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The Journal of National Development (JND) is an interdisciplinary bi-annual peer reviewed & refereed international journal committed to the ideals of a 'world community' and 'universal brotherhood'. The Journal is a joint effort of like-minded scholars in the field of social research. Its specific aims are to identify, to understand and to help the process of nation-building within the framework of a 'world community' and enhance research across the social sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Geography, Education, Economics, Law, Communication, Linguistics) and related disciplines like all streams of Home Science, Management, Computer Science, Commerce as well as others like Food Technology, Agricultural Technology, Information Technology, Environmental Science, Dairy Science etc. having social focus/implications. It focuses on issues that are global and on local problems and policies that have international implications. By providing a forum for discussion on important issues with a global perspective, the *JND* is a part of unfolding world wide struggle for establishing a just and peaceful world order. Thus, the *JND* becomes a point of confluence for the rivulets from various disciplines to form a mighty mainstream gushing towards the formulation and propagation of a humanistic world-view.

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Two Buddhist Cultural Festivals of Bhaktapur : Panchadan and Samyakdan

Balaram Kayastha*

The Panchadan and Samyakdan festivals have their own significance among the various festivals celebrated in Bhaktapur, the historical city of Kathmandu Valley. As these festivals are especially associated with charity under Buddhism, it is celebrated annually by the local Shakyas, Bajracharyas and other Newars with reverence and devotion. It is mentioned in almost all scriptures that virtue is attained by giving alms. On top of that, it seems to have a special significance in Buddhism. According to Buddhist legend, the maternity tigress, who was dying of malnutrition, was given life by Prince Mahasatva (Nama Buddha) by cutting the flesh of his own body. Panchadan means giving away five elements to the monks. and Samyakdan is also called an alms, which is given to 5 Dipankar Buddhas, 4 Samyak Buddhas and Buddhist priests.The first of these festivals, Panchadan, falls on Bhadrakrishna Trayodashi every year according to the lunar calendar, and Samyakdan falls on the day of Makar sankranti every year according to the solar

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calendar. Definition and significance of these festivals and how to observe in the Buddhist society of Bhaktapur are analytically study in this article.

1.   Background

Panchadan and Samyakdan, both are Buddhist festivals. Panchadan is the festival of five summer gifts. The five different things including rice grains, unhusked rice grains, salt, money and pulses that are needed for one's daily life are donated.These days, as per one's will and capacity, people donate other things besides that. In this festival gifts are made by the laity to the monks observed by local Buddhist especially Shakyas and Bajracharyas. Buddhist antiques are displayed and gigantic effigies of Dipankar Buddha are paraded around the town. Since monastic Buddhism has been long extinct in Nepal, the receivers of the gift today are Buddhists priest, the Shakyas and Bajracharyas, who go begging alms to the house of their clients. However, the main highlight of the festival is the giving away of five elements (wheat grains, rice grains, salt, money and fruit). Traditional collections of artifacts are displayed in monasteries and households on this occasion.

Another festival Samyakdan is also called Samyakmahadan or Samyak Panchamahadan has relatively a greater significance and has aesthetically a lot more impact on Buddhism. Samyak means doing things in the right way. Especially for the Buddhists, it is an eminent opportunity to convey the message of doing dan (alms).

2.   Methodology

Both primary and secondary sources have been used to make the presented study authentic and reliable. Among the primary sources are the on-site study of various fairs and festivals, direct observation as well as interviews with related people and published texts, books, and writing articles under the auxiliary sources. Analytical, descriptive and comparative methods have been used to study the resources obtained in this way.

3.   Panchadan Festival

One month-long "Gunla parva" (festival) celebrated by the Newar Buddhist community of the Kathmandu valley falls in the month of Shravan-Bhadra. This month is considered sacred for

Buddhists as well as Hindus and other sects. This Panchadan festival also falls in this month. The Newars call it "Panjanra". This festival is celebrated in remembrance of Dipankar Buddha's first begging after he attained enlightenment (Shrestha, 2010). According to Buddhist mythology, when Dipankar Tathagata went to Dipavati Nagar for begging, King Sarvananda and a poor old woman came to give alms.But Tathagat took the first donation from the old woman's hand because the old woman's begging had more reverence and devotion than the king's (Slusser, 1982). This festival is believed to have started from the time Dipankar Tathagata went to Varanasi for begging and from this time onwards the Dwapar Era is believed to have started (Regmi, 1966). This festival is celebrated on Bhadrakrishna Trayodashi in Bhaktapur and Kathmandu, but in Lalitpur it is celebrated on Shravanshukla Ashtami. According to Buddhist texts "kapisavdan" and "pindapatravdan", Dipankar Buddha himself is said to travel Dipavati Nagar (city) on the day of Shravanshukla Ashtami to go for bhikshyatan (begging). The day of Bhadrakrishna Trayodashi is celebrated to commemorate the holy day that Dipankar begged in Varanasi in the Dwapar Era (Joshi, 2003).

On the day of Panchadan, the Buddhist monks who stays with their family, specifically Shakya and Bajracharyas visit the houses of local people to recite alms accompanied by the begging. Various grains like pea, wheat, paddy, maas (black lentil), black soyabean etc are donated in begging. Some householders even donated delicious desserts along with grains. In addition to the door to door donations, on the same day there is a tradition of making donations by setting up a Guthi (Trust) in Bouddha Baha and Bahils here. Although the Buddhists go to the Panchadan Jatra in their own dress, some Bajracharyas wear a special type of dress. This sequence continues throughout the day. In the evening, the Panchadan jatra is completed after the thunderbolt touches the pile of grain kept by Fubare, the last person to take arms (Slusser, 1982).

3·1 Cultural Activities

There are series of activities that are followed during this festival. On the day prior to the main festival, the purification is done by taking bath and cleaning houses and Bouddha Bihars. Buddhists start displaying the idol, image, photo or Paubhas of Lord Buddha in their houses and Buddha Bihars. The next day, on the main day of festival, Buddhist as well as many Hindu Newars donate to

Bajracharya and Shakyas to pay homage to Lord Buddha because they are considered as symbols of the Buddha and his disciple. In this way, Bajracharya and Shakya who come to the house of local Newars are honored according to the rules of Grihastha Ashram and other sweets and fruits are also served with Kheer (rice Pudding). On this day, in addition to the charity work, local people also donate food items on the roads as well as in the Bouddha bihars (Vajracharya, 1986).

In Bhaktapur city, the beginning of Panchadan work is started from Aadipadma Mahabihar, Tubaha, Suryamadhi. On that day, the priest of Bhaktapur from Bajracharya and Shakya caste, eat Kheer (rice pudding) as a special meal. As in Kathmandu, Buddhist statues, Paubha Paintings are displayed on houses, shops, Bihars etc. in this day. Newars, specially Buddhist Newar of Bhaktapur have set up Guthi (Trust) for Panchadan and this festival is being conducted with the income of the same, such as the Guthi of Chitrakars of Tachapal tole and Vaidyas of Inacho tole can be taken. Some of Panchadan Guthi are run within the brothers having blood relationship. In these kind of Guthi, the responsibility of organizing the Panchadan celebration is rotated among those brothers. For example, if the elder brother organized the Panchadan this year, then the second one will organized the same next year. That is, one year the Big brothers does it and the next year the small brother does it. Similarly, there are few other Guthi of Shakyas of Inacho which do not function actively and is there just for name (Kayastha, 1993).

Even though this festival is majorly celebrated by Bajracharya and Shakya, the local farmers and middle class people from other community also involved themselves in this festival by donating grain and food items to (Buddhist Monks) beggers in the morning of Bhadrakrishna Trayodashi. In the case of Bahal and Bahil, Thakali (main/head person) of Guthi and in the case of the home, the head of the household, give alms. Begging at home is initiated by the family priest. Those who come to beg for Bhikshya (donations) are first worshiped and weared Jajankaa (sacred thread). After that, Panchadan (five donations) are given by placing it in a bowl (pindapatra). Then Kheer, fruits etc are served and at the end Dakshinaa (offering) is given. Apart from Shakya and Bajracharya, other Newars also do the work of giving arms, but only Shakya and Bjracharya can take donations. Before going to beg in the charities, Thapaju is in the forefront. Thapaju means the local original religious leader of the Buddhists. The beggars do not have to go to all the

charities to collect donations. However, there is a tradition of begging in at least seven places. The grain donated in this way is up to five Pathis (a certain quantity) of one ordinary beggar. The origin of this festival tells that the activities performed on this day seem to follow the begging done by Lord Buddha in different cities and districts. The tradition of begging from house to house by Buddhist teachers must have been practiced to commemorate and propagate the perceptions of Lord Buddha (Shrestha, 1978).

3·2 Dipankar Jatra

Dipankar's Jatra (procession) is done in Bhaktapur on the day of Panchadan. This Panchadan Jatra of Bhaktapur is considered to be unique and different among the 3 cities of Kathmandu valley, including Lalitpur and Kathmandu because of the tradition of taking the statue of Dipankar Buddha along in the procession as there is a belief that Dipankar Tathagat himself came to Dipavati town for begging and it does memoirs that Dipankar received panchadan from Sarvananda, the king of that city. The incident related to Dipankar Tathagat is described in Bouddha scripture "Pinda-patravadan" (Joshi, 2003). On that day, during the procession, the devotees carry the idol of Dipankar god and go around the different places of the city. In this way, rest is also done in various Tola (street), Chowk (square) and Dabali (stage), so that the local devout devotees can worship properly. In some places, it is customary to kneel and praise while worshiping. In this way, after the Lord Dipankar is enthroned in about 58 places of Bhaktapur city, this procession is completed in the evening. While Dipankar was resting in the Dabali (stage) on right side of bhairavnath temple in Taumadhi Square, head of guthi (trust) of Tarchhen Baha, Sakotha, comes to bid farewell. It is believed that the Panchadan festival was completed after the idols of Dipankar were finally parted in a traditional farewell in Sakotha before being returned to their original place. Before this, the Dipankar Buddhas go Bhairavnath and offer Abhayajnan through dance to the tune of classical Pongabaja Buddhist stotra so that Bhairavnath can remain calm.

3·3 Significance of Panchadan Festival

The importance of this festival is mentioned in a handwritten manuscript called Varshakriya, Bajramahakaltantra, Vajrasatwa bachan and Pindapatravadan Bouddhabachan-the fruits of charity

given on the day of Bhadrakrishna trayodashi are innumerable. Therefore, the human race will donate Pindapatradi to those all Shakya and Bajracharyas, who have done Chudakarma, the fruit is obtained as the mind desires (Vajracharya, 1986). Similarly, there is a lot of belief among the local about this festival. According to them, each item donated in Panchadan has its own significance. For example, by donating a Jajanka sacred thread, one will be born in high class family or becomes mighty in the next birth. By donating Kheer and fruits, innumerable virtues are obtained. Donating paddy, wheat, pea, black lentil seed, soyabean will fulfill all the desires of the mind in the next life and it is believed that virtue is obtained. Similarly, by donating clothes and grains, there are seven kinds of fruits will be obtained. They are semen, health, happiness, longevity, heroism, wealth, name and childen. Also, donating money brings immense financial benefits. The main reason why king Sarvananda gave Panchadan to Lord Dipankar is for the happiness of the country and its people, so that the creatures do not have to suffer hell, let the inhabitants of hell be freed from the motion of hell, respect for religion, may everyone gets salvation. On this day, pea, maas, soyabean etc. seeds are cooked by soaking and eating its soup, it is believed that eating this hot soup cures many ailments. Due to these reasons, this festival is celebrated with pomp on Bhadrakrishna Trayodashi in Bhaktapur.

4.   Samyakdan

Samyakdan is of great importance in the philosophy of Budhhism. This Samyakdan is given at different times and places in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur.The day of Makar Sankranti (winter solstice) on (mid-January) every year in Bhaktapur city, this Samyakdan work is done in the open field in front of Thathubahi which is called also Shukravarna Mahabihar, near the current minibus park of Bhaktapur and on the west side of Napukhu. This work is done around 4- 5 pm, which can be done in a short time and in a short form. Although, Buddhist also have a 12-year Samyakdan, but this task seems burden some due to the large financial resources and large arrangements required.In this way, a large number of Buddhist would gather and donate food and other necessities to them. It is customary to perform Samyakdan on the ground under Kathmandu Swayambhu. However, when making special Samyakdan (dona-tions), be it from the guthi or the benefactors at their convenient place (Joshi, 2003).

On the day of Makar Sankranti, five idols of Lord Dipankar are displayed in the open space in front of the Thathubahi, west of Bhaktapur city, in the presence of other deities. At this time, various Guthis (traditional trusts) have been set up to perform religious functions including worship of these deities. Of these, Sakotha Guthi is considered to be the main guthi. Nagadsher of Sukuldhoka set up a Guthi with cash and Jagatsher of Sakotha with land, and the same guthi still serves five Dipankar Tathaagats on that occasion in a large plate with Kheer, unsalted raddish vegetables, lentils, sesame bread with containing 12 dishes etc. Also a Pathi (a few quantity) of transferable rice is offered. Some offer rice, some offer kheer, some offer khichadi, biscuits, dakshina etc. according to their reverence and devotion (Munankarmi, 1986). On the day of Makar Sankranti, on the afternoon of Samyakdan, the Dipankar Tathagats, who have gathered in the open space in front of Thathubahi, reside in various Buddhist Monasteries in Bhaktapur. Such as samskrit bihar, jaykirti bihar Kuthubahi Bharwacho, Shukrabarna Mahabihar Thathubahi, Chaturbramha Mahabihar Tarchhen baha, bagachhen Sakotha, Mangaldharma Mahabihar Golmadhi, Dipankar bihar Kwathandau devanani etc. A Thapaju is living in Dipankar bihar. Thapaju means local main religious leader. Therefore, on that day, after offering prayers and offering alms to the Lord Dipankar including Samyak deities, Thapaju is also honored and Samyakdan are also given to him. Only then, the Buddhist priest Bajracharyas, other Bajracharyas and Shakyas are given Samyakdan. The place where Samyakdan is given is called Bhuyikhya where devout devotees give alms, according to their status, to the symbol of their faith such as Lord Dipankars with Samyak gods and priests, which are sitting there line by line. Among the items of donated in this way are grains like paddy, rice, wheat, pea, black mass, soyabean, etc. Similarly, laddu made by mixing flour, sugarcane, ghee and seasame seeds and bread, seasonally fruits, Dakshina etc. According to local old people, the Samyakdan given on this day is also called Panchadan, the difference is that Panchadan (five donations) are collected by going around different Tole (street), Plazas and Chowks of the city, while Samyakdan is a collection of donations in one place.

4·1 Cultural Activities

There are more interesting acts that abide to happen before the Samyakdan like gathering of five Dipankar Buddhas at Bhaktapur

Durbar Square. The festival especially honors Dipankar Buddha who predicted lord Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightment in aprevious lifetime In Bhaktapur, the Shakyas and Bajracharya gathered in a Samyak ground near the Napukhu pond accompanied by panchabuddha and samyak Buddhas that are offered chaku balls and rice as a grant.

There is no exact information regarding when and how the Samyakdan start-up of, however, there is a sort of word about how it started in Bhaktapur. As per the available resources, Samyak panchadan first took place in N.S. 787 (1666 AD) in Bhaktapur all arranged by Jayaratna Bajracharya who was fulfilling his father (Jayadev Bajracharya)' wish to do a grand donation to the Bajracharyas and Shakyas. With his capacity and supervision, he also renovated the current Thathubahi and held the first Samyak Mahadan over there.

During Samyakdan, all the five Dipankar Buddhas are gathered at Thathu bahi, But before that, a series of actions take place like the act of "La: Swa Wanegu", which means to go to the roadway to welcome the guests. In this event, the two Buddhas from Thathubahi and Kuthubahi go to Bhaktapur Durbar Square to welcome the other three Buddhas who come from three another bihars of Bhaktapur. After the conjuction of all these Buddhas, they directly go to the Thathubahi, where the priests welcome them by washing their feet. This act is marked as "Tuti Lichhayekegu". Thereafter, the Buddhas are placed in a row to begin the samyakdan. With the Buddhas, the other four Samyak Buddhas, the priests and then the other Shakyas and bajracharyas take their place to get alms.

4·2   Significance of Samyakdan Festival

Samyakdan is an annual event for the people of Bhaktapur which takes place in Western side of Napukhu each year during Makar sankranti (winter solstice). But the Samyak Mahadan is done once in five years and twelve years in Lalitpur and Kathmandu respectively.

Samyak here literally means doing things in the right way. Samyakdan often called Samyak panchamahadan or Samya-kmahadan has relatively a greater significance and has aesthetically a lot more impact on Buddhism. Especially for the Buddhists, it is an eminent opportunity to convey the message of doing dan (alms).

## 5.	Conclusion

Based on the above mentioned illustrations, Panchadan and Samyakdan festivals are being celebrated with special pomp and ceremony in Bhaktapur city. In this way, the local Buddhist Newars seem to be financially prosperous as these festivals are celebrated with pomp and splendor. During these festivals, the daughters of different Buddhist Newar castes such as Bajracharya, Shakya, Manandhar, Chitrakar, Tuladhar etc. wear various kinds of garments and adorn themselves with ornaments and engage in the festivities with the spirit of mutual unity and cordiality. Other festivals of Bhaktapur are also known for its aggressive celebration while environment of these Buddhist festivals are cordial and gentle. Many festivals are now limited to people selfishness as it is guided by the so-called modern and civilized believers in materialism world however these two Buddhist festivals motivates people to follow and implement the Buddha's teaching that human being should have compassion for the poor, the miserable, the helpless and should have a generous attitude towards humanity. In essence, these festivals convey the message that there should be an exchange of cooperation between human beings. Another thing is that some people say the five Dipankar Buddhas who are circumambulated during this Buddhist festival as the five Pandavs of Mahabharat, but this statement is not true. Because the Dipankar Buddhas are in the posture of offering Abhayadan (oblations) with the right hand and holding the Cheebar with the left hand, whereas Pandavas are holding weapons of war. Similarly, Dipankara Buddha renounced his throne, family, wealth and achieved enlightenment by doing penance, but Pandavas fought with their own relatives for the kingdom. These Dipankar Buddhas are 5 in Bhaktapur, 60 in Kathmandu and 100 in Lalitpur. However, these festivals are found to be a festival of joy for followers of Buddhism as well as religiously tolerant Hindu Newars.

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Narrative Engagement : The Role of Binge Watching Behaviour and Gender Differences

Navami P* and P. E. Thomas**

The technological advancement paved the way for the introduction of different innovative and interactive media platforms. People began to consume the contents of these digital platforms differently as it offers more convenient and appealing viewing facilities. It allows the viewers to watch their favourite programmes in rapid succession and the distractions are less compared to the linear medium. This comfort provided by the new media popularizes the binge watching phenomenon among web series audiences all over the globe. The current study aims to analyze the relationship between the consumption method of watching a web series and media involvement. Specifically, the study, based on an online survey investigates how binge watching behaviour and gender differences of binge watchers are associated with Narrative engagement. Results showed a significant

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influence of Binge watching behaviour on Narrative engagement. The findings of this current study further revealed that Engagement experience is also associated with the Gender of binge-watchers.

1.   Introduction

New media viewers are experiencing a greater sense of autonomy and enjoyment with the introduction of streaming platforms. These streaming platforms use algorithms to track consumer viewing preferences and personalize the content (Finn, 2017). Viewers could access huge libraries of regional and global content from anywhere at any time at their convenience without the restraints of the traditional platform. The content providers even launch episodes all at once as they know that people will prefer to watch several episodes right after one another, than watching one episode a week. Whenever one episode ends, the next one begins automatically. This potential nature of the medium is being used to its fullest extent more than ever before and popularized the novel way of consumption, binge watching. Furthermore, the way stories are crafted makes them more enjoyable to consume in this way (Jenner, 2015). Series like Breaking bad or Stranger things, tempt viewers to watch the entire series in one sitting (Pena, 2015).

The study focuses on how does binge watchers consume the content. Since binge watching provides a way for enjoying an array of content without many distractions does it give a more immersive experience? Does this change in consumption behaviour have any impact on how viewers process the content? Is there a difference in the narrative engagement based on the gender of binge viewer? The study attempts to investigate these matters using the construct of "Narrative engagement" proposed by Busselle & Bilandzic (2009).

2.   Literature Review

There is a growing trend of binge watching web series nowadays with the emergence of streaming platforms. Researchers define binge watching differently based on different aspects namely the time, frequency, or the episodes. Most of the studies define binge-watching as "the consumption of 2-6 episodes of the same TV show in one sitting". Added to that dilemma, the confusion regarding the optimum time or the number of episodes for

distinguishing healthy binge watching from excessive binge watching still exists. Though studies have shown excessive binge watching adversely impacts sleeping patterns, food consumption, and physical activities (Exelmans & van den Bulck, 2017; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020; Sun & Chang, 2021) bingeing could be beneficial and productive (Troles, 2019; Flayelle et. al., 2020). It helps to engage with content that provides some kind of insight. Some even considered it as a way to foster social relationships (Boca, 2018; Ort et. al, 2021).

Moreover, the consumption style could exert influence on different media engagements like narrative transportation, parasocial relationships, etc. (Tukachinsky & Eyal, 2018; Ericson et. al, 2018). In particular, based on the literature on consumption behaviour and media involvement, this study focuses on, binge watching behaviour and narrative engagement experienced by web series viewers. Narrative engagement, as demonstrated by Busselle & Bilandzic (2009) can be subdivided into four dimensions : (a) narrative understanding, (b) attentional focus, (c) emotional engagement, and (d) narrative presence. The first dimension of engagement, narrative understanding, is defined as the "ease in construction models of meaning". Second, the attentional focus is connected to flow, in which people are unaware that they are spending resources to focus on a narrative, but can do so effortlessly. The third dimension of engagement is emotional engagement - the feeling of connection and emotion towards characters, it could be in the form of 'empathy' or 'sympathy'. The fourth and final dimension of narrative engagement is narrative presence, which is the experience "that one has left the actual world and entered the story" (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009 : 341). Narrative engagement is the mental process experienced by the audience when they are drawn into the world of a narrative. They are engaged both cognitively and emotionally by immersing in the constructed world. Previous studies show a positive relationship between binge watching and narrative engagement. When media are viewed frequently and for longer periods without much distraction, the viewer could experience greater transport capable of affecting their feelings. Besides, the narratives' complex storylines engage viewers, allowing them to escape reality and resort to fictional worlds (Green, 2004).

For decades, media researchers have studied complex interrelationships between gender and technology and contributed

significant findings in the area of research. Primarily, the media usage and gratification obtained by different gender shows variations (Wang et.al, 2008; Su, 2017; Idemudia et. al, 2017). For instance, Cohen (1997) observed the parasocial relationship, a kind of media engagement more evidently in women compared to the other gender. Similarly, Tsichla et. al. (2019) and Kasper (2020) pointed out the differences in responses to emotionally appealing advertisements by a different gender. Hence, Gender is a significant factor that could influence media engagement.

3. Hypotheses

H_o1 : There will be no significant difference in 'Narrative engagement' on the basis of the 'Binge watching behaviour'

H_o2 : 'Gender of the respondents' doesn't have any effect on 'Narrative engagement'

4. Methodology

This study was designed to find out the relationship between Narrative engagement and Binge watching behaviour. In this study, an online survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. Quantitative data is more objective compared to qualitative data because it relies on numerical measurements, which eliminates the subjective bias of the researcher. The study sample comprised of the people who consume more than two episodes of web series in a single sitting. The purposive sampling technique is used in identifying cross sectional representation of the specific population. To assess the Narrative engagement experienced by the viewers the study employed Narrative engagement scale proposed by Busselle & Bilandzic (2009). The scale has four sub scales which measures different dimensions of engagement, (a) narrative understanding, (b) attentional focus, (c) emotional engagement, and (d) narrative presence. The alpha score of the construct was greater than 0.8 thus demonstrated adequate reliability.

5. Results

5·1 Respondents' Profile

This cross sectional survey method enables the researchers to gather information about respondents' binge watching process. A total of 400 responses were included in the final analysis. The number of episodes watched in a session was used to categorize respondents

in to three groups; Viewers who watch 2-3 episodes as light viewers; 4-6 episodes as moderate viewers and more than six episodes as heavy viewers. The survey comprised of 43.0% light viewers, 31.5% moderate viewers and 25.5 % heavy viewers. Among the selected population, 50.5% of the respondents were male and 49.5% of the respondents were female. 37.3% of total respondents' preferred genre of series was drama followed by Crime (25.5%), Comedy (24.3%), Horror (5.8%), and other genres including hybrid genres (7.2%). Women mostly preferred drama (49.0%) and men preferred crime genre (32.7%). Strikingly, heavy users' favourite genre is crime (42.2%) followed by drama (37.3%).

5·2 Binge Watching Behaviour, Gender Differences & Narrative Engagement

Since the data is not normally distributed, nonparametric test of association, Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to examine the differences on Narrative engagement according to the level of Binge watching. Highly significant differences ($H(2) = 77.173$, ($p<.001$) were found among the three categories of participants with a mean rank of 145.08 for group 1, 223.19 for group 2 and 265.93 for group 3. Thus, it is apparent that there is a variation in narrative engagement experienced by the respondents on the basis of average length of session time. Hence, the null hypothesis, H_01 : ***There will be no significant difference in 'Narrative engagement'*** on the basis of the 'Binge watching behaviour', is not tenable. All four subcomponents of narrative engagement are highly dependent upon binge watching, the independent variable. By watching a medium for a long period with minimal distractions and 'pollutants', one can better understand the fictional world which subsequently produces stronger immersive experience.

To determine whether males and females differed in experiencing narrative engagement, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed. The results indicate a significant difference between groups, U (N_{male} = 295, N_{female}=322) = 16881.500, Z = -2.698, p = .007]. The mean rank is higher for women (216.24) compared to men (185.07). Hence the null hypothesis, H_02 : 'Gender of the respondents' doesn't have any effect on 'Narrative engagement', is not tenable. It can be inferred that gender of the spectator influences the immersive experience offered by the narrative. It could be attributed to the differences in their psychological traits like cognitive needs, sensation seeking traits and phylogenetic factors.

6. Discussion

Since its inception, binge watching was found to be a preferable activity by its users as it is an effective way to reduce stress and feel relaxed. It is perceived as a highly engaging media consumption method (Flayelle, et. al, 2020). The first objective of the study was to investigate the association between narrative engagement and binge watching behaviour among web series viewers. The findings imply that as the rate of binge watching increases, the level of engagement will also increase. Streaming platforms customize content options for users based on algorithms rather than simply showing what is available on television or cable. It provides a distinctive experience and has a profound impact on how viewers engage with the narrative. Viewers are given the opportunity to completely immerse themselves in the show which results in their inner happiness. Engaging shows usually have conflicts, suspense, plot twists and interesting presentation. Hence it demands a high level of emotional and cognitive engagement from the audience. So by watching a series sequentially, the audience gets to know the established fictional world and can follow the protagonists seamlessly. This is in keeping with the argument made by Jason Mittell (2010), "Having control of when and how you watch also helps deepen one of the major pleasures afforded by complex narratives: the operational aesthetic".

The second hypothesis test proved that gender has a significant influence on experiencing narrative engagement. It was even evident that they had different preferences for the genre of series. These differences could be related to the differences in psychological traits like the need for cognition or sensation seeking (Shim& Kim, 2018; Hall, 2005). Unlike men, women have a higher need for cognition (Seifert, 2018) which could attribute to their higher engagement. While women watch narratives, their mental models may influence their cognition and emotions more powerfully and create stronger experiential responses.

7. Conclusion

The evolving media environment has changed the media consumption methods and the relationship between the medium and audience. Narrative engagement, the spectator's experience of being immersed in the narrative, can be exacerbated by binge watching behavior. The heightened engagement will encourage the viewer to keep watching in order to maintain the pleasure of the

engagement. It suggests the bidirectional nature of the association between Narrative Engagement and Binge watching behaviour pertaining to the number of episodes watched in a single session. Moreover, the degree of narrative engagement may vary by gender due to the subjective nature of the experience. The forms of media involvement heavily depended on the different personality traits of the viewer. In sum, the current study reveals that there is a significant relationship exists between binge watching behavior, gender, and narrative engagement experienced by web series viewers.

However, there are limitations to this study that provide areas for further research. The causal relationship between the variables could be further explored through experimental studies. Secondly, Binge watching has different dimensions and defining bingeing is difficult. This study defined binge-watching as "watching more than two episodes of the same TV show in one sitting" the difference in the length of the episode hasn't been taken into consideration. Future studies should include more factors, such as the frequency and the total time spent in a single session of binge watching to explain the narrative engagement concept. Despite its limitations, this study theoretically contributes to the extent of literature on media effects and helps to understand the relationships between narrative experience, and binge-watching behaviour.

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3

Panchayati Raj : Supervision and Control

Mohit Malik*

Local bodies, i.e, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) are creature of states. The State legislatures pass the legislation regarding PRIs and Municipalities and remain vigilant about their working. In this way, the State Legislature indirectly exercises administrative control over these bodies. Local Bodies are institutions of decentralization and local democracy, created by the State Government through the Municipal Act and Panchayati Raj Act; and provisions of these Acts govern the relations between the State and Local Bodies. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the supervision, guidance and control of Panchayati Raj. Secondary sources have been used in this analysis. In a legal sense the mechanism of control and supervision is itself a part and parcel of the Panchayati Raj System. It has been shown that the future of Panchayati Raj largely depends on the proper supervision and control by the appropriate authorities which is constituted, among others, by four main elements viz., basis, nature, level and form.

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1.   Introduction

Perhaps no aspect of Panchayati Raj like any other local self government is as much controversial as the subject of supervision, guidance and control. There are two schools of thought representing two divergent views. There are those who hold that local authorities are and should be meant for making the local people self-governing. Therefore, external interference should be minimum. At the other extreme stands what Maddick calls the "control everything school."[1] This school is skeptical about the availability and effective utilization of talents and resources at district level and below. It advocates considerable centralization through wide legislative, administrative and financial means. There may be a "third school"[2] of thought which subscribes to neither. It "believes that the part to be played by the State Government in relation to local bodies varies according to the stage of development that the local bodies are passing through. "It may also vary with the stage of promotion of each particular service or function. The relationship between the in constituted by the stage of their maturity."[3]

2.   Autonomy of Panchayati Raj Institutions

It is, therefore, said, "Complete autonomy of local bodies would spell anarchy."[4] The achievements of local government have not been very reassuring and it may be due to a number of reasons, "but a too rigid and faulty administrative control does contribute to its failure."[5] There are wide variations in state-local relations, in some respects there is excessive interference and in others the control amounts to non-intervention. "Between the two extremes i.e, where the local government is completely free autonomous and independent of Central Government e.g. in Brazil and where it is entirely subordinate to the Central government e.g., in France the local bodies have not achieved the best results."[6] Therefore, "it is imperative that State control is to be justified."[7] The role of the State Government in helping the Panchayati Raj system to grow up into stable local government units is of crucial importance. The philosophy of State Government-Panchayati Raj relationship was spelt out by the Mehta Team : "It must not be cramped by too much control by the government or government agencies. It must have the power to mike mistakes and to learn by making mistakes, but it must also receive guidance which will help it to avoid making mistakes."[8]

Today, complete local autonomy is difficult to achieve, The activities of the modern governments are almost beyond quantitative description. The State today assumes full responsibility for ensuring protection and welfare of the citizens. For the fulfillment of its objectives and for discharging its responsibilities, the State has to regulate not only its activities but also the activities of its subordinate layer governments. A strong local authority may be able to defy the higher layer government if complete autonomy is granted to it. "The higher layer governments should be able to exert their influence over the local authorities by way of persuasion, guidance, supervision, and control if the latter act is such a way as to defeat the very policies and objectives of the higher layer governments."[9] Many factors account for "limiting the freedom or autonomy of the local authorities by the State, and a number of political, social, administrative, and economic considerations are involved in this."[10] In this era of National self-government and also from the point of view of the new goals and commitments in terms of socialistic pattern of society and planned development of the country, the very concept of autonomy has to be re- viewed in view of the changed perspective. "Control and autonomy in the long run must be subordinated to the larger interests of the community and local bodies must also realize that it is only by strengthening their organization and mobilizing local efforts and resources that local autonomy can be made a reality."[11] There, "One may have to take a limited view of the concept of autonomy."[12] One need not necessarily view "autonomy, external control and internal self- regulation from a dischotomous angle : the three could be treated as part of a continuum with external control and internal self-regulation supplementing each other and both in turn contributing to the realization of the ideal of maximal local autonomy consistent with a system which is committed to socialism as its goal and to centralized national planning as the pathway to this objective."[13] It will be idle to equate the two levels of government but the relations between them have to be described a partnership of two active and co-operative members but with the central or state government definitely the senior partner. Says Maddick, "It is not local government versus central government but the two working together; recognizing their inter-dependence, which will produce the greatest results. Partner-ship will imply contributions from both central government and local authorities, but at first the bulk of the functions of the

partnership will have to be undertaken by the central government…"[14]

Thus "in a legal sense the mechanism of control and supervision is itself a part and parcel of the Panchayati Raj System."[15]

3. Supervision and Control over Panchayati Raj Institutions

The need for proper supervision and control over Panchayati Raj institutions by higher bodies or its officers arises out of the fact that these bodies are liable to be deficient in knowledge owing to their comparatively less experience which in tern may result in abuse of powers and misuse of funds. "The strength of argument that these institutions should be left independent and relatively unsupervised is weakened by two facts."[16] First, as the bulk of their resources accrue in the form of State Government grants, State control over these institutions in imperative. Secondly, they are the creatures of the State legislature. The inherent responsibility of State Government for the overall development and general welfare of the people does not come to an end merely by transferring certain powers to these bodies; it should also see that they maintain constitutional responsibility and national policy as well. The future of Panchayati Raj largely depends on the proper supervision and control by the appropriate authorities which is constituted, among others, by four main elements viz., basis, nature, level and form. A brief description of these elements is as follows:

3·1 Basis

Basis is the very statue which authorizes the establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The relevant statues contain a number of mandatory as well permissive provisions and clauses which provide the legal framework of supervision and control.

3·2 Nature

The Panchayati Raj statutes prescribe a pattern of control and supervision which is, more or less, external cum executive in the sense that : (1) the scope for internal self- regulation, i.e., inter-institutional or intra-system, control and supervision of various Panchayati Raj bodies is limited, (2) the media, agencies and functionaries of control and supervision lie outside the Panchayati raj System and (3) most of the media, measures and agencies relating to

supervision over Panchayati Raj bodies are directly controlled and operated by the executive government in contradistinction from the legislative and judiciary which come into the picture only in an indirect manner if at all they do so.

3·3 Levels

The network of control and supervision spreads both vertically and horizontally across all the level, i.e., State, Regional and Local.

3·4 Forms

Finally, the control and supervision takes the following four forms :

1. **Institutional :** It is used to connote and cover all those statutory provisions which empower some specific agency (usually the 'Government' or ('Collector') to regulate the formation, area and jurisdiction, membership structure and composition (including mode of elections) and, thus, determine the vital components of an institution- its name, area, boundaries and membership- and ensure strict and continuous control over the very existence of an institution.

2. **Administrative :** It refers to those powers and measures which enable the controlling agency (usually the government) to check and regulate the day-to-day policies and administration. It is negative in nature and restrictive in scope.

3. **Technical :** It refers to the regulation and supervision of various plans, programmes and projects formulated and implemented by Panchayati Raj bodies with their statutory functional jurisdiction. It is usually exercised by the technical agencies of the government. The necessity or technical control has grown enormously because one of the major aims of the Panchayati Raj in to secure horizontal and vertical extension of modern techniques and skills at rural local levels.

4. **Financial :** It relates to regulation of the finances, budgets, accounts and audit of the Panchayati Raj institutions.

The blueprint worked out by the Mehta Team envisages controls of two types : *firstly*, by the bigger local body over the affirms of the smaller body and *secondly*, by Government or their outpost agents over the entire system of local government.

4. Conclusion

Pursuant to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, PRIs are required to play an active role both in terms of planning as well as implementation of development programmes. Therefore, to avoid the mal-practices and misuse of powers by panchayats, the need for supervision, guidance and control has been streamlined. In this context, all State Governments have provided necessary legislative provisions in their Panchayati Raj Acts. These checks and balances in terms of State control over the PRIs are Powers to cancel/suspend resolution; Power to take action in default of a gram panchayat; power to remove elected representatives; power to dissolve the PRIs; power to give direction to PRIs; power to call for records and inspection; and power to conduct enquiry. However, critics hold that under the State laws, wide powers of suspension and dismissal vested in the State bureaucracy have straightaway placed PRIs in a position of disadvantage. We should not forget that the role of the PRIs in the process of development is likely to increase over time with the spread of education and awareness and with the greater involvement of people in decision-making at the local level. Hence, supervision and control can not be under-estimated.

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Status and Trends in Gender Disparity in Education in India

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Education plays a crucial role in empowering women and enabling them to become economically independent and self-reliant. Like other countries, Indian women's struggle for equal access to education and applied field of the knowledge were unique. Barring Vedic era women were discriminated through ill designed customs and policies especially during the Islamic and British regimes. After independence of the country many affirmative and policy action were initiated in order to enhance the women' access to education. Paper analyses the trends in gender disparity in access to education. The result shows convergence in gender disparity gap in recent decades.

[**Keywords :** Gender gap, Educational attainment, Literacy rate, Policy action]

1. Introduction

The education has been a key driver for the real change in the society. Education refers to the process of acquiring knowledge,

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skills, values, beliefs, and habits through various forms of learning, such as schooling, training, mentoring, and experience. It is a lifelong process that enables individuals to understand the world around them, develop their potential, and contribute to society. India had a well-established network of the education system since ancient times. The education system was mainly focused on imparting moral and ethical values to the students and it was primarily based on the Vedas and other texts (Kapoor, 2019). India is home to approximately 17.7% of the world's female population, making it the country with the largest number of women in the world (UNDP, 2022). As of 2021, the total female population of India is estimated to be around 655 million, compared to the global female population of approximately 3.7 billion (World Development Indicators, World Bank 2022).

Education has been playing a crucial role in empowering women and enabling them to become economically independent and self-reliant across the globe. It helps women gain knowledge, skills and confidence and provides them with the tools to make informed decisions about their lives. Additionally, educated women are more likely to participate in political and social activities, which can help to increase their visibility and influence within their communities. Educational attainment of the nations have been depended on the various social, economic, historical, cultural and many hosts of the factors. Besides host of the factors access, availability, uses of educational infrastructure remained to be the prime determinants of the educational attainment index in general and for the specific gender particular.

India has made significant progress in terms of expansion and diversification in her GDP and many socio-economic parameters in the last three decades. Besides successes at economic front there has been notable gender differences in the educational attainment in the country. Likewise, many developing countries, women in India also face discrimination and sometimes marginalized in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and political participation. For instance, women's labor force participation rate in India is relatively low compared to men, and women are often paid less for the same work (ILO, 2022). Additionally, women are under-represented in positions of power, such as in parliament and other decision-making bodies. Nonetheless, bridging the gender disparity in access to education across the age and social groups remains to be a daunting task before the policy makers since independence.

Despite sincere efforts made by the governments and social institutions, success at this front remained to be less than satisfactory especially 30 years after the independent. As per Human Development Report (HDR) 2022, India ranks 107th out of 146 countries in gender inequality in education. Not only this, her score has marginally worsened in comparisons to HDR 2021. Global Gender Gap Report 2022 published by World Economic Forum indicates that online learning has benefitted the women learners in scaling down the barriers to entry. This report elucidates that despite significant exclusion in job and economic opportunities during the pandemic, expansion of the digital learning tools has improved the gender inclusion in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Recently published International Labor Organization's "Global Wage Report 2020-21" suggests that Covid 19 crisis has inflicted the massive downward pressure on wages and dis-proportionately affected women's total wages compared to their male counterparts. But silver lining is that women's enrolments in entry-level professional certificates have gone up from 22 per cent in 2019 to 30 per cent in 2021. Similarly, the gender gap narrowed from 23 per cent enrolments from women in 2019 to 32 per cent in 2021 in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses (ILO, 2022). In view of the above analysis the pertinent question arises that whether economic growth induced women's participation in education or not. If yes, then in which stream they were inclined to. In view of above discussion, present paper is aimed at analyzing the trends in participation of women in education in India specially after the economic reforms.

2. Overview of Education System and Women Education in India

The women's position in general and access to educational institution since ancient times presents mixed picture. During the Vedic period, they enjoyed high status and independence in the society. It was advised that unmarried young learned daughter ought to be married to a learned bridegroom. The customs of Child marriage and enforced widowhood were not prevalent in Vedic India. Women in ancient India had free access to education. They could participate in Vedic sacrifices and utter mantras as many hymns of the Rigveda were composed by poetesses. There were ample references where

learned ladies such as Visvavara, Lopamudra, Apala, Urvasi, Ghosa, Sulabha, Lilavati, Maitreyi, Saswati, Kshana, Gargi and others were part of creation and disseminations of the knowledge banks and were actively involved in the the educational upliftment of the ancient society. Maitreyi, the celebrated wife of the most learned philosopher of ancient India, Yajnavalka, used to hold discussion on abstruse philosophical questions with her husband (Vrihdarnayak Upnishad). Women were not discriminated in terms of access to educational system of the country (Roy, 2017). However, researchers find that status of women in society as well their access to educational institution have declined over the time. As Manusmriti, "by a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently". Manu further opines that "in childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons, a woman must never be independent" (Versus, 9.3, Manusmiriti). On the contrary during the Buddhism and Jainism period women were admitted into the sanghs. They had full right to do religious sacrifices. Many women achieved the great status as teachers due to their hard work. They enjoy more or less equal status in the society (Shastri, 2016).

During the Medieval Period the condition of women in society deteriorated with the advent of Muslims in India. Education in general and women education particular got least priority in the agenda of the Muslim Rulers. Women were treated mere as an object in the society by the people with no respect. This was the time when there was the arrival of different of social evils in India society, which took away all the fundamental rights from the women (Shastri, 2016). The situation even worsened in the early British rule in India.

During the early British Rule in India, women's education was not a priority for the British government. The British administration primarily focused on establishing English education for men, mainly to create a class of clerks and administrators to help them run the country. However, some British officials and Indian reformers worked towards promoting women's education. The first school for girls was established in Bombay in 1848 by Jyotirao Phule. This school provided education to girls from all castes and religions, which was a significant step towards women's education. In 1854, a similar school was established in Calcutta, which was followed by the establishment of other schools in different parts of the country. Although many girls' schools were opened during the pre-

independence period but it could not change the educational land scape of the country. At the time of independence, the female literacy was about 8.9% while it was 27. 3 percent for the male counterpart in 1951. This shows the India inherited male dominated education system with very access to women education.

As per the constitution, Education especially primary education remained in the state lists till the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976. Article 45 ensures provision for free and compulsory education for children. As per Art 45, "the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." In order to align with article 45 of the constitution and preamble the steps such as National Education Policy 1968, National Policy of Education 1986, Shri Unnikrishnan judgment 1993, Mid-day Meal Scheme 1995, Education Ministers' Resolve 1998, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) 2001. Real change occurred when The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. Subsequently, The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 a comprehensive policy framework that aims to transform the education system in India was approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, and it replaced the previous education policy that was in place since 1986. The NEP 2020 aims to provide a holistic and multidisciplinary education to students, which will enable them to develop critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The policy also aims to promote research and innovation in the education sector and to ensure access to quality education to all students, regardless of their socio-economic background. The policy also aims to create a gender-sensitive environment in schools and higher education institutions, which will promote the safety, dignity, and well-being of all students, especially girls.

3. Important Government Initiatives aimed at the Promotion of Education and Empowerment of Women in India

The Government has taken the following initiatives aimed at the promotion of education and empowerment to women in India :

1. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao :** This is the central government national program aimed at protecting children from social issues like gender-based abortions and to improve child education across the country. However, the scheme was originally designed for districts with a low sex ratio but has now extended to other parts of the country. This is mostly an educational program that aims to change the societal attitudes towards the female in the society.

2. **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana :** This bank linked program encourages parents to create a trust for their child's future education and marriage expenditures. It was brought to change the attitude of the society that a girl child is a financial burden on her parents.

3. **Balika Samridhi Yojana :** This is a scholarship program that gives financial assistance to poor girls and their families aimed at improving the girls' social status, raise their marriageable age, and increase enrolment, particularly for females in school.

4. **CBSE Udaan Scheme :** The Central Board of Secondary Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India, manages and administers the CBSE Udaan scheme for girls. This program is one of the most important government girl child schemes in India that aims to increase the number of girls enrolled in prestigious engineering and technical colleges across India.

5. **National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE) :** The Centrally Sponsored Scheme was launched in May 2008. It aims to promote enrollment of girl child in the age group of 14-18 at secondary stage, especially those who passed Class VIII and to encourage the secondary education of such girls. Besides central government schemes, many State Government Sponsored Schemes for the protection and imparting better education to the girl child has also been initiated in the recent pasts especially in the backdrop of the achieving the millennium development goals (MDG) and Right to Education 2009. Some important schemes are worth mentioning Rajshri Yojna (Rajasthan), Girl child protection scheme (Andhra Pradesh), Sivagami Ammaiyar Memorial girl child protection scheme (Tamil Nadu), Ladli Laxmi Yojana -

(Madhya Pradesh), Ladli (Delhi & Haryana), Mukhyamantri Laadli Yojna (Uttar Pradesh), Mukhyamantri Kanya Suraksha Yojna (Bihar), Ladli scheme (Haryana), Kishori Shakti Yojana (Odisha), MAMTA scheme for girl child (Goa), Saraswati Bicycle Scheme (Chhattisgarh), West Bengal Kanyashree Prakalpa (West Bengal), Bhagyalaxmi scheme (Karnataka).

4. Objective

From the above discussion it has emerged that women struggle for access to education were cumbersome and have faced many odds. During British period on account of the unsupportive attitudes, the educational infrastructure was completely destroyed and women were net victims of ignorance of government and society. The research paper is aimed at analyzing the trends in literacy gap between men and women. The paper also investigates the impact of the policy intervention on the trends in gender disparity at national level.

5. Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of the paper is that policy intervention in the post-independence regimes secular and gender neutral in terms of access to education at national level.

6. Research Methodology and Data Source

Besides historical over view of women education in India paper consider two variables namely, literacy rates and expected years of schooling. The literacy rate is defined as proportion of the adult population aged 15 years and over which is literate, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population, total or for a given sex, in a given country, territory, or geographic area, at a specific point in time. Further, expected year of schooling is defined as number of years a child of school entrance age is expected to spend at school, or university, including years spent on repetition (World Bank, 2018).

Research paper is based on the secondary data. The data for the analysis were obtained from the sources such as Census, National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE), World Development Indicators published by the world bank.

7.   Results

As discussed, India inherited dwindling educational and economic infrastructure from the British India. At the beginning of the 19th century census 1901, the literacy rate in India was 5.4% with notable difference between male and female literacy. Nonetheless, the literacy rate for male and female both has increased over the years but gender bias against the female remained high till 1981. For instance, the gender gap in literacy which was 9.2% in 1901 increased to 18.3% in 1951. After independence, despite increase in the male and female literacy rate, the gap further widened to 26.6 percentage point in 1981 (Figure 1).

Figure-1 : Gender Gap in Literacy (in %)
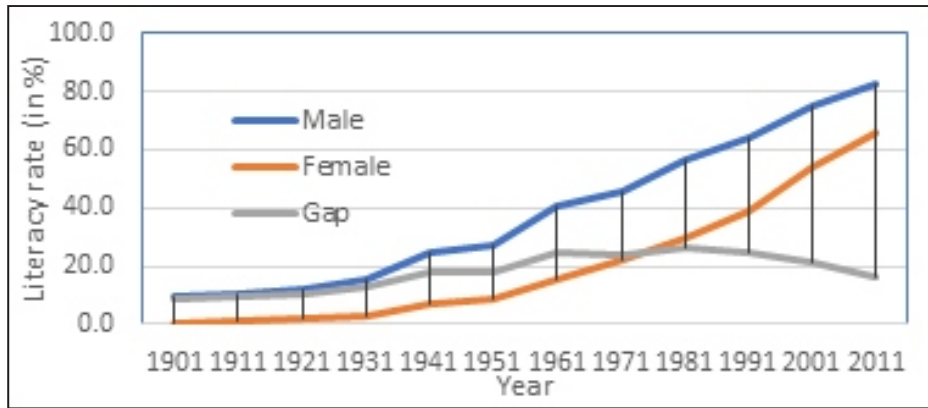
Source : Authors' own calculation from the census data

Situation No doubt began to change after the implementation of the Education policy 1986 and many affirmative actions taken by the various governments during the 1980 and thereafter. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate among women in India was 65.46%, compared to 82.14% among men. This shows the convergence in the gap between male and female literacy in India.

Table-1 : Expected Year of Schooling (in Years)

Indicator	1980	1989	2000	2010	2020
Overall	6.4	7.5	8.3	10.7	11.9
Female	4.7	5.9	7.3	10.5	11.9
Male	7.9	8.9	9.2	10.9	11.8
Gap	-3.2	-3.0	-1.9	-0.4	0.1

Source : World Development Indicator (World Bank, 2022)

Expected Year of Schooling (EYS) which signifies the quality of education systems and the extent to which children are able to access and complete their education has also improve significantly in the last three decades. The EYS is being used to track progress in achieving education-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. From the table 1, it is evident EYS has not only significantly improved for the female, but it has surpassed the male counterparts in 2020. This change must be welcomed and celebrated in the country which remained to be male dominated for the centuries and women were treated inferior to their male counterparts. Additionally, subjected to the number of factors that imposed detrimental effects upon their well-being. These include, illiteracy, purdah system, forced child marriage, polygamy and economic and political discrimination.

8. Conclusion

It has been well recognized in the development literature that improved access to women's Education has aided in improving the quality of life for women on one hand and creation of growth-oriented environment on the other hand. The former president Pranab Mukherjee rightly said the "real empowerment of women would be possible only through education, encouragement of economic self-dependence and provisional of opportunities enabling the unfolding of one's full potential" (Jadaun and Srivastava, 2018). The education remained to be a key driver of the change and development of the society. The struggle of Indian women in regards to access and availability of education remained peculiar and unique. To uplift the living standard of the women through education, training and skilling, various programs and schemes of central and state government and policy interventions have been implemented that resulted in bridging the gap in male and female literacy as well as in convergence in EYS in the last three decades (Figure-1 and Table-1). The achievement were tremendous but also reminds policy makes to formulates the women friendly policies and conducive environment. For this, customized policy intervention is needed for the diverse socio-economic groups in order to dilute the barriers to entry in the access to quality education and job market for the women. Hope, National Education policy 2020 would address the problems of gender disparity across the state, region and social groups.

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Indian Social Fabric during COVID-19 Lockdown

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The global outbreak of coronavirus since a patient in the city of the wet market of Chinese city Wuhan reported pneumonia-like symptoms on December 8, 2019, had turned into a global pandemic in 3-4 months and threatened the lives of millions of people across the globe. This virus had put the world on standstill untill for a long time in 2020, 2021 and even in 2022. It made human lives uncertain in future and led to realization that we won't return to a pre-COVID-19 life any time soon. This has proved true as WHO held on February 2, 2023 that it's not over yet. Although the pandemic is at an end-stage globally including India, its spred in China in recent passt has made us worry. The world battled with COVID-19 during lockdown to save their citizens as well as economies. Hence, it becomes imperative to investigate the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 at various levels. The present paper aims to analyze the Indian social fabric during COVID-19 lockdown. Empirical evidence collected from 750 respondents through

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the unrestricted self-selected online survey using google form in May 2020 from 19 states and union territories of India shows that the lockdown due to coronavirus has brought about a sea change in how we human beings have to live. These changes in a big way are likely to have a far reaching impact on almost every aspect of our living.

1. Introduction

Almost no nation has been spared as the novel coronavirus has swept around the world. But responses to the coronavirus have differed greatly from country to country. Preventive measures like self-quarantine in own homes, in hospitals or other places specifically designated for this purpose and lockdowns restricting people from coming out of their homes by shutting public places and commercial activities have become ubiquitous, but even then, there is great variance in their severity depending how people have responded to restrictions during lockdown. This is the reason that countries like the United States, Brazil, India, Russia, Spain, the UK, Iran, Italy, Peru, Chile, Mexico and Spain remain highly affected by this pandemic, whereas, countries like Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Dominica, Grenada, Bhutan, Mozambique and Zambia etc. are very less affected and more successful in curtailing the impact of this pandemic.

On March 25, when India had reported only 500 cases, the country went into what was one of the strictest lockdowns in the world. In fact, India was one of the first emerging economies to announce the total lockdown inspite of much lower mortality (may be because of our younger population or some innate immunity) and knowing fully that the country would have much economic loss due to slow down of economy. India's lockdown has been described widely as the most stringent in the world. This first set of curbs remained in place till April 14, 2020 and was extended four times, each time with gradual relaxations. Lockdown, as a preventive strategy, works in two ways : *first*, it slows the transmission of the virus by enforcing social/physical distancing by reducing day-to-day events. *Secondly*, it slows the geographical spread of disease by restricting the movement of positively affected and suspected cases. The Indian government argued that lockdown has successfully reduced the spread of the novel coronavirus epidemic, while some

critics argue that it has largely failed. Where does the truth lie? This is a question which can only be answered by empirical studies. It is here that crux of this paper lies.

2.   The Focus of the Study

The present investigation was exploratory in nature. It was an attempt to investigate the views of selected respondents about lockdown and to find out the impact of lockdown at individual, family and society levels. The specific objectives of this study were as follows :

1. To investigate the views of various sections of Indian society about lockdown due to COVID-19.
2. To find out the impact of lockdown at the level of individual behaviour.
3. To explore the impact of lockdown at family level.
4. To investigate the impact of lockdown at societal level.
5. To suggest possible measures to cope with such pandemic in future.

3.   An Overview of Literature

After the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic a number of studies started coming up. Some studies depicting psychological impact have been conducted at the initial stages. To cite a few, a study named "Initial psychological impact of COVID-19 and its correlates in Indian Community : An online (FEEL-COVID) survey", conducted by Varshney *et. el.* (2020) on a total of 1106 respondents from around 64 cities in the India, has shown that during the initial stages of COVID-19 in India, almost one-third respondents had a significant psychological impact as measured by IES-R scale. Almost one-third (66·8%) respondents had minimal psychological impact in reaction to COVID-19 outbreak, 15·0% had mild psychological impact, and 5·5% had moderate psychological impact. However, 12·7% reported severe psychological impact. As this was an initial study, authors have underlined a need for more systematic and longitudinal assessment of psychological needs of the population, which can help the government in formulating holistic interventions for affected individuals.

Khanna *et. al.* (2020), in their study of psychological impact of COVID-19 on Ophthalmologists-in-training and practicing ophtha-

lmologists in India, based on the responses of 2,355 ophtha-lmologists, have demonstrated that a significantly high proportion of ophthalmologists were affected psychologically by the COVID-19 crisis. There is a need for personalized mental health care from psychologists and psychiatrists, especially for those with moderate/ severe depression. 1,244 (52·8%) felt that COVID-19 would impact their training or professional work; and 869 (37%) had difficulty in meeting their living expenses. In terms of psycho- logical impact, 768 (32·6%) had some degree of depression; mild in 504 (21·4%), moderate in 163 (6·9%), and severe in 101 (4·3%). Multi-variable analysis showed that depression was significantly higher at young age.

Chakraborty and Chatterjee (2020) have attempted to find out psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic on general population in West Bengal. Results based on a total of 507 respondents from general population included in the study showed that about five-seventh (71·8%) and one-fifth (24·7%) of the respondents felt more worried and depressed, respectively. Majority (69·6%) of the respondents were worried about the financial loss they were incurring during the period of lockdown. One-fourth (25·6%) and one-third (30·8%) of the respondents found that COVID-19 pandemic had threatened their existence and they found it difficult to adjust to the new routine during the initial 21-day lockdown period, respectively.

Dubey *et. al.* (2020) have shown that along with its high infectivity and fatality rates, the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused universal psycho-social impact by causing mass hysteria, economic burden and financial losses. Mass fear of COVID-19, termed as "corona-phobia", has generated a plethora of psychiatric manifestations across the different strata of the society. So, this review has been undertaken to define psychosocial impact of COVID-19.

There are few studies on impact of coronavirus on education in India. A study of 341 teachers of higher education institutions of Ghaziabad region of Uttar Pradesh by Arora and Rathi (2020) has shown that among those who adopted virtual mode, the mean of actual benefits was significantly less than the mean of expected benefits. Network issues, lack of training, and lack of awareness were stated to be the major challenges faced by them. Lack of awareness was stated to be the most important reason by those who did not

adopt virtual classrooms followed by lack of interest and doubts regarding the usefulness of virtual classes. Less attendance, lack of personal touch, and lack of interaction due to connectivity issues were found to be the significant drawbacks of virtual classes.

Gupta (2020) suggested that online classes are not capable of substituting classroom lectures. The former is very seldom able to generate the interaction that is needed in a class. Moreover, the teachers' body language, which is a part and parcel of the classroom lectures and is imperative for their success, is also missing in online classes. The use of technology will not only lead to more discrimination, but also will create some practical problems. It will also lack the desired interaction in the class. The interaction between the teachers and the students is a crucial component of teaching and cannot be replicated in online classes. Research has been severely hampered due to the lockdown, and hence the sooner normalcy returns, the better.

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis and lockdown related rules and restrictions have forced most older persons to live in isolation, with life of 69% of them affected adversely during the current situation, as revealed in a survey report by an NGO Agewell Foundation (Sharma, 2020) on over 5000 elderly respondents in different parts of the country during the first two weeks of June, 2020. According to the report, 71% elderly respondents said that cases of elder abuse have increased during lockdown period. Amongst them, 58% claimed that strained interpersonal relationships were responsible for fast increasing incidence of elder abuse in families. Most common ways of elder abuse were found to be disrespect and verbal abuse, silent treatment (not talking to them), ignoring their daily needs, denying proper food, denying medical support, financial cheating, physical and emotional violence and forcing them to work. In the study it was found that 63·7% elderly respondents were facing neglect in their lives. More than half (56·1%) elderly respondents said that they were suffering abuse in their families and society. It has been observed that due to coronavirus, a negative atmosphere has been created around older persons, who are termed as soft target of coronavirus.

Kamble (2020) conducted a survey in the month of April on 273 respondents from 22 states & UT and 82 cities of India through a purposive and convenient random sampling technique, has shown the following results :

- ⠺ Majority (87%) of Indians are buying grocery and food items from local vendors and the frequency of visit was twice a week (58%).

- ⠺ Few (18%) have mentioned that they have not received their income and majority of them were employer or businessman.

- ⠺ Expenses, workload and pursuing hobbies have been increased for female.

- ⠺ Time spent with family, online meetings, use of mobile, television, Internet and social media has increased during this lockdown.

- ⠺ People in age bracket of 31-40 have recorded that their time spent on online meeting has increased and most of them are private sector employees.

- ⠺ Use of internet and social media has increased for everyone except those who are above age 50.

- ⠺ People in age bracket of 20-30 are missing hangout, weekend parties, trekking/adventure/nature walk.

- ⠺ People in the age bracket of 20-40 are missing eating food outside, watching movies outside, playing outdoors.

Work of medical doctors and frontline health workers has also been presented in some studies like that of Tanne *et. al.* (2020). It was found that in India, the role of health workers was less stressed as the spread stage of coronavirus was still in phase two or the phase of local transmission rather than the community transmission as compared to other nations like Italy, Spain and USA. They have argued that the world's second most populous country seems to have avoided the worst of the pandemic so far. However, if wider "community" transmission occurs, the worry is that India doesn't have the healthcare infrastructure to handle it. The country has only 1·3 hospital beds for every 1000 people, against a WHO recommendation of 3·5. Intensive care beds and mechanical ventilators, needed for treating severe COVID-19 cases, are also in short supply.

Al-Jabir *et. al.* (2020) have analyzed the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on surgical practice - Part 2 (surgical prioritization). They concluded that all surgical specialties have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have had to triage the urgency of their daily surgical procedures and consider non-surgical management options where possible. The pandemic has had ramifications for ways of working, surgical techniques, open versus minimally

invasive, theatre workflow, patient and staff safety, training and education. With guidelines specific to each specialty being implemented and followed, surgeons should be able to continue to provide safe and effective care to their patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this comprehensive and up to date review, changes to working practices have been assessed through the lens of each surgical specialty. However, it was also claimed that Indian healthcare infrastructure is not very strong as per the WHO guidelines and in case of community spread, the Indian government may find it difficult to manage the spread. Some detailed discussion on the nature of the coronavirus was also presented by some studies (Singhal, 2020).

Shadmi *et. al.* (2020) have stressed that the COVID-19 is disproportionally affecting the poor, minorities and a broad range of vulnerable populations, due to its inequitable spread in areas of dense population and limited mitigation capacity due to high prevalence of chronic conditions or poor access to high quality public health and medical care. Moreover, the collateral effects of the pandemic due to the global economic downturn, social isolation and movement restriction measures, are unequally affecting those in the lowest power strata of societies. To address the challenges to health equity and describe some of the approaches taken by governments and local organizations, compilation of 13 country case studies from various regions around the world : China, Brazil, Thailand, Sub Saharan Africa, Nicaragua, Armenia, India, Guatemala, United States of America (USA), Israel, Australia, Colombia, and Belgium have been done. This compilation is by no-means representative or all inclusive, and researchers are encouraged to continue advancing global knowledge on COVID-19 health equity related issues, through rigorous research and generation of a strong evidence base of new empirical studies in this field.

It is evident that still there are no full-fledged empirical studies on the impact of coronavirus on individual behaviour, family and society at large except some newspaper write-ups and articles. Hence, this study is an important one and is likely to provide impetus to all those concerned with the impact of coronavirus on Indian society to undertake such investigations after the pandemic is over.

4. The Methodology

As the universe of this study was cross sections of Indian population residing in various states and union territories of India

and was very large and vague in nature, it was not possible to draw an appropriate sample. Hence, it was decided to use unrestricted self-selected survey which allows the use of convenience sampling. Such surveys are open to the public for anyone to participate in it. They may simply be posted on a website so that anyone browsing through may choose to take the survey, or they may be sent via social media platforms to different persons and groups. Regardless of how the people are promoted to participate, the key characteristic of these types of surveys is that there are no restrictions on who can participate, and it is up to the individual to choose to participate or not. It may be mentioned here that as all educational institutions, religious places, government and private offices, factories, markets, malls, courts, banks and other work places were closed due to lockdown and all citizens were advised to remain inside their homes, there was no option for any other tool than the web-based survey using a Google form.

Hence, a questionnaire containing all close-ended questions was constructed and transferred as Google form. Before finalizing this form, it was pre-tested on 50 respondents of various sections of society easily available on online platforms and known to the researcher. Seven hundred and fifty (750) respondents from 19 states and union territories of India (Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) who sent the form back formed the basis of interpretation. The data were collected in the month of May 2020 and were subjected to analysis using SPSS package.

5.   Results and Discussion

Results and discussion based on the analysis of data collected through an unrestricted self-selected survey of 750 respondents have been presented under the following sub-heads :

5·1   Characteristics of the Sample

The findings of the study show the following characteristics of the sample :

1. The percentage of female respondents (55·9 percent) was comparatively more than those of male respondents (44·1 percent).

2. A little less than two-third respondents (63·9 percent) were young (less than 35 years) and one-third (30·5 percen) middle-aged (36 to 58 years). Remaining (5·6 percent) were the aged ones (more than 58 years). Thus, the sample had more youth than the middle and aged persons.

3. As regards the profession of respondents, a little less than half (45·5 percent) of them were students, followed by private and government employees (34·4 percent). Remaining one-fifth were housewives, retirees, doctors, health care workers, police personnel and unemployed people (21·1 percent).

4. Respondents have been classified in three broad categories on the basis of their monthly family income : low income families (less than ₹1,00,000), middle income families (₹1,00,001 to 2,00,000) and high income families (above ₹2,00,000). Their proportions were 58·9%, 22·1% and 18·9% respectively.

Thus, the sample represents both male and female of various age groups and professions and different income bracket of families.

5·2 Views about Lockdown

The experience of the lockdown has been quite unique for all of us. Views of selected sample about lockdown are as follows :

1. An overwhelming majority (95·6%) of selected respondents agree that the first phase of lockdown (from March 25 to April 14, 2020) has been the right decision by the government irrespective of their age, sex, profession, type of family and financial position of the family.

2. Similarly, almost all the respondents (97·6%) do agree that second phase of lockdown (from April 14 to May 3, 2020) has been the right decision by the government. Here also, like the first phase of lockdown, this view is independent of respondents' age, sex, profession, type of family and financial position of family.

3. A little more than three-fourth (76·4%) selected respondents agree that third phase of lockdown (from May 4 to May 17, 2020), with easing out restrictions for the parts of the country where the situation was less severe, has been the right decision by the government. Respondents' differences in terms of sex, profession, type and financial position of family cut across in shaping this view. However, comparatively more proportion of

young and the middle-aged respondents has shown disagreement than the aged.

4. More than half of the selected respondents (56·8%) agree that the guidelines/advisory by the government for lockdown period has not been followed by most of the people. In other words, there were more violations in lockdown. Differences in age, sex and profession play important role in shaping these views, whereas, type and the financial position of the family cut across this view.

5. Less than half of the selected respondents agree (46·0%) that lockdown in India was a hasty decision as it created many problems for daily workers, labourers, students etc., whereas, nearly one-third disagree (34·8%) with this view. The proportion of middle-aged respondents is much more in agree category as compared to young and the aged ones, whereas, it is more than the aged in disagree category than that of young and middle-aged respondents. Like age, differences in sex, profession, type and the financial position of family also play important role in shaping this view.

6. A little less than two-third (62·7%) selected respondents agree that strict curfew could have been more effective than lockdown as people do not cooperate voluntarily in India, whereas, a little less than one- fourth (23·3%) show disagreement with this. Differences in age and profession seems to be significant in determining this view, whereas, sex, type and financial position of the family do not play any role in shaping this view.

7. A little less than two-third (59·5%) respondents agree that the affected/doubtful cases have co-operated to self-quarantine in their homes in containment zones, whereas, a little less than one-fourth (22·3%) disagree with this view. Differences in age and financial position of the family have no role to play in shaping this view, whereas, the sex, profession and type of family seem to be significant in determining this view.

8. An overwhelming majority (95·5%) of selected respondents have shown agreement with the view that mostly, health workers, police/ para-military personnel and other COVID-19 warriors have done remarkable job during lockdown in India.

This view cuts across the differences in age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family.

9. The selected respondents seem to be divided so far as the view that administration has not been able to keep adequate supply of essential commodities during lockdown encouraging people to come out violating the norms is concerned, as 41·1% have shown agreement while 39·3% disagreement. Like age, this view is definitely influenced by the profession, type and financial position of the family. However, sex of the respondents does not seem to affect this view.

Thus, the empirical evidence shows that the lockdown has been a tough period, but the overall majority of the respondents are appreciative of the government's decision taken for the welfare of all the citizens to restrain the spread of this pandemic, irrespective of their age, sex, profession, type of family and financial position of the family. It is really appreciable that almost everyone did cooperate with the decision of government by staying at home. Respondents are divided on the issue as to whether imposing lockdown was a hasty decision and majority of Indian citizens followed the restrictions and guidelines or not.

5·3 Impact of Lockdown on Individuals

Lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has widely affected all of us at individual level. This impact has been analyzed as under :

1. A little less than three-fourth (72·9%) selected respondents agree with the view that the lockdown has completely changed their way of life. This view cuts across the differences in age, sex and profession as there is no significant difference in the proportions in different categories of these two variables. However, type and the financial position of the family do play a role in shaping this view.

2. Nearly nine out of every ten (89·2%) respondents agree with the view that lockdown has made them more aware about water, sanitation, hygiene, waste management and cleanliness. This view cuts across the differences in age, profession, type and financial position of the family. This indicates that this view is similar irrespective of age, profession, type & financial position of the family of respondents. However, the sex of the selected respondents do contribute in shaping this view to some extent.

3. More than three-fourth (80·3%) selected respondents agree that lockdown has affected studies of students adversely at various levels. As the schools, colleges and universities remain closed; such concerns among all are obvious. The sex, profession and financial position of the family cut across this view showing no role in shaping them. However, age and type of family have some impact in determining this view as indicated by significant association.

4. Nearly three-fourth (76·9%) selected respondents agree that online classes are not that effective as traditional classroom teaching for the students. The selected respondents think similar so far as the effectiveness of traditional classroom teaching for the students vis-a-vis online classes are concerned, irrespective of their age, sex and type of family. However, the profession and financial position of the family do make a difference in shaping this view.

5. Almost three-fourth (75·3%) respondents agree that the lockdown has made the routine monotonous in absence of any physical work for most of the individuals. Age and financial position of the family do play significant role in shaping this view. However, this view cuts across the differences in sex, type of family and profession of the selected sample.

6. Less than two-third (61·2%) selected respondents have shown agreement with the views that lockdown has made individuals restless and agitated leading to mental trauma due to isolation, closure of schools/colleges/universities, workplaces and business establishments. This view is largely shaped by the age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, the type of family cuts across this view.

7. A little less than three-fourth (73·6%) selected respondents agree that lockdown has increased social insecurity among individuals about their future. Age, profession, type and financial position of the family cut across this view about increased social insecurity indicating that the respondents think similar about this impact. However, this view is shaped by the sex of respondents.

8. Nine out of every ten (89·9%) selected respondents agree that various social media platforms have become more popular to spend time during lockdown. The impact of social media

platforms not only cuts across the differences in age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family, but they also do not contribute to shape this felt impact about social media platforms, which have become more popular to spend leisure during lockdown.

9. An overwhelming majority (86·0%) of selected respondents agree that lockdown has given ample time to individuals for self-introspection to become more responsible citizens. This impact of lockdown also cuts across all the differences not only in age, but also in the sex, profession, type and financial position of the family.

10. Nine out of every ten (89·2%) respondents agree that lockdown has made individuals more aware about advanced technology which enables to work from home. Here also, this impact of lockdown cuts across all the differences in age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family clearly showing that the respondents think similar about this impact of making use of advanced technology to work from home, irrespective of all these variables.

11. Almost three-fourth (74·7%) of the selected respondents agree that lockdown has proved a blessing for individuals as it provided ample time to pursue hobbies and relax for future busy schedule. This impact of lockdown also cuts across all the differences not only in age, but also in the sex, profession, type and financial position of the family.

12. Four out of every ten (40·4%) selected respondents agree that lockdown has proved a curse as it is very boring and difficult to spend time in social isolation as against a little more than one-third (36·5%) who have shown disagreement. Age, profession, type and financial position of the family contribute significantly towards shaping this view. However, this view cuts across the differences in sex.

13. Nearly nine out every ten (88·9%) respondents agree that lockdown has made them aware about *Jaan Hai to Jahan Hai* than anything else. This view is shaped by the age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, there does not seem to be any impact of type of family on this view.

14. Six out of every ten (59·7%) respondents agree that *Aarogya Setu* app gives them the confidence that they are safe from

coronavirus infection. It is surprising that more than one-fourth (27·1%) respondents have shown neutrality towards this app. It seems they are either not aware about this app or have not downloaded this in their mobile phones inspite of instructions from the government. This view is shaped by the age, sex and financial position of the family. However, it cuts across the differences in profession and type of family.

It may be concluded that our life at individual level is not going to be the same as before the global spread of COVID-19. A big change would be seen in our lifestyle and habits. Our social life will have many new norms, especially in our social functions or outings. Social distancing, use of masks, sanitization and washing hands repeatedly are going to be part of our life. Even going to schools/colleges/universities, during journey by bus or train, morning and evening walk, shopping and thronging market places and malls, going out for lunch and dinner in famous hotels and restaurants, joining wedding or birthday ceremonies/parties etc. will not be same due to so many precautionary measures for our life in future. The COVID-19 scare will continue to haunt our social life in times to come as grand celebrations will be reduced to low-key affairs. The ban on spitting and littering in public places would help in maintaining cleanliness in our surroundings and definitely will have a very positive Impact. How we shall be able to learn new way of life and customize ourselves, only time to come will validate. However, it is certain that the habit of washing hands, learnt during the lockdown, will continue, at least for some time. It will help prevent many other tropical diseases like conjunctivitis, cholera and typhoid with slightly enhanced immunity. All said and done, it will alter our lifestyle for the better.

5·4   Impact of Lockdown on Families

Lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has also made far reaching impact at family level. This impact has been summarized under the following points :

1. An overwhelming majority (84·5%) of respondents agree that the financial burden on families has increased due to fall in family income because of no work in the lockdown period. Though there is slight variation in the proportions in agree category, this seems to be statistically significant as is evident from association. In disagree category, the proportion of

single-parent families is comparatively less and in neutral category the proportion of nuclear families is more. Like type of family, the financial position of the family also shows significant association. This impact seems to be more on nuclear and lower income group families.

2. A little less than three-fourth (71·2%) selected respondents agree that the lockdown has increased difficulties for the family members who have to do all the household chores themselves in absence of any external domestic help. Single-parent families seem to be more affected than the joint and nuclear ones. However, the financial position of the family shows insignificant association with this view.

3. More than three-fourth (78·7%) respondents in three types of families agree that in the lockdown, the family members have evolved a better understanding amongst themselves by dividing household chores so that no one person feels overburdened. Here also, both, type and financial position of the family do not seem to contribute in shaping this view.

4. A little less than three-fourth (72·7%) respondents in three types of families agree that the roles of male family members have drastically changed as they now provide more help to womenfolk in domestic/household work. Differences in type and financial position of the family cut across this view as the proportions do not show significant variations in agree or disagree categories.

5. An overwhelming majority of respondents (84·9%) agree that the lockdown has proved to be a blessing for the family members to spend quality time with each other and improve mutual relationships. The proportion is almost the same for three types of family indicating the fact that it has no role to play in shaping this view. However, the financial position of the family shows significant association with this view.

6. More than three-fourth (80·4%) respondents in three types of families agree that the bond of love between the family members has strengthened due to staying together and not going outside and meeting others in the lockdown period. However, this impact seems to be more among lower income families than those on the middle and higher income ones.

7. The respondents in three types of families are equally divided on the view that the conflict between family members has increased in the lockdown period due to limited availability of resources like television, mobiles, laptops, internet facility etc. as 40·9% show agreement and 40·7% disagreement. However, this type of conflict between family members is more in families of lower income bracket who really do not have many resources.

8. Again the respondents in the three types of families are equally divided on the view that incidences of domestic violence have increased in the lockdown period as 35·1% show agreement and 36·3% disagreement. The role of financial position of the family seems to be significant in shaping this view as there is more proportion of lower incomefamilies in disagree category as compared to families having high income brackets.

9. The respondents in the three types of families do not have consensus about the difficulty in the lockdown to get regular supply of essential commodities like milk, vegetables, fruits, groceries etc. as 41·1% show agreement, while 45·7% disagreement. Single-parent families show more proportion in agree category, while nuclear families have more proportion in disagree category indicating that the impact is felt more by single-parent families than joint and nuclear ones. However, the financial position of the family shows significant association with this view.

10. An overwhelming majority (84·1%) of respondents in three types of families do agree that the family expenditure has come down in the lockdown period due to less spending on clothes, accessories, partying and going outside. Both, type and financial position of the family do not seem to contribute in shaping this view.

11. An overwhelming majority (88·1%) of respondents in three types of families agree that all the family members have developed better hygiene habits during the lockdown period. Both, type and financial position of the family do not seem to contribute in shaping this view.

12. An overwhelming majority of respondents (91·9%) in three types of families agree that the social media platforms helped the family to try new recipes for dishes which they never made. Single-parent families have felt this impact less than those of

joint and nuclear ones. However, the financial position of the family does not seem to have any impact in shaping this view.

It may be concluded that overall impact of the lockdown on family is mixed one as it is both positive as well as negative. Families had more of a positive impact in terms of building sound relationship amongst each other and providing a moral support to handle the hard time of crisis. It gave a chance to the family members for not only staying together, but also spending quality time with each other for better understanding. Drastic change in the role of male family members who provided more help to womenfolk in domestic/household work is also commendable. Far-reaching changes to our routine have forced us to alter our social habits and reevaluate our relation- ships, the affect of which could continue into our lives even after lockdown. Not only this, developing better hygiene habits by all the family members during the lockdown is also likely to have long-term impact in fighting the spread of COVID-19 in India. After the pandemic has run its course, we will develop more emotional proximity towards our family, the bonds may become stronger and intolerance for petty differences in interests may end. The consumption pattern will certainly change in favour of simplicity & restraint.

But, the negative implications of lockdown especially for those lower income families who faced financial burden due to fall in income are not less. Increased difficulties for the family to do all the household chores themselves in the absence of external domestic help, increase in conflict between family members due to limited availability of resources in the homes, increase in incidences of domestic violence, getting regular supply of essential commodities are some of the other negative implications which probably families have never seen before. What one can do in this sensitive hour is to pray for one and all so that all families remain safe and comfortable to face increasing global crisis due to COVID-19 in India as well as in other countries.

5·5 Impact of Lockdown on Society

Impact of lockdown on society, as felt by the selected respondents, is summarized as follows :

1. Nearly half (49·5%) of the selected respondents agree that the social/physical distancing in the lockdown has an adverse effect on social relations, as against a little more than one-third

(37·6%) who disagree. Age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family do contribute in shaping this view.

2. An overwhelming majority (91·5%) of respondents agree that the lockdown and absence/decrease in human interference has made the nature to heal itself. Except sex, differences in other four variables, *i.e.*, age, profession, type and financial position of the family cut across in determining this view indicating that they have no role in shaping them. However, sex of the respondents shows significant association with this view indicating its impact in shaping them.

3. An overwhelming majority (95·7%) of respondents agree that no work in the industries and less vehicles on the roads have decreased air and noise pollution making the society a better place to live in. All the respondents, irrespective of their age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family, think similar so far as this impact is concerned.

4. An overwhelming majority (94·4%) of respondents agree that the lockdown period has resulted in cleaner surroundings due to no or less human activity. This view cuts across all the differences in age, profession, type and financial position of the family. However, sex plays significant role in shaping this view as the proportion of females is more in agree category as compared to that of males.

5. Selected respondents are divided on the issue of lockdown playing no role in teaching humans about their social responsibilities towards nature as half of them (50·5%) disagree against four out of ten (41·6%) who agree. Age, profession and type of family contribute significantly in shaping this view. However, the differences in sex and financial position of the family cut across in determining this view.

6. The selected respondents are not unanimous that there is going to be no long time effect on people due to reduction of GDP rate in India. Less than half of them (45·2%) show agreement, as against little more than one-third (35·3%) who disagree. This view about the perceived impact is shaped by age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, type of family has no impact in shaping this view.

7. The selected respondents seem to be almost equally divided in the impact of social isolation due to lockdown resulting in more

incidences of problems amongst people as more than one-third (38·3%) agree and little less than this (34·8%) disagree. This view is shaped by the age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, type of family cuts across this view indicating no role in shaping it.

8. More than three-fourth (85·5%) respondents agree that the lockdown has resulted in simple weddings without huge gatherings providing a positive indication for the future society. This positive impact of lockdown is not shaped by age, sex, profession and type of family. However, the financial position of the family shows significant association with this impact.

9. Nearly two-third (92·3%) selected respondents agree that the increased use of technology during lockdown has a positive impact on society. This view cuts across all the differences in age, profession and financial position of the family indicating that these variables do not shape it. However, the sex and type of family show significant association with this impact.

10. An overwhelming majority (64·3%) of respondents agree that the services provided by medical and para-medical staff in hospitals to cure COVID-19 affected patients neglecting their own families have made everyone proud and they now command more respect. This view cuts across all the differences in age, sex, profession and type of family. However, the financial position of the family does contribute in shaping this view as is evident from its significant association.

11. An overwhelming majority (95·2%) of respondents agree about the new role of police and para-military forces in providing relief material and helping to maintain peace during lockdown. This view cuts across all the differences in age, sex, profession, type and the financial position of the family as all these variables show insignificant association. Thus, it is clear that the selected respondents think alike so far as the new role of police and para-military forces is concerned.

12. An overwhelming majority (93·3%) of respondents agree that the lockdown has given a message to all citizens of India for being united to fight against the common cause. This view also cuts across all the differences in age, sex, type and financial position of the family as all these variables show insignificant association. However, profession shows significant association

with this view as the government employees have comparatively less proportion in agree category as compared to other professions.

13. More than three-fourth (83·7%) respondents agree about the enhanced image of Indian government and the Prime Minister globally during lockdown. Age, sex and the financial position of the family do contribute in shaping this view. However, the profession and type of family do contribute this view.

Thus, it can be well concluded that undoubtedly lockdown had a brighter side relating to self-realization and up-gradation of people, well- being of the community and healing of Mother Nature, new role of police and para- military forces, positive impact of increased use of technology as well as simple weddings without huge gatherings. However, the darker side also covers painful pictures of lower sections striving for essential commodities, difficult & very painful exodus of migrant labourers to their homes in native states, loss of income and jobs for so many people due to the slowdown of economy, more problems like heated arguments, quarrels, divorce, depression etc. due to social isolation and an adverse effect on social relations due to social/physical distancing in the lockdown. Hence, it has to be ensured that a secondary epidemic of burnouts and stress-related diseases may not pop up in the latter half of 2020. The pandemic has left an indelible impression on many of us, making us to maintain cleanliness habits and follow good discipline in our life.

6. Conclusion

India has a fragile socio-economic fabric compared to advanced countries of the world. This is the reason that many critics in India and abroad have been blaming strict measures like complete national lockdown by shutting down all schools/colleges/universities, workplaces and all offices, cinema halls, parks, public places, religious places, markets, malls, public conveyance like rail and state/private buses, business establishments, all types of industries etc. and confining all the citizens within four walls of their household. But, the Indian government took a bold decision and declared national lockdown on March 25, 2020 to flatten the curve and contain spread of the disease, thus giving priority to save human life in the country rather than bothering about slowdown in economic growth. Empirical evidence validates the fact that first two lockdowns were very successful in containing the spread of virus.

Knowing well that the prolonged lockdown is neither foolproof nor costless measure, the government of India started giving relaxations for economic activities in phases in areas which were so far less affected by coronavirus. These relaxations, along with exodus of millions of labourers from affected areas/cities like Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Indore, Ludhiana etc. to their villages in home states increased the virus's geographic spread and aggravated the situation. The result is that India has surpassed Russia in first week of July, 2020 to become the third worst-affected country by the coronavirus pandemic. This has happened largely by reopening the economy, which has brought a surge in infections, and the country's southern states emerge as new hot spots. The worry of government at the centre and states is not just the number of COVID-19 cases, but the pace of increase which is now one of the highest in the world. However, a little compensation is the recovery rate of 61·53 per cent and the rate of patients testing positive is 8·66 per cent.

COVID-19 has triggered a deep economic crisis and as a consequence India's recovery trajectory is going to be weak as the country is struggling to get past the peak of the pandemic. The World Bank released its Global Economic Prospects report in first week of June 2020. It expects India's gross domestic product (GDP) to contract by 3·2% in 2020-21. There will be a moderate recovery to 3·1% growth in 2021-22. This means that 2021-22 GDP will be less than what it was in 2019-20. Contraction in GDP is likely to lead in dropping of incomes and losing jobs leading to unprecedented unemployment. Ratings agency Moody's slashed India's credit ratings to the lowest investment grade level. Recently, an industrial survey that was jointly conducted by industry body FICCI and tax consultancy *Dhruva* advisors and took responses from about 380 companies across the sectors and concluded that businesses are grappling with "tremendous uncertainty" about their future.

To mitigate the economic fallout, the government of India had announced a $266 billion support package containing both fiscal and monetary measures, said to be worth around 10% of India's GDP which includes an emergency credit line of collateral-free loans worth $40 billion to "resume business activity and safeguard jobs" in the wake of India's lockdown to curb coronavirus. This is the largest economic relief effort that India has ever seen and will "give a new momentum to India's development journey and has put India on the road to self-reliance", to use the Prime Minister's own words. Not

only this, the *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana* (Food scheme) announced for three months covering about two-thirds of population has been extended till the end of November, 2020. Thus, the government is taking various measures to contain the economic impact of lockdown due to COVID-19.

However, the lockdown due to coronavirus has brought about a sea change in how we human beings have to live. These changes in a big way are likely to have a far reaching impact on almost every aspect of our living. It is here that we have to behave as responsible citizens to supplement the efforts of the government. COVID-19 has taught all of us how we have become minimalistic in our approach to manage food and supplies etc. with available resources. The behavioural change on the individuals is going to be in no way less significant. Though we have been taught many things since childhood, but we never paid any heed to them. Now, COVID-19 will make sure that we pay attention to them and make them a part and parcel of our life. Hygiene, wearing a mask, use of sanitizers, and social/physical distancing will be the biggest behavioural changes we will have to practice. Other trends will be less travel (both domestic and international), less dinning in hotels and restaurants, less shopping with precautions in crowded markets and malls, more use of digital platforms, digital transactions, reducing the western tradition of handshakes and hugging in this pandemic period. If we are unable to deal with these, then we must get ready to welcome the virus back into our life, family, neighbourhood and the community.

In the concluding remarks, it may be mentioned that various sub- systems of our society, *i.e.*, polity, economy, education, family and kinship as well as religion are adjusting with each other very well at this critical crisis created by un-curable COVID-19. Nobody could have ever thought that not only all educational institutions at different levels will remain paralyzed for such a long period, economy will be at stand still during the period of lockdown, all places of worships will be closed, family members will remain indoors (within the four walls of their households) without welcoming relatives or bothering kins by going to their homes and only the polity (government) will take all initiatives to come out from this crisis. The only requirement at this time, though a difficult one, is that we all have to be united and keep adopting suitable measures at all levels to revive at a faster rate and find amicable solutions for the left burnt-outs of lockdown. Though the lockdown due to coronavirus seems to have emerged as a binding

force to knit together India with the gossamer thread of social harmony and has taught us to increase social/physical distance and decrease mental distance, still we as citizens of India are far behind in our social responsibility to think about well-being of all citizens and to follow guidelines/instructions issued by competent authorities from time to time.

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6

Online Education : Challenges and its Limitations

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An extraordinary health catastrophe has hit the educational system, upending its foundation. Given today's uncertainty, it is critical to have a detailed picture of students' online learning experiences during the COVID-19 epidemic. Even though this topic has been the subject of numerous research, more is needed to know about students' difficulties and their methods to overcome them. In order to fill the gap, this study tries to do so. Using a mixed-methods approach, the results showed that college students faced various online learning problems and severity. Their home learning setting presented the most obstacle, whereas technical literacy and competency posed the slightest difficulty. The studies also showed that the COVID-19 epidemic significantly affected the standard of education and pupils' mental health.

[**Keywords :** Academic achievement, Online education, Face-to-face mode]

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1.   Introduction

An unprecedented health crisis has disrupted the educational system's foundation. To lessen the pandemic's harmful effects on education, some countries worldwide have started a crisis response. This reaction entails, but is not limited to, curriculum updates, infrastructure and technology provision, adjustments to the academic calendar, and regulations governing the delivery of instruction and evaluation. It seemed inevitable that these changes would force educational institutions to switch to entirely online instruction until face-to-face instruction was permitted. Because of the limitations on movement and health regimens, the current situation is critical in that it might make it harder to complete online learning tasks. Given the current uncertainties, understanding the nuances of students' online learning experiences during the COVID-19 epidemic is crucial.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have changed educational pedagogy and presented the field of education with new difficulties. Yet, it goes beyond simply educating or conventionally disseminating information at a minimal cost for lecturers and teachers. Hence, staff training swiftly reacted to online learning programs. As a result, teachers are utilizing brand-new, cutting-edge technologies to conduct lessons and communicate with pupils throughout the pandemic. Numerous institutions and universities provide teacher development programs and training to encourage teachers to select an appropriate learning platform that they are accustomed to. In addition, universities and schools are starting to adopt various specialized software for teaching and learning processes to support teachers. The current study compares students' experiences and results between traditional in-person and online learning.

2.   Methodology

This paper is based on secondary data, collected from various sources i.e. books, magazines, newspapers, journals and websites.

3.   First Response for Digitalization

The schools and universities halted regular classes as soon as India was severely affected by COVID-19. Several people began

providing online seminars to find a remedy as they were concerned about what would occur next. In addition, independent, private groups have offered online lectures and classes. As a result, there is minimal effect on academic achievement. Nonetheless, the switch from in-person instruction to online instruction has impacted both students and teachers. The change to online learning had to be acknowledged by higher education instructors. On the other hand, if the lockdown lasts for a long time, there will be a need for more substantial Computer infrastructure for teaching and learning. In addition, teachers and students must both receive further training.

3·1 Digital Evolution

When it comes to online classrooms, educational institutions must first decide what policies and procedures to implement. Institutions have two options-either a live session or a recorded session, but not both. In the first type, recorded lessons are made available to the public, enabling students to look them up and access them whenever and wherever they like. A MOOC is a term used to describe this instruction (MOOC). The second form consists of live online classes where instructors employ a variety of software programs, including Zoom Meet, Google Class Room, Cisco Webex, etc. However, education organizations and students require a high-speed internet connection to hold online classes. Students will also require a smartphone, PC, or laptop for regular attendance and online courses. Teachers experienced with online learning procedures and a dependable and appropriate IT infrastructure are needed in schools and colleges.

3·2 National Programs for Online Education

In India, the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) has undertaken numerous projects to offer online education through e-learning. The Ministry of Technology & Education and the National Council for Educational Research & Training (NCERT) are developing several online learning platforms. Other online platforms include National Knowledge Network (NKN), National Academic Depository (NAD), e-PG Pathshala (e-Content), Employment Authorization (NEAT), National Project for Enhanced Technology-Enabled Learning (NPTEL), and e-PG Pathshala (e-Content). However, it primarily serves educational purposes. The SWAYAM

(Online Courses for Teachers) project of the Government of India offers an integrated platform and site for online courses for instructors, making it one of the reputable MOOC domains.

3·3 Technology

The internet is a terrific resource for learning and researching a topic. You can explore facts, read books, watch videos, and listen to audio about a subject. Also, the internet makes it simple for those who wish to learn new skills, like computer programming, to swiftly and readily find the information they require. For example, students can look for software that teaches them how to use computers or books that go into further detail about computer programming.

Numerous places on the internet will teach you how to use your computer for many different purposes, including sending emails, playing online games, checking stock quotations, etc. if you're interested in learning how to use a computer. The ability to produce educational materials for our kids using computers and software programs is another benefit of technology in education. Programs allow us to make instructive images, which we can print and provide to our pupils. Software tools can also create documents for our pupils to read and study.

3·4 Limitations of Technology

However, some drawbacks must be considered along with all of educational technology's benefits. The most obvious flaw is that computers can't handle all our issues. The human brain has a wide range of cognitive abilities, and there are some things that computers cannot do, like generating novel and original ideas. The internet's occasionally erroneous or misleading information is another drawback of technology in education. The internet offers many opportunities to exaggerate their achievements and mislead others about what they know to claim credit for something they did not do or were ignorant of. Therefore, always check the accuracy of any online information before relying on it. Also, while they should be focusing on their job or studies, students who take online classes can get side-tracked by their phones or other electronic gadgets. They may become distracted as a result and perform their work incorrectly.

The last drawback of educational technology is that some students might not want to enrol in online courses since they need to learn something. Some people prefer to attend classes in person to

meet their classmates' faces and get to know them better. They can also see how much information their peers already know about a particular subject. To take lessons online, you can choose from various formats, including distance learning, a live virtual classroom, online video conferencing, etc.

4. Challenges in Online Classes

Teaching online courses is a challenge for many professors in higher education. As you must connect to the internet and deliver lectures using laptops, PCs, and cell phones, online education is not simple. Both teachers and students still encounter difficulties with online courses.

Teaching and curriculum development are only part of education. Nevertheless, it's more about interaction, frank debate, mentoring of ideas, and conversations that address each student's difficulties while paying attention to their expression. Teachers try all of these strategies in online classes, but many students are unable to communicate frequently due to connectivity concerns. Students struggle because they are unable to participate in online classes in the same manner that they can in traditional classroom settings.

Online and in-person teaching are not equivalent, but in-person instruction has the advantage of making eye contact with students, which helps determine whether they truly grasped what was being taught. Rules that instructors teach. In comparison to online classes, Science, Commerce and Computer applications students from the previous year reported being more engaged and enthusiastic in traditional, in-person theoretical and practical classes.

A large number of brand-new educational institutions have launched their online curricula utilising their own materials, including webinar hosting, video recordings, and online seminars. On the other hand, mentorship, interpersonal relationships, and brainstorming from the viewpoint of the student are not included in online education. They won't get the academic outcomes they want unless both teachers and pupils are comfortable using the technology.

5. Future of Online Education

What the future of online learning is the central question right now. Many difficulties that instructors and students face are

highlighted in this study. According to the faculty, only some students can access online lectures, which indicates that this is a problem. In addition, access to the Internet and smartphones might be difficult for students in urban areas. Hence, for educational institutions to fully profit from online learning, connecting and supporting students is their main duty. Effective implementation of technology is a must for educational institutions. If your institution is unable to achieve that, online education is useless and you won't receive the academic outcomes you want.

Higher education only sometimes involves doing online coursework, exams, or other tasks. Students need to acquire the necessary knowledge, abilities, and other things in labs to be ready to participate actively in the workforce. In the present, this is acceptable, but what if students don't perform well academically? Due to his lack of understanding, the student will need help with various challenges associated with online classes, hindering him from landing the job he wants. Many students express frustration with voice interruptions, slow internet, and unclear communication. Colleges must overcome these obstacles if they want to achieve successful academic outcomes in terms of outcomes, internships, and placements. Because many educational institutions are doing their best in this circumstance, nobody is certain of what will occur in the future at this time.

Today, during the epidemic, numerous educational institutions concur that a solid technical foundation is required to build a uniform online learning platform. Open-source programs like Google and Zoom should not be used for online classes, but students and teachers should receive education to improve academic performance.

Schools, teachers, and students are being compelled, like never before, to adopt online learning thanks to COVID-19. The public has been made aware of the value of online education for the previous 5-6 years, and the government has proposed numerous initiatives; nevertheless, as a result of Corona 19, all teachers are now required to teach and learn. In addition, according to most educational institutions nationwide, online learning platforms must be standardized. Using mobile apps like Zoom or Google apps is not enough; they also need to be thoughtfully created and prepared for use by teachers and students. Considering the various challenges

that disciplines and institutions must also comprehend, it is also necessary to assess the nature of this platform and how students learn using different online tools and approaches.

6. Conclusions

Although in-person teaching is more pleasant for kids, all students and teachers must incorporate online instruction into their curricula in the contemporary epidemic. Online courses should be taken seriously by both students and instructors. Students and professors should participate in orientation sessions or quick methods to help them become more familiar with the technology tools to prevent internet outages or other technical concerns. Teachers must establish a personal connection with each student they teach online to encourage consistent attendance and compliance. Both students and teachers can overcome difficulties and realize the objectives of online education by selecting the appropriate technology. Students can also get ready for career orientation and careers.

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Rising Tide : Gender Equality among Indian Women through Empowerment

Priyanka Kapoor*

Gender equality is a human right issue. Although the Indian Constitution has granted equal rights to both men and women, still gender disparities continue to live and rule unabated. Indian society has always been considered the hub of gender discrimination, making women its victim. Since the patriarchy has been the prime form of social structure almost globally, gender inequality and gender discrimination have become essential components of such various societies, including India. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the gender equality among Indian women through their empowerment. It has been surmised that the status of Indian women which has been low as a whole except the Rig-Vedic period, has undoubtedly improved considerably as both the sexes have realized the need for empowerment of women, which has started showing positive results. Though, the progress on the four intrinsically interlinked critical elements for the empowerment of women developed by the United Nation, i.e. development of capabilities,

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ensuring access to essential resources and opportunities, provision of opportunities for leadership and decision-making roles and ensuring security and safety for women and girls has been a quite slow in India, still the gender equality is definitely on the increase.

[**Keywords :** Gender equality, Gender inequality, Gender discrimination, Empowerment of women, Patriarchy]

1.   Introduction

It is generally held that the history of mankind hitherto has been the history of declining social position of women and their increasing oppression. This is exemplified by the fact that all the societies, whether belonging to East or West, are similar as regards the degradation of their women. While taking stock of the five years of extensive research and investigations about women after United Nations declaration in 1975 as 'International Women Year' which was subsequently turned into a decade, the Mid Decade U. N. Conference on Women at Copenhagen in 1980 brought out the startling facts : "while women represent fifty per cent of the world population and one-third of the official labour force they perform nearly two-thirds of all working hours, receive only one-tenth of the world income and own less than one per cent of the world property". Hem Lata Swarup has rightly observed, "that there is a close connection between the 'wretched of the earth' and the most 'wretched', that is, the women, is abundantly clear. Women suffer dual oppression of sex and class within and outside the family"[1]. Of course, there can be a difference of nature and degree of women's problems in the developed and developing societies, but they are, undoubtedly, victims of discrimination, oppression and aggression. In developed societies, they are fighting more for gender equality, whereas, in the developing societies, they are facing more the crisis of survival. It is, therefore, pertinent to point out that the issue of women's development is not only the most crucial, but also a pre-requisite of any developmental effort. One can't conceive the development of any society without the development of fifty per cent population, i. e., the women.

Even today, women are not considered at par with men. Ironically, development planners and policy makers all over the world have often failed to consider women's needs and their view point in designing the programmes for their upliftment and development. Nevertheless, women form central focus for development of any society. Everywhere women discharge two

roles—at home as housewives and outside as wage earners. Both are important for the progress of any society and nation as a whole. Further, they carry out several vital socio-economic activities like Unfortunately, women's work is generally undervalued and the additional development it promotes is usually unrecognized. As a result, their work suffers and development is held back.

The United Nations was right to declare three objectives for the decade for women, i. e., 'Equality', 'Development' and 'Peace'. The real hope for the emergence of a truly liberated and peaceful human era lies in the freedom of women from their bondage. They were the first to be enslaved in the history of humanity and their freedom is a pre-condition for the re-construction of humanity.

2. The Position of Women in Indian Society before Independence

The problem is still more grave in Indian society. Upendra Baxi has rightly posed the Indian women's problem when he says that "the problem of Indian women is that of 'survival'—physical survival, a perpetual struggle against physical aggression. In complete plain words, women are being killed daily in sobering numbers in India. Dowry murders, custodial deaths, infanticide, or discrimination in nutrition, experimental caesarian outpatient department women, amniocentesis—these are the typically noted contexts of fatal aggression on women. Less noted are the contexts of physical aggression in situations of protest against subalternity, whether situations of social banditry or of insurgency and counter-insurgency. Revival of Sati marks a puzzling, cruel return of ritualistic aggression against women."[2]

Indeed, the picture is glooming, but so is the prevailing social scenario in our society. The social scientists have been investigating seriously the nature, manner and causes of such an aggression against women in order to make their due contribution towards the development of an egalitarian and humanistic society in India. In spite of the fact that many specialized courses, cells, centres and research institutes for women's development have come up and many Ph. Ds in women's studies have been done during the last few decades, one rarely finds suggestions of involvement of women (and also of men) in social action against patriarchal aggression still going on in our society.

The question of the status of women has recently moved into the forefront of the socio-economic discussions in India. But her current status cannot be properly understood without reference to the predecessor form of Indian womanhood from which it evolved and the process by which it grew. During the centuries of its existence, the image of women has undergone many changes. It is not our intention to trace and analyze the ups and downs in the position of women through the various periods of history. But the primarily concern here is to identify the traditions which continue to affect the status of women in modern times. It is generally held that in the Rig-Vedic civilization, women enjoyed equal status with men. They received education and observed *brahmacharya*, and *upanayana* was also performed for them. Women studied the Vedas, and composed Vedic hymns. According to K. L. Sharma, "women had access to all branches of knowledge.....Child marriage was unknown. Girls enjoyed great freedom and settled their own marriages. Monogamy was a general rule, but there were cases of polygamy among the rich and the ruling classes. Polyandry and sati were non-existent. Wife was given a place of honour and she participated with her husband in religious ceremonies."[3] In the Rig-Vedic period, a daughter retained her right of inheritance and many women rose to become philosophers, well-versed in the sacred and participated in scholarly debates.

The position enjoyed by women in the Rig-Vedic civilization deteriorated in the later-Vedic period. The status of women deteriorated with the injunctions of Manu, on which rested the fabric of Hindu society. A daughter began to be regarded as a curse. However, women were granted freedom to participate in public life. They were denied the right of inheritance and ownership of property. Even, the earnings of women became property of their husbands and sons. The scope of the activities of a wife in the religious field was restricted and a strict discipline in life and fidelity to her husband were demanded from a woman. The importance and necessity of a son increased for the continuity of the race and for the peace and happiness of the soul of the dead in other-world.

Most of the scholars agree that the position of women really deteriorated in the Gupta Age. Dowry emerged as an institution in this period. Widows could not marry again. They had to spend life in penance and austerity. Women had no right to real property. However, the *purdah* system did not exist. *Sati* had become popular by

the seventh century A. D. The period between A. D. 1206 and A. D. 1761 witnessed further deterioration in the position of women. In this period, female infanticide, child marriage, *purdah*, *jauhar*, *sati* and slavery were the main social evils affecting the position of women. According to K. L. Sharma, "The birth of a daughter was considered a bad omen. Giving freedom to women was thought of as the predecessor of doom. Women were largely uneducated and remained confined to their homes. Conservatism, superstition and belief in magic, sorcery and witchcraft were part of women's life. However, motherhood was respected. A woman's devotion to her husband, children and home was universally accepted as a positive value."[4]

At the advent of the British rule, women had already fallen prey to many abhorrent customs. On few historical subjects is there so much agreement among students of widely differing persuasions as on the shocking situation of women at the time India came under the British rule. In the reaction to the Western impact, there was revival of indigenous ideals. In the nineteenth century, India began to discover her long cherished ideals and cultural self-consciousness. This came to be known as the period of 'Renaissance' (meaning reawakening) in India. The reformers, who advocated the emancipation of women, aspired the restoration of such healthy and congenial conditions which once prevailed in the early Vedic period. The renaissance of Indian women attained its fruition by 'the renewed awareness of India's glorious past'. This implies that the removal of evil social practices was perceived not in the light of new liberal thought of the West but on the basis of revival of the Vedic feminine ideals which was thought to be truly democratic. In response to the enlightened Indian public opinion, the British rulers legislated against the glaring social evils. Significant legal reforms were the abolition of *Sati* in 1829, the removal of restriction on remarriage of the widow in 1856, banning female infanticide in 1870, and permitting inter-community marriages under the Special Marriage Act in 1872, raising the age of consent to twelve years in 1891, legislation against child marriages in 1929, giving right to vote to women in Madras Province in 1921 and getting limited right to property in 1937. Although these early reforms and legislations were not able to bring intended results, they did succeed in creating resurgence among Indian women. Under the impact of the West, Indian women experienced an air of freedom and the stir of a new life. All these measures resulted in raising the status of Indian women during the British period.

3. The Position of Women in Indian Society after Independence

What is the status of women today? This is a question which is very difficult to answer keeping in view the diversity among Indian women. Generally, one may safely surmise that the status of Indian women which has been low as a whole except the Rig-Vedic period, has improved considerably as both the sexes have equal rights including the right to a civil marriage. The age of marriage has been increased to 18 for girls and 21 for boys. Thus, monogamy, judicial separation, nullity and divorce are some of the salient features of the post-independence era, which put man and woman on an equal platform. Educational facilities for the women have been broadened. New economic opportunities have been opened up and women are taking advantage of them. In K. L. Sharma's words, "Inheritance, adoption and divorce (even consent) have enhanced women's status in India. These reforms have a long history, and are outcome of the efforts of several reformists through various movements that they launched in the pre-independence period. However, there is no uniform civil code in India. Muslims continue to have their personal laws."[5]

Indian Constitution ensures equality to all its citizens including women (Article 14), ensures no discrimination on any grounds of including sex for providing employment opportunities (Article 16), entrusts the state to take the responsibility of providing maternity benefits to women employees (Article 42), directs the state that its policy towards securing equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex [Article 39(d)], makes provision for one-third reservation of women in the Panchayats with separate seats for women SCs and STs [Article 243 D (3)], one-third reservation for women in the presidential posts at all the levels of panchayats, i.e., Gram Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat [Article 243 D(4)] and one-third reservation in Municipalities [Article 243(T) 3].

The Right to Education Act, 2010 affirms education as a fundamental right of every child, providing free and compulsory elementary education to all. India has taken progressive steps to promote gender equality and many government programs like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* work on eliminating gender bias in the country.

As a result of various measures, not only literacy amonf women has gone up, but the number of working women has also steadily

increased. Women are now being recruited in all posts such as teachers, doctors, nurses, advocates, police officers, bank employees in all major cities of India. Since 1991 women have been recruited into 3 wings of armed forces that are military, air force and naval force.

Women in modern Indian society enjoy equal position as men in many areas such as politics, economics, and legal rights, although in many areas they are still not treated equal to men. Patriarchal society, cultural preference for sons, and systemic bias against women have undermined their position in the society for a long time. Women are proving to be capable of being equal to men, as they get more opportunities. However, it may be emphasized that the majority of women are still far from enjoying the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

Many evils faced by women before independence like *Sati Pratha*, child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, *purdah* system, dowry system, no education to girls, polygamy, female infanticide, domestic violence, sexual harassment and so on. Though some of these evils have got vanished but some are still existing in our society like female infanticide, domestic violence, women abuse etc. Inspite of all these issues, we are not in a position of saying this is a big achievement but the condition of women has improved at a relatively faster rate. We hope that with the passage of time, India will be a safer place for women. This is the reason that the Indian Society has not yet succeeded in framing the required norms or institutions to enable women to fulfill the multiple roles that they are expected to play in India today. On the other hand, the increasing incidence of practices like dowry indicates a further lowering of the status of women. Though the extent to which women can control their own living conditions as well as the extent to which they possess the decision making authority and perform their tasks and activities without minimum restrictions has definitely increased, still the equality has not been achieved fully.

India has been engaged in a planned development for nearly eight decades now. True, but it has been revealed by many objective and systematic studies that our developmental effort has not been able to make any substantial headway. The hiatus between haves and have-not has widened; the violence against women has increased and the standards of political and social morality have touched the bottom. As regards the aggression and violence against

women and the protest action against such an aggression and violence, we have not been able to do much. Upendra Baxi has rightly stated that, "Despite all the efflorescence of the so-called women studies, we have not moved one centimeter towards any serious understanding of this form of aggression against women. Nor has protest action kept pace with the incidence of aggression. Nor has any imaginative proposal for innovation in law and administration emerged in recent years."[6] Why it is so? What are the reasons for our failure to curb the incidence of aggression and violence against women? We have to blame partly the bondage to patriarchy, and partly the women themselves for taking violence against them nonviolently. Not only this, the communication factor is also responsible for the malady by fostering the patriarchal values. Without making them aware of their rights and obligations, without making them politicized and eliciting their active participation, no plan of their development or countering the aggression and violence against them can really succeed.

4. Rising Tide : Gender Equality among Indian Women through Empowerment

The National Policy on the Empowerment of Women in India, 2001, is regarded as one of the important strategies in the development process and led to changes within the socio-economic environment. With these changes, transformations also came about in the status of women. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAIROBI in 1985. Empowerment has been defined broadly as "the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives."[7] Notable in this definition is the recognition of empowerment as a process of building capability and of the importance of structure as represented by the institutions affecting people's lives. This broad conception can be further grounded in a feminist theory of empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them."[8]

The extent of empowerment of women in the national hierarchy is determined largely by the three factors—her economic, social and political identity and their weightage. These factors are deeply inter- twined and interlinked with many cross cutting

linkages which imply that if efforts in even one dimension remain absent or weak, outcomes and momentum generated by the other components cannot be sustained as they will not be able to weather any changes or upheavals. Therefore, for holistic empowerment of the woman to happen—social, economic and political aspects impacting a woman's life must converge effectively.

Decision-making can be regarded as an outcome of mental processes (cognitive process) leading to the selection of a course of action among several alternatives. Each decision-making process produces an output that can be an action, an opinion or a choice. This is in fact what the empowerment looks for : giving more autonomy in their own life by encouraging the power of their opinions.

Empowerment of women would necessarily mean redefining the notions of feminity and masculinity as well as changing man-woman relationship. This is something more and more women are now talking about. Contrary to the rumours which are spread, feminists are not against men. They are against patriarchy as a system, against aggressive masculinity. They want men who are gentle, who are caring. The models of good men for women are not muscular, aggressive and supermen but they want husbands who can not only act as fathers but also as mothers.

Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment. True, education and employment opportunities for women have opened new avenues for enhancing the status of women and are considered the effective mechanisms for their empowerment. Educational dimension of empowerment not only helps the women to gain knowledge, but also provides the necessary courage and inner strength to face the challenges of life. It enables them to procure a job and supplement the income of the family and achieve social status. It is often argued that education is a powerful tool in the emancipation and empowerment of women. Economic empowerment of women means their economic independence or access to an inherited or self-generated income. This is considered an important dimension of empowerment of women. However, many studies have indicated that the educated and employed women don't have effective control over their earnings. They are controlled by fathers in case of un-married women or husbands and mother-in-law/father-in-law in

case of married women. They don't have freedom to spend their earnings at their own will. Similarly, studies have also reported that educated and employed women are also the victims of violence, sometimes more than those less educated and unemployed. Sexual harassment of women at work places both in organized as well as un-organized sectors has been reported by many studies. Education and employment of women have definitely involved them in decision-making process in their families. However, how many suggestions are decisions taken by them are actually carried out by the men-folk is still is a topic of investigation.

Empowerment of women as a process involves a change of perceptions about themselves, the environment, and the relation-ship of themselves and the environment. As such, empowerment enables the women to gain insights and have an awareness of what is undesirable and unfavourable about their current situation, perceive a better situation, the possibilities of attaining it and realizing what is within their reach and what they could do to get to a better situation. This change of perceptions implies a change of attitudes and a change in their outlook in life.

Empowerment of women also implies avoidance of crimes and atrocities against women and improvement in their education, health etc. Improvement of the status of women and their access to resources make an important contribution to sustainable develop-ment. It was felt that The World Population Report 1994 gives a clear definition of this term. It says that, "Empowering women means extending choices, choice about if and when to get married, choice about education, employment, opportunities, controlling the social and physical environment, choice about if and when to get pregnant and ultimately about family size. Empower- ment requires that husbands, partners, family members, and communities help to promote a healthy environment too from violence's or abuse, in which women are free to use community services on the basis of equality." Ultimately, empowerment should lead to the improvement of women's socio-economic status. There is urgent need to eradicate the gender-based socialization, patriarchal values and religious sanctions, which are so deeply rooted in socio- cultural moorings that they don't crumble easily.

One of the approaches for enhancing the status of women emphasizes the process of social inclusion as it helps in removing the institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase

the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities.[9] The growth of civil society and participatory development methods at both macro and micro levels of society were also proposed as the mechanisms by which empowerment of women could take place. This approach to empowerment obviously focuses on state and civil society institutions and interpersonal gender dynamics within the house-hold as a part of the equation of social exclusion and in need of directed efforts at change.

The modern approach to empowerment emphasizes on the basic objective of development as "expansion of human capabilities."[10] It is argued that expansion of human capabilities empowers the people and facilitates the reduction of social and economic inequalities. This approach views empower- ment from a new perspective as Malhotra et. al. have argued that empowerment is "the expansion of people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them."[11] Women have been denied equal opportunities for personal growth and social development all over the world. They have been burdened with cumulative inequalities as a result of socio-cultural and economic discriminatory practices which until recently have been taken for granted as though they were part of the immutable scheme of things established by nature. In spite of these hurdles, participation of women in different walks of life has begun which has triggered a new era of social change.

While it is true that women still continue to suffer various kinds of deprivation, discrimination and atrocities, the country has mounted a concerted onslaught against these problems through various development/empowering strategies to inculcate confi-dence among women, bring an awareness of their own potential and to ensure their participation in their own development, an empowering strategy has been advocated by the Government based on promotion of literacy and education, training, credit, employment and income generation. The results of these development have been quite obvious. This has definitely led to social mobility among women which has subsequently given them a great sense of empowerment. Thus, empowerment perspective is quite helpful in raising the status of women.

With higher literacy rates and equal pay for equal work, women are able to thrive economically and rise out of poverty.

Protecting women and girls from violence and abuse while challenging the stigmas against reporting crimes would overall create a much safer society. However, India ranks 140th among 153 nations, "becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia" on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index of 2021. In other words, India fell 28 places from its 2020 rank of 112th. The report also cites several reasons for this fall. In terms of political empowerment, the number of female ministers declined from about 23% in 2019 to just 9% in 2021. The female workforce participation rate also decreased "from 24.8% to 22.3%."

Additionally, the report also reveals that "share of women in senior and managerial positions also remains low." The report also indicates that women in India earn just one-fifth of what men earn. Furthermore, "one in four women" endure "intimate violence" at least once in their lifetime. Although India has achieved gender parity with regard to educational attainment, illiteracy rates among women remain high. The report indicates that just 65.8% of women in India are literate in 2021 in comparison to 82.4% of men.

Women also endure inequality with regard to land and property rights. A 2016 UNICEF report noted that only 12.7% of properties in India "are in the names of women" despite 77% of women in India depending on agricultural work as a core source of income. According to many scholars[12], several factors contribute to Indian women's relative lack of empowerment including the patriarchal nature of Indian society, constrained mobility, limited work opportunities, and low levels of social, political and economic participation.

Lack of empowerment results in negative consequences, such as poor health, disparities in allocation of household resources, medical care and education, and increased burden of strenuous physical tasks.[13] However, according to Patel et al.[14], gender disadvantage is the main determinant of the poor health status of many Indian women. Many studies have associated higher levels of empowerment with positive reproductive health outcomes. Women's greater degree of autonomy and gender equity are seen as playing an important role in shaping their ability to manage fertility as well as the health and development of children.

Study conducted by Lwendo Moonzwe Davis et. al.[15] supports the notion that empowered, non-pregnant women in a predominantly patriarchal society constantly battle gender inequalities,

which results in greater somatic symptoms. Husbands and members of the extended family view women's general health problems as further reducing the households' limited financial resources, especially if the cost of treatment is high. Women themselves are raised with the cultural norm that their health problems (and other aspects of their lives) are less important, and thus tend to minimize them.

5.   Conclusion

In simple terms, empowerment means giving power or authority to an individual. The empowerment of women has been extensively debated and written about all over the world. It is rightly said that empowerment of women means equipping them to be economically independent, self-reliant, in addition to providing positive self-esteem to face any difficult situation. Women should be equipped enough to participate in any development process. In this context, Kofi Annan, the former secretary-general of the United Nations, once stated that "There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women."

In many cultures, gender equality,women's empowerment and women's rights don't seem to matter at all. In countries like India, this discrimination is much worse. Earlier, Indian women suffered abuse in the name of culture. Now they are being abused in the name of loss of culture. And if they raise a cry for their empowerment and safety, accusing fingers find it very easy to lay the blame of all the sufferings on women's heads.

From a global perspective, empowerment of women is critical for the achievement of all the goals related to equality, human rights, development and peace and security established by the United Nations over the past more than six decades. At the World Summit in 2005, Heads of State and Government stated that "progress for women is progress for all". One of the eight Millennium Development Goals established in 2000 is focused on gender equality and empowerment of women, with targets on education, employment and political decision-making. Gender equality is also important for the achievement of all other Millennium Development Goals.

An important breakthrough is considered the establishment of the strategy of "gender mainstreaming" in Beijing in 1995. This strategy requires that Governments, the United Nations, and all other institutions in both the public and private sectors, including

universities, take into consideration the gender perspectives in all aspects of their work and make efforts to remove discrimination and inequality. It is this strategy that has led to attention to gender perspectives and the participation of women in sectors where there was little attention in the past, including the maritime sector.

While much has been achieved at the policy level on gender equality and empowerment of women, implementation has not been as systematic and effective as expected. A number of studies conducted after 2005 have revealed a huge gap between the global policies and actions at national level. Member States have not lived up to their commitments, and the United Nations has failed to deliver the necessary support to Member States.

In view of the gaps and failures, a framework of four critical elements for the empowerment of women has been developed within the United Nation. These include *development of capabilities* (which must begin at an early age and continue throughout the lifecycle); *ensuring access to essential resources and opportunities* (which is necessary to ensure that women are able to effectively utilize their capabilities for the benefit of themselves, their families and communities and for society in general); *provision of opportunities for leadership and decision-making roles* (this is one of the areas where very little progress has been made over the past decades, despite much rhetoric); and *ensuring security and safety for women and girls* (which is critical for their empowerment and requires urgent attention to violence against women, a pervasive form of discrimination and human rights abuse prevalent in both developed and developing countries). These four elements are intrinsically interlinked. Ensuring that they are in place requires a range of actions from a diverse group of actors, within the framework of a human rights approach.

All of us need to accept the fact that gender inequality and discrimination had been the norm of the society for centuries and in this regard it touches all aspects of a women's life. It must be remembered that patriarchal values are deep-rooted in Indian society and they are not likely to crumble down so easily. However, women's empowerment, especially through education with employment has started changing the traditional scenario and reducing gender gap to a significant extent. Women's empowerment gives impetus to the ongoing process of status mobility and change towards gender equality. This will definitely enhance the awareness

in women which in turn will increase their confidence. Confident and well aware women would be able to tackle inequality and discrimination in a far better way than the ill-equipped women.

It must be emphasized that empowerment of women is a complicated and uphill task. It is generally said that women's empowerment will be, to a large extent, at the expense of the power that men enjoy. However, this argument does not seem to be convincing until men reconcile with losing a bit of their total power. Men will gain and not lose by the sharing of power with women in the long run.[16] There is need for building new values for gender equality instead of strengthening the patriarchal values which are deeply rooted in Indian society. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in India-2001 has to be made more effective to realize the goal and take effective steps for decreasing gender inequality by removing all the obstacles in its way. There is urgent need to implement this policy in letter and spirit and take effective steps in this direction from local to the national level.

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8

Intellectual Property Rights : An Overview in Indian Context

*Swaty**

The intellectual property rights (IPR) are intangible in nature and gives exclusive rights to inventor or creator for their valuable invention or creation. Intellectual property has increasingly assumed a vital role with the rapid pace of technological, scientific and medical innovation now a day. Additionally, it offers opportunity to share and distribute knowledge for the prosperity of the society. In present scenario of globalization, IPR is the focal point in global trade practices and livelihood across the world. These rights boost the innovative environment by giving recognition and economic benefits to creator or inventor whereas the lack of IPR awareness and its ineffective implementation may hamper the economic, technical and societal developments of nation. Hence dissemination of IPR knowledge and its appropriate implementation is utmost requirement for any nation. The present paper highlights various terms of IPR such as patents, trademarks, industrial designs, geographic indications, copyright, etc. with their

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corresponding rules, regulations, their need and role especially pertaining to Indian context.

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1.   Introduction

Intellectual property (IP) refers to any Intellectual creation of mind. Intellectual Property Rights are legal rights, which give people the right to own and profit from their artistic, scientific and technological creations for a designated period of time. Inventors are granted to a variety of intangible assets, such as ideas, business methods, inventions, musical piece, literary work, artistic works, discoveries, words, phrases, symbols, and designs.

The primary objective of an Intellectual Property Rights is to encourage inventions by promoting their protection and utilization so as to contribute to the development of Industries, which in turn contributes to the promotion of technological innovation and to the transfer and dissemination of technology.

In the wake of globalization, it is necessary to be ahead in innovation and creativity in order to compete with the stagnant technology and trade competitions. India is well known for its intellectual skills in software engineering, missile technology, the Moon or Jupiter project and other technological fields. In terms of registered patents, industrial design, trademarks, etc., India lags in the generation of IPR properties. India ranked 29th among 30 countries in the IP index around the globe in a recent report by the US Chamber of Commerce. It is a very worrying situation for both the policy-makers and the country as a whole.[1] Any society's growth depends directly on IPR and its policy frame work.[2] Lack of awareness of IPR resulted in the death of innovations, a high risk of piracy, economic loss and the deterioration of the country's intellectual age. Thus, there is an urgent need for the dissemination of IPR knowledge to improve indigenous research and technology innovations and developments.[3, 4]

2.   World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) was incepted in 1967 at Stockholm to protect the IPR throughout the

world.[5, 6] Later it becomes one of the agency of United Nation in 1974. WIPO frame works as well as regulate various policies concerned to IPR across the globe. The economic, social and sustainable cultural development with preservation of bio diversities, traditional knowledge through a balance and effective international IP system is main objective of WIPO. Besides this, it is responsible to harmonise differences amongst various countries especially between the developed and developing nations by amending international regulation so that each of them get an equal opportunity in emerging world.[5, 7] With 192 members, the mission of WIPO is to develop a balanced and accessible international intellectual property (IP) system, which rewards creativity, stimulates innovation and contributes to economic development while safeguarding the public interest.

3. Nature of Intellectual Property Rights

IPR are largely territorial rights, except copyright, which is global in nature in the sense that it is immediately available in all the members of the Berne Convention. These rights are awarded by the State and are monopoly rights, implying that no one can use these rights without the consent of the right holder. It is important to know that these rights have to be renewed from time to time for keeping them in force, except in case of copyright and trade secrets. IPR have a fixed term, except trademark and geographical indications, which can have an indefinite life provided that these are renewed after a stipulated time specified in the law by paying official fees. Trade secrets also have an infinite life but they do not have to be renewed. IPR can be assigned, gifted, sold and licensed like any other property.

Unlike other moveable and immoveable properties, these rights can be simultaneously held in many countries at the same time. IPR can be held only by legal entities, i.e. those who have the right to sell and purchase property. In other words, an institution that is not autonomous may not be in a position to own an intellectual property. These rights, especially patents, copyrights, industrial designs, IC layout design and trade secrets, are associated with something new or original and, therefore, what is known in public domain cannot be protected through the rights mentioned above. Improvements and modifications made over known things can be protected. It would, however, be possible to use geographical indications for protecting some agriculture and traditional products.[8]

4. Types of Intellectual Property Rights

4·1 Patent

Patent is an intellectual property right granted to inventor by concerned government office for his novel technical invention.[9] The term invention means solution of any problem in terms of development of a product or a process.

Patents are one of the most important types of IPR. It is defined as "A government authority or licence conferring a right or title for a set period, especially the sole right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention." When individuals or organisations invent or come up with a new way of doing something, they approach the patent office, give them details about the product or process, and get protection for their 'property' for a fee. This is justified because these individuals invest years and extensive resources developing something, and would like to be compensated for their efforts. Patents act as an incentive for inventing new products and processes and form an integral part of a culture of innovation and growth. Patent protection is given only for a limited period, say 10 or 20 years. Any invention has to meet the following conditions for patentability.

Usefulness : Invention must have industrial applicability or applied for practical purpose.

Novelty : Invention must be new technology which has not been published or available in prior art of the country or elsewhere in the world before the date of patent filing.

Non obviousness : Invention which can be done by any ordinary skilled person is obvious and cannot be patentable. Hence invention must not be obvious for patentability.

The first Indian patent laws were promulgated in 1856. These were modified from time to time. New patent laws were made after the independence in the form of the Indian Patent Act 1970. The Act has now been radically amended to become fully compliant with the provisions of the TRIPS. The most recent amendment was made in 2021 after 2005, which was preceded by the amendments in 2000 and 2003. While the process of bringing out amendments was ongoing, India became a member of the Paris Convention, Patent Cooperation Treaty and Budapest Treaty.[10]

4·2 Copyright

Copyright refers to the rights granted to creators, authors, artists, and composers for their 'original' creative work or to performers, artists, and broadcasters for the related rights. Like patent laws, copyright is also a monopolistic right. Copyright gives exclusive right to sell, publish and reproduce, any literary, musical, dramatic, artistic or architectural work created by the author. Thus, the kinds of works which are covered by copyrights are innumerable and include books, stories, novels, poems, plays, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, movies, computer programs, databases, musical compositions, songs, choreography, videos, paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture, architecture, maps and technical drawings.

The following literary and artistic works are covered under copyrights[11, 12] :

- ⤻ **Literary and scientific works :** Novels, poems reference works, newspapers, plays, books, pamphlet, magazine, journals, etc.

- ⤻ **Musical work :** Songs, instrument musical, choruses, solos, bands, orchestras, etc

- ⤻ **Artistic works :** Such artistic works as painting, drawings, sculpture, architecture, advertisements, etc.

- ⤻ **Photographic work :** Portraits, landscape, fashion or event photography, etc

- ⤻ **Motion pictures :** it includes the cinematography works such as film, drama, documentary, newsreels, theatrical exhibition, television broadcasting, cartoons, video tape, DVDs, etc

- ⤻ **Computer programmes :** computer programmes, softwares and their related databases, Maps and technical drawings.

As per the Copyright act 1957 without permission or authorization making copies and distribution of software is criminal offence. Although, this act gives, rights to authorized users to make at least backup copies of the software or any other computer programs. The registration of copyright is carried out under the Indian Copyright Act, 1957. Recently the act was amended in 2012 known as The Copyright (amendment) Act, 2012. As per rule, author gets copy rights just after creating its work without any formality but work can be registered at Register of copyrights maintained in the Copyright office of Department of Education as prima-facie evidence.[13, 14, 15]

4·3 Trademark

A trademark is a distinctive sign which helps the consumers in identifying the source of particular goods or services. It can be in the form of text, word, numeral, phrase, symbol, design, signature, smell, shape, colour, sound, packaging, texture or combination of any of these elements. The intent behind a unique trademark is that the consumer can associate the specific mark with the manufacturer of goods or service providers in case of services. It helps in ensuring the customers that the goods are of a certain quality and type. It also creates goodwill or reputation for that manufacturer or service provider. e.g., when a consumer looks at a new product with this symbol below, he can easily understand that the particular product belongs to Apple Inc. This is the power a symbol can create and earn goodwill for the trademark owner. Trademarks already existed in the ancient world also. The Indian craftsmen used around 3000 years ago to engrave their signature on their jewellery or artistic creation. With industrialization the trademark become key factor in modern world of international trade.

A trademark cannot be the same or confusingly similar to a trademark already in use. A search of the federal registrations-and preferably state registrations and other databases containing brand names for goods and services, including Internet domain names-will be necessary to determine this. Registration requires that the trademark be in use on goods sold as part of business. If the goods are sold in only one state, then that state's trademark law will apply. If sold as part of interstate commerce, then federal law will apply.

Important Criteria of Trademark Registration : As per UK Trademarks Act, 1994, the three main requirements for registering a trademark are as follows :

➤ The trademark should be a sign or anything that can convey information.

➤ The sign should be capable of distinguishing products or services of one undertaking from that of another. This is clearly a requirement of distinctiveness of trademarks.

➤ The trademark is capable of graphical representation to provide precise identification in the trademark registry.

Broadly Followed Rules of Trademark Registration are :

- The word "apple" or an apple device cannot be registered for apple as in this case it is not distinguishable. But it is registered being highly distinctive in case of computers.

- Similarly Camel trademark is registered for cigarettes. The generic term like "furniture" Cannot be registered as trademark for chair, table, or similar type of items.

- In case of use of letters or numerals, in certain countries registration is allowed only when at least few numbers of letters and/or numerals are combined or in case of letters the combination of word is pronounceable.

- Similarly, common surnames are not registered in some countries as they are not Distinctive in nature.

- Beside these, deceptive sign or trademark which is misleading or violates the public order or morality is not qualified for registration.

- The signs which are reserved for state, public institution, organization or international Body cannot be registered as trademark.[16, 17]

The Indian trademarks act specifies that any mark which is distinctive i.e. capable of distinguishing goods and services of one undertaking from another and capable of being represented graphically can be trademarks.[18] Since trademarks do not grant exclusive right that could be exploited, there is no need to limit their validity. But without time limit, trademark validity would lead to unnecessary number of registered trademarks without any applicability.[19] In India, the initial term of trademark registration is for 10 years and thereafter it has to be renewed from time to time. The applicant can apply for trademark registration at Trade Mark Registry Office, Mumbai (head office), Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmadabad and Chennai.

4·4 Industrial Designs

The creative activity of achieving an ornamental or aesthetic appearance of mass produced products or articles is covered under industrial design. The design can be expressed either by two dimensional or by three dimensional forms. The Design Act 1949 of the United Kingdom refers to feature of shape, configuration, pattern or ornament. Broadly, shape, surface, pattern, lines, colour, etc appearance related features of industrial products such as watches,

vehicles, mobiles, laptops, different home appliances, buildings, textile designs or handicraft products are covered under industrial design. The aesthetic value or how a product appeals is the main concern in selling besides its technical quality and other aspects.[20]

The industrial design must be new or original and non-functional, to be legal under most national laws. Therefore, industrial design is concerned only with aesthetic features and the design registration does not cover any technical features or characteristics of the product to which it is applied. Although the technical features, if are novel could be protected by getting the patent.[21] Beside these, design which is literary or artistic in character such as cartoon, label, leaflet, map, dressmaking pattern, etc is protected under copyrights instead of industrial design. The term of industrial design rights vary from country to country from 10 to 25 years. In India as per Design Act, 2000 duration of protection of industrial design is for 10 years. This duration can be extended further for 5 years. When an authorized user dies, the right devolves on his successor. At the same time, transmission, assignment and licensing on GI are not permitted legally.

An industrial design encourages creativity and skill development amongst the individual and manufacturing sector by promoting more aesthetically pleasing products for the society. The design and shape of the product not only create aesthetic appearance but in case of machine, furniture, automobile, etc. design is also indirectly associated with ergonomics and plays a major role in customers' comfort. The patent offices at Chennai, Mumbai, New Delhi and Kolkata also deal with industrial design. The patent office, Kolkata maintains the register of design as statutory requirement of all concerned information of filed industrial design.

4·5   Geographical Indication (GI)

GI signifies the name or sign used in reference to the products corresponding to the particular geographical area or somewhat related to the origin, like town, region or nation. Thus, GI grants the rights to its holder that acts as the certification mark and shows that the specified product consists of the some qualities and is enjoying a good reputation due to its origin from the specified geographical location.[22] The TRIPs agreement has defined the "geographical indications rights" as the exclusionary rights for the indicator that identify the goods originated within the member nation territories, or

area or region of that territory, where the reputation or other attributes of the goods is essentially related to the geographic origin of the place. GIs are a part of the intellectual property law and, therefore, like any other law, the regulation and governing conditions of GI also vary from one country to another as high differences have been found in the use of generic terms across the world. Such a case is prominent for food and beverages, which more commonly use the geographic terms. The Champagne, Havana, Darjeeling tea, Arabian horses, Alphanso Mango, Nagpur orange, Basmati, etc. are some well-known examples of names that are recognized worldwide with their unique quality product and registered as GI.

In India, the GIs regime is regulated by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 and the Geographical Indication of Goods (Regulation and Protection) Rules, 2002.[23] However, registering of the GI is not compulsory in the India as the owner of the unregistered GI can also enforce the actions with the help of passing off against the infringer, but it is recommendable to register the GI as the registration certificate acts as the prima facie evidence in the court at the time of arising of any dispute, and no additional evidence is required to prove the validity. In the Indian act, GI is used for identifying goods from a particular geographical location and its origin. It encircles the agriculture goods and natural goods and is extended up to the manufactured goods also. In order to register the GI, the goods should possess unique characteristics and reputation with other qualities attributed to its geographical origin, e.g. climate, quality of soil, processing methods, etc.[24-27]

4·6   Protection of New Plant Varieties and Farmer's Rights (PPVFR)

The rights under the Protection of new Plant Varieties and Farmer's Rights (PPVFR) cover a wide chain of rights conferred exclusively for specific groups, such as Breeders' rights, Researchers' rights and Farmers' rights. Breeder will have rights to cultivate, sell, and market the product. Importing and exporting goods are also permissible. A researcher can use any of the registered varieties, for research purpose or conducting experiments. A researcher has to get consent from the breeder of the initial source of a variety, on experiment, for conducting further development. In addition, farmers' interest in being a part of the development of a plant variety is entitled with the registration and protection. The farmers' general

works and eligibility to get honours and awards for conservation of plant genetic resources and wild family of economic plants are also protected by law. The office of the Registrar of Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmer's Rights authority in New Delhi is the authorized registration centre for the protection of all rights for plant varieties and farmers guaranteed by law. The registration process involves complex procedures and it varying depends on the type of legal right required. Once it is granted the rights are protected for a certain period of time.[28]

The Plant Variety Protection and Farmers Rights act 2001 was enacted in India to protect the New Plant Variety; the act has come into force on 30-10-2005 through Authority. Initially 12 crop species have been identified for registration i.e. Rice, Wheat, Maize, Sorghum, Pearl millet, Chickpea, Green gram, Black gram, Lentil, Kidney bean etc. India has opted for sui- generic system instead of patents for protecting new plant variety. Department Agriculture and Cooperation is the administrative ministry looking after its registration and other matters.

4·7   Trade Secrets

Any invention or knowledge which in not innovative (not patentable) but useful for business and provides economic benefits can be kept as trade secret. Beside this novel or creative information is also kept as trade secret when registration of patent, copyright, industrial design, etc are pending or in process.[29] The technological information or process such as recipe, idea, device, software, blue prints, pattern, formula, maps, architectural plans and manual or any commercial information or business strategy or secret in form of any data compilation or data bases, marketing plans, financial information, personal records, etc can be kept as trade secret.[30] It is also known as "confidential information" or "classified information." To be safeguarded under trade secrets, the matter should be "secret" and there are the following elements that are found to be the same :

- ⤻ Is not known by the public.
- ⤻ Provides some financial sort of gain to its holder.
- ⤻ Involves reasonable efforts from the holder side for maintaining secrecy.
- ⤻ Importance of data or information to him or for his rivals.
- ⤻ The ease by which information could be learnt or duplicated by others.

Trade secrets are accorded protection without any registration. Unlike patents, where all the claims and processes enter the public domain as soon as the patent application is filed, it is not possible to follow the same process with trade secrets. A formidable example of the same is the recipe of Coca-Cola. It is a fact that the recipe of Coca-Cola was never patented, as it would cause the recipe to be leaked. The officials of Coca-Cola are so particular about it that it is said that the two employees who know the recipe, only know one half of it each and no one knows the recipe as a single piece of information. Such law of protecting confidential matters offers monopoly in respect of any secret data and information. Trade secrets offer protection for an indefinite time period. Unlike patent, this does not expire.[31]

In certain countries there are specific rules for trade secret such as Unfair Competition Prevention Act in Japan, Uniform Trade Secrets Act in the United States of America. The TRIPS Agreement recognizes trade secrets under 'undisclosed information' but remains silent on mechanism and modalities, under common law, law of contract, etc.[32-34]

4·8 Layout Design of Integrated Circuits

The designing of layout of an integrated circuit is the process involving a two or three dimensional layout or the topography of an IC. It is also termed as mask work. This structure consists of elements include transistors, other circuitry elements and lead wires connecting to them. In order to get protection for semiconductor IC layout designs, an act came into force in India in the year 2000. In the event, the layout of a circuit found not original, commercially exploited anywhere in India, inherently not distinctive or not in a distinguishable form from registered layout design will not be considered for registration under this act. The Semiconductor Integrated Circuit Layout Design Registry at New Delhi is the issuing authority of rights regarding design of Integrated CircuitsA. Registration of a Layout-Design is valid only for a period of 10 years from the date of filing an application for registration or commercial exploitation in any country, whichever is earlier.[35]

4·9 Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity

"Traditional knowledge (TK) means innovation and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional life

styles; wisdom developed over many generations of holistic traditional scientific utilization of lands, natural resources, and environment. The use of turmeric, neem, tulsi, etc herbs in day to day life as per ritual is very well known example of traditional knowledge existing in India."[36] The US patent was granted to University of Mississippi for use of turmeric in wound healing; European patent was granted to W. R. Grace and Company for its discovery of fungicidal effects of neem oil; the agro-biotech giant, Syngenta, attempted to take rights of thousands of rice variety which already existed in India. These all are few examples of biopiracy in which rights have been cancelled after wards in favour of genuine owner of Traditional Knowledge. The rights related to Traditional Knowledge such as cultivation practises, medicinal uses of plants or herbs and plant varieties as well as their genetic resources are covered under the Sui generic means unique systems of land of law or region as they are not covered or fit under standard IPR systems.

WIPO Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took place in 1992 with a prime goal of conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of the benefits occurring due to utilisation of traditional genetic resources. India being a member of this convention passed following legislation in the parliament to protect traditional knowledge and farmer's rights.[37]

5. Conclusion

The Intellectual Property Rights has a key role in fostering research and innovations of every nation.[38] It has crucial influence on international and national trade. These rights protect both individual and national interest through giving opportunity for economic growth. Always, the unique expression of ideas or products is being important in all commercial endeavours. In today's digital world, there are more chances of stealing trade secrets or illegal use of registered properties, as the entire world is connected with networks. Loss of Intellectual Properties may be detrimental for the overall development of the whole nation itself. For protecting the wealth of the nation, stringent laws should be enacted in all fields associated with handling Intellectual properties. It is essential for policy makers to include IPR in basic educational system and promote IPR registration by encouraging the innovators and creators. India is having all the resources in terms of available raw material, cheap labour, innovative and creative dedicated manpower. No doubt that

India and other developing countries will definitely harness its proportionate share in global trade by exploration in Intellectual Property Rights.

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9

Contribution of Bhimthadi Jatra in Inclusive Growth of India

Vidula Dnyaneshware Vyawahare*

Economic Growth of any country should include all segments of the society. In India the contribution of women to the growth of the economy is less than that of the global average of women. Therefore, opportunities must be created to increase their contribution to the growth of the economy. Bhimthadi Jatra is mainly an exhibition of the products of the women. The paper explains the case of India.in relation to the contribution of women in the growth of the country and throws light on the role played by Bhimthadi Jatra in the entry of women in productive activities along with the sustenance and expansion of their businesses. The paper concludes that the Bhimthadi Jatra is playing an important role in making growth of Indian economy inclusive.

[**Keywords :** Bhimthadi Jatra, Inclusive growth, Self-help groups, Labour force, Participation rate]

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1. Introduction

Economic growth is an important objective of any country. However whether the growth includes all segments of the society is also a matter of concern for the country. Women constitute almost half a portion of the society in all the countries including India. However their contribution to the growth of the economy is less than that of the men. In India, the contribution of women to the growth of the economy is less than that of the global average of women. Therefore opportunities must be created to increase their contribution to the growth of the economy. Bhimthadi Jatra mainly an exhibition of the products of the women. Self Help Groups[1] creates such opportunities to the women and is helping the country to include women in the process of growth.

2. Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this study are two-fold :

1. To study the concept of inclusive growth and the status of Indian economy in relation to the contribution of women.
2. To study the impact of Bhimthadi Jatra on the businesses of the women stall holders of various self-help groups.

3. Research Methodology

The paper is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected with the help of an interview schedule. The schedule was prepared for the women stall holders in the Bhimthadi Jatra who are members of different self help groups (SHGs). The schedule contains both close ended and open ended questions. Interviews of women stall holders who participated at least thrice in the Bhimthadi Jatra were taken. The years of participation of the women stall holders range from three years to ten years. The questions in the interview schedule are related to the businesses of women and whether Bhimthadi Jatra has helped them in starting, sustaining and expanding their businesses. Questions related to the managerial skills required for doing a business are also included in the schedule. The study was conducted for the years 2006-2019. The years before the COVID-19 Pandemic occurred.

4. Meaning of Inclusive Growth and Case of India

According to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, Inclusive growth is economic growth that creates

opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society.

The World Bank stated that rapid pace of economic growth is necessary for reducing absolute poverty. But, for this growth to be sustainable in the long run, it should be broad-based across sectors, and inclusive of the large part of a country's labour force.

The Asian Development Bank explained inclusive growth as growth that not only creates new economic opportunities, but also one that ensures equal access to the opportunities created for all segments of society, particularly for the poor

The United Nations Development Programme stated that "Inclusive growth opens up opportunities for people to improve their well-being while leaving no one behind. It aims to eradicate poverty and lift all income groups, including those who may be better off yet remain vulnerable to sudden shocks....... Where people at large can become more productive and capable, and have opportunities to use those capabilities, people can create better lives for themselves and their families. They also become the engine of a highly productive economy....."

Thus taking into account all these views on economic growth; participation of all sections of the society in the process of growth is necessary. Women being almost half portion of the population of India, their participation in the growth process must be at par with men. They should contribute to growth and get benefitted from the growth of the nation also.

If we consider the economic status of women in India; we find a wide gender gap as compared to global scenario. According to the study of Mckinsey Global Institute, the contribution of women to Gross Domestic Products is only 17% in India. It is very low compared to global average of 37%. According to the Report on Fourth Annual Employment – Unemployment Survey (2013-14) of the Government of India, Ministry Of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau, Female Labour Force.[2] Participation Rate (FLFP) is lower as compared to LFPR among males. At All India level, female LFPR was 25.8% as compared to 74.4% for males. The global average for females is 49.6%. As per the study of Mckinsey Global Institute At All India level, the female unemployment rate was 7.7% (under the UPS[3] approach). According to Women At Work Trends/2016 of International Labour

Office Geneva, global unemployment rate was 6.2 %. Thus the incidence of unemployment is more among Indian women. When we consider the entrepreneurship among women, the number of women entrepreneurs is very less than men entrepreneurs in India. According to the All India Report of Sixth Economic Census (2016), of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation of the government of India, 13.76% establishments in the country were owned by the women. These establishments provided employment to 10.24% persons. Total number of SHGs were 0.19 million out of which all women Own Account Establishments were 89%.

The asset holding by a person whether man or woman creates an opportunity for productive activity. However 'A Gender Asset Gap Project in three countries of Ecuador, Ghana and India' (2011) studied ownership of land among women. The study of Karnataka found that ownership of land was reported among single women i.e. widowed/divorced, etc. and rarely among married women. Thus women do not have this asset also to take loan with the help of land to start a business.

Whether by employment or entrepreneurship, the participation of women in growth process is less as compared to men in India as well as with the global averages in case of many variables. For equal participation of women in the growth process, equal opportunities must be available for them. However women being marginalized class in India due to patriarchal nature of Indian society special efforts must be done to provide equal opportunities to them. Bhimthadi Jatra is playing an important role in providing such opportunities to women.

5. About Bhimthadi Jatra

Bhimthadi Jatra is an exhibition or trade fair organized by the Agricultural Development Trust which is located in Baramati, Maharashtra. Bhimthadi Jatra was initially started as a platform for the products of the women Self Help Groups in the form of an exhibition or trade fair. However other than SHGs; women entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, departments of government offices, farmers, farmers clubs and self help groups of men farmers also participate to some extent. Jatra is organized normally once in a year; However if the Jatra could not be organized in a particular year, in the next calendar year it is organized twice in a

year. The Jatra is conducted for four to five days. Majority of the stall holders always remain women from various self groups. The stall holders in the Jatra are from different states of India and in Maharashtra from various villages and cities.The Jatra aims to create awareness regarding business among women, train them in business skills and make them self sufficient. The Jatra tries to help women to develop entrepreneurship by which they can compete at national and international level. They aim for linkages and networking to create a market for the products of the stall holders.

The name Bhimthadi Jatra is based on Bhimthadi, It means a province on the banks of river Bheema. The name of the river Bheema comes from the King Bhimak. Supe and Baramati regions on the banks of river Karha are the parts of Bhimthadi Taluka. The area is related to Peshvas. In those times the village market fair used to be held on the banks of the river. Jatra means fair and it is held at a particular place like village market fair in old days. Thus the name Bhimthadi Jatra was given to this trade fair. Though the name is Bhimthadi Jatra; it is organized in Pune because the organizers observed that Pune is supposed to be an international destination for many corporate houses, multinational companies and popular fashion brands. Therefore for Jatra Pune was selected rather than Baramati and Supe region.

6. Role of Bhimthadi Jatra in the Inclusion of Women in Growth Process

To include women in the productive process, their entry in the productive activities is necessary. Due to less education, and lack of professional skill, many women can not get good jobs or enter into businesses which require some professional skill. In case of women of middle age getting any kind of job becomes more difficult. Working in most of the firms need a minimum basic vocational training which these women lack. They can not get a job of a worker also except in factories where unskilled workers also can be employed like Beedi factories. Thus the option of entering into micro-enterprises based on the skill acquired in the household activities or after a short period training by any government or private agency can be started and run. Bhimthadi Jatra provides this opportunity to the women. When we see the women participating in Bhimthadi Jatra, 52% women were educated up to 12th standard and 48% women were of the age of 40 to

50. 64% women stall holders are engaged in the business of food articles or vegetarian food stall or thela or hotels.36% women have not taken any kind of training for the skill required for the type of business they are running. Though 64% women have taken training either from any government agency or private agency or from the organizers of the Bhimthadi Jatra or in the self help group or in the family it is a short term or an informal training. Women do not have confidence to start any kind of business due to possibility of failure and thereby loss, which they do not afford. Bhimthadi Jatra gives an opportunity to such women to try whether the customers will buy their products in the four days stall in the Jatra. The women can also have an idea whether their business can sustain and if already started whether there is a possibility to expand the business. 35% of women stall holders either started their businesses after participating in the Bhimthadi Jatra first or started doing business seriously and professionally after participating in the Bhimthadi Jatra first. The businesses of women got boost after participating in the Jatra. It is observed from the interviews that in case of 40% women stall holders, the businesses run by them became the chief source of earning in the family after participating in Jatra. In case of 22% women stall holders, their husbands joined the businesses started by the stall holders either because they were terminated from their previous jobs or their jobs were lowly paid or the income of the stall holders rose so much that they felt it better to support her business rather than doing their jobs. Thus Bhimthadi Jatra not only motivates and helps the entry of women in the productive activities but is playing an important role in converting the income generating activity as a chief source of income of the family. Where women are having a low economic status at home at large in India, the opportunity provided by Bhimthadi Jatra empowers them economically.To run and expand business the legalities related to business must be taken care of. Here also the Bhilthadi Jatra helps the women. In case of 37% women the organizers of the Bhimthadi Jatra made aware of license or registration of the business to the stall holders. In case of 30% women the organizers helped in getting license or registering their business.

66% stall holders found more than 50% increase in the total annual income of their families after participating in Bhimthadi Jatra. 8% women found an increase in the total annual income of their families between 30% to 50%. 22% women found increase below 30%

whereas 4% women did not find any increase in their total annual family income. Thus 96% women found increase in the total income of their families post Bhimthadi Jatra thereby contributing to Gross Domestic Product of the country. Increase in savings increases the possibility of more investment and expansion of business also. 18% women found increase in their total family savings more than 50%. 2% women found increase in their total family savings between 30% to 50%. 30% women found increase in the same below 30%. Thus total 50% women found increase in their savings. 50%. 58% women found increase in their total family investments more than 50%. 2% women found increase in their total family investments between 30 % to 50 percent. 8% women found increase in their total family investments below 30%. Thus total 68% women found increase in their total family investments. 43% women found increase in their assets like TV, fridge, bike, house, land. Though only 8% women registered purchase of land or shop/building of house after participation in Jatra the land/house/shop was purchased in the name of the woman, thus creating assets which might help them while taking more loan to expand business. To run the business successfully, certain managerial skills are required for those running the businesses. Bhimthadi Jatra is inculcating such skills among women. 86% women found increase in the knowledge and proficiency in trade. 78% women found increase in their ability to interact and motivate the customers to buy their products. 68% women found increase in the skill of making plans and policies for the business. 78% women found increase in their ability of getting the work done in spite of obstacles. 66% women found increase in their ability to take quick and correct decisions related to business.

Advertising the products and the techniques of advertising play an important role in marketing of the produce. 52% women started printing handbills to advertise their products after participating in Jatra. 22% women started mobile marketing post Bhimthadi Jatra. 16% women started email marketing. 16% women started their website for advertising their products.

30% women could find business connection like a shop/mall/wholesaler to do the business on higher scale. 50% women could get new orders after their participation in the Jatra.

Credibility of the businesswomen in the market helps them to expand their businesses. 24% women found their credibility incre-

ased in market in getting raw material or other semi finished goods on credit. 16% found their credibility increased in getting formal finance. 22% women found increase in the bargaining capacity in purchasing raw material and semi finished goods. Thus we can say that Bhimthadi Jatra is helping women in their businesses in many ways which is helping the growth process of India to be more inclusive.

7.   Conclusion

The growth of the economy should include all sections of the society. Women being nearly half portion of the Indian economy their contribution to growth of the economy must be equal to men. However due to patriarchal nature of Indian society; participation of women in the productive activities of the economy is low as compared to the men in India and with the global average of women. Though necessary steps should be taken for their inclusion, Bhimthadi Jatra as an exhibition for the products of mainly self help groups is creating an opportunity for the women to start, sustain and expand their businesses in various ways. This is definitely helping the growth of the economy to be more inclusive.

Footnotes

1. A self help group is a group of about 20 people from a homogeneous class, who come together for addressing their common problems. They are encouraged to make voluntary thrift on a regular basis. They use this pooled resource to make small interest bearing loans to their members.
2. Persons who are either 'working' (employed) or 'seeking or available for work' (unemployed) or both during a major part of the reference period, constitute the labour force.
3. The activity in which a person spent relatively longer time (major time criterion) during the reference period is considered as the usual principal activity of the person. To decide the usual principal activity of a person, he/she is first categorized as belonging to the labour force or not during the reference period on the basis of major time criterion.

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The Woman in Goddess : Radha and the Confluence of Divinity and Sexuality in the Making of Modern Romantic Selves

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Sociological analysis of sexuality has made remarkable progress in enabling the rethinking of history, politics, gender roles and the self. This paper attempts to deal with literature which have been conveniently dubbed 'erotic,' 'mythological' or even 'mystical' from time to time within the cultural context of Northern India to either 'justify,' 'make sense of,' or even further 'political or cultural agenda.' Particularly looking at the famous literature of Gita-Govinda, the paper maneuvers and examines associated texts on the complexity of the character of Radha as depicted in mythological legends and its role in the creation of imagination of 'popular sexuality.' The paper focusses particularly on the narratives of Radha in different texts in the backdrop of the time and space when it was written, published and consumed vis-à-vis the narratives accumulated through empirical research of

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working middle class women in Delhi NCR area. Radha has been a complex, confusing and powerful figure in the imagination of Indian popular culture. The historical emergence of Radha predates the incoming of mass-cultural consumption. Her appearance in the mythological sites as Krishna's lover dates long after Krishna surfaced as the 'duty-bound', 'righteous' hero within the Indian socio-cultural psyche. So then how did Radha become the image of Krishna, an enigma without whom Krishna could no longer be imagined. And what did this mean for the cultural understanding of sexuality and its expression (or repression) in the imagination of one's self and that of a lover.

[**Keywords :** Power, Sexuality, Intimacy, Mythology, Lover, Love]

1.   Introduction

The latter was a model wife, modest and devoted to Jayadeva, and very different from Radha, who is the typical heroine of classic Sanskrit poetry : proud of her heavy breasts and hips, consumed with longing, sulking, jealous, tempestuous and despairing. Krishna is the eternal male : urgent and charming and uncommitted. Radha submits to his entreaties, but feels abandoned when Krishna returns to his other women (Holcombe, 2008 : 2)

writes Holcombe in his translation of Jayadeva's poems on Krishna and the cowherdess Radha, in 'Gita Govinda by Jayadeva.' In the above passage, he is distinguishing between Jayadeva's wife whom he calls a 'model wife' from Radha who is 'Krishna's lover' (Pauwels, 2008). Distinguishing Radha from another 'model wife' Sita, is Pauwels who writes :

If Sita is Rama's wife, Radha is Krishna's lover. If Sita is chastity incarnate, Radha is sensuality incarnate. […] If the mutual love for Ram and Sita is an example of happy monogamy, Radha's relationship with Krishna is famously fraught with the issue of his unfaithfulness and her jealousy of his other lovers and wives. If Sita is a queen, aware of her social responsibilities, Radha is exclusively focussed on her romantic relationship with her lover. Thus, we have two opposite role models. Hindu women then have to navigate between ideals from both ends of the moral universe: the loyal, chaste wife and the adulterous lover (Pauwels, 2008 : 13).

Both the above passages elucidate the range of values which differ in examining, understanding and positioning the two prominent mythological role models, i.e Sita and Radha in the lived

experiences of women and in their intimate interactions (sexual, emotional) with men.

Following the enquiry of this paper, the attempt is to shift the view of these mythological characters from their identity as only 'righteous women' to possible romantic heroines. This attempt follows Pauwels's (2008) comment on the influential capacities of these characters on impressing young Indian women. She writes "many of the heroines of those stories set illustrious examples for a women's duty (stri-dharma). Few women will actually quote the Dharmasastra with regard to why they act the way they do, but many will cite inspiration from mythological examples" (Pauwels, 2008 : 7). It is this mythological framework of reference that I borrow to attempt an analysis of romance as both these characters of Radha and Sita are recollected in memory alongside their 'divine' partners Krishna and Rama, and hardly ever in solitary. Their image as ideals is pervasive in all spheres.

Being an ideal woman encompasses the ideal mother, daughter, sister, wife and lover.

One might agree that the neo-liberal population has been familiarized with the notion of the 'ideal wife' in Sita and how she epitomizes 'devotion' in romancing Rama through the nationally televised Ramayana.

The aspect of devotion in the romance of Rama and Sita has revealed the peculiarity of romance within North-Indian heterosexual Hindu marriages alongside the notion of "gendered divinity" (pati-parmeshwar) where the man (husband) assumes a god-like position. The task of this paper is to deliberate upon the romance of couples outside of the Hindu conjugal alliance, and hence the focus of this paper will be on the lover. Through textual analysis of commentaries on Jayadev's Gita Govind by Holcombe (2008), Somsundaram and Raghavan (2019), Verma (1968), Das (1920), Pattnaik (2018), Paranjape (2018) this paper also tries to explore whether devotion coexists with erotic pleasure in a fulfilling romantic partnership, in India.

2. Legends of the Lover : Kinship in Tradition, Innovation and Romance

Radha-Krishna as we know is the epitome of the image of the lovers. According to Pauwels (2008), in the 17th century, the genre of

courtly poetry secularised the imagery of Radha Krishna and made the pair an archetype for ideal lovers. The appeal of their romance is greater as it is a product of 'forbidden love', where Radha is other than Krishna's wife. Meaning, other than Krishna's kin. The non-conjugality of this partnership allows scope for a more holistic enquiry and analysis of romance. The question which follows this, is what this aspect of 'non-conjugality' and/or extra- conjugality makes of romance? Is the nature of this romance any different here? Keeping in mind how conjugal relationships in India are equated with divine union, could its absence mean different things for couples outside of it? Pauwels's observation of conjugal relations (marriage) through Ramanand Sagar's innovation of a scene in the televised version of Ramayana clarifies on the importance of divinity in Indian Hindu marriages. Describing the scene, she writes :

> Satrughna then teasingly asks Rama where he got his love-education (prem ki siksa), given that gurus don't teach prem-sastra. Rama's answer is dead serious. He lectures about "primordial love" (pahle se hi nirdharit), saying that it cannot be forced by man (jo manusya ke banana se nahin banta). Rama insists that his love for Sita came about in the same way that nature (prakriti) teaches mothers to love children, brothers to love brothers, and the waves of the ocean to be attracted by the moon. Love for a spouse is preordained by God. […] (Pauwels 2004 : 180).

The fact that this scene was an innovation and not part of the original texts of Ramayana by either Valmiki or Tulsidas suggests that it was set up with a specific intention which conflates love, romance and marriage into each other. That love and romance much like marriage is also 'pre-ordained' and monogamous in practice, emphasizing the role of the Gods in the union of two people and thereby establishing it as a sacred sanctum. Along with many other purposes, conjugal unions then also serve to legitimize the romance shared between other than kin and pre-kin. I use the term pre-kin to refer to those members in some form of union who hold the potential and possibility of entering into kinship relation with one another; ritually and/or legally; while the term extra-conjugal is used to refer to relations established by people outside of marriages with partners other than their wife or husband.

Since the specific subject-matter of this paper attempts at an investigation of romance other than conjugal, I turn to the most

celebrated imagery of the romantic couple outside of their marriages in India, Radha-Krishna. The bonds that this couple represents revolve around the legends of kinship (or rather non-kinship) shared by the two.

One of the popular legends is that their relationship was outside of the marital union of their respective spouses. As Archer (2004 : 96) notes, "Radha, for this is the girl's name, is recognized as the loveliest of the cowgirls. She is the daughter of the cowherd Vrishabhanu and his wife, Kamalavati, and is married to Ayana, a brother of Yasoda". And as for Krishna, according to Bhagavata Purana was married to Rukmini, daughter of King Bhishmaka of Vidarbha. However, the dominant and popular opinion within the kinship relations in North India does not favour relations between two people who are married but not to each other. On the mortal plane, according to the reading of the cultural/religious texts, such a union is considered to be adulterous. As for Radha-Krishna's relation, Bose (2004 : 142) writes, '[…] for she is no more than a human heroine in an adulterous relationship (she is parakiya, married to another man) with a man half her age, who is socially related to her'. According to Bose, their love story is both at once, 'illicit and intense' (142).

For the purposes of clarity, it might help to briefly refer to the reading of Manu Smriti (1959), the Hindu Law book (8.356) and its instructions on the issue of adultery, 'he who addresses the wife of another man at a tirtha, outside the village, in a forest, or at the confluence of rivers, suffer (the punishment for) adulterous acts (samgrahana)', also 'to meet with other's wives in unreasonable (solitary) places, and at unreasonable hours, and to sit, speak, and amuse oneself with them, are the three gradations of adultery.' While the legal debates around adultery have seen shifts in the recent past, from being considered as criminal to this law being deemed as simply unconstitutional in 2018. This shift has ensured that adultery can no longer be penalized; however, under the Hindu Marriage Act (1955), it is still very much a legitimized ground for either of the party, man or woman to seek for separation or annulment.

As we can see, both Manu Smriti (1959) and the legal provisions for Hindu marriage recognizes relations by both man and woman outside of the sanctity of marriage as illegitimate and adulterous. Precisely because the institution of marriage is a sacralised union and

establishing relations outside of it breaches its sanctity and consequently challenges the moral landscape of the community.

In the popular debates as well, there exists an equal mystique around their relationship.

As Sengupta (2018 : 38) writes on this mysticism,'[…] the 'quest' for Radha concerns her growth from obscurity to inseparable union with Krishna over the centuries, despite the explicitly transgressive, adulterous and incestuous elements of her erotic attachments to Krishna.' Further, discussing the nature of Radha's relationship with Krishna and what it meant for Indian women, Varma (2009 : 59) states', […] the secretive, illicit and adulterous nature of her affair with 'Krishna provided a particularly apt framework for them to identify with.'

Paranjape (2018), tracing the shifts in Radha's imagery concludes that the drastic social changes which arrived with the dawn of modernity, began to situate Radha as representing 'illegitimate sexual desire,' and that she and her 'dalliance with Krishna proved an embarrassment to the agenda of social reform that the proponent of Hindu mythology espoused.'

Given the fact that Radha had been an issue of concern in Hindu mythology and what she symbolized, mentioning the nationalist project of situating Indian women within the gamut of values culturally considered of greater moral order would prove helpful and will be taken up in the course of this discussion.

3. Becoming a Lover : Questions of Legitimacy, Divinity and Adultery

In conjunction with the concept of romance and its possibilities within the Indian (Hindu) prototypes of love, the nationalist framework did a great deal in contributing to both Sita and Radha's image. As discussed above, Radha symbolized both 'illegitimacy' and 'sexuality'; qualities which resonated with the image of the Western woman. As Parameswaran (2002 : 834) writes on the nationalist argument on Indian morality that it was 'characterized by a distinctive morality which was absent in European culture.' This distinction rested upon the notions of 'chastity and fidelity' which became foundational to 'the nationalist rhetoric in colonial India' (834). The locus of this ideology was situated in Sita who held these values up in all kinds of narrative.

Following the cultural/religious and legal understanding of adultery along with the range of values associated with the romance of Radha and Krishna, it can be located within the purview of what in the physical plane is understood as an adulterous relationship.

However, there is more than one legend which surrounds and adds to the mysticism and dynamism of their relationship. Where in one of the legends, Radha appears merely as the lovely cow-girl in love with a boy from her neighbourhood, the other popular legend can be derived from Archer's (2004) biography of Radha as stated earlier. And this legend follows the kin relation they share of aunt and nephew. As interesting an inquiry this legend presents itself with, exploring it, I believe will require greater space than the line of question this paper intends to follow. And hence, I intend to follow and limit my inquiry of romance within the legend of their adultery and whether and how it's invoked in the popular cultural memory.

Aarti, 35, a bio-medical engineer in Gurugram's top multi-national corporation discussed a few of her past relations with me. Most intriguing however, is her current relationship with Ranjeev, where Aarti described a pattern where she believed she is a 'third party'. Ranjeev and Aarti met in University of Delhi and begun a whirlwind romance. Aarti commented, 'it was everything a young girl could expect from a love story. He was the generic college hero. Like Shahid Kapur in Kabir Singh, you know. But it was only after two months of our relationship where I found out that he was involved with another girl from his football sessions.' Aarti's voice, raised a little higher as she tried to mask her distress. She said :

> "it was humiliating for me. But my friends in college said that I must act cool, it's not like he is my husband! I mean what does that even mean? you know. I could not make out from his behavior of whether he even cared that his illicit relation with her bothered me".

At this point, Aarti apologized for using the term 'illicit.' She went on to ask me if technically it was in fact illicit. I obviously could not have responded to her feelings at the time. And she carried on about Ranjeev. Aarti had given Ranjeev over four chances, she said. These chances, she categorically mentioned were given out of her love and respect for him. But in all those four times, Ranjeev was involved successively with more than six women. 'But I have evolved', Aarti said to me. Now Ranjeev and I are better. Aarti said

she understood however that it was Ranjeev's charm and in effect 'it was who he was', so she had to reconcile with it if she wanted to continue the relationship. Aarti wrapped up with a laugh saying, 'you know after all, he is a guy… and I love him. Whenever he is with me, the matters are different. He focuses all his loving energy towards me. He sets up the perfect dates, vacations and has the best choice in shopping!' While narrating her story, Aarti acknowledges that she was always aware of the 'other woman' who probably got some time with him, but she asserted that she also knew that they were only temporary. And that made her feel special.

> "Guys will always have choices; you just have to wait it out. In the end, they come home, you know, I am Radha to his Krishna. And in today's day and age, when you have so many kinds of relationships to choose from, I don't need to conform to the basic standards of monogamous relationship".

I then asked Aarti if she would want to engage in relationship with someone else while being steady with Ranjeev. Aarti said :

> "I know a lot of my colleagues who are in such relationships, open relationships, they say. But I think what I have with Ranjeev is special in its own way. I know, I know he has flaws. But who doesn't? I know his flaws, and he knows mine. His past-times give me an upper-hand and I enjoy that power. This doesn't mean we don't love each other. And that gives me comfort and I am fully happy in it, so no. I do not think I am looking for anything other than Ranjeev now but who knows about the future?"

Here, the evolution Aarti notices in herself indicates a mix of acceptance of the divine charm of Ranjeev, her movement towards a more "modern self" and her claim to feminism rooted in the understanding of Krishna's personality and Radha's status in his life.

This aspect of divinity when attempted to understand surrounding the couple of Radha-Krishna has been subject to various interpretations and deliberations. The assertion of the nature of their relationship within the quotient of divinity acquires a different kind of legitimacy; which is endowed with heavy symbolic narratives. As Archer (2004) writes :

> Radha's sexual passion for Krishna symbolized the soul's intense longing and her willingness to commit adultery expressed the utter priority which must be accorded to love for

God. [...] In deserting their husbands and homes and wilfully committing adultery, Radha and the cowgirls were therefore illustrating a profound religious truth. [...] By worldly standards, they were committing the gravest of offences but they were doing it for Krishna who was God himself. They were therefore setting God above home and duty, they were leaving everything for the love of God and in surrendering their honour, were providing the most potent symbol of what devotion meant (63).

Here, the legitimacy of the lover is established by foregrounding the explanation of divinity which resonates with the narrative of 'devulgarizing the erotic' and enshrine the notion of devotion. However, one important line in the excerpt from Archer's (2004) book, not to be missed here is '[..] By worldly standards, they were committing the gravest of offences but they were doing it for Krishna who was God himself' (63), the 'gravest offence' here was adultery which by worldly standards was not acceptable.

In the human plane, the aspect of adultery is two-fold, meaning it could either be an act of passion alone i.e. lust, on the other hand it could also involve an elaborate process of romance between two people in love or in attraction. It is the latter of the two that I intend to explore below.

The notion of adultery being a taboo emerges from the assertion that as a society we value the principles of commitment, loyalty, devotion and honesty with one another. And while this holds true for all human relationships, the institution of marriage in India demands it fundamentally owing to its sacralised position. Having said that, it might surprise one to know the detailed chapters dedicated in Kamasutra (Burton, 1883 : V) titled 'about the wives of other people' offering advice and tricks for romancing and consequently establishing authority over the wives of other men. Further, ritually too, the text of Gita Govinda by Jayadeva (Holcombe, 2008) can be read from this position where the accounts of Krishna's dalliance with Radha could serve as an entry point to analyze romance within the extra-conjugal sphere of relationships in India.

4. Who is a Lover : The Problem of Radha and Mira in Questions of Kama and Bhakti

Discourses around Radha-Krishna vary, with some discouraging the romantic lens of viewing their relationship. They

instead suggest that their relation and dalliance must be viewed as an example of Divine-Human relation. As Somasundaram and Raghavan (2019 : 2), write on Gita Govinda, 'the religiously and the spiritually minded considered this work as the union of jeevatma (individual soul) and paramatma (soul of the cosmos) and overlook the physical aspects.' The literature on Radha-Krishna which emerged around the sixteenth-seventeenth century revolved around this twin image and focussed on 'devulgarizing' their relationship. One of the keys to this attempt was to glorify the 'divine' and downplay or disown the 'erotic.'

The framework for this project positioned Radha as a manifestation of Krishna's internal pleasure potency who was brought to life as and when Krishna wished to exhibit it. As Prabhupada (n.d.) writes, 'the object of Krsna's pleasure potency is Radharani, and He exhibits His potency or His energy as Radharani and then engages in loving affairs with her' (4). Elaborating further on the aspect of divinity in the romance of Radha Krishna, he adds, 'Radha and Krsna are one, and when Krsna desires to enjoy pleasure, He manifests himself as Radharani. The spiritual exchange of love between Radha and Krsna is the actual display of the internal pleasure potency of Krsna' (Prabupada, n.d. : 6). The central idea of this body of literature on Radha-Krishna is to establish their union on the divine plane so that their romance be set apart from the possibilities of mortal imagination. That the nature of love and romance shared between them is not to be expected in the material plane of the physical world. Pandey and Zide (1965) citing the works of the poet Rajjab, discuss the dichotomous themes which persist in the Radha-Krishna literature.

This dichotomy also reveals the differences in the notions of love stressing upon the fluidity of its expression. As the distinctive character of the Krsnaite poems from that of the saint poets on Radha-Krishna suggest; love and romance are not monolithic, in nature and in form.

Kritika, 29, CEO of a popular candy start-up in Ghitorni commented upon the relationship of Radha-Krishna :

> "I can't believe with all honesty that any woman today will identify herself with Radha. I mean look at her, in the living realities of people, such a woman would be called delusional with no self-respect. And really, there is no need to mimic

everything we hear about these women, Radha, Sita…they are not real people. They had only one thing to do; serve the man!"

However, the overarching theme of the texts that surround the Radha-Krishna union provide a host of possible dichotomies to interpret. And this theme can be delineated into two categories where, amongst the saint poets the focus is that of virah (separation) and amongst the Krsnaite poets it is of sanyog (union). Their widespread prevalence and circulation indicate the acceptance of both these kinds of narratives around love and romance. Further, adding on to the former notions is Rajjab (1963; Pandey and Zide 1965 : 66) who writes, 'prem, which is the basis of bhakti has no quality of kama'.

I would like to quote Kritika here again as she goes on to give her insights about Radha vis-à-vis her last relationship with Vibhur. Kritika and Vibhur began dating in 2019 a little before the lockdown and while during that time of their courtship, they were head over heels for each other, things took a turn during the period of lockdown. Kritika said :

> "during the lockdown, we developed a system, where post our work commitments we would skype with each other and dine together. However, only a few weeks had passed and we began to realize that we were drifting apart. He began dodging our dinner dates on Skype stating that due to 'work-from-home' culture, his working schedule had become erratic. But please, could we have not negotiated any other time. It was clear to me that he was no longer interested. But I was okay with it, I mean, no matter how great the guy is, I am not gonna wait around. Who is going to? He didn't, so why should I? I am not Radha who will sulk around in waiting. I have my needs just like him and I will go get mine. Show me a woman in her right mind who wouldn't".

Kritika's criticality of Radha comes from her commitment to modernity and feminist debates of claim over one's own personhood. There is no need to think of Radha as one of us, as her realities are dramatically consumed by the one man in her life. And so, we can see that as the Saint poets have tried to drown Radha and her complexities in a framework of the 'Divine-Human,' and thus making her untouchable, the modern women may have dismissed her altogether in an attempt to self-assert and emancipate themselves and thus muffling her voice and undermining her potential.

However, upon following the interpretations of Radha-Krishna's love story, it is observable that they unfold different kinds of Human-Divine romances. The literature developed by poets like Jayadeva and Vidyapati (Pandey and Zide, 1963) invoke the erotic union of their dalliance, for example, the latter's work depicts Radha as the typical 'nayika (heroine) who enjoys her love deeply and suffers the pain of separation in the same manner', while his Krishna 'does not rise above the typical hero of Indian literature who, in loving a woman, makes every attempt to satisfy her carnal desires' (61-62).

Here, an account of Moumeeta, 32, a graphic designer in an MNC located near Ajamgarh becomes relevant. In our discussions about intimate relationships, and the Radha-Krishna legend, I shared the above the interpretation with her, upon which she responded laughingly :

"where have you ever seen that? Tell me. I mean who talks about Radha-Krishna like that? We know Krishna is a philanderer and Radha is the girlfriend who is devoted to him. Now, I can slide a few of Raul's lapse of judgement in casual flirting but I wouldn't be okay if he has an affair, obviously".

When I enquired about their long-distance relationship where Raul works for an investment company in Mumbai while Moumeeta resides in New Delhi NCR, Moumeeta said :

"of course, when we are apart from each other, there is a lot of anxiety and worry surrounding him and us in general… but with time I think one gets adjusted to that distance and the many other things involved in life help us to cope with it, nothing like Radha though".

Here, Moumeeta's perception of distance does not automatically turn into a 'suffering' as she acknowledges the presence of other worldly duties and obligation she is surrounded with.

Similarly, Alankrita, 30, who is Moumeeta's colleague in the same office and has been in a long-term relationship with her boyfriend Kshitij, who is placed as a lawyer in a private firm in California says :

"initially I and Kshitij were apprehensive to live elsewhere without each other. Physical proximity was an integral and fundamental issue for us with which we were not ready to negotiate. To that end, we tried our best to find placements which could help us remain at least in the same city, however,

two months into his job here in Delhi, he got a very prestigious offer to further his law degree from a university in the US, it broke our hearts to part but obviously, I won't ever want his ambitions and aspirations to be hindered and the only logical next step was to deal with the separation so that he could pursue his dream without added anxiety. The first few months were the most challenging but gradually we figured it out. We developed a system and feel secured in that. The point is you are not the same even a month later as you were a month before. Kshitij and I have also evolved in our relationship and the time in which have been dating, helped us develop trust and confidence on each other. And the move only strengthened our bond".

Following the conversation further on the erotic image of Radha, both Moumeeta and Alankrita responded that while they were not aware of Radha being a symbol for any kind of sensuality or sexuality, in the context of long-distance relationship, they agreed that sexual longing is as challenging as emotional yearning. 'It makes it difficult, the thoughts of other people surrounding your partner can test your patience,' they said as they agreed with each other.

These conversations indicate that while Radha-Krishna in the popular imagery maybe a profound symbol of love, the idea of Radha as an erotic being in herself is not a common knowledge. The legend of Radha-Krishna can be seen reflecting only in some aspects of lived experiences of intimate relationships. The expectation of 'devoted monogamy' is no longer a male dominated privilege, and while most women have not put much effort to recognize Radha's patience in her longing for Krishna, they have agreed to negotiate with the promise of love by enduring a period of separation only in return for equal devotion and respect. In a twist of literary fate, the experiences and insights from these conversations resonate as much with the principle of 'non-erotic prem', as much as with the framework of 'erotic prem.'

The idea of a non-erotic prem can be found in the contribution of poets like Surdas and Jiva-Goswami who highlight the possibilities of a non-erotic 'prem' which is fueled with the passions of longing and separation rather than union. One example of such an interpretation is made possible through the examination of Mirabai's relationship with Krishna. And while the Bhakti tradition does discuss a form of union as is done in the Caitanya sect; it is important

to note that this discussion revolves around the union of the soul (atma) with the divine (paramatma).

Mirabai's accounts of her relationship with Krishna is non-physical and thus non-erotic. The Lord is absent from the physical and the material plane substituting the probable 'lover' with the 'devotee'. And transforming this 'love' to 'devotion'. To elaborate on this, I would like to cite one of Mirabai's poems :

> "I don't like your strange world, Rana
>
> A world where there are no holy men and
>
> All the people are trash
>
> I have given up ornaments and given up braiding
>
> my hair; and I have given up putting on Kajal.
>
> Mira's lord is Girdhar Nagar,
>
> I have found a perfect husband" (Pandey & Zide 1963 : 57).

What is noteworthy in the Mira-Krishna relation is that Mira considers Krishna to be her husband. And it is by this status that her involvement with Krishna can be said to take the form of devotion. While in the case of Radha, she regards Krishna as her lover; all the while acknowledging that he is the husband of another. But, as the writings in the Bhakti tradition will show, the latter is also an example of the human-Divine relationship where Radha is a mortal and Krishna is a God. The overwhelming emphasis on rejecting the romantic view of their relationship however raises pertinent questions viable for complexities in the understanding of romance.

The observation which follows the aforesaid textual accounts show that there have been concerted efforts to position Radha-Krishna's romance within the notions of the 'love for the divine'. This throws light on the probable assumption that considered erotic pleasure as 'vulgar,' 'scandalous', and/or 'sin'. To this, Scott's (1988, n.p) writing explains, '[…] here passionate love became sacralised as an expression of bhakti: the loving- woman's longing became devotion and love-making became worship…' According to him, the Radha-Krishna legend is '[…] an invocation and an elaboration of the here-and-now of passionate love, an attempt to capture the exciting, fleeting moments of the senses and the baffling ways in which loves' pleasures and pains are felt […]' (1988, n.p).

However, the conversations I had with the women for the benefit of this paper, complicated these frameworks. While on one

hand there is a subtle hint of admiration for Radha or Radha-like conduct by some, on the other, there was little to no information of her erotic imagery as opposed to the awareness around Krishna's legends of being a philanderer, to which one can note a lukewarm acceptance at best. However, the complications to these textual narratives are presented in the form of skepticism in acknowledging Radha as a symbol of passion and sexuality. In fact, as some of the conversations narrated above have shown, it is Krishna's audacity that captures the young female imagination as a symbol of historical emotional oppressor, whose inevitability lies in their subversion of his role by channeling their inner Krishna.

5. Understanding the Lover : Radha in Separation and in Union with Krishna

Bose (2004) engages with the character of Radha along the lines of separation and union to understand her operative value as a 'role model' for Indian women. Kumar (2003) referring to Sisir Kumar Das's commentary on Gita Govinda and Jayadeva writes that Jayadeva's greatest achievement has been in creating and positioning Radha as a central figure in Indian love poetry insofar as setting her eternally into 'the symbol' of a 'lover.'

Bose's (2018) analysis contributes to the efforts of this paper in understanding romance in India, extensively. Following this theme of separation and union, she writes, 'Jayadeva's Radha is tormented by viraha, or love-in-separation. Her world-forsaking urge to be with him compels her to follow him as an abhisarika (a woman who goes to meet her lover, ignoring social censure) […]' (4).

The interesting aspect that can be noted here recurring throughout the discussion is the duality of separation and union as an integral feature of romance between the partners; here, Radha-Krishna. As Pattnaik (2018 : 8) writes, 'it was always described as a turbulent shift between separation and union, jealousy and surrender.' This separation is fueled by the situations and circumstances which present themselves as hurdles which need to be overcome to finally be able to unite with one's lover.

To be able to persist through these situations, the mythology of Radha-Krishna offers what may be called a uniquely Indian resolve for the lovers. This resolve appears as 'devotion', towards the other partner. As previous discussion shows, the imagery of Radha-

Krishna in association with the notions of adultery and/or extra-marital affair were quite unsettling for many.

Tracing the shift in the symbolic representation and association of this particular couple sheds light on the possibilities of what constitutes Indian romance and how it has come to constitute it as we know of it, today. Paranjape (2018), discussing this shift, attributes it to the changes in the ideas and notions around sexuality and erotica. In the beginning, Radha-Krishna's relationship 'embodied a sexpositive mystical cult in which sexual fulfilment was very much a part of self-realization' (7). But the association of their imagery with the idioms of adultery and extramarital relations were unsettling for many devotees and spiritual leaders. In this light, the Bhakti revolution urged the 'serious practitioners' of spirituality to abstain from sexual engagement and its consequent gratification. It was a successful project which placed them in dichotomous relation; where spirituality on one hand was a virtue to be practiced in isolation from sexual pleasures which was deemed as a vice.

According to Paranjape (2018) and as the body of Bhakti literature shows, the couple of Radha-Krishna represented love which was simultaneously both, 'erotic and devotional'. As he refers to Seigel (2009) who writes on the symbolism of Radha-Krishna in Gita Govinda :

> the Gita Govinda is not so much an allegorical work as an allegorically interpreted work… the Gita Govinda is literally about carnal love but it is also literally devotional. There was no contradiction… The need to read the poem allegorically, to interpret the sexuality as a mere analogy for the spiritual relationship, wholly differentiated from it, arises only when celibacy is idealized, when sexuality becomes a transgression against religious ideals (6).

Pattnaik (2018 : 5) explaining on the matter of interpretation of Gita Govinda's allegorical appeal, writes, 'As one moves from verse to verse, one is transported from the physical to the spiritual realm. The erotic longing becomes the cry of the soul for union with the divine.'

Such interpretations became necessary following the movement of Indian spirituality post colonization which took a turn towards celibacy (Pattnaik, 2018). The feeling of cultural inferiority from the British gave rise to the project of 'devulgarising' and 'sanitizing the embodiment of sexuality' (Gokhale and Lal, 5). Prior to Jayadeva's

Gita Govinda, Pattnaik (2018) notes that the issue of erotica and love revolved around the god of lust, Kama and his consort, the goddess of love, Rati. However, with the emergence of monastic orders like Buddhism and Jainism, Kama was demonized and equated with Mara. The idea was that those seeking spiritual enlightenment must conquer over Kama to attain it. 'All things sensual, came to be seen as fetters that blocked ones' spiritual growth' (Pattnaik, 2018 : 6). But the Gita Govinda was revolutionary in changing that.

Gita Govinda made the imagination of romance with the practice of devotion possible. Romancing with Krishna became a form of devoting oneself to him, as the song captured the heart of both the erotica and the divine in the romantic framework of Radha-Krishna. As Pattnaik (2018), writes on Jayadeva, 'through his song he made sensuality and romantic emotion the vehicle of the highest level of spirituality. His Krishna was a reformed Kama. His Radha was a reformed Rati. He turned kama (lust) into prema (romance)' (6).

Radha's love and romance were in itself a form of devotion to her lover who was also her god. This understanding can be seen in the heart of many young lovers today.

Shalini, 28, a post-graduate medical student who has been in relationship with Saroj for over a year now, says :

"definitely it's a challenge to begin a relationship from being apart, especially in the initial times, when you are just starting out. I and Saroj are very exclusive. He is just the kind of man I had been waiting for all my life. Once I complete the degree, we are going to get married. We are really serious about each other".

When I asked how they manage long distance relationship, as Saroj's practice is in Madhya Pradesh, Shalini replied :

"if you truly want to be with someone, you will have faith. I mean, we no longer are in the ages where one will sacrifice more than the other but that does not mean you do not want a relationship. If you are committed, what or who else could occupy your heart. If you are skeptical about the person, even close proximity cannot save your relationship. It's all about faith, trust and commitment".

Similarly, Adrita, 30, who is a content creator located in Chattarpur area, New Delhi, and has been in a four-year long relationship with Rajdeep says :

"no relationship is easy. Mine particularly tested us because Rajdeep and I were not stable financially and were not clear on a lot of things about our future. But we were sure of each other, we did hit a few bumps on the way with my ex especially who kept reappearing now and then. We were determined still and Rajdeep really handled these issues maturely. No matter what time you live in, relationships need submission and dedication of each partner towards the other".

When I asked her what did she mean by 'time' here, she replied :

"you know, like our parents, they met and married at a different time. The notions around love and marriage may have been different, obviously we have more choice now. The ability to fall in love and exercise one's freedom wasn't an easy deal. My aunt had a difficult time reconciling with the fact that she had to marry as per her older brother's choice. She wasn't allowed to just follow her heart. While this may have changed quite a lot today, the fundamentals of a successful relationship hasn't much changed, in my opinion. And those fundamentals are rooted in the ideas of true companionship; patience, devotion and respect. But of course, to each his own. What works for me and Rajdeep might not work for my brother and his girlfriend."

Adrita's account touches upon several points of conflict in the post-modern philosophy of love. While there is an acknowledgement of a degree of emotional emancipation across generational movement, there is also an acceptance of skepticism in the standardization of ethics in intimate partnerships. It can be noted here, that while with modernity and emergence of a female educated workforce, the paradigm on emotional labor might have moved a needle, notions of devotion and dedication are not lost upon this generation of lovers as values of the past. In fact, with the complicated settings in which these romantic subjectivities are located today, one might argue these very values provide some structure and a sense of safety to endure the multiple challenges they face.

6. Possibilities of a Lover : Debates around Radha's Symbolism

It is the ideas of 'divinity and devotion' associated with Radha-Krishna's otherwise 'scandalous' (Pattnaik, 2010) image

which much like in the conjugal relations of Ram and Sita seem to reappear in their romance as well. So far, the notions of the divine and devotion seem to couple with the erotic image of Radha and Krishna. As Pauwels (2008) notes, the significance of these images go far in their capacity to inform, influence and guide human behaviour and relationships. Following this then, what kind of love and romance does this particular couple cast an image of?

Acknowledging Radha's emergence in both Krishna's life and in the popular and spiritual Indian literature, Sharma (2018) writes :

> "unlike Sita, she is not a consort, a crowned queen seated on a throne by her husband. In many mythological stories, she is said to be older than Krishna, and a married woman. Her relationship with Krishna is fraught with danger and intrigue. […] Radha always meets Krishna in the forest or in some secret grove hidden from the prying eyes of her family and the people of the village" (8).

Here, one can gather an idea about the clandestine nature of their relationship and how it challenged the social codes set aside on love and romance for men and women differently. The intensity of their passion is met with resistance as is evident in their relentless persuasion for each other even and beyond the times of 'danger and fear.' As Sharma (2018) notes an account from a popular Bengali tale and narrates it :

> "Radha walks quietly through the dark, lonely forest but she is not afraid as she knows Krishna is waiting for her in the grove of trees. Soon they will be together in ecstasy. […] Her mother-in-law, Jatila, is there too, glaring at her with angry eyes. 'Where are you going, Radha, at this late hour? Who are you going to meet in the forest?" (8).

As the account follows, Radha is seen to lie to her mother-in-law and the group of women as she rushes off into the forest to meet Krishna where upon meeting him, trembling with 'fear' she says :

> "I have lied to the women of my family. I told them I was going to pray to Goddess Katyayani in the forest. They will follow me here and soon find out that I lied" (Sharma, 2018). To this, Krishna assures her that nothing will happen by transforming into the Goddess of Katyayani himself as the women folk

approach them. On seeing that Radha had in fact spoken the truth, they leave her alone, "in the forest to be with her beloved for the rest of the night" (8).

Some of the key highlights of their romance is found in the nature of its performance and its classification as put forward by Keshav Das (1920) who identifies that shringara (love) is of two distinct types i.e. samyoga and viyoga. The former refers to 'love-in- union,' while the latter refers to 'love-in-separation'. In the literature available on Radha-Krishna, one will find both. In her love for Krishna, Radha is seen to take up the various roles of the 'nayika', as demonstrated by Das (1920) in his treatise on erotica, Rasikapriya. Along with the six others categories, she is also, the 'Utkantitha' (one who yearns for her lover) and the 'Vasaksajja' (one who waits in readiness with the bed made for the return of her lover) (Das, 1920 : 97).

A reading of the Gita Govinda reveals this theme as well, underlying both the depiction and the imagination of their romance. As Varma (2018) notes :

> "the story of Gita Govinda is both simple and complex. It is simple because the essential plot is structured, as in the rasa leela of the Bhagavata, on the unitary theme of separation (vipralambhasingara) and union (sambhogsringara) of love. The theme is complex because of the qualitatively new emotions it unleashes. The joy of union with Krishna and the unbearable pangs of separation from him […]" (24).

Following this theme portrays Krishna in similar light as Radha and the other Gopis. Meaning, this theme makes the 'humanization' of Krishna possible where he 'is no longer the detached lover' but instead, 'suffers and agonizes like Radha' (Varma 2009 : 24).

Here, the love-in-separation takes the form of devotion, while the love-in-union takes the form of erotic pleasure. The Radha-Krishna mythology engages with both these forms of loving and hence suggest the possible intertwining of both.

7. Conclusion

This paper attempts a discussion of India's one of the most celebrated and legendary romantic icons; Radha-Krishna. Thorough and elaborative discussion of their influence across classical and popular art forms, debates and contentions around the legends

surrounding them have helped to examine and explore the aspect of the lover.

The notion of lover in India brings with it many questions, of fidelity, chastity, devotion etc. keeping in mind the archetypical role of lover as illustrated by Radha and Krishna, we see that their several interpretations have both clarified and provided manifold explanations for the same. Following the inquiry of the paper, in depth analysis of the literature on Radha-Krishna from across various point of view (Bhakti, post-colonial literature, classical and lived narratives) bring out both points of confluence as well as departure. While some scholars and poets have stressed on the adulterous aspect of Radha and Krishna's alliance, some have forwarded a more de-sexualised version of the legend where the efforts had been to establish their relationship as the union of the soul and the divine.

Hence the notion of the lover is multi-faceted as it stands to get socially sanctified through marriage. Similarly, extra-marital affairs have been attempted to be studied within the contours of 'union with the divine' theme, where Radha's adultery was explained as an expression of devotion.

This analysis follows the various forms of representation of the romantic couple of Radha-Krishna; to closely elucidate the symbolic value associated with the couple. One of the understandings which surfaces in this analysis vis-a- vis the social acceptance of lovers and notions surrounding the location of the adulterer/adulteress is that socially amongst human relations, these come as ambiguous positions. Positions which do not receive too much respect and are to be pursued (if at all) within the limitations set by the family, which is to say the society. Questions of religion, class, caste, modesty are to be taken into consideration (Parameswaran 2002). However symboli- cally, Radha and Krishna have been depicted as star-crossed lovers and have not only been acknowledged but also accepted in the cultural arena of Indian classical and popular expressions of art. Their longing for each other, seduction of one another, playful teasing, have all been used and developed to create cultural forms of various kinds in a bid to feel closer to God. Radha's love and romance were in itself a form of devotion to her lover who was also her god.

In congruence with the idea of a conjugal partnership, certain findings in exploring Radha must be accounted for in this conclusion. One can see that, within the conjugal union, the notion of 'pati- parmeshwar', equates the husband with God and love for ones'

husband is coupled with the character of devotion which outlines the conjugal behaviour. It is this idea which can be seen as being transported into the understanding of love and devotion even amongst a couple outside of conjugal boundaries.

So as the narratives show, the acceptance of the lover in the arena of performance is greater as it is carefully woven within a divine narrative providing it social legitimacy. We see then, that as complex as the textual narrative around Radha is, so is the understanding of love and romance in practice and performativity. Roles and behavior are perceived and lived complicatedly, negotiations around expectations of romance show an evolutionary pattern which can be explained through Srivastava's (2009) concept of 'retractable modernity'. Srivastava's (2009) retractable modernity refers to a particular pattern of consumerism which addresses the anxieties of capitalist consumption's relationship with 'Indianness'. Capitalism in India took solid roots in the 90's through mass production of material, ideas and images. It opened the gates to modern era of lifestyle where 'individual ideas of personhood' emerged as a national crisis to 'cultural morality'. The research on pop cultural production of mythologies, cinemas and romantic literature (Bose, 2008; Pauwels, 2008; Archer, 2004; Narayan, 2004; Parameswaran, 2002) of the early nineties reveal these anxieties and strategized resistance to these 'wild west' idioms of individuality and sexuality.

The narratives in this paper show an emergence of reflexive consciousness of one's moral and cultural context vis-à-vis the capitalist settings of spaces, where the opportunities for a settled livelihood is not passed over for stability in partnership and further describes a degree of emotional emancipation where the limitations and abilities of the partners are renegotiated with an acknowledge-ment of time, history and ones' own self. The female working middle-class youth have responded to the anxieties of aspirations, ambitions and the need to strike it out on their own by recalling values of morality from the frameworks being pushed in resistance to western module of intimacy.

However, the notable observation here which departs from the simple arguments of text over practice, self and individuality, oppression or subjugation is the very essence in the how of these recollections. These are values and notions which are no longer simply recalled to keep discipline in roles but also in expectations, performance and experience. Further, it is also noteworthy that these

standards are valued from both partners, not just the women. Speaking of standards, these accounts provide a nuanced under-standing of how 'standards' in a relationship are viewed. There is a univocal opinion in viewing oneself as a dynamic person meaning that standards are not simply viewed as a static manual for choosing a partner or maintaining a relationship. Experientially, they have concluded that standards change; the essential point is to be willing to work with it. This idea is radically different from what the moral texts on women's role in India pursue and indicates a movement towards a more nuanced feminist position where accountability of role-performance, self-awareness and sexuality are not auto-matically assumed from one partner but instead efforts are engaged in understanding one's own self in relation to the partner.

This brings together the understanding of Radha as a romantic mythological heroine, where through these accounts, one can note how there is a careful selection of her characteristics which resonate with women today. The most striking revelation however was the degree to which they relate with Krishna's image as well. So, while they have picked and chosen from Radha, they have also negotiated with the image of Krishna. While the center of Radha's sexuality was demurred within the framework of devotion, Krishna's freedom to engage with his own sexuality in his own terms spoke to the educated, empowered women who have let both these images cumulatively set their specific definitions of what being a lover is.

From this, one can gather that change in symbolic representation does not affect the overall structure which guides the lovers in India, in marriage and/or outside of it and that it is two-fold.

Following the textual analysis depicts that, in the face of one's lover, one sees God. In a heterosexual relationship, it is the male partner who assumes this face of God. Secondly, while both the partners are devoted to each other in their love, it is the female partner whose role as a devotee is more pronounced. Thus, we see that following this model, ascertains a typical nature of relationship where one is the God and the other is a devotee. And that this devotion becomes a fundamental character in defining the romance of a couple.

However, the lived experiences of intimate relationship operates this very model not without awareness of their situatedness vis-à-vis their individuality, aspirations and ambitions. The need to love and be loved is not clouded by simple emotional dependency rather accepted with emotional emancipation where romantic roles

and behaviour are met with critical acknowledgement and appreciation of morality and freedom of personhood.

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Rumours and Lies : Science and Beliefs among the Flight of Claims in Homeopathy and Allopathy

Apoorva Sinha*

In this sociological study of rumours, it is important to look into the area of plentiful knowledge, where truth and facts are expected to be the foundation. The presence or absence of rumours depends on the possibility of the existence of lies in this realm. Science and research have led to the emergence of plenty of knowledge and verifiable facts. Where there is ample of verified or researched information or knowledge, the possibility of rumours seems unimaginable, though falsifiability is the essential character of science. But it becomes difficult to find out true information and false information since this area of knowledge is abundant and considered to be correct or exact. To analyze rumours and its existence in the area of plentiful knowledge, we have looked into the area of science by taking the cases studies, based on secondary data, of Homeopathic and Allopathic medicines, as

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there have been several works and research concerning the reliability and scientificity of the same.

[**Keywords :** Rumours, Lies, Science, Beliefs, Culture, Homeopathy, Allopathy]

1. Introduction

Where the techniques used in finding any data, information or theory gives the utmost importance to proof, precision, verifiability and reliability, there the realm of knowledge is considered to be constituted of correct information and facts, and it is supposed to be closer to the truth. This vast area of well-researched knowledge is constituted by plenty of information, data, theories and discoveries. This area of knowledge is referred to in this study as the area of plentiful knowledge. It is trusted to be constituted of the correct, logical, well-researched, factual and hence flawless knowledge.

Trust can be based on many factors such as the reputation of a person, the appearance of a person, family, schooling, education, qualification or any authoritative figure. The questions that arise are how is this trust formulated and how information travel or is received by the people based on this trust. Usually, the information passed on orally is considered to be more distorted than the written or documented work. It has several reasons including memorization, passing it on to the audience in that form, and no chance of proofreading, as mentioned in detail by R. C. Culley (1963). But even with all the supposedly strong evidence and proofs, and arrival to the realm of Reason, we cannot be sure that the trust in science or documentation of something is unquestionable or undisputed, as it is Reason that enables us to question the validity of anything and everything. Not only Reason but reasoning also has an essential part to play in deciding what to be sure of and what not to be. In everyday lives, people tend to simultaneously work with Reason and reasoning, which can also depend upon sources they have trust in or the way they get socially conditioned.

Science and research have led to the emergence of plenty of knowledge and verifiable facts. Where there is ample verified or researched information or knowledge, the possibility of rumours seems unimaginable, though falsifiability is the essential character of science. Nevertheless, it becomes difficult to find true information and false information since this area of knowledge is very abundant and considered to be correct or exact.

2.   Lies : Of Science and/or of Culture

Since rumours can pass off as truth or unverifiable traveller, it can be seen that they can be developed in many domains, and can be discernible as well as imperceptible. It depends on the domains which are prone to concoction and lies. According to Bailey (2019), people exercise their work and social life through basic lies. Barnes writes that the areas in which lies are found are science (natural and social sciences), cultures, warfare, politics, advertising, bureaucracies, history and tradition (Barnes, 1994). In the context of knowledge, this paper is aimed to look at the existence and role of lies and their relation with rumours.

Barnes (1994) defines lies with respect to the intentions of a person. He defines lies as false statements made by someone with the intention to deceive (Barnes, 1994).

> "Truthfulness and deception, on the other hand, belong to the moral domain of intention. If we intend to deceive, we are acting untruthfully; if our untruthful act consists of making a statement intended to mislead, we are lying" (Barnes, 1994 : 12).

He writes that it depends on the intention of the liar, who could have merely misunderstood the state of the world (Barnes, 1994). Barnes (1994) writes :

> ".. allows for a statement to be perceived incorrectly as a lie by those who hear or read it, when in fact its originator had no intention to deceive... errors and misunderstandings do not necessarily constitute lies, provided they arise in good faith, even though in the speech of young children, and in some popular usages, they are sometimes labelled as lies" (11).

According to Barnes' (1994) definition, lies can consist of either true or false statements or statements that are partly true and partly false. Lying, hinged on people's molar intentions, is an embedded and internal part of their lives and the societies they live in. According to Barnes (1994), a lie is formed with the knowledge of a person and her/his intention to deceive, and a statement made without the intention does not count as a lie. Here, a statement told 'with the knowledge' of a person, or intentionally, to mislead someone is defined as a lie. Barnes' definition of a lie ignores the falsity or truth of the statement; he writes that a lie is not defined merely as the "opposite of telling the truth", but they can be either

true or false statements, or partly true and partly false (Barnes, 1994). He argues that the person delivering a statement could be mistaken about the state of the world or of her/his own mind, and explains this by giving the example of early chemists and scientists including Ptolemy who believed the idea of the sun revolving around the earth as true and expected people to believe that, which thereby did not make his ideas a pack of lies (Barnes, 1994). He writes, "errors and misunderstandings do not necessarily constitute lies, provided they arise in good faith, even though in the speech of young children, and in some popular usages, they are sometimes labelled as lies" (Barnes, 1994 : 11). His work draws our attention to many other definitions of lies given by various authors and the categories that exist on the basis of those definitions, such as social lies, benevolent lies, malicious lies, harmless and not-so-harmless lies (Barnes, 1994).

Many contexts and areas in which people lie or tend to lie are discussed in his work. The difference between politics and other domains is that in the political domain, a liar is not required to have a good memory and the lies do not need to be consistent (Barnes 1994). "In an election, each party accuses all others of trying to deceive the gullible electorate. The elector, suffering from a surfeit of propaganda from all sides, cannot distinguish between sincere promises and seductive lies" (Barnes, 1994 : 31). In the other domains, he draws our attention to the importance of good memory to deceive, since the liar should be consistent with her/his lies. He goes on to write, "In many other domains where deceit is attempted, an appearance of consistency is called for; liars should therefore have good memories, so that they avoid contradicting themselves and exposing their deceits" (Barnes, 1994 : 31). Because of the consistency in the lies or the verification of incorrect information as correct information, many times, the deception remains unseen while the people of society get deceived. So, a rumour remains a rumour or might become a fact for society or even a narrative at some point in time, depending on trusted and credible sources.

In many cultures, particular types of lies are institutionalized as they are normalized and not looked down upon. Barnes explains that there can be different values placed on lies with regards to the context and culture, by giving examples of Lebanon, Greece, Russia, France, India, industrialized community, non-industrialized communities and so on (Barnes, 1994).

"In Greece, the practice of eavesdropping, gossiping about neighbours, inventing scurrilous explanations of events, lying to destroy another's reputation were common occurrences and were accepted as legitimate strategies to follow when defending personal secrets and uncovering those of other…but the victims of these ploys could appeal to the commonly accepted norms to condemn the deceit practised on them" (Barnes, 1994 : 72).

Many of these lies become rumours which can get converted into beliefs. Rumours also spread when there is a desire to prove the belief as real and true to oneself. It is difficult to accept a message or information which contradicts one's set beliefs or ideology and much easier and smoother to accept whatever coincides or overlaps with those beliefs. The perception of people is important to focus on. The question of why a story or information can become a narrative, regardless of being false or true, should be addressed.

Barnes (1994) explains that though we expect science to be the last place where lies and deceit could be found, the historians of science reveal that this is not the case. Weinstein (1979, quoted in Barnes, 1994) remarks that science is an institution where the value of always being in pursuit of truth dominates, unlike the other domains which consist of endemic lying.

In the following sections, it can be seen that there can be many arguments, claims and debates in the area of science and technology, which is otherwise expected to have clear-cut outcomes without any lies or obscurity. Science is an area, where there is a constant verification of the claims by the colleagues (Merton, 1984, quoted in Barnes, 1994), and hence it is believed to be a trustworthy area which is abundant with correct information. But Barnes (1994) goes on to give the example of Ptolemy (mentioned before) who "appropriated as his own data collected by someone else; he fudged his data as well to make them appear more supportive of his thesis that the sun moved round the earth and the planets travelled in epicycles" (55).

Newton and Mendel amended their data to gain more support for their theories (Barnes, 1994). Barnes (1994) writes :

"Presenting data modified in this way as if they were the true outcome of observations might be deceitful, but is not necessarily so. The laity may be unable to see what the data mean until they are cleansed of the likely effects of measurement and other kinds of error" (55).

Babbage (1830) considers the process of 'trimming' not as harmful as 'cooking' the data (quoted in Barnes, 1994), for example, the incident which happened with Dr Beringer, where his academic opponents "manufactured spurious fossils to mislead him, was unmistakably deceitful and malicious" (Barnes, 1994 : 55).

There are cases of manipulation of data as well as plagiarism which even go unnoticed many times over a long period of time.

"Four of the cases listed by Broad and Wade seem to have been instances of plagiarism, which is akin to lying, and though not all the others involved lying, they were all, if widely held suspicions are in fact justified, cases of deceit" (Barnes, 1994 : 56).

But there is a constant need of the natural sciences to be replicable and verifiable. It is the nature of natural science to deal with everything with precision and exactness. This is where it differs from the social sciences, as in the latter's case, it is very difficult to be replicable, precise, exact and verifiable all the time. Barnes (1994) writes that this is the reason that makes it a little easier to find out and claim falsity in natural sciences, whereas it is difficult to claim the same in the social sciences. So, what is it that leads to the presence of lies in natural sciences? Barnes (1994) writes, "The commitment of natural scientists to dominant paradigms, the emphasis on the priority of discovery, and the importance of early publication for professional advancement combine to provide incentives for deceit as well as for scientific progress" (57).

While natural science claims its superiority over the other disciplines and approaches to exactness and finding facts and truth, it is imperative to see whether this domain is in actuality only concerned with the exact knowledge, or if there is a possibility of lies and deceit to be present somewhere or the other, for various interests of the scientists or the scientific community, as suggested by Barnes (1994).

In this study of rumours, it is important to look into the area of plentiful knowledge, where truth and facts are expected to be the foundation. The presence or absence of rumours depends on the possibility of the existence of lies in this realm. Lies and deception are major aspects of rumours. Science and research have led to the emergence of plenty of knowledge and verifiable facts. Where there is ample of verified or researched information or knowledge, the possibility of rumours seems unimaginable, though falsifiability is the essential character of science. But it becomes difficult to find out

true information and false information since this area of knowledge is abundant and considered to be correct or exact. To analyse rumours and its existence in the area of plentiful knowledge, we will look into the area of science by taking the cases of Homeopathic and Allopathic medicines, as there have been several works and researches concerning reliability and scientificity of the same. There exists plenty of discussions, debates, claims and counter-claims in journals, books, newspapers, articles, audio-visual texts and so on. The existence of plentiful knowledge can be known from the plethora of works and researches done in these areas.

3.   Truth or Dare : Homoeopathic and Allopathic Medicines

Another discourse that is very popular in the realm of science is about allopathy and alternative medicines like homoeopathy. Allopathic medicine is considered as evidence-based modern medicine. Allopathy "roughly refers to treating a symptom with its opposite" (Iftikhar, 2019) and is focused on treating the symptoms of a disease. It follows the procedure of having a hypothesis, followed by experimentation and then basing the conclusion on the result. Because it follows the methodology that is more popular and legitimate in the field of science, it is considered as more scientific and thus reliable in the realm of modern science. These medicines are considered to be very effective in the cases of emergency.

On the other hand, homoeopathy means treating "like with like" (Iftikhar, 2019), where minute quantities of those drugs are prescribed which can create symptoms similar to the disease itself. Vigano et al. (2015) discuss that medicines are personalized according to the patient as they take the premise that "...it is a 'holistic' medicine, programmatically aimed at the whole person in its entirety and individuality" (7) while trying to study the scientific basis of homoeopathy.

"The homeopathy treatment mode is a way of substances that identifies the symptoms of a disease and have a curative effect on a sick person, when the medicine is given in very dilute quantities" (More, 2016). These medicines are considered to be non-toxic, which improves the immunity of the body while gradually curing the root cause of a disease (More, 2016).

The therapy of homoeopathy was founded in the 18th century by Samuel Hahnemann (Vigano, 2015). The popularity of homoeopathy

increased in the 19th century, as it was proven to be very useful in curing people during the outbreaks of the epidemics (Vigano, 2015). In the succeeding centuries, this field of medicine has been surrounded by debates and controversies due to the contentions based on its scientific basis (Vigano, 2015). "Homeopathy is a clinical-therapeutic method which aims to restore the level of health of some organism (human, vegetable or animal)" (Vigano et al., 2015 : 8).

The principles of homoeopathy treatment were first laid down by its founder Samuel Hahnemann in very important work 'Organon'. These are the principles of experimentation or proving, similarity or 'law of similars' and the administration of minimal doses (Hahnemann, 1842, quoted in Vigano et al., 2015).

> "The homeopathic doctor's objective during a clinical examination is to find a remedy whose own pathogenesis includes the symptoms presented by the patient during his illness. To reach this objective the doctor uses two instruments: the Materia Medica and the Repertory. The first is a collection of signs and symptoms (physical, psychological and sensory) caused by administration of a given substance in a high percentage of healthy subjects during proving, while the second is in practice a list of symptoms and the homeopathic remedies associated with them" (Vigano et al., 2015 : 9).

Allopathy and homoeopathy are shrouded with the contro-versies around which of the strands is the real medicine or better medicine. There have been debates around whether homoeopathy is really science or just a myth or bluff. Many claims have been made about homoeopathy being unscientific and dangerous, just working on the 'placebo effect'. Placebo effect means that the beliefs of the people that the medicine of treatment would treat and cure them can itself lead to the healing process. While at Panjab University in Chandigarh, Ramakrishnan, the President of the Royal Society, and a Nobel prize winner in Chemistry, said : "No one in chemistry believes in homoeopathy. It works because of placebo effect" (Sharma, 2016).

Though the controversy around homoeopathy is "mainly because of its use of highly diluted medicines, but there is growing evidence that is not a mere placebo" (Vigano, 2015 : 7).

Scientists and scholars who vouch for allopathy claim emphatically that it is superior to all types of "alternative" or traditional medicines. They openly state that homoeopathy being

medicine is a myth. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) assessed the effectiveness of homoeopathic medicines and concluded :

> "Based on the assessment of the evidence of effectiveness of homeopathy, NHMRC concludes that there are no health conditions for which there is reliable evidence that homeopathy is effective. Homeopathy should not be used to treat health conditions that are chronic, serious, or could become serious. People who choose homeopathy may put their health at risk if they reject or delay treatments for which there is good evidence for safety and effectiveness" (NHMRC, 2015 : 6).

The scientists who discourage homoeopathic medicines also call it pseudoscience. Edzard Ernst (2016) wrote an article titled 'Reject the Pseudoscience of Homeopathy', where he writes about the Declaration on Homeopathy, Freiburg, which states a few points like, "Homeopathy is not medicine" (Ernst, 2016), "Homeopathy should not be given special status" (Ernst, 2016), "Self-deception by patients and therapists should be acknowledged" (Ernst, 2016), "Embrace science" (Ernst, 2016). Anthony King (2018) writes that homoeopathy is a 'bad science' as its benefits are based on the placebo effect. He quotes David Shaw, a bioethicist, who says that homoeopathy does not contain any active ingredient, and thus "It makes false promises about its efficacy" (King, 2018 : 128). In another article, 'The debate about Homeopathy is over. These Verdicts Prove It', Ernst (2017) presents an 'evidence-based' argument against homoeopathy, saying that homoeopathy does not follow science and it cannot be scientifically proven. Homoeopathy is dismissed as science and the medicines are claimed as just being sugar pills. On the other hand, some people claim otherwise and argue that homoeopathy has a scientific basis and is effective.

There have been counter-claims which consider homoeopathy as a more effective and a safer strand, as opposed to allopath which is seen to have side effects without causing the root problem of a disease (More, 2016). There are also claims that homoeopathy has been studied scientifically and their effects cannot be denied. "There is a significant body of clinical research including randomized clinical trials suggesting that homoeopathy has an effectiveness in curing many symptoms and in improving the quality of life of patients. Cohort studies, observational and economic have produced favorable results" (Vigano et al., 2015 : 7).

One of the researches done in the field of homoeopathic medicines to understand how it works is based on the theory of "memory of water" by "understanding whether and how water may be able to retain information" (Vigano et al., 2015 : 12). "More recent studies suggest that in appropriate circumstances, aqueous or hydroalcoholic solutions can memorize and transmit information about substances which have been progressively diluted in them" (Vigano et al., 2015 : 12). Another research involves hormesis, which explains the principle of similarity. "Hormetic responses are characterized by modest stimulation of a specific function at low doses and inhibition of the same function at high doses" (Vigano et al., 2015 : 12).

The Vigano et al. (2015) conclude with the suggestion that all types of methodologies should be employed to study the homoeo-pathic therapy and none of it should be undervalued.

There is a lack of trust in homoeopathy medicines. Though, in the cases where people tend to depend on it, in severe cases or cases of emergency, they resort to allopathy. However, recently, people have started inclining towards homoeopathy and herbal medicines because of the side effects of allopathic drugs or the lack of trust in those medicines too. They are distancing from the modern/ allopathic medicines because of reasons like "only symptomatic relief is experienced" (Jawla, 2009), " 'completion of treatment' is never a reality, more so in chronic ailments" (Jawla, 2009), "frustrating side effects" (Jawla, 2009), "high cost involved" (Jawla, 2009). They seem to be resorting to homoeopathy because of easy administration of doses and no side effects (Jawla, 2009). From the above discussion, we can find how ambiguity and controversy surround the areas of homoeopathy and allopathy.

4.   Extrapolation : Science, Praxis and Hegemony

Praxis, simply, is the confluence of theory and practice. Freire's elaborate work on praxis is especially important in the quest to transform the education system, as his ideas centred on the awakening of human consciousness and the pedagogy that could help in the liberation of the oppressed and poor (Shih, 2018). According to Freire ([1970] 2005), action and reflection are the two components of praxis which help in bringing change, and praxis does not exist if either of the two components is absent. He writes, "But

human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action" (Freire, [1970] 2005 : 125). He further writes that human activity "cannot be reduced to either verbalism or activism" (Freire, [1970] 2005 : 125). Shih (2018) writes that Freire ([1970] 2005) emphasized that when there is an improvement in an oppressive situation, the individual's consciousness awakens, which in turn gives them the ability to perceive the living world. Explaining the work of Freire ([1970] 2005), Shih (2018) writes, "In the context of oppression, the oppressed cannot be conscious of awakening… when the oppressed are in an oppressive situation, they are less conscious of awakening" (66).

Freire ([1970] 2005) distinguishes between 'revolutionary praxis' and 'praxis of the dominant elites' as they are entirely in conflict and opposition with each other. Revolutionary praxis denies the idea of people absolutely following a leader, an idea which is the essence of the praxis of dominant elites. He writes :

> "Manipulation, sloganizing, 'depositing', regimentation, and prescription cannot be components of revolutionary praxis, precisely because they are components of the praxis of domination. In order to dominate, the dominator has no choice but to deny true praxis to the people, deny them the right to say their own word and think their own thoughts" (Freire, [1970] 2005 : 126).

When there are reflection and action working together, people make meanings, interpret and understand how they should act and how an action could be analyzed. This is a process of understanding and creating knowledge, and hence praxis is a very vital part of human society. It is important to transform reality by critically reflecting on what is going around and take action on the basis of that (Freire, [1970] 2005).

Bourdieu (1990) talks about praxis in relation to social action. He writes, "…it aims simply to bring to light the theory of practice which theoretical knowledge implicitly applies and so to make possible a truly scientific knowledge of practice and of the practical mode of knowledge" (Bourdieu, 1990 : 27). Taking from Bourdieu, praxis is defined as "an activity by which individuals produce and reproduce society in its cultural, social, and economic dimensions"

(Öztürk, 2005 : 144). Praxis lies in between an individual's action and development of her/his society, as "individuals' action by praxis becomes part of societal development" (Öztürk, 2005 : 144).

In the area of science, praxis is an essential part. Theory and practise are the concepts that are tried to be converged for the development of scientific knowledge. Understanding or analyzing and acting in relation to it and vice-versa is an important part of this realm.

While discussing the construction of an adequate science of practice, Bourdieu (1990) writes that the biggest barrier in front of it is :

"the solidarity that binds scientists to their science (and to the social privilege which makes it possible and which it justifies or procures) predisposes them to profess the superiority of their knowledge often won through enormous efforts, against common sense, and even to find in that superiority a justification for their privilege, rather than to produce a scientific knowledge of the practical mode of knowledge and of the limits that scientific knowledge owes to the fact that it is based on a privilege….. All objectivist knowledge contains a claim to legitimate domination" (28).

In the present times, the most dominant authentic and credible source is the institution of scientific knowledge, as rationality is linked with the scientific approach of knowledge. Though scientific knowledge has been a victor to a great extent, there are many contestations, accusations and a lot of doubts and disbelief. Every individual has her/his own trusted source, and there are varying approaches of thinking which are consistently challenged while questioning the truth behind any scientific claim. For example, there have been suspicions about the dangers of harms of using some technique or technology. There have been ongoing conversations and debates about the concerns regarding environmental degradation. How would the common public decide if a technology is truly as safe as the scientists claim it to be, and is it truly worth taking a risk? Does the common public close its eyes and believe in a credible source without questioning its authority? The answer is not an unambiguous yes or no as the diversity of thought and socialization generally provides room for contestations. In the middle of this debate, many rumours emerge. Rumours emerge out of doubt and the inability to verify. The doubt is a product of various historical and contemporary

phenomenon, as well as the social condition of a person vis-à-vis occupation, religion, privilege/ disadvantage etc. It can also be the product of the critical mind which questions the claim of everything, as a rational mind would. Though rationality and science go hand in hand, a distinction is important to make. There is also the necessity of seeing the blurring line between rationality and irrationality. Weber gives the concept of the iron cage where he talks about how people act in a capitalist society where actions get shaped by the rational bureaucratic system (Weber, 1968). Ritzer (1992) talks about the irrationality of rationality, where he says that rational systems may not be reasonable systems as there have been many negative outcomes in the rational system. This trap encircles the people which in turn makes the rational system look irrational, as, after a certain point, people act not out of rationality but because of the compulsion and habit of acting a certain way. We might not realize when our rational actions trespass the line and enter the area of irrationality. So, every source is questionable and rumours can either channel those doubts, questions or distrust, or they can be the product of those doubts and suspicions.

With the overlap and distinction of the sources, we need to see how a piece of information travels, how different people react to different information according to their sources which might or might not be based on their prejudices. Factors like training, interaction, communication, local and general knowledge, go into the making of those sources. In the arena of science, everything has or should have a scientific explanation. In other words, whatever can be proved using experiment and observation becomes a fact, until falsified or modified using the same kind of systematic knowledge. However, the scientific field, which claims expertise in most of the fact-making and truth-making, is not immune to the production of false information or rumours, which has been explored in this paper.

There is a necessity to look at the level of importance that an activity, writing or utterance holds for the other people. Depending on their relevance, rumours can have direct, indirect and no impact on people. A rumour can be dispersed with dubious or malicious intent, or the dispersion can be nonchalant and out of curiosity. It can also keep getting diffused among people to fill their leisure time or become part of the conversation during the work-time to fill in silences, to strike a conversation merely, make a bond, or, as mentioned before, out of curiosity and human nature.

Rumours are forwarded using either systematic or unsystematic approaches. The systematic approach of creating a message or information here means applying a set of objective steps such as observation, data collection and research, as is done in disciplines which require training. The unsystematically formulated messages/information are those which are instantly or randomly formulated, without using procedure entailing objectivity. The former condition is suitable for formulating theories in the field of established schools of knowledge or disciplines. We investigated whether rumours can be created in this kind of knowledge centre where there is plentiful, well-researched knowledge. Scientific knowledge is supposed to always leave scope for being falsified, and this same characteristic makes it relevant and acceptable as a theory, as it increases its credibility. Popper rejects the idea that science is about confirmation; instead, he asserts that science is based on refutability, testability and falsifiability; and he calls the disciplines which are not based on them pseudo-sciences, which happen to 'stumble upon truth' (Popper, 1963). The disciplines which evade this falsification by building up a new theory in order to support the pre-existing theory become irrefutable and untestable, and evade falsification; Popper accuses them of using pseudo-empiricism (Popper, 1963). The Marxist theory of history, the psychoanalysis and individual psychology were his primary targets as pseudo-science. According to Popper's idea of science, falsifiability is the core of scientific knowledge. If we analyze the credibility of science on this basis, we would see that the correctability or having a scope for rectifying/correctifying itself after being falsified, makes it reliable/credible and closer to the truth and fact. Therefore, the area where there is plentiful knowledge is assumed and expected to be credible. So, how does this credibility of science come into question? It happens when science is not exclusive of the politics of truth, power and other political-economic factors. It can also happen when scientists choose to take the path of confirmation of theories rather than falsification. What else makes it less credible, is the false information, the deadlock among contradictory claims around a technology, policy or theory. As we have discussed the examples of genetically modified crops and Higgs Boson discovery, we can see that the credibility in this field can also come into question because of the rumours this can give rise to. The other trusted sources can drive or veer the thought process of the people. The theories or the

knowledge created through the systematic procedure can at any time be proved incorrect; however, this property cannot designate them as rumours. They are theories that are just falsified following a scientific and objective procedure. It can go through the stage of being a rumour when it comes in contact with the common masses. What we mean here is that a theory might not be a rumour, but it can become a rumour if it circulates among the common mass, where it could be distorted or misunderstood. It can be contested, debated, speculated about, exaggerated or distorted.

5. Trimming and Cooking in Science

Trimming and cooking are the two ways of lying or fabricating a discourse in natural sciences, as discussed by Barnes (1994). However, the major process involved in this debate is extrapolation. In the area of sufficient knowledge, verifiability, reliability and proof through experimentation hold the utmost importance. However, when there is obscurity, due to claims and counter-claims, people try to infer results. They start expecting a particular kind of result from whatever knowledge is available to them. This extrapolation is the basis for many conjectures or speculations that, in actuality, could be flawed and incorrect.

As we looked at the kind of prominence that science has with regards to knowledge, we discussed that there are many organizations and people who call the claims in the scientific field hoaxes; hoaxes which are meant to mislead people. Since there are many ways of constructing and acquiring knowledge, it is not possible for everyone to go into the sources employed in all the fields and disciplines. People trained in specific fields are closer to the sources and the process of creation of information. There are many accomplishments in the scientific or non-scientific fields which come to the notice of the public in general. However, it is imperative to verify those claims and find if they are reliable. There are many factions of people who believe that masses are being hoodwinked in these different fields of knowledge. A lot of obscurity clouds the capability of a person to differentiate a fact from a hoax. The (other) credible sources in a particular discipline are the alternate voices and sources within the same area of knowledge. For example, the only credible sources in the affairs of science are the scientific communities. Here, the speculations could become concrete especially if the claims are disputed by any reputed faction in the scientific community only.

The planets, satellites, space, extra-terrestrial objects, chemical reactions, electricity, atoms, technology and other plethora of affairs are the portfolio of the scientific community, and whatever reputed organizations discover, add or subtract from the scientific knowledge of the world is considered to be a fact. Still, we have to question if all of them are really facts. People always speculate about new discoveries and findings, which can be based on the scientific or unscientific knowledge acquired by them. They can find inconsistencies in these discoveries and findings, using this knowledge. The speculations can be based on the traditional/religious texts which give different arguments. It can also be objurgated because of any other bias or inclination towards the 'trusted sources'. The fact that the discoveries could be authentic or based on lies, makes us think about the reason why lies exist in the realm of science. One of the important reasons for the existence of lies in the realm of plentiful knowledge is to have hegemony. Here, a look at the concept of hegemony is important, as neither the scientific nor the non-scientific realm are excluded from it.

In the scientific world, empirical evidence is of utmost importance; hence, scientists work towards finding them, whereas it does not hold that much importance in the non-scientific arenas. This creates a tension between what is true and what is not, based on these areas. The evidence, for example- photographs, audios, videos- gathered to support the claims are crucial for making the claims close to being a fact because what is in contact with the sensory organs is more believable for the common masses. Media plays an important role in creating doubt or establishing a truth. It also depends on how credible media is for the people. Many people would be critical of the evidence, which would lead them to speculate. The speculation can also be backed by evidence, which can, as mentioned before, belong to any trusted source. The speculation could also be due to the timing of the formation of discourse too, as a very essential factor which gives rise to any claims, is the 'timing' of these claims. The formulation of a certain kind of knowledge needs a favourable situation. Oftentimes, a certain kind of situation is created for the making of certain kinds of knowledge. For example, there can be an atmosphere of a threat to women outside their homes created with the purpose of production of a particular kind of knowledge which favours patriarchy.

The debate that we can look at is the tussle between allopathic medicines and homoeopathic medicines. The hegemony of allopathic medicines is very obvious, because the faith in allopathic medicines of

many people may make it seem natural and rational. There are various debates around the topic, where it comes down to the faith of people in particular kinds of medicine. There is a clear hegemony of allopathic medicines, as the doubt is created in the minds of the public about the alternate medicines, by vehemently telling people to reject homoeopathy. Since medicines are associated with rationality and science in modern times, when seeds of doubt (about whether something is scientific or just a belief) are sown, people tend to not use it. When a reputed source from the field of science claims something as unscientific or scientific, then the trust leans towards that source. This also happens because of the hegemony of that reputed source, which might dismiss the other alternative source by calling it non-science or bad science, but at the same time hide its own faults and flaws. Allopathy has been claimed to have a lot of negative effects and side-effects, which are not addressed properly, and people might not be made aware of those disadvantages, and even if they have awareness, they might still trust it more than alternative medicine like homoeopathy, because of a conception that allopathy is scientific and effective, while homoeopathy is not scientific and hence ineffective.

There are debates around many other issues, such as respiratory inhalers, which are widely used since they are recommended by many doctors, at the same time discouraged by many others who find inhalers addictive, as they increase a patient's dependence on it, and they also refer to people who abuse those inhalers. Science Daily (2008) published an article 'Asthma Inhaler Misuse Widespread Among Anti-social Teens' which reported that with an intention of getting high, nearly one out of four teens use asthma inhalers and those with higher levels of distress use it more. Many other reports try to draw attention to the idea that many patients are sceptical about depending on inhalers with the fear of getting addicted to them. To counter the disadvantages cited by those sources by calling the claims a myth, there are many websites, papers and advertisements which dismiss the accusations as misconception and they promote the idea that inhalers have no disadvantages whatsoever. It is necessary for the patients to take inhalation medicines regularly and properly or their condition could become worse, and its consequences could be misuse and overdose (Ranaut et al., 2014). He writes that there is "misconception and misconception in general public regarding use of inhaler and cause of bronchial asthma, they keep on avoiding dietary and other items

which in fact have no role to play in either the causation or management of bronchial asthma…The most likely cause may be lack of training programmes regarding use of the inhalers, poor compliance and lack of knowledge" (Ranaut et al., 2014 : 6).

The disciplines which require training and specialization have an ample amount of knowledge regarding the areas they are focused on. The common masses who have some or no knowledge about the entire procedure involved in coming to the concluding report or statement, cannot verify the authenticity by themselves. This leads to a schism in society on the basis of the extrapolation on different/ countering evidence and trusted/credible sources. The extrapolation and schism open up tributaries of rumours. For the people who rebut the claims, it is already a rumour, which has been spread among the people who entirely or to some extent believe it. The reason cited by them, for the spreading of such false claims, is the maintenance of supremacy or hegemony and the garnering of more trust and respect from the masses by these disciplines. Gramsci writes that the intellectual hegemony of the ruling class has control over the independence of the subaltern and the former is aware that to maintain hegemony over the subordinate class, it has to take care of their interests and make sacrifices in the realm of the economy (Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 2005). Here, it can be said that the other reason is the hegemony of the ruling class, which works in tandem with the knowledge-producing disciplines.

6. Conclusion

The belief about what is trustworthy and what is not is also made on the basis of the perception of different people. Perception is the concept which is central to what we experience and what we think. What we perceive from the basic unnoticeable level to the major phenomenon, is extremely important in understanding how we give meaning to the world. The perceptions of the public are formed via one or more than one medium, which includes the state, media or other agents.

There are two ways behind the arrival of technology, which the state adopts. One is the situation, where scientists and the state work hand in glove and the former works to meet the demands or the needs of the state. Second is the situation where there is an availability of technology, and the state has to decide whether to usher the technology and in what way to implement/use it. We can

say that a piece of message or information is a rumour when there is uncertainty about the truth around it, and it is unverifiable. So, the implementation of something by the state or the authority does not truly sanction its truthfulness to the public (citizens) even if it appears to be and is expected to be the case, considering the nature of the State, since the State is thought to be the ultimate credible source for its subjects. The identity of a person is in the hands of the State- from birth till death- as all processes of identification and documentation are either owned or approved by the state. It is supposedly a credible source, but it might or might not be a trusted source. Rumours can crop up from a small barn in a village to the highest legal authority like the State. The source can be any person, people or institution, but it gets lost in the chaos of rumours or is meant to vanish. It is believed that a source of a rumour cannot be identified or found, but that is not the case at all times. Many times it is not difficult to know the body where the source could be situated, if not the exact source. The exact source here means the initial source from where the information emerged. The un-verifiability, uncertainty or the falseness of information spreading among people makes it a rumour. Several times, it is realized that a message was a rumour, only after confirmation of its fallacy. Before that, people consider that to be true or having high chances of being true.

In the realm of science, where there is plentiful knowledge, there is no escape from rumours. The source can be situated in the field of science itself, producing rumours about its claims; or it can be around scientific achievements or claims, produced by the general public due to their suspicion. But anything that is systematically probed and set knowledge in a society, which turns out to be false is not always a rumour. Rumour is usually an unsystematically forwarded message which uses non-objective approaches, and there are no objective set of rules involved in arriving at the resultant message. But not all rumours are produced out of unsystematic (devoid of an accepted set of rules) procedure. Rumours can be produced even when the initial message follows those accepted rules.

Something is considered scientific when it can be verified to be true every time it is tested. Verifiability is an important factor of the scientific field, so is falsifiability. Popper (1963) argued that something that cannot be falsified could not be scientific. It means that any theory or finding is not ultimate, as it would be tested again and again until it is falsified or its alternative argument, theory or findings is

discovered. Verifiability and falsifiability are considered as important ideas in the realm of science, so rumours are not the immediate consequences of those. Lies are important to discuss while talking about plentiful knowledge. As mentioned before, Barnes (1994) defined lies on the basis of the intention behind a statement of any person. If the statement is made with malicious intent or with an intention to mislead people, then it is considered as a lie, but if the person's statement lacks the same intention, then it would not be considered a lie. In this study, we have seen that the area of science is not bereft of lies. Some of the examples show that lies can be circulated among people, which take the shape of rumours, and it becomes challenging to recognize those lies, especially in the field of science because of its hegemony in being considered as the flawless and correct knowledge.

Funding statement

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Kashmir through Decolonizing Methodologies : An Approach to Knowledge

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This paper seeks to propose decolonizing methodologies as methodologies of choice when inquiring into the fields of Sociology of Knowledge and Sociology of Violence. Taking the case of Kashmir into account, while reflecting on the literature on knowledge, violence, and the impact of violence, the paper suggests that the use of decolonizing methodologies prevents the subjugation of knowledge. While making no definitive claims about the kind of knowledge structures that should emerge, the paper only seeks to enable reflexivity, where the researcher engages with his research subjects as participants and not as objects of research. This paper aims at building capacity for knowledge that can be used in inductive research through humanistic investigation.

[**Keywords** : Kashmir, Decolonizing Methodologies, Knowledge, Epistemic Violence]

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1. Introduction

What is Kashmir? Is this a place, a product, or a people? As for the people in the West, it is cashmere that they know better—goat's wool, which is transformed into a finished product. Clothes are the closest any product has been to humans ever since they were worn, so the people in the West can be excused for knowing cashmere better than Kashmir. But any etymological query on cashmere would have led them to Kashmir—a place, not as warm as cashmere, and certainly not as comfortable.

Far from wool, what is this place called Kashmir? It is a place, located in the midst of the Himalayas, surrounded by India, Pakistan, and China. It has been a place of conflict since 1947, claimed by both India and Pakistan, portions of which have also been annexed by China. Has Kashmir always been disputed? Has it always been sandwiched between nation-states as a piece of land awaiting its fate? A survey of literature suggests the opposite. Kashmir, as a civilization has old roots. Known for its splendid landscapes, the culture (both material and immaterial), Kashmir—the place, is a visitor's dream. But is this place without its people? As Kashmiris (the people of Kashmir) begin to be seen, the pulchritudinous picture begins to disintegrate, the fine pieces of which are blown away by the not-so-mild breeze, awakening the visitor to the reality. A reality where the idyllic culture has been superseded by what has now become the dominant culture of the place—the culture of mourning, and grief. It is a place where its people must be seen to discover Kashmir—the nation.

Kashmir is not a happy story to tell. It would not make a good lullaby. There is pain, torture, and blood—it is grotesque. Why would one want to look at it anyway? This does not make a good picture. It is a nation that has witnessed deceit, sufferings, carried coffins, and dug graves; a nation where mothers are waiting for their (dead) children to return, where mourning has been routinized, where death looms large, where the old bury their young. Zia and Bhat (2019) write, "The blinkers manufactured by India to hide this history are a great disservice not only to Kashmiris but also to the Indian masses" (16). Obscuring the history and masquerading the myths of integrity by 'historicizing' them must not prevent a critical reflection. Kashmir must not be viewed using the colonial gaze. It does not only distort the picture, it turns it into an occulted entity where Kashmir that exists is

not seen, and the Kashmir that has not been becomes the normative. The discourse of establishing Kashmir as a sight of violence where the perpetrators of violence are exclusively the Kashmiri people must end in order to see the Kashmir that is, that exists, that has been unseen, one that lurks in the dark abyss of subjugated knowledge. Unless methodologically addressed, Kashmir will continue to remain integral to the impudence of subjugation of knowledge.

Before anything, any research on Kashmir should question the very understanding of Kashmir; as to how Kashmir is generally known. Kashmir is more than the beautiful landscapes, lofty mountains, majestic valleys, pristine lakes, and vast meadows. Kashmir is its people too. A deeper, saner refection is needed to find what Kashmir actually is. To understand Kashmir, one must first unlearn all what one has known about Kashmir, as most of what has been narrated about Kashmir may contribute to colonial mendacity. In order to arrive at the reality, a lot of bases have to be unsettled; a preliminary attempt has been made here.

2. Reviewing Literature : Towards a Sociology of Knowledge

There is inarguably a sea of literature to be explored in order to discuss the key themes of this research. In order to investigate into the key themes of this research, a fair bit of literature has been studied. To review is not to merely cite. To review is not to merely quote. Any engagement with literature must come from a conscious thought. Academic rigor must be invoked while reviewing literature. Criticality, as it is an essential component of the review of literature, needs to be employed to find gaps in the works studied. In order to make the review more convenient, this paper offers four sections, based on the four main themes. Each section highlights the core books and articles used to study that theme/concept.

2·1 On Violence

Reviewing literature on violence, in this research, has been pertinent in order to understand the employability of the said concept. In doing so, Fanon's ([1961] 1963), *'The Wretched of the Earth'* has been the most useful, given the context in which it was written. Notable mentions which do not make a part of this review but have been beneficial in understanding violence are : Benjamin ([1921]

2021), Arendt (1970), Sartre (2001), Dodd (2009), Agamben (1998), and Said (1979).

As one thinks of violence, the first thing that comes to mind is bodily harm. To someone like Collins (2008), for 'real' violence to exist, the component of physicality is a must. He out rightly rejects other forms of violence as rhetorical, and maintains they exist only theoretically. It is hard to disagree with Collins if one has not taken the field to look at the scale of violence, wherein physicality is only one of the components. To see beyond the physicality of violence, it is important to look at the possible forms of it. Collins (2008), however, offers us a challenge by arguing that sans real (physical) violence, other forms (e.g. symbolic violence) are merely theoretical and lack, what he calls "confrontational tension and fear… on which pivot all the features of violence when it does occur" (25). Do we then have other perspectives to look at violence? It is important to note that Collins is writing in 2008, and he is critical of Bourdieu's ([1972] 1977) categorization of symbolic violence. Bourdieu did not live long enough to respond to that criticism. For Bourdieu, there is a kind of 'euphemism' which enables symbolic violence to operate. This euphemism causes misrecognition to operate, which acts as a veil, and under which symbolic violence is let loose. He defines symbolic violence as "that form of domination…which is only exerted through the communication in which it is disguised" (237). Slavoj Zizek (2008) extends this concept further where he talks about the symbolically violent forms of representations in literature, drawings, or demonstrations. To Zizek, language itself is violent as it is reductionist in nature. Following the lines of Hegel, he writes, "Language simplifies the designated thing, reducing it to a single feature…It inserts the thing into the field of meaning which is external to it" (61). It is in the making of the other a subject of one's desire in which it (the other) is, through the use of language, vilified and an impermeability of values is maintained that causes symbolic violence to settle into a concrete shape. Resonance of similar viewpoints can be found in Said's (1979) Orientalism, albeit with contextual differences. Given that these forms of violence are operational within a society, and they are well beyond the realms of physicality, what is it that causes the reproduction of these forms of violence? Johan Galtung (1990) is of the view that the operation of physical violence is made to be seen or felt as right or, at the worst, a lesser wrong by having in place a scheme of violence, which he calls cultural violence. By

dehumanizing the other, and reducing him/her to a 'dangerous it', it becomes convenient for direct violence to operate. It is in this dehumanization, and the reduction of the other into the category of a dangerous entity (non-person) that cultural violence works. Galtung defines it as, "those aspects of culture… exemplified by religion, ideology, language, art, empirical science, and formal science that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (291).

Understandably, physical violence is not the only form of violence, at least not theoretically. Once situated in an empirical dimension, the theoretical spectrum changes into an existing one. These forms of violence could then be seen and felt. But is there any form of violence which refuses to fall within the visible spectrum? Zizek (2008) calls it systemic violence. To him, it is like the 'dark matter'—invisible. This is also similar to what Galtung (1969) called structural violence—one carried out indirectly, in absence of an actor. Systemic/structural violence is often unseen, and it is this invisibility of systemic violence that makes it difficult to resist or escape from.

Would the assumption of 'systemic violence incorporating all other forms of violence' be appropriate to find the organizational structure of these forms of violence? Is symbolic violence, when Bourdieu talks about it, actually limitless? Does Zizek see how the use of words, if not language altogether, in its euphemism or objective diversion result in symbolic violence? Although Galtung sees the Israel-Palestine conflict as that of cultural violence, does he situate it in a setting where it is relational with the two other forms that he discusses (direct and structural violence)? Is there a commonality in these forms of violence? Do these forms of violence spring out of the same stream? Fanon ([1961] 1963) answers some of these questions by locating them in the structure of colonialism. For Fanon, the violence in colonies, in all its forms, is because of the colonial occupation. Fanon writes, "The colonial regime owes its legitimacy to force and at no time tries to hide this aspect of things" (66). For him, the violence in the colonies can only be responded with violence. In Fanon's writing one can see how violence is not only about causing physical injury, it is also in words, in humiliation, in denial, and in political subjugation. But how relevant is Fanon in present times? And is the colonial hegemony only the monopoly of the West?

One form of violence in which the physicality of violence, more or less, is an essential component, as discussed by Collins (2008) is that

of destruction of spaces. This, Sari Hanafi (2007) calls spaciocide. He analyzes the violent destruction of the Palestinian spaces by the Israeli regime as a part of its neocolonial project in Palestine. Hanafi (2012) believes that the neocolonial Israeli project in Palestine is predominantly of a spaciocidal character. To him, the killings of the Palestinians, which are in excess of one-hundred-thousand, are a consequence of the spaciocidal project. Can spaciocide occur by the ruthless demolition of spaces alone or are there subtle versions of spaciocide too? Is colonial occupation primarily spaciocidal? What are the possibilities of expanding the concept of spaciocide to analyze various forms of it?

2·2 On Knowledge

Knowledge and power share a relation among themselves; this could be absolute or relative. Bourdieu ([1979] 1984) offers an insightful realm of ideas wherein he discusses the role of legitimization of the knowledge of the powerful. Those who possess the 'cultural capital' and have, through 'legitimized' means, acquired knowledge gain a monopoly over the established knowledge. This legitimization of certain structures, of which school curriculum is one, does not just produce knowledge for the benefit of those possessing the cultural capital but it also reproduces the same structures responsible for such an arrangement. This production of knowledge and reproduction of the structures thereby causes to maintain the distinction between social classes and their attributes of 'taste'. Bourdieu writes, "all knowledge of the social world, is an act of construction implementing schemes of thought and expression…" (467). He believes that this classificatory system is more a means of power than it is of knowledge. This invites one to look critically at any knowledge system, primarily the one dominant in its times.

Michael F. D. Young (1971), in concurrence with the Bourdieusian framework, demonstrates through empirical evidences how certain members of the society get access to knowledge that is regarded as superior by those in power. He finds that the transmission of this 'high value' knowledge takes place through educational establishments only to a chosen few. Young (1971) makes a very powerful statement by writing :

> "Those in positions of power will attempt to define what is to be taken as knowledge, how accessible to different groups any

knowledge is, and what are the accepted relationships between different knowledge areas and between those who have access to them and make them available" (32).

This classificatory scheme of calling one form of knowledge as superior leads to, what he calls 'stratified knowledge', which in itself also problematizes the criteria of such stratification. Accrediting a superior status to some form of knowledge results in legitimization of a higher status to those possessing it. This accreditation also leads to creation and maintenance of dominant values, and of power structures.

The inseparability of power and knowledge was coherently dealt with by Foucault ([1975] 1977). He could not see a situation where power and knowledge are not in a direct and absolute relation with one another. This inseparability gives rise to a person becoming an object of knowledge upon which power is exercised. Knowledge production, as Foucault argues, is an act of power; this power is reproduced and maintained by the knowledge thus produced. The subjugation of human bodies as objects takes place when they are reduced to such a state to serve the power-knowledge matrix. What is considered true and right also comes from how, by the use of power, a systematic body of knowledge is created which serves the goal of developing objects out of humans upon whom power could be exercised. Foucault ([1975] 1977) writes :

"We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (194).

The questions one might ask include: what are the production houses for such knowledge which aim to serve the powerful? How can we understand the tendency to not know? What kind of knowledge overrides another kind of knowledge, and why? How can one understand the complex design of power and knowledge in a neocolonial setting where the vastness of the discourse might suggest it being legitimate? An extension of Foucauldian, Bourdie-usian, and Young's analyses of knowledge and power is required in answering these questions.

2·3   On Kashmir

In discussing Kashmir, there is a plethora of literature to be cited and reviewed, part of which deals with its historicity, and a part of which deals with the violence taking place. Because it would make a lengthy review to cite all the works, this section shall deal with only a select few to look at the historicity of the Kashmir conflict, and the trajectory of violence in Kashmir. Of the literature that has been looked at includes Lamb (1991, 1994), Schofield (1996), Korbel (1954), Biscoe (1922), Lawrence (1895), Khan (2014), Bazaz (1954), Duschinski, et al. (2018), Roy, et al. (2011), and numerous other reports by APDP (Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons), JKCCS (Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Societies), Amnesty Internaional, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations.

Snedden (2015) provides a fairly elaborate account of Kashmir's modern history. He begins by discussing what he means by Kashmiris, and Kashmir. In discussing Kashmir, Snedden cites the historical colonial expansion, and how Kashmir was left to act as a buffer between the two (British and Russian) powerful colonial establishments. He also discusses the rule of the Sikh and Dogra emperors over Kashmir. The historical fallacy of attributing Kashmir's accession to India because of the invasion of the 'raiders' from outside has also been discussed at fair length. Snedden refers to three events that have been subjected to historical erasure which make it clear that it was historically an indigenous movement for independence. These three events occurred between August 15 to October 26, 1947, and they were the "anti-Maharaja uprising in Poonch; inter-religious violence in Jammu province; and the creation of Azad Kashmir" (165). Snedden, towards the end of his work, writes about the possible solution to the Kashmir dispute.

To write about the violence in Kashmir, and to place it appropriately in the context in which it takes place is a challenge, given the nature of the state violence. Yet scholars from within Kashmir, and outside it have produced literature that looks at the unpleasant, lived realities of Kashmir—of violence and fear. In an anthology, complied by Zia and Bhat (2019), various essays reflect the state terror, and the monumental scale of violence spread over Kashmir. From dealing with the deceitful leader—Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who wronged his own people for generations to come, to questioning the legality of the accession of Kashmir to India, this anthology reflects a side of Kashmir that is not like its

tourism advertisement. There is pain in it, there is a reflection of violence and terror. It talks about the accounts of ex-militants, of the violence their families face, the scars of torture that refuse to go (205-223). It reflects on how a young boy could see through the state's meta-narrative and become politically conscious of his own existence (255-267). There is also the poetry of resistance, of hope and pain.

Another anthology, edited by Sanjay Kak (2011), is more about allowing an Indian to see a Kashmir that he/she has not known—the Kashmir that exists. It also has poetry and songs of dissent and resistance. Of particular significance is Natasha Kaul's essay (189-212) that looks at the narratives of the Indian state, beginning from the cartographic falsehood to the demeaning reflection of an average Kashmir in the Indian media. Kaul also discusses how the state, by using the services of Jagmohan (appointed as the governor of Jammu and Kashmir for the second time in 1990) managed to orchestrate what would be known as the 'Pandit exodus' (198-205). The anthology also features other essays highlighting the design of malicious occupation and violence in Kashmir.

Geelani (2019) in a quest to find reasons for the rage in Kashmir attempts to look at Kashmir through a journalist's prism. He looks at the resistance groups of Kashmir, the emerging voices of dissent and rebellion. He is critical of the projection of Kashmiris in the mainstream Indian media. He cites Chomsky (1988) and writes that the manipulative Indian media has projected a side of Kashmir that does not exist. Devadas (2018 : 177-188), an Indian journalist uses his partially Indian prism to look at Kashmir. He does see violence and 'a few bad apples' but he is suggestive of silencing the voices of dissent by pacification. While he does acknowledge that there has been violence on part of the state machinery, he gets sucked into (or chooses to sink into) the Indian way of looking at Kashmir, which fundamentally sees Kashmir as integral to it. Suhail (2018 : 156) looks at the occupation of land by the NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) and the displacement caused by it. This occupation, he believes has caused economic de-development in the region along-side causing irreparable damage to the ecology. NHPC is one of the largest hydroelectric power corporations in India, and its establish-ment in Kashmir is one of economic loot of the resources. Suhail cites a report which figures the profit that the corporation made between 2001-2015 at over 194 billion rupees (2.7 billion dollars).

These works look at aspects of violence that are visible and manifest. But are there not forms of violence in Kashmir that are deeply embedded in the structure, making it difficult to observe? Is violence just an occurrence of a conflict, or a land dispute between India and Pakistan, or is there more to it? Is India fighting the militants in Kashmir or are the rebels fighting for the right to be free?

2·4 On the Impact of Violence on Families

An ex-militant in an interview said, "Our families are not allowed a normal life. We are not issued any passports, nor given any government jobs…" (Qanungo, 2019 : 218). A mother whose son was killed by the government-sponsored gunmen would wake up at night, carry a shovel in her hand, and walk towards the graveyard. When intercepted, she said, "Leave me. I want to see my son's face" (Zahir u din, 2019 : 66).

Bowlby (1983) suggests that a family requires homeostatic adjustments once a death in a family has taken place. Of these homeostatic adjustments are enmeshment, obsessive paranoia, idealization, infantilization, pathology, and restructuring. These adjustments could be defined either by religion or culture. Fazili (2016) suggests that there is a role reversal at the time of grieving in Kashmir, causing a gendered restructuring. The impact of violence does not just affect the one directly affected by violence, but all those who relate to him as it hampers the family functioning and increases the likelihood of manifestation of psychological disorders among the members of the family (Krenawi and Graham, 2012). Families affected by violence undergo many changes, which include lack of interaction (Barber, 1999). Weingarten (2004 : 14) writes that through silence, trauma could enter other members of the family. "Silence can communicate a wealth of meanings. It is its own map : Don't go there; don't say that; don't touch; too much; too little; this hurts; this doesn't". She further mentions that even warning children about not doing something which might cause them harm can inversely terrify them. In a family where the loss is common, it could at times result in, what Volkan (2001) calls, chosen trauma, which is transgenerational. But one might ask what violence does it take for the families to be negatively impacted? Is it only the death or the killing of a family member that reinforces enmeshment?

3. Decolonizing Methodologies : A Humanistic Inquiry

When it comes to the selection of methodology/methodologies, there are a few things that occupy a pivotal position in determining the most appropriate methodology. First and foremost, the type of research that the researcher has taken up. The research question determines the complexities of the research, its nature, and the kind of methods required to gather the essential data. It, in a way, is suggestive of a particular methodology or a set of methodologies. A research question, at times, dismisses the operation of certain methodologies, for example, if a researcher intends to study the students' perspective of the structure of the university, wherein he/she aims to study the pattern of the interaction as well; in such a case, the positivist methodology would not be a great prism to have. The knowledge of positivism, however, can enhance the study, but to solely rest the research on a positivist methodology would not allow the researcher to find the intricacies of the research problem. Not only does a methodology offer a prism through which we see our research problem and approach it, but it also helps us in understanding that problem by offering a systematic design to study it.

The methodological questions, while dealing with a research project that involves complexities in the manner of how it must be viewed, become important, more so because such projects are often susceptible to be branded as nonobjective. Undertaking a research on Kashmir and attempting to study violence would need a methodological rigor unless the research has to only be an opinionated summary. The primary question here is that how is Kashmir seen in this research work. In socio/anthropological work, the essence (if that is the correct word to use) of the research lies in how the universe of study is seen by the researcher. Often, as have colonial anthropologists done best, researches are made a means to serve a greater motive of classifying people, and cementing the dominant narrative. The 'normative' that is thus established must be looked at critically, for there has been a very sketchy process that has gone into the making of this normative. When it comes to understanding Kashmir—the place, a researcher must be wary of the dominant narratives that have caused to form, what is now, the mainstream knowledge on Kashmir. It becomes pertinent to desist from following the same path, and engaging in an exercise that leads to further subjugation of knowledge.

The challenge of undertaking a research work on Kashmir starts with not falling prey to the dominant discourses—which are coalesced with the historical misunderstanding of Kashmir. To not do that involves an extensive study of literature. Kashmir, to understand it correctly, involves seeing it in its actual location. To view Kashmir with any preconceived notion is to engage in a practice of colonial knowledge production. To choose to wear that lens and study Kashmir is to serve the interests of colonial anthropology, and prove scholars like Linda Thuwai Smith ([1999] 2021), Marianna Torgovnick (1990), Haunani Kay Trask (1993), and others right, who suggest that the disciplines such as anthropology/sociology have often served to further the colonial expansion. The mainstream narrative on Kashmir is one of historical amnesia. Abiding by that narrative would result in further foreclosure of the Kashmiri people. To quote Smith ([1999] 2021 : 67), "The history of the colonies, from the perspective of the colonizers, has effectively denied other views of what happened and what the significance of historical 'facts' may be to the colonized".

Linda Thuwai Smith's 'Decolonizing Methodologies' becomes very helpful in understanding the context in which it becomes essential to decolonize methodologies and the techniques of data collection while studying a place like Kashmir. To decolonize methodologies is to understand theory and research from the point of view of the native. Smith ([1999] 2021) is referring to the indigenous people of New Zealand—the Maori, who have been studied as the objects of research wherein they are seen as those who cannot contribute to the research. As Smith ([1999] 2021 : 61) writes, "it is simply impossible, ridiculous even, to suggest that the object of research can contribute to anything. An object has no life force, no humanity, no spirit of its own, so therefore 'it' cannot make an active contribution". This worldview has to change, more so when the subjects of research are the colonized people who have been rendered voiceless over decades of brutal oppression. In Kashmir, this issue gets compounded because it is not a place that had been colonized in the past and is now independent, and needs to counter those narratives of the colonial period; Kashmir is a place that is embedded in a neocolonial web wherein the indigenous production of knowledge about Kashmir and its people has been subjugated. It continues to remain a challenge to produce literature on Kashmir that represents the voices of the people of Kashmir. With appropriate methodologies, which are decolonized in the manner as Smith ([1999]

2021) suggests, one can engage in research on Kashmir that represents Kashmiris not as objects of research, rendered as such by the colonial gaze of an anthropologist, but as active participants who contribute to the making of the research.

## 4.	Conclusion

This paper attempts to offer a methodological position that researchers can employ in order to engage in sociological/ anthropological work that does not foreclose the people under investigation. In doing so, a researcher will avoid succumbing to forces of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1999). It highlights how the lack of exposure to decolonizing methodologies can shift the focus of violence in which the victim can become the perpetrator. Under-taking an investigation which uses decolonizing methodologies prevents the researcher from reducing his/her respondents to merely objects of study. This paper does not lay claim on any definitive findings, and only suggests an approach that is situationally appropriate to studying sociology of violence and sociology of knowledge. It makes a researcher aware of the context in which the research is being undertaken. It also helps a researcher to not fall prey to the already existing narratives that could have emerged out of epistemically violent modes of knowledge formation. While engaging in research that employs decolonizing methodologies, one can also come close to addressing Fanon's ([1961] 1963) anguish, which he expressed when he wrote, "For the native, objectivity is always directed against him" (61).

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