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Editor
R.K. Verma

Indian Institute of Public Administration
Bihar Regional Branch, Patna

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On the recommendation of Paul H. Appleby, the then Prime Minister Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru established the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) on March 29, 1954 with its HQ at IP Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi- 110 002 under the supervision of DoPT, Government of India. Its main aim is to equip the public servants with knowledge, skills and behaviour required for managing the tasks of governance. Bihar Regional Branch, commenced in the year 1960, is one of the 26 regional branches in India as part of the apex body of IIPA with an objective to undertake activities in furtherance of discipline of Public Administration and good governance. The Branch has five pronged activities like - research/evaluation studies, seminar / conferences / workshops etc., training / orientation / awareness programmes, collaboration with governmental & non-governmental agencies and publication of Journal, books, Monographs etc.

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From the Desk of the Chief Editor

It is a matter of great pleasure that BJPA has completed its 21st year of its continuous and punctual publication and also presenting the Vol. XXI No. 2 July-Dec., 2024. Of course the exercise is not easy, yet we try to maintain the punctuality and quality of the Journal. It will not be out of place to mention that the Journal faces financial stringency as we don't charge for submission or publication but request to subscribe to the Journal. We face over stress of large numbers of paper submissions since its inclusion in UGC-CARE List of Quality Reference Journals and strains of management.

However, I express my thanks to the learned contributors, the entire Editorial Team and the anonymous referees for carrying the venture of publication of Bihar Journal of Public Administration in regular frequency and that too by maintaining quality. I, in personal capacity as Vice Chancellor of Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya, commit myself to facilitate the regular publication of the Journal by involving institutions of higher education, falling in this part of the state. The editorial board intends to accommodate the new ideas and issues of our focus area of research. We also encourage those papers which contain assessment of trends of research in Public Administration and allied disciplines, especially covering Bihar.

– Prof. S.P. Shahi
Vice Chancellor,
Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya

Editorial

It is a matter of immense pleasure that Bihar Journal of Public Administration has entered into the third decade of its regular publication. We are thankful to all those who have rendered support of any kind in this academic venture.

The Vol. XXI No. 2, July-December, 2024 is before the readers with a hope that it will be beneficial to the researchers and academicians. The Issue covers a wide range of subjects of importance like community managed water distribution, harnessing inquisitive intellect, bibliometric analysis of literature on e-governance, cultural capital, Indian democracy, food security in Asia, Climate Change and health, administration of prison, higher education, land revenue, Swaksha Bihar etc. Examination of impact of policies like GST, police complain authority (PCA), health policy on TB, e-Vehicles, caste based survey and areas of research on public policy process have been included in the present Issue.

The Ethnic federalism of Ethiopia, Belt Road Initiative, India's strategic vison of Indo-US relations and comparative prison administration find place here. Besides, subjects like relevance of mediation Act in delivery of justice, justice delivery by weaker sections through Gram Kachahary and traditional Indian administration of justice etc. are some innovative ideas that have been included. It is added with research notes and book review.

The IIPA Bihar Regional Branch and the Editorial team express thankfulness to external support from expert reviewers and the contributors. At last, though utmost care has been taken to maintain the quality, yet we shall feel obliged to have suggestions from readership for improvements in the Journal.

– R.K. Verma
Editor

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TRADITIONAL PRACTICES OF SHARING WATER: A STUDY OF *DAMASHA* IN TWO VILLAGES OF CHIKKABALLAPUR, KARNATAK

Nayanatara S. Nayak* and Narayan Billava**

Abstract

The role of village communities in the management of local resources is not new to India. But, there is a fall in the number of community managed resources, particularly water over the time due to factors like state intervention, developmental activities, reforms, increasing population size, encroachment, etc. Inspite of many such odds we can trace instances of community strength in continuing the indigenous practices in resource management. 'Damasha' is a unique experiment in participatory approach to water management that exists in Karnataka, assumed to be first of its kind and probably the only such model in India addressing the water scarcity for agriculture purposes. Neither the village panchayat nor the government functionaries were involved in its operation. The origin of Damasha is unknown or not documented. Being practiced since long time in two small villages of Bodampally and Channarayanhalli in drought-hit Chinatamani taluk of Chikkaballapur district and some parts of Kolar district, it has not received due attention from the administrators, policy makers and researchers. The main objective of this paper is to explore and demonstrate the case of water sharing practiced in times of drought and, the methods employed in sustaining the cooperation of villagers for several years and its current status in the backdrop of the intervention of late by gram panchayat. The study followed a case study approach and gathered information through FGDs with stakeholders carried out in each of the two villages with a follow- up thereafter.

Keywords: Damasha, Community management, Water scarcity, Indigenous Knowledge, Participatory approach

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Acknowledgement: The present paper is a by-product of ICSSR sponsored research project conducted by CMDR, Dharwad. The earlier version of the paper was presented at a National Seminar organized by Karnataka State Higher Education Academy, Dharwad on 22nd June, 2024.

CONTEXT

The role of village community in the management of local sources is not new to India. But, there is a fall in the number of community managed resources overtime due to so many factors like state intervention, developmental activities, reforms, increasing population size, encroachment etc. In spite of many such odds we find instances of community strength in continuing the traditional practices in resource management. One such rare model addressing the water scarcity and which has not received the attention of administrators, policy makers and researchers is being practiced since long time in the villages named Bodampally and Channrayanhalli in Chintamani taluk of Chikkaballapur district (previously in Kolar district) in Karnataka. *Damasha* in Kannada dialect means proportionate distribution or equitable allotment from the resource. The principle behind the model is that "let all survive and benefit by sharing whatever little is available". The system of *damasha* is said to be operative in Pichaguntlahalli village in Mulbagal taluk of Kolar district also (Vishwanath 2021), where a NGO has been helping villagers to conserve and develop the tank.

In rural India, Common Property Water Resources (CPWRs) form an important component of the ecological systems. And the dependence of rural poor on these resources is high. These resources, which were looked after by the community earlier to independence, have deteriorated or declined overtime due to neglect. Similarly, the other community resources like the sacred groves, village tanks/wells and 'gomals' i.e. the village pasture land were also looked after by the community in the past. However, they lost their resourcefulness with government regulations, excess usage, development projects including residential layouts in the absence of conservation and development. Fortunately, there are instances of continued community resources management across the country necessitated by water crisis. The literature refers to Kumaons of Uttarakhand and Ralegan Siddhi model of Anna Hazare (Kadekodi et al. 2000), paani panchayats of Maharashtra (Deshpande and Reddy 1994) and Odisha, *Piyat Mandalis* of Gujarat, '*Phad*' irrigation system in Maharashtra (Singh and Firdausi 1991; Barah 1996), *Ahar* pynes of Bihar, *Johads* and, *Aapni yojana* in Rajasthan (Mishra et al 2008), etc., which give an account of the water distribution and water rights effectively managed and exercised even today. In addition, the emerging policy paradigm in the country seeks to involve users in the management of water resources. A number of state governments in India have carried out in varying degrees of institutional reforms in the water sector, particularly in relation to irrigation.

THE APPROACH

The case study approach was followed to collect the information on the practice of damasha. The researchers conducted focused group discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders including farmers, waterman, village elders, panchayat members and women. The FGDs were carried out in each of the two villages to examine and understand the origin of the system, decisions on the distribution of land and sharing practices and the responses of the farmers on the sustainability of the model, particularly the younger generation.

DAMASHA: ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Chickaballapur and Kolar districts, which are drought prone do not have perennial water sources for both agriculture and drinking water purposes. The only source of water is ground water. This could be one of the main reasons for the origin of *damasha* in this region. *Damasha* is a unique experiment in participatory approach to water management that exists in Karnataka, which is the first of its kind and probably the only model in India.

Damasha in Kannada dialect means proportionate distribution or equitable allotment out of total amount/availability. Villagers sometime pronounce it as "*damasi*" also. But, most of them do not know the meaning of the term *damasha*. This model is practiced in two small adjacent villages named Bodampally and Channrayanhalli currently located in Chickaballapur district. Earlier, they were part of Kolar district. The population of the two villages is around 1400 with a geographical area of 628 hectares. There are around 300 households. The main sources of irrigation are the two tanks, which fall under the jurisdiction of the two villages. Around 25% of the cultivable area is under irrigation. The villagers reported that the researchers from Africa and Sri Lanka had visited these villages to understand the actual functioning of the *damasha* model and from their discussions with the villagers, similar sharing mechanism appears to be found only in Sri Lanka. This perhaps could be true as there are no such prior references elsewhere in India or in other countries.

The efforts for initiating community's willingness to share water on equitable or proportional basis, was seeded by late Shri B.V. Narasappa, the village accountant (called as *Shanbag*) who worked during the period 1939 to 1972. To explain in brief, villagers adopt to *damasha* when there is scarcity of water in the two tanks, which are the main sources of irrigation for the farmers in the two neighbouring villages. The main tank Doddakere spread over 55 acres and irrigating more than 100 acres of land is located in Bodampally. The second tank Manuganakunte located in Channrayanhalli is spread in an area of 30 acres and irrigates about 50 acres. When water is scarce, the capacity of these tanks to irrigate reduces to about 53 acres and 23 acres respectively. It is usually resorted to in summer. Villagers then adopt *damasha*. The village elders assess the water availability in the tanks with the help of 'neeraganti' and hold a meeting with the farmers in the catchment area of the tanks. The capacity of the tanks is assessed to fix the crop area. The land earmarked for cultivation becomes public land temporarily during this time. Neeraganti is responsible for releasing water to the entire cultivated area. He also gets a share in the crop. Villagers say that the system of sharing based on total agricultural land holding of each farmer was developed before the independence.

HOW DOES THE MODEL OPERATE?

- The system is totally community based exercise
- Neither the village panchayat nor government functionaries are involved in its operation
- The villagers do not know exactly the year when the system began to function, but remember that it was before independence.
- The village Shanbag (accountant) initiated this process and prepared the survey numbers of land holdings for enabling allotment of agricultural plots to farmers near the tank.
- For each of the two tanks two members from two separate families are identified as Neergatti (one who distributes water by putting obstructions in the right places). Neergatti is not paid any cash for performing the job of waterman. But, villagers pay in kind i.e. around 30 bags of paddy and other agricultural produce in nominal quantity per annum.
- Villagers decide the proportion for distribution of water to the fields for the second crop on the basis of water availability in the tank. Sometimes during drought years, *damasha* is practiced for the first crop also.
- The proportion of land to be irrigated could fall in between 10% to 50%. If it is 10%, then all the farmers are allowed to cultivate only 10% of their land (whatever be the size of holding) using tank water. Majority of the farmers in these two villages are marginal and small farmers. Large holdings are rare.
- The other interesting arrangement is that farmers whose holdings are far off get land near the tank for temporary cultivation in proportion (fixed by villagers) to the size of their actual holding. That is the agricultural land near the tank becomes common or community owned during the times of water scarcity. All the farmers whose land is near the tank agree for allotment of their land to other farmers. They also get their due share, which is usually a quarter of the cultivable area. To maintain efficient use of water only land near the tank is cultivated depending on the extent of its capacity to irrigate the land.

THE BENEFITS

- Totally around 225 farmers and their households benefit from *damasha.*
- *Damasha* helps to irrigate cultivable area of around 15% during water scarcity and 25% during its full capacity. Generally, paddy is grown during this time.

- Other benefits: Since water is used efficiently there is no wastage. It has helped vegetation around the tank bed benefiting the cattle for grazing. Families, particularly the poor have benefited as they can cultivate at least a small piece of land with assured water and get crops to sustain their families. There is a feeling of pride among villagers as they have adopted this system. *Damasha* also represents the extent of cooperation among the villagers and their respect to the traditional values. Villagers do not remember any incidences of major disputes regarding sharing of water or allotment of land. Minor disputes are solved by mutual discussions and by neergatti.
- The system is acceptable to all because, farmers who do not become part of it are at loss. Though they have their land beside the tank they cannot draw water from the tank. Their field will be left fallow. So villagers gain by cooperation and lose by non-cooperation.

THE DRAWBACKS

It should be well appreciated that villagers have adopted a unique sharing method during times of scarcity. But, this model has almost slipped into static mode of operation. More than seven decades have passed since its inception. Villagers have followed the principles laid down by their elders without making further efforts to increase the extent of its coverage. There is increase in population, livestock and the number of households depending on the tank over the years. During the summer, the tank dries and there is little water left for livestock. Villagers know that removing the silt can increase the capacity of tank. But they have not made any major efforts since last 40-50 years to remove the silt except once under the scheme of *Jala Samvardhane Yojana Sangha* (JSYS).

Villagers cite the following reasons for not initiating any work in this connection:

1. Since the government owns the tanks, villagers feel that the government should undertake the work of removal of silt from the tanks.
2. Majority of the farmers in Bodampally and Channrayanhalli are marginal and small farmers, hence cannot contribute towards silt removal. Under the *Zilla Panchayat* (the local government) programme of silt removal, villagers have to pay 15% of the cost, rest of which is borne by the government.
3. As a result, the capacity of the tanks to hold water had reduced drastically and the bunds had washed out in many places.
4. Party politics: The villagers said that getting support of people for any new work was difficult as there were different opinions from groups belonging to political parties. These problems were not found in the village earlier to panchayat elections.

However, under the state government's JSYS, farmers once tried to clear the encroachment, undertook repair works, desilted the inlets and the tanks and planted the saplings. Women were also involved. Around 3000 saplings were planted in the command area. The research team feels that villagers can contribute half in terms of labour and remaining half in terms of cash for removing silt or rejuvenation of tank. By doing so, they will be extending the coverage of tank water to a larger area, thereby increasing the productivity and income.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MODEL

Discussions with the village elders, women and youth indicates that people will continue the application of *damasha* in the near future. People in this village give importance to education. Hence, majority of the youth are educated. Educated youth also feel that the system of *damasha* should continue as it enables every farmer to have one crop to sustain livelihood in times of scarcity of water. If farmers participate they may get additional income during times of drought.

During the visit of the research team, one of the family members of the first two watermen had taken the work of distribution of water to the fields. The family was continuing the services of water distribution on payment of 30 bags of paddy per annum. In future, if none of the members from these households are available, villagers may assign the duty to others who are unemployed and are willing to take up the work. It is likely that new watermen may demand more in cash or kind to undertake this work, which would increase the burden of the farmers.

CAN THIS MODEL BE APPLICABLE ELSEWHERE IN THE STATE?

- Yes! This type of distribution can be practiced if all tanks are treated as common in the villages and if villagers agree on the concept that everyone has right over water. Since water is scarce, it should be distributed evenly to all the farmers.
- The current practice in other villages is that only those farmers whose agricultural fields are near the tank benefit from village water tank. Farmers whose fields are far off cannot draw water, as laying pipeline is costly for small and marginal farmers. But, *damasha* provides water to all near the tank.
- *Damasha* can be successful if, majority of the landholdings are small.
- For successful implementation of *damasha* it is necessary that farmers from all the social groups participate in this common activity.
- A reference (Vishwanath 2021) to Pichaguntlahalli village in Mulbagal taluk of Kolar district practicing *damasha* indicates that others have also followed this practice and it is replicable. A large tank of 40 hectares of command area desilted by village women was adopted for practicing *damasha.* Kolar being a water-stressed district, might have compelled the villagers to adopt water saving and sharing practices. So, *damasha* appears to be a unique feature of Kolar

district. *Damasha* discussed so far is in Chintamani taluk of Chikkaballapur district, which was earlier in Kolar district.

CURRENT STATUS

Of late it is observed that this unique practice of unity, sharing and mutual benefit of water management achieved by converting private land into community land during times of water scarcity is fading. In the backdrop of the depletion of ground water level and water scarcity in the district, the gram panchayat has intervened to stop the release of water for agriculture. The gram panchayat has sealed the point from where the water was being released to the fields. The villagers are pursuing the gram panchayat, but their efforts have been in vain. The villagers desire that the traditional system of water management for irrigation be restored.

SUGGESTIONS

The current status of the tanks is a big drawback to '*damasha*', which is being practiced for more than 60 years. Although farmers used the resource during times of scarcity, the researchers found that there was an absence of efforts by the community to conserve and develop the tanks as the ownership of these tanks lies with the government. This has currently resulted in sealing of the outlet releasing water from the tank by grama panchayat almost after six decades of practicing *damasha*. This is also a lesson to villagers who only took benefits from the tank without conserving it. Had the villagers maintained the tank and desilted it with proper vegetation surrounding it, this problem would not have occurred. Moreover, the gram panchayat instead of sealing the water release outlet could have given a chance to villagers to conserve and rejuvenate the tank in whatever little capacity they could to enhance water storage and sustain bio diversity. Traditional practices, particularly of this kind should not be abandoned. Therefore, a formal arrangement may be made to shift the management of the tank to the community which can get the benefits of maintenance by way of getting contract for the sale of fish and for supplying water through tankers for household consumption to motivate the villagers to participate in the management of the tanks throughout the year. The gram panchayat may also take up conservation of tank with desilting and vegetation under government schemes and, promote rain water harvesting in the village as the district is drought prone. The watershed department should take some initiatives to preserve this unique water management system.

CONCLUSIONS

Damasha is a well-designed model, which stands as a finest example recognizing water rights in irrigation. In Bodampally and Channarayanhalli, landless population is allowed to use the water for different purposes, but there is no provision for sale of water to other persons. Scarcity makes man to cooperate and that is what has happened in Bodampalli and Channrayanhalli villages. And, cooperation for water resource management is not a new idea in the country as specified earlier. Warabandi system (wherein each farmer gets water from the total flow in proportion to his land holding and in rotational system) practiced in northwestern states in canal irrigation and in some irrigation projects in the south has some similarities with *damasha*. So it may not be difficult for the farmers in other districts and states to practice *damasha* on the common resources, particularly village common tanks. Those who own land can use the water for irrigation and with an extended version of this model, those who do not own land can sell their share of water. Since the practice of *damasha* necessitates temporary abandoning of land rights (near the tanks) during scarcity, adoption of such system in any villages requires creating awareness on the working of the model. The Water Committees of village panchayat, which are functional today, may be the main facilitators in this regard.

It is a best practice of subsistence living followed in times of drought that gives equal opportunity to all the farmers to gain. It can be replicable in villages having large public or community tanks. It sets an example for integrity, belief in traditional system and realization of common gain for all against the current practices of competition, water disputes both within the communities and between the governments. The communities can learn from this practice and replicate the model in water stressed areas without even depending on institutional support. Overall, looking in to the current system of frequent water disputes between neighbours, between villages, between states and countries, *damasha* appears to be a silver lining in water sharing and distribution.

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TOWARDS A DEVELOPED STATUS - HARNESSING INDIA'S INQUISITIVE INTELLECT

Rajiv Talwar*

Abstract

Over the years India has been witnessing a large migration of the studied elite abroad for better prospects abroad. India is home to many world-class educational institutions like the India Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). Entry into these institutes is after a highly competitive process with only a few getting lucky to get in. This migration has been the highest from amongst the above institutions boasting of the cream of Indian minds. With the current Aatma Nirbhar initiatives of the Government of India many amongst these have been sucked into the Indian challenge of innovation and are becoming entrepreneurs raising startups of their own, some having created unicorns. This has created space for the not so lucky ones from the second-tier institutes and smaller cities, who are equally capable if not more. The result, brain drain out of India continues. Ebbing this trend is the need of the hour for the government in power as every pair of hands is important for the country in her reach out to a developed status in the comity of nations. With this view in mind the present paper examines the trend of brain drain and prospects of harnessing the inquisitive intellect of India.

Keywords: Brain, Drain, Intellect, Migration, Research, Inquisitive

INTRODUCTION

77 years down the line, since her independence, India has become a vibrant democracy with its citizens brimming with hope and confidence. Showcasing many hues, the country has been steadily progressing in its quest to becoming an entity with a voice in the world comity of nations. The countries' economy

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has been demonstrating a steady growth ever since the embracing of a changed economic thought in 1991. The last twenty years India has been witness to two decade long steady governances at the centre. Both, with different and varied ideologies, did converge on the idea of India developing. And, today with this as the base the Prime Minister of the country has set out a dream for the country to attain a developed country status by the turn of India's centenary of independence. Twenty-three years to go and much to achieve, the growth engine has been given a rocket boost and all it remains is for the boost phase to take India to higher heights. Time has come to harness each able set of hands and brains amongst the 140 billion to contribute to the vision.

India's recorded history goes back many thousands of years and the country boasts of a heritage that allows Indians to bask in the glory of learned sages who did India proud with their wisdom. The wisdom enshrined in the Vedas has been there to guide the Indian thought and to provide a wide and wise knowledge base. Always known for intellect, India has been home to many a thinkers and innovators like Chanakya, Aryabhata, Bhaskara and many more. Much of history having being obliterated during the British occupation of India, India of the twentieth century has also been a cradle of innovation with names like CV Raman, Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabhai amongst many others. The economic reforms in the late twentieth century opened up new vistas of growth with the country developing at a fast rate. The average economic growth rate of the country has been more than 6% in the last fifteen years (GoI: 2024 Aug). The figures bear testimony that Indian businesses are growing and consequently are in a position to create more and more jobs for the Indian youth.

India's intellect, since independence, has slowly and steadily seen a shift of base outside the shores. The prospects of a better life and work environment have been the common lures. For some it has also been better job opportunities and a chance of bolstering their incomes as compared to what they would earn in India. Many of those who have trained in the prestigious Technological and Management institutes have migrated. Some, because they themselves wanted to and some because they were wooed by foreign institutes and businesses. Move to America or Europe or the West was the common aspiration, in the eighties and nineties known as the American Dream, of every school going child. The migration has not only been restricted to the upper elite colleges it has been equally there at the low end of the income group. This move has predominantly been to the gulf nations where a demand has always existed for skilled, semi-skilled and low skilled workers. The result, Indian inquisitive brains whether at the high end or the lower income group end have been steadily migrating.

INDIA'S LANDSCAPE OF INTELLECT

Parents in India for long have propagated a thought amongst their children to study hard while in school. There has been a general clamour amongst the parents to see their children stand first in their class. This stems from the practical experience of having seen the struggles for finding the occupation of choice followed by the preferred job. The job choices being limited to a few professions was often the reason. Yes, finding a job was a common goal for majority amongst the Indian families. The opening of the economy in 1991 brought in a paradigm shift where more opportunities started to take shape and the scenario over years transformed. Occupation opportunities increased phenomenally but what kept pace was the sense of competition. Irrespective of the profession the competition to get through was intense. In the competitive world of today, in a country with a large population, a child does need to excel and prove intellect to achieve success. Getting into institutes of substance for example like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) or Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) is no small feat.

IIT has carved out a niche for itself as being amongst the best in engineering institutes available in India. Prior to 1991 the number of such institutes in the country was only five. Environment demanded more such institutes and over time the numbers have kept increasing and reached a figure of 16 in 2012. The period from 2008 – 2012 saw an infusion of nine of them into the Indian landscape. Today, in 2024 the number has swelled up to 23 with seven more getting added in the two years of 2015 & 2016. This in itself is a great feat for the country having realised the worth of studying in such an institution. An insight into the value that the country gives to an IIT graduate can be thus gauged. The number of students who aspire to enter the portals of the prestigious IITs is in lakhs. For 2024 there were only 17760 seats available for the taking for all IITs combined. The Joint Entrance Examination - JEE (Main), the first hurdle to cross, saw 11,70,036 students sitting for the examination. Qualifying numbers were limited with a cap applied and only 2,50,284 could qualify to compete for the said seats. A 21 % cut had got applied at the first stage itself. The second stage had 1,80,200 appearing for the examination and only 48,248 finally qualified to be eligible for the said available seats (GoI: 2024 Nov). This in itself brings out the challenge faced into getting inside one of the 23 such institutions of high intellect. Those who get in could thus be termed high achievers.

The story is no different for getting into the top IIMs considered as the best business schools of the country today. Till 1991 the country had only four IIMs with a mandate to produce business leaders. Once again, the opening of the economic scene saw an infusion of IIMs into the Indian landscape. By 2011 the country had thirteen such institutes with six getting added in the two years from 2010 – 11. The country boasts of 21 IIMs, as of 2024, which are producing business leader's adept at good business practices capable of doing the country proud. Seven institutes got established in the two years from 2015 – 16. A Common Admission Test (CAT) is mandatory for becoming eligible for entry into IIMs. In 2023 a total of 3.28 lakh applicants registered for the said examination with finally 2.88 lakh appearing (India Today Research Bureau: 2023). The total seats available for the students were 5500 for 2024 (Dhawan: 2024). An entry CAT percentile of above 90 is the least with it being minimum 98 for the top ranked ones of the 21 institutes in all (Shrivastava: 2024). The ones who despite this manage to enter these portals are indeed the cream of the country of that year. And, who doesn't want the cream. The demand for these brains of India from IITs, IIMs and other institutes is very high world over.

Indian student migration numbers over the years tell a story. The numbers are increasing every year. In 2023, as per the numbers put out by the Ministry of external affairs, 7,65,000 students migrated from India. This was an increase from 2022 when 7,50,000 migrated (Rathore: 2024). A study conducted in Jun 23 on the migrations from India, with a sample set of 2010, analyses the numbers to bring out that amongst the top 1000 scorers at IIT 36 % migrated abroad. It gets further interesting when one moves to the top 100 where migration stood at 62 % and out of the top 10 the number stood at 09. Interestingly again the study brings out that 83 % of these migrated for higher education and for carrying out PhDs with only 17 % moving out to take up jobs (Choudhury et al: 2023). This in itself speaks volumes of the Indian brain and the high demand that the world places on the Indian talent. This of course is visible across the world when one sees the current list of CEOs of Indian origin heading operations of many known brands. It is the 83% number here which speaks of what an Indian student is looking out for, quality higher education with opportunities for research.

It was in 2014 when the current Prime Minister went onto the podium at Red Fort and exhorted Indians to focus on the thought of 'Made in India'. He also invited the world to come to India by coming out with a slogan 'Make in India' by exhorting the world businesses to come and manufacture in India and sell anywhere in the world.[1] These were the thoughts that spurred many Indians to rethink on their priorities of migrating or staying in India. It was also the time that Indian minds were exhorted to become entrepreneurs rather than job seekers. Many govt initiatives were launched with 'Startup India' getting launched on 16 Jan 2016. India was witness to a paradigm shift with many brilliant brains taking up the challenge and the associated risks to contribute to the Indian economy by creating startups by staying in India. Success of some was instant. Earlier India had witnessed very few startups becoming 'Unicorns', those with a valuation above 1 billion $, the number being one to two a year if the figures from 2011 to 2017 are to be believed. Come 2018 India saw 10 unicorns. 2019 and 2020 saw 07 and 12 respectively and 2021 saw the number reaching 45 the highest ever (Invest India: 2023). The total figure on date has crossed the hundred-mark figure giving an insight into what Indian brains can do for themselves and for the country.

Notwithstanding the creation of unicorns, within the Indian business landscape another worrisome fact came to fore. Efforts had been made for the high achievers of the country to have been harnessed to stay in India and create and contribute at home. However, the world eco-system that had been used to cultivating the Indian brain for their own progress was still existing. There was a chance of a vacuum getting created and hence the focus quickly of the foreign recruiters was shifted to the second-tier Indian cities and to students from second tier colleges. These students were equally qualified, if not better, with some perhaps having just missed out entering the prestigious IITs. These were the students who came from families who could not earlier afford to send their children abroad due to financial constraints. Now with the improvement in the Indian household incomes it became possible for these families to also start looking abroad on their own accord (Rao: 2023). The result, the numbers migrating rather than reducing continued an increase with India continuing to lose on brilliant brains. The Indian brain drain thus continues with the world benefitting.

India's intellectual landscape also has another facet. This is the landscape that rises from the Indian villages and small cities. This is a landscape that belongs to the people who have risen from very meagre earnings and form the lower strata of earners of the country. The intellect of the people who have not been fortunate enough to get high end education access is another asset for the country. Un/low/semi-skilled, some of them, but innovative and inquisitive in the ways of the world all of them. Indian *Jugaad*, a terminology widely used comes from these mindsets who know how to use their brains and find low end solutions to problems, sometimes bigger. These solutions, temporary as they might be, are innovative to the core and are available in India in abundance. When skilled these low-end innovators have the potential of contributing big to the nations progress. The skill India initiative of 2015 has contributed towards providing skill-based training to Indian youth. This trained Indian youth is now looking for job opportunities to improve his/her financial status. The world is keeping an eye out for such skilled labour force as well. The world is also getting smarter with adoption of pick and choose of the people they sponsor. The cream is what is most sought.

Indian worker migration figures indicate a constant and continuous migration for better salaries. As on date the Non-Resident Indians (NRI) numbers stand at 1,58,50,612 (GoI: 2024 Nov a). More than 50% of these numbers belong to the middle east nations which have been a constant recipient of Indian worker force over the years. These Indian workers get employment in these countries in the informal sectors engaging themselves in low/semi-skilled jobs (Singh: 2022). Each one of these abroad is a source that could be tapped within the nation provided there are opportunities that are equally lucrative. The Indian manufacturing sector would be in need of skilled and unskilled labour force. Given the right atmosphere even those currently abroad would want to get back to their families and work within the nation. There definitely would be a dent in the remittance numbers for India but those would be easily makeable with in house production of goods. Industry establishment boost has to become the new focus area for the country, sector might be any.

STEMMING THE BRAIN DRAIN

Time has come for the country to start looking at the ways to keep own brains back home. The imperative for the day is to get together and understand the game of research. Creation of world class facilities for furthering research has to become a national importance task for the govt in power. This would have to be executed both by the centre as well as the states with the completion date being as of yesterday. For the country to achieve its development aim it is imperative that this mission has the backing of world class in house research. Harnessing of the universities of the country, public or private, to revamp their research centres with modern day ethos is the need of the hour. Centres of excellence would have to be created with brilliant Indian young brains being given research infrastructure that allows for germination of innovative thoughts. The existing faculties, there being many who would want to be a part of the new journey, would have to be goaded to buckle up and harness the research initiative towards newer glory. I for one can easily say that there are many Indians abroad who would love to get back to Indian shores given the correct environment both at work and off it.

Creation of new research facilities would require huge infusion of funds. For the private sector to get into the game along with huge funding they would require some govt guarantees of benefits for the money infused in research. India has for years depended upon its Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs). The public sector of India has been the backbone for India since its inception post-independence. Number of PSUs that exist in India as of today stand at 365 (GoI: 2024 Nov b). Many have over the years been privatised as well. It is time for the govt to make the PSUs get involved in the new growth story of India by setting up of research centres that could be utilised and leveraged even by the private industry. Product wise clusters could be thought of that could then combine their intellectual skill sets towards innovating. Huge infrastructures already exist and all it would take would be to reach out to like-minded intellectuals to spearhead an era of revolution which is totally Indian in its application. Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which are getting created in the country with the Aatma Nirbhar push could also get linked with these research centres thereby contributing towards the growth story of tomorrows India.

Defence is another field where the call for Aatma Nirbharta is the new buzz. It is also one sector where gestation periods are long and it would be very difficult for the startups to match up. Another facet of this sector is the requirement of huge funds for harnessing of niche technologies. This then requires a govt push to entice the big businesses of the country to set up quality research infrastructure. This then would attract young Indian inquisitive brains to stay within the country and contribute to the cause. The defence landscape as of now is dominated by a select few in the world who have developed key technologies and are continuing to innovate even today to create. Indian existing public sector creations need a comprehensive revamp. New research focus needs to be defined which if 180 degrees opposite so be it. The budgets existing may need to be doubled but that would bring in benefits many times over in the times to come. Where there is research there is bound to be failure. Building a stomach to digest failures, learn from them and then to innovate is the only way to success and a developed status.

Remunerations in the Indian industry would also have to be hiked at par with those as the world over. The present remunerations at all levels are low and somewhere are contributing immensely towards keeping the brain drain active. The fact that the best need enticement by ways of tickling the mental faculties as also better lifestyles needs imbibing. The govt has to take a lead in this. Present govt salaries are placed at an even scale with all of a particular grade being paid equal irrespective of the output displayed. New visions require new paradigms and now is the time to rethink Indian remuneration policies. For starters output based approach that allows the country to progress needs mulling over and implementing. A patent achieved within the country needs incentivising motivating others. Innovation has to be made a national goal with anyone and everyone, irrespective of the strata they belong to, getting rewarded and assisted for further development. Time is now to use the Indian Jugaad for the benefits that it has accrued over the years in providing solutions Indian to the core.

The world is also witnessing a revolution of sorts with disruptive technologies like Artificial intelligence, quantum computing, big data and block chain technology being some pointers. Harnessing these in good measure is another area that has to be given a focus. This revolution in technology is fast happening with the world at large making huge leaps some with Indian brains at the fore. We in India need to grab the opportunity and start understanding the compounding benefits that these technologies can bring our way. Efforts would have to be made with dedicated research in these fields creating and opening doors of new vistas for the country. Just like India today has made a name for itself by being one of the best English language speaking nations of the world. Our service industry is a huge contributor to the Indian revenue generation machinery. In a similar way these technologies and others that are being taught in our institutions have to be harnessed. Students with demonstrated performance have to be coaxed to stay within.

FINAL THOUGHTS

India witnessing a brain drain is nothing new. Everyone in the country has been affected by it and we have today come to accept this as a fact of life and perhaps that is the reason that concerted efforts have not been put towards stemming the out flow. Time has to come to wake up to the perils of the occurrence and understand that an individual would go where better prospects beckon. We need to create equally good infrastructure in India at par with the best to be able to retain the best brains to contribute to the country and be there to take the nation into the comity of developed nations. The task of maintaining India's intellect within the confines of the country is not an easy one. The creation of better prospects within and the will to contribute for the growth of the country would go a long way towards retaining India's brains for India. The inquisitive of today are yearning to stay within and contribute. All they require is the right environment. The fact is that migration would always be a reality. Efforts need to be put in to ensure that the cream of the nation stays within whether highly skilled or low skilled.

The research facilities existing as of today need immediate introspection towards improving the conditions being provided for research. They would have to become key drivers of this revolution of retaining intellect by seeking and providing better prospects to the Indian inquisitive brains. Foreign shores have thin populations in their own countries and have always relied on overseas personnel. Time has come for the world to come to India and seek work from here rather than seeking our brains to join them in their own countries. We need to get wise towards our strengths and learn to harness them lest we repent as someone will definitely pounce given a chance. Make in India is a great initiative that will provide India with creation of job avenues as also will contribute to the India's intellect to get harnessed within. The present growth rates of the country have provided a firm launch platform capable of providing a boost towards an upward trajectory. Economic development being the key would follow in the shadows propelling India towards a status of a developed nation.

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ADOPTION OF E-GOVERNANCE: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Researches on e-governance adoption has increasingly been raised since information and communication technology was used in the public sector. Much research on e-governance adoption has been published over the past ten years. The purpose of this research was to determine the evolutionary trajectory of research in e-governance adoption based on bibliometric gauges such as publications, source distribution, and authors; the co-occurrence and cluster analysis reveals patterns and interrelationships among key concepts, authors, and documents in e-governance adoption. The study also examines the impact of authors, keywords, publications, journals, and countries in the e-governance adoption literature. The present study endeavors to form bibliometric analysis as a comprehensive assessment of the evolution of e-governance literature. After evaluating, identifying, and synthesizing the extensive publications, 239 articles were selected. These articles were extracted from Scopus databases. The research employs VOSviewer and RStudio software for solving research questions. The finding indicates that there has been considerable growth in the research focusing on the adoption of e-governance. The cluster analysis reveals the primary research keywords in the e-governance adoption field delineated by their distinctive association. It also provides the framework for advancing exploration in this particular domain.

Keywords: adoption, bibliometric, e-governance, RStudio, VOSviewer

INTRODUCTION

All around the globe, governments have harnessed e-governance systems to enhance their services by utilizing information and communication technology

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(ICT) for information processing and transforming communication platforms (Fernández & Batanero et al., 2020). According to previous research, e-governance can revolutionize government operations, enhancing service quality and increasing trust among organizations and citizens (Fakhruzzaman & Dimitrova, 2020). It enhances access to government evidence and the delivery of services to citizens, partners, and government entities and organizations (Mustafa et al., 2020). This technology can foster a deeper societal self-awareness by establishing a regulatory framework for information-centric endeavors (Ziba & Kang, 2020). Most developing nations embrace e- government initiatives, often with support from international funders like the World Bank, aiming to alleviate poverty and facilitate development (Gyamfi et al., 2019; Ziba & Kang, 2020). The rapid technological advancements of the past two decades have prompted governments to initiate e-governance services to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in their operations (Wairiuko et al., 2018). E-government services have the potential to enhance the overall quality of government operations. However, the research on adopting e-governance can be challenging because of the complex environment. (Sabani, 2021).

E-governance is a multidisciplinary research field that is explored through a diverse arrayof approaches (Dwivedi, 2009). In the public sector, adopting e-governance literature has experienced a substantial surge in the number of studies published across various outlets, coinciding with the widespread implementation of ICT. This has significantly amplified scholarlyand global interest, prompting researchers and scholars to delve into this expanding domain.

The present study uses a bibliometric analysis and a quantitative approach to examine bibliographic material while minimizing subjective bias (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Cobo et al., 2011a, in their study employs the network's visualization technique. The VOS algorithm visually represents similarities between objects, such as citations, with their spatial arrangement reflecting the degree of similarity (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). A bibliometric study is essential to map the features and present how the items are prearranged, interrelated, and showed and to show the evolving leanings of a research field (Donthu et al., 2021). The study significantly enhances our understanding of the e-governance landscape by delving into various facets. Firstly, it sheds light on the evolutionary trajectory and the current state of research within the e-governance domain. This comprehensive analysis quantifies publications, distribution sources, noteworthy authors, influential documents, co-occurrence patterns, and cluster formations.

Secondly, the research offers valuable insights for scholars and researchers by uncovering interconnections within the existing literature on e-governance. This serves as a roadmap for navigating the complex network of ideas. The findings from this study can potentially guide future research endeavors, inform strategic decision-making in e-governance globally.

Given the ongoing emergence of e-governance adoption research, conducting such a review can help understand the evolution of research, identify current trends, and predict potential advancements in future e-governance research.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to discern recurrent themes and potential topics within the realm of e-governance adoption. To achieve this objective, bibliometric analysis research method, is adopted which facilitates the organized examination of volume, knowledge advancement indicators, and intellectual frameworks within the specified domain.

This method employs a synergistic integration of bibliometric text-mining and visualization techniques to augment our comprehension of the research landscape and pinpoint prominent areas of interest within e-governance. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the evolutionary trajectory of research in e-governance adoption based on bibliometric gauges such as publications, source distribution, and authors?
2. How do co-occurrence and cluster analysis reveal patterns and interrelationships among key concepts, authors, and documents in e-governance adoption?
3. What insights can be derived from examining the impact of authors, keywords, publications, journals, and countries in the e-governance adoption literature?

By addressing these research questions, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of e-governance adoption, offering a roadmap for future research endeavors and aiding in identifying crucial themes within the field.

DATA SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHODS

The methodology integrates quantitative and qualitative, approach to organize the data (Alshater et al., 2021). By leveraging the bibliometric approach, the research aims to uncover patterns, trends, and interrelationships within the e-governance implementation landscape, offering a nuanced understanding of the field's dynamics.

Pritchard introduced this method in 1962, which has since been widely adopted by various studies (Baraibar, Diez et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2020). Bibliometric analysis, as defined by Broadus (1987), is an examination of written publications that scrutinizes the historical trajectory of scientific works(Lee et al., 2005). In this research, VOSviewer and RStudio software have been utilized. These softwares are instrumental in illustrating refined patterns within a specific area by graphically representing bibliographic content. Employing nodes and their connections enables the readers tocomprehend the maps more effectively. Additionally, the study utilised the Biblioshiny tool available on R Studio software. This research adopts a five-step methodology, such as (a) definingthe appropriate search terms, (b) obtaining the initial search results, (c) refining the search result (d) compiling data statistics, and (e) analyzing data to identify the higher-impact studies, as shownin Figure 1 (Garza-Reyes, 2015).

Figure 1: Five Phases of Bibliometric Analysis

APPROPRIATE SEARCH TERMS

This research employed a search strategy utilizing keywords formulated as search strings pertinent to e-governance adoption. The keywords were systematically explored within the articles' title, keywords, and abstract. The search methodology involved a careful selection and combination of terms to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant literature on e-governance adoption. as follows: *TITLE-ABS-KEY ("e-governance"), TITLE-ABS-KEY ("e-government"), TITLE-ABS-KEY ("e-gov"), TITLE-ABS-KEY ("electronic government"), TITLE-ABS-KEY ("digital government"), and TITLE-ABS-KEY (adoption)*. The search was restricted to the period from 2001 to 2022.

Obtaining Initial Search Results

With the above search criteria, 239 documents were found. Searching for articles in an electronic database is a common and essential step in research to gather information and access reputable scientific literature. One widely recognized and reputable electronic database often utilized is Scopus, known for its extensive collection of scholarly articles and research papers across various disciplines. Researchers rely on Scopus to access a vast repository of peer-reviewedarticles and the bibliographic data was extracted in CSV file format.

Refining Search Results

Following acquiring the initial results, inclusion criteria were applied to filter the search outcomes. This meticulous selection was based on recognizing and providing reliable and validated results. This approach ensures that the dataset for analysis comprises rigorously vetted and scholarly contributions, enhancing the credibility and robustness of the research findings (Haleem et al., 2020 Bhatt et al., 2020). Consequently, conference proceedings, book chapters, newspapers, letters, and editorials were deliberately excluded, aligning the research with a high standard of scholarly literature.

Compiling Data Statistics

The search dataset was verified and classified based on publications, authors, journals, authors, and subject area.

Analyzing Data

The review encompassed 239 articles published from the year 2001 to 2022 in 115 journals. Five hundred sixty-two authors have issued them in 36 countries. The total number of keywords included in the review were 751. The average citations per article were 50.44. The Biblioshiny in RStudio was used to generate the essential information for the article set as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Basic Information

Description	*Results*
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2001:2022
Sources (Journals)	115
Documents	239
Annual growth rate (%)	10.22
Document average age	6.88
Average citations per doc	50.44
References	1
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords plus (ID)	196
Author's keywords (DE)	751
AUTHORS	
Authors	562
Authors of single-authored docs	44
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	51
Co-authors per doc	2.64
International co-authorships (%)	20.5
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	239

Source: Review data

The following paragraphs highlight the main findings of the data retrieved from the 239 articles.

Number of Articles Published Year-Wise. Figure 2 shows the annual scientific production of research on e-governance adoption based on the articles published per year. An analysis of published data is conducted from the year 2001 to 2022. The adoption of e- governance research worldwide shows the highest publication (30 publications) in 2022.

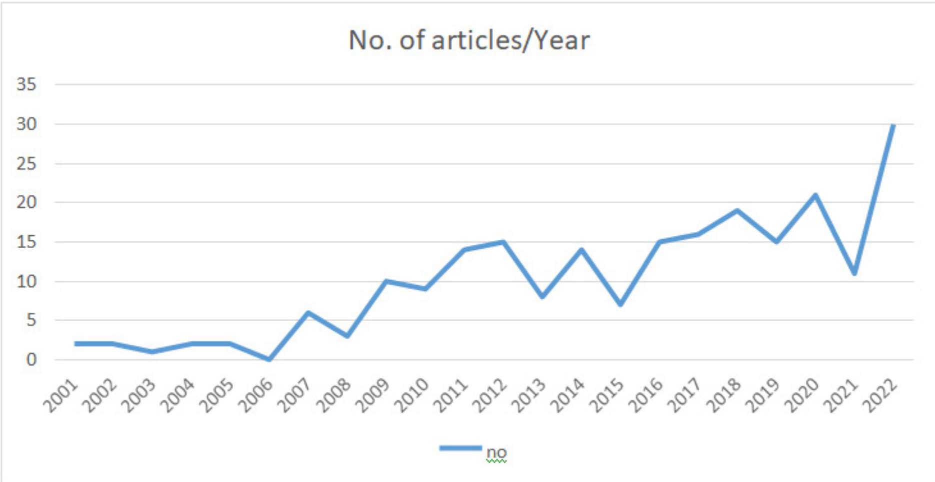

Figure 2: Number of Articles Published Year Wise

Diversity in Geographical Distribution of Publication. According to the publications in Figures 3 and 3a, limited countries are taking the initiative of e-governance research. Mainly the studies belong to the USA (34%) and China (26%), which is a size towards e- governance adoption research. Figure 3 indicate the number of publications and the percentage of total publications belonging to a specific region.

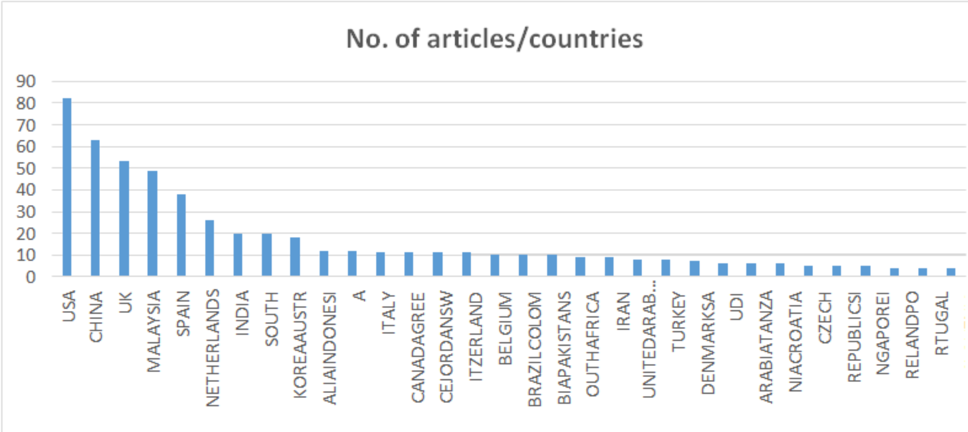

Figure 3: Number of Articles Published in the Countries

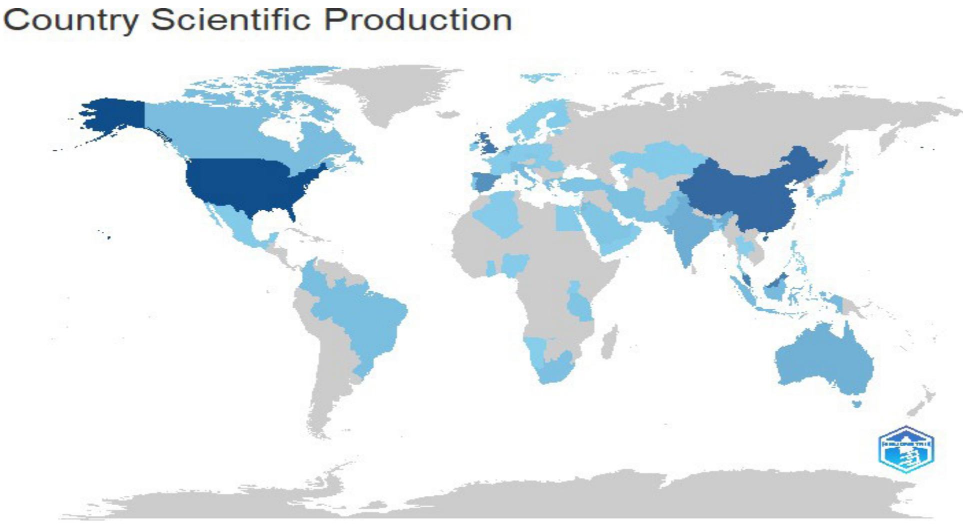

Figure 3a: Countries' Scientific Production

Journals Consisting of the Highest Number of Articles Published in E-governance Adoption Research. Figure 4 shows the most influential top peer-reviewed journal between 2001 and 2022 that consists of publications in e-governance adoption research. The leading journal based on publication numbers is Government Information Quarterly, which has published 64 articles out of 239 used in the present study and published by Elsevier.

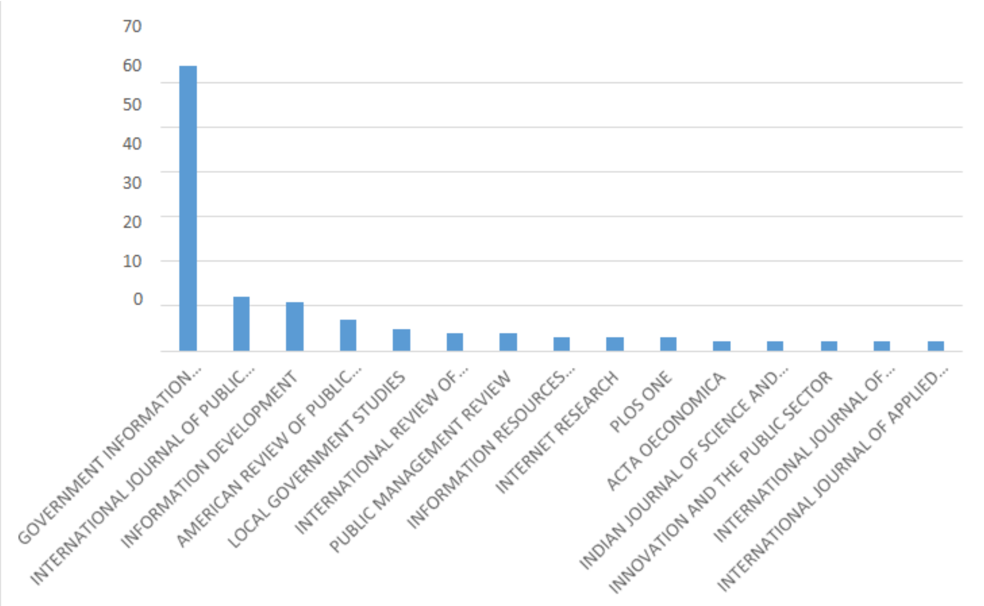

Figure 4: Journals Having the Most Articles Published

Corresponding Authors' Countries in the Publication of E-Governance Adoption Research. Figure 5 indicates the corresponding authors' countries with published articles in peer-reviewed journals. The USA has the highest multiple-country publications, and India, Jordan, South Africa, and Turkey have single-country publications in e-governance adoption.

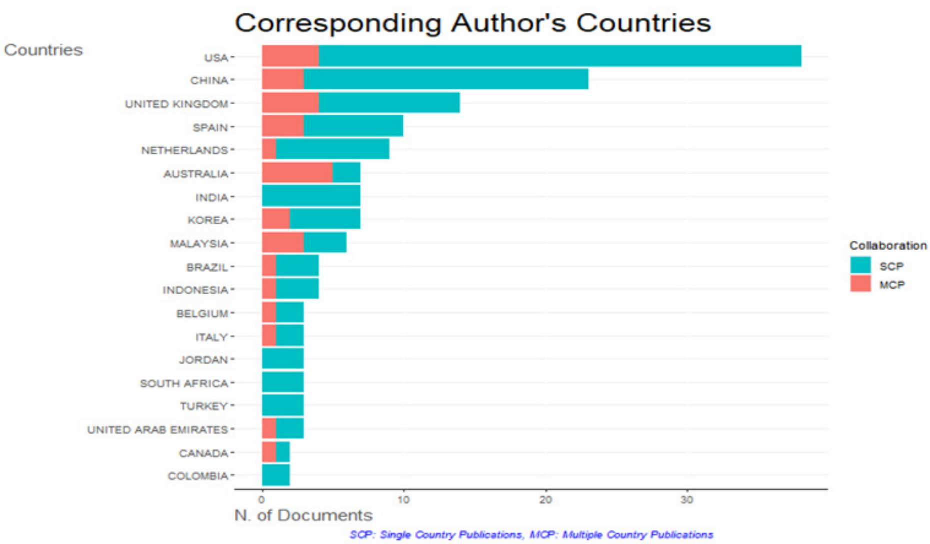

Figure 5: Corresponding Authors' Countries With Published Articles

Contributing Authors Who Have Published Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals. Figure 6 indicates the authors who have published articles in peer-reviewed journals. Out of the list, I. K. Mensah becomes the most productive author—authoring 11 articles,followed by M. K. Feeney and Z. Irani authoring five articles each, and Y. K. Dwivedi authoringfour articles as a contribution toward e-governance adoption research.

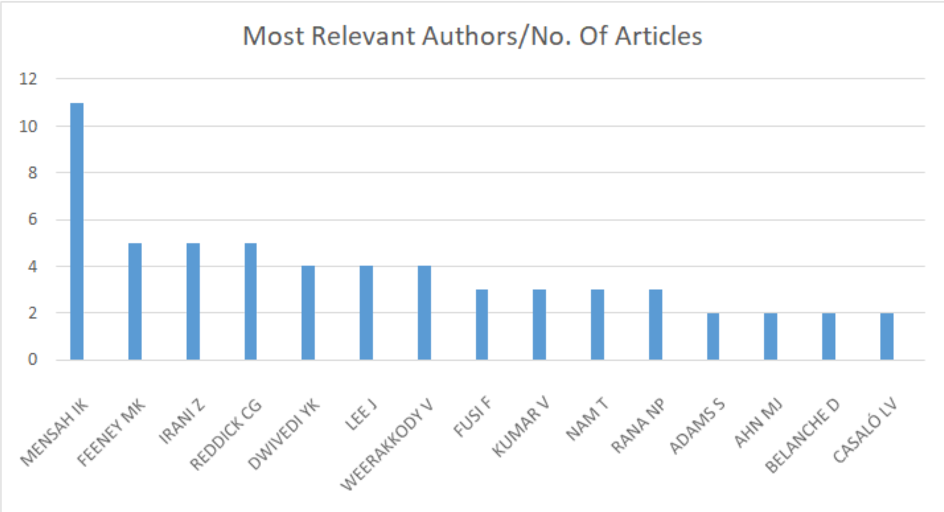

Figure 6: *Contributing Authors With Published Articles*

Number of Citations Concerning the number of authors' citations most authors referenced works from the USA, accumulating 2660 citations, as depicted in Figure 7. Notably, when identifying the most cited authors, the name M. J. Moon emerges prominently, aligning with expectations, especially in e-governance adoption studies.

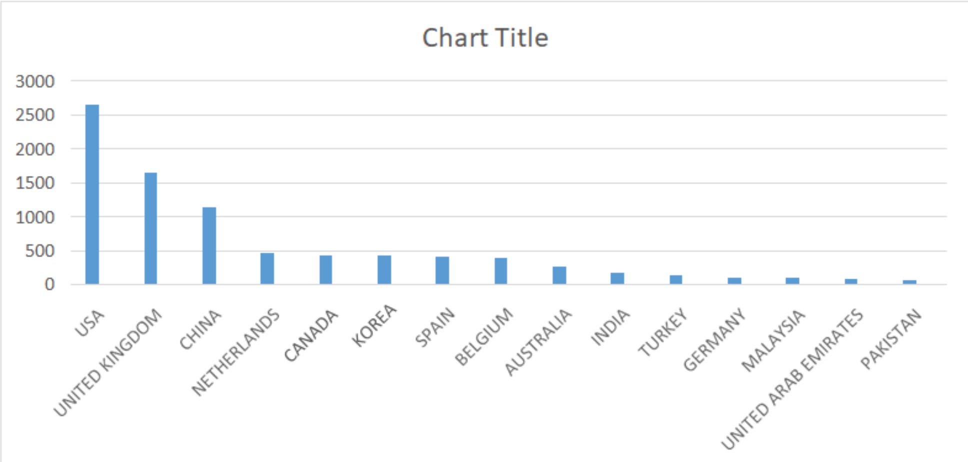

Figure 7: *Number of Citations*

KEYWORD STATISTICS

Keyword statistics have been visualized using VOSviewer software. VOSviewer is a valuable tool for bibliometric analysis and for creating graphical representations of research networks and collaborations. VOSviewer is widely appreciated for its ability to handle large datasets and present bibliometric maps in an accessible and interpretable manner.

Co-word analysis is a methodology that examines the text within publications, revealing joint occurrences of key ideas in a particular area (Cobo et al., 2011b). Typically, words for co-word analysis are sourced from abstracts, author keywords, or document titles (Donthu et al., 2021). A pool of 751 author keywords was initially drawn from the 239 publications and through this process, the final keywords were identified (Davarzani et al., 2016). Figure 8 illustrates that most keywords align with the specified search criteria (Soriano et al., 2018). Predominantly, these keywords pertain to the domain of e-governance adoption. The preserved bibliometric data serves as a robust platform for visualizing research connections, pinpointing key research themes, and tracking academic trends within the field. Researchers commonly rely on VOS viewer for these analytical purposes (Hudha et al., 2020).

KEYWORDS VISUALIZATION USING VOSVIEWER

This analysis was directed to visualize the result based on frequently occurring keywords, which is useful to show the keywords used by the researchers that had been searched for the last two decades.

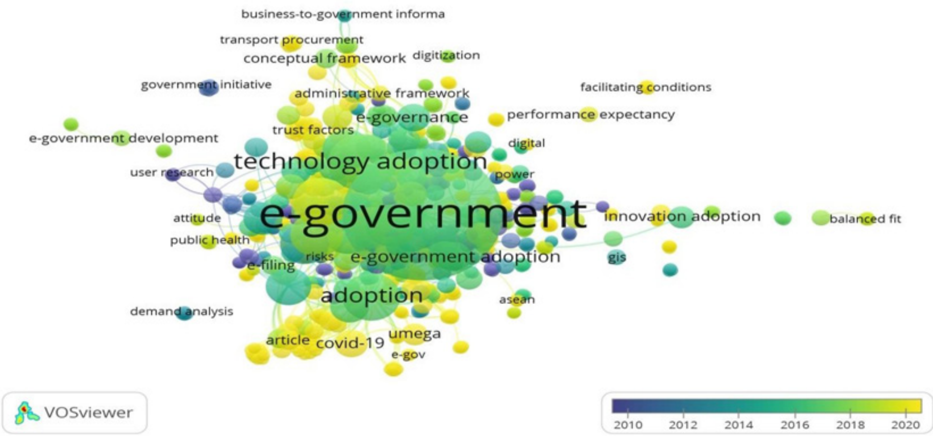

Figure 8: Overlay Visualizations of Scopus Database Using VOSviewer

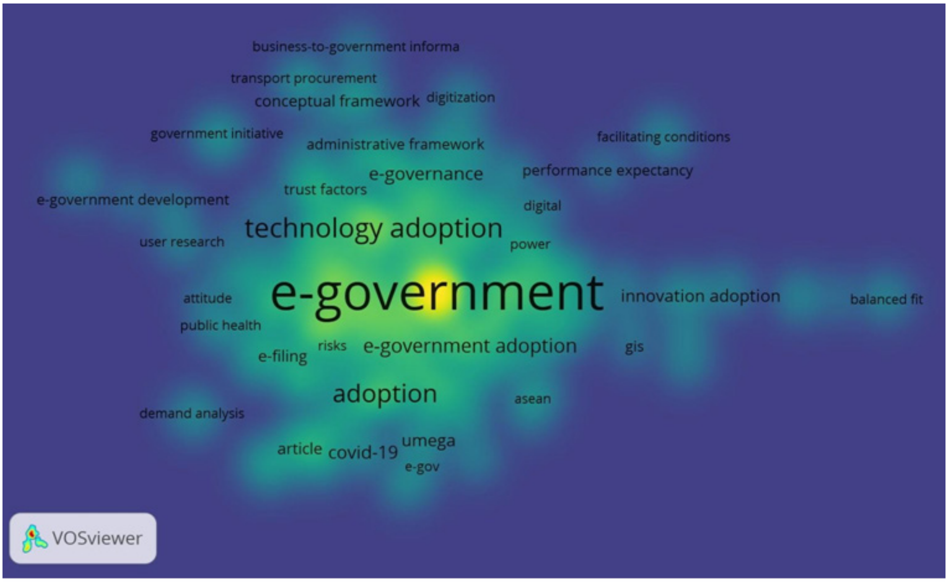

Figure 9: Density Visualizations of Scopus Database using VOSviewer

In Figure 9, keywords related to e-governance adoption research topics were visualized ascircles in VOSviewer, and the occurrence rate determines the size of the keywords. (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Concerning cluster analysis, 18 clusters of all the keywords were formed. Table 2 displays the number of clusters, items in the cluster, and the most frequent keywords used in the articles.

Table 2: *Cluster Analysis*

No. of clusters	*No. of items in the cluster*	*Most frequent keywords*
Cluster 1	177 items	Acceptance, adoption, behavioural adoption, digital divide, diffusion, digital transformation government, e-governance, e-governance services, e-government portal, effort expectancy, ICT adoption, intention to adopt, privacy, performance expectancy, security, trust, and website
Cluster 2	102 items	Adoption models, attitude, bureaucracy, block chain, citizen, citizen adoption, citizen satisfaction, Delone and Mclean, e-filing, ease of use, government capacity, intention to use, perceived responsiveness, perceived risk, technology acceptance, usefulness, and user satisfaction
Cluster 3	95 items	Access to information, barriers for e- governance, business to government, digitization, e-government use, innovation, knowledge, meta-analysis, and technology integration
Cluster 4	63 items	Commerce, communication technology, digital services, internet, key success factors, technology, and policy
Cluster 5	56 items	E-commerce, e-business, e- government application, financial capacity, service satisfaction, trust in government, and web presence
Cluster 6	49 items	Broadband adoption, innovation model, and theory of planned behavior
Cluster 7	49 items	Accessibility and dimensions
Cluster 8	42 items	Diffusion of technology
Cluster 9	41 items	Common service centres
Cluster 10	41 items	E-health services and intension
Cluster 11	36 items	Cost of services and ICT implementation process.
Cluster 12	26 items	Factors of adoption
Cluster 13	25 items	E-governance cloud and innovation adoption
Cluster14	21 items	Accountability, business users,citizen trust, and evolution of e- governance
Cluster 15	9 items	Local government and stakeholders.

No. of clusters	*No. of items in the cluster*	*Most frequent keywords*
Cluster 16	7 items	Initial usage and uncertainty
Cluster 17	7 items	IT adoption and urban governance
Cluster 18	6 items	Facilitating conditions, government to government, and leadership support

CO-OCCURRENCE *ANALYSIS*

Figure 10 illustrates the co-occurrence network of the authors' keywords, offering insights into the evolution of keywords over the years based on the frequency of their usage in articles within the data set. The co-occurrence network analysis of keywords integrates a comprehensive method for mapping bibliometric networks (Waltman et al., 2010). Many studies have employed co-occurrence analysis to effectively cluster literature data and explore trends (Prashar & Sunder, 2020). In this study, the VOSviewer software was utilized to extract information from the Scopus dataset, which contains bibliographic details of the articles and clustering was applied based on density using association-based normalization algorithm and an entire-counting method (Kriegel et al., 2011).

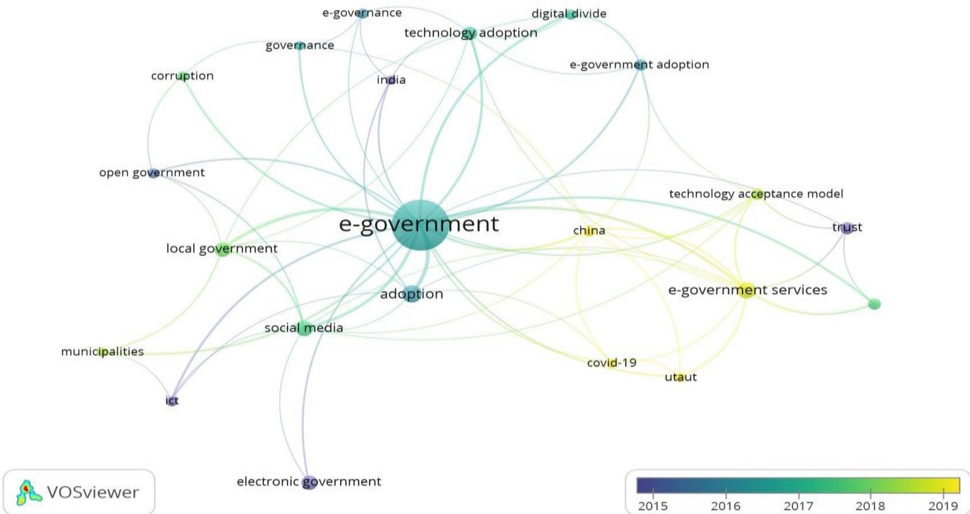

Figure 10: Authors' Keyword Co-occurrence Network From Dataset Publications

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There has been a substantial rise in the e-governance adoption literature, reflecting the extensive integration of ICT. This study seeks to scrutinize the trajectory of e-governance adoption research through bibliometric analysis involving the extraction of 239 articles from the Scopus database. The results reveal trends in e-governance adoption research, encompassing publication outlets, contributing authors, productive countries, and influential articles. Numerous opportunities for future work emerge. A literature review could broaden keyword searches to enhance comprehensiveness. Subsequent studies might explore the evolution of identified clusters for cross-validation and advancement. Lastly, bibliographic analysis could be employed to scrutinize recent publications, enhancing visibility for newer contributions in e-governance adoption.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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REVISITING INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM: NEW DIRECTIONS AND TRENDS (POST-EMERGENCY PERIODS)*

Sangit Kumar Ragi**

Abstract

Indian democracy refutes many theoretical formulations which otherwise appear to be very close to explaining the political reality in other countries. Understanding of the Party system in India is one of them. It deserves not just a rereading and renewed attention but a newer classification in light of birth of new sets of parties and changing nature of existing parties which overall have significant impacts on the party system in India. Secondly, it also needs to be looked at from Indian lenses rather than forcibly fitting them into classifications that emerged from experiences of Westerners of their home political systems or their understanding of Indian Party System. It is needed because parties are realities of the modern democracies and governments but how they unfold themselves in each system depends largely on socio-cultural, political and economic milieu in which they originate and function.[1] Understating the party and party system, therefore, becomes key to understand the matrix of politics and government in a country.

Keywords: Party System, Emergence, Coalition-Politics, Regional Parties, Caste-Based, Region-based, Dynastic Parties, India

REGIONAL PARTIES: POST-EMERGENCY PERIOD

In 1989 election, Janata Dal emerged as the second largest party in the parliament, first being the Congress with 191 seats. It formed the national front which was supported by the BJP and the left from outside. N T Rama Rao who happened to be the chairman of the front also supported the National Front from outside.

* Note: The first part of the paper was published in Vol XXI No.1, Jan-June,2024. Here is the concluding part.

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However, this second big experiment with a joint front of political parties failed again. VP Singh was not liked by Chandrasekhar as Prime Minister of the country. Both Devi Lal and V P Singh were suspicious of each other. That resulted into split of Janata Dal into various constituents.

The formation of regional political parties started against the Congress by the Congress leaders who had defected the party against the working style of Mrs. Gandhi who had started placing loyal leaders at the helm of government and party affairs in states. Chaudhary Devi Lal Chautala, better known as Devi Lal, who was a freedom fighter and in Congress party till 1971, formed Indian National Lok Dal. He joined Janata Party and got elected in 1977 and became the Chief Minister of the state. His government was dismissed. But subsequently, he launched Harayana Sangharsh Samiti and established his social base across the communities. In 1987, he again became the chief minister of the state. When Vishwa Nath Pratap Singh appealed to the parties to join hands against the Congress, Devi Lal became one of the leading lights of the opposition. He was rewarded with the Deputy Prime Minister post in the V P Singh government.

In Orissa, the rise of the Biju Janata Dal also came up against the Congress. Biju Patnayak who founded the party was a freedom fighter and had a very crucial role in 1947 where he played the role of the pilot to airlift the soldiers to Kashmir. He was close to Nehru as well as Mrs. Gandhi but left the Congress party in 1969 to form the 'Utkal Congress' and was pushed into jail during the period of emergency. He merged his party 'Utkal Congress' in Janata Party in 1977. Again, when V P Singh left the Congress party on the issue of corruption in Bofors gun purchase, he became part of the Janata Dal. After the fall of the V P Singh government, Patnaik charted his path by forming Biju Janata Dal in Orissa. During his peak days in politics, he did not encourage his children to take forward the reign of power. But after his death, Biju Janata Dal has been under the chairmanship of his youngest son Navin Patnaik. There was lack of mutual trust, and the crisis forced them to come together in the name of protecting democracy, and rightly so, but the democratic governance, which should have been their task ahead, took a backseat. And this led to the emergence of several regional parties who became dominant after the failure of the Janata Dal experiment.

The story of RJD in Bihar and Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh is not very different. Both these leaders trace their political legacies to socialist leader Lohia who throughout his life lent currency to anti-Congress campaign in the country. Both Mulayam Singh Yadav and Lalu Yadav started their politics with Janata Party in 1977. Lalu was elected to the Parliament at the age of 29 and then shifted to state politics in 1980. In 1990, when the Janata Dal secured victory in the state elections, Lalu Prasad Yadav emerged as a leading candidate and became the Chief Minister of Bihar. He became iconic figure and a symbol of Yadav identity and protector of

Muslim interests, after arresting Advani in Samastipur1990. After passage of four years, a fraction Janta Dal led by Nitish Kumar splintered away as Samta Party and Lalu led Janta Dal later emerged as Rashtriye Janta Dal (RJD).

The Janta Dal factions which emerged in the states with different names though emerged not as a regional party with a regional agenda but gravitated towards a singular personality. The social justice platform that pushed their politics in the centre of political discourse with the application of Mandal Commission for the backward caste and subsequent anti-reservation protests from the upper castes made them the champion of the cause of social justice. As the Mandir issue was perceived to be mobilization primarily against the Muslims, the Muslim-Yadav (MY) combination became the backbone of the political strength of these two parties in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. They projected themselves as the champion of democratic values with slogans of democracy, social justice, and secularism but this gravitated towards the personality of Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar and Mulayam Singh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh. The rise of Yadavas was seen as the rise of Dalit backward in combine with Muslims as a new social base of politics in these states. But in both the states, this social coalition did not last long. Ram Bilash Paswan who emerged as a powerful leader from non-OBC Dalit category soon realized that the Dalits were the target of the Yadavas also, and therefore launched Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) in Bihar. In Uttar Prades, Bahujan Samajwadi Party emerged as the voice of the Dalits. George Fernandes and Nitish Kumar launched the Samata Party. Both Nitish Kumar and Mayavati do not have their children but needless to suggest that both parties are leadership centric. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, all these parties had one thing in common; that is, they all were a votary of anti-congress and against the dynasty politics of the Indian National Congress. Kumar, P. (2016), The Congress, the Self Respecters and Anti-touchability Campaign in later Colonial Tamil Nadu, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 77, pp 72-74

REGIONAL PARTIES OF SOUTH INDIA

The stories of the rise of regional parties in southern India have different stories. While in Kerala left parties challenged the political dominance of the Indian National Congress, in Tamil Nādu Dravidian politics became the centre of politics. The Dravidian politics had its roots in the justice party and self-respect movement[2] which was started in Madras presidency but travelled across the other states. This movement had three elements; it was projected as a fight for the Dravidian pride essentially against the Aryans North. So, somewhere they approved of the Aryan-Dravidian conflict theory as designed and championed by the missionary historians. Second, they were opposed to the Brahminical order of caste hierarchy. Third, they were against the dominance of Hindi language again targeted against the North (Hardgrave: 1964). Fourth, they claimed to be rationalist and opposed superstitions and the religious rituals in any form. Periyar who founded the self-respect movement in 1925 was in the Indian National Congress, but the policies of the Indian National Congress on the issue of untouchability and social justice was not found convincing by him (Kumar: 2016). And therefore, he finally left the party in 1935 and joined the justice party and fought elections on its ticket, though got defeated. But the imposition of Hindi in the schools by C Rajagopalachari government in the Madras Presidency allowed the Dravidian leaders to launch a movement against Hindi. Periyar who led the movement toyed with the idea of separate Dravid land. But he lost the moral charm after he married a young activist of the party, barely 26 in age and sought to transfer the power of the party to her. This was in fact the beginning of dynasty in the Dravid organization, as instead of handing over the power to the second most popular leader of the movement C. N. Annadurai, Periyar chose to transfer the power to his better-half. As a result, Annadurai laid the foundation of Dravid Munetra Kazhagam in 1949 with five other leaders, often called great five in Tamil politics. It included K. Karunanidhi who was a popular scriptwriter in Tamil cinema. In subsequent years, he became the master and leader of the party.

In 1953, a maverick actor of Tamil cinema M G Ramachandran joined the party and soon became a popular fact of the party. After the death of Annadurai, Ramachandran parted ways to form AIDMK. Both DMK and AIDMK emerged as a regional force and changed power alternatively in Tamil Nādu politics. But both had a different trajectory in a political succession of leadership in the party. While Karunanidhi converted DMK into a family party, the leadership of AIDMK too was not very different. After the death of M J Ramachandran, the leadership went to Jayalalitha who was a maverick actress in Tamil cinema and a very close friend of Ramachandran in the party. As Jayalalitha was unmarried and had no children, there was no one in the family to claim ownership of the political succession in the party. But in case of the DMK, it was not like this. Karunanidhi nurtured his son Stalin for political succession. He made him the deputy CM in his cabinet the way Prakash Singh Badal nurtured the political succession to his son in Punjab.

Few key points are worth noticeable in respect to the rise of regional parties and their subsequent transformation in Indian politics. **First,** most of the regional parties took birth in protest against the Congress and its leadership. The real reasons were largely about their role the party to personal feuds with the state leadership or sidelining of their fellow followers in the party and the government but for the public consumptions they claimed some broader issues; like ignoring the interests of the state, undermining democracy and democratic values, the practice of patronage and dynasty politics and so on. For example, when the Dravidian parties came up, they charged the Congress government of humiliating the Dravidian pride and imposing the Aryans culture of the North on the South. This was sectarian but it touched the heart of the people, and they rallied behind the party. It also charged the Congress of promoting the Brahminical order. The purpose however was to harness the large chunk of the OBCs population in the state. Parties with national expansion cannot afford to put one caste or group of castes pitted against others as such attempts can be counter productive for them in the states.

Dravidian party however, did all this to snatch the political space from the Congress which was the ruling party. The national Party such as Jan Sangh was not in a position to defeat the Congress party in the states on national issues. CPI was the only exception to this, as the part could form governments in Bengal and Kerala in 1967 and 1969 respectively. This was done by the regional parties. Because their political appeals had deeper emotional quotient compared to the national parties, since they focused on the state issues. National issues were secondary to them. They had no problem even if their appeals had potential to invoke contesting appeals in the neighboring states. For examples, inter-river water sharing has often been seen as a point of contestation for the two states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. In such situation, the regional parties boldly stand for their states, but this is not possible for the national parties to take state centric approach which often hurt their political interests in other states. As a result, where regional parties have emerged first, they have stunted the growth of the national parties. BJP could not make an active presence in Tamil Nādu, Punjab, and Haryana for a long. Further, where BJP initially succeeded in challenging the Congress, it blocked the rise of regional parties. **Second,** all the regional parties started with the anti-congress planks which included opposition to the dynasty politics, but by far all of them turned out not just the votary of dynasty politics but converted the party into a family enterprise. Absence of national ideology and outlook, and predominance of personality became the gravitating force as the political members thought it easier to cling to the leader in the road to the power than to raise fundamental and critical issues in politics. And the leader becomes a synonym of and subsequently proprietor of the party. This effectively set the pattern of political heir-ship in regional parties in India across the regions, DMK in extreme South to National Conference and People Democratic Party in the extreme North, Akali Dal in Punjab to Shiv Sena in the Western region, Orissa in the East to Janata Dal in Bihar, JD(S) in Karnataka, Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh and so on. Control of party and transfer of leadership is now a family affair, and democracy has no role to play in it.

Among the national level, the Indian National Congress is alone which can be termed as the family party where control of the party is fixed in the Gandhi Nehru family. Today there is no party where there is no family inheritance of political constituencies. It includes even the BJP whose several top leaders in states and centre have several members in politics. however, what makes 'dynasty politics' different from the ‘family party’ is that where in case of the former political succession is limited to the entry and functioning in the party and may heir the political constituency, the latter marks a total control of the party by a family in which the successor of the family decides who gets what? There is little or exceptional scope for democratic choice. In the case of the Indian National Congress all the structures and mechanisms of political decisions are subservient to the Gandhi family. Today almost all the regional parties without any exception are in control of a single family. Exceptions are possible only where there is no blood successor, such as, BSP in UP and AIADMK in Tamilnadu. Even in TMC in Bengal son of brother of Mamta Banerjee, Abhishek Banerjee is defacto but unchallenged heir of the Chief Minister. In the Samajwadi party of Akhilesh Yadav, 21 members of the family occupy a prime place in the organizational and political structure of the party. So is the case with Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar.

The emergence of coalition politics has further set a new trend in Indian politics. Rise of the regional parties and coalition politics have been both opposed and appreciated by the political commentators. While a section of intelligentsia looks at it as a phenomenon which has expanded the democratic base of the polity, there is no dearth of people who look at it with a sense of contempt on the ground that it not just has inflicted government instability both at the Centre and the state[3] but it has encouraged the springs of unprincipled devalued politics through mushrooming of new parties further based on political ambitions of individual wrapped often in slogans of democratic values, justice, development and freedom but the sole desire is to extract political power for himself.

What the new trend that has set in now is the emergence of the caste and community-based parties in different states which are not just making an appeal to their caste fellows to vote for him and his party, but to oppose others for neglecting the interests of representation of the community in politics, government, and bureaucracy. And they havce attached it to their community identity. Kothari too had indicated of it while discussing the Congress system. But in the coalition era, it further gained currency and legitimacy. Jharkhand turned out to be a classic case where an independent member of the legislative assembly of Jharkhand, Madhu Koda, became the Chief Minister with the support of regional and national parties like Rastriya Janata Dal of Lalu Prasad Yadav and Indian National Congress. It was a case of blood touching the tongue of the lion. The role of the individual member of the legislative Assembly became so important. Bajpayee government at the center was also defeated by one vote in the parliament in 1999. Independents started asserting themselves in fragile parliamentary politics. The caste leaders of the parties who used to earn votes for the parties thought it better why not to launch their own caste-centric parties in assumptions that continuance of coalition politics will deliver far better dividend than being associated with a national or regional party.

Apana Dal Party in the Uttar Pradesh won just two seats, but it got a cabinet berth in the Modi cabinet. Apana Dal has support not all over the state of Uttar Pradesh but in large part of pockets of areas adjacent to Varanasi. Preceding 2019 elections, Apna Dal forced the BJP to negotiate seats and terms of an alliance with the party. Party of Upendra Kushwaha is another glaring example of how parties are getting organized on caste and community lines. Kushwaha community singularly outnumbers others in at least three constituencies of Bihar. Upendra Kushwaha though kept the name of his party as Rastriya Loktantrik Samata Party(RLSP) but neither it is Rastriya nor democratic one for achieving the mission of the equal society. Kushwaha did not have any blueprint for the state. If at all he has anything in mind, it is all about how to emerge as the sole leader of the community and win at least three seats so that he could play an effective role in power bargain in the situation of fragmented parliamentary mandate in the general elections. Jitan Ram Manjhi is another case to the point. He was not a very tall and popular entity in the politics of Bihar before he was made Chief Minister by Nitish Kumar. But when Nitish Kumar dislodged him sensing that he was leaning towards the BJP, he joined the NDA bandwagon but again drifted away to form Hindustani Awam Morcha. From nomenclature, it gives the impression of a great revolutionary party which has pan-Indian reach and acceptance, but the fact bellies all this. He is banking on his caste to win seats enough to remain relevant in the state and national politics. Several such examples can be quoted from other states also to prove the point. This phenomenon is not limited to North India but also the South India.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Is then it fair to suggest that the national parties have failed to sanitize themselves against such tendencies by giving them representation and meeting their power interests in the system? In other words, does rise of the regional parties signify the failure of the national parties in meeting the regional aspirations? Are the tendencies towards formation of regional parties mean failure of national parties to accommodate genuine representation and articulation of regional interests? There is no such statistics to suggest so conclusively. However, it is also not possible for the party of Pan-Indian reach to think along the lines of acceding to caste representation. Acceding to it means acceptance of the fact that India is a caste democracy wherein parties rely too much on caste mobilization to win elections. As caste plays a significant role in the elections, every party has gone into to woo the caste support through a different mechanism. The TV debates and newspaper articles and stories have also contributed to start of this kind of polarization.

The matter of fact is that India's party system did not develop on ideological lines. In the post-independent India, the parties with ideology could make limited success. The Communist Party of India and subsequently the CPM remained confined to three states of Bengal, Tripura, and Kerala. Jan Sangh too remained confined to the North Indian states and therefore it was popularly depicted as the cow-belt party. Socialists' parties with different shades also remained at the margin. Thus, the real contest for power remained confined to contest between the powerful and dominant regional party in the states and the Indian National Congress.

The preceding discussions thus bring us to consider possibility of a new typology for Indian politics. And they can be listed as a) Ideological Parties b) Power Parties c) Movement Parties d) Caste and Community Parties e) Family Parties. By ideological parties I mean those parties which have a distinct vision for the nation and society and they want to transform the society and the nation in that direction. They have a different world view and all the programmes and policies that they design intend to be in sync with the ideological framework. Bhartiya Janata Party, Socialist Parties, Communist Parties can be safely placed in that category. The communists want to bring out a radical change in the society, polity, and economy after throwing away the present system which they consider as one that is controlled by the propertied class and works against the deprived ones. They want the revolution to alter the present power structures.

REFLECTIONS

Bhartiya Jan Sangh which changed to Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980 supports the idea that India is distinctively a Hindu nation wherein the term Hindu does not entail the Dharma or Religion but a distinct philosophy which rejects the ethnic homogenization and accepts the diversity and plurality of ideas and thoughts, sects and sub-sects, and stands to oppose all those ideas which subscribe to dissolving other sects and establish a monopoly of one religion , one sects or one idea. Hindutva for the party is the soul of India and synonym of Indian nationalism, as Aurobindo talked about. The weakening of Hindutva, therefore, would mean a weakening of Indian Nationalism according to the party. This is precisely the reason that the party stands to oppose infiltrators from Bangladesh settling in India, especially the Muslim infiltrators, banning religious conversion in the country, ban on cow slaughter, respecting the Hindu sentiments and symbols and so on. Ideological parties cannot come in power if they stick to their trained cadres and rigid ideology. Ideology seldom operates in pure form at a mass level. It is compelled to reach out to the people beyond the cadres when it tends to be a 'power party'. With the inching towards power and becoming a mass party, the ideological parties have the risk of becoming a power party for which coming into power is central to its existence.

The second type of Parities are the parties for whom winning the elections and coming to power is central to their scheme of thought and existence. I call them power parties because their sole drive is to capture power and form the government. It is not that they don't have tall ideals in their elections manifesto or they do not articulate such in public discourses, but they have no fundamental alternative vision for the nation. They are the centrist in the claim as they don't subscribe to radical positions like the left or the right, but they support both the right and the left for the political dividends. In the power parties, membership is open to all, and in principle, everyone can reach the top position in the organizational hierarchy following a democratic process, but this remains only in principle for many reasons.

The third type of parties in India is the movement-based parties. By movement-based parties, I mean those parties which emerged from a movement for a precise specific cause. Dravidian parties, Asom Gana Parishad in Assam and AAM Adami party in Delhi can be placed in that category. Here also a distinction is quite visible. While both the Dravidian parties and Asom Gana Parishad emerged from the movement which had specific to do with the states but while the former retained the relevance the latter became marginally relevant with time. For example, Asam Gan Parishad launched a movement to detect and deport the Bangladeshi migrants from Assam which had the potential of changing the religious demography of the state. Similarly, DMK had two crucial components of its movement; the opposition of the Brahminical tradition and their cultural dominance pervading through religious rituals and an appeal for Hindi as Pan-Indian language. Social egalitarianism and language issue brought both the Tamilian pride and social engineering in one basket giving popularity and sound political base enough to dislodge the powerful Congress in the state. The relevance of the Dravidian party and dislodgement of the Asom Gan Parishad from seat of power can be explained through continuity and discontinuity of the core issue. Asom Gan Parishad lost its powerful edge in attempt to appropriating the national agenda of secularism and relegating the core issue of Bangladeshi infiltration which was grabbed by the BJP far more powerfully.

But the same cannot be said about the Aam Adami Party in Delhi. They had pioneered a movement against corruption and corrupt political system which appealed the masses and gave an astounding mandate in its favour. However, while the AsomGana Parishad lost control of the masses, DMK emerged as a powerful political force in the state. The life span of the movement based is small unless they expand and consolidate their political base. It is yet to be seen how Arvind Kejriwal deals with challenges of retaining power. He is trying in this direction by changing the discourse on corruption and moving more towards governance, social coalitions and diluting the rightwing parties appeal on Hindu culture and Hindu idioms.

The fourth types of Parties are the parties which emerged from the regional idioms and issues, but they have turned into a family party in the sense that it is the first in the family who controls the party in entirety. There is no scope for political succession at the top beyond the immediate blood group, the exception being the parties whose top leaders do not have children to carry forward the political leadership. The family head decides the distribution of power in the party, and it does so that the party does not go beyond the control of the family. The key positions are given to those who are loyal to the family, and any voice of deviance and protests is dealt with severely. Most of the regional parties in India who started their journey as a regional political party have turned out to be the family parties in India. TelguDesham, Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar, Loktantrik Janata Party (LJP), Shiv Sena, Akali Dal, Party of Sharad Pawar in Maharastra, DravidMunnetraKadagam, Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, Rashtriya Janata Dal in Uttar Pradesh controlled by the family of Chaudhary Charan Singh, etc. Some of the regional parties could not carry forward the legacy because they had no one from family blood to inherit further. For example, AIDMK in Tamilnadu, BSP in Uttar Pradesh, Trinamool Congress in Bengal are entirely under the control of one individual, and the party survives not because of any ideology but the individual. Democracy for them is not a serious moral and ethical principle. They abhor democracy in the organization.

The fifth category of the parties in India can be termed as caste and communities parties. The way criminality and criminals entered the politics after working for bigger parties in several parliamentary and assembly elections and entered the fray directly realizing their worth, caste leaders working in Pan-Indian parties have turned to the formation of parties based on their social support base. There are parties which are based on a single caste support base. For example, Nishad Party, Apana Dal, Hindustan Awami Morcha by Jitan Ram Manjhi, Rashtriya Lok Samata Party of Upendra Kushwaha can be safely placed in this category. etc. The reason why there is rise of the caste and community party is the possibility of a larger share in the fragile polity. The thinking is that Indian politics has reached the era of coalitions in which no one knows the future of power structure. So, instead of working for the national parties and mobilizing votes as a caste leader they thought it better to float independent parties with caste-based support. This is a new trend which effectively was visible in 2014 general elections has now become settled, and many such parties have come up between 2014-19 in hope to effectively influence the formation of government and bargain for better share in the power.

This trend in the Indian politics is likely to continue unless there is institutional mechanism to control the birth of such parties. The argument that the fragmented parliamentary politics throws a more vibrant and responsive government has proved a big misnomer. The interesting point is that no one knows where this fragmentation will end. Today is caste and sect, tomorrow it may be sub-caste and sub-sects. The social fragmentation of society on caste lines and absence of ideology driven polity will continue to produce caste and community centric parties which in turn would seek polarization of polity on those lines.

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NOTES

1. Even Kothari acknowledges that the forms of politics cannot be dissociated from the historical situations they are supposed to serve. And it is not an accident that party system in Asia differ from their European ones and India presents a unique configuration. See; Kothari, Rajni (Dec 1974). "The Congress System Revisited". Asian Survey, Vol.14, No12, p.1053.
2. Justice Party which was a popular name for South Indian Liberal Federation was formed in 1916 by P. Thyagaraya Chetty, Dr. P.T. Rajan, Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar, and a few others.
3. This was also the way Duverger has argued that the coalition government has more chances of producing government instability compared to the government formed by a party in majority in the popular house.

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IMPACT OF CULTURAL CAPITAL ON SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

This paper on the impact of cultural capital on school education in India examines the potential influence that cultural capital provides to the school education by applying a sociological lens. Education is considered to be the key driver for ideation, formation and expansion that helps people move on the ladder of qualitative life course. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and its application in educational contexts, the paper explores how socio-cultural factors shape educational experiences and outcomes in the diverse Indian landscape. The paper analyzes the interplay between family background, social class, caste, language, and educational institutions, highlighting how these factors contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities within the education system. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature and empirical studies, the paper elucidates the mechanisms through which cultural capital impacts student achievement, teacher-student interactions and overall educational framework. The findings underscore the need for policy interventions and pedagogical approaches that address cultural disparities and promote inclusive education in our country.

Keywords: cultural capital, education, India, sociology of education, social inequality

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of cultural capital and education in India presents a compelling case study in the reproduction of social inequalities through institutional mechanisms. Drawing on Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural capital, the paper examines how the Indian educational system, shaped by colonial legacies and entrenched social hierarchies, perpetuates and legitimizes existing power structures. The

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tripartite manifestation of cultural capital, namely 'embodied, objectified and institutionalized', finds distinct expression within the Indian context, where caste, class, linguistic diversity and regional disparities converge to create a complex tapestry of educational experiences. Embodied cultural capital, evident in linguistic proficiencies and internalized dispositions, aligns closely with the dominant upper-caste, urban, English-speaking habitus privileged within Indian schools. Objectified cultural capital, manifested through access to educational resources and cultural artifacts, further demarcates the boundaries between the culturally 'rich' and 'poor'. Institutionalized cultural capital, represented by academic credentials and school prestige, serves as a powerful mechanism for converting cultural advantages into economic and social capital, thereby reinforcing intergenerational transmission of privilege.

The interplay between cultural capital and other forms of social stratification in India reveals the multifaceted nature of educational inequality. Caste, as a fundamental organizing principle of Indian society, intersects with cultural capital to create layered disadvantages for marginalized groups, despite affirmative action policies. Economic class, while distinct from cultural capital, often facilitates its acquisition, particularly in the context of burgeoning private education sector. Gender dynamics further complicate this landscape, with patriarchal norms often limiting girls' access to cultural resources, although this varies significantly across social and regional contexts. The rural-urban divide emerges as another critical axis of differentiation, with urban centres typically offering greater opportunities for diverse cultural capital accumulation. This sociological analysis underscores the need for nuanced policy interventions that address not only economic barriers to education but also the subtle, pervasive influence of cultural capital in shaping educational trajectories. By recognizing the multidimensional nature of educational disadvantage in India, policymakers and educators can work towards creating more inclusive learning environments that value diverse forms of cultural knowledge and challenge the reproduction of social inequalities through the education system.

The Indian educational system stands as a stark exemplar of how cultural capital operates as a powerful mechanism for the reproduction and legitimization of social inequalities. This system, deeply rooted in colonial legacies and ossified social hierarchies, does not merely reflect societal disparities, it actively perpetuates them. Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural capital finds heightened relevance in India, where the convergence of caste, class, linguistic diversity, and regional disparities creates a labyrinthine landscape of educational experiences. The tripartite manifestation of cultural capital, 'embodied, objectified, and institutionalized' is not just present but exaggerated within the Indian context. Embodied cultural capital, far from being a neutral attribute, aligns insidiously with the dominant upper-caste, urban, English-speaking habitus that is unequivocally privileged within Indian schools. This alignment is not coincidental but systemic, effectively marginalizing vast swathes of the population whose cultural dispositions diverge from this narrow norm. Objectified cultural capital, manifested through unequal access to educational resources and cultural artifacts, serves as a visible and tangible demarcation between the culturally 'rich' and 'poor', reinforcing and legitimizing existing social stratifications. Perhaps most critically, institutionalized cultural capital, represented by academic credentials and school prestige; functions as a potent alchemical process, transmuting cultural advantages into economic and social capital. This process is fundamental to understanding how the Indian education system becomes a crucible for the intergenerational transmission of privilege, effectively calcifying social mobility.

The intricate interplay between cultural capital and other forms of social stratification in India reveals a multi-layered tapestry of educational inequality that demands urgent sociological scrutiny. Caste, far from being a relic of the past, continues to function as a fundamental organizing principle of Indian society, intersecting with cultural capital to create compounded, often insurmountable disadvantages for marginalized groups. The existence of affirmative action policies, while well-intentioned, often serves as a smokescreen, masking the deep-seated cultural advantages that continue to benefit upper-caste groups. Economic class, while conceptually distinct from cultural capital, operates in tandem with it, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of advantage that is particularly evident in rapidly expanding, yet deeply exclusionary, private education sector. Gender dynamics add another critical dimension to this complex picture, with patriarchal norms often severely curtailing women access to cultural resources, although this limitation manifests with significant variations across social and regional contexts. The rural-urban divide emerges not merely as a geographical distinction but also as a critical axis of cultural capital differentiation, with urban centers functioning as concentrated hubs of diverse cultural capital accumulation, further marginalizing rural populations. This emphatic sociological analysis underscores the urgent need for radical, systemic interventions that go beyond addressing mere economic barriers to education. It calls for a fundamental examination of the cultural assumptions embedded within the educational system itself. Only by recognizing and actively challenging the multidimensional nature of educational disadvantage in India can policymakers and educators hope to disrupt the cycle of social reproduction. The goal must be nothing less than the creation of truly inclusive learning environments that not only value diverse forms of cultural knowledge but actively work to dismantle the structures that have long privileged certain forms of cultural capital over others. In doing so, the Indian education system has the potential to transform from a mechanism of social reproduction to a powerful force for social transformation.

The concept of cultural capital, introduced by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, has become a cornerstone in understanding the relationship between social background and educational outcomes. In the Indian context, where social stratification is deeply rooted and multifaceted, the role of cultural capital in shaping educational experiences and opportunities is particularly significant. This paper seeks to explore the impact of cultural capital on school education in India, examining how various forms of cultural resources influence academic performance, educational aspirations, and the overall trajectory of students within the Indian schooling system.

The education landscape of our country is characterized by immense diversity and stark inequalities. With a population of over 1.4 billion people, the country encompasses a wide array of languages, religions, castes, and socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity is reflected in its education system, which includes government schools, private schools and various types of alternative schooling. Against this backdrop, understanding the role of cultural capital becomes crucial in addressing educational disparities and promoting inclusive learning environments.

The overarching objectives of the paper is to examine the theoretical framework of cultural capital and its applicability in the Indian educational context. It also analyses the different forms of cultural capital (embodied, objectified, and institutionalized) manifest in Indian schools and influence student experiences. The paper has taken into account the relationship between cultural capital and educational outcomes, including academic performance, school retention, and higher education access. Under this paper the interplay between cultural capital and other social factors such as caste, class, gender, and regional disparities in shaping educational experiences have also been estimated. The paper also discusses the implications of cultural capital disparities for educational policy and pedagogy in India. By addressing these objectives, the paper contributes to the growing body of literature on educational sociology in India and provides insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers working towards more equitable educational outcomes in Indian society at large.

CULTURAL CAPITAL IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital provides a powerful framework for understanding how social and cultural resources contribute to educational success and the reproduction of social inequalities. Bourdieu (1986) defined 'cultural capital as the accumulation of knowledge, behaviors and skills that taps into the demonstration of cultural competence and social status'. He identified three forms of cultural capital. These are embodied, objectified and institutionalised. The embodied cultural capital is about internalized dispositions, knowledge, and ways of thinking acquired through socialization. The objectified cultural capital deals with physical cultural goods such as books, instruments, or artworks. The institutionalized cultural capital includes academic qualifications and credentials that symbolize cultural competence. In the context of education, cultural capital theory suggests that students from privileged backgrounds possess cultural resources that align more closely with the dominant culture valued in educational institutions. This alignment can translate into academic advantages, as these students are better equipped to navigate the educational system and meet its implicit expectations.

CULTURAL CAPITAL IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

The concept of cultural capital propounded by Bourdieu originated in the French context, its application to Indian education requires careful consideration of the unique social structures and cultural dynamics of our country. In India, cultural capital is intricately linked with caste system, linguistic diversity, religious and regional diversity and colonial legacy. The caste system connotes the hereditary class structure that continues to influence social interactions and opportunities. The linguistic diversity is with over 19,500 languages and dialects, language proficiency becomes a crucial form of cultural capital. The religious and regional diversity posits different cultural norms and practices associated with various religious and regional communities. The colonial legacy is about the impact of British colonialism on education and the valuation of certain forms of knowledge and language.

'Understanding how these factors intersect with Bourdieu's forms of cultural capital is essential for analyzing educational disparities in India. For instance, proficiency in English, often associated with urban, upper-class backgrounds, can be seen as a form of embodied cultural capital that significantly impacts educational and professional opportunities'.

MANIFESTATIONS OF CULTURAL CAPITAL IN INDIAN SCHOOLS

Embodied Cultural Capital

In Indian schools, embodied cultural capital is evident in various ways. It may be in the form of language proficiency, cultural knowledge, behavioural dispositions etc. 'In language proficiency cultural capital is about students who speak English or standard versions of regional languages at home often have an advantage in classroom interactions and academic performance' (Annamalai: 2005). 'Cultural knowledge deals with familiarity with dominant cultural references, often drawn from urban, upper-caste Hindu traditions, can facilitate better engagement with curriculum content' (Nambissan: 2010). Embodied cultural is found in terms of behavioural dispositions. For instance, 'students from privileged backgrounds may exhibit confidence, assertiveness, and communication styles that align with teachers' expectations' (Kumar: 2016).

Objectified Cultural Capital

The possession of cultural objects impacts learning experiences too. It is about access to books and educational materials, technology access and cultural artifects. Access to books and educational materials deals with 'students from well-resourced homes often have better access to supplementary learning materials, enhancing their academic preparation' (Pal: 2010). Technology access becomes important when in 'an increasingly digital education landscape, access to computers, smartphones, and the internet creates significant disparities in learning opportunities are made equitably affordable' (Agrawal: 2020). 'Cultural artifacts is about exposure to art, music, and other cultural products valued by the education system can enhance students' cultural literacy and academic engagement' (Sarangapani : 2003).

Institutionalized Cultural Capital

The Indian education system places high value on certain forms of institutionalized cultural capital. It includes parental education, school prestige and English medium education, 'Parental education is about students whose parents have higher educational qualifications often benefit from enhanced home support and higher educational aspirations'. 'School prestige is about attendance at reputed schools, often correlated with socio-economic status that can confer advantages in terms of perceived competence and future opportunities' (Kingdon: 2007). The credentials from English -medium schools are valued more, reflecting and reinforcing linguistic hierarchies in Indian society' (Ramanathan: 2008).

Cultural Capital and Educational Outcomes in India

Research indicates a strong correlation between cultural capital and academic achievement in Indian schools. 'A study by Joshi (2017) found that students from families with higher cultural capital consistently outperformed their peers in standardized tests across multiple subjects'. 'Sharma and Jha (2020) demonstrated that proficiency in the language of instruction, often linked to home language environments, was a significant predictor of academic success in both urban and rural schools'. 'Cultural capital has been shown to influence not only test scores but also teacher perceptions of student ability, which can impact grading and academic tracking' (Ibid).

SCHOOL RETENTION AND DROPOUT RATES

The relationship between cultural capital and school retention is complex in the Indian situation. The students who cannot afford to align with school expectation, typically because they bear lowbrow profile are more prone to dropout. However, many information on the subject show that retention can be mediated through many other factors ranging from economic necessity to gender considerations. It may override the influences of cultural resources. The students bestowed with highbrow cultural dispositions are also intend to prepare for competitive examination and get space in the existing ruling structures. 'The ability to navigate complex application processes and access information about higher education opportunities is often linked to family background and cultural resources' (Tilak: 2015). 'Cultural capital influences not only access to higher education but also the choice of disciplines, with students from privileged backgrounds more likely to enter high-status professional courses' (Nambissan & Rao: 2013).

Caste and Cultural Capital

The intersection of caste and cultural capital significantly shapes educational experiences in Indian landscape. 'Upper-caste students often possess forms of cultural capital that align more closely with school expectations, contributing to their academic success' (Deshpande: 2011). 'Dalit and Adivasi students may face challenges in acquiring and leveraging cultural capital valued in educational settings, despite affirmative action policies' (Thorat & Newman: 2007). 'The relationship between caste and cultural capital is not monolithic; urban, educated Dalit families may possess significant cultural capital, highlighting the need for nuanced analysis' (Subramanian: 2015).

Class and Economic Factors

Class and economic factors are also interrelated with the cultural capital. Economic factors by class interrelationship provide power to dispense resources on the educational attainment. If the economic resources are scarcely available, the priority to spend money on learning is compromised. The resources available are required more to livelihoods. 'Economic resources often facilitate the acquisition of cultural capital through access to quality schools, extracurricular activities, and educational resources' (Varghese & Manoj: 2013). 'The impact of cultural capital on educational outcomes can be amplified or mitigated by economic factors, particularly in the context of growing private education sector in India' (Kingdon: 2020).

Gender Dynamics

Gender as a cultural construct interacts with cultural capital in complex ways in the Indian educational system. The patriarchal norms limits girl child to access the cultural resources. Though in urban settings the ideational trajectory goes strikingly different for the girl child, its eventual effects cannot be denied, especially in the Covid like pandemic. The traditional patterns of society tends to considers girl child as weaker sex, incapable of utilising the cultural resources ad come up with creativities. 'Patriarchal norms may limit girls' access to cultural resources and educational opportunities, particularly in rural and conservative settings' (Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian: 2008). 'However, in some urban, educated families, investment in girls' education and cultural capital acquisition may be prioritized as a means of securing social mobility' (Mukhopadhyay & Seymour: 1994). As such, cultural capital also influences gender based relationships for inaccessibility to generate potential profit.

Regional and Rural-Urban Disparities

The impact of cultural capital varies significantly across India's diverse geographical landscape. The traditional practices in one region varies from the other. The rural areas manage with limited degree of resources whereas urban areas as engine of economic growth have more resources to put on cultural upbringing. The presence of technological devices and digital tools attract urban habitations to recreate more of cultural resources as compared to rural settings. 'Urban students often have access to more diverse forms of cultural capital, including exposure to global cultural trends and information technology' (Kumar & Gupta: 2008). 'Rural students may possess forms of cultural capital not recognized or valued by the formal education system, contributing to educational disparities' (Balgopalan: 2008). 'Regional variations in language policies and educational traditions create diverse contexts for the operation of cultural capital' (Mohanty: 2006). Thus, rural-urban and regional variations also help accessing the cultural capital and vice-versa.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Understanding the role of cultural capital in Indian education has significant implications for policy and practice as well. The reworking on the curriculum and pedagogy also influence the fabric of cultural capital. Certain curricula recognises the values connected with diverse forms of cultural capital. Effective pedagogical approaches bridge the gap between home and school culture where normal vocabulary used as the home easily transformed into scholastic. 'Dveloping inclusive curricula recognizes and values diverse forms of cultural knowledge and experience' (Kumar: 2005). 'Implementing pedagogical approaches that bridge the gap between home and school cultures, particularly for first-generation learners'(Nambissan: 2014). 'Promoting multilingual education strategies that capitalize on students' linguistic resources while facilitating proficiency in languages of wider communication cannot be undermined' (Mohant. Panda & Pal: 2009).

Teacher Education and Development

Teacher education and development is also one of the areas of concern where focus needs to be given. Teacher as a key agent in educational transformation requires to be equipped with required knowledge and skills through which the approach of students can be changed. 'Enhancing teacher awareness of cultural capital disparities and their impact on student learning are essential to be estimated' (Nambissan: 2014). 'Equipping teachers with strategies to create inclusive classroom environments that support students from diverse cultural backgrounds can enable them to have a better hold on exclusive advantage created by cultural capital' (Kumar: 2016). 'Addressing teachers' own cultural biases and assumptions through reflective practice and professional development can make them powerful agent in transferring elitist values' (Sriprakash: 2012). Moreover, the paper also suggest to focus on teacher education so that they can effectively channelize the elitist values among students.

School-Community Relationships

School and community relationships are essential in providing boost to leaning ecosystem. The community engagement not only ensures teachers to come up with effective means to creatively engage students but also enables students to take the academics sincerely and religiously. The community engagement mobilises parental support for students to receive learning outcomes effectively. 'Fostering stronger connections between schools and diverse community cultural resources to enhance relevance and engagement have also been emphasised' (Govind & Bandyopadhyay: 2011). 'Implementing programs that support parents in developing cultural capital aligned with school expectations, particularly for disadvantaged communities can further help' (Nambissan: 2010). 'Developing targeted interventions to support the acquisition of cultural capital among disadvantaged groups, going beyond traditional affirmative action approaches may excitingly help' (Deshpande: 2013). 'Addressing structural inequalities in resource allocation and school quality that exacerbate cultural capital disparities are to be taken into account' (Kingdon: 2007). Implementing comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems that account for cultural capital factors in assessing educational equity and outcomes need to be prioritised.

CONCLUSION

The paper has examined the multifaceted impact of cultural capital on school education in India, highlighting its significant role in shaping educational experiences and outcomes. The analysis reveals that cultural capital, interacting with caste, class, gender, and regional factors, contributes to the reproduction of social inequalities within the Indian education system. However, the relationship between cultural capital and educational success is not deterministic; it is mediated by various contextual factors and can be influenced by targeted interventions. The findings underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of cultural capital in the Indian context, one that recognizes the diversity of cultural resources and their varying alignment with educational institutions. Policy makers and educators must work towards creating more inclusive educational environments that value diverse forms of cultural capital while also equipping students with the resources necessary for success in formal education systems.

Future research should focus on developing more refined measures of cultural capital specific to the Indian context, exploring the dynamic nature of cultural capital acquisition and transformation, and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions aimed at addressing cultural capital disparities. By continuing to examine and address the role of cultural capital in education, India can move towards a more equitable and inclusive education system that truly serves its diverse population.

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POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY IN INDIA: EVALUATING ACCOUNTABILITY AND CIVILIAN CONTROL

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Abstract

Every citizen has fundamental right to live in a safe and secure environment, as such, it is the duty of the state, especially through police, to provide the same. On the contrary, the people's trust in police personnel is always in question. In view of the situation, in 2006, the Supreme Court with a view to ensure civil control over police practices in the country, directed to establish Police Complaints Authorities (PCA) at the state and district level. The authority is required to interrogate in complaints against serious police misconduct. Thus, the present paper attempts to evaluate the countrywide progress of PCAs in the last seventeen years. The research analyses the extent to which Supreme Court directives on composition, powers, and transparency are followed in the implementation of PCAs in the country by studying reformed police acts and government notifications on police reforms in various states and union territories. The study deduces that initially PCAs were established in different parts of the country but it remained only on paper.

Keywords: Police Reforms, Abuse of Power, Police Complaint Authority, Police Accountability, Custodial Violence

INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India provides the fundamental right to live in a safe and secure environment, without any fear of becoming the victim of crime. The implementation of the same is entrusted to the state, particularly police officials. However more often than not the custodians of our security, advertently or inadvertently, ignore

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their responsibility and the general public suffers. It will be evident from the fact that as per the National Crime Records Bureau (hereafter, NCRB), in the year 2021, an alarming incidents of crime increased to 60,96-310 in 2021 from 51,56,172 in 2019 and 50,74,634 in 2018 (National Crime Records Bureau, 2021, xi). In the year 2022, minute reduction was registered with cases coming down to 58,24,946 incidents of crime. Out of these 4,45,256 were registered crimes against women, which is approximately 51 FIRs every hour (NCRB, 2022, xi).

In addition, a substantial number of complaints is also registered against the police personnel on issues of sexual harassment, torture, corruption, false cases, inaction, and non-registration of FIRs which is evident from the data published by NCRB yearly. In 2006, in the hope of establishing a more ethical police force in the state, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in the case of Prakash Singh & Others v. Union of India,[1] gave seven directives to all states to bring structural reforms in their existing police system. Out of these seven directives, the establishment of Police Complaints Authorities (hereafter, PCA) at the state and district level to interrogate complaints against serious police misconduct is significant. At the district level, in addition to the serious misconducts, PCAs are also required to look into complaints that alleged extortion, land grabbing, or incidents involving serious abuse of authority.

Thus, the paper attempts three pronged examination, first, discusses the persistent issue of police atrocities in India and the existing mechanisms in place, except PCA, to check the same, second, examines the events leading up to Prakash Singh's judgment specifically focussing on the establishment of the Police Complaints Authority and the powers attributed to the agency and third, it assesses countrywide progress of PCAs in the last seventeen years.

POLICE ATROCITIES IN INDIA

Misconduct and abuse by Police officials is a common phenomenon in India since colonial period. It must be noted that any such incident ranging from refusal to lodge a FIR, to commitment of murder, culpable homicide, rape, custodial torture, harassment, use of force not warranted by law, illegal detention or arrest on inefficient or illegal grounds, humiliation, using filthy language, extorting confession under pressure, padding up of additional information, not allowing to meet the counsel or family members, denial of food, etc. comes within the ambit of Police atrocities. The accepted assumption is that only a courageous person with connections can complain against police atrocities. This is because police officials often manage to escape from being accountable for their actions due to a system of ineffective supervision of police officers in the country. During their service, they create a nexus of mutual cooperation with senior police officers, senior government officials, and influential politicians which worsens the whole system of 'supervision' of their actions resulting in zero accountability for any misconduct. Whereas the Indian Constitution through Articles Articles 20 (1), (2) and (3), Article 21, 22 and 24 provide sufficient safeguard to citizens.

Despite guarantee of strong legal protections, statistics reveals discouraging situation. *According* to the *NCRB data* for 2015, a total of 54,916 complaints were registered in the country against police personnel which is an increase of 14.9 % in comparison to the previous year when 47,774 registered complaints were made against police personnel in 2014 (NCRB, 2015, 157). From the year 2016 onwards, NCRB stopped mentioning the total number of complaints received against police personnel. In the year 2021, it was reported to be 6164 (NCRB, 2021, 1037) as compared to 5479 given in the year 2018 (NCRB, 2018, 993). The 2022 NCRB report stated that a total of 2614 cases were registered against police officials (NCRB, 2022, 1037).

Disappointingly, police accountability has not substantially improved which is evident from the fact that in 2021, only 240 trial cases against police officials were disposed. Of these, in 15 cases police personnel were convicted while in 225 cases police personnel were acquitted which is a testament to the imbalance in the high rate of acquittal and low rate of conviction of police officers (NCRB, 2021, 1037). Similarly, in 2022, out of 2614 cases, only 1113 police personnel were arrested for the crimes committed which is not even half of the number of complaints (NCRB, 2022, 1037). Such inaction and apathy result in a deficit of public trust in the police force as a larger part of the public continues to either completely fear or distrust police officials. As a result, dissatisfaction with the police has steadily increased and there is a common notion among the public that police officers can get away with anything.

However, there is a provision of Orderly Room in police administration which acts as an internal body where complaints against police personnel are attended by senior police officers. The Orderly Room is authorised to award punishments in namely three categories which are a) minor punishments, b) punishments not requiring oral inquiry but a charge is framed, and c) defaults where charges are framed and an oral inquiry is also held. Minor punishments pertain to sanctions like extra fatigue, extra drills, confinements to barracks, etc. The second category pertains to intermediate measures of administration while the last category holds severe punishments for officers. Such punishments can include compulsory retirement or dismissal from official posts.

Another institution is the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), an external mechanism to look for police accountability. However, there are structural weaknesses that impact the outcome of its investigations against police personnel. It must be noted that NHRC/SHRCs have the power to enquire upon petitions filed on matters concerning human rights violations. However, NHRC/SHRCs can only advise the government to prosecute the accused or grant relief to the victim. This is mere a recommendatory power.

THE ROAD TO PRAKASH SINGH'S JUDGMENT

In view of the above situation the judiciary and the government bodies have suggested reforms in the police administration of the country to address the public distrust in the police and to check police atrocities. The precedent can be traced back to the crucial case of Joginder Kumar v. State of UP[2] where the Court voiced its concern regarding complaints of violations of human rights during and after arrest. It was held that denying a person his liberty is a serious matter and any officer arresting must have some reasonable justification that the arrest is necessary. As a part of the judgment, the court also laid down guidelines that were to be followed during any arrest till proper legal procedures not established: 1) an arrested person being held in custody is entitled, if he so requests, to have one friend, relative or other person who is known to him or likely to take an interest in his welfare, told as far as is practicable, why and where he is being detained or arrested; 2) the police officer shall inform the arrested person when he is brought to the police station of this right and 3) an entry shall be required to be made in the Diary as to who was informed of the arrest.

Similarly, in DK Basu v. State of Bengal,[3] the issue of custodial deaths and torture came under scrutiny. The Court laid down a few guidelines for police officers to follow while making an arrest, detention, or interrogation of any individual. In its guidelines, it stated that police officers must wear 'accurate, visible and clear' name tags and details of police officers who are interrogating must be recorded in a register. Further, the person arrested or detained has the right to have a friend, relative, or well-wisher informed of the place of arrest or detention. Further, his medical examination must be done within 48 hours. He also has the right to meet his/her lawyer during interrogation.

In the past three decades, several measures have been initiated by the government to make serious police reforms. The National Police Commission submitted eight reports between 1978 and 1981 making various recommendations namely, the accountability of the police to an independent cell in the State Security Commission to ensure fair and transparent working of police officials, withdrawal of the protection against prosecution provided to police officials for acts committed in their due course of duty (under section 132 and 197 of the CrPC; sections changed in BNSS), and replacing the Police Act of 1861 to promote the rule of law and render impartial service to the country. However, little action was taken to implement the suggested reforms.

Similarly, in 1998 and 1999, the Ribeiro Committee submitted two reports. The first report (1998) emphasized the need to establish a Police Performance and Accountability Commission in each state as well as the District Police Complaint Authorities and Police Establishment Board. The report further emphasized the need to create government rules on tenures, transfers, promotions and rewards along with the due process of appointing the Director General of Police. The second report furthered the need to replace the Police Act of 1861 with a fresh Act, as recommended by the NPC. It also suggested reforms in the recruitment and training process, investigation processes, etc.

In 2000, the central government appointed the Padmanabhaiah Committee to scrutinize the challenges the police would face in the next millennium, to make a people-friendly force, tackle problems of organized crime, militancy, terrorism, provide mechanisms to prevent political interference, etc. The Committee in its report talked about fresh procedures for the recruitment and training of police officials, their promotion through pre-promotion exams, appointments, tenure and transfers that are free of political meddling, etc. It also suggested some minor reforms like dismantling the VIP security systems, providing better living conditions to constables, fostering the concept of community policing, etc.

The Law Commission of India has also raised the issue of police reforms in the country. For example, in its One Hundred and Thirteenth Report on Injuries in Police Custody, the Tenth Law Commission of India recommended an amendment to the Indian Evidence Act of 1872. This amendment pertained to providing sufficient grounds for prosecuting a police officer alleged to commit custodial atrocities. The Law Commission advised inserting a new section as 114B in the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 which stated that in case of bodily injury happens to a person in custody, then the court can presume that injury was caused by the police officer having custody of that accused during period of injury.

The Commission also suggested careful re-examination of sections 53 and 54 of the CrPC1973, to consider whether the medical examination of any and every person taken into police custody is essential and feasible, or not (Law Commission of India, 1985, 6-7). All of these reports culminated in the Supreme Court judgment in 2006. Addressing the issue of accountability, autonomy and efficiency, the Supreme Court of India provided seven detailed directions to central and state governments for bringing police reforms in the country. These included: 1) limit political control by constituting a State Security Commission; 2) Appoint DGP through a merit-based transparent process and secure a minimum tenure of two years); 3) minimum tenure of two years for other police officers including Inspector General of Police (IGP), Deputy IGP, Superintendents of Police in charge of districts and Station Officers; 4) separate the functions of investigation and maintaining law and order.; 5) setting up a Police Complaints Authority; 6) setting up a National

Security Commission; 7) setting up a Police Establishment Board which will decide issues concerning transfers, postings, promotions and other service-related matters of officers below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police. Given the scope of this paper, we will limit our discussion to the Police Complaints Authority.

POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY (PCA): AN APPRAISAL

Various brutalities including illegal detention, refusal to register cases, custodial sodomy, custodial deaths, etc., are commonly committed by the police in spite of the various legal protections. The judgment of Prakash Singh proved to be the most significant moment in the history of police reforms in the country as it was instrumental in introducing the institution of the Police Complaints Authority (hereafter, PCA) to ensure accountability of the police to citizens of the state.

The fundamental purpose of setting up the Police Complaints Authority was to set up an organization that is 1) independent of the police; 2) has its own powers of investigation; 3) can make binding recommendations for action and 4) can deal seriously with complaints of serious misconduct and dereliction of complaint by the police (Srinivas and Siddiqui 2009,8). Therefore, PCA has been empowered to receive and hear complaints against officers of all ranks. Further, it is established at both the state and district level. At the state level, it is required to look into 'allegations of serious misconduct against officers of the rank of Superintendent of Police and above, while the district level is to look into all complaints against police officers of and up to the rank of Deputy Superintendent' (Centre for Law and Policy Research, 2014, 13). Further, there is a distinction that is provided on the types of complaints that the authority can hear against police officers. For example, complaints of only serious misconduct can be accepted against higher-level officers while complaints of any nature can be heard against lower-level officers. The offenses which are considered as act of serious misconduct are death in police custody, grievance hurt caused by Police, rape or attempt to rape, illegal detention, extortion, land/house grabbing and any serious abuse of authority.

To ensure its functioning as an independent body, Supreme Court directed that the organisation must consist of three to five members – a chairperson who is a retired judge of the Supreme Court or the High Court and his assisting members who may be retired police officers, civil servants or persons from the civil society (Srinivas and Siddiqui 2009, 9). In certain cases, like in the case of the NCT of Delhi, one of the members must be a woman.

We must note that as per the Supreme Court judgment, the PCA can take cognizance of complaints made either by the victim or the victim's representative. PCA has the 'power of the civil court under the code of civil procedure, 1908 including the power to summon witness, compel appearance, inquiries, compel registration of First Information Report (FIR) against errant officers or initiate departmental inquiries' (Centre for Law and Policy Research, 2014, 13). Once the complainant files his/her complaint, the Police Complaints Authority thoroughly reviews it to gain a basic understanding of the nature of the complaint. It has the power to dismiss certain complaints: a) if the complaint fails to meet the mandate of the Authority b) if litigation regarding the subject matter of the complaint is already pending in a court of law or c) if there is a lack of evidence to support the complaint. However, if the Authority establishes the fact that it was indeed the police officer who was at fault, then the Authority has the power to recommend the concerned Authority or the state government to initiate internal disciplinary proceedings against the police officer if he is found guilty of the offense. An FIR can also be lodged if the police officer is found to be guilty of the offense. In certain cases, both an FIR and disciplinary inquiry may be ordered. The Authority also is empowered to recommend the state government to pay some sort of financial compensation to the victim (Srinivas and Siddiqui, 2009, 14). The complainant is also entitled to a set of rights after he has filed a complaint which includes: a) the right to attend all hearings in an enquiry about the complainant; b) right to be informed about the date and place of hearing and c) right to ask for measures for the protection of the victims and their families in case they are subjected to threats or harassments from the police personal.

SUPREME COURT ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PCAS

It must be noted that a Model Police Bill was submitted by the Police Act Drafting Committee (PADC) under the chairmanship of Soli Sorabjee. This committee, created by the Ministry of Home Affairs in September 2005, solely looked into drafting a new police act for the country to replace the old Police Act of 1861.

> The Court referred to the Committee's draft and advised state governments to frame new Police Acts based on the Draft Model Police Bill. The Draft Model Bill contains a detailed section that establishes police complaints bodies in the form of Police Accountability Commissions at both the state and district level… the draft Model Police Bill complements the Supreme Court judgment in that it provides the detailed nuts and bolts through which the directions of the Supreme Court can be most effectively implemented. It puts in a place a system to manage complaints against the police in its legislative model (Prasad, 2012, 2).

To date, majority of the states like Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttarakhand complied with the Supreme Court directive by establishing Police Complaints Authority through state police laws. However, many states have failed to follow Supreme Court directives. Rather its directive is adhered to by passing government orders. Some of the states that have taken this route are Andhra Pradesh (Press Trust of India 2022), Arunachal

Pradesh,[4] Goa,[5] Jharkhand,[6] Madhya Pradesh[7], Maharashtra,[8] Manipur,[9] Orissa[10] and West Bengal.[11] Further in all the Union Territories which include Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi (NCT), Lakshadweep and Pondicherry, PCA were established through a notification by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.[12]

In three states i.e., Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Jammu and Kashmir the status of PCAs is not clear. This is because initially state governments in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir stated before the Supreme Court for suspending the implementation of PCA in the state. However, in 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs in its reply to a question in Rajya Sabha included these two states in its list of states which have established PCA in the country while including Telangana in the list where PCA has not been established.[13] In February 2020, the High Court of Telangana directed the state government to frame rules for the constitution of PCA and subsequently, it was formed by the state government in 2021 (Vamshidhar, 2023).

It must be noted that the Supreme Court order calls for both state and district-level establishment of a Police Complaints Authority. However, only fifteen states i.e., Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand have established PCAs at both state and district level in their police laws and government orders. Nine States which include Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Sikkim, Tripura and West Bengal have provided for only state-level authorities. PCAs at the district level are particularly important as it is in the districts where legal remedies for police violence and misconduct are rarely accessible.

An online survey can only verify the existence of functional PCAs, which are operational at the ground level, in nine states - Assam, Goa, Haryana, Kerala, Tripura and Uttarakhand, Karnataka,[14] Maharashtra, Gujarat[15] and four union territories - Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Delhi[16] and Pondicherry (Nag and Prasad, 2011, 10; Thaver, 2017; Hindu, 2017). In June 2023, the Telangana High Court showed concern stating that PCA in the state has only been available on paper as no office space or staff has been allocated to the authority (Vamshidhar, 2023).

COMPOSITION OF PCAS

Amongst the states that have established new police acts or passed government orders for the establishment of PCA, only three states have adopted this criterion in almost full sense which includes Assam, Chhattisgarh and Tripura (Nag and Prasad, 2011). In many police acts passed, little attempt has been made to ensure strict compliance with the Supreme Court order. This is evident from the fact that the composition of PCAs in many state police acts provides for serving police officers. While we must not doubt the integrity of serving police personnel in the country, we should also note that if serving police officers are adjudicating members then the public trust in the institution as an independent body from police will be difficult to achieve. Further, the Supreme Court judgment clearly states that members must be retired officials of the state and not those who are already in service. However, despite this directive, Tamil Nadu has also not complied with the Court's directive as State-level PCAs are directed to be headed by the Home Secretary with the Director General of Police and Additional Director General of Police as members (Press Trust of India, 2023). No retired High Court judge is required to be the Chair nor any space has been given for the inclusion of independent members.

In the country's capital Delhi, despite the existence of a functional PCA, citizen's complaints against police officers are adjudicated by 'internal departments such as vigilance, punishment branch, departmental inquiry cell and others, which were chaired by police officials, thereby raising apprehension of bias and unfair treatment' (Sachdeva, 2023).

POWERS OF PCAS

An important component of an effective and independent Police Complaints Authority is that its inquiries on complaints received must be done by dedicated team of investigators. Supreme Court recognised the importance of the same and directed that 'authorities may need the services of regular staff to conduct field inquiries. For this purpose, they may utilize the services of retired investigators from the CID, Intelligence, Vigilance or any other organization' (Sachdeva, 2023). However, amongst the PCAs which have been established in states via new police acts, only few police Acts like that of Assam, Haryana, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu and Tripura mention the supporting staff of Police Complaints Authority.

The government order which governs the Arunachal Pradesh Police Complaints Authority firmly reproduces the Court's instruction as it states 'for the purpose of regular staff to conduct field inquiries this authority may utilize the services of a retired investigator from the CID, Intelligence, Vigilance or any other organization.'[17] Government order of Jharkhand merely mentions secretarial assistance and Maharashtra failed to mention anything about investigative or any other supporting staff.

In terms of PCAs established in Union Territories, Ministry of Home Affairs directs in its notification that each 'Police Complaints Authority will be provided the support staff of not more than three officials – one computer-knowing stenographer, one office superintendent for running the office and one employee with multitasks.'[18] However it does not mention utilization of support staff for investigative purposes.

As per the Supreme Court directive, after investigation, PCAs have the power to recommend a) internal disciplinary action within the Police department, financial compensation to the victim or lodging of an FIR against the accused Police officer. The judgment also says that these recommendations by the authority must be binding. However, only four Police Acts – those of Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Meghalaya firmly spell out that the recommendations of Police Complaints Authorities are binding (Prasad, 2012, 11). In some states like Haryana and Tamil Nadu, police acts require the Authority to communicate its findings to the state government. The government is to consider the findings recommendations and take appropriate action.[19] The government order setting up the Chandigarh and Maharashtra Authority states that the recommendations of the Authority shall ordinarily be binding except for reasons to be recorded in writing while the government order of Arunachal Pradesh states that 'the recommendation of the Complaints Authority, for any action, departmental or criminal, against a police personnel/officer shall be binding on the concerned authority.'[20]

RESISTING TRANSPARENCY

To ensure a transparent functioning, authorities are expected to have functional websites where they can publish their annual reports or orders, in addition to providing other essential information. However, out of 29 states and seven union territories, only seven states and four union territories have created a proper channel for victims to file complaints. This includes Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Orissa, Karnataka, Tripura and Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Dadar &Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Delhi (NCT). Further, except Gujarat, no state has provided any portal to victims of crime by police personnel to check their complaint status. A lack of transparency in the functioning of PCAs is further evident from the fact that few states like Assam and Tripura has prepared an annual report on the functions and activities of the PCA, which is otherwise required by law. The orders carried out by the PCAs in individual cases are also inaccessible except in the case of Assam, Tripura, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu. Similarly, only Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Tripura, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, and Delhi have functional PCA websites. However, most of these websites do not provide adequate information for the general public. In fact, the website of the Delhi PCA provides no link to either lodge the complaint to or access the complaint status.

CONCLUSION

A country-wide progress of the Police Complaints Authority shows that even after more than a decade since the Prakash Singh judgment, the progress of PCA is in nascent stages. While some states across the country have made serious efforts to operationalise PCAs on the ground, many have done just lip service to escape violation of the Supreme Court directive by adopting PCAs only on paper through new Police Acts or government orders.

In some states and union territories, their effectiveness and independence have been compromised by not complying with the Supreme Court Order completely in areas pertaining to the composition of PCAs, binding recommendations, annual reports, orders, etc. Further, in most states, like Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh, no information whatsoever is available on PCAs while in states like Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, little details are out in the public domain which shows that there is a dearth of information on the matter.

In the end, it must be recognised that there are structural and political problems that are impending the smooth establishment and functioning of PCAs in the country. Therefore, civil society must take urgent steps to ensure active advocacy for Police Reforms while the government must make earnest efforts to provide PCAs in states and districts where they are missing in order to build a more accountable police force in the nation.

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THE ROLE OF INDIA IN SHAPING U N DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

India's role in developing and implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) is essential considering its population magnitude, economic impact, and intricate governance framework. This study analyzes India's role in influencing and attaining the UNSDGs via the lens of public administration. The study examines critical policy measures, diplomatic interactions, and governance practices that have established India as a prominent actor in global development. The research underscores the complex issues confronting India's public administration system, encompassing poverty alleviation, healthcare enhancement, and environmental sustainability. The study highlights the essential function of public administration in promoting sustainable development at both national levels and through South-South cooperation initiatives, as evidenced by an in-depth analysis of case studies like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Digital India. The results indicate that although India has achieved considerable advancements, substantial obstacles persist, necessitating improvements in administrative efficacy and intergovernmental collaboration. The report finishes by offering insights into how India's experience might educate global development governance and recommends specific areas for reform to improve India's efficacy in contributing to international development initiatives.

Keywords: India, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Public Administration, Sustainable Development, International Development, Governance.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the post-2015 agenda build on and go further than the MDGs while articulating a vision of the world we want by 2030; an ambitious DNA for what needs to be achieved if we are to end poverty,

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save our planet, and ensure prosperity for all. The 17 goals and 169 targets, for a holistic political commitment, are intended to be pursued on the principles of social inclusivity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability of countries (United Nations).

India, as one of the more populous and diverse countries in Asia, is a major player when it comes to assuring that the overall shift towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) worldwide will come back on track. As the most populous and fastest developing economy, India has the largest piece of the pie when it comes to global progress on the SDG indicators. These are also concomitant of the complex interplay of socio-economic gaps, geographic imbalances, and diverse demand across a population (UNDP 2019).

In essence, the integration of public policy and delivery to individuals is public administration, which encompasses all functions within government and guarantees these activities are carried out efficiently and economically in pursuit of national objectives. Public administration, therefore, constitutes the chief agency of translation of international obligations into policy and practice at national or sub-national levels within the framework of SDG (Dwivedi 2016). Therefore, assessing the role of public administration in India to support the on-ground realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) becomes crucial for discerning opportunities and challenges within this spectrum (Government of India 2015).

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) marked a significant step forward in the international framework for development. Unlike fundamental rights, the aims of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) launched in 2000 were specific socio-economic targets which ranged from poverty alleviations to reducing child mortalities to achieving universal primary education, based on the pledge by world leaders at that time. As has been noted, the MDGs were successful at mobilizing global action and improving some key human development indicators; however, they also received criticism for being too narrow in scope, not strong enough on sustainability — such as environmental degradations (Sachs 2012) — and failing to address systemic injustices. In addition, the MDGs were seen as a top-down project of rich nations with little indigenous stakeholder taking part from poor countries they aimed to speed up development (Griggs et al., 2013).

The strategy chalked out by India for sustainable development seeks to focus on the role of public administration in its efficacy to realize the purpose behind every Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). It still presents considerable agency problems, notably regarding coordination, resource allocation, and governability (Singh & Bhatnagar 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The present paper aims to assess India's influence on framing of UNSDGs for which it examines India's diplomatic role in advocating inclusion of poverty, equality, renewable energy etc. Further, it emphasizes the marking of role of public administration and governance in innovative formation and implementation of specific schemes to achieve SDGs and identifies the key challenges in the process.

This research uses a mixed-methods strategy of qualitative data analysis along with case studies and expert interviews. The main data for this study is collected from an extensive examination of policy documents, official publications, and reports generated by institutions like NITI Aayog, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Health, among others. The selection of case studies is governed by effectiveness of specific schemes of SDGs and best practices therein

AN OVERVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) build on the successes and lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but they differ significantly in their scope and enforcement mechanisms. The SDGs represent a major shift, moving development beyond a traditional focus on poverty alleviation to a more comprehensive model that addresses structural and systemic barriers to sustainable development (Griggs et al., 2013).

EVOLUTION FROM MDGS TO SDGS

The MDGs were a milestone in fostering global cooperation for development. In many regions, including India, they significantly reduced poverty and improved health and education outcomes (United Nations, 2000). However, they faced criticism for not addressing the root causes of poverty, such as inequality, social exclusion, and environmental degradation (Sachs, 2012). Additionally, the MDGs primarily focused on developing nations, leaving wealthy countries less accountable for global sustainability issues.

In contrast, the SDGs are universal, recognizing that development challenges are interconnected and require solutions from both developing and developed countries. The SDGs emphasize inclusivity, environmental sustainability, and social equity—values that align closely with India's development goals (Griggs et al., 2013).

INDIAN ENGAGEMENT IN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

India has played a dynamic role in shaping the SDG agenda and developed an ambitious strategy for local implementation. This focus on social protection, access to essential services, and reducing income inequality is clearly reflected in the SDG targets (Government of India, 2015).

India has shown strong commitment to the SDGs through various initiatives. Despite these successes, India faces challenges in implementing the SDGs, including inefficiencies in governance, limited resources, and regional disparities. While India's federal structure allows for localized development, it also complicates intergovernmental cooperation (Patel & Roy, 2019). Addressing these challenges will require administrative reforms, capacity-building, and stronger institutional systems to ensure efficient service delivery and alignment of development priorities across regions.

INDIA'S ROLE IN SHAPING UNSDGS

The aspiration of India as a developing country and commitment towards furthering global sustainable development has been reflected in the UNSDGs, as one of the key representatives of Global South. India largely input into the design and implementation of SDGs through actively participating in international negotiation processes using its socio-economic projects as models for other countries. By all these means, India has demonstrated commitment towards development that is more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.

POLICY ADVOCACY AND GLOBAL DIPLOMACY

The policy engagements of India while making the UNSDGs was to popularize an inclusive development model that can be applied at all development stages (Ministry of External Affairs, 2018). Contrary to the MDG approach, which focused only on the top-bottom approach and ignored all the minute details regarding sustainability and inequality that had been acknowledged in SDGs; it thereby presented an opportunity for countries like India to press for a more balanced agenda. This was further cemented by the success of India's Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, which was embarked upon to ensure that the unbanked population enjoyed access to banking as well as social security (Kumar & Gupta, 2019).

INDIAN LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is also one of the tremendous leadership roles that India has put to the forefront in terms of cooperation for developing nations. The ISA initiative counts more than 120 member countries as it addresses energy poverty through the advocacy of scaled and affordable solar energy solutions. The alliance is a resource pool that develops the possibility of renewable energy solutions for countries.

These sectors include energy, healthcare, education, and agriculture. India has through the India-Africa Forum Summit provided technical assistance, concessional finance, and capacity-building to African nations (Narula, 2020). It contributes towards attaining SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 2 Zero Hunger, and SDG 4 Quality Education. The leadership of India proves that sustainable development is not a preserve of developed countries, and development countries have the capability to collaborate and achieve the SDGs.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES ALIGNING WITH SDGS

India has national development policies converged to the UNSDGs, so as to become acutely conscious of the domestic and international dimensions of sustainable development. Some key projects and policy frameworks outlining India's all-encompassing approach in coping up with the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability are highlighted.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana that was launched in 2014 not only brings the financially isolated population under the India fold but also well matches with SDG 1, 'No Poverty' and SDG 10, 'Reduced Inequalities' because it provides a saving account, insurance, and other financial services to all the households of India (Kumar & Gupta, 2019).

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND UNSDG IMPLEMENTATION IN INDIA

The success of the UNSDGs in India lies in the country's public administration system that is to translate international commitments into action as national policies. Governance being at its core deals with resource management, intersectoral coordination of activities, and outreach so that the benefits of development are accruable to all segments of the population.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN DEVELOPMENT

Public administration thus links policy formulation with implementation in international development work. It pertains to the implementation of policies by the government and ensuring coordination with myriad stakeholders: national and state governments, private sector organizations, and civil society groups (Dwivedi, 2016). Public administration is imperative while trying to translate the global SDG targets into regional contexts since it ensures that the context and needs are met for each region and locale.

In the context of India, public administration is thus a channel through which the delivery of SDGs can be implemented with flagship initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Digital India, and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. These initiatives require a multi-sector approach, serviced by myriad numbers of government ministries, departments, and partnerships between non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The success of such programs is contingent on the prudent resource management skills of public administrators as well as their ability to facilitate cooperation among departments and ensure that target recipients receive service and support (Chaturvedi, 2017).

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGs

The implementation of the SDGs in India also boasts of an institutional framework comprising central ministries, state and local government, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The central body involved in coordinating at the national level has been NITI Aayog since 2015. NITI Aayog is responsible for integrating SDG into national development plans, defining measurable targets, monitoring progress, and strengthening collaboration among stakeholders (NITI Aayog, 2021).

NITI Aayog publishes the SDG India Index annually. It's very important to keep track of the performance of all the states and union territories. Competitive federalism brings in competition and nudges governments to start new practices and gradually upgrade their performance (NITI Aayog, 2021). The ranking brings best practices to the forefront and points out areas where one needs to get more efforts; it is a framework of focused interventions.

CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Despite all progress, several challenges pose an obstacle to successful SDG implementation in India. One major challenge is policy coherence, or the alignment of policies within sectors as well as levels of governments so that they always contribute toward sustainability development (Singh & Bhatnagar, 2019).

Another challenge is the limited administrative capacity at both state and local levels. While the central government has the national policies, most initiatives that are in line with the SDGs are mostly at the state and local governments, who mostly lack technical know-how as well as the capacity and resources to perform them (Patel & Roy, 2019). Capacity gaps exist vividly in rural areas. Here, local governments face serious capacity shortcomings; there is very low staff, infrastructure, and finances, which severely hinder the capacity of delivering basic services. Collaboration between central and state governments poses another significant hurdle (Chaturvedi, 2017).

INDIAN INITIATIVES IN ALIGNMENT OF UNSDGs

A Case Study of Swaksha Bharat Abhiyan (SBA): The initiative is perhaps unparalleled in its scope, covering both rural and urban areas to improve sanitation infrastructure and cleanliness across this nation (Mishra, 2018). It was the two-pronged approach-infrastructure development and behavior change-that helped SBA win its campaign. It built over 100 million toilets across India, ensuring access to sanitation in a number of places. Still, this was not sufficient with infrastructure alone. BCC played a much larger role in getting rid of open defecation and ascertaining a clean culture. The public awareness campaigns, involving influencers, celebrities, and community leaders, played a major role in promoting toilet use and hygiene practices, thus inducing deep cultural shifts (Mishra, 2018).

However, for SBA in some parts, there were problems related to infrastructure quality and water supply. In some areas, the rush to meet toilets targets led to such issues as shoddy construction or inadequacy of water in supplying toilets, which rendered them unusable (Mishra, 2018). Further, in the regions where cultural barriers and resistance to new sanitation practices continue, it has been challenging to sustain long-term behavioral change (Singh & Bhatnagar, 2019).

Digital India and Sustainable Development Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure: The initiative enhances digital infrastructure, bettering e-governance, and bridging the digital divide between cities and villages as such to create a digitally connected economy for India (Rao, 2020). Improvement in broadband access across rural areas, which have hitherto faced poorer services, is fundamental to the Digital India initiative. Improved connectivity enables rural communities to access information, utilize services, and interact with economic opportunities that were inaccessible heretofore. The CSC has made access to a range of digital services possible while reducing inequalities in service provision and bringing governance closer to citizens (Sharma, 2021).

Nonetheless, the programme faces several challenges. The digital divide can still be traced, as depicted in remote and rural areas where infrastructural shortcomings and deficient digital skills prevent proper participation in the digital economy (Sharma, 2021).

Health and Wellbeing: Ayushman Bharat Initiative: Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) are intended to upgrade the existing subhealth centers and primary health care centers into an integrated service delivery unit that will include services for screenings from noncommunicable disease, maternal, child, mental health services, and essential diagnostics. Along such preventive and promotive healthcare, HWCs are aligned toward addressing health problems' root causes, developing healthy outcomes, and reducing disease burden (Mehta, 2021).

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) health insurance will provide cover up to 5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary hospital treatment. It seeks over 100 million low-income families by shielding them from catastrophic health expenditure—a significant pathway to poverty in India. The initiative helps both SDG 3 and SDG 1 (No Poverty) because it reduces out-of-pocket healthcare expenses and provides access to quality medical care (Mehta, 2021).

However, challenges still exist, especially relating to infrastructure in healthcare and shortages of personnel, especially in the rural areas. The quality of care under PM-JAY has been inconsistent, as some private medical facilities are accused of inflating charges to exploit the scheme. Overcoming these issues will be important to ensure that Ayushman Bharat meets its promise to deliver universal health coverage and equitable access to healthcare (Sharma, 2021).

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSDGs IN INDIA

Ambitious efforts are made by India toward achieving UNSDGs; however, there is a substantial set of barriers in the way of successful implementation. Barriers may relate to governance issues or socio-economic inequalities, political dynamics, and distribution of resources. Ensuring solutions to these challenges is crucial in accelerating progress toward SDGs and toward sustainable inclusive development.

Governance and Administration Challenges

The effectiveness of SDG implementation in India is heavily influenced by governance structures and administrative efficiency. India's governance system operates on multiple tiers—central, state, and local—each responsible for distinct tasks in executing development plans. However, this multi-tiered system often leads to bureaucratic inefficiencies, delays in decision-making and poor coordination among different levels of government, hampering SDG-related project implementation (Sharma, 2021).

An important issue in governance relates to policy incoherence. The coherence of all governmental programs and activities is necessary to ensure they all work synergistically toward the core objectives of sustainable development (Singh & Bhatnagar, 2019). Implementing frameworks for inter-ministerial coordination and fostering integrated planning is essential to ensure that policies are cohesive and aligned with the SDGs.

India encounters considerable obstacles in the monitoring and evaluation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) advancement. For effective monitoring, the availability of reliable and timely data is essential; however, data collection mechanisms across numerous regions of India, particularly in rural locales, are insufficient. The absence of precise data complicates the ability to monitor progress, pinpoint deficiencies, and formulate informed policy choices (Sharma, 2021).

Political, Economic and Social Barriers

Probably the most relevant challenge is governance, but India has many other political, economic, and social challenges that provide an apparent barrier to this country fully achieving the SDGs. Poverty and regional inequality are probably its biggest obstacles. Although conditions have improved greatly since the time of independence, much of the Indian populace continues to live below the poverty line, including millions in rural areas and underdeveloped states. The unequal distribution of resources and opportunities has created sharp regional disparities, with some states making considerable progress toward the SDGs while others lag behind (Patel & Roy, 2019). These disparities present a major obstacle to achieving uniform SDG progress across the country.

Political factors also significantly influence the consequences of SDGs. Corruption and low accountability are important barriers in ensuring proper achievement of SDGs. Corruption within the public sectors reduces the effectiveness of public spending by misallocating the resources and reducing the effectiveness of developmental activities. Weak accountability systems weigh upon these factors that further creates difficulty for the public to trust the governmental organizations and also hampers the effective provision of SDG-based projects (Sharma, 2021).

Economic challenges have stemmed from resource constraints as well as fiscal constraints. Significant expenditures are required to implement infrastructures, health, education, and social services in pursuit of the SDGs. However, fiscal capacity strain, conflicting objectives of development, and the allocation of resources to some sectors across other sectors had limited what was possible within what the government could provide for the initiatives associated with SDGs (Singh & Bhatnagar, 2019).

Corruption and low accountability are important barriers in ensuring proper achievement of SDGs. Corruption within the public sectors reduces the effectiveness of public spending by misallocating the resources and reducing the effectiveness of developmental activities. Weak accountability systems weigh upon these factors that further creates difficulty for the public to trust the governmental organizations and also hampers the effective provision of SDG-based projects (Sharma, 2021).

Human obstacles: Social obstacles of gender inequality and prevailing customary practices inhibit the SDG. Amongst female literacy and the proportion of women in the labor force increasing, long-standing gender inequalities characterize much of the rural and social/communal context. Cultural behaviors and social norms include not attending school or gaining access to health and economic opportunities, which also affects the attainment of SDG 5, Gender Equality, and its interlinked goals (UNDP, 2019).

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES THROUGH REFORMS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The UNSDGs have motivated India to significantly reform its public administration structure. This is because the reason behind it is that the issues of governance complexity, administrative failure, and the socio-political constraint are demanding real reforms in governance structures, for efficiency and transparency, and for fostering local institutions toward achieving the SDG set agenda effectively.

Administrative Reforms and E-Governance

One of the most outstanding reforms made recently is the DBT system, designed to remove inefficiencies in subsidy distribution while reducing corruption at the same time. The DBT provides the avenue for the direct crediting of subsidies and other benefits into the bank accounts of eligible recipients, bypassing intermediaries, who cause much fraud and resource leakages (Nanda, 2019). The Aadhaar system, by basing specific digital identification on biometric attributes, allocates a specific digital identity to more than 1.3 billion individuals, hence facilitating reform by ensuring welfare initiatives are targeted correctly and minimizing the occurrence of double or fake beneficiaries.

However, the gap between urban and rural locations in digital access prevents the fulfillment of the vision of digital governance. Problems of broadband accessibility and lack of digital literacy continue to prevent many from taking the benefits of digital services in rural and deprived areas (Sharma, 2021). Initiatives like setting up Common Service Centres (CSCs), making digital services accessible to those in rural areas, mark a positive step; however, much more remains to be done to achieve complete digital inclusion.

Strengthen Local Government

Local governance assumes a very crucial role in sustainable development in such a diversified country like India, where socio-economic disparities and geographical diversity are highly vast. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) form the backbone of local governance and, therefore, play an important role in the implementation of SDG-sensitive initiatives, especially at rural levels where state and central authorities may not possess requisite local knowledge to challenge specific problems faced by these communities (Prakash, 2020).

Another administration reform that defined the past few decades is the decentralization of power to PRIs, granting them more decisive power, especially in sectors like water, sanitation, education, and health, all of which play critical roles in achieving SDG attainment (Prakash, 2020). PRIs have been important in the implementation of initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA), developing community-led sanitation initiatives, promoting local ownership, and ensuring sanitation infrastructure was maintained and sustainable (Mishra, 2018). However, despite these changes, the grassroots governance in India remains bedeviled with political interference, resource constraints, and differential administrative capacities in the states. Harmonization of imbalances will require strategic interventions to enhance weak PRIs, facilitate sharing of best practices, and promote an environment-friendly framework for efficient local governance (Patel & Roy, 2019).

INDIA'S ROLE IN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE

India has taken a strong position in international forums, promoted equitable development, and participated in South-South Cooperation. This is the approach the nation is taking toward its global governance role-; devoted to promoting developing country interests while sharing their development experiences and working together toward attainment of the SDGs.

India's Participation in International Forums

Global cooperation, with India actively engaging itself through the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), G20, and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has indeed provided a momentum to global policy on sustainable development. The HLPF is one of the primary mechanisms for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs. Indian participation in this body provides an avenue to enhance its achievements, challenges, and best practices for the SDG (Bhatia, 2018).

India has, time and again on the HLPF platform, urged that growth be inclusive in which the needs of the marginalized sections are addressed first. Through its VNRs, India has taken pride in its progress and shared vital insights into tackling all-encompassing development issues through targeted interventions (Bhatia, 2018).

Sharing Best Practices with Developing Nations

India is playing a very strategic role in global developmental efforts through South-South Cooperation. This is through the spreading of best practices, provision of technical assistance, and developmental support globally (Sen, 2021). ITEC or the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation is one of the most prominent Indian engagements in the overall framework of South-South Cooperation (Sen, 2021).

This again underlines India's stewardship in renewable energy and, more importantly, the ISA it launched in cooperation with other participating states - to mobilize resources, build technical know-how, and work toward the cause of promoting solar energy in countries that have high solar potential. India, by developing international cooperation in renewable energy, played its role in building a more sustainable and resilient global energy infrastructure, taking into account both energy poverty and climate change (Narula, 2020).

CONCLUSION

India's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) reflects the strategy involves technology, strengthened institutions at the local level, and collaboration both with relevant actors across the country and beyond. The successful operation of DBT initiatives shows the capability of technology in improving service delivery by eliminating inefficiencies and assuring the delivery of subsidies to targeted beneficiaries. Strengthening PRIs also has emphasized the need for local government towards achieving the SDGs. The decentralization of decisions and empowerment of local institutions facilitated in India has helped the government in the country to develop programs that are tailored to the specifics of communities, thereby making the benefits more equitably distributed.

India's active engagement in governing global development only makes the nation hold its ground as a leader in global sustainable development. By being an active participant in international forums like HLPF and G20, India has reiterated the concerns of developing countries by forcefully advocating for a holistic agenda that would facilitate full engagement without leaving out any country. India as a leader under the International Solar Alliance and its commitment toward South-South Cooperation defines its approach to fair and sustainable solutions in managing world development-related issues.

Development efforts by India as it strives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals reflect much-needed lessons for other developing countries. By structuring national policies in accordance with world objectives, multi-level governance, and using technology to efficiently deliver services, these are fruitful insights that can guide development activities elsewhere. Forward-looking emphasis on public administration reforms, digital governance, and local empowerment will, therefore, be important to make India's development efforts sustainable, inclusive, and in line with the 2030 Agenda goals. At this juncture of reaching the targets of the 2030

Agenda, all eyes would also eagerly look toward the leadership and managerial expertise from India towards shaping a sustainable future for all people.

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FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA: A STUDY OF CROSS COUNTRY VARIATIONS

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Abstract

Food security as prime responsibility of state is a global phenomenon and also recognized in South Asian countries. But ensuring food security in these countries has not been fully achieved, evident from the fact that one third of the population under food insecurity of world belong to South Asian countries. The situation of ensured food security within this region varies from country to country. Thus, it becomes an urgent imperative to examine the status of food security in the context of relationship between availability of food production and accessibility/affordability in South Asian countries. Further, it is also imperative to examine the adequacy of nutritional requirements from food stuff provided under food security law. It is also important to ascertain the effectiveness of adopted policies of food security in the region. On the basis of qualitative and quantitative data, the paper finds that economic growth is inversely related jobs and food security.

Keywords: Food Security, Availability, Accessibility, Affordability, Nutrition, South Asia

UNDERSTANDING FOOD SECURITY

The concept of food security evolved over the last quarter century. Food security has been a consistent theme raised in specific contexts in a number of world conferences convened by the United Nations in the 1990s. FAO (1983) had formulated that the basic concept of food security implied that "all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food they need". The World Bank (1986) has modified this formulation to indicate that food security is "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Its essential elements are

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the availability of food and the ability to acquire it." The World Bank has made a distinction between chronic and transitory food insecurities. Chronic food insecurity reflects continuous "inadequate diet caused by the inability to acquire food. It affects households that persistently inability to either buy food or to produce their own." The transitory food insecurity is defined as "a temporary decline in the household's access to enough food. It results from instability in food prices, food production and household income - and in its worst forms, it produces famine".

Accordingly, food security implies livelihood security at the level of each household and all members within, and involves ensuring both physical and economic access to balanced diet, safe drinking water, environmental sanitation, primary education and basic health care. It visualized that: Food security involves economic growth, especially access to resources, education, especially the education of women, population programme, improved nutrition that lowered the death rates and increased child survival, natural environment, democracy, participation and accountability are the natural antidotes to starvation and malnutrition of food, Chung et al. (1997) have summarized the diverse determinants of food security status in a general conceptual framework indicated in Figure 1. It focuses on the links between resources commanded by the households, levels of farm and non-farm production, household income, household and individual consumption, and individual nutrition.

Food security is generally understood as access to adequate food to all households at all times to enable them to lead a healthy and active life. The initial focus on food security as a global concern was on the volume and stability of food. Achieving food security in South Asia has become a major challenge. The food security scenario in South Asia has witnessed rapid progress over the last few decades, yet nutrition outcomes, especially those related to women and children, have failed to keep pace.

As Sen (1981) points out, the poor do not have adequate means to secure the essential food, even when food is available in local or regional markets. Here it should also be pointed out that though increases in household income contributes to improving the access to food, it need not improve the nutritional well being of all individual members of the household. Hendry (1991) points out that poverty is not the sole determinant. The extent of access to gainful employment, to arable land, to suitable technologies, and to other productive resources are important factors influencing under nutrition. The direct food and nutrition support for the poor through a minimum safety net should be properly balanced with improvements in the quality of life of local people through investments in education, drinking water and sanitation, and health care. Further, future food security programmes should have a broad objective of increased agricultural production and enhanced access to food through a participatory approach of local people with emphasis on resources efficiency, social equity and preservation of the environment (George, 1994).

Food security can be summarized in terms of the following four key aspects:

(a) **Food Availability (production and agricultural resilience):** There should be availability of adequate food with the nation through domestic production, net imports (commercial or food aid) and carry-over of stocks.

(b) **Food Accessibility/Affordability (economic resilience):** Individual should be capable to purchase food and to be able to procure food through safety nets.

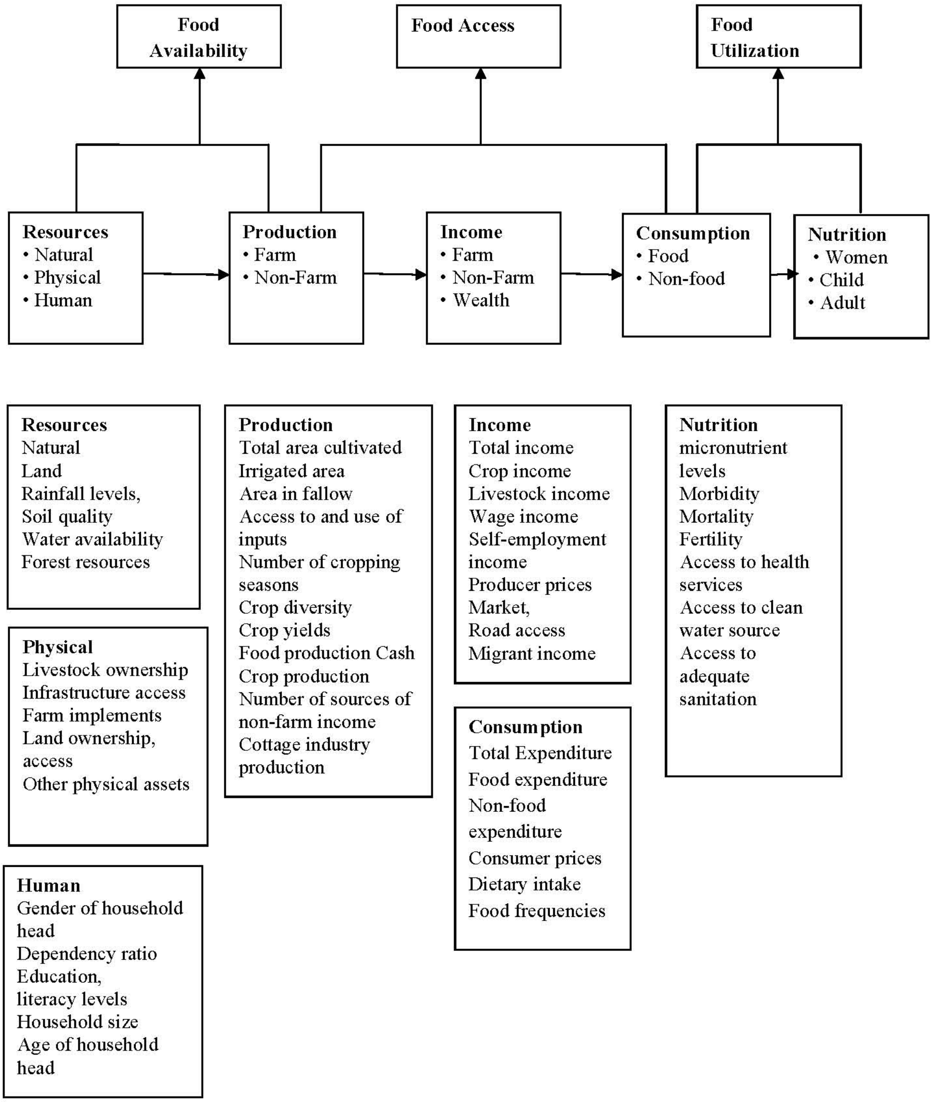
(c) **Sustainability and adaptation (environmental resilience): Adaptation** refers to adjustments in **ecological**, social or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects.

(d) **Food Utilisation:** Consumption of food by the household in a proper form. It also takes into account food preparation, storage and utilisation, food safety, nutritional safety and dietary balance.

(e) **Food Vulnerability:** Vulnerability of the population to food insecurity due to physiological, economic, social or political reasons.

It may be apprehended that following variables are also associated with food security in Indian context: Owning poor quality land or less than 10 dismil of agricultural land.

A Conceptual Framework



Source: Chung et al., (1997)

FOOD SECURITY STATUS IN WORLD

During the last 10 years, the 2022 Global Food Security Index (GFSI) shows that the overall food security environment continues to deteriorate for the 113 nations in the index. The early years of the GFSI (2012-15) saw the biggest improvements, with the average overall food security environment score jumping by 6%. However, the GFSI saw slower growth between 2015 and 2019 and then has weakened from 2019 to 2022, plateauing over the past three years as the world faces its highest-ever food prices and hunger on an unprecedented scale. In 2022 the index was dragged down regarding two of its strongest pillars—affordability, and food quality and safety—and saw continued weakness in its other two pillars—availability, and sustainability and adaptation. Around one third of countries (35 out of 113) do not have any national nutrition plan or strategy in 2022. In addition, 25 of 113 countries are not regularly monitoring the nutritional status of their population (compared with 15 in 2019). Without regular monitoring, policymakers cannot identify nutritional deficiencies and deploy resources where needed.

At world level, conflict, economic shocks, climate shocks and soaring fertilizer prices are combining to create a food crisis of unprecedented proportions. As many as 783 million (78.3 crore) people are facing chronic hunger. More than 333 million (33.3 crore) people are facing acute levels of food insecurity in 2023, and do not know where their next meal is coming from. High fertilizer prices could turn the current food affordability crisis into a food availability crisis, with production of maize, rice, soybean and wheat all falling in 2022.

The prevalence of average undernourishment in world is 9.2% in 2022 while it was 12.9% in 2001 and 8.2% in 2011. It seems that undernourishment is being increased between 2001 to 2022 at international level. Between 702 and 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021. Projections are that nearly 670 million people will still be facing hunger in 2030 – 8 percent of the world population, which is the same as in 2015 when the 2030 Agenda was launched. Around 2.3 billion (230 crore) people in the world were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021, and 11.7 percent of the global population faced food insecurity at severe levels. Globally in 2020, an estimated 22 percent of children under five years of age were stunted, 6.7 percent were wasted, and 5.7 percent were overweight. Children in rural settings and poorer households, whose mothers received no formal education, were more vulnerable to stunting and wasting. Children in urban areas and wealthier households were at higher risk of overweight.

FOOD SECURITY STATUS IN SOUTH ASIA

South Asia's GHI score and indicator values reflect worrisomely high rates of child undernutrition (15.3%) as well as a substantial level of undernourishment facing the population as a whole. The 2022 child wasting rate of South Asia is 14.8 percent, the highest of any world region and more than twice the child wasting rate of Africa South of the Sahara of 6.0 percent (UNICEF et al. 2023b). This pattern indicates that there are prevalence of poor maternal nutrition (Banerjee et al. 2022; Torlesse and Tram Le 2020). There is also a high prevalence of simultaneous child wasting and child stunting in South Asia (Torlesse and Tram Le 2020), and its child stunting rate of 31.4 percent is nearly identical to that of Africa South of the Sahara, at 31.5 percent (UNICEF et al. 2023b). Meanwhile, due to various reason undernourishment in the region has been increased by 15.9 percent in 2020–2022, compared with 13.5 percent in 2014–2016 (FAO 2023; Schipper et al. 2022).

Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report (2022) reported that hunger situation of South Asian Country's is worrisome, as this reason scored only 27 in 2023 while it was 28.6 in 2015. It means there is no improvement in food security level in last 8 years. Around 400 million or 40 crore people are undernourished and unable to access adequate food. Global Hunger Index (2023), India ranks 111th out of the 125 countries with a score of 28.7, India's hunger situation comes under serious category while Afganistan rank below at 114 and followed by Pakistan (102), Bangladesh (81), Nepal (61) and Sri Lanka (60). During 2015-2023, there were no any improvement in front of the security in South Asian countries that Global Hunger Index remained constant or decreased in India (29.2 to 28.7), Afganistan (30.4 to 30.6), Pakistan (28.8 to 26.6), Bangladesh (26.2 to 19), Nepal (21.3 to 15) and Sri Lanka (17.1 to 13.3).

Agriculture in the SAR (South Asian Region) is caught in a low equilibrium trap with low productivity of staples, supply shortfalls, high prices, low returns to farmers, area diversification and unequal agrarian structure - all these factors can be a threat to food security. Average 25% population of the total world population is living in South Asian countries and with low per capita income and food insecurity.

Table 1: Food Security Indicators in South Asia

Indicators/South Asia Country	*India*	*Bangladesh*	*Afghan-istan*	*Nepal*	*Pakistan*	*Sri Lanka*
Population 2023, (million)	1428.6	172.9	42.2	30.8	240.4	21.8
GNI_Per Capita Income ($), 2022	2390	2820	380	1340	1560	3610
Number of undernourished (million) 2022	244	44	31.9	4.4	37.5	4.2
Proportion of under-nourishment (%) (2020-22- 3 year average)	16.6	11.2	30.1	5.4	18.5	5.3

Indicators/South Asia Country	*India*	*Bangladesh*	*Afghan-istan*	*Nepal*	*Pakistan*	*Sri Lanka*
Life expectancy (2022)	67.2	72.4	62.58	68.4	66.1	76.4
National (Poverty headcount, (% of population)) 2020	11.9	13.5	54.5	8.2	4.9	1
multidimensional poverty Rural (headcount ratio), 2023	21.24	27.42	66.87	28.1	49.82	3.3
Intensity of Poverty Rural, 2023	42.1	42.32	49.02	42.37	53.34	38.39
Headcount Ratio of Severe Poverty Rural, 2023	5.65	7.33	30.49	8.02	30.36	0.31
Vulnerability to Poverty Rural (%), 2023	22.33	19.18	17.16	22.87	15.38	15.85
Under $2.15_International Poverty Line_2023	10	13.5	55	8.2	4.9	1
Food Security						
Malnutrition/ Undernourishment	16.3	11.4	29.8	5.5	16.9	3.4
Global Hunger Index Score (2023)	28.7	19	30.6	15	26.6	13.3
Global Hunger Index Rank (2023)	111	81	114	69	102	60

***Note:* GHI Severity Scale:** ≥50- extremely alarming; 35-49.9- alarming; 20-34.9- serious; 10-19.9-moderate; ≤9.9-low

Source: FAO

Around 20 crore people are earning less than $2.15 per day are facing huge challenges on the issue of food security. In case of India it was 140 million people (14 crore) who earns less than $2.15 per day. Afganistan, Nepal and Pakistan's GNI_Per Capita Income ($) is lower than that of India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Life expectancy of Pakistan (62.58) is lowest among Asian Countries and the life expectancy of Asian Countries is lower than that of world average 72.7 yr. Share percentage of rural poverty is high in Pakistan (53.34) and Afganistan (49.02) than other South Asian countries, It was also observed that around 500 million people (50 crore) people are suffering from multi-dimensional poverty [1]and 300 million (30 crore) alone in India.

FOOD INSECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA

Table 2: Food Security measures in South Asia (%)

(2022)

Food Security measures/South Asia Country	Prevalence of Undernourishment in the total population	Prevalence of Severe Food Insecurity In the total population	Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity in the total Population	Prevalence of Wasting In Children (Under 5 Years of Age)	Prevalence of Stunting In Children (Under 5 Years of Age)	Prevalence of Anaemia In Women Aged 15 To 49 Years
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
India	16.3	5.65	na	17.3	30.9	53.0
Afghanistan	29.8	22.5	70	5.1	30.7	42.6
Bangladesh	11.4	10.7	31.7	9.8	30.2	36.7
Nepal	5.5	13.6	37.8	12	6.3	35.7
Pakistan	16.9	8.7	32.6	7.1	30.4	41.3
Sri Lanka	3.4	1.1	10	15.1	36.7	34.6
Southern Asia	15.3	18.8	39.4	14.1	30.7	48.2

Source: https://www.fao.org/3/cc0639en/cc0639en.pdf dated 06.02.2024

The table 2 shows that share percentage of undernourished people are high in Afghanistan (29.8%) followed by Pakistan (16.9%), India (16.3%), Bangladesh (11.4%), Nepal (5.5%), and Sri Lanka (3.4%). The table also indicates that average 15% of the total population are facing severe food insecurity, means 150 million (15 crore) people are unable to access two times meal in South Asian Countries, and around 8 crore people are unable to access food two times in a day in India. Column 7 of table 2 shows that anaemic women are high in India (53%) followed by Afganistan (42.6%), Pakistan (41.3%), Bangladesh (36.7%), Nepal (35.7%, Sri Lanka (34.6%). Column 6 of table 2 says that average 30% child are suffering from stunting (height to age) and it is lowest in Nepal (6.3%) only. Average 14% children are suffering from wasting in South Asian Countries, and it is high in India (17%).

Countries	*Programmes and Steps taken for Food security*	*Target Population*	*Coverage and implementation*	*Aspect of food security*[7]
Afghani-stan	World Food Pro-gramme	Chronically poor and food- insecure fami-lies, schoolchildren, teachers, illiterate people, tuberculosis patients and their families, internally displaced persons and ex-combatants – with a particular emphasis on vulnerable women and girls.	25 million people, Since January 1, 2006.	Vulnerability
Bangla-desh	National Food and Nutrition Security Mission		August 2000, 160 million people	
	National Nutrition Policy		2015	
	Public Foodgrain Distribution Sys-tem (PFDS)	Poorest population	Launched in 1975	Availability and Acces-sibility
Bhutan	Food and Nutrition Security Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2014		2014, All the people,	
	Food Corporation of Bhutan	Farmers	Established in 1974	Accessibility and Avail-ability

Countries	*Programmes and Steps taken for Food security*	*Target Population*	*Coverage and implementation*	*Aspect of food security*[7]
	Food Safety advocacy sessions (I & II)		May, 2005	Utilisation and Vulnerability
Nepal	The Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act		2018	
	National Food Safety Policy		2019	
	National Nutrition Policy		2020	
	Nepal Food Corporation	People in hill and mountain areas where there is food deficit	Established in 1974	Accessibility and Vulnerability
Pakistan	No food security programme as such - rather plethora of food laws. Only government of Punjab has a food policy but that considers only wheat for the food security policy and ignores the other components of food security.			Availability
Sri Lanka	There are food-based welfare programmes and not food security programmes: Samurdhi programme	People below poverty line	Two million households. Started in 1995	Accessibility
	Thriposha programme	Mothers among low income groups with infants under one year of age (lactating mothers)	Launched in 1973 and covers 600, 000 beneficiaries	Utilisation

Countries	*Programmes and Steps taken for Food security*	*Target Population*	*Coverage and implementation*	*Aspect of food security*[7]
	School mid-day meal programme	Children	Covers 500, 000 children in 6, 440 schools; started in 2004.	Utilisation and Vulnerability
India	National Food Security Act 2013	75% of rural and 50% urban people		accessibility, affordability and availability
	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)	Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH) beneficiaries	January 2024, 81.35 Crore people (813 million)	
	Public Distribution System	Below Poverty Line Population	It is intended to serve poor who number more than 810 million.	Accessibility and Vulnerability
	Integrated Child Development Scheme	Children and pregnant women	Scheme was launched in 1975. 13.56 lakh anganwadi, 4 crore children (40 million)	Utilisation
	Mid-day Meal Scheme	Students in govt. primary schools/ primary schools aided by govt. and run by local bodies.	Students of Class I-VIII and was launched in 15 Aug1995; 12 crore (120 million) students	Utilisation
	National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP)	All rural poor who are in need of wage employment and desire to do manual and unskilled work.	150 most backward districts of India. Launched in 2000.	Accessibility
	Antyodaya Anna Yojana	5 % of the total population in the country who sleep without two square meals a day	One crore of the poorest families; launched in 2000.	Accessibility and Vulnerability

Countries	*Programmes and Steps taken for Food security*	*Target Population*	*Coverage and implementation*	*Aspect of food security*[7]
	Essential Commodities Act, 1955	General public	Launched in 1955 and it extends to the whole of India	Availability
	National Food Security Mission	to increase the production of rice, wheat and pulses	Launched in 2007-08	Availability
	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana	Farmers	Covers all the states and UTs and launched in 2007.	
	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)	Rural Households primarily semi-skilled or unskilled workers living below the poverty line in rural India.	Launched in 2005, active15 Crore labour (150 million labour); enrolled 25 crore	Accessibility and Vulnerability
	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)	Women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and parents of	ed in 2001 in all states and UTs	Accessibility

Table 3: Food Security measures in South Asia (%)

(2020)

Food Security measures/South Asia Country	*Value Added of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (USD Million, 2015 Prices)*	*Share Value Added of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing to GDP (USD Million, 2015 Prices) (%)*	*Share of Agri., Forestry and Fishing Employment In total Employment (%)*	*Share of Central Govt. Expenditure on Agri, Forestry and Fishing In total Outlays (%)*	*Production of Cereals 2020 (000 Tonnes)*	*Per Capita Production of Cereals (Kg)*
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
India	440649	17.3	44.0	4.8	335035	240
Afghanistan	6163	30.6	46.0	3.2 (2019)	6026	155
Bangladesh	33967	12.4	37.9	5.7 (2016)	59960	358
Nepal	7275	25.0	62.8	4.4	10936	373
Pakistan	69898	21.9	38.3	0.1 (2019)	42541	187
Sri Lanka	6597	7.4	26.2	4.6 (2019)	5435	248

***Source*:** //efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.fao.org/3/cc2211en/cc2211en.pdf

It is well known that in underdeveloped country, there is structural inequality in composition of GDP that share percentage of agriculture and allied activities is less than that of share percentage of total employment engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The data also shows that central government has been spending very less proportion (less than 5%) of total outlays on agriculture, indicates neglect behavior of central government towards agriculture economy where average 40-50% labour force are engaged in agriculture sector. Table 3 indicates that in India, 44% labour force are engaged in agriculture while agriculture produces 17.3% of total GDP and it was 46% to 30.6% for Afganistan, 37.9% to 12.4% for Bangladesh, 62.8% to 25% for Nepal, 38.3% to 21.9% for Pakistan, 26.2% to 7.4% for Sri Lanka.

It is well known that there is 180 kilogram cereals are needed per capita per year in South Asian countries. And the table shows that availability of cereals in most of the South Asian countries except Afghanistan is adequate.

CONCLUSION

Most of the quantitative and qualitative indicators of food security at the household level are linked to the poverty issues or affordabilty. It seems that food is available in South Asian countries but people are unable to access or afford foodgrains adequately. Among south Asian countries, data reveal that people of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal have low affordability than that of India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. But it was also true that among south Asian countries 75% malnourished people are living in India and 30% of world average. The study shows that there is good number of population is undernourished due to affordability. Global Hunger Index shows that there are negligible changes in score of global hunger index. Around 40 crores people face hunger in South Asian countries. Although, some countries have food security programme but some countries do not have any food security programme. In India, there is good number of food security programme but it is limited to 5 Kg grains per person per month which cannot fulfill the requirement of the body. Currently, Government of India is providing food (preferably rice) to 810 million people. Despite, the various food security schemes in India, India's condition is worrisome that still stands with Afaganistan and Pakistan.

Increased food production at the national level alone does not guarantee the adequate accessibility and affordability. Unless the poor have economic access to food either from increased income levels or from reduced prices, it cannot be assured. For this there is a need of conscious effort to overcome this problem. Maintaining physical access through increased food supplies has an impact on food security through maintaining price levels under control and creating incomes by promoting rural employment opportunities. Finding an appropriate policy-mix that provides incentives for increased agricultural production and meeting the consumer demand for low-cost food has been a difficult proposition, and imaginative policies and programmes are needed to achieve this. Economic access to food for the poor could be achieved through a mix of employment and income policies in the farm and non-farm sectors and through a minimum safety net. In view of the heavy dependence of a large proportion of the rural population on agriculture for employment and income, the main elements of the strategy for reduced poverty and enhanced food security should be based on a broad approach towards agricultural and rural development.

As fragmentation of land holdings and landlessness increases, creation of off-farm employment for the rural poor should be at high priority. In the absence of appropriate measures to encourage non-farm activities, a large segment of the rural population cannot be provided with gainful employment and economic access to food. The human dimension of this problem is such that helping people to help themselves by capacity building can provide a lasting solution. In order to be effective the food security policy must evolve as a basic element of a social security policy with proper co-ordination among the various government departments, private sector and non-government organisations. Current economic growth is jobless growth. A policy should be job oriented and Food policy programme should cover various micro-nutrients along with proteins.

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1. **Note:** In the global MPI, a person is identified as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least one third of the weighted MPI indicators. So, person is MPI poor if their weighted deprivation score is equal to or higher than the poverty cutoff of 33.33%. Following the AF methodology, the MPI is calculated by multiplying the incidence of poverty (H) and the average intensity of poverty (A). H is the proportion of the population that is multidimensionally poor, and A is the average proportion of dimensions in which poor people are deprived. So, MPI = H × A, reflects the share of people in poverty and the intensity of their deprivation. A headcount ratio is also estimated for vulnerability to poverty and severe poverty. A person is identified as vulnerable to poverty if they are deprived in 20–33.33% of the weighted indicators, and in severe poverty if they are deprived in 50–100% of the weighted indicators. International poverty line: Instead, poverty is most often measured in monetary terms only, using the international extreme poverty line established by the World Bank (2022). The $2.15 (Rs. 178/- in India) a day, line is an average of national poverty lines in the poorest countries and covers the minimum set of basic

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REVITALIZING INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC LEGACY: TIME FOR TRANSFORMATIVE SPIRIT

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the evolving practice of democracy in contemporary India. While acknowledging recent challenges, the paper emphasizes the importance of reinvigorating the core democratic values that shape the lives of ordinary people. It underscores the need for a more substantive democratization that empowers people to fully engage with democracy's vast potential, moving beyond a merely procedural understanding. By addressing key issues such as law and order, corruption, and poverty, the study underscores the opportunities for constructive activism and peaceful reform. However, the paper also stresses the importance of restoring democracy's transformative potential, which, if harnessed, can significantly strengthen and enrich India's democratic culture. This emphasis is intended to inspire and motivate the audience to actively participate in the democratic process.

Keywords: Democracy, India, procedural democracy, Substantive democracy, political equality, participation, state capacity.

INTRODUCTION

The idea that democracy is inherently good has grown. As a result, there is a pressing need to find the most effective ways to assess and explain democracy to determine whether it is good or harmful. Democracy's fundamental virtue is its moral superiority over other decision-making methods since it considers the interests of all parties involved and imposes equal liability on everyone. The fundamental justification for democracy is that it is based on the notion of

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individual autonomy and that democracy can only arise if equality is guaranteed. This implies that everyone has an equal voice in the collective decision-making process. But democracy is reduced to a system of institutions and processes where citizens choose their representatives, whose accountability is only periodically guaranteed. Thus, participation, within this understanding, is restricted to the exercise of franchise by citizens of a country. In this way, elections become the only means citizens in a representative democracy like India may hold their leaders accountable. In the last speech of Constituent Assembly debates on adopting a new constitution on 25 November 1949, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the drafting committee of the Indian Constitution, strongly argued that the task of democratization is not complete with ensuring only political democracy. What was of greater importance was to focus more on and achieve social democracy, which he considered to be a way of life incorporating the basic principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity, and compromising on any one of them would mean destroying the very purpose of democracy. (Constituent Assembly Debates 1949) The idea of a free democratic India was well captured by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the former President of India, who believed that democracy in India would be judged based on how well it catered to the needs of common people, in terms of social services, food, clothes, and housing. He also highlighted the need to eradicate corruption to improve administration, production, and distribution efficiency. (Mehta et.al 2011) The test of Indian democracy, therefore, was not just in a theoretical sense but more by how it performed in actual practice.

The paper argues that much of India's political discourse has centered on a procedural understanding of democracy, which, while important, has limited the full engagement of the people with its democratic resources. To enrich India's democratic experience, the paper highlights the potential for deeper, substantive democratization. Although challenges such as poverty, corruption, and lawlessness have spurred activism outside the state—sometimes resulting in conflict—this also reflects a strong desire for change. The study suggests that by addressing these core issues, India can restore democracy's transformative potential, ensuring it continues evolving as a vibrant and inclusive system.

REIMAGINING THE FRAMEWORK OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY: TOWARDS SUBSTANTIVE DEMOCRATIZATION

In the modern political discourse, democracy is primarily defined as a collection of procedures and institutions through which citizens elect representatives whose accountability is only guaranteed periodically. As a result, participation is limited to citizens exercising their right to vote. Robert Dahl believed that people's "effective involvement" meant they had an appropriate and equitable opportunity to express their choices for the ultimate outcome, which could be achieved by meaningful resource equalization. For Dahl, political equality was merely a means to achieve human growth, freedom, and worth, and large-scale resource transfer was required for 'effective participation.' (Dahl 1989, p. 323)

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that merely allocating resources equally may not ensure participation because many variables affect people's "effective participation." The "fallacy of electoralism" befalls proceduralists who attempt to explain participation with election statistics. (Jayal 2001, p. 3) Their theories ignore the various obstacles to political involvement that may exist in the Indian context, such as patriarchy and caste. The inability of people to make independent decisions, their lack of access to pertinent information, their inability to hold elected officials accountable, and, most importantly, the failure of their franchise to produce an administration that responds to their needs all undermine the right to exercise one's franchise freely. (Jayal 2001, p. 4)

Therefore, substantive democratisation is also necessary for the meaningful enjoyment of equal citizenship rights. The difficulty is in advancing these goals. Some theorists and philosophers contend that socioeconomic equality is necessary for political democracy. Others, on the other hand, disagree with this expansive interpretation of democracy, believing it to be deterministic and omitting political democracy's contribution to advancing social and economic equality. For them, substantive democratization occurs when powerful actors with popular constituencies realize that the best approach to influencing issues of common interest in a society is to fight for and establish significant pro-democratic rights and institutions that citizens may employ. (Tornquist 2005, p. 201) This does not imply, however, that social and economic equality are prerequisites for robust democracy. It implies that people must be sufficiently resourceful to participate in the significant facets of political life.

However, to realize substantial democratisation, political intervention is important. A pervasive skepticism of democracy and a lack of participation has resulted from economic distress paired with a failure to institutionalize political reforms. To enhance governance, democracy is essential, and the state plays a critical role in democratization's success. As a result, the state must recognize and institutionalize its relationship with the people. While the state has the authority and resources to control and regulate society, the people must have access to the socio-political and civil rights necessary for the "regulation of this regulator". (Doig 2000, p. 21) This can happen only when the state recognizes its obligation towards the disadvantaged and provides them with basic necessities. "Citizens of developing countries may enjoy formal equality, before the law, but for many of them it is rendered virtually meaningless in practice by the absence of satisfactory housing, nutrition, and education." (Doig 2000, p. 22) As a result, it may be argued that reforms cannot be implemented based on minimalist state ideas. What is needed is an activist state that engages with civil society and intervenes more effectively to help the disadvantaged improve their standard of living.

Thus, any analysis of democracy must acknowledge that procedural democracy is essential but not sufficient for democracy to be meaningful. "The project of democracy is not accomplished by merely securing legal and political equality, it may be severely compromised by inequalities of wealth, power and social status, which deny many from having a truly equal opportunity to influence governmental decisions." (Jayal 2001) As a result, democracy should not be limited to the realm of state and government; it should be viewed as the guiding concept for collective existence in society. Critics would claim, however, that emphasizing the substantive essence of democracy and judging democracy on substantive criteria is unrealistic because no current democracy would pass such a test. However, it is critical to recognize that any democratic philosophy must address concerns of inequity and injustice of any kind.

Democracy in India should be theorized and measured by also taking into account various developments and incidences like movements, protests, state violence, victimization of minorities, violence and other forms of oppression against women and LGBTQ communities, and so on. Intrinsically, democracy is a universal value not just because it brings up a particular form of government but also because of its importance in the lives of the people, because of its ability to bring everyone on the same platform irrespective of differences and ensure people's needs and rights and in preventing abuse of power. (Sen 1999) Substantive democratization may not follow procedural democratization; hence, it should not be assumed that institutional changes will necessarily bring about substantive transformations in the functioning of the state. (Przeworski 2004) The present crisis of Indian democracy lies in the fact that it has lost its transformative potential and has been restricted within the framework of the nation-state. In this way, people are kept ignorant about the real meaning of democracy, so they cannot explore new possibilities and spaces within it. Democracy and democratization, therefore, are both about process and outcomes and require institutional, representative, and functional transformations. (Grugel and Bishop 2014) It is, therefore, important that this transformative potential is brought back within the democratic culture in India.

Here, one is reminded of Rajni Kothari, who talked about the importance of the politics of mass struggle for bringing about social transformation at the local, national, and global levels. He argued that in order to overcome the authoritarian, state-centric system of governance, there is a need to adopt an 'alternative' approach towards democracy and work towards an "alternative movement," which should mainly comprise initiatives by the citizens. (Kothari 1989) These kinds of changes, Kothari thought, were holding back the democratic social transformation of the state and giving rise to a managerial and technocratic variant of political democracy. (Kothari 1988) He believed that democracy should function not just at the political but also at social and economic levels, which calls for a version of social democracy exclusively for the Indian context. He thus advocated for an Indian version of social democracy. (Kothari 1976)

DEMOCRACY AND STATE CAPACITY IN INDIA: THE GROWING POLITICAL DISORDER

The way democracy functions today cannot be understood in isolation. It is very much shaped by how it has functioned in the past and how the state has been behaving throughout its democratic history. (O'Donnell 2000) It is important to understand that the past is deeply embedded in the elite and the people, greatly shaping the state-society relationship. (Grugel and Bishop 2014) The historical experiences of democratic India, including the complex relationship between Hindu and Muslim communities and the longstanding tensions with Pakistan, have deeply influenced its political culture. These issues often dominate the domestic political narrative, with the Hindu-Muslim dynamic shaping much of the discourse, while international politics is frequently framed in terms of relations with Pakistan. At times, concepts of nation and nationalism are viewed through the lens of these contrasts. While these challenges persist, there is great potential for Indian democracy to grow stronger by broadening its focus beyond these divisive narratives and fostering a more inclusive and forward-looking political culture. By addressing these deep-seated issues constructively, India can pave the way for a more unified and resilient democratic society. Similarly, the culture of corruption that has taken root over a period of time has been deeply embedded in the institutions of the state, which greatly affects its functioning. If a government is corrupt, it is not just because it has some corrupt leaders but also because it has inherited the past legacy that had been determining the state-society relationship for decades. Therefore, if a state is behaving in a particular way, then it is important to understand that this behavior might be the result of the past tradition.

Apart from the past tradition and culture, it is also important to dig into the capacity of the state in terms of fulfilling its responsibilities towards its people. Insensitivity of the state towards the people, especially the poor, might be the result of poor state capacity. (Grugel and Bishop 2014) This means that democracy or democratization may not be the precondition for a strong state's capacity to fulfill the promises that democracy gives to its people. States which lack basic capacities like infrastructure and are responsive to the demands and needs of a few will always be susceptible to corruption, violation of the rule of law, and distorted citizenship. (Huber 1995) Therefore, state capacity is important for democratization to succeed.

According to Huber, state capacity means the ability of a state to enforce the rule of law, to ensure economic growth and development, to gather legitimacy, support, and compliance of the people of the state, and to redistribute resources in a justified way. (Huber 1995, p. 167) However, this state capacity is greatly affected and redefined with the development of globalization and growing interdependence, which has demanded decreasing the role and control of the state in various fields. A state today faces the challenge of fulfilling welfare responsibilities on the one hand and keeping pace with the forces of globalization on the other. (Grugel and Bishop 2014) Developing states find it very difficult to strike a balance between these two. (Grugel and Bishop 2014) The economic and political compulsion of developing states to comply with the demands of globalization and, at the same time, cater to the needs of the people with fair distribution and redistribution of resources have also affected the process of democratization where states have been unable to fulfill even the basic requirements of democracy. (O'Donnell 2007) Grugel and Bishop explain how the democratization process was more successful in Southern Europe than in sub-Saharan Africa. They argue that Southern Europe was much stronger in terms of state capacity, like technical, extractive, and policy-making capacities. Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, had poor state capacities. From the start of globalization, i.e., around the 1990s till the 2000s, it was too fragile and had a very poor capacity to introduce reforms that democratization demanded. (Grugel and Bishop 2014) Grugel and Bishop concluded that deepening democratization and carrying out radical economic liberalization simultaneously results in an authoritarian government and reduces the quality of public space. (Grugel and Bishop 2014, p. 133)

Experts on Indian democracy have repeatedly correlated the state's incapacity with the growing political disorder in the Indian democracy, which they believe led to the governance problem. (Kohli 1990) Today, we witness a political system where at all levels—local and national—the rule of the party has been replaced by personal rule, administrative services are politicized, and political violence is on the rise, which justifies the above observation that political order in India is not in its place. The incapacity of the state to deal with the fundamental problems of law and order, corruption, and poverty led to the growth of activism outside the state, which mostly resulted in violence, sometimes by the State and sometimes among different social groups, which point towards the degeneration of Indian democracy. Amid so much turmoil and systemic failure of the state in addressing the demands of different social groups, the growth of individual leaders became easier as they promised to fulfill the demands of these specific groups. This led to the growth of personalized politics, where personal rule or authority became more important than impersonal authority based on procedural aspects of democracy. This shift resulted in the national and regional leaders focusing more on their personal power and authority, ignoring the importance of strengthening democratic institutions. In the past, Indian politics has seen the prominence of influential leaders such as Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, A.B. Vajpayee, L.K. Advani, and Narendra Modi at the national level, along with Mamata Banerjee, Mayawati, and Jayalalithaa at the state level. While these leaders have significantly shaped the country's political landscape, their focus on personal leadership has sometimes led to a centralization of power. This has the potential to diminish the role of democratic institutions, as public trust may shift more towards individual leaders than the institutions themselves. The language of these leaders often reflects a personal approach, emphasizing their ability to bring change—whether in delivering justice, fighting corruption, or addressing public demands. To strengthen India's democracy, it is important to ensure that these powerful figures work in tandem with democratic institutions, fostering both trust in leadership and a renewed belief in the power of institutions to drive long-term progress. A public opinion survey in 12 Indian states[1] found that political parties are the most distrusted political institutions in India, followed by government officials and police. (The Politics and Society Between Election 2019 Survey 2019) Political trust is an indicator of how the democratic system is actually functioning, whether both its input (procedural aspects) and output (policy-making and implementation) mechanisms are working properly. Low levels of trust show that there is some problem in this system, and it creates an environment where people are not sure whether those in power will be responsive and do what is right and in their best interest. In a plural and multicultural society like India, this political context easily provides the leaders the opportunity to mobilize the different social groups on different lines like language, religion, race, ethnicity, etc., and they manipulate these allegiances to serve their personal political interests.

In this context, the elite leadership decides which rights are important for a particular group and what kind of democracy should be practiced. In other words, the democratic behavior of people is decided by the elite. So, democracy in India is democracy from above, like a gift the elite gives to the masses. (Kohli 1990) In this way, democracy in India relies more on the wishes of the elite than on the established framework, making India an interventionist state because there is no clear distinction between the public and private spheres of social life. (Kohli 1990) This has led to the politicization of all forms of social and economic cleavages. In such situations, the resources are mostly controlled by the state, resulting in an extremely competitive political environment in terms of gaining control over these scarce resources, leading to conflicts, which often take violent forms.

INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC PRAXIS: GROWING DICHOTOMY OF "WE" AND "OTHER"

The concept and practice of democracy have evolved significantly across the world, including in India. India's democracy has been shaped by the voices of the poor and marginalized, as well as the influence of political elites. Recent advancements in areas such as LGBTQ rights, feminism, and other social movements have further enriched it. The Indian Constitution's opening phrase, "We the People of India," reflects the values of unity, integrity, and fraternity. However, it also introduces the notion of the "other," which can sometimes be seen in contrast to the "we." While the existence of "other" is a natural aspect of modern democracies, ensuring that this distinction does not turn into an exploitative or oppressive relationship is crucial. Maintaining a balance between the 'self' and the 'other' is essential. India's democratic journey has seen moments where this balance has been disrupted, with the "we" often being identified as the majority and the "other" as minority groups. This represents the 'dark side of Indian democracy'. (Mann 1999) Reinforcing this balance can help ensure that democracy remains inclusive and equitable for all.

Numerous incidents, events, and behaviours by leaders and common citizens have flagrantly transgressed the liberal state's democratic goals and are, therefore, incompatible with democratic norms. The 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid and the subsequent riots that broke out across the nation, the 2002 riots in Gujrat, the 2020 riots in Delhi, and the State's inaction in responding to these events cast doubt on the Indian State's commitment to democracy. The ultimate disgrace for a democracy is when its citizens feel unsafe, and the government is unable to give them the bare minimal guarantee of survival. India's modern political landscape is experiencing significant challenges, yet it strives for a more inclusive and equitable future. While controversial, the government's efforts to revise the citizens' registry in Assam highlight the complexity of managing diverse populations. While concerns have been raised about the exclusion of nearly two million Assamese citizens, primarily Bengali Muslims, this has opened up important national conversations about citizenship and belonging. Regarding democratic metrics, India has faced setbacks, particularly in protecting political rights, but these challenges also provide opportunities for reform and stronger safeguards. (Freedom House 2020)

The government's approach to dissent, while seen by some as heavy-handed, reflects ongoing debates about balancing security with freedom of expression. Journalists face difficulties, yet their resilience is a testament to the enduring spirit of press freedom. In Kashmir, the government's recent policies, such as revoking Article 370, have drawn attention to the region, encouraging a broader discussion on autonomy and governance.

While these policies have decreased democratic scores (Freedom House 2020), they also present an opportunity for re-evaluation and potential improvement. Although pressures exist in academic circles, discussions around intellectual freedom have sparked renewed interest in maintaining open and robust discourse in educational institutions. This adjustment period reflects India's journey toward aligning its democratic ideals with its diverse and evolving society.

India's democratic history is a testament to its resilience and ability to navigate the complexities of its diverse society. While challenges have arisen due to the country's rich tapestry of caste, religious, and regional differences, these moments have also provided opportunities for reflection and growth. India's "unity in diversity" motto remains a guiding force, even when its diversity presents difficulties. Rather than undermining the nation's unity, these challenges highlight the strength of India's democratic framework, which continues to evolve in response to its unique and vibrant societal fabric. This ongoing journey reaffirms the legitimacy and endurance of the idea of a united India. The violent instances in different parts of the country, especially in Kashmir, Punjab, and the North East, pose a challenge to regional and cultural democracy in India. The Hindu-Muslim riots erupting soon after the India-Pakistan partition in 1947 and riots taking place thereafter on several occasions are certainly dark spots in Indian democratic history, and in many ways, it can be argued that democracy has failed India's diversities. (Kilnanai 2011) If the basis of violence by state or otherwise becomes the identities of people, then the democratic nature of that country is bound to disintegrate and collapse. This has often led many observers to question the validity of the existence of one nation called India. According to Tocqueville, India is comprised of several caste groups that may be regarded as independent small states rather than as a single nation. He said that caste was the one thing that made India unique. (Tocqueville 1962) Such interpretation of India's multiculturalism was not new as it echoed in the writings of many Western thinkers like Aristotle, Hegel, Adam Smith, James Mill, Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Montesquieu. Unlike the modern state in Europe, which was characterized by the values of freedom and consent, these thinkers were of the opinion that states in Asia were marked by the spirit of servitude, and one could not find any feature that reflected a free soul. (Rudolph and Rudolph 2008) However, the Indian experience of democracy proved that such views that were based on the concept of 'Oriental Despotism' had no empirical basis and that rather than disintegrating, India became a classic example of democratic multiculturalism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

According to the preceding debates, there is a tradeoff in India between democratic theory and reality, between procedural and substantive democracy. On the procedural front, India may rank high on the democracy scale, thanks to its constitutional government, free and fair elections, and legislative assemblies, among other things. However, in order to understand Indian democracy in its entirety, it is necessary to consider the values that it seeks to achieve. Apart from the availability of effective democratic institutions, it is also critical to consider if people are truly equal and whether they are politically active and have an equal say in selecting and holding their representatives accountable. Despite the fact that equality was introduced into the Indian Constitution in the form of equality before the law and equal protection under the law, these rules have been severely weakened for people who are unable to approach the courts for violations of their rights on multiple occasions. It is also true that while civil liberties and personal freedoms are nominally acknowledged, they are routinely violated in practice. Even though India has had frequent, usually free and fair elections, democracy has failed in the areas of accountability and responsiveness. Though people have voted out corrupt and ineffective regimes, the governance structures have always been inaccessible to the general public. Where do we go for the cause of such conditions when there are so many barriers to effective participation? These are unquestionably the product of unequal resource distribution, but they are also the result of unequal power relations in society.

The transformative potential of democracy lies in its capacity to positively impact people on multiple levels, including the individual, the society, and the institution. Democracy is more than just a system of governance; it is a philosophy that values citizens' participation, representation, and empowerment. The transformative potential of democracy lies in its capacity to empower individuals, promote social cohesion, ensure institutional accountability, and contribute to positive societal and economic development. It is an ongoing process that requires active citizen participation, protection of fundamental rights, and a commitment to democratic values. It is not a static institutional attribute. In order to overcome the crisis of democracy, India needs to adopt the democratization process in its governance process and how it connects with the people. The future of democracy in India lies in regaining this transformative potential.

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ENDNOTE

1. The report was published jointly by Azim Premji University and Lokniti, India. The survey used a sample of about 24,000 people from 12 Indian states—Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and the National Capital Region of Delhi.

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IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMAN HEALTH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT REGIONS OF INDIA

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Abstract

Climate change has a lot of spillover effects on various walks of life. The present paper attempts a region-wise comparative analysis of the impact of climate change on the health of people in the different regions of India. The impact of climate change on health varies from region to region in terms of nature and cause. On the basis of secondary data, the study apprehends that the major health related impact of climate change in other regions will be observed in the northern region of India in the coming years. The paper asserts that there is an urgent need of such policies that enhance the provision of adaptation and mitigation facilities in India to minimize the rising health concerns of climate change in India in future.

Keywords: Climate change, heatwaves, vector-borne diseases, water-borne diseases, extreme weather events.

INTRODUCTION

There exists large-scale dissimilarity in the geographical features of northern, eastern, southern, western and central India which is also evident from the diversified climatic features of these regions. Each region differs in their occupational structure which also influences the level of exposure of people and related health consequences of climate change. India experienced extreme weather events almost every day in the first nine months of the 2023 which led to nearly 3,000 deaths, according to a report released on 29 November 2023. Published by the independent think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the report said the climate-

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vulnerable country had extreme weather on 86 percent of days from January to September. The CSE said that in India due to climate change 2,923 people died, almost two million hectares of crops were ruined, 80,000 homes were destroyed, and more than 92,000 animals were killed. However, these numbers might be even higher because not all the data is collected (The Hindu,2023).

Climate change is expected to have major health repercussions in India. Many parts of India face water crisis as a major challenge for India. Urbanization, population growth, economic development, and increasing demand for water from agriculture and industry are likely to aggravate the water crisis. More than 60% of India's agriculture is rain-fed, making the country highly dependent on groundwater. Even without climate change, 15% of India's groundwater resources are overexploited. (World Bank, 2013). Water scarcity is an apparent future of India, however, this along with water pollution further reduces water availability because whatever water is available, a substantial portion of it is polluted by industrial wastes, household wastes etc (Rais and Salam,2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that climate change is responsible for at least 150,000 deaths per year, a number that is expected to double by 2030. The effects of global warming will cause dire health consequences in the form of:

I**nfectious diseases:** IPCC predicts that global warming will worsen human health conditions, especially in tropical regions. As a developing country with a high population density, India might experience myriad human health effects because of climate change. Many other fields of health care in India could be affected by climate change, including family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, geriatrics, and psychiatry (Dhara, Shrumm and Luber, 2013). The ability to tolerate temperature changes differs from region to region. Richer societies can utilize technological advances. On the other hand, developing countries lack not only the technological know-how but also the resources and public health systems, required to prevent such outbreaks. (UN,2007)

Heatwaves: Prolonged periods of abnormally high temperatures can have serious health effects on vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and the sick. In a study by the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research in the United Kingdom, scientists showed how greenhouse gas emissions have increased the likelihood of heatwaves. The most common effect on health is hyperthermia or heatstroke that can be life threatening if left untreated.

Asthma and other respiratory diseases. People suffering from heart problems are more vulnerable to increased temperatures, especially those living in already warm regions, as their cardiovascular system must work harder to keep their bodies cool. High temperatures increase the ozone concentration, which can damage people's lung tissue and cause complications for asthma patients and those with lung diseases (UN,2007).

Loss of agricultural productivity. In six years (2015-21), the country lost 33.9 million hectares of the cropped area due to floods and excess rains and 35 million hectares due to drought, which are likely to intensify in the near future. Hydro-meteorological calamities, including heavy rainfall and floods, have damaged 33.9 million hectares of India's cropped area between 2015-16 and 2021-22, as per the Ministry of Agriculture data. The drought was equally destructive. About 35 million hectares of cropped area (where crop loss was 33% and above) was damaged between 2016-17 to 2021-22. Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra were among the most affected states, which faced crop losses from drought and excess rainfall. Other states where floods and heavy rains were predominant factors for crop loss were Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, and Odisha (Gupta 2022).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study by Majra and Gur (2009) revealed that the impact of climate change on health will vary from region to region and among them developing countries will be the worst affected countries. They further asserted that in India, rural area is most exposed to health concerns related to climate change. A significant impact of climate change on human health in India was found by Kaur and Pandey (2021) in their study with most of the megacities experiencing high amounts of air pollutants beyond the permissible limit causing adverse impacts on human health. Lawrence (2022) has performed an analysis of the relationship between climate change and mental health and found that climate change alters the socio-economic scenarios, cultural, political and environmental conditions which altogether affects the mental health of people. The authors have also resembled climate emergency as a mental health emergency.

Awasthi et al (2023) in their paper have analyzed the impact of climate change on the temperature in North Indian states and revealed the possibility of severe heatwave events in future. Their study found a continuous increase in the temperatures of Himalayan states also which will adversely affect the inhabitants of this region. In another study by Chaudhry and Mukhopadhyay (2023), 56 percent of the 344 districts in India are highly vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change however, high adaptive capacity has helped in reducing the vulnerability of the population. Etzel and Bhave (2023) have investigated the impact of climate change on children and have suggested to include paediatricians in the policy making process of climate change-related issues. They argued that paediatricians must declare climate change as catastrophe for children. The impact of climate change on health and adaptability in Orissa has been examined Purohit and Raut (2023) in which they found that there is an increase in the annual maximum and minimum temperatures along with an increase in the heatwave period in Orissa which has affected the mortality figures. However, they have highlighted the role of adaptation in reducing mortality despite high vulnerability score. According to WHO (2023), the health indicators are increasingly influenced by climatic factors leading to the spread of climate-sensitive diseases, food insecurity, etc which is laying stress on the global health system.

The imperative role of education is highlighted by Ravi et al (2024) where they have emphasised the importance of higher education in minimising the impacts of climate change on health. Their study found that nursing students are well-versed with the problems of climate change however, they are not aware of the direct and indirect impacts of climate change. The authors opined that the aspect of climate change must be included in the curriculum of nursing. The impact of climate change on health is also established by Thompson et al (2024) in their study where they blamed air pollution, ambient temperature etc for the reduction in physical activities of people giving rise to cardiovascular diseases.

Several researches are carried out to study the impact of climate change on India however, no specific research has been found which has performed region-wise analyses of the impact of climate change on the health of the people in India. This study therefore, analyses the impact of climate change on health of people by dividing regions into northern, eastern, southern, western and central regions respectively.

OCCURRENCES OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

India is experiencing one of the worst incidences of climate change with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Over 85 percent of Indian districts are now vulnerable to extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, droughts, and heatwaves. Alarmingly, 45 percent of these districts are witnessing a shift in weather patterns, with traditionally flood-prone areas becoming drought-affected and vice versa, a study by IPE Global and ESRI India revealed. The report, which was presented at the Climate Technology Summit's plenary session on "Leveraging GIS Technology to Mitigate Climate Risks," highlights a sharp increase in the frequency and intensity of these events. According to the study, extreme climatic disorders have surged fourfold in recent decades, with the last ten years alone seeing a fivefold rise. The analysis is based on a comprehensive 50-year assessment from 1973 to 2023, using spatial and temporal modelling to explore the changing climate patterns across India (Business World, 2024).

INDIA DATABASE ON WEATHER DISASTERS

Year	*No.of extreme weather days*	*Total No.of days*	*Number of states/UTs affected*
2022	313	365	33
2023	318	365	35
2024*	255	274	34

**Till* 30th September 2024

Source: Disaster Management Division, India Meteorological Department and Media Reports, 1st January 2022 to 30 September 2024.

NORTH WEST INDIA DATABASE ON WEATHER DISASTERS

(Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Union Territories of Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and the National Capital Territory of Delhi)

Year	*No.of extreme weather days*	*Total No.of days*	*Number of states/UTs affected*
2022	237	365	9
2023	256	365	10
2024*	213	274	10

**Till* 30th September 2024

Source: Disaster Management Division, India Meteorological Department and Media Reports, 1st January 2022 to 30 September 2024.

CENTRAL INDIA DATABASE ON WEATHER DISASTERS

(Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Odissa and Goa).

Year	*No.of extreme weather days*	*Total No.of days*	*Number of states/UTs affected*
2022	218	365	6
2023	219	365	7
2024*	218	274	6

*Till 30th September 2024

Source: Disaster Management Division, India Meteorological Department and Media Reports, 1st January 2022 to 30 September 2024.

SOUTH PENINSULA INDIA DATABASE ON WEATHER DISASTERS

(Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar as well as the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Puducherry,)

Year	*No.of extreme weather days*	*Total No.of days*	*Number of states/UTs affected*
2022	170	365	8
2023	214	365	8
2024*	168	274	8

*Till 30th September 2024

Source: Disaster Management Division, India Meteorological Department and Media Reports, 1st January 2022 to 30 September 2024.

EAST AND NORTH EAST INDIA DATABASE ON WEATHER DISASTERS

(Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya)

Year	*No.of extreme weather days*	*Total No.of days*	*Number of states/UTs affected*
2022	196	365	11
2023	226	365	11
2024*	193	274	11

*Till 30th September 2024

Source: Disaster Management Division, India Meteorological Department and Media Reports, 1st January 2022 to 30 September 2024.

REGION WISE CLIMATE-HEALTH RELATIONSHIP

It's the change in the composition of the atmosphere caused by climate change that poses a threat to the emergence of health concerns in India. Most of the health issues are arising from the lack of availability of adaptation and mitigation facilities. The increasing concentration of greenhouse gases mainly carbon dioxide is an important contributor to climate change causing abnormal weather patterns in India. The Climate Shift Index (CSI) for 18-20 May 2024 for India shows a large area with average levels at or above 3 across western and northwestern India. This includes the states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Climate Central, 2024). The Climate Shift Index shows how climate change influences the intensity of daily high and low temperature in any region. The index ranges from -5 to +5 with positive levels implying temperatures that are becoming more likely due to climate change and vice versa.

According to NDMA (2024), the health impacts of heat waves typically involve dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke. The signs and symptoms are as follows:

1) Heat Cramps: Ederna (swelling) and Syncope (Fainting) are generally accompanied by fever below 39°C i.e.102°F.
2) Heat Exhaustion: Fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps and sweating.
3) Heat Stroke: Body temperatures of 40°C i.e. 104°F or more along with delirium, seizures or coma. This is a potentially fatal condition.

The present study examines the region-wise effects of climate change on health by dividing regions into following: Northern India, Eastern India, Southern India, Western India and Central India respectively.

NORTHERN INDIA

Northern India includes states with diversified climatic features ranging from Himalayas to the Gangetic plains. Therefore, the impact of climate change will also differ along with changes in the climatic features of regions. Interestingly, northern India is home to fifty percent of the population of the country which raises concerns about the degree of impact of climate change on their health. The Himalayan region may experience the impact of climate change in the form of melting of glaciers, warmer summers, extreme winters, forest fires due to long dry weather, late arrival of winters/snowfall etc. The mild degrees of heatwaves have also affected the mountainous states of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. The agricultural production in Punjab is expected to suffer a substantial reduction in the production of particularly maize, cotton, potato and wheat due to climate change. Uttar Pradesh (UP) is one of the worst affected states which experienced extreme heatwaves to extreme winters including floods and droughts due to climate change. The lack of adaptation of people to such abrupt weather changes has led to the emergence of several health concerns in northern India. Northern India possesses a diversified network of climatic zones from extreme winters to heatwaves therefore, the impact of climate change will also be heterogeneous in nature affecting a large section of the population residing in northern India.

Kashmir being situated at a higher altitude is protected against vector-borne diseases (like dengue, malaria, chikungunya) as the vector responsible for the spread of these diseases does not survive at lower temperatures as the peak temperature does not cross above 37 degrees Celsius during summer months. In the near future, due to climate change, the vector is moving to higher altitudes, with increased possibilities of the occurrences of these diseases. Following are the major climate-sensitive diseases prevalent in J&K: (a) Acute Respiratory Illnesses attributed to Air Pollution (b) Vector Borne Diseases (c) Water Borne Diseases (SAPCCHH, 2023).

Melting of Glaciers in Himalayas

Several species of flora and fauna will extinct thereby, disturbing the food chain and ultimately threatening human survival. There will be a fall in the availability of fresh water for usage by people particularly those who are dependent on river/ glacier water for their necessary works. Also, a smaller amount of water will be available for agricultural purposes, electricity generation, drinking, washing etc. Warmer and longer summer periods will lead to a surge in the heat-related diseases. According to The Guardian (2022), the next pandemic will not spread from bats or birds it will be from the melting of glaciers. Melting permafrost could soon present humanity with a new deadly disease. Global warming is beginning to release the Methuselah microbe, also known as the "zombie virus," from melting Arctic ice. Melting of excessive glaciers may spread the dormant bacteria and viruses by reawakening them which would be new viruses for human beings and may create deadly health concerns for the population.

Extreme hot temperatures

Warmer days and nights pose a threat to the essential health care parameters. Recently in 2024, northern India experienced unusually warm nighttime temperatures also. Lack of sleep due to warmer nights is risky for health parameters giving rise to heart ailments and related health concerns even among youngsters in rural as well as urban areas. Behavioural transformation among people is another critical health concern emerging due to climate change. The mental health of people is affected particularly those who works the entire day (whether skilled or unskilled labourers, students etc) and are unable to get required sleep in the night time due to warmer nights/electricity cuts. Unskilled or semi-skilled labourers will be worst affected in terms of health consequences of extreme heatwaves (with long spell). The skilled people will also suffer from health concerns resulting from extreme heatwaves (with long spell) causing a reduction of their per capita output/ contribution to GDP.

Northern India and Agricultural Production

Agricultural sector is one of the worst hit sectors from climate change. Climate change has resulted in the reduction of agricultural production giving rise to multiple health concerns:

i. Food insecurity occurs due to high prices and lack of availability of required food products.
ii. The quality of agricultural products is also adversely affected due to climate change.
iii. Climate change gives rise to typical plant diseases, pests etc which will affect crop quality.
iv. Untimely or irregular rainfall patterns are an important contributory factor for low agricultural productivity.
v. Health concerns like, malnutrition, undernutrition, foodborne diseases etc will be widespread due to lack of nutritious and healthy foods.

EASTERN REGION

Eastern India again includes states with diversified geographical and climatic features. For example: the states of Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal are becoming prone to floods and hence, are at greater risk of several water-borne diseases particularly related to contaminated water along with extreme heatwaves concerns emerging in Bihar and Orissa. Further the reduction in rainfall adversely affects the agricultural productivity. River contamination is another perilous consequence of floods causing several health concerns.

NORTH-EASTERN REGION

The north eastern region includes-Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The region faces significant fall in monsoon rains in different parts of this region, frequent occurrences of flash floods, etc. Changes in intensity and frequency of rainfall is a threat to the biodiversity and agricultural production for north eastern states in India. There has been an increase in the frequency of rainfall in Assam. Assam is also reported to be one of the most vulnerable states of Himalayan region for climate change. Tripura is also experiencing heavy rainfall, flooding, cyclones, landslides etc. The duration of warm season is expanding while cold season is shrinking in Meghalaya leading to adverse impacts on agriculture, biodiversity etc. These situations cause adverse impact on the health indicators. The health of people in Arunachal Pradesh is sensitive to shifts in weather patterns. Some of the major climate sensitive diseases prevalent in Arunachal Pradesh are-acute respiratory illnesses attributed to air pollution, nutrition related diseases, allergic diseases, Cardio-pulmonary diseases, Zoonotic Diseases, Disaster management - Extreme weather events (landslides, floods, forest fires, earthquakes) affecting health.

CENTRAL INDIA

Climate change in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh has impact on temperature, precipitation and relative humidity, all of which affect the transmission and distribution of vector-borne diseases in central India. Climate change may aggravate the problem of vectors and vector-borne diseases in Madhya Pradesh. Most cases of malaria in India (65%) occur in just 6 of the country's 28 states, including Madhya Pradesh. Half of the State's 50 districts are considered to be malaria 'hot spots', and 25% of cases occur in just 4 predominantly tribal districts where malaria is endemic, namely Dindori, Mandla, Dhar and Jhabua. With an increase in extreme rainfall events anticipated due to climate change, there may be more frequent flooding and retention of stagnant water, creating a greater risk of outbreaks of water-borne diseases. Madhya Pradesh is among the states in India that are most vulnerable to natural disasters, including droughts, floods and hailstorms. There may also be an increased rates of skin inflammation and fungal disorders as a result of increased temperature and humidity. Another serious climate-related concern for the health sector is the problem of rapidly mutating strains of viruses and bacteria. The increase of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the atmosphere will increase UV radiation, which may weaken people's immune systems, increasing vulnerability to infectious diseases in Madhya Pradesh (MP-SAPCC, 2013).

Chhattisgarh may also experience severe health impacts of climate change in the form of vector-borne diseases and water-borne diseases. The southern and northeastern districts of the state including Bijapur, Dantewada, Sukma, Bastar, Kondagaon, Kanker, Jagdalpur, Sukma, Narayanpur, Jashpur, and Koriya are particularly vulnerable to malaria. There has been an increase in Dengue cases in the past few years. Another vector-borne disease Filaria endemic districts in Chhattisgarh are present in the districts of Ambikapur/ Surguja, Bilaspur, , Mahasamund, Janjgir, Jashpur Nagar, Dhamtari, Durg, Raigarh, and Raipur. The outbreak of water-borne diseases occurs during the rainy season and floods in Chhattisgarh. A common water-borne disease in Chhattisgarh is Acute Diarrheal Disease (ADD) (Chhattisgarh-SAPCCHH, 2022)

SOUTHERN INDIA

Climate change is moving southern India from moderate to high temperature climatic zone. The southern India is exposed to multiple health risks largely due to its coastal location which makes it more vulnerable to climate change. Sea level rise is a potential threat causing contamination of water bodies which is a source of emergence of multiple health crisis in southern India. The state of Tamil Nadu is becoming prone to rising temperature/heat related incidences accompanied with rising risks of droughts causing several health apprehensions. Andhra Pradesh is experiencing frequent changes in climatic conditions and in future intensity and frequency of cyclones are expected to increase. There are around 30 million people living in the coast of Andhra Pradesh who are prone to the health-related worries arising from sea level rise and cyclones in future. Low groundwater table is already a concern for the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for several years.

Southern India is already facing water crisis which is evident from several inter-state river disputes in this region. Climate change will further aggravate it leading to numerous health crisis. Kerala is another state which has constantly witnessed one of the noxious consequences of climate change in terms of heavy floods and cyclones that had led to the loss of lives and advent of other major health concerns in the region. Even the tourism sector was worst hit as many of the tourist spots at Kerela were badly hit by these extreme weather events. Climate Change is further expected to adversely affect the spices and coffee cultivation in Kerela by affecting both- their volume and quality. Karnataka is also witnessing a shift from the moderate climate towards hotter temperature. Southern India's occupation structure dependents largely on climatic conditions such as fisheries, etc. which may affect the employment scenarios thereby, affecting the livelihood and ultimately the health of the people in southern India. Warmer winters as well as summers added with heavy rainfalls are main challenges for southern India in future.

WESTERN INDIA

Rajasthan has a high exposure to heat waves, and with limited adaptive capacity, impacts are quite severe and can lead to severe heat stress and increased mortality (Murari et al., 2015). Occurrences of severe heat waves in India have resulted in increased deaths, particularly in the north western regions such as Rajasthan (Rajasthan-SAPCC, 2014). In 2015, loss of life (2300) due to extreme heat was the highest in Rajasthan within India. Extreme temperature in the desert districts of Rajasthan increases thermal stress, leading to thermal discomfort and distress on the one hand and increased risk of vector exposure on the other hand, ultimately resulting in malaria, malnutrition, injuries and premature death. Over the past 100 years, Rajasthan is the second state, after Jammu and Kashmir, to experience the maximum number of cold waves (De et al., 2005, Rajasthan-SAPCC, 2022). Studies have predicted that Thar desert may turn green due to climate change. If this happens then this transformation will bring abrupt changes in the health parameters of people in Rajasthan. Gujarat is one of the moderately vulnerable states to climate change impacts in India based on its socio demographic, biophysical, and institutional-infrastructural aspects. Among climate sensitive health issues, air pollution, heat-related illnesses, extreme weather events, vector-borne, food and water-borne diseases, nutrition related impacts, coastal impacts, environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient health care facilities are relevant aspects for health sector strengthening in the state. Exposure to extreme heat can lead to various heat-related illnesses (HRI), from mild (prickly heat) to fatal (heatstroke) manifestation. It also increases cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, problems etc (Gujarat-SAPCCHH, 2022)

Maharashtra is unique in a sense that it is experiencing floods in urban areas and drought in rural areas. The state of Maharashtra is facing increasing instances of climate change in terms of its impact on the production of cotton, wheat, soybean and gram. Abrupt changes in the rainfall and temperature patterns are posing significant challenges in Maharashtra causing health concerns for every section of the society. According to TERI (2014), climate change will lead to an increase in average number of days that are conducive to malaria transmission in some regions in eastern and coastal Maharashtra in the 2030s (e.g. Thane and Raigad) and 2050s (e.g. Gadchiroli). There will be a faster rate of parasite development at higher temperatures even in regions with reduction in the average number of conducive days in the 2050s (e.g. Aurangabad, Jalna, Nashik). Health impacts will also include an increase in human discomfort due to heat stress in parts of Konkan, Nashik, and Nagpur divisions by the 2030s, increased risk of water borne diseases due to increases in mean rainfall and proportion of extremely high rainfall events. This requires adequate drainage and hygiene. Climate change will also reduce availability of fresh water due to saltwater intrusion into groundwater aquifers near the coast.

CONCLUSION

The impact of climate change on human health in India will largely be in the form of a reduction in the quality and quantity of agricultural production, rising incidences of heat strokes, spread of vector-borne and water-borne diseases. The reduction in agricultural productivity will have a direct consequence on around 65 percent of the population who are residing in rural areas and are mostly dependent on agriculture and related activities to fulfill their subsistence needs. The study found that due to climate change, India's northern region will experience a surge in the emergence of vector-borne diseases, diarrheal diseases, extreme cold waves and heat waves causing cardiovascular disorders, respiratory diseases, heatstrokes; low rainfall, droughts lowering agricultural productivity leading to food insecurity, malnutrition, undernutrition and related health consequences. Eastern India will suffer from heat waves along with the spread of water-borne and allergic diseases. Central Indian states will witness a surge in vector-borne, water-borne and fungal diseases due to heavy rains as a consequence of climate change. Southern India will be marked by an increase in water-borne diseases due to excessive floods causing contamination of mainly river waters, low precipitation, low agricultural productivity instigating food insecurity, health concerns related to sea level rise, cyclones etc are also expected to increase. Western India will experience heat-related health disorders and water scarcity, mainly in Rajasthan, there are also chances of a surge in vector-borne, renal and cardiovascular diseases in western India.

The study finds that the impact of climate change in the form of a health crisis will be most severe in northern India which is home to fifty percent of India's population followed by western India, southern India and eastern India respectively. Lack of adaptation measures along with the lack of awareness about climate change will further aggravate the health crisis, particularly in rural areas.

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ETHNIC FEDERALISM IN ETHIOPIA: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FROM SOCIO-POLITICAL VIEW POINT (1889-1991)

Haile Chuluke Digile* and Kham Khan Suan Hausing**

Abstract

Ethiopia underwent considerable historical turmoil, and the implementation of ethnic federalism was a reaction to this protracted instability. These transformations encompassed several historical events and the change from imperial dominance to the establishment of a federal organization. Thus it is interesting to trace Ethiopia's governance structures from a sociopolitical viewpoint, elucidating the ramifications of implementing ethnic federalism to address historical hostilities among the nation's ethnic groups. The present paper intends to review a contextual exploration of the ethnic issue within the designated timeframe i.e. from 1889 to 1991. It concentrates on the diverse political governance systems employed at different periods, the impact of ethnic identity on these systems, and the consequences of addressing historical grievances transmitted throughout generations. Ethiopian ethnic federalism, considering the diverse ethnicities and historical context, has exacerbated ethnic tensions, despite its intention to address historical grievances. The implementation of democratization and the initiation of a national conversation and reconciliation effort were proposed to address past concerns related to identity politics and resource allocation.

Keywords: Ethnic federalism, managing historical grievances, inter-ethnic conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of the Ethiopian state was influenced by three theoretical approaches: force, Divine right, and social contract (Devine, 1972; Etieyibo, n.d.;

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Schuberth, 2014)contract and autonomy / Peter Stone -- Basic equality and social contract theory / Nikolas Kirby -- Hypothetical consent and the bindingness of obligations / Carl Fox -- On the (historical. The force thesis was demonstrated through the conquering and annexation of southern territories as parts of the nation. The Solomonic dynasty's reign over Ethiopia for 704 years, from 1270 to 1974, was supported by the argument of Divine right. In 1991, the installation of ethnic federalism marked the establishment of a social compact, replacing the Solomonic dynasty. These three theoretical approaches played a significant role in the establishment of the Ethiopian state (Devine, 1972). Ethiopia's sociopolitical governance structures were changed and developed over different views, molded the people's and leaders' attempts to tackle the nation's many problems. Accordingly, there are four viewpoints and approaches that Ethiopian historians use to explain the nation's sociopolitical government structures. The viewpoints that comprise these include postmodern, Ethiopian, Africanist, and ethno-nationalist orientations. These varied perspectives of the sociopolitical governance systems have developed over millennia, influenced by the country's rich cultural heritage (Devine, 1972; Andargie, 2018).

The entire Ethiopian socio-political experience should be seen as a component of Africa's historical past, and Ethiopia's history may be traced back to the origins of Africa. Pan-Africanists frequently cite fossilized discoveries to illustrate the historical age of Ethiopia (Parker, J., & Rathbone, 2007; Andargie, 2018). The Ethiopian viewpoint, on the other hand, estimated the age of Ethiopia at around 3,500 years ago and saw Ethiopia as a distinct state created by a divine will in a way that was different from the rest of Africa. According to their claims, Ethiopia is a state with a distinctive culture that is "blessed" with an Orthodox Christian religious tradition. Ethiopians are courageous individuals who have given their lives in defense of their nation's sovereignty, land, and identity. In this instance, the northern Ethiopian culture is viewed as a representative of the entire nation, and are supporters of the Solomonic dynasty. Although they disputed the notion of divine power like Marxists and Leninists, Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam, the (1974–1991) president of Ethiopia, and his political party also tended to be Ethiopianist throughout the Cold War and followed the same course with regard to Ethiopianists as supporters of the divine will of the Solomonic dynasty (Devine, 1972; Andargie, 2018). A form of nationalism known as Ethio-nationalism has two opposing positions, such as the colonial thesis and the national operation thesis, and defines the country in terms of a shared ethnicity. They claimed that all ethnicities and peoples who were denied the opportunity to cling onto political power had been colonized by the ethnic group of the political elites in the ruling class. Therefore, there are more than 85 different ethnic groups represented in the Ethiopian political system, and only a small number of them, the semetic-speaking Amhara and Tigrian, have a chance to colonize the remaining 85 ethnic groups. According to the National Operation thesis, prior Ethiopian government authorities preferred one ethnoculture over the other ethnocultures and one religion over the other religions. This is due to the fact that throughout Ethiopia's political history, almost the majority of ethnic groups have not had access to equal opportunities in the country's political economy except for two Semitic-speaking ethnic groups, which has led to resentment among the nations of the country (Devine, 1972; Andargie, 2018). For the proponents of post-modern interpretation of Ethiopian politics history was always layered with understated, weakened narratives behind the overtly stated, overblown narratives. The debate in Ethiopian political history is extensive. History writers are frequently so ideologically predisposed that they don't actually seek out and reveal the true tales; instead, they concentrate on the topics that support their own personal concerns. In other words, territory and culture are fabricated expressions of identity in a civilization. However, the powerful elites and their propagandists preach to the populace and persuade them to accept a specific ethno-cultural identity and claim ownership of particular natural resources (Andargie, 2018).

Ethiopia's historical trajectory, spanning from 1889 to 1991, is tainted by inherited historical grievances that have profoundly impacted the socio-political climate of the nation. Ethnic divisions and unsolved conflicts are a remnant of the Derg regime's effort at modernization after Menelik II's imperial control and later attempts at modernization. To address these concerns, Ethiopia implemented ethnic federalism in 1991, yet this has resulted in a number of urgent difficulties. Examining these issues' historical foundations in Ethiopia and evaluating how well ethnic federalism works to resolve inherited historical grievances are the main objectives of this study. In doing so, it hopes to offer insights that might guide future changes to the existing governing structure or suggest different strategies for better handling past grievances and promoting national unity.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the complications and ramifications surrounding the ethnic question in Ethiopian history between 1889 and 1991, with a focus on the attempt to enact ethnic federalism. As a result, it looks at the historical factors that affected Ethiopia's acceptance of ethnic federalism 1990s. Through a detailed investigation of the ethnic question within this historical epoch, it therefore investigates the consequences of ethnic federalism on managing historical grievances. Finally, it aims to offer perspectives and tactical recommendations for managing the execution of ethnic federalism, considering Ethiopia's complicated historical background from 1889 to 1991. It bases on secondary sources of data collection.

SOCIO-POLITICAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM IN ETHIOPIA (PRE-1990)

In Ethiopia, there were three major periods of government systems—monarchical rule that was the restoration of the Solomonic Dynasty from 1270 to 1974, the Ethiopian Revolution, military control from 1974 to 1991, and a federal state from 1991 to the present—account for Ethiopia's political history (Tafese, 2011). It is a long-established nation with a variety of unique characteristics, including defeating colonizer's power, famine, drought, and indigenous scripts. It was also, Africa's continent first sovereign nation, mostly known for its sporadic civil wars, famines, and frequent droughts. Emperor Tewodros is credited as being the first to start modernizing politics by attempting to bring Ethiopia's many polities under the banner of organized rule/governance. However, Emperor Menelik reinforced imperial power, preserved Ethiopian independence from Italian aggression attempt, and started the process of establishing and assisting modern Ethiopia while taking into account the goals of Emperor Tewodros (Bélair, 2016). During the administrations in the first two eras (1270–1974 and 1974–1991), they were preoccupied with creating their countries and unwilling to accept diversity. The monarchical rule continued the royal family's line and safeguarded the king's rights, whereas the Derg dictatorship sought to establish a powerful communist state in Africa. Nevertheless, their methods of political approach were different (Tafese, 2011).

According to Bahru Zewde (1991), Emperor Tewodros II (1855–1888), whose leadership marked the beginning of Ethiopia's reunification, and his successors Yohannes IV and Menelik II, whose bases were in the northern highlands, stretched Ethiopia's empire towards the south. After being crowned in 1930, Emperor Haile Selassie increasingly centralized the government. The imperial authority was unwilling to accept ethnic diversity. As a result, the issues of nationality and class were occasionally raised. In the end, military force was used to unite the rebellious parties, and during the 1974 revolution, a coup d'état abolished imperial control (Tafese, 2011). The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), through an alliance of twenty-seven (27) ethnically based militant groups and primarily four ethnically based parties, created fronts: the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), and Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) came together as one front and overthrew the Dergue Military Regime through bloody conflict (Tafese, 2011; Erk & Anderson, 2009; Tafese & Erk, n.d.). Through these all governance system, Ethiopia's has a long and complicated political and historical background that is connected to the Ethiopian Student Movement of the 1960s which is linked to the so-called "question of nationalities." The issue of nationalities centered on the structure of the Ethiopian state and the pre-existing interethnic tensions in the nations that leads to the decision to form this federation on the basis of ethnic groups' convenience (Gudina, 2006). Alongside these, the rise of the political system in modern-day Ethiopia has been marked by a number of paradoxes that raise challenging and interesting questions regarding the country's future direction under different regimes. These puzzles date back to the eras of Menelik II's state construction, the Imperial Regime, the Derg Regime, the EPRDF, and post-EPDRF 2018 (Dibu & Ahadu, 2020).

In general, the foundations of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism were the paradoxes of three types of ethnic and social engineering that have been implemented under different regimes. These puzzles date back to the eras of Menelik II's state construction, the Imperial Regime, the Derg Regime, and the EPRDF from 1990 on. Emperor Menelik (1889–1913) developed the first social engineering, but Emperor Haile Selassie (1930–36, 1941–74) considerably expanded on to establish a unified state based on homogenization of cultural assimilation. In the second phase, the military government's endeavor to maintain a unitary state and handle the "national question" within a Marxist-Leninist framework, and lastly, ethnic federalism and cultural, linguistic, and political autonomy at regional and sub-regional levels (Dibu & Ahadu, 2020).

For the purpose of the present study, it is not to construct the historical narration of Ethiopian politics from theoretical perspectives but rather to lay the groundwork for how those regimes that rule the country have based their philosophical framework outlook with regard to managing divergent interests of ethnic groups and disagreement that leads to conflicts. In order to examine how the system of government performed in managing variety and ethnic conflict, let's briefly review the history of the political system in Ethiopia from the time of the establishment of the nation-state, notably under the Imperialists (Menelik II and Haile Selassie), the military regime, and draw their contribution and implications to the implementation of ethnic federalism under the EPRDF, and the Prosperity Party from 1990s onward. Here, after delving into the historical background of those successive rulers and their approaches to managing the ethnic or national question in the country. How Ethiopia, as a nation-state, has implemented the existing political system so far in managing ethnic conflict for what is previously labelled as "National question" and its' management under political system and its implications for the institutionalized federalism along ethnic lines will be the primary concern of this paper.

EMPEROR MENELIK II AND NATIONAL QUESTIONS MANAGEMENT (1889-1913)

The Ethiopian people, a long-established multi-ethnic state, moved from one region to another, intermarried, interacted with one another on all levels of activity, and shared a sense of political and cultural unity for thousands of years prior to centralized state formation and the modern political system (Devine, 1972; Bayu, 2021)ethnic federalism indeed paved the way for the recognition, accommodation, and institutionalization of ethnocultural diversity for the first time in the country's history since its modern existence. What is equally important is, the practice of ethnic federalism complicated state-society and inter-group relationships creating a favorable environment for ethnic confrontation and conflict to take place in the country threatening national unity, eroded century-old values of coexistence, a hard ethnic boundary where administrative boundaries are served as political and ethnic differentiators like the Oromo and Somali conflict over contested boundaries. Territorial recognition, and institutionalization of ethnicity gave room for the emergence of 'ethnic like and ethnic others' thinking, made minorities in different regions victims of politics and failed to provide sound accommodation mechanisms from them, severely restricted people's constitutional rights including the right to mobility and right to work, created room for the re-emergence of secessionist tendency. Hence, ethnic federalism while solving old problems of ethnic inequality and injustice; has created new problems of ethnic tensions and conflict across Ethiopia. It is the purpose of this study to investigate how and why federalism is being considered as the source of ethnic conflicts in the Ethiopian context. The study adopted a qualitative comparative approach while FGDs and key informant interviews were used to gather data. The finding of the study shows that though multinational federation plays an irreplaceable role to accommodate and institutionalize ethnocultural diversity, the notion and implementation of federalism instigate ethnic conflict in the Ethiopian context. (Bayu, 2021. The "imagination" of modern Ethiopian state formation was started during Yohannis IV's reign, which began before 1889, and saw the country as a political entity with a clearly defined territorial limit. However, it was Emperor Menelik II's rule, after 1889 onwards, that realized the country's actual state formation (Gemtessa, 2014) and inaugurated the new era of colonialism "(David Thomson 1966-501. Thus the process of state formation under the Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia started as an aggressive and occasionally brutal by its nature; while it took the directions of westward, eastward, and southward expansion in the 19th century, conquering and assimilating the various small kingdoms and communities of many ethnic groups, including Oromo, Sidama, Gurage, Wolayta, Somali, Kaffa, and other groups (Abbink, 2002). Since then, the nation's inherent multicultural and multilingual reality has been ignored and neglected for nearly more than a century by numerous succeeding governments. As a result, Ethnicity and ethnic politics started to emerge as an important governmental phenomena in the country (Dibu & Ahadu, 2020; Donham & James, 1986; Gemtessa, 2014)out of which the present state was created by the 1974 revolution. After the 1880s, Abyssinia, under Menilek II, expanded from its ancient heartland to incorporate vast new territories to the south. For the first time, these regions, Ethiopia's southern marches, are treated as integral parts of the empire that Menilek created. The famous or infamous Berlin Conference of 1884/5 was held at the height of the "scramble for Africa/for colonies". It was at this conference that European colonial powers came together and partitioned Africa among themselves and recognized one another's possessions and defined "spheres of influence". They further "agreed that in the future any power that effectively occupied African territory and duly notified the other powers could thereby establish possession of it. This gave the signal for the rapid partition of Africa among all the colonial powers, and inaugurated the new era of colonialism "(David Thomson 1966-501. Menelik's sole goal in subjugating the nations to the east, south, and west of his realm was to take use of their material and people resources. In the early stages of his interactions with the affected communities, his main objective was to round up as many people as he could for domestic and international enslavement. The slaves that were seized were also used as pack animals to transport the ivory and other export-ready goods. By stationing his soldiers, who were drawn from the northern Abyssinian society, in the conquered provinces, Menelik legitimised his colonisation system while also opening the door for racial abuses (Gemtessa, 2014) and inaugurated the new era of colonialism "(David Thomson 1966-501. Since then, in Ethiopia's contemporary history, ethnic politics have been the primary cause of internal unrest, resulting in battles that are frequently seen as clashes between ethnic groups. Thus, the main threat to the peace and security of nations, regions, and even the entire world is the conflict between ethnic groups (Abbink, 2002; Donham & James, 1986).

These settler-colonialists that drawn from the Abyssinian society who are (gun owners) received no pay but were given the collected tax (gabar) to help them in every way possible. Menelik implemented two interconnected processes of redistribution. The first were the poor, armed Abyssinians who were moved from their native areas into the conquered provinces and became lords of the conquered, subsisting off their labour, land, and other necessities for survival. Secondly, this process of redistribution was also followed by the direct transfer of resources from the conquered regions to Abyssinia. In essence, the only redistribution that took place under Menelik was looting the vanquished in order to enrich the conqueror both at home and in the new settlement areas, which hastened the fall of his administration (Gemtessa, 2014)and inaugurated the new era of colonialism "(David Thomson 1966-501. The military expansion of King Menelik and the incorporation of numerous ethnic groups into the Abyssinian Empire has been a cause of dispute and is still being debated in present Ethiopian politics (Bekele, 2021)ethnic federalism indeed paved the way for the recognition, accommodation, and institutionalization of ethnocultural diversity for the first time in the country's history since its modern existence. What is equally important is, the practice of ethnic federalism complicated state-society and inter-group relationships creating a favorable environment for ethnic confrontation and conflict to take place in the country threatening national unity, eroded century-old values of coexistence, a hard ethnic boundary where administrative boundaries are served as political and ethnic differentiators like the Oromo and Somali conflict over contested boundaries. Territorial recognition, and institutionalization of ethnicity gave room for the emergence of 'ethnic like and ethnic others' thinking, made minorities in different regions victims of politics and failed to provide sound accommodation mechanisms from them, severely restricted people's constitutional rights including the right to mobility and right to work, created room for the re-emergence of secessionist tendency. Hence, ethnic federalism while solving old problems of ethnic inequality and injustice; has created new problems of ethnic tensions and conflict across Ethiopia. It is the purpose of this study to investigate how and why federalism is being considered as the source of ethnic conflicts in the Ethiopian context. The study adopted a qualitative comparative approach while FGDs and key informant interviews were used to gather data. The finding of the study shows that though multinational federation plays an irreplaceable role to accommodate and institutionalize ethnocultural diversity, the notion and implementation of federalism instigate ethnic conflict in the Ethiopian context.

In Ethiopia during this period of state formation under Menelik II, there was forcible conquest and resource extraction for the sake of conqueror advantages, ignoring multiculturalism and the brutality of the emperor. As a result, the national question increased from that point on as a major source of internal unrest, leading to battles that were frequently seen as conflicts between ethnic groups and the central government structures.

HAILE SELASSIE'S IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION AND ETHNICITY QUESTIONS MANAGEMENT

Menelik's strategy of basing the Ethiopian Empire's survival on the labour and resources of the conquered societies was carried over by Haile Selassie (Power of trinity). He simply served to further Menelik's programme by relocating an increasing number of Abyssinian immigrants who later established themselves as landlords in the Oromo and other conquered peoples' of country. As a significant recipient of imperial land concessions, the Orthodox Church rose. Despite introducing taxation, Haile Selassie administered it unequally, charging the dominant ethnic group of Oromo and other conquered peoples more than the Abyssinians. Even foreign funding meant to promote economic growth was misused to benefit North Abyssinian settlers and the empire. The Oromo and other peoples were turned against in the contemporary economic sectors of mining, commercial agriculture, and coffee export, while their role were also served as the backbone of the empire in economic contributions. Essentially, the only redistribution that occurred throughout Haile Selassie's protracted rule was the extraction of resources and labour for the advantage of the Abyssinian soldiery, the Church, and the imperial order as a whole without providing anything back to the people in the way of services to a prominent landowner in the homelands of the Oromos and other societies (Gemtessa, 2014)and inaugurated the new era of colonialism "(David Thomson 1966-501. According to Clapham, (2009) at this time, Ethiopian state-building politics have been employed through four approaches by the country's changing political regimes in relation to people and the nationality issue. The first phases were: the center or state power penetrates its periphery through power, administration, taxation, and communication; secondly, language and cultural standardization through the school system and minority assimilation; this was in an effort to create an Amharic-speaking, Orthodox Christian society that would operate as a unit under centralized leadership that is taken from the French model external colonizers. These were an attempt to achieve cultural homogeneity through state centralization and a one-language policy. Thirdly, political participation of the periphery and lower social classes through franchisement and entitlement of citizen rights. Lastly, Emperor Haile Selassie I rebuilt feudalism in a way that strengthened the political authority of the king and his immediate heirs while dismantling the pre-existing regional powers of the '*Rases*', or the rulers of each province (Clapham, 2009; Gebeye, 2023; Gemtessa, 2014and inaugurated the new era of colonialism "(David Thomson 1966-501; Alem, 2003). These methods, which were put into place when political regimes changed and nationality concerns needed to be managed in the nation, created additional problems and ultimately contributed to the regime's downfall.

Haile Selassie inherited control of an empire-state that had been split into two antagonistic areas that were involved in what were perceived as two different internal conflicts. The first is the fight between the Center (*Ghibbi*) "and the feudal ruling houses - Gojam, Tigrai, and Wello," while the second is the war between the Ghibbi and the incorporated territories of the south, south-west, and south-east - in the areas where military-feudal-colonialism was formed (Gebeye, 2023). The assimilation and homogenization of Ethiopian society in the sense that all Ethiopians would essentially become Amharic-speaking Orthodox Christians, embodying the Ethiopian "great tradition" of Axum, Lalibela, and empire under the imperial government of Haile Selassie were also faced another challenges from other parts of country. The 1955 imperial constitution, which officially suppressed non-Amhara ethnic groups, particularly those distinctive ethnic cultures, historical traditions, languages, religions, and administrations located in the territory's south, west, and east, contributed to the homogenization trend. This implies that the assimilation and homogeneity goals of the imperial regime were intended to avoid and eradicate Ethiopia's multiethnic reality (Eshete, 2003; Bayu, 2021)ethnic federalism indeed paved the way for the recognition, accommodation, and institutionalization of ethnocultural diversity for the first time in the country's history since its modern existence. What is equally important is, the practice of ethnic federalism complicated state-society and inter-group relationships creating a favorable environment for ethnic confrontation and conflict to take place in the country threatening national unity, eroded century-old values of coexistence, a hard ethnic boundary where administrative boundaries are served as political and ethnic differentiators like the Oromo and Somali conflict over contested boundaries. Territorial recognition, and institutionalization of ethnicity gave room for the emergence of 'ethnic like and ethnic others' thinking, made minorities in different regions victims of politics and failed to provide sound accommodation mechanisms from them, severely restricted people's constitutional rights including the right to mobility and right to work, created room for the re-emergence of secessionist tendency. Hence, ethnic federalism while solving old problems of ethnic inequality and injustice; has created new problems of ethnic tensions and conflict across Ethiopia. It is the purpose of this study to investigate how and why federalism is being considered as the source of ethnic conflicts in the Ethiopian context. The study adopted a qualitative comparative approach while FGDs and key informant interviews were used to gather data. The finding of the study shows that though multinational federation plays an irreplaceable role to accommodate and institutionalize ethnocultural diversity, the notion and implementation of federalism instigate ethnic conflict in the Ethiopian context. Another, challenges as pointed out by Michael & Johnson (1981), came from, Menelik centralization strategy of the Ethiopian empire which was Haile Selassie's predecessor, had confirmed under his successor the dominance of the northern few ethnic groups over the southern majority, including the Somalis in the Ogaden, the Oromos region, the Afars in the north-east, and other nationalities of southwest and southeast wards. New political forces based on new social classes were also produced by the creation of an absolutist state and the subsequent growth of capitalism. Action on the part of these groups—primarily a tiny working class and a bourgeoisie—led to Haile Selassie's and the regime's collapse in 1974. (Clapham, 2009; Donham & James, 1986; Bayu, 2021)ethnic federalism indeed paved the way for the recognition, accommodation, and institutionalization of ethnocultural diversity for the first time in the country's history since its modern existence. 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Therefore, during the imperial administration, as a programme of assimilation, homogenization, and centralization persisted, it neglected the issues of ethnic identity and autonomy, and suppressed the national issues. The management strategies created a new political and resentful conflict issue as the nationalities' queries went unanswered.

THE DERG MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM & NATIONAL ISSUES MANAGEMENT (1974-1991)

The imperial rule fell in 1974, the Derg Military dictatorship of Mengistu Haile-Mariam established its own image of Ethiopia and began a project to create the country based on the idea of revolutionary military nationalism known as "Ityopia Tikdem" (Ethiopia First) (Abdulkadr, 2021; Lyons, 2022). The ideological underpinnings of this rule at the time were supported by communists, and the administration has continued the legacy of the previous colonial approach to nation-building. As a result of the nation's repression of ethnicity, and grieviances that inherited under past successive regimes ruled country, several ethnic-based organisations to against the military regime were created, including The Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF), The Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF), The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and others. Due to this, an ethnic nationalist movement-led civil war that lasted around 20 years between the military regime in charge of the country's centre broke out (Bayu, 2021ethnic federalism indeed paved the way for the recognition, accommodation, and institutionalization of ethnocultural diversity for the first time in the country's history since its modern existence. What is equally important is, the practice of ethnic federalism complicated state-society and inter-group relationships creating a favorable environment for ethnic confrontation and conflict to take place in the country threatening national unity, eroded century-old values of coexistence, a hard ethnic boundary where administrative boundaries are served as political and ethnic differentiators like the Oromo and Somali conflict over contested boundaries. Territorial recognition, and institutionalization of ethnicity gave room for the emergence of 'ethnic like and ethnic others' thinking, made minorities in different regions victims of politics and failed to provide sound accommodation mechanisms from them, severely restricted people's constitutional rights including the right to mobility and right to work, created room for the re-emergence of secessionist tendency. Hence, ethnic federalism while solving old problems of ethnic inequality and injustice; has created new problems of ethnic tensions and conflict across Ethiopia. It is the purpose of this study to investigate how and why federalism is being considered as the source of ethnic conflicts in the Ethiopian context. The study adopted a qualitative comparative approach while FGDs and key informant interviews were used to gather data. The finding of the study shows that though multinational federation plays an irreplaceable role to accommodate and institutionalize ethnocultural diversity, the notion and implementation of federalism instigate ethnic conflict in the Ethiopian context. (Bayu, 2021; Abdulkadr, 2021). The Dergue's subsequent activities against the idea of an independent class action led to the supremacy of nationalist waves. Armed opposition and uprising by organisations like the Tigrai People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) grew more ferocious. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and other anti-Dergue forces were contemplated as potential allies in 1980 efforts by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and TPLF to forge a popular unified front. These liberation movements have a variety of objectives, ranging from various levels of local autonomy to, in the case of the EPLF, independence. The Eritrean national-democratic revolution is the latter scenario, and what sets it apart from some of the other national movements in Ethiopia is how that revolution transitioned from a petty-bourgeois nationalism to socialism (Michael & Johnson, 1981). These set the stage for an almost two-decade civil war between the central authority (military administration) and ethno-nationalist organisations.

In general, the foundations of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism were the paradoxes of three types of ethnic and social engineering that have been implemented under different regimes. Emperor Menelik (1889–1913) developed the *first* social engineering, but Emperor Haile Selassie (1930–36, 1941–74) considerably expanded on it. It intended to establish a unified state based on cultural assimilation, with Amharic as the exclusive language of teaching and public discourse and Abyssinian Orthodox Christian culture serving as the center of Ethiopian national identity. This attempt was consistent with the Ethiopian nationalist viewpoint. Imperial rule was characterized by cultural and structural inequality, as well as ethnic and geographical disparities. Discontent grew until the monarchy was deposed in the 1974 revolution. As a result of the strategy of assimilation into mainstream Amhara culture, several subordinate ethnic groups in various parts of the empire-state launched ethnic movements (Alem, 2003). As further explained in Alem (2003), another issues is the military government's endeavor to maintain a unitary state and handle the "national question" within a Marxist-Leninist framework as the *second* ethnic social engineering contradictions, which took place from 1974 to 1991. In 1983, the Institute for the Study of Nationalities advised the military administration to establish 24 administrative areas and five autonomous regions under a unitary system of government. Still, there was no apparent devolution of power. Therefore, under this rule, ethnically oriented opposition groups stepped up their campaign against the military administration, and ethnic nationalism played a significant role in the fall of the militarizing military state (Habtu, 2004).

During the military autocratic 'Derg' regime, Ethiopian authorities had put in place a wide range of anti-democratic measures. Due to the backing of the rest of the Ethiopians, the EPRDF Party, led by the TPLF, conducted a violent struggle to overthrow the military dictatorship or autocratic Derg, and succeeded (Bayu, 2021)ethnic federalism indeed paved the way for the recognition, accommodation, and institutionalization of ethnocultural diversity for the first time in the country's history since its modern existence. What is equally important is, the practice of ethnic federalism complicated state-society and inter-group relationships creating a favorable environment for ethnic confrontation and conflict to take place in the country threatening national unity, eroded century-old values of coexistence, a hard ethnic boundary where administrative boundaries are served as political and ethnic differentiators like the Oromo and Somali conflict over contested boundaries. Territorial recognition, and institutionalization of ethnicity gave room for the emergence of 'ethnic like and ethnic others' thinking, made minorities in different regions victims of politics and failed to provide sound accommodation mechanisms from them, severely restricted people's constitutional rights including the right to mobility and right to work, created room for the re-emergence of secessionist tendency. Hence, ethnic federalism while solving old problems of ethnic inequality and injustice; has created new problems of ethnic tensions and conflict across Ethiopia. It is the purpose of this study to investigate how and why federalism is being considered as the source of ethnic conflicts in the Ethiopian context. The study adopted a qualitative comparative approach while FGDs and key informant interviews were used to gather data. The finding of the study shows that though multinational federation plays an irreplaceable role to accommodate and institutionalize ethnocultural diversity, the notion and implementation of federalism instigate ethnic conflict in the Ethiopian context. The Ethiopian People's

Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the government's effort to uphold the Ethiopian state based on ethnic federalism and cultural, linguistic, and political autonomy at regional and sub-regional levels, is the *third* ethnic social engineering party (1991–present). Though, EPDRF after 2018, evolved into the Prosperity Party (PP) as the National Party, inheriting ethicized politics to implement national political changes in the country as a whole.

In conclusion, the socio-political governance system in Ethiopia before 1990 was primarily characterized by a centralized and imperial form of rule, which set the stage for significant changes, especially with the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 and the subsequent establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Derg regime. After Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown in 1974, a Marxist-Leninist military junta known as the Derg took control of the country. The Derg participated in massive violations of human rights, nationalized companies, and enacted communist programs. Changes in the socio-political environment started in the early 1990s. Following the overthrow of the Derg dictatorship in 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) presented ethnic federalism as a new form of government in response to the problems and complaints.

DISCUSSION

Socio-political governance of pre-1990

The preceding explanation indicates that land ownership, identity, and democratic governance were the principal issues of the age. The arguments indicate that the purported national issues stemming from various ethnic-based enquiries inside the country's socio-political governance context remain unresolved. From the Ethiopian perspective on the nation's socio-political landscape, Ethiopia is regarded as a singular state established by divine will, with northern Ethiopian culture representing the entirety of the nation in a manner distinct from the rest of Africa, particularly during the Solomonic dynasty's reign from 1270 to 1974. The dictatorial military Derg was established on the principle of revolutionary military nationalism termed "Ityopia Tikdem," prioritizing Ethiopia, with communists endorsing the intellectual foundations of its governance. The administration has sustained the legacy of the prior internal imperialist strategy of nation-building by emphasising ethnic matters and provoking diverse identity and autonomy claims across. This situation precipitated unrest and conflict while perpetuating the suppression of diverse national interests, prompting mobilizations that facilitated the formation of united fronts among various ethnic groups to violently oppose the regime in an attempt to overthrow it. This discourse clearly indicates that, until 1991, imperialist and military governments addressed ethnic conflicts through coercive measures and prioritized homogenizing nation-building at the expense of the interests of ethnic groups inside the nation.

Ethnic question: Implication for post ethnic Federalism

The post-ethnic federalism and ethnic dilemma in Ethiopia profoundly influence the nation's socio-political framework. The objective of transitioning from a centralised to an ethnic federal government was to rectify historical injustices, enhance the influence of marginalised people, and foster inclusion. The ramifications of the ethnic question within this paradigm have resulted in several challenges, including issues with political representation, inter-ethnic disputes, disparities in resource distribution, and the fragmentation of national identity. Nonetheless, the ramifications of this paradigm regarding the ethnic question have engendered fresh challenges and apprehensions. There is apprehension that prioritizing ethnic autonomy may lead to the disintegration of a unified national identity. The diversity of ethnic identities within the federal framework has threatened Ethiopian unity and national cohesion. Despite the objective of ethnic federalism to enhance ethnically defined regions, its practical implementation has resulted in challenges with equitable resource distribution. Disparities in social services and economic opportunities among ethnic groups have further intensified historical inequalities. Inter-ethnic conflicts have inadvertently escalated due to ethnic federalism, which was designed to recognise and celebrate identity variety. Disputes among ethnic groups stemming from historical grudges, political power, and rivalry for resources can threaten social harmony. Addressing these issues necessitates comprehension of the importance of the ethnic question in the framework of post-ethnic federation. It requires a nuanced governmental strategy that addresses historical injustices, enhances national identity, and promotes equitable development for all ethnic groups. Thus, a comprehensive analysis of this empirical research indicates that the ethnic issue profoundly impacts Ethiopia's socio-political landscape in a post-ethnic federation framework. Although issues of land ownership, identity, and ethnic-politics were acknowledged at the constitutional level, the processes of democratisation re-emerged, influencing politics and nation-building in the country after 1991, as identities were redefined for political advantage.

CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

Ethiopia's historical narrative within African history is characterised by unique issues of land ownership, identity, and democratic governance, which were crucial to the process of nation-building. The Ethiopian state employed warfare to achieve what Christopher Clapham termed "indigenous state formation," akin to the processes observed in European states. The study indicates that Ethiopian history imparts contradictory impulses of glory and conquest to its populace. The subsequent generations of Ethiopian elites display characteristics such as engaging in a zero-sum political game, resisting concessions, possessing an ambiguous vision for future societal objectives, exhibiting a tendency towards hegemony, harbouring a sense of grandeur, and, most critically, neglecting to learn from historical precedents. From the standpoint of democratisation, the unresolved national issues of land ownership, identity, and democratic government have posed challenges to the historical grievance management suggested by ethnic-based federalism.

Researchers advocate for the establishment of a national dialogue and reconciliation initiative to address historical grievances in a diverse society such as Ethiopia. Local administrations and grassroots organisations should be included in the dialogue. Addressing the needs of smaller communities necessitates local engagement, and restorative justice programs aimed at rectifying historical injustices should be contemplated. These programs may encompass financial assistance, community service, or additional measures to facilitate the recovery of affected regions. Implementing mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the reconciliation process. Regular evaluations facilitate the identification of areas for improvement, ensuring the project's durability and efficacy. A national dialogue and reconciliation initiative offers a pathway to healing, comprehension, and the establishment of a more harmonious future for Ethiopia by addressing the complex landscape of historical grievances.

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NATIONAL TB ELIMINATION PROGRAMME: A STUDY OF TUBERCULOSIS PATIENTS IN ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

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Abstract

An estimated 10.6 million people worldwide 3.2 million women, 6 million men, and 1.2 million children are TB positive. Globally, 1.6 million people lost their lives to tuberculosis in 2021. Andaman and Nicobar Islands are remotely situated and prone to tuberculosis disease. Thus, it becomes imperative to understand socio-economic profile of Tuberculosis patients in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. For this purpose a cross sectional socio economic survey was conducted to study the profile of Tuberculosis patients sampled from Seven Tuberculosis Units (TUs) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands participated in this investigation and included the TB patients aged above 18 years, amounting to 274 from both the sexes. Our examination reveals that NTEP reaches all segment of the population, indicating an effective TB control by curing TB patients and sustaining their productivity. This will also help in achieving the one of the END TB goals of alleviating poverty by reducing catastrophic cost to the poor patients.

Keywords: Tuberculosis, Demographic, Social, Economic, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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INTRODUCTION

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious global public health concern that requires immediate attention as it causes a threat for both individual and community, in terms of physical, psychological, social and economic factors. Not just a leading cause of death and illness, tuberculosis (TB) is a severe public health concern, but also the clear link with its social and economic problems. TB is a number one single infectious killer disease taking toll of three million lives in a year globally (WHO: 2022). In 1993, the World Health Organization designated tuberculosis (TB) as a "Global Emergency" due to its concerns (Nathavitharna & Friedland: 2015). Since then, public health

A tale of two global emergencies: tuberculosis control efforts can learn from the Ebola interventions are accelerated globally by taking actions on introducing early and accurate diagnoses by smear microscopy, uninterrupted drug supply (patient wise drug box for full course of treatment), directly observe treatment, systematic monitoring of patients adherence to treatment and political commitment (GoI: 2017). It shown that it resulted in early case detection and improved treatment success. Through the cure of TB patients, it saved billions of dollars for countries and the lives of TB patients. TB control programme has worked in collaboration and coordination with other welfare departments such as HIV programme, private sectors, NGOs and community based organisations. Through the government health system, the program also offers high-quality, free TB diagnosis and treatment services nationwide. The strategy used to combat tuberculosis not only offers the patient and their family medical relief, but also social and financial support.

An estimated 10.6 million people worldwide 3.2 million women, 6 million men, and 1.2 million children are TB positive. Globally, 1.6 million people lost their lives to tuberculosis in 2021 (WHO: 2022 & Goletti et al: 2023). Seventeen counties, which is, classified as a low income countries accounts for 87% of estimated new TB cases. India listed one of the high TB burden countries among 17 countries accounts one third of TB cases (Institute of Medicine: 2012). India is expected to have 2.9 million TB cases in 2021. Out of all the countries contributing to the global tuberculosis cases, India remained the largest contributor (GoI: 2022). Since 1956, the Indian government has been implementing the TB control program to combat tuberculosis. This programme revised as a Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP). In 2021, itwas renamed as a National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) (GoI: 2017 & Khanna et al: 2023).[3, 7] Still it was reported that0.236 million people were missed for diagnosis of TB and were not reported under the NTEP. India setthe goal of eliminating tuberculosis by 2025 in the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2017–2025. Indiaestablished the "Prevent, Detect, Treat, and Build" pillars of strategy for social protection and universalcoverage for tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment under this NSP (GoI: 2017 & Sachdeva et al: 2012).

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a collection of over 572 islands in the Bay of Bengal, are a Union Territory of India. Six nomadic tribes, including immigrants from the Indian mainland, make up roughly 10% of the population on these Islands (Burma et al:2019). Islanders were a disadvantaged population that frequently had limited access to the systems that provided health care. Due to their remote location, distinct cultural and social customs, lack of formal education and treatment seeking behavior, unconventional lifestyles, and low socioeconomic status, these populations are more susceptible to a variety of health issues, including tuberculosis. Andaman and Nicobar Islands have higher prevalence (495 per 1,00,000) of TB cases as compared to overall Indian tribal population average (330 per 1,00, 000) reported in a survey done in 2021 (Thomas et al: 2021). Priority populations who are at risk of tuberculosis infection because of a range of risk factors, including environmental, biological, behavioral, legal, and economic barriers to accessing services, were identified by the National Strategic Plan to "End TB" (GoI: 2017). The TB burden in the Islands is a major challenge for the NTEP and it require special attention due to many social, cultural, geographical, economical and health care service related reasons (Sachdeva et al: 2012 & Murhekar et.al. 2004). In addition, people living in Islands are more vulnerable due to their living condition of hard to reach areas. Information on the social and economic effects of tuberculosis (TB) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is scarce. Research on the socioeconomic background of tuberculosis patients is necessary. The present study was undertaken to study the demographic, social and economic profile of TB patients registered during 2021-22 under NTEP in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The NTEP offers free TB treatment and management services, funded under National Health Mission (NHM). It adheres to the internationally recommended DOTS (directly observed treatment strategy), which consists of five elements: administrative and political commitment; prompt diagnosis by sputum microscopy; continuous, high-quality drug supply; and systematic monitoring and accountability. Standardized treatment regimens lasting six to eight months are administered to all TB patients (pulmonary and extra-pulmonary) who have been registered and are drug-sensitive. Two phases comprise the TB treatment regimen: an Intensive Phase (IP) lasting two to three months, followed by a Continuation Phase (CP) lasting four to five months. Daily doses of TB treatment are administered while under observation.

PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

This study was carried out in seven Tuberculosis Units (TUs) of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. Among these TUs five were from rural (Ferrargunj, Little Andaman, Rangat, Mayabunder, and Diglipur), one from urban (Port Blair) and one from Tribal (Nicobar). The study covered only government health system which consist of 19 Primary Health Centres (PHCs), four Community Health Centres (CHCs), five Urban Health Centres (UHCs) and its covered areas of Health and Wellness Centres (sub centres)

Newly diagnosed pulmonary drug sensitive TB (both smear positive and smear negative), extra pulmonary TB patients registered for treatment during April 2021 to December 2022 under NTEP of Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands were considered for the study. The eligibility criteria for study inclusion of TB patients was both male and female patients aged above 18 years. Patients who were chronically sick, older than 65 years, or unable to respond to the study questions were not allowed to participate. Following the completion of the intensive phase of treatment, the patients were interviewed for the study (after 2- 3 months of treatment).

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Pre-coded, semi-structured interview questions were employed to collect data. Details about the patient's age, gender, marital status, size of family, and length of stay were included in the schedule. Information on social characteristics such as religion, community and education also included in the interview schedule. Further economic characteristics such as occupation, individual income and household income are also included. Information on clinical characteristics such as smear positive pulmonary TB, smear negative pulmonary TB, extra pulmonary TB, past history of TB in the family and latent TB infections are also included. Patients life style characteristics such as tobacco smoking, tobacco chewing and alcohol consumption are also included in the interview schedule. In addition to that we also used Kuppuswamy scale to measure the socio economic status (SES) of the study population. After scrutiny, data were entered in Microsoft Excel spreads sheet (MS excel version 10) and the data were analysed using SPSS version 22.0 (SPSS, IBM, Bangalore). percentage were used in the study.

ETHICAL ISSUES

This study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of the ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, Port Blair. Necessary approvals obtained from the NTEP, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. During the interview, all the patients with TB were counselled and motivated to complete the treatment by the professional Social Worker.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic profile of study population

Among 274 individuals included in the study; 25 (9%) were latent TB infected individuals and the remaining 249 (91%) were TB patients. Among the study population 57% were males and in both gender majority (64%) were belonged to age group of 18-50 years. There were 29% unmarried and 9% were either divorced or widowed. Majority (62%) of the study population living with nuclear family system and 72% have a family size of more than three members. Overall 55% belongs to Hindus and 38% were from the Christian religion. With respect to community, majority of 75% were non-tribal community and 25% were from the tribal community who were following Christianity. Majority (87%) of them living in the Islands more than ten years (Table -1).

ECONOMIC PROFILE OF STUDY POPULATION

Out of total 274 TB patients interviewed, 14% were illiterates, 14% have completed primary level of education and 14% were with higher secondary level of education. Majority 31% had high school level education and only 10% had college level of education. With respect to the patient's occupation, 29% were unemployed, 57% were working in the private sector (40%) and 17% were working as daily wage labourers. Only 14% were working in the Government sectors. The average mean income of the study population is around Rs. 3000 per month. The head of the family members profile such as education, occupation, month income also collected. It was observed that majority around 81% were completed only school level of education and 11% were illiterates. Sixty nine percent of patient's head of the family were working in the private sectors and daily wage labourers. With respect to the family income 65% were belongs to below the average monthly income of Rs. 30000 and 70% were from the lower and middle social and economic status (Table-2).

LIFE STYLE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

Life style characteristics of the study population were given in Figue-1. It was observed that 15% had a habit of tobacco smoking, 73% had a habit of tobacco chewing and 47% had a habit of consuming alcohol.

CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

Figure-2 describes the clinical characteristics of the study population such as type of TB disease, latent TB infection and history of TB in the family (any family members infected with TB disease and treated for TB). It was found that majority (61%) were pulmonary TB and one third (30%) were extra pulmonary TB patients. Among pulmonary TB patients 52% were sputum smear positive TB and 9% sputum smear negative TB. Smear negative patients diagnosed by sputum smear and also diagnosed by X-ray abnormalities and clinically examined.

DISCUSSION

The present study has highlighted the profile of the TB patients registered under NTEP in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It was observed that majority of the study population is from Islands and they stayed more than 10 years. It was also observed that 57% of the registered patients are male. In India, male to female ratio of diagnosed with TB is varied from 2:1 to 6:1. However, in our study, the ratio was around 1:1 (Horton et al: 2018, Rao: 2009 and Marcoa et al: 2019). In this study, we have included all TB cases including latent TB Infection, this could be one of the reasons for getting equal ratio. In general, TB is high among male as compared to females (Balasubramaqnian et al: 2004). The gender difference in TB has not been always addressed in the interventional research. Several studies have recommended that excess burden on male or female need to be addressed and it is essential to meet the ambitious targets for reducing TB incidence and deaths (Ibid).

Further, there is a need for better understanding of the gender difference in terms of immunological basis and the modern development of personalised Gene therapy should be encouraged for better treatment outcomes for this key people. People from Islands may have different problems as compared to people living in main land (Burma: 2019). There is also need to understand the underlying biological mechanisms to this population. In India, the Government made continuous efforts to take actions in strengthening TB services especially in tribal areas including Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Sachdeva et al: 2019). The Government has also initiated the Social Action Plan, where the appropriate strategies are incorporated in the National Strategic Plan to ensure universal access to international standard of quality care (GoI: 2017). Our study highlights that NTEP services are reaching all population without any gender discrimination.

The other important finding from the current study is that people registered under NTEP are below the poverty line. We used different scales to measure the economic status of the patients such as income and Kuppuswamy scale. Kuppusamy SES, a commonly used tool to assess economic status, was the instrument used in the current study to measure poverty (Wani: 2019). It was observed that majority of 70% were from lower socio-economic status as per Kuppuswamy scale and average mean monthly income of the patient was Rs 3000. It indicates that NTEP services are reaching out to the poor segment of the population. The theme of the World TB day 2000 was 'Stop TB Fight Poverty', TB control is a one of the strategies to eliminate poverty. Our study finding highlights that the poor patients are able to utilise the government subsides services. The results of our study clearly show that, of the TB patients registered in the TB control program, 41% had a low living status. This result confirms that the program is reaching out to the underprivileged. This study offers an additional perspective on whether the TB program is reaching the underprivileged population. It has been demonstrated that nearly half of the

TB patients who were enrolled in the program were low-income, and the initiative serves the health needs of this vulnerable population group.

This study clearly shows that the TB programme is accessible for all segments of the population. The benefits of the current TB programme might be due to the special attention given to the Islands and tribal population by the government of India. It consists of a number of programs, including the Tribal TB Initiative, a special collaboration between the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare aimed at enhancing the provision of TB support services and care to the tribal populations of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Rajeswari et al: 1999). The Tribal TB Initiative is a novel endeavour that unites various stakeholders possessing unique abilities to address complex problems that are common in tribal regions. It involves working together between the community and the government to improve primary health care service delivery from a systemic standpoint. With an emphasis on tribal areas that are TB hotspots, the overall goal of the TB tribal initiative will be in line with India's vision of "ending TB".

In general, the highest disease burden were found in the adult population aged more than 18 years. In this study, 64% were form adult patients registered for treatment under NTEP. It is a well-known fact that the TB is high among adults and it affects more among economically productive segments of the population. Similar finding was reported by the previous studies done in Nicobar Islands that more adults have TB (Burma: 2019 and Rao: 2009. Furthermore, it is commonly known that tuberculosis (TB) significantly worsens the financial hardship experienced by patients and their families.[18] Patients in poverty incur higher costs, and future generations will be affected by poverty. If the male is the only earning member of the family, it will affect severely and the burden pass on to the next generation by stopping children from the school and send them for work. It was reported from the mainland that 20% were dropped out from the school and send them for work to manage the family (Geetharamani: 2001).

The other important findings is that 73% of patients were chewing tobacco. This was higher as compared to the tobacco chewing reported from the general population (41%) (Manimunda et al: 2012). Our study finding corroborate with the finding Manimunda et al, the primary method of tobacco use in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is chewing, and there are several common chewing patterns, including the use of Zarda Pan, Kagaz Pan, Sookha, Khaini, and Gutkha. Government of Andaman and Nicobar taken efforts to control, tobacco use, in 2016 introduced the use of all forms of chewing tobacco products banned. Efforts also taken to percolation of the existing tobacco products which is already in the market.

The important issue noticed from this study is that 38% of the patients are young and unmarried. There are underlying misconceptions about TB among population, which makes it difficult for the patients to lead a normal life with a fear of getting married and settling in life. There is a high need of giving social awareness to the society at a large scale, family intervention to the family members and counselling to the TB infected unmarried individuals. Here, the social work plays a major role in implementing the intervention based approach at different levels like society, family and individuals concern. There is also a need for them to converge with the health sectors in TB in addressing the misconceptions about the TB and improving the quality of lives of the unmarried young TB patients.

We also observed that 29% patients were unemployed. Unemployment increases the challenges faced by individuals diagnosed with TB. The inability to work due to illness leads to loss of income and financial strain on families. In many cases, TB patients face stigma and discrimination, making it difficult to secure or maintain employment. Moreover, the treatment for TB is lengthy, catastrophic costs, regular medical check-ups, and, in severe cases, hospitalization. This disrupts a person's ability to work consistently, leading to decreased job stability and employability. The loss of income due to unemployment, coupled with the costs of medical care, can force their families into poverty. This financial strain further limits their access to proper nutrition and healthcare, slowing down the recovery process.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Since the findings of this study are based on interview of patients, it is likely that patients had difficulty in answering their habits like tobacco smoking, chewing and alcohol use. In addition, in this study we also asked information to assess their socio-economic status through income, occupation, religion and community. This information are more sensitive there may be a bias. Care was taken to overcome these difficulties by medical social workers by providing motivational interviewing, make them to feel comfortable to answer all these questions. During the interviews, social workers clarified their doubts and provided need based counselling to the patient's to complete the treatment and avoid unnecessary worries. Patients receiving outpatient care at government health and wellness centers were included in the study; neither hospitalized patients nor those pursuing private sector TB treatment were excluded.

CONCLUSION

Our study highlights, NTEP reaches all segment of the population, indicating an effective component of a development strategy aimed at reducing poverty in developing nations could involve public health interventions in the detection and treatment of disease of poverty like tuberculosis.[16–20] By curing TB patients and sustaining their productivity, it has saved billions of dollars for countries and saved the lives of TB patients. Effective TB control helps end the cycle of poverty and illness in India and other countries. It has been acknowledged that the NTEP is a cost-effective health intervention that can cure poor individuals and enable them to return to work sooner. This benefits the individuals' families as well as the nation's overall social and economic development, with the potential to reduce poverty. This will help in achieving the one of the END TB goals of alleviating poverty by reducing catastrophic cost to the poor patients.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of study population.

Socio-demographic profile		*No*	*%*
Gender	Male	156	57
	Female	118	43
Age in years	18-30	87	32
	31-40	59	22
	41-50	58	21
	>50	70	26
Marital status	Unmarried	79	29
	Married	170	62
	Widowed/Divorced	25	9
Family type	Nuclear	169	62
	Joint	105	38

Socio-demographic profile		No	%
Family size	1_3	77	28
	>3	197	72
Religion	Hindu	151	55
	Muslim	18	7
	Christian	105	38
Community	Non-tribal	205	75
	Tribal	69	25
Duration of stay	<10 Years	34	13
	>10 Years	240	87
Total		274	100

Table 2: Economic profile of study population

	Patient		*Family Head*	
	No	*%*	*No*	*%*
Education				
Illiterate	38	14	31	11
Primary	38	14	42	15
Middle	47	17	69	25
High school	84	31	85	31
Higher Secondary	39	14	28	10
College	28	10	19	7
Occupation				
Unemployed	81	29	-	-
Government sector	37	14	86	31
Private sector	109	40	140	51
Daily wage Labourer	47	17	48	18
Individual Monthly Income				
Rs. ≤3000	139	51	-	-
Rs. >3000	135	49	-	-
Family Monthly Income				
Rs. ≤30000	-	-	178	65
Rs. >30000	-	-	96	35
Socio-Economic Status				
Upper	-	-	2	1
Upper Middle	-	-	80	29
Middle	-	-	80	29

	Patient		*Family Head*	
	No	***%***	***No***	***%***
Upper Lower	-	-	100	37
Lower	-	-	12	4
Total	274	100	274	100

Figure Legends

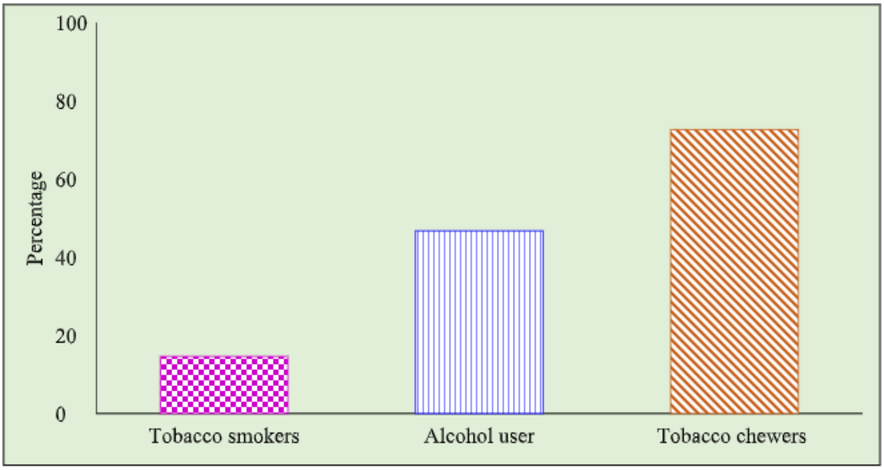

Figure 1: Life style characteristics of the study population

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IMPACT OF GST ON INDIAN ECONOMY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Mona Kumari* and Surendra Kumar Gupta**

Abstract

There is a current urge to alter the Indian economy in light of global trends by incorporating competitiveness and core competence into every company operation. As a result, the government is working to establish one nation, one market, and one tax system in order to simplify and eliminate the region of multiple and double taxes. The implementation of GST in the domain of indirect taxes is the outcome of the government's commitment to eliminating regional disparities and ensuring the country's balanced regional growth. GST aims to open the progressive door to all sectors of the Indian economy, making them viable not only in the home market but also in the international market, but it's appropriate implementation with stated goals remains a major obstacle for the country's policymakers. This article seeks to determine the influence of GST on various sectors of the Indian economy, which appears to be favorable in compared to the country's previous tax structure. An attempt has been made to conduct a comparative assessment of the country's old and new tax regimes, as well as to highlight some of the obstacles encountered during their implementation in the country.

Keywords: G.S.T, Uniform Taxation, Destination based, Cascading effect, Input tax credit

INTRODUCTION

The indirect tax system was proven a hindrance to India's progress and prosperity. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) introduced in 2016 single tax regime applied uniformly throughout the nation replacing all State and Central indirect levies. It features a dual model that includes a federal goods and services tax (CGST) and

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a state goods and services tax (SGST). The CGST will replace all central indirect taxes such as central taxation on excise, central sales tax, central service tax, special additional duty on customs, and counter veiling duties, whereas the SGST has replaced all state government indirect taxes such as state vat, purchase tax, luxury tax, octroi, lottery and gambling tax. It is not a new tax, but rather a mechanism for examining interstate transactions of goods and services and ensuring that the tax is collected by the importer state, as GST is a destination-based tax (Garg: 2014).

In terms of the pattern of taxes under the GST regime, it has been discovered that the tax is levied at every point of sale. In the event of intra-state sales, both Central GST and state GST are levied. Inter-state sales are subject to Integrated GST. For tax collection purposes, goods and services are separated into five slabs: 0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%.Petroleum-based goods, beverages containing alcohol, power, and real estate are taxed independently by each state government. There is a specific fee of 0.25% on raw precious and semi-precious stones and 3% on gold. In addition, a 22% surcharge or additional charges on top of the 28% A few things, such as aerated drinks, expensive autos, and tobacco products, are subject to GST. Prior to GST, the statutory tax rate for most commodities was about 26.5%-50%, while after GST, most of these goods are taxed between 12% and 18%.

Tax is charged on value addition at each level under GST. The producer pay taxes on raw materials and after manufacturing, value of produce is added. Then the produce is sold to wholesalers who after packaging add value on the produce. GST is charged on these value additions, which are the sums of money added at each stage to reach the ultimate sale to the consumers. There are three stages of GST collection namely CGST, SGST, and IGST. The following table gives a clear picture.

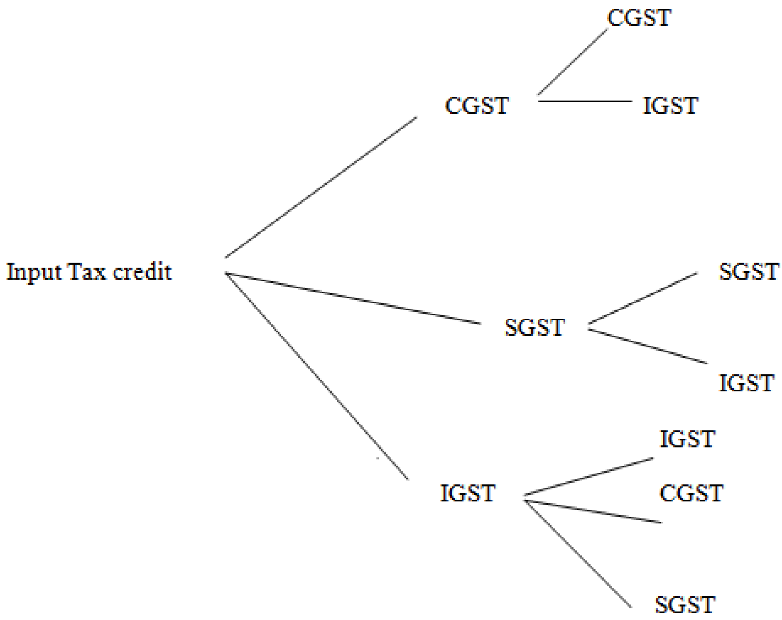
Table 1: Tax Structure

Transaction	*New Regime*	*Old Regime*	*Impact*
Sale Within the State	CGST+SGST	VAT/Central excise/ Service Tax	Revenue will be shared equally between the Centre & the State
Sale to another State	IGST	Central sales Tax + Excise & Service Tax	There will be one type of Tax Incase of inter State sale. The centre will then share the IGST revenue based on the Destination of the goods.

Source: Compiled by author on the basis of figures on website

INPUT TAX CREDIT

A shopkeeper can claim credits for the tax he previously paid on the purchases of inputs under In the GST system, the cascading consequences of taxation are also lessened. The fact that input tax credits were previously only available for VAT and not for services or other taxes is especially important because there is now just one tax under the current system. It is provided in the way listed below.



It aims to simplify the tax system so that just one tax is owed for the delivery of goods and services. The GST, is a massive indirect tax framework designed to support and promote the nation's economic growth.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An array of studies reveals different aspects of GST but a few assess its impacts on economy. Agogo Mawali (May 2014) has argued that the GST is bad for low-income countries and does not promote broad-based economic development in these nations. If these nations do decide to introduce the GST, the rate should be lower than 10% to promote growth. Kumar (2014) has come to the conclusion that if the GST is implemented in India, there would be just one tax, the GST, which is expected to promote fair taxation. Dander (2015) finds that the prevailing economic climate in India made the introduction of the GST necessary. R. Vasantha Gopal (2011) has come to the conclusion that moving from India's convoluted present indirect tax system to the streamlined GST would be beneficial for the country's developing economy. Ehtisham Ahmed and Satya Poddar (2009) argues that the adoption of the GST will result in a more straightforward and transparent tax system, as well as an improvement in the production and productivity of the Indian economy. However, the GST's advantages heavily depend on its thoughtful design.

Pinki, Supriya Kamma and Richa Verma (July 2014) found that the new NDA government in India is supportive of the implementation of GST and that, if it is supported by a strong IT infrastructure, it will eventually be advantageous for the central government, state governments, and consumers alike. Anushuya and Narwal (2014) came to the conclusion that, while CGE and GST are both highly well-liked concepts globally, GST is a strong one for indirect taxes. Nitin Kumar (2014) finds that the introduction of GST in India will assist in reducing the economic distortion caused by the present indirect tax system and is anticipated to promote a fair tax system that is not location-based. Chaurasia et al. (2016) predicts that GST will, overall, be beneficial for the growth of the Indian economy and that it will also assist to increase the country's Gross Domestic Product by more than 2%. J. Jency and R. Bharthvajan (2020), advocated that it will make India's vital indirect tax system simpler. The government has also guaranteed that the GST will lessen the current burden of compliance, meaning that there won't be any price differences between Indian and imported goods; instead, they will be taxed at the same rate and have the same prices. Shilpa Kulkarni and Sudhindra Apsingekar (2021), explained that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will simplify taxation and incentivize new business owners to create jobs across industries. Since the GST is a national tax, it will reduce tax disparities depending on an Indian's geographic location. The long-term decline in commodity prices and the rise in goods consumption that results from the GST will both have a positive impact on the nation's GDP and economic growth. Rajesh Garg and Mangal Sain (2022) opines that there is no differentiation made between the public sector, private sector, or industry. By fostering more cooperation between the economies of the several states, the establishment of the GST is intended to stimulate economic growth on a national level.

Based on secondary sources of data, the present study intends to examine the impact of GST regime on country's economic growth in comparison to previous tax system and also the challenges faced at present.

IMPACT ON INDIAN ECONOMY

The new taxing structure under the GST has a direct impact on three sectors of the Indian economy: agriculture, industry, and services. The goal of the study is to compare the effects of taxation on these industries before and after the implementation of the GST. An effort has been made to understand how the GST would affect the retail sector, which has been a significant contributor to the Indian economy. The analysis of the tax system throughout the pre- and post-GST eras took into account the degree of openness that was maintained and the amount of corruption that was eliminated.

IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Any input taxes imposed on farm-related inputs, such as seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, tractors, etc., raise the price of agricultural output. On the other hand, market factors over which farmers have little influence determine the pricing of agricultural produce. The farmer will be forced to bear the expense, which eventually adds to his burden, as input prices rise and output prices stay flat. The increasing tax burden will cause a crater in the income of an Indian farmer who is already under extreme strain from several sources.

Table I: Tax on Agricultural input

Agriculture Input	*Tax burden under previous Tax Regime*	*Tax burden under GST Tax Regime*
Seeds	Nil	Nil
Tractors	12-13%	12%
Fertilizers	6%	5%
Pesticides	12.5%	18%

Source: Personally Compiled data taken from Website http://www.gstindia.com

The table above demonstrates that seeds were free from taxation both under the previous tax system and under the new GST scheme. The overall tax incidence for the sector is between 12 and 13 percent due to the tax incidence on Tractor's inputs and the VAT on the finished product. The manufacturers have been able to claim a credit for the total input duties and taxes thanks to the establishment of a GST rate of 12% on tractors and on tractor inputs@18%. As a result, the overall tax incidence on tractors has stayed at relatively stable levels, and the installation of the tax has no negative effects on the tractor business. Previously, fertilisers, a crucial component of agriculture, were subject to a 6% tax (1% excise + 5% VAT). Fertilisers now only carry a 5% tax under the GST system, which lowers the cost to farmers. Currently, pesticides are subject to a 12.5% excise tax; however, under the GST system, crop protection items like insecticides will be subject to an 18% tax. Therefore, the farmer's tax burden may have grown as a result. Therefore, during the 49th GST Council meeting held in February 2023; the majority of the states voiced their desire to lower the GST on pesticides from 18% to 5%.

IMPACT ON SUPPLY CHAIN

The transportation of agricultural products across state boundaries in India was one of the key problems the agricultural industry had to deal with. Due to the variable degree of perishability of agricultural commodities, transit time had an impact on commerce. 60% of the time that long-distance trucks spend travelling in India is spent parked. Before, trucks waited outside for hours to pay taxes at city and state borders. The State Entry Tax and Octroi were these taxes. However, the GST has replaced the State entrance tax and the octroi, promoting smooth truck traffic. Thus, a straightforward uniform tax system has sped up transportation, reduced food waste, and facilitated the movement of agricultural commodities across state lines. These improvements have undoubtedly increased marketing effectiveness, facilitated the growth of virtual markets through warehouses, and decreased overhead marketing costs.

IMPACT ON TRADE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

The degree of market distortions caused by differences in the market taxes/cess applied to various commodities in different States were found to range from 2% to 8%, which is now taxed at the same rate in all the states. Under the GST regime, the State is made more competitive and strategic thanks to this strategy. By including all taxes and fees associated with the selling of agricultural products, the introduction of the GST is a step towards creating a single national agricultural market.

IMPACT ON INDUSTRIES

Manufacturing, construction, mining, and utilities (such as gas, water, and electricity) make up the majority of the industrial sector. The largest sub-sector among them is manufacturing, and an effort has been made to understand how GST would affect this industry. The results are as follows:

REDUCTION IN TAX

Manufacturing's contribution to GDP has been constant at 16%, whereas in China, it is 42%. Multiple indirect tax laws that have resulted in high compliance and administrative expenses, as well as categorization and value conflicts, are some of the causes of this low share. Therefore, it is crucial and vital to implement tax reforms to support a sector that is already in decline.

Source: GST India Economy and Policy 2020, pp-52

Following the establishment of the GST, the tax burden on the bulk of produced items has decreased, as shown in the table below:

Table II: Automobiles Taxation under pre and post GST

Segment	*Total pre GST rate*	*GST*	*Cess*	*Effective GST*	*Change*
Two/ three wheelers	30.2%	28.0%	3%	31.0%	2.2%
Mid Segment Cars	47.3%	28.0%	3%	43.0%	4.3%

Segment	*Total pre GST rate*	*GST*	*Cess*	*Effective GST*	*Change*
Sports Utility Vehicles	55.3%	28.0%	15.0%	43.0%	12.3%
Commercial vehicles	30.2%	28.0%	15.0%	28.0%	2.2%

Source: Personally Compiled data taken from website http://www.economictimes.com

Table III: FMCG: Taxation under pre and post GST

Segment	*Excise*	*VAT*	*Total pre GST rate*	*GST*	*Change*
Soap	12.5%	13.5%	27.7%	18.0%	9.7%
Shampoos	12.5%	13.5%	27.7%	28.0%	-0.3%
Pastries and cakes^	6.0%	6.0%	12.4%	18.0%	-5.6%
Waffles and wafers coated with chocolate	12.5%	6.0%	19.3%	28.0%	-8.7%
Milk	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ghee	0.0%	13.5%	13.5%	12.0%	1.5%
Butter	0.0%	13.5%	13.5%	12.0%	1.5%
Hair Oil	12.5%	13.5%	27.7%	18.0%	9.7%

Source: Personally Compiled data taken from Website http://www.economictimes.com

It is clear from the above tabled no vi & vii that automobile sector and FMCG sector have been benefitted by GST resulting the benefit to the consumers.

(ii) Additions to Competitiveness and ease of doing business:

There are certain other aspects of GST which have added to competitiveness and ease of doing business of manufacturing sector as found during the study:

(a) **Valuation of goods –** Prior to GST, a certain percentage of the maximum retail price (MRP) displayed on the package—rather than the ex-factory transaction value—was the amount of different pre-packaged items intended for retail consumption that were subject to excise duty. The ex-factory transaction value was typically substantially lower than the MRP based value (which was typically between 30% and 35% of the MRP), resulting in a greater excise tax burden than would otherwise be the case. This led to a rise in excise duty, which in turn raised MRP and eventually increased costs for customers.

(b) **Reduction of cascading taxes–** Previously, under the indirect tax structure, State taxes and Central taxes could not be offset against one another. As a result, manufacturers frequently found themselves unable to trigger excess credits of federal or state levies. Additionally, the central sales tax paid on interstate purchases was not refundable and was a cost to the business. The cascading of taxes at the post-manufacturing stage was another problem. On their input side, dealers, merchants, etc., were subject to taxes that could not be credited (service tax on input services, excise duty on capital goods). As a result, prices went up, which ultimately reduced the competitiveness of Indian-made items compared to imports.

With the GST, which allows tax set offs along the whole value chain of production for both products and services, all of the aforementioned problems have been resolved. As a consequence, the cascading impact of taxes is lessened, which lowers the overall cost of producing goods.

(c) **Formalization of Manufacturing** - The idea is to only enable input credit if a taxpayer's declaration matches the declarations made by suppliers in their returns. This will encourage suppliers to manufacturing companies to switch from the informal to the formal economy because if they are in the informal economy and do not offer a bill to their clients, the manufacturing units, these units may route supplies from those suppliers who do.

(d) **Reduction of classification disputes –** Currently, classification conflicts were a frequent source of litigation under both central excise and VAT, notably for the manufacturing sector, due to differing rates of excise tax and VAT on various items, as well as multiple exclusions allowed under excise and VAT legislations. It is clear that the GST is built on the tenets of a streamlined rate structure and the reduction of exclusions, which will greatly decrease disagreements over the categorization of goods.

(e) **Supply chain restructuring based on economic factors** - Modern supply and distribution models are built to minimise the indirect tax effects that result from different degrees of value addition. With the introduction of GST, it is hoped that these decisions would be made to maximise company efficiency rather than indirect tax efficiency. As an illustration, today's warehousing decisions frequently depend on the arbitrage between the relevant VAT and CST rates and the various State-specific VAT rates. With the introduction of GST, it has become clear that decisions about storage and logistics are based on factors that are economically efficient, such as costs and geographical benefits in relation to important clients.

IMPACT ON MSMEs

The micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) are the foundation of our economy. It makes up around 29% of our GDP. However, the MSMEs in Bihar is unsatisfactory. As far as the impact of GST is concerned, it has had a good effect and drawn business to this sector due to the reduced tax rates, decreased logistical costs, and lowered threshold exemption limits. The research that is readily available shows unequivocally that the GST has grown MSMEs' business by 5 to 10% and their income by 9% to 15% since the year of its adoption.

IMPACT ON SERVICES

Since 2011–12, the services sector has contributed 70% of the total annual GDP growth, accounting for 60% of GDP (2013–14). A new tax regime's unfavourable effects might slow the Indian economy's overall development, while its positive effects would accelerate it. With consideration for the risks, opportunities, and difficulties that would arise under the post-GST system, the effect on the service industry has been critically examined.

i) Risks - For this industry, the government has introduced a four-tier GST rate structure with rates of 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%. However, there is an 18% tax on the majority of the services. Since the sector is now subject to a 15% tax, the GST system will result in a higher tax burden for this industry. According to economic theory, final product sold may experience delayed growth as a result of rising costs. Given that the service industry is struggling and that advanced nations, particularly the USA, have a protectionist policy, this may not be good news. Export-oriented services, such as business process and IT industries, are displaying slowed growth. However, the public administration and defence sectors of the services sector might experience great development due to an increase in tax income, an expanded tax base, and simpler tax compliance.

ii) Opportunity – For purchases of both commodities and services that are used in production as services, such as transportation services, input credits are available under the GST. There must be at least two separate outcomes from this handling of the service input. First, since manufacturers might receive a tax credit for service input, the price of items will inevitably decrease. Second, as input tax credits are available for services, outsourcing of services may rise. Today, a lot of traditionally created by the producer themselves services in the production process are outsourced to third parties. Due to economies of scale and the division of work, these third parties offer services at a lower cost than producers do internally. Because service inputs are inexpensive, end product prices are consequently lower.

iii) Challenges - A four-tiered tax structure with a varied rate for the goods and services sectors affect/distort business by encouraging arbitrage. For instance, if a car is taxed at 10% and leasing rates are at 18%, automobile leasing can eventually take the place of car sales. A contract may be specifically created to take advantage of the cheaper rates on services in the domain of composite services. As a result, there are consequences for the conflict management field.

IMPACT ON RETAIL BUSINESS

The Indian economy's mainstay, the retail sector generates around 10% of the country's GDP. According to economic value, the Indian retail market is one of the top five retail marketplaces in the world with an estimated worth of US$600 billion. With 1.2 billion inhabitants, India is one of the fastest expanding retail markets in the world. It is crucial to implement new modifications in the industry to promote its expansion and reach given the rising rate of international trade.

Retailers had the right to 30% of indirect taxes in the pre-GST era, including value-added tax (VAT), central state tax (CST), excise duty, service tax on warehousing, intra-state service tax, and more. But in the post-GST era, replacing everything with a single tax is a drastic step. On the surface, it may seem that understanding the technical aspects of such a set-up would take some time for shops. But in the end, the retail industry has risen to a new level. GST has an impact on every aspect of the retail industry, including storage, the supply chain, distribution, promotions, and everything else. (Das Gupta, S 2017) The process of moving goods from the supplier to the customer is transparent. The most productive course of action right now is to restructure each and every approach. With the implementation of the GST registration laws, the complexity of the retail industry is no longer apparent. In all of it, the correct tax filing is really important. The free movement of commodities across the country is about to start. Retailers now face less of a tax burden. The input value that must be utilised to make it available has decreased due to the money saved on maintaining warehouses in several states. Overall, the post-GST system aims to provide a viable and effective conduit for retail trade. It spreads greater growth chances for existing market sectors and industries as well as for new retail company seekers.

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Providing a unified and straightforward method of indirect taxation in India, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is without a doubt one of the major tax reforms. This is why it is referred to as a "Good and Simple Tax." The GST will benefit business and industry, the federal and state governments, as well as consumers. GST is built on an extensive IT infrastructure that allows tax payers to access registration forms, payments, and other information online, making compliance simple and open. Business is made simple by the GST's uniform tax rates, structures, and elimination of cascading impacts of taxes. In addition, it will lower costs for products and services, boosting consumption, output, employment, and eventually the nation's economic development. According to the poll, India will profit from exports after GST by $ 15 billion annually, and GDP would increase by 1% to 2% in the next year. Additionally, it will support the development of an honest and free tax system. As fewer officers and offices are needed, it will lower administrative costs. India will gain from the revenue savings of Rs. 1.8% lakh, or 2.7% of GDP, during the post-GST period as provided in the form of excise tax exemptions. Thus, GST is expected to have a good effect on the economy, but there are also certain difficulties that have been found throughout the course of this study. Which are ….

Revenue loss to the States

Without a question, VAT has been the major source of tax income for state governments. But with the GST reform, this was included in the GST, along with the surcharge and cess. State governments have seen a loss in revenue as a result, and as a result, they are now more dependent on the Finance Commission for tax devolution (now 42%). States are asking the federal government for compensation in order to offset their revenue losses. According to the 14th Finance Commission, the union must provide payments to the states over a maximum of five years, with a tapering effect. 100% Compensation for the first three years was lowered to 75% and 50% in the fourth and fifth years, respectively. This union pay created a financial burden and prevented the government from meeting the 3% fiscal deficit objective set by the finance minister in the 2015 budget. For future economic expansion to be more rapid and full capital account convertibility to be possible, this budgetary aim must be met. Due to the destination-based nature of the GST scheme, industrialized nations have also suffered. It has discouraged the manufacturing sector and encouraged states to expand their imports in order to raise tax income. It is bad for India's manufacturing sector as well since a strengthened manufacturing sector will be the key engine of future economic growth in India. Additional 1% tax on interstate sales and supplies of commodities for a period of two years has been proposed in the GST as a temporary relief measure for industrialized states. However, with 1% more tax, the GST's primary goal of reducing the cascading impact of taxes has started to lose its effectiveness. Therefore, this extra tax should not be imposed at least on the supply of interstate products in order to reduce the cascading impact. However, compared to the monthly collection of Rs. 1.10 lakh crore in the first quarter of the previous financial year, GST collection for the first quarter of 2022–23 was Rs. 1.51 lakh crore, representing an increase of 37%. A small number of states asked for an extension of the GST compensation payment beyond the five-year transition period during the most recent meeting.

Limits of Registration

Currently, the threshold amounts for VAT (5 lakh), service tax (10 lakh), and excise duty (1.5 crore) are all different. However, a standard threshold limit for all indirect taxes is necessary for the implementation of the GST. It will escalate into a struggle between the centre and the state. States want to set the cap at 10 lakhs instead of the 25 lakhs that the union has advised. However, this ceiling has lately been raised to Rs. 40 lakhs for regular states and Rs. 20 lakhs for special category states for both goods and services, respectively. The lower threshold limit would widen the tax base and boost government income, but it will also necessitate a cutting-edge IT infrastructure to manage the larger assessment database that is now absent in Indian states. As the union would electronically transfer IGST to states, IT infrastructure will be essential for IGST implementation. A robust network, maintained by the GSTN (Goods and Service Tax Network) suggested in GST, is needed to handle the data base. The largest issue to IT infrastructure must be addressed by GSTN in a timely way. *Source:* http://www. Gsteva.com

Cash Flow and Working Capital

GST will have an effect on working capital and cash flow as well. Businesses who have large inventories of products in many states may see a negative impact on their cash flow and working capital since they will be required to pay GST at the full rate on stock transfers between jurisdictions. Currently, CST/VAT must be paid on stock transfers and sales.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the report mentioned above, GST has a favorable effect on a number of Indian economic sectors. Nevertheless, the implementation of GST necessitates concerted efforts from all interested parties, including the federal and state governments, business, and industry. With no human participation, electronic processing of tax returns, refunds, and payments through "GSTNET" will lower corruption and tax evasion. It is essential on the part of the government to educate, conduct proper training, and hold ongoing seminars and workshops on GST, which is the need of the hour. Built-in checks on business transactions through seamless credit and return processing will reduce scope for black money generation leading to productive use of capital. Without a question, the GST would provide India a top-notch tax structure by giving the industrial and service sectors varied treatment. But all of this will depend on thoughtful planning and prompt execution. The implementation of the GST faces a number of difficulties, which are covered in this article. To reconcile the conflicting interests of numerous stakeholders and fulfill the pledge for a significant change of India's tax structure, additional analytical study is required. GST should guarantee that the advantage is truly distributed to the consumers. The ultimate price of the items is also influenced by other elements, such as the seller profit margin. The ultimate cost of things is not only based on GST. Consumer interests are strictly protected by an anti-profiteering provision, which must be particularly effective for the good of the nation.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAHARASHTRA AND BIHAR

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Abstract

For the last ten years, the companies have been spending more than 2% of their net profits on corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, it has been observed in India that the amount spent is concentrated in a few states, whereas the states that need more attention for development are not focused. In 2021–22, India has witnessed a transformative phase in CSR expenditure as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu could take remarkable strides in driving social change and welfare through their diverse CSR initiatives. These states have touched countless lives, fostering inclusivity, sustainable development, and empowerment. On the other hand, other states like Bihar, Orissa, and Jharkhand could not benefit from the CSR initiatives as other states did. The way CSR in India is managed leads to anomalies in inclusive development. This is a major contradiction of the intent behind the law. These loopholes need to be plugged in order to make the CSR legislation successful and to better utilize CSR funds for the social and economic development of the country. This paper looks at several aspects of CSR's initiatives and the issues associated with regional disparities in India. This paper did a comparative study between Maharashtra and Bihar by exploring their CSR status and the reasons responsible for their high and low CSR position, respectively.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, Maharashtra, Inclusive development, Policies, Economic growth

INTRODUCTION

In the pandemic of Corona, the word CSR was often used in TV and newspaper headlines, breaking headlines such as Tata donating so many crores to the PM Cares Fund, Ambani donating so many crores, and Adani and Birla donating so

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much under CSR. Most people, of course, must have heard these words CSR many times; though, a deeper understanding of CSR and its initiatives and the impact of CSR on society must be highlighted. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu could take a remarkable strides in driving social change and welfare through their diverse CSR initiatives. These states have touched countless lives, fostering inclusivity, sustainable development, and empowerment. On the other hand, other states like Bihar, Orrisa, and Jharkhand could not benefit from the CSR initiatives. Overall, inclusive development in society could not be achieved through CSR. There is a need to revisit the ideas behind the CSR and look into the regulatory framework that is responsible for overall assessing the CSR. The government must focus on the inclusive development of India and assess the role played by CSR.

India is the first country in the world to make CSR legally mandatory. The CSR Act has come into full force in India as of April 1, 2014. This law applies not only to Indian companies, but it also applies to all foreign companies that operate in India. Corporate social responsibility has been mandated through provisions under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013. According to the law, a company with an annual net worth of Rs 500 crore, annual income of Rs 1,000 crore, or annual profit of Rs 5 crore is required to spend on CSR. This expenditure should be at least two percent of their 3-year average profit.

CSR IN INDIA AND THE REGIONAL GAP

India's vibrant corporate sector has taken substantial strides in corporate social responsibility (CSR) during the fiscal year 2021–22, making remarkable contributions to societal development and welfare. At the forefront of CSR spending, Maharashtra leads the way with an astounding expenditure of INR 3464.81 crore.[1] On the other hand, in 2021–22, Bihar received only CSR support from over 220 companies, amounting to Rs. 165.66 crore.[2] In percentage terms, this means that Bihar only got 0.62% (not even 1%) of the total CSR funds.

Table 1: List of top 4 states funds received for CSR & lowest position of Bihar in 2021–22

Sr. No.	*States*	*Amount in Indian Rs.*
1.	Maharashtra	3464.81 crore
2.	Gujarat	1461.60 crore
3.	Karnataka	1277.81 crore
4.	Tamil Nadu	1174.07 crore
5.	Bihar	165.66 crore

Source : India CSR Outlook Report 2023

The above table shows that CSR funding in the western state of Maharashtra has remained at the top, with the state consistently getting the largest share of CSR funding from top companies, whereas CSR in Bihar is still far below satisfactory since the state scores the lowest on most parameters for CSR. The regional disparity in the allocation of CSR funds is a prominent issue.[3] As per the legal provision mandated through CSR rules, every company is required to undertake CSR projects in various sectors and geographical regions across India.

The low CSR spending in Bihar is a reflection of the state's poor economic condition and of the state's lack of corporate investment. This low figure also signifies the ground reality of employment opportunities in the state. Bihar has a small industrial base, and there are not many large companies operating in the state. This paper has taken Bihar as a case study in order to make an in-depth inquiry into the ideas of CSR in India and also explore how CSR helps India's inclusive development and other issues of regional disparities associated with CSR in India.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF CSR

The provision of CSR is applicable to companies whose net worth exceeds ₹ 500 crore, turnover exceeds ₹ 1000 crore, or net profit exceeds ₹ 5 crore. Under CSR, the above companies have to spend 2% of the average of their net profits of the last three years on the following activities:[4]

- Eradication of poverty and hunger.
- Promotion of education.
- Gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Environmental protection.
- Improvement in infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate.
- Contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any fund constituted by the Central or State Government for socio-economic development and relief of SCs and STs, women, minorities, and other backward classes.

The objectives of CSR in India have been an excellent example of inclusive growth and development, as there are still many areas in India that need development. 80 percent of India's resources are with 10 percent of the rich, and the remaining 10 percent is with 90 percent of the poor. There are still some areas of India that need attention, and their development is also necessary. CSR appears to be a precision instrument for overall growth and development in India. Though, with the passing of more than ten years of CSR rules in India, there is a need to make an assessment of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Fukuda & Ouchida: 2020).

Since the enactment of the CSR Act, till March 2021-22, more than Rs 50,000 crore has been spent on CSR. However, it has been observed that in India, the amount spent is concentrated in a few states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu etc. Regional development disparity is a continuous developmental challenge for Indian policy makers. The sustainability of the growth rate and the goal of the country to achieve its development target will be difficult to meet unless India develops as an integrated whole of regional competency. Regional disparities in terms of development also exist within a state, for example, Vidarbha in Maharashtra, Saurashtra in Gujarat is not benefitted from CSR funding as it did Mumbai in Maharashtra and Surat in Gujarat. There are districts which are always neglected in CSR based upliftment of society.

However, the performance of social responsibility still has a big disparity and is subjective and preferential. To explain these issues, this paper tries to take Bihar as a case study to test how the concept of CSR does not take an inclusive approach while spending crores of rupees for the last ten years.

ECONOMIC PROFILE OF MAHARASHTRA

The state of Maharashtra is situated in the western part of the country and is also known as the most industrialized state in India. The state is performing excellently in small-scale industries and also boasts the largest number of special export promotion zones. At the same time, it has a large number of skilled and industrial laborers, making it an ideal destination for knowledge-based and manufacturing sectors. Presently, Maharashtra's gross state domestic product has been estimated at Rs. 38.79 trillion in 2023–24. The state has also emerged as a key hub for the information technology and electronics industries and other outsourcing industries located in Mumbai and Pune. On the other hand, several policies and schemes of the Maharashtra government are operational for the purposes of the smooth functioning of companies and providing ample scope for CSR spending. In Maharashtra, Pune, a major city in the state, has emerged as the educational hub.

MAHARASHTRA: THE HIGHEST SPENDER ON CSR IN INDIA

In India, the state of Maharashtra, which has the second-most populous state, is known to be a top CSR destination in the country. Consequently, the state receives the largest share of CSR funds in India. Presently, 4387 companies are functional in Maharashtra, allocating Rs. 5290.19 crore in CSR funds in the years 2021–22. Though Maharashtra is geographically large and the capital city of Mumbai is accounted for as the financial hub and headquarters of many top companies, it spends a huge amount on CSR. At the same time, high economic development in the state always motivates investors to invest in various sectors of the state, thereby contributing to the overall development of the economy. Such an economic cycle helps the state attract a lot of CSR spending. Greater awareness and focus on social responsibility by the companies are encouraged by state government initiatives. At the same time, the regulatory framework for CSR works in proper coordination with the state government in Maharashtra, which leads to high CSR spending on various projects.[5]

Though there appear to be several questions about why such efforts and initiatives could not be taken in other parts of India, such as Bihar, in order to attract a high CSR, The argument still exists: do the ideas of CSR help inclusive development in India?

ECONOMIC PROFILE OF BIHAR

The state of Bihar is situated in the eastern region of India. In the years 2023–24, its GSDP at current prices will amount to Rs. 8.59 trillion. From an economic perspective, the state has always witnessed high growth in per capita net state domestic product. Presently, the state has emerged as one of the strongest agricultural states in the country. Here, the percentage of the population who are employed in agricultural production is around 80%. On the other hand, it seems to be a large base of cost-effective industrial labour forces, which is considered the best destination for a wide range of industries, factories, and companies. At the same time, other industries such as food processing, dairy industries, manufacturing industries, and healthcare are some of the fastest-growing areas in Bihar. In the last two decades, the government of Bihar has taken several initiatives for the development of other key areas, including education, tours, and travel industries, which provide incentives for I and T sectors and other renewable energy plans and projects.

BIHAR: ONE OF THE LOWEST SPENDERS ON CSR IN INDIA

In the five-year period from 2017 to 2021–22, Bihar could get only Rs 440 crore in CSR expenditure, which is only 0.62% of the total CSR spending in India. Many private companies that are operational in Bihar are not interested in spending money for public causes, and they remain engaged in diluting the CSR fund by transferring it into their own trusts. Lack of effective state governments's policies seems to be one of the reasons for not attracting huge CSR spending. The state government in Bihar does not raise awareness of CSR among companies and individuals. Tax breaks, exemptions, and other incentives to companies that invest are not the financial policy of the government of Bihar.

ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a very popular term today. This term is widely used by people working in the social service sector. There are many social and economic challenges in India. It requires collective efforts to overcome it. The amount of CSR proved to be a big help for the government and society to fight against poverty, unemployment, environmental issues, etc. On the basis of a comparison made between the top-leading state of Maharashtra and the bottom-level state of Bihar in terms of CSR spending, it could be argued that companies do not discriminate on CSR allocation. Whereas the main reason for such geographical disparity in CSR allocation could be understood as that the companies always give preference to the local area and areas around it where they operate. At the same time, the lack of high-quality infrastructure and other resources for implementing CSR projects in the region and the lack of awareness about the importance of CSR among companies operating in the region play a vital role in deciding the amount to be spent on CSR. The companies always try to get the goodwill of the local community, which helps them run their business smoothly. To conclude, it could be argued that there could not be a valid reason for justifying that the idea of CSR creates regional disparity in India.

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TRADITIONAL VILLAGE PANCHAYAT PRACTICES AND FORMALIZED MEDIATION PROCESSES: AN ASSESSMENT OF MEDIATION ACT, 2023

Deo Narayan Singh* and Rana Navneet Roy**

Abstract

India has been experiencing resolution of conflicts through mediation by the institution known as panchayats from ancient times. Now with burden of cases on judiciary, it has been resorted to mediation mode of conflict resolution. Growing awareness of the shortcomings of the established legal system and a resurgence of interest in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes, especially mediation, have been observed in recent years. As such, the present paper compares the traditional panchayat practices with the new arrangements of conciliatory resolution of disputes through laws i.e. formalised mediation process. On the basis of opinions of courts and legal experts, the paper assesses the similarities between the old and new systems. It is found that litigants are becoming interested in panchayats and other types of Alternative Dispute Resolution to avoid the difficulties with regular courts. Finally, it is suggestible that this indigenous method of dispute resolution must be adopted in almost as many kinds of disputes/cases as are possible.

Keywords: Panchayat, Mediation Act, Win-Lose Mode, Alternative Dispute Resolution, India

INTRODUCTION

With a long history of village-level Panchayats and continued through a sophisticated modern court system, India's conflict resolution system is currently seeing a rebirth of mediation because judiciary across the nation is finding it impossible, not just difficult, to handle plethora of cases. In mediation, the mediator helps the party's

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identity the real issues, frame the discussion, and generate options for settlement. Mediators come from a number of different background, trained attorneys and technicians and experts familiar with the underlying subject matter of a conflict (Myneni: 2019). The principal means of settling disputes within communities was the antiquated Panchayat system, which was firmly ingrained in regional customs and traditions. Decisions were frequently made with societal peace and consensus in mind, giving restorative justice precedence over punitive measures. However, the old Panchayat system was progressively replaced by a formal judicial system founded on English common law with layers of courts from district judiciary to Supreme Court. Although this system offered a well-organized and defined framework for resolving disputes, it also had drawbacks including backlogs, delays, and expensive fees that prevented many people from using it.

Growing awareness of the shortcomings of the established legal system and a resurgence of interest in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes, especially mediation, have been observed in recent years. With this view in mind the present paper attempts to compare the mediation method of sustainable conflict resolution in old panchayat system with new mediation laws and highlight the benefits of mediation system.

EVOLUTION OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEM IN INDIA

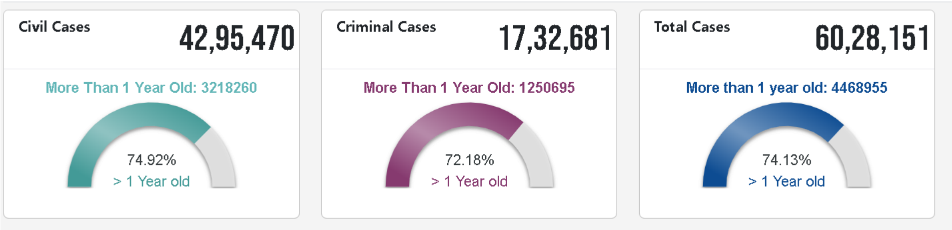
During this time, humans either lived in caves or in the stone age, a period known as the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age). 10,000 BCE marked the end of the Ice Age, also known as the Old Age or Stone Age, and about 190,000 years of human existence. Before humans were civilized, they were wandering animals that were not living in organized homes and without a fixed address as a result of animal domestication and human humans travelled about, yet their settlements persisted in ancient times due to the plants that led to agriculture. Some individuals chose to build what are known as semi-permanent dwellings (Hassan & Muhammad: 2020). The customs, social and cultural traditions, and faiths of all the Indian States are diverse and multifaceted. The Vedic age, similarly, saw the development of the theory of basic rules by jurists. In ancient India a group of elders, known as *panch, kul, sreni or puga,* settled conflicts in community by relying on their personal relationship with people and considering local situations, language, conventions and practices (IIPA: 2023). Later in medieval period, King or *Kaji* settled the disputes by applying mainly reason and mediation and sometimes *kajis* applied religious customs.

India became a British colony ruled by East India Company in late 18th century which established Indian courts as per British laws. The British disregarded indigenous adjudication practices. But there was a clash between Indian principles, which urged the sides to reach a compromise in order to resolve their problems, and British values, which demanded a definitive resolution. India came under the rule of British Crown in 1858 and the British legal system progressively came to dominate India's legal system. Independent India inherited the judicial system. As a method of resolving disputes, arbitration was acknowledged as early as 1879 and was included in the 1908 Civil Procedure Code. The arbitration clause that was originally found in Section 89 of the Civil Procedure Code was eliminated with the passage of the Arbitration Act in 1940. It was the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, which first officially recognized mediation. Section 4 of the Act assigns conciliators the responsibility of mediating and facilitating the settlement of industrial disputes. Under the Act, certain protocols for conciliation sessions were mandated. Through the enactment of The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which established the National Legal Services Authority as a Central Authority with the Chief Justice of India as its Patron-in-Chief. The Central Authority has been vested with duties to perform, inter alia, to encourage the settlement of disputes by way of negotiations, arbitration and conciliation and mediation.

Further, the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 was amended in 1999 by the Indian Parliament through the CPC Amendment Act of 1999, which allowed for the referral of court proceedings to alternative dispute resolution (ADR), including mediation. Effective July 1, 2002, the Amendment was implemented.[1] The amendment was also made in Order-X rules-1A, 1B and 1C of the 1C.[2] Further, Justice Malimath Committee recommended that it should be made obligatory for the court to refer the dispute, after the issues are framed for the settlement either by way of arbitration, Conciliation, mediation or judicial settlement or through Lok Adalat (Singh: 2013). The another step in this direction was the enactment of Arbitration and Conciliation Act in 1996 by our parliament, making elaborate provisions for conciliation of disputes arising out of legal relationship, whether contractual or not, and to all proceedings relating thereto. The most recently passed Consumer Protection Act, 2019[3] also contains the provisions for settlement of dispute outside court. The Act specifically lists mediation as the preferable option for resolving consumer disputes prior to going to court.[4]

CHALLENGES IN COURT BASED DISPUTE RESOLUTION SYSTEM

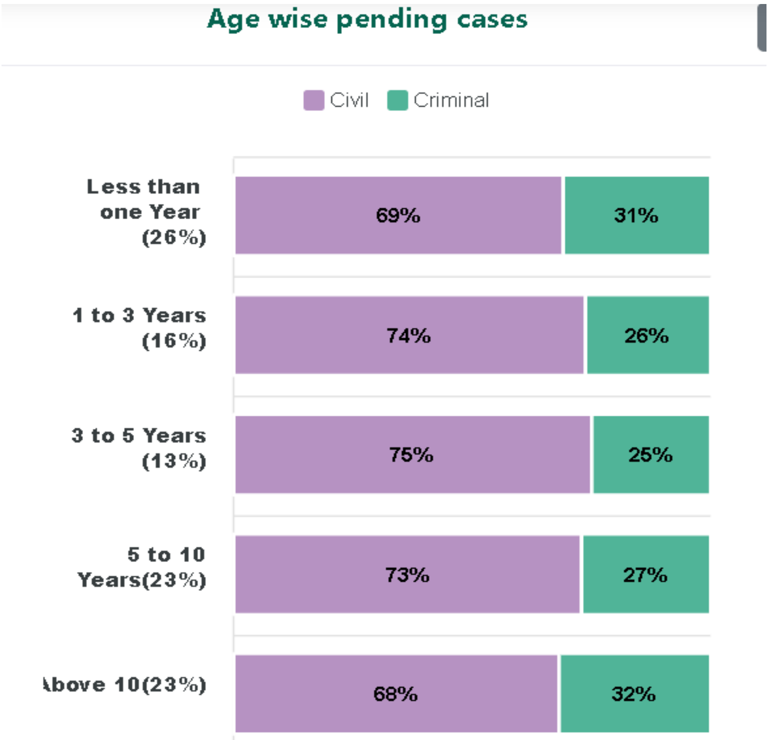
Backlog of Cases: The enormous backlog of cases in several courts is one of the most important problems. Justice is delayed as a result, and plaintiffs may have to wait years for their claims to be settled, which may be frustrating and burdensome. Nearly 62,000 of cases pending in high courts are over 30 years old.[5]



The given data shows that, more than 60 lakh cases are pending before the higher judicairy.[6] The enormous backlog of cases in several courts is one of the most important problems. Justice is delayed as a result, and plaintiffs may have to wait years for their claims to be settled, which may be frustrating andburdensome. Further, the costs associated with attorney fees, court charges, filing fees, and other expenditures can quickly build up throughout legal processes, making them unaffordable. The financial strain may completely discourage someone from pursuing justice.

i. **Based on Win-Loose Mode:** When a dispute is resolved in court, one party usually wins at the expense of the other, creating a hostile and competitive atmosphere. The emphasis on winning in a courtroom context frequently obscures the possibility of cooperation and reconciliation, which can worsen strained relationships and reduce the chance of a more comprehensive solution that takes into account the interests of all parties. Gandhian ideas imply that, even in the practice of law, the real goal should be to promote compromise and reconciliation in order to promote not only legal settlement but also greater community peace, which is sometimes lost in win-lose court decisions (Buresh: nd).

ii. **Time-consuming:** It may take a long time for a court matter to be resolved. The average waiting time, both in civil and criminal subordinated courts, can be extended to 10-25 years. The effective judicial system requires not only that just results be reached but that they be reached swiftly. However, the currently available infrastructure of the courts in India is not adequate to settle the growing litigation within reasonable time (Sukkar: 2022, p.18).



iii. **High Costs:** The costs associated with attorney fees, court charges, filing fees, and other expenditures can quickly build up throughout legal processes, making them unaffordable. The uncompensated financial strain may completely discourage weaker sections from pursuing justice. Miscellaneous expenses like extra fees to legal aid attorneys, transportation costs to the court, copying, and similar services, or small favours to prison officials (Chadha: 1983). It is possible that services provided to recipients of free legal assistance are not always provided.

iv. **Complexity of Procedures:** Court-based conflict resolution involves legal procedures that can be difficult to understand and traverse. This intricacy may cause litigants to get confused, especially if they are not represented by counsel, which might lead to unjust results. The technicalities of Civil Procedure Code with its tiring and complex orders and rules read with section becomes next to impossible for the common man either to draft or to follow. There are several sections[7], orders[8] and rules in the 1908 Code of Civil Procedure (now BNSS). Orders and regulations offer comprehensive guidelines pertaining to the procedures outlined in the sections. The same is the case with Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (Now Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023). Rule of Exclusion of Oral by documentary, primary and secondary evidence, examination and cross examination etc. make the parties exhaust in dealing with the litigations.

THE MOVE TO THE MEDIATION ACT, 2023

Pointing out the advantage of mediation, the Supreme Court observed that there is always a difference between winning a case and seeking a solution. Via mediation, the parties will become partners in the solution rather than partners in problems. The beauty of settlement through mediation is that it ensures a just solution to the satisfaction of parties and acceptable to all the parties to dispute, thereby achieving a win-win situation.[9] In their monumental comparative work on civil justice systems, Mario Cappelletti and Bryant Garth point out that the emergence of the right of access to justice as "the most basic human right" was in recognition of the fact that possession of rights without effective mechanisms for their vindication would be meaningless (Capelletti & Garth: 1978).

Kinds of Mediation

Mediation refers to a procedure wherein parties try to resolve their disagreement amicably with the help of a third party known as a mediator, who is normally not authorized to impose a settlement upon the parties to the dispute; this process may also be known as pre-litigation mediation, online mediation, community mediation, conciliation, or another term of similar import.[10] The nature of mediation can be classified as below:

a) **Facilitative Mediation:** Serving as an impartial intermediary, the mediator assists the parties in identifying problems, discussing possibilities, and coming to a mutually agreeable conclusion. In this kind of mediation, the mediator doesn't make recommendations or opinions. In this method, the neutral forum/persons serves more as a referee or advisor to the parties, to encourage discussion, dialogue, and settlement (Myneni: 2019). In this, a mediator who facilitates communication between parties assists in understanding one another's viewpoints, elucidating areas of disagreement (like maintenance duties or cost sharing), and generating potential solutions (like fixing the current fence, replacing it, or deciding on new boundaries). Despite mediators' roles being skewed towards facilitation, the mediation envisioned by the TDA is not strictly modelled on the mediation styles described above, but is rather a hybrid of the facilitative and settlement styles. This is premised on the fact that while facilitative mediation generally (Mogapaesi: 2023).

b) **Evaluative Mediation:** In this type of mediation, the mediator uses their legal knowledge to offer comments and assessments on the advantages and disadvantages of each party's case. This can promote settlement by assisting parties in convincing them of possible consequences of litigation. In Evaluative

ADR including, the lawyers and litigants present their version of a particular case and receive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their claims and argument (Myneni: 2019). Based on the facts offered, an evaluative mediator—possibly a retired judge or attorney with appropriate experience—might determine the likelihood of a successful outcome in court.

c) **Restructuring Mediation:** This puts more of an emphasis on enabling the parties to strengthen their relationships and communication skills than it does on coming to a precise agreement. The intention is to turn the disagreement into a chance for development and comprehension. It aims to enhance the family's future capacity for positive interaction and communication.

d) **Arbitration**- If mediation doesn't work, the mediator steps in as an arbitrator and renders a legally enforceable ruling. When a commercial dispute between two companies or corporations arise, the arbitrator initially tries to settle the dispute by using mediation agreement, the same person serves as an arbitrator and renders a definitive judgment on the matter.

SALIENT FEATURES OF MEDIATION ACT, 2023

Provisions regarding mediation were rather wide in the 1996 Act. The implementation of a specialized legislation enables the development of more precise and extensive laws that are customized to the particular characteristics of mediation. The Act has broadly defined mediation covering all the disputes whether online or offline. In India, the Mediation Act, 2023[11], brings in a number of significant provisions intended to advance mediation as the go-to process for resolving disputes. Important characteristics of the Act consist of the followings-

a. **Pre-Litigation Mediation**-Pre-litigation mediation is one that occurs before the official initiation of legal action under the Mediation Act. In order to resolve conflicts in time, cost-effective, and friendly way, mediation is usually encouraged or required under the Mediation Act. The main objective is to settle conflicts without going to law. In addition to helping to preserve relationships between parties, this can save time and resources.[12]

b. **Online Mediation:** - Online mediation is included by the Mediation Act 2023 as part of its framework for resolving conflicts. This is in line with the primary goal of the Act, which is to settle disputes out of court in order to maintain relationships and save time and money.[13] The Mediation Act 2023 permits parties to participate in online mediation from a distance by utilizing digital tools and platforms. This method offers accessibility and flexibility, allowing people who might be geographically separated or have other limitations to actively engage in the mediation process. The Act specifies the privacy, security, and equity requirements that must be met in order for online mediation to be just as trustworthy and successful as in-person mediation.[14] In such cases, the issues of jurisdiction will not come in the way for deciding the dispute,[15] whereas in case of other dispute of civil nature the place of suing or jurisdiction plays a pivotal role in determining the forum.[16]

c. **Legal Recognition and Enforceability of Mediated Settlements**: The Act grants mediated settlements legal recognition and enforceable status as court orders. A mediated settlement agreement that arises from mediation and is signed by the parties and verified by the mediator is final, binding on the parties and anybody making a claim under them, and enforceable in accordance with sub-section (2) of the Act.[17]

d. **Impartiality of Mediators:** The Act attempts to guarantee impartiality in the mediation process by outlining the ethical obligations and educational requirements of mediators. This increases the system's confidence and sense of trust Section 10 of the Mediation Act, 2023 deals with the independence and impartiality of mediators, including conflict of interest and disclosure.

e. **Attorney-Client Privilege**: If attorneys are present during mediation, then attorney-client privilege may apply to the material that is conveyed. This legal protection would be violated by disclosing this information. In this regard the rule of confidentiality as given in Bhartiya Sakshaya Adhiniyam, 2023 would apply which makes the provisions for non-disclosure of communication of professional nature.[18] No person shall be required to reveal to the Court any private correspondence that has occurred between him and his legal counsel, unless he presents himself as a witness, in which case he may be required to divulge any communications that seem to the Court to be relevant to the explanation of any testimony he has provided, but no other communications.[19] Ethical Duties: It is the mediators' professional and ethical duty to protect the mediation process's confidentiality. Information disclosure would be a violation of this duty and may lead to disciplinary action.

f. **Organized Mediation Process:** The Act offers an organized framework for mediation, detailing the steps required and the duties of the parties and mediator, while nevertheless permitting flexibility. This contributes to a just and effective procedure.

g. **Protection against baseless claims:** By establishing procedures for handling such situations and guarding against improper use of the mediation process, the Act seeks to deter baseless claims. Further, in any case in which the mediated settlement agreement is arrived at between the parties and is sought to be challenged by either of the parties, such party may file an application before the court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction.[20]

h. **Institutionalization of Mediation:** In order to further institutionalize mediation as a widely used method of resolving disputes, the Act supports the creation of mediation centres as well as the education and certification of mediators.[21]

It is an entity or organization recognized by the Council that facilitates mediation under this Act and its rules and regulations; or an Authority established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987; or a mediation centre attached to a court; or any other entity as may be notified by the Central Government.[22]

i. **Time bound disposal of dispute:** The Act makes the provisions for disposal of dispute in maximum period of one hundred and twenty days which is further extendable to sixty more days.[23] It is however submitted that the period given at the first instance is sufficient i.e 120 days period was sufficient and there was no need to give more time enable the forum to dispose of the dispute in minimum time period.

j. **Community based mediation:** Section 43 of the Act makes the provisions for the process of community mediation, parties with divergent interests can come to an amicable agreement on how to handle their differences. The goal of the Mediation Act 2023 is to encourage community mediation by giving mediators a legal framework within which to guide productive discussions. The Act calls for the establishment of community mediation centers to offer parties to conflicts as well as mediators support and training. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to create mutually beneficial and long-lasting solutions by increasing mutual respect, understanding, and trust between the parties. Building peaceful communities requires the use of community mediation because it fosters a culture of cooperation and conflict resolution.[24]

k. **Provisions for fund and its utilization:** generally some policies fail because of scarcity of fund. The enforcement agency makes law/rules but they forget to make provisions for the fund. But the Mediation Act, 2023 not only makes the provisions for fund but also for its accountability. The Fund will be used to pay for the salaries and other benefits of the members, officers, chief executive officer, and staff, as well as the Council's costs, which will include costs related to the use of its authority and the performance of its obligations under this Act.[25]

The Council is responsible for keeping accurate books and other pertinent documents, as well as for creating an annual statement of accounts that includes the balance sheet etc.[26]

CONCLUSION

In India, panchayats are traditional grassroots local governance structures where elders in the community mediate conflicts. Keeping social peace and reaching an agreement were the key concerns here. In order to reach agreements that satisfied all parties, decisions were made based on local norms and reality. With the passage of time, many disagreements started to shift toward formal courts as a result of the colonial legal systems and the state's ongoing growth. Courts promise impartiality and a rule-based order by providing a defined legal framework with rules and procedures. Initially, people may have turned to courts in search of more formal and organized justice. They frequently did so because they were seeking conclusive answers that panchayats might not be able to offer, particularly in complicated matters. With time, the judicial system's shortcomings were revealed. Court cases may be protracted, costly, and contentious, which frequently causes damaged relationships rather than reconciliation. People seeking justice might become alienated from the judicial system due to its impersonality and complexity, particularly those who live in rural regions with limited access to legal services.

A growing number of people are becoming interested in panchayats and other types of Alternative Dispute Resolution because of the difficulties with regular courts. These methods are thought to be quicker, more affordable, and more inclusive. Negotiations, community service, and finding ways to bring social peace back are emphasized. This comeback is predicated on the understanding that justice encompasses more than just what is morally correct. Now, we can say with confidence that our indigenous system of dispute resolution was much better than the system imposed by the Britishers and the system which is being followed by most of the countries and western nations. They may decide the case with the help of courts, but may not do justice to both the parties to the best of their satisfaction. Now, it is high time to make amendment in almost every law to encompass the essence of dispute resolution by amicable means like mediation. Therefore, is urged that, this indigenous method of dispute resolution must be adopted in almost as many kinds of disputes/cases as are possible.

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ENDNOTES

1. Section -89, Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
2. Salem Bar Assn (1) vs UOI, (2003) 1 SSC, 49. Was challenged as there were no rules under CPC, Salem Bar Ass (II) vs UOI, (2005), 6 SSC 344. Rules were adopted as per the committee report.
3. Mediation under Chapter V of Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
4. Section- 74-81 of Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
5. Times of India (2024), "Nearly 62,000 of cases pending in high courts are over 30 years old", September 07 , New Delhi.
6. Available on-National Judicial Data Grid.- https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/hcnjdg_v2/. Visited on-13-10-2024.
7. The Code of Civil Procedure contains-158 sections.
8. The Code of Civil Procedure contains-51 Orders. Each order contains several rules. Order XXI is largest order consisting of 106 rules.
9. Vikram Bakshi v. Sonia Khosla; 2014 (6) SCALE 514.
10. See Section 3(h) of Mediation Act 2023
11. The preamble of the Act states that it is " An Act to promote and facilitate mediation, especially institutional mediation, for resolution of disputes, commercial or otherwise, enforce mediated settlement agreements, provide for a body for registration of mediators, to encourage community mediation and to make online mediation as acceptable and cost effective process and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."
12. Section-5 of Mediation Act provide that pre-litigation mediation in matters of commercial disputes of Specified Value shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 (4 of 2016), and the rules made thereunder.

(2) The provisions of sub-section (1) shall be applicable to the tribunals notified by the Central Government or a State Government, (3) For the purposes of sub-sections (1) and (2), unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties, a mediator:

(i) registered with the Council; or (ii) empanelled by a court-annexed mediation centre; or

(iii) empanelled by an Authority constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 ; or

(iv) Empanelled by a mediation service provider

(4) For conducting pre-litigation mediation under clauses (ii) and (iii) of sub-section (3), a party may request any person designated for this purpose by the High Courts, or an Authority constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

(5) The mediation centre and an Authority constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, shall maintain a panel of mediators for the purposes of pre-litigation mediation.

(6) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-sections (1) and (2) and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (59 of 1988), when an application for compensation arising out of an accident is made before the Claims Tribunal, if the settlement as provided for in section 149 of that Act is not arrived at between the parties, the Claims Tribunal shall refer the parties for mediation to a mediator or mediation service provider under this Act.

(7) Where the parties arrive at an agreement under sub-section (6), it shall be placed before the Claims Tribunal for its consideration.

13. See Chapter-VII and Section- 30. of Mediation Act, 2023
14. Section 3 (q) "Online Mediation" means online mediation referred to in section 30 of the Act.
15. Provided to section-13 of the Act provides that on the mutual consent of the parties, mediation may be conducted at any place outside the territorial jurisdiction of the court or tribunal, or by way of online mediation.
16. See Section15-25 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
17. See Section-27(1) of Mediation Act, 2023
18. See Section-132. Bhartiya Sakshaya Adhiniyam 2023 - No advocate, shall at any time be permitted, to disclose any communication made to him in the course provided that nothing in this section shall protect from disclosure of—

(a) any such communication made in furtherance of any illegal purpose; (b) any fact observed by any advocate, in the course of his service as such, showing that any crime or fraud has been committed since the commencement of his service.

19. See 134. Bhartiya Sakshaya Adhiniyam, 2023.
20. under Section 28 of the Mediation Act, 2023.
21. Section 3(f) Mediation Act, 2023- "institutional mediation" means mediation conducted under the aegis of a mediation service provider
22. Chapter-IX, and section 40 of Mediation Act, 2023 provides the Definition of Mediation service provider.
23. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, mediation under this Act shall be completed within a period of one hundred and twenty days from the date fixed for the first appearance before the mediator.

(2) The period for mediation mentioned under sub-section (1) may be extended for a further period as agreed by the parties, but not exceeding sixty days.

24. Section-43 Mediation Act, 2023 (1) Any dispute likely to affect peace, harmony and tranquillity amongst the residents or families of any area or locality may be settled through community mediation with prior mutual consent of the parties to the dispute…."
25. See Section 45 Mediation Act 2023
26. Section-46(1) Mediation Act, 2023-The Council shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts, including the balance sheet, in such form and manner as may be prescribed in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India…..".

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OVERCROWDING IN INDIAN PRISON: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND MEASURES

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Abstract

Overcrowding in prison has emerged as serious humanitarian problem, especially in India. President of India has also expressed concern over the issue. This makes an urgent imperative to examine legal and systemic causes, consequences on inmates and jails and adequacy of enforcement of laws and measures adopted so far. Thus, the present paper intends to analyse these aspects and suggest measures to reduce the overcrowding. Based on secondary sources of data, the paper finds that delays in trials, lack of adequate jail infrastructure and personnel strength and enforcement of laws. As such, fast trials, improvement in infrastructure, involvement of community as well as fresh judicial and prison reforms are suggestible.

Keywords: Overcrowding, Problems, Trials, Bail, Judicial Reforms, Prison Reforms, India

INTRODUCTION

Overcrowding is a menace in Indian prisons. The official capacity of prisons and their occupancy rate are commonly used to describe overcrowding. Strict sentence guidelines and the extreme use of pre-trial confinement are the two key contributing reasons. The administration of criminal justice has also been a cause of prison congestion more than that of rise in crime. It's first adverse impact is on inmates' fundamental necessities, space, food, and medical attention.

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Overcrowding in prisons is a worldwide phenomenon. The International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS) reports that the occupancy rate exceeds 110% in more than two-thirds of nations. Over one-fifth of the capacity is exceeded, with an average global occupancy rate of 122%. The countries like Haiti, the Philippines, and Congo experience occupancy levels ranging from 450 to 600 percent (Global Prison Trends, 2023). The problem is more severe in poor countries.

Overcrowding in prisons results in a number of major issues for prison administration. It not only creates security issues but also puts a great deal of burden on necessary services, poses major health risks, and interferes with efforts to rehabilitate and reform the criminal justice system. It becomes impossible to separate hardcore criminals from less serious offenders in an overcrowded prison.

Thus, the present study aims to provide a detailed description of prison overcrowding in India, its causes and the problems associated to it. Thus, it analyses the data on prison, underlines the causes, examine the measures to reduce the overcrowding and suggest measures.

BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As documented in P. Chhimpa's (2020), overcrowding among undertrial prisoners is a major concern. The 2015 National Jail Census reveals a staggering 52% of prison inmates expecting trial. As reported in The Hindustan Times (June 27, 2006), this high-security facility Tihar jail houses approx 13,000 inmates compared to a capacity of 6,200. Another doctoral research by P. D. Haveripeth (2004) sheds light on the multi-layered nature of the issue. It recognized significant delays in case disposal for undertrial prisoners as a major attribute of overcrowding. Moreover, it emphasized on dissatisfaction among inmates regarding insufficient toilet and bathing amenities in certain prisons and instances where prisons held double their proposed capacity. These findings highlight the need for focusing both systemic interruptions in the legal system and the physical restrictions of penal infrastructure. Another study observes the relation between violence in prison and institutional aspects in the Swiss pre-trial prison. The study found that violence in prison increased with increase in overcrowding and recidivism rates. Reducing overcrowding and recidivism is critical for creating safe prison settings (Baggio et al, 2019). Overcrowding in prisons of Ghana has harmfully impacted the health and well-being of prisoners and staffs. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue, with the DG of Ghana Prisons blaming it for the poor conditions. The study contributes to the partial knowledge of prison research in Ghana and offers policy and research implications (Baffour et al, 2023).

STATE OF OVERCROWDING IN INDIA

Earlier, the district prisons were more overcrowded, but for 2022 data, the highest overcrowding is in Central Jails, with Delhi at the top of the list. The top three states with high occupancy rates are:

- Delhi, with the maximum number of Central Jails (14) in the country, and highest in terms of overcrowding/ occupancy rate (184.5%) for the year 2022. Reason being, the no. of convicted prisoners has increased in 2022 by 8.6% from 2021, and were lodged in Central Jails, which is highest in Delhi.
- Uttarakhand came to second in terms of overcrowding as it has reported the highest female occupancy rate (183.3%), and with no separate women jails as on Dec, 2022.
- UP with (179.9%) is third in the list of overcrowding in the country, reason being the no. of undertrials has increased by 1.7% in 2022 and the highest no. of them is lodged in District jails (52.1%) and UP has highest number of District jails (64).
- According to the report by Prison Statistics India, 2022, with the surge in the number of Women prisoners, there are still 20 states/UTs which have no separate Women Prisons as on 31st Dec. 22. Out of 5,73,220 prisoners, 5,49,351 are male prisoners, 23,772 are female prisoners and 97 are transgenders (PSI, 2022).

The report covers a five-year period of prison statistics that demonstrate the no. of prisons, the no. of inmates, and current state of overcrowding in Indian prisons. According to the data, the number of inmates in India is rising annually while the number of prisons in the country is declining. This could possibly be one of the several causes of the congestion in prisons in India. The figure mentioned below illustrates the reality:

Table 1: Statistics of Prison in India

YEAR	*No. Of Prisons*	*Actual Capacity of Prisons*	*No. of Prisoners*	*Occupancy Rate*
2018	1,341	3,97,138	4,66,802	117.5%
2019	1,351	4,00,934	4,81,387	120.1%
2020	1,306	4,14,033	4,88,511	118%
2021	1,319	4,25,609	5,54,034	130.2%
2022	1,330	4,36,266	5,73,220	131.4%

(Source: Prison Statistics of India)

The total number of prisons at National level has subsequently decreased from 1,341 in 2018 to 1,330 till the end of 2022, which shows the decrease of 0.82%. The data shows that the number of prisons is decreasing by last 5 years, yet the actual capacity have increased for the prisoners with few modifications made within the prisons. Although, after increase in the capacity for prisoners, the number of prisoners is more than the actual capacity, with 131.4% for the year 2022, which is comparatively 13.9% more than the year 2018.

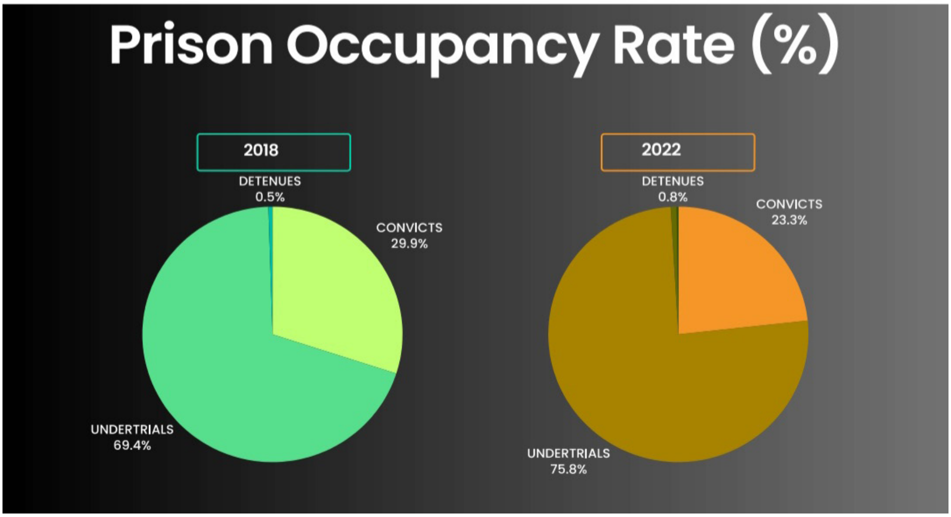
Table 2: Number of Kinds of Prisoners

Year	*Convicts*	*Undertrials*	*Detenues*	*No. of Other Inmates*	*Total No. of Prisoners*
2018	1,39,656	3,24,141	2,384	621	4,66,802
2019	1,44,567	3,32,916	3,223	681	4,81,387
2020	1,12,589	3,71,848	3,590	484	4,88,511
2021	1,22,852	4,27,165	3,470	547	5,54,034
2022	1,33,415	4,34,302	4,324	1,179	5,73,220

(Source: Prison Statistics India)

It demonstrates the different categories of prisoners to be present in various prisons of India. This data will clearly depict the actual increased population from a specific type of prisoners in the Country, which will help in understanding the basic reason for the increased percent of overcrowding in Indian prisons. Number of prisoners lodged in several prisons has increased from 4,66,802 in 2018 to 5,73,220 in 2022 having increased by 22.79%.

Fig. 1: Showing comparison between no. of different prisoners in Indian Prison



The figure 1 reveals that the total number of undertrials in 2018 were 3,24,141 as compared to 4,34,302 in 2022, which is increased by 33.98%. The total numbers of convicts in 2018 were 1,39,656 and in 2022 it is 1,33,415, which shows the decrease in numbers of convicts by 4.67%.

OPINION OF SUPREME COURT

The causes and consequences of prison overcrowding in India have been extensively addressed by the Supreme Court through its various judgments. In the Hussainara Khatoon case, the Court established the right to a speedy trial as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Emphasizing the importance of free legal aid for poor prisoners, the Court laid down conditions for releasing accused individuals on personal bond, considering factors such as residence, employment, family ties, reputation, mental condition, and criminal history. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Supreme Court, in a judgment dated March 23rd, 2020, mandated each State/UT to form a High-Powered Committee. This committee, comprising key figures like the Chairman of the State Legal Services Committee, Principal Secretary (Home/Prison), and Director-General of Prisons, was granted discretion to decide which category of prisoners should be released on bail or parole based on aspects like the nature and severity of the offense. In the Gautam Navalkha v. National Investigation Agency case, the Court talked about the problem of prison overcrowding by encouraging house arrest as a solution. The Supreme Court appointed Justice Amitava Roy's (Retd.) Committee to mention vital prison reforms. These reforms comprised encouraging for speedy trials, keeping a attainable lawyer-to-prisoner ratio, establishing special courts for pending cases of petty offenses, releasing convicts of petty offenses on Personal Recognizance bonds (PR Bonds), discouraging adjournments, encouraging plea bargaining, providing free legal aid and education to prisoners, evolving vocational skills for employability after release, and advocating fines over imprisonment wherever likely.

CAUSES OF OVERCROWDING

Pre-Trial Detention

The overdoing of pre-trial detention remains a foremost factor, highlighted by reports like 'Global Prison Trends.' Initiatives like special parole could also not reduce the crowd viz. Uttar Pradesh offered responsive trials but without desired result. Disturbingly, India looks to improve the prison's capacity instead of faster trials.

Legal Factors

- India has tough laws and rigorous sentencing policies, for certain offenses. The lack of flexibility in sentencing options might result in an irregular sum of individuals being imprisoned for prolonged periods, without considering substitute, and rehabilitative measures.
- Bail system of India faces challenges, leading to overcrowding of prisons due to postponements and insufficiencies in processing bail applications, resulting in prolonged pre-trial detention.

Socio-Economic Factors

Economically deprived individuals often turn towards criminal acts due to inadequate education and employment opportunities, intensified by scarcity and socio-economic challenges (Criminal Justice Handbook Series, United Nations, 2013). Such category of people are destined to imprisonment as they cannot afford to bear the cost of legal process even in the petty offences/

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Many prisons in India suffer from overcrowding due to inadequate infrastructure. Thus, overcrowding not only compromises the well-being of prisoners but also affects the overall working of the penal system.

Delayed disposal of cases and huge backlog of cases cause increase in pre-trial prisoners. It is due to insufficient judges and judicial staff. Limited use of E- courts and investigative delays are important causes.

CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON OVERCROWDING

a) Poor health care is a menace in overcrowded prisons. The Prisons Act, 1894, mandates that every prisoner's health should be checked at the time of entry, but it is not done. Common diseases found in prisons include anaemia, tuberculosis, diarrhoea, and HIV AIDS and for recent data, COVID was the one most prevalent disease spread between the year 2020- 21 (Khamari,2021). The superior courts also addressed the issue. A The three-judge panel of Supreme Court consisting of L. Nageswara Rao, Surya Kant, and CJ NV Ramana has issued instructions aimed at preventing the spread of coronavirus in India's overcrowded jails. The Court stated, *"Reduction of impact of Covid-19 requires this Court to effectively calibrate concerns of criminal justice system, health hazards and rights of the accused. From limiting arrests to taking care of Covid-19 Patients, there is a requirement for effective management of pandemic from within the prison walls so as to defeat this deadly virus."*

b) Disparities in treatment of prisoners in jails also hampers the rights of prisoners. Neier et al (1991) rightly observes, "Though the prisons may be supposed as the levelling institutions in the world where some different variables that could create/develop the vital effects on the conditions of confinement of the criminal records and their inmates and also their Behaviour in prison, other factors play an important part in many countries." Human Rights Watch observes that nations like India and Pakistan have a "rigid" class structure in the jails. As per the statement, the prisoners belonging to the upper and middle classes are granted exceptional benefits under this system, irrespective of the offenses they have committed or their behaviour while imprisoned.
c) In India, legal aid for imprisoned individuals is limited to trial times only. The lack of efficient lawyers in legal aid panels and suggestions to speed up trial processes are also serious concerns. Lok Adalat involvement, constant monitoring of prisons, and law reform should be considered as important step. A study in Central Prison, Bangalore, found that many women in Indian prisons are illiterate, have no financial resources, and have no knowledge about legal procedures (Kashyap, 2022).

DISCUSSION

The overcrowding of Indian prisons is a complicated issue with broad consequences. Due to the nation's complex legal structure and rapidly expanding population, India has seen a sharp rise in the number of people entering the criminal justice system. As a result, the number of inmates in the country's prison systems has increased beyond all expectations, surpassing their allocated capacity and putting the system's capacity for change to the limit.

The backlog in court hearings coupled with increased caseloads due to the violations of restrictions and emergency measures, has significantly contributed to the surge in inmate populations. As of 2023, the situation in India aligns with global trends, as highlighted in "Global Prison Trend, 2023." Over 120 countries, including India, grapple with occupancy rates surpassing prison system capacity. Africa, notably the Republic of Congo, exhibits extreme prison overcrowding, with over 1,300 individuals housed in two main prisons at levels exceeding 600 percent. Haiti faces an occupancy rate of 401%, impacting approximately 11,500 people and drawing condemnation from the United Nations due to deplorable and sometimes fatal conditions. Uganda's prison system, with an occupancy level of 374%, houses a population of 74,900 as of March 2023. This alarming scenario calls for urgent attention and comprehensive measures to address the root causes and consequences of prison overcrowding in India and globally (Global Prison Trends, 2023).

The fluctuations in prison population numbers in India over the past two years can be attributed partly to the COVID-19 pandemic. This impact is twofold: first, there have been large-scale exceptional release measures aimed at decongesting prisons, and second, the nature of offenses committed has undergone changes. Additionally, the judicial system has experienced a slowdown, prompting efforts to clear court backlogs. Despite being over two years into the pandemic, there is no conclusive evidence of an overall reduction in the global prison population. Throughout the pandemic, certain countries, including India, witnessed lower imprisonment rates due to disruptions in normal court operations, leading to fewer new admissions to prisons.

This is true despite the fact that the nation added 11 prisons since 2021 and launched a campaign in July of last year to find undertrial inmates suitable for release. More than three out of every four prisoners are awaiting trial, which is a continuation of a pattern that began in prior years. In 2020, three out of every four inmates in Indian jails were awaiting trial, marking the greatest percentage of inmates awaiting trial in recent memory. Similar to this, the majority of undertrials are part of the Other Backward Classes (OBC), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST), among other oppressed caste groups (Paliath, 2020). A report published by IndiaSpend in September 2020, suggests the high percentage of undertrials from the SC, ST, and OBC populations. Additionally, in 2022, 119 convicts committed suicide, leading to 20.8 deaths per 100,000 prisoners. This is 67% more than the 12.4 suicides per 100,000 people in India.

Furthermore, analysing global prison demographics reveals a striking surge in female incarceration, outpacing the 22% increase in male prison populations from 2000 to 2022. Notably, the female prison population in India and other nations soared by nearly 60%, with specific countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, Cambodia, and Indonesia experiencing substantial spikes. Rooted in poverty, research highlights economic necessity as a driving force behind women's imprisonment for minor, petty crimes. Additionally, the inability to secure legal representation or afford bail amplifies the likelihood of pre-trial detention or conviction, as exemplified by a Mexican study revealing that 10% of women detained face charges solely due to financial constraints, not posing a threat to society (Global Prison Trends, 2023).

Emergency measures worldwide, including those in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, have fallen short in effectively addressing the problem. The overuse of pre-trial detention, often automatically applied for certain offenses, contributes significantly to this challenge, as indicated by the observed trends in Releases in response to COVID-19 (Mahaseth et al, 2023). The Global Prison Trends 2022 report by Penal Reform International and the Thailand Institute of Justice underscores the gravity of the situation. Despite widespread calls to reduce prison populations during the two-year span of the pandemic, the global prison population has, alarmingly, reached an all-time high. Disturbingly, instead of a decline in prison numbers, there is a notable trend among governments, including India, to expand prison capacity, as evidenced by a significant growth in the global prison estate over the past year. In the specific context of India, the state of Uttar Pradesh has responded to escalating prison populations by implementing special parole for 2,500 individuals. This measure, while aiming to alleviate overcrowding, underscores the persistent challenge faced by the Indian prison system. Notably, recent large-scale releases and pardons in the country are primarily reactive measures to the pandemic, demonstrating the urgent need for comprehensive, sustainable solutions to address the root causes of prison overcrowding in India.

GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES

I. Undertrials Review Committees (UTRCs): To speed up the judicial process and evaluate the cases of prisoners pending trial, the government formed UTRCs. This contributes to the declining number of prisoners awaiting trial (Khanna,2023).

II. Free Legal Aid & Awareness: Trials can be efficient and custodial period can be reduced through refining access to legal aid and educating prisoners about their legal rights, particularly those from economically weaker background.

III. Use of Technology in Judiciary Procedures: The government has been exploring ways to utilize technology such as video conferencing for court sessions for improving the judicial system. This might reduce the no. of pending cases to reduce prison overcrowding.

IV. Reforming the Bail System: In an effort to lessen the burden on prisons, efforts have been taken to ensure that non-violent offenders are not excessively kept in custody.

V. Budget Allocation, 2023: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced financial support for imprisoned poor individuals unable to afford penalties and bail. This follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of High Courts to prioritize cases related to undertrial prisoners and release them based on human sensitivities (Budget,2023). In the Union Budget for 2023–2024, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been given more than Rs 1.96 lakh crore. This amount is approximately 6% more than the Rs 1.85 lakh crore budgetary allotment for 2022–2023 (Manral, 2023).

COUNTRIES WITH BEST PRACTICES

The United States deal with one of the highest global detention rates, leading to prevalent overcrowding in its prisons. Some states have implemented pioneering measures, such as reform in sentencing, early release programmes, and prolonged parole and probation, to address the issue. Brazil faces similar challenges, tackling overcrowding through alternative sentencing, a greater number of prison construction, and increased use of probation and parole. In India, the emphasis is on fast-track courts, free legal aid, and prison reforms to reduce overcrowding, while the Philippines stresses on initiatives to loosen overpopulation in Prison, community-based rehabilitation, and legal reforms. South Africa aims to ease overcrowding by decriminalizing petty offenses, implementing parole and early release programs, and encouraging alternatives to imprisonment. Thailand, struggling with drug-related charges, implements an approach of drug policy reforms, prison infrastructure developments, and surge of probation and parole programs. Each country's approach shows its specific judicial system, cultural setting, and existing resources in the current global effort to address overcrowding of prisons.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Even after the continuous efforts made by the Government of India, the lack of honest implementation of directives and orders by previous committees highlights the need for efficient prison staff to adhere to jail manual norms. It shows the need that State-level committees should conduct surveys and data to ensure compatibility and smooth administration of prisons. For effective implementation of free legal aids and awareness among prisoners for their rights, active members in criminal Justice System are required to make it a ground reality instead of a just declared policies. Ultimately, a holistic and adaptive strategy, taking into account legal, social, and infrastructure aspects, will contribute to improving prison overcrowding in India.

Thus, India requires a multi-layered approach. Strengthening fast-track courts and additional effort in this field could quicken the trial process, reducing duration of pre-trial detention. Further improving legal aid and awareness initiatives is crucial to ensure fair depiction and prevent pointless delays. There is a need of continuous efforts in prison reforms, like infrastructure developments and health care facilities including focus on the mental wellbeing of the offenders, can improve living environments and helps in rehabilitation. The services of NGOs should be taken to provide vocational training and educational programs, reducing recidivism rates. The involvement of private sector and civil society for rehabilitation and generating opportunities for released prisoners to reintegrate into society positively.

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LOCATING TAJIKISTAN IN CHINA'S BRI: IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the engagement of other nations with Central Asian states received more attention and discussion. China's engagement through BRI in the post-Soviet zone, particularly in Tajikistan, coined a new geopolitical dynamics of Beijing's extended outreach in the region. In this backdrop, this article explores China's strategic engagement with Tajikistan within the framework of BRI. Employing the exploratory methods of inquiry draws on empirical evidence the study examines how China's interactions through BRI affect Tajikistan on social-economic and geopolitical grounds. The study's findings reveal that, motivated by strategic ambitions, Beijing uses different means, including soft power, military engagement, and investment, to take Tajikistan into its strategic orbit. This dynamic has contributed to an expansion of Chinese influence within Tajikistan's domestic political sphere, promoting the rise of Sinophilia and deepening the nation's economic and political dependence on China. Consequently, this dependency has restricted the engagement opportunities available to other global powers, limiting their strategic influence in Tajikistan.

Keywords: Belt and Road Imitative, Central Asia, China-Tajikistan, Soft power, Xi Jinping

INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has evolved into a key instrument for China to expand its global influence, primarily through large-scale investments in infrastructure and strategic partnerships. BRI

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serves as a strategic geopolitical framework through which China seeks to enhance global connectivity by establishing an extensive economic and trade corridor across Eurasia, linking China with Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia (Hong et al., 2023). This strategy aligns with China's broader aim of asserting itself as a key player in shaping global trade routes, consistent with theories of state-driven economic expansion that emphasise infrastructure as a tool of influence. By December 2020, a total of 138 countries had officially joined China's BRI, collectively representing 63% of the global population and 40% of the world's GDP (Vadlamannati et al., 2023). While some of these countries have only formally acknowledged the BRI concept and committed to cooperating with China to promote it, the endorsement of the initiative by such a large number of nations significantly enhances its credibility on the global stage.

Building upon this, BRI pursues two strategic goals. First, it seeks to create an alternative continental trade and energy route to reduce reliance on vulnerable maritime chokepoints like the Malacca Strait, enhancing China's trade and energy security. This addresses the "Malacca Dilemma," showcasing China's aim to safeguard against disruptions. Second, the BRI aims to establish a security buffer between Xinjiang and Central Asia to protect China's western provinces from instability and Islamist terrorism (Cai, 2023). This aligns with China's strategy to extend influence and ensure internal stability, reflecting a realist approach to managing regional security threats.

In this backdrop, Tajikistan shares a border with China and works as a land bridge between China and the Middle East. Tajikistan's strategic location has drawn significant attention from Beijing, especially amid concerns that the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan could lead to the spread of Islamic fundamentalism into China's Xinjiang region via the Wakhan Corridor, which shared borders with China and Tajikistan (Kaushiki et al., 2024). Through BRI, China has deepened its influence in Tajikistan, using infrastructure projects to bolster connectivity while securing its western borders from potential instability. China has ensnared many countries in debt through its ambitious and increasingly hegemonic BRI project, with Tajikistan no exception. China's expansionist policies significantly affect Tajikistan's economic, social, and strategic fronts, tightening Beijing's influence over Dushanbe.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The present paper employs an exploratory method of inquiry and utilising empirical evidences from the existing literature, to contribute to the broader discourse. The paper intends to analyse how China uses the BRI as a strategic instrument to strengthen its control over Tajikistan and its socio-economic and geopolitical implications for Tajikistan?

In response to this context, this paper is structured as follows. The first section introduces the overarching theme of the research, establishing the foundation for the subsequent analysis. The second section, *Locating Tajikistan in China's BRI Project*, emphasises Tajikistan's geostrategic significance within the BRI framework, positioning it as a crucial link in China's broader geopolitical agenda. Drawing on empirical evidence, the third section offers an in-depth examination of the socio-economic and geopolitical implications of the BRI for Tajikistan, assessing how these factors shape the country's development trajectory. Finally, the discussion section synthesises the findings, critically engaging with the broader debates surrounding the BRI's impact, offering a nuanced understanding of its multifaceted consequences for Tajikistan.

LOCATING TAJIKISTAN IN THE CHINESE BRI PROJECT

As a growing economy, China has immense potential for foreign investment. As a result, in the first half of 2024, China's GDP touched US$ 18649.00 billion, and its overseas investments and foreign investment surpassed US$ 2.5 trillion during 2005-2024 (China Global Investment Tacker, 2024). Due to geostrategic importance and vast potential of investment, Beijing initiated substantial financial investments into Central Asian states, which were critically reliant on these ventures for their development (Yazdani & Zeng, 2023). Strategically, Central Asia is encircled by major powers such as China, Russia, and India, making it a region of significant geopolitical interest. Its abundant natural resources have earned it the label of the "Second Middle East," underscoring its potential as a critical energy supplier (Karrar & Mostowlansky, 2020). During the Soviet era, the USSR failed to harness this potential, and even post-dissolution, Russia's initial neglect of the region left it economically vulnerable, lacking the investment necessary for stability. This created a power vacuum, making Central Asia a "Global Chessboard" where international actors sought to expand their influence (Karimova, 2023). Utilising this opportunity, China rapidly established its presence, driven by the region's geographical position, resource wealth, and the need to create a security buffer against instability from Afghanistan and China's Xinjiang province.

Against this backdrop, China's early focus on demarcating its boundaries with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (sharing borders of 1,782 km, 858 km, and 414 km, respectively) reflects its apprehension of potential threats from religious extremism affecting the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) (Wang, n.d.). The Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan has heightened Tajikistan's strategic importance to China, as the spillover effects of extremism threaten China's stability in Xinjiang. Consequently, China has increasingly invested in Tajikistan as part of the BRI, leveraging its position to secure energy resources, expand its geopolitical influence, and create a buffer zone, all of which reinforce China's long-term ambition to become a global economic superpower (Rizwan Haider Bukhari et al., 2024). This strategic engagement is not merely opportunistic but reflects a calculated effort to strengthen China's security and economic interests in an increasingly contested region. The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has elevated the strategic importance of Tajikistan for China, due to the potential spillover of Islamic extremism into the politically unstable western XUAR.

This approach aligns with China's broader strategy of ensuring energy security and safeguarding its western borders, consistent with realist theories that prioritise the control of neighbouring regions to enhance national security (Yazdani & Zeng, 2023;Nguyễn et al., 2024). For China, Central Asia, especially Tajikistan, became pivotal for its BRI, "New Silk Road," and "Going Out" strategies, given its geostrategic location and potential for fostering connectivity (Kitade, n.d.). In this process, Tajikistan's engagement with the BRI reflects a strategic alignment with its development goals. Which China to invest in different sectors of Tajik society while directly linking their commercial routes. To follow up on this, for the first time in 2014, a memorandum of understanding with Beijing marked Tajikistan's intent to leverage the BRI for infrastructural and economic growth. The 2016 *National Development Strategy* aligns closely with BRI objectives, signalling a deliberate integration of Tajikistan's development path with China's vision (Yu, 2023). The 2017 strategic partnership established during President Rahmon's visit to China underscores Tajikistan's commitment to utilising the BRI for broader economic cooperation, evidencing a calculated move to advance its long-term growth and stability (Lemon, 2024). China has employed a diverse array of strategic tools (as mentioned in Figure 1) to draw Tajikistan into its economic and geopolitical orbit. China's ambitious BRI has created a significant opportunity for Tajikistan. As an integral part of the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor, which serves as a critical link between China and the Mediterranean, improves Tajikistan's transportation links with other nations and draws foreign direct investment and business prospects from states beyond China.

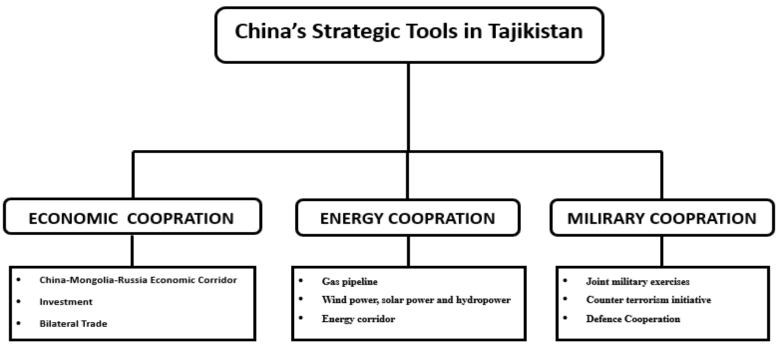

Figure. 1: China's different strategic Tools in Tajikistan

Note: Prepared by authors from different sources

The financial support provided by China, amounting to $435 million between 2017 and 2021(Yu, 2023), exemplifies China's commitment to strengthening its influence in Tajikistan. This influx of capital aligns with China's broader objective of leveraging economic partnerships to solidify its presence in Central Asia. Further, Chinese investments in Tajikistan have increased dramatically, with Chinese foreign direct investment rising from a mere 1.6% in 2007 to 75.8% in 2019, according to the Central Asia Regional Data Review (2019). This surge underscores the centrality of China in Tajikistan's economic development, particularly through the execution of 52 BRI projects (Huang, 2022). Such projects have contributed significantly to key economic growth indicators in Tajikistan, reflecting China's capacity to shape the economic landscape of its partner states. By 2021, approximately 30% of Tajikistan's total investment came from China, further illustrating the depth of this economic entanglement. China's role as Tajikistan's largest trading partner, with trade volumes nearing $1 billion, reinforces its dominant position in the region (Andronova & Qalandarshoev, 2024). This economic partnership, driven by the BRI, not only enhances Tajikistan's growth but also entrenches China's strategic influence, showcasing how economic tools can serve as instruments of geopolitical alignment.

Simultaneously, Chinese enterprises have played a pivotal role in numerous infrastructure projects within Tajikistan. Between 2006 and 2013, Chinese companies invested in construction of 1,700 kilometres of highways and 31 tunnels. Additionally, firms such as Huawei Technologies and ZTE (Zhongxing Telecommunications Equipment) have been actively engaged in modernising Tajikistan's communication infrastructure and banking sectors, contributing to the overall advancement of the country's technological and financial systems. Moreover, made a 22-million-dollar deal with Huawei, and consequently, Dushanbe launched its Safe City program in 2013 (Yau, 2019). Under the Safe City concept, in 2019, the Tajik government declared it would install new Huawei cameras with face recognition for analysing criminals' data, traffic rules violators and missing persons, with the help of artificial intelligence (Umarov, 2020). Interestingly, but expectedly, Huawei was given the whole contract for this massive expansion; no domestic business was engaged (Stryker, 2021). The table below provides an overview of Chinese engagement with Tajikistan in technology sector.

Table 1: China's technological involvement in Tajikistan

Technology	*Internet* *Biometric Database* *Safe City Projects* *Facial recognition*
Foreign Companies Involved	Huawei
Domestic Companies Involved	Government
Data Privacy Legislations	Yes
Known Data Privacy Scandals	No

Note: Prepared by authors from sources Stryker (2021).

The BRI has facilitated China's expanded access to Tajikistan's gold mines, enhanced transportation infrastructure, and a substantial growth in bilateral trade, indicating that Tajikistan is no longer a terra-incognita for Beijing. Furthermore, China's role in Tajikistan has transitioned from that of a trading partner to a security provider, as it has increasingly engaged in the construction of military infrastructure along the Afghan-Tajik border (Bolonina, 2019). Driven by the BRI, several major infrastructure projects have been successfully executed in Tajikistan. In the realm of transportation, the Vahdat-Yavan railway tunnel has emerged as a key hub for international rail links between China, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. Additionally, the completion of the Dushanbe-Chanak Highway has significantly enhanced Tajikistan's transport infrastructure (Changzhi et al., 2024). This infrastructural development is paralleled by substantial Chinese investment in Tajikistan's energy sector, where Beijing has invested over $5.3 billion in Tajikistan's energy sector, including financial assistance for 35 energy projects and direct investments by Chinese companies. This includes funding and construction plans for solar and wind power plants, and cooperation with China National Petroleum Corporation in the oil and gas sector (Daryo, 2024). Demonstrates China's comprehensive approach to shaping Tajikistan's infrastructure, positioning it as a critical node in both regional connectivity and energy security under the BRI framework.

China's expanding presence in Tajikistan has contributed to a rise in Sinophobia among the local population. The implications of this phenomenon are likely to be multifaceted, impacting Tajikistan across economic, social, and strategic dimensions. These complexities will be examined in detail in the subsequent section, where the broader consequences of China's influence will be critically analysed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TAJIKISTAN

China was among the first nations to formally recognise the independence of Central Asian states, swiftly moving to establish diplomatic relations in the aftermath of their sovereignty. This early recognition underscores China's strategic interest in fostering political and economic ties in the region, positioning itself as a key player in Central Asia's post-Soviet geopolitical landscape (Mendez, 2023). The prompt establishment of these relations also reflects China's broader foreign policy objectives of regional stability and influence. In the case of Tajikistan, the onset of a civil war shortly after independence further stunted the progress of an already underdeveloped country, creating an urgent need for external assistance. As Tajikistan sought dependable partners for its development, Russia's weakened post-Soviet economy, coupled with the country's geographical distance from Tajikistan, positioned China as the most viable option for strategic partnership and support (Mandelbaum & Weiffen, 2022). As a result, in the case of limited options China increased outreach through BRI and bilateral initiatives has major implications on Tajikistan. Firstly, through BRI China swiftly initiated monopolistic practices in Tajikistan, including questionable negotiations, tax exemption incentives through bribery, and the exertion of influence to benefit Chinese enterprises (Ibragimova, 2019). This has resulted in Tajik government face pressure to align its policies with Chinese interests. Conversely, the number of Chinese workers in Tajikistan has seen a significant rise in recent years. According to Tajikistan's Labour Migration Service, the influx of Chinese migrant workers grew from 3,000 in 2006 to 82,000 by 2011 (Bawa & Ashish, 2023). Additionally, China sought to establish numerous agricultural settlements, aiming to foster cultural connections between the Uyghurs of Xinjiang and the local population. However, these efforts have led to tensions with the local Tajik communities, who view such initiatives with suspicion and hostility (Peyrouse, 2016). The presence of Chinese companies and workers in Tajikistan could lead to social tensions, as local populations may perceive Chinese influence as undermining their national interests or causing environmental and labour issues.

Numerous political analysts and China experts attribute these developments to a limited understanding of China within Central Asia. In response, China has pursued a strategy to improve its image by encouraging young Central Asian students to study in Chinese institutions and by establishing Confucius Institutes and classrooms throughout the region. These initiatives are designed to promote Chinese culture, traditions, philosophy, and technological advancements, while also familiarising Central Asians with Chinese cuisine and medicine. In Tajikistan, there are currently 2 Confucius Institutes and 2 Confucius classrooms in operation (Aminjonov & Kholmatov, 2022). On the other hand, the functioning and subsequent implementation of the BRI is such that it nurtures political loyalty by routing the funds to the politicians and the elites, who hold a significant favourable view of China, particularly its 'One China policy'. Chinese investments are used is left entirely to the Rahmon administration which in turn fuels corruption amongst the ruling elite. Consequently, China's "developmental technocracy and tenets on hierarchy, political stability, and minority policies may resonate with other countries elites, civil servants and technical experts" and have possibly served as the push factors that contribute to the domestic tendencies and processes of "Democratic backsliding" and "autocratic hardening" in the recipient countries with Tajikistan is no exception (Noesselt, 2021; Carothers & Press, 2022).

China strategically employs the BRI as a unifying narrative to shape global perceptions and garner international cooperation. By partnering with overseas media outlets, China ensures that its official BRI message is integrated into local media platforms, effectively disseminating Chinese perspectives on global development. Through broadcast and digital media, China promotes a carefully curated narrative of "win-win relations," emphasising mutual benefits and cooperative development (Mandelbaum & Weiffen, 2022). This cultural diplomacy serves as a soft power tool to build influence and foster more favourable perceptions of China among future regional leaders. Simultaneously, Tajikistan has amassed substantial foreign debt, amounting to approximately $3.2 billion, with nearly half owed to China (Lemon, 2024). Critics of China's lending practices contend that Beijing strategically extends loans to nations unlikely to meet repayment deadlines, thereby creating conditions that enable Chinese entities to acquire strategic assets as collateral. This practice raises concerns about potential economic dependency and loss of national control over key infrastructure, aligning with broader critiques of the debt diplomacy often associated with the BRI such as in South Asia.

The strategic significance of Central Asia increased after 'Operation Enduring Freedom,' with China perceiving the Western military presence post-9/11 as a security threat. In response, China adopted a proactive approach through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its 'Going Out' strategy to expand its influence in the region (Wu, 2012). Central Asia, particularly Tajikistan, became a crucial area for China's BRI and its growing energy needs. Tajikistan, viewed by China as the region's most vulnerable link in terms of security, holds particular strategic importance. In order to protect its strategic interests, China formed a security alliance with Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan in 2016, aimed at countering terrorism and enhancing regional stability (Researcher Yang Jiang, 2018). China has gradually expanded its military involvement in Tajikistan through training, aid, and joint military exercises with Central Asian nations. Between 1993 and 2008, China provided $15 million in military aid to Tajikistan, followed by a $1.5 million pledge in 2009. Bilateral military exercises have been regularly conducted between the two countries in 2006, 2015, 2016, and 2019, with an agreement to hold joint anti-terrorism drills every two years (mentioned in table 1). Additionally, China has constructed several border guard posts along the Afghan-Tajik border, signalling its growing security interests in the region.

Table 2: China-Tajikistan bilateral military exercises

Year	*Countries*	*Number of Soldiers*	*Type*
2006	China-Tajikistan	450	Counter-Terrorism Drills
2015	China-Tajikistan	100	Counter-Terrorism Drills
2016	China-Tajikistan	10000	Counter-Terrorism Drills
2019	China-Tajikistan	2400	Counter-Terrorism Drills

Note: Prepared by authors from sources of (Kizilay, 2022).

Reports regarding the establishment of a Chinese secret military base in proximity to the Wakhan Corridor, located within Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, further highlight China's intensifying security engagement in the region. This shift from economic partnership to military involvement suggests a broader strategic transition, potentially altering the balance of power in Central Asia and impacting Sino-Russian relations (RFE/LE, 2021). China's increasing military role in the region indicates its desire to protect its geopolitical interests, particularly in counterterrorism efforts and border security, as it strengthens its influence beyond economic ties(Nichol, 2014). This network enables China to establish direct connections to Europe and other regions, circumventing U.S.-controlled transit routes like the Strait of Hormuz and the Malacca Strait. Framed as development initiatives, these investments often entice Central Asian leaders, drawing them into China's debt-trap strategy, similar to what occurred in South Asia.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Given the BRI corridor, it is well understood that Tajikistan is a significant transit route for Beijing's imports of natural resources, especially gas from Turkmenistan. Importing raw materials, minerals, for its high-tech industries motivates China to move closer to Tajikistan. Beijing has initiated essential projects, such as the mining sector and the restoration of highways to extend its reach in the region. To maximise its leverage, Beijing has made good use of cultural and soft power (Rashidov et al., 2023) at the core of its authoritarian image management. Besides the geopolitical and economic context, the impact of Chinese soft power on Tajikistan's has future consequences. Such initiatives allow China to strengthen its contacts with Tajikistan's intellectual community while shaping perceptions of Chinese interests in the region (Zhu et al., 2022). Through which China can strategically penetrate better, and maintain favourable environment which probably enhances its reputation and gives a thrust to its ulterior geopolitical objectives.

From a security perspective, China's concerns regarding the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan have significantly influenced its geopolitical strategy, particularly in strengthening ties with Tajikistan. The Taliban's return to power is perceived as a potential threat to the stability of the Xinjiang region, where China remains vigilant about any resurgence of separatist movements or extremism, especially among the Uighur population. The strategic calculus in Beijing acknowledges that political destabilisation in neighbouring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan could lead to spillover effects into China, exacerbating unrest in Xinjiang. China's policy framework, often referred to as addressing the "three evils" such as ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and violent terrorism (Zhang et al., 2024) (Lemon, 2024) serves as a foundation for its security measures. This framework justifies the implementation of privacy-invasive policies both domestically and in neighbouring states, under the guise of preventing external influences from destabilising its borders. These concerns are intertwined with China's broader geoeconomic interests, as stability in Central Asia ensures the continuity of the BRI, particularly in energy and trade corridors that traverse these regions. The fusion of security and economic imperatives underlines China's strategy of maintaining regional stability to safeguard both its internal security and external economic ambitions.

Chinese projects in Tajikistan, such as the Dushanbe-Chanak Highway, depict corruption and lack of transparency. Overall, the Projects provide a striking example of how the ruling class profited from specific infrastructure projects financed by Chinese investments while ignoring the needs of the common people(Digital et al., n.d.). Concerns over data privacy are heightened by Tajikistan's increasing dependence on Chinese technology, particularly surveillance devices manufactured by firms like Huawei. These developments cast a shadow of technological authoritarianism over the country (Stryker, 2021). Another critical issue is debt sustainability, as Tajikistan owes significant amounts to China through its Export-Import Bank. Additionally, concerns about worker treatment and the influx of Chinese labour have brought attention to domestic consequences in the recipient states. The grand strategy of China is thus to strategically, financially, and politically engage countries in its periphery in South, Central, and West Asia and enhance its tactical presence to avoid a direct military confrontation with the major Western powers like the United States. Tajikistan thus, serves China as an important lynchpin in 'march West' foreign and geoeconomic policies.

Finally, it would not be wrong to assert that the BRI funded investments from China have significantly heightened concerns on governance and transparency issues— significantly influencing a country's ruling elite and politics of Tajikistan.

Dushanbe increasingly depends on the Chinese government for external security and the administration's budgeting and decision-making processes probably push Tajikistan to align its policy orientation with Beijing's interests.

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MAPPING THE SPATIAL IMBALANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN BIHAR

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Abstract

Higher education is given prime importance in the international development agenda as well which is evident from the United Nations Sustainable Development (SDG) Goal 4. With the expansion of higher education participation, universities have acquired a larger potential for contributing to societal development. Therefore, it is high time to analyse the educational institutions particularly the higher education from the spatial lens. Lefebvre's socio-spatial dialectic explores the potential of space and place in the analyses of the processes and practices of exclusion and inclusion. Against this backdrop, the present research paper brings to the fore the disparities in the spatial distribution of higher education institutions (Universitie/Colleges) in Bihar. The paper also presents comparative trends in the gross enrolment ratio in higher education in India and Bihar in order to present a scenario of student enrolment in higher education institutions of Bihar. Based on secondary sources, the paper attempts to analyse the distribution of higher education facilities across the state in order to identify the deprived localities of higher education facilities. The situation suggests that there is need to go for additional higher education institutions.

Keywords: Spatial Imbalance, Higher Education, Sustainable Development Goals, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Bihar

INTRODUCTION

In the words of the renowned Economist John Kenneth Galbraith (1979) "Illiteracy is the cause of poverty" and education can be an instrument of change. Higher education is meant to inculcate the democratic values of equality, liberty, fraternity

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and skills needed to participate in effective democratic engagement among the youth. UNESCO's World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century (1998) underlines the mission of Higher Education as training young people in the values that form the basis of democratic citizenship (Article 1e). It prepares young minds to become effective citizens by enhancing students' knowledge regarding issues about inequalities, poverty, discrimination, and injustices. Higher education is now given importance in the international development agenda which is evident from the United Nations Sustainable Development (SDG) Goal 4 which aims, by 2030, "to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university".

University as an institution has a long history, starting as an educational establishment, later assuming the knowledge-creating (research) function and more recently the so-called third mission (engagement) (Ostlingst, 2018; Chankseliani and McCowan, 2021). In most contexts, universities were for the elites, educating them for religious, professional or administrative occupations. With the expansion of higher education participation, universities have acquired a larger potential for contributing to societal development (Chankseliani and McCowan, 2021). Therefore, it is timely to analyse the educational institutions particularly the higher education from the spatial lens.

Spatial analyses of various kinds and forms have been undertaken for at least a hundred years (Gulson and Symes, 2007). Space has also been instantiated in other elements of educational life, particularly with the emergence of a neoliberalist agenda that has brought into the spotlight the differentiating spatial effects of unequal provision. Lefebvre's (1991) socio-spatial dialectic explores the potential of space and place in the analyses of the processes and practices of exclusion and inclusion. For Lefebvre (1991) space as a producer of, and produced by social relations, requires that people's interactions are shaped in some way by the spatial surroundings and that social relations may shape spatial surroundings.

Further, Doreen Massey's (1993, 1994, 2005, 2012) work on the politics of 'space-time' and the concept of 'power-geometry', and the relationship between 'the spatial organization of society...and the production of the social' (Stehlik, 2001). Similarly, Harvey (1993, 1996, 2020) explored notions of geography, new and enduring class formations, postmodernity, social justice, and what he perhaps notoriously termed 'time-space compression'. Geographers such as Soja (1996) D.M. Smith (1994), and also Rose (1993), are also important sources for rethinking space and society. This relatively recent link of space and place with educational research is especially appropriate and timely, given Marsden's (1977) observation, more than four decades ago now, that 'educational phenomena are distributed in space'. The 'space' is a key defining element in understanding the imbalances of the spatial distribution of various institutions of education.

One of the earliest attempts to highlight the spatial imbalance in education provisions was done in United Kingdom by Henry Brougham during the 1820s, using a series of national surveys. There have been studies during the last few decades where space and place have played an important part in understanding social inequalities and the inadequacy of policy in addressing these. For example, Taylor(2007) studied the understanding of school choice and the impact of increased marketization in publicly-funded education.

Against this backdrop, the present research paper brings to the fore the disparities in the spatial distribution of higher education institutions in Bihar. The paper also presents comparative trends in the gross enrolment ratio in higher education in India and Bihar in order to present a backdrop of student enrolment in higher education institutions of Bihar.

The paper attempts to analyse the distribution of higher education facilities across the state to identify localities which are deprived of higher education facilities. Such mapping of the localities, requiring the need to open additional higher education institutions, would help in maintaining a regional balance in terms of the availability of higher education institutions and, therefore, facilitate access to higher education by different sections of the population and ultimately meeting the United Nation SDG Goal 4 targets.

OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

The present paper aims to identify the disparities in spatial distribution of higher education institutions in Bihar and to understand the trends in GER in higher education in India and Bihar

The research paper is exploratory and based on findings from secondary sources like the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) reports, Bihar Economic Survey reports, Bihar State Higher Education Council documents, various research articles and reports on higher education. Geographical Information System based software is used to create map for the spatial analysis.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

It is imperative to study the Indian state of Bihar in the context that it ranked last on the SDG India Index 2020-21 released by the Government of India. According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index report (Niti Aayog, 2021), the poverty headcount ratio is 56 percent in rural Bihar and 24 percent in urban Bihar. A large part of Bihar's geographical area suffers from natural vagaries, its northern part is extremely flood-prone, while the southern part is drought-prone. Apart from this, every year, unaccounted thousands of students migrate from Bihar to cities like Delhi, Mumbai etc. for higher education. In such precarious situations, HEIs of Bihar have an extremely vital role in engaging with SDGs for its stakeholders and society at large. However, do we have enough institutions to cater to Bihar's growing demographic dividend? Does college density in Bihar meet the national benchmarks?

TRENDS IN GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA AND BIHAR (2017-18 TO 2021-22)

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is a fundamental indicator used to measure the levels of participation in higher education within a given population. It is calculated as the total enrolment in higher education, irrespective of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official population (18 to 23 years) in the appropriate age group.

The formula for calculating GER is:

GER = (Number of enrolled students/Population in corresponding age group) × 100

India has a gross enrolment of 28.4 in 2021-22, which has been increasing at a positive rate over the last 5 years. In other words, it indicates that nearly three of every ten individuals in the eligible age group are enrolled in higher education in India. However, it also shows that rest 62% of India's citizens are outside the higher education system.

The higher education sector in India has experienced an unprecedented expansion in recent decades. India is now in the stage of massification in Higher Education with the aim of increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) to 50% by 2035 as per the National Education Policy 2020.

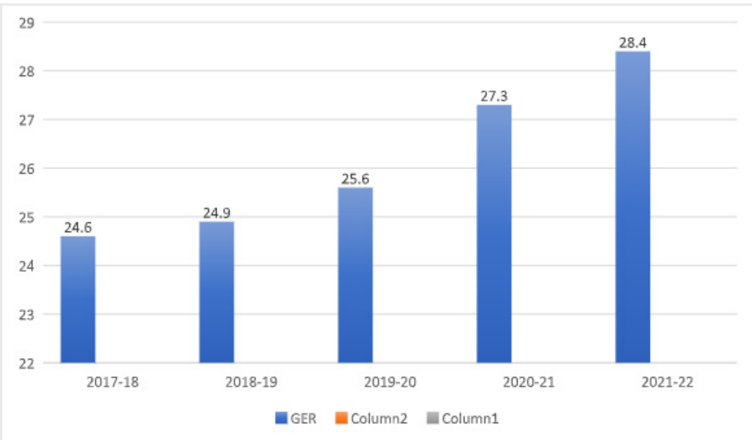

Figure 1: GER of Higher Education at All India Level

Source: AISHE, Government of India, 2021-22

Bihar is one of the most populous states of the country with the highest density of population among the major States of the country. The literacy rate of Bihar has improved significantly during the last decade, from 47.0 percent in 2001 to 61.8 percent in 2011. However, this is still below the national average. According to the All India Survey for Higher Education (2020-2021) report, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in Bihar is 15.4. Bihar has improved its past performance over the last 5 years but still far away to meet the national targets. There has been an increase of about 36 percent in the enrolment of students in higher education in Bihar as compared to last year. According to the data of AISHE 2120-2022, the enrolment of students in higher education in Bihar is 26,22,946, which was 1738432 in the AISHE 2019-2020 survey. According to AISHE 2021-2022, enrolment of about 8,84,514 students in higher education in Bihar has increased compared to AISHE 2019-2020 survey, in which enrolment of women has increased by 4,06,956.

Bihar's Status on GER during the last 5 years as per AISHE report			
Survey Year	***BOYS***	***GIRLS***	***Total***
2017-18	12.4	10.5	11.4
2018-19	12.4	10.7	11.6
2019-20	12.7	11.5	12.1
2020-21	16.6	15.1	15.4
2021-22	17.8	16.3	17.1

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN BIHAR

Presently, the State has fifteen traditional state universities including one open university, seven private universities, 277 constituent colleges, 307 affiliated colleges, 198 B.Ed. Colleges and 5 central universities and centrally funded higher education institutions.

The Government of Bihar has established 3 new Universities viz., Patliputra University, Munger University and Purnea University in 2018. Three more universities in the domain of Engineering, Medical and Sports are also being established. Since 2016, the state has established 110 new B.Ed. colleges, 80 new Nursing colleges, 45 new colleges for professional courses, 31 new Engineering colleges and 3 new Medical colleges. As a result, Bihar has added around 1.63 lakh seats in higher education institutions with the above efforts within the last 5 years.

Moreover, the Government of Bihar has launched Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana to improve Bihar's Gender Parity Index and make higher education accessible to girls. Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana (Snatak) was launched in 2018 to provide one-time grant of Rs. 25000 after graduation. Till date 1.59 lakh female students have benefitted from the scheme. The grant amount has been increased to 50,000 from the academic session 2021-2022 onwards.

Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana provided free cycles for intermediate girl students enabling them easy access to higher education since 2007-08. Till 2020-21, 78 lakh female students have availed of benefits. (Rs 3842 crores). Another scheme of Student Credit Card Scheme was launched in 2017 as a flagship program to provide financial support for upto 4 lakh at a minimum interest rate of 1% for girls and physically challenged and 4% for boys. The number of students who benefitted till date is 1,55,550. Apart from this, fess during admission for SC, ST and girls students has been waived off, for regular courses in all levels of higher education.

A centrally sponsored scheme- Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) launched in 2013 was a first attempt to expand higher education in a mission mode. RUSA attempts to help revive state initiatives in higher education and a total of 228 crores were spent on higher education institutions of Bihar.

Despite several efforts by the central government and state government, Bihar is still lagging behind on several parameters in higher education. In the context of college density, Bihar has only seven colleges per lakh eligible population (aged 18-23 years) against the national average of 31 which makes it hold the bottom position in the national tally. Karnataka (62), Telangana (53), Kerala (50), Himachal Pradesh (50), Andhra Pradesh (49) are the states with highest college density. It can be deduced that the number of existing colleges is not able to meet the increasing student enrolment in Bihar indicating a severe demand-supply mismatch creating a scenario of imbalance.

Figure 2 and 3 reflects the disparities in the spatial distribution of higher education institutions in Bihar. The picture is not encouraging because the majority of the districts of the state are within the lowest classification in terms of the presence of colleges. Seemanchal districts like Kisanganj, Araria and Supaul, other districts viz., Khagaria, Munger, Lakhisarai, Shehoar, Sheikhpura, Arwal and Gopalganj had the lowest concentration of higher education institutions in Bihar. On the other extreme are only two districts of Bihar viz., Patna and Nalanda have the highest concentration of colleges and universities. Other districts Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Rohtas, Aurangabad, Vaishali, Bhojpur and Madhubani have high to moderate concentration of colleges.

It is necessary to highlight that 10 districts out of 13 districts identified as Aspirational Districts by Niti Aayog are having low concentration of colleges. These 10 districts are Sitamarhi, Araria, Purnia, Katihar Begusarai, Khagaria, Banka, Sheikhpura, Nawada , Jamui.

Further, 240 Blocks out of 545 blocks in the state are identified where no Higher Educational Institute is available.

An analysis will reveal that the market process has contributed to the widening of the regional disparities in the distribution of higher education institutions and enrolment in India. It seems the market process of expansions of higher education promotes regional concentration of institutions and thus conflicts with the equity considerations across the state. The private sector establishes institutions mostly in the urban and sub-urban areas which can attract a larger number of feepaying students, thus leading to an increasing rural-urban divide (Varghese, 2015).

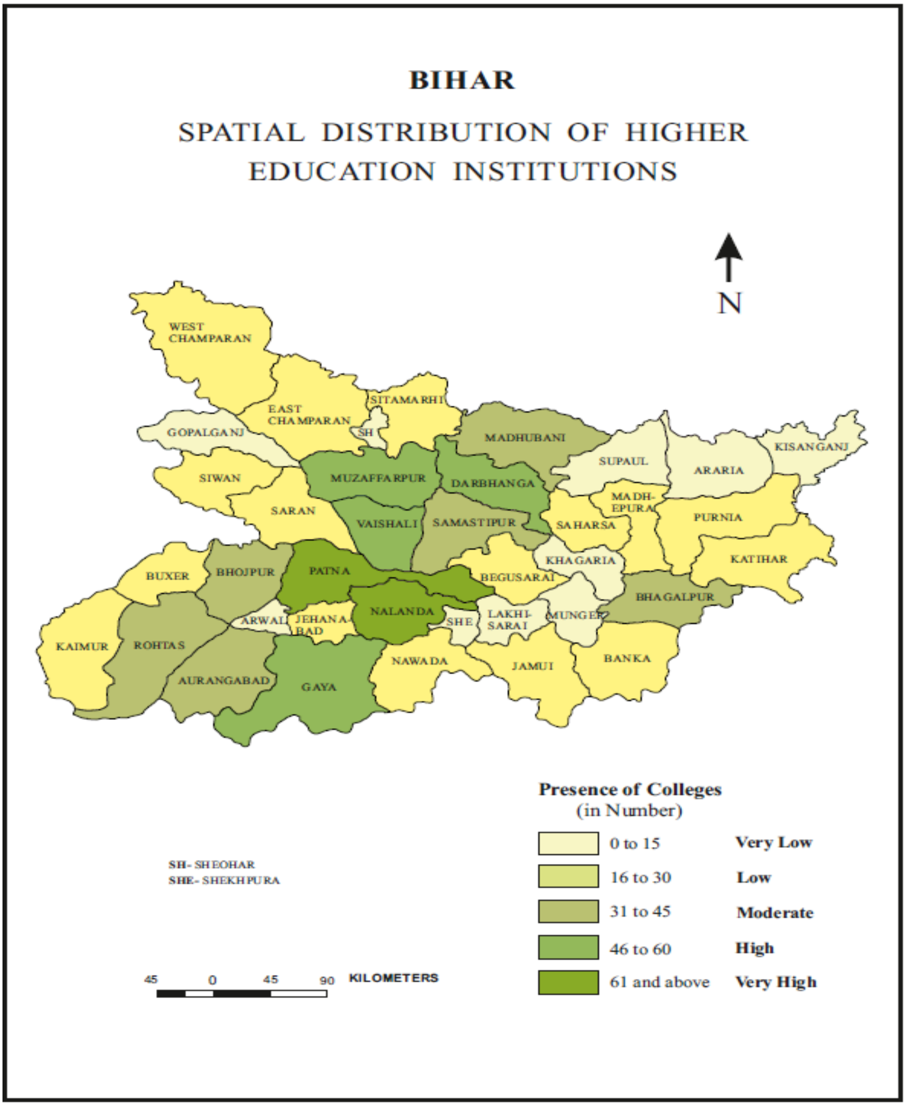

Figure 2: Spatial Distribution of Higher Educational Institutions in Bihar

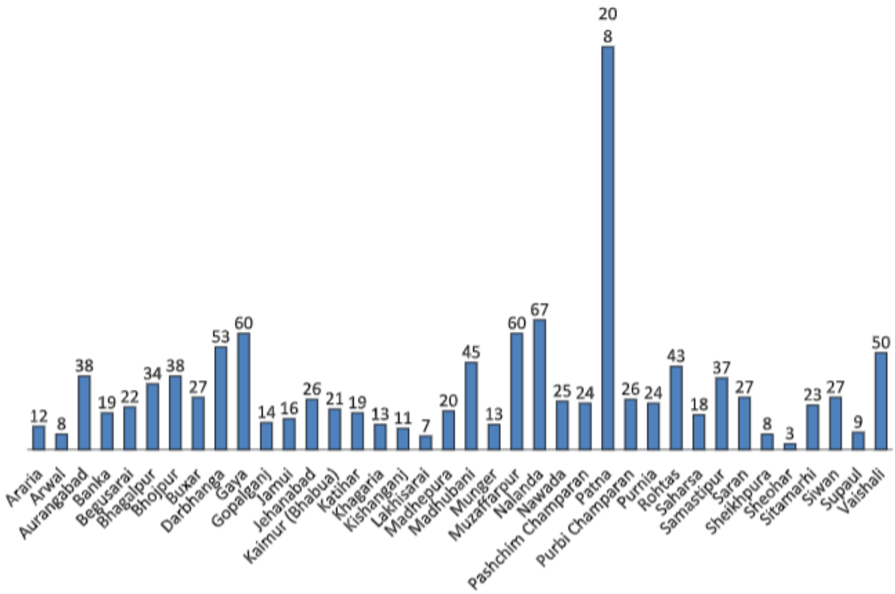

Figure 3: Number of colleges in different districts of Bihar

As discussed above, the growth and expansion of higher education is not uniform across the state. The establishment of institutions, perhaps, did not follow any state-level plan to ensure the minimisation of inequalities in the geographical distribution of higher education facilities. The expansion is driven by the pressure of social demand and urban bias supported by financial resources. Resultantly, certain regions of the state have been endowed more higher education institutions, while other regions were deprived of them.

WAY FORWARD

- Growth of both public and private institutions is required, with a strong emphasis on developing a large number of outstanding public institutions in Bihar.
- Special status should be granted to the state of Bihar which will leverage substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system. Atleast one constituent college should be established in the districts having a low presence of colleges.
- Philanthropic/ Industry/ Community organisations should be invited to set up private university campuses in Bihar
- Efforts should be made for setting up community colleges. Community colleges are expected to provide career-oriented courses which enable graduates

to directly enter the labour market. It may also provide an opportunity for secondary school graduates not getting admission to traditional universities and courses. These Community colleges will provide modular credit-based courses that conform to the National Skills Qualification Framework.

- As mentioned in NEP, 2020 guidelines, there shall, by 2030, be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district.
- It is expected that the Bihar State Higher Education Council will play an important role in the planning and management of higher education in the state by laying out a vision road map for higher education under Viksit Bharat 2047.

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LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION IN MODERN INDIA: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BIHAR

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Abstract

Land rent had been the major source of revenue of Indian governments from ancient times, but the organized and systemic change in land rent collection was first introduced by Todarmal, a minister of the Indian ruler Sher Shah Suri. As systemizing land revenue administration became the need of East India Company rulers, it was Lord Cornwallis who introduced the decentralized revenue collection by adopting Permanent Settlement in 1793 in Bengal that covered the present Bihar. Jharkhand, Odisha, UP and some other provinces. However, some other systems were introduced like Raiyatwadi and Mahalwadi systems in southern states and Punjab and other western states respectively. This system continued even under the British Crown since 1858. India after independence inherited the system, however, the leaders of independent India took steps to make equitable redistribution of ownership over land, popularly known as land reforms measures for two reasons – making the land holding size more economically viable and more equality in land ownership. Although the land revenue now is not a substantial source of income of governments, yet land revenue administration still remains an important part of governance in view of determining ownership rights over land, maintaining land records and land reforms measures. As such the present paper intends to articulate the features of land revenue administration since 1793 and assess its impact on socio-economic situation in India, especially in Bihar in the context fulfilment of the need of land reform measures. The paper is based on secondary sources of data collection.

Keywords: LRA (Land Revenue Administration), Permanent Settlement, Rayatwadi, Mahalwadi, Board of Revenue, District Administration, Commissioner, Collector, India, Bihar

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INTRODUCTION

Administration of collecting land rent had been one of the basic functions of state from the ancient times for meeting the expenses of statecraft and delivery of public services. As such, Revenue Administration has been oldest arm of the governments. With evolution of agriculture as major livelihood source, the mankind remained intimately related to land and in due course state regulated the use of land and its minerals. From beginning of civilisation land revenue administration veered around collection of land rents as it was the main source of revenue of state. The village was the basic unit of administration and has remained so throughout the centuries. The resources, their ownership and accessibility of land are some of the fundamental constituents of any system which is considered an essential aspect of human societies over the centuries. Sometimes, king/state appointed officers for the purpose and sometimes nominated local elites/ leaders from among the villagers to collect land revenue. Sometimes rent collecting bureaucracy was centralised, sometimes decentralised (by appointing grassroots level) mechanism and sometimes devolving power to non-state actors from people on certain terms and conditions. It cannot be denied that rent collecting mechanism required involvement of police and judiciary as well. The objectives of Land Revenue Administration (hereinafter LRA) in India are not confined only to collect rent rather to promote social justice, equitable distribution of land, enhance agricultural productivity, alleviate rural poverty, empower landless farmers and tenants, eliminate exploitative land tenures, and ensure sustainable and inclusive rural development. The district head of the LRA had been given magisterial powers to ensure proper collection of land rents with support revenue personnel under him. It handled all aspects of interface of land-people relations. During the British Rule, the Revenue Department was the pivotal part of Administration. Britishers created the Board of Revenue at state level with extraordinary powers and District Collector at District level who was virtual monarch at district level. The Board of Revenue was introduced by Court of Directors of East India Company years before introduction of permanent settlement and it continued in post 1858 rule of England under the control of Governor of the state. The Board of Revenue ACT 1883 dispensed with the Collective nature of the Board. Each member was assigned some subjects and his orders were treated as those of the board. In 1894 the Board received operational freedom. Senior members of the ICS were selected as board members. The entire LRA including the Board of Revenue and District Collector had such powers that could influence the people in their entire socio-economic and administrative life. Hence, LRA is very important aspect of entire administration irrespective of its being in British India or Independent India. India still inherited the LRA, of course with certain changes, in post-independence period also.

This makes an imperative to examine the LRA in modern times during British rule vis-à-vis independent rule. It attempts to mark the changes in LRA from pre-independence to independence periods in the context of its purposes, people's wellbeing and administrative efficiency. It has been tried to examine the influence of socio-economic and political aspects on reforms in LRA from time to time. Further, it attempts to assess the relevance of pre-independence LRA and viability of the existing land administration.

EVOLUTION OF LRA IN INDIA

It is supposed globally that all the natural resources including agricultural land belongs to state and individual citizens are authorise to cultivate over it through settlement or otherwise by state. Right from ancient times, the Land Revenue has been a major source of income of the sovereign. During the Mauryan and Gupta periods, the revenue was collected by the paid officials, which resembles the present day mechanism. During the Post Mauryan and Gupta periods, the State revenue was collected by donees of Brahmadeya, Devadana, and Agrahara Lands. The donees were feudal intermediaries who passed on a part of the revenue they collected to the King. In medieval period, the system of collecting revenue was entrusted to the Jagirdars, Subedars and Inamdars who passed on the revenue to the kings during the rule of Sultanates which extended for more than 300 years. It must be noted here that in Moughal period tax collection was done separately from Muslims by Zakar and from non-Muslims by Jigya. However, the systemic land revenue was introduced by Todarmal, an expert of revenue who was a Minister in the court of Shershah Suri (during 1540-1545). The system was continued during the reign of Akbar (1556-1602) in which Todarmal was declared as one of nine ratnas of Akbar's Court (Bayly: 1988). He practiced such a judicious land revenue system that was not over taxing on cultivators and without loss to the treasure. For fixation of rent, he classified the land on the basis of productivity. The officials like *amins, kanungo*, including jagirdars and village headman named *Muqaddams* and *Choudharies* (O'Malley: 1907).

LRA IN BRITISH INDIA

In the mid-18th century, particularly after Carnatic war, the East India Company leaned to establish civil administration and special premier was placed on land revenue administration because land tax was the primary source of revenue of the Company. A study opines, "In possession of fiscal authority but not full state power and still under threat from a northern coalition re-forming, the Company started investigating the chances of raising the revenues substantially and making the revenue flow stable to fund standing army" (Roy: 2023). The Company preferred to create such a system that could legitimise the relationship between tax payers and tax collectors. Thus, it tried to entrust local elites (commonly known as Zamindars) for tax collection. Against the idea of Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis introduced the law of Permanent Settlement in 1793. The law was primarily extended to Bengal (present WB, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha) and later in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and in certain parts of Sothern states. It entrusted the zamindars to collect taxes and pay a fix rent to government and granted ownership to them. Land revenue demands were permanently fixed which was greater than the capacity of zamindars, however, they accepted the deal without protest and sought greater security from the government (Ray: 1975). But the judiciary was kept independent to decide the land disputes. The grant of Diwani rights to the East India Company in 1765 and the Permanent Settlement brought in by the company in 1793 with the sole purpose of maximizing and realizing the revenue on time. The major features of the Permanent Settlemen were – a) recognition of zamindars as permanent owners of the land, b) zamindars were mandated to pay 89 percent of the tax collection to government and remaining 11 percent was left to them and c) Zamindars were made independent for handling affairs of tax collection in their respective areas.

The land revenue system of Bihar has evolved from the legacy of 'Permanent settlement'. This arrangement, unlike Raiyatwari and Mahalwari, bequeathed the State with land records that were uniquely deficient in quality and reliability. The Zamindars under the Mughal rule were the functionaries of the State administration in as much as they were tasked with the collection of land revenue. Initially their offices were neither proprietary nor hereditary. With the gradual rise of the British power in India, Zamindars assumed both proprietary and hereditary rights (O'Malley: 1907a). Further, the integrity of land records under the Zamindari system was compromised. Each zamindar and patwari had his unique style of functioning and maintaining records, resulting in regional variations in prevailing terms and nomenclatures, numbering style and data format.

The then government had its administrative set up above the zamindaras which was responsible for collecting fixed rent from zamindars and maintaining the treasury at district level. During the British times the Revenue Department was the pivot of Administration. The Collector was the virtual monarch at the district, around whom the entire administration revolved. However, the Divisional Commissioner was entrusted to exercise of powers of supervision and control over revenue administration of District Collectors under his jurisdiction. There were three divisions in Bihar (as part of Bengal) namely Tirhut, Patna and Chhotanagpur headed by Commissioner. He was subject to control of the state government through Board of Revenue. Prior to creation of Bihar & Orrisa state, the Bengal Board of Revenue 1822 served the purpose. The Board of Revenue had vast powers and served as the highest court of LRA. The Board had powers decide cases related to LRA such as deciding the ownership of land, transfer of land, appeals against district Collector/Commissioners etc. (Singh: 1987).

For maintaining land records and transfer & sale-purchase of land, Registration offices were created at district level. The Registration Office was introduced in Bihar in 1796, three years after the introduction of Permanent Settlement. The establishment of Registration office created a market for land that did not exist, prior to Permanent Settlement. Later Sub Registrar offices were subsequently established in1845, however, the land records were maintained at district level by the Registration Office. The Registration Office was headed by Registrar who collected revenue (stamp duties) in case of transfer and sale-purchase of land.

After first war of independence, the British parliament decided to take the political control of India under British Crown in 1958 from East India Company by passing Government of India Act 1958. The Act transferred the powers of government, territories and revenues from the East India Company to the British Crown. Since then, the new government broken some presidencies into more manageable provinces, as result there became 8 major provinces governed by Governor or Lt Governors and minor provinces were put under Chief Commissioners. The Act changed the designation of the Governor General of India to that of Viceroy of India. Land Revenue Administration of Company's rule continued in this regime. In short, Company's monopoly came to an end.

What important change was marked in this period was commercialisation of agriculture and colonial administrators started exporting some grains and cash crops like indigo, opium, cotton and silk, raw jute etc. With passage of time food grains, oil seeds and tea replaced indigo and opium, however, raw cotton remained the most in demand item. In initial stages, the colonial rulers encouraged it, but with passage of time it was felt that most of the benefits of commercialisation of agriculture went to capitalists (Bayly, C. A. 1988, Rury et al).

The revenue administration of East India Company rule continued in new British Indian Government. Collector, Commissioner and Board of Revenue. However, the Board of Revenue of Bihar and Orrisa was made in 1913 after creation of separate state of Bihar and Orrisa carving out from Bengal. As per Bihar and Orissa Board of Revenue Act, 1913, provision of Additional Member of the Board was made who shall exercise and perform such powers and duties as the government may direct. As earlier the Board remained the highest court in matters of land revenue and matter related to ownership and appeals against decisions of District Collector and Commissioner. The Board had the power to review its own decisions (Kumar: 1970)

Registration Office continued to function, however, the number of Sub-Registration offices increased substantially. In the process Registration Office was vested with more responsibilities. The primary responsibility of Registration Offices was to create and maintain records relating to immovable property after registration of mortgages and other documents, as well as to facilitate search, inspection and authenticate true copy of records to obtain information about the title to the property. It created the Archive to maintain rare documents like the first registered document of Bihar executed in the year 1798, documents registered in 1857, the year of India's first war of independence were preserved.

OTHER SYSTEMS OF LRA: NOT APPLICABLE IN BIHAR

As mentioned earlier the East India Company adopted two LRA systems namely – Ryotwari and Mahalwari.

THE RYOTWARI SYSTEM

Ryotwari sytem was a major LRA system, initially in south Indian states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and later in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan and most of the parts of Madhya Pradesh. The system covered nearly 38 percent of the total cultivated area in the country. It was introduced in Madras Province in 1802 and in Bombay in 1817. In this system, individual cultivators i.e, ryots were recognised as proprietors of their land with the rights to sublet, mortgage and transfer their lands by gift or sale. Their tenure of land was secure so long as revenue payments were paid directly to the Collectors. The local rajas, nawabs etc. administered the system. The rent was not permanently fixed rather varied year after year. It is said that system was pioneered by Company officers Alexander and Munro (governor of Madras Presidency during 1819-26)). The ryots could not be evicted from their land as long as they paid the rent.

MAHALWARI SYSTEM

This system was introduced between 1820 and 1840 in Punjab (including both present-day Punjabs in Pakistan and India, and the State of Haryana), parts of what are now Madhya Pradesh and Orissa and the princely states of Oudh and Agra in Uttar Pradesh. This tenure system was much less extensive and accounted for some 5% of the cultivated area. Under this system, the village lands were held jointly by the village communities, the members of which were jointly and severally responsible for the payment of land revenue. Land revenue was fixed for the whole village and the village headman (Lumbrdar) collected it for which he received 'panchatra' i.e. 5 per cent as commission. In this system the revenues was not fixed permanently at such a time when the Company needed more money to meet its expenses of administration and trade. In 1822, Englishman Holt Mackenzie devised a new system known as the Mahalwari System in the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency (most of this area is now in Uttar Pradesh). Under the Mahalwari system, the land revenue was collected from the farmers by the village headmen on behalf of the whole village (and not the zamindar). The entire village was converted into one bigger unit called 'Mahal' and was treated as one unit for the payment of land revenue. The revenue under the Mahalwari system was to be revised periodically. It was popularised by Lord Bentick in Agra and Awadh and was later extended to Madhya Pradesh and Punjab.

ISSUES IN LRA SYSTEMS

These LRA were adopted by East India Company rulers as well as the British rulers with the major objective to assured land rent collections to the optimum level and less involvement the government machinery. But these systems caused maladies at society and economic levels, such as exploitation and atrocities by intermediary land revenue collection system.

In zamindari system, the farmers and cultivators faced the oppressive and exploitative as the cultivators often had to take loan to pay the rents. Exploitation of farmers by Nilha Sahebs in Champaran District of Bihar is burning example (Verma: 2005). The zamindars had also to face constraints due to high rent fixed by the British government. On the failure of payment of revenue, they would have lost the zamindari. Zamindare were not so keen in improvement of land and agricultural practices in order to raise the productivity but they were more keen in collecting the rent. They used force, even in the year of the poor production, to collect the rents. Sometimes, they had to take loan to pay. As discussed earlier, by the end of nineteenth century, the phenomenon of commercialisation of agriculture expanded the agriculture and caused rise in prices of agricultural produce. As result, the income of zamindars increased but government was not benefited since the rent to be paid by zamindars was settle permanently. These consequences caused exploitation of farmers and grave inequality.

In Ryotwari system vested much powers to subordinate revenue officials where their activities were inadequately superwised. Thus, these officials and mahajans/money lenders dominated over the farmers, rather they exploited the farmers/cultivators in many ways like getting begari (labour without payment) done by farmers by this section of people, getting their land mortgaged and so on. The money lenders sometimes alienated the land of cultivators on one pretext or another.

So far Mahalwari system is concerned, the British government fix rents higher whenever it required money to meet the expenses of administration and trade. The revenues was not fixed permanently as such a time when the government needed more money to meet its expenses of administration and trade. A major drawback of the system was that the survey was practically based on faulty assumptions which left a space for manipulations and corruption. At times, it made the government spend more for the collection than the revenue collected. Consequently, the system was regarded as a failure.

After independence, the leaders put the agenda of land reforms and abolition of zamindari system on the top priority. They intended to introduce land reforms as major socio-economic step which aimed at fulfilment of constitutional obligations to provide social and economic justice to the vast rural populace. Further it had two clear goals – a) improvement of agrarian relations and b) making landholding size operationally and economically viable (Verma: 2005). Verma further finds that entire policy process of land reforms, although it was initiated by legislators (mainly big land owners) but later lingered it in passing the bill for saving their land under their ownership (Verma: Ibid). The land survey was last conducted in 1970s in Bihar and since then there are huge changes in land holding and ownership pattern owing to sale-purchase of land and divisions in land owning families. This has created complex problems in updating the land records. A welcome step has been taken by present government of Bihar to digitalise the land records through making Special Land Survey law and rules 2019 and recently, a sufficient number of Special Assistant Land Survey Officers are recruited in addition to the existing land revenue administration below District Collectors like Circle Officers, Circle Inspectors, Karmcharis and Amins etc.

CONCLUSION

The whole gamut of discussion above reflects that all the three Land Revenue System during colonial period made the 80 percent of rural population to live a miserable life, rampant poverty, disrespect in society and exploitative social system. These LRAs were faulty, exploitative, unproductive, breeding miseries to the farmers, rampant social inequality and economically inviable land holdings. The zamindars and government officials exploited the situation. Soon after independence, our leaders took strong step in form of 'land reforms' to minimize the inequality and make land holdings economically viable. But maintain land records, land rent collection and determining ownership over land remained complex and inconsistent. Despite major land survey in Bihar in 1970s, problem did not end due to sale-purchase of land and family partitions of land. Although the LRA remains still complicated and corrupt in Bihar, yet, Nitish Government has recently launched special drive to update land records for which appropriate laws are made and personnel are appointed for the purpose. This can be hoped that the renovations in land revenue administration will minimise the problem.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF LOHIYA SWAKSHA BIHAR ABHIYAN: A STUDY OF ITS IMPACT ON OPEN DEFECATION FREE (ODF) GOAL

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Abstract

Access to sanitation facilities remains a critical challenge in many regions across the globe, particularly in developing countries like India. The government of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission at the national level to end open defecation by the end of 2nd October 2019. Bihar, one of India's most populous states, has been grappling with the issue of open defecation for decades, posing significant health and social risks to its inhabitants. In response, the government of Bihar launched the Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan, a comprehensive sanitation campaign aimed at eradicating open defecation and promoting hygiene practices by the end of 2nd October 2019. It becomes an imperative to assess the performance of the 'abhiyan'. The present paper attempts to assess the implementation of Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan (LSBA), its impact on social hygiene and people's sanitation behavior in Bihar. On the basis of secondary data, paper finds that the performance of the abhiyan has not been encouraging and there is need of raising awareness among people, consistent monitoring, providing adequate funds and proper infrastructure.

Keywords: Open Defecation, Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan (LSABA) SBA, WASH, Bihar

INTRODUCTION

Globally around 3.5 billion people do not have access to sanitation services. Approximately 8% of the worldwide population practices open defecation. Sanitation was one of the world's most off-track Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), despite notable progress—between 2000 and 2020, around 2.4 billion

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people acquired access to better toilets or latrines. Even today almost 1.7 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation services (World Bank, 2023). In rural areas, two-thirds population lack access to basic sanitation services. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6.2 aims to "achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations by the end of 2030".

The most recent studies on health issues related to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) show that 1.4 million people die yearly because they don't have enough clean drinking water, proper toilets, and good hygiene habits (WHO, 2024). Most of these deaths happen in low- and middle-income countries. Out of these deaths, about 564,000 are because of poor sanitation, mostly from diseases like diarrhoea. Poor sanitation also makes it easier for other diseases like intestinal worms, schistosomiasis, and trachoma to spread (Giribabu et al., 2019). Additionally, poor sanitation can lead to malnutrition.

In 2014, the sanitation coverage of India was only 39% despite the globally accepted fact that sanitation is vital to human health and well-being (Government of India, 2014). In India, about 67% of rural and 13% of urban households defecate in the open (Census, 2011). Before 2014 around 55 crores of the rural population lack access to toilet facilities. This was severely affecting the health and dignity of rural people, especially women and children.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The issue of open defecation has been the subject of several research studies and scholarly articles. These studies have provided insights into the status of open defecation in Bihar. Here are some research articles and publications related to the sanitation status and open defecation in Bihar.

Anoop Jain et al. (2020) explores the issue of open defecation in rural Bihar within the context of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan campaign. The study challenges the common assumption that low rates of latrine ownership are solely due to a preference for open defecation. Instead, it highlights the socio-economic and structural barriers that hinder households from building latrines, despite recognizing the importance of sanitation for health and safety. The research emphasizes the need to look beyond individual preferences and understand the social-structural determinants influencing latrine uptake. Distrust of government initiatives, economic constraints, and unequal development priorities were identified as key factors affecting the success of sanitation programs in rural areas. The study calls for further research to explore these themes in other regions to inform more effective policy interventions. Rajeev Kamal Kumar and Abhijit Ghosh (2023), focusing on the coverage rate of latrines and the challenges in implementing sanitation programmes, in a survey of 1536 households from six districts of Bihar, finds that 58.14% owned the toilets. The study emphasizes the importance of sustained use of toilets, gender discrimination due to open defecation, and the need for behaviour change interventions. It indicates the challenges like poor infrastructure in public institutions, inadequate financial assistance, and lack of sensitization efforts. It goes to suggest to adopt improvement in sanitation coverage, continuous awareness campaigns, monitoring, and community involvement in promoting hygienic behaviours.

Arutperumjothi Muthukumaran et al. (2024), in their study of Patna, have revealed that despite having toilets in their households, 64.2% of respondents still practised open defecation. Factors associated with open defecation included the age of initiating toilet use, lack of government water supply, and specific toilet characteristics like roof, window, and lighting. The study highlighted the importance of addressing behavioural factors in addition to infrastructure improvements to combat open defecation effectively.

Diane Coffey et al. (2014), highlighting consequences of open defecation in rural areas of North India, find open defecation has negative impacts on health, child development, and overall human capital. The study identifies that even households with latrine access may still practice open defecation. The paper discusses the concept of a "sanitation ladder" and notes the lack of middle rungs in the sanitation infrastructure in India. Overall, the paper underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to tackle open defecation in rural North India, emphasizing the importance of addressing behavioural factors, improving sanitation infrastructure, and promoting hygiene practices to enhance public health outcomes and human capital development in the region.

Mohammad Rashid and Debapratim Pandit (2018) have dwelt up on the sustainable structure of latrines. After having conducted survey in six panchayats of Gaya district, the study comes to suggest that improving the overall "toilet structure" and specific attributes like the capacity of disposal pit/tank are crucial for increasing toilet adoption and usage in rural areas. The study emphasizes the need to consider both stated and derived approaches in framing policies for rural sanitation. Understanding the expectations and preferences of households practising open defecation can inform the design of effective sanitation programs in India and other developing countries.

Sandeep Kumar Sinha and Pradeep Chaudhry (2019) have also studied the cost effective and sustainable construction of latrines in rural Bihar. Further, it highlights the challenges faced in achieving the goal open defecation-free (ODF), such as, the relationship between government subsidies and sanitation coverage, factors influencing sustained behavioural change in certain areas, and the role of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) in promoting better sanitation practices. The study reveals that despite government efforts to provide sanitation facilities, many households still prefer open defecation due to owing to their perceptions.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

Overall, the literature review suggests that there is gap in literature on impact of LSBA on behavior and psyche of the people. Thus, the present study intends to assess the impact of the Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan in eradicating open defecation from Bihar. The study assesses the reasons of prevalence of open defecation in the stater and suggests measures to bring desired behavioural changes among the people of Bihar. The study is a mix of qualitative and quantitative in nature. It bases on secondary sources of data collection, especially from the annual reports of the government of India and Bihar. The other secondary sources are books, research articles and various government reports. The desk-based research method is followed.

STATE OF OPEN DEFECATION IN BIHAR

Bihar is a populous state with a density of 1106 persons per square kilometers and 82.4 percent of rural population, a sizeable of them lack access to sanitation facilities which is much higher in comparison to national data (Census, 2011). The 2015 Swachhta Status Report found a modest improvement, reporting 72.8% of rural households as not having access to a toilet facility. The low coverage of sanitation facilities in Bihar resulted in poor sanitation habits. In the absence of toilet infrastructure people are forced to defecate in the open compromising the dignity of women and adolescent girls. The availability of toilet facilities differs greatly among districts, ranging from the lowest in Araria (41%) to the highest in Rohtas (82%). In seven districts, over 95% of urban households have access to toilet facilities. This include Patna, Muzaffarpur, Saharsa, Sitamarhi, Munger, Khagaria and Siwan. In the state capital Patna, over the past five years, there has been a rise in the utilization of improved sanitation facilities within households. In 2015-16, 52.3% of people in the district had access to better sanitation facilities in their homes, which increased to 61% by 2019-20.

REASONS OF PREVALENCE OF OPEN DEFECATION

Bihar has a total of 38 districts, of which 28 are flood-prone, out of which 15 districts are considered as extremely flood-prone. Nearly almost the whole of Bihar is prone to floods. Thus, flood is a recurring threat to the sustainability of Bihar's open-defecation-free (ODF) status. North Bihar has a population density of 1,294 persons per square kilometre and a population of 65.54 million (as against 103.80 million for the entire state). The state has 15 extreme flood-prone districts: Darbhanga, East Champaran, Katihar, Khagaria, Madepura, Madhubani, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Saharsa, Samastipur, Shoehar, Sitamarhi, Supaul, Vaishali and Begusarai, according to the Water Resources Department (WRD), Bihar government.

According to the Disaster Management Department, Bihar government between 2000 and 2018, 144.01 million people (approximately 28 million households) were affected by floods across 24,670 panchayats. Due to flooding in Bihar communities endure both hardship and physical discomfort. In the absence of access to latrines women and adolescent girls are particularly affected as they are left with little options to maintain privacy and personal hygiene in these conditions, exposing them to increased health and safety risks (UNICEF, 2020).

Toilet infrastructure plays a crucial role in eliminating open defecation and promoting sustainable sanitation behaviour. Despite being the third most populous state in India, Bihar lacks toilet infrastructure in both rural and urban areas (Census, 2011). Inadequate toilet infrastructure has been a persistent issue, contributing to public health concerns and hindering efforts towards achieving universal access to sanitation. In Bihar, almost two-fifths 39% of households do not have access to sanitary facilities, meaning that family members utilise fields or public spaces for defecation. Compared to urban households 12%, open defecation is more common in rural households 44%. More than three-fifths 62% of households have access to a toilet facility, with much higher accessibility in urban areas 89% than in rural areas 57% (NFHS, 2021).

Access to sanitation facilities exhibits significant disparities between households belonging to scheduled caste (SC) communities and those not affiliated with scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, or other backward class categories. The prevalence of toilet facilities ranges from 46 per cent among scheduled caste households to 82 per cent among households not categorized as scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, or other backward class. Notably, there exists substantial regional heterogeneity in toilet facility access, with figures ranging from 41 per cent in Araria to 82 per cent in Rohtas. Urban areas generally demonstrate higher rates of access, with over 95 per cent of urban households enjoying toilet facility access across seven districts, namely Saharsa, Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Munger, Patna, Khagaria, and Siwan (NFHS, 2021).

The habit of non-usage of toilets has been one of the reasons behind open defecation in Bihar. This means that households having toilet infrastructure also resort to open defecation. The practice of open defecation is also due to the prevalence of behaviour and habit among the people. It is seen that those households having access to functional toilets are also practising open defecation (Oxford Policy Management et al., 2018). In Bihar, the rate of open defecation is higher both among males and females. It was found that despite having functional toilets in comparison to men, females have a higher rate of open defecation in Bihar (Oxford Policy Management et al., 2018). To address the habit of non-usage of the toilet and bring the desired level of behavioural change among rural masses, SBM focuses more on Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities (GOI, 2014).

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION

According to the data of the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), the sanitation coverage in India was merely 40.6 %. After the launch of several sanitation programmes, the sanitation status in India remains unchanged. Poor performance of the previous sanitation programme became the reason for the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission (See Fig 1).

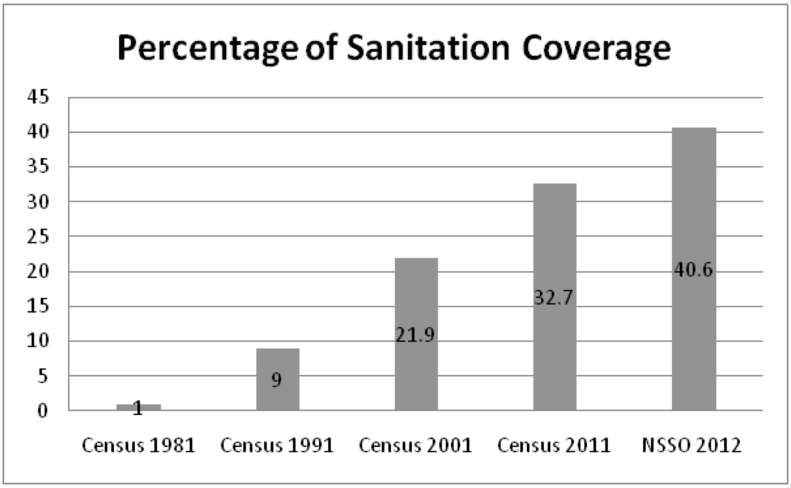

Fig. 1: Percentage of Sanitation Coverage across different Years

Source: Annual Reports Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (2014-15)

Before the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), India's sanitation coverage remained as low as 39% until 2014 (Government of India, 2014). Before that year, approximately 55 Crore individuals in rural areas lacked access to toilet facilities, significantly impacting the health and dignity of rural residents, particularly women and children.

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched on 2nd October 2014 by the Government of India to achieve a clean India by 2nd October 2019, a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary. Swachh Bharat Mission aims to provide safety, security and convenience, especially for women and children, by eliminating the shameful habit of open defecation across the country (Government of India, 2014).

SBM-Gramin, the world's largest behaviour change programme, achieved the seemingly impossible task by generating a people's movement at the grassroots. As a result, rural sanitation coverage increased from 39 per cent in 2014 to 100 per cent in 2019 with over 10.28 crore toilets built across 36 States/UTs. As of 2nd October 2019, all districts across India had declared themselves ODF.

Rural Sanitation coverage in Bihar was 23.59 % in the year 2015-16 (See Fig 2). The Sanitation coverage in the States of Odisha, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh is below the national average. Bihar was just behind Odisha in rural sanitation coverage.

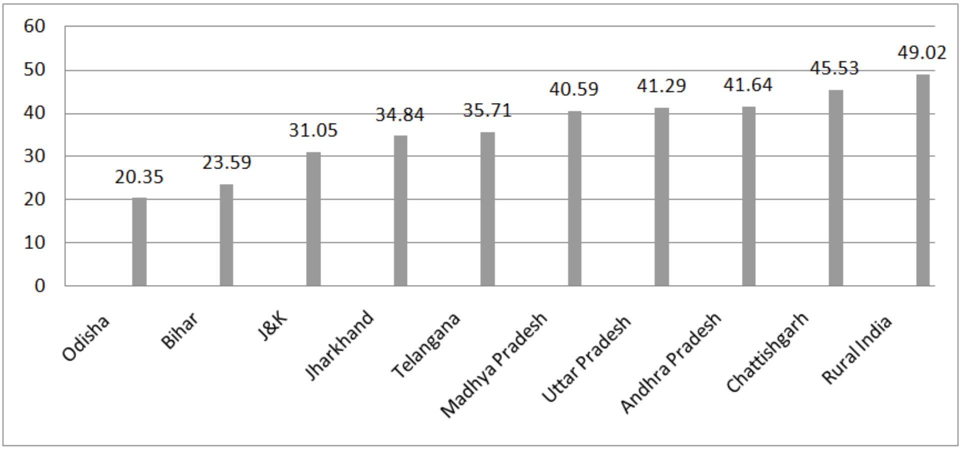

Fig. 2: State/UT Sanitation Coverage as of 31.12.2015

Source: Annual Reports 2015-201

LOHIYA SWAKSHA BIHAR ABHIYAN

The Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan (LSBA) integrates the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), a centrally sponsored scheme, with the Lohiya Swachh Yojana (LSY), a state-sponsored program, with the overarching goal of attaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) status for Bihar by October 2nd, 2019. LSBA aims to achieve an ODF Bihar by improving the cleanliness index of rural areas with a special focus on Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) among the community members. The objective is to make 8404 Gram Panchayats (GPs) of 534 blocks in 38 districts of rural Bihar ODF, covering a total of 1.6 crores IHHL by 2nd October 2019.The following are the objectives of LSBA:

a) To cover sanitation in rural areas in a time-bound manner and to achieve the "Open Defecation Free Bihar" goal.
b) To involve various stakeholders like representatives of Panchayati Raj Institution, cluster-level associations, village organizations, self-help groups, disabled self-help groups, various government departments and NGOs in the activities of the cleanliness campaign.
c) Adoption of a Community-Based Total Sanitation (CLTS) strategy to ensure collective behaviour change and safe hygiene practices that sensitize the entire community about cleanliness.
d) Implementation of Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) to ensure community-based total sanitation.

PROVISION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER LSBA

As LSBA integrates the SBM-G with the LSY programme the financial assistance under LSBA largely remains as SBM-G. An incentive of Rs 12000 in the ratio of 60:40 between central and state share is provided for the construction of Individual Households Latrines (IHHLs) in Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. In addition to the identified beneficiary under SBM-G, an additional Rs 12000 is given to the Above Poverty Line (APL) families by the Bihar Government.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LSBA

In June the implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin was transferred to the Rural Development Department, Government of Bihar. The LSBA aims to make Bihar open-defecation-free by 2nd October 2019.

TOILET CONSTRUCTION

Under the LSBA, the total number of toilets constructed during the financial year 2017-18 was close to 34.33 lakhs which was almost 2.5 times greater than the toilet constructed in the previous three financial years. In the same financial year, Bihar came out of the red zone by crossing 40% or above rural sanitation coverage. Bihar rural sanitation coverage in the year 2017-18 was more than 50% this means that around half of the rural population had access to toilet facilities.

Similarly, in the Financial Year 2018-19 around 61.33 lakh Individual household toilets (IHHL) were constructed and 20 districts were declared ODF status which includes Arwal, Aurangabad, Banka, Bhagalpur, Gaya, Gopalganj, Jamui, Jehanabad, Kaimur, Kishenganj, Munger, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Lakhisarai, Rohtas, Saran, Sheikhpura, Sitamarhi and Siwan (See Fig 3).

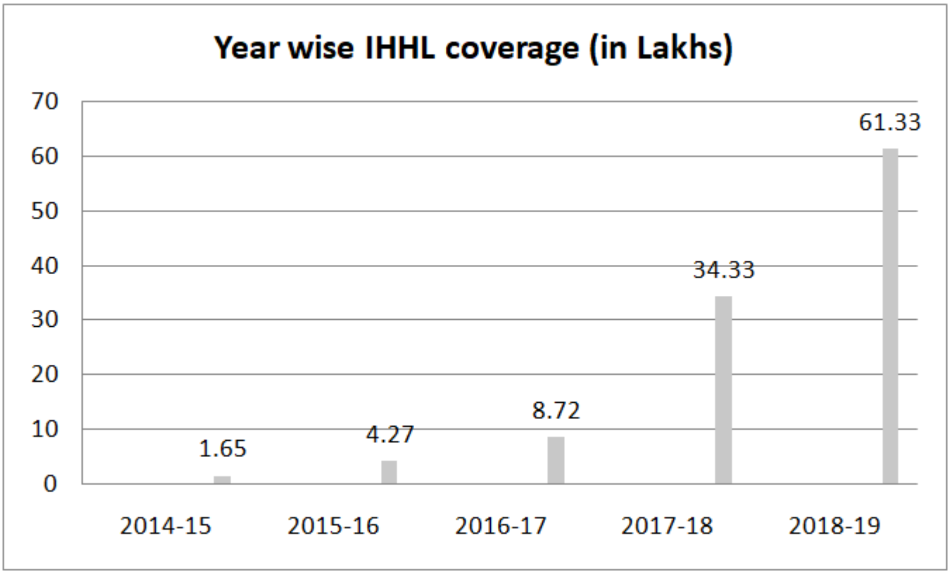

Fig. 3: Year-wise IHHL Coverage

Source: Bihar Annual Reports 2018-2019

In the Financial Year 2019-20 LSBA achieved 100 per cent IHHL coverage in rural areas and moved ahead from ODF status to ODF-S (ODF-Sustainability) status (See Table 1).

Table 1: Progress Under IHHL Construction

Particulars	*Cumulative Progress till March 2020*
IHHLs Constructed	1.26 crore
IHHLs Coverage	100%
IHHLs Payment	77.03 Lakh
Geo Tagging	80.54%
Number of villages declared ODF	38691
Number of villages verified as ODF	37307

Source: Bihar Annual Reports 2019-20

INFORMATION, EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION (IEC) ACTIVITIES

IEC activities were carried out by the Government of Bihar (GoB) under LSBA to spread awareness related to healthy sanitation practices and the use of toilets for defecation. Mass awareness campaigns were conducted across 38 districts of Bihar to promote behavioural change among people. IEC activities include the release of Swachhta Darpan, Swachhta Rath, radio and newspaper advertisements, Gaddha Khodo Abhiyan, and Milkar Banaye Swachh Bihar. The district officials of East Champaran led by the district collector launched a 102 km padayatra to raise awareness of the importance of sanitation and the use of toilets. Swachhta stalls were organized across various districts including Patna.

FOCUS ON BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Under LSBA, the Government of Bihar, making relentless efforts to facilitate collective behavioural change among the village community about the adoption of safe sanitation practices like the use of toilets along with addressing the challenges of toilet technologies, supply chain management and credit access. Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) and women-led community-based organisations nurtured by Jeevika play a very crucial role in anchoring the WASH intervention and working towards sustaining the same.

The Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan (LSBA) has embraced the adoption of Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) methodologies as a means to expand sanitation development initiatives. This approach predominantly emphasizes the cultivation of enduring behavioural transformations by motivating and mobilizing communities to comprehend the inherent risks associated with open defecation. Additionally, LSBA endeavours to address other critical components such as Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) institution building, facilitation of credit access, management of supply chains, and the provision of training for masons.

CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING OPEN DEFECATION-FREE (ODF)

The Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan was implemented to achieve ODF status in Bihar by the end of 2019. However, the implementation of the programme faces several challenges, which include:

Lack of Awareness – One of the major obstacles in the implementation of the LSBA is the lack of awareness among the citizens of Bihar. Many people are not aware of the functioning of the LSBA. This leads to a lack of demand for toilet construction and makes Bihar an ODF state.

Lack of Infrastructure – To achieve the ODF status in Bihar large number of toilet infrastructure should be constructed by creating demand among the citizens. This includes raising awareness and identifying beneficiaries for the toilet construction. Beneficiaries from APL and BPL families were selected for the proper implementation of the programme.

Habit and Behaviour of People – Most of the time people are not willing to change their behaviour of open defecation. Merely creation of toilet infrastructure not going to solve the problem of open defecation. To change the habits and behaviour of people Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities should be carried out in Gram Panchayats.

Lack of Monitoring Mechanism – According to the SBM data, toilets built in 1374 villages have not been verified once. There is a total of 38,691 villages in the state, out of which 37,317 villages have been verified once under the SBM-Gramin. As per the ministry achievement of ODF status is not a one-time process, at least two verifications need to be carried out. Toilet construction in any village in Bihar has not been verified a second time.

Insufficient Funds – The incentive provided under LSBA is Rs 12000 for the construction of Individual Household Latrines (IHHL). People in rural areas think that at least Rs 21000 is needed for the construction of robust toilet infrastructure (Sinha & Chaudhry, 2019). To promote sustainable behavioural change among people robust toilet infrastructure is needed.

Lack of Citizen Participation- The government authorities working towards providing subsidies for the construction of toilets but the people are not accepting the subsidies due to various reasons. People are not interested in building toilets and are happily defecating in the open (Sinha & Chaudhry, 2019).

SUGGESTION FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF LSBA

The government need to launch widespread awareness levels regarding the benefits of toilet construction and healthy sanitation practices. In addition to use of media, steps of community outreach programmes should be taken. Further, the government appoint local actors to raise the awareness level.

Information, Education and Communication activities (IEC) – The government should increase the funds for IEC activities to develop the awareness level among people. In 2016-17 Bihar utilised only 4.2 per cent of total funds on IEC activities (Government of India Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2017). Expenditure on IEC activities helps in developing sanitation behaviour for the long term.

Training of Swachhagrahis – Sound training should be given to grassroots motivators in Community Approaches to Sanitation (CAS) and Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS). This type of training helps generate awareness at the community level.

Double Verification of ODF villages – To get a true picture of the ODF status of villages, double verification of the villages is necessary. Officials should carry out double verification of villages and then declare ODF status to villages.

In conclusion, the implementation of Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan has faced several obstacles including lack of awareness, lack of infrastructure, habits and behaviour of people, lack of monitoring mechanism, insufficient funds, and lack of citizen participation. Addressing these obstacles requires combined efforts of government, civil societies and communities as a whole to achieve ODF status in Bihar.

Overall, the successful implementation of LSBA requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including the citizens, officials, NGOs, and the government. Addressing the above-mentioned obstacles is crucial in achieving ODF status to ODF+ and further ODF++ status in Bihar.

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ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN PROMOTING ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Anand* and Dilip Kumar**

Abstract

The decreasing reserves of coal and natural oil, quest for alternative energy sources and reduce the air pollution have created the need of shifting from petrol/diesel vehicles to electric vehicles. But there may be issues and challenges in shifting to electric vehicles. Thus the present paper, intends to examine the impact of various governmental policies and initiatives aimed at promoting electric vehicles in India. It will undertake a comparative analysis of different policy frameworks, including subsidies, incentives, infrastructure development, and regulatory measures implemented by central and state governments. This research also aims to investigate the impact of financial incentives, support and environmental implications of battery recycling policies in India. Current regulatory frameworks, industrial practices, and technological advancements related to the recycling and disposal of EV batteries will also be examined. The uptake of EVs, market penetration rates, technological advancements, and consumer behavior changes resulting from these policies has also be taken under consideration. Through empirical data collection and analysis, the research seeks to provide insights into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of current electric vehicles policies and propose recommendations for enhancing their efficacy.

Keywords: Electric vehicles, Scrapping Policy, charging Infrastructure, subsidies.

INTRODUCTION

India is the 5th largest vehicle market in the world. The Government has targeted EVs sales to be 30% of private cars, 70% of commercial cars, 40% of buses and 80% of two-wheelers and three-wheelers by 2030 (PTI: 2022) and also implemented

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several measures at both the national and state levels. There is a need for a strong electric vehicle policy, because India has declared itself to be carbon neutral by the year 2070. But still faces many challenges for a successful EV policy, including, Inadequate charging Infrastructure, Scarce battery technology and limited availability of rare earth metals, Limited Manufacturing Capabilities of domestic industry, Need for Strong Scrapping Policy and Shortage of skilled manpower for servicing and repair of EVs. etc. All the departments of the Government of Bharat are supporting this policy and setting their own targets like Indian Railways would replace 20% of its fleet with EVs by December 2023, 60% by December 2024 and achieve 100% by the end of 2025 (Wappel: 2022). Parliamentary Committee on Estimates presented a report on 'Evaluation of EVs Policy' suggesting formulation of a comprehensive national policy on Electric Vehicle in India.

SIGNIFICANCE

The research findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on EV policy effectiveness in developing economies like India. It will provide policy makers with evidence-based recommendations for refining current policies and designing future strategies to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles, thereby reducing carbon emissions, enhancing energy security, and promoting sustainable transportation solutions in the country. We already know that Greenhouse Effect, which directly leads to climate change, is primarily due to motor vehicle gas emissions. The oil is also going to be empty in the future. Therefore, Electric Vehicle is the only option left for easy transportation and saving the environment.

NEED FOR PROMOTING ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN INDIA

India's dependency on oil and oil equivalent gas imports is 78.6 percent, underscoring the need to promote EVs to curtail this reliance[3]. Improving Air Quality: Vehicular emission is a major cause of air pollution in urban areas. As EVs produce fewer emissions, they can significantly improve air quality. Typically, vehicular emission contributes 20-30% of Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 at the breathing level of air quality. At the same time, around 8% of total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions in India are from the transport sector (Shukla & Dhar, 2015), and in Delhi, it exceeds 30%. As per the 'World Air Quality Report, 2022' released by IQ Air. 39 of the top 50 most polluted cities in the world are in India. Electric Vehicle can aid in fulfilling India's international commitments under initiatives like Panchamrit, aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2070 and a billion-ton reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 (UNFCCC: 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ghosh Thirthankar (2020) has discussed the successful use of electric vehicles and future challenges have been discussed. In this, Indian policy for electric vehicles has been discussed, it has been said that the current electric vehicle industry in India is dependent on imports which are being heavily subsidized by the government, due to which investment in India has increased. Patel, nil et al. (2021) has clarified that due to lack of technology, the electric vehicle sector has not fully developed in India. That is why it is becoming very expensive here. The main reason behind this is considered to be the lack of infrastructure in the manufacturing sector. Bishnoi (2024) finds that this is of great importance for India and China because they want to reduce their oil imports. Goel et al. (2021) has considered electric vehicles as an important factor to tackle global warming and it is also a very important asset for energy security in India. In a report of NITI Ayog, Kant, Amitabh, et al. (2021) emphasized that the success of electric vehicles is possible only when a full-fledged charging station is developed. Just as there is a network of petrol pumps all over India, similarly there should be charging stations as well. It has also been emphasized that charging stations should be built at the places where petrol pumps are already established.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Present paper intends to review and analyze the evolution of electric vehicle policies in India from inception to the present. Further, it assesses the impact and effectiveness of government subsidies and incentives on the adoption of electric vehicles by consumers and businesses and to evaluate the effectiveness of infrastructure development initiatives such as charging stations and battery swapping networks.

This research is descriptive and analytical in nature and study is based on only secondary data which is collected from books, journal, Google Scholar, newspaper, government reports and internet.

STATUS OF ELECTRICAL VEHICLES IN INDIA

In India, the transportation industry has become one of the most significant sources of air pollution. To reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions from various vehicles, the Indian government has implemented several measures at both the national and state levels. In 2021, COP 26 took place in Glasgow, Scotland and featured a Historic moment for the country of India when it committed to achieving Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2070. As one of the top producers of greenhouse gases, the country's electrification of its transport sector continues to be crucial to its push to rapidly reduce Emission.

India now dominates the [2]Whellar and [3]Whellar markets and is among the top five in passenger cars and commercial vehicles (CVs). Despite this, the country's EV share remains minimal. In 2012, more than 104806 EVs were registered in India (GoI: 2012). Electric buses are gradually becoming a common source of transportation. More than 400 electric buses were sold in FY 2021. This figure will reach around 900 in FY 2022. The government recommended several measures to increase market penetration of EVs in India. In this article we will discuss government initiatives for electric vehicles in India. India has made better progress in the field of electronic vehicles. If we talk at the provincial level in the context of India, then Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have the highest number of electronic registrations, which is clearly shown in the following Figure no.1

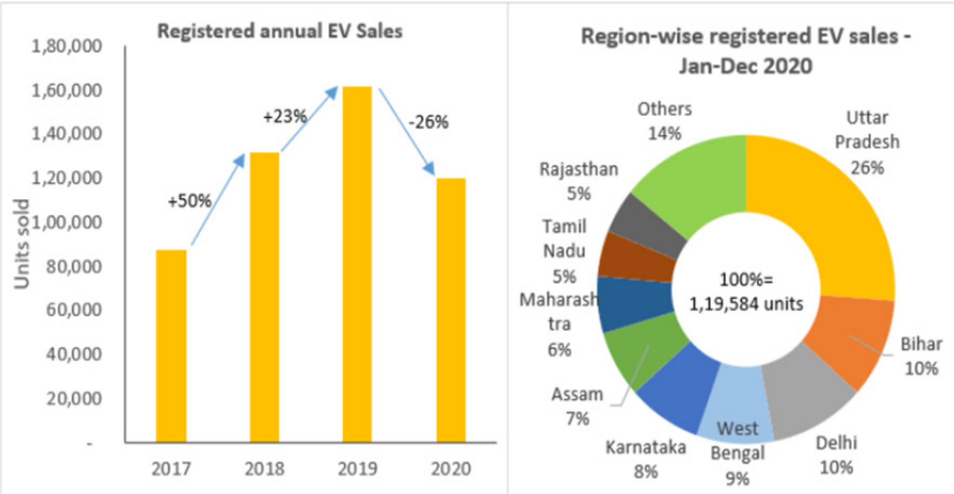

Figure 1: Registered EVs Sales trends in India

Source: Vahan Dashboard, JMK Research.

The number of vehicles has increased continuously since the year 2017 but due to Covid-19 in the year 2020 there was a slight decrease in the production but now in the year 2023 the production is again in a continuously increasing trend.

The Indian government is making tireless efforts to increase the number of electric vehicles, but if we compare it with countries like China and America, we are lagging far behind in this field and for this it is necessary that we do a comparative study to find out. What policies did they adopt that made their electronic vehicle production so large? We can understand these data better through the Figure no.2 given below.

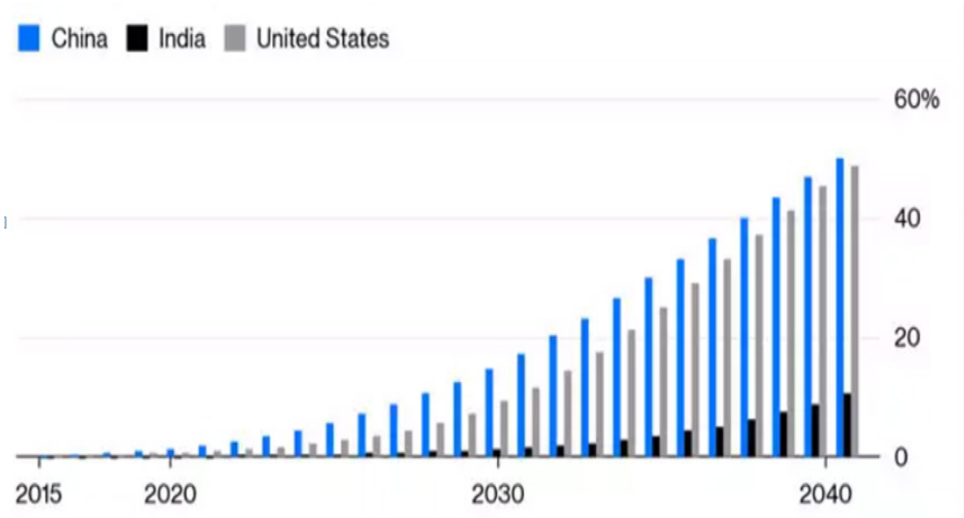

Figure 2: Comparative share of EVs production (India, China and USA)

Source: BNEF Bloomberg Opinion

The Indian government has set aggressive targets but even in the U.S. and china, electric vehicles are still a small portion of their total vehicle fleets.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The government introduced several measures in line with the 'Make in India' campaign to encourage manufacturers to produce components locally and create a structured policy framework as India is heavily dependent on China for lithium supply chains hindering widespread deployment of EVs.

1. In 2010, the Ministry of Renewable Energy (MNRE), announced a financial incentive for manufacturers for EVs sold in India. It was the first concrete decision to incentivize EVs. However, it was withdrawn by the MNRE in March 2012.
2. NEMMP (National Electric Mobility Mission Plan): This scheme was launched in 2013 by DHI (Department of Heavy Industry) as a roadmap for faster manufacturing and adoption of electric vehicles in India.
3. FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) Phase-1: As part of this scheme, the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and EVs in India (FAME) scheme was notified in April 2015 to promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology. It has mainly focused on 4 aspects: technology platform, charging information, demand generation, pilot projects and demand generation (GoI: 2015).

4. FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) Phase II: It was launched in 2019 for 3 years; the scheme has an outlay of US$1.36 billion which will be used to provide upfront incentives on the purchase of electric vehicles and support the development of charging infrastructure. This phase focuses primarily on supporting the electrification of public transport and intends to support about 5 lakh electric 3-wheelers, 55,000 electric 4-wheelers and 7,000 electric buses through subsidies (Bansal & Goyal: 2020).
5. Amendments to FAME Phase II: In 2021, the government announced further amendments to Phase II to boost demand for electric vehicles among customers. In this revised policy, the battery size-linked subsidy per electric 2-wheeler has been increased from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 per kWh. Additionally, electric 2-wheeler manufacturers can now offer discounts of up to 40% to customers, much higher than the earlier limit of 20%. The amendments or changes in the policy have been welcomed by industry stakeholders, who are now expecting sales of over 6 million units from the 2-wheeler electric vehicle business by 2050.
6. Department of Science and Technology: It has launched a major challenge to develop an Indian standard for EV charging infrastructure.
7. Ministry of Power: It has clarified that charging electric vehicles is considered a service, which means that electric vehicle charging stations will not require a licence to operate and it has also released a policy on charging infrastructure to enable early adoption of electric vehicles. On January 14, 2022, revised joint guidelines and standards for charging infrastructure for EVs were promulgated.
8. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH): It has announced that both commercial and private battery-operated vehicles will be issued green license plates. It has also stated that all battery-operated, ethanol-powered and methanol-powered transport vehicles will be exempted from the requirement of commercial permits (Sreeram & Preetha: 2019).
9. NITI Aayog: The NMTMBS has been approved by the Cabinet, and the inter-ministerial guidance committee of the mission will be guided by the CEO of NITI Aayog. The mission aims to create a PMP or phased manufacturing programme for 5 years by 2024, to support the establishment of large-scale, export-competitive integrated battery and cell-manufacturing giga plants in India. On 20 April 2022, NITI Aayog released the Battery Swapping Policy and invited comments by 05 June 2022.
10. Battery Swapping Policy- which provides incentives for scrapping old vehicles and purchasing new electric vehicles. (a) Duty Reduction on Electric Vehicles - As per the budget, customs duty on nickel ore and concentrate will be reduced from 5% to 0%, on nickel oxide from 10% to 0%, and on Ferro nickel from

15% to 2.5%. Nickel manganese cobalt (NMC) is an essential component of lithium-ion batteries used in electric cars (Dhar and Pathak: 2016).

11. Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme: For manufacturing Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACCs) in the country to reduce battery prices in the country. Auto and Auto Components PLI Scheme, hydrogen fuel cell based vehicles which are zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) are covered under this (Shah: 2019).
12. Green License Plate: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) announced that battery-operated vehicles will be given green license plates and will be exempted from permit requirements (Nair, Rao, Mishra: 2017).
13. Several states (including Delhi, UP, MP, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh etc) have notified their EV policies with the aim to promote manufacturing of electric vehicles in their respective states and increase their demand (Sahoo, Harichandan & Kar: 2022).
14. ISRO has commercialized indigenously developed lithium-ion battery technology and selected 14 companies (Dimitriu & Tiwari: 2014) for technology transfer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Reduce the initial cost of ownership of EVs by providing subsidies, tax incentives and financing schemes for both consumers and manufacturers.

(2) Encourage domestic manufacturing of EVs and related components through incentives and supportive policies.

(3) Increase awareness among the public by launching campaigns, portals and platforms to educate them about the benefits and incentives of EVs.

(4) Improve power distribution and supply by investing in renewable energy sources, smart grids and energy storage systems.

(5) Reduce the charging time of EVs by developing fast-charging and battery-swapping technology and standards.

(6) Expand EV charging infrastructure by creating a network of public and private charging stations across the country with adequate quality and accessibility.

(7) Increasing service centers and repair options for EVs by training and certifying technicians, mechanics and dealers for maintenance and servicing of EVs.

(8) Encouraging government institutions, including public transport authorities, to adopt EVs in their fleets. This will create significant demand for EVs, boost the market and demonstrate the viability of electric mobility.

(9) Developing a domestic battery manufacturing ecosystem and reducing dependence on imports is critical to address this challenge.

CONCLUSION

India has set a very ambitious target of achieving net zero by 2070 at the UNFCC COP26 (The E T: 2022). Electric vehicles have a key role to play in achieving this goal. We can build a green India quickly with proper understanding and the need for sustainable mobility. The effects of incentives are undeniable when it comes to government subsidy schemes. Overall, electric vehicles provide a cleaner, more efficient, and cost-effective alternative to traditional gasoline-powered vehicles, and with the right infrastructure and policies, they can play a major role in reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions while improving energy independence. We hope these initiatives will help India continue its path towards a greener future.

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INDIA'S STRATEGIC VISION IN THE 21st CENTURY: AN EXAMINATION OF TRANSFORMING INDO-US RELATIONS

Nikita Raj*

Abstract

In post-cold war period, the global power dynamics has witnessed a sea of change due to emergence of unipolar world and dominance of traded in international relations. India also has to change its policy of strategic dependence on Russia which is further influenced by trends of global trade. With the beginning of 21st century, the growing China's influence in Asian region, India required to diversify its foreign policy away from Moscow and foster a strategic partnership with Washington. India's alliance with the US has become increasingly crucial in addressing perceived threats and safeguarding its interests in the region. The situation makes it imperative to assess India's strategic vision especially its inclination towards better relation with United States of America. Thus the present paper intends to examine the factors influencing India's inclination towards US. It finds that the rise of corporate influence, cultural nationalism and influence of Bhartiye Janta Party have cemented India's inclination towards a closer relationship with US.

Keywords: Grand Strategy, Strategic Partnership, Structural Realism, Non-alignment, Major Powers.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, India and the United States have cultivated a strong strategic partnership, primarily driven by shared concerns about China's growing influence and assertiveness in Asia. India's grand strategy has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from a non-aligned stance and dependence on Russia for military equipment and technology to a more assertive posture as an emerging global power. To counter potential encirclement and threats from China

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and Pakistan, India has forged a robust alliance with the United States (Bajpai et al: 2014). In response the US has shifted its foreign policy, gradually distancing itself from China and its former 'major non-NATO ally,' Pakistan. Instead, the US has embraced a strategy of quadrilateral cooperation with India, Japan and Australia to contain China's expansion and influence. This evolving partnership reflects the US recognition of India as a crucial and long-term strategic ally (Rajgopalan: 2012)

The Asian strategic landscape can be best understood within the framework of structural realism, which suggests a largely anarchic system and an impending power transition from the US to China. As China's influence and assertiveness continue to grow, it increasingly challenges the established status quo in the region. The emerging US-India strategic partnership is unfolding at a pivotal moment in the strategic evolution of Asia as the region moves from unipolarity to multipolarity (Mohan: 2017). The US has experienced a relative decline in power within Asia, particularly since the global financial crisis of 2008. In contrast, China and India have significantly increased their power and influence. The US efforts to maintain its dominant position in the region are facing growing challenges as China and other countries assert their national interests. Additionally, Russia's deepening alignment with China partly in opposition to the US pivot to Asia, further complicates the regional strategic landscape (Lukin: 2018).

Facing an increasingly assertive China, Japan has adopted a more assertive defence and security stance, leading to confrontations. In contrast the US is maintaining a presence in Asia through alliances with Japan, Australia and South Korea, as well as partnerships with countries like India. The primary strategy for maintaining order and stability in Asia amidst China's rise as a major power is power balancing. Realists argue that deterring a rising power's aggression requires forming alliances or partnerships with powers of equal or greater strength. In Asia, several security ties have been established to facilitate this balancing with the emerging Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) potentially becoming the most significant in the long term (Satake & Ishihara: 2012).

An important consideration is how the relationship between India and the US will develop in an increasingly multipolar Asia. While a formal alliance is unlikely due to China's growing economic influence and India's pursuit of an independent grand strategy, the threat of encirclement and China's advancements in the Himalayas has strengthened their defence and strategic partnership. As Asia becomes more multipolar, China's assertive behaviour may prompt the US and India to establish an even closer relationship (Friedberg: 2011). The shifting dynamics among China, the US and India will undoubtedly define Asian security in the 21st century (Madan: 2012).

FROM ADVERSARIES TO PARTNERS: THE EVOLVING INDIA-US RELATIONSHIP

For over four decades, the Cold War and bipolarity profoundly shaped Indo-US relations, despite the two countries shared democratic values. In its efforts to contain the Soviet Union, the United States found a willing ally in Pakistan, India's arch-rival. From 1954 to 1990, the US forged and maintained an alliance with Pakistan, leading to suspicions about India's ties with the Soviet Union and its strategy of strategic autonomy and socialist economic development (Kalyanaraman: 2014). During Prime Minister Nehru's leadership, India played a pivotal role in establishing the Non-Aligned Movement, distancing itself from the United States and its containment policies. Although there was a brief period of support from the US for India in the late 1950s and 1960s during the perceived Chinese aggression, particularly during the 1962 Sino-Indian border war the relationship deteriorated in the late 1960s, reaching a low point during the conflict that led to the formation of Bangladesh. In March 1971, the United States leaned towards Pakistan, despite its military's severe human rights violations in the country's eastern region. In response India signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in August, indicating a departure from non-alignment and an increased reliance on Moscow for arms supplies. In 1972, the United States formed a quasi-alliance with China against the Soviet Union, further strengthening the US-China-Pakistan axis and pushing India closer to the Soviet Union.

The 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which came into force in 1970, singled out India among the US and its allies. Despite India's nuclear weapons program in the 1960s, it refrained from testing and aimed for peaceful nuclear explosions, aligning itself with the emerging non-proliferation regime. However, in 1974 India conducted a 'peaceful nuclear test,' which was met with objections from the US and its allies. This led to the enactment of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act by the US Congress and the Carter administration in 1978, resulting in a cut off of nuclear fuel supplies to India (Lantis: 2015). Upon assuming power in 1998, the BJP made good on its pledge to conduct nuclear tests, thereby progressing towards establishing India as a recognized nuclear weapons state and a major power. Subsequently, India formulated an undisclosed new grand strategy aimed at harnessing its burgeoning national power, furthering its nuclear weapons program and upholding a credible minimal deterrent (Narang: 2013).

During the 1990s, the US viewed India and Pakistan as equals in terms of their nuclear weapons programs and the Kashmir issue. Despite Pakistan's involvement in nuclear proliferation and sponsorship of terrorism, the US encouraged India to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir and did not differentiate between the nuclear behaviours of the two countries. Both nations were urged to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as non-nuclear weapons states. Sanctions were imposed on both countries after their nuclear tests in 1998, but the US gradually lifted most economic sanctions on India due to its counterterrorism efforts and non-aggressive nuclear stance. President Bill Clinton's visit to India in 2000 marked a shift towards recognizing New Delhi as a potential great power, a stance that continued under President George W. Bush's administration.

FROM PARTNERSHIP TO PIVOTAL ROLE: INDIA'S GRAND STRATEGY IN THE 2000S

The Bush administration introduced a new realist approach to engaging with Asia, departing from the previous administration's methods. A key development during this period was the US decision to separate its India-Pakistan policy, acknowledging India's potential as a strategic partner to counter China's rise. Prime Minister Vajpayee eagerly embraced this opportunity, collaborating with the Bush administration to establish a strategic partnership. This led to the significant decision to lift long-standing military and economic sanctions in September 2001, marking a pivotal moment in the bilateral relationship.

Following the 9/11 attacks, India's growing confidence and the US overtures culminated in a strategic alliance. India joined the global coalition against terrorism, offering invaluable logistical support to American forces and basing rights for operations targeting the Taliban and al-Qaeda. This partnership was rooted in their shared adversaries. However, Pakistan's aggressive pursuit of similar benefits from the United States in October 2001 posed a significant strategic challenge for India. The US intervention in the region marked a turning point, resulting in the overthrow of the Taliban regime—a longstanding adversary of India—and compelling Pakistan to reduce its support for anti-India terrorism. In November 2001, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee hailed the United States and India as 'natural allies,' emphasizing his commitment to the global counterterrorism effort (Press Trust of India: 2001).

After the Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001, India mobilized and deployed 700,000 troops along the Line of Control and the Pakistan border. Although India threatened military action, it refrained from launching offensive operations or even engaging in 'limited conventional war' actions (Kampani: 2002). Throughout 2002, the US exerted significant pressure on India to prevent a punitive strike against Pakistani forces and terrorist camps. Analysis from US war games suggested that any limited conventional warfare initiated by India could potentially escalate into a nuclear conflict (Kapila: 2002). The collaboration between the US and India in combating terrorism and addressing regional matters set the stage for the 2004 'Next Steps in Strategic Partnership,' which expanded cooperation in nuclear energy, high technology, space exploration, missile defence and other military areas.[1]

In May 2004, despite a shift in foreign policy under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, India reaffirmed its commitment to a strategic partnership with the US, particularly in the area of civilian nuclear cooperation. By March 2005, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice publicly endorsed the Bush administration's intention to support India's emergence as a global power (Rajghatta: 2005). By June 2005, New Delhi and Washington had outlined a more ambitious course for the India-US Defence Relationship, establishing a framework for enhanced cooperation in areas such as joint military exercises, technology transfers and counterterrorism initiatives.[16] As a result, the Indian military engaged in more joint exercises with the US than with any other country, participating in several exercises annually. By 2008, the US had emerged as India's largest defence equipment supplier, with India acquiring billions of dollars' worth of American military hardware.

The collaborative efforts between the Bush administration and the UPA government resulted in a landmark civilian nuclear agreement, a pivotal move that acknowledged India's de facto nuclear weapons status while advancing global non-proliferation objectives. After a protracted and politically complex negotiation process, the Bush administration bolstered by the influential 'US-India lobby,' secured congressional approval for the historic 'nuclear deal' in 2008 (Mistry: 2013). This agreement elevated India to the ranks of the five officially recognized nuclear weapons states, traditionally the stewards of the non-proliferation regime and marked a new chapter in India's foreign policy. The US subsequently lifted its long-standing sanctions on nuclear trade with India, citing the country's exemplary non-proliferation record and its dedication to maintaining the integrity of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The nuclear deal and the US-India strategic partnership solidified the Bush administration's vision for India as a major power with a prominent strategic role in Asia (Kessler: 2007). Some officials and advisors within the administration viewed these initiatives as essential for positioning India as a counterbalance to China's rapid ascent as a strategic competitor, with the potential for a future alliance (Cheow: 2007). Conversely, certain US policymakers perceived the protracted three-year process for India to ratify the nuclear deal as indicative of the country's complex political system and bureaucratic hurdles. Additionally, some US observers questioned whether Indian leaders possessed the strategic foresight and assertiveness needed to develop the capabilities required for a major partnership, let alone a potential alliance. The US-India partnership also prompted questions about how India would leverage this alliance to bolster its global influence.

Building on the foundation laid by the Bush administration, President Barack Obama reaffirmed the strategic partnership with India, emphasizing in November

2009 that the US and India were 'natural allies,' bound by their shared commitment to free-market democracy and mutual goals of peace and security in the Asian region (Whitelaw: 2009). In his April 2009 address in Prague, President Obama articulated his vision for a world free of nuclear weapons, outlining the steps necessary to achieve this ambitious goal and acknowledging the challenges that lay ahead. In response, India actively engaged in the Obama administration's 'nuclear security initiative,' aimed at preventing violent extremists from acquiring nuclear materials.[2] Furthermore, India upheld its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, established after its tests in May 1998, as a testament to its commitment to non-proliferation (Zerbo: 2018) .

To reinforce its role as a responsible non-proliferation partner, New Delhi challenged Iran's lack of transparency in its nuclear program during International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meetings in 2005 and 2009 (Bagchi: 2013). India also worked with the US to advance negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and a nuclear weapons convention (Burgess: 2013). Additionally, Washington and New Delhi collaborated to support India's bid to join key international non-proliferation and arms control regimes, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement on export controls and the Australia Group on chemical and biological export controls (Latif: 2012). While India successfully joined the MTCR and the Wassenaar Arrangement in 2017 and the Australia Group in 2018, China's opposition has hindered India's NSG membership, reflecting Beijing's strategy to limit India's rise in global power and prestige (Bana: 2015).

A TURNING POINT: THE US-INDIA PARTNERSHIP IN CRISIS, 2009-2014

From 2001 to 2009, the US-India relationship grew significantly, highlighted by the 2008 civilian nuclear agreement. However, after the Congress Party's re-election in 2009, the relationship stagnated. The Congress Party's commitment to Nehruvian principles and strategic autonomy, along with internal party divisions and bureaucratic resistance to changing traditional foreign policies, contributed to this cooling. US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke faced criticism for trying to include Kashmir in peace efforts for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, concerns over the Obama administration's focus on China and limited technology transfer from the US led India to choose French Dassault Rafale fighters over US aircraft.

The Obama administration's 2011 'pivot' to Asia, aimed at countering China's rising assertiveness, reaffirmed the US commitment to strengthening its strategic partnership with India. Despite this, the Indian government was cautious, fearing increased pressure for a deeper alliance. The pivot focused on diplomatic and economic measures to address Chinese challenges while preparing militarily for potential conflicts. It sought to create a trilateral partnership with India and China to influence Asia's security landscape. The Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) were introduced to boost US technology transfer and promote domestic production of American defence equipment in India. However, progress was hindered by bureaucratic and political barriers, and some Indian observers viewed the relationship as mainly transactional, emphasizing military hardware sales over broader economic benefits.

RESURGENT TIES: MODI AND THE US-INDIA PARTNERSHIP

The BJP's decisive victory in the May 2014 general election and the rise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi signalled a revival of Indian nationalism and a renewal of the strategic partnership with the US. Modi's administration focused on industrialization and job creation through the 'Make in India' initiative, while also enhancing military capabilities (Goswami, &Thakur: 2016). Confronted with a growing strategic challenge from China and its allies, the new government sought increased support from the US. Despite Modi's controversial past, he and President Obama overcame previous differences and established a strong personal rapport. Modi extended an invitation to Obama for India's January 2015 Republic Day celebrations, marking the historic first visit by a US president to this event.

In 2014, India and the US established a contact group that effectively addressed several programmatic deadlocks. They also set up over fifty bilateral mechanisms, including the India-US Commercial and Strategic Dialogue, to tackle various issues. In 2015, the Modi administration introduced an insurance arrangement to resolve liability concerns in civilian nuclear energy cooperation that had been unresolved since 2008. Preparatory work for the sale of six Westinghouse nuclear power plants began in 2016 (Pant & Joshi: 2017). Despite these advancements, significant challenges remained in the partnership, particularly regarding differences over Iran and India's commitment to strategic autonomy (Jain: 2016).

In June 2015, the US and India signed a ten-year renewal of the Defence Framework Agreement, marking a significant upgrade in their defence relations. This renewed framework emphasized the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) and outlined plans for the co-development and co-production of defence technologies and services. Key aspects of the agreement included joint efforts to develop mobile electric hybrid power sources and advanced protective gear for soldiers in biohazard environments (Rosen & Jackson: 2017). Additionally, it facilitated collaboration on jet engine technology, aircraft carriers, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms.

In 2016, the Obama administration granted India the status of a Major Defence Partner, enabling further co-development, co-production and the transfer of sensitive defence technology. Additionally, the US and India signed the Logistics

Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), first proposed in 2004. Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, the agreement allowed for the Indian Navy to use US bases such as Diego Garcia, and for the US to utilize Indian bases in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (Pant & Joshi: 2017).

In 2017, the operationalization of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) began, with a US Navy tanker refuelling an Indian Navy ship in the Pacific Ocean. Both nations also focused on enhancing cyber security cooperation. However, they still need to finalize key agreements, including the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (CISMOA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (Tellis: 2017).

When President Donald Trump took office in January 2017 with his "America First" agenda, concerns arose in India about a possible decline in relations and the risk of a trade war. Despite these apprehensions, Trump expressed a strong interest in pursuing economic agreements with India and sustaining the defence partnership. In response, Prime Minister Modi promptly engaged with Trump to reinforce bilateral ties (Madan: 2017).

In June 2017, a military standoff occurred in the Himalayas due to China's encroachment into the Doklam Plateau, an area historically protected by India on behalf of Bhutan. The incursion aimed to construct a road that infringed on Bhutanese territory, prompting the Indian Army to intervene and resulting in a 73-day standoff with the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Although India showed strong resolve, it was cautious about escalating the conflict. India also expressed concerns that the US was framing the issue within the broader context of China's territorial disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea, feeling the US had not clearly supported India and Bhutan. Despite these concerns, both US and Indian officials viewed the Doklam standoff as a critical moment that could strengthen cooperation between the two nations and their allies.

In August 2017, President Trump outlined a new US strategy for South Asia that marked a significant shift in American policy. The strategy entailed increasing the US military presence in Afghanistan, raising troop levels to over ten thousand, with an emphasis on maintaining a sustained presence (Dockx: 2018). A key component of this strategy was to apply pressure on Pakistan to combat terrorist groups operating from its territory, and to encourage India to play a greater role in providing economic and developmental support to Afghanistan.

Under Secretary of Defence James Mattis, the Department of Defence worked to strengthen defence relations, partly as a counterbalance to China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean and broader Asia. Mattis advocated for a close military partnership between the US and India, highlighting the idea that "the world's two greatest democracies should have the two greatest militaries."[3]

This vision was reinforced during the ASEAN summit in Manila in November 2017, where President Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi publicly committed to elevating India's status as a key US defence partner. The December 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) further solidified this commitment, emphasizing the deepening of the strategic partnership with India and supporting its role in regional security in the Indian Ocean and beyond.[4]

The US has criticized Pakistan for its failure to effectively combat the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network within its borders. In March 2018, the Trump administration introduced the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy' (FOIPS) and a 'strong coalition of democracies,' shifting away from Obama's 'Rebalance to Asia' (Panda: 2017). However, Trump's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018 renewed sanctions on Iran, risking India's energy supplies and straining US-India relations.[5] India's acquisition of the Russian S-400 air defence system also complicated its ability to purchase US combat aircraft and risked potential US sanctions.

Under the Biden administration, the US has continued to prioritize its strategic partnership with India, focusing on countering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. The two nations have strengthened their defence collaboration through joint exercises and new agreements. Despite facing challenges, such as trade disputes and divergent international policies, the US-India partnership remains strong and adapts to evolving global dynamics.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES AND MULTILATERAL DEFENCE: NAVIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP AND INDIA'S GRAND STRATEGY

The Quadrilateral Defence Cooperation (QUAD), comprising India, Japan, the US and Australia has significantly advanced in recent years due to rising concerns over China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific. The group has become more cohesive through regular defence minister meetings, progress in bilateral defence relations, and joint military exercises. They have engaged in dialogues like Track 1.5 and Track II, including a Japan-Australia-India maritime security dialogue, which has further strengthened their cooperation (Yamaguchi: 2024).

India and the US have notably expanded their defence collaboration through initiatives such as the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and a proposal to produce new F-16 Block 70 fighter jets in India. This not only supports India's "Make in India" campaign but also improves interoperability between the US and Indian air forces.[6] Additionally, the US has permitted India to use its Diego Garcia base for logistical support, while India has agreed to make the Nicobar Islands accessible to the US. These enhanced defence ties contribute to regional stability and act as a strategic counterbalance to China's increasing influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

The overall vision is to establish a multilateral defence network aimed at enforcing freedom of navigation, with India willing to collaborate with the US to a certain extent in patrolling the Indian Ocean. However, India aims to maintain its "strategic autonomy" and avoid entering into a formal alliance with the US to prevent complications with China. India seeks further assistance from the US to strengthen their strategic partnership without forming a formal alliance. This development could potentially enable the Indian Navy to relieve the US Navy of certain responsibilities in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and Persian/Arab Gulf in the 2020s. Furthermore, India may eventually confront China's anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) strategy in the Indian Ocean, necessitating the development of its own 'air-sea battle' operational concept, which will require modernization and support from the US.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of India-US relations and India's grand strategy over the past two decades reflects shifting power dynamics and a commitment to structural realism. The rise of China as a major Asian power has further strengthened this partnership. Domestic factors, such as the growth of capitalism, nationalism, and the dominance of the BJP, have also played a significant role. These elements have heightened India's interest in collaborating with the US to counterbalance China's increasing influence in South Asia and the potential threat of encirclement. As a result, a tripolar balance of power is becoming increasingly likely, and India is expected to leverage its position by balancing the US and China while maintaining strategic autonomy and partnerships with both countries.

Despite these challenges, the trajectory of the India-US relationship remains positive. Both nations share a commitment to democratic values and a rules-based international order. As China's influence in the region grows, India and the US are likely to continue their strategic partnership to counterbalance Beijing's power. The exact nature of this partnership—whether it evolves into a formal alliance or remains a strategic partnership—will depend on future developments, particularly related to China's actions and US commitment to the region.

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NEP 2020, LOBA AND COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH TO SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Government of India has introduced National Education Policy 2020 with an objective to impart skill-based quality education and instilling competency among students. It is largely argued that quality education at school level is a prerequisite for improvement in educational eco-system in India. This requires the need of ensuring learning outcome approach (LOBA) and competency based learning approach. Well thought Learning outcomes (LoC) ensure specificity, objectivity, measurability and precision in the teaching learning processes. As such, the present paper intends to examine the LoC and competency based school education in the light of NEP 2020 which has placed emphasis on attainment of foundational literacy and numeracy in early grades and has prescribed for overhauling the curricular, pedagogical and assessment practices so as to make learning outcomes oriented and infused with quality.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Learning Outcomes, Competency-Based, School Education, India

INTRODUCTION

The Learning Outcomes-Based Approach (LOBA) is sweeping the curriculum development process across all stages of education today. The implementation of learning outcomes represents a momentous stride in enhancing the efficacy and quality of education. These outcomes pertain to particular skills, information, and abilities that students are anticipated to gain during their education or rather

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upon the completion of a set of modules (Adam, 2004; Mann, 2004). The early reference to the idea of learning outcomes can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, rooted in the behaviourist theories of Ivan Pavlov, JB Watson, and BF Skinner. These pioneers viewed human behaviour as a product of responses to environmental stimuli, emphasizing the need for observable and measurable learning outcomes. Robert Mager (1984) advanced this notion by developing precise instructional objectives, which clearly articulated expected learning results. Over time, these objectives evolved into the more defined learning outcomes approach, refined by educators in the UK, New Zealand, and later European countries.

Learning outcomes are specific, measurable statements that describe what students are expected to know, do, and value at the end of a learning experience. Learning outcomes are more specific and focused, detailing particular achievements within a course or programme and are achieved within the structured environment of the course or program (Kennedy, 2006).

The concept of learning outcomes has received prominence through developments in outcome-based education (Nusche, 2008). These determine the organization of curriculum content, the courses offered, the teaching methods and strategies, the assessment process and the overall educational environment. It is defined as concise statements that describe the knowledge, understanding, and skills that a learner should possess upon completing a learning process (Ellis: 2004; Melton, 1996). In the 21st century, learning outcomes have become central to educational reforms, and significant in enhancing the competitiveness and transparency of educational systems. This shift marks a transition from a focus on teaching to one on learning, encouraging a critical examination of educational practices (Adam, 2004). Benjamin Bloom's 'Mastery Learning Instructional Model' introduced the idea that educators should identify prerequisite knowledge to support all students, including slower learners. Therefore, philosophy of outcome-based education underscores the necessity of providing opportunities for all learners to succeed (Spady, 2020).

THE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE AND FOCUS ON QUALITY EDUCATION

The Indian constitution aims for free and compulsory education for all children, leading to various initiatives to improve school education standards. Significant policies and initiatives include the Education Commission (1964-1966), the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme in 1975, National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The 86th constitutional amendment in 2002 made the Right to Education a fundamental right in the constitution, ensuring free and compulsory education for children aged six to fourteen years. The Yashpal Committee Report in 1993 raised concerns about the quality of education, while the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2009 provided suggestions for curriculum design, teacher training, professional development, educational infrastructure improvements, digital learning, and inclusive education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the integration of learning outcomes into curricula, transforming curricular and assessment methods.

Since the post-independence era, the Indian education landscape has undergone significant changes. Primary education as foundation years of learning has received much attention, reflecting the country's evolving priorities and challenges. The first National Policy on Education in 1968 emphasized the importance of universalizing primary education and improving its quality. The first Five-Year Plan (1951-1956) laid the foundation for educational development, while the Education Commission 1966 made recommendations for improvement of the education system. The 1970-00s saw significant expansion of primary education, with initiatives like the National Policy on Education 1968 and the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) establishing minimum learning levels for children. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001 aimed to provide universal access to elementary education and improve the quality of education through teacher training, curriculum reform, and community participation. The NCF 2005 advocated for a child-centric approach to education, promoting active learning methodologies, critical thinking, and problem-solving. The Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 mandated free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14, and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme addressed malnutrition and improved school attendance rates. In recent years, there has been a focus on leveraging technology to improve primary education outcomes, with initiatives like the Digital India campaign and ICT in education enhancing teaching-learning processes.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Equity and inclusion are essential components of Learning Outcomes-Based Approach (LOBA). LOBA can be modified to promote fairness and equality by supporting students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Culturally relevant pedagogy in LOBA can improve student involvement and academic performance. Student assessments have been a central focus, with concepts like comprehensive and continuous evaluation and No-Detention Policy (NDP) advocating for a study atmosphere free from anxiety and social disapproval.

National documents have identified concepts related to fairness and inclusion, such as child-led, locally tailored activity-based learning, minimal levels of learning, and standardized learning outcomes. Decentralisation has been shown to effectively mitigate social polarization among students from various genders, levels of education, and social backgrounds.

Despite efforts to improve physical infrastructure and resources in schools, disparities persist such as urban-rural divides, lack of sufficient classrooms, insufficient teachers, and high pupil-teacher ratios. Enhanced educational outcomes require redistribution of resources and institutional reforms, including changes in sector structure, administration, and incentive mechanisms.

LEARNING OUTCOME BASED APPROACH IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Through consistent efforts , the objective of access and retention of students in school has been met to a great extent but the endeavour for the quality of education still remains elusive. Since the NPE 1986 and its Programme of Action 1992, successive education policies have focused on the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) at the primary stage level. Despite these efforts, huge gaps have been identified in intended and achieved learning levels, particularly in government schools. Regular assessment surveys, such as the National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) 2022, show significant disparities and learning gaps across different states. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in substantial educational setbacks, causing students to perform below their anticipated level of competency.

The FLN (2022) report provides a comprehensive analysis of India's efforts to improve early-grade education, focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy. It highlights that only 42% of students achieve the Global Minimum Proficiency (GMP) standard in numeracy, and only 20% meet the GMP standard for Oral Reading Fluency. The NAS (2021) survey also shows that a significant percentage of students in India face difficulties in achieving desired learning results, with Grade 3 students having lower scores in mathematics and language. Socio-economic factors play a significant role in these differences, with students from rural and economically deprived areas often having worse performance.

To address the issues of quality in school education, the document titled 'Learning Outcomes at Elementary Stage 2017' has been introduced by NCERT in 2017, which serves as a comprehensive manual for elementary education (grade 1 to grade 8). NCERT (2017) provides a detailed overview of the anticipated learning outcomes and effective practices for learners. This has been further supplemented by the curricular goals and competencies highlighted in the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), released in 2023. Both these documents emphasize the importance of quality learning in schools by enabling teachers to assess students' learning skills through learning outcomes (LOs), guiding them to take remedial measures without delay. LOs play a crucial role in designing curriculum, pedagogical processes, and assessment strategies at the school level. They provide a roadmap for teachers and school administrators ensuring that the curriculum is holistic, focused, and adaptable. Learning outcomes serve as a guide for curriculum designers to determine what knowledge, skills, and competencies students should acquire which helps in setting clear goals and objectives for each subject or course. By aligning the curriculum with learning outcomes, teachers can ensure that the content and activities are relevant and progressive, enabling students to achieve the desired outcomes. Learning outcomes help in creating age-appropriate content and aligning the content, resources, and learning experiences with what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of a grade. Learning outcomes help in reducing the content load as it determines the scope (breadth and depth of content) and sequence (the order in which content is taught) of the curriculum. Learning outcomes are not based on specific content, therefore they help in providing a foundation for adapting the curriculum to meet diverse learning needs, including different learning styles and levels.

Based on the learning outcomes, teachers can select appropriate pedagogical approaches like activity-based, story-based, project-based, discovery-based, and exploration to ensure that children get a variety of experiences in order to develop the intended skills and knowledge. By using various assessment techniques teachers can collect evidence of student learning and provide feedback for improvement. Assessments also help in identifying areas where students may need additional support or intervention. Learning outcomes-based assessment helps in directly measuring how much students have achieved in their learning continuum. This ensures that assessments are purposeful and relevant. Learning outcomes guide the development of both formative (ongoing) and summative (term-end) assessments.

A SHIFT TOWARDS COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING

The Indian educational system has traditionally been characterized by rote learning, a rigid curriculum, and a focus on examination results. However, the changing demands of the global economy and the increasing importance of skills over mere knowledge acquisition have prompted a significant re-evaluation of educational practices. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need for reforms aimed at enhancing the quality of education, particularly at the school level. The Learning Outcome-Based Approach (LOBA) has emerged as a critical framework in this context. By focusing on defined learning outcomes and essential competencies, these approaches seek to create a more student-centric and relevant educational environment.

The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape, with advances in big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence taking over unskilled jobs worldwide. Climate change, pollution, and depleting natural resources will require new skilled labour in various fields, including biology, chemistry, physics, agriculture, climate science, and social science. The growing demand for humanities and arts will also increase as India moves towards becoming a developed country and among the three largest economies in the world. Education must focus on critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, multidisciplinary abilities, and innovation in novel and changing fields. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports, literature, culture, and values, as well as science and mathematics. Education is thus crucial for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable society, and promoting the national development of India (NEP, 2020; NCFSE, 2023).

The National Education Policy 2020 serves as a pivotal document advocating these shifts, emphasizing the importance of holistic development, critical thinking, and skill acquisition. The NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for educational reforms to meet the demands of a rapidly changing society. With India's large youth population, there is a pressing need to align educational practices with the skills required in the workforce. By adopting LOBA, schools can enhance learning experiences, promote employability, and foster lifelong learning. The primary objective of the NEP 2020 is to transform India into a sustainable and fair knowledge society by ensuring universal access to high-quality education, thereby positioning it as a global leader. Suggesting the futuristic vision of education, the policy identifies the need of new skilled labour which could meet the challenges of sustainable growth, demands of AI & data driven industry, society struggling with shortage of natural resources, and the uncertainty of pandemics. The curriculum content has been suggested to be reduced to the core essentials with a focus on key concepts and ideas to give an opportunity to the learners to employ critical thinking and deepen their learning with inquiry-based, discovery-based, discussion-based and analysis-based approaches (NEP, 2020). It also recommends incorporating learning outcomes into the curriculum frameworks and teachers are encouraged to design assessments aligned with these outcomes, promoting a deeper understanding of the subject matter. NEP 2020 advocates lifelong learning by providing for flexible learning pathways for the learners, increased accountability for the teachers.

The RTE Act 2009, the Twelfth Five Year Plan of India, and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, seek to ensure inclusive and quality education for every individual to promote life-long learning. This necessitates a comprehensive strategy focused on developing a high-quality curriculum and ensuring its successful implementation in a supportive setting. Along these lines, NCERT had prepared teaching-learning materials to assist teachers in assessing the learning path of individual students and identifying any gaps in their learning. Nowadays, parents, community members, and educational officials are more eager to track the development of children's learning and want a clear criteria to evaluate the level of expected learning. It is crucial to evaluate the quality of education by assessing learning outcomes at regional, national, and international levels. Additionally, active involvement of various stakeholders, such as parents and the community, in monitoring the education system ensures that corrective actions are taken at the appropriate levels and that the system remains accountable as India's ability to provide high-quality education will determine its future, considering that it will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade.

NEP 2020 strives to address these developmental imperatives by revising and reforming all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance to create a new system aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). The policy emphasizes the development of cognitive, social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions. The policy aims to provide quality education to all students irrespective of their background, with a particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and under-represented groups. The policy aims to develop individuals capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion, empathy, courage, resilience, scientific temper, creativity, with sound ethical values.

Fundamental principles of the education system include recognizing and fostering the unique capabilities of each student and prioritizing Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) by Grade 3. It promotes flexibility, multidisciplinarity, emphasis on conceptual understanding, creativity, critical thinking, ethics, multilingualism, life skills, regular formative assessment, extensive use of technology, respect for diversity, full equity and inclusion. This is to ensure synergy in curriculum across all levels, with teachers and faculty at the heart of the learning process alongside a light but tight regulatory framework. It lays emphasis on outstanding research, continuous review of progress, rootedness and pride in India's rich culture and knowledge systems, and investment in a strong, vibrant public education system (NEP, 2020). A shift towards competency-based learning is needed by focusing on achievement of learning outcomes which assess the measurable and observable behaviour of the learner using assessment tools that will also be aligned according to the learning outcomes.

NCERT has formulated learning outcomes for many academic subjects at the elementary level (Grades 1-8), encompassing Languages, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Science, and Social Science. This serves as a guide to all stakeholders, such as parents/guardians, teachers, School Management Committees (SMC), and members of the community. The content employs straightforward language, offers a concise comprehension of each topic, and presents quantifiable benchmarks for evaluation. Additionally, it offers instructive pedagogical methods to assist teachers in comprehending and attaining educational objectives. It is intricately interconnected in terms of age suitability and intricacy inside and beyond academic subjects and levels. Furthermore, inclusion entails offering equitable educational opportunities to all students including children with special needs (CWSN). Thus ensuring that learning outcomes are consistent for all children while also accommodating their specific requirements.

GOVERNMENT POLICY INITIATIVES FOR ATTAINING LEARNING OUTCOMES

The government has taken a lots of initiatives to improve the infrastructural facilities in schools and conducted training programs for teachers in the last five years, to ensure achievement of learning outcomes by learners. NEP 2020 states revamping of the school education system to ensure equitable quality education for all children. Samagra Shiksha is an integrated scheme for school education that provides grants for construction of classrooms, toilets, drinking water facilities, libraries and computer labs. Various other grants like Composite grant, Swachhta grant, Library grant and ICT grant are given to schools to improve the infrastructure as well as provide better resources for students in schools.

The Digital India initiative has led to the creation of digital classrooms, internet connectivity, and the distribution of tablets and laptops to teachers and students, enhancing the use of technology in education. Not only this, lots of teaching-learning resources have also been developed for digital platforms such as DIKSHA, SWAYAM, etc.

The Department of School Education and Literacy has launched a National Mission to improve learning outcomes at all levels of school education through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme called National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA), in 2019-20. This integrated programme aims to build the capacities of all teachers, heads of schools, teacher educators and prospective teachers. NISHTHA aims at enhancing the competencies of teachers and is learning outcome-based. It includes modules promoting integrated and interdisciplinary approaches of teaching. The modules cover themes ranging from curriculum, inclusive education, mathematics education, school-based assessment to toy-based pedagogy and so on.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN OUR SCHOOLS

The complex educational landscape of schools in India creates various challenges in the implementation of LOs in schools. Efforts have been made to integrate LOs into the system through curriculum, teachers training etc. However, infrastructure, inequality, diverse education boards (CBSE, ICSE, state boards), limited professional development opportunities for teachers, and linguistic diversity pose hurdles to their effective implementation.

Implementing the learning outcomes-based approach in schools poses several challenges, some of the major challenges are given below-

1. Designing and implementing learning outcomes equally and in an effective way across the different regions creates a challenge for states and UTs in terms of India's vast diversity with regard to language, culture, and socio-economic backgrounds.
2. Many schools, especially in rural areas, face resource constraints specifically lacking an adequate number of teachers and teaching-learning material. This impedes the effective implementation of learning outcomes.
3. It is also found that due to transmission loss at different levels of teacher training, teachers may not be adequately trained to design curriculum and assessment methods that align with the defined learning outcomes. Additionally, the quality of teaching varies significantly across regions. Many teachers, school administrators and parents have a limited understanding of the curricular goals and competencies for which learning outcomes are defined. Teachers also find it difficult to modify their teaching methods and ensure that the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies are adequately covered. Building capacity among teachers to design and implement such assessments is very crucial.
4. Overcrowded classrooms is another concern that makes it difficult for teachers to give individual attention and customize their pedagogy to meet diverse learning needs, which is essential for achieving learning outcomes.
5. The assessment systems in many schools are still focused on rote-learning and memorization, rather than on assessing the actual understanding and application of knowledge, which is crucial for measuring learning outcomes.
6. Students in classrooms specifically in rural areas often come from different linguistic backgrounds, providing education in their languages is a challenge for schools and teachers. This also impedes the attainment of learning outcomes among children.
7. Lack of awareness among parents about the concept of learning outcomes can hinder its effective implementation.

CONCLUSION

The shift to a learning outcomes-based approach and competency-based learning in India signifies an essential advancement in attaining quality education at the school level. By emphasising the skills and competences students must attain, these frameworks synchronise education with contemporary demands. Despite ongoing implementation issues, the prospective advantages for greater educational results, improved employability, and heightened responsibility are substantial. As India progresses through this educational revolution, cooperation among educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders will be crucial to fully actualise these paradigms.

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IDENTITY, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN BIHAR: A STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF CASTE-BASED SURVEY

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Abstract

The state of Bihar has diversities in terms of caste, religion, culture, economic status and also geographical settings. It is a dominant assumption that the people's different identities determine their roles in different way in structures of institutions of state making their relationship with other categories of people complex. The identity of religion and caste among other identities are politically most effective in Bihar. These identities have an intricate and complex relationship depending upon the situation. In most cases, the identities of caste and gender seem to be dependent on religious identity. Identity as women has drawn attention of political parties in recent years, but women also belong to identities of caste and religion. Thus, the present study attempts to explain the role of different categories of people in the creation of inequality which further leads to injustice at large. The article also critically evaluates the role of the government of Bihar in dispensing justice to marginalized sections of societies like women, backward castes, SCs/STs etc.

Keywords: Caste, Religion, Equality, Gender, Identity, Social Justice. Bihar

INTRODUCTION

Being part of society, an individual has to perform different kinds of functions which determine their identity; sometimes functional identity (occupations like teacher, labour, businessman etc.), but most of the times, especially in political domain, individual identity is determined by their position in social structure (caste), religious affiliation (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, etc.), economic status (poor, rich, middle class etc.), and geographical locations (hill people, forest dwellers, tribes etc.). The

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layered identities of individuals always matter in terms their relationship with rest of the population. Achen and Bartels develop a rigorous argument, supported by extensive evidence, that politics is driven by social identities and partisan loyalties (Achen & Bartels: 2017).

In view of the above, the present paper intends to assess the present socio-economic conditions of the people of Bihar, their representation in democratic institutions and assurance of social justice to weaker sections women, BCs/EBCs/SCs/STs. The paper is primarily based on secondary data. This paper uses a multidisciplinary approach to explain the dynamic and static nature of identity and concerning issues of inequality and injustice.

DEFINING IDENTITY: CASTE, GENDER AND RELIGION

The idea of identity is an affiliation of something common among the individuals who made them feel and act together in their own interests. There is a plethora of identities like religion, caste, race, sex, teacher, engineer, and gender. The different identities in society play a crucial role in various walks of life. Some specific identities of an individual e.g. religion, caste, and gender are key in deciding one's substantive role in different structures of different government and non-government institutions. Existing and persisting, all kinds of identity can majorly be divided into constructed identity, static or natural identity, dynamic and scalar identity. So, people have different kinds of identities, and their identities give their behavioural attitude and purpose. However, because people also act in public sphere that are attached to particular identities, the role/identity nexus is also an important aspect in motivation and choice. Indeed, the very idea of identity in symbolic interactionism connotes an intimate linkage between self and role (Burke & Tully :1977).

Social identity is a feature of a person, derived from the social group e.g. caste, religion, gender etc. of which someone is part of. Persons differ in terms of qualitative and quantitative aspects of social identities depending upon the social group they belong (Klandermans:2014).

CASTE AND INEQUALITY

Caste and religious identities are such that can easily be conglomerated, hence political parties bank on such identity politics. In the process the economic and occupational identities are pushed back. The electoral politics has strengthened the caste and religious divisions more rigid in society. It will evident from emergence of caste and religion based associations in Bihar. In 1980s and 1990s and got associated with the parties who claimed to be champion of their specific interests, popularly termed as Mandal-Kamandal politics in India in general and in Bihar in particular. The situation changed in 21st century in which gender and religious identities are brought to fore by political parties, however, caste politics still remained effective. But caste groups were re-identified by 'social engineering' of Nitish Kumar. He banked on re-grouping of castes as OBC and EBC among backward castes and Dalit and Mahadalit among Scheduled castes (Jha and Pushpendra: 2014). Besides, religion-based identity also remained effective.

The caste is the biggest reason of persisting social inequality in India. The social inequality is based on which economic and political inequality have been persisting. As per "Varna System", there are four varnas e.g. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra which are hierarchical in same order. The Brahmin, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya Varnas have by and large been transformed into synonyms of Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya castes respectively. But, the Shudra varna has number of castes. According to "Mandal Commission Report", there are 3743 castes in Shudra Varna (OBCs). Besides it, one more category of caste has been historically persisting in India i.e. Scheduled Castes or Out-castes or Untouchables.

SCs and STs constitute the lowest strata of Caste System in India since centuries. So, they have lowest share in wealth and resources in India. The atrocities and the practice of uncountability have by and large been reported by all the castes above them in social hierarchy against them.

GENDER, PATRIARCHY AND INEQUALITY

Every society has almost half the population as women and so is in the families. Does the same proportion of women have been there in different institutions of state and organs of government? They are not equally represented. The dichotomy between private or domestic and public natures of works has created a gender identity where females were restricted to domestic work. Contemporary societies have been witnessing the saga of patriarchy, the institution whereby, 'that half of the population which is female is controlled by that half which is male' (Millet: 1970). The radical feminist slogan, 'the personal is the political' justifies the reason for the oppression or subjugation of women by making women is personal kind of thing.

In most of the cases, the dependency female over male for public activity, decision making made the female a scalar (dependent) identity, though they are legitimized authority. After all, they have to get directed informally due to the persistent patriarchal setup.

The identities of religion and caste are so important that need to be known at large by conducting a census for a better understanding of their socio-economic conditions. Persons belonging to different castes and religions are being represented adequately or not. For that, there should be some scientific data like a census so that the substantive condition of people can be known and affirmative action can be taken by the government to dispense justice.

Till 1931, the caste census had been conducted by the British who were ruling India. But, after independence the caste census was stopped except to counting of SCs and STs. The government of India have been conducting the census till 2011.

There has been demand to start caste census again since 1968. But, caste census at national level was not conducted till date. Though, socio-economic caste census was completed in 2011 and it reveals data related to the level of deprivation in rural and urban India without stating the castes of the households belonging to OBCs and general communities but the SC/ST category-wise data revealed.

The census delayed by four years and the central government has been planning to start the census in 2025.The opposition parties and allies have been demanding to conduct the caste census. But, Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) the main party of NDA is salient on caste census. The caste census is important because through which identification of caste-based deprivation level of person can be known and it will be made the basis to start the welfare measures by the government.

THE GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The motto of present ruling government of Bihar, led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is "Justice With Development" (Nyaya Ke Saath Vikash). Justice here means inclusion of every section of society in the process of development which broadly implies as social justice. The performance of government of Bihar in achieving the sustainable development goals (SDG) is dismal poor and ranked at the bottom with composite score of just 50 which is 20 points behind the composite score of Kerala (Diwakar & Mahendru:2020). Viewing the persistent socio-economic inequality, poor performance towards SDG and overall backwardness in Bihar, government have gone ahead with caste survey in 2022 and the survey was completed in 2023.The motto of caste survey was to know the actual number of persons caste-wise, caste-wise representation in government institutions and their economic conditions.

Table 01: Caste-wise Percentage Population & their Percentage in Govt. Services in Bihar

S. No.	*Caste*	*% Population*	*% Government Jobs*
01.	Bhumihar	2.86	4.99 (187,256)
02.	Brahmin	3.66	3.60 (172,259)
03.	Rajput	3.45	3.81(171,933)
04.	Kayasth	0.6	6.68 (52,490)
05.	Yadav	14.2	1.55 (289,538)

S. No.	Caste	% Population	% Government Jobs
06.	Kurmi	2.81	3.11(117,171)
07.	Koeri	4.2	2.04 (112,106)

(Source: Bihar Govt. Caste Survey 2022-2023)

As per the data of caste survey (Table 01), among the forward castes Bhumihar, Brahmin, Rajput and Kayasth, Kayasth representation in government services is 6.68 %. In terms of percentage, the Kayasth caste is over represented and highest not only among the forward castes but also across all the castes. Except Brahmin caste, other forward castes are over represented. Among the backward castes, Kurmi is over represented in terms of percentage. But other backward castes are under-represented. In terms of number, Yadav caste have highest number of government jobs across all the castes. The survey is silent on how many persons from a particular caste are employed in class A, B, C and D level of government services. Because, it is an important aspect per se representation of different castes in different levels of government services.

Table 02: Caste-wise & Community-wise Percentage of Population in Bihar

S. No.	Caste/Social Group	% Population	% of Poor (Total Population)
01	Bhumihar	2.86	27.58
02	Brahmin	3.66	25.32
03	Rajput	3.45	24.89
04	Kayasth	0.6	13.38
05	BC	27.1286	33.16
06	EBC	36.0148	33.58
07	SC	19.6518	42.93
08	ST	1.6824	42.7

(Source: The Hindu, October 02, 2023)

As per data of caste survey, 63.14 % of total population of Bihar is other backward class (OBC) and 19.65 % population is scheduled caste (SC). In terms of percentage, among all the castes of Bihar, SC has highest number of poor i.e. 42.93 %. The data shows that those castes who have been placed higher in social hierarchy as per Varna System have by and large less poor in terms of percentage.

The prevalent socio-economic inequality in Bihar demands social justice. The distribution and re-distribution of "wealth and resources" and representation in public institution in proportionate manner of population of different communities are needed to establish social justice in Bihar. To establish social justice, the policy of reservation (India) and affirmative action (in other countries) for admission in educational institutes, and employment opportunities for marginalized groups in government institutions have been adopted in many countries, e.g., India (based on caste), Northern Ireland (based on religion) and the United States of America (based on race and sex) (Jenkins:1998).

The inclusion of different identities like caste and gender in public institution has been required to establish justice. The inclusion of different social groups at the societal level in multicultural and diversified polities needs state recognition and institutional protection of identity, as well as provision for group-differentiated policies (Young: 2018).

The government of Bihar has made a policy of reservation based on caste and gender in

- Panchayati Raj Institutions for EBCs/SCs/STs and women
- 35% reservation for women across the government jobs
- 50% reservation for women in panchayati raj institutions (PRIs)
- 50% reservation for women in government jobs is proposed

In the month of November of 2023, the Bihar Vidhan Sabha passed a bill based on the data of "Caste Survey 2022-23 of Bihar" to increase the reservation quota to 75% from 60 %. After this amendment, 10% reservation for economically weaker sections (EWS); 20 % reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs), 02 % reservation for Scheduled Tribes (STs), 25 % reservation for Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs), and 18 % reservation for Backward Classes (BCs). But, in June 2024, the Patna High Court invalidated the amendments, citing the reason that it is violation of the provision of the Constitution. Further, the apex court of India (Supreme Court) has validated the verdict of Patna High Court.

Now, it is up to the Union Government whether the upcoming census would be caste census or status quo will be maintained. If the upcoming census will be completed probably in 2026 even without inclusion of caste, then one thing would be good per se social justice. Because, as per the 106th constitutional amendment act 2023 and Art.330 A, Art.332A & Art.334A, one third of total seats in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha will be reserved for women (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) but only after delimitation of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha constituency based on data of then census or probably be 2025-26 census of India.

CONCLUSION

In Indian society, the constructed identity of caste and gender is by and large based on birth not on education. After acquiring an education, an individual used to carry two kinds of identity i.e. caste and functional identity if someone is male. But an individual used to carry three kinds of identity i.e. caste, gender and functional identity if someone is female. There are three elements of the soul and one is dominant in a person which will be identified by stages of education. There are two types of society, caste and class society. In case of caste, marriages mandatory in same caste is the main cause of persistence of caste rigidity. Dr. Ambedkar has pleaded the annihilation of caste identity through inter-caste marriages. Caste based inequality breeds inequality and justice in Bihar society. Thus it is the duty of the state to minimise inequality through specific measures, other than reservation policy, like ensuring education, employment, asset endowment, wealth and resources and above all opportunities to develop.

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IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ON TEACHING-LEARNING SKILLS OF TEACHERS

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Abstract

It is globally recognised that progress in education essentially requires the improvement in efficiency and optimising talent of teachers through designed programmes. Thus, it becomes imperative to examine the Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs)under Pandit Madan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Training (PMMMNMTT) in India in terms of its effectiveness. As such,the present paper attempts to evaluate the outcome of FDPs by conducting survey of 344 faculty members from Faculty Development Centres (FDCs) across the country. The main aim of this research is to evaluate the teaching-learning skill of teachers in connection with teachers' professional development, self-efficacy, and teaching competency, as well as to examine the interrelationships among these factors. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to assess construct reliability, validity, and the fitness of the measurement model and structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesised relationships between independent and dependent variables. It is evident from the study that self-efficacy should be integrated as a central part of the professional development framework for educators.

Keywords: Faculty development programmes, Professional development, Self-efficacy, Teacher competency, Teacher satisfaction,

INTRODUCTION

The World Development Report on Education (2018) emphasises the significance of teacher talents and motivation in the context of educational progress. It

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underscores the necessity of continual, individually-tailored training for teachers in order to achieve advancements in student learning outcomes. The research emphasised that throughout the past decade, a significant proportion of World Bank initiatives incorporated an educational element, with almost two-thirds of these initiatives encompassing teacher professional development. Nevertheless, a significant portion of teacher professional development remains unassessed. The provision of professional development opportunities for teachers play a crucial role in determining the quality of education. Achieving a substantial enhancement in the institutional efficacy of the teacher education system is a challenging and labour-intensive endeavour. In light of recent breakthroughs and changes, there is a need for a fresh viewpoint on the overall development of instructors (Kaushal & Tagore, 2017).

With the fast expansion of educational institutions in the country, there is an increasing emphasis on improving the quality of education. It is evident that the effectiveness of any endeavour in this context is contingent upon the calibre of the instructional personnel engaged. According to the Kothari Commission's report in 1966, the paramount factors influencing the quality of education and its contribution to national development are undeniably the teachers' quality, competence, and character. It is imperative to provide careful consideration to the training of educators, the conditions under which they operate in classrooms, schools, and institutions, and their continuous professional development, in order to ensure that the most talented individuals in the nation are available to influence the forthcoming generation. In addition, the significance of enhancing the quality of pre-service and in-service teacher training was underscored by the Justice Verma Commission in 2012.

According to Watts and Hammons (1980), in order for newly designed staff development programmes to progress beyond their current stage, it is imperative that they establish their value through assessment. The evaluation of staff development courses at universities is crucial to assess their effectiveness and the impact they have on both the participants of the programmes and the broader college community. Thus far, the response to the proposition of implementing standardised evaluation systems has been largely discouraging. The fundamental cause for the failure of the review procedure was attributed to the absence of a theoretical or practical literary framework upon which an assessment could be made.

The assessment procedures employed in the studies conducted by Richardson and Moore (1987) and Watts and Hammons (1980) are constrained to the collection of feedback exclusively from faculty members who have participated in professional meetings, seminars, and workshops. The evaluation of knowledge and skills obtained through extracurricular activities is infrequent among faculty members at higher education institutions, and even fewer assess the application of these abilities or knowledge inside the classroom setting. Moreover, there is a dearth of published research on assessment approaches that examine the impact of these programmes on host institutions. As a result, there exists a deficiency in the establishment of responsibility for the programmes that ought to receive precedence in higher education institutions, specifically those that bolster the calibre of education and the expertise of faculty members.

It is vital to ascertain the effectiveness of the training provided to higher education teachers in order to enhance their teaching abilities within the university setting, as emphasised by Gilbert and Gibbs (1999). Given the predominant descriptive nature of the available literature in this field, it is imperative for educational development units to possess empirical proof of success in order to inform the design of their courses.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of these Faculty Development Centres in relation to teacher efficacy, competency, and overall professional development. In light of this major objective, the paper analyses the impact on self-efficacy, professional competency, and job satisfaction of teachers.

The study covers the FDCs' programmes/courses held during last 5 years (2017-22). While selecting the sample, each course held during the period under study was taken as a stratum. To take representative units from each stratum, the technique of simple random sampling has been used. 344 participants were sampledfrom 20 FDCs across different states of the country. The participants were served with the structured questionnaire. Reliability of the data was conducted, and Cronbach alpha was calculated and validity analysis was carried out. Data collection for the courses conducted during 2017-2022 was started in January 2023. The participants were contacted through e-mails and data was collected through Google Form. The questionnaire was designed to measure teaching competency, teachers' professional development, job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Descriptive analysis as well as SPSS and AMOS were used to analyse the data and testing of the hypothesis.

HYPOTHESES

Following hypotheses were developed and the path diagram related to the hypotheses of this study is shown in Figure 1.

H1: Teachers' professional development affect and explain teachers' self-efficacy positively and significantly.

H2: Teachers' professional development affect and explain teachers' competency positively and significantly.

H3: Professional development affect and explain teachers job satisfaction positively and significantly.

H4: Teacher's competency affects teachers' Job satisfaction positively and significantly.

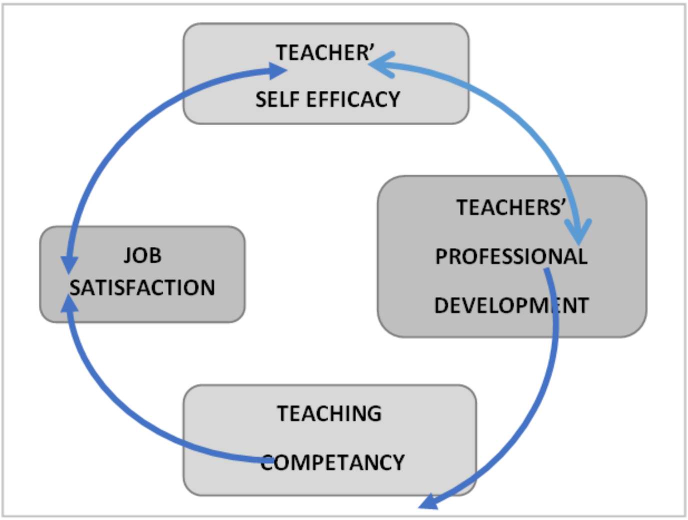


Figure 1: Path diagram related to study hypothesis

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis comprised two stages. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to assess construct reliability, validity, and the fitness of the measurement model. Subsequently, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized relationships between independent and dependent variables. This two-stage methodology ensured that only constructs with good measures (i.e., reliability and validity) were retained for inclusion in the structural model (Hair et al., 2010).

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Measurement scale reliability refers to the degree of consistency in the outcomes when the scale is repeatedly employed (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). It assesses the consistency of results across multiple measurements. One commonly used reliability measure is internal consistency, which signifies that individual scale items measure the same construct and are closely interrelated. It reflects the coherence among the constructs in the summed scale. Cronbach's Alpha serves as a diagnostic tool for gauging internal consistency. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the measurement instrument's reliability, employing SPSS (version 26). An alpha value exceeding 0.70 is considered reliable and acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

The reliability was tested for all the four constructs namely professional development, self-efficacy, teacher competency, and teacher satisfaction as presented in Table 1.1. The Cronbach's alpha score for all the construct's items (34 items) had a score of 0.964, thus, reflecting that the questionnaire had high reliability and consistency. Therefore, statistical techniques can be applied to the data.

Table 1.1: Reliability Statistics of Professional Development, Self-Efficacy, Teacher Competency, and Teacher Satisfaction

Number of items	*Cronbach's Alpha*
36	0.964

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

In this study, descriptive statistics were employed to arrange, categorize, and condense the data with the objective of obtaining a comprehensive overview of the sample's characteristics and distribution (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This process involved converting the collected data into a more reader-friendly and understandable format. All participants were requested to indicate their responses using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for 'strongly disagree' to 5 for 'strongly agree'.

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

The mean is a fundamental statistical tool used to summarize data. To assess the accuracy of the mean in representing the data, the standard deviation is calculated. Small standard deviation values in relation to the mean indicate a good fit of the mean, while large standard deviation values suggest that the actual data are widely dispersed from the mean. In Table 1.2, you can find a summary of descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation for the four constructs. The mean values for all four constructs— professional development, self-efficacy, teacher competency, and teacher satisfaction —were 3.94, 4.25, 2.64, and 3.69, respectively. The standard deviation values for these constructs were 0.701, 0.724, 0.477, and 0.767, respectively. Given that the mean values for all constructs and dimensions exceeded 3, it indicates a positive response from the respondents toward these professional development programmes. Furthermore, the standard deviation values for all constructs were below 1, signifying relatively low data variability.

Table 1.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Constructs

Constructs	*Label*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*
Professional Development	PD	3.94	.701
Self-Efficacy	SE	4.25	.724
Teacher Competency	TC	2.64	.477
Teacher Satisfaction	TS	3.69	.767

CORRELATION MATRIX

The correlation matrix is a tabular representation that illustrates the correlation coefficients among the constructs, quantifying the strength and direction of their associations (Cooper et al., 2018). To assess the strength and direction of relationships between latent constructs, correlation coefficients were computed using AMOS (version 26). Table 1.3 demonstrates that all correlation coefficient values were statistically significant ($p<0.001$), signifying that all four latent constructs (i.e., professional development, self-efficacy, teacher competency, and teacher satisfaction) exhibited positive and moderate relationships with each other.

Table 1.3: Correlation Matrix

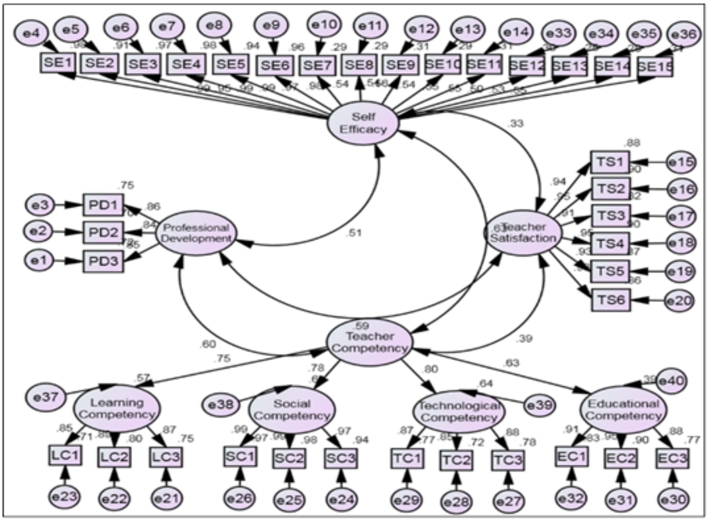
	Professional Development	*Self-Efficacy*	*Teacher Competency*	*Teacher Satisfaction*
Professional Development	1			
Self Efficacy	0.506***	1		
Teacher Competency	0.604***	0.627***	1	
Teacher Satisfaction	0.592***	0.325***	0.394***	1

Note: ***p<0.001

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

CFA serves as a confirmatory test for the measurement theory, verifying how observed items systematically represent latent variables in the model. It either validates or challenges the pre-established theory. The measurement model includes four latent constructs: Professional development, self-efficacy, teacher competency, and teacher satisfaction. Model fitness and construct validity were evaluated in sections, respectively, with Figure 3 illustrating the consolidated measurement model.

Figure 3: Measurement Model



MODEL FIT INDICES

Model fit assesses how well a model represents observations by measuring the difference between observed values and model expectations (Bollen & Long, 1992). The primary goal of conducting CFA is to determine the validity of the measurement model. In this study, we computed goodness-of-fit indices. While various SEM fit indices are available, there is no consensus on which ones to use. Kline (2005) suggests reporting a minimum set of fit indices, including the Chi-square value, RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR. However, Hair et al. (2010), Holmes-Smith et al. (2006), and Jaccard and Wan (1996) recommend using at least three fit indices, one from each of the three categories: Absolute Fit Indices, Incremental Fit Indices, and Parsimonious Fit Indices. Model fit indices are found to be within the acceptable values, hence, the measurement model is found to be a measure of good fit.

Table 1.4: Model Fit Indices of Measurement Models

Fit Indices	*Measurement Model*	*Acceptable Values*
Absolute Fit Indices		
Chi-square P-value	0.000	>0.05
CMIN/DF	2.508	<5.00
GFI	0.845	>0.80
AGFI	0.806	>0.80
RMSEA	0.043	<0.08

Fit Indices	*Measurement Model*	*Acceptable Values*
RMR	0.020	<0.08
SRMR	0.025	<0.08
Incremental Fit Indices		
NFI	0.900	>0.90
TLI	0.901	>0.90
CFI	0.921	>0.90
Parsimony Fit Indices:		
PNFI	0.845	>0.50
PCFI	0.830	>0.50
Remarks	Good Model fit	

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Following the creation of the measurement model, the next step involved assessing construct validity, which determines the accuracy of the research. Construct validity evaluates how well the measured items effectively gauge the intended latent constructs (Malhotra et al., 2017). It focuses on verifying the precision of the measurement model and consists of tests for convergent and discriminant validity.

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Convergent validity assesses the extent to which indicators of a specific construct share a significant amount of common variance (Hair et al., 2010). It essentially confirms whether theoretically related constructs are indeed related. Convergent validity is evaluated through three measures: (a) Factor Loadings, (b) Composite Reliability (CR), and (c) Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

a) **Factor Loadings:** These represent the correlation between items and their respective constructs, indicating the variance explained by the variable. Acceptable factor loadings are typically above 0.50 or ideally above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). All factor loadings of the items exceeded 0.70 and were statistically significant ($p<0.001$), indicating that all items were accepted for the study.
b) **Composite Reliability (CR):** CR is an indicator of convergent validity, measuring the overall reliability of the measurement scale. A CR above 0.70 is recommended for all factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), signifying internal consistency among items measuring the same latent construct. Calculation of CR was performed using AMOS (version 26) and the 'Stats Tool Package' by Gaskin (2016). Table 5.5 demonstrates that all constructs (Professional

development, self-efficacy, teacher competency, and teacher satisfaction) had a CR above 0.70, ensuring sufficient convergence and internal consistency.

c) **Average Variance Extracted (AVE):** AVE indicates the proportion of variance in the constructs explained by their items. AVE values above 0.50 are recommended for adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Higher AVE suggests that the explained variance by the latent factor exceeds the error variance. AVE calculation was conducted using AMOS (version 26) and Gaskin's 'Stats Tool Package' (2016). All constructs (Professional development, self-efficacy, teacher competency, and teacher satisfaction) in Table 1.5 exceeded the 0.50 AVE threshold, thus satisfying the criterion for adequate convergent validity.

Table 1.5: Standardized Factor Loadings, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Constructs	*Regression Weights*	*Composite Reliability(CR)*	*Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*
Professional Development		0.886	0.722
PD1	.857		
PD2	.838		
PD3	.844		
Self Efficacy		0.946	0.558
SE1	.990		
SE2	.954		
SE3	.986		
SE4	.990		
SE5	.972		
SE6	.978		
SE7	.543		
SE8	.535		
SE9	.557		
SE10	.538		
SE11	.554		
SE12	.549		
SE13	.501		
SE14	.528		
SE15	.552		

Constructs	*Regression Weights*	*Composite Reliability(CR)*	*Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*
Teacher Competency		0.830	0.551
Learning Competency	.749		
Social Competency	.769		
Technological Competency	.789		
Educational Competency	.623		
Teacher Satisfaction		0.976	0.872
TS1	.935		
TS2	.949		
TS3	.906		
TS4	.950		
TS5	.933		
TS6	.923		

Note: CR= Composite Reliability; AVE= Average Variance Extracted; ***p<0.001

DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Discriminant validity is the measure of how distinct latent constructs are from each other, confirming that constructs not theoretically related are indeed unrelated (Thong, 2001). In simpler terms, individual measured items should exclusively represent a single latent construct, with no cross-loadings (Byrne, 2016). High discriminant validity suggests that a construct captures unique aspects that others do not. Discriminant validity is assessed through two criteria: (a) AVE should exceed MSV (Maximum Shared Variance), and (b) the square root of AVE should be greater than the correlation values between corresponding constructs, known as Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria for discriminant validity.

Discriminant validity calculations, performed using AMOS (version 26) and Gaskin's 'Stats Tool Package' (2016), are presented in Table 1.6. For E-CRM, customer experience, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, AVE values for each latent construct exceeded MSV values, and the square root of AVE (diagonal values) exceeded pair-wise square correlation values between the corresponding constructs (non-diagonal values). This outcome indicates that each latent construct captures more variance from its items than from any other constructs, thereby confirming the achievement of discriminant validity.

Table 1.6: Discriminant Validity

Constructs	*AVE*	*MSV*	*Professional Development*	*Self-Efficacy*	*Teacher Competency*	*Teacher Satisfac-tion*
Professional Development	0.872	0.350	0.850#			
Self Efficacy	0.722	0.365	0.506	0.747#		
Teacher Competency	0.558	0.393	0.604	0.627	0.742#	
Teacher Satisfaction	0.551	0.393	0.592	0.325	0.394	0.934#

Note: AVE= Average Variance Extracted; MSV= Maximum Shared Variance; #Square root of AVE.

STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING (SEM)

Following the confirmation of the measurement model via CFA, the structural model, derived from the theoretical framework, underwent validity testing. The structural model was assessed using maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) and the bootstrapping technique with 2000 bootstrap replicates. Notably, the factor loadings in the hypothesized model remained consistent with those from the pooled measurement model, indicating the stability of parameters among the measured items and lending support to the pooled measurement model (Hair et al., 2010).

MODEL FIT INDICES

Model fit evaluates the extent to which a model accurately represents observed data, measuring the disparities between observed values and expected model outcomes (Bollen & Long, 1992). In this study, the hypothesized model's validity was assessed using goodness-of-fit indices. While various SEM fit indices are available, there is no consensus on which ones to use. Kline (2005) recommended reporting a minimum set of fit indices, including the Chi-square value, RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR. However, Hair et al. (2010), Holmes-Smith et al. (2006), and Jaccard and Wan (1996) suggested using at least three fit indices, one from each category of model fit, which comprises Absolute Fit Indices, Incremental Fit Indices, and Parsimonious Fit Indices.

Considering the recommended fit indices from various categories, it was evident that the hypothesized model exhibited good fit for further analysis, with all values falling within acceptable ranges (Hair et al., 2010). This outcome confirms that the hypothesized model effectively represents the data. Detailed model fit indices for the structural model are provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Model Fit Indices of the Structural Model

Fit Indices	*Model Values*	*Acceptable Value for Good Model Fit*	*Remarks*
Absolute Fit Indices			
Chi-square P-value	0.000	>0.05	Not significant, sensitive to sample size (N=836).
CMIN/DF	2.508	<5.00	The required level is achieved.
GFI	0.845	>0.80	The required level is achieved.
AGFI	0.806	>0.80	The required level is achieved.
RMSEA	0.043	<0.08	The required level is achieved.
RMR	0.020	<0.08	The required level is achieved.
SRMR	0.025	<0.08	The required level is achieved.
Incremental Fit Indices			
NFI	0.900	>0.90	The required level is achieved.
TLI	0.901	>0.90	The required level is achieved.
CFI	0.921	>0.90	The required level is achieved.
Parsimonious Fit Indices			
PNFI	0.845	>0.50	The required level is achieved.
PCFI	0.830	>0.50	The required level is achieved.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

The structural model was assessed utilizing the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) approach along with 2000 bootstrap replicates. The ultimate structural model and parameter estimates are illustrated in Figure 4. Furthermore, Table 2.2 presents the direct path relationships between the four latent constructs in the research model.

Figure 4: Structural Model of the Study

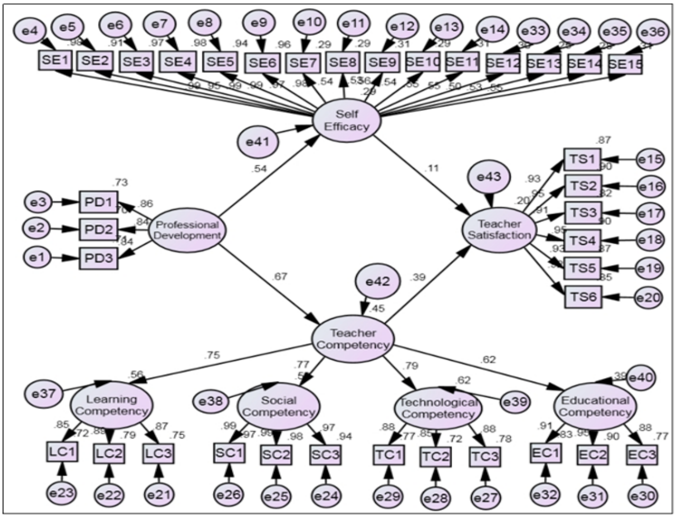


Table 2.2: Path Details of the Structural Model

Paths	*Standardized Estimates (Beta)*	*S.E*	*95% Bootstrap Confidence Level*		*Remarks*
			LL	*UL*	
PD→SE	0.539***	0.073	0.411	0.646	H1 supported
PD→TC	0.672***	0.069	0.544	0.776	H2 supported
SE→TS	0.111***	0.082	0.024	0.244	H3 supported
TC→TS	0.394***	0.092	0.245	0.564	H4 supported

Note: PD= Professional Development; SE= Self Efficacy; TC= Teacher Competency; TS= Teacher Satisfaction; S.E= Standard Error; LL= Lower Limit; UL= Upper Limit; *** p<0.001.

On the basis of path details (Table 2.1) of the structural model, the following hypotheses were analysed:

Impact of Professional Development on Self-Efficacy (Hypothesis-1)

This study hypothesized that Professional Development influences Self-Efficacy. The structural model test results depicted that Professional Development has a significant positive relationship with Self Efficacy (beta= 0.539, p<0.001). Thus, H1 was supported.

Impact of Professional Development Teacher Competency (Hypothesis-2)

This study hypothesized that Professional Development influences Teacher Competency. The structural model test results depicted that Professional Development has a significant positive relationship with Teacher Competency (beta= 0.672, p<0.001). Thus, H2 was supported.

Impact of Self Efficacy on Teacher Satisfaction (Hypothesis-3)

This study hypothesized that Self-Efficacy influences Teacher Satisfaction. The structural model test results depicted that Self - efficacy has a significant positive relationship with Teacher Satisfaction (beta= 0.111, p<0.001). Thus, H3 was supported.

Impact of Teacher Competency on Teacher Satisfaction (Hypothesis-4)

This study hypothesized that Teacher Competency influences Teacher Satisfaction. The structural model test results depicted that Teacher Competency has a significant positive relationship with Teacher Satisfaction (beta= 0.394, p<0.001). Thus, H4 was supported.

In conclusion, it is clear from the above analyses that all the direct path relationships (H1 to H4) were found to be significant and positive in the proposed research model. Therefore, the proposed research model could not be rejected and, hence, it was accepted.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

From total of 334 responses, 195 (58.4%) were males and 139 (41.6%) were females. Most of the respondents were in the age group of 30 to 50. There were only 4 respondents with less than 25 years of age(1%), 12 were between 25 to 29 years were (4%); 110 were between 30 to 39 years were (33%); 164 were between 40 to 49 years were (49%), 38 were between 50 to 59 were (11%) and only 6 were above 60 years of age (2%) .

Educational Qualification: In terms of educational qualifications, the results revealed that 5 (2%) respondents had completed high school; 8 (2%) respondents had completed graduation; 108 (32%) respondents had completed post-graduation; 145 (44%) respondents were doctorate and 68 (20%) respondents had completed their professional degree.

Important characteristics for a teacher: the respondents find logical structure and content for the subject as the very important characteristics (277, 83%) as a teacher followed by specialized training and seminar for better teaching styles (252, 75%), student counselling (250, 75%), innovative evaluation practices (236, 71%), teaching multi-culture students (196, 59%), higher remuneration (154, 46%), and to have a say in school administration and management (141, 42%).

Programme attended by teachers: the majority of the respondents had attended Short-term workshops (320), followed by refresher course (300), webinars/ seminars (295), orientation (289), capacity building programme (280), conferences (265) and faculty induction programme (205).

Offline and online mode programme attended: 54.5% respondents attended this programmeme online and 45.5% attended these programmes offline.

Outcome of the programme: majority of the respondents (55%) find that these professional development courses help in contributing teaching and achieving of core performance standards and outcomes. 19% respondents revealed that these programmes help in learning new teaching techniques and theories, 16% revealed that these programmes help in collaborating and networking with other faculty members, 6% revealed that these programmes helps in integrating new technologies (eg. Zoom) whereas 4% revealed that these programmes helps in learning classroom management techniques.

Need of the professional development programme: the ICT skills for teaching the most (57%) followed by Knowledge and understanding of instructional practices in the main subject field (54%), Content and performance standards in main subject fields (49%), student assessment practices (47%) and classroom management (44%).

Reasons for not attending the professional development programme: Majorly, 64% respondents revealed that they don't have the pre-requisites (such as qualifications, experiences, seniority) and these courses are way bit expensive. 63% respondents revealed that they have family responsibilities, 58% respondents revealed there was a lack of support from employer, 56% respondents find no professional development offered whereas 45% respondents revealed that they were not able to attend these courses because of conflict with their work schedule.

Mean and standard deviation: all four constructs— professional development, self-efficacy, teacher competency, and teacher satisfaction —were 3.94, 4.25, 2.64, and 3.69, respectively. The standard deviation values for these constructs were 0.701, 0.724, 0.477, and 0.767, respectively. Given that the mean values for all constructs and dimensions exceeded 3, it indicates a positive response from the respondents toward these professional development programmes.

INFERENTIAL ANALYSIS

(i) As per the data analysis respondents has given a response of training programme, they have attended at FDC and they believe that Professional Development has a significant positive relationship on their Self-Efficacy.
(ii) The respondents have given their opinion that Professional Development has made a significant positive impact on their Competency.
(iii) The analysis has supported that programme offered by FDC has improved their confidence which make them more satisfied.
(iv) the programme has made them confident, and teachers are more satisfied.
(v) Need for ICT tools: As per the analysis, teachers are looking forward to have more skills on ICT tools for teaching and learning like MOOCs etc.
(vi) Freedom to attend these workshops free of cost: Respondents are more keen to attend these workshops without any pre-requisite like permission from office and other qualifications and want it should be offered free of cost.

In totality, analysis shows that programmes attended by participants were effective and the impact of the FDC was satisfactory and positive on participants in terms of their confidence, competency and satisfaction.

There is a dynamic link between professional growth and confidence in one's own abilities. Participating in professional development activities increases competence, which in turn boosts confidence. In turn, having high self-efficacy encourages people to invest in their own professional advancement, resulting in a virtuous circle of improvement and assurance.

A successful and satisfying job relies heavily on the individual's level of professional development and competence. Successfully navigating today's ever-changing professional landscape requires a commitment to lifelong learning and the cultivation of industry-specific skills.

There is a correlation between professional development and teacher satisfaction because it encourages progress, gives credit where credit is due, boosts efficiency, encourages teamwork, and helps teachers achieve their own personal and professional goals. Teachers who have their professional growth encouraged are more likely to like their work and make significant contributions to the field of education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

An effective training programme for educators must address instructors' needs for both theoretical grounding and hands-on experience. Following are few recommendations to make FDC more effective: a) Needs Analysis, b) specified aims and objectives of programmes, c) Courses should be both theoretical and practical,

d) intensive use of technology, e) introduce case studiesto reflect modification usefulness of lessons for different background of students f) cooperation among instructors g) introduction of mentoring, g) motivate teachers to abreast developments in the field of study h) regular evaluation and modifications in the course design and i) provisions of incentives and acknowledgment. Finally, the study ensures that the introduction of teachers' sense of self-efficacy into training designs is a theoretically grounded way to enhance instructors' competency and, subsequently, improve students' outcomes. Accordingly, it is suggested that self-efficacy be integrated as a central part of the professional development framework for educators.

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SEBI AND PROTECTION OF INVESTORS' INTERESTS: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF KEY INITIATIVES OF REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Protection of investors, especially small investors, in capital market and ensuring transparency, fairness and their confidence are the obligation of state. For this Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was established in 1988 and later made statutory body in 1992 by an Act. Here the question is – to what extent SEBI is successful in protecting the interest of the investors? Whether its regulatory framework requires reforms? In the light of these queries the present paper examines the role of SEBI in safeguarding investors' interests in India's capital markets, its regulatory framework, initiatives, and collaborations in 2023-2024 in the light of enhanced disclosure requirements, corporate governance reforms, and the adoption of AI-driven monitoring systems to combat financial misconduct. On the basis of secondary data and some case studies of SEBI's interventions in major fraud cases and IPO oversight, the paper assesses SEBI's impact on grievance redressal, enforcement actions, and corporate governance improvements. Further, it also explores SEBI's collaborations with global regulatory bodies like IOSCO, which strengthen its cross-border regulatory capabilities, and underlines the challenges faced in tackling new-age financial frauds and cross-border issues. Finally, the present paper suggests areas for revisions in SEBI's regulatory framework for better results.

Keywords: Investor Protection, SEBI Regulations, ESG, Financial Frauds, India.

SEBI AND ITS MANDATE

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was established in 1988 as a response to growing concerns about unethical practices within the securities market. Officially gaining statutory powers through the SEBI Act of 1992, SEBI was

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tasked with three primary objectives: to protect the interests of investors, to promote the development of the securities market, and to regulate market practices. This foundational mandate positioned SEBI as a critical regulator in India's financial landscape, with a particular focus on curbing fraud, ensuring transparency, and facilitating fair trading practices. Since its inception, SEBI has sought to create a trustworthy financial environment where investors can operate without fear of malpractice or manipulation.

Investor protection remains central to SEBI's mission, as a safeguarded investor base is essential for market stability. In financial markets, investor confidence directly correlates with sustained market growth and economic expansion. When investors trust the system, they are more likely to invest, facilitating capital formation and market liquidity. SEBI's role is therefore vital not only to individual investors but to the broader economic framework, where protected investors bolster overall financial stability and growth. This emphasis on protection underlines SEBI's commitment to creating a secure, level playing field where both retail and institutional investors can participate equitably.

Transparency, fairness, and efficiency are fundamental to SEBI's operations in the Indian securities market. SEBI mandates comprehensive disclosure norms, requiring companies to provide accurate, timely information to investors. By ensuring transparency, SEBI empowers investors to make well-informed decisions, reducing the risk of investment in non-performing or misleading ventures. Additionally, SEBI's strict enforcement of anti-fraud measures ensures that the market remains fair and competitive. SEBI's commitment to operational efficiency further reduces systemic risks, fostering an environment where markets function optimally and investors benefit from a reliable, well-regulated financial ecosystem.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF SEBI

SEBI operates under a robust regulatory framework designed to protect investors and ensure the integrity of the securities market. Key legislation, such as the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act of 1956, the SEBI Act of 1992, and the Depositories Act of 1996, provide SEBI with the necessary authority to regulate securities trading, supervise stock exchanges, and oversee electronic trading platforms. The SEBI Act of 1992 is the primary legislation that empowers SEBI to enforce regulations and act against market malpractices. Additionally, SEBI collaborates closely with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to oversee governance under the Companies Act of 2013, focusing on shareholder rights and transparent business operations.

To stay relevant in an evolving financial landscape, SEBI continually updates its regulations. Recent amendments in 2023-2024 have introduced more rigorous disclosure requirements and corporate governance standards, especially around independent board composition and related-party transactions. These changes aim to increase accountability, reduce conflicts of interest, and ensure that companies maintain high ethical standards. SEBI has also introduced updated insider trading rules to protect non-public information and prevent market manipulation. These amendments reflect SEBI's proactive approach in adapting to new challenges and risks within the financial sector (SEBI: 2023).

SEBI's guidelines target the unique needs of both retail and institutional investors, who have different risk tolerances and expectations. For retail investors, SEBI has implemented safeguards like transparent IPO pricing mechanisms, clearer product risk disclosures, and swift actions against fraudulent entities. For institutional investors, SEBI enforces rigorous due diligence practices, ensuring that large-scale investments adhere to fair practices and do not destabilize market structures. By addressing the needs of various investor groups, SEBI fosters a regulatory environment that supports diverse participants while prioritizing investor protection.

KEY INITIATIVES OF SEBI (2023-2024)

SEBI has launched several targeted initiatives in recent years to enhance investor protection, with 2023-2024 seeing a focus on disclosure requirements, corporate governance, and advanced technological oversight. Enhanced disclosure requirements are a key initiative, especially for listed companies. SEBI now mandates quarterly financial disclosures with detailed insights into revenues, liabilities, and any potential risks associated with the company's operations. This helps investors assess financial performance accurately and make better-informed decisions. Furthermore, SEBI has introduced ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reporting standards to hold companies accountable for their environmental and social impact. These requirements not only promote transparency but also appeal to investors interested in sustainable and socially responsible investments.

Corporate governance improvements are another priority for SEBI, aimed at reinforcing ethical practices within companies. To strengthen governance structures, SEBI has introduced stricter norms around the appointment of independent directors and the functions of audit committees. These measures help ensure that boards are accountable and capable of making objective decisions, especially concerning financial transparency and related-party transactions. By mandating these practices, SEBI addresses issues that could lead to conflicts of interest, thereby protecting shareholders from decisions that might prioritize company insiders over the broader investor community (SEBI: 2024).

Incorporating advanced technology into market surveillance is another major SEBI initiative. By deploying artificial intelligence and data analytics, SEBI can now detect market manipulation, insider trading, and fraudulent activities in real time. This technology-driven approach allows SEBI to act swiftly on irregularities, reducing the impact of illicit activities on investors. Real-time monitoring has proven crucial in an era where digital financial transactions can happen at lightning speed, helping SEBI maintain control over a dynamic and rapidly changing market landscape.

SEBI'S IMPACT: SOME RECENT FACTS

SEBI's impact on investor protection can be seen in recent data from 2023-2024, reflecting its proactive stance on grievance redressal and market enforcement. During this period, SEBI handled a substantial volume of investor complaints, focusing on swift redressal to build confidence among retail investors. By addressing complaints efficiently, SEBI not only resolves individual grievances but also fosters a sense of trust within the market. Recent statistics reveal that SEBI has improved its complaint resolution rate, with the majority of grievances being addressed within stipulated time frames, underscoring its dedication to investor support (Shroff & Sreenivas: 2023).

Enforcement actions taken by SEBI in the past year include fines, penalties, and even debarments of individuals and entities involved in malpractice. This data shows a clear trend towards strict deterrence, where SEBI uses punitive measures to discourage fraud and misconduct. For instance, companies or individuals found guilty of insider trading or stock manipulation face significant penalties, and repeat offenders may be banned from the market entirely. These enforcement actions serve as a strong reminder that SEBI prioritizes investor welfare and will take necessary steps to uphold market integrity.

Through its initiatives, SEBI has proven effective in maintaining a fair and transparent financial environment. The penalties and fines imposed, combined with the increased rate of resolved complaints, illustrate SEBI's role in deterring unethical behavior and supporting a balanced market. By continuously analyzing investor feedback and enforcing strict regulations, SEBI maintains its status as a vigilant regulator committed to the interests of both retail and institutional investors (GoI: 2023).

SEBI'S ROLE IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REFORMS

SEBI has long prioritized corporate governance reforms, recognizing that robust governance structures within companies are essential for protecting investor interests and maintaining a stable market. In 2023-2024, SEBI introduced and enforced a series of stringent governance standards, particularly focusing on enhancing the accountability and independence of company boards. These reforms mandated the presence of independent directors in decision-making processes, aiming to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure that the interests of shareholders, especially minority ones, are safeguarded. SEBI's governance reforms also emphasized the need for transparent audit committees to monitor financial disclosures and ensure that companies present an accurate financial picture to stakeholders (SEBI: 2024a).

Throughout 2023 and 2024, SEBI was involved in several high-profile cases where corporate governance standards were compromised, leading to significant regulatory interventions. One such case involved a large publicly listed company accused of concealing financial risks and exaggerating revenue figures in its disclosures to boost stock prices (Banerjee: 2023). SEBI's investigation uncovered evidence of irregularities, leading to penalties and mandates for the company to restructure its board with more independent directors. This case underscored SEBI's commitment to enforcing governance standards, as well as its role in rectifying corporate malpractices that could mislead investors.

In 2023, a notable case involving SEBI's intervention centered around the boardroom conflict within Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL). The dispute arose when certain board members and shareholders expressed concerns over the company's governance practices and its handling of financial irregularities. The situation intensified as various stakeholders called for increased transparency and accountability from ZEEL's leadership. Recognizing the potential risk to investor confidence, SEBI swiftly acted, demanding a thorough review of the company's governance practices and ensuring adherence to transparency norms. SEBI's intervention led to structural changes within the board and strengthened corporate governance frameworks within ZEEL. This case highlighted SEBI's proactive role in upholding governance standards and demonstrated its commitment to protecting investor interests by mitigating risks that could arise from internal conflicts. Through actions like these, SEBI reinforces accountability standards across listed companies, fostering a more transparent and trustworthy securities market in India.

SEBI'S INVESTOR EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Investor education is another key focus area for SEBI, as informed investors are better equipped to make sound financial decisions, reducing their vulnerability to market risks and scams. To this end, SEBI has implemented various education and awareness programs targeting diverse groups, from first-time retail investors to experienced market participants. Through workshops, seminars, online resources, and social media campaigns, SEBI has made financial literacy resources more accessible, emphasizing the basics of investment, the risks of speculative trading, and the importance of long-term wealth building. These initiatives play a crucial role in demystifying the securities market and equipping investors with the tools needed to make informed decisions (Patel & Mehta: 2024).

A cornerstone of SEBI's investor education efforts is the Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF), established to finance and execute educational programs. The IPEF allocates funds for initiatives aimed at raising awareness about various financial products, investment strategies, and the risks associated with certain high-return schemes. In 2023-2024, IPEF-funded programs expanded to cover emerging investment areas, including digital assets and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) investing, reflecting SEBI's commitment to keeping investors informed about evolving market trends. The IPEF also supports grievance redressal initiatives, helping to strengthen SEBI's relationship with investors by actively addressing their concerns and educating them on their rights.

SEBI's recent investor education campaigns have achieved considerable success, as evidenced by increasing participation rates and positive feedback from investors. For instance, data from 2023 showed a significant rise in the number of participants in SEBI-led financial literacy programs, as well as higher levels of engagement with SEBI's online educational content. Success stories from these initiatives include numerous cases where investors reported that SEBI's programs helped them avoid high-risk schemes and fraudulent operators. By empowering investors through education, SEBI not only enhances individual financial security but also contributes to a more resilient and informed investor base in the Indian market (SEBI: 2023).

SEBI'S ROLE IN TACKLING FINANCIAL FRAUDS AND SCAMS

SEBI's mandate includes a robust framework to combat financial frauds and scams, a responsibility that has become increasingly critical in recent years as financial crimes have grown in complexity. SEBI has deployed a multifaceted approach to detect and deter fraudulent activities, including Ponzi schemes, insider trading, and pump-and-dump schemes. Through regular market surveillance (SEBI: 2023), SEBI monitors trading patterns for signs of manipulation and suspicious behavior. The regulator has also adopted advanced technological tools like artificial intelligence and machine learning to enhance its fraud detection capabilities, enabling it to identify irregularities in trading data and respond swiftly to potential threats to market stability. Several high-profile cases of financial fraud (SEBI: 2023) came to light in 2023-2024, where SEBI's interventions played a pivotal role in protecting investor interests. For instance, in 2023, SEBI uncovered a major insider trading ring involving executives of a large corporation who exploited non-public financial data for personal gain. SEBI's prompt investigation led to heavy fines, trading restrictions, and the prosecution of individuals involved, signaling SEBI's zero-tolerance policy for insider trading. This intervention not only safeguarded the company's shareholders but also sent a strong message across the market that SEBI would act decisively to punish those who sought to profit illegally at the expense of ordinary investors.

SEBI's process of handling financial fraud is rigorous, involving investigation, enforcement, and, if necessary, prosecution. Once suspicious activity is detected, SEBI initiates an investigation to gather evidence, collaborating with other agencies if the case involves cross-border transactions or multi-agency jurisdiction. Upon concluding its investigation, SEBI can impose penalties, trading restrictions, and even seek to debar individuals or entities from participating in the market. In severe cases, SEBI collaborates with legal authorities to prosecute offenders, further ensuring that fraudulent practices face serious consequences. Through these actions, SEBI maintains a protective layer over the securities market, deterring potential fraudsters and reassuring investors of a secure trading environment.

CASE STUDIES OF SEBI INTERVENTIONS (2023-2024)

In 2023, SEBI's response to a significant corporate fraud case involving Adani Group companies exemplified its commitment to maintaining market integrity and protecting investors from stock manipulation. This case attracted substantial public and regulatory scrutiny when allegations surfaced accusing Adani Group companies of artificially inflating stock prices through complex ownership structures and undisclosed related-party transactions. SEBI launched a comprehensive investigation, aiming to assess potential violations of disclosure norms, corporate governance, and insider trading regulations. By working closely with other regulatory bodies and leveraging advanced data analytics tools, SEBI thoroughly examined trading patterns, corporate filings, and ownership records. This investigation underscored SEBI's approach to enforcing transparency and holding companies accountable for actions that might mislead investors (Choudhury: 2023). The outcomes included corrective measures imposed on the group to comply with disclosure requirements, signaling SEBI's determination to deter similar practices in the future and restore investor confidence.

Another notable case in 2023 involved SEBI's enforcement actions surrounding the IPO of a major technology company, where concerns emerged over the pricing and disclosure practices. As the IPO gained attention, SEBI identified potential discrepancies in the company's financial disclosures, particularly related to profit projections and risk factors that could impact investor decisions. SEBI intervened to ensure that the IPO (SEBI: 2023c) adhered to fair pricing practices and that all material information was transparently disclosed to potential investors. SEBI's scrutiny led the company to revise its prospectus, providing clearer insights into its financial health and growth prospects. This intervention not only upheld the standards of fair disclosure but also protected retail investors from potentially overvalued stocks, ensuring a balanced playing field. SEBI's oversight in high-stakes IPOs reinforces the regulator's role in fostering transparency and trust, especially for first-time investors participating in initial offerings.

These case studies underscore SEBI's active role in safeguarding investors and maintaining market integrity. In both instances, SEBI's actions highlighted the need for thorough corporate governance and accurate disclosures, demonstrating that investor protection extends beyond mere regulatory compliance to creating a trustworthy market environment. By addressing these high-profile cases, SEBI sets a precedent that fosters greater transparency and accountability, benefiting both companies and investors in the long run.

SEBI'S COLLABORATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

To bolster its regulatory capabilities, SEBI actively collaborates with other domestic and international regulatory agencies. SEBI's partnership with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is critical in coordinating on issues like systemic risk management, market liquidity, and financial stability. Through this collaboration, SEBI and RBI jointly address challenges like ensuring investor protection during economic fluctuations or tackling issues related to foreign investments in domestic markets. SEBI also works closely with India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs, especially on corporate governance norms under the Companies Act, ensuring alignment between securities regulation and broader corporate law standards.

On the international front, SEBI is a member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO), a global body that sets international standards for securities regulation. SEBI's involvement in IOSCO (2023) allows it to participate in global regulatory initiatives, facilitating the exchange of insights and best practices with regulators worldwide. This collaboration helps SEBI stay updated on emerging trends and challenges in global financial markets, such as cross-border fraud, digital assets, and regulatory responses to technological disruptions. In 2023-2024, SEBI strengthened its ties with foreign regulatory bodies, including the U.S. SEC and the UK's Financial Conduct Authority, to tackle cross-border issues like insider trading and money laundering that affect multiple jurisdictions.

These collaborations enhance SEBI's ability to respond to complex challenges by incorporating international best practices and resources. For instance, SEBI's association with IOSCO has informed its approach to digital asset regulation, drawing from the experiences of countries with established frameworks for cryptocurrencies and other digital financial products. By participating in global networks and building partnerships, SEBI not only enhances its own regulatory capacity but also contributes to shaping a more integrated and resilient global securities market. These partnerships ensure that SEBI remains a robust regulator capable of addressing both domestic and international investor protection challenges.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR SEBI

Despite its proactive measures, SEBI faces ongoing challenges in its mission to protect investors in an increasingly complex financial landscape. One of the primary challenges is the rise of technology-driven scams, such as algorithmic manipulation and digital asset fraud, which can be difficult to detect with traditional regulatory tools. As technology advances, fraudulent schemes have become more sophisticated, often involving automated trading systems that exploit market volatility. SEBI is working to enhance its technological capabilities, but these rapid advancements in fintech continue to test its resources and response mechanisms. Moreover, digital assets like cryptocurrencies, which operate beyond traditional financial frameworks, pose regulatory challenges as SEBI navigates the balance between investor protection and innovation.

Cross-border issues also present a significant challenge for SEBI, as Indian markets become increasingly interconnected with global markets. Instances of cross-border fraud, money laundering, and insider trading require collaboration with foreign regulators, a process that can be hampered by differences in legal frameworks, jurisdictional limitations, and information-sharing protocols. SEBI's involvement in international regulatory bodies helps address some of these challenges, but achieving seamless global enforcement remains an ongoing struggle (Gupta: 2023).

Looking to the future, SEBI is preparing for new trends in financial markets, such as the rise of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing, which introduces new considerations for investor protection. SEBI has already taken steps to require listed companies to disclose ESG-related risks, but as these investments grow, SEBI will need to develop more comprehensive standards and monitoring mechanisms to protect investors from potential greenwashing. Additionally, SEBI is focusing on regulatory updates for digital assets and other emerging financial instruments that do not fit within traditional frameworks, aiming to provide clarity and protection without stifling innovation. SEBI's planned initiatives include further integration of technology for fraud detection, the introduction of specialized units for handling digital assets, and continued efforts to strengthen cross-border regulatory collaborations. By addressing these evolving market risks, SEBI is positioning itself as a forward-thinking regulator ready to tackle the challenges of a modern financial ecosystem. Its focus on adaptability and collaboration will be crucial in maintaining investor confidence and safeguarding the integrity of India's capital markets in the years ahead.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, SEBI has proven to be an instrumental force in safeguarding the interests of investors within the Indian securities market. Since its inception, SEBI has developed and enforced a comprehensive regulatory framework (Sharma: 2023) that aims to foster transparency, enhance corporate governance, and mitigate the risk of fraud and malpractices. Through its multi-pronged approach—comprising policy formulation, real-time market surveillance, investor education, and strict enforcement actions—SEBI has contributed significantly to establishing a resilient and investor-friendly market environment. Recent interventions in cases of corporate fraud, high-stakes IPOs, and boardroom conflicts illustrate SEBI's ability to respond effectively to dynamic challenges. Additionally, SEBI's ongoing efforts to incorporate technology into its monitoring and enforcement processes further demonstrate its adaptability to modern market needs. As a result, SEBI has successfully built a foundation of trust among investors, which is critical for the stability and growth of India's financial markets.

However, despite SEBI's accomplishments, there are areas where its regulatory framework can be further strengthened to address the evolving complexities of the financial landscape. One such area is the rapid advancement of financial technologies, which has introduced new forms of fraud, such as algorithmic manipulation and scams involving digital assets. These technologies present unique challenges that require SEBI to continually upgrade its tools and expertise to detect and prevent abuse effectively. Additionally, as Indian markets attract more foreign investment, SEBI faces an increasing need to address cross-border regulatory issues. This involves enhancing collaboration with international regulators and adapting its policies to account for global financial flows that may impact domestic investors. By bolstering its resources and strengthening international partnerships, SEBI can better safeguard Indian investors in an interconnected global market.

To enhance SEBI's regulatory framework, several policy recommendations can be considered. First, SEBI could invest in developing a specialized unit focused on digital assets and fintech innovation. This unit would be tasked with formulating regulations that allow innovation to flourish while ensuring that these new products do not pose undue risks to investors. SEBI should also consider strengthening its investor protection and education initiatives to address the rising complexity of financial products. By equipping investors with knowledge about emerging risks, SEBI can help them make informed decisions, thereby reducing their susceptibility to scams. Moreover, SEBI could introduce policies mandating greater transparency in financial disclosures, especially for high-risk assets and new financial products. This would allow investors to access critical information needed to make sound investment choices (IIM: 2023). Additionally, SEBI could benefit from enhanced data-sharing agreements with other regulatory bodies globally, facilitating seamless information exchange and more effective cross-border fraud detection. As India's market matures, aligning SEBI's regulations with global standards, particularly in areas like ESG investing and digital finance, will help attract international investors while maintaining a high standard of investor protection. By addressing these emerging areas proactively, SEBI can remain an agile, effective regulator, capable of meeting the needs of modern investors and ensuring the integrity of India's financial markets.

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A RESEARCH NOTE ON

PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS: SUGGESTING THE AREAS OF RESEARCH

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Abstract

The researches in Public Administration and Political Science are generally concerned with a public policy or several public policies. But the perception of the process and intricate areas of public policy are not taken into consideration. This makes an urgent imperative to understand the stages of public policy. Thus, the present research note is an attempt to identify the areas of research in Public Administration especially concerned with the policy process.

Keywords: Public policy, agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation

A public policy is such a significant aspect of governance that the credibility of a government is judged by its policy. The public policies are the indicator of the performance of government. Thus, policy process becomes an important subject for the students of Public Administration and political science. Rather every research in public administration ultimately relates to a policy. But the problem arises relating to perception. People perceive policy in different ways. Researchers take up policies mainly in terms of performance (outcomes/outputs of policy) covering target, achievements, benefits to clientele and people's participation. But researchers miss to examine the driving forces behind it and intention of policy masters, without which researchers may not reach to reality. Thus, it is imperative to understand the policy process in the context of bringing a social issue on political agenda, converting the agenda into government action ,and formation of policy, its relationship with policy masters and beneficiaries. In short, it is essential to discuss the varied perceptions of policy, models of policy, stages of the policy process etc. all in the context of developing societies.

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The scholarship on subject have tried to underline the ways in which people perceived a public policy, most important among them is Turner and Hulme (1997). He has categorized them into nine – a) broad statement of government towards a goal commonly called as 'label for the field activity', b) government expression of general purpose, such as to create jobs, provide facilities for raising income of the people, c) government decisions as announced by legislative houses or an order issued by the executive wing of government, d) formal authorization or granting right to the people through an Act or statute like MNREGA entitling employment in rural areas, e) an outcome or output of government action that has been really delivered like services, grants or public distribution e) a theory or model of government such as "if A is done then B will be achieved". If jobs are created in rural areas then migration of labour will be checked, f) as a process of achieving a goal i.e. starting with issues and moving to formation, implementation and evaluation g) the definition of a purpose. All these perceptions cannot be either declared right or wrong. The critical issue is – how do the researchers develop an awareness of the public policy and identify the version which has greatest analytical insights.

For this, let us have an idea on aspects of policy. Definitely, policy is about government decision or series of non-decisions on strategies to achieve a goal. Second aspect of policy is purposive behavior of state apparatus, intents and rationalization of outcome through different stages. The third aspect relates to human agents who handle the policy process. As such, a researcher will have to understand their behaviour, conflicts, multiplicity etc. in the context of political goal. Definitely, the policies are the reflection of political choices of political regimes, international instruments, crisis management, electoral prospects and so on. Finally, the policy reflects the priorities of the steps of the governments mainly for socio-economic development (like poverty eradication, employment etc.) in developing countries and economic growth in developed ones. In nutshell, it can be said that 'public policy is a set of government strategies decided to achieve a goal that passes through – bringing the issues (problem) on political agenda, formulation and enactment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.'

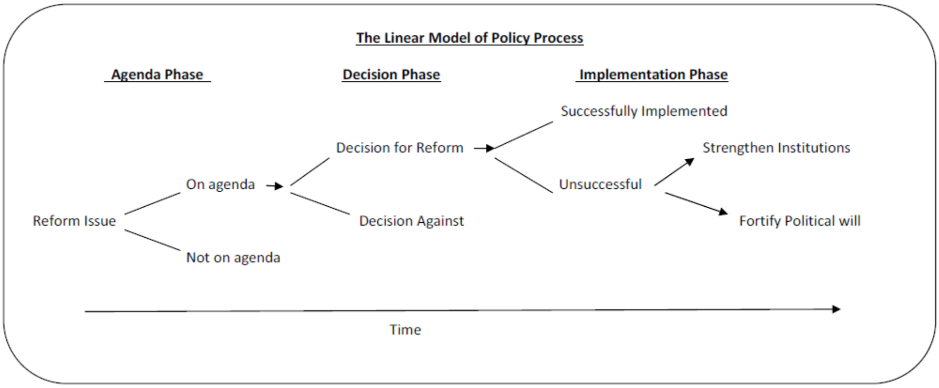
Policy is the key to prospects of the countries and the people and governments' performances. Good policy choices and their effective implementation facilitate faster pace of socio-economic development – viz. 8 Asian countries like Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, (from 1960s to 1990s), Bangladesh (since 2010). Thus, policies can be classified in accordance to their purposes. Grindle and Thomas (1991) have classified the models of policy. Some policies are made to serve the purposes of social classes; such policies can be termed as society-centric model. The policies made to resolve the conflicts among social classes, coalescing the conflicting social groups and providing public resources to the people. Secondly, some policies are made without considering social issues rather for strengthening state apparatus and political prospects. For example, the rational actors take decisions without consulting social players, public officials manoeuver political actors to devise strategies to curtail expenses in public services and sometimes, state establish its autonomy by defining public problems in accordance with their goals (Grindle and Thomas:1991).

Policies are not made abruptly but it passes through various stages (Anderson: 1975). A common problem acquires an issue in society which turns into an issue of political decision, strategies are set to solve the problem; after certain decisions, government decides the course of action, in such way, a policy is made. Different scholars have classified the processes of public policy in their own way. Jordan and Adelle (2012) have enumerated emergence of a social problem, agenda setting, consideration of policy options, decision making, implementation and evaluation. Similarly, Hill and Verone (2021) simplify the process as Agenda setting, Formulation, Adoption, implementation, and evaluation. Turner and Hulme have made it into four processes – agenda setting i.e. bringing a social issue on political agenda, formulation, implementation and monitoring and finally evaluation of policy.

Agenda setting refers to drawing the attention of policy makers towards certain problems from am among the other problems. Generally political actors, with support of people and media, bring an issue on the political agenda. The influencing factors of bringing an issue on political agenda are an event or crisis situation, suggesting reforms after review of ongoing programme, change in values and beliefs, collective action of interest groups, protests, media reports media reports, political changes, international agreements/covenants/instrument (Mooij: 2017). These factors can be classified into streams (Kingdon: 2001) like problem stream, policy stream (expert driven) and political stream (political parties and politicians).

The second stage is policy formulation that refers to process of identifying and crafting a set of policy alternatives and narrow down the alterative to arrive at a final policy decision. The selection of policy from various alternatives is governed by techniques like cost-benefit analysis and identifying needs of the clientele, economic forecasting, rationality, planning programming and budgeting system. There are certain agencies involved in policy formulation like legislature (both state legislature and parliament), executive (political executive and bureaucracy), inter-state bodies (NDC, GST Council etc.), planning bodies (Planning Commission, NITI Ayog) and grassroots level bodies (PRIs, ULBs, PSUs). Further, there are certain factors that influence these agencies to take a decision to formulate a policy such as political priorities, institutional mechanism, charismatic personality of the leader, identity politics, coalition compulsions and pressure of dominant groups. Besides, international instruments like international environmental meets, decisions of international bodies like WB, IMF, BRICS, G20 etc. (i) Rational Model – Underlines that policy formulation is a logical decision and the objective is to choose the best from the many options available. In this process the models of formation of policy. Some important among them are (ii) Incremental Model – It states that policies are gradually scaled up when the viability and workability of the policy has been determined. (iii) System Model – Transforms societal demands into policies. The inputs are processed and transformed into policies. (Easton's 'input-output analysis) (iv) Group Model – Various groups opposing each other shape the policy by adjusting their respective interests (v) Elite Model – Elites interests are given priority

These two stages can be shown in the following diagram:



Any policy can have impact, if it is implemented properly. The third stage of the policy process is implementation which refers to giving actual effects by using tools of Public Administration in shape of allocation of public resources and delivery of goods and services. In the process it involves complex technical exercise, role of bureaucracy and political actors, tackling conflicting interest groups and facilitate people's participation. The implementation has also to face the challenges posed by systemic constraints, institutional constraints, shortcomings of technical assistance, lack of people's participation, time constrains, ineffective information system despite increased digitalization.

The implementation of policy must have proper outcome. The evaluation is an activity through which we develop understanding of merit, worth and utility of a policy. Policy may be evaluated according to a number of parameters like Utility, Feasibility, Propriety and Accuracy etc. The implementation can be evaluated by measuring achievement in relation to set target statistically. But the statistical figures do not reflect the real benefit reached to the target group of people. The other parameter is cost-effectiveness, meaning that the benefit of the policy must be compared with the cost involved. Above the benefits, the satisfaction of clientele, the evaluation must assess the satisfaction of the beneficiaries for whom the policy was made. The fruits of policy must be inclusively distributed. If a policy benefits a certain section or group of the society, it cannot be said successful, if its benefits every section of society. Evaluation of a policy should not only examine in terms of achievements, benefits, satisfaction and cost effectivity but should also underline the challenges faced by the implementation mechanism. Finally, it must be assessed that the policy has social acceptability, feasibility (economic or otherwise) and unintended consequences. Now there is question – what should be modes of evaluation. The modes of evaluation are anecdotes and success stories reflected through case studies, obtaining careful and honest feedback from beneficiaries, stakeholders and NGOs etc. Thirdly, some evaluations are done by formal empirical researches of policy's effectiveness with scientific and statistical evaluation. Reports of statutory bodies like CAG reports, NSSO, NFHS etc., NGOs and international organisations are also the mode of evaluation.

Finally, it is suggestible for the young researchers of Public Administration to have right perception of the policy process and examine the issues related to the stages of the policy process. It is imperative to conceptualize the forces that bring a social issues on political agenda, models of policy formulation like rational model, incremental model, system model, group model or elite model, implementation aspects in the context of mechanism and challenges and evaluation process.

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BOOK REVIEW

Lalit Dadwal, Right to Information and Official Secrecy. New Delhi: Avon Publications, pp. XVI+344, 2nd edition 2023 (hardback). ISBN: 978-93-8183-979-9.

Nittin Siwach* and Sewa Singh Dahiya**

Information is a crucial element of power and empowerment in a democratic country. The colonial legacy of secrecy has led to a lack of access to information, increasing the risk of bureaucrats abusing power. Enhanced public awareness fosters vigilance and a dynamic democracy. The right to information is an invincible weapon, and in the modern age, countries are striving for more information. Information rich countries dominate, while those information-starved lag behind. Physical and economic sources of power are being superseded by informational power. A strong country's indicators are not military force or economic wealth, but its level of governance. Key principles of successful governance include transparency, inclusivity, responsibility, efficiency, and consistency. Access to government information is essential for democratic participation and enabling public monitoring of government authority. In this context, this book on Right to Information and Official Secrecy evaluates the dimensions of the right to information in international and national perspectives, particularly in a democratic environment. It traces the historical evolution of the right to information, highlights its position in Indian laws and international documents, and evaluates judicial attitudes. The study examines the Right to Information Act, 2005, laws enabling secrecy, comparative positions in other countries, and suggestions for improving the legal framework. The study primarily focuses on doctrine and relies on a critical examination of both primary and secondary sources. The study is purely explorative and evaluative in nature. The book is divided into eight chapters.

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The introductory chapter focuses on concept, scope and conceptual clarifications regarding information regime. Besides, it comprehensively discussed right to information & its significance, official secrecy, need of right to information, objectives, hypothesis, limitations, methodology, sources and framework of the study in a systematic manner. Chapter II explores the history and evolution of the concept of right to information, highlighting the historical control of access to information and knowledge, leading to secrecy-based governance. The transformation of absolute monarchies into democratic systems over three centuries granted civil, political, and social rights. The global trend towards information rights and freedom of expression is reflected in India's Right to Information Act, 2005, which aims to ensure transparency and responsibility in government operations, fostering a corruption-free, proactive, and effective democratic system. Chapter III explores India's laws that promote secrecy, particularly the Officials Secrets Act, 1923, which remains in effect even after India became a republic. In addition to the Official Secrets Act, Sections 123 and 124 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 prohibit the revelation of official information as evidence. The Civil Service Conduct Rules also prohibit government personnel from disclosing official information with unknown individuals, reinforcing the Official Secrets Act. Bureaucrats often abuse their power when secrecy expands, and it is crucial to limit it to what is necessary. The chapter suggests repealing, redefining, broadening, and strengthening existing laws to promote people's participation in participatory democracy and removing the veil of secrecy. Chapter IV is a comparative overview of the position of the right to information in United Kingdom, United States, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand etc. It shows that US, Sweden and Australia are the countries where freedom of information has become a part and parcel of their constitutional and political life. The global trend towards enacting right to information laws is growing, as it is considered a vital human right that ensures openness, transparency, and accountability in public agencies. Most legislations enacted by different countries share common objectives and features. Chapter V explores the judiciary's role in enhancing people's right to information, focusing on recent Supreme Court and High Court decisions. It discusses reasonable restrictions on the right to information. The judiciary in India has significantly contributed to freedom of speech and expression law through landmark judgments, expanding the scope of these rights and ensuring their importance. The right to information is implicit in these rights, as stated in Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The judiciary emphasizes the need for balance between secrecy and disclosure, especially in privacy contexts. Chapter VI evaluates the right to information in relation to India's Parliament and judiciary, focusing on the role of Parliament and the media in informing the public. It assesses people's ability to reach Parliament, ensuring they are informed about political matters. Information about Parliament's proceedings is available through public sessions, publications, and media like press, radio, and television. Mass media aids Parliament by communicating their deliberations, while the judiciary operates transparently, accountable, and free from fear and favor, fostering public confidence in fair justice administration. The press plays a crucial role in fostering democracy by facilitating information flow and providing guidance. Chapter-VII of the Right to Information Act, 2005 examines the provisions of the Act, which establishes various agencies to disclose required information to the public upon request. The Act aims to foster sustainable economic growth by introducing transparency, accessibility, and accountability. It could shift India's democracy from a representative to a participatory one, empowering citizens and addressing declining public expectations. The efficacy of the Right to Information (RTI) relies on active participation of people in the governance process, ensuring transparency and accountability. The success of the RTI depends on its effectiveness in preventing corruption and promoting efficient and caring governance. The study suggests that the Information Commissioner should have complete autonomy of rulemaking power, allowing them to establish their own procedures and processes for smooth functioning. Additionally, there is a clause for imposing penalties on PIOs, but there is no incentive for good performance, resulting in a lack of motivation among them. Chapter VIII discusses the right to information in India, highlighting its positive and negative aspects. It highlights the need for universal access to information and communication technologies, particularly the internet, in the era of information revolution and knowledge societies. The study suggests that enacting laws alone is insufficient for effective administration. Political determination and a conducive atmosphere are also necessary for democratic engagement. Suggestions include imposing penalties for public bodies failing to disclose information timely, applying the law to private entities and non-governmental organizations, and providing the Commission's yearly report to the Parliament/State Legislature instead of the government. Education on information laws should be widely spread at the college and university level to foster a culture of openness and transparency. The study emphasizes the importance of political determination and a conducive atmosphere in ensuring effective implementation and fulfillment of the right to information in India.

From the above discussion, it would not be wrong to say that the author of book completely ignores the repercussions in the implementation of the Right to Information Act due to various amendments made by the government in the Act from to time, especially the one made in 2019 according to which the central government may determine the terms and conditions of appointment for information commissioners at both the national and state levels. It has given undue authority to the central government to impede the autonomy of the central and state information commissions, the highest adjudicator of information regime, resultantly these commission would act as a mere scarecrow and perform function as per political will of the government. In addition, a 'Foreword' might be written by a distinguished individual, ideally a Chief Information Commissioner, to captivate readers and describe the rationale for reading the book.

Nevertheless, Dadwal's book tends to be commendable, since it provides valuable knowledge and is easily understandable. The author has made every attempt to present the discussion in a clear, orderly and methodical way. The study concludes with annexures and a bibliography that supplement the content with further details regarding the right to information. The author has also compiled Officials Secrets Act, various State RTI Acts, RTI Act, 2005 and various courts/ commissions judgements which would serve as a ready reckoner to those who are pursuing research, officials dealing with RTI matter and common citizen who wants to enhance knowledge and use RTI Act as a medium of getting information so that he/she can make arguments in a logical way. This is a comprehensive guide on the Right to Information (RTI) Act so it would be appropriate to describe it as a compendium on the right to information. Therefore, it justifies inclusion in all institution's libraries. The book's printing exhibits exceptional quality. The book is believed to be beneficial for government officials, adjudicators, administrators and scholars. Nevertheless, the exorbitant cost may deter students, research scholars, officials and other citizens who are keen in acquiring more knowledge about the RTI. Consequently, the reviewers recommend that the publishers produce a Paperback Edition of this valuable book to make it more affordable for both those seeking information and those who have limited funds.

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घुमंतू जनजातियाँ और उनके विकास हेतु सरकारी प्रयास: संभावनाएँ एवं चुनौतियां

संजय यादव* एवं स्निग्धा त्रिपाठी**

सार संक्षेप

भोजन जीवन की आवश्यकता है। अपनी इसी आवश्यकता की पूर्ति के लिए व्यक्ति एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर पलायन करते रहते हैं। रोजी, रोटी, रोजगार व्यक्ति को "परदेसी" बना देती है। भारतीय भू-भाग के सभी क्षेत्रों में कुछ समुदाय बहुधा अबाध रूप से जीविका और रोजगार की तालाश में पलायन, विस्थापन और भ्रमण करते रहते हैं। परम्परागत रूप से इन्हें घुमक्कड़ जनजाति, बंजारा, विमुक्त और घुमंतू जनजातियों के नाम से जाना जाता है। भारत ही नहीं अपितु वैश्विक फलक पर भी देखा जाय तो इन जनजातियों का जीवन परिश्रम और संघर्ष का जीवन है। सामाजिक न्याय इनके लिए "मृगतृष्णा" हैं। श्रम, आखेट या वनोपज संग्रह इनके जीवन का अवलम्ब है। विकास के आधुनिक मानक आर्थिक आधार पर तय किये जाते हैं। इस मानक पर यह समुदाय अन्य समुदायों की अपेक्षा अतिशय पीछे है। जीवन संघर्ष में भूखे मरने की जगह परिश्रम को इन जनजातियों ने अपने जीवन का आधार बनाया। हमारी यह भी मान्यता है कि सबके कल्याण में ही राष्ट्र का कल्याण सन्निहित है। इसी आलोक में प्रस्तुत आलेख घुमंतू जनजातियों की स्थिति एवं इसके निमित्त सरकारी प्रयासों का आकलन करता है। यह पाया गया कि इनके लिए सरकार द्वारा क्रमबद्ध नियोजन और विकासात्मक ढांचा तैयार कर बहुस्तरीय लाभ देने का प्रयास आवश्यक है तभी समावेशी विकास का मार्ग तय होगा।

प्रमुख शब्द : विमुक्त/घुमंतू-जनजातियाँ, विकास, सरकारी प्रयास, आत्मनिर्भरता, नियोजन।

भूमिका

भारत विश्व का सबसे बड़ा लोकतंत्र तथा लोककल्याणकारी राष्ट्र है। इसकी सभ्यता संस्कृति विश्व के लिए आकर्षण तथा शोध का विषय है। यहाँ भौगोलिक तथा सांस्कृतिक विविधता बहुतायत में है। इसकी विविधतायुक्त भौगोलिक, सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि में अनेक सामाजिक तथा सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि के लोग निवास करते हैं। कविवर रवीन्द्रनाथ टैगोर ने भारत की सांस्कृतिक विविधता में उसकी एकता का आद्योपान्त निरुपण करते हुए उसे "महामानव समुद्र" कहा था (द्विवेदी 2022)। टैगोर के ध्यान में हिमालय

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से हिन्द महासागर तक और कच्छ से कामरूप तक फैली हमारी जीवनशैली और जीवनदर्शन रहन-सहन का सतरंगी इन्द्रधनुष था। उन्होंने भारत की विविधता और लोक मान्यताओं को निहारा था। इस सांस्कृतिक विविधता में न केवल जातियों का रहवास है अपितु विभिन्न जनजातियाँ भी रहती है। पर सबमे भारत, भारतीयता का भाव बोध है।

जनजातीय विकास और समावेशी विकास वर्तमान सन्दर्भ के सर्वाधिक चर्चित विमर्श हैं। इस विमर्श पर विचार करने से पूर्व जनजाति, विकास और समावेशी विकास जैसे विमर्श को समझ लेना आवश्यक है। मानवशास्त्रीय अध्ययन यह निरूपित करता है कि जनजाति वह है जिसकी जनसंख्या घनत्व कम हो, आदिम अर्थव्यवस्था हो, राजनीतिक, व्यवस्था का स्वरूप आदिम हो, अन्य समाजों से पृथक्करण लिपि का अभाव तथा धर्म का आदिम स्वरूप हो (बैद्य, 2003)। जनजातीय मानक को निर्धारित करने के लिए 1965 में लोकुर समिति का गठन किया गया था। इस समिति ने भी निम्नलिखित मानकों को निर्धारित किया- आदिम लक्षण विशिष्ट, संस्कृति, अन्य समाज से मिलने में संकोच आर्थिक पिछड़ापन, तथा भौगोलिक अलगाव।

वस्तुतः वर्तमान सन्दर्भ में देखा जाए तो जनजातियों की भौगोलिक अलगाव वाली स्थिति अब नहीं रही। भारत ही नहीं अपितु वैश्विक फलक पर भी मानवशास्त्री मानने लगे हैं कि जनजातीय समाज समय के साथ अपने को परिवर्तित करने लगा है। भारत में प्रायः ऐसे समूहों को जनजाति कहा जाता है, जिन्हें भारतीय राष्ट्रपति संविधान के अनुच्छेद 342 के आधार पर सार्वजनिक सूचना द्वारा जनजाति घोषित करता है (पाण्डेय 2007)। विकास को परिभाषित करना अतिशय कठिन कार्य है। सभी सामाजिक विषय और विषय विशेषज्ञ द्वारा विकास की अलग-अलग परिभाषा रची गई है। राज्य विकास के अलग-अलग मानक निर्धारित करते हैं। वस्तुत, निश्चित समय सीमा के अन्तर्गत वांछित दिशा में परिवर्तन को विकास माना जा सकता है। विकास की संकल्पना मानव जीवन के सभी पक्षों को समाहित करती है। बात जब समावेशी विकास की होती है तो वह विकास के आयाम को और विस्तृत कर देता है। समावेशी विकास के गति के साथ परिवर्तनशीलता का नैरन्तर्य रहता है। इसमें आर्थिक विकास, सामाजिक विकास, राजनीतिक विकास सांस्कृतिक विकास, जैसे बहुपक्षीय आयाम सम्मिलित किए जाते हैं। आर्थिक क्षेत्र में, - यह वंचित वर्गों की संवृद्धि को सम्मिलित करता है तो सामाजिक क्षेत्र में यह वंचित वर्गों की शिक्षा, समानता, अधिकार बोध तथा न्याय की बात करता है। साथ-साथ आवरण, आहार, आवास, सफाई, स्वास्थ्य जैसे संकेतक भी दृष्टिगत होते हैं। राजनीतिक दृष्टि से गतिशीलता, सत्ता का विकेन्द्रीकरण महिला सशक्तिकरण अधिकार संबर्द्धन, संरक्षण तथा नीति निर्धारण, नीति नियन्त्रण और नीति निर्माण में निम्नतम की अधिकत्तम भागीदारी को सुनिश्चित करने का प्रयास करता है।

विमुक्त जनजातियों के अन्तर्गत उन्हें सम्मिलित किया जाता है, जिन्हें साम्राज्यवादी सत्ता ने उपनिवेशकाल में लागू किए गए आपराधिक जनजाति अधिनियम के अन्तर्गत अधिसूचित किया गया था जिसके अन्तर्गत पूरी आबादी को जन्म से ही अपराधी घोषित कर दिया गया था। स्वाधीनता पश्चात 1952 में इस कानून को निरस्त कर दिया गया। इन समुदायों को विमुक्त कर दिया गया। ये विमुक्त जनजातियाँ निरन्तर भौगोलिक गतिशीलता को बनाए रखती हैं। जन्मजात अपराधी कानून से इन्हें 31 अगस्त 1952 को मुक्त किया गया था। इसलिए 31 अगस्त ही इनके लिए स्वतन्त्रता दिवस के रूप हर्षित करता है। कुछ समुदाय स्थायी रूप से विस्थापित होते हैं तथा कुछ समुदायों की गतिशीलता निश्चित स्थानों तक ही होती है इन्हें सैद्धान्तिक रूप से अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातियों की श्रेणी में रखा जाता है। ये विकास की मुख्य धारा में आ

सके इसलिए समय-समय पर इनके विकास और नियोजन की रूपरेखा तैयार करने और इनके समग्र कल्याण के लिए आयोग और समितियों का गठन किया जाता रहा (जैन, 1997)। इनकी सामाजिक आर्थिक स्थिति के आकलन तथा व्यापक सर्वेक्षण के लिए भारत सरकार ने 2006 में रेनके आयोग का गठन किया। इस आयोग ने जो रिपोर्ट 2008 में प्रस्तुत किया वह आश्चर्यजन था। आयोग के रिपोर्ट के अनुसार भारत में 1,500 घुमक्कड़ एवं अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातियाँ तथा 198 विमुक्त जनजातियाँ पायी जाती है (त्रिवेदीः कुरूक्षेत्र, सितम्बर 2022)। ये सामाजिक तथा आर्थिक रूप से अत्यन्त पिछड़ी हैं। इनमें से अनेक जनजातियाँ आज भी जीवन के नैसर्गिक अधिकारों से परे हैं। (केशरवानीः कुरुक्षेत्र, 2022)। इनमें संविधान द्वारा प्रदत्त सामाजिक, शैक्षणिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक सुरक्षा उपायों का बोध नहीं है। आस्था और अज्ञानता के बीच जीवनयापन करने वाली इन जनजातियों में अन्धविश्वासों की भरमार होती रही। आश्चर्यजनक तो यह है कि ये अभाव में भी तनावमुक्त हैं। तनाव मुक्त की स्थिति इन्हें आरोग्यता प्रदान करती है। जबकि अपने को सुविधा सम्पन समझने वाला समाज तनाव सम्पन्न भी है। 2008 में गठित बालकृष्ण सिदराम रेनके आयोग ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में यह कहा कि यह विडम्बना है कि ये जनजातियाँ हमारे संविधान निर्माताओं के ध्यान से वंचित रही है (दास 2008)। साथ ही साथ ये अनुसूचित जातियों एवं अनुसूचित जनजातियों की अपेक्षाकृत भी ये संवैधानिक सुरक्षा उपायों से भी वंचित रही।

भारत सरकार ने 2014 में राष्ट्रीय विमुक्त, घुमन्तू तथा अर्द्ध-घुमन्तू जनजाति आयोग का गठन किया। सरकार द्वारा इस आयोग को यह कार्य सौंपा गया कि इन जनजातियों के विकास से सम्बन्धित अन्य विन्दुओं के साथ-साथ इनकी राज्यवार सूची भी तैयार किया जाए। यह आयोग भारत सरकार के सामाजिक न्याय मन्त्रालय द्वारा गठित किया गया था। इस आयोग द्वारा आठ जनवरी 2018 को अपना प्रतिवेदन प्रस्तुत किया गया। इसके रिपोर्ट में राज्यवार सूची तैयार करने के साथ ही 1,235 समुदायों को विमुक्त तथा घुमन्तू समुदाय के रूप में चिह्नित किया गया। (पी.आई.बी. की रिपोट, 201-7)।

घुमन्तू तथा विमुक्त जनजातियों की सूची

राज्य	*घुमन्तू समुदाय*	*विमुक्त समुदाय*	*राज्य*	*घुमन्तू समुदाय*	*विमुक्त समुदाय*
अण्डमान व निकोबार द्वीप समूह	06	01	हरियाणा	35	14
आन्ध्र प्रदेश	34	26	हिमाचल प्रदेश	41	0
अरूणाचल प्रदेश	01	0	जम्मू कश्मीर	14	0
असम	0	0	झारखण्ड	39	5
बिहार	50	3	कर्नाटक	76	85
चण्डीगढ़	31	2	केरल	21	1
छत्तीसगढ़	17	11	लक्षद्वीप	0	0
दादर और नगर हवेली	14	0	मध्य प्रदेश	31	20
दमन दीव	04	0	महाराष्ट्र	40	14
राष्ट्रीय राजधानी क्षेत्र दिल्ली	26	29	मणिपुर	0	0
गोवा	2	0	मेघालय	2	0
गुजरात	52	13	मिजोरम	2	0

राज्य	*घुमन्तू समुदाय*	*विमुक्त समुदाय*	*राज्य*	*घुमन्तू समुदाय*	*विमुक्त समुदाय*
राजस्थान	29	13	नागालैण्ड	0	0
सिक्किम	5	0	ओडिशा	31	11
तमिलनाडू	60	68	पुडूचेरी	13	0
तेलंगाना	36	36	पंजाब	23	9
त्रिपुरा	14	0			
उत्तर प्रदेश	18	31			
उत्तराखंड	21	25			
पश्चिमी बंगाल	32	8			

स्रोत - राष्ट्रीय विमुक्त, घुमन्तू तथा अर्द्ध-घुमन्तू जनजाति आयोग की रिपोर्ट

विमुक्त और घुमन्तू जनजातियों के प्राक्कलन का प्रयास - सरकार द्वारा समय-समय पर घुमक्कड़ तथा अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातियों के लिए कल्याणकारी योजनाओं को लागू किया जाता रहा है। एक समृद्ध तथा सशक्त राष्ट्र के लिए जनकल्याण की प्राथमिकता अपरिहार्य होती है। इसी क्रम में भारत सरकार ने जनवरी 2015 में भीखू रामजी इदाते के नेतृत्व में नेशनल कमीशन फार डिनोटिफाइड, नोमेडिक एवं सेमी नोमेडिक ट्राइब्स का गठन किया। इस आयोग का कार्यकाल तीन वर्ष का था जिसे आवश्यकता पड़ने पर 2 वर्ष बढ़ाया जा सकता था। आयोग ने निम्नलिखित बिन्दुओं को सम्मिलित करते हुए 2018 में अपनी रिपार्ट सरकार को प्रस्तुत किया। आयोग के रिपोर्ट के कुछ प्रमुख बिन्दु इस प्रकार थे।

1. आयोग का आग्रह था कि ये समुदाय सर्वाधिक पिछड़े हैं तथा इनमें से कुछ जातियाँ - अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति तथा अन्य पिछड़े वर्गों में सम्मिलित है। इसके लिए अस्थायी आयोग का गठन किया जाए तथा सामाजिक आर्थिक आरक्ष में राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर एकरूपता निर्धारित किया जाए।
2. सभी राज्यों में इनके लिए अलग-अलग विभाग तथा निदेशालयों का गठन किया जाय जो इनके विकास की निगरानी रख सकें।
3. इन्हें संवैधानिक संरक्षण का समुचित लाभ नहीं मिलता, साथ ही साथ ये अलग-अलग राज्यों में, अलग-अलग समुदायों में सम्मिलित हैं। अतः राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर उन्हें एक श्रेणी में रखा जाए।
4. प्रत्येक जनगणना के बाद इनके जातिवार जनसंख्या का प्रकाशन किया जाए जिसमें योजना, बजट और लाभ का आकलन किया जा सके।
5. इन्हें विशेष संरक्षण प्रदान किया जाए तथा राष्ट्रीय और राज्य स्तर पर विकास कार्यों की निरन्तर समीक्षा किया जाए।
6. इन्हें होने वाली परेशानियों के सम्बंध में जनप्रतिनिधियों, प्रशासकों तथा पुलिस को जागरूक रहने तथा जागरूक करने की आवश्यकता है।
7. इनकी समस्याओं का त्वरित समाधान किया जाना चाहिए।
8. स्वास्थ्य सुविधायें, टीकाकरण, दवा वितरण, परिवार नियोजन, शिक्षा के मूल अधिकार इन तक पहुँच सके इसका समूचित उपाय किया जाना चाहिए।
9. स्वरोजगार हेतु वित्तीय सहायता तथा रोजगार के लिए कौशल विकास तथा प्रशिक्षण की व्यवस्था की जानी चाहिए।

10. कौशल विकास तथा प्रशिक्षणोंपरान्त इनके लिए रोजगार के अवसर सृजित किए जायें।

विद्यमान चुनौतियाँ - ये जनजातियाँ अपनी सम्पूर्ण घर-गृहस्थी अपने साथ लेकर चलती हैं। इनका स्थायी अधिवास नहीं होता है। इनका घर-गृहस्थी समय-समय पर बदलता रहता है। एक समय अन्तराल अथवा ऋतु परिवर्तन के साथ इनका ठौर-ठिकाना बदलता रहता है। इनके निस्तर गतिशील होने के पीछे इनका पारम्परिक रोजगार जो इनकी आर्थिक सुरक्षा है सबसे बड़ा कारण माना जाता है। इनके पारम्परिक रोजगार इनको कुछ आर्थिक सहायता और सुरक्षा अवश्य प्रदान करते हैं परन्तु नियोजन और विकास के लिए स्थायी, अधिवास अपरिहार्य माना जाता है। इनके अभाव में मूलभूत सुविधाओं का विकास और विस्तार संभव नहीं है। इनके विकास में बाधक कुछ बिन्दुओं को निम्न रूप मे चिह्नित किया जा सकता है -

- एक जगह पर स्थायी अधिवास नहीं होने के कारण ये मूलभूत तथा संरचनात्मक सुविधाओं जैसे, पेयजल, आवास, स्वच्छता, शिक्षा, तथा स्वास्थ्य से वंचित हो जाते हैं।
- इन समुदायों के प्रति प्रचलित गलत अपराधिक धारणाओं के कारण स्थानीय प्रशासन इनके प्रति सहानुभूति नहीं रखता तथा निरन्तर प्रताड़ना के शिकार होते हैं।
- इनका स्थायी निवास नहीं होने के कारण इनको राशन कार्ड, आधार कार्ड निर्गत नहीं किया जाता जो इनकी सामाजिक असुरक्षा का प्रबल कारण है। इनके सामने पहचान संकट भी एक विकराल समस्या है।
- सामाजिक और आर्थिक रूप से इनका स्पष्ट वर्गीकरण नहीं होने के कारण इनकी जातीय पहचान की समस्या बनी रहती है। इससे इन्हें सरकारी योजनाओं का समुचित लाभ नहीं मिलता (जैन, 1999)।
- स्थानीय समुदाय भी इनके प्रति पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रसित रहता है कि ये दिन में रोजगार और रात में डकैती तथा हत्या करते हैं।

विकास से सम्बन्धित, योजनाएँ एवं सरकारी प्रयास: घुमक्कड़ और अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ समुदाय के समुचित विकास के लिए भारत सरकार द्वारा अनेक लाभकारी योजनाएं क्रियान्वित की गई है। ये योजनाएं उनकी मूलभूत समस्याओं का समाधान करने के लिए तैयार की गई थी जो इस प्रकार हैं -

1. घुमक्कड़ तथा अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातियों के बच्चों को शिक्षा के प्रति जागरूक कर उनकी शिक्षा स्तर को उठाने के लिए भारत सरकार ने वर्ष 2014-15 में डॉ. अम्बेडकर प्री-मैट्रिक और पोस्ट-मैट्रिक छात्रवृति योजना का प्रावधान किया। इस योजना के लिए उन बच्चों को पात्र रखा गया जिनके परिवार की वार्षिक आय दो लाख रुपए से कम हो। इस योजना का वित्तपोषण केन्द्र और राज्य सरकारों के माध्यम से 75:25 के अनुपात में किया जाता है। यह योजना शिक्षा के प्रसार में सहायक है तथा कुछ राज्यों में इसके सकारात्मक परिणाम दिख रहे हैं।
2. घुमक्कड़ और अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातीय समुदायों के बच्चों के उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच प्राप्त हो सके इसके लिए नानाजी देशमुख छात्रावास योजना प्रारम्भ किया गया है। यह योजना भारत सरकार की दूरदर्शी योजना है। यह उन बच्चों में उच्च शिक्षा के प्रति जागरूकता पैदा कर उन्हें शिक्षित होने में सहायता प्रदान कर रही है। यह योजना राज्य सरकारों/केन्द्रशासित प्रदेशों तथा केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों के माध्यम से क्रियान्वित की गई है। इसका वित्तपोषण भी 75:25 के अनुपात में है। इस योजना को सफलीभूत करने के लिए प्रतिवर्ष सभी शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में प्रवेश देने तथा आवासीय असुविधा से बचने के लिए सीटों का आरक्षण दिया जाता है। यह योजना घुमक्कड़ और अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ समुदाय के बच्चों के लिए सकारात्मक परिणाम अवश्य दे रहे हैं पर अभी इन समुदाय के बच्चों की उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुँच नहीं हो पायी है।

3. इन समुदायों की महिलाओं की आर्थिक भागीदारी तथा सामाजिक सशक्तिकरण के लिए राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण आजीविका मिशन के तहत सरकारों द्वारा ग्रामीण स्तर पर 'समूह प्रसुविधा केन्द्र' (Cluster Facilitation centre) बनाने का कार्य किया जा रहा है। ये प्रसुविधा केन्द्र इन समुदायों की महिलाओं के आर्थिक सशक्तिकरण में उपादेय सिद्ध हो सकती है। जिससे इनका सामाजिक और राजनीतिक भविष्य निर्धारित होगा।
4. घुमक्कड़ और अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातियों का कोई स्थायी अधिवास नहीं होता। ये यायावरी जीवन व्यतीत करते हैं। सभी राज्यों में इन्हें चिह्नित कर प्रधानमन्त्री आवास योजना ग्रामीण के अन्तर्गत पक्के आवास का निर्माण किया जा रहा है। इस योजना से इन समुदायों के आवास की समस्या का हल निकाला जा रहा है।
5. खाद्य सुरक्षा और कुपोषण भी इस समुदाय की ज्वलन्त समस्या है। इस समस्या के समाधान के लिए राष्ट्रीय खाद्य सुरक्षा अधिनियम 2013 के तहत स्थानीय स्तर पर सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली से जोड़कर खाद्यान्न उपलब्ध कराया जा रहा है।
6. विकास ने विस्थापन को बढ़ावा दिया है। विस्थापन, पलायन और गतिशीलता भी इनकी विकट समस्या है। विस्थापन तथा पलायन से रोकने के लिए स्थायी आवासीय पट्टा का प्रावधान किया गया है। इन आवासीय क्षेत्रों के विकास के लिए मूलभूत सुविधाओं का विस्तार, आवासीय क्षेत्रों का विद्युतीकरण, स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं की व्यवस्था आदि पर विशेष ध्यान दिया जा रहा है।
7. भारत, सरकार ने 16 फरवरी 2022 को इन समुदायों के कल्याण के लिए आर्थिक सशक्तिकरण स्कीम (सीड) आरम्भ किया है। (पी.आई.वी. रिपोर्ट) इस योजना का कुल परिव्यय 200 करोड़ रुपए है। इस योजना के परिव्यय के चार घटक होंगे तथा यह पांच वर्ष तक कार्य करेगी

(a) इन समुदायों के उम्मीदवारों को प्रतियोगी परिक्षाओं के लिए सक्षम बनाने के लिए गुणवत्ता परक कोचिंग की सुविधा।
(b) स्वास्थ्य बीमा।
(c) सामुदायिक स्तर पर आजीविका की सुविधा।
(d) आवास निर्माण हेतु वित्तीय सुविधा।

राष्ट्र निर्माण में सबकी भूमिका होती है। सबके विकास में राष्ट्र का विकास सन्निहित हैं। इसको दृष्टिगत रखते हुए भारत सरकार ने घुमक्कड़ और अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातियों तक सरकारी योजनाओं का लाभ पहुंचाने के लिए बहुआयामी प्रयास और पहल प्रारम्भ की है। भारत सरकार के सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मन्त्रालय द्वारा व्यापक स्तर पर कार्य किया जा रहा है। मन्त्रालय द्वारा इन जनजातियों को चिह्नित कर इनके सर्वेक्षण का कार्य किया जा रहा है। इन समुदायों के सर्वेक्षण के उपरान्त इनका पंजीकरण समुचित एवं सुनिश्चित रूप से किया जा सके इसके लिए सरकार द्वारा एक पोर्टल प्रारम्भ किया गया है। जिस पर इनका पंजीकरण इनका डेटाबेस तैयार किया जा सके। इस डेटाबेस के आधार पर ही शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, आवास योजनाओं की सुविधा उन तक पहुँचाने का पहल और प्रयास किया जाएगा (योगेश एवं सिसोदिया: 2010)।

निष्कर्ष एवं सुझाव

भारत में विभिन्न पंचवर्षीय और वार्षिक योजनाओं द्वारा जनजातीय विकास को प्राथमिकता दिया गया। परन्तु विकास के आधुनिक पैमाने के आधार पर देखा जाए तो जनजातीय समुदाय के विकास की गति अन्य समुदायों की तुलना में धीमी है। घुमक्कड़ और अर्द्ध-घुमक्कड़ जनजातियों की विकास गति तो और भी मन्थर है। इनका आर्थिक विकास नहीं होने से इनकी सामाजिक तथा विकास की गति भी धीमी पड़ी है। अन्य समुदायों की तुलना में इन्हें आजीविका के लिए कड़ा संघर्ष करना पड़ता है।

इनकी उद्यमशीलता अनुकरणीय है। इनका परिश्रम अतुलनीय है। फिर भी ये वंचित समुदाय हैं। ऐसी स्थिति में सरकार द्वारा क्रमवद्ध नियोजन और विकासात्मक ढाँचा तैयार कर बहुस्तरीय लाभ देने का प्रयास आवश्यक है। इसमें इनके सम्बन्ध में विस्तृत जानकारी, सामाजिक-आर्थिक प्रस्थिति जीवन स्तर के विभिन्न मानकों के आधार पर स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, आय, खाद्य सुरक्षा, वित्तीय समावेशन जैसे कार्यों के द्वारा सहयोग दिए जाने पर इनके समावेशी उत्थान का मार्ग निर्धारित होगा। घुमन्तू जनजातियों के लिए विभिन्न प्रकार की सामाजिक-आर्थिक सुरक्षा के लिए लगातार प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं। इन समुदायों के लिए शैक्षणिक विकास की योजना, आर्थिक विकास की योजना, सामाजिक उत्थान के लिए संवैधानिक संरक्षण का लाभ और विभिन्न प्रकार की गतिविधियों में प्रोत्साहन की योजनाएं लागू हैं। मूलभूत सुविधाओं की उपलब्धता, बुनियादी ढांचे में सन्तोषजनक सुधार, स्थानीय प्रशासन की सक्रियता व सहयोग, तथा योजनाओं की जानकारी व उसके प्रति जागरूकता ही इनका इनके भविष्य का मार्ग तय करेगा तथा ये समाज की मुख्यधारा में आ सकेंगे।

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ग्रामकचहरी व्यवस्था में आरक्षित पंचायत प्रतिनिधियों की भूमिकाः वैशाली जिला, बिहार के संदर्भ में एक अध्ययन

हेमंश प्रेमी*

सार संक्षेप

2011 जनगणना के अनुसार बिहार की ग्रामीण आबादी 88.7 प्रतिशत है। दूसरी ओर फरवरी 2023 को पटना उच्च न्यायालय द्वारा जारी सूचना के अनुसार बिहार में लंबित मुकदमों की संख्या सात लाख से अधिक है (web link 1)। ऐसी स्थिति में न्याय देने की व्यवस्था को विकेन्द्रीकरण कर छोटे-छोटे मुकदमों का सहमतिपूर्ण तरीके से स्थानीय या ग्रामीण स्तर पर निपटाने के प्रयास किए गए। 2008 में भारत सरकार द्वारा न्याय पंचायत अधिनियम पारित किया गया। साथ ही बिहार में पंचायती राज व्यवस्था में ग्राम कचहरी की व्यवस्था की गई है। ग्राम कचहरी में आरक्षण के वही नियम लागू हैं जो समस्त पंचायती राज संस्थाओं के लिए हैं। यहां प्रश्न यह उठता है कि क्या आरक्षित श्रेणी के पंचायत प्रतिनिधियों की भूमिका न्याय प्रदान करने की प्रक्रिया में प्रभावकारी रहती है? इसी प्रश्न के आलोक में प्रस्तुत आलेख सर्वेक्षण के आधार पर आरक्षित श्रेणी के पंचायत प्रतिनिधियों की भूमिका का आकलन करता है। वैशाली जिला के चार पंचायतों के अध्ययन के पश्चात् पाया गया कि उनकी भूमिका उत्साहजनक नहीं रही है।

प्रमुख शब्द : ग्राम कचहरी, आरक्षित श्रेणी, पंच-सरपंच, मुकदमा, निपटारा, वैशाली, बिहार

पृष्ठभूमि

1947 के बाद स्वतंत्र भारत की सरकार ने प्रजातांत्रिक आधार पर गांव के विकास हेतु पूरे देश में लोकतांत्रिक विकेंद्रीकरण के रूप में पंचायती राज के आदर्श को अपनाया। पंचायती राज का विचार सर्वप्रथम महात्मा गांधी के द्वारा दिया गया था। सन 1952 में भारत सरकार ने गांव के विकास हेतु सामुदायिक विकास कार्यक्रम चलाया। सन 1957 में केंद्र की सरकार ने राष्ट्रीय विकास परिषद के माध्यम से बलवंत राय मेहता समिति का गठन किया। इस समिति की सिफारिश पर गांव के समुचित विकास एवं लोकतांत्रिक विकेंद्रीकरण के लिए त्रिस्तरीय पंचायती राज व्यवस्था को सरकार ने अपनाया, जिसका श्रीगणेश 2 अक्टूबर 1959 को राजस्थान के नागौर जिले से किया गया। पंचायती राज व्यवस्था आगे अनेक सारी समितियों की सिफारिशें

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एवं सरकार के प्रयास किए गए तथा तत्कालीन पंचायत व्यवस्था की कमियों का अध्ययन किया गया। अंततः उन कमियों को दूर करते हुए 1989 में 64वां संविधान संशोधन विधेयक पेश किया गया (Mishra: 1991)। वह पारित नहीं हो सका, फिर भी 73वां संविधान संशोधन अधिनियम, 1992 पारित कर पंचायती राज संस्था को संवैधानिक मान्यता प्रदान किया गया। 73वें संविधान संशोधन अधिनियम लागू हो जाने के पश्चात पूरे भारत में त्रिस्तरीय पंचायती राज व्यवस्था को अपना लिया गया। ग्राम पंचायत स्तर पर सहमति के आधार पर सुलभ न्याय देने हेतु ग्राम कचहरी की व्यवस्था की गई जिसमें एक सरपंच तथा प्रत्येक वार्ड से एक पंच के निर्वाचन की व्यवस्था है। इन पदों पर निर्वाचन हेतु आरक्षण की वैसी ही व्यवस्था की गई जैसी ग्राम पंचायत के लिए प्रावधानित है। साथ ही बिहार पंचायती राज अधिनियम 2006 यथा संशोधित 2016 के तहत ग्राम कचहरी को भारतीय दण्ड संहिता के कतिपय धाराओं के तहत मेजिस्ट्रेट के अधिकार दिए गए हैं। बिहार पंचायती राज अधिनियम 2006 यथा संशोधित 2016 के द्वारा भारतीय दण्ड संहिता की धाराओं 140, 142, 143, 145, 147, 151, 153, 160, 172, 174, 178, 179, 269, 277, 283, 285, 286, 289, 290, 294, 323, 334, 336, 341, 352, 356-358, 374, 403, 426, 428, 430, 447, 448, 502, 504, 506 तथा 510 के तहत मामलों के क्षेत्राधिकार ग्राम कचहरी को दिए गए हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त बंगाल पब्लिक गैंब्लिंग तथा कैटल ट्रेसपास अधिनियम के तहत आने वाले मामले भी ग्राम कचहरी के क्षेत्राधिकार में लाए गए (Govt. of Bihar: 2018)।

न्याय तक पहुंच विधि के शासन की प्रथम शर्त है। साथ ही यह एक मानवाधिकार का अंग है मानवाधिकारों की सार्वभौमिक घोषणा 1948 में भी "एक्सेस टू जस्टिस" या न्याय तक सभी की पहुंच को मूल स्थान में रखा गया है (APU: 2022)। इसलिए ग्राम कचहरी जैसी संस्थाओं का महत्व बढ़ जाता है। ग्राम कचहरी ग्राम पंचायत स्तर पर ग्रामीणों के बीच के छोटे विवादों के निपटारे के लिए न्यायिक कार्य या सुनवाई करती हैं, जैसे - शराब सेवन, विवाह संबंधों, पैसे के लेनदेन, संपत्ति के बंटवारे, अन्य छोटे-मोटे आपसी अपराधिक झगड़ों आदि से उत्पन्न विवादों का सुनवाई और निर्णय करना। बिहार पंचायती राज अधिनियम के तहत भारतीय अपराधिक एवं दीवानी संहिता के अनुसार जिला स्तर के न्यायालयों तथा न्यायाधीशों को प्राप्त अधिकारों के अनुरूप ग्राम कचहरी तथा सरपंच को अदालत लगाने तथा सुट या मुकदमों की सुनवाई करने, पुलिस प्रतिवेदनों का अवलोकन करने तथा निर्णय देने एवं उन निर्णयों को लागू कराने का अधिकार दिया गया है। न्याय प्रक्रिया को विधिवत संचालित करने में सहायता हेतु न्याय मित्र के रूप में वकीलों की व्यवस्था का भी प्रावधान किया गया (Govt. of Bihar: 2006)। यहां प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या बिहार की ग्रामीण सामाजिक संरचना में आरक्षित पंच एवं सरपंच ग्राम कचहरी के दायित्वों के निभाने में सक्षम एवं सफल रहे हैं? क्या आरक्षित श्रेणी के पंचों को न्याय प्रक्रिया का समुचित अवसर मिलता है? क्या मुदई एवं मुदालय उनके निर्णयों एवं निदेशों का पालन करते हैं? क्योंकि हम जानते हैं कि हमारी सामाजिक संरचना में महिलाओं, अनुसूचित जातियों एवं पिछड़ी जातियों को शेष समाज द्वारा सम्मान नहीं मिलता तो क्या ऐसे में वे अपनी प्रभावकारी भूमिका निभाते हैं? इन्हीं प्रश्नों के आलोक में प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र ग्रामीण स्तर पर न्याय निस्सरण में पंचों एवं सरपंचों की भूमिका का आकलन प्राथमिक स्रोतों से तथ्य संकलन के आधार पर करने का प्रयास करता है।

शोध पद्धति

प्रस्तुत शोध में तथ्य संकलन में प्राथमिक एवं द्वितीयक दोनों प्रकार के स्रोतों का उपयोग करता है। द्वितीयक स्रोतों में पुस्तक, जर्नल, सरकारी एवं गैर-सरकारी संगठनों के रिपोर्ट समाचार पत्रों तथा वेबलिंकों का उपयोग किया गया है। जहां तक प्राथमिक स्रोत का प्रश्न है वैशाली जिला के चार पंचायतों का सर्वेक्षण साक्षात्कार अनुसूची की सहायता से किया गया है। बिहार में 8,463 ग्राम कचहरी हैं जिसमें इतने ही सरपंच तथा 1,14,691 पंच हैं। वैशाली जिला में 290 सरपंच तथा 3,818 पंच हैं। वहीं बिदुपुर ब्लॉक के 2 पंचायत कठौलिया और जोरावरपुर तथा जनदाहा ब्लॉक के 2 पंचायत मोहीउद्दीनपुर गढ़ी तथा बसन्तपुर पंचायतों के सभी निर्वाचित पंचों एवं सरपंचों का साक्षात्कार लिया गया।

साहित्यिक सिंहावलोकन

इस विषय पर बहुत कम शोध प्रकाश में आए हैं तथा अनुभवपरक अध्ययनों का अभाव है। सिग्मा फाउण्डेशन एवं अजीम प्रेमजी विश्वविद्यालय (APU: 2022) द्वारा संयुक्त रूप से बिहार में ग्राम कचहरियों द्वारा मुकदमों के निपटारे का अध्ययन किया गया है। इस अध्ययन में विभिन्न जिलों से 15 ग्राम कचहरियों का सर्वेक्षण किया गया और पाया गया कि इन कचहरियों द्वारा पिछले पांच वर्ष में 1,059 मुकदमों का निपटारा किया गया जिसमें 55.7 प्रतिशत दीवानी या सिविल तथा 44.3 प्रतिशत अपराधिक या फौजदारी के मुकदमे थे। इनमें 88.6 प्रतिशत मुकदमों का सहमति (amicably) से निपटारा किया गया और वह भी 6 सप्ताहों में। इनमें 92 प्रतिशत फौजदारी के मामलों का तथा 80 प्रतिशत से ऊपर दीवानी का निपटारा किया गया। शेष सुनवाई के आधार पर निर्णित किया गया। इस अध्ययन में सराहनीय तथ्य यह था कि सभी वादी-प्रतिवादी निर्णयों से संतुष्ट थे। परन्तु इस अध्ययन में यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि इनमें कितने मुकदमों का निपटारा आरक्षित वर्गों के सरपंचों एवं पंचों द्वारा किया गया।

कुछ समाचार एजेन्सियों के द्वारा उजागर हुआ कि चूंकि न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में न्याय करने वाले का समाज में प्रतिष्ठा होनी चाहिए। इसलिए जिन पंचों एवं सरपंचों का सामाजिक वर्ग निम्न है, वे सही दायित्व का निर्वहन नहीं कर पाते क्योंकि वादी-प्रतिवादी यदि उच्च श्रेणी के होते हैं तो वे उनका निदेशों का पालन करने में आनाकानी करते हैं या उनके निर्णयों एवं निदेशों का अनदेखा करते हैं (Bhupatiraju et al.: 2021)। खासकर महिला सरपंचों को न केवल पितृ-प्रधान समाज के बंधनों का सामना करना पड़ता है अपितु उनकी सामाजिक स्थिति भी उनकी प्रभावकारिता पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव डालती है (First Post: 2016; HT: 2020)। एक अन्य अध्ययन (Jha: 2023) में पटना जिला के महिला सरपंचों एवं पंचों का अध्ययन किया गया है। इस अध्ययन में पाया गया कि अधिकांश महिला सरपंचों एवं पंचों के बीच ग्राम कचहरी के नियमों एवं उनके अधिकारों का ज्ञान पर्याप्त नहीं था। यह उजागर किया गया है कि ग्राम कचहरी पूर्णतः लोकतांत्रिक निकाय है इसलिए तकनीकी सहायता आवश्यक है। परन्तु वादी-प्रतिवादी समाज के समझदार लोगों के कहने पर अपने विवादों का निपटारा ग्राम कचहरियों से करवाया। इस अध्ययन में उजागर किया गया कि महिलाओं को निर्णय देने में समाज के शेष वर्गों के कारण कठिनाइयां आई। साथ ही स्थानीय पुलिस प्रशासन का असहयोग एवं न्यायिक अधिकारियों द्वारा मुकदमों के स्थानांतरण एवं ग्राम कचहरी को वित्त उपलब्ध कराने में देरी की समस्या उठानी पड़ी। इस अध्ययन में महिला सरपंचों एवं पंचों के स्थान पर उनके पतियों द्वारा काम किए जाने की प्रवृति पर भी प्रकाश डाला गया है।

प्रस्तुत साहित्यिक सिंहावलोकन से विदित होता है कि ग्राम कचहरी द्वारा न्याय निस्सरण में कमजोर वर्गों के प्रतिनिधियों को आने वाली कठिनाइयों एवं उनकी प्रभावकारिता पर साहित्य का सर्वथा अभाव है। अतः प्रस्तुत आलेख इसी दिशा में एक प्रयास करता है।

तथ्य विवेचन

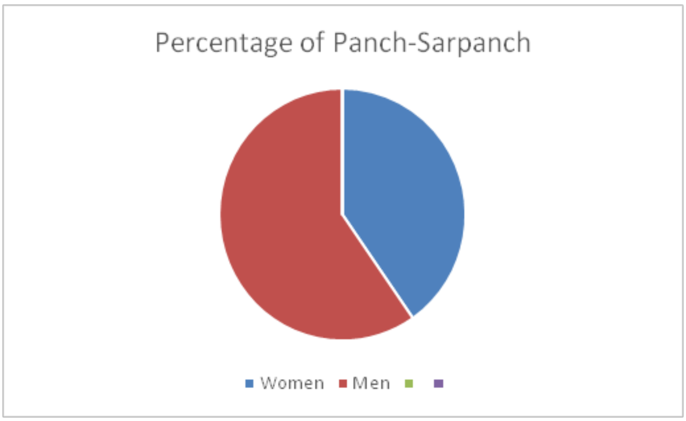
चार पंचायतों के अध्ययन से पता चलता है कि ग्राम कचहरी के समक्ष आने वाले मुकदमों में प्रमुख अपराधिक विवाद इस प्रकार हैः- परिवार के सदस्यों या पड़ोसी के साथ पड़ोसियों द्वारा ट्रेसपास, संपत्ति को हानि पहुँचाना, रास्ता रोकना, कूड़ा फेंकना तथा गाली-गलौज तथा मारपीट करना। दीवानी मामलों में कर्ज नहीं लौटाना, किसी संपत्ति के बिक्री पर पूरा मूल्य नहीं देना, जमीन संबंधी विवाद यथा संपत्ति बंटवारा, पड़ोसियों द्वारा भूमि अतिक्रमण, शादी संबंधों में विवाद, भाई-भाई में विवाद प्रमुख हैं।

उत्तरदाताओं में आरक्षित श्रेणी के पंच-सरपंच की सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूपरेखा का यहां उल्लेख आवश्यक प्रतीत होता है।

सारिणी 1: उत्तरदाताओं का स्वरूप लिंग के अनुसार

क्रम सं.	*लिंग*	*संख्या*	*प्रतिशत*
1.	महिला	27	44
2.	पुरुष	34	56
3.	कुल	61	100

ग्राफ 1

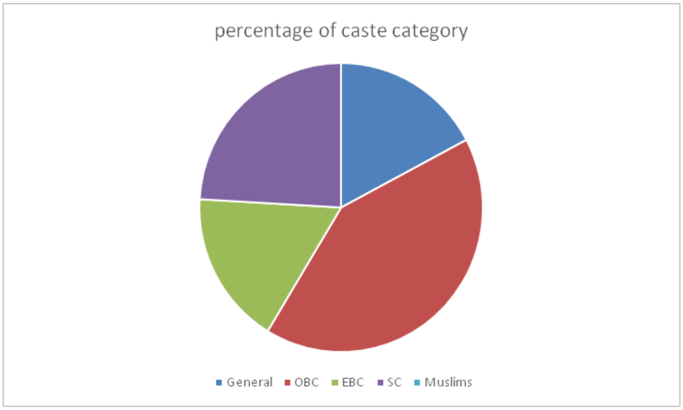


उपरोक्त आँकड़ों से पता चलता है कि महिला पंचों-सरपंचों की संख्या पुरुषों की तुलना में कम हैं।

सारिणी 2: उत्तरदाताओं का स्वरूप जाति के अनुसार

क्रम सं.	*जाति वर्ग*	*संख्या*	*प्रतिशत*
1.	सामान्य	10	16.4
2.	पिछड़ा	24	39.4
3.	अति पिछड़ा	10	16.4
4.	अनु. जाति	14	22.9
5.	मुस्लिम	3	4.9
6.	**कुल**	**61**	**100**

ग्राफ 2

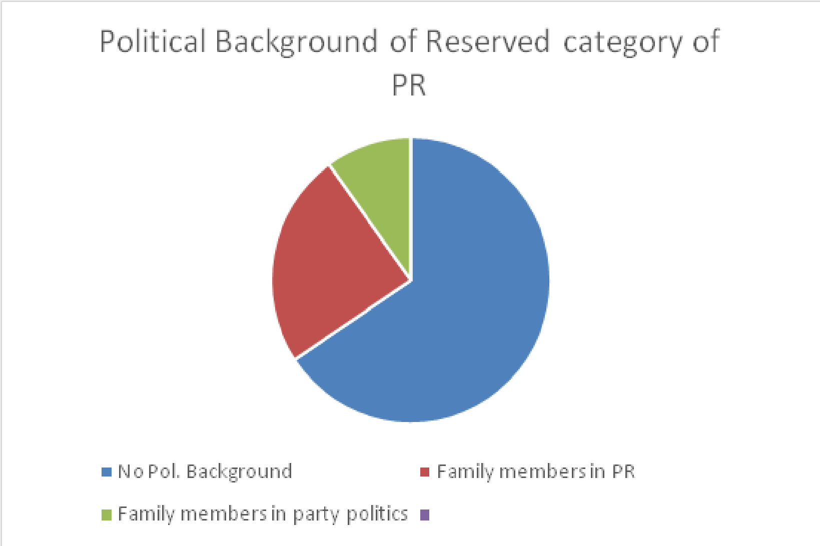


उपरोक्त सारिणी 2 से ज्ञात होता है कि पंचायतों की सामाजिक संरचना के अनुरूप ही उत्तरदाताओं की संख्या हैं। सामान्य जातियों में ब्राह्मण 1 एवं राजपूत 9, पिछड़ी जातियों में यादव 13 कुर्मी 5 एवं कुशवाहा 1, अति पिछड़ी जातियों में मुख्य तेली, बढई एवं मल्लाह थे। वहीं अनुसूचित जातियों में दुसाध 9 एवं चमार 5 थे। तीन मुस्लिम थे जो अति पिछड़ी जातियों की श्रेणी में आते हैं।

सारिणी 3: उत्तरदाताओं का स्वरूप राजनीतिक पृष्ठभूमि के अनुसार

क्रम सं.	*राजनीतिक पृष्ठभूमि के प्रकार*	*संख्या*	*प्रतिशत*
1.	कोई राजनीतिक पृष्ठभूमि नहीं	40	65.6
2.	परिवार के लोग पंचायत राजनीति में रहे हैं	15	24.5
3.	किसी दल के कार्यकर्ता या किसी मुद्दे पर अगुआई की है	6	9.9
4.	**कुल**	**61**	**100**

ग्राफ 3



उपरोक्त सारिणी 3 के आँकड़ों से पता चलता है कि कमजोर वर्गों या आरक्षित श्रेणी के पंचायत प्रतिनिधियों का स्थानीय राजनीति में भागीदारी तब बढ़ी जब पंचायती राज संस्थाओं में आरक्षण की व्यवस्था व्यापक रूप से लागू हुआ। हालांकि 2016 के पूर्व के पंचायती राज व्यवस्था में ग्राम कचहरी सशक्त नहीं था क्योंकि उनकी शक्तियों को स्पष्ट रूप से प्रदत्त नहीं किया गया था। 2016 में संशोधन के द्वारा उनके न्यायिक शक्तियों को स्पष्ट रूप से प्रभावी बनाया गया।

कर्तव्यों के प्रति जागरूकता

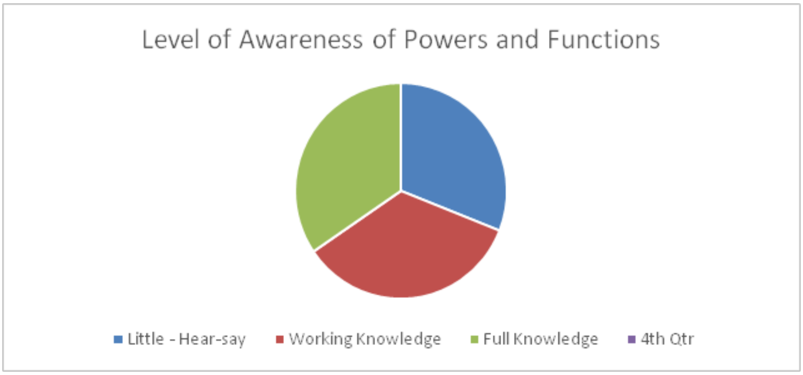
यह सत्य है कि कमजोर वर्ग के पंचायत प्रतिनिधि खासकर महिला एवं अनुसूचित जाति वर्ग के चुनावों में आरक्षण के कारण आ तो गए लेकिन उनकी स्वस्फूर्त भूमिका नहीं होती थी। इस प्रकार छद्म नेतृत्व का उदय हो गया। तात्पर्य यह कि अनुसूचित जाति वर्ग के प्रतिनिधि गाँव के दबंगों के कहने के अनुसार कार्य करते थे या महिला प्रतिनिधियों के स्थान पर उनके पति या परिवार के पुरुष सदस्य उनके बदले में पंचायत संस्थाओं के कार्यों का निपटारा करते थे। इस संदर्भ में ‘मुखिया पति’ की संस्था का उदय हो गया, परन्तु कालान्तर में धीरे-धीरे कमजोर वर्ग के पंचायत प्रतिनिधि स्वस्फूर्त भूमिका निभाने लगे हैं। हालांकि यह परिघटना पूरी तरह से समाप्त नहीं हुआ है (Verma: 2009)। छद्म नेतृत्व की परिघटना जागरूकता के कमी के कारण ही होती है। अतः सर्वेक्षण के दौरान उनके कर्तव्यों के प्रति जागरूकता का आकलन किया गया।

सर्वेक्षण के परिणामों के अनुसार जागरूकता की निम्न श्रेणियां उभरकर सामने आईं - यथा, पंचों-सरपंचों के कर्तव्यों की सुनी-सुनाई जानकारी, थोड़ी-बहुत पर आवश्यकता पड़ने पर जानकारों से पूछ लेते हैं तथा जानकारी है। निम्न सारिणी 4 से चित्र स्पष्ट हो जाता है।

सारिणी 4: कर्तव्यों एवं अधिकारों की जागरूकता का स्तर

क्रम सं.	जानकारी की स्थिति	संख्या	प्रतिशत
1.	सुनी-सुनाई जानकारी	19	31.0
2.	थोड़ी-बहुत जानकारी पर आवश्कता पड़ने पर जानकार से पूछ लेते हैं	21	34.5
3.	पूरी जानकारी	21	34.5
4.	**कुल**	**61**	**100**

ग्राफ 4



कहा जा सकता है कि आरक्षित श्रेणी के सरपंचों एवं पंचों में उनके कर्तव्यों एवं शक्तियों की जानकारी ज्यादातर में नहीं है। इसके दो कारण हैं - पहला परिवार के पुरुषों द्वारा कार्यों का संपादन करना तथा दूसरा पंचों को न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में अवसर का नहीं मिलना।

मुकदमा निपटारे या न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में भूमिका

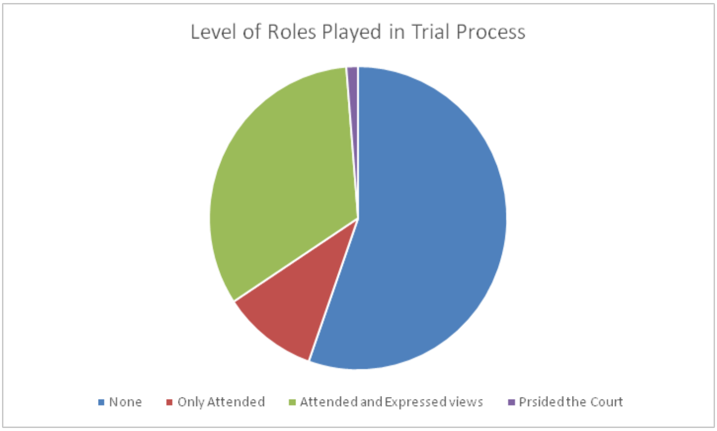
सर्वेक्षण के परिणाम बताते हैं कि ग्राम कचहरी के निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों द्वारा मुकदमों के निपटारे में निभाई गई भूमिका को तीन श्रेणियों में रखा जा सकता है - पहला, कभी भाग ही नहीं लिया, दूसरा, केवल न्यायिक बेंच में बैठे, तीसरा, न्यायिक बेंच में बैठकर विचार दिए तथा चौथा, न्यायिक बेंच की अध्यक्षता की। निम्न सारिणी 5 तथा ग्राफ-5 से स्थिति स्पष्ट होती है।

सारिणी 5: मुकदमा निपटारे या न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में भूमिका

क्रम सं.	भूमिका के प्रकार	संख्या	प्रतिशत
1.	कभी भाग ही नहीं लिया	32	52.4
2.	केवल बेंच में बैठे	06	09.8
3.	बेंच में बैठे और विचार दिए	19	31.2

क्रम सं.	*भूमिका के प्रकार*	*संख्या*	*प्रतिशत*
4.	बेंच की अध्यक्षता की	04	06.6
5.	**कुल**	**61**	**100**

ग्राफ 5

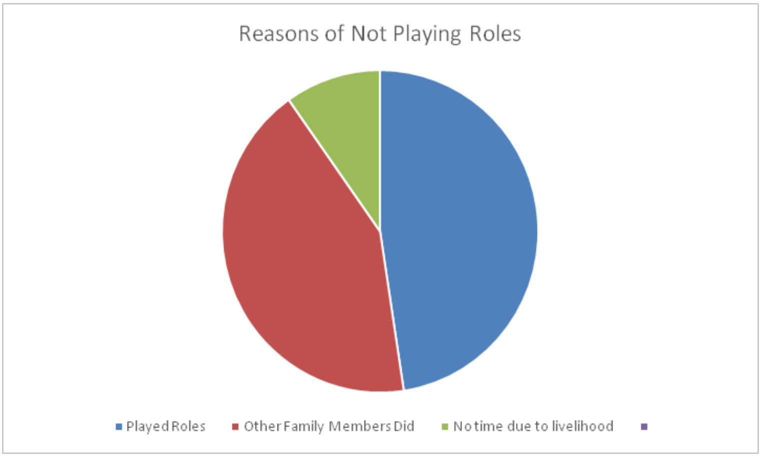


आंकड़े बताते हैं कि आधे से अधिक ने कोई भूमिका ही नहीं निभाई। 37.8 प्रतिशत ने मुकदमों के निपटारे एवं न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में भूमिका निभाई, 9.8 प्रतिशत ने सांकेतिक भूमिका निभाई और शेष ने कोई भूमिका नहीं निभाई। अब प्रश्न उठता है कि जिन लोगों ने कोई भूमिका नहीं निभाई उसके लिए कौन से कारण जिम्मेवार थे।

सारिणी 6: न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में भूमिका नहीं निभाने के कारण

क्रम सं.	*भूमिका के प्रकार*	*संख्या*	*प्रतिशत*
1.	कमोबेस भूमिका निभाई	29	47.6
2.	परिवार के अन्य सदस्य ने काम कर दिया	26	42.6
3.	रोजी-रोजगार से फुर्सत नहीं	06	09.8
4.	**कुल**	**61**	**100**

ग्राफ-6



सारिणी 6 में उत्तरदाताओं के आंकड़ों के अनुसार कम या नहीं भाग लेने के कारणों को निम्न श्रेणियों में रख जा सकता है - पहला, भाग लिया, दूसरा, परिवार के अन्य लोगों ने काम कर दिया तथा तीसरा, रोजी-रोजगार से फुर्सत नहीं मिली। 37.8 प्रतिशत ने न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में भाग लिया तथा 9.8 प्रतिशत ने सांकेतिक रूप से भाग लिया। अर्थात् 47.6 प्रतिशत ने भाग लिया। सर्वाधिक 42.6 प्रतिशत ने इसलिए नहीं भाग लिया कि उनके परिवार के दूसरे लोगों ने उनके बदले में कार्यों का निपटारा किया तथा 9.8 प्रतिशत ऐसे थे जिन्होंने रोजी-रोजगार से फुर्सत नहीं मिलने के कारण भूमिका नहीं निभाई। इस श्रेणी में ऐसे लोग थे जो रोजगार के लिए शहर या अन्य जगह चले जाते हैं।

भूमिका निभाने में कठिनाइयां

यह भी जानने का प्रयास किया गया कि जिन ग्राम कचहरी के आरक्षित श्रेणी के प्रतिनिधियों ने सार्थक भूमिका निभाई उन्हें किन-किन चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ा? सर्वेक्षण से जो बातें प्रकाश में आई उन्हें हम निम्न श्रेणियों में रख सकते हैं - पहला, पर्याप्त जानकारी का अभाव, दूसरा, अन्य प्रतिनिधियों एवं समाज के दबंगों द्वारा सहयोग का अभाव, तीसरा, स्थानीय पुलिस एवं न्यायपालिका का असहयोग तथा चौथा, राशि विमुक्ति में विलंब। निम्न सारिणी 7 से स्थिति स्पष्ट होगी।

सारिणी 7: न्यायिक प्रक्रिया में भूमिका निभाने में चुनौतियाँ

क्रम सं.	*चुनौतियों के प्रकार*	*संख्या*	*प्रतिशत*
1.	पर्याप्त जानकारी का अभाव	18	62.2
2.	दबंगों से असहयोग	3	10.3
3.	स्थानीय पुलिस से असहयोग	2	6.9
4.	सरकार से राशि विमुक्ति में विलंब	6	20.6.
	कुल जिन्होंने मत दिया	29	100

क्रम सं.	चुनौतियों के प्रकार	संख्या	प्रतिशत
5.	कोई मंतव्य नहीं/भाग नहीं लिया	32	
6.	**कुल**	**61**	**100**

उपरोक्त सारिणी 7 से विदित होता है कि अधिकांश (62.2 प्रतिशत) आरक्षण श्रेणी के निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों को ग्राम कचहरी की शक्तियों एवं कर्तव्यों की पर्याप्त जानकारी नहीं थी। सर्वेक्षण के दौरान यह भी ज्ञात हुआ कि कई पंचायतों में न्याय मित्र या न्याय सचिव उपलब्ध नहीं है और वादी-प्रतिवादी वकील की सेवा लेने में असमर्थ होते हैं। हालांकि ज्यादातर मामले आपसी सहमति से सुलझा लिए जाते हैं, परन्तु कतिपय मामलों में कानूनी सलाह की आवश्यकता पड़ती है। कतिपय अपराधिक मामलों में पुलिस प्रशासन के भी सहयोग की आवश्यकता पड़ती है। कार्यालयीय व्यय के लिए सरकार से जो राशि आवंटित होती है उनको विमुक्त करने में विलम्ब होता है। आरक्षित श्रेणी के पंच-सरपंचों को सामाजिक संरचना में अनारक्षित प्रतिनिधियों से पर्याप्त सहयोग नहीं मिलता है।

निष्कर्ष एवं सुझाव

उपरोक्त विवेचन से ज्ञात होता है कि ग्रामीण स्तर पर न्याय व्यवस्था को मजबुत करने एवं आरक्षित श्रेणी को सशक्त करने की आवश्यकता है। यदि ग्राम कचहरी की व्यवस्था को मजबूत किया जाता है तो अनावश्यक मुकदमेंबाजी से निजात मिलेगा तथा सहज, सुलभ एवं सस्ती न्याय सभी को मिलेगी। साथ ही न्यायालयों पर मुकदमें का बोझ भी कम होगा। इस प्रकार निम्न सुझाव सरकार को ग्रामीण न्याय व्यवस्था को सशक्त करने हेतु नीतियाँ बनाने में सहायता मिलेगीः-

1. ग्राम कचहरी के निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों को समय-समय पर प्रशिक्षण देने की व्यवस्था करनी चाहिए ताकि वे अपने जिम्मेवारियों और अधिकारों से अवगत हो सकें तथा उसके अनुरूप उनकी भूमिकाएं प्रभावी हो सकेगी।
2. जिला न्यायालयों को ग्राम कचहरी के क्षेत्राधिकार वाले मामलों को हस्तांतरण करने में विलम्ब नहीं करना चाहिए।
3. ग्राम कचहरी के कार्यालयीय व्यय के लिए आवंटित राशि की विमुक्ति मे विलंब नहीं किया जाना चाहिए।
4. ग्रामीणों को भी ग्राम कचहरी के साथ सहयोग करना चाहिए।

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कौटिल्य की न्याय व्यवस्था: वर्तमान समय में उसकी प्रासंगिकता

देवेन्द्र प्रसाद राम*

सार संक्षेप

राज्य की यह प्रथम जिम्मेवारी है कि उसमें नागरिकों को समुचित न्याय मुहैया कराये। परन्तु आज की परिस्थितियों में भारत में आम जनता के लिए न्याय पाना अत्यंत कठिन है। इसके मुख्य कारणों में न्यायपालिका पर अत्यधिक वादों का भार, न्यायपालिका में न्यायधीशों की कमी, न्याय प्रक्रिया का खर्चीला एवं जटिल होना, अत्यधिक गरीबी आदि प्रमुख हैं। कौटिल्य का भी मानना है कि जो राज्य अपनी जनता को समुचित न्याय नहीं देता वह न तो स्वस्थ राज्य है और न ही स्वस्थ समाज। कुछ विद्वानों का मानना है कि इसीलिए कौटिल्य ने एक व्यापक न्याय व्यवस्था की वकालत की जिससे 21वीं सदी की न्याय व्यवस्था सीख ले सकती है। ऐसे में कौटिल्य की न्याय प्रशासन की व्याख्या आवश्यक प्रतीत होती है। इसी आलोक में प्रस्तुत आलेख कौटिल्य द्वारा प्रतिपादित न्याय व्यवस्था की वर्तमान परिपेक्ष्य में अनुशीलन करने का एक प्रयास है। द्वितीयक स्रोतों के प्राप्त तथ्यों की व्याख्या के आधार पर कहा जा सकता है कि वर्तमान न्याय प्रशासन को कौटिल्य की न्याय प्रशासन पर विचार करना चाहिए।

प्रमुख शब्द : कौटिल्य, अर्थशास्त्र, न्याय प्रशासन, दण्डनीति, कानून का अनुपालन, राज्य की आर्थिक समृद्धि

परिचय

मान्यता है कि कौटिल्य द्वारा अर्थशास्त्र की रचना 200 ई.पू. से 300 ई.पू. के बीच की गई थी। अर्थशास्त्र 15 अधिकरणों में 150 अध्यायों तक विस्तारित है। इस ग्रंथ के तीन प्रमुख खण्डों में आर्थिक समृद्धि, न्याय प्रशासन तथा विदेश संबंधों की चर्चा है। अर्थशास्त्र के अधिकरण या बुक 3 के 13 अध्यायों में न्याय प्रशासन या दण्डनीति की विस्तृत व्याख्या है (Shamasastry: 1915)। कौटिल्य ने व्यापक न्याय व्यवस्था का प्रतिपादन किया जिसमें आज की न्याय व्यवस्था के तत्व दिखते हैं। दीवानी एवं अपराधिक न्याय की तथा कानूनों को प्रभावशील बनाने की भी व्यवस्था कौटिल्य ने की। कौटिल्य ने मजदूरी, लेन-देन, संपत्ति

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बंटवारा, साझा व्यापार, उत्तराधिकार, ऋण, गिरवी, खरीद बिक्री, मानहानि, चोरी-डकैती, मारपीट तथा यौन अपराध, सरकारी भ्रष्टाचार आदि से संबंधित कानूनों की व्यवस्था की। जॉसेफ स्पेन्गलर (Spengler: 1971) ने भी माना है कि व्यापार तथा आपसी व्यवहार पर व्यवस्थित कानूनों की पहल पहली बार कौटिल्य ने ही किया है। ज्ञात हो कि आज इन्हीं विषयों के विवादों पर कई अपराधिक मामले घटित होते हैं तथा लोग अन्याय के शिकार होते हैं। यहाँ एक उत्सुकता होती है कि कौटिल्य की न्याय व्यवस्था एवं न्याय प्रशासन किस प्रकार वर्तमान न्याय व्यवस्था के लिए प्रासंगिक और कितना प्रासंगिक है तथा क्या इसमें सीख लेने योग्य तत्व है? इसी मूल प्रश्न के आलोक में प्रस्तुत अध्ययन कौटिल्य की न्याय व्यवस्था का विश्लेषण करता।

कौटिल्य का न्याय प्रशासन

कौटिल्य ने समस्त न्याय प्रशासन की जिम्मेवारी प्रबुद्ध और अनुभवी लोगों को सौंपी। अर्थशास्त्र के अधिकरण 3 के अध्याय 1 के प्रथम पंक्ति में लिखा गया है, "In the cities of *Sangrana, Dronamukh* and *Asthaniye* and at places where districts meet, three members acquainted with sacred law *(dharmasthas)* and three ministers of king *(amatyas)* shall carry on the administration of justice" (As per translated version of Shamasastry: 1915)। न्याय प्रशासन को गुणवत्तापूर्ण एवं ज्ञानी न्यायाधीशों का होना आवश्यक शर्त है तथा न्यायपालिका को राज्य शासन से स्वतंत्र होना चाहिए। कौटिल्य भी इसी विचार के पोषक हैं इसलिए वे न्याय प्रशासन के लिए अलग से न्यायाधीश की व्यवस्था करते हैं। उनके अनुसार न्यायाधीश कोई ब्राह्मण हो तथा धर्मशास्त्र एवं विधिशास्त्र का ज्ञाता होना चाहिए। प्रत्येक वाद की गहन सुनवाई की व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। न्यायाधीश अपने स्वधर्म का पालन करे और जनता को भी स्वधर्म का पालन करना चाहिए। कौटिल्य ने न्याय प्रशासन को दो अंगों में बांटा - व्यवहार या धर्मस्थीयास न्यायालय तथा कण्टकशोधन न्यायालय अथवा ठेठ भाषा में कहा जाय तो दीवानी और फौजदारी अदालतें (श्लोक 59-60/36/2)।

व्यवहार या धर्मस्थीयास न्यायालय के तहत साधारण समझौते से संबंधित विवाद, दाम्पत्य संबंधी विवाद, पारिवारिक संपत्ति विभाजन संबंधी विवाद, ऋण विषयक विवाद, स्वामी-सेवक विवाद आदि मामले इस न्यायालय के क्षेत्राधिकार में आएंगे (अर्थशास्त्र के अधिकरण 3 के 148 से 191 तक इन वादों की चर्चा है)।

कंटक शोधक न्यायालय (अर्थशास्त्र के अधिकरण 3 में इन न्यायालों से संबंधित) में फौजदारी के मामले निर्णित होते हैं जैसे शिल्पियों एवं व्यापारियों की रक्षा तथा उनसे प्रजा के बचाव के मामले, अनौपचारिक विधियों से धनोपार्जन करने के मामले, कन्याओं के साथ बलात्कार एवं महिलाओं के साथ दुर्व्यवहार के मामले, चोरी-डकैती, मार-पीट, हत्या, भ्रष्टाचार तथा सामाजिक एवं नागरिक नियमों को भंग करने से संबंधित मामले। अधिकरण 3 के अध्याय 17, 18 एवं 19 मे लूट-पाट, मानहानि एवं प्रहार के मामलों की चर्चा की गई है जिसमें अपराध की परिभाषा तथा गम्भीरता एवं उनके अनुरूप दण्ड की व्यवस्था की गई है। उसी प्रकार अध्याय 20 में जुआ, सट्टेबाजी एवं इसी तरह के अन्य अपराधों की चर्चा है। इन सभी मामलों को कंटकशोधक न्यायालय द्वारा निर्णित किया जाता है। उसकी न्याय व्यवस्था विभिन्न प्रकार के न्यायालयों, अपराधों एवं विवादों एवं संबंधित कानूनों का वर्णन करती हैं।

अब यहां जानना आवश्यक है कि इन न्यायालयों का प्रशासनिक ढ़ांचा कैसा है? दोनों तरह के न्यायालयों तीन स्तरों पर स्थापित किया गया है, यथा जनपद संधि न्यायालय, संग्रहण न्यायालय तथा द्रोणमुख न्यायालय। सबसे निचले स्तर पर जनपद संधि न्यायालयों की स्थापना उन स्तरों पर किया जाता है जहां दो या दो से अधिक जनपदों या गाँवों का मेल होता हो, मध्यम स्तर संग्रहण न्यायालय जिसका क्षेत्राधिकार 10 गाँवों तक विस्तारित होता है तथा सर्वोच्च स्तर पर द्रोणमुख न्यायालय होंगे जिन्हें 400 गाँवों का क्षेत्राधिकार प्राप्त होगा। यहां स्पष्ट करना जरूरी है कि इन तीनों स्तरों पर व्यवहार न्यायालय एवं कंटकशोधक न्यायालय अलग-अलग स्थापित होंगे। यह ठीक वैसा ही है जैसा आज भारत में है जैसे जिला न्यायालय, उच्च न्यायालय तथा सर्वोच्च न्यायालय। इन सभी स्तरों के न्यायालयों के क्षेत्राधिकार निर्धारित हैं। विद्वानों का मत है कि आज से हजारों वर्ष पहले प्रतिपादित कौटिल्य की न्याय व्यवस्था बहुत ही उन्नत (advanced) थी (Spengler: 1971)।

न्यायाधीशों के गुण

कौटिल्य ने इन सभी न्यायालयों के गठन में न्यायाधीशों के वर्ग निर्धारित किए। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय यानि द्रोणमुख न्यायालय में तीन न्यायविद् या धर्मशास्त्र के ज्ञाता तथा तीन आमात्य या मंत्री होंगे तथा राजा मुख्य न्यायाधीश होगा। इसी प्रकार निचले स्तरों पर स्थानीय अधिकारी शासक प्रमुख के साथ उपरोक्त दो श्रेणियों से न्यायाधीश चयनित किए जाएंगे। कौटिल्य ने यह शर्त रखी कि न्यायाधीशों को ईश्वर, ब्राह्मण, संत, महिला, बच्चे, बूढ़े, बीमार तथा निःसहाय आदि की सुधि लेनी चाहिए चाहे वे उनसे न्याय मांगने नहीं भी गये हों। उनके द्वारा किए गए वादों या मुकदमों को क्षेत्राधिकार के इतर या मुकदमादर्ज करने में विलम्ब होने के आधार पर भी उनकी याचिका को रद्द नहीं की जायगी (3.2)।

कौटिल्य ने न्यायाधीशों के कार्य प्रणाली के लिए कुछ शर्तें निर्धारित की जैसे न्यायाधीशों को सुनवाई के लिए आए विवादों की पूर्ण जानकारी एवं विवरण संग्रहित रखना चाहिए, वादी, प्रतिवादी के नाम, जाति, गोत्र, ग्राम तथा गवाहों आदि की सूचना होनी चाहिए, सत्य-असत्य के हर सूक्ष्म पक्ष ही जांच करनी चाहिए तथा निष्पक्ष होकर सत्यासत्य के आधार पर निर्णय करना चाहिए। यहां यह उल्लेखनीय है कि कौटिल्य ने पक्षपात से बचाव के लिए साक्षियों की शर्तों का भी निर्धारण किया जैसे साला, सहायक, दास, ऋणी, शत्रु, अपंग एवं राज्य द्वारा दण्डित व्यक्ति आदि के साक्षी होने से बर्जित किया। उसका मानना है कि गवाह स्वतंत्र, ईमानदार और निष्पक्ष होना चाहिए। पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रसित गवाह या पैसा देकर लाया गया गवाह या दण्डित कैदी की गवाही से निर्दोष व्यक्ति सजा पा जाता है और दोषी व्यक्ति छुट जा सकता है।

सीहाग ने कौटिल्य के न्याय प्रशासन का विवेचन करते हुए इसके चार तत्वों को चिह्नित किया है - न्यायकर्ताओं की ईमानदारी, कानून के प्रति निष्ठा, निष्पक्षता, दण्ड-अपराध के अनुपात की समझ तथा मौद्रिक या आर्थिक दण्ड को शारीरिक दण्ड से अधिक प्राथमिकता देना। न्यायाधीशों द्वारा क्रोध, लालच या अज्ञानता में लिए गए निर्णय के कारण न केवल प्रजा में अविश्वास पैदा होता है अपितु राज्य भी अस्थिर हो जाता है (Sihag: 2007)।

कानून एवं उसका प्रभावी अनुपालन

कौटिल्य का विश्वास है कि कानून स्पष्ट, तर्कयुक्त तथा लिखित रूप में होना चाहिए। राजा का शासन का मुख्य आधार लिखित आदेश ही होना चाहिए यहां तक कि युद्ध और शान्ति दोनों में इसी को आधार मानना चाहिए। उसकी मान्यता थी कि पहले के कानून तत्कालीन समय में अप्रासंगिक एवं अप्रभावी हो सकते हैं इसलिए स्पष्ट, लिखित एवं अद्यतन आदेश या कानून का उपयोग करना चाहिए। कौटिल्य की मान्यता है कि कानून की शक्तियां विस्तृत होनी चाहिए क्योंकि परम्पराओं की शक्ति धीरे-धीरे कम हो जाती है। इसलिए लिखित आदेश एवं स्पष्ट कानून ही अधिक प्रभावी होता है। दूसरी बात है कि कौटिल्य न्यायाधीशों को भ्रष्टाचार से बचाने के लिए उनके प्रोत्साहन का प्रावधान किया। उनके लिए दक्षता पारिश्रमिक (incentive for competency) एवं नैतिक एवं भावनात्मक प्रशंसा दिया जाना चाहिए (Book II/2.10)।

कौटिल्य ने अर्थशास्त्र के अधिकरण 3 में स्पष्ट किया है कि कानूनों के सही अनुपालन के लिए यह आवश्यक है कि 1. न्याय करने वाले स्वयं कानून के प्रति प्रतिबद्ध (law abiding) एवं ईमानदार हों, 2. उनका मानना था कि किसी अपराध के लिए अत्यधिक दण्ड अप्रभावी हो जाता है अर्थात् दण्ड की मात्रा एवं अपराध के बीच रैखिक संबंध नहीं होता। वह शारीरिक दण्ड से आर्थिक दण्ड को अधिक प्रभावी मानता है, 3. साक्ष्यों पर अधिक बल दिया जाना चाहिए। यह दोषी एवं निर्दोष का निर्धारण करने में सहायता करता है तथा अतिरिक्त साक्ष्य न्याय देने में सहायक होता है, 4. शारीरिक दण्ड के स्थान पर आर्थिक दण्ड ज्यादा कारगर होता है। इसलिए न्यायाधीशों को आर्थिक दण्ड को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए, 5. न्याय एवं शासनिक व्यवस्थाओं में भ्रष्टाचार की कमी होनी चाहिए जो आर्थिक समृद्धि के लिए भी हानिकारक होता है, 6. न्याय करने में उन दोषियों को भी शामिल करना चाहिए जो दण्डित न हुए हों पर शंका के दायरे में हो तथा किसी कारण से वे बंदी होने से बच गए हों तथा 7. वह मानता है कि बंदी बनाने की धारणा की संभाव्यता से वास्तविक संभाव्यता अधिक प्रभावी होता है। अर्थात् आरोपी को पहले बंदी बना लेना चाहिए। कौटिल्य ने अधिकरण 2/27 में कहा कि पहली बार अपराध की सजा उतनी ही दी जाए जितनी कानून में अनुशंसित हो परन्तु अगर वही व्यक्ति दुबारा अपराध करता है तो सजा दुगुना, तीन बार करता है तो तिगुना तथा चौथी बार दुहराता है तो राजा जितना चाहे उतना गुना अधिक सजा दे सकता है। यहां हम देखते हैं कि प्रशासन की मिली भगत से और कई बार सत्ता के प्रभाव में सम्भावित अपराधी को भी छोड़ दिया जाता है।

कौटिल्य मानता है कि दण्ड का प्रावधान समाज की संरक्षा और सुव्यवस्था कायम करने के निमित होना चाहिए। इसलिए राजा को सुधारात्मक दण्ड देना चाहिए। निष्ठुर दण्ड से प्रजा राजा से असंतुष्ट हो जाती है। परन्तु राजा को अपराधी के प्रति दयालुता नहीं रखनी चाहिए और सदा कानून के अनुरूप ही दण्ड देना चाहिए। कौटिल्य यह भी मानना है कि प्रजा की बजाय संबंधित राज्य के अधिकारियों को दण्डित करना ज्यादा कारगर होता है। आज हम देखते हैं कि अधिकारी का दोषी होने पर भी उन्हें सजा नहीं मिलती है अर्थात् न्याय के क्रम में आरोपी को परेशान करने पर भी अधिकारी को सजा नहीं मिलती।

न्याय व्यवस्था को और अधिक प्रभावी बनाने के लिए कौटिल्य ने अपराध या भ्रष्टाचार की सूचना देने वालों (whistle blower) के लिए सुरक्षा और पुरस्कार का भी प्रावधान किया है। सूचना सही पाये जाने पर विवादित राशि का छठा भाग उसे प्रोत्साहनस्वरूप देने या यदि वह सरकारी कर्मचारी है तो उसे बारहवां भाग देने का प्रावधान किया गया। यदि सूचनाकर्ता को जान का भय हो तो उसे गुप्त रहने की अनुमति तथा सूचना किसी दूसरे के माध्यम से देने की छूट दी गई है (Sihag: 2007)।

विधि के शासन पर कौटिल्य

आज विधि के शासन पर प्रश्न उठ रहे हैं। राजनीतिज्ञ, अधिकारी एवं व्यापारी अपने स्वार्थ में विधि के समक्ष समानता की अनदेखी कर रहे हैं। बेकर (1968) ने विधि के शासन की इन अवहेलनाओं को निम्न प्रकार से वर्गीकृत किया है - 1. रेन्ट सीकींग विहेवियर या किसी सेवा के बदले अनैतिक रूप से धन लेने की प्रवृति, 2. किसी अपराध की सजा को बढ़ाना या घटाना 3. न्याय देने में विलम्ब करना 4. सार्वजनिक धन का दुरूपयोग। दूसरी ओर कौटिल्य का मानना है कि किसी समाज के आर्थिक समृद्धि के लिए विधि के समक्ष समानता आवश्यक शर्त है। अगर राजा समानता का व्यवहार करता है तो कमजोर को कोई दबा नहीं सकता। कौटिल्य के अर्थशास्त्र में बुक 3 के अध्याय 17 से 19 के बीच डकैती, अवमानना तथा प्रहार जैसे अपराधों के लिए दण्ड का वर्णन है जिसमें उसने समाज के सभी वर्ग के अपराधी के लिए समान दण्ड की व्यवस्था की, परन्तु अपराध की गम्भीरता के आधार पर राजा निर्धारित दण्ड का 3 प्रतिशत से आठ प्रतिशत अधिक दण्ड लगा सकता था। वर्तमान समय में हम देखते हैं कि न्यायाधीश विवेक से ज्यादा निर्णय लेते हैं और कानून से कम। कौटिल्य का मानना है कि उन्हें केवल कानून के आधार पर निर्णय लेना चाहिए न कि विवेक के आधार पर। यदि विवेक की आवश्यकता हो तो कानून के अनुरूप ही विवेक का उपयोग करना चाहिए ताकि कानून का पालन हो सके।

कौटिल्य के अनुसार व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार के कारण विधि का शासन कठिन होगा। उनके अनुसार अनैतिक रूप से धन संग्रह करने वाले की 13 श्रेणियां होती हैं, यथा भ्रष्ट न्यायाधीश एवं दण्डाधिकारी, ग्राम एवं राज्य के वैसे प्रधान जो लोगों से पद का लाभ लेकर धन ऐंठते हैं, शपथ तोड़ने वाले या झूठे गवाह (perjurers) तथा झूठे गवाह लाने वाले, जादू-टोना या झाड़-फूँक करने वाले, विष देकर मारने वाले तथा नशा का धंधा करने वाले, और मूल्यवान धातुओं में मिलावट करने वाले। इन सभी को उसने 'असामाजिक तत्व' की संज्ञा दी। अगर ऐसे लोग गुप्तचरों द्वारा पहचान या पकड़ लिए जाएं तो उन्हें समाप्त कर देना चाहिए या देशनिकाला की सजा देनी चाहिए (अधिकरण 4, अध्याय 4)। यहां उल्लेखनीय है कि कौटिल्य ने इस श्रेणी में न्यायाधीशों तथा अधिकारियों को भी रखा।

न्यायः देश की आर्थिक समृद्धि का महत्वपूर्ण कारक

पाश्चात्य विद्वानों जैसे एड्म स्मिथ ने भी माना कि सही न्याय देश की अर्थव्यवस्था को समृद्ध करता है। उसने अपनी पुस्तक 'वेल्थ ऑफ नेशन्स' में स्पष्ट लिखा - "Commerce and manufactures can seldom flourish long in any state which does not enjoy a regular administration of justice, in which the people do not feel themselves secure in the possession of their property, in which the faith of contracts is not supported by law, and in which the authority of the state is not supposed to be regularly employed in enforcing the payment of debts from all those who are able to pay. Commerce and manufactures, in short, can seldom flourish in any state in which there is not a certain degree of confidence in the justice of government." हम ऊपर चर्चा कर चुके हैं कि कौटिल्य की भी मान्यता है कि यदि न्याय व्यवस्था सही हो तो समाज की आर्थिक समृद्धि सुनिश्चित है। जिन तत्वों की चर्चा एड्म स्मिथ कर रहे हैं कौटिल्य ने भी

अर्थशास्त्र के अधिकरण 3, अध्याय 1 में कहा है कि 'राजा जो अपनी प्रजा की देखभाल का कर्तव्य न्यायपूर्ण एवं कानून के अनुसार करता है वह स्वर्ग जाता है और जो राजा ऐसा नहीं करता और प्रजा पर अन्यायपूर्ण व्यवहार करता है, स्वर्ग को नहीं प्राप्त होता। जो राजा दण्ड की शक्ति को निष्पक्ष रूप से चाहे वह राजा का पुत्र हो अथवा शत्रु हो, अपराध के अनुपात में दण्ड का उपयोग नहीं करता, वह अपना इहलोक एवं परलोक को सुरक्षित नहीं कर पाता।' कौटिल्य मानता है कि दण्ड के दमन के समुचित उपयोग के बिना समाज न तो आर्थिक रूप से समृद्ध होगा न ही राजनीतिक रूप से स्थिर रह पाएगा।

निष्कर्ष

निष्कर्षतः उपरोक्त विवेचन से हमें विदित होता है कि कौटिल्य का न्याय प्रशासन न्याय संगत एवं अपराध से संयम के सिद्धान्तों पर आधारित है तथा यह अपराधमुक्त समाज के निर्माण के लिए पर्याप्त है। उनका प्राधिकरण 3 पूर्णतः विधि द्वारा कंटकशोधन की वकालत करता है। किसी अपराधी को दण्डमुक्त करने तथा निर्दोष को सजा मिलने पर राजा द्वारा उसको लगाए दण्ड का 30 गुणा क्षतिपूर्ति के रूप में दिए जाने की व्यवस्था की गई है। अर्थात् न्यायालय की गलती का श्रेय राजा स्वयं पर लेता है तथा अधिकारियों को दण्ड देने की वकालत करता है। वहीं दूसरी ओर अच्छे काम करने वाले अधिकारियों को प्रोत्साहन देने की व्यवस्था करता है। वह शारीरिक दण्ड की अपेक्षा आर्थिक दण्ड को कारगर मानता है। कौटिल्य ने अपराध एवं दण्ड की व्यापक एवं संतुलित व्यवस्था का प्रतिपादन किया है। यहां कांगले (Kangle: 2000) के शब्द अत्यंत समीचीन प्रतीत होते हैं - "This very brief review of the law found in Kautilya will, it is hoped, show how it has been treated by him in the most systematic manner. The treatment is also as full as possible."

इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि कौटिल्य की न्याय व्यवस्था कई कारणें से आज भी प्रासंगिक है - क. यह काफी व्यापक है जो वर्तमान न्याय व्यवस्था के अनेक तत्वों को समाहित करता है जैसे दीवानी एवं अपराधिक पक्ष, महिलाओं और नाबालिग लड़कियों आदि, ख. इसके सिद्धान्त सार्वभौमिक हैं जैसे सत्ता का उपयोग जनहित के लिए तथा स्थानीय परम्पराओं को सम्मान, ग. न्याय प्रशासन का व्यापक एवं विस्तृत होना जो कराधान से लेकर देश के शासन तक को समाहित करता है, तथा घ. इस व्यवस्था में वह राजा और प्रजा के बीच जुड़ाव तथा राष्ट्र के निर्माण एवं आर्थिक समृद्धि के साथ जुड़ाव पर महत्व दिया गया है।

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टिप्पणी

यहां यह उल्लेख करना आवश्यक है कि कौटिल्य के अर्थशास्त्र के संदर्भ हेतु सभी अंश आर. शमाशास्त्री द्वारा अंग्रेजी में अनुवादित पाण्डुलिपि के आधार पर ही उपयोग किया गया है।

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प्रशासक की आनुभविक टिप्पणी

प्रशासनिक लोकप्रतिबद्धता का पलायन

अशोक कुमार*

भारतीय सभ्यता और संस्कृति की जड़ें बहुत गहरी एवं पुरानी हैं जो जीवन के हर अंश से अपना तादात्म्य संबंध स्थापित किए हुए है। काल और परिस्थिति के प्रवाह ने इसे कई मोड़ों पर कुछ देर तक भले रोके रखा लेकिन इसकी विरासतीय शक्ति ने अपनी गतिशीलता बनाए रखी है। चिंता की बात है कि देश में विविध कारणों से जाति, पंथ, क्षेत्र एवं भाषा के नाम पर जारी विभाजकीय स्थिति आज देश के नौकरशाही में भी प्रवेश कर चुका है। राजनीति और नौकरशाही का समझौतावादी गठजोड़ कभी परदे के पीछे अत्यंत सीमित रूप में हुआ करता था, लेकिन सत्ता व्यामोह के राजनीतिक रंग के आकर्षण में यह संबंध आज व्यापक रूप में देखा जा रहा है। मूल रूप में यह स्वीकार किया गया है कि नौकरशाही व्यक्तियों का ऐसा व्यवस्थित संगठन है, जिसके द्वारा संप्रभु के आदेशों एवं इच्छाओं को क्रियान्वित किया जाता है। आजादी के बाद देश में ब्रिटिश शासन पद्धति के लगभग सभी अंशों को ज्यों का त्यों अंगीकार कर लिया गया था, उनमें से कदाचित नौकरशाही ही सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण एवं जीवंत अंग था। इसी परिप्रेक्ष्य में लौहपुरुष सरदार वल्लभ भाई पटेल ने इस वर्ग को "फौलादी ढांचे" का नाम देकर यह उम्मीद जताई थी कि देश में विकास के सूर्योदय में इनकी अहम भूमिका होगी। राजनीतिक नेतृत्व में आए दिन बदलाव कल्याणकारी राज्य की स्थापना की दिशा में किए जा रहे प्रयत्न के परिणामस्वरूप सरकार के कार्यों में अप्रत्याशित रूप में वृद्धि हो रही है। लोक प्रशासन के प्रसिद्ध चिंतक वुडरो विल्सन की मान्यता थी कि नौकरशाही और राजनेताओं के बीच एक संतुलित विभाजक रेखा होनी चाहिए। उनके कथन का सार यह भी था कि एक ओर राजनेता विधायिका का प्रतिनिधित्व करते हैं जबकि नौकरशाह विधायी प्रावधानों को लागू करने में अपनी प्रतिबद्धता के लिए कार्यपालिका के प्रति जिम्मेवार हैं। यह भी दृष्टिगत हो रहा है कि राजनीति ने आज मानव जीवन के समस्त क्षेत्रों पर अपना अधिकार स्थापित कर लिया है। नौकरशाहों के राजनैतिक रुझान की चर्चाएं अक्सर होती रहती हैं और सेवानिवृति के बाद कुछ अधिकारी राजनीतिक दलों में न सिर्फ शामिल हुए हैं बल्कि चुनाव

* डॉ. अशोक कुमार, बिहार प्रशासनिक सेवा के सेवानिवृत (संयुक्त सचिव) तथा बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग एवं बिहार राज्य विश्विद्यालय सेवा आयोग के पूर्व सदस्य रहे हैं। (ये लेखक के अपने विचार हैं जो);
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जीतकर मंत्री पद से सुशोभित भी हैं। सरकारी सेवा से स्वैच्छिक सेवानिवृत्ति लेकर किसी राजनैतिक दल में प्रवेश उपरांत चुनाव लड़ने की तैयारी करने वाले अधिकारियों की निष्पक्षता पर संदेह होना भी स्वाभाविक है। कुछ ऐसे अधिकारी भी देखे गए हैं जो राजनैतिक आश्वासन पाकर नौकरी से त्यागपत्र दे दिया लेकिन राजनीति में उन्हें कुछ भी नहीं मिल सका है और वे नैराश्य के नभ में विचरण को विवश हुए हैं। अभी भी केंद्र एवं कुछ राज्यों में नौकरशाहों तथा दलों के शीर्ष नेतृत्व में जो आपसी सूत्र स्थापित होते हैं, वह बाद में राजनीतिक रिश्तों में तब्दील हो जाते हैं।

कुछ विशेषज्ञों का कथन है कि नौकरशाहों के सरकारी सेवा छोड़कर तुरंत राजनीति में स्थापित होने की स्थिति न सिर्फ शासन और प्रशासन की दृष्टि से उचित है और न राजनीति के लिहाज से। अधिकारियों के इस तरह के पैराशूटीय अवतरण से दलों के संगठन और उनके प्रतिबद्ध कार्यकर्ताओं के मनोबल पर भी असर पड़ता है और वे अपनी उपेक्षा महसूस करते हुए अपने दायित्व से विमुख भी हो जाते हैं। राजनीति में प्रवेश पाए कुछ अधिकारी जिसने कई दशकों तक अधिकारी बनकर अपने शान-शौकत से ड्यूटी लगाई, वे राजनीति में आकर अपने पूर्व के अफसरशाही के रौब की चादर जब ओढ़े रहते हैं तो वे जनता एवं अपने संगठन की जमीनी हकीकत से दूर ही रहते हैं। इस स्थिति में उनकी सही स्वीकार्यता द्वंद्व के दरिया में बहने को बाध्य हो जाया करते हैं। समाजशास्त्री इस प्रवृत्ति को लोकतंत्र के लिए खतरा मानते हैं, क्योंकि नौकरी त्याग कर तुरंत सत्ताधारी दल या अन्य किसी दल में शामिल होना, यह दर्शाता है कि अमुक अधिकारी अपने पूर्व के कर्तव्य के प्रति निरपेक्ष नहीं रहा होगा और ऐसे अधिकारियों से यह अपेक्षा नहीं की जा सकती है कि वह सरकार के प्रति निष्ठावान रहेगा। आजकल कुछ नौकरशाहों का झुकाव राजनीतिक दलों विशेषकर सत्ताशीन दलों की ओर तेजी से हो रहा है, जिससे भ्रष्टाचार की शिकायतें भी मिल रही हैं। चुनाव में धांधली भी प्रशासनिक अधिकारियों के राजनीतिक झुकाव को प्रदर्शित कर रहा है। आम तौर पर अध्ययन के बाद यह पाया गया है कि मंत्रियों को अपने विभागीय कार्यों के संचालन का कोई अनुभव सह ज्ञान नहीं होता है। ऐसी हालत में उन्हें विशेषज्ञ कर्मचारियों के इशारे पर ही अपने मंत्रालय के संचालन की जिम्मेदारी होती है। यही कारण है कि नौकरशाही के प्रभाव में विधायिका के आंगन में अस्वस्थ परंपरा का आगमन हुआ है क्योंकि देश में मंत्री पद धारण की कोई शैक्षणिक योग्यता तय नहीं है। ऐसी हालत में अनुभवी और विषय-विशेष की अच्छी खासी पकड़ रखने वाले नौकरशाहों के राजनीतिक झुकाव से चुस्त, स्वस्थ और अनुशासित राजनीति की उम्मीद लगाई जाती है। अधिकारियों की प्रशासनिक प्रतिबद्धता में कमी का दुष्परिणाम यह भी हुआ है कि उनके बुनियादी कर्तव्य पालन में गिरावट आई है, निष्ठा के घनत्व में क्षरण हुआ है जिसका प्रतिकूल प्रभाव जनमानस के रोजमर्रा कार्यों की पूर्ति पर पड़ा है।

बुनियादी सवाल यह है कि आखिर जो एक अधिकारी अपनी निर्धारित शैक्षणिक योग्यता प्राप्त कर विभिन्न जटिल प्रतियोगिता परीक्षा पास कर लोक सेवक की भूमिका में पद भार ग्रहण करते हैं, अचानक उनका हृदय परिवर्तन क्यों हो जाता है। अपने मूल कर्तव्य पथ से वे जब राजनीति की राह पकड़ने को उद्धत हो जाते हैं, उस समय उन्हें यह विचार क्यों नहीं उद्वेलित करता कि उन्हें एक अधिकारी के सांचे में ढलने में उनके सपने, मेहनत परिवार की दीर्घ आकांक्षा, सांस्थिक प्रशिक्षण की लंबी श्रृंखला आदि अवयव का कितना गहन योगदान रहा है। अचानक अपने ध्येय का नब्बे डिग्री का मोड़ देकर वे लोक प्रशासन की संस्कृति को क्या संदेश देना चाहते हैं, यह वस्तुत: शोध का विषय है। कई उदाहरण प्रकाश में आए हैं कि राजनीतिक निकटता किसी अधिकारी की एकाएक नहीं होती बल्कि सेवाकाल के दौरान किसी मंत्री से विभागीय संबंध

जब निजी दौर में परस्पर हितों के कारण धीरे-धीरे आगे बढ़ती है तो वैचारिक परिवर्तन की परिणति प्राप्त होती है। नेताओं का परीक्षण तो प्रत्येक पांच साल बाद मतदाता लेती है लेकिन स्थाई कार्यपालिका पर जनता का विश्वास इसलिए प्रबल होता है क्योंकि वे एक कठिन चयन प्रक्रिया से गुजरने के बाद अधिकारी का दायित्व ग्रहण करते हैं। आंकड़े बता रहे हैं कि राजनीति की ओर अधिक अभिरुचि अखिल भारतीय सेवा के पदाधिकारियों की हो रही है। यह भी देखा जा रहा है कि कुछ अधिकारी अपनी सेवा काल में अपने कर्तव्य का श्रेष्ठ प्रदर्शन करते हैं और वे जब राजनीति में प्रवेश कर मंत्री का प्रभार ग्रहण करते हैं, तो वे वहां भी अपनी प्रतिभा, मेहनत और कौशल का प्रशंसनीय छाप छोड़ देते हैं। संविधान में प्रदत्त मौलिक अधिकार भी हर नागरिक को अपने जीवन पथ की प्रगति की अनुमति देता है कि वह किसी भी क्षेत्र का चयन कर सकता है। यह बात अलग है कि राजनीति के साथ-साथ नौकरशाही में सुधार की कुछ प्राथमिकताएं निर्धारित की जानी चाहिए। ब्रिटिश संस्कृति की चादर ओढ़े आज अधिकांश अधिकारी दिखते हैं, जिनके कुछ गैर जिम्मेदार आचरण हेतु उन्हें सरकार दंडित भी कर रही है लेकिन आज ऐसी नौकरशाही की आवश्यकता है जो स्वयं जनता का सेवक समझे, सीधे तौर पर जनता के प्रति जवाबदेह हो तथा विधायकों एवं मंत्रियों के कुप्रभाव से मुक्त होकर विधि सम्मत ढंग से कर्तव्य निर्वहन करें। कुछ घटनाएं साक्षी हैं कि नौकरशाही के राजनीतिकरण की पृष्ठभूमि में भ्रष्टाचार का भी योगदान हैं। दोनों के बीच संबंधों की एक लंबी श्रृंखला इस व्यसन की ओर आपसी तालमेल निर्मित करती है जिसका पटाक्षेप अमुक अधिकारी का राजनीति के आंगन में प्रवेश पाकर होता है। उक्त संदर्भ की गहराई ने आज लोकतंत्र की आस्था को निश्चय ही कमजोर किया है लेकिन जरूरत इस बात की है कि यदि अधिकारी राजनीति में भी सत्यता और शुचिता का पालन करते हैं तो उनके प्रशासनिक प्रतिबद्धता के पलायन को सकारात्मक दृष्टि से आकलन किया जाना चाहिए।

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STRENGTHENING GDP IN INDIA: PREVENTING ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN AND CONSUMER PURCHASING POWER IN POST-COVID-19 PERIOD

Aditi Singh* and Deepa Bakshi**

Abstract

Lockdown during Covid-19 pandemic had adverse impact on Indian economy evident from negative growth of GDP. It has effected more on purchasing power parity.According to global economic and political development patterns, the final gross domestic product (GDP) projection for 2022–2023 was about 7%, while GDP growth in 2023–2024 was predicted to be between 6.0 and 6.8%. The rising commodity prices brought on by the fierce European dispute, the expanding current account deficit (CAD), and the recession in the global economy might all pose problems for the Indian economy in the future. The main reason for the economic slowdown in any nation is the decrease in demand as compared to supply. In this research paper it has been analyzed that due to which the purchasing power of the consumer is low in India.

Keyword: Consumption, Purchasing Power Parity, inclusive economic growth, GDP

INTRODUCTION

The demand for goods and services is made by the consumer, if the purchasing power of the consumer is continuously low or suddenly decreases then economic recession is a natural process. Factors such as Hindu growth rate, political, social, economic and demographic environment of economic development can bring economic slowdown in any nation. It is now well established that periods of high economic growth have been historically associated with increase in inequality.

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(Acharya and Mohan: 2010). Along with the income of the consumer, it is necessary to increase the purchasing power, otherwise a demand-supply gap will arise. The process of the multiplier-accelerator will be blocked. India is included in the low per capita income nation group where more than 37 Crore people are living below the poverty line. The rate of economic growth for the financial year 2018-19 has come to around 5%. The sound of economic slowdown is being heard in real estate, automobile, textile sector etc. Economic relief and exemption are being provided to the industry sector. Economic growth will not accelerate without increasing the purchasing power of the consumer, reducing unemployment and poverty. In the face of high inflation rate and high standard of living, increasing cost of living reduces consumer purchasing power. In this research, the declining purchasing power of the consumer has been considered as the main factor of economic recession.

India is moving towards capitalist economy. In a capitalist system, capitalists set up enterprises to earn profit. To earn more profit, the workers are paid less wages or salaries. Therefore, the purchasing power of workers is less so that they demand less in comparison to produces more. As a result, an economic recession occurs. Capital intensive production techniques have given a boost to automobile factories. A handful of workers are able to produce a large quantity. In modern textile mills, a laborer can prepare a cloth equivalent to one thousand in a day. The number of workers in the organized sector in India is continuously decreasing. Digital India and artificial intelligence development have also reduced the white collar jobs. Consistent fall in economic growth, fall in consumption, rise in unemployment rate, decrease in savings and investment rates.The increasing purchasing power of the middle class of the country can give impetus to the consumer market provided its earnings continue to increase, which maintains its purchasing power. Inflation has been a major problem faced by both the developed and developing countries in the last fifty years. Classical economists opine that it was the quantity of money in the economy that determined the general price level in the economy and rate of inflation depended on the growth of money supply in the economy. Cost-push and structural theories of inflation have been put forward. To analyse the problem of inflation is an important issue of macroeconomics (Ahuja: 2007). It makes more sense for the government to reorganize itself, shifting into the role of the umpire and away from the role of the player (Chelliah: 1996). Therefore, the main problem of such an economy is to maintain a high level of stability of income and employment (Bhatia: 2006). Some part of this rubs off on the policy side. It may take deliberate action to maintain full employment. But the multiplicity of routes to full employment, via tax, expenditure, and monetary policies, leaves the nation some leeway to choose whether it wants high employment with relatively heavy capital formation, low consumption, rapid growth; or the reverse, or some mixture (Solow: 1956).

A consumer is a person who either consumes or uses various goods and services. Goods include consumer goods (flour, rice, sugar, spices, pulses, etc.) and permanent goods (such as computers, televisions, furniture, motorcycles, etc.). The services we use include transportation, telecommunications, electricity, water, theater etc. Keep in mind that it is not useful for the retailer to buy and resell the goods by the wholesaler. It is not necessary that a buyer should always be a consumer. The head of the family buys things while all the members of the family use them. Just as someone else buys food grains and brings them, someone else cooks it and someone else eats it. A consumer is also defined as a person who chooses goods and services; Gives a return in return for receiving them and uses them for fulfilling his needs is called consumer.

India is on the way to become an economic superpower whose main basis is the consumer market and the purchasing power of the consumer. E-commerce has revolutionized the retail business of the country and changed it. Large and multinational corporations of the country and abroad are making their strategies to meet the demand of India's huge consumer market. With the number of Internet users in the country exceeding 600 million, the rapid demand-supply form of business has expanded. The United Nations' Global Population Report 2019 states that the population of India will exceed that of China by 2024. As the industrialization and urbanization is increasing in India, the consumer market of the country is growing rapidly. People prefer to live in cities due to education, health, transport and basic facilities. English speaking professionals in India are leading to outsourcing flows from developed countries to India. Due to the creation of employment with the development of new cities, the purchasing power of the consumers has increased. According to the World Economic Forum's report "The Leap of Indian Cities in Global Urbanization" 2019, the changing economic picture and population trends of 780 large and medium cities have been prepared. India will have 17 cities out of the top 20 in terms of speed of fast growing new cities. The National Institute for Applied Economic Research has estimated the middle class population in India to be more than 400 million. In which 17 crores come in the upper middle class. In India, only 26 percent of the youth in the age group of 18 years to 23 years are able to take admission in higher education institutions. According to the report of CMIE, out of about 100 million people who have completed graduation in India, 63 million people are involved in the labor force, out of which 5.35 crores have a means of earning a living. 1.94 crore people are unemployed in the country. The literacy rate of India in the year 2011 is 74.04 percent which was only 18 percent in 1947. The literacy rate for males is 82.19 percent and the literacy rate for females is 65.46 percent.

Economic recession arises due to economic activities like investment, production, income, employment and prices etc. An economic downturn is a temporary stage of the business cycle. The pre-recession phase is a slowdown in the economy while the post-economic recession phase is revival. The first normal phase of the business cycle is the recession phase. In this stage, production starts falling and due to less amount of investment, the use of natural and human sources reaches the minimum limit. Due to less purchasing power of the consumer, there is a decrease in the demand for goods and services, factories and banks start closing, due to which a feeling of despair arises among the industrialists and traders. The purchasing power of farmers decreases due to fall in the price of agricultural produce, this happens due to reduction in wages or layoffs of workers.

Hotre attributed the volatile nature of banking and monetary systems in the economy. The ability to create credit and the rate of interest affect the demand and supply of a commodity. Hayek attributed this to more credit creation by reducing the market rate of interest to less than the actual rate. Hicks consider the combined effects of the multiplier process and the accelerator theory as its result. Keynes considers the marginal working capacity of capital as its basis while Schumpeter the innovator. Sir William Herschel and William Stanley Jeeves have considered climate as its basis while Prof. Pigou considers the changes in the mental state of the appropriating class as the basis. Chapman and Sismandy attribute this to overproduction or intense competition, while Hobson attributes it to over-savings or under-use and greater inequality. The multiplier accelerator interaction generates the economic cycle.

METHODOLOGY

The primary data for the research paper has been collected from various cities of Delhi, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh like Noida, Moradabad, Rampur, Dehradun, Varanasi and Kashipur etc. Rampur, Moradabad, Udham Singh Nagar and Varanasi districts have been selected in rural areas. For research, data was collected from teachers, research scholars, managers, farmers, industrialists and traders etc. from the schedule/questionnaire. The information of 200 respondents was analyzed with the help of various computer software. In the context of the second data, national and international reports and information have been used.

DATA ANALYSIS

In the era of liberalization, privatization, globalization, modernization and artificial intelligence, where the world is moving towards jobless development, achieving high growth in consumer's purchasing power is a challenge. The basis of production is consumption and consumer consumes/uses goods and services. Therefore, economic recession can be prevented by increasing the purchasing power of the consumer. On the basis of demand for consumer goods and services, while production is based on supply i.e. farmers, business etc.

The basis of purchasing power of the consumer of any word is his income. Following are the contribution of various sectors on the basis of Gross Value in the year 2017-18:-

Table 1

Area	*Percentage*	*Area*	*Percentage*
Public Administration, Defense and Others	14.3	Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication and Broad-casting Services	18.20
Finance, Real Estate and Professional Services	20	Agriculture, Forestry and Animal Husbandry	17.20
Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services	2.7	Manufacturing	16.4
Mining and Quarrying	2.3	Construction	7.8

Source: Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation

The size of a country's economy is measured by its GDP. GDP = Consumption $ Private Investment $ Government Expenditure $ Exports - Imports. 139.52 lakh crore for the current financial year 2018-19 by the Central Statistical Organization. The national income at current prices is estimated at Rs.167.03 lakh crore. The per capita income has been estimated to be Rs 125397. Private consumption expenditure at current prices is estimated to take Rs 109.99 lakh crore. The World Bank declared India the third largest economy in the world on the basis of purchasing power parity. In the 2011 report of the International Comparison Programme, India was ranked 171 in the 'Price Level Index' of various countries. The most expensive economies are Switzerland, Norway, Vermuda, Australia and Denmark. The five economies with the world's highest per capita GDP are Qatar, Macau (China), Luxembourg, Kuwait and Brunei, respectively. whose per capita income is more than $1 million. India ranks 127th. India's per capita income is $6101. In the case of final consumption expenditure, it was maximum 86.69 percent of GDP in the year 1961, while the highest in 56 years was 71.08 percent in 2016 and the lowest was 61.67 percent in 2007.

Table 2: Consumption Size of Purchasing Power Used
(Total Consumption Expenditure / Final Consumption Expenditure)

Year	*1961*	*1971*	*1981*	*1991*	*2001*	*2011*
Total consumption expenditure (Trillion Dollars)	.033	.054	.155	.201	.353	1.22

Source: National Accounts Compendium of World Bank and IECD

It is clear from the table 2 that the total consumption expenditure has increased by almost three times from 2001 to 2011. In the year 2016, it has reached $1.60 trillion. 1.60 trillion in the year 2016

Table 3: Size of consumers in India

Year	*1951*	*1961*	*1971*	*1981*	*1991*	*2001*	*2011*	*2022*
Population (in crores)	36.10	43.92	54.81	68.33	84.64	102.87	121.05	140.05*
Growth Rate (per decade)	13.31	21.64	24.80	24.66	23.87	21.54	17.7	10.80*

Source: National Census 2011 and others *(Estimate)

It is clear from Table 3 that the total number of consumers in India has increased by 3.16 times in the year 2019 as compared to 1951. The Population Division of the United Nations has projected an increase of 273 million in India's consumers from the year 2019 to 2050. Fertility rate is decreasing in the world. India's consumers will exceed China by 2024. Consumers' life expectancy is increasing, which will lead to an increase in the number of the elderly population as well as an increase in healthcare sector expenditure. The working population of India will continue to increase till the year 2047, due to which the purchasing power of the consumers will increase continuously. In the year 2011, 83.34 million consumers live in rural areas, which is 68.84 percent of the total population, while 37.71 crore consumers in urban areas live in urban areas, which is 31.20 percent of the total population. In the year 2011, this population resides in 640930 villages, 640 districts, 5924 sub-districts, 7933 towns. The literacy rate is 73 percent for the year 2011, which is 80.9 percent in the case of males and 64.6 percent in the case of females. The population density is 382.

Table 4: Decline in consumer purchasing power due to Inflation

Description	*Year 1947*	*Year 1997*	*Year 2022*
Sugar	40 paise	16 Rupees	40 Rupees
Flour	10 paise	12 Rupees	28 Rupees
Rice	12 paise	20 Rupees	50 Rupees
Milk	12 paise	18 Rupees	60 Rupees
Bus Ticket (Min)	6 Paise	1 Rupee	5 Rupee
Gold	Rs 73.40	Rs 4500	Rs 53000
School	5 Rupee	1000 Rupee	3000 Rupee
Car	2500 Rupee	2 Lakh	3.5 Lakh
Hotel Rent	Rs.3	Rs.2000	Rs.4000 Rs.
House Delhi (1000 sqft)	Rs 17000	2 crore	3-4 crore

Description	*Year 1947*	*Year 1997*	*Year 2022*
South Mumbai (Rent of 02 rooms)	40-60 rupees	80 thousand	2 lakhs
Petrol	30 paise	23 Rupees	105 Rupees
Salary (Clerk Govt)	Rs.50	Rs. 3500	Rs.21000

Source: Outlook Dandiya Patrika 18 August 1997 and others

The analysis of Table 4 shows that the change in the prices of goods and services is due to change in the purchasing power of the consumer. During the above period the price of sugar has increased 100 times, the price of milk has increased by 500 times while the salary has increased by 420 times. House rent has increased by 4000 times in South Mumbai. Whereas the value of house property has increased by 1765 times. The price of petrol has increased by 350 times. Under the influence of inflation, the effect of increase in per capita income has been reduced, due to which the purchasing power of the consumer has decreased in comparison to economic growth. The value of gold in India in the year 1942 was 44 rupees, today it has increased to more than 53000 rupees which is 722 times. The prices of food items have increased relatively less, due to which the pace of increase in the income of the farmers has been slow. Rapid growth in the real estate sector has reduced the purchasing power of consumers in mega metros. Financial services have expanded due to bank loan and interest payment on it, but its effect has been on other sectors. The importance of private education in place of government education has further reduced the purchasing power.

Table 5: Effect of various factors on consumer purchasing power

Positive effect	*Negative effect*
High rate of economic growth	Widespread unemployment and illiteracy
Increase in products and services through innovation	Poverty and hunger
Increase in foreign trade	Uneven distribution
Increase in foreign investment	Low per capita income
Employment Generation	Low Consumption Expenditure
Poverty Alleviation Program	Overpopulation
Promotion of skill development	Decreased workforce
Subsidies, grants and PDS	Less savings and investment
Arrival of MNCs	Old Age Security
White-collar job growth	Decline of traditional profession
Expansion of new services	Corruption

Source: Self-Survey

Table No. 5 analyzes the various factors affecting the consumer in which positive factors have been kept in one side and negative factors have been kept in the other side. Positive factors increase the purchasing power of the consumer while negative factors decrease the purchasing power of the consumer.

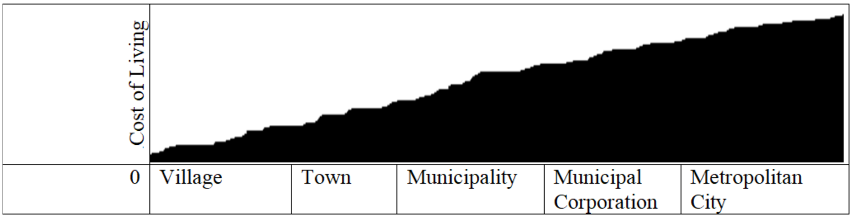

Figure 1: Cost of living and area residential area

Source: Self-Survey

The economics literature contains innumerable discussions of relationships be tween variables in pairs: quantity and price; consumption and income; demand for money and the interest rate; trade balance and the exchange rate; education and income; unemployment and the inflation rate; and many more. This is not to say that economists believe that the world can be analyzed adequately in terms of a collection of bivariate relations. (Dinardo, John and Johnston, Jack (1997)). The graph number - 1 adjective show that the cost of living standard is minimum in rural areas whereas in metropolis metropolitans this cost is highest. People living in rural areas get minimum basic facilities at minimum cost whereas in urban areas they have to pay more, due to which the cost of living becomes higher. People migrating from rural areas to urban areas have hope of employment; they have to get minimum basic facilities by payment.

CONCLUSION

The effect of economic slowdown is less in India because India's consumers are frugal. Consumers in rural areas are still far from ostentatious consumerism. The purchasing power of the consumer can be increased only by abandoning the jobless growth model in the organized sector. The key to the success of the 5 trillion dollar economy of the Indian economy is the increase in the income and purchasing power of the consumer. Economic growth can be brought to double growth by increasing the flow of foreign investment. The demographic dividend will require human resource development. There has also been a decrease in the purchasing power of the consumer during the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been a decrease in the per capita income of the consumer and the national GDP in India from the year 2020 to the end of 2021.

SUGGESTIONS

In a developing country like India, the state and central government play an important role. If both the government together effectively implement welfare schemes for the public and move towards corruption-free governance with transparency, then extensive work can be conducted to increase the income of the consumers. In the context of stability of income and employment, J.M. It would be useful to look at the fiscal theory propounded by Keynes. According to Keynes, a modern developed market economy always suffers from inadequacy of effective demand, as a result of which production, income and employment remain the victim of recession. Therefore, according to Keynes, the solution to this problem is to increase the effective demand. For this work, the government should reduce taxes by adopting a deficit budget so that private sector expenditure is encouraged in the country. Decreasing the tax liability of those taxpayers in the process. (Bhatia: 2006).We must move towards a simple and clean solution: government work as an umpire and the private sector work as players for employment and other purposes. (Chelliah: 1996)). If the consumer's purchasing power also increases as a result of the increase in per capita income, the consumer will be able to do the work of saving and investing more. A lot of work will be required for poverty alleviation in the country. If the consumer will not have employment and income then it is impossible for India to develop, even today India's position in terms of per capita income is in the countries with low low income group.

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बिहार के महामहिम राज्यपाल सह कुलाधिपति **श्री राजेन्द्र विश्वनाथ आर्लेकर** के मार्गदर्शन में मगध विश्वविद्यालय प्रगति, उत्कृष्टता और परिवर्तनकारी उपलब्धियों की असाधारण यात्रा पर द्रुतगति से अग्रसर है। अटूट प्रतिबद्धता के साथ माननीय कुलपति प्रो. एस. पी. शाही के दूरदर्शी नेतृत्व में विश्वविद्यालय नई उचाइयों पर पहुंचने तथा शिक्षा और शोध में अभूतपूर्व मानक स्थापित करने की ओर अग्रसर है। माननीय कुलपति ने विश्वविद्यालय के छात्रों, शिक्षकों और अन्य सभी हितधारको को अकादमिक क्षेत्र में उत्कृष्टता प्राप्त करने के लिए नई जिम्मेदारियां सौपी है तथा उनके अबतक के कार्यकाल के दौरान निम्नांकित उल्लेखनीय कार्य पूर्ण हुए है।

- स्नातक और स्नातकोत्तर स्तर पर पारंपरिक और व्यावसायिक पाठ्यक्रमों के विभिन्न सत्रों को नियमित करने हेतु वर्षों से लंबित परीक्षाएं आयोजित कर परिणाम घोषित किये गये।
- विश्वविद्यालय एवं महाविद्यालयों में वर्ग संचालन सुचारु रूप से हो तथा छात्र-छात्राओं की 75 प्रतिशत सुनिश्चित हो, इसके लिए गंभीर प्रयास लगातार जारी है।
- दो लाख दस हजार से अधिक प्रमाण-पत्र का निराकरण करते हुए संबंधित विभाग / महाविद्यालयों को भेज दिए गए हैं।
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