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## Editor

Ahmad Naved Yasir Azlan Hyder

Address: Dabeer Hasan Memorial Library

12, Choudhri Mohalla, Kakori, Lucknow,

U.P.-226101 (INDIA)

Email: [dabeerpersian@rediffmail.com](mailto:dabeerpersian@rediffmail.com)

Mob. No. 09410478973

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

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**CONTENT**

S. NO.	TITLE	AUTHOR	PG. NO.
1	REFLECTIONS OF INDIA IN THE POETRY OF AMIR KHUSRO	DR. QAISER AHMAD	5
2	PERSIAN BRILLIANCE: MADARUL UMARA'S (1208-1285 A.H.) LEADERSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP	DR. K.M.A. AHAMED ZUBAIR	10
3	SAADI SHIRAZI: THE MESSENGER OF HUMANITY	DR. MOHD QAMAR ALAM	15
4	SUFISM AND SUFI LITERATURE IN PERSIAN IN THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT	DR. ATIQUR RAHMAN	24
5	WAHDAT AL-WUJUD AND WAHDAT AL-SHUHUD: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS	DR. NAUSHABA ANJUM	36
6	EXPLORING THE MYTHOLOGICAL LINKAGES BETWEEN INDIA AND PERSIA	DR. AMIT KUMAR / DR. NITISH KUMAR	44
7	DR. HIRA LALL CHOPRA's CONTRIBUTION TO INDO-PERSIAN LITERATURE	DR. SYED MD IQBAL SHAH ALQUADRI	51
8	JAHANARA BEGUM: A REMARKABLE LITERARY FIGURE IN MUGHAL INDIA	DR. SEEMA JANGIR	58
9	SUFI NEXUS WITH CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AFFAIRS: A CASE STUDY OF ERSTWHILE GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM	DR. ASHRAFUL ISLAM AHMED	64
10	UNDERSTANDING HEIDEGGER'S ANALYSIS OF SUPERIORITY OF DASEIN	DR. DIWAN TASKHEER KHAN	73
11	TUTELARY DEITIES OF SOUTH ODISHA: RITUAL PRACTICES AND ROYAL PATRONAGE (Circa. 16th- 19th century CE)	DR. THOBIR KUMAR LIMA	79
12	SUFISM: THE VOICE OF PEACE, CO-EXISTENCE, COMPASSION AND EQUALITY	DR. RAHMATULLAH	86
13	VISUAL POLITICS OF HIJRI CALENDAR ON COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP	DR. VINAY PATEL	93
14	RISE OF WOMEN HISTORIOGRAPHY IN INDIA: NATIONALIST REACTION TO THE COLONIAL CRITIQUE OF THE INDIAN CIVILIZATION	DR. GOWAR ZAHID DAR	104
15	NARRATIVE AS RESISTANCE: INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST POLITICS IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S FICTION	ROSHEE VAID / DR. RAVI SHANKAR MISHRA	110
16	ARTIFICIAL TISSUES AND ORGANS	GAURISHA SINGH / DHARMENDRA PRATAP SINGH	114
17	VACCINATION-DANGERS AND BENEFITS	GAYATHRI PRABHAKARAN	125
18	MEDICAL HUMANITARIAN MISSIONS IN	RASAGNA	136

	THE DEVELOPING WORLD	REDDIMASI	
19	BEHAVIORAL GENETICS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IDENTICAL TWINS	VARSHA MANIKANTAN	150
20	HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE	GAURISHA SINGH / DHARMENDRA PRATAP SINGH	162
21	IMPACT OF POOR SLEEP QUALITY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH	GAYATHRI PRABHAKARAN	170
22	ROLE OF WOMEN AND THEIR RIGHT IN HENRIK IBSEN'S "A DOLL'S HOUSE"	DR. MAHREEN / DR. SHAHNAWAZ SHAH / DR. LATEEF AHMAD SALMANI	180
23	LIFE OF MAHMUD KUSHDAHAN & IMPORTANCE OF MARIFATUS-SULOOK IN SUFI LITERATURE	AMEER ABBAS	186
24	INDO-PERSIAN CULTURE	IMRAN AHMAD	192
25	UNVEILLING THE RICH TAPESTRY OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN NORTHEAST INDIA: UNCOVERING THE TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS OF MEDIEVAL ASSAM	RAKTIM JYOTI HAZARIKA	198

DR. QAISER AHMAD<sup>1</sup>

(1)

## REFLECTIONS OF INDIA IN THE POETRY OF AMIR KHUSRO

## **(1). Background:**

India is known for its multiculturalism. People from the time immemorial have been living in peace, love and brotherhood in India. Indian society has accepted and loved the people of other countries, regions, religions, castes, races and colour, and they have been living together. People from different parts of the world arrived in the Indian sub-continent from the ancient times and whosoever came here was astonished to witness the peaceful co-existence of this society. Here people of different backgrounds lived together peacefully, which encouraged them to settle down here for the rest of their life. They considered India as their home and forgot their original countries. They not only loved and adored India but also sacrificed their life in protecting this country against the enemies. Like the indigenous people of India, these people and their descendants contributed to the growth and development of this country. They made India proud by their contribution in different areas and disciplines. Many of them made remarkable contributions in architecture, painting, art, prose and poetry, history writing, art of warfare, city planning and in the field of education.

## **(2) Introduction:**

Amir Khusro was also one of them. After the invasion of Genghis Khan on different parts of Central Asia the ancestors of Amir Khusro also migrated from the city of Kush to India and settled down in Patiali near Agra.

“Amir Khusro was born here in 651 AH or 1253 AD” (1)

He was brought up at the same place. From early youth he got connected with the courts of different Sultans of Delhi. He witnessed the rule of eleven kings of his times and was in the courts of seven kings of Delhi Sultanate.

Through his poetry in different languages he made India proud. He was loved and honored by the different Sultans, kings, viziers, nobles and men of letters of his times and was also equally loved, regarded and respected by the common people of that period. Every researcher of different disciplines like, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, History, Sociology and Indology is awestruck on his popularity among the people of all the sections of the society. After going through his biography and reading his literary

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Persian and Central Asian Studies, MANUU, Gachibowli, Hyderabad

contributions their common observation is that he did not belong to a particular society but praised and appreciated all the societies and cultures of India in his couplets. Through his poetry he stressed for the unity and brotherhood among the people of different religions of India.

**(3) Life:**

He was a multilingualist and knew languages like Persian, Hindi, Urdu, (commonly called as Hindawi) Arabic and Sanskrit and wished to know more languages. He says:

*“Zabane Yaare Man Turki Wa Man Turki Nemidanum*

*Che Khush Boode Gar Boodi Zabanash Dar Dahane Man”*

(The language spoken by my beloved is Turkish and I don't know the Turkish language. It would have been better if I knew this language).

His poetry is full of mysticism consisting of masnavis, ghazals, qasidas, hamd, naat, history, biographies, commentary and love stories. He was deeply influenced by Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, who was his spiritual teacher and later joined his disciples' group.

He followed the trend of classical poets of Iran like Sanai, Khaqani and Nizami Ganjawi but considered Sheikh Saadi as his ideal while writing his ghazals. He says:

*“Jild-e-Sukhanam Darad Shirazah-e-Shirazi” (2)*

*(I have a compilation of the poetry of the likes of Sheikh Sadi Shirazi).*

**(4). Khusro and Hasan:**

He is also called Tuti-e-Hind (the parrot of India). Another poet named Amir Hasan Sijzi Dehalvi is called Saadi-e-Hind. Interestingly both of them were good friends and it was Amir Khusro who took Hasan Sijzi Dehalvi to Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and introduced him to the renowned sufi. Both the peers of Persian language wrote beautiful ghazals and different genres of poetry. The common thing of their poetry is that both of them wrote a lot about India. Hasan Sijzi Dehalvi wrote books like Fawaedul Fawad, which is the compilation of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's speeches and talks with him and Ishque Nameh, which is the traditional love story of Rajasthan. This book also mentions the practice of Sati in Rajasthan.

“Amir Khusru also mentions Sati and Jauhar traditions in his poetry and claims that had Islam allowed these traditions everyone would have appreciated these traditions”. (3)

## **(5). Reflections of India:**

Amir Khusro wrote poetry on many Indian elements like culture, traditions, religions, festivals, seasons, fruits, flowers, rivers, mountains, places, cities etc. Apart from writing in Persian language he wrote in Hindawi also. He is considered to be the originator of the poetry of Indian Style called Sabk-e-Hindi in Persian. He used to recite couplets in Perso-Hindawi language also.

His Diwan of poetry consists of five sections namely, Tohfatus Sughra, Wasatul Hayat, Ghurratul Kamal, Baqiya Naqiya and Nihayatul Kamal. Taking inspiration from Nizami Ganjavi he wrote Khamsa ie; collection of five masnavis. Apart from these two major works he has written many more books which are both in prose and poetry form. Whatever he writes he has perfection in all the genres of the poetry and are not only popular but are widely read also. Because of the sweetness of his language and simpler and easier words made his poetry more understandable and popular among the people of all sections of the society.

He was well aware of the idioms and proverbs of his times of different languages in which he used to write. He was also well aware of the customs and traditions of the major religions, cultures and societies of India. Among the Indian poets who wrote in Persian language he is the most admired and loved one.

In his book Nuh Sipehar he considered India as the heaven on earth. He says:

### *“Kishwar e Hind ast Bahishti Be Zameen” (4)*

*(The country of India is like heaven on the earth)*

He stressed that “to love one’s own country ie; Hubbul Watani (meaning patriotism) is recommended by the Prophet. He says that I love this country because I was born and brought up here” (5). He praised the festivals of India and has written on Diwali, Holi, Eid.

In the reply to a letter from Awadh from his friend, Tajuddin Zahid, Khusro praised the river Saryu, the gardens, the fruits and flowers, the wines, peace and the people of the city, who are busy in their work and live in peace.

Praising the Brahmans he said that they are very learned and having great knowledge but are never proud of it.

"In the third chapter of his book Nuh Sipehar he elaborates about India in a very clear manner that it is the land of knowledge and people from different parts of the world come in the quest of knowledge but hardly a Brahman goes outside of India to acquire knowledge because he actually doesn't need it. He says Indians are well equipped in science and has also written Panchtantra, which was translated into Persian and Arabic languages". (6)

He further adds that the Indians are multi linguists and can also speak the foreign languages like, Arabic, Turkish etc.

“Comparing the seasons of India like Spring, autumn and the rainy seasons are better than the seasons of Iran and Turkey” (7).

In another important work Qiran Ul Sadain, while appreciating the fruits, flowers and trees found in India, he says that the fruits of India and its tastes are found nowhere in the world. In his other book Hasht Bahisht he elaborates the Indian stories that are told and heard in India. He also mentions the Ragas and sur of Indian music.

He was an exponent in Iranian and Indian music. Many expert musicians believe that he has introduced many new ragas like Tablana, Qaul, Naash, Ghul, Khayal and many others.

He wrote Persian and Hindawi language to symbolise the common linguistic and cultural interactions of both the Muslims and the Hindus. Everyone is aware of his poetry:

*“Zehaale Miskin Makun Taghaful Duraye Naina Banaye Batiyan*

*Ke Taabe Hijran Na Daram Aye Jaan, Na Lehu Lagaye Kahe Chhatiyan”*

*“Shabane Hijran Daraz Chun Zulf, Wa Roze Waslat Chun Umre Kotah*

*Sakhi Piya ko Jo main Na Dekhun, To Kaise Kaatun Andheri Ratiyan”*

In fact this poem reflects his idea of Multi-Culturalism, which is a blend of two different languages and it was what he witnessed right from his childhood.

Another poem which reflect the Sufism in pure Indian form is:

*Chhap Tilak Sab Chhini Re Mose Naina Milake*

*Baat Agam Kah Dini Re Mose Naina Milayeke*

*Bal Bal Jaun Main Tore Rang Rejwa*

*Apni Si Rang Deni Re Mose Naina Milayke*

*Khusro Nizam Ke Bal Bal Jaye*

*Mohe Suhagan Kini Re Mose Naina Milayeke*

Two more couplets from another poem:

*Khusro Darya Prem Ka Ulti Wa ki Dhar*

*Jo Ubhra So Doob Gaya, Jo Dooba So Paar*

*Gori Sowe Sej Par Daale Mukh Par Kes  
Chal Khusro Ghar Aapne saanjh Bhayi Chinhou Des*

Likewise, there are many couplets which indicate his thoughts of the composite culture of India and Indian elements which makes him the torch bearer of the Ganga Jamuni Tahzeeb.

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3. Hindustan Amir Khusro Ki Nazar Mein: Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, Darul Mosanneffin, Azamgarh, 1966, Page No. 35
4. Hindustan Amir Khusro Ki Nazar Mein: Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, Darul Mosanneffin, Azamgarh, 1966, Page No. 30
5. Hindustan Amir Khusro Ki Nazar Mein: Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, Darul Mosanneffin, Azamgarh, 1966, Page No. 29
6. Hindustan Amir Khusro Ki Nazar Mein: Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, Darul Mosanneffin, Azamgarh, 1966, Page No. 32-33
7. Hindustan Amir Khusro Ki Nazar Mein: Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, Darul Mosanneffin, Azamgarh, 1966, Page No. 30

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**PERSIAN BRILLIANCE: MADARUL UMARA'S (1208-1285 A.H.)  
LEADERSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP**

**Abstract:**

Moulvi Abdul Wahab Madarul Umara Bahadur (1208-1285 A.H.) emerges as a towering figure in Islamic scholarship and leadership, leaving an enduring legacy marked by his profound scholarly pursuits and unwavering dedication to service. Born into a family steeped in knowledge and piety, Moulvi Abdul Wahab's journey commenced in Madras, where he embarked on a path of intellectual enlightenment under esteemed mentors. His formative years were characterized by diligent study and spiritual growth, honing his understanding of Arabic, Persian, and Islamic jurisprudence.

Elevated by his father's esteemed position and his own intellectual acumen, Moulvi Abdul Wahab's contributions to the Carnatic State exemplified his commitment to the welfare of the people and the prosperity of the region. His travels to Mecca and Medina enriched his knowledge and garnered him widespread acclaim, while his literary endeavors in Arabic and Persian reflected his scholarly prowess.

Despite the passage of time, Moulvi Abdul Wahab's legacy endures as a beacon of knowledge, virtue, and service, inspiring generations with his transformative impact on Islamic scholarship and governance.

**Keywords:** Madarul Umara, Persian, Madras, India, Islamic Literature

Moulvi Abdul Wahab Madarul Umara Bahadur, a luminary of his time, left an enduring legacy marked by his scholarly pursuits and unwavering dedication to service. Born into a family steeped in knowledge and piety, Moulvi Abdul Wahab's journey began in Madras in 1208 A.H., where he embarked on a path of intellectual enlightenment under the guidance of esteemed mentors.

His formative years were marked by diligent study and spiritual growth, as he imbibed the teachings of Arabic, Persian, and Islamic jurisprudence. Under the mentorship of his father and other revered scholars, Moulvi Abdul Wahab honed his linguistic skills and deepened his understanding of religious texts.

Elevated by his father's esteemed position and his own intellectual acumen, Moulvi Abdul Wahab's contributions to the Carnatic State were manifold. His service to Nawab

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor & Research Supervisor, Post Graduate & Research Department of Arabic, The new College (Autonomous), 147 Peters Road, Chennai, Tamilnadu

Azeemuddowlah, spanning various roles and responsibilities, exemplified his commitment to the welfare of the people and the prosperity of the region.

Endowed with titles of honor and distinction, Moulvi Abdul Wahab's reputation as a learned scholar extended beyond the borders of his homeland. His travels to Mecca and Medina, punctuated by encounters with scholars and dignitaries, enriched his knowledge and garnered him widespread acclaim.

Moulvi Abdul Wahab's literary endeavors, spanning Arabic and Persian, reflected his scholarly prowess and intellectual curiosity. From meticulously documented biographies to comprehensive treatises on Islamic jurisprudence, his writings continue to illuminate the minds of scholars and enthusiasts alike.

Despite the passage of time, Moulvi Abdul Wahab's legacy remains enshrined in the annals of history. His dedication to scholarship, his commitment to service, and his unwavering faith serve as inspirations for generations to come. As he rests in the tranquil confines of Walajahi Mosque, Triplicane, Madras, his contributions endure as a testament to the enduring power of knowledge and virtue.

He was the eldest son of Moulvi Muhammad Ghoush Sharaful Mulk Bahadur, born in Madras on the 5th of Jamadiul Awwal, 1208 A.H. At the age of five, his mother passed away in Siddhout, leaving him without immediate educational guidance as his father was in Hyderabad at the time. His formal education commenced upon his father's return to Udayagir from Hyderabad in 1215 A.H. Subsequently, his structured studies began when his father assumed the position of diwan of Nawab Azeemuddowlah in 1216 A.H. Initially, he received lessons from Malkul Ulama Moulvi Abdul All, followed by Arabic and Persian studies under his father and Malikul Ulama Moulana Alauddin Ahmad. He also learned Quranic recitation from Qari Shaikh Mansar Zubaidi and Qari Syed Ali, son of Syed Abdullah Hamawi, during their visits to Madras in 1227 and 1234 A.H., respectively.

Following his father's demise, he entered the service of Nawab Azeemuddowlah and held various positions such as daroogha of gardens, Mir Sanan, Bakhshi, and eventually Madar-al-Meham. He inherited all the titles of his father, including Sharaful Mulk Sharafuddowlah Muhammad Ghoush Khan Bahadur Ghalib Jing. Additionally, he was bestowed with the title of Madra-ul-Unara Miabbir-al-Mamalik, Mukhtaruddowlah Wizart Khan Bahadur Arastu Jung on the 20th of Rabius Sani 1260 A.H. (11th May, 1844 A.D.), by Ghulam Ghoush Khan Bahadur. He dedicatedly worked towards the betterment of the people of Carnatic State and the welfare of its rulers. Despite tendering his resignation on the 2nd of Jamadi-ul-Akhar 1270 A.H., and residing in Sayeedabad, Madras, Nawab Ghulam Ghoush did not accept it, prompting his return. Syed Abdul

Lateef Altaf composed two lengthy Persian poems on this occasion, excerpts of which are included in the book Khanwada-e-Qazi Badruddowlah.

He continued to serve as diwan from the 7th of Rajab 1270 A.H. However, the Nawab passed away on the 23rd of Muharram 1272 A.H. (5th October 1355 A.D.). As one of the Chief Officers of the State, he received a monthly stipend from the British Government. Expressing dissatisfaction with the concessions, he penned a lengthy Persian letter to Rt. Honourable Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, advocating for recognition of his faithful services to the Nawabs, the people, and the British Government, and requesting a higher stipend.

Although invited by Mukhtar-ul-Mulk Salar Jung of Hyderabad to settle down in Hyderabad, he opted to remain in Madras due to his age. He relocated to Roypettah, Madras, in 1281 A.H., purchasing a significant tract of land known as "Diwan Saheb Bagh," where his descendants and those of his younger brother Qazi Badruddowlah continue to reside.

Moulvi Abdul Wahab undertook journeys to Mecca and Medina twice, in 1244 and 1265 A.H., receiving great honor from the British Resident at Aden and the learned scholars at Mecca and Medina. He engaged with numerous scholars and augmented his personal library with many Arabic books during his travels. Poets like Syed Abdul Lateef Altaf composed lengthy poems in his praise upon his return to India, as documented in my book Khanwada-e-Qazi Badruddowlah.

For the remainder of his life, Moulvi Abdul Wahab dedicated himself to teaching, writing books, and transcribing standard works in Arabic and Persian. He passed away on the 5th of Rabiul Awwal 1285 A.H. (26th June 1853 A.D.) and was laid to rest in the compound of Walajahi Mosque, Triplicane, Madras.

#### **His Persian Works:**

**Nihayat-al-Su'l fi Manaqib-e-Raihanat-al-Rasool** (pp. 110): Comprises the life story of Imam Husain, divided into eleven sections (فصل). Written upon the request of Nawab Azamjah in 1235 A.H.

**Azkar-e-Imam Nawawi** (pp. 42×19): Translation of Imam Nawawi's work on prayer recitations, completed in Safar 1249 A.H.

**Hibat-al-Wahab** (pp. 54): A concise treatise on Islamic matters, penned in 1263 A.H.

**Khulasat-al-Bayan** (pp. 215×17): Commentary on Aqaid-e-Jami by Moulvi Muhammad Ghous, initiated by his father but left unfinished. Moulvi Abdul Wahab completed it in 1269 A.H.

**Roznamcha:** Comprises four personal diaries - two documenting pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina in 1244 and 1266 A.H., one detailing a journey to Nagore in 1233 A.H., and the fourth maintained from the 1st of Jamadi II 1236 A.H. These diaries, deemed valuable, are currently in possession of his great-grandson Haji Abu Ahmad Muhammad Abdullah, Diwan Saheb Bagh, Madras, dated the 6th of March, 1821.

He married Ruqayya Bee, daughter of Abdul Qadir, Qadir Alt Khan, and they had six sons and five daughters.

#### **Conclusion:**

Moulvi Abdul Wahab Madarul Umara Bahadur's life stands as a testament to the transformative power of education, dedication, and compassionate leadership. His profound contributions to Islamic scholarship and governance resonate through history, leaving an indelible mark on his community and beyond.

As a scholar, Moulvi Abdul Wahab illuminated the complexities of Islamic jurisprudence, providing invaluable guidance to scholars and jurists. His scholarly works serve as enduring monuments to his deep understanding and commitment to righteousness and justice.

As a leader, his visionary leadership and dedication to the welfare of his people endeared him to hearts far and wide. His legacy of integrity, compassion, and humility serves as a timeless reminder of the transformative power of ethical leadership in shaping societies and inspiring positive change.

In his passing, Moulvi Abdul Wahab leaves behind a rich legacy of scholarship, leadership, and philanthropy, inspiring generations to strive for excellence and uphold noble virtues in their lives and endeavors.

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### **SAADI SHIRAZI: THE MESSENGER OF HUMANITY**

#### **Abstract:**

Saadi Shirazi (Maslih al-Din Maslih ibn Abdullah Shirazi) is one of the most influential Persian poets, prose writers, social reformers, and Sufi thinkers of the 7th century Hijri. His works, particularly *Būstān* and *Gulistān*, provide timeless ethical guidance and spiritual insight, emphasizing universal human values such as compassion, justice, humility, and moral integrity. This paper explores Saadi's life, philosophy, and teachings, demonstrating their enduring relevance in addressing moral and spiritual challenges in the modern world. Through his poetry and prose, Saadi emerges as a teacher, reformer, and messenger of humanity.

**Keywords:** Saadi Shirazi, Persian literature, humanism, ethics, spirituality, *Gulistān*, *Būstān*

#### **Introduction**

Saadi's teachings remain profoundly relevant in the contemporary world. The universality and timelessness of his work distinguish it from other literary productions. His verses and anecdotes continue to enlighten humankind about ethics, justice, compassion, contentment, humility, and repentance. While deeply aligned with Islamic teachings, his worldview rests fundamentally on humanitarian values. Saadi Shirazi was not merely a poet; he was a reformer, moral guide, philosopher, and keen observer of human nature.

*Būstān* and *Gulistān* constitute the pillars of Persian ethical literature, establishing the foundations of didactic poetry. Their study not only enriches literary appreciation but also nourishes spiritual refinement, offering guidance amid modern moral and social crises.

#### **Saadi's Relevance in the Modern World**

Despite unprecedented material advancement, contemporary society faces moral and spiritual crises. Humanity is losing its essence; social insensitivity has become widespread; injustice and corruption dominate; and education is often reduced to the pursuit of credentials. In such an age, Saadi's teachings call for a new moral order founded on goodness, justice, brotherhood, and universal human dignity. His thought encourages compassion, patience, humility, self-restraint, and service to humanity. Even today, his writings embody humanism, tolerance, and truthfulness.

#### **Life and Philosophy of Saadi**

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Persian, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (INDIA)

Muslih al-Din Maslih ibn Abdullah Shirazi, known as Saadi, was a multifaceted personality: Sufi, social reformer, scholar, traveler, physician, and linguist. He provided ethical, social, and spiritual guidance that transcends temporal boundaries. His poetry reflects love, tolerance, compassion, and knowledge of God, emphasizing the dignity of humanity across differences of religion, race, and social status.

One of Saadi's most celebrated verses exemplifies his universal humanism:

بنی آدم اعضای یکیگرند  
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند  
چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار  
دگر عضو هارا نماند قرار  
تو کر محنت دیگران بی غمی  
نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

Translation:

The children of Adam are limbs of one another,  
Created from the same essence.  
If one member suffers, the others cannot remain at rest.  
He who feels no grief for others' pain  
Does not deserve the name of human.

Saadi's personality encompassed multiple roles, making his life and works a rich source of study. His contributions have influenced literature, ethics, and spirituality, not only in the East but also globally.

#### Ethical and Spiritual Teachings

##### Invocation of God

به نام خدایی که جان آفرید  
سخن گفتن اندر زبان آفرید  
خداوند بخشنده دستگیر  
کریم خطاب پوش پذیر

Translation:

In the name of God who created the soul,  
And bestowed upon man the gift of speech.  
The Lord—Generous and Supportive,  
The Clement, who forgives sins and accepts repentance.

##### Supplication for Mercy

کریما به بخشای بر حال ما  
که هستم اسیر کند هوا  
نذرایم غیر از تو فریادرس  
توئی عاصیان را خطاب پوش و بس  
نگهدار ماراز راه خطاب  
خطاب در گذار و صوابم نما

Translation:

O Generous Lord! Have mercy on our state, for we are trapped in the snares of our own

desires. We have no helper except You, and You alone forgive the sins of the erring. Protect us from the path of error, overlook our faults, and guide us toward righteousness.

#### Virtues and Ethical Principles

Saadi's works systematically explore ethical principles, including:

Reflection on the Workmanship of Almighty God:

Reflect upon the magnificent golden dome of the sky—firmly suspended without pillars. God has assigned different stations to His creation: some as guardians, others as rulers; some as seekers of justice, others as collectors of tribute; some dwell in poverty, others in wealth; some enjoy permanence, others face mortality. Some sit on mats while others occupy thrones; some wear coarse garments while others don silk. Some are poor, others affluent; some are healthy, others frail; some are righteous, others erring. Some enjoy pleasure, others suffer sorrow; some hold power, others pay taxes; some rejoice, others are afflicted. Such is the divine diversity which invites man to reflection. Saadi says:

نگه کن برین گبید زر نگار	که سفقم بود بی ستون استوار
یکی پاسبان و یکی پادشاه	یکی داد خواه و یکی باج خواه
یکی در عنا و یکی در غنا	یکی را بقاو یکی را فنا
یکی بر حصیر و یکی بر سریر	یکی در پلاس و یکی در حریر
یکی بینوا و یکی مالدار	یکی نامراد و یکی کامگار
یکی تدرست و یکی ناتوان	یکی سال خورد و یکی نوجوان
یکی در صواب و یکی در خطأ	یکی در دعاء و یکی در وغا
یکی نیک څلک و یکی تندخوی	یکی بردبار و یکی جنگجوی
یکی در گلستان راحت مقیم	یکی باغم و رنج و محنت ندیم
یکی باجدار و یکی تاج دار	یک سرفراز و یکی خاکسار
یکی شادمان و یکی درد مند	یکی کامران و یکی مستمند

#### In Praise of the Prophet (ﷺ)

زبان تا بود در دهان جایگیر	شای محمد بود دلپذیر
حبيب خدا اشرف انبیا	که عرش مجیدش بود متکا
سوار جهانگیر یکران براق	که بگذشت از قصر نیلی رواق...

As long as the tongue rests in the mouth, praising Muhammad (ﷺ) brings delight to the heart. He is the Beloved of God, the most noble of all Prophets, whose station is near the Throne of Majesty. He rode the celestial steed Buraq, surpassing even the blue celestial palaces.

#### Address to the Self (Nafs)

چهل سال عمر عزیزت گذشت

مزاج تو از حل طفی نگشت

همه با هوا و هوس ساختی

دمی با مصالح نه پرداختی

مکن تکیه بر عمر ناپایدار

میاش اینم از بازی روزگار

O self! Forty precious years of your life have passed, yet your nature remains childish. You have always pursued your desires and never once reflected on righteousness. Do not rely on this fleeting life nor remain heedless of time's deceptions, for the world is a mirage that changes in an instant.

#### The Virtue of Generosity

سخاوت کند نیک بخت اختیار

که مرد از سخاوت شود بختیار

بلطف و سخاوت جهانگیر باش

در اقلیم لطف و سخا

Only the fortunate choose generosity, for a man's true fortune arises from his liberality. Conquer the world through kindness, and be a leader in the realm of compassion—for generosity is the key to honor and acceptance.

#### Condemnation of Miserliness

اگر چرخ گردد بکام بخیل

در اقبال باشد غلام بخیل

اگر در کش گنج قارون بود

و گر تابعش ربع مسکون بود

بخیل ار بود زاهد بحر و بر

... بهشتی نباشد بحکم خبر

Even if fate favors the miser and fortune becomes his servant—even if he possesses the treasure of Qarun and rules a quarter of the earth—he remains blameworthy. Even if he is ascetic on land and sea, he is deprived of Paradise according to the Prophetic tradition. Though wealthy, the miser suffers humiliation like a beggar. The generous enjoy their wealth, while the miser is consumed by anxiety over gold and silver.

#### The Excellence of Humility

دلا گر تواضع کنی اختیار

شود خالق دنیا ترا دوستدار

تواضع کند هر که هست آدمی

نه زیید ز مردم بجز مردمی

تواضع بود حرمت افزای تو

کند در بهشت برین جای تو

تواضع زیادت کند جاه را

که از مهر پرتو بود ماه را

تواضع کلید در جنت است

سرافرازی و جاه را زینت است

تواضع عزیزت کند در جهان

گرامی شوی پیش دلها چو جان

O heart! If you adopt humility, the Creator will love you and people will cherish you.

Humanity's true adornment is humility. It elevates your spiritual rank and opens the doors of Paradise. Humility increases honor just as the moon receives its light from the sun. It is the key to Paradise and the ornament of dignity. Through humility you will become beloved on earth and cherished like the soul itself.

#### Condemnation of Arrogance

تکبر مکن زینهار ای پسر	که روزی ز دستش در آیی بسر
تکبر بود عادت جاهلان	تکبر نیاید ز صاحب دلان
کسی را که خصلت تکبر بود	سرش پر غرور و تصور بود
جو دانی تکبر چرا می کنی	خطا می کنی و خطا می کنی

Translation:

Beware, my son—never be arrogant, for one day this very pride will bring you down. Arrogance is the habit of ignorant people; the wise keep away from it. The arrogant man's mind fills with delusion and conceit. If you know arrogance is evil, why do you repeat the same mistake?

The Virtue of Knowledge

بنی آدم از علم یابد کمال	نه از حشمت و جاه و مال و منال
چو شمع از پی علم یابد گداخت	که بی علم نتوان خدارا شناخت
تران علم در دین و دنیا تمام	که کار تو از علم گیرد نظام
میاموز جز علم گر عاقلی	که بی علم بودن بود غافلی

The children of Adam attain perfection through knowledge, not through wealth or social status. As a candle melts to give light, a person must sacrifice for the sake of knowledge. Without knowledge, one cannot truly know God. Both worldly and spiritual order rest upon knowledge. If you are wise, learn nothing but knowledge, for ignorance leads to heedlessness. Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman, as the Prophet (ﷺ) taught.

Humility in Knowledge

دعوی مکن که برترم از دیگران بعلم	چو کبر کردی از همه دونان فروتری
علم آدمیت است و جوانمردی و ادب	ورنه ددی به صورت انسان مصوري

Do not claim superiority over others due to your knowledge. If arrogance enters your heart, you will fall from grace. True knowledge teaches humanity, chivalry, and etiquette; otherwise, you are but a beast in human form.

The Virtue of Justice

چو ایزد ترا این همه کام داد	چرا بر نیاری سر انجام داد
تران مملکت پایداری کند	اگر معدلت دستیاری کند
جهان را با ناصاف آباد دار	دل اهل انصاف را شاد دار
جهان را به از عدل معمار نیست	که بالاتر از معدلت کار نیست
اگر خواهی از نیکبختی نشان	در ظلم بندی بر اهل جهان

When God has granted you such blessings, why do you not administer justice? If justice becomes your companion, your kingdom will remain strong. Build the world with

fairness and gladden the hearts of the just. Nothing builds the world better than justice. If you seek honor, shut the doors of oppression.

#### Condemnation of Oppression

خرابی ز بیداد بیند جهان	چو بُستان خرم ز باد خزان
کسی کاوش ظلم زد در جهان	بر آورد از اهل عالم فغان
مده رخصت ظلم در هیچ حال	که خورشید ملکت نیابد زوال
مکن بر ضعیفان بیچاره زور	بیندیش آخر ز تنگی گور
ستم بر ضعیفان مسکین مکن	که ظالم بدوخ رود بی سخن

The world is ruined by tyranny, just as the spring garden is destroyed by autumn winds. Whoever ignites the fire of oppression brings forth the cries of humanity. Never allow injustice, lest your dominion perish. Do not oppress the weak; remember the narrowness of the grave. Oppress not the poor and helpless, for the oppressor shall enter Hell without question.

#### The Virtue of Contentment

دلا گر قناعت بدت آوری	در اقلیم راحت کنی سروری
اگر تنگ دستی ز سختی منال	که پیش خردمند هیچ است مال
ندارد خردمند از فقر عار	که باشد نبی راز فقر افخار
ز نور قناعت بر افروز جان	اگر داری از نیک بختی نشان

O heart! If you attain contentment, you will rule the kingdom of peace. Do not complain of poverty, for wealth means nothing to the wise. The intelligent feel no shame in poverty—the Prophet (ﷺ) was proud of it. Illuminate your soul with the light of contentment if you hold a sign of true fortune.

#### Condemnation of Greed

ایا مبتلا گشته در دام حرص	شده مست و لا یعقل از جام حرص
دهد خرمن زنگانی بیاد هر آنکس که در بند حرص او قناد	که خواهد شدن ناگهان پایمال
چرا می کشی محنت از بهر مال	که خواهد شدن ناگهان پایمال

#### Translation:

O you trapped in the snare of greed, intoxicated by its cup! Whoever falls captive to greed destroys the harvest of his life. Why toil for wealth that will vanish in an instant?

#### The Virtue of Obedience and Worship

کسی را که اقبال باشد غلام	بود میل خاطر بطاعت مدام
بطاعت بود روشنانی جان	که روشن زخورشید باشد جهان
سعادت ز طاعت منور شود	دل از نور طاعت منور شود

اگر حق پرستی کنی اختیار	در اقلیم دولت شوی شهریار
بآبی عبادت وضو تازه دار	که فردا ز آتش شوی رستگار
نماز از سر صدق برپای دار	که حاصل کنی دولت پایدار
ز تقوی چراغ روان بر فروز	که چون نیک بختان شوی نیکروز

The heart of a truly fortunate person inclines toward worship. Worship is the light of the soul, just as the sun illuminates the world. Happiness is attained through obedience, and the heart becomes radiant with its light. If you truly serve God, you will become a leader in the realm of prosperity. Keep your ablution fresh with the water of worship so that you may be saved from Hellfire. Establish prayer with sincerity so that you may gain eternal fortune. Light the lamp of piety within your heart so that, like the blessed ones, you become truly happy.

#### The Virtue of Gratitude

نرا مال و نعمت فراید ز شکر	نرا فتح از در درآید ز شکر
نفس جز بشکر خدا بر میار	که واجب بود شکر پروردگار
ولی گفتن شکر اولی ترست	که اسلام را شکر او زیور است
زیادت کند شکر جاه و جلال	زیادت کند شکر مال و مقال

Gratitude increases one's wealth and blessings, and opens the doors of success. Let no breath pass without thanking God, for gratitude is obligatory. Expressing gratitude is most virtuous—gratitude is the adornment of Islam. Gratitude enhances dignity, honor, and prosperity.

#### The Virtue of Patience

ترا گر صبوری بود دستیار	بدست آوری دولت پایدار
صبوری بود کار پیامبران	نه پیچند زیبی روی دین پروران
صبوری گشاید در کام جان	که جز صابری نیست مفتاح آن
صبوری بر آرد مراد دلت	که از عالمان حل شود مشکلت
صبوری ترا کامکاری دهد	ز رنج و بلا رستگاری دهد

If patience becomes your helper, you will attain enduring fortune. Patience is the attribute of the Prophets; the pious never turn away from it. Patience opens the doors of the heart's desires, and nothing but patience can unlock them. A patient person attains the fulfillment of his wishes, and scholars resolve their difficulties with patience. Patience brings success and delivers from hardship.

#### The Virtue of Truthfulness

دلا گر کنی راستی اختیار	شود دولت همدم و بختیار
نه پیچد سراز راستی هوشمند	که از راستی نام گردد بلند

که در گلبن راستی خار نیست      به از راستی در جهان کار نیست

O heart! If you adopt truthfulness, fortune and prosperity will accompany you. The wise never deviate from truth, for truth elevates one's reputation. No deed is better than truth in this world, for the garden of truth bears no thorns.

#### Do Not Place Hope in People

ازین پس مکن تکیه بر روزگار	که ناگه ز جانت بر آرد دمار
مکن تکیه بر ملک و جاه و حشم	که پیش از تو بودست و بعد از توهم
مکن بد که بد بینی از پارنیک	نی روید از تخم بد، بار نیک

Place no trust in the world—for it may suddenly destroy you. Do not rely on kingdom, rank, or army—they existed before you and will remain after you. Do no evil, for even a good friend will repay evil with evil. A bad seed never yields good fruit.

#### The Transience of the World

بسا پادشاهان سلطان نشان	بسا پهلوانان کشورستان
بسا ماه رویان شمشاد قد	بسا مشک بویان خورشید خد
بسا ماهرویان نو خاسته	بسا نو عروسان آراسته
بسا نامدار و بسا کامگار	بسا سرو قد و بسا گلعادزار
که کردند پیراهن عمر چاک	کشیدند سر در گریبان خاک
ثباتی ندارد جهان ای پسر	به غفلت میر عمر در روی پسر
منه دل برین کاخ خرم هوا	که می بارد از آسمان صد بلا
منه دل برین دیر کهنه خراب	که خالی نباشد ز رنج و عذاب
منه دل برین دیر ناپایدار	ز سعدی همین یک سخن یاد دار

Many mighty kings have passed away, many warriors and conquerors have perished. Many beautiful, graceful, moon-faced maidens, many perfumed and adorned brides, many renowned and successful people—all tore the garment of life and buried their heads in the dust. Their harvest of life was scattered by the wind, and today no trace of them remains. The world is not permanent, my son—do not waste your life in heedlessness. Do not attach your heart to this alluring palace, for calamities fall from the sky without pause. Do not set your heart on this ancient, decaying abode, for it is never free of sorrow and hardship. Do not attach your heart to this fleeting world—and remember this one counsel of Saadi forever.

#### Conclusion

Saadi Shirazi emerges as a timeless teacher, reformer, and guide. His works transcend the literary sphere, offering ethical, social, and spiritual solutions for the human condition. In a world beset by moral decay, injustice, and spiritual neglect, Saadi's teachings illuminate the path of compassion, humility, justice, and human dignity. His poetry and prose continue to inspire, reminding us that the essence of humanity lies not in material accumulation but in ethical living and spiritual reflection.

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Through Būstān and Gulistān, Saadi remains a messenger of humanity, a beacon whose teachings are as indispensable today as they were seven centuries ago.

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## **SUFISM AND SUFI LITERATURE IN PERSIAN IN THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT**

**Abstract:** *The study of the emergence of the Sufi poetry in Persian literature has been of interest to all Persian historians. Sufism is a special School of thought which was formally introduced from the second century AD. The first thing that was important among them was the denial of the world and then, love for God was the ultimate goal of their deeds. Therefore, their teachings are divided into two categories: educational literature and romantic literature. Subsequently, the great heritage left behind which was nourished from this School of thought. Therefore, in this essay, the manifestation of the Sufi poetry in Persian literature will be investigated, without paying attention to the romantic poems written by non-mystical poets who mean human love for mankind, which have been whispered by the mystics in a certain way. Meanwhile, the attempt will be made to mention the masters of Persian Sufi poetry.*

**Key words:** *Sufism, Sufi Literature, Persian Sufi Poetry, Persian Sufi Poets.*

**Introduction:** The emergence of Sufi poetry in Persian is undoubtedly one of the most important events in the history of this language, unfortunately; no one has addressed it separately; an incident that turned people's language into the deep one. The introduction of the mystical poems to Persian has begun from the beginning of the fifth century; it has inspired a new spirit in the body of Persian poetry, and thanks to that, the domain of meaning in this language has gradually expanded to the extent that the Persian language carries profound mystical and metaphysical meanings thus became a sacred and deep language. The mystical literature or Sufi literature is part of the literary heritage that the mystic poets have been influenced by Sufism and includes a huge part of the Persian literature. In order to understand this kind of literature, it must inevitably recognize the creators of it, namely, the Sufis and the mystics. So it is better to understand what Sufism is and who is a Sufi?

A Sufi is a mystic, if by "mystic" we mean a person who strives towards intimate knowledge or communion with God, through contemplation, meditation and or inner vision. 'The origin of Sufism goes back to the Prophet Muhammad, who received the Divine Revelation known

as the Holy Quran over a period of 23 years. As all Muslims know the Holy Quran is a "multi-layered revelation," whose verses can be interpreted literally, metaphorically, philosophically, and mystically. Osho also has good opinions about the Sufi. He says:

The Sufi lives in the present. To live in the present, the basic need is to withdraw yourself from the past, to withdraw yourself from the future. Then there comes a concentration of energies; then this small moment becomes luminous, you pour total

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor of Persian, Department of Arabic, Persian, Urdu & Islamic Studies, Bhasha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati (A Central University) Santiniketan, West Bengal, India.

energy into it. Then there is joy and benediction. If you are miserable, it is only because you live in the past and in the future. A miserable man has past and future; a man who lives in bliss has only the moment, this moment he lives in now<sup>1</sup>.

**Sufism:** The term, ‘Sufi’, is applied to Islamic spiritualists who attempt to achieve a development of exercise, contemplation, renunciation and self denial. Sufism (*tasawwuf*) became a universal aspect of Islam social life whose influence spread to all Islamic worlds by 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Political expansion, sectarian controversies, theological and philosophical developments, all synchronized with the evolution of Sufism.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century, there was a vigorous Sufi tradition in Khurasan (modern Iraq and Afghanistan). It was characterized by ‘Orders’ (*tariqa* or *silsilah*) of quiet recent historical development. These patterns of holy life and Sufi organization were transmitted from Khurasan to Delhi Sultanate. Through the order, Sufism became more widely known and practiced throughout

The word ‘Sufism’ is an interpretation of the Arabic expression *Tasawwuf*, which initially has been found in the nineteen century, and refers to be a Sufi. *Tasawwuf* or with its general meaning, *Irfan* is as old as Islam itself, and first, has been used in the eighth century (the second century of Islam). It is the spiritual or inner dimension of Islam. So, “as long as there is Islam, there will be Sufism”<sup>2</sup>. The outer or esoteric dimension may be considered a religious world-view. However, both inner and outer aspects of religion are the important aspects of Islam. They can be considered as the two sides of the same coin.

#### **Sufism & Spiritual Interaction between India and Iran:**

Sufism was the result of spiritual interaction between Persia and India. Sufism was originally borrowed from India and returned to India with a distinct Iranian stamp. The mysticism of Islam came under the impact of Hinduism and its philosophy of Vedanta. Hinduism also accepted some Islamic elements such as equality and monotheism<sup>3</sup>.

Islamic grew in the intellectual soil of Iran. Among its sources were the Quran, the teachings of Hindu Philosophy and neo-platonism of Alexandria. The dominating concern of the neo-platonists was religious and their attitude was subjective and intuitive. Upanishadic monism and ethics of Hinduism transformed the idealism of Plato into a Gnostic Philosophy. Therefore Hindu thought entered the structure of Muslim *Tasawwuf* thorough neo-Platonism<sup>4</sup>.

Buddhist monks and Hindu priests spread throughout the land from Khwarizm to Khotan and Afghanistan. Sufi thought and practice grew in Khorasan. Sufi philosophy inspired sufi poetry and learnt the Hindu practices of restraining the breath using the rosary and mediation. Great mystic poet Abu said Abil Khair, Abdul Majid Sanai, Jalaluddin Balkhi and Summa Rumi came from Khorasan. The Iranian muslim mystics were mainly responsible for propagating Islam in India and thereby bhakti movement existed in Hinduism. Today, India is the biggest centre of Sufism in the world. The four

<sup>1</sup>. Osho. Sufis: The People of the Path, (1979. Pune: Tao Publishing, 2006), p.18

<sup>2</sup>. Williams, 1994, P.123

<sup>3</sup> . Jorfi, Abdul Amir, (1994) Iran and India: Age old Friendship, Indian Quarterly, Oct-Dec., p-76.

<sup>4</sup> . Chand , Tara, (2005) 'Indo-Iranian Relations'. p-7.

well known sufi, silsilas in India are the Quadiriya, the Chishtiya, the Naqshbandiya and the Sohravardiya.<sup>1</sup>

There are a lot of similarities among the Hindu and Muslim mystical thought. The Pantheist monism of the Advita Vedanta and Wahdat al Wujud of the Sufis are different expressions of the same world view<sup>2</sup>. Self-manifestation of the ultimate being is spoken of in vedantic terms such as vivarta, Pratibhasa and Pratibimba. These are the same as the sufi concepts of tajalli, Zuhur, aks and numud. The immanence of the divine essence described as sarvabhatutma and antaryamin is also postulated by the sufis in their conception of God as soul of the world that's Jane-i-jahan. The idea of nirguna Brahman is comparable to dhat al-mutlaq, jivatman with ruh and tajrid and so on.

The most prominent Sufis in India were Moinuddin Chishti, Fariduddin Ganj Shakar, Nizamuddin Aulia, Jalaluddin Tabrizi, Bahauddin Zakariya, Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki and Amir Kabir Seyyed Ali Hamadani<sup>3</sup>. These are the exact translations of Upanishadic passage into sufi terms. The most prominent sufi in India were Moinuddin Chishti, Fariduddin Ganj Shakar and so on. Seyyed Ali Hamadani came to Kashmir in the 14<sup>th</sup> century along with 700 friends, disciples and artisans. He propagated Persian and religious guidance.

Before the establishment of the Delhi sultanate in 1206 and the Muslim kingdom of Kashmir in 1320, Sufis had migrated to northern India. The abodes of the sufis in India were generally known by their Persian name Khanqahs. Most of the sufi pioneers came from Iran or from central Asia. The Shattari silsilah of Sufism was founded by Shah Abdullah Shattari in Persia. The poetry of Khwaja Abdullah Ansari, Sanai, Ahmad Jam, Nizami Ganjavi, Attar, Rumi, Sa'di, Hafez and Jami inspired the Indian Sufis. Mohd. Ghous translated Amrit Kund into Persian under the title of Bahr-al-hayat. Awarifu-l-ma'arif of Sheikh Suhrawardi was another Sufi work that contributed to the spread of Persian ideas in India. An important Iranian tradition that influenced the Indian minds in the Khanqahs was the compilation of malfuzat. Sufis also contributed in large measure to the development of Urdu language<sup>4</sup>.

The love of Sufi poetry cemented relationship between Hindus and Muslims. A Persian verse of 'Attar was inscribed on temples of Kashmir. A glossary of masnavi by Rumi, compiled by Abdul Latif Abbasi during the reign of Shah Jahan identifies words in the masnavi that's common to Persian and Hindi. Hafez's literary reputation reached India during his lifetime. The Sufi literature pertaining to Kashmir is rich in discussion involving the Sufis and Hindu ascetics<sup>5</sup>.

Sufis appealed to all classes of Muslims particularly those who are less educated in traditional sciences and exhibited a way of life. Sufis had spread their network of 'retreats' over north India. Between the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, three great Sufi orders had migrated from Iraq and Persia into northern

<sup>1</sup> . Khan, Rashiduddin , (2007) *The Making of the Muslim Mind', 'Muslims in India'* edited by Ratna Sahai, p- 26.

<sup>2</sup> . Arya (2006). 'The mutual relations of culture & civilisation of Iran and India', p-38

<sup>3</sup> . Chand, Tara , (2005) Indo Iran Relations, p-9.

<sup>4</sup> . 'Reciprocal enrichment between Iran and India from historical point of view', paper , 2008

<sup>5</sup> . Ainslie T. Embree, (1992) 'Sources of Indian Traditions', Vo.I, *Penguin Books*, , p-450.

India, the Chishti, the Sohravardi and the Firdausi. The tombs of the mystic saints are still honoured by both Hindus and Muslims<sup>1</sup>.

In 13<sup>th</sup> century, the great Persian poet travelled from Shiraz to Punjab, Somnath, Gujarat and Delhi. From Somnath, he went to Gujarat and then to Punjab and later to Delhi and from Delhi to Yemen. In 1220, Islam went into eclipse in Persia when the Mongols ransacked the Muslim World. India escaped the Mongol invasion. The Delhi sultanate offered a refuge in that crucial period and India became a cultural sanctuary of the Muslim world.

Modern Indo-Iran cultural relations were interacted by cultural embassies; book translated and annotated art exhibition, exchange of learned persons, exchange of ideas, people to people contact, and fascination of Iranian for Indian language and culture.

After the advent of Britisher's in India, this cultural affinity which existed between two civilized countries of the oriental world got set back. But with the independence of our country from yoke of British oppression, a new enhances the cultural contacts. And fortunately Iran also reciprocated and we see that the first ambassador of Iran to India, Mr. Ali Asghar Hikmat in himself was a person, who was obsessed with the wisdom and knowledge of India. He translated many books from India and wrote his observatories about the literary development of Persian in India.

Many intellectuals and thinker's i.e. Dr. Tarachand, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rabindra Nath Tagore and the founder of communist party in India M. N. Roy have visited Iran for the betterment of cultural affinity between the two sides. The relationship entered the modern context in the 1960's with exchange of high level visits from both sides. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Iran in 1963. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Iran in April 1974 and the Shah of Iran made a return call the same year in October.

According to the Chittick, "The word Sufism refers to a range of theories and practices that have been present in one form or another within the Islamic tradition from its inception"<sup>2</sup>. In general, Sufis consider themselves as the individual Muslims, who recognize God's vicinity both in the universe and in the self and called themselves "Ah al-Haqq" the followers of the real<sup>3</sup>. Martin Lings in his book What Is Sufism said: Sufism is nothing other than Islamic mysticism, which means that it is the central and most powerful current of that tidal wave which constitutes the Revelation of Islam; and it will be clear from what has just been said that to affirm this is in no sense a depreciation, as some appear to think. It is on the contrary an affirmation that Sufism is both authentic and effectual.

The ahle suffe believed that it was the unique human right and privilege to be able to find the way towards understanding the reality of the Divine. As the cognitive tools of ordinary mental logic are limited in their ability to comprehend such a great and all-embracing subject, disputation and all discussions based on language alone cannot open any door to understanding such reality. Instead, such a path of understanding necessitates

<sup>1</sup> . Khan, Mohd. Ishaq, (2009) 'Some Iranian Sufi traditions & their impact on the evolution of Indo-Muslim culture' paper.

<sup>2</sup>. Chittick, 1995, P. 132

<sup>3</sup>. Nicholson, 2002, P. 1

spiritual striving, the understanding and the knowledge of the heart, in its quest to realize the existence of the Divine. Such an approach separates Sufis from philosophers, and indeed from any other group of scholars whose knowledge is founded upon traditions, words, assumptions, and the imagination instead of the actual and direct understanding of all that exists. Thus the path of Sufis, of cognizant Moslems, was separate from that of the traditional understanding. They became the people of the tarigha, or the way; their particular goal was to understand and introduce the esoteric aspect of Islam, as opposed to the exoteric public elements of this universal religion. The principles of Sufism are all based upon the rules and teachings of the Quran and the instructions of the Prophet. To a Sufi there is no gulf of separation between all of Being, the Creator, and His creations. That the multitude cannot perceive this fundamental unity is the result of the impurity of nafs and the limitations of the material and physical tools that mankind possesses. If man were free from the limitations of matter, then he would surely witness this immense and eternal unity of being. But there is a chance for mankind to ascend to such a level of understanding, a pathway that can be followed through purification and meditation to the realization of its achievement. When one's heart is purified, the manifestations of the Divine are reflected in the mirror of the heart. Only then may man ascend from the level of his animal nature to the level of the true human being. Since all the principles that underlie the instructions of Sufis are based on the Quran, it is impossible to relate Sufism to any religion outside of Islam. Yet the search for true understanding and abstract knowledge of reality is a universal quest. As long as humanity endures, so too will the search for such understanding continues. History shows us that every nation and religion has its own way of expressing the universal.

**Persian Sufi Poetry:** To find the date of the first mystical poems, we have to obtain the correct definition of mystical poetry. The mystical poem is a poem written in the formulation of the spiritual principles and truth. So the mystical poem is the one written with a mystical intention, not a love poem [man to man] which is interpreted mystically. Sufism which originates from the inspiration has the same affinity with poetry that comes from the same inspiration, nevertheless, the Sufis, who at first was ascetic, at the beginning of the same period, did not show much interest in poetry. Many believe that the history of this incident is not clear. Some consider Baba Tahir as the first mystical poet; some people say that the beginning of the mystical poetry coincides with the beginning of Sama; another theory that has many supporters considers Sanai as the founder of the mystical poems. It is clear that in this essay, we are referring to the Sufi poems of Persia.

**Some Important books on Sufism:**

**Kashful Mahjub:** This book is most ancient, authentic and celebrated treatise on **Sufi** religious thought in India. It was written by Shaikh Ali Hujweri known as data Ganj Bakhsh (d.1071-72 A.D.)<sup>1</sup>. This book is divided into twenty five chapters and it is first Persian prose work on Sufism. Ali Hujweri, in his famous book Kashful Mahjub, "enumerate twelve schools of Sufism upto his time, amongst which he calls ten as rightly guided and the other two as heretical."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> . Ali Hujweri Shaikh, Kashful Mahjub, p3

<sup>2</sup> . Kashful Mahjub, pp 130-131

**Jawahir-i-Khamsa:** It is composed in Persian by Mohammad Gauwth of Gawaliyar. This book is divided into five sections as Khamsa on mysticism.

**Miratul Arifin:** It is an exposition of the theory of Sufism as to its principal doctrines. This book was written by Masud Bak (d.1387 A.D.). The book is divided into 4 Kashfs. It begins by distinguishing between the Shariat, Tariqat and Haqiqat<sup>1</sup>.

**Fawaaid-ul-Fuad:** It is the collection of conversations of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia compiled by Amir Hasan Sijzi, the distinguished disciple of the Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia.

## Some Notable Persian Sufi Poets:

1. **Baba Tahir:** Although the history of the life and death of Baba Tahir is not known, surely he has preceded the others. “The first Sufi who can be identified individually as a poet would have been Baba Tahir, nicknamed ‘Uryan (‘the Naked’)”<sup>2</sup>. Because Ru’ba’i is considered the first genre of poetry which was used by mystics to express their thoughts and experiences, Baba Tahir as one of the most celebrated Iranian poets of Rubai was the forerunner of this style of mystical poetry. Because the poetry of Baba Tahir is not reliable, he cannot be the originator of the mystical poem. In one of his

poems, he appears as a dervish who is searching his mystical ideas:  
While I wander through the desert, night and day, Tears are streaming from my eyes,  
night and day. No fever do I feel, nor pain in any place; I only know that I am crying,  
night and day.<sup>3</sup>

**2. Abu-Saeed Abul-Khair:** Abu Saeed Abul Khair is one of the great wise mystics of the fifth century, whose word “Sama” is the companion of his name. Undoubtedly, the Sama ceremony, which was held in the presence of Abu Saeed Abul Khair has no meaning without poetry; the mystical poetry was one of the essential items of the Sufi ceremony. Two arguments are here: First, the ceremony of Sama needed poetry and forced Abu Sa'id to compose a mystical poem. Second, there is a collection of Rubaiyat showing that Abu Sa'id is the first mystical poet. But it's easy to reject these two arguments. Although in sama ceremony, mystical poems have been read, these poems may have been written by poets who mean human love, in sama ceremony, mystic had another meaning from the same poem. There is no doubt that Sufism used poetry as a great tool in the sama ceremony to influence the audience's morality; Abu Saeed expressed many teachings by poetry for the mystic audience. However, the point is whether there was at that time a Persian mystical poem which could easily express concepts like Arabic Ghazal.

Secondly, the poems which attribute to Abu Saeed are not significant. If the assignment of these poems to Abu Saeed Abu al-Khair was not a problem, we could have cited him as one of the serious options for the creation of mystical poetry. The following poem is an example of his poetry:

I have my eyes filled by the vision of the Beloved.

My eyes rejoice when the Beloved is there. Between eye and Beloved one cannot distinguish:

He is in the eye, or the eye is nothing else but He.

<sup>1</sup>. Masud Bak, Miratul Arifin, p1

<sup>2</sup>. De Bruijn, 1997, P.13

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid, p.15

My body became all tears and my eyes wept.

Loving you, one should live without a body. No trace remained of me; why is there Love?

Now I became the Beloved entirely, where is the Lover?

When I shall be dead for twenty years or mare,

Do you think that my grave holds no love anymore? When you touch the ground and ask: Who lies here? You will hear a voice crying out: How is my Beloved?<sup>1</sup>.

**3. Sanai:** The first great writer of Ghazal in Sufism is Sanai. He is the first poet who used Ghazal to express mystical thoughts. Sanai's services are enormous in the progress of Sufi poetry. We need to know him as the leading of this kind of poetry. The first person to introduce the interpretation of the true and virtual love into the language of the Persian Sufi love poetry was Sanai. Sanai is one of the earlier Sufi poets. "The whole of Sanai's poetical works amount to more than thirty thousand distiches, of which the most important is the "Hadika," or Garden, a mystical work on the unity of God, self-mortification, and the attainment of the knowledge of spiritual truth"<sup>2</sup>.

Sanai's works are of particular importance to historians of poetry and mysticism. Sanai's Hadiqa is the beginning of the new style of poetry, and his qasidas are also the beginning of another style; his ghazals have the unique style in comparison to his previous ghazals. A poet can rarely be found like Sanai, who is the beginner of the new style of poetry. With Sanai, the path of the Persian poetry changes, the first time poetry enters the field of mysticism; he is the "founder of mystical poetry."

**4. Attar:** After Abu Saeed, the Sanai in the sixth century, by introducing the mystical concepts into the solid structure of qasida opened a new window to mystical literature. In addition to his sonnets, full of zeal, Sanai introduced the theme of mysticism in the structure of the Qasida, after him, Attar Nishapuri in the form of Ghazal and Masnavi introduced the great mystical concepts. "Attar, well known as the Persian mystic poet standing between Sanai and Jalal-uddin Rumi"<sup>3</sup>. It is worth mentioning, however, mystical literature is divided into two types of literary education and romance. Sufi poets generally write secrets and excitement in the form of sonnets, preaching and asceticism in the form of Masnavi; accordingly, Sanai and Attar, as well as other mystic poets have both Ghazal full of passion and educational Masnavi such as Sanai's Hadiqa and Attar's Mantiq al-Tair. Attar dedicated much of his literary output "to honouring the Sufis and glorifying their doctrines"<sup>4</sup>.

**5. Jalal al-Din Mohammad Rumi:** The great mystic poet is Maulana Jalaluddin Mohammed Rumi, not only in the field of mystical romance but also in the field of mystical teaching. Rumi's Masnavi is the most important work which is considered to be the richest heritage of Sufism. "To Jalaluddin Rumi might be applied Dante's phrase regarding Homer: "He flies above other poets like an eagle"<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>. De Bruijn, 1997. P.19

<sup>2</sup>. Field, 1942, P.160

<sup>3</sup>. Arbuthnot, 1887, P. 77

<sup>4</sup>. Hodgson, 1974, P. 305

<sup>5</sup> . Field, 1942, P.175

“He seems to have been influenced by the religious and mystical ideas of al-Ghazali, by the famous Sufi poet Sana”i (d. Ca. 525/1131) and by ‘Attar’<sup>1</sup>. Rumi has underlined the importance of both. “Attar appears to Rumi as the (asheq) ‘lover’; Sanai as the ‘king and superior’ (faeq), whereas he himself is ‘neither this nor that’ but has lost himself completely”<sup>2</sup>. In general, after Rumi, mystical literature didn’t have special flourishing; the works which were later created were based on the imitation of Rumi, Attar, and Sanai. In general, Sufis have had a very important influence on the formation and transformation of Persian literature. They have led the Qasida from the flattery to the peak of preaching and research; they have given the Ghazals from the erotic love to the spiritual affection; Masnavi has been a means of education, mysticism, and morality; Rubai has become the expressive form of the transient and temporal suffering; the prose is made in depth and simplicity; they made stories in the form of meanings and judgments.

**Four Renowned Persian Sufi Poets:**

**1. Rumi** (30 September 1207 – 17 December 1273)

Maulana-literally our master–Jelal-ud-Din Mohammad Ibn Mohammad Husain al-Rumi, is considered by both East and West, as one of the greatest mystical poets the world has ever seen.

Born in Afghanistan in the province of Balkh in 1207 A.D, he was of royal descent. His mother belonged to a princely house whose roots could be traced to the immediate family of the prophet Mohammed and his father; Baha-ud-Din Velad was a descendent of the Caliph Abu Bekr. He himself, according to legend, was born a self-realized soul. His father adhered strongly to orthodox Islamic values, even when they conflicted with those at the royal court. Perhaps on account of this, or of the advancing Mongol hordes, in 1219, Baha-ud-Din was obliged to flee Balkh, which was until then capital of the Khawarzam Shahi and renowned for its cultural and intellectual enrichment. Jelal, just five years of age at the time, spent his early childhood as a fugitive, moving along with the family from city to city. Jelal-ud-din was a strange child, who, even at this tender age, saw visions and went into ecstasies, but often, also became restless and uneasy. His father would soothe him, saying that these were angelic presences that came to greet him from the invisible world. Word of these visitations spread and people looked upon the boy as khudavendgar—God absorbed. While travelling extensively through the East, at Nishapur in Iran, the family met the Sufi saint Attar, an aged and revered figure. Attar divined Jelal’s spirituality and presented him with a copy of his Asrar-namah—the book of mysteries, and told Baha-ud-Din “soon your son would set on fire the consumed ones of the world. Rumi’s major work, generally considered to be one of the world’s greatest books, is his Mathnavi-I-Maanavi (Couplets of Inner Meaning). His table-talk (Fihi Ma Fihi), letters (Maktubat), Divan Shams Tabriz, and the hagiography Munqibel-Arefin, all contain important parts of his teachings. Rumi, like other authors, plants his teachings within a framework, which as effectively screens its inner meaning as displays it. This technique fulfils the purpose of preventing those who are incapable of using the material on a higher level from experimenting effectively with it; allowing those who want poetry to select poetry; giving entertainment to people who want stories;

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<sup>1</sup>. Knysh, 2010, P.159

<sup>2</sup>. Schimmel, 1993, P.36

stimulating the intellect in those who prize such experiences. Rumi had the uncomfortable Sufi habit of excelling in literary and poetic ability beyond all his contemporaries, while constantly affirming that such an attainment was a minor one compared with Sufi-hood.

**2. Hafiz (1325 AD-1390 AD):** Shamsuddin Mahommad, better known by his poetical surname of Hafiz, was born in Shiraz in the early part of the fourteenth century. His names, being interpreted, signify the Sun of the Faith, the Praiseworthy, and one who can recite the Quran; he is further known to his compatriots under the titles of the Tongue of the Hidden and the Interpreter of Secrets. The better part of his life was spent in Shiraz, and he died in that city towards the close of the century. The exact date either of his birth or of his death is unknown. He fell upon turbulent times. His delicate love-songs were chanted to the rude accompaniment of the clash of arms, and his dreams must have been interrupted often enough by the nip of famine in a beleaguered town, the inrush of conquerors, and the flight of the defeated. Hafiz is a name that has found its way into many parts of world, and lovers of fine poetry have become familiar with this great Iranian poet's lyrics (ghazal), through the translation of his sonnets into various languages. Iranians read his poems, not only as an entertainment, but very often they open Divan of Hafiz at random as a means of divination and augury. They regard Hafiz's poems as a good omen for starting their works such as marriage, travel, job starting, and so on. His sonnets contain an atmosphere of faith, sincerity, mysticism, spirituality, theology, love, and religiousness. The word-Hafiz, meaning —memorizer is a word chosen by the poet himself as a pen name after he had memorized all the verses of the Holy Quran and had also undertaken the task of teaching the Quran. He used this pen name in the last couplets of all his sonnets, addressed to himself as a concluding point in that piece. Later on in his life, Hafiz got the name—khajeh, to indicate his intellectual and spiritual position as a master of poetry and a reverent man of learning.

**3. Sa'di (1184 – 1283/1291):** A new height in Persian lyric poetry is reached in the thirteenth century with Sa'di, a versatile poet and writer of rare passion and eloquence. He holds a position in Persian literature, in terms of the power of expression and the depth and breadth of his sensibilities, comparable to that of Shakespeare in English letters. His sparkling ghazals display a youthful love of life and passion for beauty, be it natural, human, or divine. Sa'di's dexterous use of rhetorical devices is often disguised by the beguiling ease of his locution and the effortless flow of his style; his masterly language has been a model of elegant and graceful writing. Poet, prose writer and thinker, Muslihuddin Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Mushrifuddin Sa'di, also referred to as Shaykh Sa'di and Sa'di Shirazi, was born in Shiraz in or around 1200. He died in Shiraz in or around 1292 of old age. After the composition of the Gulistan, in 1258, Sa'di went into retirement and was heard of no more. He is the quintessential Muslim humanist, the first such wise man to be recognized in the West. The world honours Sa'di today by gracing the entrance to the Hall of Nations in New York with this call for breaking all barriers:

Of one Essence is the human race,  
Thusly has Creation put the Base;  
One Limb impacted is sufficient,  
For all others to feel the Mace.

The opening statement of the Gulistan followed by this: IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MERCIFUL THE CLEMENT, Laudation to the God of majesty and glory! Obedience to him is a cause of approach and gratitude in increase of benefits. Every inhalation of the breath prolongs life and every expiration of it gladdens our nature; wherefore every breath confers two benefits and for every benefit gratitude is due.

Whose hand and tongue is capable  
To fulfil the obligations of thanks to him?

Words of the most high: Be thankful, O family of David, but few of my servants are thankful.

It is best to a worshipper for his transgressions  
To offer apologies at the throne of God,  
Although what is worthy of his dignity  
No one is able to accomplish.

#### **4. Omar Khayyam (1048 AD-1131 AD)**

Omar Khayyam's full name was Ghiyath al-Din Abu'l-Fath Umar ibn Ibrahim Al-Nisaburi al-Khayyami. A literal translation of the name al Khayyami (or al-Khayyam) means tent maker and this may have been the trade of Ibrahim his father. Khayyam played on the meaning of his own name when he wrote:

Khayyam, who stitched the tents of science,  
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned,  
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,  
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing!

Omar Khayyam was an important philosopher, scientist, and practical instructor in Sufism. His name is well known in European literature mainly because of Edward Fitzgerald, who in Victorian times published a few of Omar's quatrains in English<sup>1</sup>. Omar Khayyam's teaching-poems, and those of other members of his school which have become an accepted part of this material, are based upon the special terminology and allegory of Sufism. Swami Govinda Tirtha made a full investigation and translation in 1941; published under the title of The Nectar of Grace<sup>2</sup>. This chapter shows the history, origin, salient elements, and literature of Sufism and eminent Persian Sufi Poets. The next chapter will examine the elements of Sufism in various essays of Emerson and also it shows the impact of the East on Emerson's prose.

**Development of Sufi Orders in India:** Real and continuous Sufi activities in India began from the last decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hence forward Sufi of outstanding personality began to come to India one after another in quick succession. These Sufi had organized themselves into various orders, called Silsilah's upto the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. there had been three main Sufi orders viz. Chishti, Suhrawardi and Qadri. They have played a leading role in the spiritual reform of Muslims in India. The 4<sup>th</sup> major Sufi order in India i.e. Naqshabandi had his growth and dominating influence mainly from 17<sup>th</sup> century and hence it is out of our purview.

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<sup>1</sup>. Idries, Shah. The Way of The Sufi, (New Delhi: Rupa Press, 2007) p.58

<sup>2</sup>. Ibnid, p. 226

**Conclusion:** The main reason for the emergence and prevalence of Sufism in Iran is that the Iranians have made the highest progress and reached the highest levels as a result of centuries of living in the material and spiritual civilization. They were superior in aesthetics to all the Asian nations; they had reached perfection in fine arts, such as painting, poetry, music, and handicrafts, including metalworking, knitting, and other industries. The limitation which followed the Sassanid era in Iran was not compatible with the beauty of Iranian taste that inherited the matter in the centuries from their ancestors; they knew it a precious jewel; they were looking for a way to sweep these conjectures, thus regained their old freedom. Sufism was the best way to reach this freedom of thought; that's why from the beginning, music and dance, which the Iranians were accustomed to them, not only perceived as legitimate but also in some of the branches of Sufism were considered as the form of worship, a means of approaching the source, refining the soul, and purifying the inner being.

One of the earliest means by which Sufis took over the concern of Iranians was by means of poetry, which is the subject of discussion in one of the chapters of the history of the intellectual movements of Iranians. The first person from the Sufi leaders of Persia, who accepted Persian poetry for his education, was Abu Sa'id Abu al-Khair. With the advent of Hakim Sanai Ghaznavi, the path of Persian Poetry changed. He was the first poet to find that there is a close connection between Islamic poetry and mysticism. At the time of Sanai's death, Attar was born and continued his journey. For Sanai and Attar, poetry is a platform for the presentation of ideas that ultimately leads to human salvation. After Attar, Rumi, who had great dedication to Attar and Sanai, continued the way. This dedication is apparent in the Divan Shams and the Masnavi Manavi.

The special attention that the great Sufis of Persia and Indian sub continent had in Persian language and literature were especially obliged to give their teachings in Persian language show what the desire of the great majority of the Indo-Iranian people.

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## WAHDAT AL-WUJUD AND WAHDAT AL-SHUHUD: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

## Abstract

The doctrines of Wahdat al-Wujūd (Unity of Being) and Wahdat al-Shuhūd (Unity of Witnessing) have evolved through centuries of Islamic metaphysics, mysticism, and philosophical theology, and have been influential in ongoing debates. Ibn al-Arabi, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, and Shah Waliullah are considered the three most prominent figures in this context. Ibn al-Arabi, a proponent of Wahdat al-Wujūd, contended that there is only one Divine Being, who is God. He argued that the created entities, including the earth, the universe, thoughts, systems of thought, and angels, are nothing but manifestations of divine attributes. Although each Being appears unique, they all stem from the same source, God. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, who criticized Ibn al-Arabi, created the concept of dualism within unity. He contends that God created the universe from non-being, which is not the Being of God. He maintains that God and His qualities are not identical to one another. Another prominent figure in the Muslim philosophy, Shah Waliullah, tried to reconcile this dispute. He argued the fundamental difference between the two ideas was due to semantics. He considered Wahdat al-Wujūd as ontologically valid, whereas Wahdat al-Shuhūd is spiritually lived. In this paper, the researcher aims to critically analyze the concepts of Wahdat al-Wujūd and Wahdat al-Shuhūd within the philosophical domain, exploring their foundational principles, evaluating their points of divergence and convergence, and assessing their relevance in contemporary Sufi thought.

Keywords: Wahdat al-Wujūd, Wahdat al-Shuhūd, God, world, mysticism, divine.

## Introduction

The primary goal of metaphysics is to explain the nature of Reality and the relationship between the Absolute and its manifestations. The search for truth is most fundamentally represented in Islamic intellectual history by Sufis attempting to comprehend how the One connects to the many. *Wahdat al-Wujūd* (the unity of existence) and *Wahdat al-Shuhūd* (Unity in appearance) are two influential yet contrasting doctrines within Sufi metaphysics that seek to explain the relationship between God, the world, and human spiritual experience. Both concepts revolve around the oneness of the Divine. Still, they articulate that oneness in different ontological and experiential terms, which has led to primary debates among Muslim scholars and Sufis. Both of these perspectives emerged in response to broader theological and philosophical concerns about *tawhid* (divine unity), transcendence, and immanence, as well as the proper interpretation of intense mystical experiences. *Tawhid*, as used in the Sufi literature, has four different meanings. First, faith and belief in the unity of God. Second, discipline in the internal and external in the light of that faith. Third, the experience of the union and the oneness with God.

<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor in the department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

Fourth, a theosophy or philosophical constructions of Reality in the light of the mystical experience (Kazmi, 2013). While Wahdat al-Wujūd was criticized by some for appearing to blur the boundary between God and the world, on the other hand, Wahdat al-Shuhūd arose partly as a corrective, seeking to protect orthodox doctrines of divine transcendence while still acknowledging the powerful unitive language of the Sufi path.

Many prominent mystic philosophers have explored the concepts of Wahdat al-Wujūd and Wahdat al-Shuhūd over time. However, two of the most renowned Sufi philosophers, Muhyiddin ibn Arabi and Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, addressed the nature of the divine in their philosophies, with their ideas differing in meaningful ways. Their ideology is based on mystical folklore and Islamic philosophy. It appears that the latter's role was to purge Sufism of what he saw as doctrines extraneous to Qur'anic discourse, encouraging appreciation for diverse perspectives within Islamic mysticism.

Ibn al-Arabi formulated the concept of Wahdat al-Wujūd (unity of Being). He asserted that the only Reality is God, while the cosmos is unfolding divine self-disclosure. According to Ibn Arabi, Wahdat-al-Wujūd acknowledges the presence of a single being, rejecting the existence of all other entities. The physical world is a manifestation of this One Being. (Chaudhary, 1998). The Being is singular, indivisible, and unlimited. There is no independent ontological fact of multiplicity, but the results of varying modes through which the real is manifested and perceived. However, the concept of Wahdat al-Wujūd has also generated theological debates throughout the history of Islam.

Many scholars and theologians consider this view potentially problematic, especially regarding the blurring of boundaries between God and creation. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi championed another school of thought. This metaphysical assertion, Wahdat al-Shuhūd, preserves a fundamental distinction between the Creator and creation. The unity, according to this perspective, is only encountered in the subjective state of the mystic, whose consciousness is so engaged in the Divine that the world fades from perception. This unity is not a truth of being but a truth of spiritual experience. This debate between these two prominent Sufi philosophers was not merely semantic or sectarian. It reflects two philosophical points on the ultimate Reality and the nature of the divine, from the perspective that nothing exists but God. From the standpoint of the second, it acknowledges the existential separation of creatures that grounds moral agency and responsibilities, which are real but not identical to God. The dialogue between Wujūd and Shuhūd is therefore a dialogue between ontology and experience, between metaphysical unity and lived duality. The tension between Ibn al-Arabi and Sirhindi is not a sign of discord, but rather evidence of the profound richness of Islamic mysticism and Muslim philosophy, in which the one and the many, the real and its reflections, stand in an eternal relation of revelation.

#### **Wahdat al-Wujūd (The Unity of Existence)**

Wahdat al-Wujūd is a Sufi concept that posits that everything that exists ultimately is one, single Reality, i.e., God. "There is no existence but God" (Chittick, 1989). There is only one Being, and nothing exists beside it. It is the same Being that presents in its whole, one form after another, without division or ratification. The doctrine of Wahdat-al-Wujūd asserts that everything that exists can only exist because it is an aspect of

Divine Reality. Therefore, it is an aspect of divine unity itself. For many Sufis, Wahdat al-Wujūd is not merely a theory about existence, but a way of perceiving and living. It emerges from a profound spiritual experience, where the seeker feels that the usual boundaries between "I" and "you," "creator" and "creation," begin to soften in the presence of God's nearness.

Philosophically, God is pure, but mystically and devotionally, He is Absolute Beauty. Earthly beauty, whether in form, idea, or action, is only a pale reflection. Sufi hymns use the passionate language of the lover. He is all-beautiful, and the entire universe reflects His beauty. The relationship between God and nature is often compared to light and darkness. *Wujūd* belongs solely to God; hence, its absence belongs to nature. Therefore, Ibn 'Arabi argues that *Wujūd* is light, and its absence is darkness (Sumbulah,2016).

Ibn 'Arabi refers to God as al-Haqq (The Truth), while khalq (creation) refers to everything produced. In the words of Ibn Arabi, there is a strong connection between al-Haqq and khalq, as all creation derives from God and lives solely through His existence. Creation is not a literal representation of God, but rather exists in utter dependence on Him. Since God and the world are one being, the relation between God and the world cannot be the relation of a cause and effect, or the relation of the Creator and the created, as the theologians believe, or the relation of the one and its emanations, as neo-Platonic philosophers imagine. For all these relations of causation, creation, and emanation imply dualism in varying degrees between God and the world, and contradict the fundamental truth that being is one. Since these terms fail to convey the truth, Ibn al-Arabi employs the term tajalli, which means self-uncovering or self-revelation, to describe the relationship between God and the world (Kazmi, 2013).

He believes that the relationship between the world and God is one of identity. In bringing forth this identity, he either negates the world or affirms God. Ibn Arabi rejects the concept of a real world and believes that only God exists. The world exists only through the unity's modalities. It does not exist independently. The One is the real Being, the source and ground of all that exists, while the phenomenal world is merely its passing shadow, an expression that possesses no autonomous reality of its own (Sharif). Ibn Arabi thinks that this dualism and multiplicity are therefore fictitious; the cosmos resides in a subtle, imaginal level of Reality ('âlam al-khayâl), suspended between pure Being and absolute non-being. Its existence is contingent, relative, and momentary, which is continuously refreshed (taqaddud al-khalq) by the ever-present "Breath of the All-Merciful" (nafas al-rahmân). Ibn Arabi rejects the concepts of transcendence and immanence because they convey a duality of existence.

This brings up the issue of being and not-being. Ibn Arabi believes that all beings exist in one form or another, which he refers to as 'awalim' or 'maratib'. According to him, there are four stages of being: (1) Existence in the physical world. (2) an intelligent being. (3) Being a thing in spoken words, and (4) having a thing in script. Everything must go through one of these stages to exist. Not existing in any of them means not being. If something exists in one plane yet does not in the other, it is considered a being in the plane where it exists and not in the plane where it does not. Here, Ibn Arabi is attempting to prove that a thing may exist conceptually but not as a concrete object. Ibn Arabi believes that God knows things before they come into existence in the world. Things exist in two planes: (1) intelligent beings and (2) concrete beings in the external

world. It serves as the foundation for his understanding of the universe and humanity. He considers the universe to be both eternal and temporal. It is both infinite and temporal, as it is based on God's knowledge and has a temporal existence in the world. Hence, it is the same Being that is the knower and the known, the Creator and the created. Being as knower and Creator is God, and being as known and created is the world. In other words, the same Being, one, indivisible and homogenous, when seen from the other side, is the world (kazmi latif). Ibn Arabi believed that being in actuality meant becoming one with God. All other existing and potential beings in the universe are manifestations, states, or modes of His Divine Names and Attributes. Through this metaphysical vision, Ibn Arabi establishes a worldview in which existence itself is a single, unified reality, God is the only true Being, and the multiplicity of creation is merely the unfolding of His presence. Thus, the doctrine of Wahdat-al-Wujūd stands as the culmination of Sufi insight into the oneness of all that exists.

## **Wahdat al-Shuhūd: Sirhindi's criticism of Wahdat al-Wujūd**

In contrast to the above comprehensive affirmation of ontological unity, the doctrine of Wahdat al-Shuhūd (Unity of Witnessing) emerges as a deliberate corrective to what some scholars perceived as an excessive identification of God with creation. Ahmad Sirhīndī, supporting the utmost transcendence of the Divine, argued that unity is realized not in the structure of being itself but in the state of the mystic's consciousness. As Sirhīndī emphasized, "the unity perceived is only in witnessing, not in existence" (Friedmann, 1971). The theories of Wahdat-al-Wujūd and Wahdat al-Shuhūd revolve around the nature of the mystical experience. The mystical experience itself is primarily focused on union with the Divine Being and how this union is interpreted in terms of either the oneness of existence or the duality of existence.

Nonetheless, the challenge to Wahdat-al-Wujūd's idea is not a recent development. Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine was criticized during his lifetime and later by the Iranian Sufi Sheikh Ala-Uddawla Simnani. In India, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi was a significant critic. Simnani argued that all creation was distinct from the Oneness or Divine Essence. The phenomenal world is a reflection of Reality, not its actual substance. There is just one existence, and it is that of God, who exists independently of the apparent universe. Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi refuted Ibn Arabi's doctrine in his theory of Wahdat al-Shuhūd. He argued that while Ibn Arabi's views were antithetical to the Qur'an, his own views were in complete accordance with the Qur'an. The Qur'an, as an authentic scripture, is the ultimate arbiter of opposing viewpoints. Sirhindi, therefore, redefined the mystical experience of unity as a subjective spiritual state, rather than an ontological truth about the nature of existence. According to him, when the mystic becomes absorbed in divine remembrance, the material world may temporarily disappear from awareness, giving the illusion that only God exists. However, this unity does not mean that created beings lose their distinctness or that the world dissolves into the Divine Essence. Instead, creation retains a real, though dependent, existence granted by God. Sirhindi thus aims to protect the core Islamic belief in God's transcendence (tanzih), that He is absolutely unlike His creation, while still acknowledging the transformative power of mystical union.

It is worth mentioning that Wahdat al-Shuhūd also means 'unity of vision'. Sirhindi thinks that the sense of union or oneness is purely a matter of vision (Shuhudi), not Reality. The awareness of one entity does not negate or exclude the presence of other creatures. Wahdat al-Shuhūd does not deny the presence of other beings. Its defining element is the acceptance of God as transcendent, not immanent, as described in the concept of Wahdat-al-Wujūd. Sirhindi says, "on the premise of the duality rather than the identity of God and the world. It separates the creation from the Creator, the servant from the lord, and never says that the Creator is the created, or the lord is the servant" (Kazmi, 2013). What Sirhindi emphasizes in this formulation is the preservation of relational distinction as the foundation of spiritual life. If God and the world were identified as one Being in the literal sense, then worship, obedience, prayer, and moral accountability would lose their meaning. The servant (abd) must remain aware of his separation from the Lord (Rabb), for it is precisely this distance that grounds humility, devotion, and ethical struggle. Unity is experienced inwardly, as the heart becomes so absorbed in the remembrance of God that all else fades from attention, yet this spiritual vision never abolishes ontological duality. Even in the highest state of mystical unveiling, the servant must ultimately return to consciousness of the world and resume his place as a responsible agent under divine command. Thus, according to Wahdat al-Shuhūd, transcendence does not imply absence. Still, rather than the inaccessible loftiness of God above His creation, who may be seen at all times yet is never compared to what He has made.

In his criticism of Wahdat-al-Wujūd, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi asserts that "the universe is only a shadow of the Existence of the Necessary Being and has no independent existence", (Firdaus & Sahib, 2021). Additionally, he claimed that the Absolute should be used to determine the existence of the universe and that the Absolute exists because of its Essence rather than because of existence. Thus, Sirhindi's critique represents an attempt to reiterate the transcendence of God while upholding the ontological boundary between Creator and creation.

## **Shah Waliullah's philosophy of Reconciliation**

Shah Waliullah, recognizing the depth and experiential authenticity within both doctrines, argued that "the apparent conflict between Ibn 'Arabi and Sirhindī was not rooted in substance but in perspective and terminology" (Faruque, 2016). While discussing Wahdat al-Wujūd and Wahdat al-Shuhūd, Shah Waliullah first addresses the origins of the terms "Wujūd" and "Shuhūd." Speaking about it, he emphasizes that to comprehend these patterns, one must first recognize that these terms have distinct meanings. To understand these trends, it is essential to realize that the two terms have distinct meanings. We are unaware that he is following any language trends in contemporary philosophy. However, it is also evident that his approach is definitely analytical. Any concept used as a term must have a meaning, and those who wish to understand it must be aware of its background. He begins by using Wujūd to describe the unity of existence, emphasizing that it is the point at which a traveller becomes lost in the unity. His intuition and concentration prevent him from thinking about anything but God. Describing Shuhūd, according to him, it is a moment when a traveller recognizes that there are reasons to perceive God and the world as one, as well as reasons to

perceive them as distinct. After explaining them, Shah Waliullah makes it clear that the latter, the stage of Wahdat al-Shuhūd, is higher than the former, the stage of Wahdat al-Wujūd.

Shah Waliullah's stance on the issue of existence was to harmonize Sirhindī's Wahdat al-Shuhūd with Ibn Arabī's well-known theory of Wahdat al-Wujūd. Shah Waliullah argued that "there was only a semantic issue rather than a substantial difference between the two ideas during his critique of Ibn Arabī's doctrine" (Kazmi, 2013). He said that both ultimately came to the same conclusion. Shah Waliullah explained his position on existence by saying that everything in the world has both similar and unique characteristics. For instance, although humans differ from one another in numerous ways, they all share the common trait of being human. According to Shah Waliullah, Wahdat al-Shuhūd emphasizes the significance of recognizing and comprehending this oneness within the limitations of human perception and the Reality of the world.

In contrast, Wahdat-al-Wujūd reveals the ultimate oneness of God underlying all existence. Shah Waliullah's stress on the "necessary relation between the creation and the creator, which consistently pervades all his thinking, is one of his writings' most distinctive characteristics" (Kazmi, 2013). Whether the subject of his discussion is highly spiritual or purely mundane, the consciousness of the ultimate Reality is always uppermost in his mind. Therefore, the creation still has a relative existence even though the actuality of God's unity is metaphysical, and this relative existence is essential for people to interact with God through worship and introspection. In this way, Shah Waliullah succeeds in maintaining a delicate balance between the metaphysical unity of God and the experiential plurality of creation. He essentially views the entire contingent phenomenon as a manifestation of God's creative power. In his Reconciliation, he affirms that while all existence ultimately derives from the Divine Reality, the world's relative existence is not illusory but divinely intended as the arena in which spiritual growth and moral responsibility take place, he resolves the tension that had historically separated the followers of Ibn 'Arabī and Sirhindī, by stating that there is no real distinction between the philosophies of Wahdat al-Wujūd and Wahdat al-Shuhūd, and any such distinction is merely a delusion. The world is made up of non-emanative modes of attributes in the mirror of nonexistence rather than an attribute or an emanation of attributes. These modes appear true; yet in actuality, they are only true because they exist. He uses an example to resolve this disparity. He says, "Let us make a horse, a donkey, and a man out of wax. This wax is common to all of them, although their forms differ from one another. We call these forms, moulded out of wax, a horse, a donkey, and a man. If we reflect deeply, we find that these forms are only modes of their Being, and their Being is nothing but the wax" (Rakhmetkyzy, 2025). Thus, Shah Waliullah's philosophy serves as a bridge that preserves the transcendence of God without negating the mystical experience of His nearness, ultimately restoring harmony within Sufi metaphysics and enriching the Islamic understanding of divine, cosmic relations.

### **Conclusion**

The long-standing discourse between *Wahdat-al-Wujūd* and *Wahdat al-Shuhūd* represents more than a mere theological disagreement; it embodies the two epistemic

pathways through which Islamic mysticism seeks to comprehend the relationship between the Absolute and the contingent. As the analysis reveals, Ibn al-Arabi asserts that all diversity is merely the varied expression of a single, Divine Being and bases mystical unity on the ontological nature of reality itself. In his perspective, multiplicity is not a separate or independent realm but a series of manifestations through which the One reveals different aspects of His own essence. Ibn al-Arabi's goal was to produce mystical literature so that every person, regardless of their cultural background, might study it, embrace the spirit of mysticism, and discover mysticism through being and expression. He is justifiably credited with influencing the greatest minds in the Islamic world, but as most of his writings are still in manuscript form, a comprehensive overview of his thoughts has not yet been provided. Ibn al-Arabi's philosophy is not merely a doctrine of abstract monism, but an all-encompassing mystical perspective that allows people to recognize God's presence in all things and to experience spiritual transformation through both understanding (*being*) and expression (*becoming*).

By contrast, Sirhindi defends the indispensability of duality, affirming that unity is not a metaphysical fact but a spiritual perception experienced during mystical states. An alternate system was to be established by Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi. Mysticism and Islam had never been so strongly linked in India. It should come as no surprise that Sirhindi's *Wahdat al-Shuhūd*, as an ideology, had such a profound effect on Indian Islam. His critique of excessive ontological unity served as a theological corrective, ensuring that mystical experience did not compromise either core Islamic tenets of divine transcendence or prophetic law. It redirected all of its streams, both esoteric and orthodox, into a single stream. It eased the conflict between spiritual experience and religious law. He reconciled the inner life of profound mysticism with the formalistic dynamic of religion. His intellectual legacy effectively guided diverse Islamic traditions in India into a unified stream, one that preserved the richness of mystical insight without sacrificing the theological boundaries essential to the faith.

However, Shah Waliullah's mediatory reinterpretation demonstrates that the divergence between *Wahdat-al-Wujūd* and *Wahdat al-Shuhūd* is not incompatible. Unlike the majority of pantheists, Shah Waliullah believed that the deity was transcendent. Nevertheless, he also highlighted the differences between the philosophies of *Wahdat-al-Wujūd* and *Wahdat al-Shuhūd* and believed in the imminent presence of God. Thus, the evolution of these doctrines shows the intellectual elasticity of Islamic metaphysics.

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**DR. AMIT KUMAR**<sup>1</sup>

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**DR. NITISH KUMAR**<sup>2</sup>

## **EXPLORING THE MYTHOLOGICAL LINKAGES BETWEEN INDIA AND PERSIA**

### **Abstract**

Myths are supernatural sagas that are considered sacred reality to the believers. Myths are generally the stories of primordial ancestors whose minds are engaged in the quest to answer the natural phenomenon that occurred over the ages. All the mythologies are connected to the actions of gods and goddesses or evil spirits and demons. The myth believers considered them as unmistakable truth and eternal, unlike our contemporary stories, which are unidirectional and transient. Many commonalities of mythologies have been found in Vedic and Avestic legends. Hence, it becomes an important aspect of the investigation to determine how they are identical in names, attributes, and functions of gods and goddesses and others. This paper selectively delved into their mythologies related to some important gods and goddesses, demons and dragons and their linkages with social life.

**Keywords:** Myth, Veda, Avesta, Gods, Goddess, Demons

### **Introduction**

Every society evolved with mythologies intertwined in their history and memories. In general, one can presume that mythologies are either associated with supernatural beings, ancient narratives of gods and goddesses, or evil spirits and demons. The concept of "Myth" has been elucidated with a significant variation in different disciplines, including history, psychology and philosophy. The best ontological understanding is prescribed by Eliade as 'The mythical age is the time when the Sacred entered our world, giving it form and meaning: The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world thus, the mythical age is sacred time, the only time that has value for traditional man'.<sup>1</sup>

Myth narrates a story that is tacitly connected with the root of different societies and evolves over time. It tells us how the supernatural came into existence as a reality to ancient societies, be it the gods of different animistic beings like the sun, the sky or the moon, or the manifestation of devils in the form of flood and famine. Therefore, myth speaks about old virtuality, the narrative of how human beings or myriad gods/goddesses came into being, the existence of evil spirits or demons or dragons, and the explanation of supernatural phenomena on earth. It is related to the thoughts of human ancestors on

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Centre for West Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Gargi College, University of Delhi

the quest for different universal questions that necessitate the human mind to ponder upon them and seek an answer to these questions. Such engagements should not be viewed from the modern scientific lens. Rather, they should be viewed from the perspective of those who believe in these myths. From the believers' viewpoints, the myth is considered an infallible truth and eternal – the saga of gods and goddesses, unlike the stories of our modern history, which are linear and transitory.

The myth generally speaks about the characters of gods and goddesses and the anecdote of how they fought demons or dragons and defeated them for humankind's welfare. Myths also tell us about the creation of heaven and earth, the creation of humans and other living beings, the mystery of life and death, and the blessings and curses of gods. It also speaks about the pathway towards a life of wealth and abundance and poverty, the importance of piety and devotion, how humans pleased gods and, in return, how humans received the same treatment.

In general, the relationship between myth and society is reciprocal. Society's traditions and beliefs are influenced by their myths, and the myths, too, are shaped by the associated social settings. Over time, some myths may disappear, new myths may take their place, or the old myths may continue with certain changes. In the above context, the mythologies of the two ancient civilisations, India and Persia, need special investigation because of the many commonalities of gods and goddesses, their names, characteristics, and functions. This paper discusses selected mythologies and the associated stories of evil spirits, demons, and dragons. Here, the stories are mainly derived from Rig Veda, Atharva Veda, Mahabharata, Yasna and Yasht.

### **Mythologies of Gods and Goddesses**

In Vedic scriptures, Adityas is associated with seven gods, viz. Varuna, Mitra, Indra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Daksa and Ansa. The first three gods are of Indo-Iranian origin, and the last three are abstract gods. *Rta*, the law on morality, is a special attribute of Varuna but is also associated with all the gods of Adityas. Likewise, in Avesta, Ahura Mazda and his six arch-angels or divine beings are named Amesha Spents, the "Immortal Holy Ones." *Asha*, the ethical law, is associated with all the gods of this group. Except for the Ahura Mazda, the rest of the gods are purely an abstraction.<sup>2</sup>

The wonders and vastness of the sky have kindled the primordial men to believe in the habitation of God behind the sky. Such belief has led to the development of the "Sky-god" in many early societies, including Indo-Persian. In the early Vedic age, Varuna was considered the "Sky-god" and changed to the "god of water" in the later Vedic age. Rig Veda mentions that Varuna controls heaven, earth, and air<sup>3</sup> and creates a division between heaven and earth.<sup>4</sup> He is believed to have created a direction for the bright sun and moon to shine in the sky.<sup>5</sup>

In Rig Veda Hymn XXIV (8 and 10), it says,

King Varuṇa hath made a spacious pathway, a pathway for the Sun  
wherein to travel. Where no way was, he made him set his footstep,  
and warned afar whate'er afflicts the spirit..... Whither by day  
depart the constellations that shine at night, set high in heaven above  
us?

Varuṇa's holy laws remain unweakened, and through the night the Moon moves on in splendor.<sup>6</sup>

Under the command of Varuna, the moon moves at night, and the stars shine in the sky.<sup>7</sup> He is believed to be an independent ruler of the earth<sup>8</sup> with complete knowledge of truth and wrongdoing of mankind.<sup>9</sup> It is believed that Varuna and Mitra have control over *Rta*.<sup>9</sup>

The equivalent of Varuna in Avesta is Ahura Mazda, “The Wise Lord”, the supreme God and the creator of the earth and everything that lives under it. His worshippers believed that Ahura Mazda brightened the heavenly compass and the sky enclothed him.<sup>10</sup> He engendered the division of day into morning, noon and night, light and darkness and rotation of seasons.<sup>11</sup> He determines the speed of wind and cloud, the power of the sun and stars and the different moon periods.<sup>12</sup> The innate trait of sovereign power has made him the absolute ruler of this earth.<sup>13</sup>

Also, Varuna is mentioned in Atharva Veda as the god who controls the course of rivers.<sup>14</sup> And in Mahabharata, it is said that Varuna became the “Water god” at the request of all other gods,<sup>15</sup> the lord of all water creatures surrounding him.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the “Water goddess” concept is found in Persian Mythology. Grimal writes, ‘She was simply called the waters or *Ardvi Sura Anahita*. This deity played an important but somewhat mysterious role in Iran.’<sup>17</sup> The name is mentioned in one of the earliest Persian texts, *Yasht*, though it tends to lose value in modern Iran. However, she gained importance and was worshipped as *Anaitis* (Hellenic name) in Asia Minor. Anahita Temple is erected on the raised stoned platform in Kangavar, Iran.<sup>18</sup>

Though the moon is associated with the Vedic Varuna and Avestic Ahura Mazda, both societies worshipped the “Moon-god” as a minor deity. In Veda, it is called Chandra (or Soma), and Mah in Avesta.<sup>19</sup> The Chandra is associated with healing, even the sharpest ills that humans endure; he heals the sick and cheers the sad; he nerves the weak and dispels their fears.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Mah is associated with the cow, which plays an important role in Persian mythology, especially in the Vedai and Avestan periods, and presides over time and tide. The worshippers dedicated the seventh day of the month to Mah.<sup>21</sup>

In Vedic mythology, Surya is regarded as the “Sun God”. Rig Veda says that Surya brightens the world and makes the darkness and demons disappear through his light.<sup>22</sup> It is believed that Agni causes brightness in the sun,<sup>23</sup> and so the sun is called the eye of Agni.<sup>24</sup> As mentioned in Rig Veda, Surya is known to ride a chariot dragged by seven mares.<sup>25</sup> In epics, Surya is synonymous with other names like Aditya, Pusan, Ravi, Vivaswat and Tapana.<sup>26</sup> The sun also reflects progeny as the union of Kunti and Surya receiving a child may relate to the sun's role in providing progeny to barren women.<sup>27</sup> The counterpart to the ‘Sun God’ in Persian mythology is Hvar (or Hvarshaeta).<sup>28</sup> He is called the “Shining God” and the “Genius”.<sup>29</sup> When he shines, the creation of Ahura Mazda becomes clean.<sup>30</sup> Because of its source of light and brightness, the sun is regarded as the eye of Ahura Mazda.<sup>31</sup> It is a general belief that the one who worships the sun to stand against darkness receives the blessing of worldly and heavenly gods.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, in Vedic mythology, the sun is also associated with progeny. The Iranian people widely

believe that the rays of the rising sun were the most effective means to make the new wives conceived.<sup>33</sup>

Though the deities as goddesses occupy a subordinate position in the Indo-Persian pantheon, they are well-revered and worshipped by their respective believers. One of the prominent goddesses mentioned in Avesta is Parenthi – she is associated with affluence and wealth.<sup>34</sup> The similar goddess in Veda is Purandhi. She is also considered a “goddess of plenty” in Veda.<sup>35</sup> The other important goddess is “Goddess Earth” – Prithvi, as mentioned in Rig Veda. There is no goddess of this name in Avesta. However, Aramaiti – the divine being listed in Amesha Serpents – is considered the genius of the earth and wisdom. She is believed to restore the perpetuation of a blissful life.<sup>36</sup> Aramati is the personification of devotion and explains an association with the earth.<sup>37</sup> She is considered the servant of men, and if well treated, she yields abundant food in return. The Indo-Persian society worshipped her as a goddess of the earth.<sup>38</sup>

### **Mythology of Demons**

The Indo-Persian mythology ascribes no propitiation, invocation, offering or worship to demons to evade or cast-off evil spirits. It is rather considered a chronic enemy of gods.<sup>39</sup> In Avesta, the evil spirit is named “Druj”, who is always defeated by Mithra, which means the qualities of caring, kindness and trust. Identical to Avesta, Macdonell identifies the Vedic “Druh” as a group of “injurious demons”.<sup>40</sup> Another group of demons mentioned in both Rigveda and Avesta is the “Yatus”. Avesta mentions that the “Yatus” affect mankind with their sorcery and witchcraft,<sup>41</sup> and the Vedic “Yatus” is mainly concerned with sorcery.<sup>42</sup> The believers of both mythologies conceived that “Yatus” interfered in their rituals and prevented the ritual's effect. They believed that “Yatus” savoured the flesh of men and horses and drank cow's milk.<sup>43</sup> The Indo-Persian feared “Yatus” and prayed to gods for the demon's destruction.<sup>44</sup>

Another prominent type of demon known in the ancient Indo-Persian literature is ‘*Danava*’, the adversary of the lord Indra.<sup>45</sup> The one famous demon, which is considered an arch-rival of Indra, was Vritra, whom Indra defeated and killed at the end. Vritra is believed to have stolen life-sustaining water from the world, putting all creatures on the earth in danger. But at last, Indra came to the help of mankind and defeated Vrita through the powerful thunderbolt, which was formed from the sacred bones of Sage Dadhich. As in Vedas, the gods of Avesta also constantly stage wars against the demon.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Gandhara, another *Danava* who occupies a distinct class in Veda, lived in waters with its *Apsaras*. He, too, is described as a hostile being to gods, especially Indra.<sup>47</sup> The counterpart of Gandhara, the Avestic Gandarewa, is clearly mentioned as a dragon-like demon.<sup>48</sup> Threatona fought Gandarewa and slayed him. Scholars identify the Vedic Gandhara and Avestic Gandarewa as very similar and opined that the attribute of being hostile gradually developed from a singular entity.<sup>49</sup>

### **Dragon Slayer Mythology**

The most important dragon slayer gods in Indian mythology are Trita Aptya and Indra. Trita Aptya is the protagonist who battled Viśvarūpa – the dragon that imprisoned “cloud cattle”. The story opined that Trita Aptya defeated Viśvarūpa, freed the “cloud cattle”, and let the rain prevail. Indra, the “god of storm and thunder”, too defeated the dragon, Vritra. As per the story, the birth of Indra was captivating. It is assumed that the birth of

Indra from Purusha – the metaphor of “productivity cow” – tremors the sky, the earth and the mountains and frightens all gods, including his mother, and all of them leave him. And his birth was contemporaneous with the massive drought delivered by Vritra. The drought was so disastrous that none of the gods was able to subside it until when the baby Indra drank an ample amount of Soma and fought the dragon with his iron weapon – which was given to him by his grandfather, Tavstri, and freed the “cloud cattle” and caused the rain falls. Since then, he was given the epithet name Verethragna – the defeater of Vritra.<sup>50</sup> In Iranian myth, though, this epithet is named as the conqueror of resistance (the name given to Bahram Yazata). However, the character more notable to mention is *Fereydun* – the dragon-slayer and the conqueror of *Zahak* (dragon king).<sup>51</sup>

### **Conclusion**

A careful study of the Vedic and Avestic mythologies suggests that many commonalities in the characteristics of gods and goddesses with the same or different names were found and that their influences are profoundly significant in both societies. For example, the Vedic Adityas is associated with seven gods, similar to the Avestic Amesha Spents. The counterpart of Varuna in Indian mythology is Ahura Mazda in Iranian mythology, where both the gods are considered the independent and sovereign rulers of the earth. The Indo-Iranian society worshipped the “Water-god” (Varuna in Veda and Ardvi Sura Anahita in Avesta), “Moon-god” (Chandramas in Veda and Mah in Avesta), and “Sun-god” (Surya in Veda and Hvar or Hvarshaeta in Avesta). Also, the Indo-Iranian mythologies were found in the worshipping of goddesses. The goddess Parenthi in Avesta and Purandhi in Veda is associated with riches and abundance. The Avestic goddess Aramaiti and Vedic Aramati are both associated with earth and prosperous life. The mythologies of demons were found in Indo-Iranian society, wherein their slayer is lord Indra in Veda and Threatona in Avesta. Finally, the mythology of dragon Viśvarūpa in Veda was believed to be fought and defeated by Indra and Trita Aptya and Zahak – dragon king in Avesta – was defeated by Fereydun.

From the light of the above discussion on the Indo-Iranian mythologies, it can be seen that the influence of these myths on society is reciprocal. Indo-Iranian society shaped the sagas of their mythologies, and these mythologies, in turn, shaped their culture, traditions, beliefs and religion. Scholars have identified the commonalities of the Vedic and Avestic mythologies and argue mainly based on common origin, race and religion.<sup>52</sup> However, this paper opined that every society (mainly in the ancient and medieval periods) had myths associated with an inherent belief that a supernatural being controls the universe by taking into various forms of attributes. Some myths have changed completely with the change of social settings, some with minor distortions, and some continue to remain in their pristine form and have deep influence and significance to many societies, including the Vedic and Avestic societies.

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**DR. SYED MD IQBAL SHAH ALQUADRI<sup>1</sup>**

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**DR. HIRA LALL CHOPRA's CONTRIBUTION TO INDO-PERSIAN  
LITERATURE**

Dr. Hira Lall Chopra was born in Kasur a well known place in Lahore on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1906. He grew up in the town of Hafizabad and from there he passed the Matric Examination from G.S.A.S High School. He passed the Intermediate Examination from the D.A.V College, Lahore in 1927. Thereafter he obtained the degree of B.A (Hons) in Persian from S.D College, Lahore in 1929. He passed the M.A Examination in Persian in 1931 and secured First Class First and also received a Gold Medal from the Punjab University. It is said that he created a history for being the first Hindu to top in M.A in Persian with such record marks from the Punjab University. He also had the privilege of being a direct student of Allama Sir Dr. Mohammad Iqbal (1877-1938 A.D). Thus he acquired the knowledge of Urdu and Persian literature and learned the art of versification directly from this great poet. He was fluent in many languages like Persian, Urdu, English, Hindi and Punjabi. After completing M.A he started teaching Persian in the S.D College as well as in Punjab University from 1931. During 1930s he edited Diwan e Zauq<sup>2</sup> and Diwan -e- Hali<sup>3</sup>. Both of these books were prescribed for the syllabus of intermediate students.

After partition of the country in 1947 he came to Delhi via Srinagar with his family. From there he came to Calcutta in 1948 and settled in the city permanently. He joined the department of Islamic History and Culture of Calcutta University in 1955.<sup>4</sup> Though Dr. Chopra taught Sufism in the department of Islamic History but his inclination towards Persian remained till his last breath.

Dr. Hira Lall Chopra went to Iran in 1958 on the invitation of Imperial Government and delivered lectures in the University of Tehran. During this period he obtained the degree of D.Litt. from the University of Tehran on his thesis entitled Shrimad Bhagwat Gita in which he also wrote an exhaustive commentary in Persian. He also translated the famous Sikhs book Japji Sahib and Sukhmani Sahib into Persian. These books earned him great reputation in Iran and Afghanistan. Dr. Chopra returned to India in 1959 and continued to work as lecturer in the department of Islamic History and Culture in Calcutta University. He served the said department for about 25 years and retired in 1985.

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Persian, Maulana Azad College, 8, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Kolkata

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Ibrahim Zauq (1790-1854 A.D) was one of the renowned poets of his time. He was the master of masters like Mohammad Hassan Azad in prose and Dagh in ghazal. In the reign of King Bahadur Shah Zafar, Zauq, who was awarded the title of Malik al-Shu'ara, was considered to be one of the most important poets of his time.

<sup>3</sup> Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali (1837-1914) born in Panipat, was as a poet, critic, commentator, biographer, and translator.

<sup>4</sup> Indo Iranica, Vol 48, March-June, Sep-Dec, 1995, No-1-4, p. 9-14.

Dr. Chopra held the post of Chairman of Board of Studies in Arabic, Persian and Urdu of the Calcutta University for several years. During this period he took several important decisions for the development of these languages. He was also attached to several other organizations and societies. He was associated with the Iran Society, Calcutta established by Dr. Mohammad Ishaque<sup>1</sup> since 1949. He remained an active member of the society throughout his life attending most of the seminars, conferences, symposiums and meetings. As from the beginning Dr. Chopra was desirous of building friendly relation between India and Iran, the Iran Society provided him the platform of founding an Indo-Iranian Friendship Association in Calcutta. Initially with the support of his friends and assistance of Embassy of Iran, New Delhi he established the association and a number of literary programmes were organized but unfortunately this association did not last long. Inspite of a short span of existence it proved very fruitful for the development of Indo-Iran relations.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Chopra also contributed many valuable articles to Indo Iranica, the journal of the Iran Society. He was also among the members of Board of Editors of the journal till his last days. He wrote a large number of research articles in the said journal. In view of his lifelong contribution and services, the society elevated him to the post of Vice President. The titles of some of his important articles published in Indo-Iranica are as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- i. Avicenna –The Integrator of the East and the West
- ii. A Brief Life Sketch of Mirza Ali Akbar Kashani
- iii. Chandra Bhan Birahman
- iv. English Translation of the poem Roz-i-Zindagani
- v. Father V. Courtois as I knew him
- vi. Fortieth Birth Anniversary of His Imperial Majesty The Shahanshah of Iran
- vii. Forty first Anniversary of the H.I.M The Shahanshah of Iran
- viii. His Excellency Dr. Fereydoun Adamiyat, Iranian Ambassador in India
- ix. Indo Iranian relations during the Pahlavi regime (1926-1976)
- x. Iqbal and his message
- xi. Iqbal and India
- xii. Iqbal- The poet
- xiii. Iqbal- Rumi of the Modern Age
- xiv. Khoda Hafiz: Dr. Asghar Ali Hikmat
- xv. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
- xvi. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is dead

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<sup>1</sup> . Dr. Mohammed Ishaque was an Iranologist and founder of Iran Society in Calcutta.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p 4-5

<sup>3</sup> Indo-Iranica, Index I to L, 2002, Kolkata, p. 9-10

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- xvii. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi
- xviii. (Dr.) Muhammed Ishaque, A symbol of Friendship and Sincerity
- xix. Omar Khayyam and Indian Philosophy
- xx. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru s' Goodwill Visit to Iran
- xxi. Pandit Nehru s' visit to Afghanistan and Iran
- xxii. President Dr. Radha Krishnans' visit to Afghanistan and Iran
- xxiii. Rabindranath Tagore in Iran
- xxiv. Representatives of Iran Government in New Delhi and Calcutta
- xxv. Translation of Sadiq Sarmad s' poem Roz-i-Gandi

Name of some Persian Articles and compositions:

- 1- بگو گیتا 2- (نظم) بخدمت برادر محترم آفای محمد اسحاق 3- خطاب، دفاعیہ پروفسور ہیرا لال چوپرا 4- راماین 5- قطعہ استقلالیہ بخدمت عزت ماب دکتر علی اصغر حکمت سفیر کبیر مملکت ایران در ہند 6- قطعہ خیر مقدم بہ ورود دبیران ایران بہ کلکتہ 7- قطعہ کے بتقريب افتتاح بزم ایران بہ منزل نو نوشته شد

As mentioned before, Dr. Chopra was a contemporary of Allama Iqbal and he had the opportunity of being a student this great poet, so he keenly observed Iqbal's personality, his thoughts and views and penned them down in his articles. He wrote a number of articles on Allama Iqbal which were actually his lectures he delivered in the seminars at the Iran Society. In his opinion Allama Iqbal should not be portrayed as an Islamic poet, rather he should be considered as a poet of entire mankind because of his universal message. Dr. Chopra says "To label him as a poet of Islam is a great injustice done to him. He is a poet of entire mankind and his message is universal, though grabbed in Muslim technique and measured with the yardstick of a faith, which inherently does not condone the human frailties but goads everyone to soar high towards the ideal- the very personality of the last great prophet, Muhammad."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Chopra in another article entitled "Iqbal Rumi of Modern Age" explained how the poetry and philosophy of Rumi had the deepest influence on Iqbal's mind. Iqbal pays tribute to Rumi in almost all of his books and acknowledges him as his spiritual guide. Dr. Chopra compared the works of both the poets citing relevant passages and explaining how Rumi's thoughts helped Iqbal in formulating his philosophical ideas. He says "Iqbal in the present age has played the same role which Rumi played in his time".<sup>2</sup>

He was awarded twice by the Iranian Government for promoting Indo-Iranian Cultural relations, firstly the Educational and Cultural Medal, secondly, the Shahanshah of Iran s' Coronation Gold Medal in 1964. Moreover the President of India awarded him the certificate of Honour in 1984 for his erudite scholarship in Persian. Dr. Chopra got the Ghalib Award as well besides other honours. He died at the age of 92 on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1994 in Calcutta.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Iqbal and his message, Indo-Iranica, Vol,8(3), 20-28

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p 20-28

<sup>3</sup>.Ibid, p. 6-21. (Persian Section)

Dr. Chopra was an eminent poet of Urdu and Persian and could compose poetry in both the languages spontaneously and effortlessly. He was fully acquainted with Modern Persian Poetry and had complete mastery over it.

Though Dr. Chopra was a Hindu by faith, yet he had great love and respect for the household (Ahle Bait) of the holy Prophet of Islam. He composed few *manqabats* in their praise. For instance a specimen of his qasida written in praise of Hazrat Ali (R.A) may be seen hereunder:

گر نه جان پاشم براه مرتضی ای والی من  
زندگی گویا دلیل خامی سودای من  
این قدر سودا بده تا می شوم خاک درت  
یا علی یا مرتضی مولای من آقای من  
چون مرا آورده در خطه دین مبین  
ذره ذره شکر تو گویند جمله سر تا پای من  
در ریاض آرزویم با غبانی کرده ای  
ای مرا مشکل کشا و ای چمن برای من  
نیست ممکن گر توانم کرد شکرت ای حبیب  
در خور تو کی تشكیر آید از لبهای من  
منبع اخلاق و علم و حلم و ایمانی امیر  
می سرایند مدح تو اولاد من آبای من  
بر درت هر موی من گوید دعا هر لحظه ای  
بارش رحمت به هندوستان علی ست مولای من

He composed a marvelous Salam in praise of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A). The opening verses are as follows

ای حسین ای فخر عالم بر تو من گوییم سلام  
این توی گر دین شد زنده بتو هر دم سلام

Dr. Chopra says Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A) sacrificed his head for Islam but never bowed his head before the oppressors.<sup>1</sup> As said by the renowned sufi of India, Khawja Moinuddin Chishti (R.A):

شاه است حسین باد شاه است حسین  
دین است حسین دین پناه است حسین  
سر داد نداد دست درست یزید  
حقه که بنا لا الہ ست حسین

<sup>1</sup>. Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A), the grandson of the Holy Prophet of Islam was martyred in Karbala in 680 A.H by the army of Yazid.

Dr. Chopra expresses the same idea. He says

ای شہنشاہ دو عالم زینت دین مبین  
جان را دادی و لیکن سر نہ خم کردى سلام

He further says

از شهادت زندگانی جاودانی یافته  
چشمهاں ابل ماتم تا ابد شد نم سلام  
تو حصار حصن دین ملت بیضا استی  
او و آل تو چسان بر دید رنج و غم سلام  
مقصد آل نبی هر گز نه بودش سلطنت  
ما سوی الله نباشد عبد تا آدم سلام<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Chopra was a symbol of Indo Iranian cultural relations. He developed friendship with Iranian scholars, poets, officials and diplomats. Iranian guests used to visit India on his invitation. When Dr. Ali Asghar Hekmat, the then Iranian Ambassador to India visited Calcutta he was warmly welcomed at the Iran Society. On this occasion Dr. Chopra composed an Ode (Qita) in his praise.

جذدا امروز چه مهمان ذیشان آمده  
باغبان گلستان بزم ایران آمده  
دکتر حکمت سفیر خطّه<sup>2</sup> ایران به هند  
آسمان علم را خرشید تابان آمده  
اربیاط هند و ایران پخته تر گردید ازو  
روز و شب او خود باین مصروف و کوشان آمده  
محفل میخانه<sup>3</sup> اخلاص را پیر مغان  
خود به بزمش رندهای هند و ایران آمده  
این فقط اعجاز استقبال حکمت شد که من  
عشرت بی مایه هم امشب غرلخوان آمده<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Chopra had sincere love and respect for culture of India as well as Iran. He was a true patriot and loved his country very much. After visiting Iran he was so much charmed by the Iranian culture that he became great admirer of it. He respected and appreciated the scholars and poets of Iran in the same way as he respected of his own country. He expressed this feeling in one of his poems. Few verses may be quoted here:

آن پار آشنایم خوش مرز بوم ایران  
همسایه قدیمی پار است ملک ما را

<sup>1</sup>. Rise Growth and Decline of Indo-Persian Literature, R.M.Chopra, p. 337-338  
<sup>2</sup>Indo-Iranica, Vol 48, 1-4,p.17 (Persian Section)

تهریب ماست یکسان داریم یک تمدن  
از مهر ما نشلی ارواح فدما ما را  
فردوسی و سنای عطار و روم و سعدی  
حافظ خیام و جامی رشک اند شعراما را  
خسرو نظیری فیضی عرفی و غالب و اقبال  
صاحب ظهوری بیدل فخر اند آسیارا  
هندستان دیار بودا و کریشنا و شنکر  
ایران زمین زرتشت نوشیروان و دارا<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Chopra was a promoter of peace, love, brotherhood, humanity and fraternity. He was against the policy of war, killing of people and bloodshed. He completely disliked hue, lamentation, unrest and commotion. He wanted peace and prosperity for both the countries. He says:

چون خطه های عالم جنگد بهر قوت  
مارا همین مناسب باشیم با مدارا  
عشق است مقصد ما امن است منزل ما  
از جنگهای عالم کردیم ما کنارا  
منقود امن عالم شد از تضاد باهم  
شان و جلال آدم گشته است پار پارا  
انسان چون بهایم اندر ستیز دایم  
گفتارها ملایم دل همچو سنگخارا  
دو پار هند و ایران از قرنها چون اخوان  
بستند عهد و بیمان جنگ است نا گوارا<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Chopra was a prolific writer. He had good proficiency in Urdu, Persian, Hindi, Punjabi and English languages. Like his poems, his Persian prose possesses charm too. His language was simple, elegant, clear and sweet. He was the master of Persian prose and used to write with fluency and simplicity. His Persian writing bears the testimony of his command over the language. A specimen of his prose writing may be seen in his article entitled "خطابه دفاعیه پروفسور هیرا لال چوپرا" "in which he defended his own thesis of D.Litt. which he obtained from University of Tehran. He writes:

حال در خاتمه مقال بصمیم قلب حضور ارباب فضل معروض می دارد که این افخار اینجانب  
است که اول بار رساله بزبان فارسی راجع بفلسفه گیتا نوشته ام و اعتراف میکنم که فقط لطف  
استاد محترم جناب اقا سعید نفیسی و دیگر استادان گرامی و دانشمند که همه عنایت داشتند

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 342  
<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 342

مرا در این کار تشویق کرد و جسارت بخشد تا بار عظیم را در این پیرانه سری که پنجاه و  
سه سال از عمرم رفته است تحمل کنم  
آسمان بار امانت نتوانست کشید قرعه فال بنام من دیوانه زند  
استادان علیقدر محترما چنانکه ملاحظه فرمودید مختصری از تاریخ آشنای اینجانب با باگواد  
گیتا و موجب انتخاب صحیفه مزبور و بحث در فلسفه اش برای رساله دکتری حضور هنیت  
استادان عالیقدر معروض افتاد و در پایان و ظیفه دارم که سپاسگزاری بیحد خویش را بهمه  
استادان محترم تقدیم دارم که برای اینجانب زحمات بسیار کشید<sup>1</sup>

Besides, Dr. Chopra wrote books in Hindi also. His Hindi book on Allama Iqbal's poetry earned him award from U.P government. He was highly praised by the Imperial Government of Iran for writing a Hindi book on 'Persian Literature'.

Thus, it may be concluded that Dr. Hira Lall Chopra was a great literary figure of his time, a scholar of repute of Persian, a man of multi-dimensional personality, a social reformer and educationalist, a symbol of communal harmony and national unity and a torch bearer of Indo-Persian literary and cultural relations.

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<sup>1</sup>. Indo Iranica, Vol 48, March, June, Sept and Dec 1995, No 1-4, p. 15 (Persian Section)

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**DR. SEEMA JANGIR<sup>1</sup>**

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**JAHANARA BEGUM: A REMARKABLE LITERARY FIGURE IN MUGHAL INDIA**

**Abstract**

In the present article an effort was made to disclose a new image through the contribution of Mughal royal women in the sphere of education and literature in Mughal India especially by Jahanara Begum (1614-1681). Royal couple Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal made special arrangements for the sound education of their daughter princess Jahanara. Jahanara Begum was a highly educated lady of the Mughal seraglio. A well accomplished Persian lady Sati-un-Nisa was her tutor. She acquired sound knowledge of Holy Quran, Arabic and Persian along with poetry and prose within a short period. She was genius having knowledge of poetry and composed many beautiful verses in Persian. Her love for poetry is shown through the scattered poetic lines in her mystic accounts. Jahanara had a good knowledge of various calligraphy styles. She also possessed religious tolerance. Many risalas on Sufism and spirituality and two mystic accounts entitled Munis-al-Arwah and Sahibiya were written by Jahanara. Her literary works are a prominent part of Malfuzat. She was a disciple of Chishti and Qadiriyya sufi orders. She had a great reverence to her spiritual guide. She spent most of her time in spirituality, religious pursuits and devotion to the Almighty. She promoted education by establishing a madrasa at Agra and encouraged scholars and poets by giving them grants, rewards and allowances. Many poetic eulogies were written about her. The poetic expressions of her deep humbleness are inscribed on her gravestone through a self written epitaph. Due to her extraordinary qualities in every sphere, she was bestowed upon multiple honorific titles Padshah Begum, Badshah Begam and Sahibat-uz-Zamani by emperors Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. She was generous-hearted. Her life was pious. She died unmarried during Aurangzeb's reign and was buried in the tomb built by herself in her lifetime at Delhi. She was a high school poetess.

**Keywords:** Mughal, Jahanara, Education, verses, Sufi, Persian

**JAHANARA BEGUM: A REMARKABLE LITERARY FIGURE IN MUGHAL INDIA**

In historical and literary writings, distinctive aspects related to the position and status of women in Mughal India has been underscored. It has been seldom highlighted that women had made substantive contributions in numerous domains of cultural life as well as public life during the Mughal rule in India. The Mughal came from a lush and juicy cultural background like Central Asia and they valued intellectual, literary, artistic and philanthropic activities and achievements. Mughal emperors always imparted enough

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, History, Rajiv Gandhi Govt. College, Saha, Ambala, Haryana

liberty to their ladies in spite of purdah or seclusion to patronize the cultural activities. They always took great care about the education of their princesses.

**Objectives of the study:-**

- A) To unravel a new and innovative image of a Royal Mughal Lady named Jahanara Begum as an active agent of cultural history.
- B) The exercise is also an effort to provide a platform to practicing women historians to deliver on issues related to women.

**Early Life:-**

Of course, Jahanara Begum (Adorner of the World) was one of the brightest stars of the royal Mughal court. She was the second child or first surviving child of emperor Shahjahan and Arjumand Bano later known as Empress Mumtaz Mahal. She was born at Ajmer (Rajasthan) on March 23, 1614 A.D. (21st of Safar, 1023 A.H.)<sup>1</sup>.

**Education:-**

Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal made special arrangements for the proper education of their daughter Jahanara Begum from her childhood. They appointed a well educated, cultured and talented Persian lady of the time Sati-un-Nisa Khanum (literary meaning is, The Lance-Head among Women and she was the Female Nazir to Mumtaz Mahal) as the personal teacher of the royal princess. In the words of Jadunath Sarkar, “*her (Sati-un-nissa) ability, charm of speech, perfect mastery of the proper conduct of a dependent and knowledge of medicine and various kinds of treatment, won her royal mistresses (Mumtaz Mahal) heart.*” The princess soon acquired knowledge of the holy Quran and Persian language along with poetry and prose and other subjects from her<sup>2</sup>.

Mughal Monarch Shahjahan awarded her the title of ‘Padshah Begum’ or The First Lady of the Mughal Empire after the untimely demise of his most beloved empress Mumtaz Mahal in 1631<sup>3</sup>. Emperor Aurangzeb awarded her the honorific title of ‘Badshah Begam’ or Empress of Princesses<sup>4</sup>. She was also bestowed upon the title of ‘Sahibat-uz-Zamani’ (Mistress of the Times), posthumously by Mughal monarch Aurangzeb<sup>5</sup>.

**Her Death:-**

Princess Jahanara Begum died unmarried during Aurangzeb’s reign. A scholar, well-educated, capable, generous-hearted, philanthropist, culturally inclined and a political icon died on 6th September 1681<sup>6</sup>.

**Contribution in Education and Literature:-**

In the field of education and literature, a very prominent name associated with the Mughal mansion is that of Jahanara Begum. She had a good knowledge of Persian language and she used to compose beautiful poetry in the same language. She wrote her

own epitaph<sup>7</sup>. Being a Mughal princess, she had received the educated environment of scholars and the ladies of the caliber like Noor Jahan Begum, Sati-un-Nisa Khanum and Mumtaz Mahal around her since childhood<sup>8</sup>. It is worth mentioning that Jahanara Begum wrote two famous mystic accounts - 1. Munis-al-Arwah 2. Sahibiya. This type of Persian literature connected with the lives and teachings of Sufis and Muslim saints is known as Malfuzat<sup>9</sup>.

### **1. Munis-al-Arwah (The Companion of the Spirit):-**

This is a biography of the famous Sufi saint Sheikh Muinuddin Chishti and his descendants and disciples, written by Jahanara in Persian for the benefit of others after spiritual light (in prose style). She studied the life and teachings of Sheikh Muinuddin Chishti in depth<sup>10</sup>. According to Rekha Misra, it was completed in 1671 A.D. In the preface of this book Jahanara writes that she has written this book with the help of very reliable books<sup>11</sup>. This book is a unique composition of high quality based on Sufism and philosophy. This work is a documentary testimony of her spiritual bent of mind. Jahanara Begum had a special love for spirituality and the search for the ultimate truth. Hence, later on she became a disciple of Sufi saint Mian Mir of Lahore (follower of Qadiri Silsila)<sup>12</sup>. She wrote many risalas (pamphlets) on mysticism, Sufism and spiritual topics.



A copy of Munis-al-Arwah signed by Jahanara

1/4Source: [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or\\_56371/2](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or_56371/2)

### **2. Sahibiya:-**

It is noteworthy here to record that a hitherto unknown work of Jahanara has recently come into light. This is the small tract of Sufi saint Mullah Shah Badakhshi of the Qadiriyya order. It was written in Nastaliq mixed with Shikasta style of calligraphy. It was completed in A.H. 1051. In this book, there is mention of the life, miracles and disciples of her spiritual preceptor and guide Mullah Shah. In the end, there are about a dozen poems written by Jahanara Begum<sup>13</sup>. She expressed her immense respect for Pir Mullah Shah in the following words -

My guide, my master, my sect and my protector,  
O Mullah Shah! I have no one except you and my God.  
Seek the path of the street of Mullah Shah,  
For, He is the keeper of the treasure of the Unity of lord.

She bowed her head in gratitude before the Supreme Power and read this quatrain:-

“O Shah, with piety thy magnanimous insight  
Directs the seekers to God:  
On whomsoever thou condescended to cast a glance, he obtains his goal;  
Perhaps God's Light has transformed itself into the Light of thy vision!”<sup>14</sup>

She was the author of another religious work ‘Khazain-ul-Asfiya’<sup>15</sup>.

It is noteworthy that Jahanara Begum enthusiastically spread education using her resources. Her remarkable contribution towards the literary sphere didn't limit itself to her poems and literary works. Many learned men, poets and scholars flocked to her and received grants, rewards and salary allowances from her. Mirza Hussan Baig Rafi, the scribe of Nazar Muhammad Khan, received a reward of rupees 500 from the Begum for the poem he composed in praise of Bagh-e- Hayat Baksh garden<sup>16</sup>. Mir Muhammad Ali Mahir, also called Murid Khan extolled her generosity and patronage of education and literature through his masnavi (a long poem) written in the praise of Jahanara Begum as follows, for this alone verse he is rewarded with five hundred rupees by her:-

“ Ba - zat - i- to sifat- i- kirdgaar ast:  
Ki khud pinhan O faizash ashkar ast.”

Translation from Persian to English: - The virtues of the Almighty are reflected in your personality. Like Him, you disappear from people, but your extreme bounty is known to everyone<sup>17</sup>.

She established a madrasa (a higher educational institute) attached to the Jami masjid, located at Agra to promote education<sup>18</sup>. This madrasa received great renown and continued even in later times also to prosper. Jahanara was an excellent poetess of the Persian language. Some selected lines written by her pen in the Persian dedicated to Ajmers's Sufi Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, are as follows:-

“Rishta-e-dar gardanam afghanada dast,  
Me burad har ja ki khatir khwahisht.”<sup>19</sup>

Translation in English:- My lover has got hold of my neck and the reins are in his hands.  
It is his pleasure; he can take me wherever he wants.

Original Persian reads like this-

Yaar aamat dar bagal be-mehnat-e-shab-e-hijr,  
Aashiq-o-diwana budam ishtiyakam daad Azar.<sup>20</sup>

Translation in English:- My beloved came into my embrace, without spending many sleepless nights for him, My immense love for him gave me this reward.

Jahanara Begum built her tomb during her lifetime. It was situated under the shadow of the gorgeous sepulcher of the tomb of Saint Hazrat Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi.<sup>21</sup> An epitaph written by Jahanara herself in Persian is inscribed in black letters on a small stone at the top of her grave. This epitaph is famous for its stern simplicity and deep humility.

Original in Persian runs thus:-

“Baghair sabza na poshad kase mazar mara  
Ki qabar posh ghariban hamin gayah basast.”<sup>22</sup>

Translation in English- Nothing but grass and greenery should cover my grave, for this is the only shroud available to us poor people.

The full text of the inscription on her gravestone runs like this:-

“Except (with) grass and green things let not my tomb be covered; for grass is all - sufficient pall for the graves of the poor.

The fakir, the transitory one, Jahanara Begam, disciple of the saintly family of Chishti, daughter of Shah Jahan, may God illuminate his intentions.”<sup>23</sup>

Of Course, she was one of the most attractive and accomplished princesses of India. It may be admitted that Mughal royalty never neglected the education of their womenfolk.

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## **SUFI NEXUS WITH CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AFFAIRS: A CASE STUDY OF ERSTWHILE GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

## Abstract

The Muslims came to Assam throughout the past under different circumstances and ultimately established enclaves in various locations of the state. From the study, it is known that the Sufi saints had traditionally found fruitful ground in the erstwhile Goalpara district of Assam. The primary objective that motivated them to leave their homes and travel to this area was to propagate their faith among the native people. The infiltration of Sufism in Assam was influenced by the constantly changing geo-political and socio-cultural landscapes of Bengal. During the medieval period, the rise of Turko-Afghan and Mughal rule in Bengal primarily influenced the emergence and diffusion of Sufism in Assam. Consequently, the eastern border of Bengal connecting the erstwhile Goalpara district of Assam became an important conduit for the spread of Islam and Sufism. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a large number of Sufi saints came and settled in this region of Assam and eventually cultivated a favourable relationship with the contemporary ruling authorities. Some of these Sufi saints opted to distance themselves from political affairs. However, there are many dimensions to the relationship between the Sufi saints and political power. The latter Sufi saints were not much concerned with the political affairs of the time, generally avoided the court, and did not maintain a close connection with the political elite.

**Kew Words:** Sufi, relationship, political authority, Goalpara, Assam

## Introduction

The undivided Goalpara, presently comprising the districts of Goalpara, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Chirang, and South Salmara-Mankachar, bore the brunt of the tensions between Assam and Bengal during the medieval era because it lies on their shared border. It was the first district in the entire Brahmaputra valley of Assam to witness the invasion of Muslim outsiders. Therefore, it is very likely that Islam and Sufism had a more secure foothold in this area far earlier than they had elsewhere in Assam. The undivided Goalpara district was one of the most prominent Sufi centres in Assam. At various points in history, a multitude of Sufi saints from all over the world arrived in this region. The advent of Sufi saints and their activities in this region of Assam are important historical facts. The arrival of Sufism helped the region flourish culturally, as evidenced by the proliferation of historic mosques, *khanqahs*, and *mazaars* across the area. The profiles of the Sufi saints show that they were the true torchbearers of the Islamic faith in the study area. For this reason, the kind of Islam that developed in this region is more oriented towards Sufism than traditional Islam.

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of History, Abhayapuri College, Abhayapuri, Dist. Bongaigaon, Assam

## Discussion

The Sufi saints of the study area can be categorised into three groups: those who were residents of the undivided Goalpara district, non-resident Sufi saints, and semi-legendary figures. Those Sufi saints who came here from somewhere else but settled, died, and were buried here have been referred to as 'resident Sufi saints'. Prominent among them are Panch Pir of Dhubri, Deg Dhowa Pir, Pir of Panjatan Dargah, Faqir of Patpara, Abul Qasim Khurasani (d. 1896 A.D.), Syed Nasiruddin Baghdadi (d. 1936 A.D.), Hazrat Ezadullah Shah (d. 1970 A.D.), and Abdur Rahman Firuzi (d. 1988 A.D.). There were still a number of Sufi saints who were not residents of the study area, but they frequently visited this area, thereby leaving a deep imprint of their ideology on contemporary society. Some of them even spent a large portion of their working lives establishing *khanqahs* and *astanas* in different parts of the undivided Goalpara district of Assam before leaving for their original place. Prominent among them are Shaykh Jalaluddin Tabrezi, Shah Jalal Mujarrad (d. 1346 A.D.), Shah Ismail Ghazi (d. 1474 A.D.), Shah Kamal, Keramat Ali Jaunpuri (d. 1873 A.D.), Abu Bakr Siddiqui (d. 1939 A.D.), Shah Muhammad Ekramul Haq (d. 1944 A.D.), Hazrat Ruhul Amin (d. 1945 A.D.), Yunus Ali Enayetpuri (d. 1952 A.D.), Syed Asad-ud Daula Shiraji (d. 1971 A.D.), and Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (d. 1976 A.D.). Moreover, this area was home to a few semi-legendary Sufi saints about whom no authentic information exists. Due to the lack of sources, it is very difficult to reconstruct their lives and histories. The little that is known about them is also shrouded in myths and legends. However, observing various traditions and rituals prevalent in the present society, it can certainly be said that they once upon a time must have exerted immense influence on the society of this region of Assam. Notable of them are Khwaja Khizr, Satya Pir, Shah Madar, Pir of Dohela Mazaar, and Pir of Mamudpur Dargah.

In addition to the above-mentioned Sufi saints, there were still a number of lesser-known Sufis who exerted significant influence on the society and culture of the study area. Unfortunately, owing to the scarcity of proper written evidence, we can't say much about them. For reconstructing their history, oral sources play an important role. Their impact and influence on the Muslim society of the study area is still palpable. Examples include Hazrat Abdul Bari Chishti of Nichintapur, Noakhali, Bangladesh; his disciple Hazrat Abdur Rezzak al-Chishti of Dharmakam, Sherpur, formerly Bogura district of Bangladesh; Hazrat Shah Nurullah Misri of Hatijana, Gaibanda district of Bangladesh; Hazrat Shah Mehboob Alom al-Chishti of Burdwan, West Bengal; Maulana Abdul Qader and Maulana Abdul Hai of Furfura Sharif; Khwaja Nur Muhammad, Adalguri, Chirang, Assam; Goni Khalifa of Darrang district, etc. In addition, five *mazaars* were discovered during 1964–65 A.D. in the Chatla Hill of Hadira Chawki of the present Bongaigaon district by Syed Keramat Ali of Hajo. It was assumed that these graves belonged to five *pirs*, namely Shah Niadullah, Anowar Shah, Syed Badar Shah, Hazrat Haidar Ghazi, and Syed Sana.<sup>1</sup> However, at present, no traces of these *mazaars* are to be found due to a lack of preservation. The relationships of the above-mentioned Sufi saints with the contemporary ruling aristocracy and politics are varied and multi-dimensional.

<sup>1</sup> Akdas Ali Mir (ed.), *Aitihasic Patabhumi Asomor Atijiyamandita Islamdharmi Sakal* (1714–1857), Vol. III (in Assamese), The Raushanara Education Foundation, Guwahati, 2010, p. 188.

Most of the Sufi saints of Assam came here with the Muslim invading armies to cleanse their pathways from various adversities with the help of their supernatural abilities. During the initial period of medieval India, several Sufi saints played a significant role in the invasions led by the Muslim monarchs and their generals, contributing to the expansion of Muslim political influence as well as Sufi doctrines in medieval western Assam. Saints like Hazrat Shah Jalal, Shah Ismail Ghazi, Ghiyasuddin Awliya, etc. led Muslim armies in conquering the region. A few Sufi saints also exerted pressure on the decision-making power of the Sultans of Bengal. In addition, the Sultans of Bengal provided the Sufis with abundant and generous opportunities to establish permanent bases in various areas of the region. Several Sufi saints collaborated with the Muslim monarchs and generals to extend their political frontiers in Bengal and Assam. By banding together with Sultan Shamsuddin Firoz Shah, Hazrat Shah Jalal and his allies defeated the Hindu monarch of Sylhet and established Muslim dominance in the area.<sup>1</sup> The importance of Shah Ismail Ghazi to the growth of Sultan Barbak Shah's authority is widely recognised. He effectively waged war against the Hindu kingdoms of Orissa and Kamrupa.<sup>2</sup> There are numerous other accounts about how Sufi saints contributed to the spread of Muslim influence in western Assam and Bengal. These early Sufis were recognized as martial saints. It is probable that some Sufis collaborated with the Sultans to strengthen Muslim power because they thought that fighting for Islam amounted to jihad, or holy war. The inclusion of Sufi-saints in the Muslim army resulted in a significant boost to the morale and spiritual well-being of the soldiers. The ability of the Muslim rulers to manage a diverse population of several religions with few military forces would have been challenging without the discreet efforts of the Sufi saints. The Sufi saints enhanced the moral authority of Islam by enlisting followers, thereby providing the Muslim state with a sense of duty and influence within a non-Muslim country.

There existed either a direct or indirect relationship between the Sufi saints and the state authority. There are several instances of kings and nobility asking the Sufis for spiritual blessings, along with the general public. The elites of society saw their financial and material support for Sufi institutions such as *khanqahs* and *dargahs* as an act of devotion to God. It was largely with the accession of Rudra Singha (1696 A.D.- 1714 A.D.) to the Ahom throne that the Sufis, their shrines, and other Islamic institutions started receiving particular treatment and attention from the Ahom monarchy. Inscriptions on copper plates left by some of the descendants of Rudra Singha reveal that the Ahom monarchs established Muslim 'Satras' and awarded revenue-free land to numerous *dargahs* and *khanqahs*.<sup>3</sup> J. P. Wade noted the presence of Muslim 'Satras' in Guwahati and the Ahom capital of Rangpur as well.<sup>4</sup> S. K. Bhuyan mentions the

<sup>1</sup> Abdus Salam (tr.), *Riyazu-s-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, originally written in Persian by Ghulam Hussain Salim, Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, Delhi, 2009, p. 43.

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<sup>3</sup> S. K. Bhuyan (tr. & ed.), *Annals of the Delhi Badshahate*, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Guwahati, 2016, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Surya Kumar Bhuyan (ed.), *Swargadev Rajeswarsinha*, Assam Prokashan Parishad, Guwahati, 2014, p. 198.

dispersed Muslim *maqams* and *dargahs* and their state patronage in the Assam valley in his book '*Annals of the Delhi Badshahate*'.<sup>1</sup> He further says that the Ahom kings granted '*pirpal*' lands to the Muslim *pirs* and theologians for their sustenance.<sup>2</sup> Between 1558 A.D. and 1639 A.D., the Mughals were in charge of Kamrupa, and they began work on upgrading the mosques, *khankahs*, and temples.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the Sufi saints and shrines in the study area, both the Bengal Sultanate and the Mughal emperors had a strong tie. As discussed above, a certain number of Sufi saints worked together with the Bengal Sultans to consolidate their political authority. The cooperation of Hazrat Shah Jalal, Shah Ismail Ghazi, and Giyasuddin Auliya might be considered as examples in this scenario. They were able to obtain all their assistance from their royal adherents. In the words of Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, land grants through '*waqf*' (endowment) for the upkeep of *dargahs* all over eastern Bengal became very common during the Mughal period, and today also the descendants of "*Mutawallis*" (those who take care of *dargahs*) of those *dargahs* continue to enjoy rent-free lands.<sup>4</sup> Regarding Jalaluddin Tabrezi's relationship with the state apparatus, Tania Begum, in her article, "The Sufis and the Political Authorities in Medieval Assam: A Historical Study," mentions that it is unknown as to how he interacted with the local authorities; nevertheless, given his tremendous influence over the region, it appears that the local authorities must have favoured him during that time.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the *astana* of Jalaluddin Tabrezi at Pandua was very nearer to the capital of the Bengal Sultans. The five *pirs* of Dhubri were sent by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to accompany the Mughal forces in their expedition to Assam.<sup>6</sup> The zamindar of Karaibari donated Baklai Mauza to Sufi Shah Kamal.<sup>7</sup> According to a government document, the *dargah* of *Pagal Pir* at Dhupdhara, located at the easternmost corner of Goalpara district, was granted 630 bighas of *pirpal* land for its maintenance.<sup>8</sup> As per the accounts of

<sup>1</sup> S. K. Bhuyan (tr. & ed.), *Annals of the Delhi Badshahate*, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Guwahati, 2016, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Surya Kumar Bhuyan (ed.), *Swargadev Rajeswarsinha*, Assam Prokashan Parishad, Guwahati, 2014, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> S. K. Bhuyan (tr. & ed.), *Annals of the Delhi Badshahate*, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Guwahati, 2016, pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *Islam in Bengal (Thirteen to Nineteenth Century)*, Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, 1972, p. 264; Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p. 238.

<sup>5</sup> Tania Begum, "The Sufis and the Political Authorities in Medieval Assam: A Historical Study," in *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 25, Issue 5, Series 10, May 2020, p. 68, retrieved from [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org), accessed on 03/03/2022.

<sup>6</sup> Mazhar Asif (tr.), *Tarikh-e-Aasham*, originally written in Persian by Shehabuddin Talesh, Department of Historical & Antiquarian Studies, Guwahati, 2022, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> H. Blochmann, "Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal (Muhammadan Period) No. II," in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XLIII, Part I, Nos. I to IV, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1874, p. 285; Golam Saklayen, *Bangladesh Sufi-Sadhak (Lives and Activities of the Saints of Bangladesh)*, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2011, p. 213.

<sup>8</sup> 246 No. Record of Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, Dt. 31/01/1859, cited in Maheswar Neog (ed.), *Pavitra Asam*, Kiran Prakashan, Dhemaji, 2008, p. 365.

‘Pavitra Asam’, Shah Alom, the Mughal emperor of Delhi, engaged the *khadim* in the Panjatan *dargah* of Dakaidal, a few kilometres south-east of Goalpara town. The *khadim* was also provided with 1002.7 bighas of land by the Badshah for the subsistence of the *dargah*.<sup>1</sup> The Deg Dhowa *dargah* was also awarded a land grant in the form of *pirpal* by the royal authority. However, following the demise of the *pir*, the local Mechpara zamindar took possession and control of the *pirpal* property.<sup>2</sup> It is further known that the Mechpara zamindar also donated a sizeable amount of land just in front of present-day Goalpara College to Abul Qasim Khurasani for his shelter as well as for his meditation.<sup>3</sup> Similar endowments were also awarded to other Sufi saints of the original Goalpara during the twentieth century under the British authorities. The most well-known of them is Hazrat Nasiruddin Baghdadi, who established his headquarters at Jaleshwar in west Goalpara. The zamindar of Lakhipur granted Nasiruddin Baghdadi 800 bighas of land with the intention of building a *khanqah* there.<sup>4</sup> Another instance of such an incident is that the contemporary Lakhipur zamindar also granted the *khanqah* of Asad-ud Daula Shiraji, situated in the Basbari area of western Goalpara, a revenue-free land of approximately fourteen bighas.<sup>5</sup> Even so, it is known that the zamindar would occasionally visit his *khanqah*, seeking his blessing. The *dargah* of Dohela was also granted about 10 bighas of land by the then king of Bijni estate, and the present *khadim* of this *dargah* is still enjoying this vast tract of land.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the kings, their nobility, and other officials patronised and preserved the Sufi saints and their *khanqahs* in this manner. The Sufi saints also, on their part, had friendly relations with the local authorities and gratefully accepted funding for their advancement. However, there are examples of a substantial number of Sufi saints mentioned above who had nothing to do with contemporary politics, and thus they provide information of the opposite kind.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, some Sufi saints and other scholars initiated a number of reformist movements in order to purify Islamic society and Sufi practices from non-Islamic rituals. Among these movements, mention may be made of “Wahabi” or “Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah” by Sayyid Ahmad of Barelvi; “Faraizi Movement” by Haji Shariat Ullah, Dudu Miyah, and Titu Mir; “Patna School” by Wilayat Ali and Enayet Ali; “Taiyuni Movement” by Keramat Ali Jaunpuri; “Ahl-e-Hadith Movement,”

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<sup>1</sup> Maheshwar Neog (ed.), *Pavitra Asam* (in Assamese), Kiran Prakashan, Dhemaji, 2008, p. 364.

<sup>2</sup> Maheshwar Neog (ed.), *Pavitra Asam* (in Assamese), Kiran Prakashan, Dhemaji, 2008, p. 365.

<sup>3</sup> Abedur Rahman Saikia, *Hazrat Syed Abul Qasem Khorasani Pir Chahabor Jivani* (in Assamese), Shahi Mohammad Karim, Goalpara, 2016, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Yahya Tamizi, *Sufi Movements in Eastern India*, Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, New Delhi, 2009, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> Dewan Nazrul Qadir, *Glimpses of Sufism in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam (From 13<sup>th</sup> Century till Date)*, Devika Publication, New Delhi, 2010, p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Kasim Ali Ahmed, *The Muslims of Assam*, EBH Publishers, Guwahati, 2021, p. 63; Monower Hussain, Age- 47, *Caretaker of the Mazaar*, Village- Dohela Kalitapara, P.O.- Dohela, Dist. Goalpara (Assam), Date of Interview: 05-11-2023 (Sunday). He obtained this information during his childhood from his grandfather, Kandura Sheikh, who died in 1988 A.D. at the age of 96.

etc.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of this new trend was also evident in numerous other movements, such as the “*Deobandi Movement*,” “*Aligarh Movement*,” and “*Nadwat-ul-Ulama*” in the nineteenth century A.D., as well as “*Tablighi Jamaat*,” “*Jamaat-i-Islami*,” etc., in the twentieth century A.D. An important aspect of these movements was the need for a more authentic religion by eliminating the non-Islamic excrescences and accretions which were formerly common among Muslims. However, the attempts of these Puritan movements were not successful in toto due to several causes. Firstly, the reformers were unable to recognise that many of these indigenous beliefs and practices met certain pragmatic requirements that their faith did not fulfil. Furthermore, ideological disputes among the religious reformers of different movements led to divisions among themselves and pitted various factions against one another. However, despite this schism, it is undeniable that the Islamic revivalist and reformist movements of the past few centuries infused rejuvenation into the Muslim communities of Bengal and the neighbouring areas of Assam. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar says that the reformists aimed to stimulate the political awareness of the Muslims by advocating for ‘*jihad*’ (struggle) and rebelling against the zamindars and proprietors of indigo plantations.<sup>2</sup> Often, it served as a form of resistance against the British government and the economic exploitation endured by the Muslim population. As a result, religious reforms took on multiple dimensions, including social, political, economic, and communal aspects. Sometimes, they created a setback to the increasing trend of assimilation between Muslims and Hindus. All of these developments culminated in certain Bengali Muslims adopting a religiously and socially exclusive worldview, which had political ramifications in the years that followed.

Several Sufi saints also played an active role in the ongoing freedom struggle in India. In his doctoral thesis, A. R. M. Ali Haidar mentions that Sufi Abu Bakr Siddiqui travelled extensively throughout Assam and Bengal to teach people the true Islam and the doctrine of Sufism.<sup>3</sup> His role in mobilising the people of Bengal and western Assam in the freedom struggle of India is also significant. He called on his legions of followers to stand in solidarity against the colonial rule of the British.<sup>4</sup> In pursuit of this goal, he laid the foundation for numerous significant Muslim organisations and newspapers in Bengal and Assam. These organisations, together with their mouthpieces, were instrumental in the Khilafat, Non-Cooperation, and Quit India movements. Prominent of these organisations are: “*Anjuman-e Ulama-e Bengal*” (Organisation of Ulama of Bengal), “*Islam Procharak Samiti*” (Association of Preachers of Islam), “*Anjuman-e Wai’zeen*” (Organisation of Sermonizers), and “*Jamiat-e Ulama-e Bangla-O Assam*”

<sup>1</sup> Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *Islam in Bengal (Thirteen to Nineteenth Century)*, Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, 1972, pp. 48–75; Muhammad Enamul Haq, *A History of Sufi-ism in Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dacca, 1975, p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *Islam in Bengal (Thirteen to Nineteenth Century)*, Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, 1972, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> A. R. M. Ali Haidar, *Shah Sufi Syed Fateh Ali, Shah Sufi Abu Bakr Siddiqui and Shah Sufi Mawla Mawla Nisaruddin Ahmad (R): A Survey of the Lives and Deeds of these Three Sufi-Saints of Bengal* (in Bengali), Doctoral Thesis, Dhaka University, 1997, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Md. Shamin Firdous, "The Light of Furfurah Sharif," in *Journal of Islamic History and Culture in India*, Volume 4, 2015, Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Calcutta, p. 118.

(Association of Ulama of Bengal and Assam).<sup>1</sup> Maulana Abu Bakr Siddiqui presided over the “*Jamiat-e Ulama-e Bengal-O Assam*” till his demise in 1939 A.D. Regarding Hazrat Ruhul Amin, another Sufi, Md. Abdul Karim mentions in his book that he spent almost forty years speaking at religious gatherings in Bengal and western Assam.<sup>2</sup> So far as his public career is concerned, together with Pir Abu Bakr Siddiqui of *Furfura Sharif*, he founded the organisation “*Anjuman-e Wai’zeen*” in 1911 A.D. with *ulama* from Bengal and Assam in order to instruct Muslims of all social strata in Islamic principles and practices.<sup>3</sup> Along with his spiritual mentor, he founded a new political party, “*Jamiat-e Ulama-e Bangla-O-Assam*.<sup>4</sup>”<sup>4</sup> He was chosen to serve as the vice president of the party. After the death of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiqui, Hazrat Ruhul Amin assumed the presidency of the party, a position he held until his death.<sup>5</sup> Yunus Ali Enayetpuri was another prominent Sufi-cum-freedom fighter. During my interaction with Ashraf Ali Fakir, aged 99 years,<sup>6</sup> he informed me that the Sufi saint occasionally visited different locations in lower Assam and had an immense influence over the East Bengal migrant people of western Assam. In addition to spiritualism, *Khwaja* Enayetpuri also participated in political activities. He fought for the ongoing freedom struggle and opposed the partition of the country.<sup>7</sup>

Syed Asad-ud Daula Shiraji was another Sufi-cum-political activist in this regard. Inspired by his father, Syed Ismail Hussain Shiraji, he participated in the ongoing freedom struggle, and for this reason he was unable to pursue further study. On May 21, 1927 A.D., he delivered an inflammatory speech in Calcutta on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.<sup>8</sup> The British government imprisoned him

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<sup>1</sup> Md. Mahmudul Hussain, “Maulana Abu Bakr Siddiqi’s Participation in the Freedom Movement of India,” in *Sprin Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, Vol. 2 (02), Sept. 2023, p. 49, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.55559/sjaes.v2i02.42>, accessed on 14/12/2023; Dewan Nurul Anwar Hussain Choudhury (ed.), *Amader Sufiaye Kiram (A Collection of the Life-Sketch of the Sufis)*, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2004, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> Md. Abdul Karim, *Mymonsingh Zelai Islam (Islam in Mymonsingh)*, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2002, p. 86; Dewan Nurul Anwar Hussain Choudhury (ed.), *Amader Sufiaye Kiram (A Collection of the Life-Sketch of the Sufis)*, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2004, p. 461.

<sup>3</sup> Muzammel Haq, *Maulana Parichaya* (in Bengali), Ganesh Pustakalay, Calcutta, 1321 B.S., pp. 35–36; Dewan Nurul Anwar Hussain Choudhury (ed.), *Amader Sufiaye Kiram (A Collection of the Life-Sketch of the Sufis)*, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2004, p. 461; A. R. M. Ali Haidar, *Shah Sufi Syed Fateh Ali, Shah Sufi Abu Bakr Siddiqui and Shah Sufi Mawlana Nisaruddin Ahmad (R): A Survey of the Lives and Deeds of these Three Sufi-Saints of Bengal* (in Bengali), Doctoral Thesis, Dhaka University, 1997, p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Julfiqar Ahmad Kismati, *Azadi Andolone Alem Samajer Sangrami Bhumika* (in Bengali), Professor’s Book Corner, Dhaka, 1970, p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> A. R. M. Ali Haidar, *Shah Sufi Syed Fateh Ali, Shah Sufi Abu Bakr Siddiqui and Shah Sufi Mawlana Nisaruddin Ahmad (R): A Survey of the Lives and Deeds of these Three Sufi-Saints of Bengal* (in Bengali), Doctoral Thesis, Dhaka University, 1997, p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> Ashraf Ali Fakir, Age- 99, Village- Bartalowa, Dist.- Chirang (Assam), Date of Interview: 09-10-2021 (Saturday).

<sup>7</sup> Ashraf Ali Fakir, Age- 99, Village- Bartalowa, Dist.- Chirang (Assam), Date of Interview: 09-10-2021 (Saturday).

<sup>8</sup> Hossain Mahmud & Syed Shamim Shiraji (ed.), *Syed Asaduddoula Shiraji* (in Bengali), Bonafide Printing Press, Fakirapool, Dhaka, 2004, p. IV.

for anti-nationalist sentiment. During the freedom movement, he worked along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. M. A. Ansari, Choudhury Khaliquzzaman, etc. He was associated with the Indian National Congress until 1934 A.D., when he left it and joined the Muslim League.<sup>1</sup> Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, a Sufi-cum-peasant leader, also took part in the anti-British agitation. According to Amalendu Guha, “The wandering Maulana, renowned for his austere and pious way of life and his extraordinary organisational abilities, was revered by rural people as a political figure and also as a *pir* (holy person), believed to possess supernatural qualities.”<sup>2</sup> Bhasani had a considerable number of Hindu followers who respected him as ‘*Pir Baba*’, and Hindu peasants also called him ‘*Kishan Bandhu*’ (friend of farmers).<sup>3</sup> Maulana Bhashani had a substantial number of adherents in Assam. He was, in fact, revered as a *pir* in western Assam, a saintly person who attracted an enormous following who were prepared to back his political views as well as his doctrines of religion.<sup>4</sup> He orchestrated several peasant conferences with these supporters. Maulana Bhashani gained legendary status in Assam during the mid-1930s and 1940s. His efforts led to the establishment of an agricultural farm, a school, a college, a library, a madrassa, a veterinary hospital, and an orphanage in Hamidabad, in the southern part of present-day Dhubri district.<sup>5</sup> After his departure to East Bengal following the partition of the country in 1947 A.D., all these became *waqf* property. He was elected as the member of the Assam Legislative Assembly from the Dhubri South constituency in 1937.

Another person, namely Abdur Rahman Firuzi, was a journalist-cum-Sufi saint. He was the editor of the weekly magazine “*Biswa-Dut*.”<sup>6</sup> This magazine was published in Assamese and Bengali. He himself was the editor, publisher, and proprietor of the magazine. It was probably the first magazine that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, published from western Assam. The annual report of the ‘*Registrar of Newspapers for India*’, published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, released from New Delhi in 1957 A.D., mentioned “*Biswa-Dut*,” a bilingual journal.<sup>7</sup> The Assamese version was supplied to the Assamese

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<sup>1</sup> Hossain Mahmud & Syed Shamim Shiraji (ed.), *Syed Asaduddoula Shiraji* (in Bengali), Bona fide Printing Press, Fakirapool, Dhaka, 2004, p. IV.

<sup>2</sup> Amalendu Guha, *Planter Raj to Swaraj (Freedom Struggle & Electoral Politics in Assam, 1826–1947)*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2019, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Nozrul Islam Mondal, “Muslim Politics in the Undivided Goalpara District under Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan: An Assessment,” in Uttam Kumar Poddar (ed.), *Souvenir*, published by the Department of History, Ratnapith College, Chapar, on the occasion of the UGC-sponsored State Level Seminar held on 21-09-2006, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Shamsul Alom, Age- 103, Village- Simlabari, Dist.- Goalpara (Assam), Date of Interview: 23-10-2023 (Monday). It is to be noted here that during my interview, he informed me that on several occasions, he met Maulana Bhasani during his childhood, and he subsequently took initiation under Maulana Bhasani.

<sup>5</sup> Prasun Barman & Gorky Chakraborty (ed.), *Char-Chapori: Abalokan-Punorabalan* (in Assamese), Bandhav, Guwahati, 2020, p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> Shoriful Islam (ed.), *Goalparar Ratna (A Collection of Life and Works of Twelve Prominent Persons of Goalpara)*, Char Chapori Shahitya Parishad, Guwahati, 2022, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Shoriful Islam (ed.), *Goalparar Ratna (A Collection of Life and Works of Twelve Prominent Persons of Goalpara)*, Char Chapori Shahitya Parishad, Guwahati, 2022, p. 2.

readership, while the Bengali version was supplied to the Bengali-speaking readership in Assam, West Bengal, and various states of India. After completing his formal education in England, he returned home. At that time, the freedom movement in India was going on in full swing under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, and he actively participated in the ongoing freedom movement. The British government imprisoned him for holding meetings (picketing in villages) to persuade the common people to use domestic products and boycott foreign goods. Firuzi got government jobs in the education and medical departments but resigned due to the obstacles to his anti-British activities.<sup>1</sup>

## Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is clear that the Ahom rulers supported the Sufi *dargahs*, granting them revenue-free land and holding Muslim saints in high regard. It is evident that many of the Sufis in the study area received 'pirpal' land from the contemporary state apparatus for their maintenance. Some prominent Sufis and their *dargahs* received land grants from both the central and local political authorities. This sponsorship involved the establishment of *khanaqahs*, the endowment of revenue-free estates for the management of either *khanaqahs* or *dargahs*, occasional financial assistance for the Sufi saints, the construction of tombs to commemorate the deceased, etc. Because of this patronage by the governing class, the Sufi saints were quite able to freely and securely disseminate their religious beliefs and doctrines among the inhabitants of this territory. In addition to the realm of spiritualism, a number of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Sufi saints were also active in the ongoing freedom struggle in India. Among them, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiqui of *Furfura Sharif*, Maulana Ruhul Amin of Basirhat, Yunus Ali Enayetpuri, Asad-ud Daula Shiraji, Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, and Abdur Rahman Firuzi were the prominent ones. They played an important role in the freedom struggle in India by mobilising the people of Bengal and the Bengali-speaking people of western Assam. Some of their actions included organising picketing events in villages to encourage people to use native items and abstain from purchasing foreign goods. On multiple occasions, the colonial government put several of them in jail because of anti-British agitations. Thus, it can be concluded that the kings, their nobility, and other officials patronised and preserved the Sufi saints and their *khanqahs* in this manner. On their part, the Sufi saints also continued to maintain amicable relations with the local authorities and gratefully accepted funding for their advancement. However, many of them stayed out of political activities and always opted to work in fields unrelated to politics.

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<sup>1</sup> Shoriful Islam (ed.), *Goalparar Ratna (A Collection of Life and Works of Twelve Prominent Persons of Goalpara)*, Char Chapori Shahitya Parishad, Guwahati, 2022, p. 2.

## **UNDERSTANDING HEIDEGGER'S ANALYSIS OF SUPERIORITY OF DASEIN**

### **ABSTRACT**

In *Being and Time* Heidegger advocates the Superiority of Dasein over other beings of the world. This superiority is not a moral or biological one but based on ontological and ontical peculiarity of Dasein. He affirms that Dasein is the only being through which the meaning of Being itself can be disclosed and investigated. His analysis of Dasein serves as the fundamental ontology for exploring his ambitious enquiry of Being. He advocates that fundamental ontology, from which alone all other ontologies grow, must be required in the existential analytic of Dasein. Heidegger asserts that Dasein has three levels of priority over other beings i.e. Ontological priority, Ontical Priority, and Ontico-Ontological priority. Ontologically, Dasein's existence is determinative for its being. We cannot separate Dasein's essence from its existence, nor should one even accept the duality. Heidegger argues that the traditional categories of essence and existence are themselves ontologically inadequate because they are ontic categories that continue to hold force because of the historical forgetting of the question of being. Ontically, Dasein is that being whose being is an issue for it and thus has the determinate character of existence, of possibility. And lastly the Ontico-Ontological priority of Dasein, Heidegger affirms that by understanding of his own being Dasein has the capacity to understand other beings also. Hence, Dasein has methodological priority over other beings of the world. And fundamental Ontology, as an articulation of being, requires a being with Dasein's constitution for the analysis of Being in general.

Key Words: Being, Dasein, Existence, Essence, Man, Ontology

### **INTRODUCTION**

Martin Heidegger together with Jean-Paul Sartre left an indelible mark in the twentieth century philosophy. Sartre acknowledges the wisdom of Heidegger in stating that "philosophy in the twentieth century without Heidegger was unthinkable and, for any philosopher writing after *Being and Time*, impossible". (Stassen, 2003, p. IX) Heidegger has exerted an enormous influence on contemporary thinking, reaching beyond the limits of philosophy proper to include such diverse fields as psychology, theology, linguistics and modern theories of the text – most notably the hermeneutic theory of Gadamer and Ricoeur and the deconstructive theory of Derrida.

Fundamental ontology, as visualized in *Being and Time*, stood to be Heidegger's philosophical enterprise. His sole aim has been to work out the question about the

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

meaning of Being in general. As he points out “the analytic of Dasein … is to prepare the way for the problematic of fundamental ontology – the question of the meaning of Being in general”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 227) But it does not mean that there are two separate stages: the study of man and the study of Being. It is not even the case that one begins with man and ends with Being, nor vice versa. We can rather say that a study of man is itself a study of Being; and to this, from Heidegger’s later perspective we can add that a study of Being is itself a study of man. To quote Heidegger:

“Every philosophical – that is, thoughtful – doctrine of man’s essential nature is in itself alone a doctrine of the Being of being [entities]. Every doctrine of Being is in itself alone a doctrine of man’s essential nature” (Heidegger, 1968, p. 79)

Division I of his magnum opus, *Being and Time*, presents a “preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein”, and interprets Dasein’s Being as “Being-in-the-word”. Being-in-the-world is the fundamental way through which, Dasein primarily shows itself. It is a unitary phenomenon, a primary datum’ which ‘must be seen as a whole’. We can look at this unitary phenomenon in three ways. We can look at the side of ‘world’, that is, the idea of ‘worldhood’; or at the side of the ‘who’ of Dasein; or at the relationship between the two – the ‘Being-in’.

Heidegger soon discovered his philosophical vocation on reading Brentano’s thesis on Aristotle’s inquiry into the multiple meanings of Being. In a short study entitled ‘*My Way to Phenomenology*’ Heidegger declares:

“Ever since 1907 Brentano’s dissertation, ‘on the manifold meaning of Being, according to Aristotle’ had been the first help and guide of my first awkward attempts to penetrate into philosophy. The following question concerned me in a quite vague manner: if being is predicted in manifold meanings, then what is its leading fundamental meaning: what does Being mean?” (Stassen, 2003, p.70)

Thus, for Heidegger, the chief concern of philosophy is to clarify the meaning of Being. He wants to re-open this age old question because, as Walter Biemel observes, “he challenges the tradition, and he calls upon us to think this tradition through”. (Biemel, 1977, p. 29) Therefore, he initiated his enquiry by tracing the entire history of western philosophy and saw that neither Greek nor modern and not even his teacher Husserl addressed the age old question coherently. So, in working out the question of Being Heidegger re-interpreted the history of ontology. He gave phenomenology an ‘existentialist’ orientation which gained it international acclaim and attracted such talented and original young minds as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Hannah Arendt, Marcuse and many others.

Heidegger revised Husserl’s phenomenological method so that it might properly respond to the question of Being. He re-opened the brackets to create room for existence once again. Existence was now to be understood neither as mere subjectivity nor mere objectivity, but as a fundamental openness to the Being of beings.

Husserlian phenomenology had operated largely at the level of epistemology, that is, of an inquiry into the origin of knowledge as it is constituted by our intentional experience. This had required, Husserl believed, a suspension of the ontological question of Being in order to focus on the workings of consciousness. Heidegger goes a step beyond his

master; he shifts the emphasis from the meaning of consciousness to the meaning of Being. He accepts nonetheless the overriding conviction of phenomenology that an analysis of the essential structures of meaning necessitates a movement beyond the subject-object dualism in order to lead us back to our originary experience of the world, that is, to 'the things themselves'. But where Husserl identified this originary experience as a consciousness-of-the-world, Heidegger interprets it as a being-in-the-world. Thus Heidegger graduates phenomenology from the epistemological question – what does it mean to know? – to the ontological – what does it mean to be?

Heidegger champions phenomenology as a means of recovering and restating the fundamental question of Being: why is there something rather than nothing? This question goes beyond the certainties of dogmatic speculation or science; it is not concerned with determining what things are so that they may be classified, objectified or controlled. It inquires instead into the ultimate why of being, restoring a sense of wonder that things should be at all rather than not be. While recognizing that this ontological question has become irrelevant for our contemporary culture and no longer commands our attention, Heidegger proclaims the possibility, indeed the necessity, of reviving this question by 'deconstructing' western metaphysics and thereby 'retrieving' the original existential experience of Being similar to the metaphysical questioning when it first arose.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger employs phenomenology to redirect our attention away from traditional metaphysics to the 'fundamental ontology' which originally founds it. The ontological question reactivated by a concrete description of man's being there (Dasein) in the temporal world. *Being and Time* opens with the question 'what does it mean to be?' And it proceeds on the assumption that since man is the only being capable of asking this question, our inquiry into Being as such must first engage in a phenomenological analysis of human being as it concretely exists in the everyday world.

Thus, Heidegger states that Being can be understood only in terms of beings. Because Being reveals itself only through being. He says that in order to work out the question of Being the right entity must be picked up. "To formulate and to work out the question of Being adequately, we have first of all to make the questioning entity (Dasein) transparent in its Being". (Heidegger, 1973, p. 27) And Heidegger says that "this entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiry as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term 'Dasein'". (Heidegger, 1973, p. 27)

Dasein is the right entity which provides the access to the question about the meaning of Being because according to Heidegger, it has some priority over other entities. He states threefold priority of Dasein over other entities. These three fold priorities are: ontological, ontic and ontico-ontological.

Ontological priority: Dasein has an ontological priority because he is able to understand Being. Dasein (The 'Da' of 'Sein') points to the fact of how the comprehension of Being is fundamentally rooted in Dasein's Being. And this primordial comprehension of Being constitutes Dasein's ontological structure. That is why Heidegger remarks: "understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being". (Heidegger, 1973, p. 32) This quality of Dasein's comprehension of Being is that which makes Dasein ontically distinct from all other entities, even though Dasein, like any other

entity, is an entity in the world. Heidegger says that “Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it [he] is ontological”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 32)

Dasein’s ‘Being-ontological’ means that Dasein takes its Being as an issue for itself, it does not mean that Dasein is to develop a theoretical inquiry which aims at working out a study ‘explicitly devoted to the meaning of entities.’ But what Heidegger has in his mind ‘in speaking of Dasein’s “Being-ontological” is to be designated as something “pre-ontological” which simply signifies that Dasein is being such a way that it has an understanding of Being. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 32)

**Ontic priority:** Dasein is ontically unique because it is also ontological. Its distinguishing feature is its concern and involvement with its own Being. Dasein has an ontic priority, in the sense that he is existence, i.e., he is ecstatic, stands out from and transcends other beings, besides his openness to Being. It has an ontic priority “because its essence lies rather in the fact that in each case it has its Being to be, and has it as its own”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 32) The expression refers to the two special characteristics of Dasein that is ‘existence’ and ‘mineness’.

**Existence:** Heidegger defines existence (*Existenz*) as ‘that kind of Being towards which Dasein can comport itself in one way or another, and always does comport itself somehow.’ This comporting of Dasein becomes the ground of its understanding of its own, which is to say, ‘Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence-in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself.’ Dasein’s understanding of itself or its self-awareness which it attains that way, and which is its ‘ontical affair,’ is what Heidegger calls ‘*existentiell*’\_(Heidegger, 1973, p.33)

According to Heidegger “the essence of Dasein lies in its [his] existence”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 67) Dasein, as existence, is ek-static, which literally means: standing beyond the static entities of this world. For Heidegger all other things are but they do not exist. He says “Man (Dasein) alone exists. The rock is, but it does not exist. The tree is, but it does not exist. The horse is, but it does not exist. The angel is, but it does not exist. God is, but he does not exist”. (Heidegger, 1959, p. 16) But it does not mean that Heidegger deny the reality of other entities like tree, rock, horse etc. but only he points to the unique type of being which Dasein, as existence is. Dasein, as existence, “is set apart in the realms of beings as the only existing being which can undertake an enquiry into Being in terms of his peculiar existence”. Thus, according to Heidegger, Dasein is not a mere thing, but is ‘to be’ or existence. He is not something static, but a reality that is to be achieved. To exist is to be on the way. Dasein is always stretched forward towards his still-to-be-realized being. It is an existence which is “already-begun-still-to-be-achieved”. (Venus, 2003, p. 71) So, an existence, Dasein is a being which stands out above other entities present-at-hand and moves towards actualization, its possibilities, thereby ever remaining on the way.

**Mineness:** Dasein is not to be construed as one more object in a world of objects. Dasein is separated from other objects by what Heidegger calls its mineness. Dasein is always someone’s own existence. And it is “that entity which in its [his] being has this very being as an issue...” (Heidegger, 1973, p. 68) Therefore, unlike other entities, human existence cannot be a matter of indifference and he can never be substituted for another. So Dasein “... is in each case mine”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 68) Thus, according to

Heidegger, the essence of Dasein lies in the fact “that in each case it [he] has its [his] being to be and has it as its [his] own”. (Heidegger, 1973, pp. 32-32)

Heidegger asserts that Dasein’s mineness is to be seen in relation to its ‘existence’. As Heidegger states that Dasein is primarily existence or having-to-be, it has constantly to choose from the possible ways for it to be. Dasein is never a finished product, without having to choose from its possibilities. He points out “that entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue, composts itself towards its Being as its ownmost possibility”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 68) And when Dasein chooses itself as its ownmost possibility, it is said to be ‘authentic’, it can have lost itself and been ‘inauthentic’. As Heidegger says “As modes of Being, authenticity and inauthenticity... are both grounded in the fact that any Dasein whatsoever is characterized by mineness” (Heidegger, 1973, p. 68) which means, he says “that Being which is an issue for this entity (Dasein) in its very being, is in each case mine”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 67) Thus, combining both ‘existence’ and ‘mineness’, we can say that Dasein is in each case mine-to-be in one way or another.

**Ontico-ontological priority:** Heidegger’s account of existence through the Dasein-World relationship prioritizes Dasein over substances like “subjects” and “objects” that are prioritized by the tradition starting with the pre-socratics and perfected by Descartes. Heidegger writes that the present at hand can not be made intelligible without Dasein, but emphasizes that Dasein could not make World intelligible without things present at hand. Heidegger does mention the ontico-ontological priority in the introduction, and this has to do with his account of a fundamental ontology - Dasein’s ability to make sense of existence pre-ontologically (without having an account or theory for it).

Ontico-ontological priority according to Heidegger is that, Dasein by his understanding of Being, understands his own being. And not only his own being but that of other Daseins and that of entities. Heidegger says that “in such understanding Dasein provides the ontico-ontological conditions for the possibility of any other ontologies”. (Heidegger, 1973, p. 34) Thus, Dasein is the worldly human being, which provides in himself an opening for Being to be revealed. Human existence is the questioner of Being and, in posing the question about Being, he creates an opening that transcendently grounds all other realms of enquiry.

## **CONCLUSION**

The first part of Being and Time begins with how Heidegger is rejecting all of the traditional presuppositions regarding the concept of Being, restates the question of Being with new metaphysical foundations in the paradigm of hermeneutic phenomenology. In all of the traditional presuppositions, Being is taken to be an object like other entities, which is to say, it shows *the what* of every object. According to Heidegger, Being is to show “*the how*” rather “*the what*” of all entities. In this phenomenological inquiry into the question of Being, Being is not an entity rather it ‘determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which [*woraufhin*] entities are already understood.’ In this process that which is interrogated (*einBefragtes*) is not Being rather entities. Since there is infinite number of entities in the world therefore in order to make the inquiry viable one has to give priority to one specific entity. And this entity is Dasein, the inquirer himself, as for him the question of Being is an issue. Dasein is prior an entity both ontologically and ontically; ontologically, as it is ontologically interrogated in the process of discerning the

meaning of Being; and ontically, as it is an entity itself which has the determinate character of existence. Dasein is also ontico-ontologically prior in the sense that on the ground of understanding of its own, the Being of all other entities will be discerned.

Heidegger affirms that Being is always the Being of some entity, and it is to be shown not by itself rather by some entity. The most prior of entities, ontically, ontologically and ontico-ontologically, is Dasein. Without an entity like Dasein, Being remains implicit and so it is interpreted to be explicitly understood by the help of Dasein. That's how interpretation becomes complementary to phenomenological description in the triadic structure of Dasein being ontologico-ontically prior in phenomenological research and hermeneutically explicit in understanding.

Thus, Dasein has priority over other beings of the world and has the capacity to do the enquiry of Being because of its unique character that can question and take a stance on its own being, the being of other entities, and Being in general. Heidegger takes Dasein as a starting point for the investigation of the question of Being generally. If one can conduct an existential analytic of Dasein, as Heidegger does in *Being and Time*, then it's likely that one will come closer to a genuine understanding of Being itself. Dasein has priority because no other being can question or take a stance on its own being.

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**TUTELARY DEITIES OF SOUTH ODISHA:  
RITUAL PRACTICES AND ROYAL PATRONAGE**  
(Circa. 16th- 19th century CE)

The former rulers of Odisha played an important role in the growth and development of the worship of gods and goddesses. To establish and strengthen their power as local rulers, they depended on the assistance and protection of the main local goddess, who was in most cases a tribal deity. Due to a strong belief in her power, she received the status of a royal family's tutelary deity; as such, she was also considered a protective goddess of the territory. Since the rulers promoted her cult and worship, she often acquired supra-regional recognition. These tutelary deities of the former royal families of Odisha form a specific group of deities, many of whom have their roots in the tribal fold.<sup>2</sup> They exert a strong integrative influence in these particular regions. A network of relationships may also result from a family splitting up, as was the case within the Khemundi Raj family. The royal families of Parlakhemundi, Badakhemundi and Sanakhemundi join in worshipping the goddess Manikeswari. The most prominent goddess Manikeswari, is worshipped widely in Kalahandi, Rayagada and Ganjam districts, and the goddess Sambaleswari, is known in the Sambalpur, Bolangir and Sundargarh areas. Similarly, Bhattarika of Baramba, Maninageswari of Ranpur, and Carcika of Banki are some instances of deities who ascended from the status of tribal deities to that of Istadevatas.

This paper focuses on the tutelary deities of south Odisha most importantly Khambhesvari, Mohuri Kalua, Thakurani, Majhighariani and Markama, their ritual activities and patronisation by little Odisha kings. One of the most prominent characteristics of the religious life of south Odisha is the greater significance accorded to those deities of the little tradition who are regarded as mother goddesses or earth goddesses.

**Khambheswari in Aska:**

The goddess *Khambhesvari* from Aska, a vibrant trading town in Ganjam, in the valley of the river Rushikulya, belongs to a group of goddesses known as Stambheshvari which means 'goddess of the pillar', alluding to the fact that the images of this goddess consist overwhelmingly of wooden posts. In Aska itself, we find an interesting doubling up of the material representation of the goddess in front of the sacrificial site stands the non-iconic symbol of a wooden post, while in the sanctum opposite is a stone idol. This stone image of Khambhesvari, the focus of the pujas, consists of a body in the form of a

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Department of History, Kunja Bihari (Degree) College, Baranga, Khurda-751024 (Odisha)

<sup>2</sup> B. Schnepel, 1993. 'Die Schutzgöttinnen: Tribale Gottheiten in Sudorissa (Indien) und ihre Patronage durch hinduistische Kleinkönige.', Anthropos 88, 337-50.

lingam, roughly 1.20 metres high and with a diameter of about 40 centimetres. Attached to this stone is a round, vermillion-coloured head made out of a sheet of cardboard on which three golden eyes and a mouth with a protruding tongue have been glued. For the puja, Khambheshvari is dressed in splendid silk robes and hung with garlands of flowers. I was allowed to photograph the goddess, for which the priest dressed her up especially. However, the head of the temple, who arrived later, was incensed that on this occasion Khambheshvari had not been adorned with a cardboard construction of eight arms (which was kept in the storeroom of the temple). A further stage in her anthropomorphization would therefore have been possible, though it finds expression only on special occasions.<sup>1</sup>

The priests at the temple of Khambheshvari belong to the low-ranking caste of 'gardeners' (*mallis*). The puja is performed twice daily, in the early morning and the evening, and consists of the offering of lamps, incense, flowers, food and the sounding of a bell hung in front of the entrance. Among the gifts presented are coconuts, bananas, leaves in the shape of a trident called *belo-patra*, and the red flowers of the *mandara* tree. Only rarely do animal sacrifices take place in the temple of Khambheshvari, though they are carried out on the occasion of the Durga *puja* in autumn and the *caitra parva* (an originally tribal festival based on the symbolism of the hunt) in spring. It should also be mentioned that a small movable figure of brass is carried around the temple or the town in a procession during these festivals and on Sankranti days. This is Khambheshvari's mobile substitute (*calanti pratima*), which otherwise stands next to her in the temple.

One legend about Khambheshvari, according to a priest in the temple at Aska, illustrates the original relationship of the goddess with the forest region and its inhabitants. It is said that Khambheshvari appeared in a dream to a man living in the forest called Khamhamuni and demanded from him that he worship her as a goddess. The beautiful goddess lived with the old man for a time as if she were his daughter, though this was regarded with suspicion by passers-by. To avoid getting a bad name, Khamhamuni revealed the true nature of the goddess, who immediately disappeared. Subsequently, Khambheshvari played practical jokes on the old man, for example, by buying bangles and having him pay for them. Once she appeared suddenly before him with a baby torn to pieces on her arm. Eventually, the old man lost his patience and slapped her, upon which Khambheshvari made it known that the time of her childish play (*balyalila*) was over, that Khamhamuni must die, and that from that day on she was to be worshipped at that very same spot by his son.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Mahuri Kalua and Budhi Thakurani in Berhampur:**

The temple of another goddess called *Mohuri Kalua* is situated some twelve kilometres west of Berhampur, near the Kerandi Hills. Directly behind the temple is a steeply rising hill, with a stony path leading up to its summit. After an arduous ascent, one passes through a narrow cleft to a shelter beneath three large rocks which stand

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<sup>1</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_, 2002. "Tutelary deities: The Royal Patronage of Tribal Goddesses" in The Jungle King, pp. 233.

<sup>2</sup>. A.K. Rath, 1987. *Studies on Some Aspects of the History and Culture of Orissa*, Calcutta: Punthi Pustak. Pp. 80-89.

together like a house of cards. In this cave is the original goddess in the form of a small, conically shaped heap of earth about fifty centimetres high. A vermilion head of cardboard decorated with golden eyes and a protruding tongue is placed on top of this earthen body and a tiara of peacock feathers is fixed above the figure. Puja is offered to the goddess on the hill twice a week, on Sundays and Tuesdays. However, animal sacrifices are not made here because, according to the priest, it is too difficult to get animals up there. It is said that to spare her devotees the tiresome climb, Mohuri Kalua threw a vessel from the hill and at the point at which it landed the main temple now stands.

The temple at the foot of the hill is of a medium size and rectangular in shape. At the back are some houses in which live the priests, who come from *bhandari* or *barbar* caste. To one side a small temple dedicated to Siva. The walls of the entrance hall of the main temple are decorated with motifs of the goddess Kali. The image of goddess Mahuri Kalua consists of a conical body, roughly 1.20 meters in height. Puja is offered three times a day. When pilgrims step in front of the goddess with their gifts, a priest sitting in front of Mohuri Kalua offers candlelight, incense, flowers, leaves, coconut milk, bananas and other items in a shortened form of the puja ceremony. While this is going on, the supplicant stands reverently praying in front of the balustrade or rings one of the many bells that hang from the roof. Some, to show their great devotion, prostrate themselves on the ground, with their faces to the floor and folded hands outstretched towards the goddess, praying and occasionally hitting their foreheads on the floor. The goddess is offered animal sacrifices twice a week, mainly goats and chickens, which are killed in a rather remote grove outside the temple complex. A foreleg of the goat is offered to the goddess. Twice a week, the snake that lives in the body of the goddess (in the termite mound, that is) is worshipped by the priests behind closed doors and fed with milk. The greatest festival of the year takes place on sankranti day which marks the entrance of the sun into the zodiac called mesa. On this festival, besides thousands of pilgrims, the Mohuri raja personally visits the goddess. Many goats are killed and it is said that earlier Mohuri kings offered human sacrifices on this occasion.

Together with Mohuri Kalua, a look should be taken at the goddess *Budhi Thakurani*, the patron deity of the large trading city of Berhampur, since this goddess is regarded by many of the inhabitants of the area as another manifestation of Mohuri Kalua. *Budhi Thakurani* is one of the most important goddesses of the coastal region of southern Odisha. Tens of thousands of people take part in her festival, the *Thakurani yatra*, which takes place every two or three years and lasts for several weeks. The celebration of this festival in spring (in the month of *Chaitra*) acquires special significance in the eyes of many, if there has been a long period without a good harvest or the country has been plagued by epidemics. The *Thakurani yatra* offers an occasion for ritual costume, pantomimes and lively, occasionally ecstatic dancing. The celebrations sometimes have the character of a ritual of reversal or a ritual of violence. These excesses are the main reason why the collector gives his approval for the holding of the festival reluctantly.

*Budhi Thakurani* is represented by a stone roughly forty centimetres high, on to which is placed a red cardboard mask representing a face. During the *Thakurani*

*yatra*, she is also worshipped in the form of a lotus blossom. Many elements of the daily cult in the Thakurani temple are similar to those found in the temple of Mohuri Kalua. However, in Berhampur sacrifices are frequently made—up to several times a day. The sacrificial site is in the temple complex itself, behind a wall at the foot of a neem or margosa tree, which is regarded as sacred. The severed heads of the sacrificial victims, mostly goats and chickens, but in earlier times also occasionally humans, are offered to the goddess. The priests belong to the weaver or dera caste, usually in India a low, often even derided caste,<sup>1</sup> though in Berhampur they are influential merchants of Telugu descent. The head of a leading family of this caste called *desi behera*, is regarded as the ‘father’ of the goddess, a fact which also finds ritual expression in the Thakurani *yatra* and which alludes to the fact that, in the case of Budhi Thakurani, we have less a ‘mother’ goddess than a ‘daughter’ goddess.

#### **Majhighraiani in Rayagada:**

*Maa Majhighraiani*, a further example of a tribal goddess subjected to the process of Hinduization is from the hill area of Koraput District. It will be recalled that under Viswanatha Deo (1521-1571 CE), the fourth ruler of the Suryavamsha dynasty, the royal capital was moved for a time from Nandapur to Rayagada. One of the most important temples in present-day Rayagada, which is dedicated to the goddess Majhighariani, dates from the time of Viswanatha, when it probably already possessed central ritual importance for the inhabitants of the area. If one makes one’s way from the centre of Rayagada to this temple today, one first comes to a quarter of the town which can be identified as the old fortress area through the remains of a wall. A few hundred meters before the temple is a large banyan tree with many small white stones lying under it. A split coconut, some scattered flowers, several belo patra leaves, and red and white spots painted on the large monolithic block of stone in front of the tree indicate that this is a sacred site. According to local information, the stones lying scattered beneath the tree were gifts made to the goddess by adivasis who had come to the town.<sup>2</sup>

After crossing a railway line built in the, there is a well-kept temple dedicated to Majhighariani. Today, this temple is one of the most popular as well as the richest in south Odisha, with several thousand visitors daily, especially on Sunday. The flow of pilgrims is controlled using a ticketing and barrier system. However, the temple acquired its present size and splendour only some decades ago. It is reported that while constructing the railway line, a bridge being built not far from the temple collapsed on several occasions. According to local tradition, Majhighariani did this to have a bigger temple built for her by the railway company. It is not known precisely when the new temple was constructed, but an eyewitness describes the temple as being in ruins in 1930. Old photographs also testify to the immediate environs of the temple, which today are well-groomed, being overgrown and covered with many trees and bushes.

<sup>1</sup>. Jordan-Horstmann, M. 1972. “Der dumme Weber: Spotterzählungen beiden Mundas”, in *Anthropos* 67, Pp. 564-85.

<sup>2</sup>. B. Schnepel, 2002. *Tutelary deities: The Royal Patronage of Tribal Goddesses in The Jungle King*, pp. 238.

Even the site of the legendary ritual death by burning (*sati*) of the 116 consorts of Viswanatha, located next to the temple, looks neglected in the old photographs. Today this is a small, fenced-off park, in which the deified wives are ritually honoured on sankranti days.<sup>1</sup>

The figure of Majhighariani consists of seven white stones, the largest of which forms a head coloured in vermillion. The face is characterized by expressive eyes, black eyebrows, a silver nose, a golden mouth and a protruding silver tongue. The head is wreathed in a gold ornament in the shape of a crown and the image is garlanded with red and white flowers hung around the head. The seven stones can hardly be made out under this, 'mask'. Only when the sacred inner space is cleaned a task that is undertaken after visiting time are the naked stones revealed.

The greatest festivals of the year at the Majhighariani temple are Durgapuja in autumn and *caitra* parva in spring. Until 1890, human sacrifice is said to have taken place on the eighth night of the Durga *puja*. This was carried out at a stone especially set aside for it, called the 'priest's stone' (*jani pathara*), probably the stone with red and white spots under the tree in front of the temple.<sup>2</sup> Today, humans are replaced by a particular type of sheep. As this animal can be found only in remote areas, its sacrifice can be allocated to the realm of tribal culture. After the sacrifice, the blood is collected and brought to the goddess, while the body and head go to members of the sweeper caste. Even on a normal day, a large number of goats and chickens are sacrificed. In addition, coconuts, bananas, rice and other vegetable gifts are offered, if the request is a minor one or the pilgrim's financial means are not enough to permit a blood sacrifice. The priests of the Majhighariani temple come from the caste of the foot soldiers or *paiks*.

#### **Markama in Bissamcuttack:**

*Markama* is the tutelary goddess of Bissamcuttack town and one of the most powerful goddesses of the estate, she is ascribed great effectiveness by her devotees, especially when it comes to holding witchcraft, demons or evil spirits at bay. *Markama*'s temple lies in a grove somewhat outside the town. The image of the goddess consists of a large black stone with a smaller stone on top. The latter forms a red-coloured head, covered all over with silver eyes and a protruding tongue. The larger stone, which functions as the body, is usually decorated with red garments. During *puja* the head of the goddess is decorated with garlands of red and white flowers (made up like a splendid head of hair). During the services, burning candles, coconuts and many flowers with red, blue and yellow blossoms are placed on the ground in front of the deity; during sacrifices, *Markama* is also decorated with many green *belo patra* leaves. Right next to her stands a sword with red and white stripes, which acts as her substitute in processions. This 'stage' is surrounded by a stone structure, before whose semi-circular opening the priests perform their services. If one takes a few steps back and looks at the whole scenario, one receives the impression of looking into the open muzzle of a lion.

In order to reach *Markama*'s dwelling in her medium-sized temple, raised

<sup>1</sup> . K.B. Singh Deo, 1939. *Nandapur: A Forsaken Kingdom*, Cuttack: Utkal Sahitya Press. Pp. 14-17

<sup>2</sup> . W. Francis, 1907. *Madras District Gazetteers: Vizagapatnam*, Madras: Government Press. Pp. 302.

somewhat on a mound of earth, one must climb ten stone steps. At the foot of this ascent are five wooden posts about a meter high, on which slight notches hint at heads and waists. Sacrificial animals which have been dedicated to the goddess are tied to these posts before being killed directly in the sight of the goddess. In the middle of the sandy square in front of the temple lies a flat stone painted with twenty red spots surrounded with white to represent the human sacrifices that were carried out at one time. The heads and a few blood of the sacrificial animals are offered to the goddess and to the priest sitting in front of the image, who is possessed by her on these occasions. During the daily puja, the gifts consist of coconuts, bananas, millet, the juice of a particular tree, *Mandara* blossoms, sweets, red cloth and other items. The greatest festivals of the year are the two *Durga pujas* in autumn and spring. As in the case of Majhighariani, the priests of the Markama temple belong to the warrior caste of paiks.<sup>1</sup>

While the theme of this legend is the connection of the goddess with a particular locality and the beginning of her royal patronage, in another tradition the focus is on the characteristics of her cult. The king, it is reported, adopted Markama as his family deity and chose a Brahman to be the priest in her temple. The Brahman performed the usual services for five or six days, during which the food given to the goddess was offered to the king after the puja as consecrated food (*mahaprasada*). One day, the Brahman turned his back to the goddess and received a kick in the backside from her so that he fell and lost consciousness. Meanwhile, the king, waiting in his palace for the consecrated food, learned of the priest's fall only after sending a messenger to the temple. Markama appeared to the king at night in a dream and instructed him to release the Brahman from his duty and appoint her adoptive parents as her priests. She also stipulated that Brahmins should only be used for three services, namely to perform the fire ritual (*homo*) on the seventh night of the *Durga puja*, and to place the sacred thread around Markama on full-moon days of the months of *sravana* (July/August) and *pausa* (December/January). Another ritual change ordered by the goddess was that henceforward the king was not to receive the consecrated food, only the water in which the goddess had been bathed.

We must now consider the nature of the relationship between tribal goddesses and Hindu little kings who were originally outsiders. Little kings of the sub-region there were probably none who had not patronized one or even several of the most important goddesses in their realms. There is evidence that neighboring little kings, or others striving for power, competed over access to the sacred site of a goddess and the status of her patron to the extent of going to war over her; occasionally, they sought to destroy the image of the tutelary goddess of their opponent, doubtless in the hope of destroying an important source of his power.

The royal patronage that was extended to tribal goddesses consisted first and foremost in the building of suitable accommodation, then in the financing of their cults and great festivals, as well as of regular puja ceremonies and in the provision for priests and their families. Mostly, the resources required for the religious services and the maintenance of professional, though non-Brahman priests, who established themselves permanently as religious virtuosi between the devotees and the goddesses, were secured

<sup>1</sup> B. Schnepel, 2002. Tutelary deities: The Royal Patronage Of Tribal Goddesses in The Jungle King, pp. 245.

through small donations of land near the temples. The kings also provided funds from the treasury by raising additional payments of tribute or by raids on neighbouring kingdoms. For the goddesses themselves, the patronage of individuals with access to economic resources and political power meant an extension of their influence beyond their originally limited domains and a higher reputation. In their increased domains, they acquired the ritual recognition of most social groups, and not only, as before, of the inhabitants of one village or the members of one caste or tribe. Their temples became sites of pilgrimage, though the worship by local communities, from which the priests were also recruited, remained dominant. The local roots of these goddesses were never forgotten even though their appearance changed. They were given accommodation and a more human form. Puja was regularly performed, up to three times a day, mostly consisting of five or six *upacaras* or services, namely the offering of sandalwood paste (*gandha*), flowers (*puspa*), incense (*dhupa*), light (*dipa*), food (*bhoga, naivedya*) and, less frequently, a bath (*snana*).<sup>1</sup>

It is concluded that the royal patronage of tribal goddesses can only be understood in the context of the establishment, consolidation and legitimization of political power by Hindu little kings in Hindu-tribal border regions or predominantly tribal areas. It was an important means integrating tribal and semi-tribal groups into a structure of authority based on Hindu ideas and values. In this respect, royal support for indigenous goddesses was of special importance in the early stages of a newly founded kingdom. However, in the religious history of the royal dynasties of south Odisha, there are few signs of the significance of these goddesses declining in any significant measure even in the following centuries. Only in the late nineteenth century did the cult of Jagannath begin to surpass the cult of the goddesses in popularity and political significance.

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<sup>1</sup> . A. Eschmann, 1978a. 'Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa: The Sakta and Saiva Typology,' in: Eschmann, Kulke and Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, Pp.79-97.

## **SUFISM: THE VOICE OF PEACE, CO-EXISTENCE, COMPASSION AND EQUALITY**

### **Introduction:-**

The current-day world particularly Indian sub-continent is seriously encountering with extremism, terrorism and violence of diverse sorts and levels. Religion-based extremism and terrorism is entangling the world in a chaotic atmosphere of hatred, malice, prejudice, terror, distrust and what not. The prospect of long-lasting peace, tranquility, stability—social, political as well as economic—seems far at this juncture. However, the spiritual aspect of religions have often been neglected or not highlighted/explored to that extent which otherwise possess profound potential effects toward peace building narratives and examples. Spiritual movements seem a welcoming and sponsoring ground by the political authorities in the current-day scenario. Therefore, People are moving towards spirituality to find solace and to seek an answer to their perturbed minds. Sufism in fact indulged in love and peace and Sufis are real ambassador of peace and communal harmony.

### **Definition:-**

A variety of opinions exists among scholars regarding the meaning and definition of Sufism, because it is not mentioned in the Quran or the books of *hadith*, nor does it figure in the *Qamus*, the standard Arabic dictionary compiled in 1414 AD<sup>2</sup>. According to Qushayri (986/1073), author of a famous book “*al Resala*”, the word Sufi was used as a generic term to describe individuals adopting a particular religious attitude based on austerity and spirituality, and came into usage only at the beginning of the 9th century. This he explains simply: ‘After the Prophet Muhammad, *sahabi* (companion) was the only title given to the Muslims of that period. This was the highest title for them, and they therefore required no other title for their piety and religiosity. The next generation that received religious education directly from the *sahaba* was called *tabeen* (followers of the companions), while the title *taba tabeen* (followers of the followers of the companions) was the title given to those who had received religious training from the *tabeen*.’ After that the people became more and more diverse, and their ranks became distinct from one another. The elect people, who had strong attachment to the affairs of faith, came to be known as “*zahid*” (world renouncers) and “*abid*” (worshipers). Then there appeared innovations in religion and strife among various factions. Members of various group claimed that the true *zahid* were among them. It is only in relation to the succeeding generations that one comes across the term Sufi. This name became widely

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Dept. of Islamic Studies, A.M.U., Email Id:  
[rahmatullahkhan4@gmail.com](mailto:rahmatullahkhan4@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Subhan, A. John, *Sufism its Saints and Shrines*, (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2011), p.7

applied to the greatest among them before the second century of the *Hijra*<sup>1</sup>. According to Abdur Rahman Jami (1414/1492), who quotes earlier sources, the first spiritualist to be given the title of Sufi was Shaikh Abu Hashim Kufi (d. 150/767)<sup>2</sup>.

The scholars on Sufism have given many subtle definition of Sufi, all of which cannot be discussed but some of them mentioned here. It is also kept in mind that these varied definitions arose from the fact that each Sufi was speaking from his own spiritual station to the station and level of understanding of his listeners. Thus, each definition reveals a different aspect of Sufism, each correct in its proper context, and to grasp Sufism as a whole.

Sufism may be defined as the spiritual progress of a devotee from the initial stage of Islam to the final stage of *Ahsan*. It can be explained from the perspective of the three religious attitudes mentioned in the Quran and sunnah. These three attitudes are Islam, *Iman*, and *Ahsan*. Islam means submission to the will of God this is the minimum qualification for being a Muslims. *Iman* is more advanced stage in the field of religion than Islam. *Ahsan*, third quality, is the highest stage of spiritual advancement.

In Sufism, *Ihsan* is central, which focuses on the purification of the heart and the mystical connection to Allah. Sufis emphasize this inward state of excellence and God-consciousness.

Sufis seek to represent *Ihsan* by cultivating sincerity, love for Allah, detachment from the material world, possible distance from worldly powers, social equality, tolerance, supporting of poor and needy persons, contacts with common people, secular outlook and philanthropic attitude. These are the chief orientation of Sufi way of living. It is not surprising that Jalaluddin Rumi, a Persian poet and Sufi master born about 800 years ago in the 13th century, has become 'the most popular poet' in the US.<sup>3</sup> Sufism became popular in the 13-14<sup>th</sup> centuries when the world was facing the Mongol onslaught. Again, the world is faced with violent threats in the form of state and alleged non-state actors and Sufism is gaining popularity. Rumi's writing, *Mathnavi*, is selling in millions across the world.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the Sufis came from central Asia; they whole-heartedly accepted Indian spiritual tradition and cultural practices. Many of them like Baba Farid preferred to write in local languages instead of Arabic and Persian. They even adopted local traditions, this made them quite popular among people and that is why attracted the Hindu masses. The Sufis saints preferred to be in the company of the poor and weaker sections of the society instead of courtiers and upper class nobles and they did not observe religious boundaries. This made them quite popular among the masses. The Sufis became bridge between Hindus and Muslims and brought about the birth of composite culture in the society. The Sufis believed in the doctrine of *Wahadatul Wajood* and *Sulh-i-Kul* and both these

<sup>1</sup> Qushayri, Abu-al- Qasim, *al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, tr. by, Alexander D. Knysh (UK: Garnet, 2007), p. 17

<sup>2</sup> Abdur Rahman Jami, *Nafahatul-Usn*, tr. by, Ahmad Ali (Lahore: NA), p. 35, Nizami. K.A, *Tarikh Mashaikh-i-Chisht*, (Delhi: Idarah Adbiyat-i Delhi 1980), p. 43

<sup>3</sup> Jane Ciabattari, "Why Rumi is the best-selling poet in the US?" 21 October 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140414- Americas-best-selling-poet> (Accessed 6 April 2016)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

doctrines are quite helpful in building bridge between the communities. In fact the doctrine of *Wahdatul Wajood* demolished all barriers between communities as Allah is the only reality and the only thing that exist. The rest are not real existence but manifestation of one God. *Sulh-i-Kul* total peace, peace with all was another doctrine that brought about cordial relations. In establishing peace, a Sufi never makes any discrimination rather he works for peace to all.

### **Sufi concept of Love**

It is generally considered that Sufism is mainly based on the philosophy of love and Sufis have mainly utilized it as the main source of their realization of Truth/Reality (*Haq*). They have considered their relation with Allah just like the relation of the lover and beloved. In their eyes, a Sufi is a lover (*ashiq*) and God is the beloved (*mashuq*). Sufis wants to unite himself with God to denote his concept of love as metaphysical element that cannot be articulated in the particular language. The feeling of love is purely mystical and metaphysical that is a matter of apprehension and realization only. The idea of love presumably borrowed by the Sufis from the Quran, where the term *mahabbah, hubb, wudd, muwaddah* are present that are depicts the various types and gradation of love. The term *hubb* and *mahabbah* are inter-related and represent as a supper category of love or overflowing love (*ashaddoo huballillah*).<sup>1</sup> Prophet Muhammad also clearly expressed about the concept of love several times. In a hadith he says: "My servant draws nigh into Me by works of devotion. And I love him, I am the ear by which he hears, and eye by which he sees and tongue by which he speaks."<sup>2</sup> The greatest Sufi and thinker of Islam Imam Ghazali in his *Ihya'uloom al-Din* maintains that love is natural desire, which produces pleasure but when that desire assumes an intense form, it is affection and become intense form, it is called passionate love or *Ishq*. Sufis say whenever love going beyond extreme in affection and becomes intense it is called *Ishq*. Sufis regard love is the essence of their metaphysics. A true Sufis is a lover of God as well as the lover of the whole universe. Whenever a Sufi is deeply joined in the love of God he sees all as his own without any discrimination of caste and creed, whenever a Sufi is fully intoxicated sees nothing except God and all the distinction between God and man is disappeared here. In this stage he proclaims *anal haque* (I am the Reality) as Mansur Hallaj uttered. A reputed Sufi al- Jami says: *ishq awwal, ish qakhir, ishq zahir wabatin, ishq hi se tu banaeh har dar wa diwar hai ishq*.<sup>3</sup> Love is the beginning, love is the end, love is the manifest and love is hidden. Love is that sustains the world.

### **Sufi concept of Equality and Brotherhood**

Sufis are the lover of God and all creatures. They love all and sundry without any discrimination of caste creed and religion. According to their tradition anybody can take their discipleship without changing their own faith and all initiated anybody of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Quran*, 2:165

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Bukari, Kitab al-Raqaque, Bab Tawadhu*, Hadith, No. 6502

<sup>3</sup> Waliuddin Mir, *Love of God*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1968), p.133

Sufi order are considering as *pir bhai* (brother of spirituality). There is no caste classification, all the rigidities and barriers like high and low, superior and inferior are broken down in their society. They believe all human beings are the descendant of one Adam and piety is the best criteria to measures some one's quality and goodness. Even Sufis pay regards to all creatures as they thought they are the inevitable part of environment balance. Their universal brotherhood is based on the notion of *khidmat-i-khalque* (the service of humanity) as they apprehend it as their one of the best principles. So they uttered.

The path of Sufis is nothing but the service of humanity. It is neither in a rosary, nor on the prayer carpet, nor in the garment of Sufi.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Sufi concept of Tolerance**

Though the main aim of the Sufis is the unite their finite soul with the infinite, however, they do not cut themselves off from the society. In India, Sufis achieved extra ordinary popularity due to their humane and tolerate attitude. Their eternal massage is:

*“awwal sakhwati chun sekhawat-i-darya*

*Doam sefqati chun sefqat-i-Aftab*

*Sewan tawazui chuntewazu-i-Zameen”*

A generosity like that of the ocean, secondly,  
mildness like that of the sun and thirdly modesty like  
that of the earth.

In extending tolerant outlook they open their *khanqah* for all human being and the guests those who arrived in their *khanqah*, lived, slept and ate all together without any ethnic distinction. The holy book and scriptures were open to all and accessible to all. The celebrated Sufi Nizamuddin Awlia's humanism and toleration were very lofty, so he said “devotion to God does not mean detachment from the mundane world. Highest form of devotion to god is removal of misery of the distressed and extending helping hands to the helpless and feeding of the hungry”.<sup>2</sup>

In the dark ages of human civilization (*aiyam-i-jaheliyat*) Islam showed the light of rich culture towards all aspects of human life in transforming all spheres of the society, but it is very unfortunate that most of the people do not understand the true spirit of this cultural transformation. In the due course, Islamic culture penetrated in India in the garb of Sufism and assimilated with Indian culture and its divergent natures. It assimilated with Indian composite values and developed various aspects of cultural sides through its scientific transformations. There is an erroneous thought that Islam is typically rigid and cannot able to adapt with the changing patterns of the society, but it is not true. Since Sufis were very much egalitarian in their outlook therefore, in the course of time Islamic culture has adapted with various cultures of East and West and accommodated the attractive and reasonable portions of the other cultures in its fold.

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<sup>1</sup> Md. Sirajul al-Islam, *National Integration in the light of Sufism*, Book *National Integration Problems in Perspective*, Edit. By P. Jash (Indira Gandhi centre for National Integration, Visva Bharti, 1995), p. 77

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p.77

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This philosophical enquiry is an initiative to understand the true nature of Indian culture homogeneity and rapprochement. In this contemporary world Sufi culture and its ethical values, if practiced properly, it will help to annihilate most trivial problems of the world.

Sufism is the mystical dimension of Islam. Throughout the world of Sufism love has become the eternal theme. Interfaith dialogues and service to humanity are important aspect of Sufism. There are many Sufis shrines and *khanqahs* that serve only vegetarian food respecting Hindu sensivities. The shrine of Haji Waris Ali Shah at Dawa in Barabanki is famous for Hindu Muslim unity where the celebration of *Holi* festival commemorated every year with enthusiastically and heartily, the shrine of Syed Salar Masud Ghazi, Bahrach and Syed Makhdum Ashraf Jahangir Simnani at Kichhaucha, an important mental and physical health service to everyone without any discrimination. According to spirit of Sufism, religion has no meaning unless it is warmed by emotions of love. So, if it rightly interpreted Sufism is the heart of Islam. Sufis have in many cases realized and shown the greatest perfection of humanity. The most important attributes that have contributed to their wide acceptance are their love for the humanity, purifying of mind and perfection of their conducts. Spirituality does not need to follow of any particular religion. Customs and rituals are only the outer forms of religion. Spirituality is however, seeking the Truth and self-realization that are the matter of heart and soul, which are equal and same in every individual. Peaceful coexistence is one of the most important human ideals. Peace and harmony constitute the soul of Islam. Sufism has laid the foundation of peace and has thus leveled the path to peaceful coexistence. Sufism had contributed significantly to India's rich cultural and religious legacy. Sufi saints have played a major role in promoting religious harmony and Hindu Muslim unity in medieval India. The Sufi saints dedicated their entire lives to the promotion of secular values, religious toleration and Hindu Muslim unity. Sufism always persuaded people to live with tolerance, harmony, love, brotherhood and peace on the earth adding that humanity is more precious than any of the religions.

Sufis for centuries have been the bridging gap between Hinduism and Islam. Sufi religious establishments in India were the major means of spreading Islam and adapting it to indigenous cultural tradition. Sufis played a significant role in bringing together major Indian religious communities by creating conditions strives for a composite culture.<sup>1</sup> The mysticism, in all religious tradition strives for co-existence with people of other faith but Islamic Sufism served as a connection between religious, ethnic and cultural identities. It involved common people with its message of tolerance and love for God and humans. Sufis in the sub-continent are known for providing a common venue for people of all religions and ethnicities. Sufi shrines are still highly popular among the believers of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and other faiths. Sufism has made significant contributions to Islamic civilization in music and philosophy, dance and literature.

Sufism had contributed significantly to India's rich cultural and religious legacy. When Sufism came into contact with the people of other religions, some of the influence of the latter upon the former's social and cultural conditions was inevitable. The idea of *Wahda al-Wajood* and several techniques of meditation brought the Sufism

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<sup>1</sup>Murad Ali Baig, *80 questions to understand India: History, Mythology and Religion*, p. 55

very close to certain non-Muslim religious tradition which already existed in Indian sub-continent. For example, The *advaita Vedanta*, a Hindu stream believed that the *Aatma* (human soul) and *Parmatma* (God) were one and the same, a theory similar to *Wahdat al-Wajood*. Similarly, The Sufis found much to learn from Hindu disciples such as Yoga which influenced and strengthen their meditation techniques. In the same way, local Indian traditions were also powerfully affected by the principles of Islam as represented by Sufi saints. The teaching of Kabir and Guru Nanak show the clear imprint of soul of Islam.<sup>1</sup>

The most relevance contribution of Sufism to present world is constructive approach for the peace and harmony. Sufism has a vital and essential role to play in these efforts, in which it can harmonize relations between Islam and other great religious cultures and direct attention to issues that are of perennial importance in the moral and spiritual development of humanity. Sufism tried to bridge the gulf between orthodoxy and devotion and played a important role in propagation of peace and harmony. Because of its capacity to inspire human solidarity and deeply ecumenical spirituality, Sufism can greatly expedite the emergence of a global peace culture. Like other religious and spiritual traditions Sufism must be respond to the problems of contemporary context of human life.

Because of its capacity to inspire human ecumenical spirituality, Sufism can greatly expedite the emergence of a global peace culture. Though most religious and ethical systems promotes reciprocity and good will, their institutions and outlooks are too frequently identified with just those aspects of the past that contribute to current division and conflict. Sufism competent enough of bring together on the agenda of humanity and it has different technique to achieve this object. All the mystic thoughts developed in different religions in different places and times but with similar feelings. No one deny that there are differences between the great religions on the fundamental view point. The unity on existence of one and only God is the way which can lead us to achieve the universal outlook for the solving the problems. So it is the need of time that we must work together for peace and prosperity under the shadow of of Sufism. The most significant part of Sufism is the motivation for the universal unity of human beings without any discrimination. It shows that how Sufis have love and care for the mankind. Sufism modifies the human behaviour with broad thinking of universality. This expected spiritual understanding goes to beyond to humans for examining global idea of unity and harmony. Sufism promises for progress in human behaviour in practical forms to universal level.

Sufi mysticism has long exercised a fascination upon the Western World, and especially its Orientalist scholars. Figures like Rumi have become well known in the United States, where Sufism of perceived as a peaceful and apolitical form of Islam. The Islamic Institute in Mannheim, Germany, which works towards the integration of Europe and Muslims, sees Sufism as particularly suited for inter-religious dialogue and inter-cultural harmonization in democratic and pluralistic societies; it has described Sufism as a symbol of tolerance and humanism, no dogmatic, flexible and non-violent.

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<sup>1</sup>Rizvi, Syed Abbas Athar, (*History of Sufism in India*, vol. ii, (1992). p. 180

Sufism is the science of the supreme knowledge of God, its doctrines and methods are derived from holy Quran. Sufism freely makes paradigms and tallies with Greek and even Hindu sources and it is not at all strange that the most recent of the great revealed religions should take account of the intellectual developments which preceded it when these are compatible and useful in bridging the gap between human reason and sure knowledge of the Divine. Sufism inculcates the notion that all religions are the religion of God. If each one of us would come to the realization that my God is the God of man we would find it impossible to greed for a world of overpowering our fellow being and infliction them agonies. Definitely, Sufism is the best way to heal and cure our physical and spiritual injuries in these turbulent times. We are brought up to believe that from about sixteenth century onwards the east began to stagnate, whereas the West developed and progressed, Sufism is the only bridge between the East and the West spreading its wings beyond the boundaries of this mortal world.

Following the devastation caused by two succeeding wars (World War-I and II) voices were raised especially by International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), a preceding entity of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), on the need of fostering international understanding and cooperation. In 1946, with the formation of UNESCO international peace & harmony became an essential part of its agenda. In this context, if we look back we will be surprised to find that the Sufism is the history of cultivating and instilling education of peace and value in a society utterly fragmented by prevalent socio-cultural milieu. The way towards tranquillity that the Sufi long been suggesting is relevant today and even of course in its rather heightened implication. Modern Sufi scholar Hazrat Inayat Khan declared: "The peace for which every soul strives, and which is the true nature of God and the utmost goal of man, is but outcome of harmony."<sup>1</sup>

Hazrat Inayat Khan, the founder of Universal Sufism expressed his views on how can peace and harmony be achieved saying "harmony is brought about by attuning oneself to all beings, to all situations; and one who cannot tune himself tries to tune others. Here, we find that a modern Sufi or may be called a dedicated follower of Sufism, has exquisitely summarized one of the modern connotations of Education.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Siddiqui, Muhammad Shaheer, *Sufism and India spiritual traditions an educational perspective*, (New Delhi Publication, 2015), p. 36

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 36

### **VISUAL POLITICS OF HIJRI CALENDAR ON COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP**

#### **Abstract**

This essay explores the cultural, semiotic, and postal-historical importance of issuing a commemorative postage stamp for 1400 AH, the Hijri Islamic New Year which begins in the year 1400 AH. It inserts such a stamp into discussions of nation-branding, religious memory, cylindrical identity, and philatelic activity. The analysis provides a methodological framework for cataloging and researching specific issues from 1400 AH, including their historical context, such as calendar conversions and public observance of the 1400 AH milestone, as well as typological design elements like calligraphy, numerals, and motifs, and production and circulation details like issuance, first-day covers, and cancellations. Regional variations in determining the start of 1400 AH are highlighted; specifically the contrasting methods of moon-sighting versus astronomical tables, and their effects on date-marking in postal artifacts are noted. This study investigates the ways in which postage stamps, cancellations, and postal stationery from the mid-19th century to the present have been used to record, represent, and spread the Hijri era—both the lunar Hijri (AH) and the solar Hijri (SH). The tool charts Hijri dating sites and methods; distinguishes regional stamp design conventions; studies scripts, numerals, and iconography; and shows how philatelic items embody modernity, state authority, and religious time. It proposes a working typology, a documentation technique, and an initial checklist for academics compiling a corpus of "Hijri stamps."

**Keywords:** Hijri calendar, State iconography, calligraphy, Visual Culture, Islamic art..

#### **Introduction**

Special commemorative stamps display visual arguments, highlighting what a state, postal authority, or community has decided to honour and make accessible worldwide. A 1400 Hijri stamp has a dual function. This marks the beginning of a new centennial or quinquennial period in the Islamic lunisolar calendar, marking a considerable calendrical landmark. The system also demonstrates its ability to reconcile local and religious time with world time, particularly the Gregorian calendar and global postal systems. This article investigates the political and artistic importance of a stamp dating to 1400 AH. What is the importance of the small stamp frame in the context of the Hijri calendar? What methods should philatelic items be conserved, analyzed, and recorded by academics? Postage stamps serve as small agreements between the sender and the government, featuring a country's emblem, verifying payments, and symbolizing its official authority. Portable calendars are frequently offered by stamps in Muslim-majority countries, showcasing the Hijri era via numbers, calligraphy, inscriptions, or commemorative themes like the Hajj, Ramadan, and Islamic New Year. The presence of

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<sup>1</sup> Assist. Professor, School of Art and Architecture (Fine Arts), Sushant University Gurugram, India, [vinaypatelbhu@gmail.com](mailto:vinaypatelbhu@gmail.com)

Hijri dates on stamps illustrates diverse time perceptions and emphasizes that time measurement is a complex and context-dependent concept, as opposed to the widespread use of the Gregorian calendar in global trade. In Islamic history, the Lunar Hijri calendar has been used in both religious settings and historical documentation, as seen in the year 1447 AH. Iran and Afghanistan utilise the solar hijri (SH) civil calendar, for example, 1403 SH. Both of these can be found on postage stamps; their simultaneous appearance causes problems with cross-dating and cataloging.

#### Historical & Portable Calendar

Philatelic handbooks and general catalogs, such as Scott, Stanley Gibbons, Michel, and Yvert, typically omit detailed discussions of calendar politics and conversion tables between Hijri and Gregorian dates, although they may occasionally note specific dates and themes. A comprehensive, comparative analysis of Hijri inscriptions is currently lacking, despite occasional mentions in regional studies and postal history publications (e.g., in Ottoman, Hejaz/Nejd, early Saudi, Iranian SH problems, and cancellation devices). This research suggests a method for building a reproducible corpus in order to bridge the gap. The Islamic calendar, known as the Hijri calendar, is based solely on the cycles of the moon. A yearly variation in calendar alignment occurs because a Hijri year is roughly 10-12 days shorter than a Gregorian solar year. The first day of Muharram in 1400 AH corresponds to either November 20, 1979, or November 21, 1979, in the Gregorian calendar, depending on local lunar sighting practices. In many Muslim-majority countries, decisions about sighting the crescent locally decide when a month starts, resulting in slight variations in daily timetables across different regions.

The year 1400 was significant for numerous cultures and institutions, encompassing both religious, cultural, and intellectual spheres, despite the Islamic calendar having tracked centuries for centuries already. Geopolitical developments and religious revivals in the late 1970s. A pivotal event in the Muslim world occurred in the late 1970s, with the 1979 Iranian Revolution being a crucial instance. From a geopolitical perspective, a commemoration of 1400 AH could be interpreted as either a government-backed celebration of time, a religious-cultural marketing campaign, or a reaffirmation of cultural values. Each of the 1400 AH topics receives a distinct interpretation, thereby requiring a case-by-case evaluation of local factors. In this work, each of the 1400 AH topics is assigned a unique interpretation, necessitating consideration of local circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

#### Literature Review (Philately, Calendric, and Visual Culture)

Philatelic catalogs available today, including Scott, SG, Michel, and local postal yearbooks, typically only list issues and dates without systematically addressing calendar politics. The study of postage stamps as a location of calendrical politics is often overlooked in research on visual culture and Islamic studies, which usually focus on calligraphy, calendars, and state symbolism. This study offers a framework specifically designed to tackle issues related to 1400 AH, using a combination of visual-semiotic techniques (iconography, typographic analysis) and philatelic methods (cataloging, origin research, stamp cancellations). Items of visual media that carry cultural significance are of interest to philately, calendar art, and the study of visual culture. The use of stamps and calendars aids in the examination of nationhood, ritual time,

commodity circulation, and everyday aesthetic practice, as these two small-format, widely disseminated images convey symbolic, historical, and ideological themes. In contemporary art, both are considered objects of circulation, with equal importance given to production methods, visual language, distribution networks, and public opinion. For a comprehensive examination of Indian calendar art and its production/consumption cycles, consult Kajri Jain's "Gods in the Bazaar".

Images of deities, celebrities, and national icons are produced on a large scale in industrial settings like Sivakasi and lithography presses, then distributed for sale and bought by people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Calendar art is a subject of study in the cultural and anthropological histories of mass imagery. Studies of calendar art emphasize its everyday applications (e.g., in offices, vehicles, and home shrines), non-traditional production techniques, and economic systems supporting cultural visual traditions. This study focuses on semiotics and visual culture, with a close examination of stamps and calendars as symbolic representations. Researchers examine stamps and calendars to decipher the symbolic associations of national identity, ritual practices, and modernity through the lenses of semiotics and iconography. Research on picture series and memory can be connected to theoretical frameworks, with links established between Aby Warburg's interest in philately and contemporary studies revisiting Warburg's work, which emphasizes the intersection of collecting practices, visual theory, and mnemonic architecture.

Studying philately shows how governments use stamp designs to convey policies, festivities, and historical narratives through the combination of visual analysis and historical research that incorporates postal records and stamp design records. Institutional resources and modern guides, which encompass those from the Smithsonian and postal archives, provide extensive catalogues and methodological starting points. The subjects of calendric studies include time, ritual, and sociocultural rhythm. Studies of calendars investigate calendars as cultural developments, encompassing how ritual time is represented on physical objects and how calendars influence social interactions and collective recollections. Recent research has discovered that the calendar can serve as a foundation for investigating identity and cultural development more comprehensively. Recent research and case studies investigate postcolonial postal narratives, regional stamp designers, and the ways in which stamps communicate civic or scientific information (public science, constitutional themes), as reflected in recent publications. Research on regional and comparative cases, including those in China, Sri Lanka, and South Asia, reveals both distinct local features and commonalities.

#### Methods used in the literature Gaps and future research directions

Calendar art's aesthetic, marked by glossy, colour-saturated, and hybrid imagery, is perceived as both being commercialized and awe-inspiring, with commercial influences reframing sacred images in innovative methods. Calendric artifacts enable the management of temporal politics by linking ritual and civic time through the organization of anniversaries, festivals, and national narratives into annual cycles. Examining the calendar as a category provides insight into how societies organize memory and establish legitimacy. State and commercial entities often create stamps and calendars, yet individuals acquire and re-evaluate these images in their

everyday lives. Research comparing different media and areas: Claims regarding global visual flows could be substantiated by more comparisons between various regions, such as India and others. Further ethnographic studies of everyday users, such as drivers, shrine-keepers, and small business owners, in Latin America are required to comprehend micro-level meaning-making processes in relation to calendar posters, stamps, and newspapers, as well as Reception studies with underrepresented audiences. Establishing searchable collections of stamp and calendar images in digital humanities databases can aid in tracing motifs across time, thereby addressing issues of iconographic continuity or change. Delving into the deeper industrial histories of designers and printing presses, such as those in Sivakasi producing calendars, can link design aesthetics to the work and technological processes involved. Researching Latin America's calendar posters, stamps, and newspapers can provide insight into reception studies with under examined publics, such as drivers, shrine-keepers, and small business owners, by conducting more ethnographies of everyday users. Additionally, compiling searchable databases of stamp and calendar images could facilitate the analysis of iconic motifs over time, addressing the evolution or continuity of iconography. Furthermore, exploring the deeper industrial histories of designers and manufacturers, including stamp artists and presses, like those in Sivakasi which produce calendars, can help connect aesthetics to production processes and technological advancements.

#### Methodology

Primary sources: postal gazettes, official press releases, postal bulletins, printer proofs, government archives (cultural ministries), national libraries and museum stamp collections. Fieldwork: visit national philatelic museums, postal museum collections, and major auction houses; photograph stamps and FDCs at high resolution; locate contemporary news reports and broadcast transcripts covering the 1400 AH New Year events. Community knowledge: interview postmasters, designers (if living), and veteran philatelists for oral histories about the issue. Obtain high-resolution images of the stamp's front and back, as well as any first-day covers, FDCs, news releases, postal bulletins, and photographs. The date of issuance, including the country or postal release details and date, should be recorded, along with the issuing country or postal authority, print amount, printer, quantity, printing facility, and catalog numbers, as well as credits for the designer and calligrapher responsible. Record the face date exactly as it appears in print on the document, including examples like "1400" "۱۴۰۰ H," or "1 Muharram 1400 AH." The normalized Gregorian equivalents are provided along with a statement on possible variations in local sightings, such as "1 Muharram 1400 AH  $\approx$  20–21 Nov 1979; normalization utilizes astronomical tabulation, and local sightings may differ." Whenever possible, rely on the primary postal gazette or use a trustworthy conversion tool. The protocol for visual analysis scripts involves identifying the calligraphic styles of Maghribi, Nastaliq, Kufic, Thuluth, and Naskh. The inscription also incorporates the use of both Eastern and Western Arabic numerals, exemplifying dual numeracy. These motifs, which include the crescent, minaret, Ka'ba, mosque facade, calendar wheel, starburst, manuscripts, and portraits of religious figures, are characteristic of iconography. The protocol also entails the analysis of colour and layout, encompassing an examination of the element hierarchy and colour palette, particularly where and how prominently the date "1400" is positioned.

Town postmarks on FDCs, as well as cancellations, may feature the Hijri date in Arabic numerals, whereas first-day postmarks frequently display the Gregorian issue date, and sometimes the Hijri date as well. Physical attributes include features such as the paper, printing method, watermark, perforation, and the presence of the Hijri numeral in security measures or microtext. Study postal bulletins, national archives, and recent news articles to acquire official information regarding the issue's objective. Investigate public commemorations from the year 1400 AH, including mosque events, public broadcasts, commemorative medals, and published materials.

#### Historical and religion aspects

In addition to the religious lunar Hijri calendar, the Ottoman Empire employed a number of other calendrical systems, most notably the Rumi fiscal calendar. The stamps frequently included Ottoman imperial titles and Arabic/Ottoman Turkish inscriptions, but Hijri elements were also present in cancellations and fiscal applications. Grasping the transition from imperial time to national time necessitates a concentration on the pivotal matters from the last decades of the empire and the initial years of the republic. Hijri dates on many overprints and provisionals from Hejaz and Nejd, issued between the 1910s and the 1920s, are marked in Arabic script and accompanied by Arabic numerals. These stamps provide a fertile laboratory for textual density, illustrating sovereignty, unification, and administrative changes, especially with regards to overprints and surcharges.

In Saudi Arabia, Hijri years (often denoted as both AH and AD) are still used, notably on stamps and coins linked to the Hajj, national anniversaries, and the opening of new infrastructure. The application of explicit Hijri dating varies across different time periods and subject matters, as exemplified by Egypt's use of Arabic characters and Arabesque design languages. Islamic heritage memorials and mosque renovations frequently bear inscriptions of Hijri dates. Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia exhibit diverse practices, such as French colonial customs (Gregorian rule) and the growing adoption of Eastern Arabic numerals and Hijri dates following independence. Iran and Afghanistan mainly employ the Solar Hijri calendar in their daily lives, with postage stamps and cancellations typically featuring SH years rather than lunar AH years.

Typography, multilingual numerals, and Persian Nastaliq/Naskh script are used in combination; many publications combine SH and AD to enhance international readability. To prevent mistaken connections with AH, researchers need to specify SH years clearly. Islamic legacy and Ramadan/Eid stamps are issued by Pakistan and Bangladesh; inscriptions or FDC texts may reference Hijri months or years. Festival cancellations attributed to religious causes occasionally utilize Hijri month names or numerals, which may indicate how time is managed within official government organisations. In Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, Islamic New Year (Muharram) and Eid (Aidilfitri/Idul Fitri) celebrations often incorporate references to Hijri in mosque architectural elements. These references are commonly accompanied by Romanized country names and Western numerals for postal purposes. Elegant Naskh/Thuluth calligraphy is commonly found in Brunei and Malaysia, whereas Indonesia frequently pairs Arabic script with modern sans-serif Latin in multilingual compositions.

Design & Semiotic Analysis, and Typology of Visual Strategies Numerals and Scripts: Semiotic Weight

A large, ornate depiction of the number '1400', typically rendered in Eastern Arabic numerals, is frequently situated centrally, adorned with elaborate calligraphic flourishes. In calligraphic centering, the word "Hijri" is used as a scriptural embellishment, with Qur'anic or customary phrases being incorporated in Thuluth/Naskh scripts to convey religious significance. Images of mosques, the Ka'ba, and arches serve as architectural motifs, linking the new year to cycles of pilgrimage and revered structures. Historical montages refer to images of manuscripts, scholars, or historical events that connect 1400 AH to a broader narrative of civilization. The dual-date layouts simultaneously display both the Anno Hegirae (AH) and Anno Domini (AD) dates, thereby highlighting regional authenticity and global understanding. Western numerals increase global recognisability, whereas Eastern Arabic numerals highlight local or religious affinity. Designers frequently adopt a dual approach to cater to various types of readers (local post offices versus international mail handlers). Deep blues, gold used for ceremonial purposes, and green associated with the Islamic faith are commonly featured in issues that focus on a religious theme. Selecting colours can convey an impression of devoutness and a sense of solemnity.

Design Systems: Scripts, Numerals, and Iconography

Naskh is typically used in small inscriptions because of its readability; Thuluth is often used in headings and formal writing; Nastaliq is frequently found in Persian contexts; Maghribi is commonly associated with North African calligraphy; and Kufic is frequently used as an ornamental title or border; in addition, calligraphy can also be an area of interest rather than just a method of conveying information. Stamps honouring Qur'anic manuscripts or skilled calligraphers highlight the significance of the script, whereas the Hijri years serve as a foundation for understanding the historical context of the text. Many stamps pair Eastern Arabic numerals (٦١٢٣٤٥٦٧٨٩) with Western numerals to ensure international postal recognizability, a practice known as 'double numeracy', which emphasizes cultural distinctiveness. In Iran and Afghanistan, Solar Hijri inscriptions frequently make use of Persian numerals, which look similar to Eastern Arabic numerals but have local glyph variations.

A person's Islamic identity is frequently associated with the crescent and star motifs, minarets, mosque silhouettes, mihrab and arch frames, and intricate geometric designs. Frequencies of dates in the Arabic Hijri calendar can be found in documents linked to the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages, such as those for pilgrims, the Hajj terminal, or the Ka'ba, while postal stamps commonly associate cycles of devotion with commemorative issues for Ramadan or the Islamic New Year. Throughout different print sets, the colours green, blue, and gold persistently reappear, with green symbolizing piety and devotion, blue signifying learned tradition and calmness, and gold representing sanctity and ceremony; in recent decades, multicoloured prints have replaced the monochromatic engravings used in earlier editions.

Postal Devices: Cancellations, Surcharges, and Overprints

Combining town names in Arabic script with Hijri dates or month names, such as Ramadan or Shawwal, can serve as the primary indicator of calendar use. During a

transitional period, year markings are frequently integrated into overprints and surcharges to signify the legal tender's validity, particularly during regime change, currency reform, or unification. Researchers should photograph both the front and back of the covers in order to capture bilingual date lines and routing indications that may lead to conflicting calendars.

#### Semiotics and Politics of Time, Case Snapshots (Illustrative)

Declaring a distinct timeline for its civilization, the state simultaneously asserts temporal and political authority by printing the Hijri year. The purpose of bilingual calendars (AH/AD or SH/AD) is to maintain local timekeeping customs while conforming to global postal regulations. Unlike Gregorian anniversaries, commemorative cycles (such as 1400 AH, centennials counted in AH, or SH jubilees) establish alternative rhythms for national remembrance. In contemporary settings, modernist style elements – defined by clear, sans-serif Latin typography and limited Arabic calligraphy – enable a discussion between Islamic visual legacy and global design conventions. Saudi postal issues from the early period often combine the Hijri year with the denomination for official institutions, featuring AH dates prominently with Arabic inscriptions. In Iran, concerns regarding education, industry, and the revolution make systematic use of Solar Hijri years; many sets display dual AD/SH dates, indicating a multilingual time framework. Typically, Eid sets from Malaysia and Brunei contain intricate calligraphy and seasonal messages; some series centre on the name of the Hijri month, and dual-language greetings are included for the sake of clarity in postal situations. References to Hijri are sometimes included on cachets and cancellations in Pakistan and Bangladesh's Ramadan/Eid, mosque heritage, and Islamic calligraphy series, even if they are not featured on the stamp itself.

#### Ethical & Curatorial Considerations, Illustrative Figure Captions

Display and reproduce verses from the Qur'an, along with other religious inscriptions, in a public space. When dealing with colour management, proceed with care and consult colleagues who specialise in religious matters regarding the suitability of cropping or display settings. Maintain precise documentation of a product's ownership history, encompassing information about previous vendors and any restoration work undertaken. The credibility of research is increased by accurate provenance. Figure 1: A proposed design mockup for a fictitious commemorative stamp for 1400 AH: lower legend in bilingual dates Nov 1979"; central Thuluth calligraphic rendition of "١٤٠٠ هـ" within an elaborate mihrab frame. The illustration is by Emily Wilson, as shown in Figure 2. The cachet on the first day cover bears the inscription, "First Day of Issue — 20-21 November 1979 (1 Muharram 1400 AH)". According to the National Postal Museum, the town and Hijri date are printed on the cancellation.

#### Discussion: Interpretation & Broader Significance

The 1400 AH stamp exhibits bureaucratic, mnemonic, and devotional characteristics in its multifaceted essence. This practice is bureaucratic in governmental rituals that establish legitimacy, devotional when using Qur'anic passages or iconic images, and mnemonic as a public marker of time and memory. The design decisions made by the issuing authority take into account the needs of its target audience, as it aims to strike a

balance between highlighting local identity and enhancing global recognition, through features such as Arabic numerals, dual dating, religious architecture, or secular symbols.

#### Conclusion

Besides themed memorabilia, Hijri postage stamps also reflect how states conceptualise both civic and sacred time. The inclusion or exclusion of Hijri dates on stamps illustrates the conflicting priorities of nation-branding, international recognition, and religious devotion across different regions and administrations. Accessing Hijri inscriptions, which comprise scripts, numerals, and dates, alongside imagery enables a comparative history of temporal sovereignty to be viewed at a postal scale. This paper provides a framework for examining commemorative stamps issued to commemorate the 1400 Hijri event. Creating a complete list of 1400 AH stamps from around the globe, focusing on issues from 1979–1981 that feature 1400 AH in their designs, on first-day covers, or in cancellations, is a subsequent step for a project nearing publication. This entails performing in-depth visual and typographic assessments of regionally distinctive challenges in South and Southeast Asia, Iran/Afghanistan [note: SH versus AH], and the Arab world. To understand the importance of postal issuance, it is necessary to consider its connection to significant, current national events, such as those of a religious or political nature. A detailed spreadsheet template, pre-populated with relevant metadata fields, can be created in Excel or CSV format. A draft version of this document, formatted for submission, includes image placeholders and preliminary figure captions. I will incorporate the provided stamp images, convert their dates, extract inscriptions, and generate a ready-to-publish metadata row and caption.

#### Reference

- **“Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early-Twentieth-Century Shanghai”** (book / chapter). Comparative example of how calendar posters function in East Asian commercial and visual fields—good for comparative methodology. JSTOR
- **Collections & online databases** (IndianPhilately.net, PhilaArt, Smithsonian catalogs). Key aggregators and catalogs for philatelic research—good for visual and issue tracking.
- **India Post and national stamp listings** (official releases & calendar projects, 2025). Primary source for state-issued calendars or philatelic projects (e.g., India Post constitutional calendar project). Useful for contemporary primary data. karnatakapost.gov.in / YouTube
- **Kajri Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar: The Economies of Indian Calendar Art*** (Duke Univ. Press, 2007). Foundational ethnographic and historical study of Indian calendar art—production, circulation, and vernacular uses. Essential for any work on calendars in South Asia. Duke University Press
- **MA Krall, “Stamps from around the globe and public science”** (2022). Example of how stamp imagery is deployed for public science messaging; good model for thematic stamp studies. SAGE Journals
- **Recent regional case studies** (e.g., Sri Lankan stamp designers article, 2025). Demonstrates contemporary scholarship on designers and state narratives; helpful for recent methodological examples. ScienceDirect

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- ResearchGate** — “**Calendar as a Criterion in the Study of Culture**” (paper). Useful theoretical article proposing calendar systems as an analytical entry into culture and social rhythms. ResearchGate
- Scholarly article: “Cultivating official culture through visual communication: postage stamps as carriers of ideological messages”** (PhD dissertation / article). Argues stamps are instruments of official culture and ideological dissemination; contains methods and case studies. ktisis.cut.ac.cy
- Smithsonian Libraries & Archives, “Postal History and Philately Research Guide”** (online guide, 2024). A practical, annotated resource for archival sources, catalogs, and philatelic reference works—useful for locating primary postal records. Smithsonian Libraries
- UPU / philatelic catalogs and Bendon, Specimen Stamps 1878–1961** (reviewed literature). Standard reference lineage for philatelists; useful for historical issue identification. Academia
- Visual culture textbooks and course syllabi** (e.g., UBC/USC course pages). Good for theoretical framing, course-ready bibliography, and canonical reading lists. UBC Academic Calendar / classes.usc.edu
- A. Zöllner, “Aby Warburg and the Postage Stamp”** (article / PDF). Explores Warburg’s collecting and theoretical use of stamps—useful theoretical framing linking collecting to visual theory. heiDOK

[https://postagestamps.gov.in/Stamps\\_List.aspx](https://postagestamps.gov.in/Stamps_List.aspx)

Appendix A — Quick Conversion Note (1400 AH ↔ Gregorian)

- 1 Muharram 1400 AH ≈ 20 November 1979 (astronomical/tabular conversion) or 21 November 1979 (some regional sighting records); range reported in contemporary sources is 20–21 November 1979.
- Researchers should record the face date as printed and annotate conversion method (astronomical vs observed sighting).

Appendix B — Starter Bibliography & Resources

- National postal bulletins and gazettes (country-specific issues, 1979–1980).
- Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue; Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth and World Catalogues; Michel Spezialkatalog (country-specific volumes).
- Islamic calendar conversion tools and tabulations (for normalization). National postal museums (online collections) and auction archives (Sotheby’s/Robbins/David Feldman entries for relevant years).

Short Practical Checklist (for your next action)

Do you have a specific 1400 AH stamp image? Upload front/back + FDC if available.

I will extract exact inscriptions (Arabic/Persian transliteration), identify numerals, and convert date with a clear note about sighting assumptions.

I will prepare a catalog row (CSV) and a publication-ready caption for each item.

Appendices

A. Starter Data Schema (fields for your spreadsheet/database)

**Cancellation Evidence** (town, date line in AH/SH/AD, festival)

**Catalog References** (Scott, SG, Michel, local)

- Date on Stamp** (verbatim); Calendar Type (AH / SH / AD; dual?)
- Denomination / Currency**
- Designer / Calligrapher** (if credited)
- ID / Image URL / Country / Political Entity (at issue date)**
- Issue Title / Theme** (e.g., Hajj, Ramadan, Islamic New Year, Mosque, Calligraphy)
- Notes** (translation of inscriptions, colorway, security features)
- Normalized Date(s)** (ISO range if AH overlaps AD years)
- Numeral Set(s)** (Eastern Arabic, Western; dual?)
- Overprint/Surcharge?** (text, date, purpose)
- Perforation / Paper / Watermark**
- Printer / Process** (intaglio, offset, typography)
- Scripts** (Naskh, Thuluth, Nastaliq, Maghribi, Kufic; Latin present?)

#### B. Common Pitfalls & How to Avoid Them

Confusing AH with SH. Always mark which Hijri system appears.

Ignoring numerals. Record whether dates use Eastern Arabic numerals—this is crucial for OCR and searchability.

Losing paratext. Keep FDCs and covers with Hijri cancellations; they often carry the only explicit Hijri date.

Silent bilingualism. Some designs print Hijri content in small calligraphy; zoom inspections are necessary.

#### C. Mini-Checklist (illustrative—not exhaustive; fill with your holdings)

Arabian Peninsula: early Hejaz/Nejd overprints with AH dates; Saudi Hajj commemoratives (AH on face).

Iran: education/industry/revolution commemoratives with SH years; dual SH/AD practice on 21st-century sets.

Malaysia/Brunei/Indonesia: Eid/Islamic New Year issues with month names; bilingual Latin/Arabic layouts.

North Africa/Egypt: mosque restorations and Islamic art commemoratives; check for AH on face or in first-day materials.

Pakistan/Bangladesh: Ramadan/Eid and mosque heritage series; look for Hijri in cancellations and FDC texts.



A commemorative postage stamp on 1400 HIJRI

Date	of	Issue: 03	Nov	1980
Denomination: 35				nP
Category: Event				

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## **RISE OF WOMEN HISTORIOGRAPHY IN INDIA: NATIONALIST REACTION TO THE COLONIAL CRITIQUE OF THE INDIAN CIVILIZATION**

### **Abstract**

*Women for a very long time remained as the muted or even silent voices of history. Their role in the development of civilizations found no place in the academic circles. In India, the British used the women's history as a vehicle to prove their liberality and superiority over the Indians. They created the propaganda of women deterioration during early India to legitimise their rule. This invoked the Indian intellectuals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to defend their history and culture by counter writing against the colonialists. So, the present write up is an endeavour to highlight how anti-colonial feeling in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to women's historiography in India. The chapter also discusses that the male supremacy used by the colonizers has been denounced to such an extent that women commenced to work together against Indian domination in the first half of this 20<sup>th</sup> century, and regarded imperialism as one of the key causes of their disparity.*

*Key Words:* Colonial, British, Women, Historiography, Position, Early India,

### **I. Introduction**

In India the feminist writings were boasted by the rising anti British feelings which gave women a central stage in the social debate. The British imperial policy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century revolved around the masculinity as per the testimony of Mrinalini Sinha. In the first half of the nineteenth century the colonialists were writing with negative perception on Indian society, particularly portraying Indians as 'barbarians and naturally inferior'. Indian's were dubbed as frill, cowardly and soft bodied little people by the writers like Mill, Orme, Dubious, Macaulay and Bentinck etc. According to Edward Said the colonial sovereigns consciously characterized the orient in distorted structure of fantasy. It was palpable that because of psychological advantage of being ruler, colonial masters were proclaiming their moral superiority. One of such zone of signifying superiority was the gender dealings which they efficiently used as a tool to strengthen their rule in India. To create the notion of higher morality, the majestic power deliberately underlined the low status of Indian women in their works. For case in point, in the colonial texts the Bengali middle class men were envisaged as small and bodily weak with no self-control as observed through child marriage in Katherine Mayo's explanations (Katherine 16). In fact, Mayo's version created huge controversies. Mrinalini Sinha critiqued such depiction of Indians and said "deliberations on the age of consent and marriage regulation in British India were characteristically more due to the claims of modernity than with the inferior position of women (Mrinalini 153). Msani almost voiced in a same tone and said that opposing to western insights, the life in the

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<sup>1</sup> Doctorate, Department of History, University of Kashmir Srinagar, India

old-style *haram* had not essentially meant obliviousness or backwardness of Indian women. These two writers are very well supported by the Tara Ali Baig who said" there was tremendous amount of sophistication even in traditional families, within even an orthodox Hindu family, the amount of learning, that a woman might have was far greater than people recognized (Zareer 75). Perhaps Mill's interpretation was the first in depicting Indian social customs as sank and barbaric. Mill proposed Hindu civilization as unpolished which was dashed in the lowest depth of wickedness specifically in relation to women's condition. He labelled the Hindu women as: 'in a state of dependence stricter and humiliating than that which is ordained for the weaker sex, nothing can exceed the habitual contempt which Hindus entertain for their women. They are held in extreme degradation, excluded from sacred books deprived of education and of share in paternal property. That remarkable barbarity, the wife held unworthy to eat with her husband, is prevalent in Hinduism" (Mill 312). He is followed by M C Deb who labelled that Indian men always beheld women as domestic slaves. It was ostensible that all these interpretations were to inaugurate the fact that, it was the Hindu dogma that dishonoured and put women in such a miserable condition (Charavarty 35).

Therefore, for the colonial rulers, the dishonoured settings of women required equally intervention as well as protection from the State. Partha Chatterjee pens down that 'in classifying women as "debauched and barbaric," colonialist faultfinders invariably repeated a long list of carnages perpetrated on Indian women, by a whole body of theological canons. He added that by assuming a spot of sympathy with the unfree and troubled womanhood of India, the colonial cognizance was able to transform this character of the Indian woman into a symbol of the inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire cultural tradition of a country (Chatterjee 622). The British administrators saw gender relations as a power for self-control and check to administer not only oneself but others (Sinha 77).

## **II. Indian Nationalist's Response to the Colonial Writings.**

During this period the Indian literati was undergoing a dual happenstance with colonial dogma. On the one hand it was challenged with the so called humanizing mission of imperialists who portrayed it as vicious; on the other hand, it struggled with the orientalist's depiction of India as a great civilization. For example, Max Muller's account of India. It is valuable to mention that in his works also women did not figure obviously. Women in his works were depicted just to highlight the strength of the civilization. For example, his mention of characters like *Matrayie*, *Gargi* can be taken in this context. It does not mean that presence of women was completely ignored. While unfolding the Vedic life in definite instances, Muller narrated that despite women's partaking in the Vedic ceremonies, they were known less to Vedic knowledge. Chakravarty comments that Muller's perception for women was mostly illustration of logics from Greek writer Strabo (Sangari 41).

An analogous endeavour in 19th century European writings may be perceived in the works of Mrs. Speier. In her book "Life in ancient India" Speier valorised the womanhood in early India. She highlighted a virtuous and exciting picture of women in India. She noticed that: Women seem to have been as unrestricted as Trojan dames or daughters of Judaea. Hymens in *Reg Veda* refer them with admiration and warmth. We witness in one of the Upanishads a king holding a solemn sacrifice and inviting his chief

guest to state their opinion on theology. Among these invitees a well-read female named *Gargi* is noticeable. However in his accounts Speier too mentioned that there was a decay in the status of women throughout that period. This veneration of womanhood was constant even in the writings of Clariss Bader. Interestingly in both these methods, historical cognizance and women's queries remained dominant to the enquiry. Though Uma Chakravarty assessed critically this assumption and jagged out that how insufficient women contributing in Vedic ceremonial, tell us very little about the mainstream of the moment of the period. She claims if there were thousand *dasis*, how come we hear nothing about them. Does one *Maitreyi* or *Gargi* describe the lives of women of that time? To actually define the status of women, one has to go into constructions of the society of that time. Therefore, without pushing into framework of the society one cannot conclude the abode of women therein (Krishnaraj 40).

Though the presentation of women as submissive and requesting for the defence from savagery was made an apparatus by colonial power to execute its ideology, in later years the same belief twisted into a momentous factor in the cultural conflict between ruling class and their subject. The opening retort to the adverse image of Hindu civilization originated as early as in the 1840s. As a response, the writing on Hindu women in 1842 Peary Chand Mitra retorted with robust arguments to colonial approach. He took up the characteristic of education and female isolation as key contemporary concerns in colonial writings and delivered the proofs that in the past women had admittance to learning predominantly Sanskrit (Chakravarty 36). To corroborate his argument, he used ancient writings where it was revealed that daughter should be 'nurtured and educated with care' and wedded to a scholarly person. In backing of his position Mitra used references from Kalidasa's plays, Tamil literature and other old texts.

The preliminary writings on the condition of women in India were in fact stimulated by the spirits of nationalism which depict Indian women as superwomen. In this milieu, the most noteworthy historical text was of R. C. Dutt's "*History of civilization in Ancient India*". In this effort Dutt sturdily condemns James Mill's defamation of Hindu civilization and of wretched position of Hindu women within it (Dutt 170). In the nationalist historiography the *Brāhmaṇical*, and more specifically the Vedic period was deliberated as a golden phase of Hindu practice and tradition in which women adored reverence and honour. The other Sanskritic classic which remained overriding in the historical observations were A. S. Altekar's "*The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*" (1938), R. C. Majumdar's "*The Vedic Age (1951)*" and Shakuntala Rao Shastri's "*Women in the Vedic Age (1955-56)*". Altekar's book is the ground-breaking one and centring exclusively on the history of women, might be said to have initiated a new sort. It is the first typical social history text and at the same time it was devoted to a remarkable historical subject. With all its philosophical and interpretative limitations and one-dimensional readings, it remains a major exit in the male-centred history writing of the times. However, he could not go afar the *Brāhmaṇical* version of society nor did he cross-examine the normative projections in the sources which succeeding Orientalist convention remained overpoweringly canonical. He expressly followed the *Dharmaśāstra* dogmas in interpreting the position of women and believed the ancient Indian society to be monolithic and the women's role in it as static through the entire timeframe of his research. Most prominently, this innovative work on the position of

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women in ancient India became the trademark of modern historiography in the early 20th century and influenced the subsequent generations of scholars in invoking an ideal image of Indian womanhood fitting very well with the nationalist agenda of making of a new nation (Altekar 127).

The next group of researchers spoke about the question of position of women in ancient Indian in relation to their part in the sphere of production. They moved from the preceding belief of romanticizing women in ancient India and projected for a substitute way of defining history as a trajectory in time. They assumed the task of assessing various historical developments in ancient India from tribal to agricultural. D.D. Kosambi did the ground-breaking job of going through the depictions of the ancient Indian mythologies as a kind of historical illustrations inferring the contents and the procedures of creation of these illustrations for historical scrutiny. (Kosambi 22). He outlined a practice of genderization of the feminine image in ancient Indian culture since the Pre-Vedic days in his research on "*Urvashi and Pururavas*". As he held it, the myth signified traces of earliest roots of mother cult which got slowly recreated into a glorified form of submissive women in the male-controlled design of the Vedic society (D. Kosambi 217).

Sukumari Bhattacharji is the intellectual inside this category who was the definite pioneer in understanding the novel literary sources to get inferences on the position of women in ancient India. In *Prachin Bharat Samaj O Sahitya* (1989) and later translated version - *Women and Society in Ancient India* (1994), she had navigated the issue from a new sociological placement, re-explored numerous social foundations to disapprove the overwhelming male bias in creating the Indian past and perceived women's conditions in more exact milieu of society and culture. To them ancient society was not stagnant and the women did not signify a monolithic social category. So they re-studied the characters and positions of women in the household, the community women and the heroines and goddesses (Bhattacharji 127)

Narendra Nath Bhattacharyya fitted approximately to the similar genre but his method is slightly different as he lodged on definite institutions from an angle settled out of his empirical study of the sources. We might not be mistaken to hold that while Prabhati Mukherjee were keen to the cause of women's history, Bhattacharyya was observing more at the establishments than trying to fold evidence for commenting on the male-centric depictions in historical foundations or the earlier historiography. But his key attitude to history was materialistic. He reconnoitred the mythical and religious customs of India to evaluate the development of gender part in early Indian society. In Indian Mother Goddess, his whole effort in outlining the history of the mother cult was commenced for understanding the shared -fabric of India. He believed that the stages in the growth of the cult of the womanly power could be correlated indirectly with varying stages and situations of women's contribution in numerous modes of production (Bhattacharyya 84).

### **III. Conclusion**

So it is obvious that women's subservience held a distinctive connotation for the upkeep of the British Empire, and that till the First World War, the colonizers used women's wretched condition as one of the foremost justification of foreign rule. The way

male supremacy had been used by the colonizers has been denounced to such an extent that women commenced to work together against male domination in the first half of this 20<sup>th</sup> century, and regarded imperialism as one of the key causes of their disparity. The women became active and participated in the Indian women's movement and citing their subjugation not to Hindu religious dogmas but to traditions and customs resulting as of wars, assaults, invasion and imperialism (Forbes 529) The women believed that their issues could not be detached from the question of colonial dominance, and this belief had the consequence of soothing male opposition and engaging support for the women's question inside India. They formed a coalition with the freedom movement, and interconnected the two causes together. But they did not hold the two subjects as identical.

The commencement of the organised women's association was in 1904, when the National Social Conference was formed with the purpose of exploring social issues including women's deliverance, then in 1917 there was the formation of Women's Indian Association, which had relations with the British suffragette movement. A branch of the International Council of Women was established in 1925, known as the National Council of Women in India and in 1927 the All India Women's Conference was started, which emphasized on the political goal of self-government as a method to achieve women's hopes (Kaur) The All India Women's Conference was initially called to deliberate female education, but they realized that this question could not be talked without looking at other subjects such as purdah and child marriage, and after that it was settled that these glitches could not be detached from India's political subjection. The women's organisations worked for two things: national in dependence from Britain, and women's in dependence from men. The result was that the women did not lag behind and actively took part in the socio-political movements. From the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century women got conscious about their plight due to the emergence of political consciousness, expansion of modern education, spread of cultural awareness and deterioration of economic conditions.

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**ROSHEE VAID** <sup>1</sup>

**(15)**

**DR. RAVI SHANKAR MISHRA** <sup>2</sup>

## **NARRATIVE AS RESISTANCE: INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST POLITICS IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S FICTION**

### **ABSTRACT**

This article explores the intersectional feminist framework in Arundhati Roy's novels *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, focusing on how her narrative style, character development, and symbolic spaces articulate resistance against caste, patriarchy, religious fundamentalism, and state violence. Roy's fiction creates a language of dissent that intertwines personal histories with political traumas, thus redefining the role of literature as both artistic and activist. By grounding feminist politics in lived experiences, her novels foreground the grief, resilience, and quiet defiance of those traditionally left out of dominant narratives: Dalits, women, Muslims, and transgender people. The article positions Roy's fiction as a vital contribution to Indian feminist and postcolonial discourse and argues that her writing itself becomes an act of resistance.

**Keywords:** Arundhati Roy, Feminism, Intersectionality, Dalit, Caste, Gender, Political Fiction, Resistance

### **INTRODUCTION**

Arundhati Roy is a prominent figure in Indian literature and political activism. Her literature defies conventional genres and categories, necessitating a reading that acknowledges its political dimensions. Roy's oeuvre, spanning from her inaugural work, *The God of Small Things* (1997), to her latest publication, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), is deeply entrenched in intersectional feminist discourse. Her work examines feminism not merely as an isolated term for gender issues, but also in conjunction with caste systems, religious identities, and governmental power structures (Roy, 1997; 2017). This article asserts that Roy's literature engenders a feminist consciousness that is emotional, political, and multifaceted. Roy employs nonlinear narrative, fragmented structure, and symbolic spatiality to foreground the lived realities of oppressed individuals combating various forms of institutional violence in her work. Her feminist perspective encompasses wounded characters that grieve, reflect, and persist beyond conventional frameworks. The novels do not present ideal instances of resistance; rather, they depict fractured, emotionally complex individuals whose experiences mirror the challenges of contemporary India.

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<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Department of English, NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana

<sup>2</sup> Research Supervisor, Department of English, NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To analyze how Arundhati Roy's narrative form and character development articulate intersectional feminist resistance.
- To examine how her fiction functions as political testimony against caste, gender, and state-based oppression.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a qualitative textual analysis of Roy's two novels. The analysis is supported by feminist and postcolonial theories, particularly the intersectionality framework developed by Kimberle Crenshaw and expanded upon by postcolonial feminist scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Gayatri Spivak. Arundhati Roy's nonfiction writings are used to further contextualize her political positions. Close reading is employed to uncover how narrative strategies, characterization, and symbolism reflect her feminist ethics.

#### **The God of Small Things: Love Laws and Caste-Based Femininity**

The God of Small Things presents a haunting story of family breakdown, caste violence, and suffering that is specific to women. The story takes place in Kerala and follows the lives of Estha and Rahel and their mother, Ammu. Ammu's forbidden love for Velutha, an untouchable Dalit man, goes against the deeply rooted caste system. The social order punishes Velutha, despite his intelligence and talent, for his forbidden love with an upper-caste woman. The punishment is harsh: the police beat Velutha to death after he is falsely accused of rape (Roy, 1997, p. 269). The police's brutal murder of Velutha shows how caste hierarchies keep society in order. This conclusion is supported by Rupkatha's theory of "Defiant Faces" (2024), which says that marginalized voices are key to resistance. Ammu also pays for not following the rules. She is not given dignity, freedom, or protection from her family because she is a woman who dares to act on her desires outside of marriage and caste norms. Her gradual removal from the family and eventual death in a boarding house are a metaphor for what happens to women who break "Love Laws" that decide "who should be loved, and how and how much" (Roy, 1997, p. 33). As Roy shows, these love laws are made by caste, nationalism, and patriarchy. The story is told in pieces, which is like how the characters feel after going through trauma. This broken structure makes it hard to come to a conclusion or find a solution, which is what Roy wanted to do with resistance and easy solutions. Roy's portrayal of Velutha goes against how Dalits are usually shown in literature. He is not quiet or passive; he is a full person kind, loving, creative, and aware of politics. But the social machinery treats his death as unavoidable, showing how caste oppression works on a larger scale. Through emotional storytelling, the novel breaks the silence around caste violence and makes Dalit subjectivity clear.

#### **The Ministry of Utmost Happiness: Mapping Margins, Reclaiming Spaces**

In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Roy's canvas expands across geography and politics. Set against the backdrop of Kashmir, Gujarat riots, and displacement zones of central India, the novel follows the intertwined lives of Anjum, a transgender woman; Tilo, a political dissenter; Saddam Hussain, a Dalit posing as a Muslim; and other characters who inhabit forgotten spaces of the nation. Each character is marginalized, not just by the state but also by society's expectations of identity and normativity. Anjum, born as Aftab, transitions into a Hijra and finds her chosen family in the Khwabgah. Kavita and Yadav (2025) remark that Anjum's story "redefines subaltern agency" (p. 617), illustrating political resistance as embodied praxis.

After surviving the Gujarat riots, she retreats to a graveyard and builds the Jannat Guest House, a sanctuary for the living among the dead. This graveyard becomes a symbol of both mourning and resistance, where those rejected by society create a space of safety and care. As Roy writes, “She lived in the graveyard and made it her home, turning it into a place for all who had been banished elsewhere” (Roy, 2017, p. 33).

Tilo, another central figure, consciously refuses roles of wife or mother. Her silent withdrawal and moral witnessing are forms of dissent. Roy portrays her life as politically charged reflection rather than overt rebellion a feminist act framed in empathy, not grand gestures.

Tilo, another key character, refuses the conventional roles of womanhood. An architect by training, she becomes deeply involved in the Kashmir resistance through her relationship with Musa. Tilo's character is defined by silence and restraint, reflecting the emotional and ethical weight of witnessing political brutality. Her decision not to join the institution of marriage, not to become a mother, and to eventually disappear into anonymity is her act of quiet resistance. Roy presents Tilo's life not as a failure of femininity but as a conscious rejection of patriarchal definitions of success.

## Intersectionality in Roy's Feminist Politics

Roy's feminism is deeply intersectional. She does not treat gender as separate from caste, religion, or class. In both novels, characters suffer because of the way multiple identities interact to produce exclusion. For instance, Ammu suffers because she is a woman, divorced, and lower in status; Velutha because he is a Dalit; Anjum because she is transgender and Muslim; and Saddam because he is both Dalit and poor. This intersectional approach enables Roy to show how marginalization is not singular but layered, and resistance must also address all these layers simultaneously (Mohanty, 1984; hooks, 1984). Moreover, Roy's fiction gives voice to those who are not normally central to narratives: orphans, displaced people, riot survivors, and sexual minorities. She resists the idea of the strong female protagonist and instead offers emotionally fragile but politically aware individuals. Their strength lies not in conventional empowerment but in remembering, surviving, and creating alternate communities.

## **Narrative as Political Testimony**

One of the most significant contributions of Roy's fiction is how she uses narrative form as political testimony. Her nonlinear structure, use of shifting voices, incorporation of poetry, and frequent use of silence allow the reader to experience the fractured realities of her characters. For Roy, writing is not a neutral act it is a form of resistance. She does not separate the personal from the political; instead, she shows how private lives are deeply shaped by public decisions and systemic violence (Roy, 2011).

Her fiction does not offer resolution. There are no happy endings. Instead, she presents an ethics of care, grief, and survival. In this sense, Roy redefines the role of the novelist not as a passive observer but as a chronicler of national trauma and a witness to suffering. Her fiction becomes a form of mourning, a space where pain is not erased but given voice (Spivak, 1994). This literary activism challenges readers to confront oppression rather than escape it. Recent feminist scholar (SSRN, 2024) emphasizes Roy's transition into Fourth-Wave feminism, where resistance is both personal and public, reflecting social diversity and digital activism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Arundhati Roy's fiction is a vital contribution to Indian feminist and postcolonial literature. By employing intersectional feminist politics, she illuminates the suffering and bravery of individuals residing on the periphery. Her characters are not symbols or abstract ideals they are deeply human, shaped by their histories and social positions. Roy's refusal to romanticize resistance, her commitment to narrative experimentation, and her political vision make her one of the most powerful literary voices in contemporary India. Her writing itself becomes a form of resistance to forgetting, to silencing, and to injustice.

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**GAURISHA SINGH<sup>1</sup>**

**(16)**

**DHARMENDRA PRATAP SINGH<sup>2</sup>**

## **ARTIFICIAL TISSUES AND ORGANS**

### **ABSTRACT**

The growing crisis of organ failure and the limitations of transplantation have fueled intense research into artificial tissues and organs. This interdisciplinary field, merging materials science, cell biology, engineering, and medicine, seeks to create functional biological substitutes to restore and enhance human health. This paper explores the present landscape of artificial tissue and organ engineering, highlighting crucial methodologies such as biomaterial scaffolds, cell sourcing and differentiation, bioreactor cultivation, and bioprinting. We examine the progress in engineering simpler tissues like skin and cartilage, alongside the hurdles and future directions in developing complex, vascularized organs such as the liver and kidney. Ultimately, this paper underscores the revolutionary potential of artificial tissues and organs in regenerative medicine and in addressing the critical need for organ replacement therapies.

**Keywords:** *Artificial tissues, artificial organs, tissue engineering, regenerative medicine, biomaterials, cell sourcing, bioreactors, bioprinting, organ transplantation, vascularization.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The inherent self-healing mechanisms of the human body, while impressive, often fall short in the face of severe trauma, debilitating diseases, or congenital anomalies, culminating in irreversible tissue and organ damage. Organ transplantation, a cornerstone of modern medicine, offers a lifeline to many, yet it is severely constrained by a critical shortage of suitable donors, the persistent threat of immune rejection, and the necessity for lifelong immunosuppressive regimens, each carrying its own set of risks and side effects (Todd et al, 2023). These substantial limitations have ignited a powerful impetus within the scientific community to develop functional biological substitutes – artificial tissues and organs – capable of surmounting these formidable obstacles and ushering in a new era of therapeutic possibilities. This burgeoning field represents a fundamental shift in medical paradigms, moving beyond the mere replacement of damaged anatomical structures towards actively regenerating or meticulously replicating their intricate

<sup>1</sup> Student Researcher, Department of Biology, Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram, C-04, Sector 61, Noida (201301), India, Email Id: [gaurisha1106@gmail.com](mailto:gaurisha1106@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Faculty Mentor, Department of Biology, Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram, C-04, Sector 61, Noida (201301), India, \*Corresponding Email Id: [dpsinghiasup@gmail.com](mailto:dpsinghiasup@gmail.com)

biological functions. It synergistically integrates advancements across diverse scientific and engineering disciplines, including materials science, cell biology, engineering principles, and medical insights. As Todd et al. (2023), emphasizes, the overarching goal is to construct sophisticated three-dimensional (3D) constructs that faithfully mimic the native tissue microenvironment, thereby fostering cell survival, promoting controlled growth and differentiation, and ultimately enabling seamless functional integration within the recipient host.

This paper will embark on an exploration of the foundational principles that underpin the creation of artificial tissues and organs, delving into the crucial aspects of biomaterial selection and design, the sourcing and manipulation of appropriate cell types, the role of bioreactor systems in nurturing tissue development, and the transformative potential of bioprinting technologies in constructing complex architectures. Furthermore, we will examine the significant progress achieved to date in engineering simpler tissue types, such as skin and cartilage, which serve as compelling proof-of-concept examples. Simultaneously, we will critically analyze the formidable challenges that persist in the endeavor to create complex, highly vascularized organs like the liver and kidney, highlighting the innovative strategies being pursued to overcome these hurdles. Finally, this paper aims to underscore the profound and transformative potential of artificial tissues and organs in revolutionizing the landscape of regenerative medicine, offering the promise of effective and sustainable solutions to address the ever-increasing and critical need for organ replacement therapies worldwide.

### **Principles of Artificial Tissue and Organ Engineering**

The successful engineering of functional artificial tissues and organs hinges on the intricate and synergistic interplay of several fundamental principles, each presenting its own set of complexities and opportunities for innovation:

#### **Biomaterial Scaffolds: The Architectural Blueprint for Tissue Development**

Biomaterial scaffolds form the essential three-dimensional (3D) framework upon which cells can attach, proliferate, and organize into functional tissues. They act as a temporary extracellular matrix (ECM) analog, providing not only structural support and maintaining the desired shape of the engineered construct but also actively guiding cellular behavior (Todd et al., 2023). The ideal biomaterial for a specific application must possess a carefully curated suite of properties. Biocompatibility is paramount, ensuring that the material does not elicit a toxic or adverse immune response from the host tissue upon implantation. Biodegradability is another critical factor, with the scaffold ideally degrading at a controlled rate that matches the pace of new tissue formation, eventually being replaced by the native ECM produced by the seeded cells. The mechanical properties of the scaffold, including its tensile strength, elasticity, and stiffness, must be tailored to mimic those of the target tissue, providing appropriate mechanical cues that influence cell function and tissue development.

Furthermore, the 3D architecture of the scaffold is crucial. This includes factors such as pore size, porosity, and interconnectivity, which directly impact cell infiltration, nutrient

and waste diffusion, and the formation of a vascular network (Jasirwan et al., 2023). Tailored porosity allows for sufficient space for cell growth and ECM deposition, while interconnected pores facilitate the transport of essential molecules throughout the construct. The surface properties of the biomaterial also play a significant role in dictating cell adhesion, migration, and differentiation. Surface modifications, such as the incorporation of specific peptides or growth factors, can actively promote cell attachment and guide their behavior towards the desired tissue phenotype. The selection of the biomaterial itself is a critical decision, with a wide array of options available. Natural polymers, such as collagen (the most abundant protein in the body's ECM), alginate (derived from seaweed), and chitosan (derived from chitin), often exhibit inherent biocompatibility and bioactivity.

However, they can sometimes suffer from batch-to-batch variability and limited mechanical strength. Synthetic polymers, including polycaprolactone (PCL), polylactic acid (PLA), and polyethylene glycol (PEG), offer greater control over their mechanical properties, degradation rates, and processability, but may require surface modifications to enhance cell interactions (Jasirwan et al., 2023). Often, a combination of natural and synthetic polymers, or modifications to existing materials, are employed to create scaffolds with optimized properties for specific tissue engineering applications.

#### **Cell Sourcing and Differentiation: The Building Blocks of Functional Tissue**

The selection of an appropriate cell source is a cornerstone of successful tissue engineering, as the chosen cells will ultimately be responsible for generating the functional components of the engineered tissue or organ (Todd et al., 2023). Primary cells, isolated directly from a patient's tissue, offer the significant advantage of autologous transplantation, meaning the cells are genetically identical to the recipient, thereby drastically minimizing the risk of immune rejection. However, the isolation of primary cells can be invasive, and their availability and proliferative capacity (their ability to multiply in culture) can be limited, particularly for certain cell types or in older patients.

Stem cells, on the other hand, present a virtually unlimited cell source and possess the remarkable ability to differentiate into various specialized cell types. Embryonic stem cells (ESCs), derived from the inner cell mass of blastocysts, are pluripotent, meaning they can differentiate into any cell type in the body. However, their use raises ethical concerns and carries the risk of teratoma formation (tumors composed of multiple tissue types). Induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) offer an alternative, as they are generated by reprogramming adult somatic cells like skin or blood cells back to a pluripotent state. This technology bypasses the ethical issues associated with ESCs and allows for the generation of patient-specific iPSCs, further reducing the risk of immune rejection (Jasirwan et al., 2023).

Regardless of the cell source, precise control over cell differentiation pathways is paramount for generating functional tissue-specific cells within the scaffold. This is typically achieved by carefully manipulating the cellular microenvironment through the delivery of specific growth factors (signaling molecules that promote cell growth and differentiation), cytokines (signaling proteins that regulate immune responses and cell communication), and mechanical cues (physical forces and stimuli provided by the

scaffold and the bioreactor) (Jasirwan et al., 2023). For instance, chondrocytes (cartilage cells) require specific growth factors and mechanical compression to maintain their phenotype and produce cartilage-specific ECM. The spatial and temporal delivery of these cues within the 3D scaffold is a complex but crucial aspect of guiding tissue development towards the desired functional outcome.

### **Bioreactor Cultivation: Mimicking the Physiological Milieu**

Bioreactors are sophisticated *in vitro* culture systems designed to provide a tightly controlled environment that mimics the physiological conditions experienced by tissues and organs within the body. These systems go beyond static cell culture flasks, offering dynamic control over crucial parameters that influence cell behavior and tissue development. Temperature and pH are meticulously regulated to maintain optimal cellular function and enzymatic activity (Jasirwan et al., 2023). A continuous and controlled supply of oxygen and nutrients is essential for cell survival and metabolic processes, particularly as the engineered tissue constructs increase in size and cellular density. Bioreactors facilitate the efficient delivery of these vital components and the removal of metabolic waste products.

Furthermore, many bioreactor designs incorporate mechanical stimulation, recognizing the critical role that physical forces play in tissue development and function. For example, fluid flow within a bioreactor can mimic the shear stress experienced by endothelial cells lining blood vessels, promoting their alignment and the formation of functional vascular channels (Singh et al., 2023). Cyclic strain can be applied to engineered cardiac or muscle tissues to promote their maturation and enhance their contractile properties. Different bioreactor designs have been developed to cater to the specific needs of various tissue types and developmental stages. These include spinner flasks for uniform suspension culture, rotating wall vessel bioreactors that minimize shear stress, compression bioreactors for cartilage development, and perfusion bioreactors that facilitate nutrient transport throughout thicker constructs. The careful selection and optimization of bioreactor parameters are crucial for promoting cell growth, guiding differentiation along desired lineages, and ultimately fostering the development of functional tissue architecture with appropriate cell density and ECM organization (Singh et al., 2023).

### **Vascularization: The Lifeline for Engineered Constructs**

The formation of a functional and extensive vascular network within engineered tissues and organs represents a critical bottleneck, particularly for creating larger and thicker constructs that exceed the limits of passive diffusion for nutrient and oxygen transport. Without an adequate blood supply, cells within the interior of the engineered tissue will rapidly become hypoxic and nutrient-deprived, leading to cell death and tissue necrosis (Jasirwan et al., 2023). Therefore, establishing a robust and interconnected network of blood vessels is essential for the long-term survival, integration, and functional performance of artificial tissues and organs upon implantation into the host.

Researchers are exploring a multitude of strategies to address this significant challenge. One approach involves incorporating endothelial cells (the cells that line blood vessels) directly into the biomaterial scaffold, often alongside angiogenic factors (growth factors that stimulate blood vessel formation) (Todd et al., 2023). These factors can be either

incorporated within the scaffold material for sustained release or delivered through the culture medium. Another promising strategy involves utilizing microfluidic channels within the engineered construct. These pre-fabricated channels can guide the formation of vascular networks and facilitate initial perfusion with nutrients and oxygen before and after implantation.

Furthermore, strategies aimed at promoting *in vivo* angiogenesis (the formation of new blood vessels from the host's existing vasculature after implantation) are also being actively investigated. This can involve the release of angiogenic factors from the implanted scaffold to attract host blood vessels to infiltrate the engineered tissue (Jasirwan et al., 2023). The design of the scaffold itself, with its pore size and interconnectivity, can also influence the extent and rate of vascular ingrowth. Combining multiple approaches, such as pre-vascularizing the engineered tissue *in vitro* and then promoting further vascularization *in vivo*, holds significant promise for creating clinically relevant and functional artificial tissues and organs with the necessary vascular support. Overcoming the vascularization challenge is paramount for the successful translation of complex artificial organs from the laboratory to clinical application.

#### **Current Progress in Artificial Tissues:**

Significant strides have been made in the field of artificial tissue engineering, particularly in the development of simpler tissues that have already demonstrated clinical utility or hold strong promise for future therapeutic applications. These successes serve as crucial proof-of-concept examples, validating the fundamental principles of tissue engineering and paving the way for more complex organ fabrication.

#### **Skin:**

Bioengineered skin substitutes represent one of the most clinically advanced areas of tissue engineering. These engineered constructs are primarily designed to address the critical needs of patients suffering from severe burns, chronic wounds (such as diabetic foot ulcers and venous leg ulcers), and skin ulcers resulting from various causes (Jasirwan et al., 2023). Typically, these substitutes are composed of collagen or other dermal matrices, which provide a structural framework mimicking the dermal layer of native skin. These matrices are then seeded with key skin cell types, primarily fibroblasts (responsible for producing collagen and other ECM components) and keratinocytes (the main cells of the epidermis, the outermost layer of the skin).

The clinical application of bioengineered skin substitutes offers several significant benefits. They provide immediate wound coverage, protecting the underlying tissues from infection, dehydration, and further damage. By delivering essential cells and ECM components directly to the wound bed, these substitutes actively promote healing by stimulating cell proliferation, migration, and the deposition of new tissue. Furthermore, the use of bioengineered skin can significantly reduce scarring compared to traditional wound healing processes. Different types of skin substitutes exist, ranging from simple dermal equivalents to more complex bilayered constructs that mimic both the dermis and epidermis. Advances in this area include the development of acellular dermal matrices (ADMs) derived from human or animal sources, which are decellularized to minimize immunogenicity and provide a natural scaffold for host cell infiltration and tissue regeneration (Singh et al., 2023). The continued refinement of cell sourcing, scaffold

materials, and growth factor delivery is further enhancing the efficacy and clinical applicability of bioengineered skin substitutes.

**Cartilage:**

Tissue-engineered cartilage grafts have emerged as a promising strategy for repairing cartilage defects, particularly in the knee and other joints affected by trauma, osteoarthritis, or other degenerative conditions. Native cartilage, due to its avascular nature (lack of blood vessels), has a limited capacity for self-repair. Tissue engineering approaches aim to overcome this limitation by providing a supportive environment for cartilage regeneration. These grafts typically utilize chondrocytes, the specialized cells responsible for producing the cartilage matrix, seeded onto biodegradable scaffolds (Jasirwan et al., 2023).

Hydrogels, three-dimensional networks of hydrophilic polymers that can absorb large amounts of water, are frequently employed as scaffolds for cartilage tissue engineering. Their high water content and viscoelastic properties closely resemble those of native cartilage, providing a biomechanically relevant environment for chondrocyte function. Various natural hydrogels (e.g., alginate, hyaluronic acid) and synthetic hydrogels (e.g., PEG-based hydrogels) are used, often modified to enhance cell adhesion and matrix production. The seeded chondrocytes proliferate within the scaffold and synthesize new cartilage matrix, gradually filling the defect. While still an evolving field, early clinical results with autologous chondrocyte implantation (ACI) and matrix-induced autologous chondrocyte implantation (MACI), which utilize cell-seeded scaffolds, have shown promise in improving pain and function in patients with cartilage defects (Research Gate, 2025). Ongoing research focuses on optimizing scaffold design, cell sourcing (including the use of mesenchymal stem cells that can differentiate into chondrocytes), and the incorporation of growth factors to enhance the quality and durability of the regenerated cartilage tissue.

**Bone:**

Bone tissue engineering aims to regenerate bone defects resulting from trauma, surgery, disease, or congenital abnormalities. The goal is to create functional bone tissue that can restore structural integrity and integrate seamlessly with the host skeleton. This approach typically involves the use of osteogenic cells (bone-forming cells, such as osteoblasts or mesenchymal stem cells), growth factors (e.g., bone morphogenetic proteins - BMPs), and biocompatible scaffolds that provide a structural template and inductive cues for bone formation (Research Gate, 2025).

A wide range of biomaterials are employed as scaffolds in bone tissue engineering, including ceramics (e.g., hydroxyapatite, tricalcium phosphate), which mimic the mineral phase of natural bone and provide excellent osteoconductivity (allowing bone cells to attach and grow on their surface). Polymers (both natural and synthetic, such as collagen, PLA, and PCL) offer flexibility in design and degradation rates. Often, composite scaffolds combining ceramics and polymers are used to leverage the beneficial properties of both material classes. The scaffold's porosity and interconnectivity are crucial for vascularization and bone cell infiltration (Research Gate, 2025). Growth factors are often incorporated into the scaffold to stimulate osteogenic differentiation and bone matrix production. While significant progress has been made in

engineering bone grafts for non-load-bearing applications, creating large, load-bearing bone substitutes that fully integrate and remodel like native bone remains a challenge. Current research focuses on improving vascularization strategies, optimizing the release of growth factors, and developing bioactive scaffolds that actively promote bone regeneration and integration.

**Cornea:**

Bioengineered corneal equivalents represent a significant advancement in addressing corneal damage, a leading cause of blindness worldwide. The cornea, the transparent outer layer of the eye, can be damaged by trauma, infection, or disease, leading to vision impairment. Tissue engineering approaches aim to create functional substitutes that can restore corneal transparency and function (Science Daily, 2025). These bioengineered corneas typically utilize collagen-based scaffolds that mimic the structure and transparency of the native corneal stroma (the main structural layer of the cornea). These scaffolds are then seeded with corneal epithelial cells, the cells that form the outermost layer of the cornea and are crucial for maintaining its smooth surface and refractive properties.

While still in earlier stages of clinical translation compared to skin substitutes, limited clinical trials using bioengineered corneal equivalents have demonstrated promising results in restoring vision in patients with specific types of corneal damage, such as limbal stem cell deficiency (a condition affecting the regeneration of the corneal epithelium). These studies have shown that the engineered corneas can integrate with the host tissue and restore corneal transparency. Ongoing research focuses on developing more complex corneal substitutes that include other important corneal cell types, such as keratocytes (stromal cells) and endothelial cells (the innermost layer), to fully replicate the functionality of the native cornea. The development of readily available, off-the-shelf bioengineered corneas holds the potential to significantly impact the treatment of corneal blindness globally (Hozan et al., 2023).

**Blood Vessels:**

Small-diameter vascular grafts (blood vessels with a diameter less than 6 mm) remain a significant challenge in cardiovascular surgery. While larger diameter grafts made from synthetic materials like Dacron and PTFE are successful, these materials often fail in smaller diameters due to thrombosis (blood clot formation) and intimal hyperplasia (thickening of the vessel wall) (Science Daily, 2025). Tissue engineering offers a potential solution by creating bioengineered vascular grafts that are more biocompatible and possess the ability to remodel and integrate with the host vasculature. These grafts are typically engineered using two main approaches: decellularized vessels and synthetic scaffolds seeded with cells.

Decellularized vessels, derived from cadaveric or animal sources, undergo a process that removes all cellular components, leaving behind the intact extracellular matrix (ECM) scaffold of the native vessel. This natural scaffold retains the intricate architecture and biomechanical properties of the original vessel and can then be recellularized with the patient's own endothelial cells (lining the inner surface of blood vessels) and smooth muscle cells (providing structural support and contractile function). This approach aims to create a graft with reduced immunogenicity and improved long-term patency

(openness) (Research Gate, 2025). Alternatively, synthetic scaffolds made from biodegradable polymers are fabricated into tubular structures and then seeded with endothelial cells and smooth muscle cells. These scaffolds provide initial mechanical support and guide tissue formation, eventually degrading as the engineered vessel matures. Research in this area focuses on optimizing cell sourcing, scaffold design to promote cell adhesion and alignment, and strategies to enhance graft patency and prevent complications like thrombosis and stenosis (narrowing of the vessel). While still largely in the preclinical and early clinical trial stages, bioengineered small-diameter vascular grafts hold significant promise as alternatives to autologous grafts (vessels harvested from the patient's own body), which are not always available or suitable, for treating various cardiovascular diseases.

#### **The Challenge of Engineering Complex Artificial Organs:**

Creating fully functional, transplantable artificial organs presents a significantly greater challenge due to their intricate cellular composition, complex 3D architecture, and the critical need for extensive and functional vascularization (Research Gate, 2025). However, significant strides are being made in this ambitious endeavor:

**Liver:** The liver's complex metabolic functions and intricate vascular network make it a formidable target. Researchers are exploring various approaches, including decellularizing native liver tissue to create a natural scaffold, bioprinting liver lobule-like structures, and developing bioartificial liver support systems to temporarily assist patients with liver failure.

**Kidney:** Engineering a functional artificial kidney capable of filtration and reabsorption is another major goal. Efforts include developing bioartificial kidneys containing renal cells within hollow fiber membranes for filtration and exploring the potential of bioprinting complex nephron-like structures.

**Heart:** Creating a fully functional artificial heart remains a long-term aspiration. Current research focuses on developing cardiac patches to repair damaged heart muscle after infarction and investigating the potential of bioprinting cardiac tissue with aligned cardiomyocytes to improve contractile function.

**Pancreas:** Bioengineering insulin-producing islets for the treatment of diabetes is an active area of research. Encapsulation of islets within biocompatible materials aims to protect them from immune attack after transplantation.

#### **Emerging Technologies and Future Directions:**

The field of artificial tissues and organs is being significantly propelled forward by a confluence of groundbreaking emerging technologies. Bioprinting, an innovative additive manufacturing technique, stands at the forefront, enabling the precise layer-by-layer deposition of living cells, biomaterials, and crucial growth factors. This capability allows for the creation of complex three-dimensional tissue constructs with unprecedented control over their internal architecture and cellular organization, moving beyond traditional scaffold-based approaches (Jasirwan et al., 2023). Advancements in various bioprinting methodologies, including extrusion-based, inkjet-based, and

stereolithography-based printing, are continuously expanding the complexity and functionality of the tissues that can be fabricated, paving the way for the creation of more intricate and physiologically relevant models and eventual therapeutic implants. Complementing this, Organ-on-a-Chip (OOC) technology offers miniaturized microfluidic devices that meticulously replicate the physiological environment and functional units of whole organs on a small scale. These OOC platforms provide invaluable in vitro tools for in-depth studies of tissue development, drug efficacy and toxicity testing, and the modeling of various disease states, offering a more biologically relevant alternative to traditional cell culture. Furthermore, OOCs hold the potential to serve as fundamental building blocks for the assembly of larger, more complex engineered tissues in the future.

#### **Novel Approaches in Scaffold Development and Cell Manipulation:**

Beyond fabrication technologies, significant advancements are being made in the development and utilization of biological scaffolds and cell sources. Decellularization and recellularization represent a unique approach that involves the complete removal of cellular components from a donor organ, leaving behind the intact and structurally complex extracellular matrix (ECM) scaffold (Vascularization Strategies for Tissue Engineering, 2024). This natural scaffold, with its inherent biochemical cues and intricate architecture, can then be repopulated or "recellularized" with patient-derived cells, potentially significantly reducing the risk of immunogenicity and preserving the organ's native microenvironment. This strategy offers a promising avenue for creating whole-organ replacements with improved biocompatibility and functionality. In parallel, the powerful tools of gene editing and cell reprogramming are revolutionizing our ability to manipulate cells for tissue engineering applications. CRISPR-Cas9 and other gene editing technologies offer the potential to precisely modify cells to enhance their desired functionalities, improve their biocompatibility within the host environment, or even prevent the transmission of diseases. Moreover, cell reprogramming techniques, such as the generation of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) from adult somatic cells, provide a readily available and patient-specific source of cells that can be differentiated into a wide range of tissue-specific cell types, overcoming limitations associated with primary cell availability and immunogenicity.

#### **Smart Biomaterials and Integrated Technologies:**

The development of advanced biomaterials is another critical driving force in the evolution of artificial tissues and organs. These next-generation materials are being engineered with "smart" functionalities, enabling them to respond dynamically to biological cues within the body. This includes materials that can self-heal upon damage, release therapeutic agents (such as growth factors or drugs) in a controlled and on-demand manner, or actively interact with the surrounding tissue to promote integration and regeneration (Tissue-Engineered Skin Substitutes for Use in Clinical Dermatological Practice, 2024). The integration of these smart biomaterials with other emerging technologies, such as bioprinting and OOC platforms, holds the key to creating increasingly sophisticated and functional artificial tissues and organs with enhanced longevity and therapeutic efficacy. As these diverse technological advancements continue to converge and mature, the field of artificial tissues and organs stands poised to overcome current limitations and deliver transformative solutions for a wide range of

medical challenges, ultimately revolutionizing regenerative medicine and offering new hope for patients facing debilitating tissue damage and organ failure.

#### **Challenges and Ethical Considerations:**

Despite the remarkable strides achieved in the engineering of artificial tissues and organs, significant challenges persist that necessitate focused research and innovative solutions. A major hurdle remains in achieving functional vascularization, the creation of robust and enduring networks of blood vessels within thick, engineered constructs, which is crucial for nutrient and oxygen delivery and waste removal, ultimately impacting long-term survival and integration (Science Daily, 2025).

Furthermore, the scaling up of production from promising laboratory-based results to clinically relevant and cost-effective manufacturing processes presents a considerable engineering and logistical challenge that must be addressed for widespread therapeutic application. Ensuring long-term functionality and seamless integration of these artificial substitutes within the complex host environment demands extensive investigation into biocompatibility, biomechanics, and the dynamic interactions between the engineered tissue and the surrounding biological systems. While the use of autologous cells mitigates the risk of immunogenicity, developing strategies to minimize immune responses to allogeneic or xenogeneic cell sources and the various biomaterials employed remains a critical area of research to broaden the applicability of these therapies (Research Gate, 2025).

Beyond the technical obstacles, the development and clinical translation of artificial tissues and organs raise profound ethical considerations encompassing the sourcing of cells, particularly embryonic stem cells, concerns regarding animal welfare in the derivation of certain biomaterials or decellularized scaffolds, issues of equitable cost accessibility to these potentially life-saving technologies, and the broader societal implications surrounding the potential for enhancement technologies that extend beyond mere therapeutic replacement. Addressing these multifaceted challenges, both scientific and ethical, is paramount for the responsible and effective advancement of this transformative field.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The burgeoning field of artificial tissues and organs offers a transformative vision for regenerative medicine, poised to address the critical global shortage of transplantable organs. While substantial advancements have been achieved in engineering simpler tissues, the creation of intricate, fully functional organs remains a significant and multifaceted challenge, demanding sustained interdisciplinary collaboration and relentless innovation. The emergence of powerful technologies such as bioprinting, organ-on-a-chip platforms, and advanced biomaterials is paving the way for the development of increasingly sophisticated and functional bioengineered constructs. However, realizing the full potential of this revolutionary field in transforming healthcare and improving the lives of millions afflicted by organ failure and tissue damage hinges on overcoming persistent challenges, particularly in achieving robust vascularization and scalable manufacturing, alongside a thoughtful and proactive consideration of the ethical implications that accompany these powerful new capabilities. As the era of biofabrication dawns, the future trajectory of medicine may indeed be

profoundly shaped by our growing ability to engineer life-sustaining biological substitutes.

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GAYATHRI PRABHAKARAN<sup>1</sup>

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## VACCINATION-DANGERS AND BENEFITS

## ABSTRACT

Vaccination stands as a cornerstone of modern public health, dramatically reducing the incidence and severity of infectious diseases. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the benefits and potential risks associated with vaccination, aiming to offer a balanced perspective grounded in scientific evidence. The benefits are substantial, including the prevention of debilitating and deadly diseases, the establishment of herd immunity, and significant reductions in healthcare costs. Vaccines have played a pivotal role in eradicating diseases like smallpox and controlling others, such as measles and polio. Furthermore, herd immunity protects vulnerable populations who cannot be vaccinated, enhancing overall community health. However, like any medical intervention, vaccines are not without potential risks. Common side effects, such as localized pain and fever, are generally mild and transient. Rare adverse events, including allergic reactions, are closely monitored through rigorous post-market surveillance. A significant challenge lies in the spread of misinformation, leading to vaccine hesitancy and undermining public trust. This paper addresses common misconceptions about vaccine ingredients and debunks false claims, such as the retracted association with autism. It emphasizes the importance of relying on credible scientific sources and the role of healthcare professionals in disseminating accurate information. The rigorous testing and approval processes, along with ongoing surveillance, ensure vaccine safety. Ultimately, the overwhelming scientific consensus supports the safety and effectiveness of vaccines, with benefits far outweighing the risks. Maintaining high vaccination rates is crucial for protecting individual and public health.

**Keywords:** Vaccination, Immunization, Herd Immunity, Adverse Events, Vaccine Safety, Public Health, Infectious Diseases.

## INTRODUCTION

Vaccination, a cornerstone of modern public health, represents a triumph of scientific innovation in the fight against infectious diseases. At its core, vaccination involves the administration of a biological preparation, a vaccine, which stimulates the body's immune system to develop protection against a specific pathogen (Plotkin et al., 2018). This process, known as immunization, primes the body to recognize and neutralize disease-causing agents, preventing future infections or mitigating their severity. The

<sup>1</sup> Student Researcher, Department of Health and Biological Studies, Private International English School, Musaffah, Abu Dhabi, UAE, Email Id: [gayupakkers@gmail.com](mailto:gayupakkers@gmail.com)

concept of vaccination has a rich and storied history, tracing its roots to ancient practices of variolation, where individuals were deliberately exposed to smallpox in an attempt to induce immunity. However, it was Edward Jenner's groundbreaking work in the late 18th century, using cowpox to protect against smallpox, that laid the foundation for modern vaccination (Riedel, 2005). His pioneering efforts marked a turning point in medicine, ushering in an era of targeted disease prevention. Over time, advancements in microbiology and immunology have led to the development of a diverse array of vaccines, each meticulously designed to combat specific threats.

The pivotal role of vaccines in safeguarding public health cannot be overstated. By inducing herd immunity, where a substantial portion of a population is immune, vaccines effectively disrupt the transmission of infectious diseases, protecting even those who cannot be vaccinated due to age or medical conditions (Plotkin et al., 2018). This collective protection has led to the dramatic reduction, and in some cases, the eradication of devastating illnesses that once plagued humanity. Diseases like polio, measles, and rubella, which caused widespread suffering and mortality, have been largely controlled through widespread vaccination campaigns. Furthermore, vaccines have contributed significantly to the overall improvement of global health outcomes, reducing childhood mortality and enhancing life expectancy (Poland & Jacobson, 2012). Beyond individual protection, vaccines play a crucial role in preventing outbreaks and epidemics, mitigating the strain on healthcare systems, and minimizing the economic burden associated with infectious diseases. In essence, vaccination stands as a testament to the power of preventive medicine, offering a safe and effective means of protecting individuals and communities from the devastating consequences of infectious diseases (World Health Organization, 2024).

This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive and balanced examination of vaccination, exploring both its undeniable benefits and the potential dangers that have fueled ongoing debates. The central purpose is to delve into the scientific evidence surrounding vaccination, offering a nuanced understanding of its impact on individual and public health. This exploration will not shy away from addressing the concerns and controversies that have arisen, particularly regarding the safety and efficacy of vaccines. By meticulously analyzing peer-reviewed studies, epidemiological data, and expert consensus, this paper seeks to clarify the complex interplay between the protective power of vaccines and the rare, but real, potential for adverse events. It is crucial to acknowledge that while vaccines have revolutionized disease prevention, no medical intervention is entirely without risk. Therefore, this analysis will strive to present a transparent and objective assessment of the available evidence, distinguishing between scientifically validated concerns and misinformation that has often clouded public discourse.

Ultimately, this paper endeavors to equip readers with the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about vaccination, fostering a deeper understanding of the vital role vaccines play in safeguarding global health while addressing the legitimate questions that arise from their use. By prioritizing scientific rigor and a balanced perspective, this research aims to contribute to a more informed and reasoned discussion about the crucial topic of vaccination.

## **Benefits of Vaccination**

### **Disease prevention:**

The most profound benefit of vaccination lies in its ability to prevent infectious diseases, a feat that has dramatically reshaped the landscape of human health. By stimulating the immune system to recognize and combat specific pathogens, vaccines significantly reduce both the incidence and severity of a wide range of illnesses (Andre et al., 2008). This protective effect extends beyond individual immunity, contributing to a broader shield within communities. Through widespread vaccination, the circulation of infectious agents is curtailed, leading to a substantial decrease in the number of people who contract these diseases. The impact is not merely a reduction in cases; vaccines often mitigate the severity of infections, transforming potentially debilitating or fatal illnesses into milder, more manageable conditions. This translates to fewer hospitalizations, reduced complications, and improved overall health outcomes.

According to Bloom et al. (2005), one of the most remarkable achievements of vaccination is the eradication of smallpox, a devastating disease that plagued humanity for centuries. This triumph stands as a testament to the power of targeted immunization campaigns and global collaboration. The eradication of smallpox serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating the potential to eliminate other infectious diseases through sustained vaccination efforts. Beyond eradication, vaccines play a critical role in preventing outbreaks and epidemics, safeguarding communities from the rapid spread of infectious diseases. By building herd immunity, where a sufficient proportion of the population is immune, vaccines create a barrier that protects even those who cannot be vaccinated. This collective protection is especially crucial for vulnerable populations, such as infants, the elderly, and individuals with compromised immune systems (CDC, 2024). The ability of vaccines to prevent outbreaks and epidemics is vital for maintaining public health infrastructure, preventing healthcare systems from being overwhelmed, and minimizing the societal and economic disruptions caused by widespread illness.

### **Herd Immunity**

A crucial benefit of widespread vaccination is the establishment of herd immunity, a phenomenon that extends protection beyond the individuals who are directly immunized. Herd immunity operates on the principle that if a significant percentage of a population is immune to a contagious disease, the likelihood of transmission is drastically reduced (CDC, 2024). This creates a protective barrier for those who cannot be vaccinated, such as infants too young to receive certain vaccines, individuals with compromised immune systems due to medical conditions, or those with severe allergies to vaccine components. These vulnerable populations rely on the collective immunity of the community to shield them from potentially life-threatening infections. When a high proportion of individuals are vaccinated, the chain of transmission is broken, effectively preventing the spread of the disease to those who are most susceptible.

Furthermore, herd immunity plays a pivotal role in reducing overall disease transmission within a population (CDC, 2024). By minimizing the number of susceptible individuals, vaccines limit the opportunities for pathogens to spread, thereby curtailing outbreaks and epidemics. This reduction in transmission not only protects vulnerable individuals but also contributes to the overall health and well-being of the entire community. According

to CDC (2024), it diminishes the burden on healthcare systems, reduces the economic impact of infectious diseases, and allows for a more productive and healthy society. The effectiveness of herd immunity is directly linked to vaccination coverage rates; the higher the proportion of immunized individuals, the stronger the protective effect. Therefore, maintaining high vaccination rates is essential for maximizing the benefits of herd immunity and safeguarding the health of all members of the community, especially those who rely on it most.

#### **Economic impact that Covid vaccine had on global economy**

The economic impact of widespread vaccination is substantial and multifaceted, yielding significant cost savings and boosting societal productivity (CDC, 2024). One of the most direct economic benefits stems from the reduced healthcare costs associated with treating infectious diseases. When vaccination rates are high, the incidence of preventable illnesses decreases, leading to fewer hospitalizations, doctor's visits, and prescriptions. This translates to substantial savings for healthcare systems, both public and private, as resources are not strained by managing large outbreaks or treating severe complications of preventable diseases.

Furthermore, the cost of treating chronic conditions that can arise from certain infections, such as disability following polio or liver cancer from hepatitis B, is also mitigated through effective immunization. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was vividly illustrated (CDC, 2024). The rapid development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines prevented countless hospitalizations and ICU admissions, thus averting a catastrophic collapse of healthcare systems globally. The economic strain of prolonged hospital stays, intensive care, and long-term rehabilitation for COVID-19 survivors would have been immense without widespread vaccination. Moreover, the swift reduction in severe cases allowed for a more rapid reopening of healthcare services for other critical conditions, preventing a backlog of untreated illnesses that would have had long-term economic repercussions.

Beyond direct healthcare savings, vaccination contributes to increased productivity by reducing the number of sick days taken by individuals (CDC, 2024). When people are protected from infectious diseases, they are less likely to fall ill and miss work or school. This translates to a more productive workforce and a more stable educational environment. A reduction in absenteeism not only benefits employers and educational institutions but also contributes to overall economic growth. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns and widespread illness led to massive disruptions in the workforce, supply chains, and educational systems. Vaccination played a crucial role in enabling a return to normalcy (CDC, 2024).

By reducing the severity of infections and the need for quarantine, vaccines allowed businesses to resume operations, schools to reopen, and supply chains to stabilize. The economic impact of this return to productivity is incalculable, preventing further losses in GDP and mitigating the long-term effects of interrupted education and workforce development. The ability of vaccinated individuals to return to work and school, even with breakthrough infections, minimized the severity of disruptions and allowed for a more consistent economic recovery. The tourism and hospitality industries, which were

severely impacted by travel restrictions and fear of infection, also experienced a significant boost as vaccination rates increased and confidence in safe travel returned.

Moreover, the prevention of outbreaks and epidemics minimizes disruptions to businesses and communities, preventing widespread economic losses that can occur when large segments of the population are incapacitated (CDC, 2024). The economic benefits of vaccination extend beyond immediate savings and productivity gains, contributing to a healthier and more resilient society capable of fostering long-term economic stability and growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the devastating economic consequences of uncontrolled infectious disease outbreaks (CDC, 2024). Lockdowns, travel restrictions, and business closures resulted in trillions of dollars in economic losses globally. Vaccination became a critical tool in preventing future waves of infection, allowing governments to avoid imposing stringent restrictions that stifle economic activity. By reducing the risk of large-scale outbreaks, vaccines provided a level of predictability and stability that businesses needed to plan and invest. The restoration of consumer confidence, driven by the perception of safety provided by vaccination, also played a crucial role in stimulating economic recovery. The ability to attend public events, dine in restaurants, and travel without fear of severe illness contributed to the revitalization of sectors that had been devastated by the pandemic.

Therefore, the economic impact of vaccination, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been profound. Beyond immediate healthcare savings and productivity gains, vaccination has played a vital role in preventing economic collapse and facilitating recovery. The ability to return to work, school, and social activities, coupled with the restoration of consumer confidence, has been instrumental in rebuilding economies around the world. The long-term economic benefits of vaccination extend to the creation of a more resilient and stable society, capable of weathering future public health crises. Investing in vaccination programs is not only a public health imperative but also a sound economic strategy, yielding significant returns in terms of reduced healthcare costs, increased productivity, and sustained economic growth.

### **Saving Lives**

The most compelling benefit of vaccination is its profound impact on saving lives, particularly through the dramatic reduction in childhood mortality. Throughout history, infectious diseases have been a leading cause of death among children, claiming millions of young lives each year (Cutts et al., 2016). However, the widespread implementation of vaccination programs has revolutionized pediatric healthcare, leading to a significant decline in childhood mortality rates. Diseases that were once feared killers, such as measles, polio, and diphtheria, have been brought under control through effective immunization campaigns.

Vaccines have not only prevented deaths but also reduced the long-term disabilities and health complications associated with these diseases, allowing children to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives. This reduction in childhood mortality has had a ripple effect, contributing to increased life expectancy and improved overall population health (CDC, 2024). The ability of vaccines to protect children from life-threatening infections is a testament to the power of preventive medicine and a crucial factor in improving global

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health outcomes. The impact extends beyond individual families, contributing to the well-being of entire communities and nations. By safeguarding the lives of children, vaccination ensures a healthier future for generations to come.

According to Cutts et al., (2016), the introduction and widespread adoption of vaccines against diseases like rotavirus and pneumococcal infections have further decreased child mortality rates, particularly in developing countries where these diseases pose a significant threat. These vaccines have dramatically reduced the incidence of severe diarrhea and pneumonia, which are leading causes of death in young children. Moreover, the measles vaccine, in particular, has proven to be a powerful tool, not only in preventing measles but also in bolstering overall immune function in children, reducing susceptibility to other infections (CDC, 2024). The global effort to eliminate polio, largely driven by vaccination campaigns, stands as a testament to the transformative power of immunization, nearly eradicating a disease that once paralyzed and killed thousands of children annually.

A particularly striking example of the life-saving potential of vaccination is the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. HPV is a common virus that can cause several types of cancer, including cervical, anal, and oropharyngeal cancers (Cutts et al., 2016). The HPV vaccine has been instrumental in preventing these cancers by targeting the most high-risk strains of the virus. Cervical cancer, in particular, was once a leading cause of death among women worldwide, but the HPV vaccine has dramatically changed this landscape. By vaccinating young adolescents, both boys and girls, before they are exposed to the virus, the vaccine provides robust protection against HPV infection and subsequent cancer development. Studies have shown significant reductions in HPV infection rates and precancerous lesions in vaccinated populations (Cutts et al., 2016). The impact of the HPV vaccine is not limited to preventing cancer; it also reduces the need for invasive screening procedures and treatments, such as biopsies and surgeries, which can have significant physical and emotional burdens. The implementation of school-based HPV vaccination programs, such as those in the UAE, underscores the commitment to protecting future generations from preventable cancers (Cutts et al., 2016). By incorporating the HPV vaccine into routine immunization schedules, healthcare systems are proactively safeguarding the health of young people, ensuring they have the opportunity to live long and healthy lives. This proactive approach not only saves lives but also reduces the long-term healthcare costs associated with cancer treatment.

The broader implications of vaccination in saving lives extend beyond individual diseases and age groups. Vaccines have been instrumental in controlling outbreaks and pandemics, preventing widespread mortality and morbidity. The COVID-19 pandemic vividly demonstrated the critical role of vaccines in protecting populations from a deadly virus. The rapid development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines prevented millions of deaths and hospitalizations, mitigating the devastating impact of the pandemic (CDC, 2024). Vaccines not only saved lives directly but also allowed for the gradual return to normalcy, preventing further economic and social disruptions. The ability of vaccines to induce herd immunity, protecting vulnerable populations who cannot be vaccinated, is another crucial aspect of their life-saving impact. By achieving high vaccination rates, communities can create a protective barrier against infectious diseases, safeguarding the

health of everyone, especially those at higher risk. The continued investment in vaccine research and development, coupled with robust immunization programs, is essential for ensuring that future generations are protected from the threat of infectious diseases. Vaccines remain one of the most powerful and cost-effective tools in public health, saving countless lives and improving the overall well-being of populations worldwide.

### **Potential Dangers of Vaccination**

#### **Common side effects:**

While the benefits of vaccination are undeniable, it's essential to acknowledge the potential for adverse reactions, even if they are typically mild and transient. According to Ehreth (2003), common side effects are a normal part of the body's immune response to a vaccine and generally indicate that the immune system is being activated and building protection. Localized reactions, such as pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site, are frequently reported after vaccination. These reactions are usually short-lived, resolving within a few days without requiring any specific treatment. The discomfort is often minimal and can be managed with over-the-counter pain relievers or cold compresses. Similarly, systemic reactions, such as fever and fatigue, are also relatively common side effects. These symptoms typically indicate that the body is mounting an immune response and are generally mild and self-limiting. Fever, often a low-grade temperature, is a natural part of the immune system's activation and usually resolves within a day or two (Fine et al., 2011). Fatigue, or a feeling of tiredness, is another common symptom that can accompany the immune response. While these side effects can be temporarily uncomfortable, they are far less severe than the consequences of contracting the diseases that vaccines prevent. It is important to remember that the vast majority of individuals experience only mild side effects, and these reactions are a small price to pay for the protection offered by vaccines.

#### **Rare side effects**

While common side effects of vaccines are typically mild and transient, it's crucial to acknowledge the existence of rare, but potentially serious, adverse events. Among these, allergic reactions, particularly anaphylaxis, are of paramount concern. Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction that can occur within minutes or hours of vaccination (CDC, 2024). It involves a rapid onset of symptoms, including difficulty breathing, swelling of the throat or face, hives, and a drop in blood pressure. Although rare, anaphylaxis requires immediate medical attention and is a recognized risk associated with any vaccine or medication. Healthcare providers are trained to recognize and manage anaphylactic reactions, and vaccination centers are equipped to provide emergency treatment.

Beyond anaphylaxis, other rare adverse events have been reported following vaccination. These events are often difficult to link definitively to the vaccine itself due to their low incidence and the complexity of human biology (CDC, 2024). Extensive post-marketing surveillance systems and ongoing research are essential for monitoring vaccine safety and identifying any potential rare adverse events. These systems allow for the rapid detection and investigation of any unusual or concerning patterns, ensuring that vaccine safety remains a top priority. It is important to remember that the risk of experiencing a severe adverse event from a vaccine is significantly lower than the risk of serious

complications from the diseases they prevent. The benefit-risk assessment consistently favors vaccination, as the overwhelming majority of individuals experience no serious adverse effects (CDC, 2024). However, transparent communication about potential risks and ongoing monitoring are crucial for maintaining public trust in vaccine safety.

#### **Misinformation and vaccine hesitancy**

A significant challenge facing public health today is the pervasive influence of misinformation and the resulting vaccine hesitancy. Misinformation campaigns, often fueled by unfounded fears and conspiracy theories, have eroded public trust in vaccines, leading to a decline in vaccination rates in some areas (Godlee et al., 2011). These campaigns frequently exploit emotional appeals and anecdotal evidence, bypassing scientific rigor and critical thinking. The impact of this misinformation is profound, as it can sway public opinion and lead to individuals making decisions that put themselves and their communities at risk.

Social media platforms have played a significant role in amplifying the spread of false information about vaccines. The rapid dissemination of unverified claims and misleading content on these platforms has created an echo chamber where misinformation can thrive. This has made it increasingly difficult for accurate scientific information to reach and influence the public. The accessibility and anonymity of social media have enabled the rapid propagation of false narratives, often with little to no accountability (CDC, 2024).

One of the most damaging examples of vaccine misinformation is the now fully retracted and thoroughly debunked claim linking vaccines to autism. This false claim, propagated by a fraudulent research paper, caused widespread fear and distrust of vaccines, leading to a decline in vaccination rates and outbreaks of preventable diseases. Extensive scientific research has repeatedly demonstrated that there is no link between vaccines and autism. The original study that fueled this claim was retracted due to ethical violations and fraudulent data, and its author was stripped of his medical license (Institute of Medicine, 2003). Despite the overwhelming scientific consensus, the myth persists, highlighting the challenge of countering misinformation and restoring public trust. Debunking false claims requires a concerted effort from scientists, healthcare professionals, and public health organizations, who must actively engage in communicating accurate information and addressing public concerns. This effort must be ongoing, as new forms of misinformation constantly emerge, threatening to undermine the crucial role of vaccines in protecting public health.

#### **Vaccine ingredients:**

Concerns regarding vaccine ingredients, particularly thimerosal and adjuvants, are frequently raised by those hesitant about vaccination. Addressing these concerns requires clear and transparent communication about the composition and safety testing of vaccines (FDA, 2024). Thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative, was once widely used in some vaccines to prevent bacterial contamination. However, due to public concerns, it has been largely phased out of childhood vaccines, with the exception of some influenza vaccines. It is crucial to emphasize that scientific studies have

consistently shown no link between thimerosal-containing vaccines and autism or other neurodevelopmental disorders. The trace amounts of mercury present in thimerosal are different from the type of mercury found in environmental toxins, and they are rapidly eliminated from the body (Godlee et al., 2011).

Adjuvants, such as aluminum salts, are added to some vaccines to enhance the immune response, making the vaccine more effective (FDA, 2024). While concerns have been raised about the potential for aluminum to accumulate in the body and cause adverse effects, extensive research has demonstrated the safety of adjuvants in vaccines. The amount of aluminum in vaccines is minimal and far less than the amount we are exposed to daily through food, water, and air. Furthermore, the body efficiently eliminates aluminum, preventing harmful accumulation.

The safety testing and monitoring of vaccine ingredients are rigorous and multi-layered. Before a vaccine is approved for use, it undergoes extensive clinical trials to evaluate its safety and efficacy (Kata, 2012). These trials involve thousands of participants and are conducted in multiple phases, ensuring that any potential adverse effects are identified and thoroughly investigated. After a vaccine is licensed, ongoing monitoring systems, such as the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), are in place to track any reported adverse events. These systems allow for the rapid detection and investigation of any potential safety signals. Regulatory agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), play a crucial role in overseeing vaccine safety and ensuring that vaccines meet the highest standards of quality and safety (FDA, 2024). Continuous scientific research and monitoring are essential for maintaining public trust in vaccine safety and ensuring that vaccines remain a safe and effective tool for preventing infectious diseases.

### **Vaccine Safety and Monitoring**

The safety of vaccines is paramount, and it is ensured through a rigorous, multi-stage process involving extensive testing, approval, and ongoing monitoring. Vaccine development begins with preclinical research, followed by carefully controlled clinical trials (Kelso, 2010). These trials are conducted in phases, starting with small groups of volunteers to assess safety and then expanding to larger groups to evaluate efficacy. Each phase is meticulously designed to identify potential adverse effects and determine the optimal dosage. Before a vaccine can be licensed for public use, it must undergo thorough review by regulatory agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States and the World Health Organization (WHO) globally. These agencies scrutinize the clinical trial data, manufacturing processes, and quality control measures to ensure that the vaccine meets the highest standards of safety and efficacy (FDA, 2024).

### **Post-market surveillance is a crucial component of vaccine safety monitoring.**

Once a vaccine is licensed, ongoing surveillance systems, like the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) in the United States, are used to track any reported adverse events (Offit & Moser, 2003). These systems allow healthcare providers and individuals to report potential side effects, which are then investigated by regulatory agencies. This continuous monitoring enables the detection of rare adverse events that may not have been identified during clinical trials. Furthermore, scientific research on

vaccine safety is ongoing, with researchers conducting studies to investigate potential long-term effects and address any emerging safety concerns. These studies utilize sophisticated epidemiological and immunological methods to assess the safety of vaccines in diverse populations (Ozawa et al., 2016). The commitment to ongoing monitoring and research underscores the dedication to ensuring that vaccines remain among the safest and most effective medical interventions available. By maintaining rigorous testing, approval, and surveillance processes, regulatory agencies and researchers work tirelessly to uphold the safety and integrity of vaccination programs.

## **CONCLUSION**

the overwhelming body of scientific evidence unequivocally supports the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Decades of research, rigorous clinical trials, and extensive post-market surveillance have consistently demonstrated that vaccines are a safe and powerful tool for preventing infectious diseases. The benefits of vaccination far outweigh the risks, which are typically mild and transient. The dramatic reduction in childhood mortality, the eradication of diseases like smallpox, and the prevention of countless outbreaks and epidemics stand as testaments to the transformative power of vaccination. While rare adverse events can occur, they are far less frequent and severe than the complications associated with the diseases vaccines prevent.

The importance of evidence-based decision-making cannot be overstated. In an era of rampant misinformation, it is crucial to rely on credible sources of information, such as peer-reviewed scientific studies, reputable medical organizations, and public health agencies. Healthcare professionals play a vital role in providing accurate information and addressing patient concerns, fostering informed decision-making. Open and transparent communication about vaccine safety and efficacy is essential for maintaining public trust.

Finally, maintaining high vaccination rates is critical for protecting individuals and communities from infectious diseases. Herd immunity, achieved through widespread vaccination, safeguards vulnerable populations who cannot be vaccinated, preventing outbreaks and epidemics. The collective benefit of vaccination extends beyond individual protection, contributing to a healthier and more resilient society. By embracing evidence-based practices and prioritizing vaccination, we can continue to safeguard public health and prevent the resurgence of preventable diseases.

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## **MEDICAL HUMANITARIAN MISSIONS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines existing literature on medical accessibility, humanitarian response, crisis intervention, restrictive policies, and *bodily autonomy*, examining their influence on healthcare outcomes. Medical humanitarian missions play a crucial role in addressing *healthcare disparities* in war-affected, developing, and restrictive regions. This review explores the effects of *restrictive abortion laws* and limited healthcare access, particularly in regions where policies affect reproductive rights. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the impact of *terrorism* on healthcare systems and obstacles to medical services and humanitarian operations in conflict zones. Additionally, it highlights the *healthcare challenges faced by refugees* including constraints to patient care and medical access. This review aims to provide a detailed overview of the factors controlling healthcare accessibility in crisis settings and considers potential strategies for improving medical humanitarian responses through policy and international collaboration.

**Keywords:** *Medical humanitarian aid, abortion access, terrorism, refugee aid, global health policy*

### **Medical Humanitarian Missions in the Developing World**

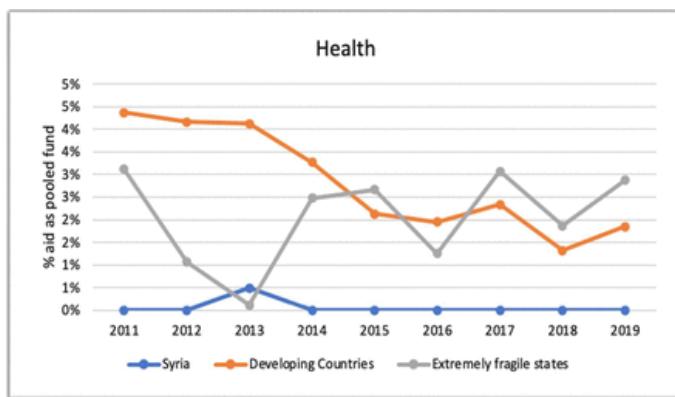
The Universal Declaration of Human rights states that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services (Article 25, UDHR). It reinforces that the right to life, liberty and security of a person are basic human rights (Article 3, UDHR). These articles highlight the importance of medical care and humanitarian aid for safeguarding human life.

In northern Iraq in October 2014, there were an estimated 2.8 million people who were in need of food and approximately 800,000 people in urgent need of emergency shelter. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) delivered supplies to camps in Iraq such as tent insulation and flooring which would keep refugees warm in the harsh winter months. (OCHA/Iason Athanasiadis, United Nations - Deliver Humanitarian Aid). The General Assembly created the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to provide emergency relief to 750,000 Palestine refugees, who had lost their homes and livelihoods as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. Today, around 5 million Palestine refugees are eligible for UNRWA services. Since its inception in 1948, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been actively involved in improving medical

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<sup>1</sup> Student Researcher, Department of Social Sciences, National Public School, ITPL Bangalore, ITPL Main Road, Whitefield, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, Email Id: [mounica.p@gmail.com](mailto:mounica.p@gmail.com)

care around the world and consistently managing to curb disease and health crises. These efforts strongly suggest that medical care and humanitarian efforts are successfully being carried out globally.



**Figure 1. Trends in Pooled Fund Health Aid as a Percentage of Total Aid (2011–2019).** This figure tracks the proportion of health sector aid delivered through pooled funds for three recipient groups: Developing Countries, Extremely fragile states, and Syria. The share for Developing Countries generally decreased from a high of around \$4.5% in 2011 to approximately \$2.5% in 2019. In contrast, the share for Extremely fragile states showed high volatility, with peaks in 2011 and 2017 (both over 3%) and a significant drop in 2013, recovering to near 3% by 2019. Pooled fund aid to Syria remained at or near 0% for the entire period, with a small peak around 1% in 2013.

Despite these efforts, numerous countries worldwide fail to uphold the basic human rights of their citizens by denying humanitarian access, medical care or imposing restrictive laws. The United Nations documented 3,931 cases of denial of humanitarian access in 2022 — mostly by Government forces. Medical Humanitarian Missions in the Developing World

Reproductive health is an essential yet often side-lined component of humanitarian aid worldwide, especially in crisis settings. The WHO, UNFPA and many such global healthcare organisations provide abortion or reproductive health services in war-zones, refugee camps, disaster affected areas and even advocate for the implementation of supportive reproductive health policies in developed countries. Restrictive laws in certain countries prevent these organisations from providing their services even in extreme medical emergencies or war related sexual violence. Terrorist activities and armed conflicts often disrupt healthcare infrastructure and violate the people's right to life. In this review I aim to examine the ongoing conditions of humanitarian and medical access in constrained countries and the violation of human rights due to restrictive laws such as denial of abortion or overall medical care. Additionally, I also intend to propose meaningful solutions for the existing state of affairs in terms of global healthcare access and provision of humanitarian aid.

## **Barriers to Medical Humanitarian Aid**

### **Restrictive Reproductive health policies**

To truly understand the current scenario of abortion and the rights associated with it, we must examine key questions: What is abortion, and under what circumstances is it performed? How do we define life? How does the value of a fetus' life compare to that of the mother? Why are some countries reversing or refusing the liberalization of abortion laws? What are the consequences of these restrictions on humanitarian aid and medical access? Let us examine the case of El Salvador, a country where abortion has been banned since 1998.

Before 1973, women in El Salvador who needed an abortion had no legal options, forcing many to risk their lives with unsafe, illegal procedures. To combat this issue, a new penal code was established in El Salvador, 1973 where abortion was permitted under three main conditions: if the pregnant woman's life was endangered and abortion was the only means to preserve it, if her pregnancy had resulted from rape or statutory rape, or if a serious congenital disorder was detected in the fetus. However, by the early 1990s, growing anti-abortion efforts, led by groups like the Christian Democratic Party and the 'Say Yes to Life' Foundation, began pushing for an absolute ban. In 1997, after the submission of a draft bill by the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), the Legislative assembly voted 61 out of 84 for no exceptions in the prohibition of abortion.

When the new law took effect in 1998, women who underwent a consensual abortion could be sentenced to two to eight years in prison. Those who performed abortions without the woman's consent faced can be sentenced to four to ten years in jail; if the person is a physician, pharmacist, or other health care worker, he or she is instead subject to between six and twelve years. The following year, in 1999, El Salvador went even further by amending its Constitution to recognize life from the moment of conception. For many Salvadoran women, these changes have made pregnancy into a life-or-death situation, leaving them without choices in the most vulnerable moments of their lives. Even women with miscarriages have received decades long sentences while poor women, indigenous women and rural women have been unfairly affected by these laws. Similarly, in Nicaragua—a country where approximately 6,750 girls between the ages of 10 and 14 are victims of sexual violence each year, and 1,300 become pregnant—a total ban on abortion was implemented in November 2006.

But why are countries rolling back on the liberalisation of abortion? Why are few other countries refusing to grant their citizens the right to abortion?

Over the past three decades almost 60 countries and territories have liberalised their abortion laws and abortion is being recognised as a basic human right. However, amidst the liberalisation efforts, some nations have rolled back the legality of abortion, the most notable one being The United States in recent years. Though a majority of Americans support abortion, the laws vary from state to state. For example, in the state of Texas abortion is illegal with limited exceptions while in the state of California it is legal before fetal viability and in states like Alaska it is legal at any stage. According to the

Centre for Reproductive Rights, 753 million women of reproductive age live under restrictive laws regarding abortion.

The NHS defines abortion as a way of ending pregnancy or termination of pregnancy. A survey conducted in 14 countries by the NIH reveals the most common reasons for abortion include socioeconomic concerns (27% to 40%), limiting childbearing (20% to 64%), partner-related issues, such as lack of support, were also frequently mentioned, along with concerns about being too young or facing family objections or health risks, whether maternal or fetal. Reasons for abortion can also vary based on sociodemographic factors such as age, marital status, education, and residence. Younger women often get abortions to postpone childbearing and/or partner-related concerns, whereas older women are more likely to get an abortion to limit childbearing. Married women frequently attribute it to space or delay pregnancies, while unmarried women often mention being too young or facing family objections. There are a multitude of other reasons for an abortion including sexual violence but if you decide to have an abortion, it should be done as soon as possible.

Any discussion about abortion is incomplete without a discussion on life and the ethical challenges faced when prioritising different lives. In a scientific context, life is typically defined as a self-sustaining chemical system capable of Darwinian evolution, characterized by the capacity for growth, metabolism, response to stimuli, adaptation, and reproduction. Deciding whether the mother or the fetus should be prioritized is a sensitive and complex issue. Both lives are important, but it is necessary to make a distinction to ensure fair and ethical decisions. The mother is a fully developed individual with legal rights, social responsibilities, and personal autonomy, while the fetus, especially in the early stages, depends entirely on her for survival. In most cases, medical and legal systems recognize that a person cannot be forced to use their body to sustain another life, similar to how organ donation is a choice. Viability, the stage when a fetus can survive outside the womb, is often used as a guideline in these discussions. For instance in India, if the pregnancy has not exceeded 12 weeks (first trimester), only one doctor needs to be satisfied that the conditions have been fulfilled, if the pregnancy has exceeded 12 weeks and is below 20 weeks (first trimester), two doctors need to be satisfied that the conditions have been fulfilled. The gestation period does not matter if doctor feels that an immediate abortion must be conducted to save your life. Pregnancy also brings physical, emotional, and financial challenges, and if the mother's health is at risk, prioritizing her is often necessary. Clearly defining these differences is important to protect both medical rights and personal freedoms.

Some may argue that life begins at conception or that a fetus is a developing newborn and denying it rights is analogous to denying the rights of newborns, kids and people with disabilities but it is important to note that while conception involves the formation of a zygote with a new DNA, the law does not grant rights purely based on biology because then, sperms and eggs would also have to be given rights for being potential human beings. Kids, coma patients and people with disabilities differ from a fetus by having established personhood—meaning they have been recognized as individuals with legal and societal relationships. A fetus, especially in the early stages, does not yet have independent existence or cognitive capabilities. This is why society differentiates

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between a miscarriage and the death of a newborn, and why abortion is treated differently from infanticide.

While abortion laws vary across countries, their implications extend far beyond national borders, influencing global health, human rights, and access to medical care. The lack of access to abortion or the stigma around it in society severely affects women's mental and physical well being. This inaccessibility violates the fundamental rights of women and young girls ,including the right to life; the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the right to benefit from scientific progress and its realization; the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number, spacing and timing of children; and the right to be free from torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment. Restrictive abortion regulation can force women and young girls to travel to receive medical care that can be a financial burden on them and is not accessible for women with low resources. According to the WHO, estimates from 2006 show that complications of unsafe abortions cost health systems in developing countries US\$ 553 million per year for post-abortion treatments and households experienced US\$ 922 million in loss of income due to long-term disability related to unsafe abortion. Legalisation of abortion reduces the number of unwanted pregnancies and thus ensures that the children being born are wanted and this in turn means that parents are more likely to invest on their children and their future including in girls' schooling. When countries criminalize abortion, it not only affects the women of that region but it also stops global healthcare efforts and health care workers from providing the women with reproductive healthcare and leads to the women turning to unsafe and illegal options which significantly affects the population as compared to legal and safe abortion procedures.

When abortion is banned or restricted, it teaches people that controlling women's bodies is normal. This contributes to a broader societal narrative where bodily autonomy and healthcare access are seen as optional rather than fundamental. Such laws reinforce gender inequalities by suggesting that women's rights are malleable. When such actions are normalized, it creates a ripple effect by influencing societal norms and leading some groups to justify restricting other essential medical support. In places already struggling with healthcare access, like countries in crisis settings, this mindset is bound to worsen disparities, leading us to the next concern: healthcare disruptions in crisis settings.

### **Healthcare Disruptions in Conflict Zones**

Terrorism is the use of violence, often against civilians, to create fear and achieve political or ideological goals, aiming to intimidate or coerce populations or governments. By instilling fear and exerting control through intimidation or coercion, terrorism can ultimately contribute to the violation of fundamental human rights. One of the most concerning examples of human rights violations due to terrorism or crisis can be observed in Afghanistan where women and girls are being stripped of their rights and life. Since August of 2021, the Taliban have imposed rules that violate the rights of women and girls in the country, ensuring that they are oppressed and do not have the ability to speak up for themselves. These include the freedom of speech and expression, the right to work, the right to be free from violence, the right to participate in public life but most importantly the right to education and access to healthcare services. As

discussed in earlier sections, access to quality healthcare is essential for all humans, across all genders, races, religions, age and disabilities.

In December 2022, the Taliban imposed a ban on higher education for girls and women which includes institutions that offer medical training. This closes the last remaining door for women in Afghanistan to access healthcare. The prohibition against women receiving care from male physicians, combined with the ban on their medical education, Afghan women are denied access to healthcare and are trapped in an endless cycle that violates their fundamental rights.

Another example of a poorly managed healthcare system is that of North Korea, where since the pandemic, the system has failed and ordinary people are paying the price. Before 2019, the people relied on informal trade with China to obtain medicine but since the beginning of the lockdown, the strict crackdowns and border control have left the citizens helpless. State run pharmacies are now short of medicines and private suppliers have been driven out by the crackdowns. In rural areas, such as Kimhyungjik County people have died of easily treatable conditions like appendicitis and diarrhea due to lack of basic medical supplies such as anaesthesia and IV fluids. The authorities have now loosened the crackdowns on people promoting folk remedies that are often inefficient such as cupping, acupuncture and needling. This has encouraged many people to poorly learn these folk techniques to make profits by treating desperate people. The idea of the free medical system has simply faded away, with doctors now asking their patients to buy their own medicines, that is, if they can even find it.

One of the lesser known barriers to healthcare in crisis settings is the attack on infrastructure and aid workers. Buildings belonging to relief organisations are attacked, vehicles and convoys hijacked, hospitals and schools attacked, and staff murdered or kidnapped. Such violence affects civilians and prevents millions of people from receiving life-saving assistance. On average, at least one aid worker is abducted, injured or killed every day. Since April 2023, over 100 aid workers have been killed in Sudan, 23 in Ukraine, and 399 in Gaza — including 289 UN staff members. About 95%, are local workers, who are the foundation of relief efforts and deserve respect, yet their deaths often receive little media attention. Humanitarian workers today face more than just violence. They are being criminalized for their efforts, targeted by false information, and held back by a lack of funding. All of this makes it harder for them to reach the people who need them the most.

Last updated: December 19, 2024

Data verified up to: December 31, 2023

More current data is available by accessing the database.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	▲ ▲
Number of incidents	281	247	272	283	276	229	160	164	150	194	265	170	152	132	
Total aid worker victims	595	459	466	484	481	409	315	296	290	340	474	277	309	252	
Total killed	280	118	141	117	125	131	140	109	111	130	159	71	86	74	
Total injured	224	146	203	242	234	147	103	99	110	89	179	115	127	85	
Total kidnapped*	91	195	122	125	122	131	72	88	69	121	136	91	96	93	
International victims	26	23	23	25	27	29	28	43	30	33	60	49	29	42	
National victims	569	436	443	459	454	380	287	253	260	307	414	228	280	210	
UN staff	243	76	55	58	37	70	48	71	44	71	115	48	92	44	
International NGO staff	178	177	203	228	260	186	109	161	173	152	142	97	135	152	
ICRC staff	6	0	5	8	2	5	14	10	3	16	14	3	5	10	
NRCS and IFRC staff	45	9	6	20	14	20	60	11	28	27	44	24	10	1	
NNGO staff	119	184	187	168	154	128	84	41	39	71	145	92	67	45	

**Figure 2. Annual Analysis of Major Security Incidents and Aid Worker Victims Worldwide (2010–2023).** This data provides a 14-year trend analysis of violence against aid workers, showing the Number of incidents and the resultant Total aid worker victims, including the number killed, injured, and kidnapped. The table highlights the increasing severity in recent years, with 2023 recording the highest number of incidents (281) and total victims (595). The data further distinguishes between National victims and International victims and provides a breakdown by organizational affiliation, noting that NNGO staff and UN staff consistently account for a significant portion of the casualties.

Source: <https://www.aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/report>

In crisis settings where healthcare is already compromised, displaced populations face even greater issues. In most places, refugees and asylum seekers often receive little to no support. Unlike citizens, they lack legal protections, identification, or stable shelter. As we shift focus to refugee healthcare I aim to highlight the challenges faced by refugees around the world.

### Refugee Healthcare Challenges

People run from war and destruction, not only with their belongings and family but also their trauma, wounds and urgent need for medical care. Among the affected groups, refugees are one of the most affected, often lost in unknown countries with no legal status, discrimination and routine denial of healthcare. Understanding the barriers to healthcare is crucial while addressing global healthcare disparities.

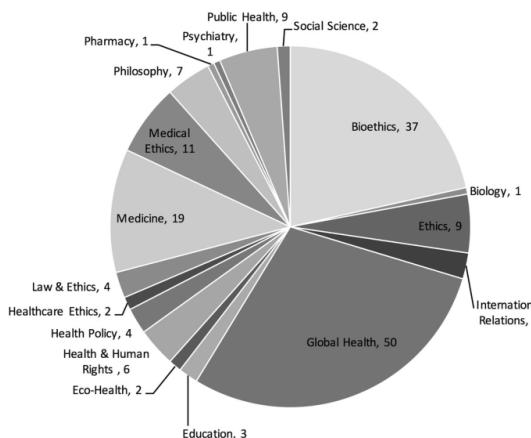
The Rohingya are a predominantly muslim ethnic group that was denied citizenship due to Myanmar's 1982 nationality law. They have faced discrimination and violence due to which many of them have fled to Bangladesh. As of 2024, almost half a million Rohingya children are living away from their home country in temporary camps and

shelters provided by humanitarian assistance. According to a survey conducted by Doctors without Borders in 2023 revealed that, almost a third of the adults in the camps have been exposed to hepatitis C infection at some point in their lives and that 20 percent have an active hepatitis C infection. It is estimated that 86,000 people in the camps have an active hepatitis C infection. The Rohingya population is paying the price for inadequate access to healthcare and discrimination against certain ethnic groups in their country of origin. A similar case can be observed in the country with the most refugees per capita and per square kilometre in the world, Lebanon. It is estimated that almost 1.5 million Syrian refugees and some 11,238 refugees of other nationalities are present in the country. While the country is facing its socio economic crisis, the citizens are faced with extreme poverty, failing systems and inadequate health care and almost 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees are dependent on humanitarian assistance for their healthcare.

Despite the promises made to protect refugees and immigrants, one of the major issues affecting their health is the discrimination and violence against them. Refugees also tend to have relatively high rates of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal tendencies. (Eckstein, 2011; Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; National Academy of Sciences, 2015). These issues combined with trauma, stress and fear can significantly contribute to their mental and physical well being. Furthermore, the underfunding of humanitarian assistance hinders the efforts being made to curb the refugee crisis. Nearly one million Rohingya refugees are facing a serious health crisis because of a lack of funding. Around 40,000 pregnant women could lose access to care, and 5,000 may have to give birth in unsafe conditions. About 19,000 children who are severely malnourished and 10,000 people with serious health problems might not get the treatment they need. Mental health support for 200,000 people and treatment for Hepatitis C for 10,000 others is also in danger among others. As refugees continue to face deep challenges in getting the care they need, it becomes equally important to look at the rules and restrictions that the people trying to help must navigate, especially how international law shapes their efforts.

### **Legal and Ethical Dilemmas in Global Health Policy**

Global health is a set of processes that occur at the intersections of transnational networks. Global Health Policy refers to the set of guidelines and strategies that govern the implementation and reception of health initiatives on a global scale, addressing the intersection of transnational networks and diverse theoretical approaches to ensure health equity for all. When it comes to global health, laws and policies can be both beneficial and disadvantageous. The way health rules are made across countries is complicated, especially because there's no single global body to make sure all countries follow the same rules. This becomes a big problem during crises. Refugees, women living under strict regimes, and people in war zones often don't get the medical help they need, not because it's inaccessible, but because legal and political systems stand in the way. To understand why healthcare fails in these settings, we need to look at how international rules are made and who gets to decide what's allowed and what isn't.



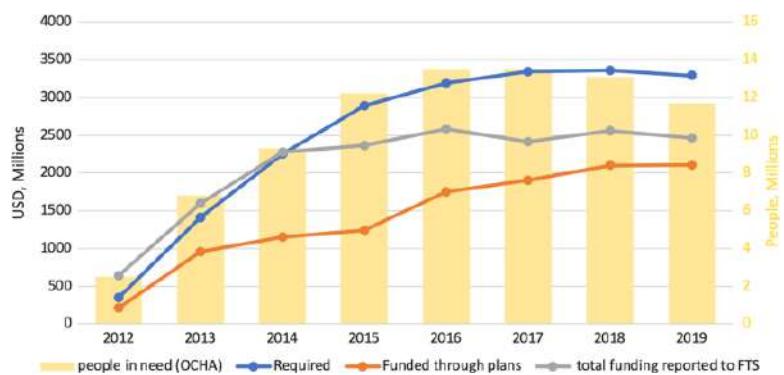
**Figure 3. Breakdown of Publications by Academic Discipline and Count.** The figure illustrates the disciplinary origin of the analyzed publications. Global Health is the dominant field, accounting for 50 publications, followed by Bioethics (37), and Medicine (19). Other notable contributions come from Medical Ethics (11), Ethics (9), and Public Health (9), while many disciplines contribute smaller single-digit numbers.

Government policies continue to influence the kind of healthcare that people receive especially when it comes to sectors like reproductive health. Restrictive policies such as the 'Global Gag Rule' established in the United States silence NGOs and healthcare workers in order to continue receiving funding for healthcare services. Under this policy, NGOs outside the United States and/or receiving U.S. global health assistance funds are prohibited from using this money or any of their own funds from any other sources to perform or actively promote abortion as "a method of family planning with the exception of women who have been subject to rape, incest or any other form of sexual violence. Such policies fail to take into account the lives of people in underdeveloped or crisis-stricken countries where abortion and many such procedures are necessary for maternal healthcare, child welfare and safety of the families. These restrictions go against the basic principle of humanitarian aid, medical neutrality. The restrictions are not only limited to states but can also be imposed by extremist non-state organisations.

As seen in Afghanistan, the Taliban's ban on girls' education and restrictions on female patients and doctors has created a system where half the population does not have access to adequate healthcare. Health care providers are left to obey the ones in power instead of being able to provide necessary treatment. The global crises where aid workers are positioned makes healthcare a battlefield for them as they fight to treat the people while facing threats of arrest, attacks, or being forced out.

Lebanon harbours over 1.5 million Syrian refugees, but it has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention. As a result, Syrians in Lebanon live without appropriate legal status, face discrimination in hospitals and are charged unaffordable fees. Many avoid seeking medical help due to the fear of being arrested or deported. Over a million

Rohingya refugees live in camps in Bangladesh, but their lack of legal status leaves them to completely rely on humanitarian aid. In 2023, a funding shortfall forced a reduction in funding of healthcare services.



**Figure 4. Evolution of Humanitarian Funding Requirements Versus Total Funding Reported and People in Need (2012–2019).** The figure illustrates the rising scale of global humanitarian crises from 2012 to 2019. The number of People in Need (OCHA) and the corresponding Required funding both show a steep increase, peaking around 2018 at over 13 million people and \$3.3 billion, respectively. While both Funded through plans and Total funding reported to FTS also increased substantially, a significant funding gap is evident, with total reported funding consistently falling below the required amount throughout the period.

Over 40,000 pregnant women lost access to medical care, and thousands of malnourished children were left without treatment. Government and non-government organisations and global policies have a lasting effect on global healthcare access, humanitarian aid and populations of desperate people. At the heart of every crisis is the political landscape, and to prevent the virus of poor healthcare access from mutating into something worse, we must begin by administering a vaccine within politics.

#### **Addressing the gaps through Global Health Laws and Institutions such as the UN**

There are seven key strategies that can be implemented to improve global health and humanitarian aid by enhancing legal framework and assistance provided by global entities such as UN, WHO and UNICEF and also state specific and international NGOs.

Firstly, a legally binding international treaty, under the UN or WHO, must be established which specifies the minimum healthcare access standards, such as sanitation, maternal care, and vaccinations. This would be similar to the Geneva Conventions but focus on healthcare. Examples of the success of such policies include the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) that was introduced by the WHO in 2003 to reduce the global consumption of tobacco and the International Health Regulations that help prevent and respond to public health risks. The power of law in shaping healthcare is

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often underutilised due to lack of awareness about individual rights such as the right to affordable, high quality health care.

Secondly, the domestic legalisation of humanitarian law by enforcing the Geneva Convention compliance in the context of healthcare. This includes building infrastructure, training personnel in humanitarian law, and respecting the emblem of institutions such as the Red Cross. Strengthening global protection for the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems is crucial to ensure safe passage of medical aid and field workers, even in non conflict zones or areas controlled by non-state entities. This approach has proved to be successful in Sri Lanka where the International Committee of Red Cross helped establish rules and infrastructure for the Jaffna Teaching Hospital after it was severely damaged.

Third, countries must collaborate with organisations like the WHO and NGOs. Consider the case of Liberia where post-conflict where the government worked with NGOs to rebuild medical infrastructure to strengthen their power and also to ensure safety of aid workers and provide tax exemptions for medical goods and streamline the process of obtaining medical equipment and goods. Additionally, in Sierra Leone before and during the Ebola outbreak where the government developed protocols under the guidance of WHO to effectively manage the resources and provide ethical care.

Fourth, a global health ethics council could be established to monitor and advise medical ethics, justice, and during emergencies, promote peace and ensure that safe aid is delivered. The body can consist of UN representatives and major NGOs from around the world. It would be similar to the UN Human Rights Council wherein human rights violations are monitored and addressed globally. The council has the right to hold any organisation or country accountable for any health violation and discrimination.

Finally, in the ever evolving line of AI and technology, the UN along with other global entities and tech firms can develop AI systems that scan for potential violations of global health laws in conflict zones and provide real time alerts to ensure that no stone is left unturned.

### **Improving Medical Infrastructure in Crisis Zones**

Health and peace go hand in hand in the context of development. Rebuilding medical infrastructure and reforming healthcare policies can promote peace and reconciliation in conflict zones. Strengthening healthcare systems ensures cross-community cooperation, rebuilds trust among divided populations, and encourages mutual understanding. In this way, health becomes not only a means of healing the wounded populations, but also a bridge for healing broken societies.

No development is complete without keeping the future in mind. Sustainable development does just that by keeping in mind the lives of future generations while also ensuring quality of life to the present populations. Sustainable practices must be adopted in improving medical infrastructure to ensure the healing of wounded populations while also ensuring a good life for the generations to come. Constructing container based clinics with recyclable and local materials and integrating solar panels, rainwater harvesting and natural ventilation systems maintains sustainable practices while saving

resources which are often scarce in conflict zones. Sustainable building materials such as bamboo, recycled steel, and locally sourced brick reduce environmental damage and costs. Renewable energy like solar panels and wind turbines reduce carbon emissions and low-carbon designs for mobile and container clinics significantly reduce their dependence on external factors for electricity, cooling, etc. These facilities are easily deployable, cost-effective, and significantly reduce environmental impact.

### **Expanding Access to Reproductive Healthcare**

Access to reproductive healthcare is a cornerstone to promote gender equality, public health and human rights. By recognising reproductive rights as human rights, we promote bodily autonomy, gender equality, equal access to healthcare and spread awareness on reproductive rights.

Make access to contraception, safe abortion, and maternal healthcare part of human rights frameworks. International bodies like the UNHRC and Centre for Reproductive Rights should pressure states to uphold these rights. We must also ensure NGOs and UN agencies include emergency contraception, post-rape care, and safe abortion in crisis settings. Legal frameworks should make reproductive health a mandatory aid and not secondary.

Education is the foundation for change. Comprehensive Reproductive and Sexual Education is crucial for spreading awareness, improving reproductive health outcomes and destigmatising essential reproductive health services. The government should mandate CSE in schools to cover topics such as consent, contraception, bodily autonomy, and rights. NGOs and UN agencies can help in developing the appropriate curriculums for the diverse populations. A UNESCO analysis revealed that countries with strong CSE policies, such as the Netherlands and Sweden, show significantly lower rates of teenage pregnancy and higher rates of contraceptive use.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This paper has explored how legal frameworks, global policies and partnerships, ethical challenges and cultural beliefs play a significant role in shaping healthcare as a whole. From refugee protection to healthcare infrastructure to reproductive health and sustainable strategies, the power of law and collaboration among populations is undoubtedly essential in reshaping the healthcare landscape. The successes in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Netherlands and Sweden showcase that change is not impossible and can be done with the right policies, assistance and cooperation. To progress as a safe and inclusive world we must recognize healthcare as a fundamental human right and not just a privilege. With the right legal tools and combined efforts, a future with equal, accessible healthcare is within our reach.

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## **BEHAVIORAL GENETICS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IDENTICAL TWINS**

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the behavioral differences observed in monozygotic (MZ) twins, challenging the notion of genetic determinism and emphasizing the complex interplay of genetic and environmental factors. While MZ twins share nearly identical DNA, they often exhibit significant variations in personality, cognitive abilities, and mental health. This research investigates the primary sources of these behavioral differences, focusing on the roles of epigenetics and non-shared environments. Epigenetic modifications, which alter gene expression without changing the DNA sequence, are shown to be crucial mediators between environmental exposures and behavioral outcomes. Non-shared environments, encompassing unique experiences such as differential parental treatment, peer interactions, and individual choices, contribute significantly to behavioral divergence. This study reviews existing research on personality traits, cognitive abilities, mental health, and behavioral habits in MZ twins, highlighting the limitations of solely genetic explanations. It underscores the importance of longitudinal studies tracking epigenetic changes and examining gene-environment interactions across the lifespan. The paper concludes by reiterating the significance of twin studies in unraveling the complexities of human behavior and advocating for a holistic approach that integrates genetic, epigenetic, and environmental considerations. The findings provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of behavioral development and the crucial role of individual experiences in shaping human behavior.

**Keywords:** *Monozygotic Twins, Behavioral Genetics, Epigenetics, Non-Shared Environment, Gene-Environment Interaction, Personality, Cognitive Abilities, Mental Health.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The field of behavioral genetics delves into the intricate relationship between genetic makeup and behavioral traits, seeking to unravel the complex interplay of inherited predispositions and environmental influences (Better Health Channel, 2024). At the heart of this discipline lies the fundamental question: to what extent are our behaviors determined by nature, and to what extent by nurture? Understanding this dynamic is crucial for comprehending the diversity of human behavior, from personality traits and cognitive abilities to the development of mental health conditions. Twin studies, particularly those involving monozygotic (MZ) twins, have proven to be invaluable tools in this endeavor. MZ twins, arising from a single fertilized egg that splits early in development, share nearly 100% of their DNA, offering a unique natural experiment to

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<sup>1</sup> Student Researcher, Department of Biological Sciences, Methodist College, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Email Id: [varshamanikantan08@gmail.com](mailto:varshamanikantan08@gmail.com)

disentangle the contributions of genes and environment (CDC, 2024). This genetic similarity provides a powerful baseline for observing behavioral variations, as any differences observed between MZ twins can be attributed primarily to environmental factors or epigenetic modifications, rather than genetic divergence. The very high degree of genetic relatedness in MZ twins makes them a critical subject of study for scientists aiming to understand how genetic predispositions manifest in observable behaviors, and how environmental factors can modulate these manifestations.

However, a perplexing paradox emerges when examining the behavioral profiles of MZ twins. While their genetic code is nearly identical, they often exhibit noticeable differences in personality, cognitive abilities, and susceptibility to certain mental health disorders (Better Health Channel, 2024). This observation challenges the simplistic notion of genetic determinism, raising a crucial question: if identical twins share the same genes, why do they differ in behavior? This research paper argues that the primary sources of behavioral differences between identical twins lie predominantly in the interplay of epigenetic factors and non-shared environmental influences. While genetic similarity provides the foundation, epigenetic modifications, which alter gene expression without changing the underlying DNA sequence, play a critical role in shaping individual behavioral trajectories. These modifications, often triggered by environmental exposures, can lead to significant variations in gene activity, resulting in divergent behavioral outcomes.

Moreover, the unique experiences and environments encountered by each twin, referred to as non-shared environments, exert a profound influence on their developing behaviors. These non-shared environments encompass a wide range of factors, including differential treatment by parents and peers, unique life events, and individual choices (CDC, 2024). By focusing on the roles of epigenetic mechanisms and non-shared environmental influences, this paper aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex factors that contribute to behavioral differences between identical twins. This approach moves beyond a simple nature versus nurture dichotomy, instead embracing the intricate, dynamic interaction between genes and environment that shapes human behavior.

### **Genetic Similarity and Epigenetic Differences**

#### **Monozygotic Twins and Genetic Identity**

When delving into the complexities of behavioral genetics, the study of monozygotic (MZ) twins occupies a position of paramount importance. The very foundation of their significance lies in their remarkable genetic similarity. Monozygotic twins originate from a single fertilized egg, which subsequently splits, resulting in two individuals who share, for all practical purposes, an identical genetic code (Eckert et al., 1986). This near-perfect genetic replication provides researchers with an unparalleled opportunity to isolate the effects of environmental influences on human behavior. It is this fundamental genetic identity that allows scientists to hold the "nature" variable relatively constant, thereby enabling a more precise assessment of the "nurture" variable.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the concept of "identical" is not absolute. While MZ twins share the vast majority of their DNA, subtle genetic variations can and do arise. These variations can occur due to mutations during the early stages of embryonic development. While these mutations are typically rare, they can introduce slight differences in the genetic makeup of MZ twins (Fraga et al., 2005). For instance, variations in the number of copy number variations (CNVs) or single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) can occur. These very small genetic differences, although minute, can have an effect on the eventual Phenotypic expression of the twins.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that even with nearly identical DNA, the way those genes are expressed can differ. This is where the concept of epigenetics comes into play, which will be discussed further in the next section (CDC, 2024). But it is important to establish here, that although the base code of the DNA is extremely similar, the activation, and deactivation of those genes can be different.

The recognition of these subtle genetic differences, although small, reinforces the understanding that even within the context of near-identical genetic constitutions, variability can exist. This nuance is critical for avoiding overly deterministic interpretations of genetic influences on behavior (Fraga et al., 2005). The knowledge that minute genetic variations can occur, helps to further solidify the importance of the study of MZ twins, in the study of behavioral genetics. Because it helps to establish a baseline of extremely similar genetic make up, while also allowing for the observation of other influences.

### **Epigenetics**

Building upon the foundation of near-identical DNA in monozygotic twins, the concept of epigenetics introduces a critical layer of complexity to understanding behavioral differences. Epigenetics refers to heritable changes in gene expression that occur without alterations to the underlying DNA sequence (Gottesman & Hanson, 2005). Essentially, it's the mechanism by which environmental factors can influence how genes are turned on or off, or how strongly they are expressed. These modifications act as a bridge between the static genetic code and the dynamic environment, allowing for phenotypic plasticity and adaptation.

Environmental factors play a crucial role in shaping epigenetic modifications. Exposures to various stimuli, including diet, stress, toxins, and social interactions, can trigger epigenetic changes that persist throughout an individual's lifespan (Gottesman & Hanson, 2005). These modifications can occur at various levels, including DNA methylation, histone modification, and non-coding RNA regulation. DNA methylation involves the addition of a methyl group to DNA, typically at cytosine residues, which can repress gene transcription. Histone modifications, on the other hand, involve chemical alterations to histone proteins, around which DNA is wrapped, influencing chromatin structure and gene accessibility. These processes, among others, can lead to stable changes in gene expression patterns, affecting cellular function and ultimately, behavior.

In the context of monozygotic twins, epigenetic differences can arise even from subtle variations in their shared environment. For instance, studies have shown that MZ twins can exhibit differences in DNA methylation patterns, particularly as they age (Javed,

2023). These differences can be attributed to variations in their lifestyle, diet, or exposure to environmental toxins. For example, one twin may have a diet high in methyl donors, leading to increased DNA methylation at specific genes, while the other twin may not. Histone modifications can also differ, with variations in the acetylation or methylation of histone tails impacting gene expression. Research has also shown that even prenatal environmental differences, such as slight variations in placental sharing, can lead to epigenetic variations that persist postnatally.

These epigenetic changes can have profound effects on behavioral outcomes. For example, differences in methylation patterns at genes involved in neurotransmitter signaling can influence personality traits or susceptibility to mental health disorders (Javed, 2023). Variations in histone modifications at genes related to stress response can affect an individual's resilience to adversity. Moreover, epigenetic changes can accumulate over time, leading to increasing behavioral divergence between MZ twins as they age. For example, if one twin experiences a traumatic event that causes epigenetic changes related to anxiety, they may develop an anxiety disorder, while the other twin, who didn't experience the trauma, may remain unaffected. This shows how epigenetic mechanisms can translate environmental exposures into long-lasting alterations in gene expression, ultimately shaping behavioral phenotypes. By understanding the role of epigenetics, we gain a deeper appreciation for the complex interplay between genes and environment in shaping human behavior, and why even those with near identical DNA, can have drastically different outcomes (Redei & Atanasova, 2014).

### **Gene-Environment Interactions**

The interplay between genes and environment, often referred to as gene-environment interaction, is a cornerstone of behavioral genetics, and it is particularly revealing when examining monozygotic (MZ) twins (Zhang et al. 2024). It's crucial to move beyond the simplistic notion of genes and environment as separate, independent forces. Instead, we must recognize that they are inextricably linked, constantly influencing and shaping each other to determine behavioral outcomes. The influence of genes is not a fixed, predetermined script; rather, it's a dynamic process that unfolds in response to environmental cues. Similarly, environmental exposures do not exert their effects in a vacuum; their impact is modulated by an individual's genetic predisposition.

One key aspect of gene-environment interaction is the concept of gene-environment correlation. This refers to the phenomenon where an individual's genotype influences their exposure to certain environments. There are three types of gene-environment correlation: passive, active, and evocative. Passive gene-environment correlation occurs when children inherit both genes and environments from their parents. For instance, children with parents who are musically inclined may inherit both musical talent and a musical environment. Active gene-environment correlation occurs when individuals actively seek out environments that are compatible with their genetic predispositions (Zhang et al. 2024). For example, individuals with a genetic predisposition for sensation-seeking may engage in risky behaviors. Evocative gene-environment correlation occurs when an individual's genotype elicits certain responses from their environment. For

instance, a child with a naturally sunny disposition may receive more positive attention from others.

Furthermore, gene-environment interaction involves the concept of gene-environment interaction proper, where the effect of a gene on behavior depends on the environment, or vice versa (Zhang et al. 2024). For example, a gene associated with aggression may only manifest in aggressive behavior when an individual is exposed to a stressful environment. Similarly, the impact of a stressful environment may be greater for individuals with a genetic predisposition for anxiety. This dynamic interplay can lead to substantial variability in behavioral outcomes, even among individuals with similar genetic backgrounds.

The study of MZ twins provides a powerful lens through which to examine these interactions. Because MZ twins share nearly identical genotypes, any differences in their behavioral responses to environmental exposures can be attributed to the interaction between their genes and unique environmental experiences. For instance, studies have shown that MZ twins who experience different levels of stress may exhibit varying degrees of vulnerability to mental health disorders (Zhang et al. 2024). This highlights the importance of considering both genetic and environmental factors in understanding the development of behavioral traits. The environment can act as a trigger, amplifier, or buffer for genetic predispositions. The same genetic predisposition can result in diverse behavioral outcomes depending on the environment in which it is expressed. By carefully considering these intricate interactions, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex origins of human behavior.

## **Environmental Influences**

### **Shared vs. Non-Shared Environments**

In the pursuit of understanding the behavioral divergences observed between monozygotic (MZ) twins, the delineation between shared and non-shared environmental influences is paramount. Environmental factors, broadly defined, encompass the myriad external stimuli that shape an individual's development (Zhang et al. 2024). However, not all environmental exposures are equal in their impact. Shared environments refer to those experiences that are common to both twins, such as family dynamics, socioeconomic status, and the general cultural milieu in which they are raised. These factors contribute to the similarities observed between twins, fostering a sense of shared identity and experience. For instance, both twins may experience similar parenting styles, attend the same schools, and be exposed to the same family values. These shared experiences tend to reinforce the genetic similarities between twins, contributing to the development of shared behavioral traits.

In contrast, non-shared environments encompass the unique experiences that are distinct to each twin. These individual experiences, which are not shared by their co-twin, play a pivotal role in shaping behavioral differences (Javed, 2023). Non-shared environments can include a wide range of factors, such as differential treatment by parents or peers, unique life events, distinct peer groups, and individual choices. For example, one twin

might have a particularly influential teacher, while the other might experience a significant health challenge. One twin may develop a close-knit group of friends with a specific set of interests, while the other pursues different social circles. These seemingly subtle differences can accumulate over time, leading to significant divergences in personality, cognitive abilities, and mental health.

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates the greater impact of non-shared environments on behavioral differences between MZ twins. While shared environments contribute to similarities, it is the unique, non-shared experiences that account for the majority of the variation observed. This is because shared environments, by definition, are held relatively constant within a twin pair (McGue & Bouchard, 1998). Therefore, any observed differences are more likely to stem from the variables that are not consistently shared. The power of non-shared environments lies in their ability to create individualized developmental pathways, even within the context of near-identical genetic predispositions. The accumulation of these unique experiences can lead to divergent behavioral trajectories, highlighting the importance of considering the individual's subjective experiences when studying behavioral genetics. It is through these non-shared experiences that the unique tapestry of each twin's life is woven, leading to the behavioral differences that make them distinct individuals.

### **Prenatal Environment**

The prenatal environment, the period encompassing fetal development within the womb, exerts a significant influence on the subsequent behavioral trajectories of monozygotic (MZ) twins. While MZ twins share nearly identical genetic material, variations in their prenatal experiences can contribute to behavioral differences (Zhang et al. 2024). A crucial factor is placental sharing. In monochorionic MZ twins, where both twins share a single placenta, unequal blood flow and nutrient distribution can occur, leading to disparities in fetal growth and development. This phenomenon, known as twin-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS), can have lasting effects on the twins' health and behavior. Even in dichorionic MZ twins, where each twin has its own placenta, subtle differences in placental function and blood supply can arise, impacting fetal development. Furthermore, exposure to environmental toxins during pregnancy can differentially affect each twin. Substances like alcohol, nicotine, and certain medications can cross the placental barrier and influence fetal brain development (Javed, 2023). Even subtle variations in exposure levels can lead to differences in neurological function and subsequent behavior. The position of the fetus within the womb, and therefore exposure to certain hormones, can also have an effect. The prenatal environment, therefore, represents a critical period of development during which subtle variations can have lasting consequences for behavioral outcomes.

### **Postnatal Environment**

Following birth, the postnatal environment assumes a central role in shaping the behavioral differences between MZ twins. Unique experiences accumulated throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood contribute to individual variations. One

significant factor is differential treatment by parents and peers (Moore, 2023). Even with the best intentions, parents may unconsciously treat their twins differently, leading to variations in self-perception and behavior. For example, one twin might be perceived as more athletic, while the other is seen as more academically inclined, leading to divergent developmental pathways. Peer interactions also play a crucial role. Twins may have different peer groups, leading to exposure to distinct social influences and behaviors. Individual choices and experiences, such as hobbies, interests, and career paths, further contribute to behavioral divergence. One twin might develop a passion for music, while the other pursues a career in science, shaping their personalities and behaviors in distinct ways. Exposure to different social and cultural influences also plays a significant role. Twins raised in different cultural contexts or exposed to diverse social environments may develop different values, beliefs, and behaviors (Moore. 2023). Even within the same family, exposure to differing social circles or information sources can create diverging social and cultural influences. These varied postnatal experiences contribute to the unique tapestry of each twin's life, leading to the behavioral differences that make them distinct individuals.

### **The Impact of Random Chance**

Beyond the systematic influences of genetics and environment, it is essential to acknowledge the role of random chance in shaping behavioral differences between MZ twins. Stochastic processes, or random events, can occur during development and throughout life, influencing behavioral outcomes in unpredictable ways (Petronics, 2010). For instance, random fluctuations in gene expression, neural connectivity, and environmental exposures can contribute to behavioral variability. Even with identical genes and similar environments, subtle variations in developmental processes can lead to significant differences in behavior. This concept highlights the inherent unpredictability of human development and the limitations of purely deterministic explanations. Random chance can manifest in seemingly minor events, such as a chance encounter or a random thought, which can have cascading effects on behavior. These random events, while difficult to quantify, underscore the complexity of human behavior and the importance of acknowledging the role of chance in shaping individual differences. It is important to remember that not all differences between twins can be explained by specific genetic or environmental factors (Moore, 2023). Some differences will inevitably arise from the inherent randomness of biological and developmental processes.

### **Behavioral Traits and Twin Studies**

#### **Personality Traits**

Twin studies have been instrumental in dissecting the complex interplay of genetic and environmental factors in shaping personality. Research consistently demonstrates that while genetics plays a substantial role in personality variation, environmental influences are equally significant, especially when examining monozygotic (MZ) twins (Zhang et al. 2024). Studies on personality differences in MZ twins reveal that even with near-

identical genetic constitutions, variations in personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are observed. These variations underscore the importance of non-shared environmental factors. Genetic studies often show strong heritability for personality traits, but these heritability estimates do not equate to genetic determinism. Rather, they highlight the propensity to develop certain traits. Environmental factors, ranging from early childhood experiences to adult life events, can modulate these genetic predispositions (Zhang et al. 2024). For example, stressful life events might amplify genetic vulnerabilities related to neuroticism, whereas positive social interactions could bolster traits related to extraversion and agreeableness. Therefore, the shaping of personality is a dynamic and ongoing process throughout the entire life span, affected by a constant reciprocal interaction, between genetic and environmental input.

### **Cognitive Abilities**

Research on cognitive abilities, particularly intelligence quotient (IQ), has also benefited immensely from twin studies. While genetic influences on IQ are well-documented, the importance of environmental factors in cognitive development cannot be overstated. Research demonstrates that while identical twins have very similar IQ scores, those scores can still differ. Factors such as prenatal environment, nutrition, education, and socioeconomic status can significantly impact cognitive development (Phillips, 2017). Studies show that environments stimulating cognitive development during childhood, such as access to educational resources and engaging social interactions, can have a strong influence. Conversely, environmental deprivation, such as exposure to toxins or chronic stress, can hinder cognitive development. Moreover, epigenetic modifications, influenced by environmental factors, can alter gene expression related to cognitive function. Therefore, the expression of cognitive abilities is a product of an ongoing, reciprocal interaction, between genes and environmental experience, and not a static genetically predetermined outcome.

### **Mental Health**

The discordance of mental health disorders in MZ twins provides compelling evidence for the role of environmental triggers in the development of mental illness. Disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression, while showing a significant genetic component, often exhibit variability within MZ twin pairs (Zhang et al. 2024). This variability indicates that while genetic vulnerability may exist, environmental factors can act as critical triggers. For example, stressful life events, exposure to toxins, and social isolation can contribute to the onset of mental health disorders in genetically predisposed individuals. Epigenetic modifications, triggered by environmental exposures, can also play a role in the development of mental illness. For example, early life stress can lead to epigenetic changes that increase susceptibility to depression. The study of mental health in MZ twins reinforces the concept that the expression of mental illness is not purely genetically predetermined, but is a complex interaction, between genes, and environment.

### **Behavioral Habits**

Lifestyle choices and behavioral habits can significantly contribute to the differences observed between MZ twins (Zhang et al. 2024). Although they share very similar genetic predispositions, the habits that they choose to take on, can have drastic effects. For example, Differences in diet, exercise, and substance use can lead to varying health outcomes, which in turn can influence behavior. One twin might adopt a healthy lifestyle, while the other might engage in risky behaviors, leading to divergent health trajectories. Furthermore, differences in social interactions and support networks can affect stress levels and coping mechanisms (Pishva, 2024). One twin might have a strong support system, while the other experiences social isolation, impacting their overall well-being and behavioral habits. In addition, habits such as sleeping patterns, and hobbies, can change the way that genes express themselves. The influence of behavioral habits highlights the active role individuals play in shaping their own behavioral outcomes, even within the context of near-identical genetic predispositions.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

#### **Implications for Behavioral Genetics Research**

The study of behavioral differences in monozygotic (MZ) twins carries profound implications for the broader field of behavioral genetics research. Primarily, it underscores the critical importance of considering epigenetic and environmental factors alongside genetic influences. Traditional genetic studies that focus solely on DNA sequences often fail to capture the full complexity of behavioral outcomes (Zhang et al. 2024). The observation of significant behavioral divergence in MZ twins, who share nearly identical DNA, highlights the limitations of relying solely on genetic explanations for behavior. Epigenetic modifications, which alter gene expression without changing the underlying DNA sequence, play a crucial role in mediating the interaction between genes and environment. These modifications, influenced by environmental exposures, can lead to substantial variations in gene activity and subsequent behavior. Therefore, future genetic studies should incorporate epigenetic analyses to provide a more comprehensive understanding of gene-environment interactions. Furthermore, the emphasis on non-shared environmental influences highlights the importance of considering individual experiences and subjective environments. Researchers should move beyond broad environmental categories and focus on identifying specific environmental factors that contribute to behavioral differences. This includes examining subtle variations in parenting styles, peer interactions, and life events (Sebastiano & Wossidlo, 2023). By incorporating epigenetic and environmental considerations, researchers can develop more nuanced and accurate models of behavioral development. The study of MZ twins serves as a powerful reminder that human behavior is a product of a dynamic interplay between genes and environment, and that a holistic approach is essential for unraveling its complexities.

#### **Future Research**

The field of behavioral genetics is ripe with opportunities for future research, particularly in the context of MZ twin studies. One promising avenue is the implementation of longitudinal studies that track epigenetic changes in MZ twins across the lifespan. By following twins over time, researchers can examine how environmental exposures and life experiences influence epigenetic modifications and subsequent behavioral outcomes (Sharp et al., 2005). This approach can provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of gene-environment interactions and the long-term effects of environmental exposures. Another crucial area of research is the examination of the interaction between genes, environment, and behavior across the lifespan. Studies that investigate how genetic predispositions and environmental influences shape behavioral development from early childhood to adulthood are essential for understanding the complex origins of human behavior. This includes studying how early life experiences can have lasting effects on behavioral trajectories and how genetic vulnerabilities can be amplified or buffered by environmental factors (Van Dongen et al., 2023). Furthermore, the increased utilization of advanced genetic sequencing technologies, such as whole-genome sequencing and single-cell sequencing, holds immense potential for advancing our understanding of behavioral genetics. These technologies can provide a more detailed and precise analysis of genetic and epigenetic variations, allowing researchers to identify specific genes and epigenetic modifications that contribute to behavioral differences. Additionally, the integration of multi-omics data, including genomics, epigenomics, transcriptomics, and proteomics, can provide a more comprehensive view of the biological mechanisms underlying behavioral traits. The incorporation of advanced neuroimaging techniques will also allow for a more in depth look at the biological underpinnings of behavioral differences. By embracing these innovative research strategies, scientists can further unravel the intricate interplay of genes and environment in shaping human behavior.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper has explored the fascinating phenomenon of behavioral differences between monozygotic (MZ) twins, highlighting the intricate interplay of genetic and environmental factors that shape human behavior. Key findings underscore the limitations of solely genetic explanations, emphasizing the pivotal roles of epigenetic modifications and non-shared environmental influences. While MZ twins share nearly identical DNA, subtle genetic variations and, more importantly, epigenetic changes driven by environmental exposures contribute to significant behavioral divergences. The impact of non-shared environments, encompassing unique experiences and individual choices, further amplifies these differences, demonstrating that even within a context of genetic similarity, individual trajectories can vary considerably.

The research presented here reiterates the complex and dynamic interplay between genetic predispositions and environmental exposures. Human behavior is not a static, predetermined outcome of genetic code, but rather a fluid and adaptable response to environmental cues. Epigenetic mechanisms provide a crucial link, allowing environmental factors to modulate gene expression and shape behavioral phenotypes. The importance of non-shared environmental influences highlights the significance of individual experiences and subjective environments in shaping behavioral outcomes.

This understanding moves beyond the simplistic nature versus nurture dichotomy, embracing a more nuanced and integrated perspective.

The study of MZ twins remains an indispensable tool for unraveling the complexities of human behavior. Their unique genetic similarity allows researchers to isolate and examine the effects of environmental factors, providing valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying behavioral differences. Longitudinal studies tracking epigenetic changes, investigations into gene-environment interactions across the lifespan, and the utilization of advanced genetic sequencing technologies hold immense potential for further advancing our understanding. By embracing these innovative research strategies, scientists can continue to refine our understanding of the intricate interplay between genes and environment, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive and accurate model of human behavior. The study of twins, therefore, remains a cornerstone of behavioral genetics, offering a powerful window into the complex origins of who we are.

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**GAURISHA SINGH<sup>1</sup>**

**(20)**

**DHARMENDRA PRATAP SINGH<sup>2</sup>**

## **HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE**

### **ABSTRACT**

Huntington's disease (HD), a progressive neurodegenerative disorder, stems from a CAG trinucleotide repeat expansion within the huntingtin (HTT) gene, yielding mutant huntingtin protein (mHTT). This review synthesizes current knowledge on HD's pathogenesis, clinical presentation, and therapeutic landscape. mHTT's toxicity involves intricate molecular mechanisms, including protein misfolding, transcriptional dysregulation, and mitochondrial dysfunction, culminating in neuronal degeneration, particularly within the striatum and cortex. Clinically, HD manifests as a triad of motor, cognitive, and psychiatric symptoms. Chorea, cognitive decline, and mood disturbances progressively impair quality of life. Diagnosis relies on genetic testing, confirming the expanded CAG repeat. While a cure remains elusive, current management focuses on symptomatic relief using medications like tetrabenazine for chorea and antidepressants for psychiatric disturbances. Emerging therapies, including gene silencing through RNA interference and antisense oligonucleotides, alongside HTT-lowering drugs and neuroprotective agents, hold promise for future interventions. However, challenges persist in delivering therapeutics to the brain and accurately predicting disease progression. Future research should prioritize biomarker development and targeted therapies to combat this devastating disease.

**Keywords:** Huntington's disease, neurodegenerative disorder, huntingtin gene, HTT, mutant huntingtin protein, mHTT, chorea, CAG repeat, gene silencing, neuroprotection, therapeutics.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Huntington's disease (HD), a devastating autosomal dominant neurodegenerative disorder, affects a significant portion of the global population, impacting roughly 5-10 individuals per 100,000 (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). Its hallmark features include progressive motor dysfunction, cognitive decline, and debilitating psychiatric disturbances, culminating in premature mortality. The identification of the genetic basis of HD in 1993, the expansion of a CAG trinucleotide repeat within the HTT gene encoding huntingtin protein, revolutionized our understanding of the disease. This

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<sup>1</sup> Student Researcher, Department of Biology, Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram, C-04, Sector 61, Noida (201301), India, Email Id: [gaurisha1106@gmail.com](mailto:gaurisha1106@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Faculty Mentor, Department of Biology, Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram, C-04, Sector 61, Noida (201301), India, Corresponding Email Id: [dpsinghiasup@gmail.com](mailto:dpsinghiasup@gmail.com)

genetic mutation leads to the production of a mutant huntingtin protein (mHTT), which triggers a cascade of detrimental cellular events (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). The pathogenesis of HD is complex, involving intricate molecular mechanisms such as mHTT misfolding and aggregation, leading to the formation of inclusion bodies that disrupt cellular homeostasis.

Furthermore, mHTT interferes with crucial cellular processes, including transcriptional regulation, mitochondrial function, and axonal transport, contributing to neuronal dysfunction and eventual cell death. Excitotoxicity, mediated by glutamate, and neuroinflammation, characterized by the activation of microglia and astrocytes, further exacerbate neuronal damage. The selective vulnerability of neurons, particularly within the striatum and cortex, underlies the characteristic motor and cognitive symptoms observed in HD patients (Dayalu & Albin, 2015).

Clinically, HD manifests as a triad of motor, cognitive, and psychiatric symptoms. Motor symptoms, prominently chorea, involuntary jerky movements, progress to include dystonia, rigidity, and bradykinesia, significantly impairing motor coordination and functionality. Cognitive decline affects various domains, including executive function, attention, memory, and visuospatial abilities, impacting daily living. Psychiatric disturbances, such as depression, anxiety, irritability, and psychosis, are common and can precede or accompany motor and cognitive symptoms, adding to the disease's complexity. Diagnosis relies on genetic testing, confirming the expanded CAG repeat within the HTT gene (Dayalu & Albin, 2015).

While a cure remains elusive, current therapeutic strategies focus on symptomatic management. Medications like tetrabenazine and deutetrabenazine alleviate chorea, while antidepressants and antipsychotics address psychiatric symptoms. Supportive care, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy, plays a crucial role in maintaining functional abilities. Emerging therapies, such as gene silencing using RNA interference and antisense oligonucleotides, HTT-lowering drugs, neuroprotective agents, and stem cell therapy, hold promise for future interventions.

However, challenges persist in delivering therapeutics to the brain and accurately predicting disease progression. Future research should prioritize the development of reliable biomarkers and targeted therapies to combat this devastating neurodegenerative disorder (Dayalu & Albin, 2015).

#### **Genetic Basis and Pathogenesis:**

The genetic foundation of Huntington's disease (HD) lies within the HTT gene, situated on chromosome 4, which normally codes for the huntingtin protein (Nopoulos, 2016). This protein is essential for various neuronal functions, including vesicle trafficking, signal transduction, and neuroprotection. In individuals with HD, a critical mutation occurs: an expanded CAG trinucleotide repeat within the HTT gene. This expansion results in the production of a mutant huntingtin protein (mHTT) characterized by an elongated polyglutamine (polyQ) tract. The length of this CAG repeat is a key determinant of disease onset; longer repeats lead to earlier manifestation of symptoms, demonstrating a strong inverse correlation.

The pathogenic cascade initiated by mHTT is multifaceted and complex, driving neurodegeneration through several interconnected mechanisms. Firstly, protein misfolding and aggregation occur as the elongated polyQ tract in mHTT causes the protein to misfold and aggregate, forming inclusion bodies (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). These aggregates disrupt normal cellular processes, interfering with protein trafficking and cellular signaling. Secondly, transcriptional dysregulation arises as mHTT interacts with transcription factors, altering the expression of various genes crucial for neuronal survival and function. This dysregulation can lead to the downregulation of neuroprotective genes and the upregulation of pro-apoptotic genes. Also, excitotoxicity is heightened as mHTT sensitizes neurons to glutamate, the primary excitatory neurotransmitter. Excessive glutamate signaling leads to neuronal overexcitation and subsequent cell death.

In addition, mitochondrial dysfunction occurs as mHTT impairs mitochondrial function, reducing ATP production and increasing oxidative stress (Nopoulos, 2016). This energy deficit and oxidative damage contribute to neuronal vulnerability. Also, impaired axonal transport arises as mHTT disrupts the transport of essential molecules along axons, hindering neuronal communication and survival. Alternatively, neuroinflammation is triggered by the activation of microglia and astrocytes, the brain's resident immune cells. While intended to protect, chronic neuroinflammation contributes to neuronal damage. Lastly, impaired protein degradation occurs due to dysfunction of the ubiquitin-proteasome system and autophagy, the cellular mechanisms responsible for clearing misfolded proteins. This impaired clearance leads to the accumulation of toxic mHTT aggregates (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). These combined processes ultimately result in the selective degeneration of neurons, particularly in the striatum and cortex, which are brain regions critical for motor control and cognitive function, respectively, leading to the hallmark motor and cognitive symptoms of HD.

#### **Clinical Manifestations:**

Huntington's disease (HD) manifests as a complex interplay of motor, cognitive, and psychiatric symptoms, forming a debilitating triad that progressively erodes an individual's quality of life. The hallmark motor symptom, chorea, characterized by involuntary, jerky movements, often serves as the initial observable manifestation (Rawlins et al., 2016). As the disease progresses, other motor dysfunctions emerge, including dystonia, marked by sustained muscle contractions leading to twisting and repetitive movements or abnormal postures; rigidity, an increased muscle tone causing stiffness and resistance to passive movement; bradykinesia, a slowness of movement; and impaired coordination, affecting balance and fine motor skills. These motor symptoms significantly impact daily activities, hindering mobility, dexterity, and overall functional independence. Cognitive decline, another integral component of HD, affects a broad spectrum of cognitive domains.

Additionally, executive function, encompassing planning, decision-making, and problem-solving, is significantly compromised, impacting the individual's ability to manage daily tasks and maintain employment (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). Attention deficits, characterized by difficulty focusing and maintaining concentration, further impair cognitive abilities. Memory impairment, affecting both short-term and long-term recall, disrupts the individual's ability to learn and retain information. Visuospatial

abilities, which involve spatial awareness and the ability to perceive and manipulate visual information, are also affected, impacting tasks such as navigation and construction. These cognitive impairments progressively erode the individual's intellectual capacity and independence. Furthermore, psychiatric disturbances, encompassing depression, anxiety, irritability, and psychosis, are commonly observed in HD patients. These symptoms can precede or accompany motor and cognitive decline, significantly impacting the individual's emotional well-being and social functioning (Rawlins et al., 2016). Depression, characterized by persistent sadness, loss of interest, and feelings of hopelessness, can exacerbate cognitive and motor impairments. Anxiety, manifesting as excessive worry and fear, can further impair daily functioning. Irritability, characterized by increased frustration and anger, can strain interpersonal relationships. Psychosis, marked by hallucinations and delusions, can severely disrupt the individual's perception of reality.

#### **Diagnosis and Assessment:**

The diagnosis and assessment of Huntington's disease (HD) rely on a multi-faceted approach, integrating clinical evaluation, family history, and definitive genetic testing. Clinical evaluation involves a thorough neurological examination to assess motor, cognitive, and psychiatric symptoms (Reiner et al., 2011). The presence of characteristic motor manifestations, such as chorea, dystonia, and bradykinesia, alongside cognitive decline and psychiatric disturbances, raises suspicion for HD. A detailed family history is crucial, as HD is an autosomal dominant disorder, meaning that a 50% chance exists of inheriting the mutated gene if one parent is affected (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). However, de novo mutations can occur, although rarely. Genetic testing provides the definitive diagnosis, confirming the presence of an expanded CAG trinucleotide repeat within the HTT gene. This test quantifies the number of CAG repeats, which is directly correlated with the probability and age of onset of HD.

Beyond genetic confirmation, neuroimaging techniques play a significant role in assessing brain changes associated with HD. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) provides detailed structural images of the brain, allowing for the visualization of brain atrophy, particularly in the striatum and cortex, which are prominently affected in HD (Reiner et al., 2011). Positron emission tomography (PET) scans can assess metabolic changes in the brain, revealing altered glucose metabolism in affected regions. These neuroimaging modalities contribute to understanding disease progression and monitoring the effects of potential therapies.

Clinical rating scales are essential tools for quantifying disease severity and tracking progression. The Unified Huntington's Disease Rating Scale (UHDRS) is the most widely used scale, encompassing motor, cognitive, behavioral, and functional assessments. The UHDRS provides a comprehensive evaluation of the individual's disease burden, enabling clinicians to monitor disease progression and assess the effectiveness of interventions (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). The Total Functional Capacity (TFC) scale, a component of the UHDRS, specifically assesses the individual's ability to perform daily activities. These scales are vital for clinical trials and research studies, providing standardized measures to evaluate disease progression and treatment response. They also help to personalize treatment plans and provide appropriate support to individuals with HD and their families.

### **Therapeutic Strategies:**

The therapeutic landscape for Huntington's disease (HD) is currently focused on symptomatic management and supportive care, as a definitive cure remains elusive. However, promising emerging therapies are under investigation, offering hope for future interventions.

**Symptomatic Treatment:** This approach aims to alleviate the debilitating symptoms of HD, improving the individual's quality of life. Chorea, the characteristic involuntary movements, can be managed with medications like tetrabenazine and deutetrabenazine (Andhale & Shrivastava, 2022). These vesicular monoamine transporter 2 (VMAT2) inhibitors reduce dopamine levels, thereby lessening choreic movements. However, these drugs can have side effects, including depression, sedation, and parkinsonism. Psychiatric symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis, are addressed with antidepressants like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors - SSRIs and antipsychotics like atypical antipsychotics. Careful monitoring and dosage adjustments are crucial to minimize side effects and optimize symptom control.

**Supportive Care:** This holistic approach focuses on maintaining functional abilities and maximizing independence. Physical therapy helps manage motor symptoms, improving balance, coordination, and strength. Occupational therapy assists with adapting daily activities and modifying the environment to enhance independence. Speech therapy addresses communication and swallowing difficulties, which are common in later stages of HD (Andhale & Shrivastava, 2022). A multidisciplinary team, including social workers and psychologists, provides emotional support and resources to individuals and their families.

### **Emerging Therapies**

These innovative strategies target the underlying pathogenesis of HD, aiming to slow or halt disease progression.

**Gene Silencing:** This approach utilizes RNA interference (RNAi) and antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs) to reduce the expression of the mutant huntingtin (mHTT) gene. RNAi involves introducing small interfering RNAs (siRNAs) that target and degrade mHTT mRNA. ASOs are single-stranded DNA molecules that bind to mHTT mRNA, preventing its translation. These strategies aim to reduce the production of toxic mHTT protein. Clinical trials are underway to evaluate the safety and efficacy of these gene silencing therapies (Dayalu & Albin, 2015).

**HTT Lowering Drugs:** Small molecules are being developed to reduce HTT protein levels through various mechanisms. These drugs target different stages of HTT production or clearance, aiming to decrease the overall burden of mHTT in the brain. Some of these drugs are designed to increase the degradation of the mHTT protein.

**Neuroprotective Agents:** These therapies target specific pathogenic pathways involved in HD, such as mitochondrial dysfunction, excitotoxicity, and neuroinflammation. Drugs that enhance mitochondrial function, reduce glutamate-mediated excitotoxicity, or modulate neuroinflammation are being explored (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). These agents aim to protect neurons from the damaging effects of mHTT.

**Stem Cell Therapy:** This experimental approach involves transplanting stem cells into the brain to replace lost neurons. Neural stem cells have the potential to differentiate into various neuronal subtypes, potentially restoring lost function. However, significant challenges remain, including ensuring stem cell survival, differentiation, and integration into the existing neural circuitry.

These emerging therapies offer hope for future treatments that could significantly impact the course of HD. Ongoing research and clinical trials are crucial to translate these promising strategies into effective therapies for individuals affected by this devastating disease.

## Challenges and Future Directions:

The pursuit of effective treatments for Huntington's disease (HD) is fraught with significant challenges, demanding innovative research and strategic approaches. The inherent complexity of mutant huntingtin (mHTT) toxicity poses a substantial hurdle (Walker, 2007). The multifaceted nature of mHTT's pathogenic mechanisms, involving protein misfolding, transcriptional dysregulation, mitochondrial dysfunction, and neuroinflammation, necessitates a comprehensive understanding of these interconnected pathways. Moreover, the lack of reliable biomarkers to track disease progression and treatment response hinders the development and evaluation of therapeutic interventions. Current clinical assessments rely heavily on subjective measures, limiting the ability to accurately quantify disease burden and monitor treatment efficacy (Walker, 2007). Furthermore, delivering drugs effectively to the brain, particularly across the blood-brain barrier (BBB), remains a significant obstacle. Many potential therapeutic agents cannot readily cross the BBB, limiting their efficacy in targeting the affected brain regions.

To overcome these challenges and advance HD research, future directions should prioritize several key areas. Firstly, identifying key pathogenic pathways and developing targeted therapies is crucial. A deeper understanding of the molecular mechanisms underlying mHTT toxicity will enable the development of drugs that specifically target these pathways (Gonzalez-Alegre, 2006). This includes exploring strategies to modulate protein misfolding, restore transcriptional dysregulation, enhance mitochondrial function, and dampen neuroinflammation. Secondly, developing reliable biomarkers for disease progression and treatment response is essential for accelerating drug development and clinical trials. Biomarkers, such as neuroimaging markers, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) markers, and peripheral blood markers, can provide objective measures of disease severity and track treatment efficacy.

In addition, improving drug delivery to the brain is paramount. Innovative drug delivery systems, such as nanoparticle-based delivery, viral vectors, and focused ultrasound, can enhance drug penetration across the BBB and improve targeted delivery to affected brain regions. Also, conducting large-scale clinical trials is necessary to evaluate the efficacy and safety of new therapies. Well-designed clinical trials with clearly defined endpoints and rigorous statistical analysis are essential for demonstrating the clinical benefit of potential treatments. Lastly, developing therapies that address the full spectrum of HD symptoms is crucial for improving the quality of life for individuals with HD (Dayalu & Albin, 2015). This includes targeting not only motor symptoms but also cognitive and psychiatric manifestations, which significantly impact daily functioning and well-being.

A holistic approach that integrates pharmacological interventions with supportive care, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy, is essential for comprehensive disease management. Collaborative efforts among researchers, clinicians, and patient advocacy groups are vital for accelerating progress in HD research and translating scientific discoveries into effective treatments.

### **CONCLUSION**

Huntington's disease (HD) stands as a formidable neurodegenerative disorder, inflicting profound motor, cognitive, and psychiatric decline upon affected individuals. Its complex pathogenesis, rooted in the expanded CAG repeat within the HTT gene and the subsequent production of mutant huntingtin (mHTT) protein, presents a formidable challenge to researchers and clinicians alike. Despite the absence of a definitive cure, the scientific community has made substantial strides in unraveling the intricate mechanisms of mHTT toxicity, paving the way for potential therapeutic interventions. The identification of key pathogenic pathways, including protein misfolding, transcriptional dysregulation, and mitochondrial dysfunction, has provided valuable targets for drug development.

The evolution of diagnostic techniques, particularly genetic testing and neuroimaging, has enhanced our ability to accurately identify and monitor HD progression. Clinical rating scales, such as the UHDRS, have standardized disease assessment, facilitating clinical trials and providing objective measures of treatment efficacy. Current therapeutic strategies, while primarily focused on symptomatic management, have improved the quality of life for individuals with HD. Medications like tetrabenazine and deutetrabenazine alleviate chorea, while antidepressants and antipsychotics address psychiatric disturbances. Supportive care, encompassing physical, occupational, and speech therapy, plays a pivotal role in maintaining functional abilities and promoting independence.

Looking forward, the future of HD research holds immense promise. Emerging therapies, including gene silencing techniques utilizing RNA interference and antisense oligonucleotides, HTT-lowering drugs, neuroprotective agents, and stem cell therapy, offer hope for disease modification and potential cures. Overcoming the challenges of drug delivery to the brain and developing reliable biomarkers will be crucial for translating these promising strategies into clinical practice. A concerted effort, encompassing basic research, clinical trials, and patient advocacy, is essential to accelerate progress and ultimately improve the lives of individuals with HD and their families. The ongoing dedication of the scientific community and the unwavering support of patient advocacy groups provide a beacon of hope in the fight against this devastating disease.

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## **IMPACT OF POOR SLEEP QUALITY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH**

### **ABSTRACT**

Poor sleep quality is a pervasive issue with significant implications for both psychological and physical health. This paper examines the multifaceted impact of inadequate sleep, encompassing various dimensions of well-being. We explore the established links between disrupted sleep and mood disorders, including increased susceptibility to depression and anxiety. Furthermore, we delve into the cognitive impairments associated with poor sleep, such as diminished attention, memory deficits, and impaired decision-making. The physical consequences of chronic sleep deprivation are equally profound, encompassing heightened risks of cardiovascular diseases, metabolic dysregulation leading to type 2 diabetes and obesity, and a weakened immune system. We also investigate the bidirectional relationship between psychological distress and sleep disturbances, highlighting the synergistic effects that exacerbate both mental and physical health issues. This paper emphasizes the critical role of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis in mediating the stress response and its interplay with sleep regulation. Finally, we discuss potential interventions, including lifestyle modifications, cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), and medical treatments, while suggesting future research directions. Addressing sleep disorders is crucial for promoting overall well-being and mitigating the adverse health outcomes associated with poor sleep.

**Keywords:** *Sleep Quality, Psychological Health, Physical Health, Insomnia, Mood Disorders, Cardiovascular Health, Cognitive Function.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sleep, a fundamental biological necessity, serves as a cornerstone of human physiology, orchestrating a complex array of restorative processes crucial for both mental and physical well-being (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2024). Its importance extends beyond mere rest, encompassing vital functions such as cellular repair, memory consolidation, and immune system regulation. However, in contemporary society, the prevalence of poor sleep quality has reached epidemic proportions, posing a significant threat to individual and public health. This decline in sleep health manifests in various forms, including insomnia, characterized by difficulty initiating or maintaining sleep; sleep apnea, marked by repeated interruptions in breathing during sleep; and fragmented sleep, where sleep cycles are frequently disrupted, leading to a sense of unrefreshing rest (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2024). These conditions, often intertwined

<sup>1</sup> Student Researcher, Department of Health and Biological Studies, Private International English School, Musaffah, Abu Dhabi, UAE, Email Id: [gayupakkers@gmail.com](mailto:gayupakkers@gmail.com)

and exacerbated by modern lifestyles, contribute to a pervasive sense of sleep deprivation, impacting a substantial portion of the global population. The relentless demands of work, the constant stimulation of technology, and the increasing pressures of daily life have collectively eroded the sanctity of sleep, creating a society where chronic sleep disturbances are increasingly normalized.

Consequently, the pervasive nature of poor sleep quality necessitates a comprehensive examination of its far-reaching consequences. This research paper aims to explore the significant and multifaceted impact of poor sleep quality on both psychological and physical health, providing a detailed analysis of the intricate connections between sleep disruption and overall well-being. By focusing on the interplay between sleep and health, this paper seeks to highlight the critical importance of prioritizing sleep in the pursuit of optimal health. Specifically, this paper will delve into the psychological ramifications of poor sleep, examining its influence on mood disorders such as depression and anxiety, cognitive function, including memory and concentration, and the exacerbation of pre-existing mental health conditions.

Furthermore, it will explore the physical health consequences, investigating the links between sleep deprivation and cardiovascular health, metabolic disorders, immune system function, and the regulation of pain and inflammation. By systematically analyzing these diverse impacts, this paper will demonstrate the profound and interconnected nature of sleep's influence on both the mind and body, underscoring the urgent need for greater awareness and effective interventions to address the growing public health challenge of poor sleep quality.

## **Psychological Impacts of Poor Sleep Quality**

### **Mood Disorders**

The intricate relationship between sleep and psychological health is profoundly evident in the development and exacerbation of mood disorders (Sleep Foundation, 2024). Poor sleep quality stands as a significant risk factor for both depression and anxiety, conditions that often coexist and mutually reinforce each other. The disruption of normal sleep patterns, whether through insomnia, fragmented sleep, or sleep apnea, creates a cascade of neurobiological changes that directly impact emotional regulation. At the core of this connection lies the delicate balance of neurotransmitters, the chemical messengers that govern mood and behavior. Sleep disruption profoundly affects the regulation of key neurotransmitters, most notably serotonin and dopamine. Serotonin, crucial for mood stabilization and emotional well-being, is often diminished in individuals experiencing chronic sleep deprivation. This reduction contributes to feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and the diminished pleasure associated with depression.

Similarly, dopamine, associated with motivation, reward, and pleasure, is also affected by sleep disturbances. The resulting imbalance leads to anhedonia, decreased motivation, and heightened anxiety (Sleep Foundation, 2024).

The consequences of these neurochemical alterations extend beyond clinical diagnoses, manifesting in everyday emotional experiences. Individuals suffering from poor sleep quality frequently report increased irritability, a heightened sensitivity to stress, and

pronounced mood swings. The ability to manage emotional responses becomes compromised, leading to disproportionate reactions to minor stressors and a general sense of emotional instability. This emotional volatility can significantly impact interpersonal relationships, work performance, and overall quality of life. The cyclical nature of this relationship is particularly concerning; poor sleep can trigger or worsen mood disorders, while conversely, the distress and anxiety associated with these disorders can further disrupt sleep patterns (Sleep Foundation, 2024). This creates a self-perpetuating cycle of emotional distress and sleep deprivation, demanding a holistic approach to intervention that addresses both the psychological and sleep-related aspects of these conditions.

### **Cognitive Function**

Beyond the emotional turbulence induced by poor sleep, the detrimental effects extend significantly into the realm of cognitive function. The brain, reliant on restorative sleep processes for optimal performance, suffers noticeably when sleep quality is compromised. Impaired attention, concentration, and memory are among the most prominent cognitive deficits associated with sleep deprivation (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2024). The ability to focus on tasks, sustain attention over extended periods, and effectively encode new information becomes significantly diminished. This manifests in everyday challenges such as difficulty following conversations, struggling to complete assignments, and experiencing frequent lapses in memory.

Furthermore, poor sleep quality directly impacts higher-level cognitive functions, including problem-solving abilities and decision-making. The capacity for logical reasoning, critical thinking, and sound judgment is impaired, leading to increased errors, poor choices, and a general decline in cognitive efficiency. This diminished cognitive capacity has profound implications for learning, academic performance, and work productivity. Students experiencing chronic sleep deprivation often struggle to grasp new concepts, retain information, and perform well on exams.

Similarly, in the workplace, reduced concentration and impaired decision-making can lead to decreased productivity, increased errors, and a decline in overall job performance. The impact extends beyond immediate tasks, affecting long-term learning and career development. The brain's ability to consolidate memories during sleep is critical for learning and skill acquisition (Sleep Foundation, 2024). Chronic sleep deprivation disrupts this process, hindering the formation of long-term memories and limiting the ability to learn and adapt. In essence, poor sleep quality creates a cognitive fog, hindering the brain's ability to function optimally and impacting virtually every aspect of daily life that requires cognitive effort.

### **Mental Health Disorders**

The consequences of chronic poor sleep extend beyond the exacerbation of mood disorders and cognitive impairments, significantly impacting the broader landscape of mental health. Individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or PTSD, often experience a marked worsening of symptoms when sleep quality deteriorates (Mental Health Foundation, 2024). The delicate neurochemical balance that underlies these conditions is further disrupted by sleep deprivation, leading to increased symptom severity, heightened emotional distress, and a

greater susceptibility to relapse. For example, individuals with bipolar disorder may experience more frequent and intense manic or depressive episodes, while those with PTSD may experience increased nightmares, flashbacks, and anxiety.

Furthermore, chronic sleep deprivation acts as an independent risk factor for the development of new mental health disorders (Mental Health Foundation, 2024). The sustained stress and neurobiological changes associated with poor sleep can trigger or contribute to the onset of conditions such as anxiety disorders, depression, and even psychosis in vulnerable individuals. This highlights the critical role of sleep in maintaining mental health resilience and underscores the importance of addressing sleep disturbances as a preventative measure. Perhaps most concerning is the established link between sleep deprivation and an increased risk of suicidal ideation (Sleep Foundation, 2024).

The profound emotional distress, cognitive impairment, and neurobiological changes associated with chronic poor sleep can significantly impact an individual's sense of hope, coping mechanisms, and overall mental well-being. The resulting feelings of hopelessness, despair, and emotional vulnerability can increase the likelihood of suicidal thoughts and behaviors (Mental Health Foundation, 2024). This connection underscores the urgent need for mental health professionals to assess and address sleep disturbances in individuals at risk for suicide. Recognizing the bidirectional relationship between sleep and mental health, it is crucial to implement integrated approaches that address both sleep disorders and mental health conditions simultaneously. This comprehensive approach is essential for promoting mental well-being and preventing the devastating consequences of untreated sleep deprivation.

### **Physical Impacts of Poor Sleep Quality**

#### **Cardiovascular Health:**

The detrimental effects of poor sleep quality extend far beyond the realm of mental health, significantly impacting physical well-being, particularly cardiovascular health. Chronic sleep deprivation has been strongly linked to an increased risk of developing serious cardiovascular conditions, including hypertension, heart disease, and stroke (Cleveland Clinic, 2024). The intricate mechanisms through which sleep disruption affects cardiovascular function are multifaceted. One primary pathway involves the dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system, which controls involuntary bodily functions like heart rate and blood pressure. During sleep, the body typically experiences a decrease in sympathetic nervous system activity, allowing for cardiovascular rest and recovery.

However, in individuals with poor sleep quality, this normal nocturnal dip in sympathetic activity is often blunted or absent. This leads to persistently elevated levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, which contribute to increased heart rate and blood pressure. Furthermore, chronic sleep deprivation disrupts the delicate balance of endothelial function, the lining of blood vessels (Cleveland Clinic, 2024). Healthy endothelial function is crucial for maintaining vascular tone and preventing the formation of atherosclerotic plaques, which are the hallmark of heart disease.

Sleep deprivation compromises this function, leading to increased vascular stiffness and a heightened risk of plaque buildup. The resulting chronic elevation in blood pressure, coupled with impaired endothelial function, significantly increases the risk of hypertension, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Additionally, the increased heart rate associated with sleep deprivation places extra strain on the cardiovascular system, further contributing to the development of these conditions (Riemann et al., 2010). The cumulative effect of these physiological changes underscores the critical importance of prioritizing sleep for maintaining cardiovascular health. By ensuring adequate and restorative sleep, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of developing these potentially life-threatening conditions.

### **Metabolic Disorder**

Poor sleep quality exerts a profound influence on metabolic health, significantly elevating the risk of type 2 diabetes and obesity. This connection arises from the disruption of intricate hormonal regulation, a process heavily reliant on adequate sleep. Specifically, sleep deprivation impairs the sensitivity of cells to insulin, the hormone responsible for regulating blood sugar levels. This insulin resistance leads to elevated blood glucose levels, a hallmark of type 2 diabetes (Cleveland Clinic, 2024). Furthermore, sleep disruption profoundly affects the balance of appetite-regulating hormones, leptin and ghrelin. Leptin, which signals satiety, is reduced, while ghrelin, which stimulates hunger, is increased. This hormonal imbalance promotes increased food intake, particularly of calorie-dense foods, and contributes to weight gain and obesity. The cyclical nature of this relationship is concerning, as obesity itself can further exacerbate sleep disturbances, creating a detrimental feedback loop.

### **Immune System Function**

Beyond metabolic health, sleep plays a critical role in maintaining robust immune system function. Chronic sleep deprivation weakens the body's defenses, increasing susceptibility to infections (Riemann et al., 2010). The immune system relies on adequate sleep for optimal functioning, as it is during sleep that the body produces and releases cytokines, proteins that help fight infection and inflammation. Sleep deprivation disrupts this process, leading to a reduction in the production of these crucial immune mediators.

Furthermore, sleep is essential for the proper functioning of T cells, a type of white blood cell that plays a vital role in recognizing and destroying infected cells. Reduced T cell activity, a consequence of poor sleep, compromises the body's ability to effectively combat pathogens. The resulting weakened immune response makes individuals more vulnerable to a range of infections, from common colds to more serious illnesses. Sleep also plays a vital role in managing inflammation. Chronic inflammation is implicated in a variety of diseases, and sleep deprivation can exacerbate inflammatory processes, further compromising immune function and overall health (Riemann et al., 2010). Therefore, prioritizing sufficient, high-quality sleep is essential for maintaining a strong and resilient immune system, reducing the risk of infections, and promoting overall well-being.

### **Endocrine System**

The endocrine system, a complex network of glands that regulate various bodily functions through hormone secretion, is significantly impacted by poor sleep quality. Hormonal imbalances are a common consequence of chronic sleep deprivation, affecting a wide range of physiological processes (Walker, 2017). Notably, the production and secretion of growth hormone, essential for cell regeneration, tissue repair, and muscle growth, are profoundly influenced by sleep. The majority of growth hormone is released during deep sleep stages. Therefore, disrupted sleep patterns can lead to a significant reduction in growth hormone levels, impacting physical recovery, muscle maintenance, and overall cellular health. Furthermore, sleep deprivation can disrupt the production of other crucial hormones, such as cortisol, the stress hormone, and melatonin, the sleep-regulating hormone. Chronically elevated cortisol levels, a common consequence of poor sleep, can contribute to a cascade of negative health effects, including increased blood pressure, impaired immune function, and metabolic disturbances (Walker, 2017). Conversely, decreased melatonin levels can further exacerbate sleep difficulties, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of sleep disruption and hormonal imbalance.

### **Pain and Inflammation**

The interplay between sleep and pain is also a critical consideration. Poor sleep quality increases sensitivity to pain, creating a vicious cycle where pain disrupts sleep, and sleep deprivation intensifies pain perception (Riemann et al. 2010). This heightened pain sensitivity is likely due to the dysregulation of pain pathways in the central nervous system, which are influenced by sleep-related neurochemical changes.

Moreover, chronic sleep deprivation is associated with increased levels of inflammatory markers, such as C-reactive protein (CRP) and interleukin-6 (IL-6). These inflammatory markers contribute to chronic inflammation, a key factor in the development and progression of various pain conditions, including arthritis, fibromyalgia, and chronic back pain. The increased inflammation also impacts the body's ability to heal and recover, further compounding the experience of pain. The combined effect of increased pain sensitivity and elevated inflammatory markers underscores the critical importance of addressing sleep disturbances in individuals experiencing chronic pain (Walker, 2017). Effective pain management strategies should incorporate interventions aimed at improving sleep quality, as this can lead to a significant reduction in pain intensity and an improvement in overall quality of life.

## **The Interplay Between Psychological and Physical Health**

### **Bidirectional Relationship**

The relationship between psychological and physical health is not unidirectional, but rather a complex, bidirectional interplay, with sleep acting as a critical mediator. Psychological distress can significantly contribute to poor sleep quality, and conversely, inadequate sleep can exacerbate or even trigger psychological issues (Cappuccio et al., 2010). This bidirectional relationship creates a cyclical pattern where mental and physical health deteriorate in tandem. For instance, anxiety and depression often lead to insomnia or fragmented sleep, while the resulting sleep deprivation amplifies feelings of anxiety and hopelessness. This synergistic effect underscores the interconnectedness of

mental and physical well-being. Poor sleep intensifies the negative impacts of psychological distress on physical health, and likewise, physical ailments exacerbated by poor sleep can intensify psychological suffering. The cumulative effect of these interactions results in a significant decline in overall quality of life.

### **Stress Response**

A key mechanism underlying this interplay is the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, the body's central stress response system. The HPA axis plays a crucial role in regulating both sleep and stress. During sleep, the HPA axis typically exhibits a period of reduced activity, allowing for restorative processes (Cappuccio et al., 2010). However, chronic sleep deprivation disrupts this normal pattern, leading to persistent activation of the HPA axis. This chronic activation results in elevated levels of cortisol, the primary stress hormone, which can further disrupt sleep, creating a vicious cycle.

Moreover, poor sleep amplifies the stress response to daily stressors. Individuals with chronic sleep deprivation exhibit a heightened sensitivity to stress, experiencing more intense emotional and physiological reactions to challenging situations. This amplified stress response contributes to increased anxiety, irritability, and difficulty coping with daily demands. The persistent elevation of cortisol and other stress hormones, triggered by both poor sleep and amplified stress responses, contributes to a range of physical health problems, including cardiovascular disease, metabolic disorders, and immune dysfunction (Cappuccio et al., 2010). Thus, understanding the intricate relationship between sleep, stress, and the HPA axis

is crucial for developing effective interventions that address both psychological and physical health concerns.

### **Potential Interventions and Solutions**

#### **Lifestyle Modifications:**

Addressing the pervasive issue of poor sleep quality requires a multifaceted approach, emphasizing both lifestyle modifications and therapeutic interventions. Lifestyle adjustments form the cornerstone of improving sleep health, focusing on establishing healthy sleep habits, often referred to as sleep hygiene (Medic et al., 2017). Central to this is the establishment of a regular sleep schedule, maintaining consistent bedtimes and wake-up times, even on weekends. This regularity helps to synchronize the body's circadian rhythm, the internal clock that regulates sleep-wake cycles. Creating a conducive sleep environment is equally crucial. This involves optimizing the bedroom for sleep, ensuring it is dark, quiet, and cool. Minimizing exposure to light, particularly blue light from electronic devices, in the hours leading up to bedtime is essential. A comfortable mattress and pillows can also significantly enhance sleep quality. Dietary habits play a significant role in sleep regulation.

Additionally, avoiding caffeine and alcohol, especially close to bedtime, is important, as these substances can disrupt sleep architecture (Cappuccio et al., 2010). A balanced diet, rich in nutrients, supports overall health and indirectly promotes better sleep. Regular physical exercise is another vital component of healthy sleep. Engaging in moderate-

intensity exercise during the day can improve sleep quality and duration. However, it is crucial to avoid exercising too close to bedtime, as this can have a stimulating effect. Implementing these lifestyle modifications can significantly improve sleep quality and mitigate the adverse effects of sleep deprivation. By prioritizing sleep hygiene, individuals can establish a solid foundation for restorative sleep and enhance their overall well-being.

#### **Therapeutic Approaches:**

While lifestyle modifications are fundamental, therapeutic approaches are often necessary to address persistent or severe sleep disorders. Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) stands as a highly effective non-pharmacological treatment for chronic insomnia. CBT-I focuses on identifying and modifying the thoughts, behaviors, and environmental factors that contribute to sleep difficulties (Medic et al., 2017). Through techniques such as stimulus control, sleep restriction, and cognitive restructuring, CBT-I helps individuals develop healthy sleep habits and overcome negative thought patterns that interfere with sleep. This therapy empowers individuals to regain control over their sleep, promoting long-term improvements in sleep quality. For sleep disorders such as sleep apnea, medical treatments are essential. Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy is the gold standard treatment for obstructive sleep apnea, delivering pressurized air through a mask to keep the airway open during sleep (Altevogt et al., 2006).

In some cases, oral appliances or surgical interventions may be necessary to address anatomical factors contributing to sleep apnea. Furthermore, addressing underlying mental health conditions is crucial for improving sleep (Medic et al., 2017). Mental health treatments, including psychotherapy and medication, can effectively manage conditions such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD, which often coexist with sleep disorders. For instance, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and other antidepressants can improve both mood and sleep in individuals with depression. Similarly, cognitive behavioral therapy for anxiety (CBT-A) can address anxiety-related sleep disturbances. Integrating mental health treatments with sleep-focused interventions is essential for a comprehensive approach to sleep health.

In cases where medication is deemed necessary for insomnia, healthcare professionals should carefully consider the risks and benefits, prioritizing short-term use and exploring alternative treatments whenever possible (Altevogt et al., 2006). Combining therapeutic approaches, including CBT-I, medical treatments for sleep disorders, and mental health interventions, provides a comprehensive strategy for addressing the diverse causes of poor sleep and promoting optimal sleep health.

#### **Future Research Directions:**

The field of sleep research continues to evolve, revealing new insights into the intricate relationship between sleep and overall health. Future research directions are crucial for deepening our understanding and developing more effective interventions. One area demanding further investigation is the long-term impact of chronic sleep deprivation on specific populations, such as adolescents, shift workers, and older adults (Altevogt et al.,

2006). Longitudinal studies are needed to elucidate the cumulative effects of poor sleep on cognitive function, physical health, and mental well-being across the lifespan. Additionally, research focusing on the neurobiological mechanisms underlying sleep disorders is essential. Understanding the complex interplay of neurotransmitters, hormones, and brain regions involved in sleep regulation can pave the way for targeted therapies and novel treatment approaches. The role of genetics in sleep disorders also warrants further exploration. Identifying genetic predispositions to specific sleep disturbances can facilitate personalized interventions and preventive strategies (Hale & Guan, 2015).

Another critical area of research is the development and validation of objective sleep assessment tools. Wearable devices and advanced neuroimaging techniques offer promising avenues for accurately measuring sleep quality and identifying underlying sleep pathologies. Furthermore, research on the impact of environmental factors, such as light exposure, noise pollution, and air quality, on sleep health is vital (Hale & Guan, 2015). Understanding how these factors contribute to sleep disruption can inform public health initiatives and urban planning strategies. The importance of individualized sleep treatment cannot be overstated. Recognizing the heterogeneity of sleep disorders, future research should focus on developing personalized interventions tailored to individual needs and preferences. This includes exploring the effectiveness of tailored CBT-I protocols, personalized medication regimens, and individualized sleep hygiene recommendations.

Integrating personalized medicine approaches with sleep research can optimize treatment outcomes and enhance the overall effectiveness of sleep interventions (Altevogt et al., 2006). Ultimately, future research endeavors should strive to bridge the gap between scientific discovery and clinical practice, translating research findings into evidence-based interventions that promote optimal sleep health for all individuals.

## **CONCLUSION**

The extensive body of research reviewed underscores the profound and multifaceted impact of poor sleep quality on overall health. The findings consistently demonstrate that inadequate sleep significantly compromises both psychological and physical well-being, affecting mood, cognition, cardiovascular health, metabolic function, immune response, and endocrine regulation. Chronic sleep deprivation increases the risk of developing mental health disorders, exacerbates existing conditions, and impairs cognitive abilities. Furthermore, it contributes to the development of serious physical health problems, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and weakened immunity. The bidirectional relationship between psychological distress and poor sleep highlights the interconnectedness of mental and physical health, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to intervention.

The implications of these findings are clear: prioritizing sleep is essential for achieving and maintaining optimal well-being. Also, adequate and restorative sleep is not merely a luxury, but a fundamental biological necessity that supports every aspect of human health. Increased awareness of the detrimental effects of poor sleep quality is crucial for promoting public health. Individuals, healthcare professionals, and policymakers must

recognize the importance of sleep as a cornerstone of health and well-being. Healthcare providers should routinely assess sleep patterns and address sleep complaints in clinical practice.

Public health campaigns should educate the public about the importance of sleep hygiene and the risks associated with sleep deprivation. Interventions aimed at improving sleep quality should be readily accessible and tailored to individual needs. This includes promoting access to evidence-based therapies, such as CBT-I, and ensuring timely diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders like sleep apnea. By fostering a culture that prioritizes sleep and providing effective interventions, we can mitigate the devastating consequences of poor sleep and promote a healthier, more resilient society.

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**DR. MAHREEN<sup>1</sup>**

**(22)**

**DR. SHAHNAWAZ SHAH<sup>2</sup>**

**DR. LATEEF AHMAD SALMANI<sup>3</sup>**

## **ROLE OF WOMEN AND THEIR RIGHT IN HENRIK IBSEN'S "A DOLL'S HOUSE"**

**ABSTRACT:** Ibsen, is known as the father of realism and the father of modern drama and as one of the greatest supporters of women. He is more a humanist rather than a humanist. The most prominent element in Ibsen's character was perhaps, austerity, the severity of his code of life, truth in reference to right. He always worked for right and battled his life for truth. The paper will portray the untrue system of marriage, status of women in the society, oppression, subservient status of women in society, individuality of women and fighting for their freedom, protesting to all the restrictions in society on them. Ibsen expands this outlook on the women's status in the society whose freedom is taken by masculine society. Nora as a woman, a wife, or a mother is treated like a doll. She is controlled by the pressures of patriarchal society. So Ibsen protests against the position of women in the society which is totally unfair and under the control of male-dominated powers. This paper explores the role of women and their right in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879).

**Keywords:** Oppression, Scandinavian, Identity, freedom, Masculine society, Patriarchal society.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) is a unique dramatist who is known as social contributor . He is also known as the father of modern drama and the first dramatist who wrote about the various tragedies of ordinary people. He portrayed the basic concepts of life . He made a great contribution to the dramatic world; he broke all the social barriers which was bound with outdated conventions. Ibsen presented high tragedies that could take place in ordinary lives of the people which was a tremendous success for him. In this regard Allardyce Nicoll in his *World Drama* (1957) has clearly explicated that

“the plays of Ibsen reflect the tragedy in the life of the common human beings which is the result of their uncontrolled destiny” (10)

A Doll's House is one of the best known plays of Ibsen. It mainly deals with the social status of women .In A Doll's House, Ibsen is concerned with problem of women's position in society. The play explores the individuality and individual rights in the society. In this patriarchal society which is controlled by men's rules, this is woman, who should try to get her rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Department of Persian, University of kashmir

<sup>2</sup> Assistant professor, department of persian, university of Kashmir

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor, SHMM Government degree college, Anantnag

A Doll's House is a tragedy in which Nora leaves the house of her husband to seek her freedom and new possibilities. This kind of self-realization, which usually leads to new beginning, are the main ideologies posed in the play. Nora realized that her individuality and freedom have been taken by her husband Torvald Helmer. Nora will not go on living her life with a man who used to abuse her even though she sacrificed her life for him. Michael rightly points in *The Critical Heritage*(2003), “ The world at large from which she was thus shut off hardly existed for her hence everyone but those in her immediate circle are only strangers”.(116)

Helmer was socially programmed in such a manner where definition of right appears women as inferior and men as superior. So he always used to maintain that reputation in the society and for these reasons he used to crush Nora by treating her like a doll. So his reputation in the society matters most than sacrificing for the family. So Nora realized her worth and she is to become a person in her own right and she will have the self development and have her own identity and that she rejected the traditional patriarchal attitude of her husband.

In the last act of drama Nora confirms that she has been treated like a doll first of all by his father before marriage and then had a doll like existence in A Doll's House of Torvald in which she has played with her children , with Torvald Helmer .In order to achieve her maturity and her worth.She has to leave her bitter experience behind and while discovering her self worth she comes to conclusion that she has to leave her husband and children behind to achieve individuality and independence.John Gessner in his *Master of the Drama* (1954)opines

“ In A Doll's House he addressed himself to woman's place in the home, to which he attributed all her limitations. According to her creator, Nora was a failure as a personality because she had never been allowed to develop one. First her father sheltered her, then her husband; and neither of these men allowed her any opportunities to acquire a broad education or even to master the elementary realities of the social world ..... Then suddenly the complications that ensued from her ignorance awakened her to the necessity of learning something about the world at large. This she could only do if she left her husband who have locked her in 'A Doll's House' where she was expected to be pretty and playful, submissive and mindless”.(3)

A Doll's House depicted the real picture if the Scandinavian women of 19th century who were dependent on males for money, shelter and identity. The Scandinavian bourgeois society exposed the problems of woman of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian era. The main aim of the Ibsen was to highlight the burning social issues of the era and the restrictions imposed on woman by men. In this male dominating society the women were considered as best suited for the household jobs like cooking, cleaning and looking after children. They have no right to control their own property, Whatever a woman gets from her father after marriage would be the property of her husband. They were even restricted for any task or earning money. Chris Weedon's Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory (1995) defines patriarchy as: “The term patriarchy refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. These power relations take many forms, from the sexual division of labour, and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live”(1)

In *A Doll's House* there is a serious discussion between a wife and husband which is one of the basic elements of modern drama. Nora sacrificed her whole life for her husband and in return she was expecting that her husband should feel proud of her but he passed brutal remarks on her due to that reason she stay in her doll's house where she was always being dominated by her husband in a one way or the other. She refuses to stay with her husband and wanted to live alone and face the world on her own. She wanted to prove herself as an independent women and up to that few women had profited from individualism. Before Nora, no women in the world of fiction had taken such kind of bold act.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Feminist theory aims to understand the nature of inequality of women. There are physical differences between two sexes but they are dogged by our society and culture. So women are categorized as submissive and men as rational and strong being due to the traditional subordinate roles men are considered superior to women and this justification deprived women from equal social , political and economic rights . Beauvior's coined the famous phrase 1949 in her book the second sex "One is not born , but rather becomes, a women."(14). It represents that are no differences in terms of biology, psychology or intellect rather its the construction made by society that there are gender differences. Women are not born fully created; but she is shaped by her upbringing . Biology does not determine the sexes but she learns her role from man and other members in society. She is not born passive , unnecessary , secondary but it is the external force of the society that makes her non essential. The external forces of the society rob woman from her right. Thus , women's marginalisation creates gender prejudice due to the patriarchal ideology. So, Tyson in his *Critical Theory Today* (1999) opines;

"Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically; patriarchal ideology is the means which they are kept so. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other . She is objectified and marginalised, defined only by her difference from male norms and values defined by what she (allegedly) lacks and that men (allegedly) have" (92).

Before the feminist movement led by Virginia Woolf, Siomne de Beauvior, Julia Kristeva and others, Ibsen protested against the position of women in the society. Ibsen exposed the Scandinavian bourgeois society where he debated about the social issues of the era and the restrictions imposed on women by men. Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* incorporates the marginalised characters, especially female characters. This marginality took away freedom, independence due to the domination of men folk The women being oppressed and she is excluded from equal opportunities, equal participation in public sphere. She is crushed under the patriarchal society that man is always superior to women.Ibsen's ultimate desire is truth and freedom. He laid much stress on liberation, freedom, self realization. He wanted to change and reform society and the position of women in society. He desires to fight for the equal status of women and their education .He explicitly depicts woman's position as a deprived , powerless and

dependent creature whose individuality is taken from her .Quoted in Chris Beasley's *An Introduction to Feminist Theory* (1999)

“Any view point to count as feminist must believe that women have been oppressed and unjustly treated and that something needs to be done about this, but it does not follow from this that any consensus is available as to the precise forms this oppression or injustice takes, or as to how they should be remedied”. (27)

In *A Doll's House*, Torvald who is bound to follow the patriarchal society, and he wants to keep Nora in that system but Nora realized herself that she is being oppressed and she recognizes herself and gains self- knowledge and she rebels against patriarchy. It means she has understood the social reality.

*A Doll's House* is a play that discusses various social issues in general but particularly about feminine society as they are being victimized in the society. Nora as a new woman, experiences victory, her journey to self worth and self realization happened as a miracle. Nora as the protagonist of the play who realized that she is treated in as a doll and finds that she is nothing but a toy in her husbands hands. At first glance Nora seems very satisfied with her life as she was living peacefully with her husband . Helmer on the other hand is a proud who only cares about his social status and he has no worth about Nora's personality. Nora's forged cheques in order to save life of her husband that was rather an illegal action, but she does it for him, as she loves him. But she supposes that if someday Torvald came to know about the truth Torvald Helmer will protect her but when she observes that it was just a dream actually she was a pet in her husbands hands. So she decides to leave her husband, children and put herself in outside society, insults, destitution and loneliness. Michael in his *Critical Heritage* (1972) states

“The husband and wife are face to face in their silent home at the dead of night. Calmly , relentlessly. Nora proves to him that the card- castle of their married life has irrevocably collapsed. ‘ He has never loved her, but only found it pleasant to be in love with her ..... She has had no happiness with him..... only amusement .... He is a stranger to her, and she will not live in the house of stranger,’ As for her children , she is unfit to educate them until she has educated herself.’ She leaves her home at once and forever” (70)

#### CONCLUSION

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is an important play that introduced the liberal issues of woman. Ibsen has portrayed the realistic image of Victorian era through Nora in the play who is always treated like a doll either by her husband or father, all this deprived her from self- confidence and self- respect. The play sharply defines the flaws of marriage and male dominant Scandinavian society of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The play depicts the real contentious issues of the society that draws the attention of public. The situation depriving women from their rights, oppression of women and their subjugation. By the technical excellence of Ibsen, the play draws the attention of the public and welcomes with great excitement. The play *A Doll's House* was free from blood shed, fantasy, dirge and pretention rather the play has been realistic presentation that exerts the global impact on the social norms and conditions . Nora becomes an ideal for the New women

and her character encouraged these women to vice against their inequality and unjust treatment. Through the play, Ibsen paved a way to new liveliness to the theatrical art by bringing moral gravity , social importance into the bourgeois drama. Elizabeth Hardwick in *Seduction and Betrayal* (1973) writes, “ It is very strength as a heroine that turns her into a possible utopian model for women of the future, allowing them to create a free, individual identity” (22).

Ibsen had realistically portrayed the character of Nora through his writings and plays that how a women turned an independent individual .When she realized that woman is not a sole property of her husband. A woman needs a favourable environment in which she can think for herself ,live freely as she has her own mind to think about good for herself. A woman has her separate identity where a men cannot impose restrictions or any decision on her. She should not be considered inferior or for granted by her husband. Therefore the plays shows a battle between patriarchal male full of ego and the submissive oppressed woman.. So Nora by her bold action , shows that she is not a conservative wife of the typical patriarchal traditions. But she is woman that had turned from immature child to a mature woman and she will live the rest of her life as an independent woman full of freedom which is only possible by breaking the masculine norms . She slams door of Torvald’s house in order to search her own identity. Ibsen had shown her exit as a symbol of woman’s emancipation from the world of domination and oppression to the world of freedom, equality and fully independence. MC Farlane in his *Cambridge Companion to Ibsen* (1994) articulates

“A Doll’s House may be said to be the story of a quite immature woman who suddenly wakes up and sees her marital situation, sees ‘life-lie’ on which she had based her life. She married to and had children by a ‘stranger’s somebody who had always treated like a child and a possession. She had believed she was happy, but discovers that the kind of happiness was based on a much more comprehensive masquerade than the one she herself had invented. For this reason she quits her earlier world and the inauthentic existence of her ‘doll’s house’. She feels she must go out into the real word to discover the truth about herself and her values”. At which she takes her first step into a different , harsher and lonelier world --- but a world which carries the hope of something better” (82).

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## **LIFE OF MAHMUD KUSHDAHAN & IMPORTANCE OF MARIFATUS-SULOOK IN SUFI LITERATURE**

### **Abstract:**

The present article is about the status, works and thoughts of Mahmud Khushdahan. Especially in this article, the written version of Marifatus-Sulook is introduced. And there are about sixteen manuscripts of this valuable work, which are kept in Indian and foreign libraries. I have studied Marifatus-Sulook is one of the most important mystical works of Mahmud Khushdahan in the field of Sufism and conduct. And the subject of the book is in the description of the speech of the Hazrat Imam Ali (a.s): (من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربها) "Whoever knows himself, knows his God." This book contains self-knowledge and God knowledge. The author had a special devotion to both Chishti and Qadria order. For this reason, he interpreted this work from the point of view of the teachings of Chishtia and Qadiriya. He wrote this book after the death of his teacher Shah Burhanuddin Janam (990AH), in order to explain the teachings and thoughts of the teacher. The author lived in the dynasty of Adil Shahi, during the region of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, known as "Jagat Guru". All this information is given in this article.

### **Keywords:**

Mahmud Khushdahan, Marifatus-Sulook, Chishtia & Qadiriya silsilah, Bijapur.

In the land of Bijapur, sufia and many scholar were born, who are known all over the world for their discovery, dignity, knowledge and grace. Among the families of famous Sufis is the family of Sheikh Mahmud Ainul-Haq Chishti, also known as Khushdahan. He gained the inner possessions and religious services of the hearts of the people of Deccan by being a cleric.

Mahmud Khushdahan, son of Dawood Qoreshi, was born in Shahpur (Bijapur) in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. His grandfather was Badruddin Badr-e Alam Shah Habibullah Qadri Bidari who was educated under his shadow. And he had loyalty and devotion in the Qadiriya order from his maternal grandfather. The initial time of his life was spent in "Mohamdadbad" Bidar. Then he returned to Bijapur and took allegiance and caliphate from Shah Burhanuddin Janam in the Chisht family. The chain of allegiance and caliphate reaches Makhdoom Syed Mohammad Husaini Gesudaraz through five intermediaries. As the authors of Rauzatul-Auliya, Mishkatun-Nabuwa, Tazkira-e Qadri, Hadiqa-e Rahmani, and Marifatu-Sulook all agree on this statement. The author of Mishkatun-Nabuwa wrote: that Qadiriya caliphate came from Shah Abul Hasan Qadri. Both of these statements are true that he is from both the Qadiriya and Chishtia orders, the disciples gave the right as a cloak of allegiance and caliphate. Mahmud Khushdahan was actually the son of Sister Shah Abul Hasan Qadri and Shah Mustafa Qadri, and he was also the teacher of Shah Aminuddin Ali Ala. As the writer of Rauzatul-Auliya

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<sup>1</sup> (Ph.D.) Persian, Department of Persian, University of Delhi, Delhi

writes: "According to the will of His Holiness (Shah Burhanuddin Janam), he became the master and elder and tutor of Hazrat Shah Aminudin Ali Aala."

The author of Rauzatul-Auliya writes about the nickname of Khushdahan:

"کے سبب اشتہار انصھرت بے خوش دھان گویند کہ قدری دھان انصھرت کچ بودہ است. مردم کچ  
دھان گفتند فقر ایشان تبدیل کرده بے خوش دھان شہرت دادہاند"

"They say that the reason for his fame is that his mouth was somewhat crooked. People said that his mouth was crooked and his disciples made him famous." (Rauzatul-Auliya: Folio. 267)

Hazrat Aminuddin Ali wrote about Sheikh Mahmoud Khushdahan: "When he spoke, a pleasant smell came from his mouth, this is God's forgiveness" The Author of Rauzatul-Auliya has written Khushdahan from the perfect elders, mystics and people of heart. The author of Tazkira-e Auliy-e Deccan parents has mentioned: that he was good-natured and possessed discovery, dignity and revelation. Due to his attention and kindness, many deviant people took the right path and became religious.

Mahmud Khushdahan was an outstanding poet in his time. And he writes poetry in Persian and Deccani language. And he used the surname "Mahmoud". He lived during the reign of Adil Shahi Period of Ibrahim Adil Shah II known as "Jagat Guru". Mahmud Khushdahan had only one son and his name was Sheikh Mustafa. He was also a mystic and a poet.

There is a difference of opinion on the date of Mahmud Khushdahan death. The date of his death is not known. The writer of the Tazkira-e Deccan and the author of Tarikh-e Zaban-e Urdu (Urdu-e Qadeem) wrote: that his death occurred around 965AH.

But according to the opinion of Dr. Husaini Shahid, who wrote in his book "Syed Shah Aminuddin Ali Ala Hayat aur Karnam", that this date of death is not correct because khushdahan was still was alive after the death of shah Burhanuddin janam (990AH). And the upbringing of Shah Aminuddin Ali Ala was under his responsibility. Dr. Husaini Shahid has quoted about the date of his death from his book Two Material History:

- 1- Kaleed-e Tariqat be Lutf-e Mabood. (کلید طریقت بے لطف معبود)
- 2- Mahmud Khushdahan nam-e Mubarak. (محمود خوش دھان نام مبارک)

According to this, the death of Mahmud Khushdahan is found in 1026 AH and 1064 AH. "His shrine (Mahmud Khushdahan) is outside the fence of Bijapur, on the side of the Shahpur gate, connected to Shah Aminuddin Ali Sahib's cemetery in Jannat-e Malah"

Like his Mentor, Mahmud Khushdahan wrote many books. The number of his verse and prose works in Persian and Deccani language is twelve, as below, Deccani works For example:

- 1-Masnawi-i Ilmul-Hayat,
- 2-wojud-nameh or Masnawi-i Sheikh Mahmud
- 3-Risala-e Mahmud Khushdahan
- 4-kalam-e Mahmud Khushdahan or Tanbihul-khalayeq.
- 5-Risala-e Wajibul-Wojud
- 6-Lori Nama

Persian Books:

- 7-Masnawi-i Munajat-e Asrarul-Haq
- 8-Risala-e Salatul-Asheqeen
- 9-Risala-e-Royatil-Haq
- 10-Kholasatul-Irshad
- 11-Marifatus-Sulook
- 12-Kashful-Maqamat
- 13-Miftahun-Noor
- 14-Isharatul-Maani

These are all his works in Persian language. These last four works were all written in the description of the hadith "Whoever knows himself, knows his God" and this manuscripts are kept in the library of Dr. Zakir Husain in Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

But it is very famous among the well-written works of Marifatus-Sulook by Sheikh Mahmud Chishti. This book is a Persian manuscript in prose, which has an important place in Sufism and Sufism books. In this edition, the most famous mystical hadith of the Hazrat Imam Ali (a.s) "Whoever knows himself, knows his God", has been explained and explanation. The author of this book is Mahmud Khushdahan, who himself was a special caliph and disciple of Shah Burhanuddin Janam. Khushdahan wrote this book after the death of his mentor, Shah Burhanuddin Janam, in the years 990-AH to 1026-AH. In this book, he has explained the sayings of Shah Miranji and the words of his mentor Burhanuddin Janam (system of thought) in Persian language.

The method of Persian language is smooth, those who know Persian well can easily read and understand this book. The summary of Manazil-e Sulook is mentioned in this book. This book is minimum one hundred pages, which has five chapters and introduction. In this book, according to the five orders of existence, they are:

- 1- Wajibul-Wojud
- 2- Momkenul-Wojud
- 3- Momtaneul-Wojud
- 4- Ariful-Wojud
- 5- Wahidul-Wojud.

Then, the author of the sentence "I know my self" has divided existence into four (obedience) in the first mention, and explained the truth of the sentence "lack of self-identity" in the fifth stage, that is, in the unity of existence (Lordship). Therefore, finding the path of God, the Most High, is to pass through these levels of existence.

As the author has said that the discussion of obligatory existence belongs to the soul, possible existence belongs to the heart, forbidden existence belongs to the soul, mystic existence belongs to light, and wahidul Wojud belongs to the essence and attributes of the Almighty. As it is mentioned in the Hadith Qudsi: "By knowing it, the seeker reaches from the soul to the heart, and from the heart to the soul, and from the soul to the light, and from the light to the essence of the Almighty". The author has written all beings in a circle. And stated the purpose and conditions of the seeker. And he said that the spiritual advancement of the seeker is based on these five existences. Sorting the Spiritual journey

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into a system, connecting scattered conditions and accessories, finding connections and sequences between them, harmonizing them, for the convenience of the seeker, and adding accessories and conditions, determining the duties of each Placing order and all this in its place is one of the great works of Shah Miran ji Shamsul-Ushaq and Shah Burhanuddin Janam. He is the originator of the terms Miranji and Janam.

From the first chapter to the fourth chapter, the author has presented the teachings of Chishtia, that is, the Noh Botoons. They say nine stomachs, four existences, four breaths, four hearts, four places and four martyrdoms. For example, the four existences are Wajibul-Wojud, Momkinul-Wojud- Momtaniul Wojud, Ariful-Wojud, and Wahidul-Wojud. There are four Nafs, for example, Nafs-e Ammara' Nafs-e Lauvvama, nafs-e Mutmaenna, and Nafs-e Mulhemma. Four heart for example, Qalb-e Muzgha, Qalb-e Muneeb, Qalb-e Saleem, Qalb-e Shaheed, etc. The author has written each term into step in order and spiritual advancement of the seeker is based on all these terms. The seeker should visit so many way in order to reach the almighty.

The wahidul-Wojud (unit of existence) is the fifth chapter. This chapter has twelve terms. In addition, in the fifth chapter of Qadria teachings, the author has explained At the end, the author has mentioned the term wahidul- Wojud (unity of existence), which is the most important mystical discussion, and it is the home of annihilation, which existential Sufis reached this home on the path of truth through discovery and intuition.

In this mystical prose work, which is mixed with poems by the author himself or other poets. In this book, the sayings of famous mystics and poets in this field such as Junaid Baghdadi, Mansoor Hallaj, Bustami, Masoud Bak, Ibn-e Arbi, Syed Ali Hujweri, Ainul Quzzat-e Hamdani, Attar Nishaburi, Hafez Shirazi, Nooruddin Jami and Maghribi Tabrezi, Mohd Husaini Gesudaraz and others. A phrase from mystics of this period such as Miranji Shamsul-Ushaq and Burhanuddin Janam and the like can be seen.

Most of the sayings of these famous mystics have been quoted from the book "Maghz-e Marghoob and Chahar Shahadat", "Kalematul-Haqayaq", "Irshad Nameh", Risala-e "Mahmud Khushdahan" and "Jam-e Jahan Numa". And Mahmud Khushdahan has used these words a lot in the beginning of the text. The prose of Marifatus-Sulook is punctuated and melodious. And the way of expression and arguments seems clear. Because Mahmud Chishti has used verses, hadiths, terms and poems in the text of the book. And this shows his proficiency in the knowledge of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet Hazart Mohammad (s.a.w) Mahmud Chishti wrote this book in the form of advice. And from reading the book, it is assumed that he is communicating with someone, and many times from the word "O seeker!" but we know that at that time this method was common among mystics and Sufis. In their writings and poems, they called students and disciples with the nicknames "O friend!" They addressed For example, Mahmud Khushdahan writes: "O seeker! Wajibul-Existence is the existence of Almighty God, who is present. Forever and ever to his own essence that does not change him. And it was not permissible for him to be born and destroyed."

The author's goal is to bring the seeker to the position of the mystic. This degree of existence is actually a Mohammadi light. This is Mahmud speech: "The seeker should

always seek success from the Almighty God, so that he reaches the status of Muhammad (s.a.w) peace be upon him."

One of the reasons for the popularity of Marifatus-Sulook is that all libraries in India and abroad have copies of Manuscript this book is available For example:

1. Noorbakhsh library (Khanqah-e Nematullahi), Tehran, Iran
2. Hazrat Ayatullah Golpayegani Public Library, Qom, Iran.
3. Professor Manzoorul Haq Siddiqui Library, Pakistan.
4. Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu Karachi, Pakistan.
5. Juma Majed Center for Culture Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
6. Library of Hazrat Pir Muhammad Shah, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
7. Dargah-e Alia Chishtia Library, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
8. Library of Nizamia Medical College, Hyderabad, Telangana
9. Library of Mujibia, Phulvari Sharif Patna, Bihar.
10. Library of Osmania University, Hyderabad, T.S
11. Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad, T.S
12. Telangana State Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Center, Hyd.
13. Rampur Raza Library, Uttar Pradesh.
14. Dr. Zakir Husain Library, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.
15. Noor International Microfilm Center. Iran Cultural House, New Delhi.
16. Darul Musannefin Shibli Academy, Azamgarh Uttar Pradesh.

There have been Mention this Manuscript in 28 Catalogue in different Language.

Regarding the importance of the book Marifatus-Sulook, it is enough to say that Shah Waliullah Quadri Hyderabadi (died: 1157AH.) translated this book into Deccani language on the order of his father Shah Habibullah Quadri in 1140 AH. But this translation has not been published yet. According to Dr. Mohiuddin Quadri, "Zor" is the first book in Urdu prose during the reign of Asif Jahi first.

Translations of Marifatus-Sulook are usually available in Indian libraries. For example: in the library of Oriental Manuscript Hyderabad, Nizam Trust Library Hyderabad, Idara-e Adabyat-e Urdu, Hyderabad and Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu-e Hind, New Delhi.

Another sign of the acceptability of this book is the fact that this book has been three times so far. It has been published. Twice by the printing press of the Munshi Navalkishor, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The first edition was published in the month of October 1882. And the second edition is in January 1898. And the third edition was published from Lahore in 1891. This book is one of the most important and useful books about Sufism and Spiritual journey. In this book, the method of spiritual journey is explained. In terms of language and expression, this book has an obvious virtue among books.

After studying the text of Book, it becomes clear that the discussion of this book is philosophical, mystical, jurisprudence and moral. After editing this book it has been added about Sufism because this book is written philosophically in the Sufism method, which is a special feature of this book that this individual method is not seen in other Sufism books. Mahmud khushdahan is the first Sufi of Chishtia Order who Expressed

Sufism in Philosophical way in Persian. This style is a prominent Feature of Marifatus-Sulook, which was not seen in Sufis works. It can be concluded that the main goal of the author is to defend, publish and explain the doctrine of the unity of existence. In the end, we can say that Marifatus-Sulook is one of the most important mystical works in Persian on the subject of Sufism, which is an important source for the followers of the Chishtia series and scientists and researchers in this field. And from that time until today, it has been considered among the masters of Science and knowledge.

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## **INDO-PERSIAN CULTURE**

The earliest introduction of Persian influence and culture to the subcontinent was by various Muslim Turko-persian rulers, such as the 11<sup>th</sup> century Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, rapidly pushed for the heavy Persianization of conquered territories in North-Western India. This soci-cultural synthesis arose steadily through the Delhi Sultanate from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Mughal empire from then onwards until the 19<sup>th</sup> century[1]. Various Muslim dynasties of Turkey, local Indian and Afghan origin patronized the Persian language and contributed to the development of the Persian culture in India[2]. The Delhi Sultanate developed their own cultural and political identity which built upon Persian and Indic languages, literature and arts which formed the basis of an Indo-Muslim Civilization.[3]

Persian was the official language of most Muslim dynasties in the Indian subcontinent such as the Delhi Sultanate, the Bengal Sultanate, the Bahmani Sultanate, the Mughal Empire and their successor states, and the Sikh empire. It was also the dominant cultured language of poetry and literature. Many of the Sultans and nobility in the Sultanate period were Persianized Turks from Central Asia who spoke Turkic languages as their mother tongues. The Mughals were also culturally Persianized Central Asians (of Turko-Mongol origin on their paternal side). But spoke Chagatai Turkic as their first language at the beginning. Before eventually adopting Persian. Persian became the preferred language of the Muslim elites of northern India. Muzaffar Alam, a noted scholar of Mughal and Indo-Persian history, suggests that Persian became the official Lingua Franca of the Mughal Empire under Akbar for various political and social factors due to its non-sectarian and fluid nature[4]. The influence of these languages led to a vernacular called Hindustani that is the direct ancestor language of today's Urdu-Hindi varieties.

The Persianization of the Indian subcontinent resulted in its incorporation into the cosmopolitan Persianate world of Ajam, known today academically as Greater Iran, which historically gave many inhabitants a secular, Persian identity.[5]

With the presence of Muslim culture in the region in the Ghaznavid period, Lahore established as centres of Persian literature. Abu-al-Faraj Rumi and Masud Sad Salman (d. 1121) were the two earliest of the "great" Indo-Persian poets. Amir Khusrow (d. 1325) of Delhi.

### **"Delhi Sultanate and The Mughal Era"**

Indo-Persian culture flourished during the period of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526). The invasion of Babur in 1526, the end of Delhi Sultanate, and the establishment of what would become the Mughal Empire would usher the golden age of Indo-Persian culture with particular reference to the art and architecture of the Mughal era.

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<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, University of Allahabad

During the Mughal era, Persian persisted as the language of the Mughal up to and including the year 1707 which marked the death of the emperor Aurangzeb, generally considered the last of the “Great Mughals”. Thereafter, with the decline of the Mughal Empire, the 1739 invasion of Delhi by Nader Shah and the gradual growth initially of the Hindu Marathas[6] and later the European power within the Indian subcontinent Persian or Persian culture commenced a period of decline, although it nevertheless enjoyed patronage and may even have flourished within the many regional Empires or kingdoms of the Indian including that of the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1837). Persian as a language of governance and education was abolished in 1839 by the British East India Company and the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, even if his rule was purely symbolic or ceremonial, was deposed in 1857 by the British.

Further, C.E. Bosworth writes about the significance of Persian culture that developed a mark within Muslim Sultans in this era that: the Sultans were generous patrons of the Persian literary tradition of Khurasan, and latterly fulfilled a valuable role as transmitters of this Heritage to the newly conquered lands of northern India, laying the foundation for the essentially Persian culture which was to prevail in Muslim India until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century[7].

#### **Mughal Empire (1526-1707)**

The Mughal Empire was founded by Babur, a Timurid prince and ruler from central Asia. Babur was a direct descendant of the Timurid emperor on his father's side, and the Mongol ruler Genghis Khan on his mother's side[8]. His ancestral domains in Turkistan by Sheyban Khan, the 40, year-old prince Babur turned to India to satisfy his ambitions. He established himself in Kabul and then pushed steadily southward into India from Afghanistan through the Khyber pass[9].

##### **1- Babur:**

Zahir ud-Din Muhammad was the founder of the Mughal Empire in 1526 after defeating the last Sultan of Delhi at the first Battle of Panipat. He was a skilled military commander and established the foundation of the Empire.

##### **2-Humayun (1503-1540)**

Humayun was the son of Babur and succeeded him as the second Mughal emperor. However, he faced numerous challenges and was briefly overthrown by Sher Shah Suri. He later regained the throne and ruled until his death.

##### **3- Akbar (1556-1605)**

Akbar is considered one of the greatest Mughal emperors. He expanded the Empire, introduced administrative reforms, and pursued a policy of religious tolerance. His reign is often referred to as the “Golden Age” of the Mughal Empire.

##### **4- Jahangir (1605-1627)**

Jahangir was the son of Akbar and continued many of his father's policies. He was known for his interest in the arts and culture, as well as his relationship with the Mughal Empress Nur Jahan.

### **5- Shah Jahan (1628- 1658)**

Shah Jahan is renowned for building the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum in Agra, as a tribute to his wife Mumtaz Mahal. He also constructed other impressive structures and expanded the Empire territories.

### **6- Aurangzeb (1658-1707)**

Aurangzeb was the last significance Mughal emperor. He expanded the Empire to its greatest territorial extent but faced challenges in governing such a vast Dominion. He pursued a more orthodox Islamic policy, which led to conflicts and contribution to decline of the Empire.

These are just a few of the prominent Mughal emperors who left a lasting impact on Indian history. The Mughal Empires influence can still be seen in the architecture art, and culture of the Indian subcontinent.

And the additional Mughal emperors had relatively short and tumultuous reigns, and their rule was marked by internal power struggles and conflicts for the throne.

The Deccan regions integration into the Indo- Persian culture of the North began in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, when the Delhi Sultanate made political movements towards the south, and the Deccan was brought into the Sultanate under the conquest of the Tughlaq Dynasty. Sultan Muhammad Shah's policy of ordering a migration of the North Indian Muslim population of Delhi to migrate to the "Deccan" city of Daulatabad in 1327, has ordered to build a large Muslim urban centre in the Deccan.

### **Adab**

In Indo- Persian culture in North India, Adab, which could simply be understood as a form of virtue ethics, is a code of values determining social behaviour that forms the defining characteristic in Indo- Muslim culture.[10]

The Indo-Persian synthesis led to the development of cuisine that combined indigenous foods and ingredients with the tastes and methods of the Turko-Persian. This was especially under the Mughals, who invited cooks from various parts of the Islamic world. This resultant cuisine, and has left a great impact on the regional eating habits of South Asia it was further developed in the kitchens of regional Islamic powers, leading to distinctive styles such as the Awadhi and Hyderabadi cuisines.

Due to this synthesis the Indian shares with Central and West Asia foods such as naan and kebab, but has also become home to unique dishes such as Biryani.

### **Indo- Islamic Architecture:**

The Indian Islamic Period produced architecture that drew stylistically from Persianate culture, using features such as Domes, Iwans, Misars and Baghs. Early Islamic rulers tended to use spolia from Hindu, Buddhist and Jain buildings, resulting in an Indianised style which would be refined by later kingdoms. Hence monuments came to feature Indian architectural elements, such as corbelled arches and jalis. The main buildings

produced were mosques, forts and tombos. These still stand today and are well represented in the architecture of cities such as Lahore, Delhi and Hyderabad to name a few.

Indo-Persian architecture was not exclusive to Islamic power, as the members and rulers of other religious incorporated it in their monuments. Sikh architecture is a notable example of this. The Hindu Vijayanagara Empire used Indo-Persian architecture in curtly monuments.[11]

Indo- Islamic architecture has left a large impact on modern Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi architecture, as in the case of its influence on the Indo-Saracenic Revivalism of the late British Raj. Both secular and religious building are influenced by Indo-Islamic architecture.

The Mughal Empire, an Islamic empire that lasted in India from 1526 to 1857 left a mark on Indian architecture that was a mix of Islamic, Persian, Arabic, Central Asian and native Indian architecture. A major aspect of Mughal architecture is the symmetrical nature of buildings and courtyards. Akbar, who ruled in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, made major contributions to Mughal architecture. He systematically designed forts and towns in similar symmetrical style that blended Indian styles with outside influences. The gate of a fort Akbar designed at Agra exhibits the Assyrian gryphon, India elephants, and birds[12].

During the Mughal era design elements of Islamic-Persian architecture were fused with and often produced playful forms of the Hindutani art. Lahore, occasional residence of Mughal rulers, exhibits a multiplicity of important buildings from the empire, among them the Badshahi mosque ( built 1673-1674), the fortress of Lahore (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) with the famous **Alamgiri Gate**, the colourful **Wazir khan Mosque**,[13] ( Lahore, 1634-1635) as well as numerous other mosques and mausoleums.

**Major example of Mughal architecture include:**

- The use of elephant- shaped building of the Lahore fort reflects Hindu influences on Mughal Architecture during the reign of Akbar.
- The Darwaza- i- Rauza (Great Gate) of the Taj Mahal.
- Jama Masjid, Delhi, one of the largest mosques in India.
- Lahori Gate of the Red Fort,Delhi,India.
- Tomb of Nithar Begum at Khusro Bagh, Allahabad, India.
- Akbar Tomb at Agra, uses red sandstone and white marble,like many of the Mughal monuments.The Taj Mahal is a notable exception, as it uses only marble.
- Bibi ka Maqbara tomb in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, built by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb son Azam Shah for his mother.

The best known example of Mughal architecture is the Taj Mahal. It was built as a mausoleum Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Shah Jahan, who died in 1631. The main ideas and themes of garden tombs had already been explored by earlier Mughal emperors, and this was the culmination of all those previous work into a national of all those previous works into a national landmark. The white tomb rises above a reflecting pool, within a large walled garden.

### **Hindustani Classical Music:**

Prior to Islamic conquest, the Indian subcontinent had a history musical practice that drew from Sanskrit culture. The Indo- Persian synthesis resulted in an influx of Iranian musical elements, leading to further development in the region musical culture through the patronage of new persianate rulers. This appears to have been the impetus for divergence of Hindustani, classical music from carnatic music. Some of the main instrument used in the style, such as the sitar and Sarod, are thought to have close historical ties with Persian instruments. Musical genres such as khyal and Tarana, and the musical performance of ghazals are example of the Indo-Persian musical confluence. Notably, the Safi devotional music of Qawwali bears evident impact from Persian influence, such as the frequent usage of Persian poems[14].

The creation of many of these practices is a 13<sup>th</sup> century poet, scholar and musician Amir Khusrow.

### **During the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal era**

The advent of Islamic rule under the Delhi Sultanate and later the Mughal Empire over northern India caused considerable cultural interchange. Increasingly, musicians received patronage in the courts of the new rulers, who in turn, started taking an increasing interest in local musical forms. While the initial generations may have rooted in cultural traditions outside India, they gradually adopted many aspects from the Hindu culture from their kingdoms. This helped spur the fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideas to bring forth new forms of musical synthesis like Qawwali and Khyal.

The most influential musician of the Delhi Sultanate period was Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) a composer in Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, as well as Braj Bhasha. He is credited with systematizing some aspects of Hindustani music and also introducing several ragas such as Yaman Kalyan, Zeelaf and Sarpada. He created six genres of music khyal, tarana, Naqsh, Gul, Qaul and Qalbana. A number of instruments were also introduced in his time.

Amir Khusrau is sometimes credited with the origins of the khyal form, but the record of his compositions does not appear to support this. The compositions by the court musician Sadarang in the court of Muhammad Shah bear a closer affinity to the modern khyal. They suggest that while khayal already existed in some form, Sadarang may have been the father of modern khyal.

As the Mughal Empire came into closer contact with Hindus, especially under Jalal ud-Din Akbar, music and dance also flourished. In particular, the musician Tansen introduced a number of innovations, including ragas and particular compositions. Legend has it that upon his rendition of a nighttime raga in the morning, the entire city fell under a hush and clouds gathered in the sky so that he could light fires by singing the raga Deepak.

After the dissolution of the Mughal empire, the patronage of music continued in smaller princely kingdoms like Awadh, Patiala, and Banaras, giving rise to the diversity of styles that is today known as gharanas. Many musician families obtained large grants of land which made them self-sufficient, at least for a few generations. Meanwhile, the

Bhakti and Sufi tradition continued to develop and interact with the different gharanas and groups.

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**UNVEILING THE RICH TAPESTRY OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN  
NORTHEAST INDIA: UNCOVERING THE TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS OF  
MEDIEVAL ASSAM**

Where in Medieval India, most of the historical writings were written following the Arabic and Persian historiography, Assam developed a Unique way of preserving the past records known as '*Buranji*' tradition which was the most authentic source to understand the socio-political, economic and cultural history of entire North East India till the advent of the colonial rule. As the rulers of assam traditionally followed a kind of 'close door policy' in politics, the inhabitants of Assam from ancient times developed their own technology when it comes to agriculture, sericulture, handicraft industries such as gold washing, ivory crafts, metallurgy and military technology. The medieval and colonial accounts testifies that Assam had its own traditional knowledge system which also helped in enriching the agro based economy. The land was also known for its unique knowledge about gastronomy and herbal medicine. One of the prime reasons for Assam's constant success against the Islamic invaders was its military technology and tactics . Even the mighty Mughals had to kneel down again and again before the advanced fortification process, guerrilla and naval warfare technology developed by the Ahoms. Travellers like Tavernier claimed that even China got the gunpowder technology from Assam. However, the colonial authority played a vital role in the elimination of traditional knowledge of the native people. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the age-old indigenous knowledge system developed by the inhabitants of Assam. It also tries to figure out how this traditional knowledge can be revitalised and utilised for the greater cause of the nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Keywords:** Assam, Gastronomy, Knowledge, Military, Sericulture, Technology

**Introduction**

Assam is the melting pot of diverse ethnic groups. Each group possesses substantial traditional knowledge about gastronomy, health and diseases, and food preservation techniques. As the rulers of Assam traditionally followed a kind of 'close door policy' in politics, the inhabitants of Assam from ancient times developed their own technology when it comes to agriculture, sericulture, and handicraft industries such as gold washing, ivory crafts, metallurgy, and military technology. The medieval and colonial accounts testify that Assam had its own traditional knowledge system, which also helped in enriching the agro-based economy. The land was also known for its unique knowledge about gastronomy and herbal medicine. Till the introduction of colonial times, the ordinary subjects of Assam used to follow their traditional knowledge in their everyday works. But with the British annexation of Assam, the political scenario changed dramatically, and gradually the natives had lost their control over the province's forestry

<sup>1</sup> Department of History, Jorhat College (Amal).

and agriculture. The disruption in political economy led to the gradual decline of much traditional knowledge used by the people of Assam in every day's works. As no proper documentation of traditional knowledge has been made, a considerable number of ideas and knowledge about gastronomy, agriculture, healthcare, and crafts have gradually been lost in the wombs of time. Even the British authority made no wholehearted attempt to revive such ideas and techniques. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the age-old indigenous knowledge system developed by the inhabitants of Assam. It also tries to figure out how this traditional knowledge can be revitalized and utilized for the greater cause of the nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Statement of the Problem**

When discussing India, the region beyond Bengal is often overlooked in mainstream academic discourse, whether in the realms of history, politics, or socio-cultural studies. Consequently, a comprehensive documentation of the diverse lifestyles within the North Eastern Region, which encompasses seven Indian states, remains to be systematically undertaken. Furthermore, the exploration of India's traditional knowledge systems is a relatively new area of academic inquiry, with North East India representing a largely uncharted territory in this context. This region, with its close ties to South Asian and South East Asian nations, is undeniably significant for India in terms of ethnicity, demographics, biodiversity, and culture. However, historical research concerning India's rich heritage in science and technology, gastronomy, and astronomy has predominantly focused on the Hindu-centric traditions of Northern and Southern India. The North Eastern Region, with its connections to China, Myanmar, and its unique Buddhist and animistic traditions, possesses distinct cultural, ethnographic narratives, and folklore. Due to the seclusion policies implemented by the rulers of North East India, the area remained largely untouched and unconquered by the political authorities of mainstream India. As a result of this geopolitical isolation, the inhabitants of the region developed their own knowledge systems related to warfare, gastronomy, and ethics. Numerous foreign travelers from the medieval period have acknowledged the prowess of various ethnic groups in North East India, such as the Ahoms and Koches of Assam, particularly for their advanced skills in naval warfare and military technology. Therefore, it is crucial to highlight the lesser-known aspects of traditional knowledge concerning science, technology, history, and gastronomy from this region to a global audience. This paper aims to illuminate the advancements made by the people of Assam, which historically included four to five of the seven states of North East India until India's independence.

### **Manuscript Tradition**

One of the prime reasons behind the disappearance of many *buranjis* and *vamsawalis* was its written method. As these literary works were preserved in the form of manuscripts (locally known as *Puthi*), a significant amount of manuscripts got destroyed during the civil war period (1769–89) and during the three Burmese invasions (1817–21).. During that time, one-third of the population got eliminated, and the remaining lives took shelter in the jungles and in Bengal. In such a chaotic situation, numerous manuscripts got displaced and destroyed. The manuscript tradition itself reveals the

region's indigenous knowledge about making manuscripts. Different types of manuscripts had been used in Pre-British Assam on the basis of theme, carrier and writing tool including *Bhurja-patra* (*bark of the Birch Trees*), *Tala-patra* (*Palm leaf manuscript*), *Raupya-patra*, *Mrt-patra*, *Ketaki-patra*, and *Bata-patra*. Apart from other methods, the locals of Assam developed a unique way of making manuscripts from the barks of the *Sanchi* (*Aquilaria Agallocha*) tree, which was locally known as *Sanchipat Puthi*. This technique involves creating a folder from a long strip of *Sanchi* paper (leaves made of aloe wood bark) to hold many pages of text.

#### **Technological knowledge in Pre-British Rule**

Traditionally, the rulers of Assam maintained a safe distance from the mainstream politics of India. Due to geographical locations, the rulers of Assam till the advent of the Europeans used to follow a kind of close-door policy in terms of politics and diplomacy with the rest of India. They were so sceptical about the outsiders that no outsiders (even from Bengal) were allowed to enter, settle, and penetrate deeper into the region with the prior state approval. This was the reason Assam remained unconquered by any Sultanate rulers. Even the mighty Mughals failed to conquer the Assam valley despite repeated attempts. The primary reason for the success of the rulers of Assam in outnumbering any foreign invasions from the west was their immense knowledge of the topography of the region and their unique warfare tactics. From the age of the Mahabhatta, the region was well known for the military strength and usage of diverse tactics to infuse fear in the hearts of the enemies. With limited resources, they indigenously developed both defensive and offensive warfare strategies, and from generation after generation, similar types of technological knowledge were followed by the people of Assam to safeguard the sovereignty of the region. It was the gorilla strategy developed by the people of Kamrupa kingdom that created havoc among the Turkish soldiers led by the noted Muslim general Bakhtiyar Khilji during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The indigenous skills on military technology can be traced to the fact that Shihabuddin Talis claimed that every army and caravan that entered Ahom kingdom left the domain of life and placed their belongings in the area of death.<sup>1</sup> The level of knowledge about military technology and defensive strategies among the people of Assam can be known from the fact that Ram Singh (the Rajput general of the Mughal army who led the Mughal expedition to North East India during 1769), while retreating from Assam, praised the Assamese soldiers for their versatility in rowing boats, firing arrows, building trenches, and handling weapons, unmatched to any other portion of India.

The Ahoms developed their fortification process to such level that even the Mughals were astonished by their accomplishments in the field of military technology. Mirjhumla (the military general of the Mughal Army during the Mughal expedition to North East India) was stunned to see the craftsmanship inside the Simlaguri fort in 1762 and opined that had the command of the fort been given to a capable person, it would have been

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<sup>1</sup> Bhuyan S.K. *Studies in the History of Assam*. Laksheswari Bhuyan Company Bagan Road Gauhati, 1965., P-149

impossible for the mighty Mughals too to capture the fort.<sup>1</sup> Shahabuddin Talis, the Muslim chronicler who accompanied Mir Jhumla wrote in his book ‘Fatiha E Ebriya’ that to conquer a fort as formidable and sky touching as Simalauguri Fort through blockade was beyond the capacity of even the most ambitious warriors of that time.<sup>2</sup> It reveals that the Ahoms indigenously developed a sophisticated technology for water fortification process in medieval era<sup>3</sup>.

The Ahoms developed 11 types of light artillery muskets such as Gathia, , jambur Hilloi, Phuloguri, Ramchangi, Saru hatnalia, Kamayan,, jamur, Kachai, Tow, Khoka Hillai, Bachadari<sup>4</sup>. While they developed 5 types of heavy artilleries known as Biyagum, Hatimuria, Baghura, Tubuki and Mitha Holong. They developed an ingenuous technique of producing saltpetre locally known as Jakhar. The Ahom kings Shahabuddin Talis praised the Assamese for their knowledge about gunpowder and artillery. He wrote in his chronicle that the Assamese showed great skills in the casting matchlocks and artillery as they made first rate gunpowder from which matchlocks and cannons were made.<sup>5</sup> Even Mirjhulma seized 3 large iron guns, 343 Jhumur, 1200 ramchangi matchlocks , 6570 pathorkolai and 1828 iron shields, 370 mounds of gunpowder, 1960 chests of powder each weighting about 2 or 2 ½ mds.<sup>6</sup>

There may be different opinions regarding the original discovery of gunpowder and gun. But one theory claimed that the people of assam indigenously developed gunpowder technology. Tavernier claimed that China got the gunpowder technology from Assam. From Assam the techniques of gunpowder and gun was passed to Pegu and from Pegu China derived this knowledge<sup>7</sup>. But, from the statement of Tavernier it may be inferred that this region had developed itself their own gunpowder technology. The Chutias were also the one of the pioneers of gun powder use. The firearms similar to grenades of that time were found in abundance in Assam could be used like rockets. Tavernier wrote that these fireworks were fixed at the end of a stick of the length of a short pike which carried more than 500 paces (rockets)<sup>8</sup>.

### **Knowledge about the Elephants**

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<sup>1</sup> *Nath, D.N. , Asom Buranji.* Bidya Bhawan , Jorhat , 2008.

P230

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, P230

<sup>3</sup> *Sarkar. J.N , the Comprehensive History of Assam, Vol-III(Ed) H.K.Barpurjari.* Publication Board Assam; Guwahati, 1993.. P-64

<sup>4</sup> Dutta, Sristidhar, and Byomakesh Tripathy. *Martial Traditions of North East India.* Concept Publishing Company, 2006., P100

*Gait, E.A. History of Assam.* Thakcker Spink & Co, Calcutta , 1906, , P151

<sup>6</sup> Dutta. S & Tripathy B.(Ed.). *op. cit.* P100

<sup>7</sup> Tavernier, J.B. *Travels in India ,* (Ball. V. Trans.))MacMillan and Co., (orginal work published in 1676 as *Les Six Voyages De Jean- Baptiste Tavernier.* , 1899, P 277

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, P278

Again, the command of the people of Assam over elephants was extraordinary. Since time immemorial, these people had the knowledge of captivating wild elephants and used them for both domestic and military purposes<sup>1</sup>. As the tiger was to the Cholas, the elephant was the natural symbol of ancient Kamrupa kingdom of Assam<sup>2</sup>. In the Shanti Parva chapter of the epic, the easterner people was praised for their unique characteristics of the ability to fight skilfully on elephants<sup>3</sup>. In The Mahabharata there is a mention about a king from Pragjyotishpur named Bhagadutta whose command over elephant and archery even mesmerized Arjuna. King Bhagadutta's elephant troops were considered as the "best wield of elephant goad."<sup>4</sup> The mastery over the elephant warfare of the people of Pargjyotishpur (Kamrupa) finds mention in the accounts of noted Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang<sup>5</sup>. During Ahom era, it was customary for dignitaries to have elephants as a symbol of their status and power. One particular tradition involved the Raja, or king, being required to catch elephants and select one that was suitable for various ceremonies<sup>6</sup>. The Ahoms not only used elephants for destroying forts, enemy blockades and repealing enemy advancements , gigantic animals were also used as a part of psychological warfare to terrorise the enemies. Muslim accounts testifies that 'ferocious looking elephants' were sent towards the enemy locations for invoke heavy destructions. To make these animals mad and ferocious the Assamese soldiers used to feed them a traditional herbal medicine named 'Sarfil'.<sup>7</sup>

The Ahoms developed an indigenous method of elephant catching known as 'Hati kheda' and 'Hati Mela' during medieval period. For 'Hati Kheda' method, embankments of 40 yards were raised in the elephant corridors. One can assume the grand arrangements of these embankments form the fact these embankments were 5 feet high, 20 feet breadth with a ditch of around 5 feet.<sup>8</sup> *Kunki*, the trained domesticated female elephants were used to bring the wild elephants towards the collapsible doors of the embankments. Once entered inside the embankments such wild elephants were made to come into the contacts of the female kunkis , who gradually brought these wild elephants one by one out of the embankments. Mirja Nathan in his noted work 'Bahiristan E Ghaibi' mentioned that even the Muslim rulers of Bengal tried to copied the Assamese tactics of capturing and taming wild elephants.<sup>9</sup> While in 'Hati Mela' method experienced raiders entered the elephant herd with Kunki and captured small elephants. Shihabudin Talis mentioned about a local grass that the natives used to rub in the body of the female elephants whose smell captivated the wild elephants and had drawn them

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<sup>1</sup> B. K. Baruah. *A Cultural History of Assam*. Lawyer's Book Stall, Guwahati , 1969 , P69,

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. P. 70

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed, I. A. (2015). Elephants In Medieval Assam. *Proceedings Of The Indian History Congress*, 76, 264–270. [Http://Www.Jstor.Org/Stable/44156592](http://Www.Jstor.Org/Stable/44156592), P264

<sup>4</sup> Handique, Rajiv, British Forest Policy In Assam, P21

<sup>5</sup> E.A. Gait, op. cit. P. 26

<sup>6</sup> Ahmed, I. A. (2015). Op. cit., P264

<sup>7</sup> Rajkumar. S. *Itihase Soaura Chashata Bachar* . Banalata, Dibrugarh , 2000, P. 182

<sup>8</sup> Ahmed, I. A. op. cit., P264

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

closer to the female elephants. The Assamese people had so much mastery over elephants that even the Mighty Mughals were impressed by their traditional knowledge of elephant catching and rearing. Therefore Mirjhumla in 1663 also involved in a failed attempt to introduce such techniques in Bengal and other parts of Mughal India by taking with him some native experts<sup>1</sup>. To chase the elephants from the jungles to the embankment areas, ramparts (locally known as Gadh) were made by the Ahoms. Ahom Swargodeo Partap Singh wanted to capture one thousand elephants from the jungles of Jorhat and Sivsagar district of modern Assam. For this he even designed a grand town named 'Hasti Nagar'<sup>2</sup> and even built a rampart known as 'Hati Gadh'. Apart from these, the Ahoms also used indigenous techniques to capture and hunt down wild boars, deers and other wild animals by building ramparts which were known as 'Pahu gad' in general. These elephants were not only used in the military fields but also used for transportation and loading heavy things.

The Ahoms appointed the *Morans* and the *Motok* tribes for capturing wild elephants and supplying tamed elephants to the royal houses. However people from other classes and ethnicity were also involved in supplying wild elephants to the state. Renown Assamese Neo Vaisnavite leader Madhavadeva and Hari, son in law of Sankardeva had to flee from Ahom state as he fell short from providing allotted number of elephants to the Ahom court along with the other reasons. A systematic network was set up by the Ahom state for the maintenance of these elephants under a group called '*Hati Chungi Khel*' which was came under the supervision of Hati Chungi Baruah. Shihabuddin Talish praised the natives for the extraordinary command in elephant catching and elephant riding. As traditionally the rulers and elite section of the society of Assam kept a large number of elephants, they also developed a traditional knowledge system for the betterment of the wild animals. Several discovered manuscripts of medieval period locally known as '*Hati Puthi*' testifies that the natives had commendable knowledge about healthcare of the animals along with the tactics to tame these animals. *Hasti Vidyarnava*, one of such manuscripts written by Sukumar Barkaith in 1734, documented 148 diverse categories of tuskers based on their birthplace, artifacts, events, and characteristics along with the lesson plans on how to teach and punish the wild elephants. It also gave a vivid description of 17 types of female elephants and the techniques to measure the age of these animals from their height. Barkaith also describes various medicines to make the domesticated elephants free from bruises, pains and different kinds of ailments. It is not treatise on the health care of elephants as the book provides highlight on the 3 types of *hatisals* (elephant enclosures) along with the best ways to keep these animals in the enclosures.<sup>3</sup>

### **Gold washing technology**

Assam had a rich legacy with gold washing as the region was referred as Survarnabhumi and Suvarnakunda in different ancient texts. From earliest times, the people of assam had the knowledge of extracting gold ores from the rivers flowed down the region. Before

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, P266

<sup>2</sup> He Renamed Jamuguri As Gajpur And Took The Title 'Gajapati'

<sup>3</sup> Rajkhowa, R. (2021). *Hati Puthi : The Medieval Assamese Manuscripts On Elephant Training And Treatment*, *Indian Journal Of History Of Science*, 56:230–234

the beginning of the medieval period, the region was divided into four parts known as Kampith, Ratnapith, Suvarnapith (land of gold ) and Soumarpith<sup>1</sup> . The ancient Greek text ‘Periplus of the Erythrian sea’ states that gold produced in Assam was sent to different parts of India<sup>2</sup>. Tavernier observed mines of gold, silver, lead, steel and iron in Assam<sup>3</sup>. The Muslim accounts of medieval India also threw light on the abundance of gold in this region. When Mirjhul occupied Ahom kingdom he compelled the Ahom ruler to sign a treaty in 1663. According to the treaty, the king of Assam had to pay 20,000 tolas of gold, 128,000 cash, and 120 elephants to the Mughal Emperor. Again during his stay at Gargoan the soldiers of Mirjhul plundered the maidams (graveyards of the Ahoms) of Ahom kings from where they looted 90,000 rupees worth of gold and silver which was testified by Muhamad Kazim’s Alamgirnama<sup>4</sup>. Mahamad Kazim stated that the people of Assam obtained gold and silver from the rivers flows through the region. People to the tune 12,000 to 20,000 were involved in washing gold and silver and they had to pay one tola of gold each annually to their chief<sup>5</sup>. These specialised workers were known as *Sonowals* (in Assamese gold is called *Son*) . However, Gold was not allowed to be taken outside the Ahom kingdom as the gold was used for local trade only<sup>6</sup>. During the reign of Rajeswar Singha (1759-69), Sonowals used to present 7000 tolas of gold annually. In his paper sent to coal committee, Maniram Dewan, a noted entrepreneur and prime minister of the last Ahom king Purandar Singha (1834-38) stated that prior to the British occupation, the Sonowals paid a yearly tribute of 4000 tolas of gold or in value at Rs 16 a tola,(Rs 64,000) to the Ahom government<sup>7</sup>. Even in 1838 when the authority of Upper Assam was handed over to the British East India company from Purandar Singha , 400 sonowals paid annual tribute in gold . Captain Hannay estimated that 10,000 Sonowals of Lakhimpur district had to pay gold ( 4 Annas of weight worth 4 Rupees) which was calculated to be 40,000 Rupees during 1838<sup>8</sup>. Noted Assamese elite Maniram dewan mentioned about two process of extracting gold from the rivers used in the Ahom era. The Gold-washers used river sands to wash away clay and stones, then collected in a wooden trough. Water was sprayed over the sand to blend the dense gold with fine sand. Quicksilver was added to the residue, and water was poured over the sand. Once the gold adhered to the quicksilver, it was placed over a charcoal fire for quicksilver to evaporate. The remaining gold was thrown into a pot of water, causing the pure gold to sink. However no enthusiastic efforts had been made by the colonial government to revive the age old traditional knowledge of gold washing as they found tea in Assam to be more significant for them. Gold dust, often found in combination with iron dust in rivers, required repeated washing and trituration with mercury to separate it. Gold purity was determined by submerging it in water, with pure

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<sup>1</sup> *Devsarma. D. Kamrup- Kamakhya*. Bishnu Prakashan, GUwahati , 1994, P. 14

<sup>2</sup> Periplus of the *Erythraean* sea, 1st century AD. Translated From The Greek And Annotated By Wilfred H. Schoff, Longmans, Green, And Co., London, Calcutta, 1912P 259

<sup>3</sup> Tavernier, Op. Cit P281

<sup>4</sup> Tavernier, Op. Cit., P278

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, P280, Economic Geology Of India, P231

<sup>6</sup> Tavernier, P283

<sup>7</sup> **A Manual Of The Geology Of India, Part 10, Volume 3, Geological Survey Of India, Henry Benedict Medlicott, William Thomas Blanford, Valentine Ball, Frederick Richard Mallett, P219**

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 219

gold sank immediately. Brass gold was wrapped in a paste made of clay and salt water, then burned in fire to give it a glittery appearance.

## Conclusion

From time to time, attempts had been made by the European and Medieval Islamic scholars to disown the progress that the Indians made in the fields of science, technology, architecture, and medicine. Rather, on various occasions, they directly and indirectly played a vital role in the elimination of the indigenous knowledge system. Where in Medieval India, most of the historical writings were written following the Arabic and Persian historiography, Assam developed a unique way of preserving the past records known as the '*Buranji*' tradition, which was the most authentic source to understand the socio-political, economic, and cultural history of entire North East India till the advent of colonial rule. But irony of pain is that despite having such a genuine masterpiece to showcase the native's practical sense of history writing, the *Buranji* literature fails to attract the mainstream media. The proper representation of the *Buranji* writing methods and their historical significance is hardly found in most of the mainstream textbooks on historiography. The historians and the students of India are well aware of the Kalhana's *Rajtarangani*, a single book on Kashmir, but fail to gather sufficient knowledge about the Ahom *Buranjis*, which is the regional history of not only Assam but of North East India. The academicians did ample research on *Bakhar* tradition, but only a few would have heard of the *Charit Puthi* tradition of medieval Assam. The same thing can be attributed to the *Vamsawali* tradition. As the rulers of Assam traditionally followed a kind of 'close door policy' in politics, the inhabitants of Assam from ancient times developed their own technology when it comes to agriculture, sericulture, and handicraft industries such as gold washing, ivory crafts, metallurgy, and military technology. The medieval and colonial accounts testify that Assam had its own traditional knowledge system, which also helped in enriching the agro-based economy. The land was also known for its unique knowledge about gastronomy and herbal medicine. One of the prime reasons for Assam's constant success against the Islamic invaders was its military technology and tactics. Even the mighty Mughals had to kneel down again and again before the advanced fortification process and guerrilla and naval warfare technology developed by the Ahoms. Travelers like Tavernier claimed that even China got the gunpowder technology from Assam. However, the colonial authority played a vital role in the elimination of traditional knowledge of the native people. Without having direct access to the Ayurvedic texts, the local population of Assam developed their indigenous knowledge about gastronomy and herbal medicine. Though catching and taming wild animals got lost in the womb of time, till one century before, it was practiced in every district of Assam. Even the colonial masters continued the *Hati kheda* and *Hati mela* methods of elephant capturing during the initial days of the company rule in North East India. Considering the importance of trade related to elephants in the Assam-Myanmar border, the colonial government issued a monopoly over elephant catching, and it gave a dead blow to the traditional knowledge of capturing and taming wild elephants. With this, the medicinal practices related to the health care of wild animals also got lost generation after generation.

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