of the Corleone crime family, whose patriarch, Don Vito Corleone (real surname Andolini), migrated from Corleone in Sicily, Italy, in the early years of the twentieth century. An orphan whose whole family was murdered by a mafia boss in Italy, the trilogy is a story of the rise of Vito Corleone as a mafia boss in America and the pinnacle of power attained by his family under his son, Michael Corleone. The first movie introduces a middle-aged Vito Corleone and his family, which consists of his wife, elder son and heir-apparent Sonny Corleone, second son Michael, daughter Connie and foster son Tom. The arch of the first movie deals with handing over of the baton of the family by Vito to Michael and the circumstances of the transformation of Michael from a disinterested member of the family to its ruthless head (Browne 2000, 5-6).

The second movie of the trilogy simultaneously deals with the circumstances around the early life and the beginnings of Vito Corleone and the pinnacle of Michael's power coupled with the breakdown of his family. The principles, circumstances and methods of Vito Corleone are juxtaposed against the principles, circumstances and methods of Michael Corleone. The story of Vito is the story of the beginnings of the Corleone family and empire. In contrast, the story of Michael is the zenith of the Corleone empire, which is, however, accompanied by the loss of that family, at least for the family members (Jess-Cooke 2009, 42-43).

The last movie, *The Godfather III*, released sixteen years after the second, is the culmination of Michael's story. The film sets up of destruction of the Corleone empire and the family. The movie is considered the weakest of the trilogy and is not regarded as highly as the other two. The movie was recut by Francis Ford Coppola and rereleased in 2020, titled *Mario Puzo's The Godfather Coda: The Death of Michael Corleone*. Coppola claimed that this was the intended cut he and Puzo wanted to put out. The story primarily deals with the ghosts of Michael's past, his elusive search for legitimacy, his relationship with his children who live with his divorced wife, and finally, the penance for his actions. Retrospectively, these movies have been seen as a crime genre, a tragedy and a commentary on American life. A significant reason for this was that its story appealed to the immediate socio-political context it was released (Phillips 2004, 134-137).

The Socio-Political and the Cultural Aspects of the Godfather

The Godfather was released when the United States of America was going through a sociological churning. The Vietnam War had given rise to a huge anti–war movement and a large body of powerful counter–culture in America. The unemployment rate was high, creating a sense of disillusionment with the American Dream. It was also the moment that neo-liberalism was emerging as a predominant philosophical and economic worldview, necessitating broad policy changes in the USA, which significantly exacerbated the socio-economic conditions of the large working classes in the country. The story of *The Godfather* was released into such a political, social and cultural context and fed into all of this. The tussle between morals and safety, business and family and the dominating effects of the capitalist neo–liberal structure on society from the crux of the trilogy. *The Godfather* has been looked at as a story of "American capitalism on family life" (Shadonian 2003, 268), "an Aristotelian tragedy" (Leitch 2002, 103), and "Coppola's attempt at a Marxist analysis of society" (Hess 1985, 83).

The Godfather, ironically, starts with the dialogue, 'I believe in America. America has made me my fortune,' seemingly praising its liberal and capitalist structure. However, Coppola immediately undertakes a scathing critique of the system through the character of Bonasera, who utters these famous lines. Bonasera, a Sicilian, follows these lines with a plea for justice to Don Vito Corleone for his daughter. He is forced to ask for Vito's help because the American system has failed to provide him with justice, forcing him to take recourse through extra–legal means. Don Vito, on his part, "manages to be at once generous, judicious, and unapologetically criminal" (Leitch 2002, 119), agreeing to fulfil the request only when Bonesera asks him for friendship and agreeing to call him 'Godfather' effectively binding himself in a relationship of subordinate loyalty. This is the first instance where Coppola manages to show how business interests can be beautifully masqueraded as social and cultural ties, efficaciously robbing the latter precepts of any relevance.

Michael Corleone, the protagonist of the trilogy and the youngest son of Don Vito, is a war veteran looking forward to a successful and legal American life. Instead, he gets entangled in his 'family business' for the protection of his family, first on account of his love for his father and concern for his safety and, later, as the head of the family after the assassination of his elder brother, Sonny – the heir apparent. The notion of his family's safety leads Michael from being a war veteran, a law-abiding American, to a ruthless Mafia who transgresses even the morals and ethics his father embodied while dealing with people inside and outside his

family, particularly the other mafia dons and the Italian community. It is, therefore, ironic how "Vito's Olympian insistence on justice and family values gives way first to Sonny's impulsive, unquenchable appetite for vengeance, then to Michael's apparently more judicious, but actually more Machiavellian, handling of the family's struggles to adapt to a treacherously changing world" (Leitch 2002, 120-121). In this instance, the family values become subservient to the larger capitalistic drive of accumulation – of power. Thus, even though Michael ventured into Mafia to protect his family, at the end of the first movie, he has largely drifted away from his family.

The second movie takes over in more depth the inherent relationship between capitalism, individualism, social relations and social mobility. *The Godfather Part II* always possessed a loose metaphor—the metaphor of Michael Corleone as the society of the United States of America. The film juxtaposes the rise of Vito Corleone after his arrival from Italy and the degeneration of his son Michael some fifty years later. The film starts with quarantined Vito singing a song after arriving in America, signalling a dream. Michael's first sequence shows his son participating in his first communion. This partly reflects a fulfilment of a dream. However, as soon as the camera takes us to the party at Michal's Nevada compound, celebrating the communion, we realise its hollowness. Economic mobility has been attained, but family affiliation and community affiliations have completely degenerated.

Capital, Business and Identity: The Undertones of the Godfather

Business reigns supreme in everyday life. Family and community ties have been reduced to business relations and have to be shown concern as long as certain profit is extracted. This necessitates that he forgoes his moral uprightness and turns into a ruthless, unforgiving Don who even kills his brother–in–law at the end of the first movie and murders his brother at the end of the second. George Lukacs, while defining the essence of the commodity – structure, claims that "Its basis is that relation between men takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity', an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people" (Lukács 1971, 83). This basic understanding of relations under a capitalist mode of commodity – structure can loosely be applied to *The Godfather,* where relations between biological as well as the broader family of a mafia acquire a business quotient that drives them. Michael's killing of Sollozo and McCluskey is 'nothing personal but strictly

business." Michael's second marriage to Kay "is a marriage of convenience, an assimilationist fantasy designed to bring him a step closer to his oft-proclaimed dream of making the Corleone family legitimate. – The quintessentially American fantasy of legitimacy" (Leitch 2002, 122).

This is, nonetheless, not Michael's creation but is derived from the rise of his father half a century ago from a petty criminal to one of the most feared dons of America. Vito's relations are based on 'favours and services,' thus personifying a business logic at its core. The Don and the Caporegimes in *The Godfather* are based on business relations. This logic works as a seed for Michael's subsequent degeneration. Thus, the roots of Michael's destruction go back to his father, which John Hess terms as a 'causal relationship between the father and the son" (Hess 1985, 86). Business (signifying capitalism for Coppola) leads to individualisation. Father's advent into business with a logic of capitalism at its core would inadvertently lead to his son's individualisation.

John Hess argues that "Michael as America embodies a basic contradiction in capitalism between the luminous bourgeoisie ideals of peace, freedom, opportunity, love and community and the harsh, brutal realities of an irrational economic system which encourages these ideals and feeds off their unobtainability" (Hess 1985, 86). Michael's primary concern may be the safety of his family. However, the system, which he is a part of, feeds on individualism and profit – although it may use the language of other values to drive the desire for accumulation. Thus, Michael goes on accumulating power and prestige, failing to realise how it is not leading to his family's safety but to its inevitable destruction. Michael kills his own brother, separates from his wife and ends up being a lonely man amidst vast wealth and power.

The Marxist concept of alienation gives us an essential insight into Michael's ordeal. Marx's analysis of estrangements argues that a capitalist mode of production invariably leads to the alienation of a human from his work, followed by nature, fellow human beings and finally to itself. Although the character of Michael Corleone does not portray alienation precisely, as Marx puts it, chronologically and a complete set, Michael does have some aspects of the last two. Michael, as a part of this capitalist endeavour for bourgeoisie values of accumulation, power, social mobility and legitimacy, not only gets alienated from his fellow beings (family, community etc.) but also from himself (and his historically created human possibilities (Bottomore 1985, 11) of leading a normal American life). Hence, at the end of The Godfather Part II, Michael is arguably America's most powerful and dreaded man, but he is essentially a corpse.

In addition to the capitalist and liberal structure, *The Godfather* is also a scathing critique of religion and its association with violence and corruption. The third movie is a direct and overt exposition of corruption within the Catholic Church, with Coppola using actual events from the twentieth century to bring forth this critique. However, religion is used as a premonition for violence or loss across the trilogy. The last scene of *The Godfather* shows killings ordered by Michael juxtaposed with Michael renouncing Satan while performing duties as the godfather of Connie's child, whose father he would later kill the same day. This juxtaposition of violence and the Church is considered one of the most potent critiques of religion. This theme Coppola takes on in the other two as well. In the second part, Vito commits his first murder while a religious procession is going on. In the third part, Michael loses his daughter on the steps of an opera after watching a performance of the Crucifixion. Religion is as hollow for Coppola as any other bourgeoisie value. Further, the very first scene of *The Godfather* is "played in the hushed tones of a religious ritual, is the first of many parodies of such rituals that will mark the Corleones' "growing distance from the ideals they embody" (Leitch 2002, 117), particularly that of the 'family' which is inextricably linked to the plot throughout.

Conversely, *The Godfather* trilogy can also be looked at in a different sense. As a counter theme, it can be seen to put forth the value of family and community in one's life. "It is a demonstration that the benefits of the family structure and the hope for the community have been destroyed by capitalism" (Hess 1985, 84). It puts an onus on the nurturing of such value as a counter to the individualising tendency of capitalism. Michael can be used as an example of a successful entrepreneur ("values of American corporatism and Mafia collide" (Hess 1985, 86)) who is still lonely and unhappy—the implied hollowness of capitalist endeavour. *The Godfather Part III* tries to rectify this hollowness through redemption, for which Michael finally had to pay with his daughter's life.

Identity is also essential throughout the movie for inclusionary and exclusionary purposes. There is a clear–cut demarcation of the roles based on one's identity. The first scene of *The Godfather* shows Vito Corleone respecting a Sicilian tradition. Both Tom Hagen and Kay Adams are excluded at essential steps because they are not Sicilian. Kay also faces discrimination on account of being a woman. Patriarchy manifests deeply in Godfather. Be it women being portrayed as submissive characters (Don's wife) or harbingers of moral and ethical values (Kay Adams). However, women also play an essential part in showing the mirror to the protagonist, be it Connie, who confronts Michael because of her husband's murder or Kay, who revolts against Michael in the second movie by aborting his child.

Coppola's work can be, thus, seen imbibing certain qualities of Polanyian "double – movement (Polanyi 1944, 79)." The dialectic movement between marketisation and a push for social protection against that marketisation, espoused by Karl Polanyi, can be seen in *The Godfather*. On the one hand, the movie strictly marketises values and ethics. The primary concern for the principal characters remains family and the security of its ethics and values. Thus, implicitly there is an emphasis on the desirability of such values. It not only limits itself to family but also other values, such as that of identity.

Politics, Identity and Culture: Influences and Adaptations of The Godfather in India

Just like the rest of the world, *The Godfather* significantly influenced Bollywood. Also, just like in Hollywood, these adaptations spoke to the immediate concerns of the Indian populations and incorporated socio-political concerns within them. India took to *The Godfather* at a very early stage. *Dharmatma* (1975) was the first adaptation of the film on the Indian screen (Ostrowski 2004, 4). It was released three years after the original and a year after its sequel. The film, also a blockbuster, borrowed heavily from the first movie, including directly copying some scenes from the movie. Keeping with the upsurge of nationalism, emergency and the incorporation of the fundamental duties of a citizen (42nd Amendment), Michael's character in the movie (played by Feroz Khan and named Ranbir) does not lose his moral leanings. He continues to oppose the illegal business of his father throughout the film. At the end of the movie, he hands over the wealth acquired by his father to the police to be used for the betterment of the nation.

The next movie influenced by The Godfather's themes was *Nayagan* (1987), which was made in Tollywood and had Kamal Hassan in the leading role. Politically, this time was characterised by the decline of the hegemony of the Indian National Congress and the empowerment of regional parties, which accentuated regional identity and inter-region tensions. One of the crucial arenas of this tension was Bombay (now Mumbai), where a regional party called Shiv Sena crystallised Marathi identity against the South Indians living in the metropolitan city (Gupta 1996, 7). This forms the crux of *Nayagan,* where Kamal Hassan plays a south-Indian don in Bombay. The Sicilian identity, which played an important role in *The Godfather,* translates into the south – Indian identity in *Nayagan.* The identity, however, drives the narrative in the movie and is an essential aspect of the protagonist's character.

The twenty-first century saw three movies profoundly influenced by the characterisation, themes and narrative structure of *The Godfather*. With liberalisation and privatisation reforms in 1991, India faced drastic economic

and social changes, uprooting the earlier protective and socialist system and replacing it with an open and free-market economy. However, such a profound change had consequences, and the transition was termed 'torturous' (Bardhan 2009, 31). The resultant shockwave sent society into jeopardy, with two disparate phenomena emerging within Indian society. One was the immense wealth accumulated by the elites of the society, some of whom migrated to the Western countries, becoming non-resident Indians or NRI's. Second was the people left behind, the poor and the vulnerable dependent on the state exchequer, who were forced to fend for themselves. Simultaneously, market liberalisation fed these underprivileged the dreams of upward mobility and wealth. Further, with this advent of social order driven by urbanisation, migration and marketisation, a renewed vigour was found in the traditionalist sector of thought embodied in the 'Hindutva' tradition.

This liberalisation, coupled with a division within Indian society and a reaction of the Hindutva forces, the fight between the modern and the past, of elites and the left behind, intimately connected to the tropes and ideas emanating within *The Godfather*. This tussle between the traditional and the modern brought a renewed relevance of *The Godfather* for Indian cinema, an essential aspect of *The Godfather* trilogy. The first movie that dealt with it substantially was the *Sarkar* trilogy, which consists of three movies- *Sarkar* (2005), *Sarkar Raj* (2008) and *Sarkar 3*(2017). Michael Corleone of *Sarkar* is a Non-Resident Indian who unwittingly takes over from his father after he is attacked. Just like Michael Corleone, Shankar Nagre gives up his American dream, including his girlfriend, to take up the mantle of the family, the abdication of the modern for the traditional. However, in the second movie, the character of Shankar is used to justify liberalisation when he supports an industrial project even though it results in the dispossession of a considerable number of peasants, something that troubles his father, Subhash Nagre. The movie justifies the initial trouble encountered by liberalisation as a momentary loss compensated by a long-lasting profit. It is pertinent to note that this assertion, justifying capitalist dispossession, was made when people were fighting against land acquisition in Nandigram, West Bengal (2007), and the backdrop of historical movements such as Narmada Bachao Andolan. Also, employing the extra-legal and ruthless character of Shankar Nagre to legitimise such a decision can be seen as a justifying tool for state excesses, especially in Nandigram (Patnaik 2007, 1893-1895).

This trope of corrupting tendencies of capital and, more specifically, an accidental leader who becomes more ruthless is also used in two other Bollywood movies- *Raajneeti* (2010) and *The Gangs of Wasseypur* duology (2012). *Raajneeti* is a beautiful amalgamation of *Mahabharata* and *The Godfather*. *Raajneeti* brings forth the

tension between the past and the present through the character of Samar, akin to Michael of *The Godfather*. In *Raajneeti*, just like *Sarkar*, Samar is a non-resident Indian living the American dream, returning home to an ailing father. He is initially disinterested in politics but is pulled into it after the killing of his elder brother, who was the heir apparent *a la* Sonny Corleone. Samar exhibits extreme cunningness and shrewdness, eliminating all his opponents and ensuring his family regains its lost power and authority. However, in the end, he gives up his power to his sister-in-law and returns to the West.

On the other hand, *Gangs of Wasseypur* occupies a diametrically opposite spectrum. *Gangs of Wasseypur* is based in the hinterland of India, which was gaining economic and political prominence around its release. *Gangs of Wasseypur* closely follow the economic trajectory of the country, detailing how crime and violence intertwine with the economic structure of the country. The rise of Sardar Khan, the Vito Corleone of *Gangs of Wasseypur*, is aided by the economic regulations of his time. Across the country, smuggling was an essential source of income for gangsters and helped them attain prominence (Prasad 2012, 926). While liberalisation curtailed smuggling, the skewed nature of its benefits led disillusionment of a large section of the population, giving rise to anger. This anger further fueled gangsters and their businesses, and money-making became the primary goal of an enterprise. This is evident in the story arc of the Michael of *Gangs of Wasseypur* - Faizal Khan.

Faizal Khan is also sucked into power politics after the death of his father and brother, emerging as more ruthless and powerful than his predecessors. However, the more economically and politically powerful he becomes, the more his family comes close to destruction. In this respect, he mirrors the character arc of Michael Corleone and his family, but with one crucial difference. While for Michael, the loss of family is based on the dismemberment of the family structure, in the case of Faizal Khan, it takes the form of violent assassinations. Nonetheless, the underlying hollowness and individualising nature of capital runs deep in both cases. The incessant desire to make money makes Faizal Khan ignore his family members and the dubious character of a middleman who gets him government contracts. This finally leads to his half-brother joining his enemy and later killing Faizal Khan, an uneventful end for a dreaded gangster.

Conclusion

Thus, the thematic, cultural, political and historical narratives of *The Godfather* spoke to the Indian audience through numerous adaptations and influences it had on different movies. *The Godfather* evinced such profound thematic, cultural and political issues that had universal appeal and translatability. Thus, adaptations of *The Godfather* within India contextualised the movie around the time's dominant socio-political and cultural narratives. From *Dharmatma* to *The Gangs of Wasseypur*, each film was situated within the immediate history and issues facing the Indian population.

The values imbibed in *The Godfather* can be linked to the social, cultural and political environment prevalent when it was made. The notion of identity and gender were coming into the public domain through Multicultural and feminist movements. Capitalism and liberalism were also under intense attack through a strong counterculture after anti–war movements. Marxists had also deviated from a very economic understanding of society to a more sociological and cultural understanding (hegemony and the Critical School), leading to the critique of values. The 1970s, thus, was a vibrant phase in the socio–cultural space of the Western world, with all these ideas coming into shape and interacting with each other. All are assimilated to some degree or the other in the thematic body of *The Godfather.*

The global march of capital did translate issues and concerns from one spatial context to another, but differences remained. In India, such concerns and issues arrived at different periods. In India, changes took place slowly because of state control and different manifestations of the liberal order were encountered at different times. Thus, *The Godfather* was adapted to the necessary social and cultural conditions which suited the audience at that particular time. The issues which the audience can somehow relate to. This led to different adaptations and took on *The Godfather*, each portraying a specific aspect put forth by the movie. While *Dharmatma* spoke to the political realities of its time, *Nayagan* brought forth the issues of identity.

It is also important to note that most of the adaptations of *The Godfather* happen very close to or after the advent of liberalism, which reinforces the relevance of *The Godfather* in understanding and criticising the notions of liberal social order. From *Sarkar* to *Gangs of Wasseypur,* a critique of liberalism can be found. In addition, a certain amount of traditionalism espoused by *The Godfather* also became its plus point with respect to other gangster movies of the West. The values of family, traditionalism, morality, and, to some extent, patriarchy still resonate with many of the Indian population. This made *The Godfather* a natural choice over

others keeping in mind the traditional sensitivities of the people and the business intent of the producers and the movie makers.

Thus, *The Godfather* holds a very preeminent position in the world of cinema. This is not only on account of a serious plot and brilliant execution but also how the movie represented as well as fed into the dominant issue and sensibilities present at the time of its making and subsequent release. These sensibilities were not only beautifully and emphatically dealt with, but with the movement of capital from one place to the other, these sensibilities attained global prominence. This resulted in wide acclaim, influence and adaptability of *The Godfather.*

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Nine Birds, Nine Emotions: Birds as Embodiment of Navarasa in Anita Nair's *Mistress*

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Abstract:

The paper discusses the various dimensions of bird in literature, their role in the ecosystem, and how they convey emotions through the exploration of Rasas in Indian aesthetics. Specifically, it analyses Anita Nair's use of nine birds to explore the nine rasas in her novel Mistress (2005) and highlights the cultural significance behind this relationship. By analysing each rasa with respect to the birds, Nair creates a rich tapestry of emotions and experiences that resonate in the novel. It also notes that Nair's approach differs from other writers who use birds to convey emotions, as she uses nine varieties of birds instead of confining herself to one or two. This analysis provides a distinctive viewpoint on how birds are used in the novel as full-length characters, especially in the context of Indian aesthetics. Nair draws inspiration from the Malayalam classic Keralathile Pakshikal by Induchoodan, which offers in-depth illustrations and descriptions of two hundred and sixty-one birds found in Kerala. The paper also highlights the behaviours of birds that can provide insights into how we can better protect and conserve biodiversity. It is important to remember the significance of birds in our ecosystem and to not only view them as symbols but also as living beings that contribute to the balance and beauty of the world.

Introduction

All basic emotions of humans are linked to the natural world, and that we can experience it by paying attention to our surroundings. By listening to nature carefully, we can feel all nine human emotions in pristine form, which resonates with us in many ways. The connection between nature and human emotion

goes beyond mere observation and has a measurable effect on our mental state. Nature truly gives us everything, including the different shades of emotions. The different emotions can be linked to specific natural experiences, such as joy with a sunny day at the beach and sadness with rainy day. The paper highlights the fact that by immersing ourselves in nature, we can experience and understand these emotions on a deeper level. These nine emotions are an integral part of Indian culture and are deeply rooted in the country's traditions and beliefs.

The concept of emotional states, or Rasa, has been an important aspect of Indian aesthetics and is believed to be the essence of all human emotions. In his well-known book on dramaturgy, *Natyasastra*, Bharata makes the claim that "no composition can continue without rasa" (Dasgupta 1970, 38). Theos Bernard in *Hindu Philosophy* defines Rasa as "the subtle element of flavor" (1989, 219). There are nine basic emotions, or Rasa, which are termed Navarasa in the treatise *Natyasastra*. Navarasa includes *Sringaram* (love), *Haasyam* (contempt), *Karunam* (sorrow), *Raudram* (fury), *Veeram* (valour), *Bhayanakam* (fear), *Beebhalsam* (disgust), *Adbhutam* (wonder), and *Shaantam* (peace). Navarasa has been an integral part of storytelling traditions in India for centuries and continues to influence contemporary literature.

Literature emphasises the importance of recognising and appreciating the relationship between our emotions and the environment. The aesthetic sense of literature allows authors to create vivid and evocative imagery that can convey complex emotions and ideas through metaphor and allegory. Many writers have used birds as symbols to represent human emotions and feelings. For example, Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" and Shelley's "To a Skylark" explore the bittersweet beauty of fleeting moments in life through the metaphor of a bird's song in nature. Indian English literature also explores the connection between nature and human emotions, and the role of birds in the emotional well-being of humans. Rabindranath Tagore's *Stray Birds*, Sarojini Naidu's *The Bird Sanctuary*, Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*, and Anita Nair's *Mistress* have used birds as metaphors to convey complex emotions and ideas.

The present study concentrates on Anita Nair, a prominent writer in Indian English literature. Anita Nair is a native of Kerala, and her respect for the state's extensive cultural history and natural beauty is clear throughout her narratives. The setting and its topography are frequently used to enhance the characters and stories in Nair's books. In each of her novels, she gives the readers a vivid description of the geography and cultures of Southern India. Anita Nair's *Mistress* (2005) sheds light on the traditional art form of Kathakali and its significance in Kerala's rich cultural heritage. The narrative primarily centres on Koman, a Kathakali artist, and his niece Radha. Through the lens of Koman, Radha,

Shyam and Chris, the reader is taken on an emotional journey that reveals the past and present realities of their lives.

The paper explores how Nair masterfully links the nine rasas of Indian aesthetics and the nine birds found in the cultural landscape of Kerala. Nair takes references from a book *Keralathile Pakshikal* (Birds of Kerala) that provides detailed illustrations and descriptions of birds that can be found in Kerala's forests, mountains, plains, and fields daily. *Keralathile Pakshikal*, by K. K. Neelakantan or Induchoodan, was first published in 1958 and is considered a Malayalam classic. It is regarded as an exceptional work on ornithology among Indian languages and describes about two hundred and sixty-one birds found in Kerala with pictures. The novel's structure begins with a prologue, followed by the narrative. Each chapter begins with an overview of a rasa and then discusses how non-human entities in nature convey the meaning that each rasa embodies before elaborating on how each fictional character perceives it.

Sringaaram is the title of the first chapter. V.S. Seturaman in his book *Indian Aesthetics* defines this rasa as "the Erotic (*sringara*) Sentiment proceeds from the Dominant state of love" (2014, 23). Nair explains different shades of *Sringara* rasa, but this paper specifically focuses on one face of *Sringaaram*, which the *Vanampaadi* or Nightingale symbolises. Nightingales are known for the melody of their songs. It has been utilised in multitudes of work in literature. The nightingale is commonly understood as a symbol of unrequited love in Indian literature. It is said that the bird sings for its beloved, who may never return its affection.

Nair depicts *Vanampaadi* as a bird that sings mysteriously from heaven's door. "The Vanampaadi. From heaven's doors, a trail of unknown, caressing the soul, stroking desire, propelling needs into words. Love for the unknown. That, too, is the face of Sringaram" (Nair 2005, 8). This idea is reflected in Radha's love for Shyam, as she longs for his love but is unable to attain it. This is evident in the lines: "He hides his conniving behind a mask of besotted love, and when he has her on her knees, he'll kick her. Then I think Radha is wise to keep him on a leash of unreciprocated longing" (Nair 2005, 30). Similarly, Shyam's love for his wife is overshadowed by his desire for social status, leaving him unable to express his true feelings. The nightingale serves as a poignant reminder of the pain that unrequited love can bring and the novel explores the complexities of love and desire in the context of Indian society. This aspect of *Sringaaram* is demonstrated through the characters of Radha and Shyam.

The second chapter of the novel is titled *Haasyam*. V.S.Seturaman defines *Haasyam* as "the Comic (*Hasya*) Sentiment has as its basis the Dominant emotion of laughter" (2014, 25). According to

Nair, *Haasyam* can also be contempt for convention. The contempt is demonstrated in the behaviour of the *Olanjali* bird or the Indian tree pie, which goes against the norm of perching and instead chooses to hang and glide carelessly. "It is the custom of birds to perch… It has scant regard for custom. Instead, look at the bird's nonchalance as it skates and slides to the tip of the palm frond and dangles from it…haasyam can be that as well" (Nair 2005, 53). Nair's point is that *Haasyam* is about making people laugh and challenging societal norms and conventions. It is a way of expressing disdain for the status quo and celebrating individuality. The *Olanjali* bird embodies this sentiment perfectly and symbolises the importance of breaking free from traditional expectations and living life on one's own terms.

Nair's definition of *Haasyam* as contempt for convention echoes in Radha's dialogues when she shows her disdain for tiresome routines and rituals in their married life and says sarcastically: "I lie next to Shyam, unable to sleep. We have our bedtime rituals, Shyam and I. We have been married for eight years, after all, and there is no escaping the ritual of routine" (Nair 2005, 53). She expresses her guilt for harbouring a soft corner for Chris in her mind, being already a married woman. She wonders, "How have I become so disdainful of honour, so contemptuous of convention?" (Nair 2005, 54). Like an *Olanjaali*, the character Radha shows her contempt for traditions by acting against the law imposed by society for a woman. Out of her contempt towards Shyam, Radha acts flirtatiously toward Chris. Her flirtatious behaviour towards Chris allows her to assert her independence and shows Shyam that his expectations do not bind her.

The chapter explores the multiple facets of *Karunam*. V.S.Sethuraman defines it as "the Pathetic (*karuna*) Sentiment arises from the Dominant State of sorrow" (2014, 27). Nair analogises *Karunam* with the bird *Karinkuyil* or cuckoo and says, "You can hear it in the song of the karinkuyil as the notes soar into the skies. Perhaps remorse is what the koel's song throbs with" (2005, 104). The author explains *Karunam* as remorse that throbs in the cuckoo's song who sit alone on a branch of a tree and think about her mistakes. As a youngster, this creature carries the unhatched eggs and crow babies on her back and throws them out of the nest. She is naturally capricious. She explains that the reason behind the trembling of the cuckoo's voice is regret that she made a mistake by laying her eggs in the crow's nest and absolves herself of all responsibility she has.

Karuna rasa is associated with a cuckoo, or koel, who sings by sitting alone on a tree. Saadiya, like the cuckoo, carries a sense of remorse and regret for her past mistakes. She has left behind a trail of broken relationships and abandoned responsibilities, much like the cuckoo who lays her eggs in the nests of other birds. But unlike the cuckoo, Saadiya is not a survivor in the true sense of the word. Her actions

have left her with a sense of guilt and shame that she carries with her always, just like the cuckoo's trembling voice. As the novel unfolds, we see how Saadiya ends her life leaving behind all the responsibilities of her mistakes. Radha, like Saadiya, also displays the mood of *karuna* rasa. Radha's past actions have left her with deep regret and sorrow. She had an affair with a co-worker and became pregnant but was forced to abort the baby after discovering he had cheated on her. The above incident leads her to make the mistake of marrying Shyam, which has only added to her feelings of apathy and despair. Radha says: "If there is a thought goes with me, it is only sorrow for what could have been" (Nair 2005, 115). Radha's thoughts are consumed by sorrow, and she carries a heavy burden of remorse like a cuckoo bird.

The fourth chapter opens with *Raudram.* V.S.Seturaman defines *Raudram* as "the Furious (*raudra*) Sentiment has as its basis the Dominant Stage of anger" (2014, 27). Nair claims that wrath and anger are the most typical synonyms for Raudram that people think of. Nair elucidates the rasa by providing a wide range of connotations. She adds that Raudram is also the fury of passion, which is evident in the *Maramkothi* or woodpecker's mating call. Nair clarifies, "It is the maramkothi…This is the fury of passion…the woodpecker has only its drumbeat with which to beckon and call. It is a quiet fury, not any less intense or raging in its power, but locked within you, so that only you know it…only you hear it in your heart. Such is the fury of a passion that rules you" (2005, 152). Nair's observation about the woodpecker's mating call serves as a metaphor for the power and intensity of passion, both internal and external.

A person deeply in love may feel the same intense emotions as the woodpecker's call, with their heart beating rapidly and their body trembling with excitement. However, this intensity can also lead to destructive behaviour, such as jealousy or possessiveness, if not properly channelled. Just as the woodpecker tirelessly drills into trees to attract a mate, Shyam tries to woo Radha with great fervour and determination. On the other hand, Radha welcomes Christopher's flirtatious advances when rejecting Shyam. He says: "The resentment I felt for being tolerated rather than loved, the yearning I had suffered, the loneliness of these eight years, all fused to become a consuming desire to possess her" (Nair 2005, 163). Shyam then displays the fury he harbours by asserting his dominance over her through a forced sexual activity. This heinous act of Shyam harms both of their relationships, just as a woodpecker's drilling damage the trees it nests in.

The fifth rasa is *Veeram*, and it is the manifestation of courage in one's life. V.S. Seturaman defines *Veeram* as "the Heroic (*vira*) Sentiment, relates to the superior type of persons and has energy as

its basis" (2014, 28). The chapter highlights the uncommon courage of the Drongo bird or *Anaranchi*, known for chasing away larger birds like crows and kites to protect its nest and those of other birds. The drongo's bravery inspires other birds, who choose to build their nests in the same area, knowing that the drongo will keep them safe. "Take the drongo… What is uncommon about it is its courage… For they know that the drongo will keep the marauding birds away and protect their young" (Nair 2005, 198). Nair suggests that we can learn from drongo's example and draw courage from our beliefs. The drongo's ability to mimic other bird calls to scare off potential predators is a remarkable adaptation that has helped it survive in its environment. Using the brave action of the bird drongo as an analogy, the author here demonstrates the courage displayed by the characters in the novel when faced with a challenge or threat.

Nair draws a parallel between the drongo bird and the characters of Radha and Koman in the novel. Despite appearing weak, they exhibit immense mental strength and determination to make their own decisions, like the *Anarachi*. Koman's journey of self-discovery may be fraught with challenges and obstacles, but his determination to uncover his identity and purpose in life is unwavering. Radha musters the courage to be closer to Chris, and she says confidently, "Nothing matters. What feels so right can't be wrong? This is what I have to draw courage from, to go on" (Nair 2005, 216). The care and protection provided for the vulnerable is another auxiliary mood of *Veeram*. Sethu shows courage to return to his village, where he earns a good reputation for his hard work and dedication. He then finds the courage to bring Koman back from Nazareth after marrying Damayanthi and starting a family of his own. The drongo's behaviour demonstrates the importance of mutualism in nature, where different species benefit from each other. It is fascinating to observe how animals have their ways of survival and adaptation, which we can learn from.

The novel's sixth chapter talks about the rasa *Bhayanakam*. V.S. Seturaman defines *Bhayaanakam* as "the Terrible (*bhayanaka*) Sentiment has as its basis the Dominant State of fear" (2014, 29). Nair compares the rasa to the Devil's bird, commonly known as *Kaalan Kozhi* in Kerala. The bird hides under cover of darkness and calls death by "a thin quivery call echoes through the shadowed skies. Poo-ah, poo-ah…the kaalan kozhi" (Nair 2005, 240). This call invokes death and instils fear in humans. People of Kerala believe that when the devil's bird cries, the warning bell of death rings and it is time for someone to leave the earth. "Yet, the cries echo through the twilight and the heart beats faster: who is to be next?" (Nair 2005, 241). So, this rasa teaches us the fear of losing loved ones.

Shyam is the personification of the *bhayanaka* rasa. Just as fear arises in people when they hear the call of the devil's bird, Shyam also begins to feel anxiety and fear when he anticipates Radha's lost

forever. He constantly worries that he will lose Radha due to her illicit affair with Christopher. Shyam's mind is consumed with thoughts of Radha's infidelity. As he obsesses over it, he becomes increasingly panicky and paranoid. Shyam reveals his present state of mind and says, "I know you, fear. I know you are back in my life again" (Nair 2005, 241). Shyam's fear is created when he anticipates an event that could wreck his life, such as the vigilant expectation when hearing the poo-ah sound of *Kaalan Kozhi*. Similarly, he worries that witnessing Radha's every moment with Chris leaves him heartbroken and instils fear in his mind. Thus, the concept of *Veera* rasa is not limited to physical strength and bravery but also encompasses emotional courage and moral fortitude.

The seventh rasa *Beebhalsam* portrays the tinge of revulsion exhibited by the characters. V.S. Sethuraman defines it as "the Odious (*bibhatsa*) Sentiment has as its basis the Dominant State of disgust… arises in many ways from disgusting sight, tastes, smell, touch and sound which cause uneasiness" (2014, 30). Nair compares this rasa with Vulture or *Thoti Kazhukan*. When talking about this bird, everyone has a general aversion because of its bald dome-like head and scabby visage, wrinkled neck, and potbelly. Nair says, "Who among you does not feel that tinge of revulsion when you see a vulture?" (2005, 287). Nair is not trying to highlight the external repulsion through this rasa but rather concentrates more on the internal revulsion that various characters experience out of shame and guilt. This internal disgust and shame are highlighted through the characters' actions and thoughts, revealing the complex psychological states of the characters in the novel.

Regarding her adulterous relationship with Chris, Radha feels disgusted and expresses that by saying: "I feel disgust for what I am doing. Can anything be worth this repugnance? How much longer can I do this? This cheating, lying and pretence?" (Nair 2005, 290). She feels dread when she realises that her relationship with Chris is based solely on lust and that it has complete control over her. This rasa's most abhorrent and disgusting aspect is losing control over one's wantonness. She constantly questions her moral values and struggles with the guilt of betraying her partner. According to Radha, losing one's dignity is the worst thing that ever happen. This thought disgusts her so much throughout the novel. Shyam discovers that Koman has involved in Radha and Chris' liaison and has kept it a secret from him. Shyam forces Koman to present a Kathakali performance at his resort to seek revenge and hurt Koman for his act. He merely tries to denigrate Koman by trivialising Kathakali, which he considers sacred. Shyam says: "Not a full performance, mind you. My guests would fall asleep. Just enough to interest a western

audience" (Nair 2005, 300). This incident generates a sense of disgust in the minds of Koman, Radha and Chris.

Koman also feels disgusted when the State Government proclaims an honour for him. Koman believes the award is a mere formality and holds no real value. He thinks the recognition should have come when he actively contributed to the art form rather than barely performing. He feels the award does not reflect his commitment and effort towards his skill. Koman says: "if I had got the award twenty or thirty years ago, it would have pleased me, but now…He makes a face. It is a grotesque face. One I recognize from the navarasas. Beebhalsam. Disgust. Disdain. Repugnance" (Nair 2005, 295). Nair brilliantly explores many facets of this rasa that exist in the lives of various characters in different ways.

Adbhutam, the eighth chapter, offers each character the ultimate experience of wonder. V.S.Sethuraman defines it as "the Marvellous (*adbhuta*) Sentiment has as its basis the Dominant State of astonishment" (2014, 30). Nair compares the *adbudha* rasa and the mysterious bird Paradise Flycatcher or *Nakumohan*. The bird evokes a sense of excitement and anticipation as we observe them, wondering about its beauty and its unusual looks. It also leaves us with many questions about its diet and habitat. The mystery surrounding it only adds to its allure and makes it a fascinating subject of observation.

> Between the months of September and May, in our gardens there comes a visitor. feathers like satin ribbons flutter. This is the nakumohan. Some people call it the rocket bird and others the ribbon bird, but its real name is the paradise flycatcher… And you ask yourself: What is this bird that is so beautiful? Where does it live? What does it eat? A million questions race through your mind as you look at it. That is the hallmark of wonder. (Nair 2005, 337)

The concept of *adbudham* is fleeting and transient, as the excitement and wonder it brings can never be replicated in the same way again. This is reflected in Chris' curiosity and yearning to know the truth about the relationship between Koman and his mother, Angela, which Koman finds surprising and intriguing. The nature of *adbudham* is such that once it is possessed, the wonder ceases, leaving only the memory of the experience behind.

Nair stresses the importance of cherishing moments of excitement and wonder. It is demonstrated through the curiosity of Chris and Radha regarding their fatherhood and Koman's astonishment to discover that Chris' mother is Angela. Koman is reluctant to admit that Mani is Radha's father. Radha never stops bringing up the subject of her mother's relationship with her uncle Mani. She questions: "My mother and the two brothers, one of whom was my father and the other an uncle. The only thing is, I am not sure who is who" (Nair 2005, 338). Chris, meanwhile, has his doubts about Koman being his father because Angela, Chris's mother and Koman has been living together for a long time. He asks Koman with a sense of wonder, "There is something else. I meant to ask you this days ago…Did you know an English woman called Helen Pullman? … My mother's name is Angela" (Nair 2005, 353). Both Radha and Chris express their curiosity and astonishment to know more about their biological fathers. The *adbhuta* rasa adds a layer of intrigue and fascination to the story, keeping the reader interested and wondering what will happen next.

Shaantam is the ultimate expression in Navarasa. V.S.Seturaman defines it as "the basic emotion of the favour of peace (*santarasa*)" (2014, 114). The characters' experience of inner peace is intended to convey by *Santa* rasa in *Mistress*. Nair symbolises this rasa with the C*haramundi*, or Grey Heron, the king of water birds. "Unlike other water birds, it does not stalk its prey. Instead, it waits, knee-deep in water without a flicker of movement or emotion. The grey heron is stillness personified while it waits" (Nair 2005, 396). The grey heron waits patiently in the water without any movement or emotion, personifying stillness. Nair uses this symbol to depict the intended Santa Rasa, the feeling of tranquillity and calmness. The grey heron's stillness is a reminder that sometimes, the best thing to do is to be present and let life unfold. The use of the grey heron as a symbol in *Mistress* represents finding inner peace through stillness and patience. This concept is reflected in the characters' lives and is the goal of *Santa* rasa.

The grey heron is a powerful reminder of the characters' ability to let go of their worries and embrace the present moment, much like the grey heron waiting patiently for its prey. Radha, for example, chooses to start over as a single mother, achieving the ultimate freedom she seeks by separating from Shyam and abruptly ending her relationship with Christopher. On the other hand, Shyam accepts Radha's illegitimate child from Chris, hoping she will begin to love him. Koman recognises his need for companionship, and Chris' newfound control over himself reflects the *charamundi's* ability to wait

patiently without agitation or anxiety. Shyam says, "Peace washes over me. All that is lost, I will regain" (Nair 2005, 403). Nair asserts that true peace of mind can only be found when we learn to let go of our worries and fears and embrace the stillness within us.

The book progresses from *Shringaram* to *Shantam,* and the reader gets an inkling of what is to follow each time. *Mistress* is a work of art that articulates the intricacies of the human venture through its unique verbiage and structure. Nair's ability to weave together the natural world and human experience is a testament to her writing skill. Nair's unique approach to this topic, using nine specific birds to represent each rasa, sets her apart from other Indian writers. Nair's book is a must-read for anyone interested in Indian aesthetics and philosophy, as it incorporates the concept of rasa and bird symbolism into the story. This approach adds depth to understanding each rasa and encourages readers to appreciate the beauty of nature.

Birds are used to convey complex emotions and ideas in literature. From the phoenix rising from its ashes to the wise owl, birds have been used to represent a wide range of themes and concepts. Nair's *Mistress* emphasises the importance of nature in shaping our beliefs and cultures. We must recognise and respect the power and importance of nature in our lives to address environmental challenges. As we continue to explore the connection between birds and human emotions, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the natural world and our place in it and perhaps even find solace and inspiration in the beauty and resilience of these winged creatures. Ultimately, the connection between nature and human emotion is a powerful one that should be nurtured and celebrated for the benefit of all. It is important to remember that birds should not only be viewed as symbols but also as vital components of a healthy and balanced ecosystem. Nair's attention to detail in portraying each bird highlights their importance and places them on par with other characters in the novel. The novel also emphasises the need to appreciate and protect the natural world around us. The study of these behaviours can provide insights into how we can better protect and conserve biodiversity.

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The Binge-Watching Blues: Investigating the Association between Binge-Watching and Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract

Binge-watching is now a prevalent way of consuming media, particularly among the younger generation, and has been associated with various psychological outcomes. This review paper offers a systematic examination of current literature on binge-watching and draws further insights into its potential positive association with behaviours specifically depression and anxiety. It provides an overview of binge-watching behavior, including its prevalence and common characteristics. The present study also examines the theoretical mechanisms underlying the association between binge-watching and psychological states such as social isolation, negative mood regulation, and anxiety. The analysis of the empirical evidence on this relationship focusing on cross-sectional and longitudinal studies suggests that bingeing has been positively associated with a higher risk of depression and anxiety among web series viewers. Viewers' motivations, media consumption patterns and the content they consume can have an impact on their psychological well-being. However, the strength of this relationship may vary depending on individual factors such as genetic predisposition and life experiences.

Key Words: Anxiety, Binge-watching, Coping, Depression, Loneliness, Social isolation

Introduction

The emergence of streaming platforms has triggered a paradigm shift in the production and distribution of media content, leading to a profound revolution in the consumption habits of individuals. This transformation has upended traditional approaches and ushered in a new era of media consumption. In the past, viewers were limited to a set schedule of programming determined by traditional broadcast and cable networks. Subscribers of OTT platforms now have access to a virtually unlimited supply of content that can be consumed at their own pace and on their own time. They can choose shows that suit their entertainment preferences and

individual expectations. Binge-watching is a direct result of the convenience and abundance of options provided by these platforms.

In the post-pandemic era the trend of indulging in binge behaviour has become increasingly prevalent and got favored by the younger demographic (Dhiman, & Malik, 2021; MICA, 2021). However, the captivating interfaces, ever-evolving features, and vast potential can fascinate web series viewers and keep them hooked for hours which gradually yield unforeseen results. Some studies highlighted the positive aspects of binge-watching and summarized that binge-viewing could elevate positive emotions and contribute to well-being (Stoldt, 2013; Troles, 2019). They argue that when done in moderation binge-watching can provide relaxation and escapism from the stresses of everyday life. Also, a sense of accomplishment can be gained from binge-watching, since completing a series gives closure and feelings of satisfaction. Moreover, when binge-watching a show, viewers become immersed in the story and the characters, and can't wait to find out what happens next. This shared experience creates a sense of community among viewers, as they can discuss their thoughts and feelings about the show with other viewers. Thus, binge-watching can be a restorative experience for some and the behaviour is associated with enhanced feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Erdmann& Dienlin, 2022). However, a large percentage of academic studies establish a negative emotional context surrounding bingeing. Especially when it becomes a compulsive behaviour that interferes with other aspects of life, such as work or social interactions or when viewers adopt it as a maladaptive coping mechanism. As an evolving media consumption pattern, research on binge-watching has elicited concerns regarding its potential addictive properties and its correlation with the psychological well-being of viewers.

Method

Relevant studies for this review were identified by searching academic databases and Google Scholar. The keywords used here are "Binge-watching", OR "Binge-viewing" AND "Depression" "Anxiety" "Psychological well-being", "Isolation", "Mental health", "Impacts" etc. Articles or theses were selected based on the following crteria: (1) Published in an

internationaljournal or submission of a thesis within a specified time frame, (2) Written in English language exclusively, and (3) Centered on the binge-viewing of streaming video series and selected psychological variables, Depression and Anxiety. The reviewed studies primarily examine the correlation between binge-watching behaviour and allied psychological factors, such as depression and anxiety.

Results

Binge-watching

The rise of streaming services and the availability of entire seasons of shows online has made it easier to watch multiple episodes in one sitting and has a strong influence on consumption patterns. Furthermore, the incorporation of compelling narrative styles of content can serve as a motivation for such individuals to engage in binge-watching a series. This viewing behaviour clearly distinguishes itself from the normal TV viewing. A binge-watch of a show is primarily considered an intimate, solitary act with the programme in contrast to traditional/episodic TV viewing (de Feijter et al. 2016). What one person considers binge-watching might differ from that of another person considers binge-watching. Hence, the viewing behaviour and gratifications regarding bingeing differ greatly from person to person. However, it generally refers to the act of watching multiple of episodes of a programme in a single sitting (Steins-Loeber, 2020; Walton-Pattison et al. 2018; Wang, 2019). The behaviour often involves a high level of engagement with the media content, with viewers becoming absorbed in the storylines and characters (Conlin, 2015; Ericson et al, 2018; Warren, 2020).

Hence, bingeing is more than a media consumption style. As Dieterich et al. (2021) found that individuals who reported engaging in binge-watching behaviour showed differences in neural activity compared with individuals who do not. Specifically, binge-watching is associated with reduced activity in brain regions resulting in response inhibition. Individuals who exhibit decreased levels of feedback-related brain activity may demonstrate a diminished ability to adjust their behaviours or a reduced response to the outcomes of their actions, such as overlooking other objectives or less interest in alternative rewarding activities. Clinical psychologist Renee Carr noted that binge-watching can lead to increased dopamine production in the brain. Dopamine, a neurotransmitter that plays a pivotal role in the brain's reward system,

is intimately linked with sensations of euphoria and gratification. This powerful chemical is released when we engage in pleasurable activities such as eating, sex, and drug use, reinforcing and amplifying the feelings of pleasure we experience (Celeste, 2020). Furthermore, prolonged exposure to dopamine can lead to desensitization of the dopamine receptors in the brain, which can lead to a feeling of paucity in the levels of pleasure and reward. This can contribute to a cycle of compulsive binge-watching behaviour in which individuals feel the need to continue watching to experience the same levels of pleasure and reward obtained earlier (Devasagayam, 2014).

Likewise, several scholars have postulated that indulging in binge-watching could potentially heighten the susceptibility to addiction as individuals who engage in this behaviour may be more likely to develop a dependence on television shows and streaming content (Flayelle et al., 2019; Riddle et al., 2018; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2019). Due to these aspects, the researchers in the field of binge-watching posit a strong correlation between heavy binge-watching and excessive internet usage, and these parallels cannot be ignored or overlooked. This suggests that theoretical frameworks asserting the relationship between excessive Internet use and negative emotional states may provide a basis for understanding the connection between binge-watching and different psychological conditions. For instance, The Cognitive-Behavioural Model of Pathological Internet Use (PIU) developed by Davis in 2001 explained that feeling of anxiety, depression, and social isolation lead the individual to engage in excessive Internet use as a way to cope or escape from these negative emotions. However, excessive Internet use can then lead to further negative consequences, such as decreased social skills and relationships, decreased work performance, and physical health problems, which then reinforce the negative cognitions and perpetuate the cycle. In another model, The Compensatory Internet Use Model by Kardefelt-Winther (2013) proposed that people turn to media to fulfill unfulfilled social needs and to regulate negative emotions. This can have both good and bad outcomes. While media provides social stimulation, it can also lead to a reliance on the internet for social interaction, hindering real-life relationships. Likewise, The Socio-cognitive Theory of Internet usage postulates that deficient self-regulation of media use often results in excessive consumption patterns (LaRose & Eastin, 2004).

Binge-watching and Psychological well-being

The interrelationships between binge-watching and the psychological state of viewers have been the subject of extensive research in the field of psychology and media for the last few years. Research has also indicated that bingeing may be a symptom of other underlying psychological disturbances, such as anxiety and depression disorder. Depression is a debilitating mental health condition that is distinguished by persistent emotions of sadness, despair, and disinterest in activities that were previously pleasurable. It is estimated that around 5% of adults worldwide suffer from depression, and it is considered one of the leading reasons of disability (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Likewise, anxiety is a psychological condition that affects people from diverse demographic backgrounds. Anxiety can be identified through various signs and symptoms such as changes in mood, thinking patterns, behaviour, and physical activity. It often leads to disruptions in sleep patterns, concentration, social interactions, and work performance (Adwas et al., 2019).

Bingeing, on the other hand, refers to heavy media consumption in a short period. An array of studies confirmed the positive association between Binge-watching behaviours and different psychological states like depression, stress, anxiety and isolation risks (Alimoradi et al., 2022; Starosta et al., 2021; Sun & Chang, 2021). Excessive binge-watching can be a symptom of depression or anxiety, as individuals may use it as a way to avoid facing their problems or to distract themselves from feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Hence, it is often seen as a coping mechanism for emotional distress among individuals with depression (Steins-Loeber et al., 2020; Orosz et al., 2016). Unsurprisingly, many people feel detached from others during times of depression or anxiety, and they are unable to maintain relationships with others during those times of depression or anxiety and search for compensatory methods. Cohen (2004) observed similar involvement, that people who have a high level of anxious attachment and difficulty in forming close relationships are more likely to develop strong connections with characters in television shows. Viewers may perceive themselves as having greater authority or power in this one-way interaction. This is because they consider these parasocial relationships as safer than real social interactions. As a result, individuals with an anxious attachment may spend more time watching TV as a way to fulfill their social needs.

Moreover, statistics show that the practice of binge-watching has become widespread during the lockdowns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has presented persistent and far-reaching dangers to individuals worldwide, impacting various facets of their existence. This continuous threat and uncertainty affect the mental health negatively. During this period, *USA Today* has assured the viewers that binge-watching can help alleviate the stress of quarantine and that there's no need to feel guilty about it. Similarly, *The Conversation* has stated that "watching TV during lockdown can be beneficial and suggested TV shows that can uplift one's mood". During the quarantine, recommending TV shows as a form of "medicine" was a common occurrence (Horeck, 2021; Jarzyna, 2020). It is however important to be careful not to let recreational streaming turn into compulsive or problematic behaviour. A problematic binge-watching pattern such as heavy viewing marked by a loss of control elicits negative physical, psychological and social consequences (Sigre-Leirós, et al., 2022; Steinbach, 2018).

Previous studies also indicated a bidirectional relationship since binge-watching can lead to increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression in individuals who are already vulnerable to these mental health issues (Raza et al., 2021; Rosen et al., 2019; Vaterlaus, 2018). It can produce adverse psychological, physiological, behavioural, cognitive and cultural impacts (Ahuja, 2020; Chattopadhyay, 2020; Dandamudi, & Sathiyaseelan, 2018). Binge-watching can disrupt normal sleep patterns, as people often stay up late to finish episodes, leading to sleep deprivation or poor sleep quality. This lack of sleep can contribute to anxiety and depression (Exelmans & van den Bulck, 2017). Research has indicated that viewers have developed a tendency to opt for solitude and watch web series and movies on OTT platforms as a means of relaxation, as opposed to engaging in social activities and interacting with others outside. This may even affect the social structure over time, where people prefer to be alone (Chattopadhyay, 2020; Hamer et al., 2010). Peterson (2016) noted that bingeing not only prevents people from leading a social life but also hinders them from engaging in responsibilities and other activities. In sum, psychological distress such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness can be exacerbated or alleviated by media exposure (Umar & Idris, 2018; Wang et al., 2019; Halder, et al., 2021). In this context, moderation is the key and individuals should strive to engage in healthy and balanced media consumption habits.

Conclusion

Individuals with depression and anxiety are more likely to engage in bingeing behaviour, while bingeing can also lead to the development of these behaviours. Several theories have been proposed to explain the link between depression and bingeing, including the self-medication hypothesis, which suggests that individuals with depression or anxiety use bingeing as a way to temporarily relieve themselves from their emotional distress or as an emotion focused coping strategy. But the dependence could in turn heighten the emotional turbulences. This suggests that the relationship between the binge-watching behaviour and psychological distresses like depression or anxiety can be bidirectional in nature.

Problematic binge-watching can exhibit similarities with other addictive behaviours such as substance abuse or gambling, which can be a useful approach to highlight the potential negative effects of excessive screen time on one's well-being. However, it is important to approach the issue of binge-watching with caution and not automatically pathologize it as an addiction or a pathological behaviour. One reason for this caution is that the concept of addiction is complex and multifaceted, and merely because a behaviour shares some similarities with addiction does not necessarily mean it is pathological or destructive. Moreover, binge-watching can also have positive aspects, such as providing a form of relaxation or escape from stress, and can even foster social connections and shared cultural experiences.

In conclusion, bingeing is a complex phenomenon that has a significant impact on psychological well-being. Further research is needed to better understand the underlying mechanisms and to develop effective treatments for individuals struggling with these conditions. Overall, while binge-watching can be a fun and enjoyable way to consume media content, it is important to be aware of the potential negative effects that this behaviour can have on viewers' physical and mental health. The impact of different media use is determined by the motivations behind it and how they're managed.

Limitation

There is no universally accepted definition of binge-watching. It can be difficult to determine how many episodes or how much time constitutes a binge-watch session, as these can vary based on personal preferences and circumstances. So, defining binge-watching requires

considering a variety of subjective and objective factors, and acknowledging that there may be different definitions depending on the context and perspective of the individual. Besides, the distinction between healthy and problematic bingeing is also vague.

Most of the papers explained the relationship between binge-watching and psychological well-being on the basis of quantitative data. Further studies should adopt the qualitative tools since the method helps researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the subject and to reveal different perspectives that are not anticipated

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Scandal, Shame, and Policing Morality in Masaan and Bulbul Can Sing

Piyali Sur

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Abstract

Film as popular representation of contemporary culture deserves critical attention from sociologists as it reflects society back to itself. The article offers a feminist sociological reading of two films-Massan and Bulbul Can Sing and analyzes how the films re-present the issue of female desire.

Keywords: female sexuality; movies; moral policing; gender policing

Introduction

Female sexuality in India is primarily understood in terms of prohibition, surveillance and is strictly policed. Notions of honour and shame of the family/community are tied to women's sexual embodiment, with chastity acclaimed as a feminine virtue. Women's reputation is linked to her sexual respectability and the moral domain for woman is defined, regulated, and policed by the Other. Feminist research (Niranjana, 2001, 68) has demonstrated how female embodied living occurs through a 'matrix of sexualization', the matrix specifying the 'codes of moral conduct within the community' and the spaces available to her. A woman is held to bring dishonour to her family, clan, caste, and community by her 'immoral' conduct and the family finds it difficult to survive in the community. Hence, any violation of the moral codes and norms, especially caste norms, leads to infliction of violence by the members of the community and family on the couple generally and on the girl specifically. In the era of globalization, though the moral boundaries for women are widening and women are attempting to reclaim their sexuality, especially in urban areas, changes to tradition are being criticized for violating 'natural' patriarchal norms and for being western and alien (Chaudhuri, 2012, 279).

In urban areas where families are not under collective community pressure, norms regulating gender and sexuality are now more relaxed. Yet policing of moral boundaries continue as women are attacked for their attire, for occupying male spaces like pubs, for accessing male spaces at night, for public display of

affection, considered alien to Indian culture. Couples are regularly picked up from public spaces by the police, attacked on Valentine's Day by Hindu right wings group. There is moral policing, or enforcing of cultural values in the name of 'tradition' on people against their wish in consensual relationships. Couples, especially the girl is shamed and blackmailed after spurious raids in hotel rooms. Sen writes that women face public humiliation when they are "caught romancing in public by the local, self-styled moral police and often made to do sit-ups while holding their ears in front of onlookers or were dragged by their hair through the streets, and these forms of shaming rituals were primarily designed to dissuade women from love relationships" (2018, 551). The question asked here is to what extent have movies as a form of popular culture, representative of social life have represented the policing of women's sexuality. Popular culture, especially movies have not given serious attention to surveillance of women's sexuality, its public shaming and disciplining. This article selects two movies, Masaan, a Bollywood movie and an Assamese movie named Bulbul Can Sing as they deal with the issue of moral policing of female sexuality. In both the movies, the protagonists are publicly shamed for their desires in consensual relationships and are subjected to violent moral policing. Masaan is set against the small town of Varanasi where a young woman is caught with her paramour in a hotel room by the police. The entire incident is filmed on phone with the woman almost lying unclothed under the sheets. Bulbul Can Sing set in Assam, represents moral policing of young girls' sexuality, narrates the boundaries that society imposes on girls and the gender inequalities embedded within rural social relations. This film has been selected for analysis as it deals with how adolescent sexuality is perceived and dealt with within a village context, a theme that is rarely represented in films. Secondly, both the texts are rich for feminist reading on gender, sexuality, moral policing, and patriarchy. Bulbul Can Sing is situated within the coming-of-age genre as the film hints at a break with innocence and transition to maturity of an adolescent girl due to certain meaning making experiences in life. In Masaan, an unapologetic Devi wants to put the scandal behind and wants to start anew in life not by marrying but by leaving the small town of Varanasi for better career options.

A note on Method

Representational structures, like films convey to its viewers the social norms as well as how it is to live particular identities. We draw from the work of Norman Denzin (1989, 40-41) while analyzing the film. The method has the following steps:

Select the film and view it multiple times.

Identify the narrative themes of the film.

Firstly, we review the story of the film and offer a realist interpretation of its message. We then offer a feminist reading of the film, according to the previously stated research objectives of how the movies talk about desire, it's surveillance, and female sexuality.

Masaan (d. Neeraj Ghaywan, 2015)

The film is a reminder of the scores of raids conducted by the police to detain and humiliate unmarried couples, with the onus on the girl to prove that she is not a prostitute. In the film, Devi, a young unmarried woman, and her boyfriend check into a hotel room for sexual intimacy but their privacy is brutally invaded by a police raid. The police barge into the room and the first thing they say is "pura hi bazaar bana diya" (turned into a bazaar), implying sex that occurs outside the private confines of a family and home is public sex that needs to be policed. A girl who has sex in a hotel room is assumed to be a prostitute and Devi is bombarded with questions from the male cop like 'are you from the local brothel?', "are you from Nepal?" The female cop holds half-clothed Devi by her hair as her face is filmed by the male cop, pressurizing her to reveal her personal details. Piyush, her boyfriend, manages to lock himself inside the bathroom and commits suicide. Devi is taken to the police station as neighbours film the incident on the phone. Devi is detained in the police station until her father, Vidyadhar Pathak, a retired Sanskrit Professor of the university, now selling ritual goods at Benaras ghat, bails her out. The police inspector, Mishra tells her father that Devi wanted to satisfy her sexual curiosity in the hotel room. They are pressurized by Inspector Mishra to pay three lakh rupees within three months to save the reputation of the girl, or otherwise they are threatened that there would be a big scandal. Inspector Mishra tells them that he is saving Pathak's honour by taking three lakh rupees from him, otherwise the video of the police raid is on his mobile and he would upload it on the internet, then the whole of Benaras would ridicule him and his daughter. To save being publicly shamed, stigmatized and ostracised in the small town where he is respected as an upper-caste Sanskrit scholar, Pathak makes endeavours to collect the huge sum. Devi faces slut-shaming at her work spaces and indecent sexual proposals leading her to switch jobs. She finally leaves Benaras to join a course in Allahabad University and to get a closure visits Piyush's family, but is slapped and thrown out of the house. The film ends with Devi sitting on the stairs of the ghat, and is joined by Deepak, the male protagonist of another parallel narrative that runs through the film.

Shame and Policing of Women's Sexuality

A woman's sexuality is circumscribed by notions of shame and honour, allowing its expression only within certain legitimate spaces. There is a power in shaming, it seeks to control women's sexuality and their freedom to make choices. Viswanath argues that the discourse has the power to produce "notions of good and bad women, of what is shameful and what is honourable both for the individual and the family" (1997, 325). It is socially believed that the men and family suffer shame due to women's actions as can be viewed in Masaan and Bulbul Can Sing.

Devi in the movie challenges shame and shaming as a mechanism to maintain idealized 'respectable' femininity. She resists the ideas of good and bad women and is never apologetic for her sexual curiosity and desire. The film opens with Devi watching porn that establishes her sexual curiosity and agency. She reveals to her father that Piyush would come to the coaching centre where she worked and she liked talking to him. Her father's remark 'just this' shows that what women choose to desire is shaped by society's norms. Devi does not feel shame to act on her desires as she tells her abusive male colleague "whatever we did we did it together, and consensually." Vidyadhar Pathak feels he has never been a patriarch, has never controlled the behaviour of his daughter which was expected of him as men maintain familial honour in a patriarchal structure through regulating women's activities. He feels he does not deserve this scandal.

Pathak: I've always been liberal with you. I raised you like a boy. Encouraged you to study. What did I do to deserve this scandal?

Devi: I haven't created any scandal.

Pathak: Then what is this? I'm scampering for money! What is this? On the ghat, in the streets, I'm constantly afraid someone will ask about you. What is this?

Devi: That's your fear. (translated by Ghosh 2019, 333)

Devi's father, Vidyadhar Pathak is afraid of a scandal, that the filmed video of her daughter in the hotel raid would be on the internet and emerge in the public sphere to be a part of public gossip. To him that the incident of his daughter's sexual transgression would become a ketchha[i] (in Bengali) or public knowledge, and stain his standing or reputation as a Sanskrit scholar in the community hounded him. He makes all efforts, even sinking morally, to arrange for the money that his blackmailer Inspector Mishra demands from him.

It is evident in Masaan that "to speak of a woman's reputation is to invoke her sexual behaviour" (Lees, 1989, 19). Women are directed to take up subject positions where concern for saving their reputation is primary to them. In daily lives women use strategies to avoid social and sexual disrespectability, otherwise women place themselves in 'high risk situations' as is represented in Devi's narrative. She is slut-shamed by her office colleague who tells her since she has slept with a man, will she sleep with him? Devi in the eyes of her male colleague has become a "baazaru aurat" or a prostitute. She has destabilized patriarchal social order by having sex out of her own will against prescribed social rules as opposed to the 'good' woman who has "sex under conditions strictly controlled by patriarchy" (Menon 2012, 132).

Bulbul Can Sing (d. Rima Das, 2018)

This article analyses a coming-of-age Assamese language film, released in 2018, Bulbul Can Sing by noted film writer-director and producer, Rima Das. The movie begins with Bulbul lying on a field with a shimul flower on her chest. The shimul flower only blossoms during Spring. One is provoked to wonder if the shimul is a metaphor used to symbolise the concept of 'coming-of-age'. Coming of age films in India, a rare genre, is mostly about boys and young men and about their life changing experiences seen from a masculine gaze. Contrarily this film is on adolescent girls, their love, sexuality, and moral policing, featuring how a scandal and slut shaming of the girls in the village leads to emotional transformation of the protagonist, Bulbul, who finds new ways to navigate through loss.

The film is on the life and living of three adolescents Bulbul, Bonny, and Suman, their school and beyond school experiences within a village context. They come from a low-income group household. Bulbul's father wants her to become a singer but she out of fear cannot sing in public but at the end due to a radical change in her (coming-of-age), sings for herself sitting amid a large green field. The film is set within the context of a village in Assam and captures the beauty and tranquillity of Assam's village, the green grasslands, the paddy fields, and lakes. The film maker seems to take up the discourse of rural idyll by conceiving of rural life as more 'natural and connected to nature' (Crann 2021, 531). The rural idyll also constructs the social relationships and the sense of community in rural spaces as stronger producing strict control over its members, especially girls and women through surveillance and gossip. We shall offer an interpretive-feminist reading of the film (Denzin, 1989, 40-41) arguing that it contains important statements

on gender identity, gendered practices in school, adolescent girls' relationship to sexuality, bullying of subordinate masculinities and moral policing of girls.

Film Synopsis

Bulbul Can Sing is on the friendship of three adolescents, Bulbul, Bonnie, and Suman, coming from lower class social background. The three share a strong, intimate bond and are always together whether in going to school, or in leisure activities outside the school like strolling in the village, bathing in the lake, playing, cleaning the house and share the deepest secrets with each other. In the beginning, the film depicts the carefree lives of the three teenagers, unruffled by gender expectations and norms. Bulbul's father, a folk musician, wants her to be a singer but she gets too conscious and scared to sing in public. Bonnie's mother, a widow is depicted to own a small eatery in the village. Suman's gender performance is not aligned with the sex attributed to him. He is bullied both in school and in the village. Both Bulbul and Bonnie get involved in romantic heterosexual relationships with their class mates. Bulbul and Bonnie get physically assaulted along with their boyfriends when they are caught by villagers in an isolated place in the village. This is followed by slut-shaming of the girls by the villagers, beating of Bulbul by her father, and expulsion from school. Bonnie, unable to face the shame commits suicide, and Bulbul's self makes a transition from a timid to a confident girl. She finds peace in her loneliness, breaks off with her boyfriend and draws close to Bonnie's mother, and each find solace in the other.

Love, Desire, and Secrecy

The expression of adolescent sexuality in a socio-cultural context is influenced by the family, the community, and religion. They set ideas about acceptable sexual behaviour by holding rigid ideas of 'good' and 'bad' girls, and girls abide by them for fear of institutional sanctions. Bulbul and her friend, Bonnie, are represented as heterosexual in the movie. In the beginning of the film, Bonnie is seen to have a boyfriend, not totally committed to the relationship. Bulbul reciprocates the advances by a boy of her class and a courtship starts with Parag. They meet furtively in remote places outside the gaze of the villagers, accompanied by Suman, to alert them of any passer- by. They know, if caught, they will be rebuked and punished. Young girls' falling in love is not accepted in villages and it is held that girls violate moral code of conduct by falling in love. For girls, it is important that others do not come to know about the courtship in order to protect their reputation. Bulbul's brother holding the love letter that she has received from Parag,

threatens Bulbul that he would disclose her secret unless paid. Bulbul becomes vulnerable to her young brother who can disclose the secret information and hence wields power over her.

There is a conviction among the village elders of an erosion of traditional values, and love among the young becoming too physical, alien to the culture of the village. A binary is created between emotional and physical love with the love of Radha and Krishna cited as an example of sublime spiritual love. Both Bulbul and Bonny transgress the norms set by family, village community and religion by entering romantic relationships with their class mates that engulf physical and emotional intimacies. Exploring their sexualities, the girls believe that physical embrace and kissing can be allowed in a love relationship that is held as prelude to marriage. This becomes evident when Suman teases Bulbul and says "she will start kissing as she is in love." Bulbul conceives her relationship as life-long and hopes it ends in marriage and is ready to go to a temple to pray for a good married life. Love for Bulbul entails both physical like holding hands, embracing, kissing as well as discussing poems, reading them out, sharing life's secrets.

Gender Policing and Gender "Accountability"

Bulbul visits her friend Bonnie's house where they dress up in sarees and jewellery to emulate newly-wed women. According to Gansen, "Young children's peer cultures involve the active construction, enforcement, and ''doing'' of sexuality and gender" (Gansen 2017, 257). Gender, as theorized by West and Zimmerman (1987, 126-136) is accomplished through daily interactions with other people and individuals 'do' gender appropriate behaviour, men and women perform normative masculinity and femininity. As Butler noted, "We regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right" (1990, 140), and in this film Suman is shamed in school by peers and is called 'ladies' as his gender performance is not consistent with normative 'masculinity'. The school boys delineate the boundaries of masculinity by calling Suman 'ladies', ask him to wear necklace and attempt to pull down his trousers to see whether he has a penis. He carries a stigma, a shame, is a social failure for not displaying masculinity and is ridiculed by the villagers. Once fishing with others, he is taunted and told fishing is not his activity and is asked to go home and cook, kitchen coded as a feminine space. Kimmel (1994, 214) notes that performance of masculinity happens among men for men. Suman feels humiliated for being constantly bullied and though Bulbul resists the gender harassment, he breaks down before Bulbul and Bonnie after a bullying incident. It becomes evident

that Suman is still in the process of understanding his gender identity, but realizes due to his appearance and mannerisms he is not doing gender appropriately.

Policing of sexuality and scandal

In the opening scene Bulbul is asked by Suman to tie up her long hair or else a female ghost would come to catch her. He narrates the story of a young girl committing suicide and becoming a ghost. It is believed that since her soul did not receive salvation owing to unfulfilled dreams and desires, she is jealous of young girls and catches them. Though Bulbul resists the idea that a woman can take revenge on another woman, she nevertheless ties her hair up. Uma Chakravarti (1995) notes that in South Asia 'sex behaviour' is consciously associated with 'hair behaviour', and writes that "hair behaviour embraces a widely understood set of conscious sexual symbolisations" (2252). In many South Asian cultures unbound long hair symbolizes untamed sexuality of women and women are directed to bound their hair to regulate their 'wild' and 'disorderly' sexuality.

Bulbul's mother is relentlessly engaged in managing her daughter's sexuality. Bulbul tells her friends Bonnie and Suman that only 'don't's' are administered to her by her mother. She is always telling her what not to do, and her favourite word is no. In school, the post pubertal girls are all sari clad. The classroom sitting order is highly gendered, where boys are shown to sit on one side of the classroom and girls on the other. A physical distance is maintained between boys and girls in class.

In this film, the village community takes on the self-defined role of moral guardian [ii]by strict regulation of sexuality and defining what is 'permissible' and 'non-permissible', and 'moral' and 'immoral'. The only sanctioned sexual relationship is heteronormative marital relationships and teenage dating is strongly condemned. When village men discover the two couples holding hands in the woods, they are immediately enraged. The men start beating the couples in order to punish them for dishonouring and betraying the values and cultures of Assamese society. They are forced to give their parents' phone numbers and the village men also forcibly film a video of them. Bulbul and Bonnie are subjected to more violent beatings

than the boys for their supposed immoral conduct. In India, across communities, girls are prepared to be responsible for maintaining cultural values and practices (Dube, 1998, WS13). Bulbul and Bonnie in the eyes of the vigilante groups fail in this and deserve more severe punishment than boys.

Consequently, the girls are rusticated from the school for going against the moral values taught in their school, as well as for bringing ill repute to the school. There is no cognisance of the violations of the privacy of the adolescents when they were publicly humiliated, but the massive social outrage only restrict itself to be concerned about the dishonour to their community. Therefore, both the family and the school complement each other to resist any threats to establish structures of practicing sexuality.

Schools are fundamentally modernist institutions that prioritize the mind over the body and engage in disciplinary techniques to produce asexual subjects. In order to control sexuality among adolescent children, the first step that schools take is to control the bodies of students. Schools always try to suppress desires and sexuality within their premises. However, students are embodied beings, and in adolescence, all concerned are inescapably aware of this.

Interestingly, while schools try to send the body into oblivion as it is related to sex, at the same time, schools also try to enshrine heteronormativity within its walls. Using the tripartite forces of pedagogical practices, disciplinary action and interactions with students, school authorities often utilise informal ways to influence the construction of sexuality within schools (Pascoe, 2007, 52-81). Thus, when his friends are rusticated from school, Suman stops going to school as well. For Suman, Bonnie and Bulbul provided him with a safe space where he could be himself and not be ridiculed or harassed for not being masculine enough. The plight of the two girls does not end with rustication, while Bulbul's parents conduct various rituals and prayers to cure her of her 'immoral' behaviour, Bonnie commits suicide to escape the social stigma of being a 'bad' woman. It can be thus concluded that the school as both a social space and as an institution not only try to maintain the narrative of childhood as a phase of sexual innocence and purity, but also actively marginalise anyone who flout or resist conforming to the inculcation of married cis-heterosexuality.

Conclusion

The embodied experience of female sexuality is enmeshed with and governed by the tripartite factors of scandal, shame and moral policing. A woman, in order to keep her reputation intact, needs to perform gender as a balancing act to not violate any of the moral codes of socially sanctioned (hetero)sexuality. Attempts at reclaiming their sexuality have been made by women, especially in urban areas, however, in rural areas where women's sexuality is also a matter of community pride, moral policing on their sexuality have remained equally vigilant. Bollywood's representation of Indian woman has time and again harped on the dichotomous categories of the 'good', chaste woman and the 'bad' sluttish vamp. Pitting women against one another has been a routine theme in mainstream Bollywood. However, with the ushering in of films like Masaan, Pink and Lipstick Under My Burkha, a niche has been created to represent women from a female gaze, and consequently address the critical problems women undergo while performing their set gender roles and navigating through their sexuality in the everyday life. Masaan and Bulbul Can Sing, lie on two ends of the continuum representing female sexuality in Bollywood. While Masaan represents the plight of Devi, a young woman in urban Varanasi, after being discovered by the police with her boyfriend in a raid. Bulbul Can Sing focusses on the life of Bulbul, Bonnie and Suman, and the tumultuous transformations in their life, after Bulbul and Bonnie are discovered kissing by village men in rural Assam. The common theme connecting both the films have been the moral policing that the female protagonists – Devi and Bulbul, are subjected to when they flout the socially sanctioned norms of married heterosexuality. Women across ages, cultures and geographical locations can be subjected to public humiliation for the slightest faltering while walking on the tightropes of socially sanctioned married heterosexuality.

Notes and References

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[i] Tanika Sarkar writes that the Bengali work ketchha has been taken from the Persian word, Kissa meaning 'fabulous romances'. In bengali this meaning was changed to trans gressive romances or scandalous affairs. The concern of the families have always been to hush up the ketchha to prevent it from becoming public.

[ii] By moral guardianship, it is implied that the village community imposes values on its members of what is 'moral' and 'immoral'.

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Women Solicitors to Environmental Rescue:

An Eco-feminist Study of John Grisham's *Gray Mountain*

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Abstract

Women lawyers have been at the forefront of environmental protection and conservation, advocating for environmental rights and justice. Many women lawyers have worked tirelessly to protect the environment and hold corporations and governments accountable for their actions. The legal industry is an arena that coaxes women to voice the first-hand authentic problem, fight for solutions, and attain empowerment with all the legal backup. After years of formalisation and reformations, the occupational regimes of the legal profession gave access to the inclusion of women. In his novel Gray Mountain (2014), the attorney-turned-writer John Grisham presents the lives of women law professionals from the most realistic perspective of modern times and resonates with the idea of struggling women empowerment and environmental degradation under the patriarchal society. He presents the patterns of organisational regimes in the legal field with detailed exposure to gender stratification, segmentation and sedimentation with an emphasis on environmental law. The novel Gray Mountain embarks on the journey of Samantha Kofer, who finds a revelatory path from a big law firm to a small Mountain Legal Aid Clinic in a time of economic meltdown. Samantha is recruited by Mattie Wyatt and her other two women employees, who represent the poor and marginalised communities and fight for justice in the remote mountains. The focus of the paper is to eco-critically analyse the feminine problems faced by women in the legal field, with particular emphasis on the role of gender imparity and environmental governance in modern society.

Keywords- Eco-feminism, Gender discrimination, Ecocriticism, Environment, Women Solicitors, Courtroom, Law and Literature.

The relationship between women and nature has been discussed for many years. Historically, women have been closely associated with nature, as they were often the primary caregivers and responsible for gathering food and other resources from the environment.

In many traditional cultures, women were seen as the guardians of the natural world, with their knowledge of medicinal plants and their ability to cultivate crops and care for animals. However, with the rise of industrialisation and urbanisation, this connection has been disrupted, and women's roles in environmental conservation have often been marginalised. Women are often disproportionately affected by environmental

degradation and climate change, and their knowledge and skills can be harnessed to address these challenges.

Ecofeminism is a social and political movement that draws connections between the oppression of women and the exploitation of the environment. It argues that both are rooted in patriarchal systems of power that prioritise domination, control, and profit over the well-being of people and the planet. Ecofeminists advocate for a more holistic and interconnected approach to environmental and social justice that takes into account the perspectives of women, marginalised communities, and nature.

On the other hand, environmental justice is a movement that seeks to address the disproportionate burden of environmental harm often borne by marginalised communities, including people of colour, low-income communities, and Indigenous peoples. Environmental justice advocates argue that these communities are often excluded from the decision-making processes that affect their lives and are more likely to live near polluting industries, hazardous waste sites, and other environmental hazards.

Ecofeminism and environmental justice address different issues but share common themes and goals. Both seek to challenge dominant systems of power that prioritise profit and control over the well-being of people and the planet. Both also call for a more inclusive and participatory approach to decision-making that takes into account the perspectives of marginalised communities and recognises the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues. While ecofeminism and ecological justice have their unique histories and approaches, they share a joint commitment to challenging systems of oppression and working towards a more just and sustainable future for all.

Legal thrillers, as a genre, typically revolve around legal cases, courtroom drama, and the pursuit of justice. The stories involve courtroom drama, as the lawyer or legal team tries to prove their case before a judge and/or jury. It often involves investigative elements, as the lawyer or legal team tries to gather evidence and build their case. Incorporating eco-feminist themes into legal thrillers can provide a unique perspective on environmental and social issues and offer a thought-provoking narrative that can engage readers. The protagonist, often a lawyer or a judge, can highlight the linkages between environmental degradation and gender inequality and work towards achieving justice for both.

Women have played essential roles in legal thrillers as protagonists and supporting characters. In many legal thrillers, female lawyers or judges are depicted as robust, intelligent, and tenacious individuals who fight for justice in the face of adversity. Some notable examples of female protagonists in legal thrillers include Erin Brockovich, the real-life legal clerk who fought against a power company accused of polluting a community's water supply, and Atticus Finch's daughter, Scout, in *To, Kill a Mockingbird*, who learns

about the injustices of racial discrimination through her father's legal defence of an innocent black man. Many legal thrillers have featured female lawyers or judges as supporting characters, providing essential assistance to the main characters or offering insightful commentary on the legal system and light for justice and equality in the face of adversity.

Women are no strangers to gender discrimination owing to the higher echelons of the patriarchy. The legal profession is andro-centric and is known for its elocutionary valour of male lawyers. In 1878, the first women lawyer of modern times, Clara Foltz, was admitted to practice law in the State of California. This incident attributes to the sprout of gender trouble in the profession.

John Grisham is a bestselling American author known for his legal thrillers, such as *The Firm* (1991), *The Pelican Brief* (1992), and *A Time to Kill* (1989). While his novels generally focus on legal and political issues, he has also expressed concern about environmental issues. John Grisham's *Gray Mountain* is a legal thriller with a story around a legal case involving ecological harm and its impact on the local community, particularly women. The novel addresses the women issue in an empathetical and calculative manner and as an answer to the criticism by Gingerbread Carrie S. Coffman, who, in the article 'Women: Stereotypical Female Attorneys in the novels of John Grisham', analysis and remarks that Grisham's portrayal of women attorneys is in need of development. Coffman asks Girsham to 'portrays a capable woman who … can simultaneously be essentially female and competent attorneys. An author of Grisham's intelligence and skill owes it to his public to write such a novel.' (Coffman, 1998, p. 101)

Grisham's depiction of female characters as attorneys in the novel *Gray Mountain* envelops the readers with an understanding regarding the role of women in the legal profession and the chances of success in the legal career. Grisham embarks on a feminist journey throughout the novel's resolution with minute prospects of the male gaze, objectification and stereotyping with the use of passive language, behaviour and predominantly male viewpoint, which subtly reinforce a negative view of women in the law and related threshold and how women overcome such instances.

The novel focuses on the coal mining industry and its impact on Appalachia's environment and local communities. The connections between environmental degradation, gender, and social justice prevail throughout the novel. The protagonist, Samantha Kofer, is a young lawyer who is furloughed from her job at a big law firm in New York City and ends up working for a legal aid clinic in Appalachia. Through her work, she learns about the devastating impact of coal mining on the environment and the health and well-being of local communities, particularly women and children.

Grisham vividly describes the natural beauty of the Appalachian Mountains, including the lush forests, winding rivers, and diverse wildlife. However, he also portrays the devastating impact of coal mining on this environment, such as mountaintop removal and the contamination of water sources. Coal mining, in the novel, is a significant contributor to air and water pollution, deforestation, and greenhouse gas emissions, which have a substantial impact on women's health and livelihoods. The local women have been at the forefront of many social and environmental movements, including those against coal mining. As they live near coal mines, they are disproportionately affected by pollution and environmental degradation. Some even suffer from respiratory diseases, asthma, and other health problems caused by exposure to air pollution.

In addition to health concerns, women are also affected by the social and economic impacts of coal mining. Coal mining often results in the displacement of communities, loss of traditional livelihoods, and increased gender-based violence. The local women of the Appalachian mountain are under direct attack from the strip coal mines that surrounds them. They witness the rise in patriarchal traits owing to the increased number of male workers in the mining sector. Now they face economic inequality as they are poorly educated and can only find low-paying jobs with little job security. As a result, they often struggle to make ends meet and provide for their families and approach the women solicitors who might help them with the injustices.

Women in the legal profession challenge the classical stereotypical female characteristics of being modest, passive and silent. The profession seeks highly knowledgeable, strong women with excellent potential oratory skills, which is the most subjugated skill for women under patriarchy. In the novel *Gray Mountain*, author John Grisham details the subtle forms of discrimination women to undergo every day in their career of choice. He explicitly embarks on the methods used in the legal profession to intimidate women lawyers. He brings out the situations using subtle sexist remarks, practices and derogatory treatment that are intentional and accidental. Bolton and Muzio, in their article, 'Can't live with 'em; can't live without 'em: gendered segmentation in the legal profession', says that the gender segmentation in women's empowerment is based on the underlying built of women, which is used as an exclusionary 'defence mechanism' that allows the elite segments or coalitions in preserving the traditional patriarchal privileges.

The Mountain Legal Aid Clinic in the novel is a women-led organisation, and movements have been instrumental in fighting against coal mining and advocating for renewable energy solutions. These groups work to raise awareness about the harmful effects of coal mining on women's health, livelihoods, and the environment and push for policies and regulations that prioritise clean energy and protect communities from the negative impacts of fossil fuel extraction. The Mountain Legal Aid Clinic advocates for gender equality and women's rights in climate change and sustainable development policy. They work towards

empowering women and promoting their leadership in environmental decision-making, although their work is restricted to immediate problems like domestic violence and sexual harassment.

The problem of sexual harassment is the most common intimidating technique that is equipped in the patriarchy to control strong women. Many legal cases are filed yearly on different types of workplace harassment. Still, it is ironic as women in the legal field are regularly exposed to everyday harassment in their professional environment. Sexual harassment includes requests for sexual favours, unwelcome sexual advances, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Mattie, the owner of the Mountain Legal Aid Clinic, even in her Fifties, readily defends herself from sexual comments and tries to protect her employees and clients from sexual harassment. She uses eloquence and legal guidance to scare off the sexual predators who lurk around women in all statutes. Mattie's nephew Donavon, himself a lawyer, tries to make sexual moves on Samantha until Mattie's intervention. These women withstand the intimidation of male counsels, jury members, and other lawyers, who comment on the appearance of female solicitors during the courtroom proceedings. Mattie and Samantha, under such circumstances, create a portrayal of an aloof exterior and masks their expression with indifference, followed by certain focused, influential commentaries as a reply. These characteristic makes them look bad from the conventional gender perspective but becomes the most essential trail to grapple the gender prejudices. For instance, on interaction with the arrogant Snowden, Mattie takes the stand and plays the power game as she says, "'Don't call me a gal!" Mattie barked at him. Snowden recoiled fearfully as if he might get hit with one of those sexual harassment claims. . .They wheeled about and marched away, leaving Snowden weak-kneed and shell-shocked and already having glimpses of the nightmares.'(Grisham, 2014, 108)

Women are often disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation and climate change, and as a result, they have been active in advocating for environmental justice and sustainability. One of the important historical milestones of women in environmental protection is the landmark case of 1972 – Sierra Club v. Morton, which established that environmental groups have standing to sue on behalf of natural resources. It was initiated by a female conservationist named Martha Fox, who bravely defended nature alone with other female supporters. Likewise, Mattie, Samantha and all the women characters in the novel, *Gray Mountain,* try to fight and tackle the gender problem themselves, as they find the law against workplace harassment is susceptible and renders futile in the hands of those defending the law. Grisham explains on the reasons for the susceptible attitude of women professionals towards sexual harassment. He points at the long work hours, frequent travel, and partner autonomy as a median of possible harassment that every women with strong willpower can easily cope with, especially a person in the field of law, like Mattie, Samantha and others.

The novel *Gray Mountain* is one of the best novels with minimal usage of feminine body objectification. Marion Dixon analysis the early novels of Grisham and concludes that 'first, women lawyers' outward struggle with the patriarchy; and secondly, their inner struggle to hold onto or express their true nature as women while working in a discipline which emphasises the "masculine" characteristics of logic, order and hierarchical authority' (Dixon, 1994, 77). In the novel *Gray Mountain,* Grisham employs has tried to minimalise the male gaze description as he never lets the reader learns about the explicit features of the women in the text, even when the entries plot is female-based. He never tells them their height, hair colour, or race. The protagonist Samantha Kofer is given no particular details, and one cannot even remotely paint the primary picture of her. The most direct objectification that occurs towards female characters in the novel is in Samantha's conversation with Marshall, who gawks and stops chewing when a brunette walks in a short skirt, saying, 'You don't understand men, Samantha. Looking automatic and harmless. We all look. Come on' (Grisham, 2014, 66). In other cases, Grisham remarks the female characters with statements such as '…a slender brunette…' and '…glanced at her legs as he settled in behind his desk' (Grisham, 2014, 174). Grisham brings out the strong professionalism of the women characters with proud and beaming potential rather than making them the object for pleasure.

When it comes to environmental degradation, the male gaze can be seen in the way that natural resources have historically been exploited for profit and economic growth, often without regard for the long-term consequences for the environment and the people who depend on it. This exploitation has been driven largely by the interests of powerful men and corporations who have been able to control and shape policies and practices to their advantage. The mine owners and operators in the novel are all dominantly men and are associated with the exploitation and degradation of natural environments. The prioritisation of economic growth and profit over environmental sustainability and the well-being of communities is a reflection of the male gaze, which has historically centred the interests of men in positions of power.

The critical requirement of the legal profession is the time and research it seeks to uncover the truth and prepare counter arguments for one. The time for women disrupts with their family time, and work-life balance is ruptured creating another hurdle for female aspirants in the field. The long-hours culture followed in the occupation asks the professionals to practice law in an arduous time frame, Grisham takes the time factor using Samantha and her mother. As a successful employee of a big firm, Samantha is single in her thirties and has no time for family, friends or even for herself. She is forced to step down from her successful career to get in touch with friends and even start looking for a partner. Samantha's mother is similar, her professional success strains the mother-daughter relationship. She is best known for her astute arguments and best-known divorces whereas Annette, another member of Mountain Legal Aid Clinic, despite her high

qualifications, has to choose to be in the small Clinic as she is a single parent who has to take care of her children. Thanks to today's technology-driven world, women are able to combine their regular working hours with work-from-home, which helps them to juggle their professional and personal commitments.

The time commitment required for environmental lawyers can vary depending on the specific case or project they are working on, as well as their level of involvement. Some cases may require only a few hours of work, while others may require a long-term commitment or full-time work. This type of work can require a significant time commitment, as environmental law cases can be complex and involve extensive research, document review, and analysis. Like Mountain Legal Aid Clinic, the Environmental lawyers may engage in pro bono work, which involves providing legal services for free to individuals or organisations that cannot afford to pay for legal assistance. This type of work can be advantageous for lawyers passionate about environmental protection, as it allows them to use their legal skills to help advance environmental causes. It is essential for lawyers to carefully consider their time and resource commitments before taking on any environmental law case, as these cases can often be complex and time-consuming.

In their essay, "Bibliographic Essay: Women and the Legal Profession", Cynthia Grant Bowman concludes that women are most likely to work in specific career specialisms, like in family law, which is usually low-paid and lower in status. She continues that their work is set areas such as the government, private agencies and teaching in law clinics for the satisfaction of the job. Bowman's point is affirmed by Grisham in the *Gray Mountain*, as he portrays all the women in the novel are settling for low-paid jobs, especially after their thirties, as they are tired of the rush. He labels the achieving women in the law field as ruthless loaners like Carmen in S&P, who is ready to save her position at the cost of her co-workers. Carmen represents the elite women, safe in their position due to their family and connections that make them more robust than the others. Samantha belongs to this group, where both her highly influential parents are ready to support and guide their daughter by pressuring officials if required. Such nepotism in the field has become the priority for the success of women solicitors, which is again an insult and hurdle in women's empowerment. This becomes a reason for dejection. The patriarchy uses nepotism as its defence mechanism to insult the success of the women solicitors, which impacts their performance at the workplace. These are some of the existing structural barriers that stand as primary hurdles to women's empowerment.

Similarly, the case of nepotism causes adverse environmental impacts as it is prevalent in government or industry, appointing unqualified individuals to positions of power or influence. This can result in poor decision-making and mismanagement of environmental issues, leading to harm to the environment and public health. It perpetuates a culture of corruption and cronyism, where individuals with connections to

those in power are given preferential treatment. This can make it difficult for independent organisations and individuals to speak out against environmental violations or to advocate for more responsible environmental practices. Nepotism limits opportunities for qualified individuals who do not have the right connections or family background. This can result in a lack of diversity in leadership and decision-making, leading to a narrow focus on specific environmental issues at the expense of others.

Overall, nepotism can be detrimental to the environment by promoting unqualified individuals, perpetuating corruption, and limiting opportunities for qualified individuals who can contribute positively to environmental stewardship.

Grisham's women characters in the novel, *Gray Mountain,* strive against the roles assigned to women and make their story worthy. They protect their rights by protecting the right of others, the Mountain Legal Aid Clinic, in the text represents the seclusive utopia for these women where they come together to join forces to stand against the patriarchal hierarchy. They help the needy with open arms, like, Mattie's call for Samantha; Annette's help for Phoebe, who was under multiple assaults from her husband; Samantha's addressing the case of Lisa Tate and her children.

Through *Gray Mountain*, Grisham reflects on the toxic professional and societal behaviour against women and nature. He incorporates some of the changing understandings about women and nature with authentic facts. He formulates multiple ways for women and nature to withstand, oppose and overcome the hurdles in legal and legislative execution. He represents Mattie as a leader of this small group of women and every other female character connected with the legal aid arena. He gives an encouraging voice for the future state of women.

Grisham, with the protagonist, Samantha Kofer announces the desire of women solicitors at the very end of the novel as, 'When I walk into a courtroom, I want all the boys to sit up straight and notice, and not just my ass' (368). Grisham continues with Samantha demanding a lot of information from Andy on how she wants to be treated in the workplace and the male/ female ratio when he offers her the big firm job, 'What's the male/ female breakdown? No all-boys club' (310). In fact, the novel is a bildungsroman for Samantha, who, from being a passive Big firm worker in a busy urban surroundings is let to the awareness of her role as a woman and fellow being in the ecosystem. The aim of women and their desires are like the ecosystem that settles for the good of the human race under the dominance of man. When Samantha realises the higher good, she is ready to take on the responsibility and fight for the justice of women and the environment in the long run. Samantha grows to the desire for motivating more females to join the profession of law and is ready to take up environmental and social cases in the legal aid clinic rather than her initial goal '… to

make partner by the age of thirty-five, one of few women at the top, and nail down a corner office from which she would play hardball with the boys.' (Grisham, 2014, 16)

The *Gray Mountain* is a novel of explicit value with acute details about the problems of strong women in the field of law. The women solicitors are strong and resilient, fighting against injustice and making a difference in their communities and the natural surroundings. John Grisham as the famous author of best-seller legal novels, takes readers to a thrilling land where the female attorneys are the new heroes who fight against the dark forces of inequality, injustice, corruption, and greed with emphasis on the rights of the natural environment. In this masterfully crafted thriller, Gray Mountain, Grisham has unveiled the female stereotypes using powerful self-resilience and created the awareness of the power women and nature withhold. The highest-paying professional fields and the governmental policy-making authorities are still predominantly patriarchal. Women in the legal profession are fighting gender imparity for the welfare of the common good of the human race. The multidisciplinary approach towards environmental justice is essential and Grisham's women solicitors are exceptionally curated for the prosperity of all. Through the novel, Grisham calls to action the need to protect the natural world and ensure that it is preserved for future generations.

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Buried in History, Unearthed in Memory

Renderings of Chennai

Priya Sasidharan

Abstract

Memory celebrated in history of architecture is embodied in the tangibles of chronological evolution, style, material & construction while the intangibles of people, events and culture identify as underlying layers. The concept of place that contains the indelible identity to history has myriad, mired or mere interpretations. The crux of this research paper is to unearth the potential significance of delving beyond history through place and its perceptive understanding by people and its posterity in memory. Places that invoke memory have been related to encompass the built fabric, legacy of power dynamics and cultural milieu, but landscapes, public realm, symbols, names and urban art that are integral in everyday urbanism, profiling collective and popular reminiscences need reinforcing. The revelation of multiple layers that unfold through a way of life, an assemblage on a setting of landscape, mooted in memory by visual ensemble, definitions of power and expression in the public realm relate to history beyond timeline. The delineation by place, time, people and practice is the repository that the phenomena of memory behold that contends to being integral in the construction of history.

Keywords – Intangibles, Memory, Perceptive Understanding, Construction of History

History – A Frame in Time: Constructed or Construed?

History being presented as a compendium in time; of events, people, place and posterity, while construed by ramifications of memory transcends to newer realms of establishing a bridge between perception, popular thought and actual fact. Constructs of memory are repositories of narratives, untold lore, visible manifestations and intangible assets that challenge chronological derivation of history. Popular perception of people on urban evolution, events, activities, life and contribution of renowned personalities and its transcendence in time, contradicts or even contrasts documented or interpreted academic history. Popular history is a potpourri of interpretation, drawing linkages and connect in language, vernacular, societal overtones and trappings of power.

Maurice Halbwachs (1992), the French sociologist had discussed social and historical memories profiled as collective memory, while reading the city in urban artifacts of memory was emphasised by the Italian architect Aldo Rossi in his seminal work, The Architecture of the City in 1966. Boyer M. Christine (1996),

in his book on The City of Collective Memory discussed the role of visual images, representational forms, and reading the notions of the urban fabric as art, panorama and spectacle in the history of urban architecture. The debate on oral histories and memory studies, the experience and perspectives of the approach was initiated by Thomson et.al, (1994). Oral history and its interpretation gained momentum and popularity that a specific stream of research emerged that had canonised the system and reliability of oral memory-based knowledge. The distortion of memory, multitude of interpretations and perceptions, collective and group revelations was not translated as a deterrent, rather was indulged as a resource. Screen representations as in media and films became a repository of memory and oral history, which was a celebrated cause in Chennai city with leading actors indulging in politics, as the image, memory of larger-than-life persona created a cult status. Cinema, a strong visual medium and literature as in the scripting was a double-edged weapon wielding power dynamics through creation of memory with strong emotions of fervour and favour among the masses has also been discussed by Jacob, P (2008) in the context of South India. Cinema as a defining aspect, cult status, visual imagery and memory etching phenomenon has been examined and explored in this book, Celluloid Deities: The Visual Culture of Cinema and Politics in South India. The interesting note in the political history of Tamil Nadu, Chennai city being its capital, traces the creation of power dynamics through cinema as a medium of expression that is remembered, etched and had catapulted actors to take centre stage in elections.

The concept of casual residue, recall, trace, or representation termed as structural analogue of experience was put forth by Martin and Deutscher, (1966) in the analysis of memory in its physical state. Gordon Cullen in the book, The Concise Townscape, written in 1961, edited in 2012, discussed the city as a collective enterprise capable of producing potential emotional responses, offering visual pleasure and moulding the city into a coherent drama. Cities in history have opined in regime, political replenishment and architectural grandeur, but the imageability and mental mapping of its indelible identity as experienced by people established in the work, The Image of the City of Kevin Lynch in 1964, form key to the construction of visual imagery that is etched in human memory.

The case of Chennai city, erstwhile Madras under the British Raj in its colonial antiquity had its opulent renderings of a glorious White Town against the natives and settlers of the Black Town. While history of Madras from its formation on 22 August 1639 by Francis Day of East India, commemorated as Madras Day was largely documented from the British sources, the life, culture and events were interpretation of colonial regime. The erstwhile Madras in its antiquity was recorded in the works of K.V. Raman (1959), describing the city as a vignette of villages, tracing its origins supported by inscriptions, epigraphs, citations in classical

Tamil scriptures and archaeological evidences. The couplets, verses from the scriptures, the fond remembrance of the names of the villages in its reverent memory, as in Triplicane or Thiruvallikeni (from thiru=sacred, alli=water lily, keni=pond) hold stronger moorings of identity. The names of places hold deeper meaning that relates to the order of nature, way of life or the landscape rendering. The naming of places or placing of names not only denote the geographical context, but also address socio cultural facets, community-based attributes, or specific event-based phenomenon. Chetpet in Chennai city was primarily centred on the local name of Chettiaar pettah, meaning the place where the community of Chettiaars lived, and in the same thread Kosapet denoted the place of the potter (kosavar) community lived, worked, and displayed wares ingraining everyday urbanism of people and livelihood.

Memoirs of Landscape

Landscapes as natural networks have defined human settlements over time, rendering associated meaning that have shaped human lives and practices. Raadik-Cottrell (2010) quoted T.Winter (2007) in discussing those landscapes are 'the medium through which multiple histories are simultaneously remembered and forgotten'. Veneration of nature in the Indian context as in ghats, temple tanks, sacred groves and ceremonial gardens have an intrinsic connect with events, rituals and collective memory enacted in the context of the landscape. The valley section or Valley Plan of Civilisation by Patrick Geddes emphasised social survey on a geographical lie of the land, while history of regions defines the settlement by time. The missing thread that history leaves is weaved by drawing in the colours of people, life and activity that etches memories on the use of the land. The unpublished letters and artwork renderings of the natural world of Madras in the nineteenth century by the Symonds-Gwillim sisters (Wheeler, 2021) are memoirs of nature, landscape, hydrogeography and pristine setting of place that the documented colonial history of the city does not invoke.

The drawing of parallels to the concept of thinai or modes of landscape of the Sangam era is in the chronological establishment of order of nature in one of the earliest settlements of in the erstwhile Tamil Kingdom. The thinai or landscape modes evokes a strong sense of memory, emotion, belonging and a corpus of sensations embodied in the classical anthology. The classification of poems on the backdrop of landscapes as agam (inner) and puram (outer) connect to the deeper side of human experience and emotions that are perceived and stored in memory. While history chronicles the era in its splendour in the city of Madurai, the literature records memories in its poetic rendering of love, valour, herioism and union amidst mountains (kurinji), pastoral forests (mullai), coastal regions (neythal), riverine agricultural lands (marutham) and arid areas (palai). The power of narratives, art of storytelling, educating through lore was

a classic example exploited in the poetical rendition of the Sangam era profiling land, occupation, natural resources and guarding structure of power in visible images. The landscape orders detailed in the Sangam epics, poetry and classical texts relate to everyday urbanism, rituals and practices that connect people to nature and create memory through veneration. The order of nature described in Sangam age as Thinai or modes of landscapes further stand testimony to classic imprints of natural definitions explored and interpretd even in western body of research work. The works of Zvelebil (1974) and Gaur (1996) compilation of Takanashi interpret the classical anthologies in their themes, narrative and social significance that encompass, populace, perception and posterity beyond chronicled history.

Mnemonics of Power

The dynamics of power is an evident conduit of impressionable creation of popular history beyond the documented recordings that outlines the regime, personalities and policy making scenarios. The subtle yet conscious memory rendering through strong visual culture, iconic architecture and propaganda through mass media is the acclaimed and visible manifestation of power. Intangible manifestation of power dynamics through names and meanings, symbols that etch lasting mental images of regime and strategic pitching of urban art wield a play of fervent memory game among the public.

The strong legacy of the Tamil Kingdom (Abraham, 2003) in Southern India resonated the fervour for literature, culture and tradition. The symbols of power in the flags of the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers (muvendar or the three kings, mu=three, vendhar = king) of the Tamil Kingdom celebrated nature, valour and the landscapes pertaining to the geographical context and extent of the kingdoms. Cheras sported the bow and arrow, Cholas imprinted the tiger and the Pandyas marked the fish, denoting a myriad of popular interpretation outlining specific community, occupational significance and the vestiges of annexation. The symbolic representation of animal figures to denote the vahana or the carrier of the gods is the underlying and integral facet of unison between the sacred and mental imagery. While the sevvval or cock denotes the sanctity of Lord Muruga, hailed as the Tamil god, the bull or nandhi represents the essence of Lord Shiva with their respective consorts taking a specific avatar or version reminiscent of an anecdote or event in mythology. The visual imprint is accentuated through folklore, mythology and narratives that are fostered through generations. The visible yet intangible quotient is the veneration of nature through celestial power, belief, sacred fervour and traditional inklings.

The power of the people cannot be undermined as specific communities have created pockets of unique identity in the city, as illustrated in George Town, the erstwhile central business district of Chennai. While the colonial renderings of history of the trading community that settled in Madras does record the

chronology of the twin temples, the perceptive essence of the Chettiaar community speaks volumes on the inception, the tale and the colonial patronage. The Saivite-Vaishnavite duality, the two factions of Chettiaars – Beeri and Komti, also termed Idangai or the left and Valangai or the right, were intangible manifestations that soci0-cultural perspectives would dwell and elucidate on. Mattison Mines (1994), in his book, Public Faces, Private Lives, details the rising of the community in power, stature and visible manifestations. The memory of people in still recalling dubashes, who could speak two languages still points to specific community of people, who came in as settlers rather than as native inhabitants. The spatial connect in the layout of George Town, with streets named as Muthialpet, Peddanaickenpet, demarcating the specific personality from the community or the big man, relates beyond dating the start of the settlement.

The Tamil fervour and legacy brought to the fore beyond addressing it in the political manifesto has a stronger trail demonstrated in urban art, symbols, placing names or naming places and visual culture. The case of Valluvar Kottam, a cultural facility created in 1976 reminiscences honouring the great classical Tamil poet, Thiruvalluvar amidst the backdrop of the World Tamil Congress held earlier in the erstwhile Madras. The naming of public parks as Semmozhi Poonga and Tholkaapiar Poonga, celebrating the Tamil fervour through reminiscences of the language, contributions by poets and saints, recalling the classical epithets scripted by them, so as to permanently imprint the invisible images in the memory. The visible urban manifestation in a public realm with a striking architecture of a chariot (based on an anecdote) appeals to the public in fostering the linguistic connect. Iconicity, strategic locational siting, symbolic rendition and a strong narrative creates an indelible impact through mental imageability.

Reminiscences of the Public Realm

Public realm has been an arena of demonstration of power, podium of expression and gathering of the commons. Public spaces exude in memory through a trail of chronological events in time, translating aspirations of the people, commemorating victory, celebrating freedom of expression and universal access. History through the narratives of a public realm in a city reveal the timeline of creation and events, while popular perception delves into the attachment to place, sense of belonging and civic identity. The case of Marina beach in Chennai city literally presents itself as a footprint on the sands of time being a spectator to the political legacy of being created as a protective sandy buffer to controlling the sea-based trade post of the British. The significance of the promenade beyond the largest open space of the city (Arabindoo, 2011), also formed the foreground to stately administrative corridor of the colonial regime. The economic spine of erstwhile Madras, from Fort St. George to the central business district, the Marina swells with pride on the ravages of the British, the retaliation of the Independence movement, host to demonstrations and public

outcry for freedom of expression. From the setting of the Seerani Arangam, translated as a stage or podium, an edifice erected on the Thilak square of the Nationalist rallies of the Indian freedom struggle to the lineage of memorials, the Marina stretch resonates strong memories of power dynamics.

While memorials cast a memory spell, a strong mental mapping and imagery, Chennai city has celebrated the siting of memorials strategically at the public realm of the Marina. The symbolic representation of the ideology of the leaders through evocative architecture, symbols of power, visual imagery that brings a surge of patriotic fervour, allegiance to the political party and reminiscences of power dynamics overpowers the historical dating. The metaphorical approach to the memorials that are either literal, as in the two leaves symbolising victory that stood for as the party symbol to the figurative Pegasus epitomising power, freedom an endurance was remembrance in reverence of another political leader. The anecdotes, rebellion and sense of attachment to siting the memorial at Marina have etched a greater memory than the history of commissioning the memorial. The history of memorial culture in Chennai city if traced in time, purely through memory and perception, the narrative it reveals and unravels would connect process, people and place in myriad connotations that become a rich repository for further research. Architecture has celebrated triumphal arches, gateways, honorific columns and statues erected in public spaces, but the sequential narration of the event, multitude of interpretation and perceptive memory recording could reinforce, reinstate or even redefine history.

The lining of statues along the promenade on the Marina, exude narratives of Tamil legacy, with saints, poets, and strong memoirs of the fervour for language has had a play in evolution of a civilization. The political ideology of the ruling power or the party with its manifesto rooted in reinstating cultural milieu and reviving tradition of the Tamils further moots developmental interventions, images of the built fabric, signs and symbols, iconography, and visual display.

The largest public realm of Chennai city, timeless in its sands and space, but ephemeral as a host to parades, protests, and performances, reiterates in history as a place of expression, homecoming and sense of togetherness, an innate identity of the people. Many a visual montage that introduces the city has the Marina Beach promenade, the Napier bridge linking the corridor, the Island grounds created by the hydrogeography and the line-up of stalwart houses of commerce, giants of the business and banking world. The Indo-Saracenic corridor, erstwhile First Line Beach Road or North Beach Road (Rajaji Salai) was an array of British patronage to economic power houses as in banks and headquarters of public infrastructure, strongly imprinting lifeline and pulse of the city, through strategic location and striking architecture. Spatial, functional and visible manifestation combine to create an impressionable casting of memory that historical

accounting cannot achieve in isolation or with the lacuna of not connecting the dots to form layers and dimensions.

Urban Art in its Reminiscences

Urban art become records of memory in unique ways as recognisable and relatable objects and visual appeal to the human mind. The cognitive process that the mind experiences have a lasting effect that recalls, connects and interprets similar presentation or ensemble of space, events and artifacts. Gaston Bachelard (2014), Edward Casey (2009) through philosophical and phenomenological analysis have expounded the powerful connection between memory and place. The work of Yi-Fu Tuan (1979) traced the significance of memorable architecture that strengthened mental cognition related to place. The concept of sense of place, attachment and identity are largely played by memory that reflects culture, people and activities performed in space that go beyond documented history and chronological timeline recordings.

Urban artifacts (Rossi, 1984) that evoke memory and render greater description of the place in comparison to the documented history is etched deeper and recall becomes spontaneous. The trail of statues lining the Marina Beach promenade exude Tamil fervour and legacy as it connects to the classical texts of yore. The debated Kannagi statue at Marina Beach promenade was reminiscent of the primal character of the popular Tamil epic Silapathikaram, that created vivid images of the glory of Madurai and the Pandian ruler alongside strong emotions of justice and righteousness that was weaved in the storyline.

Urban art in Chennai city as part of the city beautification project, Singara Chennai 1.0 and 2.0 saw a complete revamping of the compound walls splashed with wall paintings and murals depicting life and culture of the Dravidian Tamil inhabitants. It is interesting to note that the major public infrastructure networks, stations and foot over bridges have donned life-size paintings of the common man, from an inclusive standpoint. The visual imagery is arresting, calls for a pause and the larger than life rendering of the commons is so vivid in memory as the city for all. The statues and urban art at the junctions and intersections of major arteries and networks of the city further creation of vivid images that recall the past, etch the present and revel in the minds of people. Public participation, the inclusive call at such art-based projects go beyond the theme, revival of tradition and venerating heritage to picturising the coming together of the masses, in creating a new chapter of convergence that has to find its texting in history. Involving the public in writing history need not profile revolutionary incidents, rebellious anecdotes, but creative expression through common art, assemblages and group memories accentuate history of place and event.

The history of the public realm hardly documents the changing scenario, perspectives on art, imagery, lifestyle and people, culture and routine that play strong memory games.

The cut-out culture, popular in Chennai city, wherein huge visual images of the power centric personalities are launched at strategic locations, to reiterate the significance, symbolism and strong image rendition of the leader or the torch bearer of the political party. While politics and cinema or movie culture literally define mass movements, the sequential display of movie advertisements and hoardings along Mount Road, a major artery of Chennai city several decades earlier was a glorious mix of personality – people – narrative nexus by popular culture. The concept of names and meanings discussed by Kevin Lynch, speaks volumes on the legibility of the urban environment, underlying eventful history. The conversion of place names from English to the vernacular Tamil language has been a never-ending saga that either erases or etches in human memory.

History as a Construction of Memory

The paper attempts at revealing the potency of unearthing multidimensional facets of memory being the true record in time against mere documentation through history. Memory being triggered by slices of everyday urbanism as in landscapes, public realm, visible symbols and arresting architecture go a long way in fostering the heritage and legacy of place -people – posterity. Though history gives an account in chronological timeline, it is the plethora of memory that supports the crux of understanding place in its constituents of people and perception. The most visible need not become the truth, while its manifestations; hidden, jaded, blurred or even abstracted, leave stronger mental images that speak on timeless and ephemeral, while history immortalises. The history of human settlements though documented in books, research and archeological findings, have evaded thought processes lost in time, memory capture and reinterpretation through generations.

Perceptive interpretations from varied cross sections of the society if analysed, authenticated, or documented can strengthen the threads that weave the fabric of place, in its contained memory. History as a construction of memory could unearth beyond physicality of the built to the phenomenological approach to existence. History built on the foundation of memory would see a new horizon, a stronger trajectory that edges beyond time to delve into transformation, change and metamorphosis yet with traces of static, permanent and non-erasable connotations offered by memory. The construction of memory in place, events, people and practices of the society become the missing links in the approach to historical realisation rather than completeness. Incomplete rendering of history is essential to pique the research interest, but new

approaches, directives that could enrich the compendium of studies on history has to delve into the plethora offered by memory and perceptive interpretations.

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Dialectical distinctions within the organizational politics of Hindu communalism with special emphasis on Hindu Mahasabha in late colonial Bengal

Priyam Konar

Abstract

In this paper, I primarily endeavour to comprehend the internal incongruity within the organizational polity of Hindu Mahasabha as a so-called 'homogeneous' political entity. The micro-analysis of the organizational polity of 'District' level Hindu Mahasabha will be convenient in this regard to comprehending how the growth of Hindu communal polity is itself fragmented in nature and without conceptualizing the inter-relationship between 'Centre' and 'Fragment' the historical analysis regarding the emergence of Hindu communal polity cannot be possible. That is why in my essay, I will examine the structure of the polity of Hindu Communalism led by Hindu Mahasabha by emphasizing the role that the organizational relationship between Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha as a 'Centre' and District level Hindu Mahasabha as a 'Fragment' played in distinctive 'spatio-historical' context to configure and re-configure the discursive framework of the communal polity.

Keywords: *Organizational polity, Centre, Fragment, Spatio-historical, Discursive*

Historiography

In this essay, I have conceptualized both 'communalism' as a dialectical 'transformative' and 'associative' entity by confronting the notion of 'communalism' as an antithesis of 'secularism'. The construction of an oppositional binary to situate particular historical developments in relation to other not only alleviate the importance of the distinctiveness in terms of spatio-historical context but also make the contextual analysis irrelevant by the over-arching attempt of historians to situate the historical incidents in the singular teleological framework. The endeavour to comprehend the rise of the communal polity from the meta-theoretical framework existed in the writings of groups of historians belonging to 'Nationalist', 'Marxist', 'Colonial', and

'neo-colonial', historians, and all of them conceptualize 'Communalism' as a product of modernity and 'secularization' of the social public sphere through the institutionalization and implementation of colonial juridical discourse upon the pre-modern semi-feudal social structure (Bayly, 177-186 ,Chatterjee, 3-14, Guha 1997, 160-195, Pandey 1990, 233-262). Although scholars belonging to the domain of subaltern studies endeavour to unravel the internal power structure within the 'carving' bloc of communalism, the teleological narrative they subscribe to is somehow indistinguishable from the narrative of the neo-colonialist historian.

Recently scholars like Christophe Jaffrelot provides a 'formalist' and 'instrumentalist' definition of 'Communalism' in colonial India and opine that 'Communalism' is an 'instrument' in the hands of elite upper-class political actors to mobilize masses around both conceived and perceived symbolic value that homogenizes the collective consciousness of masses around the mythical reality (Jaffrelot, 1996, 11-45). But scholars like Peter Van Deer or John Javos criticize the 'formalist' and 'instrumentalist' interpretation of Communalism and they provide contextual analysis of 'Communalism' in colonial Indian polity. The question that Peter Van Deer raises in his book is whether it is pertinent to suggest 'communalism' as an idea that legitimizes itself through its association with the dominant hegemonic power bloc or 'communalism' as a context that produces an 'idea' to legitimize the context itself. For Peter Van Deer, 'Communalism' is a context and it has its own spatio-temporal variabilities that are distinguishable from each other. But now the question arises of how an idea churns out from the context because it is the idea that formulates the context. Here Peter Van Deer annotates that the 'Idea' itself is not an independent variable rather it is structured by the existence of a 'specific' historical context that played an important role to produce the idea (Van Den Veer 1994, 1-25, Javos 1999, 2269-2276).

The framework that Peter Van Deer or John Javos provides is considered nitty-gritty to comprehend the specificities and distinctiveness of the historical 'context' in the growth of 'Communal' Polity. Bhuwan Kumar Jha and Richard Gordon very elaborately elucidate how the discursive terrain of 'Hindu' Communalism is very accommodative and co-constitutive in nature on one hand and dialectical as well as transformative on the other. By examining the dissensions among various social organizations like Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharma Sabhas between 1915 to 1919 and the supposed unity after the failure of Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements with the emergence of a newer form of provincial electoral politics with the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford act of 1919 sometimes manifests how the context of communal polity and its discourse transform throughout the period with its association of larger socio-political and historical context. The adaptation of

'Suddhi' and 'Sangathan' as an instrumental strategy to mobilize the Hindu masses along with the principal agenda i.e. the construction of homogenous Hindu unity to masculinise the dying race from the invasion of expendable 'other' is very much associated with the macro political space of post-non-cooperation and Khilafat movements where at one hand the provincial congress polity divided into two splintered groups (No-Changers and Pro-Changers) after the decision of Swarajya party to participate into the provincial elections within the broad umbrella of Congress and the strong disenchantment of conservative congress politician like Modan Mohan Malavya belonging to the groups of 'No-Changers' after the enactment of Hindu-Muslim pact in 1923 by C.R. Das to mobilize the Muslim masses around the newly adopted rural reconstruction programme of Swarajya party that directly help Swarajya party to become popular among Muslim masses. The kind of political strategy that the progressivist leaders like Motilal Nehru, and C.R. Das adopts not only isolate the conservative congress politician at the provincial level but also creates another form of difference within the Swarajya party where liberal-conservative groups left the party and decided to participate in the provincial elections in alliance with the conservative groups of congress party who basically establish another organization within the broad umbrella of congress party i.e. Independent Congress party under the leadership of Modan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai in 1926. So the kind of political transformation within the so-called homogenous space of Congress nationalist polity dialectically transforms the political strategy of the conservative leaders like Modan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai and Modan Mohan Malaviya endeavours to rejuvenate the seemingly loosely structured fragmented association like All India Hindu Mahasabha in its Gaya session that held around the last week of December 1922 where an attempt of 'forging' unity among Orthodox and Hindu revivalist organization seriously undertaken with the presence of Swami Shraddhanand who actively involved into the social program of 'Suddhi' and 'Sangathan' to mobilize the feminine 'dying' Hindu population in the terminology of Upendra Nath Mukherjee around the imagined Hindu nationhood (Datta 1999, 21-64, Jha 2007, 1069-1088). The adaptation of the idea of 'Suddhi', and 'Sangathan', along with the establishment of regional 'Akhras' is the central agenda that All India Hindu Mahasabha undertakes under the leadership of Modan Mohan Malaviya, Lajpat Rai, Balakrishna Shivram Moonje and Swami Shraddhanand (Leader of Arya Samaj). From 1923 onwards we find how the discourse of 'nationalism' develops within the subjective discursive terrain of 'Hindu' communalism idealizing 'nation' as a 'feminine' object that needs to be protected by her masculine children in front of the confrontation of expendable 'other' i.e. Muslims and Christians. The process of construction of 'homogenous' masculine Hindu citizens of an

enslaved colonized 'mother' i.e. 'Bharatmata' is the major 'formalist' and 'instrumentalist' strategy the All India Hindu Mahasabha undertakes after the transformation of the political environment after the cessation of post-non-cooperation movement.

From the abovementioned analysis, it becomes obvious how the polity of Hindu Mahasabha structurally transformed with the transfiguration of the context and it is the context that both 'configures' and 'reconfigures' the 'praxis' of the polity of Hindu Mahasabha as a whole. But here I attempt to raise an important question regarding the relationship between 'discourse' and 'Praxis' because scholars like Bhuwan Kumar Jha or Richard Gordon explicated that along with the transformation of 'discourse' in relationship with 'context' the polity of Hindu Mahasabha metamorphosed completely. But whether this transformation in terms of 'discourse' and 'praxis' implies that the existing fractions within the subjective discursive terrain completely subsumed under a 'monolithic' structure because of the transformation of socio-political context or it still continues in a reconfiguring manner that in turn influence the 'transactional' interrelationship between 'discourse' and 'praxis'. In the succeeding part of this essay, I will address this question in an elaborate manner.

Organizational structure of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

In the colonial Bengal province, the early formation and consolidation of Hindu Mahasabha primarily centred on the events of the Calcutta killing in the months of April and the subsequent electoral politics regarding provincial council elections in the months of November. From the confidential report of the anonymous agents dated 23rd August 1926, one could comprehend the formations of Bengal provincial Hindu Mahasabha as socio-political organizations. In this report, it was mentioned that 'Before January 1926 there was no provincial Hindu Sabha, but some were local sabhas such as Burrabazar, Dacca, etc. In January last a provincial Sabha was organised by Burrabazar, Calcutta. The body was captured by Swarajists. Before it could establish its positions properly riots broke out in Calcutta. Now the work of the Hindu Sabha is being carried on as follows:-

1. Relief Work by Hindu Relief Committee.
2. Organisations of new Sabhas by a special committee consisting of mainly Responsivists and anti-Swarajists with Padamraj Jain as secretary, which is known as Hindu Sabha organization Samity.
3. Conference work is carried on by a special reception committee.

4. Affiliation work by old Bengal provincial Hindu Sabha office bearers of the old Bengal provincial Hindu Sabha.'[1]

But after the occurrence of council elections the politics of Hindu Mahasabha which had primarily centred on the politics of electoral campaigns and operated in alignment with the 'responsivist' groups within the congress party shifted towards the idea of 'homogeneous' Hindu unity through the methods of 'Suddhi' and 'Sangathan' and it was only after the commencement of Communal awards in 1932 and subsequent political developments within congress party it began to align itself with provincial politics again. The dialectical transformation and the internal incongruence were also inherent within the discursive terrain of 'Hindu communalism' propagated by Hindu Mahasabha per se. In order to do the micro-level analysis I will select Midnapore as an area of case study to comprehend the discursive heterogeneity within the 'homogeneous' polity of Hindu Mahasabha.

The form of co-operation in terms of the electoral alliance between the responsivist and the Hindu Mahasabha manifested in the letter of J.C. Roy, a member of the electoral committee of Hindu Mahasabha to Padamraj Jain on 3rd November 1926 about the unalloyed support of the local Hindu Mahasabha members to the candidates of Responsivist party i.e. Basanta Kumar Lahiri, Bholanath Bhattacharya, Satya Kinkar Sahana, Jatindra Kishore Chowdhury, Mon Mohan Neogi, Dr. Haridhane Dutt, Dr. Santosh Kumar Mukherji, Charu Chandra Biswas, Bismadeb Das, Sukhendu Biswas Roy, Rai Jadunath Mazumdar Bahadur, D.C. Ghose, Panchu Gopal Chakraborti, Baranashi Banerji, Divankar Roy Chowdhury, Upendra Nath, Raja Tankanath Chowdhury, Tarini Das Roy, Jogendra Nath from Nadia, North Faridpur, Bankura, Bankura West, Mymensingh East, Mymensingh west, Calcutta, Calcutta East, Calcutta South, Faridpur, Chittagong, Jessore, Diamond Harbour, 24 Pargana municipal north, Contai, Barisal, Perajpur, Dinajpur, Malda, Pabna respectively and the subsequent electoral campaign of the district Hindu Mahasabha primarily centred behind those above-mentioned responsivist candidates.[2] However after the cessation of elections the primary role that Hindu Mahasabha as a political organization played was to institutionalize the local level 'Sangathan' to incorporate the social causes of the heterogeneous Hindu community to integrate the Hindu community into a singular framework of 'Hindutva'.

In the constituencies of Midnapore, the early formations and the mobilization of the Hindu Mahasabha primarily centred on the legislative assembly elections of December 1926. It primarily unfurled through

examining multiple letters that the local leaders from the respective district wrote Padamraj Jain (Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha) at this time period. From the letter written by the member of the Kathi Harisabha i.e. Sri Subash Chandra Mukhopadhyay to the Padamraj Jain on 12th October 1926, we comprehend how the activities of local organizations like Kathi Harisabha that primarily played an instrumental role to organize Hindu Mahasabha in the regions of South Midnapore primarily centred on the electioneering campaign on behalf of Babu Baranasi Banerji who participated into the legislative elections as a member of Responsivist party. However the political discourse the Midnapore Hindu Mahasabha was not unilinear and monolithic and it was very evident when Baranasi Banerji wrote a letter to the secretary of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha i.e. Padamraj Jain on 13th October of 1926 where he clearly mentioned the reasons behind his willingness to participate on behalf of the responsivist party to the upcoming legislative council elections despite of the instantaneous antagonisms from the members of the executive committee of the District Hindu Mahasabha by elucidating that the nominations of the candidates like Babu P.N. Banerjee and Babu G.D. Nanda on behalf of the Swarajist Independent party and Bengal provincial Swarajya party made him reluctant to directly participate into the electoral process to carry forward the ideological position of Hindu Mahasabha because both of these candidates supported the Hindu-Muslim pact enacted by CR Das unhesitatingly and it would be the ideological self assassination if the members of Hindu Mahasabha either support the candidature between the two. In order to provide the reply to the letter written by Baranasi Banerji Sanjib Chandra Chowdhury who was the vice president of Contai College and an important member of the executive committee of the district board of Hindu Mahasabha had sent a letter on 16th October 1926 and opined that even though the majority of members from the executive committee of the district Board extended their support in favour of the candidates like Mr. Divendra Khan (Raja of Narajole) from the North Midnapore Constituency but most of the members showed resentment towards the candidature of Babu Baranasi Banerji as the candidates of South Midnapore constituency. Despite the wrath on the part of the members of the executive committee if the central executive committee of the Bengal provincial Hindu Mahasabha supported the candidature of Baranasi Banerji then the district executive committee would be obliged to follow the decision but from those letters, we cannot comprehend the reason behind the fractional politics between the members of the executive committee of Midnapore district Hindu Mahasabha and Baranasi Banerji. Although the letter that Baranasi Banerji had written to the Padamraj Jain on 22nd November 1926 showed that despite the non-compliance on the part of the members of the Swarajya Party he had been selected by the central executive committee of the

Hindu Mahasabha to participate the elections on the part of the responsivist party and the major reason behind his willingness behind participating into the elections because of the relative ideological differences between the participating candidates on behalf of the Swarajya party and the Independent congress party and he opined that the tussle between the member of the Swarajya party and Independent Congress party reflected the hostility inside the congress for selecting non-local persons to fight the election under the banner of Swarajya party and as a result of it the local congressmen alienated with the political support in favour of the local congressmen who decided to fight as a candidate of the Independent congress party. In this letter, he particularly mentioned the selective non cooperation of the local members of the Hindu Mahasabha because they were aligned with the local candidates of the independent congress party and treated him as an outsider who was aligned with the 'British' government. Although there was an antagonism between the members of the executive committee of the District Hindu Mahasabha regarding the candidature of the south Midnapore constituency in other places unanimity was observed regarding the candidature of the elections of the legislative assembly. Besides the North Midnapore constituency, in the constituency of East Midnapore, the candidature of Pandit Gangadhar Nandi was accepted unanimously in the meeting of both the Contai district committee and the District executive committee of Midnapore.

The important facts that I noticed while reading the letters which had been sent by the secretaries of various local committees of the Hindu Mahasabha were the formations of various local branches to carry on the works of both 'Sangathan' and 'Suddhi' besides electoral campaigning in favour of the responsivist swarajists more institutionally. From the letter of Santosh Chandra Das, the local member of the Hindu Mahasabha at the Mir Bazar, Midnapore to the Padamraj Jain on 22nd November 1926 and the letter of the Sachi Nandan Adhikary, secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha at the Gopiballavpur, Midnapore to the Padamraj Jain on 22nd November 1926 It was clearly palpable how the establishment of Local Hindu Mahasabha at Gopiballavpur, Rohinigarah, Barbaria under the active economic co-operation from the local Hindu Zamindars like Kumar Debendra Lal Khan, Chowdhury Harihar Das respectively aimed at institutionalizing the local rural and 'mofussil' level organizations of Hindu Mahasabha to involve into the electoral campaign more directly along with the direct participation of the locality level endeavour to propagate the idea of the 'suddhi' and the 'sangathan' to 'purify' the Hindu society.

However, after the commencement of elections and the electoral victory of the Raja of Narajole, Mr. Divendra Khan the course of the movement of the District Hindu Mahasabha transform into the principle agenda of

'unifying' the Hindu society through the methods of 'Suddhi' and 'Sangathan'. From the letter of Santosh Chandra Das, the local member of the Hindu Mahasabha at Mirbazar, Midnapore to the president of Bengal provincial Hindu Mahasabha on December 1926 the transformation in terms of the political strategy of the Hindu Mahasabha can be comprehended and it was evident from the letter, how the visit of prominent members of Arya Samajists like Swami Viswananda or Swami Satyananda to expedite the movements of 'Suddhi' with the active financial support of the Raja of Narajole and organizations support from local educational institutions like 'Vedavidyalaya' which had started by the Krishnaswami Gosai under the active cooperation from Sanjib Chowdhury, Vice President of Contai college metamorphose the political discourse of Midnapore district Hindu Mahasabha.

The active involvement on the part of the members of Hindu Mahasabha in the movement of 'Suddhi' was expedited after the visit of Prominent Arya Samajists like Swami Viswananda and Swami Satyananda in December. Through the movement of 'Suddhi' local members of Hindu Mahasabha not only endeavoured to 'unify' the collective body social of the Hindu society but also integrated the lower-class Muslim and Christian community with the ethics of revivalist Hinduism. On the 3rd March 1927 Santosh Chandra Das, secretary of Hindu Mahasabha of Mirbazar wrote a letter to the Padamraj Jain regarding the arising anticipation between the Local Baptist missionaries led by Reverend H. E. Lang and regional Hindu Mahasabha regarding the conversion of the three members belonging to Mohammedan community through the alleged employment of monetary means whereas the paucity and lack of monetary support from the Hindu relief committee made the locality level branches of Hindu Mahasabha impuissant. Because of the meagreness of the funds he cautioned the president of Hindu Mahasabha that Baptist missionaries would dismantle the existing organic social equilibrium completely. The paucity and unwillingness to provide funds on the part of the central executive committee continued even after the disenchantment on the part of the prominent member of Midnapore district Hindu Mahasabha and it was demonstrated in another letter written by Santosh Chandra Das to the President of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha on 18th April 1927 about the unwillingness and lack of enthusiasm on the part of the members of local Hindu Mahasabha to attend the annual conference of All India Hindu Mahasabha at Patna as a result of the burgeoning paucity of the fund and because of the active support and donations from the local Hindu Zamindars, it became possible to carry on the works of 'Suddhi' by opening new regional branches in different places like Indraboni, Krishnakand, Kusumghati, Rasna, and Salpatra. The unwillingness on the part of the members of the Midnapore district committee to attend the conference of the

All India Hindu Mahasabha further expedited the detestation between the executive committee of Provincial Hindu Mahasabha and Midnapore district Hindu Mahasabha respectively. As a result of the burgeoning bitterness between the executive committee of the district and the provincial Hindu Mahasabha Central executive committee of the provincial Hindu Mahasabha decided to abrogate the prospective allocations of the funds to continue the works of 'Suddhi' in the Midnapore district on July 1927. From the letter sent by Santosh Chandra Das to Padamraj Jain on 15th July 1927, a form of resistance on the part of Santosh Chandra Das regarding the decision of abrogation of funds for continuing the work of 'Sangathan' and monthly allowances to the secretary of the central executive committee was observed and here he elucidated that as the secretary of the central executive committee of district Hindu Mahasabha, he was not obliged to pressurize the local working committee to release 'funds' to carry on the work of 'Suddhi', and 'Sangathan',. But the abovementioned letters are very efficacious to discern the micro-political strategy on the part of locality-level organizations of Hindu Mahasabha to materialize the macro institutional strategy of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha and the existing difference in terms of strategy that had arisen continuously in a different context because of the heterogeneous external factors. However, despite the paucity of funds, 'Suddhi' movements in locality level continued with the active cooperation from the local Hindu Zamindars and as a result of it prodigious portions of people belonging to the religion of Christianity in the regions of Goatgora, Iswarpore converted into Hinduism.[3]

But the forms of overwhelming institutional attempt and deployment of the bulk of resources to the integration of 'converted' people from the manifold of Hindu community to other communities produced a certain form of furiousness and disenchantment among the leaders belonging to the Namasudra classes and the forms of disenchantment manifested in the letter on 29th May 1927 where the local level associations of Kairab caste at Nandigram showed indignation by portraying that despite of the belonging and practicing Hindu religion publicly the local committee of Hindu Mahasabha didn't attempt the uplift the members of their respective co-religionists facing multiple forms of social oppression in daily basis whereas they involved into the alleviation of the agony of the community belonging to a different religion. The form of disenchantment on the part of the local Dalit communities regarding the contradictions between ideological discourse and real politick of Hindu Mahasabha on the matter of integrating Namasudra sections of people into the mainstream Dalit communities did not a discrete phenomenon of Midnapore district but the form of antagonism was inherent into the so-called unilinear discourse of All India Hindu Mahasabha. Previously I elucidated that even after the acclimatization

of the organizational strategy of ' Arya Samaj' and its methods to construct an alternative version of 'unilinear' 'homogeneous' Hindu unity the discursive terrain of Hindu Mahasabha was paradoxical and fragmented because of its apparent attempt to accommodate both Hindu revivalist and orthodox elements within its discursive radius. Besides the district of Midnapore, we observed a similar form of wrath on the part of the Dalit Hindu communities residing in the Bankura district regarding the social ostracism they had faced from the orthodox upper-class Hindu community for their attempt to overcome the compartmentalization of the caste system by associating themselves with the social activities of Hindu Mahasabha. From the letter of Nirmal Prasad Banerji and Ananga Kumar Niyogi who were the assistant secretaries of the Bankura Hindu Sava to the Padamraj Jain on 2nd February 2027 the apparent fragmentation of the discourse of Hindu Mahasabha unveiled when the local members of Hindu Mahasabha belonging to the Brahmin community had demonstrated fulmination when the local executive committee decided to organize 'Saraswati' festival as a modality to unify the Hindu society after providing the communities belonging to the caste Hindu sections to participate the festival along with Brahmin community.[4]

Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion, it becomes pellucid how the electoral politics and subsequent cleavages between 'responsivist' and 'swarajist' groups make it possible for Hindu Mahasabha to enter into the political arena by strategically allying with the conservative 'responsivist' group headed by Byomkesh Chatterjee. But after the completion of provincial elections in December 1926 the political context transformed entirely because of the post-electoral alliance between the so-called conservative 'responsivist' party and 'Central Moslem party' on one hand and the political alignment between the 'Swarajist' party and 'Karmi Sangha' on the other. The transformation of political context somehow metamorphosed the 'real politick' of Hindu Mahasabha from the beginning of 1927 till the commencement of the 'Communal' award of 1932. But the central point that I mentioned in my discussion is that besides the transformation of the structure of communal polity along with the transmogrification of 'historical' context the structural polity of Hindu Mahasabha somehow oscillates because of the distinctions between 'discourse' and 'praxis' where the seemingly unilinear discursive polity fragmented internally when the 'idea' or 'discourse' enters into the domain of 'real politick'. The tussle between the district Hindu Mahasabha of Midnapore and Bengal provincial Hindu Mahasabha regarding the allocations of funds somehow manifested the inherent squabble between 'idea' and 'practice' where despite

the part of the homogenous discursive terrain the tussle exists between 'Centre' and 'Fragments' because of the overwhelming tendency of the 'centre' to encroach the autonomy of 'fragments'.

Finally, I conceptualize the 'dialectics' inside the polity of Hindu Communalism by situating the Hindu 'communal' polity in a larger historical context on one hand and by comprehending how the internal distinctions between 'idea' and 'practice' played an important role into the structural transformation of polity in association with larger spatio-historical context.

Notes and References

[1] West Bengal State Archives, IB Department SL No 113/25, File No 279/N/1925 (The Hindu Mahasabha, Calcutta)

[2] Ibid.

[3] West Bengal State Archives, IB Department SL No 130/25, File No 279/25 (The Hindu Mahasabha Midnapore)

[4] West Bengal State Archives, IB Departments SL No 115/25, File No 279O/25 (The Hindu Mahasabha Bankura)

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Why is it crucial to have a Comprehensive Governance Framework for Geoengineering?

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Abstract

International negotiations on climate change within the UNFCCC regime are stressed up by the increasing gap between the level of decarbonisation required for achieving the 2-degree Celsius target and the actual levels of decarbonisation states have achieved. The political will of the states to prioritize the mitigation targets have been influenced by varied domestic and international interests. As the gaps between the actual decarbonisation achieved and the set targets has been increasing, science has been looking for the solutions outside the adaptation and mitigation framework. Scientific and political communities have been recently discussing geoengineering as an intermediate mean to reduce the greenhouse gases concentration in the atmosphere. Geoengineering is not a new concept, its recognition dates back to 1830s, as a weather modification technique (The Royal Society 2009, 4). However, the discussion within scientific and political communities caught spark after 2009. Academia has been discussing geoengineering from varied perspectives of physical science, philosophy of science, economics, sociology, and international governance. The debate around deploying the geoengineering techniques have received mixed response; it has been supported as well as strongly opposed. However, as of now there is no comprehensive international governance framework to regulate the geoengineering experiments and technology deployment. This paper analysis why there is a need to formulate an international governance framework for geoengineering.

Key words: Geoengineering; Sulphur Aerosol Injection (SAI); Solar Radiation Management (SRM); UNFCCC; Climate Change; International governance

Introduction

The climate change regime within the UNFCCC framework has been negotiating the climate actions- the actions to be taken to reduce the anthropogenic greenhouse gases emission- since 1992. The annual Conference of Parties (COP) meetings have so far formulated the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement along with other supporting documents such as the Copenhagen Accord, the Cancun Accord, Warsaw Loss and Damage Framework etc. Despite the political efforts, the policy frameworks have not significantly produced the climate actions. As per the sixth assessment report (synthesis) of IPCC, in the historical cumulative net CO_2 emissions from 1850 to 2019, 58% have occurred between 1850 and 1989, and 42% have occurred between 1990 and 2019 (IPCC 2022, 4). Which is to say, in the cumulative CO_2 emissions caused by human activities for 169 years, 58% of the emissions have occurred in 139 years, and 42% of the CO_2 emissions have occurred in later 30 years. These figures manifest the increased rate of carbon emissions in these 30 years. Concerning mitigation gap, the same report states that a "substantial emission gap" exists between global GHG emissions targets and the actual actions for 2030 and this would make it likely that warming will exceed 1.5°C during the 21st century (IPCC 2022, 11). Thereby, the scientific community is now becoming increasingly concerned that emissions will not be reduced at the rate and magnitude required to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2°C (above pre-industrial levels) by 2100.

Considering the low levels of the political will for considerable climate action, scientists have been working on ways other than mitigation to reduce the greenhouse gases concentration in the atmosphere. These technologies are together called as geoengineering; some scholars have also preferred calling them as climate engineering (Honegger et al 2013, 125). Geoengineering is defined as "the deliberate large-scale manipulation of the planetary environment to counteract anthropogenic climate change" (The Royal Society 2009, 1). These large-scale manipulations of the planet's climate can be possibly done through Solar Radiation Modification/Management (SRM)[i] and Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) technologies. Some scholars have clubbed SRM and CDR techniques together as geoengineering technologies, while the other group of scholars have separated CDR and labelled only SRM technologies as geoengineering; IPCC report separates CDR from geoengineering technologies (IPCC 2019,

347). The scholars have scrutinized the deployment of these technologies from moral and ethical point of view and served range of argument both in support as well as against the full-scale deployment of these techniques. Scholars have also analysed the economic costs that may be involved in the experiments and deployment of these technologies, scholars have also discussed the economic costs of speculated compensation involved in case of recurrent loss and damages. As climate is a global common, thereby a unilateral action to deploy geoengineering by any state may eventually affects other states' climatic conditions. Therefore, geoengineering has been discussed by international studies scholars, in terms of its governance. Scholars have discussed the existing agreements and protocols under which geoengineering can be possibly governed. They have also suggested possible structures of the framework for international governance of these technologies.

This paper tends to answer why geoengineering need a comprehensive international governance framework to be established at earliest possible. It is divided in the five substantive sections. The first section addresses what is geoengineering, it provides a panorama of geoengineering science and technology. The second section provides the layers of arguments by a wide range of scholarship on ethical and moral standpoints vis-à-vis geoengineering. The third section describes what existing literature says about the calculated economic costs involved in deploying geoengineering technologies. The fourth section will analyse the possible ways of governing the geoengineering within the existing framework and by establishing a comprehensive governance structure in a novel framework. The fifth section summarizes the paper and also makes the arguments why geoengineering needs a governance structure. The last section is the conclusion.

What is geoengineering?

Geoengineering has been helpfully defined as "the deliberate large-scale manipulation of the earth's climate to counteract anthropogenic climate change or its warming effects" (The Royal Society 2009, 1). It was earlier considered as fringe elements ideas; David Victor had once called it as "a freak show in otherwise serious discussions of climate science and policy" (Victor 2008, 323). However, the rapid rate of global carbon footprint, and wide gap in mitigation targets and actions have instigated the serious consideration of geoengineering as a potential means to avoid climate crisis. As per the majorly referred The Royal Society Report

(2009), geoengineering technologies tend to deliberately modify the planet's climate system in order to reduce the increasing global temperature and eventually stabilise it at a lower level. The scientific methods that are proposed for this endeavour vary significantly in terms of their technological characteristics and consequences. These methods are broadly classified into two main groups. First, Solar Radiation Management techniques- these techniques tend to deflect the sunlight by increasing the reflectivity of the atmosphere, clouds or Earth's surface, for reducing the incoming ultra-violet and visible solar radiations. The IPCC report has described four different SRM methods on the basis of their technology characteristics: 1) Stratospheric Aerosol injection (SAI), 2) Marine Cloud Brightening (MCB), 3) Cirrus Cloud Thinning (CCT), 4) Ground-Based Albedo Modification (GBAM) (IPCC 2019, 348). Through SAI, gas is injected in the stratosphere, which converts into aerosols, and deflect the ultra-violet and visible solar radiation (together they are called as short-wave solar radiations). MCB technique is basically spraying of sea salt or other particles into marine cloud for making them more reflective of the short-wave solar radiations. CCT technique includes seeding to promote nucleation, reducing optical thickness and cloud lifetime, to allow more outgoing long-wave radiation to escape into space. GBAM includes whitening roofs, changes in land use management for changing of the albedo at a larger scale (covering glaciers or deserts with reflective sheeting and changes in ocean albedo). Amongst these SRM methods, SAI has been majorly discussed amongst scholars as it is considered as economically feasible and technologically deployable. The other group of methods are together called as Carbon dioxide removal (CDR) methods, using these methods the level of CO_2 can be reduced in the atmosphere as they allow outgoing long-waves (thermal infra-red) radiations to escape more easily (The Royal Society 2009, 1).

There are layers into the debate of clubbing SRM and CDR methods as geoengineering technologies. Some scholars have categorised SRM and CDR both as geoengineering technologies (The Royal Society 2009, 1-2; Moore et al 2010, 15699; Burns 2011, 39; Robock et al 2008, 1). While another debate amongst scholar considers only SRM as geoengineering technology, and excludes CDR from this category. The IPCC report, 2019 refrains from using the term "geoengineering" and it separates CDR from geoengineering, it only considers SRM as geoengineering technology. It states, "This report refrains from using the term

'geoengineering' and separates SRM from CDR and other mitigation options" (IPCC 2019, 347).

SRM, specifically SAI- the most widely studied SRM method- is being considered as a low-cost method (Moore et al 2010, 15699). Scholars have done the cost-benefit analysis for SAI technique's full-scale deployment (Kosugi 2013, 1142-1146). They have also tried making sense of moral, social, and ethical implications if this technology is actually considered to be deployed at a full-scale.

Moral and Ethical Responsibilities of Science

The debate on science as a value-free ideal or a value-laden ideal has its roots in renaissance period. The value free ideal connotes that societal values are to be considered as constants within science discipline, and the value-laden ideal connotes that science as discipline and scientists as human beings are port of the society therefore societal values cannot be ignored as constants. This debate begins with the seventeen century scholar Francis Bacon; he is one of pioneer of Renaissance- a fervent period of European cultural, artistic, political and economic "rebirth" following the middle-ages (Douglas 2009, 46). Bacon contributed to mainstreaming of the subjectivity of human mind, and argued for making the knowledge objective. However, scientists as humans can only strive to attain as much as possible value free scientific results but as social being they can never completely eliminate other value judgements. Science has become an integral part of the society and public policy; on that account it becomes more difficult for science to remain as a value-free discipline. The separation of science from values has been widely witnessed in the nineteenth century. Although this separation was not widely accepted by philosophers of science. Society as a socio-political entity has been an integral part of the scientific experimentation and result implementation since its inception, the core research process involving the evaluation and acceptance of scientific results, cannot be considered devoid social and ethical values.

In context of deploying geoengineering technology, questions have been raised concerning different moral and ethical issues. There have been arguments in favour of experiments, and ignoring the socio-political concerns at the research stage (The Royal Society 2009, 54). But arguably, it is difficult to accurately answer some research questions in

geoengineering without actually implementing the technique (Robock 2008, 13). Major ethical concerns are consequentialist- where the value of the outcome is the dominant concern. These ethical concerns arise from the studies that showcase adverse consequences of the geoengineering technologies. These studies have concluded:

- SAI could lead to a substantial reduction in precipitation in monsoon regions in East and South-East Asia and Africa. This could result in a severe reduction in monsoonal intensity, potentially undermining the food security of 2 billion people in the region (Robock et al 2008, 2; Burns 2011, 40).
- Diebacks of tropics forests- a condition in which a tree or shrub begins to die from the tip of its leaves or roots backwards, owing to disease or an unfavourable environment- could also be triggered by substantial precipitation declines in the Amazon and Congo valleys (Eliseev et al 2010, 78; Burns 2011, 40).
- Sulphate aerosol loading could result in an annual 4.5% decrease in stratospheric ozone levels, more than the annual mean global total loss due to the emission of anthropogenic ozone depleting substances in recent years (Heckendorn 2009, 11; Burns 2011, 40).

While extrapolating the results of these studies, the intergenerational ethical concerns have been raised (Burns 2011, 41). The aims and purposes of the geoengineering policy have been brought under critical lenses (Gardiner 2013). Wong (2014) has summarized the ethical questions as first order and second order questions: 1) the first-order question about the moral permissibility of geoengineering, and 2) the second-order question about the distributive and compensatory issues associated with geoengineering (Wong 2014, 186). He has further argued that a preoccupation with the first order and second order questions may lead to an oversight of post-implementation scenarios (PISs), which introduce different ethical issues relevant to decision-making on geoengineering *(ibid)*. The Royal Society Report also identifies three main ethical positions vis-à-vis geoengineering: 1) Consequentialist, in which the value of outcomes is the predominant consideration; 2) deontological, where the primary consideration is the issue of duty and 'right behaviour' (with less interest in outcomes); 3) virtue-based, concerned primarily in this context with dilemmas of hubris and arrogance (The Royal Society 2009: 39).

The economic feasibility of these techniques is also widely discussed amongst economics scholars. There is an agreement amongst scholars that injecting aerosol in

stratosphere is economically feasible (McClellan et al 2012, 6-7). However, for analysing the feasibility the calculations of the economic costs will not be sufficient, therefore scholars have carved a wider connotation for its overall feasibility by including the externalities such as social costs, loss and damages (Weitzman 2015, 1067). As it has been established that a small-scale experiment of SAI technique can be economically feasible, therefore a group within physical science scholarship has argued to get a green card for the small-scale experiment. However, it is difficult, if not impossible to differentiate between SAI small scale experiment and actual technology deployment. Moreover, all research questions in geoengineering cannot be answered without deploying the technique at the required scale (Robock et al 2008, 13).

The Existing International Governance of Geoengineering

The essence of governance is to make decisions for a collective. The decisions may be general rules intended to guide behaviour, or very specific decisions related to a specific case. Abating climate change is a global collective problem; hence, so far, the policy actions have been negotiated collectively by deriving all-state cooperation within UNFCCC regime. Geoengineering basically requires interference in chemical composition of the atmosphere, which is a global common. International law identifies four global commons, namely the High Seas, the Atmosphere, the Antarctica and the Outer Space. These resource domains are guided by the principle of the common heritage of humankind (United Nations 2010, 5). Therefore, the modification of the stratosphere in terms of its chemical composition involves interference with two global commons: 1) atmosphere 2) high seas (in case of marine cloud brightening). Thereby these interventions are to fall in line with the principle of common heritage.

So far there is no exclusive framework agreement formulated on geoengineering. However, there are few existing rules within three of the conventions that contains inhibitory provisions against deployment of geoengineering technology. These provisions are: 1) Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (ENMOD), 2) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 3) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The article 1.1 of the ENMOD says "each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage or injury to any

other State Party" (United Nations 1977, 3). As for the said ENMOD provision, the prohibition of the environmental modification is to be determined by the purpose of the modification, if it is "hostile" ENMOD would prohibit the action, otherwise it does not interfere. Within UNCLOS, article 192 defines the general obligations of the states to protect and preserve the marine environment, this clause can govern the MCB- geoengineering (United Nations 1982, 100). The article 4.1(f) of the UNFCCC states that parties shall "take climate change considerations into account, to the extent feasible, in their relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, and employ appropriate methods, for example impact assessments, formulated and determined nationally, with a view to minimizing adverse effects on the economy, on public health and on the quality of the environment, of projects or measures undertaken by them to mitigate or adapt to climate change" (United Nations 1992, 11).

There are some inhibitory decisions taken by international organisations vis-à-vis geoengineering. The Conference of Parties meeting to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) has deliberated on geoengineering several times, it firstly discussed the issue in 2008 in context of ocean fertilization. Thereafter it picked the discussion in COP10 in 2010, in its decision the CBD called for studies on the possible impacts of geoengineering techniques on biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural considerations, and on gaps in the regulatory mechanisms for climate-related geoengineering relevant to the CBD (United Nations 2016, 1). A series of studies on *Geoengineering in Relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Technical and Regulatory Matters* was released in 2012, after noting the key findings of this study, the COP, 2012 decision outlined the lack of science-based, global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms for climate-related geoengineering, the need for a precautionary approach, and that such mechanisms may be most necessary for those geoengineering activities that have a potential to cause significant adverse transboundary (United Nations 2016, 2). Another decision is being taken by the parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, popularly known as the London Convention. This decision concerns marine geoengineering techniques and their potential impacts. The scope of this decision does not suffice to SRM techniques but also include CDR techniques as geoengineering. It states that "marine geoengineering should not be considered as a substitute for measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, there are

investigations into the potential for marine geoengineering to mitigate the effects of climate change with multiple interests driving urgency for deployment" (London Convention 2008, 1).

Why International Governance of Geoengineering is Crucial?

The cruciality for the international governance structure for the geoengineering research and its deployment arises from the following concerns:

1. Considering the current status of the gap between the targets and actions, many of the states are reaching climate emergency situation, and possibility of unilaterally deploying SAI-geoengineering as intermediate relief cannot be completely ruled out. Therefore, the emerging concerns around unilateral actions by states hold solid ground (Weitzman 2015, 1058).

2. The additional attraction to the geoengineering, specifically the SAI technique is its low cost for the technology deployment (Bodansky 2013, 3). This gives states a chance to solve the climate problem unilaterally. The fundamental pillar of the existing climate change regime established within UNFCCC, is the collective action. Geoengineering has the potential to turn the climate change regime "upside down", as it incentivises the unilateral actions by the states (Victor 2008, 323).

3. The possibilities of the unilateral actions make geoengineering techniques devoid of the governance structure quite worrisome. The studied risks of geoengineering include the potential effects on the ozone layer or regional weather patterns. There may be many other unknown risks involved as well. The suspected unilateral actions without the clarity of its aftereffects will only contribute to already existing problem.

4. If it is majorly agreed, geoengineering instigate more problems that serving the solution, in that case only governance can ensure mutual deterrence of the usage of these techniques. There is high probability that states may possibly collaborate for SRM in order to safeguard themselves from the consequences of the unilateral technology deployment- the possible social and environmental consequences such as change in weather pattern, warming of stratosphere, depletion of ozone layer.

5. It is only through the governance mechanism; states can ensure transparency in geoengineering research and understand the feasibility of technology deployment. There are emerging concerns on non-state actors' involvement vis-à-vis geoengineering

(Bodansky 2013, 8). The governance mechanism can resolve these concerns, as in principle, the governing rules on geoengineering would regulate the conduct of the states and would indirectly apply to individuals/corporates through national implementing legislation.

6. The international governance of geoengineering will facilitate geoengineering research, so as to have better understanding of the consequences of geoengineering. If the potential risks of geoengineering are to be concerning, then geoengineering governance might aim to impose limits on geoengineering or to collectivize the decision-making process, in order to prevent actors from making decisions that might have serious, even catastrophic, consequence for others (Bodansky 2013, 4).

Amid major moral and ethical concerns being raised vis-à-vis geoengineering, governance void emerges as major void. The governance structure will regulate the research and carve its scope. It will also decide on the questions like- how to engage in geoengineering; who are the legitimate actors, and stakeholders. Governance will also determine the rules and norms of research engagement. After the research determines answers of all the consequentially sceptical questions, governance framework can possibly decide the norms and rules of engaging with geoengineering, or the deterrence of geoengineering technology, as the case will be.

Possible Governance Structure

As of now, there is no international agreement on geoengineering, few of the existing rules are applicable in one or more forms of geoengineering; these general rules are already discussed. This rules basically aim to protect the ozone layer, protect biodiversity, and limit use of force and so forth. One may wonder, to what extend these rules can effectively govern geoengineering? These rules majorly rely on self-implementation and self-compliance by states. As the biggest concern vis-à-vis geoengineering is unilateral action by state, so voluntary compliance by states cannot be counted as a governance measure (Downs et al 1996, 387).

As the governance through existing international laws and institutions decisions is discounted on the grounds of weak probability of self-compliance by states. Now the question remains, should geoengineering governance be institutionalised? If yes, whether it should be governed through a single institution or by multiple institutions? The geoengineering

techniques involve different technologies, and touches different aspects of socio-economic and ethical issues. Therefore, effective governance would certainly need a centralised governance structure located in single institution. However, the international politicisation of any issue usually has a longer gestation period, than a domestic politicisation process. Therefore, speedy formulation of a comprehensive governance structure within single institution will be mere romanticisation of the international politics, but the process of international politicisation of geoengineering should not be delayed, as it does not remain any longer "a freak show in otherwise serious discussions of climate science and policy" (Victor 2008, 323).

In order to ensure the efficiency in global governance of the geoengineering, the ultimate aim should remain formulating a comprehensive single-institution structure for the governance. Meanwhile, the attempts can be made to govern the geoengineering by utilizing the existing institutes with mandates relevant to geoengineering: for example, the London Convention and CBD with respect to ocean fertilization, and the Montreal Protocol and Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution Convention with respect to stratospheric aerosol injection.

Geoengineering can be possibly governed within existing institutions, guidelines or regulations. The geoengineering research can possibly be governed through international organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) or the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. This will ensure research monitoring, reporting, verification, and transparency in geoengineering research and technology deployment. In practice, governance of geoengineering is more likely to develop through the extension of existing treaty regimes to cover various types of geoengineering than through the adoption of a single comprehensive regime – for example, through the application of the London Convention to ocean fertilization, or the Montreal Protocol to stratospheric aerosol injections. This makes sense, partly because different types of geoengineering raise very different kinds of issues.

Conclusion

Geoengineering has now been mainstreamed in the arena of science, economics, sociology, and policy science. However, science does not have all the answers to the risks and aftereffects associated with the full-scale implementation of these techniques. Considering the feasibility of some of the geoengineering techniques, it become a possibility, some state actor or non-state actor may be prompted to indulge in full-scale implementation. In the given circumstances such action poses climate risk, and associated social and economic challenges on other states. A comprehensive governance framework can be a solution to such risks, through the governance the research can be regulated, and if research concludes that the overall cost-including social cost and risk of depleting ozone layer- of deploying geoengineering technology is impractical, then governance structure can outlay a mutual deterrence framework for this technology.

Considering the slow process of international politicising of geoengineering governance issue (or any issue for that matter), it may take time to get a governance structure within a single organisation in place. As the possibility of deployment of few of geoengineering techniques, specifically SAI, are not quite far away. Therefore, states should meanwhile govern it through the existing conventions and protocols that can be applicable to geoengineering, in order to avert the risks of technology deployment devoid governance. However, states should strive politicise the issue and reach a consensus on formulating a comprehensive governance structure for its governance.

Notes and References

[i] In literature, there has been noted difference in expanded form of the acronym SRM. Scholars have majorly expanded SRM as Solar Radiation Management, However, the IPCC Report, 2019 uses the Solar Radiation Modification as its expanded form.

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Textile Workers and Manufacturing of Textiles: A Study of Western Rajasthan

(Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries)

Shabir Ahmad Punzoo

ABSTRACT: Craftsmen were known to be creative persons who worked in order to fetch their articles to the public. There were many craftsmen and professional groups in Rajasthan who were manufacturing articles for the royal household, elite people, and the common masses as well. The proposed theme examines the various categories of textile workers and attempts to find out their role in textile manufacturing in western Rajasthan during the specified time period. What were the various kinds of textiles manufactured, dyed, printed, and embellished by textile workers? Which castes were engaged in the production of wool, woollen goods, and the wool trade? Furthermore, the current research tries to explore the export of wool and woollen goods from Bikaner and Nagaur to other parts of Rajasthan and abroad.

Keywords: *Pinjara, Julaha, Darzi, Chhinpa, Rangrez, Textiles.*

Textile workers and textile production

Textile workers were an important part of urban society and have been divided into various categories (Bhadani, 1999, 361-64, Gupta, 1987, 25-26), see table 1.[1] In India, during the medieval period, there was hardly a city or a town worth naming where no cloth was prepared (Vanina, 2004, 30). A variety of fabrics were produced (Nahta, 1962, 323). Generally, four major kinds of fabrics were prepared by Indian weavers viz: cotton, silk, woolen, and mixed. There were two types of items: luxury articles for the royal household, and articles of mass demand. The beauty and delicacy of Indian textiles have been praised in travelogues.[2] During medieval times, it was a thriving and pivotal industry. It was the main industry that flourished during the period of our study (Gupta, 1987, 56). Rajasthan was known for the manufacture of various textiles.[3] There were different crafts like colouring, printing, embellishments, etc. Skilled artisans were employed in workshops to meet the fastidious tastes of the elite class.[4]

Table 1: Categories of Textile Workers

S. No.	Categories
1	*Pinjara/Kandara* (cotton carder)
2	*Balai Banger/Kartiya/Jatiya Bangar* (spinner)
3	*Julaha* (weaver)
4	*Chhinpa* (calico-printer)
5	*Bandhara* (tier and dyer)
6	*Darji* (tailor)
7	*Rangrej* (dyer)
8	*Embroiderer*
9	*Dhobi* (washerman)
10	*Shanakar* (reed maker)

Pinjaras and *Julahas*

Pinjaras (cotton carders) and *Julahas* (weavers) were important parts of the textile industry. They were present in almost all the towns of Rajputana. In the medieval period, we witness the presence of cheap and skilled labour power in India (Habib, 1969, 32-78). Within the textile industry, there existed specialised crafts or divisions of labour in textile production, like *shanakar, who* manufactured reeds for looms (Chicherow, 1971, 66). Cotton cleaning, carding, twisting, and winding (these are operations connected with cotton processing) became independent professions (Ramaswamy, 1985, 294-325) and we have a reference to a tax on *pinjaras* called *pinjar-bob*. The job of *pinjaras* was cotton carding, so they were known as cotton carders. They were also called as *kandaras.*

Another independent profession was spinning, and thread was purchased by weavers from the market (Chicherow, 1971, 51-55). Through the expansion and extension of commerce, the first labour to receive an impetus and further development was weaving which remained the main manufacture (Marx and Engels, 1976, 56). The connection of weavers with the market was both direct and through middlemen (Ramaswamy, 1985, 309). The small independent weavers used to cater to the needs of the immediate locality and usually sold their

cloths at the weekly markets and fairs. There were also some weavers who through the middlemen (merchants), were connected with the market.

Cotton Cloth Industry

Cotton textile production has been considered to be present in almost all parts of India (Naqvi, 1928, 136-158, Sethia, 2003, 240). This industry was highly developed. Cotton was produced on a large scale in Rajputana. There were various centres of cotton cloth production like Pali, Ajmer, Sironj, Delwada, Jodhpur, etc.[5] At Sironj, good quality printed cloth was prepared.[6] Cotton *sarees* and calico-printed *scarves* were prepared at Sanganer and were very famous. Kota was known for the manufacture of muslin (Gupta, 1987, 56). At Jaipur, the best types of *velvet* and *phanta* were manufactured. Muslin was also prepared at Pali. *Mashru* cloth was manufactured in Jodhpur and the famous craftsman associated with this was Akhai Mal.[7] Coarse cotton cloth, scarves and turbans were prepared at Pali (Jibraeil, 2018, 183, Vyas, 1995, 49). Nagaur was also the centre of the cotton cloth industry.

We find references to various types of cloth manufactured in Rajasthan like *scarves, turbans, angrakha, odhni, sarees, ghagra,* etc. *Ain* mentions different varieties of Indian textiles like *panchtola* (cotton stuff), *khasa* (cotton stuff), etc.[8] *Tansukh* (Bahar, 1916, I: 259), *shrisaf, bafta, salu, feta, gazi*, etc., were also cotton stuffs. Silk cloths also find mention in our sources like the *tafta, kimkhab, atlas and taatband* (Watt, 1966, 163). *Ain* gives us information about silk production in Rajasthan. This information is also provided by Watt (1966, 163) and Habib (1982, 20). For weaving sarees, silk yarn was added to cotton (outer yarn-cotton and inner-silk). But, mostly cotton cloths were prepared because at that time silk was expensive and common people did not wear silk cloths (Kothari, 1995, 44). Silk cloth was sold to different places like Ahmadabad, etc., and Gujarati traders bought silk cloth in Rajasthan. In order to meet the fastidious needs of the elite, good quality cotton cloth (muslin, linen, and silk) was imported from Dhaka, Banaras and Chanderi.[9]

In Rajasthan, the main centres of cotton production were-Kota, Malpura, Jaipur, Udaipur, etc., (Tod, 1916, 348). We also witness cotton cultivation in fertile areas of Jodhpur, Merta, Sojat, Sanchor and Jalor.[10] In Jodhpur, a market for cotton was established where cotton

from all parganas of Marwar used to be brought for sale purposes and sent to other parts of the country.[11]

Woollen Cloth Industry

Besides cotton cloths, woollen cloths were also produced during Mughal times (Naqvi, 1968, 136-58). Wool and woollen cloths were produced on a large scale in our region (Punzoo, 2022, 61-72). Nagaur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Merta, Malpura, Jodhpur and Shekawati were important places for wool and woollen cloth production. Woollen items like blankets, *namde*, *loi*, carpets, *khes, pattu, lunkaras*, *ghugghi, bhakala*, etc., were produced in good quantity (Jibraeil, 2018, 194-95, Kumar, 2021, 202-13). These were in great demand in Rajputana and in other states as well like Multan, Sindh, Indore, etc.[12] Nagaur and Bikaner were famous for the production of wool and woollen items. For instance, forty-six woollen *lunkaras* were brought to the city of Nagaur by a *bhambi* of village Alai and sold to a Mahajan.[13] A cart loaded with woollen clothes was brought by Lahiri traders to the Mundawa fair for trading purposes.[14] From Nagaur, a thousand blankets were ordered for Jodhpur in 1778.[15] The cost per piece was Rs.10. Similarly, from Bikaner, sixty-six camels laden with wool were carried by Mukundas Parikh and Ratanshi Dhamani to Jaipur (Sharma, 1993, 899-908).

Wool was produced in various villages in Nagaur and Bikaner like Surdana and Alai.[16] Gujars came from Ajmer and their concentration was large in eastern Marwar (Munshi, 1894, 44). This was a large wool producing community. The involvement of high castes like Rajputs and Brahmins in this field speaks of social mobility. The other castes who were involved in the said business are *Chhinpa, Pinjara, Chamar, Lava* and *Gadaria.* The work of cutting wool was done by the lava caste. We find references to both Hindus and Muslims in this job (the cutting of wool). The *Chhinpa* caste was associated with wool-dying. But it is significant to note that they did not confine themselves to wool-dying but engaged themselves in trade later on (an indication of social mobility).[17] The *pinjaras* were taking wool from wool producers and then spinning, cleaning, whitening, and softening it through their tools for the complete process (Munshi, 1894, 550). In the production of wool and woollen clothes, women were also active as evident from the sources. We have references to *lunkara thans* being sold to traders (Chaina Kothari and Kadei Dasani) by *meghwal* women of Bikaner and Surdana (Kumar, 2020, 54-60). But the sector was mostly dominated by men. Weavers also played a significant role

in the said process. Nagaur was a well-known centre of cotton and woollen cloth production. Even the rulers of the Jodhpur state used to purchase cloth from Nagaur (like a thousand blankets being ordered from Nagaur to Jodhpur, Rs. 10 per piece).[18] Weavers were weaving different woollen items like blankets, scarves, *loi*, etc. Scarves were produced in good quantity in Bikaner. For the elite and well-off classes, fine wool scarves were made by the weavers whereas for the common class, scarves of raw wool were manufactured. Jodhpur was also famous for wool and scarves (for women).[19]

Export of Wool and Woollen Articles within and outside Rajasthan

Wool and woollen articles were exported in great quantity within and outside Rajasthan. Our focus is here on Western Rajasthan (especially-Nagaur and Bikaner). See table 3 and 4.

Table 3: Export of wool/woollen items from Nagaur[20]

S.No.	Name of place
1	Multan
2	Sindh
3	Indore
4	Kota
5	Churu
6	Bikaner
7	Jaisalmer
8	Kishangarh
9	Jodhpur
10	Pali

Table 4: Export of wool/woollen items from Bikaner[21]

S.No.	Name of place
1	Delhi
2	Central Indian states

3	Churu
4	Nagaur
5	Jaipur

As already mentioned, from Nagaur, a thousand blankets were purchased for Jodhpur Durbar in 1778. We find reference to woollen clothes being purchased by the Pathans of Multan in Nagaur through a local wool broker (Bhau).[22] A cloth worth Rs. 469 was bought from wool traders in 1763 at the house of Thakur Jait Singh of Nagaur.[23] A woollen garment worth Rs. 3000 was sent to Indore through a merchant named Sukha.[24] Similarly, in the trade of Bikaner State, wool production had a tremendous share. Two *lunkar thans* were sold to Jetha Bhura of village Kotri by a brahmin *bichayat* (trader).[25] There was a constant production of wool and woollen products which generated the amount of revenue in the state treasury. Nagaur and Bikaner emerged as prominent trading marts in western Rajasthan during the eighteenth century.

Tailors (*darzis*)

The word *darzi* has been derived from the Persian word *darz* meaning 'sewed up' (Steingass, 1981, 511, Sumit, 2017, 127-38). The job of *darzi* was to sew the clothes for the royal household, the elite, and the common masses. We have references to many tailors like Dula, Bhima, Dungar, Jiva, Dula, Asa, Bagho, Sihala, Asa, Bagho, etc.[26]

High-quality stitching was the craze among Rajput rulers. Separate *karkhanas* were established for stitching and other textile related work. On the order of the Raja, they prepared *siropaos* which were given to nobles and skilled craftsmen as a mark of honour. For making and repairing articles for the royal household, they were employed in *khemakhana*.[27] They also used to make tents for army's stationing during war expeditions. For example, a darzi of Merta named Dula was employed in *khemadoz*, the department of sewing tents. Tailors were also employed in *palikhana* for preparing different clothes in order to beautify and decorate *palki* (palanquin).

On special occasions like Dussehra, darzis used to sew different clothes for the royal household. There were some famous tailors like Bhima, Dungar, Jiva, Dula, Asa, Bagho, Sihala, etc. who were rewarded by the state in the form of *siropaos* and cash. In 1774, Rs. 100

was given as a reward to a tailor from Nagaur named Asa by the Jodhpur Darbar.[28] Bagho was given Rs. 4 for stitching cloths for the Jodhpur Darbar. Similarly, for sewing a tang for the royal horse, one paisa was given to a tailor in Jodhpur. For sewing cloths for the royal household of Jaipur on the occasion of Dussehra, Jiva was given a white *chira* cloth which cost Rs. 7 and annas 8.

Besides these, the accessories for arms and armour were also made by darzis. For making these accessories, different fabrics were used like *gazi, reza, velvet, chint, gulab taat, taat patti, momjama*, etc. For storing gunpowder, *reza* fabric was used. *Gazi* fabric (cotton cloth) was used for making bags (*thaila*). *Darzis* also tailored velvet cloths, used in the making of covers for different weapons like daggers, swords, *katar*, etc.

Dyers (*Rangrez*)

They were present in almost all the big and small towns of Rajasthan. Their job was to dye the clothes. There were some famous dyers like Sawai (*Qasba* Jalor), Wadhu Kamal (Pali), Ghansi (Kota), Nathu, Gothu, Vandhu, Dathu, etc.[29]

Different varieties of cotton, silk and woollen clothes were dyed and printed like *panchtola* (cotton stuff), *bafta, tafta, tansukh* (kind of muslin), *shrisaf* (cotton stuff), *suqlat* (woollen cloth), *kimkhab* (silk cloth), *zari* (brocade), *gospech, sarpech, feta* (cotton stuff), *makhmal, alam* (kind of muslin), *khasa* (cotton stuff), *atlas* (silk), *narma, mahmudi* (white cloth), *malmall* (type of muslin), *cheera* (turban cloth), etc.[30]

Craftsmen used dexterity to dye turbans for men in both check and wavy styles. Scarves for women were also dyed with dexterity.[31] *Kurta, paiyjamawar (piece of dress), aanchal* (veil), *nima* (jacket), *odhni* (dupatta), *saree, ghagra*, etc. were various kinds of dresses dyed and printed in *Ranghkhana* and *Chapkhana* (Kamal, 2016, 78). Besides these, we also find that mattresses like *palangposh* (a type of bed sheet), *chadri* (bed sheet), *razai* and *dulayi* (quilts), and *mat (dari)*, were also dyed. Basically, it was a great art possessed by artisans to dye the cloths of the elite. They beautified their dresses by colouring them. Skilled artisans were employed by the state like Nathu *Rangrez*.

The production of natural dye-stuffs and their processing was a special art that all the cultivators did not possess. *Al, kusumbo and indigo* were produced to a great extent in our

region. *Kachis* were involved with the production and processing of *al* and *kusumbo* while as *neelgars* and *rangrez* dealt with *indigo* (Sethia, 2003, 237). Dyers were an important part of the textile industry. They played a vital role in the flourishing of the textile industry. The people of Rajasthan were fond of wearing different colours of clothes like red, saffron, blue, and black (Jibraeil, 2018, 86). Saffron was dyed with the flower of a *kasooli* tree and red with a kind of timber dust named *kasoomb*. Blue was dyed with *indigo*. The dyers fulfilled the demands of the elite and the common people as well. The clothes were dyed for religious devotees. The papers of the *tahvildar* were kept in a *juzdaan* (cover) and it was also dyed or coloured by a dyer. On the occasion of festivals, birthdays, marriages, etc., dyers used to prepare cloth. For playing Holi, Nathu Rangrez prepared clothes. Clothes were also presented to nobles and rajas as a mark of reward.

Different ingredients were used in the colour preparation like *gulal* (red starch), *saffron* (kesar), *kasum* (safflower), *saji* (vegetable), *goond* (wax), *keestha, haldi, naspal* (pomegranate), *fitkari* (alum), *neel, geru (*ochre*), gulabi, chawal, maida* (refined flour), *sosni* (lily flower), *mahawar* (lac resin), *gul anar, aatshi, pevrhi* (mahaleb cherry), *narangi* (orange), *zard, siyah*, etc. The important centres for dye stuffs were Kota, Sanganer, Bayana, Hindaun, Jalor, Pali, etc. (Irvin and Sachwartz, 1966, 16, Sethia, 237-38).

Dye and Tie Works

In the state of Rajasthan, dying and printing were prevalent in different areas. As already mentioned, people were fond of wearing clothes in bright colours like red, saffron, blue, and black. Sanganer was the known centre of tie-work-*Chundries* and *Lahariyas*. It was not only famous in India, but also in foreign countries like Canada, the USA, Mexico, and Europe (Jibraeil, 2018, 79). Throughout northern India, tie work is in great demand. The ornamentation of cloth with an intelligent combination of contrast colours was called *bandhej* (Pal, 1984, 14). *Neelgar* used to dye the clothes while the work of *tipai* and separation of colours were done by *bandhej* craftsmen. The *bandhej* work consisted of *likhai, bandhai, tipai* and dying (Kothari, 1995, 48). The artisans of Rajasthan were known for this art. The *bandhej* work is referred to as *bandhnun* by *Ain.*[32] In the Baran region of Kota, dye, and tie work (*chundri-bandish*) were equally superb. The famous dyer of Kota was Ghansi who was given a jagir of Rs. 400 by the government. Chechat, Basai, Baran and Rampura were important

centres of calico-printing in Kota. *Chechat* was a variety of *cheentz* in the Chechat area of Kota. The other varieties were *jaffarkhani, damaul, neeli, kali, rati, moti, sironj and basai cheentz.*

In the Marwar region of Western Rajasthan, the traces of the said industry began with the immigration of the *chadive*-a Muhammadan community from Multan to the then capital of Marwar namely Nagaur during the period of the 15th century (Gupta, 1987, 57). They beautifully dyed the turbans and scarves for men and women.[33]

Washermen

Washermen were known as *dhobis*. Their job was to wash the clothes.

Calico-Printers (*Chhinpas*)

In almost all the small and big towns of Rajasthan, *chhinpas* were present and involved in the occupation of printing clothes. Sita, Sheo Ram and Dharma were famous *chhinpas* of Kota. Dunca, Chand, son of Kamal, Fateh Muhammad, and Dost Muhammad, Amaro, Khemo, Nango, Dugo, Keso, etc., were also important *chhinpas* (Jibraeil, 2011, 51-55). On the birth of a prince of Kota *Darbar* in 1827 V.S., 319 scrolls of sarees were brought from a *chhinpa.* *Chhinpa* Rupa was given Rs. 2 and *annas* 15 for printing a kurta and a female costume. Sanganer as already pointed out, was very famous for textile printing not only in India but also in various foreign countries. Various kinds of cloth were exported to foreign countries like *dupatas*, curtain clothes, quilts, veils, sarees, etc. (Watt, 1903, 236). The rulers of Rajasthan encouraged and promoted colourful textile production. The use of vegetable dyes was unique feature of Jaipur textile prints. Bagru was also an important centre for printing.

Chhinpas printed different kinds of clothes like a turban, sari, kurta, *ghagra, odhni* (a piece of cloth for a head cover), *angrakha*, etc. The turban was made of muslin (cotton) with block printing, outlined in black and decorated with red (Irvin and Hall, 1971, 113). Jaipur prints had more in common with those of Jodhpur.

The clothes were embellished and looked very attractive. The sketch or figure on the cloth was made by *chiteras*. We have references to famous *chiteras* like Govind and Dubarak. Different motifs were prepared on cloth like flower leaves, animals, birds, and human figures

(in dance poses). Rajasthan is known for different printing techniques like block printing, resist printing and *khari* printing. Wax resins, clay materials, etc. were used for printing.

Embroidery

It was the ornamentation of textiles by embroiderers. It was basically a kind of needle work to make the dresses decent. In India, it has been known since the Vedic times (Alam, 2005, 206, Chandra, 1973, 8). We have references for different kinds of embroidery works like *zardozi, chikandozi, phuldozi, kalabatun, kahsida, jali* (open work), etc. (Khan, 2015, 86). In beautifying the clothes, the artisans used silver and gold (*kalabatun*) thread and *resham*. The piece of cloth was broached between the two sticks of wood (Bahar, 1916, II: 281).

In chickendozi, the chickendoz embroidered chicken on cloth. *Kahsida dozi* was employed on the *muga* silk with a gold colour according to Watt (385). Taylor writes that clothes were embroidered in the cotton portion of the warp with the needle and were known as *kahsida* (102). Printers used to stamp the figures on *kahsida* clothes by using small blocks of wood.

In *guldoz*, flowers were stitched on cloth (Bahar, 1916, II: 351). In Hindi, it is known as *phulkari*, done by dawn stitch, from the back (Watt, 1987, 374). *Zardozi* was gold and silver wire ornamentation done on a wooden frame. After the pattern has been embossed over the surface, the cotton fabric is stretched on a frame. In *Bahar-i-Ajam*, we find two types of gold and silver wire ornamentation/embroidery viz. heavy or massive *zardozi* and light or graceful/*kamdani zardozi* (Bahar, 1916, II: 53). In *kalabatun* work, gold wire was used as a special weft along with silk (Watt, 1987, 319). This ornamentation was done on *resham* cloth.

Embroiderers also practised *zari* and *gota kinari*. *Gota* was cut into shapes matching the forms or designs of birds, animals, and human figures, then attached to the cloth (Pal, 1984, 18).

CONCLUSION

Our study concludes that the textile workers played an agentive role in the manufacturing of textiles in Western Rajasthan during the study period. A variety of fabrics were produced, dyed, printed, and embellished. There were two distinct types of manufacturing going on: luxury items for the aristocratic class and goods catering to the needs of the majority. The

cotton and woollen sectors flourished to a great extant. Numerous castes were engaged in the production of wool, woollen items, and the wool trade. The present study has also shown the export of wool and woollen articles within and outside Rajasthan, which proved fruitful for the growth of trade and commerce, which in turn boosted the economy of the region under review.

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Russia-Ukraine War: A Geo-Political Impact on Global Politics

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Abstract

The continuous clash between Ukraine and Russia has brought substantial geopolitical consequences, extending beyond the two nations involved to impact the wider region and other areas. The conflict originated in 2014 when Russia took control of Crimea, which was widely criticized by the international community. Since then, the situation has worsened, with hostilities in eastern Ukraine and strained relationships between Russia and the West. This has resulted from a clash between NATO and Russia's ambitions to dominate their ideologies, causing the global competition between the West and Russia to intensify. The paper argues that the war has led to a shift in the balance of power between Russia and the West, with Russia asserting its dominance in the region and challenging the global order. This research paper aims to explore the geopolitical impact of the Russia-Ukraine war, with a focus on the various ways in which the conflict has shaped international relations, affected regional stability, and influenced global politics. The paper intends to present a thorough examination of the geopolitical consequences of this continuing conflict by utilizing various sources such as media accounts, scholarly studies, and political assessments. The paper concludes that the Russia-Ukraine War has significantly altered the geopolitical landscape and that policymakers must carefully navigate this new reality to maintain global stability and prevent further conflict.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, Conflict, Global Politics, NATO

Introduction

After World War II, the Russian conquest of Ukraine marked the beginning of a significant and deadly conflict between two European nations. While the conflict continues, a terrible global spectacle is being played out in front of the entire globe. The projection of the conflict and its potential effects are what different academics have largely overlooked. A political answer to this situation is at least conceivable. The only feelings left are horror and trepidation. Accordingly, many political leaders, policymakers, and analysts have described the war between Russia and Ukraine as a watershed moment. Others have called the war an inflection point in global politics, similar to the end of the Cold War or the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001 that led to the global war on terror. Others talk of the emergence of a new era in global politics and security. This is in line with what German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has called a "Zeitenwende". (Vestner, 2022) The extent to which the war between Russia and Ukraine is actually transforming global politics is not obvious. The outcome of the war largely hinges on the success or failure of Russia in Ukraine, and even if Russia emerges victorious, the stability of this victory remains uncertain. "It's as if neither Ukraine nor Russia has been defeated, but unfortunately, the war is still ongoing and there's no clarity on its duration" (Tack, 2022). It is impossible to anticipate the duration of the conflict or when we can expect to reach a satisfactory level of stability. Winston Churchill, a leader during wartime, cautioned against assuming that any war would be effortless or that those who initiate it can accurately predict the challenges they will face. He also warned that once the decision to go to war is made, the statesman relinquishes control over policy and becomes subject to unforeseeable and uncontrollable circumstances.

If Russia wins the conflict handily, it would indicate that it had been successful in conquering Ukraine. It would be successfully captured by it. Then it's conceivable that Russia will incorporate all or a portion of Ukraine's land into its borders. Even a more limited, less certain Russian triumph is possible. There may even be a situation where an agreement is made. Russia might even agree to keep the previously seized Crimea and the Donbas regions. In any event, it might result in Ukraine losing its autonomy and geographical unity. In each case, Russia may be successful in forcing an impartial position on Ukraine or establishing a defense zone between itself and the

remaining Ukrainian lands. However, anything less will seem like a loss for Russia. The conflict in Ukraine will undoubtedly affect the strategic ties between European nations and the rest of the globe in every circumstance. The total Russian triumph will also allow Russia to enforce its supremacy. In fact, some political experts think that the Russian victory will bring an end to Western supremacy across the globe. The Old Russian Empire will be restored in a modified form, according to political experts, despite the fact that the world today is different. The conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the seizure of Crimea, and even the Transnistria conflict, are all surpassed in significance by another event. In essence, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine's political landscapes may shift. Eastern Europe might also undergo some kind of shift. Sweden and Finland, at least, have similar political philosophies. Western nations immediately placed sanctions on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. Many scholars think that it will ultimately result in the total ruin of Russia. It is also true, though, that its political and economic repercussions will affect the entire world. The human cost of the Ukrainian war is substantial. The effects of this problem are being felt in neighboring European countries. Additionally, it could significantly disrupt the global economy.

Existential Geopolitics

To survive, every global entity must protect its security interests, which includes defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity from any threats such as invasion, alteration, deception, and abuse. The West's interference in Russia's area of influence has been a major source of friction, with Russia feeling that the West has taken advantage of the political situation in Eastern Europe, particularly with regards to Bosnia and Serbia. NATO deliberately used force against the Serbs in Bosnia in 1994 and later against Serbia itself in an effort to alter the political topography of Eastern Europe, which resulted in Kosovo's sovereignty and later independence(NATO, 1999).. It was derogatory for Russia because of the past links between Serbia and that country. NATO and Russia experienced severe conflict as a result. Russia has also criticized some Western countries, particularly the United States, for their use of double standards in international relations. (D.M. Jacq, 2015).

The act of requesting few Eastern European countries to join NATO and the EU from the West had a significant impact on the relationship between NATO and Russia. Russia saw NATO's expansion as an augmentation of the United States' influence overseas. In 1999, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were officially invited to join NATO, which further aggravated Russia's concerns. The second and more substantial enlargement of NATO in 2004, which included the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, posed a threat to Russia from the US. The expansion brought NATO closer to Russia's borders, particularly in the Baltic countries, which are nearer to Moscow and St. Petersburg. The inclusion of the Baltic countries, which were previously part of the USSR, was a delicate matter for Russia, as it raised doubts and concerns for them. The west, particularly the US, wished to expand NATO even more. This time, the roster of nations to be admitted to NATO included Georgia and Ukraine. Georgia and particularly Ukraine were Russia's endurance limit due to strategic and economic factors. It was clear that the Russian sphere of influence encompassed these two nations. During their 2008 meeting, NATO decided to invite Croatia and Albania to become members and to urge Georgia and Ukraine to seek membership (Report, 2009). Eventually, a war in Georgia in 2008 was the result of the Russian response. The peak of the situation in Crimea occurred in 2014. Western observers believe that Russia's aggression towards Ukraine was due to their increasing dissatisfaction with NATO's expansion into territories previously under the Soviet Union's influence after the end of the Cold War. Professor John Mearsheimer accurately pointed out that the Ukraine crisis can be primarily attributed to Russian animosity, which is in line with the Western consensus, when recounting the series of events that led to the unfortunate situation in Ukraine (Mearsheimer, 2014). Some claim that Russia may ultimately invade the remainder of Ukraine because of its long-standing wish to restore the Soviet Empire.

There is no denying that Russia's annexation of Crimea and backing for rebels in eastern Ukraine represent a serious act of aggression. However, it must be recognized that the US and its European allies are also involved in the crisis and are partly to blame. Both NATO and the EU's eastward growth could be seen as aggressive moves, and when boundaries in international relations are crossed, a decisive response is anticipated. Geopolitically and strategically, Ukraine and Russia are at odds, and Russia sees Ukraine as falling within its sphere of influence. It would have been

fair to anticipate that the West would approach Ukraine and Russia with reason, but this did not happen. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict was likely due to the West's failure to recognize Russian interests in Eurasia.

Impact of War on Ukraine

In the process of going, we cannot predict the future stance of war, nor do we know the intentions of Russia clearly, as Russia is trying to convince the world with the claim that it is just containing the NATO expansion. Russia appears to be prioritizing the establishment of a buffer zone around the separatist republics in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region. Additionally, its motives include limiting Ukraine's military capabilities to dissuade it from seeking NATO membership, and attempting to seize territories in southern Ukraine, such as the Kherson region, similar to what it did in the Donbas in 2014 (Group, 2020-2022) Russia might attempt to use these recently annexed areas as a negotiating tool in peace talks with Ukraine, possibly including demands regarding Ukraine's chances of joining the EU and NATO. By overthrowing the Ukrainian government, Russia can also accomplish these objectives. As a result, it will have a big and long-lasting impact on Ukraine. In any event, the ongoing conflict could result in the loss of Ukraine's geographic unity and authority. It might alter Europe's political landscape. There are many geostrategic possibilities for Russia. A few of them are discussed below.

These options are predicated on the premise that Russia will win. In the event of a clear victory, Russia will attempt to alter Ukraine's political landscape. It will result in the total division of Ukraine into smaller units. Russia would try to occupy all of Ukraine, effectively subjugate it, and directly annex all or a part of its territory. If not, Russia will attempt to annex a sizable portion of Ukraine. In that case, it will attempt to annex the region up to the Dnieper River in the west (Philip G. Wasilewski, 2022). Following the annexation of this new region to Russia, A sizable portion of Ukrainian land would then be under Russian authority. However, Ukraine will continue to play a major role in global politics. The Dnieper River has historically been a dividing line between opposing parts of Ukraine, and this could happen again. In 2014, the then-President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, also warned the public of attempts to divide the country, and the Ukrainian

rivers may now act as a new dividing line. (Rexhepi. 2017). It appears most probable that, if this were to become feasible, Russia would attempt to divide the nation in half along the Dnieper River, which cuts through the center of the nation. As a result, the Dnieper would be part of Russia's new geographic boundary. Russia aims to establish a subordinate government in Ukraine's territories, which would be a significant achievement in terms of their geopolitical objectives.

Another scenario could be that Russia attempts to take control of Ukrainian land extending as far as the Dnieper River and an additional share of land in the southwest, which encompasses Odessa. By taking Odessa, Russia would establish a connection between its own territory and the separatist Transdniestria region. As a result, Ukraine would lose access to the Black Sea due to Russia's actions (Philip G. Wasielewski, 2022). This proposal would result in Ukraine retaining only a portion of its western region, while the rest would be absorbed by Russia to prevent Ukraine from being viable. Even if Ukraine were to lose this conflict, there would still be resistance, and the West may try to support a Ukrainian rebellion, leading to a permanent state of war between Ukraine and Russia. Although occupying Ukraine would be costly, Russia would ultimately achieve its desired objectives

Global Implications of Russia-Ukraine War

Many foreign affairs specialists have repeatedly prophesied that the world's chaos will eventually unwind. The trade hostilities between the United States and China, the decline of multilateralism, the UN's, the World Trade Organization's, and other multilateral institutions' inefficiency, the refugee crisis, increasingly polarized global politics, and the rise of fundamentalism all played a role in the chasm of world politics. Then the epidemic struck, causing significant delays, pain among people, inefficient management by the World Health Organization, vaccine nationalism, and further highlighting the difficulties in global governance. The biggest of them all is the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It has posed a challenge to the post-Cold War order, which aimed to create a multipolar system through international communication, collaboration, and political-economic links. The conflict in Ukraine has caused disorder, instability, and insecurity throughout the globe. It has harmed supply networks and weakened trade rules. Food and store prices have increased as

a result of this. Global energy security has also been impacted by the sharp increase in crude costs. Even before the existing Ukraine crisis, it was pretty obvious that the current system of global governance was having trouble coping with the problems posed by the linked, intertwined, and heavily digitalized world of the twenty-first century. The rule of law is deteriorating due to a lack of agreed-upon standards for appropriate conduct, and as this dispute shows, a lack of international collaboration is gradually shattering regional and global coalitions.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine is not only a result of the deteriorating relationship between Russia and the West but also indicative of the internal tensions and disputes within traditional allies such as NATO. Although European officials acknowledge the irreparable damage to their ties with Russia, they have expressed their intention to assess the situation based on Russia's future actions rather than following the United States' general position. The conflict's initiation in 2014 and intensification in 2022 are directly linked to Russia's foreign policy objectives towards its neighboring countries. In recent years, Russia has prioritized blocking former Soviet states' accession to the EU and NATO while strengthening its position in Central Asia and forging closer ties with China.

The assault on Ukraine can be seen as a response to the country's gradual shift from being a buffer region to a potential EU and NATO member, as well as a warning to neighbouring countries about Russia's sway over them in areas such as geopolitics, the economy, and energy (Trenin, 2014). As a result, Western countries are expected to reconsider their foreign policies, recognizing that the threats presented by China and Russia cannot be handled separately in order to meet present and future global challenges. Many European countries have required to involve in discussions and debates on issues of mutual interest, including the conflict in Ukraine, unlike the United States, while acknowledging the need to strike a balance between their conflicting interests. The relationship between both the Russian and china and the West, which is becoming more confrontational, will have various components.

- First, the West has implemented a variety of financial strategies in response to the invasion of Ukraine, which is seen as economic warfare, including the imposition

of sanctions on government officials and oligarchs, the freezing of Russian Central Bank reserves, the beginning of trade and investment boycott campaigns, and the exclusion of Russia from the SWIFT banking transaction system.

- The second issue pertains to the security of energy supply. Europe's dependence on Russian energy has been a double-edged sword, serving as a vulnerability while also providing a bargaining chip and a retaliatory measure for both parties over a significant period of time. As an example, in reaction to sanctions from Western countries, Russia halted gas deliveries to certain European nations, prompting the EU to pledge not to procure energy from Russia.

- Thirdly, the world is facing significant crisis related to the accessibility of food and metals, with around 30% of the global wheat supply being produced by Russia and Ukraine. However, since Russia's incursion in February, there has been a sharp decline in shipments and a surge in prices. As a result, there is fierce competition for cereal supplies across the globe. Additionally, the two nations' exports of essential commodities such as steel have significantly decreased, causing disruptions in global supply chains.

- Fourth, ideology and disinformation: The current crisis demonstrates how nationalist lies and information warfare have become a mainstay of modern conflict. The portrayal of each other as ideological opponents is given great importance by both Russia and the Wes

- Fifth, the erosion of coalition cohesion: Conflicting interests will make it harder for allies to hold together and be secure, which will exacerbate possible future problems. In order to resolve the current crisis and reduce the threat of nuclear war and to address future flashpoints like rivalry over Arctic and Antarctic resources, discussion and collaboration will be essential. This is demonstrated by the variety and complexity of these challenges.

The West and China are increasingly headed towards a direct confrontation, as China is taking advantage of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine to strengthen its political and economic influence

within the BRICS alliance (consisting of China, Russia, India, South Africa and Brazil) and also to position itself against the West. This is being aided by the weakened position of Russia due to the war. Second, the dispute has momentarily diverted focus from China's escalating assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific. The war has also strengthened trade and energy agreements between China and other Central Asian nations as well as between China and Russia. Importantly, this will lessen the harm that the Ukrainian war has done to ties between China and Europe. Although the EU is a significant trade partner of China, the increasing hostility between the two countries has been made worse by China's choice to oppose Western sanctions against Russia.

The increasing strains in the Taiwan and South China Sea are likely to hinder future collaboration between the EU and China. The situation in Ukraine, where Russia's invasion and the global response serve as a warning to Taiwan, China, and the world, highlights the potential consequences of China's invasion of Taiwan with the aim of annexation. However, the current security platforms have proven inadequate to handle such scenarios alone, as demonstrated by the conflict in Ukraine. While military coercion and a lack of security assurances contribute to conflicts between Russia and the West, some fundamental beliefs underlie these disputes, necessitating dialogue for resolution. The conflict in Ukraine in 2022 is regarded as the wickedest catastrophe in the West since the Cold War, according to its consequences. Ukraine has been destroyed by the conflict. Many of its towns are now nothing more than ruins. More than a fifth of its people have either been forced to flee their homes or are currently refugees. The war's negative effects will spread beyond Ukraine's boundaries and have a significant impact on both its security and sovereignty (Tack, 2022). The conflict in Ukraine is expected to bring about a significant transformation in global affairs, with the potential for a Russian victory leading to the end of Western dominance across the world. This could have far-reaching implications for global stability and security, as the conflict could potentially escalate and spread beyond Ukraine's borders. While Russia's geopolitical objectives are currently focused on Ukraine, there is a possibility that neighboring nations may become involved as well. Although it is unlikely that Russia would directly target NATO-allied nations, some Western scholars are worried that NATO's involvement may further aggravate the situation (Al-Rodhan, 2022). Furthermore, the threat of a nuclear conflict looms large in this volatile situation.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the paper can be summed up as, Russia-Ukraine war marks a significant turning point in history, as it has not only disturbed the present international order but also revived the Cold War model of mistrust, which undermines confidence in a global system based on peace and cooperation. This conflict serves as a clear reminder that national security concerns and individual state's geopolitical objectives, driven by the classical realism's zero-sum approach and emotional state concept, will always take precedence over international peace and security. The indications of such a disorderly, ever-competing, and conflict-ridden global system are evident in historical precedents, strategic culture, and recurring complaints. The escalating economic and financial strife between the opposing blocs will only exacerbate existing animosities and distrust. This conflict had significant geopolitical impacts that have reverberated far beyond the borders of these two countries. The conflict has highlighted the importance of energy security and the strategic importance of Ukraine as a transit state for natural gas. It has also demonstrated the fragility of international norms and agreements, as well as the difficulty in resolving conflicts when powerful actors refuse to abide by them. Furthermore, the conflict has had ripple effects on the European Union, NATO, and other regional and global actors. It has tested the resolve of these institutions to uphold the rule of law and protect the territorial integrity of their member states. It has also heightened tensions between Russia and the West, leading to a renewed arms race and a more assertive Russian foreign policy. Overall, the Russia-Ukraine War is a complex and multifaceted conflict that has had significant geopolitical implications. Its legacy will continue to shape the region and the world for years to come. As such, it is essential to continue studying and understanding this conflict to inform future policy decisions and prevent similar conflicts from arising in the future.

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The Impact of Social Media on Reshaping Public Political Engagement in the Digital Age

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Abstract:

Social media has drastically changed public political engagement by altering how people consume and share information, participate in political conversations, and engage with public figures and institutions. The democratization of information is one of the most significant effects of social media on political engagement, which allows anyone to become a citizen journalist or commentator and share their views on political events and issues through platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. This has resulted in a proliferation of diverse viewpoints and voices, giving individuals greater power to shape the public discourse. In India, the social media revolution in the political landscape is rapidly accelerating, with political parties and elected officials using Twitter and Facebook to communicate with citizens. This paper aims to shed light on how political action on social media affects political effectiveness and political participation in real life.

Keywords: *social media, online political participation, election campaign, digital democracy, political disagreement, communication competence.*

Introduction:

The Internet has existed for over half a century, evolving from a military experiment to a General Purpose Technology (John Naughton, 2016). The evolution from the "Galactic Network" concept to the wide-area packet-switching network ARPANET to the open architecture networking with the protocol suite, known as the Internet, is the most significant technological revolution in history (Kahn et al., 1997). The Internet has transformed our lives in every conceivable way and permeates every aspect of life. Traditional communication platforms such as the radio, telephone, newspaper, and mail have been redefined, reshaped, or supplanted by the internet, which has introduced online music and video streaming, Wi-Fi calling, digital news, blogs and emails, and social media. The Internet enabled every person on Earth to be digitally connected.

In this digital age, social media are interactive platforms where people, organizations, businesses, and even governments can talk to each other. "The rise of social media is the most important change since the Industrial Revolution" (Eric Qualman,2012). It took radio 38 years to reach 50 million subscribers, TV 14 years, the internet four years, and Facebook less than nine months.

As per Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Social media platforms provide information and facilitate engagement and interaction with users. Such interaction may take various forms, including requesting likes, shares, and comments, voting on polls, participating in surveys, or simply inquiring about users' interests. As such, social media represents a two-way communication channel. The proliferation and ascent of social media can be attributed to its provision of a platform for users to exercise their freedom of expression to a wider demographic. Individuals have a proclivity for self-expression and the dissemination of their viewpoints. Indian citizens are considered to be among the most prolific users of social media on a global scale.

After transforming many facets of our lives, social media has become an important political tool over the last decade. People discuss politics, express their political ideologies, and even debate/ fight virtually over politics. Social media played a crucial part in world politics via social activism and internet revolutions in the past. The use of social media platforms has changed the political fabric of the world. There are several recent examples of social media reshaping world politics. To quote a few: The Arab Spring uprisings in 2010 and 2011 were largely organized and fuelled by social media. Activists used platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to share information, organize protests, and mobilize support for their causes. Social media played a crucial role in toppling authoritarian regimes in countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. The Black Lives Matter movement gained traction in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in May 2020. platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok were used to share videos of police brutality and amplify the voices of activists calling for racial justice. Social media played a significant role in the Brexit referendum campaign in the UK in 2016. Pro-Brexit groups used targeted advertising on platforms like Facebook to reach specific groups of voters with their messaging. The campaign was criticized for using misleading and

inflammatory content, but many analysts believe it played a decisive role in swaying public opinion and ultimately securing the Brexit vote. Following the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021, Facebook and Twitter were used to organize protests and share information about the situation on the ground. However, the military junta responded by shutting down internet and social media access, effectively cutting off communication channels for many activists and protesters. These examples demonstrate how social media can be a powerful tool for political mobilization but also how it can be used to spread misinformation and fuel divisions.

Throwing light on the Indian political scenario, Indians are always open to political discussions, and thus social media platforms have become a hub for politics. The 'Avaaz' campaign for Anna Hazare's anti-corruption Lokpal Bill, the activism of student communities in the Telangana movement which led to the formation of the state, The 2014 Indian general elections were dubbed the "social media election," as the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and its leader, Narendra Modi, used social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to engage with voters and mobilize support. Modi's social media campaign was credited with helping the BJP secure a decisive victory in the elections. In December 2019, protests erupted across India in response to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which was considered discriminatory against Muslims. Twitter and Facebook were used to organize protests, share information about the protests, and document instances of police brutality. In late 2020 and early 2021, farmers across India protested against three new agricultural laws passed by the Indian government. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram were used to amplify the voices of farmers and their supporters and to mobilize support for the protests. The hashtags #FarmersProtest and #StandWithFarmers trended globally on Twitter. In February 2020, communal riots broke out in the Indian capital of Delhi, leading to several deaths and widespread destruction. Social media platforms were used to spread fake news and hate speech, exacerbating tensions between different religious and ethnic groups. The Indian government responded by imposing restrictions on social media and other communication channels in the affected areas. These examples demonstrate how social media can be a powerful tool for political mobilization and civic engagement in Indian politics. Political discussion is everywhere regardless of the platform and its primary feature of networking or sharing information. Facebook political discussion is in the form of posts, live webinars discussing politics, political groups, and invitations to events. On Twitter, political

tweets and hashtags are used. Instagram and YouTube facilitate more image and video sharing, facilitating political discussions and activism.

Online Political Participation: A Theoretical Analysis

According to Himelboim, Lariscy, Tinkham, and Sweetser (2012) and Putnam (1995), political participation is typically defined as the involvement of individuals in endeavors that have the potential to impact the organization of government, the appointment of officials, and formulation of policies. The definition of online political participation is similar to that of conventional political participation, with the only difference being that the activities are carried out in a digital environment (Brady, 1999; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). The online political activities that are considered relatively serious include writing to a politician online, making a campaign contribution online, subscribing to a political channel, signing up to volunteer for a campaign or issue online, sending a political message via email, and writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper online. These activities have been identified in previous studies conducted by Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2012), Shah et al. (2005), and Zukin et al. (2006).

Valenzuela et al. (2012) have argued that the varying outcomes of research on the impact of the Internet on mobilizing and reinforcing participation warrant the differentiation of online and traditional participation as distinct constructs.

Online political participation refers to the use of digital technologies such as social media, blogs, online forums, and other internet-based platforms to engage in political activities. The rise of online political participation has transformed traditional forms of political engagement, becoming a critical area of research in political science. In this theoretical analysis, we will explore some of the theoretical perspectives that help us understand online political participation.

1. *Social Capital Theory*: This theory explains how social networks and relationships can facilitate political participation.

2. *Civic Voluntarism Model*: This model emphasizes the role of individual motivations and attitudes in shaping online political participation.

3. *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Model*: This model focuses on the impact of digital technologies on political participation to increase political knowledge, facilitate political discussion and deliberation, and provide new opportunities for political action.

5. *Digital Citizenship Model:* The Digital Citizenship Model views online political participation as a form of digital citizenship involving using digital technologies to engage with political processes.

6. *Networked Individualism Model:* The Networked Individualism Model views online political participation as a product of the individual's networked relationships.

7. *Theory of Communicative Action:* The Theory of Communicative Action views online political participation as a form of communicative action, which involves the use of communication to reach an understanding and consensus among individuals as a form of deliberative democracy, where individuals engage in dialogue and exchange ideas to arrive at a shared understanding of political issues.

These theories provide a useful framework for understanding the factors that shape online political participation and can inform efforts to promote more inclusive and effective forms of digital democracy.

Use of social media in Election and Political Participation:

Online activities related to politics are essential and act as a motivation for the younger generations to take part in political events (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008). The use of social media, political information and knowledge, and political participation have an association with each other. This particular shift is playing a vital part in the elections of developing nations such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc. Internet and social media have proven to be critical tools for propagating political information (McAllister, 2015). Interaction on social media has a strong influence on the propensity to participate in politics. A recent surge in the IT Cells, which are organizations under the mask of Pages/Groups/Individuals who help to amplify the effect of a political activity online, is observed. These IT Cells by different political parties trend disinformation and circulate fake news to politically influence the people and their opinions. The level of fake news in circulation and its impact on the citizens led to the coining of a new term called 'WhatsApp University', a satire on people who believe everything on social media without fact-checking.

Initially, political parties used the Internet as a one-way communication tool to inform the public through their websites. With the later emergence of social media and technology, communication patterns turned into a two-way path, making social media a more powerful political tool (Emruli & Bača, 2011). In the present scenario of the Indian political avenue, all the political parties and their candidates at various levels are active and involved in social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, personal websites, and blogs. Political parties have realized social media's importance and are using it alongside on-ground political activities. Political party pages, elected representatives, election commissions, policymakers, and the governments of different states keep showcasing their work on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Party members and elected representatives often engage in a satirical jibe or serious criticism of opposite parties and their cadre. Even the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann ki Baat', where he shares his thoughts on the All India Radio and DD Channel, are streamed live on YouTube and Facebook. There is increased political activity on social media before elections. There are online campaigns showcasing manifestos and promises on social media, entry and exit polls by various media outlets and third-party organizations, on-ground activities telecasted live on social media, and much political discussion by the citizens.

The use of social media in election campaigns in India has become increasingly popular in recent years. One example is the 2014 general election, where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) used social media extensively to connect with voters. They launched a massive online campaign, including creating multiple social media accounts, using hashtags, and sharing videos and images to engage voters. They also launched a "Missed Call" campaign, where supporters could give a missed call to a specific number to show their support for the party. This campaign was a huge success, with over 10 million missed calls received in just 20 days. Similarly, in the 2019 general election, the Indian National Congress used social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to connect with voters and launched campaigns like "Main Bhi Chowkidar" and "RahulFirSe" to promote their party's agenda.

The current election campaigns have established novel benchmarks for the effective implementation of campaigns daily. Social media platforms enable political parties and candidates to efficiently and expeditiously connect with a vast audience of potential voters. Using social media platforms enables political parties and candidates to directly communicate

their beliefs, objectives, and achievements to the electorate, fostering a greater sense of involvement and engagement in the campaign. The feature enables contenders to provide their advocates with an exclusive look into their campaign and streamline the process of monitoring involvement. These emerging forms of media also enable the accessibility of current and significant target audiences.

Digital Democracy and Governance: Reshaping Political Participation

Digital democracy refers to the use of digital technologies to enhance democratic processes and political participation. It can reshape political participation by providing new pathways for citizens to engage with their government and participate in decision-making processes. Digital tools are being used to engage communities in more meaningful political participation and improve the quality and legitimacy of decision-making. The internet and digital technologies have changed the way people interact with each other, including how they engage in politics and governance. In the past, political participation was limited to voting, attending public meetings, or contacting representatives via phone or mail. However, with the advent of digital technologies, people can now engage in political discussions, organize protests, and share information through social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Digital democracy and governance have the potential to enhance citizen engagement, increase transparency, and improve decision-making processes.

Digital democracy and governance have reshaped political participation in several ways:

1. *Increased access to information*: Digital technologies have made it easier for people to access information about political issues, policies, and candidates. This allows citizens to make more informed decisions when voting or engaging in political discussions.

2. *Enhanced participation*: Digital technologies have made it easier for people to participate in political discussions and decision-making. Online platforms and apps allow citizens to share their views, propose ideas, and provide feedback on policies and programs.

3. *Increased transparency*: Digital technologies have made it easier to monitor government actions and hold officials accountable. Citizens can use social media to report corruption or misuse of public funds, which can lead to investigations and reforms.

4. *Improved communication*: Digital technologies have improved communication between citizens and government officials. Governments can use social media platforms to inform citizens about policies and programs, and citizens can use these platforms to provide feedback and ask questions.

However, digital democracy and governance also come with some challenges. For example, not everyone has access to the Internet or digital technologies, which can lead to unequal participation. Additionally, online platforms can be vulnerable to fake news, propaganda, and manipulation, undermining the democratic process. Digital democracy and governance have the potential to enhance political participation and decision-making processes. However, it is important to address the challenges and ensure that everyone has equal access to digital technologies and information.

Social Affect and Political Disagreement on social media:

The social media platform's provision of anonymity and distance can foster unfavorable behaviors such as social affect and political disagreement. The term "social affect" pertains to the affective reactions elicited in individuals by the content they encounter on social media platforms. This may encompass a range of affective experiences, such as anger, frustration, sadness, or joy. Political disagreement pertains to divergent viewpoints held by individuals regarding political matters, often resulting in contentious discussions and disputes.

The prevalence of political disagreement is observed to be higher on social media platforms compared to in-person interactions, and it is likely to be linked with unfavorable emotional responses towards individuals. Recent empirical findings indicate multiple occurrences of political discord within social media environments (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015;). Recent research has highlighted the significant affective dimension of political expression on social media (Papacharissi, 2015). This dimension is becoming increasingly prominent as individuals engage in interactions that involve agonistic sentiment regarding politics and public affairs.

The notion of political disagreement holds significant value in democratic theory as it is believed to foster tolerance towards opposing viewpoints (Mutz, 2006). Additionally, it is thought to stimulate individuals to engage in more profound contemplation of their pre-existing

beliefs (Price, Cappella, & Nir, 2002). The use of social media is associated with a significant increase in the perception of political disagreement when compared to in-person political discussions, Barnidge (2015, 2017); Kim (2011).

The observed rise in perceived disagreement is believed to be a consequence of the tendency of social media to broaden the scope of news networks, as noted by Kim et al. (2013). Social media platforms facilitate exposure to cross-cutting information more effectively than face-to-face interactions due to the absence of social norms that discourage the expression of opposing viewpoints (Barnidge,2017). The study suggests that social connections are maintained through both face-to-face interactions and social media networks. It is observed that people often use social media platforms to replicate their existing face-to-face networks rather than to establish new connections. However, individuals tend to seek common ground in face-to-face discussions, and social groups generally discourage disagreement. These findings are supported by previous research conducted by Conover, Searing, and Crewe (2002), MacKuen (1990), and Walsh (2004). In contrast, scholarly literature suggests that social media platforms facilitate the dissemination of information and enable users to provide feedback (Bakshy, Rosenn, Marlow, & Adamic, 2012;). Consequently, social media platforms may not impede the expression of opposing viewpoints to the same extent as in-person interactions.

The amalgamation of social affect and political disagreement on digital platforms can potentially result in adverse outcomes for both individuals and the broader community. An instance of this phenomenon is the potential for individuals to become increasingly polarised and less inclined to participate in productive discourse with individuals with divergent perspectives. The phenomenon, as mentioned above, has the potential to result in a deterioration of effective communication and a rise in societal and political fragmentation. To tackle these concerns, individuals must exercise emotional awareness and participate in productive discourse with others, even in instances of disagreement. Social media platforms must implement measures that facilitate favourable engagements while discouraging unfavourable conduct, such as trolling and harassment. In general, the intricate matters of social influence and political discord on social media necessitate meticulous contemplation and reflective involvement to foster constructive social and political consequences.

Political Expression on social media: The Role of Communication Competence

Communication competence, which refers to effectively communicating one's thoughts and ideas, plays a critical role in political expression on social media. Individuals with high levels of communication competence are more likely to effectively express their political views on social media, engage in meaningful conversations, and influence others. They can also better navigate the complex and often polarized political environment of social media, avoiding communication breakdowns and misunderstandings.

In the context of political expression on social media, communication competence can influence how individuals express their political views and engage in political discussions. Here are some ways in which communication competence can affect political expression on social media:

1. *Clarity of expression*: Communication-competent individuals can better express their political views clearly and effectively. They can use appropriate language, tone, and style to convey their messages, which increases the likelihood of their messages being understood and accepted by others.

2. *Persuasion*: Communication competence is also critical in persuasive communication. Communication-competent individuals can present their arguments persuasively and convincingly, which can influence the opinions and attitudes of others toward political issues.

3. *Conflict resolution:* Political discussions on social media can sometimes lead to conflicts and disagreements. Communication competence can help individuals navigate these conflicts and find acceptable solutions for all parties involved.

4. *Respectful communication:* Communication competence also involves respecting and considering other people's views and opinions. This is particularly important in the context of political expression on social media, where individuals with different political beliefs and ideologies may interact.

5. *Empathy*: Communication competence also involves understanding and empathizing with others' perspectives. This is particularly important in political discussions, where individuals with different backgrounds and experiences may have different views on the same issue.

Political leaders and policymakers use social media platforms to promote communication competence among citizens, enhance political expression on social media, and promote healthy democratic discourse. An example of communication competence on social media in Indian politics is the use of Twitter by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Narendra Modi is known for his active use of social media platforms, particularly Twitter, to communicate with his followers and convey his political views effectively. Prime Minister Modi uses clear and concise language to convey his messages, often accompanied by hashtags and other visual content. He engages his followers by posting regular updates on his political activities, sharing his thoughts on current issues, and inviting feedback from his followers.

Moreover, Prime Minister Modi's tweets often show empathy and respect for others' opinions, which enhances his communication competence. This communication style helps foster healthy political discussions on social media and contributes to the overall quality of democratic discourse. In addition to Twitter, Prime Minister Modi has also utilized other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to communicate with his followers and engage them in political discussions. "Maan ki Baat" is a radio program in India hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a platform for the Prime Minister to address the nation and discuss various issues that concern the citizens of India.

Conclusion:

The use of social media has become increasingly important in political campaigns and has the potential to influence political participation and engagement among the younger generation. It provides a platform for political parties to communicate directly with the public and interact with them and for voters to share their opinions and be heard. However, the increasing use of social media has also led to the spread of disinformation and fake news, which can have negative effects on political discourse and citizens' opinions. Politicians, citizens, and social media platforms must recognize and address these challenges to ensure a healthy and informed political environment. Overall, social media has become a powerful tool for political communication and mobilization, and its impact will continue to shape the future of politics.

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Human Rights-Based Approach as a way to Sustainable Development in Water and Sanitation Sector

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Abstract

Human right to water and sanitation envisages that non accessibility to safe drinking water and sanitation services is a threat to human dignity and survival. In the era of sustainable development, water and sanitation programmes should follow human rights principles to ensure non-discrimination and equity. The conventional non-human rights-based approaches have limitations in addressing sustainability and human right needs. Since Sustainable Development Goal 6 'Ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all' and the human right to water and sanitation are mutually enforced, a Human rights-based approach can solve the challenges in the sector more sustainably. In this context, this paper intends to discuss the importance of the human rights-based approach in the water and sanitation sector as a new way of sustainable development.

Keywords; Human right, Water, Sanitation, Sustainable Development

Introduction

The accessibility to safe water and sanitation is a precondition for sustainable life and a fundamental human right that supports human well-being and dignity. The concept of the 'right to water' was first outlined in the United Nations General Comment 15 (2003), which stated that *"The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses"* (UN 2002). Realizing the vitality of water and sanitation, on 28th July 2010, UN General Assembly adopted Resolution *64/292*, which "*recognized the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights"* (UN 2010). The passing of this resolution led to an unprecedented shift in the development approach towards water and sanitation . It affirmed that "water should be treated as a social and cultural good rather than an economic one" (UN 2002). With this, the lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation became a human right violation rather than the mere lack of availability of resources. It provided the right holders with both freedoms and entitlements; freedom

included the right to access and the right to be free from any interference that stops them from having safe drinking water and sanitation (UN 2010). The entitlement aspect was that everyone should have equal opportunity to enjoy the right to water and sanitation. In short, with the right to water and sanitation, a people-centric approach is introduced in the water and sanitation sector.

The link between the right to water and sanitation and development goals strengthened with the sustainable development agenda. In September 2015, UN General Assembly unanimously agreed upon the "*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*" with 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Of that Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) focused exclusively on water and sanitation issues *'Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all'* (UN 2018). The resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25th September 2015 on the 2030 agenda, reaffirmed their commitment towards human right to water and sanitation. On 17th December 2015, UN 70/169 resolution welcomed Sustainable Development Goal No; 6 and recognised it as an exemplary target that can support and reinforce the basic Human Right to water and sanitation since it involves aspects that are core to the right to water and sanitation (UN 2015).

SDG 6 aims to ensure that the human right to water and sanitation is achieved for all sections of society without discrimination. To achieve that, the development approach should imbibe and follow the basic human rights principles like universality, inalienability, indivisibility, participation, transparency, accountability, responsibility, justiciability, equality and non-discrimination. The task is challenging since there is a resource-constrained environment in the water and sanitation sector which slows the progress toward SDG 6.

Amidst the growing population, and the climate change risks, nearly 2.3 billion people currently reside in water-stressed countries (UN 2021). With 7 years left to touch the target of Sustainable Development Goal No; 6, around 2 billion people (26 per cent of the global population) lack access to safe drinking water, and 3.6 billion people (46 per cent of the global population) lack access to basic sanitation services (UN 2021).The UN observed that even with the current rate of progress, only 81 per cent coverage is expected to achieve by 2030 in terms of 'access to safely managed drinking water' and 67 per cent coverage in 'access to safely managed sanitation services' (UN 2022). Almost 1.6 and 2.8 billion people would not have provisions to safely manage drinking water and sanitation services in 2030 (UN 2022) . This

is against the *'leave no one behind'* agenda envisioned for 2030. Only if there is a three-fold increase in the rate of progress SDG 6 can be achieved by 2030 (UN 2022). In that context, we need a more people-centric, sustainable, and equitable development approach to catalyse progress in both the sustainable development agenda and the human right to water and sanitation. Because the 2030 agenda envisions shared progress in which no one is discriminated against and side-lined from having the fruits of development (Loeffen 2021) . For that has to be realised, a human right and people-centric approach should be the basis of development programming rather than a basic need and service-oriented approach. Thus, right to water and sanitation should be incorporated into the development programming of water and sanitation. The integration of the right to water and sanitation and sustainable development goal can be encapsulated in the right-based approach to development in WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) programming. In that context, this paper attempts to discuss how human right-based approach can contribute to the value addition in the water and sanitation sector and also intends to provide a conceptual background of the Human right-based approach to development and explain how it differs from the non-human right-based approach.

Human rights-based approach

Human rights and development were two separate domains of interest without any scope of integration before the Second World War. Development was considered a working terrain of economists, while human rights were that of political activists, lawyers, and lawmakers (Adlys, et al. 2000). Human rights were considerably linked to development agendas to a great extent during the Cold War period (Broberg and Sano 2018). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the significant milestones in the history of human rights, was passed in 1948 when the world was going through the miseries of the Second World War and the political upsurges of decolonization.

As the Second World War created much turbulence in the socio-political and economic stability of the world nations, human rights later evolved as an instrument of transformation and justice during the post-war period (Broberg and Sano 2018). During the cold war, there was a substantial hike in the extent of official development assistance given to low-income countries for economic development (Sengupta 2002). The Cold War period saw a significant increase in human rights violations worldwide. This led to an increased focus on safeguarding human rights while promoting development. Subsequently, the eradication of human rights violation

become a matter of consideration along with the economic development objective in providing official development assistance to low-income countries (Sengupta 2002) . As the international community has become increasingly aware of its obligations to promote and protect human rights, governments, and civil society worldwide started recognizing this interlink between human rights and development as an essential component of global progress (Wilson 2005).

By recognizing the reciprocal relationship between human rights and development, the UN General Assembly drafted the '*Declaration on the Right to Development'* in 1986. Later the '*Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights'* reassured the interdependence and mutual reinforcement of democracy, development, and human rights (Broberg and Sano 2018). It was unanimously acknowledged that combining human rights and development gives us something neither can provide alone (Adlys, et al. 2000).

Although the different organizations adopted this integrated strategy, there was no uniformity regarding the basic principles and methods by which human rights are to be blended into the development programming. To remove this disunity, UN bodies organized a workshop on the Human Right based approach to development in 2003. This workshop produced a document called '*The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Development Cooperation – Towards a Common Understanding among the United Nations Agencies'* (UNSDG 2003)*".* According to the *Common understanding*, "all developmental activities, policies, and related cooperation should be guided by the human rights principles articulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments" (UNSDG 2003). And it was agreed that the development collaboration would focus on enhancing the capacity of duty bearers and right holders to uphold their obligations and claim their rights (UNSDG 2003)

The fundamental human right principles guide the programmes in the right-based approach. Firstly, the universal, indivisible, and inalienable nature of human rights is recognized as a core element of right-based programmes (Schmitz 2012). Secondly, it recognizes that all fundamental human rights are mutually dependent and related. Thirdly, it accepts the equal and non-discriminatory nature of human rights (Wilson 2005). Fourthly, participation and inclusion are essential principles through which the right holders contribute to and enjoy development (Wilson 2005). Finally, the principles of accountability and the rule of law also give a higher

dimension to the right-based approach. The accountability principle shifts the development perspective from charity to duties (Uvin 2010).

In the right-based approach, human rights are used as content and as a reference for development programming. Human rights, as a reference, have three important implications. Firstly, with this approach, human rights receive international validity and acceptance. Secondly, rights are legal claims rather than a tool of charity, welfare policy, or any moral commitment. Lastly, it ensures higher accountability among the development agents (Hamm 2001) .

According to Right Based Approach, development is fundamentally about the interconnection and interplay between two parties, right holders and duty bearers. It aims *"to empower the rights-holders to claim and exercise their rights and secondly, to strengthen the capacity of the duty-bearers who should respect, protect and fulfill the rights of the poorest, weakest, most marginalized and vulnerable, and comply with these obligations and duties"* (unicef 2015)

The right-based approach is an improvement over the other widely used approaches, basic needs and charity-based, which were prominent in development frameworks until then. The realization of basic needs and charity was the focus of predecessors, while the HRBA considered the fulfilment of human rights as the fundamental objective of developmental programmes and policies (UN 2006). When the needs are not fulfilled, it leads to general dissatisfaction. However, when the rights are not recognized and respected, it is referred to as a violation. In the basic needs approach, the authorities supplied 'needs' as 'services' as part of a charity or welfare.

On the other hand, in human rights-based approach , development efforts are seen as ways to fulfill fundamental human rights rather than an effort of charity (Broberg and Sano 2018).In the right-based approach, development cooperation is more than service delivery which performs two significant duties; empowerment of right holders and strengthening the accountability of duty bearers. More precisely, it facilitated a focus shift from needs to rights and charity to duties (Uvin 2010). In the right-based approach, the process and outcome of developmental activities are equally important, making the approach unique in its perspective (Schmitz 2012). In the other non-human right-based approaches, only the result is a matter of concern (unicef 2015)

Similarly, in HRBA, participation is not just an instrument to get acceptance for development projects; it is a right to get involved in planning, process, outcome, and evaluation (Hamm 2001). Here right holders became active participants who are empowered enough to claim their rights rather than passive recipients who are just objective of development policies (Loeffen 2021). It ensures that projects are not far from reality and not planned without having an in-depth grasp of the concerns of the rights-holders and duty-bearers (unicef 2015).

Rights-Based Approach for the Development of the Water and Sanitation Sector

Most of the current challenges in the water and sanitation sector are related to accessibility rather than availability (Schmitz 2012). While availability is a quantitative parameter, accessibility is more qualitative. Accessibility issues in the water and sanitation sector have immediate, underlying, and root causes related to water policies, governance, societal structure etc. (Loeffen 2021). Most of the non-human right-based approaches, precisely the basic needs approach that has been commonly practiced in the water and sanitation sector, gave more importance to addressing the immediate causes and failed to look into the underlying causes (Floch 2021) . This approach is unsustainable as the programmes and policies that come from this will not create long-term outcomes. It slows the progress towards sustainable development goal 6. In this context, the following sections overview how the human rights-based approach can better contribute to sustainable development than the non-human rights-based approach.

Embracing the concept of universality

In a complicated resource-constraint context, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 aims for 'universal access to water and sanitation by 2030'. It targets everyone should have access to safe drinking water and sanitation regardless of their social status or economic background. A human rights-based approach efficiently addresses the universality concept embedded in SDG 6 , better than a basic needs approach (Floch 2021). A human rights-based approach considers not only the basic needs of individuals for water and sanitation but also their right to access these services without discrimination (Loeffen 2021) . Also, the 'universality' criteria required for SDG 6 is addressed in a limited way in the basic needs approach. Because the basic needs may not always universal and inalienable as they can be prioritized under different living conditions (Floch 2021). However, human rights are always universal, inalienable, and bounded by the ideology of human commonality and non-discrimination (Wilson 2005). While

the needs can be ranked or prioritized for different communities as per the scarcity of resources, human rights advocates for non-discrimination and equal treatment by facilitating efficient allocation of scarce resources to everyone (Gosling, et al. 2022). Therefore, in a resource-constrained environment with conflicts in development priorities, the right-based approach ensures that no single individual's water and sanitation rights are compromised; thus, it reinforces universality (Wilson 2005).

Addressing the causes of vulnerability and exclusion

Water availability and accessibility are critical for the well-being of any community. Most often, water scarcity disproportionally affects the people placed at society's lowest ladder. Unfortunately, these marginalised and vulnerable sections are less resilient to water resource scarcity (WWAP 2019). With the growing climate change-related water risks, they face innumerable hardships in accessing safe and acceptable water and sanitation facilities. This can have severe implications for the health and safety of these communities, as well as their ability to thrive in times of crisis (WWAP 2019).

Women and young girls suffer severe economic and health consequences due to inadequate access to water and sanitation (WWAP 2019). They predominantly carry the physical burden of fetching household water, limiting their time used for productive activities. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of 1992 agreed that women have a vital role in managing and conserving water in every household. Despite this crucial involvement, only less than 50 countries have water and sanitation policies and laws that recognise women's participation as a crucial element for resource management (UN 2021). This kind of discrimination in policy can slow progress towards SDG 6 as the scope of potential contribution from women in water resource management is significantly undervalued in water governance.

In the basic needs approach, the water and sanitation needs of women and children in vulnerable living conditions are directly met through supply-led solutions like building more toilets, supplying menstrual hygiene products, setting up new water supply schemes, etc. Though these solutions are necessary to solve the accessibility issues, they are insufficient to produce sustainable outcomes. This kind of top-down, supply-oriented service delivery mechanism in the basic needs approach largely overlooks the participation and involvement of women in problem-solving (Wilson 2005) . Only when women are involved in the planning,

designing, and managing water and sanitation issues , their real concerns and choices will come to light which helps to generate more realistic and best-fit policies. In this way, the 'participation' and 'capacity building' aspects of right based approach help to generate more sustainable outcomes in the water and sanitation sector.

In the case of marginalised and vulnerable sections of society, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation is more of a problem of misallocation of scarce resources and lack of pro-poor water governance rather than non-availability of resources. In that context, strategies using the basic needs approach again have limitations since they identify a community's vulnerability as a lack of resources. However, the right-based approach treats vulnerability as a structural issue triggered by socio-political and environmental backgrounds. While the needs-based approach only addresses the issues of exclusion by meeting their needs, the human rights-based approach examines the causes of exclusion and solves underlying problems (Loeffen 2021).In this way both the questions 'who are left behind 'and 'why they are left behind' is equally considered in the development approach. This anti-discriminative perspective supports the development of the marginalized and weak sections of society (Broberg and Sano 2018). As mentioned earlier, the human rights-based approach recognises right holders as active participants rather than charity receivers. Thus the agenda based on the Human rights approach in water and sanitation will help to empower the vulnerable and excluded communities through active participation and capacity building. This enables an inclusive and pro-poor development framework in the water and sanitation sector.

Acknowledging participation as a development tool

The Dublin Statement on Water and Sanitation recognized the role of participation in water management by stating that " *Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners, and policymakers, at all levels"* (United Nations Publications 2013) .

In the context of the human rights-based approach to water and sanitation, participation is considered a fundamental principle and an end in itself. Therefore, people should be involved in the decision-making related to the provision of these services. Participation means that individuals and communities are actively involved in planning, implementing, evaluating, and

monitoring all aspects of decision-making related to water and sanitation services (Wilson 2005).

Participation in the water and sanitation sector helps to ensure that communities' needs, preferences, and opinions are considered when designing and implementing water and sanitation programmes. It promotes transparency, accountability, and the empowerment of local communities (Nelson, et al. 2021). When involved in decision-making, communities are more likely to become cognizant of their rights and empowered enough to claim them from the governing authority. Community management of water and sanitation is proven more effective in creating sustainable outcomes in the water and sanitation sector (Carter, Tyrrel and Howsam 1999). It promotes the empowerment of local communities, enhances accountability and transparency, and make sure that the demands and preferences of all community members are considered when designing and implementing water and sanitation programmes (Wilson 2005).

Moreover, participation helps to identify the specific needs and the obstacles faced by different groups , such as women and children, who may have unique requirements for safe and accessible sanitation facilities. It can also contribute to developing more effective and efficient water and sanitation systems better adapted to local conditions and delivering greater community benefits. Without the active participation of the communities in question, the targeted intervention might conflict with the existing practices and customs and hinder the effectiveness of the intervention (Nguyen and Ross 2017).

Acknowledging peoples' agency, needs, and knowledge.

In the water and sanitation sector, policies are often implemented without considering specific needs and demands of the local community residing in a particular region. This can lead to policies that are distant from reality, producing outcomes that are not useful and sustainable for the community. It is particularly problematic in the case of marginalised sections of society like urban slum dwellers, tribal populations, whose living conditions are way more vulnerable than the mainstream. This can directly cause them to be 'left behind' in having sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation services. This is where the human Rights-based approach has the upper hand when used to develop water and sanitation policies. Because the top-down mechanism envisaged in the basic needs approach often outlooks the peoples'

inherent agency and capacity for facilitating development and, thus, the notion that the state should be an enabling agency rather than a service provider. However, a human rights-based approach, based on the principle of people's participation and agency, ensures that policies are tailored to fulfil the unique requirements of the local population. This approach involves engagement with people to identify their needs, understand their cultural context, and build sustainability on existing local water and sanitation practices. The human rights-based approach advocates for a human-centred development framework that takes into account and respects local knowledge systems and practices. In water and sanitation settings, the involvement of the people at the grass root level by acknowledging their local practices, systems, beliefs, and habits will bring sustainable behavioural attitudes towards targeted programmes and policies.

Addressing sustainability perspective

A development approach based on human rights is essential for achieving sustainable development outcomes (unicef 2015). Ultimately, the question is, 'Are the water and sanitation outcomes sustainable?' Sustainability is not based on whether the outcome has been produced but on how much the result can add value to the current environment and sustain it for the future. A result-based, basic needs approach can supply the needs instantly; however, the underlying cause of accessibility issues in the first instance is often not addressed. Also, the long-term operational perspectives are always side-lined. In this approach, the immediate causes of non-accessibility are given over emphasise and not the underlying and root causes (Loeffen 2021) . Unless the root causes are addressed, the accessibility issues will spiral up and threatens sustainability.Similarly, the Government is tracking the progress based on the extent of service provision but ignores the quality and durability of those services. The sustainability of water and service provision should predominantly come from targeted and consistent financing, timely monitoring of services, and readjusting of the policies to changing needs. Otherwise, the programmes and policies will produce instant and static results, not dynamic, long term and sustainable.

Legality

Legality makes the rights-based approach more appealing than the basic needs approach. People can legally claim their human rights when they are violated, prohibited, or unprotected.

This empowers the people and enhances their agency as water and sanitation rights are legal entitlements rather than services or charity by the Government. Most countries have legislative and executive provisions for water and sanitation services to a considerable extent. However, the judicial and legal aspect is often overlooked in realizing the sector goals. When water and sanitation become human rights, legal assistance can be used as a primary developmental tool for achieving sectoral goals and catalyse progress (Gosling, et al. 2022).

Conclusion

Fostering social justice, equality, and human well-being is a shared objective of sustainable development and human rights-based approach. The conventional basic needs approach based on a top-down strategy is no longer a best practice for achieving sustainable development in the water and sanitation sector since it ignores the inequality and vulnerability aspect attached to the non-accessibility of water and sanitation services. With the changing needs and growing structural inequalities, a Human rights-based approach can produce best-fit practices in the water and sanitation sector that are more sustainable and inclusive. It recognizes that water and sanitation policies must be people-centred, fair, and inclusive, and individuals and communities are empowered enough to claim their rights and have a definite voice in the policy decisions. To conclude, integrating HRBA into SDG 6 is imperative for upholding the human right to water and sanitation and advancing broader goals of sustainable development, social justice, human dignity, and shared progress.

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Unveiling the cyclic vision of the plot in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

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Abstract

This paper presents the analyses of cyclic vision of the plot in the third book of the Harry Potter Series. Harry Potter series is a British Young Adult Fiction written by J.K. Rowling. Karma is frequently characterised as a causal law that operates on the moral and spiritual realms. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban is explicit in the characteristics of Karma and narrative patterns. The third book depicts the protagonist Harry Potter, facing the villain Voldemort while exploring his background, challenges, and dilemmas as he travels to Hogwarts. The objective of the paper is to explore the impact of karma on the characters and to study the cyclic vision of the plot. The above stated elements are explicit in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, which contributed to the book's phenomenal success.

Key words: Karma, *Harry Potter* Series, YAL, Cyclic Vision, Effect and Cause.

The theory of Karma in Indian philosophy aims to answer the questions regarding the source of pain and the staggering diversity of human situations. Karma is frequently characterised as a causal law that operates on the moral and spiritual realms. In the physical world, every effect is said to have a cause, and it is the imminent cycle of cause and effect, that determines the path of human life replete with many causes, actions and consequences. P. Nagaraja Rao in his book *The Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy* writes:

> The doctrine of Karma inculcates in us faith in the absolute justice, that we experience and an attitude of wise, uncomplaining acceptance of the inequalities of life. In the Indian view of life there is the marked absence of bitterness when misfortune befalls them. There is no shouting against injustice, no railing against God. Karma induces in us a mood of acceptance and understanding as we know that there is no dark fate that governs us. We move by our deeds. (Nagaraja Rao 1972, 17-18)

The Indian philosophy upholds the belief in the cyclic vision of the world. Swami Ahedananda is one among the contemporary Indian philosophers who has explored and presented the idea in a profound and

deep manner. He explains, the law of causality, action and reaction, law of compensation and law of retribution to elucidate the theory of Karma.

Academics are still attempting to explain the phrase 'young adult' and who it is for because it is an enigmatic term. Campbell in his work *Reflections of Young Adult Literature* states, "The central theme of most YA fiction is becoming an adult, finding the answer to the internal and external question, 'Who am I and what am I going to do about it?'" (Campbell, Patricia J and Patty Campbell 2010, 70). Since there are myriad interdisciplinary approaches to Young Adult Literature, perception and insight of this genre has been proven challenging. Each of its genre presents its own set of challenges. Young adult fiction, in general, contains highly intense narrative aspects that are emotional. They are quickly evolving narratives that focuses on having a completely new and wide array of different experiences on the other side of childhood. Certain features of Young Adult Fiction bind the reader to the narrative. On defining Young Adult Literature as a genre, Mike Cadden in his work *Genre as Nexus: The Novel for Children and Young Adults* claims that,

> As a genre category, the novel for young readers is a nexus - a core of connections and links. It is a nexus of other genres, including not only those more structurally-defined like science fiction or mystery but also the age-based genre categories of children's and young adult literatures. (Cadden 2011, 303)

The contemporary categorization of Young Adult as a genre has its origins from the novels produced during the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1960s, Young Adult Literature created realistic novels that told the practical difficulties about individuals. Writers of the twentieth century responded by pushing the boundaries of normal compositions and by producing more intellectually challenging works. YAL from the previous century differs significantly from current works of Literature, since it was criticised for its high morals in the mid-twentieth century. It was very focused on delivering messages, but lacked strong character development and exploration of various themes during the mid-twentieth century. Modern YAL is more daring and realistic, sometimes gloomy and depressing. Contemporary YAL also produced sensible stories about the protagonists facing an identity crisis that helped the teens connect with the humanity within them. Therefore, the real problems that affect the young people often got into the YAL works, dealing with vibrant emotions and stories of the struggles against the lonely world of individuals. It assisted the young people prepare mentally for the future when they face the original difficulties. The evolution of Young Adult Literature is closely related towards the perceptions of the adolescents and young adults. These texts reach a large array of readers at developmental ages of their life. There is always a greater sense of responsibility, as these texts mould the young minds of the future. Young Adult Literature includes distinctive components

that assist the reader to feel connected to the narrative. The genre has given rise to numerous subgenres that deal with more significant and ethical grounds.

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series belongs to British Young Adult Fiction, consisting of seven books that chronicles the episodes of Harry Potter, an eleven-year-old boy at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The collection of seven fantasy books has reached the pinnacle of contemporary YA fantasy Literature. It has received a lot of attention and there's been a multitude of other literary and sociological attempt to discover the secret to its great success.

> There are many children's books with similar supernatural happenings and characters. Yet, according to *School Library Journal* (January 2000), the success of this best-selling British fantasy series about the boarding school experiences of a teenaged wizard has generated an unprecedented level of excitement in both children and adults. (Kotarba 2010, 1)

Rowling has published seven books in the series. The seven books in the *Harry Potter* Series and the sequels followed: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (July 2, 1998), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (September 8, 1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (July 8, 2000), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (June 21, 2003), and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (July 16, 2005). *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows* (July 21, 2007). The series has spanned generations throughout the world. Rowling began writing the novels for children, but they were liked by both children and young adults. The series follows Harry Potter and his companions through their lives and their adventures. It is set in the midst of England, where students as young as eleven are permitted to learn magic until they reach the age of eighteen. Rowling has written a seven-volume series, each of which portrays a school year in the life of the protagonist. They battle for justice against the malevolent Dark Lord Voldemort.

The third book in the series is *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (POA). With the Dursleys, Harry is once again having a difficult summer. He finds out through the muggle news that Sirius Black, a prisoner in Azkaban, has escaped from custody. At this time, Aunt Marge, Vernon's sister, arrives at Privet Drive and Harry inflates her unintentionally after hearing her criticise his parents. He is therefore forced to gather his possessions and depart the residence. Just when he realises he has no way to get in touch with anyone in the wizarding world, he is picked up by the Knight bus, a transportation service for the witches and wizards in plight. He meets the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge in Diagon Alley. Harry discovers that Sirius Black is suspect who intends on murdering him and that dementors will be patrolling the school to arrest Sirius. Professor Lupin instructs Harry on how to utilise the Patronus Charm to fight against the dementors outside of the classroom.

Harry is unable to travel to Hogsmeade with his classmates at Hogwarts because he doesn't have a permission form signed by a guardian. Harry therefore makes use of the Marauder's Map, which George and Fred Weasley handed him. It shows secret passageways throughout Hogwarts and moving marks of people on foot. Harry uses the map to enter Hogsmeade undetected and overhears the professors discussing how Sirius Black, Harry's godfather and family friend, betrayed his parents by telling Voldemort where their safe house was. In addition, Black was found guilty of the murders of thirteen Muggles and their companion Peter Pettigrew.

Ron claims that Hermione's pet cat, Crookshanks, ate his pet rat, Scabbers. In contrast, Scabbers appears right after Buckbeak, the hippogriff is killed. When Ron pursues Scabbers to the Whomping Willow, a large black dog attacks him and drags him into the Shrieking Shack through a tunnel under the Whomping Willow. Ron is saved by Harry and Hermione, who followed the dog. It is later revealed that, Sirius can instantly change into a dog at will because he is an Animagus. Scabbers is Pettigrew in animagus form, which Lupin explains as he is present at the Shrieking shack. After falsely accusing and framing Sirius for the deaths of Harry's parents and thirteen Muggles, Pettigrew went hiding away from Sirius. The truth is disclosed by Lupin and the three lose consciousness as dementors approach them after the combat. Sirius has been ordered to endure the Dementor's Kiss, which steals the victim's soul. Harry, Ron and Hermione awaken in the hospital. Hermione is advised by Dumbledore to use her time-turner to travel back in time. They use it to save Buckbeak, who later flies Sirius to escape. Harry goes back to Privet Drive for his summer vacation after saving Sirius.

The focus of this paper is the impact of karma on the characters and to study the cyclic vision of the plot keeping in mind the theory of Karma by Swami Abhedananda. Swami Abhedananda in his book *The Doctrine of Karma* asserts: "Any action, physical or mental is called Karma; and as every action is bound to produce its reaction or result it is also Karma" (Abhedananda 1947, 7). On tracing the plot's significant events, the causation cycle begins with Peter Pettigrew's murder of thirteen muggles, which resulted in a cascading repercussion and wide range of reaction. "Then, before I could curse him, he blew apart the street with the wand behind his back, killed everyone within twenty feet of himself -- and sped down into the sewer with the other rats...." (Rowling 1999, 385). Pettigrew was tasked with keeping the location of Harry's parents' residence a secret from the Dark Lord. But Pettigrew betrayed them and let the secret slip to Voldemort. Voldemort tracked them down and killed Harry's parents as a result of his treachery.

The events of "*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*" provide a fascinating illustration of how the climax provides a clear solution to the subject of cyclic vision. Mr. Weasley warns Harry that the fugitive killer Sirius Black is on the hunt for him and instantly after that Harry is attacked by a Dementor, the

guardians of the Azkaban Prison. He is then rescued by the newly arrived Professor Lupin. Mr. Weaseley's warning is appropriate since it sets the stage for the main conflict, but the narrative apparently concludes with a major occurrence that illustrates the peril. For the most of the novel, Harry considers Mr. Weasley's version of events, that Sirius Black killed thirteen people with a single spell, as reality and the entire narrative moves along with it. However, the tale takes a turn when Harry realises that Sirius Black was his parents' secret keeper and exposed them to Voldemort.

Harry discovers the truth about what occurred twelve years ago. He gradually learns more about Sirius Black and realises that he isn't the cruel murderer. Pettigrew was actually working with Voldemort; thus, Sirius Black didn't hand up Harry's parents on purpose. Pettigrew blew up a muggle street, murdering twelve muggles, and faking his own death by transforming into his Animagi form. In diverse manners, this insight interacts with the ideas of cyclic perspective.

Swami Abhedananda further states that "The word Karma includes both the cause and the effect" (Abhedananda 1947, 7). The effect of Pettigrew's single act of murder and betrayal produced the cyclic outcome that runs through the series of novels. The chain of effects resulting from Pettigrew's action continued with the death of Harry's parents and Harry being taken to his uncle's home where he is a victim of neglect. On the other hand, Sirius Black was wrongly imprisoned and suffered over twelve years in the Azkaban controlled by the Dementors. Harry becomes the owner of a bad past and hence the Dementors attack him. "The dementors affect you worse than the others because there are horrors in your past that the others don't have" (Rowling 1999, 197). The cause-and-effect cycle continues to spread extensively diversifying into different aspects of the life of Harry Potter. The one event of Pettigrew's murdering innocents caused various effects in the plane of living and dead.

Every character in itself is a cause and effect. Sirius for a myriad of reasons, can be taken as a character giving rise to elements of cause and effect throughout his life. The fact is that he was a complex character with both good and bad aspects and Rowling had addressed Sirius' flaws on many occasions. Sirius Black and a fellow Gryffindor, James Potter, were not only close friends but also the finest trouble makers at Hogwarts. Sirius is characterised as a reckless and aggressive adolescent who was also intelligent and gifted with magic. He was able to become an Animagus at the age of fifteen which attests to his remarkable magical abilities. An Animagus was a learned skill of transforming into an animal and back, by a witch or wizard. His daring escape from Azkaban caused terror throughout the wizarding community. Swami Abhedananda continues by saying that:

> The character of an individual is again subject to the law of Karma because, it is the aggregate of a large number of minute activities of the mind-substance to which we give different

names such as desires, tendencies, thoughts, ideas and impressions: every one of which is governed by the law of action and reaction. Each character or personality is the grand total result of previous mental actions, and is also the cause of future changes in the character. (Abhedananda 1947, 15-16)

Sirius Black was also used as a depiction of how a person's exterior look tends to determine whether they are considered good or bad. The first and second time Harry encounters Sirius, he thinks so, "Harry had never met a vampire, but he had seen pictures of them in Defence Against the Dark Arts classes, and Black with waxy white skin looked just like one" (Rowling 1999, 40). Harry does not consider Sirius particularly attractive, but in a photograph of Sirius taken prior to his imprisonment in Azkaban, he characterises his features as "handsome, full of laughter" (Rowling 1999, 224). For a long time, Harry believed Sirius as an evil man and frequently describes him as someone with a gauntly persona and waxy skin. After their closure in the climax of the book, despite their lack of many encounters, Harry associated Sirius with having a father figure.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban is about the transition from childhood to adulthood which is replete with quests and difficult choices. The spells Harry learns over the year, firmly place him on the side of good. As a wizard, Harry Potter has numerous magical capacities that are fantastical and powerful. He understands that the powers he has should be utilised for good from his encounters of people and from the direction of different prominent figures like Dumbledore around him. The Patronus charm is a kind of Anti-Dementor spell and a guardian which acts as a shield between a wizard and the Dementor. It is also a kind of positive force and a projection of the very things that the Dementor feeds upon: hope, happiness, the desire to survive (Rowling 1999, 251). This spell that Lupin teaches to Harry, uses happiness to fight despair. The Patronus represents the personality that which is concealed and undiscovered. A wizard summons the hidden resources that he or she may never have required before, when confronted with an evil like the Dementor. The Patronus is the engrossed self that has remained camouflaged, but revealed when there is a need. "With an incantation, which will work only if you are concentrating, with all your might, on a single, very happy memory" (Rowling 1999, 252). Patronus can take on structures and forms that their casters are new to or for which they have never had a solid connection. Every Patronus is as unique as the creator and even identical twins have been known to generate Patronus that are markedly different.

The other spells like '*Riddikulus'* uses laughter to fight fear, light to fight darkness. It is the expressive symbol of the soul that leads a cycle, which is a concentration of the mind and heart toward a delicate and entertaining inner separation, from the boggart's distortion. A Boggart is a non-being that takes the form of its onlooker's deepest fear. Because of their shape-shifting ability, nobody knows what a Boggart

actually as it changes shape immediately upon encountering someone. "The charm that repels a boggart is simple, yet it requires force of mind. You see, the thing that really finishes a boggart is laughter" (Rowling 1999, 141). Lupin here teaches a crucial lesson namely the harmful effect of an outer force, dominance, or rigid resistance. The boggart cannot be easily subdued or won over as the only way to defeat it is to withdraw from the same brooding and the frightened self-consciousness that the boggart feeds on.

One who understands Karma will never believe in Predestination. "If we can once understand that each individual soul reaps the results of its previous acts and deeds then we can never advocate the theory of predestination and grace. Every effect is measured by its cause" (Abhedananda 1947, 19). In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban,* Sybill Trelawney is the Divination Professor who predicts the future. Professor McGonagall describes Sybill Trelawney thus, "Sybill Trelawney has predicted the death of a student every year since she came to this school. None of them have died yet" (Rowling 1999, 116-118). Hermione effectively sees through Trelawney's imperfections and also that she utilises the circumstances to anticipate occasions that are probably going to occur.

Trelawney never questions her forecasts, even though they are entirely irrational and has no recollection of her predictions after that. To Harry's question, when she predicts that the Dark Lord's servant will reunite with him and that he will establish himself, Trelawney replies, "But you just said it! You said the Dark Lord…' 'I think you must have dozed off too, dear!' said Professor Trelawney. 'I would certainly not presume to predict anything quite as far-fetched as that!'" (Rowling 1999, 345). Harry and his friends are quickly able to tell that Trelawney's predictions are incorrect. Hermione eventually decides to discontinue attending Divination lessons because of her dissatisfaction with the subject, which she describes as "woolly" (Rowling 1999, 116) and the teacher an "old fraud" (Rowling 1999, 342). It is evident that Sirius has been convicted for the murder of Harry's parents and that his next target will be Harry. Prediction or Divination is not required to confirm this. The law of action and reaction plays its role. When Harry believes he saw Trelawney making a true prediction for the first time, he confronts Dumbledore with his doubts about whom to trust. Surprisingly, Dumbledore admits that Trelawney might have made a genuine prophesy. However, Dumbledore's idea is that even a real prophecy may not necessarily come true. "Hasn't your experience with the Time-Turner taught you anything, Harry? The consequences of our actions are always so complicated, so diverse, that predicting the future is a very difficult business indeed Professor Trelawney, bless her, is living proof of that" (Rowling 1999, 453).

Swami Abhedananda in his theory further asserts "As every effect must have a cause, every consequence must have an antecedent, so also there must be equal balance between a cause and its effect, between an antecedent and a consequence" (Abhedananda 1947, 23). The equilibrium and harmony of Harry's cause

and effect was maintained after the time travel. Dumbledore asks Hermione to use her Time-Turner, so that the balance and justice for their actions can be maintained. A Time-Turner is an exclusive magic apparatus, used to traverse time. It is a unique watch that resembles an hourglass on a necklace. The travel across time into the past corresponds to the number of times the hourglass is rotated. The traveler can only stay in the past for five hours at a time without causing significant harm to himself or time itself. Although the Time-Turner does not solve all of Harry and Hermione's problems, it does allow them to rescue Sirius and Buckbeak. Buckbeak the Hippogriff was executed prior to the time travel as a result of Draco Malfoy's accusation. Despite the fact that Pettigrew's identity is exposed, he transforms into a rat and flees. Lupin transforms into a werewolf and the dementors are on the verge of performing their attack when someone intervenes and stops it from happening. They save two innocent lives when Dumbledore asks Hermione to use her Time-Turner. "If all goes well, you will be able to save more than one innocent life tonight" (Rowling 1999, 418).

The karma theory is one among the methods to reach the ultimate objective of knowing the absolute truth and self-realisation which is the ultimate goal of human life. Harry discovers many truths about his family and godfather, but self-realisation is the ultimate aim, for which he puts himself through several hardships. He pushes himself to comprehend his actual potential while learning the Patronus charm from Professor Lupin, despite Lupin's warning that even the best wizards have difficulties performing a complete Patronus. "Harry, that the charm might be too advanced for you. Many qualified wizards have difficulty with it. What does a Patronus look like? Said Harry curiously" (Rowling 1999, 251). Harry discloses at the end of the novel that he recognised his late father defending him from a Dementor attack and waits for his father to come after the time travel. When Harry saw no one approaching, he took a step forward and cast his Patronus. The Dementors were chased away by a stag that burst from his wand. Harry realised it was Prongs, his father's Animagus form, as it approached him. This proves Harry's realisation of his creative and intellectual potential through internal drive and also the fact that loved ones of our life will never actually leave. Dumbledore reminds that Harry can be proud of himself during the times of self-doubt. "It didn't make any difference,' said Harry bitterly. 'Pettigrew got away. Didn't make any difference?' said Dumbledore quietly. It made all the difference in the world, Harry. You helped uncover the truth. You saved an innocent man from a terrible fate" (Rowling 1999, 452).

Understanding the significance of Karma theory in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, enables the readers to have a stronger insight of the book. The presence of these elements indicates the special features in the book that lay the foundation for a vibrant perspective to the philosophical kaleidoscope of the Harry Potter's magical universe. Hogwarts presents a multi-dimensional philosophical canvas wherein

the differences empower; sensibilities strengthen and the good prevails. In the journey of finding the truth, Harry finds his purpose and begins to realise the value of standing for good. There is a strong undercurrent of a sense of belonging coupled with the common goal of human welfare, which explains the immense popularity of the novel to this day.

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An Inner Path: Contextualising Indian Religious Tourism

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Abstract

In recent years, India has gained prominence as a trailblazer in the burgeoning domain of faith-based or religious tourism. Spirituality and religious conviction are common motivating factors for people to undertake religious pilgrimages. India's varied religious traditions have rendered it a favoured location for religious tourism, attracting tourists across the globe in search of spiritual encounters. This article explicates the concept of religious tourism and its emergence as a significant form of non-economic travel. The study endeavours to examine the phenomenon of religious tourism in India and its impact on the nation's economic development. It seeks to elucidate how this form of tourism has gained widespread acceptance as a popular culture and has emerged as a significant contributor to the country's economic progress. The article also illustrates how tourists are drawn to pilgrimage sites, thereby boosting the Indian tourism industry. The proliferation of mass media has facilitated the dissemination of religious tourism to a wider demographic. Despite the advantages and disadvantages associated with promoting religious tourism, India is currently experiencing a rise in the number of tourists who are drawn to alternative medical practices. The article concludes by positing that the Indian government's endeavours to foster religious tourism are contributing to India's status as the preeminent travel destination.

Keywords: *Religion, Spirituality, Religious Tourism, Popular Culture.*

Introduction

Religious tourism (alternatively referred to as faith-based tourism) is a term that refers to individuals who travel alone or in a group on a pilgrimage. As Rinschede (1992) puts it that visiting the holy sites is partially motivated by religious factors. He noted that this form of tourism can also be denoted as 'cultural tourism.' Religious tourism is not a new phenomenon. Religion is a significant component in the world's oldest form of non-economic travel. People from all around the world visit pilgrimage sites for a variety of reasons. According to Jackowski and Smith (1992), around 240 million people (per year) prefer religious travel. Despite being one of the oldest forms of travel, religious tourism has recently experienced an enormous rise in both national and global appeal. This spiritually oriented-tourism has contributed considerably to the expansion of the worldwide tourist sector in the contemporary era (Favreau-Lilie, 1995; Sharpley, 2009). It is difficult to understand modern travel patterns without factoring in religion (Mattila et al, 2001). This is why revered locations are classified as tourism resources. Numerous religious places have been commercialized for the benefit of tourists. The media is also a popular instrument for educating tourists about the culture and heritage of various holy places. To attract not just spiritual pilgrims but also curious tourists, the tourism industry is infusing religious connotations into its marketing techniques. Sacred tourism also broadens one's peripheral knowledge of the numerous legends associated with a religious location. Many tourists believe that travelling to any pilgrimage spot brings one closer to the local culture (Wiltshier, 2012).

The field of religion and tourism is characterised by its interdisciplinary nature and the continuous growth of research in this area in contemporary times (Duran-Sanchez et al. 2018). The link between tourism and religion has been studied from a variety of angles by trailblazing scholars. On the same platform, Bremer (2005) outlined three different approaches to the two interrelated variables (faith and tourism). The spatial approach is the first strategy to consider. It indicates that pilgrims and visitors share the same physical place, yet engage in divergent activities. There is an

important role for both of them in maintaining the hallowed nature of religious sites. Because of this, a site that serves both tourists as well as deep practitioners and religious visits can be found in a comparable area. The second strategy is based on the historical approach. It indicates a connection between religious-based travel and tourism. The historical significance of the location attracts both spiritual and non-spiritual travellers alike. Lastly, the cultural perspective is taken into consideration. Tourists are usually exposed to a new culture when they leave their comfortable surroundings (Lew et al, 2014). Tourists become commodities because of this. It is also worth noting that tourism has spread like wildfire across modern society. Once a tourist decides to travel to a location, numerous forms of transportation, various networks of communication, involving oneself in net banking, arranging for lodging along with food services, and multifarious other items or packages are all involved. The contemporary process of commodifying commodities and services contrasts sharply with religion and tourism, but people all around the globe are obliged to bring these issues into the sacred places they visit.

India is one of the popular destinations for religious and spiritual tourists across the globe. The country is home to numerous religious traditions such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Parsis, Jainism, and many more. These religious sites attract both domestic and international tourists. The religious and spiritual atmosphere of the country paves the way for the tourists for an overall learning experience. Additionally, with the rising growth of mass media, there has been a development of this religious and spiritual-based tourism in India to evolve as a rising popular culture. This association of popular culture with the religious or folk culture of India leads to a focus on the different subcultures in the Indian territory. Before planning for their travel to a specific destination, the tourists do pre-hand research on the list of places that they can cover within the duration of their trip. The emergence of mass media has led to a transformation of faith-based tourism into a phenomenon of popular culture, resulting in a significant economic boost for the country. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to emphasize how religion and spirituality function as an

incentive to promote tourism among travellers from all over the world and across all age groups.

Religion and Spirituality: Tourism Parameters

Religion organises a collective and unified spiritual experience among the people, which through time becomes faith, beliefs, and practises of the people. The term "religious involvement" or "religiosity" refers to someone who is deeply immersed in religious practise and associated rites. Benor (2006) has defined the term "spiritual" as pertaining to a "transpersonal consciousness" that arises either spontaneously or through various practises such as meditation. This consciousness is beyond conventional explanations and is often attributed with an inspiring and directing meaning, frequently in the form of a Deity. When it comes to spirituality, it is regarded as an "open-ended path" (Stausberg, 2014). As a result, an atheist or agnostic might be spiritual but not religious. Other religious organisations are not prohibited from entering religious institutions. Humanity is the most important thing in religion. It is feasible for individuals who identify as atheists to partake in religious tours, intending to engage in the acquisition of experiences that are accompanied by spiritual growth. Travellers' pursuit of spiritual enlightenment is often at the heart of their decision to visit a place of worship (Jacowsky and Smith,1992; Swatos, 2011).

It is widely believed that religion or spirituality and tourism are two notions that are diametrically opposed to one another. Scholars have long believed that these two variables can never be brought together on a single plane, regardless of how hard they try. Given Durkheim's (1912) distinction between the sacred and the profane, religion is always considered to belong to the world of the sacred; individuals participate in religious activities because they seek inner salvation, whereas tourism personifies the world of the profane; individuals participate in tourism because it is a part of their daily routine.

Smith (1992) looked into the idea that pilgrims and tourists should be seen as two interchangeable parallel paths. Tourists are seen as the ones based on Western scientific understanding, whereas pilgrims are seen as the ones who have chosen the spiritual route. In this way, both pilgrims and visitors may tailor their journeys to their requirements and interests. Thus, a traveller desires emotional fulfilment, bearing in mind their best interests and motivation for travelling. Similarly, Stausberg (2011) investigated the complex interrelationship between religion and tourism in the modern world in his research study. He pointed out that travellers do not abandon their religious views when on vacation; that there is a link between tourism and pilgrimage; and that religious institutions, as well as their holy rites, serve as pull factors for visitors while on vacation.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of spiritually motivated trips. Because of the progress of contemporary culture, themes such as privatisation of religion and cyber-pilgrimages are beginning to emerge in the public consciousness. Visitors visiting sacred locations may or may not be religious in today's post-modern culture, but their spiritual inclination drives them to do so, hence encouraging faith-based tourism to flourish. The purpose of spiritual travel is to provide travellers with an understanding of the solutions to different epistemological problems that have been plaguing them, such as seeking the significance of their existence in the social world (Olsen and Guelke 2004; Clark 1991). In recent years, there has been an increase in the combination of pilgrimage travel and New Age Spirituality (Rountree, 2006). It is one of the growing trends in which religion is considered a privatised affair, but spirituality is viewed as a pluralized experience. For example, the Sheikh Salim Chisti Tomb in Jama Masjid attracts throngs of tourists each year from a variety of religious backgrounds. This is due to the fact that tourists from other religious backgrounds are drawn to the spiritual atmosphere of the sacred sites, which does not consider personal religious beliefs. Spirituality is a natural inner experience that human beings have which is distinct from religious doctrines that have been predetermined. Numerous

studies have observed that there exists a distinction between individuals who self-identify as religious and those who consider themselves spiritual and that the two categories are not necessarily mutually inclusive. Therefore, faith-based tourism has created a new dimension in which both religiously and spiritually oriented tourists can find a parallel path.

Pilgrims Versus Tourists: Unravelling the Attributes

Tourists, as defined by the World Tourism Organisation, are people who stay in a destination outside of their usual cultural milieu for a period of time that is typically less than a year. Different travellers have various underlying reasons behind embarking on a journey to a particular destination. In this context, Fleischer (2000) pointed out that pilgrimage is a widely recognized kind of tourism in many countries. Numerous researchers stated that tourists and pilgrims are synonymous with one another; there is no distinction between the two (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Collins-Kreiner, 2010, Olsen and Timothy, 2006; Ron, 2009). When examined through the lens of tourism, it is possible to objectify both pilgrims and tourists to the same spatial plane. Observing that tourists are simply pleasure-seeking hedonists living a sybaritic lifestyle is impolite and unprofessional. Alternatively, if we categorize travellers, we may distinguish between business tourists, adventure tourists, medical tourists, leisure tourists, and various types of tourists, among other things. A pilgrim, in this context, is defined as a "religious tourist" who is motivated by spiritual or religious motivations to travel to a particular location (Sykes, 1982). As a result, this viewpoint eliminates the distinction that exists between pilgrimage and tourism.

When it comes to religious tourism, Rinschede (1992) distinguished between two types: first, short-term religious tourism, which involves travelling to nearby sacred sites for a short period of time—for example, people from West Bengal travelling to Puri (Orissa) in order to enjoy both relaxations on the beach and pay a visit to the centuries-old Jagannath Temple. Secondly, there is long-term religious tourism, which

refers to visiting holy locations over a longer period of time and involves travelling a greater distance. The following are a few characteristics of religious travel:

1. As a subset of cultural tourism, religious tourists have their own personal viewpoints on the reason for their visit to sacred sites. For example, some may see it as an activity to explore the unexplored, while others may see it as a way to spend their spare time by experiencing a culture that is different from their own.

2. Religious tourism contributes to the alleviation of seasonal oscillations. For example, the Basilica of Bom Jesus, Goa (which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is visited by visitors throughout the year.

3. Travellers get knowledge and information through religious tourism. During their journey, the travellers gain an understanding of the history and culture of the areas they visit.

4. Religious tourism is also associated with medical tourism/wellness tourism. Medical tourism is becoming a more popular alternative for people all over the world. For example, the unique faith-healing characteristics of India entice many patients from all over the world to travel to India in order to receive spiritual treatment. These supplemental and alternative medications are provided to patients regardless of their religious affiliation. Sometimes medical professionals would suggest a "change of air" for their patients. A patient may experience a subjective revival after being exposed to fresh air. The patient is healed on the inside by meeting and connecting with new people, learning about a new culture, and seeking spiritual solace. Most spiritual destinations in India are often seen as a salve for the weary mind and spirit (Chaturvedi, 2021).

Consequently, pilgrims from all over the world have a plethora of options and motivations to visit the sacred locations that India has to offer. The Buddhist pilgrimage site of Bodh Gaya in the Indian state of Bihar is one such example. The monasteries

provide the serenity of mind to their visitors. In the same way, travelling to Ajmer Sharif Dargah is seen as going to the Mecca of India. Similarly, as a result of its reputation as a city of temples and learning, Varanasi also attracts a large number of visitors and pilgrims each year. Therefore, any government that actively promotes religious tourism is certain to reap substantial benefits. It also has a significant impact on the numerous socioeconomic aspects on a global scale.

Religious Tourism and Economy

Every human being has a natural curiosity for the world beyond their cultural bubble. Therefore, discretionary money, leisure income, and societal sanctions that are permissive to travel are necessary for tourism to thrive (Smith 1992). Among the many subsets of the tourist market, religious tourism has been expanding at a rapid clip. For many years, the relationship between increasing religious tourism and its influence on a country's economy has been an under-appreciated research topic. Several eminent academics believe that religious tourism may be a significant economic generator. Tourism is one of the factors that might help a country's economy recover after it has suffered a setback. A significant portion of any nation's resources is directed toward the development of its tourist attractions in order to increase the number of Foreign Tourists Arrival (FTAs) in the country. In India, the growth rate in FTAs in 2022 is 6.19 million, compared to 1.52 million in 2021. Though the pandemic has created a setback in the global tourism industry. However, there have been considerable signs of recovery post-lockdown and relaxation of restrictions. The Ministry of Tourism under the Government of India is providing financial assistance to the State governments so that the development of tourism-related infrastructure is taken care of. The end goal is simple: increase visitor numbers to India and hence boost the economy through the tourism industry. India is sometimes called the "spiritual capital of the world," and the country's tourism sector is working to increase awareness of the significance of its many sacred sites, attracting visitors who come for both religious and cultural reasons. According to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development 2021,

India ranks 54th out of the total 117 countries globally. Despite falling 8 places from its 2019 ranking, the Indian government is making efforts to regain its position at the top of the tourism industry rankings through a variety of tourism policies and programmes.

According to Shackley (1999), in his study, Buddhist monks allow for tourist participation because of the relationship between the accumulation of potential money and the intervention of monks. Tour guides are available at most sacred locations to share previously undiscovered knowledge about a well-known location. This also has a positive impact on the level of employment in that area. Religious visitors have also been shown to contribute to the growth of a country's economy by purchasing religious souvenirs and other religious items from local stores. Although this element encourages notions such as the commercialization of religious beliefs as well as the breakdown of spiritual values, but when seen in an economic context, it is viewed as a positive factor that will benefit the country's economy.

In this context, the media too plays an important role to promote these tourist hotspots. Bloggers, vloggers, travel journalists, social media influencers, and so on are using the reach of the internet to spread information about India's sacred sites and the mysteries surrounding them. The sum of all these has given a new dimension to religious tourism in India. It has enhanced travellers from across the globe to pay a visit to India's cultural heritage sites both in search of spirituality and knowledge-seeking motives—this in turn, is having a salutary effect on the country's economy.

Impact of Popular Culture on Religious Tourism

The pursuit of tourism has evolved into a widespread recreational endeavour on a global scale. According to MacCannell's (1973) assertion, tourism can be regarded as a contemporary form of pilgrimage undertaken by individuals. Over the years, the

concept of tourism has grown increasingly institutionalised. Tourists who travel to the Eastern region may do so for various subjective reasons, such as personal fulfilment, academic pursuits, or spiritual exploration. The contemporary trend of the "Click-Like-Share" culture has a significant impact on global travellers. This phenomenon entails tourists venturing to obscure destinations and subsequently sharing their experiences with a wider audience. Creators of travel content are starting with the goal of expanding their audience by tailoring their content to meet the demands of their consumers.

The methods of generating content have transformed over time. In the past, individuals seeking pertinent travel information primarily relied on print media. However, with the advent of technology, YouTube videos have emerged as a popular source for travellers to plan their itineraries. In the present day, content creators have shifted their focus to producing "reels" to efficiently provide travellers with comprehensive information promptly. The advent of advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools has led to the emergence of AI-powered websites that generate comprehensive travel itineraries based on the user's specified destination. As a result, the implementation of these convenient systems has facilitated a significant shift in religious tourism, transforming it into a widespread cultural phenomenon. With this inherent need to stay "online" and get information from mass media tools rising, religious tourism is becoming a global common culture.

It is a plausible assertion that religious tourism can have both advantageous and detrimental impacts on individuals and societies. Many people express dissatisfaction with the negative influence that tourism has on religious places and religious events. It is frequently asserted that it would result in the erosion of the cultural unity of a specific built environment in which it is implemented. Mass tourism to certain religious places has even resulted in an increase in mismanagement and abuse of cultural structures, which has contributed to the degradation of the environment. Consequently, the local population is left with little or no spiritual space for themselves. In the case of special ceremonies, it is not only the visitors who go to the religious institutions, but also the

media, which lends a secular and non-spiritual tinge to the proceedings. Tourism-related errors have been shown to diminish the significance of a particular religious site on several occasions. These kinds of tourists are described as "mindless visitors" by Moscardo (1996). In 2012, the Strategic Initiatives and Government Advisory Team of India published a report regarding faith-based tourism within the country. The report highlighted the various challenges that India encountered in its efforts to promote religious tourism on a global scale. Firstly, there is a geographical constraint on the carrying capacity of the region. The increasing influx of tourists to a particular sacred location is having a detrimental impact on the surrounding ecosystem. The implementation of various developmental initiatives aimed at enhancing the tourist experience has resulted in a higher incidence of landslides, road closures, and vehicular mishaps. Secondly, a significant proportion of tourists remain uninformed about proper waste disposal practises, exacerbating the issue of waste management. Thirdly, tourists are often taken advantage of by locals who want to cash in on their faith, and if there is not enough oversight of religious trusts, there is a risk that underhanded corruption can flourish in places of worship.

However, despite the drawbacks, it is important to recognise the positive role that religious tourism plays in India. The employment of people in the tourist sector contributes to the economic stability of a country. It not only improves the economy of a country, but it also benefits the people who live in the surrounding area (of the specific holy places). Because of the large number of visitors to any holy place, the government ensures that water supply, power, and convenient transportation are maintained in such areas, which helps to make the lives of the residents a little bit easier as well. The longer religious tourism thrives in a specific location, the more likely it is that the government will be pushed to undertake positive measures to further enhance the area. Consequently, the benefits and drawbacks of a specific component are inherently incompatible. The onus lies on people to address the unfavourable facets of society and convert them into constructive and beneficial elements for the holistic advancement of the nation.

Conclusion

It can be inferred that religion and spirituality serve as the predominant motivating factors for tourism within the nation. Notwithstanding the adverse effects, one could argue that religious tourism confers economic advantages and fosters religious inclusivity among people. The increasing popularity of faith-based tourism is an inevitable consequence of technological advancements in contemporary society. The rapid pace of modernization is resulting in a notable transformation in the lifestyle and conventional perspectives of individuals. The sharp change in ideas and lifestyles has resulted in the proliferation of popular culture, which has had a significant impact on the development of religious tourism in India. Several Indian states are utilising a virtual forum as a means to advertise the primary attractions of their respective regions and cities. Thus, by clicking the mouse, the world learns about a previously unknown area. Expressions like "Atithi Devo Bhava," which conveys the idea that the guest is equivalent to divinity, facilitate a lively exchange between the host and the guest. As a result, the Indian government is augmenting the quantity of data accessible on the diverse holy sites within the nation, intending to establish India as the preeminent religious tourism hub. It is appropriate to conclude with a quote from Aldous Huxley--"*To travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries*."

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Exploring the Right to Education Discourse: Little's Education as a Model for Inclusion

Srimathi and Anjum Khan

Abstract

The overarching objective of this research is to emphasize the significance of education for children with disabilities in promoting personal growth and development, and ultimately, a higher quality of life. The study aims to examine the effectiveness of special education and inclusive education as two approaches to providing equitable educational opportunities for children with disabilities. To contextualize the importance of education for individuals with disabilities, the research draws on the example of Canadian novelist Jean Little, whose life and struggles with learning challenges, school difficulties, and identity issues in a new environment are detailed in her book Little By Little: A Writers Education. The research paper titled "Exploring the Right to Education Discourse: Little's Education as a Model for Inclusion" analyzes Little's experiences in education and underscores the role of education in her success as a writer, despite her blindness. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the concepts of social inclusion and the social model of disability in addressing the societal barriers that hinder access to education for individuals with disabilities. Overall, this research aims to contribute to the discourse on education for children with disabilities and offer insights into effective strategies for promoting equitable educational opportunities and social inclusion.

Keywords: right to education, quality of life, special education, inclusive education, and social model of disability

Exploring the Right to Education Discourse: Little's Education as a Model for Inclusion

Every child has the right to education on the basis of equality of opportunity. Children with disabilities are particularly at risk of being marginalized or discriminated against in the realization of this right. (UNICEF 2012, 31)

The provision of education to persons with disabilities instils in them a sense of self-confidence and purpose in life. The entitlement of children with disabilities to receive an education promotes a favourable perspective and equitable opportunities within society. This

scholarly article adeptly chronicles the developmental journey of Jean Little, a writer with a disability, with emphasis on her formative years and educational experiences, as depicted in her autobiographical oeuvre. Specifically, *Little By Little: A Writer's Education* delves into Little's schooling, inclusive milieu, medical evaluations, immigration, and endeavours towards attaining social integration.

Introduction:

Little By Little: A Writer's Education delineates the formative period of Jean Little's life, from her infancy to childhood. The cover page of the book, published by Penguin Books Canada Limited, aptly summarizes the account as an indelible portrayal of the elation and anguish of childhood, maturation, familial relationships, and love, while extolling the resilience of the human psyche. Thus, Little serves as an exemplar for individuals with disabilities, fostered by her parents' endorsement of inclusion and education.

This scholarly article scrutinizes the notions of special education, inclusive education, and social inclusion within the context of Jean Little's autobiographical literature. The discourse encompasses these concepts vis-à-vis the life of an individual with a disability. Little's advantageous upbringing, facilitated by supportive parents and access to education, has afforded her a more uncomplicated and self-directed life. The article cogently expounds on the pivotal role of education in ameliorating the quality of life for persons with disabilities.

This scholarly article illuminates the life of Jean Little through the prism of the social model of disability, which prioritizes the societal obstructions and marginalization encountered by persons with disabilities over their physical impairments. In Lennard J. Davis' *The Disability Studies Reader (5th ed.),* Tom Shakespeare's perspective on the social model of disability is expounded upon, as he acknowledges that culpability does not lie with the disabled individual, but rather with society (Davis 2017, 199). Little, however, encountered formidable social barriers hindering her access to education and inclusion. Consequently, the social model of disability is employed to underscore and scrutinize Little's struggles and challenges within society.

Exploring Little's Education:

Flora Jean Little's early life, chronicled in this scholarly article, highlights the importance of early disability identification in children. Little appeared to be slow, clumsy, and unfit to her siblings, Jamie, Hugh, and Patricia, who were unaware of her disability and initially excluded her from their activities. However, Little's parents, who were both doctors, observed her peculiar vision and identified her disability early on. The book "The Right of Children with Disabilities To Education: A Rights-Based Approach To Inclusive Education" emphasizes the significance of early identification and assessment of disabilities to provide appropriate support and care to children. As stated in the book, "Early identification and assessment to ensure that any developmental delay, impairment or particular difficulty experienced by the child is identified and addressed as early as possible in order to ensure the provision of appropriate support and care" (UNICEF 2012, 31). Consequently, Little was able to avoid unnecessary social challenges and was provided with the best guidance to live a stress-free life.

Little's experiences of bullying and exclusion due to her vision impairment are described in this scholarly article. Her brothers and friends often make fun of her for her poor vision, and in one instance, a friend named Marilyn is warned by her mother not to allow Little to participate in any dangerous activities. Marilyn tells Little, "She told me not to let you do anything dangerous because you have bad eyes" (Little 1987, 3), which impacts Little's mental health and reinforces the social oppression and exclusion of people with disabilities. As described in Lennard J. Davis's *The Disability Studies Reader (5th ed.),* the social model of disability places the moral responsibility on society to remove the barriers that prevent the participation of disabled people. Davis states that "The social model demonstrates that the problems disabled people face are the result of social oppression and exclusion, not their individual deficits" (Davis 2017, 198). Little is perfectly content with her vision until she is excluded from activities and made to feel inferior by her peers. She reflects on this experience, thinking "Children could be bad. yet not eyes" (Little 1987, 3). Thus, it is clear that Little experiences bullying and exclusion due to her vision impairment, highlighting the importance of creating inclusive environments that value and support individuals with disabilities.

Little's mother provides her with significant moral encouragement, allowing her to explore the world with bravery, as evidenced by her becoming irate and a bit scared when teased by others, stating "I was furious. I was also a little frightened" Little 1987, 4). However, such comments wear her out, causing her to ask her mother about Marilyn's mother's comment regarding her eyesight and whether she can climb a tree, to which her mother responds, "You do have bad eyes, she said, but you go right ahead and climb the tree" (Little 1987, 4). This exchange showcases Little's reliance on her mother's support to face the world confidently.

Little persists in trying new activities despite enduring numerous insults. She mirrors her brothers' behaviour by engaging in similar activities, including learning music from their grandmother, just as Hugh does. However, Little struggles with learning and becomes discouraged, stating, "If I just went slower, I could make it work" (Little 1987, 9). She ultimately believes that she cannot succeed in music due to her inability to follow her grandmother's instructions. To make matters worse, Hugh's laughter at her struggles brings her to tears, blurring her vision further (Little 1987, 10). Despite this setback, Little does not give up, as her grandmother provides her with the necessary support and motivation. Ultimately, Little perseveres and manages to memorize the lyrics effectively.

Little displays an inquisitive nature and wishes to understand the cause of her vision problems. Her mother provides an explanation, stating, "Because you were born with scars on your corneas. The cornea is like a window in the front of the eye. It has to be clear if you are to see. Yours were all misted over. We could not see your pupils at all" (Little 1987, 16). With this newfound knowledge, Little finally grasps the reason for her difficulties in navigating her surroundings, mistaking objects for their proper use, and struggling to climb trees alongside her siblings and friends.

Little's parents, despite being working individuals, demonstrate a sincere interest in and attentiveness to their children's pursuits. This attentiveness enabled them to detect Little's visual impairment early on, enabling her to receive the necessary assistance for smooth learning and reducing some of the challenges in her daily life. Little's mother recounts how she first learned of her daughter's issue:

> When you were four months old, I was at the hospital examining a baby just your age. I put my stethoscope down beside him for one second and right away he reached out and tried to grab it. I realized then that you had never reached for anything. Not once. (Little 1987, 17)

Little's visual impairment causes her to worry that she cannot read as well as her family members. Although she enjoys listening to stories and words read by others, she finds that they are often too busy to do so, stating, "Whichever one read, I loved listening. The only trouble was, so much of the time they were too busy" (Little 1987, 19). Consequently, Little relies on others to assist her with reading books, which leaves her feeling inferior and dependent, expressing that "If I could read to myself, I would never have to wait for one of them to be free" (Little 1987, 19). This dependence on others can often lead to disappointment.

Little's mother plays a pivotal role in facilitating her access to education. As a working mother, she is able to provide the financial resources necessary to cover Little's medical needs and assistive technology. In order to support Little's reading requirements, her father procured a customized study desk and sourced large-print books from Canada, allowing her to read independently. It is evident that Little's parents are committed to ensuring that she has a conducive learning environment, free from any barriers.

Despite the availability of large-print books, Little still finds reading challenging. However, her mother offers academic assistance to help her overcome this hurdle. Even with the inclusion of illustrations and oversized text, Little's eyesight problems make it difficult for her to read. She resorts to touching the book with her nose while reading, indicating that she needs to bring the text close to her face to discern the letters and words. This is how she typically reads and these are her reflections on the experience.:

> When I did eventually progress to reading an actual book, it was a lovely big one with cream-coloured pages and large, clear type. Even so, I had to put my face very close to the page to be able to see the shapes of the words, and my nose brushed against the paper as I tried to read. The book had a good smell. Not all books had that wonderful smell, I was to learn. (Little 1987, 21)

Little's primary challenge when reading is experiencing the sensation of letters moving, as she shares, 'They often wavered and sometimes seemed to jump' (Little 1987, 21). Little's mother, however, explains that it is her eyes that are moving, not the letters. Little's mother also informs her that she has a condition called nystagmus, which makes it difficult for her to maintain focus on one spot for more than a second at a time (Little 1987, 21). Despite these challenges, Little finds joy in reading and even though she still struggles with the moving letters, especially when tired, she enjoys the books she reads, which are enlarged for her benefit (Little 1987, 22). Little's greatest aspiration is to read independently and attend regular school without depending on others to read for her.

At the age of seven, Little's family relocated from China to Hong Kong to seek the expertise of an eye specialist, Dr. Ling. During the evaluation, Little was asked to identify letters on a chart in capital letters, but she was unable to identify any of them. The specialist diagnosed her with a visual acuity of 20/200ths in the right eye and 12/400ths in the left eye and recommended that she wear glasses to improve her vision.

Little feels apprehensive about starting at a new school in Hong Kong, primarily due to her fear of speaking in front of an unfamiliar class of peers. Both Little and her brother, Hugh, will attend the same school, which is inclusive in nature. In anticipation of their first day, they are curious about the dress code. Each class at the school is comprised of twenty-five students, with the majority being foreigners from business-class families. The school uniform consists of sleeveless cotton dresses in pastel colours such as pink, green, blue or yellow, each dress trimmed with white rick-rack braid, and accompanied by matching underpants (Little 1987, 34). However, after learning more about the school from her mother, Little is excited to attend and eager to learn.

On the first day of school, Little experiences feelings of unease and discomfort. When the teacher instructs the class to read, Little begins by holding her book close to her nose. Unfortunately, this action results in her classmates making fun of her, causing her to feel embarrassed and reluctant to continue reading. Despite wearing glasses, she continues to struggle with reading and is forced to hold the book so close to her nose that nobody notices her reading skills. As a result, Little becomes self-conscious in front of her peers and ends up getting ink from the book all over her nose. Despite the ridicule from her classmates, she chooses not to inform the teacher about the situation. Little reflects on her experience:

> When the teacher walked into the room, I longed to tell, but I didn't. I knew tattletales were despised by everyone. I spat on the corner of my handkerchief and scrubbed my short nose until it felt raw. But a red nose was better than a nose smudged with printer's ink. (Little 1987, 35)

Little's classmates in the classroom treated her cruelly, and she felt their judgmental stares upon her. When she remembered her mother's promise of "riding lessons," Little struggled to deal with the discomfort of the situation. Her teacher's concerns prompted discussions with Little's parents about the benefits and drawbacks of inclusive schooling. The negative classroom atmosphere and the peers' insensitive gestures made Little fear attending school and lose interest in learning. Little expressed her disappointment, saying, "I was gradually learning that if you were different, nothing good about you mattered" (Little 1987, 36).

Therefore, the anticipation of receiving an education in an inclusive school became disturbed by the negative attitudes towards individuals with disabilities in classrooms. From Davis's social model of disability perspectives, he strongly emphasized that "the problem of disability is relocated from the individual, to the barriers and attitudes which disable her. It is not the disabled person who is to blame, but society. She does not have to change, society does" (Davis 2017, 199). Despite her disability, Little was eager to attend school and learn, but the cruel treatment from her peers made her feel bad about her disability.

Little's teacher recommends to her parents that they enrol her in a Sight saving class in Canada, emphasizing the importance of individual attention and care for her in the classroom to aid in her academic growth. This demonstrates the positive impact of special education on the learning and cognitive abilities of children with disabilities. The article "Importance of Special Education for Special Children" in *Education Today* recognizes that special education promotes individualized learning, instils confidence, and contributes to the personal development and growth of special-needs children: "It allows the students to enjoy the education and gain confidence due to individual learning. For the personal growth and development of the special children, it is important for all of them to receive proper education." Therefore, it is essential that children with disabilities receive appropriate care and education to support their personal development.

Dr. Aylesworth conducts a follow-up examination on Little before recommending enrollment in a sight-saving school. Additionally, he recommends that Little attend a specialized school for the visually impaired. In response, Little's parents decide to relocate to a residence closer to the sight-saving school. Little expresses her excitement and anticipation about attending the special education school, noting that the classroom and educational materials for children with special needs are specifically tailored:

> Our classroom was special. The chalk was fat and yellow instead of skinny and white. The blackboards were green. No other room in the Duke of Connaught school had green blackboards then. The enormous dictionary, which lay open on a stand, had large black print. Each desk had its chair attached to it and all of them could easily be moved so you could sit as close to the board as you needed to. The desk lids, which we used for writing and reading, could be tilted up and down like the one I had had in Taiwan. (Little 1987, 60)

Little is concerned about her ability to see clearly even with her spectacles. To aid the students in her class, Miss. Burton, the teacher at the special needs school, uses large print books and writes on the board in larger type. Little notes, "When Miss Burton printed on the board, she did it in large letters. The thickness of the chalk made her lines fat and much easier to see than ordinary chalk marks" (Little 1987, 60). While everyone has visual issues to some extent, Little faces more challenges than most. She observes that others may wear glasses, but they do not provide her with sufficient assistance. Little's mother helps her to understand her eye condition through the use of drawings:

> Mother drew me a picture of the inside of the eye. The cornea was at the front. My corneas were scarred. Glasses could not take away the scars. Behind the cornea was the iris. My iris was stuck to my cornea in places. My iris was stuck to my cornea in places. Behind the iris came the lens. Glasses could fix things that were wrong with the lens. (Little 1987, 60)

A classroom at the sight-saving school included multiple grade levels, but Little still thrived with the help of Miss Burton. Little expresses her fondness for the class, stating, "Even though I had less vision than others, I loved Miss Burton's class" (Little 1987, 61).

This highlights the crucial role that teachers play in the education of children with disabilities. In Rebecca Branstetter's article titled "How Teachers Can Help Students With Special Needs Navigate Distance Learning," the author emphasizes the importance of special education teachers, stating that "In the classroom, teachers can give instant feedback and support. Students may also get pull-out services with specialists to teach them needed skills for focus, problem-solving, and emotional or behavioural self-regulation."

Little's disability does not hinder her ability to learn effectively. Despite her poor vision, she demonstrates a strong desire to read, write, and learn. Her perseverance and willingness to work hard are commendable. Little's teacher at the sight-saving school helps her make a basket as a Christmas present for her parents, and Little learns the skill with enthusiasm. She expresses her relief after the experience by saying, "I did not feel cross-eyed all day long" (Little 1987, 75). Therefore, instead of feeling discouraged by her condition, Little strives to excel in her work.

At the age of eight, Little's parents once again arranged for an eye examination by Dr. Aylesworth, who determined that Little had poor vision and should attend a sight-saving school in Brantford. However, a special education teacher, Miss Bogart disagreed and encouraged Little's parents to enrol her in a mainstream school. According to Miss Bogart, the most inclusive approach to Little's education would be:

> If she goes to Brantford, she'll soon think of herself as a blind child, she said. If she attends a regular class, she'll grow up thinking of herself as sighted and fitting into the sighted world and, after all, that is the world she'll have to live in when the years of schooling are over. (Little 1987, 75)

Upon enrolling in an inclusive school, Little experiences bullying on her first day of class, where she is subjected to hurtful comments such as "She's cross-eyed" (Little 1987, 78). As a result, Little becomes anxious and fearful of being in a classroom with non-disabled children, feeling too small to handle the bullies. Little expresses her fear:

> I did not look to see who had said it. I was struggling to control the tears that were threatening to well up and spill over. Even though this was my first day in a regular classroom in Canada, I knew that crying right then would be a fatal mistake. I did not dare blink. I gazed straight ahead. (Little 1987, 78)

Little overcomes obstacles and perseveres through her struggles. Despite her visual impairment, she finds solace in reading and spends time at the library. Reading books can be a challenge for individuals with disabilities, but Little's love for reading drives her to write a poem, which she later publishes with the help of her father. Her father takes her to meet the renowned poet Mr. Macdonald to further develop her skills, and upon introducing Little, he notes, "She writes poems, too, though she's still a beginning, of course." (Little 1987, 190). Mr. Macdonald kindly offers his expertise to assist Little in honing her lyrical talent.

Little overcame numerous challenges and completed her education, despite facing hardships, obstacles, and bullying from her peers. She experienced both inclusive and special education and recognized the benefits and drawbacks of each. Despite the barriers to education, Little remained determined and persevered through her struggles to pursue her passions. The article "Social Model of Disability" published on the *People with Disability Australia (PWDA)* website highlights the importance of promoting equal participation and access to education for individuals with disabilities:

> The social model sees 'disability' is the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It therefore carries the implication that the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on a equal basis with others.

As a consequence of her education, Little overcomes difficulties and becomes a writer, earning several awards and recognitions. Little describes how she was occupied with studying and completing essays, highlighting the importance of education in her life. Her success is a testament to her strength and intelligence.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Jean Little's memoir "*Little by Little*: *A Writer's Education*" provides a firsthand account of the challenges and successes experienced by a person with disabilities in accessing education. Little's experiences highlight the importance of inclusive education, special education, and supportive teachers in ensuring equal participation for people with disabilities in the education system. Despite facing numerous obstacles, including bullying and a lack of resources, Little's determination to succeed in her education and pursue her passion for writing is a testament to the power of education in empowering individuals.

Little's story also underscores the need for society to shift towards a social model of disability, where people with disabilities are viewed as individuals with equal rights and opportunities. This model advocates for the removal of social barriers and the creation of an inclusive society that accommodates the needs of all individuals, regardless of their disabilities. By adopting this model, society can ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities to access education, employment, and other aspects of life.

Overall, Jean Little's memoir provides valuable insights into the challenges and successes experienced by a person with disabilities in accessing education. Her story serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of inclusive education and the need for society to adopt a social model of disability to ensure that all individuals can participate fully and equally in society.

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Contextualizing Historical Trauma in Historical Fiction: A Study of Rita Choudhury's *Chinatown*

Days

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Abstract

The narrativized forms of historical events offer a seamless convergence of the real and the fictive world by interweaving historical events and literary elements. In contemporary literary discourses arising from the margins of the mainstream culture, such blending of historiography and literature writing is very prominent. Unlike the historical reports, the purpose of such narratives is not to convey the quintessence of things but to rather bring to the fore the various layers of a complex socio-political reality. To examine how an interaction between 'historiography' and fiction helps in capturing the complex geographical, historical, and cultural experiences and literary traditions of the people from the Northeast of India, Rita Choudhury's Chinatown Days has been studied in this paper. The temporal intersections occurring at different geographical, cultural, and existential spaces enable writers to capture the complex ways of living and thinking, especially in the postcolonial context. This paper aims to study the narrative techniques employed in the novel to depict the trials and tribulations of the four generations of Chinese-Assamese immigrants living in upper Assam. The juxtaposition of the quotidian lives of the people with the political volatility of the region and its bearings on the sense of identity of the people has been portrayed by the use of multiple voices and elements of oral traditions of the region. Various facets of memory and trauma studies and postcolonial studies have been used to study the psychological and cultural impact upon individuals and the society. It also focuses upon the significance of subjective reflections upon historical events by the use of various narrative techniques.

Keywords: Historical fiction, immigrants, intersectionality, trauma, memory

The familiarity with the geographical and cultural elements of a particular place often draws one to explore it in new ways. This leads to a magnified focus on the seemingly familiar things around us that further rouses our curiosity to delve deeper into their origins and development. Both the textual or visual representation of the lesser known cultural histories emerging from the peripheries have led to the examination of the long-existing but often overlooked components of our societies. Critical studies on

colonial and post-colonial experiences have been an important part of literary studies since many decades. Such studies have been mostly centred around the power relations between the colonizers and the colonised and the implications of the colonial past on our present times. The temporal intersections occurring at different geographical, cultural, and existential spaces enable writers to capture the complex ways of living and thinking, especially in the postcolonial context. However, there have been very few literary works that have endeavoured to recount the experiences of the lesser-known communities belonging to the margins, both geographic and demographic. A closer look at the representation of a culturally, historically and politically volatile region helps one understand the implications of former power structures on the present lives of the people. Such narratives usually display a seamless mingling of historiography and literary elements that help in capturing the complex socio-political reality. Genealogical narrative analysis is another method that helps in establishing links between textual representation and the processes of authorship and reading in general. The process of connecting the data from field study and archival research in the form of a genealogical narrative can be an effective story-telling tool about the lesser known historical communities. This paper aims to study the narrative techniques employed in the novel *Chinatown Days* by Rita Choudhury to effectively recount the experiences and the interactions amongst the varied communities inhabiting a historically complex space. It depicts the trials and tribulations of the four generations of Chinese-Assamese immigrants living in Upper Assam. The juxtaposition of the quotidian lives of the people with the political volatility of the region and its bearings on the sense of identity of the people has been portrayed by the use of multiple voices and elements of oral traditions of the region. Various facets of memory and trauma studies and postcolonial studies have been used to study the psychological and cultural impact upon individuals and the community. It also focuses upon the significance of subjective reflections upon historical events by the use of various narrative techniques.

The realistic non-linear narrative technique employed in the novel tells the story of the lesser known Assamese-Chinese community living in the eastern-most fringes of the state of Assam. The novel delineates the life story of the Chinese indentured labourers and their descendants from their arrival in Upper Assam till the Sino-Indian war and its tragic aftermath. Such analysis of literary texts helps in revealing the hidden centres of power and how they have an implication on the lives of the characters. It questions the sacredness attached to the beginning and emergence of certain events in history. For instance, the glory that the British attached to the story of discovery of tea in Assam is in reality fraught with painful stories of displacement of the labourers working in the plantations. Such perspective helps in looking at the history represented in the narrative as a continual process and not as something that took place and was completed in the distant past. History has been often looked at as a detached subject that inadequately represents the nuances of

emotions associated with the events that transpired in real. Therefore, narrative historical fictions are often preferred over objective historical accounts. A call for mingling of the 'historical' and the 'literary' has often been advocated by the post-modern critics like Linda Hutcheon. Historical narratives help the writers transcend the objective framework of history and allows them to delve deeper into the subjective reflections of the narrator.

The novel *Chinatown Days* by Rita Choudhury employs an array of narrative techniques that enable her to paint a realistic and vibrant picture of the historical events she recounts in the novel. The narrative with multitude of voices and descriptions of varied temporal and spatial points enable the readers to reflect upon the historical events in a better way. The unprocessed trauma of the Chinese-Assamese community is established from the very onset of the novel where the present generation character Lailin goes through deluge of emotions upon reading about the tragic history of her community, "As if the pain and anguish that had lain heavy as a stone on their hearts all these years had converged to take the form of a book…Amidst its ruins pulsated a present that too had gone unnoticed."(Choudhury 2018, 6) Elleke Boehmer (2018); states in "Postcolonial Poetics," that a writer's imaginative style and narrative techniques help in effectively reflecting the intersectional issues pervading the society in which the cultural product is created (2). It is the linguistic frameworks and metaphorical aspects of a postcolonial literary work that draws the interest of the readers to the historical events underlying the narrative. Terror and trauma exist as recurring motifs embedded deeply into the fabric of the lives and the psyche of the individuals. The impact of this comes to the fore not only when terror-causing events take place but also when the individuals go about their regular mundane lives. Boehmer (2018) states, 'the diagnostic mechanisms of resistance, terror, and post-trauma re-imagining that a postcolonial poetics might apply or set in motion' are closely associated to aesthetic qualities of the literary work (35). The history of the present-day Assamese-Chinese community has been delineated in way that is in keeping with Foucault's idea of history as a textured palimpsest rather than a continuous, coherent series of events. He emphasises on the importance of looking beyond events to include subjective elements like 'sentiments, love, conscience, instincts' in the study of genealogy to develop a finer understanding of the past and not just to trace a systematic evolution of the past events (Foucault 1977, 139). The very realistic description of a severely impoverished household to which the ancestors of the pivotal present-day characters belong, focuses more on the emotions of the characters rather than only the events. Ho Han's life under the slave trade regime of the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty in China is mostly recounted using his emotional responses to the changing social dynamics around him. The blending of the simultaneous histories of two geographically proximate but culturally dissimilar spaces offers the readers with a broader understanding of the complex political relations prevalent amongst the

existing power-structures. The important places that the slaves brought from China had to traverse like Penang, Calcutta and finally the nascent tea gardens of Assam have been vividly described to capture their constant displacement which has been a recurrent process for the slaves and their descendants.

Chinatown Days can be read as a trauma narrative as the novel portrays both personal and collective trauma of the Chinese-Assamese community. Ann Whitefield upholds narrative fiction's ability to represent those elements which the conventional, historical, cultural and autobiographical accounts are unable to adequately represent. Narrative history is an amalgamation of facts and imagination that helps the readers to have a more comprehensive view of the past events as they highlight the inter-personal and intra-personal emotions of the characters. The trauma caused by the sense of uprootedness is further reinforced by their vulnerability to physical and emotional abuse at the hands of the colonisers. The coping mechanisms adopted by the displaced people to deal with their trauma like the colloquial interactions and folk songs also play a role in recounting their troubled history. The novel is replete with ditties about the hardships of the labourer community which are sung ironically on happy occasions. For instance, Phulmati singing, 'To whom will I speak about my sorrows? Who will believe in my tales? My body withers…' (Choudhury 2018, 90) is indicative of the juxtaposition of the tragically bonded lives of the people with the little occasions of mirth and joy. The emotional intricacies of the community have been depicted in the backdrop of the political events leading up to the discovery, establishment and expansion of the tea industry in Assam. This makes up the first part of the book.

The second part of the book takes the readers to the 1960s and highlights the story of the descendants of the former Chinese slaves many years down the line. This section begins with a poetic portrayal of passage of time and the far-reaching changes that had taken place over the past century in the region. The establishment of the titular town Makum as one of the biggest Chinatowns in the region shows the rising prominence of the Chinese community during this period. The objective descriptions of the resource-rich strategically important places like Digboi, Margherita, the Tirap Frontier Division and the Lohit Frontier Division which ended between India and China's boundary, the McMahon Line sets the premise for the rising tensions amongst the communities in the region during the Sino-Indian War.

The anxieties surrounding the mounting tensions between India and China, generations after the descendants of the former Chinese slaves had settled down peacefully, shows the constant vulnerability of the immigrant communities across the world. Their uprootedness becomes evident when the state machineries forcibly relocate them from one place to another. This goes on till they have either succumbed to the hostile surroundings or have been deported back to their so-called ancestral lands in China.

Throughout the course of the novel, we find pivotal characters recounting traumatic events from the past which helps them both heal their pains as well as reinforce their communal ties. The novel begins with the present generation character, Lailin's inability to process the generational trauma caused by the constant flux of her community. She feels dislocated, untethered and agonized by the presence of Arunabh Bora, an Assamese writer who later on takes up the daunting task of writing about the trans-boundary trauma suffered by the people of former's community. Although later it is revealed that he too belonged to the community of the Chinese exiles. Writing the novel enables him to document the collective and personal memory of the community.

Trauma writing enables 'literary verbalization' of the deep-seated pains of such individuals and communities (Hartman 1995, 259). Trauma studies blend the various facets of memory studies, narrative fictions and history. The fictional or visual representation of trauma helps in reconstructing the historical events and providing better understanding of the complex experiences of the individuals and the communities. The use of the character of Arunabh Bora provides an external perspective to the events that take place in the lives of the people described in the novel. Trauma theories show a deep connection between the past and the future of the people as well as the prevalent social and geopolitical situations of the present times. After a failed attempt at forging amiable ties with China, Jawaharlal Nehru, the incumbent Prime Minister of India at that point of time, tried to dissuade the Chinese from attacking Indian lands through discussions. The communities living in the peripheries of the country felt it to be an utterly inadequate and insincere method of dealing with the escalating tensions at the Indo-China borders. Their fears are verbalized in public events and cultural gatherings where people feel a sense of restless uncertainty gripping their lives. During the wedding preparations of Mei Lin and Pulok, Minaram Barua, Pulok's father keeps incessantly talking about the border dispute with China while also expressing his displeasure with his Chinese neighbours for not speaking up enough against the Chinese aggression. The long-established harmony among the Assamese, Chinese and the other communities starts disintegrating slowly owing to the political qualms. The apprehensions of Pulok's father towards their Chinese neighbours during Pulok and Mei Lin's wedding serves as a foreshadowing of the terrible times to come for the family. His agitation towards the only Chinese custom followed during the wedding ceremony of his son causes immense anger and frustration which can be seen as the manifestation of overtly exaggerated and distorted sense of patriotism.

The narrative is peppered with radio news reports, newspaper articles, and covert discussions within the private spheres of the households, brash descriptions of the warfare in social gatherings and censored

personal letters of the characters. All these snippets of underlying fears and worries of the people living in the close proximity of a war-zone shows how political volatility impacts the otherwise harmonious fabric of society. The frictions are heightened by the presence of discordant elements living among the common people in the town. For instance, the ominous presence of Thakur Prasad, an agent entrusted by the police to spy on the Chinese community, proves to be a big setback for the Assamese-Chinese unity in the town. The sense of vulnerability of the Chinese populace is further aggravated when they realise that their personal letters are being intercepted as well as censored. The newspapers too had been seized and stopped from being circulated by the local police stations. The detached news-report-like tone of the descriptions of the developments of the war in the frontiers is juxtaposed with the blasé description of the quotidian acts of everyday life. Here a gendered dimension too can be seen coming to play. It is usually the women who take up the task of moving ahead with the simple but significant day-to-day actions like cooking, looking after the children, and ensuring smooth preparations for the community celebrations despite knowing about the uncertainty lurking beneath their seemingly normal lives. Whereas the men mostly preoccupied themselves with anxious debates and discussions surrounding the war. There are numerous instances showing the impact of the fears of the war upon the relationships. One such instance is when after a radio broadcast informing of India's losses during the war with China, Rameswar rudely replies to Wenling's innocent query if India was losing the war. Rameswar replies her, "Who said so? Of course we are not losing! Those who are hoping so will soon be taught a lesson"(Choudhury 2018, 205). The changing dynamics of the Chinese with the other indigenous communities is reflected through the pervading sense of identity crisis of the Chinese. The narrator's voice captures this in the following observations-

> The easy rhythm of life had been disturbed. Things seemed to have changed almost overnight. They could see the change and difference in the eyes of the students present in the field. Those were not the eyes of friends. Fear and confusion occupied their minds. Though no one said anything they felt an unfamiliar anxiety. They felt as if everyone was observing them. They felt like outsiders. (Choudhury 2018, 206)

The events that follow this perturbed atmosphere justify the uneasiness felt by the Chinese community since the Sino-Indian war began. With the mounting losses on the Indian side, during the war with China, the government started taking stern measures like imposing national emergency and eventually marking and removing Chinese people to distant and hostile camps. All these endeavors were apparently for ensuring the safety of the Chinese people and protecting them from the angered local people. However, there are strong hints embedded in the narrative that tell the readers that this entire process was in reality a

way of ostracizing the Chinese population to both appease the local communities as well as to ensure they did not pose any threat to the security of the nation. Most of the Chinese characters found themselves in a situation where history was being repeated as they too had been forcibly removed from their homes and made to go through frightening passages just like their ancestors had to. The groundless and insensitive ways in which families were divided for being taken to so-called safe custody, shows the lack of planned preparedness on part of the central government to deal with such difficult situations. The complex sense of identity of the community comes to fore when the police and the magistrate ask all the Chinese people to leave their houses and their belongings temporarily. Families like that of Pramila Gogoi are left baffled as their family exhibits a seamless blend of many cultures and identities. Upon being asked by the magistrate, "How many Indians in your family?," she replies, "All the members of our family are Indians. We have Indian citizenship, sir." (Choudhury 2018, 251) She goes on to explicate further the diverse composition of her family. Her youngest daughter-in-law was an Assamese; the eldest daughter-in-law was from the tea garden community; her husband was a fourth generation descendent of immigrant Chinese labourer. Despite this, the officers decide to take away only the Chinese members of their family.

Similar situations arose in most of the households which had wholly accepted the Assamese-Chinese hybrid culture and identity. The grim shadow of the chaotic impounding of the Chinese people in Makum had also fall upon the newly married couple Pulok and Meilin. Their separation appears to be all the more tragic as it was caused by Pulok's father's vile machinations to get rid of the daughter-in-law whom he could not wholeheartedly accept. He secretly files a false report against her to the police, claiming her to be a Chinese spy who surreptitiously spoke to unknown Chinese people that helped the Chinese forces defeat the Indian troops. Despite claiming that the action was taken for ensuring safety of the Chinese community, soon their hard-earned possessions were sealed as enemy properties, ascertaining that the detainees were never to return to their cherished land.

The representation of the developments of the war is placed alongside concurrently with the detainment of the Chinese population in Assam. Misplaced patriotism and fear of being conquered by the enemies had turned many people into intolerant xenophobes who went so far as to pelt stones at the detained innocent kids and their families. It was during their long arduous journey to an unknown detainment camp that the most trauma-inducing events started taking place. Images of young children crying of hunger in stifling train compartments reeking of stench of excreta, elderly people dying of hunger and thirst and hatred-filled abuses at the hands of those who looked at them as enemies had left a indelible scars on their minds. The only thing they found some solace in was telling each other stories and writing letters with the

hope of receiving reply from their loved ones during the troubled times. However, even these little moments of joy were shattered upon receiving a perfunctory diktat from the Indian government that all the Chinese detainees were to be deported to China. Another shock awaited them once they reached China. They were hurled xenophobic comments like 'foreign devils' by the locals who wanted them to go back to where they had come from. After suffering years of drudgery and humiliations every day as farm labourers in China, most of the so-called refugees drew up plans to escape their hostile realities. Meilin leaves for Hong Kong with her daughter Lailin and few others to ensure a better life for their next generations. It is here in Hong Kong where the novel reaches its culmination with the uniting of Pulok and Meilin after long forty-nine years of being forcibly separated by the ravages of war. The final lines of the novel effectively sum up the trauma that the war had inflicted upon the people, "The Sino-Indian war is now a chapter of history. But there remains an invisible wound, which will never heal. There remains a source of tears, which will never dry. There remains a multitude of rootless people who will carry with them a legacy of loss to the end of time…" (Choudhury 2018, 435)

Trauma inflicted upon by colonial as well as neo-colonial apparatuses have a 'complex, continuous, collective, cumulative and compounding' impact caused by 'colonial policies and practices' on the masses. (Mitchell 2019, 74). Understanding the impact of colonial trauma calls for reconstructing or narrativizing the traumatic experiences which enable one to develop an effective understanding of the subjective realities of an individual. This in turn helps in developing tools to cope with the traumatic memories of the past. The act of writing as an emotional release is depicted through Lailin's inability to write about the sufferings of her own community due to the weight of the personal trauma she had been carrying for decades. In order to be able to tell a story surrounding a traumatic incident, one needs to have an objective view of the traumatic events. The inability to write about her traumatic past may also be the result of her lack of proper understanding of the nature of the trauma. But once she finds an empathetic audience in the form of Arunav, she is able to recount her experiences. The writer takes up the task of transforming traumatic memories into narrative memories which makes it more accessible to those readers who have not had a first-hand experience of the events. A very intimate connection exists between traumatic and nostalgic memories of the past which can be seen in the form of Lailin's urge to hold on to the Assamese culture in the form of the language she speaks, the clothes she wears and the customs she followed despite a lapse of several decades since her parting with the land. Reading the story about her mother's past life in Assam enables Lailin to understand her mother's attachment to her homeland in a better way. This helps her shift her perception towards not only her mother but towards the community and the country in general too. The use of 'self-reflexivity' and 'anti-linearity' and other "(post)modernist forms for the representation of traumatic

experiences provide a welcome reminder of the importance of attending to the political and cultural contexts in which literary testimonies are produced and received" (Bennet 2003; Kennedy 2003) Thus, trauma studies provide an effective framework to understand the impact of conflicts, dispossession, oppression and displacement upon the immigrant communities through multiple generations.

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Looking Back to the Ethno- Regionalist Thrust in Dominating Federal Politics in India: Challenges and Changes

Swati Banerjee

ABSTRACT

*The working of federal system of India had chosen the path of rigidity in a centripetal atmosphere. But some qualitative as well as quantitative changes in the political system make the constitutional device as dynamic as possible. The country has unique features ornamented with ethno-regional diversity, gradually increasing by politico-economic necessities. Most importantly, redistributing state boundaries based on language appeared as the primary achievement of regional demands. The researchers identified that due to the growth of regional political parties, the dominating central politics in India has transformed into a federal one. The regional forces have been trying to expand the essence of decentralization through national flexibility in the decision- making platform. The politics of coalition have bought a paradigm shift in the era of pluralism. The trend has shown the triumph of the multiparty system at the center with the support of regional forces. However, along with this victory, the acceptance of the regional powers in an environment of renewed centralization needs to be assessed objectively. **In which way the sustainable federal development of India will be achieved from within the heritage of the Constitution is another crucial matter to find out.***

Key Words: Constitution, Federalism, Regionalism, Centralization, Decentralization, Multiparty System, Coalition politics

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I

The founders of the Constitution of India opted for the federal form of governance with a powerful center induced by the situational temperament of partition. The system has bought numerous challenges since its origin. The enormous diversity of the plural country has intended to move towards institutional decentralization. Hence over time, the sub-national forces have played a prominent role, and gradually the

necessities of the states are highlighted in the national discourse. Consequently, the various regional power centers have 'greatly eroded the erstwhile cordiality of center-state relations' (Das Choudhury1990, 35-40). The trend of excessive centralization over the federal structure has created a space for regional aspirations. Against the backdrop of the hegemonic party system, the regional forces would get integrated. However, the Parliamentary democracy of India experienced sudden changes through the linguistic re-organization of states, creating an environment of ethnic empowerment since 1956. Following M.N.Srinivas, 'This is the first time in Indian history when cultural frontiers were converted into political frontiers' (Srinivas 1992, 45). The state-centric national politics has emerged in this web of democratization. Hence, the first re-organization strengthened the Centre and its constitutional units in the context of federalism. Though, the power of creating or abolishing the boundaries of states has vested in the realm of the Union since the enactment of the Constitution of India.

Hence, the central dictatorship since the late 60s has created a monolithic environment for the states. At the same time, the centric mode of political authority could not attach to the spirit of pluralist India. Morris Jones states, 'A dominant party was not necessarily a majority party, though it would be larger than any other; it was a party whose influence dominated the political atmosphere…..' (Jones,1967, 642,644). The imperious tendency of the Center ultimately leads to intra-Congress factionalism in State politics. The regional needs have been spreading out all over the country. In this context, the scholars give an in-depth analysis of the regional politics in India. The experiment of the formation of coalition governments in different States since 1967 has shown the importance of the States' identity in the politics of India. The changing political environment has recognized the historic verdict of the people against the powerful center for the first time in India. Therefore the regional forces have taken the responsibility of power decentralization from the roots to minimize the federal grievances in general. The regional movements have brought a counter pressure to the convention of the central domination of the country in particular.

II

However, the national politics of India wobbled by the emerging trend of centralization and decentralization of power since 1977. Consequently, coalition politics has prepared the ground for regional access into the national politics. The regional parties have appeared as a decisive factor in the power equation at the Centre.

Naturally, the Centre-State relations are restructuring along with the proforma of federal compulsion. Gradually the process of regionalization has started to boost the devolutionary form of federalism in the Indian political system. Strengthened by the regional power he states have started to demand a satisfactory working of federal principles, broader powers, and greater autonomy. However, the return of central dogmatism during the 80s came under criticism in different parts of the country. The states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and West Bengal have raised their demand for restructuring the center-state relations from 1982 onwards. The Janata Government in Karnataka criticized the centralizing polity of India. It demanded restoring the stability of the democratic political process of the Country in its memorandum submitted to the Sarkaria Commission. In Anandpur Sahib Resolution, the Shiromoni Akali Dal in Punjab has raised their voice to uphold the matter of States autonomy vested in the principles of Federalism. The DMK in Tamil Nadu expressed their regional assertion by arguing that "Wholesome freedom alone can keep India together and strengthen her from within and without….the Union and the States, must have complete freedom from mutual control….this freedom is the soul of federalism" (Shastri1990, 172-182). The different states throughout the country expressed their grievances against central interference in their constitutionally granted areas of administration. The legitimate role of the national authority repeatedly faced questions. The policy-making process of an oppressive Center following the command of a single ruling political party has entered the arena of discussion. The genre of 'undue over-centralization' has increasingly affected the working of the Center- State relations. The Rajamannar Committee constituted by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1969 recommended in favor of required autonomy of the States [1]. Eventually, the state -level politics of coalition started its journey in 1967. In 1973, The Keshavananda Bharati case tried to uphold the dignity of federalism in India, citing the Constitution's remarkable 'Basic Structure'[2].

The electoral downfall of Congress in different states has bound the Centre to bring the Sarkaria Commission in 1983 to look into the matter of the Centre-State relationship. Though Amal Roy argued that, 'the major issues in centre-state relations formulated by the commission, do not reflect their concern for a new option that would accommodate the needs and aspirations of the regional communities' (Ray 1988, 1131-1133). On the other hand, the significant verdict given by the Supreme Court in the S.R.Bommai vs. Union of India case in 1994 supported the autonomy of the states again. The court said that "The Constitution of India has created

a federation but with a bias in favor of the Centre. Within the sphere allotted to the States, they are supreme."
[3] Remarkably this is another landmark case in The Indian judicial system regarding the delicate use of Article 356. Several criticisms made by the states led to the Simultaneous establishment of the commissions like The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) in 2000 and Punchhi Commission in 2007 to minimize the growing conflict of Center-States relations. Some states voiced for restructuring 'Articles 246 and 254' as these focused the Central legislative supremacy. The other states are shown their grievances against the 'Operational use of Union List' through different Entries [4]. The notion of 'structural strain' (Smelser 1962, 1) is working as a dominant factor in such situations of domination, leading to societal changes. The NCRWC has recommended that 'Ordinarily, the Union should occupy only that much field of a Concurrent subject on which uniformity of policy and action is essential in the larger interest of the nation, leaving the rest ….' [5] No one can deny that the states are the significant device for the progress of a Nation. Hence, the steps taken for the states' autonomy are considered as a key concern of the democratic system. On the other hand, regional diversity has been treated as a continuous process in the Indian political system. Naturally, the political variation of the country has craved constitutional flexibility. Pandit Nehru states that, 'A Constitution to be living must be growing; must be adaptable; must be flexible; must be changeable……Therefore, it is desirable and a good thing for people to realize that this very fine Constitution that we have fashioned after years of labor….'[6] However, the Punchhi Commission again reported the grievances of the States regarding equal power of the Union and the States in the concurrent field of the Constitution [7]. Kothari states that, 'The battle for federalism in India is fundamentally a battle for greater democracy in which the people come into their own through social identities, organization forms and institutional frameworks with which they feel comfortable and through which they can find their potency and self respect' (Kothari 1989, 13).

Therefore the regional elites are becoming politically conscious of their share in the national-level politics in India. If we analyze the electoral performances of regional political parties in the Lok Sabha 1977, a quantitative transformation of the Indian political system has come up. The percentage of the seats owned by the candidates from the regional parties in different states in the Lok Sabha election in 1971 was 17.86, whereas, in 1977, the percentage increased to 57.65. Again, the rate decreased to 32.08 in 1980 when the states were under massive central dictation. The percentage of votes secured by the state-based regional

parties increased from 1989 to 2004 from 9.28 to 28.90. But the rate of votes secured by the state-based regional parties again decreased from 2009 to 2019 to 13.75 [8] when Bharatiya Janata Party won the election with a single majority.

Henceforth after many ups and downs, the regional political parties in India have permanently achieved their place at the national level of politics through the process of coalition since 1989. Naturally, the period that started in the early 1990s has indicated the trend of progressive regionalization of a much-decentralized political system. In this state-centric federal atmosphere, scholars have begun to emphasize the role of the regional parties, making the states as stronger as possible. The fact also highlighted that 'between 1991 and 1999, regional parties increased their vote share from 26 percent to 46 percent and the number of regional parties in the lower legislative house increased from 19 to 35……from 1989 through 2010, thirty-three of eighty-four parties that won seats in the lower legislative house gained cabinet representation. These thirty-three parties include nearly every major regional party in India' (Ziegfeld 2012, 69-77).

III

As a multicultural country, India cannot escape from diverse regional aspirations. More importantly, the regional assertions spread as an average consequence of a federal polity. On the other hand, the initiative of linguistic states building paved the way for the advantage of regional elites. This process of empowering ethno-regionalism in India has generated 'an indigenization and democratization of provincial politics' (Pai 1990, 397, 410). Usually, in a pluralist country, the co-existing multi-cultural identities are confronted due to the perception of 'relative deprivation' (Gurr 1970, 29). Moreover, the politics of discrimination between the Congress-led and the non-congress states has massively indulged the regional crisis. Hence various regional movements have occurred to fulfill the gap of regional imbalances. Regions of a state are the active sub-units that make the political culture sounds in a federal democracy. They possess their own distinctive ethnic

culture, which may not always reconcile with a nation's mainstream. Hence associating the regions by giving them the scope for self-fulfillment has been treated as a pre-condition for developing a successful federation (Khan 1997, 13,17). On the other hand, the economic differences in different regions in the same states often prepare the ground for generating sub-regional movements. More regional parties are formed for self-fulfillment in a democratic political system. Such as 'Telengana Rashtra Samiti in Telengana, Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti, Vidarbha Janata Congress, Vidarbha Rajya Party in Maharashtra, Gondwana Ganatantra Party in Madhya Pradesh, Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha in Uttar Pradesh' (Prakash, 2010, 207-211).

The argument raises in this context is that 'the twin progeny of modernization-cultural pluralism and nationalism must find reconciliation because the world offers no other choice' (Englewood 1972, 213). However, abolishing one-party domination and establishing a multi-party system has introduced a new era of 'regionalization of Indian politics'. Eventually, the national political parties have shown their interest in regional political parties to survive in national politics. The policy of command has transformed into the procedure of negotiation. Moreover, the national political parties need the help of the regional political parties to run their centralized governance smoothly due to the principle of coalition compulsion. If we analyze the records of seats owned by the regional political parties out of total seats in Lok Sabha elections since 1967, the regional political parties have won 43 seats in 1967, 49 seats in 1977 which increased to 129 seats in 1996, 101 in 1998, 158 in 1999; 159 in 2004; 146 in 2009; 176 in 2014 and 136 in 2019. [9]

Again if we analyze the position of some major regional political parties in their states, it has been seen that they stood as a determining factor in State Legislative elections since the 1990s. In the state election in Andhra Pradesh in 1994, TDP won 216 seats whereas INC won 26 seats; In 2004, TDP won 47 seats and INC won 185 seats; In 2014, TDP won 117 seats, and INC won 21 seats; In Assam, in 1996 AGP has won 59 seats and INC has won 34 seats; In 2006 AGP won 24 seats and INC has won 53 seats; In 2016 AGP won 14 seats, BJP has won 60 seats; In Tamil Nadu in 1996, DMK has won 173 seats, BJP has won 1 seat; In 2006, DMK won 96 seats, INC has won 34 seats; In 2016, ADMK won 135 seats, INC has won 8 seats; In Maharashtra in 1995, SHS has won 73 seats, INC has won 80 seats; In 2004, SHS won 62 seats, INC has won 69 seats; In 2014, SHS

won 63 seats, BJP has won 122 seats [10]. Hence over time, the politics of coalition turned out as an inevitable doctrine in the political matrix of India.

IV

It has been argued that in a sustainable federal democratic system, it is the task of a ruling political party to make a 'centralist perspective' and 'regional aspirations' complementary to each other (Arora 1989, 200-201).The dissatisfaction, as well as detachment regarding the centralized strategy, has created regional discontent. The Success of federalism depends on its ability to respond to the challenges continuously for the benefit of the greatest number in a pluralist society. Eventually, the regional forces began to monitor centralized federalism and to create a balancing atmosphere of democratic federalism instead of democratic centralism. A challenging political discourse has forced the national authority to remake the federal direction of the country on a regional line. Hence the single power center was demolished and shifted towards the multiple power centers in Indian Parliamentary democracy. The growth of regional power maximizes the autonomy of states which is marked as a sign of qualitative changes in the Indian political process. On the other, quantitative changes took place in the period of regionalization through a growing political consciousness leading to increasing political participation in Indian parliamentary democracy. The politics of coalition has ensured the inclusionary method of federal democracy. But once again, the national election of 2014 has bought another structural change by introducing the politics of re-centralization. It has been argued that multiplicity-oriented anarchy, as well as ideological contradictions, may hamper the durability of coalition governments.

It has been observed that when the political discourse of the country again experienced the strength of one party in the national political scene from 2014 to 2019. The impact of the regional political parties in the assembly elections in different states remains powerful. Hence regionalism has inculcated the values of cohabitation in a political platform through political adjustment. The inclusive 'politics of cohabitation' (Kailash 2010, 86-87) have replaced the policy of exclusion in national political platform since the 90s. However, the present BJP regime has tried to balance the system of dynamic centralization and regional democracy to lead sustainable political development in the age of globalization.

In the word of Nehru, India is a country having 'historic unity, based on traditions on toleration, incorporation and assimilation' (Adeney 2003, 57-59). As per the opinion of the first Administrative Reforms Commission (June 1969), the pillar of the Constitution of India stands for the unity of the nation where the structure of the country's rule book is neither purely unitary nor purely federal. The founding fathers were given emphasized 'sustaining and strengthening the unity'[11] of the country along with its unique diversity. Over time it has been noticed that the essence of the Constitution is adequate for the smooth running of a democratic system. But the Center-States confrontations are maximizing due to the attitudinal implications of these constitutional principles in different political regime. Therefore the politico-federal strategy of a plural country is recognized as crucial for nation-building. However, the researcher agreed regarding various inconsistencies in the rules residing in the Constitution of India. The Entry system in the Constitution's Seventh Schedule appears as a present look out of the scholars. The Center frequently encroaches on the purview of the State list through these Entries. The time has come when federalism in India enriched itself with adaptability in the changing global scenario. However, the evolution of the federal system has experienced the post-partition menace and was written based on the Government of India Act 1935, which is unitary. At the same time the founding fathers were guided by the federal system of many other countries like the USA, Australia, and Switzerland. It has been noticed that the federal system of the USA chooses the path of minimal government; on the other hand, the Swiss federal system emphasizes peaceful diversity management and Australia achieved worldwide recognition as an inclusive country. India indeed exhibits some traditional features of plurality, which cannot always be compared with other countries.

V

However the situational temperament of a multi- dimensional country, sufficient space for ethno-regional communities of States may enhance the central potency. The research emphasizes the need for the center's accountability towards regional requirements. The center may not always be able to materialize its objectives without the cooperation of states in the atmosphere of federal democracy. The matter of repealing the Farm Bill is a noted instance. Therefore it has been noticed that a more flexible political authority may lead to a

more reasonable political order, and reformulation of national policies in an accommodative manner appeared as a viable way to control the regional movements. It has been examined that as a political phenomenon, the feelings of nationalism help to increase the support base of the national ruling authority. So far as the concept of patriotism is concerned, the way to address nationalism is qualitatively different in the Nehru and Modi regime. Achin Vanaik states that 'the hegemony of the BJP represents a qualitative hardening of Indian political culture' (Vanaik, 2018). However, the genre of cultural consciousness has shaped regional consciousness in general, which has ensured the regional elites' support base in Indian politics in particular. But in dealing with this subject, the researchers need some observations. During the era of over-centralization since the late 60s, India had faced the politics of 'Internal colonialism'. According to the theory of Michael Hechter, the nationalist sentiments originate from this policy of Internal colonialism where the core group creates an ethnic imparity in the 'peripheral regions' which leads to a confrontation to the core (Kellas 1998, 49). Whereas, in the re-centralized era since 2014, there is no contradiction has arisen between the notion of political nationalism and cultural nationalism. When a national leader in a democratic country tries to reconcile ethnic consciousness and 'political belongingness', achieving the ends of national upliftment, the country will be recognized as the beneficiary. The concept of ethnicity is firmly attached to human instinct, and feelings of nationalism have occupied human psychology, like a religious belief. Hence if the ethnic values of states are encouraged, the overall atmosphere of national attachment is also increased.

Modi has tried to increase ethnonational feelings towards India's rich culture and heritage and honored the contribution of different states behind it. Karl Deutsch's theory of nationalism gives emphasize on 'social communication'(Kellas 1998, 48). The performance of the states to protect the Indian culture since before Independence has frequently comes up in Modi's speech in different news channels. This technique of social networking may minimize the Core-Periphery contradictions. It is assumed that A.D. Smith's modern theory of nationalism (Kellas 1998, 60-61) may work here, focusing on the existence of ethnic and national identity together in a modern nation-state along with ethnic accommodation in an inclusionary way. Presently, the emerging concept of 'competitive federalism' in BJP regime is a great example of this. Through this federal policy Modi has tried to enlighten the capability of different States of India not only in nation building but in the stage of world. In the Nehru-Indira regime, there was a trend of continuous interaction between nationalism and ethnic separateness but an absence of recognition of ethnic 'Identity'

(Kellas 1998, 61) in the national platform. We cannot ignore that, as a multicultural country, ethnicity plays a pervasive role in the national discourses, and the proper cultural development brings national solidarity. . Ethnic feelings may convert to nationalist thinking when the ethnic groups are involved in national politics, but its survival depends on its capability aspect. However, it should also be seen how long the emerging concept of tight nationalism will successfully mobilize the regional assertions in India in future. Most importantly, the electoral downfall of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the Legislative Assembly election in Karnataka in 2023 has made researchers think again about the future of national politics in India. The State of Karnataka was the only southern state of India where the BJP won the 2018 assembly elections.

We know that a nation-state is not only a political being but also a representative of multicultural sentiments. Therefore in a pluralist society, the quality of leadership carries profound significance. The most important thing is that the Constitutional heritage always emphasizes the motto of preserving unity and protecting diversity. This founding spirit may show the path in which way the federal apparatus of the country will be used by the national political authority, whether as an overpowering strategy or as a power-sharing method. In today's Indian context, a dynamic federal atmosphere is more demanding than political absolutism or quantitative anarchy.

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Matrimonial Discourses in Manju Kapur's *Brothers*

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Abstract

Women have to be compatible to face challenges that threaten their identity, which is defined by stereotypical gender roles like being a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, and mother. Manju Kapur presents the social institution of marriage which has an impact on the lives of the major women characters, Tapti Gaina and Sonal. Tapti, the protagonist of the novel, Brothers (2016), is a strong-willed woman, who metamorphoses her identity from a child-bearer to a breadwinner after she encounters marital discordance. Tapti, the wife of Mangal Singh and the youngest daughter-in-law of the Gaina family is treated to be a child-bearing machine. Sonal is abandoned by her husband, Himmat Singh, who exploits his wife for her wealth and family property. To transform the monotonous life of women, Tapti and Sonal desire to achieve physical and economic independence to establish their feminine esteem. Tapti becomes the breadwinner of the family, gets rid of dependency syndrome, and triumphs in her efforts to attain individuality in the family and society. Manju Kapur's characterization of Tapti and Sonal educates the women folk to overcome patriarchal obligations, raise their voices against injustices, prove their stability to change the profile of their survival, and be determined to achieve self-independence.

Key Words: Identity, Prejudice, Martial discordance, Independence, Individuality

Full Paper

Manju Kapur has highlighted the women's space and her participation in ruling nations, involvement in the nationalist movement to being pushed into the domestic household space, and finally their resurgence as super-women today. Her writings have given vent to women's education, empowerment, and emancipation. Meena Shirwadkar observes that:

> As women received education, they began to feel an increasing urge to voice their feelings. The
> awareness of individuality, the sense of compatibility with their tradition - bound surroundings,

resentment of male dominated ideas of morality and behaviour problems at home and at place of work or in society - all come up in a welter of projection.   (Shirwadkar 1979, 20)

Feminism has shown its impact on Indian soil and has changed its colours with respect to the social milieu of India. K. S. Ramamurti remarks that '…the emergence of women writers during this period is of a great significance and he remarks that it marks the birth of an era which promises a new deal for the Indian, Women' (Ramamurti 1987, 66). The women writers write differently from men; men write about affairs of state, war, business, espionage, and sexual encounters, women write about themselves. The main contention is the distinctive women's sensibility and it reflects itself in the literature of the contemporary times. Jaidev reflects the thoughts of Indian feminism as:

> A feminine novel for India is not a novel which a woman will write just because she is a woman and knows how to write. It will be written by one who has understood a woman both as a woman and as a person pressurized by all kinds of visible and invisible contexts, by one who is not carried away by fetishes but is mature enough. (Jaidev 1960, 63)

Kapur's women characters evolve, realize the need for independence, fight against injustices and resist patriarchal norms and codes but at the same time these characters realize that certain things are not sustainable in practical life and so adjust to the societal system to lead a 'normal' life for themselves. This confirms the idea of Indian feminism, which is different in this sense that there is a struggle and resistance in different forms and yet there is some sort of belongingness and rootedness to one's culture and codes of conduct. In this context, Indian feminism departs from the Western concept of feminism which fights for equality and gender rights. Indian feminism advocates that, women change and at the same time keep core values and ethics related to the Indian culture.

Manju Kapur has emerged with new trends in her writings and presents the women protagonists as a strong force capable of taking charge of their life with or without the support of male folk in the family and society. The women protagonists of Kapur revolt against the traditional role of the woman, voice their dissatisfaction and make their feeling of alienation and frustration known. Kapur displays the struggles of women to gain self-respect, identity, right to express and choose, right to say no, and break the self-sacrificing image that the men folks have built. The women protagonists of Kapur are representative of the voices of all Indian women suppressed and harassed for a long time. They are revolutionists who are not ready to play the

roles of traditional wives any more. However, the Indian writers never viewed marriage as a barrier to their independence and children as the binding force, a hurdle in their progress. K.M. Kapadia while discussing the concept of marriage, writes:

> Marriage was a social duty towards the family and the community, and there was a little idea of individual interest. The social background provided by the authoritarian family afforded no scope for the recognition of any personal factor, individual interest and aspirations, in the relation between husband and wife. (Kapadia 1958, 169)

Women are educated only in subjects that made them ideal wives and mothers; the education that is meant for the self-empowerment of women is not encouraged in the family and the patriarchal society. Family is a dominant milieu that constructs the identity of women and prescribes their role to be a daughter, wife and mother. Marriage and motherhood are viewed as social responsibilities in the Indian cultural context. They bring about a change in the identity and status of women and how their existence becomes very much not of theirs but of their family and society. Jyothi Puri states that, 'Although…, marriage, and motherhood each define important cultural turning points and involve widespread changes in the life of a woman… marriage and motherhood are social statuses that also entail social responsibilities and rights.' (Puri 1999, 137)

The notable factor in the writings of Manju Kapur is the feeling of alienation which is a result of unfulfilled desires or the marginal role offered by male domination or the feeling of otherness that tortures women inwardly, irresistibly. The women protagonists live in conflicts, the conflict between husband and wife, inclination and duty, society, and self, restrictions and freedom, existence, and adjustment, physical reality and inner self. The oppression of women in marriage and family is dealt by Manju Kapur. Marriage is a major theme in the novels of Manju Kapur namely, *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *The Immigrant*, *Custody*, and *Brothers*. She represents the disturbed man-woman marital relationship that prevails in the present-day society and the resultant alienation in the middle-class Indian family.

Difficult Daughters describes the problems of Virmati, who is trapped by her partner in the matrimonial discourse. *A Married Woman* is about the predicaments of Astha, who battles to establish her own identity. *Home* reveals determination of Nisha to achieve self-reliance and get rid of the dependency syndrome. *The Immigrant* projects the dilemma of Nina that arise out of patriarchal compulsions like marriage with an immigrant groom. *Custody* presents the emotional and legal difficulties of Shagun and Ishita in the journey of

motherhood. *Brothers* reveal the exertion of Tapti's motherhood to bear a male heir, who is presumed to continue the family bloodline. The novels of Manju Kapur unfold the unbelievable uncertainties of matrimony in today's modern society.

The women protagonists of Kapur recognize the primal essence of family bond, marriage, cultural construction and societal predicaments while they strive to assert their identity. Virmati, Astha, Nisha, Nina, Shagun, Ishita and Tapti Gaina are aspiring individuals confined in a cage within the restrictions of a bourgeois society but they insist on liberation from the constraints of patriarchy. They evolve, realize the need for independence, fight against injustices and resist patriarchal norms and codes that confine their life within the matrimonial institution. Marriage is inevitable in the lives of women in Indian society and it brings numerous obligations that affect the significance of womanhood. The novels of Manju Kapur highlight the fact that marital oppression is common to women irrespective of caste, colour, creed and country. Motherhood is a crucial phase to venerate womanhood but Virmati, Astha, Nisha, Nina, Shagun, Ishita, and Tapti Gaina are humiliated in their marital homes and disgraced by their husbands if they fail to give birth to a male heir. Marital adjustments become unfeasible as the husbands pay no heed to the physical and emotional difficulties of their wives with regard to pregnancy.

The protagonists of Kapur are subjugated due to gender discrimination and domestic violence in their marital homes. The women protagonists of Kapur find it arduous to communicate with their male counterparts as there is an absence of friendly acquaintance and a lack of mutual understanding in the husband-wife relationship which leads to marital incompatibility. Culture plays a crucial life in the shaping of women protagonists' lives. The male domination and the dynamics of power in the family destroys the mental strength of the women protagonists. Virmati, Astha, Nisha, Nina, Shagun, Ishita and Tapti Gaina are denied basic human rights when they become puppets in the hands of their husbands. Restrictions are imposed in the name of family welfare, social prestige, taboos, and superstitious beliefs which deter the women protagonists' path to success. Their pursuit of happiness is torn between their familial responsibilities and societal expectations. They suffer the emotional trauma of being ignored in their marital homes. They are dissatisfied to be docile and subservient in the domestic sphere where their sacrifices and dedication go unrecognized.

The protagonists of Kapur resist the patriarchal norms and codes that confine their lives within the matrimonial institution. Marriage is inevitable in the lives of women in Indian society and it brings numerous obligations like inequality, unequal division of familial responsibilities, unjust expectations of the spouse and

his family members, discomforts or misunderstandings between the husband-wife relationship, and financial crisis that affects the significance of womanhood. The male domination and the dynamics of power in the family destroy the mental strength of the women protagonists. Sudhir Kakar in the article, observes that:

> The ideal of womanhood which, inspite of many changes in individual circumstances in the course of modernization, urbanization and education, still governs the inner imagery of individual men and women as well as the social relations between them in both the traditional and modern sectors of the Indian community. (Kakar "Feminine Identity in India" 1988, 57)

Manju Kapur presents the character of the female protagonist, Tapti Gaina, as a modern and educated woman. Tapti gets married to Mangal Singh soon after the completion of her graduation and her marriage compels her to withhold the desire to become an IAS officer. As the youngest daughter-in-law, Tapti experiences male hegemony and struggles to define herself in the stereotypical roles of women in the conservative family of the Gainas. The Gaina family members are strict followers of patriarchal principles and they expect the women to confine themselves within the boundaries of home and family.

Tapti is disappointed with her marital family when they treat her to be a submissive woman and her identity revolves around the perception of women as child-bearers. The birth of her two daughters is unwelcomed by her husband and his family members and she is cursed for the failure to give birth to a male heir. In a patriarchal society, the preference marked for male children and a family is considered to be incomplete without the birth of a son which forces women to undergo unending pregnancies. Mangal Singh is unhappy about his daughters' birth as he expresses that, 'It made him feel awkward…and embarrassed' (Kapur 2016, 260) without the birth of a male heir. Tapti is unable to convince her conservative husband that the birth of daughters is also as powerful and equal to that of sons.

Tapti is against gender biases in the birth of children but her sister-in-law, Sonal belittles her thoughts and criticizes her views against gender bigotries. Sonal proclaims that women should abide by the family laws with regard to motherhood, which is celebrated and sanctified for giving birth to a male heir. Tapti rejects accepting the opinions of her husband and his family members regarding another pregnancy. Mangal Singh is agitated of his wife's objection and questions her stating that, '…how could daughters take on the responsibility of a business, or carry on the Gaina name?' (Kapur 2016, 268). His male chauvinism is expressed when he insists that it is, '…my right' (Kapur 2016, 269) to have a male-heir, who would continue his family bloodline,

his business, and be the inheritor of his property. He remarks that, 'For now, though it is his son who will make his toil worthwhile, his son who will work beside him, who will stretch the fruits of his endeavour into the future, and give his struggle a meaning and continuity.' (Kapur 2016, 268)

Manju Kapur represents the strong patriarchal belief about gender stereotypes and favouritisms which mortify the birth of girl children in Indian families. The constant pestering of her husband to undergo another pregnancy makes her think that, 'What was she, a machine that would go on producing children until he got a son? At twenty-four she felt there was nothing left of her youth, so swallowed up by babies…' (Kapur 2016, 268). She is anxious that '…it was physically impossible for her to have more children' (Kapur 2016, 273) and tells her husband that, 'I don't think I can go through this again, she murmured. It will kill me…Two daughters are enough…' (Kapur 2016, 266, 268). Her physical and emotional discomforts regarding pregnancy are brushed aside by her husband, who is stubborn in his decision to fulfill his expectations of procreating a male heir. Mangal Singh ignores the health conditions and post-partum depression of his wife and persuades her saying, 'Never mind…there is always a next time…My mother had to try many times before she gave birth to a boy that lived.' (Kapur 2016, 266)

Tapti is frustrated with her husband's demands '…and it hurt her that he saw nothing of how she was feeling, his main concern not her, but his seed, his line, his name' (Kapur 2016, 268). She strongly objects to him stating, '…I am sorry' (Kapur 2016, 272), and opposes the preferential treatment of children based on the clichéd gender bias which prevails in the patriarchal Gaina family. Mangal Singh is not able to accept the resentment of his wife and her individual decision regarding the third pregnancy. He unveils his chauvinistic attitude as he abandons his wife validating that his masculine self-conceit is disrespected when Tapti stands against his stipulations. He sheds his fatherly and familial responsibilities and Tapti is left alone as a single parent to cater to her daughters' needs. She stumbles to confront the humiliation of her dictating husband and the Gaina family members. Her marital life becomes miserable as 'Nothing in her marriage was as she had expected. The ache, the dissatisfaction, the yearning…, it stretched through days, months, threatening to gobble up years as well.' (Kapur 2016, 275)

Manju Kapur writes about the traumatic psyche of Tapti, who is driven to the extent of committing suicide, 'Anyway what should I do now? Kill myself?' (Kapur 2016, 37) but her mother convinces her saying, 'Hai beta, don't talk like that. Think of your children' (Kapur 2016, 37) as the kids would suffer without parental nurturance. Tapti realizes that she has to put an end to marital authoritarianism as 'She needed space

to distance herself from Mangal's desires. Like an oyster reacting to a grain of sand, she vowed to establish a professional life, become someone who could not even remotely be construed as a stay-at-home breeder of male children' (Kapur 2016, 266). She leaves her husband as well as the marital home to focus on the lives of her daughters with futuristic thinking that, '…the idea of an independent job that came with an attached house began to look like the essence of practical wisdom.' (Kapur 2016, 270)

Tapti continues her education to fulfill her aspirations to be a working woman, strives hard to clear the civil services examination, and procures a job as a probation officer in the department of rural development. She becomes the 'New woman' when she triumphs in her efforts to withstand familial and socio-cultural pressures and earns a respectable feminine status in the patriarchal society. Manju Kapur represents that the social institution of marriage dominates the lives of women as Simon de Beauvoir opines that, 'Marriage is a destiny traditionally offered to women by society' (Beauvoir 1997, 444). She portrays the plight of Indian women, who are treated as child-bearing machines to give birth to a male heir. The matrimonial myth coerces women to compromise greatly not only with their origin, belongings, and emotions but also with their desires and temperament.

Manju Kapur remarks that women suffer as victims at the hands of their husbands, who exploit the marital relationships due to their chauvinistic outlook as they expect their female counterparts to be submissive. Child marriage is eradicated to a great extent in Indian society but still, such marriages take place in the rural and underdeveloped parts of the country. Himmat Singh, the eldest son of the Gainas gets married as a child at the age of seven and his child bride makes his family hierarchy proud when she begets a male heir. He forgets about his marital life and abandons the child bride when he shifts from his village to pursue his higher studies. He becomes a famous politician and his uncle, Virpal tries to reunite him with his wife as he has to look after his family.

Himmat Singh falls in love with the home minister's daughter, Sonal, and refuses to accept his wife, who lives in exile hopefully waiting for her husband's return and reunion. He tells his uncle that he would divorce his wife to marry Sonal, who is talented, richer, and highly educated. His uncle is agitated about his decisions and shouts at him stating:

> Wives are no like dolls. You can't buy another when you get tired of one. Has she been
> unsuitable anyway? She has given you a son, she has never disobeyed you…You think this is

how family life is conducted? What about the ones who arranged the match, you want to blacken their faces? What about the years she has lived in your house? Do you think whims and fancies can change all that? Your father will never allow it. Never. (Kapur 2016, 203-204)

Himmat rejects the orthodox thoughts of his uncle and remarks that, 'Obedience? Is that all I want from a wife? As for the son, I keep telling you, I was forced to do that' (Kapur 2016, 204). His attitude projects male chauvinism as he considers his wife to be a mere toy and it disgraces women's integrity in the family and society.

Himmat Singh marries Sonal, the woman of his choice but his marital life becomes incompatible when he fails to pay attention to his familial duties. He is always busy crafting his political venture and turns out to be an unsympathetic husband. He adapts to the tide of capitalism and materialism, becomes a dictator in formulating his opinions, and disregards the sacrifices of Sonal, who renders her constant support, both, physically and emotionally to develop his identity as a politician and tirelessly balances her servitude in the role of a wife, a daughter-in-law, and a mother. He is utterly blinded to his wife's emotional apathy and children's progress as his attachment to the family remains superficial.

Himmat Singh, who gets involved in social activities and becomes a politician develops extra-marital affairs with the ladies of the political party. He deceives his wife and breaks the trust and foundation of matrimony. Sonal loses confidence in her husband when she realizes that Himmat Singh has never approached her with true feelings. Her husband is a deceiver and a noxious invader, who hurts her emotions. She feels trapped and defrauded by her husband. Manju Kapur remarks that the hypocrisy of men is well apparent when they have more money and it exposes the chicanery in marital relationships. Barbara Stuart mentions that:

> The success of a marriage depends on the effective working together of both husband and wife, because each has specific responsibilities set out by God for the permanence and quality of the marriage. Still, the factor of responsibility in the marriage for husband and wife must not be interpreted as a gender-marked-role-identity. Rather, it is an integral aspect of the relationship mandated by God since creation, for harmony and stability in the home.   (Stuart 2005, 31)

Himmat Singh destroys the significance of brotherhood when he indulges in having an affair with his brother's wife, Tapti, who rejects to pay heed to his request for sexual favours. He begins to injure her physically and emotionally stating, 'I wanted to see you, no, that's not quite accurate, I needed to see you. Needed, you

understand… You are mine…Mine. Against all sense and reason, mine' (Kapur 2016, 307, 310). When Tapti chastises Himmat Singh and reveals that she would raise a complaint against his malicious acts, he threatens to accuse her of being a corrupt officer and will ensure that she loses her job using his political influence. The intrafamilial sexual abuse fractures Tapti's character and her professional prosperity. Himmat Singh not only collapses the transparency of matrimonial bonds but also the purity of brotherhood.

Marriage, which is one of the most important social institutions for an individual, becomes a hindrance in the life of women as they are forced into the relationship without a proper understanding of their place in the family. The concept of marriage in India is considered as an important event in the life of women and a sacred ritual for mankind, but the practice of inequality through patriarchal norms creates the worst scenario for women in the marital relationship. In marital life, it becomes the bride's responsibility to make major adjustments in the family, especially with her spouse. Women should be prepared to make sacrifices in terms of their own needs and from the childhood they are taught to be modest, hardworking and should always contribute themselves to the family. The society advises women to be docile and subservient. The state of being subservient leads wives to obey the orders of their husbands and in-laws. The society teaches a wife to treat her husband as God and that she should be loyal and obedient to him. In the novel, *Brothers*, Tapti, and Sonal lead a life pertaining to societal norms. As women, they blindly accept their submissive role without raising any questions since they believe that the patriarchal norms and practices of male domination cannot be altered. They remain supportive, compliant and subservient in their marital life as long as possible. They respect their husbands and obey all their orders without demanding a reason that makes them the perfect wife, daughter-in-law, mother and the perfect women according to the norms. Manju Kapur depicts the plight of perfectly groomed women, who are put to test their womanhood under severe patriarchal clutches.

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Urbanisation and New Services: The Study of Drivers under Cab Aggregators in Guwahati

Tanay Choudhury

Abstract

The urbanisation of modern cities is based on the service sector economy. While traditional services have benefited from technological advancement and innovation, new services have also emerged. Many of the new services are provided by a platform-based economic system which is an online market-based system where the buyers and sellers meet. There are different platforms providing various services- online shopping, food delivery, city-based household services, etc. One such service which is very popular in the platform-based market system is cab services or taxi services. Taxi services under the platform-based economic system are often called the cab-aggregator economy. This study attempted to understand the important aspects of the platform-based gig economy in Guwahati through drivers working on cab aggregator platforms such as Ola, Uber, and Rapido.

Introduction

The 21st-century urban space witnesses the rise of new and novel services that helps in making the lives of city dwellers convenient. Many of these services in modern cities are facilitated by the Internet revolution. Fast and easily accessible internet facilities generate new types of employment in the urban service sector economy. One such employment category is workers employed in the mobile app/platform-based gig economy. While platform economy covers multiple urban services today, one of the first services under platform economies was that of the cab-aggregator companies. This study is dedicated to having a phenomenological understanding of the drivers working under such cab-aggregator platforms in Guwahati, the only tier II in India's North East region.

Methodology Adopted

- Interaction with 96 drivers (semi-structured interviews and ethnographic engagement) working in various cab aggregator companies, four-wheeler as well two-wheeler cab services – Ola/ Uber/ Rapido- in Guwahati city- in 2019-2020. Random Sampling method was used to select the participant drivers.

- Snowball sampling was used to connect to the participants during the covid19 pandemic lockdown phase.

- An inductive analysis was done to understand the various aspects and conditions in the gig-economy-based cab aggregator companies.

- The primary information is complemented by secondary sources that deal with the subject matter.

Cab Aggregator Platforms

In recent times online cab aggregators have gained prominence within urban spaces. These cab aggregators seem very promising to the unemployed/ underemployed working-age populace, more precisely the male working population. The freelancing nature of such gigs offers the flexibility of work time and therefore, more freedom to the workforce. In the last decade, many have joined cab aggregator platforms as drivers.

The Union Transport Ministry in 2018 had asked the states to allow the use of private licenses by drivers to drive taxis and light vehicles for commercial use. While there are many dimensions of cab aggregators as well as the transport and communication sector in general within the city space, this paper's analysis will specifically focus on 'drivers' working under such platforms, the condition of work, and their concerns and problems.

Cab aggregator platforms appeared in the city economy in the second decade of the 21st century. San Francisco-headquartered Uber entered India the Indian market space in 2013, two years later Ola (India based) was founded. Ola was launched in Guwahati in December 2014. Uber entered Guwahati's online market space in 2015. It is also worth noting that Ola signed an MOU in the Advantage Assam Summit (2018) to start a river taxi service in the capital city. Guwahati, the busiest city in NE India, is the only urban space that has these major cab aggregator platforms.

This paper initially takes up four-wheeler taxi service platforms such as Ola and Uber and in the latter parts, it analyses Rapido, the two-wheeler taxi ride provider which disrupted the market in recent times. While these platforms also try to bring autorickshaws into their respective platforms in other cities, the Guwahati autorickshaw drivers are visibly hesitant to work under these platforms and prefer their current independent

status. Hence, this study will only involve cab drivers in the four-wheeler (LMV) and two-wheeler categories.

Ola and Uber enjoy an unofficial duopoly position in 4-wheeler cab services. The trend is observable in the Tier-1 as well as Tier-II cities of India. As a result, traditional taxis are losing their business to their modern 'app-hailed counterparts'. Although the trend of online taxi services is a very recent trend, in 2019 there were already more than 10,000 drivers in the city who were working under such platforms.

Issues of Informality

The informal sector absorbs a majority of the workforce in India. According to the periodic labour survey report 2017-18, more than 90 per cent of the workforce was engaged in the informal sector (Murthy 2019). Formalisation is a major task that lies in front of the Indian economy. When cab aggregator platforms first showed up, many hoped that these modern services would help the formalising process.

Although the cab aggregator platforms are often hailed for bringing a shift from informal to formal, however such 'formalisation' are often pointed out as a form of 'registration' only rather than any real 'transformation'. First, is the accountability issue. It is because the drivers working under such platforms are classified as freelancers rather than company employees. Such a process doesn't make the company liable for the drivers' welfare which wouldn't be the case if the drivers were classified as company employees. Anwar (2018) that any kind of formal employment must underlie features such as job and income security, social security, provisions for paid leave, and so on, which are absent in the case of drivers working under the platform economies. (Anwar 2018). This concern is not India-specific. Instead, the concern is global in nature. In this context, the recent decision of the UK Supreme Court to classify the drivers under the Uber platform as workers of the company rather than gig economy workers is a significant move.

Second, there is an issue regarding the transparency policy of the companies. The companies do not consult the driver community in the decision-making process. Chhavi Sharma (Sharma 2019) points out that these platforms bring periodic changes to their payment structures as well as the incentives without consulting drivers about such changes. Moreover, the companies often do not make this information (regarding the changes) transparent with the drivers (and riders).

The drivers working under Ola and Uber fall somewhere between the formal sector and the informal sector. They cannot be put under water-tight categories. Although these drivers are registered under Ola and Uber, their nature of work gives them an informal character. They are more like full-time freelance workers facilitated by the gig economy. Experts in this area of study opine that strong there is an urgent need to redefine these new jobs outside the formal-informal binaries. Surie (2017) argues that conditions such as the absence of a guarantee of long-term wages, retirement, health benefits, protection against layoffs, and the working condition of the driver community are similar to that of the informal sector (Surie 2017). Chaavi Sharma argues that the cab aggregator company's model has rather increased the precarity of drivers under the veil of autonomy. Many drivers had high hopes before joining the platforms and therefore, many drivers even bought their own vehicles to work full-time under the cab-aggregator platforms. Most of these drivers had taken bank loans to buy new vehicles. Later, when the payment and incentive structure of these platforms changed, these drivers had a hard time repaying the loans. Sharma says financial liabilities are an integral component of the Uber–Ola model that has strained drivers' ability to be autonomous (Sharma 2018).

Services provided under the platform economy model are still new to us. Hence, it seems pertinent that we understand the phenomenon well such that the issues can be dealt with a correct approach. While these services have become an integral part of the lives of today's city dwellers, the interests of the on-field service providers cannot be ignored as well. In the following sections, the findings of the primary study are covered in greater detail, covering various aspects of the phenomenon.

Long Hours of Work

One of the major complaints of the driver community is that the incentive structure provided by the companies keeps on changing. Sometimes it is based on the amount earned by the driver while at other times it is on the number of rides completed. From interaction with drivers across the city, it was found that a driver had to work an average of 10-12 hours a day, 6-7 days a week in order to sustain a living income. The drivers reported the vulnerability of their family's livelihood as the companies continued pushing the drivers to work longer hours for income and incentives.

The drivers also mentioned the apathy of the company officials to their problems. This is not unique to Guwahati. Aditi Surie points out that there are frequent protests by the driver community, reflecting the gap in earnings that the driver community was promised by Ola and Uber and what the drivers actually got (Surie 2018). There have been protests by drivers in Guwahati as well which would be taken up in later sections of this paper.

Fairness of the Algorithm

Many drivers doubted the fairness of the platforms' algorithm. During the course of this study, drivers opined that merely staying online on the platform doesn't guarantee them regular rides. Moreover, the flexibility so promised by such platforms isn't always true. For instance, the drivers reported that if a driver gets a ride and refuses to accept it, there are probable consequences. He may not get any more rides for several hours. Anwar (2018) points out, that asymmetry in information and continuous fluctuation of the incentive structures force Uber and Ola drivers to work an average of 12-16 hours per day.

From interactions with drivers, the study found that sometimes when a driver is just one ride short of completing his quota for the daily incentive target, he doesn't get the last ride for a long time. Sometimes he has to wait several hours before he is allotted the last ride. Sometimes when he is allotted the last ride, he is given one where he has to travel a long distance across the city to drop off the passenger. This brings into question the algorithm pattern of the companies, which the companies claim to be fair as it is data-driven. The companies claim that the rides are allotted based on IT-enabled and GPS navigation-powered apps. Chhavi Sharma questions the potential biases in the algorithm pattern of the companies. Sharma insists that there is a need to scrutinize the aggregator companies' pricing estimates and breakdowns despite claims of algorithmic and data-driven precision (Sharma 2019).

Also, the drivers revealed in this study that their allotted rides were affected if they did not use the apps for a while. All these indications prove the point that there is an urgent need to make the algorithm patterns of these companies more transparent. That is because the market in the cab aggregators' platform economy is not a free market and is not free from influence as it was advertised to be.

There is a general perception that algorithms are rational, scientific, and unbiased. Such a perception makes it seem unnecessary for state regulation, thus, making the algorithms ungoverned and unregulated. However, many studies have started to question that perception. For instance, an EPW article refutes the transparency claim regarding algorithms and rather mentions them as 'highly opaque' (EPW Engage 2020).

Impact of Externalities

Moreover, there are externalities that add to the other prevalent problems discussed above. Since the drivers are connected to riders via the internet, disruption to internet supply and internet availability also affects the drivers' livelihoods. For example, during the 2019 protests in Guwahati against a new law in the Parliament, the driver community suffered a lot as the government had taken down the internet to maintain law and order in the state. The internet ban affected internet-dependent commercial activities in the state.

However, the worst affected were the online platform-dependent cab services like Ola and Uber. The internet ban which lasted more than a week led to a 'hand-to-mouth situation' for thousands of Assamese youths who were dependent on the app-based cab services. Many even took to the streets demanding an immediate lift on the mobile internet ban. The Sentinel, a leading newspaper in Assam, quoted the President of All Assam CAB Operators as saying, 'Internet is the only source of income and lifeline for us. How we will manage bread and butter for our family?... We are now absolutely clueless on how to pay the EMI next month if the situation continues' (The Sentinel 2019). Thankfully for the drivers, the internet ban did not last long.

In recent times, another event that was a major blow to the economy as a whole but more so to the informal economy is the Covid19 pandemic outbreak. Many participants in the study reported that they knew someone who had to sell off the car, return to the village or take up alternative work in the city as they couldn't pay back the loans even after the economy opened up.

The drivers working under cab aggregator companies suffered a lot although the respective companies announced initiatives to help their driver partners (Siddharth 2020). Moreover, while talking to drivers of cab services during the lockdown, it was revealed that the companies did not pass on monetary help to the driver community although there were online features that were introduced on the respective apps during the pandemic that allowed the customers to make contributions for the driver community's welfare. Further studies can be taken up to see if contributions towards the Covid relief fund which individual users (passengers) may have contributed to the welfare of the drivers' community (through the respective apps) during the lockdown have reached the drivers or not.

Apart from above mentioned externalities, there are market-based externalities as well. For instance, apart from Ola and Uber, that is, the four-wheeler cab services, a new entrant to the online-cab aggregator market space is 'Rapido'. Rapido provides cab services on two-wheelers. This is a novel experiment and has gained quite popularity in a short span. Rapido has disrupted the competition between the two major cab aggregator companies- Ola and Uber. In response to Rapido's entry, Ola and Uber have launched their own two-wheeler initiatives- Ola Bike and Uber Moto. However, in cases of such disruption, a major brunt is faced by the driver community. Several participants in the study feel that many potential customers of the four-wheeler cab services have now shifted to two-wheeler services which ultimately affects the security of the drivers engaged in the four-wheeler cab services.

Options for Drivers

In the case of a four-wheeler cab service, the drivers can choose between the two major platforms- Ola and Uber. For a two-wheeler taxi, an additional option was provided by 'Rapido'. Naturally, the choice of platforms for the drivers depends on various factors like income earning potential under the platform, incentive structure, the commission of the companies, etc. Although according to the drivers, they initially (in 2016-17) managed to drive under both platforms and switched between the two apps depending on demand, however, more recently (around 2019 onwards), the drivers cannot afford to drive under both platforms due to more tenuous incentive targets fixed by the companies. As one driver mentions 'there is not enough time in the day to work under both platforms'. This indicates a virtual dilution of the 'freelancer' character of the so-called driver partners. According to most drivers, if they try to balance working for both platforms, they will not be able to achieve the targets (for an incentive) under either of the companies. Also, the commissions, that is, the percentage of the money earned by the drivers that are to be paid to the companies have increased substantially over the years. The All Assam Cab Operators' Union (AACOU) led various protests to protect the rights of the drivers working under Ola and Uber including demands to reduce the commission. In 2018, the drivers' union led a protest demanding a halt on the further addition of vehicles to the existing quota of Ola and Uber registrations. They also demanded that the commission of the companies be reduced to 10 per cent. The drivers commented that the cab aggregators were charging over 25 per cent commission at that time.

Improvisations by the driver community

It was found during the course of the study that the drivers of Guwahati working on platform economies used various tactics to survive the system.

- Some drivers of two-wheeler vehicles revealed that during the December 2019 protests, the drivers took advantage of the situation and charged hefty sums from the riders to cover short distances. These rides were done offline, that is, outside online platforms.

- Again, when commissions charged by the companies were unreasonably high aftermath of the covid19 lockdown, the drivers were doing rides outside the online platforms. Many drivers mentioned that once the trip was booked over one of the platforms, the driver would ask the rider to cancel the ride and would make the trip offline. However, the drivers couldn't do it all the time as they feared the company's surveillance team might notice a such glitch in the behavior and may cancel the driver's registration with the company.

- Protests are undertaken by the drivers' community at different times to uphold their demands. It is interesting to note that the same developments in technology and the internet, which helped companies to organize the platform-based market system, are being used by the drivers to organize their protests against arbitrary company policies. These drivers have WhatsApp groups to coordinate and organize themselves and their interests.

- Some two-wheeler drivers mentioned that they would go to the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT bus terminal), from where they would get willing passengers and wouldn't have to pay commission to the company. According to one participant of the study, 'Prior to the introduction of Rapido, this wouldn't be possible as people were not used to two-wheeler taxi service. However, with Rapido legitimizing the two-wheeler taxi services among the city's residents, now the drivers can conveniently approach customers and complete rides outside the platforms as well'. To confirm the situation, a visit was made to the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT). It was observed during the visit, that the drivers (especially those of two-wheeler vehicles) stand at the ISBT and shout 'Rapido, Rapido!' to attract potential customers/riders. What two-wheeler cab aggregator platforms had done is that they legitimized the image of two-wheeler cab service, which has come to benefit the drivers who can now take rides outside the platform as well.

Waves of Protests and their Causes

As aforementioned, there has been a continuous tussle between the cab aggregator platforms and the drivers working under such platforms. Every now and then, the driver community organizes protests to put forward its interests in the public sphere.

The main reason for most of the protests has been regarding the conditions of service under the platforms-ranging from the commission of the companies to incentive structures. For instance, in 2017, Ola and Uber taxi drivers under the All Guwahati Cab Owners and Drivers' Association put up a 3-day strike demanding proper incentives.

However, there are instances when the drivers' community itself engages in intra-struggle due to conflict of interest of different categories of drivers. For instance, there has been a conflict of interest between the existing drivers and the new ones. In 2016, in the wake of Ola and Uber registering more cars and drivers under the platforms, resulting in a shrinking of the incentives of the already existing drivers, this led to

protests by thousands of drivers working under the platforms. The increase in new entrants (drivers) to the platform economies has reduced the share of the total rides of individual drivers.

Again, in the wake of Rapido (the two-wheeler cab service) entering the market, the thousands of drivers working under Ola and Uber in the city were not happy. They were upset as the new entrant which absorbed most of their customers could work without acquiring a commercial permit. As mentioned above, Ola and Uber's response to Rapido's entry into the market was that of introducing their own two-wheeler service, that is, 'Ola Bike' and 'Uber Moto' respectively.

Quick Popularity of the Two-Wheeler Cab Services

The two-wheeler taxi service attained quick popularity. One of the chief reasons for the quick success of two-wheeler taxis is the extremely low amount charged by the two-wheeler cab services compared to the four-wheeler cabs. It has been noticed that to cover the same trip a two-wheeler cab service charges only one-third or one-fourth of the price relative to the same trip if taken in a four-wheeler cab service.

However, price is just one factor. The traffic in Guwahati is another factor that makes passengers avoid four-wheeler cab services. The journey time reduces with two-wheeler transportation and hence makes this type preferable among customers.

Moreover, from interaction with regular customer users of such platforms in Guwahati, it was found that customers were somewhat irked at times by the unprofessional attitude of the traditional Ola-Uber cab services. Customer passengers in Guwahati often complain about the non-acceptance of online payment by the drivers, late arrivals as well as other logistical problems like the inability to reach the exact pickup and drop location.

However, the major factor for the quick popularity of the two-wheeler online cab services is still the 'pricing factor' and it outweighs all other factors. For example, in 2019, to cover a 3-4-kilometer distance in Guwahati city, Rapido or its counterparts Ola bike and Uber Moto charged about 20 rupees, which is extremely cheap. The two-wheeler Taxi services have not only affected the customer base of Ola and Uber four-wheeler cabs but also affected other transport systems like manual rickshaws and auto rickshaws. However, in the aftermath of the post-Covid lockdown restrictions, the prices of all taxi services have spiked upwards multifold, including the two-wheeler cab services. But still, two-wheeler taxis are much more economical for customers than four-wheeler cabs.

Conclusion

The gigs-based cab aggregator platforms earned quick popularity in the second decade of the 21st century. Many were attracted by the opportunities provided by these platforms such as flexible work schedules, self-employment, impressive incentive structures, etc. However, as time elapsed and thousands of drivers joined the platforms in the urban spaces, the platforms tightened their approach toward the drivers. This affected the earnings of the drivers. Moreover, various externalities also affected the drivers. To deal with such issues, the drivers of Guwahati city working under such platforms have often organized themselves in the public sphere. Overall, gig-based services are relatively new in our economic system and are constantly evolving. The formality of such services is often unclear. Therefore, the socioeconomic impacts of such services will need to be evaluated from time to time to gauge their effectiveness in creating employment opportunities on one hand and making the lives of city dwellers better off on the other.

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Coping with Partition: Health and Diaspora in Assam's Kamrup and Cachar District (1947-1957)

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Abstract

The Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 can be seen as an event which brought a sea change in the post-colonial order of things for both the nascent countries – India and Pakistan. After the hurried action of the Boundary Commission in both the western and the eastern regions, the administrators had not anticipated that the political turmoil's direct victims would be the people itself. Although the transfer of population in the eastern sector started slow but the impact of the variations in the flow were different than the western Partition plan. The experiences therefore were diverse in the east. To choose a safe haven for the refugees was a difficult task as there was no such a place. Everywhere the refugees went they were looked upon with apprehension and the ideas about the status of a displaced person, majority belonging to the Bengali Hindu community. Apart from the general implications of Partition on the refugees, the paper explores into another area of the quotidian life of the displaced- health. The paper argues that health was an aspect where state intervention had transformed an individual's health from a private affair to a state regulated entity since they were classified as displaced persons. Such interventions were also required as the displaced persons were also becoming a part of the new nation and henceforth the nation-building process. This transition is traced out from two of the districts in Assam- Kamrup and Cachar.

Keywords: Migration, Partition-displaced, refugees, Assam, health and hygiene.

Introduction

One of post-colonial India's first major problems was the refugee crisis. Partition of the subcontinent in August 1947, and even immediately before that, had led to influx and exodus in the core regions where it was implemented. Punjab in the west and Bengal in the east. However, beyond these core regions too its contiguous regions were equally facing the repercussions of the partition plan. Such a contiguous geographical region explored in this work is Assam; one of the states in the Northeast collective and composed of the Brahmaputra and the Surma/Barak valley where most of the displaced population were concentrated later. Assam was integrated into the politics of partition after the initiation of the 3rd June Plan of Lord Mountbatten leading to the Sylhet Referendum which ultimately divided Assam and Sylhet. Voting took place on the 6th and 7th of July, 1947 and upon separation being chosen a Boundary

Commission was formed similar to the ones for Punjab and Bengal. Although the separation was final, the boundaries demarcating the sovereign nations were only declared on 17th August, 1947.

While migration occurred in trickles before the official partition plans were executed, much of it took place when the confusion over the borders was lifted in the east after independence. In the east, or taking Assam under purview, the actual exodus of the refugees from East Bengal occurred only after the 1950 riots in East Bengal. It was, moreover, from this time onwards that the centre and state authorities began to see the need for a proper rehabilitation plan to execute and a department of relief and rehabilitation to be created under a full time Rehabilitation Commissioner and a Central Council to coordinate with Delhi when needed. The article, while looking into the impacts of partition on the displaced persons in the aftermath of their migratory experience, takes another aspect of the everyday life of the refugees in Assam which was health and its allied experiences, be it living conditions, resettlement, diseases, healthcare, etc. Health, while more of a private aspect, but to deal with it while being a displaced person needed state intervention and constant negotiation with the authorities. This is what the article explores. Sources used for the work are archival documents and secondary literature relevant for the subject.

Labels and Categories

In order to make the rehabilitation process a success, the priority job of the government was to categorise and segregate those for whom the government sponsored rehabilitation packages were application and for whom they were not. As the basis of the Partition plan was religious the dichotomy of a refugee/immigrant had been clear in the minds of the government and its administrators from the very beginning. In doing so, the title of a 'refugee' or 'displaced person' was important as it would guarantee a legal and just position for the relief seeker while one being called an 'immigrant' was on the wrong side of the authorities. In the 1951 Kamrup District Census Handbook a "displaced person" was defined as "any person who has entered India having left or being compelled to leave his or her home in Western Pakistan on or after the 1st March, 1947 or his/her home in East Pakistan on or after the 15th October, 1946 on account of civil disturbances or the fear of such disturbances or on account of the setting up of the two Dominions of India and Pakistan."(Vaghaiwalla year unknown, xvi). It was because of the religious criterion that the administrative authorities had to keep their eyes open to intercept any 'immigrant' who had entered the state lest a refugee be deprived of his/her share. As an official had stated:

> We shall simply have to stop them from proceeding further into Assam and direct them to leave the province and on refusal, to detain them in camps until they agree to *return* to their Dominions. If

for economic and other reasons they are un-willing to go back, they will be our *un-welcome guests forever* (Home Confidential C294/48) (Emphasis added).

The religious factor was also the binding rule for the officials to be compassionate to the newcomers hence while the Hindus from East Bengal/Pakistan were the genuine refugees, Muslims fell into the other category- immigrant. This becomes clear when an officer asserted that 'the Muslims who come to Assam from E[ast] B[engal] are not refugees, they are to be *treated as immigrants.*' (Ibid.) (Emphasis added).

There were still other labels that were attached to them such as "new migrants" for those who came in the 1950s. As for the local parlance that was in use in the eastern regions, the common ones were *udbastu, bastuhara, bhogoniya* etc. It seems to have been not only the administration but also the already settled Bengali population who developed a sort of animosity towards the newcomers and instances of looking down upon and teasing a refugee was rife (Bhattacharjee Interview, 2017).

The entire period which witnessed the crests and troughs of inflow of population had varied numbers such as, starting in the middle of 1949 the census showed 24,600 families.(Vaghaiwalla 1954, 356). Until 1955 1, 29,000 displaced families had come to the state (Relief and Rehabilitation RHH128/55), and in Cachar alone unofficial reports claimed 4, 00,000 refugees during this period (Dutta 2018, 258). Uncertainty over the actual numbers made the planning process precarious as well leaving an impact on the long term rehabilitation of the displaced person within the state of Assam.

"…and in case of help to T.B. patients the less said, the better…"

Health is often said to be a state of mind and as the clichéd phrase goes, 'health is wealth'. However, the term 'health' may have different connotations at various levels and it may also differ from person to person. To link the theme of health with partition can also be done to understand the scenario in terms of a kind of trauma to a person's body. Apart from looking into trauma through the conventional facets linked with the event of partition such as riots, violence, murder, etc. it may seem to be possible to extend the net wider to accommodate other kinds of traumatic consequences which could have markedly made a lasting impression on the partition displaced population. Hence, one of the areas which this paper looks into is on the health and sanitation of the partition-displaced in the aftermath of the influx to the country of their choice.

In the battle for who was to get what, a crucial area where the refugees suffered was in the health department However, as the steady stream of old and new refugees started their onward journey towards the valleys of Assam, apart from the misery of their tedious flight various other awaited them in their safe haven. In the course of rehabilitating the refugees much work went into setting up of camps and colonies, both of a transit and permanent nature. It was often the plan to open less of camps as possible since, '…a

Camp, once established, is difficult to wind up…' (Relief and Rehabilitation RHH171/55). Another opinion was that opening up of such transit camps would be seen as an invitation for the new migrants to stay there which later would be difficult to rehabilitate (Relief and Rehabilitation RHM176/56).

In some cases, permanent settlement sites was rife with insecurities for life and completely uninhabitable. For instance, the case of Kauli-Dangargaon colony in the Kamrup district near the Bhutan border. Inmates fell easy prey for the wild elephants who caused menace. These animals also destroyed their crops which led to severe losses. Lives of people were also at stake, since the encounter with wild elephants had even led to deaths of seven lives according to the local people and only two according to the officials (Relief and Rehabilitation RHH141/53). The All Assam Refugee Gauhati District Committee also sent telegrams to the Rehabilitation Minister in Shillong stating the panic that the wild animals have created among the refugees (Relief and Rehabilitation RHM151/55). The location of the colony was reported as "interior and unhealthy" because of which medical supplies were required in larger amounts and 'the actual requirement of medicines could not be met out of the sanctioned grant' (Relief and Rehabilitation RHH141/53). Upon enquiry it was found that the drinking water facilities were in a dilapidated state: 'the ring well in the south is not yet started. The middle ring well is not successful. I saw mud water in the middle ring well…the northern ring well is not completed but there is good water…' (Ibid.). Hence, basic facilities were out of order and even if it was present, it was not immediately within the grasp of the refugees. In another instance a group of thirty Garo refugee families residing under Sonapur Mauza under Kamrup District were almost on the brink of starvation as the procedure for verification of their identities for loans took a long time (Relief and Rehabilitation RHM 151/55).

The All Assam Refugee Association in one of its meetings held in 1959 deeply put forward its disappointment regarding the workings of the Government. Among the many grievances it had, one was on the lack of assistance towards the treatment of refugee T.B. patients, about which they stated, 'the less said, the better' (Relief and Rehabilitation RHH385/55). Besides, working for the crisis of the refugees in general, the Association also gave special attention to the problems prevalent in women's ashrams or such shelters. In one such memorandum on the women's ashram at Gauhati, the local branch of All Assam Refugee Association stated its grave problems which required immediate attention. To ensure security of the unattached women and destitute they suggested "a strong high barbed wire fencing all around it with one common main gate allowing one-way entry. This will protect the camp from the attack of habitual goondas' (Relief and Rehabilitation RHH390/55). However, the government turned it down stating that "the existing *tarja* (wall made from bamboo) fencing will serve the purpose and no barbed wire fencing is

necessary particularly as the Home is *likely* be shifted to Nowgong' (Ibid.) (Emphasis added). Unhygienic conditions related to dearth of toilets inside the campus itself denoted the lack of privacy for the women who had to go outside to answer nature's call. The Association also mentions the dearth of clothing for the women in the ashram and most of them only had one-piece sari which they could not change after their daily baths: '…the difficulties of those inmates in having their baths with one piece of SAREE. The Govt. should respect modesty of those women though unfortunately they are refugees now. Each and every of one them must be provided with two pieces of saree just to allow her to change one for another after bath. Their necessity has to be looked into immediately' [sic] (Ibid.).

However, it was not so that the authorities were completely unaware of the grave situation that was in existence and at times even acknowledged this fact. That the lack of medical attention even led to death among refugees was not unknown. Along with the adult population children also suffered equally from lack of medicines and malnutrition. These facts were acknowledged by a medical officer himself who wrote to the Secretary of Relief and Rehabilitation asking for a loan:

> …the Disp[ensar]y.[under Salbari Local Board] is very poor for Medicines. According to the area and population [about 8000] it cannot supply proper drugs to the patients…the refugees are very poor…does not allow them to buy any prescribed medicine and diet. So that most of the refugees are died for want of proper drugs and diet. It is regret to inform you that most of the children of there are unhealthy and suffering from any diseases for the want of vitamin and proper diet… [sic] (Relief and Rehabilitation RHR49/55)

Dismantled Cachar: Plight of Partition-Displaced

In the case of Cachar, the responsibility of relief and rehabilitation was taken over by the Central government. However, the plight of the refugees was not very different than those under the state government. Contestations between the authorities and refugee representatives were glaring at times in official documents. Some of the documentations in the form of tour notes shows parallel worlds of the way that the officials and the refugee representatives perceive the situation. The 'rosy picture' impressed upon by the state agencies was contested with their version, which they believed to be true. In a lengthy inspection report from 1955 much of the situation in Cachar can be pieced together and the equation between the state and the representatives of the displaced population seemed to be rife with counters. The report can be categorized into four parts where the first part consisted of the report prepared after the official visit of the C.N.Chandra, Secretary to the GOI, Relief and Rehabilitation Department from February 16th -18th , followed by the contestations levelled by the Cachar Refugee Association's General Secretary. Subsequent parts of the file contained refuted allegations by provincial officers of the concerned department. Allegations by the Association's member also created much leeway for a distress situation when J.N.

Mathur, Secretary in the Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry, became 'very anxious to know a correct appraisal of the position [in the colonies of Cachar]…' (Relief and Rehabilitation RHM 197/55). Visits were made to various refugee colonies in Panchgram, Duhalia, Ghungoor, Ramkrishnanagar, Das Colony, some I.T.A. colonies among other functioning colonies and camps. Distress due to 'inadequacy of medical relief' and that the 'nearest dispensary is about 8 miles' (12 kms). Also, even if four full-time doctors and two part-time compounders have been appointed, they do not visit regularly 'for lack of technical supervision' and hence the suggestion was made to bring them 'under the control of the Civil Surgeon' (Ibid.). Duhalia colony too raised questions in the health department. A medical unit was to have been present within with a medical officer and a compounder. Doubts were raised by the Secretary when the out-door patients' register maintained by the medical unit showed a drop in the number of patients to about five per day which was about thirty to forty per day until December 1954. It was learnt that 'there has been no stock of medicines for the last 4 months though the Medical officer had sent intimation of this' (Ibid.). Lack of medicines also led to the doctor admitting the fact that 'he has not been visiting the colony' which was also guessed by the official when he stated, 'I have my doubts if the doctor goes round the colony to see the patients who are unable to go to the dispensary' (Ibid.). Insufficient land allocations to agriculturist families were found to be 'substantially true'. The Deputy Commissioner, who also accompanied on this inspection journey 'promised to look into this matter personally and report on the matter to the Government of India….' (Ibid.). In one of the I.T.A. colonies in Sarispur Tea Estate 10 displaced families had been allotted *tilla* lands for constructing houses as well as for agriculture but they had considered the land to be unsuitable for cultivation. It was even difficult for officials who had to take a 'lot of strain…to climb a *tilla* 'hillock'…' to inspect. The location of the colony was at times seen as 'out-of-the-way' when again the displaced had to use the available resources, especially medical benefits, until they found workable conditions by themselves or allotted by the authorities. The administrator stated thus, 'I also made it clear to them that it was not possible for the Government to provide…medical facilities for a group of 10 families in an out-of-the-way place' (Ibid.). The state's sphere of influence therefore had its limitations. One of the largest Destitute Homes in Silchar consisted of 398 inmates of which there were 25 men, 104 women, 118 boys, and 151 girls. Acute conditions were noticed while surveying the barracks that were transformed into 'homes'. Families cooked food inside the barracks creating precarious conditions in the presence of inflammable substances. In a way, the barracks would have turned into chambers of smoke and gas, causing much problems that come with living in enclosed or confined spaces, the most common being respiratory infections caused due to cooking within confined spaces using '…about 25-30 '*chuhllas*' [usually an

earthen oven, but in this case it might have meant a makeshift fire oven with firewood or other flammable resources] inside each barrack. (Ibid.).

After the initial report a long follow-up letter by Tarapada Bhattacharjee, General Secretary of the Cachar District Refugee Association in Silchar dated 1 April 1955 set about to uncover the real 'plague spots' of the workings of the provincial rehabilitation department before the central authorities. The rhetoric within the letter portrayed the 'real' refugee problem stating that 'one does not find any change in the condition of the refugees before and after your [C.N. Chandra's, the official who had come on the inspection tour] visit.' Assertions on the deplorable conditions of newly arrived displaced persons expressed through terminologies such as 'rotting', 'uncared' and 'unattended' mark the different version of the same problem as seen by the state and the refugees themselves. Bhattacharjee also remarked that medical units in some colonies were only a 'show' by the local authorities. In another colony, Bhorakai Tea Estate, lack of shelters was due to them getting blown away, with some remaining in that distressed condition for a long time – a reference of time given by Bhattacharjee in such a situation was one year (Ibid.).

As a counter to the Secretary's letter, Silchar's Special Officer, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, M.K. Chowdhury, retorted to the Under-Secretary of the GOA, Relief and Rehabilitation Department in a letter dated 13th January 1956. Tarapada Bhattacharjee's allegations were said to be 'a travesty of truth' and that much had been done for the betterment of the displaced. The letter ended with a note of lament, 'it is unfortunate that Shri Bhattacharjee has failed to notice the improvements which have been, and are offered, effected in the standard of living of the displaced persons all over the district' (Ibid.).

The long narrative on the inspection tour had managed to portray parallel stories of the same situation. As Nilanjana Chatterjee argues in her work *The East Bengal Refugee: A Lesson in Survival*, it was the 'interpretive version of two representative accounts'. She calls them the 'official discourse' and the 'refugee counter-discourse'. While the former sees the displaced persons as merely objects of assistance which becomes the problem group the latter discourse gives the displaced population a "centrality…in reconstructing their lives and may even hold the government responsible for exacerbating the refugee 'problem'" (1990, 70). In building of this discourse the contemporary media equally contributed to the latter group by claiming to be the 'real picture of refugee rehabilitation in Cachar.' This 'real picture' in one of the English weeklies from the region, *The Chronicle,* came up with an article based on 'personal tour in the Refugee colonies' and focused on the 'callous policy' of the government. Refugees complained about the administration's 'divide and rule' policy and also that a diplomatic game was being played out with the displaced persons' fate. Physically too, deterioration surpassed them when due to malnutrition

almost all families were falling prey to diseases and even death in extreme cases of starvation (The Chronicle 1954). Cachar reeled under the pressure of refugees from the moment of the country's division, the first wave of the refugees swept through the newly found borders. As an unofficial report, 'The Condition of Displaced Persons' cited by Binayak Dutta in his article *Challenging Times, Challenging Bodies,* suggests, the region witnessed 'refugees and refugees everywhere in the district sheltered in school and college buildings, other public and private houses, railway stations and even in open air tents' (2018).The kind of refugee influx encountered in Delhi and the neighbouring regions was felt like a traumatic experience even for the state. In most of the correspondences, it can be observed that Prime Minister Nehru wanted to avoid a fresh influx of any kind at all costs. In a letter dated 3rd May 1948 to Akbar Ali Hydari, the then Governor of Assam, he mentioned that in the event that a large scale influx does take place, it would be a 'disturbing factor' and more so for Assam. Further, he goes on to say that 'we do not want any barrier to free movement but a large influx of people should be certainly be avoided' (Gopal 1987, 105). The 'disturbing factors' thus persisted for a long time and left imprints too.

Conclusion

Health as a traumatic experience is true in many cases. The after effects of partition, especially, had an immense effect on the diaspora; the various instances that had been discussed in this paper shows a different kind of battles they had to deal with in order to survive. 'Soft violence' as Jayanti Basu calls it, (2013) prevailed over the Partition refugees in various forms and at times it was the fight for their lives which were at stake. Displaced persons while seen as a distinct category had to negotiate with the state for all intents and purposes. This was the case for most since the majority of the displaced population had to flee for their lives and came bare handed. To start a new life was something they had to cope with. In terms of negotiating with the state too this was a new experience since most of the time the displaced were at the mercy of the schemes of the relief and rehabilitation department and some took long to be implemented or was slow paced. The wait to be redeemed was hence a trying time for the pleaders. The new state in many ways had to themselves 'cope' with the situation. Keeping a significant population healthy would also attest to the health of the state. Nation-building thus was a marker in terms of looking at the displaced population as an asset for the process, especially since the post-colonial conditions were rife with instability in the country as a whole. The comparative rhetoric of the nation between the West and the Eastern displaced persons also adhered to this idea of a fit displaced population. While this idea was a given in case of west Punjab, in the

east the stereotype of a pampered being was the usual narrative. Hence, belonging to a specific category, other than being an asset to the state there was no other option. Their sustainability in the new nation and the state was on the basis of identifying them as someone who was 'needed' in the nation.

Notes and References

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Property Rights of Women in Tribal Society: A Reflection from Bodo Society

Indira Basumatary and Jutirani Devi

Abstract

Property rights play an important role in the life of the individual in the society. The right to property determines the status of individual/people in the community as well as in the general society. The right to hold property differs between communities, including in tribal society. The Bodo society is regulated by the practice of the customary laws, which are not codified or legally enacted but its usage and practice is socially recognized. For the tribes of the state of Assam, the areas falling under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution have the provisions of administration of justice, preservation of culture and identity according to their own customary laws. Ownership and Inheritance rights are also governed by the traditional customary laws of the people. In Bodo society property rights are generally in accordance to the customary laws, where rights to inherits are transmitted in favor of male. This paper attempts to study the property rights of Bodo women and look at the changes that have taken place in recent times.

Keywords: Property Rights, Women, Tribal Women, Society Bodo, Customary Law, Ownership and Inheritance Rights, Bodo Women.

Introduction

Women empowerment and gender justice have become the goal of many democratic countries of the world. Women in societies can truly be called empowered if they are economically developed and this economic empowerment of women depends on their right to hold property and to inherit the same. Property rights are vital for the growth of any individuals in the society. In many societies across the world economic rights, like right to property, to own property and to acquire property etc., are considered as a parameter for economic development of the people and the nation. There are also the enacted laws of the land to foresee the economic rights of the people. In India, many of the socio-religious groups like the Christian, Hindus, Parses, Muslim etc., have their own personal laws governing their property rights. In case of many of the schedules tribes of India traditional customary govern their economic rights and these customary laws of various ethnic groups enjoy laws fair amount of constitutional protection relating to their culture and identity. Customary laws are

set of customs and practices, passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth (oral tradition). Customary laws are also un-codified, lacking in clarity, unlike the enacted law of the state. Tribal people believe that their customs and practices are sanctioned by their ancestors and are to be followed for a peaceful society. These customary laws include their principles or values, their beliefs, rules, code of conduct and also established economic practices (Das 2017). In North East India customary laws of the tribal societies is a reflection of their social conduct, principles and norms by which the members of the societies try to live accordingly.

This paper is an attempt to analyze the property rights of Bodo Women under their customary laws and also examine their position in the society.

Bodos of Assam

The state of Assam is home to many ethnics groups. Different ethnics groups entered into the region at various period of the history. Contentious debates regarding the period of entry of different ethnic groups to the region still surrounds. Despite having the smallest proportion of tribal percentage in the north east, Assam has largest number of scheduled tribes in the N.E region. According to Census India Report, 2011, there are 755,194 tribal households and the total population of the tribal is 3,884,371. Overall the tribal population in the state is 12.5% of the total population of the state (Census India Report 2011), and of many tribal groups in the state, Bodos are largest tribes in the North East of India with a population of 1,361,735 constituting 35.06% of the ST population of Assam. Of the total number of Bodo population, female population stood at 678,804. Bodos are spread out in the whole of North East, and majorly concentrated in the lower western part of Assam. The creation of Bodoland Territorial Council under Sixth Schedule of the constitution of India created the four districts Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri districts where the Bodos are now mainly concentrated.

The Bodos are of Mongolian race, inhabiting in the north of the Himalayas and west of China (K. Brahma 1998).Rev. Sidney Endle termed this tribe as Kacharis (Endle 1911).Linguistically the Bodo includes a group of people who are speaker of the Tibeto Burmam language scattered in the North and East Bengal, parts of Assam and Burma. (K. Brahma 1998). The Bodos are also called '*Boros'* in the Brahmaputra valley in the lower western part of Assam. The Bodos or *Boros* are scattered throughout the North-Eastern region of India. Pockets of areas inhabited by Bodos can also be found outside of India. Mainly at present Bodos are majorly

concentrated in the state of Assam in the Northern bank of the Brahmaputra valley. The Bodos are termed as Scheduled Tribe in the Indian constitution.

Tribal Customary Law under Indian Constitution

The Indian Constitution of India gives equal rights and opportunities to its citizen, irrespective of sex and gender. It also however recognizes the need of alternative system of structure as demanded by the various tribal groups preserve their distinct cultural identity. Thus, under the Sixth Schedule adequate provisions were made to address those demands and which are found in Article 244(2) and 275(1). Such constitutional guarantees gave freedom to tribal to run their own customary law. Also, with regard to inheritance law, the granting of status of Schedule Tribe to Bodos in 1950, Vide Constitution (Schedule Tribe) order, 1950, exempted the operation of the provision of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 to the tribal people (Ministry of Tribal Affairs 1950).

Customary Laws of the different tribal groups in India is not uniform owing to the very fact that all these tribal cultures are diverse in themselves. Barring few tribes groups from the north eastern states, the customary laws of tribes from the rest of the country have not got legal recognition. Customary laws of the Bodos are not codified or systematically in a written form like its other counterpart tribes of the region. The Customary laws of the Bodos are generally understood to have sourced from the various works of compilations rules on customary laws of the tribe such *Boroni Pandulipi*, which is the religious and social laws for the follower of Brahma Dharma and other works such as Boro *Samajari Khanti- The Bodo Customary Law.* Following these two works of compilations the Bodo people source their social laws regulating the lives of the people from such works. It is also observed that following of code of conduct and certain practices of the tribes differs slightly from place to place and in recent times have undergone few changes. The social, religious and all aspects of the life of the tribe are regulated under the customary laws.

Methodology of the Study

The methodology employed for this study is empirical. The study area was conducted in Kokrajhar district, lower western part of Assam where the Bodos are mainly concentrated. This part of the state of Assam witnessed a long arm struggle by the people for the quest of more political autonomy in governance to their tribal affairs. The decade long struggle came to an end with the establishment of Bodoland Territorial Council in 2003.

The study data was mainly gathered through interviews and discussions of which women folk formed main components interviewees. The other stakeholders such as village headmen and elders of the village communities also formed the part of interviews and group discussions. The present study is qualitative research, utilizing a combination of both partly-structured and thorough interviews of the participants in both formal and in formal settings for gathering of the data. This paper is an effort taken up by the researchers to explore and examine the property and inheritance right of women under the Bodo customary laws.

What are Property Rights?

Property Rights are usually referred to as the rights of the individuals or families and others to own private properties with protection from the customary laws of the land or any enacted laws of the state (Hayong 2017)This implies the individual or the family possess the ownership or the authority over such property. The major source of livelihood and income of the Bodo people chiefly depend on agriculture. It is only in the context of the Bodo society, the right to property is generally understood as those rights of the Bodo tribes or individual over both moveable and immoveable properties such as land, moveable properties like cows, buffalos or other cattle which are considered essential for agricultural life as the livelihood of the people majorly depends on agriculture. Right to property thus would imply here as ownership over all the properties.

Types of Property in Bodo Society.

Boro Samajari Khanti: The Customary law has a part dealing with property rights. It describes about the various kinds of property that the Bodo tribes considered as 'property' and their distribution or division among the family members. In Bodo society property is generally understood to mean land, house, ornaments, cows, cattle etc. As mentioned, the Bodos majorly depend on agricultural cultivation for livelihood and hence, land is considered to be the primary asset.

Property in Bodo society can be roughly be categorized as (i) Moveable Property; which includes ornaments or jewelry, cows or cattle, utensils, livestock, cloths (ii) immoveable Property; this chiefly include land and ancestral dwelling houses and (iii) Communally owned Property; this includes the community owned property such as land etc.

Property and Inheritance Rights of Women under Bodo Customary Laws

Studies of the existing literatures shows that there is no codified law on inheritance rights of Bodos women, but as stated earlier, same can be deduced from the recent compilation rules on customary laws of the Bodos

Boroni Pandulipi,- social laws for the follower of Brahma dharma Boro Samajari Khanti; Boro Dwrwngari Nem Khanti. These compilations on customary laws on inheritance rights roughly states that, the Bodos are patriarchal and patrilineal people, in that sense that linage of the family run through the male members of the family. Thus it is understood that Bodos follows patrilineal system in matters of property ownership and property inheritance. Thus, according to the customary practices of the Bodos, the ancestral property such as land and dwelling house belongs to the male. The individually owned property can be moveable, immovable (land, houses), acquired or ancestral. Men and women have different rights over each categories of property. Succession of property especially of immovable property resides in eldest son. Among the Bodos, immovable property like land and houses can be inherited only by sons and adopted sons, but daughters cannot inherit the same .In case the deceased has no sons then the daughter inherits the property. Inheritance of movable property like cloths, jewelry, utensils, livestock are given to daughters at the time of her marriage. Landed property (acquired land, resulting from the direct purchase by the family) is also inherited mostly by sons. Rare instances of giving a plot of land to daughter have also been found in Bodo society. But these are given to daughters as "gift". It has been observed that well off family tended to be more generous when gifting their daughters at the time of the marriage. Instances of gifting land though purchases were found among a section of well of and educated family. Customarily women do not inherit the land but if the family desires she can be gifted. It is understood that, Bodo customary law provides the inheritance rights of property in male lines. Very rarely, in exceptional cases female can inherit the property. In recent times studies by scholars in the field shows that change of attitude towards the property inheritance is taking place as few family at personal level have been giving property to daughters.

As mentioned, under the customary laws of the Bodos, father is the sole custodian of the family property. Properties are divided while the head of the family, i.e., father is alive. This division of property may involve immovable property such as land and houses and among the agricultural family, it division of property mean cultivation lands etc. In the absence of the father eldest son inherits the property. Furthermore, if there are no sons, under such circumstances a daughter may inherit the property. Mother or the wife of the head has a small share which she can inherit after her husband demise.

Succession of Property by Bodo Women

So, in a patrilineal society how or when can a woman in Bodo society under a customary law have right over property? It is observed that the ownership and inheritance of property by women in Bodo society is limited and circumstantial. Right to property and inheritance is in male line. Though the property inheritance favors the male, it is found that women under the customary laws can acquire and inherit property of her parents under some circumstances. Sources of customary laws like the *Pandulipi*, *Boro Samajari Nemekhanti* states that women can inherit the property under certain conditions. Following are the conditions or situations under which Bodo Women inherit the property:

Daughter

Succession or inheritance of property of immovable property under customary law, as mentioned is rare or circumstantial. A daughter acquires or inherits her parental property only in the absence of her brothers. Data gathered from the study it was also indicated that women rarely inherit landed property. It is observed that daughter inherits her father's property if she is the only girl child of the parents with no male child in the family. In such cases, after her marriage, the bridegroom stays in the house of the bride, which is called '*gwrjia lakhinai*' (It is a situational practices among the Bodos wherein a man stays with the family of his spouse after marriage in the absence of a son in the family). After the death of the woman, henceforth the property is inherited by her sons and not by daughters. Movable properties which includes household items, cash, dress ornaments livestock are given to daughters at the time of her marriage. But daughter may or may not necessarily have right to ownership over such items. As mentioned above, daughter receives various other items considered necessary for life at the time of her marriage, which may include ornaments, cloths, cattle, cows and other livestock. Gifting of cattle, cows, goats, pigs were mostly found among the village folk.

Widow

Boroni Pandulipi: Social Laws of the Bodos (Narzary and Mitra 2005), states that an issueless widow i.e. without a son, and who has only a daughter, who does not live with her relatives after her husband death, who lives alone is entitled to both immoveable and movable property of her deceased husband. This right is entitled to her until the widow remarries. And in case the widow remarries the property is taken back from her by the relatives. However, the widow can only inherit and use her husband property, but cannot donate the same to anybody, not even by making a will.

Adopted girl

An orphan girl, adopted, whether she is a minor or an adult has the right to inherit one-third of the property of the deceased father. In case the number of orphan adopted girls are more, then fifty percent of the property be shared by the children, and the rest will go to the relatives (Narzary and Mitra 2005). These rights are mentioned in the Boroni *Pandulipi* for the followers of Brahma Dharma. Property inheritance for the follower of *Bathouism (*Traditional religion of the Bodo which is a nature-worship) is more or less same with the followers of Brahma Dharma, because the religion of the people which is *Bathou* has undergone change due to Sanskritization and influences by other cultures and religion. Inheritance to property by the adopted girl depends mostly on the goodwill and generosity of the family members and the relatives.

Modernization and Change

Has modernization impacted the tribal society? Bodo society saw a social change with reformation movement that took place in the late 19th century. The Brahma Dharma movement initiated reforming the Bodo society and advance in the field of education. Followers of Brahma Dharma tried to modernize the society and thus new social and religious laws for its new followers were written down. Changes in new society of the followers of Brahma dharma was seen in various religious aspects of the people. However, according to followers of the Brahma Dharma rights of Bodo women especially in matters of property did not change much. It still continued to be regulated by the customary laws of the people that were practiced since ages. For the followers of *Bathouism,* who believes in the nature worship, religion itself has undergone change due to reformation movement and conversion to other religion. But it is also observed that there is no record of customary laws being change to accommodate the changes in society, at the same time adherence to such traditional rules and laws are not strictly followed by the people especially by the growing number of educated lot. Bodo converts to religions like Christianity also did not see any significant changes in matters relating property rights and inheritance.

In recent years, studies have shown that access to modern education, paved way for various jobs opportunities that lessen the people dependency on agriculture as the only source of economy. Few changes are noticeable among educated families as they shifted the focus from the customary laws of property while distributing the family property among the family members. However the changes are visibly negligible. Ancestral property

still seems to be handed down though the male sons though the acquired property (land, house) seems to be handed down to daughters through purchases.

Other factors such as the advent of the Christianity in the Bodo society impacted some aspects of Bodo society. But unlike the other north eastern tribes where the conversion to Christianity challenged the property ownership, with regard to Bodo society that impact was not visibly seen. The property linage was still though male sons but educated convert Christians slightly began to accommodate the need to divide the property to daughters too. However, this change is not visible amongst the poor and less educated people.

Are Property Rights of Women in Bodo Society Gender Biased?

It is generally understood that males have a right over immoveable property such as land, houses. This is because also of the patriarchal institution where men are said to continue the family lineage. However, the customary laws also do not explicitly discriminate women to inherit property under circumstantial conditions. Women are also entitled to moveable properties like ornaments, livestock. Followers of Brahma Dharma also allow widow to inherit her husband property. And a divorced woman whose husband initiated the separation is also entitled for maintenance till she remarries. Few changes are also noticeable in recent times in case of wealthy families in favor of equitable division of self-acquired property amongst the family members. This suggests that there is focus shift from the customary laws amongst the educated and wealthy families. It is also found that well-off parents do not discriminate between sons and daughters when it comes to spending on education of the children.

A close study and analysis of the women inheritance rights under the customary law of the Bodos reveals that women rights to property and inheritance is no doubt unequal in comparison to men in their society. This seems to contradict the general assumption or view that women in north east India especially in tribal societies enjoy equal status with men. The customary laws of the Bodos clearly indicate the property rights and inheritance favoring the male. Bodo women cannot inherit ancestral or immovable property. Study of the customary laws on property rights revealed the circumstantial situation whereby women can inherit properties. Only in the absence of male heir women can inherit property. In case of movable properties which are given to daughters at the time of her marriage is not necessarily equivalent to ownership. Property inheritances by widow are also taken away if the woman chooses to remarry again. This limits the women liberty and choices of decision making of her life.

Cases of property inheritances by adopted girls or women revealed that such rights mostly depended on the decision of the family members. '*Pandulipi'* which acts as guiding rules for the followers of Brahma Dharma religion stipulate that adopted girls are entitles to one-third property of the deceased father. In the study conducted for this paper it was found that such rights depended on the goodness or willingness of the family members.

It is true that man benefits more when it comes to ownership and inheritance. Such benefits to men in society is influenced by cultural practice of the community or not is to be debated. It also holds true for the women of Bodo society that economic rights such as property rights seems to greatly benefit men than the women folks of the tribe.

Concluding Remarks

It can be concluded that there are changes to Bodo society owing to the exposure to modernization i.e., through education, reformation efforts which brought about a consciousness amongst the educated people. Ownership of property and inheritance under the customary laws of the Bodos is patrilineal and seems to suggest that the society favor men. Women are treated secondary to men in matters of rights to property and inheritance. Women can claim or are entitled to economic and property rights only under circumstantial conditions. Such customary law reduces the possibility of women empowerment and equitable treatment in society. Though there seems to be no much gender discrimination among the wealthy families, it may be greatly welcomed if changes are made in the customary laws with regard to ownership and inheritance rights of women to see positive and equal treatment of women in Bodo society. In recent times, there has been a growing awareness among Bodo women to assert their position as equals in the society. This leads to significant question of whether the traditional or customary laws of the people need to undergo changes to accommodate the growing demands of equal rights for women.

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Perspectives

Patron-client relationship and the politics of freebies in India

Tabasum Rizvi

Abstract

Given the present economic challenges that the Indian government is eager to solve, the topic of whether or not to distribute "freebies" to the voters has sparked significant debate. This has resulted in a resurgence of interest in the patron-client relationship. The expense of "beneficiary politics" has to be paid by the tax paying classes and the state exchequer, and it appears there is no end in sight to political parties using freebies to entice voters and influence their voting behaviour. This article examines the logic behind the ubiquitous freebie culture and offers suggestions for conserving limited resources. This paper argues that given the state of economic disparity in India, certain "capacity building freebies" can definitely help in human development; but certain other "vote luring freebies" can certainly be avoided. But the precedent has been set, and it's doubtful that political parties will be bold enough to keep handing away more of the latter. As time goes on, it's probable that "offers" and "gifts" for voters will grow increasingly far-fetched.

Keywords: Clientelism, welfare state, patronage, elections, manifesto, political parties.

Introduction

The literature on patron-client relationship is rich; it has been considerably debated in academic circle of Latin America and Middle East. The concept of a "patron-client" relationship was perpetuated by feudalism and fundamentally benefited colonisers by allowing them to exploit the labourers and resources of Latin America and Southeast Asia (Hall 1974, p.506). In India, too, a patron-client relationship, mostly "asymmetric" or "lopsided friendship," existed in the past, but it has taken on new dimensions with the consolidation of parliamentary democracy (Carney 1989,p.44). This patron-client relationship arises in countries where there are significant economic disparities. According to a report by the Oxfam, the wealthiest 1% of Indians now hold more than 40% of the nation's overall wealth, while the 'bottom half' of the population collectively own only 3% of the country's wealth (The Frontline, 2023). While it is

encouraging that between 2005–2006 and 2019–2021, nearly 400 million Indians were able to transcend poverty, much more has to be done. Economic Survey of India (2022-23) states that "the social security expenditure on health, which includes the social health insurance programme, government-financed health insurance schemes, and medical reimbursements made to government employees, has increased from 6% in FY14 to 9.6% in FY19" (Sharma 2023). In essence, individuals in poverty have benefited from an increase in public spending.

However, it has also been noticed that before every election, freebies have been announced by all political parties and it ranges from household consumer goods such as televisions, washing machines, pressure cookers, mixer grinders to essential services such as water, electricity, hospitalisation facilities *etc*. While some politicians have taken a solid position in the current debate over handouts, others have wavered between appealing to public feeling and calling for more freebies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has raised awareness of the potentially dangerous tendency of "buying people" by referring to this practise of giving away free goods supported by the general population as "Revdi Culture" (The Indian Express 2022). However, when the BJP was campaigning in assembly elections of Tripura (February 2023), the Union Home Minister announced "free scooty to every college-going girl", if the BJP came to power in the state (Singh 2023). In essence, such discrepancies represent the mounting quandaries for all parties involved. Divided in three key sections, this article first analyses the concept of freebies from the perspective of the 'patron-client relationship'. Second, the article further evaluates the importance of freebies in electoral politics in India. As freebies have gained popularity, the article goes on to discuss the relationship and contradictions between "labharthi" politics and India's welfare state. While freebie politics may not have any ethical consequences, it does pose serious financial risks that state governments in India, especially those with large debt burdens, cannot afford to ignore. However, the harsh reality is that with each election, political parties compete for freebies in order to entice voters; thus, the nature and amount of freebies are becoming more extravagant, and no political party can afford to derail the exchange mechanism that seems to have developed between political parties and voters.

Patron-client relationship and Freebies

Assistance initiatives are essential in any developing country, but giveaways encourage a dependency mentality. Even while the impoverished look to the government to determine their fate, politicians are increasingly resorting to freebies to buy their support. Clientelism may be defined as voting for a patron in exchange for favours or special treatment. Although there seems to be widespread agreement on whether freebies are generally "good" or "bad," no society or political party can agree on a common definition of this contentious term. Welfare programmes include, but are not limited to public distribution services (PDS), social security, high-quality education, equitable employment, affordable healthcare, adequate housing, and protection from exploitation as well as violence, and so on. Freebies, on the other hand, do nothing to improve public services; freebies foster patron-client relationships and "personality cults" in democratic governments.

According to Kaufman, the key feature of patron-client relations is that, though it is based on the principle of 'reciprocity' but only loosely anchored by community norms, the relationship between the parties concerned is one of unequal power (Kaufman 1974, p.285). Essentially, the client (the voter) can do little to affect the fortunes of the political party or the patron. Attractive advantages, such as a high-ranking government job, profitable business agreement, tax exemption, improved social status, or other special treatment, are offered by a patron (who controls their dispensation) to a client. Typically, the patron is a high-ranking government person who may approve funding for non-profit organisations. However, there are cases when patronage involves open fraud or corruption. Because of its close link with lobbying, conflicts of interest, and corruption, patronage has become a very contentious subject in modern politics. Although it has been reduced in certain places, patronage remains widespread, especially in less developed nations.

A nation is considered democratic if it has elections that are free and fair. Fraudulent voting behaviour has been minimised and election-related violence has been decreased in India and elsewhere after the adoption of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and strict electoral rules. But political parties have devised new mechanisms to entice voters. When a politician

uses clientelism, they provide favours to those who back them in exchange for votes. It entails exchanging material benefits for political backing, either explicitly or covertly. According to Richard Graham's definition of clientelism, it is a relationship between service providers and their clients based on the "take there, give here" concept, and it involves mediated and chosen access to resources and markets from which others are excluded (Roniger 2004, p.353). Patronage is often considered to be obsolete as societies grow; yet, it has been shown that patronage exists in some form another in all communities, not only emerging ones. Freebie distribution is a continuing expression of the patron-client relationship in India.

Freebies and electoral politics in India

Countries in the South continue to endure poverty and inadequate political and economic frameworks as a result of their colonial heritage. Despite efforts to diversify their economy away from agriculture, newly constituted governments had little money left over for redistributive programmes. While affluence in the West has made redistributive policies easier, emerging countries have found it difficult to help the poor while reaching their objectives for expanding access to education, sanitation, nutrition, and healthcare. Therefore welfare schemes by the governments do play an important role in human development. In India, the government has started several schemes to uplift the economic conditions of the poor and ensure justice and equality of opportunity for all. However, the issues of patronage still play a significant role in Indian politics. It has been observed in a variety of ways and to differing degrees across India since its independence. Despite the fact that Tamil Nadu and other southern states had previously thrived more than their northern counterparts, several freebies were promised in exchange for votes. The genesis of freebies culture lies in the competitive nature of electoral politics in India. J Jayalithaa, the late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, established the practise of announcing giveaways before of elections. She pioneered the freebie culture, promising free sarees, pressure cookers, washing machines, televisions, and other items. The Amma Canteen was also a big success with masses in Tamil Nadu. This was immediately adopted by political parties throughout the country. In the north, it all began in Delhi, with Aam Aadmi Party founder Arvind Kejriwal offering free energy, water, bus transport, and other benefits in order to win elections in 2015. Likewise BJP led government in Assam also announced scootys' for

girl students, Arundhati Gold Scheme to newly wedded brides, and announced Rs 25000 cash prize to the Bihu performers (11304 Bihu Dancers and 2548 drummers) for creation of a Guiness World Record (Pratidin Time 2023). Young boys in Assam have time and again demanded for "bullet" motorcycles from their Chief Minister, who is affectionately called "Mama" (Roy 2021). Thus, the "rise of the beneficiary class" and changes in the type and distribution of freebies are both obviously noticeable (Trivedi and Singh, 2022). Invariably, given the growth of "competitive populism", there are several factors that need to be considered before viewing freebies as "good" or "bad" (PTI 2022). Freebies are different from welfare schemes and as such the economic implications of such practices are enormous. The State Bank of India reports that 35% of Telangana's tax collections have been committed to financing the various populist programmes. Several Indian states (Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Kerala) have promised to allocate between 5 and 19% of their annual budgets to such programmes (Jc 2022). Freebies, in essence, have an influence on state budgets, and most Indian states are already in a difficult financial situation, with low income and diminishing reserves. If states keep spending money for ostensibly political purposes, their finances will worsen and fiscal profligacy will become the norm. Again, the distribution of unwarranted freebies from public money prior to elections undermines the voting process's integrity by excessively influencing voters and disrupting the level playing field, and so works against the ideals of a free and fair election. To put it another way, it's the same as attempting to purchase someone's vote.

Part IV (I) of the Indian Constitution contains the Directive Principles of State Policy, provides that 'the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people'. The government may then implement reforms for the general good of the people. As a result, it is crucial to recognise the distinctions between subsidies and freebies and their effects on public budgets. While it's not illegal for political groups to organise relief efforts for particular people in need, doing so shouldn't put undue strain on local, state, or national budgets in the long run. In contrast to the 'irrational' freebies that are often supplied right before elections, subsidies are the sensible and narrowly targeted benefits that come from requests. It's an easy method for political parties to avoid the healthy competition that emerges when they strive for power, and it's a deceptive approach that stops people from making an educated choice.

Given the after effects of COVID 19 pandemic and poor state of economy, the government may indulge in giving certain freebies such as- forgiving farmers' unpaid loans, which encourage them to contribute more and more to the agricultural sector of the economy; giving away free electronic devices to young students in order to encourage them to pursue higher education; and giving away free medical care, which increases capacity building and contributes to the human development in the country. It may be claimed that the typical individual lacks the resources to provide for his or her own necessities such food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and medical care. So the state provides services according to its welfare model, and the extent to which they are offered at no cost depends on the budgetary space that governments have. The challenge for state institutions is the regulation of 'vote luring freebies' such scooters, mixer-grinders, country liquor *etc*.

Regulation of freebies, *labharthis'* and state intervention

There is no visible difference between freebies and welfare schemes, but it fairly clear that the former refers to transfer of goods and services made available to voters for free as a poll promise. India is witnessing heightened competitive electoral politics and many a times electoral code of conduct is violated by candidates and the parties. Lofty goals, grand policies and 'hand outs' are being offered to lure the voter. The problem is that freebies have been scorned upon as per convenience; for some "incentives" given to the wealthy as "affirmative economic measures" while the same "incentives" given to the poor are viewed as "freebies" (Puhazh 2022).

In order to attract the votes of a new demographic, the 'labharthi' (beneficiaries), political parties have begun offering a wide range of handouts and subsidies. Now it's a race amongst parties to see who can provide the most freebies like wedding costs, computers, scooters, and power subsidies. In India, political parties regularly hand out freebies to voters in the run-up to elections. It's common known that monetary contributions may sway voters' opinions. On the other hand, it is common practise for political parties to provide freebies to its supporters, such as utilities, internet, public transport, and even food. In fact, several

political parties have built their whole election platforms on the promise or implied promise of gifts to voters if they support their candidate. This is because election-related promises of freebies now constitute the whole of the platforms of several political parties. Interesting questions are posed, such as whether or not it is moral, legal, or acceptable to use freebies as a technique to win over people and achieve power in a democratic country. In a 2013 verdict, the Supreme Court of India held that promises of freebies cannot be termed corrupt practice (The Indian Express 2022). However in 2022, the issue of freebies again came before the highest court of the land, where it was of the opinion that 'prayers challenging the 2013 verdict need to be heard by a larger bench'; the Centre largely believes that political parties offering freebies to the voters will have a negative effect on the economy (Scroll 2022). "Patrimonial welfarism" (Aiyar 2023) has helped the BJP electorally; the BJP is proud to have created 22 crore beneficiaries as it hopes to cross the 300 mark in Lok Sabha in the forthcoming elections (Mehrotra 2019). Essentially, this idea presents the citizen not as an active subject seeking rights from the State, but as a passive recipient of assistance relying on the goodwill of the State; the BJP has created a new lexicon of political mobilisation (Aiyar 2022).

Recently, the Supreme Court of India said freebies at the cost of taxpayers' money may push the country towards imminent bankruptcy (PTI 2022). The Union Finance Minister has asserted that "the political parties should justify their freebies and show the States' abilities to bear the burden" (The Hindu Businessline 2022). According to corporates, competition among political parties to give freebies was denying India's infrastructure industry of government financing and stifling economic progress (Chatterjee 2023). Effectively, state institutions and market forces know that freebies come at a cost. The difficulty for the governmental apparatus is to devise mechanisms for controlling freebies; political parties and the vast number of parties have got into a "dyadic relationship" (Lande 1983,p.435), where exchange between "votes" and "freebies" in India has become the "new normal".

Conclusion

Globally, the impact of freebies on domestic economy has been rather mixed. Many developing nations have found that investing in human resources via access to education, soft loans, and female empowerment programmes has been beneficial. However, the present situation in Sri Lanka has heightened the significance of ensuring the long-term viability of the country's public debt, making this analysis all the more crucial. Given the present state of affairs in Sri Lanka, this becomes glaringly apparent. Free food and public transit were once staples of Venezuela's socialist economy, but that system has now crumbled. Due to its population's utter dependence on the government, Cuban economy is on the verge of collapse. Socialism fosters a culture of freebies and giveaways, and vice versa, but there is no socialist country to look to as an example. Socialist China too is often held up as an example of how capitalism and imperialism can taint socialism. There is a price to be paid for freebies even in India. The Supreme Court issued a warning in August 2022 that Parliament may not be able to handle the problem of eliminating illogical incentives presented to voters before elections given the "reality" that neither political party wants to remove freebies. Rather, the widespread acceptance and popularity of "freebie politics" is a damning indictment of government policies and a lamentable failure to motivate politicians to invest in human capital. However, given the poor state of human capital, the vast majority of the people have no other alternative but to accept some form of freebies; therefore, promises made by political parties before elections cannot be completely eliminated. Importantly, such promises must be completely reasonable and may not contradict the basic welfare aims in any manner. It is important that political parties be brought under the purview of the Right to Information Act (RTI) and be compelled to reveal the source of money for delivering their promises of freebies to ensure that voters may make an informed choice. It is unwise to use tax payers' money to further political party agendas. Political parties must to really seek to enhance the welfare state rather than just making false pledges in an attempt to win votes. However, based on current trends, it is reasonable to believe that freebies will not only persist but grow in importance in the future.

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Medico-ethnobotany and Tribals of Jharkhand: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

The region of Jharkhand has been historically home to various tribal communities. These tribals have developed their concept of health and well-being and have been using medicinal plants and herbs to cure their diseases and illness, and thus acquired a vast knowledge of traditional plant-based medicinal knowledge and practices. But the gradual dwindling of forest areas and imposed restrictions on their easy access to forest resources have posed serious challenges before them not only in terms of their medical requirements but also as a source of their livelihood. On the other hand, given the growing global recognition of traditional plant-based natural medicines, there is a huge prospect of traditional medicinal knowledge which may be strengthened by promoting the historic relationship between tribals and forests, and by taking advantage of their vast repository of traditional medicinal knowledge. This paper aims at bringing out the historical trend of the tribal medicinal and health practices in the region of Jharkhand along with their challenges and prospects.

Keywords: health, medico-ethnobotany, traditional knowledge, diseases, forest, tribals

Introduction

Living in harmony with nature is considered to be the greatest cultural and characteristic feature of the tribals. The tribals of the Jharkhand region are also no exception. It is not surprising that there is a huge role of forests in all their cultural, social, and religious beliefs and behaviours. Not only for household requirements, but they also depend upon forests for medical treatment of various diseases. The role of forests is visible in their basic concept in terms of health, disease, and treatment. With the use of knowledge acquired over the centuries, they have developed their approach to health and wellbeing. Although the role of supernatural elements as a fundamental factor in this context cannot be denied and malevolent spirits, witches, and

ojhas occupy a central place in their approach, as far as the treatment is concerned, they take recourse to medicinal plants and herbs based on their informal knowledge acquired and practiced over the years. Their prescriptions show that the medicines employed by them are mostly part of trees, plants, or shrubs. They often use the leaves, fruits, bark, roots, or the bark of the roots in the treatment of almost all kinds of diseases. In fact, all the kinds of stuff employed by the tribal medicine- men are such as obtained in their own villages or found in their forests.

It is a matter of surprise that the plants and herbs used by the tribals have astonishing similarities with the prescriptions mentioned in Caraka and Susruta Samhitas- the canonical texts on medicine compiled centuries ago. Not only that; but the medicinal significance of these plants used by the tribals has also been validated in modern ethnobotanical studies. But, unfortunately, the study of tribal tradition from a medicinal point of view is far and few between. Tribal studies indeed continue to grow in different disciplines, but most of them are confined to their cultural activities such as tribal customs, rituals, dance, and other various arts.

 Fortunately, studies in traditional tribal medicine have been done in India long before the date of the start of Indian ethnobotanical studies. Bodding (Bodding, 1925) is known as the harbinger of the systematic study of tribal medicine in India. He undertook extensive work in two volumes on Santhal diseases and Santhal medicines respectively. Later on, Bressers documented the medico-ethnobotany of different ethnic groups from the Ranchi district (Bressers, 1951), then part of the Bihar state. In the recent past, a detailed scientific study of tribal medicine of major ethnic groups of this region has been carried including introductory notes on basic characteristics feature of tribal medicine, its pharmacology, the tribal concept of disease diagnosis, treatment, magico- religious belief, taboos, etc. (Chandra et al., 2007: 599- 601). Similarly, several works have been carried out about environmental degradation and its impact on tribal communities in Jharkhand. But, the historical trend of the medicinal approach of the tribals, its crises because of depletion and regulations of forests, and prospects of traditional tribal medicines have not been focussed upon.

Methodology

For this study, the empirical-analytical method has been used. Apart from the empirical data collected from the local villages, primary data collection has been done from different sources mainly the government-published works in form of District Gazetteers, Survey and Settlement Reports, India State of Forest Report, and Report of the Tribal Commissions, etc. Moreover, several secondary sources have been consulted to comprehend the historical trend of the use of medico-ethnobotany by the tribals, their relationship with forests, and the impact of the forest rules and deletion of the forest area on tribal communities, and find out the research gap related to the proposed topic.

Demographic and Geographical Features of Jharkhand

Jharkhand, now as a separate state coming into existence on 15 November 2000 after being carved out of the southern part of Bihar, has historically been home to various tribal communities for centuries. The state has a total of 30 Scheduled Tribes. The ST population of Jharkhand as per the census of 2011 constitutes 26.2 per cent of the total population (Census, 2011). At least five districts of the state have more than 50per cent ST population such as Khunti (73.3 per cent), Simdega (70.8per cent), Gumala (68.9per cent), West Singhbhum (67.3per cent), and Lohardaga (56.9per cent). Eight districts are having a share of the ST population between 25 to 50 per cent. The important tribal communities that have been residing in this region for centuries are Santhals, Hos, Oraons, Mundas, Birhors, Asurs, Lohras, etc. They are primarily rural as 91.7 per cent of them reside in the villages.

The Jharkhand region is part of the Indo- Gangetic region and occupies the core zone of the country. The region is very much rich in biological as well as cultural diversity. It has altogether 22, 766 square km. forest area which consists mainly of Tropical semi-evergreen forests, Tropical moist deciduous forests, Tropical dry deciduous forests, and, Tropical Thorn forests. The region has a widespread Indian monsoon climate with maximum rain falling between the ends of June to September.

Medico- ethnobotany and the Tribals of Jharkhand

As mentioned that the tribals all over the country have their way of understanding health and diseases and so as the tribals of Jharkhand. Illness and disease are looked upon by the tribals as something unnatural. It is their firm conviction that a human being has a natural right to life and health. But a man is sometimes punished by God in form of diseases for certain sinful acts. They believe in natural causes of disease but in their opinion, the natural cause is not the original one, but that evil influences are at work in the first instance (Bodding, 1925: 5). They believe in the existence of a large number of *bongas* (spirits), who happen to be more or less malevolent. They approach the *ojhas*- a medicine man, who works with the assistance of a *bonga* and attempts to cure the disease using an appropriate *mantar* (the local word for Sanskrit mantra). But if we go beyond this supernatural concept of health and disease of the tribals, we find several natural remedies for their diseases in their prescriptions based on the employment of medicinal plants and herbs. If these natural remedies are considered, we can understand the traditional medicinal knowledge and practices of the tribals of this region on one hand and the medicinal properties of the plants and herbs employed by them on the other. Based on the empirical data collection of the medicinal plants and herbs used by the tribal communities and the information received in this regard from various ethnobotanical studies undertaken in this region we can better understand the use of medicinal plants and herbs historically used by them. The following table can better illustrate the information regarding medicinal plants and herbs used by the tribal communities of the Jharkhand region:

Table 1: Use of different plant species in the treatment of various diseases by the tribals in the region of Jharkhand

Sl. No.	Name of Disease	Botanical Name of the Plant species	Local Name of the Plants	Plant part used
1.	Subnormal temperature fever	*Curcuma angustifolia*	*Tikhur*	Tuber

2.	Malaria	*Ichnocarpus frutescens*	*Kali dudhi*	Root
3.	Burning sensation in the chest	*Dillenia indica* *Shorea robusta*	*Karambel* *Shal*	root bark
4.	Diarrhoea	*Terminalia bellerica* *Eugenia jambolana*	*Bahed* *Jamun*	bark shoot
5.	Continuous fever	*Bassia latifolia*	Mahua	Bark
6.	Chest pain	*Melia azadirachta*	*Bakain*	Leaves
7.	Wounds	*Anthocephalus cadamba*	*Kadam*	Bark
8.	Kala- Azar	*Andrographis paniculata*	*Chirata*	Root
9.	Stomach- ache	*Streblus asper*	*Sahra*	Bark
10.	Cholera	*Mangifera indica*	*Aam*	Bark
11.	Cough	*Piper longum*	*Pipli*	Shoot

Apart from the above-mentioned common use of plants in the treatment of different diseases by the tribals, recent studies have highlighted the specific use of decoction to cure special diseases. For example, the tribals of the Jharkhand region such as Santhal and Paharia cure epileptic attacks in the following manner. They crush the fresh stem bark of *Azadirachta indica* (Neem)with leaves and roots of *Cissampelos pareira* (Akande, parhi) and *Aristolochia indica* (Isarmul) to make extract which is applied in nostrils during epileptic attacks (Kumar & Goel, 1998: 12-13). Similarly, they use the root of *Smilax ovalfoia* (Kuamrika) to cure piles (Jha & Verma, 1996:31). Moreover, they also use the extract of leaves of *Sesbania grandiflora*

(Agastya), *Cajanus cajan* (Arhar), and *Andrographis paniculata* (Chiraita) to treat jaundice (Pullaiah & Bahadur, 2017:410)

Thus, the above description abundantly shows the widespread use of plants and herbs by the tribals of this region to cure different diseases ranging from common to complicated ones. What is interesting to note is that they have been using plants and herbs for their medical treatment for centuries and thus acquired a vast knowledge and experiences of traditional medical knowledge which is even attested by modern studies.

Depleting Forest Resources and Medico Challenges of Tribals in Jharkhand

The above description highlights the role of forests in traditional tribal medicinal knowledge and behavior. In addition to different household requirements, their medicinal needs are also sufficiently satisfied and met by forests. But, there have been serious crises before the tribal communities of this region as far as forests are concerned, which is manifested in two ways. Firstly, due to different reasons, the forest cover has been shrinking historically, and the other is the denial by the state law to the traditional access of the tribals to forests. The Jharkhand region has been rich in terms of forest resources, but this is also evident that it has been dwindling for years, and the advent of colonial rule sufficiently provided for it. Much earlier in 1883, Hewitt, the then Commissioner of Chotanapur noticed the large destruction of forests (Kumar, 1970:165). During the Survey and Settlement (1902-10), the area in the Ranchi District under the forests was about 2,281 square miles, i.e., about 32 per cent of the total land area of the district. But at the Revisional Survey and Settlement (1927-35), the forest area was reduced to 1,956 square miles, i.e. 27per cent of the total land area of the district. Thus, over 25 years, 325 square miles of forests have disappeared (Kumar, 1970:166). Apart from the *'jhuming'*, the indiscriminate exploitation of forests particularly during the Second World War was a major factor in deforestation. During this period on account of the demand for all varieties of timber, there was hardly any forest that was not exploited. An unrestricted demand for timber and poles arose from the Defence Department and the railways, these forests received the full pressure of cutting (Roy, 1957:53). There was regular trade between the East India Railways and Chota Nagpur in respect of sleepers. In 1890-91 the opening of the Bengal-

Nagpur Railway for goods traffic gave a great push to the timber trade. In 1895-98, 200,000 broad-gauge sleepers were cut for the Rai Bareli- Banaras Railway (O'Malley, 1910:102). The opening of the Purulia- Ranchi railway and the main Bengal- Nagpur led to huge deforestation (Reid, 1958:127). A large number of trees were cut for boat- building and dry poles were exported to the coalfields.

When the forests were notified under the Bihar Private Forests Act, 1946, and demarcation was done, the total area under forest in the district of Ranchi came to 1278 square miles. Thus, over a decade, 600 square miles of forests disappeared. The pace of deforestation did not stop even after the end of colonial rule (Kumar, 1970: 166). According to the Global Forest Watch (GFW), an online platform that provides data and tools for monitoring forests, in 2010, Jharkhand had 263 Kha of natural forest, extending over 4.0 per cent of its land area. In 2020, and it lost 131 ha of natural forest. From 2002-20, Jharkhand lost 49 ha of humid primary forest. The total area of humid primary forest in Jharkhand decreased by 0.667per cent. In Jharkhand, during the period between 2015-19, a total of 690.87 hectares of forest land was diverted for the various non-forestry purpose under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (Forest Report, 2019:113).

Apart from the dwindling of forests, another major crisis before the tribals of Jharkhand like other parts of the country has been the gradual denial to them of their access to forests through various acts and regulations imposed by the colonial and post-colonial state. Before the advent of the colonial period, there was not any problem regarding the access of tribals to forest resources. All states of India, ancient and medieval, claimed ownership of all resources, they, in practice, never enforced it and left the control of forest resources largely under the control of local communities. But the colonial power not only claimed but enforced its ownership of resources. Thus, the forest became for the first time a resource controlled and regulated in the interest of the British capital and the British Empire. The colonial government extinguished all community rights in the forests (Chaudhuri et al., 2004: 46).

As mentioned there was a huge demand for timbers to meet different requirements of the colonial government and much wood was exploited during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. By the 1860s, the need for conservation was recognized for its future requirements. Against

this backdrop, the first Indian Forest Act was brought in 1865. This Act was further strengthened in 1894 on the advice of the German Agriculturist Dr. J.A Voelker. Thus, the resolution of 1894 divided Indian woodlands into four main categories- 1. Reserved Forest, 2. Protected Forest, 3. Private Forest, 4. Village Forest and waste (Corbridge et al., 2005:61). The main purpose of categorizing the forests was the restriction of these forest lands to obtain sustained timber yields and curtail any obstacles to its attainment. The state's takeover of forests contributed to the supply of cheap timber to build teak ships, lay down railway lines, put up British cantonments, and provide for the two World Wars (Corbridge et al., 2005:22). The restrictions thus imposed on the local communities hurt their socio-cultural conditions. They were also worst affected for their traditional access to medicinal plants and herbs. It brought about a serious disruption in the lifestyles of forest people. What is surprising is that the post-colonial forest policy also embraced and enlarged British policies. The Forest Act of 1952 approved state monopoly right at the expense of the forest communities (Corbridge et al., 2005:71). The post-colonial forest policies have led to the depletion of the community forests area in particular and the common property resources area as a whole. Not only those, the state monopoly over forests led to corruption and a large hold of mafias over the felling and trade of trees. Because of this forest products slowly started being scarer for the tribals.

It is also worth mentioning that the government through various developmental schemes has added to the problems of the tribals. Since independence, development projects have displaced lakhs of persons each year primarily as a direct consequence of administrative land acquisition. In this scenario, the majority of the affected are tribals who have historically been dependent on the natural resource base for their subsistence. The development projects benefited mainly those belonging to the formal economy but deprived tribal communities, especially those belonging to the informal economy, and dependent on natural resources for a livelihood. About three million people were displaced and affected by development projects and 90per cent of them was part of tribal communities.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the shrinking of forest area, restrictions on the access of the tribals to forest resources, and displacement of the tribals in this region had a catastrophic impact on the tribals. They were not only denied their important source of livelihood but also their basic health necessities. They started facing problems with the collection of medicinal

plants and herbs for their health requirement. On the other hand, they could not afford the costly modern health facilities. It has certainly deleterious impact on their health and well-being which is reflected in their poor health indicators.

Prospects of Medico- ethnobotany of the Tribals in the region of Jharkhand

This is evident that the tribal people not only depend on forests for their medical requirements but also earn a livelihood through the collection of medicinal herbs. Collection from forests is a labour-intensive activity and the entire family of the tribal people is involved in this. There is a huge prospect of supporting the tribal- the traditional collectors from the forests financially by promoting the traditional medicinal sector based on plants and herbs. On the other hand, at present, plant-based natural medicine is making a strong presence in both rural and urban areas parallel to the western medical system commonly known as the allopathic system. A study done by the Confederation of Indian Industry has pointed out that this sector in India achieved a gross market size of 30,000 crores by the end of 2018. Indian plant-based industry is likely to record a compound annual growth of 16per cent until 2025.It is evident that people in India have a strong passion for medicinal herbs and plants and they use them for a wide range of health-related applications from a common fever or cold to memory improvement and the enhancement of the body's general immunity. There has been a growing transition from synthetic drugs to plant-based drugs. The demand for plant-based therapeutics is increasing on account of the growing recognition that they are natural products having no side effects and are sometimes the only source of health care available to the poor (Planning Commission, 2000:5). WHO also agrees with herbal traditional medicine which is defined as consisting of the medicinal and remedial properties of plants in indigenous culture and passed from generation to generation.

Against this backdrop, it may be understood that there is a vast scope for traditional medicinal knowledge employed by the tribals in the region of Jharkhand. Through promoting this sector, not only the tribals may be helped in their pursuit of health requirements and livelihood but the health sector of the country, in general, may be strengthened.

Conclusion

Jharkhand is a rich region in terms of biodiversity and nature has given her a unique gift in the form of various species of trees, flowers, herbs, etc. full of astonishing medicinal and remedial properties. Various tribal communities have inhabited this region for centuries. They depend on the forests for their variety of requirements including health. They have been the main collectors of medicinal plants and herbs and thus have acquired profound traditional knowledge and experiences. The shrinking of the forest area, their imposed distancing from the forests, and their displacements have not only created problems for their survival but at the same time posed a serious challenge to the traditional medicinal knowledge acquired over the centuries. Today, traditional knowledge has gained special significance globally and the demand for herbal medicine is increasing fastly. This is high time to sustain and promote traditional knowledge of medicine and remedy employed by the tribals of this region not only to empower the local communities but also to make the most of the growing prospect of global trade in this field. There is a requirement of addressing the complexities such as standardization of drugs, quality control, evidence-based clinical management, etc. involved in the promotion of traditional Indian herbal medicines. By doing so, not only will the tribals of this region get the required help, but traditional knowledge will also be preserved and on its strength, India can emerge as a global leader in the health sector.

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Commentaries

India's New Farm Laws and the Farmer Movement: Few Insights

Paromita Sarkar

The Farm movement 2020-2021 has made its mark in the recent political history of India. The new farm laws intended to create 'one nation-one market', break market protection and increase commercial involvement of the big business companies. The farmers organized themselves against the laws as they felt it would endanger their livelihood as the laws were pro-corporate. The anti-farm law protest had spectacular success as it could forge unprecedented alliance cutting across class, caste, religion and gender. This article discusses how this movement has revived the farmer's identity and protested against authoritarian tendencies of the ruling government.

On November 19, 2021, Narendra Modi declared that the farm laws would be repealed and along with that the long-drawn struggle of the most historic farmers movement in India came to an end. The success of India's longest running movement can be contributed to the successful coordination by the farmer's union, volunteer groups etc irrespective of their class and caste identity and varied political views. This movement proved to be peaceful and persistent against the brutal methods employed by the government to crush it. It rejected any kind of political affiliation so that no political leaders could gain leverage through their movement.

The farmers had organized themselves to fight against the three most controversial farm laws namely- The Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020, The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Service Act 2020. The farmer unions were of the opinion that these laws would expose the farmers to the vulnerabilities of free market and endanger their livelihoods. This is a very significant movement in the history of Indian politics and contemporary social movements. It is a reflection on how civil society organizes in self-defense to protect its community itself against the expansion of the state apparatus and market economy.

<u>The Controversial Acts</u>

The Farmer's Produced, Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020, wanted to introduce free trade through removal of restrictions on processes, agents and physically acquiring agricultural produce. There would be no restrains such as licenses or stock limits etc and online transactions. This Act would weaken the public distribution system, which provides the indigent families food grains at a much lower cost than the open market prices. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act 2020 wanted to advocate 'contract farming' through changes in the present, legal and institutional framework. The farmers can get into agreement with a buyer to cultivate a specific crop that is to be purchased at a predetermined rate. This law also does not provide any kind of price security to the farmers. (Jha 2022)The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020 shortened the list of 'essential' commodities by removing a number of important items such as cereals, pulses, sugar etc. Regulations on prices of essential food items would be removed, leading to rise in prices. Subsequently constraints on their trade stocking were also removed. As a whole these acts gave free hand to the market forces relating to a plethora of activities related to Indian agriculture. The Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce Act 2020, along with the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act gave leverage to the private traders with increase in hoarding and price manipulation. The farmers also blamed the Government for not ensuring minimum support price (MSP) for the agricultural produce. Clearly the winners would be the private traders, processors and exporters who have the power to control the market forces. Fluctuating prices of essential commodities would hugely affect small farmers and food buyers. As a whole the laws proposed a major reorientation of the existing regulatory mechanism of Indian agriculture. (Jodhka 2021) And the farmers and farmer's unions feared that they might ultimately loose their land, the source of their existence and livelihood.

<u>Background of the Movement</u>

If we look back at India's agricultural scenario we can observe that the condition of the Indian farmers had worsened over the years due to trade liberalization and globalization policies such as deregulation of inputs, imports and prices since 1990s. This led the farmers to fall into the trap of vicious cycle of debt. The report of the Situation Assessment Survey (SSS) clearly

brought out the grim conditions of the farmer households. The neo-liberal reforms exposed the farmers to yield risk as well as price risk. It pushed them against the wall leading to a stunning sweep of suicide across the country.

Against the backdrop of the Land Acquisition Bill and various other neo-liberal reforms introduced by the Modi Government, a number of farmer organizations emerged such as Bhumi Adhikar Andolan (BAA) and the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC). The All India Kisan Coordination Committee was formed in late 2017 as an umbrella organization in order to mobilize the farmers in their struggle for remunerative prices and relief from debt. So the farmers had been organizing themselves as their hardships kept on aggravating. Ultimately when the Union government decided to push ahead with the farm laws the farmers came out with all their strength and vigor.

Farmer's Unity Culminating to the Protest Movement

The unity among the various peasant organisations leading to a mass protest movement did not happen overnight. The Union Government hostility passed the ordinances without much parliamentary deliberations. Soon analyzing the repercussions of the laws, The Bharatiya Kisan Union in Punjab started their demonstrations and protest movement. Several rounds of talks took place between the farmer's organizations and the government which eventually led to a deadlock. The opposition to the laws were most intense in Punjab and Haryana which later spread to the Jat population of Western Uttar Pradesh. In an effort to unite the farmers from other states The Samyukta Kisan Moracha (SKM) was formed as a joint platform of Punjab farmer's organization, All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSS) and Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU). Under the leadership of SKM a nation-wide protest movement was stirred with the Dilli Chalo movement on November 26, 2020. (Gupta 2021) The national capital became the focal point of the farm law protests. The protesters with tractors and trolleys were stopped at the Delhi border. Protest sites were set up at Singhu Border, Tikri Border and Ghazipur Border, interstate highways as they enter Delhi. With every passing day it became evident that the farmers have emerged as a united resolute force. Tents and makeshift shelters were erected at the protest sites and protesters prepared themselves to brave the harsh weather and state's coercive apparatus. Support was gained from various parts of the country even though the movement was spearheaded by the Jats or Sikhs of Punjab. The Sikh cultural

religious traditions which was used during the protest had a somewhat secular appeal. The protest sites became democratic communities. (Jonathan Pattenden 2021) Protestors slept side by side in the tents and multiple langars or community kitchens were set up which provided food not only to the protestor but also the local rural and poor people. The local villagers supplied fresh vegetables from their lands. Soon the movement had a cascading effect as the student's union and labor's union joined hands with the protesters. A number of NGOs provide services like medical camps, clothing and other daily requirements. The BKU tried to mobilize its village-level cadre and organization, composing farmers cutting across caste and religious differences. Thus the farmers were united irrespective of their class, religion and geographical divide of rural and urban. This very technique was adopted by late Mahendra Singh Tikait. (Kumar 2022) Following RakeshVaishnav and Ors vs Union of India and Ors, the Supreme Court put a stay order on the laws and formed a three-member committee. But the farmers refused to fall into the ploy of another committee and demanded to negotiate directly with the government. The farmers were well aware of the political tactics deployed by the Government to stifle the protest. The farmers held on to their protest sites till the end, braving the inclement weather and coercive forces used by the Government to crush the movement. Even though the present government advocates cooperative federalism, we very often notice centralization of power under the Modi government. Time and again we perceive the Government taking unilateral decisions and aggressively intervening in the affairs of the states. (Jaffrelot 2021)

The protestors' decisions to march to Delhi also points to the fact that real power lies with the Prime Minister's Office.

Unlike the earlier movements of 1970s and 1980s the farm laws protest managed to garner a much more wider support base with regional and class diversity. The Kisan identity gained prominence in contrast to their religious or ethnic identities. There was no waning of the farmer's enthusiasm as they united to fight against the commodification of agricultural production and trade. The Tikri border had a large presence of small and marginal farmers from Punjab and Haryana. The farmers from the Mewat region also joined the protest which has a significant number of Muslim population. Farmer groups from Odisha, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Kerela also joined in. The farm law protests open up scope for a new politics for progressive change, even though its doubtful whether the solidarity would be long lasting.

(Nilsen 2022) Explicitly projecting their Kisan identity this movement shows that over the years the farmers were disappointed with the rural-agrarian developments.

Counter Action by the Government

The Government tried to throttle the movement by brutal police force, unlawful detention and censorship. The mainstream media tried to spread that the farmers were being instigated by the opposition party. A number of demonstrators were arrested and put behind bars. Water canons and tear gas was used to stop the protestors from entering the capital, but farmers remained resolute and continued with the movement. The speeches delivered by the farmers and villagers for organizing the protests reflected their extent of their consciousness and knowledge regarding the controversial farm laws. A group of young activists started a newspaper, Trolley Times to provide a platform for the protesting farmers against the vilification campaigns by the mainstream media. They also set up small libraries for lending books and organized special lectures, discussion sessions and programs to spread consciousness and generate enthusiasm among the agitating farmers. This definitely helped to create a counter narrative against the Centre's propaganda about the benefits of the laws. Efforts to control the social media and brand the movement as Khalistani, religious nationalism or anti national only reflected the desperation of the ruling power.

Role of Women in the Movement

If we observe the agrarian landscape of Punjab and northwest India we notice an aggressive patriarchal structure. Women are mainly engaged in household chores and have least visibilty in the public space. They are in a disadvantageous position in terms of food security and nutrition, which they felt would be aggravated if the farm laws came into force. In case of landownership and inheritance practice also wide gender biasness is noticed. Wives and daughters are never given land ownership rights. SKM's main aspiration was to involve larger sections of to the farm community in the movement, which also called for participation of women. Women broke the shackles of the patriarchal structures and took to the streets, actively engaging in the mobilization process, delivering speeches and raising concern regarding their

lack of recognition as farmers. Women especially from small farmer and laboring families participated in the movement. SKM Rohtak and Women organization along with Tikri Mahila Kisan Samiti mobilized local women to the protest site. Women played a significant role at the toll plaza, the highway protest site. They had a voice in the decision making committees along with the men from the farmer union and organizations. (Jagmati Sangwan 2022) Rural India is marked by structural inequalities of class, caste and gender. Women protestors had to put up a sustained fight against discriminatory practices to make their presence felt and voices heard. The farmer movement is definitely unique due to the overwhelming presence of the women organizations and the Khaps. During the movement women activists played active role along with the Khap leaders who is the past never allowed women's participation in the political space.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The farmer's protest is a landmark in Indian politics for a number of reasons. It has opened up new insights for the future of India's democracy and a path for future protest movements. It is evident that the farmer's are ready to forge unprecedented alliances to organize joint mass action in order to fight against the neo-liberal state and corporate led agenda. This movement can be viewed as a resistance to authoritarianism. The strategies adopted by the farmers to continue the movement for a long period of time in a more or less nonviolent fashion would definitely serve as guidebook for future struggles. In the days to come the present Government needs to emphasize more on opportunities for democratic dialogue and policies should be potentially transformative, informed and pragmatic.

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Political Communication through Bollywood Movies- A Selected Study from 2010 to 2020

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Introduction

Films have been a powerful medium of mass commutation for decades which influences the mass culture (Vasudevan, 2011). Bollywood cinema has the potential of propagating politics and political ideologies by reflecting the society through the lens of the directors. Rasul and Jennifer, (2017) further argued that some Bollywood films have propagated patriotism among people through its representation of various events related to the country.

Misra, (2019) opined that Bollywood films provides an insight to the ideological, psychological as well as socio-political aspects of the society. The author further highlighted that it also has the potential of influencing the political discourse of the public. The role of Indian cinema in political communication is significant since the days of struggle for independence. It has acted as a medium for propagating the voice of nationalists during their struggle for freedom against the British rule. Banga, (2023) counter opined that films are often used as weapons to promote propaganda of political entities in India. This is because films have the ability to recreate a situation and give a new shape to an existing ideology. Hence, the role of cinema in political communication has been criticized by many researchers because of the growing rate of propaganda movies. Nonetheless, the role of cinema in political communication cannot be denied and thereby this research paper has analysed selected movies from 2010 to 2020 to evaluate the political discourse of Bollywood movies.

Representation of Global Political Scenario: A Case Study on My Name is Khan

According to Thussu, (2013) Bollywood cinema like 'My Name is Khan' have created an alternative portrayal of Islamic population which is usually portrayed as negative by Hollywood. Thussu, (2013) further highlighted that this film starring superstar Shah Rukh Khan had set up a narrative which showed the struggle of an Indian-American man from Islamic origin suffering due to Asperger's syndrome. Set up in the context of aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attack, this cinema was released in 2010 and it talked about the ways in which racial discriminations were still practiced at global level (Sartika et al. 2022). India has the capacity to create academic discourses that are not imitations of western formulations and theorization due to its demographic and democratic advantages, including debate, pluralism, liberalism, and a history of

being able to deal with difference and dispute. This is where films like 'My Name is Khan' has successfully created an alternative representation of the struggle faced by followers of Islam after 9/11 terrorist attack (Jha, 2023). The dialogue *"My Name is Khan and I am not a terrorist"* in itself is a strong political statement which was an initiative to break the stereotype of linking terrorism with the religion of Islam (Thussu, 2013). Set up in the backdrop of USA, this film has highlighted the issues of global politics and how narratives are set against some religion or community on the basis of terrorist activities conducted.

The Gandhi Family and their representation in Bollywood: The Tashkent Files

The Tashkent Files (2019) is grounded on one of the most controversial chapters of India's history, The Tashkent Files tries to recreate a hard-hitting and unpredictable political drama (Bawa, 2019). The film is grounded in ultramodern times, as an intelligencer takes a deep dive into probing Lal Bahadur Shastri's death from 1966. While the pursuit of verity after half-a-century may feel bored, the youthful intelligencer, played by Shweta Basu Prasad, chases the scoop because she's exorbitantly ambitious and in the world of social media, any sensationalistic content, will do. So, she and a whole host of politicians, social workers and civil retainers, join a commission that has the task of uncovering issues.

Director Vivek Agnihotri explores a lot of political stories, data and rumours through the story (Gupta, 2019). As the youthful journalist comes face to face with the history of Shastri's death, she also realises that the world of politics and spying can be inviting for the common man. That the story is suitable to put across such an applicable point is estimable, but the prosecution of similar ideas is far from ideal. The direction and narrative of the film is inconsistent. While officially his death is said to be due to a heart attack, conspiracy propositions have suggested poisoning.

Portrayal of popular political figures in Bollywood: An Accidental Prime Minister and Thackeray

Grounded on the book with the same name, The Accidental Prime Minister chronicles former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's relationship with his media counsel Sanjaya Baru (The Wire, 2019). While the film focuses largely on how Baru plodded with managing Dr Singh's public image, it also touches upon United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's crucial milestones, like the nuclear deal and Congress President Sonia Gandhi's undisputed authority within the party.

The Accidental Prime Minister opens with a heavily pixelated television news footage from the 2004 of the UPA government (Joshi, 2019). This scene gives way to the actors carrying and looking strikingly analogous to all real-life political players, which is one of the highlights of the film.

Kher leads the pack as the amenable Prime Minister, who's sworn- in amidst wide- ranging controversies within the party. His performance precipitously grows on you, gradationally eliciting empathy for his character. Kher makes Singh's trademark soft spoken address and skittish walk, his own. Whether he's mustering courage to do the right thing, or succumbing to the powers that play him, the audience could witness an unexplored side of Prime Minister Singh.

However, the film revolves around Sanjaya Baru played by Akshaye Khanna, who ensures there's no way a dull moment in this political drama (The Times of India, 2019). Frequently talking directly into the camera, Khanna is quick to strike a passion with the followership, also playing the narrator. Rest of the characters also come veritably close to real life politicos from across party lines. still, the prosecution is straight- cut and gives a talkie sense. There are not many major twists or conflicts that make real pressure in the script. While the pivotal nuclear deal is covered in detail, ingenue director and co-writer Vijay Ratnakar Gutte makes only limited mentions of other issues.

Also, the impact of Manmohan Singh's conduct on the glare is no way really shown beyond a newsroom debate. At times, the film becomes accessible and lazy in prosecution, showing just close door scenes and intercutting with coarse train footage. The edit is a laddie bit sketchy. But what the Accidental Prime Minister lacks in finesse, it makes up in being completely in- your- face.

The film bravely names real characters and shows them in the light they're perceived in. It also reveals the lack of commercial and moral ethics by Baru's character, who uses his distinct position to unravel non-public information in his book. He ultimately ends up losing trust and equity with Dr Singh.

Vijay Ratnakar Gutte's 'The Accidental Prime Minister' opens to a booming background score. Behind the opening credits, the illustrations are of monuments Hawa Mahal, Qutub Minar, Taj Mahal – one would wonder how these are applicable in a film about Manmohan Singh (Anupam Kher), Red Fort and Rashtrapati Bhavan. In the world of this movie, people are a collection of adjectives broadcasted by the media. Sonia Gandhi, for case, is shown as shrewd and controlling; her son, Rahul, as ignorant and arrogant; and Singh as base, reluctant and skittish. The entire film looks rear- engineered — its generators formerly know where to arrive; the film, also, is just a collection of milestones. The makers nearly look spooked that the cult will start allowing on their own, so they keep dropping signage about where to go and how to feel about the trip.

Another significant film which highlighted a prominent character of Indian Politics is Thackeray. This biopic traces the rise of Bal Keshav Thackeray, as he goes from being a cartoonist, to establishing a new

political party for Maharashtrians, the Shiv Sena (The Times of India, 2019). The film takes us through the trip of his political life and gives us a regard of his particular story. All of this as Thackeray becomes the most influential political leader in Maharashtra. Babasaheb Thackeray, as he was fondly called by the public and his peers, was an influential leader and an inversely controversial figure. His political career had numerous fiery moments characterised by crowd- cheering speeches, some of which redounded in screams and violence, too (Sen, 2019). The film presents both the saluted and the less appreciated tones of Thackeray's life and career. Powered by a stellar performance of Nawazuddin Siddiqui, this biopic rises above an inconsistent script, to present an interesting political career.

This drama deals with a controversial life that thrived on tapping the disappointment of the Marathi people and the frustrations of other communities (Chatterjee, 2019). Thackeray, produced by Shiv Sena Member of Parliament Sanjay Raut and scripted and directed by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena leader Abhijit Panse, enters problematic terrain in a dangerously cavalier manner and seeks to make a virtue of that act. The story begins in the late 60s, when Bal Thackeray was a cartoonist at the Free Press Journal and it travels right through the 70s, 80s and 90s, as he rises up into the world of politics Sena (The Times of India, 2019). While it's easy for a biopic to glorify its subject, in a welcome departure, Thackeray presents the bare verity of the promoter's career. It does take many liberties, but for utmost part, the film portrays him as the truculent leader that he was. So much so, that he indeed stands in court and declares that his party's workers contributed to the obliteration of the Babri Masjid. Whether he's in a court of law or at a political rally, Thackeray is presented as a leader who's unapologetic about his beliefs and aggression.

The film goes to great lengths to project the promoter as a politician who believed in the concept of the 'nation first' and in the well- being of the verbal group that he represented. Indeed, if that were true, sustaining the aura around the man is a tough call. The film ties itself up in knots in the process. It's forced to back- pedal constantly for the end of justifying, if not completely erasing, the negatives associated with Bal Thackeray's politics. The director takes some smart opinions, like presenting utmost of the first half of the film in black & white. The snap helps establish the period setting of the film, as the product design by Sandeep Ravade, supported by CGI shots, recreate the old Bombay relatively well. The film also features a lot of real political leaders with their factual names and the casting is bang on. However, the inconsistent script does not help the film at all. The director also gets a bit indulgent on occasions, employing ambitious cinematic transitions (*a hammer banging on the top of the Babri Masjid fleetly transitioning into the judge's gavel in Court*) that stick out like a sore thumb.

What works wonderfully for the film is Nawazuddin's performance as Bal Thackeray. The fact that the actor does not try to modulate his voice or volley a Marathi accentuation is a wise decision. With deft nuance and the backing of minimum makeup, Nawaz transforms into the Shiv Sena chief and delivers a pitch-perfect depiction Sena (The Times of India, 2019).

Conclusion

Due to the rise of propaganda films, several experts have criticised the role of cinema in political communication. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the influence of film on political discourse, which is why this study had examined a few Bollywood films from 2010 to 2020 in order to assess their political discourse. Films like The Accidental Prime Minister and My Name is Khan has provided a new dimension to the stereotypical interpretation of political issues. Hence, it can be concluded that if the issues of propaganda are kept aside then films can be used a potential medium of political communication.

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Book Review

Partition and Memory

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Aanchal Malhotra, In the Language of Remembering The Inheritance of Partition, Harper Collins Publishers, 2022

Aanchal Malhotra's '*In the Language of Remembering*,' published in the year 2022, commemorates 75 years of Independence from British rule. 2022 also marks 75 years of a man-made division. A division based on religion followed by the tragic loss of millions of lives and the creation of two twin countries, India and Pakistan. This bifurcation of the subcontinent was followed by further trifurcation in 1971 with the birth of Bangladesh.

Urvashi Butalia rightly points out in '*The Other Side of Silence*,' that there is no dearth of material talking about the events of Partition. But what needs to be highlighted is the very human nature of the most horrific event in history. When one explores stories like that of Saadat Hasan Manto, one can get a glimpse of Partition, post partition violence, communal tension, adolescent restlessness, class, and religious differences. His understanding of the marginalised sections of the society in both colonial India and the partitioned Indian subcontinent is phenomenal at the same time. These are the things which never finds mention in academic textbooks, limited to facts and figures only.

Malhotra in the capacity of an oral historian has attempted to focus on the generational transfer of the memory of Partition trauma. The author vividly portrays how the associated suffering is not limited to the immediate survivors alone but to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generations as well, shaping their understanding of the past which consequently affects their present. However, in the process of this transfer of memory, we only get fragments of those memories, either forgotten or deliberately hidden. One can call it negligence of generations in between, for letting go of opportunities to record conversations and ramblings of 1st generation survivors in the family, or a state of being astonished at the disposal of sensitive information.

Imagining Partition, one can only think of gory images of death, roads and trains burdened with butchered bodies, and influx of refugees to both sides of the border. This is what distinguishes Malhotra's research from popular media representations as her work explores the complex realities of Partition not restricted to violence alone. There are stories of lost friendships, identity crisis post-migration, hope to return to one's

homeland, family legacies, and stories of silence as well. The book is divided into 24 chapters accommodating more than 200 interviews concerned with these themes to name a few. Though the chapters are thematically varied, most of the stories overlap in terms of revelation as the author clearly points out that a story about loss can also embody hope.

The first chapter, 'Beginning,' lets out personal anecdotes from Malhotra's own family history, of migration from D.I. Khan and Malakwal in present day Pakistan to refugee camps in Delhi. It has been mentioned that the passing down of Partition memories to the subsequent generation was avoided, because of the associated trauma as well as the equally demanding responsibility of establishing themselves in a new land. Starting from scratch after the economic losses, left little time to reminisce grief. The little they could carry with them, mundane objects of utility, a photograph, or a piece of jewellery served as objects of teleportation to their homeland, now made inaccessible by rigid borders.

In the second chapter titled 'Belonging,' the many dimensions of belonging are perceptibly described. How the idea of belonging is not just physical but cognitive. The third chapter highlights the consequences of Sir Cyril Radcliffe's haphazard drawing of border lines. The stories that the interviewees share range from surprise to grief. Like being surprised at discovering that a centre point of a river would serve as one of the borders between East Pakistan and India. The idea of demarcating areas with something as fluid as a river is indeed fascinating.

In terms of movement of people, border restrictions were not always obdurate. There were special travel documents which were later non-functional in between the three countries because of changing political situations. People lament over these changes from 1947 to the present day, wondering how these erstwhile unmanned borders now made so complicated, makes movement and communication nearly impossible.

Malhotra has taken up the diasporic experience in the post-partition years as well. In one of the chapters titled 'Discovery,' she introduces the reader to a family whose ancestor migrated from Delhi to Kenya and finally settled in London. The subsequent 3rd generation, upon learning their ancestral connection to Peshawar, seeks out more information, to make sense of their identity which was otherwise clubbed with the Indian diaspora. It was an emotional experience for the Syal siblings to discover the history attached to their surname. This revelation speaks for the many Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis in diaspora, struggling to figure out the complexities of identity in a foreign land.

Conversations around Sindhi identity also sprang up in the book, stating how there are not enough discussions in public discourse about Sindhis in India. The instances of discrimination and exclusion faced by the Muhajirs in Pakistan were also vividly portrayed through some of the interviews.

In the following section, the author also focusses on 'hope' through the many interviews featured in the chapter. The hope to coexist peacefully as neighbours.

When one questions the relevance of discussing partition after 75 years, the contemporary happenings may be taken into consideration. The communal riots of 1984; violence following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, counter affecting the minorities in Bangladesh and Pakistan; the Godhra riots of 2002 and the most recent passing of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), affecting North East India mostly. These events are nothing but direct consequences of Partition. The conflicts based on religious differences and the issues surrounding illegal influx of migrants remain unresolved till date, strengthening the existing polarities.

Despite the irreconcilable differences in between the countries, most of the voices in the book yearn for peace. It has been pointed out, that the bottom line of giving a medium to these voices is to instill empathy in the mind of a reader across borders. For subsequent generations to look into ways to mend the fractured past.

Along with stories of loss and grief, the book takes us through anecdotes of love, unrequited love, longing, and resilience. The painful reminiscence of a granddaughter who never got to see her aunt because of the matriarch's (the grandmother) irrational hatred for the 'other,' reflects the extent of othering. One would rather die than consider inter-religious marital relations.

The 'us' versus 'them' debate in the public discourse has contributed immensely in shaping our thoughts and actions. The representation of Pakistanis in popular Bollywood movies, for instance, is mostly villainous. There are exceptions as well, like the 2018 released 'Raazi', which somehow normalized the portrayal of the other side, with subtle scenes of the similarities and mundane things of the Quotidian in the backdrop of war. However, the number of such films is negligible compared to the propagandist cinema released over the last few years. The 3rd generation group that Malhotra targets as interviewees, refers to the impact of such hate narrative on the collective conscious.

In one of the later chapters, titled 'Memory,' Malhotra shares conversations with the 3rd generation participants around the importance of retaining the memories of their parents and grandparents, to serve as keepers of those memories, while their predecessors struggle with mental conditions like dementia,

forgetting memories, remembering mere fragments of the past. It is indeed important to preserve memories, for the next generations who would be more distant from Partition, to know the trauma associated with the event, to learn from history, to unlearn hate narratives, to work for peaceful coexistence.

In 'Material Memory,' the stories focus on the silent witnesses, i.e., the objects that survived Partition. Like a curfew pass, a chequebook, a gold bracelet. Malhotra's debut work, 'Remnants of a Separation,' is in fact wholly dedicated to the role of objects acting as a catalyst in the process of time travel to the pre-partition days. This sense of longing to return, even in the subsequent generations, is because of the memory that has been passed down. Memories of home, family, love, friendship, food, festivals, and a shared culture.

It has already been pointed out that Partition as a subject remains relevant even today and is still open for further study and interpretation. It is important to pick books like 'In the Language of Remembering,' to understand the consequences of not being vigilant of communal tensions especially in the present day.

The voices that Malhotra's comprehensive work helped reach out to readers is just a fraction of the millions of people who witnessed or suffered the most gruesome event in human history. There are million others lost in history. The book ends on a hopeful note of forging meaningful ties with our neighbours and advocating inclusivity over division. One can only hope for peace and harmony despite the existence of differences.

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