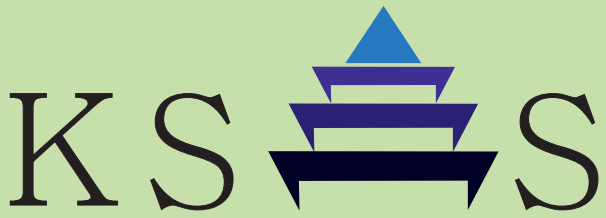
ISSN 2454-5694
Volume 11 Number 1 June 2025

JOURNAL OF KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

An International Bilingual Journal of
Social Science (UGC CARE)



Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

JOURNAL OF
KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES
Office: 3/25/1, R.K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700042
Phone:+9432490361
Email: ksasianstudies@gmail.com
kspublication1@gmail.com
Website: www.kolkatasocietyforasianstudies.com www.jrksas.org

EDITORS
Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ranjana Banerjee
Mahidas Bhattacharya
Sanjukta Dasgupta
Mita Banerjee
Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri
Tridib Chakraborti
Sharmistha Banerjee
Swati Sen Mandi
Krishna Bhattacharya
Satyabrata Chakrabarti
President, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

Krunoslav Mikulan
John Adamson
Shyam Sundar Bhattacharya
Debi Chatterjee
Mina Dan
Ishita Mukhopadhyay
Sudipa Ray Bandyopadhyay
Mesbah Kamal
Rajib Bhattacharya
Durga Basu
Arpita Basu
Treasurer, KSAS (Ex-Officio)

General Information

Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies is a double blind peer reviewed publication. It is an International Journal dedicated to the development of all branches of Social Sciences with special reference to Asian Studies. The Journal accepts theoretical and empirical papers on interdisciplinary studies. The Journal occasionally publishes special issues which mediate on a single topic. It also publishes research notes, reports, book reviews, etc.

JKSAS is a half-yearly (June and December) and bilingual (English and Bengali) journal. Only original unpublished papers are accepted. Papers submitted for consideration must not be under consideration elsewhere. The copyright of the accepted papers will lie with Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Decisions of the Editorial Board are final.

Subscription and Business Affairs

	Annual Subscription	
Countries	**Institutional Subcribers**	**Individual**
India	**INR 1200.00**	**INR 1000.00**
Foreign Countries	**US $ 100.00**	**US $ 90.00**

All correspondences relating to subscription, advertisements and other business matters should be addressed to the SECRETARY, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. Remittance should be payable to KOLKATA SOCIETY FOR ASIAN STUDIES

Copyright@Kolkata Society For Asian Studies.

Editorial

After going through the mandatory procedure of plagiarism test, peer review, any revision might have suggested by the reviewer and editing, a total of sixteen papers could be taken for this volume 11, no. 1 for the June 2025 issue of the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies. In addition to these, there is a paper which is outcome of a invited lecture, entitled as, Sāmagāna and Indian Music: A Discourse (প্রসংগঃ বৈদিক সামগান ও ভারতীয় সংগীত), written in Bengali, delivered in memory of late Professor Karunasindhu Das by Professor Didhiti Biswas. The article is on Vedic hymns and Indian music.

A report, *Contemporary US Foreign Policy and Global Conflicts: Case Studies of Ukraine and Palestine*, by Shreya Ghosh, also is published in this volume. This is the last in the list of the content. There are a total of eighteen papers published in this volume.

The paper in Bengali entitled as, Exploring Importance of Oral History in Interdisciplinary Research (আন্তঃবিষয়ক গবেষণায় মৌখিক ইতিহাসের গুরুত্ব অনুসন্ধান) by Swapan Kumar Pain of the department of History of Raigunge University, West Bengal, has discussed the importance of multidisciplinary approach in the oral history for understanding culture. The paper has emphasised .on methods related to orality in culture history

Rest of the papers are in English. The paper, *Emotional Geographies of Archaeological Spaces: Examining an Alternative Hypothesis on the Capital of Ancient Bengal,* written jointly by Biswajit Roy, Sanjoy Kumar Sadhukhan and Professor Premangshu Chakrabarty of Viswa Bharati, Shantiniketan, discussed the importance of historical geography for understanding archaeological importance of a space. The authors have taken the example of the fort of Devalgarh at Devagram, as opposed to the city of Nabadwip, for finding out the capital of ancient Bengal at the backdrop of invasion of the capital of Lakshman Sena by Bakhtyar Khilji.

A multidisciplinary approach is taken for establishing their hypothesis.

The article, *Myth, Memory, and Identity: A Study of folklore and Nationalism in Southeast Asian States,* authored by Denis Vaz from Rosery College of Commerce, Salcete, Goa, dwelt on the fact that folklore and collective memory shape national identity. In the article the author has focused on southeast Asia with case studies taken from countries like; Indonesia, Philippines,

Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar and Laos. The author has concluded that study of folklore in the context of nationalism has its importance in understanding national identity and its integrity.

The paper, *Existential Crisis of Ethnomedicine among Santals of West Bengal, India,* written under joint authorship of Soumita Chatterjee, Chaitali Karmakar and Professor Sutapa Choudhury of the department of Anthropology, Calcutta University is a result of research among the Santals residing in the Puinam village of Hoogly district, West Bengal. The authors have collected information on plants used by the Santals for cure of various ailments of the people in the village.

Bibari Boro and Jhanin Mushaary of the department of Political Science, Bodoland University wrote the paper, *Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma and his Contribution to Empowerment of Women in the Bodo Society.* Bodofa means father of the Bodo people. The paper discusses Upendranath Brahma's endeavour, not only for the recognition of Bodoland in Indian Union but also his contribution in bringing about equal status of Bodo women with the men of the Bodo society.

Professor Samita Manna's paper, *From Mirpur to Bethkundu\Suklalpur: Reflections of Cultural Transformation of Portuguese Settlers over a Period of Six Decades* is on a group of Portuguese people who were settled in the Mirpur village of Medinipur by the queen of Mahishadal about three hundred years ago. The author has made a socioeconomic survey of the present day situation of the Portuguese settlers and had found that there were a lot of changes among the people and the area due to marriage of Portuguese men with indigenous women.

Prolegomena to the Identity of Mal Paharia of Jharkhand by Professor Sucheta Sen Chaudhuri, jointly with M. Ramakrishnan, Priyavrat Nag, Sohini Chatterjee, Sunita Purty and Sunita Soren of the Department of Anthropology and Tribal Studies, Central University of Jharkhand, is a critical discourse on the affinity of the Mal Paharia people, belonging to PVTG, with others living in the said state. Kumarbhag is considered as closest to the Mal Paharia as the result of the research.

Gulzar Hussain, Research scholar, Presidency University, Kolkata has written the paper entitled as *Contested Sacred Spaces: Sufism, Reformist Movements, and Religious Authority in the Twentieth Century Kashmir.* The author has pointed out how Sufi tradition played an important role in the spiritual development of Kashmir in the twentieth century.

Facilitating the Self-Made: Utilization of Social Media for Fostering Women Entrepreneurship is a paper written jointly by Sayak Pal, Nitesh Tripathy of the department of Mass communication of St. Xavier's University, and by Swati Agarwal, Sharmila Kayal of the department of Journalism and communication of Adamas University. The work is outcome of a research based on primary

data from face book, a digital media, about women entrepreneurs who use social media for promotion of their products, which are mainly art and craft based.

Maheshwari Kharga, Department of Political Science, Sikkim Government College, authored the paper, *Regionalisation and Ethnification of Electoral Politics in Post-Merger Sikkim.* The author has analyzed the electoral poll and has come to the conclusion that Nepalese with their closeness with national political arena had more success compared to the regional parties in Sikkim.

Rupturing Enclaves and Changing Contours of Politics: A Study on Tea Plantations of the Dooars and Assam is written by Tunir Ghosal and Alak Bhattacharya, department of Political Science, Tripura University, focused on the tea plantation and its present day problem in the perspective of two regions mentioned the title. With the end of colonial period in India enclave situation in tea industry has changed and the paper suggests that state should look into the situation with a view to understanding economic pressure labour problems etc.

There are five papers on pedagogy in this volume. Starting with *Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice of Screen Time among XI-Grade Students in Reference to Their Gender and Locality,* written jointly by Sudipta Karmakar and Professor Deb Prasad Sikdar, Department of Education, Kalyani University. The work is done on students from Nadia district. The research finding suggests that students have to take the advantage of digital platform but should be aware of the hazards associated with it.

Another work on school students is conducted by Chiranjit Mandal, Manikanta Paria and Professor Muktipada Sinha of Education department, Jadavpur University. The paper is titled as *Assessing Self-Awareness Skill among School-Going Children in Kolkata District, West Bengal.* Work is done with primary data collected from both male and female students. Importance of self-awareness skill is studied from the point of view of gender, family type, medium of instruction and mother's occupation.

The article, *Understanding Gender & Sexuality through* Hidden *Curriculum in Schools* is by Nishaa Ghosh (independent researcher) and Archana Prasad of the department of Sociology, Kamala Nehru College, Delhi University. The paper concluded that school in post-colonial period is meant for producing good citizens for the society and the projects are gendered and ideological.

Restandardization of Emotional Intelligence Scale for Secondary school students through Pilot study is a paper by Sahanaz Khatun and Jakir Hussain Laskar of the department of Education, Aliah University, Kolkata. The research is conducted among the secondary school children of Darjeeling and Jalpaigurhi district of North Bengal. This was for assessing viability of Emotional

Intelligence Inventory developed by Dr. S.K. Mangal and Mrs. Shubhra Mangal and they came to the conclusion that the inventory was very much suitable for research work.

As mentioned in the beginning, Shreya Ghosh has submitted a report titled as *Contemporary US Foreign Policy and Global Conflicts: Case Studies of Ukraine and Palestine*. This is outcome of a project done as an intern under the supervision of Professor Anindya Jyoti Majumdar of Jadavpur University and President, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.

The Editors take this opportunity to thank the authors for their contribution to enrich this volume. We are grateful to the reviewers for taking valuable time for reviewing the article and wherever necessary suggest revision. We thank the press for printing this volume of the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.

Ranjana Ray
Sarmistha De Basu

Content

Editorial

Sāmagāna and Indian Music: A Discourse 7
(প্রসংগঃ বৈদিক সামগান ও ভারতীয় সংগীত)
(Late Professor Karunasindhu Das Endowment Lecture)
Didhiti Biswas

Exploring Importance of Oral History in Interdisciplinary Research 24
(আন্তঃবিষয়ক গবেষণায় মৌখিক ইতিহাসের গুরুত্ব অনুসন্ধান)
Swapan Kumar Pain

Emotional Geographies of Archaeological Spaces: 38
Examining an Alternative Hypothesis on the Capital of Ancient Bengal
Biswajit Roy, Sanjoy Kumar Sadhukhan and Premangshu Chakrabarty

Myth, Memory and Identity: A Study of folklore and 53
Nationalism in Southeast Asian State
Denis Vaz

Existential Crisis of Ethnomedicine among Santals of West Bengal, India 78
Soumita Chatterjee, Chaitali Karmakar and Sutapa Choudhury

Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma and his Contribution to 99
Empowerment of Women in the Bodo Society
Bibari Boro and Jhanin Mushaary

From Mirpur to Bethkundu Suklalpur: Reflections of Cultural Transformation 114
of Portuguese Settlers over a Period of Six Decades
Samita Manna

Prolegomena to the Identity of Mal Paharia of Jharkhand 129
Sucheta Sen Chaudhuri, M. Ramakrishnan,
Priyavrat Nag, Sohini Chatterjee, Sunita Purty and Sunita Soren

Contested Sacred Spaces: Sufism, Reformist Movements, and Religious Authority in the Twentieth Century Kashmir 150
Gulzar Hussain

Facilitating the Self-Made: Utilization of Social Media for Fostering Women Entrepreneurship 169
Sayak Pal, Nitesh Tripathy, Swati Agarwal and Sharmila Kayal

Regionalisation and Ethnification of Electoral Politics in Post-Merger Sikkim 183
Maheshwari Kharga

Rupturing Enclaves and Changing Contours of Politics: A Study on Tea Plantations of the Dooars and Assam 197
Tunir Ghosal and Alak Bhattacharya

Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice of Screen Time among XI-Grade Students in Reference to Their Gender and Locality 217
Sudipta Karmakar and Deb Prasad Sikdar

Assessing Self-Awareness Skill among School-Going Children in Kolkata District, West Bengal 229
Chiranjit Mandal, Manikanta Paria and Muktipada Sinha

Understanding Gender and Sexuality through Hidden Curriculum in Schools 245
Nishaa Ghosh and Archana Prasad

Restandardization of Emotional Intelligence Scale for Secondary school students through Pilot study 265
Sahanaz Khatun, Jakir Hussain Laskar

Report

Contemporary US Foreign Policy and Global Conflicts: Case Studies of Ukraine and Palestine 277
Shreya Ghosh

Sāmagāna and Indian Music: A Discourse*

Didhiti Biswas

Abstract

Vedic *Sāmagāna* is the document of the earliest evidence of Indian music. This *gāna* was essentially associated with the Vedic rituals and was used to be sung in a specific way as prescribed in the Vedic religious texts. The rigid religious prescription imposed on the presentation of these *gānas* and the gradual Brahmanic discriminatory attitude towards the singers and listeners initiated the introduction of another form of music i.e . Gāndharva. This new form could be practised by all irrespective of the cast and creed and its features have been elaborately documented in Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra. Later Mataṅga's Bṛhaddeśi recorded two varieties of musical systems *mārga* and *deśi. Deśi* gradually gained popularity among people and at the time of Sārṅgadeva, *deṣi* became the main stream music. This music while coming in contact with Persian music introduced by Amir Khusrou was moulded in a new form of music in North India. The music in South India remained more or less same as it had less impact of Islamic culture on it. This gave rise to two systems of Indian music North Indian and Karnataki. Both of them evolved from the *desi* music and do not owe to *Sāmagāna* for their origin. The Vedic *sāmagāna* remained confined in the religious sector without any modification. Some characteristics of this *gān* however, bear the influence of the traditional old popular music of common people in it. The sources however, are no more traceable due to the absence of systematic records though their legacy can be perceived indirectly. So *sāmagāna* remains as the earliest evidence of documented Indian music.

Key words: *sāmagāna, Samaveda, stobha, mantra, Bharata, Matanga, Śārṅgadeva*

---

*Professor Karunasindhu Das Endowment Lecture delivered on 9th September 2024 in Department of Sanskrit, Jadavpur University, organized by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies

প্রাচীন ভারতীয় ইতিহাসের অনুসন্ধানে বৈদিক সভ্যতা ও সংস্কৃতির ইতিহাস একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অধ্যায়। যে কোন সমাজ–সংস্কৃতির আলোচনায় শিল্প সঙ্গীতের আলোচনা অনিবার্যভাবেই আসবে। বৈদিক সংস্কৃতিও তার ব্যতিক্রম নয়। বৈদিক সংস্কৃতি ও ঐতিহ্যের অবিচ্ছেদ্য অঙ্গ সেই যুগের সংগীত। বহু প্রাচীন কাল থেকেই সঙ্গীতের প্রতি ছিল মানুষের এক স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত আকর্ষণ। আর তার থেকেই সঙ্গীত চর্চার শুরু। ভারতবর্ষের বিশেষ গৌরব যে তিন হাজার বছরের পুরনো এক সঙ্গীতধারার উত্তরাধিকার সে বহন করছে এবং সেই ধারা আজও চর্চিত হচ্ছে সীমিত গণ্ডির মধ্যে। এই সঙ্গীত বেদের যুগের এবং এর গানরূপটি সামগান নামে পরিচিত। বর্তমান ভারতীয় সঙ্গীত এক স্বতন্ত্রধারায় প্রচলিত হয়ে সমগ্র বিশ্বে আজ সমাদৃত। বৈদিক সামগানের পরিচয় সহ সামগান থেকে বর্তমান ভারতীয় সংগীতের যাত্রাপথের এক সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ দেওয়া হবে এই আলোচনায়।

সঙ্গীত শব্দটি বৈদিক গ্রন্থগুলিতে পাওয়া যায় না। কিন্তু গীত, বাদ্য ও নৃত্তকে শিল্প বলে অভিহিত করা হয়েছে কৌষীতকি বা শাঙ্খায়ন ব্রাহ্মণে। এখানে বলা হয়েছে- ত্রিবৃদ্ বৈ শিল্পং নৃত্তং গীতং বাদিতমিতি [১]। শিল্প শব্দটির উল্লেখ ঐতরেয় ব্রাহ্মণেও পাওয়া যায়। কিন্তু ঐতরেয় ব্রাহ্মণে[২] শিল্প শুধু নৃত্যগীতাদির মধ্যে আবদ্ধ নয়, সেখানে শিল্পশব্দটির ব্যাপ্তি বেশি। শিল্প শব্দের ব্যাখ্যায় সায়ণাচার্য বলেছেন – শিল্পশব্দশ্চাশ্চর্যকরং কর্ম ব্রূতে। শিল্প বলতে বুঝায় আশ্চর্যকর, প্রীতিজনক বা মনোজ্ঞ কর্ম। শিল্প দুই প্রকার, দেবশিল্প ও মনুষ্যকৃত শিল্প। দেবশিল্প অর্থাৎ দৈবশিল্প যা দেবতাদের প্রীতি উৎপাদন করে এবং দেবশিল্পের অনুকরণে মনুষ্যকৃত শিল্পকর্ম যা মানুষের হৃদয়গ্রাহী হয় – দেবশিল্পান্যেতেষাং বৈ শিল্পানামনুকৃতীহ শিল্পমধিগম্যতে য এবং বেদ। দেবশিল্পের অনুকরণে মানুষ মাটি, কাঠ, ধাতু, তন্তু প্রভৃতি দিয়ে হাতি, দর্পণ, বস্ত্র, স্বর্ণ অলঙ্কার, রথ প্রভৃতি যা কিছু তৈরী করে তা মনুষ্যশিল্প। এই শিল্পতত্ত্ব যিনি জানেন তিনিই শিল্পে ব্যুৎপত্তি লাভ করেন – শিল্পং হাস্মিন্নধিগম্যতে য এবং বেদ। শুধু তাই নয় শিল্প আত্মার সংস্কার সাধন করে – শিল্পের দ্বারা আত্মা পরিশীলিত হয়। বৈদিক ঋষিদের এই শিল্পভাবনা খুব বিস্তারিত না হলেও সুচিন্তিত ও স্বচ্ছ। এই চিন্তাকে একটু প্রসারিত করে আমরা ভাবতে পারি যে দেবসৃষ্ট এই জগৎ-ও একটি চমৎকার শিল্পকর্ম বলে ঋষিরা মনে করতেন।

বৈদিক সংগীতের আলোচনা ছাড়া বৈদিক সংস্কৃতির আলোচনা যেমন সম্পূর্ণতা পায় না, সেইরকম ভারতীয় সংগীতের মূল অন্বেষণেও বৈদিক সংগীতের অনুসন্ধান অবশ্যই প্রয়োজনীয়। কিন্তু বৈদিক দেবভাবনা, ধর্ম-দর্শন, সমাজ ইত্যাদি নিয়ে যত আলোচনা রয়েছে, তার তুলনায় বৈদিক সংগীতের আলোচনা অপেক্ষাকৃত কম। তার কারণ প্রথমত, বৈদিক সংগীত বৈদিক যাগ যজ্ঞে গাওয়ার জন্য বিহিত ছিল। কিন্তু বৈদিক যজ্ঞ ক্রমে অপ্রচলিত হতে হতে সাধারণের নাগালের বাইরে চলে গেল। দ্বিতীয়ত, বৈদিক ভাষার প্রাচীনত্ব, তৃতীয়ত, বর্তমান সংগীতের থেকে তাদের দূরত্ব। কিন্তু বৈদিক ধর্মকে রক্ষা করার উদ্দেশে যাগযজ্ঞের পূর্ণাঙ্গ ঔপপত্তিক ও প্রায়োগিক চর্চা পরম্পরাক্রমে সীমিতগণ্ডীর মধ্যে অনেক পরবর্তীকাল পর্যন্ত সজীব ছিল। আর সেই সঙ্গে যজ্ঞের অনুষঙ্গ হিসাবে সামগান পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের কাছে পৌঁছাল। এই গান কতটা তার প্রাচীন রূপ সংরক্ষিত করতে পেরেছে অথবা আদৌ পেরেছে কিনা তা অবশ্যই বিচারসাপেক্ষ। কিন্তু একথা অনস্বীকার্য যে এখনো পর্যন্ত বিশ্বের এতো প্রাচীন কোনো সঙ্গীতের

তাত্ত্বিক বা প্রায়োগিক রূপের সন্ধান পাওয়া যায় নি। সাম শব্দটিও বহু প্রাচীন। স্তুতিমূলক যে কবিতা প্রাচীন কালে হিব্রুরা গাইতেন তাদেরও Psalm বলা হত। প্রাচীন মেসোপটেমিয়ায় সুমেরীয়দের প্রার্থনামন্ত্রকে বলা হত ersemma.

যে কোনও বিষয়ের ঐতিহাসিক আলোচনা করার আগে, বিশেষ করে বিষয়টি যদি প্রাচীন হয়, তার সময়কাল জানা আবশ্যিক। বেদের সময়কাল নির্ণয় নিয়ে মতভেদ আছে। তবে সাধারণভাবে ঐতিহাসিক ও গবেষকরা বলেন যে খৃ:পূ. ১৫০০ থেকে ১০০০ অব্দের মধ্যে বৈদিকযুগের সুচনা এবং ঐরকম সময়েই ঋগ্‌বেদের উৎপত্তি।

বেদ মুলত ধর্মীয়গ্রন্থ আর সামগানও মুলত যজ্ঞীয় গান। বেদের মূলত দুটি ভাগ দেখা যায়, মন্ত্র ও ব্রাহ্মণ। মন্ত্রের সংকলনকে বলা হয় সংহিতা। আর ব্রাহ্মণ অংশে পাওয়া যায় মন্ত্রের প্রায়োগিক ও আনুষঙ্গিক গদ্যাত্মক আলোচনা। আকৃতিগতভাবে মন্ত্র তিন রকম। ছন্দোবদ্ধ মন্ত্র, গানাত্মক মন্ত্র এবং গদ্যাত্মক মন্ত্র। ছন্দোবদ্ধ মন্ত্রকে বলা হয় ঋক্,[৩] মন্ত্রের সুরারোপিত রূপটি সামগান[৪] আর অবশিষ্ট যে মন্ত্রগুলি থাকল অর্থাৎ ছন্দোবদ্ধ এবং গানের কবিতা ছাড়া যে গদ্যধর্মী মন্ত্র তাদের নাম যজুঃ[৫]। ঋক্‌মন্ত্রের সংকলিত গ্রন্থ ঋগ্‌বেদ সংহিতা। ঋগ্‌বেদের যে মন্ত্রগুলি সাম অর্থাৎ সুরে নিবদ্ধ করে গাওয়া হত তাদের সংকলন সামবেদ-সংহিতা। তাছাড়া অবশিষ্ট মন্ত্ররাজি 'যজুঃ' নামে চিহ্নিত। এই মন্ত্রের সংকলনের নাম যজুর্বেদ-সংহিতা। এই সব মন্ত্রই যাগ-যজ্ঞে প্রযুক্ত হত। কোন্ যাগের কোথায়, কিভাবে মন্ত্রগুলি পাঠ করা হবে বা গান করা হবে - তার আলোচনা পাওয়া যায় 'ব্রাহ্মণ' অংশে। ঋগ্‌বেদে যেমন আদি কবিদের সন্ধান পাওয়া যায়, সামবেদে ও তার ব্রাহ্মণাদি গ্রন্থে পাওয়া যায় প্রাচীন সুর, সুরকার ও গানের কথা।

বৈদিক যাগযজ্ঞে মন্ত্রপাঠ প্রভৃতির জন্য চারজন প্রধান ঋত্বিক থাকতেন এবং তাদের সাহায্য করার জন্য থাকতেন আরো কিছু পুরোহিত ও ঋত্বিক। প্রধান চারজন ঋত্বিক হলেন – হোতা, উদ্‌গাতা, অধ্বর্যু এবং ব্রহ্মা। তারা যথাক্রমে ঋগ্‌বেদ, সামবেদ, যজুর্বেদ এবং অথর্ববেদের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত ছিলেন এবং যজ্ঞানুষ্ঠানে তাদের নির্দিষ্ট কিছু কাজ থাকত। তবে মূলত হোতা মন্ত্র পাঠ করতেন, উদ্‌গাতা সামগান করতেন, অধ্বর্যু যজ্ঞে আহুতি দেওয়া ও আনুষঙ্গিক কাজগুলি করতেন, সবার উপরে ছিলেন অথর্ববেদীয় পুরোহিত ব্রহ্মা। তিনি সকলের কাজকর্ম পরিদর্শন করতেন অর্থাৎ যজ্ঞের সকল ক্রিয়াকর্মের সুষ্ঠু সম্পাদন হচ্ছে কি না তার উপর নজর রাখতেন। এই প্রধান ঋত্বিক্‌দের প্রত্যেকেরই কয়েকজন করে সহকারী ঋত্বিক্ থাকতেন।

সাধারণত সামগান গাওয়া হত সোমযাগে। সোমরস আহুতি দেওয়ার সময় প্রথমে সামগান গাওয়া হত এবং যজ্ঞীয় পরিভাষায় এই গানকে বলা হত স্তোত্র এবং তারপর কিছু মন্ত্র পাঠ করা হত, এই মন্ত্রপাঠকে বলা হত শস্ত্র। স্তোত্রগান করতেন সামবেদীয় ঋত্বিক্-রা এবং শস্ত্র পাঠ করতেন ঋগ্‌বেদের ঋত্বিক্‌গণ। স্তোত্র ও শস্ত্রের উদ্দেশ্য এক অর্থাৎ মন্ত্রের দ্বারা দেবতার গুণকীর্তন। পার্থক্য শুধু পরিবেশনের পদ্ধতিতে। স্তোত্র গাওয়া হত আর শস্ত্র পাঠ করা হত। স্তোত্রগুলি অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রেই দুটি বা তিনটি মন্ত্র নিয়ে গাওয়া হত। ক্বচিৎ কখনও একটি মন্ত্রেও স্তোত্র গাওয়া হত। কিছু স্তোত্রে আবার তিনটির বেশী মন্ত্রও পাওয়া যায়। একাধিক বারোটি মন্ত্র নিয়ে গঠিত স্তোত্রের নিদর্শনও আছে। সামবেদে এই স্তোত্রগুলি সংকলিত হয়েছে। এই মন্ত্রগুলি অধিকাংশ ঋগ্‌বেদ থেকেই নেওয়া হয়েছে।

সামবেদ

সামবেদের মোট মন্ত্রসংখ্যা ১৮৭৫, অর্থাৎ এই মন্ত্রগুলি নিয়ে সামবেদের স্তোত্রসমূহ প্রস্তুত হয়েছে। এদের মধ্যে ৯৯ টি মন্ত্র ছাড়া অবশিষ্ট মন্ত্র ঋগ্‌বেদের থেকে নেওয়া। সামবেদের মূল অংশ দুটি - পুর্বার্চিক ও উত্তরার্চিক। স্তোত্রগুলির প্রারম্ভিক মন্ত্রসমূহ পূর্বার্চিকে সংগৃহীত হয়েছে। পূর্ণাঙ্গ স্তোত্রগুলি সংকলিত হয়েছে উত্তরার্চিকে। পূর্বার্চিক যেন উত্তরার্চিকের সূচিপত্র। কিন্তু পূর্বার্চিকে বেশ কয়েকটি মন্ত্র পাওয়া যায় যাদের অনুষঙ্গ হিসাবে কোনো পূর্ণাঙ্গ স্তোত্রের উল্লেখ উত্তরার্চিকে নেই। এর কারণ হিসেবে বলা যেতে পারে যে হয়তো প্রথম দিকে একটি মন্ত্রকে আধার করেই স্তোত্র গাওয়া হত তাই পূর্বার্চিকে শুধুমাত্র সেই একক মন্ত্রগুলিকেই সন্নিবিষ্ট করা হয়েছে। এর বিপরীত ঘটনাও লক্ষ্য করা যায় অর্থাৎ উত্তরার্চিকে অনেকগুলি পূর্ণাঙ্গ স্তোত্র পাওয়া যায় যাদের প্রারম্ভিক মন্ত্রটি পূর্বার্চিকে অনুপস্থিত। এর কারণ বলা শক্ত। হয়তো সময়ের সাথে নতুন নতুন যজ্ঞ প্রচলিত হতে থাকল আর সেখানে গাওয়ার জন্য নতুন নতুন স্তোত্র বিহিত হল। এই নতুন স্তোত্রগুলি সরাসরি উত্তরার্চিকেই অন্তর্ভুক্ত হল। যাই হোক, পূর্বার্চিকের মন্ত্রগুলি পাঁচটি কাণ্ডে বিন্যস্ত। তারা হল আগ্নেয়, ঐন্দ্র, পাবমান, আরণ্য ও মহানাম্নী।

এখন প্রশ্ন হল সামবেদের যে ৯৯ টি মন্ত্র ঋগ্‌বেদে পাওয়া যায় না সেগুলি কোথা থেকে সংগৃহীত হল। ভিণ্টারনিত্‌স্ মনে করেন যে এই মন্ত্রগুলি হয়তো কোনো অজানা শাখা থেকে আহরিত হয়েছে। অনেক সময় ঋগ্‌বেদের বিভিন্ন মন্ত্র থেকে খণ্ড খন্ড অংশ নিয়ে একটি অর্থহীন মন্ত্র প্রস্তুত করেও সামবেদের অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হয়েছে। তাই সামবেদের অনেক পাঠভেদ দেখা যায়।[৬] আউফ্রেখ্‌ত্ এই পাঠভেদের কারণটি ব্যাখ্যা করে বলেন যে এটি একটি ইচ্ছাকৃত বা অনিবার্য ঘটনা, কারণ সামবেদের মূল উপাদান হল সুর, মন্ত্র তার মাধ্যমমাত্র। সামগায়কেরা প্রথমে আর্চিক বা পূর্বার্চিককে অবলম্বন করে সুর আয়ত্ত করতেন তারপর যজ্ঞের প্রয়োজনে স্তোত্রগুলি শেখার জন্য উত্তরার্চিকের পাঠ নিতেন। অর্থাৎ সুরের প্রাধান্যে মন্ত্রের বাণী যেন গুরুত্ব হারিয়ে ফেলেছিল।[৭]

সাম ও গানগ্রন্থ

আগেই বলা হয়েছে যে 'সাম' শব্দটির অর্থ সুর। প্রাচীন সম্প্রদায়ের মতে বেদ যেমন অপৌরুষেয় সেইরকম সামও অপৌরুষেয়। অর্থাৎ এইরকমই বিশ্বাস ছিল যে সুরগুলি কোনো ব্যক্তিবিশেষের চেষ্টাপ্রসূত নয়। বরং ঋষিদের মনোলোকে সুরগুলি উদ্ভাসিত। ব্রাহ্মণগ্রন্থগুলিতে অনেক সামের নাম পাওয়া যায়। অনেক সময় যে ঋষি যে সাম উদ্ভাবন করেছেন তাঁর নামানুসারে সামের নামকরণ করা হয়েছে। যেমন বামদেব যে সামের উদ্ভাবক সেই সামের নাম বামদেব্যসাম, গৌতম ঋষির উদ্ভাবিত সাম গৌতমসাম, চ্যবন ঋষির সাম চ্যাবনসাম ইত্যাদি। আবার কখনো যে মন্ত্রে সাম আরোপিত হয়েছে সেই মন্ত্রের ছন্দ অনুসারে সামের নামকরণ হয়েছে, যেমন, গায়ত্রসাম (গায়ত্রী ছন্দ), বৈরাজসাম (বিরাট ছন্দ) ইত্যাদি। মন্ত্রের অন্তর্গত পদের আধারেও সামের নামকরণ হয়েছে, যেমন, যজ্ঞাযজ্ঞীয় সাম (যজ্ঞা যজ্ঞা ব অগ্নয়ে - সামবেদ ১.৩৫),

বারবন্তীয় সাম (অশ্বং ন ত্বা বারবন্তং – সামবেদ ১.১৭) ইতাদি। মন্ত্রের দেবতার নাম অনুসারে অনেক সাম পরিচিত, যেমন, মারুত সাম, বাচঃ সাম, উষসঃ সাম ইত্যাদি। এইভাবে আরও বিভিন্ন কারণে সামের বিভিন্ন নামকরণ হয়েছে।

সাম ও মন্ত্রের সম্পর্ক অবিচ্ছেদ্য। সামবেদীয় ব্রাহ্মণগুলিতে সামের সঙ্গে মন্ত্রেরও উল্লেখ করা আছে। অর্থাৎ যজ্ঞের সময় যে সাম যে মন্ত্রকে আশ্রয় করে গাইতে হবে তা নির্দিষ্ট করে বলে দেওয়া আছে। কারণ, অনেক সময় একটি মন্ত্রে একাধিক সাম আরোপিত হতেও দেখা যায়। সাম কখনই আজকের দিনে পরিচিত রাগ-এর সমতুল্য নয়। যে-কোনো কবিতাকে আশ্রয় করে যেমন একটি রাগকে প্রকাশ করা যায়, অথবা একটি কবিতাতে যেমন ইচ্ছেমত একাধিক সুর আরোপ করা যায়, সেইরকম কোন সামগানের গায়ক নিজের ইচ্ছামত যে কোনো ঋক্-মন্ত্রে যে কোনো সাম আরোপিত করতে পারতেন না। কোন্ সাম কোন্ মন্ত্রকে আশ্রয় করে গাইতে হবে তাও নির্দিষ্ট করে দেওয়া আছে। আধুনিক রাগের মতো সামের এমন কোনও নিজস্ব বৈশিষ্ট্য আজ খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না যাতে সামগুলিকে পৃথক্‌ভাবে চিহ্নিত করা যায়।

সামগানের সম্পূর্ণ গেয় রূপটি পাওয়া যায় 'গানগ্রন্থ' নামের গ্রন্থে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানের কবিতাগুলি যেমন থাকে গীতবিতানে আর গেয়রূপটি স্বরবিতানে, সেইরকম সামগানের মন্ত্রগুলি থাকে সামবেদে এবং গেয়রূপটি থাকে গানগ্রন্থ। গানগ্রন্থ মোট চারটি – গ্রামগেয়, অরণ্যগেয়, ঊহ এবং ঊহ্য। গ্রামগেয় গ্রন্থ পূর্বার্চিকের প্রথম তিনটি অংশের অর্থাৎ আগ্নেয়, ঐন্দ্র ও পবমান কাণ্ডের গেয়রূপ পাওয়া যায়। অরণ্যগেয় গ্রন্থ পূর্বার্চিকের অপর দুটি অংশের অর্থাৎ অরণ্যকাণ্ড ও মহানাম্নী মন্ত্রের গেয়রূপ পাওয়া যায়। ঊহ্য অংশে সমগ্র উত্তরার্চিকের এবং ঊহ্য অংশে নানা রহস্যপূর্ণ গানের রূপ বিধৃত আছে। গানগ্রন্থ যেভাবে সামগানগুলির গেয়রূপটি পাওয়া যায় সেইভাবেই যজ্ঞে গানগুলি গাওয়া হয়ে থাকত।

গ্রামগেয় ও অরণ্যগেয় পদদুটির দ্বারা সাধারণভাবে গ্রামে গাওয়ার গান ও অরণ্যে গাওয়ার গান বুঝায়। পাশ্চাত্য পণ্ডিত গোণ্ডা (Jan Gonda) বলেন, The second song-book, the Āraṇyagāna –which was because of its dangerous and esoteric character to be studied in the forest or desert (*āraṇya*) –belongs likewise to the Pūrvārcika.[৮]

অর্থাৎ আরণ্যগেয় গান অরণ্যে না গাইলে বিপদের সম্ভাবনা। কিন্তু এইরকম চিন্তার ভিত্তি কি তা তিনি নির্দেশ করেননি। বস্তুত এইরকম কোনো আশঙ্কার কথা বৈদিক সম্প্রদায়ে শোনা যায় না এবং কোনো গ্রন্থেও এইরকম কোনও প্রসঙ্গ পাওয়া যায় না। তাছাড়া যজ্ঞেও আরণ্যগেয় গান গাওয়া হত। সেই যজ্ঞ যে অরণ্যে করতে হবে এমন কোনও নির্দেশও পাওয়া যায় না। হতে পারে যে আরণ্যগেয় গান শেখা হয়তো অপেক্ষাকৃত দুরূহ ছিল আর তাই এই গান অরণ্য অর্থাৎ কোন নিরালা জায়গায় অভ্যাস করতে হত বলে এইরকম নাম দেওয়া হয়েছে।

সামগানের গেয়রূপ

কোনো কবিতাকে যখন গানরূপে পরিবেশন করা হয় তখন গানের বাণীরূপটি অনেক সময়ই অবিকল থাকে না। সামগানও তার ব্যতিক্রম নয়। সাম-আরোপিত মন্ত্রের যে আকৃতিগত পরিবর্তন হয় সেগুলি ছয়টি প্রক্রিয়ার দ্বারা চিহ্নিত করা হয়ে থাকে। ১) বিকার ২) বিশ্লেষ ৩) বিকর্ষণ ৪) অভ্যাস ৫) বিরাম ৬) স্তোভ। এদের একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিচয় দেওয়া হচ্ছে।

বিকার – একটি বর্ণের জায়গায় অন্য বর্ণের স্থাপন। যেমন, মন্ত্রের 'অগ্নে' শব্দের অ-কারকে পরিবর্তন করে গানে 'ও'-কাররূপে পরিবেশন করা।

বিশ্লেষ – একটি বর্ণকে একটি বা একাধিক বর্ণে ভেঙে উচ্চারণ করা। যেমন, 'অগ্নে' শব্দের স্থানে 'ওগ্নাই' গাওয়া। এখানে বিকার প্রক্রিয়ায় 'অ' স্থানে 'ও' হয়েছে। 'গ্নে'-র একারকে বিশ্লেষ প্রক্রিয়ায় ভেঙে 'আই' করা হয়েছে। এইভাবে 'বীতয়ে' পদটি গানের সময় 'বীইতোয়াই' হয়ে যায়।

বিকর্ষণ – হ্রস্ব স্বরকে দীর্ঘস্বরে এবং দীর্ঘস্বরকে প্লুতস্বরে উচ্চারণকে বিকর্ষণ বলা হয়। যেমন, মন্ত্রে পদের বা পদাংশের 'নি' অংশটিকে 'নী'-রূপে উচ্চারণ করাকে বিকর্ষণ বলে। আবার 'নী'কে প্লুতস্বরে 'নীই' বলাকেও বিকর্ষণ বলা হয়।

অভ্যাস – একটি পদকে বা পদাংশকে দুইবার উচ্চারণ করাকে অভ্যাস বলা হয়। যেমন মন্ত্রের 'বীতয়ে' পদটিকে গানে দুইবার উচ্চারণ করাও যেমন অভ্যাস, সেইরকম পদটির বিশ্লিষ্ট রূপ 'বীইতোয়াই' – এর 'তোয়াই' অংশকে দুইবার গাওয়া হলে তাকেও অভ্যাস বলা হয়।

বিরাম – একটি পদকে আংশিক উচ্চারণ করে হঠাৎ থেমে যাওয়াকে বিরাম বলা হয়। যেমন, মন্ত্রের 'হব্যদাতয়ে' পদটিকে গান গাওয়ার সময় যদি 'হ' বলে থেমে তারপর 'ব্যদাতয়ে' অংশটি গাওয়া হয় তবে সেটি হবে বিরাম। প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে যে বর্তমান সঙ্গীতে একটি পদের মধ্যে হঠাৎ বিরতি নেওয়া একটি ত্রুটি হিসাবে গণ্য হয়।

স্তোভ – সামগানে ঋক্ মন্ত্রের বাণীর অতিরিক্ত কিছু বর্ণ, পদ ও বাক্য সন্নিবেশিত করা হয় তাদের বলা হয় স্তোভ। স্তোভের আকৃতি অনুসারে স্তোভকে তিনভাগে ভাগ করা যায় - বর্ণস্তোভ, পদস্তোভ এবং বাক্যস্তোভ। হো, হা, ও, উ ইতাদি বর্ণস্তোভ, হাউ, হোবা, ঔহোবা ইত্যাদি পদস্তোভ। প্রখ্যাত বঙ্গীয় বেদজ্ঞ সত্যব্রত সামশ্রমী মহোদয় পাঁচপ্রকার বর্ণস্তোভ এবং নয় প্রকার বাক্যস্তোভের উল্লেখ করেছেন[৯]। বাক্যস্তোভ সম্বন্ধে তিনি বলেন যে, আশস্তি (অর্থাৎ আশীর্বাদ), স্তুতি, বিলাপ, প্রৈষ (অর্থাৎ নির্দেশ) ইত্যাদি অর্থে কয়েকটি বিশেষ বাক্য কোনো কোনো সামগানের মধ্যে সংযোজন করা হত, যেমন, 'অগন্ম জ্যোতিরমৃতা অভূম', 'নমো'ন্নায় নমো'ন্নপতয়ে', 'যে দেবদেবাঃ নিষিদঃ অন্তরিক্ষসদঃ পৃথিবীষদঃ', 'এতত্সংখ্যানং রিশাম ইন্দ্রঃ' ইত্যাদি। অর্থাৎ বাক্যস্তোভ বলে যাদের চিহ্নিত করা হয়েছে সেইগুলি বর্ণস্তোভ বা পদস্তোভের মত অর্থহীন ছিল না।

অনেক সময় মন্ত্রের পরিবর্তে শুধুমাত্র স্তোভকে আশ্রয় করেও সামগান গাওয়া হত। এই গানকে

'ছন্নগান' বলা হয়। তবে এই রকম গানের সংখ্যা খুবই কম। আবার কয়েকটি সামগান আছে যাতে কোনো স্তোভ আরোপিত হত না শুধুমাত্র ঋক্‌মন্ত্রকে আশ্রয় করেই গাওয়া হত। এইগানও খুব বেশী পাওয়া যায় না। জৈমিনীয়ব্রাহ্মণে দুই প্রকার সামগানের উল্লেখ আছে, স্তোভযুক্ত ও স্তোভহীন – দ্বে উ বাব সামনী স্তোভবচ্চৈবাস্তোভবচ্চ[১০]।

যজ্ঞীয় গানে এই আপাত অর্থহীন স্তোভের উচ্চারণ করার কি কারণ থাকতে পারে এই প্রশ্ন ওঠা খুব স্বাভাবিক। ব্রাহ্মণগ্রন্থগুলিতে স্তোভের প্রশংসা করা হয়েছে আর সামগানে কোন্ স্তোভের কি তাৎপর্য তাও নানাভাবে অর্থবাদের মাধ্যমে বিবৃত করা হয়েছে। ছান্দোগ্য উপনিষদে স্তোভের মাধ্যমে প্রতীক-উপাসনা বিহিত হয়েছে[১১]। আবার উপনিষদে দেখা যায় যে ব্রহ্মজ্ঞান লাভ করে ঋষি প্রাণের আনন্দে বলে উঠলেন 'হাবু হাবু'। পাশ্চাত্য পণ্ডিতেরা সাধারণভাবে এই অর্থহীন ধ্বনিকে মানুষের উল্লাসব্যঞ্জক শব্দ বলে মনে করেন[১২]। আবার একথাও মনে করা হয় যে এই স্তোভগুলি প্রকৃতপক্ষে সামগানের লৌকিকধর্ম বা উৎসবের প্রভাবের পরিচায়ক। অথবা এই স্তোভগুলি কোনো প্রাচীন অবৈদিক ঐন্দ্রজালিক পুরোহিতদের কাছ থেকে পাওয়া[১৩]। তবে তিন প্রকার স্তোভের মধ্যে সম্ভবত বাক্যস্তোভ পরবর্তীকালে সামগানে সংযোজিত হয়েছে।

সামগানের পুনরাবর্তন ও স্তোম

যজ্ঞে গাওয়ার সময় অনেক ক্ষেত্রে সামগানের পুনরাবৃত্তির বিধান দেখা যায়। একবার গাইলে পরিপূর্ণ রসাস্বাদন হয় না। তাই বোধ হয় এই পুনরাবৃত্তির বিধান। তবে এখানে পুনরাবৃত্তির ক্ষেত্রে সামগায়কের কোনো স্বাধীনতা থাকত না। কোন্ স্তোত্রের কোন্ অংশ কখন কতবার আবৃত্তি করতে হবে তার বিধান দেওয়া আছে যজ্ঞগ্রন্থে। একটি মন্ত্রকে দুইবার আবৃত্তি করলে আকৃতিগতভাবে দুটি মন্ত্রের সমান হয়। এইভাবে আবৃত্তির ফলে মন্ত্রের মোট যে সংখ্যা পাওয়া যায় তার নাম স্তোম। ত্রিবৃত, পঞ্চদশ, সপ্তদশ, একবিংশ প্রভৃতি নানা প্রকার স্তোম হয়। তিনটি পর্যায়ে আবৃত্তি করে অভীষ্ট সংখ্যায় পৌঁছতে হয়। যেমন, তিনটি ঋকের একটি স্তোত্রকে পঞ্চদশ স্তোমে পরিণত করতে হয়তো প্রথম পর্যায়ে প্রথম মন্ত্রটি একবার, দ্বিতীয় ও তৃতীয় মন্ত্রটি দুইবার করে গাওয়া হল। দ্বিতীয় পর্যায়ে দ্বিতীয় মন্ত্রটি একবার, প্রথম ও তৃতীয় মন্ত্রটি দুইবার করে গাঈয়া হল। তৃতীয় পর্যায়ে তৃতীয় মন্ত্রটি একবার, প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয় মন্ত্রটি দুইবার করে গাওয়া হল। এইভাবে প্রতি পর্যায়ে পাঁচটি করে মন্ত্র নিয়ে তিনটি পর্যায়ে মোট পঞ্চদশ সংখ্যা লাভ করা গেল।

সামগানের ভক্তি বা ভাগ

সামগান গাওয়ার সময় গানটিকে পাঁচটি বা সাতটি ভাগে ভাগ করে গাওয়া হত। একেকটি ভাগকে বলা হয় ভক্তি। এই ভাগ গুলিকে বর্তমানযুগের গানের স্থায়ী, অন্তরা, সঞ্চারী, আভোগ এই চারটি ভাগের সঙ্গে তুলনা করা যেতেপারে। গানের প্রথম অংশটি স্থায়ী, দ্বিতীয় অংশটি অন্তরা, তৃতীয়টি সঞ্চারী এবং চতুর্থ ও শেষভাগ আভোগ নামে পরিচিত। সেইরকম সামগানের সাতটি ভাগ হল যথাক্রমে - হিঙ্কার (অর্থাৎ হিম্ বা হুম্ ধ্বনি করা), প্রস্তাব, আদি (অর্থাৎ ওম্), উদ্‌গীথ, প্রতিহার, উপদ্রব ও নিধন[১৪]। সাতভাগে

বিভক্ত সামকে বলা হয় সাপ্তভক্তিক সাম। এছাড়া পাঞ্চভক্তিক সামও কখনও হয় যেখানে হিংকার এবং আদি (ওঙ্কার) অংশকে যথাক্রমে প্রস্তাব ও উদ্গীথের অংশের অন্তর্গত করলে শুধু পাঁচটি ভাগেই সামকে বিভক্ত করা থাকে[১৫]। সামবেদীয় ঋত্বিক্ উদ্গাতা তিনজন সহকারী ঋত্বিক্ সামগান করে থাকেন। তিনজন সহকারীর নাম প্রস্তোতা, প্রতিহর্তা ও সুব্রহ্মণ্য। গানের প্রস্তাব অংশ গান করেন প্রস্তোতা, উদ্গীথ অংশ উদ্গাতা, প্রতিহার অংশ গান করেন প্রতিহর্তা, উপদ্রব অংশ গান করেন আবার উদ্গাতা এবং নিধন অংশ গাইতে হয় সমবেতভাবে। উদ্গাতা প্রভৃতি মূল গায়ক ছাড়াও উপগাতা নামে কয়েকজন গানের ধুয়োধারী থাকেন, তাঁরা প্রস্তোতা ও প্রতিহর্তার গানের মাঝখানে সুর ধরেন। এঁরা কোনো গান করেন না, শুধু সুর করে 'ওওও' বা 'হোহোহো' বলতে থাকেন। অনেক সময় যজমানও এই সুরধরার কাজটি করেন। কোনো কোনো যজ্ঞে যজুর্বেদীয় ঋত্বিক্ অধ্বর্যুও সামগান করে থাকেন।

বৈদিক স্বরসপ্তক

বৈদিক সাতটি স্বরের নাম ছিল, প্রথম, দ্বিতীয়, তৃতীয়, চতুর্থ, মন্দ্র, অতিস্বার্য ও ক্রুষ্ট। এখানে উল্লেখযোগ্য যে বৈদিক স্বরসপ্তক অবরোহণাত্মক ছিল। লৌকিক স্বরসপ্তকের সঙ্গে তুলনা করলে দেখা যায় যে বৈদিক সপ্তক প্রথম, দ্বিতীয়, তৃতীয়, চতুর্থ, মন্দ্র, অতিস্বার্য ও ক্রুষ্ট যথাক্রমে লৌকিক সপ্তস্বর ম, গ, রে, সা, নি (অথবা ধ), ধ (অথবা নি), প এর অনুরূপ। তাই গানগ্রন্থে ১ সংখ্যার দ্বারা লৌকিক মধ্যম স্বর, ২ সংখ্যার দ্বারা লৌকিক গান্ধার ইত্যাদি বুঝতে হবে। বৈদিক ও লৌকিক স্বরসপ্তকের সম্পর্কটি নীচে দেখানো হল-

বৈদিক	লৌকিক
প্রথম	মধ্যম
দ্বিতীয়	গান্ধার
তৃতীয়	ঋষভ
চতুর্থ	ষড়জ
মন্দ্র	নিষাদ/ধৈবত
অতিস্বার্য	ধৈবত/নিষাদ
ক্রুষ্ট	পঞ্চম

মন্দ্র ও অতিস্বার্যের লৌকিকঅবস্থান নিয়ে মতভেদ আছে। দুটি পাঠই পাওয়া যায়। কোন কোন বিশেষজ্ঞ ঋজুগতির পাঠের পক্ষপাতী, কেউ বা বক্রগতির সপ্তকের।

আলঙ্কারিক স্বরবিন্যাস

সামগানে নানা প্রকার স্বরবিন্যাসের প্রচলন ছিল। তাদের পারিভাষিক নাম ও পরিচয় সামবেদীয় শিক্ষাগ্রন্থ মাত্রালক্ষণে পাওয়া যায়, যেমন প্রত্যুত্ক্রম, অতিক্রম, কর্ষণ, নমন, প্রণত ইত্যাদি। প্রত্যুত্ক্রমে কোনো একটি স্বরকে মাঝখানে রেখে অন্য স্বরগুলিকে দিয়ে পরিক্রমণ করা হত। আবার, অতিক্রমে একটি স্বর থেকে অন্য স্বরে যাওয়ার সময় স্বর দুটির মধ্যবর্তী স্বর বা স্বরগুলিকে অতিক্রম করা হত। নমনে প্রথম স্বর থেকে দ্বিতীয়স্বরে অবরোহণ করা হয় এবং এই নমন প্রক্রিয়াটি গানগ্রন্থে 'ন' অক্ষরের দ্বারা জ্ঞাপিত হয়। বিনত নামক প্রক্রিয়াতেও প্রথম থেকে দ্বিতীয় স্বরে যাওয়া বঝায়। দুটির পার্থক্য নির্দেশ করতে গিয়ে কেউ কেউ বলেন নমনে প্রথম স্বর থেকে দ্বিতীয় স্বরে যাওয়ার সময় তৃতীয় স্বরটিকে স্পর্শ করতে হয়, কিন্তু বিনত প্রক্রিয়াতে সোজাভাবে যাওয়া হয় এবং স্বরলিপির নির্দিষ্ট অক্ষরের ওপর 'বি' চিহ্ন দেওয়া থাকে। আবার দ্বিতীয় স্বর থেকে তৃতীয় স্বর যাওয়ার প্রক্রিয়াকে বলা হয় প্রণত। চতুর্থ স্বর থেকে মন্দ্র স্বরে অবরোহণকে বলে উতস্বারিত। একই স্বরের বা অক্ষরের মধ্যে দ্বিতীয় থেকে প্রথম স্বরে আরোহণ করাকে বলা হয় অভিগীত। এই সব থেকে অবশ্যই মনে করা যায় যে সামগান যথেষ্ট পরিশীলিত ও সমৃদ্ধ ছিল।

প্রাচীন স্বরলিপি

গানগ্রন্থে যখন কবিতাগুলি সংকলিত হয়েছে তখন শুধুমাত্র তাদের আকৃতিগত পরিবর্তনই করা হয়নি গানের সুর ও গেয় রূপটি বঝানোর জন্য কিছু চিহ্নও সংযজিত হয়েছে। বিভিন্ন চিহ্নের বিভিন্ন অর্থ আছে। যেমন অক্ষরের ওপরে ১,২,৩ প্রভৃতি সংখ্যাগুলি সেই সেই অক্ষরের স্বরসূচক। অর্থাৎ ১ সংখ্যার দ্বারা বৈদিক স্বরক্রমের প্রথম স্বরকে বঝান হয়, ২ সংখ্যার দ্বারা দ্বিতীয় স্বরকে, ৩ সংখ্যার দ্বারা তৃতীয় স্বরকে ইত্যাদি। অক্ষরের ওপরে লেখা র,ক,উ বর্ণগুলি যথাক্রমে দীর্ঘস্বর, উঁচুস্বর ও নীচুস্বরকে বোঝায়। অক্ষরের ওপরে আনুভূমিক রেখা (--) থাকলে তার অর্থ হবে অক্ষর-সংলগ্ন স্বরটিকে তিনগুণ করে গাওয়া ইত্যাদি। সামবেদীয় ব্রাহ্মণদের সম্প্রদায়ভেদে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন চিহ্ন ব্যবহারেরও রীতি আছে। এইরকম নানা চিহ্ন দিয়ে গানের একটি স্বরলিপি তৈরী করার প্রথম প্রয়াস গানগ্রন্থগুলিতে পাওয়া যায়।

গানের সুরকে ধরে রাখার একনিষ্ঠ প্রয়াস প্রাচীন কাল থেকেই ছিল। স্বরলিপির মাধ্যমে যেমন চেষ্টা হয়েছিল, সেইরকম গানের শিক্ষা, অভ্যাস ও পরিবেশনের সময় সামহস্ত বা গাত্রবীণার মাধ্যমে সুর ধরে রাখার এক অনন্য প্রয়াস করা হত। সামগায়াকরা তাদের ডানহাতের বৃদ্ধাঙ্গুলি দিয়ে অন্যান্য অঙ্গুলির নির্দিষ্ট রেখা নির্দেশ করতেন। এই রেখাগুলি একেকটি স্বরের পরিচায়ক। যখন যে স্বর গাইতেন তখন সেই স্বর নির্দেশিত হত ডানহাতে। সামগানের স্বরূপটি জানার আগ্রহ আজও আছে। পাশ্চাত্য গবেষকদের মধ্যে Louis Renou সর্বপ্রথম পাশ্চাত্য রীতিতে সামগানের স্বরলিপি তৈরি করেন[১৬]। Wayne Howard তাঁর সম্পাদিত মাত্রালক্ষণের ভূমিকায়[১৭] রথন্তরসামের স্বরলিপি উপস্থাপিত করেছেন। তবে এই বিষয়ে শ্রী রাজ্যেশ্বর মিত্রের প্রয়াস বিশেষ উল্লেখের দাবী রাখে। তিনি তাঁর 'বৈদিক সাহিত্যে সামগান' গ্রন্থে বহু সামগানের স্বরলিপি আকারমাত্রিক পদ্ধতিতে প্রস্তুত করেছেন।

বৈদিকযজ্ঞের অবলুপ্তির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সামগানের প্রচলনও কমে যায়। বর্তমানে খুবই সীমিত পরিসরে এইগানের চর্চা করা হয়। সামগানের প্রকৃত সুর আজ অনেকটাই বিস্মৃত আর এই বিস্মরণের প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হয়েছিল বহু পূর্বেই। তার অবশ্যম্ভাবী পরিণতি সুর বিকৃতি। মহাভাষ্যে বলা হয়েছে 'সহস্রবর্ত্মা সামবেদঃ'। সামবেদে সুরের সংখ্যা অজস্র তাই সামবেদকে সহস্রবর্ত্মা বলা হয়েছে। সহস্রবর্ত্মা শব্দটি শাখা বৈচিত্র বা সুরবৈচিত্র যাই বোঝাক না কেন তা সম্ভবত অজস্র সুরবিকৃতির ইঙ্গিতকেও বহন করছে।

গান্ধর্ব:

সামগান সকলের কাছে সম্ভ্রমযোগ্য হলেও তার কঠোর অনুশাসনের জন্য সাধারণের কাছে গ্রহণযোগ্য হল না এবং সাধারণের তাতে অধিকারও ছিল না। এই অবস্থায় এক নতুন ধরণের সংগীতধারার প্রচলন ছিল, যা গুরুত্ব ও মাহাত্ম্যের নিরিখে সামগানের প্রায় সমতুল্য। এই সঙ্গীত সামগানের জটিলতা থেকে মুক্ত এবং গোষ্ঠিভিত্তিক না হওয়ায় সব শ্রেণীর সঙ্গীতরসিক মানুষের কাছে অবারিতদ্বার। সঙ্গীতের এই ধারাটির নাম হল গান্ধর্ব। গন্ধর্বরা হলেন সঙ্গীতকুশলী দেবপ্রতিম পৌরাণিক চরিত্র। মহাভারতে বলা হয়েছে – গন্ধর্বা গীতিকুশলা নৃত্যেষু চ বিশারদাঃ[১৮]। তাঁদের সাঙ্গীতিক প্রতিভাকে স্মরণে রেখে সম্ভবত এই নামকরণ হয়েছিল। আবার গান্ধার দেশে এই সঙ্গীতধারার উদ্ভব বলে গান্ধর্ব নামকরণ হয়েছে – এই সম্ভাবনার কথাও কেউ কেউ বলে থাকেন। গান্ধর্বের প্রসঙ্গ রামায়ণ, মহাভারত ও পুরাণগুলিতে পাওয়া যায়। গান্ধর্বের পরিচয়ের জন্য অবৈদিক প্রাচীন সঙ্গীত শাস্ত্রের প্রয়োজন। বৈদিক সঙ্গীতের সঙ্গে সংশ্লিষ্ট নয় যে সঙ্গীতশাস্ত্রগুলি আছে তাদের মধ্যে প্রাচীনতম হল ভরতের নাট্যশাস্ত্র। যদিও নাট্যশাস্ত্রের মূল আলোচ্য বিষয় হল নাট্যকলা, কিন্তু নাটকের অপরিহার্য অঙ্গ হিসাবে সঙ্গীতের আলোচনা এখানে ছয়টি অধ্যায়ে পাওয়া যায়। নাট্যকলার সঙ্গে যুক্ত যারা ছিলেন তাঁদের ভরত বলা হত।

গান্ধর্বের ব্যাখ্যা করে আচার্য ভরত বলেছেন-

অত্যর্থমিষ্টং দেবানাং তথা প্রীতিকরং পুনঃ।
গন্ধর্বাণাং চ যস্মাদ্ধি তস্মাদ্ গান্ধর্বমিত্যুচ্যতে।।
অস্য যোনির্ভবেদ্‌গানং বীণাবংশস্তথৈব চ।
এতেষাং চৈব বক্ষ্যামি বিধিং স্বরসমুত্থিতম্।। [৮]

অর্থাৎ, দেবতা ও গন্ধর্বদের অত্যন্ত অভীপ্সিত ও প্রীতিকর বলে এই সঙ্গীতকে গান্ধর্ব বলা হয়। এর উৎস হল গান অর্থাৎ সামগান, বীণা ও বংশ। ভাষ্যমতে বংশ বলতে নারদ প্রমুখ গন্ধর্বকুল এবং তাঁদের অভিমতকে বুঝানো হয়েছে। ভরত বলেছেন, এদের স্বরসন্নিবেশের নিয়মবিধি আলোচনা করব।

গান্ধর্ব সামগানের মত স্থির ও অপরিবর্তনীয় ছিল না। বিভিন্ন বিবর্তনের মধ্য দিয়ে গান্ধর্বের যাত্রা। প্রথমদিকে গান্ধর্বে জাতিগানের প্রচলন ছিল। পরবর্তী কালে সেখান থেকে গ্রামরাগের উদ্ভব হল। জাতিগানের উল্লেখ রামায়ণে পাওয়া যায়। মহাভারত ও হরিবংশে গ্রামরাগের প্রসঙ্গ আছে। নারদীয় শিক্ষাতেও একুশটি গ্রামরাগের নাম পাওয়া যায়। অর্থাৎ সঙ্গীতের এই ধারায় সামগানের কিছু উপাদান থাকলেও তার একটি

স্বকীয় পদ্ধতি ও গতি ছিল যা তাকে সামগান থেকে স্বতন্ত্র করে তুলেছিল। যাই হোক, সামগান থেকে গান্ধর্বের উৎপত্তি হলেও এই দুটি সঙ্গীত চরিত্রগতভাবে আলাদা। মূর্ছনা, গ্রাম ,তাল, জাতি, রাগ, বাদ্যযন্ত্র প্রভৃতি যে বিষয়গুলি নাট্যশাস্ত্রে গান্ধর্বের প্রসঙ্গে আলোচিত হয়েছে তা সামগানের ঔপপত্তিক আলোচনা থেকে স্বতন্ত্র। এমনকি বৈদিক সপ্তস্বর গান্ধর্বের সপ্তস্বরের নাম ও অবস্থান আলাদা। ভরত বলেছেন 'গান্ধর্বং ত্রিবিধং বিদ্যাত্ স্বরতালপদাত্মকম্' অর্থাত্ স্বর, তাল ও পদ –এই তিনটিকে আশ্রয় করে গান্ধর্বের অবস্থান এবং তিনি তাঁর গ্রন্থে এই গান্ধর্বের লক্ষণ ও প্রয়োগ নিয়ে আলোচনা করেছেন। কিন্তু এই গ্রন্থে সঙ্গীত শব্দটির প্রয়োগ নেই বললেই হয়। হাতে গোনা যে শ্লোকগুলিতে পাওয়া যায় সেইগুলি আবার সব সংস্করণে পাওয়া যায়না।

বৃহদ্দেশী:

ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতের আবার একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য পরিবর্তনের ইঙ্গিত পাওয়া যায় মতঙ্গের বৃহদ্দেশী গ্রন্থে (আনু. ৫ম-৮ম শতক)। এই গ্রন্থটি নানাকারণে বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। এই গ্রন্থে সর্বপ্রথম রাগের আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। এইখানে সর্বপ্রথম সরগম-এর আলোচনা পাওয়া যায়। তান্ত্রিকধারায় নাদের আলোচনা গ্রন্থটিকে একটি বিশেষ মর্যাদা দিয়েছে। এছাড়া শ্রুতি, স্বর, গ্রাম, মুর্ছনা প্রভৃতির আলোচনায় নতুন আলোকপাত করেছে গ্রন্থটি। এই গ্রন্থের বিশেষতা হল 'মার্গ' সঙ্গীতের সঙ্গে 'দেশী' সঙ্গীতের উপস্থাপনা। বৃহদ্দেশী গ্রন্থটি অসম্পূর্ণ অবস্থায় পাওয়া গিয়েছে। কিন্তু তা সত্ত্বেও পরবর্তী গ্রন্থকারদের কাছে এটি প্রায় আকরগ্রন্থের মত বিবেচিত হয়েছে।

'দেশ' ও 'দেশী' শব্দটি মতঙ্গ ভিন্ন ভিন্ন অর্থে গ্রহণ করেছেন। গ্রন্থের প্রারম্ভিক শ্লোকে বলেছেন- 'নানাবিধেষু দেশেষু জন্তূনাং সুখদো ভবেত্। ততঃ প্রভৃতি লোকানাং নরেন্দ্রাণাং যদৃচ্ছয়া।। দেশে দেশে প্রবৃত্তো'সৌ ধ্বনির্দেশীতি সংজ্ঞিতঃ।' এখানে দেশ বলতে অঞ্চল (region) বুঝানো হয়েছে। বিভিন্ন দেশে রাজা ও জনগণের সুখদায়ক ধ্বনিকে দেশী ধ্বনি বলা হয়- 'দেশে দেশে প্রবৃত্তো'সৌ ধ্বনির্দেশীতি সংজ্ঞিতঃ'[১৯]। মতঙ্গ বলেছেন সঙ্গীত ও দেশভাষা এই দুই জায়গাতেই স্বর সর্বাপেক্ষা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। বাক্যে এই স্বর হল স্বরবর্ণ এবং সঙ্গীতে এই স্বর হল সা রে গ ম ইত্যাদি। এখানে দেশভাষা শুধুমাত্র আঞ্চলিক ভাষাকে বুঝাচ্ছে না, সংস্কৃতভাষাকেও বুঝাচ্ছে। প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখযোগ্য পাণিনি তাঁর অষ্টাধ্যায়ী ব্যাকরণে ভাষা বলতে সংস্কৃতকেই বুঝিয়েছেন।

সঙ্গীতে দেশির লক্ষ্মণ নির্ণয় করতে গিয়ে মতঙ্গ বলেছেন-

অবলাবালগোপালৈঃ ক্ষিতিপালৈর্নিজেচ্ছয়া।
গীয়তে সানুরাগেণ স্বদেশে দেশিরুচ্যতে।। [২০]

অর্থাৎ মহিলা, শিশু, রাখাল, রাজা প্রমুখ মানুষেরা তাদের খেয়াল খুশিমত আঞ্চলিক সুরে যে গান গেয়ে থাকেন তাই দেশী। অর্থাৎ দেশী শুধুমাত্র সাধারণ জনগণের প্রিয় ছিল না, রাজার মত অভিজাতদেরও প্রিয় ছিল। এর পরের শ্লোকটিতে মার্গ ধারার কথা বলা হয়েছে-

নিবদ্ধশ্চানিবদ্ধশ্চ মার্গো'য়ং দ্বিবিধো মতঃ।
আলাপাদিনিবদ্ধো যঃ স মার্গঃ প্রকীর্তিতঃ ।। [২১]

অর্থ হবে – দেশী পদ্ধতি পরিবেশনের দুটি পথ আছে, নিবদ্ধ ও অনিবদ্ধ। আলাপ প্রভৃতির দ্বারা নিবদ্ধ গানকে মার্গ বলে এবং অপরটি দেশী। অর্থাৎ এই অবৈদিক দেশীর দুটি প্রকারভেদ, নিবদ্ধ বা মার্গ এবং অনিবদ্ধ বা দেশী। মতঙ্গ তার গ্রন্থে গান্ধর্ব শব্দের কোনো উল্লেখ করেননি বা এখানে মার্গের প্রতিশব্দ হিসাবে গান্ধর্ব পদটির ব্যবহার করেন নি। যদিও পরবর্তী কালে সঙ্গীতশাস্ত্রকাররা মার্গ ও গান্ধর্বকে সমপর্যায়ভুক্ত বলে মনে করেন। উল্লেখযোগ্য যে এই গ্রন্থেও সঙ্গীত শব্দটি অনুপস্থিত।

সঙ্গীতরত্নাকর

মার্গ শব্দের ব্যুৎপত্তিগত অর্থ পাওয়া যায় ত্রয়োদশ শতকে রচিত শার্ঙ্গদেবের সঙ্গীত রত্নাকর গ্রন্থে। এই গ্রন্থটি মতঙ্গের বৃহদ্দেশীর পর সর্বাপেক্ষা উল্লেখযোগ্য সঙ্গীতশাস্ত্র। শার্ঙ্গদেবের মতে মার্গ শব্দটি এসেছে অন্বেষণার্থক 'মৃগ্' ধাতু থেকে। সামবেদের লুপ্তপ্রায় ধারাকে অন্বেষণ করে এই নতুন পদ্ধতির উদ্ভব হয়েছিল আর তাই তার আর এক নাম 'মার্গ'। সঙ্গীতরত্নাকরে বলা হয়েছে যে ব্রহ্মা প্রভৃতি এই সঙ্গীত অন্বেষণ করেছেন এবং ভরত প্রমুখ তা প্রয়োগ করেছেন – 'যো মার্গিতো বিরিঞ্চ্যাদ্যৈঃ প্রযুক্তো ভরতাদিভিঃ'[২২]। সঙ্গীতরত্নাকরে আরও বলা হয়েছে , 'সামবেদাদিদং গীতং সংজগ্রাহ পিতামহঃ'-পিতামহ ব্রহ্মা সামবেদ থেকে এই সঙ্গীতের জন্য গানের উপাদান সংগ্রহ করেছিলেন। আর এই গীত বা সুর এতই মনোগ্রাহী যে মহেশ্বর, শ্রীকৃষ্ণ, ব্রহ্মা ও সরস্বতীর প্রীতি উৎপাদন করে, যক্ষ, দেবতা, দানব ও মানুষদের আনন্দ দেয়, এমন কি শিশু, বনচর পশু, মৃগশাবক প্রভৃতিও এই সঙ্গীতের অমৃতরস পান করে আমোদিত হয়। এই লক্ষণ গান্ধর্বের লক্ষণের অনুরূপ। তাই মনে হয় মতঙ্গ গান্ধর্ব নামটির পরিবর্তে মার্গ শব্দের ব্যবহার করেছেন।

বস্তুত বৃহদ্দেশী গ্রন্থে যে দেশীর আলোচনার সূচনা ঘটে তা শার্ঙ্গদেবের সঙ্গীত রত্নাকরে গান্ধর্ব থেকে পৃথক এক স্বতন্ত্র সাঙ্গীতিক ঐতিহ্য হিসাবে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। দেশী সম্বন্ধে শার্ঙ্গদেব মতঙ্গকে অনুসরণ করে বলেছেন –

দেশে দেশে জনানাং যদ্ রুচ্যা হৃদয়রঞ্জকম্।
গানং চ বাদনং নৃত্যং তদ্দেশীত্যভধীয়তে।।[২৩]

অর্থাৎ, ভিন্ন ভিন্ন দেশে সেই স্থানের জনরুচি অনুসারে মনোরঞ্জনকারী গান, বাজনা ও নৃত্য হল দেশী।

সঙ্গীত রত্নাকরের প্রথমে সঙ্গীতের লক্ষণ দিয়েছেন গীতং বাদ্যং তথা নৃত্তং ত্রয়ং সঙ্গীতমুচ্যতে। প্রবন্ধাধ্যায় নামক চতুর্থ অধ্যায়ে প্রথমেই গীতকে গান্ধর্ব ও গান –এই দুই ভাগে ভাগ করা হয়েছে। টীকাকার কল্লিনাথ বলেন যে গান্ধর্ব হল মার্গ এবং গান বলতে দেশীকেই বুঝতে হবে। গান্ধর্ব সঙ্গীত ব্রহ্মার দ্বারা পরিকল্পিত বলে বেদের মত অপৌরুষেয় ও শ্রেয়স্কর। অপর পক্ষে বাগ্‌গেয়কারেরা দেশজ রাগে যে গীত রচনা করেছেন তাকেই গান বলা হয়[২৪]। এখানে 'গান' একটি বিশেষ পরিভাষা যার অর্থ এক বিশেষ

সঙ্গীত পদ্ধতি আর গান্ধর্বের বিপরীতে দেশী সঙ্গীত হিসাবে তার অবস্থান। অতএব 'গান' আর 'দেশী' সমার্থক।

সম্ভবত মতঙ্গের সময় থেকেই গান্ধর্ব থেকে দেশীর জনপ্রিয়তা উত্তরোত্তর বাড়ছিল। সঙ্গীত রত্নাকর গ্রন্থটি গান্ধর্বের লোপ পেয়ে যাওয়ার কিছু সাক্ষ্য বহন করে। গান্ধর্ব ও গানের লক্ষণ দেওয়ার পর শার্ঙ্গদেব বললেন – 'তত্র গান্ধর্বমুক্তং প্রাক্ অধুনা গানমুচ্যতে'[২৫]। গান্ধর্বের কথা আগেই বলা হয়েছে এখন গান সম্বন্ধে বলা হবে। 'উক্তং প্রাক্' অংশটির ব্যাখ্যা করে টীকাকার কল্লিনাথ বলেন, গ্রন্থের প্রথম তিনটি অধ্যায়ে গান্ধর্ব সম্বন্ধে বলা হয়েছে এরপর চতুর্থ অধ্যায় থেকে গানের অর্থাৎ দেশী সঙ্গীতের আলোচনা হবে। কল্লিনাথের বক্তব্য অনুসারে সঙ্গীতরত্নাকরের সাতটি পরিচ্ছেদের মধ্যে প্রথম তিনটি পরিচ্ছেদে গান্ধর্বের এবং পরবর্তী চারটি পরিচ্ছেদে দেশীর আলোচনা করেছেন শার্ঙ্গদেব। কল্লিনাথের এই বক্তব্য কতটা গ্রহণযোগ্য তা আলোচনাসাপেক্ষ। তৃতীয় অধ্যায়ের বাইরেও শার্ঙ্গদেব গান্ধর্বের আলোচনা করেছেন। তালাধ্যায় নামক পঞ্চম অধ্যায়ে মার্গ ও দেশী উভয় তালের আলোচনা করেছেন। ঐ একই অধ্যায়ে ব্রহ্মগীতির বিস্তৃত আলোচনা করেছেন। এই গীত হল সামগানের মত স্তোভযুক্ত অর্থাৎ অর্থহীন পদযুক্ত ও ব্রহ্মাকর্তৃক পরিবেশিত – স্তোভভঙ্গীং বিজানীয়াত্ সাম্নো বৈদিকসম্মতং ব্রহ্মণা চ পুরা গীতম্[২৬]। শার্ঙ্গদেবের সময় গান্ধর্ব অপ্রচলিত হয়ে গেলেও তিনি নিজে কিন্তু এই প্রাচীন রীতির সম্বন্ধে অবহিত ছিলেন এবং তাঁর গ্রন্থ থেকেও তা স্পষ্ট। দেশীর প্রতি তাঁর স্বাভাবিক অনুরাগ থাকলেও প্রাচীন লুপ্তপ্রায় গান্ধর্বকে অবহেলা করেননি তিনি। অতএব 'উক্তং প্রাক্' বলতে গান্ধর্ব সম্বন্ধে তাঁর পূর্বাচার্যদের মতামত তিনি স্মরণ করেছেন এমনও ভাবা যেতে পারে। তবে দেশী সম্পূর্ণভাবে গান্ধর্বের প্রভাব থেকে মুক্ত ছিল বলে মনে হয় না। সেইরকম গান্ধর্ব ও সামগান যে লৌকিকপ্রভাব থেকে মুক্ত ছিল তাও সম্ভবত নয়। কিন্তু আঞ্চলিক জনরুচির সঙ্গে সঙ্গতি রেখে পরিবর্তনকে জায়গা করে দেওয়াতে মানুষের কাছে দেশী অনেক বেশী গ্রহণযোগ্য হয়েছিল।

শার্ঙ্গদেবের সঙ্গীতরত্নাকর গ্রন্থটি ভারতীয় সঙ্গীত শাস্ত্রগুলির মধ্যে সর্বাপেক্ষা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। শুধু বিষয়গতভাবে নয়, ইতিহাসের দৃষ্টিতেও সঙ্গীতরত্নাকরের স্থান খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাসে একাদশ থেকে অষ্টাদশ শতক মধ্যযুগ বলে পরিচিত। এই যুগটি ছিল ইসলামশাসনের সময়কাল। কিন্তু একাদশ শতকের অনেক আগে সপ্তম শতক থেকেই ভারতে আরব-তুর্কীদের আক্রমণ শুরু হয়। ঐ সময় থেকে মুসলিমদের নানা গোষ্ঠীর উপুর্যুপরি আক্রমণে উত্তর ভারত বিপর্যস্ত হয়ে পড়ে এবং ধর্মীয়, সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক পরিমণ্ডলের উল্লেখযোগ্য পরবর্তন ঘটে। তাই অনেকেই মনে করেন যে সপ্তম-অষ্টম শতকে মুসলিমশাসনের সূচনার থেকেই মধ্যযুগের আরম্ভ। মুসলিম আক্রমণ, সংঘাত, অভিঘাত ও হত্যালীলার সংগেই চলল সাংস্কৃতিক আদানপ্রদান। দুই সম্প্রদায়ের জ্ঞান, বিজ্ঞান, শিল্প সংস্কৃতির প্রতি পারস্পরিক শ্রদ্ধা ও আগ্রহ এক সাংস্কৃতিক মেলবন্ধন ঘটাল যার প্রভাব পড়ল সঙ্গীতের ক্ষেত্রেও।

আমীর খুসরো

শার্ঙ্গদেবের সমসাময়িক ছিলেন আমীর খুসরো। পারস্য থেকে আসা আমীর খুসরো বহুমুখী প্রতিভার অধিকারী ছিলেন আর সেই সঙ্গে হিন্দু সংস্কৃতির বিশেষ গুনগ্রাহী। ফার্সী, তুর্কী, আরবী ছাড়াও তিনই হিন্দী, ব্রজভাষা ও সংস্কৃত ভাষাতেও ব্যুৎপন্ন ছিলেন। ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতের তাত্ত্বিক দিকটিতেও ছিল তাঁর অবাধ বিচরণ। সুফী মতবাদে বিশ্বাসী এই মানুষটি ছিলেন হিন্দু ও মুসলিম সংস্কৃতির ঐক্যসাধনে প্রয়াসী। প্রচলিত ভারতীয় ও পারস্য সঙ্গীতের মিশ্রণে তিনি এক নতুন ধারার প্রবর্তন করেন। নতুন আঙ্গিকের গীতরীতির উদ্ভাবন করেন তিনি, যেমন, খেয়াল, তারানা, গজল, কাওয়ালি প্রভৃতি। কয়েকটি নতুন রাগ ও তাল ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতে প্রচলন করেন। রাগের মধ্যে ইমন, পূরবী, শাহানা, সাজগিরি, জিলফ, পুরিয়া প্রভৃতি এবং তালের মধ্যে সওয়ারি, ফরদোস্ত, যৎ, পাস্তা, ঝুমরা প্রভৃতি উল্লেখযোগ্য। অনেকে মনে করেন যে, এগুলি ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতে আগেই ছিল অন্য নামে, আমীর খুসরো শুধুমাত্র তাদের পারস্যীকরণ করেছেন। সেতার ও তবলাও আমীর খুসরোর উদ্ভাবন বলে মনে করা হয়। এইভাবে এইসময় উত্তরভারতে প্রচলিত ভারতীয় সঙ্গীত একটি বিশাল পরিবর্তনের মধ্য দিয়ে একটি নতুন রূপ ধারণ করল। পারস্যরীতির দ্বারা প্রভাবিত এই সঙ্গীত তদানীন্তন শাসকদের কাছেও বেশি গ্রহণযোগ্য হয়েছিল। রাজদরবারে অধিক গ্রহণযোগ্যতা সম্ভবত উত্তর ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতের পরিবর্তনের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অনুঘটক ছিল।

দক্ষিণভারতে মুসলিম অনুপ্রবেশ অপেক্ষাকৃত কম ছিল বলে সেখানে ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতের চর্চা প্রাচীন পদ্ধতিতেই হতে থাকল। এতদিনের ঐতিহ্যবাহী ভারতীয় সঙ্গীত সুস্পষ্ট দুটি ধারায় বিভক্ত হল। সাম্বমূর্তি আমাদের জানান যে হরিপালদেব তাঁর সঙ্গীত-সুধাকর গ্রন্থে (আ. ১৩০৯-১৩১২) পারস্যপ্রভাবিত উত্তর ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতকে হিন্দুস্তানী সঙ্গীত ও দক্ষিণ ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতকে কর্ণাটকী সঙ্গীত নামে অভিহিত করেন।[২৭] অখণ্ড ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতের শেষ শাস্ত্রকার ছিলেন। তবে সঙ্গীতরত্নাকরে 'তুরস্ক তোরি' নামে একটি রাগের উল্লেখ আছে, যার থেকে মনে হয় বহিঃ ভারতের প্রভাব ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতে অনেক আগের থেকেই পড়েছিল। সাম্বমূর্তি বলেন, কর্ণাটকী সঙ্গীতের অর্থ দক্ষিণের সঙ্গীত এবং প্রাচীন সঙ্গীত। 'কর্ণাটকী' নামটি শ্রীমদ্ভাগবতম্ ও ভোজচম্পূতে পাওয়া যায়। দেশের জনরুচির পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দেশি ধারাই বর্তমান ভারতীয় সংগীতে রূপান্তরিত হল। বর্তমানে উত্তর ও দক্ষিণ ভারতীয় সঙ্গীতের মেলবন্ধনের প্রয়াসটি উল্লেখযোগ্য আর তাও শুরু হয়েছে শ্রোতাদের রুচির সঙ্গে সঙ্গতি রে খেই।

ভারতবর্ষে সামগানের সঙ্গে সমান্তরালভাবে অবৈদিক লৌকিক ধারাও প্রচলিত ছিল। সেই সঙ্গীতের পরিশীলন না থাকলেও হৃদয়ের স্বতঃস্ফূর্ততার অভাব ছিলনা। সেই ধারা ছিল সামবেদের থেকেও প্রাচীন। সেখান থেকেই নির্যাস নিয়ে যথাযথ পরিশীলন ও সংস্কারের মাধ্যমে সামগান ও গান্ধর্ব সমৃদ্ধ হয়েছে। সামের মধ্যে লৌকিক প্রভাবের ইঙ্গিতও সুস্পষ্ট। কিন্তু দুর্ভাগ্যক্রমে সামগানের পূর্ববর্তী এই ধারার কোন নিদর্শন পাওয়া যায় না। সামগানকে তাই ভারতবর্ষের প্রাচীনতম সঙ্গীত না বলে নিয়মানুসারে নিবদ্ধ প্রাচীনতম সঙ্গীতের ঐতিহাসিক নিদর্শন বলা যেতে পারে।

Endnote:

[১] কৌষীতকি ব্রাহ্মণ ২৯.৫

[২] ঐতরেয় ব্রাহ্মণ ৩০.১

[৩] 'যত্রার্থবশেন পাদব্যবস্থা সা ঋক্' মীমাংসাসূত্র ২/৩৫

[৪] গীতিষু সামাখ্যা, ঐ ২/৩৬

[৫] শেষে যজুঃশব্দঃ, ঐ ২/৩৭

[৬] M. Winternitz, History of Indian Literature, Vol I Part I p. 143-১৪৪

[৭] ভিণ্টারনিত্স্-কর্তৃক সংকলিত, ঐ, পৃ ১৪৩-১৪৪।

[৮] Vedic Literature, p. 317

[৯] সামবেদসংহিতা, পৃ.১৩

[১০] জৈমিনীয়ব্রাহ্মণ ১.১২৪

[১১] ছান্দোগ্য উপনিষদ ১.১৩

[১২] M. Winternitz, পৃ ১৪৫

[১৩] ঐ, পৃ ১৪৬

[১৪] ছান্দোগ্য উপনিষদ্ ২.৮.১,২;২.৯.২-৮

[১৫] ঐ ২.১১.১

[১৬] Louis Renou. Vedic India, p 19

[১৭] p. XIV

[১৮] আশ্বমেধিকপর্ব ৯৪.৪৩

[১৯] বৃহদ্দেশী ১.২

[২০] ঐ ১.১৪

[২১] ঐ ১.১৫

[২২] সংগীতরত্নাকর ১.২.২২

[২৩] ঐ ১.১.২৩-২৪

[২৪] অনাদিসম্প্রদায়ং যদ্ গন্ধর্বৈঃ সংপ্রযুজ্যতে।
নিয়তং শ্রেয়সো হেতুস্তদ্ গান্ধর্বং জগুর্বুধাঃ।।
যত্তু বাগ্‌গেয়কারেণ রচিতং লক্ষণান্বিতম্।
দেশীরাগাদিষু প্রোক্তং তদ্‌গানং জনরঞ্জকম্।। ঐ ৪.১.২-৩

[২৫] ঐ ৪.৪

[২৬] ঐ ৫.২৩০

[২৭] 'By the time of the invasion by Malik Kafir in 1294 the North Indian music has become almost Persianised. This was called Hindustani Music by Haripala Deva and the music of South India was called Karnatic Music meaning southern music and old music.' P. Sambomoorthy, South Indian Music Vol I, The Indian Music Publishing House, Madras1935, p 13.

Bibliography

- আগাশে, কাশিনাথ (সম্পা)। ঐতরেয়ব্রাহ্মণ। পুণা ১৯৭৭
- বিশ্বাস, দীধিতি। নারদীয়শিক্ষা, প্যাপিরাস। কলকাতা ২০০৫
- ভট্টাচার্য, হরিনারায়ণ। শাঙ্খায়ন ব্রাহ্মণ, সংস্কৃত কলেজ। কলকাতা ১৯৭০
- মিত্র, রাজ্যেশ্বর। বৈদিক ঐতিহ্যে সামগান, জিজ্ঞাসা। কলকাতা ১৯৭৮
- সত্যব্রত সামশ্রমী। সামবেদসংহিতা গানগ্রন্থসহ। নতুন দিল্লী ১৯৮৩ পুনর্মুদ্রণ।
- Gonda,Jan. Vedic Literature Vol. I Fasc. I of A History of Indian Literature. Weisbaden 1975
- Joshi, K.L. & Vedalankar, M.A. (ed). Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni with com. Of Abhinavagupta. Delhi 1984.
- Sharma, Premlata (ed). Bṛhaddeśī of Mataṅgamuni. IGNCA & MLBD. New Delhi 1992.
- Shringy, R.K. (ed). Sangītaratnākara of Śārṅgadeva. IGNCA. New Delhi Vol. I 1991, Vol.II 1989.
- Renou, Louis. 1971. Vedic India. Eng. Trans. By Phillip Spratt. Delhi.

- Rowell, Lewis. 1992. Masic and Musical Thought. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.
- Winternitz, M. 1962. History of Indian Literature Vol.I Part I. Calcutta. 3rd ed.

Bio Profile of the Author:

Retired Professor, Department of Sanskrit
University of Calcutta
Email: didhiti2017@gmail.com

কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সংস্কৃত বিভাগের অবসরপ্রাপ্তা অধ্যাপিকা ড. দীধিতি বিশ্বাস, ওই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ঈশান স্কলার ও কৃতী ছাত্রী। "A Critical study of the Aranyakas" নামে পুস্তকাকারে প্রকাশিত তার পিএইচডি সন্দর্ভটি দেশে ও বিদেশে স্বীকৃত হয়েছে। এ ছাড়া তিনি আরও তিনটি গ্রন্থ এবং প্রায় পঞ্চাশটি গবেষণা প্রবন্ধ নানাস্তরের গবেষণাপত্রিকায় প্রকাশ করেছেন। তার বিভাগের প্রধানের দায়িত্ব পালনের পাশাপাশি তিনি দেশে ও বিদেশে বহু সারস্বত সম্মেলনে অংশগ্রহণ করেছেন ও আমন্ত্রিত হয়েছন। রবীন্দ্রভারতী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের যন্ত্র-সঙ্গীত বিভাগের মিউজিকোলজির পঠন-পাঠনের সঙ্গে তিনি দীর্ঘদিন অতিথি শিক্ষক হিসেবে যুক্ত ছিলেন।

Exploring Importance of Oral History in Interdisciplinary Research

Swapan Kumar Pain

Abstract:

The most popular trend in historical study and research is the 'Interdisciplinary Approach'. Scholars believe that the interdisciplinary approach has achieved success in post-independent India with the development of historiography, oral tradition and history. Oral history is a multidimensional method of preserving and interpreting the lived experiences, memories and narratives of individuals and communities. The main objective of the present article is to explore the oral method in history writing, the development of this method in India and its practical advantages and disadvantages, and above all, a thorough analysis of how 'Oral History' is effective in writing scientific history. The conflict between archive-based history and oral history is not unknown to us. To mitigate this conflict an attempt has also been made in the present paper with the help of available data. Another objective of this article is to explore how oral history established interdisciplinary trend. It is evident that the use of oral history has established in India with the introduction of digital revolution which resulted well-preserved documentation system. In fact, oral history and culture is not an exceptional way of writing, but it is an integral part of the mainstream history - keeping this in mind, this article discusses the method of reconstructing history.

Key Words: *Narrative, Tradition, Research, Subaltern, Archive, Memoir, Preservation, Culture, Sociology*

প্রবন্ধসার :

বর্তমান ইতিহাস চর্চার মূল ধারাগুলির মধ্যে বহুচর্চিত হল আন্তঃবিষয়ক ধারা বা 'Interdisciplinary Approach'। স্বাধীনোত্তর ভারতবর্ষে মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চার মাধ্যমেই আন্তঃবিষয়ক ধারা সাফল্য লাভ করেছে বলে ঐতিহাসিকদের ধারণা। মৌখিক ইতিহাস ব্যক্তি ও সম্প্রদায়ের জীবিত অভিজ্ঞতা, স্মৃতি ও বর্ণনাকে সংরক্ষণ ও ব্যাখ্যা করার বহুমাত্রিক পদ্ধতি। ইতিহাস রচনায় মৌখিক পদ্ধতির উৎস, ভারতবর্ষে এই পদ্ধতির প্রচলন এবং তার প্রায়োগিক সুবিধা-অসুবিধা এবং সর্বোপরি বিজ্ঞানসম্মত ইতিহাস রচনায় 'Oral History' কতটা কার্যকরী তার পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ বিশ্লেষণ এই প্রবন্ধের মূল বিষয়। লেখ্যাগার ভিত্তিক ইতিহাস রচনার সঙ্গে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের দ্বন্দ্ব কারও অজানা নয়। উক্ত দ্বন্দ্বের বিশ্লেষণ ও তার অবসান

ঘটানোর একটি প্রচেষ্টা এই প্রবন্ধের মাধ্যমে করা হয়েছে। অর্থাৎ লেখ্যাগার ভিত্তিক ইতিহাস চর্চার পাশাপাশি মৌখিক ইতিহাস কীভাবে আন্তঃবিষয়ক ইতিহাস চর্চাকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করল, তার তথ্যভিত্তিক আলোচনার প্রয়াস রয়েছে এখানে। ভারতবর্ষে ডিজিটাল বিপ্লবের ফলে মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চা প্রতিষ্ঠিত হতে শুরু করে। কারণ ডিজিটাল বিপ্লবের ফলে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের সাক্ষ্যগ্রহণ এবং তার সংরক্ষণ অনেক সহজ হয়ে যায়। মৌখিক ইতিহাসের তথ্য সুসংবদ্ধভাবে সংরক্ষিত থাকলে তা ভবিষ্যৎ গবেষকরা ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন। আসলে মৌখিক ইতিহাস এবং সংস্কৃতি কোনো ব্যতিক্রমী বিষয় নয়, ইতিহাসের মূল ধারার সঙ্গেই তা সম্পৃক্ত- একথা মাথায় রেখে ইতিহাস পুনর্নির্মাণ করার পদ্ধতি এই প্রবন্ধে আলোচিত হয়েছে।

সূচক শব্দ : *আখ্যান, ঐতিহ্য, গবেষণা, নিম্নবর্গ, লেখ্যাগার, স্মৃতিকথা, সংরক্ষণ, সংস্কৃতি, সমাজবিজ্ঞান।*

"ইতিহাসের প্রকৃত নথি পাওয়া যায় সাধারণ মানুষের জীবনযাপনে। মৌখিক ইতিহাস সংগ্রহ, সংরক্ষণ এবং তার আদান-প্রদান শুধুমাত্র এক প্রজন্ম থেকে অন্য প্রজন্মের কাছে জ্ঞান সঞ্চারিত করে না, এটি ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতাকে আলোকিত করে অতীত সম্পর্কে আমাদের ধারণাকে উন্নত করে।"

-John Robert Lewis
Texas Historical Commission

মৌখিক ইতিহাসের ধারণা:

জন রবার্ট লুইস-এর কথার মধ্যেই লুকিয়ে রয়েছে ইতিহাস চর্চায় মৌখিক ধারা বা মৌখিক সংস্কৃতির গুরুত্ব, যার সূচনা হয়েছিল স্মৃতি ও শ্রুতির মাধ্যমে। ইতিহাস চর্চার শুরুতে প্রাথমিক ও অপ্রাথমিক উৎস বলে কিছু ছিল না। স্মৃতি থেকে আহরিত ঘটনাই ইতিহাস রচনার কাজে সবচেয়ে বেশি ব্যবহৃত হত। এমনকি পৃথিবীর সর্বপ্রাচীন ধর্মগ্রন্থও ঐ একই পদ্ধতিতে রচিত হয়েছিল। বর্তমানে আমরা যাকে ইতিহাসের জনক বলে অভিহিত করি সেই হেরোডোটাসও মৌখিক উপাদানের উপর ভিত্তি করেই ইতিহাস রচনা শুরু করেছিলেন আজ থেকে প্রায় আড়াই হাজার বছর আগে। আসলে প্রত্যেকটি মানুষের জীবনে অন্যকে বলার মত অনেক কথা থাকে। জীবনের স্মৃতিগুলোকে মানুষ গল্পে রূপান্তরিত করে। মৌখিক ইতিহাস এই গল্পগুলোকে পর্যালোচনা করে এবং বৈজ্ঞানিক ঝাড়াই বাছাইয়ের মাধ্যমে তার মধ্য থেকে প্রকৃত ইতিহাসের উপাত্ত বা রসদ খুঁজে নেয়। মৌখিক ইতিহাস কথ্য অ্যাকাউন্টের মাধ্যমে ব্যক্তি এবং সম্প্রদায়ের জীবিত অভিজ্ঞতা, স্মৃতি এবং বর্ণনাকে সংরক্ষণ ও ব্যাখ্যা করার একটি বহুমাত্রিক পদ্ধতি। এই পদ্ধতি নৈতিক বিবেচনা এবং তাত্ত্বিক কাঠামোর বৈচিত্র্যময় বিন্যাসকে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করে, যাতে ইতিহাসকে তাদের দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে বোঝার উদ্দেশ্যে পর্যাপ্তভাবে উপস্থাপন করা যায়। উপনিবেশিকোত্তর যুগে মৌখিক ইতিহাস আমাদের প্রচলিত ইতিহাস রচনার পদ্ধতিকে চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখে ফেলেছে। কারণ এই পদ্ধতি পেশাজীবী শ্রেণীর বাইরে গিয়ে জনইতিহাস চর্চায় পরিণত হয়েছে। আসলে ইতিহাস চর্চার যে আন্তঃবিষয়ক ধারা বা 'Interdisciplinary Approach' তা মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চার মাধ্যমেই সাফল্য লাভ করেছে। লেখ্যাগার ভিত্তিক ইতিহাস চর্চার পরিবর্তে মৌখিক ইতিহাস কীভাবে আন্তঃবিষয়ক ইতিহাস চর্চাকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করল তার অনুসন্ধানই বর্তমান প্রবন্ধের মূল অভিপ্রায়।

কেন এই প্রবন্ধ লেখা?

বর্তমানে 'Oral History' বা 'মৌখিক ইতিহাস' একটি বহুচর্চিত বিষয়। আধুনিক ইতিহাস চর্চায় বা সমসাময়িক ইতিহাস রচনায় মৌখিক পদ্ধতি ব্যবহার করেননি এমন গবেষক বিরল। কিন্তু এই পদ্ধতির উৎস, ভারতবর্ষে এই পদ্ধতির প্রচলন এবং তার প্রায়োগিক সুবিধা ও অসুবিধা এবং সর্বোপরি বিজ্ঞানসম্মত ইতিহাস রচনায় 'Oral History' কতটা কার্যকারী সে সম্পর্কে বেশিরভাগ গবেষকই সন্দিহান। অনুসন্ধিৎসু গবেষকদের ধারণা স্বচ্ছ করার জন্য নিম্নলিখিত উদ্দেশ্যে এই প্রবন্ধটির উপস্থাপন:

১. ইতিহাস চর্চাকে শুধুমাত্র একাডেমিক গবেষকদের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ না রেখে নানা মাত্রায় ছড়িয়ে দেওয়া।

২. মৌখিক ইতিহাস কীভাবে ইতিহাস চর্চাকে আন্তঃবিষয়ক গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রকে প্রসারিত করল তা পর্যালোচনা করা।

৩. মৌখিক ইতিহাস কীভাবে 'তল থেকে দেখা ইতিহাস' (History from Below) এবং 'নিম্নবর্গের ইতিহাস' (Subaltern Studies) চর্চার ক্ষেত্রকে প্রসারিত করেছে তার অনুসন্ধান।

৪. আত্মজীবনীমূলক ইতিহাস (Biographical History) রচনার ক্ষেত্রে মৌখিক ইতিহাস কতটা কার্যকরী তার অনুসন্ধান।

৫. সর্বোপরি, বিজ্ঞানসম্মত ইতিহাস রচনার ক্ষেত্রে মানুষের স্মৃতি কতখানি নির্ভরযোগ্য তথ্য হতে পারে সে বিষয়ে বর্তমান গবেষকদের স্বচ্ছ ধারণা তৈরি করাই এই প্রবন্ধের মূল উদ্দেশ্য।

মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য (Orality and Oral Tradition or Culture) :

সাধারণভাবে মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যকে অনেকে সমার্থক বলে মনে করেন। কিন্তু মনে রাখা দরকার দুটি বিষয় কখনোই সমার্থক নয়। দুটি বিষয়কে পরিষ্কার করে বলা যাক। মৌখিক ইতিহাস বা 'Oral History' হল ঐতিহাসিক নথিপত্র হিসেবে ব্যক্তিগত স্মৃতিকথার সংগ্রহ এবং তার সংরক্ষণ। এখানে মানুষের অভিজ্ঞতার তাৎপর্যকে গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়। আসলে মৌখিক ইতিহাস হল প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীর বিবরণ এবং সাক্ষাৎকার নেওয়া ব্যক্তির জীবদ্দশায় ঘটে যাওয়া ঘটনা ও অভিজ্ঞতার স্মৃতি বিজড়িত।

মৌখিক ইতিহাসকে এমন ব্যক্তিদের সাথে রেকর্ড করা সাক্ষাৎকারের মাধ্যমে ব্যক্তিগত আখ্যান এবং স্মৃতির পদ্ধতিগত সংগ্রহ এবং ব্যাখ্যা হিসেবে সংরক্ষিত করা যেতে পারে, যাদের অতীতের ঘটনা, অভিজ্ঞতা বা সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্য সম্পর্কে প্রথম জ্ঞান রয়েছে। সরকারি নথিনির্ভর লিখিত ইতিহাসের বিপরীতে মৌখিক ইতিহাস ঐতিহাসিক প্রমাণের প্রাথমিক উৎস হিসেবে কথ্যশব্দ ও ব্যক্তিগত সাক্ষ্যের উপর জোর দেয়।

মৌখিক ইতিহাসের ধারণাটি বেশ কয়েকটি মূলনীতি এবং তাত্ত্বিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির মধ্যে নিহিত। মৌখিক ইতিহাস স্বীকার করে যে, স্মৃতি এবং ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতা, আবেগ এবং দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির দ্বারা গঠিত। কারণ বর্ণনাকারীরা তাদের অতীতের ঘটনাগুলির ব্যাখ্যার উপর ভিত্তি করে তাদের স্মৃতি পুনর্গঠন করে, যা

সময়ের সাথে বিকশিত হতে পারে বা পরবর্তী অভিজ্ঞতা দ্বারাও প্রভাবিত হতে পারে। মৌখিক ইতিহাস তাদের নিজস্ব আখ্যান এবং ইতিহাস গঠনে প্রান্তিক কণ্ঠস্বরকে প্রশস্ত করে এবং তাদেরকে স্মৃতি পুনরুদ্ধার করতে ও সাংস্কৃতিক পরিচয়কে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে চায়।

মৌখিক ইতিহাসবিদরা বৃহত্তর ঐতিহাসিক, সাংস্কৃতিক এবং সামাজিক কাঠামোর মধ্যে আখ্যানগুলিকে প্রাসঙ্গিকভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করেন। মূলত তারা ভাষা, সংস্কৃতি এবং আর্থ-সামাজিক বিষয়গুলিকে বোঝার জন্য জনসাধারণের কাছে উপস্থাপিত করেন। এককথায়, মৌখিক ইতিহাস স্বীকার করে যে, বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তির একই ঘটনার বিভিন্ন ব্যাখ্যা থাকতে পারে কিন্তু ঐতিহাসিক অভিজ্ঞতার মধ্যে জটিলতা এবং বৈচিত্রের একটি সুসংবদ্ধ বোঝাপড়া অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজন।

অতএব বলা যায়, অতীতের মৌখিক বিবরণী ধারণ, প্রক্রিয়াজাত ও সংরক্ষণ করার জন্য ইতিহাস চর্চায় যে গবেষণা পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করা হয়, তাই হল 'মৌখিক ইতিহাস' বা 'Oral History'। ১৯৬৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে প্রতিষ্ঠিত 'Oral History Association' মৌখিক ইতিহাসের সংজ্ঞা দিতে গিয়ে বলেছেন, 'অতীতের ঘটনা সম্পর্কে মানুষের কণ্ঠস্বর, স্মৃতিকথা, বিভিন্ন সম্প্রদায় ও অংশগ্রহণকারীদের বক্তব্য সংগ্রহ, সংরক্ষণ, বিশ্লেষণ ও চর্চা করাকেই মৌখিক ইতিহাস বলে।'

অন্যদিকে, মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য বা 'Oral Tradition or Culture' হল আখ্যানের এমন একটি অংশ যা মৌখিক ভাবে প্রজন্ম থেকে প্রজন্মে যে কোনো ব্যক্তির জীবনকাল অতিক্রম করে চলে যায়। মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যের সংজ্ঞা দিতে গিয়ে অধ্যাপক Jan Vansina বলেছেন, "মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য হল একধরনের বার্তা যা কথা, জ্ঞান প্রভৃতির মাধ্যমে মুখে মুখে পূর্ববর্তী প্রজন্ম থেকে পরবর্তী প্রজন্মে এসে পৌঁছায়"।[১] অর্থাৎ মানুষের মুখে মুখে প্রচলিত লোককাহিনী, ছড়া, গান, বাণী, মুখস্থ বক্তৃতা এবং অতীত ঘটনার ঐতিহ্যবাহী বিবরণ প্রজন্মের পর প্রজন্ম প্রবাহিত হওয়ার ধারা-ই 'Oral Tradition' বা 'Oral Culture' নামে পরিচিত। সাধারণভাবে এসব তথ্যের কোনো লিখিত রূপ থাকে না। অর্থাৎ মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য হল মানব-সংস্কৃতি এবং যোগাযোগের একটি মৌলিক দিক, যা এক প্রজন্ম থেকে অন্য প্রজন্মে কথ্যভাষার মাধ্যমে জ্ঞান, বিশ্বাস, রীতিনীতি এবং বর্ণনার ধারাকে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করে। মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য সমষ্টিগত পরিচয় গঠনে, সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্য সংরক্ষণে এবং বিশ্বব্যাপী বিভিন্ন সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে ঐতিহাসিক অভিজ্ঞতার ব্যাখ্যায় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে। সামগ্রিকভাবে, মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য বলতে লিখিত পাঠের পরিবর্তে কথ্য যোগাযোগের মাধ্যমে সাংস্কৃতিক জ্ঞান, গল্প, আচার এবং মূল্যবোধের সংরক্ষণকে বোঝায়। 'Oral Tradition' বিভিন্ন পৌরাণিক কাহিনী, কিংবদন্তি, লোককাহিনী, গান, প্রবাদ, মন্ত্র, আচার এবং ব্যক্তিগত আখ্যানসহ বিভিন্ন বিষয়কে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করে ইতিহাস রচনায় সাহায্য করে। ইতিহাস রচনার ক্ষেত্রে প্রাইমারী ও সেকেন্ডারী তথ্য না পাওয়া গেলে 'Oral Tradition' থেকে প্রাপ্ত বিবরণী ইতিহাসের সাক্ষ্য হিসেবে ব্যবহার করা যেতে পারে। তবে গবেষককে সতর্ক থেকে বেশ কিছু শর্ত মানতে হয়। এই প্রসঙ্গে ঐতিহাসিক Gilbert J. Garraghan কিছু শর্তের উল্লেখ করেছেন, যা পূরণ করলে 'Oral Tradition বা Culture' -কে ইতিহাসের সাক্ষ্য হিসেবে ব্যবহার করা যেতে পারে।[২]

১) মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যের কোনো উপাদানের অংশ হিসেবে যে বিবরণী পাওয়া গেছে তাতে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন ধারার সাক্ষ্য থাকতে হবে। অর্থাৎ, বর্ণিত ঘটনার অনেকগুলো স্তরের বিবরণ থাকতে হবে।

২) যেসব তথ্য পাওয়া যাবে তার যথার্থতা প্রমাণের জন্য অন্যান্য সমার্থক তথ্যের সঙ্গে তা মিলিয়ে নিতে হবে।

৩) গবেষক যেসব তথ্য তার গবেষণায় ব্যবহার করবেন তা অবশ্যই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হতে হবে এবং ব্যাপক সংখ্যক মানুষের তা জানা থাকতে হবে।

৪) যেসব তথ্য ইতিহাসচর্চার উপকরণ হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হবে তার অবশ্যই সাধারণভাবে বিশ্বাস যোগ্যতা থাকতে হবে অন্তত একটি নির্দিষ্ট কাল জুড়ে। দেখতে হবে কেউ যেন তার বিরোধিতা না করে।

৫) মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য হিসেবে কোনো তথ্য ব্যবহার করতে হলে তার সম্ভাব্য সময়কাল জানতে হবে। কারণ সেটা খুব বেশি প্রাচীন হওয়া চলবে না। Garraghan -এর মতে কোনো ঘটনা ১৫০ বছরের বেশি পুরোনো হলে তাতে তথ্য বিকৃতির সম্ভাবনা বেশি থাকে।

৬) যেসমস্ত মানুষ সমালোচনামুখর তারা মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যের তথ্যাবলিকে অসত্য বা মিথ্যা হিসেবে মনে করেন কিনা, তা দেখতে হবে।

Garraghan - এর শর্ত মেনে মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যের যথার্থতা বিচার করে ইতিহাস চর্চা করলে নিশ্চিতভাবে তা এক নবদিগন্তের সূচনা করবে।

মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য হল মূলত গতিশীল, কারণ সময়ের সাথে সাথে মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রেক্ষাপট পরিবর্তনের মাধ্যমে বিকশিত হয়। আখ্যানগুলির বিষয়বস্তু ও রচনাশৈলী অনেকসময় পরিবর্তিত হতে পারে কারণ সেগুলি সমসাময়িক বাস্তবতা প্রতিফলিত করার জন্য অভিযোজিত হয়। মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য সমাজের মধ্যে বিনোদন, শিক্ষা, নৈতিক নির্দেশনা, সামাজিকীকরণ এবং ঐতিহাসিক স্মৃতি সংরক্ষণসহ একাধিক কাজ করে থাকে।

পটভূমি : মৌখিক ইতিহাসের উৎপত্তি ও চর্চা :

মৌখিক ইতিহাসবিদরা প্রাচীন ঐতিহাসিকদের লেখার মধ্যে তাদের নৈপুণ্যের উৎস খুঁজে পেতে স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য বোধ করেন। মৌখিক ইতিহাসের প্রথম আভাস পাওয়া যায় চীনের ঝো (Zhou) রাজবংশের আমলে। খ্রিস্টপূর্ব ১১২২ থেকে ২২১ অব্দের মধ্যবর্তী সময়ে ঝো-রাজারা রাজ দরবারের তথ্যাবলী সংরক্ষণের জন্য দরবারী ঐতিহাসিক নিয়োগ করেছিলেন।[৩] অন্যদিকে হেরোডোটাস এবং থুকিডিডিস বর্ণনামূলক ইতিহাসের জন্য প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীর বিবরণের ওপর নির্ভরশীল ছিলেন। উক্ত ঐতিহাসিকদ্বয় ইতিহাসের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ঘটনাগুলির অন্তর্দৃষ্টি অর্জনের জন্য সাক্ষাৎকার পদ্ধতির পরিচালনা করেছিলেন। থুকিডিডিস সাক্ষাৎকারের উপর ভিত্তি করে পেলোপোনেশিয়ান যুদ্ধ (Peloponnesian War) - এর বিবরণ নথিভুক্ত করেন। তাঁর মতে, "partly one what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me."[৪] মৌখিক ইতিহাসবিদরা এইসব

প্রাচীন ধ্রুপদী ঐতিহাসিকদের সাথে কিছুটা স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য এবং আত্মীয়তা খুঁজে পান। তারা মৌখিক ইতিহাস শব্দটির জেনেরিক ব্যবহার আবিষ্কার করার জন্য নিরন্তর প্রচেষ্টা চালিয়েছেন। এক্ষেত্রে সমাজের সকল স্তরের মানুষের সঙ্গে পরিচয় এবং শেকড়ের সন্ধান আশু প্রয়োজন, যা বিবর্তনের অনুভূতি ভাগ করে নেয়।[৫]

অষ্টাদশ শতকে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের ধারণা সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করতে গিয়ে স্যামুয়েল জনসন মন্তব্য করেছিলেন, "all history was at first oral, but the term oral history was first used in reference to troubadours and oral traditions."[৬] অষ্টাদশ এবং ঊনবিংশ শতকের বেশ কিছু ইউরোপীয় ঐতিহাসিক এবং দার্শনিক যেমন ভলতেয়ার, মিশেল প্রমুখ তাঁদের গবেষণাকে আর্কাইভস বা লিখিত নথির মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ রাখেননি। পরিবর্তে তাঁরা আখ্যানের স্মৃতিচারণ এবং ঘটনার প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীদের বিবরণের উপর অনেক বেশি নির্ভর করেছিলেন। সেক্ষেত্রে আমরা ধরে নিতে পারি যে, মৌখিক ইতিহাস আমাদের মানবিক চাহিদার সাথে সাথে লেখ্যাগার ভিত্তিক তথ্যের মেলবন্ধন ঘটায়।[৭] যাইহোক, মৌখিক ইতিহাসের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক চর্চা বিংশ শতাব্দীতে গুরুত্ব সহকারে চালু হয়, যখন কলম্বিয়া বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইতিহাসের অধ্যাপক অ্যালান নেভিন্স ১৯৪৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সাক্ষাৎকার পরিচালনা এবং সংরক্ষণের জন্য প্রথম সংরক্ষণাগার প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। এটিই বিশ্বে প্রথম মৌখিক ইতিহাস গবেষণা সংস্থা নামে পরিচিত। একারণেই অধিকাংশ গবেষক মনে করেন 'ওরাল হিস্ট্রি' পরিভাষাটি প্রথম অ্যালান নেভিন্সই ব্যবহার করেন। ইতিহাস রচনার প্রতি অ্যালান নেভিন্সের উদ্ভাবনী পদ্ধতি জোয়ারের বিরুদ্ধে সাঁতার কাটার মত। এক্ষেত্রে তাঁকে সহযোগিতা করেছিলেন কলম্বিয়া বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের তার দুই সহকর্মী Jacques Barzun এবং Henry F. Graff। ১৯৫০ এর দশকের বিখ্যাত পত্রিকা, 'The Modern Researcher' -এ নেভিন্সের উক্ত দুই সহকর্মী, মৌখিক ইতিহাস প্রকল্পকে স্বীকৃতি দেন। তাঁদের মতে, "the written word is still so compelling, however, that these recordings are transcribed and the typescripts filed like books." নেভিন্স যেহেতু পেশায় সাংবাদিক ছিলেন সেহেতু, গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ঘটনাবলী এবং তার সঙ্গে যুক্ত ব্যক্তিদের স্মৃতিচারণের জন্যই মৌখিক ইতিহাসকে গুরুত্ব দিয়েছিলেন।[৮] তিনি সংবাদমাধ্যমে সাক্ষাৎকারের উপর গুরুত্ব এবং নির্ভরতা প্রতিফলিত করে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের উত্থানকে আরও বিশ্বাসযোগ্যতা দিয়েছেন। নেভিন্সের সাক্ষাৎকার গুলিকে শুধুমাত্র লিখিত ইতিহাসের পরিবর্তে বৃহত্তর সমাজবিজ্ঞানের সাথে যুক্ত করা হয়েছে। অর্থাৎ মৌখিক ইতিহাসের চর্চার ঊষালগ্নেই ইতিহাসের সঙ্গে সমাজবিজ্ঞানের অন্যান্য শাখার মেলবন্ধন ঘটেছিল, যা আন্তঃবিষয়ক গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রকে প্রসারিত করেছে।

কলম্বিয়া বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মৌখিক ইতিহাস সংরক্ষণাগারের কার্যাবলী খুব দ্রুত Los Angeles এবং Berkeley-এর ক্যালিফোর্নিয়া বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়কে প্রভাবিত করে। ১৯৫০ এর দশকে তারাও মৌখিক ইতিহাস সংরক্ষণাগার তৈরি করেন। সময়ের সাথে সাথে ইউরোপ ও এশিয়ার অসংখ্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মৌখিক ইতিহাসের চর্চা আরম্ভ করে। যেখানে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র মৌখিক ইতিহাস প্রকল্পগুলিকে রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক এবং সাংস্কৃতিক অভিজাতন্ত্রের উপর আলোকপাত করতে শুরু করেন, সেখানে ইউরোপীয় মৌখিক ইতিহাসবিদরা সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক ক্ষেত্রে তল থেকে দেখা ইতিহাসকে পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠা করেন, যা পূর্বে মূল ইতিহাস রচনা থেকে বাদ দেওয়া হয়েছিল।[৯]

১৯৬০-১৯৮০ খ্রিস্টাব্দ পর্যন্ত এই তিন দশককে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের 'take off' বা 'উড্ডয়নকাল' বলে অভিহিত করা হয়।[১০] কারণ ওই সময় মৌখিক ইতিহাসের বিকাশ ও অনুশীলনে সমগ্র পৃথিবীতে এক উন্মাদনা দেখা দেয়। ১৯৬৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মৌখিক ও স্মৃতিমূলক তথ্যের ভিত্তিতে ইতিহাস গবেষণা প্রসারিত করার জন্য মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে তৈরি হয় 'ওরাল হিস্ট্রি অ্যাসোসিয়েশন'। এর তিন বছরের মধ্যেই মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চাকে আলাদা মাত্রা দান করে ইংল্যান্ডে তৈরি হয় 'ওরাল হিস্ট্রি সোসাইটি' (১৯৬৯)। ১৯৭৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দের মধ্যে 'মৌখিক ইতিহাস সমিতি' ৩০০ টিরও বেশি ইতিহাস চর্চা কেন্দ্র চিহ্নিত করেছিল। ১৯৭৪ সালে কানাডা এবং অস্ট্রেলিয়ায় মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চার জন্য জাতীয় সমিতি গঠিত হয়। মৌখিক ইতিহাসবিদরা ক্রমবর্ধমানভাবে জাতি, শ্রেণি, লিঙ্গ এবং স্থানীয় সম্প্রদায়ের দিকে তাদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেন। মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র এবং পশ্চিম ইউরোপের বাইরে মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চা ক্রমে পূর্ব ইউরোপ, আফ্রিকা, এশিয়া এবং লাতিন আমেরিকার দেশগুলিতে প্রসারিত হয়েছিল। কারণ এইসব দেশগুলি সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক দ্বিধাদ্বন্দ্বের মধ্য দিয়ে যাচ্ছিল এবং সেখানে লিখিত সংরক্ষণাগারগুলি অসম্মানিত শাসনকে প্রতিফলিত করেছিল। অধ্যাপক Paul Thomson -ও তাঁর গবেষণায় মৌখিক ইতিহাসকে 'The first kind of history' বলে অভিহিত করেছেন।[১১]

পাশ্চাত্যের মৌখিক ইতিহাসের বিবর্তনের সঙ্গে তাল মিলিয়ে ভারতবর্ষেও এর ধারাবাহিক চর্চা শুরু হয়। ভারতবর্ষে স্মৃতিনির্ভর এবং কথিত গল্প নিয়ে প্রথম কাজ করেন বিখ্যাত হিন্দি ঔপন্যাসিক অমৃতলাল নাগর। তিনি অযোধ্যা অঞ্চলের ১৮৫৭ সালের মহাবিদ্রোহের স্মৃতি সংগ্রহ করে তা অকাল্পনিক আকারে প্রকাশ করেছিলেন। এটি প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল মহাবিদ্রোহের ১০০ বছর পূর্তি উপলক্ষে ১৯৫৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দে 'গদর কি ফুল' নামে। এরপর ১৯৬০ খ্রিস্টাব্দে তিনি লক্ষ্ণৌ অঞ্চলের সিপাহী বিদ্রোহের সময়কার জীবিত গৃহবধূদের মৌখিক সাক্ষ্য গ্রহণ করে রচনা করেছিলেন 'ইয়ে কোথেওয়ালিয়ান'। ভারতবর্ষে প্রাতিষ্ঠানিকভাবে প্রথম মৌখিক ইতিহাসের লেখ্যাগার তৈরি হয় তৎকালীন নেহেরু মেমোরিয়াল মিউজিয়ামের অধিকর্তা অধ্যাপক বি. আর. নন্দার উদ্যোগে।[১২] মূলত তার উদ্যোগেই একদল তরুণ গবেষক ভারতের স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনে মৌখিক তথ্য সংগ্রহে মনোনিবেশ করেছিলেন।

১৯৬০ এর দশকের পর বেশ কয়েকটি সামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক আন্দোলনের ফলে মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চা গতি পায়। প্রকাশিত হওয়া প্রথম দিকের মৌখিক ইতিহাসগুলি ছিল পশ্চিমবঙ্গে তেভাগা আন্দোলনের ইতিহাস, উদ্বাস্তু আন্দোলনের ইতিহাস, খাদ্য আন্দোলনের ইতিহাস, নকশালবাড়ি আন্দোলনের ইতিহাস, বাংলাদেশের মুক্তি আন্দোলন, তেলেঙ্গানা আন্দোলনে মহিলাদের ভূমিকা ইত্যাদি। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের পাশাপাশি আমরা তেলেঙ্গানার কথা আলাদা করে উল্লেখ করছি এই কারণে যে তেলেঙ্গানা স্বাধীন ভারতের নবগঠিত রাজ্যগুলির মধ্যে অন্যতম, যার সমসাময়িক তথ্য সন্নিহিত রয়েছে ১৯৮৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে প্রকাশিত 'We Were Making History' শিরোনামে। বইটির তাৎপর্যের উপর আলাদা করে জোর দেওয়ার কারণ হল এটি শুধুমাত্র ইতিহাস এবং বিষয়গত সমস্যাকে সম্বোধন করেনি, বরং এর পৃষ্ঠাগুলিতে প্রতিনিধিত্বের রাজনীতি এবং আন্তঃবিষয়ক উপাদানগুলির প্রাসঙ্গিকতার বিবরণ লিপিবদ্ধ হয়েছে। ভারতে মহিলাদের মৌখিক ইতিহাসের সংরক্ষণাগার নারী আন্দোলনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রত্যক্ষ প্রভাব ফেলেছে। ১৯৮৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে

সি. এস. লক্ষ্মীর নেতৃত্বে 'SPARROW: The Sound and Picture Archives for Research and Women' এর প্রতিষ্ঠা ভারতে নারী ইতিহাস সংরক্ষণের গুরুত্ব অনেকাংশে বৃদ্ধি করেছে। আসলে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের তাত্ত্বিক প্রভাব ভারতের আঞ্চলিক ইতিহাস রচনাকে উদ্বিগ্ন করেছে। ১৯৯৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে 'পশ্চিমবঙ্গ ইতিহাস সংসদ' মৌখিক ইতিহাসের উৎস এবং তার পুনর্গঠনের সমস্যাগুলির উপর একটি সেমিনার কার্যপ্রণালী প্রকাশ করে আঞ্চলিক ইতিহাস রচনায় মৌখিক তথ্যের গুরুত্বকে প্রকাশ্যে আনে। ভারতবর্ষে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের কাজ শুধুমাত্র লিখিত শব্দের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ থাকেনি, তা বিভিন্ন চলচ্চিত্রগুলিতেও বারংবার প্রতিফলিত হয়েছে।[১৩] ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক মেসবাহ কামাল মৌখিক ইতিহাসের তত্ত্ব ও চর্চার চারটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ধারার কথা উল্লেখ করেছেন।[১৪] এগুলি হল যথাক্রমে -

প্রথমত, দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযযুদ্ধোত্তর কালে স্মৃতিকে নির্ভর করে জনগণের ইতিহাস চর্চার পুনর্জাগরণ।

দ্বিতীয়ত, ১৯৭০ এর দশকের শেষ দিক থেকে স্মৃতি ও বিষয়বস্তু ভিত্তিক (Post-Positivism) দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির প্রবর্তন।

তৃতীয়ত, ১৯৮০-র দশকের শেষভাগ থেকে মৌখিক ঐতিহাসিককে একজন সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহীতা ও বিশ্লেষক হিসাবে দেখার ক্ষেত্রে দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির পরিবর্তন।

চতুর্থত, ১৯৯০ এর দশকের শেষভাগ ও একবিংশ শতকের গোড়ার দিকে শুরু হওয়া ডিজিটাল বিপ্লবের ফলে সৃষ্ট পরিবর্তন।

একবিংশ শতকের সূচনা থেকেই মৌখিক ইতিহাস ভারতবর্ষে গুরুত্ব পেতে শুরু করে। কারণ ডিজিটাল বিপ্লবের ফলে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের সাক্ষ্য গ্রহণ অনেক সহজ হয়ে যায় এবং এই সাক্ষ্য খুব সহজে সংরক্ষণও করা যায়। আসলে মৌখিক ইতিহাস হল বেঁচে থাকা মানুষের (অবশ্যই যারা ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনার সাক্ষী) নিজস্ব অভিজ্ঞতার সাক্ষ্য সমূহের একটি সুসংবদ্ধ রূপ, যা সংরক্ষিত থাকলে পরবর্তীকালের গবেষকরাও তা ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন।

মৌখিক ইতিহাসের গুরুত্ব:

বিংশ শতকের মধ্যভাগ পর্যন্ত ইতিহাসচর্চা ছিল মূলত সমাজের শাসক ও অভিজাত শ্রেণিকেন্দ্রিক। কিন্তু ১৯৬০ এর দশকের পর ইতিহাস গবেষণার ধারা পরিবর্তিত হতে থাকে। উচ্চবর্গের ইতিহাস চর্চার বদলে শুরু হয় নিম্নবর্গের ইতিহাসচর্চা। এক্ষেত্রে আন্তঃবিষয়ক গবেষণা বা 'Interdisciplinary Approach' প্রাধান্য পায়। বিভিন্ন বিষয়ের সঙ্গে যুক্ত গবেষকগণ যেমন ইতিহাসবিদ, লোকসংস্কৃতিবিদ, নৃতত্ত্ববিদ, ভূগোলবিদ, সমাজবিজ্ঞানী, সাংবাদিক, অর্থনীতিবিদ এবং এক কথায় সমাজবিজ্ঞানের গবেষণার সঙ্গে যুক্ত প্রায় সকলেই তাদের গবেষণায় প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী মৌখিক ইতিহাসের ব্যবহার করে থাকেন। অর্থাৎ মানুষের স্মৃতি যে জীবন্ত ইতিহাস সেবিষয়ে সন্দেহের অবকাশ নেই। আফ্রিকা মহাদেশে এই স্মৃতিনির্ভর ইতিহাস বা মৌখিক ইতিহাস অত্যন্ত জনপ্রিয়। আফ্রিকান প্রবাদ অনুযায়ী "প্রতিটি বর্ষীয়ান মানুষের মৃত্যুর সঙ্গে সঙ্গে একটি পাঠাগার পুড়ে ছাই হয়ে যায়"।[১৫] আসলে মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চা এমন এক প্রক্রিয়া

যেখানে জীবন্ত স্মৃতি এবং অনুভূতিকে গুরুত্ব প্রদানের মাধ্যমে অতীতে সংঘটিত ঘটনাগুলির অধিকতর সত্য অনুসন্ধান সম্ভব হয়। এই প্রক্রিয়ায় যেকোনো উন্নয়ন ভাবনায় সমাজের বাদ পড়া মানুষগুলোকে আলোচনার কেন্দ্রে তুলে আনা হয়, যাতে তাদের অভিজ্ঞতা, মতামত ও দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিকে বৃহত্তর পরিসরে অনুধাবন করে তা কাজে লাগানো যায়। আসলে আমাদের বিদ্যমান সমাজ কাঠামোয় যারা কথা বলার সুযোগ পান না, মৌখিক ইতিহাস পদ্ধতি তাদেরকে কথা বলার সুযোগ দানের মাধ্যমে ইতিহাস পুনর্নির্মাণ করার সুযোগ সৃষ্টি করে। সময়ের বিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে ব্যক্তি, পরিবার, সমাজ, রাষ্ট্র ও আন্তর্জাতিক জীবনের কোন বিষয়গুলো পরিবর্তিত হয়েছে এবং কোন বিষয়গুলো দীর্ঘ সময়ব্যাপী অপরিবর্তিত রয়েছে, মৌখিক ইতিহাস চর্চার মাধ্যমে তা জানা সম্ভব হয়। আসলে মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও সংস্কৃতি ইতিহাস গবেষণা পদ্ধতির যেসমস্ত ক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেছে, সেগুলিকে পর্যায়ক্রমে আলোচনা করা বর্তমান গবেষকদের কাছে অত্যন্ত প্রাসঙ্গিক।

প্রথমত, মৌখিক ইতিহাসচর্চার ধারা লক্ষ্য করলে সহজেই বোঝা যায় যে, আমাদের প্রতিষ্ঠিত লেখ্যাগার ভিত্তিক ইতিহাস চর্চার প্রচলিত পদ্ধতির সীমাবদ্ধতাকে অতিক্রম করে বর্তমানে মৌখিক ইতিহাস জনগণের স্মৃতির আলোকে ইতিহাসের অনেক দিক পুনর্নির্মাণে নতুন পথ দেখিয়েছে। এই প্রক্রিয়াকে অধ্যাপক সুমিত সরকার বলেছেন 'তল থেকে দেখা ইতিহাস', অন্যদিকে অধ্যাপক রণজিৎ গুহ যাকে বলেছেন 'নিম্নবর্গের ইতিহাস'।[১৬] দ্বিতীয়ত, মৌখিক ইতিহাসের উৎপত্তি ইতিহাস গবেষণাকে শহরের গণ্ডি ছাড়িয়ে প্রান্তিক ইতিহাস চর্চার ক্ষেত্রকে প্রসারিত করেছে। এক্ষেত্রে প্রাধান্য পেয়েছে শ্রমিক, নারী, আদিবাসী ও দলিত ইতিহাস চর্চা। বিশেষত, জনজাতির ইতিহাস চর্চার ক্ষেত্রে লেখ্যাগারের চেয়েও বেশি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ জনজাতির প্রতিনিধিদের মনস্তত্ত্ব বিশ্লেষণ, স্থানীয় ভাষা-জ্ঞান এবং ক্ষেত্র সমীক্ষা যা মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও সংস্কৃতির মাধ্যমে নিরূপণ করা সম্ভব।

তৃতীয়ত, মৌখিক ইতিহাস অপ্রকাশিত আত্মজীবনীর মত। অধিকাংশ আত্মজীবনীগুলো লেখা হয় প্রতিষ্ঠিত রাজনৈতিক, সামাজিক ও বুদ্ধিজীবীদের দ্বারা। ফলে সেখানে ইতিহাসের একটা বৃহৎ অংশ অপ্রকাশিত থাকে বা সুপ্ত অবস্থায় থাকে। মৌখিক ইতিহাসের মূল কাজই হল ওইসব অপ্রকাশিত ইতিহাসকে অনুসন্ধান করে বইয়ের পাতায় তুলে আনা। সেক্ষেত্রে মৌখিক ইতিহাস মানব জীবনের অভিজ্ঞতার প্রাথমিক উৎস হিসেবে কাজ করে।

চতুর্থত, আধুনিক ভারতের ইতিহাস চর্চার মূল উপাদানগুলি হল আর্কাইভাল রেকর্ডস, ব্যক্তিগত চিঠিপত্র, নিউজ পেপারস, পিরিয়ডিক্যাল বা পাক্ষিক, ব্যক্তিগত ডায়েরী এবং সরকারি দলিল দস্তাবেজ। অষ্টাদশ ও ঊনবিংশ শতক বিশেষত ঔপনিবেশিক কালের ইতিহাস রচনায় এগুলি অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। কিন্তু বর্তমান পৃথিবীতে ইতিহাসের ওইসব লিখিত উপাদানের জায়গা দখল করেছে টেপ রেকর্ডার, মোবাইল ফোন, ই-মেইল, ইন্টারনেট সোর্স এবং অসংখ্য ডিজিটাল প্রযুক্তি। অর্থাৎ প্রযুক্তি বিপ্লবের যুগে মৌখিক ইতিহাস এইসব ডিজিটাল পদ্ধতিসমূহ ব্যবহার করে বিংশ ও একবিংশ শতাব্দীর ইতিহাস ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের জন্য সংরক্ষিত করে রাখতে সক্ষম হয়েছে। এই প্রসঙ্গে Perks & Thompson তাঁদের

গুরুত্বপূর্ণ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি ব্যক্ত করেছেন। তাঁদের মতে, "Technology which has continued to play a significant role in oral history has brought its own challenges: present day digital tools hold out the promise of new modes of dissemination and new approaches to interpretation, but also thrust on us technical epistemological and ethical dilemmas hitherto unimagine".[১৭]

পঞ্চমত, ১৯৬০-এর দশকের পরবর্তীকালে মৌখিক ইতিহাস সমগ্র বিশ্বে ইতিহাস চর্চার ক্ষেত্রে এক অভূতপূর্ব জনপ্রিয়তা লাভ করলেও অনেক গবেষক মনে করেন এটি হল স্থানীয় বা আঞ্চলিক গবেষকদের কাজ, যারা এলাকার বুড়ো মানুষদের পেছনে লেগে থেকে তথ্য সংগ্রহ করেন। বিশেষত, ভারতবর্ষের স্বাধীনতার পরবর্তীকালে অকথিত ইতিহাস রচনার জন্য বুড়ো মানুষের সাক্ষাৎকার অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয়। ঘটনার প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীরা যেসব বিবরণ গবেষকদের কাছে ব্যক্ত করেন তার সংরক্ষণের মাধ্যমে ইতিহাস চর্চার ভবিষ্যৎ গতিমুখ পুনর্গঠিত হতে পারে। আবার অনেকে মনে করেন, মৌখিক ইতিহাস হচ্ছে ইতিহাস চর্চার একটি নতুন সংযোজন যা সাধারণ মানুষের স্মৃতিকে অনেক বেশি গুরুত্ব দেয়। একারণে বিদগ্ধ ইতিহাসবিদদের কাছে বর্তমান মৌখিক ইতিহাসচর্চা তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ও জনপ্রিয় হয়ে উঠেছে।

ষষ্ঠত, একটি নির্দিষ্ট ঘটনা বা সময়কালের একাধিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি একত্রিত করার মাধ্যমে মৌখিক ইতিহাসবিদরা ইতিহাসের জটিলতাগুলি উন্মোচন করতে পারেন, যা আধুনিক ইতিহাস চর্চার ক্ষেত্রে অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ।

সপ্তমত, লিখিত ইতিহাস প্রায়শই ক্ষমতার অবস্থানে থাকা ব্যক্তিদের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি এবং তাদের অগ্রাধিকারগুলিকে প্রতিফলিত করে। এক্ষেত্রে মৌখিক ইতিহাস ক্ষমতার অপরপ্রান্তে থাকা, প্রান্তিক গোষ্ঠী এবং সাধারণ মানুষের কণ্ঠকে ইতিহাস চর্চায় উপস্থাপিত করে। উদাহরণস্বরূপ বলা যায়, ভারত বিভাজনের ফলে যে উদ্বাস্তু সমস্যার উদ্ভব হয় সেইসব উদ্বাস্তু পরিবারের বংশধরদের অভিজ্ঞতাকে ধারণ করে তারা যে চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হয়েছিল সেবিষয়ে মৌখিক ইতিহাস আলোকপাত করে।

অষ্টমত, সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্য সংরক্ষণে মৌখিক ইতিহাস গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে। আমাদের সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্য, ভাষা, আচার-অনুষ্ঠান এবং অনুশীলনগুলিকে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করে মৌখিক ইতিহাস বিভিন্ন সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে সম্প্রীতি রক্ষা করে এবং ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের কাছে তা প্রেরণ করে।

নবমত, মৌখিক ইতিহাসের একটি রূপান্তর মূলক দিক হল অফিসিয়াল আখ্যান এবং ঐতিহাসিক কল্পকাহিনীকে চ্যালেঞ্জ করার ক্ষমতা। এক্ষেত্রে মৌখিক ইতিহাস নিপীড়ন, প্রতিরোধ এবং স্থিতিস্থাপকতার সাক্ষ্য রেকর্ড করার মাধ্যমে লুকানো ইতিহাসগুলিকে আলোকিত করে।

দশমত, মৌখিক ইতিহাস বিভিন্ন গবেষক, সামাজিক সংস্থা এবং সাংস্কৃতিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের মধ্যে আন্ত:বিষয়ক সহযোগিতা ও অংশীদারিত্বের মাধ্যমে গবেষণার ফাঁকগুলি সমাধান করতে পারে। মৌখিক ইতিহাস শুধুমাত্র বর্তমান প্রজন্ম নয়, ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের জন্য একটি অর্থবহ উত্তরাধিকার রেখে যেতে পারে।

এককথায়, মৌখিক ইতিহাস শুধুমাত্র প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক ইতিহাস চর্চার মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ নেই, এটি বৃহত্তর

জনসমাজের ক্ষমতায়নের প্রক্রিয়াও বটে। তাদের কাছে অতীতকে স্মরণ করা এবং এর পুনর্ব্যাখ্যা করার প্রক্রিয়াটি অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। কেননা এর মধ্য দিয়ে শুধু ব্যাক্তি বিশেষ নয়, বিভিন্ন সামাজিক-গোষ্ঠী বা জনজাতির মানুষেরও ক্ষমতায়ন ঘটে। উদাহরণস্বরূপ বলা যায়, অতি সম্প্রতি জনজাতির মানুষের মানবাধিকার লঙ্ঘন বা ভূমির ওপর অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠার প্রক্রিয়া অথবা যুদ্ধ পরবর্তী ট্রাইব্যুনালের সাক্ষ্যে মৌখিক ইতিহাস গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা নিয়েছে। এমনকি ১৯৯৭ সালে কানাডার সুপ্রিম কোর্টও তার এক নির্দেশনামায় উল্লেখ করেছিলেন, "On an equal footing with the types of historical evidence that courts are familiar with".[১৮]

মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও ঐতিহ্যের সীমাবদ্ধতা ও চ্যালেঞ্জসমূহ :

যদিও মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও ঐতিহ্য ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতা, দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি এবং সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্যের মূল্যায়নের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হাতিয়ার কিন্তু এটি সীমাবদ্ধতা ও সমালোচনার ঊর্ধ্বে নয়। 'মানুষের স্মৃতি কতখানি নির্ভরযোগ্য'- এবিষয়ে অসংখ্য গবেষক ও ঐতিহাসিক একাধিক প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন। তাদের মতে, মানুষ অতীতের কোনো ঘটনাকে ইচ্ছাকৃতভাবে বিকৃত করতে পারে বা স্বল্পকথন বা অতিকথন করতে পারে। কারণ মানুষের সহজাত প্রবৃত্তি হল তাদের জীবনে অপ্রীতিকর ঘটনাকে এড়িয়ে যাওয়া। স্বাভাবিকভাবেই এক্ষেত্রে ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনার বাস্তবতার যথাযথ প্রতিফলন নাও ঘটতে পারে।[১৯] অতীতের ঘটনাগুলির স্মৃতি এবং ব্যাখ্যা সময়ের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বিকৃত হতে পারে। এছাড়াও মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও ঐতিহ্য ইতিহাস গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রে একাধিক চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হয়েছে।

প্রথমত, মৌখিক ইতিহাসের সাক্ষাৎকারগুলি প্রকৃতপক্ষে কী ঘটেছিল তার সুনির্দিষ্ট বিবরণের পরিবর্তে অনেক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ঘটনাকে লাভ-ক্ষতির নিজস্ব অঙ্কে চাপা দেওয়া হতে পারে। অনেক সময় বর্ণনায় ফাঁক বা অসঙ্গতি থাকতে পারে। বর্ণনাকারীদের ব্যাখ্যা তাদের নিজস্ব বিশ্বাস, মূল্যবোধ এবং অভিজ্ঞতার দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হতে পারে। বর্ণনাকারীরা এমনভাবে ঘটনাগুলিকে উপস্থাপন করতে পারেন যা অতীতে তাদের কাঙ্খিত বোঝাপড়ার সাথে সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ নয়। এক্ষেত্রে ইতিহাসের বাস্তবতা প্রতিফলিত নাও হতে পারে।

দ্বিতীয়ত, মৌখিক সাক্ষ্যকে লেখ্যরূপে উপস্থাপনের ক্ষেত্রে ভিন্নতা তৈরি হতে পারে। আবার সাক্ষ্যদাতা ও সাক্ষ্যগ্রহিতার ক্ষমতা ও সম্পর্ক ঘটনার বিবরণকে প্রভাবিত করতে পারে।

তৃতীয়ত, অধ্যাপক Alessandro Porelli –র মতে, 'মৌখিক ইতিহাস প্রণয়ন খুব সহজ কাজ নয়। কারণ কথা বলার সময় মানুষ অনেক ক্ষেত্রে সম্পূর্ণ বাক্য বলেনা অথবা পুনরুক্তি করেন, আবার পুনরুক্তি করার সময় আগের কিছু কথা বাদ দিয়ে বলেন।'[২০] আসলে মানুষ কখনো কখনো একই কথা বারবার বলেন, আর কথা বলার সময় সময়ানুক্রমে বলেন না। স্মৃতি থেকে কথা বলার সময় তারা অনেক সময় দ্বিধাগ্রস্ত থাকেন আবার কখনো কখনো ভুল নাম বলেন, যা ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনাকে বিকৃত করতে পারে।

চতুর্থত, মৌখিক ইতিহাসের আরেকটি সীমাবদ্ধতা হল এটি মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য এবং সাংস্কৃতিক জ্ঞানের ব্যাখ্যার সাথে সম্পর্কিত, যা এক প্রজন্ম থেকে পরবর্তী প্রজন্মে গল্প, পৌরাণিক কাহিনী এবং ঐতিহ্যের স্থানান্তরকে পুনর্ব্যাখ্যা করে। এক্ষেত্রে সময়ের ভিন্নতায় ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনার নিরপেক্ষতা ক্ষুন্ন হতে পারে।

পঞ্চমত, মৌখিক ইতিহাসের তথ্য প্রেরণের প্রক্রিয়া অত্যন্ত ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ। যেহেতু মানুষ বিভিন্ন আর্থ-সামাজিক পরিবর্তনের মধ্য দিয়ে যায়, সেহেতু মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যগুলি প্রেরণের ক্ষেত্রে ভুল হতে পারে। মৌখিক ইতিহাসের নির্ভরযোগ্যতা এবং সম্পূর্ণতা তখনই ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয় যখন তথ্য ট্রান্সমিশনের ক্ষেত্রে ফাঁক দেখা দেয়।

ষষ্ঠত, মৌখিক ইতিহাসের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ চ্যালেঞ্জ হল ভাষার অদক্ষতা। সাক্ষাৎকারী এবং যিনি সাক্ষাৎকার দিচ্ছেন এই দুজনের মধ্যে শব্দের প্রকৃত অর্থ বোঝার দক্ষতা না থাকলে প্রকৃত ইতিহাস নিরূপণ করা সম্ভব নয়। ভুল ব্যাখ্যা বা ভুল বোঝাবুঝি গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্যকে বিকৃত করতে পারে বা মৌখিক ইতিহাসের সাংস্কৃতিক প্রেক্ষাপটকে অস্পষ্ট করতে পারে।

অন্যদিকে, মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য বা সংস্কৃতিও সমসাময়িক প্রেক্ষাপটে একাধিক চ্যালেঞ্জ ও সমালোচনার সম্মুখীন হয়েছে। এগুলি হল-

১. বিশ্বায়ন, নগরায়ন এবং আর্থ-সামাজিক প্রেক্ষাপটে মানুষের ভাষা পরিবর্তন এবং স্থানান্তর মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যের ধারাবাহিকতাকে সবথেকে বড় চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন করেছে।

২. মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যগুলি পরিবর্তনশীল সামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রক্রিয়ায় আসল ঘটনা, বর্ণনার সত্যতা এবং বিশ্বস্ততা সম্পর্কে একাধিক প্রশ্ন উত্থাপন করে।

৩. বর্তমানে ডিজিটাল বিপ্লবের যুগে মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যের বিকৃতকরণ কোনো কঠিন কাজ নয়। এক্ষেত্রে ডেটা সুরক্ষা এবং ভার্চুয়াল স্পেসে মৌখিক বর্ণনার নৈতিক ব্যবহার সম্পর্কিত উদ্বেগগুলিকে অস্বীকার করা যায় না।

তবে একথা বলা যায়, মৌখিক ঐতিহ্য একটি গতিশীল, স্থিতিস্থাপক এবং বহুমুখী সাংস্কৃতিক ঘটনার প্রতিনিধিত্ব করে যা ভৌগোলিক সীমানাকে অতিক্রম করেছে।

সিদ্ধান্ত ও মূল্যায়ন :

উপরোক্ত পর্যায়ক্রমিক আলোচনার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে এবং প্রাপ্ত তথ্য ও সাহিত্যের পর্যালোচনার পর নিম্নলিখিত সিদ্ধান্ত ও মূল্যায়নে উপনীত হওয়া যায়।

মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও সংস্কৃতি হল একটি পদ্ধতিগত দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি, যা ইতিহাস রচনায় গভীর তাৎপর্য বহন করে। এই পদ্ধতি অকথিত ইতিহাস সংরক্ষণ করে, ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনাকে প্রাসঙ্গিক করে তথ্যের ফাঁক পূরণ করে, অতীত সম্পর্কে আমাদের উপলব্ধিকে সমৃদ্ধ করে এবং অনেক সময় প্রভাবশালী বর্ণনাকে চ্যালেঞ্জ করে, যার শিক্ষাগত মূল্য বর্তমানে শ্রেণীকক্ষের বাইরেও প্রসারিত রয়েছে। মৌখিক ইতিহাস ও সংস্কৃতি চর্চা গবেষকদের সমালোচনামূলক চিন্তাভাবনা, সহানুভূতি এবং আন্তঃবিষয়ক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিকে প্রসারিত করে।

ইতিহাস রচনার ক্ষেত্রে তথ্যের ভারসাম্য রক্ষা করা অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয় বিষয়। তথ্য উপস্থাপন এবং তার সঠিক ব্যাখ্যা ইতিহাস চর্চার ক্ষেত্রে মস্ত বড় চ্যালেঞ্জ। এই চ্যালেঞ্জ শুধুমাত্র মৌখিক ইতিহাসের ক্ষেত্রেই সীমাবদ্ধ নয়। আমরা যে ধরনের তথ্যই ব্যবহার করি না কেন, যদি তার প্রকৃতি সম্পর্কে সচেতন

থাকি, তাহলে ইতিহাসের বায়াস (Bias) কাটিয়ে নিরপেক্ষ ইতিহাস রচনা সম্ভব। ইতিহাস রচনার ক্ষেত্রে তথ্যের ভারসাম্য রক্ষার প্রয়োজনে মৌখিক উৎসের সঙ্গে বস্তুগত উপাদান ও প্রাপ্ত তথ্যাবলী ঝাড়াই-বাছাই করে মিলিয়ে নেওয়া প্রয়োজন।

মৌখিক ইতিহাসের চ্যালেঞ্জগুলিকে সঠিকভাবে নেভিগেট করতে গেলে গবেষকদের নৈতিক, যৌক্তিক ও ব্যাখ্যামূলক পদ্ধতি অবলম্বন করা প্রয়োজন। উক্ত চ্যালেঞ্জগুলির সাথে সমালোচনামূলকভাবে জড়িত থাকার মাধ্যমে গবেষকরা ঐতিহাসিক তথ্য অনুসন্ধানে একটি গতিশীল এবং রূপান্তরমূলক পদ্ধতি হিসেবে মৌখিক ইতিহাসের নৈতিক অখণ্ডতা এবং সামাজিক প্রাসঙ্গিকতাকে উন্নত করতে পারেন।

পরিশেষে বলা যায়, ইতিহাসের সব ধরনের উপাদানের সীমাবদ্ধতা সম্পর্কে যথাযথ জ্ঞান থাকলে নিরপেক্ষ ইতিহাস রচনা করা সম্ভব। এক্ষেত্রে মৌখিক ইতিহাস এবং সংস্কৃতিও ব্যতিক্রম নয়। কারণ বর্তমানে মৌখিক তথ্যের ভিত্তিতে ইতিহাস চর্চা সমগ্র পৃথিবীব্যাপী মান্যতা পেয়েছে এবং ইতিহাস চর্চার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ধারা হিসেবে ইতিমধ্যেই প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। পদ্ধতিগত কঠোরতা এবং নৈতিক অখণ্ডতাকে মাথায় রেখে বর্তমান ডিজিটাল যুগে মৌখিক ঐতিহ্যকে ইতিহাস রচনার কাজে লাগানো যেতে পারে।

Reference:

- Jan, Vansina, 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. The University of Wisconsin Press, USA, pp. 27-28
- Gilbert, J. Garraghan, 1946. *A Guide to Historical Method*. Fordham University Press, New York, pp. 261-262
- Moss, William W., and Peter C. Mazikana, 1986. *Archives*, *Oral History and Oral Tradition: A RAMP Study,* General Information Programme and UNISIST, Paris: UNESCO, part- iii, p. 13
- Donald, A. Ritchie eds. 2010 & 2012. *Introduction: The Evolution of Oral History, The Oxford Handbook of Oral History,* Oxford University Press, UK, p.2
- Starr, Louis, 1977. *Oral History in Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Sciences,* New York: Marcel Dekker, vol- 20, pp.440-463 & *The Oral History Review,* Oral History Association, 1980, pp. 20-48
- Thomson, Paul, 1981. *Britain Strikes Back: Two Hundred Years of Oral History*, Oral History Association Newsletter, Vol- 15, pp. 4-5
- Paul, Thomson, 1978. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford University Press, UK, p. 257
- Nevins, Allen, 1966. *The Uses of Oral History in Oral History at Arrowhead: The Proceedings of the first National Colloquium on Oral History*, ed. Elizabeth l Dixon

and James V. Mink, sept.15-28, pp. 25-37

- Donald, A. Ritchie eds. 2010 & 2012. *op. cit.,* p. 3
- Moss, William W., and Peter C. Mazikana, 1986. *op. cit*., p.16
- Paul, Thomson, 1978. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford University Press, UK, p. 2
- Chowdhury, Indra, 2014. 'Speaking of the Past: Perspective on Oral History'. *Economic and Political weekly*, July 26, 2014, p.40
- ঐ, পৃ. ৪১
- কামাল, মেসবাহ, ২০১৭. স্মৃতি, সাক্ষ্য ও বাচনিক ইতিহাস : সীমানা পেরিয়ে অনুসন্ধান, মহম্মদ নাজিমুল হক (সম্পাদিত) ইতিহাস চর্চায় বাচনিক উপকরন, ইনস্টিটিউট অফ বাংলাদেশ স্টাডিজ, রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ২০১৭, পৃ. ১০-১১
- Perks, Robert & Thomson, Alistair ed. 2006. *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge. London & New York, p. 9
- গুহ, রণজিৎ, ১৯৯৮. নিম্নবর্গের ইতিহাস, আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, পৃ. ২২-৪৬
- Perks, Robert & Thomson, Alistair ed. 2006. *The Oral History Reader*. Routledge, London & New York, p. 12
- Delgamuukw vs. British Columbia Case, dated 11.12.1997, *Retrieved from decisions. ssc-csc.ca,* accessed on 26.06.2024
- কামাল, মেসবাহ, ২০১৭. ঐ, পৃ. ২০-২১
- Porelli, Alessandro, 2006. *What Makes Oral History Different*, found in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, op. cit., pp. 33-35

Bio Profile of the Author:

Assistant Professor
Department of History, Raiganj University
West Bengal, India, Pin – 733134
Email ID: pain.swapan@gmail.com

Emotional Geographies of Archaeological Spaces: Examining an Alternative Hypothesis on the Capital of Ancient Bengal

Biswajit Roy[1], Sanjoy Kumar Sadhukhan[2], and Premangshu Chakrabarty[3]

Abstract

Geography of the past, i.e., Historical Geography, has not been given proper emphasis on solving locational disputes until satellite image processing has provided the keys for reconstructing past landscapes. Some of the eminent historians have raised controversy about the recognition of Nabadwip as the ancient capital of Bengal. Under the paradigm of spatial organization in geography, it is against the laws of location from the standpoint of the non-availability of epigraphic and archaeological evidences as well as the accessibility and connectivity aspects of the past. Adopting the methodology of triangulation of all available conventional historical geographic data sources with the application of geo-informatics, this paper puts forward an alternative hypothesis on the location of 'the city of Nadiyah.' The route by Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji, who invaded the city at the beginning of the 13th century A.D., has been mapped for the perusal of archaeologists and historians along with the river route of Lakshman Sena, who left the city, in connection with presenting the alternative location. The retreat of the Hindu King is a subject of the emotional geography of the past for which Debalgarh, the fort settlement of Nadia might be a place of Dark Tourism with its archaeological remains.

Key Words: *Landscape, Spatial, Geo informatics, Archaeological, Dark Tourism.*

Introduction:

Emotions associated with a place are more than just feelings inspired and cultivated by history and folklore. The cultural and ideological hearts usually evoke strong feelings of reverence with a sense of nostalgia that leads to the preservation of significant architectural relics (Jackson & Rogar, 1983: 94-107), otherwise depleted due to ignorance of the community. It is ethno-archaeology that provides arguments to explain past activity from character, arrangement, and interrelations of place and past events, and emotional geography is one that charters the sensory and affective

qualities of a place (Kearney & Bradley, 2009: 77-94). Recognizing emotion is highly relevant to geography's engagement with heritage while objecting is to explore the centrality of emotion in recognizing and validating the relationships to place (Ey. et al., 2017: 153-168). Debalgarh (23°09' N, 88°39'30" E) is an archaeological space located in the Nadia district of West Bengal, India (Fig:1), which represents the interconnectedness of people to place through historical and folkloristic threads of connection.

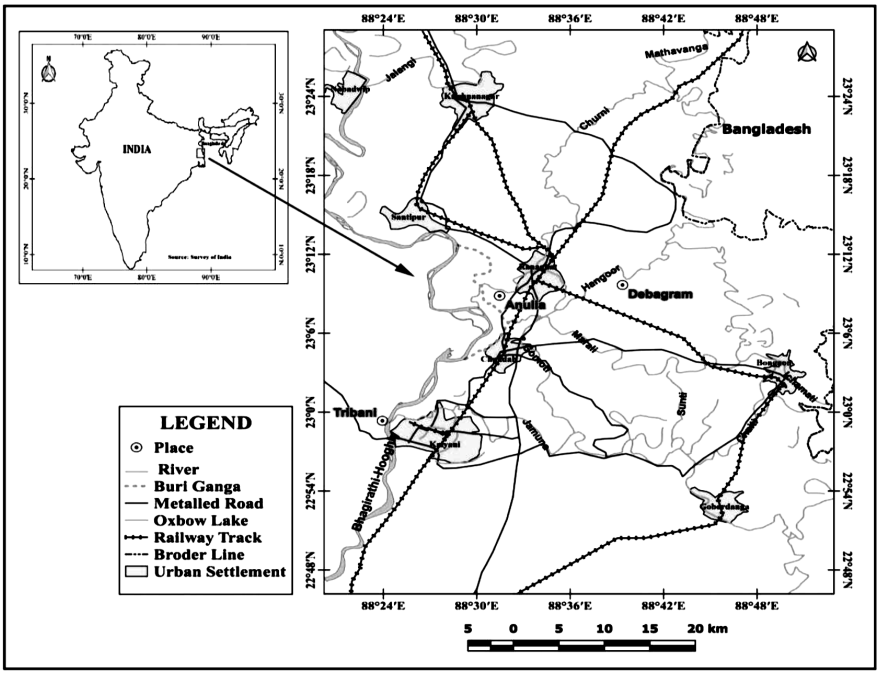


Figure 1: Location map of the study area
(Source: Prepared by the Authors using QGIS 3.22)

Reconnecting with Your Culture (RWYC) is a worldwide mission recognizing attributes of heritage as the vital force of place-making. Heritage of Debalgarh illustrates a holistic complex and interdependent mix of historical-archaeological-folkloristic symbiosis that develops a unique identity of the place in the cultural landscape. Such uniqueness of the place creates new opportunities from a tourism perspective for various emotional interfaces and imitations that harness socio-spatial networking and historic-spatial personality (Martin, 2005). Debalgarh has the capacity to foster emotion in the place, raising collective sentiment for its protection and development. Such emotions are more than just feelings, and emotional geographies conceive emotion as a

physical response consisting of some level of conscious awareness of history and heritage. Place attachment is a reverential and compassionate connection developed between a person and space as a synthesis of land and people in the mindscape by emphasizing connection and connectedness. The continuity of civilization in the place is evident from discrete archaeological findings by local people engaged in primary activities from which emotion emerges among the locals, which is a state of consequences on heritage in this respect that ensures human enlightenment with powerful cultural places.

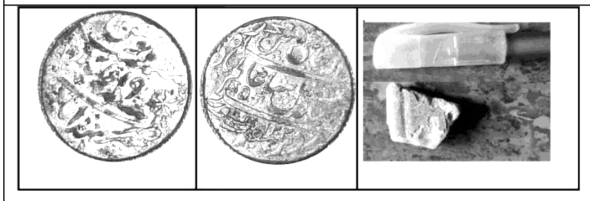
Picture of Evidences	Historical age	Archaeological evidences and features
	Pre Gupta	Pot shards, pottery
	Gupta Period	Gold Coin of Sumudra Gupta, Pottery, terracotta beads, terracotta beads with Bramhi inscriptions.
	Post Gupta (8^{th}-9^{th} Centuary)	Silver Coin (Sahi-jital) of Sri Sthalapatidev, black slipped pottery, architectural materials and brick with floral motif.
	Pala Sena Period	Blacked skipped pottery, terracotta beads, terracotta seals, architectural materials, stone sculptures, and metal objects.
	Islamic Period	Silver coin, laminated bricks, and slipped pottery

Table 1: Evidence of Early Civilization
(Source: Prepared by Authors during field survey, 2022-23)

Debalgarh archaeological space was enlisted in the present name Debagram by the Britishers while enlisting archaeological sites of Bengal (Mukherjee, 2013: 15-29) for the presence of ruins of temples associated with a broken foot structure. Due to negligence and unawareness, the temples have been fully depleted, and only a tower of the fort, among many such previously, still exists within a protected forest. It is from collective emotions combined with logic citing historical evidence that a hypothesis has emerged identifying the place where the ancient capital of Bengal was invaded by Muslim intruders at the beginning of the 13th century A.D. In fact, the current examination of affect and emotion recognizing a dualism within geography has stemmed from the humanistic geographies of the 1970s and 1980s (Finlayson, 2012:1763-1778). There is a deficiency of research on the emotion and effect of such archaeological spaces, and the present research is an attempt to contribute in this respect by recognizing the potency of the Debalgarh-Anulia site. It is noteworthy to mention that the Anulia (23°09'N, 88°31'E) is the place (15 km west of Debalgarh on the bank of river Churni) from where the copper plate inscription of Lakshman Sena was discovered in the year 1898 (Sarker, 1943: 5). Lakshmana Sena was the king (1178-1206 A.D) who fled from his capital city to save himself from the attack of Mohammedan king Bakhtiyar Khilji, who might had come to Bengal from Bkahtiyarpur (the settlement named after him) of Bihar by land route, which is also a geographical puzzle to solve.

Background of the Study:

The identification of the capital of Lakshman Sena in South Bengal, which was the place of attack by the Muslim invaders in South Bengal at the beginning of the 13th century AD, is still considered a research gap in the historical geography of ancient Bengal. It is generally accepted that in the year 1201 (Roy, 1980: 267) or in the year 1202 (Majumder, 1971: 227), Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji invaded the 'city of Nadiyah' and commenced Sultanate reign over part of Bengal. The spatial location of the city of Nadiyah is still a matter of dispute; instead, several historians (Bandyopadhyay, 1981: 288-289; Roy, 1980: 267 and Chowdhury, 2004:51) have identified Nudhiya with Nabadwip, a historical town of Nadia district in West Bengal. Neither any epigraphic nor archaeological evidence, however, could be produced to date in the context, nor does any literary record match such a claim. There are some scholars who were against identifying Nabadwip as the capital of the Sena dynasty and examined the alternative location, namely:

1. Ramaprasad Chanda, (1912, 'Gour Rajamala')
2. Akshay Kumar Maitra, (1912, 'Gour Rajamala')
3. Jadunath Sarkar, (1943, 'History of Bengal')

4. Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay, (1981, 'Banglar Itihash')
5. Anirudhha Roy, (1999, 'Modhyajuger Bharatiya Sahar')
6. Kanailal Ghosh (2013, Sri Gouranga Abirbhav Bhumi: Reprint)

Under such circumstances, an attempt has been made by the authors of this research article to review critically the location of the ancient 'City of Nadiyah' or the ancient capital of Bengal, that was invaded by Bakhtyar Khilji in the beginning of 13th century A.D. with the following objectives:

I) To identify and map the route of advancement of Bakhtiyar Khilji from an accessibility perspective to the capital of the Sena dynasty in ancient Bengal.

II) To reappraise the drainage network that enabled the Sena king to leave the capital to reach East Bengal (present Bangladesh) instead of being captured by the Islamic invaders.

Materials and Methods:

To address the above objectives, especially for developing the route maps Geographical Information System (GIS) has been utilized. Digital cartography has been applied to show the flee path of Lakshman Sena in order to establish the alternative hypothesis on the location of the ancient capital of Bengal in the Sena dynasty. For the present study, the following are the useful materials:

i) Historiographic data: Tabaquat-I-Nasiri written by Minhaj-ud-din in the year 1256, translated by H. G. Raverty (1873: 557-558); "Pavandutam," a masterpiece of Sanskrit literature contributed by Dhoyi, the court poet of Laksman Sena in the 12 th century; "Ramacharitam" by Sandhyakar Nandi edited by Sri Ayodhyanath Bidyabinod (1936:45); are among the major data sources from the available literature.

ii) Epigraphic data: The copper plate of Laksman Sena was discovered from Anulia (Inscription of Bengal by Nani Gopal Majumder, 1929 and Indian Epigraphy by D.C. Sircar, 2017).

iii) Toponymic data: The place names are vital sources in reconstructing the image of the past places. For the present study, the following names are noteworthy (Table: 2).

Place Name	Origin	Significance
Anulia (23°09'N, 88°31'E)	Analgram	Analgram is a name of Buddhist influence; the place was later under the rule of the Sena dynasty, as evident from the presence of a copper plate inscription of Laksman Sena there.
Debgram (23°09'N, 88°39'30"E)	Debgram/ Debal rajar garh	Debagram has been identified as a provincial capital of Bikramraj, who helped Pala king Rampala (1072-1126 A.D) against the Kaivartya revolt (Basu, 1914: 198-199).
Briddhakol (23°08'45"N, 88°31'40"E)	Budhhakol	Near Anulia, Budhhakol is still an ancient settlement by the side of the paleochannel of river Ganga from where several artefacts during Pala-Sena period have been discovered.
Rajar Math (23°03'N, 88°40'15"E)	Rajar Math	Rajar Math is situated in between Anulia and Debgram by the side of the paleochannel of river Marali featured with several large mounds and huge architectural residuals. This site played an important node in the riverine economy and socio-cultural landscape during the Pala-Sena period. Later on, Nadia King Raghabh Ray made a fortified construction during the early 17th century (Roy, 2021:91-113)
Jahaj Ghata (23°03'N, 88°30'"E)	River Anchor	A place of ferry that bears an important spatial location where the ancient Devpala road from the fort of Debalgarh connects the ferry over the ancient flow of river Ganga.

iv) **Historical data:** Among the eminent historians, the contradictions of the following are useful for the present study (Table: 3).

Historian/ Geographer	Opinion in synopsis
Monmohon Chakraborty (1908, Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal)	Vijaypur, the capital of Suhma, is probably another name for 'Nadiyah', which has been mentioned as the seat of government of Laksman Sena, at the time it was sacked by Bakhtiyar Khilji.
Nalinikanta Bhattyashali (1909, Presidential Lecture, XXI Annual conference, Bangiya Sahitya Sammilan)	Questions have been raised on the route of Bakhtiyar Khilji as described briefly in the text of Tabaquat-I-Nasiri, along with the location of Nabadwip as the ancient capital of Sena king so far as the past course of river Ganga doesn't match with the present spatial location.

Ramaprasad Chanda, (1912, 'Gour Rajamala')	Bijay Nagar, some 10 mile west of Rampur- Boalia town of Rajshahi District (present in Bangladesh) is the capital of Laksman Sena. The capital Vijaypur described by Dhoyi has also been identified with this site.
Akshay Kumar Maitra, (1912, 'Gour Rajamala'	Nabadwip is not Bijaypur. The ancient capital of Laksman Sena 'Bijaynagar' was in Debpara village under Godagari police station, Rajshahi district (present in Bangladesh).
Jadunath Sarkar, (1943, 'History of Bengal')	Nabadwip was never the permanent capital of the Sena kings. Merely, it was a holy place on the bank of the river Ganga. But, when Bakhtiyar attacked, King Lakshman Sena stayed there.
Ramesh Ch. Majumder, (1971, 'History of Ancient Bengal')	Same as Jadunath Sarkar.
Nihar Ranjan Roy, (1980, 'Bangalir Itihash: Adi parba')	Nabadwip was the capital of Sena king Laksman Sena and Bhakhtiyar attacked the city.
Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay, 1981, 'Banglar Itihash'	There is no evidence that Nabadwip was the capital of Sena Kings.
Anirudhha Roy, (1999, 'Modhyajuger Bharatiya Sahar')	The city of Nadiyah was a notable centre of trade and commerce as Bakhtiyar entered in the disguise of a horse trader, and no one noticed. But Nabadwip was never a prominent town and trade centre at that time. Nabadwip was not the capital and the place of attack.
Jogeswar Chowdhury,(2004, 'Ekti Bismrita Rajdhani Bijaypur: Nadiah: Nabadwip')	Nabadwip was the capital Bijaypur of Sena king Lakshman Sena and Bhakhtiyar attacked the city. Ballaldhipi at Bamunpukur, Mayapur, is the administrative center.
Abul kalam Mohammad Zakaria, (2007, 'Tabqat-I-Nasiri after Minhaz-I-siraj)	Nabadwip was not the Sena capital and place of invasion by Bakhtiyar Khilji but in the village Naodah of Rajshahi district (present in Bangladesh).
Biswajit Roy, (2021, 2023), 'Debalgarh-Anulia Protnokhetro: Harano ek Rajdhanir Sondhane'.	There is no evidence that Nabadwip was the capital of Sena Kings. From the text of Pabandutam by Dhoyi it is evident that the capital Bijaypur of Sena king Lakshman Sena was much nearer to Tribeni. The text Tabaqat-I-Nasiri represents the city of Nadiyah as a well-protected fortified city where external trade and commerce were traditional. The spatial location and recovered archaeological evidence from the Debalgarh archaeological site suggest its potential as the ancient capital of Sena king Lakshman Sena.

Source: Literature review by the authors.

In the study of historical geographies, archaeological and historical data are vital. Literature triangulation is made for deriving historical data on the location of the 'The City of Nadiyah,' the capital of Sena kings. Minhaj-ud-din in Tabaqat–I–Nasiri (1256) pointed out that in disguise of horse merchants, Muhammad Bakhtyar, along with not more than eighteen associates riding horses, reached the entrance of the palace of the Sena king, without any confrontation regarding which Majumder (1971) expressed doubt with the following words 'It is difficult to believe that even the most ordinary precautions were taken to defend the capital city, especially when the king himself was staying there.' Nabadwip has been identified as the ancient religious centre, but no evidence is there that Nabadwip was ever the permanent capital of the Sena kings rather merely a holy place on the banks of the Ganges, where pilgrims took up their residence for religious belief (Sarkar, 1943:5).

'Tabaqat- I- Nasiri' (1206 AD) by Minhaj- ud- din is the only detailed account regarding the invasion of Bakhtyar Khilji during the reign of Sena king Laksman Sena (described as *Rae Lakshmaniah* by Minhaj). There is no mention of Nabadwip as the 'city of Nudiyah' or as the capital of the Sena king. After conquering Bihar, Bakhtyar attacked Bengal. It is known that he marched from Bihar with his army and suddenly appeared before the 'city of Nudiyah'. Minhaj seems too short and inappropriate particularly in this section of narration describing the route. Bakhtiyar himself arrived desperately with only eighteen soldiers in the disguise of horsemen, the rest of the soldiers were following behind him. Arriving at the main entrance of the city, Bakhtyar did not clash with anyone. All the town people thought of them as foreign traders with materials and horses as foreign trade was a common practice there. Only after reaching the kings palace, conflict began (Raverty, 1873: 557-558). The invasion, headed by Khilji, reached up to the palace of the king through the main gate without any military confrontations is quite surprising.

It was probably because the city of Nadiyah was a wealthy city and a major center of trade and commerce, where merchants from far and wide used to come to trade with their merchandise. Khilji surely took advantage of this disguise, and no attention was given to these horse sellers. However, there is no reference that Nabadwip was ever such a famous trade center of Bengal during the Sena period or even before (Roy, 1999: 131), where the horse-selling merchants could get access without the curiosity of the people of the town.

Now, the pertinent question arises: if Nabadwip was not the Sena capital and there was no conflict between Khilji and Lakshman Sena, then where did it happen? What is the location of the city of Nadiyah? Where might be the famous centre of trade and commerce and capital of Sena in South Bengal? The famous Dutakavya literature '*Pavandutam*' by *Dhoyi*, the court poet of King Lakshman Sena in the 12th century A.D, is considered a great source of knowledge regarding the

location of Sena capital '*Vijaypura*' in South Bengal. Vijaypura might be one of the capitals of Laksmanasena, like his other capitals, such as Lakshanabhati and Vikrampur (Chakraborty, 1908: 285).

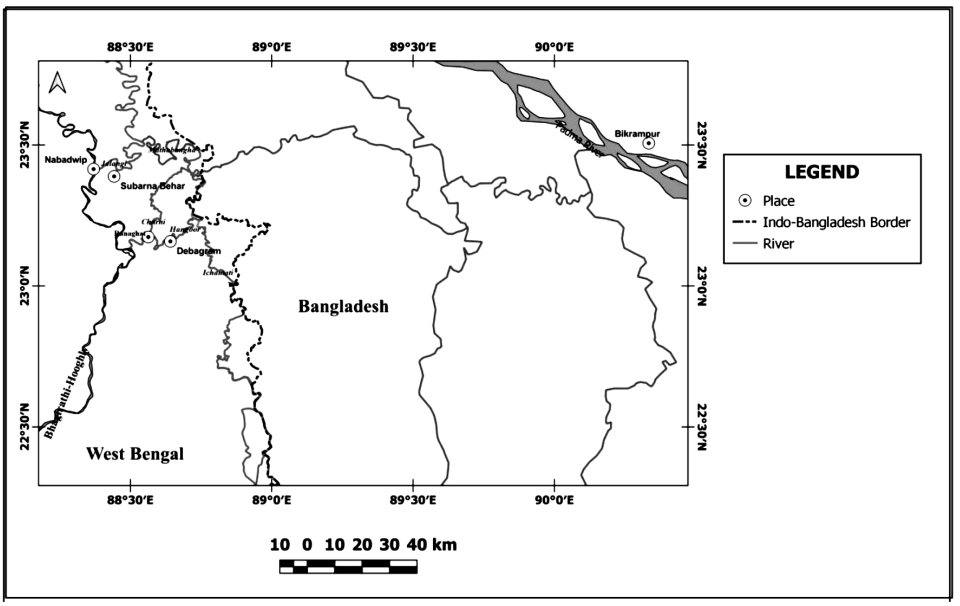


Fig:2: River route of Lakshman Sena fleeing from his capital
(Source: Prepared by authors using QGIS 3.22)

Dhoyi has referred *to* Vijaypura (Chakroborty, 1926) as an administrative capital and military headquarters of great importance. Veteran historians consider Vijaypura to be the same as the City of Nadiyah (Chakroborty, 1926: 2-26; Majumder, 1971:227). On the other hand, some eminent historians identify it with Vijaynagar, about ten miles to the west of Rampur-Boalia, the headquarters of the Rajshahi district, Bangladesh (Chanda, 1912 and Maitra, 1912: 25). But since the Sena capital, as well as the military, headquarter Vijaypura is described very near the Tribeni by Dhoyi, and the city of Nadiyah appears as a traditional commercial center near a port location as well, none of the above assumptions can be regarded as the Sena capital Vijaypura.

The location of the Debalgarh site near Tribeni, archaeological findings related to centuries-old practices of trade and commerce based on the riverine network, and the residual the fort with huge protective measures boost the hypothesis that the site was the ancient Sena capital Vijaypura. The residual of the extensive palace made of decorative sandstone, Laterite blocks, and bricks, surrounded by rampart and entrenchment, evidently proves the existence of a past city

of great importance.

The Route of Khilji to the City of Nadiyah:

The route of Khilji to 'the City of Nadiyah' is another research problem for historical geography. Minhaj has represented an incomplete and surprisingly short description of the route of the journey. Different probable routes of Bakhtyar have been traced by different historians for coming to the City of Nadiyah from Bihar. Khilji must have considered any one of the following three routes to reach the City of Nadiyah.

i. The first route is from Bihar, via Bhagalpur and Munger, crossing the Ganges and reaching 'Gour.' From there, it is possible to cross the Ganges again and reach the east bank to Nadiyah city.

ii. The second route stretches between the forest-covered plateau provinces of Chhotanagpur and Birbhum. Presently it is the road along the present Rampurhat- Bolpur Santiniketan railway line.

iii. In the case of the third route, one can reach the left side of the Ganges by taking the route from Sahibganj. Marching along the west bank of the Ganges (Bandopadhyay, 1981:288-289). The field survey, conducted in the year 2021-22, in search of the itinerary of Bakhtiyar seems quite consistent with the third route depicted.

The most common land route to Bengal from Bihar and Northern India is the Grand Trunk Road, which has been in use since the Maurian period. This ancient land route is also considered one of the oldest roads in the world. The road extends from east Bengal through Delhi, North India, and Northwest frontier provinces to Kabul. It seems quite impossible for a Turkish warrior like Khilji to enter ancient India without this land route. Most probably, this was the reason why the route was chosen to enter the 'City of Nadiyah' from Bihar; he might have proceeded along the Grand Trunk road to the western bank of Ganga at Tribeni near Adi-Saptagrama.

As it was an ancient and widely used road, the arrival of Khilji's forces in this way might upset the military geographical conceptions of Lakshman Sena. It is also possible that the Sena military concentration was waiting for the advancement of Khilji's forces on the way across the '*Kajangala*' at Chhotanagpur. Probably, Khilji marched with the advanced force of selected warriors, leaving the main force near Adisaptagrama -Tribeni. The camping site was at the bank of Saraswati and the tomb of Zafar Khan Gazi, a Muslim religious site of the antiquity of the early 13th century, which is evidence of an Islamic base in the area where the main troops camped. He advanced through the west bank of the Ganges near the Sukhsagar- Chakdaha region, as

there was ferry as evident toponymic data available. The place name 'Jahaj ghata' (literally, the port for the ships), bears the evidence of the ancient Ganga ferry crossing. Just on the other side of this location, an ancient road named 'Devpala road' leads straight to the ruined fort of the Debalgarh, where the hypothesis of its presence as the Sena capital- the City of Nadiyah has been strengthened. Devpala was a legendary King of the Pala dynasty in Bengal who ruled the region before the rise of Senas.

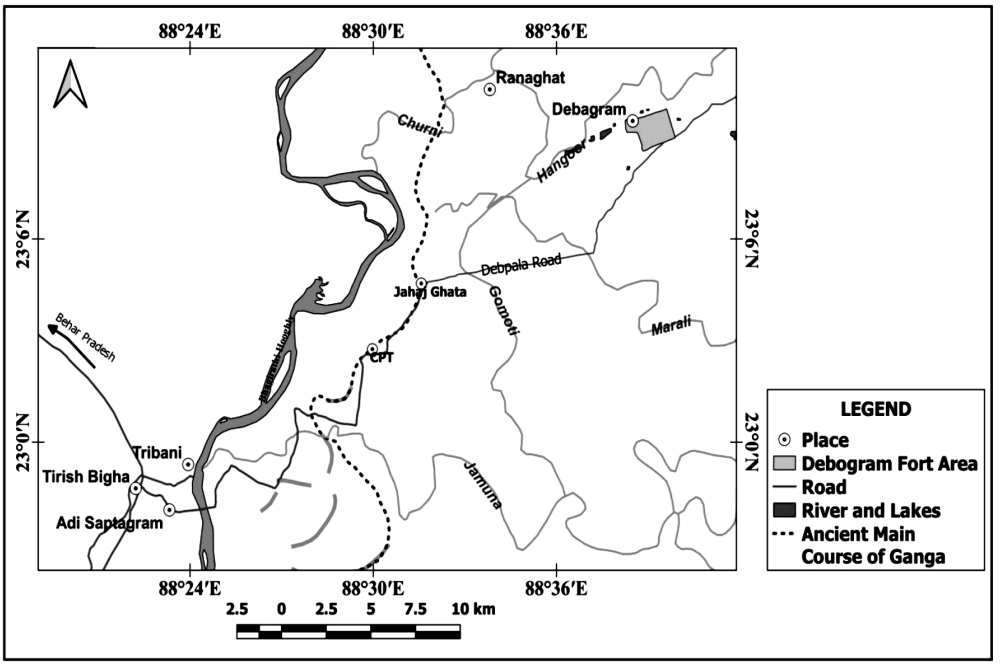


Fig: 3: Route of Bakhtiyar Khilji to the City of Nadiyah
(Source: Prepared by authors using QGIS 3.22)

The hypothesis on Nabadwip as the capital of Lakshman Sena is largely based on the story of his escape via river route (Fig: 3), but the study on the past course of rivers, as evident from paleochannel analysis, does not support this hypothesis. The proponent of the hypothesis probably was concerned only with the present course of the river that they found in Survey of India maps, which do not bear the imprints of landscape change, particularly due to the 1865 earthquake. Ancient Nabadwip was located on the eastern bank of river Bhagirathi, while present Nabadwip town is located on the western bank. The past flow of the mighty Bhagirathi is now a paleochannel named Maraganga, flowing west of the eastern railway line, joining Kalna and Katwa. The present town is situated on the flow path of a dried-up river locally called Alakananda,

from which it is evident that there might be the junction of two major rivers in the place as found today where Bhagirathi, the lower course of (Ganga), meets Jalangi. There exists a water body (part of paleochannel) named Alakananda bills, supporting the hypothesis that a river once flowed bearing the name Alakananda in the region. A religious structure named Ballaldhibi, protected by the Archaeological Survey of India, bears evidence of activities of the Sena dynasty in the region. From the structural pattern, it seems that it was originally a Buddhist monastery probably converted into a Hindu shrine on the topmost layer (Bandyopadhyay, 2014: 288-289; Mandal, 2021: 45-47). If Nabadwip was attached by Khilji, this transport layer is very likely not to remain such intact as discovered during excavation.

When Bakhtiyar Khilji attacked and ruined the Sena capital in Bengal (Raverty, 1873), Padma was not the main flow of Ganga. It is only from the 16th century, the main course of Ganga flew through Padma (Mukherjee, 2009 and Rudra, 2019:50-51). Nowhere a description is found on crossing the mighty Ganga by the army of Bakhtiyar Khilji. It is at Devikot on the opposite side of Ganga, where the tomb of Khilji is situated; he camped before his invasion of Tibet. There is a description, however, of his conversion of Lashabati (Sena city) into Lakhnouti (Zakaria, 2007), which lies on the opposite bank of Ganga, considering the origin of Bakhtiyar's journey after destroying the *Mahabihara* (Monastery) of Oudwantapuri. It is evident from such co-incidences that marching of his army from Bakhtiyarpur via the present Delhi road to reach the confluence of Ganga, Jamuna, and Saraswati met is more realistic among the alternatives. In this part, due to the flow regime, the ferry was conducive, and he was probably supported by the local merchants called Subarnabanik, who were deprived and degraded socially by the Sena dynasty; instead, they were rich enough from the business. They acted as a fifth columnist (Sen, 1958), and this internal disruption proved an important factor in the collapse of the Sena rule in Bengal (Majumder, 1971; Sircar, 1982). With their support, Bakhtiyar reached Debalgarh by the use of Jahajghata, a harbor on the past course of Ganga, and marched through the Devpala road, the ancient path that reached Debalgarh. Probably after ruining Debalgarh, his army marched northward for another Sena city called Lakshanabati, where Bakhtiyar formed his capital, changing the name of the city. Devikot is his next destination towards the north, from where he initiated his invasion of Tibet and where he returned after defeat and was finally killed there by his own men.

Ballal Sena revived Hinduism after the rule of the Pala dynasty in Bengal when Buddhism was the royal religion, and Nabadwip might have been the cultural capital of Senas from which the hypothesis of Lakshman Sena escape from Nabadwip to Bikrampur via the river route was developed. But from the ancient flow path of Jalangi, it appears that it was not suitable for a planned escape route for an eminent war strategist like Lakshman Sena. According to history,

Lakshman Sena was a warrior king who won a number of battles from his youth to save the sovereignty of Sena kingdom. It is not possible for a king of such stature to stay in a place without fortification and escape route instead of being aware on advancing Turki troop under notorious Bakhtiyar Khilji. The geographical aspects of river dynamics and the discovery of a fortified structure at Debalgarh, along with the water course network joining Ichhamoti; clearly indicate that it was none but the Bijaynagar, the forgotten capital of ancient Bengal in the Sena dynasty. The residual morphological structure of Debalgarh Fort, which features a high watch tower in four corners and is surrounded by a deep moat, also suggests its applicability of being a military post that might experience the invasion of Bakhtiyar.

Conclusion:

The location associated with the glories of past civilizations as a subject of geographical analysis presents an interesting connection between geography and history of those places not only to enhance the pride and esteem but also to contribute to the economy by the promotion of heritage tourism that relies on emotions. Emotions differentiate them from ordinary spaces; thereby, they become places of tourist interest. Particularly, domestic tourists would be encouraged to visit the place of the alternative hypothesis on the ancient capital of Bengal that could be established for Debalgarh. Archaeological excavation in the Debalgarh-Anulia area is an immediate necessity to address the entire hypothesis in this context. If the outcome is positive, the approaches of Historical Geography would be vital for rewriting a very sensitive part of Bengal's history. It is the emotion of Bengali people that will drive them to the place for Dark Tourism, and further study could be possible on emotion and affect in heritage management. Archaeological excavation on a large scale with scientific studies on paleo-channels may not only open up the treasures of regional history that could make the community proud but also may contribute to the economy by raising the scope of Dark Tourism since the event of the flee of Hindu king still conceived as a matter of shame. Further research on the archaeological space ensuring community involvement is necessary from heritage protection and capacity-building perspectives. The present study has limitations in analyzing the response of local people by cross-sectional analysis of emotions. Such limitations could be addressed by initiating multidisciplinary research focussing on achieving sustainable development goals.

References

- Bandyopadhyay, A. 2014. *Ballaldhibi o Ekti Prachin Debalay*. Amar Bharati, Kolkata, pp: 168-169.

- Bandyopadhyay, R. D. 1981. *Banglar Itihash*. Dey's publishing, Calcutta, 288-289.
- Basu, N. 1914. *Banger Jatiya Itihash (Rajanyakanda)*. Biswakosh Press, Calcutta, 198-199.
- Bhattyashali, N. 1909. *Nadiyar Itihasher Koiekti Somasya*. Prabasi Patrika, Baishakha, 48-56.
- Bidyabinod, A. 1936. *Ramacharitam by Sandhyakar Nandi*. Dibyasmriti Samiti, Calcutta, 45.
- Chakraborty, M. 1908. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 285.
- Chakroborty, C. 1926. *Pavandutam*. Sahitya Parishat Series: Sanskrit Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, 25-26.
- Chanda, R. 1912. *Gour Rajamala*. Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 87-88.
- Chowdhury, J. 2004. *Ekti Bismrita Rajdhani Bijaypur: Nadiah: Nabadwip*. Nabadwip Puratattwa Parishad, Nabadwip, West Bengal, 51.
- Ey, M., Sherval, M., & Hodge, P. 2017. 'Value, identity and place: Unearthing the emotional geographies of the extractive sector'. *Australian Geographer*, *48*(2), 153-168.
- Finlayson, C. C. 2012. 'Spaces of faith: incorporating emotion and spirituality in geographic studies'. *Environment and Planning A*, *44*(7), 1763-1778.
- Ghosh, K. 2013. *Sri Gouranga Abirbhuv Bhumi*. Ekush Sotok, Kolkata.
- Jackson, R. H., & Henrie, R. 1983. 'Perception of sacred space'. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, *3*(2), 94-107.
- Kearney, A., & Bradley, J. J. 2009. 'Too strong to ever not be there': Place names and emotional geographies. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *10*(1), 77-94.
- Maitra, A. K. 1912. *Gour Rajamala*. Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 25.
- Majumdar, R. C. 1971. *History of ancient Bengal*. G. Bharadwaj & Co., Calcutta, 227.
- Majumder, N. G. 1929. *Inscription of Bengal*. The Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, Bengal, III, 81-91.
- Mandal, M. 2021. *Nabadwiper Itihash o Sanskriti*. Amar Bharati, Kolkata, 45-47.

- Martin, G. J. 2005. *All possible worlds: A history of geographical ideas*. OUP Catalogue.
- Mukherjee, R. K. 2009. *The Changing face of Bengal through the riverine Economy*. University of Calcutta, Calcutta. 98.
- Mukherjee, S. 2013. 'Configuring sacred spaces: archaeology, temples, and monument-making in Colonial Orissa'. *South Asian Studies*, *29*(1), 15-29.,
- Raverty, H. G. 1873. *Tabaqat -I- Nasiri*. Kandahari, 557-558.
- Roy, A. 1999. *Modhyajuger Bharatiya Sahar*. Ananda Prakashani, Kolkata, 131.
- Roy, B. 2021. *Debalgarh Anuliya Protnaskhetra: Harano Ek Rajdhanir Sandhane*. Byond Horizon Publication, Alipurduar, West Bengal, 91-113.
- Roy, B. 2023. *Vuprotnototwer Aloke Debalgarh.* Panchalika Publication, Kolkata.
- Roy, N. R. 1980. *Bangalir Itihash: Adi parba*, Pratham Khanda, Paschim Banga Nirakhsharata Durikaran Samiti, Calcutta, 267.
- Rudra, Kalyan., 2019, *'Banglar Nadikatha'* (in Bengali), Sahitya Sangsad, Kolkata, p: 7.
- Sarkar, J. 1943. *History of Bengal.* B. R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, II, 5.
- Sen, S. 1958. *Bangabhumika.* Eastern Publishers, Calcutta, 133-134.
- Sircar, D. C. 1982. *Pal-Sen Juger Bangshanucharit*. Sahityalok, Kolkata, 132.
- Sircar, D. C. 2017. *Indian epigraphy*. Motilal Banarsidass.
- Zakaria, A. K. M. 2007. *Tabqat-I-Nasiri after Minhaz-I-Siraj*. Dibya Prakash, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Bio Profile of the Author's:

[1]Assistant Professor of Geography, Pijush Kanti Mukherjee Mahavidyalaya, Alipurduar, West Bengal
[2] Guest Faculty, Dept. of Geography, Kanyashree University, Krishnanagar, Nadia.
[3] Professor, Dept. of Geography, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal
Email: dr.pramangshunadia@gmail.com

Myth, Memory, and Identity: A Study of folklore and Nationalism in Southeast Asian States

Denis Vaz

Abstract

This research explores how folklore shapes national identity and influences nationalist movements in Southeast Asian states, addressing the critical interplay between myth and collective memory in constructing state narratives. By analyzing how folklore serves as a vehicle for promoting national unity and cultural pride, this study seeks to elucidate the mechanisms through which folklore informs contemporary nationalist discourse. The primary contention proposed is that the intertwined relationship between myth and collective memory is instrumental in framing national identity, allowing for both the reinforcement of historical narratives and the mobilization of populations around shared cultural symbols. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. Ethnographic interviews with community stakeholders and folklore practitioners serve as foundational qualitative resources, alongside an examination of relevant folklore texts and historical documents. The quantitative aspect is informed by surveys gauging public perceptions of nationalism and identity across various Southeast Asian states, providing a broader context for the qualitative findings. Limitations encountered included accessibility to specific historical texts and variance in local interpretations of folklore, which posed challenges in establishing a consistent framework for analysis. The findings suggest that folklore plays a pivotal role in reflecting and actively shaping national consciousness in Southeast Asia. It was observed that state can leverage narratives rooted in myth to foster a sense of belonging and collective identity, especially during sociopolitical upheaval. Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of folklore as a dynamic component in constructing national identities, revealing broader implications for understanding the interplay between culture and politics in a region characterized by diverse ethnic landscapes and historical complexities.

Keywords: *Collective Memory, Culture, folklore, Identity, Myth, Nationalism, Southeast Asia.*

Introduction

In Southeast Asia, the relationship between folklore, national identity, and nationalism is a compelling and multifaceted topic that warrants careful exploration. This region, known for its diverse ethnicities, languages, and traditions, has witnessed nationalist movements that frequently draw on cultural narratives and myths to cultivate a shared sense of identity. Often perceived as a relic of the past, folklore is a dynamic and evolving element of cultural identity, playing a significant role in shaping national narratives and fostering communal bonds. In an era marked by globalization and technological change, understanding how folklore intersects with nationalism is crucial, particularly in a region with a complex colonial history and ongoing struggles for independence.

Southeast Asia's postcolonial states have often turned to myths and folklore as tools for nation-building, using them to unify diverse populations and articulate visions for the future. Scholars like Benedict Anderson have highlighted the role of shared stories and collective memories in creating "imagined communities" where individuals feel connected despite never meeting. This theoretical perspective provides a valuable framework for examining how folklore influences national identity in Southeast Asia. However, while existing research has explored political movements or cultural narratives in isolation, the interplay between folklore and nationalism remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by investigating how folklore shapes national identity and informs nationalist movements in the region.

The central research problem guiding this study is, *how folklore influences national identity and nationalist movements in Southeast Asia.* In order to answer this question, this study examines the relationship between myth and collective memory, with particular emphasis on its role in constructing state narratives. The research aims to uncover their role in shaping contemporary national identities by analyzing specific folklore narratives. Additionally, it examines how nationalist movements use folklore to mobilize populations and foster unity. Finally, the study evaluates how public perceptions of nationalism are shaped by folkloric expressions and collective memories, employing qualitative and quantitative methods to understand these dynamics comprehensively.

This research holds significant academic and practical value. Academically, it contributes to the literature on nationalism and identity by integrating discussions of folklore, myth, and memory, particularly in a postcolonial context. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers, educators, and cultural practitioners navigating issues of identity and unity in increasingly diverse societies. Furthermore, the study has the potential to inform cross-cultural dialogues and promote

intercultural understanding in a global context marked by rising nationalism and xenophobia.

The paper is structured to address the research problem and achieve its objectives systematically. It begins with a literature review that situates the study within existing scholarship on folklore, nationalism, and identity. Next, the methodology section outlines the qualitative and quantitative approaches used to collect and analyze data. The analysis section explores specific folklore narratives and their implications for national identity across Southeast Asia, supported by case studies that illustrate broader themes. The discussion synthesizes the findings, highlighting how folklore influences collective identity and nationalist movements in the region. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the key findings and their implications for future research and practical applications.

Literature Review

The role of folklore in shaping national identity in Southeast Asia is a testament to the unique cultural context and the power of collective memory. The region's diverse cultures, languages, and histories provide a rich tapestry for examining how folklore influences national identity. Folklore, which includes myths, legends, traditional beliefs, and oral narratives, serves as a cultural remnant and a potent tool for constructing collective identities, shaping memory, and fostering social unity in nations marked by colonial histories and ethnic diversity. As a repository of communal memories, folklore allows societies to navigate their historical evolution and assert their identities in an era of globalization and modernity. Scholars have extensively explored the role of folklore in nation-building processes in Southeast Asia, particularly how these narratives underpin national myths and collective memory. For instance, Anderson (1983) emphasizes how nations are 'imagined communities' formed through shared stories and narratives, which foster a sense of belonging among individuals. Similarly, Ong (1996) and Rosaldo (1986) have highlighted how folk narratives reflect and reinforce power dynamics, socio-political structures, and the experiences of marginalized communities. These studies reveal that folklore can inspire unity and aggregate divisions, especially in multi-ethnic societies where competing narratives vie for dominance. The resurgence of nationalism in Southeast Asia, driven by economic and political changes, has renewed interest in folklore as a tool for cultural revival and resistance. Scholars like Bunnell (2004) have shown how folk traditions are increasingly mobilized in nationalist rhetoric, influencing public policy and educational curricula to cultivate national consciousness. However, while much research has focused on the political use of folklore, there is a pressing need for more nuanced studies on how individual and collective identities evolve through interactions with folklore over time, particularly in digital media and transnationalism. This is especially true in the context of diasporic and cross-border communities, where traditional narratives are both

preserved and transformed, highlighting the evolving nature of folklore in a globalized world.

By identifying gaps in the literature, this review aims to guide future research and deepen our understanding of how myth, memory, and identity converge in the region. The study of myth, memory, and identity in Southeast Asia has evolved significantly over the 20th and 21st centuries. In the mid-20th century, scholars like David Kang examined the historical ties between nationalism and cultural memory, suggesting that local traditions could be harnessed for nation-building (Rangarajan, 2023). This period emphasized indigenous folklore as a means to forge national identity in the wake of colonialism. As Southeast Asian nations gained independence, the focus shifted to reclaiming local histories, with folklore studies highlighting how traditional stories and myths shaped new national narratives. For example, the Meitei people of Manipur redefined their identity through oral histories blending Indigenous and Hindu elements (Vang, 2019) reflecting broader efforts to reconcile colonial histories with contemporary national narratives (Wang, 2018).

In the 21st century, the discourse has expanded to include critical examinations of how folklore intersects with political ideologies and conflicts. Recent studies reveal that state-sponsored narratives can uphold and undermine folkloric traditions, illustrating the dual role of these narratives in reflecting and shaping societal identities. Globalization has further complicated this dynamic, as local folklore increasingly interacts with global narratives, leading to a more prosperous but complex understanding of identity formation. These developments emphasize the enduring relevance of folklore in contemporary Southeast Asian contexts, highlighting the enduring nature of folklore in shaping national identity. Folklore plays a crucial role in shaping collective memory and cultural identity, serving as a medium through which communities articulate their historical experiences. For instance, the Meitei folklore, which blends Hindu and indigenous elements, reflects their colonial past and ongoing societal changes (Rangarajan, 2023). In Thailand, folklore reinforces national identity amid global influences (Vang, 2019). At the same time, the music of indigenous Filipino groups illustrates how cultural expressions can reflect shared histories and moral universes (Wang, 2018). Similarly, the epic narratives of the Miao people demonstrate how folklore preserves history in the face of political change (Brehm, 2018, p. 104-119). However, gaps remain in understanding how these narratives adapt to or resist dominant national discourses, particularly regarding the role of state institutions in shaping folkloric traditions and their impact on ethnic minorities (Mendoza, et al, 2012, p. 457-460). These tensions highlight the need for further research into how folklore influences contemporary identity politics.

Researchers studying folklore, nationalism, and identity in Southeast Asia have employed diverse methodological approaches, each offering unique insights. Ethnographic methods have

been particularly valuable in uncovering local narratives and practices, revealing how folklore is an archive for collective memory and socio-political identity (M Mora, 2005). On the other hand, historical analyses critique official histories that often marginalize complex local identities, as seen in Indonesia's decolonization process studies. Comparative approaches have enabled scholars to examine how regional dynamics influence national identities, while literary analyses explore how folklore is represented in literature, revealing tensions in national identity formation (Fairlee, 2011, p. 329-330) (Yuan J et al., 2012, p. 119-149). Despite these contributions, gaps remain in understanding how folklore adapts to modernity, particularly in rapidly changing political landscapes. Future interdisciplinary research integrating performance studies and cultural sociology could provide deeper insights into these dynamics (Mora, 2005). Theoretical perspectives on folklore and nationalism in Southeast Asia have enriched our understanding of this complex relationship. Constructivist theory, for example, hypothesizes that national identity is socially constructed through shared narratives, myths, and memories (Rangarajan, 2023). This framework is beneficial in analyzing how Southeast Asian societies use folklore to assert cultural uniqueness and national solidarity (Vang, 2019). Narrative theory further emphasizes the role of storytelling in shaping collective memory, highlighting how folklore can glorify a nation's past while serving political agendas (Wang, 2018). Memory studies, meanwhile, focus on how traumatic histories shape national consciousness, with cultural narratives binding communities together in opposition to external threats (Fairlee, 2011, p. 329-330). These theoretical approaches reveal significant gaps in the literature, particularly regarding the impact of globalization on local folklore and identity politics, pointing to the need for further research.

This literature review has explored the relationship between folklore, nationalism, and identity in Southeast Asia, emphasizing how myths and collective memories shape national identity. Folklore is a cultural remnant and a dynamic tool for constructing social narratives and political ideologies. Scholars like Anderson and Ong have demonstrated how folklore fosters collective consciousness, articulating diverse communities' shared aspirations and historical experiences. However, gaps remain in understanding how folklore operates in diasporic contexts and adapts to globalization. Future research should explore these areas, employing interdisciplinary approaches to deepen our understanding of Southeast Asia's evolving interplay between myth, memory, and identity.

1. The Interplay of Myth and Collective Memory in Southeast Asian Nationalism

The intricate interplay of myth and collective memory serves as a fundamental component of nationalism in Southeast Asia, where folk narratives not only reflect cultural heritage but also actively shape contemporary national identities. Myths in this context function as vessels

of historical consciousness, enabling communities to anchor their identity in a shared past that goes beyond individual experiences. This communal memory is essential in fostering solidarity among diverse ethno linguistic groups, particularly in a postcolonial context burdened with the legacies of fragmentation and external domination. Folklore, thus, acts as a unifying force that reinforces a standard narrative, providing a framework within which individuals can locate their identities and align their aspirations with national goals. The capacity of myth to adapt to changing circumstances further enhances its relevance as states manipulate these narratives to activate support for nationalist endeavors. This adaptation is particularly observable during socio-political turmoil, when governments may invoke historical tales of heroism, sacrifice, or cultural superiority to inspire patriotism and resilience among their populations. In light of this, it is critical to analyze how specific folklore narratives are harnessed to articulate national identity across various Southeast Asian contexts. For instance, stories of national heroes who embody the ideals of bravery and justice are frequently cited during political campaigns or national celebrations, becoming emblematic of the virtues a state seeks to cultivate among its populace. Such mythical figures serve as idealized representations of national character and as cultural touchstones that reinforce narratives of unity in diversity. Therefore, blending myth and memory facilitates a collective understanding of belonging to a nation, concretizing the drives toward national cohesion amidst diverse cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, the politicization of folklore in this region underscores the mechanisms through which specific memories, often sidelining contradictory or marginalized narratives that do not align with the dominant national identity. This selective memory can lead to the construction of an idealized national past that simplifies complex histories, thereby shaping public perceptions of nationhood and identity. Nation-states often engage in what can be termed "mythmaking," utilizing folklore to anoint specific historical interpretations as the "truth" while delegitimizing others. This process is particularly salient in countries where the collective memory is fraught with conflict or division, as governments seek to foster national alignment and inhibit dissenting voices. The implications of this interplay manifest in the socio-political landscapes of Southeast Asia, where individuals increasingly express their identities through the lens of national folklore, reflecting both pride and uncertainty. The resurgence of interest in local myths and legends serves simultaneously as both a cultural affirmation and a response to globalization, which poses threats to traditional identities. Thus, contemporary national movements often leverage folklore to galvanize popular support, frame collective goals, and challenge colonial narratives that have historically marginalized indigenous voices.

Further complicating this framework is the role of transnational cultures, which interact with local folklore, blending mythic elements from different origins and creating hybrid cultural identities. This phenomenon illustrates how folklore is not static but a fluid element that evolves in response to internal and external influences. In this light, globalization does not necessarily diminish the significance of local folklore; instead, it presents opportunities for reshaping and revitalizing national stories, allowing for a more inclusive approach to identity that encompasses the multifaceted nature of Southeast Asian societies. In conclusion, exploring the interplay between myth and collective memory within the context of Southeast Asian nationalism reveals its profound impact on national identity construction. The strategic use of folklore as a tool for national cohesion brings to the forefront questions regarding authenticity, representation, and the inherent dynamics of power in shaping cultural narratives. By revealing how states wield folklore to foster nationalist sentiment, this analysis contributes significantly to a broader understanding of how culture and politics intertwine in the intricate fabric of Southeast Asian identities, providing key insights for future research into the connections between cultural traditions and contemporary nationalisms.

1.1. Defining Myth and Memory: Theoretical Frameworks

The interplay between myth and collective memory is a cornerstone of nationalism in Southeast Asia, where folk narratives not only reflect cultural heritage but also actively shape modern national identities. Myths serve as vessels of historical consciousness, allowing communities to root their identity in a shared past that surpasses individual experiences. Folklore, in this sense, acts as a unifying force, providing a standard narrative that helps individuals connect their identities to national goals. The adaptability of myths to changing circumstances further enhances their relevance, as states often reshape these narratives to rally support for nationalist causes.

To understand this dynamic, examining how specific folklore narratives articulate national identity across Southeast Asia is important. For example, stories of national heroes—symbolizing bravery and justice—are frequently highlighted during political campaigns or national celebrations. These figures become cultural symbols, embodying the virtues a nation seeks to promote and reinforce narratives of unity amid diversity. By blending myth and memory, communities develop a shared sense of belonging, strengthening national cohesion despite cultural differences. This sense of belonging and shared identity is a testament to the unifying power of folklore in Southeast Asia. However, the politicization of folklore also reveals how selectively curate memories, often sidelining narratives that challenge the dominant national identity. This selective memory can create an idealized version of the past, simplifying complex histories and shaping public perceptions of nationhood. Governments engage in what might be called ‘mythmaking,’ using

folklore to legitimize specific historical interpretations while marginalizing others. This process is especially significant in countries with histories of conflict or division, where states aim to foster national unity and suppress dissenting voices. The impact of this dynamic is evident in Southeast Asia, where individuals increasingly express their identities through the lens of national folklore, reflecting both pride and ambivalence. Adding to this complexity is the influence of transnational cultures, which interact with local folklore to create hybrid identities. This phenomenon shows that folklore is not static but evolves in response to internal and external influences. Rather than diminishing the importance of local folklore, globalization offers opportunities to reshape and revitalize national stories, allowing for a more inclusive approach to identity that reflects the diversity of Southeast Asian societies.

In conclusion, the relationship between myth and collective memory plays a significant role in shaping national identity in Southeast Asia. The strategic use of folklore as a tool for national unity raises important questions about authenticity, representation, and power dynamics in cultural narratives. By examining how states use folklore to promote nationalism, this analysis contributes to a broader understanding of the intersection between culture and politics in Southeast Asia. It also underscores the need for further research into how cultural traditions influence contemporary forms of nationalism, given the evolving role of folklore in shaping national identity.

1.2. Folklore as a Vehicle for National Identity Construction

Folklore plays a crucial role in shaping national identity, especially in Southeast Asia, where cultural narratives and nationalistic sentiment are deeply intertwined with diverse traditions and practices. As previous sections have shown, the connection between myth and collective memory is key to understanding how these stories highlight shared historical experiences and create a sense of belonging among different ethnic groups. In many Southeast Asian societies, folklore is more than just a collection of tales—it is a living repository of values, customs, and historical narratives that reflect the nation's social fabric. These stories preserve the collective past and embody ideals and aspirations that resonate with modern national identity. For example, national epics and legends provide a foundational mythology that legitimizes the nation-state, weaving various cultural threads into a unified identity celebrated through education, media, and public discourse. This way, folklore acts as a cultural glue, binding individuals together under a shared historical narrative.

To understand how folklore shapes national identity, it is important to examine the role of state in promoting specific narratives. Governments often use folklore as a strategic tool to foster patriotism and unity, particularly during times of crisis or social change. State leaders shape

public perceptions of the nation's history and culture by emphasizing certain myths and stories, creating a collective memory that reinforces a dominant national identity. For instance, rituals, ceremonies, and commemorative events centered on folklore celebrate cultural heritage and rally citizens around the themes of resilience, unity, and pride. These performances create emotional connections among individuals, turning abstract ideas of citizenship into tangible experiences that strengthen loyalty to the nation. However, the role of folklore in national identity construction is not limited to state efforts. Local communities also play an active part in reinterpreting and revitalizing folklore in response to contemporary challenges. In Southeast Asia, where globalization threatens traditional practices, communities often revive and adapt folklore to assert their cultural identity in an increasingly homogenized world. These adaptations can strengthen local identities while aligning with national narratives, highlighting the complex relationship between local cultures and national identities. Folklore thus becomes a space for negotiation, where the preservation of cultural heritage coexists with the desire for national belonging. This dynamic shows how folklore reflects collective historical memories and the ongoing tensions within evolving national identities.

The enduring power of folklore lies in its ability to resonate across generations, maintaining a sense of historical continuity essential for national identity. As stories are retold and adapted, they remain relevant while preserving core elements that give them meaning. Storytelling becomes a dynamic practice through which individuals negotiate their identities—not only about their regional or ethnic backgrounds but also in connection to the broader national identity. Additionally, as folklore is shared and disseminated, it fosters intercultural dialogue and promotes understanding among diverse groups within the nation, contributing to a more inclusive sense of identity. The role of folklore in shaping national identity is particularly evident in education, where folklore is often integrated into history and literature curriculums. These educational practices reinforce the importance of folklore in teaching values of patriotism and social cohesion to younger generations. Doing so ensures the continuity of myths central to the national narrative, elevating folklore from mere entertainment to a vital component of national consciousness.

1.3. Case Studies: folklore and Nationalism in Specific Southeast Asian States

The relationship between folklore and nationalism in Southeast Asia can be understood through specific case studies that highlight the interplay of myth, memory, and national identity. These examples demonstrate how folklore is not just a reflection of cultural heritage but also a dynamic tool for shaping national narratives and fostering unity.

1.3.1. Indonesia: The Ramayana Epic and National Unity

The Ramayana, one of the world's great epics, is central to Indonesian culture, particularly in Java, Bali, and other regions where Hinduism and traditional animist beliefs have historically flourished. In Indonesia, the Ramayana is not merely a religious or literary text but a living tradition adapted and reinterpreted to reflect local values, histories, and identities. Its role in shaping national unity and identity is profound, as it serves as a cultural bridge that connects diverse ethnic and religious groups under a shared narrative of heroism, morality, and resilience. The Ramayana was introduced to Indonesia through Indian traders and scholars around the first millennium CE, during the period of Indian cultural influence in Southeast Asia (Mahulikar, 2002). Over time, the epic was localized, blending with indigenous traditions and beliefs to create uniquely Indonesian versions of the story. For example, in Java, the Ramayana was adapted into the Kakawin Ramayana, a poetic rendition written in Old Javanese during the 9th century. This adaptation incorporated Javanese cultural elements, such as the importance of harmony (*rukun*) and the integration of local deities and spirits into the narrative. The Ramayana's themes of loyalty, duty, and the triumph of good over evil resonated deeply with Indonesian audiences, making it a cornerstone of cultural expression. Its stories were performed in traditional art forms such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), *wayang wong* (dance drama) and *sendratari* (ballet), which became vehicles for transmitting moral and cultural values across generations (Bagaskara et al., 2024).

One of the most significant ways the Ramayana has been used to foster national unity is through *wayang kulit*, the traditional shadow puppet theatre. *Wayang kulit* performances are not just entertainment but also a form of cultural education and spiritual reflection. The puppeteer (*dalang*) narrates the story, accompanied by a *gamelan* orchestra, and uses intricately crafted leather puppets to bring the epic to life. The *dalang* often adapts the story to address contemporary issues, making the Ramayana relevant to modern audiences. The Indonesian government has actively promoted *wayang kulit* as a national art form, recognizing its potential to unify the country's diverse population. For example, during the Sukarno era (1967–1945), *wayang kulit* was used to promote the ideals of the newly independent nation, such as unity (*persatuan*) and social justice. The government sponsored performances in rural and urban areas, ensuring the Ramayana reached a wide audience. By framing the epic as a symbol of national identity, Indonesia created a shared cultural narrative that transcended regional and religious differences. The Ramayana's adaptability has made it a powerful tool for constructing national identity. The epic is often reinterpreted in Indonesia to reflect local values and historical contexts. For instance, the character of Hanuman, the monkey god, is particularly revered in Java and Bali. In

Javanese versions of the Ramayana, Hanuman is depicted as a symbol of loyalty, strength, and devotion, embodying the ideal of service to the nation. His adventures are often emphasized in performances, making him a relatable and inspiring figure for Indonesian audiences. Similarly, the hero of the epic, Rama, is portrayed as a just and wise leader who upholds *dharma* (moral duty). This portrayal resonates with Indonesian ideals of leadership, particularly in the context of the nation's struggle for independence and subsequent efforts to build a unified state.

By celebrating Rama's virtues, the Ramayana reinforces values such as integrity, responsibility, and unity, which are essential for national cohesion. In contemporary Indonesia, the Ramayana is vital in shaping national identity. The epic is celebrated in festivals, such as the annual Ramayana Ballet in Yogyakarta (Caturwati et al., 2022), attracting domestic and international audiences. This large-scale performance, held against the backdrop of the Prambanan Temple, combines traditional dance, music, and storytelling to bring the epic to life. The Ramayana Ballet is a cultural spectacle and a symbol of Indonesia's rich heritage and its ability to adapt ancient traditions to modern contexts. The Indonesian government has also integrated the Ramayana into educational curricula, ensuring that younger generations know its stories and values. Schools often organize field trips to *wayang kulit* performances or Ramayana ballets, providing students with a tangible connection to their cultural heritage. By teaching the Ramayana, Indonesia reinforces its national narrative and fosters a sense of pride and belonging among its citizens.

1.3.2. The Philippines: Jose Rizal as a Symbol of National Struggle

Jose Rizal is more than just a historical figure in the Philippines; he is a national symbol whose life, works, and martyrdom have been mythologized to inspire patriotism and resistance against oppression (Morris, 2003). As a writer, physician, and nationalist, Rizal played a crucial role in awakening Filipino consciousness through his literary masterpieces, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. These works, which exposed the injustices of Spanish colonial rule, not only stirred the Filipino spirit but also influenced revolutionary leaders such as Andrés Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo. His execution on December 30, 1896, in Bagumbayan (now Luneta Park) transformed him into a martyr and became a rallying point for the Philippine Revolution. Although he was not directly involved in the armed struggle, his writings and ideas were a significant inspiration for those who fought for independence. Rizal's legacy as a national hero is rooted in historical events in the way in which his image has been shaped by folklore, national memory, and cultural narratives. Over time, Rizal's story has been elevated to near-mythical proportions, with various legends reinforcing his image as an extraordinary figure. Some stories depict him as a prophet who foresaw his death, deliberately positioning his body to fall facing the rising sun, symbolizing the dawn of Philippine independence (Quibuyen, 1997). Others highlight his healing skills,

claiming he possessed medical knowledge beyond his time, enhancing his image as a wise and benevolent figure. More radical beliefs have even portrayed him as a messianic figure, leading to the formation of *Rizalista* religious sects that venerate him as a divine being. Some myths suggest that Rizal faked his execution and escaped into exile, later guiding the country under a new identity. While these stories are historically unfounded, they reflect the Filipinos' deep-rooted reverence for him, embedding him in the country's cultural consciousness. It is important to note that these myths are not historically accurate, but they do reflect the deep reverence Filipinos have for Rizal, which has embedded him in the country's cultural consciousness.

The Philippine government has institutionalized Rizal's legacy to reinforce national identity and civic duty. His life and works are mandatory school subjects through Republic Act No. 1425, known as the Rizal Law. This law, enacted in 1956, mandates the teaching of the life, works, and writings of Rizal in all schools, public and private, to ensure that students learn about his contributions to the nation. His image appears on Philippine peso banknotes and coins, and monuments dedicated to him stand in every major city. The Rizal Monument in Luneta Park, where his remains are enshrined, is one of the most iconic landmarks in the country. Every year, Rizal Day (December 30) is a national holiday to commemorate his sacrifice, while his birthday, June 19, is also celebrated with various educational and cultural events. His influence extends to popular culture, inspiring numerous films, plays, and literary works that continue to portray him as the ultimate embodiment of Filipino nationalism and heroism. Even in contemporary times, Rizal's ideals remain not just relevant but crucial in national identity, governance, and social reform discussions. His advocacy for education, civic responsibility, and moral leadership is not a relic of the past but a guiding principle for movements that address corruption, poverty, and inequality. Political leaders frequently invoke his name, urging Filipinos to emulate his sense of duty and integrity in nation-building. His message of self-determination and empowerment resonates in ongoing struggles for sovereignty, human rights, and historical truth. Rizal's story is not just a relic of the past but a living force that continues to shape the aspirations and ideals of the Filipino people.

Ultimately, Jose Rizal's transformation from a historical figure into a national folk hero illustrates the power of storytelling in shaping nationalism. His life and martyrdom have been mythologized to create a lasting symbol of hope, resilience, and national unity. Through literature, education, and cultural narratives, Rizal remains deeply ingrained in Filipino consciousness, serving as a moral compass and a source of inspiration for future generations. His legacy is a testament to the enduring power of ideas and the profound impact of individuals who dedicate their lives to the cause of freedom and justice.

1.3.3. Thailand: The Sufficiency Economy and Traditional Values

Thailand's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), introduced by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, is deeply rooted in traditional Thai values and has become a cornerstone of the nation's economic and social policies (Whietley, 2010). This philosophy emphasizes moderation, self-reliance, and sustainable development, aligning with Buddhist principles of balance and ethical living. It was initially proposed in response to economic crises and globalization, advocating a middle path between excessive materialism and economic vulnerability. SEP has since evolved into a guiding principle for Thailand's development, influencing governance through its emphasis on ethical decision-making, agriculture by promoting sufficiency farming methods, education by instilling values of self-discipline and sustainability, and community resilience by encouraging self-reliance. By framing these traditional values as a means of achieving long-term national stability, Thailand has successfully integrated folklore, ethical teachings, and modern economic strategies into a cohesive national identity.

The tale of *Phra Aphai Mani*, a classic Thai epic written by Sunthorn Phu, is one example of how traditional folklore reflects the ideals of SEP. The story follows the journey of Phra Aphai Mani, a prince who learns the importance of wisdom, patience, and moral integrity over material wealth and power. Throughout his adventures, he faces challenges that test his resilience, resourcefulness, and ethical decision-making—qualities that resonate with the principles of SEP. Like many other Thai folk tales, the story teaches that true prosperity comes not from greed or conquest but from sustainable and ethical living. By drawing connections between folklore and modern economic policies, Thailand has reinforced the idea that its development model is deeply rooted in the country's cultural and moral heritage. The Thai government has actively promoted SEP as a national strategy, incorporating it into policies addressing economic inequality, environmental conservation, and rural development. It has been particularly influential in agriculture, where farmers are encouraged to adopt sufficiency farming methods, such as mixed-crop cultivation, organic farming, and water conservation techniques, reducing dependence on external resources and market fluctuations. The philosophy is also applied to education, where schools integrate SEP principles into their curricula by teaching subjects like ethics, sustainability, and community responsibility, thereby instilling these values in young generations. Even in urban areas, businesses and policymakers use SEP to encourage ethical entrepreneurship, fair trade, and corporate social responsibility.

Internationally, Thailand has promoted SEP as a model for sustainable development, sharing its principles with other nations, especially in Southeast Asia. This promotion has taken various forms, including hosting international conferences, providing technical assistance to other

countries, and participating in global sustainability initiatives. The United Nations recognized SEP in 2006 as an effective strategy for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting Thailand's success in applying traditional wisdom to contemporary global challenges. The philosophy's emphasis on local empowerment, environmental stewardship, and ethical governance aligns with modern discourses on sustainability, making it a relevant and adaptable framework for economic and social development beyond Thailand's borders.

The enduring success of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy demonstrates how traditional values and folklore can be effectively mobilized to address modern challenges while reinforcing national identity. By integrating cultural heritage into state policies, Thailand has created a narrative that resonates across all sectors of society, fostering unity, resilience, and long-term prosperity. The philosophy's legacy continues to shape Thailand's approach to development, proving that traditional wisdom, when adapted thoughtfully, can provide enduring solutions in an ever-changing world.

1.3.4. Cambodia: Angkor Wat as a Symbol of Resilience

Angkor Wat is a powerful symbol of national identity and resilience in Cambodia, representing both the grandeur of the ancient Khmer Empire and the nation's ability to overcome historical adversities. Built-in the early 12th century during the reign of King Suryavarman II, Angkor Wat was initially dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu. However, with the gradual transition of the Khmer Empire to Buddhism, Angkor Wat also transformed into a Buddhist temple (Norindr, 2006). This religious shift is reflected in its massive structure, intricate bas-reliefs, and celestial alignment, which signify the empire's prosperity and advanced engineering capabilities. Over the centuries, Angkor Wat became more than just a religious monument—it evolved into a cultural and national icon that continues to inspire Cambodians, reinforcing a sense of pride and continuity with their past. Despite its historical significance, Angkor Wat and its surrounding temples have witnessed periods of decline, neglect, and destruction. During Cambodia's colonial occupation, civil wars, and the brutal Khmer Rouge regime (1975–1979), the temple complex suffered looting, vandalism, and deterioration. Priceless artifacts were stolen, carvings were defaced, and the structures were left to decay, mirroring the country's struggles for survival. However, in the decades following Cambodia's recovery from war and genocide, Angkor Wat emerged as a unifying symbol of national resilience. The Cambodian government strategically incorporated Angkor Wat into its nationalist discourse, using it as a focal point for rebuilding national identity and fostering unity among its people. The temple's presence on the national flag—the only country in the world to feature a UNESCO heritage site on its flag—demonstrates its unparalleled importance in the Cambodian consciousness.

Myths and legends surrounding Angkor Wat further reinforce its role as a symbol of resilience and divine protection. The legend of the *Naga*, a mythical serpent often associated with Angkor Wat, is deeply ingrained in Khmer folklore. According to local beliefs, the Khmer people are descendants of a *Naga* princess and an Indian Brahmin, symbolizing a sacred link between Cambodia's people and their divine origins. The *Naga* is also seen as a guardian spirit, representing strength, renewal, and protection—qualities that resonate deeply with Cambodia's history of struggle and recovery. By intertwining historical grandeur with mythological significance, Cambodians have strengthened their collective memory and cultural pride, ensuring that Angkor Wat remains an enduring source of inspiration. In recent decades, Angkor Wat has played a pivotal role in Cambodia's economic and cultural revival, primarily through tourism and heritage conservation. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992, the temple attracts millions of visitors annually, generating revenue and employment while raising global awareness of Cambodia's rich history. The government and international organizations have made significant investments in its preservation, ensuring that the site remains a testament to Cambodia's resilience and cultural continuity. Educational programs in schools underscore the historical and symbolic significance of Angkor Wat, instilling a sense of national pride in younger generations and fostering optimism for Cambodia's future.

Beyond its role in tourism and cultural heritage, Angkor Wat has become a rallying symbol for national recovery and modernization, linking Cambodia's ancient past with its aspirations for a stable and prosperous future. Its image is used in everything from official documents and banknotes to political speeches and national celebrations, reinforcing that Cambodia, like Angkor Wat, has withstood the test of time. The temple serves as a reassuring reminder of Cambodia's strength, endurance, and ability to rise from hardship, making it not just a historical monument but a living testament to the resilience of the Cambodian people.

1.3.5. Vietnam: The Legend of the Dragon and the Fairy

The Legend of the Dragon and the Fairy (*Lạc Long Quân* and *Âu Cơ*) is one of Vietnam's most revered foundational myths, deeply embedded in the nation's cultural and political identity. This legend tells the story of *Lạc Long Quân*, a dragon lord from the sea, and *Âu Cơ*, a fairy princess from the mountains, who fell in love and gave birth to a hundred sons (VIETNAM.COM, n.d.). Eventually, they decided to part ways—*Lạc Long Quân* took fifty sons to the coastal regions, while *Âu Cơ* led the other fifty to the mountains. Their eldest son became the first *Hùng* King, founding the *Hồng Bàng* Dynasty, which is considered the beginning of Vietnamese civilization. This myth is not merely a tale of origins but a profound symbol of unity, resilience, and national identity, reinforcing the belief that all Vietnamese people, despite regional differences, share a

common ancestry. The legend has been actively incorporated into Vietnam's national discourse, serving as a unifying narrative in historical and modern contexts. The division of *Lạc Long Quân* and *Âu Cơ's* children into coastal and mountainous regions symbolizes the diverse geography of Vietnam and the harmony between different ethnic and regional groups. Despite the physical separation, the myth underscores the idea that Vietnamese people, whether from the lowlands or the highlands, are part of one extended family, bound by shared heritage and cultural values. This notion of unity has been particularly significant during times of conflict, such as the struggles against Chinese domination, French colonial rule, and the Vietnam War. By invoking the legend, leaders, and scholars have reinforced the message of national solidarity and collective resilience in the face of external threats.

The *Hùng* Kings, the descendants of *Lạc Long Quân* and *Âu Cơ*, are venerated as the founding rulers of Vietnam. Their reign, which began with the first *Hùng* King, is considered the beginning of Vietnamese civilization. Their legacy is commemorated annually during the *Hùng* Kings' Festival (*Giỗ tổ Hùng Vương*) on the 10th day of the third lunar month. This festival, recognized as a national holiday, sees thousands of Vietnamese people making pilgrimages to the *Hùng* Kings' Temple in *Phú Thọ* Province, paying tribute to their ancestors. The government actively promotes this tradition to strengthen national consciousness and historical continuity, emphasizing that Vietnam's cultural and political roots extend back thousands of years. The festival also reinforces the importance of filial piety and respect for ancestors, key values in Vietnamese society. In addition to fostering unity, the legend of the Dragon and the Fairy embodies ideals of strength, perseverance, and patriotism, which continue to shape Vietnam's national identity. The dragon symbolizes power, courage, and adaptability, while the fairy represents grace, wisdom, and harmony—qualities often emphasized in Vietnamese cultural and political narratives. The dragon, a symbol of power and courage, is often associated with the ruling class and the nation's strength. The fairy, on the other hand, represents grace, wisdom, and harmony, and is often associated with the nation's cultural and spiritual values. The story has been featured in school curriculums, literature, and official speeches, ensuring that future generations recognize their shared heritage. Vietnamese leaders have often referenced the legend to instill a sense of duty and resilience in the population, particularly during periods of war, economic hardship, and modernization.

Beyond its political and cultural significance, the legend reflects Vietnam's deep connection to nature and the environment. The myth's depiction of the union between the sea *(Lạc Long Quân*) and the mountains (*Âu Cơ*) mirrors Vietnam's geographical landscape, emphasizing the balance between land and water. This harmony is reflected in traditional Vietnamese agricultural practices, particularly wet rice cultivation, which has sustained the country's economy for centuries. By

embracing this legend, Vietnam strengthens its national identity and fosters a cultural appreciation for its natural environment. Today, the legend of the Dragon and the Fairy remains a cornerstone of Vietnamese national pride, reminding the country of its deep-rooted history, unity, and resilience. It is frequently referenced in national celebrations, political rhetoric, and educational materials, reinforcing that a common lineage connects all Vietnamese people. Whether in peace or struggle, the legend serves as a powerful inspiration, fostering a sense of collective strength and proving that folklore remains a potent force in shaping and sustaining national identity.

1.3.6. Malaysia: Hang Tuah and National Heroism

The legend of *Hang Tuah*, a figure from the 15th century Malacca Sultanate, is a cornerstone of Malaysian national identity. His unwavering loyalty, martial prowess, and wisdom, as depicted in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, have shaped Malaysia's understanding of courage, duty, and resilience. While historians continue to debate whether *Hang Tuah* was a historical figure or a mythical hero, his cultural and political significance is undisputed, making him a central figure in Malaysia's national identity. One of the most poignant episodes in *Hang Tuah's* story is his tragic duel with his childhood friend and fellow warrior, *Hang Jebat* (Nanney, 1988). Falsely accused of treason, *Hang Tuah* was secretly spared by the Sultan, while *Hang Jebat*, believing his friend had been unjustly executed, rebelled against the ruler. When *Hang Tuah* was reinstated, he was ordered to kill *Hang Jebat*, leading to a dramatic and tragic confrontation. This episode embodies the Malay concept of loyalty (*kesetiaan*) and duty to the ruler (Daulat raja)—themes that have been deeply ingrained in Malaysia's political and cultural consciousness.

The Malaysian government has actively promoted *Hang Tuah's* legend as a source of national pride and unity, particularly in reinforcing Malay cultural identity. His story is taught in schools, depicted in literature, and performed in *bangsawan* (Malay opera) and traditional theater. *Hang Tuah's* famous declaration, "*Takkan Melayu hilang di dunia*," meaning "Malays will never vanish from the world," has become a powerful rallying cry for Malay nationalism and cultural preservation. This phrase has been frequently cited in political discourse, especially in times of national uncertainty, to emphasize the resilience and continuity of Malay identity. Beyond his role in shaping Malay nationalism, *Hang Tuah's* legacy resonates with Malaysia's broader national identity, emphasizing universal values such as bravery, justice, and loyalty. His legend serves as a historical reminder of Malaysia's rich maritime past, highlighting the significance of the Malacca Sultanate as a powerful center of trade, diplomacy, and cultural exchange. By honoring *Hang Tuah*, Malaysia strengthens its connection to its Malay heritage and its role in Southeast Asia's regional and global history, making all Malaysians feel included in this rich cultural tapestry. In contemporary Malaysia, *Hang Tuah's* image continues to be celebrated in public monuments,

educational curricula, and cultural projects. His story is also referenced in discussions about leadership, loyalty, and ethics, making him a moral and ideological figure beyond just folklore. At the same time, modern scholars and writers reinterpret his legacy, questioning the rigid notion of loyalty and exploring the nuances of his character about justice, governance, and societal change. This ongoing debate keeps *Hang Tuah's* story relevant and engaging for all Malaysians. Ultimately, *Hang Tuah's* legend remains a dynamic and evolving symbol of Malaysian heroism, serving as a powerful force in shaping the country's historical consciousness and collective memory. His story continues to inspire national identity, political thought, and cultural pride, proving that folklore remains a potent tool in shaping historical narratives in Malaysia.

1.3.7. Myanmar: The Legacy of King Anawrahta

King Anawrahta (1014–1077 CE), the founder of the Pagan Empire, is a revered figure in Myanmar's history and folklore. His legacy is deeply intertwined with the formation of Myanmar's national identity, as he is credited with unifying the region and establishing Theravāda Buddhism as the dominant religious and cultural force (Eikeri, 2020). Through military conquests, administrative reforms, and religious patronage, *Anawrahta* laid the foundations for a centralized Burmese state, which would later influence the development of Myanmar's political and cultural institutions. Over time, his image has been mythologized in Burmese folklore, transforming him into a symbol of unity, resilience, and righteous leadership. *Anawrahta's* most significant achievement was the profound transformation of Myanmar's religious landscape through the spread of Theravāda Buddhism. Before his reign, the region was influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, Hinduism, and indigenous animist beliefs. However, after conquering Thaton, a Mon kingdom in the south, *Anawrahta* brought back Buddhist scriptures, scholars, and artisans, integrating Theravāda Buddhist practices into the state's governance and religious life. His devotion to Buddhism is exemplified by his construction of temples and pagodas, including the famous Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan, which became a center for Buddhist learning and pilgrimage. These contributions not only shaped Myanmar's religious identity but also reinforced a national identity centered around Buddhism, which continues to influence the country's socio-political structure today.

Beyond religion, *Anawrahta* is celebrated as a nation-builder and military strategist. Under his leadership, the Pagan Empire expanded its control over vast territories, encompassing much of Myanmar. He established a feudal administrative system, integrating various ethnic groups under a centralized rule while allowing local leaders autonomy. His military campaigns and diplomatic efforts helped forge a sense of Burmese unity, laying the groundwork for later dynasties. The Burmese chronicles, historical records that blend fact with folklore, often depict *Anawrahta* as a warrior king guided by divine favor, reinforcing his image as a protector of the land and the

Buddhist faith. In Myanmar's modern nationalist discourse, *Anawrahta's* legacy is frequently invoked to promote themes of unity, resilience, and cultural pride. Successive governments have emphasized his contributions to national identity, portraying him as an ideal ruler who exemplified wisdom, strength, and devotion to Buddhism. His story is taught in schools, commemorated in historical sites, and referenced in political rhetoric to reinforce Myanmar's connection to its historical roots. The city of Bagan, the heart of *Anawrahta's* empire, remains a UNESCO World Heritage site and a symbol of Myanmar's cultural heritage, attracting pilgrims and tourists who honor his legacy.

Despite his revered status, modern interpretations of *Anawrahta's* rule have sparked lively and ongoing discussions about the complexities of his reign. While he is credited with unifying Myanmar, his military campaigns also involved the conquest and subjugation of other ethnic groups, raising questions about the nature of his leadership. In contemporary Myanmar, where ethnic tensions persist, his legacy is sometimes viewed through a more critical lens, with debates on how historical narratives should be framed in a diverse and multi-ethnic nation. These debates engage the audience in the country's evolving historical narrative, making them feel part of the ongoing discourse. Nevertheless, *Anawrahta* remains an enduring icon of Burmese identity and national resilience. His legacy as a political visionary, religious patron, and cultural unifier continues to shape Myanmar's historical consciousness. Whether through temple architecture, folklore, or nationalist rhetoric, his story serves as a powerful reminder of Myanmar's rich historical past and enduring cultural traditions, fostering a sense of connection and continuity with the country's heritage.

1.3.8. Laos: The Phra Lak Phra Lam Epic

The *Phra Lak Phra Lam* epic, a cornerstone of Laos's literary and cultural heritage, is a key player in shaping the country's national identity. This Lao adaptation of the Ramayana, deeply entrenched in the country's folklore and religious traditions, acts as a cultural bridge between Buddhism and Lao heritage ("Laos," 2011). While it shares some commonalities with other Southeast Asian versions of the Ramayana, *Phra Lak Phra Lam* is distinctly Lao, incorporating local elements, values, and settings that set it apart from its Indian origins. The epic, passed down through generations via oral traditions, dance, theatre, and religious ceremonies, is a living narrative that continues to influence Lao society. The story of *Phra Lak Phra Lam* follows the lives of two brothers, *Phra Lak* (Lakshmana) and *Phra Lam* (Rama), who embark on a journey of dharma (righteousness), loyalty, and heroism. Their adventures, trials, and battles symbolize the struggle between good and evil, with strong Buddhist undertones emphasizing moral values, patience, and justice. Unlike the Indian Ramayana, which has a more Hindu-centric worldview,

the Lao version is deeply infused with *Theravāda* Buddhist principles, making it an essential part of the country's religious and philosophical identity. Monks, storytellers, and performers have used the epic to teach Buddhist virtues, reinforcing its role as a moral and ethical guide for the Lao people.

The *Phra Lak Phra Lam* epic is performed during festivals and religious ceremonies, particularly in Buddhist temples and royal courts. It is commonly enacted in Lao Lamvong dance, puppet theatre, and Khon masked dance-drama, where elaborately costumed performers bring the story to life. These performances are not merely artistic expressions but nationalistic and cultural affirmations, reinforcing Lao identity in the face of foreign influences. The epic is also closely associated with the That Luang Festival, one of Laos' most significant Buddhist celebrations, where monks and devotees gather to honor the story's teachings. The Lao government has actively promoted *Phra Lak Phra Lam* as a national unity and cultural pride symbol. Recognizing its importance in maintaining the country's heritage, it has been included in school curriculums, literary works, and state-sponsored cultural programs. By emphasizing its uniquely Lao aspects, the government has used the epic to differentiate Laos from its larger neighbours, particularly Thailand and Cambodia, which also have their versions of the Ramayana. This distinction reinforces a sense of national identity, asserting Laos' independent cultural heritage in the region.

Despite the challenges of modernization and globalization, *Phra Lak Phra Lam* remains a resilient part of Lao consciousness. While Western media may influence some younger generations, efforts to preserve and adapt the epic in contemporary formats—such as films, digital storytelling, and literature—have kept it relevant. Cultural organizations and religious institutions continue to ensure that the epic remains a living tradition, linking Lao people to their historical roots and instilling a sense of pride in their heritage. In essence, *Phra Lak Phra Lam* is more than just a mythological tale; it reflects Lao values, national resilience, and cultural identity. The epic inspires Lao society through its teachings of morality, perseverance, and righteousness, ensuring that the nation's cultural heritage is preserved for future generations.

2. Conclusion

The study of folklore and nationalism in Southeast Asian states reveals the profound impact of myth and memory in shaping national identity. Across the region, folklore has been instrumental in unifying diverse populations, but more importantly, it has been a key in preserving our rich cultural heritage. Whether through epic tales, historical figures, or sacred sites, folklore is a tool for constructing collective memory, allowing nations to link their past to their present aspirations. By examining specific case studies, this research highlights how folklore is not merely a relic

of the past but a dynamic force actively mobilized by governments, cultural institutions, and communities to foster a sense of national belonging. The Ramayana epic has been reinterpreted in Indonesia to reflect national values, using wayang kulit performances to promote moral teachings and unity. Similarly, in the Philippines, Jose Rizal has transcended his historical role to become a folk hero, embodying the nation's struggle for independence and democracy. In Thailand, the philosophy of the sufficiency economy, rooted in traditional wisdom and folklore, has been integrated into modern governance, demonstrating how ancient narratives can shape contemporary policies. Beyond being an architectural marvel, Cambodia's Angkor Wat stands as a symbol of resilience, connecting the nation's glorious past to its post-war recovery and collective identity, inspiring us with the strength of the Cambodian people. The myth of Lạc Long Quân and Âu Cơ in Vietnam emphasizes a shared ancestry that unites the people, reinforcing national solidarity in times of change. Likewise, Malaysia's legendary warrior Hang Tuah has been immortalized in education and cultural performances, promoting values of loyalty and patriotism in a multi-ethnic society. Myanmar's King Anawrahta, through his association with Buddhist expansion, has become a historical and spiritual symbol of national unity. In Laos, the Phra Lak Phra Lam epic, a localized version of the Ramayana, continues to shape national consciousness through festivals, literature, and religious teachings.

These case studies serve as compelling evidence that folklore is more than just storytelling—it is a potent instrument of nation-building. By invoking myths and historical narratives, Southeast Asian states have successfully crafted national identities that bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. Governments and cultural institutions strategically mobilize folklore to strengthen nationalism, instil moral values, and foster resilience in times of crisis. However, as globalization and modernization challenge traditional narratives, these nations must adapt folklore to contemporary contexts to ensure its continued relevance in shaping national consciousness. This adaptability underscores the dynamic nature of folklore, ensuring its continued relevance in the shaping of national identity. This research underscores that myth, memory, and identity are deeply intertwined in constructing nationalism in Southeast Asia. Folklore, as a powerful tool, not only preserves historical and cultural heritage but also reinforces a shared sense of belonging, helping nations navigate political, social, and economic transformations. As Southeast Asia continues to evolve, its folklore will remain a vital force in defining and sustaining national identity, proving that the past is remembered and actively lived in the present

References

- Anderson, B. 1983. Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1st ed.). Verso. https://ia601200.us.archive.org/25/items/benedict-anderson-imagined-communities/Benedict-Anderson-Imagined%20Communities.pdf
- Antoinette, M. 5 Memoryscapes: Present Pasts Revisioned. 2014, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/5-Memoryscapes%3A-Present-Pasts-Revisioned-Antoinette/a5faf667c6bf75a55c972c4c5eb3d31c51dd8c97.
- Bagaskara, A., Rokhani, U., & Wahyuningsih, S. 2024. 'Cultural encounters: puppetry performing arts (Wayang) and dangdut music as a reflection of India-Indonesia integration'. *International Journal of Culture and Art Studies*, 8(1), 27–36. https://doi.org/10.32734/ijcas.v8i1.15333
- Bisht, Diwas. "Diasporic Memory Ecologies: Creative Explorations of Intergenerational Memories and Identities in the British Bangladeshi Community." Figshare, Apr. 2022, https://doi.org/10.26174/thesis.lboro.19027691.v1.
- Brehm, W. Curricular Challenges to Human Rights in the Mekong: Disputed Histories, Contested Identities. 2018, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Curricular-challenges-to-human-rights-in-the-Brehm/fa72e81090cc384abc35cddfa5d2926122871a96.
- Bunnell, T. 2004. Malaysia, Modernity and the Multimedia Super Corridor. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203647363
- Caturwati, E., Herdiani, E., & Tobing, S. H. L. 2022. Ramayana Ballet Performance's allure at Purawisata Yogyakarta. Mudra Jurnal Seni Budaya, 37(4), 368–373. https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v37i4.2102
- Eikeri, M. D. (2020). "Historical leaders that I admire" : themes of religion and ethnic unity in the public primary school curriculum in Myanmar. https://mfopen.mf.no/mf-xmlui/handle/11250/2732999
- Fairlee, Cathryn. Butterfly Mother: Miao (Hmong) Creation Epics From Guizhou, China (Review). 2011, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Butterfly-Mother%3A-Miao-(Hmong)-Creation-Epics-from-Fairlee/51ae990d4ac1e355e9e2946e01d6e79a4155b88e.
- Hawkins, M. Contestations of Memory in Southeast Asia Ed. By Roxana Waterson and Kwok Kian-Woon (Review). 2013, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Contestations-of-Memory-in-Southeast-Asia-ed.-by-Hawkins/8343375c990c85962624cb174dec7503ae25e87b.

- Houben, V. The Unmastered Past: Decolonization and Dutch Collective Memory. 2000, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-unmastered-past%3A-decolonization-and-Dutch-Houben/b4bfaec514b6b450b0367c866517ab9227d1306f.
- "Interpreting Shared Pasts: Remembering Taiwanese Idol Dramas and Taiwan Tourism in a Rising China." King's College London, https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/studentTheses/interpreting-shared-pasts-remembering-taiwanese-idol-dramas-and-t.
- Laos. 2011. Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203931448-20
- Macdonald, M., et al. Regional Variation of Mortality in Heart Failure With Reduced and Preserved Ejection Fraction Across Asia: Outcomes in the ASIAN□HF Registry. 2019, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Regional-Variation-of-Mortality-in-Heart-Failure-in-Macdonald-Tay/fbd5693eae8f488a5ecb1900b7b5000f6c0650e1.
- Mahulikar, G. 2002. EFFECT OF RAMAYANA ON VARIOUS CULTURES AND CIVILISATIONS. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/EFFECT-OF-RAMAYANA-ON-VARIOUS-CULTURES-AND-Mahulikar/6cd0b76bed61e0ca97dc44fcc8450e731759d4bc
- Mendoza, Meynardo, P. Roxana Waterson and Kwok Kian-Woon, Eds. Contestations of Memory in Southeast Asia. Singapore: NUS Press, 2012, Vi+300p. 2014, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Roxana-Waterson-and-Kwok-Kian-Woon%2C-eds.-of-Memory-Mendoza/ab6310eb42f6e38ad9b7b902e54a0491282afaed.
- Mora, M. Myth, Mimesis, and Magic in the Music of the T'boli, Philippines. 2005, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Myth%2C-mimesis%2C-and-magic-in-the-music-of-the-Mora/cac2b67505ed897baeff8080e8c9eae2e8f85078.
- Morris, D. M. 2003. Jose´ Rizal and the challenge of Philippines independence. https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2003/eirv30n09-20030307/eirv30n09-20030307_018-jose_rizal_and_the_challenge_of.pdf
- Nanney, N. K. 1988. 'Evolution of a Hero: The Hang Tuah/Hang Jebat Tale in Malay drama'. *Asian Theatre Journal*, 5(2), 164–174. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25161490
- Nicolau, Mariana. "The Past Today: Analysing Asian Historical Movies." LUP Student Papers, 2024. https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=9164633&fileOId=9164637.

- Norindr, P. 2006. The fascination for Angkor Wat and the ideology of the visible. In Routledge eBooks (pp. 70–86). https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203966891-14
- Peleggi, Maurizio. Editorial Foreword. 2012, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Editorial-Foreword-Peleggi/c5241947c97fba325255d49e0c60aa976cbda40d.
- Perspectives on East and Southeast Asian folktales. (n.d.). Rowman & Littlefield. https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781666912890/Perspectives-on-East-and-Southeast-Asian-Folktales?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Ong, A. 1996, December 1. Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5sn1795g
- Quibuyen, F. 1997. Rizal and the Revolution. Philippine Studies, 45(2), 225–257. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42634230
- Rangarajan, Akshatha. Home: Photographs by Lim Sokchanlina and Yoppy Pieter. 2023, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Home%3A-Photographs-by-Lim-Sokchanlina-and-Yoppy-Rangarajan/e0df2af30e4220d936f2340bef6b799ec19d7b45.
- Ray, Sohini. Boundaries Blurred? Folklore, Mythology, History and the Quest for an Alternative Genealogy in North-east India 1. 2014, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Boundaries-Blurred-folklore%2C-Mythology%2C-History-and-Ray/7ac28b3523868c7859d42a608959c9d4ecc76ae6.
- Rosaldo, M. Z. (1986). Metaphors and folk classification. Journal of Anthropological Research, 42(3), 467–482. https://doi.org/10.1086/jar.42.3.3630049
- Sidel, J. T. (2012). The Fate of Nationalism in the New States: Southeast Asia in Comparative Historical perspective. Comparative Studies in Society and History, 54(1), 114–144. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0010417511000612
- Vang, C. Fly Until You Die. 2019, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Fly-Until-You-Die-Vang/6c09a262ecb092e2dc21463dfb7c3f447c5ca9a3.
- VIETNAM.COM. (n.d.). Lạc Long Quân and Âu Cơ - the legend of ancient Vietnam. https://www.vietnam.com/en/culture/art/fairy-tales/lac-long-quan-and-au-co-the-legend-of-ancient-vietnam.html
- Wang, Shucheng. Museum Diplomacy: Exploring the Sino-German Museum Forum and Beyond. 2018, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Museum-diplomacy%3A-exploring-the-Sino-German-Museum-Wang/0b808cbae194fc2319eea2d963dee36ff25bef47.

- Whietley, A. 2010. The Core Values Method within the Sufficiency Economy and Thai Societal Values. https://ojs.lib.buu.ac.th/index.php/hrd/article/view/8593
- Wu, I.-Fen. Looking for Nostalgia: Memory and National Identity in Hou Hsiao-Hsien's a Time to Live, a Time to Die. 2003, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Looking-for-Nostalgia%3A-Memory-and-National-Identity-Wu/73cc17c6382d1c0b4c026aa89a6d4e2277699f26.
- Yuan, Jingdong, et al. Book Reviews. 2012, www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Book-Reviews-Yuan-Kelly/6ad151d3b9aa97e2175efba35c3c80c7af18602e.

Bio profile of the Author:

Assistant Professor,
Rosary College of Commerce & Arts, Navelim, Salcete – Goa
Email ID: denis@rosarycollege.ac.in

Existential Crisis of Ethnomedicine among Santals of West Bengal, India

Soumita Chatterjee[1], Chaitali Karmakar[2], & Sutapa Choudhury[3]

Abstract:

Ethnomedicine, rooted in traditional healing practices, explores the bio-active properties of plants and animals, particularly among ethnic communities with limited exposure to Western medicine. This study investigates practice of ethnomedicine among the Santal people, an indigenous group in South Asia, with a focus on healing patterns and intergenerational transmission of knowledge orally. The study aims at exploring present healing practices among the Santals, emphasizing use of ethnomedicine, understanding any obstacle that prevails in transmitting indigenous knowledge across generations. Data was collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth face to face interviews. Interview was carried out among the Santal individuals who were above 15 years of age and were residing in Puinam village in West Bengal. Social and demographic details were gathered through semi-structured schedules. Qualitative data were analyzed by means of interpretation and through narrative analysis. Santals living in the Puinan village predominantly rely on 37 types of plant-based and 6 types of animal-based medicines, where 48.9% of medicines are applied to people of all age groups. The villagers mentioned that oral tradition is the primary mode transmission of knowledge. They also use modern medication. Modernization, loss of biodiversity, and easy accessibility to modern healthcare pose challenges to the indigenous medical practices. Despite shifting preferences towards allopathic treatments, ethnomedicine persists among the Santals. This reflects the enduring significance of traditional healing knowledge. The study reveals an existential problem of ethnomedicine in future. This requires further research on both plant and animal based medicine and on the barriers to knowledge transmission within the Santal community.

Key words: *Ethnomedicine, santal, plant, transmission, indigenous knowledge*

Introduction

Ethnomedicine refers to traditional medicinal practices. Diverse ethnic communities, especially

those with limited exposure to Western medical treatments, take advantage of the bio active properties of plants and animals for treatment of diseases (Acharya and Shrivastava, 2008). "Ethnomedicine" is a term, often used interchangeably with "traditional medicine" (Acharya and Shrivastava, 2008). Ethnomedicine has a rich historical background, with its roots going back to the early 19th century to John W. Harshberger, who first introduced the academic study of medicinal plants in 1895(Ghosh and Guha, 2021). This field later flourished with its magnificence and the perspectives of Ethnomedicine is glorified as a specialized area of Medical Anthropology (Ghosh and Guha, 2021). Lieban defines Ethnomedicine as, '*A diverse subject that includes magico-religious, ethnobotany, medical and chemical procedure'* (Lieban, 1973). World Health Organization (WHO) mentioned that, around 80% of the global residents rigorously selected the local and traditional medicines for their regular healing practice (Bhuyan, 2015; Azaizeh et al., 2003). Traditional medicines play a significant role in the healthcare practices of various communities worldwide, including tribes in both developing and developed countries (WHO, 2023). Derived predominantly from plant sources, these traditional remedies have persisted alongside modern medicine. Research findings indicate that approximately 85% of primary healthcare traditional medicines worldwide are derived from plants (Yadav et al. 2005). India boasts a diverse range of medicinal plant utilization, as documented in various studies. In India, the practice of utilizing plants for medicinal purposes has ancient roots, dating back to the Rig Vedic period spanning from 3500 to 1800 BCE. During this time, humans learned about the use of medicinal plants by observing animals (Raghunathan, 1987). For instance, the Rig Veda mentions around 99 medicinal plants, the Yajurveda lists 82, and the Atharvaveda includes 28 plants used for treatment of various ailments (Bodding, 1925). Moreover, at the national level, numerous researchers and scientists have conducted various documentation on ethno-medicinal plants. Globally, over 35,000 plant species are currently utilized for their medicinal properties (Van Seters, 1997). Today, there is a resurgence of interest in tribal medicines and their potentials in treating severe diseases such as cancer, AIDS, hepatitis, rheumatoid arthritis, and neurological conditions along with countless limitations (Basak et al, 2016). This resurgence underscores the economic importance of traditional medicine and the ongoing efforts to harness its therapeutic potential in addressing complex health challenges.

Ethnomedicine among the Santals

"Ethnomedicine is more ethnic, more magical and less scientific" (Erickson, 2007). In this post-modern era, indigenous people are still cherishing their traditional healthcare procedures, which are purely based on the cultural beliefs and interpretation of diseases and illness. Santals, an ethnic group with ancient roots in South Asia, historically lived in remote jungles in the

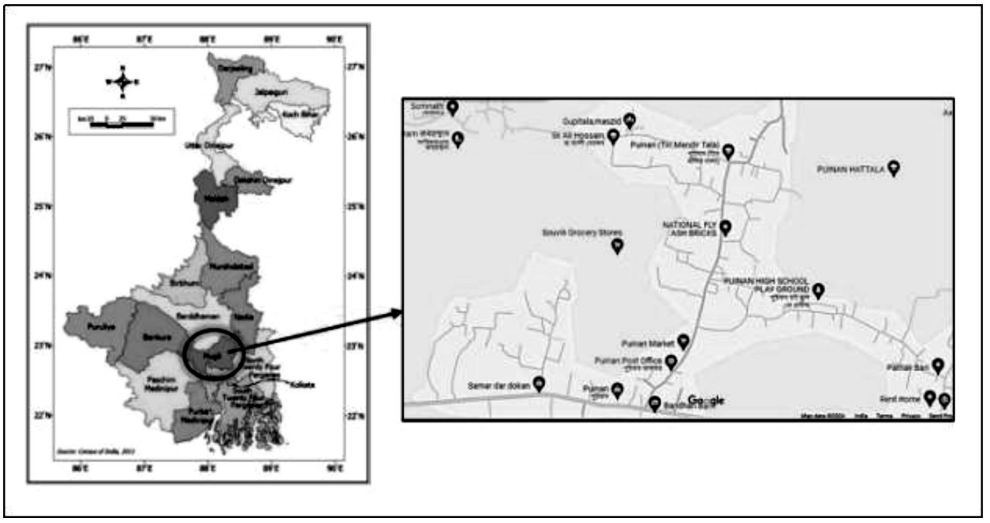
midst of challenging natural conditions governed by the unpredictable forces of sun, rain, and wind (Kaura, 2015). They faced constant threats from wild animals and birds, which propelled them towards a superstitious and highly ritualistic way of life (Kaura, 2015). Revering nature, they relied on unseen powers and forces that guided their existence. Disease and ghosts were significant fears for them. Illness often attributed to evil spirits, reflecting their primitive beliefs and worldview (Kaura, 2015). Thousands of indigenous people are primarily dependent on the herbal plants and some faunal resources for therapeutic practices. Santal is one of the Austro-asiatic speaking indigenous communities who believed on ethno-medicinal practices in their daily life (Hembrom, 1996). Application of Ethnomedicines among Santals in different districts of Odisha has revealed an entire procedure of treatment for numerous diseases like bone fracture, ghost attack etc (SCSTRTI Report, 2017). Oral transmission is the only way to convey their knowledge. In course of time and due to cultural dynamics this rich tradition has faded away silently. W. H. R. Rivers (1924) highlighted that, traditional knowledge of disease and healing practices were mostly unscientific to the Western medical procedures. However, indigenous understanding is demonstrated in terms of cultural belief system (Rivers, 1924; Lal and Neeraj, 2019). Being an indigenous people, Ethnomedicine became their second choice, because of uncountable benefits of Allopathic and Homeopathic treatment and of its easy and pocket-friendly accessibility (Tripathi, 2019).

The utilization of Ethnomedicine among indigenous communities offers valuable insights into traditional healing practices and the transmission of ancestral knowledge across generations. This study mainly focuses on investigating the present healing patterns among the Santal people, with a particular emphasis on the usage of Ethnomedicine and the way of inter-generational transmission of indigenous healing knowledge.

Objectives of the study

- Explore the present healing pattern among the Santals, with special emphasis on use of ethnomedicine.
- Understand obstacles in the way of transmission of indigenous knowledge about ethnomedicine of the studied people across generations.

Area and the people



Map-1: Puinan Village

(Source: https://www.google.com/maps/@22.9439571,88.2151659,15.92z?entry=ttu)

The study has been carried out among the Santals living in Puinan village, located in Latitude 22.9398452°N and Longitude 88.2112543°E of Polba-Dadpur Block in Hooghly District of West Bengal. Puinan is one of the out sized multi-ethnic villages in this block with 4449 individuals, as mentioned in census 2011 (Census India, 2011). In Dadpur Panchayet of Puinan village, out of 977 households, 43 belonged to Santals.

Total 193 Santals people lived in Puinan village, irrespective of genders. Hansda (15.51%), Soren (13.21%), Tudu (30.45%) and Murmu (40.83%) are the predominant clans of Santals in this village. Demographic profile shows that majority (55.18%) were female and 44.82% were male members in the Puinan village. Maximum number of the participants (25.86%) were adults. They belonged in the age groups of 48 to 58 years. 9.7% of the people belonged to the the group of above 58 years of age. Moderate number of individuals that is 24.13% and 24.71% belonged in 15 to 25 years and 37 to 47 years age groups respectively. This village has a poor educational status. Most of the respondents (58.62%) have only Primary education, 17.8% had completed Higher Secondary and only 2 women are graduates. Elderly persons are mostly non-literate. In terms of marital status 24.13% are unmarried, 49.42% are married, and 15.51% are separated. High propensity of child marriage is found among the persons, who were above 50 years of age irrespective of genders. This study covered information from two generations. All of the villagers

including both male and female were solely agrarian labors. A few people were engaged in some cottage industry, which were their secondary occupation.

Table – 1 Social and demographic profile of the Santal people of the village

Variables	Types	Number	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	78	44.82
	Female	96	55.18
Age groups (in years)	15 – 25	42	24.13
	26 – 36	27	15.51
	37 – 47	43	24.71
	48 – 58	45	25.86
	59 and above	17	9.7
Education	Non-literate	16	9.2
	Primary education	102	58.62
	Secondary	23	13.21
	Higher secondary	31	17.8
	Graduation	02	1.16
Marital status	Unmarried	42	24.13
	Married	86	49.42
	Separated	27	15.51
	Widow/ widower	19	10.91

Intensive fieldwork of eight days was conducted in November, 2023 to explore the present state of ethnomedicine.Data was collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method to trace a group oriented notion of use of ethnomedicine among the Santals of Puinan. To get the social and demographic details of the population, structured schedule was used and intensive interviews were conducted to understand the present healing procedures, irrespective of gender as well as generations. To obtain an implicit knowledge of Ethnomedicine as traditional healing procedure and its regular usage in their livelihood pattern, data was collected from the Santal, who were above 15 years of age. As a consequence, 19 children were not incorporated in this study and responses of 174 participants (78 male and 96 female) were interviewed for understanding their regular healing practice. Qualitative data was collected by means of verbatim manner and

analyzed through interpretative method.

Glimpse of ethno-medicinal practice among the contemporary Santal people

Santal is the third largest indigenous community (Bisai et al., 2014). They are mainly distributed in States like Assam, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in India. Use of ethno-medicine among Santals has regularly been documented at various countries, namely, ethno-medicinal use of Soren clan of the Santals from Bangladesh (Rahamatullah et al., 2012).

In West Bengal, a number of ethno-medicinal researches were carried out. Some of these are, among the Santals of Alipurduar (Mondal et al., 2020), Bankura (Rahaman and Karmakar, 2015), Medinipur (Kisku, 2023) and South 24 Pargana (Ghosh and Guha, 2021). It is found that impact of geo-physical environment is important in terms of accessibility of herbs and plants in various spaces. Selection criteria have also changed by means of spatial context. Documentation of ethno medicine in Hooghly district of West Bengal is still witnessing an existential reality of the ethno-medicinal usage. Out of 37 herbal plants, major portion of the medicines (48.9%) were used by Santals of all age groups in the village. Ethnomedicine has special application for the children (24.9%) and women (10.8%) respectively. Different parts of the local plants are used for regular healing, such as, root (10.81%), seeds (5.40%), fruits and flowers (5.40%), bulb and latex (2.7%). Leaves (64.9%) dominate among other used parts of the plants used for medicine (Lal and Neeraj, 2019). This study was done in Hooghly district, which is very close to the urban zones. As a consequence to the proximity of urban centres influence of neighbouring Hindu caste population is quite prominent. Some herbal plants have also been used traditionally by the Bengali speaking caste people in several parts of West Bengal (Basu, 2018; Basu and Choudhury, 2018).

Use of animal products as a part of ethno-medicinal practice among Santals has rarely been recorded. However, it is found that Santals in Bankura district use animal resources for curative purposes (Ghosh, Singhamahapatra and Mandal, 2013). Four very old Santal members of the Puinan village informed about the medicinal significance of various animals living in their surrounding ecosystem. Animal flesh is of prime focus. Shell, wax and some secondary animal resources, like honey, soil from termite mound are also with certain prevalent therapeutic applications in their daily life. This is shown in table -3.

Table – 2 Use of the plants as medicine

Sl. No	Local name	English name	Scientific name	Family	Habit	Used part	Binding element	Disease	Application procedure	Preferable age group
1	Rahorsakam	Pigeon pea	*Cajanus cajan*	Fabaceae	Tree	Leaf	Jaggery Pamelo	Jaundice, blood purification	Leaves smashed, extract mixed with one table spoon jiggery and is taken once in a day	Children
									Leaves smashed two table spoonful of the extract added to one cup of pamelo juice. The juice taken twice a day	Adults
2	Karybuhu	Creat	*Andrographis peniculata*	Acanthaceae	Herb	Leaf	Honey	Improve liver function, cure worm infestation	Juice of a handful of karybuhu regularly consumed with a tablespoon of honey in empty stomach in the morning	Children
3	Kuleknata	Swampweeds	*Hygrophila auriculata*	Acanthaceae	Herb	Leaf	water	Anaemia	Patient has to consume juice of leaf, once in a day at least for one month	All age groups
4	Rrhol	Indian hog plum	*Terminalia chebula*	Combretaceae	Tree	Seeds	water	Constipation	Mixed with hot water and honey, make a smooth paste then have it after dinner.	Adults
5	Tulsi	Holi basil	*Ocimum tenuiflorum*	Lamiaceae	Herb	Leaf	Honey	Cough and cold	Extract of handful of tulsi leaves and honey mixed, consumed three times in a day, until recovery.	All age groups

6	Bakosh pata	Malabar nut	*Justicia adhatoda*	Acanthaceae	Herb	Leaf	Water	Cough	Juice of bakosh leaf consumed once a day	All age groups
7	Sashang	Turmeric	*Curcuma longa*	Scrophulariaceae	Annual herb	Root	Milk, lime cake (chun)	Sprain, joint pain	Sashang paste mixed with some lukewarm lime cake, applied on the affected surface as per requirement	Children, and adult persons
8	Rushun	Garlic	*Allium sativum*	Amaryilidaceae	Herb	Bulb	Mustard oil	Ear problem	Juice of the bulb consumed in empty stomach, at least for one week	Children
								Anti-infectious and shrivels up of the stitch after child's birth	Boiled rushun consumed daily with parboiled rice and some drops of mustard oil	For lactating women
9	Patharkuchi	Air plant	*Bryophyllum pinnatum*	Crassulaceae	Herb (erect succulant)	Leaf	water	Sore and lesion	Smooth paste applied on affected surface at least twice a day.	All age groups
10	Monosa	Indian spurge tree	*Euphorbia neriifolia*	Euphorbiaceae	Shrub (succulent spinous)	Leaf, Stem	Honey	Cough and cold	Juice extracted from stems or leaves, mixed with honey, used to alleviate cough and cold.	All groups
11	Akando	Crown flower	*Calotropis gigantea*	Asclepiadaceae	Shrub	Leaf, latex	Nil	Joint pain, insect bite	Heated leaves are applied on the painful area. Latex directly applied on the affected area	All age groups
12	Thankuni	Indian pennywort	*Centella asiatica*	Apiaceae	Herb (creeper)	Leaf	Turmeric	Stomach pain	A mixture of leaf and small amount of freshly extracted turmeric juice, consumed in an empty stomach.	All age groups

13	Kesuri pata	Bhringraj	*Eclipta prostrate*	Asteraceae	Herb	Leaf	Water and salt	Sore in the mouth and hair fall	A smooth paste of the leaf mixed with salt and water, taken once a day in empty stomach. In case of hair fall, juice extracted handful of the leaves, applied directly on the scalp	All age groups
14	Horkkoncha	Mexican prickly poppy	*Argemone Mexicana*	Papaveraceae	Shrub	Leaf	Wheat flour and water	Stumbling and swallowing	Paste made with two tablespoons of wheat flour with 10-15 leaves, directly applied on the affected surface, at least for three days	All age groups
15	Buri dantan	Chaff flower	*Achyranthes aspera*	Amaranthaceae	Shrub	Root	Nil	Fever	Root of the plant collected in early morning, string with white thread, with a deep faith in Goddess Manosha fasten it on right wrist (if son) or left wrist (if daughter) of her child.	Children
16	Dhubi ghas	Bermuda grass	*Cynodon dactylon*	Poaceae	Herb	Leaf	nil	Gum bleeding	Patient has to chew a generous amount of the leaves, once in a day	Adults
17	Neem	Margosa	*Azadirachta indica*	Meliaceae	Tree	Leaf, Stem	Water	Intestinal worm, Gingivitis	Prepare a small pills of the neem leaves. Children have to take it at least thrice in a week. Adult individuals usually chew and crushed a thin stem of the neem every morning	Children, Adults

18	Ghetu pata	Hill glory bower	*Clerodendrum infortunatum*	Lamiaceae	Shrub	Leaf	Water, honey	Roundworm	Prepare small pills of the leaves with water and honey. Children have to consume it in the morning in empty stomach once in a week	Children
19	Mungaara	Drumstick leaf	*Moringa oleifera*	Moringaceae	Tree	Leaf	water	Immunity booster	Take lukewarm juice of mungaara, at least once in a week	Children
20	Lapung hara	Mountain knot grass	*Aerva lanata*	Amaranthaceae	Shrub	Root	Peppercorn, water	White discharge	Smooth paste made with water and a tablespoon peppercorn. Patient consume it and continue once in a day, after three days of interval	Especially women
21	Birbigar	African eggplant	*Solanum anguivi*	Solanaceae	Shrub	Fruit	Mustard oil	Bronchitis	8to10 fruits boiled in a cup of mustard oil. Applied on the chest of the patient.	All age groups
22	Peyara pata	Guava leaf	*Psidium guajava*	Myrtaceae	Tree	Leaf	Salt	Stomach ache, dysentery	Chew small leaf of guava with a pinch of salt at least for a minute, twice in a day	All age groups
23	Turitunum	Thornapple	*Datura metel*	Solanaceae	Shrub	Fruit	Mustard oil	Chest congestion, Bronchitis	Smooth paste of the fruit made without seeds, boiled with a cup of mustard oil. Applied on the chest once in a day, continued as per requirement	All age groups

24	Peyaj	Onion	*Allium cepa*	Amaryllidaceae		Bulb	Mustard oil	Joint pain	Paste of the bulb mixed with warm mustard oil and applied on affected body parts	Adults
25	Pan	Betel leaf	*Piper betle*	Piperaceae	Herb	Leaf	Water	Migraine, headache	Juice of the pan applied on forehead of the patient	Adults
26	Kodom	Burflower-tree	*Neolamarckia cadamba*	Rubiaceae	Tree	Leaf	Water	Stomach pain	Juice extracted from leaves, mixed with common salt, taken in empty stomach.	Adults
27	Tamakur	Tobacco	*Nicotiana tabacum*	Solanaceae	Herb	Leaf	Nil	Snake bite	Extract of handful amount of leaves on snake bite spot of the patient.	All age groups
28	Tandi chatam era	Amrul or Indian Sorrel	*Oxalis corniculata*	Oxalidaceae		Leaf	Water	Gastroentritis (pitti bomi)	Extract of the leaves taken once in a day and continued for a week	All age groups
29	Kayra	Banana	*Musa paraddisiaca*	Musaceae	Herb	Stem	Water	Liver problem	A glass of banana stem juice taken in empty stomach	Adults
30	Murut	Polash or parrot tree	*Betua monosperma*	Fabaceae	Tree	Seed	Mustard oil	Scorpion bite	Fine powder of the seeds mixed with mustard oil, applied immediately on the affected area	All age groups

31	Shimul	Cotton tree	*Bombax ceiba*	Malvaceae	Tree	Flower	Nil	Excessive menstrual bleeding	Smooth paste made of 3-5 flowers, patient has to take it daily after lunch	Only women
32	Kusumbibaha	Marigold	*Targetes erecta*	Asteraceae	Herb	Leaf	Nil	Prevent bleeding	Juice extracted from leaves and applied directly on the cut or scraped area	All age groups
33	Baromasia	Nayantara or Cape periwinkle	*Catharanthus roseus*	Apocynaceae	Herb	Leaf	Nil	Diabetes	Juice made of the leaves consumed 2 tablespoon in every morning in empty stomach	Adults
34	Kukruchubaha	Morog jhuti or Cockscomb flower	*Celosia cristata*	Aeaemaranthac	Herb	Flower	Water	Dysentery, Diarrhea	2-3 flowers poured in a glass of water. Patient consumes the water at three hours interval in a day	Children
35	Eradom	Castor oil plant	*Ricinus communis*	Euphorbiaceae	Herb	Root	Rock salt	Scorpion sting	Smooth paste of the root mixed with salt, applied directly on the affected area	All age groups
36	Konrutaki	Wild tomato	*Solanum barbisetum Nees*	Solanaceae	Herb	Leaf	Water	Pox	Handful of leaves soaked overnight in a glass of water. Patient takes the strained water twice in a day, at least for one week	All age groups
37	Tyarapata	Eucalyptus	*Eucalyptus cinerea*	Myrtaceae	Tree	Leaf	Coconut oil	Post-surgery pain relief	Boiled 8-10 leaves with 4 tablespoon of coconut oil, the warm oil applied on the abdomen of the new mother	Especially women (after child's birth)

Table 3 – Use of animal resources for medicine

Sl. No.	Local name	English name	Scientific name	Used part	Disease	Application procedure	Preferable age group
1	Kacchhuya	Indian Turtle	*Geochelone elegans*	Shell	Skin disease	Shell dusts are usually applied with coconut oil as per requirement	Adults
2	Gondhogokul	Asian Palm Civet	*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*	Meat and scrotum	Increase the vision, hernia	Usually meat is consumed by the people once a week or as per requirement	Vision for children, hernia for women
3	Gongha and Jhinuk	Snail and Oyster	*Pila sp.* *Lamellidens jenkinsianus*	Meat/ flesh	Increase immunity, disease prevent heart problems	Flesh of the snail is cooked as a curry with some vegetables like potato, onion, brinjal and consumed it at least once in a week	All age groups
4	Kulai	Hispid hare	*Caprolagus hispidus*	Meat	Prevent loose motion	Meat is well cooked with seasonal vegetables and consumed once in a month with rice	Children
5	Moom	Bee wax	*Cera alba*	Wax	Cracked heel, dry skin	Hot and liquid wax is mixed with coconut oil and applied on the cracked part twice in a day	Adults (especially women)
6	Rui pokar chata	Termite soil	*Hemimetabolous neopterans*	Termite soil	Menstrual pain relief	Soft termite soil mixed with water into a smooth paste and applied on lower abdomen twice or thrice in a day during menstruation	Only adult women
7	Rokoch	Land snail	*Cyclophorus saturnus*	Flesh	Improve the eye sight	Flesh of rokoch is cooked as a curry with some vegetables like potato, onion, brinjal and consumed at least once in a week	Especially children
8.	Yele sunum	Honey comb	*Apis mellifera*	Honey	Remedy from dry skin, cough	Yele sunum consumed with lukewarm water after dinner for relief from cough and directly applied on dry skin to prevent extreme dryness	Especially children but it can be applied for any age groups

Current use of ethnomedicine in healing practices among Santals

Santals mostly convey the method of traditional healing to the next generations, as a part of their acculturation process. According to the participants in the field enquiry, traditional medicines are made out of extracts from both plant and animal resources. Present study shows that, mostly women (32.7%) use the traditional medicines today. However, young women go for allopathic treatment, like vaccines and polio doses. They also visit hospitals for any emergency and/or critical health condition. In case of men, homeopathic treatment is their second choice followed by Ethnomedicines, as shown in table – 4.

Table – 4

Healing pattern preferred by Santals shown on the basis of gender

Gender of the Participants Ethno-medicinal practices	Prevalent Healing pattern (n=174)			
	Homeopathic treatment	Allopathic treatment	All	
Men	33 (18.9%)	19 (10.9%)	10 (5.7%)	16 (9.1%)
Women	57 (32.7%)	07 (4.02%)	21 (12.06%)	11 (6.3%)

In this study, data of present-day healing patterns are collected from two generations. Information gathered and analyzed on the basis of age and their educational attainment. It is found that attainment of higher level of education show higher inclination to follow allopathic medicines, as prescribed by modern doctor (table-6). Adolescent participants are largely dependent on their family members for their medical emergencies. However, school going children are well aware of allopathic treatments, as they are getting facilities from their schools. Additionally, with regular interventions of government appointed health workers *(Aasha kormi)*, the villagers are enlightened about the efficacy of allopathic medicines. Now-a-days, young adult women mostly prefer allopathic medicines for treatment of any medical emergencies, especially for childbirth. Least dependency on ethnomedicine is shown by the young generation (table-5).

Table – 5

Preference of healing measures followed by the Santals shown on the basis of their age groups

Age groups in years	Prevalent Healing pattern (n=174)							
	Ethno-medicine		Homeopathic treatment		Allopathic treatment		All forms of treatment	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
15 – 25	3 (1.72%)	13(7.47%)	10(5.74%)	4(2.29%)	9(5.17%)	11(6.32%)	4(2.29%)	7(4.02%)
26 – 36	8(4.59%)	15(8.62%)	04(2.29%)	2(1.14%)	1(0.57%)	5(2.87%)	5(2.87%)	3(1.72%)
47 – 57	16(9.19%)	18(10.34%)	3(1.72%)	1(0.57%)	0	3(1.72%)	7(4.02%)	1(0.57%)
58 and above	6(3.44%)	11(6.32%)	2(1.14%)	0	0	2(1.14%)	0	0

Table – 6

Preference of Healing measures followed by the Santals shown on the basis of their educational status

Educational status	Prevalent Healing pattern (n=174)							
	Ethno-medicine		Homeopathic treatment		Allopathic treatment		All forms of treatment	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Non-literate	5(2.9%)	11(6.32%)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Primary education	9(5.17%)	27(15.51%)	13(7.47%)	6(3.44%)	08(4.6%)	17(9.77%)	13(7.47%)	9(5.17%)
Secondary education	2(1.14%)	3(1.72%)	3(1.72%)	-	8(4.6%)	07(4.02%)	-	-
Higher Secondary education	3(1.72%)	2(1.14%)	7(4.02%)	4(2.29%)	3(1.72%)	10(5.74%)	02(1.14%)	-
Graduation	-	-	-	-	1(0.6%)	-	1(0.6%)	-

Tentative obstacles for transmitting the ethno-medicinal knowledge to the next generations in the Santal community

The transmission of indigenous knowledge on medicine one generation to the next generation of the Santal community faces several obstructions. It is essential for recognizing, addressing and preserving this heritage, which is conveyed orally. The obstructions are discussed below:

- *Diminishing of the legacy of oral tradition*

The transmission of indigenous medicinal knowledge to the next generation of the Santal community encounters several formidable barriers, each of which is pivotal to acknowledge and address, in order to safeguard this invaluable legacy. One such barrier is the reliance on oral tradition. A 78 years old Santal lady opined as follows:

'*In the old days, we learned about traditional medicine from our parents and grandparents. They themselves learned from their parents and grandparents too. But no one wrote it down. Now that we're getting old, we're finding it hard to remember everything. And our children and grandchildren do not seem to know much about our traditional medicine. It is sad because we are losing our ancestors' knowledge of natural medicine since it was never written down.*'

The Santal community has traditionally passed down their profound knowledge of medicinal plants and healing practices through oral communication. While this oral tradition has been effective for generations, it is inadvertently contributing to the loss or distortion of information over time. As younger Santal individuals become increasingly integrated into modern societies and urban environments, there is a risk of this vital knowledge eroding due to lack of comprehensive written documentation. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize the significance of this oral tradition and work towards preserving and revitalizing indigenous medicinal knowledge embedded in the Santal community.

- *Loss of biodiversity in ecosystem*

Another critical challenge is the loss of biodiversity, which poses a significant hurdle to the continuity of knowledge about traditional medicinal plant. As natural habitats are degraded and biodiversity declined, the availability of medicinal plants and resources essential for traditional healing practices diminished. A 62 years old Santal man stated, *'People are cutting down trees to build houses and factories. We are losing trees. Because of this, there are fewer trees and plants around. It is becoming difficult to find traditional medicinal plants because of all this urbanization'*.

The Santal people have a deep connection with the environment and rely on specific plants for their medicinal properties. However, the loss of these plants due to deforestation, urbanization, and environmental degradation not only threatens the Santal community's traditional healing practices but also hinders the transfer of this knowledge to the younger generation. To overcome this barrier, efforts to conserve and restore local biodiversity, coupled with education about sustainable harvesting and cultivation of medicinal plants, are crucial to ensure the preservation and transmission of indigenous medicinal knowledge among the Santal community.

- *Modernization within the Santal community*

As modernization sweeps into Santal communities, it introduces new lifestyles, technologies, and ways of thinking that can lead to a disconnection from traditional practices. The allure of modern medicine and healthcare systems, often considered more accessible and effective, is deterring younger Santal individuals from embracing and learning their ancestral medicinal plant knowledge. A 32 years old Santal lady stated,*'We don't know much about medicinal plants and herbs. We also do not know a lot about natural medicine, and we are not sure if they really work or not. That is why we do not use them much. These days, ASHA workers visit every home to check on pregnant women and babies after they are born. They give polio drops to the babies. We have a health centre in our village where we can go for check-ups for free, and they give vaccinate our children. We also get free medicine from these health centres and government hospitals. I chose to have my baby in the hospital instead of with a local midwife because I know it is safer there.'*

The rapid urbanization and changing dynamics of the modern world can create a cultural gap, causing younger generations to prioritize contemporary practices over the age-old wisdom of their elders. Recognizing these modernization-related challenges and working towards a balanced integration of traditional and modern healthcare systems is crucial in preserving the invaluable indigenous medicinal heritage of the Santal community for the future.

- *Easy accessibility of modern medical treatments*

The easy accessibility of modern medical treatments and healthcare professionals stand out as compelling hindrance. With modern healthcare readily available, younger members of the Santal community may increasingly opt for conventional medical practices, which are often perceived as more efficient and dependable. The convenience of visiting doctors and medical facilities can undermine the inclination to learn and perpetuate the intricate knowledge of medicinal plants and traditional healing practices. According to a 42 years old Santal man:

'*Finding plants for traditional medicine is difficult, but buying medicine from local shops is easy. Sometimes, health centres also give out medicines for free.'*

To sustain this vital aspect of Santal culture, it is imperative to strike a balance that acknowledges the value of indigenous knowledge while integrating modern healthcare within the community's healthcare landscape.

Conclusion

The study reveals a shift in preferences, with younger generations, particularly women, showing a greater inclination towards allopathic treatments, including vaccines and hospital visits for emergencies or critical health conditions. The study also captures changing opinions among different age groups and educational backgrounds, with higher levels of education correlating with increased reliance on allopathic medicine. Despite these shifts, ethno-medicinal practices remain prevalent among the Santal people, underscoring the enduring significance of traditional healing knowledge within their community. The Santal community, as the largest indigenous group in India, serves as a rich repository of ethno-medicinal practices that have been documented and practiced across various regions of this country. This study contributes to our understanding of the ongoing dynamics of healing patterns and the evolving relationship between traditional and modern healthcare practices among the Santal people. While plant-based Ethnomedicine has been extensively researched, there is a notable gap in literature concerning the use of animal-based ethno-medicinal practices among the Santal people. Additionally, limited data exists in respect to transmission of indigenous medicinal knowledge to the next generation and the barriers involved. Our study aims to address these gaps by focusing on the transmission of knowledge, barriers, and utilization of animal-based Ethnomedicine among the Santal community.

References

- Acharya, D. and Shrivastava, A. 2008. *Indigenous Herbal Medicines: Tribal Formulations and Traditional Herbal Practices*. Aavishkar Publishers Distributor, Jaipur, 440
- Azaizeh, H. Khalil, S. and Said, O. 2003. 'Ethnomedicinal knowledge of local Arab practitioners in Middle East region'. *Filoterapia,* 74, 98-108
- Basak, S., Banerjee, A., and Manna, C. K. 2016. 'Role of some ethno medicines used by the Santal tribal people, of the district Bankura, W.B., India, for abortifacient purposes'. *Journal of Medicinal Plants Studies,* 4(2): 125–129.
- Basu, C. 2018. 'Self-care as healing behaviour: A study from urban slum and surrounding non-slum area of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal'. *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences,* 6 (3): 592 – 598

- Basu, C. and Choudhury, S. 2018. 'Prevalence and Practice of self-medication: A study among adult Bengali population from North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, India'. *International Journal of Applied Social Science,* 5 (09): 1397 – 1414
- Bhuyan, M. 2015. 'Comparative Study of Ethnomedicine among the Tribes of North East India'. *International Journal of Social Sciences,* 4 (02): 27-32, February
- Bisai, S; Saha, K; Sharma, R; Muniyandi, M; Singh, N. 2014. 'An Overview of Tribal Population in India'. *Tribal Health Bulletin,* 20 (01): 126
- Bodding, P.O. 1911. *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, Delhi: G. Print Process
- Erickson, P. L. 2007. *Ethnomedicine,* U.S.: Wave Land Press, p. 124
- Ghosh, S., and Guha, S. P. 2021. 'The Traditional Healing Practices Vis-A- Vis Modern Medicine among the Santals: An Anthropological Study in Susunia Hill Region of Bankura and Mousuni Island of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal'. *Man in India*, 101(3–4): 189–211.
- Ghosh, T.N., Singhamahapatra, R., and Mondal, F.B. 2013. 'Traditional Use of Animals among Santhals of Bankura District', *International Journal of Latest Research in Science and Technology,* 2(6): 95-96. https://www.academia.edu/48159283/Traditional_Use_of_Animals_Among_Santhals_of_Bankura_District?uc-sb-sw=13403659
- Hembrom, T. 1996. *The Santhal- Anthropological Theological Reflection on Santhali and Biblical Tradition,* Calcutta: Puinthipustak.
- Indigenous Ethno- Indigenous Ethno-medicinal Practices Medicinal Practices among the Kandha and Santal of Odisha. 2017. *In Tribal Digital Document Repository. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI)*. Retrieved January 4, 2024, from https://repository.tribal.gov.in/bitstream/123456789/74428/1/SCST_2014_research_0337.pdf
- Kaura, S. C. 2015. 'Traditional Healing Practices among the Santals and Their Relevance: An Ethnomedicine Study'. In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress,* 76: 555–564.
- Kisku, R. 2023. 'Study On Ethnomedical Plants Used By Santal Tribes For Health Care'. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts* (IJCRT), 11(4), 143–144. https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2304374.pdf

- Lal, S., and Neeraj, B. 2019. 'A survey of some medicinally important plants of the Euphorbiaceae family used by the Santhal tribes of Santhal Pargana'. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge (IJTK),* 18(3): 610–614. http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/49361/3/IJTK%2018%283%29%20610-614.pdf
- Lieban, R.W. 1973. Medical Anthropology. In J.J. Honigman (eds.), *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, pp.1031-1072. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company.
- Mandal, A., Adhikary, T., Chakraborty, D., Roy, P. K., Saha, J. D., Barman, A., & Nbsp, P. S. 2020. 'Ethnomedicinal uses of plants by Santal tribe of Alipurduar district, West Bengal, India'. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology,* 13(20): 2021–2029. https://doi.org/10.17485/ijst/v13i20.565
- Puinan village population, caste - polba - dadpur hugli, West Bengal - Census india. www.censusindia.co.in. (n.d.). https://www.censusindia.co.in/villages/puinan-population-hugli-west-bengal-325220. Accessed on 28 October 2023.
- Raghunathan, K. 1987. 'Medico-Ethnobotanical Survey and Their Role in Research and Ayurveda', In S.K. Jain (ed.), *A Manual of Ethnobotany,* pp.86-101. India: Scientific Publishers.
- Rahaman, C. H., and Karmakar, S. 2015. 'Ethnomedicine of Santal tribe living around Susunia hill of Bankura district, West Bengal', India: The quantitative approach'. *Journal of Applied Pharmaceutical Science,* 127–136. https://doi.org/10.7324/japs.2015.50219
- Rahmatullah, M., Hasan, A., Parvin, W., Moniruzzaman, M., Khatun, A., Khatun, Z., Jahan, F. I., & Jahan, R. 2012. 'Medicinal plants and formulations used by the Soren clan of the Santal Tribe in Rajshahi district, Bangladesh for treatment of various ailments'. *African Journal of Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicines,* 9(3). https://doi.org/10.4314/ajtcam.v9i3.8
- Rahmatullah, M., Mollik, M. a. H., Azam, A., Islam, R., Chowdhury, M., Jahan, R., Chowdhury, M. H., & Rahman, T. 2009. 'Ethnobotanical survey of the Santal tribe residing in Thakurgaon district, Bangladesh'. *American-Eurasian Journal of Sustainable Agriculture,* 3(4): 889–898. https://www.cabdirect.org/cabdirect/abstract/20103334393
- Rivers, W. H. R. 1924. *Medicine, Magic and Religion.* London: Routledge p. 67
- Satapathy, C., Mohanty, A., Rout, J., Rath, N., Sahu, D. K., and Panda, S. 2020. 'Indigenous Ethno-Medicinal practices among the Kandha and Santal of Odisha', SC/ST Research &

Training Institute, Odisha. https://repository.tribal.gov.in/bitstream/123456789/74428/1/SCST_2014_research_0337.pdf

- Tripathi, S. 2019. 'Ethnomedicine and Future Challenges'. *Global Journal of Archaeology & Anthropology,* 10(5): 555796. DOI: 10.19080/GJAA.2019.10.555796
- Van Seters, A.P. 1997. 'Forest-Based Medicines in Traditional and Cosmopolitan Health Care'. *Non Wood Forest Products,* 11: 5-11.
- World Health Organization: WHO. (2023, August 10). Traditional medicine has a long history of contributing to conventional medicine and continues to hold promise. https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/traditional-medicine-has-a-long-history-of-contributing-to-conventional-medicine-and-continues-to-hold-promise. Accessed on 2 November 2023
- Yadav, J., Kumar, S., and Siwach, P. 2006. 'Folk medicine used in gynecological and other related problems by rural population of Haryana'. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge,* 5(3): 323–326. http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/6913/1/IJTK%205%283%29%20%282006%29%20323-326.pdf

Bio profile of the Authors:

[1] State Aided College Teacher, Department of Anthropology, Shyampur Shiddheswari Mahavidyalaya,
Email – rimly.anthro@gmail.com

[2] Research Fellows in Human Rights, Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta,
Email- mailchaigreen@gmail.com

[3]Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta,
Email – sutapamukhopadhyay.anth@gmail.com

Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma and his Contribution to Empowerment of Women in the Bodo Society

Bibari Boro[1] & Jhanin Mushaary[2]

Abstract

Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma (Bodofa) was a Socialist leader of India. He saw men and women as equals and complementary to each other. During that time women were deprived in all spheres of their lives, namely, socio-economy, education, politics, literature, etc. They suffered for a long time in the realm of polygamy, forced marriage, superstitious beliefs, etc. Bodofa wanted to reform such aspects. He realized that without the role of women, a society or a nation could not fully develop. A society or a nation should develop equal roles for both males and females. In the history of Bodo, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), under the leadership of Bodofa, started the Bodo movement in the years of 1980s with a demand for forming a separate statehood for Bodoland within the Indian Union. He thought that the participation of women in the Bodoland movement was necessary. For all the above mentioned reasons under his initiative and of some other ABSU leaders, the All-Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on 14 July 1986, with a view of equality between men and women while addressing the problems concerning women and empowerment. His inspiration for women was not only to have an active role in participating in the Bodoland movement but also to have, an active role in various spheres such as socio-economic, cultural, and for educational upliftment for women in Bodo Society. The Bodo women did not lag behind but were even ready to sacrifice their lives for their society. They came across various problems while participating in the Bodoland Movement. From then onward through equal participation in the Bodoland movement, today Bodo women are empowered in all spheres of life. In this paper, emphasis is given on Bodofa Upendra Brahma's contributions to women's empowerment in Bodo society and on their mobilizations on the issue of Bodo nationalism and of their participation durin g the time of the Bodoland Movement.

Keywords: *Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, Bodo Women, AATWWF, Bodoland Movement, empowerment of women.*

1.0 Introduction:

Referred to as *Bodofa* which means "Father of the Bodos", Upendra Nath Brahma was a visionary leader who moulded the Bodo society into an Autonomous Territorial Region in post-modern India. Born to agriculturists Manglaram Brahma and Lepsri Brahma on 31st March 1956 in Boragari, Dotma, Kokrajhar, BTAD (Assam), he began schooling in 1963 A.D at Mokorapara Lower Primary School, which was located close to his village. He had studied in Assamese Medium at Mokorapara L.P. School as there were no Bodo Medium Schools during that time. He completed his schooling in L.P. with a merit scholarship in 1968. In 1968 he was admitted at Dotma M.E. School and studied up to class VI. He was a brilliant student and had a bright career in his academic life. As his schooling was in Assamese medium, he could deliver speeches fluently in English, Assamese, and Hindi from his school life. He passed the matriculation examination from Sakti Ashram High School securing first division in 1975, and was admitted at Cotton College to pursue his course in science stream. Having cleared the Pre-University examination with letter marks in Physics, he joined Cotton College to pursue B. Sc. Degree with Honours in Physics. B.Sc. He eventually completed the Degree in the year 1981. Thereafter, he enrolled for B.A. at Kokrajhar College followed by M.Sc. at Gauhati University which he completed in 1986. But before taking his masters he did his B.A. from Kokrajhar College. However, his zeal for education was such that he again joined Gauhati University for LLB. However, he could not complete it having faced problems from some zealots who hated him for his community's background.

He then joined the All-Bodo Students Union (ABSU) to espouse the rights of the Bodos who had been sidelined by majority of the communities in the developmental process. Together with highlighting and raising the voice of the downtrodden Bodo community, he spoke in favour of the Bodo women getting empowered.

Living in the northern banks of the Brahmaputra, the Bodos are considered to be the aboriginal indigenous people of Assam. They are the "Son of the Soil" of Assam. Linguistically they belong to the Tibeto Barman family (ABSU, 1987). The social structure of the Bodo society is patriarchal. The male is the head of the family. All the family responsibilities are taken by males. In their society, women also have direct and indirect roles in the family and society. In the Bodo society, women also have considerable authority in certain social and domestic affairs. They also play direct and indirect roles in making of some decisions in domestic matters in the family, at the village level. Bodo women play a significant part in the socio-cultural aspects of Bodo society (Basumatary, 2019). However, due to poor financial conditions, most of the Bodo women had to refrain from schooling and are illiterate. For this reason, they were neither able to take opportunities in all spheres of their lives nor make better decisions for their future and they knew

nothing about women's rights and law. As such they were deprived. During pre and post periods of Independence of India, women are deprived in all spheres, such as in education, socio-economy and political fields. It can be mentioned that from 1930 to 1986, the educated Bodo, who followed the Brahma Religion, expressed the importance of participating in political activities, so that they could gain political rights. Socio-political organizations like the Tribal League, Tribal Sangha, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Plain Tribal Council of Assam, and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) were dominated and represented by men. They had no agenda for women's empowerment. Their potential for contribution to the Bodo Movement was not realized by the leaders. It was the turning point for Bodo women, when Bodofa became the 8th President of ABSU in 1986 and realized the empowerment of women in Bodo society. From his school life, he talked about the future of the Bodo and how other tribal communities were exploited, dominated, and assimilated by some advanced sections of the Society in all spheres of their life. He espoused a great Bodo Nationality, one which could create its own identity among the denizens of the world. He knew that women had considerable numbers and were the first teachers to any child who grew to be a man or woman later on. They would be able to do work for the upliftment of their family and society. He understood that without ensuring the betterment of women the reformation of the Society would remain incomplete. For the Bodo to become a great Nationality in the world, and all the sections of the people are to be uplifted. He realized that the deprived section of Bodo women has to be empowered in all spheres, such as education, economics, literature, politics, etc.

The time during which Bodofa lived, the state of Bodo women was pathetic, as they hardly got any chance to have them empowered. Bodofa knew that women being the first teachers of a baby, they ought to be educationally empowered so that the future generation among the Bodos and the community at large could be empowered. Forced marriages, early marriages, polygamy etc had been a bane in the Bodo society which directly affected womenfolk.

The independence of India from the British colonial regime paved the way for women to shoulder responsibilities at par with men in almost all spheres of life. As far as rights and duties are concerned, the Indian Constitution has clear provisions for the same. Article 15 of the Indian Constitution has mentioned that "The state shall not discriminate against any citizens on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (Right to equality), and there should be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters, relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State" (India, 2023)

Bodofa was elected as the 8th President of ABSU in the ABSU annual conference held at Rowta, Darrang District, Assam in 1986. From then as a President of ABSU he got the opportunity to work for the society. In this conference, Bodofa raised the demand for separate State named

'Bodoland', a geographical area specially marked for the Bodos, so that they could fulfil their socio-political and economic aspirations. Of course, this geographical territory was to remain within the Indian Union. This was desired for the protection of identity, language, religion, tradition and socio-economic development of Bodos. (Brahma, *et. al.*, 2002). Before starting the movement, he mobilized Bodo to unite all sections of the people in various Bodo inhabited areas. He knew that women were needed in the Bodo movement to make it more meaningful and successful and he encouraged the women to participate in the Bodo movement. He knew that women could do much to transform Bodo Society on all levels and he deeply believed women should take responsibility for the welfare of their Society in all spheres such as socio-economic, educational, and political spheres. He felt deprived of enjoying equal status in socio-economic, political and educational arenas in different development aspects compared to other mainstream communities. Therefore, initially suggested by Bodofa and some ABSU leaders, the All-Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on 14th July 1986 (Chaudhuri, 2004). Later this organization was renamed in 1993 as an All Bodo Women Welfare Federation (ABWWF). This women's organization was one of the strong women's organizations in the Bodo Society. The preamble of the AATWWF was "Whereas, it is considered expedient to form Federation of the women folk belonging to the Bodo community to unite themselves in a common platform through mutual understandings, was being imbibed in a common ideology to fight for ensuring the rights and justices of the Bodo women in the spheres of socio-economic, political, educational, cultural and for their emancipation from socio-domestic drudgery and thereby enabling themselves in rendering services to the promotion, welfare, and preservation of the Indigenous self identity of all Bodo groups". Following were the aim and objectives of AATWWF:

a) To work for the fulfilment of the interests and aspirations of the women.

b) To build up a bond of unity and also to foster brotherly and sisterly feelings among the Bodo Society.

c) To fight for equal rights, status, and honour of Bodo women in the socio-political spheres.

d) Remove the social evil practices and injustice from society that hampered the growth and development of Bodo women toward the path of progress.

e) To move both State and Central Governments for the security and safety of Bodo women from being victimized by gang rape and abductions in the name of law-and-order problem.

f) To move for reservation quota in all government jobs, educational institutions, and economic packages for Bodo women in government jobs.

g) To prevail upon the Government for the provision of free medical care and facilities to the Bodo women belonging to BPL (Below Poverty Level) families.

h) To raise the voice for Human Rights and civil liberties for all the downtrodden Bodo communities.

i) To stand for the ethnic identity of the Bodos, the preservation of the rich culture and traditional heritage, and the development of the Bodo language (Constitution AATWWF, n.d).

On the foundation day of AATWWF, Bodofa said to the AATWWF leaders, "No matter how big your problems are, ABSU will always be there to solve them". From his words, AATWWF members got confidence and more inspiration from him for their activities. After the formation of the women's organization under the President ship of AATWWF, Mrs. Pramila Rani Brahma and many AATTWF women leaders came forward and mobilized various Bodo inhabited areas to spread their aims and objectives of the Bodoland Movement (Narzary, 1993). After Women participated in the movement, the movement was stronger than earlier because half of the total population were women. Bodofa said, 'Without the participation of women, the Bodo movement would not be strong'. In this centuries-long bargain with Assam, Bodo women have silently but steadfastly supported the men though their participation was not much visible in the scene. But Bodo women gained new ideas and became more confident during the Bodoland Movement to resurge back and play self-effecting and vital roles to move and heard by both the central and state governments. This created new pages in the history and thus emerged a new Bodo woman ready to take up challenges and prospects of the world. By that time according to Boro womenfolk they were more well-understood and informed about their health, socio-economic, educational, and literary circumstances and made notable contributions to family, society, and community. From then on they are becoming educated, socially, educationally, economically, literally, culturally, and politically and in sports. They were more confident than before. In this paper, emphasis is given on showing Bodofa's contributions to the empowerment of women in Bodo society and in terms of their mobilizations on the issue of Bodo nationalism and participation during the Bodoland Movement.

2.0 Objectives of the Study:

a) To study the role of Bodo women in the cause of Bodoland under the leadership of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma.

b) To analyze the contribution of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma's Contributions for the Empowerment of Bodo Women.

3.0 Methodology:

Both Primary and Secondary methods are followed for the study. To collect the primary data, interviews are taken of members of Bodo women's organizations. On the other hand, Secondary data have been collected from published books, magazines, journals, internet etc. The qualitative method is used for this paper.

4.0 Research Questions:

The study has the following research questions:

a) What is the role played by women during the Bodoland Movement under the leadership of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma?

b) What are the contributions of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma towards the empowerment of women in the Bodo Society?

5.0 Discussion and Result:

The following are the contributions of the Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma towards women empowerment in Bodo society:

5.0.1 Bodoland Movement and Bodo Women:

In the years of 1980s, Bodofa UN Brahma under the banner of the All Bodo Students Union raised the demand for a separate state of Bodoland for the Bodo's and other plain tribal of Assam (ABSU, 1987). It was the first time that most of the Bodo women directly and indirectly participated in the movement. It was felt that Bodo women should not be sidelined in the process as they could play an important role in all round development of the Bodo society. Bodofa called every section of Bodo people to join the movement. As per the agenda for the achievement of the movement, under the banner of ABSU, Bodofa formed various organizations during the movement. Among the organizations, the All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on 14th July 1986, an initiative under the leadership of Bodofa (Chaudhuri, 2004). On his suggestion women too understood that it was the responsibility of women that they should participate in the movement. Before beginning the Bodoland movement ABSU conducted mobilization programmes, meetings, discussions, seminars, and workshops in various Bodo inhabited areas. On his inspiration, Bodo women also jointly worked with the All Bodo Student Union and various programs were conducted for mobilization, meetings, seminars, workshops, etc. The AATWWF members also mobilized movement in various Bodo inhabited areas, such as Meghalaya, West Bengal, and other states. The women's organization spread its activities in all the Bodo-

dominated areas within a span of four years (1986-1989) and established district, and village council level committees in Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Darrang, Barpeta, Nalbari, and Lakhimpur, etc (Chaudhuri, 2004). As suggested by Bodofa for the achievement of the Bodoland Movement, AATWWF formed mobilization groups on different levels such as district, *anchalik*, and village-level committees of AATWWF. During the Bodoland movement not only did they work with ABSU but sometimes they independently mobilized the movement in some Bodo inhabited areas. During the period of the ABSU movement, they carried out numerous activities. Women from diverse sections of the Bodo society participated in village, district, and state levels in the form of processions, dharanas, etc. Various other measures such as protest marches, silent marches; *gherao* of offices of law enforcement agencies, strikes and blockades of highways were held to highlight and resolve the problems of human rights violations, etc during the movement (Dutta, 2016). From the beginning of the movement, Bodo women have given support to ABSU in all agitation programmes.

According to Womenfolk, during the movement time, both AATWWF and BSS jointly resolved the misunderstanding between the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), and ABSU. As a guardian of the Society AATWWF leaders brought unity not only among women but also brought unity among the Bodo people. According to the women folk during the movement the policemen and the army personnel entered villages in search of the ABSU and BPAC (Bodo People Action Community) activists. They also targeted women. Persons of Police or army operations advised the village women to stay in together. Women were also assigned job of supplying or cooking food for the ABSU, BPAC members and Bodo Volunteer Force (BVF). ABSU members depended a lot on women members for organizing people and keeping communication between common people and the ABSU members. They also collected clothes and distributed them to the riot victims who took shelter in different camps. In case of sudden police, or army raids in any villages, women rushed to protect the innocent villagers and in case of innocent people being arrested, they forced them to release him/her (Dutta, 2016). They are instrumental in minimizing atrocities on women by the armed forces. Common people including innocent farmers working in the fields had to suffer increasingly in terms of police atrocities and torture. Men had to go out in hiding at night fearing police raids. Women and children stayed together always alert to form layers of protection for each other. There was an incident. While Bodo women were coming out to protest against the arrest of an innocent villager from Zumduar by uniformed personals; two brave women, Gainde Basumatary and Helena Basumatary lost their lives, when police force inhumanly opened fire from a short range at Soraibil on 12 May 1988. Gainde and Helena were declared martyrs by Bodofa. At present 12th May is observed as the day of sacrifice, known as "*Boro*

Bima San" (Bodo Mother Day) (Brahma, 2012). On 3rd, February 1988, AATWWF organized a Mass Rally in Kokrajhar district in protest of the incident of Bhumka rape case, and atrocities on the Boro women by the police forces. In this procession, they gave the slogans as, "We want justice", "We want Human Rights", *Aijw Afad-Jindabad",* etc. (Mosahari, 2011). Against this case, AATWWF arranged a press conference at Guwahati, which was also supported by ABSU president Bodofa (Daimary, 2012). This was successful, and the culprits were punished. It can be said that leadership quality was inculcated amongst the Bodo women and the Bumka Rape case of Kokrajhar District by the police force was handled successfully by them and the culprits were punished. During that time young women and Bodo girls were given nursing training; so that the nurses could look after the injured persons and activists of the movement (Brahma, 2012). According to the Women folk, sometimes they were also trained by doctors in different primary health care centres. From 1989 to 1990, most of the girls from each village council received nursing training; such as first aid, pharmaceutical training, handling burn cases, giving on different types of aids for bullet injuries, etc. The training aimed to help the ABSU, BPAC, and Volunteer Force in time of need. According to the women folk, AATWWF members of different villages and district councils carried important messages and letters by cycle from one place to another at the instances of ABSU.

It can be mentioned here that after the participation of women, the Bodoland movement grew stronger than earlier. From then on women became conscious of their rights, society, and empowerment in all spheres of their life. All these happened with the inspiration of Bodofa. Bodo women's participation in the Bodoland movement was important and remarkable in the history of the Bodo. The Bodo women did not lag behind and were even ready to sacrifice their lives for their society. Bodofa said. "Without the participation of Bodo women, the movement would not succeeded". Since the time of the Bodoland Movement, many socio-economic changes took place in Bodo society. Under the banner of AATWWF Bodo women were actively involved in the political aspect. They have remarkable contributions towards the achievement of the Bodo Accords, named as Bodoland Autonomous Council in 1993. Many Bodo women were united and involved in all such activities of the Bodo movement. Bodofa gave opportunity to work to the Bodo women who participated in the Bodoland Movement which encouraged them to learn organizational skills in various fields.

5.0.2 Social Status on Women's Evils:

During that time many social evils cropped in the Bodo society like; trafficking of women, school dropouts, cases of witch-hunting, abuse of girl children, forced marriage, polygamy, domestic violence, etc which are still prevailing in the society. He wanted to eradicate all these

evils. Bodofa not only encouraged participation of women in the Bodoland Movement but also, gave women opportunity to work for their development in all spheres. According to womenfolk Bodofa delivered speeches on women's issues, in various programs of the women's organization, namely, the women's body formation, meetings, discussions, seminars, etc. Issues discussed were: Fundamental Rights of women, their law and justice, health and hygiene, the role of the mother in her family, the mother's responsibility to educate her children, women's education, etc. He also talked for eradication of evil social practices, which are prevailing in their society, namely, early marriage, superstitious beliefs, alcoholism, forced marriage, Polygamy, etc. which are hampering the growth and development of the society. He supported the widow's remarriage.

It may be mentioned that initially under his suggestion all AATWWF women members were not only playing active role by participating in the Bodoland movement, but sometimes they organized various programs, such as, meetings, discussions, seminars on the topic of women's issues. According to women when AATWWF leaders invited him as a chief guest, many times Bodofa attended their meetings and suggested some ideas or agendas for their future planning. He strongly supported the role of AATWWF members in removing some social evils, such consumption of alcohol and Polygamy etc (Narzary, 1993). Inspired by Bodofa, AATWWF members made remarkable contributions by organizing the people during the movement. They organized seminars, meetings, discussions etc on issues related to health and hygiene, family planning, the necessity of cleanliness, the role and responsibilities of mothers in the family, witch-hunting, bad effects of polygamy, women's education, polygamy, early marriage, superstitions, alcoholism, drugs, forced marriage, etc (Chaudhuri, 2004). Mrs Kannika Daimari the former General Secretary of AATWWF said, women also jointly worked with ABSU to stop consumption of alcohol in every Bodo village. In 1989, on 4th April AATWWF took a resolution for 'Anti Alcohol Day'. For many years 4th April was observed as 'Anti Alcohol Day' by AATWWF. In this way, many Bodo women became conscious of their family, and society to build 'A Great Bodo Society'. In contemporary times Bodo women play an instrumental role in decision-making at the family and village level, and the society in general. AATWWF prepared the ground for today's women leaders in the Bodo society.

5.0.3 Educational:

In earlier days, compared to women in advanced communities, most of the Bodo women were illiterate. This was due to unawareness of the parents, lack of higher educational institutions nearby, parents gave less importance to her/his daughters than sons, family poverty, etc. Most of his/her daughters went to earn money outside the state to earn money for alleviation of poverty of their family. Some of them were sacrificed for their life due to suffering from molestation, rape,

murder etc. Only a few women had the opportunity for higher education. Most of them did not know their fundamental rights, law, and justice. Mostly they depend on their family.

Bodofa envisioned that education is the backbone for the progress and empowerment of any society. Hence, he stressed the need to educate Bodo youths. He espoused that women being blessed with the same mental capacity as men can equally excel in all spheres of life. Therefore, he voiced for women's education.

During that time most of the non-tribal women were highly educated than Bodo women in various fields. Bodofa knew that education could bring about positive attitudinal change, provide Knowledge, and creative awareness, and develop a capacity to understand and be comprehensive. Bodofa knew that education was also a pathway for economic development. Employment through education paves the way for financial improvement.

Bodofa could envision that educated women can take care of the family in a better way. They can give a better direction to the education of children. Educated women can take care of their household, and finances, and educate their children, thus still sowing the seed for better tomorrow. Bodofa did not confine education only to the basics of formal education but incorporated knowledge and skills to understand various fields related to financial planning savings, basics of banking, financial earning, etc. which if inculcated by children could lead to the betterment of the family and the society at large.

Bodofa supported women to take up the mantle of writers. Due to his supportive nature a good number of Bodo women came into the literary horizon. Writers and poets came into the scene of this creative field. Bhabani Baglari, a renowned writer and a school teacher, said, 'by the inspiration of Bodofa a few students of Kokrajhar College, published magazines named 'Gwdan Fwngkha' in 1984 and 'Thandwi' in 1985. In this magazine Bodofa contributed his article, and also contributed an amount of Rs 1000/- for publication'. Bodofa not only inspired but also supported them'. It can be mentioned that after the death of Bodofa in 1990, AATWWF published a magazine named 'Songdan' in 1991 which is one of the first magazines of Bodo women. The Kokrajhar district AATWWF started publishing 'Rwikhamuthi' from the same year. Women related issues are the central theme of this annual magazine (Chaudhuri, 2004). Of course, the contributors are not confined to women only but even male writers have published articles in it.

Never were Bodo women more confident than they are today getting exposed to the fruits of education. Before the Bodoland movement, the literary rate of Bodo women was very low, from then till date number of qualified Bodo women were absorbed as teachers in higher learning institutions of different Colleges and Universities. Most of the teachers in schools are women

and their presence and service are seen in all government and private departments and offices. Young successful students have spread out all over the country to pursue their studies in different courses like medicine, engineering, agriculture, law, fashion designing, hospitality, management, business management, civil service, science, social science general courses, games, and sports, singer, dancer, and creative fields.

5.0.4 Cultural:

Bodofa was an ardent believer that without one's culture, a community cannot survive and have a unique identity. Following his concept AATWWF also inspired women to wear the traditional dress "Dokhona". Inspired by Bodofa's vision, the Bodos withstood the onslaught of the majority to have the "Sardormekhela" (traditional attire worn by the majority in Assam) imposed on them. When in trouble, they thought of the need to protect and enrich their glorious tradition, language, and culture (Brahma et al 2000). Bodofa inspired AATWWF to adopt the resolution to distribute "Aronnai" (traditional scarf of the Bodos) to each movement leaders during that time. This decision was taken in the executive meeting of AATWWF held on 20th of July 1989. This decision was inspired by the Bodo tradition of weaving an "Aronai" within a single night, for the men-folk going to war, so that they get protected from evils (Chaudhuri, 2004). According to Boro women folk during that time every family had a loom. Every clothe woven by them, reflected the beauty of nature. The clothes are named by natural titles e.g. Hajw agor, Thaigir bibar, Farrwo magon, daorai mwkhreb etc. Women were expert in weaving cloths. The Boro women weave colourful designs. During earlier times Bodo women wove clothes only for wearing but at present they also weave for business. On October 28, 1987, the ABSU organized a 'Cultural Demonstration' as one of the programs of its movement in the Bodo populated areas by dancing and playing their traditional musical instruments. The program was followed by the 'Cultural Rally' to get a separate state for them (Mosahari 2011).

5.0.5 Economic Empowerment:

Economic empowerment means women with economic well-being associated with a change of women. Bodofa supported women's and girls' economic empowerment. He suggested today's women should have expert employment opportunities and training in finance. However, for women to be economically empowered, they need both the ability to prosper economically and the power to act on economic discourse. He also suggested in various meetings and conferences of AATWWF members, Bodo women participate in different economic activities such as employment opportunities, markets, business, shops, etc. The 1988-1989 year can be the 'Economic Revolution' of Bodo women because during this year most of the women began

to earn their livelihood in various sectors. Earlier only a few women came out for business. AATWWF organized awareness-programme seminars, conventions, conferences, and workshops in different corners of Bodo inhabited areas of Assam to discuss issues related to Movement and Socio-Economic problems.

According to the women folk during the movement, in the era of Bodofa, the mobility of women became restricted due to police hostility. Bodo women from depressed families had to look out for alternative livelihoods due to the inability of their men to come out to seek work to feed their families (Brahma, 2012). In this way, they started markets at every Bodo inhabited area for their livelihood. They didn't sit idle, but learned the business strategies against all adversities. A good number of women were vegetable vendors and were engaged in small-scale businesses. Women -folk of this village participate in many other activities, weaving, fishing, marketing, etc. 70% of Households have their own weaving gears. They weave clothes for themselves for other members of the family and thereby reduce expenditures on these items. Many women are also involved in many other economic activities, e.g. weaving, fishing, marketing, etc. The women are also involved in economic activities, like the rearing of cattle, pigs, fouls, Eri-worm, etc. and some of them run small tea stalls in the weekly markets. It may be mentioned that from 1987 to 1989 there was an economic revolution for women. Today qualified women from good families have set up their business centres like weaving, retailing, designing, handicraft items, food preservation, etc. Hospitality comes naturally to Bodo women as a tradition and this characteristic has helped in booming successful traditional food courts in towns of today's Bodo areas.

5.0.6 Political:

Women's involvement in political activities in the participation of Bodo women in the political field started from the language movement also called the Roman Script movement of 1974-75. At this time most of the women were school and college students so, they did not actively participate in the Movement. However, since 1930, the educated Bodos who follow the Brahma religion have expressed the importance of participating in political activities to fight for their political rights.

Inspired by Bodofa's vision to have the women folk politically empowered, ABSU gave ample opportunities to Bodo women to showcase their leadership skills. Bodofa's philosophy led to women like Mrs. Pramila Rani Brahma, and Miss Kamali Basumatary, starting their political careers as close associates of Bodofa and also members of AATWWF.S.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, we can conclude that Bodofa's vision was to empower women educationally, economically and politically. Bodofa did not go against the very foundation of the

Bodo society which since ancient times has given equal status to women. Due to his unwavering support to women's empowerment, one finds women organisations within the Bodo community as AATWWF getting a prominent role and voice in the decision-making process related to the Bodo community. The empowered Bodo women of today's time have much to thank Bodofa for it.

References:

- Basumatary, P. 2018. *Bodoland Movement and Its Impact on the Bodo Society*. A Doctoral Thesis submitted to the Dibrugarh University in the Department of Political Science.
- Brahma, N. 2008. *Socio-Political Institutions in Bodo Society.* A Thesis Submitted to Guwahati University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts.
- Mushahary, S. 2006. *The thesis on the topic Bodoland Movement: Bodoland Movement A Study in Ethnicity and Political Development Among the Bodos of Assam from 1967 to 1993.* A Thesis submitted to fulfill the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the faculty of Arts at Guwahati University.
- Ajoy, R. 1995. *The Bodo Embroglio*. Krishan Kumar Spectrum Publications. Pan bazar Main Road Guwahati 781 001 Assam. Printed by: D.K. Fine Art Press, Delhi.
- Chaudhuri, S. 2004. *The Bodoland Movement and Women's Participation*. Published and printed by Krishan Mittal for Mittal Publications, A- Mohan Garden, New Delhi- 110059, India.
- Compiled by -Brahma, Y. Z. 2001. *Bodoland Movement 1986-200, A Dream and Reality.* Published by All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) Kokrajhar, Bodoland India. Printed at: Saraighat Offset Press Bamunimaidum, Ghy-781021.
- Daimary, P. 2002. *Pilgrimage to Bodoland*. The National Voice Publications Udalguri, Darrang. Printed at Daorai Press, Udalguri, Darrang.
- Dutta, P. 2016. *Women and Bodoland Conflict*. Published and printed by Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi -110002
- Mondal, S. 2011. *History and Culture of the Bodo*. Publisher Satyendra Nath Mondal, Printed by: SAILEE 4A Manicktola Main Road, Kolkata-700 054.

- Mosahari, P. 2011. *Political Identity Crisis of the Bodo and their Bodoland Movement*. Published by: N.L. Publications Ananda Ram Barua Road Pan bazar, Guwahati - 781001 Assam, India. Printed at: Mahamaya Printing Works Kokrajhar, BTAD(Assam).
- AATWWF. (n.d.*). Constitution of All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation*. Published by Smt. Kanan Basumatary, on behalf of AATWWF, Kokrajhar. Printed at M/S Flavia printers, RNB Road Kokrajhar.
- ABSU. 1987. *Why Separate State of Bodoland.* All Bodo Student Union. H.Q. Kokrajhar, Baganshali.
- Basumatary, P. 2018. *Boro Women and Social Transformation*. In K. B. Boro, Aijwni Rega (p. 21). Design and printed @iGlobal Graphics (Printer and Publishers) Odalguri, BTAD(Assam).
- Basumatary, R. 2019. *Social and Political role of Bodo women: A Study of Kokrajhar district BTAD, Assam.* A thesis submitted to Bodoland University in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.
- Brahma, P. 2012. "Emerging of New Bodo Women at the Background of the Bodoland Movement." In S. Basumatary, *Bodoland Mungkhlong* (p. 72). Printed at Mecharge Narzary Offset Printers, Kokrajhar Jwhwlao Daimalu Road.
- Hazoary, R. 2012. Nwijise Mwga arw beni unao Bodo Somajao ABWWF ne Gwnangthi. In ABWWF, *Nwijise Jwothai Arw beni unao ABWWF ni Gwnangthi* (p. 21). Published by the Central Committee of ABWWF, Printed at Oasis Offset Printers Chapaguri, Chirang, BTAD.
- K., D. 2012. Nwijise Jwothai Mwga arw beni unao Boro Somajao ABWWF ni Gwnangthi. In ABWWF, *Nwijise Jwothai Mwga arw beni unao Boro Somajao* ABWWF ni Gwnangthi (p. 51). Published by the Central Committee of ABWWF, Printed at Oasis Offset Printers Chapaguri, Chirang, BTAD.
- Basumatary, D. 2022. *Geneses of Bodoland Movement*. Publisher: Thunlai Publications, Barama, Baksa, BTR, Assam. Printed at: Imprint & DTP: Mohilary Printers, Salbari.
- Basumatary, A. 2012. ABWWF ni maonai arw maonagow biban. In *ABWWF, Nwijise Jwothai arw beni unao ABWWF ni Gwnangthi(Importance of ABWWF in the 21st century and Afterwards (pp. 86-94)*. Published by ABWWF, Printed at Oasis Offset Printers, Chapaguri, Chirang, BTAD.

- Narzary, S. 1993. ABWWF ni Adi Guri arw Jwoganaiyao Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma. In *B. Narzary, Sukhyathi Narzary (Jeoni Dahar) (pp. 34-38)*. Printed at Bodosa press, Kokrajhar, Assam.
- India, C. o. (2023, February 15). Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Retrieved from httops://www.constitution of India.net>articles>articles-1...:/article-15-prohibition-of-discrimination-on-grounds-of-religion-race-caste-sex-or-place-of-birth/

Bio profile of the Authors:

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Bodoland University.
Email Id. bibari0087@gmail.com

[2]Assistant Professor.
Department of Political Science, Bodoland University.

From Mirpur to Bethkundu Suklalpur: Reflections of Cultural Transformation of Portuguese Settlers over a Period of Six Decades

Samita Manna

Abstract

Mirpur, a Christian village, situated in Mahishadal Police Station, near Geonkhali, Purba Midnapore District of West Bengal is not too far from Kolkata (the state capital). At the end of the eighteenth century, this village was donated to a few Portuguese people by the Queen of Mahishadal due to their bravery and devotional work with the Mahishadal Rajbari in making it free from the hands of the Bargis. As a result, ultimately, they worked as protectors and drove away the Bargis (Maratha plunderers) from that area. Gradually, with time, they established their rights as citizens of the locality. Side by side, social researchers from different branches have been interested in knowing their socio- political, economic, and cultural adjustment tothe existing local population. This study is purely based on field views to observe their changing lifestyles after sixty years, as this village was studied sixty years ago. It focuses on three major issues: infrastructural changes, changing relations in their everyday lives, and newly developed attitudes and socio-political identity over this period.

Key words: *Christian village, Cultural Adjustment, Field Views, Changing Lifestyles, Socio-Political Identities*

Introduction

Mirpur, a Christian village near Geonkhali, Purba Midnapore, is well known to the neighboring people which is100 kilometers away from Kolkata.The village was settled by the Portuguese people who came to this area during the reign of King Anandalal Upadhyay of Mahishadal in the later part of the eighteenth century. Mirpur is not only the Portuguese population's settlement in the district of undivided Midnapur because in mid -16th century in different parts of Bengal, various settlements of the Portuguese population were developed as they had skilled knowledge about fighting both sea and land. Nearly three hundred years before a few Portuguese (gunners) were brought by the Queen of Mahishadal (O'Malley 1911, Compos 1919, Basu 1939, Ghosh

1957, Karan 1958).

'They were identified as protector heroes and brave fighters... During the Pan-Indian movement in 1942, and in earlier anti-British movements, the Christians fought alongside the Hindus against British rule. The Muslims in the district allied themselves with the British, hoping that such an alliance would ensure the creation of Pakistan (Chakrabarty 1992)'.

They were transported here only to protect the kingdom of Mahishadal and its neighboring areas from the hands of the 'Bargis', the Maratha plunderers. Finally, they were successful and made Mahishadal free from the 'Bargis'. After that long battle and their love for the place, they wanted not to leave it. For rendering their service devotionally, the then Queen donated 200 acres of land to them and named the village Mirpur for their habitation. After getting lands from the Mahishadal Rajbari, they settled there. Since then, this place has been popular and acknowledged as a Portuguese Christian village in this district.

At the end of 1960s, the borders of the Midnapore district were restructured as a measure to help the national integration of India. The village of Mirpur became extinct and gave way to two new villages: Bethkundu and Suklalpur. The Christian community settlement is located exactly south of Suklalpur and north of Bethkundu. This place is known as Christianpalli (literally the Christian village), though, at the beginning of the 19th century, it was known by the same religious groups as Feringui 7 Para (Campos 1919). Today, Mirpur is the name used in cartography, in the works of Basu, and in O'Malley's census. Mirpur is also used in a very particular and friendly way by the Christian self-style' upper class 'with Portuguese surnames' (Caixeiro2000).

Objectives

The major objectives of the study is to find out the cultural transformations of the Portuguese settlers over a period of six decades. The earlier study done by Bhowmick in the 1960s has been considered a point of reference to highlight the following changes over these periods. These are as follows:

1. Infrastructural changes taken place in their locality;
2. Changing relations in their everyday lives;
3. Newly developed attitudes and socio-political identity with the passage of time.

Mirpur village was studied by Bhowmick, an anthropologist, in the year 1960 (Bhowmick 1961). As an anthropologist, he studied the village through field views. His study gave the researcher an informative idea about this group. After that again the present researcher in the

years 2022-2023 has made the study to observe the relevant changes that occurred during this period.

Sample

100 sample families have been selected for this study. Out of these families, 25 are converted Christians. Among these 25 families, five have converted within five to ten years and the rest were settled here about 200 to 250 years ago. There are many causes for their settlement. Many of them settled here due to migration, love for Christianity, to get rid of poor socio- economic status, and establish marital relations, etc.

During the time of the survey 2022-23, the total number of Christian families were 125. They are distributed in two villages- Village Bethkundu and village Suklalpur. In villages Bethkundu and Suklalpur there were other families like Hindus and Muslims. But only Christian families were selected for this study. The families are divided into two groups-Protestants and Catholics. All available families are interviewed through a complete enumeration.

Table 1 – Sample Distribution

Name of the Village	Protestant	Catholic	Total
Bethkundu	15(15.00)	39(39.00)	54 (54.00)
Suklalpur	15(15.00)	31(39.00)	46 (46.00)
Total	30 (30.00)	70 (70.00)	100 (100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table-1 describes the distribution of the sample population in village Mirpur. In 1960s the Mirpur village was in the border of two villages- Bethkundu (54) and Suklalpur (46).

Data have been collected through interview techniques and observation. Case studies and depth interviews are also used to collect detailed information from the respondents. At the entry point of the villages, the Muslim communities live there. Now the Christian population are not at all isolated. They maintain good social relationships with all religious groups but the date of their arrival, they were isolated and separated and considered untouchable due to their vulgarity.

Socio – economic Characteristics of the Mirpur village

Table 2– Family Types

Name of the Village	Family Types		Total
	Nuclear	Joint	
Bethkundu	29(29.00)	25(25.00)	54 (54.00)
Suklalpur	28(28.00)	18(18.00)	46 (46.00)
Total	57 (57.00)	43 (43.00)	100 (100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 3– Number of Family Members

Name of the Village	Family Members			Total
	1 – 3	4 - 6	Above 6	
Bethkundu	17(17.00)	27(27.00)	10(10.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	16(16.00)	28(28.00)	2(2.00)	46(46.00)
Total	33(33.00)	55(55.00)	12(12.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table-2 and 3 describe the number of families and family types in two villages.

Nuclear families are predominant there, though joint families are not very few. The majority of the families consist of 4 to 6 members. Both the villages show the same trend.

Table 4– House Types

Name of the Village	House Types			Total
	Pakka	Kachha	Mixed	
Bethkundu	32(32.00)	16(16.00)	6(6.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	29(29.00)	13(13.00)	4(4.00)	46(46.00)
Total	61(61.00)	29(29.00)	10(10.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 5– Family Income

Name of the Village	MonthlyFamily Income (Rs.)					Total
	1001 - 5000	5001 – 10000	10001 - 15000	15001 - 20000	Above 20000	
Bethkundu	09(9.00)	17(17.00)	12(12.00)	02(2.00)	14(14.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	04(4.00)	15(15.00)	11(11.00)	08(08.00)	08(08.00)	46(46.00)
Total	13(13.00)	32(32.00)	23(23.00)	10(10.00)	22(22.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 6– Electricity Facility in House

Name of the Village	Electricity		Total
	Have	Have Not	
Bethkundu	54(54.00)	-	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	45(45.00)	01(1.00)	46(46.00)
Total	99(99.00)	01(1.00)	100.00(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 7– Drinking Water Facility

Name of the Village	Drinking Water Facility		Total
	Tube well	Tap Water	
Betkundu	21(21.00)	33(33.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	13(13.00)	33(33.00)	46(46.00)
Total	34(34.00)	66 (66.00)	100.00(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Brick built (*pakka*) houses dominate in the villages. But this scenario has been very common since 2010. Avas Jogona scheme implemented by the central government as well as the state government replaces the Mud- built (*kachcha*) houses with brick- built (*pakka)* houses. Before that only three or four families have two story *pakka* buildings as they had been engaged jobs in navy. 99% families have electric facilities since 2000. Due to *sajaldharaprakalpa,* 2014*,* 66% houses had got tap water facilities and 34% families till today are availing of tubewell facilities.13% families' monthly income is within Rs.5000.00 and above Rs.20,000.00 earn monthly 22% families. So, except a few maximum familys' family income is not very few (Table- 4, Table- 5, Table- 6 and Table- 7).

Table 8– Fuel Facility

Name of the Village	Fuel Facility		Total
	Wood+ Gas	Gas	
Bethkundu	31(31.00)	23(23.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	25(25.00)	21(21.00)	46(46.00)
Total	56(56.00)	44(44.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 9– Toilet Facility

Name of the Village	Toilet Facility		Total
	Open Field	Toilet	
Bethkundu	-	54(54.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	-	46(46.00)	46(46.00)
Total	-	100(100.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 10– Kitchen Place

Name of the Village	Kitchen Place			Total
	Kitchen	Open Place	Varanda	
Bethkundu	30(30.00)	4(4.00)	20(20.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	22(22.00)	8(8.00)	16(16.00)	46(46.00)
Total	52(52.00)	12(12.00)	36(36.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Parentheses indicate percentages

Many changes have been observed in their daily livelihoods. For cooking purpose they use gas (provided by the government project-ujjala jojona) and wood. Now after getting a pakka house they have also made a separate kitchen (52%). Open fields are not used for excreta. All families of the village have their own toilets since 2017-2018 year (Table- 8, Table- 9 and Table- 10).

Table 11– Occupations of the Head of the Family

Name of the Village	Occupation							Total
	No Occupation	Service	Business	Agriculture	Labour	House Wife	Other	
Bethkundu	Male 8 female3 =11	4 (4.00)	4 (4.00)	11 (11.00)	22 (22.00)	1 (1.00)	1 (1.00)	54 (54.00)
Suklalpur	Male 4 female4 =8	2 (2.00)	2 (2.00)	5 (5.00)	25 (25.00)	1 (1.00)	3 (3.00)	46 (46.00)
Total	19 (19.00)	6 (6.00)	6 (6.00)	16 (16.00)	47 (47.00)	2 (2.00)	4 (4.00)	100 (100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 12–Educational Qualification

Name of the Village	Educational Qualification of the head of the family							Total
	Can not Read and Write	Read and Write	I – IV	V - IX	Madhyamik	Higher Secondary	Graduation	
Bethkundu	1(1.00)	02(2.00)	12(12.00)	26(26.00)	9(9.00)	3(3.00)	1(1.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	1(1.00)	3(3.00)	09(9.00)	25(25.00)	3(3.00)	3(3.00)	2(2.00)	46(46.00)
Total	2(2.00)	5(5.00)	21(21.00)	51(51.00)	12(12.00)	6(6.00)	3(3.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 13– Quantity of Land

Name of the Village		Quantity of Land (Katha)				
	No Land	1 - 20	21 - 40	40 - 60	60+	Total
Bethkundu	0	47(47.00)	5(5.00)	1(1.00)	01 (120 Katha)	Due to scarecity54
Suklalpur	0	42(42.00)	3(3.00)	1(1.00)	0	46(46.00)
Total	0	89(89.00)	8(8.00)	2(2.00)	1(1.00)	100(100.00)

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

The majority of the households (89.00%) have less land (1-20) katha as they are not agriculturists. They always love to do work in non- agricultural fields, like hotel workers, porter, workers in ship, industrial workers and sometimes in times of jobs they work in agricultural fields (16%).The likeness of their jobs easily indicates that they are not the local rural people. They had migrated and settled here. Their educational qualification is very poor. Madhyamik and above are 21%. Even among the youth, this trend is seen. Only now do the young generation's boys and girls go to school after getting incentives from the government (Table – 11, Table – 12 and Table – 13). 96% families have no cow, only 8 families have ducks, not a single family likes to keep goat, only a few families have cocks and hens (25%).

Table 14–Nature of Savings

Name of the Village	Savings		Total
	Yes	No	
Bethkundu	18(18.00)	36(36.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	13(13.00)	33(33.00)	46(46.00)
Total	**31(31.00)**	**69(69.00)**	**100(100.00)**

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

Table 15– Loan

Name of the Village	Loan		Total
	Yes	No	
Betkundu	20(20.00)	34(34.00)	54(54.00)
Suklalpur	24(24.00)	22(22.00)	46(46.00)
Total	**44(44.00)**	**56(56.00)**	**100(100.00)**

Figures in the Parentheses (brackets) indicate percentages

The majority of them have no savings but, 44% have taken loans from bank or SHGs for home or business. Other purposes are very nominal (Table-14 and Table-15).

After 60 years

Many changes have been made since the 1960s. Due to the settlement of the Portuguese in this area, the place is historically very famous; social researchers and the outsiders open their minds to studding and visiting the place accordingly. Over time, they became the citizens of this particular area. They have earned voting rights. Only one of them, named Madhabi Rozario 20 years ago, elected as a panchayet member. They are very honest and dutiful. All of them are Christians and believe in Christianity with the core of their hearts.

Infrastructural Changes

The village itself has its original beauty. Each and every house has its own pond. The mud roads are replaced by moram or pakka roads (2011dhalai). All the main roads are now dhalai. All the houses of this area have been properly electrified since 2000. This is one of the major criteria for development. The children are attending school. A few womenfolk of the village are also engaged in different programmes arranged by SHGs to empower the rural women: training schools for sewing, courses for beautification, through which they may open schools. Portuguese Smriti Sangha Club is also there. Naridanga, a NGO established 2016 for knitting. At present,

there are one Christian woman, five Muslim women and, fourteen Hindu women. The home delivery has totally stopped, since 2005. Rural health centers as well as rural hospitals play the major roles in making the area free from maternity deaths and infant mortality (also see Basu et al 1980). In the last five years, there have been no such deaths among the respondents related to prenatal and postnatal. Open fields are not used for toilets. Since 2017-18 toilet facilities have been available for all. Sajal Dhara has been in operation since 2014. Regarding educational progress, there are a few schools. In 1947 Bethkundu village established a Prathamik Vidyalaya and again in 1980 there was a new Prathamik Vidyalaya. On the other hand, Suklalpur Prathamik Vidyaloya was also seen in 1957.



Figure-3 Village Road



Figure-4 A big pond



Figure-5 Mixed House



Figure-6 Brick-built House (Sorbindu Rozario)

There are two Churches: one is Catholic and the other is Protestant. Earlier at Mirpur, there was no Church, but all the Portuguese families belonged to protestant faiths. Probably at the end of

19th century (1824), Protestant priest visited the village, and converted the Portuguese population into Protestantism. After 12 years again, in 1836 near Protestant Church another Catholic church was built up. In the 1940s, a Roman-Catholic priest from Holland went to the village and a major part of them reverted to Catholicism. Initially, the two churches were made by mud-built walls and corrugated iron sheet roofs, but now they are newly constructed with a modern look since the 1970s onward.



Figure-7 Protestant Church (restructured-1981)



Figure-8 Catholic Church (restructured-20th April, 1975)

Though there are two Churches, no such distinguishable features are observed among the two sections of the population. The Christian people in this area are very popular, and there is no conflict. All the families belonging to different castes and communities, and even the other religious groups make good conversions among them. But on the other hand, the Christian rules are very rigid to convert the non- Christians to Christians. If any non- Christian person wants to establish marital relationship with them, then a long religious procedure would become necessary, and after completion of this procedure, only the marital relationship would be possible.

At present, this Christian community is very firm regarding the restoration of their cultural elements. They regularly attend the Church. All rituals and ceremonies related to birth, death, and marriage are highly associated with their religion, especially the father of the Church takes on the responsibility of doing all sacred jobs. No one is exceptional. Regularly, they read the Bible in their houses, and the individuals also are motivated to do so. As a result, all the Christian communites in Mirpur village (now under the two villages: village Bethkundu and Suklalpur) are very obedient, and reliable. Honesty and trustworthiness are the basic components of their lives. Once, this Portuguese population was stigmatized by their unlawful acts, but in this area, they were reidentified as their new roles. Henceforth, they were identified as Mirpurians with many positive traits. Over periods of time, they restore it.

Father Bower visited the village in 1830, and described the inhabitants of Mirpur as' nominal

Christians' with scarcely any sign of Christianity except a few images of the Virgin Mary and saints. The other communities did not have a good impression of them, as they were Portuguese and descendants of pirates. But on the other hand,' they were protector heroes, a symbol of courage and strength, a positive identity, versus pirates, rapists and murderers, a symbol of destruction and immorality, a negative identity can be solved on the level of social reality: outlaws became protectors and allies of the Raja of Mahisadal, a symbol of power and prestige' cited from (Caixeiro 2000).

Socio-cultural Syncretism

Due to the interaction of the three religious groups in the villages of Bethkundu, and Suklalpur, the Portuguese Christians have adopted many local traits, mainly those of the Hindus rather than Muslims. On the other hand, a good number of Hindus also converted to Christians. In their everyday life as well as in the important life events, i.e., rites de passage, they have gradually assimilated with the culture of the Hindus.

The birth of a new baby is a joyous event, but they do not adopt any pollution period like the Hindus. Every child has to be baptised within one to three months by the hand of the father. The children have to be renamed with Christian names. The first rice eating ceremony is also arranged, and the number of guests and the father are invited without any ritual. For girls, seven months and for boys, six months are to be considered for them like the local Bengali cultures.

During the time of marriage, there is no dowry system. On the day of marriage, the groom and his relatives come to the house of the bride. The marriage ceremony is done by exchanging the ring in the presence of the father in a Church. After that, the bride is given *sindur* (Vermilion) by the hands of the groom on her forehead and the bride puts bangle made of conch shell, and polla another red coloured bangle as the sign of marriage. But on that same date the groom leaves his parent's house. After the death of the deceased, the dead body was kept in front of a Church. All the members of the community sang *Kirtan* (devotional song) taking the story from the Bible with *Khol* and *Kartal* (musical instruments). This pattern of celebration is purely formed by the syncretism of Bengali -Baishnava culture. The Father sprinkled the dead body with sacred water and put the dead body in a coffin, and finally it was buried. After forty days, they arrange a feast for all the persons those who were associated with the activities of the deceased, and the other guests and relatives, and the presence of the father is also necessary. In this way, these Mirpurians are not total Christians or true Portuguese. A new identity emerges for their survival. As per Indian Constitution they are known as 'other backward community' but Béteille referred to them as aggregates of groups not any class or race. In truth, they are not classes but aggregated groups of very similar social status (Béteille1991).

New Identity in New Setting- Strategies for Survival

In earlier years when they came, none of them had a family. As a result, they got sexual satisfaction from mixing illegally or secretly with the females of the poor families of the locality, which sometimes disturbed the peace and sanctity of the place as they had no female members with them. As a result, for the protection of the poor women of that village from their hands, and also to form their families, the local Christian father arranged their marriage with the female members of the local Mahisya families. Thus, initially they all formed their families with the association of the Mahisya caste as this area was dominated by the Mahisyas.

Even in recent times, a few Portuguese Christian boys and girls have also established their marital relations to a few other caste groups and communities. Pinki Bala (Ratha) was a Portuguese girl married 10 years before with a Hindu boy, but after marriage the members of the groom's family did not receive her. At last, Badal, the husband of Pinki, converted to Christianity before 2 years.

In this way, there are also a few Christian families whose daughters have selected their husbands from Hindu religious group, but ultimately, they have to form separate families converting themselves into Christian. But the numbers of these families are very insufficient. Now a days, in the majority of cases, the boys and girls of Christianpalli establish their marital relations with the Christians. Portuguese Christians have lost their cultural identities, except for their religiosity.

In the same way, Nandan Mallick, 45 years old, belongs to a converted Christian family who lives in a Bethkundu village and works in a hotel in Kolkata and survived with two daughters. Three generations before Mallick's family's boy married a Christian girl. Since then, they have been Christian.

Ranjit Das, 32 years old, is a toto driver, Christian by religion. 250 years ago, his ancestors settled here. Dipa Das is his mother, 60 year old pension holder widow. They were originally Tesra, but 45 years ago, they changed their title to Das (SC) for getting a job.

Minati Ghosh is a widow of 60 years, and now she works as a labourer. Originally, she belongs to the Tesra family. But she married a boy from a Bengali Ghosh family who converted to Christianity. Subrata Mahapatra belongs to a Christian family, and he is 46 years old. He is a teacher and his forefathers came 250 years before. In this way, 25 to 30 Christian families like Ghorai, Acharya, Majhi, Jha (from Bihar), Mitra, Achariya (from Ranchi), Roy, Biswas, Mandal, Pramanick and others settled in the then Mirpur village.

Till today, the Portuguese Christians are only identified by their titles like Tesra, Nunis, Lobo, Rozario, Perreda, D'cruz, Ratha etc., but now they like to identify them as 'Christian families'. Day by day, they are losing their Portuguese identity. Except for their Portuguese titles, they have totally absorbed the local cultural domain (Maity 2022). With the passage of time, they are mostly mixed with Bengali local culture, except for their religion i.e., Christianity. Gradually, Portuguese culture has been disappearing. Only during the time of interviews, they simply recall a few names of their earlier ancestors. No such Portuguese cultural elements are seen in their daily lives; only like their earlier ancestors they like to eat pork and beef and want to get addiction to liquor. The adult boys are always well dressed and carry the seeds of modernity.

"They are also positively differentiated from the neighbours because they do not have "regional linguistic traits", dress better and are more disciplined than them » (Pari Bartan 1982: cited from Caixeiro 2000).

Recently, there has been a trend to preserve their Portuguese first names following the names of their earlier ancestors. For the last ten years, they have been showing their sincerity to preserve it with the help of the local church. Before 60 years, when Bhowmick studied this Christian *para,* he observed that Portuguese family developed a trend to keep Bengali names with their titles. A few examples of the names are seen during the survey (2022-23) like Ashok Ratha, 64 year old; Sushen Tesra, 62 year old; 53 year old Prakash Nuni; Niranjan, Jacob Tesra, 55, survives with his two daughters, Piu Tesra 24 year old and 17 year old Puja Tesra. But within 10 to fifteen years, they have developed a new thought to restore their identity not only by their title but also by their first name. Animesh Lobo, 50, lives with his ten son Stefen Lobo and14 year old daughter Stanly Lobo. A few examples of these names are Allen Ratha, 4 year boy, four year girl is Maria Tesra, Philips Rozario, three months baby etc.



Figure-1Sorbindu Rozario (A Portuguese Man)



Figure-2 Usha Perera (A Portuguese Woman)

Conclusion

Mirpur village is now divided into two villages, village Bethkundu and village Suklalpur. The earlier settlement of the Portuguese people was in Mirpur village, where land was donated by the Queen of Mahishadal. Gradually, the young population of that are going to forget the history of the earlier settlement of the Portuguse families. Due to social crisis, they have gradually lost their cultural identity. Earlier, they were segregated by the Hindus and often considered untouchable by the upper Hindu castes. But at present, this Christian community is very close to other groups. In two villages, the three religious groups are living together. It was more than three hundred years before, they entered here but they are not at all the rural agriculturists. Most rural people practice agriculture with domestication of animals. But they are also not at all fond of domestication of animals and practice different rituals cantered around the different activities of agricultural performances executed throughout the year and these Mirpurians are totally devoid of these activities. They were called partial Christians as from their very arrival, they had to accept the Hindu culture because initially there were no women. As Christian they have church and burial field. Since then, for about three hundred and twenty/thirty years, these Portuguese have become a part of Bengali society. All Hindu rituals are practiced by them at the major social events like birth, death, and marriage. But little variation is seen among them.

Infrastructural changes are seen everywhere, especially in their hygiene and health. Fresh drinking water and toilet facilities have brought a new light to the villagers. Home delivery and prenatal to postnatal caresave women's primary rights. Different schemes launched by the state government empower women and also make society free from social distances and open to facing the challenges with dignity.

Changing relations in their everyday lives have improved. The Hindus, Muslims, and Christians are living together. They are more close to Hindus than the Muslims. Socio – cultural syncretism has created their new identity.

Finally, their newly developed attitudes from the perspective of a modern socio-political scenario, help them rethink and regenerate their identity as Christians in the macro level for protection and security.

Acknowledgement

Prof. Samita Manna is the awardee of ICSSR Senior Fellowship for the year 2021-2023. This paper is largely an outcome of the Senior Fellowship sponsored by the Indian Council of Science Research (ICSSR). However, the responsibility for the facts stated, opinions expressed, and the conclusion drawn is entirely, of the author.

References

- Basu, A., Gupta, R., Bhattachariya, K. K. 1980. 'A Demographic Study of Mirpur: A Village in Coastal Midnapore District, W. B'. *Journal of Biosocial Science*,12:227-234.
- Basu, Y.C. 1939. *Medinipurer Ithihas* (in Bengali). Calcutta: Sen Publisher.
- Béteille, A. 1991. *Society and Politics in India*, London, The Atholne Press, School of Economics, (Monographs on Social Anthropology).
- Bhowmick, P.K. 1961. *Four Midnapore Villages*. Midnapore: District Census Handbook.
- Caixeiro, M.C. 2000. 'True Christian or True Portuguese? Origin Assertion in a Christian Village in Bengal, India'. *Lusotopie*. 233-251.
- Campos, J. A. 1919. *History of The Portuguese in Bengal*, Calcutta: Janaki Prakashn.
- Chakrabarty, B. 1992. 'Political Mobilization in the Localities: The 1942 Quit India Movement in Midnapur', Modern Asian Studies (Delhi), XXVI (4) : 791-814.
- Ghosh, B. 1957. *Paschimbanger Sanskriti* (in Bengali). Calcutta: Pustak Prakashak.
- Karan, M.N. 1958. *Hijlir Mashnad-I-ala* (in Bengali). Calcutta: Medinipur Sanskrit Parishad.
- Maity, H. 2022. *Mahishadal Raj Paribar* (in Bengali). Kolkata: Deys Publishing.
- O'Malley, L.S.S. 1911. *Bengal District Gazetteer*. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariate Book Depot.
- O'Malley. 1911. *Census of Bengal and Calcutta of 1911*. Calcutta: Indian Statistical Institute.
- Rahaman, J. 2023. 'A Present-Day Portuguese Settlement in Mirpur West Bengal'. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*. Vol. 5 (5): 1 – 5.

Bio Profile of the Author:

Former Vice-Chancellor, SKB University, Purulia, West Bengal, India
Professor Department of Sociology
University of Kalyani
Nadia, West Bengal, India.
Pin - 741235
Email -samita.manna@gmail.com

Prolegomena to the Identity of Mal Paharia of Jharkhand

Sucheta Sen Chaudhuri[1], M. Ramakrishnan[2], Priyavrat Nag[3], Sohini Chatterjee[4], Sunita Purty[5], & Sunita Soren[6]

Abstract

The present research paper aims at delineating the identity maintenance of the Mal Paharia, a PVTG of Jharkhand. The people of Rajmahal Hills and Jungleterry, are living in the hill forest ecology and sharing the same ecology with Kumarbhag, and Saoria Paharia. In the plains their neighbours are the Santal, people of Hindi and Bengali speaking caste based communities, traders from different regions, and religions of India. Historically, the 'Maler' was referred to as a community of that region, who spoke northern Dravidian language 'Malto' (Vidyarthi 1963). The Mal Paharia, Saoria Paharia, and Kumarbhag Paharia, who are earliest settlers of the region apparently, maintain three separate nomenclatures to introduce themselves that might have originated from the 'Maler' ancestors. The present paper has made a modest attempt to know common institutionalized customs in practice among them. They share the same ecological niche and came under influence of the neighbouring communities because the place known as Rajmahal hills is considered as the gateway of Bengal from the side of northern India. The hill passes were important to traders from the ancient past. At this background the present paper aims at discussing Identity Maintenance of the Mal Paharia and their relations with the other Paharia. The word 'Paharia', is in earlier records written as 'Pahariya', 'Pahariaa' also. However, the field data are referred to in the present paper; and in a few discussions for comparative analysis secondary data sources are utilized.

Keywords: *Mal Paharia; Pahria; Maler; Malto; Kumarbhag; Ultimogeniture; Identity Maintenance; Social Ecology; Gungleterry; Rajmahal hills;*

Introduction

Every community has a name and that may change over a period of time. The origin of each nomenclature of a community is either given by outsiders (i.e. exonym) or the word is rooted to the community's own language and culture (i.e. autonym). The name(s) of a community carries

the history of social ecology. During ethnic movements in post-colonial situations in India many tribal communities shifted their nomenclature from exonym to autonym. For example, from Abor to Adi; Dafla to Miji; these are a few instances in which communities disapproved of exonym for their derogatory meanings (Chaudhuri and et.al 2008:75-77). Other exonyms are there which were given by neighbours but remember the beautiful social history of the remote past. For example, there are two neighbouring communities 'Miji' and 'Aka' in Arunachal Pradesh; and in the Aka language the word 'Miji' means 'fire givers' (Chaudhuri Ibid). In a personal communication, Maniram Mosahari, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha President of Assam (1993) said that in the Bodo language the word 'Bangla' means 'the land mass emerged from the riverine alluvial soil. This word is an exonym for the Bengali. The topography of present Bangladesh which is one of the cultural ecologies of Bengalis really matches with that meaning. Therefore, it can be said that the root word of Bengali is 'Bangla'. The word 'Mal Pahariya', the nomenclature of the community under study, creates a scope to discuss it further. The word 'Mal' originates from 'Maler' a word of Dravidian origin. The word 'Paharia' is rooted to the Indo-European Linguistic origin. The social ecology of the Mal Paharia is revealed through the nomenclature. These words originated from two separate linguistic families, and i.e. the Dravidian meaning of the word 'Male' means 'A Man of Hills' and 'Maler' means 'Men of Hills' (Vidyarthi 1963:1). In Indo European language the word 'Pahariya' means 'hill dweller'; whereas both the parts of the word 'Mal Pharia' have the same meaning and that is people of hills. Vidyarthi (1963) identified the 'Maler' as settlers of Rajmahal hills who speak the Malto language. This language is identified as one of the northern Dravidian languages. He found that the people speak Hindi as well. Vidyarthi (1963: 1-2) identified two more social groups other than 'Maler' under a generic category 'Paharia'. Those he mentions as 'Mal' and 'Kumarbhag' Paharias. He wrote that the others speak a mixed language of local 'Maghi' version of Hindi and mixed with Bengali vocabularies. The Mal Paharia, Kumarbhag Paharia and Saoria Paharis/ Maler are surrounded by those Hindi (Magahi), Bengali, and Santali people in the foothills. The Mal Paharia people speak Bengali, Hindi (Maghi), Khorta, and Santali. The Munda, Oraon, Birhor; present study finds use of words in the vocabularies of the Mal Paharias similar to Dravidian languages (See Chart-1). Their neighbours in the state the Oraon speak Kurukh language and belong to the northern Dravidian linguistic group, like 'Malto'. The Mal Paharia predominantly settled in the districts, Dumka, Pakur, Godda, and Sahib Gunj of the state of Jharkhand. Those settlement areas are hilly and historically the region was referred to as Rajmahal hills, gateway of Bengal in northern India. As per land relations the Mal Paharia has comparatively larger community land ownership (Jama-Bandi) than the Santal. The distinct feature of their habitat is villages are mostly on hill forests; uni-ethnic and traditionally their ancestors were shifting hill cultivators. They refer places as forests are located on higher

altitudes of their settlement areas and having Sal forests (Fieldwork: 2024 in Amlagarhi and Kerabani Dumka district). The Mal Paharia villages of that region are situated in the altitude and at the height of 140-170 meter. In villages the people stay in a homogenous situation despite the foothills and plains villages of the Rajmahal hills are dominated by the population of the Santal, the second largest tribes in India, and caste based Hindu communities. In the Dumka and other towns of the Rajmahal hills people from religious beliefs and faiths like Hindu, Islam, Jains and Christian live. The dominant religious festivals in that region are predominantly Hindu origin. At this background the present paper presents the identity of the Mal Paharia. This is a particularly vulnerable primitive group (PVTG). However, the habitat of the people is located in the north-east corner of the Deccan Plateau and its higher hilly region in the north and eastern sides of that plateau is divided from plains of Bengal by the rivers Ganga and Bhagirathi.

At this background Objectives of the present paper

1. To study shared social customs, institutions, and religious faiths of the Mal Paharia with other two Paharia social groups.
2. To understand the identity maintenance process of the Mal Paharia.
3. To study the probable reason behind the construction of the nomenclature Mal Paharia.

Methods of the Present Study

Both the primary and secondary sources of data are the basis of this writing. Primary data is referred here is based on fieldworks are conducted in three villages of two districts of Dumka and Pakur of Jharkhand in August-December 2024. Those are Amlagarhi and Keirabani villages of the district Dumka and Boro Pahar of the district Pakur. All villages under Dumka and Pakur are uni-ethnic and villages of Dumka smaller in size in comparison to the Boro Pahar, which has four hamlets. The inhabitants of the Boro Pahar village have identified themselves as Kumarbhag Paharia/Paharia, while people in two villages in Dumka identified themselves as Mal Paharia. Present study refers to writings of Vidyarthi (1963) who said that the non-tribal local people refer to Maler as Sanvaria and Saoria Paharia also (Ibid Appendix-1, p-180).

Nomenclature- Mal-Paharia: A Colonial Construction

The 1891 Census mentioned the ‘Mal Pahadia’ speaking people belonged to the Dravidian linguistic families and the ratio of speakers is 1: 1000 (p-136) (Census of India 1891-A General Report, Manas Publication Delhi, 1985 (Reprinted). In the chapter introduction of his book entitled, *The Maler: A Study in Nature-Man-Spirit Complex of a Hill Tribe of Bihar*, by Vidyarthi (1963) preferred the word ‘Maler’ to refer to a tribe of Rajmahal plateau of the Santal Pargana. In

footnote (Vidyarthi 1963:1) author refers the word "Pahariya" as a 'common name of the 'Maler' and further added that earlier authors (references nil) mentioned the people as 'Saoria' and local people refer to them as 'Sanvaria'. He mentioned a chart on population distribution that might be showing Census data (Appendix-1:180), entitled, "A Chart Showing the Comparative Figures of Maler, Mal and Kumarbhag Paharias in the various parts of Santal Parganas". The first column indicates Census year & Place names; Second column is as follows: 'Maler or Sanvaria' and at the bottom of this 'Saoria'; Third column 'Mal Paharias'; Fourth column 'Kumarbhag'. The last column is indicating the total population of all these groups. This chart shows that the first category 'Maler or...' is not found in places like Deoghar, Jamtara, Dumka from 1872-1951. They were found in the places like Rajmahal, Pakur, Godda. The Mal Paharias were found at Rajmahal, Pakur, Godda, Deoghar, Jamtara, and Dumka. The Kumarbhag people in between 1872-1931 are not found in any of those places mentioned above. They were not found in Rajmahal and Dumka in 1941 and 1951. They were found in places like Pakur, Godda, Deoghar, and Jamtara in 1941 and 1951. Reason of invisibility of the Kumarbhag Paharia is not discussed by Vidyarthi (ibid). He identified each of these groups as an endogamous social group having linguistic variation. The word 'Pahadia', 'Pahariya' and 'Paharia' are found with variegated spelling in the colonial and post-colonial literature (Census of 1891, 1951; Sahay 1957; Vidyarthi 1963; Panda 2021; DRMTWRI 2024). The Paharia/Pahadia/Pahariya is a word of Indo- Aryan Bengali, Magahi, Hindi origin. So, East India Company (EAC) and Colonial administrators coined the word from their Indian counterparts. Why did the people in hills become so important to EAC officials for which they created an exonym (Paharia/ Mal Paharia) for the people and Cleveland proposed the first tribal policy as per Panda (2021)?

The Pahariya as a Subject of British Jungleterry

Panda (2021) refers to the East India Company's invasion of the "Junglterry" (erstwhile Rajmahal hills). She elaborated British and Paharia relations during the East India EIC regime. That clearly helps to understand the formation of the concept "Pahariya", which is later prefixed to the word "Mal" in Censuses 1891 and 1951. Panda (2021:1) wrote, "The 'aboriginal' inhabitants/tribes in the hilly part of Jungleterry had been considered a threat to the newly established regime. Those people did not surrender their land as well as autonomy to become loyal subjects." She Quotes Bradley-Britt (1905: 16), "For centuries this land and the contending races who had made it their battlefield had gone without a written history, with scarce a record even in annals of their conquerors, to show what manner of things befallen them, and what they accomplished during all the years of turmoil and unrest"; Bradley Britt ends this description with a kind of glorification in support of the British administrators, but Panda (2021) felt that Cleveland's policy to some extent

could stop the rebels who were referred as the 'Paharyias'. Cleveland as referred to in Panda's article (2021: 20) received praise for his far sighted contribution to the birth of a tribal policy. Cleveland "devised a comprehensive strategy to neutralize resistance of the indigenous people against consolidation of the company's authority at Jungleterry. He designated his stratagem to transform insubordination into loyalty and trust" (Panda 2021:21). For that he travelled a lot among Pahariya people in remote hills, created a native Militia consisting of Pahariya 'Sardars' and 'Chief'. Cleveland offered them a lucrative salary and Pension. Through this strategy he aimed to create a group of loyal families. Such a strategy has a positive result. In his second move he established a Hill Assembly, a native Judicial Body of Pahariya Chiefs to probe criminal cases in which the Collector was ultimate authority. Under this provision revenue increased in which Hill Archers (Pahariya Police) had contributed to maintain law and order. All these developments happened in 1779-1782. Pahariya people denied only one of Cleveland's proposals and that was occupying rent free plain lands leaving hill forest settlement. This denial of Pahariyas invited the Santals to occupy those lands to begin settled cultivation (Ibid 2021: 20-22).

The Mal-Pahariya: Their Participation in Resistance Movements

In 1766 Ramna Ahadi, Changrun Sanwariya, Pachge Domba, Paharia and Kariya Pulhar –Pahariya leaders protested against aggressive behaviours of the EAC officials ("Pahariya Rebellion, History, Pahariya Revolt, and People" https://www.studyiq.com, date of access, 07.01.2025). The Pahariyas under leadership of Zamindar Jagannath Deo led a protest against intervention of EAC and their taxation policy (1778).

Ashok Das, interviewed of Prof. Lakshman (e channel, dalit dastak@gmail.com, date of access 05.10.2024) says that due to the taxation policy on the peasants and farmers they revolted against East India Company after 1765, Jamindars in the Rajmahal hills (1772-1778). To control the Pahariya rebellion against taxation policy of the British Governor General Warren Hastings (1778) established "Hill Corps" and recruited around 800 soldiers from the Pahariya. To control rebellious Pahariyas the then Collector Cleveland established Hill Rangers in 1781 and recruited 1300 Pahariya men in this troop by the permission of the East India Company. Das says that Mr. Jabra Pahariya was the Commander/ Chief of the Hill Rangers.

The Mal Pahariya: Their Political Economic Relations with Muslim Rulers and Jamindars before the Advent of East India Company

Dr. RamDayal Munda, Tribal Welfare Research Institute (DRMTWRI) states, "*During Muslim rule in Bengal, the Mal Paharias were brave warriors who maintained their independence from government control but developed a relationship with local landlords. Under this agreement,*

Mal Paharia lands were divided into two "Tappa" headed by Sardar, Who in turn had authority over the Majhi: village head. The Sardar acted as a law keeping force among the Mal Pahariya in return for this they were given a certain amount of land by the plains people. Passes leading to the hills are guarded by the Mal Pahariya outposts as well as forts of the plains people. This system ensures a relatively friendly relationship between the hills and plains people. Once a year, the arrangement was renewed with a feast in the plains between the landlords and the Sardars." During the Bengal Famine 1770s the treaty of the Sardars and Jamindars got disturbed. "The Mal Paharia was not affected due to their reliance on the forest product, so they were able to raid without much resistance."

Panda (2021:6-8) mentioned ruins of Muslim dynasties in the Rajmahal hills. This region was ruled by Khilji, Hosen Shah, Mughals and at last Nawabs of Bengal. After the defeat of the last Nawab of Bengal to the East India Company Mir Kashim shifted his capital to this region and very soon East India Company defeated him. Panda (Ibid) states that this region was not invaded by Sher Shah. East India Company after receiving "Forman" from the sitting Mughal Ruler and after defeating Nawab of Bengal paid whole attention to expand trades and RajMahal hills drew attention to them for its huge natural resources. They identified this place as the district-Jungleterry.

The Mal Pahariya: Their Political Economic Relations with East India Company

East India Company officials, collectors posted to the area of Rajmahal hills, which was referred to by them as Jungleterry district to fulfill the aim of creating sources of revenue collection for high profit. The first officer Captain Browne posted to this post was unsuccessful for his prolonged violent encounter with the Pahariya and a few Jamindars. He was removed soon (Panda 2021:1). EIC implemented direct administration to Jungleterry in 1772. Panda quotes Brit (1905) who described that hilly and forested territory by the side of the river Ganga was remarkable for its tangible and aesthetic resources and distressing for its human resource and that the Pahariyas. All British administrators acknowledged this fiercely independent people who according to the colonial gaze were not civilized. The territory of Jungleterry changed with the administrative decisions. Therefore, places like Bhagalpur, Mongyer, Kharagpur, some portions of Maldah, Birboom, were earlier within and later outside of the Jungleterry. To exploit the natural resources properly EIC created databases on the Jungleterry district- topographic, political Maps, paintings, mapping of natural resources and mining resources, and they had created archival records to exploit resources properly (Panda Ibid:8-9). In writings of all EIC officers a common subject was on the inhabitants of the region their pitiable situation, backwardness, despite EIC officers faced resistance continuously from the Pahariya people, they considered them wild people. Among all

Panda quotes Brit who appreciates collector Cleveland for his policies, which worked in support of imperialism and controlled the Paharias for a certain period. Paharias organized protests during Brownie' time period (1773-1774). His book *Indian Tracts* (1788) described food resources, and different tribal knowledge in practice. Buchanan (1794-1815) documented resources with full detail. He found people are in poor living conditions, despite the resource- rich Jungleterry; he studied linguistic affiliation of people to Dravidian languages. But his framework of comparison was between savages and civilized to judge the Pahariyas. Buchanan noticed the religious characters of this region. He discussed influences of Islam and Hinduization to the territory of the Jungleterry. Panda (2021:16) refers to Oldham (1930) to discuss the distinct influence of Hinduism on the different sections of the Pahariyas. Among all administrators, Panda (2021:21-23) stated that Cleveland (1779-1782) by his policy framing could bring them under control. Cleveland to control uncouth Sardars among Pahariya proposed salary and pension policy; to control all sections of Pahariyas, proposed to create and recruit Light Infantry Corps or Hill Police. Cleveland proposed to use the military instinct of the Pahariya in favour of the Company. Cleveland's policy really helped in the making of the colonial state in its early period. However, such policies of EIC gradually opened up possibilities to exploit natural and mining resources of the Pahariya territory peacefully. Those plans had changed the demographic features of Jungleterry district forever. The novel, entitled, Harmawoa Ato (1946), written by R.R. K. in the Santali language, a book on the Santal Insurrection (1855-1856) mentions the "Pahariya" people, the neighbour of the Santals of Dumka in the hills. The first chapter of this book describes the efforts of the headman & people of Harma village protecting Bund for storing water. Harma and his people are of Santal community origin and states that the Pahariya from hills attempted to destroy the Bund of the Harma's village. Description of the incident wrote that people of both the communities went for meetings and conversations to stop such unlawful acts at intercommunity level. This book originally translated from the book, entitled*, Harma's Village*, written by Robert Carstairs, a Deputy Commissioner posted in the Santal Pargana in between 1883-1897 and felt the Santal people' emotive expressions of the "Santal Hul". The first chapter of the book, *Harmawoa Ato* (1946), written by R.R. K. Rapaz began with the polemic relation between the Santal and Mal Paharia reflecting the dominant presence of the latter in that region. In this context East India Company's initiative for establishing the Pahariya Regiment in the Bhagalpur division in the last part of the eighteenth century was significant to understand the Mal-Paharia ethnic identity of the present.

The Mal Pahariyas are settled in West Bengal and trace their ancestors' migration from Rajmahal hills settled in the district Bardhaman since East India Company began Indigo Plantation. The Mal Paharia people worked as labourers for the plantations and later they settled there (Sumahan

2000). Vidyarthi (1963:182) in the Appendix -2 (i)- documented biographical interview of a Maler woman who was 90 years old at the time of interview. This interview discusses the social situation of the people. Two aspects are significant among all topics of the interview. One is frequent occurrences of smallpox endemic and large number of deaths; second is her narration on people' protest against imposition of tax on the Paharia. She narrated that her father told about Paharia's struggle and that they marched to Patna under the leadership of the Sardar of Bhatibhanga. She remembered that the Paharia equipped with bow and arrows didn't fight the enemy as they armed with guns and returned back. These things happened in the first of the nineteenth century.

The Mal Paharia Identity Maintenance Process: Discussion

Sahay (1957: 193-198) in *Vanyajati* wrote the article entitled, "Malpaharia Religion, Festivals and Deities". This article discusses the influence of Hindu religious practices on the Malpaharia belief system. He quotes the 1938 Santhal Pargana Gazetteer that refers to the Mal Paharia as a Hinduised section of tribes. Sahay observed that the people like to refer to themselves as Hindu and sacrifice hens, goats, eggs, pigs, and offer liquor to "deota", "dev", "Mata", "Gosain". Some of male gods are Bhuin-Dev, Siv, Rasdeo, and Manadana. The female goddesses are Singwahini, Kali, Dhartimai, etc..

Food as Identity Marker

Our interaction with people of Amlagarhi, on the first day village men Mr. Jit Ahari and Rajendra Ahari said that you may call us 'Pahari', 'Ahari' or whatever but we are not 'beef eaters'. In this discussion group women (Ms. Shamlata Devi and Seema Devi) were mute participants (dated, 11.08.2024). They distinguished their own identity from the 'Sauriya Pahariya', referring that others are 'beef eaters'. Mr. Biswanath Paharia and Ms. Drothi Malto of the Bodopahar shared the same opinion. (dated,13.08.2024). They do not maintain a marriage relationship with the 'Sauriya Pahariya'.

Marriage Distance and Marriage Relations

Earlier writings (Vidyarthi 1963; Sarkar 1938; tribejharkhand.in/en/mal-paharia, dated, 12.12.2024) discusses about Mal Paharia, Sauria Paharia, Kumarbhag Paharia, who are referred as endogamous social group within the Pahariya. Data on Marriage Preferences and Marriage Distances of the Bodopahar, Keirabani and Amlagarhi show that Mal Paharia prefer to marry within and nearby villages. Keirabani and Amlagarhi people have marriage relations with the people Sikaripara, Golpur, Valki, Pokhriya villages of Dumka. Earlier didn't prefer marriage relations from the other side of the river Basloi. At present, marriage relations are there with Mal Paharias of Pakur, Godda, They marry with the Kumarbhag Paharia and avoid Sauria Paharia.

The surnames of the people of these two villages are Pujhar, Deori, Dalai, Singh, Giri and they do not maintain any restriction to marry members from any other families with these surnames and Paharia surname.

Bodopahar villagers are Kumarbhag and use the surname Paharia. Maximum marriage relations are confined to the different hamlets of the same village or to nearby areas like Dumarchi, Poklo, Sundar Pahari and they have marriage relations with Mal Pahariya. All villagers marry Kumarbhag Paharia and Mal Paharia but not Sauria Paharia. (Data collected August-December 2024). Bodo Pahar, Telopara, are villages of Kumarbhag Paharia and Asan Pahari, Amlagarhi, Keirabani people are Mal Paharia. All of these villages have marriage relations. One young woman of the Bodo Pahar married a Sauria Paharia of Sahib Ganj and parents accepted the relation.

Poon Taddi Festival: A Quintessence of Social History

The festival Poon Taddi and its two days long rituals observed one after another transform the village space as a place where this uni-ethnic village transients its boundary. This ephemeral journey connects ritual of neighbours in which neighbours engagement is highly symbolic and negligible. Officially no outsiders are invited. Most significantly words and meaning of different rituals happen in separate altars, ingredients used for rituals are signatures of untold history in practice. For those two days, the village space synchronized ritual elements of aggressors with whom probably they had to contest for survival.

Poon Taddi is a festival observed in the month of February. This festival is performed collectively by the community after harvesting of Bjra (Millet). Different rituals of this festival take place at various sacred sites in the village, all these locations are known as ***Goreya Odho, Taddi Tungpo, Jaher Than, Shiv Kutti, Gangaram Puja, Tigo-Muge, Mian Puja***. The Headman convenes a meeting after the Bajra harvest (January). He asked Goraith, the village messenger, to inform everyone in the community. Goraith by playing the dholak (percussion instrument) invites all the male villagers to gather at the designated location. During the meeting, Goraith announced dates of the upcoming festival, which would take place after the Bajra harvest was complete. The gathering was called by the headman about three weeks to one month before the festivals. The village head ensures arrangements for the events. No committee was formed for this festival; those interested persons from the same village assist the Nado (Priest); there are persons who volunteer to assist Nado; some of them by playing instruments.. No other women are involved in the ritual except that Nado's wife prepares raw rice powder used for decoration of altars in all phases of the festival; and when Malto Goshni visits different residences, he visits Nado's home and wife of Nado washes Malto Goshni's feet. She puts oil on the hair and feet on the Malto Goshni. Wife of

Nado is the only woman, who performs only one custom among all women of the village. Women and girl children can be spectators of all events. Neither women nor girl children have entitlement for participation in the feast on the first and second day. Only the Ghosni and Goshai sath Guraro (Ghosni's assistants), along with other participants of the festival and the male members of the village, can take part in the feast at the Nado's house, where they consume Pochoye (millet beer) and Surwa (stew of goat heads), and cooked Ghangra (a local bean).

Essential tasks associated with the festival, such as cleaning of the work area, tidying up the Goria Odho, and preparing all the weapons and sticks used during the rituals, are performed by the male members of the village. While the cleaning of individual homes is the responsibility of the women in the household, it is not mandatory for all of them to do so. During various rituals, the villagers actively engage in playing instruments, enhancing the ceremonial atmosphere. It typically occurs at key moments, such as the beginning of the ceremony, the arrival of Ghosni(s); at the transition from one ritual to another; and while moving to different worship locations. There are no designated musicians, anyone in the village, who has the desire and skill to participate and contribute to perform. During this festival men manufacture Pogali, a blowing instrument made by palm leaves and gifted to Goshnis. The process of making the Pogali occurs during the arrival of Malto Ghosni.

Animals and birds are sacrificed in the festival like goats, cock and chick; Men participants cooked goat meat, head of goats, and Surwa. Surwa is a dish of stew, which is served to the participants in the feast in the house of Nado at the beginning of dining. This party happens in the courtyard, not inside rooms. These foods cannot be shared with outsiders of the village. Therefore, no one is invited to this festival. The two days festival happens in different phases. In every phase the ritual starts from the possession of Ghosnis to the body of 2-3 villagers. Such action happened at Goreya Odho. The Nado, his associates go to respective altars of the village with the Ghosni to perform rituals. Alters are painted by *chawal gundi* (raw rice powder), *sindoor* (vermilion). Offerings like *pochoye* (millet-based liquor), *tapan* (rice-based liquor), goat (*patha*), chuwra (flattened rice), *gur* (jaggery), *khapra* (earthen bowls), *furuw* (Cups made of sal leaves), containing *otaro* (sediment from millet liquor), eggs (*pan*), bel patta (bael leaves), banana leaves, milk, chilli, Ginger, brass plate, chuwra, tender bamboo sticks, raw rice (arwa chawal), betel nut (*supari*), mats, clothing for Ghosni, battle axe (farsa), conch shell, mustard oil and Odho Pup, (a particular type of flower) goats, chiks, cock for sacrifices.

Table-1

Poon Taddi –A descriptive Table on Performance

Name of rituals	**Alter**	**Ingredients used**	**Role of Priest (Nado) Nado and his assistants**	**Role of Goshni**	**Role of Villagers**
Goreya Ordho	Goreya than	Chawal gundi (Row rice powder), Sindur (Vermilion), Khapra (Earthen pot), pochoye (millet based liquir), tapan(rice based liquor), patha (goat) chuwra (flattened rice), gur (jiggery), bent (tender bamboo stick)	They carry all ingredients to alter. Nado decorate the place with the rice powder and vermilion arranges earthen pots filled up with pochoye. After possession of goshni the Nado hand over a bamboo stick to the the hand of each goshni.	Goshni arrives in the body of a few men; they may be any one from community present there. After possession Goshni all proceed to *Jaher than*.	All the men of the village gather at Goreya than and wait for the goshni (spiritual entity and non -physical representative who can see past and future) by playing instruments to create the ambience.
Jaher Than	A stone at Jahir than	Chawal gundi (Row rice), 2 Khapra (Earthen pot), pochoye (millet based liquor), Sindur (Vermilion), water, Patha (he goat), tapan (rice based liquor),Chuwra (flatted rice), Fursa (Daau)	The Nado decorates the alter by chawal gundi and vermilion. Khapras filled up with pochoye(millet liquor) and tapan(rice liquor) are offered. Nado sprinkaled water on the he goat and sacrifice it. Assistants carry small cock, an egg , raw rice and a glass of Mahua liquer at the ritual sight.		Everyone hold chuwra((flatted rice)) in their hands and remembering their ancestors by praying happiness and peace they offer the chuwra((flatted rice)) to goat before sacrifice the goat. After this ritual all return to Goreya orho.

Tadi tungpo	A place situated at the far end of the village.	Chawal gundi (Row rice powder), Sindur (Vermilion), Bel patta (Limonia acidissima), 2 khapra (earthen pot, pochoye (millet based liquor), furrow (bowl made by Sal leaves), Patha (he goat), tapan (rice based liquor),Otaro (the sediment of the millet liquor), 2 pan (eggs)	Nado create a symbol of 14 rectangular cambers equally divided by two rows. Decorate these cambers by sinder,chawl gundi his assistants covers sinder by bel patta by each cambers.2 khapra filled pochoye are offered. Nado place 7 furrow of millet liquor in each camber of upper row. Prayers are offered to the ancestors for the prosperity and wellbeing of the village. Nado sprinkle water on the goat put vermilion and flower on his body and 9sacrifices him. Nado and his assistants prepared 2 furrows containing otaro and placed two eggs on the otaro. Vermilion applied on the egg. Priest and his assistants proceed opposite direction to the village to north and south. Place furrow at those places end of the habitation known as Pan chutpo.	Goshni places 7 furrow of millet liquor each cambers of the lower row. After returning goshni adorned with vermilion and flowers. Goshni pay his respect at the goreya than by bowing dow . Goshni seated under tha Manda (A temporary Shade) and started conversation with villagers in pahariya Language with that Goshni (spiritual entity) departs from the villagers body.	Villagers attend rhe ritual at spectator. After placing Pan chutpo all returns to Goreya Orho. Before entering goreya orho participants snack hands and embrace each other. Conversation with goshni.

Shiv kutti	Shiv kutti(wooden stain of 2ft. is installed permanently).	Chawal gundi (Row rice powder), Sindur (Vermilion), Bel patta (Limonia acidissima), pochoye (millet based liquor), Patha (He goat) chuwra (flattened rice), gur (jiggery), bent (tender bamboo stick), milk, banana leaves, 4 earthen bowls.	Nado draw 4 circular patterns with chawal gundi and decorate each with vermilion. An assistant covers patterns with bel patta. 3 earthen bowls placed in the circle filled up with tapan. Outside the circle 1 earthen bowl filled up with milk is placed. Nado sprinkle water on the goat applies vermilion to the goat then sacrifices him in the shiv kutti.	Before sacrifice goshnis offer salutation on the goat. After ritual is over the shiv kutti goshnis and nado comes back to goreya orho and placed their sticks down for salutation and bowing their heads at goreya orho.	All villagers after attending the ritual came back to the goraya orho with the nado.
Gangaram puja	Nala(small flowing water source)	Cinder : Sacred fire, red cock, an egg, brass plate, 4 banana, chopped onion, chilli, ginger, chuwra, Bamboo stick, vermilion, sword, row rice powder, 2 earthen bowl, rice liquor, milk	Nado go to the alter carry all essential maintained beside Nala the alter is consists of 2stones. Nado decorate stones and draw symbol of 4 rectangles in 2 rows with chauwal gundi and vermilion from time memorial used as a place to release snakes. Two khapra filled up with tapan and another one filled up with milk placed on design. Nado sprinkle water on a red cock and sacrifice it.The blood is offered at the ritual side.	Goshni run with the fire. After returning goshni consumed the milk. After that goshni departs from the body.	All comes to goreya orho.

Tigo muge	Goreya orho	Wooden polls, rope, onion,chilli, ginger, chauwal gundi, khapra, cot, cracked egg.	After rest nado preparation of tigo muge(monkey sprits). Two wooden polls fixed in a ground and rope is tight between them. On this rope he suspends onion,chilli, ginger. Human figure (Kut padipo) its decorated by vermilion before coverd by bel patta is drawn on the ground by roe rice powder. Nearby a cot (machiya) placed.	After placing cot goshni sit here. A khapra containing a crack egg is placed nearer by goshni when tigo muge arrives they consume offerings play around with laughter and merriment and eventually leave. Whole action is purfored by goshni.	Villagers attend rhe ritual at spectator.

Mia Puja	Manda	Red cock brought by Santal man, chauwal gundi, vermilion, 2 earthen bowl, banana, water, chuwra	Nado conducts prayer and offer things to ancestors. Small portion neck of cock is cut using a sword the cock does not die. Some of blood mixed with rice liquor (tapan) and the cock is released. After hunting the cock nado performs the ritual at goriya orho. He decorates the goreya than by using chawal gundi, vermilion; 6 bananas, a banana leafs, 6 lhapras, bel patta, raw rice(arwa chuwal), milk, bettle nut(supari) scarified goat. After decoration its covered by bel patta. At the top most stairs banana leaf is placed and bananas, khapra bowls are arranged in all three layers. Each khapra contains Rice liquor.Arwa chauwal mixed with milk on the banana leaf is offered mixer of this is refered Pulash Rakhna battle nut is placed on the top. Nado sprinkle water on the goat marked with vermilion flatted rice then sacrifices goat,its blood collected in same khapra with containing pochoye.	At this point one individual proceed with goshni and communicates with the nado to comments ritual. Khapra bowl offers goshni filled up with tapan,goshni consumes pocheyee mixed with milk. After offering prayer leaves this time.	Pahariya and santal individual chased the cock together in a symbolic hunt expedition if pahariya catches the cock they receives 1 leg as a share. If santal individual catches it then pahariya do not receive any portion of it. After having meal all participants return to goreya ortho. group of people stay with the first choosen goshni known as gosainath gurarow they carry mat, cloths battle axe, musical instrument, corn seal. They spread mats to all for seat wait for mal to goshni.

Malto goshni	Goreya orho	Bamboo stick,Pogali,Mat,Coornseal, cloths, battle axe, musical instrument	When goshni appers Nado gives cloths and other items to primary goshni. He distribute all to other goshnis. Nados assistants make Pogali(Palm pipe wind instruments)Which goshni play.	Goshni wear garments, distributed all things among themselves. Persons under the influent by goshni speak malto language. The goshni dances and sings when all proceeds to nados house.	Usually villagers of Bodo pahar do not speak and understand malto. They are only familiar with the word malto.

Table -2

Village-Amlagariya, Panchayat- Rajhbandh, Block-Dumka

Sl. No.	Ritual/Festival	Related to	God/Goddess	Offer to/Sacrifice	Place	Season/Month	Gender Role
1	Aambhadai-	Mango	Kul Devta (Ancestral)	Cock and Pigeon	Household	Fagun/March	Male
2	Mohul Bhadai	Mahua flower	Kul Devta (Ancestral)	Cock and Pigeon	Household	FagunMarch	Male
3	Gurundi Bhadai	Maize	Kul Devta (Ancestral)	Cock and Pigeon	Household	Bhadrapad/ September	Male
4	Karam	Karam Tree	Karam Devta	Jhinga and Khira leaves	Village	Bhado Ekadasi/ September	Unmarried girls and women
5	Khet Bandha puja /Asadh Puja-	Before ploughing field	Dharti Basmati	Patha (Goat)	Field	Asadh/June or July	Male
6	Newani Puja	Before harvesting paddy	Pahad Thakur	Bhed (Sheep)	Under Sakhua/ Simal tree	Kartik/October or November	Male
7	Bitcha puja’	Before harvesting Barbati, Gangra, Lahir	Pahad Thakur	Cock, Kabutar, Mahua daru, khaini	Pahad Khet	Aghan/November	Male
8	Jog puja		Jog Devta	Two Patta and two cock	Forest	Paus/December	Male
9	Lawani Puja	Before consuming rice and barbati	Kul Devta (Ancestral)	Flower, fruits, paddy, Barbati	Household	Paus/December	Male
10	Surja Puja	If someone mansik (wish) full filled	Surja Devta	Bhed (Sheep), Patta (Goat)	Village	Chitra/March	Male priest
11	Gawali Puja	Welfare of village	Pahad Devta	Bhed (sheep), Murga (Cock), Kabutar (Pigeopn), Patta (Goat)	Forest	Magh/January	Male priest

12	Sarojini puja	Welfare of village and agriculture	Sarojini Devi	Patta (Goat)	Forest	Aghan/November	Male
13	Kali Puja	Related to Hindu calendar	Kali	Patta(Goat)	Kali Mandir	Aghan/November	Male
14	Durga Puja	Related to Hindu calendar	Durga	Patta(Goat)	Household	Kartik/October	Male

Source: The fieldwork (August –December 2024) among Mal-Paharia of Amlagaria, Keirabani

Table -3

Ritual Calendar of Village Keirabani

Sl. No.	Ritual/Festival	Related to	God/ Goddess	Offer to/Sacrifice	Place	Season/Month	Gender Role
1	Aambhadai-	Mango	Kul devta	Cock and Pigeon	Household	Fagun/March	Male
2	Mohul Bhadai	Mahua flower	Kul devta	Cock and Pigeon	Household	FagunMarch	Male
3	Gurundi Bhadai	Maize	Kul devta	Cock and Pigeon	Household	Bhadrapad/ September	Male
4	Karam	Karam Tree	Karam devta	Jhinga and Khira leaves	Village	Bhado ekadasi/ September	Unmarried girls and women
5	Khet Bandha puja /Asadh Puja-	Before ploughing field	Dharti Basmati	Patha (Goat)	Agriculture Field	Asadh/June or July	Male
6	Newani Puja	Before harvesting paddy	Pahad Thakur	Bhed (Sheep)	Under Sakhua/ Simal tree	Kartik/October or November	Male
7	Bitcha puja	Before consuming Barbati, Ghangra, Lahir	Pahad Thakur	Cock, Pigeon, Mahua daru, khaini	Pahad Khet	Aghan/ November	Male
8	Jog puja		Jog devta	Two Patta and two cock	Forest	Paus/December	Male
9	Lawani Puja	Before consuming rice and Barbati	Kul devta	Flower, fruits, paddy, Barbati	Household	Paus/December	Male
10	Surja Puja	Well-being of family or someone mansik (wish) full filled	Surja devta		Village	Chitra/March	Male priest
11	Gawali Puja	Well-being of village people	Pahad Thakur	Bhed (sheep), Murga (Cock), Kabutar (Pigeon), Patta (Goat)	Forest	Magh/January	Male priest
13	Telpada	Before consuming Kathal and Mahua flower	Kul devta	Cock/Pigeon	Household	Fagun/March	Male
14	Kali Puja		Kali	Patta	Kali Mandir (Village)	Aghan/ November	Male Priest
15	Durga Puja		Durga	Patta	Household	Kartik/October	Male

Source: Fieldwork: August- September in Keirabani 2024

Dumka and Boro Pahar of District Pakur revealed that people of those villages speak a language and they said that is 'Mawro' language (Madan Dalai, Keirabani September 2024). That might be a link language which Vidyarthi identified as Magahi (1963:1-2); people use many Bengali words also due to their territorial vicinity. Most importantly vocabularies collected during fieldwork among all at least twenty words are there which are pronouncing nearer to Dravidian words. These are identified with the help of Dr. M. Ramakrishnan, who is a Tamil language .speaker and linguist. In the Chart-1 vocabularies are mentioned

Chart 1

Mawro/Paharia Words of Dravidian Origin

Sl. No.	Mawro/Paharia	Dravidian Syllable	English
1.	Pupdu	Poo	Flower
2	Kosambi Pup	Poo	Marry gold
3	Chapa Pup	Poo	Chameli
4	Porda Pupdu	Poo	Lotus
5	Binke	Vinmin	Star
6	Makdu	Matu	Beef
7	Bekdu	Uppu	Salt
8	Mindu	Min	Fish
9	Atokolo	Atukkalai	Kitchen
10	Ato	Atuppu	Stove
11	Modraii	Marati	Forget
12	Tetli	Puli	Tamarind
13	Neme Mandu	Maram	Neem
14	Paroya	Pura	Pigion
15	Kara	Katai (if it's a shop)	Store
16.	Toddy Tudpo	Palm grove in the Telugu language	Sacred Place In the Bodo Pahar
17.	Pun Toddy	Toddy stands for sap of palm tree in the Telugu and other Indian language	Religious Ritual
18.	Perwa	Pura	Dove
19.	Mouna/Manjir	Mayil	Peacock
20.	Kodwa	Kollu	Millet

Source: Fieldwork August- December 2024. The data is analysed with the help of Dr. Ramakrishnan

Analysis and Conclusion

The Mal Paharia and Kumarbhag might have social distance from Saoria Paharia (referred as

beef eaters by the others) in terms of food taboo but these three groups have linguistic affinities (see Chart-1). The fieldwork data from the Mal Paharia and Kumarbhag Paharia/Paharia villages collected and the comparative analysis of the data has shown that at least 20 words used in the dialects of the communities have similarities with vocabularies of Dravidian origin. Vidyarthi identified the dialect of the Saoria Paharia as 'Malto', the language of the 'Maler', which is a northern Dravidian language. The utilization of the Malto language in the Poon Taddi rituals and its presence in the cognition of the Kumarbhag Paharia/Paharia people of the Bodopahar finds connectedness to the Malto language. Words referred as Mowro vocabularies have Dravidian affiliation (Chart-1). Ritual presence of Malto language in the festival of the Bodo Pahar and its symbolic uses signifies their linguistic affinity at cognitive level. The Malto language connects these three communities as per usages of words and as well as in terms of ritual usages.

No less important is the similar inheritance pattern of household property follow the custom of ultimogeniture by the Mal Paharia, Kumarbhag Paharia and Saoria Paharia. This custom is uncommon among all neighbouring communities of them in the region. Other sons inherit cultivable lands. In absence of sons daughters inherit the same and in that case the son in law and his family get settled in the village of the father in law. Vidyarthi reported this tradition present among Maler, whom he refers as Saoria Paharia (1963) and fieldwork finding of this project located the same custom among Mal Paharia and Kumarbhag Paharia (2024) among people of Amlagarhi, Keirabani villages of district Dumka and Bodopahar of the district Pakur.

The 1766 protest movement of the Pahariya, the leaders involved from all sections their surnames are testimony. Those surnames are Pulhar, Ahari (found among the Mal Pahariya at present in the Amlagarhi and Keirabani villages); Sanwaria, Domba (among the Saoria Pahariya) reveal that leaders belong to Mal Paharia and Saoria Paharia. That helps to understand the construction of the 'Paharia' identity of the three social groups. As per field data the Mal Paharia & Kumarbhag are connected to each other by marriage relations.

Their preference for ecological niche, patterns of subsistence activities and staple food show similarities with the tribal people of the neighbourhood. That indicates the age-old traditions of the Mal Paharia in practice. Vidyarthi (1963) identified the Maler as Maize eaters. Present study shows that the Mal Paharia of Dumka are maize eaters and Kumarbhag Paharia Millet eaters. Sahay (op.cit) mentioned that the Mal Paharia exposed to Hinduized religious beliefs. People of villages of Dumka shared the similar behaviours (Tables 2 and 3). Differences are found in the worship of certain rituals and practices which set them apart from Hindu traditions (Tables 2 and 3). The 'Poon Taddi' as an annual festival of the Bodopahar village has a very significant presence in the identity maintenance process of the Paharia. People of this village identify their language 'Paharia' (Chart-1) but 'Malto' language is symbolically memorized during Poon Taddi festival

in a ritual in which the Malto Goshni possessed a villager in person. Under the control of Goshni the villager speaks Malto. Tables (1,2, and 3) reveal the influence of Hindu beliefs and faiths on the people under study.

The Mal Pahrias were struggling to establish their rights of living two centuries back. Rulers and other communities dominated them. This Poon Taddi festival became a site of remembrance of that history of relations with neighbouring communities. They worship forest environments –'Jaher than' a concept of their Santal neighbours but the neighbours are not participants in this ritual. Ganaganarayan Puja (happen beside spring), Shiv Kutti in a strict sense of the term neither be perceived as appropriation of Hindu beliefs and practices nor assimilation. The structural and functional aspect of the Poon Taddi has created unique patterns of rituals to fortify their identity. In the 2 days of the Poon Taddi festival 7 rituals are performed. Among them six rituals are performed in the six separate altars. Worshippers go to each altar for worshipping and come back to a central altar (Goreya Ondo). Music creates the ambiance of the rituals and persons under possessions of separate Goshnis constantly narrate the past and future of the fortunes and failure of the villagers. Poon Taddi as an invention of the festival of the Mal Paharia describes the centuries old history of interaction between them with others.

Influence of Hinduism on the Maler and Mal Paharia is least discussed by Vidyarthi (1963) and DRMTWRI (2024). Anyone visiting the districts Dumka and Pakur will see the nature, level and extent of marginality of the Mal Pahariya in their own cultural niche. This is similar for Sauria and Kumarbhag too. The Deoghar, a popular Hindu religious tourist spot and massive number of pilgrims visit that region every year, a source of revenue generation. Bengalis of adjacent states, people of Bihar and of other states are settled as traders, in white colour jobs and agriculturists in the whole region. All these belief systems influenced Mal Paharia. Every community maintains their marriage preferences. But when that is communicated within short conversation to the unknown outsiders who have very little knowledge on any social relations of the different groups, it sounds more as a political phenomenon.

However, this research could delineate a few social traits and systems and moreover marriage relation of two groups. Vidyarthi's observation on the absence of Kumarbhag people in the census up to 1941 creates a scope to analyse that further. Findings of the present study identifies the Mal Paharia as an off-shoot of the Maler, who in the social ecology of the Rajmahal hills created a distinct identity to sustain and survive with the dominant communities.

References

- Bandopadhyay, S. 2000. "Mal Paharia Tribe and the Problem of their Identity in West Bengal, India". in the Journal of *Asian Ethnicity;* http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/caet20 http://doi.or

g/10.1080/14631369.2020.1785274

- Chaudhuri, S.S. 2008. *Tribes in India and Arunachal Pradesh*, A Text Book ed. By S. K. Chaudhuri and S.S. Chaudhuri in Tribal Studies, Institute of Distance Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar, pp.73-75
- DRMTWRI, *Mal Paharia*, http://trijharkhand.in/en/mal-paharia, date of access 02.01.2025 https://www.studyiq.com/articles/pahariyas-rebellion/ (7th January 2025)
- Office of the Registrar General India, 1951, *Estimated Population By Castes 1951, 5*. Assam, Ministry of the Home Affairs, Government of India,p-16
- Panda, N. B. 2021*, 'Sovereign and 'Tribesmen' in Jungleterry: Augustus Cleveland and the Birth of Tribal Policy in Early Colonial Bengal,* Asian Confluence, Shillong
- Santal Pargana Tenancy Laws "Santal Pargana Tenancy (Supplementary Provision) Act, 1949, Bihar Act XIV 1949, published by Santal_Parganas_Tenancy_Law_full.pdf
- Sarkar, S.S. "The Social Institution of Mal Pahariaa" *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* III (1937:25-32)
- Vidyarthi, L. P. 1963. The Maler: *A study in nature-man-spirit complex of a hill tribe in Bihar*, published by Bookland Private LTD., T .Sankar Ghosh Lane, Kolkata.

Authors of the present paper acknowledge ICSSR for utilization of the database of the Major Project entitles, 'A study on the cultural Ecological knowledge of the Mal poharigs of Jharkhad' (F.No. ICCSR/RPD/MJ/2023-24/G/46, Date: 13.02.2024)

Bio Profile of the Authors:

1. Professor, DATS, CUI
2. Assistant Professor, DATS, CUJ
3. Field Investigator, DATS, CUJ
4. Field Investigator, DATS, CUJ
5. Research Assistant, DATS, CUJ
6. Research Assistant, DATS, CUJ

Contested Sacred Spaces: Sufism, Reformist Movements, and Religious Authority in the Twentieth Century Kashmir

Gulzar Hussain

Abstract

The Sufi traditions in Kashmir have significantly influenced the religious, cultural, and socio-political fabric of the region, intertwining with local practices and shaping communal identities. Originating from various Sufi orders, these traditions emphasize mystical communion with the Divine, fostering spiritual insight, tolerance, and pluralism. Over centuries, Sufi saints established influential *khanqahs* and *dargahs*, contributing to the spiritual and social cohesion of Kashmiri society. However, the rise of Islamic 'reformist' movements in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the Ahl-e-Hadith and the Jama'at-e-Islami, sparked debates over the 'authenticity' of Sufi practices, challenging their dominance and redefining religious discourse. These movements criticized certain Sufi rituals as deviations from 'true' Islam, leading to conflicts over religious authority and influencing the socio-political landscape. Despite these challenges, Sufi leaders have defended their traditions, emphasizing love, tolerance, and unity. Various religious organizations and their strategic use of Islamic principles, underscore ongoing efforts to maintain doctrinal purity and social transformation within Kashmir. This paper aims to explore the rich and complex history of Sufi traditions in Kashmir in the twentieth century, examining their profound impact on the social, religious, and cultural fabric of the region. This article also offers a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between Sufism and the socio-political landscape of Kashmir. Furthermore, it highlights the complex interplay between Sufism and various reformist critiques coming mainly from the *Ahl-e-hadith* and the *Jama'at-e-Islami*, which challenged the authenticity of Sufi practices and sought to assert more orthodox interpretations of Islam, and how Sufi organizations, like the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, have responded to these challenges.

Key Words: *Sacred Site, Sufism, Ideological Contestation, Community Identity, Spirituality, True Islam, Orthodoxy, Shari'ah.*

Introduction and Literature Review

The study of Kashmir's history and culture reveals a landscape deeply intertwined with religious and political movements, where Sufism has played a formative role. Over the years, scholars have examined various facets of this heritage, ranging from the impact of Sufi mysticism on local identity to the influence of reformist movements that have sought to redefine religious practices in the region. This work addresses the significant contributions and ongoing debates within the scholarship on Kashmiri Sufism and reformist ideologies, highlighting how these elements have shaped both communal identities and sociopolitical dynamics in Kashmir.

This section explores major works that analyze the interaction between religious traditions and political authority, the evolution of Kashmiriyat as a cultural identity, and the rise of reformist movements. By situating this study within existing research, it aims to highlight gaps in the discourse, particularly in how Sufi practitioners responded to reformist critiques, and how these historical interactions continue to influence modern Kashmiri society. Through this framework, it contextualizes the focus of the current study on the complex interplay of religion, culture, and politics in shaping the historical narrative of Kashmir.

While Ian Copland (1981) in *Islam and Political Mobilization in Kashmir, 1931-34*, argues that religion was integral to the political movements of the early 1930s, with Islamic symbols challenging Hindu-dominated structures. He explores sectarian divides within the Muslim community and critiques the notion of Muslim unity in Kashmir, shedding light on British colonial influences on regional politics. Although, Muhammad Ishaq Khan's (1983) *Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions*, traces the evolution of Kashmiriyat, a shared cultural identity rooted in mystic poetry and spiritual harmony. Khan's analysis highlights how Islam in Kashmir evolved with local traditions and how modern educational movements shifted Kashmiriyat toward a regional rather than religious identity.

Ashiq Kashmiri's (1991) work *Tarikh-i-Tehrik-i-Islami Jammu wa Kashmir*, provides a history of Jama'at-i-Islami's role in education and politics in Kashmir. Despite Kashmiri's pro-Jama'at stance, which may introduce bias, the work captures the Jama'at's educational and political influence amid opposition from traditional clerics. Sufi Ahmad Muslim's (2019) *Tarikh-i-Ahl-e-Hadith Jammu wa Kashmir*, documents the Ahl-e-Hadith movement, highlighting its reformist approach in Kashmir and challenges from entrenched Sufi traditions. His affiliation with Ahl-e-Hadith potentially colours the analysis, requiring careful interpretation for balanced insights. Whereas Yoginder Sikand's (2002) *The Emergence and Development of the Jama'at-e-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (1940s1990)*, examines the transformation of Jama'at into a sociopolitical

force promoting Islamic values while challenging traditional Sufi practices. Sikand's work addresses the tensions between Sufi and reformist movements, though it lacks responses from Sufi advocates.

Chitralekha Zutshi (2004) in *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir*, studies the fluid identities of Kashmir from the precolonial era to the 20th century, emphasizing its pluralistic history. Her work discusses major figures and political developments, suggesting that Kashmiri identity is an evolving narrative influenced by religion and politics. Mridu Rai's (2004) *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir*, analyses the sociopolitical disenfranchisement of Muslims under Dogra rule and its lasting tensions. Rai examines how Hindu sovereignty shaped cultural narratives and fuelled sectarian divides, arguing that British policies exacerbated Kashmir's communal conflicts.

Yoginder Sikand (2008) in *Popular Kashmiri Sufism and the Challenges of Scripturalist Islam (1900-1989)*, explores how Sufism fostered Kashmir's Islamic identity, and the ideological challenges posed by Ahl-e-Hadith and Jama'at-e-Islami. Sikand underscores the resilience of Sufi traditions despite reformist critiques, though he doesn't address post-1989 dynamics affecting Sufism.

The existing literature offers valuable insights into the interplay between Kashmir's political, religious, and cultural identity. However, discussions on "reformist trends" often overlook how Sufi practitioners responded to reformist critiques. Two Urdu works, *Amir-i-Shari'at aur Unke 'Aqaid* by Sayyid Arif Ahmad Qadri (2018) and *Noor-i-Dil* by Ghulam Hasan Zargar (2023) address this gap by exploring the techniques used by Sufis to counter anti-Sufi rhetoric, providing rare insights into Qasim Shah Bukhari's efforts to unify Muslims and engage in theological debates. Their works show that Sufis did not passively accept anti-Sufi rhetoric but engaged in theological debates, used religious discourse to counter criticisms, and sought to maintain unity within the Muslim community. Both works, however, contain biases that necessitate a cautious approach for a balanced understanding. This response from Sufis, although not covered by scholars like Sikand, reveals a two-way discourse within the Muslim community of Kashmir, adding depth to our understanding of intracommunity dynamics and religious resilience.

These works underscore the complex relationship between Kashmir's political, religious, and cultural landscapes. They reveal a nuanced view of identity formation, where Kashmiri Islam has been shaped by the intermingling of Sufi traditions and reformist movements. The literature also highlights the transformative impact of colonial and Dogra influences, the role of education, and the evolving understanding of Kashmiriyat. Yet, a key gap remains in addressing

Sufi responses to reformist critiques, as Qadri and Zargar's contributions attempt to bridge. This interplay of resistance, adaptation, and ideological contention continues to shape the historical and socioreligious fabric of Kashmir.

Sufi Tradition in Kashmir

The Sufi traditions of Kashmir have a rich and complex history, deeply intertwined with the cultural, social, and religious fabric of the region. Kashmir, known for its spiritual heritage, has been a center of Sufi activity for centuries, with various Sufi orders *(silsilah)* profoundly impacting the religious and intellectual landscape of Kashmir. Sufism was introduced to Kashmir in the early fourteenth century by Sayyid Abdul Raham Sharaf-al-Din, also known as Bulbul Shah, a disciple of Shah Ni'matullah Wali Farsi of the Shuhrawardi order. He arrived during the reign of Suhadeva (Rafiqi, 2015: 74). He is credited with converting the reigning Buddhist ruler of Kashmir Rinchana (A.D.1320-1323) and named Sultan Sadar al-Din (Khoiyami, 2016: 18). The conversion of Rinchana marked a significant point in Kashmir's Islamic history. However, his reign was short, and the Hindu ruler resumed control after his death until 1339, when Shah Mir established the Sultanate of Kashmir (Wani, 2004: 56). An important watermark in Kashmiri Sufism was reached when Sayyid Ali Hamadani arrived in Kashmir with 700 followers, significantly promoting Islam in Kashmir and primarily among the courtly class. His mission was furthered by his son, Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, who arrived in Kashmir in 1393 and helped the reigning Sultan Sikander (1389-1413) Islamize the administration (Didamari, 2003: 88). Muhammad Hamadani established a network of Islamic institutions, including madrasas and khanqahs, and worked for twelve years to spread Islam in Kashmir. The spread of Islam in the rural areas of Kashmir was continued by Sheikh Nuruddin Noorani (*Nund Rishi*).

The Sufi orders that flourished in Kashmir include the *Qadiri*, *Naqshbandi*, *Suhrawardi*, *Kubravi,* and *Rishi silsilahs* (Sikand 2008: 490). These Sufi orders brought their distinct teachings and practices, contributing to the diversity of spiritual expression in the region. Sufism became the dominant form of Islam in Kashmir. By the end of the Seventeenth century, almost all of Kashmir had accepted Islam, and the Sufis, particularly the Rishis, played pivotal roles in this conversion (Khan, 2002).

Syncretizing the Order

Sufis initiated the Islamization of Kashmir Valley from central Asia and Persia. Concurrently, an indigenous movement called the *Rishi* tradition began to develop. This syncretic Sufi tradition flourished in Kashmir, led by its founder, Sheikh Nuruddin (1379-1442) (Rafiqi, 2015: 134-168). Despite the mystical aspects of their philosophical thought, Sheikh Nuruddin was seen as a

significant figure within the peasant community.

Kashmiri Rishism can be considered the unique expression of Islam in Kashmir. It represents the only Indigenous Sufi order in the region and played a significant role in the spread of Islam (Ahmad, 2011: 2). Historically, Kashmir was a center for the practice of Buddhism. However, with the advent of Vedanta philosophy in India, a new philosophical system known as Trika or *Shiva Siddhanta* emerged in Kashmir in the early 9th century (Wani 2004: 90). The establishment of the Sultanate brought Islamic science and culture to the forefront during this time. The Sufi tradition had the opportunity to engage with the existing Buddhist and Siva Siddhanta traditions. This interaction led to the Sufis, referred to as *Rishis* or *babas*, incorporating local influence into their practices.

The emergence of the indigenous *Rishi* movement in Kashmir brought a new socio-religious ethos within Kashmiri society and culture. The exemplary lives of the *Rishi* saints inspired many Kashmiris to adopt Islam. Over time, Islam integrated with community life, encompassing religious practices and belief in the holy spirit, sacred places, and saints revered by Muslims and non-Muslims. As Islam spread throughout Kashmir, various shrines were dedicated to the saints of different Sufi brotherhoods (Amin 2000:192). The success and popularity of the Sufi and their shrines in the valley can be attributed to their role as mediators in both religious (between humans and God) and worldly matters. Wani writes, "The most effective means which made his movement pervasive throughout the Valley was the language and the genre Nuruddin used to bring home to the people his message. He used the commoner's (*Koshur*) language, the piercing mode of expression" (Wani, 2004: 67). His straightforward personality and use of the Kashmiri language likely facilitated many conversions to Islam.

Ishaq Khan emphasizes that "the majority of the commoners, especially the rural folks, were brought to the fold of Islam not by the missionaries of Persia and Central Asia but by the *Rishis*" (Khan, 2002: 178-79). The early Sufis, such as Syed Ali Hamdani, Mir Mohammad Hamadani, and their disciples predominantly used Persian for their teachings, which was inaccessible to the rural populace. Consequently, verb convergence was largely limited to the elite and those associated with the royal court. In contrast, the widespread conversion of rural illiterate people to Islam is attributed to Sheikh Nuruddin, who effectively preached in the Kashmiri language. Because of this approach, Kashmiri Muslims revered Sheikh Nuruddin's didactic poetry as the '*Koshur* Qur'an' (the Qur'an in Kashmiri) (Wani, 2004: 68). This tradition has significantly shaped not only the spiritual landscape of the region but also its socio-political structure.

The Institution of Khanqah

The term "*khanqah*" appeared in the late 9th century and came to be widely used for Sufi residences in Khurasan and Transoxiana. By the end of the 11th century, *khanqah* had become associated with tombs of venerated Sufi masters and the site of pilgrimage for ordinary believers (Lapidus, 2002: 169). Pilgrimage to the shrine is called *ziarat,* a visitation, while the shrine itself is called a *mazar*, a place of visitation; in the Sufi history of Kashmir, it is sometimes called *dargah*, a royal court (Subhan, 1938: 106). These shrines were established for enshrining relics or as tombs or hospices (Mir, 1989). The Sufi saints brought with them the *khanqahs* in Kashmir. These *khanqahs* and *dargahs* serve as centers of spiritual guidance and communitarian cohesion (Khaki, n.d.: 225-226). The shrine of a saint is a place where he has preached and breathed his last, and the tomb built after his death is revered as a sacred place (Saab, 1998: 55). It became sacred because this place is now connected to Islamic spirituality with the medium of Sufi. The presence of the Sufi in a particular space makes it holy because it connects it to divinity through the medium or chain of the Sufi master and Prophet. These shrines were established for enshrining relics or as tombs or hospices (Mir, 1989). These *khanqahs* and *dargahs* serve as centers of spiritual guidance and communitarian cohesion (Khaki, n.d.: 225-226).

Kashmir has been a focal point of spiritual and ideological debates. The interaction between sacred sites, preaching rights, and socio-political control has shaped communal identities and reflected the region's changing socio-political dynamics (Subhan, 1938). These institutions and relationships create a sense of belonging and spiritual connection beyond mere rituals, fostering individual enlightenment and communal harmony. This syncretic nature of Kashmiri Sufism, which integrates local traditions with Islamic mysticism, highlights its inclusive and integrity ethos. This syncretism has enabled diverse communities to engage in Sufi rituals, promoting communal harmony and cultural synthesis. Additionally, the cultural manifestation of Sufism suggests music, dance, and art as powerful means of conveying spiritual messages and preserving the region's rich cultural heritage.

The study of Sufi traditions within the context of Kashmir reveals the deep socio-spiritual interaction that has influenced their regions, culture, and religious milieu. An in-depth analysis of the historical, social, and cultural components demonstrates how integrating indigenous practices with Islamic doctrines facilitated by Sufi tradition has cultivated a distinct religious identity and promoted broader social cohesion and cultural integration. Revered Sufi saints arrived in Kashmir and established themselves, significantly shaping the spiritual environment of the region and characterizing the historical development of Sufism there. Through their exemplary lives and teachings, these saints attracted a broad following. Their shrines (*khanqahs* or *dargahs*) evolved

into centers for spiritual solace and community engagement. Over time, these shrines became focal points for religious activities, community gatherings, and cultural festivals, thus cementing their significance in the daily lives of the people.

In recent political and social turmoil, the lasting influence of Sufi traditions in Kashmir provides significant insight into how religious practices can foster social tolerance, spiritual well-being, and communitarian cohesion. Sufi shrines and their rituals are crucial for comprehending Kashmir's intricate relationship between religion, culture, and society. Furthermore, the inclusive nature of Sufi practices serves as a model for tackling contemporary religious intolerance and social fragmentation issues. Consequently, studying Kashmiri Sufism enhances our understanding of regional Islamic practices and contributes to the broader discussion on how mysticism and spirituality shape human experiences and societal frameworks.

Claiming Authority over the Sacred Spaces

Till the end of the nineteenth century, Sufism remains the dominant form of Islam in Kashmir, with most Kashmiri Muslims adhering to various Sufi orders. Starting in the late nineteenth century, Sufism faced significant criticism from both the 'reformists' and the 'Islamists' across the Muslim world. The arrival of Islamic 'reformists' in Kashmir, influenced by movements from mainland India such as Delhi, Amritsar, and Punjab, further altered the religious landscape of the region. The emergence of reformist movements, such as Ahl-e-hadith and the Jama'at-e-Islami, has initiated debates over the "authenticity" of Sufi practices and their devotion to Islamic orthodoxy. While some Muslim groups or movements regard Sufism as a path to spiritual enlightenment, others consider it as a deviation from the pure teachings of Islam.

However, different groups strive to affiliate themselves with Sufi shrines and culture in Kashmir, seeking to exert control over these sacred spaces. The complex power dynamics reveal the ongoing struggle for religious authority, identity, and legitimacy. The contention between various groups, notably the Mirwaiz families of Srinagar, illustrates the interplay of religious, economic, and political interests. The disputes between the two prominent Mirwaizes of Kashmir, Mirwaiz Kashmiri, and Mirwaiz Hamadani, over preaching rights at specific shrines highlight this complexity (Zutshi, 2004: 131). This struggle extends beyond mere physical control of the shrines; it was deeply intertwined with the broader socio-political and ideological currents within Kashmiri society (Zutshi, 2004: 129). This conflict over these sacred sites demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of Sufi traditions amid reformist pressures and modernist critiques. Despite attempts by various reformist and modern movements to redefine or diminish the role of Sufism, its presence and influence in Kashmir remain robust. The ongoing disputes over sacred

spaces illustrate how deeply Sufism is embedded in the cultural and religious fabric of Kashmir, continuously shaping and being shaped by the evolving socio-political landscape of the region. Ultimately, these sacred sites serve as a testament to the enduring significance of Sufism in Kashmir, highlighting the dynamic and contested nature of religious authority and identity in the region (Zutshi, 1986: 190-195). These conflicts over sacred spaces and preaching rights at significant religious sites in Kashmir have played a crucial role in shaping community identities and changing the socio-political scenario of the region. Central to these disputes are competing claims to leadership among the Kashmiri Muslim elites, who seek to assert their influences through control of city shrines and religious patronage networks. In this conflict, the issue of 'authenticity' and preaching 'true' Islam was vital in asserting their authority (Chowdhary and Rao, 2006: 298).

The *Khanqah* came to symbolize authority over the city, its inhabitants, and its sacred past, thus becoming a focal point for political conflicts among rival groups of Kashmir Muslims and their Sufi supporters and detractors. Since the shrines asserts both religious and political legitimacy, these groups sought to control its management and, thereby, over the Muslim community itself. Consequently, disputes over the shrine were often framed as battles between '*sahih*/*asal* Islam' (true Islam) and *kufr*/*be-dini'* (infidelity) (Zutshi, 2018: 56). Unsurprisingly, shrines in Kashmir became the centers of political and religious controversy in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, marked by significant changes in Kashmir's political economy. During this period, the Dogra state underwent bureaucratization, with colonial officials overseeing land settlements. Consequently, the shawl trade declined, and Kashmiri Muslims began to organize as a community. As a result, the traditional landed and merchant elites experienced a losing ground influence over economic resources and political authority.

The advent of modernity, especially the rise of print media, profoundly impacted the dissemination of knowledge and ideas within the Muslim community. The printing press became a powerful tool for religious reformers, enabling the widespread distribution of Islamic teaching and debates over interpretations (Mir, 2019: 55). This technological advancement reshaped religious life, allowing individuals and groups to assert their ideological narratives and challenge established norms.

However, Sufism plays a significant role in Kashmiri society, it has encountered opposition from prominent institutions like the Ahl-e-hadith and the Jama'at-e-Islami, which criticize and challenge Sufi traditions. Political development, socio-economic changes, and technological advancements have spurred various reformist movements seeking to establish authority within the Muslim community, during which Sufism also came under scrutiny. The critique of Sufi traditions by Ahl-e-hadith movements in Kashmir exemplifies a multifaceted and complex

dialogue within Islamic thought shaped by historical, socio-political, and theological factors. This dynamic interplay between Sufism and reformist ideologies highlights the evolving tensions and discourses that have influenced Kashmiri society since the late nineteenth century.

Ahl-e-hadith Challenges to Sufi Tradition and the Struggle for Religious Authority

The historical connection between Kashmir and the Ahl-e-hadith movement in mainland India dates to the late nineteenth century. This period was marked by the journey of Shah Hussain Bhatku, a young Kashmiri who travelled to Amritsar and then Delhi to further his Islamic studies (Khan, 1987: 43).

Born in Delhi during the latter half of the nineteenth century, Hussain Bhatku hailed from a family that had migrated from Makkah. He eventually settled in Amritsar before relocating to Kashmir and settling in Batakpora Srinagar. After receiving primary education from his father, Sayyid Mohammad Shah, Hussain Bhatku went to Amritsar and became a Maulana Ghulam Ali Amritsari student in 1872. In Amritsar, he noticed the growing influence of *Madrasa Miyan Sahib*, which Maulana Nazir Dehlavi managed or ran.

Subsequently, Hussain Bhatku migrated to Delhi, where he enrolled in *Madrasa Miyan Sahib* and studied theological and jurisprudential doctrines under Nazir Dehlavi (Dar, 2006: 56). When he entered the Kashmir Valley, Hussain Bhatku found Muslims mired in superstitious practices, ignorance, and darkness. He criticized the ‘ulama for promoting several rituals that have no authenticity in Islam and ceremonies at the khanqah level (Khan, 2007: 137). He was the first among Ahl-e-hadith to raise his voice against and criticize *piri-muridi*, superstitions, and rituals and to denounce *astan* (shrine) visitation. The local Mullahs, who had much influence on people in general and had gained respect among the Kashmiri Muslims in particular, strongly opposed Hussain Shah Bhatku, compelling the Maharaja to issue an expulsion order for him from the state (Khan, 1978: 108). When Maharaja expelled Hussain Shah Bhaktu from Srinagar, he chooses to go to Shopian because he had learned that Maulana Anwar Shah Shopiani (d. 1939) was convinced of the Ahl-e-hadith School and had become active in its propagation and promotion (Muslim, 2019: 95). Although Bhatku’s movement did not make much progress, it managed to influence many well-known people of Srinagar, such as Sayyid Sabzar Shah, Abdul Aziz Chikan, Maulvi Hasan Shah, and others, who became motivated by his ideology (Bukhari, 1975). Later, Anwar Shah and Atta Muhammad Khan significantly advanced the cause of the Ahl-e-hadith movement.

The Ahl-e-hadith movement emerged as a significant force, advocating for a return to the fundamental sources of Islam and promoting a literal interpretation of the Qur‘an and Hadith. This movement, characterized by its emphasis on theological purity, gained traction in Kashmir,

sparking debates and reshaping religious landscapes. The Ahl-e-hadith argued that Muslims had deviated from "true" Islam by introducing innovations that had no Islamic legitimacy (Muslim, 2019: 65). They criticized the custodians of shrines, accusing them of hiding the 'true' message of Islam, and condemned the shared religious spaces, where Hinduism and Islam interacted, as threats to the purity and integrity of the Muslim community (Sikand, 2008: 502). However, the Ahl-e-hadith did not become a mass movement due to their strong opposition to the Sufi tradition, which had played a crucial role in converting many Kashmiris to Islam. The custodians of the shrines and the devotees accused the Ahl-e-hadith of being *be-din* (irreligious) and *munkir-i-auliya* (deniers of Sufis) (Muslim, 2019: 100).

The emergence of the Ahl-e-hadith in Kashmir during a time of socio-political upheaval, marked by colonial encounters and socio-economic transformations, highlights the contextual specificity of their reformist agenda. Their critique of Sufi practices was closely linked to broader concerns about religious purity, authenticity, and practices. They sought to align Kashmiri Islam with their interpretation of orthodox teachings, emphasizing a return to the foundational principles of Islam as articulated in the Qur'an and Hadith. This attempt at religious purification was not merely doctrinal but also a means to address the socio-political realities of the time. The decline of traditional Islamic polities under colonial rule created a vacuum that allowed new religious and intellectual movements, like the Ahl-e-Hadith, to assert their influence.

The Ahl-e-hadith framed their opposition to Sufism within a more extensive Islamic revival and reform narrative. They positioned themselves as custodians of Islamic orthodoxy, challenging the established religious authority of Sufi orders and the *'ulama* who supported them. This critique was both a theological stance and a strategic response to the changing socio-political landscape. By advocating for a return to what they considered the 'pure' and 'unadulterated' teachings of Islam, the Ahl-e-hadith aimed to restore a sense of religious and moral order amidst the tangle of colonialism and modernization.

As a significant part of broader Islamic reformist discourse, the debates over Sufism in Kashmir reflect a continuous negotiation between tradition and modernity, mysticism and orthodoxy, and individual spirituality and communal identity. The Ahl-e-hadith emphasis on scripturalism and legalism contrasted sharply with the mystical and experiential dimensions of Sufism, creating a landscape of religious contestation that was both intellectually vibrant and socially significant. The doctrinal disagreements between these two movements were not merely abstract theological debates; they had real implications for the lived religious experiences of Kashmiri Muslims. The emphasis on strict adherence to scriptural sources by the Ahl-e-hadith challenged the established norms and practices of Sufi traditions (Sikand, 2008: 501). This led to a re-evaluation of religious

identities and practices within the community.

Ultimately, the critique of Sufi traditions by the Ahl-e-hadith in Kashmir highlights the dynamic and contested nature of Islamic reform. It underscores the importance of historical context in shaping religious movements and how theological debates are often embedded in broader socio-political struggles. The enduring legacy of these debates continues to influence contemporary Islamic thought and practice in Kashmir and beyond. The ongoing quest for religious authenticity and socio-political relevance in the modern world can be traced back to these early reformist movements, which sought to redefine the parameters of religious orthodoxy and practice.

Jama'at-e-Islami and the Challenges to Sufi Tradition in Kashmir

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the Sufi traditions in Kashmir witnessed criticism from "political Islam" *(Siyasi Islam)* in the form of the Jama'at-e-Islami (Sikand, 2001: 218). These critics, influenced mainly by "Islamist" and "reformist" ideologies, raised concerns about the politicization of Islam and its effects on governance, social justice, and human rights. Political Islam refers to the idea of Islam as not just a personal faith but also as a political ideology governing public and social life (Volpi, 2013: 9). In Kashmir, the concept of political Islam has manifested through movements advocating for an Islamic state or the Shariah law implementation. These movements often emerged in response to perceived injustices or as part of broader struggles for self-determination (Akbarzadeh, 2012: 2).

Some supporters of political Islam in Kashmir criticized Sufi traditions for deviating from what they considered "pure" or "true" Islam. They criticized certain Sufi practices, such as "shrine worship", veneration of saints, and mystical rituals, as *bid'ah* (innovations) or idolatry. These critics often sought to 'reform' or 'purify' Sufi practices based on their understanding of Islam.

The evolution of the Jama'at-e-Islami in Jammu and Kashmir illustrates an intricate interplay of ideology, strategic decision-making, and socio-political dynamics. The Jama'at exemplifies the adaptability and resilience of the Islamist movement in achieving its objectives within the contexts of governance and social change. The Jama'at was established in 1946 in Kashmir under the guidance of Sa'aduddin din Tarabali, Qari Saifuddin, and Maulana Ahrar. It fell prey to a schism during the partition of India in 1947, with the formation of an Indian branch, Jama'at-e-Islami-Hind (JIH), and a Pakistan Branch, Jama'at-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP). After the partition, Jama'at-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, till 1952, was governed by the constitution of the Jama'at-e-Islami-Hind. However, Jammu and Kashmir were disputed regions, and owing to complex political reasons, the Kashmiri leaders of the Jama'at decided to separate themselves from the Jama'at-e-Islami Hind. After separating from the Jama'at-e-Islami Hind, they drafted their constitution to

make the organisation function smoothly. A draft committee under Maulana Ahrar and Ghulam Rasul was formed. The constitution was completed in November 1953 and was accepted and passed in the same year, on which basis the Jama'at-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir should act (Kashmiri, 1991: 27-28). The constitution of the Jama'at-e-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir is like the original constitution of the Jama'at-e-Islami Hind, except that it has been localized to Kashmir (Majid, 2018: 95).

Tracing the Jama'at's trajectory from an ideological entity to an electoral participant reveals how it navigated the challenging socio-political landscape of the region. Primarily founded to promote the ideals of political Islam, the Jama'at-e-Islami in Jammu and Kashmir was driven by a vision of Islamic revivalism and social justice. Its basic values were embedded in the belief that returning to "true" Islamic teachings was essential to address the socio-economic and political challenges of the Muslim community (Sikand, 2002: 727). This ideological perspective directly opposed the Jama'at to the established socio-religious patterns, particularly those linked and connected with Sufi traditions, which significantly affected the region.

The Jamaat's critique of the Sufi institution was central to its ideological campaign. It accused the Sufi ulama of promoting syncretic practices and superstitions to wave them as a deviation from authentic Islamic teachings. This critique carried significant socio-political implications, as the Jama'at sought to undermine the Sufi influence and establish itself as the legitimate representative of Islamic values in the region. This effort to delegitimize Sufi institutions can be considered part of a broader strategy to consolidate the Jama'at's authority and expand its influence.

As the Jama'at's ideological campaign gained support, it attracted many supporters dissatisfied with the prevailing socio-religious order; it transitioned from a purely ideological movement to a socio-political force influencing public discourses and policy (Sikand, 2002: 734). Its entry into electoral politics marked a strategic shift, reflecting its pragmatic approach to achieving its objectives. The Jama'at sought to transform its ideological vision into formal political engagement by participating in elections and improving its competence to effect change within the existing governance structures.

A restructuring of its organizational framework accompanied the strategic foray of the Jama'at into electoral politics (Kashmiri, 1991: 243). It established a hierarchical structure with centralized leadership to consolidate power and maintain ideological coherence. This organizational model aimed to challenge the traditional authority of Sufi leaders and assert its dominance as a religious and political entity (Sa'aduddin, n.d: 7). The centralized leadership structure facilitated coordinated efforts to propagate the messages of the Jama'at, mobilize supporters, and implement its agenda.

This restructuring was a crucial step in the Jama'at's efforts to establish itself as a formidable force capable of shaping the socio-political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Jama'at-e-Islami's journey from an ideological movement to a political actor highlights the dynamic interplay between ideology, politics, and social change. Its critique of Sufi traditions and efforts to establish authority illustrates the complexities of pursuing religious and political goals (Veer, 1999: 547). Examining the Jama'at-e-Islami's evolution provides insights into ideological adaptation, strategic decision-making, and socio-political transformation within Islamist movements (Kashmiri, 1991: 244). The Jama'at's experience in Jammu and Kashmir serves as an essential study of how religious movements evolve and adapt to changing socio-political landscapes, demonstrating the enduring relevance and influence of political Islam (Warikoo, 2011: 71).

Focusing on Islamic revivalism and adherence to Quranic principles, the Jama'at-e-Islami became a significant political force in Kashmir. Its critique of Sufism as perceived deviations from 'authentic' Islamic teachings echoed with sections of the inhabitants, initiating debates and restructuring religious debates. However, among these ideological contestations, the complex relationship of "tradition" and "modernity," "orthodoxy," and "innovation" continue to shape the religious landscape of Kashmir.

Resilience and Adaptability: The Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam's Defence of Sufi Tradition in Kashmir

The rise of 'reformist' and 'political Islam' during the early and mid-twentieth century created challenges and opportunities for the advocates of Sufi traditions and practices. Those who supported Sufi traditions were aware of the criticisms and challenges presented by 'reformists' and 'Islamists' to Sufi institutions in Kashmir. In response, they began to organize and restructure their Sufi organizations. Within this context, the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam exemplifies the resilience and adaptability of Sufis in confronting various challenges and criticisms.

The Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, founded in 1931-32 by supporters of Sufism and the traditional *'ulama* of Kashmir, acknowledged the necessity of organizing to defend their beliefs and practices while safeguarding and advancing Sufism in the region (Zargar, 2023: 61). Central to the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam's effort in this polemic was its commitment to the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence and its identification with the Sufi path, as reflected in its slogan, *"Hanafi Maslak Sufi Mashrab"* (Zargar, 2023: 61).

The efforts of the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam in literature, education, and organizational

restructuring highlight a proactive approach to preserving and promoting Sufi traditions. This Anjuman defended Sufi beliefs and practices against reformist critiques and sought to make Sufism relevant in a rapidly changing socio-political landscape.

While political movements aimed to alter Kashmir's religious and cultural landscape, Sufi organizations such as Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam sought to preserve their spiritual and cultural significance (Suhrawardi, 2008: 29). They founded educational institutions and madrasas to educate the Kashmiri populace about contemporary trends and raise awareness of the challenges confronting Sufi traditions and practices. A key feature of the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam's approach was the integration of Sufi texts into their curriculum alongside modern secular education, ensuring the continued relevance of their ideology and faith (Bukhari 1974). Additionally, they began publishing extensive journals to spread their ideas and interpretations of Islam throughout the region. These efforts, including establishing educational institutions and publishing journals and tracts, were strategic initiatives to inform and educate the masses about the importance of Sufi practices within the broader Islamic traditions.

Through a nuanced understanding of Islamic principles and a devoted commitment to Sufi traditions, the Anjuman adeptly managed the challenges of religious interpretation and socio-political involvement, thereby influencing the spiritual and ideological contours of Kashmiri Muslims. Central to the objectives of the Anjuman was its defence of Sufi practices, including shrine rituals, saint veneration, and observances like *milad-un-nabi* and *'urs* – against critique from reformist groups. By contextualizing these practices within Islamic monotheism and spiritual guidance, the Anjuman safeguarded the historical and cultural legacy of Kashmiri Islam and adapted it to contemporary changes.

Additionally, the Anjuman actively engaged in contemporary 'reformist' or 'Islamist' discourses on key Islamic concepts such as *tauhid* (unity of Allah), *shirk* (polytheist or associating partners to Allah), *bid'at* (innovations), *isti'anat* (seeking help from anyone other than Allah), and *wasila* (mediation, intermediaries), demonstrating its efforts to integrate traditional Sufi teachings with evolving religious perspectives (Bukhari, 1975). By endorsing specific practices as valid expressions of piety and spiritual connection, the Anjuman nurtured a sense of continuity and religious identity among Kashmiri Muslims, countering the homogenizing tendencies prevalent in the broader Islamic world. Moreover, Anjuman's inclusive approach to religious education, socio-political involvement, and cultural preservation enhanced its relevance and impact within Kashmiri society. Through initiatives like establishing educational institutions and advocating for social equity, the Anjuman represented a comprehensive vision of Islam that bridged sectarian differences and fostered unity amidst diversity (Suhrawardi, 2008: 13).

The Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam not only restricted itself to education and religion but also played its part in politics. Although the Anjuman professed political neutrality, it consistently supported the ruling government, sometimes in indirect ways (Hussain, 2021: 155). The Anjuman's ability to unify various Sufi groups under a single platform underscores the organizational skill and strategic foresight of its leaders. This unified approach defended the Sufi traditions against external criticism and cultivated a sense of solidarity and purpose among its followers. The success of the Anjuman in incorporating local customs and practices into the Islamic framework of Kashmir highlights the adaptive and dynamic nature of Sufism. Sufism in Kashmir did not merely survive the onslaught of reformist movements; it adapted and evolved, reinforcing its spiritual, educational, and cultural foundations. The Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam exemplifies this resilience and adaptability, demonstrating how Sufi organizations can address contemporary challenges while remaining faithful to their core spiritual values (Anjuman, 1998: 12).

The evolution of organizations like the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, which champions the Sufi tradition, highlights a persistent pursuit of religious authenticity and social change by advocating Sufi teachings and addressing criticisms from reformist and Islamist scholars. In Kashmir, Sufi leaders and their adherents countered the criticism of reformists and Islamists by reaffirming their spiritual heritage and underscoring the values of love and tolerance promoted by Sufism. They often depicted Sufism as a cohesive force that bridged sectarian divides and enhanced social unity within Kashmiri society. Moreover, Sufi leaders occasionally dialogue with political Islamists to find common ground and bridge ideological differences. The counter-critiques by the Anjuman were motivated by reformists' criticism of the Sufi traditions and concerns about the political threat to their authority in the Kashmir valley. The Anjuman aimed to consolidate power by uniting traditional religious scholars (*'ulama*) within a single organization to strengthen their legitimacy and maintain control over religious discourse and practices in the region.

The proponents of the Sufi traditions responded to Kashmir's reformist and Islamist movements by engaging in self-criticism and embracing modern practices, institutions, and social services. Concerned about challenges to their authority, they sought to maintain relevance amidst social and political upheaval. On the other hand, if the 'reformist' groups or movements were criticizing them, it was not that the Sufis were against the Qur'an and hadith because, in their responses to the Ahl-e-hadith and the Jama'at, they were also citing the Qur'an and hadith. This indicates that the interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith can vary significantly among individuals and movements. The reformists' critiques of Sufism were less about resorting to 'true' Islam and more about consolidating their socio-political authority. Since the colonial intervention had demolished the political structure of Muslim leaders, these reformists were trying to strengthen their authority

within the Muslim community by criticizing the Sufi traditions and practices as *bid'at* and 'false Islam' and declaring them unauthentic.

Conclusion

Sufi traditions and their concomitants played an important role in developing and nurturing the spiritual development and establishment in Kashmir. Contested sacred spaces: Sufism, reformist movements and religious authority in the twentieth century Kashmir illuminates how Sufism became the dominant form of Islam in Kashmir, and the Sufis became the head of this conversion. However, the advent of reformist trends in Kashmir in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed criticism of Sufi traditions and practices. They tried to articulate their notion of reform and perspectives of 'true Islam'. Central to this criticism were competing claims to leadership among the Kashmiri Muslim elites, who sought to assert their influence over the subjects through control over city shrines and religious patronage networks. However, the Sufi, on the other side, tried to reorganize and restructure the traditional *'ulama* and the proponents of the Sufi traditions to defend their beliefs and rituals. Central to this reorganization of the Sufi, *'ulama* on a common platform were to make themselves relevant to the changing context of the socio-political landscape of the region. Sufi leaders and their followers in Kashmir responded to critiques from the 'reformists' and 'political Islamists' by reaffirming the importance of their spiritual heritage and emphasizing the value of love and tolerance promoted by Sufi teachings. They often portrayed Sufism as a unifying force that transcended sectarian divides and contributed to the social cohesion of Kashmiri society. One common factor among the different Anjumans in Kashmir, be it the Ahl-e-Hadith, the Jama'at-e-Islami, and the Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam, is their strategic deployment of Islam and the Qur'an as the principal instrument of advocacy. Rooted in a collective aspiration to revive an unadulterated manifestation of Islam, they have persistently attempted to combat perceived deviancy and uphold doctrinal purity throughout their respective historical trajectories.

References

- Akbarzadeh, S. (eds.). 2012. The paradox of political Islam. In *Routledge Handbook of Political Islam*. London: Routledge.
- Amin, P. M. 2000. *Beliefs, Customs and Practices- A case study of Hazratbal, Srinagar*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Delhi: Jamia Milia Islamia.
- Anjuman Tablighul Islam Jammu and Kashmir. 1998. *Uboori-Dastoor*. Srinagar: New Kashmir Press.

- Bukhari, A. Q. S. (eds.). 1975. Al-Aitiqad. *Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam Jammu and Kashmir*.
- Bukhari, A. Q. S. 1974. *Salana ijtima aur Iftitahe Hanafi Arabic College ke Moqe Par Khutba-i-Sadarat*. Srinagar: Nazime Nashr-o-Isha'at Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam.
- Chowdhary, R., & Rao, V. N. 2006. The Evolution of Political Islam in Jammu and Kashmir. In S. Saberwal & M. Hasan (eds.), *Assertive Religious Identities: India and Europe*. Delhi: Manohar.
- Copland, I. 1981. 'Islam and Political Mobilization in Kashmir'. 1931-34. *Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia* 54 (2), 228-59.
- Dar, N. A. 2006. *Religious Institutes of Kashmir*. Srinagar: Jay Kay Book Shop.
- Hussain, S. 2021. *Kashmir in the Aftermath of Partition*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108780995
- Ira M. Lapidus. 2014. *A History of Islamic Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kashmiri, A. 1991. *Tarikh-i Tehrik-i Islami Jammu wa Kashmir* (3rd ed., Vol. 2). Lahore: Idara Ma'arif-i-Islami.
- Khaki, B. D. (n.d.). *Dastur-ul-Salikin* (M. T. Kamili, Trans.; Vol. 2). Srinagar.
- Khan, B. A. 2007. The Ahl-e-Hadith: A Socio-Religious Reform Movement in Kashmir. *The Muslim*, *90*.
- Khan, M. I. 1978. *History of Srinagar, 1846-1947: A Study in Socio-cultural Change*. Srinagar: Aamir Publications.
- Khan, M. I. 2002. *Kashmir's Transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century*. Delhi: Manohar.
- Khoiyami, P. H. S. 2016. *Tazkira Auliya E Kashmir* (P. A. K. Tahiri, Trans.; Vol. 3). Srinagar: Gulshan Books.
- Mir, G. H. 1989. *Muslim Shrines of Kashmir and their impact on society (1847-1947 A.D.* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Srinagar: Kashmir University.
- Mir, R. 2019. Communicating Islam in Kashmir Intersection of Religion and Media. *Society and Culture in South Asia*, *5*(1), 47–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/2393861718787871
- Muslim, S. A. 2019. *Tarikh-i-Ahl-e-hadith Jammu wa Kashmir*. Srinagar: Jam'iat-i-Ahl-e-hadith Jammu wa Kashmir.

- Qadri, S.A.A. 2018. *Ameer-i-Shariat Allama Bukhari aur unke Aqaid*. Srinagar: Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam Jammu wa Kashmir.
- Rafiqi, A. Q. 2015. *Sufism In Kashmir*. Srinagar: Gulshan Books.
- Rai, M. 2004. *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir.* Delhi: Orient Blackswan.
- Saheb, S. A. A. 1998. A 'Festival of Flags': Hindu-Muslim devotion and the sacralising of localism at the shrine of Nagore-e-Sharif in Tamil Nadu. In H. Basu and P. Werbner (eds.), *Embodying Charisma*. London: Routledge.
- Saifuddin, Q. 1979. *Vadi-i-Purkhar, 6 Sala report Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu wa Kashmir.* Srinagar: Shooba-i-Nashir wa Isha'at Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu wa Kashmir.
- Sikand, Y. 2002. The Emergence and Development of the Jama'at-e-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (1940s–1990). *Modern Asian Studies*, *36*, 705–751. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X02003062
- Sikand, Y. 2008. Popular Sufi Tradition and the Challenges of Scripturalist Islam (1900-1989. In A. Rao (eds.), *The Valley of Kashmir: The Making and Unmaking of a Composite Culture?* Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors.
- Subhan, J. A. 1938. *Sufism, its Saints and Shrines*. Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House.
- Suhrawardi, M. G. A. 2008. *Dastoor-i-Anjuman Tabligh-ul-Islam Jammu and Kashmir* (revised). Srinagar: Nashr-o-Isha'at Anjuman-i-Tabligh-ul-Islam.
- Tarabali, S. (n.d.). *The Term Subhan Allah*. Srinagar: Ideal Publishing Academy.
- Veer, P. V. D. 1999. Playing or Praying: A Sufi Saint's Day in Surat. *Journal of Asian Studies*, *51*(3).
- Volpi, F. 2013. *Political Islam: A Critical Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Wani, M. A. 2004. *Islam in Kashmir: Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century*. Srinagar: Oriental Publishing House.
- Warikoo, K. 2011. Islamist Extremism in Kashmir. In Kulbhushan Warikoo (eds.), *Religion and Security in South and Central Asia*. New York: Routledge.
- Zargar, G. H. 2023. *Noor-i-Dil*. Srinagar: Idara Anjuman-i-Tablighul Islam J&K.
- Zutshi, C. 2004. *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of*

Kashmir. London: Hurst & Company.

- Zutshi, C. 2018. *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Zutshi, U. K. 1986. *Emergence of Political Awakening in Kashmir*. Delhi: Manohar Publications.

Bio Profile of the Author:

Research Scholar, Presidency University, Kolkata, Department of History
Email: gulzar.presiuniv2018@gmail.com

Facilitating the Self-Made: Utilization of Social Media for Fostering Women Entrepreneurship

Sayak Pal[1], Nitesh Tripathi[2]. Swati Agarwal[3],& Sharmila Kayal[4]

Abstract

As Digital Media takes center stage in every domain of life, it is essential to understand its implications to utilize it better. Unlike Electronic and Print Media, Digital Media is truly democratic as it allows people to exchange ideas, goods, and services without hassles. For this reason, social media is widely used by the masses for expressing their creativity and art. There is a commercial aspect to this as well. The scope of conducting and promoting one's creativity and monetizing it to create a small business can't be found on any other media platforms as these platforms indulge in a top-down and not bottom-up approach. In this regard, the researcher attempts to study the potential of Facebook, the largest social media platform, in promoting the small-scale business of Women Entrepreneurs. For this purpose, secondary data from the validated sources have been considered along with the in-depth interviews to elicit responses on various aspects such as business details, revenue generation, promotional endeavors, challenges, and motivation. The analysis indicates the increasing rate of women-centric entrepreneurship activities that can open up ways for further developments, while women entrepreneurs are yet to explore the full benefits and potentialities of Facebook to promote and expand their businesses.

Keywords: *Women Entrepreneurs, Facebook, Business, Digital Media, Marketplace, Promotion*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship signifies the dynamism of an economic system, which is often reflected in the liberalization and globalization of the economy. Along with the men who have undoubtedly contributed to the growth and development of illustrious organizations, women entrepreneurs on various scales have also set exemplary business organizations that have contributed to the

financial escalation of the nation. The recorded history of Indian entrepreneurship dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization when entrepreneurial activities were primarily restricted to trade practices across human establishments. Similar trading activities occurred during the copper age in the Indus Valley Civilization, northern Iran, and Turkmenistan (3200-2600 BCE approx.). The trading materials were seals, pottery, ornaments, figurines, etc. Some archeological evidence suggests strong trading possibilities between Iranian countries and Central Asia during the Harappa and Mesopotamian civilizations (T. Swetha, 2013). Modern India has witnessed the inception of entrepreneurship right from the eighteen-fifties when factories were set up by individuals like Thomas Parry to run his tannery business in the southern part of India. Another daring attempt was made in the early eighteen hundred to establish the iron plan again in the same region of India.

The Initial entrepreneurship activities primarily originated in foreign lands that came to India for a large and unexplored market; the latter part of Indian history saw Indian investors setting up their cotton and textile industry firms, giving tough competition to foreign competitors. The factory system in India was first recorded in its application in textile industries, followed by several other sectors like tea, coal, and papers, which encouraged Indian entrepreneurs to take an interest and bring more investments into the industry. According to Phiroze B. Medhora, the development of Indian entrepreneurs can be segregated into multiple phases. The first half of the nineteenth century provided a favorable environment for Indian entrepreneurs that were instrumental to the growth of Indian business people, which is considered the first wave. However, they faced a series of challenges, including the dearth of skilled laborers, setting up the proper facilities, etc. During the second wave of development, a few major industries like sugar and cement were set up that required massive investments. For example, in 1875, a sugar factory was set up in Kolkata because the steady supply of raw materials from the favorable irrigation facilities abound Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In 1912, TATA erected a cement factory, a prominent example of a large-scale factory from the era. After the Second World War, the planning era helped shape the current stage of entrepreneurial development while pushing the development further (Medhora, 1965).

Entrepreneurship in India and West Bengal

SMEs (Small and medium-scale entrepreneurs) are considered the backbone of the nation's economy, unlike countries like the United States, where large-scale industries monopolize most of the market. The Indian government also played its part in supporting SMEs with incentives and schemes like the Make in India initiative (2014), Start-up India (2015), Digital India campaign

(2015), and Atmanirbhar Bharat (2020) over the years (Sayak Pal, 2022). 2016-17 report from 'Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)' India indicates that Indian 'early-stage entrepreneurship activities' are around 11 percent, among which 4 percent are 'nascent entrepreneurs' who are engaged in business activities actively where 7 percent could manage to establish their business that is continuing for 3.5 years and 5 percent are running their ventures for above 42 months (EDI, 2018). The MSMED (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development) Act, 2006 by the Government of India, set the ground rule for categorizing entrepreneurs according to initial investment and early turnover. A 'Micro-scale' enterprise should not exceed the investment of Rs. 1 Crore for the plant and machinery with a turnover limited to Rs. 5 Crore. The 'Small-scale' enterprises should not invest beyond Rs. 10 Crore and should be limited to a yearly turnover of Rs. 50 Crore. These micro and small-scale industries support international and domestic market development. 'The National Sample Survey Office,' Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, came out with the '73rd National Sample Survey' in 2016, highlighting the distribution of states with the highest contributions from MSME. The report claims that Uttar Pradesh is the top contributing state, followed by West Bengal (BIAC, 2016).

The state of West Bengal carries its lineage in handcrafting with various materials and techniques that support a large number of artisans in sustaining their livelihood and, at the same time, continuing their heritage. West Bengal is especially popular for producing premium artifacts that are in high demand not only in local, regional, and national markets but also in the international market. Some popular sectors are 'terracotta,' 'handloom,' 'leather,' 'sericulture, etc. The list of popular forms of cottage industries belongs to the state of West Bengal are 'Pottery,' 'Handlooms Terracotta,' 'Brass and Bell Metal Works,' 'Clay products,' 'Bamboo and Cane,' 'Leather products,' 'Jute products,' and 'Sericulture.'

Women Entrepreneurs in India

Women entrepreneurs' contribution to India's economic development goes back a long time; however, much of their contribution has been recorded correctly in recent times (T. Swetha, 2013). While in ancient Indian society, women enjoyed almost equal status with men, 'Udyogini' (an NGO conceptualized by the World Bank in 1992 aiming to improve India's economic empowerment) states that the current number of women entrepreneurs is one for every seven male entrepreneurs. The Ministry of MSME has made numerous attempts to intensify women's empowerment through rigorous development of entrepreneurship like the setting up of 1.38 lakh of projects under 'Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) Scheme,' 'Khadi

Programme of KVIC' that has managed to launch more than thirty thousand projects to strengthen and empower women, TREAD (Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development) Scheme, Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs, Bhartiya Mahila Business Bank Loan and many more (MSME, women-entrepreneurs, 2022).

The reason behind the women becoming entrepreneurs was an extension of their kitchen and household activities, and they mainly depended on Pickle Pappad and Powder. However, educational and technological empowerment slowly opened up other avenues for them to establish their businesses. There are an array of reasons for a woman to take up the role of an entrepreneur like 'self-identity and social status,' 'education and qualification,' 'support of family members', 'role model to others,' 'Success stories of friends and relatives,' 'Bright future of their wards,' 'Need for additional income,' 'Family occupation,' 'Government policies and procedures,' 'Freedom to take own decision and be independent,' 'Employment generation,' 'New challenges and opportunities for self-fulfillment' and 'Innovative thinking.' The sixth census made a few observations for the women entrepreneurship development in India: 'Representation of women entrepreneurship is limited to 13.76 percent only'; 'Most of the establishments (83.19 percent) run by women entrepreneurs are operating without hired workforce'; 'Majority (65.7 percent) of the establishment run by women are non-agricultural'; 'Top five states are Tamil Nadu (13.51 percent), Kerala (11.35 percent), Andhra Pradesh (10.56 percent), West Bengal (10.33 Percent) and Maharashtra (8.25 percent)'; 'Non-agricultural activities are primarily covering manufacturing units'; 'almost 13.48 million people have received employment from women entrepreneurs'; and 'most of the women entrepreneurs (79 percent) have financed their establishment' (Tiwari, 2017).

Instrumental role of social media for entrepreneurial development

SMEs can enjoy much more potential when they promote their business on a multi-dimensional and fast-accessible platform. One of the benefits of using social media for promotion is the ability to interact with users through various types of content. This helps the advertisers to analyze the users better and understand their preferences, which would, in turn, help in efficient product placement. Despite the efforts and reach of social media, the impact and engagement depend largely on determinants like creativity, content, degree of acceptance, and similar attributes (Hilde A M Voorveld, 2018). Digitization made it convenient for marketers to utilize social media to promote their products through engaging and innovative ways capable of generating massive views around the products and brand. Social media are often seen as a ground to launch campaigns regarding new products that allow collecting prompt feedback to save time and improve efficiency

(Asur, 2012).

Promotion in an effective form has always been a challenging task for SMEs, and one of the most common challenges they face is the constraint of a budget. While the choice of the channel depends on the requirements of advertisers, research suggests that social media ads are closely linked with the purpose of that medium and also its users. Similarly, social media promotion can prove to be a healthy option for brand promotion as it offers a wider range of users from various geographical accessibility (Hilde A. M. Voorveld, 2018). The social media platforms allow the creation of accounts, groups, and pages to share promotional content. Social media also allow the free flow of information between the vendor and customer, which opens up the opportunity for entrepreneurs to explore the market freely. Simultaneously, the platforms have gown facilities and features (e.g., Facebook Marketplace) to support entrepreneurs and their social commerce (Sonia Camacho, 2021).

Objectives and methods

Objectives- The study intends to understand how women entrepreneurs use social media platforms such as Facebook to host and promote their small businesses, which they have started with little or no help from others. The study focuses on aspects such as promotional techniques, reception of product-related posts, and business-related challenges faced on Facebook. This would help in understanding and establishing the potential of Facebook as a possible platform for budding entrepreneurs (especially women) in conducting and promoting business.

Method- The study is based on the empirical research design to measure the activities of twenty-five women entrepreneurs using Facebook to promote their products. Snowball sampling technique was used to connect and conduct detailed interviews with the entrepreneurs from the state of West Bengal for the study. In relation to this, the first women entrepreneur was chosen through Facebook (based on her entrepreneurial activities on Facebook), and later, through her reference, 24 other women entrepreneurs were approached for this study. The following research questions will be answered through the study.

- RQ1. Why do they choose to be an entrepreneur?
- RQ2. Do women entrepreneurs equipped with the essential requirements for running their businesses on Facebook?
- RQ3. How are they utilizing Facebook for their business?

- RQ4. How does Facebook support their business?
- RQ5. Do women entrepreneurs receive favorable responses to their business promotions on Facebook?

Procedure- The category of the business was also restricted to the arts and crafts. The snowball sampling method was applied to choose the participants for the interview for the collection of data. The women entrepreneurs were asked to nominate other women entrepreneurs for interviews. All the interviewees went through an initial screening process to verify whether they were operating their businesses online and using Facebook to promote their products. The interviewees were also asked about basic demographic details like age, education, monthly income, place of residence (city, town, or village), and marital status to understand the diversity of the participants for the study. The interviewees are all residents of West Bengal, primarily from Kolkata, followed by Hooghly, Durgapur, Barasat, and Belur. According to the sixth economic census, West Bengal is India's third-highest state in terms of women entrepreneurship establishments.

In the second stage, a structured interview consisted of twenty-five questions (opinionated, close-ended, yes and no statements, numerical only, and Likert scale measurement) to understand the nature and volume of business run by the women entrepreneurs. The interviews with individual participants lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and were transcribed in English. The answers were codded as per the nature of the question and analyzed in a consolidated manner. The coding for the study follows the inductive coding structure, where the interviews were taken and transcribed, and codes emerged from the set of data (Delve, 2022). Pearson correlation was also applied to analyze the relationship between two data sets.

Analysis- For the analysis of the data collected from the interviews, the study has adopted inductive coding for the open-ended questions to look for keywords (later turned into codes). The raw outcome was further taken to the QSR NVivo (10) to turn the keywords into codes (nodes) and map the frequencies lined up (compared) with each of the participants. The outcome was illustrated in the form of a ‘group query’ with the frequencies added to the nodes (edited) and analyzed according to the research question.

Result and Analysis

The research primarily focused on various aspects of the engagement of women entrepreneurs on Facebook to promote their businesses. The participants for the research were mostly from the age

group of 31-40 years. A majority of them were graduates, whereas some of them have pursued post-graduation. Amongst them, only one of the respondents had an average monthly income of 1 lakh and above, three respondents fall under the income bracket of ₹ 50,001 to ₹ 1,00,000, ten of them earn between ₹ 20,001 – ₹ 50,000, and the rest eleven women entrepreneurs earn below ₹ 20,000. Fifteen of the entrepreneurs were married, while the rest, i.e., ten, were unmarried. On being asked about the duration for which they have been in the business, most of them, on average, said that they have been promoting their business on Facebook for at least the past 1-5 years. In addition, on being asked about the period for which they were using Facebook actively for business, three of them said less than one year, seventeen entrepreneurs said one year to three years, and five people said that that they have been promoting their businesses over Facebook for more than three years.

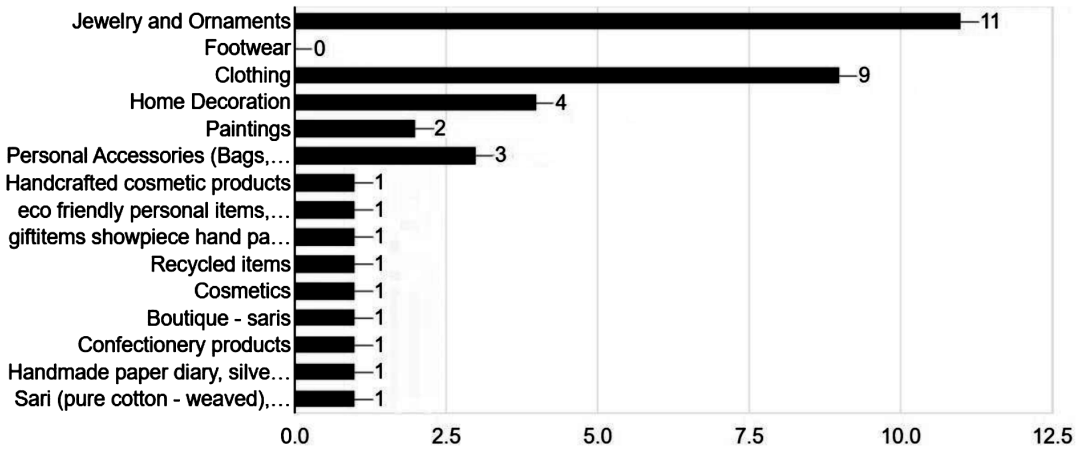


Figure 1. Category of products sold by the women entrepreneurs and their frequencies, Source: interviews conducted for the study

Interestingly, most participants mentioned that they were dealing with jewelry and ornaments, followed by clothing, home decor, personal accessories, and painting (Fig. 1), which can broadly be categorized into art and craft.

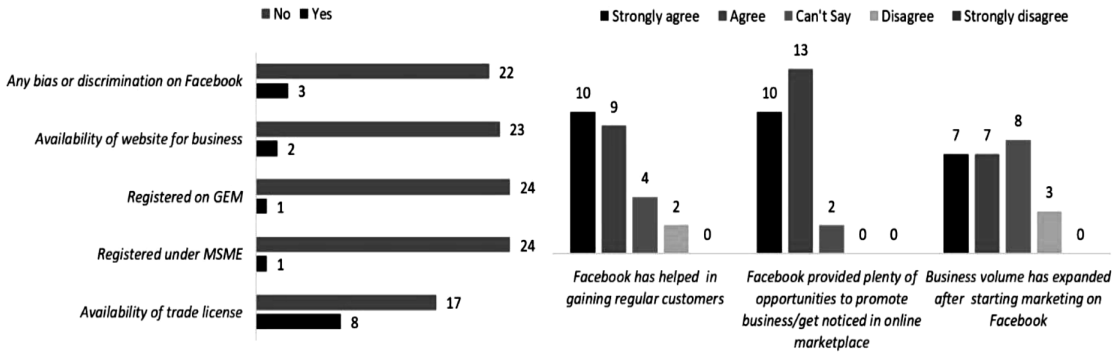


Figure 2. Essential requirements of running businesses and the usefulness of Facebook for online business promotion

The study also required the participants to answer five close-ended questions to map their activities regarding the essential requirements of running their businesses (Fig. 2), which would also align with the RQ2. Almost 17 women entrepreneurs do not have trade licenses for their businesses, and a large majority have no websites to list and promote their businesses; at the same time, they are not listed under MSME or GEM. While each of the participants is using Facebook to promote and sell their products, only three of them felt the medium to be biased in terms of products being copied, loyal customers comparing and demeaning products from other brands, and differentiating in ad performance. The selected entrepreneurs were also asked about their customer base (where they usually get their orders from), to which nine of them referred to both 'within the state' and 'outside the state.' At the same time, two of them mentioned that they get their customers mainly from their city/town/ village, one of them said to cater primarily to the local customers, and four entrepreneurs referred to their usual customers as being from the international territory. Diversity of the customer base and reaching out to external (outside of state or nation) customers with limited resources are prominently indicating social media usage (in this case, Facebook) for their businesses.

The women entrepreneurs were also asked to mark the usefulness of Facebook for their businesses through a five-point Likert scale (Figure 3), and 19 entrepreneurs (10 strongly agree + 9 agree) acknowledged the help they receive to gain customers, 13 entrepreneurs (10 strongly agree + 13 agree) accepts that Facebook has provided the opportunity to promote their businesses and 13 (7 strongly agree + 7 agree) could identify positive changes in their business expansion after they have reached out to Facebook. The set of three questions (with the Likert scale retting

system) demonstrates the acceptance of Facebook among women entrepreneurs. At the same time, they could systematically utilize the platform in favor of their businesses.

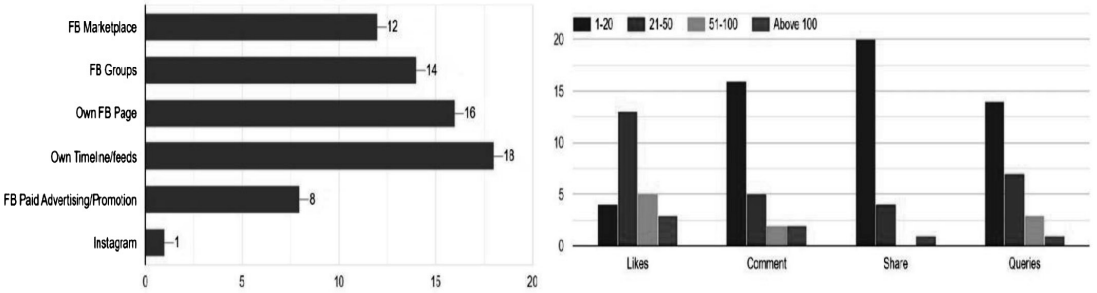


Figure 3. Activities on Facebook to promote products online and the average number of likes, comments, shares, and quarries on Facebook

In-depth interviews on their activities leading to the promotion and selling of their products on Facebook reveal a list of activities they regularly conduct on the platform (Fig. 4), which helps align the outcome with RQ3. They were asked about the average number of likes, comments, shares, and quarries they receive on their products (Fig. 4), and the compelling data show that 13 of them have said that they get 21-50 likes on an average week while the number of comments, share, and quarries are still low on average, proves the requirement of strong Facebook marketing strategy for their business (RQ5). Leading to the same trial and tracking their Facebook activities, the study also found that seven of them are generating ₹ 50,001- ₹ 1,00,000 in revenues annually from Facebook. At the same time, eighteen entrepreneurs could not manage to cross ₹ 50,000. Additionally, they were also asked about the number of employees they have hired for the business. The study found that fourteen of them are running their business without any additional labor, eighteen have several employees limited to 1 - 5, and three of the women entrepreneurs have more than five employees who are working under them, aiding their businesses.

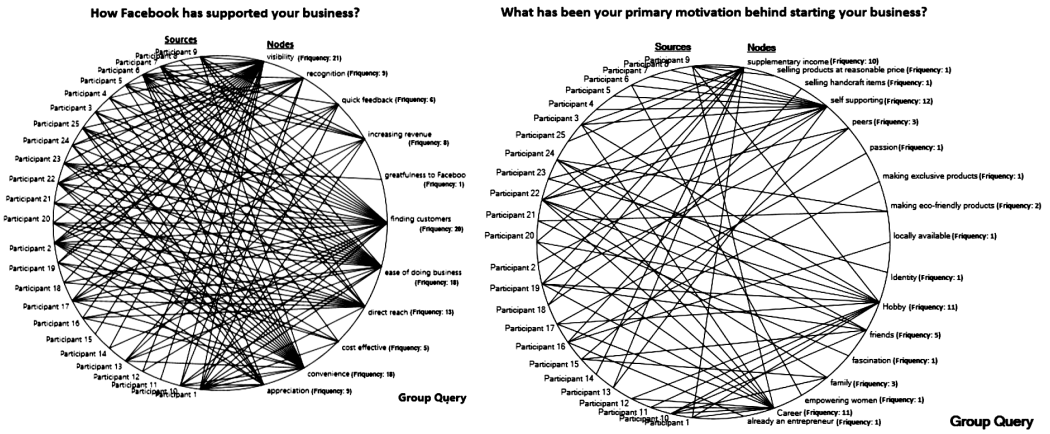


Figure 4. Frequency of the factors (nodes) to understand the determinants behind certain behaviors of participants

RQ4 aimed to find out how Facebook has extended support to women entrepreneurs for their businesses. The 'group query' (Fig. 5) shows that 'visibility' (21) had the most significant impression when the participants were asked to speak about the support that they receive through Facebook promotion, followed by 'finding customers' (20), 'ease of doing business' (18), 'convenience' (18), and 'direct reach' (13) while rest of the factors are having the impression below 10. Similarly, they were also asked about the reason behind starting their businesses (RQ1). The 'group query' (Fig. 5) displays certain factors (nodes/codes) have higher impressions than the rest, like 'self-supporting' with 12 impressions, followed by 'carrier' (11), 'hobby' (11), and 'supplementary income' (10), while other factors have negligible impressions.

Discussions and Conclusion

With the onset of the digital era, business practices have changed to a great extent. A large number of business organizations have taken their businesses to online platforms to enjoy better convenience and greater penetration. Because of these benefits, even lesser-known brands are heavily using social media platforms to market their products to a larger consumer base. Even small-scale businesses and entrepreneurs are jumping on this bandwagon as social media platforms are a free medium. The 2016 national survey shows the potentiality of social media to the extent that almost three out of ten people had a social media presence, which is gradually increasing with the advancement of technology. The data derived from the 2005 and 2013 Economic Census

illustrates how the percentage of 'Women's proprietary establishments without premises' increased by a massive margin, followed by 'Women-owned proprietary establishments', 'Workers engaged in women-owned proprietary establishments', and 'Women's proprietary establishments in agricultural activities' indicates that the growth rate of entrepreneurial activities among women across the nation.

The demographic data derived from the income interviews suggests that lucrative earning through entrepreneurship is possible under favorable circumstances. West Bengal carries its lineage of mastering handicraft products, including large varieties of craftsmanship, supporting a considerable number of artisans. The cottage industry in West Bengal is known for its premium artifacts exported around the world, including handloom, terracotta, sericulture, leather, and similar items (Rahul Gupta, 2006). Enquiring about the products the interviewees are dealing with led to the result that a major chunk of women entrepreneurs are in the art and craft business. However, the correlation based on their Facebook usage for the promotion of their products stands unfavorable ($r = 0.457$), which means they have yet to explore the full potential of the medium. Most of them are also found to be running their business without a trade license, and many are also not listed under MSME or GEM, making them lose various government supports to improve the stature of their businesses.

While diversity in the customer base is significant in bringing more volume to the business, the women entrepreneurs selected for this study mainly cater to customers from their state, leaving more excellent earning opportunities in the international market. Sound knowledge about the platform is also crucial for a business to flourish through utilizing the tools to an extreme extent, and most of the selected women entrepreneurs are found to be using multiple tools of Facebook for their promotion, leading to income mainly restricted under □ 50,000. The lower number of employees can be one of the primary reasons why women entrepreneurs have such limited income opportunities. The detailed analysis of one of the two questions on their motivation to become entrepreneurs brought four significant factors: 'self-supporting,' 'Hobby,' 'career,' and 'supplementary income,' indicating the propensity of the women entrepreneurs towards establishing their business. The second question helps the study to understand the support they receive from Facebook, and 'visibility' has occurred in 84%. Two factors that surfaced during the analysis were carrying exceptionally low weightage, 'making eco-friendly products' and 'empowering women,' indicating the progressiveness of current generation women entrepreneurs, which would also lay the pathways for future development.

Scope of further research

With the understanding received regarding the reception of Facebook as a platform for business promotion, further research might be carried out to get more ideas on increasing the adoption of Facebook among entrepreneurs and the limitations of Facebook as a medium. The study was narrowed down to focus on women entrepreneurs. However, a study on entrepreneurs and their use of Facebook to conduct business can be conducted for further insights.

References

- Asur, S. 2012. 'The Economics of Attention: Social Media and Businesses'. *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers, 37*(4), 77-85.
- Coppard, D. 2001. *The Rural Non-farm Economy in India: A Review of the Literature.* national Resources institute.
- Dijck, J. V. 2013. Engineering Sociality in a Culture of Connectivity. In J. V. Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity A Critical History of Social Media* (pp. 3-5). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Getbengal. (2021, March 13). Women Entrepreneurs in Bengal's MSME. Kolkata, West Bengal, India. Retrieved from https://www.getbengal.com/details/women-entrepreneurs-in-bengals-msme
- Hilde A. M. Voorveld, G. V. 2018. Engagement with social media and social media advertising: The differentiating role of platform type. *Journal of advertising, 47*(1), 38-54. doi:doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2017.1405754
- Hilde A. M. Voorveld, G. V. 2018. 'Engagement with Social Media and Social Media Advertising: The Differentiating Role of Platform Type'. *Journal of Advertising, 47*(1), 38-54. doi:doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2017.1405754
- IWWAGE, I. 2020. *Women's Entrepreneurship in India.* New Delhi: LEAD at Krea University. Retrieved from https://iwwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ISST-and-IWWAGE-Position-Paper.pdf
- Medhora, P. B. 1965. Entrepreneurship in India. *Political Science Quarterly, 80*(4), 558-580. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2146999.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A14f586cbeafc0dcfd71e6c3f4c1c100c&ab_segments=&origin=
- Meenu Goyal, J. P. 2017. Women entrepreneurship in india-problems and prospects.

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 166-197. doi:dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3110340

- MSME. 2021. *Annual Report 2020-21*. New Delhi: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India. Retrieved 2021, from https://msme.gov.in/sites/default/files/MSME-ANNUAL-REPORT-ENGLISH%202020-21.pdf
- MSME. (2022, October 08). *women-entrepreneurs*. Retrieved from msme.gov.in: https://msme.gov.in/women-entrepreneurs
- Rabeb Hamdi, R. K. 2019. 'Online advertising and consumer behavior in Tunisia'. *Atlantic Marketing Journal,* 8(1), 2-4. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1223&context=amj
- Rahul Gupta, I. M. 2006. Scope of Cottage and Small Scale Industry in West Bengal in the Early 2000. 1-18. doi:dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.888501
- S. Sathish, A. R. 2012. 'Consumer Behavior and Lifestyle Marketing'. *International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research*, 152-166.
- S. Sathish, A. R. 2012. 'Consumer behaviour and lifestyle marketing'. *International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research, 1*(10), 152-166. Retrieved from https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/38867287/13-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1665401773&Signature=GddqBazx7iakXq2lpBIu2w~3gu~zEX4ta6NGW04kDkyY9k7XdFKPo8v3G~h1Jz-ZWazE0Q75evdzRkM7jKB41zAj9jV5UL~~p9QjZ9-8Gdz264nB-lUlB2QgjIAmT2JNP5zgH8Esa4CJ77t-pyLlkqOuiG
- Sayak Pal, N. T. 2022. Digital Market Scenario in India: A Case Study on "Unicorn" Indian Digital Start-Ups. In S. K. Ketan Kotecha, *In Industry 4.0 in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)* (1 ed.). CRC Press. doi:doi.org/10.1201/9781003200857
- Schmitt, B. 1999. 'Experiential Marketing'. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 53-67.
- Shaw, R. 2021. 'A Study on Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs in the State of West Bengal'. *International Journal of Information Technology and Management, 16*(2), 11. doi:http://ignited.in/I/a/304939
- Sonia Camacho, A. B. 2021. Social commerce affordances for female entrepreneurship: the case of Facebook. *Electronic Markets*, 1-2. doi:doi.org/10.1007/s12525-021-00487-y
- Statista. (2022, February). *india-share-of-women-owned-msmes*. Retrieved from www.statista.com:https://www.statista.com/statistics/1118549/india-share-of-women-owned-msmes/

- T. Swetha, K. V. (2013). Entrepreneurship in India. *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research, 2*(7), 104-107. Retrieved from http://indianresearchjournals.com/pdf/IJSSIR/2013/July/12.pdf
- Tiwari, N. (2017). Women Entrepreneurship in India: A Literature Review. *Amity Journal of Entrepreneurship, 2*(1), 53-54. Retrieved from https://amity.edu/UserFiles/admaa/db0c0Paper%204.pdf
- Vishal K. Gupta, D. B. (2009). The Role of Gender Stereotypes in Perceptions of Entrepreneurs and Intentions to Become an Entrepreneur. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice, 33*(2), 397-417. doi:doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2009.00296.x

Bio profile of the Authors:

[1]Department of Mass Communication
St. Xavier's University, Kolkata
ORCID id: 0000-0003-3342-1883
E-mail: palsayak01@gmail.com

[2]Department of Mass Communication
St. Xavier's University, Kolkata
ORCID id: 0000-0003-4335-9155
E-mail: tripathinitesh23@gmail.com

[3]Department of Journalism and Communication,
School of Media and Communication
Adamas University, Kolkata
ORCID id: 0000-0003-4625-9117
E-mail: swatiagch@gmail.com

[4]Department of Journalism and Communication
School of Media and Communication
Adamas University, Kolkata
ORCID id: 0000-0001-5574-4910
E-mail: sharmilakayal@gmail.com

Regionalisation and Ethnification of Electoral Politics in Post-Merger Sikkim

Maheshwari Kharga

Abstract

This paper engages with the peculiar features of Sikkim's electoral politics which is characterized by the electoral dominance of regional political parties and consecutive electoral victory of Nepalis political leaders since 1979 assembly election. The first section provides analytical framework on the rise and success of regional parties in Sikkim's electoral politics. It seeks to probe the underlying causes and contextual factors that have facilitated the success of regional parties and at the same time, failure of national parties in Sikkim. To this end, it will analyse the electoral performance, electoral tactics and social support of successful regional political parties of Sikkim. The second section looks into the efforts of different Nepalis Chief Ministers of Sikkim in term of facilitating ethnification of Sikkim's electoral politics for their electoral gains.

Keywords: *Caste, Election, Ethnification, Political Parties, Regionalisation, Sikkim*

Introduction

The small Himalayan state of Sikkim having an area of 7,096 sq. km is inhabited by a sparse population of 6,10,577 (as per 2011 Census). The ethnic composition of Sikkimese society is different from other North-Eastern States of India. It is inhabited by twenty communities belonging to one of the three major ethnic groups wherein, Nepalis account for the highest population (73 per cent) followed by Bhutias (11 per cent) and Lepchas (7 per cent) (as per 2011 census).

Nepalis is a heterogeneous category which include various sub-groups belonging to different castes and tribes whose common *lingua franca* is Nepali. The indigeneity of Nepalis is largely contested as only two Nepali communities viz., Limboos and Mangars have documented history of their political presence in Sikkim, while other communities have migrated to Sikkim from different places.

Original Bhutias migrated to Sikkim centuries earlier than the Nepalis from Kham-Mina-

Andong, Tibet. But since 1978 onwards, the political category of "Bhutias" has emerged which include other eight immigrant sub-groups viz., Sherpas, Dukpas, Tibetans, Dopthapas, Kagateys, Yolmos, Trompos and Chumbiapas. Finally, Lepchas are the earliest inhabitants of Sikkim whose place of origin is also contestable[2].

Over the years, Sikkim has been subject to political control of different ethnic groups. In pre-modern Sikkim (prior to 1642), Lepcha and Limboo Chiefs ruled over small and independent chiefdoms or what British historian Saul Mullard referred to as "proto-states"[3]. Thereafter, in 1642, Bhutias founded the kingdom of Sikkim under the religious patronage of Tibetan *lamas* (monks) belonging to the red hat sect. From 1947 onwards, Nepalis leaders resisted feudalistic elements of monarchy and instead, installed democracy with the help of Indian Government. Since 1979 assembly election onwards, these Nepalis political leaders have been successful in terms of ensuring their consecutive electoral victory in Sikkim.

Regionalisation in Sikkim

Sikkim's electoral politics is characterised by consecutive electoral dominance of regional parties thereby, giving rise to regionalisation. Regional parties are those which either emphasise on regional or national perspectives but their existence is confined to a particular state (Mehra 2003). Sikkim's democratic transition gave rise to regional parties as a "natural consequence" of federal democratic establishment (Pai1990). These regional parties marked the transition from what Sudha Pai referred to as a shift from "traditional class politics to democratic mass politics"(ibid). They came to the fore by arousing "sub-regional consciousness" among Sikkimese and also, by opposing the Central Government's interference in Sikkim (Mishra1983). This was evident during Rajya Sabha election of 1981, when the then ruling regional party, Sikkim Janata Parishad (SJP) alleged the Central Government of imposing its candidate without paying heed to the choice of Sikkimese people (ibid).

In Sikkim, regional political parties have been able to dominate state level politics due to their ability to showcase "regional pride" (Mehra 2003) of the state in the form of its special status which is guaranteed under Art.371 F of the Indian Constitution. Their ideological position has been to protect and preserve the distinct regional identity of Sikkim within the broader national framework of Indian Union. To this end, they have invoked strong sense of regionalist identity which overrides nationalist identity. Such identity discourse appeals to different sections of Sikkimese society considering the rights and privileges associated with it.

Leaders of national parties like Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC) along with regional parties like Sikkim National People's Party (SNPP) and Hamro Sikkim

Party (HSP) have mentioned that Sikkimese do not trust national parties in terms of protecting their interests, rights and aspirations (Sikkim Express; Times of India). Mishra (1983) has also claimed that Sikkimese since monarchical days have exhibited their apathy towards plainsmen owing to which they view national party as "party of plainsmen or *dhotiwallas*" that seeks national integration. Therefore, voters are more inclined to support regional parties even if such a party is a faction of the ruling party or members of such party were former members of the ruling regional party.

While national parties have failed to carve their niche in Sikkim's electoral politics as they remainactive only during the time of assembly election due to asymmetrical representation of small state having less population. Also, they do not have their organisational structures like women or youth wings in the state which could garner them the support of different segments of Sikkimese electorate (Lama 1994). They are also not concerned with the functioning of their party's state unit which was evident when recently President of BJP's state unit, D. P Chauhan resigned from the party due to "high command's apathy" towards issues concerning BJP's state unit (the print). While INC lost its support base in the state due to party factionalism and defection of its members.

For this reason, national parties' field few party candidates for contesting Sikkim's assembly elections as shown below in Table 1. It shows that INC accounts for the highest number of fielded candidates over the years while other national parties have remained largely inconsistent. While some national parties rely mostly on regional parties with whom they have direct connection; for example, in 1979 assembly election, Sikkim Rajya Janata (SRJ) was an affiliate of Janata Party, Sikkim Kisan Sabha (SKS) was an affiliate of Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI (M) and Sikkim Prajatantra Congress (SPC) was an affiliate of INC (Phadnis1980). But INC and CPI (M) could not secure a single assembly seat while percentage of votes polled for SRJ party was also exceptionally low as compared to previous assembly elections (ibid).

Table 1 Fielded Candidates by National Parties for Assembly Elections

Assembly Election	***INC***	***BJP***	***AITC***	***NCP***	***CPI (M)***	***CPI***	***Janata Party***
1979	11	0	0	0	3	0	31
1984	32	0	0	0	1	2	19
1989	31	0	0	0	0	0	0
1994	31	2	0	0	2	0	0
1999	31	0	0	0	2	0	0
2004	28	4	0	0	1	0	0
2009	32	11	0	11	3	0	0

2014	30	13	6	0	0	0	0
2019	24	12	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Statistical Report on General Election, 1979 to Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

*Note: BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, AITC: All India Trinamool Congress, NCP: Nationalist Congress Party, CPI: Communist Party of India.

In Sikkim, national parties have adopted the electoral tactic of parties' merger which becomes all the more convenient for them to use if such party is in power at the Centre. They adopt this tactic due to their concern of losing elections and therefore, determine the electoral outcome by joining other political forces. Coffe & Torenvlied (2008) in their study have identified interplay among three complex and inter-related factors forparties' merger. First, contextual factors arise out of the structural conditions of party system and the socio-economic environment. Second, inter-party factors are those which facilitate interaction and relation among possible merging parties. Finally, intra-party factors may vary among possible merging parties but there should be some similarity among them in certain respects and also, willingness among party leaders to cooperate.

In Sikkim, INC initially merged with Sikkim Prajatantra Congress (SPC) by dissolving its state unit but this merger did not last long as later SJP became an alliance partner of INC. SJP went even further to prove its allegiance to INC by removing the word "*Janata*" (public) from its party's appellation. This instigated few Nepali leaders of other regional parties like Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary) and SPC to request INC for forming its own state unit under their leadership but their plan could not materialise. Chakaravarthi (1994) referred to this as a "phenomenon of conversion" rather than defection (Lama1994). He further claimed that INC gained such a strong foothold in Sikkim's politics that it turned out to be a "third political force" (ibid).

In 1984, former Chief Minister (CM) of Sikkim, Lt. Nar Bahadur Bhandari's along with his supporting legislators left INC and formed another regional party, Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP). When Lt. Bhandari's successor Lt. Sanchaman Limboo lost majority in the House due to the resignation of his two legislators, then once again INC came to his rescue by merging with his party. This was the last time that INC had a share in power of the Sikkim Government, albeit it was for a brief period of time.

The other common electoral tactic adopted by national parties to have a share in power is party alliance with regional parties. Alliance is an "association of associations"(White 2018) which is explicit in nature as public recognition of such alliance ensures desirable ends for which it was formed. Alliance preserves distinct identity of the involved parties but at the same time, it

ensures them the possibility of voluntarily exit. The "intrinsic value" of alliance is that it enhances the political outlook of the involved parties by giving rise to fresh and better perspectives. While its "instrumental value" is that it plays an influential role in achieving the desirable goals of involved parties especially if they have common programmatic ends and dominant opposition. But concurrently, alliance is perilous and subject to scrutiny as its formation cannot be denied if it is subject to negative public reactions. It can adversely affect any party individuals or involved party itself. Also, parties face the challenge of harmonizing their search for common agenda with preservation of distinct establishments. Moreover, the problems of bargaining and adversarialism remains persistent (White 2018).

In Sikkim, national parties agree to be subordinate partner in the alliance for the sake of merely ensuring their political presence as a pan-India party. INC and Janata party followed the tactic of party alliance but they could not sustain it for longer duration. But BJP was successful in adopting this tactic by following ethno-regionalist approach in terms of addressing issues which are specific to Sikkim. In 2016, the former ruling regional party, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) joined the regional political alliance, North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) of BJP, albeit it did not agree to pre-poll alliance with BJP for contesting 2019 assembly election[4].

But recent assembly election marked the unexpected backdoor entry of saffron party into Sikkim's politics as in other North-Eastern states of India. Such development occurred at the cost of SDF witnessing a severe political jolt when itsten elected MLAs defected to BJP prior to two months of by-elections in Sikkim (Roy 2023). Thereafter, Sikkim ceased to be the only north-east state where BJP could not secure a single assembly seat. BJP further received a political boost when two Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) party members joined BJP to contest the by-election for two vacant assembly seats and subsequently, they won those seats. Moreover, SKM party after forming the government joined NEDA, albeit earlier it had refused to forge pre-poll alliance with BJP due to differences over sharing of assembly seats (Gogoi 2019).

So, the paradox in current political landscape of Sikkim is that BJP not only became the major opposition party but it also became an ally of the present ruling party, SKM[5]. The startling shift in regional balance of power from SDF to SKM allowed BJP to carve its strong foothold in Sikkim's electoral politics in spite of not winning a single assembly seat and securing only 1.62 per cent vote share in 2019 assembly election[6]. Such electoral trend proves that alliance of SDF with BJP weakened the former while it strengthened support of new political entrant, SKM in Sikkim's politics (Teehankee & Echle2023)[7].

Table 2 provides a detailed analysis of electoral performance of elected political parties over

the years. It shows that different regional parties have secured absolute majority twice in assembly elections of Sikkim. Table 3 provides a comparative and comprehensive detail on the electoral performance of all political parties which contested Sikkim's assembly elections since 1979 onwards. It can be inferred that the vote share of national parties was lowest in 1999 assembly election. While in 2014 assembly election, the difference in the vote share of national and regional parties was highest (93.77 per cent). Table 4 shows that vote share of INC has been higher than that of BJP except in the last two assembly elections of Sikkim. Table 5 shows a detailed electoral performance of all political parties in the latest assembly election of 2019. It shows that SKM could manage to win by a slim margin of two seats in spite of having less share of votes (47.03 per cent) than SDF (47.63 per cent). It also shows the electoral failure of all state registered unrecognised parties in Sikkim owing to which they have not been able to secure recognition from the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Table 2: Electoral Performance of Elected Political Parties in Sikkim

Election	*Elected Party*	*Votes obtained*	*% of Votes*	*Candidates Elected*
1979	SJP	22776	31.49%	16
1985	SSP	60371	62.20%	30
1989	-,,-	94078	70.41%	32
1994	SDF	72856	42%	19
1999	-,,-	107214	52.32%	24
2004	-,,-	139662	71.09%	31
2009	-,,-	165891	65.53%	32
2014	-,,-	169986	55%	22
2019	SKM	165508	47.03%	17

Source: ECI

Table 3 Electoral Performance of National and Regional Parties

Election	*Vote Share of National Parties*	*Vote Share of Regional Parties*	*Vote Share of Registered Unrecognized Parties*
1979	15.55 %	67.94 %	16.51 %
1985	25.46 %	62.65 %	11.89 %
1989	18.05 %	79. 21 %	2.74 %

1994	15.33 %	78.76 %	5.91 %
1999	3.86 %	94.20 %	1.94 %
2004	26.54 %	71. 71 %	1.75 %
2009	28. 95 %	69.45 %	1.6 %
2014	2.33 %	96.1 %	1.57 %
2019	2.39 %	94.65 %	97.04 %

Source: Singh & Singha, 2016.

Table 4 Vote Share of BJP and INC in Assembly Elections of Sikkim

Election	*Vote Share of BJP*	*Vote Share of INC*
1998	-	33.11
1999	-	4.76
2004	-	27.43
2009	1.77	29.59
2014	2.39	2.36
2019	4.71	1.13

Source: Teehankee, J. & Echle, C.2023.

Table 5: Electoral Performance of Parties in Assembly Election, 2019

Political Parties	*Party Type*	*No. of Seats Won*
SKM	Regional party	17
SDF	-,,-	15
INC	National party	0
BJP	-,,-	0
HSP	Registered unrecognized party	0
SRP	-,,-	0
SRMP	-,,-	0

*Note: HSP: Hamro Sikkim Party, SRP: Sikkim Republican Party, SRMP: Sikkim Rajya Manch Party

Ethnificationin Sikkim

In multi-ethnic society of Sikkim, political leaders seek to garner the support of different ethnic groups thereby, giving rise to ethnification. Sikkim's merger with India instilled democratic impetus upon the numerically dominant Nepalis community to such an extent that their leaders started endorsing majoritarian politics in Sikkim. But since 1979 assembly election onwards, electoral politics of Sikkim has been largely determined by ethnic considerations (Chakraborty 2000). It is characterised by successful attempts of Nepali political leaders to ensure ethnification of electoral politics owing to which they have consecutively ruled Sikkim in the last four decades. Table 6 shows the tenure and party affiliation of all Nepali CMs of Sikkim over the years.

Table 6 Chief Ministers of Sikkim Since 1979.

CM	Ruling Party	Term
Lt. Bhandari	SJP	1979-1984
Bhim Bahadur Gurung	B.B Gurung faction of SJP and INC	1984
Lt. Bhandari	SSP	1985-1994
Lt. SanchamanLimboo	SanchamanLimboo faction of SSP and INC	1994
Pawan Kumar Chamling	SDF	1994-2019
Prem Singh Golay	SKM	2019-incumbent

Source: Statistical Journal 2015.

The first Nepali CM of Sikkim, Lt. Bhandari ruled Sikkim for three terms with two breaks in between due to corruption charges and party factionalism. He could secure simple majority (16 out of 31) in 1979 assembly election by successfully arousing nationalistic feelings among Sikkimese (Times of India). Table 7 shows the number of assembly seats won by Lt. Bhandari from all districts of Sikkim in 1979 assembly election. Lt. Bhandari won equal number of Bhutia-Lepcha (BL) seats and General seats which represents Nepalis and plainsmen population of Sikkim.

Table 7 : Ethnic Representation of Seats won by Lt. Bhandari in 1979 assembly election

Districts	*General*	*BL*	*Total No. of Actual Seats*
West	5	2	9
South	1	0	7
East	2	3	11
North	0	3	3
Total	8	8	30

Source: Phadnis, 1980

*Note: There are 17 General seats open for all the communities while 12 "BL" seats are reserved ethnic seats.

Lt. Bhandari, in spite of being removed from power, could bounce back in 1985 assembly election with a thumping majority. His SSP party's absolute electoral victory set a new record not only in Sikkim but also at the national level. SSP also won the lone Lok Sabha seat by securing 56, 614 votes out of 86, 024 polled votes but he relinquished the Lok Sabha seat in order to become the CM of Sikkim for the second time (Lama 1994). He won assembly election of 1985 due to his upper caste viz., Bahun's, Chettri's and Newar's support base as they collectively accounted for almost 40 per cent of the Sikkim's electorate. He could easily win their support not only because he was Chettri but also by offering them high rank positions in politics and administration as shown in table 8 (Chakraborty2000).

Table 8 Representation of Communities in Sikkim Legislative Assembly

Community	*1979*	*1985*	*1989*
Bahuns and Chettris	7	7	6
Newars	1	1	2
OBCs	6	6	7
Plainsman	Nil	1	Nil
Bhutias	11	10	10
Lepchas	2	3	3

Source: Gurung 2011

*Note: Other Backward Classes (OBCs) included Limboos, Tamangs, Rais and Mangars.

Lt. Bhandari's popularity increased to such an extent that in 1989 assembly election he secured all assembly seats by raising issues that were beneficial to discrete Nepali communities. But in 1994 assembly election, he was voted out of powerby another Nepali leader and his former accomplice P.K Chamling. When Chamling was a cabinet minister of Lt. Bhandari's Government, then he sought the creation of Backward Class Commission and implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendation in Sikkim. His "pro-OBC"and "pro-poor" image cost his removal from the ministry and later, from the party by Lt. Bhandari. So, when Chamling formed his own party, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), then it was viewed as an "OBC party". Fortunately, SDF party could win 1994 assembly election due to strong support of OBC communities which constitute the largest section of the electorate in Sikkim (Bora2004; Gurung2011; Kazi2009,). Thereafter, Chamling constituted OBC board to identify backward classes in Sikkim (GoS 2016). He ensured central level recognition to Limboos, Tamangs, Bhujels, Gurungs, Rais, Mangers and

Sunuwars as OBCs (ibid). In 1995, he also accorded official recognition to the local languages of OBC communities (Chakraborty 2000; Sinha 2008).

By 1999 assembly election, Chamling was also able to gradually win the confidence of other sections of the Nepalis population which Lt. Nar Bahadur Bhandari lacked. He strengthened his support base of non-OBC Nepalis by fielding their candidates from his party, raising issues that were pertinent to their interests and demanding their inclusion in the central list of OBCs (Chakraborty 2000). When the Central Government accepted the proposal of recognising only Thamis and Sanyasis as OBCs at the central level, then Chamling declared Dewan, Jogi and Thami as OBCs at the central level in 2000 (Chennattuserry et. al 2023). In 2003, he ensured OBC recognition to non-listed Nepalis castes viz., NBCs (Newar, Bahun and Chettri) at the state level but by doing so, he clubbed Sanyasi community along with them in spite of their differences in caste hierarchy. He was aware of the criticisms that he could face for this move because of which he changed the nomenclature of Central listed OBCs to Most Backward Classes (MBCs) at the state level. In 2014, he again changed the nomenclature of MBCs to Central listed OBCs considering the futility of the category in terms of reservation quota. In 2015, he included one of Scheduled Caste community, Majhi in the state list of OBCs so as to facilitate their "caste climbing".

Chamling employed the rhetoric of inclusion-exclusion on the basis of caste of various Nepalis communities. He resorted to backward caste politics by enabling reservation to all communities of Nepalis. Such caste based ideological position ensured his uninterrupted rule for more than two decades thereby, making him the longest serving CM of Sikkim as well as of India. Likewise, his party also ensured one-party dominance and a balanced policy of inclusion without any pattern of political alteration and electoral cycle or oscillation of political parties (Giri 2009).

But in 2019 assembly election, Chamling was voted out of power by the incumbent Nepalis CM of Sikkim, P.S Golay. Multiple factors are attributable to his electoral victory such as public discontentment against one-party dominance, defection of elected SDF MLAs and "political vacuum" (Pai 1990) in Sikkim's politics. Above all, P.S Golay belongs to Tamang community which made strong and valid claims for their reserved assembly seats as a part of their constitutional right of being recognised as Scheduled Tribes in 2003.

Conclusion

The co-relation between success of regional parties and ethnic mobilisation in Sikkim's electoral politics differentiates it from other states of India. To this end, it is rather intriguing to investigate as to how a community that migrated from the late 19th century onwards became successful in not only outnumbering the earliest inhabitants of Sikkim but also ensuring their dominance in Sikkim's electoral politics. Since 1979 onwards, Nepalis political leaders have been successful in

bargaining with the Centre and fulfilling the demands of their support base. They have continuously redefined the social relations of different ethnic communities and catered to the needs of different sections of the society. They have been able to retain and sustain their power even at the cost of opposing, merging or aligning their regional parties with the ruling national party. Consequently, national parties have become dependent on regional parties to mark their political presence in Sikkim, albeitregional parties of Sikkim have not even able to enter national level politics.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the anonymous referees for their valuable comments.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Notes

Sikkim is the second smallest state and least populated state of India.

2 Some believe that Lepchas have originated from Upper Burma and Assam while others believe that they originated from Kailasa which is on the way to Tibet (Chakrabarti 2013). Juxtaposed to these beliefs is a myth which reverberates the rationale behind Lepchas following animism (worship nature) that is they have migrated from the slopes of Mt. Khanchendzonga.

3 Proto-state is similar to a state in terms of organizational structure and functioning but it cannot be called a full-fledged state as it does not have clearly demarcated boundaries (Mullard 2011).

4 On 24th May, 2016 NEDA was formed in Guwahati by BJP along with ten regional parties (including SDF) as the first "political coalition" of a national party for north-east states (Gogoi2019). It was formed a day after the formation of first BJP led coalition government in Assam.

5 SKM attempted to forge an alliance with BJP prior to 2019 assembly election but it was not successful due to disagreements between the two parties over seat-sharing and common minimum programme. Moreover, SDF as a partner of NEDA was also opposed to such alliance owing to which SKM-BJP alliance was forged prior to the by-poll elections (Swarajya 2019).

6 Elections in India, http://www.electionsinindia.com/subscription.aspx.

7 The Buddhist minority communities of Sikkim expressed their apprehension of being subsumed by *Hinduvta* nationalist ideology of BJP (Roy 2023). While social media users were aggrieved by the fact that BJP would eventually rule even if SKM or SDF wins public mandate (ibid).

References

- Adhikari, B. 2010. *Sikkim: The Wounds of History*. Siliguri: Biraj Adhikari.
- Basi, S. 2003. *Sikkim Legislative Assembly: Retrospect and Perspective-An Overview*. Gangtok: Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat.
- Basnet, L. 1974. *Sikkim: a Short Political History*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co. (Pvt.).
- Bhadra, M. 1992. *Sikkim: Democracy and Social Change*. New Delhi: Minerva Associations Publications Pvt.
- Bijukumar, V. 2023. Transforming Ethno-Regional Parties in North-East India. In Teehankee, J. (Ed.). *Rethinking Parties in Democratizing Asia*. pp. 176-195. London: Routledge.
- Bora, B. 2004. 'Pro-Incumbency Factor'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39 (51): 5536-5544.
- Chakrabarti, A. 2013. Marganalization and the Contours of Conflict in Sikkim. In R. Bharda (eds.) *Ethnicity in India: Issues on Community, Culture and Conflict in Sikkim*. pp. 61-83, Kolkata: Levant Books.
- Chakraborty, J. 2000. 'Elections and Casteist Politics'. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 35 (43/44): 3805-3807.
- Choudhury, S. & Chhetry, T. 2021. Politics of Tribalization and Contested Space in Sikkim. In Ambagudia, J. (ed.) *Handbook of Tribal Politics in India*. pp. 489-499, New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Coffe, H. & Torenvlied, R. 2008. Explanatory Factors for the Merger of Political Parties. Centre for the Study of Democrac*y.*
- Department of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation (2015). Statistical Journal. Government of Sikkim.
- Directorate of Census Operations Sikkim (2011). District Census Handbook. Government of Sikkim.
- Gergan, M. & Lepcha, C. 2023. In Pursuit of Parivartan: Youth Agency and the 2019 General Election in Sikkim. In Roy, I. (ed.). *Passionate Politics: Democracy, Development and India's 2019 General Election*. pp. 137-148. New Delhi: Manchester University Press.
- Giri, M. 2009. 'Sikkim: Politics of Inclusiveness and One-Party Dominance'. *Economic and Political Weekly.* 44 (39): 150-152.
- Gogoi, T. 2019. 'North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) and Political Change in Northeast India'. *Dialogue Quaterly*, 20 (4): 114-124.
- Grover, B. 1974. *Sikkim and India: Storm and Consolidation.* New Delhi: Jain Brothers.

- Gurung, S. 2007. Ethnic cultural identity and the political process a study of relationship between ethnicpolitics and political institutions and organizations of Sikkim. University of North Bengal.
- Gurung, Suresh Kumar. 2011. *Sikkim: Ethnicity and Political Dynamics, a Triadic Perspective*. New Delhi: Kunal Books.
- Joshi, H. 2004. *Sikkim: Past and Present*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Kazi, J. 2009. *Sikkim for Sikkimese: Distinct Identity Within the Union*. Gangtok: Hill Media Publications.
- Kumar, S. 2015. *Sikkim Human Development Report*, *2014*. New Delhi: Routledge
- Lama, M. 1994. *Sikkim: Society, Polity, Economy and Environment.* New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company.
- Malu, B. 2023. Regional Populism in India: A Case of Sikkim. In Chennattuserry, J. (Ed.). *Encyclopaedia of New Populism and Responses in the 21st Century*. Singapore: Springer.
- Mishra, S. 1983. 'Growing Regionalism in Sikkim'. *India Quaterly*. 39 (3): 331-337.
- Mullard, S. 2011. Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History. Leiden: Brill NV.
- N.A. 2019. No match for Sikkim's Victorious Regional Parties Since 1979. *The Times of India*. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/elections/assembly-elections/sikkim/news/no-match-for sikkims-victorious-regional-parties-since-1979/articleshow/68700102.cms?from=mdr (accessed on 20th April 2020).
- N.A. 2019. Sikkim's Bizarre Politics: BJP is in the Opposition and the Ruling Party its Ally. *Swarajya-Online Edition*. Retrieved from https://swarajyamag.com/politics/sikkims-bizarre-politics-bjp-is-in-the-opposition-and-the-ruling-party-is-a-bjp-ally (accessed on 23rd July 2020)
- N. A. 2019. Success in Sikkim Eludes National Parties. *Business Standard-Online Edition*. Retrieved from https://www.business-standard.com/article/ptistories/success-in-sikkim-eludes-national-parties 119040700130_1.html(accessed on 3rd November 2020).
- N. A. 2022. 'Indecision is Still a Decision'-Politics Behind BJP 'apathy' That Made its Sikkim Chief Resign. *The Print*. Retrieved from https://theprint.in/politics/indecision-is-still-a-decision-politics-behind-bjp-apathy-that-made-its-sikkim-chief-resign/1265371/ (accessed on 1st January 2024).
- Nakane, C. 1996. A Plural Society in Sikkim: a Study of the Inter-relations of Lepchas Bhotias and Nepalis. In Furer-Haimendorf, V. (ed.). *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and*

Ceylon: Anthropological Studies. London: Asia Publishing House.

- Pai, S. 1990. 'Regional Parties and the Emerging Pattern of Politics in India'. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 51 (3): 393-415.
- Palshikar, S. 2003. The Regional Parties and Democracy: Romantic Rendezvous or Localized Legitimation? In Mehra, A. (eds.) *Political Parties and Party Systems*. pp. 306-335. New Delhi: Sage.
- Phadnis, U. (1980). "Ethnic Dimensions of Sikkimese Politics: The 1979 Elections", Asian Survey, 20 (12): 1236-1252.
- Sengupta, N. 1985. State, Government and Politics. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications.
- Singh, A. & Singha, K. 2016. *Identity contestation and development in Northeast India.* Routledge.
- Singh, M. & Murari, K. 2020. Party Systems in India: Patterns, Trends and Reforms.
- Sinha, A. 1975. *Politics of Sikkim: a Sociological Study*. New Delhi: Thomson Press (India) Limited.
- Sinha, A. C. 2008. Sikkim: Feudal and Democratic. New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company.
- Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department (2016). Achievement Report: 1994 2016. Government of Sikkim.
- Subba, J. 1999. The Limboos of the Eastern Himalayas: With Special Reference to Sikkim. Gangtok: Sikkim Yakthung Mundhum Saplopa.
- Syangbo, G. & Bhutia, K. 2016. 'Political Parties and Regional Discourse in Sikkim', *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 6(7): 172-174.
- White, J. 2018. 'The Ethics of Political Alliance'. *British Journal of Political Science*, 48(3): 593-609.

Bio Profile of the Author:

PhD (Submitted), CPS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
Assistant Professor of Political Science,
Sikkim Government College, Burtuk
Email ID: maheshwari.kharga10@gmail.com
Orcid id 0009-0009-1866-0502

Rupturing Enclaves and Changing Contours of Politics: A Study on Tea Plantations of the Dooars and Assam

Tunir Ghosal[1] & Alak Bhattacharya[2]

Abstract:

Tea plantations are often seen as 'enclave economies' due to their colonially entrenched oppressive structures. The paper deals with the mid-19th century 'in-migration' of pauperised communities from the Chotanagpur region, various parts of Jharkhand, and Odisha to Assam and the Dooars region of West Bengal as indentured labourers and how their current out-migration is causing ruptures in the long existing 'enclaves' pertaining to stagnation of wages, closure of big estates, rise of Small Tea Growers (STGs) and potential legal changes such as the abolition of Plantation Labour Act of 1951. It also highlights the emergence of a new form of activism, emphasising the need for systemic change to address historical exploitation and promote fair labour practices.

Keywords: *In-migration, out-migration, rupturing enclaves, Plantations Labour Act, fair labour practices.*

Introduction:

Tea plantations in the Dooars region of West Bengal and various parts of Assam have historically been viewed as 'enclave economies'[1]—isolated from the outer world due to their colonially entrenched oppressive structure. The 19th-century history of colonial Indian labour migration to Assam and Dooars' tea plantations involves the importation of tribal and lower-caste Hindus from regions like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh as indentured labourers (Barpujari, 1993: 40). The demand for raw materials and tropical agricultural products led to the establishment of large-scale plantations using European capital, necessitating a diverse workforce from across the Indian subcontinent from around 1839 (Behal, 2014: 2). The plantation system is a labour intensive industry (Bhowmik, 2011), rooted in colonial control and resource extraction, encompasses a distinct form of labour organisation where the workers are tied to the land for lifetime without any land rights and produce commodity crops for national and global consumption

(Besky, 2014: 7; Das & Hazarika, 2022). The tea plantations in India employed an extensive workforce at exceptionally low wage levels among all private capitalist enterprises in the history of colonial India (Behal, 2014). This system mirrors an 'enclave' (Bhowmik, 1980; Dasgupta, 1992; Nath, 2005) where structural oppression pervades the labourer's existence (Chatterjee, 2003). The early conditions within plantations were deliberately designed to keep labourers captive as this workforce was largely imported through coercive means such as- indentured labour, slavery and bonded labour (Dasgupta, 1992: 66; Bhowmik, 1995; 2011; Banerjee, 2017: 3). This extensive workforce was ensnared in a system where their mobility was restricted, their bargaining power minimal and their wages meagre (Behal, 2014; Rudra, 2018). The marginalised position of the labourer is a natural entailment partially belonging to the exploitative, rigid and highly centralised structure of the plantation hierarchy (Banerjee, 2017). Despite subsequent developments, the shackles of low-paid work persisted, denying them true emancipation.

Plantations faced a paradox: while they needed labour, they were hesitant to pay competitive wages (Myint, 1973). The conditions are more or less remained same in both in Assam and Dooars plantations. Despite increased labour productivity, the wage rates in plantations remained stagnant (Bhowmik, 1981). Increment in the wages of the workers has remained a major bone of contention for last many decades (Singh, 2024). The precariousness of their situation underscores the need for fair wages and improved working conditions. The plantation system relied on three interconnected components: coercion, low wages, and immigrant labour. These factors guaranteed high profits for the planters (Bhowmik, 1980). As a labour-intensive industry, reducing the wage bill directly increased profits. Simultaneously, the planters aimed to maintain a captive labour force, extracting maximum work from labourers (Ibid.). By employing indentured labour, the planters ensured that workers remained bound to the plantations, accepting whatever wages were offered (Bhowmik, 1981; Sharma, 2014: 5). Unfortunately, this phenomenon hindered the growth of a competitive labour market, leaving workers without access to fair market wages. The absence of legal safeguards hindered workers' mobility and bargaining power. These perpetuated their reliance on the plantation system.

Scholars such as Sarkar (2017) and Wolf (2022) argue that the notion of spatial immutability in these plantations is evolving. They emphasise the need to reassess and update the academic discourse to reflect the current dynamics. One of the most pressing issues in these plantations today is price stagnation, which is pushing workers out of the enclosed boundaries of the plantations. This economic pressure is significant as it disrupts the long-standing model of labour immobility and insularity. Therefore, a phenomenon of reverse-migration can be seen in these plantations which characterises the space as a dynamic one as opposed to a static one (Besky, 2019; Sarkar,

2017). There are enough reasons to ponder about why this pattern of outmigration is taking place. Either this is happening due to any disruptive change in the pre-existing labour-capital relations or it is simply taking place as a form of escape from the unsolved long-standing issues in the plantations (Sarkar, 2017). The Plantation Labour Act, 1951 (potentially getting abolished) ensured at least some guaranteed benefits (such as housing, sanitation, crèches etc.). This issue further endangers the existing status of the workers living within the plantations (PTI, 2020).

The rise of Small Tea Growers (STGs) in both the Dooars and Assam is also a notable trend. It affects not only the economic viability of the tea plantations but also the social and political structures that have historically defined them. The impact of this transformation on the political economy of tea plantations is profound. It raises questions about the relationship between the crisis in the tea sector and the changing conditions of the workers. As STGs become more prevalent, the traditional plantation model faces challenges, potentially leading to better opportunities for workers but also increasing instability as the old systems of support and control wane.

Moreover, the encouragement of STGs by state governments suggests a policy shift aimed at revitalising the tea industry and addressing issues such as labour exploitation and economic stagnation. However, this transformation is complex and multifaceted. By the end 1970s, ownerships of big tea plantations in Assam and Dooars changed hands and this phenomenon needs to be located within the larger political-economic circumstances of the country (Banerjee, 2017). The transition involved a gradual increase in joint ventures and the emergence of local proprietors. By the 1970s, pan-Indian capital began to gain significance (Raman, 2010). After the advent of globalisation and the beginning of tryst with neo-liberal economy, tea plantations in both Assam and Dooars suffered challenges that are someway linked to the developments in global capitalist economy. The downturn in the plantations started after hitting a peak in productions in the early 2000s which forced the workers to break away from generational captivity within the plantations and look for alternative avenues of livelihood.

Activists in Dooars are concerned that the government is plotting to sell the ‘sick’ tea gardens to corporate and further relocating workers to remote and less visible areas. The concern of the activists is not completely baseless as 2019 Tea Tourism and Allied Business Policy of the State of West Bengal is allowing up to 150 acres or 15% of the plantations repurposed for tourism and other business (Singh, 2024). Activism is also gaining ground revolving around the issue of land rights for the tea workers within the tea plantations (Ibid). The reactions of the trade unions and social activists points towards a new form of politics germinating in the plantations.

This paper is divided into three distinct sections. In the initial section, the paper attempts

to examine whether the issue of mobility exacerbates the crisis or provides new opportunities for social advancement, that is, upward social mobility. Secondly, political dynamics within tea plantations is explored and how Small Tea Growers are playing a catalytic role in this phenomenon. Thirdly, the paper examines how various political parties frame narratives around the ongoing crisis and propose solutions within the existing hierarchical structure and investigates how these narratives impact the workers and influence the germination of new form of politics within the plantations.

Based on the objectives of the research, the following research questions are formed:

a) How does the issue of mobility among plantation workers influence the ongoing crisis in tea plantations, and does it offer opportunities for upward social mobility?

b) In what ways do Small Tea Growers (STGs) contribute to the evolving political dynamics within tea plantations, and what impact do they have on the traditional plantation labour system?

c) How do various political parties frame their narratives around the crisis in tea plantations, and what are the effects of these narratives and proposed solutions on the workers and the emergence of new forms of politics within the plantations?

Methodology:

The research employed qualitative analysis as a method to understand the issues outlined in the research objectives. Four tea gardens in Dooars region were purposely taken of which two are categorised as regularly operational tea plantation and the rest two are categorised as sick and closed respectively. Random Stratified sampling and snowball sampling was involved to select the respondents among the workers. Interactions were made with workers and local managers to understand the current conditions, challenges, and dynamics within these plantations. For the tea plantations in Assam, the research primarily relies on secondary data. Extensive review of literature was done to analyse the issues in plantations in Assam. This includes reports (such as TRA publications, newspaper reports), publications (publications of DTR & DC), and statistical data obtained from various offices of the Tea Board of India, located in Siliguri, Guwahati, and Kolkata. Secondary sources also include academic publications, industry reports, and previous research studies which provided a historical and economic context to the current state of the tea industry in Assam and Dooars. Analysis in the paper integrates insights received from the workers and inputs underscored in the existing literature.

Ruptures in the Enclaves:

The history of tea plantations in Assam and Dooars cannot be fully understood without recognising the diverse narratives of labour migration to these regions. Together, Dooars and Assam produce more than half of India's total tea output, the state of Assam being the largest tea producing state in India. This tea-producing belt in West Bengal and Assam spans over 138,000 hectares and employs over 800,000 permanent workers, making it the largest organised sector in both regions. Plantations were established in sparsely populated areas due to the need for large, cultivable land. Planters generally avoided using local labour, even when available, as local workers would have greater bargaining power (Xaxa, 1985; Bhowmik, 2011). Instead, planters opted for migrant workforce, which were seen as a more suitable option for achieving maximum productivity (Ibid.). This strategy involved importing labour at low costs, preventing the development of a competitive labour market (Ibid.). Many labourers, primarily from Chhota Nagpur region presently situated in the state of Jharkhand, and other tribal belts of Odisha and Chhattisgarh were permanently recruited to work in the isolated, malaria-prone, and bushy areas that needed clearing for the plantations (Sarkar, 2019).

Geographical locations of plantations in alienated areas and insularity of the labour quarters within the plantations placed workers mobility within the plantations which is also characterised lack of social and political capital due to their cultural alienation. In an institution like system within the plantation, workers are deprived of the ability to leave the confined environment and are isolated from the socio-economic changes taking place in the outside world. The only link to the outside world from the plantation is through the nearby satellite towns (Raj, 2022). Poor connectivity of the road network further restricts movement of the workers to the satellite towns (Ibid). Workers were unable to leave the plantations for two primary reasons. First, planters kept workers and their families' captive on the plantations, with watchmen guarding the labour lines to prevent outsiders from luring workers away (Bhowmik, 1981). Second, planters did not permit alternative employment in the tea-growing region, ensuring workers' total dependence on the plantation for sustenance (Ibid.). In the early years of plantations in Jalpaiguri, the Forest Department tried to attract workers by offering cultivable land in exchange for work in forest plantations. The planters' association protested, using their influence on the colonial government to prevent this, as they had invested in recruiting labour from distant areas.

The workforce recruitment in Assam's tea plantations was primarily through indentured labour, unlike the newly established tea estates in Dooars and other parts of the country where this method was not employed (Bhowmik, 2011; Sharma, 2014). Despite the absence of an indentured system in Dooars, workers faced challenges in leaving the plantations due to coercive measures

used by the planters (Bhowmik, 2011). Workers were encouraged to bring their families, which helped sever their ties with their native places and ensured their permanent settlement within the plantations. The landscape of the tea plantation sector evolved with favourable government concessions (Dasgupta, 1992; Sharma, 2014). Those already in business found it highly lucrative to reinvest their profits and savings in tea plantations and other resource-based industries. This reinvestment, along with government policies that extracted revenue from the agricultural sector, played a significant role in the rise of the modern tea plantation sector in Assam.

The tea tribes of Assam, despite having a newer generation with improved education and a growing presence of intellectuals and professionals, remain among the backward and most exploited tribes in India. Primarily labourers, they reside in villages within tea estates established by tea planters. The remote locations of these estates contribute to the overall backwardness and exploitation faced by the tea tribes. Living with basic facilities provided by the tea planters, the workers often experience various forms of exploitation. During the interactions with the workers and in some of the well-maintained plantations in Dooars, it has been explored that migration from various parts of India continued not only during the colonial period but also during and after independence. However, when an inquiry was made with the administrative personnel about whether this migration had ceased, they explained that the unions no longer allow external workers to be hired. The new workers are typically relatives or distant relatives of the existing plantation workers. It suggests that in-migration to the plantations might have been restrained to a level but on contrary out-migration far outnumbers it. During the field survey, it was found families living in the coolie lines where no family members are actively or permanently employed in the plantations, thus not contributing to the labour force. These families typically consist of retired workers who, due to age, no longer have the physical strength to work in the plantations. In most cases, the next generation of these families is not absorbed into the plantation labour force and must seek employment elsewhere, either in nearby areas or by moving to distant cities for better opportunities. Members of these families do not get any support from the planters as they no longer contribute to the active labour force. Similar trends are noted in plantations of Assam by Mishra, et. al. (2011) which highlights the issue of multiple exclusions and inability to ensure inclusive growth.

When it was asked to Bibhash from Matheran Tea Estate[3] in Dooars, a relatively well-maintained plantation, about work opportunities, he responded, "Kaam ekhene nai, kichhu kori khati to hobey? Lokgulai kutha jabe?" which roughly translates to, "There are no jobs available in the plantation. They have to earn their bread somehow, or else where will they go?" His son recently joined the State Police as a Civic Volunteer and married a woman in the same profession.

Arun[3], whose family lives in the residential area within the garden, known locally as the coolie line, works as a construction labourer in Birpara and visits his family once or twice a week. Since no family members currently work in the plantations, he finds it challenging to keep his family there. He hopes to save enough money to move his family to his nearby workplace, as union members are also pressuring him to vacate the land. Ramen from Kalindi Tea Garden earlier used to work as a permamnent worker in the tea garden but intermittent closure of the tea garden forced him to look for casual work outside in the forest department or nearby plantations[2]. Deputy Manager of Kamtapur Tea Estate Mr. Srinivas[3] told me that some of the young labourers are migrating to plantations in South India for better wages and opportunities as plucking season goes on throughout the year there.

Tea labourers and their children exhibit various forms of mobility away from plantations, including subsistence farming, temporary work in metropolitan cities, and activist engagements (Wolf, 2022). Subsistence farming often proves inadequate for financial stability, compelling former labourers who left plantations to return under worse conditions as temporary labourers . Thus, spatial mobility frequently results in downward social mobility. Temporary labour migration to cities offers an alternative, but it rarely leads to sustainable upward social mobility, as many workers ultimately return to plantations (Wolf, 2022). Therefore, while the traditional notion of labour immobility within plantations might hold some truth, it cannot be taken for granted. Increasingly, instances are emerging where workers and their families are migrating from the plantations, either permanently or in search of better wages and working conditions.

Workers are not always leaving their residences willingly; various factors such as occupational distribution, diversification, and non-absorption into the labour force contribute to this phenomenon (Mishra, Upadhyay, & Sarma, 2012). Interestingly, some reverse migration is occurring from one 'enclave' to another, leading to the transformation of seemingly unaltered spaces into expanding ones. Hence, the ongoing labour mobility, driven by various factors, is rendering the space dynamic and permeable rather than stagnant one (Wolf, 2022). The increasing rate of casualisation labour also significantly contributes to strengthening Small Tea Growers as a competitive economic segment where workers do not come under any regulations and are paid according to the daily wage rate. The issue is dealt in the following section.

Emergence of Small Tea Growers: Catalysts for Change in Dooars and Assam:

In the Dooars region, encompassing districts such as Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri, there is a significant presence of small tea growers (STGs). For instance, Cooch Behar boasts 3,139 STGs cultivating 1,496.01 hectares, while Jalpaiguri has 19,696 STGs working on 12,289.73 hectares. Collectively, West Bengal has a total of 36,559 STGs cultivating 24,212.41 hectares, with the

Dooars region contributing a substantial portion of this total, underscoring its critical role in the state's tea production landscape.

Comparatively, Assam has a considerably higher number of STGs than West Bengal. The area cultivated by STGs in Assam is nearly five times larger than in West Bengal, indicating a more significant impact on Assam's tea production. The proliferation of STGs in the Dooars has shifted the tea industry from being dominated by large estates to a more diversified sector. This transition has notable implications for market dynamics, as STGs typically incur lower production costs and can adapt more swiftly to market demands. However, STGs are not definitely not above problems as most of them are hugely dependent upon a class of middlemen and sub-contractors. Price determination of green leaves are largely left on the mercy of the bought leaf factories and profits depend on the whims of the weather conditions as well.

These STGs are increasingly contributing to the total tea production in both states, and they are actively supported by state governments (Panda, et al., 2022). This shift is transforming the tea industry landscape, indicating a move towards a more diversified and less isolated economic model. The rise of STGs exerts competitive pressure on large estates. Their lower operational costs and greater adaptability provide STGs with an advantage, potentially affecting the profitability and sustainability of larger estates. In Assam, this effect is more pronounced due to the higher number of STGs and the greater area they cultivate. The diversification brought about by STGs helps mitigate risks associated with dependency on large estates, potentially fostering a more stable tea economy in both regions. This shift presents both challenges and opportunities for the sustainability and evolution of the tea industry in Assam and West Bengal. The tea sector in Assam has adopted several cost-cutting measures to cope up with the challenges posed by globalisation such as casualisation of labour force (Mishra et. al., 2011). Workers in the “sick” plantations seek work in these small tea gardens on temporary basis to make ends meet (Wolf, 2022). In times of sickness, the inherent violence of monoculture intensifies, laying bare its intricate relational dynamics beyond the human realm (Besky, 2019).

Table 1

State wise Tea Growers and Tea Area

State	Organised Sector		Enumerated STGs as on 31.03.22		Total	
	No. of Tea Gardens	Tea Area in Hectares	No. of STGs	Tea Area in Hectares	Growers	Tea Area (Ha)
Assam	762	232961.73	122415	114848	123177	347809.73
West Bengal	449	114479.37	36559	24212	37008	138691.37

Source: https://www.teaboard.gov.in

The incremental role of STGs in the Plantation scenario is clear from Table 1. In Assam, STGs contribute significantly to the tea area, accounting for 33.03% of the total tea area. This is a clear indication that substantial portion of tea cultivation is being carried out by the STGs in contemporary scenario. STGs contribute significantly to the tea area in Assam and West Bengal which accounts for 33.03% and 17.46% of the total tea area respectively. From the experience gathered during field survey, STGs (Small Tea Growers) located near large tea estates typically do not face manpower shortages for garden maintenance. Casualisation of the labour force is prevalent, with workers who struggle to contribute to the larger tea estates often seeking employment in nearby small tea gardens. This trend provides a steady labour supply for STGs. During the lean season from October to January, many tea gardens across the Dooars region temporarily close, which has become a recurring issue in gardens like Dheklapara, Damdima, and Kalchini, where fieldwork was conducted. The management often issues suspension notices citing reasons such as hooliganism or the casual attitude of the workers, using these excuses to shut down operations. This tactic allows them to avoid paying salaries during a period when not much work is needed, thus bypassing their financial obligations to the workers. This cycle of closure and casualisation highlights significant management and labour challenges within the tea plantation industry.

Despite the substantial capital investment by Small Tea Growers (STGs) in the tea sector, they have not been entirely successful in absorbing labour from closed tea estates or from larger estates where workers struggle to find opportunities. In the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, and Alipurduar, most STGs employ leaf plucking machines, leaving only the smaller and poorer growers to rely on manual labour for plucking tea leaves. A significant observation is the gender disparity in the labour force composition between large tea estates and STGs. Large estates primarily employ a feminised labour force, while male labourers dominate the workforce in STGs. Female labours dominate in the large tea plantations because during colonial times they were employed to keep the wage level depressed as they earned less than their male counterpart (Sarkar & Bhowmik, 1998). Inside the plantations gendered division of labour refelcts the centrality of patriarchy as a structure of control (Banerjee, 2017). This discrepancy highlights the gendered nature of labour casualisation. When labour is casualised, male workers predominantly take part in this shift.

Within the protected boundaries of tea estates, women find favorable working conditions (Banerjee, 2017). However, outside these secured plantations, women are less likely to work due to the change in spatial and material conditions. This reluctance is often influenced by family restrictions and perceived vulnerabilities in the less protected external environments. Thus, it can be argued that plantation spaces offer female workers a domesticated arrangement where the

invisible governance mechanisms provide security and protection from perceived vulnerabilities. This protective environment contrasts sharply with the less secure conditions outside the plantations, where women feel less safe and supported. This analysis underscores the complexity of labour dynamics within the tea industry, where economic, spatial, and gender factors intersect, shaping the employment patterns and experiences of the workforce.

Navigating Change: Political Shifts in Tea Plantations of Dooars and Assam:

By the late 1970s, ownership of large tea plantations in Assam and Dooars shifted towards joint ventures and local proprietors, influenced by the rise of pan-Indian capital (Banerjee, 2017; Raman, 2010). Subsequently, globalisation and neoliberal policies had a profound impact on tea plantations, contributing to production declines from the early 2000s onwards. Within this context, political entities including unions and NGOs operating within these plantations framed narratives highlighting ongoing crises in Assam and Dooars. As the Indian economy integrates into global circuits of production, exchange, and accumulation, the burden of adjustment falls disproportionately on small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, workers in the urban informal sector, and informal workers in the organised sector (Sarma & Borah, 2016). Globalisation tends to favour capital, which can swiftly move across borders, while disadvantaging labour, particularly lower-skilled workers who face challenges in migrating or cannot migrate at all (Ibid.). To enhance global competitiveness, many investors are relocating to countries with lower labour costs or relying increasingly on informal employment.

While the evolution of unions varied between these states, common issues such as non-payment of bonuses, housing repairs, and food supply persisted. In Dooars, union movements have become increasingly fragmented in recent decades, with workers aligning themselves with various political factions such as Gorkha Janamukti Morcha, Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad, Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress, Hindusthan Mazdoor Sangh, among others (Banerjee, 2017). The once influential Indian National Trade Union Congress and Centre of Trade Unions have experienced a diminished presence in the tea gardens of Assam and Dooars. Instead, Assam Cha Mazdoor Sangh continues to maintain a foothold in many large tea plantations, alongside other unions such as Assam Chah Karmachari Sangha, Bharatiya Cha Parishad, and ABITA. This fragmented allegiance among workers has exacerbated issues of non-inclusivity for permanent casual workers within the trade union movement, hindering their ability to negotiate for improved working conditions, wages, and facilities (Duara, 2017). The efforts of these unions failed to achieve unified solidarity among workers and effectively pressure management or the government, resulting in only sporadic protests (Sarkar and Bhowmik, 1998).

Trade union politics is generally stable in nature in a sense that it does not keep on changing with the change of government in the Centre or State. However, both in Dooars and Assam a constant change of allegiance is being oberserved as Unions in this contemporary period are more likely to align with the ruling parties. In some cases, the workers' organisations and trade unions are mostly led by individuals who are not part of the community, making it difficult for them to truly represent the aspirations of the workers (Bhowmik, 2015). In the last decade, the Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad (ABAVP) gained significant traction in Dooars and Assam. The violent response to Adivasi protests in Assam fueled larger demonstrations in the Dooars against injustices perpetrated by the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJMM) and their push for a separate state. ABAVP leaders have highlighted several factors responsible for the emergence of the movement, including: (a) the threat to their territory by Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJMM), (b) fear of losing their land to non-adivasis, (c) the prolonged crisis in the tea gardens and its impact on their livelihood, (d) lack of development in the region, (e) declining faith in political parties, trade unions, and the government, and (f) the desire to establish their distinct adivasi identity (Roy, 2017). This evolving political landscape, marked by the declining influence of older unions like INTUC and CITU and the rise of new alliances, reflects the complex socio-political dynamics in the tea plantations of Assam and Dooars (Bhowmik, 2011). During this period, the Progressive Tea Workers Union in Dooars became aggressively vocal, demanding a sudden hike in wages and directly challenging other existing union bodies. However, these movements, despite their initial promise, eventually died down over time.

There is a widespread decline in unions across the plantations. Even though the statistical participation of workers (both permanent and casual) appears high, these numbers are grossly misleading. This decline happens when unions adopt a narrow perspective, failing to develop the necessary linkages, alliances, and broad reform vision required to build significant political power (Turner, 2004). Based on fieldwork in several plantations, it appears that there are currently two dominant unions in Dooars: one aligned with the ruling TMC party and another associated with the BJP. Despite its affiliation with the TMC, INTTUC has been ineffective in negotiating various issues with the government and management. During interactions with workers, it is discovered allegations of corruption within the TMC-affiliated union, where leaders allegedly receive kickbacks from management in the form of bonus cuts. Workers like Bitun Kharko from Matheran Tea Estate and Shibu Rani from Kalchini Tea Estate reported instances where union leaders failed to advocate for worker demands. Arun, also from Matheran Tea Estate, shared how union leaders are pressuring his family to vacate their quarters due to their lack of current employment in the plantation. Activists in Dooars are concerned about government plans to sell

struggling tea gardens to corporations and relocate workers to remote areas. This concern is supported by the 2019 Tea Tourism and Allied Business Policy of West Bengal, which allows up to 150 acres or 15% of plantations to be repurposed for tourism and other businesses (Singh, 2024). Activism is also growing around land rights for tea workers.

Different political outfits shape their narratives around improving conditions within the plantations. Both BJP and TMC top leadership visit tea garden localities, promising to address poor working conditions, reopen closed tea estates, and inject capital to resume full-scale operations in the 'sick' tea gardens. But these promises remain perenially unfulfilled. The large pool of unemployed individuals on plantations gives employers a significant advantage. Employers leverage the availability of casual labour to depress general wage levels. During wage negotiations, when trade unions push for higher wages, employers often counter that higher wages are possible only if the number of casual labourers is reduced (Bhowmik, 1980). This puts workers in a difficult position: while higher wages would increase individual income, reducing casual labour would decrease household income. Consequently, wage increases are inevitably scaled down. But there are ample instances where it can be noted people are leaving the plantations despite the case that their family had been living there for centuries. Various global and local factors discussed earlier are heavily influencing this phenomenon. Ultimately, the future of these tea plantations will depend on the ability of workers, unions, and activists to navigate these complex dynamics and push for more inclusive and equitable economic models. The ongoing struggles underscore the need for systemic change that addresses the root causes of exploitation and creates sustainable livelihoods for plantation workers and their families.

Findings:

Based on the responses to the three major research questions the following findings are observed.

1. One of the major factors forcing the workers to seek alternative opportunities outside the plantation is the price stagnation in the tea industry. In the context of economic pressure, forces are pinching everywhere and leaving no room for the workers to stick with their traditional property within the plantations and therefore leading to reverse migration.
2. Small Tea Growers (STGs) are identified a key determinant in bringing dynamism and change in the Tea industry of Dooars and Assam. They are also making substantial contribution in tea production with support from their respective state governments. This reflects a shift towards more diversified and less isolated economic model.
3. The responses from the trade unions and social activists show that it may be a case of

new political equations forming within the plantations. These trends mainly consist of attempting to combat the current crisis and supporting the interests and well-being of workers. The evolving narratives are efforts to negotiate the shifting socio-economic terrain of tea plantation life in Dooars and Assam.

Conclusion:

The tea industry's transformation in the Dooars and Assam regions involves complex interactions between economic pressures, labour dynamics, gender roles, and political responses. The historical evolution of plantations is different in Dooars and Assam and even the manifestations of crises are different. While drawing structural parallels between plantations of these two regions may not be feasible, the nature of their problems exhibits some similarities. The issues in the tea plantations in both Assam and Dooars cannot be understood in isolation from each other; rather they are largely entangled and enmeshed with each other. The workers are tied to the land not only as a result of occupational immobility due to generational captivity inside the plantations but various other factors are responsible for perpetuating the issue. Despite the traditional notion of labour immobility within plantations, recent trends indicate increasing labour mobility driven by various factors. This includes economic necessity, non-absorption into the labour force, and better opportunities elsewhere. The mobility of workers is not entirely voluntary, as workers face multiple exclusions and pressures from both economic and managerial fronts. The movement of workers from one plantation 'enclave' to another, as well as to different regions, underscores the dynamic and permeable nature of plantation spaces. This ongoing mobility challenges the static perception of plantation labour, revealing a more fluid and adaptive workforce.

Price stagnation in the tea industry has emerged as a critical factor driving workers to seek alternative employment opportunities outside the plantations. This economic pressure, coupled with limited financial prospects within the plantations, has led to reverse migration. Workers are increasingly unable to sustain their livelihoods within the traditional plantation economy, prompting them to explore other avenues. STGs contribute substantially to tea production and it reflects a shift towards a more diversified and less isolated economic model. This shift enhances the resilience of the tea sector by promoting smaller, more flexible production units over large, static estates. Despite their significant capital investment, STGs have not fully absorbed labour from closed or struggling large estates. This however produces a new challenge in labour integration.

The researchers' interaction with the workers in different plantations revealed that they tend to develop an intimate relationship with the plant being cultivated in a monoculture such as Tea plantations which extends to 'boundaries of species' (Besky, 2019). The rupture within plantation

boundaries are not only a result of sudden policy shift or corporatizing the space for better output and productivity, but it is, to a large extent happening due to the breaking of inter-species intimacy between plants and human beings. The plantations are to be seen more as a living and growing space rather than only as a colonial or feudal remnant.

Therefore, the rise of small tea growers becomes a natural outcome to repatriate momentum in the tea industry in terms of productivity and growth. The unusual paradigm is activism within the plantations revolves around the narrative of sustenance amid sickness. The politics even though disorganised is always navigated towards protection of the eroding 'enclaves' and a desperate search for unsustainable and temporary alternatives. The political dynamics in these regions are navigated towards protecting these spaces and addressing the deep-seated issues faced by the workers.

To expunge the issues existing in the tea plantations several policies are already put in place but seemingly these policies only exist on paper. For this the nature of the policies cannot be criticised rather there is a serious lacuna in the implementation part. Previously, alternative practices such as cooperatives-run estates were implemented but in the long run they proved to be failed experiments. In many of the closed tea gardens, worker-run cooperatives function as a means of sustaining livelihood, but many times, this lands the workers in an uncomfortable terrain of a legal battle with the owners where the owners surely have a better edge to win it. Nevertheless, the cooperative model of running the estates involved multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process, with community leaders having a larger voice in the whole process. But there were allegations from multiple fronts of hegemonising the decision-making by the ownership faction in their favour. But state government needs to play a greater role in ensuring vindication of labour rights and owners get fair profit. The government also needs to encourage diversification of income-generating activities of the workers, such as livestock rearing or growing alternate crops alongside tea, which can garner some extra income for the families. Introducing micro-finance schemes for the women tea garden workers can also bring palpable changes as a vehicle of empowerment for them. Proposing a plausible solution to the existing crises is a complex task. However, considering the multi-faceted nature of the crises, the role of the state needs to be placed critically in order to underline the causes and implications of the crisis. In other words, whether the state and its collusion with the capitalist classes, meaning estate owners and perpetuating crises is a question that needs further research.

Endnotes:

[1]Enclave economy: export-based industry dominated by international capital extracting resources

from another country, often applied to describe post-colonial dependency, notably in Latin America. See: Singer, H. W. (1950). The Distribution of Gains between Investing and Borrowing Countries. *Papers and Proceedings of the Sixty-second Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association*, 40 (2), pp. 473-485.

[2] The apparent crises in the tea plantations in North Bengal are explained in the following news articles. See: Crisis in North Bengal tea belt continues as another tea garden shuts in Alipurduar. (2023, November 04). Telegraph. Retrieved March 23, 2024, from https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/crisis-in-north-bengal-tea-belt-continues-as-another-tea-garden-shuts-in-alipurduar/cid/[1]977532 & Chaudhuri, Mohuya (2015): "Tea Gardens in the East Are Brewing Starvation, Malnutrition," The Wire, http://thewire.in/2015/07/30/tea gardens-in-the-east-are-brewing-starvation-mal nutrition-7571/, accessed on 21 June 2023.

[3]For ethical reasons, the names of the tea gardens and workers have been kept anonymous to protect their identities.

References

- Banerjee, S. 2017. *Activism and Agency in India: Nurturing Resistance in Tea Plantations.* Routledge.
- Barpujari, H. 1993. *The Comprehensive History of Assam* (Vol. V). Guwahati: Publication Board of Assam.
- Behal, R. P. 2006. Power Structure, Discipline, and Labour in Assam Tea Plantations under Colonial Rule. *International Review of Social History, 21*(S14), 143-147. doi:10.1017/S0020859006002641
- Behal, R. P. 2014. *One Hundred Years of Servitude: Political economy of Tea Plantations in Colonial Assam.* Columbia University Press.
- Besky, S. 2014. *The Darjeeling Distinction: Labour and Justice on Fair-Trade Tea Plantations in India.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Besky, S. 2019. Exhaustion and Endurance in Sick Landscapes: Cheap Tea and the Work of Monoculture in the Dooars, India. In S. Besky, & A. Blanchette (Eds.), *How Nature Works: Rethinking Labour on a Troubled Planet* (pp. 23-40). School for Advanced Research Press.
- Bhowmik, S. K. 1980, September 6. 'The Plantation as a Social System'. *Economic and Political Weekly, 15*(36), 1524-1527. Retrieved September 29, 2023, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/4369053

- Bhowmik, S. K. 1981. *Class Formation in the Plantation System.* People's Publishing House.
- Bhowmik, S. K. 1996. Tea Planatation Workers in West Bengal. In S. K. Bhowmik, V. Xaxa, & M. Kalam (Eds.), *Tea Plantation Labour in India* (pp. 43-80). New Delhi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (India Office).
- Bhowmik, S. K. 2011. 'Ethnicity and Isolation: Marginalization of Tea Plantation Workers'. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts, 4*(2), 235-253. doi:10.2979/racethmulglocon.4.2.235
- Bhowmik, S. K. 2011, August. 'Wages and Ethnic Conflicts in Bengal's Tea Industry'. *Economic and Political Weekly, 46*(32), 26-29.
- Bhowmik, S. K. (2015, November 21). 'Living Conditions of Tea Plantation Workers'. *Economic and Political Weekly, 50*(46), 29-32. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/44002859
- Bhowmik, S. K., Xaxa, V., & Kalam, M. A. 1996. *Tea Plantation Labour in India.* Friedruch Ebert Stiftung.
- Borah, P. (2016, May). 'A Study on the Problems and strategies required for the development of Small Tea Growers in Assam with special reference to Dibrugarh District'. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies, II*(VI), 177-183. Retrieved from http://www.ijhsss.com
- Chakraborty, S. (2023, October 10). Bengal: Tea Garden Workers Launch Stir to Demand 20% Puja Season Bonus. India: NewsClick. Retrieved January 7, 2024, from https://www.newsclick.in/bengal-tea-garden-workers-launch-stir-demand-20-puja-season-bonus
- Chakraborty, S. 2023. *WB: Closure of 13 Tea Estates in the Hills and Dooars Region Troubles Tea Workers Ahead of Durga Puja.* NewsClick. Retrieved January 26, 2024, from https://www.newsclick.in/wb-closure-13-tea-estates-hills-and-dooars-region-troubles-tea-workers-ahead-durga-puja
- Chatterjee, P. 2001. *A Time for Tea: Women, Labor, and Post/Colonial Politics on an Indian Plantation.* Duke University Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctv11cw1bt
- Chatterjee, P. (Spring 2008). Hungering for Power: Borders and Contradictions in Indian Tea Plantation Women's Organizing. *Signs, 33*(3), 497-505. doi:10.1086/523820
- Chatterjee, S. 2010. 'Women Workers in the Dooars Tea Gardens: Roots of exclusion'. *Voices of Dalit, 3*(2), 213-226. doi:10.1177/097435452010020

- Crisis in North Bengal tea belt continues as another tea garden shuts in Alipurduar. (2023, November 04). *Telegraph*. Retrieved March 23, 2024, from https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/crisis-in-north-bengal-tea-belt-continues-as-another-tea-garden-shuts-in-alipurduar/cid/1977532
- Das, P., & Hazarika, R. (2022, December). Claiming Land Rights: Politics of Space and Identity—A Study of the Tea Garden Community of Assam. *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*, 1-12. doi:DOI: 10.1177/2455328X221137236
- Das, S. K. 2018. *Migrations, Identities and Democratic Practices in India* (First ed.). New York: Routledge: London and New York.
- Dasgupta, R. 1992. *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869-1947*. Calcutta, Bombay, Madras: Oxford University Press.
- De Sarkar, T. 2009. Cha Shilpa, Dooars O Ei Samay. In D. K. Roy, & P. Nath (Eds.), *Uttarbanga Darpan* (Vol. I, pp. 33-39). Kolkata: N.E. Publishers.
- Dey, A. 2018. *Tea Environments and Plantation Culture: Imperial Disarray in Eastern India.* Cambridge University Press.
- Duara, M. 2017. 'Non-Inclusive Trade Unionism in the Tea Estates of Assam'. *Working Paper Series of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University*, 1-15.
- K. Tharian, G., Thakaran, P. K., Tharian, G. K., & Michael, P. K. 1986. 'Penetration of Capital into a Traditional Economy: the Case of Tea Plantations in Kerala, 1880-1950'. *Studies in History, 2*, 199-231. doi:DOI: 10.1177/025764308600200204
- Kapoor, C. (2019, September 18). In Pictures: Plight of India's tea plantation workers. Al Jazeera. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2019/9/18/in-pictures-plight-of-indias-tea-plantation-workers
- Mishra, D. K., Sarma, A., & Upadhyay, B. (2011, March 30). 'Invisible chains? Crisis in the tea industry and the 'unfreedom' of labour in Assam's tea plantations'. *Contemporary South Asia, 19*(1), 75-90. doi:10.1080/09584935.2010.549557
- Mishra, D. K., Upadhyay, V., & Sarma, A. 2012. *Unfolding Crisis in Assam's Tea Plantations: Employment and Occupational Mobility.* Routledge.
- Mitra, D. 2010. *Globalisation And Industrial Relations In Tea Plantations.* Delhi: Abhijit Publication.

- Myint, H. 1973. *The Economics of Developing Countries.* London: Hutchinson.
- Nath, H. K. 2005. The Rise of an Enclave Economy. In A. Barua (Ed.), *INDIA'S NORTHEAST: DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.* Manohar - Centre De Sciences Humaines. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1265826
- Panda, S., Ghosh, A., Das, L., Modak, S., Mondal, S., Pal, P., & Nain, M. (2022, January-March). 'Economics of Small Tea Farming System (STFS): An in-depth Study of North Bengal, India'. *Indian Journal of Extension Education, 58*(1), 63-67.
- Prasanneswari. (1984, June 16-23). 'Industrial Relation in Tea Plantations: The Dooars Scene'. *Economic and Political Weekly, 19*(24/25), 956-960. Retrieved October 24, 2023, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/4373326
- PTI. (2020, January 24). Govt to repeal Plantation Labour Act; tea industry concerned. *Economic Times*. Retrieved November 26, 2023, from https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/govt-to-repeal-plantation-labour-act-tea-industry-concerned/articleshow/73586167.cms?from=mdr
- Raj, J. 2013. 'Alienated Enclaves: Economic Crisis and Neo-bondage in a South Indian Plantation Belt'. *Forum for Development Studies, 40*(3), 465-490. doi:10.1080/08039410.2013.799098
- Raj, J. 2022. *Plantation Crisis: Ruptures of Dalit life in the Indian tea belt.* London: UCL Press.
- Raj, J. 2022. Tea in Troubled Times: Labour in Indian Postcolonial Plantations. In S. Kasmir, & L. Gill (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Anthropology of Labour* (1st ed.). Routledge. Retrieved March 6, 2024
- Raman, R. 2010. *Global Capital and Peripheral Labour: The History and Political Economy of Plantation Workers in India.* London: Routledge.
- Roy, S. 2013. *Transformation on the Bengal Frontier: Jalpaiguri 1765-1948.* New York: Routledge.
- Roy, S. (2017, June). Mobilisation of Adivasi Tea Garden Workers under Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikas Parishad in North Bengal. *Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Sciences, 22*(1), 11-38. Retrieved June 28, 2023
- Rudra, D. 2018. Case Analysis III: Closed Tea Estates— A Case Study of the Dooars Region

of West Bengal, India. *Vision, 22*(3), 339-341. doi:10.1177/0972262918788230

- Sarkar, K., & Bhowmik, S. K. (1998, December 26). Trade Unions and Women Workers in Tea Plantations. *Economic and Political Weekly, 33*(52), 50-52. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/4407515
- Sarkar, S. (2019, September). 'Labour Migration in the Tea Plantations: Colonial and Neo-Liberal Trajectories of Plantation Labour in the Dooars Tea Belt of West Bengal'. *Journal of Migration Affairs, II*(1), 25-43. doi:10.36931/jma.2019.2.1.25-43
- Sarma, A., & Borah, P. 2016. Impact of Informalisation and Role of Trade Unions on the Tea Tribe Workers in Assam. In K. Sarap, & V. Motkuri (Eds.), *Adivasis in India: Resources, Livelihoods and Institutions* (pp. 101-118). Bloomsbury.
- Sharma, J. 2011. *Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India.* Permanent Black.
- Singh, S. S. 2024, April 27. Death and distress in the Dooars. *The Hindu*, p. 7.
- Sinha, A. 2021, July 07. Rs 400 crore tea subsidy held up for years: North Bengal planters. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved December 25, 2024, from https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/tea-subsidy-held-up-for-years-north-bengal-planters/cid/1822092
- Sinha, A. 2022, November 07. Big trouble for small tea sector. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved January 25, 2024, from https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/big-trouble-for-small-tea-sector/cid/1896585
- Sinha, A. 2023, October 16. North Bengal: 7,000 tea estate workers jobless ahead of Durga Puja, brew belt feels the pinch. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved January 20, 2024, from https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/cash-woes-in-tea-bonus-rows-dooars-tea-garden-shutdowns-leave-7000-jobless-before-durga-puja/cid/1973623
- Thakur, U. 1995, April. "Sick" Tea Plantations in Assam and Bengal. *Labour, Capital andd Society, 28*(1), 44-66. Retrieved December 21, 2023, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/43158053
- Turner, L. 2004. Why Revitalize? Labour's Urgent Mission in a Contested Global Economy. In C. Frege, & J. Kelly (Eds.), *Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy* (1st ed., pp. 1-10). Oxford University Press.
- Vijayabaskar, M., & Viswanathan, P. 2019. Emerging Vulnerabilities in India's Plantation Economy. In K. Shyam Sundar (Ed.), *Globalization, Labour Market Institutions, Processes and Policies in India.* Palgrave Macillan. doi:10.1007/978-981-13-7111-0

- Wolf, A.-L. 2022. Beyond “Enclaves”: Postcolonial Labor Mobility to and from Assam Tea Plantations. *Anthropology of Work Review, XLIII*(1), 49-58.
- Xaxa, V. 1985. 'Colonial Capitalism and Underdevelopment in North Bengal'. *Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 20* (No. 12), 1659-1665. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4374874

Bio profile of the Authors:

[1] Research Scholar, Department of Political Science,
Tripura University (A Central University), Suryamaninagar, Tripura West- 799022.
Email: tunir.polscience@tripurauniv.ac.in

[2] Professor, Department of Political Science,
Tripura University (A Central University), Suryamaninagar, Tripura West- 799022.
Email: alakbhattacharya@tripurauniv.ac.in

Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice of Screen Time among XI-Grade Students in Reference to Their Gender and Locality

Sudipta Karmakar[1] and Deb Prasad Sikdar[2]*

Abstract:

People are concerned about spending too much time on screens, thus prevention and awareness raising are important. This study used questionnaires to examine the screen time habits of 764 eleventh-grade students in West Bengal's Nadia region. Females and rural students outnumbered males in the 1–5 hour range, whereas males and rural students led the 6–10 hour group. There were differences between pupils in rural and urban areas, although awareness of screen time was consistent across genders. Students, both male and female, had different opinions on how much time they spent on screens. Gender had an impact on screen time habits, but patterns were similar in rural and urban areas. The study concludes that the advantages of technology can be realized without sacrificing health, highlighting the necessity of a balanced approach to knowledge, attitude, and practice for a long-lasting relationship with the digital world.

Keywords: *Screen Time, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice.*

I. Introduction:

Advances in science and technology have boosted the progress of education in a different way. In today's society, it has become almost impossible to imagine education without technology, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic has made education much more digital. The COVID-19 epidemic has significant changes in people's daily lifestyles. Implementation of lockdowns and social distancing measures, individuals are spending more time at home. As a result, the reliance on screens for work, education, entertainment, and social interactions has substantially increased. The widespread adoption of remote work and online learning has contributed to the rise in screen time. Many professionals are doing work from home, relying heavily on digital platforms and virtual meetings to carry out their tasks. Moreover, the limited social interactions and recreational opportunities due to the pandemic have further propelled the enlargement of screen time (Sultana et al., 2021). People are turning to digital platforms for socializing, connecting with friends and

family and engaging in virtual events. Additionally, the popularity of streaming services, online gaming, and social media has surged, contributing to prolonged screen usage (Sultana et al., 2021). Similarly, students have transitioned to online classes, requiring them to spend extended hours in the appearance of screens for lectures, assignments, and exams. The traditional education system i.e., the practice of sharing knowledge between teachers and students sitting in the classroom has completely changed and has become online synchronous and asynchronous learning. That makes it even more imperative than necessary for every student to use technology more. Students finish their usual classes seated in appearance of a screen, which has led to a significant increase in the amount of time they spend starting at screens each day. According to estimates, teenagers between the ages of 11 and 17 spent an additional 0.9 hours a day on digital devices during the pandemic. This indicates that the epidemic contributed to the development of screen time habits in these young people (luaet al., 2023).

The duration of time an individual spends in bearing of a screen is known as screen time. This can be called the duration of time an individual spends in front of any electronic device (TV, laptop, computer, etc.). The consequences of this heightened screen time are a subject of concern. Prolonged exposure to screens can spearhead to various health issues, encompass with eye strain, headaches, disrupted sleep patterns, and sedentary behaviour (Nakshineet al., 2022). Numerous studies have highlighted that screen time is an important indicator of various health risks such as hypertension, heart problems, depression, anxiety, poor sleep quality etc., (Arrippinet al., 2021). It is crucial for individuals to be aware of the potential risks associated with excessive screen time and take necessary measures to mitigate them. There is no doubt that adolescents are spending increasingly more time watching screens every day, so it is important to determine how much knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) they have about the use of screens.

II. Objectives of The Study:

The objectives of the study are as follows-

- To analyze the usage of screen time among XI-grade students based on their gender and locality.
- To find out the knowledge about screen time among XI-grade students of Nadia district.
- To find out the attitude towards screen time among XI-grade students of Nadia district.
- To find out the practice of screen time among XI-grade students of Nadia district.

III. Hypothesis of the Study:

The main hypothesizes of the study are as follows-

H_{01}: There are no notable disparities between the male and female student groups when it comes to their levels of knowledge regarding screen time.

H_{02}: There are no notable disparities between the rural and urban student groups when it comes to their levels of knowledge regarding screen time.

H_{03}: There are no appreciable differences between the attitudes of male and female students regarding screen time.

H_{04}: There are no appreciable differences between the attitudes of rural and urban students regarding screen time.

H_{05}: The screen time practices of male and female students show no substantial differences.

H_{06}: The screen time practices of rural and urban students show no substantial differences.

IV. Materials and Method of The Study:

The goal of the study was to ascertain the eleventh-grade students' knowledge, attitudes, and practices about screen time. The study was conducted by the researcher on teenage pupils attending school in both rural and urban areas. The sample of the study comprised 764 adolescent eleventh-grade students who belong to the Nadia district, West Bengal. The main method utilized in this study was a survey. This study used questionnaires with particular factors to obtain meaningful results. For this study researcher conducted a measuring tool/scale regarding knowledge, attitude, and practice about screen time which is divided into 3 parts and consists of 30 items. The tool reported high reliability. To know more about the scale check the article named “Screen time: analysis of items regarding knowledge, attitude and practice” (Karmakar et al., 2022). The scores were calculated depending on how well the sample students performed or answered the offered questionnaires to interpret the scenario. Thus, a quantitative technique and descriptive research design were used in this study. As a result, the study is quantitative and uses a descriptive survey approach. The researcher computed descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and z-score) using the statistical program SPSS version 25.0 to ascertain the degree of knowledge, attitude, and practice about screen time. The t-tests were used in inferential statistics to compare two groups based on demographic variables like gender and rural/urban differences. These techniques enable the testing of hypotheses using inferential statistics.

V. RESULTS:

The results are discussed through the objectives and hypothesis of the study. The study has four objectives. The first objective is discussed through descriptive statistics and the other three objectives are discussed through hypothesis.

The Usage Variations of Screen Time:

The first objective focuses on how male and female students who live in rural and urban areas use screens. The aim was to present the usage percentages of male and female pupils. The study split the time period into two groups: 1–5 hours and 6–10 hours. The differences in screen usage between male and female students according to their location are displayed in the tables below.

Table 1: 1 to 5 hours usage variations of screen time

	Frequency	Percent	Time
Male	286	41.0	1-5 Hours
Female	411	59.0	
Rural	384	55.1	
Urban	313	44.9	

Students by gender and by location using a proportion of their screen time is shown in Table 1. In terms of screen usage for one to five hours, the table shows that 59.0% of female students and 41.0% of male students used screens, suggesting that female students used screens more frequently than male students. Based on the statistics shown in the table, it can be inferred that 55.1% of students in rural areas and 44.9% of students in urban areas saw screens of one to five hours each day. It would appear from this that pupils in rural areas use screens more often than those in urban areas.

Table 2: 6 to 10 hours usage variations of screen time

	Frequency	Percent	Time
Male	52	77.6	6-10 Hours
Female	15	22.4	
Rural	37	55.2	
Urban	30	44.8	

The percentage of screen time used by male-female and rural-urban pupils is shown in Table 2. Male students viewed screens more frequently than female students, as the table shows that

22.4% of female students and 77.6% of male students used screens for six to ten hours daily. According to the data, 55.2% of students in rural areas and 44.8% of students in urban areas used screens for six to ten hours apiece, suggesting that rural students use screens more frequently than their urban counterparts.

Table 3: Knowledge about screen time

	Hypothesis	Gender & Locality	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2- tailed)
Knowledge	H_{01}	Male	338	6.83	2.367	0.129	0.767	762	0.443
		Female	426	6.70	2.276	0.110			
	H_{02}	Rural	421	6.58	2.230	0.109	2.350	762	0.019
		Urban	343	6.98	2.402	0.130			

Table 3 shows group statistics i.e. number of samples mean, standard deviation, standard error of the mean, t-value, df, and significance level value of male-female and rural-urban students about their knowledge regarding screen time. The case of H_{01} shows that t-value is not statistically significant, so null hypothesis H_{01} is accepted (t= 0.767, df= 762, P>0.05). It indicates that there is no male-female differences in knowledge about screen time. On the other hand, H_{02} indicates that the t-value is statistically significant, so null hypothesis H_{02} is rejected (t= 2.350, df= 762, P<0.01). It indicates that there is a difference between rural and urban students in knowledge about screen time.

Table 4: Attitude towards screen time

	Hypothesis	Gender & Locality	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2- tailed)
Attitude	H_{03}	Male	338	39.65	4.985	0.271	5.776	762	0.000
		Female	426	37.70	4.322	0.209			
	H_{04}	Rural	421	38.16	4.623	0.225	2.644	762	0.008
		Urban	343	39.06	4.805	0.259			

Table 4 displays group data, including the number of samples, mean, standard deviation, standard error of the mean, t-value, df, and significance level value of the attitudes of male and female students towards screen time in rural and urban areas. Since the t-value in this instance of H_{03} is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected (t=5.776, df=762, P<0.01). It suggests that attitudes towards screen time differ between male and female students. Null hypothesis H_{04} (t= 2.644, df= 762, P<0.01) is rejected since the H_{04} shows that the t-value is statistically significant. It suggests that attitudes towards screen time differ between rural and urban areas.

Table 5: Practice about screen time

	Hypothesis	Gender & Locality	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2- tailed)
Practice	H_{05}	Male	338	3.67	1.302	0.071	5.416	762	0.000
		Female	426	3.10	1.559	0.076			
	H_{06}	Rural	421	3.39	1.515	0.074	-0.880	762	0.379
		Urban	343	3.30	1.430	0.077			

The group data of male-female and rural-urban students who practice screen time are displayed in Table 5, along with the number of sample means, standard deviation, standard error of the mean, t-value, df, and significant level value. The aforementioned table indicates that the t-value for H_{05} is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ($t=5.416$, $df=762$, $P<0.01$). It suggests that there are differences in screen time practices between male and female students. The null hypothesis, H_{06}, is accepted since the H_{06} indicates that the t-value is not statistically significant ($t=-0.880$, $df=762$, $P>0.05$). It suggests that there are no differences in the screen time practices of pupils in rural and urban areas.

VI. Discussion:

The intellectual core is found in the discussion section, which conducts a thorough examination and interpretation of the findings from the previous section. This section carefully evaluates the findings, makes inferences, and situates them in a larger framework. It considers its relevance in the context of the broader scholarly and practical landscape, synthesizes the consequences, and constructs a narrative that adds to the current scholarly discourse. The ability to understand the material, conduct a critical analysis, and significantly advance the field's intellectual discourse is embodied in the discussion part.

Table 1 represents the percentage of screen time used by male and female students. Here we see that under 1-5 hours male usage percentage was 41.0% and the female usage percentage was 59.0, which means the male usage percentage was lower than female usage. This may be due to several social conventions, cultural elements, and individual preferences. Social media platforms offer a space for interpersonal interaction and conversation, which may appeal more to women. However, women may find this area more vulnerable to social comparison and the requirement for social validation. Visual material is extensively emphasized on several social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. Females may be more drawn to visually focused communication, which may lead to higher levels of engagement. This is supported by Reyes et al., (2022) and Svensson

et al., (2022). They looked at social media and digital platform usage patterns in relation to gender differences, but they did not specifically address screen time. This is included as a reference because social media is a platform that can lead to an increase in screen time. On the other hand, the table shows 5-6 hours per day of screen time consumption by rural-urban students. In this regard, we see that 55.1% of rural and 44.9% of urban students used screens for one to five hours apiece. This suggests that rural students use screens more frequently than their urban counterparts. Students' access to conventional educational materials may be restricted in some remote places. Online courses, educational materials, and other learning resources that might not be easily accessible locally can be accessed by them through digital platforms. Connecting with peers locally and worldwide can be facilitated for rural students through digital platforms. Online jobs and access to scholarship and vocational training information are only a couple of the economic options that may be obtained through digital platforms. Using these platforms to investigate such opportunities may inspire kids in rural areas. Certain remote communities may have restricted access to entertainment alternatives. Students in rural areas may use digital platforms more frequently since they provide a variety of entertainment options, such as gaming and streaming services. This result is in close agreement with the other studies Laon, (2011); Patil et al., (2019); Thomas et al., (2020). Another Table 2 showed 6-10 hours of screen time used by male-female students and rural-urban students respectively. The table indicate that 22.4% of female students and 77.6% of male students utilized screens for 6 to 10 hours each, indicating that male students viewed screens more frequently than female students. Males have traditionally been more inclined to play video games. It's possible that boys are more lured to digital platforms for gaming, which raises user engagement levels Leonhardt and Overa, (2021). Here 55.2% of rural students and 44.8% of urban students utilized screens for 6 to 10 hours each, indicating that rural students viewed screens more frequently than urban students. The previous stanza discussed the reason behind rural students use screens more than urban students. This agreement is also supported by Patwari, (2020).

In this regard, the knowledge scale has two hypothesis. The H_{01} is about the overall knowledge score difference between male and female students, table 3 shows that there is no significant difference between male and female students ($p= 0.443$, $p>0.05$). It may be assignable to the enlarged integration of technology into daily life, people of both genders are gaining information about digital media and screen time. The cognitive skills of men and women significantly overlap. Research indicates that, overall, gender differences in cognitive ability are less common than similarities. However, individual disparities may still exist. Gender is not a barrier to knowledge access in modern culture. Equal chances exist for men and women to learn about and comprehend ideas associated with digital media, technology, and screen time. Education and awareness

campaigns have sought to guarantee that women and men alike are provided with equal access to information and understanding on a range of topics, including technology and screen time. Media, educational institutions, and other venues work hard to deliver impartial information. People of all genders can access and use the ubiquitous modern technologies. The result is also inconsistent with other studies Popa and Gavriliu, (2015). Thus the null hypothesis H_{01} is accepted at a 0.05 level.

The hypothesis H_{02} is about the differences between rural and urban students' knowledge scores. The table shows that there is a difference between rural and urban students in knowledge about screen time ($p= 0.019$, $p<0.05$). So the null hypothesis H_{02} is rejected and alternative hypothesis are accepted. Disparities in digital media usage among pupils in rural and urban areas have numerous issues pertaining to infrastructure, resource accessibility, socioeconomic circumstances, and educational possibilities. These results were also supported by Liao et al., (2016); Sharma and Banerjee, (2022); Rundel and Salemink, (2021).

The attitude part of the study also has two hypothesis. Hypothesis $H_{03}$is about the attitude toward screen time of 11th-grade students. The result shows that there is a significant difference between attitude scores ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$). Here the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Hypothesis $H_{04}$is about rural-urban students' attitude differences. This hypothesis was also rejected at 0.05 level ($p=0.008$, $p<0.05$).So it signifies that the overall male-female and rural-urban students' attitude disparities exist. It may be influenced by a combination of societal, cultural, and individual factors. This result is in close agreement with the other studies by Berges et al., (2020); Anjitha and Tiwari, (2022); Bond, (2019); and Hadi et al., (2021).

The practice part also has two hypothesis. The H_{05} (male-female) were rejected ($p=0.000$, $p<0.01$). Hence alternative hypothesis was accepted. There is a multitude of factors, including societal, cultural, psychological, and individual elements that can impact the differences in screen time practices between males and girls. Gender role expectations can be influenced by societal and cultural conventions. Children are conditioned from an early age to fit into particular gender roles. Differing practices around screen usage might be attributed to upbringing and parental expectations. People's ideas about what constitutes proper screen time activities might be influenced by how gender is portrayed in media, such as TV shows, movies, and commercials. Practices about screen time may change if specific categories of screen-related content are more closely linked to one gender than the other. Inequalities in digital literacy and technology availability may be a factor in the variations in screen time habits. This result is in close agreement with the other studies by Hadi et al., (2021); Cui et al., (2022). On the other hand H_{014} (rural-urban), were accepted at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value of the hypothesis are 0.379. It means there are no significant

differences exist. It may be due to covid-19 pandemic. After the lockdown all students are used to online learning so in school student's perspectives there is no significant difference between rural-urban students screen time practice.

VII. Conclusion:

Conclusively, a crucial element of our contemporary digital era is the complex interaction among knowledge, attitude, and practice concerning screen time. Nuanced knowledge is necessary to promote a healthy and balanced relationship with technology as people, communities, and civilizations struggle with the effects of excessive screen time. Making educated decisions is based on having the necessary knowledge. Being aware of the negative effects of excessive screen time, like strained eyes, irregular sleep patterns, and social isolation, gives people the power to choose carefully how they interact with technology. Campaigns for education and easily accessible data are essential in giving individuals the knowledge and skills they need to appropriately navigate the digital world. Screen time attitudes have a big impact on behavior. A healthy attitude towards technology use is fostered by fostering a positive mind-set that values a harmonious fusion of digital and offline activities. Promoting moderation and mindfulness can assist people in gaining a balanced viewpoint and understanding the advantages of technology while being aware of its possible downsides. In the end, the key to striking a healthy balance between screen time and other activities is to put knowledge and optimistic attitudes into practice. People must deliberately put screen time management techniques into practice, such as creating reasonable usage targets, scheduling regular breaks, and encouraging in-person contacts. Additionally, communities and organizations, whether via job regulations, educational programs, or public awareness campaigns have a part to play in fostering settings that encourage responsible screen time practices.

Understanding how technology is changing and how it affects our lives is crucial for managing the challenges associated with screen time. People will be able to take advantage of technology without sacrificing their general well-being in a society that is built on ongoing introspection, adaptation, and a shared dedication to promoting a culture of responsible digital involvement. Maintaining a lasting and positive relationship with the digital world going ahead will depend critically on finding a balance between knowledge, attitude, and practice.

V. Acknowledgement:

We sincerely appreciate the tremendous instruction provided by Dr. Santosh Mukherjee, Principal of Krishnagar B. Ed College in Nadia, West Bengal. We are grateful to our colleagues for their informative remarks, which improved the study's overall quality.

References:

- AbdHadi, N. F. N., Hasmanizar, M. N. A., Razif, M. A. D. M., Syafiq, M., Shabani, A. A. A. T., Bakar, A. A. A., and Hashim, H. F. C. 2021. 'Knowledge attitude and practice of screen time among undergraduate university student in Malaysia during pandemic'. *The International Journal of Medicine and Science* 6(1), 36-40.
- Anjitha, S., and Tiwari, S. 2023. Parental knowledge, attitudes and concerns towards media technology and screen time use in children with ASD and typically developing children. *1 Jan. 21-42. DOI: 10.3233/TAD-220389*
- Arippin, N. F. A., Mahmud, M. H., Rahman, H. A, Aliy-Yuin, K. Y. A., Lai, S. C. L., and Abdul-Mumin, K. H. 2021. 'Children's screen at home at home: A study of parents knowledge, attitude and practice'. *Research Squire,* 1-17.
- Bond, R. 2022. 'Social network determinants of screen time among adolescents'. *The Social Science Journal*, 59:2, 236-251.https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2019.08.009
- Cui, Z., Zou, P., Lin, Z., Cao, Y., &Luo, Y. 2022. 'Gender differences in excessive screen time among Chinese high school students in Henan province'. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health,* 20(1), 721. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010721
- Karmakar, S., Ray, S., and Sikdar, D. P. 2022. 'Screen time: analysis of items regarding knowledge, attitude and practice'. *International Journal for Research Trends and Innovation, 7(7), 709-718.*
- Leonhardt, M., Overa, S. 2021. Are there differences in video gaming and use of social media among boys and girls?- A Mixed methods approach. Int. J Environ Res Public Health. Jun 4:18(11): 6085. doi: 10.3390/ijerph18116085. PMCID: PMC8200210; PMID: 34200039.
- Liao, P. A., & Chang, H. H., Wang, J. H., & Sun, L. C. 2016. What are the determinants of rural-urban digital inequality among school children in Taiwan? Insights from Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition. Computers and Education. 95. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.01.002
- Loan, F. A. 2011. 'Internet use by Rural and Urban College Students: A Comparative Study'. DESIDOC *Journal of Library & Information Technology. 31(6).DOI:10.14429/djlit.31.6.1317*

- Lua, V.Y.Q., Chua, T.B.K., Chia, M.Y.H. 2023. A narrative review of screen time and wellbeing among adolescents before and during the covid-19 pandemic: Implications for the future. *Sports*, 11, 38.
- Miguel-Berges, M. L., Santaliestra-Pesias, A. M., Mouratidou, T., Flores-Barrantes, P., Androutsos, O., De Craemer, M., and Galcheva, S., Koletzko, B., and Kulaga, Z., Manios, Y., and Moreno, L. A. 2019. 'Parental perceptions, attitudes and knowledge on European preschool children's total screen time: the ToyBox-study'. *European journal of public health. 30(1). DOI:10.1093/eurpub/ckz151*
- Nakshine, V. S., Thute, P., Khatib, M. N., & Sarkar, B. 2022. 'Increased screen time as a cause of declining physical, psychological health and sleep patterns: a literary review'. *Cureus, 14(10)*. DOI:10.7759/cureus.30051
- Patil, M. A., Bharti, H., Amte, A., Singh., B. K., and Desai, M. 2019. 'Profile of adolescent social media user in rural area'. *International Journal of Pediatric Research. 2019; 6(01):22-28. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17511/ijpr.2019.i01.04*
- Patwari, I. 2020. *Use of Social Media by Rural Youth in India: A Boon or a Bane.* June 11.
- Popa, D., Gavriliu, D. 2015. 'Gender Representations and Digital Media', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences. Vol 180, Pages 1199-1206. ISSN 1877-0428. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.02.244.*
- Reyes, M. E., Morales, B. C., Javier, G. E., Ng, R. A., and Zsila, A. 2022. 'Social networking use across gender: Its association with social connectedness and happiness amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic'. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science, 7, 396-405. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-022-00262-6*
- Rundel, C., and Salemink, K. 2021. 'Bridging Digital Inequalities in Rural Schools in Germany: A Geographical Lottery?' *Education Sciences, 11(4), 181. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11040181*
- Sharma, A., and Banerjee, A. 2022. *Socio-Economic Determinants of Digital Divide in India. Vol. 51, No. 1, pp.78-92.*
- Sultana, A., Tasnim, S., Hossain, M. M., Bhattacharya, S., Purohit, N. 2021. Digital screen time during the COVID-19 pandemic: a public health concern [version 1; peer review: 1 approved, 1 approved with reservation]. *F1000 Research.* 1-11.

- Svensson, R., Johnson, B., and Oisson, A. 2022. Does gender matter? The association between different digital media activities and adolescent well-being. *BMC Public Health 22, 273.*
- Thomas, B., Senith, S., Alfred Kirubaraj, A., and JinoRamson, S. R. 2020. 'Digital Education of Rural India to Impact Rural Economy'. *Medico-legal Update, April-June 2020, Vol. 20, No. 2.*

Bio profile of the Author:

[1] M. Phil Student, Department of Education,
University of Kalyani,
Email ID: karmakarsudipta949@gmail.com
&
[2] Professor, Department of Education,
University of Kalyani,
Email ID: dpsedu@klyuniv.ac.in and dps_kalyaniuniversity@yahoo.com

Assessing Self-Awareness Skill among School-Going Children in Kolkata District, West Bengal

Chiranjit Mandal[1], Manikanta Paria[2] & Muktipada Sinha[3]

Abstract

This study explores self-awareness among secondary school students in Kolkata, West Bengal, focusing on the influence of gender, family type, medium of instruction, and mother's occupation. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, gathering data from 449 students using a self-developed Self-Awareness Skill Measurement Scale (SASMS). Results indicated significant differences in self-awareness based on gender, with male students showing higher self-awareness than females. Students from joint families exhibited greater self-awareness compared to those from nuclear families. Additionally, Bengali medium students demonstrated higher self-awareness than their English medium counterparts. Although students with mothers in government service showed slightly higher self-awareness, the difference was not statistically significant across different maternal occupations. These findings underscore the importance of cultural and familial contexts in shaping self-awareness, suggesting the need for tailored educational strategies to enhance students' emotional and cognitive development.

Keywords: *Cultural Context, Emotional Development, Educational Strategies, Cognitive Development*

Introduction

Self-awareness, the ability to introspect and recognize one's thoughts, emotions, and actions, is a critical aspect of human development, particularly during childhood and adolescence (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Morin, 2011; Silvia & O'Brien, 2004). This skill underpins emotional intelligence, playing a significant role in various aspects of life, including academic achievement, social relationships, and mental well-being (Goleman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). As children grow and advance through their schooling years, their ability to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses becomes increasingly vital. This self-awareness influences how they approach learning, stay motivated, and build resilience in the face of challenges (Schunk

& Zimmerman, 2008; Gardner, 1999; Pintrich, 2004). The development of self-awareness is shaped by a variety of factors, including the socio-cultural environment, family background, and educational practices, each of which significantly impacts a child's self-concept and emotional growth (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Basu, 2006; Chakrabarti & Joglekar, 2006; Mukherjee, 2014). In diverse and vibrant regions like Kolkata, West Bengal, these influences are particularly pronounced. Here, the intersection of traditional values with modern educational approaches offers a unique context for examining how self-awareness develops among school-going children (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Sen, 2000).

In the context of Kolkata district in West Bengal, a region known for its cultural diversity and varying socio-economic conditions, understanding self-awareness among school-going children is particularly important (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Chakrabarti & Joglekar, 2006; Mukherjee, 2014; Sen, 2000; Basu, 2006). The educational systems here blend traditional and modern approaches, offering a unique environment to explore how self-awareness skills are developed or hindered among students (Chakrabarti & Joglekar, 2006; Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Sen, 2000; Basu, 2006; Mukherjee, 2014). This study focuses on understanding the current state of self-awareness among these students, with special attention to differences based on gender, family type, medium of instruction, and mother's occupation. These factors are crucial because they often determine how children are socialized and educated, which in turn impacts their cognitive and emotional development (Bracken, 1992; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Sani, 2008; Lawson & Farah, 2017; Hartas, 2011). Research consistently shows that gender significantly influences the development of self-awareness. Females generally demonstrate greater emotional awareness and reflective thinking compared to males, likely due to socialization practices that encourage emotional expression in females (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012; Brody & Hall, 2008; Chaplin, 2015; Gullone & King, 1997; Halberstadt, 1986). Additionally, family structure, whether a child is raised in a nuclear or joint family, affects their emotional and social development. Joint families often provide a broader support system that can enhance self-awareness (Singh & Misra, 2012; Sinha & Sinha, 1990; Desai, 1995; Kulkarni & Wakankar, 1993; Das, 1995). The medium of instruction in schools-whether in English or a regional language-also significantly impacts a student's cognitive and emotional development, as language is closely tied to how they process and express emotions (Cummins, 1981; Krashen, 1985; Garcia & Wei, 2013; Snow, 2006; Bialystok, 2009). Furthermore, a mother's occupation has been found to play a crucial role in a child's self-perception and emotional well-being, particularly in cultural contexts where the mother is heavily involved in child-rearing (Hoffman, 1989; Harkness & Super, 1992; Bornstein, 2002; Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, & Clifford, 2000; Volling, 2005). Understanding these dynamics is essential for educators and

policymakers aiming to foster environments that support the healthy emotional and cognitive development of students (Thompson & Goodman, 2011; Elias, 1997).

Significance of the Study

The importance of self-awareness in secondary school-going children cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in their cognitive and emotional development during this critical age (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Goleman, 1995). This study holds educational significance as it can provide valuable insights into teaching methods and curriculum design aimed at enhancing students' personal and academic growth (Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Zimmerman, 2000). Self-awareness is a fundamental skill in human life and a vital component of emotional intelligence, which underpins various aspects of academic achievement, social interactions, and mental well-being (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000). Understanding the extent to which secondary students demonstrate self-awareness can significantly contribute to their holistic development, emotional well-being, and communication skills, which are critical for navigating the challenges of adolescence and adulthood (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Goleman, 1995). Moreover, self-awareness equips individuals with the essential expertise and understanding to effectively navigate the challenges of adulthood and succeed in their future careers by fostering resilience and adaptability (Goleman, 1995; Roeser et al., 2016). It has the potential to impact mental health and well-being by enabling students to identify and address the factors causing distress, thus promoting better emotional regulation and stress management (Roeser et al., 2016; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000). Currently, teenagers make up approximately 20% of the global population, reflecting a growing demographic that increasingly requires targeted educational interventions to support their emotional and cognitive development (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Goleman, 1995).

The importance of self-awareness in education cannot be underestimated, particularly in the context of academic performance, stress management, and overall well-being (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000; Goleman, 1995). In the dynamic and often demanding environment of secondary schools, children with a strong sense of self-awareness are better equipped to navigate academic expectations, peer interactions, and the myriad decisions shaping their educational journey (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Brackett & Katulak, 2007). Zimmerman (2000) highlights the significance of self-regulation, an aspect of self-awareness, in achieving academic success, noting that students who understand their learning processes are more likely to reach their academic goals, maintain motivation, and build resilience (Zimmerman, 2000; Pintrich, 2004; Goleman, 1995). Furthermore, self-awareness is closely linked to emotional intelligence, a crucial factor in successful interpersonal interactions and social engagement (Goleman, 1995;

Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Goleman (1995) underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in understanding and managing emotions, which are critical skills for adolescents in their social engagements within the complex social dynamics of secondary schools (Goleman, 1995; Brown & Ryan, 2003). Students with heightened self-awareness have a greater capacity to understand not only their own emotions but also the emotions of others, fostering empathy and facilitating effective communication, which are vital for maintaining healthy peer relationships and academic collaboration (Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000).

Approximately 80% of the global population resides in developing nations, where the challenges of adolescence are particularly pronounced, making the need for self-awareness even more critical in these contexts (Roeser et al., 2016; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Adolescents with sufficient self-awareness can discern the direction in which their emotions and thoughts are guiding them, enabling them to make informed decisions and avoid potential pitfalls (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Brackett & Katulak, 2007). To bring about a shift in the cognitive and emotional perspectives of teenagers, and subsequently influence their behavior, it is imperative to assess their degree of self-awareness, particularly in diverse cultural settings such as Kolkata district (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Goleman, 1995).

Consequently, this study aims to examine the current status of self-awareness skill among school-going children in Kolkata district, considering the complex socio-cultural and educational dynamics of the region (Brackett & Katulak, 2007; Goleman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). The problem statement was formulated as follows: **"Assessing Self-Awareness Skill Among School-Going Children in Kolkata District, West Bengal".**

Delimitations of the Study

The present study has the following delimitations:

i. The present study was delimited to only urban area students in Kolkata district.

ii. The present study was delimited to only secondary school-going children.

iii. The present study was delimited to only 449 students were taken.

iv. The current study was delimited to only one skill i.e., self-awareness skill.

v. Only four independent or demographic variables were used in this study i.e., gender, family type, medium of instruction, and mother's occupation.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the following objectives were established for the investigation:

i. To know the current status of self-awareness skill among students in Kolkata district.

ii. To investigate the self-awareness skill among students by their gender.

iii. To find out the self-awareness skill among students by their family type.

iv. To investigate the self-awareness skill among students by their medium of instruction.

v. To examine the self-awareness skill among students by their mother's occupation.

Hypotheses of the Study

$H_0$1: There exists no significance mean difference in self-awareness skill of students by their gender.

$H_0$2: There exists no significance mean difference in self-awareness skill of students by their family type.

$H_0$3: There exists no significance mean difference in self-awareness skill of students by their medium of instruction.

$H_0$4: There exists no significance mean difference in self-awareness skill of students by their mother's occupation.

Methodology

The primary objective of the study was to determine the current status of self-awareness skill and their variation across different demographic indicators among students in the Kolkata district. A cross-sectional survey research design was employed for this study. An extensive survey was conducted in four schools within the Kolkata district in the state of West Bengal to assess self-awareness skill among students. The study comprised 449 secondary school-going children who were selected through simple random sampling. Basic demographic variables, namely gender, family type, medium of instruction, and mother's occupation, were considered to examine any significant impact on their self-awareness skill. The dependent variable in the study was self-awareness skill.

Tools Used for Data Collection

Self-awareness skill measurement scale (SASMS) was a self-made questionnaire created by researcher with the supervisor and subject experts. Participants received a brief explanation of the

study's purpose and tool instructions. After checking that participants followed the instructions, the questionnaire with test items and response sheets was given to them and data was collected. Participants responded to 25 items on a Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree. The expected answer frequently comes to mind first after reviewing the test items. Each item has 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 answers. The minimum score for this questionnaire is 25, and the maximum score is 125.

Pilot study

In present scenario, a pilot study was conducted by the researcher. Internal consistency of self-awareness skill measurement scale was computed upon 125 school-going children are sample in the current study. Here Cronbach's alpha or reliability value was **$\alpha = 0.91$.** This value is very high. So, the scale is ready for final data collection. As the original Bengali version of scale was used in the study, the content, concurrent and face validity were maintained by the researcher taking the help of his supervisor.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 1

IV-wise mean difference on S-AS

Self-awareness skill				
IV	**Category**	**Number of students**	**Mean**	**SD**
Gender	Male	181	93.9	19.7
	Female	268	84.5	16.2
Family type	Joint	212	90.8	17.8
	Nuclear	237	85.0	18.4
Medium of Instruction	Bengali	391	89.1	18.0
	English	58	88.0	19.2
Mother's occupation	Homemaker	409	88.4	18.25
	Business	16	86.3	18.60
	Govt. Service	11	92.3	19.1
	Private Sector	2	62.0	5.66
	Daily Labour	11	88.5	16.68

*S-AS= Self-awareness Skill, *IV= Independent Variable, *M= Mean, *SD= Standard Deviation

Figure 1

Showing iv-wise mean difference on Self-awareness skill

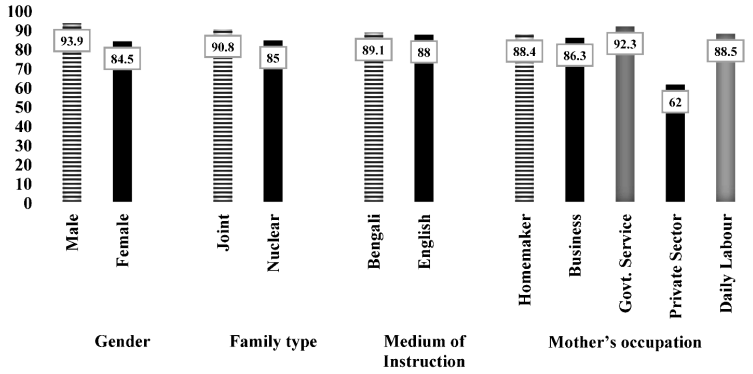


Table 1 and Figure 1 displays the mean differences in three different variables of self-awareness skill among students. Gender wise, mean score for male students was 93.9 and the mean score for female students was 84.5. Family type wise, the mean score for students from joint families was 90.8, and the mean score for students from nuclear families was 85.0. Medium of instruction wise, the mean score for Bengali medium students was 89.1, and the mean score of English medium students was 88.0. Again, the mean score of students whose mother occupation homemaker was found to be 88.4, business was 86.3, government service was 92.3, private sector 62.0, and daily labour was 88.5.

Hypotheses testing

Table 2

Inferential statistics based on $H_0$1 to $H_0$4

Independent samples t-Test						
Dependent Variables	**Independent Variables**	**t-value**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean Difference**	**Remarks (0.05 level)**
Self-awareness skill	**Gender**	-5.53	447	0.001	-9.41	***Significant**
	Family type	2.70	447	0.007	4.62	***Significant**
	Medium of Instruction	-2.33	447	0.020	-5.95	***Significant**
One-way ANOVA						
Dependent Variables	**Independent Variables**	**F-value**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**Mean square**	**Remarks (0.05 level)**
Self-awareness skill	**Mother's occupation**	1.23	4, 444	0.299	58.666	***Not Significant**

Table 2 showed that the computed value of the independent sample t-test comparing the mean scores of male and female's student with respect to self-awareness skill. self-awareness skill was found to be statistically significant [t (447) = -5.53, $p<0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor.

Table 2 showed that the computed value of the independent sample t-test comparing the mean scores of family type among students with respect to self-awareness skill. self-awareness skill was found to be statistically significant [t (447) = 2.70, $p<0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor.

Table 2 showed that the computed value of the independent sample t-test comparing the mean scores of medium of instruction among students with respect to self-awareness skill. self-awareness skill was found to be statistically significant [t (447) = -2.33, $p<0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor.

Table 2 showed that the computed value of the one-way ANOVA comparing the mean scores of various mothers' occupation among students with respect to self-awareness skill. Self-awareness skill was found to be not statistically significant [F (4, 444) = 1.23, $p>0.05$]. Hence, the null hypothesis was failed to reject at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be said that the found difference in the mean scores was due to random chance factor.

Major Findings

- The present status of self-awareness skill of secondary school-going children in Kolkata district was found to be 88.32.
- Male students exhibited significantly higher self-awareness skill compared to female students.
- students from joint families had a significantly greater self-awareness skill compared to students from nuclear families.
- Bengali medium students exhibited significantly greater self-awareness skill compared to English medium students.
- Mother occupation of govt. service students showed higher self-awareness skill than mother's occupation of student's business, homemaker, private sector and daily labour but the difference was found to be not statistically significant.

Discussion

This study sheds light on the self-awareness skill of secondary school-going children in Kolkata, revealing important insights shaped by the region's unique socio-cultural context. With an overall self-awareness score of 88.32, these students demonstrate a moderate level of self-awareness, which reflects the complex interplay of cultural, familial, and educational influences that shape their development.

One key finding is that male students exhibit significantly higher self-awareness than female students, which diverges from some existing research that suggests females generally possess greater emotional awareness due to socialization practices that encourage emotional expression (Chaplin, 2015; Brody & Hall, 2008). However, the higher self-awareness observed among males in this study could be attributed to cultural norms specific to Kolkata, where boys might receive more encouragement to reflect on their actions, particularly in academic and social settings. These finding challenges traditional gender stereotypes about emotional expression and highlights the significant role that cultural context plays in shaping self-awareness (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012; Gullone & King, 1997; Halberstadt, 1986). Recent studies also suggest that societal expectations and educational pressures on boys might contribute to their increased self-awareness, especially in urban settings (Kumar et al., 2021; Patel & Sharma, 2022).

The study also finds that students from joint families demonstrate significantly higher self-awareness compared to those from nuclear families. This supports previous research indicating that joint family systems, with their broader support networks and opportunities for social interaction, can foster a stronger sense of self-awareness in children (Singh & Misra, 2012; Sinha & Sinha, 1990). The constant exposure to diverse perspectives and the guidance provided by multiple family members in joint families may create an environment conducive to the development of self-awareness (Desai, 1995; Kulkarni & Wakankar, 1993). Conversely, children in nuclear families may have fewer opportunities for such interactions, potentially limiting their self-awareness development. Recent research has further highlighted the role of extended family interactions in enhancing children's social and emotional skills, which are crucial components of self-awareness (Bhattacharya et al., 2021; Mehta & Gupta, 2023).

Another significant finding is that Bengali medium students exhibited significantly greater self-awareness compared to their English medium counterparts. This outcome might seem unexpected, considering that English medium education is often associated with broader cognitive development due to its global reach. However, this finding can be understood in the context of linguistic comfort and cultural resonance. Students educated in their mother tongue, such as

Bengali, may feel more at ease and expressive in their learning environment, which can enhance their self-awareness (Cummins, 1981; Garcia & Wei, 2013). The use of a familiar language in education can lead to deeper cognitive and emotional engagement, fostering higher levels of self-awareness (Snow, 2006; Bialystok, 2009). Recent studies have emphasized the importance of mother-tongue education in enhancing students' emotional and cognitive development, which are critical components of self-awareness (Ghosh & Sen, 2022; Roy & Basu, 2021). Interestingly, the study also reveals that students whose mothers are employed in government service exhibit higher self-awareness, although the difference compared to students whose mothers are engaged in other occupations, such as business, homemaking, private sector jobs, or daily labor, was not statistically significant. This finding may suggest that the impact of maternal occupation on children's self-awareness is becoming less pronounced in contemporary society. Factors like work-life balance and the nature of maternal employment may not significantly affect children's self-awareness as much as once thought (Hoffman, 1989; Harkness & Super, 1992; Bornstein, 2002). Recent research indicates that the quality of maternal involvement, rather than the specific occupation, plays a more critical role in shaping a child's emotional and cognitive development (Sharma et al., 2023; Gupta & Singh, 2022).

Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of considering the specific cultural and social contexts when interpreting the development of self-awareness among students. The results of this study align with and challenge existing literature, underscoring the need for educators and policymakers to design interventions that are sensitive to the unique socio-cultural dynamics of the Kolkata district. By doing so, they can better support the emotional and cognitive development of students in this region.

Educational Implications

The study’s findings have important implications for education, especially in culturally diverse areas like Kolkata. The differences in self-awareness between genders suggest the need for educational strategies that are mindful of gender roles, encouraging emotional growth equally among all students. This could involve introducing activities that foster self-reflection and resilience, tailored to address the unique needs of both boys and girls. The stronger self-awareness observed in students from joint families points to the value of social support networks in nurturing emotional and cognitive development. Schools can emulate this by creating a learning environment that promotes collaboration, peer mentoring, and group activities, helping students benefit from diverse perspectives. Additionally, the difference in self-awareness between Bengali and English medium students highlights the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive education. Schools should consider the benefits of teaching in the mother tongue, especially in the early

years, to enhance students' engagement and learning. This approach not only supports academic growth but also helps preserve cultural identity. Moreover, the study emphasizes that the quality of parental involvement is more significant for a child's self-awareness than the mother's occupation. Schools should work to strengthen home-school partnerships by encouraging parental involvement through flexible communication and supportive workshops, ensuring students receive consistent support both at home and in school. Overall, these insights advocate for a holistic approach to education that goes beyond academics to also address the emotional and social development of students. By embracing this approach, educators and policymakers can better prepare students for the challenges of modern life, promoting their overall well-being and success.

Conclusion

The study showed how important it is to be self-aware in this age of globalisation because it has a big effect on how well you can change, solve problems, understand other cultures, and grow personally and professionally. This study provides important insights into the self-awareness of secondary school students in Kolkata, highlighting how cultural, familial, and educational factors shape this essential skill. Interestingly, male students showed higher self-awareness than female students, challenging traditional gender expectations and underscoring the influence of local cultural norms. Students from joint families demonstrated greater self-awareness compared to those from nuclear families, pointing to the valuable role of extended family support in nurturing emotional and social growth. The observation that Bengali medium students had higher self-awareness than their English medium counterparts suggests that comfort with one's native language plays a significant role in emotional and cognitive engagement. Additionally, the study found that a mother's occupation had less impact on self-awareness than the quality of maternal involvement, reflecting changes in societal dynamics. These findings underscore the need for educational strategies that consider the unique cultural and social contexts of Kolkata. By aligning with these specific dynamics, educators and policymakers can more effectively support the emotional and cognitive development of students, promoting their academic success and overall well-being.

References

- Banerjee, A. & Duflo, E. 2011. *Poor economics: A radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty*. Public Affairs. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0262.2011.02254.x.
- Basu, K. 2006. 'Globalization, poverty, and inequality: What is the relationship? What can be done?' *World Development*, 34(8), 1361-1373. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.10.009.

- Bhattacharya, S., Sharma, R., & Mukherjee, A. 2021. 'The role of extended family interactions in child development: Insights from Indian joint families'. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 35(2), 210-221. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000697.
- Bialystok, E. 2009. 'Bilingualism: The good, the bad, and the indifferent'. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 12(1), 3-11. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728908003477.
- Bornstein, M. H. (Ed.). 2002. *Handbook of parenting: Vol. 1. Children and parenting* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Bracken, B. A. 1992. *Multidimensional self-concept scale*. Pro-Ed.
- Brackett, M. A. & Katulak, N. A. 2007. Emotional intelligence in the classroom: Skill-based training for teachers and students. In J. Ciarrochi & J. D. Mayer (Eds.), *Applying emotional intelligence: A practitioner's guide* (pp. 1-27). Psychology Press.
- Brody, L. R. & Hall, J. A. 2008. Gender and emotion in context. In M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones, & L. F. Barrett (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (3rd ed., pp. 395-408). The Guilford Press.
- Brown, K. W. & Ryan, R. M. 2003. 'The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822-848. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822.
- Burchinal, M. R., Peisner-Feinberg, E., Bryant, D. M., & Clifford, R. M. 2000. 'Children's social and cognitive development and child-care quality: Testing for differential associations related to poverty, gender, or ethnicity'. *Applied Developmental Science*, 4(3), 149-165. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0403_4.
- Chakrabarti, S. & Joglekar, R. 2006. 'Determinants of child labor: A case study of a rural district in West Bengal, India'. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 40(3), 658-676. https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2006.11506941.
- Chaplin, T. M. 2015. 'Gender and emotion expression: A developmental contextual perspective'. *Emotion Review*, 7(1), 14-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073914544408.
- Cummins, J. 1981. The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In California State Department of Education (Ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 3-49). California

State Department of Education.

- Das, V. 1995. *Critical events: An anthropological perspective on contemporary India*. Oxford University Press.
- Desai, I. P. 1995. *The family in transition: A study of family and kinship in Pakistan*. University of Michigan Press.
- Duval, S. & Wicklund, R. A. 1972. *A theory of objective self-awareness*. Academic Press.
- Eccles, J. S., & Roeser, R. W. 2011. 'Schools as developmental contexts during adolescence'. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 225-241. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00725.x.
- Eccles, J. S., & Roeser, R. W. 2011. 'Schools as developmental contexts during adolescence'. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 225-241. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00725.x.
- Elias, M. J. 1997. *Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators*. ASCD.
- Garcia, O., & Wei, L. 2013. *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gardner, H. 1999. *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. Basic Books.
- Ghosh, S., & Sen, A. 2022. 'The impact of mother-tongue education on emotional and cognitive development in India'. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 115, 102031. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.102031.
- Goleman, D. 1995. *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- Gullone, E., & King, N. J. 1997. 'Three-year follow-up of normal anxiety and anxiety disorders in children'. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 25, 401-414. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025753201869.
- Halberstadt, A. G. 1986. Family socialization of emotional expression and nonverbal communication styles and skills. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(4), 827-836. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.4.827.

- Harkness, S., & Super, C. M. (Eds.). 1992. *Parental cultural belief systems: Their origins, expressions, and consequences*. Guilford Press.
- Hartas, D. 2011. 'Families' social backgrounds matter: Socioeconomic factors, home learning and young children's language, literacy and social outcomes'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(6), 893-914. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.506945.
- Hoffman, L. W. 1989. 'Effects of maternal employment in the two-parent family'. *American Psychologist*, 44(2), 283-292. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.2.283.
- Krashen, S. 1985. *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Kulkarni, P. M., & Wakankar, A. 1993. *Population and family in India: Contemporary issues and perspectives*. Himalaya Publishing House.
- Kumar, A., Singh, R., & Patel, N. 2021. 'The impact of societal expectations on self-awareness in urban Indian boys'. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 36(4), 456-478. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558420988392.
- Lawson, G. M., & Farah, M. J. 2017. 'Executive function as a mediator between SES and academic achievement throughout childhood'. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 41(1), 94-104. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025415603489.
- Mehta, P., & Gupta, R. 2023. 'Role of extended family in developing social skills in children: A study on Indian joint families'. *Indian Journal of Psychology*, 41(3), 227-240. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-023-00234-x.
- Morin, A. 2011. 'Self-recognition, theory-of-mind, and self-awareness: What side are you on?' *Laterality: Asymmetries of Body, Brain and Cognition*, 16(3), 367-383. https://doi.org/10.1080/13576500903472384.
- Mukherjee, S. 2014. *The intelligentsia in revolutionary Bengal: Cultures of radicalism in late colonial Bengal*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315879467.
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S. 2012. 'Emotion regulation and psychopathology: The role of gender'. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 8, 161-187. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-032511-143109.
- Patel, D., & Sharma, P. 2022. 'Educational pressures and self-awareness in male adolescents: A study in urban India'. *Education and Urban Society*, 54(2), 127-144. https://doi.

org/10.1177/00131245211006070.

- Pintrich, P. R. 2004. 'A conceptual framework for assessing motivation and self-regulated learning in college students'. *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(4), 385-407.
- Roeser, R. W., Eccles, J. S., & Sameroff, A. J. 2016. 'School as a context of early adolescents' academic and social-emotional development: A summary of research findings'. *The Elementary School Journal*, 100(5), 443-471. https://doi.org/10.1086/499650.
- Roy, S., & Basu, A. 2021. 'The impact of mother-tongue education on cognitive and emotional development: Insights from West Bengal'. *Journal of Language and Education*, 7(3), 65-78. https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2021.11541.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. 1990. Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211. https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG.
- Sani, F. 2008. *Self-continuity: Individual and collective perspectives*. Psychology Press.
- Schunk, D. H., & Zimmerman, B. J. 2008. *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research, and applications*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sen, A. (2000). *Development as freedom*. Anchor Books.
- Sharma, A., Gupta, V., & Singh, R. 2023. 'Maternal involvement and its impact on children's emotional and cognitive development: A cross-sectional study in India'. *Journal of Family Studies*, 29(1), 99-115. https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2022.2121300.
- Silvia, P. J., & O'Brien, M. E. 2004. 'Self-awareness and constructive functioning: Revisiting "the human dilemma." *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23(4), 475-489. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.23.4.475.40308.
- Singh, R., & Misra, G. 2012. The science of mental health in India. In P. S. Dale, & D. Bhugra (Eds.), *Mental health in Asia and the Pacific: Historical and cultural perspectives* (pp. 158-172). Springer.
- Sinha, D., & Sinha, M. 1990. Socialization goals, family structure, and the father's role in India. In J. Georgas, M. H. Bond, J. W. Berry, & F. J. R. van de Vijver (Eds.), *Families across cultures: A 30-nation psychological study* (pp. 146-157). Cambridge University Press.
- Snow, C. E. 2006. What counts as literacy in early childhood? In K. McCartney & D. Phillips

(Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of early childhood development* (pp. 274-294). Blackwell Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470757703.ch14.

- Thompson, R. A., & Goodman, M. 2011. Development of emotion regulation: More than meets the eye. In A. V. Clark & J. G. Bassett (Eds.), *Emotion regulation: Conceptual and practical issues* (pp. 183-201). Nova Science Publishers.
- Volling, B. L. 2005. 'The transition to siblinghood: A developmental ecological systems perspective and directions for future research'. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 19(4), 542-549. https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.19.4.542.
- Zimmerman, B. J. 2000. 'Self-efficacy: An essential motive to learn'. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 82-91. https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1016.

Bio Profile of the Authors:

[1] PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India.
Email ID: chiranjitm105@gmail.com

[2] Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India.

[3] Professor, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India.

Understanding Gender & Sexuality through Hidden Curriculum in Schools

Nishaa Ghosh [1] & Archana Prasad [2]

Abstract

Sexuality is a culturally diverse conceptual category which could refer to a wide range of things like sexual orientation and desires, which could be same-sex, bisexual, and heterosexual, gender roles, construction of femininity and masculinity, gender relations, and consequent sex roles (Vance, 1991). Sexuality is also ideological because socialization into appropriate sexual behaviour is a social process which leads to the construction of gender identity. The school is one of the primary institutions for reproducing conventional gender and sexual norms. This paper argues that a form of sex education is always part and parcel of school systems by focusing on hidden curricula. The paper conducts a relational analysis of the school and the wider society and argues that there is conformity, tension, and resistance in schools and how the school is not a neutral body outside of society but functions within the larger political and social landscape. Thus, this study will examine the State, the significant gatekeepers (family, teachers and guardians), and adolescents. The paper, therefore, also focuses on adolescents who negotiate the hegemonic patterns and inculcation intended to produce good citizens (good girls and good boys).

Introduction

Sexuality has been represented as a private affair differentiated from the public sphere of economy, production and politics (Correa and Petchesky 2007:298, Rubin:2007, 156, Padgug:2007 ,19, Vance: 2007, 49). Gayle Rubin (2007, 150) states that sexuality is often regarded as a marginal matter and overshadowed by critical topics like poverty, war and diseases; however, discourses around sexuality have led to significant social upheavals across societies in different periods of history. Starting from the late nineteenth-century Victorian morality in England, which abolished prostitution and masturbation and outlawed child pornography and representation of nudity in art and culture (Rubin:2007,150), the innovation in birth control methods like condoms and diaphragm (Stearns:2009, 99), the 20th-century rise in rates of venereal disease like syphilis,

gonorrhea epidemic and the HIV-AIDs epidemic in different parts of the world (Stearns:2009,131), the invention of the birth control pill (Zimmerman:2015,chapter-3), the radical gay movements in Europe and North America (Weeks:2007,126) to the more contemporary anti-gender mobilisation across Europe and America (Corredor:2019,613).

In the Indian context, too, activism regarding gender and sexuality evolved through various periods, from the introduction of Western morality with colonialism (Stearns: 2009, 129) to the construction of acceptable male and female sexuality by nationalist leaders in the late 19th and 20th centuries (Srivastava: 1998, 88). Contemporary 21st-century queer parades in different regions of the country (Sircar: 2022, 226-227) as well as the political activism against brutal rape case like the 2012 Nirbhaya case (Corrêa & Khanna: 2015, 48). These public outcries led to legal transformation, like the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013, which led to stricter punishments for sexual offenders and widened the ambit to include voyeurism and stalking, and the legalization of same-sex relationships and Amendment of Article 15 of the Indian Constitution to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation (Yamini:2015).

In recent times, several global efforts have been made to achieve gender equality, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Fifth SDG on *Gender Equality to Empower and Achieve Equality for all Women and Girls* focuses on eliminating all forms of discrimination, sexual violence and harmful practices, easy access to sexual and reproductive health rights, recognizing unpaid work, ensuring women's participation in the economic and political sphere, bringing reforms for women's equal rights to economic resources and land control, enhancing the use of information technology to advocate for women's empowerment, the adoption of policies and enforcement of legalization to ensure women's empowerment and equality (United Nations:2016).

Despite the attempt to introduce a series of legislative measures, the silence on sexuality remains a matter of concern. The construction of invisibility takes place foremost in the schools, which, on the contrary, should have been a space for dissemination of information on the topic of sexuality. Information on sexuality issues is also channeled through informal sources such as peer group socialisation and popular culture, mainly movies, magazines, newspapers and the internet (Chowkhani:2020,131). There have been many contestations regarding implementing sex education curricula in schools. Different programs have been proposed at different times, expressing concerns and the need for sex education (Chowkhani: 2013).

In this paper, sex education is not limited to physical and biological aspects of the body but a broader understanding of sex as culturally and socially constructed. Most literature on sex

education starts with a definition: "Sex education can be defined as a broad program that aims to build a strong foundation for lifelong sexual health by acquiring information and attitudes, beliefs and values about one's identity, relationship and intimacy" (Ismail et al. 2015:333). It is significant to note that this definition applies to sexuality education, which is more than just sex. Sexuality is a culturally diverse concept which includes sexual orientation and desires, gender roles, construction of femininity and masculinity, gender relations, and consequent sex roles (Vance:2007,47). Scholars like Abraham (2007), Padgug (2007), and Vance (2007) have argued that sexuality is not fixed and static; rather, it is socially constructed. Several anthropological cross-cultural studies have shown differences in human sexuality, indicating socially constructed behaviour (Vance: 2007, 46), which is also referred to as sexual scripting (Simon & Gagnon: 2007, 36). This also implies that sexuality is ideological (Abraham: 2007, 359). Ideology is a set of ideas that hides reality; it performs certain functions of legitimizing unequal structures (Althusser: 1970). Sexuality is ideological because socialization into appropriate sexual behaviour is a social process and not an individual isolated process whereby people are expected to follow specific set trajectories or go through life states which indicate a pattern within a particular society (Simon & Gagnon: 2007, 36).

However, it is significant to understand that sexuality is marginalized in the school curriculum, especially sex education programmes. In India, sex education began within the context of population control, shifting focus to adolescence and AIDS prevention after the 1994 Population and Development Conference. In 2005 and 2006, the government attempted to facilitate comprehensive sex education in schools in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Organisation. However, it was met with fierce opposition from many states and failed as many debated that sex education is a Western concept (Anandhi: 2007, 3367). Subsequently, programs like Delhi's YUVA life skill, Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram, were introduced to support youth well-being. Both supporters and critics of sex education in India emphasise sexual restraint, while some view it as part of globalization, either to be rejected or used to advocate sexual abstinence (Anandhi:2007,3368 & Chakravarti:2011,389-390).

However, this paper argues that a form of sex education is always part of school systems by focusing on hidden curricula. The paper conducts a relational analysis of the school and the wider society and argues that there is conformity, tension, and resistance in schools and how the school functions within the larger political and social landscape. The paper focuses on adolescents who negotiate the hegemonic patterns and inculcation intended to produce good citizens as good girls and boys. Citizenship is a gendered concept (Thapan:2015); therefore, the *Good Girl* refers to the regulated and controlled female sexuality based on upholding community and family honour

(Gupta:2001,8 & Chakravarti:2018,143); on the other hand, the *Good Boy* analogy refers to the restrained sexuality along with scientific temper and rationality (Gupta:2001,68-69). The concept of purity and pollution is central to Indian society (Srinivas: 1952), and it differs by caste. Dube (1997) states especially upper-caste women are burdened with maintaining the purity of the home; however, women's sexuality can be potentially dangerous and require regulation and control. Consequently, a woman is constantly categorised between the binaries of good/bad. Chaste/ unchaste, pure/impure, thereby become the repositories of family honor (Chakravarti: 2018,143 & Sinha: 2001,8). Meanwhile, men have the responsibility to safeguard the women in their communities and be the controllers of female sexuality (Chakravarti: 1993,579 & Chakravarti: 2018).

Sex education is subsumed under the more extensive discussion on sexual and reproductive health and rights, which sparked globally after the 1994 Conference on Population and Development (Saiz: 2007.) The history of sexual and reproductive health and rights can be traced to shifting focus from population control (Chowkhani: 2013), family planning, and STI prevention (Khan & Raby: 2019, 3) to a focus on adolescent sexuality (Chowkhani: 2013). The literature on sex education suggests a linkage between sex education and a specific youth identity construction (Phadke: 2005, 67), as scholars have argued that sex education became a moralising tool for reinforcement of dominant culture (Chakravarti:2011, 390). Thus, earlier studies suggest that youth sexuality is seen as problematic by the State and, therefore, has to be regulated, which can be understood by looking at three sets of literature.

The three main sets of literature on sexuality education include: first, studies on sex education and youth sexual and reproductive behaviour, which examines the disconnect between the intent of school and gatekeepers by treating adolescents as innocent and asexual and the reality of adolescent behaviour (Carlson: 2012,161 & Powell: 2010,12). Second, the literature on international bodies and feminist advocacy for sexual and reproductive rights as human rights and the parallel change in focus from population control to family planning and finally to adolescent Sexuality (Saiz:2007, Correa & Petchesky:2007, Carlson:2012, Chowkhani:2022). Third, the studies on UN, WHO, and UNESCO reports on sex education emphasise schooling years as the relevant period for sex education, defining the 10 -19 as the adolescent group, while the UN Convention on Child Rights classifies anyone under 18 as a child (Goldman: 2012, 201).

On the other hand, data from South Asia suggests that sexual debut among adolescents/ youths, as well as the prevalence of early marriage, is widely known (Bott et.al:2003,7 & Murshid. et al., 2020). Signatories of international treaties such as Sustainable Development Goals and Millennium Development Goals based on the universal human rights frameworks, specifically

the goals of SRH (Sexual and Reproductive Health), imply acknowledgement of adolescents as sexual agents rather than rendering them of any knowledge concerning sexuality. On the contrary, adolescence is stated as a problematic stage, and the solution applied is to render them asexual and innocent children to be protected; that is, the State and the gatekeepers have a protectionist approach towards the adolescents (Chowkhani:2022,60).

Official and Hidden Curriculum in Schools

Different types of schools exist in India, such as those run by government schools, aided schools, and private schools (Thapan:2015,143)**.** A National Educational Policy guides all these schools' curricula. Historically, the term curriculum has evolved, originally meant to study or train at school (Pinar et al.:1995, 26), later broadened to include school experiences by John Dewey and Franklin Bobbit.

Franklin Bobbitt and John Dewey are seminal figures who have influenced the school curriculum differently. Franklin Bobbit's understanding of curriculum has influenced modern reforms in education, such as competency-based instruction, standard curriculum, central role of teachers and examination (De Paor: 270, 2021). However, later, he adopted a similar view to Dewey's for a child-centered educational module (De Paor: 277, 2021).

John Dewey advocated for critical thinking and experiential learning by focusing on children's needs, interests and personal histories (Hlebowitsh: 67, 2023). Since the 1990s, child-centered education has been influential in the Indian school curriculum (Sriprakash, 297:2010), yet the teacher's dominance, exams, and the textbook-centered education module continues (Sriprakash, 298: 2010). Meanwhile, academicians' input in the curriculum has shrunk, and there is greater control by politicians, textbook companies and subject matter specialists (Pinar et al.: 14 & 41).

In '*Life in a Classroom',* Philipp Jackson identified two types of curricula: the official/ written curriculum and the hidden/unwritten curriculum (Walton: 2005, 20). An official curriculum is the written down and clear objectives of formal instruction, while the hidden curriculum means the unstated norms, values, and beliefs that students learn (Giroux and Penna: 1979, 22). Understanding the official curriculum is essential for examining the hidden curriculum, as all schools follow the state-sanctioned official curriculum (NEP: 2020, NEP: 2010). Second, this focus on the official curriculum highlights the centrality of teachers, textbooks, examinations and the neo-liberal influence on education emphasized within the nation's education policy, shifting the focus away from everyday school realities.

In India, the two waves of liberalization in the 1990s and 2000s led to the development of market-

oriented policies (Batra: 2014, S7). The ushering of liberalization and then neo-liberalization meant significant change in government policies, which emphasised "national competitiveness" to fit in a globalizing world (Batra: 2014, S6& Velaskar: 2015), instrumental output, science and technology (Benei: 2009, Srivastava: 1998, Thapan: 2015). Second, educational institutions are primarily viewed to offer occupational training (Collins: 1971).

This is the backdrop against which the hidden curriculum can help us realize that the school is not just an equalizer (Bourdieu: 1997, 493) with instrumental goals of providing jobs but also a disciplining institution. The hidden curriculum is the unstated norms and values internalized by the students in school settings, which reflect the protectionist approach of the State and the stakeholders towards adolescents. Educational institutions are not neutral in their operations but reflect society's social and political landscape, using hidden curricula to create hegemony (manufactured consent) using ideology, state power and institutions (Apple: 1990, 1, 5).

Among all the ideological state apparatus, schools are significant in disseminating and maintaining societal hegemony. Thus, education helps the dominant class maintain and reinforce its hegemony through the ideological tool of the hidden curriculum. Bourdieu further explains the hidden curriculum through the concept of cultural capital, which includes non-economic assets like knowledge but also mannerisms, values and tastes as arbitrarily defined by the dominant middle class of the society (Bourdieu: 1986, 16-18) and coveted by the schools.

At this point, it is significant to state that structural functionalists like Talcott Parsons (1955) and Kinsley David(1940)have stated that along with school, the family is also a primary socialising unit which inculcates various role responsibilities to children. Judith Butler, in her article '*Merely Cultural'* first published in 1977, has argued that the family is also the first site where gendered socialisation occurs (Ngyuen:120,2023), and the parental choices in this socialization are influenced by the larger societal and cultural expectation (Ngyuen:121,2023). Thus, the reproduction of acceptable social behaviour in adolescents includes the role of various institutions, such as the family, the educational institutes, the State and the medical institution (Chowkhani: 2022, 60)**.** The following sections will examine everyday rituals and schooling that help shape adolescents.

The Schooling process

John Dewey (1916) argued that education develops intellect and wisdom among young people, which helps them develop into mature and influential citizens of society who then transmit the acquired culture to the next generation and transform it in the face of change. According to Rousseau (1977), education aimed to develop citizens who want what is good for the entire

community, and thus, he wished for the elimination of independent individual achievement.

Meenakshi Thapan, in her PhD thesis, *'Life at School'* (2006a), states that school culture consists of transcendental order (school values and ethos) and local order (classroom activities, exams, discussions); together, they produce good citizens. Thapan (2015, 2006b) notes that pedagogic practice contributes to constructing "good citizens". Citizenship education in schools, focusing on education on government, laws, national boundaries, detailed history, and civic knowledge, aims to produce obedient citizens who respect the rule of law and the authority of the State (Thapan:2006b,4197). This kind of subordinate relationship of the citizen to the State is realized in various ways in the school through the official school culture (Thapan: 2006b, 4198).

The production of docile citizens is both a gendered and an ideological process. First, gender influences how we organise society and distribute power. Patriarchy is a structure in all institutions, social relations, and interactions, thus determining the different life chances for men and women (Acker: 1987). Second, socialisation is not just gendered; it is also about constructing a religious identity (Thapan: 2006b, 4198), specifically a Hindu identity, as opposed to the figures of Muslims and Christians (Benei: 2009). This disciplining has religious contouring because the nationalist leaders have constructed identities based on community membership; precedence was given to caste, ethnicity and religion over individual identity (Menon: 2015, 38). The concept of the individual was drawn from Western colonialism, but the community took precedence over individual identity, as evident in the Indian constitution (Menon: 2015, 38).

Studies like Sanjay Srivastava's *'Constructing Post-Colonial National Character and the Doon School'*(1998) and Veronique Beni's '*Schooling India: Hindu Muslims and the Forging of the Citizens'*(2009) examine the ideological and gendered construction of school students into contributing individuals of society.

Srivastava (1998) mainly focused on the Doon School, Mayo College (Ajmer) and the Lawrence School (Himachal Pradesh) to explore the construction of a modern Indian citizen in post-colonial India. He argues that in the pre-independence period, British public schools aimed to produce loyal, rational and calculating individuals well-versed in British values. In the post-independence period, the public schools aimed to construct an "All-conquering modernist, male hero, guardian of the free market, a bridge between progressive West and regressive India " (Srivastava:1998,6). This project emphasised producing rational beings, inducing individuals with a scientific temper with this worldly attitude and finally imbibing them with intellectual masculinity (Srivastava: 1998, 49 -50).

First, the school's citizenship project is inherently gendered because nation-building was a

gendered process (Srivastava: 1998, 88). Influenced by two scholars, VAN der Veer and Partha Chatterjee, Srivastava argued that the nationalist discourse assigned gender-specific roles (88). Chatterjee used the concept of binaries: the home/world, the public/ private, the outer/inner, the material/spiritual, whereby men represented the public and learned the scientific and rational temper from the Western man, while the women represented the inner/private/home/spiritual and ensured the sanctity of Indian culture (Srivastava: 1998, 88 & Chatterjee: 1993).

However, this division between the roles of men and women stands problematic as it is largely based on the cultural construction of gender and supported by biological determinism, which allocates a subordinate and secondary position to women universally in different degrees across different cultures (Lamphere & Rosaldo: 1974, Otner: 1974). Biological determinists argued an inherent genetic lack made men naturally superior to women (Otner: 1974, 71). Feminist scholars like Butler (1990), Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974), and Sherry Otner (1974) reject biological determinism by stating that gender identity is also shaped by culture, environment and individual agency, race, class, and ethnicity. Sinha (1995) critiqued the glorification of women's roles as mothers and wives to preserve the sanctity of the inner domain, while Sarkar (2001) argued against the lack of intersectionality in studying women and the lack of representation of lower caste women (Sarkar:2001,6).

Secondly, the school's citizenship project had a religious and specifically Hindu orientation, despite its attempts to be secular in all its functions. For example, several things semiotically indicate a Hindu context, such as the lamp of learning as the school crest has Hindu significance, and the symbol of fire or lamp is part of the Hindu cultural system (Srivastava: 1998, 104). The placement of carved rocks and a rose bowl, along with statues of Mahavira (founder of Jainism), Buddha (founder of Buddhism), and Vivekananda (the Hindu leader), were symbolic of Hinduism (Srivastava:1998,108).

By applying a phenomenological approach, Benei (2009) analyzes gendered and political socialization that has taken place in schools in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, after the India-Pakistan Kargil conflict. She notes that religious and cultural semiotics (images of Shivagi, singing the National anthem, and Hindu values in textbooks) are used in school to reproduce Hindu nationalism and devotional sentiments disguised as secular practices (Benei:2009,77). The reproduction of nationalist and patriotic emotions vis-a-vis a religious sensorium contradicts secular ideals adopted in the Indian constitution (Benei: 2009, 22-24). Second, she argued that the gendered self is not exclusive to the national and religious identity as both are mutually co-produced. The ideal female identity (*Bharat Mata*) is based on the mother figure, an exclusive Hindu iconography understandable at the familial, regional, and national levels used to promote national development

during various periods in post-independent India (Benei:2009,104). The ideal male identity is the icon of *SonsoftheSoil*- the warriors who strategize (Benei: 2009, 153) in contrast to the 'fantasized Muslim other' (Benei: 2009, 154).

Essays from the book '*Ethnographies of Schooling in Contemporary India',* edited by Meenakshi Thapan (2014), argue that schools upheld the vision of an ideal student through gender-specific uniform policies like a correct length of skirt and pants, fastened buttons, short hair for boys and properly tied hair for girls. This character building primarily involves gendered role socialisation. Deka (2014, 76-77) notes a difference in the supervision of male and female students; boys were often subjected to physical punishment, while female students were exempted from physical punishment and faced verbal disapproval only. Deka (2014, 77) notes that the bodies are subjected to various disciplinary actions to produce obedient individuals, whereby school works as an Ideological State Apparatus and instills middle-class Hindu values.

Similarly, in her ethnography of an all-girls school, Bhandari (2014) notes the gendered aspect of socialisation and consequent reproduction of docile bodies who are not only good ideal Indians but also good Christians well-versed with Christian values and ethos. Likewise, the essay '*Being Muslim, Becoming Citizens: A Muslim Girl's School in Post-Riot Ahmedabad'* states that the school aims to produce not just good Indians but also good Muslim girls by emphasising neutral values like cleanliness, good neighbourliness, nature protection, kindness, generosity, as well as gendered values like Izzat (honour), and Lihaz (respect and obedience). The school, supported by the parents and guardians, upheld the image of a good Muslim girl (Matthan et al.:225:2014).

Thus, every school has instrumental and ideological goals that shape everyday processes and constitute the school culture. Second, all schools contribute to the reproduction of values of the dominant sections of society, which has both gendered and ideological reproduction.

The construction of national identity is not devoid of individuality and agency; thus, students actively create the self and the "other". Thapan (2006b) has argued that students are not mindless robots, and therefore, their comprehension of selfhood is not just shaped by the family and school, but they form their views. Scholars have argued that students learn about their country via school, parents and guardians, and through exposure to television and newspapers, which help them shape their own identity and construct the figure of the social "other" (Thapan:2014 and 2006).

Students and School Culture

Adolescence is a socio-cultural construct that, while recognised in pre-capitalist times, became institutionalised in the capitalist period (Carlson: 2012). Capitalism constructed this period of adolescence between childhood and adulthood, utilizing modern schools to guide adolescents

into roles of workers, family members, and citizens (Carlson: 2012). Adolescents undergo physiological and psychological changes (Arnett: 2006, Carlson:2012), fostering curiosity and critical thinking about parents' views (Carlson:2012,167) and may lead to norm-breaking behaviour (Nurmi:2004,102). They undergo stress about the future and form an identity based on parental instructions, societal influence, and institutional structure but also individual agency and choice by exploration, decision making and planning to create specific careers, achieve a particular peer group and have a particular lifestyle (Nurmi:2004,87).

Adolescents negotiate the hegemonic patterns and inculcation promoted to produce good citizens (Good Girls and Good Boys). Connel 's '*Making the Difference: Schools, families and Social Division',* published in 1982, argued that social reproduction (gender and class ideologies) and resistance displayed by students co-occur with accommodation, interpretation and resistance by students towards the attempts of hegemonic socialisation by the school at both the individual and group level (Thorne:1993,106-107). Students' culture is shaped by the interaction between peers and teachers; comprehension of identity and resistance to socialization are strongly influenced by the broader social, cultural, and economic circumstances (Thapan: 2014 & 2006b).

Students' resistance to the school's authorities is shaped by rapid globalisation and consumerism (Powell: 2010). Giddens argued that traditional institutions like religion and family have declined in the neo-liberal era (Powell: 2010, 13), which is a result of commercialism and consumerism (Powell: 2010). Appadurai has argued that imagination is central to constructing modern identities brought out by the media industry or mediascapes: films, various mediated images and videos, print media, and the internet. Thus, in this globalized context, students' interactions reflect Western influence, like their preference for Western clothing, music and movies (Deka: 2014) and consumerist behaviour, like indulging in foreign products and branded commodities (Bhandari: 2014).

Thapan (2014) argues that most students become socialised individuals who accept the school authority and good academic performance. On the other hand, schools are also sites of resistance. Most students unquestionably internalised the academic demands for achieving their prospective future, but they disobeyed gendered norms and anti-consumer values propagated in schools (Bhandari: 2014, 198).

Exploring the Hidden Curriculum is therefore important as contemporary education is focused on the instrumental needs of education influenced by the priorities of the gatekeepers, the educators, the State, the parents (Nussbaum:2015). Naussbum (2015) fosters liberal studies to create active agents, but a strong control of the State on liberal studies leads to the reproduction of

the knowledge by the dominant section of society. For example, most textbooks focus on military and state history and marginalise women and labour class history, implying that the history of the marginalised sections remains absent. We can infer the subject of adolescence is discussed with a protectionist approach by infantilising them as children. Therefore, it's essential to understand the youth subculture to grasp the protectionist (read disciplinary) role of the state and the gatekeepers.

Youth sub-culture

Youth culture is a type of subculture (Mclaren: 1948). Subculture refers to the subset of dominant and subordinate cultures (Mclaren: 1948). Subcultures resist the imposition of dominant culture dispensed through mainstream media, schools, religion and culture industry (Mclaren: 1948).). However, the youth sub-culture is not entirely oppositional but negotiated (Mclaren: 1948, 139). Understanding youth culture requires examining peer groups formed in the elementary school based on sex segregation and providing a space outside adult control (Parsons, 1959,442). In secondary school, the peer group changes to a youth peer group, providing significant emotional support, developing positive cross-sex friendships and shaping adolescent personality (Parsons:1959,451). This implies that youths are a diverse group (Abraham:2007). Second, same-sex peer groups based on fun, mutual interest and friendship are the norms where peer socialisation and specifically sexual socialization occurs (Abraham:2007).

There is increasing evidence from India that young people engage in premarital romantic and sexual relationships. A cross-sectional study in Dharavi, Mumbai, conducted by SNEHA(Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action), surveyed respondents aged 11-19 years from different socioeconomic, caste, sex, religion, disability and education through a questionnaire. The study revealed girls' views coincide with normative socialisation and expectations such as little knowledge of sex, masturbation, disapproval of premarital relationships, dress code, and acceptance of arranged marriages. Conversely, boys were less conforming to traditional views, with many engaging in masturbation premarital relationships and not accepting sexual refusals from girls (Daruwalla et.al:2017,321).

Studies reveal young boys engage in risky premarital relationships, often with sex workers and older women, but cultural norms require women to remain “chaste.”Bott et al., 2003; Abraham, 2007; Chowkhani, 2020).In a survey conducted by the All India Educational and Vocational Guidance Association, 54% of males and 42% of females lacked adequate sexual knowledge. Another survey in Mumbai revealed that 88% of men and 58% of women depended on books, magazines, and youth counselors for sex education (Tripathi and Sekher, 2013, 3). Two major household surveys carried out in 2006-08 and 2006-2007 found support for family life education

among half of the respondents and among 83% of men and 78% of women, respectively. Thus, despite the demand for adequate sexual knowledge, parents, teachers, and the State remain reluctant to discuss sexuality among youths (Sullivan et al.:2018).

Conclusion

Schools are essential socializing agents. Thus, pedagogies are not just the science of teaching but also discipline the body (Thapan:2006b, Foucault:1980, Carlson:2012). Schools operate in a societal context; in the post-colonial period, schools started the mission of producing good citizens, and this school project is gendered and ideological. The presence or absence of a formal sex education curriculum is insignificant as the hidden curriculum works to produce docile bodies simultaneously as well as without any formal sex education curriculum in schools.

Second, this inculcation of individuals with gendered and ideological values is the same as socializing them with sexual values and acceptable sexual behaviour through official sex education programs.

Sexuality Education programmes, where it exists, focus on biological reproduction. (Carlson:2012) and promote moralistic behaviour rooted in class, family, and marriage institutions, often emphasizing abstinence and fear-based HIV prevention (Chakravarti, 2011, p. 390). There is silence around non-normative sexualities and ongoing discrimination against sexual minorities despite various legal developments as the 2014 NALSA judgment, which recognized transgender individuals as a third gender, allowing them to self-identify and obtain identity certificates (Singh et al., 2024, 164), and the decriminalization of homosexuality in 2018 through the repeal of Article 377, led by the NGO Naz Foundation (Singh et al., 2024, 159).

In their essay, *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and School Life in India* (2024:165-166), Singh, Kaur and Mittal argue that the National Education Policy 2020 is progressive and inclusive by proposing a Gender-Inclusive Fund. However, LGBTQIA+ activists state it as tokenism, demanding age-appropriate sex education to foster sensitivity towards all genders and sexual identities (Bhasak:2020).

Social stigma continues to marginalize sexual minorities, leading to school dropout rates and low literacy levels, which result in economic oppression and vulnerability to abuse (Singh et al.:2024, 162). Data from CBSE in 2020 revealed that only 19 out of 1.8 million transgender students and 6 out of 1.2 million in grades 10th and 12th , respectively, took their board examinations (Singh et al., 2024). Thus, while the decriminalization of LGBTQIA+ identities, recognition of transgender individuals, and the gender inclusion fund are important steps, they are insufficient in challenging the heteronormative discourse that promotes ideal heterosexual,

cis-gendered citizens (Good girls & Good Boys) in schools and society.

References-

- Abraham, Leena. 2007. Bhai-behen, True Love, Time Pass: Friendships and Sexual Partnerships among Youth in an Indian Metropolis. (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge. In Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (Eds.), *Culture, Society, and Sexuality Reader* (2nd ed., pp. 358-371). London and New York: Routledge.
- Anandhi, S. 2007. 'Sex education conundrum'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(33), 3367-3369.
- Apple, M. W. 1990. On analyzing hegemony. In *Ideology and Curriculum* (pp. 1-23). New York: Routledge.
- Arnett, J. 2006. G. Stanley Hall's Adolescence: Brilliance and Nonsense. History of psychology. 9.pg 186–97.
- Batra, P. 2014. 'Problematising Teacher Education Practice in India: Developing a Research Agenda'. *Education as Change, 18*(sup1), S5-S18.
- Bénéï, V. 2009. *Schooling India: Hindus, Muslims, and the Forging of Citizens*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Bhandari, P. 2014. In Quest of Identity: Student Culture in a Religious Minority. In M. Thapan (Ed.), *Ethnographies of Schooling in Contemporary India* (pp. 182-224). New Delhi: Sage.
- Basak, S. *Where's the rainbow in NEP?*
- Queeractivists explain what's missing in gender-inclusive policy News18. https://www news18.com/news/buzz/wheres-the-rainbow-in-nep-queer-activists-explain-whats-missing-in-gender-inclusive-policy-2844815.html (accessed on 6th September 2020).
- Bourdieu, P. 1997. Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction. In J. Karabel & A. H. Hasley (Eds.), *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 15-29). Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Bott, S., Jejeebhoy, S., Shah, I., & Puri, C. (Eds.). 2003. *Towards Adulthood: Exploring the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Adolescents in South Asia*. World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research.

- Chatterjee, P. 1993. *The Nation and Its Women. in the Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton University Press.
- Chakravarti, P. 2011. 'The Sex Education Debate: Teaching 'Life Style' in West Bengal, India. *Sex Education, 11*(4), 389-400'.
- Chakravarti, U. 2018. *Caste and gender in contemporary India*. In Gendering caste through a feminist lens (Revised ed., pp. 133-161). SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
- Chakravarti, U. 1993. 'Conceptualising Brahmanical patriarchy in early India: Gender, caste, class, and state'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28(14), 579–585.
- Carlson, D. L. 2012. The education of Eros: A history of education and the problem of adolescent sexuality. Routledge.
- Corrêa, S., & Petchesky, R. 2007. *Reproductive and sexual rights: A feminist perspective* (pp. 298-316). In Culture, Society and Sexuality Reader (2nd ed.). London, UK & New York, NY: Routledge.
- Chandra-Mouli, V., Gómez Garbero, L., Plesons, M., Lang, I., & Vargas, E. 2018. 'Evolution and Resistance to Sexuality Education in Mexico'. *Global Health: Science and Practice, 6*, 137-149.
- Chowdhry, P. 1997. 'Enforcing Cultural Codes: Gender and Violence in Northern India'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1019-1028.
- Chowkhani, K. 2013. 'Sexuality education: Why we need it'? *Teacher Plus, 5*.
- *Chowkhani, K. 2020. Learning about Sex in Mumbai Rethinking the 'Knowledge Gap' Debate in Sexuality Education. (Hi)Stories of Desire: Sexualities and Culture in Modern India Eds Rajeev Kumaramkandath and Sanjay Srivastava, Cambridge University Press .pg116-133*
- Chowkhani, K. 2022. "Nothing Much Happened": Rethinking heterosexual middle-class adolescent boys' romance in Mumbai. In P. Kumar (Ed.), *Sexuality, Abjection and Queer Existence in Contemporary India* (pp. 60-76). Routledge India.
- Corredor, E. S. 2019. 'Unpacking "gender ideology'' and the global right's antigender countermovement'. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 44(3), 613-638.
- Corrêa, S., & Khanna, A. 2015. *Emerging powers, sexuality and human rights: "Fumbling around the elephant?"* (Working Paper). Sexuality Policy Watch.

- Collins, R. 1971. 'Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification'. *American Sociological Review, 36*(6), 1002-1019.
- Das, A. K., & Roy, S. 2016. 'Unheard Narratives of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) of Adolescent Girls of the Holy Cross College, Dhaka, Bangladesh'. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 21*(2), 01-08. Retrieved from
- Deka, M. 2014. Schooling and the Production of Student Culture: Principles and Practice. *In Ethnographies of Schooling in Contemporary India* (pp. 66-103). SAGE Publications.
- De Paor, C. 2021. 'The curriculum in an era of global reform: Bobbitt's ideas on efficiency and teacher knowledge'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 53*(3), 270-278.
- Daruwalla, N., Mishra, T., Pantvaidya, S., & Osrin, D. 2017. 'Good girls and boys: Findings From a Cross-Sectional Survey on Adolescent Rights, Relationships and Sexuality in an Urban Informal Settlement in India'. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 23*(3), 308-324.
- Davis, K. 1940. 'The sociology of parent-youth conflict'. *American Sociological Review, 5*(4), 523-535.
- Dewey, J. 1916. *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Dore, B. 2014. Living in the Bubble: Rishi Valley School and the Sense of Community. *In Ethnographies of Schooling in Contemporary India* (pp. 270-332). SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd.
- Dube, L. 1997. *Women and Kinship: Comparative perspectives on gender in South and Southeast Asia*. United Nations University Press.
- Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, & Kate Soper. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Goldman, J. D. G. 2012. 'A critical analysis of UNESCO's International Technical Guidance on school-based Education for puberty and sexuality'. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning, 12*(2), 199-218.
- Giroux, H. A. 2001. *Theory and Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

- Giroux, H., & Penna, A. 1979. 'Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of Hidden Curriculum'. *Theory and Research in Social Education, 7*, 21–42.
- Gupta, C. 2001. *Sexuality, obscenity, community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu public in colonial India*. Permanent Black.
- Government of India. 2020. National Education Policy. New Delhi: Ministry of Education.
- National Education Policy 2010.
- Government of Bangladesh. 2010. National Education Policy. Dhaka: Ministry of Education.
- Hlebowitsh, P. 2023. Curriculum: The Educational Experience in the School Curriculum. In T. M. Christou (Ed.), *Historical Foundations of Education*. Bloomsbury Academic.https://www.torrossa.com/gs/resourceProxy?an=5606008.
- Ismail, S., Shajahan, A., Rao, T. S. S., & Wylie, K. 2015. Adolescent sex education in India: Current perspective. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 57*.https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.171843
- Khan, T., & Raby, R. 2019. From missing to misdirected: Young men's experiences of sex education in Bangladesh. *Sex Education, 20*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2019.1703177
- Lamphere, L., & Rosaldo, M.Introduction. (Eds.). 1974. *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Stanford University Press.pp1-17.
- McLaren, P.1948. *Life in Schools: an Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education.* New York: Longman, 1994.
- Menon, N. 2015. '*Is Feminism about 'Women'? A Critical View on Intersectionality from India*'. *Economic and Political Weekly, 50*(17), 37-44. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/24481823
- Murshid, N. S., & Irish, A. 2020. 'Understanding teen sex in Bangladesh: Results from Global School Health Survey 2014'. *Children and Youth Services Review, 119*, 105619.
- Nussbaum. M 2015. Tagore, Dewey and the demise of liberal Education. In Meenakshi Thapan (ed) *Education and Society: themes, Perspective and Practices*. Oxford Indian readings in Sociology and Social Anthropology.
- Nurmi, J.-E. 2004. *Socialization and self-development: Channeling, selection, adjustment, and reflection*. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology*

(2nd ed., pp. 85–124). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- O'Sullivan, L. F., Byers, E. S., & Mitra, K. 2019. Sexual and Reproductive Health Education: Attitudes and Experience in India: How Much Support Is There for Comprehensive Sex Education? Findings from an Internet Survey. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning, 19*(2), 145-161.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1974. Is female to male as nature is to culture? In M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds), Woman, culture, and society. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 68-87.
- Padgug, R. 2007. Sexual Matters: On Conceptualizing Sexuality in Culture, Society, and Sexuality (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge. In Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (Eds.), *Culture, Society, and Sexuality Reader* (2nd ed., pp. 17-30). London and New York: Routledge.
- Parsons, T. 1959. 'The Social Class as a Social System: Some of Its Functions in American Society'. *Harvard Educational Review*, pp. 434–455.
- Parsons, T. 1955. Family structure and the socialization of the child. In Parsons, T., & Bales, R. F. (1955). *Family, socialization, and interaction process* (in collaboration with J. Olds, M. Zelditch Jr., & P. E. Slater). The Free Press.
- Paiva, V. 2007. Gendered Scripts and the Sexual Scene: Promoting Sexual Subjects among Brazilian Teenagers. In Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (Eds.), *Culture, Society and Sexuality Reader* (2nd ed., pp. 31-40). London and New York: Routledge.
- Phadke, S. 2005. Some Notes towards Understanding the Construction of Middle-Class Urban Women's Sexuality in India. In H. Islam, S. Quader, & S. Khan (Eds.), *Sexuality, Gender and Rights: Exploring Theory and Practice in South and Southeast Asia* (pp. 67-81).
- Pinar, W., Reynolds, W., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. 1995. Chapter 1: Understanding curriculum: An introduction. *Counterpoints, 17*, 3-65. Retrieved October 15, 2020, fromhttp://www.jstor.org?stable/42974917.
- Powell, A. 2010. *Sex, Power and Consent: Youth Culture and the Unwritten Rules*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rubin, G. 2007. Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality, (2nd ed)In Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (Eds.), *Culture, Society and Sexuality Reader* (2nd ed., pp.150-187). London and New York: Routledge.

- Rousseau, J. J. 1977. *Emile* (B. Foxley, Trans.). London: J. M. Dent and Sons.
- Saiz, I. 2007. Bracketing Sexuality: Human Rights and Sexual Orientation: A Decade of Development and Denial at the UN. *Health and Human Rights*. In Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (Eds.), *Culture, Society and Sexuality Reader* (2nd ed., pp. 459-479). London and New York: Routledge.
- Sarkar, T. 2001.*Introduction.* Hindu wife, Hindu nation, community, religion, and cultural nationalism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Sinha, M. 1995. *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late nineteenth century.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Singh, T., Kaur, H., & Mittal, S. 2024. *Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) minority and school life in India.* In M. Kasai, Y. Toda, & S. Russell (Eds.), *Sexual orientation and gender identity and school life in Asian contexts: Beyond bullying and conflict toward inter-minority empathy*.Routledge.(pp. 156-170).
- Sircar, O. 2022. *A brief prehistory of queer freedom in the New India*. In P. Kumar (Ed.), *Sexuality, abjection, and queer existence in contemporary India* (pp.226-250). Routledge.
- Srinivas, M. N. 1952. *Religion and society among the Coorgs of South India*. Oxford University Press.
- Srivastava, S. 1998. *Constructing Post-Colonial India: National Character and the Doon School*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sriprakash, A. 2010. Child-centred education and the promise of democratic learning: Pedagogic messages in rural Indian primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Development, 30*(3), 297–304. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.11.010
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. 2007. Sexual Scripts. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. In Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (Eds.), *Culture, Society and Sexuality Reader* (2nd ed., pp. 31-40). London and New York: Routledge.
- Stearns, P. N. 2009. Sexuality in world history.2nd edition:2017.London: Routledge
- Matthan, T., Anusha, C., & Thapa, M. . 2014. Being Muslims, becoming citizens: A Muslim girls' school in post-riot Ahmedabad. In Thapan, M. (Ed.), *Ethnographies of Schooling in Contemporary India*, 225-270.

- Thapan, M. 2006a. *Life at School: An Ethnographic Study*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Thapan, M. 2006b. 'Docile' bodies, 'good' citizens or 'agential' subjects? Pedagogy and citizenship in contemporary society. *Economic and Political Weekly, 41*(39), 4195-4203.
- Thapan, Meenakshi (Ed.). 2014. *Ethnographies of Schooling in Contemporary India*. Sage Publications.
- Thapan, M. 2015. Curriculum and Its Possibilities. In W.F. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum Studies in India* (pp. 141-161). Palgrave Macmillan.https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137477156_6
- Thorne, B. 1993. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School* (2nd ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Tripathi, N., & Sekher, T. V. 2013. Youth in India Ready for Sex Education? Emerging Evidence from National Surveys. *PLoS ONE, 8*(8), e71584. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0071584.
- United Nations. 2016. *The Sustainable Development Goals report*. United Nations
- Vance, C. 2007. Anthropology Rediscovers Sexuality: Sexual Scripts. In R. Parker & P. Aggleton (Eds.), *Culture, Society and Sexuality Reader* (2nd ed., pp. 41-57). London and New York: Routledge.
- Velaskar, Padma. 2015. Educational Stratification, Dominant Ideology, and Reproduction of Disadvantage in India. In Thapan, Meenakshi (Ed.), *Education and Society: Themes, Perspectives, Practices*. Oxford University Press.
- Walton, Gerald. 2005. The Hidden Curriculum in Schools for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth. *Alternate Routes: A Journal of Critical Social Research*, 21, 18-39.
- Williams-Ørberg, E. 2008. The 'Paradox' of Being Young in New Delhi: Urban Middle-Class Youth Negotiations with Popular Indian Film (Working Paper No. 24). Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden. Retrieved fromhttp://www.ace.lu.se
- Yamini. *Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013: Sexual Offences*. Academike - Lawctopus. http://www.lawctopus.com/academike/criminal-law-amendment/ (retrieved on 8th April 2015).

Endnotes

Dominant culture refers to the culture which is arbitrarily selected by the ruling class or the social class which has symbolic, and economic dominance in society (McLaren,139)

Subordinate culture is the culture of the working class (ibid, 139).

Bio profile of the Authors:

[1]Independent research scholar
Email ID: nishaaghosh63@gmail.com

[2]Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi

Restandardization of Emotional Intelligence Scale for Secondary school students through Pilot study

Sahanaz Khatun[1] & Jakir Hussain Laskar[2]

Abstract:

This study seeks to revise and adapt the Emotional Intelligence Inventory developed by Dr. S.K. Mangal and Mrs. Shubhra Mangal for secondary school students residing in the Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts of West Bengal. The inventory comprises 100 items, categorized into four dimensions of emotional intelligence: intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal awareness, intrapersonal management, and interpersonal management. Among the 100 statements 48 is positive and 52 are negative statement. The Inventory is being re-standardized for Secondary School students of North Bengal region of West Bengal. The test was carried out with a sample of 100 pupils, 50 each from government and private schools. Reliability was established through Cronbach Alpha for correlation between forms and was found to be r= .908. Spearman Brown Coefficient for reliability was found to be .953 and Guttman Split half coefficient was found to be .908. Validity correlation was significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed test) and the validity of the re-standardization was established.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, EI models, pilot study, re-standardization.*

Introduction:

"The true purpose of education is to broaden intellectual perspectives, cultivate emotional accountability, and nurture aesthetic appreciation," as stated by Indira Gandhi.

Within the field of psychology, emotional intelligence has emerged as a relatively recent area of study. It refers to an individual's ability to recognize and understand not only their own emotions but also those of others (Goleman, 1998). The concept was first introduced in an article by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in the 1980s. Emotional intelligence encompasses a set of skills that enable individuals to perceive, manage, and utilize emotions—both their own and others'—to guide decisions and behavior. Emotions shape our experiences, influence our perspectives and actions, and have a ripple effect on those around us.

Mayer and Salovey further define emotional intelligence as the capacity to recognize emotions, access them, and employ them to enhance cognitive processes; to understand emotional meanings; and to regulate emotions effectively to support mental and physical well-being.

The definition and application of emotional intelligence remain subjects of debate, with three primary models widely recognized:

1. Ability Model
2. Trait Model
3. Mixed Model

An array of EI models has prompted the creation of several tools for measuring the build. Despite the possibility of some overlap, most experts think that these parameters tap independent components.

1. Ability Model:

According to this concept, there are certain skills that one must have in order to be emotionally intelligent. **This model of** emotional intelligence is put forth by **Mayer, Salovey and Caruso** This model mainly has four types of skills:

1. **Use of emotions**: Being able to use feelings to improve relationships, decision-making, and thought processes is known as emotional intelligence.
2. **Sense of emotion**: It has to do with One's capability to recognize and understand their and others feelings. Since you cannot control emotions until you can recognize them, this is the fundamental Emotional Intelligence ability.
3. **Understanding emotions**: It's about understanding how different emotions could influence a person's conduct and making use of the unique knowledge they supply.
4. **Emotional management**: It speaks about one’s ability to regulate their own and other people's emotions. An effective achiever can regulate both good and bad emotions and channel them in a way that makes completing work easier.

Depending on ability-based exams, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) was formed. A consensus metric called the MSCEIT contrasts each respondent's response with a selection of the participants. The replies are considered emotionally "intelligent" only if they are shared by the majority of the sample.

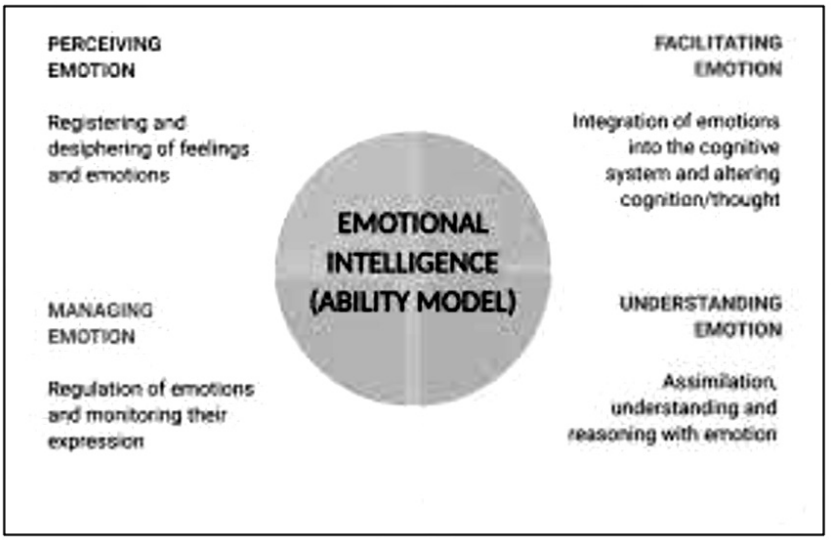


Figure1: Represents Emotional Intelligence Ability model.

2. Mixed Model:

Another prevalent emotional intelligence model is the mixed model. In the Daniel Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence, significance of characterising emotional intelligence in terms of a range of abilities and traits that affect the efficacy of leadership is focused upon.

The five major elements of emotional intelligence in the Mixed Model are:

1. **Knowledge of oneself**- The capacity to make judgements based on intuition while also being aware of and cognizant of one's feelings, motives, faith, and goals, as well as the implication they have on others.
2. **Self-regulation / Self-management-** Involves managing or rerouting erratic feelings and impulses in addition to adjusting to shifting conditions.
3. **Social ability** – The capacity to steer individuals in the right path via relationship management.
4. **Compassion** - is the ability to take into account the feelings of others, especially while passing judgement.
5. **Inspiration** – The drive to be successful just for the purpose of being successful.



Figure 2: Mixed model for Emotional Intelligence.

2. Trait Model:

The Trait Model refers to an approach used to assess emotional self-perceptions, which are foundational aspects of personality.

Konstantinos V. Petrides introduced this model, describing it as "a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality" (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). This concept, often referred to as "trait emotional self-efficacy," relates to an individual's perception of their emotional intelligence and is distinct from traditional classifications of human cognitive abilities.

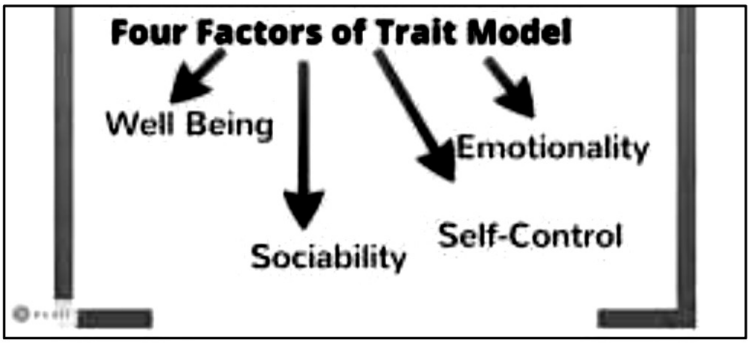


Figure 3: **Trait model of Emotional Intelligence**.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a concept explored through various models that have shaped the construction and standardization of tools in this field. Broadly, these models are categorized into three types: ability models, mixed models, and trait models. Among these, the mixed model gained prominence through the work of Daniel Goleman, who introduced it in 1995. This model emphasizes five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation.

Goleman's mixed model has served as a foundation for the development of numerous tools and inventories aimed at measuring emotional intelligence. Notably, Mangal and Mangal have contributed significantly by creating various tools designed to assess EI. One of their well-known instruments, the Emotional Intelligence Inventory for secondary school students (EII-MM), draws inspiration from the principles of Goleman's mixed model.

In her upcoming research, the investigator intends to undertake the restandardization of the EII-MM to better align it with the specific needs of secondary school students. This initiative aims to enhance the tool's validity and reliability while maintaining its relevance in educational settings.

Objective:

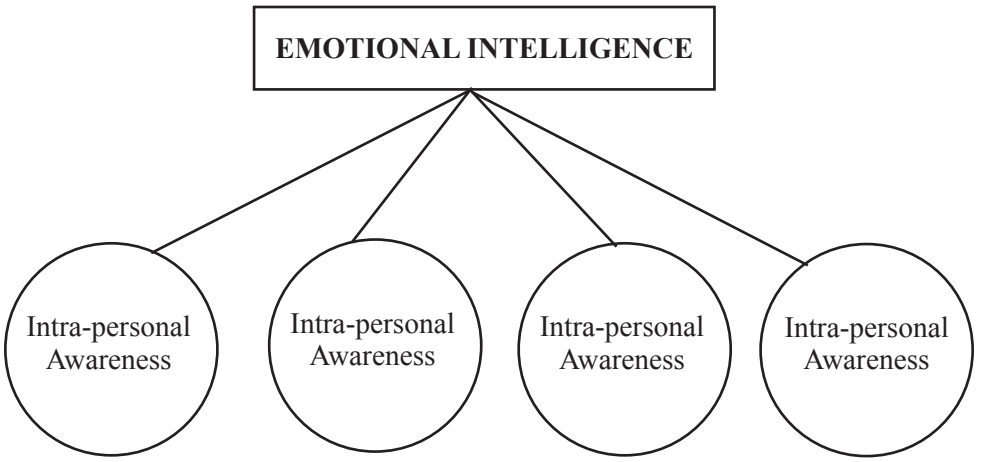
Objective of the present work is to Re-standardize the emotional Intelligence inventory by Mangal and Mangal for Secondary school students.

Delimitations :

Since it was impossible to examine every facet of the issue, the study was limited on the basis of following criteria:

1. The population of the study was taken as Secondary students of class 8 and 9.
3. The selected schools were both from rural and urban areas and had different type of Management (namely government and Private school) of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal.
4. The study's sample size was determined to be 100.

Conceptual Flowchart of Emotional Intelligence as designed by Mangal and Mangal:



Methodology:

The researcher used the descriptive survey methods to Re-standardize the emotional intelligence inventory of secondary school pupils in the West Bengal districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. The method of doing research is defined by the nature of the problem.

The Sample:

A sample of 100 students took part in the current study. They were selected through Stratified random sampling technique from two schools of West Bengal region, namely, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri District.

Table 1: Sample collected for pilot study.

Total Sample Size (100)	BOYS	GIRLS
	39	61

Tool for the study:

Emotional Intelligence inventory prepared by Dr. S.K. Mangal Department of Education, M.D University and Mrs. Subhra Mangal, C.R.S. College of Education NOIDA.

Description:

The four sections of the Emotional Intelligence Inventory have a total of 100 items, with 25 items

in each category.

1. Inter Personal Awareness.

2. Intra Personal Awareness..

3. Inter Personal Management.

5. Intra-Personal Management.

Area-wise Distribution of Statements:

Scoring:

Scoring system of Emotional Intelligence inventory is as follows:

Sl. No.	Type of Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	Positive	2	1	0
2.	Negative	0	1	2

Reliability:

The inventory's Reliability was assessed through:

1. Cronbach Alpha for correlation between forms was found to be r= .908.
2. Spearman Brown Coefficient for reliability was found to be r= .953.
3. Guttman Split half coefficient was found to be r= .908.

Validity:

Two distinct methods have been used to establish the authenticity of the inventory, notably, Content and face validity.

Collection of Data:

The investigator visited the schools in person and obtained permission in advance from the principal. The students received the Emotional Intelligence Inventory during a formal visit. The opening page of the Question Booklet contained directions that the students were asked to follow. They were given the opportunity to respond freely and honestly, without holding back or feeling afraid, because their answers would be kept private and used solely for research. Any queries were clarified, and there was enough time to record the answers. The response forms were collected in accordance with the daily and hourly timetable. As soon as the answers were finished, the response sheets were gathered. The administrations of the institutions, as well as pupils and teachers in the classes, fully cooperated with the investigator to gather information.

Statistical Analysis:

To determine Emotional Intelligence of Secondary school students, Descriptive and Inferential Statistics was used.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 2: Participants profile

Sl. No.	Demographic variable	Sample with specification(100 participants)	
		N (no. of respondents)	Percentage (%)
1.	**Gender**		
	Male	39	39
	Female	61	61
2.	**Type of Management**		
	Private school	1	50
	Government school	1	50

Pilot Study:

The children were instructed to complete the questionnaire according to the subsequent guidelines given below.

1. A test booklet and an answer sheet have been handed to you. The instructions are on the opening page of the booklet, and subsequent pages have 100 test statements that may be marked as "Always," "Sometimes," or "Never."
2. The purpose of all these statements is to assess your emotional intelligence. Answers to the questions in the booklet are not deemed correct or incorrect. You just need to answer the question after reading it carefully and deciding what is right for you.
3. It's crucial to keep in mind that writing anything on the booklet is not necessary. It is only a survey form. Marking "Always," "Sometimes," or "Never" next to the serial number of each phrase on the answer sheet indicates your response.
4. Although there is no timeframe for responding, you are asked to complete your work in 30 to 40 minutes.
5. You can ask questions if you're uncertain.

The data received were verified to ensure the completion of the statistical analysis. Next, the emotional intelligence scale's variability and central tendency were identified. In order to determine if the data matches a normal probability curve, skewness and kurtosis were computed.

According to the findings, every number fell within a range that was statistically significant. . (Kurtosis < 7 and skewness < 2).

Table 3: Table displaying the pilot study's mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis:

Topic	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	SD	SKEWNESS	KURTOSIS	Percentile			
							25	50	75	100
Emotional Intelligence of Students	117.61	118.50	113	15.108	-.073	-.611	106.25	118.5	127.75	146

Reliability:

Reliability was established through Cronbach Alpha, Split- half reliability technique and Guttman Spilt half coefficient. Cronbach Alpha for correlation between forms was found to be r= .908. Spearman Brown Coefficient for reliability was found to be .953 and Guttman Split half coefficient was found to be .908.

Validity:

A tool's validity is determined by its truthfulness. If a test measures the items it is intended to measure, it is considered authentic. Because it contains items from every chosen emotional intelligence assessment dimension, including interpersonal awareness, interpersonal management, and intrapersonal awareness, the scale is known as having "universe of content." The scale has 100 elements, which symbolize the scope of the material and the validity of the scale's content. An education specialist reviewed the results to ensure the scale's face validity, and the items on the scale were found to be pertinent to the study's goals. It also has face validity as a result.

Table 4: Results of Inferential statistics for data collected for pilot study:

Sl. No.		Reliability coefficients	Result	Validity
1.	**Emotional Intelligence of Secondary School Students**	Cronbach Alpha for correlation between forms	.908	Significant at the two-tailed test level is 0.01.
2.		Split- half reliability technique	.953	
3.		Guttman Spilt half coefficient	.908	

Relevance of the study:

Standardization/ Re-standardization of a tool are essential to measure the accuracy of the results in a particular study. Re-standardization of a tool helps to tweak the tool according to the needs of the investigator. It helps to meet the desired results that the investigator aims to achieve through the process of pilot study. Re-standardization of the tool was essential in this particular study to

check whether the results obtained after pilot study were consistent with the standardized results of the tool and that the tool used for the study would actually suffice to obtain the desired results the investigator aims to achieve through this study. If the results would have been inconsistent, the investigator would have to either reject the tool or design a new one to align with the specific needs of the secondary school students as well as relevance of the study according to the educational setting of the area of study.

Conclusion:

The area of study chosen by the investigator has strategic relevance in terms of trade and commerce, also that North Bengal caters to the North eastern states of India and its proximity to three SAARC countries (Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh) cannot be ignored. North Bengal especially the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri has long been neglected for research. The investigator finds it imperative to bring these regions to focus in order to study whether there is any regional influence on the study or not. It is also important to study whether there is any impact on emotional intelligence due to these differences. The results obtained after pilot study by the investigator concludes that the scale chosen for the study is a viable and trustworthy tool for assessing emotional intelligence. With strong item homogeneity, internal consistency, and a significant pattern of validity, the Scale is a promising tool. To summarize, the study yielded noteworthy findings, demonstrating the excellent reliability and validity of the test through a considerably high correlation coefficient. Restandardization of the scale was important for the study as new studies are crucial to the growth and advancement of the country. The current study came to the conclusion that the emotional intelligence inventory chosen for further study by the investigator is a trustworthy instrument for carrying out the research work.

References:

- Adak, chayan. 2019. 'Emotional Intelligence among Higher Education students in West Bengal: A study on Stream, Gender, Level of Education and Habitat'. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*. www.irgssh.com ISSN 2250-0715 (P) 2248-9010 (O) Volume 9 Number 7 July 2019.
- Ansary, K and Saha, Dr Birbal. 2023. 'Construction and standardization of adjustment ability inventory'. *International Journal of creative research thoughts.* Volume 11, Issue 3 March 2023 | ISSN: 2320-2882.
- Curranet et al., 1996. The Robustness of test statistics to Nonnormality and Specification error in confirmatory factor analysis, the American Psychological Association, Inc. Psychological methods Vol 1, No. 1 16-29, 1082-989X.

- Dahiya, A and Patel, Dr H. A. 2018. Construction and Standardization of Emotional Intelligence Inventory for Secondary and Higher Secondary school teachers. *International Journal of Research in all Subjects in Multi Languages*, Vol. 6, Issue: 9, September: 2018 (IJRSML) ISSN: 2321 – 2853.
- Dey, Antara and Roy, Dr Nil rattan. 2022. Construction and Validation of Emotional Intelligence Scale for Secondary School Teachers, doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.7358/ecps-2022-026-dero
- Goleman D. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. 1998. *Working with emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. & McKee, A. 2002. *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Importance of Emotional Intelligence*. Harvard Business School Press: Boston.
- Halder, Dr Binay Kumar. 2024. 'A Study of Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance Among College Teachers in Kolkata'. *Scope-Journal*, Volume 14 Number 02 June 2024
- Haoji, Nagendra Rao and chavan, Vijaya kumar. 2017. 'Emotional intelligence of school teachers'. *International Journal of Applied Research 2017*; 3(8): 463-470
- Mangal, S. 2008. *Manual for Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Inventory*. Agra: National Psychological Corporation, 2-3.
- Marwaha S. 'Development and standardization of indigenized emotional intelligence scale'. Open Access J Sci. 2018; 2 (6):350–356. DOI: 10.15406/oajs.2018.02.00110
- Mayer, J.D., & Salovey, P. 1997. What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications* (pp. 3-31). New York: Basic Books.
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. 2000. Models of emotional intelligence. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of intelligence* (pp. 396–420). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511807947.019
- Mondal, B. C., Saha, B. & Kar, D. 2014. 'Development and Validation of Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII) for Secondary School Students'. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 4(5), 1-3
- Pervez, Sheikh Imran. 2019. 'Emotional Intelligence among the Higher Secondary Students in West Bengal in Relation to Their Gender, Habitat and Stream of Study'. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary*. Volume-04 Issue-10 October-2019, ISSN: 2455-3085 (Online).
- Petrides, K.V. and Adrian, Furnham. 2000. 'On the dimensional structure of emotional

intelligence'. *Personality and Individual Differences*. Volume 29, Issue 2, 2000, Pages 313-320, ISSN 0191-8869, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00195-6.

- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. 1990. 'Emotional Intelligence. Imagination'. *Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211. https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG
- Sfetcu, Nicolae. 2023. 'Models of Emotional Intelligence in Research and Education'. *Cunoaşterea Ştiinţifică*, 2:2, xxx, DOI: 10.58679/CS72804, https://www.cunoasterea.ro/modelsof-emotional-intelligence-in-research-and-education/
- Supramanian et al: 'Emotional intelligence using ability model in context of nursing and its impact on end-stage renal disease patients'. *International Journal of Current Research and Review* DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.31782/IJCRR.2021.131609.
- Suresh, Dr. K. 2017. 'How to standardize the research tool correctly?- The Answer'. Shanlax *International Journal of Education*. Vol 6, special issue 1, ISSN 2320-4168 pages 149-153.
- Yang, Lei & Duan, Manfu. 2023. The role of emotional intelligence in EFL learners' academic literacy development. Heliyon. 9. e13110. 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13110.

Website Citation:

- https://upscwithnikhil.com/index.php/article/ethics/models-of-emotional-intelligence-ei retrieved on 15.09.2024
- https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/emotional-intelligence-at-work/0/steps/62998 retrieved on 15.09.2024
- https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/emotional-intelligence/ retrieved on 16.09.2024
- https://www.insightsonindia.com/ethics-integrity-and-aptitude/emotional-intelligence/models-of-emotional-intelligence/ability-based-model/ retrieved on 16.09.2024
- https://selfstudyhistory.com/2015/04/05/concepts-of-emotional-intelligence/retrievedon 16.09.2024.

Bio profile of the Authors:

[1] Research Scholar, Department of Education, Aliah University, Park Circus campus, Kolkata
[2] Associate Professor, Department of Education, Aliah University, Park Circus Campus, Kolkata
Email: sahanazkhatunju@gmail.com

Report:

Contemporary US Foreign Policy and Global Conflicts: Case Studies of Ukraine and Palestine

Shreya Ghosh

Introduction

The foreign policy of the United States of America has been a topic of interest for analysts and researchers alike due to its significant impact on global politics and international relations. The United States of America is one of the most powerful influential countries in the world with a foreign policy that has significant global implications. The country's foreign policy is shaped by a range of factors, including historical events, domestic politics, and economic interests. Historically, the U.S. has been involved in numerous global conflicts including both World War I and II, the cold war and the War on Terror. These events have had a significant impact on the country's foreign policy and continue to shape its approach to international relations. The main trend regarding the history of U.S. foreign policy since the American Revolution is the shift from non-interventionism before and after World War I, to its growth as a world power and global hegemon during World War II and throughout the cold war in the 20th century. (George W Bush, 2002**).** Promoting freedom and democracy and protecting human rights around the world are central to U.S. foreign policy. However, the guiding principles of U.S. foreign policy remain constant that is promotion of security, democracy, prosperity and development in the United States and around the world. (US department of State, 2020)

Promoting democracy in the Middle East has been cited by U.S. as a key post-Cold War foreign policy objective. As a result, the U.S. has intervened in numerous countries and conflicts, particularly since 9/11 and the subsequent declaration of the War on Terror. However, this has not been without controversy and its actions often aid imperialism rather than the country it claims its intervention is benefitting. U.S. is promoting democracy on one hand but at the same time pursuing national objectives to increase hegemony. (Ruairidh Wood, 2019) We have observed

U.S. involvement in the Middle East from the Soviet-Afghan War, through the invasion of Iraq and the Arab Spring, up to the present day, U.S. has continuously created instability in the region, in terms of both state and human security. By constructing various actors as threats to themselves, the West or the world, the U.S. has been able to justify its aggressive pursuit of foreign policy objectives in the Middle East. Utilizing the theories of realism, this research discusses how the U.S. has attempted to achieve hegemony in the region, and indeed especially in the global conflicts, before contrasting this with humanitarian efforts it has been a part of. The United States has long grappled with the dichotomy between its strategic interests in maintaining global influence and hegemony and its stated commitment to promoting democracy worldwide. This tension arises because these goals can, at times, be in conflict, leading to complex and sometimes contradictory foreign policy decisions. National security and survival are the primary national interest of each state and, in pursuit of national security states strive to increase national power.

Political realism in international relations reached its zenith in the hands of Hans J. Morgenthau in his seminal work *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (1948). The main signpost of political realism is the concept of interest defined in terms of power which infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible (Peu Ghosh, 24-27). The realist tradition suffered a setback due to the emergence of neo liberal thought especially by the challenge posed by pluralism. The pluralist's challenge to realism was soon met by a new brand of realists and the forerunner among them was Kenneth Waltz, who in his famous works, *Man, the State and War* (1959) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979) came up with his idea of world politics which is popularly known as neo-realism. Neo-realistic approach is a global level analysis unlike the classical realism which focused on individual interests. The end goal of the state according to neo-realists is to achieve security not power maximization like the classical realists believed. According to neo-realists, power is a means to achieve security maximization. Waltz argues that key differences between international and domestic politics lie not in the regularity of war and conflict but in the structure of international system. In the absence of higher authority in the international system there is no way to secure oneself other than self-help which will ultimately lead to security dilemma because security buildup of one would lead to insecurity of others. The resultant anarchy for the neo-realist is, therefore due to the presence of a system characterized by the absence of a higher power over the sovereign states. It is this structure of international system which decisively shapes up the behavior of the states in international relations and their struggle for power (Peu Ghosh, 28-29**).**

U.S. has a history of intervening in global conflicts to protect its interests, promote democracy, and maintain stability. This has included military interventions, such as in World War II, the Korean

War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in various other smaller conflicts. Post-9/11, U.S. foreign policy has heavily focused on counterterrorism efforts, leading to military actions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other regions. This includes targeting terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda and ISIS, and supporting global counterterrorism initiatives. (Global policy forum, 2005**)** Overall, U.S. foreign policy regarding global conflicts is characterized by a mix of military, diplomatic, and economic strategies aimed at protecting national interests, promoting global stability, and responding to emerging threats. U.S. foreign policy regarding global conflicts has been shaped by various historical contexts, ideological shifts, and strategic objectives. The U.S. has a history of military interventions to protect national interests, prevent the spread of ideologies opposed to its own (e.g., communism, terrorism), and maintain global stability (US department of State, 2020). It supports and leverages international institutions (e.g., UN, World Bank, IMF) to address global conflicts, promote peace, and foster international cooperation. Sometimes, USA directly intervened alone on humanitarian grounds and sometimes in alliance with NATO or with UN mandate like in Korean War. (Edieth Y Wu, 2013**)** Therefore, humanitarian aid and disaster relief efforts are part of U.S. policy to address the consequences of global conflicts. Out of these, two major conflicts have drawn substantial attention in recent years are the Ukraine Russia conflict and Israel - Hamas conflict.

A war between Russia and Ukraine began in February 2014 with the covert invasion of the Ukrainian autonomous republic of Crimea by disguised Russian troops. The conflict expanded in April 2014 when Russians and local proxy forces seized territory in Ukraine's Donbas region; over the next seven years, more than 14,000 people would be killed in fighting in eastern Ukraine. On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Although Russian forces made significant gains in the first days of combat, Ukrainian defenders rebuffed attempts to seize Kyiv and other major cities and were soon launching counterattacks at Russian positions. (Michael Ray, 2022) The invasion aimed to topple the Ukrainian government and assert control over significant parts of the country. The war has caused significant casualties, widespread destruction, and a massive humanitarian crisis, with millions of Ukrainians displaced. Despite initial rapid advances, Ukrainian resistance has been fierce, supported by Western military aid and sanctions against Russia. The conflict has since become a protracted war of attrition, with both sides locked in intense battles across various fronts**. (**Jeffrey Mankoff, 2022) By the end of 2024, the war continues with no clear end in sight, affecting global politics, energy supplies, and international relation.

Israel and Hamas have been at war in Gaza for over 100 days since gunmen from the Palestinian militant group ran amok in southern Israel, prompting a fierce Israeli military campaign in which

almost 24,000 Palestinians have been killed. (The Hindu, 2024). Hamas launched its deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, prompting the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to engage in aerial campaigns and ground operations within the Gaza Strip. On June 8, 2024 the IDF undertook an operation in central Gaza to rescue four hostages while Gazan authorities reported that 274 Palestinians were killed, and hundreds of others were injured. Other efforts to free the more than one hundred remaining Israeli and foreign hostages taken by Hamas on October 7 have been largely unsuccessful, and their location and health status are unknown. Almost two million Gazans—more than 85 percent of the population—have fled their homes since October 2023. Casualty estimates from the Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry place death toll in Gaza at around 40,000, though such numbers are challenging to verify due to limited international access to the Strip. On July 13, Israel conducted a major strike on south Gaza, targeting two top Hamas commanders that killed at least seventy-one people. Meanwhile, neither Hamas nor Israel has agreed to the term laid out by U.S. President Joe Biden for a ceasefire and hostage release. The conflict has sparked increased regional tensions across the Middle East. Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon have engaged in cross-border skirmishes with the IDF, Yemen's Houthi rebels have shot missiles at Israel and commercial ships in the Red Sea and other Iran-backed groups have launched dozens of attacks on U.S. military positions in Iraq and Syria. (Centre for preventive action, 2024**)** A significant escalation occurred when Hamas launched a large-scale surprise attack on Israel, leading to a major military response from Israel. This escalation resulted in heavy casualties on both sides, with Gaza facing extensive destruction and a severe humanitarian crisis. The conflict remains unresolved, with occasional ceasefires but no lasting peace agreement. The situation is exacerbated by political divisions within the Palestinian territories, regional rivalries, and international interventions, making it one of the most intractable conflicts in modern history.

Taking into consideration the two major conflicts of the day, the research questions are framed as follows:

1. How do U.S. overtures towards Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Hamas conflict reflect broader US policies and strategic interests?
2. What are the key challenges faced by U.S. policy makers in addressing both Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Hamas conflicts simultaneously?

US Policies towards Ukraine-Russia Conflict

The U.S. supported Ukraine to counter Russian aggression and uphold international law and sovereignty principles till Israel-Hamas conflict begun. This support includes military aid, economic assistance, and diplomatic backing. The U.S. has imposed extensive sanctions on Russia

to deter its aggressive actions and weaken its capacity to wage war. These sanctions target key sectors of the Russian economy and influential individuals. The U.S. reaffirms its commitment to NATO, seeing the alliance as critical to European security and a deterrent against Russian expansionism. The conflict has led to increased NATO presence and cooperation in Eastern Europe. (Congressional Research Service, 2024**)** The U.S. provides military aid and training to Ukraine to enhance its defense capabilities and ensure it can resist Russia. Ukraine has received its first batch of long-awaited American-made F-16 fighter jets that will help the country fight back against Russia's superior air power (Greg Myre, 2024**).** The U.S. frames its support for Ukraine as a defense of democracy against authoritarianism. This aligns with the broader U.S. policy of promoting democratic values and human rights globally. The U.S. aims to maintain geopolitical stability by supporting allies and countering adversaries. This involves a complex balancing act of diplomacy, military aid, and economic measures to manage conflicts and prevent escalation. In the Middle East, the U.S. seeks to ensure the stability of energy supplies, given the region's significance in global oil and gas markets. In the case of Ukraine, energy security also plays a role, as Europe relies heavily on Russian gas, and the conflict has prompted efforts to diversify energy sources. The U.S. views Iran's influence in the Middle East and Russia's actions in Europe as threats to its interests and global stability. Countering these adversaries involves a combination of military presence, alliances, and economic sanctions. By actively engaging in these conflicts, the U.S. seeks to maintain its role as a global leader. This involves upholding international norms, supporting allies, and promoting a rules-based international order. Therefore, U.S. policies toward the Israel-Hamas and Ukraine-Russia conflicts reflect broader strategic interests, including maintaining regional stability, supporting allies, countering adversaries, and promoting democratic values. These policies are interwoven with efforts to uphold international norms and ensure geopolitical balance. (Foreign policy Research Institute, 2023)

The *New York Times* headline said it all: "Middle East War Adds to Surge in International Arms Sales." The conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and beyond may be causing immense and unconscionable human suffering, but they are also boosting the bottom lines of the world's arms manufacturers. American arms industry already dominates the international market in a staggering fashion, controlling 45% of all such sales globally, a gap only likely to grow more extreme in the rush to further arm allies in Europe and the Middle East in the context of the ongoing wars in those regions. (William Hartung, 2023**)** Military contractors have benefited from an upsurge in contracts to supply Ukraine with the artillery, tanks and drones that it has been using to defend itself. These contracts are part of an overall boom for the U.S. military-industrial complex. For 2024, Congress approved an $858 billion military spending bill, a full $45 billion more than even the Biden administration

requested. This represents a 4.3 percent increase in spending compared to increases closer to 1 percent between 2015 and 2021. When it comes to arms exports, the war is only accelerating recent trends by helping to boost U.S. overseas sales and reducing Russia's share of the global market. Although Ukraine has indeed increased its imports substantially, many from the United States, the major uptick in sales of U.S. arms comes from Asia—South Korea, Japan, and India—and comes in response to a perceived threat from China, not Russia. (Global Times, 2024**)** And where Russian exports have fallen, it has not necessarily been the United States that has jumped into the gap. In India, for instance, France has been the major beneficiary of falling Russian sales. The U.S. military-industrial complex has indeed profited from the Ukraine war. But, like with fossil fuel companies, the arms industry is not driving U.S. security policy. Providing weapons to fight an anachronistic war is more of a distraction for manufacturers, lobbyists and politicians who continue to focus on a future conflict with China. (John Feffer, 2023:11) Energy politics are of utmost concern to the Biden administration. Biden does not want to see significant increases in oil prices at home or its European partners suffer from a lack of energy. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the first challenge for the Biden administration was the surging price of gas. By the first week of March 2022, gas at the pump cost well over $4 a gallon. This increase coincided with rising inflation (since early 2021) that threatened the administration's claims of a post-COVID economic recovery. In 2022, for instance, the United States doubled its shipments of natural gas to Europe, filling an important gap created by reductions in Russian imports. Indeed, the United States supplied fully half of Europe's natural gas needs in 2022, along with 12 percent of its oil. (John Feffer, 2023:10) Unlike the Russian or Saudi state, the U.S. state doesnot own the energy sector. There are, however, some indirect monetary gains through taxes—and Biden has threatened to gain even more through a windfall profits tax on oil and gas companies, which was opposed by Republicans. Washington has also acquired some additional leverage with energy poor countries. But dominant market position is a side effect of the war, not a driving force behind U.S. efforts to defend Ukraine. The runaway profits of the oil and gas sector are also something of an embarrassment for an administration that has put so much emphasis on a transition to renewable energy. The war has simultaneously given fossil fuel companies an unexpected boost and pushed countries dependent on Russian fossil fuels to accelerate their plans to shift to sustainable energy sources. This desire for the energy independence that solar and wind power provide can even be seen in China, which has been perhaps the biggest beneficiary of the war in Ukraine in terms of cheaper fuel imports. (John Feffer, 2023:9) Interestingly U.S. itself is trying to justify its support to Ukraine in terms of economic benefits. A *Wall Street Journa*l report has put focus back on how U.S. economy is getting a boost from the war in Europe. Therefore, bolstering Ukraine not only serves U.S. strategic interest and moral obligations but also benefits the American economy**.**

(*Times of India*, 2024)

India has been facing criticism from policymakers in the US and West for trying to profit from the Ukraine war as it emerged as one of the key buyers of cheap Russia oil in the wake of Western sanctions. India's pragmatic strategic concern is Russia's "no-limits" ties with China. But there is very little that New Delhi can do to drive a wedge between China and Russia. China is the bigger economy that has openly provided diplomatic cover to Russia during the Ukraine war, and has helped sustain the Russian economy and its military-industrial capacities through dual-use items that can be used for both civilian and military applications such as technology, satellites, or drones. Beijing has therefore acquired considerable leverage over Moscow, something that Delhi cannot emulate. (Swasti Rao, 2024) Delhi's talk of an FTA with the EAEU and all-weather friendship with Russia should not overlook Russia's regional and global interests in having a strong strategic partnership with a territorially revisionist as well as an economically and militarily powerful China. They are united by their hostility towards America's global primacy. China's economy, nearing $18 trillion, presents it with a better chance of becoming a global power than Russia or India, whose economies are valued at $2.02 trillion and $3.54 trillion respectively. India can do nothing to change Russia's lower-ranking role in the Sino-Russian ties or their aversion to America's pre-eminence. (Anita Inder Singh, 2024)

US Policies towards Israel Hamas conflict

Israelis and Palestinians have clashed over claims to the Holy Land for decades, a conflict that has long been one of the world's most intractable imbroglios. Although the United States is a strong supporter of Israel, it has traditionally tried to advance a diplomatic solution that would reconcile the competing claims of the two parties. In the decades since, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute has continually flared into conflict, including multistate wars, armed uprisings, and terrorist acts. A major turning point was the 1967 Six-Day War, which culminated in Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. The Middle East has long been of central importance to the United States as successive administrations pursued a broad set of interrelated goals including securing vital energy resources, staving off Soviet and Iranian influence, ensuring the survival and security of Israel and Arab allies, countering terrorism, promoting democracy, and reducing refugee flows.(Kali Robinson, 2023**)** The Trump administration opted to side with Israel on various matters, breaking with decades of U.S. policy that aimed at serving as a neutral broker in negotiations. In August 2020, the administration mediated an agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, known as the Abraham Accords, in which the two countries pledged to begin normalizing ties. Under that deal, Israel also agreed to temporarily halt plans to annex about 30 percent of the West Bank. (Adam Zeidan, 2024) Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan later announced

their own U.S.-brokered deals to normalize relations with Israel. Opponents of normalization say these moves betray the Palestinian cause, as the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative stipulates that Arab League members will establish relations with Israel only after the creation of a Palestinian state, among other conditions. The agreement shows how the Arab countries are gradually decoupling themselves from the Palestine question. Full diplomatic ties will be established between Israel**,** the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain which will have a positive impact on the entire region. The deal buys UAE a lot of goodwill in the US, where its image has been tarnished by its involvement in the Yemen War. (*The Hindu*, 2023**)** Biden administration has focused on promoting equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians and encouraging more nations to seek normalization with Israel. The United States has long been Israel's ally and its leading security collaborator because the United States supports the existence of a Jewish state. The U.S. policies toward the Israel-Hamas conflict and the Ukraine-Russia conflict reflect broader U.S. strategic interests in several ways, including geopolitical stability, regional influence, defense commitments, and the promotion of democratic values. Here is a detailed explanation of how these conflicts fit into the larger framework of U.S. policies.

The U.S. has a long-standing alliance with Israel, viewing it as a key strategic partner in the Middle East. This partnership is rooted in shared democratic values, counterterrorism efforts, and mutual security interest. The U.S. provides significant military aid to Israel, ensuring it maintains a qualitative military edge over potential adversaries in the region. This support is seen as crucial for maintaining regional stability and protecting U.S. interests. The U.S. designates Hamas as a terrorist organization and supports Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas' attacks. This aligns with the broader U.S. counterterrorism strategy, which aims to combat extremist groups globally. According to court documents, Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyya, commonly known as Hamas, is a terrorist organization that was founded in 1987, and has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) by the United States since 1997. (US department of justice, 2024**)** While supporting Israel, the U.S. also engages with Arab nations and promotes peace initiatives, such as the Abraham Accords, to normalize relations between Israel and several Arab states .The Abraham Accords, signed in 2021, launched a new era of cooperation and normalization not only between the Arab states and Israel but also between the U.S. and the wider region. A direct outcome of this normalization was the setting up of new initiatives, such as the I2U2, an economic and trade ecosystem between India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the US, which is seen as a pilot to what this "new" Middle East (West Asia) can achieve. (Kabir Taneja, 2023**)** This approach seeks to enhance regional stability and counter Iranian influence.

Today, Israel remains the United States' closest strategic partner in the Middle East. Both

countries are concerned about Iran's nuclear ambitions and its support for Islamist militants, particularly Lebanon's Hezbollah and Hamas. As a result of these shared interests, the United States has pledged to help safeguard Israel's military superiority over any hostile combination of countries in the region. The United States began providing Israel with military assistance after its withdrawal from Arab territories as part of the peace process. **(**Amiti Sen, 2024) Washington considered it a responsibility to provide this security aid because Israel was taking risks for peace. The United States also gave large aid packages to Egypt and Jordan in exchange for their commitments to the peace process. More than half of all foreign military aid that President Biden requested for fiscal year 2022 was earmarked for Israel. Though the anti-terrorism law remains in effect, the Biden administration has resumed aid to the West Bank and Gaza, pledging to provide the Palestinians at least $500 million by 2024, pending congressional approval. The ongoing conflict in West Asia has cast a shadow over I2U2 – a grouping of India, Israel, the US and the UAE forged to tackle global challenges such as food security, energy, water and health, and advance economic opportunities. Discussions in the group have gone dormant with no meetings taking place for almost a year because of Israel's attack on Gaza. India has adopted a 'wait and watch' approach on the matter as it does not want to disturb its balancing act in the region. UAE wanted to distance itself from Israel. It is not possible to expect the UAE to be dialoguing with Israel when it is at the center of the conflict in the Middle East and Muslim countries are being affected. It is a sensitive matter, and the UAE does not seem interested in reopening the dialogue. (Amiti Sen, 2024) The escalation in the war between Palestine-based terror group Hamas and Israel is likely to slow down projects envisaged by the I2U2. At a virtual I2U2 Summit attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Israeli Prime Minister (former) Yair Lapid and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, it was decided that the UAE will invest $2 billion to develop integrated food parks across India as part of an initiative to enhance food security in West Asia and South Asia. These food parks, which would be set up in Gujarat and Maharashtra to begin with, would incorporate state-of-the-art climate-smart technologies to reduce food waste and spoilage, conserve fresh water, and employ renewable energy sources. (Amiti Sen, 2023) The UAE and Israel may want to wait for things to cool down before they talk business. The two are not in the best position for talks while such a bloody fight is on. The projects lined up under I2U2 after the leaders' summit may suffer a setback, at least till the situation normalizes. If an I2U2 meeting is held at this point, the optics would not be good. For India, it would be okay but not for Israel and the UAE. The UAE will come under scrutiny of the Arab world which may ask why it is in dialogue with Israel while there are killings going on in Palestine.

The Israel-Hamas conflict and bombardment of Gaza could "pause" progress on India-U.S. trade, and connectivity initiatives, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) and the India-Israel-UAE-U.S. (I2U2) groupings. Speaking about the India-U.S. 2+2 dialogue held on November 10, 2023 Ambassador Garcetti said that bilateral cooperation is growing in several domains. He also said that the two countries must advance their engagement on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), highlighting dangers that had been outlooked by both U.S. President Joseph Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. (Suhasini Haider, 2023) Moreover, India has good relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel and therefore it cannot take sides of any one of them. Thus, India adopted the idea of Strategic Autonomy. Despite the Russia-Ukraine war polarizing the world, India has stood out in the past period by maintaining cordial ties with both the West and Russia. While the West insisted or even indirectly pressurized India to condemn Moscow's actions, India has stood its ground. India has followed what is termed as strategic autonomy which implies not allied or subservient to one power and to maintain ties with all the powers in protecting national interest. Apart from this specific issue of the Russia-Ukraine war, India has followed strategic autonomy on the larger geopolitical canvas as well. India's ties with Iran are a part of the strategic autonomy that India has strived hard to maintain in its policy formulation despite relations with the United States prevailing upon India's stand at times. Iran, for its part, with a strategic location in the Middle East as well as a route to Central Asia and Eurasia, has successfully managed to position itself as one of the important factors in India's strategic autonomy through a combination of strategic and diplomatic overtures towards India. India-Iran relations have experienced ups and downs owing to India's convergence of interests with the West. But still, Iran remains a strategically important country for India. While the past years have witnessed India stopping oil imports from Iran in 2019 due to the US sanctions over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or the Iran nuclear deal, this has not hindered the progress on the connectivity projects between India and Iran. Iran is India's gateway to Central Asia and Eurasia and is a crucial connecting point for three projects – Chabahar Port, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Ashgabat Agreement. (Niranjan Marjani, 2022)

US challenges in dealing with Ukraine-Russia Conflict

U.S. faces numerous complex challenges in dealing with the Ukraine-Russia conflict, which has escalated dramatically since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The conflict is not only a military and geopolitical issue but also a test of U.S. foreign policy, international alliances, and global stability. Here are the key challenges:

1. Balancing Support for Ukraine without Direct Military Involvement – The U.S. has been

one of the largest suppliers of military aid to Ukraine, including advanced weapons systems like HIMARS, tanks, air defense systems, and drones. However, the U.S. has avoided sending ground troops or enforcing a no-fly zone to prevent direct conflict with Russian forces, which could risk escalation into a broader NATO-Russia war. There is a constant balancing act between supporting Ukraine and avoiding actions that might provoke Russia into a direct confrontation with NATO. Russian leaders, including President Putin, have hinted at the potential use of nuclear weapons if they feel existentially threatened, adding to the complexity of U.S. actions. The United States has approved sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine from Denmark and the Netherlands to defend against Russian invaders. Ukraine has actively sought the U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets to help it counter Russian air superiority. (Steve Holland & Idrees Ali, 2023)

2. Managing NATO and European Unity – U.S. has worked to maintain a unified NATO front, despite varying levels of support for Ukraine among member states. Some countries, especially those geographically closer to Russia (e.g., Poland and the Baltic states), have been more vocal in calling for robust military aid, while others, like Hungary, have been more cautious or sympathetic toward Russia. Many European countries, especially Germany, have been highly dependent on Russian energy, particularly natural gas. The U.S. has had to navigate these dependencies, encouraging European countries to reduce reliance on Russian energy while mitigating the economic and political fallout from rising energy prices and inflation. Beyond Ukraine, the U.S. must ensure the security of NATO members in Eastern Europe, which have expressed concerns about potential Russian aggression. This has led to the deployment of additional U.S. troops and military assets to Eastern European NATO countries, further complicating logistics and resource allocation. The only way to secure lasting peace in Ukraine is to explore Ukraine's path to a deeper relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union. By taking steps to join both of these institutions over time, Ukraine will also strengthen its internal democracy. (Benjamin Jensen & Elizabeth Hoffman, 2024)

3. Managing Economic Sanctions and their Global Impact – U.S. has led international efforts to impose harsh economic sanctions on Russia, targeting its banking system, oligarchs, key industries, and access to global markets. However, these sanctions have global ripple effects, especially in the energy and food sectors, as Russia is a major exporter of oil, gas, and wheat. The sanctions on Russia, combined with the disruption of Ukrainian agriculture and exports, have contributed to inflation, food shortages, and energy price spikes globally. Developing countries, particularly in Africa and parts of Asia, have been hit hard by rising food and fuel

costs, and the U.S. faces diplomatic pressure to mitigate these impacts. There are potential limitations to sanctions targeting Russia's trade and financial relationships with the West. Despite efforts to sever these ties, Russia has shown resilience by establishing stronger connections with other nations, such as China, India, and Turkey. (Daisoon Kim, 2024)

4. Domestic Political Divisions – While there has been bipartisan support for aiding Ukraine, there are divisions within U.S. domestic politics about the scope and scale of that aid. Some lawmakers, particularly within the Republican Party, have expressed concerns over the cost of military and economic aid to Ukraine, especially given domestic issues like inflation and public spending. Over time, there is a growing concern about "war fatigue" among the U.S. public. Some Americans question the continued financial and military support for Ukraine, asking whether U.S. interests are being served. Managing this political and public sentiment, while continuing to aid Ukraine, is emerging as a significant challenge for U.S. policymakers. U.S. domestic politics is now inextricably tied to its support for Ukraine. Since February 2024, the House Republicans have blocked efforts by the Biden administration to secure aid for Ukraine and Israel. Despite an initial agreement between the Republicans and Democrats on the issue of illegal immigration through the U.S.-Mexico border, where Biden agreed to significant border control measures to break a Republican deadlock on aid for Israel and Ukraine, Republicans continue to block the latest border security bill in Congress. The Republican Party originally blocked a US$60 billion aid package to Ukraine (Vivek Mishra, 2024)

5. Dealing with Russia's Nuclear Threats – Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022 the threat of nuclear war has loomed over the conflict. Yet with President Vladimir Putin's latest announcement that Russia would hold exercises for tactical nuclear weapons use in combat—supposedly in response to "provocative statements" from Western officials—Russia's nuclear brinksmanship has possibly reached a new phase, in which higher risks need to be met with an upgraded Western deterrence posture. (Pavel K. Baev, 2024**)** Russia has repeatedly made veiled threats about its potential use of nuclear weapons in the conflict, particularly if it feels its national security is existentially threatened. This has raised concerns in the U.S. about how to manage deterrence without escalating the situation to a nuclear crisis. The U.S. faces the challenge of deterring Russia from using tactical nuclear weapons while avoiding steps that might be interpreted as provocative. This delicate balance of power is critical, given that any nuclear escalation could have catastrophic consequences not just for Ukraine but for the entire world.

6. China's Ambiguous Role – China, as a close partner to Russia, has maintained a largely

neutral stance, calling for peace while avoiding direct condemnation of Moscow's actions. The U.S. must balance its competition with China while pressuring Beijing not to provide military or economic support to Russia. A stronger China-Russia alliance could have significant geopolitical implications, especially if China decides to provide Russia with more overt economic or military assistance. This would strain U.S. efforts to contain the conflict and could lead to more complex global confrontations. China's own precarious position in great power politics and its deteriorating relations with the United States, aggravated by Beijing's commitment to winning Taiwan back, make Beijing an unlikely candidate to solve tensions between Russia and the West. The crux of the problem is that Russia is China's only great power ally, and China will rely on Russia in the event of a confrontation with the United States. Unlike the United States and its allies, China does not want Russia to suffer a devastating defeat in Ukraine.(Alexander Korolev, 2023)

7. Managing Diplomatic Efforts for a Peace Settlement – While the U.S. strongly supports Ukraine, it also must be involved in any diplomatic discussions regarding potential peace negotiations. The U.S. faces the challenge of encouraging a settlement that respects Ukraine's sovereignty without being seen as dictating terms or allowing Russia to secure territorial gains through aggression. Any peace settlement will have to navigate the difficult balance between Ukraine's territorial integrity and Russia's perceived security concerns regarding NATO's proximity. The U.S. will play a key role in shaping these negotiations, but the positions of Ukraine, Russia, and European countries will complicate any resolution. The primary concern of the US is not to maintain Ukraine's territorial integrity but rather to limit Russia's strength and ability to challenge the current global order. Ukraine has proved to be an exceptional vehicle for grinding down Russian resources at a massive scale. Continuing support might not win the war, but it would likely add a few more years of Ukrainian survival. The resulting losses would degrade the capacity of the Russian leadership to continue with their ambitions. (Theodore Oltean, 2024)

8. International Law and War Crimes Accountability – By any measure, Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine is devastating. Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has raised a host of complex issues—first and foremost for Ukrainians, and also for each and every state in relation to international law. (Olga Butkevych, Rebecca Hamilton and Gregory Shaffer, 2024) The U.S. has been vocal in accusing Russia of committing war crimes in Ukraine, particularly in regard to attacks on civilians, and the targeting of civilian infrastructure. However, holding Russia accountable through international legal mechanisms is difficult, especially given Russia's position on the U.N. Security Council and its lack of cooperation

with the International Criminal Court. The U.S. must balance its response to human rights abuses with diplomatic efforts to end the war. Pursuing accountability for war crimes while still engaging in diplomacy can be a delicate challenge, particularly when both justice and a political resolution are priorities.

9. Rebuilding Ukraine and Long-term Commitments – Once the conflict ends, Ukraine will require massive international assistance to rebuild its economy, infrastructure, and military. The U.S. will likely play a key role in this, but the scale of the financial commitment and international coordination required presents a long-term challenge. Even if the conflict ends, ensuring Ukraine's security and preventing future aggression from Russia will remain a U.S. and NATO priority. This may involve discussions about Ukraine's potential membership in NATO or other security guarantees, which could further complicate relations with Russia. To date, the United States has allocated $175 billion dollars towards civil and military aid to Ukraine. Over two and a half years of fighting, this comes out to just under $60 billion annually. (Theodore Oltean, 2024)

Therefore, U.S. faces a complex array of challenges in managing the Ukraine-Russia conflict, from military support and economic sanctions to diplomatic efforts and managing global repercussions. The stakes involve not only Ukraine's sovereignty and security but also broader international norms, alliances, and the global economic order.

US challenges in dealing with Israel-Hamas conflict

Apart from this, U.S. also faces several key challenges in dealing with the Hamas-Israel conflict, driven by a combination of strategic, political, and humanitarian considerations. These challenges include:

1. Balancing Support for Israel with Regional Stability – U.S. has a long-standing alliance with Israel, providing military aid and diplomatic backing. This relationship, especially in times of conflict with Hamas, leads the U.S. to support Israel's right to defend itself. While supporting Israel, U.S. must ensure it doesn't destabilize relationships with Arab nations or provoke broader conflict. Many of these nations, like Egypt and Jordan, have peace treaties with Israel and are key U.S. allies. U.S. must also consider Iran's influence in the region, as it supports Hamas and other anti-Israel groups. There is a risk of escalation and therefore U.S. must tread carefully to prevent a wider regional war, especially with the involvement of Hezbollah (in Lebanon) or Iran. Iran's financial and military support for Hamas adds another layer of complexity to the U.S. response. Iran's influence in the region is a major concern for the U.S., as it seeks to limit Tehran's power and ensure that it does not escalate

the conflict further by supporting other militias like Hezbollah. U.S.'s tensions with Iran over nuclear development and regional influence add an additional challenge. Iran's backing of Hamas and other anti-Israel groups makes any U.S. action in the region more complicated. The Biden Administration has provided political and material support for Israeli efforts to end Hamas rule in Gaza and secure the return of hostages. In Israel, debate is ongoing about whether and how these objectives can be achieved separately or together, if at all. In April 2024, Congress appropriated the President's requested supplemental funding for Israel ($8.7 billion in Foreign Military Financing and missile defense) and global humanitarian assistance (over $9 billion) in P.L. 118-50. The legislation also includes provisions aimed at preventing the $1 billion of humanitarian aid intended for Gaza from diversion, misuse, or destruction. The Administration increased criticism of Israel during the first half of 2024, in apparent connection with Israel's prosecution of the war, questions regarding the achievability of the Israeli government's stated objectives, and the conflict's impact on Palestinian civilians. The Administration has pushed for a multi-phase cease-fire and hostage-prisoner exchange (working with Qatari and Egyptian mediators) and increases in humanitarian aid and civilian protection. It is unclear whether regional tensions connected to various July 2024 strikes and attacks, including the reported killings of top Hamas leaders Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and Muhammad Deif in Gaza, might affect the prospects for a cease-fire deal. A February presidential memorandum (an executive document, not standing law) set forth oversight mechanisms for Israel's compliance with international law as a U.S. arms recipient, and the Administration provided an initial report on Israeli compliance to Congress in May. Also in May, the Administration paused some weapons shipments to Israel, triggering debate in Congress. (Congressional Research Service, 2024)

2. Managing Relations with Arab and Muslim Nations – U.S.'s close ties to Israel can lead to strained relations with many Arab and Muslim-majority countries. A perception of pro-Israel bias risks alienating these nations, complicating diplomatic efforts. Beyond the Middle East, global Muslim populations are sensitive to the U.S.'s stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the loss of Palestinian civilian lives often lead to widespread protests and anti-American sentiment in these communities. Most U.S. Jews (89%) see Israel's reasons for going to war against Hamas as valid. Only 18% of U.S. Muslims see Israel's reasons as valid. (Laura Silver, Becka A Alper, 2024)

3. Humanitarian Concerns in Gaza – U.S. support for Israeli military operations is often met with concern over the humanitarian impact on Palestinians. In particular, airstrikes on Gaza, where Hamas operates, often result in significant civilian casualties and destruction of

infrastructure. Balancing the need to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians in Gaza without benefiting Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, is a constant challenge. U.S. has to ensure that aid reaches civilians and not the group controlling the area. In this conflict till date, more than 39,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed, according to the Hamas-controlled health ministry there. Additionally, about 1.9 million of Gaza's some 2.1 million residents have been displaced, with most facing unsanitary, overcrowded conditions alongside acute shortages of food, water, medical care, and other essential supplies and services. Obstacles to transporting aid through crossings and Israeli checkpoints and then safely delivering it have contributed to high levels of food insecurity. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification assessed in June 2024 that increases in assistance since March helped temporarily avoid famine in Gaza, but warned that 96% of Gazans would likely experience crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity through September, and that any significant change in humanitarian access could lead to famine. (Congressional Research Service 2024)

4. Addressing Domestic Political Pressures – U.S. domestic politics play a significant role in shaping its policy on the conflict. The issue is highly polarized, with Republicans generally favoring more robust support for Israel, while Democrats often push for more balanced approaches that consider Palestinian rights. Managing this divide, while maintaining a consistent foreign policy, can be politically challenging. Public sentiment in U.S. is divided, with some groups advocating for Israel's security, while others call for Palestinian rights and an end to Israeli occupation. The U.S. government must navigate these competing pressures, especially during periods of intense violence. Overall, Americans' support for a two-state solution has increased modestly since 2022 from 35% to 40%. Much of the shift has come among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents. Today, 48% of Democrats favor a two-state solution, up from 36% in 2022. Indeed, this shift has opened up a partisan gap in views of the two-state solution that was not present in 2022. (Laura Silver, Becka A Alper, 2024) U.S. designates Hamas as a terrorist group, which complicates any direct diplomatic engagement with the group. This limits the U.S.'s options in terms of negotiation or conflict de-escalation. However, Hamas remains a key player in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and ignoring its role makes achieving a lasting peace more difficult. The broader Israeli-Palestinian peace process has been largely stalled for years, with the U.S. struggling to find a path forward. The two-state solution, historically backed by the U.S., faces significant challenges, including Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank and internal Palestinian divisions between Hamas and Fatah.

5. Navigating International Diplomatic Dynamics – U.S. faces pressure from European and other global allies to push for restraint on Israel's part and to actively work toward a peaceful resolution. The international community often calls for a ceasefire and condemns the humanitarian toll, which may conflict with U.S. strategic interests. U.S. must balance support for Israel's right to self-defense with international concerns about potential violations of international law, including civilian casualties, the use of force, and the blockade of Gaza. Things are difficult for the US because, after being such vocal supporters of Israel from the beginning of the war, it is hard to suggest that an end to the war is now the priority and that the focus should be on what post-war Gaza will look like. (Al Jazeera, 2024**)**

Therefore, the U.S. faces a complex web of challenges in addressing the Hamas-Israel conflict, balancing its strong support for Israel with humanitarian, regional, and domestic considerations. The situation is made more difficult by geopolitical dynamics involving Iran, Arab nations, and international expectations for the U.S. to play a role in finding a path to peace.

The United States attaches great importance to the success of Ukraine's transition to a modern democratic state with a flourishing market economy. U.S. policy is centered on realizing and strengthening a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine more closely integrated into Europe and Euro-Atlantic structures. The U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership highlights the importance of the bilateral relationship and outlines enhanced cooperation in the areas of defense, security, economics and trade, energy security, democracy, and cultural exchanges. It also emphasizes the continued commitment of the United States to support enhanced engagement between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Ukraine. To fulfill one of the key tenets of the charter, the two countries have established the Strategic Partnership Commission. Thus, U.S. Government assistance to Ukraine aims to support the development of a democratic, prosperous, and secure Ukraine, fully integrated into the Euro-Atlantic community. (US Embassy in Ukraine).

The risks of conflict between two nuclear-armed powers are so great that virtually any rational leader should, in theory, seek to avoid one. This is especially true of the United States and Russia, who together control an estimated 90 percent of the world's nuclear warheads. The issue is not merely the size of their arsenals but also their structure — both countries have robust "second strike" capabilities, meaning each can sustain a devastating nuclear first strike from the other side and still retaliate. The U.S. and Russia maintain second strike capabilities through the so-called "nuclear triad": bombers armed with nuclear bombs, submarines equipped with nuclear missiles, and land-based missile launchers. The result is

that neither the U.S. nor Russia can hope to "win" a nuclear war. The only way to win is not to play. This appears to be the reason the Biden administration has been so adamant on avoiding any kind of involvement in Ukraine; the risks of any direct intervention are far too high. (Zack Beauchamp, 2022) Sanctions against Russia and aid to Ukraine have come from many directions. But putting troops on the ground in Ukraine, which is not a member of NATO, is a line that the U.S. and other Western allies have not been willing to cross. In other words, the U.S.' entry into the conflict has the potential to touch off a global war. If NATO or the U.S. sent troops into Ukraine to help them fight the Russians, the dynamic would shift to a multinational conflict with potential global implications due to the nuclear power status of both U.S. and Russia. Because of that, the U.S. and NATO — and other nations around the world — are attempting to influence the success of Ukraine and the defeat of Russia by providing other types of support. Moreover, the United States will not put U.S. pilots in the air to create a no-fly zone in Ukraine. While some Ukrainian officials have called on NATO countries to "close the sky" over Ukraine, establishing a no-fly zone would put the U.S. in direct engagement with the Russian military which the White House has made clear it is not interested in doing. (Farrah Tomazin, 2022) The U.S. and Western countries have imposed several rounds of sanctions on Russia, targeting its banking, aerospace and technology sectors (Paul LeBlanc, CNN, 2022). Much of the current U.S. strategy comes down to the fact that sending troops into Ukraine is simply not in America's national interest. Ukraine is not a major trading partner and there's little strategic benefit for the U.S., which does not even have an army base there.

On the other hand, Biden administration faces pressure from progressive Democrats, Arab officials and even some U.S. diplomats to help end the Israel-Hamas war. But the White House does not necessarily want to stop the fight because the U.S. agrees with Israel's goal of destroying Hamas, a Palestinian network designated by Washington as a terrorist organization. Destroying — or at least degrading Hamas — is in the U.S. interest on multiple levels. Hamas is a proxy of Iran, a major U.S. adversary, so dismantling it undercuts Tehran. Hamas is a destabilizing force in a region that remains critical to U.S. economic and security interests. The militant group also does not recognize Israel's right to exist, making it a major barrier to a two-state solution. Plus, publicly breaking with Israelis could damage U.S. ties with a partner who is critical on fronts including intelligence sharing. The U.S. has significant tools it could use to pressure Israel beyond the mere words. It could threaten to cut military aid to the country, stop defending it at the United Nations, or abandon long-term efforts to help Israel normalize diplomatic relations with Arab countries. Some congressional Democrats are even considering legislation to curtail intelligence sharing with Israel. But the Biden administration has steadfastly rejected such moves. (Nahal

Toosi, Alexander Ward and Lara Seligman, 2023). U.S. leaders are mounting an urgent effort to prevent Israel's war against Hamas and a resulting civilian catastrophe in Gaza from turning into a widening regional conflict that could snowball into an even greater geopolitical crisis after the horrific attacks. For the United States, there is the risk that a wider conflict could lead to reprisals by terror groups of Iran-backed militias against its remaining troops in Iraq and Syria, where they are engaged in missions to counter ISIS. (Stephen Collinson, CNN, 2023).

Worldwide, oil is very important but people are searching for alternatives like electric cars bio fuels etc. Therefore, Middle East countries especially Saudi Arabia are thinking and realizing that after few decades, oil would not be an essential resource due to availability of other alternatives with the technological advancements. Since the need of oil will be reduced with time so they want to diversify their economy. Apart from oil business they want to enter into other business-like production manufacturing and so they are looking for partners and therefore connecting with India, China, USA, etc. Life is a balance between holding on and letting go. The basic objectives of Gulf Co-operation Council are to effect co-ordination, integration, and interconnection among member states in all fields in order to achieve unity among them. Their idea is that if peace prevails then only it is possible to run the business smoothly. Therefore Abraham Accords, I2U2 etc. were signed. However, recently, Iran launched almost 200 ballistic missiles towards Israel. The missile barrage was retaliation for what it called the "violation of Iran's sovereignty and the martyrdom" of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh, who was killed by an explosion in Tehran in July 2024 that Iranian officials blamed on Israel. (David Gritten, Matt Murphy and Patrick Jackson, BBC news, 2024). Strategically, Israel is so important for U.S. that recently it was observed that United States sent troops to Israel along with an advanced U.S. anti-missile system, in a highly unusual deployment which was meant to bolster the country's air defenses following missile attacks by Iran. U.S. President Joe Biden stated that the move was meant "to defend Israel," which is weighing an expected retaliation against Iran after Tehran fired more than 180 missiles at Israel on October 1, 2024. (Phil Stewart and Jasper Ward, 2024). The U.S. House of Representatives with broad bipartisan support passed a $95 billion legislative package providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, over bitter objections from Republican hardliners. (Richard Cowan, Moira Warburton and Patricia Zengerle, 2024)

This study set out to explore how U.S policies towards Ukraine Russia and Israel Hamas conflict reflect broader US policies and strategic interests as well as the key challenges faced by U.S policy makers in addressing both Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Hamas conflict simultaneously. The findings indicate that, US wealth is at risk due to these conflicts. In 2023, U.S. approved F16 fighter jet to Ukraine after pressure from NATO. U.S. attention got diverted due to Israel-

Hamas War. Moreover, U.S. faces several challenges which include balancing support for Ukraine without direct military involvement, dealing with Russia's nuclear threat etc. The primary concern of U.S. is not to maintain Ukraine's territorial integrity but rather to limit Russia's strength and ability to challenge the current global order. Basically, the risk of conflict between two nuclear armed powers such as Russia and USA, are so great that virtually any rational leader would seek to avoid it. However, the U.S. military industrial complex has indeed profited from the Ukraine war. On the other hand, U.S. is facing some challenges due to humanitarian concerns in Gaza, addressing domestic political pressures etc. As mentioned above, strategically, Israel is very important for U.S. but ultimately U.S. strategy is to prevent conflict and promote stability which is necessary to carry out business smoothly. Therefore, after Donald Trump became the President-elect, Israeli-Palestinian conflict came to an official end by forming a two-state solution for the Jewish and Palestinian people, promoting the idea of everlasting peace and putting an official halt to any further land claims. Thus, USA is promoting democracy but at the same time we can observe a hegemonic behavior of USA in order to fulfill their interests. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that the U.S. adopted a neo-realistic approach towards international relations in their quest for power and hegemony. Neo-realists do not overlook the prospects of cooperation among the states but the point of contention is that states like U.S. while cooperating with others to uphold certain common values, in effect, try to maximize their relative power and preserve their hegemony.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al Jazeera Staff. 2024. June 17, "US says Hamas is to blame for ceasefire delay – but is it Hamas or Israel?" ,https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/17/us-says-hamas-is-to-blame-for-ceasefire-delay-but-is-it-hamas-or-israel ,accessed on 15/09/2024
- Baev,Pavel K, 2024. May 14, "Nuclear brinkmanship in Putin's war: Upping the ante", https://www.brookings.edu/articles/nuclear-brinkmanship-in-putins-war-upping-the-ante/ ,accessed on 22/09/2024
- Beauchamp, Zack, 2022. February 25. "Why the US won't send troops to Ukraine", https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/2/25/22949351/ukraine-russia-us-troops-no-fly-zone-nuclear-weapons, accessed on 28/09/2024.
- Bertrand, Natasha, 2024. October 13. "US to deploy about 100 troops to operate advanced anti-missile system in Israel amid heightened tensions", https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/13/

politics/israel-iran-antimissile-system-us-troops/index.html, accessed on 16/10/2024.

- Bush, George W. 2002. September 17, "The national security strategy of the United States of America", https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nssall.html, accessed on 18/08/2024.
- Butkevych, Olga, 2024. February 22. "International law in the face of Russia's aggression in Ukraine -the view from lviv,https://www.justsecurity.org/92554/international-law-in-the-face-of-russias-aggression-in-ukraine-the-view-from-lviv/ , accessed on 24/09/2024.
- Centre for Preventive Action, 2024 (October 6),"Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict, accessed on 18/08/2024.
- Chaulia, Sreeram, 2024 May 29. "Chabahar is a metaphor for strategic Abrahamautonomy", https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/chabahar-is-a-metaphor-for-strategic-autonomy-101716989825501.html, accessed on 10/09/2024.
- Choi, Seung - Whan, 2014. Journal of conflicts resolution 2016, "Why Does the United States Intervene Abroad? Democracy, Human Rights Violations, and Terrorism", Volume 60(5), sagepub.com/journals Permissions.nav DOI:10.1177/0022002714560350 jcr.sagepub.com, accessed on 16/10/2024.
- Congress, Section 504(a) of the Global Fragility Act of 2019, "United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability", 2020.
- Congressional Research Service. 2024 June 10. "Russia's War on Ukraine: U.S. Policy and the Role of Congress"https://crsreports.congress.gov accessed on 12/09/2024.
- Congressional Research Service. 2024 August 1. "Israel and Hamas Conflict In Brief: Overview, U.S. Policy, and Options for Congress", https://crsreports.congress.gov ,accessed on 15/09/2024.
- Collinson, Stephen. 2023, October 17. "The US is mounting a frantic effort to head off a wider Middle East war", https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/16/politics/us-prevent-wider-middle-east-war/index.html , accessed on 27/09/2024.
- Cowan, Richard, 2024, April 21. "US House passes $95 billion Ukraine, Israel aid package, sends to Senate", https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-house-vote-long-awaited-95-billion-ukraine-israel-aid-package-2024-04-20/ , accessed on 13/10/2024.

- Daily updates. 2023, September 22. "Three years of the Abraham Accords", https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-editorials/three-years-of-the-abraham-accords, accessed on 10/09/2024
- Feffer, John, 2023, April. "Sending Arms or Twisting Arms: The U.S. Role in the Ukraine War".
- Ghosh, Peu. 2014. International Relations, Third edition, February, pp 24-29.
- Global policy forum, December 2005, "U.S. interventions", https://archive.globalpolicy.org/us-westward-expansion/26024-us-interventions.html, accessed on 18/08/2024.
- Global Times, 2024 (January 30), "As biggest broker for US arms industry, Washington greatly profits from Russia-Ukraine conflict", https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202401/1306369.shtml, accessed on 24/ 08/2024.
- Gritten, David. 2024, October 3. "What we know about Iran's missile attack on Israel", https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c70w1j0l488o, accessed on 03/10/2024.
- Gvosdev, Nikolas k. 2023 (February 16), "The confrontation with Russia and US grand strategy", https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/02/the-confrontation-with-russia-and-us-grand-strategy/ , accessed on 15/09/2024.
- Haidar, Suhasini. 2023, November 20. "IMEEC, I2U2 progress could be paused due to Israel-Hamas conflict: U.S. envoy", https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/imeec-i2u2-progress-could-be-paused-due-to-israel-hamas-conflict-us-envoy/article67555319.ece, accessed on 10/09/2024.
- Hartung, William. 2023, November 18. "Good Times for the Military-Industrial Complex", https://responsiblestatecraft.org/military-industrial-complex-ukraine-israel/, accessed on 25/08/2024.
- Holland, Steve. 2023, August 18. "US approves sending F-16s to Ukraine from Denmark and Netherlands", https://www.reuters.com/world/us-approves-sending-f-16s-ukraine-denmark-netherlands-2023-08-17/ accessed on 20/09/2024.
- Jahshan, Khalil E. 2023, October 17. "The War on Gaza: Deterrence or Inching toward Direct US Involvement?". https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-war-on-gaza-deterrence-or-inching-toward-direct-us-involvement/, accessed on 28/09/2024.

- Jensen, Benjamin. 2024, May 15. "Victory in Ukraine Starts with Addressing Five Strategic Problems", https://www.csis.org/analysis/victory-ukraine-starts-addressing-five-strategic-problems accessed on 19/09/2024.
- Kim, Daisoon. 2024, February 26. "Economic Sanctions: Lessons from the Russia-Ukraine Conflict", https://poole.ncsu.edu/thought-leadership/article/economic-sanctions-lessons-from-the-russia-ukraine-conflict/, accessed on 22/09/2024.
- Korolev, Alexander. 2023. May 27. "China's ambiguous mediation role in Ukraine", https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/05/27/chinas-ambiguous-mediation-role-in-ukraine/ accessed on 22/09/2024.
- LeBlanc, Paul. 2022, February 28. "Why the US isn't sending troops into Ukraine", https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/27/politics/us-troops-ukraine-russia-what-matters/index.html, accessed on 29/09/2024.
- Mankoff, Jeffrey. 2022, April 22. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict" https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-war-ukraine-identity-history-and conflict, accessed on 18/08/2024.
- Marjani, Niranjan. 2022, October 28. "How Iran positions itself in India's pursuit of strategic autonomy?", https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/nolimits/how-iran-positions-itself-in-indias-pursuit-of-strategic-autonomy/, accessed on 10/10/2024.
- Mastriana, Sante. 2023, November 29. "U.S. Foreign Policy Decisions in the Israel-Hamas Conflict: Part 2", https://www.closeup.org/u-s-foreign-policy-decisions-in-the-israel-hamas-conflict-part-2/, accessed on 7/09/2024.
- Mishra, Asit Ranjan. 2024, January 2. "Israel-Hamas war may impact future I2U2 project collaboration efforts" https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/israel-hamas-war-may-impact-future-i2u2-project-collaboration-efforts-124010100839_1.html ,accessed on 10/09/2024.
- Mishra, Vivek. 2024, April 24. "Mapping the Arc of US Support to Ukraine: Economic, Political, and Strategic Imperatives", https://www.orfonline.org/research/mapping-the-arc-of-us-support-to-ukraine-economic-political-and-strategic-imperatives, accessed on 18/09/2024.

- Myre, Greg. 2024, August 1. "Report: Ukraine receives first batch of U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets", https://www.npr.org/2024/08/01/g-s1-14698/ukraine-receives-u-s-f-16-fighter-jets#:~:text=Ukraine%20has%20received%20its%20first,power%2C%20according%20to%20news%20reports ,accessed on 12/09/2024.
- Office of public affair, us department of justice. 2024, September 3. "Justice Department Announces Terrorism Charges Against Senior Leaders of Hamas", https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-terrorism-charges-against-senior-leaders-hamas#:~:text=According%20to%20court%20documents%2C%20Harakat,the%20United%20States%20since%201997accessed on 24/09/2024.
- Rao, Swasti. 2024, May 24. "India can't ignore Russia-China bonhomie. Pursue CNP with a grand strategy", https://theprint.in/opinion/india-cant-ignore-russia-china-bonhomie-pursue-cnp-with-a-grand-strategy/2099675/ , accessed on 25/08/2024.
- Real conflicts. 2024, July 5. "The United States Should Continue Supporting Ukraine".
- https://www.realconflicts.com/post/merican-interests-in-ukrainewhy-aid-should-continue?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw9Km3BhDjARIsAGUb4nxk4KrCyB6pqKIu0BMgQnNrqFswgDWu6Cs N0dHaLLcAluiELRiEz QwaAoZZEALw_wcB, accessed on 19/09/2024.
- Ray, Michael. 2022, "Russia Ukraine War" https://www.britannica.com/event/2022-Russian-invasion-of-Ukraine ,accessed on 18/08/2024.
- Robinson, Kali. 2023, July 12. "What Is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?", https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-us-policy-israeli-palestinian-conflict, accessed on 7/09/2024.
- Sen, Amiti. 2023, October 25. "Israel-Hamas war could slow down I2U2 projects in India" https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/israel-hamas-war-could-slow-down-i2u2-projects-in-india/article67458507.ece ,accessed on 10/09/2024.
- Sen, Amiti, 2024(August 30), " Israel-Hamas conflict casts shadow on future of I2U2 group", https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/world/israel-hamas-conflict-casts-shadow-on-future-of-i2u2-group/article68586280.ece , accessed on 24/09/2024.
- Singh, Anita Inder, 2024 (July 12), "To Russia with love: India's new attempts to cultivate Russia won't contain China, could spoil ties with the US", https://www.

financialexpress.com/opinion/to-russia-with-love-indias-new-attempts-to-cultivate-russia-wont-contain-china-could-spoil-ties-with-the-us/3551059/lite/#amp_tf=From%20%251%24s&aoh=17245297712175&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com, accessed on 25/08/2024.

- Silver, Laura, 2024(March 21), "Majority in U.S. Say Israel Has Valid Reasons for Fighting; Fewer Say the Same About Hamas", https://www.pewresearch.org/2024/03/21/majority-in-u-s-say-israel-has-valid-reasons-for-fighting-fewer-say-the-same-about-hamas/, accessed on 15/09/2024.
- Stewart, Phil, 2024 (October 15), "US to send anti-missile system and troops to Israel, Pentagon says", https://www.reuters.com/world/us-send-anti-missile-system-israel-says-pentagon-2024-10-13/, accessed on 13/10/2024.
- Taneja, Kabir, 2023 (November 23), "The Gaza crisis and challenge to future-proof I2U2", https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-gaza-crisis-and-challenge-to-future-proof-i2u2 ,accessed on 24/09/2024.
- The Hindu, 2024(January 14),"Israel-Hamas war | Timeline of major events from the first 100 days", https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/israel-hamas-war-timeline-of-major-events-from-the-first-100-days/article67740155.ece accessed on 18/08/2024.
- Times of India, 2024 (February 19), "How Russia-Ukraine war is boosting US economy, defense industry", https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/how-russia-ukraine-war-is-boosting-us-economy-defense-industry/articleshow/107816099.cms, accessed on 25/08/2024.
- Tomazin, Farrah, 2022 (March 2), "Why the US won't fight in Ukraine", https://www.smh.com.au/world/north-america/a-direct-us-intervention-in-ukraine-is-still-off-the-cards-20220301-p5a0qd.html , accessed on 30/10/2024.
- Toosi,Nahal, 2023 (July 11), "Why the U.S. isn't stopping this war, and other Middle East realities", https://www.politico.com/news/2023/11/07/why-the-u-s-doesnt-want-to-stop-this-war-and-other-middle-east-realities-00125860, accessed on 25/09/2024.
- Usher, Barbara Plett, 2023 (October 10), "President Joe Biden's foreign policy upended by Hamas attack", https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-67061453, accessed on 30/09/2024.

- US embassy in Ukraine, 2022 "Policy and History", https://ua.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/#:~:text=U.S.%2DUkraine%20Relations,with%20a%20flourishing%20market%20economy ,accessed on 25/09/2024.
- Wood, Ruairidh, Journal of Global Faultline's, Vol. 6, No. 2, Security Challenges of the 21st Century: New Challenges and Perspectives (December 2019-February 2020), pp. 166-185 Published by Pluto Journals, "Promoting democracy or pursuing hegemony? An analysis of U.S. involvement in the Middle East", accessed on 28/08/2024.
- Wu, Edieth Y., 2013, "SHOULD THE UNITED STATES INTERVENE IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS: WHY, WHEN, AND HOW?", Volume 23, accessed on 18/08/2024.
- Zeidan,Adam, 2024 (September 30), "Abraham Accords", https://www.britannica.com/topic/Abraham-Accords ,accessed on 10/09/2024.

Bio Profile of the Author:

PGT Political Science Educator (class XI & XII) & Social Science (classes VII-X)
ISC Affiliated reputed English Medium School 05/2022 - Present,
Visiting Examiner for ISC Examination (Class XII) for political science Engaging in external invigilation, participation in cultural programs in school
Assistant Examiner for Centralized evaluation of Political Science answer scripts for ISC Examination
Email ID: shreyaghosh1700@gmail.com

Acknowledgement

Dr. Reshma Khatun
Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Aliah University
Park Circus Campus

Professor Dilip Kumar Kalita
Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University, Assam
Director of Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture (ABILAC) Assam,

Dr. Malay Dey
Centre for Studies in Museology
University of Jammu

Prof. Durga Basu
Vice President,
Kolkata Society For Asian Studies.
Former Head of the Department,
Department of Archaeology,
Calcutta university.

Amit Kumar Kisku, PhD (SOAS, University of London)
Professor, Department of Anthropology,
Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India

Dr. Tinni Goswami
Assistant Professor, HOD,
History,
St. Xavier's College , Kolkata ,

Professor Rahim Mondal
Professor and Head, Department of Anthropology and Sociology and
Dept. of Sociology, Centre for Himalayan Studies, University of North Bengal,

Dr. Sraboni Chatterjee
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology,
Bijoy Krishna Girl's College, Howrah,

Dr. Chandramalli Sengupta
Associate Professor
Post Graduate Department of Bengali
Asutosh College

Debasis Kumar Mondal, Ph.D
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Calcutta

Dr. Debi Chatterjee
Retired Professor
Department of International Relations
Jadavpur University

Dr. Ranjana Banerjee
President of UWAsia; Membership and Extension officer of the National Association of Soroptimist International. Member in GWIs Fellowship Committee.

Dr. Tanusree Chakraborty
Faculty, Globsyn
PhD from University of Calcutta
Area of Specialisation Gender, Economics, Micro Finance

Dr. Atasi Nanda Goswami
Research Coordinator
Centre for knowledge Ideas & Development Studies
Kolkata

Dr. Madhuri Sarker
General Secretary
Academy of Folklore, Tollygunge

Dr. Madhumita Chattopadhyay
Professor, Department of Philosophy.
Jadavpur University

Dr. Sudeshna Basu Mukherjee
Professor, Department of Sociology
University of Calcutta
Alipore Campus

Dr. Sarbani Guha Ghosal.
Associate Professor, Political Science
Bijoy Krishna Girls' College, Howrah

Notes for Contributors

We accept contributions in four categories for the Journal of Kolkata Society For Asian Studies:

- Research Articles
  The original research papers submitted for consideration should not exceed 7000 words. It includes figures, charts, tables and references and excludes the abstract, key words and the bio-note of the author/s. Papers based on scientific study, review articles written in correct English and Bangla will be considered for publication.
- Research Notes:
  Informal items of topical interest (maximum 5000 words including endnotes and bibliography).
- Reports:
  Based on any survey or field study approved by any recognised University or Authorised research organization (maximum 5000 words including endnotes and references).
- Reviews of Social Science Scholarship:
  Books, Journals and other media (maximum 800 words), are also invited for reviews in the Journal.

Style Sheet for Research Article

1. Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate (hard copy) along with a softcopy. All correspondences regarding manuscripts should be submitted to:

   The Editor, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.
   Postal Address: 3/25/1, R. K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata-700042 Phone +91 9432490361
   Email: kspublication1@gmail.com Copy to: ksasianstudies@gmail.com

2. Manuscripts should be typed using a word-processing program like MS.
   Word with .doc/.rtf extension and also in pdf. format. Type the manuscript on one side of the paper. Leave double space between the lines, extra space between the sections and keep 1 inch (2.54 cm.) margins on all four sides of the paper.

3. Abstract should be provided before the article.

4. The number of Key Words should be up to 10.
5. The contributor's affiliations and his/her complete mailing address must be given at the end of the manuscript.
6. Endnotes should follow numerical order. Try to avoid footnotes.
7. As the journal will be mainly printed in Black, the authors are requested to make the charts, graphs and tables using Black and White combination only.
8. The references should be like:
   i. Embedded references (Phillipson 1992: 144)
   ii. Multiple references placed in alphabetical order '(Ellis 1994:10; Lenneberg 1967: 7; Pinker 1994: 54)'
   iii. Multiple references of the same author published in the same year arranged serially '(Pattanayak 2000a, 2000b)'

The detailed style of referencing follows:

a. Books:

Wirsing, G. 1972. Indian Experiment: Key to Asia's Future. Calcutta: Orient Longman.
Liu, J., H. A. Ross and D.P. Kelly. 2000. The Ethnographic Eye: An Interpretative Study of Education in China. New York : Falmer Press.

b. Articles in Edited Volumes:

Atkinson, J. M. 1987. Religions in Dialogue: The Construction of an Indonesian Minority Religion. In: R.S. Kipp and S. Rodgers (eds.), Indonesian Religions in Transition.
pp. 171-86. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

c. Articles in Journals:

Sonntag, S. K. 1996. 'The Political Saliency of Language in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh',
Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, 34 (2): 1-18.

d. Edited and Translated Volumes:

Zakaria, H. A. and H. A. Crouch (eds.). 1985. Military-Civilian Relations in South-East Asia. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
Becker, C. 1923. Early History of the Catholic Missions in Northeast India (1598-1890), edited and

translated by F. Leicht and S Karotemprel. 1989. Shillong: Vendrame.

e. Unpublished Works:

Kurasawa, A. I. 1988. 'Mobilization and Control: A Study of Social Change in Rural Java, 1942-1945.' (2 vols.)
Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Ithaca: Cornell University.
Mullins, D. 2001. 'Land reform, poverty reduction and HIV/AIDS'. Paper presented at the Southern African Regional Poverty Network conference on Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation in the Region, Pretoria, 12-14, March.

f. Primary Source Citations:

The location of the archive (the name of the town/village/city) and the country must be mentioned. Materials from personal archive should contain the name and location of the collector. If an audio/ audiovisual material is being used, the date/time and location of the recordings should be specified.

g. Website Citation:

http://en.mastersinleiden.nl/programmes/history-arts-and-culture-of- asia/en/introduction (accessed/ retrieved/updated on 5th May 2014)

Other specifications:

i. Use double quotation marks where necessary. Single quotation marks should be used only for a quotation within a quotation.
ii. In the text, the words from a regional language other than English which appear in a commonly used dictionary must be italicized. Proper names from all the countries and terms like 'et al.', 'ibid.', 'vis-a-vis' etc. should be written in Roman alphabet.
iii. A stop should be used after abbreviations ('ed.','vol.' etc.), contractions ('Dr.', 'Prof.' etc.) and between initials (as in 'J.S. Karan'). Do not use a stop in a contraction in capital ('UNESCO', 'USA' etc.).
iv. In the text, the numbers from one to nine should be in words rather than figures. However, 10 and above can remain in figures. Use 'thousands' and 'millions', avoid 'crores' and 'lakhs'. Dates and page numbers should be in full forms (like '2002-2007' and 'pp.125-127').
v. Attach each figure and table on a separate sheet of paper at the end of the article and arrange them serially. The titles should be short and crisp.
vi. Figures, tables, charts, graphs or photographs reproduced from any other source must obtain Copyright permission before reproduction.

vii. Diacritical marks should be consistent.

Glosses and Translations of Examples:

1. Language specific examples must be provided in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) or in Roman alphabet.
2. Examples from various languages other than English should be translated. Some examples may require a translation along with a word-for-word or morpheme-by- morpheme gloss.
3. The translation and the gloss should be placed under the example with proper indentation and alignment (in case of word-for-word or morpheme-by-morpheme gloss).
4. The grammatical categories in a gloss must be abbreviated
   For example,
   a) ad͡ʒ̃nek brʃ̺i hoye ʧ͡he.
      today lot rain be-pr.pf.3rd
      'Today there was heavy shower.'
   b) boneder ʧ͡hobi.
      sister-gen.pl. picture
      'Sisters' picture.'
5. The abbreviations must be given in a separate list.
   The paper/s submitted for consideration should not have been published before or under consideration for publication, anywhere in any language. The work must be approved by its author and the co-authors and also by the authorities of the place where the research was done. If the paper is accepted for publication in the present journal, it must not be published anywhere in any language without the proper written consent of the copyright holder.

For Papers in Bangla

The same style sheet should be followed for papers written in the Bangla language. Bangla font 'Avro' 'Kalpurush & Unicode' is preferred.

Off Prints: The first author of each paper will receive 10 off prints free of cost.

Notifications

This is to inform you that the Journal of Kolkata Society for Asian Studies accepts newly published book for its Review section.

The authors, who wish to get their books reviewed, should submit their books both in hard copy and soft copy. In absence of soft copy, the hard copy needs to be submitted in duplicate.

It is essential to submit the book with a covering letter clearly mentioning the purpose of submission. Kindly note that the book submitted for review will not be returned to the Author.

Kindly send the hard copies of the book to the following address: The Editor, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.

Postal Address:
3/25/1, R. K. Chatterjee Road,
Kolkata 700042
Phone: ++919432490361

Kindly send the soft copy of the book to the following Email Ids. prof.ranjana.ray@gmail.com
debasusharmistha@gmail.com

Copy to: kspublication1@gmail.com

RECENT PUBLICATION

'A Fiesta of Fifty Years of Indo-Bangladesh Relations :
Assessing the Varied Dynamics of Opportunities and Challenges'
Editor: Dr. Archita Ghose
Year: 2024, Published by
Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies.
ISBN: 978-81-955545-8-4
ASIN: B0D9TY16M1 (Kindle Edition)

Relevance of the Universal Mission of the Bengali Renaissance
for a Sustainable Future for India and the World.
Editor: Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2024 Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Editor
ISBN: 978-81-955545-3-9

Banglar Nabajagaraner Prasangikata o Bishwavratrittwabodh
Editor: Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2024 Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Editor
ISBN: 978-81-955545-6-0

Traditional Clay-Arts of Bengal: A Comprehensive Museological & Folkloric Study
Author: Arpita Basu
Year 2023 : Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Author
ISBN: 978-81-955545-2-2

Exploring the Saga of India-Nepal Relations: Juxtaposing Issues
of Convergence and Divergence
Editors: Tridib Chakraborti Sarmistha De Basu
Year 2023 Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ISBN: 9788195554508

Research Methodology: Tools & Techniques in Social Science
Editors: Durga Basu Asmita Basu
December, 2022 Pub: Setu Prakashani, Kolkata Delhi © Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ISBN: 9788195706051

Cultural Exchange through Folklore
Volume 1 and Volume 2
Editors: Sarit K. Chaudhuri Sarmistha De Basu Arpita Basu
Pub: Serials Publications (P) Ltd, New Delhi
© 2022, Kolkata Society for Asian Studies & Serials Publications (P) Ltd
ISBN: 9789391844035

Indian Relations with Sri Lanka and Maldives
(A Collection of Research Articles)
Editor: Sarmistha De Basu Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies December: 2021
Paper Back Edition, ISBN: 978-81-955545-1-5
E-Book Kindle Edition, ASIN : B09N2QB2NZ

Contours of India's Act East Policy: Opportunities, Challenges
and Futuristic Trend of Indo-ASEAN Partnership
Editors : Archita Ghose & Sarmistha De Basu
June : 2021 Pub: Kolkata Society for Asian Studies
ASIN : B097NL92S2
E-Book, File size: 2386 KB/ Kindle Editlon

Published by Kolkata Society for Asian Studies, Postal Address : 3/25/1, R.K. Chatterjee Road, Kolkata - 700042
Phone : +91-9432490361
Email : Ksasianstudies@gmail.com kspublicationl@gmail.com
Website: www.kolkatasocietyforasianstudies.com www.jrksas.org

Printed at : The Saraswati Printing Works, 2, Guru Prosad Chowdhury Lane, Kolkata 700 006

Price: Rs. 500.00