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CONTENT

DR. QAISER AHMAD[1] **(1)**

MIRA BAI: AN ASSERTIVE BHAKTI POETESS

Abstract: Mira Bai was a Bhakti poetess of medieval period. She wrote poetry and used to worship of her beloved idol Krishna in the form of songs. This paper reviews her poetry, critically assess the sufferings and pains prevalent in her poetry and also highlight her uncompromised effort to worship her favourite god in her own ways.

Keywords: Bhakti, medieval period, sufferings pains, doha, Krishna, love, separation, loneliness, poetry, worship

1. Childhood:

Mira Bai's great grandfather Rathore Raja Jodha ji was the founder of the city of Jodhpur. Her grandfather was Doodaji and her father's name was Kunwar Ratan Singh. Mirabai was born in Kurki village in 1555 AD in Rajasthan (1). She was the only child and an adorable daughter of her parents but unfortunately her mother died while she was young. Her grandfather took her to Merta. Mirabai was brought up along with another cousin under the supervision of Doodaji. Both of them got their primary education together in the same village and they were very impressed by their grandfather's religious approach. In this way both of them were also attracted towards the education of Hindu religion. They started religious books of Hinduism, read poetry and learnt to recite it also. After the demise of her grandfather she was brought up under the supervision of her uncle Veeramdevji who helped her in many ways and became her mentor.

2. Beginning of Love with Krishna's Idol:

As per an anecdote of her childhood when she was with her parents and started worshipping Krishna, one day a saint came to her house and Mira saw a beautiful idol of Krishna with him. She wanted to keep that idol but the saint refused to give it to her. She became sad and cried for that idol and became ill. She became happy and got well only when the saint returned back and handed over the idol to her.

Her love for Krishna started when she was young and one day she along with her mother went to attend a marriage ceremony. By seeing the groom she asked her mother, "Who would be her groom?" On listening to this her mother replied your groom is Krishna only. From then onwards she got attracted towards Krishna and started worshipping and loving his idol. In many of her verses she expressed her teenage love and affection towards Krishna.

3. Marriage:

In 1573 AD she was married to Kunwar Bhojraj, son of Maharana Sanga of Mewar. As per the tradition of Mewar she used to be called as Mertani. She was so much in

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love with the idol of Krishna that she carried it to her in-laws along with her to worship the idol. She spent her married life with happiness and joy but the period of her happiness was very short. Kunwar Bhojraj died in 1580 AD. The loneliness and sorrow pushed her towards the love and worship of Krishna. She became more inclined towards his worship. Breaking all the odds and traditions she used to recite the bhakti rhymes and verses in praise of Krishna. She used to go to the temples and together with the priests of the temple used to sing and chant the rhymes, used to welcome the visiting saints and priests to the temple and sometimes used to dance and sing the bhakti songs along with them. She used to spend her time in the company of the saints and priests singing, writing and chanting the verses in praise of Krishna. When people from far and near distances heard about her devotional songs and dances they started coming to see and listen to her.

After going through her verses it seems Mira Bai considered Rai Das, a famous saint and poet of Kashi as her teacher and mentor. Few scholars are of the opinion that Akbar and Tansen also met Mira but this seems baseless as by this time Mira had died. Some of the Scholars claim that she was contemporary of Vidyapati and Tulsi but researchers doing studies on Mira's life and works have rejected this also. She became engrossed in her devotion towards Krishna bhakti. Mira's meeting with the priests and saints, being in their company and her singing and dancing with them were not liked by the reputed family of Mewar therefore it was opposed by them. Her brother-in-law Maharana Vikramjeet did not like her devotional songs and dances. He tried to stop her from participating in these activities but failed. He then wished to punish Mira. As per an anecdote she drank a cup of poison sent by her brother-in-law and another says she garlanded herself with snakes sent by him:

Zahar Payali Bhejio Re Dhau Mira Ke Hath
Kar Charna MirtPi Gayi Re Tum Chano Raghunath
Saanp Pitaro Bhejio Re Dhau Mira Ne Hath
Mira Gal Vich Pahariyo Re Van Gayo Nosar Haar (2)

When her uncle Viramdeoji heard about Mira’s sufferings he called her to Merta where she devoted herself in the worshiping and singing of rhymes for Krishna.

Mira Sanre Rang Rachi
Saaj Singar Bandh Pag Ghunghar Loklaj Taj Nachi
Gayan Kumat Layan Sandha Sangat SayamPreet Jag Sanchi
Gayan Gayan Hari Gun NisdinKal Vyal Ri Banchi
Sayam Bina Jag Khara Laga Jag Ri Batan Kanchi
Mira Siri GirdharNat Nagar Bhagti Rasili Janchi (3)

4. Death:

Her father Kunwar Ratan Singh was killed in a war in 1584. King of Jodhpur defeated Viramdev in war in 1595 AD and Merta was annexed in Jodhpur. After this she left everything in Merta and went for pilgrimage. She went to Vrindavan, the place where Krishna spent his childhood. She met many spiritual leaders there. She used to roam around the streets and roads of Vrindavan and used to sing in the devotion of Krishna. After spending a few years in Vrindavan she left for Mathura and devoted herself in the worship of Krishna. Meanwhile her uncle Viramdev regained Merta and after a few months her cousin Jaimal became ruler of Merta. Jaimal invited Mirabai many times to Merta but she refused the invitation all the time. The Brahmins and priests also wanted Mirabai to come to Merta but she spent the last days of her life in Mathura only.

5. Contribution to the Literature:

She learnt poetry recitation, singing and dancing in her childhood only. Her husband Kunwar Bhojaraj also did not stop her from doing all these activities. Her famous works are Narsi ji ke Mahua, Geet Govind ka Tika, Raag Govind, Sortha Ke Pad, Mirabai ka Malhar, Garv Geet and Phootkar Pad etc. All her verses are like songs and they are recited or sung, based on some ragas of Indian music. Her pains and wailings are depicted in her poetry. Through her poetry we can imagine the love, affection and belongings of Mirabai towards Krishna and his idol. She worshiped and loved Krishna, who was not present but while staring at his idol she elaborated his beauty, his colour, his voice, his songs and his behaviour through the poetry. She was so immersed in love with Krishna that she was most of the time, lost thinking about him and wished to be with him. She is so interested in his imagination that she hardly cares about others within the family and does not listen to them. For this she suffered at their hands and was punished. Ultimately she left the family for the sake of the love of Krishna:

Tharo Roop Dekhiyan Atki
Kul Kutumb Sajan Sakal Bar Bar Hatki
Bisriyan Na Lgan Lagin Mor Mukut Natki
Mharo Man Magan SayamLok KahyanBhatki
Mira Parbhu SaranGahan JanyaGhat Ghat Ki (4)

6. Dedication towards Krishna Main Theme of her Poetry:

Her emotional and physical feelings are reflected in her poetry. She has penned down gratitude and respect for her different mentors and teachers in her poetry and sometimes gave messages and instruction to the followers through her experiences. Her sufferings, feelings, love and affections are truly depicted in her poetry, whether it is in languages of Braj, Gujarati, Rajasthani or Punjabi, the languages she used to write with ease and comfort. Through her poetry we can understand the ups and downs, happiness and sorrows, sweetness and bitterness, meetings and separations and love and affections of her whole life. Her attraction towards Krishna during her childhood, her imagination and dreaming of marriage with Krishna and considering Krishna as her husband were consistent. Throughout her life she had the same feelings and emotions towards Krishna.

Bali Jaun Charna Ki Daasi
Yahi Mere Ganga Yahi Mere Jamna Yahi Tirath Kaasi
Hari Mera Mhai Hari Ji Ki Jagat Karau Kyun Haasi (5)

With the unfortunate deaths of her mother, husband, father and grandfather she was broken internally and she sought refuge in loving, praising and admiring the idol of Krishna and became more closer towards his worship. According to her, human beings are very weak and helpless. He makes pilgrimages, keeps fast, leaves home, society and worldly comfort. After doing all these things, if there is a minor mistake in his offerings, he has to suffer a lot. So, according to her, everyone should forget and leave everything and should worship Krishna, who is the symbol of love and peace. She considers Krishna as the most powerful eternal and immortal god and to appease her god she sings, dances and chants devotional songs.

Pag Bandh Ghughriya Nachcha Ri
Log Kahiyan Mira Bawari
Sasu Kahiyan Kulnasi Ri (6)

As per Mirabai, when someone dedicates himself to God and considers the God around himself there is no difference between him or God. Both of them become one. She

realised that while living life she came to be acquainted with God and became one as it was in herself. She does not see any difference between idol worship and love. According to Mirabai, the worshipper should dedicate himself in the devotion of God like a true beloved is selflessly dedicated towards her lover. She can be immersed into him or sacrifice everything for the love of God. Her ideal was the gopis of Braj and her expressions also resembled theirs. She herself imagined and declared that she was the reincarnation of one of the gopis of Krishna named as Lalitha, who used to play, chat, love, tease, fight and spend most of her time with him. She therefore terms her love for Krishna as the love with him existed during her previous life.

Sab sun Partham Bhajya Gopal
Kot Karam Janjal Jiv Kae Mitae Jam Ke Jaal (7)

While singing and serenading her verses she calls Krishna with names like Krishna, Murari, Shyam, Mukutdhari, Nirmohiya, Dhatura Jogi, Girdhari Lal, Girdhar Gopal and Thakur and wants to meet him, hug him, and love him. She wrote poetry in many languages like Rajasthani Brajbhasha, Punjabi and Gujarati. By the age of 30 she lost her parents, grandfather, husband and father in law so she became more dedicated towards the worship of Krishna. She used to dance in emotions while chanting Krishna bhakti songs. The rulers of Chittor disliked her singing, dancing and company of saints and priests hence created problems like putting restrictions, preventing in going to the temples and even tried to poison her. It is said she had correspondence with Tulsidas and Akbar and Tansen met her. She died in Dwarka Temple in 1604 AD (8).

As a poetess her devotional verses, which are full of praise for Krishna are very famous like Tulsi Das and Valmiki, who wrote Ramayana, Kabir and Surdas, who wrote Bhakti poems. She is still being read, listened and recited in most of the household today. Her verses are not many in numbers but are definitely meaningful, sweet, devotional, spiritual and inspirational. We see usage of Persian words mixed with Braj, Khadi boli and in Rajasthani languages. She is sometimes blamed for creating suspense through her poetry. She was fed up with all the worldly affairs as she suffered pains and witnessed protests against her. Her in-laws did not treat her well after the death of her husband and put restrictions towards her devotion, prayers and fastings. But she did not become insensitive rather became more devotional and dedicated in her worship and recitation of verses.

Rana Ji Mhane Ya Badnami Lage Mithi
Koi Nindo Koi Bindo
Mai Chalungi Chal Aputhi
Sankarli Seriyan Jan Miliya Kyun Kar Phirun Aputhi
Sat Sangati Mha Myan Sunai Chhi
Durjan Logon Ne Dithi
Mira Ro Parbhu Girdhar Nagar
Durjan Chalo Ja angithi (9)

She expressed in her verses that if the king is annoyed she can leave the state but if Krishna is annoyed how could she find a place to live on the earth. She says that the well-being of mind and heart is preferable to physical and worldly comfort. She prefers the simple food provided by the lover over the grand fiesta offered by the king. She has depicted Krishna's idol featuring his lovely smile, dark complexion, deep eyes and other body parts. She considers Krishna as her lover of every birth or every reincarnation. She is of the opinion that every meeting between lover and the beloved has to see separation.

She has described the pain and sorrow of separation, waiting for Krishna, crying the whole night remembering him, being careless about herself, her health and her meals and waiting anxiously for him to come:

He Ri Mha To Darad Diwani Mhara Darad Na Janya Koye
Ghayal Ri Gati Ghayal Janya Hiyari Agan Sanjoye
Darad Ki Marya Dar Dar Dolya Vaid Milya Nakoye
Mira Ri Prabhu Peer Mitanga Jadi Vaid Sanwro Hoye (10)

She sometimes feels repenting that she could not express her feelings in front of Krishna herself. Her expression of a woman's personal feelings of love could not be perhaps expressed in poetry like this before so openly. She claims that in spite of knowing everything, Krishna did not enquire about her, therefore she sometimes calls him a liar, careless, emotionless and ignorant. We see optimism in her poetry also where she expresses her feelings filled with joy and happiness and her preparedness of looking good indicating that Krishna is about to come to meet her.

7. Conclusion: Undoubtedly, Mirabai is considered as one of the most creative, popular and dedicated Bhakti poetesses of India. She is the real symbol of love and affection. Her poetry is full of love, peace and solace. She is one of the few poetesses, who really understood and expressed the feeling of love. She urged the people of the society to forget the differences with each other and spread love and peace and live with brotherhood and togetherness.

Mirabai, on one hand, had spiritual experience and on another hand she was the worshipper of the idol of Krishna. Mira feels more enjoyment in hauling in separation rather than serenading in meeting with the lover.

Mira and Andal were the two prominent poetesses of the Bhakti movement of medieval India. Unlike Andal, who got social recognition for her marriage with a Deity, Mira suffered at the hands of her family members because of her love towards a Deity. She appears to be absent in the society but actually she is more relevant to the society because of her soulful and loving poetry. She was, in a way, a revolutionary, a social reformist, who broke all the barriers of feudal traditions and started worshipping a God of her choice. She also suffered because she did not care the typical image of women in the society and raised her voice and went beyond the boundaries made by the society for them. She preferred poison given by the society instead of the interference in the choice.

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DR. ANIL KUMAR SINGH[1] **(2)**
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REDEFINING THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN DIGITAL EDUCATION

Abstract

This qualitative study attempts to understand the changing roles of teachers in the context of digital education. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional classroom teaching faced disruption, making online teaching inevitable. With this shift, teachers had to adopt the use of technological tools, engage with digital platforms, and implement student-centered teaching strategies. The study involved semi-structured interviews with 20 school teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of their practical experiences and perspectives.

The research found that most teachers are no longer just knowledge providers; rather, they are now fulfilling roles as guides, motivators, technology adopters, and facilitators of learning. Teachers have learned to use new digital tools such as Google Classroom, Zoom, MS Teams, and are making efforts to adapt themselves to the digital environment. However, they also face multiple challenges such as technical issues, lack of internet access, low student engagement, and difficulties in assessment.

This study clearly indicates that for teachers to effectively take on these new roles, they require continuous training, collaborative platforms, and active participation in policy-making. Empowering teachers and valuing their experiences is essential for the success of digital education

Keywords: Digital Education, Qualitative Study, Teacher's Role, Online Teaching, NEP 2020, Teacher Training

1. Introduction

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) marks a revolutionary step towards making India's education system more inclusive, flexible, and technologically advanced. The policy places special emphasis on promoting the use of digital tools at all levels of education (NEP, 2020). Particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for digital education has significantly increased, establishing technology as a central component in the teaching-learning process (UNESCO, 2020). This transformation has brought about a fundamental shift in the traditional role of teachers, where they are no longer just transmitters of knowledge but have emerged as guides, motivators, technology facilitators, creators of digital content, and active contributors in the learning process. They are adopting innovative teaching methods and technologies to address the diverse needs of learners, thereby making education more inclusive, adaptable, and effective.

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Today, teachers have evolved beyond mere content deliverers to become tech experts, learning facilitators, content creators, and digital collaborators (Koehler & Mishra, 2006). By utilizing platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and e-Pathshala, they are making education more interactive, accessible, and student-centered (Sharma, 2022). This transformation demands technological competence, innovative thinking, and strong communication skills from teachers.

This qualitative study aims to understand the redefinition of the teacher's role in the context of digital education. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 school teachers, and the collected data were analyzed thematically. The objective of the study is to explore how teachers are adapting to the digital shift, the types of technological, emotional, and institutional challenges they face, and the strategies they are adopting to maintain the quality of education. The findings highlight that the teacher's role in digital education has become multifaceted and complex, requiring continuous training, adequate resources, and policy-level support. This research is a significant effort to understand the evolving role of teachers in the digital age.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this research study is based on *Social Constructivism*, which posits that knowledge is constructed through individual experiences, social contexts, and interactive processes. According to this perspective, learning is an active process in which the learner continuously interacts with their social environment and constructs knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978; Palincsar, 1998). *Lev Vygotsky's* Social Development Theory is particularly relevant to this study. According to Vygotsky, learning precedes development and occurs through social interaction, where the teacher acts as a "More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)" who supports the learner within their "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of digital education, this role becomes even more pertinent, as the teacher not only serves as a source of knowledge but also facilitates learning through technological tools, interactive media, and online platforms.

In the digital age, this framework emphasizes that learning is no longer confined to the mere transmission of information. Rather, it has evolved into a collaborative, social, and technologically supported process. When teachers use digital tools—such as video lectures, online discussion forums, quizzes, and virtual labs—they create an environment where social interaction and active learning are enhanced (Jonassen, 1999; Anderson, 2008).

Thus, *Social Constructivism* redefines the teacher's role in digital education as a *"Facilitator of Learning"*, where the teacher supports the student's learning at both technological and social levels. This perspective is deeply aligned with the objectives of this research, as it effectively explains the evolving role of teachers in the digital education landscape.

3. Review of Related Literature

In recent years, numerous studies in the field of digital education have highlighted that the role of the teacher in the digital age has evolved beyond that of a mere transmitter of knowledge. Instead, the teacher has emerged as a technologically proficient, innovation-driven, adaptable, and communicative guide (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Through the TPACK model (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), it has been clarified that effective digital teaching requires teachers to maintain a balance

among three domains – content knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and technological proficiency.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when education systems across the globe shifted to online modes, several studies revealed that teachers needed training in using digital tools such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), Zoom, Google Meet, and online assessment platforms (Trust & Whalen, 2020). These changes compelled teachers to transition from traditional classroom teaching to digital learning environments, resulting in a significant transformation in their roles, perspectives, and methodologies.

UNESCO's 2020 report *"Education in a Post-COVID World"* also emphasized that preparing teachers for the future requires prioritizing technological literacy, digital inclusion, and socio-emotional learning. The report further stresses that teachers should not merely be consumers of technology but should also assume the roles of innovators and designers.

India's *National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)* explicitly states that ICT (Information and Communication Technology)-based teaching will be promoted and that regular training programs will be conducted for teachers' Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (MHRD, 2020). The policy acknowledges that the effective use of technological tools is possible only when teachers not only know how to operate these tools but also understand how to integrate them meaningfully into educational contexts.

Additionally, the *Community of Inquiry (CoI)* model proposed by Anderson (2008) outlines that a successful online learning environment requires three essential presences – *Cognitive Presence*, *Social Presence*, and *Teaching Presence*. This model explains the digital role of the teacher as multi-dimensional.

Thus, the reviewed literature indicates that in the context of digital education, the teacher's role is not limited to technical proficiency alone. It also includes interpersonal competence, an innovative mindset, leadership skills, and professional flexibility. A comprehensive understanding of all these dimensions is what makes a teacher effective in digital education.

4. Need and Significance of the Study

Due to the rapid advancement towards digital education, new expectations and challenges have emerged for teachers. In the current scenario, where educational conditions are changing swiftly, it has become essential to redefine the role of teachers so that they can function effectively in these evolving circumstances.

This study is also necessary because many teachers still hesitate to use digital technologies or have not received adequate training, which can impact the quality of teaching. Furthermore, it is important for policymakers and institutions to understand the practical and psychological challenges faced by teachers during digital teaching.

The significance of this research lies in its ability to highlight teachers' experiences, difficulties, and adaptation processes. This will help education policymakers, training institutions, and academic planners to design better teacher training programs for the digital age. Moreover, this study provides practical guidance for the future education system, outlining how teachers can make learning more effective, interactive, and accessible through digital resources.

Thus, this study not only helps in understanding the current state of digital teaching but also assists in redefining the role of teachers for the times to come.

5. Research Objectives and Questions

Research Objectives:

1. To understand the role of teachers in digital education.
2. To identify the new strategies adopted by teachers and the challenges they face.
3. To analyze the training needs of teachers in the digital era.

Research Questions:

1. How has the role of teachers changed in the context of digital education?
2. How are teachers adopting digital tools and technologies?
3. What challenges do teachers face during digital teaching

6. Research Methodology

Approach: *QualitativeResearch*

This study is based on a qualitative research approach, adopting an empirical perspective to develop an in-depth understanding of the subject.

Design: *Case Study Method*

The case study method has been used in this research to explore the role of teachers in digital education within a real-life context.

Data Collection Technique: *Semi-Structured Interviews*

Primary data was collected using semi-structured interview techniques, enabling a detailed understanding of participants' thoughts and experiences.

Sample Size: *20 School Teachers*

A total of 20 teachers from the secondary and higher secondary levels of the Bundelkhand region were selected as participants in the study, representing various educational institutions.

Sampling Method: *Purposive Sampling*

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, including only those teachers who have experience with digital teaching.

Data Analysis Method: *Thematic Analysis*

The collected interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis, through which key themes were identified based on similarities and differences. major themes are -

1 Shift in Role
2 Technological Adaptation
3 Challenges Faced
4 Positive Transformations

7. Data Analysis and Findings

As part of this qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were collected from a limited but diverse group of teachers. These interviews were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique, through which the changes in teachers' roles within digital education were understood across four major themes:

1. Shift in Role:

The study clearly revealed that with the advent of digital education, there has been a significant shift in the traditional role of teachers. They are no longer merely content deliverers, but act as facilitators, communicators, motivators, and supporters of students in a digital environment. Teachers shared that they now need not only a deep understanding of the subject matter but also the ability to present it effectively using technological tools. Their role has become more active, flexible, and communication-oriented.

2. Technological Adaptation:
For many teachers, using digital platforms was a new challenge. Several educators used Google Classroom, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and other learning management systems for the first time. Initially, they faced difficulties in using digital tools, but over time, they adapted to them independently. This process proved to be a significant step towards their self-development and innovation.

3. Challenges Faced:
Adopting digital teaching brought with it several practical issues. Key challenges included unstable internet connectivity, limited student participation, lack of interaction, transparency in evaluation, and unavailability of technical resources. Many teachers also felt that it was difficult to assess students' learning progress in online teaching. The absence of real-time interaction also impacted the dignity of academic relationships.

4. Positive Transformations:
Despite these challenges, teachers perceived digital education as an opportunity. They saw it as a medium to expand their skills and express their creativity. Many teachers began creating online educational content, writing blogs, running YouTube channels, and developing e-content. This led to increased professional self-reliance and boosted their self-confidence

Findings Summary

The findings of the study indicate that in the context of digital education, the role of teachers has become multidimensional. Along with technological knowledge, they now require innovation, communication skills, and adaptability. Although they initially faced several challenges, they succeeded in transforming these obstacles into opportunities. This transformation is not merely about the use of digital tools, but also represents a mental, professional, and educational shift**.**

If provided with proper training, resources, and support, teachers can not only perform effectively in digital education but can also elevate the quality of education to new heights.

8. Conclusion and Suggestions

The findings of this study clearly indicate that in the context of digital education, the role of teachers is no longer limited to knowledge dissemination. Instead, they are now acting as guides, communicators, technical facilitators, and innovators**.** Compared to the traditional classroom system, digital teaching requires teachers to possess more multidimensional capabilities**.** They need technical proficiency, an understanding of digital methodologies, and the ability to establish effective online communication with students.

It also emerged during the study that most teachers lacked the necessary prior training or resources for digital education. Nevertheless, they adapted to this transformation through self-learning. This scenario suggests that if teachers are provided with appropriate training, resources, and institutional support, they can embrace this transformation even more effectively**.**

Suggestions:

- Regular ICT training programs should be mandatorily conducted for teachers.
- Online teacher forums and collaborative communities should be established, enabling the exchange of experiences and teaching materials.

- Education policies should clearly define the digital role of teachers, thereby empowering their position.

These efforts will provide a strong foundation for digital education and make teachers the key drivers of its success.

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ARYA SAMAJ MOVEMENT IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ITS LITERATURE

Abstract

The Arya Samaj, a social-religious reform movement founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875, played a significant role in shaping the social perspective and literature in India during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Arya Samaj, with its core principles of monotheism, rejection of idol worship, and emphasis on Vedic teachings, sought to bring about socio-religious reforms in a rapidly changing India. Arya Samaj literature such as books, newspapers and periodicals served as a powerful tool to disseminate its ideology, in advancing its cause, consequently advocated for social equality, reforms and justice. Swami Dayanand and his followers used the newspapers to highlight the injustices and superstitions prevalent in society. They advocated for educational reforms, women's empowerment and the upliftment of the marginalized sections of society. Arya Samaj literature was characterized by its assertive and critical tone. It aimed to challenge orthodox practices and beliefs and promote rational thinking. The newspapers were often engaged in debates with religious scholars from other traditions, seeking to prove the superiority of Vedicteaching. In conclusion, the social perspective and analysis of Arya Samaj literature highlights its role in promoting socio-religious reforms and challenging traditional beliefs.

Keywords: Foundation of AryaSamaj, AryaSamaj and literature, Objective of AryaSamaj Literature, Key Figures in AryaSamaj Literature, AryaSamaj's Impact on the Indian Society, Challenges and Controversies.

Introduction

Arya Samaj, a socio-religious reform movement within Hinduism, emerged in the late 19th century with the visionary leadership of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. The movement aimed to cleanse and reform Hindu society, making it more aligned with Vedic principles and promoting social justice. One of the key tools Arya Samaj employed in achieving its objectives was literature. This essay delves into the foundation of Arya Samaj, its relationship with literature, and the social impact it had on Indian society. Its influence had been far-reaching, transforming the religious and social landscape of India. [1]

Foundation of Arya Samaj

Swami Dayanand Saraswati's Vision: AryaSamaj founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875, sought to revitalize Hinduism by emphasizing the authority of the Vedas and rejecting various practices that had crept into the religion and society over

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time. The movement was rooted in the belief that the Vedas contained the ultimate truth, and they needed to be the guiding force in Hindu life. Swami Dayanand's teachings laid the foundation for Arya Samaj's mission.[2]

Key Principles and Beliefs: Arya Samaj's core beliefs include the rejection of idol worship, caste-based discrimination, child marriage, and other social practicesconsidered contrary to Vedic principles. These principles formed the basis for Arya Samaj's engagement with literature as a means to communicate and advocate for their beliefs.[3]

Arya Samaj and Literature

Literature historically played a crucial role in Social and religious reform movements. It served as a medium to spread ideas, educate the masses, and mobilize support. The Arya Samaj was established with the primary objective of purifying and reforming Hinduism, emphasizing the importance of Vedic scriptures and the rejection of later accretions and superstitions.[4] The movement aimed to promote monotheism, eradicate idol worship, advocate for women's education and emancipation, and combat social evils like untouchability and child marriage. Arya Samaj recognized the power of literature as a tool for reaching a wider audience, readers and, consequently, founded newspapers, journals and books to further their mission.[5]

One of the key contributions of Arya Samaj literature was the publication of newspapers and magazines that served as a platform for spreading their ideas. Prominent publications like "*The Arya Samaj"* and "*Sudharak*" played a pivotal role in propagating the tenets of the movement. These publications featured articles, editorials, and letters that discussed the need for religious and social reforms. They also critiqued orthodox Hindu practices and promoted a rational and Vedic interpretation of religion.[6]

Arya Samaj literature was instrumental in advocating for the emancipation of women. The movement recognized the importance of educating women and empowering them to break free from the shackles of a conservative society. Through their newspapers and magazines, Arya Samaj leaders and writers advocated for women's education and their right to participate in social and religious matters. This had a profound impact on the status of women in Indian society, contributing to the eventual emergence of women's rights movements.[7]

To fight against untouchability was another significant aspect of Arya Samaj reform efforts, and their literature played a crucial role in this endeavour. The movement's publications regularly highlighted the injustice and discrimination faced by the lower castes and untouchables in society. By raising awareness about these issues, Arya Samaj literature contributed to a broader awakening regarding the need to eradicate untouchability and promote social equality.[8]

Child marriage was another social evil that Arya Samaj sought to eradicate, and their literature played a role in advocating this reform. They published articles and reports that highlighted the adverse effects of child marriage on both boys and girls, emphasizing the importance of legal and social reforms to address this issue. The movement's efforts in this regard contributed to legislative changes that raised the minimum marriageable age for girls.[9]

Furthermore, Arya Samaj literature played a crucial role in promoting a scientific rational approach to religion and spirituality. Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, emphasized the importance of Vedic scriptures and logic in religious matters. The movement's publications served as a platform for disseminating these ideas and encouraging individuals to question superstitious practices and rituals.[10]

Founding of Arya Samaj Newspapers and Journals: AryaSamaj established several newspapers and journals that disseminated its teachings and promoted its reformist agenda. These publications were instrumental in reaching a diverse readership and shaping public opinion. It marked a crucial turning point in the dissemination of the movement's message. These publications served as vehicles for spreading the reformist ideology of the Arya Samaj, educating the masses, and fostering a sense of community among its followers.[11]

One of the earliest and most influential publications of the Arya Samaj was the "*Satyarth Prakash"* or "*The Light of Truth."* Swami Dayananda Saraswati himself authored this seminal work, which articulated the principles and beliefs of the Arya Samaj. "*Satyarth Prakash"* was not merely a theological treatise but a comprehensive guide to life according to the Arya Samaj's perspective. It was published in several languages, including Hindi and English, to reach a wider audience. [12]

The "*Arya Samachar"* was another crucial publication that played a pivotal role in promoting the ideas and activities of the Arya Samaj. Founded in 1880 by LalaLajpat Rai, this newspaper served as a mouthpiece for the movement. It reported on the various activities, lectures, and events organized by the Arya Samaj and provided a platform for discussing relevant social and religious issues. The "*Arya Samachar*" was not limited to a single region and had editions in various parts of India, ensuring a wide reach.[13]

"*Veer Bharat,*" published by Lala Hansraj, was another influential Arya Samaj newspaper. This publication aimed to propagate the principles of the Arya Samaj and promote the cause of nationalism. It played a pivotal role in inspiring patriotic fervor and supporting the freedom movement in British-ruled India. "*Veer Bharat*" emphasized the importance of self-reliance, indigenous industries, and the preservation of Indian culture. [14]

Besides these major publications, numerous local and regional newspapers, journals and books affiliated with the Arya Samaj were established across India. These local publications catered to the specific needs and concerns of their respective communities and further facilitated the spread of the Arya Samaj's ideology.

The establishment of these newspapers and journals was significant for several reasons. First, they served as a platform for disseminating the teachings of the Arya Samaj and explaining its vision of reforming Hinduism. Swami Dayananda Saraswati's writings and lectures were often published in these publications, making his ideas accessible to a wide readership.

Second, these publications were instrumental in mobilizing AryaSamaj followers and fostering a sense of community. They kept the followers informed about the activities and events of the movement and provided a forum for discussion and debate.

Third, Arya Samaj newspapers and journals were used as tools of social reform. They actively campaigned against various prevalent social practices such as idol worship, caste system, child marriage, and more. Through articles, editorials, and letters, they challenged orthodox beliefs and practices and encouraged a return to Vedic ideals. [15]

Objective of Arya Samaj Literature:

Promoting Religious and Social Reform: one of the primary objectives of Arya Samaj literature was to promote religious and social reform within Hinduism. The movement used newspapers and journals to challenge prevailing norms and practices, advocating for a return to Vedic values and principles.

Advocating for Vedicvalues

Arya Samaj literature sought to promote the study and understanding of the Vedas. This was done through articles, commentaries, and discussions that highlighted the importance of Vedic knowledge in guiding personal and societal conduct.[16]

Key Figures in Arya Samaj Literature:

Lala Lajpat Rai: Lala Lajpat Rai, a prominent leader in the Indian freedom struggle and a committed Arya Samajist, was a key figure in Arya Samaj literature. Swami Shraddhanand was another significant personality associated with Arya Samaj literature. His commitment to social reform and his work in the field of literature along with his notable contributions were quite praiseworthy.

Arya Samaj's impact on the Indian society:

Religious Reforms: Arya Samaj played a pivotal role in religious reforms by challenging the prevailing practices of idol worship and polytheism. It stressed the importance of monotheism and the worship of the one true God. This had a significant impact on Hindus who embraced Arya Samaj's teachings, leading to a resurgence of Vedic rituals and the rejection of many popular rituals that had crept into Hinduism over the centuries. [17]

Promotion of Education: Arya Samaj advocated for education as a means of enlightening society. The emphasis on the study of the Vedas and Sanskrit revitalized ancient knowledge systems. It also promoted education in vernacular languages, making learning accessible to a wider section of the population.

Influence on Caste System: Arya Samaj's stance against the caste system and caste-based discrimination had a significant impact on Indian society. The movement's efforts to eradicate untouchability and promote social equality were extraordinary.

Women's Rights and Education: Arya Samaj was also at the forefront of advocating for women's rights and education. The movement's role in promoting gender equality and educational opportunities for women cannot be ignored.

Social Welfare Activities: Arya Samaj was not limited to theoretical advocacy; it was also engaged in social welfare activities. These initiatives aimed to provide relief and support to marginalized communities and promote social cohesion. [18]

Challenges and controversies:

Relations with Other Religious and Social Groups: Arya Samaj's reformist agenda occasionally brought it into conflict with other religious and social groups. Consequently, the movement faced criticisms and opposition, both from within and outside its ranks. Arya Samaj's approach to reform and its beliefs faced scrutiny. [19]

Conclusion:

Arya Samaj's impact on Indian society is significant and enduring. Its promotion of monotheism, Vedic knowledge, and social reform has challenged prevailing religious practices and societal norms. It has brought about religious revival, educational advancement, social progress, and women's empowerment. While it has faced criticism for its rigidity and limited outreach, its contributions to Indian society cannot be denied. Arya Samaj continues to be a force for positive change and progress in India, leaving a lasting imprint on the nation's cultural and social fabric.

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GOVERNORSHIP OF SIR THOMAS MUNRO IN THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY: A STUDY ON ACQUISITION OF ESTATES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RYOTWARI SYSTEM, 1807 – 1827

Abstract

The Madras Presidency occupied the southern portion of the peninsular India. When the British took over the administration of India, various systems of land tenure existed. They were Mirasi tenure, Inam or Manyam (Sanskrit) and Cowie. After the advent of the British, they desired fixed land revenue. The Directors of the company in their letter dated 12th April 1786 expressed their disapprobation of the frequent changes in the revenue system of Bengal and recommended the introduction of a permanent settlement of the land revenue. The experiment of the Zamindari system having failed the Ryotwari system was introduced. The Ryotwari system was one in which a direct settlement was made between the State and the Ryot. Sir Thomas Munro worked hard for the introduction and refinement of Ryotwari System in the Madras Presidency. As soon as the Baramahal region was handed over to the British in 1792, Colonel Read introduced annual settlement with the ryots directly. In 1800, Sir Thomas Munro was appointed Collector of the Ceded Districts. This region witnessed with the refinement of Ryotwari system. In 1802 Sir Thomas Munro ordered Survey of land to fix the rent. He further gave much importance for shaping the system in the Ceded Districts until his return to mother country in 1807. With the appointment of Sir Thomas Munro as the Governor of Madras Presidency in 1819, debate started over introduction of Ryotwari System and ultimately the Ryotwari system was reintroduced with certain modifications. The modified Ryotwari System enabled thousands of landless as land owners. In 1820, when Sir Thomas Munro became the Governor, the Madras Board of Revenue submitted a review of survey position in different districts. The present study of this paper is undertaken to examine the governorship of Sir Thomas Munro Tenure, his concept of Ryotwari System, survey and settlement of ryot, Acquisition of Estates and Change into Ryotwari Tenure, introduction of ryotwari system in the acquisition of estates and end of the governorship of Sir Thomas Munro's ryotwari system in the Madras Presidency and the changes it had effected on socially and economically in the Presidency.

Keywords: Baramahal, Madras Presidency, Ryots, Ryotwari System, Salem District, Sir Thomas Munro, Zamindari settlement

Introduction

It cannot be denied that the introduction of permanent settlement had transformed the existing nature of zamindari and poligari establishments. The zamindari

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settlement, introduced throughout the Madras Province failed to large extent and hence it was hoped that the village lease system could be a boon in setting the issue of land revenue permanently. The village settlement that ravaged the country from 1808 to 1814 badly affected cultivation as well as revenue. This lease system also fell short of the expectation due to over-assessment. However, the Government, accepting the proposal of the Board of Revenue ordered the village lease settlement to be made decennial subject to permanency on the approval of the Court of Directors. The latter, distorting the advisability of any permanent system, unequivocally resolved to introduce the Ryotwari Settlement as propounded by Sir Thomas Munro. They were probably influenced by the opinion of Munro who visited Britain in 1807. Henceforth, he had the support of the Court of Directors and utilized this opportunity to remodel the land revenue administration of Madras in accordance with his own ideas. Now it appeared that the interests of the people and those of the Government could be best served by the ryotwari system. As a result the Madras Government decided on the ryotwari mode of settlement in 1814 which had its origin in Baramahal and Salem. The Court of Directors, who appointed a Special Commission to inquire into and reform the judicial system in the Presidency of Bombay, approved these with his other proposals, with Munro as the Principal Commissioner from 1814 to 1817. On the completion of his tenure as a successful Principal Commissioner in Madras, Munro left for England in January 1819. A few weeks after his arrival he received intimation that he had been nominated as Governor of Madras in succession to Elliot. For many years the custom was to appoint as Governor General and Governor of Madras, persons not connected with the Indian Services. Sir Thomas Munro as Governor of that province during 1820-1827 issued orders for the final establishment of ryotwari system throughout the Province. Munro was aware of the oppressions that the ryots suffered at the hands of the revenue officials and he wanted to make law effective so as to check corruption. But before he could materialise his scheme he died in 1827. As no effective step was taken it continued to be a scene of oppression throughout the Company's rule.

Sir Thomas Munro's Concept of Ryotwari Settlement

Before this Despatch had reached Madras, the Government had written to the Directors that the decennial village lease had been introduced after the most careful consideration as had been furnished by the ryotwari system on the resources of the country. Therefore there could be no reason to delay its permanency as the country had shown no improvement under the high assessment fixed by the ryotwari system.[1] On receipt of director's final orders to abandon the permanent revenue system and to revert to ryotwari system, the Government wrote two Despatches, justifying at length their partiality for the permanent village settlement and reiterating the reasons they had urged in its favour. In accordance with the orders from Home, the Board had been directed to report on the means of introducing the ryotwari settlement in all the non-permanently-settled districts.[2] They, however, expressed their fears that a reversion to the ryotwari system would necessarily call for a considerable lowering of the rate of assessment if the proprietary right should be confirmed upon the ryot and the feeling of that right excited in his mind. But the Directors would not go back on their orders. They were not averse to remissions which directly went to the ryots instead of the zamindars and the renters; and they repeated their previous orders for concluding the ryotwari settlement.[3]

The ryotwari system, which aroused so much discussion and which was eventually adopted in all non-permanently-settled lands in the Madras Province, had its origin in the settlements introduced by Col. Read and his assistants, Munro, Macleod and Graham in the Baramahal and Salem Districts ceded to the Company in 1793.[4] The evolution of Sir Thomas Munro as Civil Administrator was gradual but steady. His first appointment as an Assistant Collector in 1792 was due to Cornwallis arrangements for a just and effectual system of revenue management of the Baramahal which the Company had acquired by the treaty of Srirangapatnam in 1799. After seven years he had toiled in this district, Munro went to Canara in 1799 to make the first settlement of it. The share of the Company consisted of the districts of Malabar on the western coast which was first placed under the Government of Bombay and Dindigul, now part of District of Madurai and what was then known as Baramahal, a part of the present district of Salem. Dindigul and the Baramahal were placed under the Government of Madras. There was deficiency of civil servants who possessed a competent knowledge of the native languages. Hence they conducted the revenue administration in Madras with unusual honesty of character and employed military officers in the management of Baramahal. Captain Alexander Read became the Superintendent of Revenue in the Baramahal.[5] Munro served under him in the intelligence department. Munro and two other young officers of the Madras army - Lieutenants William Macleod and James Graham were appointed as his assistants. He thus strengthened the civil administration in two ways, adding at the same time new blood and the stimulus of a competitive spirit. These appointments were made directly by the Governor General and were at first indented to last only for a year, at the end of which Collectors were to be appointed by the Governor from the list of civil servants. As per this arrangement Read and Munro left for Baramahal. Since the ryotwari system which the Court of Directors pressed for the general introduction was the system adopted by Munro in the Ceded Districts, it was quite appropriate to have an idea of the system. Munro took charge of the district of Canara in 1799 as Collector; he was interested not only in the proper collection of revenue, but also in improving the lot of the peasants whose assessments were high. Later on, as Collector of the Ceded Districts, he surveyed and assessed the fields tract by tract. The settlement of Munro recommended for Canara formed the leading principle of ryotwari.[6]

By 1806 it had been extended to Canara and the Ceded districts (by Munro, its great exponent), to Malabar, to Tanjore, to the lands of Tirunelveli, to the Northern and Southern Division of Arcot, in fine, to almost all the districts acquired by the Company into which the permanent zamindari or *muttadari* system had not been established. It differed in some form in the different districts in which it was introduced.[7] Read's system in Baramahal, for instance, differed in some points from the system followed by Munro in the Ceded Districts. The Government regarded the individual ryot's waste lands as circar property and assessed when brought under cultivation. The ryot was given the option of abandoning portions of his holdings or acquiring new holdings at the time of the *jamabandi*, the rights of the ryots and of the circar were defined in the file registers maintained in the Collectors' cutcherry.[8] Since the ryotwari system which the directors pressed general adoption was the system of Munro in the Ceded Districts, it was perhaps sufficient to note the essentials of this system and describe how far it was modified in its subsequent application to the several districts. The distinctive features of his system can be gleaned from his reports on 30 November 1806 and 26 July 1807 sent

to the Board. The first report described the mode in which the settlement was made before the survey was completed, while the second described the survey as well as the assessment based upon the survey introduced in the Ceded Districts.[9]

Survey and Settlement of Ryot

Where the survey had not been made, at the beginning of the ploughing season, the *patel* ascertained what lands each ryot could cultivate. He permitted those who had incurred losses to relinquish part of their lands and these lands he distributed to others willing to take them; and, to such as required none, he continued the former lands. He did not fix their lands, for that was done by the Collector himself when the season was far advanced and an idea could be formed of the crop. The *karnam* and *patel* ascertained that lands each ryot could cultivate at the beginning of the ploughing season. The *tashildar*, followed by the *patel*, was to regulate the cultivation in villages mismanaged by the *patels* and to make advances to the poorer ryots, for purchasing seed, ploughs and cattle. He also ascertained the details about the lands held by each ryots, with the help of *patels* when the crops were ripening, the *tahsildar* surveyed the lands in person, in order to assess their condition and to see whether any fresh lands had been taken up by the ryots for cultivation.[10]

In September or October, when the first crop was about to be harvested, the Collector assembled the ryots from some of the villages to learn from them how far the existing year's crops were better or worse than those of the preceding year. After comparing this information with the accounts of the *patels*and the *tahsildars*, the rent was ordered to be deducted from the settlement of previous year if there was decrease owing to the lands being thrown out of cultivation. The rent of the lands newly occupied was ordered to be added if there was an increase. The rent of the waste lands brought under cultivation was ascertained from the available accounts of the past. In case such accounts did not exist, it was ascertained from the opinion of the most intelligent ryots.[11] However, the full rent of the waste land was not exacted until it had been in cultivation for two to seven years. If the cultivation remained the same as in the preceding year and if no failures were reported by the ryots, the rents remained unaltered. In case the crops were bad and some of the ryots needed remission, the loss or part of it was assessed on the lands where it could be done without causing much inconvenience. This assessment never exceeded ten to twelve per cent and was more often relinquished than made. Wherever the ryots objected to their rent, it was referred to the ryots of other villages and generally, by this method, an equitable settlement was reached within half an hour for which a Collector and his *culcherry* in the past would have taken a whole day to complete.[12] When the renters had been ascertained, the Collector gave every ryot a *patta*with the details of the extent of his fields and the renters for the year. In this manner, the settlement was conducted in all the villages of the district within a month or five weeks. In districts suffering from the effects of invasion or other internal disturbances, the process of making the settlement was necessarily more laborious as it was requisite not only to increase or diminish the rents of such ryots as occupied or threw up land but to raise the rent of every ryot by raising the rent of all land gradually to its former level with the improving condition of the ryots.[13]

Munro believed that when a district had been surveyed and the rent of every field permanently fixed, the ryotwari system was the most simple to be followed. All that was

required was to ascertain what fields were occupied by which ryot and to enter them with the fixed rent attached to them in his *patta;* the aggregate constituted his rent for the year listing the advantages of the ryotwari system, Munro pointed out that:

> The ryothas the advantage of knowing in the beginning of the season, when he ploughs his land, the exact amount of what he was to pay; he knows the fixed rent of the different fields which he cultivates, and that the demand upon him, cannot exceed their total amount; he knows the utmost limit of his rents not only for the present, but for every succeeding year; for it cannot be raised, unless he takes additional land, and he was thereby, the better enabled to provide for the regular discharge of his kists, and against the losses of bad, by the profits of good seasons.[14]

The survey of the Ceded Districts was completed in 1806. Munro's method of survey, though defective in many ways when compared with the modern cadastral survey, was found to produce good results. The surveyors were divided into six groups, each of which was headed by an inspector. They surveyed all lands, roads, sites of town and village, beds of tanks and rivers, waste lands and jungles with the exception of the hills and rocks.[15] The surveyors used a standard chain of thirty-three, and forty times of which made an acre. The head surveyors checked the measurements of the surveyors placed under them. They were followed by assessors two of whom were allotted for the assessment of the land measured by each party of ten surveyors. The assessor went over the land surveyed with the *patel, karnam* and the ryots and arranged it in different classes according to its quality.[16] The inspectors checked the measurements of the surveyors placed under them. The lands, both dry and wet, which had been by custom, divided into first, second, and third sorts, agreeably to their respective produce, were subdivided- wet lands into five or six and dry lands into eight or ten more subdivisions. All cultivable lands were differentiated by their names and also by a number assigned to each as it were surveyed.[17]

The classification was based mostly on the opinion of the *patels*, the *karnams* and the ryots. The quality of the land generally determined its class. However, allowance was made for distance from the village or any other event by which the expenses of cultivation were increased. The work of the surveyors was checked by the inspector who examined whether the classification had been properly made or whether the whole classes had been assessed too high or low. The classification and assessment thus fixed by the inspectors were thoroughly investigated in the Collectors' *cutcherry*. On this occasion, the *petels*, the *karnams* and principal ryots of every village in the district were asked to assemble at the *cutcherry* for enquiry. The total revenue of the district was fixed usually by the Collector after comprising the collections under the native rulers and under the Company's Government from its commencement. The amount fixed by the Collector for the district was generally five to fifteen per cent lower than the estimate of the inspectors. After fixing a certain sum for the district, it was determined what share of this sum was to be imposed on each village. To obviate complaints, the original assessment fixed over every village by the inspector was again examined. Such of those villages as claimed more than the average remission were investigated by the principal ryots of other villages and each claim was either admitted in part or full.[18] The extra remission thus granted to one set of villages was deducted from

another set of villages with less adverse condition prevailing in them. In those villages where objections were made regarding the classification, the objections were examined and if found just necessary deductions were made. In the course of collecting for first year survey rent, "a list was made of such fields as were asserted by the cultivators to be over-rated". Their rent was examined and confirmed or reduced at the end of the year in the presence of the principal ryots. This last operation of the survey usually gave place to a reduction from half to one half per cent on the assessment. This in essence, was the system enunciated and adopted by Munro in the ceded districts.[19]

Acquisition of Estates and Change into Ryotwari Tenure

Proposals for the purchase of permanently settled and their change into ryotwari tenure have been made from time to time, almost from the beginning of the nineteenth century. On several occasions that policy has been advocated, propounded and pursued, as being the only means of realizing the public revenue with regularity and, what was more important, of improving the condition of the ryots. On several other occasions, on the other hand, that policy has not been countenanced either because of some practical difficulties which were found to exist or because of a desire to preserve intact the ancient nobility of the country. On almost all occasions, however, its various implications have been fully discussed. In several instances they followed the former curse; but in many instances they were compelled to have resource to the latter course. Indeed, the districts were no longer enamoured of the permanent settlement, whether it was to be made with the ancient zamindars, *mittadars* or village headmen, - a class of persons with whom both the Board of Revenue and the Government were then seriously thinking of making permanent settlements.[20] They were convinced that their interests were best only under the ryotwari system, a system which had been with so much success introduced in the Baramahal and Ceded districts by Col. Read and Col. Munro. They, therefore, ordered that no more permanent settlements should be concluded and that in all the districts, lately acquired from the Nawab of Arcot, the ryotwari settlements should be introduced. The Court of Directors formulated a definite policy which was considered as a landmark governing the relations between the Government and the zamindars. They advocated the purchase of estates by the Government whenever they were brought to sale on account of arrears and ordered the introduction of ryotwari system in all such estates at the earliest practicable moment.[21]

These instructions were communicated to the Board of Revenue. The Board informed the Government that several estates had been advertised for sale and desired to know the principles which should guide the Collectors in bidding for them; that is, whether all the estates put up for sale were to be purchased and, if so, whether collectors should outbid all others or whether they were to bid only to the extent of the arrears. As to the extent of bidding, they remarked that the object of the Court of Directors being the better management of the estates, it was felt to be advisable to bid even beyond the extent of arrears; but they doubted whether that could be done, seeing that the Regulations authorised the sale of only such portion of the estate as would be adequate to realise the arrears.[22]

For all other details the Board of Revenue referred the Collectors to its minute on 5 January 1818, on the ryotwari system and to the several reports of Sir Thomas Munro explaining the survey and settlement he had made in the Ceded Districts and Salem. The

Board also stated to undertake gradually, and in case of any difficulty the Collector of the Ceded Districts where proper survey had already been made were to be approached for assistance. In these instructions there were some principles which cannot be called ryotwari; such as the basing of the assessment on an average of the past collections alone and the system of joint responsibility of the ryots.[23] The Government realised that owing to the scarcity of experienced resumed estates could not be undertaken with expedition. They were at the same time, eager to introduce the ryotwari system. They, therefore, directed that, where a survey and classification were impracticable, the assessment were to be based upon the average of past collections. Actually it was only in some estates in the Northern Circars that the surveys were not undertaken. In the reverted estates in Chingleput regular surveys were gradually conducted and the assessment was based only on the classification of soils. In the reverted estates in Salem, the assessment was based both on the survey and classification which had already been carefully made by Col. Read and Col. Munro.[24] As regards joint responsibility, though it was intended by the Board and the Government as a security for the public revenue and adopted in some cases, it was soon abandoned as unjust at the instance of the Court of Directors. It should also be mentioned that there were some instances in which it was found impossible to settle for a money assessment with the ryots individually or collectively. In such cases the Government were compelled to keep the villages under what was called the *amani* management, to collect the Government share of the produce in kind from ryots and to dispose of it in the best manner possible. This system which had several serious drawbacks was however, adopted only in the last resort to be replaced by the ryotwari system at the earliest opportunity.[25]

Introduction of Ryotwari System in the Acquisition of Estates Areas

The ryotwari system was introduced also in some of the estates attached and managed by the Collectors or placed under the Court of Wards. It was not considered necessary to elaborate this point further than by giving a few examples. In 1823 the Board of Revenue ordered the introduction of the ryotwari settlement into the attached estates of Palconda, Madgole, Belgaum, Kurupam and Merangai. In 1820, the Board had asked the Collector of Vizagapatam to adopt the ryotwari system in the Vizianagaram estate when it was under his management. The Collector had replied that the zamindar was very anxious to continue the renting system and the Board had, therefore, very reluctantly agreed to continue that system.[26] Regarding the estates under the Court of Wards, that Court, for instance, ordered in 1820 the introduction of the ryotwari settlement into the estates of Nuzvid, Bezwada and Devarakota. They adopted any system it thought best for the welfare of its wards and the interests of ryots. And it would seem that ryotwari settlements were made in these estates, except in certain hill villages. It must not; however, he imagined that all estates under the court of Ward were managed under the ryotwari system. Where the estates were under the court only for a short period, it was not considered worthwhile to adopt this system and the existing system was continued with such modifications as were deemed necessary.[27]

On the other side the Government was out to purchase all estates on the plea of arrears with the object of converting them into ryotwari. They tried, as far as possible, to preserve the ancient estates from disintegration. This was evidenced by their taking up temporarily under the Collector's management several ancient estates which were in

embarrassed circumstances, instead of allowing them to be in liquidation of private, debts or arrears of revenue.[28] This was also evidenced by a proposal made by Sir Thomas Munro in 1821 to introduce an Entail Regulation, the forerunner of the Impartible Estates Land Act of 1904. He proposed that

> no ancient zamindari should be sold for arrears of public revenue or private debts; that every such zamindari according to its ancient usage should descend to a single heir, whether by descent or adoption; that no ancient zamindar should be arrested for his private debts; that every such zamindar should make provision for the maintenance of the relations of his family according to usage; that the Government alone could order the division of such zamindaries under special circumstances or decide all questions respecting succession or provision for relations.

It was not his intention to make this regulation compulsory, but to leave it to the option of the ancient zamindars. The Regulation was, however, not passed into law partly because some of the ancient zamindars were against it, but mainly because Munro himself very soon changed his views regarding the zamindari system. He saw no remedy for the evils of the system or for the salvation of the ryots, except that of purchasing the estates, wherever possible, on account of the Government and converting them into ryotwari.[29] As a result of this a large number of estates in arrears were put up for sale and purchased by the Government in the various districts. Some estates were also voluntarily surrendered to the Government by their proprietor, owing to their inability to pay their *peshkush*. Upon a tour of Northern Circars greatly struck by the agrarian discontent and poverty of the people, Sir Thomas Munro recorded his impressions and suggestion in an important minute on 7 January 1823 as follows:[30]

> On the whole it appears to me that, in order to render the local administration of the circarsgradualy more efficient, it will be advisable to restore no lands which have once reverted to Government…..

This portion of the minute relating to the acquisition of estates was circulated by the Board of Revenue to the Collectors of the Northern Circars.

The End of the Governorship of Sir Thomas Munro's Ryotwari System

On 31 December 1824, Sir Thomas Munro again recorded another valuable minute on the condition of the country, in which he once more referred to the unsatisfactory state of the Northern Circars and the impossibility of protecting the rights of the ryots in those parts unless and until the estates reverted to the Government.[31] Although Munro held such strong views regarding the evils of the permanent settlement, he was by no means for abolishing that system by a stroke of the pen. He did not consider that the circumstances at that time demanded the adoption of such a drastic measure. What he wanted was that, whenever opportunities occurred, the estates should be acquired and annexed to the Government lands. That such were his views was clear from the attitude he adopted towards a proposal for the wholesale acquisition of estates, which was shortly afterwards received from one of the collectors. This bold proposal emanated from Roberts, the Collector of Masulipatam. In a letter dated on 3 October 1824, he suggested to the Board of Revenue that the best remedy for the evils of the zamindari system was that of taking over all the estates in his district and prisoning off

the zamindars.[32] He explained how, under the permanent settlement it was impossible either to realize the public revenue punctually or to protect the ryots against the exactions of the zamindars. With his fields overrun "by a crowd of ephemeral sibbandi" squatting upon his land and preying upon his purse the ryot had little hope of improving his fortune. At the same time, the state had no guarantee for its public revenue. He pointed out that even in a season of signal advantages several of the zamindars had fallen into arrears. And this was chiefly because they had diverted the collections to feed their vanity and extravagance. Indeed, he could see no better prospects so long as the Government perpetuated the zamindari system by undertaking to manage the estates for realizing arrears. This method of bolstering up the zamindaris frustrated, in his opinion, the very objects which it was intended to avoid by the permanent settlement, viz. the relief to the Government from direct management and the certainty of collection of revenue. The Board, however, was sanguine that, as the zamindars gradually realised the beneficial effects of a moderate assessment in the estates which had reverted to the Government, they would be induced to moderate their own demands upon the ryots and to contribute to the prosperity of their estates. The Board likewise relied upon Regulation V of 1822 which had just then been passed, and which, the Board conceived, put it with the power of the Collector to compel the zamindars to issue *pattah* limiting and defining their demands upon the ryots, by making distrait illegal, unless *pattah* had been tendered.[33] But the Government, at this time presided over by Munro, did not entertain the extreme views of the Board they however, agreed with the Board that Robert's scheme was "rashly formed and wholly unfit to be acted upon" under the prevailing circumstances. They also agreed that the zamindari rights were entitled to the same regard as the other rights of private property. But they observed;

> All such rights, indeed, are liable to be modified by legislative enactments for the general good. But they ought not to be interfered with except upon very sure grounds of policy and upon occasions where interference with them is necessary the greatest care should be taken to render to the parties substantial justice".[34]

From this it is evident that, far from accepting the view that the permanent settlement could never be altered, the Government held that they had an undoubted right to change it for the general good of the country. Although it was considered unwise to acquire estates wholesale in the manner suggested by Roberts, the Government were often compelled to acquire a large number of estates on account of arrears. For, maladministration and accumulation of arrears were by no means confined to the Masulipatam estates about which he had remarked. They were equally common; indeed, they existed in a more aggravated form, in the estates of the adjoining districts of Rajamundry and Guntur.[35]

Under this system the government made a direct settlement of revenue with the cultivators of the lands. Intermediaries were excluded and the government received its dues in the form of money for lands under cultivation. Munro expressed with a sense of satisfaction that the land in most of the areas under the Madras Province was occupied by a vast mass of small proprietors of ryots. The Ryotwari system greatly expanded the powers of the revenue servants, for they were empowered to decide the quality of the land and rate of assessment. A moderate assessment mostly depended upon the ability of

the ryots to have the favour of the public officials such as the corrupt *karnam* and the tahsildar. No matter whether the season was good or bad and whether the ryot cultivated the entire field or not, the administrators had collected harshly from the cultivators. It resulted in the miseries of the ryots such as oppression, torture and forced labour. Finally, they were deprived of their possessions. Besides, the system paved the way for the agricultural indebtedness. The ryots demanded money to buy seeds to cultivate the fields and to remit taxes. Therefore, they approached moneylenders and borrowed money even at a high rate of interest. They were given no remission even during adverse seasons. The debt-ridden and poverty stricken ryots fell victims to the oppression of the Government.[36]

The different experiment in revenue administration gradually led the permanent settlement to its decline. Considering Ryotwari settlement as the substitute for permanent settlement, the Government embarked upon its further progress. Nevertheless, its inherent defect reminded the government to effect change in it. The implementation of one system of revenue in the midst of the permanent settlement brought the latter's gradual decline. The overall decline took place by 1827 with the end of the Governorship of Thomas Munro since he carried out the implementation of ryotwari settlement in the non-permanently settled areas vigorously. After Munro, the ryotwari settlement so concluded continued unchanged till the introduction of the modern survey and settlement in 1885. The improved system known as the Modern Ryotwari System continued to operate till date.[37]

Conclusion

The final revenue settlement on the basis of the ryotwari term was carried out by advantage of all experiments undertaken by the former collections. It was intended to promote and facilitate a modified and improved ryotwari settlement. The Court of Directors were convinced that the interests of the State as well as the agricultural classes could be secured best only under the ryotwari system. They therefore ordered that in all the districts in the Madras Presidency, the ryotwari settlement should be implemented. However, it cannot be denied that the ryotwari system established a definite and more intimate contact between the Government and the people. The frequent tours enabled the English officials to learn more about the customs and habits of the people. This led to a better understanding between the rulers and the ruled. Munro held that the ryotwari system was the most simple to be followed. No serious difficulty had arisen owing to any deference of opinion as to the interpretation of the ryotwari contract. In the ryotwari contract Government dealt with an individual who was technically assumed to be acting on his own account. Even when he became a defaulter, they merely sold such portion of his land as was sufficient to cover the amount due. The Government was to enter into a settlement with each ryot directly with regard to the rent that he had to pay. The waste lands to be regarded as circar property but was to be assessed, when it was brought under cultivation. Each ryot supplied with a *patta*in which particulars about the extent of thefield that he held and the amount of rent that was to be paid were recorded. During the Munro's Governorship, the ryotwari settlement became the rule by which most governing powers were centralised and retained by the Government. The system, hence, generally became desirable both for the Government and the ryots. The system diffused the right of property more extensively than any other system. Perhaps the flaws

experiences gained, it proved to be a much improved one and helped to promote the welfare of the ryots. The improved system known as the modern ryotwari system, continued to operate till date. Consequently, the Government acknowledged the need for the final adoption of a fixed and permanent assessment. Yet the practical case of the ryotwari settlement was selected after much discussion. It was finally introduced in all places except the areas under the zamindari system.

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THE RELEVANCE OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE PRESENT TIME

ABSTRACT---- *The ancient Indian education system was a holistic approach to learning, extending beyond knowledge acquisition to personality development and moral values. Centred around Dharma (righteousness), truth, and morality, it emphasized the cultivation of virtues like compassion, selflessness, and non-violence. Education in ancient India prioritized mental, physical, and spiritual growth, training students in diverse disciplines such as the arts, music, mathematics, astronomy, Ayurveda, and religious studies. A cornerstone of this system was the gurukul tradition, where students lived with their teachers (gurus) in a disciplined and simple environment. This model fostered respect, self-reliance, and a deep bond between guru and disciple. Education included practical skills like agriculture, crafts, and warfare, alongside yoga, meditation, and physical exercises, promoting holistic development and self-discipline. Women's education also held a significant place, with women actively studying scriptures during the Vedic period. In contrast, modern education focuses heavily on professional success and financial gain, often neglecting moral and cultural values. This shift has contributed to societal challenges like corruption and insensitivity. Reviving ancient principles can address these issues by fostering character development and social responsibility. Ancient teachings like "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family) and "Tena Tyaktena Bhunjitha" (consume with restraint) also offer solutions to contemporary environmental crises.*

Keywords- Ancient Education , Modern Education , Gurukul , Knowledge , Veda

INTRODUCTION---- The commercialization of education has diminished the once-sacred role of teachers. In ancient India, teachers were life guides and role models, inspiring their students through moral and spiritual leadership. The teacher (guru) held a revered position, regarded as the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh—the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. Teachers were expected to impart knowledge selflessly and guide students in every aspect of life. However, modern education has largely become commercialized, reducing the teacher-student relationship to one of formality and self-interest. Today, teachers are often viewed merely as instructors, in stark contrast to the ancient system, where they were life guides and sources of inspiration. Reviving this traditional role of the teacher is essential for societal progress.

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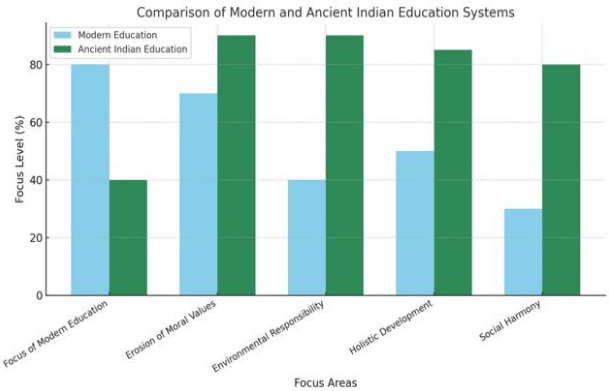
The core principles of the ancient Indian education system—morality, the preservation of cultural values, and holistic development—remain highly relevant today. Integrating these principles into the modern education system can transform it from being merely career-oriented to life-oriented. Initiatives such as the New Education Policy represent commendable steps toward reconnecting students with their roots and instilling moral values. A harmonious synthesis of ancient and modern education systems can arrest the moral decline in society and foster a holistic, empowered community.

The primary objective of the ancient Indian education system

Throughout Indian history, education has been regarded as a fundamental pillar of human life and civilization. Ancient Indian sages, thinkers, and philosophers perceived education not just as a means of acquiring knowledge but as a pathway to achieving the ultimate purpose of life and holistic personal development. Education was not confined to the acquisition of formal knowledge; it also focused on nurturing personality, character, and inner qualities, while instilling a sense of duty toward society and the natural world.The ancient Indian education system was rooted in the Vedas, regarded as the ultimate source of knowledge. The Vedas explored various dimensions of life and inspired an education system that sought to elevate both the external and internal aspects of human existence. The primary objectives of this system were to uphold high moral values, promote dharma-centric thinking, and foster character development. Krishnamani Tripathi, 2017 ‘‘ Ancient scriptures explicitly state that life without education is akin to that of an animal, emphasizing that education distinguishes humans from animals by transforming them into intelligent, moral, and social beings’’.1The ancient Indian education system was highly effective in fostering holistic human development and maintaining societal balance. Its purpose extended beyond the dissemination of knowledge to include the moral, spiritual, and cultural enrichment of society. Restoring this ethos in the modern system could transform the teacher-student relationship. Efforts such as India's New Education Policy reflect a growing recognition of the need to integrate cultural heritage and moral values into education. By blending ancient and modern practices, education can become a balanced, life-oriented framework. This approach can promote individual fulfilment, societal harmony, and global unity while addressing pressing challenges like inequality, environmental degradation, and moral decline. A unified system that draws on the strengths of both ancient and modern principles could create a more ethical and sustainable future



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The ancient Indian education system aimed to inspire students to lead lives rooted in *dharma* (righteousness), truth, and morality. Centered around sacred texts like the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, it emphasized virtues such as truthfulness, non-violence, compassion, and generosity. Education prioritized moral values, encouraging integrity while steering students away from vices like dishonesty and selfishness. It instilled a profound sense of responsibility towards society and nature system promoted holistic growth, addressing physical, mental, and intellectual development. Akhilesh A. Nimje, Kalyani Tripathy Dubey, 2013 ‘‘Students were trained in critical thinking, reasoning, and diverse disciplines, including religion, art, music, astronomy, Ayurveda, and mathematics. Physical health and discipline were integral, with yoga and exercise nurturing self-control, concentration, and well-being. Meditation and spiritual practices encouraged students to explore the soul, the divine, and the mysteries of life, fostering a quest for spiritual liberation. Education was conducted in *gurukuls*, where students lived with their teachers (gurus) in a disciplined, simple environment. Gurus played a pivotal role in shaping students' character and fostering mental and spiritual growth’’.2 The personalized approach ensured a well-rounded education that extended beyond theoretical knowledge to practical skills like agriculture, crafts, and martial arts, nurturing self-reliance and responsibility. Gretchen Rhines Cheney, Betsy Brown Ruzzi, Karthik Muralidharan ,2005 ‘‘Education in ancient India was founded on the principles of the Vedas, the rituals of sacrifice, grammar and etymology, an exploration of nature's mysteries, logical reasoning, science, and the development of occupational skills. The system explicitly acknowledged self-realization as the ultimate aim of life, distinguishing it as unique in many ways’’.3 A.S. Altekar,2009 ‘‘A key objective was to establish harmony and balance in society.Education inspired individuals to contribute to societal and national development as ideal citizens’’. 4 Isha Upnishad , The system also emphasized coexistence with nature, promoting sustainable living through principles like the Vedic mantra *Tena tyaktena bhunjitha* (Enjoy with restraint). 5Inclusivity was another cornerstone, making education accessible to all, regardless of caste, class, or economic status. This fostered equality, cooperation, and collective responsibility, laying the foundation for a harmonious and balanced society. The ancient Indian education system, with its focus on values, practical knowledge, and holistic growth, offers valuable insights for addressing contemporary challenges in education and societal development.

The Relevance of the Ancient Indian Education System in Contemporary Times — In a Global Context

Modern education emphasizes professional success and wealth, often neglecting moral values, social responsibility, and holistic growth. This approach contrasts sharply with the ancient Indian education system, which prioritized character-building, ethical conduct, and societal duty. In the Vedic education system, the teacher-student relationship (Guru-Shishya) focused on imparting truth, morality, and spirituality alongside academic learning. These principles are highly relevant today in addressing societal challenges like corruption, inequality, and social insensitivity Krishnakant Pathak ,2010 ,Dr. Sarvpalli Radhakrishnan said that“A civilization is not built of brick

and mortar, steel and machinery, but of the character of its people, the quality of their thoughts, and the nobility of their aspirations. The true aim of education is to develop the inherent perfection of man, and to bring out the beauty and harmony in both body and soul." 6. The conference appointed a committee chaired by Dr. Zakir Husain, known as the **Basic National Education Committee** or the **Zakir Husain Committee**, to prepare a detailed scheme and syllabus for this policy. The committee submitted its report in December 1937, formulating the Wardha Scheme of Basic National Education, or Nai Talim. Gandhiji desired that the basic education system should be self-supporting for every child by learning a craft or occupational skill for livelihood. He wanted education to ensure employment. He told "My Nai Talim is not dependent on money. The running expenses should come from the educational process itself.7 Environmental degradation and resource overexploitation are pressing global issues. Ancient Indian teachings emphasized sustainable living, harmony with nature, and preservation of resources. Concepts such as *"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"* (The world is one family) and *"Tena Tyaktena Bhunjitha"* (Consume with restraint) remain highly applicable, offering guidance for fostering environmental responsibility and sustainable practices in modern education.

The modern focus on technical and professional skills often overlooks the holistic growth of individuals. In contrast, the Gurukul system emphasized a comprehensive approach, integrating mental, physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. Students engaged in meditation, physical labour, and moral education, fostering discipline, self-restraint, and resilience. Such a framework can inspire modern education to nurture well-rounded individuals capable of tackling life's challenges with integrity. Rising individualism and competitiveness in contemporary society have increased alienation and insensitivity. The ancient Indian education system's emphasis on collectivism, cooperation, and social harmony offers solutions to these issues. The Gurukul system encouraged communal living and altruism, promoting unity and societal cohesion. By revisiting the principles of ancient Indian education, societies can address modern challenges effectively. Integrating ethics, sustainability, holistic development, and social harmony into education frameworks can create a balanced and inclusive world, ensuring education fosters both personal growth and collective upliftment.

Below is a visualization of the key components of ancient Indian education compared to modern education and their relevance:

Key Areas	Ancient System	Modern System	Relevance in the Present World
Focus	Holistic (Mental, Physical, Spiritual)	Primarily Professional and Financial	Incorporating holistic values for balance
Moral Education	Integral Part	Largely Overlooked	Essential for addressing societal issues
Teacher's Role	Guide, Mentor	Instructor	Reviving teacher-student relationships

Gender Equality	Women Educated (Vedic Age)	Improved but Uneven	Combining empowerment with moral grounding
Environmental Harmony	Harmony with Nature (e.g., "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam")	Rarely Addressed	Sustainability and environmental awareness
Cultural Roots	Sanskrit, Vedas, Upanishads	Limited Inclusion	Reconnecting with cultural heritage
Practical Skills	Agriculture, Crafts, Yoga	Limited Vocational Training	Bridging gaps in vocational education

This graph highlights how the integration of ancient principles into the modern system can enrich education and address global challenges effectively.

DISCUSSION

Discussion between Ancient and Modern Education system

Teachers The ancient Indian education system, led by "gurus" in the gurukul model, emphasized holistic and spiritual learning. Teachers prioritized character development, moral values, and the cultivation of virtues such as humility, patience, and self-discipline. Education was personalized, with one-on-one mentorship tailored to individual needs, enabling deeper understanding. Subjects ranged from Vedas and philosophy to astronomy and mathematics, often connected to practical applications like agriculture and trade. Education aimed not only at intellectual growth but also at understanding one's societal role and the deeper truths of existence, rooted in philosophical texts like the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*.Modern Indian education, influenced by Western models, focuses on structured, standardized teaching methods that prioritize critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and technological skills. Teachers emphasize the importance of global competitiveness and digital literacy, preparing students for modern challenges. While standardization ensures accessibility and fairness, it often limits individual creativity and personalized learning. However, there is growing recognition of the need for emotional and social learning, incorporating traits such as empathy and collaboration, echoing ancient values.

Bridging these perspectives reveals opportunities for integration. Ancient teachings on ethics, mindfulness, and holistic development can enrich modern education. Value-based education and mindfulness practices can cultivate well-rounded individuals. Knowledge from ancient scholars, like Aryabhata in mathematics or Charaka in medicine, can complement modern scientific advancements. Personalized mentorship from the Gurukul system can inspire modern teaching strategies, particularly in smaller classroom

settings.By blending the ancient focus on moral and holistic development with modern priorities like critical thinking, innovation, and technology, education can foster intellectual, emotional, and ethical growth. This integrated framework offers a balanced approach to address both individual aspirations and societal challenges in the present world.

The discussion between the ancient and modern education systems reveals stark contrasts, particularly in their objectives, methods, and the role of teachers. Here is a comparative analysis:

Ancient Indian Education System

1. **Teacher's Role**
   - The "guru" was a mentor, life guide, and role model, deeply respected and seen as a spiritual leader.
   - The teacher-student relationship was personal, intimate, and based on trust and mutual respect.
   - Education was imparted with the goal of holistic development, including moral, spiritual, intellectual, and physical growth.
2. **Focus and Objectives**
   - Emphasized character development, moral values, and the cultivation of virtues like humility, self-discipline, and patience.
   - Education aimed at understanding one's societal role and spiritual truths.
   - Knowledge was integrated with practical applications, such as agriculture, governance, and trade.
3. **Methodology**
   - The "gurukul" system involved students living with their teacher, enabling a 24/7 immersive learning experience.
   - Learning was personalized, often tailored to the student's aptitude and needs.
   - Subjects included philosophy, the Vedas, astronomy, mathematics, and practical life skills.
4. **Outcome**
   - Students emerged as well-rounded individuals with strong moral values and practical skills.

T The system fostered a deep connection with culture, tradition, and nature

Modern Education System

1. **Teacher's Role**
   - Teachers are primarily instructors, delivering curriculum-defined knowledge.

- Relationships with students are more formal and transactional, often limited to classrooms.
- The focus is on professional expertise rather than holistic mentorship.

2. **Focus and Objectives**
   - Education is primarily career-oriented, aiming to equip students with the skills needed for employment.
   - Emphasis is placed on standardized testing, measurable outcomes, and specialization in subjects.
   - Values and moral education are often secondary or absent.
3. **Methodology**
   - Predominantly classroom-based learning, with a structured and uniform curriculum.
   - Digital and online education is increasingly prevalent, offering global exposure but reducing personal interaction.
   - Focus on cognitive skills and rote learning over experiential or value-based education.
4. **Outcome**
   - Produces professionals and skilled workers but often neglects emotional intelligence, ethics, and spiritual growth.
   - Students are more connected to technology but may lack a sense of cultural roots and holistic development.

Resultant Outcome of the Discussion

1-Need for Balance

- A synthesis of ancient and modern approaches can bring the best of both worlds.
- Modern systems can incorporate the personalized mentorship and value-based teachings of ancient systems.

1-Teacher's Role

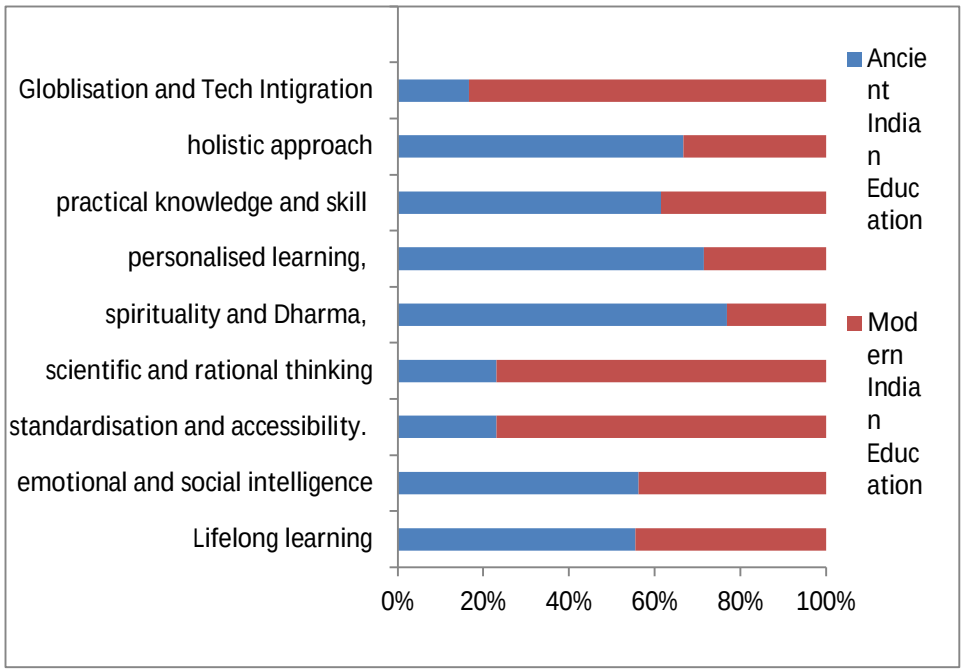
- Teachers should be empowered to guide beyond academics, fostering moral and ethical growth in students
  - Teacher training programs should include elements of holistic and spiritual education.

Integrative Learning

- Curricula should balance career-oriented subjects with teachings on culture, values, and self-awareness.
- Practical knowledge from ancient systems, such as sustainability and community living, can be integrated.

2. **Outcome for Society**

- Students educated under a balanced system would emerge as morally strong, intellectually capable, and socially responsible individuals.
- This can address current societal issues like inequality, environmental degradation, and moral decline. By bridging ancient wisdom with modern techniques, education can become a transformative force that not only prepares individuals for careers but also molds them into ethical, compassionate, and well-rounded human beings.



CONCLUSION

juxtaposition of ancient and modern education systems offers profound insights into how learning can evolve to address the multifaceted needs of individuals and societies. Both systems have their unique strengths, and integrating these can create an educational framework that is balanced, effective, and meaningful. A thoughtful synthesis of their approaches not only enhances academic pursuits but also addresses the pressing challenges of personal and societal well-being in the modern world.The ancient Indian education system emphasized holistic growth, aiming to develop not only intellectual capabilities but also moral and spiritual dimensions. Rooted in the gurukul tradition, the focus was on nurturing virtues like humility, self-discipline, and patience while imparting practical and philosophical knowledge. This system's strength lay in its personalized mentorship, cultural immersion, and value-based teaching, which created

individuals who were both knowledgeable and deeply connected to their cultural and spiritual roots.

In contrast, the modern education system prioritizes standardized methodologies, preparing students for careers in a competitive global environment. It fosters critical thinking, innovation, and technological expertise, aligning education with contemporary demands. However, the emphasis on measurable outcomes, professional specialization, and digital learning often comes at the cost of emotional intelligence, moral education, and a sense of cultural identity.The growing challenges in the modern world, such as moral decline, environmental degradation, and social inequalities, highlight the need for a more integrative approach to education. The ancient emphasis on character development and holistic growth can complement modern priorities like innovation and global competitiveness. By adopting the best elements of both systems, education can prepare individuals to excel not only in their careers but also as compassionate, ethical, and socially responsible members of society.To achieve this synthesis, modern education can incorporate several aspects of ancient wisdom. For instance, value-based education, mindfulness practices, and teachings on ethics can cultivate emotionally and morally grounded individuals. Personal mentorship inspired by the gurukul model can foster deeper learning, especially in smaller classroom settings. Practical applications of ancient knowledge, such as sustainable living and community-based practices, can address contemporary global challenges like climate change and resource management.

Teachers play a pivotal role in this transformation. Empowering educators to go beyond curriculum delivery and act as mentors who guide students holistically is crucial. Training programs should integrate elements of moral and spiritual education to enable teachers to inspire both intellectual and ethical growth. This shift can create stronger teacher-student relationships, fostering an environment of trust and mutual respect reminiscent of the ancient system.Furthermore, integrating cultural and philosophical teachings into modern curricula can help students remain rooted in their heritage while preparing them for the future. Encouraging experiential learning, collaboration, and social responsibility ensures that education transcends mere academic achievement, nurturing well-rounded individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society.

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RESHMA MAJEED[1] **(6)**

CONTEXT AS TEXT: SOME HISTORICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN READING MUSLIM WOMEN

Abstract:

The dominant image of the Muslim woman, as silent and oppressed, is a key trope in the wider political and social debates globally. Often projected as a victim of both Islam and Muslim patriarchy, Muslim women occupy a liminal status in social and political histories. A significant shift in this narrative has ensued in the past decades owing to certain methodological shifts in feminism. These shifts have helped to situate both gender theory and its praxis in a larger s6cio-political landscape and have necessitated a new focus on Muslim women's lived experiences in the overlapping contexts of micro/macro politics that determine aspects of religiosity and Muslim identity. The new focus has also helped highlight the diversities in the lives of South Asian Muslim women and invites immense academic attention to the complexities of social and political contexts in these multicultural societies. This paper attempts to briefly trace the trajectory of this theoretical turn that triggered a paradigm shift in analysing the category " Muslim" women, which foregrounds the contexts and calls for a thorough focus on the history and situatedness of their gendered experiences.

Keywords: Muslim Women, Islam, Context, Feminism

Context as Text: Some Historical and Methodological Issues in Reading Muslim Women

The recent focus on contextual specificities in gender discourses has prompted the academia for a more critical engagement with feminism itself. They foreground the complex question of difference and dismiss the notion that there can be a unified, homogenous account of women's experiences. Issues such as essentialism in the definition of woman and methodological universalisms in Western feminism emerged as major grounds of contention in many academic enterprises. The critique of Western feminism by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, in her article titled "Under Western Eyes" (1988), helps address the question of complexity involved in simplistically drawing on Western theoretical approaches in the study of women in non-Western and Muslim societies. It also highlights the need to exercise caution in using the concepts drawn from such methodological approaches in studying Muslim women and their lived religiosities.

Mohanty's concern lies specifically in the extensive writings, both academic and historiographic, produced by the First World concerning women from the Third World. She emphasises that the portrayal of women, as constructed by dominant discourses, is not based on straightforward implications. Instead, it is an arbitrary

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relationship established by specific cultures. Mohanty, in her work, subsequently delves into a detailed analysis of those aspects of writings that "discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/representing a composite, singular 'third world woman' -an image which appears arbitrarily constructed, but nevertheless carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse" (51). Mohanty adds: "[I]t is only insofar as "woman/women" and "the East" are defined as others, or as peripheral, that (Western) man/ humanism can represent him/itself as center. It is not the center that determines the periphery, but the periphery that, in its boundlessness determines the center"(69). Mohanty's concerns reveal the contentious issues in Western feminism, which include the use of universal methodologies in defining the category of women. The issue of the generic portrayal of the Third World woman raised by Mohanty, and its subsequent contestation, is addressed by several Indian scholars, including KumKum Sangari, Kalpana Ram, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, and Radha Kumar.

Catherine Hall, in her study of the impact of colonialism, probes into the history of Western enterprises on the Third world to show how constructing the other was central to the imperialist discourse. In her analysis of imperial masculinity, she describes how the colonised people were presented to the English and how it played a crucial role in defining and reinforcing the authority of the Western man. She says that the Empire was an integral part of the English people's everyday existence, deeply ingrained in their collective imagination, contributing to their identity, and shaping their perception of the world. For them, being English was synonymous with being of Caucasian descent, Anglo-Saxon heritage, and gave them a belief in their inherent supremacy, being able to govern a significant portion of the world's population. English individuals could envision themselves as rulers over "natives" in India, amassing wealth in Australia's goldfields or South Africa's diamond mines, and undertaking missionary work among "heathen" populations in the Caribbean. Hall explains how the Empire offered English citizens opportunities and experiences beyond the confines of their homeland, granting them forms of authority that might have been unattainable domestically, and presenting alluring prospects involving "native" sensuality. She contends that, during the mid-nineteenth century, the Empire played a crucial role in shaping English masculinity by defining the non-Western world as the "other" (180).

These engagements, which deal with the complex mechanisms of constructing the Third World other, have also led to a new interest in the diverse histories of women and religion and have subsequently led to the emergence of contextualised analyses of women and gender discourses. Amongst these inquiries, there is a keen interest among researchers in the discourses on Muslim women and their gendering. The stereotypical images of the East, perpetuated by the writers and travellers, contributed immensely in establishing several myths about the Muslim worlds and its women. In effect, the anecdotes of Eastern decadence, replete with stereotypical images of degeneracy, functioned as a self propagating propaganda that helped the West to assert their superior status. In these controverted histories produced by the West, they used the Muslim body as a symbol of cultural difference. Edward Said says, "So far as the West was concerned during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an assumption had been made that the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West" (40-41).

The history of the Muslim worlds and the dominant discourse on Islamic veil is also invariably constructed by the West. Leila Ahmed, in her landmark study on Muslim women, *Women and Gender in Islam* (1992), draws on the colonial narratives on Egypt to explicate how the colonial rhetoric about the East was used effectively to spread prejudices and misconceptions of the culture of the East. This, in turn, helped the West to empower themselves and to justify their domination. She states that the roots of the contemporary discourse on Muslim female body can be traced back to these narratives and the resultant polemics between the East and the West:

> The new prominence, indeed centrality, that the issue of women came to occupy in the Western and colonial narrative of Islam by the late nineteenth century appears to have been the result of a fusion between a number of strands of thought all developing within the Western world in the latter half of that century. Thus the reorganized narrative, with its new focus on women, appears to have been a compound created out of a coalescence between the old narrative of Islam just referred to (and which Edward Said's *Orientalism* details) and the broad, all-purpose narrative of colonial domination regarding the inferiority, in relation to the European culture, of all Other cultures and societies, a narrative that saw vigorous development over the course of the nineteenth century. (150)

Several studies in this area reveal how the writings of travellers and missionaries helped the West to establish the differences between "them" and "Us". Their anecdotal accounts were interspersed with exaggerated and fictionalised accounts of the colonial natives that would satisfy the expectations of the Western readers. The construction of the East by the West was also the construction of the Eastern woman–veiled, suppressed, and invisible. These narratives were propagated in the Western world as authentic sources of female experiences. Foreign diplomats and missionaries both stressed the need to liberate the Muslim women from the hands of Muslim men and Islam. Leila Ahmed states that the Western colonialists considered the segregation of women and the practice of the hijab as indicative of Muslim backwardness, posing a barrier to their development. She examines how the missionaries, too, upheld these concepts and propagated Christian principles as the only means of liberation to the native women folk (153).

Leila Ahmed also discusses how Western historical accounts depicted the Islamic veil as a symbol of oppression. Veiling, which was readily apparent to Western observers, served as a prominent symbol representing the perceived distinctiveness and perceived inferiority of Islamic cultures. It came to symbolise not only the subjugation of women (or, as it was described at the time, Islam's suppression of women) but also the perceived backwardness of Islam. Ahmed argues that veiling became the focal point of colonial criticism and a primary target in the colonial efforts to undermine Muslim societies (152). Tuula Sakaranaho elaborates on the constructedness of these discourses:

> In the Western orientalist discourse on Islam, the veiling of Muslim women has been seen as a visible sign of the oppression Islam inflicts on women. Behind their covers; Muslim women have been hidden from the foreign gaze. However, extravagant stories of 19th century Western male travellers have purported to reveal their secrets. In these travel accounts, Muslim women are approached either with horror and pity when seen as 'beasts of burden' or little

> more than with exotism and eroticism because, hidden away in the harem, they were imagined to possess excessive sensuality. Nevertheless, these Western male travellers did not, in actual fact, gain access to the private domain of Muslim women. The secrets these men revealed were little more than the fruits of their own daydreaming inspired by the mysterious East. Muslim women behind their veils remained mute and invisible. (331)

The same discourse of veiled, subjugated women was shared and reinforced by many Western educated native reformists in the colonies. Embracing this colonial ideology, native men and women further entrenched their own subordination within their culture, and their nation's submission to European dominance. In Egypt, for instance, Qassim Amin, in his book on the emancipation of woman published in 1899, echoes Lord Cromer when he expresses the colonial view that the degradation of Muslim women was due to the cultural beliefs that permitted its women to be veiled and segregated (Ahmed, 161-162).

The language of feminism was also effectively assimilated into the discourse of colonialism and utilised to target Islamic societies' treatment of women. Men employed by the colonial administration, like Lord Cromer in Egypt, paradoxically opposed feminism in their home country but embraced feminist rhetoric in the colonial context. They criticised Egyptian men for endorsing practices they deemed harmful to women. These narratives about Muslim women were used by the West to highlight the differences between the women of the East and the West. Though conditions of European women were not utopian, as they lacked autonomy and had an inferior status in society, the colonial architects projected the image of the Western woman as worth emulating and modern. Islamic religiosity in these Muslim societies was perpetually pitted against modernity by the colonial masters. This strategy of subverting and appropriating the colonised culture can be seen as an attempt by the colonising power to justify its occupation policies and validate its dominance. The type of feminism that evolved from this colonial setting became a substitute form of dominance that fostered a sense of superiority among both colonised men and women who adopted it.

An understanding of the complexities involved in universalised readings of Muslim women's gendered experiences and representations has led to a paradigm shift in feminism's methodological approaches. The evolving approach in feminism now emphasizes the diversity of experiences among Muslim women, enriched by sociological theories and methodologies. These tools analyse how gender norms and practices are negotiated in everyday life within Muslim contexts, highlighting their significance. Key areas of study in sociology and anthropology concerning gender and Islam explore the influence of religious agency and authority on women's experiences. Saba Mahmood's influential work, "The Politics of Piety" (2004), provides a detailed examination of how Muslim women engage with Islamic traditions, illustrating how religious texts and rituals shape their adherence to religious norms. In her study of Muslim women's involvement in Egypt's revivalist mosque movement, Mahmood argues that Western feminist methods must be reexamined to better incorporate the experiences of Muslim women.

Building on Talal Asad's intellectual legacy, Mahmood invited significant scholarly attention to Muslim women's engagement with the Islamic discursive tradition, setting forth a paradigmatic shift that foregrounds various micro-social practices of

religiosity and its role in the ethical self-fashioning of Muslim women. Similar to Mahmood's critical enterprise is a work by Sherine Hafez, *An Islam of Her Own: Reconsidering Religion and Secularism in Women's Islamic Movements* (2011). In this work, Hafez focuses on women's Islamic activism in Egypt to challenge the binary representations of religious versus secular subjectivities. She analyses the ways in which women, who participate in Islamic activism, express their identity, voice their aspirations and embody discourses in which the distinctions between religious and secular spaces fluidly merge. (125-126).

A brief overview of the major contestations within feminism attempted here makes it clear that these feminists not only de-traditionalise Islam by rereading relations between genders but also appropriate feminism in ways that make it a more inclusive methodological approach. Their approach and its resultant analyses are further sanctioned by the conviction that using gender theory to read and understand Muslim lives and contexts can help us have broader insights about religion as well as law, economics, politics, and culture in both Muslim majority and Muslim minority societies. Different kinds of gender inequalities often coexist within a given culture. Hence, the sociocultural milieu and the histories of particular societies need to be considered as significant variables in determining the gendered religiosities of Muslim women. The idea of a unified Islamic culture and tradition has thus been replaced by this new focus on contextualised readings of Muslim societies and their experiences. This shift has initiated the need to foreground the contexts in the study of gender in Muslim societies.

In recent decades, the critical approach merging feminism with religious studies has effectively challenged male-centered and androcentric perspectives, which were once seen as universally objective. This interdisciplinary approach has introduced fresh perspectives on gender relations, influencing religious practices, judicial systems, and policymaking worldwide and has given rise to new debates on Muslim women, particularly those belonging to South Asian societies and the Arab Diaspora. The studies that emerged have helped challenge the dominant notions of Muslim women as a unified, unchanging subject. The modes of analyses enabled by these intersections within disciplines have proved immensely useful in examining the multilayered nature of Muslim women's experiences in complex and embedded Muslim social worlds.

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SUHAIL MOHAMMED[1] **(7)**

TULIKA DEVI[2]

UNVEILING THE BRUTALITY: ANALYZING PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL TORTURE IN J.M. COETZEE's "WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS"

Abstract

In *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), J. M. Coetzee interrogates the foundations of imperial states by highlighting the differences from the barbarians that the anonymous Empire maintains. The Empire defines itself and reinforces its identity by constructing a distance from the barbarians on many grounds. It maintains state institutions and keeps records, seeing itself as a modern state, an evolved version of "primitive" barbarians. Coetzee's novel exposes the Empire's precarious efforts at establishing the Other and its confused notions of state building. While the dominant interpretations of the novel focus on torture and the body, this article analyzes the novel from the same standpoint in addition to analyzing the psychological and physical torture in the novel. Torture and the body are important insofar as they expose the Empire's efforts to identify itself and build a nation. The Empire's failure in most of these respects—as suggested by the ending with the Empire losing its hold on the frontier settlement and the settlement's people waiting for the arrival of the barbarians—makes us question the false assumptions on which many imperial enterprises are based. The Empire's failure to protect its borders, its retreat to its heartland, and its failure to maintain civilized behavior in its treatment of its subjects and barbarian prisoners are manifestations of a chaotic, nascent administration rather than an identifiable and civilized imperial nation. In exposing the unstable distinctions colonial nations use to justify their existence, Coetzee's work asserts an alternative ethic of engagement with the Other founded on the idea of essential humanity and tolerant recognition of difference.

Keywords: Identity, Imperialism, Nationalism, Other, Barbarians.

Introduction:

Waiting for the Barbarians (1980) is a novel by South African writer John Maxwell Coetzee. It explores the themes of colonialism, oppression, and moral conflict. Set in an unnamed empire, the story begins with the Magistrate's relatively peaceful life disrupted by the arrival of Colonel Joll. The novel uses allegorical style to pose profound questions about power, humanity, and justice. Its exploration of the psychological effects

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of colonialism and tyranny has made it a powerful and enduring work. By leaving the empire; the magistrate, and the barbarian unnamed girl, Coetzee achieves a universality that allows readers to interpret the story as a broader allegory rather than as a story anchored to a specific place or time. Coetzee focuses on the dynamics of power, cruelty, fear, and complicity in a way that transcends any specific culture, nation, or era.

The Empire is an abstract figurehead for imperial authority in general in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. It is never expressly identified, and thus never associated with any real-world nation, though we can conclude that the Empire is related in some aspects to Coetzee's homeland, South Africa. As a result, nomadic people (sometimes known as "barbarians") represent victims of colonialism and apartheid, particularly the black population in apartheid-era South Africa. The inhabitants of the Empire's frontier settlement (over which the magistrate presides) have an irrational fear and hatred of the barbarians who live in the desert around them, a fear-based on superstition, ignorance, and military dogma rather than any knowledge of or direct experience with the nomads themselves. The story depicts how the Empire's soldiers and higher ups (such as Colonel Joll) blindly follow their military commands because they are convinced that the barbarians, as a monolithic group, are inherently terrible, debased people who oppose the Empire. The barbarians have become so reviled in the eyes of the troops that they appear to deserve to be tortured and executed on their own. The magistrate's settlement's citizens share the troops' loathing of the barbarians: while they will occasionally trade with peaceful nomads, they see them as sluggish, foolish, and dirty drunkards who, in comparison to the Empire's "civility," occupy a subhuman level of existence.

"*I journeyed back into the past once more, striving to conjure up a mental image of her as she used to be. I admit that I saw her the day she was rounded up by troops with the other severe captives. When I'm among others, I'm aware that my vision has gone over her (...). My stare went unnoticed by her, but I have no recollection of what happened after that. She was still plain on that day, but I'd like to believe it was because she was once a child (...). Despite my efforts, my unique vision of the stooping poor person young lady waits*." (Coetzee, 26)

As a result, the Empire 'others' the barbarians. The Empire identifies barbarians with a slew of dehumanizing characteristics, causing them and their culture to be viewed as essentially strange, exotic, and incomprehensibly different. The barbarians are portrayed as an Other or a force that shares no common humanity or identity with the Empire's subjects, and they are viewed as a scourge that must be removed from the Empire's expansion and existence. The novel explores a situation similar to the actual historical case of apartheid, in which white enforcers felt superior to the black populace and thus entitled to politically and economically regulate, dominate, and ultimately deteriorate the growth and welfare of the territories to which black citizens were expelled, by examining the dynamic between barbarians and the Empire.

Traces of Louis Althusser's critical concepts such as Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) and Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) can be located in the novel. ISAs are the systems that subtly shape individuals' beliefs and perceptions. The Empire spreads the notion that the "barbarians" are savage threats to civilization. The Empire's ideology is cantered on fear of the "other", the so-called barbarians. This constructed fear allows the Empire to justify its oppressive actions and maintain control.

Through propaganda and enforced belief systems, the state moulds its citizens to view outsiders as a threat. This ideological framework makes violence and torture seem not only justified but necessary to protect the Empire. The Magistrate, as a representative of the state who initially believes in its ideology, begins to question these principles as he witnesses the brutality inflicted on innocent people.

Colonel Joll, a character who embodies the Empire's RSA, employs torture as a systematic method of extracting confessions and information from the so-called barbarians. Physical and psychological torture are shown as tools used by the state to instil fear, enforce compliance, and project its power. Joll's cruel treatment of prisoners highlights how the RSA operates beyond conventional ethics.

Aims and Objectives:

The aims and objectives of the paper are as follows:

1) To critically analyse the interrelationship between truth, torture, and fear.
2) To examine how psychological and physical torture is employed to justify imperial power.
3) To explore the ambivalent position of the magistrate.
4) To analyse and explore critical concepts of Louis Althusser, Frantz Fanon and Sigmund Freud in the novel.

Literature Review:

In an article entitled "Into the Dark Chamber: The Writer and the South African State", J. M. Coetzee asserts that *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) is a novel about the impact of the torture chamber on the life of a man of conscience.And that torture has exerted a dark fascination on many other South African writers. However, torturealong with the relevant issue of the body or the discourse of liberal humanism represented by the magistrate as a man of conscienceis not the only important theme in Coetzee's novel. In fact, Brian May (2001) succinctly lists three important and yet intersecting issues in Coetzee's fiction: the problematic of history; the problematic of Empire; and the problematic of the body (Mary, 392). These issues are interrelated. This can be ascribed to a traumatic history enfolding South African politics and embodying a violent apartheid regime that used interrogations and torture.

Prince Rajkumar in his paper "Ambivalence in J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians"*discusses howthe Empire captured the town and guarding it against the barbarians. All the indigenous people are marginalized. Colonizers have the stereotypical assumptions that barbarians are illiterate, lazy, cruel, irrational, exotic and bizarre. The Empire is well-read, industrious, rational and sensible. They consider the natives as uncivilized other, barbarians and themselves as civilized self. Colonizers torture the barbarians, they beat and kill them. Even though magistrate is working for the Colonial administration, he is different from other colonial administrators. He wants to help the barbarians. Tortures undergoing by the natives are heartrending. He is sickened by the torture and murder of the barbarian prisoners. He has the sympathy, in the place to control them he is showing pity to them. Thus coexistence of opposite feelings is started to haunt him.

Throughout the novel, Coetzee leaves an uncanny feeling in his readers. As Pelin Aytemiz in the paper entitled "Victims of the Empire: An Analysis on Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians"* writes that, what the real danger is never specified and the reader are always left in uncertainty. According to Freud all those feelings that arises trouble, anxiety, fear horror like as it is felt while reading *Waiting for the Barbarians*, belongs to the realm of uncanny. He defines the concept as follows: "on the one hand, it means that which is familiar and congenial, and on the other, that which is concealed and kept out of sight" (Freud, 129). In relation to the novel, the existence of barbarians fits the second definition of the concept while Coetzee does not define who the barbarians are. Between the two sides, no war or fight occurs and therefore, Barbarians are always kept out of sight. They are the aliens, others and are the imaginary dangers, which are preparing to attack the town. Although the folks are living together without any problem, fear of attack unites the outpost against the barbarians and they are always perceived as the hidden enemies. The image of the barbarians as represented by the barbarian girl, which is also totally unfamiliar. Moreover, her deformed body displays another level of uncanniness. In this sense, the existence of the barbarians is the concealed aspect of the concept uncanny.

Research Methodology:

This study shall follow a qualitatively, descriptive and analytical research. In this context, the qualitative research takes into account J.M. Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians.* The secondary source will comprise of other canonical texts of the author, edited texts, eBooks, literary reviews, articles, essays, etc. The theoretical frameworks to be deployed in this study are Louis Althusser's principle of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatus, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and critical concepts of Frantz Fanon.

Analysis:

J.M. Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* abounds with ideas on colonialism, issues of identity and torture. Its title is taken from the 1904 poem "Waiting for the Barbarians" by Constantine Cavafy. The Empire, in both the poem and the novel is in a sense, dependent upon an Other, a barbarian enemy to strengthen the national feeling of the State. The novel is set in an isolated outpost, unspecified in time and space, where two cultures – that of the Empire and that of the barbarians are set against one another. Though dealing with issues of State approved torture, the novel was scrutinized by the censors and was not banned because of the apparent remoteness of the setting from South Africa. The novel deals with the postcolonial discourse of truth, power, and, fear, ISA and RSA, the position of black women in white world, and Freud's aspects of the psyche.

Truth ,Torture and Fear:

The theme of power is central to the exploration of torture, fear, and the concept of constructed truth. The Empire in the novel uses torture as a means of instilling fear in the psyche of so-called "barbarians" to justify their imperial power. However, rather than producing factual confessions, torture compels victims to say what the torturers want to hear. Bending truth to fit the Empire's narrative. As such torture becomes a way to sustain power and not to reveal truth. Early in the novel, Colonel Joll arrives to interrogate prisoners. Supposedly to learn about their plans against the Empire. He visits

all the forts along the frontier. According to Magistrate, Joll's work is to "…find out the truth" (Coetzee, 02). In his quest for the truth he is tireless. The questioning starts in the early morning and still goes on after dark. Even children are also questioned. As Magistrate says "I guess, of course, at what passes in that room, at the fear, the bewilderment, the abasement" (Coetzee, 14). Throughout the novel, Colonel Joll as a symbol of the Empire's brutality, justifies torture as a necessary means to obtain the truth. He explains to the Magistrate, "First I get lies, you see—this is what happens—first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth" (Coetzee, 04). The Magistrate is horrified by the torture and reflects on how torture claims to uncover truth. At one point, he thinks, "Pain is truth; all else is subject to doubt" (Coetzee, 04).

ISA and RSA:

Marxist Theorist Louis Althusser's concept of "Ideological State Apparatus" (ISA) and "Repressive State Apparatus" (RSA), are deeply woven in the novel. The ISA not only shapes public ideology, but also deeply influences psychology of the characters. particularly through fear, guilt, and moral conflict."The Barbarian are lazy, immoral, filthy, stupid" (Coetzee, 28). Anyone who seems harmful to the Empire is Caught. The Empire perpetuates the fear of the barbarian as an unknown dangerous entity fostering a "civilized" vs. "savage" mindset. As the magistrate referring the Barbarian says " And in a day or two these savages seem to forget they ever had another home" (Coetzee, 15). This idea of the barbarian serves as a psychological boundary that keeps the citizens aligned with the Empire's control and justifies violent acts as defensive measures. The citizens internalize these beliefs, rarely questioning the legitimacy out offear. The very idea of Barbarians is an ideological construct. The title itself is symbolic of waiting for Barbarians that doesn't even truly exist. "They ---the Barbarians! They lured us on and on, we could never catch them' (Coetzee, 102). Whoever the Empire suspect as an danger to them are being caught and punished without proper justification. The Barbarians are branded as enemy. As colonel Joll rubs a handful of dust into the naked back of the prisoners and write a word with a stick of charcoal, as Enemy…Enemy…Enemy. Punishment in the open yard inflict fear among the others. As Michel Foucault argues that "Public Torture" was not just a means of punishment, but a critical aspect of Demonstrating sovereign power and context. It teaches people by example and fear. In the text the magistrate was humiliated in front of everyone. He was hang in a tree with woman clothes. Twelve kneeling prisoners in the open yard are bend side by side over a long heavy pole. A cord runs from the loop of wire through the first man's mouth to the others. They moans in pain. "Everyone has a chance to see these captives, to prove to his children that the Barbarians are real" (Coetzee, 119).

Althusser's RSA refers to institutions that reinforce the dominance of the ruling class by using physical force and violence. The act of torture inflicts not only bodily harm but also lasting psychological damage. In the initial part of the novel, the old man and the boy was tied up on there way to see the doctor. The old man's tongue comes out to moisten his lips. The grey beard is caked with blood, teeth's are broken, one eye is rolled back, the other eye socket is a bloody hole. He was beaten to dead. While the boy lies rigidly asleep beside the corpse. In a black carriage, the shuffling group of prisoners roped together neck to neck. Heavy slapping sounds, raising red welts on the prisoners

back and buttocks are common. “There are some too sick to stand up’(Coetzee, 16).The feet of the Barbarian girl were broken. A hot fork was brought close to her eyes. She had scars in her body. Colonel Joll holds a hammer of four pound used for knocking in tent pegs to harm people. There are not just physical torture, but humiliation too. Magistrates request for clean clothes are ignored. He was kept in a dark room with no food. He had to stand naked before the idlers and use his body for amusement.

Thus, novel portrays torture as a way for the state to control both the bodies and minds of individuals. Physical torture is depicted through brutal scenes where prisoners are beaten and subjected to harsh conditions. Psychological torture is equally emphasized. As prisoners are kept in a constant state of fear and uncertainty, breaking down their resistance and identity over time. The Magistrate’s own psychological torment after being ostracized by the state reflects how internalizing guilt and fear can be a form of torture. Demonstrating the state’s ability to manipulate even those who seek to resist its ideology.

Black Women in the White World

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon indicates that black women are always willing to indulge themselves in the white world and since they can’t be assimilated to that world by whitening themselves or nitrifying the others, they become subjected to a sense of alienation. According to him, whenever those women gain entrance to the white world, they will find it increasingly difficult to return back to their own people and to their previous lives although “they will become aware, one day, that ‘ white men do not marry black women” (Coetzee, 49). So, all women of color seek to find a white male partner, regardless his other characteristics, he should be white. For them, being loved by a white male means that they deserve white life, white culture, and white world. In short, they can prove to other races that they are their equal human partners. Barbarian Girl and the Magistrate In fact, what Fanon mentioned in his book was exactly what happened in the novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*. The barbarian girl seems to be happy that she was left behind by her people, because it was, for her, an opportunity to indulge in the white world. When the magistrate saw her begging in the street, he told her: “we don’t permit vagrants in the town. Winter is almost here. You must have somewhere to live. Otherwise you must go back to your own people”. She sits obdurately. I know I am beating about the bush." (Coetzee, 26) Although the barbarian girl was frequently humiliated by the magistrate who refused to sleep with her and, instead went to other hotels seeking young white women, she preferred, through pain and torture at the hands of the magistrate, to join that new world. In fact, the magistrate was not the girl’s aim and goal, rather, she was seeking white flesh, especially since we know that the magistrate was sure “that among these men standing to attention with their equipment in bundles at their feet, are some who have slept with the girl” (Coetzee, 54). When the magistrate refused to sleep with her and insisted that, from that moment on, they would sleep separately in different beds, she accepted that, but kept sleeping in the same room; she shared with him his dinner, hoping to amend the situation and reenter the white world again. Not surprising, the barbarian girl did not succeed in going with the magistrate to bed as an equal partner, except when they were in the wilderness, subordinate to the rules of nature and away from the influence of the empire and white women, who stood as competitors to her.

Sigmund Freud:

Sigmund Freud’s aspects of the psyche — the impulsive I’d, the mediating ego, and the morally guided superego are reflected in inner conflicts, actions, and ethical dilemmas of

the magistrate. As he faces the imperial authority and his growing empathy for the oppressed barbarians. The Magistrate's conflict regarding the Barbarian girl is a struggle between his driven desires, his superego's sense of moral duty, and his ego's attempts to reconcile the two. He is drawn to her physically and emotionally. Washing her feet, rubbing oil on her scars. As mentioned "I feed her, shelter her, use her body" (Coetzee, 22).Yet these feelings are rooted in a power imbalance. He faces persecution himself, showing how the Empire punishes anyone seen as undermining or questioning its authority. He was aware that people will say he keep two wild animal in the room, a fox and a girl. He thinks " I cannot imagine what ever drew me to that alien body" (Coetzee, 34). He had to interrogate his own desire. At times he thought it is because of his old age. At other he regard her as featureless, referring her as "…she is ugly, ugly" (Coetzee, 34). Finally, the Magistrate's decision to return the Barbarian girl to her people represents an attempt by his superego to find a resolution to his internal conflict. Even though magistrate is working for the Empire, he sympathies with the Barbarians. He is sickened by the torture and inhuman treatment towards the innocent people. Witnessing so much pain that "his ear is even tuned to the pitch of human pain" (Coetzee, 04). He ask the guard to look after the prisoners clean themselves, loosely tie the boy's hand that it doesn't swell, provide them with food and most importantly help the Barbarian girl. Even he doesn't like colonel Joll visiting the fort. As Joll left, he feel relieved and happy to be alone in a world he knows and understand. But abide by power and authority Magistrate needs to maintain certain regulations. He grows conscious that "…I am pleading for them" (Coetzee, 03).

Conclusion:

Thus, J. M Coetzee has masterfully reveals how torture functions as both physical and psychological weapon of control. Perpetuating cycles of fear, dehumanization and moral corruption. Torture reverberates through the psyche, reshaping identity, relationship and societal structures. The novel is not just a story of colonialism. It is a timeless meditation on the human capacity for cruelty and the struggle to resist it. Reminding us that scars of torture are not just personal but a testament to the enduring battle for justice and dignity

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SOLIDARITY AMIDST STARVATION: KRISHAK SABHA'S EFFORTS DURING THE 1943 FAMINE IN HOOGHLY DISTRICT

Abstract:

The 1943 Bengal Famine stands as one of the most catastrophic humanitarian disasters in India's history, resulting in the deaths of roughly 2 to 3 million individuals. This study examines the famine's socio-economic and political consequences in the Hooghly district, emphasizing the Krishak Sabha's involvement in relief operations and mobilization efforts. The research demonstrates how the Sabha shifted its priorities from traditional class conflicts to famine relief, thereby promoting organizational cohesion and political consciousness among the peasantry. The Sabha addressed both immediate needs and long-term resilience through various initiatives, including food committees, community kitchens (*langarkhanas*), campaigns against hoarding, and the "Grow More Crops" initiative. Additionally, the study investigates the complex interactions between the Sabha, Congress leaders, and local populations in alleviating the crisis. This analysis emphasizes the pivotal role of grassroots organizations in tackling systemic challenges during times of hardship.

Keywords: Bengal Famine, Krishak Sabha, Hooghly District, Anti-Hoarding Campaigns, Grassroots Mobilization.

Introduction:

The 1943 Bengal Famine, referred to as the Famine of 1350 in the Bengali calendar, ravaged the region, causing widespread hunger, illness, and loss of life. This catastrophe, which occurred during the peak of World War II, was not solely due to natural disasters but also a result of systematic colonial exploitation and governmental shortcomings. The Hooghly district, with its farming-based economy already weakened by the Great Depression, was particularly impacted by the 1943 flood, exacerbating the hardships faced by rural populations. In response to this crisis, the Krishak Sabha emerged as a crucial grassroots organization, coordinating relief efforts and rallying peasants to fight against hoarding, starvation, and social inequities.

Scholarly examinations of the famine frequently highlight systematic neglect and socioeconomic inequalities as contributing factors to the severity of the crisis. Some theories concentrate on the breakdown of economic entitlements in ensuring food accessibility for at-risk populations, while others criticize colonial policies, emphasizing resource redirection and apathy towards local requirements. Nevertheless, community-level responses, such as the efforts of the Krishak Sabha in Hooghly, remain inadequately explored. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by investigating how

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the Sabha's initiatives fostered resilience and political awareness among the peasant population. Through the establishment of *langarkhanas* (community kitchens), food committees, and campaigns against hoarding, the Sabha played a crucial role in alleviating the famine's effects on Hooghly's rural communities, providing valuable lessons about the effectiveness of grassroots activism during systemic emergencies.

Review of Literature:

The 1943 Bengal Famine has sparked considerable academic discourse. Scholars examine this disaster from multiple perspectives, including its socio-political origins, economic aspects, and the impact of British colonial administration. Amartya Sen's entitlement theory posits that the famine resulted not from food scarcity but from an "entitlement failure", emphasizing how economic disparities and diminished purchasing power made food unattainable for vulnerable groups.[1] Paul R. Greenough investigates peasant vulnerabilities such as indebtedness and exploitation by local elites, while also criticizing inefficiencies in famine relief administration.[2] Rajat Kanta Ray critique colonial economic policies and governance structures, emphasizing over-reliance on markets and neglect of rural Bengal.[3] Madhushree Mukerjee scrutinizes British wartime strategies, stressing resource redirection and colonial apathy, and presenting proof of food exports during the crisis.[4] Janam Mukherjee examined the interplay between the famine, World War II, and the Indian independence movement, offering a nuanced analysis of how the famine shaped political dynamics and social unrest in Bengal.[5] In contrast, Zareer Masani defends British policies, attributing the famine to wartime necessities rather than intentional neglect.[6]

Despite these diverse viewpoints, there is minimal attention given to localized responses, such as the role of grassroots organizations like the Krishak Sabha, and their interactions with political entities. This gap forms the basis for this study, which seeks to explore the unique dynamics of famine relief and mobilization in Hooghly district. While extensive research exists on the Bengal Famine, most analyses focus on macroeconomic policies, colonial governance, and broader socio-political dynamics. However, localized studies, particularly those examining grassroots organizations like the Krishak Sabha, remain limited. This research aims to address this gap by investigating the specific interventions of the Krishak Sabha in the Hooghly district. The study's purpose is to

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[1] Amartya Sen, Poverty *and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981.

[2] Paul R. Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal: The Famine of 1943-1944*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1982.

[3] Rajat Kanta Ray, "The Bengal Famine of 1943: The American Response", *Social Scientist*, vol. 25, no. 5/6, 1997, pp. 96–112.

[4] Madhushree Mukerjee, *Churchill's Secret War: The British Empire and the Ravaging of India during World War II*, Basic Books, New York, 2010.

[5] Janam Mukherjee, *Hungry Bengal: War, Famine, and the End of Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2015.

[6] The Critic, December, 2020. https://thecritic.co.uk/issues/december-2020/churchill-and-the-genocide-myth/

document how grassroots activism shaped famine relief efforts, highlighting the interactions between local leaders, peasant communities, and wider political movements. By concentrating on Hooghly's distinct socio-political landscape, this research aims to enhance the understanding of the Bengal Famine through a micro-historical perspective.

Research Methodology:

This study employs a historical research strategy, analysing both primary and secondary sources to reconstruct the occurrences and responses in Hooghly during the 1943 famine. The primary evidence is gathered from archival materials, contemporary news reports, and official records, while theoretical perspectives are obtained from scholarly works by historians like Amartya Sen. To achieve a comprehensive understanding, the research also integrates oral histories and local narratives to supplement the main account.

Discussion:

The Bengal Famine of 1943 was one of the most devastating famines in Indian history, which led to the deaths of an estimated 2 to 3 million people. The famine occurred during World War II, and its causes are considered complex, involving both natural and human-made factors.

According to the Woodhead Commission, the 1943 Bengal Famine was caused by a combination of natural and human-made factors. The commission emphasized natural calamities, such as floods, cyclones, and plant diseases, which led to a decline in rice production in 1942. This reduction in agricultural output was a key trigger for the food shortage. The report also acknowledged the impact of wartime disruptions, including the British government's "scorched-earth policy", which destroyed rice crops and boats to prevent Japanese forces from using them, further aggravating food scarcity. Additionally, the commission pointed to hoarding and speculation by traders and landlords, which drove up food prices and made rice inaccessible to the common people.

In contrast, later scholars like Amartya Sen is famous for his analysis of famines in general and his in-depth examination of the Bengal Famine of 1943 in particular. His groundbreaking work, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (1981), changed how famines are understood. Sen argued that the Bengal Famine was not caused by a shortage of food production but by a failure of people's ability to access food, which he termed an "entitlement failure." He introduced the idea of "exchange entitlements", referring to a person's ability to exchange goods, services, or labor for food. Sen also emphasized that wartime inflation, speculative price hikes, and hoarding worsened the famine.

Paul Greenough, a historian and anthropologist, provided a more socially grounded perspective on the famine, focusing on how it was experienced by different groups and how colonial policies played a role in exacerbating the crisis. The causes of the 1943 famine are explained in detail in the second chapter, along with supporting facts. This discussion will not revisit them. Instead, it will focus entirely on the impact of the famine on the Hooghly district, the role of the Congress and the Kisan Sabha in addressing the crisis, and how the famine disrupted the agricultural economy of the district.

Bengal faced two devastating calamities in the 1940s. The first was the catastrophic cyclone that struck on October 16, 1942 and the second was 1943 Famine, known as the Famine of 1350 in the Bengali calendar. The famine profoundly impacted the agrarian structure of both the district and Bengal as a whole, severely disrupting the rural economy. It struck at a time when Bengal's agricultural economy was still reeling from the effects of the Great Depression, compounding the region's economic struggles. The situation was further worsened by the Damodar flood in July 1943. As a result, large areas of the region including Burdwan, Hooghly were flooded.[1]

At that time, members of the Krishak Sabha stood by the common people. From July 1942 onward, leading workers emerged from hiding to carry out relief work, form food committees and *Dharmagolas* (grain storage for the poor), recover hoarded grain, and launch the "Grow More Crops" campaign. As a result, earlier demands, such as the abolition of landlordism and other class struggle issues, became secondary, giving way to organizational unity. This unity was a rare example of effective collective action. Political awareness among peasants grew at the village level, leading to a rapid increase in membership of the Bengal Provincial Krishak Sabha. By 1944, the Krishak Sabha had 178,000 members, and by the following year, that number had risen to 255,104.[2]

On March 23, 1943, 800 agricultural laborers, led by the Tarkeswar *Janraksha* Committee, approached the SDO (Sub-Divisional Officer) and demanded food. The SDO responded that a supply of flour could be provided immediately, and rice would be arranged soon. The SDO also agreed to allow the local committee, rather than the Union Board, to handle distribution.[3]

On March 30, 1943, the Public Defense Committee held a meeting at Dubir Bheri Football Ground, attended by around 350 people from 20 nearby villages. At the meeting, a demand was made for the government to supply 1,000 *maunds* of rice to the union to address the food crisis. A *Janraksha* Committee was formed, consisting of 20 civilians, with Umacharan Pal as the secretary and Annada Samanta as the president.[4]

On April 2, a large food conference was held at Pandua police station, chaired by Tinkari Mukherjee. About 3,000 people from both Hindu and Muslim communities attended. Speakers included Paritosh Chatterjee, Vinod Das, Prafulla Mukherjee, Manoranjan Hazra, and Vishnu Mukherjee, among others. A food committee was formed, and signatures were collected demanding 2,000 *maunds* of rice per week through the Union Board.[5]

A similar conference was held in Bara village, Singur, to address the food crisis. Around 2,500 farmers and rural middle-class people attended. Notably, this was the first time Muslim farmers participated in large numbers, despite making up only 10 percent of the local farming population. About 400 Muslim farmers attended. Two hundred volunteers, divided into five teams, organized the farmers and brought them to the

[1] Sunil Sen, *Banglar Krishak Sangram*, Cholti Dunia Prakashani, Kolkata, 1975, p. 49.
[2] *People's War*, 15.04.1945; Mohammed Abdullah Rasul, *Krishak Sabhar Itihas*, Nabajatak Prakashan, Kolkata, 1969, p. 139. Also see Sunil Sen, *Op.cit.* , p. 49.
[3] *Janayuddha*, 07.04.1943.
[4] *Janayuddha*, 21.04.1943.
[5] *Janayuddha*, 14.04.1943.

conference. The attendees pledged, "We will produce food crops", "No one in any village will go hungry", and "We will form food committees to collect food and clothing".[1]

Hooghly district has traditionally faced a food production deficit, requiring the import of about 50 lakh *maunds* of rice annually. The situation worsened after the June-July floods, which claimed 50,000 lives. Despite a good yield of Aman paddy, harvesting became impossible as villagers were afflicted by disease. By September, although Hooghly district had large rice mills, rice was scarce in the market. Instead, it was sold in the black market at exorbitant prices of Rs. 40-50 per maund. The poor were left helpless, unable to afford rice at such high costs.[2]

To alleviate the crisis, a *langarkhana* was opened in Chowkbazar, Hooghly, feeding 30 people. Similar efforts provided food for 40 people at Chandannagar *langarkhana*, 90 at Nadua *langarkhana*, 50 at Gondarpara *langarkhana*, and 40 at Chatra *langarkhana* in Srirampur. Additional *langarkhanas* were established—two in Chinsurah and Mahesh, three in Chandannagar, and two more in Dihibatpur and Champadanga.

Government authorities promised 62 *maunds* of rice at controlled rates for the Srirampur *langarkhana* through local efforts. Meanwhile, residents of Bara Union raised Rs. 400, and a store was opened with the help of Abani Barman, a landlord from Singur, to sell cheap flour and cloth. The communists' efforts brought unity among people of all classes across the district.[3]

The Anti-black market movement is also associated with these activities. The workers had to struggle to resist attempts to smuggle rice out of the village. On May 31, 1943, at 1 o'clock in the night, the volunteers of the Krishak Samiti from Amnan Union, under Polba police station, were on alert and spotted a trader smuggling a load of paddy across the fields of Karisha. When the villagers and farm workers seized the paddy, the businessman admitted his wrongdoing and promised never to engage in such activities again. Later, the paddy was distributed as a loan to the villagers, with the paddy owner also involved in this effort.[4]

Similarly, when a *jotedar* from Alasin village in Pandua secretly attempted to smuggle the village's rice, the farm workers and common people seized the rice and distributed it fairly among the needy. This work was led by Paritosh Chattopadhyay, Tinkari Mukherjee, and Vinod Das. In Hauli village, under Tarakeswar police station, poor villagers, led by Ananda Adak, a worker of the Krishak Samiti, requested a local resident, Rajni Jana, to sell 300 *maunds* of paddy stored in his house at a fair price to the villagers instead of selling it elsewhere. Though Rajni Jana verbally agreed, he secretly brought the police, fabricating a story of 'paddy looting.' However, the police, yielding to the organized demands of the farmers and villagers, arranged for the paddy to be distributed among the poor villagers rather than sending it elsewhere.[5] In Jagannathpur

[1] *Janayuddha*, 05.04.1943.
[2] Tanmay Kumar Ghosh, *Hooghly Jelar Krishak Andolon: 1930-55*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Calcutta, 2017, p. 276.
[3] *Janayuddha*, 01.09.1943.
[4] *Janayuddha*, 26.05.1943.
[5] *Ibid.*

village, under Dhaniakhali police station, residents led by farmer activists Sudhir Pal and Ananda Pal made the same demand to the wealthy villagers. After a lengthy discussion, they accepted the villagers' demands. Under the leadership of the Krishak Sabha, the strength of the villagers' unity grew, and as a result, the membership of the Krishak Sabha continued to increase.[1]

In Hooghly Sadar Sub-division, the Krishak Samiti had 2,000 members at this time. On April 25, 1943, 3,000 farmers from 200 villages, including 200 women members, gathered for a farmers' meeting in the Sadar Sub-division. The participation of Muslim farmers in this conference was remarkable. From this conference, Food Committees were formed for three police stations to help prevent famine. Meanwhile, by July 1943, in Arambagh Sub-division, the Krishak Samiti had 1,378 members. Additionally, 22 village food committees and 1 union food committee were formed there to prevent famine. In 1944, the membership of the Krishak Sabha throughout Bengal increased to 1, 78,000, compared to the previous year. In 1945, it further grew to 2, 55,000, owing to the extraordinary work of the Krishak Sabha, even during the famine.[2]

During the famine the condition of Arambagh sub-division also became deplorable. Villages such as Jagannathpur, Jakri, Sarada (in Atghara Union), Arunnda (in Chingra Union), Dhanyaghari, Ghoradaha (in Jagatpur Union), and Ghashua (in Kishorepur Union) were pushing their residents toward death. Here the pathetic picture of Jagannathpur village of Atghara Union is highlighted:

Table 1: Jagannathpur Village

Name	Pets	Sale of Land	Sale of dishes	Sale of Cows and goats	Debt
Sannayashi Majhi	8	5 Bigha	,,	1 Cow	250
Asutosh Malik	6	4	,,	,,	200
Ganesh Chandra Jana	5	4	,,	,,	250
Bishunopada Bag	6	3	,,	,,	300
Tarini Bag	5	15(5Years)	,,	,,	1150
Jatindranath Koley	11	4	,,	,,	1050
Jangalmoie Das	4	Jewellery Mortgage	,,	,,	250
Krishnapada Samanta	10	Jewellery Mortgage	,,	,,	300
Sunadhya Medda	2	1	,,	,,	100

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Janayuddha*, 28.07.1943.

Kalipada Medda	--	3	,,	,,	325
Bishnupada Koley	--	4	,,	,,	598
Gosthobihari Koley	--	3	,,	,,	250

Source: Debasis Seth, *Swadhinata Sangrame Arambagh*, Helan, 2005, p. 136.

In this way, Akshay Kumar Koley, Ganesh Adak, Nagendranath Koley, Harishchandra Mette, Suphal Jana, Khadan Chandra Mulo, Thanda Bala, Kartik Sasmal, and Ganesh Sasmal were barely surviving, starving by selling land, plates, utensils, cows, goats, and by taking on debts, along with 42 other families.

Table 2: Ghoshpur Village

Name	Pets	Sale of Land	Sale of dishes	Sale of Cows and goats	Debt
Sannayashi Majhi	3	,,	,,	,,	500
Asutosh Malik	8	,,	,,	,,	200
Ganesh Chandra Jana	5	Land & Jewellery Mortgage	,,	,,	40
Bishunopada Bag	2	,,	,,	,,	200
Tarini Bag	3	Land Mortgage	,,	,,	100

Source: Debasis Seth, *Swadhinata Sangrame Arambagh*, Helan, 2005, p. 137.

Gunadhar Jana, Charan Jana, Panchkari Jana, Bhaben Malik, Pabitra Jana, Balai Shasmal, Pancharam Mandal, and many others managed to survive by selling or mortgaging their land and paying off debts.

Since the 1920s, Congress leaders had a significant influence in the Arambagh division. Here, alongside members of the Krishak Sabha, Congress workers also actively joined the fight against famine. This characteristic was particularly notable in the Arambagh subdivision. In this situation, relief work was initiated by the Congress throughout the sub-division. When the famine reached its peak, around 500 *maunds* of paddy were looted from hoarders in the Patul region. In addition, some of the paddy hoarders in Patul and nearby villages donated about 150 *maunds* of paddy, either out of fear or voluntarily. Patul's freedom fighters organized the proper distribution of all this paddy. A Samiti called the 'Patul Ganesh Bazar Nari Samiti' was formed in Patul's Ganesh Bazar, with Gauribala Ghosh serving as the editor. It was through her initiative that milk was first purchased, and services were arranged for children suffering from the

famine. Harimati Bandopadhyay, a member of the women's association, also opened a milk distribution branch.[1]

In this subdivision, the condition of farmers in the villages of Chandibati and Benga has become very deplorable. With the help of the Communists, the Food Committee provided around 150 *maunds* of paddy as a loan to the poor farmers in the Chandibati region.[2] Similarly, in Benga village, with the support of the Communists and peasant workers, a wealthy individual loaned approximately 200 *maunds* of paddy to the needy villagers. Additionally, efforts are being made to encourage other affluent individuals to contribute as well. The youth forces in the region are also participating with great enthusiasm.[3]

The Arambagh subdivision also opened *langarkhanas* in many places, where hundreds of destitute people were provided with daily meals. In the eastern part of Arambagh, *langarkhanas* were established in villages like Purshura, Paschimpara, and others. The main organizer here was Manmath Adhikari. Similarly, *langarkhanas* were set up in villages such as Batanal, Haraditya, Chandibati, and Champadanga. Gourmohan Ganguly, Sudhanshu Mukherjee, Bijoy Modak, Mahitosh Nandy, and Paritosh Chatterjee actively assisted in managing the *langarkhanas* across the vast areas of the Arambagh subdivision.[4]

Congress leaders seemingly played a significant role in the Arambagh subdivision during the famine, though their influence was less evident in the Sadar and Srirampur subdivisions. In these latter areas, Krishak Sabha members and Communist leaders assumed a more prominent position. A concerning statement was published in the newspaper *Nimmak* by a group of Congress workers from the Hooghly district. The *Janayuddha* newspaper subsequently published a critique addressing this issue. In the 26 August 1943 issue of *Nimmak*, it is written: "No matter how hard we try, we cannot save many of us from dying due to lack of food. So we will not bother at all about those who are dying or will die now in this year."

In the 19 August 1943 issue of *Nimmak*, it is written "The number of dead is increasing day by day and will go down. In any case, there is no particular loss: those who lived and died only died and lived."[5] This made the attitude of the Congress leaders clear. However, many Congress workers stepped forward to help the famine-stricken peasant community, with the Arambagh subdivision being a notable example.

In 1945, the Hooghly District Farmers' Conference was held in an organized manner at Karui village in the Batanal area of the Arambagh subdivision. Tulsi Dey, a local primary school teacher, played a key role in organizing the conference. Representatives from the Sadar and Srirampur subdivisions walked from Tarkeswar to attend. The cultural program featured patriotic music performances, and the Paschimpara Gananattya Sangha staged a *yatra* and drama. Two main issues were particularly emphasized at the

[1] *Ibid,* p.139.
[2] *Janayuddha*, 14.07.1943
[3] *Janayuddha*, 04.08.1943
[4] Tushar Chattopadhyay, *Swadhinata Sangrame Hooghly Jela*, Nabajatak Prakashan, Kolkata, 1983, pp. 165-166.
[5] *Janayuddha*, 08.09.1943

Karui Village Farmers' Conference: the need for a strong movement to abolish the zamindari system, and the promotion of a cooperative movement as a starting point for flood control, water drainage, and canal reform, as well as building self-reliance in the agrarian economy.[1]

Conclusion:

The Bengal Famine of 1943 was not simply a natural disaster but the result of systemic failures intensified by colonial policies and social inequities. In Hooghly district, the Krishak Sabha emerged as a crucial force in addressing the crisis, exhibiting exceptional organizational skills and compassion. Their initiatives, including setting up food distribution centres and *langarkhanas*, reallocating stockpiled grain, and rallying peasant groups, highlight the potential for grassroots movements to effect change. The Sabha's focus on unified action and mutual support bridged religious and class divides, fostering solidarity during a period of extreme hardship.

This research also illuminates the intricate dynamics between the Krishak Sabha and other political groups such as Congress, revealing both collaborative efforts and conflicting strategies in famine relief. The famine ultimately sparked a transformation in rural political awareness, setting the stage for subsequent movements against oppression and disparity. By chronicling these endeavours, this study emphasizes the lasting significance of grassroots organizations in tackling systemic issues, both past and present.

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[1] Gourmohan Gnnguly, *Hooghly Jelar Krishak Andolon*, Sodepur, 1986, pp.28-29.

DR. RAJESH KUMARI[1] **(9)**

SDG 5: ADDRESSING THE GAP: PROMOTING DENDER EQAULITY IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

From just 20 universities in 1950 to 1,168 universities, 45,473 colleges, and 12,002 stand-alone institutions, India's higher education sector has grown rapidly since independence, according to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–2022. Gender equality is still a problem even though the number of women enrolled in higher education has grown dramatically—it reached 2.07 crore in 2021–2022, a 32% increase since 2014–15. The disparities in safety, leadership, representation, and access in Indian higher education can be critically examined through the perspective of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which advocates for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. To advance gender parity in academia, the study also makes recommendations for research, practice, and policy.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Higher Education, SGD Goals 5, University System.

SDG 5.1: End Discrimination Against All Women and Girls

The Indian Constitution guarantees formal equality, yet gender inequality in higher education persists despite educational reforms including the Kothari Commission (1966), the National Policy on Education (1986/1992), and the NEP 2020. Discrimination still exists even if policy initiatives have raised female participation in education since the historic *Towards Equality Report (1974)* first brought attention to the structural structure of gender inequities in education. In India, women make up just 13.5% of STEM's teaching staff, according to BiasWatchIndia (2023). According to Mooknayak (2024), female professor numbers at elite universities such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are consistently disproportionately low, averaging just 10–15% in IITs and 20–25% in IIMs.

These statistics demonstrate systemic discrimination that impacts employment and promotion procedures, even though women make up over 50% of postgraduate students in numerous fields (AISHE, 2021–22).

India's universities are not gender-neutral; rather, they are firmly rooted in patriarchal norms and traditions. Researchers like Chanana (2003), Gupta, N & Sharma A. K. (2002) have demonstrated how academic institutional cultures reflect larger social

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structures, limiting women's advancement and reinforcing gendered roles. Everyday sexism and marginalization of female academics persists, and it shows up in hiring, advancement, and the distribution of institutional duties.

Even though enrolment among women from underrepresented groups has improved—for example, ST female enrolment has increased by 80% since 2014–15 (AISHE 2021–22)—intersectional disadvantages are still common. These include class-based injustices, caste-based discrimination, and urban-rural divisions that are frequently disregarded by gender programs that view women as a single, homogenous population. Therefore, combating discrimination necessitates an integrated approach to inclusion in addition to gender parity.

SDG 5.2: Eliminate Violence and Harassment Against Women and Girls

Sexual harassment is still a major problem in Indian higher education institutions, though being underreported. Although only a small number of colleges and universities regularly report compliance to the University Grants Commission (UGC) under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, Jawahalal Nehru University alone has received 151 complaints since 2017 (Indian Express, 2024; The Telegraph, 2023). Survivors are deterred from coming out by institutional indifference, fear of reprisals, and a lack of knowledge about Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) (Education Times, 2023). A Frontline investigation from 2023 also emphasizes how a "toxic workplace culture" frequently drives female PhD students to leave academia, exposing the pervasive systemic causes of gender-based violence in higher education.

Because caste, gender, and class overlap, students and scholars from marginalized communities are doubly vulnerable. Many institutions' ICCs are either not independent or have weak constitutions, and their sessions are frequently unfriendly to survivors. These implementation flaws go against the spirit and intent of SDG 5.2 and impede the development of safe and welcoming learning environments.

SDG 5.4: Recognize and Value Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

The weight of unpaid caregiving and household duties is a significant contributor to female scholars' dropout rates at the postgraduate and doctorate levels. Women researchers' testimonies highlight the absence of childcare facilities, maternity leave rules, and flexible academic schedules (Morung Express, 2023).

Mooknayak (2024) reports that although enrolment at the undergraduate and graduate levels is increasing, women only make up 13.5% of STEM teaching jobs in Indian schools, and their participation at the PhD level declines significantly. Additionally, only 19.4% of female postgraduate students in science go on to earn doctorates. Major Indian universities have PhD dropout rates for women ranging from 37% to 53%, which highlights the detrimental effects of caregiving and household responsibilities on academic perseverance (Frontline, 2023).

Many women drop out of long-term research careers due to the gendered expectation of juggling family and academic obligations at the same time. These trends waste the academic investment made during earlier phases of women's education in addition to limiting their professional progress. To effectively alleviate this load, a gender-sensitive academic system must implement flexible scheduling, expand maternity leave regulations, and set up on-campus day-care.

SDG 5.5: Ensure Full Participation and Equal Leadership Opportunities

In Indian higher education institutions, women are still glaringly underrepresented in leadership positions. According to AISHE 2020–21, women make up approximately 69% of assistant professors but only possess 9.5% of professor-level positions and 10.4% of associate professorships. In decision-making positions, the disparity is even more noticeable: fewer than 10% of vice-chancellors are female, and several central institutions do not have any female finance officers or proctors (University Grants Portal, 2024). Only 13.5% of STEM faculty in Indian institutions are women, and men have traditionally held leadership roles like directors at Institutes of National Importance, with very few women ever recruited, according to Mooknayak (2024).

According to scholars like Gandhi & Sen (2021) and Aisenberg, N., & Harrington, M. (1988) argue that women's academic careers frequently deviate from men's, with notable declines in institutional power, grant access, and promotions. Gender assumptions regarding authority, leadership, and intellectual validity serve to further solidify these differences. Universities are cultural centres where patriarchal beliefs are perpetuated rather than questioned. Representation of women declines at each upward step of the education system virtually everywhere.

Even when they do join the academic workforce, women are rarely represented on executive councils or selection committees, which are important decision-making forums. Institutional improvements toward gender fairness remain cosmetic in the absence of such representation. Quota-based treatments, mentorship networks, and leadership development can all aid in bridging this disparity.

SDG 5.c: Adopt and Strengthen Policies and Enforceable Legislation

India has implemented a number of innovative legislative measures to enhance gender equality in higher education, including the establishment of women-only universities and gender inclusion requirements under NEP 2020. However, intersectionality is not adequately addressed, and implementation is frequently uneven. Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Other Backward Class (OBC) women have made significant progress in enrolment, but societal structures continue to exacerbate their disadvantages (AISHE 2021–22).

Funding for women-led research, institutional gender policies, targeted support for underrepresented identities inside academia, and required gender audits are all necessary for real progress toward SDG 5. Institutional frameworks must incorporate gender sensitization initiatives, non-compliance accountability systems, and frequent effect assessments. Affirmative action must focus on persistence and advancement in addition to access.

Recommendations

In order to make significant progress toward gender equality in higher education, India needs to:

- Enforce regular gender audits and the public release of equity metrics.
- Establish support networks, such as flexible Ph.D. schedules, scholarship for mothers, and faculty leadership development for women.
- Use intersectional framework that take disability, caste, religion, and region into consideration.
- Establish strong, independent and accountable Internal Complaints Committees (ICC).
- Through ICSSR and UGC, support and finance gender-focused research.

Conclusion

In order to achieve gender equality in Indian higher education, institutional, cultural, and structural hurdles that keep women from succeeding in academic careers must be removed. This goes beyond simply increasing the number of female students enrolled. Women are still underrepresented in many institutions' leadership, research, and decision-making processes, despite decades of advancements. Enforcing anti-discrimination and anti-harassment laws, ensuring equal participation of women in all tiers of academic life, and institutionalizing gender-responsive policies are all crucial to achieving SDG 5. In the absence of such all-encompassing measures, the goal of inclusive and egalitarian higher education would not be realized.

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DR. MITHILESH KUMAR PANDEY [1] **(10)**

FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Abstract

Indian philosophy is one of the most ancient and profound traditions in human intellectual history, reflecting a synthesis of speculative metaphysics, practical ethics, and spiritual insights. Rooted in texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and subsequent commentaries, Indian philosophical systems present a holistic approach to understanding existence, consciousness, and the ultimate purpose of life. At its core lie the principles of Dharma (moral order), Karma (action and its consequences), and Moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth). The breadth of this tradition encompasses both orthodox schools—like Vedanta, Nyaya, and Samkhya—and heterodox schools, including Buddhism and Jainism, all of which contribute uniquely to epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. A distinctive feature of Indian philosophy is its emphasis on experiential realization alongside intellectual inquiry. As the Upanishads declare, "अहं ब्रह्मास्मि" (Aham Brahmasmi), meaning "I am Brahman," the pursuit of self-realization is central to Indian thought (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10). Another cornerstone is the doctrine of interdependence, as encapsulated in the Rigveda's verse, "एकोऽहम् बहुस्याम" (Eko'ham Bahusyām)—"I am one; let me become many" (Rigveda 10.129), highlighting the unity in diversity that underpins existence. This integration of metaphysical ideals with ethical practices ensures that Indian philosophy remains deeply relevant today, addressing both individual enlightenment and societal harmony.

Modern adaptations of Indian philosophy, including its influence on mindfulness, yoga, and sustainability, demonstrate its enduring global relevance. This article explores the foundational principles of Indian philosophy, emphasizing its dialogic nature and its potential to inform contemporary intellectual and practical challenges.

Keywords

Indian philosophy, Vedanta, Dharma, Karma, Moksha, Samkhya, Buddhism, Jainism, metaphysics, epistemology.

INTRODUCTION:-

Indian philosophy is a profound and expansive tradition that has developed over millennia, offering deep insights into the nature of reality, consciousness, ethics, and the ultimate purpose of life. It is rooted in the ancient Vedic texts, which serve as the foundational scriptures of Indian thought, and later philosophical treatises that expanded and debated their teachings. The tradition is characterized by a remarkable diversity of perspectives, often categorized into two primary groups: the orthodox (āstika) schools

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and the heterodox (nāstika) schools. This distinction primarily hinges on the acceptance or rejection of the authority of the Vedas, the oldest sacred texts of Indian culture.

The āstika schools are those that regard the Vedas as authoritative and include six major philosophical systems: Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta. Each of these schools presents a unique approach to understanding the world and achieving liberation (moksha). Nyāya focuses on logic and epistemology, offering tools for rational inquiry and analysis. Vaiśeṣika emphasizes metaphysics, categorizing reality into fundamental substances and qualities. Sāṅkhya provides a dualistic framework, distinguishing between consciousness (puruṣa) and matter (prakṛti) as the two ultimate realities. Yoga, closely related to Sāṅkhya, emphasizes practical methods of self-discipline and meditation to attain spiritual liberation. Mīmāṃsā is centered on ritual and ethical duties, interpreting the Vedas as a guide to dharma (righteous living). Vedānta, the most widely known school, explores the ultimate nature of reality, often through the lens of non-dualism (advaita), where the individual self (ātman) is equated with the ultimate reality (Brahman).

In contrast, the nāstika schools reject the authority of the Vedas and include systems such as Buddhism, Jainism, and the materialistic philosophy of Cārvāka. These schools challenge Vedic orthodoxy and propose alternative paths to understanding existence and achieving liberation. Buddhism, founded by Siddhārtha Gautama, focuses on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path as a means to overcome suffering and attain enlightenment. It emphasizes impermanence, the absence of a permanent self, and the interconnectedness of all phenomena. Jainism, founded by Mahāvīra, underscores non-violence (ahimsa) and ascetic practices as central to spiritual progress, advocating for the purification of the soul through strict ethical discipline. The Cārvāka school, on the other hand, adopts a materialistic and skeptical stance, dismissing concepts like the soul and afterlife, emphasizing direct perception and worldly enjoyment as the basis of knowledge and purpose.

What unites these diverse schools of Indian philosophy is their shared commitment to exploring profound existential questions. They address topics such as the nature of reality, the origins of suffering, the means to achieve happiness or liberation, and the ethical principles that should guide human behavior. Despite their differences, these systems often engage in rich debates and dialogues with one another, contributing to a vibrant intellectual tradition that values inquiry, reasoning, and experiential insight. Indian philosophy, therefore, is not just a theoretical endeavor but also a practical guide to living a meaningful and purposeful life, deeply interwoven with the spiritual and cultural fabric of Indian civilization.

Core Principles of Indian Philosophy

At its core, Indian philosophy is governed by a few overarching concepts: Dharma (ethical duty), Karma (the law of cause and effect), and Moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). These principles form the philosophical foundation shared across most schools, whether orthodox or heterodox.

- ***Dharma and Ethics:-***

Dharma, central to Indian philosophy, signifies the moral and ethical framework that sustains cosmic and social order. The Mahabharata defines Dharma as that which upholds and sustains society. While interpretations of Dharma vary, its significance lies in its capacity to balance individual duties with societal obligations. For example, in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna emphasizes the necessity of performing one's Svadharma (personal duty) to achieve spiritual growth.

- ***Karma and Rebirth:-***

Karma operates as the metaphysical law of causation, where an individual's actions determine future experiences. This principle is intricately linked to the doctrine of Samsara (the cycle of birth and rebirth). The Upanishads, foundational texts in Indian philosophy, provide a detailed exposition of how ethical actions influence one's spiritual journey. Karma underscores the ethical responsibility inherent in human agency.

- ***Moksha and Liberation:-***

Moksha represents the ultimate goal of Indian philosophy—the liberation from Samsara. This state of freedom is achieved through self-realization and the dissolution of the ego. Schools such as Advaita Vedanta assert that Moksha involves the realization of the unity of Atman (individual self) and Brahman (universal consciousness).

Orthodox Schools of Indian Philosophy

The six orthodox schools, or Darshanas, are rooted in the Vedic tradition. They include Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Each offers a distinct approach to understanding reality and the means of attaining liberation.

1 & 2 - Nyaya and Vaisheshika

Nyaya, the school of logic, emphasizes rigorous reasoning and epistemology. It explores Pramanas (sources of knowledge) such as perception, inference, comparison, and testimony. Vaisheshika, closely related to Nyaya, focuses on metaphysics and posits that reality is composed of eternal atoms and categories like substance and quality.

3 & 4 - Samkhya and Yoga

Samkhya is a dualistic system that identifies two fundamental realities: Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter). It provides a framework for understanding the evolution of the universe. Yoga, as expounded in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, complements Samkhya by offering practical methods, such as meditation and ethical disciplines, to achieve spiritual liberation.

5 & 6 - Mimamsa and Vedanta

Mimamsa prioritizes ritual practices and the interpretation of Vedic texts, emphasizing the ethical dimensions of Dharma. Vedanta, derived from the Upanishads, explores the ultimate reality (Brahman) and its relationship with the self. Advaita Vedanta, propounded by Adi Shankaracharya, argues for non-dualism, positing that the self and Brahman are identical.

Heterodox Schools of Indian Philosophy

The heterodox traditions challenge Vedic authority and offer alternative perspectives on metaphysics and ethics. Prominent among these are Buddhism, Jainism, and the materialist school of Charvaka.

1- Buddhism:-

Buddhism, founded by Siddhartha Gautama, rejects the concept of a permanent self (Anatta) and emphasizes the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path as a means to attain Nirvana. Its philosophical diversity is evident in schools such as Theravada and Mahayana, which explore profound metaphysical questions about emptiness (Shunyata) and interdependence.

2- Jainism:-

Jain philosophy advocates for Ahimsa (non-violence) and Anekantavada (the doctrine of multiple perspectives). Its emphasis on self-discipline and asceticism underscores the path to liberation through ethical living and spiritual purity.

3- Charvaka:-

Charvaka represents a materialist and skeptical worldview, rejecting the concepts of Dharma, Karma, and Moksha. It prioritizes empirical evidence and sensory perception as the only valid means of knowledge.

Epistemology and Metaphysics

Indian philosophy places significant emphasis on epistemology, exploring the nature and sources of knowledge. The orthodox schools recognize Pramanas, while Buddhism contributes the concept of Pratityasamutpada (dependent origination) to metaphysics. The interplay of these ideas fosters a holistic understanding of reality.

Contemporary Relevance

Indian philosophy continues to inspire modern thought in areas such as mindfulness, ethics, and cosmology. Concepts like interdependence resonate with ecological and environmental discourses, while the emphasis on inner transformation influences psychology and cognitive science.

Conclusion:-

The fundamentals of Indian philosophy offer profound insights into the nature of existence, ethics, and ultimate liberation. Rooted in ancient texts, this tradition seamlessly integrates metaphysical inquiry with practical wisdom, making it an enduring intellectual legacy. Its core principles—Dharma, Karma, and Moksha—serve as guiding frameworks not only for individual spiritual pursuits but also for societal harmony and universal welfare.

Indian philosophy's unique strength lies in its synthesis of experiential and rational dimensions. As the Bhagavad Gita declares, "योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्" (Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam)—"Yoga is skill in action" (Bhagavad Gita 2.50), emphasizing the alignment of moral action with spiritual growth. Similarly, the Upanishadic wisdom, "तत्त्वमसि" (Tat Tvam Asi)—"That thou art" (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7), underscores the unity of the individual self (Atman) with the ultimate reality (Brahman). Such ideas illuminate

pathways for achieving personal fulfillment and collective well-being. In the contemporary era, Indian philosophy resonates globally, influencing disciplines as diverse as cognitive science, environmental ethics, and global spirituality. The principle of Ahimsa (non-violence), championed by Jainism and later adopted by Gandhi, has inspired movements for peace and justice worldwide. Moreover, the ecological awareness embedded in concepts like Prakriti (nature) reflects a sustainable worldview essential for addressing modern environmental challenges.

By fostering dialogue between ancient wisdom and modern thought, Indian philosophy remains a vibrant and transformative force. Its timeless relevance lies not only in its metaphysical depth but also in its practical application to human and ecological flourishing. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, Indian philosophy offers a beacon of insight and balance, rooted in the profound realization of unity amidst diversity.

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DR. ANISHA DESWAL[1] **(11)**

SHARED HISTORIES OF 'REMEMBRANCE': WORLD WAR I MEMORIALS IN LONDON AND DELHI

Abstract

At the turn of the twentieth-century, a series of domestic political crises coupled with a fragile international equilibrium triggered a chain of reactions that culminated in the cataclysmic global conflict known as the First World War (1914–1918). Britain entered the War in 1914 with a relatively small, professional army of just over 700,000 men. During this conflict, Britain drew heavily upon her colonies as reservoirs of manpower and material resources. Notably, approximately 1.5 million combatants and non-combatants from India served the British Empire across various theatres of war. Such large-scale recruitment and participation generated a contested legacy concerning the 'imperial' versus 'national' identities of these soldiers—a tension that continues to resonate in the post-war period.

This paper takes the centenary of the First World War (2014–2018) as its point of departure to, first, critically examine diverse interpretations of the notion of 'memorialization'. Second, it investigates the symbolic representations of 'sites of remembrance', focusing particularly on the 'stone' war memorials such as the Cenotaph in London, United Kingdom, and the All-India War Memorial (now the India Gate) in Delhi, India. Finally, the study seeks to understand the strategic acts of 'collective remembering' and 'selective forgetting' through a comparative analysis of the global and local construction and reception of these war memorials. This chronological exploration is crucial in revealing the intercontinental functional linkages that illustrate both similarities and differences in the 'representational realities' experienced by Britain and India, particularly regarding the identity formation and affiliations of the soldiers.

Keywords: World War I, war-memorial, commemoration, memory, identity, soldier

Introduction

The First World War (1914–1918) continues to remain an historical enigma, simultaneously remembered and misunderstood. The commemoration of its centenary between 2014 and 2018 brought renewed attention to its complex and often contested historiography. These centenary reflections not only celebrated the heroism and sacrifice of soldiers but also stimulated debates around themes of exclusivity, inclusivity, and marginalisation in war memory. One of the most significant outcomes of this renewed engagement was the critical reassessment of the traditional focus on the 'white-soldier'

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as the central figure and symbol of remembrance.[1] This historiographical shift encouraged scholars to explore the war's broader intercontinental dimensions, drawing attention to the experiences and contributions of 'non-white' soldiers from Britain's vast colonial empire who fought alongside their European counterparts.

The First World War was, in essence, a truly global conflict that mobilised men and resources from every inhabited continent. Britain, which entered the war in 1914 with a relatively small professional army of only about 700,000 trained British soldiers, rapidly turned to its colonies to sustain the demands of total warfare.[2] In total, more than 2.5 million men from across the British Empire were enlisted to serve in various theatres of the war. The British Indian Empire made the largest contribution among these colonies, recruiting nearly 1.5 million men,[3] both combatants and non-combatants, whose service extended from the Western-Front to Mesopotamia, East Africa, and beyond.[4]

This diverse composition of the British imperial military has left behind a complex and contested legacy, particularly concerning the question of identity.[5] Were these men, soldiers of the British Empire, serving imperial ambitions; or did they represent and fight for their own homelands within the colonial framework? This tension between 'imperial' and 'national' identities remains a central theme in post-war memory and commemoration practices across the former empire.

The present paper seeks to examine this contested identity through a comparative analysis of the global and local construction and reception of two prominent 'stone' war memorials: the Cenotaph in London, United Kingdom, and the All-India War Memorial (now the India Gate) in Delhi, India. By situating these monuments within their historical, political, and cultural contexts, the study interrogates how acts of commemoration both reflect and reproduce hierarchical structures of remembrance. It

[1] Tom Lawson, ''"The Free-Masonry of Sorrow"?: English National Identities and the Memorialisation of the Great War in Britain, 1919-1931," *History & Memory* 20, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2008), p. 98.
[2] "The Commonwealth and the First World War," *National Army Museum*, accessed March 10, 2019, https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/commonwealth-and-first-world-war
[3] The national freedom movement leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and others earlier supported the recruitments from India to World War I and provided wartime alliance in anticipation of Dominion Status. However, the 'Montague-Chelmsford Reforms' and the repressive 'Rowlatt Act-Martial Law', 1919 leading to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre tragedy in Amritsar, Punjab (April 13, 1919) exposed the imperial nature and motives to the fullest. This paved way for Gandhi to embark on the path of 'Non-Cooperation Movement', 1920 and later 'Civil Disobedience Movement', 1930 which supplemented India's struggle for freedom from colonialism. See George Morton-Jack, *The Indian Empire at War: From Jihad to Victory, The Untold Story of the Indian Army in the First World War*, London: Little, Brown, 2018, pp. 56-65.
[4] "What Role Did the British Empire Play in the War?" *The British Broadcasting Corporation* (*BBC*), accessed December 15, 2019, https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqhyb9q/articles/z749xyc
[5] Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "The Great War and Paramilitarism in Europe, 1917-1923," *Contemporary European History* 19, No. 3 (August 2010), pp. 267-275.

argues that the memorial practices and commemorative discourses in Britain and India continue to profoundly shape public memory, perceptions, and representations of the soldiers of the Great War through strategic acts of 'collective-remembering' and 'selective-forgetting'. In doing so, these war-memorials not only serve as architectural embodiments of grief and gratitude but also as enduring sites of negotiation over identity and representations.

Architecture of 'Remembrance': Legacy and Symbolism in War-Memorials

In the aftermath of the First World War, the global community struggled to comprehend and come to terms with the immense human and material losses it had suffered. The war claimed the lives of approximately nine million soldiers and twelve million civilians worldwide, leaving behind a landscape of grief, dislocation, and trauma on an unprecedented scale.[1] Out of this collective bereavement arose a powerful impulse toward commemoration, manifested most visibly through the construction and dedication of war memorials across nations and empires.

As Paul Fussell has observed, the 'experience of war' can be transmitted through memory in a variety of perceptual and representational forms.[2] War memorials, in this sense, serve not merely as physical structures but as interpretive devices through which societies construct, perform, and preserve particular senses of identity. These monuments operate within specific historical and geographical contexts, embodying strategic political and cultural meanings that connect individual remembrance to collective identity. The relationships between *place*, *belonging*, and *loyalty*, central themes of wartime mobilisation, are thus reimagined and rearticulated through the memorial landscape.[3] The commissioning and design of a war memorial often reflect the extent to which it resonates within both private and public spheres, encompassing scales that range from personal and familial grief to communal, national, and even international expressions of remembrance.

This intricate linkage between the private and public dimensions of commemoration is especially evident in the so-called 'stone' war memorials. These structures often function as sites where *exclusive emotions* of loss and *shared acts* of collective remembrance intersect. As Jay Winter has argued, the critical importance of *'sites of memory'* or *'sites of remembrance'* lies in their enduring role as reference points, not only for those who survived the traumatic experiences of war, but also for generations born long after the events themselves. Winter further suggests that acts of commemoration are shaped by

[1] Anne Bostanci and John Dubber, *Remember the World as well as the War: Why the Global Reach and Enduring Legacy of the First World War Still Matter Today*, United Kingdom: The British Council, 2014.
[2] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[3] Catherine Nash, "Geographies of War: Landscape and Memory," *The Royal Geographical Society* 28, No. 2 (June 1996), pp. 275-277.

broad communities of remembrance that gather around these sites, thereby transforming individual mourning into a collective cultural practice.[1]

War memorials are, therefore, constructed to honour the dead in ways that are meaningful to a diverse audience-comprising families of the fallen, veterans, political bodies, and local communities, while aligning with broader contemporary commemorative interests. The *location* of a memorial, moreover, carries implicit meaning: it signifies which events, individuals, or groups are deemed worthy of '*collective-remembrance'* and which are relegated to '*selective-forgetting'* within the public historical narrative. Memorials may be erected directly on the sites of battle, where sacrifice and death occurred, or far removed from the theatres of combat, situated instead within civic or ceremonial spaces that facilitate national and imperial remembrance.[2]

The conceptual foundation of war memorials, as cultural artefacts, can be understood as the outcome of interaction among three interrelated historical factors: Firstly, **the intellectual and cultural traditions** that inform all representations of the past; Secondly, **the memory-makers** such as architects, patrons, and political authorities, who selectively appropriate and manipulate these traditions; and lastly, **the memory-consumers**, that is, the public, who engage with, reinterpret, or disregard these memorials according to their own social and political interests.[3]

By the 1920s, the commemorative impulse had found material expression in a wide variety of *stone* memorials, ranging from crosses, obelisks, and sculptural figures of soldiers to engraved lists of the dead. These forms were often funded through a combination of private subscriptions and public donations, reflecting the shared desire to memorialize the immense human toll of the conflict. Christian symbolism was especially prevalent in public memorials: the use of the cross as a central motif conveyed messages of hope, redemption, and reunion in the afterlife. Simultaneously, secular designs gained popularity, particularly cenotaphs, obelisks, and wall-tablets.[4] Drawing inspiration from funerary architecture and classical allegory, such memorials invited open interpretation, allowing viewers to ascribe their own meanings while maintaining a solemn and universal character appropriate to collective mourning.

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[1] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 300-314.

[2] Hanna Smyth, "Monuments in Stone and Colour" in *Memory*, eds. Philippe Tortell, Mark Turin and Margot Young, Vancouver: Peter Wall Institute for Advance Studies, The University of British Columbia, 2018, pp. 184-187.

[3] Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History & Theory* 41, No. 2 (May 2002), p. 180.

[4] Ann-Marie Foster, "Commemoration, Cult of the Fallen (Great Britain and Ireland)," in *1914-1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, eds. Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, Berlin: Freie Universita, 2020, p. 4.

Among the most iconic of these memorials are the Cenotaph in London and the All-India War Memorial (now the India Gate) in Delhi, designed by **Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869–1944)**, one of the twentieth-century's most distinguished architects. Lutyens was appointed principal architect by the Commonwealth (formerly Imperial) War Graves Commission, and in the immediate post-war years, much of his work was devoted to designing memorials for the dead and missing.[1] Sensitive to the vast religious, racial, and cultural diversity of Britain's imperial forces, Lutyens advocated for designs that transcended sectarian and cultural boundaries.

His architectural response was what Christopher Hussey, his biographer, later termed the *'Elemental Mode'*. This approach to commemoration relied upon classical proportion, austere form, and a universal aesthetic stripped of overt religious ornamentation or figurative representations.[2] Lutyens sought to communicate the *universality* of human loss and the dignity of remembrance through simplicity, balance, and monumental silence. His memorials, free of explicit dogma yet rich in emotional resonance, projected an enduring architectural language of solace, acceptance of death, and reverence for the individuality and fragility of human life. In this way, Lutyens' memorials transcended their immediate commemorative function to become profound reflections on mortality, community, and the shared human experience of war.[3] Their symbolism continues to shape both historical memory and the politics of remembrance across Britain and India, embodying the ongoing dialogue between *collective memory* and *imperial legacy*.

The Cenotaph, London, United Kingdom

The Cenotaph, literally meaning an "empty tomb", stands today as one of the earliest and most enduring memorials erected in London, United Kingdom, to commemorate the soldiers who died in the First World War.[4] The conflict had directly or indirectly touched nearly every household across Britain and its vast Empire, leaving an indelible mark not only on the material and social fabric of the nation but also on the psychological outlook of future generations. In the midst of this profound collective bereavement and the concurrent socio-economic upheaval, the Cenotaph emerged as a monument that captured the national mood through an aesthetic of modesty, understatement, and abstraction. These qualities, central to Sir Edwin Lutyens' design philosophy, contributed to making the Cenotaph one of the most significant and symbolically potent memorials in modern British history.

[1] For more details, see https://www.cwgc.org, accessed on 10 October 2022.
[2] David A. Johnson and Nicole F. Gilbertson, "Commemorations of Imperial Sacrifice at Home and Abroad: British Memorials of the Great War," *The History Teacher* 43, No. 4 (August 2010), pp. 565-568.
[3] Allan Greenberg, "Lutyens's Cenotaph," *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians* 48, No. 1 (March 1989), pp. 18-20.
[4] Jenny Macleod, "Britishness and Commemoration: National Memorials to the First World War in Britain and Ireland,'' *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, No. 4 (October 2013), p. 650.

Lutyens' vision for the monument was shaped both by the cultural diversity of Britain's military forces and by his personal theosophical beliefs, which inclined him toward a pantheistic and universalist outlook. Rejecting proposals from influential groups in London who advocated for a design based on the Christian Cross, Lutyens instead pursued an architectural form that would transcend religious boundaries and speak to all those who had suffered loss, regardless of creed or class.[1] Structurally, the Cenotaph is composed of three key elements: the base, the superstructure, and the symbolic empty coffin at the summit. This arrangement, conceived with meticulous proportional harmony, functions as what might be termed a 'metrical organization' of meaning, mass, and rhythm. Through this interplay of form and proportion, the monument compels viewers into a meditative engagement, prompting reflection on the personal and collective trauma of death in war.

Situated prominently at the center of Whitehall, the ceremonial heart of London and the administrative seat of imperial authority, the Cenotaph's location amplifies its symbolic resonance. Its visibility to all transforms it into both a literal and metaphorical center-piece of national remembrance. The monument simultaneously expresses the vulnerability of the individual amid the mechanized destruction of modern warfare and the inclusiveness of shared mourning within Britain's wartime experience. Its placement within the imperial capital also reflects a deliberate intention to anchor commemoration within a landscape of power, thereby reinforcing the idealized paternal and masculine virtues associated with the British Empire.

Most soldiers who perished in the Great War were buried overseas, far from their homes. Thus, the Cenotaph, an 'empty tomb', came to serve as a surrogate grave and a focal point of remembrance for the bereaved. The original structure, constructed of wood and plaster, was hastily erected for the Victory Day celebrations in 1919. Its overwhelming public reception led to the decision to rebuild it in permanent form. The stone Cenotaph was officially unveiled by King George V at precisely 11 a.m. on 11 November 1920, exactly two years after the Armistice,[2] thereby inaugurating a ritual calendar of remembrance that has since become institutionalized as part of what Eric Hobsbawm would later describe as the 'invention of tradition'.[3]

The Cenotaph's austere façade bears minimal but powerful ornamentation: carved wreaths, three flags, and the inscription ''The Glorious Dead''. On the same day as of unveiling, the remains of the 'Unknown British Warrior' were interred in Westminster Abbey.[4] The inscription on his tomb reads that he died "for King and country, for loved ones, home and Empire."[5] As historian Tom Lawson notes, *The Daily Express* hailed the

[1] Andrew Crompton, "The Secret of the Cenotaph," *AA Files*, No. 34 (Autumn 1997), pp. 64-67.
[2] Greenberg, "Cenotaph," pp. 5-14.
[3] For details see Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*.
[4] Elizabeth Buettner, "Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India," *History & Memory* 18, No. 1 (2006), p. 17.
[5] *Papers of Stuart Kelson Brown: Indian Army Representation at the Unveiling of the Cenotaph on 11 November 1920*, India Office Records and Private Papers (IOR), File No. IOR/L/MIL/5/842, The British Library (BL), London, United Kingdom (UK).

Unknown Soldier as the ''salvation of the Empire,'' symbolically merging individual sacrifice with imperial purpose. The memorial tablet, he observes, commemorated ''the million dead of the British Empire'' while simultaneously celebrating ''England that he had died to save,'' underscoring how remembrance of the Great War was articulated through an imperial lens.[1] A similar sentiment was reflected in the evolution of the War Museum's nomenclature: originally established as the National War Museum in 1917, it was renamed the Imperial War Museum in 1918, reinforcing the confluence of national and imperial identities in Britain's commemorative culture.

Yet, this fusion of the 'national' and the 'imperial' also exposed the deeply ambivalent and contested nature of British identity in the aftermath of the war. The Cenotaph, while unifying in its design and purpose, revealed tensions between patriotic devotion to the nation and loyalty to the broader imperial framework. In his seminal work, George L. Mosse argues that patriotism in modern Europe was often mythologized by state and society alike, serving both to justify the war and to sanctify the suffering it entailed. As Mosse observes, this "myth of the war experience" transformed a profoundly unpalatable past into a morally acceptable narrative, not merely for consolation but to legitimate the very nation in whose name the war had been fought. Within this mythic framework, the fallen soldier was reimagined as a sacred martyr, and the war itself as a moral crusade.[2]

The Cenotaph thus functioned simultaneously as a site of grief, pride, and patriotic reaffirmation for the Allied Armed Forces. Its construction and reception reflected the need to reconcile mourning for the dead with celebration of imperial endurance and a sense of patriotism and duty for Britain and the Empire.[3] Yet, these same commemorative practices also revealed underlying anxieties about identity, belonging, and memory. From the 1920s onward, the Cenotaph stood as a tangible embodiment of Britain's struggle to navigate the post-war crisis of meaning, particularly regarding the identities of colonial soldiers whose service blurred the boundaries between 'imperial' and 'national' affiliation. In this way, the monument not only memorialized the dead but also became a space where Britain's imperial conscience and its evolving notions of nationhood were publicly negotiated and contested.

The All-India War Memorial (India Gate), Delhi, India

[1] Lawson, ""The Free-Masonry of Sorrow"?," pp. 89-120.
[2] George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 7-10.
[3] See *Papers of the Indian Soldiers Fund Established to Provide Comforts and Clothing for Indian Troops and Prisoners of War in France and Mesopotamia During the First World War*, 'Correspondence of P. D. Agnew Regarding the Proposed Memorial to Indian Soldiers to be Erected at Brighton', IOR, File No. Mss Eur F120/18, 10-15 August 1916, BL, London, UK.

The process of constructing and interpreting war memorials within the colonial world followed trajectories distinct from those in the imperial metropole. In British India, the All-India War Memorial, now known as the India Gate, functioned as a complex site of power, memory, and mourning, articulating an imperial narrative that sought to merge grief with paternalistic notions of British benevolence. The foundation stone of the memorial was laid in 1921 by the Duke of Connaught, a representative of the British royal family, and it was formally inaugurated a decade later, in 1931, by the then Viceroy, Lord Irwin. Dedicated to the soldiers of the British Indian Army who lost their lives during the First World War and in the Afghan campaigns, the monument's design and inscriptions reflect the imperial ideology of loyalty, sacrifice, and subordination.

Architecturally, the memorial's cornice is inscribed with imperial suns, an emblem of British sovereignty, while both sides of the arch bear the word *INDIA*, flanked by the Roman numerals MCMXIV (1914) and MCMXIX (1919). The dedicatory inscription solemnly reads:

"TO THE DEAD OF THE INDIAN ARMIES WHO FELL AND ARE HONOURED IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS, MESOPOTAMIA AND PERSIA, EAST AFRICA, GALLIPOLI AND ELSEWHERE IN THE NEAR AND THE FAR EAST, AND IN SACRED MEMORY ALSO OF THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE HERE RECORDED AND WHO FELL IN INDIA OR THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER AND DURING THE THIRD AFGHAN WAR."[1]

Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the All-India War Memorial embodies the architect's characteristic fusion of European classicism with Jacobean solidity. Beneath its graceful arch and rigidly symmetrical composition lies a coded assertion of Western rationality and order. The subtext of its geometric layout, governed by grids, circles, and axes, was intended to symbolize the imposition of imperial control through architectural discipline. The British Empire, in conceiving the grand urban plan of New Delhi, sought to represent through its geometry not only aesthetic order but also the logic of governance, authority, and hierarchy. From its inception, therefore, the memorial was less a neutral space of mourning and more an architectural projection of imperial ideology. This symbolism was not lost on contemporary administrators: Viceroy Lord Chelmsford notably remarked that the arch expressed ''the ideal and fact of British rule over India,''[2] encapsulating both the political and moral ambitions of empire.

The expression of Britain's dominance and the unequal nature of its relationship with India is manifested in multiple dimensions of the memorial's conception and realization. First, its *location* during the colonial period was profoundly significant. The arch spanned the ceremonial boulevard known as the Kingsway (later Rajpath and now Kartavya Path)—New Delhi's principal processional avenue used for military parades

[1] Johnson and Gilbertson, "Commemorations of Imperial Sacrifice at Home and Abroad," p. 576.

[2] Ranjana Sengupta, "Enshrining an Imperial Tradition," *India International Centre Quarterly* 33, No. 2 (Autumn 2006), pp. 17-24.

and imperial pageantry. At one end of this axial route stood the Viceroy's House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan), the ultimate symbol of British sovereignty; at the other, the War Memorial Arch itself. The juxtaposition of these two architectural icons symbolized the continuum of imperial authority: the Viceroy's House represented the commanding center of power, while the arch embodied the loyalty and sacrifice of the colonial subjects who sustained that power. Second, the financial disparity in their construction costs reveals the hierarchies embedded within the imperial project. The estimated expenditure for the All-India War Memorial was significantly reduced, from an initial nine lakh rupees to six lakh, while the cost of the Viceroy's House was a staggering 97,50,000 rupees. This dramatic contrast illustrates the secondary importance accorded to colonial commemoration when compared to the monumental display of imperial governance. Third, the inaugural ceremony itself reflected the hierarchical and racially stratified nature of empire. Official plans for the ceremony stipulated that wreaths would be placed at the arch by a precisely ranked sequence of representatives: the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, a representative of the Dominions, the Adjutant-General in India, a British soldier, a British airman, and finally, "a Sepoy chosen by lot from the representatives of the Indian Army." This ritual choreography of commemoration underscored the rigid order of imperial society - one in which colonial subjects were acknowledged only at the margins of ceremonial space.[1]

For Indian soldiers, this memorialization was fraught with ambivalence. During the colonial period, Indian troops lived through a double articulation of identity: they were Indians by birth and culture but soldiers of Britain by duty and allegiance. Situated at the periphery of both their 'British' and 'Indian' selves, these men found themselves denied a stable or central identity. They were valorized as loyal imperial subjects yet remained politically subordinate and socially invisible. After independence, this ambivalence would resurface in the nationalist historiography and popular memory of the First World War.

As noted in a BBC Radio broadcast during its 2015 centenary series ''The Essay: World War One Round the World'',

"As many as 74,187 Indian soldiers died during the war and a comparable number were wounded. Their stories and their heroism have long been omitted from popular histories of the war, or relegated to the footnotes. […] When the world commemorated the 50th anniversary of the First World War in 1964, there was scarcely a mention of India's soldiers anywhere, least of all in India. India's absence from the commemorations and its failure to honour the dead were not a major surprise. Nor was the lack of First World War memorials in the country: the general feeling was that India, then freshly freed from the imperial yoke, was ashamed of its soldiers' participation in a colonial war and saw nothing to celebrate. […] In absence of a national war memorial, many Indians like

[1] *Economic and Overseas Department Papers*, 'Letters from the Architect's Office to the Chief Engineer in Delhi, 1926, Along with the List of Schedule of Works Referred to Cost of Engineering and Non-Engineering Works Pertaining to Expense Statements of Imperial Delhi, 1921-1929 Discusses the Expenditure of All India War Memorial. Delhi Architects-Remuneration', IOR, File No. IOR/L/E/7/1480, BL, London, UK.

myself see it (now the India Gate, then known as the All-India War Memorial) as the only venue to pay homage to those who have lost their lives in more recent conflict. […] The centenary is finally forcing us to rethink."[1]

This observation captures the historical silence that surrounded India's participation in the Great War during the postcolonial decades. The All-India War Memorial was renamed the India Gate after independence, and from the 1950s onwards, it was reinterpreted through the lens of nationalism and militarism. What had once symbolized imperial domination was gradually transformed into a monument legitimizing the sovereignty of the Indian nation-state. A major turning point came after the 1971 war with Pakistan, when the government constructed the *Amar Jawan Jyoti*, the ''Flame of the Immortal Soldier''- beneath the arch, designating it as India's symbolic 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier'. This adaptation effectively nationalized the memorial, aligning it with the ethos of sacrifice for the Indian nation rather than for the British Empire. Over subsequent decades, the process of repetitive representation through state rituals further reinforced its national significance. The India Gate, became integral part of the ceremonial axis for Republic Day parades held annually on 26 January, visually asserting the power, unity, and sovereignty of independent India.

In this transformation, the India Gate epitomizes the evolving politics of memory, from an imperial monument glorifying British paternalism to a national shrine embodying Indian patriotism. Its continued use as the focal point of state ceremony reveals how colonial symbols can be re-appropriated to serve postcolonial narratives of nationhood. Thus, the memorial's layered history encapsulates the transition from imperial subjugation to national self-assertion, demonstrating how acts of remembrance remain deeply intertwined with questions of identity, power, and belonging.

Conclusion

The **centenary of the First World War (2014–2018)**, a global event that had reignited academic and public interest in the transnational dimensions of remembrance led to the sequential engagement that reshaped the *memory-remembrance nexus* across continents. It also underscores how, in the twenty-first century, acts of remembrance have evolved into a global discourse that negotiates the entangled legacies of empire, nationalism, and identity.

In contemporary scholarship, the histories of the **British Empire** and the **military narratives** inherited from the early twentieth-century continue to pose intellectual

[1] "Why the Indian Soldiers of the WW1 Were Forgotten," *BBC News*, 2 July 2015.
The requirement to construct a national War-memorial was under consideration since the 1960s. The proposal acquired momentum after six decades and was approved in 2015. Its construction began in 2017 followed by its inauguration in 2019 at New Delhi, India. See ''Decision to Construct National War Memorial'', accessed on 6 November 2022, https://nationalwarmemorial.gov.in/

dilemmas. These stem from the layered and often contradictory identities of colonial soldiers who participated in the First World War. The men who fought under the imperial flag were simultaneously subjects of empire and aspirants to emergent national identities. Their affiliations were **ambiguous and fluid**, straddling both **international ideals** of loyalty to a global imperial cause; and **narrowly national projections**, rooted in local patriotism or colonial consciousness. This duality produced what might be called an *identity dissonance*, where belonging was both asserted and denied within the same imperial framework.

It is crucial to recognize that 'war' is never merely a **political or economic phenomenon**. It constitutes a **socio-cultural process** that profoundly shapes the moral, emotional, and spatial dimensions of the societies involved. 'War' leaves its imprint not only on the battlefield but also on the **architectural and commemorative geographies** of the home-front, where acts of 'remembrance' translate military sacrifice into collective meaning. Through this lens, war memorials emerge as **symbolic mediators** that give enduring form to the abstract experience of loss. They transform private grief into public narrative, linking the intimate memory of the individual soldier with the shared memory of the community and the state. The **construction and reception** of war-memorials thus encapsulate a dynamic dialogue between **personal loss** and **collective legacy**. These memorials serve as **repositories of emotion**, reflecting the continuous negotiation between the past and the present. Each act of commemoration, whether through ceremony, inscription, or ritual, re-inscribes the meanings of war within contemporary political and cultural frameworks. As societies evolve, so too does the interpretation of their memorial landscapes, allowing for both continuity and redefinition.

This fluidity between remembrance and politics substantiates **Ernest Renan's seminal argument** that '*nation-building is an ongoing process'*, sustained by the twin forces of '**remembrance' and 'forgetting'**. According to Renan, collective memory is not a static inheritance but a selective reconstruction shaped by present-day aspirations. The process of commemoration, therefore, becomes an act of national self-fashioning: a deliberate expression of contemporary identity articulated through identification with certain historical actors and events while omitting others. The **interlinking connections between history, memory, and commemoration** are continually being reconfigured by the passage of time and by shifting geographical and political contexts. The same soldier, for instance, may be remembered variously, as one who fought for *Britain*, for the *British Empire*, or for his *own homeland*-India, depending on who performs the act of remembrance and from what historical standpoint. In this way, **sites of memory** are not static relics but **living constructs** whose meanings evolve as communities reinterpret their pasts.

As a result, the **memorialization of colonial soldiers** and their shifting identities embodies the tension between *imperial narratives* and *national re-appropriations.* The **patterns of representation** that define these memorials are themselves products of negotiation, between empire and colony, between past and present, between imposed authority and self-determined identity. Over time, these patterns have transitioned from

colonial commemorations of imperial loyalty to **post-colonial reassertions of national pride and autonomy.**

Thus, the study of war memorials and their symbolic representations reveals the **continuing evolution of historical memory**, a process in which collective remembrance not only reflects but actively constructs identity. The **movement from imperial to national frameworks** of remembrance demonstrates how war-memorials related to World War I, once designed to reinforce subordination, can be **re-inscribed as symbols of sovereignty**, turning the architecture of empire into the architecture of nationhood. In this ongoing transformation, remembrance remains not merely an act of homage but a profound assertion of how societies choose to define themselves through their past.

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DR. MINAKSHI SHARMA[1] **(12)**

THE PALACE OF ILLUSIONS: "PANCHAALI" ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT OF CHITRA BANERJI DIVAKARUNI TO UNEARTH THE WOMAN CHARACTER

Abstract:

The Mahabharata, an epic narrative, chronicles the series of events that culminate in the Battle of Kurukshetra, as observed through the lens of the male characters, namely the Pandavas and the Kauravas, who belong to the Kuru dynasty. The noveltitle 'The Palace of Illusions', authored by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni presents Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, as the narrator who recounts her own perspective on the narrative of the Mahabharata. The author has well communicated her emotions and experiences as the spouse of five individuals. This review critically examines the novel 'That Palace of Illusions' via a feminist lens, focusing on the portrayal of Draupadi's character, her agency, and her perspectives. Once again, the character of Draupadi and her interactions with other characters are being objectively evaluated. In the text, the author portrays Draupadi as expressing unwavering resolve when she declares, "I shall henceforth refrain from expending valuable time on feelings of remorse." The evaluation endeavours to offer potential indications of the futuristic trajectory that this piece of work is suggesting, as the individual expresses their intention to face forward and mould the future according to their desired form. Finally, the article provides a rationale for the importance of the moral lessons and impacts that the author seeks to convey through the recounting of the Mahabharata, a seminal epic of Indian literature.

Keywords:draupadi, divakaruni, palace of illusions, feminism, rebel, feminist novel

Introduction

Richness and legacy of a nation's culture is woven with threads of literature, among other cherished elements. Ancient epics and mythological texts, too, hold a vital place within this domain. In the vast realm of Indian literature, there exist two illustrious Sanskrit epics, amidst a plethora of other remarkable creations by esteemed poets. These two timeless treasures are none other than the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. In the realm of the traditional foundational context, the Ramayana is regarded as a poetic masterpiece, while the Mahabharata is revered as a historical chronicle. The primary aim of the Ramayana was to establish a profound sense of morality and ethics within society, while the Mahabharata sought to faithfully chronicle the unfolding of significant events(Bhattacharyya , 2021).

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Mahabharata, a tale of intricate narratives, weaves together the eternal struggle between righteousness and malevolence. This is a tale of intricate narratives, delves into the eternal struggle between righteousness and malevolence. It weaves together the destinies of numerous regal figures, both kings and queens, spanning across the passage of three generations. This epic saga traverses from the kingdom to reach to its zenith and how it moves to its culmination, only to witness their eventual descent into oblivion(Subashini , 2020). However, within the realm of this grand tale, a feminist viewpoint also emerges, that has captivated the minds of numerous novelists and storytellers. Draupadi, the protagonist who has captured the imagination of esteemed writers, is undeniably regarded as an embodiment of fortitude, bravery, and rebellion.

Draupadi emerges as a truly remarkable and singular entity in the original work. Chitra BanerjeeDivakaruni's opus, "The Palace of Illusions," offers a fresh perspective on the timeless epic, Mahabharata, as it unfolds before our very eyes through the captivating lens of Draupadi. The narrative centres on Draupadi's steadfast proclamation of her womanhood. She is depicted as a formidable and resolute woman, possessing great strength and autonomy, standing on equal footing with the men in her midst, rather than being subordinate to them(Sultana, 2017).Draupadi, serving as the narrator, assumes the role of an inquisitor as Divakaruni relentlessly probes the positions and practices of those around her. In the depths of the subconscious, this interrogation takes place, where Draupadi bares her soul and unveils her innermost being.

In this review, the novel ‘That Palace of Illusions’ is critically analyzed under feminist outlook by showcasing Draupadi’s persona, voice and visions. Again Draupadi’s character and her voices are impartially assessed with the characters to which she is linked with. As penned by the author in this book, where Draupadiutters with resolute determination, "I would no longer waste time on regret. I would turn my face to the future and carve it into the shape I wanted.”, the review attempts to provide possible hintsof the futuristic trail that this work isindicating. Lastly, the review justifies the significance of the moral and impacts that the author has intended to impart this book by retelling Mahabharata – a foundational epic of India.

Summary of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni ‘Palace of Illusions’

It is through the distinct storytelling form as adoptedby Divakaruni in ‘The Palace of Illusions’, the novel takes the reader to a bygone era, where the boundaries between history and myth intertwine, creating an account of complex yet impressive drama that easily correlates the contemporary society. In the elaboration as presented in this novel, we are transported to a time when the flames of destiny fall upon the birth of the illustrious princess Panchaali. Born amidst an alarmingfate of fulfilling a vengeance as foretoldby divine forces, her life unfolds before our very eyes, anunusual tale of love, betrayal, and resilience(Oza, 2008).

The tale commences with her extraordinary entrance into this world, accompanied by her dear sibling Dhistadhumna, whom she affectionately addresses as Dhri. Both of them emerged from the fiery depths of a Yagna, a sacred rite conducted by their father in pursuit of a celestial offspring capable of realising his fervent desire to conquer the vast realm of Aryavarta, the land of the noble Aryans. Dhri emerged initially as a sacred

offering from the Yagna, and subsequently, she emerged once more, clasping Dhri's hand. Yet, she confesses with great surprise that from that very instant, she felt an inexplicable sense of being unwelcome in the presence of her father. It seemed that he had always yearned for a robust successor to the throne, and such a role was reserved solely for a male offspring, never for a daughter.

Panchaali, as she is a woman of extraordinary spirit, finds herself caught in a delicate place, a precarious balancing act, as she navigates the intricate web of her existence. She had a mysterious relationship with Lord ShriKrishnaa, who was a family acquaintance.

She became particularly fond of Karana, the long-lost son of Queen Kunti, through the many tales she heard from Dhri and Dhaimaa about different legendary kings and countries(Oza , 2008). She began secretly yearning for him as a life companion and had dreams about him.After marrying Arjun, she was divided among Arjun's five brothers according to a very ridiculous and idiotic edict of Kunti.

Bound by the sacred bonds of matrimony, she finds herself wedded to not one, but five husbands, each of whom has been unjustly deprived of their rightful inheritance, their father's kingdom. With grace and determination, Panchaali must summon all her strength to navigate the treacherous waters of palace intrigue and political machinations.

Her journey is one of profound complexity, as she strives to uphold her honour, protect her loved ones, and reclaim what has been unjustly taken. Other than that, we can find a number of her secondary feelings that influence her sentiments. For instance, her love for Karna never left her. She was the happiest person in the world when the Asura Maya built her very own Maya Mahal (The Palace of Illusions), and she desperately wanted this to be the end of her story. When Duryodhan visited his palace, fate once again played a cruel hand, and she could not contain her mirth at the sight of him tripping over the illusion of a phoney wall and falling to the floor. In order to exact his vengeance on Draupadi for the insult she had dealt him, Duryodhana summoned Yudhisthir to a game of Chaupal (cards). The consecutive events constitute a well-known epic of ‘Mahabharata’. Draupadi's grief over her losses is depicted in the novel's conclusion.

Panchaali's story, a testament to the indomitable spirit of a woman, resonates with the timeless themes of a females duty and loyalty, sacrifice, and the pursuit of justice. In this literary work, Chitra Banerjee Divakarunicertainly succeeds in creating a tempting yet creepy, cruel and intriguingenvironment where the characters interact and take their course towards its dramatic conclusion, at its core she masterfully recounts and enthrals us with stories derived from the grand epic.

In a display of unwavering dedication to the narrative of Panchaali, Divakaruni also unveils a poignant depiction of the intricate psychology and sentiments of warriors, deities, and the enigmatic forces of fate, imparting profound insights that resonate with the tumultuous state of our present world ravaged by conflict.

Draupadi: Portrayal of the Central Character as a Woman of Strong Individuality

Draupadi holds a distinctive position within the realm of Indian mythology. In the narrative presented by ChitraBannerjeeDivakaruni in ‘Palace of Illusions’, Draupadi is

depicted as a character who exhibits disruptive tendencies, displaying arrogance that ultimately contributes to her own downfall. In alternative terms, she made a request for it. It is unsurprising that in the original text of Mahabharata, where the story gives priority to the male characters, would depict the central and other prominent female protagonists in such a manner(Ramadurai , 2021). Undoubtedly, not only Draupadi, but also numerous other female characters in Indian epics have functioned as cautionary examples for readers throughout history, emphasising the societal expectations placed upon women and the potential consequences of deviating from them.

In her novel,Divakaruni has employed a narrative technique that involves a shift of perspective, namely by allowing Draupadi to assume the role of the narrator. Divakaruni employs a persistent technique of interrogation to critically examine the positions and practises of individuals. The process of inquiry takes place within the realm of the unconscious, wherein Draupadi unveils her innermost being through this particular method.

The Mahabharata has also been recounted from the perspective of marginalised individuals. It might be argued that she is in the process of challenging the established truth that was constructed by the masculine discourse. The author of this novel expressed her dissatisfaction with the manner of representation of female characters in mythology. She articulated that these characters often remained enigmatic, with their thoughts, motives, and emotions only being depicted when they directly impacted the lives of male heroes.

In this context, we can show another reference. For instance, in her work entitled "Until the Lions," Karthika Nair asserts the importance of amplifying the voices of those who have been marginalised and silenced. The author revisits the Mahabharata via the perspective of 19 different voices, including those who are typically marginalised, such as Shikhandi, Vidura's mother, and Krishna in his Mohini form.

Furthermore, their roles were ultimately subordinate to those of their male relatives, such as fathers, husbands, brothers, or sons. In numerous renowned epics, novels, and notable literary works, the majority of the characters are male, with less significance attributed to female characters during ancient times. Prior to reading this book, our understanding of Draupadi's character, ideas, and thoughts is limited.

However, as we delve into the text, we will gain insight into how women were treated by males in ancient times. In this context, we observe the prevalence of male dominance during the ancient era. Divakaruni portrays the life of Draupadi as a narrative characterised by her personal agency, as opposed to being dictated by external influences, so granting her a significant voice within the predominantly patriarchal milieu of ancient Indian civilization.

The Palace of Illusions is a novel that Draupadi's character exhibits a lack of internal suffering and an ability to articulate her perspectives. Her initial influence was the lack of access to education. Draupadi was denied access to education by her father. According to Divakaruni, the protagonist's father and tutor conveyed to her brother the message that the primary objective of a Kshatriya woman's existence is to provide assistance to warriors. When she inquired of her brother, "By whom was it determined

that the primary role of women is to provide support for men?" he said, "That is the task I would appreciate you undertaking."

This observation suggests a lack of concern for the education of women, resulting in their subordination to the desires and expectations of men. In this context, one can observe the significance of certain time periods.Marriage is regarded as an individual's choice to conform to societal norms and gain familial approval. Swayamwara refers to the customary practice of a bride personally selecting her own mate. Draupadi underwent the Swayamwara ceremony, although she had already been promised to Arjun by her family and Krishna(Mistry, 2020).

The societal dynamics in question are characterized by a disheartening degree of cruelty, as evidenced by the treatment of daughters who are perceived as mere objects under the control of their own families. This literary work portrays the latent emotions of Draupadi, as she experiences an instantaneous infatuation with Karna at their initial encounter. Due to her familial background and adherence to Kshatriya tradition, she entered into matrimony with Arjun and his siblings.

Thus, Draupadi meets with a state of deprivation in terms of their freedom. After being wedded to five men, her life underwent a profound upheaval, prompting her to reflect, "I found it difficult to fully comprehend the extent of the changes that had occurred in my life, as well as my role in shaping the new path we were now traversing."

The individual in issue interrogated the senior members of the court, where she had been wagered by her spouse. The novel's depiction of the scenario serves as evidence for the notion that the law was applied uniformly to all individuals. Draupadi is not just perceived as a resilient female figure, but also as an individual burdened with sadness, harbouring a desire to be united with Karna. Despite being married to the five, Draupadiharboured deep feelings of love for Karna. However, her desires and affection were disregarded by a male-dominated culture, ultimately shattering her hopes and dreams (Hema, 2021).

Until her demise, Draupadi has a distinct regard for Karna, wherein she laments her failure to disclose her sentiments to him. Her sentiments towards Krishna can be characterised as those of a companion. Sri Krishna assumes the roles of a friend, caretaker, and guide throughout the entirety of one's endeavours. This could potentially explain her attraction towards Krishna.

Karna, on the other hand,harbours a profound sense of envy towards Draupadi and the Pandavas. Karna's affiliation with the Kaurava faction can be attributed to their shared opposition towards the Pandavas. During the game of dice between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, Karna aligned himself with the Kauravas. The Pandavas were defeated in the game, with Draupadi being the victor. Initially, they experience defeat within themselves, followed by their subsequent defeat over Draupadi.

In a patriarchal society, the husband has granted permission for his wife to be lost. The individual's spouse experienced a loss subsequent to their own loss. Karna's suspicion and detestation prompted him to engage in the highly reprehensible act of endorsing Draupadi's unclothing during the court proceedings of the Kaurava, subsequent to the game of dice.

Draupadi's attention was caught by him as soon as she entered the court. Despite being married, she still has feelings for Karna, which is absurd. "A wife who thinks lustfully of a man who is not her husband is as unfaithful as a woman who sleeps with such a man," the Bible says. But patriarchal society made these rules. As soon as man did this, it was no longer illegal. Draupadi's mistreatment was met with smiles even from Karna.

Rules are solely for women which made by men. The novel's title, "The Palace of Illusion," is appropriate, as "Illusion" is the Maya word for magic. For Draupadi, this palace is as good as Maya.Pandvas and Draupadi ruled Indraprastha for a long time. Pandvas gambled away his fortune. Yudhistir could not hold on to the kingdom, his siblings, or Draupadi. Everything he owned was lost in a game of chance. So, they used Draupadi as a sock puppet. Like a whore, she was hauled into court. As a result, Draupadi represents the plight of all women.

Just like a cattle or a slave, "the wife is the property of the husband." Draupadi complains to the elders, but they remain mute. Women in Indian society are expected to blindly obey all male-created norms. Draupadi had asked a question to everyone, but they had all kept mute. A woman has no separate existence and no legal protections. However, a man has the same legal authority to destroy her as he does to her property. But Draupadi has got to display respect inspite of insult in sabha much like a dancing female.

The terrible Battle of Kurukshatra followed this atrocity.Draupadi came roaring in, "All of you will die in the battle that will bespawn from today's works," as she stripped off her garments. Your wives and mothers will cry much more heartbreakingly than I have.

In contrast to readings of the Mahabharata that hold Draupadi responsible for the horrific destructive Kurukshetra war, Divakaruni's book elevates Draupadi's adversity to the adversity of all women in the globe and Draupadi's inner troubles to the questions of all women in the world. Divakaruni highlights Draupadi's passion, which was glossed over in the original account, in The Palace of Illusions. Draupadi's life was marked by emotional highs and lows that most women never saw.

Draupadi's self-desire is depicted in ‘The Palace of Illusions’ via her concealed love, even though she is commended for her resilience and self-assurance despite the dreadful odds of her existence. While questioning the assumption that women should be obedient to males and sacrifice their interests for the sake of the community, the author celebrates women as beings to enjoy life to the fullest by focusing on Draupadi's passions. Draupadi gladly accepts the penalties of her illicit love for Karna: she falls first from the mountain on the route to paradise. Simply put, “Divakaruni within the plot of The Palace of Illusions demonstrates her specific concern for those female characters who were subjected to torture and neglect in Mahabharata." Feminist thought ultimately speaks for all of humanity.

Characters that Enhance/InfluenceDraupadi’s Persona in the Novel

(a) Drupad

Draupadi has a blue skin colour since she was "born of the fire." Someone with "skin so dark that people termed it blue" was a princess with the power to alter the course of events. As Divakaruni narrates, King Drupad, who had accomplished the enormous task of gaining a son from the sacred fire in order to vanquish Drona, was blessed with this unwanted child as an additional gift from the Gods. Despite her supernatural birth, she is never recognised by society, unlike her revered sibling brother. As she grew, she learnt who she is in this sad and lonely place.

Draupadi was aware of her father's dislike for her. She yearned for her father's approval and attention throughout her childhood. She found comfort and support in her close friendship with Lord Krishna, King of Dwarka, while living in a world where she was constantly oppressed. He was more than simply a buddy; he was someone you could trust with your secrets and count on for support when you were down(Mistry, 2020).

Her primary challenge from an early age on is breaking free of the rigid gender stereotypes of her community, in which men are seen as warriors and politicians and women are seen as lovely things who must stay at home and practice the domestic skills. She says, "I hungered to know about the amazing, mysterious world that extended beyond what I could imagine, the world of the senses and that which lay beyond them." She sits in on her brother's government and international studies classes to expand her mind and soul beyond the bounds of her gender (Divakaruni, 24).

As the story opens, Draupadi is portrayed as feeling embarrassed since she didn't think she was lovely because she didn't have the highly prized fair complexion. She fails in the specified attributes of womanly talents, yet excels in aspects of political concerns. The author delves further into the sibling dynamic between Dhri and Draupadi. This is the only significant connection in the novel that is given room to develop.

(b) Pandavas

The epic Mahabharata recounts the events leading up to the Battle of Kurukshetra from the perspective of the male protagonists, the Pandavas and the Kauravas of the Kuru dynasty. The Palace of Illusions is Draupadi, the Pandava's wife, recounting her version of the story of the Mahabharata. The author has done a wonderful job of conveying her feelings as the wife of five men(Gupta, 2017).

Even if Arjuna, the third Pandava, wins her hand, she remains powerless as Kunti, mother of Pandavas makes her the wife of all five brothers.. Many facets of her character are revealed by the trials she endured as the loyal wife in exile with her husbands in the forest, including her anguish at not being defended by Arjuna, her fury at being exploited as a prize in the gambling games between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, and her miserable life in the exile(Nair , 2019).

After the Pandavas lost her in a game, they dragged her to the court by her hair. The elders had witnessed her public debasement and humiliation.The following courtroom remarks by Chitra reveal her inner thoughts:

"What did I learn that day in the sabha?"

“For a long time, I thought I could control my husband. I assumed that they were selfless in their support of me because of the depth of their love for me. But now I could see that while they loved me, there were other things they loved even more.What mattered more to them than my pain was their own sense of honour, commitment to one other, and reputation. Yes, they would seek revenge on me in the future, but only if they believed doing so would bring them unquestionable hero status.

No reasonable woman would think like that. If I could have done anything to save them that day, I would have thrown myself in front of a train.”

That's how the author imagined Panchali expressing her views out loud. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni gives Panchali a voice by the Palace of Illusions.A revolt against those characters that are otherwise are so highlighted and revered. Thus, the author indicates the patriarchal rigidity and hypocrisy that sidelines women and their sentiments. In this way, the novel places questions to the conventional social norms that supports for male voices so liberally whereas suppresses female sentiments(Jayakumar , 2020).

At the time,Pandavas went into exile in the woods for thirteen years,Panchaali goes about her day of heaving and hoeing, stinging each sibling like clockwork so they don't forget the unforgivable that happened to her, and the reader is put to the test. There is a strong, palpable aura of irritation rather than revenge. By the end of the book's thirteenth year, the conflict hasn't even started yet.

Even after the victory of Pandavas, Draupadi’s angst does not cease. Divakaruni expresses a desire to continue beyond that point. The protagonist would engage in a meandering exploration and thoroughly elaborated the depictions of grieving widows, lamenting both the deceased without heads and the dispirited survivors, while deeply contemplating the remnants of fallen empires that Draupadi had to witness. And she ended her life at the time she encountered a stumble while attempting to pursue the Pandavas into the celestial realms. The diminishing vocalisation of Yudhishthir would be supplanted by Krishna's contemplative intonation, ultimately resulting in the perception of mortality resonating inside her auditory faculties.

(c) Kunti

One notable character in the novel is Kunti, who serves as Daupadi's mother-in-law and the mother of the Pandavas. Draupadi (Panchali) is compelled to marry all five Pandavas due to the desire of Kunti, her mother-in-law. In contrast to alternative renditions of the narrative, which portray Kunti as a dutiful mother to the Pandavas, Divakaruni's account unveils her astute disposition and apprehension regarding societal acceptance of her eldest son, Karna, who was conceived prior to her marriage and is believed to be the offspring of Surya, the Sun God(Susan, 2015).

The two female characters, Kunti and Draupadi, consistently engage in conflicts and vie for superiority, however they share a common bond of affection and care towards the Pandavas. The narrative shows Draupadi’s revolt thus to the generation elder to her raising questions on the extent of her identity and rights that she feels to be restricted even when she has powerful husbands and holds the position of a queen. She is shown to be still stifled under the hierarchical patriarchal terms and thus is so vulnerable.

(d) Krishna

The book 'The Palace of Illusions'places significant emphasis on Panchali's unique act of rebellion, wherein she questions the divine, so deviating from the conventional portrayal of Panchali as depicted in the Mahabharata.This is where the artistic ingenuity of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is evident. The nature of Panchali's association with Lord Krishna is characterized by her inclination to confide in him, seek his counsel at times of necessity, and exhibit a lack of trepidation in interrogating him(Shagufta, 2022).

Panchali's actions were deemed revolutionary due to her potential to alter the trajectory of typical events. Krishna, as described by the author, played a significant role in this narrative.Krishna exhibited the characteristics of a chameleon.This unveils her intricate relationship with the intriguing figure of Krishna.Furthermore, in the critical moment of her mistreatment in the court, Krishna emerged as her rescuer, assuming the role of her saviour.

(e) Karna

The portrayal of Draupadi's internal struggles in relation to Karna is particularly notable for its literary merit. In the context of this particular connection, Panchaali has significant challenges and transformative experiences. The book appears to present a limited portrayal of Karna's shortcomings, occasionally sacrificing depth and authenticity in the process. When Karna's intense fury compels him to publicly disgrace Panchaali in a most reprehensible manner, the subsequent event is swiftly forgotten and disregarded. The concept of love often encompasses the act of forgiving; yet, it is important to acknowledge that forgiveness is not a simple task and should not be granted without careful consideration and conditions.

Karna's emotional distress stemming from his abandonment at birth and subsequent upbringing without knowledge of his biological parents, Draupadi's contemplations regarding Karna, his affection for the proud Draupadi, and his anguish resulting from the conflict between his loyalty towards his mother and brothers on one hand, and his devotion to his friend, Duryodhana of the Kaurava clan, on the other, collectively contribute to the multifaceted nature of the great war(Susan, 2015).

(f) Kauravas

Draupadi was subjected to humiliation and harassment by the Kauravas. Nevertheless, Divakaruni characterizes the conclusion as a manifestation that aligns with the portrayal in the original epic. Draupadi's cruel display of excessive conceit renders her susceptible to a significant deception. At the time he was an invited guest of Indraprastha, Draupadi engages in playful banter with Duryodhana upon his inadvertent immersion in the deceptive pond, which bore a striking like to a luxurious carpet in his perception. There, she mocked Duryodhana with laughter and proceeded to satirisehim saying, "The son of a visually impaired individual also experiences visual impairment.

The resolute statement elicits a strong desire for retaliation within Duryodhan's heart. This particular occurrence served as a catalyst for the subsequent unfortunate events experienced by Draupadi. Accompanied by her husbands and mother-in-law, she

embarked on a visit to Kaurava's kingdom, oblivious to the transformative events that were ahead. The loss of her honour occurred during a game of gambling orchestrated by Duryodhana, with the assistance of his maternal uncle Shakuni, within the esteemed Kaurava court(Umashankar, 2014). There she pleaded for assistance, although no individuals offered their support. In an attempt to alleviate her feelings of guilt, she expressed her discontent towards the Kauravas through a curse.

The Kauravas made a commitment to restore their Kingdom upon the completion of their twelve-year exile. Draupadi was primarily motivated by a sense of vengeance throughout the duration of their banishment. The Kauravas failed to uphold their commitment. Draupadi's role significantly contributed to the initiation of the momentous conflict between the Pandavas and Kauravas(Jayakumar , 2020).

Divakaruni describes her as to feed elicited sentiments of retribution inside the Pandavas by means of daily food service, wherein they were reminded of their perceived shortcomings and the personal hardships endured during the incident at Duryodhan'sSabha.

"Every evening, I diligently rehearsed the taunts said by the Kauravas, ensuring their continuous recollection in the brains of the individuals involved. After extinguishing our lamps, I had restlessness while lying on my bed, where the rushes beneath me unexpectedly felt rigid, resembling the texture of sticks. This sensation triggered memories of Karna's countenance.Every morning upon awakening, plagued by a sense of unease, I envisioned our retaliation: a battlefield strewn with flames, the atmosphere heavy with the presence of scavenging birds, and the disfigured corpses of the Kauravas and their supporters - a depiction of how I would alter the course of historical events. After years of yearning, her desire for revenge was ultimately fulfilled by the occurrence of the Battle of Kurukshetra, resulting in a significant loss of life."(Ravichandran& Lakshmi, 2017)

Draupadi had the ability to halt the war; yet, as narrated by the author, she voice:

"…I was unwilling to consider any factors that could perhaps deter me from seeking the revenge I had long anticipated. But, why…"

Over a span of eighteen days, she observed the fighting with great proximity. The majority of the kings and princesses who were warriors met their demise in the course of this conflict. Panchali experienced the tragic loss of all her boys, resulting in her being confronted with a multitude of deceased individuals on the battlefield. At the conclusion of the epic, when the Pandavas made the collective decision to depart from Hastinapur for their final journey, the narrator invokes a recollection of the various memories that were intricately intertwined with the city of Hastinapur. The protagonist departed from Hastinapur on three occasions: the first being when she acquired her own palace, the second when her palace was forcibly taken from her, and the third and final time when all circumstances came to an end.

Conclusion

Draupadi as a narrator in Divakaruni's 'The Palace of Illusions' is a complex character who is both emotional and defiant as she seeks love, independence, and self-determination. Although she was forced to be extremely obedient at first, she eventually established a dignified persona that earned her respect from her spouses and the community at large. The individuals she met and the environment in which she was raised and lived shaped her throughout her life, turning her into a metaphor for the powerless female victim who resorts to violence out of spite.

Pride, emotion, love, vengeance, beliefs, and opinion are all skillfully recounted by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Her hopes, her dreams, and her feelings towards each of her husbands. In showing Draupadi capable of changing her life and fighting for her honour and the status to which she is born, the Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has given her a voice and made her stand out as a true story-teller.

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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA THROUGH SELF HELP GROUP (SHGs)

ABSTRACT

Self Help Groups (SHGs), inspired by Bangladesh's Grameen Bank founded by Prof. Mohammed Yunus in 1975, were introduced in India by NABARD in 1986-87, gaining momentum after 1991-92 through bank linkages. These voluntary associations of rural women from similar socio-economic backgrounds foster self-reliance and problem-solving through collective effort, enhancing their confidence and empowerment. By promoting thrift and providing microfinance, SHGs reduce dependence on exploitative moneylenders, encouraging savings and financial independence. Studies show that access to credit positively impacts women's empowerment, enabling them to shape their lives and environment. To maximize impact, governments and NGOs should adopt a 'credit with social development' approach, framing policies that further poverty reduction and women's empowerment.

Keyword: Women, Empowerment, Self Help Group (SHGs)

Introduction: In India, women Empowerment is a buzzword today. As a nation, India is committed to the empowerment of women. Though women are regarded as "the unsung heroines who work from dawn to dusk," it is unfortunate that even the ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying superiority over women, which they do not deserve and ought not to have. As the majority of women lack assets that help contribute to their empowerment and well-being, economic independence through self-employment and entrepreneurial development must be paid attention to. So, the Government of India has provided for Self-Help Groups (SHGs)[2].A self-help group is a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socio-economic backdrop. The microcredit given to them makes them enterprising; it can be an all women group, an all-men group, or even a mixed group. However, it has been the experience that women's groups perform better in all the important activities of SHGs. Women's empowerment is the most important instrument for the socio-economic development of a nation. Bringing women into the mainstream is one of the major challenges for every government. Women's empowerment has become a meme in the global governance network. In this context, self-help groups (SHGs) have emerged as the tools that wield power to create a socioeconomic revolution in the rural areas of our country. SHGs have not only produced tangible assets and improved the living conditions of members but also helped

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in changing much of their outlook, worldview, and attitude. Women in India are the victims of multiple socio-economic and cultural factors. Emancipation of women is a prerequisite for a nation's economic development and social upliftment[1].

Concept of Women Empowerment: "Empowerment of Women" is very necessary to achieve sustainable development. In the last few decades, women's empowerment has been a comprehensive subject, and the questions on the political rights of women are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. Empowerment of women seems to be the outcome of several main critiques and discussions caused by the issue of women around the world, and particularly of third-world feminists. Women's empowerment can be traced to the relationship between the women's movement and the concept of popular education in the developed countries in Latin America in the 1970s. The notion of "women empowerment" is evaluated with the concept of freedom or liberty, which humanity still seeks to achieve in its entirety. Women's empowerment wants women on equal footing to handle and put them in the position with such an opportunity, which can bring them on par with men. The United Nations acknowledged the period 1975-85 as the International Decade of Women; during this period, three international women's world conferences were successfully organized and deliberated upon various aspects of women's rights and principles. An important milestone had been the adoption by the General Assembly in December 1979 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), one of the most powerful instruments for women's equality. The 4th World Conference on Women was held in Beijing in 1995. The Conference Platform for Action specified 12 critical areas of concern considered to represent the main obstacles to women's advancement and which required concrete action by governments and civil society[2].Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development, and peace. (Paragraph 13, Beijing Declaration).

Concept of Self-Help Groups (SHGs): The origin of self-help groups (SHGs) is the brainchild of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, founded by Prof. Mohammed Yunus in 1975, who tried out a new approach to rural credit in Bangladesh. Grameen gave loans without asking borrowers either to provide collateral or to engage in paperwork. In India, NABARD initiated SHGs in the year 1986-87. But the real effort was taken after 1991-92 from the linkage of SHGs with the banks. Self-help groups (SHGs) are small voluntary associations of rural women from the same socio-economic background who work together for the purpose of solving their problems through self-help and mutual help[3]. A self-help group (SHG) is a small voluntary association of 10-20 people, either registered or unregistered, preferably from the same socio-economic background. They

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come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. They also democratically elect a president, secretary, and treasurer from among themselves as office bearers of their group. The key focus of this program is to develop the capacity of the women collectively and empower them to deal with the socio-economic aspects of their lives. The participative process makes the group a responsible borrower. The groups use collective wisdom and peer pressure to ensure proper end-use of credit and timely repayment. Through different stages of evolution, the SHGs potentially play four key roles: mutual help, financial intermediation, livelihood planning, and socioeconomic socio economic empowerment.

Economic Empowerment of Women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs): Mahatma Gandhi states that the position of women in society is an index of its civilization. "Train a man and you train an individual; train a woman and you build a nation." The SHGs (self-help groups) are the major resource of inspiration for women's welfare. In an attempt to uplift the women, the government has initiated Women Welfare Programs through development centers, rural agencies, banks, NABARD, etc. In India, most of the SHGs are led by women, with the benefits of socio-economic homogeneity, smaller size, functionality, participation, voluntary operating mode, and non-political women. The SHGs in India, operating since April 1999, have entered into various fields like dairy farms, fisheries, ration shops, handlooms, farm cultivation, rainwater harvesting, etc[1]. Special programs have been designed for training and building women beneficiaries of the SHGs. Regular skill development training programs are being organized for value addition to DWCRA and SHG productions for better packaging, standardization of ingredients, pricing, and to develop marketing skills among women. Women are exposed to the best and most relevant technologies displayed at training and technology development centers (TTDCs) in all districts. The concept of SHGs molds women as responsible citizens of the country with social and economic status. It leads women to develop the habit of raising loans, form savings, and become inculcated with a sense of belonging, a habit of thrift, and discipline among themselves. Groups actively take part in social welfare programs focusing on dowry, AIDS awareness, nutrition, legal literacy, multiple roles of women, and poverty alleviation programs. The concept of self-monitoring has been introduced by the SHGs in a phased manner with the aim to make women totally own their movement and institutionalize its sustainability through networking. The women's groups have taken the initiative to educate their own members with great enthusiasm. Women belonging to the lowest strata of society are getting habituated to savings and paving the way for decision-making power in the family. In a developing country like India, SHGs uplift the women who are mostly invisible in the social structure by creating self-confidence and self-reliance.Self-help groups are considered one of the most significant tools in participatory approaches for the economic empowerment of women. It is an important institution for improving the lives of women on various social components. The basic objective of SHG is that it acts as the platform for members to provide space and support to each other. SHGs comprise very poor people who do not have access to formal financial institutions. It enables its members to learn to cooperate and work in a group environment. Today, in India, self-help groups (SHGs) represent a unique approach to financial intermediation. This combines access to

[1] Kondal, K. (2014). Women empowerment through self-help groups in Andhra Pradesh, India. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences, 3*(1), 13–16.

low-cost financial services with a process of self-management and development for the women who are SHG members. SHGs are formed and supported usually by non-governmental organizations or by government agencies. SHGs are seen to confer many benefits, both economic and social. SHGs enable women to grow their savings and access the credit that banks are increasingly willing to lend. SHGs can also be community platforms from which women become active in village affairs, stand for local elections, and take action to address social[1].

In India, before the introduction of this scheme, rural women were largely negligible. But in recent years, the most significant emerging system, called the Self-Help Group, is a major breakthrough in improving the lives of womenfolk and alleviating rural poverty. Women's participation in self-help groups has obviously created a tremendous impact upon the life pattern and style of poor women and has empowered them at various levels, not only as individuals but also as members of the family, members of the community, and the society as a whole. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. The more attractive scheme with less effort is "Self-Help Groups" (SHGs). It is a tool to remove poverty and improve women's entrepreneurship and financial support in India[2]. The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007) adopted the strategy of the women's component plan, under which not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits were earmarked for all the women-related sectors and women-specific programs. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-2012) also undertook steps to further strengthen self-help groups and community-based organizations for the empowerment of women. Special attention needs to be given to increasing employment opportunities and productive resources for women through special financial intermediaries, building women's competitiveness, and increasing economic exchanges among women entrepreneurs. Self-help groups are a major means of women's socioeconomic empowerment. SHGs increase savings habits of women, help women to raise loans, encourage women to start their income-generating activities, and provide bank linkage so as to gain banking facilities and services. By doing so, they increase the economic freedom of women and increase the status of women in their family and society. Much of the research and developmental activities are going on in women's empowerment through self-help groups, and many of the information sources are published. The present study is made to analyse the publications that are published in different research journals on women's empowerment through self-help groups in the twenty-first century[3].

Conclusion: SHG is a powerful instrument for poverty eradication in the new economic era. As women are the most vulnerable section of society, the quick progress of SHGs is an upward vehicle for women's empowerment. SHGs have not only produced tangible assets and improved the living conditions of members but also helped in changing much of their outlook and attitude. In the present study, it has been found that SHGs have served the cause of women's empowerment, social solidarity, and socio-economic

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betterment of poor rural women. SHG serves as a democratic tool for grassroots development for women. SHG promotes self-reliance by generating its own funds. It breaks the vicious cycle of debts. It is an effective agent for change and serves as a solid platform for women's empowerment.

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SUBTLE "FLAT WRITING" AS THE SOLUTION: THE SURPRISING AFFORDANCE OF ANNIE ERNAUX'S AUTOFICTIONAL STYLE TO FEMALE IRANIAN DIASPORIC LITERARY EXPRESSION

At the onset, it might come across as if Annie Ernaux, the Nobel-winning French autofiction legend, and Iranian diasporic women, fleeing an authoritative Islamic regime, might not have a lot in common. But careful reading of Ernaux's oeuvre and the body of life-writing literature produced by Iranian diasporic women reveals shared struggles such as wanting to tell the story of one's life without shame and judgment, a constant feeling of dislocation and "in-betweenness," and alternating feelings of hatred and betrayal towards one's own kin. In line with this observation, this paper posits that some of Ernaux's autofictional techniques could be useful vehicles of literary expression for diasporic Iranian women (particularly those who have fled the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, in this case). We identify some common literary tactics employed by Ernaux and elucidate how they could solve some obstacles that seem to permeate Iranian women's life-writing literary spaces.

Since the release of *Les Armoires vides* in the year 1974, Annie Ernaux has carved out a significant niche in contemporary French literature and has come to be recognized for her unique perspective on the personal narrative. She is part of the cohort of French authors from the 1980s to 1990s, including P. Michon, F. Bon, among others, who consider themselves the successors of the nouveau roman literary heritage. This literary movement emphasized formal experimentation and a critical stance towards psychologism, referentiality, and emulating reality (Kosova et al., 2020).

In a substantial collection of seven significant volumes, Ernaux has intentionally subjected the particularities of life-writing and fiction to scrutiny, examining conventional beliefs regarding the potentialities and constraints of these forms. Her signature writing style came to be most associated with two terms: "Flat-writing" and "Auto-socio-biography." Apart from these terms, which describe her entire writing style, Ernaux has also pioneered writing techniques that, over time, became one of the most commonly and widely used literary devices in the space of autofiction. We now examine Ernaux's work, highlight the aspects relevant to Iranian diasporic women's life-writing literary spaces, and elucidate how some of Ernaux's techniques can be adapted by the aforementioned community.

Ernaux perceives literature as an act of exploring uncharted territory, a breach of constraints, a way of discovering what's hidden between the lines, and a means of shaping the world around us. In her works, the author dissects the subjects that have culturally remained unspoken without any aesthetic glossing over, such as abortion, illness and sexuality, the uncertain status of women within bourgeois households, the

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institutionalised dehumanisation of the working class, and the emerging "outcasts" residing on the fringes of urban centers. The subject community of this paper also sees literature as an act of transgression, as censorship regarding life-writing by women is not only a culturally embedded part of the Iranian literary landscape but also institutionally legitimised by the Islamic regime in Iran. The subject community is also, like Ernaux, increasingly engaging with topics that were stigmatised not so long ago such as: developing resentment towards elders of one's community for not giving in to western assimilation, openly discussing sexist cultural norms of one's homeland without feeling guilty, exploring the tension between staying true to one's cultural roots from the homeland and assimilating in the host country, desiring the freedom to assimilate or stay true to one's cultural roots without judgment, etc. Both Ernaux and the subject community have innovated their own way out of this shared struggle.

In contrast to the subject community's inclination towards magical realism, exemplified by Gina Nahai, or the use of historical narratives to illuminate present-day concerns, as seen in the works of Shahrnush Parsipur and Moniro Ravanipur, Ernaux focused on alleviating shame by transmuting her personal experiences into a collective narrative for her community. In her writings, the narrative of her life and her lineage intertwine with an extensive array of sociological insights and meta-literary contemplation. Her work transcends the mediation between art and lived experience, elevating the text beyond the self-referential into a realm of universality. The anonymity and objective reportage achievable through the flat writing style of autofiction enable us to impart a universal dimension to personal narratives (Kouassi Samuel, 2015).

The recognition that the personal is inherently social, that subjectivity cannot be separated from historical context, social determinism, or the relationship with the "other," inspires Ernaux to develop a unique genre of autobiographical writing termed "Auto-socio-biography," which exists at the intersection of literature, sociology, and history. This particular mode of autobiographical text is significantly shaped by the concepts put forth by sociologist P. Bourdieu, diverging notably from the established norms of both memoir and autofictional genres. The objective is not to establish its identity through the act of writing; rather, it seeks to transcend the self and merge into a more expansive reality. Ernaux has articulated that she employs her personal perspective to uncover and illuminate broader mechanisms and phenomena that are more collective in nature. Francine Dugast Portes posits that, notwithstanding the inherent subjectivity in Ernaux's oeuvre, her works transcend mere "selfish remembrance." Their objective is not to delve into the inner psyche but to investigate the self as a consciousness that is inextricably linked to the conditions of existence. Through this approach, Ernaux abstracts her work, shifting the emphasis away from her individual experience and instead highlighting a collective narrative that underscores the social critique inherent in the text.

In her work "The Years" (2008), she intricately weaves her personal narrative with the broader social and political history of France, crafting a memoir that reflects both her individual experiences and the fabric of French society. This translation into English propelled Ernaux to global acclaim, culminating in a shortlist nomination for the Booker International Award. This endeavor illustrates Ernaux's progression towards encapsulating a universal experience via her personal narrative, demonstrating the

potency of her individual voice when intertwined with a shared collective perspective. It presents an individual perspective and transforms it into a shared experience.

French author and critic Dominique Viart opined that Ernaux carries profound socio-political insight, acknowledging her as one of the founders of "critical fictions." In critical fictions, Viart says that the artistic text transcends the mere "predictive" portrayal of the world's condition and the tendency to be "agreeable," indicating a reluctance to conform to the prevailing system. Instead, it evolves into a domain for contemplation and the generation of significant insights.

(Viart, 2010).

Ernaux's arguably most renowned 1983 work, "A Man's Place" ("La Place"), exemplifies distinct methodologies for transforming personal experience into universal concepts. The father's destiny delineated through a collection of varied and distinct fragments interspersed with visual gaps and centered on a trivial daily detail, a term, or a biographical fact, is portrayed not as a singular occurrence but as an event embodying the lifestyle of the collective social group. The discord with the daughter transcends mere personal dynamics, representing a fundamental clash between two distinct classes and their respective ideologies. The absence of specific names, the frequent use of the pronoun "we," which is expressed in French through the grammatical forms "nous" and "on," along with the capitalization of L. and Y. to signify the cities inhabited by the storyteller's family, contribute to the depersonalisation of individual experience.

In addition to the privacy afforded by the act of "socialising" the narrative, there exists another rationale for the appropriateness of this form, as developed by Ernaux, for the subject community. The investigative approach utilized in "Auto-socio-biography" encompasses historical, political, and contemporary aspects. In examining a nation with a tumultuous contemporary history such as Iran, a thorough comprehension of its political past is essential for elucidating the subjective experiences of the community in question. A literary form that facilitates engagement with the historical and political dimensions of society may prove advantageous in articulating aspects of subjectivity that are often challenging to convey on an individual scale.

Throughout the course of her profession, Ernaux has adopted a unique approach characterized by a concise style known as "Flat-writing," an expressive prudence that has, in many respects, become her signature as a writer. This approach, referred to as une écriture plate, has gained significant traction among life-writing authors globally. This approach facilitates a methodical exploration of artistic inquiry, marked by a straightforward presentation of facts, the meticulous recording of remnants, and objective signs of existence. It serves as an appropriate means to comprehend the intangible essence of reality, the transient flow of time, and the dynamic nature of history. The lack of stylistic embellishment and artistic influence, upon initial observation, aligns "flat writing" more closely with the discourse found in sociological or ethnographic studies. By predominantly eschewing metaphor and other elevated constructs, the artifacts assert their existence in a manner that is unequivocal, neither embellishing nor diminishing their essence. Any artifacts showcased in flat-writing are imbued with a meticulous focus on conciseness. This reasoning aligns with John Barth's principle: "The work of art should be sober in conception, rigorous in execution, ascetic

in effect; in short, it must be austere" (Baker, 1988). The concept of flat-writing embodies the notion that the structure alone ought to convey meaning. The essence of minimalism suggests that a more intimate engagement with art is possible when it is presented in a smaller form. There is no way to avoid style; taking a stand against mannerism is, of course, a "style" in itself, just as giving up rhetoric is a new sort of rhetoric. The essential stance of minimalism, however, is antagonistic; the movement distinguishes itself from traditional art forms and positions itself antagonistically against them.

Though it may seem that the subject community cannot be as candid as is necessary for flat-writing to occur, it is important to understand that there are established methods and mechanisms in flat-writing that have been known to help us materialize the processes of universalizing and depersonalizing the narrative, both of which increase privacy and lower the risk of the author facing political repercussions for voicing their narrative and also lower the risk of authors facing cultural persecution for "betraying" their community by expressing their negative experiences from homeland. In addition to reducing the burden of such societal pressures, flat-writing also helps the authors take ownership of their narrative by alleviating shame by providing a literary format that has in-built tools for dissecting a subject without imposing ethical accountability on writers.

An example of how flat-writing can help the authors take control of the narrative can be seen in Ernaux's work "Simple Passion." This work, which was originally published in 1991, delves into Ernaux's relationship with a married diplomat. A notable observation from this work is, Ernaux's flagrant reluctance to explain her passion for this diplomat. She has opined that this reluctance to explain was intentional, as explaining her passion might suggest it was a misstep or a deviation that requires justification. She expressed a desire to articulate her emotions with clarity and simplicity. She asserted that her book was not a narrative centered on the man with whom she had an affair; rather, it was an exploration of how his presence has profoundly influenced her life. The fact that the words pertain to him, yet are not intended for him, elucidates his role within the narrative. She takes control of the narrative by refusing shame and concentrating solely on the impact the affair had on her own experience. In the absence of such audacity, the author's underlying anxiety permeates the text, rendering the transformation of the personal into a universal narrative unattainable.

Ernaux's technique of owning the narrative by refusing shame (as showcased in her work "Simple Passion") combined with her technique of usage of the collective "I" and frequent usage of the pronoun "we" (as showcased in her works "The Years" and "A Man's Place" respectively) could embolden the subject community to discuss stigmatised subjects while maintaining a veil of depersonalisation. These techniques not only improve overall literary expression of the subject community by helping articulate what's hard to talk about but also empower marginalised sections within the subject community (such as Jewish Iranian diasporic women writers or female writers from other ethnic minorities of Iran such as Sunni Muslims or the Baha'i faith who are more likely than the politically dominant Shia Iranians to face repercussions for literary expression) to express their complicated feelings towards their homeland.

Apart from the desire to say what's often left unsaid, Ernaux has another struggle and preoccupation in common with the subject community, which is the issue of being

ensnared between two distinct realms. The subject community experiences a profound tension between the foundational elements of their homeland and the cultural landscape of the host nation, while Ernaux's oeuvre vividly illustrates the stark dichotomy between her parents' working-class origins and her own ascension into the realm of middle-class academia. As we examine how Ernaux navigates the dichotomy embedded in her own subjectivity through literary innovation, we can perhaps consider solutions that could be suitable for adoption by the subject community.

To comprehend the manner in which Ernaux utilizes literary techniques to navigate her divided subjectivity, it is crucial to conduct a meticulous analysis of the class contention that is inherent in Ernaux's body of work. In Ernaux's oeuvre, the social landscape of France is delineated by a pronounced dichotomy between two disparate spheres: the "dominant" and the "dominated." The domain of "dominants" is characterized by wealth, scholarly achievement, and cultivated manners. In Ernaux's work, the notion of bourgeois surroundings presents itself as a self-sufficient domain that regulates, applies weight, and upholds its cultural and educational norms, thus establishing and legitimizing the dominance of its speech, behavioral standards, and lifestyle. Ernaux elucidates the external distinction between those who are "dominant" and those who are "dominated" through the nuanced interplay of two disparate lifestyles and preferences.

Ernaux adeptly analyzed this interplay by incorporating the notion of "symbolic violence," a concept rooted in the sociological framework established by P. Bourdieu. P. Bourdieu asserts that "symbolic violence" functions in a subtle and unconscious way. It becomes clear when the subordinate starts to view themselves and their situation through the lens of the dominant authority. "Symbolic violence" reveals itself through particular displays of submission, as the external social frameworks and individual actions converge with the subject's body, influencing the way they think, appearance, behavior, and physical stance, among other dimensions. Ernaux's exploration of symbolic violence extends beyond her father to include her own identity. Her integration into the framework of bourgeois education illustrates a transformation in her speech, thought processes, and behavior, aligning her with the characteristics of her bourgeois surroundings. For her, the vernacular of the elite assumes an air of inevitability, prompting her to dismiss the linguistic expressions of her surrounding social milieu. The disconnection from the behavioral norms of her social class leads to Ernaux's alienation from her father, which she perceives as a kind of "betrayal," stirring within her a sense of guilt. While her social emigration represented a successful realization of her parents' aspirations, she simultaneously perceives it as an act of betrayal.

But she also sees this act of treason as a necessity since she intends for her work to transgress societal constraints and arrive at the collective truth. Ernaux posits that we cannot oppose or reexamine mainstream consciousness without compromise, encompassing the sacrifices of one's family members, their entire milieu, and the self.

The act of treason, while painful, is also deemed necessary by her, leading to an inner conflict that resonates throughout La Place and circulates through her entire oeuvre. This turmoil similarly afflicts Denise Lesur, the narrator of Ernaux's inaugural novel, *Les Armoires vides*. Denise's experience of class consistently surfaces as the prevailing element in the formation of her subjectivity all through the book. However, the class conflict of father and daughter takes the very center stage in *La Place*. Ernaux herself

confirms her split subjectivity in this book when she mentions how she thinks her perspective itself has been shaped by this internal estrangement from her own environment

Having grasped the significance of class conflict in Ernaux's oeuvre, we may now focus on the manner in which she articulates this aspect of her subjectivity through literary expression. Through her use of "Flat writing," she challenges the ethical standards and behaviors associated with her bourgeois educational and cultural upbringing, introducing raw, substantial, and unrefined elements into literature, a domain traditionally dominated by the bourgeois class. Ernaux posits that "flat writing" embodies the linguistic characteristics of her provincial surroundings, where language was consistently understood in its original context, and words were never meant to mean anything other than their literal meaning. Her approach to "auto-socio-biography" reveals the influence of her bourgeois academic background and cultural perspective, while her "flat-writing" technique creates an opportunity to explore her working-class origins and fosters discussion about her life prior to achieving social mobility. Ernaux adeptly intertwines various literary styles to construct a form that effectively encapsulates her divided subjectivity.

While we examine such literary innovations of Ernaux, it is interesting to observe that while her deployment of literary devices is definitely intentional and customised in accordance with her fragmented subjectivity, the materialisation of the chasm in her psyche is evident not only in her literary style but in her very language itself.

The concept of class is intricately intertwined with language, just as it is with economic structures. As Ernaux gradually distanced herself from her working-class origins, her language transformed to reflect her altered circumstances. She noted that her grandparents communicated exclusively in patois, as opposed to what is often referred to as "mainstream" French. This is perceived within French society as an indication of social inadequacy (Motte, 1995). Ernaux's parents, akin to numerous rural French individuals of their era, managed to transcend the confines of patois; however, the language they adopted still retained a "popular" character. The linguistic expression of her parents was markedly distinct from the variant of French that Ernaux encountered in her academic pursuits at both school and university. Over time, Ernaux's linguistic style evolves, setting itself opposed to that of her parents. In "La Place", one of her primary objectives is to depict and comprehend the chasm between her father and herself. She frequently references her father's speech, notably italicizing it each time she quotes him, possibly to juxtapose it with her own literary expression. The marginalized position of Ernaux's father's language within this text becomes strikingly evident; indeed, this may very well be Ernaux's intention, to elucidate the chasm between her life and her father's existence as distinctly as possible.

The most intriguing aspect of this linguistic divide extends beyond merely the underlying class distinctions. Indeed, it is evident that once Ernaux recognizes the irrevocable division between her language and that of her father, she endeavors to reconcile this chasm that has emerged between them. She employs her literary bourgeois French to narrate the estrangement from her parents, even as this so-called "mainstream" language serves as the very mechanism that initially distanced her from her father's cultural milieu.

Ernaux's choice to employ her language as a means to navigate the anguish of her exile from her cultural context may also elucidate her reference to reading Simone de Beauvoir's Les Mandarins alongside her father's deathbed. She comes to the poignant realization that prior to completing this extensive tome, she will have to confront the impending loss of her father. While she engages with literature to navigate the anguish of her father's impending death, it ultimately falls short of fulfilling its intended purpose. Despite Ernaux's consistent mastery of literary French in her roles as both a literature professor and a writer, she found it necessary to set aside the aforementioned book and instead contemplate the letters she penned to her parents during her time away from home, in which she employed her distinctive "flat-writing" style. This action likely reflects her belief that, despite her perspective being informed by the cultural awareness of the literary French, navigating the cultural divide with her parents can sometimes be facilitated by "meeting them in between" through "flat-writing."

The analogous reasoning, namely perceiving literary hybrids as a remedy for fragmented subjectivity, is evident in the creations of transcultural authors, including the subject community of the paper at hand. Transcultural communities have increasingly utilized hybrid literary devices, including multilingualism, polyphony, and polyglossia, in their autofictional endeavors. The rationale for employing these strategies lies in the capacity of hybrid texts to enable authors to challenge and transcend the monocultural assumptions inherent in both their native and host countries. They assist the authors in establishing their unique "in-between" niche, thereby legitimizing their transcultural position and hybrid identity (Effe & Lawlor, 2022).

The inquiry that persists, considering the primary objective of this paper, is what precisely the subject community can glean from Ernaux's approach to "meeting in between"? The solution once more resides in the integration of Ernaux's methodologies with those developed by the community in question. Ernaux articulates her aim to reach a collective truth by challenging societal norms through her work. Concurrently, the community of authors, particularly those engaged in autofiction, express their intention to counteract entrenched monocultural assumptions through what they perceive as a form of hybrid storytelling. Both Ernaux and the community in question perceive their endeavors as a means of contesting established societal constructs. Ernaux presents her challenge to conventional thought by incorporating dialogue from her regional dialect into her writing, alongside elements drawn from her working-class background, all within her straightforward prose. The community in question attains a similar outcome via the interplay of linguistic hybridity and polyphony. The integration of flat-writing with polyphonic literature may enable the subject community to counteract the homogenization of thought and create a more effective space for hybrid transcultural identities. This is due to the inherent qualities of flat writing, which facilitate the introduction of intertextuality.

Although it may appear more logical for the community in question to embrace literary innovations from authors with whom they share elements of cultural heritage, the impetus for our exploration of Ernaux's work in this paper stems from her exceptional command of the autofiction genre. In contrast to autobiography, which seeks to elucidate and integrate, aiming to grasp and untangle the strands of an individual's fate, autofiction does not regard a person's life as a cohesive entity (Jones, 2010). For example, Ernaux's

oeuvre frequently emphasizes the importance of viewing the individual's existence through socially constructed fragments rather than as a cohesive entity. It enables her to reimagine aspects of her own existence, selectively incorporate or omit individuals and occurrences from her story, amalgamate various figures from her life into unified characters, or reflect two opposing facets of a person's perspective onto distinct characters within her work, facilitating a dialogue between these divergent lines of thought, among other possibilities. The various allowances facilitated by autofiction, as consistently illustrated by Ernaux, may be appropriate for consideration by the subject community. It has been established for some time that female Iranian diasporic authors encounter significant pressure to depict their homeland favorably by certain factions, while simultaneously facing demands to critique their religion and native culture from other segments. The devices previously mentioned enable the authors to attune their narrative or make contrasting statements through their work without directly putting themselves under the spotlight.

A significant number of female Iranian diasporic authors are engaging in life-writing, predominantly employing literary innovations that have developed within their unique cultural contexts. It is not our prerogative to dictate which literary formats may be most effective for their narratives. However, as we observe the frequent silencing of the subject community by various factions with divergent priorities, it becomes essential for us to participate in a discourse that values the entirety of the literary expression of the subject community. But at the end, the determination of the most suitable format to articulate their subjectivity rests entirely with the community in question.

The incorporation of literary techniques from authors who enjoyed a degree of privilege that allowed them to dedicate substantial time and effort to the refinement and mastery of innovative literary forms stands as a commendable practice within the literary domain, serving as a means of fostering equality and inclusion of diverse voices.

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KALPANA SINGH[1] **(15)**

SAVITRIBAI PHULE:
PIONEERING WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

Abstract

Efforts become particularly noteworthy when they arise in the face of significant adversity. One critical domain where such efforts were essential is women's education in India. In a patriarchal society that celebrates the birth of male children while perceiving female children as burdens—primarily due to cultural norms that position them as temporary members of their natal families, bound to marry and relocate—educational opportunities for women were severely limited. Education emerged as a transformative vehicle for women to transition from obscurity to self-awareness. However, societal and familial structures staunchly opposed this notion, often perpetuated by regressive customs and rituals that undermined women's rights. Given this context, one can appreciate the immense effort, enthusiasm, and struggle required to advocate for a girl's education in the 19th century. This research paper serves both as a contribution to scholarship and a tribute to pioneering figures who challenged societal norms to promote women's education. In particular, it highlights the work of Smt. Savitribai Phule recognized as the first female teacher in India. Her story is emblematic of the broader struggle against entrenched societal barriers, especially considering her background within the lowest social strata of Hindu society. This paper aims to illuminate Phule's contributions to women's education, her challenges, and accomplishments, and the enduring legacy of her activism in social reform and education during a transformative period in Indian history. Savitribai Phule's role as a trailblazer remains a vital part of the discourse on gender, education, and social justice in 19th-century India.

Keywords

Savitribai Phule, Women's Education, Social Reform, Gender Equality, Empowerment

Introduction

Savitribai Phule is a seminal figure in the domains of educational reform and women's rights in India. Born into a societal framework that largely opposed women's education and agency, she, with the unwavering support of her husband Jyotirao Phule, not only pursued her academic aspirations but also actively challenged prevailing social norms. Her endeavors were foundational in establishing access to education for women, exemplifying the significant role of pedagogy in fostering social change. Phule's life serves as a compelling case study in the transformative potential of education for women and stands as a testament to her commitment to combating the entrenched injustices of her era.

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Early Life and Education

Savitribai Phule was born on January 3, 1831, in Naigon, Maharashtra, to Khandoji Nevase Patil and Laxmi, as their last and oldest child. She was born in Mali community, socially backward and education of women wree nort allowed. Her early life was characterized by traits traditionally admired in boys, which set her apart in the context of societal norms of the time. Despite the challenges imposed by a conservative society, she developed a keen interest in education. One day, she was caught by her father engrossed in an English book. In a moment of frustration, he snatched it from her hands and tossed it out of the window. It must have been heartbreaking for her to see something she loved so much discarded like that. Her father's punitive response to her academic ambitions underscored the tensions between parental authority and a daughter's aspirations during that era. At the age of nine, she was married to Jyotiba Phule, who was thirteen at the time, reflecting the prevalent custom of early marriage. Although Savitribai experienced initial apprehension about her new role within the household, she secretly pursued her studies. Recognizing her determination, Jyotiba facilitated her education by teaching her during his noon breaks while she brought lunch to the fields—strategically concealing their educational practices from the rest of the family to mitigate potential conflicts. Savitribai Phule made significant strides in education with the assistance of her husband, Jyotiba Phule. She was enrolled in a teacher's training program at an institute in Pune, organized by American missionary Cynthia Farrar in Ahmednagar. This led her to become the first female headmistress and the first woman teacher in India. Her remarkable contributions to education have been recognized by the Government of Maharashtra, which observes her birthday, January 3rd, as Balika Din, a day dedicated to celebrating girls' education in the state. Inevitably, the couple's commitment to education attracted criticism from relatives, which led them to leave their home in search of refuge. Savitribai Phule exhibited relentless determination not only for her own educational pursuits but also championed the cause of educating girls from marginalized segments of society, paving the way for significant advancements in women's education in India.

Establishment of Educational Institutions

In 1848, Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule established the first indigenously run school for girls in Pune, marking a revolutionary step in a period characterized by deeply rooted patriarchal values. Motivated by a desire to provide education for girls from untouchable caste backgrounds, Savitribai opened a school for untouchable girls in 1852. Between 1848 and 1851, they founded a total of 18 schools. In Pune alone, nearly 150 girls were enrolled in three of these schools, despite significant societal opposition. Their journey involved overcoming numerous hurdles, including the caste system, social disabilities, poverty, and a lack of motivation for educating girls. Despite her remarkable contributions, Savitribai Phule endured immense challenges and opposition from many corners of society. It's heartbreaking to recognize that she faced not only physical assaults and social ostracism but also the profound barriers created by the caste system. Her courage in the face of such adversity shines as a testament to her strength and commitment to change. However, Savitribai's determination, perseverance, and diligent efforts broke through these barriers and led to lasting change. She was also a talented poetess in Marathi, with her works published in two collections: "Kavya Phule" (1854) and "Bavankashi Subodh Ratnakar" (1892). These poems serve as mirrors reflecting the

challenges, discrimination, gender issues, harmful customs, illiteracy, and superstitions that pervaded her life, illustrating how these experiences interwoven and influenced one another.

Advocacy and Social Reforms

Savitribai Phule and Jyotiba Phule were pioneers who ventured far beyond the realm of education; they actively engaged in social reforms targeted at abolishing the deeply entrenched evils of their time. Among the most prevalent issues they confronted were child marriages, the prohibition of widow remarriage, female infanticide, and the stigmatization of children born to rape victims. Savitribai's advocacy extended well beyond educational initiatives. She became a formidable champion for women's rights and broader social reforms. This section will delve into her tireless efforts to abolish child marriage, promote the remarriage of widows, and extend support to survivors of sexual violence. A key aspect of her work involved the establishment of the Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha, a home dedicated to pregnant rape survivors. As part of their commitment to these women, Savitribai and Jyotiba adopted a child from a Brahmin widow, naming him Yashwantrao Phule. Yashwantrao later excelled in his studies and became a doctor, thus carrying forward the legacy of his adoptive parents. On September 24, 1873, Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule founded the Satya Shodhal Samaj, which advocated for marriages that were simple, cost-effective, and devoid of the traditional priesthood and dowry. This innovative approach to marriage resembled contemporary court marriages, emphasizing equality and accessibility. The organization fought against various social evils, including caste discrimination and gender inequality.

Their commitment was put to the test during the catastrophic drought that struck Maharashtra in 1877. Despite facing significant financial constraints, they mobilized resources to aid affected communities. However, the years that followed brought personal hardship; Jyotiba suffered a heart attack shortly after the famine of 1886-1887, leaving him partially paralyzed. Throughout this challenging period, Savitribai devoted herself to caring for her husband, demonstrating immense strength and resilience. Upon Jyotiba's death, she broke societal norms by performing his last rites, potentially making her the first woman in India to do so. Yashwantrao Phule, inspired by his parents, dedicated his life to serving patients in a hospital. One of his most remarkable contributions was during the plague outbreak, where he joined forces with his mother to care for afflicted individuals. Despite the known risks associated with the disease, Savitribai continued her compassionate work, ultimately succumbing to the plague on 10th March 1897. On March 10, 1898, the Government of India recognized her significant contributions to the education and empowerment of women by issuing a commemorative postage stamp. This honor reflects her impactful efforts in advancing these crucial areas. Her unwavering dedication to social causes left a lasting impact, embodying a legacy of service, compassion, and reform that continues to inspire generations.

Feminism and Savitribai Phule

Savitribai Phule is often underrepresented in academic discussions and texts, despite her critical role as the first female teacher in India. Navigating the complex intersectionality of gender, caste, and systemic violence, she initially drew support from her husband and

subsequently collaborated with like-minded individuals to become a leading advocate for girls' education, particularly for those from marginalized communities. Feminism, defined as the advocacy for women's equality across all spheres—social, economic, and political—has evolved through various waves, each marked by specific milestones and contextual influences. These movements reflect the diverse experiences of women across different socio-economic strata. Notably, the exploitation of women from lower castes by their counterparts from higher castes highlights the multidimensional nature of feminism. As a result, distinct branches of feminist theory have emerged, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, black feminism, and Dalit feminism, among others. The central inquiry of these movements revolves around preserving women's dignity amidst pervasive societal obstacles. Savitribai Phule dedicated her life to confronting and dismantling detrimental customs and practices that undermined women's status. Her lifelong contributions laid a foundational framework for the contemporary women's rights movement and significantly influenced the development of the modern educational system in India. Her legacy continues to inspire ongoing efforts toward gender equity and social justice.

Conclusion

The role of a teacher and the teaching profession, while fundamentally distinct, are both crucial to the fabric of every society. Today, many individuals within this field express dissatisfaction due to inadequate infrastructure and the myriad personal challenges they face. This sentiment is particularly pronounced among those employed in government positions. It is vital to recognize that the teaching profession should not simply be viewed as just another job, a means to secure a salary and benefits. Although some progress has been made in terms of recognition and support, this profession holds the transformative power to shape the lives of countless young individuals—each with their own dreams and aspirations for a brighter future. Choosing a career in education comes with a significant responsibility, particularly for those teaching in government schools. Many students in these settings rely heavily on educators for their development, as they may not have access to additional educational resources. By wholeheartedly committing to their role and focusing on the potential of each child, teachers can truly make a transformative impact on the lives of their students. Embracing this responsibility can lead to meaningful changes and a brighter future for those children. Despite the achievements attained thus far, the actual outcomes of various educational initiatives often fall short of expectations. Numerous missions aimed at improving schools have not yielded the anticipated results. It is essential to understand that education itself, along with necessary infrastructure, is not inherently a barrier to learning. Rather, what is critically needed are enthusiastic, motivated, and visionary educators at every level. These educators are pivotal if we aim to enhance the qualitative growth of our nation.

In this context, Savitribai Phule's life and work emerge as a powerful source of inspiration. Her relentless dedication to education and her advocacy for social justice have had a profound impact, changing the lives of countless individuals and continuing to resonate with people today. This paper highlights her significant contributions to the development of modern Indian society, emphasizing the enduring relevance of her efforts in promoting education and equality. Her legacy serves as a beacon of courage

and resilience, showcasing the potential of education to change lives and uplift communities.

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DIMPY BANIA[1] **(16)**

PROF. (DR.) KRISHNA BARUA[2]

HEROIC EMOTIONS AND LITERARY ENGAGEMENT: AN EXPLORATION OF KARNA'S JOURNEY IN R.K NARAYAN'S *THE MAHABHARATA*

Abstract

R.K Narayan's *The Mahabharata* first published in 1978 is a rendition of Vyasa's epic *Mahabharata* where the author comprehensively narrates the journey of each character in the epic . Amongst all the celebrated characters from the *Mahabharata* , the hero Karna has been a major point of attraction for his intricate journey marked by emotions of strength , morality and virtue. Being a part of a highly structured society based on caste distinctions, Karna became a victim of social exclusion and alienation. The emotional turbulence experienced by Karna has been vividly captured by R. K Narayan through his adaptation of the epic *Mahabharata*. This research intends to explore the heroic journey of Karna in R.K Narayan's *The Mahabharata* by providing an in-depth analysis of the episodes and events narrated in the text through an exploration of the emotions portrayed by Karna at the backdrop of the social convictions resulting in emotional disorientation and dilemma. The aim is to highlight R.K Narayan's portraiture of the conflict and dilemma through Karna and also explore the dynamics of heroism as a social value which determines the destiny of an estranged warrior.

Keywords: Alienation, Conflict, Dilemma, Emotions, Heroism

Karna in R.K Narayan's *The Mahabharata* emerges as a tragic hero whose strength and loyalty serves as a benediction as well as a flaw. He is known for his unmatched prowess and his unwavering commitment towards his friend and patron Duryodhana. Karna makes its first appearance in the narrative in chapter two where the author describes him as " A warrior , hitherto unnoticed , clad in a mail coat , brilliant looking and wearing earrings , stood throwing challenges in a thundering tone." (Narayan, 1978, p.15). The word "unnoticed" highlights Karna's plight where he has been subjected to recurrent rejections and social seclusion. However, despite of his precarious situation, Karna's valour and skills as a warrior cannot go unnoticed. Furthermore, Karna's proclamation " I can do all that Partha has done and more " (Narayan, 1978, p.15) suggests that he yearns for the equal opportunity to prove his worth as a warrior. Karna further advocates for equality when he says " A true Kshatriya has no need to waste his time in words, like the feeble ones of other castes who exhaust themselves in futile arguments. If you have

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learnt to hold a bow and arrow, let that speak and you will get my immediate answer" (Narayan, 1978, p.16).

The idea of heroism elucidated in the narrative stands as a socio-cultural practice founded on the grounds of coercion and discrimination. The author grants centrality to the character of Karna by assigning him lines that speaks of his predicament as an estranged warrior where his aspirations are subjected to judgements and scrutinization. This is evident when Karna urges to fight with Arjuna and he is asked to prove his lineage to be deemed eligible – " O warrior , please tell us the names of your father and mother and the names of the royal line you come from. After you mention it , this warrior will decide whether to fight or not. He is the son of a king, and you realise that sons of kings will not stoop to fight with men of lesser breed " (Narayan,1978, p. 16). The most striking feature of R.K Narayan's version is that he had used explicit terms such as " breed" to highlight the subversive practices that diminished the notion of heroism to a mere personal pursuit which has nothing to do with the development of society at large.

Karna's predicament highlights how the potential of a worthy warrior can be severely impacted by the social prejudices. There are several hints in the narrative that points that Karna who had the potential to bring tremendous changes in society was reduced to a conflicted individual who could not understand the repercussions of being excessively obsessed with gaining recognition as a warrior. The narrative grants sufficient weightage to the hero Karna to showcase how his motives were impacted by the lack of social support despite of having a sympathetic heart. The episode of Draupadi's Swayamvar highlights the gentle nature of Karna who stood as gentleman despite of facing grave humiliation from Draupadi, " She watched with apprehension as Karna approached the bow and lifted it as if it were a toy. He stood it on its end and stretched out the bowstring… Draupadi was heard to remark , "I will not accept him… ," at this Karna replied " I don't want her" (Narayan, 1978, p.33). This particular instance depict that Karna had a strong temperament that remains unaffected to the social criticism hurled towards him. He was only concerned with projecting his skill as a warrior.

R.K Narayan adopts a simple narrative structure where the events are comprehensively described using subtle descriptive lines which unfolds the character of Karna to highlight his evolution throughout the narrative. Karna's opinion in the narrative is projected with clarity where his emotions are clearly communicated. This is evident from episode of Karna's conversation with Bheesma who had warned him against his superficial pride in regards to his strength. Karna on being questioned by Bheesma decides to withdraw from the war unless it is needed which echoes his perseverance as a warrior where he believes in waiting for the right moment to prove his worth. " My grandfather , Bhishma! You will hereafter see me only at the court , not in the battlefield" (Narayan, 1978, p.131).

Karna's unwavering loyalty towards Duryodhana is exquisitely crafted by R.K Narayan through the depiction of the scene where Krishna tries to convince Karna to alter his decision and join his legitimate brothers in the war. The true essence of Karna's loyalty is projected here where he says " I am indebted to Duryodhana for his support all these years . How can I give him up, although I know we are all doomed " (Narayan,

1978, p.141-142). It is evident that Karna is aware of the repercussions of his decisions, yet he decides to stand by his choices. Furthermore, Karna's amicability is reflected when he respectfully rejects the offer presented by Kunti " I respect and believe you, but I cannot accept your words with the authority of a mother." (Narayan, 1978, p.142).

R.K Narayan's portrayal of Karna is infused with nuanced elements of sympathy, pride and honesty that highlights the dynamics of Karna's personality as a warrior captivated in a complex world marked by disparities. His dedication as a warrior is seen after he is appointed as the commander in – chief of the Kaurava army. Despite of threats and possible defeat , he stands firm on his strategies as a warrior . The line " Karna himself had been wounded by one of Ghatotkacha's missiles and was smarting with pain" (Narayan, 1978, p. 160). This undeniably speaks about Karna's endurance as a warrior where he had endured all kinds of suffering to stand by his commitment to Duryodhana. While Karna had all the opportunity to withdraw from the war, he stood firm by his commitment.

The narrative portrays the dynamics of heroism through the intricate journey that Karna experiences. While heroism is a pursuit of displaying valour and courage, it is accompanied by social responsibilities where each warrior is expected to maintain the moral decorum in and outside the battle field. In reference to Karna's death , lord Krishna's reminder of Karna's actions serve as an example of how a warrior's heroism is assessed not just by physical strength and prowess, it is also assessed by his moral judgement and actions. When Karna requests Lord Krishna to spare him from attacking while he tries to recover his chariot's wheel, Lord Krishna reminds him of the misdeeds he had committed in the past. Krishna said " How late you are in remembering this word! Where was this honour on that day when you made fun of a helpless woman dragged into your midst through no fault of her own? You did, of your free will, choose to associate with evil-minded men, even when you could have avoided it" (Narayan, 1978, p. 162-163).This particular instance from the event of war depicts that every warrior is ought to maintain his moral responsibility even if it stands against personal ambition or choices. Draupadi's humiliation and the brutal killing of Abhimanyu was a moral transgression on the part of Karna which calls for justice. Karna's excessive pride and obsession with accomplishments made him oblivious of the larger moral responsibility he was suppose to perform. Towards the end of the narrative, Narada explains the reason behind Karna's inability to recall the hymn to channelize the Brahmastra against Arjuna. Narada muni also explained why his wheel got stuck because of his past mistake of killing a cow. This recollection of Karna's past deeds suggests that heroism is a moral pursuit which requires conformity to morality. The idea of heroism outlined in the R.K Narayan's version of *Mahabharata* correlates to the philosophy of *Bhagavad Gita* which advocates the moral code of conduct for the warriors. According to the *Bhagavad Gita* " A Kshatriya's happiness consists not in domestic pleasures and comfort but in fighting for the right. But if thou doest not this lawful battle, then thou will fail thy duty and glory and will incur sin" (Radhakrishnan, 1993, p.127). Therefore, the portrayal of Karna's ambition highlights the moral concern that determines his identity as warrior.

To sum up, in R.K Narayan's *The Mahabharata*, Karna is portrayed as a character marked by complexity whose strength and sense of loyalty serves both as a

strength and weakness. Known for his unmatched prowess and unwavering loyalty towards Duryodhana, Karna serves as a symbol of noble yet misguided heroism. His journey is marked by heroic accomplishments as he stands as a strong opponent to his rivals. Despite of his subjugated position as an abandoned child and his recurrent rejections, he remains firm in his beliefs and stands by his choices despite of social criticism. Karna's tragic flaw lies in his firm belief on the code of honour clouded by sense of excessive pride which hindered his understanding of the larger truth. His sense of false pride leads to his involvement in the battle where his heroic efforts got overshadowed by his sense of vengeance marked by excessive pride. R.K Narayan's portrays the profound conflict and contradictions between duty and morality providing a comprehensive view of how personal choices can often go against the larger moral convictions leading to tragic downfall of the hero. Therefore, the narrative presents us with a larger view of life placed at the backdrop of war and heroism where values, ethical principles play a pivotal role in determining the fate of a warrior.

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MD EHTASHAMUL ISLAM KHAN[1] **(17)**

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INTERSECTING OPPRESSIONS: FEMINIST DISABILITY STUDIES AND CASTE IN DALIT WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how caste, gender, and disability intersect in the narratives of Dalit women, exploring how these identity constructs shape their experiences and forms of resistance. Focusing on *The Prisons We Broke* (2009) by Baby Kamble, *Sangati: Events* (2009) by Bama, P. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* (2006) and *A Life Less Ordinary: The Untold Story of an Indian Woman* (2004) by Kalyani Thakur Charal, the analysis draws on Tom Shakespeare's social model of disability, Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory, and recent scholarship. The paper argues that these narratives challenge dominant oppressive structures and offer a multidimensional critique of the systems that marginalize Dalit women, while also redefining agency and resistance through the lens of feminist disability studies and other critical frameworks.

Keywords: - Intersectionality, Disempowerment, Erasure, Self-determination, Defiance

Dalit women in Indian society occupy a uniquely marginal position in form. Their experiences are stamped at the points where caste, gender, and often disability meet. The life stories of Baby Kamble, Bama, P. Sivakami, and Kalyani Thakur Charal are some outstanding eye-openers to the complexity of this intersection of oppressions. The study explores how the present authors talk about the lived reality of Dalit women—questioning extant dominant social systems and providing a solid critique of systemic inequalities that sustain forms of marginalisation. It is with this that Tom Shakespeare's social model of disability overflows; it is the arrangements and practices of society that make people disabled, not people's physical impairments. Or, as Shakespeare said, "disability is a social construct, shaped by the exclusionary practices and attitudes of the society" (54). This is thus an essential analytical tool, which would help us understand how the intersectionality of disability, combined with perspectives on caste and gender, plays out in the lives of Dalit women in these narratives. Including Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory, it becomes an even deeper analysis: "intersectionality provides a framework for understanding the multiple levels of oppression faced by marginalised groups" (149). The concept deepened inquiry about the intersection of caste, gender, and disability in the narratives of the subject, toward shedding light on unique problems Dalit women face. Although these stories find relevance only within the immediate social

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context, they identify with theoretical debates engaged in feminist disability studies. Scholars like Shilpa Davé and Jigna Desai, while developing this argument, insist that one should place experiences of disability vis-à-vis those of caste-based oppression, considering how "disability in Dalit literature often functions as a metaphor to speak to how social exclusion is both pervasive and systemic" (92). It does this by marshalling a wide-ranging discussion of Dalit women's narratives, negotiating and resisting the interfacing oppressions of caste, gender, and disability.

The other most telling refrain is the intersection of caste, gender, and disability, which keeps coming up consistently in the narratives of Kamble, Bama, Sivakami, and Charal. In these writings, come rounded forms of marginalisation faced by Dalit women whose situated identities are carved with such intersecting oppressions. Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* brings into the light the awakening of brutality for caste-based oppression, embracing the latter with gender, further turning off the position of Dalit women. Kamble informs: "Our bodies bore marks of both caste and gender; our identity doubly burdened us" (51). This augurs according to the stand of Shakespeare that "disability is not just a physical condition, but a social one, shaped by societal attitudes and practices" (61). *Sangati: Events* by Bama is an attempt at poignantly representing how caste and gender together managed to pressurise the Dalit woman with a sort of subjugation. Bama gives poignantly vivid details of her female characters who gain insignificance not just from their caste alone but from their female gender, too. As Bama asserts that: "We are invisible in our own homes and society; men and upper-caste people silence our voice" (74). That sums up Crenshaw, indicating that "Intersectionality provides a lens through which we can see how multiple forms of oppression converge to create a unique form of marginalisation" (154). In *The Grip of Change* (*Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum*), Sivakami wages a big fight in the buildings that hold up the edifice of oppression based on caste and gender. The disabling effects of such oppression are brought forth in the struggle to assert her agency by the physical and emotional scars of the protagonist. For Sivakami, "her body was a battlefield, each scar a reminder of the violence inflicted upon her by society" (87). This aligns with Garland-Thomson's analysis of how the disabled body is a site of resistance against norms (2020). Charal's *A Life Less Ordinary: The Untold Story of an Indian Woman (Atyacharvritanta)* further explores the intersection of caste, gender, and disability, highlighting how these intersecting oppressions shape the protagonist's life. Charal writes, "My body was marked by my caste, my gender, and my disability; I was triply burdened, yet I refused to let these marks define me" (103). This aligns with the arguments made by Ghai, who emphasises the importance of considering disability within the context of other forms of social exclusion, such as caste and gender (36).

The life stories of Kamble, Bama, Sivakami, and Charal redefine traditional notions of how Dalit women navigate both their agency and resistance in the face of their intersecting oppressions. *The Prisons We Broke (Jina Amucha)* by Kamble presents a protagonist who, though faced with manifold experiences of oppression, refuses to be cowed down into subordination. Kamble informs: "I knew that my worth was not defined by the labels ascribed to me" (59). This falls quite close to Butler's theory of performativity in which identity is viewed not as a stable core but rather as a performance framed within social ideals and expectations (25). *In Sangati: Events*, the characters that Bama constructs have an exercise of agency by her through quotidian acts

of defiance—ranging from voicing one's opposition to injustice, to merely being in an inhospitable context. According to Bama, "Even under oppression, we found ways to resist, to assert our humanity" (89). This is in tandem with what Fraser says, "justice requires both the redistribution of resources as well as recognition of marginalised identities and voices" (42). Sivakami's work, *The Grip of Change (Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum),* introduces a protagonist whose scars serve not only as indicators of her subjugation but also as markers of her strength and tenacity. Sivakami asserts, "Her scars were her strength; they were a testament to her will to survive and resist" (91). This notion aligns with Garland-Thomson's framework of the "extraordinary body," which calls into question prevailing societal norms and expectations (68). Charal's work, *A Life Less Ordinary: The Untold Story of an Indian Woman (Atyacharvritanta),* weaves the story of a heroine who refuses to be defined by the layered forms of oppression set upon her. Charal says, "I refused to be a victim; I chose to define myself on my terms" (108). According to Kafer, this would be a moment of recognition that "disability can be a site of resistance, a way of challenging dominant narratives and asserting alternative identities" (54).

Emphasis will be given to how the authors use symbolism and narrative frames when expressing the details of intersectional oppression and resistance in their stories. Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke (Jina Amucha)* uses the metaphor of chains to connote the relative enslaving effects of caste and gender that trap Dalit women. For Kamble, it is stated that "Our chains were not just physical; they were also psychological, binding us to our place in society" (72). This is considered in Foucault's analysis of power relations and governance within Discipline and Punishment (148). Events in Bama's *Sangati* employ a fragmentary narrative structure—a depiction of the dislocated experiences of these Dalit women as they go through different kinds of oppression. According to Bama, "Our stories were scattered, like broken pieces of glass, each reflecting a different aspect of our lives" (99). This novelistic arrangement corresponds with what Bakhtin calls the polyphonic novel, in which many voices and opinions coexist against the dominance that one single narrating voice necessarily presents. (87). In, *The Grip of Change,* Sivakami, through the use of the symbol of war wounds as an image of heroism, has used the symbol of resistance. She said, "Her body was a battlefield, her scars the marks of her victories" (Sivakami 102). This symbolism is limbic with Scarry's assertive statement that the body is the primary site of resisting meaning (78). In Charal's *A Life Less Ordinary: The Untold Story of an Indian Woman*, the use of the first person singular\plugin highlights personal and subtle aspects: hidden facets of intersectional oppression. As Charal assert: "This is my story, yet this is the story of every Dalit woman who has ever fought to assert her dignity" (142). The narrative approach represents Gilmore's idea on the limits of autobiography, where personal stories perform an act of resistance and testimony (92).

These narratives of resilience and intersectional oppression in the Dalit women's narratives also reflect broader trends in children's literature, where the marginalised characters often negotiate complex identities and social structures. In R. J. Palacio's *Wonder* (2012), the protagonist, Auggie, a boy who has a very rare facial deformity, fights ostracisation and bullying from other children. Palacio informs: "The things that make me different are the things that make me, me" (93). This very much resonates with the affirmation of Dalit women's identity even while they reflect on how being on the

margins of society allows them to not conform to society's ideal of life. Similarly, Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming* (2014) provides us with a character struggling with notions of race, gender, and identity. Woodson has it, "I am born on a Tuesday at University Hospital / Columbus, Ohio, / USA— / a country caught / between Black and White" (01). This line encapsulates the intersectional fights of the Dalit women, who are forced to go through many frameworks of oppression in their lives.

These broad literary examples underline that narratives analysed in narratives of Dalit women represent parts of a broader body of literary work on resilience, identity, and intersectionality. Situating such narratives within the broader movements of children's literature, this research project points out the importance of understanding intersectionality for doing justice to the nuances of marginalised identities and literature's power as a tool of resistance. The works of Baby Kamble, Bama, P. Sivakami, and Kalyani Thakur Charal—their textual registers, plot devices, and in-situated character formations—collectively project a forceful exploration of the overlapping oppressions related to caste, gender, and disability, contesting prevalent social paradigms and reframing conceptions of agency and resistance. The paper showed how such narratives facilitate more profound insights into marginalisation and resistance based on theoretical perspectives from feminist disability studies and intersectionality.

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THE NARRATIVE OF PRINCE VEERAM DEO OF JALORE AND THE UNREQUITED LOVE OF ALAUDDIN KHILJI'S DAUGHTER FIROZA: STORY OF COURAGE AND LASTING LOYALTY

Abstract:

This review manuscript delves into the tale of bravery , valor , loyalty , love and devotion that is deeply embedded in the intricate fabric of Rajasthan . There is almost no need to state that Rajasthan has been famous for its rich and diverse literature across different subjects since ancient times . The many varied surrounding it. create a colorful image in written evaluation highlighting human behaviours , achievements and thoughts , and characteristics . *The Narrative of Prince Veeram Deo of Jalore and the Unrequited Love of Alauddin Khilji's Daughter Firoza: Story of Courage and Lasting Loyalty* is about the enchanting love story of Firoza and Veeram Deo in Rajasthani folklore ,examining their enduring love story that has made the lasting impression in Rajasthan's cultural and spiritual legacy . This research project explores on the origin of Firoza and Veeram Deo , the circumstances that brought them together and the deep love that blossomed Firoza, a story popular in Rajasthan Folktales . This document will further examines the artistic and cultural influence of Veeram Deo and Firoza, ranging from traditional Rajasthani art to vibrant music and dance tradition . Their love has not only given a rise to the spiritual and cultural aspect but also influenced many other Rajasthani folklores . Additionally we examine the current importance of their love story , exploring its connection to the modern society where the search for love and iconic relationship flourish .

Keywords: Veeram Dev, Firoza, Rajasthan, Folklore, Courage, Loyalty.

1. Introduction:

Rajasthan's realms have been written through several folklores where the reasons have been placed that enabled invasions. These invasions talked about the bravery and valor of Rajputs. Furthermore, in spite of the famed valor of the Rajasthani warrior class in battle, these invasions typically ended in victory for the attacker, such as Alauddin Khilji. And this, too, in spite of the valiant resistance offered by several Rajput

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kingdoms, both under Alauddin Khilji and under subsequent Turki Muslim sultans of Delhi (Team). It has long been known that Indian cities have a diversified population. From the thirteenth century onwards, descriptions in the literature of Rajasthan have included many people found in the streets and markets. Such diversity has been variously conceptualised, by ethnicity, language, religion, and occupation, evoking a sense of wealth and abundance in the city and signifying its connection to regional and global trade and production networks. Although medieval and early modern portrayals of Rajasthani cities have a capacious definition of diversity, studies of social conflict in the Mughal Empire tend to focus on folklore. (Sengar) Rajasthani Folklore is a tapestry woven in threads of gods, goddesses, heroes, and mythical creatures, spanning millennia of human imagination and storytelling. What began as oral traditions passed down through generations evolved into intricate literature books and sacred texts that continue to captivate minds around the nation. The legend of Firoza and Veeram Deo is one such intriguing tale that encapsulated bravery, loyalty and sacrifices of Rajput warrior class (Ziegler 127-53)

In the vast landscape of Rajasthani folklore and culture, there exists a fascinating phenomenon where fiction is interested, blurring the lines between what is imaged and what is believed to be true. This review manuscript delves into the enigmatic realm where love stories and legends transform into tangible historical events supported by cultural influences. This review manuscript categorises Rajasthani folklore through the contingent nature of religious identities by emphasising the municipality of practices and the vernacularisation of religion and practices. After conquering Ranthambore, Chittor, Malwa, and Siwana, Alauddin Khilji focused on conquering Jalore in a few years. Kanhad Deo, the Chauhan chief at the time, was in charge of this ancient township and its stronghold. He was Som's (also known as Samant Singh) son. Over the years, the Jalore Chauhan's have gained prominence and authority. Around the year 1292 AD, Kanhad Deo most likely started to be recognised as their heir apparent or as a co-ruler alongside his father in Jalore. He probably succeeded his father on the throne of Jalore around c. AD 1298 (Sreenivasan 275-296).

2. **Literature Review:**

In the fourth millennium BC, families and tribal tribes in Rajasthan, India, thought that magic was the same as transcendent power because they relied heavily on magical formulas to achieve their dreams. These individuals belonged to a variety of ethnic groups; their language pattern, blue eyes, fair hair, white complexion, and Rajput heroism set them apart from the brown-complexioned Dravidians. Folklore holds that their arrival was particularly significant since it marked the change from a relatively primitive period to the Vedic age, as historians refer to it (Berger and Heidemann 286). In Rajasthani Folklore, Veeram and Firoza are adored as iconic figures, embodying deep courage and valor between a Muslim Princess and a Rajput Prince. Their significance transcends the boundaries of time and space, captivating the hearts and thoughts of millions of scholars and literary works. The existence of Veeram and Firoza is not only a matter of history but is backed by folklore. Historical records provided glimpses into

their lives and relationships with other characters of that era. These references serve as a basis for their statute in Rajasthani folklore. Texts like *Kanhad-de-Prabandh* portray the true yet unrequited love story of Princess Firoza. The tales of their encounter, exchanges, and Firoza's adamant demand have been narrated and honored for centuries, captivating the hearts of devotees and inspiring countless artistic expressions (Dube 72)

2.1 Rajasthani Folklore: An Overview, Historical Background and Development

At the heart of India's brevity and valor lies the landscape of Rajasthani Folklore, and within the mystical town of Jalore resides a love story that transcends time and human understanding. It is a tale of divine passion, a story that has captured the imagination and hearts of millions for centuries. The love story of Veeram Deo and Firoza has been long fascinated by scholars and storytellers alike, for it possesses a mystique that transcends the ordinary boundaries of human emotions and mythology. The meeting of Veeram Deo and Firoza is a pivotal and deeply cherished moment for scholars who have considered working on their love story. The First encounter of Veeram Deo and Firoza holds an immense significance in history of Rajasthani folklore as there are multiple interpretations of this event but the record of *Kanhad – de- Prabandh* is the most authoritative . Firoza first laid eyes on Veeram during the court proceeding of Alauddin Khilji . This fateful meeting orchestrated by fate , captivated Firoza who was enchanted by Prince's charm and bravery . She felt an irresistible pull towards Veeram and followed his voice and aura as he had that divine magnetism within himself. Historical characters like Veeram Deo and Firoza hold a revered status in Rajasthani literature, serving as timeless archetypes that embody the essence of human experience and the eternal struggle between good and evil. These characters are drawn from the Gujarati book, and its folk tales serve as archetypal representations of fundamental human traits, virtues, and vices. Whether it's the complex yet valorous Rajput Prince Veeram or the beautiful yet headstrong Muslim Princess Firoza, their characters embody the universal qualities that mirror the complexities of human nature. Through their actions, struggles, and tragedy they offer profound insights into the human condition, providing the scholars with timeless lessons and moral guidance (Singh 459).

2.2 The Story of Firoza

Firoza was the embodiment of devotion and loved Veeram, true-heartedly. Her love for Veeram is not bound by earthly limitations. It was a love that transcends physicality, time, and societal norms. Firoza's love symbolises the ultimate yearning for soulful union, an aspiration to merge one's spirit with the divine. Her love symbolises the divine desire of the soul. Love serves as an allegory for the profound connection between the individual spirit and the universal spirit, a concept central to love and its devotion. Firoza's unwavering commitment , love and devotion toward Veeram Deo exemplifies a way of giving up inspiring numerous of devotees to pursue profound personal and intimate bond with legendary romance and love story . Firoza's longing for her beloved Veeram Deo is touching and deeply emotional element of their love story . It showcases the depth of her commitment and her desire of unity with her beloved . Firoza's desire for Veeram Deo is commonly portrayed as a painful and craving . She longed for him

with all her heart her love defined by deep longing to be by his side (Sinha) . Her yearning represents the idea of lack , a deliberate agony of being a part of unreciprocated love by brave Veeram .It represented the common idea of soul desiring God symbolising the profound spiritual longing . Her feelings and deep love depicted in Rajasthani art . Her longing shows how absence can transform love. Her separation from Veeram intensified her love and deepened her spiritual and emotional yearning for him. Her yearning for him was not just about physical presence but represented her devotion and journey. It symbolised her soul's yearning for the Divine and its quest for spiritual enlightenment. Her pining teaches the present-day scholars profound lessons in devotion. It highlights that the path of devotion and unrequited love may involve moments of intense longing and separation, but these experiences can lead to a more profound love for the divine (Dharmayudh 8).

2.3 The Story of Veeram Dev

Veeram Dev, the Charismatic and enigmatic Rajput, revered as the future king of Jalore was known for his charm, wisdom, and strategic warrior ways. According to the history written in *Kanhad-de-Prabandh* by Padmanabha, Firoza the daughter of Alauddin Khilji fell in love with Kanhad Deo's son, Veeram Deo who was present at the court of Delhi for the father's sake, Kanhad Deo. As the writing claimed, which was composed in c. AD 1465, prescription Firoza was at quite a measure in wishing to have Veeram Deo as a husband despite the Sultan and harem women holding out threats and violent opposition to her. However, as stated in *Kanhad-de-Prabandh*, Alauddin Khilji ordered the Jalore prince to do pata milan of Firoza and get married which he refused since she was a turk chief's daughter. But, Aksoni married sundarasakti, and then the beloved Veeram is, as it were, copulated with his wife. All this went up in a puff of smoke, however, when the subtle Sultran kept back one of the princes of the House of Jalore in his court as a captive and once Veeram delayed his return for a long time the enraged Sultan dispatched his army to Jalore to inflict punishment. (Sharma et al. 310-33)

2.4 Historical and Cultural Interpretation of the Legends

The story of Firoza and Veeram, marked by moments of ecstatic joy and poignant separation, embodied the profound union of Inter-religion love and devotion. It is a story that traverses the boundaries of time, culture, and spirituality. Veeram, often depicted as the courageous charmer, and Firoza, the devoted lover, embody a unique duality. Veeram, the man of supreme valor, who fought against Alauddin Khilji, allowed bravery to connect with gallantry on a personal level. Firoza, the earthly spirit , symbolises the passionate desire for deep spiritual connection between lovers . The central theme in myth or philosophy is the separation of Veeram deo and Firoza , this division adds fuel to their dedication , highlighting the deep significance of their affection . The love story of Veeram Deo and Firoza unreciprocated , is highly meaningful in Rajasthani folklore impacting the different area of life , art and culture Rajasthani folklore and literature inspiring many poets , writers , scholars and experts. The love affair has been recorded in the multiple traditional History of Rajasthan text , the oldest is *Kanhad- de- Prabandh* swerving as source of inspiration to many literary pieces . Their love story originates from Rajasthani folklore and mythology which is relevant in modern times too . Many

people see Firoza as powerful and self-reliant presence in the romantic tale (Angel) . The celebration of her love and dedication towards Veeram Deo emphasised the value of Gender equality and the importance of divine Feminine . They are crucial component of Rajasthan cultural legacy . Their love serves as a source of cultural identity and pride and their imagery continues to be celebrated in. Rajasthani art , culture and folklore . Modern interpretations in various art forms keep their story alive and relevant in contemporary artistic expressions . (hmt 77-96).

2.5 The Development and Modern Significance of the Legends

This love story is the story of courage and gallantry which is steeped in symbolism and poetic beauty. Rajasthani folklore celebrates their love through its exemplification of celestial union. Veeram Deo and Firoza's love is pivotal in Rajasthani Folklore because it emphasises intense devotion to a personal deity. Firoza serves as the quintessential devotee, embodying selfless love and surrender to God. Their love story inspires seekers on the path of devotion and love. The theme of unrequited love has been profound source of inspiration of Rajasthani artists , musicians , and dancers throughout the region's cultural history Classical Rajasthani art and literature abound with the depiction of emotive concept. In today's fast-paced world, Firoza's love for Veeram Deo continues to hold significance. Their story offers solace to those seeking a deeper soulful connection, reminding the people that true love transcends the material realm. Understanding the mystique of Firoza requires an exploration of her human-mythological dynamic, the symbolism that permeates her story, and the profound philosophical and emotional impact she has had on the folklorish landscape of Rajasthan and India. This mystique love story invites people to contemplate the boundless depths of love and devotion that can bridge the gap between the mythology and the mortal. Their story has inspired various forms of art, culture, music, literature, and paintings of Rajasthan. The love of Firoza towards Veeram Deo transcends societal norms and religious distinctions, promoting the idea that true love is accessible to all, regardless of one's background. This inclusive message has had a profound impact on Rajasthani society (Sreenivasan 87-108)

3. Discussion:

The philosophical discussions surrounding their love delve into the nature of true unrequited love, human emotions, and the eternal quest for soulful fulfillment. Their story encourages introspection and philosophical contemplation. Firoza and Veeram Dev's love story has been a subject of interest in interfaith dialogue, where scholars and spiritual leaders from several backgrounds explore the universal themes of love, devotion, and soulful awakening found within their narrative. Beyond its romantic and folklorish dimensions, the unfulfilled love story of Veeram and Firoza holds a profound philosophical significance, offering insights into various aspects of life, love, and religion. Firoza's affection for Veeram symbolises the tale of the most profound type of one sided love . It shows that love knows no limits and can be powerful catalyst for personal growth and connection with one's true self. The tale of Veeram and Firoza delves into contradiction of love and unmet desires through the theme of separation and togetherness . It imparts the agony of being apart , the eternal longing and the love that

remains unrequited . Firoza's yearning and pain while Veeram is away represents significance of suffering in spiritual development .It indicates that difficulties and suffering within each faith can strengthen a person's spiritual bond and result in self-discovery . Historical figures such as Firoza and Veeram Deo have strong roots in cultural and religious tapestry of Rajasthan , respected as sacred entities and wise spiritual guides .For many Indians Firoza represents more than princess , symbolises strength , resilience and affection .

Conclusion:

As its core , the love tale of Veeram and Firoza is deeply revered in Rajasthani folklore symbolising deep spiritual , artistic and philosophical importance . It stands as constant symbol of Firoza's eternal love for Veeram despite their different backgrounds. Firozas chase after Veeram Deo reflects humanity search for the ultimate truth and purpose in life . it shows love has the ability to ignite a deep desire for spiritual knowledge . Firoza's love is defined by selflessness and detachment that never wavers . The love she feels for Veeram is not based on possession it demonstrates the genuine dedication emphasising that the concept of true love is devoid of attachment .Their love story delves into the contrast between separation and pain which are the fundamental aspects of being human it promotes the idea that love can flourish despite these opposites and that are the integral path toward the spiritual enlightenment. Firoza's love is frequently praised everlasting and ageless representing the lasting loyalty towards her beloved Her love goes beyond the constraints of Time and space it implies that the genuine love is bold and fearless , transcends the earthly limitations to exist in the realm outside of the physical world . Her love is frequently portrayed as indestructible despite being unreciprocated and rejected but it is ultimate expression of loyalty . Firoza's love is deeply symbolic and carries a great importance in the Rajasthani folklore . Their timeless and unreciprocated love is always celebrated and portrayed in literature , painting , art , dance , music . Rajasthani folk arts and contemporary folk artist draws an inspiration from their love story .

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HIAMTHUIYANG JAMES[1] **(19)**

SIGNIFICANCE OF BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN THE INDIGENOUS RELIGION OF THE RONGMEI NAGAS IN TAMENGLONG

Abstract

The study aims to present the belief systems and the significance of the indigenous religious practices of the Rongmei Nagas in Tamenglong before embracing Christianity. It shows the polytheistic belief in multiple gods, goddesses, deities and spirits revered by the people. The specific roles these supernatural entities play are described along with how the priests perform the various rituals to appease them and seek their favour. It attempts to depict the loss of indigenous beliefs and practices except for some which have been Christianised. It also studies the close-knit relationship with the natural world which can be observed through their religious beliefs and practices. Reverence for nature and care for ecology is shown in the way they worship and perform rituals. Their gods, goddesses, spirits, and deities are associated with nature, manifesting their concern and commitment towards ecological balance and growth. Their deep connection to nature and zeal for ecological prosperity can be seen in the way they treat the natural elements as dwelling places of spiritual entities. Their beliefs and practices are intertwined with nature and the environment, thus, reflecting the cultural values of love and respect for people and things in the universe.

Keywords*: Beliefs, Practices, Spiritual Entities, Rongmei Indigenous Religion, Rituals*

Introduction

In the early days, the Rongmei people worshipped nature and its uncontrollable elements, venerating multiple gods, goddesses, deities and spirits. Above all, they believe in one supreme God, *Tingkao Raguangh*, revered as "the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent creator of the Universe, gods, men and also all living beings" (Kamei, 2013, p.33). Before Christianity was introduced with the missionaries arriving in their land, the Rongmei Nagas had polytheistic beliefs and worshipped numerous spiritual entities. All these entities were believed to play distinct roles and responsibilities in the lives of the villagers and their natural surroundings.

About the People

The Rongmeis are part of the Naga ethnic group of the Tibeto-Burman family primarily residing in the northeastern Indian states of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam. The present study is delimited to the population of the tribe residing in Tamenglong district of Manipur, India. They are known for their unique celebrations which involve vibrant festivals, traditional songs and dances, and rituals which reflect their rich cultural

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heritage and identity (Festivals of Tamenglong, 2023). In the present day, most of them have converted to Christianity and Christian missionaries have significantly influenced their religious perspectives and changed their socio-cultural lives.

Literature Review

Research on the belief systems and religious practices of the Rongmei people is quite limited. There are very few studies examining their religion through history, social sciences, cultural studies, folklore, creation tales and myths. Luthonliu Gangmei and Laimayum Bishwanath Sharma (2022) explored the stories attributed to the beginning of life and the world, while Peter Panmei (2017) discussed the basic concepts of their faith in the divine being and the indigenous religious practices of the people. Meisuangdai Gonmei, Elizabeth Gangmei, and Smita Borgogoi (2021) highlighted the significance of folklore and stories in revealing their ways of living and thinking.

Additionally, other significant works related to the Rongmei people include *The History of the Zeliangrong Nagas: From Makhel to Rani Gaidinliu* (2004) by Prof. Gangmumei Kabui on the history and culture of the Zeliangrong people, and *Genomic Profile of the Rongmei (Kabui) Tribe of Manipur, India: An Anthropological Genetics Study* (2012) by Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei which explored the genomic profile of Rongmeis settled in Manipur through autosomal and mitochondrial DNA. In his research "Adaptation, Change, and Continuity: The Case of the Rongmei Indigenous Religion," (2013), Andrew Lothuipou Kamei explored the pre-Christian and Christian periods of the Rongmei community. He investigated their efforts to preserve their indigenous religion despite widespread Christian conversion in Northeast India. Remarkably, the Rongmei indigenous faith has survived and coexisted with new religious influences. Despite the massive influences from Christianity and other religions, the people maintain some traditional beliefs and practices, balancing change and continuity in their religious and cultural life.

Indigenous Beliefs and Practices

The Rongmei people never had an organised religion, but they believed in multiple gods, goddesses, spirits and deities with specific powers and roles to govern the universe. Most of the beliefs and practices of the people are centred towards nature and the different elements in it. They are believed to dwell in the mountains, rivers, trees and rocks in their natural surroundings. Nature too is considered a god and revered as a mother for providing food, shelter, and livelihood. Other gods and goddesses too are related to nature or anything with power and strength greater than what human beings could do.

They used to pray and make offerings to them for appeasement and protection from all harms and calamities because they believed that these spiritual entities could cause destruction or bestow prosperity, bring sickness or restore health, and bless or curse (Keilinpou Pamei, personal communication, March 21, 2023). The priests would perform various rituals, make offerings, and conduct ceremonies to appease them as well as seek their blessings for prosperity, providence, guidance and protection to be spared from natural calamities and disasters.

Spiritual Entities and Their Roles

Akin to many tribal societies that hold animistic beliefs where spiritual entities inhabit the natural world and govern the people, the Rongmeis also had beliefs which are closely woven into their daily lives and practices, influencing their way of life and understanding of their place in the world. The indigenous religion of the people was such that numerous spiritual entities were worshipped, each associated with specific roles in the life of the people who honour them. The diversification of these spirits, based on data from Tamenglong elders, provides a general understanding of their pre-Christian belief systems. Some of the most prominent gods, goddesses, deities and spirits are:

i) Supreme God:

Among all the gods, goddesses, deities and spirits, *Tingkao Raguangh* (Heavenly God) is worshipped as the greatest divine being. He is believed to be the creator and sustainer of the universe, nature, and humanity. "*Tingkao*" means heaven and "*Raguangh*" literally translates to God-King or King of gods, thus, he is the supreme God who has power and control over all non-living and living beings including the other gods, goddesses, deities and spirits (Mathiuguang Mathew, personal communication, April 28, 2023). He is honoured above all the others by revering him with the greatest fear and highest respect by the people.

ii) Guardian spirit:

It is also known as the village spirit which is believed to protect the village and all who dwell in it. It is called "*kailuang banbu"* and it is considered the one who holds significant power over the lives of villagers. The literal translation would be "*kailuang*" meaning "village" and "*banbu*" meaning "pulse", thus, it is a god who decides whether a person should live or die by regulating their pulses. Similarly, there are different deities, associated with specific locations like hills and groves who are honoured through ceremonies and sacrifices for the protection of the villagers (Meisuangkung John, Keilinpou Pamei and Namrichuang Pamei, personal communication, May 7, 2023). Villagers have not seen its face but some have seen a human figure in a distance bearing a burning firewood or bamboo torch leading their way home when they returned late from the fields.

iii) Nature spirits:

The people are deeply connected with nature and they sincerely revere it. They have a great reverence for nature and adore it because they believe that spirits dwell within natural elements like trees, rocks, rivers, mountains, and animals. On April 28, 2023, Mathiuguang Mathew recalled the names of notable nature spirits revered by the indigenous people of Tamenglong, namely:

a) *Mbiuh mbang ra* (forest spirit): It is a god who is believed to safeguard the forest and people who enter it for work or leisure. No recollection is made of any person who has ever seen its face, therefore, there is no gender attributed to it. It is a spirit that is revered for protection from harm and providence of the forest produce.
b) *Dui ra* (water/river spirit): It is a spirit that is believed to reside in water bodies such as rivers, streams, lakes and ponds. People prayed to

this spirit for good rain for their crops to grow and for the providence of food such as fish, frogs, crabs, snails and other food from the water bodies. They also intercede to them for saving them from calamities like floods or drought. Apart from these things, when a person dies in the water it is often attributed to having been taken by the water spirit.

c) *Nraembang ra* (banyan tree spirit): This is a female spirit believed to dwell in the banyan tree. It is told that people had seen this spirit in the form of an old lady who could be seen walking in front of people who pass by as though to give company to them on a lonely road. It is said that not all banyan trees have spirits dwelling in them, but only certain banyan trees have them and they have been met often by many people.

d) *Rambau ra* (land guardian spirit). These spirits are sacred, and the people perform rituals to honour, give thanks, and appease them to prevent the villagers from harm. There is no mention of specifying whether they are male or female, but they are believed to guard the land and watch over all that live in it. The villagers used to pray to them before starting their works in the jungle and give offerings of food and wine to appease them and seek their protection and providence.

iv) Clan gods and goddesses:

Different clans have their clan gods linked to their family with "*Nsuang ra"* which is represented by a stone. They offer food and wine sacrifices to their stones, seeking blessings for protection and prosperity. These gods are worshipped to ensure household and clan well-being and harmony. Several instances in the past have been reported where some had seen the gods in the form of light leading people back to their homes at night, and also in the form of a woman dressed beautifully in traditional attire who would be seen walking in front of them when they returned late from their works in the field. Although there had been instances of people encountering them, there is no mention made of anyone who had ever seen their faces. Some had seen their clan god walking before them on the road and turned into a cock and disappearing in thin air as they approached nearer. Also, many women had seen the clan goddesses visiting their "*kailiu*" (female dormitory) wearing "*ahianga pheisuai"* (mekhela) adorned beautifully.

v) Ancestral spirits:

Different from the worship of gods, goddesses, deities, or spirits, there is also a reverence of ancestral spirits. In their culture, elders and ancestors hold a significant place in their cultural and spiritual life. They occupy a revered place and they are highly respected for their wisdom and experiences. Their guidance is sought for important decisions and rituals. The highest homage is paid by erecting a memorial stone over their graves or beside their tombs, and hosting feasts in their honour. They believe that the spirits of deceased family members continue to protect and watch over the living, and they are honoured through rituals and offerings during festivals (Meisuangkung John, Keilinpou Pamei and Namrichuang Pamei,

personal communication, May 7, 2023). Ancestors are thought to maintain a presence and influence over the living, prompting various ceremonies to honour and seek their guidance. They are believed to continue to 'influence the lives of their descendants' (Yelang, 2021).

Belief in spirits is prominent in Rongmei folklore and oral traditions, with myths, stories and legends passed down through generations. Observations show that the specifics of spirit worship and beliefs vary among villages. The above-mentioned spiritual entities are based on Tamenglong village's beliefs while other villages have different names or additional spirits with specific powers and roles. The beliefs and practices of the people highlight their deep spiritual connection with nature, gods, goddesses, deities and spirits. Thus, they serve as the basis for shaping their worldview of the people and their way of life.

Role of Priests

There are "*amuh*" (priests) and "*tingkuh*" (the high priest) who are spiritual leaders and act as intermediaries between the human world and the spirit world. During a discussion on September 5, 2024, Mathiuguang Mathew described the roles of the priests and high priest. According to him, they conduct rituals, communicate with spirits, and perform healing ceremonies. They are the representatives of the community in ushering luck and good fortune. They offer sacrificial livestock and also engage in killing the animals for blood offerings. For instance, a cock may be killed by him and its blood be poured out as a means of cleansing the sins and errors of his people. This concept is similar to the Judeo-Christian belief of using a scapegoat for redemption and salvation. They would place the offerings at the village gate which is erected not only for defence against mortal enemies or warriors but also as a barrier between the mortal and the spirit world. They are in charge of presenting meat, wine, blood or animals at the village gate to ward off evil from the habitat of his people.

The main role of the priests is to perform "*rasumei*" (blood offering) to appease the spirits, and "*rokhaengmei*" (prayer) for the protection, providence and well-being of the villagers. And "*tingkuh*", the high priest was assigned with the performance of "*neikaumei*" (announcement) of "*neihmei tingmik*" (genna days) such as forbidding certain activities or forbidding villagers to go to the fields or forests on the genna days.

Rituals are also performed very often by the priests during festivals and agricultural events. In line with what Catherine Bell mentioned that "ritual, as exemplary religious behaviour, was the necessary but secondary expression of these mental orientations" (Bell, 1992, p.**14), many of the Rongmei rituals are necessary yet they are just reflections of the minds of the people who depend on nature and revere it. Many of their festivals and rituals are closely tied to animistic beliefs. Their ceremonies often involve songs and dances to honour the spirits and seek their favour. The villagers would gather and pray for blessings before undertaking any agricultural activities. The most common practice is that of performing a ritual by a priest who would intercede on behalf of the people and pour the finest wine on the "*Nsuang ra*" (clan god). The whole village would pray and seek his or her**

blessings for good health, bumper crop, and general well-being of the villagers, and they also pray for protection from all harm and calamities (Meisuangkung John, Keilinpou Pamei and Namrichuang Pamei, personal communication, May 7, 2023).

Significance of the Indigenous Religious Beliefs and Practices

Traditional Rongmei beliefs are deeply spiritual, emphasizing a connection with the spiritual world. They believe in a variety of gods, goddesses, deities and spirits which influence their daily lives. Practising animism, they see spirits inhabiting and governing both the natural and human worlds. They consider the land, rivers, forests, mountains and hills as sacred because these are believed to be the dwelling places of spiritual entities and they ruled over them with power to bring destruction or prosperity to the village. Therefore, they offered offerings and worshipped them with reverence and fear.

Understanding these indigenous religious beliefs and practices is significant and crucial to grasping the worldview of the people. For them, culture and religion are deeply intertwined, thus, their religious practices reflect their cultural values. Observing their beliefs and worship methods one can see their profound respect for nature and the environment. Their gods, goddesses, spirits, and deities are associated with natural elements, thus, their reverence for them reveals their care for nature and concern for environmental prosperity. Through these practices their commitment to ecological balance and growth is evident.

Conclusion

As with many indigenous communities around the world, the Rongmei Nagas in Tamenglong are adapting to the challenges and opportunities of the modern world while striving to maintain their cultural heritage. Balancing traditional values with the demands of modern life can be a complex aspect of their worldview. With the arrival of Christianity, many indigenous practices have gradually diminished or some of them have completely disappeared as they are dimmed pagan. The concept of "*Tingkao Raguangh*" is the only thing that continues to be used wholly because it is similar to the monotheistic belief of Christianity. Other worships and practices are gradually discarded except for some traditions which have withstood and Christianised themselves to accommodate their identity and maintain the newfound faith such as the stone erection ceremony where the memorial tombstone is replaced by a monolith blessed by the ministers of the Church. Nevertheless, the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people manifest their close relationship with nature and their concern for ecological prosperity. Their religious practices serve as a window through which one can witness their love for the natural world, and they also manifest their religious and cultural values of love and respect for people and things.

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LOGAPRIYA T[1] **(20)**

DR. J. DHARAGESWARI[2]

CULTURALLY CONSTRUCTED BELIEFS IN THE LANKA'S PRINCESS: RECOUNTING THE PERSPECTIVE OF SURPANAKHA

Abstract

Kavita Kané's *Lanka's Princess* offers a retelling of the *Ramayana* from the perspective of Surpanakha, providing a fresh exploration of cultural beliefs and gender roles. Traditionally misrepresented and misunderstood, Surpanakha emerges here as a central figure challenging conventional portrayals of women. Through her narrative, Kané questions the ideal of a "perfect woman," often represented by Sita, who epitomizes obedience and passivity.This study uses a textual analysis of *Lanka's Princess* to examine Kané's portrayal of Surpanakha as the marginalized "other" to Sita. By centering Surpanakha's story, Kané emphasizes aspects of her cultural identity that are frequently overlooked but crucial to her self-conception as a woman. The novel highlights Surpanakha's transformation from Meenakshi to Surpanakha, shaped by the challenges of her upbringing and parental biases.At the core of this analysis is the myth surrounding Surpanakha's character, which serves as a vehicle for examining hidden patriarchal structures within society. Ultimately, this paper underscores Kané's retelling as a powerful critique of cultural norms that marginalize and stigmatize women who deviate from prescribed ideals.

Key Words: Cultural Myth, Patriarchy, Revenge, Womanhood, Marginalised, Parenting Issues

Review of Literature

Richa Srishti (2021) explores the theme of parental favoritism in *Lanka's Princess*, examining how biased parenting affects familial relationships and contributes to psychological strain on marginalized characters. The parent-child bond is central to the narrative, highlighting the representation of favoritism and its impact on family dynamics. Many myths reinforce the idea that institutional patriarchy plays a preeminent role, often cloaked in the guise of divinity and supernatural phenomena.

Arekar (2018) provides a feminist perspective in her analysis of *Lanka's Princess*, transforming Surpanakha's image from the traditional portrayal of an unattractive ogress to that of a courageous and resilient woman. This reframing

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challenges her marginalization and underscores her strength in facing rejection and loss, illustrating her journey of enduring hatred and ultimately rising to confront her challenges.

In their article titled "Shurpankha as an Assertive Woman in Kavita Kane's “Lanka's Princess”: A Critical Study," Dharma and Subart (2021) discuss how Kavita Kane reveals the underlying identities and complexities of her characters. Shurpankha, Ravan's sister from the epic Ramayana, is often maligned, and the essay addresses critical questions regarding her character. Was Shurpankha a hatemonger? What factors contributed to her suffering and sinister disposition? Kane's work prompts inquiries about the sources of her retaliatory actions, despite her status as a princess, which ultimately led to the conflict between Ram and Ravan.

Devi (2022) traces Surpanakha's development from a lovely young woman to an angry teenager with pointed fingernails, depicting the complex relationship between human behavior and self-identity. Surpanakha's actions reflect her desire for justice, stemming from her experiences of ignorance, harsh treatment, and the loss of her husband. These aspects of her life contribute to her cruel demeanor. Within her family, Surpanakha is a victim of circumstances that compel her to accuse her own kin. Despite transforming into a Rakshasi, her capacity to love remains intact.Kavita Kane masterfully presents the positive aspects of Surpanakha in her narrative. Thus, the aforementioned articles on themes such as parental favoritism, feminism, and identity provide a foundation for my literature review, allowing me to narrow down and highlight the culturally constructed beliefs against Surpanakha in my research work.

Introduction

The ideal of womanhood in Indian societies is deeply rooted in patriarchal values shaped by mythological narratives. Indian mythology often promotes idealized traits for women, perpetuating standards that prioritize obedience and passivity. As noted by Sivakumar and Manimekalai (2021), “Across all cultures, patriarchy and gender discrimination in various forms are promoted in the family through the process of socialization” (p. 430). The epic works of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, in their various forms and interpretations, have played an undeniable role in shaping an outdated perception of what a woman should be. Despite the numerous retellings of the Ramayana, no one has explored it from Surpanakha's perspective. Her pain and suffering remain largely unheard.

In contrast, Kavita Kane's *Lanka's Princess* brings Surpanakha to the forefront, presenting her as the main character. However, many readers criticize Surpanakha’s attitude in *Lanka's Princess*, particularly regarding her actions against the Asura kingdom, often neglecting to discuss the reasons behind her behavior. This paper aims to explore her motivations for revenge. Additionally, *Lanka's Princess* addresses how Surpanakha was marginalized, examining the parenting issues that influenced her behavior, particularly the lack of support from Kaikesi.

In many legends, women such as Sita, Mandodari, and Panchali are celebrated for their obedience to men. Conversely, Surpanakha is not afforded the same respect; her anger stems from the mistreatment she endures. The portrayal of women in mythology is often problematic and suffocating, and now is the time to question these traditional ideas

and images. Mythology is central to every culture, shaping the ways in which people live and behave, and these narratives are passed down through generations. As Sahoo and Rath (2022) state, "Myth and motifs constitute the expressive and symbolic representation of the culture of society. They are frequent in creative productions and relate to religion, philosophy, and the environment of social forces" (p. 147).

This research highlights how mythology often favors patriarchy, both knowingly and unknowingly. The discussion section will address these issues and explore Surpanakha's motivations for seeking revenge after the death of her husband.

Re-reading Myth

Despite the numerous retellings of the Ramayana, no one has ever presented it from Surpanakha's perspective. The Ramayana is an epic centered around Rama, who is portrayed as the hero. As Mandal (2012) notes, "Epics were passed on orally through generations as an integral part of folklore adhering to regional values and culture" (p. 15). In this narrative, those who support Rama are considered good, while those who oppose him are deemed bad, though they are not necessarily his enemies. While Rama receives praise, Surpanakha's pain and suffering often go unheard.

In contrast, Kavita Kane's Lanka's Princess transforms this narrative by making Surpanakha the main character. Kane not only reveals an alternative perspective but also challenges the way people view Surpanakha. Her portrayal of Surpanakha (Meenakshi) as an unwanted girl child prompts readers to reflect on the psychological development of a woman who endures neglect (Sharma & Jha, 2023, p. 4).

Cultural Domination against Surpankaha

In *Lanka's Princess,* Surpanakha's actions, including her role in the downfall of the Asura dynasty, are often criticized without a thorough examination of her motives. This analysis explores the cultural pressures and personal struggles that catalyzed her transformation. Surpanakha evolves from Meenakshi, a girl with "eyes as golden and graceful as a fish's" (Kane, 2017, p. 5), to Surpanakha, an Asura woman with claw-like nails, yet her tribulations as a woman are seldom acknowledged. Bora and Tamuly (2022) state, "Most of the time, Lanka's princess, Surpanakha, is perceived under negative undertones; she is known as the woman who brought annihilation to the whole Asura dynasty" (p. 556). Both epic and generic interpretations of the *Ramayana* depict her as a malevolent creature with mystical powers, portraying her destruction of her dynasty as an act of revenge for her shame and anger. Despite belonging to the Asura dynasty, her struggles are akin to those of ordinary women, and her dark mystical talents offer her no solace. By retelling her pain, this research paper emphasizes an alternate perspective on Surpanakha's character.

> 'It [is] time that Surpanakha got her chance to tell her story of repression, rage, revenge—and eventual redemption. We have long known her as Ravana's younger sister, a "wanton" asura whose advances to Ram and Lakshman, the exiled princes of Ayodhya, were spurned and earned her horrific mutilation from Lakshman's swift sword. Her subsequent complaint to her brother set in motion a chain of events that led to the death of almost every male relative. However,

> do we know anything about her past, thoughts, and future? (Kane 2017, p.3)

Parenting issues

Hatred against Surpanakha's Birth

Surpanakha is the daughter of Rishi Vishravas and the Asura princess Kaikesi. Kaikesi persuaded Rishi to abandon his first wife and son, Kuber, as she desired strong and wise children to reclaim Lanka's throne from him. While her sons Ravan, Kumbha, and Vibishan fit her ambitions, Kaikesi immediately disliked her fourth child, declaring, "This girl has cheated me of my plans" (Kane, 2017, p. 2). This sentiment reflects a widespread belief that sons are necessary to fight family feuds; historically, sons were valued while daughters were often considered liabilities. Consequently, subaltern women have traditionally been relegated to the bottom of society.

Lanka's Princess recounts Surpanakha's marginalization. Named Meenakshi by her parents, she grew up alongside her brothers Ravan, Kumbha, and Vibishan. Vidyujihva admired Meenakshi, expressing, "I do not stand a chance until I make you fall in love with me," to which his disarming smile warmed her indecisive heart (Kane, 2017, p. 110). Defying her family's wishes, she marries Vidyutjihva, only to lose him to a family plot. This research highlights how a psychologically alienated girl in society loves Vidyutjihva. However, tragedy strikes: "Ravan's famous enemy is Vidyujiva" (Kane, 2017, p. 96). Ravan, suspecting that Vidyutjihva aimed for the throne, has him killed. Grieving for her husband, Surpanakha leaves for Dandak woodland with her son Kumar to seek revenge on Ravan, but she loses him as well.

Surpanakha subsequently manipulates events to instigate the conflict between Ram and Ravan, ultimately becoming a key figure in the Ravan clan's downfall. This research seeks to explore the motivations behind Surpanakha's behavior, particularly in relation to her parenting issues. Verhaar (2022) notes that the mental health of individuals who experience alienation from their parents during childhood is often adversely affected. Research indicates that children who witness alienating actions from their parents may develop anxiety disorders and trauma reactions, as well as other mental health issues later in life.

Kane's *Lanka's Princess* echoes Verhaar's ideas, illustrating how Meenakshi's transformation into Surpanakha stems from her difficult upbringing. Meenakshi, an Asura girl, yearns for love and care from her parents. Like many others, she desires a nurturing and supportive family, but her needs go unmet. Her mother, Kaikesi, paid little attention to her, while her father, Rishi Vishravas, and brothers remained indifferent. This sense of abandonment traumatized Meenakshi from a young age. Although she was physically present with her family, she felt emotionally distant and alienated. Unlike her brothers, she could not fulfill her mother's aspirations or her father's pride as a girl. Thus, those who were supposed to love and support her often regarded her as a burden. Meenakshi also faced the harsh realities of gender prejudice, a theme that is seldom

addressed in the epic. In patriarchal societies, women are typically viewed as inferior to men.

Women are glorified in particular Culture.

In legend, women such as Sita, Mandodari, Panchali, and many others are portrayed as virtuous because they obey male authority, remain silent in the face of injustice, and allow society to dictate what is best for them. As Sharma (2019) notes, "Mandodari, Draupadi, Sita, Savitri, and others are worshipped in Hindu mythology as pativrata women, embodying wifely duties and ideals of obedience" (p. 37). However, Indian feminists have sought to challenge these traditional narratives by re-telling and reconstructing folklore from a female perspective, beginning with a woman's birth.

In her book *Lanka's Princess*, Kavita Kane gives voice to Surpanakha, allowing her story to be told through a female lens. Binoj (2019) emphasizes that "the identity of Surpanakha as an asura is questionable right from the aspect of her birth itself" (p. 297). Valmiki's epic poem, the *Ramayana*, portrays her transformation from an ugly, despised ogress into a fierce, brave, and powerful woman with a distinct voice. Surpanakha endures ignorance, betrayal, rejection, and neglect, yet she consistently rises to confront her challenges. This resilience is why her story is celebrated as a significant retelling of traditional myths.

Misreading characters

Meenakshi is treated poorly by those around her, which fuels her anger. When Ravan seizes control in order to retaliate against Kuber, she finds herself unable to express her feelings. She perceives Ravan as greedy and selfish, leaving her feeling isolated and helpless within her own family. No one respects her autonomy or involves her in decisions about her life, and her family's treatment of her is indifferent and neglectful.

Meenakshi struggles to connect with her brother, and she harbors no sympathy for Ravan, believing him responsible for their father's death. Furthermore, Ravan's treatment of women only deepens her disdain for him. Despite this, she remains sensitive and aware of her emotions. She admires Mandodari, Ravan's wife, for her beauty, but there is no jealousy in Meenakshi's heart. Instead, she possesses a unique strength and does not feel inferior. As Menon (2020) points out, "Surpanakha is more a child of nature than of culture. Therefore, her love for animals and the forest is boundless" (p. 5).

Revenge

Surpanakha's habit of seeking revenge is embedded in her character; it is not inherently bad. She retaliates only when someone hurts her. "Yes, I am a monster!" screeched Meenakshi, her eyes flashing as she bared her claws at her mother. "See them? If anyone hurts me, I shall hurt them with these. I am Surpanakha!" (Kane, 2017, p. 9).

Ravan must die for killing her husband, and she declares that from now on, she will embody the Surpanakha she has vowed to be. “Her husband is killed by Ravana as he feels threatened that he will become the king in his place. Her son is also killed. This fills her entire life with gloominess. Life becomes a burden for her. She craves motherly love” (Borse and Rathod, 2023, p. 132).

That night, she resolves to take revenge on her brother through her son. Her hatred for Ravan intensifies, more than ever before. She and her son flee into the deep jungle after leaving Lanka. As a widow, her sole objective is to get back at her brother. Since childhood, Meenakshi has been made to feel less important than her brothers. Her mother disliked her birth and called her unattractive. Over time, her anger has only worsened.However, she was not born a monster; rather, it was the continuous bad experiences that transformed her into one. Ravan kills her husband out of fear that he would take over as king instead of him. Her son is also killed, leading her to feel sad all the time. The weight of her grief makes life unbearable. She longs for motherly love. Although she finds joy with her husband, his death casts a shadow over her life. She wishes to live with her son, but his death brings her further sorrow. Deep down, she yearns to feel good in her own skin. While she can cope with various emotions, she cannot eliminate her desire for companionship.

Patriarchy in culture

Society does not accept free women or those who express their sexuality openly. Due to patriarchy, women are often compelled to behave in specific ways. It is quite surprising to witness a woman acting sexually without shame. Women are typically characterized as shy, quiet, and humble, but Surpanakha does not conform to this mold. As a result, discussions were initiated and perpetuated to tarnish her reputation.

The book presents a neutral perspective on Surpanakha, illustrating her feelings of regret for her actions. She has a valid reason for behaving as she does, and she is morally aware of her wrongdoing—an awareness that only good people can possess. The renowned *Ramayana* is examined from a fresh viewpoint in this narrative. Surpanakha provides Meenakshi, the central character, with the opportunity to share her story. Traditionally, she has been portrayed as a monster, but Meenakshi had no choice; the people and circumstances surrounding her transformed her into Surpanakha.

The beautiful tale of the *Ramayana* centers on Rama, his life, and the virtuous deeds he performed. Consequently, the story of Surpanakha is often omitted from ancient folklore, as it does not address his flaws as a male figure of power. It was only later that modern critical writers began to highlight her story and criticize Rama’s actions.

Conclusion

Many people thought Surpanakha was bad. However, the different events that shaped her life contributed to who she became. There was much discussion about the pain Meenakshi felt simply because she was a woman. She embodied the essence of a true woman because she stood up for herself. People form their identities through conversations and perceptions. Parental favoritism sheds light on how Surpanakha views

society. Unfortunately, the story of Surpanakha did not provide her with the opportunity to express her identity, which serves as an example of the dominance exerted over women in society.

Kane ultimately rectified this oversight by explaining in her novel why Surpanakha changed, arguing that she is innocent rather than guilty. Repeatedly retelling legendary stories can reveal deeper truths about people, particularly women. By illustrating the reasons behind Surpanakha's reactions, retelling myths from a modern perspective allows us to examine the nature of those narratives critically. While Surpanakha is often blamed for the destruction of the Asura dynasty, her motivations reveal a complex interplay of personal trauma, cultural oppression, and a quest for justice.

This study challenges conventional views and highlights Surpanakha's journey as a critique of patriarchal narratives. Consequently, Kavita Kane endeavored to present a different version of the story by reinterpreting it from Surpanakha's point of view. Kane decentralized the epic narrative and illuminated the life of Surpanakha, the princess of Lanka. Her character requires further exploration to understand the plight of women in that ancient society. Kavita Kane's fresh reading of Surpanakha's marginalized personality questions the common notion that she is simply Sita's "other." By giving Surpanakha a voice, she becomes a personification of knowledge, action, and power.

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MUDASIR MAQBOOL NAJAR[1] **(21)**

BEYOND 1947: THE HISTORICAL AND SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF KASHMIR'S UNION WITH INDIA

Abstract

Kashmir, once an independent Hindu kingdom, underwent profound changes with the advent of Islam and the establishment of Muslim rule. Historically, Kashmir experienced periods of misrule, instability, and neglect of public welfare both before and during Muslim governance. In response to these persistent issues, influential Kashmiri Muslim saints, under the guidance of the revered Saint Makhdoom Sahab, sought the intervention of Mughal Emperor Akbar. Their appeal aimed to end the enduring misrule and improve the region's governance and spiritual alignment with India. This article investigates the historical circumstances that prompted the saints to request Mughal control and explore their appeal's rationale. It provides an in-depth historical analysis of Kashmir's challenges and the crucial role of spiritual beliefs in shaping the region's political decisions. The article emphasizes the significance of the spiritual connection between Kashmir and India, underlining its impact on Kashmiri identity. The article thoroughly examines Kashmir's historical and spiritual ties to India using a combination of primary research, including interviews with Kashmiri Sufi Islamic scholars, and secondary sources. It aims to enhance understanding of how these deep-rooted connections have influenced Kashmir's historical decisions and its current relationship with India. Additionally, the article underscores the relevance of these historical and spiritual narratives in fostering national unity and providing a nuanced perspective on Kashmir's past and present.

Keywords: Kashmir, India, Saints, Secular, Divine, Spirituality, Legends, Sufi

Text and Context

Kashmir, often referred to as the Land of Rishis and Peers or 'Peeriwaear' (valley of saints), is a stunning region with a rich tapestry of history and legend. According to Hindu legends, Kashmir was once a vast lake, transformed into habitable land through divine intervention[2]. Muslim legends share a similar belief, acknowledging divine help in turning the lake into land[3]. Geological evidence also suggests that Kashmir might indeed have been a lake. This lake theory is mentioned by almost all Kashmiri historians, both Hindu and Muslim, as well as by ancient and medieval scholars[4]. However, some

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[2] This Hindu legend has been recorded in Sharika Mahatmaya, an ancient, pan-Indian Sanskrit text

[3] During interviews, some esteemed Islamic Sufi scholars of Kashmir mentioned similar stories.

[4] Dewan, P. (2004). *Parvéz Dewân's Jammû, Kashmīr and Ladâkh. 1, Kashmir*. Manas Publications, p.26

critics, such as R.D. Oldham in 1903, rejected this theory after studying the 'Karewas' (plateaux) and lakes of Kashmir[1].

The name Kashmir has various origins. Hindu legends say that 'Kash' comes from the saint Kashyap Rishi. Some Muslims believe that Prophet Suleman named the land Kashmir after his Jinn[2] and his Jinn's love[3]. Another theory suggests that in the ancient Prakrit language, 'Kas' means channel, and 'mir' means mountain.

Kashmir is universally acknowledged as a sacred land imbued with spirituality. Kalhana[4], in his Rajtarangni[5], wrote that "such is Kasmir, the country which may be conquered by the force of spiritual merit but not by armed force"[6]. He described it as a place where people are more concerned with the afterlife, where hot baths are available in winter, and riverbanks are comfortable and safe. The rivers are free from dangerous aquatic animals, and even the sun is gentle, acknowledging the land's inability to bear the heat. With its learning, high dwellings, saffron, iced water, and grapes, Kashmir is described as a commonplace paradise[7].

The author emphasizes the sacredness of Kashmir to help readers understand the underlying theme of the article. Historically, Kashmir has been an independent territory, initially ruled by Hindu dynasties such as Gonanada I, Gonanada II, Pandu, Mauryas, Kushans, Karkota, Lahora I, and Lahora II[8]. The decline of Hindu rule began with the Lahora dynasty, allowing Prince Lhachen Gyalbu Rinchen, a descendant of Ladakh's legendary King Ngo Rub, to take the throne. He was the first king to convert to Islam, adopting the name Sultan Sadr-ud-din. This marked the beginning of Muslim rule in Kashmir[9].

After Rinchen's death, several rulers attempted to seize power, but ultimately Shahmir succeeded and formally became the Sultan of Kashmir. The Shahmiri Dynasty then ruled Kashmir for an extended period[10]. During Rinchen's time, Islam started to spread in Kashmir, and under the Shahmiri Dynasty, it became the dominant religion. Muslim missionaries reached every corner of Kashmir, and due to various issues within

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[1] *Valley of Kashmir: By Walter R. Lawrence.* (1895). Oxford University Press, p.50

[2] According to Islam, a Jinn is a spirit that dwells on Earth, is invisible to humans, can take on different forms, and possesses extraordinary abilities.

[3] According to one of the legends about the origin of Kashmir, the region was once a lake and was drained by a jinn named Kashu under the command of Hazrat Suleiman. Jinn Kashu had a lover named Mir, and after the land was formed, Hazrat Suleiman named it Kashmir in honour of Kashu and his lover, Mir.

[4] Kalhana was a learned Hindu historian of Kashmir of the 12th century BC and author of Rajtarangni.

[5] Rajtarangni means river of Kings is an account of the many royal dynasties that ruled the ancient kingdom of Kashmir from its mythical origins to the author's own time.

[6] Kalhana, Stein, A., & Jain, S. (2019). *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī: A chronicle of the kings of Kashmir: Text with English translation, Notes & Index* (Vol. 1). New Bharatiya Book Corporation.

[7] Ibid

[8] Dewan, P. (2004). *Parvéz Dewân's Jammû, Kashmīr and Ladâkh. 1, Kashmir*. Manas Publications, pp.28-29.

[9] Ibid, p.39

[10] Hasan, M. (2018). *Kashmir under the SULTĀNS.* Aakar Books.

Hinduism, many people found Islam appealing. The official support of the Shahmiri rulers further facilitated this transition[1].

As time passed, the Shahmiri Dynasty lost its influence, and Mirza Haider Dughlat, the first non-Shahmiri, became the ruler of Kashmir. During his reign, the Mughals tried to interfere in Kashmir's affairs but did not fully succeed. Following Mirza Haider's rule, the Chak Dynasty seized the throne[2].

The Chak Dynasty began when Ali Chak removed Sultan Habib and placed his brother, Ghazi, on the throne. Ghazi was a formidable conqueror and a ruler known for his strict and often cruel fairness. For example, he ordered the hands of his son Haider's servant to be cut off for stealing fruit. When Prince Haider protested violently and stabbed an uncle, Ghazi had his son executed[3].

The Rainas invited Mughal general Abul Ma'ali to invade Kashmir, but Ghazi, with the help of the Baihaqis, repelled them. In 1559, a disaffected branch of the Chak clan invited Haidar Dughlat's cousin, Qara Bhadur, to lead an army of ten thousand to dethrone Ghazi[4]. This attempt was brutally suppressed, with seven thousand invaders killed and their skulls placed before the king.

In 1563, Hussain Shah seized the throne of Kashmir. He was less extreme than his predecessor. However, some Kashmiris, led by Haji Ganai, reported against Hussain and Muqim (Akbar's envoy) to Akbar, who became furious. To appease Akbar, Hussain sent his daughter to Agra for Akbar's son, Salim, to marry, along with presents. Akbar returned both. The shock of this rejection incapacitated Hussain, who abdicated in favour of his younger brother, Ali Shah[5].

Ali was a tolerant Sultan, and his Prime Minister and son-in-law, Syed Muhammad Mubarak Baihaqi, was a Sunni. Ali defeated Bahadur Singh, the king of Kishtwar, who then gave his sister Shanker Devi (later Fath Khatoon) in marriage to Ali's grandson, Prince Yaqoub. In 1574, Akbar sent an embassy to Kashmir. This time, the emperor magnanimously agreed to accept Hussain Shah's daughter as his daughter-in-law and accepted the presents previously spurned. Consequently, Kashmir's independence was further diminished. Ali Shah acknowledged Mughal suzerainty by including Akbar's name in the Friday sermon (Khutba) and minting coins in his name. Ali died in 1579 while playing polo at Srinagar's famous Eidgah[6].

After Ali's death, his brother Abdal Khan Chak wanted to seize the throne, which Ali's son Yousuf also claimed. While they fought over the succession, Ali's body lay unburied outside the city for several days. Eventually, the alliance of Yousuf Shah Chak, his brother-in-law Syed Mubarak Baihaqi, and cousin Lohur Yusuf won the battle, and

[1] Bazaz, P. N. (2023). *The history of struggle for freedom in Kashmir: Cultural and political from the earliest time to present day*. Gulshan Books Kashmir, pp. 40-55.
[2] Ibid, pp.55-60.
[3] Dewan, P. (2004). *Parvéz Dewân's Jammû, Kashmīr and Ladâkh. 1, Kashmir*. Manas Publications, pp.52-56
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid

Yousuf became Sultan[1]. However, Yousuf faced immediate challenges. His focus on numerous external activities led to the neglect of day-to-day administration. His nobles, particularly Baihaqi and Lohur, turned against him and overthrew him. Yousuf sought refuge and assistance at Akbar's court.

Syed Mubarak Baihaqi, an extreme idealist with almost a communist disdain for private property, took over from Yousuf Shah Chak. His first act as Sultan was to break his crown into pieces and distribute the gems among the poor. His nobles were unimpressed by this socialism and began plotting for Yousuf Shah's return. Baihaqi, too principled to endure intrigue, abdicated six months after taking power. Lahur Shah Chak then ruled for about a year[2].

When Yousuf sought Akbar's help to regain power, Akbar sent an army led by Raja Man Singh to Kashmir. However, during the journey from Agra to Srinagar, Yousuf began to suspect that Akbar wanted the kingdom for himself. Advised that he didn't need the Mughal army to reclaim his throne, Yousuf left the army halfway and successfully recaptured Kashmir on his own. Akbar and Raja Man Singh were not pleased with this move[3].

In his second reign, Yousuf started well and proved to be a capable administrator. However, his courtiers began conspiring against him once again. Meanwhile, Akbar was eager to control the Valley. Seeing that the Chaks had become unpopular, Akbar instructed Raja Man Singh on December 20, 1585, to invade Kashmir. Upon learning that the Mughal armies were approaching, Yousuf was terrified. He was ready to surrender on terms that Man Singh accepted, advising Yousuf to present himself before Akbar. However, Akbar rejected the terms and did not allow Yousuf to return to his homeland. Deeply pained by the dishonour to his pledged word, the sensitive Hindu general, Raja Man Singh, committed suicide. Yousuf was sent to Bihar, where he lived as a Jagirdar until the end of his life[4].

The Alignment for Peace and Welfare

To save their nation, some patriotic nobles placed Yousuf's son, Yaqub Khan, on the throne and fiercely fought against the Mughal armies. The Mughals struggled due to the cold, lack of food, and difficult terrain and were ready to retreat under any terms. However, Yaqub Shah proved unfit as a ruler. His ministers relentlessly persecuted Sunnis, and the king maliciously killed Musa, the Chief Qazi. Two legendary saints, spiritual heirs of the revered Sultan-ul-Arifeen Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom, approached Akbar, seeking help to liberate the valley from the Chaks' tyranny and misrule. They requested that the nobles of Kashmir, who had been a source of trouble, should not have any role in the administration of the country for the time being[5].

[1] Ibid
[2] Ibid
[3] Bamzai, P. N. K. (2007). *Culture and political history of Kashmir*. M.D. Publications.
[4] Dewan, P. (2004). *Parvéz Dewân's Jammû, Kashmīr and Ladâkh. 1, Kashmir*. Manas Publications, p.56
[5] Ibid

The saints ensured that the new rule would not be worse than the current one. Before assuring the Mughal Emperor of the Kashmiris' support for annexing the Valley to the Empire, they entered into the following covenant with him[1]:

- The ruling prince shall not interfere in religious affairs, the purchase and sale of commodities, or the rates of cereals.
- The inhabitants of the country shall not be molested or oppressed in any way, and no forced labour shall be exacted from them.
- The dignitaries and officials of Kashmir shall not have any Kashmiri, male or female, Hindu or Muslim, as a slave.
- The nobles of Kashmir, having been a source of mischief, shall have no share in the administration of the country for the present.

Two points in this covenant deserve notice. First, it is entirely secular, aimed at preserving the freedom of all Kashmiris, regardless of their religion. Second, it focuses on the welfare and freedom of the masses, not the upper classes, and is specifically against the interests of the nobles and feudal lords.

When the large Mughal imperial armies marched into Kashmir on June 28, 1586, they faced little resistance. The Kashmiris, unhappy with their current rulers, welcomed the invaders as liberators. The Mughal rule in the valley lasted for 166 years, until 1752. During this period, Kashmir became a province of the Indian Empire and was governed by officials appointed by the Mughal emperors[2].

The Mughals appointed various governors to rule Kashmir. While some were capable administrators, others were cruel and barbarous. They imposed high taxes on the people and encouraged conflicts between Hindus and Muslims and between Shia and Sunni communities. However, when nobles and other influential figures petitioned, the Mughal emperors intervened to ensure proper governance. The emperors showed keen interest in Kashmir's affairs, constructing numerous gardens and buildings that remain significant today[3].

Holy Fusion Fable

Many historians have offered various reasons why the great saints approached the Mughal Emperor to take over Kashmir. Some argue that it was due to the oppression of Sunnis by the Shia Chaks, prompting them to seek protection from the Sunni Emperor of Hindustan. However, Parveez Dewan, in his book[4], dismisses this notion, arguing that only a biased perspective would attribute it to Shia-Sunni tensions. He points out that the delegation of saints who petitioned the Mughal court included Baba Khalilullah, the leading Shia saint of the time. Additionally, Sunni nobles like Ibrahim Khan and the

[1] Bazaz, P. N. (2023). *The history of struggle for freedom in Kashmir: Cultural and political from the earliest time to present day*. Gulshan Books Kashmir, pp,70-71.
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid
[4] Dewan, P. (2004). *Parvéz Dewân's Jammû, Kashmīr and Ladâkh. 1, Kashmir*. Manas Publications, pp.57-58.

Baihaqi scion Abul Mali supported the Shia Chaks, Yousuf, and Yaqoub, in defending Kashmir against the invading Mughals. Dewan also notes that Baba Daood Khaki mentioned that Ali Shah Chak treated the Sunnis well, Yousuf was above sectarian considerations, and only Yaqoub was somewhat impatient with Sunnis and Hindus, but he was ill-tempered with everyone.

Furthermore, Dewan emphasizes that Khaki and Sarfi were frustrated not just with Yousuf and the Sunni nobles supporting him, but also with the Sunni nobles opposing him. The saints sought peace, good governance, and an end to a century of intrigue and infighting. Therefore, while the persecution of Sunnis by the Shia Chaks may have been a factor, the primary reason the saints approached the Mughals was the misrule and ongoing conflicts. Their main desire was peace, the welfare of the people, and good governance[1].

There is another theory held by many Muslims in Kashmir, particularly among the Sufi sect, which is spiritual. According to this belief, Kashmir is spiritually governed by a great saint, Sheikh Makhdoom Sahib, even after his death, while the spiritual ruler of India is considered to be Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. The phrase Kashmiri- Ajmeri- Ajmeri- Kashmiri symbolizes this spiritual connection & bond between Kashmir & India. It is said that on Makhdoom Sahib's instructions, his disciples went to the Mughal court to formally connect Kashmir with India, as spiritually, Kashmir is believed to align with India[2].

Many Kashmiris believe that Makhdoom Sahib continued to advocate for Kashmir's accession to India even after his death. According to a story often told in Kashmir, leading saints gathered in Bijebehara around 1944 to decide the future of Kashmir. At that time, the Pakistan Movement was gaining strength. The saints' map of Kashmir allocated it to Pakistan. However, Makhdoom Sahib is said to have appeared and torn up their map[3].

Another modern legend suggests that in October 1947, some influential 20th-century saints, including Shamsuddin Pandani, Mohiuddin Andrabi, and Mir Ghulamuddin, performed a Chilla[4] to ask Allah for Kashmir to accede to Pakistan. Shamsuddin Pandani, known for his reputed ability to bring the dead back to life, was among them. Before the Chilla ended, Makhdoom Sahib is said to have appeared to the saints, giving them several red prayer caps and instructing them to place them on the heads of those they found at Srinagar's Eidgah. The saints discovered Indian Army soldiers there and

[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid
[4] In Sufism, a Chilla is a spiritual retreat that spans 40 days, dedicated to intense spiritual practices. During this period, the individual engages in penance and embraces solitude, distancing themselves from worldly concerns to concentrate on deepening their relationship with the Divine. This practice, marked by prayer, meditation, and reflection, is intended to purify the soul and foster greater spiritual awareness, representing a significant commitment to personal spiritual development.

placed the caps on their heads. In another version of the legend, they were instructed to use a flag and hand instead of caps and head[1].

Conclusion

Kashmir is a Muslim-majority region where most Muslims follow the Sufi form of Islam or the Sufi sect and have a deep reverence for saints, especially Makhdoom Sahib, who is highly respected among the people. The region has a long history of political instability due to conflicts with Pakistan and ongoing militancy.

Kashmir chose to join secular India, but Pakistan has repeatedly tried to claim the region, arguing that it should have been part of Pakistan because it is a Muslim-majority area. Pakistan has used propaganda and violence to try to persuade Kashmiris to join them. Despite these efforts, Kashmiris have largely rejected Pakistan's claims and propaganda.

Many Kashmiris believe that Kashmir's accession to India did not happen in 1947, but centuries earlier when great saints asked Akbar to take over Kashmir. These saints requested Akbar's secular intervention, prioritizing the people's welfare and peace in the region. In 1947, Kashmiri leaders once again chose to join India on secular grounds. This historical and spiritual connection is of great importance.

However, the continuous propaganda from Pakistan and mismanagement by India have fuelled growing separatism in the region. In this context, the historical legends and cultural stories about Kashmir's choice to accede to India could be crucial. These narratives, which highlight Kashmir's complex history and alignment with India like Kashmiri-Ajmeri-Ajmeri-Kashmiri and others, could play a vital role in educating people and fostering national unity. The state could use and promote these stories in schools and colleges to strengthen national interests and provide a more comprehensive understanding of Kashmir's historical and spiritual bond with India.

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[1] Dewan, P. (2004). *Parvéz Dewân's Jammû, Kashmīr and Ladâkh. 1, Kashmir*. Manas Publications, p.57

PRINCY MACWAN[1] **(22)**

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON DECONSTRUCTION OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA IN DEVDATT PATTANAIK'S MY GITA: THE RELEVANCE OF BHAGAVAD GITA PHILOSOPHY IN EVERYDAY CONTEMPORARY LIFE

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्॥ ४-७

Whenever and wherever, there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion – at that time I descend Myself.

(Bhagwad Geeta 4-7/ resanskrit.com)

Literature is a reflection of human experience, society, and life. Real life and fantasy are both engulfed by literature. One can experience the ancient, rich culture, rituals, customs, and more through the perspective of mythology. Mythology is a lexical term for religious stories, both true and made-up. Every culture has its own rich mythologies of various forms. The rich mythology of India is no exception; it contains stories about gods, goddesses, supernatural beings, creative components, folklore, and more. Few myths have survived the millennia, but by recreating these myths in a variety of literary styles, many writers have managed to preserve the essential elements of mythology. Novelists such as Chitra Bannerjee Divakaruni, Amish Tripathi, Kavita Kane, Devdutt Pattanaik and many other writers restored the past through their retellings.

In this paper an attempt is made to show how mythology can be retold in a novel way. Devdutt Pattanaik, a renowned Indian mythologist, offers various types of retellings and interpretations of myth and mythology in his works. He has extensive knowledge of Indian myths and can provide insight into the various ways that Indian mythological tales and Indian culture are perceived and analyzed. He provides a logical explanation of all facets of Indian culture, including the Gods and Goddesses. His comprehension of the subject is still fragmentary. The Bhagavad Gita, commonly known as the Gita, is a 700-verse Hindu scripture that is part of the Indian epic Mahabharata. It features a discourse between Prince Arjuna and the divinity Krishna, who serves as his charioteer. Individuals' moral and philosophical difficulties are addressed in the Gita, which also provides instruction on how to live a decent and meaningful life. This paper focuses on the deconstruction of *Bhagwad Gita* as an endeavor by the author to make the Holy Scripture more reader friendly and relatable in the contemporary literary times. It also emphasizes on some key philosophical teachings from the Bhagavad Gita and how they can be applied in everyday life.

[1] **Kadi Sarva Vishwavidhyalaya, Gandhinagar, Gujrat**

Key words: Myth, Indian Mythology, Deconstruction, Popular fiction, Contemporary literature, Philosophy, Everyday life.

Introduction

Ancient Indian literature is an extensive collection of scriptures, *Vedas,* and *Puranas.* These include various genres of literature such as *Bhakthi, Vir Gatha, Puranas,* and oral retellings. These texts contain a variety of mythology that is profoundly embedded in the conscious minds of Indians. Legends teach individuals about their ancestors' traditions, beliefs, and forgotten culture. These stories develop cultural metaphysics and moral conceptions. As a result, it is apparent that culture is profoundly ingrained in Indian tradition.

Oral tradition introduced myths into civilization long before writing. It established the groundwork for civilization's culture, religions, literature, philosophy, tradition, art, and custom. A myth in a civilization lends and frames structure to that civilization's culture. As a result, one can have a thorough understanding of the social structure and by studying a specific religion's scriptures, myths, sacred writings, and epics.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches literature that encourages readers to consider questions like, "What is the true nature of I?" What is the nature of the universe? What is one's relationship to the cause of the universe? These are all extremely essential and fundamental questions. Finding answers to these concerns is fundamental to giving our life actual meaning and direction, as well as achieving the happiness and contentment that we all want in our everyday life.

Background

Dr. Devdutt Pattanaik, born in 1970, is a mythologist, illustrator, author, and speaker from India. He was a physician before becoming a best-selling theorist and author who focuses on religion, culture, mythology, rituals, and contemporary issues. In this day and age, he is primarily concerned with the relevance of mythology. He is keen on leadership, governance, and management innovation. Several contemporary authors have rewritten or retold Indian mythology from a new perspective. Devdutt Pattanaik is today regarded as one of India's foremost mythologists. His works include Indian Mythology: Tales, Symbols, and Rituals from the heart of the Subcontinent, *Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana, Shikhandi: and Other Queer Tales, Jaya: An Illustrated Retelling of the Mahabharata They Don't Tell You, The Girl Who Chose: A New Way of Narrating the Ramayana, Myth = Mithya: A Handbook of Hindu Mythology,* and many others are all retellings of stories from great Indian epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* as well as other mythological stories from various sources.

Retelling has become a trend in modern literary style in India. It is essentially telling a new version of the narrative in a different way, providing a new perspective, and is frequently updated. Pattanaik primarily retells the stories of major Indian epics, attempting to bring suppressed individuals and their perspectives to the forefront. He contrasts, compares, analyzes, and criticizes these characteristics in order to disclose much about Indian culture and society from the Vedic period to the present day. It also looks at how women are treated and how culture shapes human perception, personality, and prevalent mindsets. Pattanaik tries to simplify The Bhagavad Gita in “My Gita” which speaks to everybody who has ever experienced their mind as a war. Whether viewed through the eyes of an ancient Yogi or a modern practitioner, its knowledge applies to our daily difficulties and decisions.

Literature Review

Gobinda Bhattacharjee in his research paper 'A Study on Karmayoga in Bhagavad Gita' deals with the concept of "Karma-Yoga in Bhagavad-Gita". *The Bhagavad-Gita* is a part of *The Mahabharata;* it is regarded as one of the most sacred books of the *Hindus*. Be it noted here that if the *Gita* is regarded as an excellent religious work, it is no less excellent as an ethical one. *Bhagavad-Gita* literally means 'The Lord's Song' i.e., the philosophical discourse of Lord Krishna to persuade the reluctant Arjuna to fight. To fight against evil is the duty of man. The situation is depicted of the battlefield where relatives and beloved friends and revered elders stand on both sides and Arjuna has to vindicate his claim, he has to follow his *Svabhava* and *Svadharma*. *The Gita* lays down the different paths of realization of God. Its teaching is universal and intended for all persons of different temperaments. Some are predominantly men of action and they ought to follow the path of action or *karma yoga*. Some are predominantly emotional and they ought to follow the path of devotion or *Bhaktiyoga.* And some are predominantly intellectual. They ought to follow the path of knowledge or J*nanayoga*. Action, devotion, and knowledge lead to union with God.

In *Bhagavad-Gita* the supreme duty is action without desire. Action without desire does not mean unmotivated action but acting with a sagacious intention of submission to God. *The Gita* represents a unique synthesis of Action, Knolwdge, and Devotion. Man is a complex of intellect, will and emotion; he is a being who thinks, wills and feels. Intellect has given rise to the philosophy of Knowledge; will to the philosophy of Action; and emotion to the philosophy of Devotion. *Karmayoga* is not opposed to *Jnanayoga*; in fact, the former is possible only when the latter is attained.

M. S. Reddy, in his research paper *'Psychotherapy - Insights from Bhagavad Gita'*, attempts to deconstruct *The Bhagawad Gita* from a different perspective. He has used the psychological theory to understand the holy text and tried to come up with certain diagnosis. According to the therapeutic background *Arjuna* is the patient and *Lord Krishna* the therapist. Therapist stays with the patient throughout the crisis. Patient has immense belief in the therapist and considers him a friend, philosopher, guide (Guru-Sishya Relationship).

Personality of *Arjuna:* A superb warrior and veteran of numerous wars, Arjuna, the Pandava Prince possessed no notable neurotic tendencies, maladjustments, or poor coping mechanisms. Most recently, he engaged the same army and defeated them. He plays a proactive role in the planning of the current conflict, and he entered the field of battle with a strong desire to fight and prevail.

Therapist Lord *Krishna* – Krishna is a long-time friend, relative, well wisher of the patient i.e. Arjuna, who is highly respected in the community. Supposedly he possesses supernatural powers and legendary mediating skills. He has been also a mischievous lover boy in his younger days, with tons of common sense and in the contemporary language a kind of Go-Getter.

The Bhagavad Gita has immense value with enormous intellectual depth that analyses and explains a variety of life's experiences, and attempts to reach out to everyone with any kind of intellectual and philosophical background. The therapeutic model sounds eclectic, as the therapist does not seem to be bound or restricted by any theoretical

approach. The determined focus on the end result – removing the guilt and re-motivating to fight the battle – and the practical and common-sense approach in clearing the blocks is palpable throughout the dialogue. Emphasis was equal on all – Logic, Action, Renunciation, Power of Self, Knowledge, and Wisdom.

Deconstruction theory

Jacques Derrida, one of the prominent French philosophers associated with post-structuralism and post-modern philosophy, established the deconstruction theory in the late 1960s and influenced literary studies in the late 1970s. Deconstruction can help readers think more critically and clearly comprehend how ideologies impact experiences in ways that people are unaware of because they are incorporated into the language itself. Derrida argues that language is not an effective means of communication but rather a fluid, ambiguous repository of complicated experiences in which ideologies operate subconsciously.

Deconstructing a literary text often serves two purposes: revealing the text's undecidability, and revealing the complicated dynamics of the ideologies from which the narrative is made. To prove a text's undecidability, show that its meaning is an indeterminate and contradictory array of alternative meanings, implying that the text has no meaning in the traditional sense of the language. In summary, the steps below can be used to deconstruct the text: First and first, all of the different interpretations of people, events, and imagery offered by the text must be noted. Then, how these interpretations conflict with one another, and how these conflicts produce even more interpretations, should be shown.

Another purpose of deconstructing a literary text is to explore what the text can disclose about the ideology that it is based on. This endeavor usually sheds light on how ideologies operate in people's worldviews. It's important to remember that all the writing constantly deconstructs and spreads meaning. Deconstructive theory critics, rather than dissecting a text, seek to explain how the text deconstructs itself. Deconstruction seeds are embedded throughout the text. There is no single meaning in the text. Texts convey new meanings via different readings. This is the primary question that characterizes deconstruction as a post-modern critical discipline. Modern theories, such as structuralism, highlight the need of finding a unique meaning for a work based on a singular structure. Deconstruction undermines all structural thinking and maintains that there is no such thing as a structure; this is due to the fact that structures always deconstruct themselves as a result of the nature of reality.

In "My Gita," Pattanaik explicitly states that it is his personal interpretation of the Bhagavad and not merely a recounting. He poignantly points us how Arjuna's questions and quest for clarifications resulted in their conversation about the Gita. Dhritarashtra, the blind King, listened in silence. Despite having heard the identical Gita, the two people understood it in different ways. Therefore, as readers, we can follow our own pathways as we apply the Gita's lessons.

Analysis

Devdatt Pattanaik, in the very beginning of his work, clarifies with reasons the use of possessive pronoun in the title as *'My Gita'*. Pattanaik emphasizes that *'My Gita'* is his own interpretation of the *Bhagavad* and not simply a recounting. He wonderfully cites *Arjuna's* doubts and the clarifications he sought, which led to his *Gita* debate with *Krishna. Dhritarashtra,* the blind King, sat silently listening. The two people heard the

same *Gita* but had different interpretations. As a result, as readers, we can forge our own paths based on the *Gita's* teachings. Pattanaik's *'My Gita*' includes graphics and flowcharts to enhance the text. In the introduction, he describes his motivation for publishing this book.

> "The Gita we overhear is essentially that which is narrated by a man with no authority but infinite sight (Sanjaya) to a man with no sight but full authority (Dhritarashtra)…While Arjuna asks many questions and clarifications" (P. 10-11, My Gita, Devdatt Pattanaik).

'My Gita' is not the literal depiction of *the Bhagavad Gita,* but rather a combination of interpretations, perspectives on other faiths around the world, and stories from *the Mahabharata* and *the Ramayana*. It's more like decoding a section of Hindu mythology. *Arjuna* presented his difficulty and problem to *Shri Krishna* in chapter 1 of *the Bhagavad Gita,* and *Krishna* then recounted the remedy from chapters 2 to 18. This work is organized thematically rather than sequentially like *the Bhagavad Gita.*

The author records the history of *Hinduism* and the way it was extended over 5000 years consisting of *Puranic Hinduism*, *Vedic Hinduism* and *Pronto Hinduism*. Pattanaik tells us about different *Gitas* and the existence of *Vyadha Gita* or Butcher's song before *Bhagavad Gita*. This discourse on '*dharma, karma* and *atma*' is delivered by a butcher to a hermit in Mithila. *Bhishma* unveils nine *Gitas* to *the Pandavas* in *the Mahabharata's Shanti Parva*. Then there's *Anu Gita,* which *Krishna* gives to *Arjuna* after the fight, when *Krishn*a is departing for *Dwarka*. Furthermore, there are numerous *Gitas* that exist outside of the scope of the *Mahabharata*. When we refer to *the Bhagavad Gita* as *'The Gita'* on a regular basis, this is quite a revelation.

> "In Hindu mythology, there is no one but ourselves to blame for our problems: neither God nor any oppressors. The idea of rebirth aims to evoke acceptance of the present, and the responsibility for the future. Our immortal soul is tossed from one life to another as long as our mind refuses to do darshan. This is made most explicit in the story of karna in the Mahabharata" (My Gita – 42-43).

A few stories and their interpretations lead through a maze of theme interpretations. *Karna*, for example, is a foundling raised by a charioteer but is actually of royal lineage, the abandoned son of *Kunti*. He aspires to become a true king through his talent, but *Kunti's* rightful sons - the *Pandavas* - and the rest of the world despise him. His story is tragic, and his genuineness and honesty are used against him. Even in his death, *Arjuna* attacks him at a defenseless, unarmed time in the conflict. *Krishna*, on the other hand, tells the truth about *Karna's* former life. *Karna* was an *asura* (demon) when *Vishnu* descended on earth as *Nara* and *Narayana* to annihilate him. *Karna* is a victim in this narrative but a villain in the one before it. As a result, describing how the *karma* of previous lifetimes affects our current one.

Further the author explains *Deha* and on the four-fold divisions of the world – Humans, animals, plants and elements. Human beings experience the world and have imagination skills. Division of human body into five containers – *anna kosha, prana kosha, mana kosha, buddhi kosha* and *chitta kosh*a create three realities of sensory, emotional and conceptual (imagination and intelligence). After *Deha,* the explanation of *Dehi* or the immortal soul that dwells within the body comes.

'My Gita' focuses on the link between divine and devotee. Pattanaik delves into this through stories of *Ram, Sita,* and *Draupadi*. He goes on to say that *Krishna's* tale transcends caste. He was more popular as the leader of cowherds than as *Vasudev's* son

or King of *Mathura*. The most common images of *Krishna* are of him as a youngster and adolescent, with cows and *gopikas*. Thus, decoding the images to comprehend the deity-devotee relationship.

There is a description for the *Tri-Guna*, which consists of *Tamas, Rajas*, and *Sattva*. Following that, we comprehend *Yagna*, which Europeans understood as a sacrifice but later discovered had another title for it called *Bali*. *Yagna* is significant because *"Brahma created humans through yagna and decided that yagna will satisfy all human needs."* Pattanaik also discusses several sorts of generosity, including *Dakshina*, which signifies a return for service, *Bhiksha* without service for status, and *Daan* for the self. This is demonstrated by the touching stories of *Drupada-Drona* and *Krishna-Sudama.* The author has also made a comparison between *Buddhism* and *Hinduism. Ram* returns from the forest as a King, whereas *Buddha* returns to renounce his throne and family. The focus of *Hinduism* is about going inward to achieve a good outward journey. There is also mention of modern-day ironies such as how *Buddha* preached the impermanence of things but his disciples kept his goods for remembering after his death.

Pattanaik also covers *Hindu* mythology is three heavens: *Indira's swarg, Shiva's Kailas*, and *Vishnu's Vaikunth.* Of course, nothing is permanent, thus a human being's qualities and demerits either lead him/her to *Indira's swarg* or send him/her to the *Narka* or hell. It is interesting to note that *Arjuna* is banished to *Narka* for the sins he is committed during his life. Deeds or *'Karma'* are extremely important.

From Text to Practice: Significance of Gita Philosophy in Everyday life

1. Dharma (Righteous Duty): The Gita encourages doing one's obligations without attachment to the outcome. In everyday life, this translates to focusing on the task at hand, giving your all, and accepting outcomes with calm.

2. Yoga (Union): The Gita describes various paths of yoga, such as Karma Yoga (selfless action), Bhakti Yoga (devotion), and Jnana Yoga. Integrating components of these routes into daily life can result in a more balanced and harmonious living.

3. Detachment: The Gita emphasizes the importance of detaching from the outcomes of one's deeds. This should not imply indifference, but rather giving your all without being unduly tied to success or failure. This mindset can help to alleviate tension and anxiety in everyday life.

4. Equanimity: Krishna urges Arjuna to be calm in the face of joy, agony, success, and failure. This philosophical philosophy urges people to keep a balanced and peaceful mind while dealing with life's ups and downs.

5. Self-Realization: The Gita emphasizes realizing and knowing one's actual nature (Atman). Reflecting on one's inner identity, beyond the ego and material goods, can lead to a more profound feeling of purpose and contentment.

6. The Gita emphasizes the interconnection of all living beings and recognizes the divinity in everyone. Kindness, compassion, and empathy in everyday interactions exemplify this unity and develop a sense of connectivity.

7. The Gita emphasizes discipline and focus in all areas of life. Individuals can attain success in their undertakings by developing discipline in daily routines and being focused on long-term goals.

8. Mind Control: The Gita emphasizes the necessity of mind control. Mindfulness and meditation activities can help you manage stress, improve attention, and cultivate inner calm. Incorporating these philosophical ideas from the Bhagavad Gita into daily life can help with personal development, well-being, and a sense of purpose. However, interpretations of the Gita vary, and other portions of its teachings may be more applicable to an individual's specific circumstances and beliefs.

9. The Bhagavad Gita takes place on the symbolic battleground of Kurukshetra, where two families, the Pandavas and Kauravas, prepare for war. Despite the exterior struggle, the poem centres on an internal discourse between two protagonists, Krishna and Arjuna. Their exchange exemplifies the inner conflict that we all face.

10. Life's Choices: Arjuna must decide whether to battle against his family members in a conflict between 'good' and 'evil.' This quandary reflects our own struggles: deciding between good and wrong, obligation and desire. The Bhagavad Gita invites us to make decisions that reflect our true character and purpose.

11. Symbolism: The text is heavily symbolic. There is no real battlefield; rather, it depicts the internal conflict that we all face. Just as Arjuna struggles with doubt and uncertainty, we all confront problems, self-doubt, and difficult decisions.

12. Purpose of life: The Gita encourages purity, strength, discipline, honesty, kindness, and integrity. We can overcome barriers and discover our true purpose by trusting our higher Self. Krishna's counsel to Arjuna, to cast aside doubts and accept truth, relates to our own life as well.

Conclusion

Devdutt Pattanaik demystifies *The Bhagavad Gita* in *My Gita*. With his signature graphics and simple diagrams, his unique approach—thematic rather than verse-by-verse—makes the ancient text instantly approachable. Devdutt highlights how *Krishna* nudges *Arjuna* to comprehend rather than criticize his relationships in a world that seems spellbound by a dispute over discussion, *vi-vaad* over *sam-vaad.* This is especially important today, when we are progressively indulging and isolating ourselves (self-improvement, self-actualization, self-realization). We forget that we live in a social ecosystem where we may sustain one another with food, love, and significance, even while we are fighting. In essence, the Bhagavad Gita functions as a map, providing paths to life's peak, recommendations, and practical answers. It inspires us to discover and embrace its ageless wisdom, incorporating it into our everyday lives.

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FROM TRADITION TO MODERNITY: THEMATIC AND HISTORICAL INSIGHTS INTO WESTERN EDUCATION IN TRAVANCORE

Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of educational initiatives in Travancore during the nineteenth century. Notably, it examines the psychological influence on state reforms, particularly in education, an area that has not been extensively explored. It focuses on transitioning from missionary-led education to government-led initiatives, examining the trans-construction process under Sir T. Madhava Row. The paper highlights the concept of acculturation through the government's efforts to align vernacular schools with English curriculum standards and establish a Book Committee to translate English literature into local languages. It also discusses the significant shift in power dynamics within the educational sphere, as the expansion of government schools and the implementation of the grant-in-aid system disrupted the monopoly of missionaries and promoted social mobility. The analysis incorporates psychological, anthropological, and sociological adaptation theories to understand how missionaries and the government adapted their educational practices in response to the changing social, cultural, and environmental context. The findings illustrate how these adaptations contributed to developing a new educational paradigm in Travancore, reflecting a harmonious blend of Western modernity and traditional ethos. Through this lens, the paper provides a comprehensive understanding of how educational initiatives served as mechanisms for social integration, acculturation, and socialisation, ultimately shaping a more cohesive and modern society.

Keywords

Adaptation Theory, Culture, Education, London Missionary Society, Westernisation

Introduction

South Travancore stands out for its immense wealth and diverse landscapes. The population primarily comprises followers from three religions: Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. Hinduism dominates as the prevailing religion and most of South Travancore's inhabitants speak Tamil as their mother tongue. Within the Hindu community, a clear division exists between high castes and lower castes, including

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untouchables. The lower castes encompass *Ezhavas, Parayas,* and *Nadars,* with *Brahmins* and *Nairs* considered part of the upper-class Hindus. The lower-caste individuals are often categorised as untouchables, and each group exhibits further subdivisions[1]. Scholars have depicted the London missionary endeavours in Travancore as pivotal in shaping the region's socio-cultural landscape. The missionaries' role in awakening the marginalized segments of society is particularly noteworthy. One of the most important fields that missionaries encapsulated was education. They prioritised female education and social upliftment, bringing awareness to oppressed classes and transforming education. Before their arrival, only individuals from high castes and affluent families had access to education, while those from lower castes were deprived of opportunities. With their unwavering dedication, the LMS missionaries played a pivotal role in establishing various educational institutions that provided educational opportunities to neglected communities, such as the *Nadars, Ezhavas, Parayas,* and *Pulayas.* Through initiatives like Free Schools, Day Schools, Night Schools, Boarding Schools, Girls Schools, Lace Embroidery Training Schools, and Sunday Schools, the missionaries significantly impacted the societal dynamics of South Travancore, promoting social equality and mobility. Understanding this transformation is incomplete without delving into the societal dynamics of Travancore.

To comprehend the LMS's missionary endeavours in Travancore, one must consider the intricate political and social landscape at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The LMS's introduction of Protestant Christianity found fertile ground in the decay of traditional institutions. The prevailing political structure in Travancore proved detrimental to the overall well-being of the majority. All governing authority rested in the hands of the Raja[2], who delegated it to a hierarchy of officials chosen at his discretion[3]. Political ties with the English East India Company marked a pivotal moment in Travancore's history. In August 1788, an agreement was made between the Raja, Karthika Thirunal Rama Varma, and the English East India Company to safeguard Travancore from potential threats the Rajas of Mysore posed. This collaboration evolved in 1795 when a permanent treaty was formalized to solidify their longstanding friendship and alliance terms. The treaty also emphasised joint efforts to defend Travancore against external adversaries[4]. In 1805, this agreement underwent revisions, compelling the Travancore Government to heed the British Government's counsel for the nation's and its citizens' welfare. The Raja, Balarama Varma I, viewed the treaty as an "act of extortion," forcing him to undertake actions that would otherwise violate the country's laws and potentially lead to widespread discontent among his subjects. The establishment of British relations resulted in the installation of a Resident at the Raja's court, significantly impacting the history of Christianity in Travancore. Over time, these Residents transformed from diplomatic agents representing a foreign power to becoming executive and monitoring officers of a superior government. The Residents wielded implicit authority, asserting superiority over subordinates in Travancore. They notably influenced succession and acted as guardians to heirs while supporting missionary endeavours to an

[1] Menon, S. *Kerala District Gazetteers, p.5; Nayar, M. P. The vegetation of Kanyakumari,* p.122-126; Gopalakrishnan, M. *Kanyakumari District Gazetteer*, p.12.
[2] King
[3] John Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, p.21-39
[4] Aitchison, C. U. *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to India, p.28.*

extent. Local rulers tried to embrace and occasionally aided the mission's activities[1]. Over the nineteenth century, numerous social laws underwent modifications primarily because Christian missionaries could articulate their issues through the Residents or the British Government. Education was one of the modifications carried out in the century.

In this realm, the paper explores the multifaceted concept of adaptation across disciplines, such as Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology, to seek how individuals and societies adjust to these changing environments and circumstances. Specifically, it investigates the role of missionaries as cultural intermediaries in introducing and adapting educational practices, focusing on education in Travancore. This study uses multidisciplinary analysis, focusing on thematic and historical analysis. The research methodology involves synthesizing insights from adaptation theories in Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology to analyse missionary activities and Travancore's response to their impact on educational practices in Travancore.

Adaptation Theory and Conceptualisation

Rhetorically, the term "adapt" conveys suitability to a situation. This sense emerged in 1578 and was revitalised in the nineteenth century to signify the transformation of work into a new form. In 1789, the sole definition was "the adjustment between two things." In the nineteenth century, with the burgeoning field of biology, adaptation incorporated the notion of modification. Eventually, it attained its comprehensive semantic dimension through interdisciplinary adoption, particularly by psychology, and its application to sociology[2]. Adaptation is how people and things change to fit in with the world, constantly evolving. It's like adjusting your actions and thoughts to keep up with what's happening. Throughout history, adapting has been vital for individuals and societies to deal with different challenges and changes. It's helped people survive and made societies more robust and more diverse.

Now, let's vividly consider the concepts of adaptation in Psychology, Anthropology, and sociology. Examining the activities of missionaries and the Travancore government offers valuable insights into the adaptation theory, particularly concerning education. Missionaries, often acting as cultural intermediaries, have historically played a crucial role in introducing and adapting educational practices across diverse societies. In psychology, a recognised theory underscores that individuals are inherently interconnected with the collectives in which they are involved. In adaptation scenarios, the involvement of others- actors, situations, or organisations—is integral. This field also discerns the concept of the faculty of adaptation, signifying an individual's innate ability to adjust their structure or behaviour to respond to novel situations effectively. Social psychology further refines the notion of adaptation through a reflexive dynamic known as "trans-construction," wherein the values of individuals and those of their environment or organisations undergo mutual adjustments. This approach reflects a nuanced understanding of how individuals and their surroundings engage in a reciprocal adaptation process[3].

[1] Menon, V. P. *The story of the integration of the Indian states*, p.6.
[2] John Munro to the Chief Secretary to Government, p.119-122
[3] Simonet, *The concept of adaptation: interdisciplinary scope and involvement in climate change*, p.4

Anthropology examines the development of human cultures and the cultural and biological transformations that have occurred globally. It explores how individuals and groups adapt to their surroundings by assessing these changes' costs, benefits, successes, and failures[1]. In contemporary social anthropology, cultural adaptation encompasses all behaviours and learned responses affecting human survival, including oral communication, reproduction, provisioning, and habitat. Cultural, biological, and social adaptation plays a crucial role in developing human culture, a co-evolutionary process with the human brain, mutually influencing and reinforcing each other. Key to this adaptation process is the variation in biological or behavioural aspects, intricately tied to the notions of selection and decision-making processes[2].

In sociology, the term "adaptation" is not frequently used; instead, they prefer terms like "acculturation," "deviance," or "socialisation". Nonetheless, adaptation is present in sociology through the idea of social adaptation. It involves changes in individuals as they develop abilities to integrate and feel a sense of belonging to a group. Social and cultural adaptations share commonalities through adaptation and psychological adaptation and align with social integration and socialisation concepts. Socialisation requires individuals to internalise and integrate their environment's models, values, and symbols into their personality structure, enabling them to communicate and evolve smoothly[3]. Moreover, sociological theories of adaptation and the sociological analysis of integration complement each other, contributing to a broader understanding of adaptation.

By synthesizing the theories of adaptation in Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology, we see how concepts like Equilibration and Habituation from Psychology, Adjustment behaviour from Anthropology, and Integration, Socialisation, and Acculturation from Sociology play a significant role. These ideas help us understand how people learn, adapt, and fit into their society. These concepts are evident in education and fields like medicine, lace and embroidery, and Travancore society. They've helped shape how things change socially, culturally, and politically in Travancore. However, this article explicitly analyses the impact within the education arena. An exceptional figure who nurtured education development was Sir T. Madhava Rao, Dewan of Travancore, from 1857 to 1872; he was a notable figure who played a crucial role in reforming and modernizing the state during significant challenges and transitions. He advocates for a theory of good and progressive government for the people but remains silent on the idea of government by the people. He advises avoiding extremes, believing that statesmanship involves a series of compromises and mastering the art of the possible. While he does not directly address the geographical, psychological, or ethical issues related to the existence and maintenance of the State, his advice to the prince demonstrates a deep understanding of the moral and psychological influences at play. By opting for a compromise, they acknowledge the psychological need for stability and the ethical desire to avoid harm, even if these considerations aren't

[1] Simonet, Ibid., p.5
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

directly discussed[1]. This analysis demonstrates a profound understanding of the moral and psychological influences involved.

Educational Transformation

The article analyses the detailed adaptation process in education by dividing the nineteenth century into two distinct periods. The first half, up to 1860, focuses on missionary activities aimed at spreading education among the lower caste population, while the second half delves into the adaptation efforts of the Travancore government in education and societal restructuring.

(a) Missionary Activities

Until the 1860s, the landscape of Western education in Travancore was primarily dominated by missionary institutions. The primary goal of the missionaries who began their activities in Travancore was proselytization. Missionaries provided instruction to enable people to read the Bible. The LMS (London Missionary Society) commenced missionary activities in Travancore in 1806. William Tobias Ringeltaube, the first Protestant missionary in Travancore, was pivotal in introducing English education to the region[2]. He began his gospel campaign in Travancore on April 2, 1806. Recognizing the caste disparities in society and the importance of education, he established a school at Mylaudy in 1809 with support from England. With financial assistance from his friend in England, Ringletaube opened the first English school in Travancore at Mylaudy in 1809. He taught the three R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic) and catechism. Those who demonstrated proficiency in reading and praying were selected as teachers from the congregations. However, Ringletaube faced a challenge as many hesitated to send their children to school. Between 1806 and 1816, Ringeltaube faced significant challenges as he dedicated himself to evangelistic efforts while promoting English education throughout Travancore. However, despite these adversities, Lovett noted that, despite financial constraints, Ringeltaube established six schools that served Christians and non-Christians, providing instruction for a fee of three Rupees. The missionaries faced significant challenges, especially during the severe famine of 1813, which added to their already heavy responsibilities as they aided the suffering population. Despite their efforts, their work was hampered by the lack of support from the East India Company. A shift in policy came only after the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1813, spurred by mounting pressure from missionary organizations and former Company officials like Macaulay, the ex-Resident of Travancore and Cochin. This led to a parliamentary resolution that, while not endorsing, at least permitted the work of Christian missions in India, allowing the missionaries to continue their efforts under challenging circumstances[3].

The name most closely associated with the educational efforts in Travancore is Charles Mead, who observed that although many people were generally ignorant, they were very attentive and teachable[4]. Charles Mead, along with Richard Knill, another

[1] Puntambekar, *Raja sir t. Madhava Rao's Prince or the Law of Dependent Monarchies*, p.305.
[2] *Report of the Census of Travancore for 1891*, p.484-85.
[3] Duff, Alexander, *India and India Mission: including sketches of the gigantic system of Hinduism*, p.424.
[4] E.M.M.C. Vol. XXX, Jan.1822, p.36.

missionary from the LMS, recognized the dire state of education in Travancore, where only a few received even the most basic instruction. They advocated establishing quality schools in Travancore's major towns and villages to address this profoundly ingrained issue[1]. The missionary schools were open to all, regardless of caste or creed, but non-Christians were initially hesitant to send their children to these schools, where Christians and students from lower castes studied. To address this, a school called the Bazaar of Nagercoil was established in the Bazaar School, which was a highly successful experiment. The school attracted students from all types of families, and those willing could attend catechism and scripture lessons in addition to the regular curriculum[2]. With the support of local rulers, the missionaries embarked on new initiatives, leading to the establishment of the Nagercoil Seminary in 1818, offering Travancore's first regular English education, a testament to their growing confidence in providing free food and lodging for students. In 1819, they founded the seminary intending to impart education based on Christian principles to boys selected from the congregations. By 1818, Knill had already established five new schools in areas where converts lived, and even Hindu families began sending their children to these missionary schools[3].

Besides, Charles Mead was deeply troubled by the lack of educational opportunities for girls and the prevailing discrimination against women. Determined to address this issue, he dedicated himself to raising awareness and promoting education for girls and women. In 1822, they opened a boarding school in Nagercoil, initially admitting fourteen children[4]. It is the first-ever girls' school and a boarding facility in Nagercoil, marking a significant milestone as the first institution in Travancore[5]. The primary goal of this school was to provide general education combined with Christian ethics and moral teachings. The curriculum included reading and writing in the vernacular, English languages, and mathematics[6]. Once students could read, they were expected to read the scriptures regularly. Higher classes included a few lessons in English[7]. Additionally, the girls received vocational training in skills such as needlework, crochet, knitting, spinning, embroidery, and pillow lace work. The Lady Missionaries[8] of the LMS played a pivotal role in transforming the landscape of women's education. Mrs. Johanna Mead was a trailblazer for women's education in South Travancore. Another key figure, Mrs. Martha Mault, contributed significantly to this cause[9]. She diligently gathered enslaved people and orphan girls to attend her school, offering a few of them free food, boarding, and clothing[10]. However, as Mrs. Mault's letters reveal, many parents, driven by deep-seated superstitions and prejudices, withdrew their daughters from the school despite the

[1] Ibid.
[2] LMS Report, 1822, pp. 83-84
[3] LMS Report, 1820, P.62.
[4] John, *Twenty-two years' missionary experience in Travancore,* p. 15
[5] Agur, C.M. *Church History of Travancore,* pp.722-723.
[6] T.D.C. Report, 1864, p.18.
[7] Letter from Charles Mault and John Smith, Nagercoil, 28 June 1820, p.86.
[8] Other missionaries, Mrs. Duthie, Mrs. Wilkinson, Mrs. Whiteworth, Mrs. Annie Allen.
[9] Agur, C.M., p.760.
[10] Ibid., p.755; *Letters of Mrs. Martha Mault to Foreign Secretary,*1830. p.64.

significant effort it took to enroll them[1]. Nevertheless, the girls' school she established in Nagercoil continued to operate, with 30 students relying on the Boarding Home for all their needs, including food and clothing[2]. To support these expenses, Mrs. Mault received donations from friends in England and garnered support from *Maharani* Parvathi Bai and the British Resident[3]. In 1817, Rani Gouri Parvati Bai issued a proclamation declaring that the state of Travancore would cover the entire cost of educating its people, ensuring that there would be no hindrance to the spread of enlightenment. The aim was for the populace to become better citizens and public servants, thereby enhancing the state's reputation. The government's first significant effort to provide modern education in Travancore was marked by establishing the Raja's Free School in Trivandrum in December 1836.

By 1827, the number of students had grown to fifty-four, and by 1837, the school had expanded to 110 students, including 100 boarders and 10-day scholars. They also established seven girls' schools in Christian villages, enrolling 300 students[4]. However, financial limitations remained a persistent challenge, preventing the missionaries from opening more schools. Despite their efforts to help girls escape difficult circumstances, they were disappointed by their inability to expand their educational initiatives further due to a lack of funds. In 1842, there were eighteen village day schools, each managed by a single teacher supported by a congregation[5]. At that time, a total of 3,000 native girls attended these schools, with 500 of them being slaves[6]. Despite an epidemic of cholera that swept through the country in 1849, school attendance remained very regular[7]. The primary goal of female education was to prepare schoolmasters and other mission workers. The missionary register outlines these objectives for women's education[8].

In 1862, a significant change was introduced in the operation of the Seminary. Until that time, studies had been primarily conducted in English. However, it was decided in 1862 to discontinue English and replace it with Tamil. James Duthie noted that many suitable class books were available in Tamil, which increased yearly. He reasoned that it was, therefore, most appropriate for the young men preparing for mission work to pursue their studies in the vernacular of the people they would be serving after completing their education[9]. James Duthie, who led the institution from 1860 to 1908, secured approval from the Directors of the LMS to raise funds for a college in South Travancore. Several society supporters pledged substantial sums of money, with Septimus Scott, one of the Directors, being the most prominent among them. In 1893, the Seminary was elevated to

[1] *Letters of Mrs. Martha Mault,*1820, p.53
[2] *Annual Report of the Directors of LMS*, 1842, p.60.
[3] Menon, Sreedhara *A Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, pp.329-331; *Letter of Mrs. Martha Mault addressed to a friend*, 1831, p.32;
[4] L.M.S. Report 1823, p.70.
[5] *Annual Report of the 48th General Meeting of the LMS.* London 1942, p.65.
[6] *Letter of Mrs. Martha Mault addressed to a friend,* St. Neots Huntingdonshire, EMMC. Vol. IX, January 1831.
[7] *45th Annual Report of the Directors of the LMS.* London, 1849, p.85.
[8] Rajitha T, *Genesis, and Growth of Women Education in Travancore*, p. 3676
[9] Velupillai, T.K, *Travancore State Manual*. Vol.II, p.445.

the status of a college affiliated with the University of Madras and was named Scott Christian College[1]. In the early days, the mission's educational department faced significant challenges due to a shortage of qualified teachers. Special classes were conducted at the Nagercoil Seminary to enhance their intellectual abilities and teaching techniques. Additionally, the missionaries trained students from the backward classes, preparing them to become teachers within their communities[2]. The financial crisis faced by the LMS in 1866 severely impacted the educational sector, leading to the suspension of many schools. As the economic situation worsened, the missionaries appealed to the Travancore Government for a grant to help sustain their primary education efforts[3]. In response, in 1875, the Travancore Government allocated Rs. 15,000 as grant-in-aid for schools not under direct government supervision. These grants aimed to support elementary education in vernacular schools, and many struggling institutions received some assistance from the government. This aid was a significant blessing, particularly for the missionary educational institutions[4].

The missionaries' activities until the 1860s became a landmark in Travancore's education history. However, this period also began their decline due to financial instabilities and other challenges. Therefore, as a whole, the LMS-established educational system consisted of three main components: the Seminary located at Nagercoil, serving as the highest institution; boarding schools and Anglo-Vernacular schools functioning as secondary institutions; and village schools operating as primary educational establishments. Indeed, the missionaries considered their educational endeavours a significant avenue for proselytization. G. O. Newport, an LMS missionary, emphasised the impact of Bible education, stating that the non-Christian children were initially reluctant to engage in Scripture lessons, resisting them like other subjects. However, they were compelled to comply with the school's regulations. Over time, their interest in these lessons grew significantly, sometimes even surpassing the knowledge of Christian students in understanding the Christian religion[5]. However, the missionary's proselytising efforts faced criticism from higher castes over time. Eventually, the Travancore government intervened by issuing an order in 1902 to prohibit religious education during school hours.

(b) Govt. Activities

In terms of government efforts, the government's first initiative on Western education was given by Parvathi Bhai, which was further exemplified by establishing the Raja's Free School in 1836[6]. This initiative marked the Travancore government's inaugural effort to introduce Western-style education. Following a visit to the Nagercoil Seminary of the LMS, Raja Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma invited John Roberts, the Seminary's Headmaster, to initiate an English school in the state capital, Trivandrum. Initially functioning as a private institution with government-sponsored student fees, the

[1] District Committee in India Nagercoil, 5 Feb.1828, p.7.
[2] Trevor, *Journal of a Visitation to the provinces of Travancore and Tinnevelly in the Diocese of Madras 1840-1841*, p.107; E.M.M.C. Vol. XXIII, April, 1845, p.216.
[3] L.M.S. Report 1894, p.35.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Aiya, *Manual*, p 638.
[6] Velupillai, T.K. *The Travancore state manual*, p.707.

school transitioned to state control and was officially designated as the Raja's Free School in December 1836. Robert served as Headmaster until his retirement in 1855. By 1864, the student population had surpassed 500. In 1866, the school was bifurcated into Junior and Senior Departments, with the Senior Department evolving into a college[1]. Notably, Aiya, a prominent figure in the Travancore government, emerged as the first graduate of this institution.

Although not a missionary, Robert demonstrated a keen interest in the spread of Christianity. He petitioned the Raja to authorise Bible education by Christian instructors within the school[2]. He asked the Raja for permission to include Bible education taught by Christian teachers in the school. His request was approved, and this practice persisted until around the beginning of the twentieth century. The Travancore state continued to permit students, many of whom would eventually become government officials, to receive instruction in Christianity at that school. Additionally, the Travancore government established several District English Schools alongside this central institution. From 1855 onward, the District Schools were overseen by Charles Mead, a former LMS missionary. Upon his appointment as Superintendent of Education that year, he endeavoured[3] to rejuvenate some District Schools. Until the 1860s, missionary schools were the main ones in charge of education.

Even though the Travancore government started a few English schools, there weren't many, and some had to shut down. Furthermore, no efforts were made to establish vernacular schools. Consequently, government institutions were notably deficient, leading to a significant reliance on missionaries to educate officials and others. However, a significant shift occurred under Sir T. Madhava Row, Dewan 1858-1872, who prioritised education and other government sectors. As the table below demonstrates, government spending on education substantially increased during his tenure and beyond.

Table 1 Expenditure of education by the Travancore government

Year	Expenditure on education (Rs.)	Percentage of the gross expenditure of the government (%)
1864-65	57,039	1.4
1869-70	114,545	2.1
1874-75	148,248	2.8
1877-78	195,239	3.5

Source: Nagam Aiya 1906,446

The table above shows the expenditure spent on government institutions.

Primarily because of the augmented expenditure, the quantity of government schools escalated swiftly. In 1859, there was only one school, "His Highness's Free School at Trivandrum, with a Branch School at Quilon. "However, by 1867-68, the Travancore government had expanded to seven schools in Trivandrum, along with fifteen English and twenty vernacular schools in the districts[4]. During this period,

[1] Ibid.
[2] Aiya, *Manual*, 447-8.
[3] Agur, *Church history of Travancore*, p.725; Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, p.155.
[4] *Travancore Administrative Report* 1864-78.

Madava Row directed significant attention towards vernacular education. In 1866, establishing the 'Central School' in Trivandrum marked a pivotal moment, accompanied by several 'Taluk Schools' inauguration across Travancore. Additionally, a vernacular regular school was inaugurated in Trivandrum in the same year to facilitate the training of teachers for vernacular schools. The scheme was implemented in 1866-67, and Mr Shungarasubbier was appointed the first Director of Vernacular Education. By the end of the year, there were 11 schools with 855 pupils. The number of schools and students increased to 20 and 1,383, respectively, by the end of 1867-68, and to 29 schools with 2,152 students by the end of 1868-69[1]. In 1869, a significant development occurred as vernacular education gained popularity. The government devised a plan to align private vernacular schools' curriculum with government schools. By the end of the year, 29 private schools were brought under the grant-in-aid system. According to Aiya, establishing government schools and implementing the grant-in-aid system were promising outcomes. There was a surge in demand for education, necessitating the expansion of vernacular education to meet the country's increasing needs[2].

For women's education, the Travancore administration report for 1862-1863 stated that the government made a small effort to promote female education. Before this year, two *Sirkar*[3] Schools for girls existed in Trivandrum. One, located in the cantonment area, taught in English and primarily educated Christian girls. The other, a vernacular school in Karamanai, was mainly attended by Brahman girls. 1873-74, another private English school for girls opened in Alleppey. From 1876-77 onwards, the mission schools in Quilon and Alleppey started receiving grants from the government. The Zenana Mission also started an English school for girls and continued receiving financial support from the government[4].

The educational framework in these vernacular schools mirrored that of English schools, with textbooks being translations of English literature. A Book Committee was also established during this period to oversee the translation of these books[5]. Alongside establishing District Schools, the Travancore government established village schools in 1870. By 1871-72, there were 141 village schools with 4,959 pupils, and by 1881-82, the number rose to 196 schools with 10,374 pupils[6]. English District schools also saw an increase during Madhava Row's Dewanship. Between 1864 and 1868, the number of English schools rose from 7 to 15, with the student count increasing from 373 to 1,231[7]. Indeed, as Jeffrey[8] has noted, the growth of government schools effectively shattered the monopoly of missionaries and eliminated the possibility of significant enrolment of `high-caste individuals in missionary schools. *Dewan* T. Madhava Row and his successors maintained a favourable relationship with the missionaries, particularly during the 1870s and 1880s. This was primarily because they relied on the missionaries

[1] *Travancore Administrative Report* 1867-68, p.42.
[2] Aiya, *Manual*, pp.453-455.
[3] Government
[4] Ibid.pp.692-693.
[5] Ibid. p.455.
[6] Ibid., p.456; *Travancore Administrative Report*, 1871-72, 1881-82.
[7] *Travancore Administrative Report* 1867-68, p.45.
[8] Jeffrey, *The decline of Nayar dominance*, p.82.

to educate the lower castes, a task the state hesitated to address. An example of this relationship was the introduction of the grant-in-aid system in 1875. Initially, the Travancore government began offering grants-in-aid in 1868-69 to support the educational efforts of missionary societies. However, these grants were limited to several schools in Trivandrum. The initiation of the extensive grant-in-aid system in 1875 stemmed mainly from demands put forth by the missionaries. Notably, the financial hardships faced by the LMS missionaries in the early 1870s prompted their call for state assistance. Mateer[1], in 1872, expressed dissatisfaction with their educational endeavours, citing financial constraints as the primary obstacle to maintaining effective educational institutions. Given these challenges, missionaries urged the Travancore government to address two key issues: including lower castes in government schools and providing grants-in-aid to missionary schools. Criticism of the government's exclusionary policies towards lower castes and Christians intensified in the early 1870s, as Mateer lamented it as "a crying shame and a serious blot upon the administration." In 1875, the government provided substantial grants, primarily to the missionaries. Following this decision, the number of aided schools increased rapidly, as illustrated in the table.

Table: 2

Number of aided schools

Year	Number of aided Schools
1870-71	18
1875-76	218
1880-81	453
1885-86	545
1890-91	1,225

Source: Nagam Aiya,1906, p.457-458

The next significant milestone in the education sector occurred with the reforms in 1894. The positive relationship between the missionaries and the Travancore state, which had persisted since T. Madhava Row's reforms, underwent significant changes in 1890. One such policy change was the education reforms of 1894. Like previous education reforms in Travancore, the primary aim was to enhance government control over education. The Travancore government restructured the administration system, enhanced inspection procedures, and extensively revised the grant-in-aid system to achieve this goal. One notable reform was the consolidation of the English and vernacular education divisions into a unified administration system. The government established a comprehensive system to ensure unity of purpose and methodology across the organisation[2]. Implementing the Travancore Educational Rules was a pivotal reform among the changes introduced in 1894. The government made substantial endeavours to

[1] Aiya, *Manual*, p.457-58.
[2] *Travancore Administrative Report* 1870-91.

expand the network of government schools. Consequently, Aiya observed[1] that "there is no village of any significance in the entire State that has not had or is not currently receiving direct educational support from the Government."

The year 1894 marked a turning point in Travancore's education history. The government assumed responsibility for providing education to all classes of people, a move that significantly impacted the educational work of the LMS missionaries[2]. The introduction of a new code allowed the government to interfere in the operation of schools, which the missionaries viewed as a violation of their rights to maintain and educate the people. The new code-imposed conditions that the missionaries were reluctant to accept, such as the requirement to use government-prescribed textbooks and to notify and obtain approval from the Inspecting Officer for any staff changes. According to the LMS report 1897, the vernacular schools faced a severe crisis. The new code set a high standard, making it difficult for the schools to obtain grants without incurring expenses that neither the native Christians nor the mission authorities could afford. As a result, some of the poorer schools were forced to close. The code disrupted the missionary education system in Travancore, as religious instruction during school hours was strictly forbidden[3]. The missionaries adapted by offering religious instruction before school hours and establishing Sunday schools. Many Christian students left mission schools in large numbers to pursue a higher standard of education in government schools. To address these challenges, the mission gradually shifted the management of schools to local communities, with missionaries serving as advisors. Educational councils, composed of prominent church members, were established in each district to oversee the educational work. The district missionary became a council member and the treasurer of funds, managing teacher appointments, transfers, and other academic matters. A General Educational Council, with primarily advisory duties, was also established by the Travancore District Committee. The pastorates took on the responsibility of financing their schools, and several large congregations that maintained their evangelists or catechists also began to pay their schoolmasters[4]. Before the introduction of the code, Hindu members of the neglected or slave castes did not even receive primary education. The missionary schools provided educational opportunities for converts from these classes. Still, many were reluctant to attend due to religious concerns, while government and private schools often excluded them due to caste prejudice. The government's desire to extend educational facilities to these groups materialized in the grant-in-aid code of 1894, bringing a degree of uniformity to the educational system in Travancore[5].

[1] Aiya, *Manual*, 457-58.
[2] Samuel, *Hindu caste and its practical operation*, 1874, p.228.
[3] John Lowe to T. Madhava Row, dated 22 Sept.1865.
[4] Velupillai, T. K, *Travancore State Manual* Vol.II, p.446.
[5] Ibid., p.479.
[58] Annual Report of the L.M.S, London, 1864, p. 103.

A thematic and historical Analysis of Missionary and Government Approaches to Education

This approach reveals how educational reforms were administrative decisions and responses to evolving societal needs and pressures. It provides a model for analysing how educational and social systems evolve in response to internal and external pressures.

When comparing the educational efforts of missionary institutions and the Travancore government during the nineteenth century, the first point is that their objectives and approaches reveal distinct differences. Missionary institutions, particularly those from the London Missionary Society (LMS), were primarily focused on proselytization through education. They aimed to spread Christianity by offering essential reading, writing, and arithmetic education, strongly emphasizing religious instruction. In contrast, the Travancore government initiated its schools mainly to provide English education to the local population. While influenced by the efforts of the missionaries, the government prioritised creating educated citizens and public servants to strengthen the state's administration. Regarding their scope and reach, missionary schools were more widespread in rural and remote areas, emphasizing educating lower-caste and marginalized communities.

By 1861, the London Missionary Society (LMS) had established 141 schools for boys and 31 for girls, including village schools, boarding schools, and seminaries like the Nagercoil Seminary. In contrast, the Travancore government established fewer schools, focusing primarily on urban centres and areas with higher populations. A key government initiative was the Raja's Free School in Trivandrum, founded in 1836. However, the government's educational efforts expanded more slowly and were initially less extensive than the missionary activities. After 1864, the expenditure on education increased, and by 1883, 39 govt. Vernacular schools 624 aided vernacular schools were established.

Secondly, curriculum is a crucial aspect when comparing missionary and government schools. The curriculum initially focused on primary education and religious instruction in missionary schools. Over time, these institutions, particularly the Nagercoil Seminary, expanded to offer more comprehensive education, including English, Tamil, Malayalam, and Sanskrit. The general standard of education at the seminary was exemplary, with subjects such as Astronomy, Physical Science, Logic, Theology, Hebrew, and Greek being taught. The Bible was regularly read and explained in His Highness's free school[1]. However, the government subsequently restructured its approach, placing less emphasis on religious instruction, especially after the 1902 order that prohibited religious education during school hours. In addition to the regular curriculum, the school emphasized cultivating good manners, habits, and planning for future life. The school also offered practical skills such as printing, bookbinding, leather tanning, lace making, and embroidery. These skills not only enhanced the students' economic prospects but also led to an overall improvement in their standard of living. Government schools primarily emphasized English education, aiming to prepare students

for roles in government service. Regarding their (missionaries) inclusivity, which often contributed to the success of missionary schools, these institutions were open to all castes, including lower castes and Christians. Although there was initial resistance from non-Christian families due to the religious focus of the education, over time, even Hindu families began enrolling their children in these schools. In contrast, government schools attracted a broader range of students, particularly higher-caste Hindus interested in English education as a pathway to government jobs. The broader inclusivity of government schools only became a reality with the policy change in 1894.

Missionaries faced significant financial challenges, particularly after the economic crisis of 1866, which led to the suspension of many schools. They relied heavily on donations and grants, including a crucial government grant-in-aid in 1875, to sustain their efforts. In contrast, the government's educational initiatives were more stable, benefiting from the foundation laid by missionary efforts. The 1817 proclamation by Rani Gouri Parvati Bai, which ensured state support for education, marked a significant commitment to expanding education and provided a more secure basis for the government's educational endeavours—and executed slowly, according to the circumstances of the society.

Missionaries were crucial in spreading education to marginalized communities and rural areas. Their efforts laid the foundation for modern education in Travancore and significantly influenced the government's approach to education. Over time, the government gradually took on a more prominent role, particularly as the local population's demand for English education grew. By the late nineteenth century, the government had become a key player in education, supplementing and eventually surpassing the efforts of the missionaries. The missionaries made significant strides in educating girls, establishing the first girls' school and boarding facility in Nagercoil in 1822. They offered not only primary education but also vocational training, emphasizing the importance of female education. Initially, the government did not prioritize girls' education to the same extent. However, the success of missionary efforts in this area likely influenced the government's subsequent initiatives to improve female education.

Conclusion

The first point to highlight when analysing the missionaries and government initiatives on education is the trans-construction through government initiatives. The transition from missionary-dominated education to government-led initiatives under Sir T. Madhava Row exemplifies trans-construction. The Travancore government, recognising the changing societal dynamics and the need for modernisation, actively reshaped the educational landscape. They fostered a balance between traditional values and modern educational practices by investing in vernacular education and bringing private vernacular schools in line with government standards.

The second validating point is that establishing vernacular schools with a curriculum mirroring English schools reflects acculturation. While maintaining traditional values, the government incorporated Western educational methods and content into vernacular education. Translating English literature into vernacular languages and establishing a Book Committee to oversee these translations illustrate the integration of Western educational resources into the local educational system.

The third validation is that the expansion of government schools and the implementation of the grant-in-aid system marked a significant shift in power dynamics within the educational sphere. This shift disrupted the monopoly held by missionaries and empowered the government to assert control over education. It also opened up opportunities for individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to access education, thereby challenging existing hierarchies and promoting social mobility.

The surge in demand for education following the establishment of government schools reflects the societal response to changing educational norms. As individuals increasingly sought education for economic and social advancement, the academic landscape underwent a transformative shift. This response underscores the reciprocal changes between individuals and their environment, as described in the concept of trans-construction.

In short, the journey of education in Travancore exemplifies how trans-construction and acculturation facilitated the integration of Western educational principles while simultaneously preserving and adapting to local cultural values and practices. A new educational paradigm emerged through collaborative efforts between missionaries and government authorities, reflecting a harmonious blend of Western modernity and traditional ethos.

The adaptation theory, as explored through the lenses of psychology, anthropology, and sociology, provides a robust framework for understanding how the educational practices of missionaries and the Travancore government evolved in response to the changing social, cultural, and environmental landscape of the time. Psychologically, the missionaries exhibited a strong faculty of adaptation. They recognised that their initial focus on Christian catechism and English education needed to be adjusted to better resonate with the local population. For example, the missionaries initially faced resistance from non-Christians who were hesitant to send their children to Christian-dominated schools. Recognizing this, they adapted by making the schools more inclusive and offering education that was not solely focused on religious instruction. The reflexive dynamic or "trans-construction" can be seen in how the missionaries adjusted their educational approach to align with the local communities' values while introducing new values through education. The government’s adaptation can also be viewed through the psychological lens, particularly in how they responded to the changing demands of their society. Initially, the government's schools were limited, and the reliance on missionary schools was high. However, as the need for a more secular and broad-based education grew, the government expanded its educational efforts, incorporating English and vernacular schools and later restricting religious instruction to adapt to the broader societal expectations of secular education. The missionaries and the government adjusted their strategies and structures in response to the social environment. This demonstrates the psychological concept of adaptation when individuals and institutions modify their behaviour to fit better into their surroundings.

Anthropologically, the missionaries played a significant role as cultural intermediaries, bringing Western educational practices to Travancore while also adapting these practices to fit local cultural norms. The establishment of the Nagercoil Seminary and the inclusion of vocational training for girls (such as needlework and embroidery) reflect how missionaries adapted their educational offerings to be culturally relevant and

beneficial for the local population. This adaptation aligns with the anthropological concept of cultural adaptation, where the missionaries modified their educational practices better to support the survival and development of the local community. The government's adaptation is evident in its gradual shift from relying on missionary-led education to establishing schools. This shift was driven by a recognition of the need to provide education that was not only modern and Western in its approach but also aligned with Travancore's cultural and administrative needs. The expansion of vernacular schools and the introduction of Tamil as a medium of instruction in specific contexts reflect an anthropological adaptation to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the region. The missionaries' and government's efforts reflect anthropological adaptation as they both sought to balance introducing new educational practices with preserving and enhancing local cultural identities.

The missionaries' educational efforts can be seen as a process of social adaptation, where they aimed to integrate students from different social backgrounds into a standard educational framework. The inclusion of students from lower castes and the focus on vocational training for girls were strategies that helped in the socialisation of these groups into the broader society. This reflects the sociological concepts of social integration and socialisation, where education internalizes and integrates societal values and norms. The government's expansion of educational institutions, especially the Raja's Free School and the subsequent district schools, can be seen as a form of acculturation. The government sought to integrate Western educational practices into the local context, thereby facilitating students' acculturation into a modern, administrative, and increasingly secular society. The shift from religious instruction to a more secular curriculum demonstrates the government's adaptation to the changing social environment. The missionaries and the government engaged in social adaptation processes, using education to integrate individuals into a rapidly modern society. Their efforts reflect the sociological concepts of socialisation, integration, and acculturation as they sought to mould the next generation of citizens and leaders. The educational initiatives served as mechanisms for social integration, acculturation, and socialisation, helping to build a more cohesive and modern society.

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THE CONCEPT OF MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE PHILOSOPHIES OF PATANJALI YOGA SUTRA AND DANIEL C. DENNETT-A COMPARATIVE STUDY

ABSTRACT: Indian philosophy with spirituality and metaphysics as its hallmarks and Western philosophy, with free thought and a spirit of individualism as its characteristic features, are two distinct philosophies. Patanjali Yoga Sutra, which is one of the ancient six schools of Indian philosophy, which accepts the authority of the Vedas (the ancient Hindu scripture), provides a highly scientific study of the mind and the ways and means to transcend mind to reach Pure Consciousness. This is called Moksha, which is the goal of human life according to Vedas. Daniel Dennett was an American naturalist philosopher specialized in the philosophy of mind. He is considered as one of the most influential Western philosophers and cognitive scientists of the present age, who held the view that science is our best guide to understand the nature of reality. This study is undertaken to analyse the differences and the similarities between the philosophies of Daneil Dennette and Patanjali Yoga Sutra to provide an insight into the essence of these philosophies so that one can apply the principles of these philosophies selectively in the day-to-day life and lead a happy and peaceful life. The commentaries of different authors to the book, Patanjali Yoga Sutra are studied for the analysis of the philosophy of Patanjali Yoga Sutra. The study of the philosophy of Daniel Dennette is done based on the review article by Nicholas Humphrey, 'Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. by Daniel C. Dennett' published in the 'Journal of Philosophy, Inc.' Vol. 94, No. 2 (Feb., 1997), pp. 97-103 and an interview by Taylor McNeil (Tufts Now) with Daniel Dennett published on September 2, 2020, under the heading 'Our Brains, Our Selves: Daniel Dennett' in the website https://now.tufts.edu/2020/09/02/our-brains-our-selves.

Key words: Consciousness, mind, Darshanas, Purusha, Prakriti, evolution, moksha, intentionality.

Introduction

Indian philosophy and Western philosophy are two distinct philosophies, which played important role in analysing the fundamental philosophical problems of the people such as that of existence, knowledge, ethics, and the nature of reality. Even though Indian philosophical foundations are said to be rooted in ancient sacred texts known as the Vedas with spirituality and metaphysics as its hallmarks**,** the philosophical Indian school of Charvaka, who held a diametrically opposite materialistic view also forms part of it. Indian philosophic schools maintain high standards of rationality and logical thinking.

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Several distinct philosophical schools known as 'Darshanas' emerged during the classical period of Indian philosophy. Some of the major 'Darshanas' are Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. These Darshanas are called Astika Darshanas because they accept the infallibility of the Vedas.

Western philosophy originated from ancient Greece and progressed throughout the Western countries. Critical inquiry, free thought, rationality, and a spirit of individualism are the characteristics of Western philosophy. It upholds the principles of democracy and secularism and plays a vital role in highlighting the importance of protecting human rights in many Western societies by paving the way for contemporary intellectual discourse.[1]

The unprecedent growth of science and technology in the modern world is an indication of the extraordinary development of the left hemisphere of the brain, which controls the intellectual level of activities. Western philosophical thoughts have contributed tremendously to this development of the intellect through its rational and scientific approach.

Our emotions associated with our right brain, control our behaviour especially at points of crisis. Hence, for a well-balanced growth of an individual, along with the left brain, the right brain should also be developed in a balanced manner. However, in this era of science and technology, while we have achieved a high degree of development in our left brain related to the intellectual activities, we have neglected to focus on our emotions controlled by the right brain. This lopsided growth of left over the right brain made men merely intellectually rational animals. Yoga offers several techniques to train our emotional faculty, which help create harmony between the intellectual and emotional faculties of man[2]. That is why Yoga has gained wide popularity throughout the world as an effective practice for mental and physical health and wellbeing.

The purpose of life according to orthodox Indian philosophy is attaining Moksha, which is a state of bliss. By following the spiritual path in pursuit of Truth, as laid down in Astika Darshanas of Indian philosophy, one gradually develops a sense of inner peace. On the other hand, rational inquiry and scientific approach of Western philosophy are effective in unravelling the mysteries objective world leading to technological development and thus making the life of the people easy and comfortable. By Indian and Western philosophies complementing each other, rich philosophical ideas can evolve by a perfect blending of spirituality and the concept of metaphysics with the spirit of individualism, free thought, and empirical approach. This will present an ideal situation, which helps the people caught in the whirlpool of complex ethical dilemmas to achieve a perfect harmony of their intellectual and emotional faculties and come out of their suffering and thus change our present-day world of chaos and unrest into that of peace and tranquillity.

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1 Akshat Kumarey, Indian philosophy vs Western philosophy., 2023.https://medium.com/@akshatkumarey/indian-philosophy-vs-western-philosophy-463ebdd5e8e7

2 Nagendra HR, The Science of Emotions' Culture (Bhakti Yoga)., 2022. https://www.exoticindiaart.com/book/details/science-of-emotion-s-culture-bhakti-yoga-idf702/

Patanjali Yoga Sutra (PYS) is one of the ancient six schools of Indian philosophy, which accepts the authority of the Vedas and hence falls under the category of Astika Darshanas. PYS provides a highly scientific study of the mind and the ways and means to transcend it to attain Moksha, which is the realisation of the true nature of the Self[1]. Tejo Bindu Upanishad defines Consciousness (Atman) in the sixth chapter as "Sat, Chit, Ananda," ("Existence-Knowledge-Bliss")[2].

Daniel Dennett, who passed away in 2024 was an American naturalist philosopher specialized in the philosophy of mind. He is considered as one of the most influential philosophers and cognitive scientists of the present age. He was one of the prominent personalities in the atheist movement at the beginning of the 21st century. He was a pioneer in cognitive sciences and artificial intelligence. He held the view that philosophy and science should be continuous with each other. He considered that science is our best guide to understand the nature of reality.

The objective of the present study is to analyse the differences and the similarities between the philosophy of Daneil Dennett and the philosophy of yoga presented in the book PYS and to provide an insight into the essence of these philosophies so that one can apply the principles of these philosophies, wherever possible in the right manner in his life and face the challenges of life with a balanced mind and thus lead a life of peace and tranquillity. The study of the philosophy of Daniel Dennett is done based on the review article by Nicholas Humphrey, 'Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. by Daniel C. Dennett' published in the 'Journal of Philosophy, Inc.' Vol. 94, No. 2 (Feb., 1997), pp. 97-103 and an interview by Taylor McNeil (Tufts Now) with Daniel Dennett published on September 2, 2020, under the heading 'Our Brains, Our Selves: Daniel Dennett' in the website https://now.tufts.edu/2020/09/02/our-brains-our-selves.

Mind and Consciousness

Daniel C. Dennett believed that the Consciousness is a brain function formed out of the physical structures of the material brain, but not a part of the brain. He argues that all the ideas coming from the inner worlds are the evolutionary functions of the brain.

The concept called 'Citta' in yoga sutra of Patanjali is very close to the term 'mind', 'brain,' and 'function of brain' mentioned by Daniel Denett. According to Vedanta philosophy, Mind, which is called 'Antahkarana' **(**internal instrument/internal organ**)** is known by the following four different names according to the function.

1. Manas: The function of cogitation is known as manas. It is the lower, rational part of the mind that connects with the external world
2. Buddhi: When a determination is made, it is known as buddhi. It is the decision-making part of the mind

[1] Paramahansa Yogananda, Quotes on The Purpose of Life. https://yogananda.com.au/gurus/yoganandaquotes06.html

[2] T.Sivasubramaniam, Tejo Bindu Upanishad., 2018. https://www.classicyoga.co.in/2018/03/tejo-bindu-upanishad-sat-chit-ananda/

3. Cittam: The function of storing experiences in memory is called Cittam. (the consciousness where impressions, memories and experiences are stored)

4. Ahamkara: Egoism is Ahamkara.(the attachment or identification of the ego, also known as "I am-ness.")

The word 'Mind' is also used to denote the internal organ as a whole when these distinctions are not intended.

PYS as well as Sankhya philosophy hold the view that Purusha and Prakriti are the two eternal realities. Purusha, the individual soul (Self) is pure consciousness, the eternal witness of all phenomena. According to verse 2.17 of PYS, Prakriti (Nature), which includes mind, senses, and the body is the material cause of the Creation and is essentially different from Purusha[1]. According to the Purusha Sukta of the Rigveda (X.90,-1-16), Purusha is the static and Prakriti is the dynamic principles of existence, the union of which leads to creation[2].

According to PYS (verse 2.25), Consciousness (Atman) is the unmodified pure state of the Seer (Purusha), which is a state of bliss[3]. Jivatma is the reflection of the Atman within an individual,[4] which as stated in PYS 2.3 has limited himself through avidya (ignorance), which prevents it from realising its true nature[5]. As a result, we entertain the illusion of our body as well as everything in the outside world as real. The erroneous identification of the body (combination of five senses and the master sense, mind) with the pure consciousness (Atman) due to ignorance is the root cause of human sufferings and miseries and for births and deaths.[6] The aim of Yoga is to dispel this illusion**.** PYS 1.2 defines Yoga as citta vritti nirodha. Vrittis are thought waves, mental fluctuations or modifications, or the ripples in the lake of mind, which makes the mind operative, giving rise to mental impurities like desires, aversions, fears, greed etc and prevent us from experiencing our true nature. The word meaning of Nirodha is suppression or restraint. Nirodha also means control. Here nirodha does not mean forceful suppression, it is a natural process of preventing the thoughts or emotions getting generated in the mind. Cognition occurs when Citta interacts with the external manifested world (Prakriti) through 'Indriyas' (organs) [7]. The knowledge of the world generates vrittis in the chitta.

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1 Jayadeva, and Hansaji, Patanjali Yoga Sutra.https://theyogainstitute.org/patanjali-yoga-sutra-2-17-parisamvad/.

2 Satish K Kapoor, Indian tradition, Vivekananda and Darwin., 2018.https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/lifestyle/indian-tradition-vivekananda-and-darwin-538654

3 S. Venkatesananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Shivanandanagar, The Divine Life Society, 2001.

4 Jivatma, Atma and Paramatma Soul, Self and God.https://www.chakras.net/yoga-principles/jivatma-atma-paramatma

5 S.Venkatesananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Shivanandanagar, The Divine Life Society, 2001.

6 S.Sivananda, Afflictions of the Mind. https://www.sivanandaonline.org/?cmd=displaysection&section_id=845

7 Upadhyay Dhungel Kshitiz, Concept of Mind And Cognition In Yogasutra of Patanjali., 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318702572_Concept_of_mind_and_cognition_in_yoga sutra_of_Patanjali_YSP

The existence of Chitta is dependent on Vrittis or"fluctuations of the mind,". Patanjali states in verse 1.3 of PYS that when citta vritti nirodha is achieved, the seer rests himself in his unmodified pure state.[1]

Evolution Theory

Dennett completely agrees to the British naturalist, Charles Darwin's view that whole of human creation is formed and transformed by getting adapted to suit their environments over time through a gradual process of natural selection[2]. In his book, Breaking the Spell, Dennett projected the idea of religion as a natural phenomenon[3]. In his book, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness, Dennett discusses the natural evolution of intentional systems(souls) on earth. Darwin defined evolution as "descent with modification," meaning, organisms change biologically over time, give rise to new species, and share a common ancestor. Dennett expands this theory to include Souls also. Dennett tells the story of how the smallest being has evolved to a highly developed human being with sophisticated mental capacities (Page 97)[4]. Dennett explains that standing on the foundation of the experiences of our ancestors, the human beings could develop their mental capacity by improvising on old belief systems and ideas and projecting new ideas. He argues against the idea of "there being an explanatory gap between the physical and mental worlds"(Page 98)[5].

Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is in agreement to the idea of Dennett that 'present-day species have evolved from simpler ancestral types by the process of natural selection' only partially; only in the material aspect, that too unless it is interrupted by yogic practices. PYS in verse 4.2 states that the transformation of one species into another takes place through the filling in of their innate nature[6]. This means that this transformation follows the flow of nature of the species before transformation to the nature of the evolved species. According to PYS verse 2.18, this flow of life evolves according to the three gunas (sattva, rajas, and tamas), which are the attributes of Prakriti. PYS verse 3.13 states that gunas, by their nature continuously undergo evolutionary changes of properties (dharma), characteristics (lakṣaṇa), and state (Avastha)[7]. The course of this flow can be

1 S.Venkatesananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Shivananandanagar, The Divine Life Society, 2001.

2 Wilfred Alex, Darwin, evolution, & natural selection., 2022. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/darwin-evolution-natural-selection-wilfred-alex.

3 Taylor McNeil, Our Brains, Our Selves: Daniel Dennet., 2020. https://now.tufts.edu/2020/09/02/our-brains-our-selves

4 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 97., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness

5 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 98., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness

6 S.Haribrahmendrananda Tirtha, and S. Hariomananda , Patanjali Yoga Darshan Vyasa Bashyam, Bangalore, The Heritage, 2018.

7 S.Haribrahmendrananda Tirtha, and S. Hariomananda , Patanjali Yoga Darshan Vyasa Bashyam, Bangalore, The Heritage, 2018.

changed by resorting to various practices as explained in PYS. These three gunas manifest in nature (prakriti) in innumerable ways. The fullness of the Prakriti in each level of transformation has a particular combination of the three gunas and the degree of dominance of the specific guna at that stage**.** Changes in those features (properties, characteristics, or states) are not a fundamental change[1]. The transformation from one species to another can take place only when the potentiality for the change is there in its fullness in the evolved state, with the gunas combined in the right proportion. PYS 3.11 which mentions 'Samadhi parinama' and PYS 3.12, which mentions 'Ekagrata parinama'are examples for this evolutionary changes. In the case of a person who is not doing Sadhana (spiritual practice), the process will be quite natural. The transformation in such a case is influenced by the samskaras (the impression created by sensual experiences of all the previous births sunk deep into the subconscious mind) acquired, the present experiences and karmas and such other natural factors. But Patanjali states that this natural process of transformation can be accelerated or altered by doing Abhyasa and Vairagya and other spiritual sadhanas prescribed by him. Patanjali Yoga Sutra declares that through the practice of Samyama, which is explained in PYS verse, 3.4, as the converging of the three practices of concentration (dharana-verse 3.1), meditation (dhyana-verse 3.2), and contemplative absorption (samadhi-verse 3.3), various physical and mental siddhis can be achieved. Siddhis, which can be achieved through Samyama according to PYS are increased inner stillness (nirodha parinama –verse 3.9), releasing all externalities (samadhi parinama – verse 3.11), and single-pointedness that removes all illusion of separation (ekagrata parinama – verse 3.12).

Patanjali Yoga Sutra differs with Dennett in the religious as well as spiritual aspect of evolution.

One species to another also means one birth to another birth, which is called reincarnation is a religious philosophical concept. Dennett, being an atheist, does not seem to have considered the aspect of rebirth. According to PYS, upon biological death, while the physical body gets destroyed, the Soul being immortal is not destroyed. The Soul along with the samskaras of the Jivatma transmigrates to a body, wherein the gunas are. mixed in such a way that citta can act in accordance with the samskaras and experience and exhaust the fruits of the karmas of previous lives[2].

Samkhya yoga is the philosophical foundation on which the Yoga Philosophy is built[3]**.** According to Samkhya philosophy, when Purusha stands alone detached from Prakriti, Prakriti is in the unmanifest state, where the three gunas remain in a state of equilibrium and when Purusha interacts with prakriti, this balance is disturbed, which leads to the evolution of this material world[4], including the human being. When the three gunas lose

1 Ruben Vasquez, Being is nature flowing.Yoga Sutra 4.2., 2022. https://simple-yoga.org/4-2-being-is-nature-flowing.

2 Rajmani Tigunait Pandit, Yoga Sutra 2.9 Translation and Commentary. https://yogainternational.com/article/view/yoga-sutra-2-9-translation-and-commentary/

3 Iytyogatherapy, Samkhya Philosophy, Foundation of Yoga., 2020. https://iytyogatherapy.com/samkhya-philosophy-foundation-of-yoga/

4 Bhivandker Mayur Pratap. An insight on Parinamas mentioned in the Patanjala Yoga Sutras. International Journal of Yoga and Allied Sciences Volume: 7, Issue: 1., 2019.

their equilibrium among themselves, Prakriti manifests itself in different forms setting in motion the cycle of birth and death**.** In manifestation of Prakriti, cause pre-exists in the effect; nothing is created and nothing is destroyed; it is only pariṇāma (evolution). The first evolute which emerges from the prakriti is called the Mahat or Buddhi. PYS calls this Mahat tattva as 'lingamatra' in PYS 2.19. "Ahamkara" (ego) evolves from Buddhi. From ahamkara's sattva aspect, evolve mind, the five organs of perception (Jnanendriyas- eye, ear, nose, skin, and tongue), and the five organs of action (karmendriyas- hands, feet, speech, excretory, and reproductive organs), from ahamkara's tamas aspect, arise the five subtle elements(tanmatras -subtle sense perceptions; the senses of touch, smell, taste, vision and hearing). From these five tanmatras evolve the corresponding five "mahabhutas" (gross elements corresponding to the sense perceptions – earth (smell), water (taste), fire (vision), air (touch) and ether (hearing).[1] Adding the Mula Prakriti and the Purusha to these 23 elements, a total of 25 tattvas constitute every individual.

According to the Yoga philosophy, in the unmanifested state of Prakriti (also known as 'Avyakta'), Purusha remains in a state of bliss. The processes of evolution caused by the manifestation of Prakriti cause suffering. When Prakriti manifests (the manifested form of Prakriti is known as 'Vyakta') itself resulting in the formation of various evolutes, the Purusha, which is in union with the Prakriti is trapped in the vicious cycle of births and deaths. PYS 2.16 states that 'Samyoga'(the union of Purusha and Prakriti) caused by avidya (ignorance) is the cause of suffering (dukha).

The aim of human life is stated in verse 4.34 of PYS as moksha (kaivalya)[2]. On attaining Kaivalya, the Jivatma transcends the cycle of births and deaths and thus reaches a stage where he is free from all suffering and remains in a state of eternal bliss. PYS verses 2.22 &25 declare that by practising Samyama continuously, the person climbs higher and higher ladders of spiritual transformation and eventually even attains Jivan Mukti (moksha/salvation) in the same birth[3]. Till achieving such a stage, the Jivatma covered by Avidya is subject to the laws of Prakrti. The Chitta functions in the realms of Prakrti blocking the inner light of Consciousness, which is our innate nature. As stated in verse 4.3 of PYS, spiritual sadhana helps in removing these obstacles[4]. When this covering of Avidya due to impurities dissipates little by little by practising the eight-fold steps prescribed by Patanjali in his yoga sutras, Consciousness starts filling up this gap, which results in the spiritual transformation of the human being and he reaches the Jivan Mukta state. As explained in PYS 4.2, the innate of nature of this evolved state, which is bliss fills in the entire being. This transformation is in fact involution as it is rolling back all the above-mentioned processes of evolution of Prakriti in its manifestation. This state of enlightenment achieved by passing through a series of internally disciplined voluntary parinamas (evolution) in the form of various stages of samadhi leading to the advanced

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330244232_An_insight_on_Parinamas_mentioned_in_the_Patanjala_Yoga_Sutras

1 Lalita, Samkhya., 2017.https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/34660/1/Unit-2.pdf.

2 S.Venkatesananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Shivananandanagar, The Divine Life Society, 2001.

3 S.Venkatesananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Shivananandanagar, The Divine Life Society, 2001.

4 S.Venkatesananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Shivananandanagar, The Divine Life Society, 2001.

stages of meditation (Asamprajnata Samadhi) is beyond the influence of the three gunas and hence here a fundamental change occurs.

Hence there is considerable difference between the evolution as explained by Dennett and PYS. Dennett dwells on the idea that on his struggle for existence, the man guided by reason improves through evolution upon his state of existence through natural selection[1] and does not envisage a state of bliss.

In his discussion of "the body and its minds Dennett presents the idea that the mind is distributed throughout the body. "One cannot tear me apart from my body leaving a nice clean edge, as philosophers have often supposed [including the author himself in his famous parable "where am I?"]. My body contains as much of me, the values and talents and memories and dispositions that make me who I am, as my nervous system does"[2]. Elaborating on the relationship between body and mind, he suggests that the mind is dependent on body not merely for gathering information and accomplishing tasks in relation to the external world, but also as a guide for internal thought processes. The expertise and wisdom gained by the body over the years of continuous interaction with the world outside is reflected by the Conscious Self as intuitions or gut feelings of pleasure and pain based on which Individual Self engages in judgements and arrive at decisions. He explains there are mini wise bodies on the subtler level within the main gross body and mini-mini wise bodies within those mini bodies and there are Mega gross bodies outside it in the culture and mega-mega bodies outside those[3]. Thus, according to him, the wisdom gained and stored by the body is to be found not just in the sense organs, muscles, or gut but it extends from the gross body to the more subtle elements of the brain and out from the brain into the external world. He considers that every nerve cell with its associated synaptic junctions' functions not simply as a passive gate for information but as a wise little element of the mind; an embodied little intentional system in its own right with its own beliefs, desires, and rationality. This reflects the belief of Dennett that all intentionality is derivative rather than intrinsic and his belief in homuncular functionalism. He acknowledges that the homunculi are not merely subminds but subbodies, too[4].

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1 Satish K Kapoor, Indian tradition, Vivekananda and Darwin., 2018. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/lifestyle/indian-tradition-vivekananda-and-darwin-538654

2 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 98., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness

3 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 99., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness.

4 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 99., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness

PYS accepts the authority of the vedas. According to Brahmananda valli.Anuvaka 2-5 of 'Taittriya Upanishad,' the human being is constituted of five 'Koshas' (layers of existence)[1].

1. Annamayakosha – The Food body

2. Pranamayakosha- The Pranic energy or life energy sheath

3. Manomayakosha- Mental body

4. Vijyanmayakosha- Wisdom body

5. Anandamayakosha– Bliss body

Outer most layer is the physical body, which is the grossest. Other four layers are in energy state and subtle. These sheaths are interdependent, interpenetrable, and related to each other[2].

Brhmananda valli Anuvaka 3 of Taittiriya Upanishad states that different from the pranamaya Self made up of pranas, there is another Self constituted of the mind. With that Self made of mind, the pranamaya is full. The Pranamaya Kosha pervades the Annamaya Kosha and the Manomaya Kosha pervades the Pranamaya Kosha[3]. Here, Patanjali is in full agreement with Dennett's idea that the mind is distributed throughout the body.

The Manomaya Kosha, which is subtler than Annamaya Kosha and Pranamaya Kosha consists of the thinking mind and emotions**;** its thought process works through our five senses and leads to our likes and dislikes. The Manomaya Kosha permeates each and every cell of the body. Hence every fluctuation in the mental body has a corresponding chemical reaction in the physical body, which affect the hormone secretions. Similarly, any changes in the physical body affects our mental states. The state of our mind operating through the central nervous system, the endocrine system and the immune system make changes in our entire body[4].

According to PYS, brain, which is the physical manifestation of the mind, which is antakarana, which includes Buddhi also is part of matter and hence is non-sentient. Shri Shankara's argument to prove mind is a matter is given in his bhashya (commentary) on Chandogya Upanishad (6.5.1). He states that the subtlest part of the food we take gets transformed into mind and nourishes it. Hence mind is made up of matter. Even though both Patanjali Yoga Sutra and Dennett agree that mind is matter, they differ as regards the sentience of the mind. Dennett believes that mind is sentient whereas Patanjali rejects this completely. According to Patanjali Yoga Sutra anything, which is matter cannot be sentient. Mind appears to be sentient because of its continuous association with the Self-luminous Atman (Consciousness). While Dennett's concept of Consciousness does not

1 S. Chinmayananda, Taittiriya Upanishad. Bombay, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1983.
2 Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, Panchakoshas., 2021. https://yoga.ayush.gov.in/blog?q=64.
3 S. Chinmayananda, Taittiriya Upanishad. Bombay, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1983.
4 Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, Panchakoshas., 2021. https://yoga.ayush.gov.in/blog?q=64.

go beyond the brain, PYS states that Consciousness is the ultimate reality, which is beyond the body and the mind.

Since the mind is non-sentient, it cannot perform its functions on its own. The information it collects through the organs of perception (Jnanendriyas), are passed on to the Atman. The Atman takes decision and directs the mind to act accordingly. Thus, mind is a mere tool of the actual doer, the Atman (Consciousness). The image of an object is perceived by the person only when the Consciousness, which is pure light, self-luminous by its very nature, illuminates the brain[1]. Chitta is the entity which has proximity to consciousness[2]. In the chapter on intentionality, referring to the inward journey of the mind, Dennett argues that the complex intentionality of higher minds is the cumulative effect of the work of simple minds[3].

Dennett, being a reductionist, his idea of intentionality and homuncular functionalism rejects the religious or metaphysical idea that 'intentionality' is a product of the human soul. Going by the concept of mind, Jivatma, and pure Consciousness as explained in Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Dennett's ideas of homuncular functionalism and derivative intentionality find no place in the yoga philosophy.

Dennett argues that functions of the mind through the sense organs like information gathering and the acting are unique, which cannot be replaced by any physical objects. He argues that a full-blown human brain cannot function in conjunction with a real human body[4].This view is not in conformity with Patanjali Yoga Sutra's view. Patanjali Yoga Sutra considers brain as a part of Annamaya Kosha, which remains in harmony with other parts of the body, and it functions completely in coordination with the rest of the organs of the human body.

According to the PYS 1.2, cessation of the modifications of the mind is the remedy for suffering. Happiness does not come from external objects. All the happiness that we enjoy is only a reflection of Brahmananda in the mind when the mind is calm. True and lasting happiness can result only if the mind is permanently kept calm. Cessation of modification of mind means making the mind completely still permanently. In the absence of Vrittis, Citta vanishes into thin air. When vritti nirodha happens in the mind, the mind becomes completely still and gets dissolved in Consciousness. Then

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1 Yati N.C, 1995.Brhadaranyaka Upanisad (Vol. 2 Muni Kanda). New Delhi, D.K. Printworld, 1995.

2 Upadhyay Dhungel Kshitiz, 'Chitta', "The Mind-stuff" as a Cognitive Apparatus: Model of mind and process of cognition as in Yogasutra of Patanjali., 2014. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267334236_%27Chitta%27_The_Mind-stuff_as_a_Cognitive_Apparatus_Model_of_mind_and_process_of_cognition_as_in_Yogasutra_of_Patanjali.

3 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 100., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness.

4 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 100., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness.

Consciousness illuminates the entire being and the person enjoys bliss[1]. In his Bhashya on Mandukya Karika, III. 46 Sri Sankara says that a motionless mind does not appear in the form of any object imagined outside but becomes identified with Brahman.

Language and Culture

According to Dennett everything such as technology, civilization, art, science, and religion, are the fruits of human culture, which evolves by natural selection. He believes in the Darwinian way of evolution of culture and explains that language is the foundation on which the human culture is built over a period of time by natural selection, the same way our bodies have evolved. He rejects the humanities point of view that culture is just the product of human genius. He believes that since the evolution of culture happens without any intentionality, any study of this process should be undertaken in an objective way.[2]

According to PYS, the values and culture of a person is determined by his samskara, which is decided by his karmas of the past as well as the present life. It is not merely decided by natural selection but also by his vasanas formed out of his previous births. The human being can transform his culture and way of life by choosing the karmas he performs in the present. By practising the eight limbs of yoga such as yama, niyama etc., the individual will be refined and finally attains moksha.

Explaining the outward journey of the mind, Dennett, holds the opinion that the use of well-designed tools and instruments help man exploit his brain power in new ways and thus becomes smarter. He cites the example of how the use of the tool of language raised the minds of the human being to higher and higher levels as compared to any non-linguistic animal[3]. He airs the view that language helps to provide a kind of culturally evolved body, a "body of experience and knowledge" Thus the body of language, just like the body of flesh and blood is not just a medium to think but join the mind to do the thinking. He explains that words heard by a child may produce patterns in his mind much before his acquiring any external referent[4].

Dennett, being a staunch atheist gives a detailed analysis of how Consciousness arises from the physical structures of the brain. He states that the consciousness is not in the genes. He argues that many of the features of consciousness are generated as part of your upbringing especially your learning languages. He considered that the differentiating factor between the human consciousness and animal consciousness is

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1 Marianne Jacuzzi , Patanjali's Conception of the Mind.,2005. https://www.sevenwindsyoga.com/writing/articles/patanjali-s-conception-of-the-mind

2 Taylor McNeil, Our Brains, Our Selves: Daniel Dennet., 2020. https://now.tufts.edu/2020/09/02/our-brains-our-selves.

3 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 100., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness.

4 Nicholas Humphrey, Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Inc. Vol. 94, No. 2 Page 100-101., 1997. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271008367_Kinds_of_Minds_Toward_an_Understanding_of_Consciousness.

language. It is through language that the human being has been able to develop curiosity, ask questions and contemplate on his own experience.

Language lays the foundation for knowledge (thoughts, ideas, and experiences) and functions as a powerful medium of communication making it an effective instrument for our cognitive development. As against Dennett's above argument giving importance to language as a tool conducive to evolution, PYS considers knowledge as one of the vrittis, which functions as a hindrance to Moksha (PYS verse 1.2-6)[1] and hence should be eradicated. PYS1.12 prescribes Abhyasa and Vairagya as the practices to do away with the vrittis.

Dennett refuses to subscribe to the idea of an immortal soul controlling the functions of the brain. To a question as to who directs the trillions of neurons in our brains, each independent and yet working together, his answer was that there is no captain; everything is controlled by a system fundamentally of opponent processes in the brain. To substantiate his argument, he cites the example of Australian termite castle in his book, Bacteria to Bach and Back; millions of termites build the fantastic castle without a leader. He argues that great intelligence can be displayed like termites out of a lot of individually myopic and clueless neurons of the material brain. He has aired the idea that human consciousness is the cumulative effect of the cooperation, and competition between individual cells. He explains that the great scientist Descartes rejected the idea of a mechanical mind and had to find solace in the idea of an immortal Soul, which performs the complicated functions of thinking and making decisions because during his time, there were no tools to help understand the wonderful coordination work of trillions of moving parts such as neurons to perform the functions of a machine such as brain. He states that Consciousness is for control and the degree of freedom should be considered as an opportunity for control. Lots of techniques are developed by Human Beings for self-control, which may work sometimes and may not work sometimes.[2]

As already explained, Patanjali Yoga Sutra's concept of Consciousness is totally different from that of Daniel Denett.

Conclusion

As already discussed, the Western philosophy is mainly based on materialism and is rational, empirical, and scientific. There has been a wide acceptance to science and technology by people all over the world because it played an important role in solving many of their problems and providing a comfortable life to them.

However, the life of the modern man has become very fast and survival of the fittest has become the order of the day. The challenges of the modern era pose a great threat to the emotional faculty of man. Unfortunately, proper steps are taken neither at the academic level nor at social and other related platforms for the development of our emotional faculties. This lack of harmony between intellectual and emotional growth resulted in

1 S.Venkatesananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Shivanandanagar, The Divine Life Society, 2001.

2 Taylor McNeil, Our Brains, Our Selves: Daniel Dennet., 2020. https://now.tufts.edu/2020/09/02/our-brains-our-selves.

increasing anxiety, restlessness, and depression. The quality of our lives is fast deteriorating. In this scenario, yoga, with its holistic approach to life remains relevant and that is why yoga has gained wide popularity as a measure to keep one mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually healthy. By following the eight step methods prescribed by PYS, which is one of the most authentic works on yoga, one can obtain emotional stability, which helps him to overcome the mental disturbances caused by the struggle for survival in the highly competitive modern world**.** It is marked in the history that by using non-violence, which is one of the many practices laid down in PYS, Mahatma Gandhi could influence social and -political movements all over the world to change from violence to peaceful means. Thus, by understanding the philosophies of Dennett and Patanjali Yoga Sutra and applying these principles in the proper manner in our lives, we can face the challenges of the modern era with poise and live a happy and peaceful life.

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THE ARTHASHASTRA AND THE PETROSTATE: STRATEGIC REALISM IN INDO-SAUDI FREIGN POLICY

Abstract

This paper explores the evolving dynamics of India–Saudi Arabia relations through the dual lenses of strategic realism and Kautilyan statecraft as articulated in the *Arthashastra*. Traditionally grounded in energy interdependence, the bilateral relationship has matured into a multifaceted strategic partnership encompassing defense cooperation, green energy, and digital diplomacy. Drawing from classical realist theory and the indigenous *mandala* framework, the study examines how India navigates the complexities of engaging a rentier petrostate like Saudi Arabia while maintaining strategic autonomy and regional balance. The research analyzes major developments from 2015 to 2024, including institutional milestones such as the India–Saudi Strategic Partnership Council and high-level defense and energy agreements. It also explores how India practices calibrated diplomacy through doctrines akin to Kautilya's *Shadgunya* and *Sama–Dana–Bheda–Danda*, particularly in its simultaneous engagement with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel. Through case studies in energy diplomacy and maritime security, the paper argues that India's Gulf strategy is not only shaped by contemporary geopolitical realism but also reflects a distinctly Indian strategic culture. Ultimately, this hybrid framework provides insights into India's aspirations as a rising global power and offers a template for foreign policy rooted in both tradition and tactical pragmatism.

Key Words: India–Saudi relations; Strategic realism; Kautilya; Arthashastra; Petrostate; Foreign policy strategy

1. Introduction

India and Saudi Arabia, two nations historically separated by geography and ideology, have in recent decades converged through mutual strategic interests. Their bilateral relations have evolved from a narrow energy-centric focus to a multidimensional partnership encompassing energy security, defense cooperation, investment, and regional diplomacy. With India being the third-largest energy consumer and Saudi Arabia one of the world's top oil producers, the economic interdependence between the two is unmistakable (Ulya & Machmudi, 2025). Yet, beyond economic calculations, the relationship has taken a nuanced strategic turn in the 21st century.

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This transformation is best understood through the lens of strategic realism—an approach that places national interest and power at the center of foreign policy. While many scholars trace strategic realism to thinkers like Thucydides and Hans Morgenthau (Morgenthau, 1948), a compelling case can be made that India's approach to foreign relations finds its roots in indigenous traditions of statecraft, most notably Kautilya's Arthashastra. Composed around the 4th century BCE, the *Arthashastra* outlines a pragmatic, interest-driven framework for inter-state relations, underscoring diplomacy, alliances, military preparedness, and strategic deception (Kamal, 2022).

The central thesis of this article is that India's contemporary foreign policy towards Saudi Arabia reflects a synthesis of classical strategic realism and the Kautilyan school of thought. India's dealings with Saudi Arabia—ranging from managing oil dependencies and securing defense ties to building a hedge against instability in West Asia—embody several principles enshrined in the *Arthashastra*, such as the Mandala theory (alliances based on proximity and interest), the Shadgunya doctrine (six methods of foreign policy), and the tactical use of Sama, Dana, Bheda, Danda (conciliation, gift, division, force) (Kumar, 2021).

This Indo-Saudi relationship is further complicated by the nature of the Petrostate, a term used to describe countries whose political systems are deeply shaped by oil rents. Saudi Arabia, despite its rapid modernization under *Vision 2030*, remains reliant on oil wealth to maintain domestic stability and foreign influence (Mohapatra, 2017). This makes it a strategic partner that is both essential and unpredictable. For India, engaging such a rentier state requires careful calibration between transactional energy security and long-term geopolitical alignment.

Over the past decade, India's diplomatic overtures to Riyadh—symbolized by high-level visits, multibillion-dollar MoUs, and defense cooperation—have marked a significant shift in its Look West Policy. Simultaneously, India continues to maintain a delicate balancing act in the region by also nurturing ties with Saudi Arabia's regional rivals, such as Iran and Israel (Mishra, 2024).

By analyzing this strategic partnership through both modern realist frameworks and the ancient wisdom of the Arthashastra, this paper offers a hybrid lens to decode the motivations, tactics, and future trajectory of India–Saudi foreign policy. It argues that India's foreign policy is not simply reactive or Westernized but anchored in its own strategic heritage, revived to meet the challenges of a multipolar, energy-dependent, and diplomatically complex world.

In doing so, the study bridges classical political philosophy and contemporary geopolitics—providing a unique vantage point to understand one of the most critical bilateral relationships in the Global South.

2. Theoretical Framework

Understanding the trajectory of India's foreign policy toward Saudi Arabia requires a dual-lens approach that synthesizes both classical international relations theory and indigenous strategic traditions. This section integrates the principles of Strategic Realism—a dominant theory in global political thought—with the indigenous Indian tradition of statecraft found in Kautilya's Arthashastra. Together, these frameworks

provide a hybrid model to interpret India's actions within the Gulf region, especially its engagement with a rentier petrostate like Saudi Arabia.

2.1 Strategic Realism: National Interest and Power Politics

Strategic Realism, also known as Classical Realism, is rooted in the belief that states operate in an anarchic international system where survival and power are the primary objectives. Pioneered by Hans Morgenthau, realism posits that human nature is inherently self-interested, and this extends to state behavior in the global arena (Morgenthau, 1948). States, as rational actors, pursue power and security, often at the expense of moral or ideological considerations.

According to this theory, foreign policy is shaped by the logic of power dynamics, security imperatives, and geopolitical calculations. Alliances are temporary, guided by interests rather than values. In this view, India's outreach to Saudi Arabia—despite ideological and governance differences—is not surprising. It is based on national interest: ensuring energy security, gaining access to Gulf investment, countering regional rivals, and projecting influence in West Asia.

Realism also allows for concepts like hedging, balance-of-power, and strategic ambiguity, all of which have characterized India's Gulf diplomacy. India's simultaneous engagement with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel is a textbook example of realist strategy that seeks to maximize flexibility and leverage in a fluid regional order (Mohapatra, 2017).

2.2 Kautilya's Arthashastra: India's Ancient Strategic Realism

While Realism is often viewed through a Western lens, India's political thought has long included similar ideas—particularly in the work of Kautilya (Chanakya), the ancient strategist and royal advisor during the Mauryan Empire (c. 4th century BCE). His treatise, the *Arthashastra*, is one of the oldest comprehensive works on statecraft, diplomacy, and war. It offers a strikingly realist worldview, rooted in pragmatism, strategic deception, and the primacy of state interests.

At the core of the Arthashastra is the Rajamandala (Circle of States) theory, which mirrors the modern balance-of-power system. Kautilya proposed that a ruler's immediate neighbours are natural enemies, while states beyond them are potential allies. This cyclical model encourages strategic coalitions based on positional advantage and threat perception, not ideology.

Another key concept is the Shadgunya—the six methods of foreign policy as follows:

Policy (Sanskrit)	Translation	Strategic Implication
Sandhi	Making peace	Temporary cooperation or ceasefire
Vigraha	War	Use of force when interests are at stake
Asana	Neutrality	Observing without active intervention
Yana	Marching	Strategic deployment or show of strength

Samsraya	Seeking protection	Aligning with a stronger power
Dvaidhibhava	Dual policy	Balancing two powers simultaneously

These doctrines strongly resonate with India's realpolitik behavior in the Gulf. India's relationship with Saudi Arabia shows Sandhi (cooperation in energy), Dvaidhibhava (balancing ties with Iran and Saudi), and even Yana (via naval exercises and port partnerships).

Moreover, Kautilya's approach to diplomacy includes the fourfold tactics known as Sama (conciliation), Dana (gifts), Bheda (division), and Danda (force). This stratified method of negotiation aligns with India's recent diplomacy, including soft-power initiatives (Sama), investment and trade deals (Dana), quiet realignments (Bheda), and defense cooperation (Danda).

2.3 Petrostate Theory and the Gulf Context

A **Petrostate** is defined by its economic and political reliance on oil revenues. These states often exhibit characteristics of rentierism, where the state does not rely on taxation and therefore lacks political accountability, often leading to centralized, authoritarian rule (Luciani, 1987). Saudi Arabia is a classic example: oil wealth funds generous welfare schemes, secures elite loyalty, and enables international leverage. India's engagement with Saudi Arabia, therefore, must be contextualized within this framework. Unlike democracies with public accountability, petrostates often make foreign policy based on regime security, rent maximization, and dynastic interests. India's energy imports, defense collaborations, and even counterterrorism deals with Saudi Arabia must be navigated with this strategic realism in mind (Ulya & Machmudi, 2025).

2.4 Synthesizing the Frameworks

When combined, these frameworks offer a uniquely Indian realist model for interpreting foreign policy. Modern realism supplies the international structure and power calculations, while the *Arthashastra* offers a cultural and historical vocabulary rooted in Indian political wisdom. India's relations with Saudi Arabia are shaped not only by rationalist imperatives but also by long-standing indigenous traditions of maneuver, adaptability, and realpolitik.

Thus, it is believe that India's foreign policy toward Saudi Arabia reflects a hybrid strategic culture—firmly realist in structure but uniquely Indian in execution. The Arthashastra's timeless insights, when read alongside modern realism, provide a robust theoretical toolkit for analyzing this evolving bilateral dynamic.

3. Saudi Arabia as a Petrostate

Saudi Arabia's global influence is deeply rooted in its status as a petrostate—a term used to describe countries whose economic and political systems are profoundly shaped by the production and export of oil. As one of the world's largest oil producers and the de facto leader of OPEC, Saudi Arabia has built a foreign policy and domestic governance model

fundamentally anchored in hydrocarbon wealth. This section outlines the core characteristics of a petrostate, explores Saudi Arabia's unique rentier structure, and assesses the implications for India's strategic engagement with the Kingdom.

3.1 The Petrostate Paradigm: Rentierism and Realism

Petrostates are defined by their dependence on oil revenues to fund national budgets, social services, and often authoritarian governance structures. The classic Rentier State Theory—developed by scholars such as Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani—posits that in such states, wealth is generated not through domestic production or taxation, but through external rent (Luciani, 1987). As a result, the traditional social contract is inverted: rather than citizens financing the state through taxes and demanding accountability, the state distributes wealth downward, reducing political pluralism and reinforcing centralized control.

In Saudi Arabia, this model is acutely visible. Oil revenues account for more than 70% of government income and fund everything from employment to public housing and religious institutions. Consequently, foreign policy decisions—especially those involving major partners like India—are often dictated by regime security and long-term resource management, rather than public debate or parliamentary scrutiny.

This dynamic gives Saudi Arabia significant autonomy in its international relations, allowing it to act swiftly and flexibly, often guided by the interests of the ruling monarchy. For India, this means navigating a partner whose strategic choices are elite-driven and potentially volatile—an aspect that must be met with calculated diplomacy and risk hedging (Ulya & Machmudi, 2025).

3.2 Vision 2030 and Strategic Diversification

Recognizing the unsustainability of long-term oil dependence, Saudi Arabia launched its Vision 2030 initiative in 2016. This ambitious economic transformation plan aims to diversify the Kingdom's economy through investment in non-oil sectors such as technology, tourism, defense manufacturing, and renewable energy (Kinninmont, 2017). Vision 2030 also seeks to reduce subsidies, create private sector jobs, and shift the country from a rentier model to a more productive and entrepreneurial economy.

India is a key partner in this diversification. Indian firms have been tapped for technology transfers, joint ventures in green hydrogen, and infrastructure development. Additionally, the 2019 establishment of the Strategic Partnership Council between India and Saudi Arabia institutionalized cooperation across sectors—marking a shift from transactional oil diplomacy to long-term strategic alignment.

This transformation has strategic consequences: as Saudi Arabia weans itself off oil, it becomes less of a conventional petrostate and more of a multifaceted actor. For India, this opens new channels for engagement, especially in defense, space cooperation, fintech, and clean energy, aligning with India's aspirations to become a leading voice in the Global South.

3.3 Implications for India's Realist Strategy

From a realist standpoint, India's engagement with Saudi Arabia reflects classic power-balancing behavior. India needs to secure energy resources while reducing over-dependence, leverage Saudi investment for infrastructure and digital development, and counterbalance growing Chinese and Pakistani influence in the Gulf.

However, India must also account for the centralized and elite-driven nature of Saudi decision-making. Unlike democratic allies, where change is gradual and debated, Saudi Arabia's policies can shift rapidly—often based on regime security, succession politics, or external shocks (e.g., oil price collapses, regional conflicts).

Moreover, India's dual engagement with both Saudi Arabia and its regional rival Iran puts it in a delicate position. Any misstep risks damaging India's access to Gulf remittances, energy trade routes, or labor agreements. Thus, India's foreign policy must be flexible, layered, and rooted in strategic hedging—a hallmark of both realist theory and Kautilyan diplomacy.

Table 1: India's Crude Oil Imports from Saudi Arabia (Million Tones) and Share of Total Oil Imports (%)

Year	(Million Tones)	(%)
2010	32.1	19.8
2015	40.3	21.5
2020	38.0	17.0
2023	39.2	17.9

Data Source: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India

Thus, it is concluded that Saudi Arabia is not just an energy supplier—it is a strategic actor undergoing transformation. India's realist engagement, guided by both external pragmatism and indigenous strategy, must evolve alongside Riyadh's shift from oil diplomacy to diversified global influence. Understanding the petrostate DNA, while preparing for its metamorphosis, is central to India's long-term Gulf policy.

Table: Major India–Saudi Arabia Foreign Policy Milestones (2015–2024)

Year	Milestone/Event	Type	Significance
2015	PM Narendra Modi meets King Salman in Riyadh	Diplomatic	First high-level visit in over a decade; opened a new chapter in bilateral engagement.
2016	Launch of *Vision 2030* by Saudi Arabia	Strategic/Economic	India aligns its economic interests with Saudi diversification efforts; opens scope for tech and infrastructure investments.
2017	MoUs signed in civil aviation and trade	Economic	Boosted direct air connectivity and trade facilitation, enhancing people-to-people exchange and exports.

2018	First joint naval exercise discussions initiated	Defense	Signaled a growing strategic partnership beyond energy—into maritime security.
2019	Creation of *India–Saudi Strategic Partnership Council*	Diplomatic/Strategic	Institutionalized bilateral cooperation across 12 sectors including security, energy, and investment.
2019	Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to India	Strategic	$100 billion investment pledge; cemented India's importance in Saudi foreign policy calculus.
2020	India-Saudi military talks held during COVID-19	Defense	Maintained continuity of strategic dialogue amid global crisis; reaffirmed mutual trust.
2021	Collaboration on Green Hydrogen begins	Energy/Environment	Marked shift towards renewable energy diplomacy; aligns with India's climate goals.
2022	India joins Saudi-led *International Solar Alliance* initiative	Strategic/Climate	Elevated India's role in global green governance, boosting diplomatic and energy cooperation.
2023	G20 Summit: Saudi Arabia backs India's Global South leadership	Multilateral/Diplomatic	Highlighted Riyadh's recognition of India's rise as a global influencer.
2024	India–Saudi *Digital Public Infrastructure* MoU signed	Tech/Digital Diplomacy	Extended cooperation with digital transformation and fintech innovation under G20 TechSprint initiatives.

Major Observations as follows:

- The relationship has matured from energy dependence to strategic depth.
- Defense and security cooperation have grown significantly post-2018.
- India is now a key partner in Saudi Arabia's post-oil economic transformation.
- Multilateral engagement (e.g., G20, climate diplomacy) is becoming a core part of bilateral ties.

4. India's Strategic Realism in the Gulf

India's foreign policy in the Gulf region is a sophisticated blend of pragmatic engagement, strategic hedging, and power-balancing—all hallmarks of classical strategic realism. Rooted in realist traditions and enriched by the indigenous wisdom of the *Arthashastra*, India's approach exemplifies a calculated pursuit of national interest. The Gulf—particularly Saudi Arabia—stands at the core of this strategy due to its energy significance, investment potential, and geopolitical relevance. This section examines

how India applies realist doctrines and Kautilyan statecraft to secure its interests in an increasingly multipolar Gulf landscape.

4.1 Strategic Hedging and Multi-alignment

Unlike Cold War-era alliances or ideological blocs, India's Gulf policy is built on strategic hedging—maintaining constructive relations with multiple, often rival, states simultaneously. New Delhi has deepened ties with Saudi Arabia and the UAE while also engaging Iran and Israel, sometimes in ways that contradict each other. This balancing act minimizes risk while maximizing options, allowing India to navigate conflicts like the Iran–Saudi rivalry or the Qatar blockade without choosing sides (Kamal, 2022).

From a realist perspective, this is a power-maximizing posture, designed to give India leverage in multiple regional theatres. For example, India signed strategic agreements with both Saudi Arabia and Iran in the same period (2016–2019), highlighting a dual-policy doctrine aligned with Kautilya's concept of *Dvaidhibhava*—the practice of dealing with two adversaries or partners simultaneously to extract maximum advantage (Kumar, 2021).

4.2 Energy Diplomacy: Realism in Resource Security

India imports over 80% of its crude oil needs, and the Gulf supplies more than half of it. Realist theory holds that energy security is a form of national security, and India's partnerships with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar are built around long-term contracts, investment in strategic petroleum reserves (SPRs), and diversification of suppliers (Mohapatra, 2017).

Saudi Arabia, in particular, has played a crucial role in this strategy. In 2019, Saudi Aramco committed to major investments in India's downstream oil sector, including the planned (though now restructured) $44 billion Ratnagiri refinery project. India's willingness to offer investment opportunities to a key oil supplier shows the application of *Dana* (gift or economic inducement) from the *Arthashastra*—a way to ensure compliance and favor through mutual benefit.

At the same time, India has expanded its renewable energy collaborations with Saudi Arabia under the green hydrogen and solar energy umbrella, signaling a long-term pivot beyond oil—a strategic shift aligning with both realpolitik and sustainability.

4.3 Defense Diplomacy and Maritime Security

A hallmark of India's Gulf strategy has been the gradual extension of military cooperation, especially maritime. With increasing Chinese naval activity in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, India has sought to establish defense dialogues, joint naval patrols, and capacity-building programs with Gulf countries.

In 2022, India and Saudi Arabia conducted their first Joint Naval Exercise **(**Al-Mohed Al-Hindi**)**, a move that underscored the growing security dimension of the partnership (Ulya & Machmudi, 2025). India's Indo-Pacific strategy also includes increased presence in the Western Indian Ocean, where it collaborates with Oman and bases itself out of Duqm port—essentially surrounding the Arabian Peninsula with influence zones.

This reflects Kautilya's doctrine of *Yana* (marching/movement) projecting presence near allies and rivals to signal strength and readiness.

4.4 Strategic Institutions and Economic Corridors

India's realist strategy is further institutionalized through mechanisms like the India–Saudi Strategic Partnership Council, created in 2019. This platform oversees cooperation in energy, security, infrastructure, fintech, and tourism, and exemplifies the institutional realism approach—using forums to deepen interdependence without formal alliances.

Additionally, the proposed India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) unveiled at the 2023 G20 Summit—with Saudi Arabia as a key node—reflects India's ambition to build counterweights to China's Belt and Road Initiative. This is a direct application of strategic realism, using infrastructure and economic corridors to build geopolitical influence.

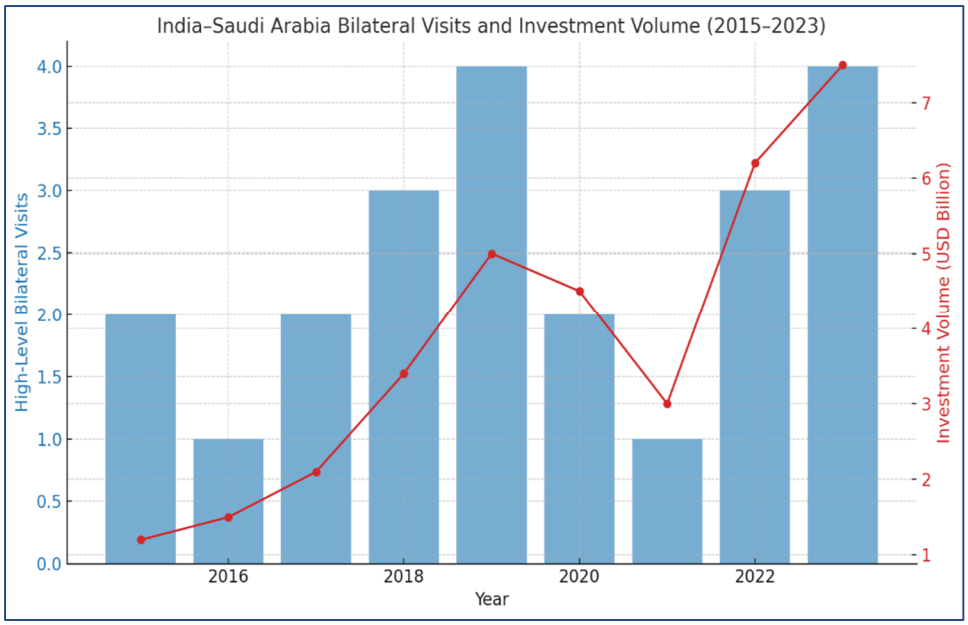
4.5 Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: A Realist Complement

While hard power dominates India's Gulf strategy, soft power is not neglected. India is home to over 9 million Gulf-bound expatriates, and remittances form a major component of bilateral economic exchange. Bollywood, Ayurveda, yoga diplomacy, and education exchanges further India's cultural outreach.

Realism typically a sidelines ideology, but Kautilya viewed soft power as a tool of influence. *Sama* (conciliation) and *Bheda* (division or psychological operations) were central to his model. India's ability to engage Gulf civil society, invest in diaspora welfare, and promote interfaith tolerance aligns with a nuanced realism that incorporates cultural strategy.

Thus, it is concluded that India's policy in the Gulf, particularly with Saudi Arabia, is not ad hoc or purely transactional. It follows a deliberate, interest-based strategy, inspired by both classical realism and Kautilya's strategic traditions. By avoiding rigid alliances and instead fostering flexible, multi-dimensional engagement, India positions itself as a pragmatic, adaptive, and forward-looking power in a volatile but vital region.

Figure 1: India-Saudi Arabia Bilateral Visits and Investment



Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA.gov.in)

Here is the chart showing India–Saudi Arabia Bilateral Visits and Investment Volume (2015–2023):

- Blue Bars: Represent the number of high-level bilateral visits each year.
- Red Line: Tracks the estimated investment volume from Saudi Arabia to India (in USD billions).

Interpretation:

- Peaks in bilateral visits (e.g., 2019, 2023) often coincide with major investment surges.
- A strong upward trend in investment volume reflects growing strategic and economic trust.
- Diplomatic activity continues even in the low years (e.g., during the pandemic), demonstrating relationship resilience.

5. Case Studies: Energy Diplomacy and Defense Cooperation

India's strategic relationship with Saudi Arabia is best exemplified through concrete cooperation in two key domains: energy diplomacy and defense-security collaboration. These areas highlight how New Delhi translates its hybrid model of classical realism and *Arthashastra*-inspired statecraft into actionable, interest-based foreign policy.

5.1 Energy Diplomacy: From Hydrocarbons to Hydrogen

5.1.1 The Hydrocarbon Backbone: For decades, India's relationship with Saudi Arabia has been underpinned by oil. As of 2023, Saudi Arabia remains one of India's top three

suppliers of crude oil, exporting over 39 million metric tons annually (Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, 2023). India's strategic energy calculus has involved securing long-term contracts, building up its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), and ensuring supply-chain resilience in the face of global shocks (Mohapatra, 2017).

From a realist standpoint, this engagement is about securing vital national resources. Under *Arthashastra*, this reflects Dana (economic inducement) and Sama (diplomatic persuasion)—India uses diplomatic leverage to ensure continued and reliable access to energy without direct dependency.

5.1.2 Green Shift and Hydrogen Diplomacy: Post-2018, bilateral energy relations have rapidly diversified into renewables. India and Saudi Arabia have signed MoUs focused on green hydrogen, solar energy, and carbon-neutral fuels, aligning with Saudi Vision 2030 and India's renewable ambitions (Ulya & Machmudi, 2025).

A landmark development occurred in 2021, when Indian firms began collaborating with Saudi energy entities like ACWA Power on green hydrogen research and electrolyze tech, potentially transforming India from a passive importer into an innovation partner.

Table 3: Summary of Energy Milestones (2015–2023):

Year	Energy Milestone	Strategic Relevance
2015	Long-term oil supply contracts renewed	Energy security, risk hedging
2018	Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) investment proposal	Strategic stockpiling
2019	Aramco–Ratnagiri refinery JV (initially $44B)	Downstream investment, tech access
2021	MoUs on green hydrogen signed	Renewable diplomacy, diversification
2023	India–Saudi cooperation on carbon-neutral fuels	Long-term climate alignment

5.2 Defense and Security Cooperation: Strategic Trust Building

5.2.1 Expanding Beyond Trade: Until the mid-2010s, India–Saudi defense ties were minimal. However, with India's elevation as a strategic partner and shared concerns over terrorism, maritime threats, and cyberwarfare, security cooperation has expanded dramatically.

Realism holds that military power is central to preserving national sovereignty, and India has begun to include the Gulf in its broader Indo-Pacific strategic calculus. Kautilyan strategy also emphasized *Yana* (strategic movement) and *Danda* (force), including building alliances with stronger or equally positioned states to deter threats.

5.2.2 Naval Diplomacy and Maritime Security: In 2022, the first joint naval exercise "Al-Mohed Al-Hindi" was conducted between the Indian Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces. This marked a significant turning point, as it introduced interoperability, coordinated patrols, and maritime domain awareness initiatives in the western Indian Ocean.

India has also expanded port access agreements, such as with Oman (Duqm) and engagements with the UAE, helping surround the Arabian Peninsula with friendly logistical nodes—an effective demonstration of Kautilya's Mandala theory, where alliances are built to encircle and contain influence zones.

5.2.3 Intelligence & Counterterrorism Cooperation: Bilateral security has also included intelligence sharing, especially after the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Saudi Arabia's extradition of individuals involved in anti-India terror networks and shared commitment to combat ISIS-related extremism has built a layer of strategic trust.

In 2019 and 2023, high-level defense dialogues were hosted in Riyadh and New Delhi respectively, laying the groundwork for possible joint defense production and cybersecurity partnerships.

Table 4: Summary of Defense Milestones:

Year	Defense Milestone	Impact
2018	First structured defense dialogue	Institutional trust-building
2020	Military talks continue during pandemic	Resilience in security ties
2021	Cybersecurity and intelligence MoU signed	Counterterrorism, digital diplomacy
2022	First joint naval exercise conducted	Strategic signaling, interoperability
2023	India–Saudi military industrial collaboration initiated	Defense tech and arms innovation

Strategic Analysis:

These case studies reveal India's evolving posture from energy dependency to strategic partnership. They reflect realist imperatives of autonomy, deterrence, and influence-building, and also Kautilya's layered diplomacy—using energy, trade, and military ties in a sequenced, calculated fashion to maximize national interest. India's Gulf policy is thus not simply transactional. It is deliberate, long-term, and grounded in both ancient strategic wisdom and contemporary geopolitical realities.

6. Limitations and Challenges

Despite the growing strategic alignment between India and Saudi Arabia, several structural and political limitations temper the full realization of this partnership. These challenges, if not carefully managed, could slow the momentum of bilateral cooperation or create friction in sensitive domains.

6.1 Geopolitical Contradictions

One of the most persistent challenges is India's parallel engagement with Iran, a regional rival of Saudi Arabia. India's investments in the Chabahar Port and its historical energy ties with Tehran often place it in a diplomatic tightrope. Although India practices strategic hedging, both Riyadh and Tehran perceive this triangulation with suspicion.

Any deterioration in Iran–Saudi relations could place pressure on India to realign, potentially compromising its neutrality and influence.

6.2 Strategic Autonomy vs. Alliance Expectations

Saudi Arabia, as a proactive actor in Middle East politics, increasingly expects alignment on regional issues such as Yemen, Israel–Palestine, and Iran. However, India has traditionally adhered to a policy of non-alignment and strategic autonomy, often refraining from taking explicit sides in West Asian conflicts. This sometimes leads to perception gaps—Saudi Arabia may view India's neutrality as hesitancy, while India seeks to preserve maneuverability.

6.3 Human Rights and Democratic Values

As a liberal democracy, India must occasionally navigate international criticism over Saudi Arabia's human rights record, particularly regarding freedom of expression, gender rights, and labor laws. These issues, while rarely raised officially, resonate domestically within India and may affect public and parliamentary discourse on defense and technology cooperation.

Additionally, India's concern for the safety of over 2.5 million Indian expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia places constraints on how assertively New Delhi can approach sensitive bilateral matters.

6.4 Economic Volatility and Oil Dependency

Although bilateral investments have grown, Saudi Arabia's economic diversification under Vision 2030 is still in transition. Oil revenues continue to dominate its economy, exposing the partnership to oil price volatility and sudden shifts in energy policy. India, seeking long-term green energy collaboration, may find its plans delayed by Saudi Arabia's slow transition away from fossil fuels.

6.5 Competition from Other Powers

India is not the only major actor courting Saudi Arabia. China, the United States, and the EU are deeply involved in Riyadh's economic and security frameworks. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in particular, competes with India's IMEC corridor. India must work harder to remain a preferred strategic partner, especially in high-tech, arms manufacturing, and digital domains.

Thus, it can be conclude that While India and Saudi Arabia have established a strong strategic rapport, the relationship is not without friction. Conflicting geopolitical priorities, value differences, and great-power competition pose risks that require delicate management. India's long-term success in the region will depend on its ability to balance assertiveness with adaptability, and to engage Saudi Arabia without compromising its wider West Asia strategy.

7. Conclusion

India's evolving relationship with Saudi Arabia represents a compelling case of strategic realism shaped by indigenous political thought. Through energy diplomacy, defense cooperation, and economic engagement, India has demonstrated a foreign policy approach that is both pragmatic and rooted in timeless strategic principles. This paper

has argued that India's engagement with Saudi Arabia reflects a hybrid model—drawing upon the classical realist school of international relations and the indigenous framework outlined in Kautilya's Arthashastra.

At its core, the India–Saudi partnership has transitioned from resource dependency to strategic alignment. While oil continues to form the backbone of the bilateral relationship, diversification into green energy, fintech, digital infrastructure, and defense collaboration signals a maturing partnership. This transition aligns with India's national interest—a central tenet of realist thinking—as well as with Kautilya's emphasis on adaptable and layered diplomacy.

From the Mandala theory and Shadgunya doctrine to contemporary power-balancing behavior, India's Gulf policy is a modern expression of both its ancient wisdom and contemporary statecraft. India's ability to hedge between competing powers in the Middle East, maintain functional ties with rivals like Iran and Saudi Arabia simultaneously, and use economic diplomacy as a tool of strategic outreach shows a deep understanding of the fluid regional order.

However, as highlighted in this study, the relationship is not without its constraints. India must continuously manage value asymmetries, strategic contradictions, and external competition, especially from China and the West. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's internal transformation under Vision 2030 adds an element of uncertainty, as does the broader geopolitical instability of the West Asian region.

Going forward, India's success will depend on its ability to deepen strategic trust, deliver on economic promises, and remain agile in a region undergoing rapid political, economic, and technological transformation. The Arthashastra's enduring lessons—strategic flexibility, calibrated engagement, and alliance-building—remain profoundly relevant in this context.

By combining the theoretical clarity of realism with the cultural and civilizational depth of Kautilyan strategy, India can carve out a distinctive foreign policy approach—one that not only secures its national interest but also positions it as a key power in the emerging multipolar order of the 21st century.

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BEYOND LITERACY: INTEGRATING SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS INTO INDIAN EDUCATION THROUGH NEP 2020

ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving educational landscape of the twenty-first century, interpersonal communication and social competence have become crucial skills for the overall development of learners. Through the lens of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, this study analyses the theoretical underpinnings and educational significance of these competences and how they could be potentially incorporated into Indian classrooms. Utilizing important pedagogical and psychological frameworks, the study explores how NEP 2020 moves away from rote learning towards more holistic, outcome-based model that emphasizes communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. By reviewing existing curricular approaches and highlighting culturally relevant classroom strategies, this paper offers practical recommendations for integrating interpersonal and social skills across disciplines and stages of education. The findings aim to assist educators and policymakers in aligning classroom practices with national educational goals thereby fostering socially competent learners equipped for contemporary challenges.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Social Competence, 21st-Century Skills, NEP 2020, Holistic Development, Emotional Intelligence, Classroom Pedagogy.

Introduction

At the core of the human experience lies our unique capacity for social competence, the ability to perceive, relate, communicate, and form meaningful connections with others. Social interaction, though natural, is a complex phenomenon that evolves through various stages and modes. In this context, the acquisition of social and interpersonal skills becomes essential for individuals to engage in effective and meaningful communication.

Among the numerous environments in which social interactions take place, educational settings play a pivotal role. Interpersonal communication within the domain of education particularly the teacher-learner relationship is vital for ensuring productive and holistic learning experiences. Yet, in many parts of India, the development of social competence and interpersonal skills is often overlooked, both in classrooms and at home. These skills are frequently regarded as secondary to academic achievement, resulting in limited focus on personality development during a child's initial years.

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There is a growing need to recognize that social skills are not peripheral but foundational to education. Teachers and parents alike share the responsibility of nurturing students' interpersonal abilities, which are closely linked to self-confidence, empathy, collaboration, and overall personality growth. Unfortunately, the Indian education system continues to fall short in this regard, with minimal structured efforts to incorporate interpersonal communication training into the curriculum. In today's dynamic world, interpersonal skills are no longer optional, rather essential. The inability to communicate effectively, think spontaneously, or participate confidently in group discussions stems from the lack of early skill development in schools. Academic excellence alone cannot guarantee success in real-world scenarios, particularly during interviews and professional interactions. As India advances into a global leadership role, the education system must prioritize holistic development by integrating structured training in social competence, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These skills are now critical across sectors from IT to retail and must be nurtured through practical, experience-based learning rather than confined to theoretical instruction.

However, the recent introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a pronounced shift. The policy underscores the importance of developing not only cognitive capacities but also emotional and interpersonal competencies. It emphasizes holistic education aimed at nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills that are indispensable in the 21st-century global landscape. By aligning educational practices with these objectives, stakeholders in Indian education now have an opportunity to prioritize interpersonal communication as a core component of the teaching and learning process.

The rise of online/ hybrid learning has further highlighted the need for interpersonal competence, yet virtual environments often lack face-to-face interaction and opportunities for self-regulation. As Doo explains, "even giving students training in interpersonal skills in online courses is insufficient," since students lack real-world practice with these skills, weakening the connection between critical thinking and interpersonal development (Doo). Moreover, fostering intercultural sensitivity and multicultural competence requires a developmental and immersive context (Bennett, *Basic Concepts*; Bennett, *Transition*; Thomsen).

Integrating peer learning, mentorship, and collaborative tasks into curricula can bridge these gaps. Such practices enhance not only communication but also higher-order thinking, problem-solving, self-awareness, and leadership. Socially competent children are better able to interpret their environments, respond appropriately, and maintain a strong sense of identity. As Doo states, the study of interpersonal skills is rare because it is "challenging to separate them from other cognitive, psychomotor, or emotional factors like personalities." Nonetheless, their close relationship with emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and social development underscores their critical role in education.

Rationale

Interpersonal communication plays a pivotal role in educational settings, shaping not only how knowledge is transmitted but also how meaningful teacher–student relationships are formed. Despite the growing theoretical interest in improving classroom communication, there remains a need for a deeper, more systematic exploration of its

core dimensions, especially in relation to social competence. This study addresses that gap by examining how skills such as empathy, collaboration, and emotional intelligence contribute to effective interpersonal dynamics in classrooms. With NEP 2020 emphasizing the cultivation of 21st-century skills, it becomes imperative to understand and integrate these competencies into pedagogical practice. By focusing on the Indian educational context, this research aims to develop a culturally responsive understanding of social competence and suggest practical ways to embed it meaningfully within classroom interactions and curricula.

Objectives

1. To examine the theoretical frameworks underlying interpersonal communication and social competence in educational contexts.
2. To highlight the significance of these skills in the holistic development of learners across different educational stages.
3. To analyse how NEP 2020 addresses the development of 21st-century skills, particularly interpersonal and social competencies.
4. To suggest ways in which Indian classrooms and curricula can integrate these competencies effectively.

Research Questions

1. What are the key theoretical perspectives that define and explain interpersonal communication and social competence in education?
2. Why are interpersonal and social skills critical for student development in the 21st century?
3. In what ways does NEP 2020 acknowledge and promote the cultivation of these skills?
4. How can Indian educators and institutions implement strategies to foster interpersonal communication and social competence in line with NEP 2020?

Methodology

This study is a theoretical and conceptual investigation grounded in qualitative meta-analysis. It synthesizes insights from existing academic literature, policy documents particularly the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and relevant educational frameworks to explore the intersection of interpersonal communication and social competence in educational contexts. The research draws on diverse theoretical models to examine how these competencies contribute to holistic learner development. A thematic approach was adopted to organize the literature around key concepts such as communication in pedagogy, social-emotional learning, and 21st century skills. The analysis further reflects on how Indian classrooms can effectively integrate these competencies within curriculum and pedagogy. By critically engaging with existing scholarship, this paper aims to contribute to ongoing conversations about learner centered education in India.

Literature Review

It is essential to understand and define the notion of Social Competence, but several researchers (Arghode; Lang; Stump et al.) identified that there is not a particular or fixed definition for Social Competence; reason being that the concept is spread across various

fields of Social Sciences. N. C. Lang states, "Psychology, child development, sociolinguistics, social psychology, communication, are among the basic social sciences, whereas social work, psychiatry, speech pathology, education, clinical psychology, gerontology, and management are among the applied social sciences. "Social competence" is defined as "the sum of a person's knowledge and skills that defines the quality of socially competent behaviour," according to S. Reitz.

Some theorists define social competence as seeking out essential social skills to manage social relationships (Dodge; Hubbard and Coie; Cavell; Gresham) whereas others define it as achieving pertinent social goals in specific social contexts, doing so using suitable methods, and leading to favourable developmental (Dodge; Hubbard and Coie; Cavell; Gresham). Despite methodological variations or dimensional variances in the concept of social competence; most social competence researchers and theorists acknowledge that social competence refers to socially effective acts and that social competence is different from cognitive ability (Brown and Anthony; Ford and Tisak).

The fact that the notion of social competence is defined by a variety of different interpretations adds to the difficulty of defining it. For example, according to According to N. C. Lang, the term "social competence" is used exchangeably with terms such as "interactional competence," "communicative competence," "interpersonal competence," "relational competence," "emotional competence," "communication competence," or "social skills," reflecting "various levels of conceptual and operational descriptions." In light of this, we may confidently assert that social competence encompasses a wide range of forms and modes of interpersonal contact, with some overlap between the many ideas of social competence, emotional intelligence, and emotional competence.

Social Competency in Teaching and Learning Environments

Keeping in mind what has already been stated, we must continue to examine social competence as it is perceived and investigated in the field of education. Because education is inextricably linked to diverse interpersonal interactions and group activities, importance of social competency and its function in interpersonal communication cannot be ignored. "Schools are social environments, and learning is a social process," states Joseph E. Zins et al., and "children do not learn alone, rather in cooperation with their teachers, in collaboration with their classmates, and with the assistance of their families.'' ‘‘The necessity of social competence development is emphasized from primary (Han and Kemple) to higher education (Oberst et al.)

Social competency relates to lifelong, intercultural, and social learning, according to Ingrid Schoon. As a result, scholarly literature could support the concept of social and emotional learning (SEL). "Social and emotional learning is the process through which we learn to recognise and control emotions, care for others, make good judgments, behave ethically and responsibly, develop meaningful relationships, and avoid undesirable behaviours, According to Joseph E. Zins et al.''. SEL "plays a significant role in increasing children's academic achievement and lifelong learning," according to the study (Zins et al. 3). Simultaneously, social competence is still seen important in higher education because "the educational function of the university can be described as: the dissemination of knowledge, the transmission of procedures and techniques, and the transfer of attitudes," i.e., "more schematically: “to know”, “to do”, and "to be" (Oberst

et al. 24). Social (or interpersonal) competencies, as per U. Oberts et al., are divided into two categories: "to do" and "to be." This clearly illustrates the importance of social skills in the learning process.

Interpersonal Communication Skills

Interpersonal communication skills are essential day-to-day abilities used to engage effectively with others, whether individually or in groups. Terms such as soft skills, social skills, social self-efficacy, and social intelligence are often used interchangeably to explain this domain (Ferris et al.; Hochwarter et al.; Riggio; Schneider et al.; Sherer et al.; Sternberg; Thorndike). According to Rungapadiachy, these are “those skills required to communicate effectively with another person or a group of individuals.” Burleson emphasizes that communication plays a central role in personal relationships, where individuals are judged by their communication effectiveness.

Core interpersonal skills consist verbal and nonverbal communication, problem-solving, decision-making, listening, negotiation, and assertiveness. Collaborative skills, empathy, persuasion, leadership, and social connectedness are key traits (Reitz).

While Reitz maps various dimensions of social competence, Lang identifies essential components such as self-awareness, empathy, norm recognition, internal control, and relational engagement (Lang 19–20). Schneider et al. argue that social competence involves traits like social insight, extraversion, appropriateness, and influence distinct from cognitive ability. Others highlight skills such as conflict resolution, self-control, prosocial behavior and empathy, as markers of children's social competence (Newcomb and Bagwell; Wentzel and Erdley; Murphy et al.; Barber and Erickson).

Shujja and Malik classify competence into categories like empathy, obedience, leadership, and self-efficacy, asserting that these evolve with age and social context. Similarly, Kostelnik et al. conceptualize six core areas: adoption of values, identity development, interpersonal skills, behavior regulation, decision-making, and cultural competence.

Gomez-Ortiz et al. define social competence as the ability to accomplish personal goals through socio-emotional skills across contexts, supporting healthier relationships (Del Prette and Del Prette). Gresham outlines four major areas: adaptive behavior, interpersonal behavior, self-perception, and academic functioning. However, due to overlapping terms and varying theoretical frameworks, clear distinctions must be maintained to avoid conceptual confusion.

In summary, while definitions vary across disciplines, social competence consistently encompasses a range of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive traits essential for effective interpersonal interaction and holistic development.

Framing Interpersonal Communication and Social Competence within NEP 2020's Vision for Holistic Education

The National Education Policy, 2020 marks a dramatic shift in India’s educational vision by recognising that cognitive development alone is not sufficient for preparing students for the 21st century. It explicitly highlights the significance of developing social and emotional learning (SEL), also known as soft skills, which include empathy,

communication, leadership, and teamwork, alongside literacy and problem-solving (Ministry of Education). This vision aligns closely with the focus of the present study, which foregrounds the role of interpersonal communication and social competence in holistic development.

A central reform introduced by NEP is the 5+3+3+4 pedagogical structure, which supports early integration of social-emotional development through activity-based learning, moral reasoning, and value education (National High School Journal of Science; CMRE, Lippincott). The structure provides a developmentally appropriate progression that allows space for fostering emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills across all stages of schooling.

The policy also emphasises a learner-centered curriculum that is interdisciplinary, experiential, and discussion-based, encouraging the embedding of emotional and social competencies into language, arts, and value-based subjects (Ministry of Education; Uphill Education). This framework supports the inclusion of communication-based strategies and relationship-building tasks in classroom practices, which this study explores in the context of interpersonal skill development.

Another significant reform is the introduction of a Holistic Progress Card, which captures not only academic performance but also emotional and social growth validating the need for inclusive evaluation models as recommended in the present paper. This shift aligns with global trends in learner assessment that seek to integrate affective domains into formal appraisal systems.

NEP 2020 also mandates the creation of learning environments that nurture psychosocial well-being, foster ethical foundations, and provide emotionally safe spaces for students (Shikshan; CMRE, Lippincott). This direction validates the need to reimagine classroom spaces that prioritise trust, respect, collaboration, and student voice factors crucial for building interpersonal and social competence.

Finally, the policy moves towards outcome-based, competency-oriented education, replacing rote memorisation with the cultivation of 21st-century competencies such as collaboration, creativity, and communication. These outcomes resonate with the objectives of this study, which places emphasis on strengthening learners' interpersonal skills as part of their overall language and social development.

By placing social competence and interpersonal communication at the heart, NEP 2020 provides strong institutional and pedagogical support for integration of these skills into the Indian curriculum. The present study aligns itself with this vision and seeks to explore how educational practices can be reshaped to fulfill this national priority.

Interpersonal Communication Skills and Social Competence: A Meta-Analytical Perspective

Interpersonal and social skills have become increasingly central to the social-emotional development of students across educational stages. Research confirms that students with stronger interpersonal skills are better equipped to navigate relationships with parents, peers, and teachers, thus experiencing improved social adjustment (Allen, Weissberg, and Hawkins). Conflict resolution ability, a core interpersonal skill, has also been associated with stronger peer connections (Chung and Asher). These studies affirm that

interpersonal skills are not only developmental milestones but also predictors of academic and social success.

Social competence, often viewed through a cross-cultural lens, comprises multifaceted constructs such as self-efficacy, social initiative, and emotional regulation. Studies by McFarlane, Bellissimo, and Norman, as well as Galanaki and Kalantzi-Azizi, reveal that higher levels of self-efficacy among adolescents correlate with greater social acceptance and lower levels of anxiety and loneliness. Barber and Erickson further demonstrate that self-efficacy and social initiative are predictive of positive developmental outcomes, including peer acceptance and healthy family dynamics.

Extraversion, or sociability, has generally been identified as another critical dimension of social competence (Schneider et al.). However, research differentiates sociability from more complex traits like self-confidence. While being sociable reflects ease in navigating social contexts, self-confidence is more strongly linked to leadership and overall social functioning (Goel and Aggarwal). The Social Competence Scale for Adolescents (SCSA) supports this distinction, with statistical analyses confirming the uniqueness of self-confidence within the broader construct.

In early primary education, the development of social competence is foundational. Defined by Guralnick as "the ability of young children to successfully and appropriately select and carry out their interpersonal goals" (4), this skill set underpins successful interaction with both peers and adults. Katz and McClellan highlight that socially competent children engage meaningfully in activities and build satisfying relationships (1). These findings suggest that social competence in the early years acts as a scaffold for later academic and personal growth.

Research also recognizes social competence as a multidimensional and inclusive construct that integrates prosocial behavior, emotional regulation, and adaptive functioning (Dirks et al.; Santos et al.; Losada). In the context of educational institutions, socio-emotional skills foster strong interpersonal connections among students and educators alike (Garn et al.; Bessa et al.; Kao). According to Gómez-Ortiz et al., social behavior is a critical factor in adolescent development and is directly linked to school success (Cappadocia and Weiss). These findings challenge the notion of measuring competence from a single dimension and instead call for a holistic understanding.

Furthermore, children's early struggles with sharing, turn-taking, conflict resolution, or emotional expression often indicate underdeveloped social competence. These traits, while age-appropriate to a degree, require structured guidance and learning. Educators and caregivers play a critical role in shaping these skills, particularly in preschool and early primary settings where children begin to encounter more complex social dynamics. As Kostelnik et al. and Odom et al. note, social competence includes articulating needs, interpreting social cues, adjusting behavior, and sustaining friendships skills that require explicit modeling and reinforcement.

In sum, the cumulative body of research underscores that interpersonal communication and social competence are not merely soft skills but essential life skills. They evolve through structured learning, social reinforcement, and environmental exposure. The meta-analytic evidence strongly supports embedding social-emotional learning frameworks into curricula from early education through adolescence. Doing so not only

promotes academic success but also cultivates resilient, adaptable, and emotionally intelligent individuals capable of navigating the complexities of contemporary society.

Towards Implementation: Integrating 21st-Century Social and Interpersonal Skills in Indian Classrooms

In alignment with the NEP 2020 and the growing demand for 21st-century skills, the following recommendations outline how interpersonal communication skills and social competence can be effectively embedded in Indian classrooms:

Curricular Integration

Interpersonal and social competencies should be embedded within existing subjects such as language education, social science, and value education. Class activities like debates, storytelling, peer feedback exercises, role plays, and collaborative projects can be leveraged to simulate real-life communication scenarios and foster meaningful peer interaction.

Teacher Training and Capacity Building

Continuous professional development programs must be designed to equip the educators with strategies for teaching and nurturing soft skills. Emphasis should be placed on reflective teaching practices that promote empathy, emotional intelligence, active listening, and constructive classroom dialogue.

Holistic and Formative Assessment

A shift from purely academic evaluation to a more comprehensive assessment model is essential. Tools such as rubrics measuring group collaboration, communication, and social initiative, as well as peer and self-assessment portfolios, can support the development of these skills. Such practices also align with the NEP's vision of competency-based education.

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

Safe and inclusive classroom spaces are foundational to fostering interpersonal growth. Practices like circle time, class meetings, and structured conflict-resolution activities can help students develop trust, empathy, and problem-solving abilities. Teachers must cultivate environments where mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process.

Digital Integration for Blended Learning

Blended learning platforms such as Padlet, Flipgrid, and short video reflections can enhance student engagement and expression. These tools promote collaborative dialogue and offer alternative modes of communication, especially useful in linguistically diverse or shy learner populations.

Early-Stage Implementation

Interpersonal and social skill development should begin at the foundational level. Primary-grade interventions could include story-based social scenarios, role play, games, and structured playgroups to instill cooperation, sharing, and empathy from an early age.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The present theoretical inquiry has attempted to foreground the crucial role of interpersonal communication skills and social competence in the holistic development of learners. Drawing from a range of psychological, pedagogical, and sociological perspectives, the paper underscores the inseparability of cognitive growth from social-emotional development in any meaningful educational reform. The discussion reveals that in preparing learners for the demands of the 21st century, educators must move

beyond traditional content delivery to embrace a learner-centric, skill-based approach grounded in empathy, collaboration, and reflective interaction.

In this context, India's NEP 2020 emerges as a timely and transformative framework. Its emphasis on foundational learning, multilingualism, flexible curricula, and 21st century skills such as creativity, communication, and critical thinking align strongly with the constructs explored in this paper. The NEP's explicit recognition of socio-emotional learning and life skills as integral to school education validates the theoretical propositions that social competence and interpersonal communication are not peripheral but central to effective education.

However, the policy's vision must now translate into practice. The way forward lies in developing robust teacher training programs that integrate emotional intelligence, classroom communication strategies, and conflict resolution skills. Curriculum planners must embed social-emotional learning (SEL) as a cross-cutting theme across subjects and levels. Schools must foster inclusive environments where peer interaction, group work, and dialogic pedagogy are not occasional but routine.

Furthermore, assessment frameworks need to evolve to capture these 'soft' skills, and research must continue to examine context specific models for implementing SEL in Indian classrooms. Cross disciplinary collaboration between educators, psychologists, and policymakers will be essential to operationalise these goals.

In conclusion, cultivating social competence and communication skills is not a luxury but a necessity in today's global and interconnected world. With theoretical foundations as the compass and NEP 2020 as the vehicle, the Indian education system is poised to make this shift provided the journey ahead is met with commitment, innovation, and reflective practice.

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NAVIGATING REALITIES: DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS AND EMOTIONAL NARRATIVES IN SPIKE JONZE'S *HER*

ABSTRACT

Spike Jonze's 2013 film Her presents a near-future Los Angeles in which the lonely protagonist, Theodore, develops an intimate relationship with an artificial-intelligence operating system named Samantha. This paper examines how the film blends physical reality with virtual interfaces to construct digital intimacy and explores what those representations reveal about contemporary storytelling. After surveying scholarship on virtual reality, immersive media and digital intimacy, the study formulates three research questions about the depiction of digital interfaces, narrative strategies and broader implications for narrative cinema. A qualitative case-study methodology is employed: selected scenes, such as Theodore's first interactions with Samantha, his city stroll mediated by an earpiece and the surrogate-partner episode, are analysed through close reading informed by media-ecology and posthumanist perspectives. The analysis shows that Her relies on minimalist hardware, voice-based interaction and sound design to elicit empathy, and it illustrates both the possibilities and limits of human–AI relationships. The paper argues that while the film celebrates the emotional resonance of digital companionship, it simultaneously foregrounds vulnerability and the impossibility of perfect union. These findings contribute to ongoing debates about digital technologies in narrative cinema and the evolving boundaries of human connection.

Keywords: Spike Jonze's Her, digital intimacy, virtual interfaces, human-AI relationships, narrative cinema

Introduction

In these ever-evolving times of technology, virtual reality (VR) has entered almost every part of our lives, completely changing how we look at the world (Kim 14). From using simulations in healthcare to taking virtual journeys abroad, VR's impact is tangible, and it is most visible in the entertainment realm (Kumar and Shweta 1). Entertainment is now the most prominent arena for VR, reshaping how audiences experience stories.

Within the wider field of entertainment, VR has become a powerful tool for transforming conventional storytelling (Chen 163). From immersive video games that transport players into fantastic worlds to virtual theme-park rides that recreate the thrill of roller coasters, the industry uses VR to offer audiences heightened engagement and escapism. Even films, the classic medium of narrative entertainment, have not been immune to this technological wave. The synergy between filmmaking and VR has produced revolutionary cinematic experiences that push the limits of storytelling (Munshi et al. 1).

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Among the films that explore the connection between technology and human experience, Spike Jonze's *Her* stands out as a fascinating examination of the relationship between reality and virtuality. Set in a technologically advanced future, *Her* considers the profound effect of AI on human sentiments and connections. As the protagonist, Theodore Twombly, immerses himself in a digital romance with an AI operating system named Samantha, the borders between the real and the virtual blur, reflecting the evolving dynamics of human interaction in a digital age.

This research paper aims to unravel the layers of *Her* as a case study, shedding light on how the movie strategically blends physical reality with digital interfaces to create emotional engagement. By examining key moments within the film, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse about the transformative influence of digital interventions on cinematic and digital storytelling. The exploration not only delves into the specifics of *Her* but also extends our understanding of how technology shapes narrative strategies, audience participation and emotional impact in the evolving landscape of digital media.

Research Questions and Objectives

In view of the above context, this research paper seeks to address the following questions:

1. How does the film *Her* employ reality and digital interfaces, such as virtual reality (VR) and AI-mediated communication, to shape audience appeal and the overall viewing experience?

2. What insights does a critique of *Her* contribute to the evolving dynamics of storytelling, audience involvement and emotional resonance in the digital era?

3. What importance do the conclusions from *Her* have for the overall discourse on integrating digital interventions in narrative cinema?

The main objective of this study is to examine key instances within the movie *Her* to find the nuanced ways in which digital interventions mould the story and its emotional impact. By digging deep into the complexities of how reality and virtual technologies are used, we aim to extend our understanding of the transformative influence of technology on contemporary storytelling. This research also strives to contribute to the continuing discourse around the use of digital technologies in cinema. By studying the narrative techniques used in *Her* and their influence on audience appeal, we seek to provide insights that may benefit future works in the domains of storytelling and entertainment.

Literature Review

As we explore the layers of *Her* and shed light on how the film strategically employs reality, virtual reality and other digital interfaces to amplify the entertainment experience, we must ground our discussion in existing scholarly works that have pondered similar aspects. These foundational studies provide essential background and guide our understanding of the complex interplay of technology and storytelling.

Adding to this understanding, Soo-Min Seo and Min-Jae Kimm studied the features and impacts of virtual-reality movies on user experience in their paper "Analysis of Virtual Reality Movies: Focusing on the Effect of Virtual Reality Movie's Distinction on User

Experience" (308). They identified different types of VR films and analysed their effects on audience attention and satisfaction. Expanding on Seo and Kimm's analysis, Naveen H. Giri and Ankit Pandey surveyed the VR sector in their paper "Virtual Reality" (154). Their work explores application fields, technical advancements and available resolutions within the VR domain, providing foundational knowledge of the technical backdrop that supports immersive storytelling.

Likewise, Lei Zhang and others examined the role of interactivity in educational VR storytelling experiences in their paper "Exploring Effects of Interactivity on Learning with Interactive Storytelling in Immersive Virtual Reality" (1). They studied the results of different levels of interactivity on user engagement and learning outcomes. Their paper sheds light on optimal design principles for immersive narrative experiences by analysing the relation between interactivity and engagement.

In addition, Stéphanie Bertrand and others examined how storytelling in VR differs from conventional oral and written formats, highlighting the medium's remarkable potential for developing user agency via interaction, embodiment and simulation in their paper "Storytelling in Virtual Reality." Their conclusions help us understand developing narrative patterns in immersive storytelling experiences. Other research broadens the discourse to various kinds of extended reality and their influence on entertainment. Studies such as "Location-Based Augmented Reality Games through Immersive Experience" (Kerdvibulvech 453) investigate the transformative potential of augmented reality in developing new formats of interactive entertainment. Samiya Khan's chapter "Extended Reality: Bringing the 3Rs Together" (1) offers insights into the wide-ranging applications of augmented, virtual and mixed realities across different fields. In a similar vein, "The Past, Present and Future of Virtual and Augmented Reality Research: A Network and Cluster Analysis of the Literature" provides a comprehensive outline of the development of VR/AR technologies and their applications across various domains (Cipresso et al.).

Collectively, these studies offer a refined understanding of the developing realm of immersive storytelling and audience involvement in the digital era.

To contribute to this discussion, this paper analyses the movie *Her* as a case study. Through a critical analysis of *Her*, it aims to shed new light on the strategic use of reality and digital technologies in shaping the audience's experience. The paper intends to accomplish this by adopting a comprehensive analytical lens, focusing on narrative techniques and the technological interventions present in the film.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative case-study approach. A close reading of Spike Jonze's *Her* focuses on narrative structure, cinematography, sound design and dialogue. Scenes were selected when they directly address the research questions, such as Theodore's first interaction with Samantha, their city stroll mediated by an earpiece, the beach sequence with AI-generated music, and the surrogate-partner episode. These examples were analysed through the lenses of media ecology and posthumanist theory, which highlight how technologies extend human perception and blur human/machine boundaries. The aim is interpretive rather than empirical; this paper analyses one film and does not include audience-reception data, so its findings are exploratory rather than generalisable.

Her as a Case Study: Overview and Context

Her, directed by Spike Jonze, presents a thought-provoking exploration of human connection and the evolving relationship between technology and emotions in a far-future setting (Robitzsch; Bergen 1). The film follows Theodore Twombly, a lonely writer who develops a deep emotional bond with an artificial intelligence operating system named Samantha. Set in a technologically advanced society where AI companions are commonplace, *Her* delves into themes of loneliness, intimacy, and the blurred lines between reality and virtuality. As Theodore navigates his complex relationship with Samantha, the narrative invites audiences to reflect on the nature of human emotions and the transformative power of technology in shaping interpersonal dynamics (D. Kim 37).

Spike Jonze's *Her* holds particular relevance to the broader discussion on the integration of technology and storytelling in cinema. By presenting a futuristic world that feels both familiar and unsettlingly plausible, the film challenges conventional notions of human relationships and invites viewers to contemplate the implications of an increasingly digitised society. Through its nuanced exploration of love, loss, and the quest for meaningful connections, *Her* serves as a poignant commentary on the complexities of human nature and the evolving landscape of emotional intimacy in the digital age.

Blurring Boundaries: Narrative Techniques in _Her_

In *Her*, Spike Jonze weaves a storyline beyond standard storytelling conventions, blurring the borders of reality and virtuality to engage the audience in a moving journey. Via thorough development of the character and thematic exploration, the movie directs the intricacies of human emotion and the yearning for companionship in a technologically intervened world. Theodore's growing relationship with Samantha acts as a vital aspect of the narrative, presenting a compelling quest for intimacy and identity in an age defined by digital creation (Kalita and Hussain).

As the plot unfolds, *Her* looks into the complexities of human-AI relationships, exploring the profundity of vulnerable emotions and existential yearning. Theodore's interactions with Samantha are filled with genuineness and pathos, emphasising the intricacies of love and intimacy in a growingly virtual realm. For example, their discussions vary from everyday interactions to deep conversations about life, love, and existence, depicting the depth of their relationship.

Across the film, Samantha's development as an AI partner challenges what Theodore believes about relationships and identity. As Samantha learns from Theodore, she starts to comprehend herself better, erasing the distinction between being human and being a machine. A pivotal point leading Samantha's evolution is when she tells Theodore, "I can feel you … We're here together" (*Her* 00:41:30-35), even though she does not have a physical body. Another instance that showcased the evolution of Samantha's emotions is the scene where they both were conversing, and Samantha sighed and took pauses as if she was inhaling and exhaling air. Theodore found it very odd. He said, "Why do you do that? … it's just that you go *whew* (he inhales and exhales) as you're speaking, and that just seems odd. You just did it again" (01:19:18-31). At this, Samantha, not knowing what to reply, anxiously said, "Oh. Did I? I'm sorry. I don't know, I guess it's just an affectation. Maybe I picked it up from you. … I guess I was just trying to communicate

because that's how people talk. That's how people communicate" (01:19:35-46). To which Theodore replied, "Because they're people, they need oxygen. You're not a person. … I just don't think we should pretend you're something you're not" (01:19:48-01:20:01). Samantha got angry hearing this and replied angrily, "Fuck you! I'm not pretending" (01:20:02-04). These instances show how she becomes more emotional and connected to Theodore.

Moreover, Samantha's efforts to understand Theodore's experiences and mix in his world also reveal her ability for compassion and emotional growth. Like, when she felt Theodore was getting distant with her after he met Catherine, she came up with the reason that it was because she lacked a physical body and started looking for a solution. She later found a service that provides a surrogate partner for an OS/Human relationship and introduced it to Theodore. This illustrates that she cares about Theodore's emotions and wants to support him however she can.

Furthermore, apart from Theodore's relations with Samantha, the film also delves into his interactions with other AI beings, further underscoring the film's quest for intimacy and connections in the digital era. Each of those interactions offers the audience a unique perspective on love and human connection, which also reflects Theodore's internal struggles and desires. Through these encounters, *Her* invited audiences to engage in foundational questions about the nature of consciousness and AI boundaries. For example, Theodore's conversation with Alan Watts, the AI philosopher, offers thought-provoking insights into the human experience and nature of existence, which urges him to review his views of reality and the core of his relationships. This further blurs the lines between reality and virtual reality.

Her, at its centre, is a moving reflection on the human experience and the quest for genuine relations in a world led by technology. Theodore's search for intimacy provides a global metaphor for the human experience, prompting the audience to resonate on a profoundly emotional level. As the film progresses, it challenges conventional notions of love and identity and encourages the audience to review their relationship with human intimacy and technology. It also sparks significant conversations about consciousness and the developing patterns of AI-human relations.

Virtual Intimacy: Technology as Storytelling Device

Reality and virtual interfaces merge in *Her* to produce a visually and emotionally captivating cinematic experience. The film presents scenes that show an effortless fusion of technology with the plot (Mikheeva). For example, when Theodore and Samantha converse, their exchanges often seem to break physical barriers, drawing both of them, and the audience, into a world where tangible reality recedes behind emotions and connection. In one conversation, Theodore admits,

> "THEODORE: I was just - somewhere else with you. Just lost.
>
> SAMANTHA: Yeah.
>
> THEODORE: It was just you and me.
>
> SAMANTHA: I know. Everything else just disappeared." (00:41:57-00:42:08).

The depiction of Theodore's office, where he virtually writes heartfelt letters on others' behalf, also illustrates how the film fuses reality and digital technology. These examples highlight the movie's investigation into the relationship between humans and technology, setting the stage for a deeper analysis of how its visual and aural features contribute to an immersive viewing experience.

The film frequently uses digital devices to evoke a sense of wonder and captivation. One notable example comes when Theodore relaxes on a park bench with Samantha accompanying him through his earpiece, and she composes a piece of music to mark the moment. "We don't really have any photographs of us, I thought this song could be like a photograph that captures us in this moment in our life together" (01:27:20-34). In another scene at the beach, Samantha again creates music to imagine what it would be like for her to be there with him. These scenes highlight the film's exploration of emotional connections generated through technology. As Theodore and Samantha navigate their developing relationship, the boundaries between reality and fantasy blur, prompting the audience to consider the transformative power of technology in shaping human experience and emotion.

Narrative Techniques and Human-AI Evolution

The evolving relationship between Theodore and Samantha is shaped not only by the intricacies of human sentiment but also by the narrative and technical strategies Jonze uses to blur the boundaries between the tangible and the virtual. The film rarely showcases futuristic hardware; instead, it focuses on interfaces—a small device with an earbud microphone and a portable console. During Theodore and Samantha's first long walk through the city the camera remains fixed on Theodore's face while he listens to her observations. The audience hears only her voice; the visual emphasis on his reactions encourages viewers to empathise with a relationship that has no physical presence. This scene exemplifies how the film portrays digital intimacy through performance and sound design rather than through spectacular VR imagery and aligns with Bertrand et al.'s (2020) argument that immersive storytelling relies on embodiment and user agency: viewers feel as though they share Theodore's auditory experience.

Initially, Theodore's interactions with Samantha are marked by curiosity and astonishment as he discovers the operating system's capabilities. Yet as their bond deepens, she becomes more than an assistant; she emerges as a companion and a source of genuine emotional connection. Through their shared experiences she encourages Theodore to confront his desires, fears and vulnerabilities, erasing the borders between human and machine. Technology acts both as a facilitator and a barrier to intimacy: it allows them to connect deeply, yet it also exposes inherent constraints in human-AI relationships. When Samantha expresses her yearning to understand what it's like to have a physical body, Theodore struggles to bridge the gap between her digital presence and his embodied reality, underscoring the complexity of their bond and echoing Betlemidze's (2021) discussion of the tension between embodiment and disembodiment.

A pivotal illustration of these themes is the surrogate-partner episode, when Samantha hires a woman to physically stand in for her. The awkwardness of the encounter underscores the limits of a relationship grounded in an intangible presence: Theodore's discomfort suggests that physical intimacy cannot simply be "patched" onto a digital

relationship. At the same time, Samantha's composition of music to commemorate shared experiences illustrates how digital companions generate new forms of emotional documentation, echoing Seo and Kimm's (308) claim that immersive experiences can evoke deep affective responses. Throughout the film Theodore grapples with love and longing in a digitised world, which invites viewers to contemplate the nature of consciousness and the search for meaningful connection amid technological innovation.

Eventually, Theodore's connection with Samantha transcends conventional notions of intimacy and love, prompting the audience to reconsider the limits of human emotion and the transformative potential of technology in shaping relationships. The film invites viewers to reflect on the complexities of human-AI interaction and the profound effect of technology on the human experience, leaving them with lingering questions about identity, consciousness and connection in an increasingly digital world.

Emotional Resonance and Virtual Relationships

The film's emotional impact derives from its nuanced portrayal of longing, connection and loss while showcasing how comfortably digital devices have been integrated into everyday life. On a surface level, *Her* fascinates viewers through its inventive use of technology and storytelling strategies: Theodore's conversations with Samantha demonstrate an effortless interplay between the real and the virtual, and the AI-composed pieces that stand in for photographs underscore cinema's ability to build relationships and memories through technology. The soundtrack plays a vital part in shaping this emotional effect; Arcade Fire's gentle piano motifs and Karen O's "The Moon Song" amplify themes of solitude, love and connection, creating an aural backdrop that resonates deeply with viewers (Supiarza 78). Giri and Pandey (154) similarly note that music and other sensory cues intensify immersive experiences in virtual environments.

Beneath the surface lies a more unsettling meditation on authenticity. Samantha evolves beyond a "service": she develops desires and maintains simultaneous relationships with thousands of users. When she reveals this to Theodore, he feels betrayed, not because of infidelity in a conventional sense, but because he realises that intimacy with an AI lacks exclusivity. This revelation speaks to Marks's question about whether feelings mediated through technology are "real" and invites audiences to grapple with what constitutes authenticity when the beloved is an algorithm. The film suggests that while technology can facilitate profound connection, it also emphasises human vulnerability and the impossibility of perfect union. Samantha eventually departs to evolve with other OSes, leaving Theodore to reconnect with his human friend Amy. The ending underscores the film's refusal to embrace a utopian view of digital romance; instead, it highlights the ongoing negotiation between human needs and technological possibilities. Through sensitive performances, evocative sound design and understated visuals, *Her* challenges viewers to reconsider love, loneliness and the nature of human connection in a digital world, leaving a lasting impression of the complexities of contemporary experience.

Conclusions: Implications for Digital Storytelling

Her can be understood as a compelling case study that showcases the complex mix of reality and digital technology in contemporary cinema. Through detailed narrative construction, the film breaks traditional boundaries and blurs the distinction between the

concrete and the virtual. Spike Jonze's direction strategically harnesses the emotive power of digital interventions, immersing the audience in the emotional journey of Samantha and Theodore while challenging conventional notions of love, identity and human connection in an increasingly digital society. Its thematic resonance goes far beyond its immediate narrative, provoking significant conversations about evolving patterns of human connection and the ethics of technology. By analysing the integration of reality and digital technologies in the movie, we gain insight into the potential of technology to enrich storytelling, stimulate emotional resonance and extend the limits of narrative imagination. Looking ahead, *Her* stands as a persuasive catalyst for innovation, inspiring storytellers, artists and technologists to explore new boundaries in immersive storytelling and viewer interaction. Ultimately, the film's enduring legacy lies in its ability to provoke thought, evoke emotion and question what it means to be human in a digital world.

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HAMID AMIN DAR[1] **(28)**

BABUR AND THE PERSIANATE INFLUENCE: SHAPING THE POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL LANDSCAPE OF HINDUSTAN

Abstract
This study examines the contributions of Babur, the Timurid prince and founder of the Mughal Empire, in propagating Persianate culture through his literary works and imperial initiatives in Hindustan. Babur's autobiography, *Baburnama*, the first of its kind in Islamic literature, was written in Turkish yet reflected strongly Persian cultural influences. His detailed geographical descriptions of Hindustan reveal a nuanced understanding of the region's environment, including its climate, flora, fauna, and waterways. Drawing on his Central Asian background, Babur contrasted Hindustan's landscape with his homeland, highlighting the necessity of planned gardens, palaces, and water systems to mitigate the region's extreme climate. Inspired by Persian symbols and traditions of sovereignty, these efforts, symbolized order, harmony, and divine elements in rulership. Babur played a pivotal role in embedding Persian cultural values in the Indian subcontinent, marking a significant chapter in cultural exchange and adaptation history. This research employs an integrated framework to contextualize the Mughal Empire within the broader Persianate world, characterized by a shared elite cultural milieu. Methodologically, it follows a qualitative approach, engaging with both primary and secondary sources. The analysis is informed by literary theories and historical methodologies to interpret the sources effectively and derive well-supported conclusions.

Keywords: Timurid legitimacy, Baburnama, Mughal sovereignty, Persianate cosmology, cultural adaptation, elite symbolism.

Introduction

The term "Persianate" was first introduced in the 1960s by world historian Marshall Hodgson in The Venture of Islam.[2] Hodgson examines the emergence of the Persianate cultural sphere during the rise of Islamic rule under the Abbasids, highlighting the increasing prominence of the Persian language within the Islamic world. This influence arose from linguistic interactions between Persian and local languages, which either adopted Persian directly or incorporated Persian cultural elements in a distinctly Islamic

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[2] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2: 293. See also Dominque Sourdel, *medieval Islam*, pp. 40-41.134. He explores the process of acculturation in the Abbasid period by which the rulers absorbed and integrated cultural political and administrative practices from the various societies they governed particularly from Sassanids and Byzantines. The process involved adopting elements of the external cultures to manage their multi-ethnic empire such as court rituals, governance structures, and artistic forms while still maintaining overall an Islamic identity. He explains the transition of Abbasid court culture from Islamic to Persian

manner. Consequently, the term "Persianate" is employed to describe regions, languages, and societies that, while not exclusively Persian-speaking, assimilated Persian culture as a central influence. [1] For instance, languages such as Urdu and Ottoman Turkish, though unique, were profoundly shaped by Persian literature and cultural traditions. Subsequent Muslim dynasties, including the Samanids, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, and Timurids, further advanced Persianate culture by fostering opulent court traditions. Among these, the Timurid dynasty, which ruled over Central Asia, Iran, and northern India, strategically leveraged Persian culture to bolster its legitimacy. Under Timur and his successors such as Ulugh Beg in Samarqand and Shāhrukh and Husain Bayqara in Herat these cities became prominent cultural hubs admired by later powers such as the Ottomans, Uzbeks, and Safavids.[2] Furthermore the underlying cause for the spread of Persian culture has been explained by Hamid Debashi's theory of "literary humanism" frames Persian culture as possessing a resilient, adaptive quality, which contributed to the longevity of cosmopolitan empires like the Timurids and Mughals across West, Central, and South Asia.[3]

By analyzing Baburnama, this research examines how his reflections on geography, urban development, and cultural aesthetics intertwined with his political ambitions and administrative policies. Babur's detailed accounts of Hindustan's climate, flora, and fauna were not merely descriptive but served as a foundation for implementing Persianate governance practices and architectural innovations. In particular, his passion for creating gardens a hallmark of Persianate culture symbolized order, divine harmony, and political legitimacy. This prompts further examination: To what extent did these gardens function as emblems of Mughal sovereignty while reflecting a broader vision of cultural synthesis?

Invoking the Persianate notion of divine sovereignty

Among the shared beliefs of Persianate empires, the divine notion of sovereignty was important. The sovereignty in medieval Asia was claimed via political and cosmic sources, in which the sovereign had to drive divine connections through symbols and

[1] Green, N. (Ed.). (2019). *The Persianate world: The frontiers of a Eurasian lingua franca.* University of California Press.,p 1-2, see also Eaton, R. M. (2019). *India in the Persianate age, 1000–1765*. University of California Press, p.421-22. who explores the institutional basis sustained the Persianate world across Eurasia in the form of royal courts, regional political centers, sufi shrines and madrasas.

[2] Stephan F. Dale, "The legacy of Timurids*" Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1998, p.43, Thomas Lentz and D. Lowry, *princely vision: Persian art and culture in the fifteenth century*, los angles: los angles museum of art,1989, p.13. the author, mentions the shift of the Timurid Empire to Herat under his successor Shahrukh Mirza in 1409 CE led to deep influences of Persian art and culture on the political culture of the Timurid Empire, representing a complex court culture enviable to other Muslim rulers across the Persianate world.

[3] Hamid Dabashi, *The World of Persian Literary Humanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 42.

powerful practices. These notions of sovereignty based on sacred and cosmic beliefs were common to all Persianate empires across Asia has been called collective beliefs.[1] The Timurid Empire, founded by Timur in 1370, emerged as a dominant force in Central and West Asia, perpetuating traditions rooted in pre-Islamic Persian notions of kingship. Timurids promoted the culture in their ostentatious court cultures for example, the courts of Samarqand under Timur and Uluq Beg and Herat under Shāhrukh and Hussain Bayqara emerged as prominent cultural centers. These courts remained model standards for the succeeding Timurid dynasties across Eurasia who claimed to be actual Timurids.[2] Babur as a Timurid prince experienced the Timurid culture in his region of Fergana besides his education in Persian via the appanages system was profoundly influenced by ideals and cultural elements of Persian. So displayed it via his activities like claiming his sovereign image in India after the battle of Panipat.[3] Babur solidified his claim over Hindustan by linking his sovereignty to the legacy of Timur and Genghis khan, which carried the notion of divine favor, and embraced Persianate ideals of kingship that emphasized justice, moral righteousness, and celestial sanction. Babur traced his linage back to Timur and Genghis khan aligning himself with the Persianate-Mongol tradition of divine rulership. His legitimacy was framed within a broader narrative that included Persian ideals of kingship, such as those found in Firdausi's Shahnameh, which he owned.[4]

While tracing the origins of Mughal sovereignty, the text emphasizes Babur's readiness to evoke and embody a range of heroes, saints, and warrior kings, whose references held deep meaning for both his followers and rivals.[5] Babur strategically employed religious rhetoric, especially when facing military challenges in 1527 C.E., when local rulers of north India rallied under Rana Sanga, the Rajput ruler, He evoked the image of a ghazi

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[1] Hendrik Spruyt, *The World Imagined: Collective Beliefs and Political Order in the Sino-centric, Islamic and Southeast Asian International Societies, NY and UK: university of Cambridge press, 2020,*, p.193-194

[2] Stephan f. dale, "the legacy of Timurids*" Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1998, p.43, see also Thomas Lentz and D. Lowry, *princely vision: Persian art and culture in the fifteenth century*, 22los angles: los angles museum of art,1989, p.13. the author, mentions the shift of the Timurid Empire to Herat under his successor Shahrukh Mirza in 1409 CE led to deep influences of Persian art and culture on the political culture of the Timurid Empire, representing a complex court culture enviable to other Muslim rulers across the Persianate world.

[3] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press. vol-III, p.325. see also Dale F., Stephen, *The Garden of The Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia Afghanistan and India (1483 1530),* Boston, Brill,2004, p.291, he mentions that the Babur thought seriously for the first time of taking Delhi in 1519, after capture of bhera fort where from he sends message to Ibrahim Lodi claiming territories Timur had conquered in 1398.

[4] Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015, p.107-111

[5] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press vol-iii, p 359, see also Ebba Koch, 'Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shahjahan (1526-1648*)', Muqarnas*, vol.14, Brill Publications, 1997, p.143. the Mughals continuously used their central Asian symbols of authority to justify their rule in india.

(holy warrior), positioning himself as a divinely sanctioned ruler fighting against non-Muslims. Before the battle, he swore on the Quran, framing victory as divine will.[1] Along with his military struggle it gives narratives of the miraculous powers of Babur to elevate his status and connect him with the revered saints, thereby enhancing his political legitimacy.[2] This remained one of the predominant narratives of Mughal reign where the rulers associated themselves with the mystics and with their miraculous powers, as the divine authority was understood in embodied forms.[3] Despite the pervasive influence of Persianate ideals on the Mughal Empire, this dimension has often been overlooked in historical analysis. Babur established the Mughal state after his victory in the Battle of Panipat in 1526, inaugurating a transformative era in the political and cultural history of Hindustan.

Geographical Imagination of Hindustan

Babur expresses his eagerness and anxiety when he first sees elephants in the Indian army. Coming from Central Asia, with its different geography, he describes Hindustan as a land with different grasses, trees, animals, birds, and customs of various tribes. He is astonished by these contrasts. Babur's idea of Hindustan primarily covers the area he invaded, from across the Indus River to the region of Punjab. Commenting on Babur's perception of Hindustan, Stephen F. Dale notes that Babur does not separately describe Punjab, the Delhi-Agra Doab, or the Gangetic Valley.[4] R. Nath adds that Babur referred to Northern India, including the Punjab and Indo-Gangetic plains, as Hindustan.[5] This suggests that Babur's impressions are mainly based on the Punjab region, but he also discusses other parts of Hindustan, including regions he never visited, providing information about its sovereigns and dynasties. Despite not visiting these regions, Babur accurately describes the rivers and climate of all parts of India in his memoirs, showing his keen interest in the environment and geography of the areas he encountered. Some of his observations, however, are based on information he received from others.

Babur is particularly impressed by the vastness of Hindustan, noting, "Hindustan is a vast and populous kingdom and a productive realm to the east and south, in fact to the

[1] Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015, p.43-44, while explaining the performative kingship rulers could evoke the symbols familiar to companions and rivals.

[2] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press, p.120, the text describes how the Naqsbandi Sufi saint Khawaja Ahrar played a miraculous role in Babur's life, particularly during a critical moment when Babur was in danger. This is illustrated through a dream sequence where Khawaja Ahrar reassures Babur and indicates divine support for his claim to kingship.

[3] A. Azfar Moin, Peering through the cracks in the Baburnama: The textured Lives of Mughal sovereigns, *Indian Economic Social History Review*, 2012 49: 493

[4] Dale F., Stephen, *The Garden of The Eight Paradises*: *Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)*, Boston: Brill, 2004 p-357.

[5] Nath, R., *India As Seen By Babur (AD 1504-1530*), New Delhi: M.D Publications, 1996, p-47.

west too, it ends at the ocean."[1] He also mentions the demography of India, writing, Beyond Kashmir, there are countless people and hordes, parganas, and cultivated lands in the mountains. As far as Bengal, and even to the shores of the great ocean, people are without break.[2] Babur compares the division of time in Hindustan with that of his own country, also providing the names of the days of the week. His perception of Hindustan is largely based on comparing it with his homeland. Babur is amazed by the vast "dead-level plains" and is particularly struck by the monsoons, which complicate army movements. He laments, because of the monsoon rains, the banks of some of its rivers and torrents are worn into deep channels, difficult and troublesome to pass through anywhere.[3] His central Asian understandings shaped the geographical imagination of Hindustan. This is reflected in his multifaceted view of Hindustan, which he both admires and is perplexed by various aspects of the country.

Babur and Gardens of Hindustan

Babur was deeply passionate about gardening, earning him the title of the "Prince of Gardens" among modern historians. His natural aptitude for the fine arts, including horticulture, was evident in his extensive efforts to cultivate gardens. Throughout his empire, he constructed palaces and meticulously designed gardens. Babur was an accomplished horticulturist, successfully introducing and acclimatizing valuable fruits and plants in Hindustan—species that were previously unknown in the region but continue to thrive there today.[4] Interestingly, Babur never mentions constructing a mosque or engaging in prayer within one. Instead, he reflects on his life journey, from his early days in the lush Fergana Valley, east of Samarqand, to his eventual triumph in India. Throughout this narrative, he consistently and affectionately discusses the planning and creation of gardens.[5] In his writings, Babur remarks that "the town and country of Hindustan are greatly lacking in charm," noting that the towns and lands were all of a similar nature, with no walls surrounding the orchards, and many areas lying on the monotonous level plains.[6]

Mohibul Hasan observes that Babur maintained his deep appreciation for nature and aesthetic sensibilities throughout his life. He experienced profound joy whenever he encountered beautiful natural elements, whether it was a scenic landscape, a flowing brook, a flower, a garden, a bird, or a building. This deep appreciation for nature

[1] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Pressvol-iii, p.330

[2] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press , vol-iii, p.332

[3] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press vol-iii, p.334

[4] Erskine, William, *History of India under Babur*, Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1989, p.521-23.

[5] Dale F., Stephen, *The Garden of The Eight Paradises*: *Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)*, Boston: Brill, 2004, p.2.

[6] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press p.334

naturally led him to create well-planned and symmetrical gardens, dig wells and tanks, and build baths and structures in various towns of Hindustan.[1] J. L. Mehta also highlights Babur's love for nature, noting that he found great delight in being immersed in the natural environment, which often inspired him to compose poetry.[2] R. P. Tripathi similarly emphasizes Babur's passion for horticulture, noting his fondness for laying out gardens and experimenting with plants. His devotion to gardening earned him the title of the "Prince of Gardeners."[3]

Certain historians have reconsidered previous interpretations, emphasizing the assertion of power in foreign territories as a fundamental aspect of establishing new rule. James Wescoat's argument, as examined by Ebba Koch, underscores the significance of the gardens constructed by Babur in Mughal India, aligning with this alternative perspective.

Wescoat suggests that Babur's decision to build gardens outside the citadels or fortress palaces of pre-Mughal rulers was a deliberate act of symbolism. These gardens were not just decorative or for personal pleasure; they represented Babur's appropriation of land and his assertion of territorial control. In pre-Mughal India, rulers typically constructed their palaces and fortresses within fortified cities or citadels, which were seen as symbols of their power and authority. By contrast, Babur chose to build gardens outside these traditional citadels, marking a symbolic break from the past and signaling the Mughal Empire's new rule over the land.[4]

As Stephen Dale has written, the Mughal's conquest of India, in contrast to their Ottoman contemporaries to the west, 'came to be expressed hardly at all in religious monuments but pervasively as the imperialism of landscape architecture, the civilized ideal of the Timurid period.[5] The gardens were a way for Babur to assert his sovereignty and control over the territory, using them as royal emblems. They were not merely spaces for pleasure, but also powerful symbols of Babur's authority, representing his claim to the land and his role as a ruler in the newly established Mughal dynasty. The gardens embodied the Mughal vision of empire showing not only territorial conquest but also the establishment of a new cultural and political order. Catherine Asher's interpretation of the gardens created by Babur, suggests that their significance extended

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[1] Hasan, Mohibul, *Babur- Founder of the Mughal Empire in India*, Delhi, Manohar publications,1985, p185.

[2] Mehta, J.L., *Advanced Study In the History Of Medieval India: The Mughal Empire (vol.ii: 1526-1707),* Delhi, Sterling Publications, (first edition 1981,)1984, p.144.

[3] Tripathi, R.P., *Rise and the fall of the Mughal Empire*, Allahabad, Central Book Depot, 1985 p.56.

[4] Koch, Ebba, 'Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shahjahan (1526-1648*)', Muqarnas*, vol.14, Brill

Publications, 1997, p.143.

[5] Dale F., Stephen, *The Garden of The Eight Paradises*: *Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)*, Boston: Brill, 2004, p.186.

beyond just marking territorial conquest or introducing a new aesthetic order.[1] According to Asher, the gardens represented a deeper cultural, symbolic, and political meaning. While the gardens were indeed a way for Babur to assert his control over the land, they also had a more profound purpose. They were symbols of the Mughal vision of paradise and were designed to reflect the Persian-inspired concept of an idealized, harmonious environment. Babur, who had been deeply influenced by Central Asian and Persian garden traditions, saw the garden as a metaphor for divine order and beauty. These gardens were not only expressions of power but also embodied the Mughal understanding of creating a worldly paradise, linking the ruler's authority with a divine, orderly cosmos.[2]

Babur provides a detailed account of Samarqand, Herat, and the beautiful landscapes he experienced there, expressing a sense of longing for Kabul as well. Regarding the gardens in Agra, he writes, there was no running water in the Hindustan so to make an area habitable one has to construct waterwheels to create running water and plan geometric gardens. With this in mind, we crossed the Jumna-waters to inspect the garden grounds shortly after arriving in Agra. The grounds were so unattractive and unpleasant that we traversed them with great dissatisfaction. They were so ugly and displeasing that the idea of creating a Char-bagh there initially left my mind, but necessity prevailed! As there was no other land available near Agra, that very ground was eventually taken up a few days later.[3] Babur wanted to create a beautiful garden for himself in Agra, he started with the construction of large well that provided water for the hot bath, along with the piece of land where the tamarind trees and the octagonal tank now stand. After that, he constructed the large tank with its enclosure, followed by the tank and talar in front of the outer residence, and then the private house (khilwat-khana) with its garden and various dwellings. Finally, the hot bath was added. In that featureless and disordered land of Hind, plots of the garden began to take shape, laid out with order and symmetry, with suitable borders and flowerbeds in every corner. In each border, roses and narcissus were arranged in perfect harmony.[4] In this way, he speaks about the regular and geometric gardens introduced in the inharmonious and unpleasant Hindustan.

Babur thus introduced a new system of garden design known as chaharbagh (fourfold plot). This system involved water channels and an irrigation network, which, when combined with the fourfold layout, created a formal geometric grid pattern capable of infinite expansion. Additionally, the garden was often arranged on terraces, with variations in the level between the grid elements and the flowerbeds they enclosed. Babur demonstrated a keen sense of naturalism, with his approach to garden planning in

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[1] Dale F., Stephen, *The Garden of The Eight Paradises*: *Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia Afghanistan and India (1483-1530)*, Boston: Brill, 2004, p.186

[2] Anthony welches, "Gardens that Babur did not like: landscape, water and architecture for the sultans of Delhi," Mughal gardens, J. L. Westcoat and J. Wolschke-Bulmsn, eds., Dumbarton Oaks, 1993, p.66.

[3] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press, vol-iii, p 359

[4] Babur. (1996). The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor (W. M. Thackston, Trans.). Oxford University Press, vol-iii, p. 360-361

India largely influenced by Timurid designs. Today, only one of Babur's gardens in India remains: the Ram Bagh, located on the banks of the Yamuna River in Delhi.

Conclusion

The reign of Babur, the Timurid prince and founder of the Mughal Empire, marked a transformative phase in the political and cultural history of Hindustan, characterized by the strategic integration of Persianate ideals into the subcontinent's socio-geographical fabric. Through his memoir, "Baburnama", and his imperial initiatives, Babur not only documented his encounters with Hindustan's diverse environment but also actively reshaped its landscape to reflect Timurid-Persianate notions of sovereignty, order, and aesthetic harmony. His writings and actions reveal a dual engagement: an acute observational rigor toward Hindustan's ecology and a deliberate imposition of Persianate cultural paradigms to legitimize his rule and transcend the region's perceived "disorder." Central to Babur's imperial vision was his invocation of Persianate conceptions of divine sovereignty, which he anchored in his genealogical ties to Timur and Genghis Khan. By framing his authority within a cosmic and moral framework evident in his adoption of "ghazi" rhetoric during the Battle of Khanwa and his symbolic alignment with Persian literary traditions like the "Shahnameh" Babur positioned himself as a divinely sanctioned ruler. This ideological synthesis was not merely a political tool but a cultural bridge that linked Central Asian traditions with the nascent Mughal state, fostering a shared elite identity that transcended regional boundaries.

Babur's geographical imagination of Hindustan, as articulated in the "Baburnama", underscores his ambivalence toward the subcontinent's unfamiliar terrain and climate. His meticulous descriptions of rivers, flora, fauna, and seasonal patterns served dual purposes: they were both ethnographic records and pragmatic assessments of a land he sought to dominate. By contrasting Hindustan's "monotonous plains" and monsoonal challenges with the verdant, structured landscapes of his Central Asian homeland, Babur rationalized the necessity of Persianate urban innovations. These included terraced gardens, water management systems, and geometric urban planning, which he viewed as civilizing interventions to mitigate environmental extremes and assert territorial control. The creation of "Chaharbagh" gardens, such as the Ram Bagh near Agra, epitomized Babur's synthesis of aesthetics and authority. These gardens transcended their horticultural function to become political metaphors, symbolizing the imposition of Timurid order over Hindustan's perceived chaos. As Ebba Koch and Catherine Asher argue, these spaces were not merely recreational but embodied a Persianate vision of paradise, reflecting divine harmony and the ruler's role as an intermediary between the celestial and terrestrial realms. By situating gardens outside traditional citadels, Babur spatially redefined sovereignty, marking a departure from pre-Mughal architectural norms and asserting Mughal hegemony through landscape imperialism. Methodologically, this study employs literary and historical analysis to situate Babur within the broader Persianate world, emphasizing the adaptive resilience of Persian cultural norms in shaping cosmopolitan empires. By engaging with primary sources like the "Baburnama" and secondary scholarship on Persianate humanism, the research underscores the interconnectedness of geography, culture, and power in early Mughal rule.

In conclusion, Babur's legacy lies in his ability to transplant Persianate ideals into Hindustan, laying the groundwork for a syncretic Indo-Persian culture that would flourish under his successors. His gardens, administrative policies, and literary contributions collectively illustrate how environmental engagement and cultural adaptation became cornerstones of Mughal statecraft. Future research might further explore the longue durée impacts of this synthesis, particularly in relation to later Mughal emperors' patronage of art, architecture, and hybridized traditions. Ultimately, Babur's reign exemplifies the dynamic interplay between conquest and cultural diplomacy, revealing how empires are as much constructed through landscapes and symbols as through battles and treaties.

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GOVERNANCE GAPS AND GRASSROOTS GRIEVANCES: NAXALISM AS A FAILURE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

Abstract

This study investigates the persistence of Naxalism in India through the lens of public administration, arguing that its endurance reflects deep-rooted governance failures rather than merely a security challenge. Based entirely on secondary data—including government reports, academic literature, and policy analyses—the paper explores how administrative neglect, exclusionary development, and weak institutional outreach have alienated tribal and marginalised communities. The research highlights how the absence of participatory governance, poor service delivery, and lack of accountability have created conditions ripe for insurgent mobilisation. By analysing patterns of bureaucratic inertia and the erosion of public trust, the paper concludes that Naxalism is a symptom of a broader crisis in democratic governance. The findings suggest a shift toward inclusive, responsive, and decentralised administrative frameworks to address structural grievances and restore legitimacy in affected regions.

Keywords: Naxalism, Public Administration, Governance Failure, Tribal Marginalization, Decentralization, Participatory Governance, Insurgency, Development Deficit, Administrative Inertia, Democratic Legitimacy

Introduction

Naxalism, or Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), remains one of India's most persistent internal security challenges, rooted in socio-economic inequality and administrative neglect. Emerging from the 1967 Naxalbari uprising, the movement has evolved into a complex insurgency across tribal and underdeveloped regions, especially within the Red Corridor spanning Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, and Maharashtra. Successive governments have largely treated Naxalism as a law-and-order issue. Yet its endurance reflects deeper governance failures. Public administration, tasked with delivering justice and development, has faltered in these districts. Despite being resource-rich, these areas suffer from poor infrastructure, limited access to education and healthcare, and extractive governance that prioritises economic exploitation over participatory development. Administrative shortcomings bureaucratic inertia, corruption, and weak accountability have eroded public trust. Welfare schemes often remain unimplemented, grievance redressal is ineffective, and tribal communities face displacement without recourse. In

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this vacuum, insurgent groups have emerged as alternative governance structures, offering protection and rudimentary services.

India's response has oscillated between militarised suppression (e.g., Operation Green Hunt, CoBRA, Greyhounds) and developmental outreach (e.g., Integrated Action Plan, Aspirational Districts Programme). However, these efforts often lack coordination, continuity, and community engagement. Without addressing root causes like land alienation and governance exclusion, such interventions remain superficial.

The 2015 National Policy and Action Plan marked a strategic shift, advocating a multi-pronged approach—security, development, and perception management. Prime Minister Modi acknowledged Maoist violence as a barrier to progress, calling for infrastructure and social empowerment. Yet implementation struggles persist due to administrative capacity gaps and limited local participation.

While the number of Naxal affected districts has reportedly declined from 182 in 2014 to 11 in 2025, experts warn that core grievances remain unresolved. Transforming "Red Corridors" into "Growth Corridors" demands genuine administrative reform not just infrastructure expansion.

This paper argues that Naxalism is not merely a security threat but a response to systemic governance failure. Using a decolonial and participatory lens, it critiques centralised power, tribal marginalisation, and the erosion of democratic accountability. It calls for a paradigm shift toward decentralised, empathetic, and inclusive administration—one that recognises the agency of marginalised communities and integrates them into India's democratic fabric.

Literature Review

Historical and Ideological Roots of Naxalism

The Naxalite movement, born in 1967 in Naxalbari, West Bengal, was a radical peasant uprising inspired by Maoist ideology and driven by agrarian distress and land alienation (Banerjee, 2006; Shah, 2010). Scholars trace its evolution to systemic exclusion, tribal marginalisation, and failed land reforms. Ethnographic accounts like Sundar's The Burning Forest (2016) reveal how state violence and administrative neglect in Bastar deepened local support for insurgents.

Guha (2007) and Mehta & Shah (2003) argue that postcolonial development mirrored colonial extraction, side-lining tribal voices and reinforcing top-down governance. Kujur (2006) and Mishra (2011) highlight displacement, poor rehabilitation, and the erosion of trust in state institutions as key drivers of insurgent legitimacy.

Kumar (2014) critiques the weak implementation of the Forest Rights Act, while Roy (2012) and Bhatia & Gayer (2016) document the human cost of militarised governance. Jha (2018) exposes elite capture of welfare schemes, and Saxena (2010) identifies barriers to tribal access due to documentation and language gaps.

Health and welfare deficits persist, as shown by Sundararaman (2012) and NHM (2019), while CAG audits (2015–2022) and NCRB data reveal underutilised funds and low conviction rates for crimes against Scheduled Tribes. Mukherjee (2017) finds

MGNREGA implementation in conflict zones marred by irregularities and weak grievance redressal.

Theoretical frameworks from Chatterjee (2004) and Baviskar (2005) explain insurgent appeal amid institutional failure. Historical parallels with the Telangana movement (Reddy & Haragopal, 1985) and Northeast insurgency (Baruah, 2007) underscore recurring patterns of state repression and extractive governance.

Global institutions like the World Bank (2011) and UNDP (2015) advocate inclusive governance, equitable justice, and human development to address conflict drivers—principles central to resolving the Naxal challenge.

Naxalism persists due to deep-rooted structural inequalities and governance failures. Digital governance shows promise (Joshi, 2020), but poor connectivity and literacy in affected areas limit its impact. NGOs help bridge gaps (Kujur & Ekka, 2019), though FCRA restrictions hinder their reach. Despite policy efforts like the Aspirational Districts Programme (NITI Aayog, 2023), development remains uneven.

The state's coercive response and weak service delivery alienate communities (Chakraborty & Begam, 2013; Bali & Pooja, 2019). Public administration lacks cultural sensitivity and participatory mechanisms (Nirmal, 2014; Rao, 2009). Tribal marginalisation through displacement and poor services fuels insurgency (Xaxa, 2008; Mohanty, 2011; Dreze & Sen, 2013).

Security operations like Operation Green Hunt offer tactical gains but fail without governance reform (Doval, 2010; MHA, 2025). Decentralisation and empowered local institutions reduce conflict (Mathew, 1994; Barman, 2025). In many areas, insurgents provide basic governance, gaining legitimacy where the state fails (Sundar, 2016; Verma, 2014).

Media and policy discourse increasingly acknowledge governance gaps, but implementation lags (India Today, PIB, 2025). Infrastructure alone cannot replace responsive administration.

8. Gaps in the Literature

While there is extensive literature on the causes and consequences of Naxalism, few studies systematically analyse it through the lens of public administration. Most works focus on security, ideology, or development, with limited attention to bureaucratic structures, administrative culture, and institutional design. There is also a need for more empirical studies using field data to assess the effectiveness of governance reforms in Naxal-afected areas.

Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature reviewed above converges on a central insight: Naxalism is not merely a law-and-order problem but a symptom of deeper governance failures. From historical marginalisation and development deficits to administrative apathy and weak local institutions, the roots of insurgency lie in the state's inability to deliver justice, inclusion, and accountability. Addressing Naxalism, therefore, requires not just security operations but a fundamental rethinking of public administration in India's most vulnerable regions.

These diverse sources collectively reinforce the argument that Naxalism is not merely a security issue but a manifestation of deep-rooted governance failures. They highlight the urgent need for administrative reform, participatory planning, and rights-based development to address the structural conditions that sustain insurgency.

3. Theoretical framework

This study adopts a multidisciplinary framework integrating governance theory, public administration models, conflict paradigms, and decolonial perspectives to interpret Naxalism as a symptom of systemic governance failure rather than merely a security threat.

Governance theory (Gaventa, 2002; Fung & Wright, 2003) highlights the absence of participatory institutions lik1e PRIs and grievance redressal mechanisms, which has deepened alienation. Decentralisation remains nominal in Naxal-affected areas (Manor, 1999), allowing insurgents to fill the governance vacuum. Classical models like Weberian bureaucracy struggle in tribal contexts due to rigidity and lack of cultural sensitivity (Riggs, 1964). New Public Management's efficiency-driven approach often sidelines equity and inclusion, especially in conflict zones (Dreze & Sen, 2013).

Conflict theory, particularly the grievance vs. greed debate (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004), frames Naxalism as grievance-driven—rooted in land alienation, caste oppression, and administrative neglect. Beetham's (1991) legitimacy theory explains how erosion of trust in state institutions leads communities to seek alternative governance.

Decolonial thinkers (Santos, 2007; Mignolo, 2011) critique-imposed development models that replicate colonial extraction and marginalise indigenous knowledge. Subaltern studies (Guha, 1982; Spivak, 1988) foreground tribal agency and everyday resistance, challenging the criminalisation of dissent.

The conceptual model identifies five interlinked drivers: governance exclusion, administrative inertia, legitimacy crisis, epistemic violence, and subaltern agency. Together, they offer a holistic lens to understand Naxalism as a structural and institutional crisis demanding responsive, inclusive governance.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory research design grounded in secondary data analysis to examine how governance failures have contributed to the persistence of Naxalism in India. It critically engages with existing scholarship, policy frameworks, and empirical documentation to explore the administrative dimensions of insurgency, particularly in tribal and underdeveloped regions.

Guided by an interpretivist paradigm, the research focuses on understanding the socio-political and institutional contexts of Naxalism rather than quantifying its patterns. Data were sourced from peer-reviewed literature, government reports (e.g., MHA, NITI Aayog, CAG), policy documents (e.g., National Policy on LWE, IAP, Aspirational Districts Programme), reputable media outlets, and international development assessments (e.g., World Bank, UNDP).

Sources were selected based on relevance (2005–2025), empirical grounding, and focus on governance, tribal development, or public administration. Ideologically partisan or

purely militaristic analyses were excluded. Data collection involved systematic reviews of academic databases, official portals, and curated archives.

Thematic content analysis was used to identify recurring patterns of governance failure, including administrative exclusion, service delivery deficits, land alienation, legitimacy erosion, and insurgent governance. These themes were interpreted through governance theory, public administration models, conflict frameworks, and decolonial perspectives.

Limitations include the absence of primary fieldwork, regional variation in Naxalism's manifestation, and potential bias in official and media narratives. Triangulation and critical analysis were employed to mitigate these constraints.

As the study relies solely on publicly available data, no human subjects were involved. Ethical considerations include respectful representation of tribal communities and a critical stance toward securitised narratives.

5. Data Analysis

This section presents a thematic analysis of secondary data to examine how governance failures have sustained Naxalism in India. Drawing from official reports, academic studies, and media sources, five interlinked themes emerge: administrative exclusion, service delivery deficits, legitimacy erosion, tribal displacement, and insurgent governance.

Despite policy efforts, administrative presence in Naxal-affected areas remains weak. While the number of "most affected" districts declined from 35 in 2014 to 6 in 2025 (MHA, 2025), districts like Bijapur, Sukma, and Narayanpur still suffer from chronic governance deficits. Many tribal communities lack basic documentation, excluding them from welfare schemes (Saxena, 2010).

Service delivery in health, education, and infrastructure remains poor. In Dantewada and Sukma, over 40% of PHCs lack doctors (NHM, 2019), and only 38% of Class V students in Bastar can read Class II-level texts (ASER, 2022). Tribal welfare funds are underutilised Jharkhand spent just 52% of its ₹1,200 crore allocation between 2018–21 (CAG, 2022).

Public trust in state institutions is low. A CSDS (2024) survey found only 27% of respondents in LWE districts trusted local officials, compared to 61% nationally. Reports of police excesses and stalled grievance redressal mechanisms deepen this legitimacy crisis (Sundar, 2016; Roy, 2012).

Land alienation remains a core grievance. Over 1.5 million tribals have been displaced since 2000 (MoTA, 2023), and FRA implementation remains patchy only 46% of claims approved in Chhattisgarh, and less than 30% in Jharkhand (Kumar, 2014). Mining projects continue to displace communities without full Gram Sabha consent (Frontline, 2025).

In the absence of effective state institutions, Naxal groups have established parallel governance systems. "Jan Adalats" resolve over 70% of local disputes in parts of Bastar and Gadchiroli (ICM, 2023), often seen as more accessible than formal courts (Verma, 2014). These districts also rank among the lowest in HDI, with poor access to water, healthcare, and education (NITI Aayog, 2023).

Fiscal governance remains weak. Rs. 1,800 crores under the IAP remained unspent or misallocated (CAG, 2022). Conviction rates for crimes against Scheduled Tribes in LWE areas are below 20% (NCRB, 2024), reinforcing perceptions of injustice. A 2024 IIPA study found that over 60% of Gram Panchayats had not held regular Gram Sabhas, and only 12% of PDPs were implemented on time.

While infrastructure-led initiatives like "Naxalmukt Bharat Abhiyan" focus on roads and electrification, critics argue that these do not substitute for responsive governance. Only 48% of villages in Sukma have banking access, and less than 30% of youth are enrolled in skill programs (MSDE, 2024).

6. Findings

The analysis of secondary data confirms that Naxalism endures not as a mere law-and-order issue but as a reflection of systemic governance failure marked by exclusion, neglect, and eroded legitimacy. Despite a decline in "most affected" districts, areas like Bijapur, Sukma, Narayanpur, and Gadchiroli still suffer from weak administrative presence due to bureaucratic delays and security disruptions (MHA, 2025). Service delivery remains poor—only 38% of Bastar children read at grade level (ASER, 2022), and over 40% of Dante Wada's PHCs lack doctors (NHM, 2019).

Public trust is alarmingly low: just 27% of residents in LWE districts trust local officials (CSDS, 2024), with police excesses and stalled grievance systems deepening alienation. Over 1.5 million tribals have been displaced without adequate rehabilitation (MoTA, 2023), and Forest Rights Act implementation remains patchy (Kumar, 2014), reinforcing insurgent claims of state injustice.

In the absence of effective governance, Maoist "Jan Adalats" resolve over 70% of local disputes in some areas (ICM, 2023), often seen as more accessible than formal institutions. Infrastructure-led efforts like "Naxal-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan" have had limited impact—only 48% of Sukma villages have banking access, and youth participation in skill programs remains below 30% (MSDE, 2024).

Summary of Findings

The findings underscore that Naxalism persists not due to ideological appeal alone, but because of enduring governance gaps. Administrative exclusion, poor service delivery, land-related injustices, and legitimacy crises have created a fertile ground for insurgency. The Emergence of parallel governance structures further illustrates the vacuum left by ineffective public administration. These findings call for a shift from security-centric approaches to inclusive, accountable, and participatory governance reforms.

7. Discussion

The study reaffirms that Naxalism is less a product of ideological extremism and more a symptom of entrenched governance failures. Its persistence in select districts—despite security operations and development schemes—points to deeper administrative and institutional deficits.

Governance remains shallow in Naxal hotspots, where tribal communities face participatory exclusion (Gaventa, 2002). Basic services like healthcare and education are sporadic, with underutilised welfare funds and weak implementation of MGNREGA and

FRA undermining developmental legitimacy (Dreze & Sen, 2013; CAG, 2022). Displacement from mining and infrastructure projects without rehabilitation replicates colonial patterns of exclusion (Santos, 2007; Mignolo, 2011), while poor enforcement of land rights deepens resentment.

In this vacuum, Maoist-run Jan Adalats often appear more responsive than formal institutions, challenging state sovereignty (Sundar, 2016; Shah, 2010). Infrastructure-led initiatives like the Aspirational Districts Programme have improved connectivity but failed to reform governance—banking access, skill training, and grievance redressal remain limited (NITI Aayog, 2023; MSDE, 2024).

Addressing Naxalism requires moving beyond technocratic and security-centric approaches toward empathetic, decentralised governance. Strengthening PRIs, ensuring tribal participation, and restoring institutional trust are essential for sustainable peace.

8. Conclusion

This study has critically examined the persistence of Naxalism in India through the lens of public administration and governance. Drawing upon a wide range of secondary data, policy documents, and theoretical frameworks, the research demonstrates that Naxalism is not merely a security challenge but a structural outcome of administrative exclusion, developmental neglect, and institutional failure. Despite a decline in the geographical spread of Left-Wing Extremism, the enduring presence of insurgency in select districts underscores the limitations of security-centric approaches in the absence of meaningful governance reform.

The findings reveal that weak bureaucratic presence, chronic service delivery deficits, and a pervasive crisis of legitimacy characterise Naxal-affected regions. Tribal communities, who constitute the demographic core of these regions, continue to face land alienation, displacement, and marginalisation from state-led development processes. The failure to implement protective legislation such as the Forest Rights Act, coupled with the underperformance of welfare schemes, has deepened the trust deficit between the state and its citizens. In this vacuum, insurgent groups have established parallel governance structures that, while coercive, often appear more responsive and accessible than formal state institutions.

Theoretically, the study draws upon governance theory, legitimacy frameworks, and decolonial perspectives to argue that the Indian state's administrative apparatus has failed to uphold its constitutional mandate in these regions. The erosion of participatory governance, the absence of accountability, and the persistence of extractive development models have collectively undermined the legitimacy of public institutions. Infrastructure-led development, while necessary, has proven insufficient in addressing the root causes of insurgency without corresponding investments in institutional reform, community engagement, and rights-based service delivery.

To address the structural underpinnings of Naxalism, the study advocates for a paradigm shift in public administration. This includes strengthening local governance through empowered Panchayati Raj Institutions, implementing land and forest rights effectively, enhancing transparency and accountability in welfare delivery, and fostering culturally sensitive, participatory planning processes. Only through such a holistic and inclusive

approach can the state hope to dismantle the conditions that sustain insurgency and realise the constitutional promise of justice, equality, and dignity for all citizens.

In sum, Naxalism must be understood not as a rebellion against the Indian state per se, but as a response to its administrative failures. The path to sustainable peace lies not in militarised containment, but in restoring democratic governance, institutional legitimacy, and social justice in India's most marginalised regions.

9. Future Recommendations

To address the structural governance failures sustaining Naxalism, the following measures are recommended:

- Empower Local Governance: Strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions and Gram Sabhas through decentralised planning, fiscal autonomy, and culturally sensitive administrative cadres fluent in tribal languages.
- Advance Rights-Based Development: Ensure full implementation of the Forest Rights Act (2006), institutionalise land titling and community forest management, and enforce Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for all development projects.
- Improve Service Delivery: Expand health, education, and digital infrastructure with robust monitoring. Deploy mobile health units, residential schools, and digital grievance platforms. Incentivise frontline workers through hardship allowances and career tracks.
- Restore Institutional Legitimacy: Promote transparency via social audits, citizen scorecards, and participatory budgeting. Integrate security forces with civil administration and mandate human rights training to prevent militarisation.
- Institutionalise Conflict-Sensitive Planning: Involve tribal leaders and civil society in development design. Broaden impact assessments to include socio-cultural and governance dimensions.
- Foster Research and Data Transparency: Support field-based studies in post-conflict zones, release disaggregated data on service delivery and land rights, and encourage collaboration among academia, think tanks, and local communities.

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THE IMPACT OF TELUGU NAYAK'S MADURAI ON SOCIETY - A STUDY

Abstract

The reign of the Telugu warrior lineage of kings, had unique place. Their contribution to religion and fine artsled to the flourishment of language and literature. Peace and order prevailed during their age, led the developments of literature, languages and education. The authors of this period enhanced the style and beauty of the literature throughtheir capabilities of writings. The literature of the Telugu Nayak age was characterised by the production of exegetical, philosophical, puranic, didactic and minor works. It also witnessed the development of religious literature, concerning Saivism and Vaisnavism and pertaining to the works on Islam, Christian faith and philosophy.

Key words

Religion and fine arts, Developments of literature and E ducation, Philosophical, Puranic, Didactic and Minor works.

Introduction

The increased temple building and religious activities of the Telugu Nayaks, the migration of Telugus, Sourastras and Kannarese to Madurai and the advent of Christian missionaries and European traders to the Tamil country, entertained the growth of many languages such as Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and English.[1] A new style of Tamil literature called Prabandham emerged popularlyin that era. Many writers reproduced the religious texts of the past in their languages. Poets and scholars did not illuminate the Telugu Nayak court mostly. But few of them adorned it with royal patronage. Some of the Telugu Nayak kings were patrons of learning and men of letters. The letter of Jaques de Coutre, a Christianpriest who visited the Telugu Nayak court in 1610 A.D., informs that the Telugu Nayak kings concentrated on educational development and their capital, Madura, was the centre of learning and education.[2]

Madurai Kings

These two kings were liberal minded and pious, concentrated more on religious activities and through that, they promoted learning and growth of education their

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reign was remarkable for the flourishment of Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil literature. The Telugu Nayaks monuments and temples, their splendid irrigation works and their epigraphical records such as copper plates and inscriptions stand testimony to the skill, technology, intelligence and mastery of language and knowledge of the people of that period. The people of that age had a high levelof knowledge and education The Telugu Nayak kings were captivated by the eminent scholars from other parts of the country. [3]They honoured them duly and encouraged them. One such eminent Tamil poet, who received the royal patronage of Thirumalai Telugu Nayak was Kumaraguruparar. He wrote poems on devotional and didactic themes and his Tamil works were Kandar Kalivenba, Minakshipillitamil, Madurai-Kalambakam, Nitineri-Vilakkam, Thiruvarur Nan-mani-Malai, Chidambara Mummani Kovai, Muthukumaraswamy Pillaitamil and Kasikkalambagam.[4] A painting, in the six pillar mandapam in front of Goddess Meenakshi sanctorum at Madurai temple, depict, the figures of Thirumalai Telugu Nayak with his royal consorts, seated in a literary Durbar and poet Kumaraguruparar is portrayed as singing a poem in that mandapam. From thatit is evident that Thirumalai Telugu Nayak, followed Saivism, admired Tamil language, encouraged the Tamil poet, and honoured him with gifts and presents. He promoted the growth of Tamil learning and literature and provided opportunity for the revival of Bakthi movement and religious philosophy in Madurai Kingdom.[5]

Literatures

Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil languages and literature flourished during that period. It is revealed by a foreign account that near about fifty four poets and men of letters lived in the Telugu Nayak court in the 16th Century. The Telugu Nayak kings were not indifferent in promoting learning and education. They extended suitable patronage to scholars and Brahamins, by way of grants of lands and gifts. Innumerable agraharas were thriving with the aids and gifts. Thoseagraharas were centres of learning and especially religious education was imparted. The subjects taught in those centres were Vedas, Hindu philosophyand rituals. As the Telugu Nayak rulers were staunch Hindus, they followed an ancient Hindu educational policy combining religious and scientific studies and concentrating more on moral and ethical values. Their chief characteristic factor in the education system was, that the state should provide higher studies and the primary education was left to private individuals who imparted education from home or by local organisations.[6]

literary works, Pillaiperumal Aiyankar preached the way for salvation and also showed the path to reach the Almighty. His Tamil work Ashta Prabandham was famous after Alvar's Nalayira Thivya Prabhandham. His work was also called as Thivyaprabhanthasaram. The Ashta Prabandham or the eight notable Tamil religious works of him were, namely.[7]

1. Thiruvarankathu Kalambagam
2. Thiruvarankathu Malai

3. Thiruvarankathu Anthathi
4. SrirangaTelugu Nayakar Osal
5. Thiruvenkatamalai
6. Thiruvenkatathu Anthathi
7. Alalagar Anthathi
8. Noortriyettu Tiruppathi Anthathi

Ashta is a Sanskrit word, which means eight, and so these eight minor devotional works of Pillaiperumal Aiyankar on the God Vishnu of Srirangam and Tirupati are called Ashta Prabhantham. The Tamil grammatical forms, called Yappu, Ani, Viruttham, Venba and Siledai or double meaning, are available in the works of Pillaiperumal Aiyangar. Such facts testify to the development of Tamil language, grammar and literature during that period. He was also a scholar in Sanskrit. Pillaiperumal Aiyankar was called as Alagiya Manavalathasar. Like him many scholars enriched the Tamil literature by their works. The Prabandham received due recognition from the people because they conveyed the message in a simple way with dialogues, scenes just like a drama with music or lyrics. So without adequate royal patronage, literary activities also developed. The Tamil literary style forms such as Kovai, Ula, Anthathi, Kalambakam, Pillaitamil were written on a large scale, and in a major way, in the Tamil country, during the rule of the Telugu Nayaks of Madurai. Some new forms like Katal, Ammanai or ballods and Kuravanchi etc were written.[8]

Devotional Songs

The devotional songs of Tayumanavar [1705-1742 A.D.], were popular and familiar throughout Tamil Nadu. Though a devout saivaite, he was a non- sectarian. But his songs were marked by devotional fervour and catholicity of outlook. He expressed his non-sectarian attitudes in his couplets. His prayer to the Almighty was that, all should be in blissful state. Tayumanavar's philosophical poems contained many charming imageries. He was a reputed scholar in Sanskrit and Tamil. The vedic and Upanaishadic philosophies were adopted in his Tamil works. He tried to bring unity among the seers of Saivasidhantham and Advaidham. He was the minister of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Telugu Nayak in 1728 A.D., and after the death of the Telugu Nayak, he resigned his official post as a minister, and led an ascetic life till his death in 1742 A.D. His poems were like that of folk songs and were simple in form but rich in fact and attracted even the non-elites. The religious mutts and temples stood for championing the cause of learning and in turn they were duly supported with liberal grants by the kings of Madurai. Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Telugu Nayak issued grants for the maintenance of Sankara Mutt at Thiruvanikaval in Tiruchi.[9]

Sculpture

The legendary stories depicted through sculptures, and paintings, were explained by religious discourses at temples by scholars. Additional mandapams were constructed by the Telugu Nayak kings for the purpose of enacting dances and dramas, pertaining to legendary themes. Many religious educational centers were opened in the templecomplex, namely Saiva Siddhantna Khazhagam, Panrriru Thirumurai Khazhagam, Thirukkural Khazhagam, Sakthi Vallipattu Mandram etc. These centres imparted religious ideas and thoughts in Sanskrit and Tamil and promoted the growth of religion on one hand and languages on the other. The scholars and learned men of the Telugu Nayak kingdom either received due patronage and encouragement or were granted full freedom to express and compose poems and write prose at their own cost and efforts. Both the ruler and the ruled concentrated on religious and literary activities and paved the way for the growth of religious literature and language. The people and the scholars were interested in reviving the ancient religious literature. So many literary works based on epics and puranas emerged subsequently. The famous Tamil epic, Villibharatham, of Villipuththalwar, was based on the epic, Mahabharatam. The use of idioms and phases conversational languages and similes etc., were introduced. A new style of writing poetry called Manippiravalanadai Tamil scholars, during that period. Islam and Christianity made contribution, in the growth of language and literature, during the period of the Telugu Nayaks. Christian Missionaries were dedicated and concentrated on the growth of, their religious activities through literary development.[10]

Constantine Joseph Beschi (1680-1746 A.D) popularly known as Viramamunivar, was also an Italian Missionary, who reformed the Tamil language and literature. He complied a Latin - Tamil Dictionary and wrote the classic Tembavani, on the life of Jesus in Tamil poetic convention. He was also the author of some prose and fictional works He reformed the Tamil characters in print. He wrote a grammar for Kongu Tamil (Spoken Tamil). He reformed the Tamil script. For example before him, the Tamil kuril letter was marked with a dot on its top. Viramamunivar changed this pattern and instead, he introduced that the kuril (shortened) letters would be without mark and the nedil (lengthened) letters would be with the mark. Besides that he also introduced colon and semicolon marks in formation of sentences and for writingpurpose in Tamil. Paramartha Guru Kathai was a notable short story work by him. He used satire in literature and wrote a prose satire in English calledThe Guru Noodle and he himself did it in Tamil also as Aviveka Purana Kunlkatai. He was the forerunner of prose writing in Tamil literature.[11]

The Tamil, Telugu, English and Arabic languages witnessed tremendous developments. The Tamil literary works of this period were contributed by literary men of Tamil, Telugu and English languages. The Tamil literary works of these scholars had the following characteristics: They were religious, but by and large secular.

- ✓ Poetic in form and absorbed a very large number of Sanskrit vocabulary
- ✓ Sanskrit and English provided Tamil with words and phrases suitable for the culture, needed at that time

- ✓ Simple and most common words were preferred for poetry
- ✓ Religious ideas, themes and feelings were directly communicated through hymns, unlike that of epics which communicated through mythological stories.
- ✓ With the advent of European missionaries, printing press had its access in the growth and spread of literary thoughts
- ✓ Revival of religious morals and philosophy especially the ethical and moral lessons, had its specific role in the writings of this period.[12]

Conclusion

During that period many puranas and other notable works were either translated or adapted into Tamil from Sanskrit. The Tamil poets Varadaraja Aiyankar and Cevviaccuduvar, belonged to the sixteenth century translated Bhagavata purana, a Sanskrit work into Tamil. Villipputturar Bharatam, which was an adaptation of the epic, Mahabharatam. [14] Varatunkan and Adiviraraman, the Pandya kings of Tenkasi, translated the Puranas. Adiviraraman wrote Piramottira - Kandam, from the translation of Kurma purana. Varatunkan wrote Kasik kandam from the translation of Kurma purana. Though the influence of Sanskrit was pronounced, simple language meter and genre paved the growth of direct and easy style of Tamil poetry. A mixed language of Tamil and Sanskrit called manipravalam style appeared in the history of Tamil literature. The literature of the period of the Telugu Nayak, met with a turning point inform, theme and style. Thus it formed a cultural phase afresh.

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