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RESEARCH ESSENCE

Peer-Reviewed Multidisciplinary Biannual Journal



Sree Narayana College, Sivagiri, Varkala

Sreenivasapuram P.O., Sivagiri, Varkala, Kerala, India, Pincode - 695145

(NAAC Re-accredited with B++ Grade, DBT Star Status,

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Title, authors' names with their institutional affiliations, email address and abstract along with relevant footnotes wherever necessary; Introduction, Keywords, Experimental details/Theory/ Method/Analysis; Results: Discussion; Conclusion(s); Acknowledgement; Reference and Appendixes.

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Zeolite Imidazole Framework-8 (ZIF-8) as Drug Delivery System-A Review

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Abstract

Zeolite imidazole framework-8, composed of Zn ions and imidazole as ligands, has sodalite topology. They are highly porous, possess large pore sizes, which are tunable, have high loading capacity, as well as exceptionally high thermal and chemical conditions. This material exhibits pH-sensitive degradation. Due to all these properties, ZIF-8 is an excellent candidate for drug delivery. This review focuses on the recent developments of ZIF-8 as a drug delivery system.

1. Introduction

Metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) have become a wide range of research topics nowadays. MOF is composed of metal coordinates to organic ligands to form finite secondary building units (SBUs), which have an immense contribution to material science, pharmaceutical science, and nanotechnology (Cheetham et al., 2006). The presence of SBU's gives geometrical shapes numerous functionalities to MOFs. MOFs are also called porous coordination polymers or MOFs process ultra-high porosity and exceptionally large surface area, which give rise to low density and considerable mechanical and thermal stability (Fairen-Jimenez et al., n.d.). The important applications of MOFs are hydrogen storage, gas absorption and separation, drug release, catalytic reaction, and other fields (Jiang et al., 2019). MOF faces a disadvantage as it has low aqueous stability, which would lead to hydrolysis and decomposition in the presence of moisture. As zeolites have a highly rigid structure, high aqueous stability, and appropriate surface area, they have been widely used in the chemical industry. As their rigid structure, pore

size, and functionality can be modified by the self-assembly method, Yaghi et al designed and synthesized MOF with zeolite-like structure (ZIFs) (Banerjee et al., 2008).

ZIFs are crystalline metal clusters bridged tetrahedrally via the imidazolate type of or self-assembled as M-IM-M structures, where M stands for tetrahedrally coordinated transition metal ions (Fe, Co, Cu, Zn) and where IM is the imidazole ligand. The angle of this structure is 145° to enable a zeolite-like topology (Banerjee et al., 2008). ZIFs exhibit properties of both MOFs and zeolites, such as exceptional thermal and chemical stability, ultra-high surface area, high crystallinity, unimodal microspores, and abundant functionalities (Wang et al., 2011). Thus, it can be used in numerous fields, including gas separations (Li et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2010), catalysis (Chizallet et al., 2004), gas storage (Ma & Zhou, 2010; Murray et al., 2009; H. Wu et al., 2007), chemical sensors (Harbuzaru et al., 2009; Lu & Hupp, 2010), and drug delivery. ZIF responds to various stimuli such as pH, singlet oxygen, and redox potential gradient, which leads to a characterization suitable for drug delivery.

ZIF-8 ($\text{Zn}[\text{MeIM}]_2 = \text{ZnC}_8\text{H}_{10}\text{N}_4$; MeIM = methyl imidazolate) is the typical type of ZIF that exhibits a sodalite-type structure. It has a high BET specific surface area (SSA) ($\approx 2000 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) and permanent porosity from its uniformly sized pore cavities ($\approx 1.16 \text{ nm}$ & pore volume of $\approx 0.60 \text{ cm}^3/\text{g}$) which are particularly desirable for many potential applications such as molecular gas storage separation by membrane sieving or Kinetic diffusion caging templating catalysis and shape-selective distillation and sensing (Gadipelli et al., 2014).

Several synthesis approaches of ZIF-8 have been proposed, including solvothermal synthesis, hydrothermal synthesis, ultrasound synthesis, mechanochemical synthesis, and accelerated aging methods (Lee et al., 2015). A large quantity of ZIF-8 can be readily synthesized by simple mixing of precursors of zinc nitrate/acetate and 2-methylimidazole in a water or methanol solvent at room temperature (Kaur et al., 2017). ZIF-8 membrane faces many problems which haven't solved yet such as: (i) synthesis costs and environmental impacts (ii) synthesis difficulties associated with the transfer from flat discs to deficient reproducibility of membrane performance And finally (iii) limited stability of supported thin film membrane caused by the differential thermal expansion of the ceramic support and the membrane material support and the membrane material (Drobek et al., 2015).

2. Review of Literature

The attractive characteristic of MOF is structural diversity, large surface area, and tunable pore size, which gives ways to many applications such as catalysis, gas separation, ion exchange, gas storage, sensing, and drug delivery. As for ZIF-8, there are typical properties such as high loading capacity, good dispersity, excellent thermal, chemical stability, and pH-sensitive

degradation, Sun et al (Sun et al., 2012), as it has a high surface area (BET- $1630 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) and large pores ($11.6 \text{ \AA}$).

The tumour cell possesses an acidic environment with a pH is about 5.0-6.8, and where normal cells have a pH of 7.4. This pH difference triggers the pH sensitivity of ZIF-8. Liu He, and co-workers check the pH responsiveness in drug delivery by fluorescence imaging. They use fluorescent carbon nanodots (C-dots) incorporated with ZIF-8 to form C-dots@ZIF-8, which is loaded with 5-fluorouracil (5-Fu). 5-Fu loaded in C-dots@ZIF-8, where release of different pH levels 7.4 & 5.5 of phosphate buffer saline (PBS). Slow release was observed in neutral PBS solution. 67% was released after 48 hr. But in the case of acidic PBS solution, fast release 92% of 5-Fu was released in the same period of time (He et al., n.d.). This experiment shows the pH-responsive drug release in cancer cells. ZIF-8 is more reactive towards acidic media, thus mostly targets the tumour cells.

Thus, the decomposition towards acidic media leads to a drawback as it is ineffective towards non-acidic media (like the intestine) or to reach the basic intestine, it should pass through the acidic stomach media, which makes the MOF structure decompose because of the acidic presence. To improve the stability of the MOF structure Tahereh Azizi Vahed, coats the ZIF-8 framework with a biocompatible polymer, sodium alginate to increase the stability in acidic media which help its stability in acidic media. Alginate coated ZIF-8 is synthesized by the in situ ball milling technique. This coating gives rise to some changes in its structural behaviour as the surface area decreases (BET $818.23\text{--}476.18 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) and pore diameter decreases ($11\text{--}9.9 \text{ nm}$).

The alginate coated ZIF-8 is loaded with metformin and it is treated in 1.5 and 8 pH conditions. Nearly 84% of metformin was

released in 8hr in PBS pH=8, and 64.2% metformin was released at PBS pH=1.5. This shows that the alginate coated ZIF-8 structure was preserved in highly acidic conditions and thus it can pass through highly acidic media to its less acidic target part. Coated ZIF-8 nanoparticles show non-toxicity towards normal cells under different pH conditions (Vahed et al., 2019). Yunrui Chen uses amphiphilic polymer (F68) coated on cargo(NaClO)@MOF, which increases the stability of hybrid carriers, MOF/F68. The loading process increases the particle size, ClO/MOF/F68 MOF/F68, this is due to the partially compromised ligand-metal coordination (Y. Chen et al., 2019).

Other than pH-responsive, the loss of target cells is due to the instability of the drug in biological media and low membrane permeability. This will lead to high cytotoxicity towards normal cells and easy decomposition of drugs. To control the drug release, put forward an idea of doxorubicin (DOX), which is an anthracycline antitumoral drug widely used in cancer treatment, and it has low stability, leading to therapeutic efficiency. Thus, DOX is bound with ZIF-8 (colorless to purple) where DOX binds to the Zn^{2+} cations on the framework surface via the quinone and the phenolic oxygen on the anthracycline aromatic moiety. 0.049g of DOX per g is dehydrated by ZIF-8, the DOX is incorporated into the ZIF-8 pores and leads to the slow release of drugs with zero order (30 days) and increases therapeutical efficiency. Pure DOX shows cardiotoxicity depend on the dose and by slow release of DOX decrease cytotoxicity. The Zn^{2+} can inhibit the binding interaction of the anthracycline with the major contractile protein cardiac myosin, exerting a cardiac protective effect against the drug. Thus, the presence of ZIF-8 reduces the cytotoxicity and increases the

stability of drugs (Vasconcelos et al., 2012).

ZIF-8 acts as a nanocarrier for drug delivery, so it's important to check the storage capability of ZIF-8 for drugs. Harepreet Kaur, use 6-Mercaptopurin(6 MP) which is an anti-leukemia drug. The drug was loaded inside ZIF-8 during the synthesis, thereby preparing 6-MP@ZIF-8, and the drug release kinetics. Even after the drug loading, there is no change in the crystallinity as well as the thermal stability of ZIF-8. The drug release was studied at two dif levels of pH, say 5 and 7.4, and found that there is rapid release in pH 5, within 10 hours, compared to pH 7.4, which extended up to 7 days (Kaur et al., 2017).

Thermal stability is observed through TGA/DSC/DTG, and it shows an experienced weight loss due to temperature rise. Leslie Raphael de Moura Ferraz has worked on BNZ@ZIF-8 and observed the thermal stability as isolated ZIF-8, isolated BNZ, and BNZ@ZIF-8. The Isolated ZIF-8 thermal decomposition takes place at 410.89- 448.54°C °C with a weight loss of 11.55%. Isolated BNZ shows 26.49 % of weight loss at 223.49-245.34°C and the combination mixture of BNZ@ZIF-8 shows 1.97 % at 50.13-87.94°C. ZIF-8 and drug interaction lead to the destabilization of the organic portion. The value of BNZ@ZIF-8 is lower than isolated ZIF-8, showing that there is a small amount of water molecule, which gives space for the connection with the molecules of the drug (de Moura Ferraz et al., 2020). Weight loss due to thermal analysis is of 3 stage (i) 1st event 80-100°C loss of hydration water molecule trapped in the pores of ZIF-8 (ii) 2nd event decomposition profile of ZIF-8 has not observed at 190-390°C and 390-620°C (iii) 3rd event due to thermal decomposition of mixture of drug and ZIF-8 followed by carbonization of matter (Vasconcelos et al., 2012).

3. Future perspective

3.1 Transdermal Drug Delivery

Transdermal drug delivery system (TDDS) method to therapeutically effective method of delivering drugs through skin. In order to deliver therapeutic agents through the Human skin for systemic effects, the comprehensive Morphological, biophysical and physicochemical properties of the skin are to be considered. Transdermal delivery provides a leading edge over injectable and oral routes by Increasing patient compliance and avoiding first pass metabolism respectively (Ansel et al., 2020).

The advantages of transdermal delivery over other delivery Systems are as follows:

1. Avoidance of first-pass metabolism of drugs.
2. Reduced plasma concentration levels of drugs, with decreased side effects.
3. Reduction of fluctuations in plasma levels of drugs, utilization of drug candidates with short half-life and low therapeutic index.
4. Easy elimination of drug delivery in case of toxicity.
5. Reduction of dosing frequency and enhancement of patient compliance.
6. Transdermal medications deliver a steady infusion of a or therapeutic failure frequently associated with intermittent dosing can also be avoided.
7. Transdermal delivery can increase the therapeutic value of many drugs by avoiding specific problems associated with the drug. eg; GI irritation, lower absorption, decomposition due to 'hepatic first pass' effect.
8. Due to the above advantage, it is possible that an equivalent therapeutic effect can be elicited via transdermal drug input with a

lower daily dose of the drug than is necessary, if, e.g., the drug is given orally.

9. The simplified medication regimen leads to improved patient compliance and reduced inter- and intra-patient variability (Kumar & Philip, 2007).

The drug absorption process is related to the drug partition between the TDDS and the skin and the drug permeation process. Complete Skin contact over the entire delivery surface for the entire Label application period is essential. If the TDDS lifts or partially detaches, the effective area of TDDS/skin contact, and thus the drug absorption, changes in an unpredictable Manner. Therapeutic failure can then occur. Only a constant TDDS/skin contact over the whole application period allows a consistent delivery and absorption of the drug (Fauth et al., 2002; Minghetti et al., 1999).

The drugs used in a transdermal system depend upon (i) physicochemical properties such as non-ionic, low molecular weight <500 Dalton, adequate solubility of oil and water (lipophilic drugs), low melting point (less than 200°C), dose should be less than 50 mg per day. (ii) Biological property such as a daily dose of order of a few mg/day, half-life of the drug should be short, allergic response should not be induced, drug degraded in the GIT (Lewis, Udupa, et al., 2006). Drugs used are: fentanyl, nitroglycerin, estradiol, ethinylestradiol, norethindroneacetate, testosterone, clonidine, nicotine, lidocaine, prilocaine, scopolamine. Permeation enhancer used to overcome come stratum corneum layer of the skin by interacting with it and thus permeability increases. Permeation enhancer should be nontoxic, compatible and should not bind to the receptor (Rastogi & Yadav, 2014).

3 types of transdermal pathways:

1. Transcellular pathway: Drugs cross the skin by directly passing through both

the phospholipids' membranes and the cytoplasm of the dead keratinocytes that constitute the stratum corneum (Mccarley & Bunge, 2001).

2. Intercellular pathway: Drugs crossing the skin by this route must pass through the small spaces between the cells of the skin, making the route more tortuous. Although the thickness of the stratum corneum is only about 20 μm , the actual diffusional path of most molecules crossing the skin is on the order of 400 μm (Hadgraft, 2001).
3. Microneedles: A pathway to breach the Stratum Corneum layer is via tiny micro channels created by a medical micro-needling device of which there are many brands and variants [cite 59]. This enhancing skin penetration ability for lipophilic as well as hydrophilic compounds (Verma & Fahr, n.d.). The microneedles can be hollow, solid, coated, dissolving, or hydrogel-forming. Some have regulatory approval. Microneedle devices/patches can be used to deliver nano medicines (Ita, 2015; Larrañeta et al., 2016).

Penetration methods are used as the Stratum Corneum contains corneocyte cells, which contain cross-linked keratin, and the mortar represents a mixture of lipids arranged in bilayers. Thus, the diffusion through is limited due to structural and solubility factors. The enhancer follows (i) increase the permeability of skin by Reversibly disrupting the stratum corneum, (ii) give an additional driving force for the permeation of the drug into the skin and (iii) avoid any side effects to the living tissues (Naik et al., 2000). Chemical and physical Penetration enhancers are used but due to drawbacks as irritation and side effect natural products such as essential oils, terpenes, fatty acids, polysaccharides, and miscellaneous are used as enhancers (Roberts & Walker, 1993).

3.2 Zif-8 as a Transdermal Drug Delivery System

As referred above ZIF-8 as a good nano carrier and a better drug delivery agent with low demerits then consider ZIF-8 as a transdermal drug delivery agent. The factor that affects the ZIF-8 as a transdermal system is the permeability of ZIF-8 through skin. An experiment was carried out to check the permeation power of ZIF-8. An animal biological membrane such as Pig ear skin or rat's skin can be used and placed between the two compartments for the Permeation study. A phosphate buffer solution of pH 7.4 is usually used as receptor medium. For the receptor compartment of the diffusion cell, the receptor solution is maintained at 32 ± 0.5 °C under constant stirring using magnetic rods. The patch is placed between the upper and inner compartments mounted so that the drug releasing surface faces the receptor side (Cerqueira-Coutinho et al., 2015). The inner compartment buffer medium is subjected to continuous stirring at a constant rate. The ZIF-8 with drug moves through the blood fluid without decomposing which is due to the pH of the blood (7.4) neutral with slight basic in nature.

The ZIF-8 decomposes in acidic nature so thus the stability of ZIF-8 through body fluid remains constant. As the intake of ZIF-8 orally they move directly towards stomach which is highly acidic in nature. So thus, transdermal system takes a way which makes this task easy as for targeting cells. Slow release of enzyme@ZIF-8 is introduced in blood vessels and as it reaches the target part the ZIF-8 slowly decompose due to the pH change and slow release of drug occurs.

Other nanocarriers in Transdermal system such as liposome, dendrimers, niosomes, transfersomes shows drawback such as:

- When high-pressure homogenization is used, decreased Stability of high-weight molecules.
- Lipid crystallization leads to a lot of polymorphic Issues.
- Variable kinetics of distribution processes.
- They are susceptible to physical instability.
- They have shown cellular toxicity.
- Elimination and metabolism could be a problem depending on the generation and materials.
- Their synthesis costs are higher than other nanocarriers.
- Hemolytic effects can be found.
- They are not good carriers for hydrophilic drugs.
- Predisposition to oxidative degradation.
- Purity of natural phospholipids.
- Formulations are expensive.

Comparing this with ZIF-8, the important factor that shows is the toxic nature of it. The hydrophobicity nature of ZIF-8 leads to a factor of toxicity. Due to hydrophobic nature there forms a cell-substrate interaction and loss of cell monolayer. The cell-substrate interaction is the reason for the cellular toxicity of these particles. There is more need to be researched about its drawbacks and other findings. The toxicity of the Nanocarrier is a main obstacle. The degradation mechanism And degradation products of ZIF-8 under physiological Conditions need more investigation.

4. Conclusion

Extensive research effort has been devoted to the synthesis And drug delivery applications of ZIF-8 and promising Progress in both aspects has

been achieved in recent years. Several synthesis methods, including traditional and Non-traditional approaches, have been developed to Produce ZIF-8 materials with different forms and properties. The traditional strategies including solvothermal and Hydrothermal methods have been broadly used to prepare ZIF-8.

The unique molecular structure and properties of ZIF-8 Make it a unique vehicle in drug delivery. Generally, ZIF-8 Shows good dispersity, high loading capacity, high thermal And chemical stabilities, and pH-sensitive degradation. ZIF-8 as transdermal drug delivery system is an turn up to the drug delivery method. The high capacity to hold up with high stability. The targeting towards cancer tissue leads to pharmaceutical field. The upcoming events and researches is going through varies part application level of ZIF-8.

In order to develop new synthesis methods and to Discover the novel attractive drug delivery applications of ZIF-8, it is important to make use of the experience and Knowledge obtained from related areas, for example in the Inorganic materials. ZIF-8 has gained broad attention and Tremendous achievement has been made in recent years. We believe that new techniques and concepts for synthesis And utilization of the fast growing field of ZIF-8 materials Will continue to develop in the near future.

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Towards A Reconceptualisation Of Influencer Marketing Effectiveness: An Integrative Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant strategy within the digital marketing landscape, fundamentally altering how brands communicate with consumers and how persuasive messages are received in online environments. Despite its widespread adoption, existing research on influencer marketing effectiveness remains fragmented, often focusing on isolated constructs or single theoretical perspectives. This fragmentation limits a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which influencer marketing shapes consumer responses. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to reconceptualise influencer marketing effectiveness by developing an integrative conceptual framework that synthesises key persuasive mechanisms identified in prior literature. Drawing on established theories of persuasion, source credibility, and social influence, the paper organises and integrates core influencer-related attributes, content-related factors, and consumer response mechanisms to explain how influencer marketing generates behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention. Rather than offering empirical testing, this study adopts a conceptual approach grounded in an extensive review and synthesis of existing research. A set of research propositions is advanced to clarify the interrelationships among the proposed constructs and to guide future empirical investigations across different platforms and consumer contexts. The study contributes to the influencer marketing literature by providing a theoretically grounded and holistic framework that enhances conceptual clarity in this evolving domain. From a managerial perspective, the framework offers strategic insights into designing and evaluating influencer marketing initiatives. The paper concludes by outlining directions for future research aimed at empirical validation and contextual extension.

Keywords: *Influencer marketing; Marketing effectiveness; Persuasion processes; Social media communication; Consumer decision-making*

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of social media platforms has fundamentally reshaped the marketing communication landscape, giving influencer

marketing significant strategic importance as a tool for engaging consumers in the digital environment (Brown & Hayes, 2008; De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

Influencers, who are perceived as relatable and credible, have emerged as powerful intermediaries capable of influencing consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions through personalised and socially embedded forms of persuasion (Freberg et al., 2011; Lou & Yuan, 2019). As a result, influencer marketing has attracted substantial academic attention over the past decade, particularly within the fields of marketing, consumer behaviour, and digital communication.

Even though the growing body of research, existing studies on influencer marketing effectiveness remain conceptually fragmented. Most of the literature has focused on examining isolated constructs, such as credibility, attractiveness, authenticity, or engagement, which are often tested independently across specific platforms or contexts (Ohanian, 1990; Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020). While these studies have contributed valuable insights, they offer a limited explanation of how different persuasive elements interact to shape consumer responses in digital settings. Consequently, influencer marketing effectiveness is frequently treated as a set of discrete effects rather than as a well-structured persuasive process.

From a theoretical approach, influencer marketing draws upon multiple foundational perspectives, including source credibility theory, social influence theory, and persuasion frameworks (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Kelman, 1961; Cialdini, 2001). However, prior research has often applied these theories partially or selectively, leading to conceptual uncertainty regarding the underlying mechanisms through which influencer marketing operates. This lack of integration restricts theoretical advancement and poses challenges for developing cumulative knowledge in the domain.

Moreover, the dynamic and evolving nature of digital platforms has further complicated attempts to define influencer marketing effectiveness. Changes in platform algorithms, content formats, disclosure norms, and audience expectations continuously reshape how influencer messages are produced, interpreted, and evaluated by consumers (Abidin, 2016; Audrezet, de Kerviler, & Guidry Moulard, 2020). In this context, narrowly focused models may become outdated quickly, highlighting the need for broader conceptual frameworks that can adapt to differences across platforms and consumer groups. In response to these limitations, scholars have increasingly called for more integrative and theory-driven approaches to understanding influencer marketing effectiveness (Vrontis et al., 2021). Rather than examining individual variables in isolation, there is a growing need to synthesise influencer-related characteristics, content features, and consumer response mechanisms into a unified explanatory structure. Such an approach can offer deeper insights into the persuasive processes that underpin influencer marketing and provide a stronger foundation for future empirical research.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to reconceptualise influencer marketing effectiveness by developing an integrative conceptual framework that synthesises key persuasive mechanisms identified in prior literature. Drawing on established theories of persuasion, source credibility, and social influence, the paper organises and links influencer attributes, communication cues, and consumer responses to explain how influencer marketing generates behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention. By adopting a conceptual and synthesis-oriented approach, this study aims to move beyond fragmented findings and

contribute to greater theoretical clarity in the influencer marketing domain.

Conceptual Background Of Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has evolved from a peripheral promotional tactic into a central component of contemporary digital marketing strategies. Unlike traditional celebrity endorsement, influencer marketing operates within socially embedded online environments where communication is perceived as more personal, interactive, and authentic (Brown & Hayes, 2008; Abidin, 2016). Influencers are typically positioned as opinion leaders who cultivate sustained relationships with their audiences, enabling them to shape consumer perceptions through ongoing content creation rather than one-time promotional messages (Freberg et al., 2011).

From a conceptual standpoint, influencer marketing can be understood as a hybrid form of persuasive communication that blends commercial intent with social interaction. This hybridity distinguishes influencer marketing from conventional advertising and complicates efforts to define and measure its effectiveness. While traditional advertising effectiveness has often been assessed using clear metrics such as recall or attitude change, influencer marketing effectiveness encompasses a broader range of cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses that unfold over time within digital platforms (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

A significant portion of existing research has examined influencer marketing effectiveness by focusing on specific influencer-related attributes. Drawing largely from source credibility theory, studies have explored how characteristics such as trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness

shape consumer responses to influencer content (Ohanian, 1990; De Veirman et al., 2017). These attributes are assumed to enhance message acceptance by increasing perceived credibility and reducing resistance to persuasion. While this stream of research has provided valuable insights, its emphasis on isolated attributes has contributed to a fragmented understanding of influencer effectiveness.

Beyond influencer characteristics, scholars have increasingly recognised the role of content-related and contextual factors in shaping persuasive outcomes. Influencer messages are embedded within visually rich, narrative-driven, and interactive content formats that differ substantially from traditional advertising messages (Abidin, 2016). Elements such as storytelling, perceived authenticity, disclosure of sponsorship, and informational value influence how audiences interpret influencer communications and evaluate their persuasive intent (Audrezet et al., 2020). These factors suggest that influencer marketing effectiveness cannot be fully explained by source characteristics alone.

Consumer response processes further add complexity to the conceptualisation of influencer marketing effectiveness. Digital platforms enable parasocial interaction, perceived similarity, and emotional engagement between influencers and followers, fostering a sense of closeness that amplifies persuasive influence (Kelman, 1961; Cialdini, 2001). Instead of acting as passive recipients of messages, consumers actively engage with influencer content by liking, commenting, sharing, and integrating influencer recommendations into their purchase decision-making processes. Consequently, the effectiveness emerges through an interaction between influencer attributes, message cues, and consumer psychological responses.

Theoretically, influencer marketing research draws from multiple foundational perspectives, including persuasion theory, social influence theory, and communication models. Source credibility theory explains how perceived credibility enhances message acceptance, while social influence theory highlights processes such as internalisation and identification that shape attitude change (Hovland et al., 1953; Kelman, 1961). Persuasion frameworks further emphasise the role of message interpretation and consumer motivation in determining persuasive outcomes. However, prior studies have often applied these theories in isolation, limiting their explanatory power in complex digital environments.

The fragmented application of theory has resulted in a proliferation of models that explain influencer marketing effectiveness through narrow lenses. Some studies prioritise influencer traits, others emphasise content strategies, and still others focus on engagement metrics or behavioural outcomes. While each approach offers partial explanations, the absence of an integrative perspective restricts the development of a cohesive theoretical understanding of how influencer marketing functions as a persuasive system (Vrontis et al., 2021).

In light of these observations, there is a clear need to move beyond fragmented, construct-specific approaches and towards an integrated conceptual understanding of influencer marketing effectiveness. By synthesising influencer attributes, content-related cues, and consumer response processes within a unified framework, scholars can better explain how persuasive influence operates in digital contexts. Such integration not only advances theoretical clarity but also provides a stronger foundation for future empirical research across diverse platforms and consumer segments.

Reconceptualising Influencer Marketing Effectiveness

Influencer marketing effectiveness has traditionally been examined through outcome-oriented lenses, often operationalised using measures such as purchase intention, brand attitude, or engagement metrics. While such indicators are useful for empirical assessment, they offer limited insight into the underlying processes through which influencer marketing applies persuasive influence. Consequently, effectiveness is often treated as an end state instead of being treated as a dynamic process shaped by multiple interacting mechanisms. This section advances the argument that influencer marketing effectiveness is better understood as an integrative persuasive system, in which influencer characteristics, communication cues, and consumer psychological responses jointly shape behavioural outcomes.

At its core, influencer marketing operates within a social communication environment rather than a purely commercial one. Influencers are embedded within digital communities where relationships are cultivated over time through consistent content creation, interaction, and self-disclosure. This relational context differentiates influencer marketing from traditional advertising and necessitates a broader conceptualisation of effectiveness. Rather than asking whether influencer marketing “works,” it is more meaningful to examine *how* and *why* it works by identifying the mechanisms that translate influencer communication into consumer action.

One foundational element of influencer marketing effectiveness lies in influencer-related attributes. Drawing from source credibility and social influence perspectives, influencers function as persuasive agents whose perceived qualities

shape message reception. Attributes such as credibility, authenticity, and perceived expertise enhance the legitimacy of influencer messages and reduce consumer cynicism. However, these attributes do not operate in isolation. Their persuasive impact is contingent upon how they are communicated through content and interpreted by audiences within specific digital contexts. Consequently, influencer attributes should be viewed as enabling conditions that initiate, rather than complete, the persuasive process.

Communication cues embedded within influencer content constitute a second critical dimension of effectiveness. Influencer marketing messages are typically conveyed through narratives, visual storytelling, and experiential demonstrations that blur the boundary between personal expression and commercial promotion. The informational value of content, the transparency of sponsorship disclosures, and the perceived sincerity of endorsements influence how consumers evaluate influencer messages. These cues shape whether audiences perceive influencer communication as an authentic recommendation or overt persuasion, thereby affecting message acceptance. Importantly, content-related factors mediate the translation of influencer attributes into persuasive outcomes by framing how influencer qualities are expressed and interpreted.

Consumer psychological responses represent a third dimension through which influencer marketing effectiveness unfolds. Digital platforms facilitate parasocial interaction, perceived similarity, and emotional engagement, fostering a sense of closeness between influencers and followers. Through processes of identification and internalisation, consumers may adopt influencer opinions and preferences as their own, particularly when influencers

are perceived as relatable and trustworthy. Engagement behaviours such as commenting, sharing, and following further reinforce these psychological connections, transforming passive exposure into active participation. Effectiveness, therefore, emerges not merely from exposure to influencer messages but from the depth of consumer involvement in the influencer–audience relationship.

Reconceptualising influencer marketing effectiveness requires recognising the interdependence of these dimensions. Influencer attributes influence how content is perceived; content cues shape consumer interpretation; and consumer responses feed back into the credibility and influence of the influencer over time. This reciprocal dynamic suggests that influencer marketing effectiveness is not linear but iterative, evolving as relationships between influencers and audiences develop. Conceptual models that isolate single variables fail to capture this complexity and risk oversimplifying a fundamentally relational phenomenon.

An integrative conceptual framework offers a more comprehensive explanation by positioning influencer marketing effectiveness as the outcome of interacting persuasive mechanisms rather than discrete effects. Within this framework, influencer-related attributes provide the foundation for persuasion, communication cues act as vehicles through which influence is transmitted, and consumer psychological responses represent the processes through which persuasion is realised. Behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention are thus viewed as downstream consequences of these interacting mechanisms, rather than as direct effects of any single factor.

Such a reconceptualization carries important theoretical implications. It shifts the focus of

influencer marketing research from variable-centric models to process-oriented explanations, aligning the field more closely with broader theories of persuasion and social influence. By emphasising mechanisms rather than metrics, the framework accommodates variability across platforms, content formats, and consumer groups, enhancing its explanatory scope and longevity. This approach also facilitates theory integration by allowing insights from credibility theory, persuasion theory, and digital communication research to be examined within a unified structure.

From a conceptual perspective, this framework serves as a foundation for systematic theory development in influencer marketing research. It enables scholars to examine not only whether influencer marketing is effective but also the conditions under which specific persuasive mechanisms are activated. For example, the relative importance of influencer attributes versus

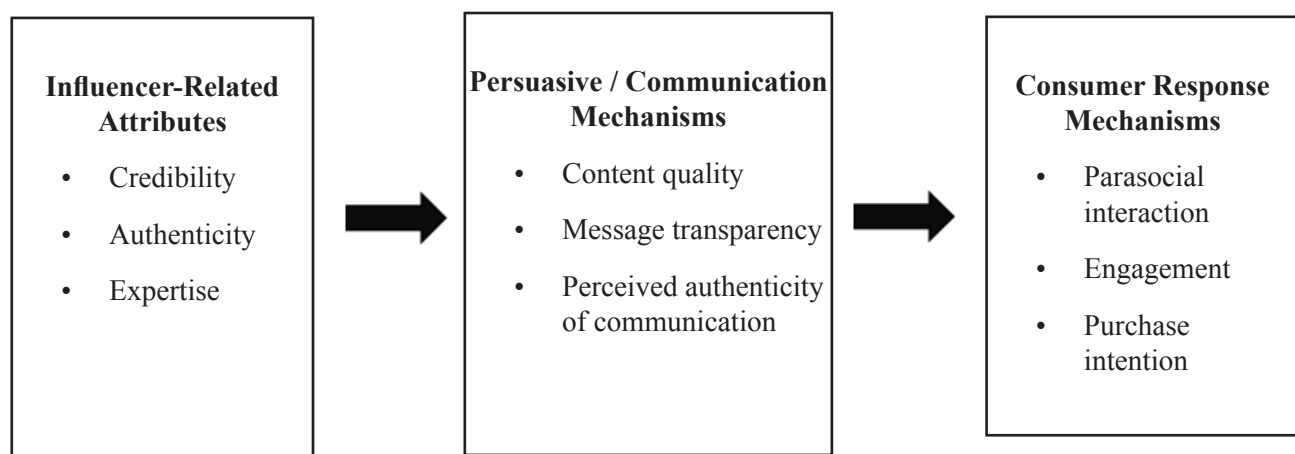
content cues may vary across product categories or stages of the consumer decision process. By situating such inquiries within an integrative framework, future research can move beyond fragmented findings and contribute to cumulative knowledge development.

In summary, reconceptualising influencer marketing effectiveness as an integrative persuasive system provides a more refined and theoretically grounded understanding of how influencer marketing functions in digital environments. By acknowledging the interplay between influencer characteristics, communication cues, and consumer psychological responses, this perspective advances conceptual clarity and offers a stronger foundation for future empirical investigation. The following section builds on this reconceptualization by articulating a set of research propositions that formalise the relationships implied by the proposed framework.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Figure.1

Proposed Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed by the author

The proposed conceptual framework illustrates influencer marketing effectiveness as an integrative persuasive process. Influencer-related attributes such as credibility, authenticity, and expertise form the foundational inputs of the model. These attributes shape the nature of persuasive communication, reflected through content quality, message transparency, and perceived authenticity. In turn, these persuasive mechanisms influence consumer response processes, including parasocial interaction, engagement, and purchase intention. The framework emphasises the interconnected nature of these elements, highlighting influencer marketing effectiveness as an outcome of interacting mechanisms rather than isolated effects.

Development Of Research Propositions

Building on the reconceptualisation of influencer marketing effectiveness as an integrative persuasive system, this section advances a set of research propositions that formalise the key relationships implied by the proposed framework. Consistent with the conceptual nature of the study, the propositions are intentionally broad and theory-driven, providing guidance for future empirical investigation rather than offering immediate testable hypotheses.

Influencer-related attributes constitute a foundational element of influencer marketing effectiveness. Attributes such as credibility, authenticity, and perceived expertise influence how audiences evaluate influencer messages and determine the extent to which influencer communications are considered trustworthy and persuasive. Research on source credibility demonstrates the importance of expertise and trustworthiness in shaping message acceptance, while studies of influencer marketing indicate that

influencer credibility can enhance consumer trust and purchase intention (Ohanian, 1990; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020). Accordingly, influencer attributes are expected to play a central role in shaping persuasive outcomes in digital contexts.

Proposition 1 (P1): Influencer-related attributes enhance influencer marketing effectiveness by increasing consumer receptiveness to persuasive communication.

However, influencer attributes alone are insufficient to fully explain persuasive influence. The manner in which influencer characteristics are communicated through content is equally critical. Influencer marketing messages are embedded within narratives, visual representations, and experiential content formats that shape audience interpretation. Content-related cues such as informational value, perceived authenticity, and transparency of promotional intent influence whether influencer communications are perceived as genuine recommendations or as overt advertising (Abidin, 2016; Audrezet et al., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). These cues are therefore expected to mediate the translation of influencer attributes into persuasive impact.

Proposition 2 (P2): Content-related communication cues mediate the relationship between influencer-related attributes and influencer marketing effectiveness.

Consumer psychological responses represent a further mechanism through which influencer marketing effectiveness unfolds. Persuasion and social influence perspectives suggest that processes such as identification and internalisation can shape how individuals respond to persuasive communication (Hovland et al., 1953; Kelman, 1961; Cialdini, 2001). In digital environments, ongoing interactions between influencers

and followers can strengthen consumer involvement and contribute to favourable responses toward influencer recommendations. As consumer involvement deepens, influencer recommendations are more likely to shape attitudes and behavioural intentions.

Proposition 3 (P3): Consumer psychological responses mediate the relationship between influencer communication cues and persuasive outcomes in influencer marketing.

Taken together, these propositions suggest that influencer marketing effectiveness emerges from the interaction of influencer attributes, communication cues, and consumer response processes rather than from isolated effects. The persuasive influence of influencers is therefore best understood as a dynamic and relational process in which multiple mechanisms operate simultaneously. This integrative perspective highlights the importance of examining how different elements of influencer marketing reinforce one another over time.

Finally, the framework implies that persuasive mechanisms in influencer marketing may vary across contexts. The dynamic nature of digital platforms, together with differences in content formats, disclosure practices, audience expectations, and platform environments, can influence how influencer attributes, content cues, and consumer responses interact (Abidin, 2016; Audrezet et al., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021). Recognising this contextual variability is therefore essential for advancing theory and avoiding overly deterministic models of influencer effectiveness.

Proposition 4 (P4): The strength of persuasive mechanisms underlying influencer marketing effectiveness varies across digital contexts and communication environments.

Together, these propositions provide a structured yet flexible foundation for future empirical research. They enable scholars to test the proposed relationships across different platforms, industries, and consumer segments, thereby extending and refining the conceptual understanding of influencer marketing effectiveness.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The present study offers several theoretical contributions to the influencer marketing and digital persuasion literature. First, by reconceptualising influencer marketing effectiveness as an integrative persuasive system, the paper moves beyond fragmented, variable-centric approaches that dominate existing research. Rather than treating influencer attributes, content features, or consumer responses as isolated determinants, the proposed framework emphasises the interdependence of these elements. This shift contributes to greater conceptual clarity and aligns influencer marketing research more closely with broader theories of persuasion and social influence.

Second, the framework advances theory by foregrounding persuasive mechanisms rather than surface-level outcomes. Much of the prior literature has relied on behavioural indicators such as engagement metrics or purchase intention without sufficiently explaining the processes through which these outcomes emerge. By organising influencer marketing effectiveness around influencer-related attributes, communication cues, and consumer psychological responses, this study provides a process-oriented explanation that can accommodate variations across platforms, industries, and consumer groups. This approach enhances the explanatory power and theoretical generalisability of influencer marketing models.

Third, the integrative nature of the framework facilitates theory development by enabling the synthesis of multiple theoretical perspectives within a single explanatory structure. By drawing from source credibility theory, persuasion theory, and social influence theory, the study offers a cohesive lens through which influencer marketing phenomena can be examined. This integration supports cumulative knowledge development by providing a common conceptual foundation upon which future empirical studies can build and refine theoretical relationships.

Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the proposed framework offers important insights for the strategic design and evaluation of influencer marketing initiatives. First, the findings suggest that influencer selection should not be based solely on visible metrics such as follower counts or engagement rates. Instead, marketers should consider how influencer attributes, content strategies, and audience relationships interact to generate persuasive influence. Evaluating influencers through a multidimensional lens can lead to more effective and sustainable marketing outcomes.

Second, the framework highlights the importance of content strategy in translating influencer attributes into persuasive impact. Managers should recognise that even credible influencers may fail to generate desired outcomes if promotional messages lack authenticity, transparency, or informational value. Designing influencer collaborations that allow for creative freedom and genuine storytelling can enhance message acceptance and reduce consumer scepticism.

Finally, the emphasis on consumer psychological responses underscores the value of

long-term relationship building over short-term promotional campaigns. Encouraging meaningful engagement, fostering community interaction, and aligning influencer partnerships with brand values can strengthen consumer involvement and enhance the durability of persuasive effects. By focusing on underlying mechanisms rather than immediate performance metrics, managers can develop influencer marketing strategies that are more resilient to changes in platform algorithms and audience expectations.

Conclusion And Future Research Directions

This study set out to reconceptualise influencer marketing effectiveness by developing an integrative conceptual framework that explains how persuasive influence operates within digital environments. By synthesising insights from persuasion theory, source credibility theory, and social influence perspectives, the paper moves beyond fragmented, construct-specific approaches and offers a more holistic understanding of influencer marketing as a dynamic and relational process. The proposed framework emphasises the interaction of influencer-related attributes, communication cues, and consumer psychological responses in shaping behavioural outcomes.

The primary contribution of this study lies in its process-oriented perspective on influencer marketing effectiveness. Rather than focusing solely on observable outcomes or isolated determinants, the framework highlights the underlying mechanisms through which influencer marketing generates persuasive impact. This reconceptualization enhances theoretical clarity and provides a coherent foundation for future research examining influencer marketing across diverse digital contexts.

As a conceptual study, this paper is subject to certain limitations. The absence of empirical

testing means that the proposed relationships remain theoretically grounded but unverified. Future research is therefore encouraged to empirically examine the propositions advanced in this paper using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches. Such studies may test the framework across different social media platforms, product categories, and cultural settings to assess its robustness and generalisability.

Further research may also explore population-specific dynamics, such as differences in influencer marketing responses across age cohorts or consumer segments, as well as contextual factors including platform design, disclosure regulations, and evolving content formats. By building on the integrative framework proposed in this study, future scholarship can advance a more nuanced and cumulative understanding of influencer marketing effectiveness in an increasingly complex digital landscape.

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Problems, Challenges, and Prospects of E-Marketing in the Digital Economy

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Abstract

E-marketing, also known as digital marketing, has transformed the way businesses interact with customers. With the rapid growth of the internet and mobile technologies, companies are increasingly adopting online platforms to promote products and services. This research paper examines the major problems and prospects of e-marketing in the modern business environment. While e-marketing offers advantages such as global reach, cost-effectiveness, and real-time engagement, it also faces challenges including data privacy concerns, technological barriers, and intense competition. The study concludes that despite these challenges, the future of e-marketing remains highly promising with continuous technological advancements

Keywords: E-marketing, digital marketing, e-commerce, Data privacy, Cyber security, Social media marketing and artificial intelligence

Introduction

The evolution of marketing has undergone significant transformation with the advent of digital technologies. Traditional marketing methods such as print media, television, and radio are gradually being supplemented or replaced by electronic marketing (e-marketing). E-marketing refers to the use of the internet and digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives. It includes email marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and online advertising. With increasing internet penetration and smartphone usage, e-marketing has become an essential tool for businesses of all sizes. However, alongside its growth, several challenges have emerged that affect its effectiveness.

Review of Literature

Kotler and Keller (2016) stated that digital marketing has transformed customer relationship management by enabling businesses to establish

personalized communication with consumers through online platforms.

Chaffey (2019) emphasized that e-marketing integrates technology with traditional marketing principles, allowing firms to improve customer engagement, reduce operational costs, and enhance marketing efficiency.

Ryan (2017) observed that social media marketing and mobile technologies have become the driving forces behind digital marketing strategies, enabling businesses to reach wider audiences across geographical boundaries.

Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) found that digital marketing provides competitive advantages through customer interaction, real-time communication, and data-driven decision-making.

Dwivedi et al. (2021) highlighted that artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and automation are transforming the future of digital

marketing by improving customer experience and personalized marketing.

Statement of the Problem

E-marketing has become an essential tool for businesses in the digital age, but it is not without challenges. Issues such as data privacy concerns, increasing competition, technological complexities, and lack of consumer trust affect its effectiveness. Many businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, struggle to adapt to rapidly changing digital trends. Therefore, it is important to study the problems faced in e-marketing and explore its future prospects for better utilization

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on understanding the concept, problems, and prospects of e-marketing in the current business environment. It covers various digital marketing tools such as social media, email marketing, and search engine optimization. The research is limited to secondary data sources and provides a general overview rather than focusing on a specific company or region. It is useful for students, researchers, and business professionals interested in digital marketing.

Problems Associated with E-Marketing

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it highlights both the challenges and opportunities in e-marketing. It helps businesses understand how to overcome obstacles and improve their digital strategies. The research also provides insights into emerging trends and technologies shaping the future of marketing. Additionally, it contributes to academic knowledge and serves as a reference for further studies.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the major problems associated with e-marketing.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data: Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from respondents familiar with digital marketing practices.

Secondary Data: Information was collected from books, journals, research articles, websites, and published reports.

Table 1

Variable	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Data Privacy Concerns	3.34	0.730	14.185	<0.001**
Lack of Consumer Trust	1.35	1.049	-24.558	<0.001**
High Market Competition	2.58	0.769	-5.501	<0.001**
Technological Barriers	2.40	0.893	-6.612	<0.001**
Low Digital Literacy	2.66	0.837	-.852	.395
Overall	2.75	0.874	6.793	<0.001**

Source: Primary data

** Significant at 1% level

* Significant at 5% level

Analysis of Problems Associated with E-Marketing

The analysis indicates that **Data Privacy Concerns** recorded the highest mean score (3.34), suggesting that respondents consider privacy issues as the most serious challenge in e-marketing. The variable is statistically significant at the 1% level.

Lack of Consumer Trust also shows statistical significance, indicating that trust remains a major issue affecting online purchasing behaviour.

High Market Competition and **Technological Barriers** are statistically significant, implying that businesses face intense competition and technological challenges while implementing digital marketing strategies.

However, **Low Digital Literacy** is statistically insignificant ($p = 0.395$), indicating that respondents do not consider it a major barrier compared to the other factors.

The overall analysis confirms that e-marketing faces several significant challenges, though its overall effectiveness remains positive.

Major Findings

1. Data privacy concerns emerged as the most significant problem affecting e-marketing.
2. Consumer trust continues to influence customers' willingness to purchase online.
3. Increasing competition among businesses reduces the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns.
4. Technological barriers hinder the successful implementation of digital marketing strategies.
5. Digital literacy is no longer considered a major challenge among respondents.

6. Overall, respondents believe that e-marketing has substantial growth potential despite existing challenges.
7. Artificial intelligence and automation are expected to improve the effectiveness of digital marketing in the future.
8. Social media continues to be one of the most influential e-marketing platforms.

Suggestions

1. Organizations should strengthen cybersecurity measures to protect customer information.
2. Businesses should adopt transparent privacy policies to build customer trust.
3. Continuous employee training should be provided to improve digital marketing skills.
4. Small and medium enterprises should invest in affordable digital marketing technologies.
5. Companies should utilize artificial intelligence and big data analytics for personalized marketing.
6. Government agencies should promote digital literacy through awareness programmes.
7. Businesses should regularly update digital marketing strategies according to technological advancements.
8. Customer feedback should be incorporated into marketing decisions to improve satisfaction and loyalty.

Conclusion

E-marketing has emerged as one of the most powerful marketing tools in the digital economy. It enables businesses to reach global markets,

reduce marketing costs, improve customer engagement, and achieve better business performance. Nevertheless, issues such as data privacy, cybersecurity, consumer trust, and technological challenges continue to affect its effectiveness. The findings of this study reveal that while several problems exist, the future prospects of e-marketing remain highly encouraging due to rapid technological innovations, increasing internet penetration, artificial intelligence, and personalized marketing techniques. Businesses that successfully adapt to emerging digital technologies will gain sustainable competitive advantages in the evolving marketplace.

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Marketer's Opinion Towards Social Media Marketing In Kerala

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Abstract

Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms and websites to promote a product or service. Most of these social media platforms have their own built-in data analytics tools, which enable companies to track the progress, success, and engagement of ad campaigns. To use social media effectively, firms should learn to allow customers and Internet users to post user-generated content (e.g., online comments, product reviews, etc.), also known as "earned media", rather than use marketer-prepared advertising copy. While social media marketing is often associated with companies, a range of not-for-profit organizations and government organizations are engaging in social media marketing of their programs or services. Thus this study aims to throw light on how marketers are perceiving the social media marketing and analyzing the future of it.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Earned media, social media sites

Introduction

Social media marketing programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A corporate message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media. Social media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access. Increased communication for organizations fosters brand awareness. Additionally, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organizations to implement marketing campaigns.

Statement of the problem

Social media marketing is gaining its importance now a day. Every small boutique to

big business institutions is now interested to use this medium to increase their sales. It is in this context, a study is being conducted to evaluate the perception of marketers towards the concept social media marketing. A study like this will help the marketers to understand which is the most used social media marketing site and will also help the customers in identifying the various scope of social media marketing. It will help the marketers to take appropriate decisions also.

Objectives

The major objectives of the study include

1. To analyse how marketers are using social media marketing to grow their business.
2. To evaluate various social media marketing sites and their functions.
3. To study the future trend of social media marketing from marketers perspective.

Methodology of the study

1. Data collection:- Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire which is sent to marketers through online. The secondary data were collected through books magazines and journals.
2. Universe and Sampling:- The universe for the study consists of all the marketers who are using social media marketing as part of their marketing strategies in Kerala. For a convenience a sample study was conducted among 50 marketers who are using social media marketing as one of their marketing strategy. A convenience sampling techniques was adopted to select the samples.
3. Data analysis and interpretations:- The collected data were analysed using percentage. Pie chart is used to present the data graphically.

Social networking websites

Social networking websites are based on building virtual communities, that allow consumers to express their needs, wants and values, online. Through social networking sites, companies can keep in touch with individual followers. This personal interaction can instill a feeling of integrity into followers and potential customers. In 2014, over 80% of business executives identified social media as an integral part of their business. Business retailers have seen 133% increases in their revenues from social media marketing. Unlike traditional media, a social media strategy does not require big budgeting. Major platforms are:-

Google+:- Google+, in addition to providing pages and some features of Facebook, is also able to integrate with the Google search engine.

Other Google products are also integrated, such as Google Adwords and Google Maps.

LinkedIn:- It is a professional business-related networking site, allows companies to create professional profiles for themselves as well as their business to network and meet others. Members can use "Company Pages" similar to Facebook pages to create an area that will allow business owners to promote their products or services and be able to interact with their customers.

Twitter:- Twitter allows companies to promote their products in short messages known as tweets limited to 140 characters which appear on followers' Home timelines. Tweets can contain text, Hash tag, photo, video, Animated GIF, Emoji, or links to the product's website and other social media profiles, etc.

Facebook:- Facebook pages are far more detailed than Twitter accounts. They allow a product to provide videos, photos, and longer descriptions allow companies to create professional profiles for themselves as well as their business to network and meet others.

LinkedIn ;:- provides its members the opportunity to generate sales leads and business partners. Members can use "Company Pages" similar to Facebook pages to create an area that will allow business owners to promote their products or services and be able to interact with their customers.

WhatsApp :- WhatsApp started as an alternative to SMS. Whatsapp now supports sending and receiving a variety of media including text, photos, videos, documents, and location, as well as voice calls. It is used to send personalised promotional messages to individual customers. Still, Whatsapp doesn't allow businesses to place ads in their app.

Yelp:- Yelp consists of a comprehensive online index of business profiles. Businesses are searchable by location. Business account holders are allowed to create, share, and edit business profiles. They may post information such as the business location, contact information, pictures, and service information. The website further allows individuals to write, post reviews about businesses, and rate them on a five-point scale.

Foursquare:- Foursquare is a location-based social networking website, where users can check into locations via a Swarm app on their smartphones. Foursquare allows businesses to create a page or create a new/claim an existing venue.

Instagram:- Instagram provides a platform where user and company can communicate publicly and directly, making itself an ideal platform for companies to connect with their current and potential customers.

You Tube:- YouTube is another popular avenue; advertisements are done in a way to suit the target audience. Also, the ads on this platform are usually in sync with the content of the video requested. Certain ads are presented with certain videos since the content is relevant. Promotional opportunities such as sponsoring a video are also possible on YouTube.

Social bookmarking sites:- Websites such as Delicious, Digg, Slashdot, Diigo, Stumbleupon, and Reddit are popular social bookmarking sites used in social media promotion. Each of these sites is dedicated to the collection, curation, and organization of links to other websites that users deem to be of good quality.

Blogs:- Blogs allow a product or company to provide longer descriptions of products or services, can include testimonials and can link to and from other social network and blog pages. Blogs can be updated frequently and are promotional techniques for keeping customers.

Tumblr:- Rather than relying on simple banner ads, Tumblr requires advertisers to create a Tumblr blog so the content of those blogs can be featured on the site.

Analysis And Interpretation

A structured questionnaire was send online to the selected marketers to measure the perception. The analysis of the data is given below

Whether Social media is important or not

As an emerging marketing strategy social media marketing is gaining importance. Hence marketers are asked to give suggestion on whether social media marketing is important or not. A significant 92% of marketers said that social media was important to their businesses.



Years of using social media marketing

The participants are asked how long they've been using social media marketing. Fifty-six percent of marketers surveyed have at least two years of social media marketing experience.

Measuring social media ROI

Any marketing strategy will be successful if their results are measured successfully. To understand marketers' ability to measure their social media activities, they are asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I am able to measure the return on investment (ROI) for my social media activities." Only about one in three (37%) agreed they are able to measure their social activities.

Analyzing social media

To understand marketers' ability to analyze their social media activities, marketers are asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I regularly analyze my social activities." A significant 68% of marketers surveyed analyze their social media activities.

Effectiveness of Facebook marketing

Marketers are asked if they agreed with the statement: "My Facebook marketing is effective."

Only 43% of marketers feel like their Facebook efforts are working. However, most marketers either don't know or indicated that their Facebook marketing is NOT working.

Mobile-optimized blogs

Marketers who had blogs were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: "My blog is optimized for mobile readers." Forty-three percent of marketers surveyed have a mobile-optimized blog.

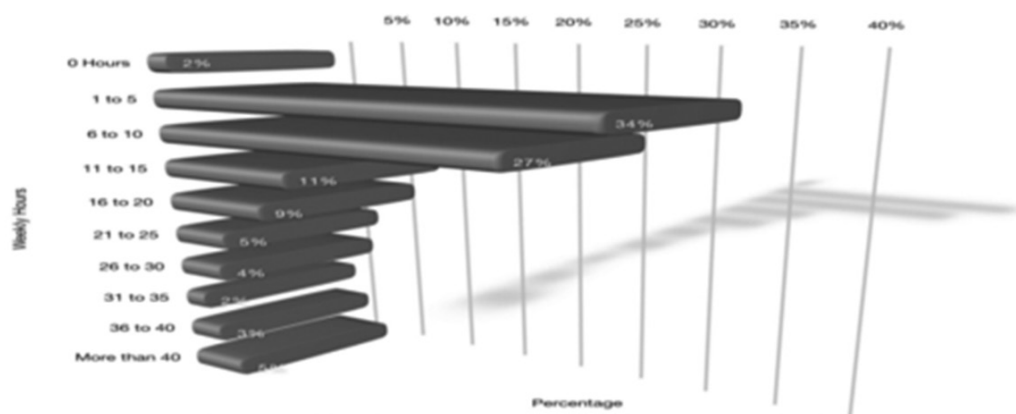
Integrated social activities

Marketers were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I have integrated social media into my traditional marketing activities." Eighty-three percent of marketers agreed that they had integrated their social media and traditional marketing activities.

Weekly time commitment for social media marketing

A significant 64% of marketers are using social media for 6 hours or more and 37% for 11 or more hours weekly. It's interesting to note that nearly 19% of marketers spend more than 20 hours each week on social media.

The experience factor



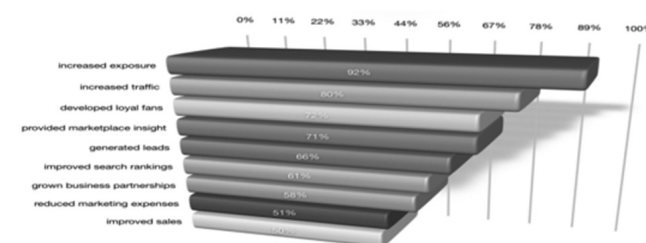
There's a direct relationship between how long marketers have been using social media and their weekly time commitment. For people just beginning with social media (less than 12 months of experience), 51% spend 5 or fewer hours per week. However, of folks who have been doing this for 2 years or longer, at least 65% spend 6 hours or more per week on social media activities.

Age factor

There's a direct relationship between a marketer's age and the time spent marketing with social media. The younger the marketer, the more time he or she spends on social media. Of those spending more than 40 hours per week doing social media marketing, 68% are under the age of 40.

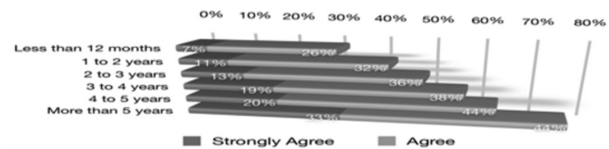
Benefits of social media marketing

The top two benefits of social media marketing are increasing exposure and increasing traffic. A significant 92% of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses. Increasing traffic was the second major benefit, with 80% reporting positive results. Most marketers are using social media to develop loyal fans (72%) and gain marketplace intelligence (71%).



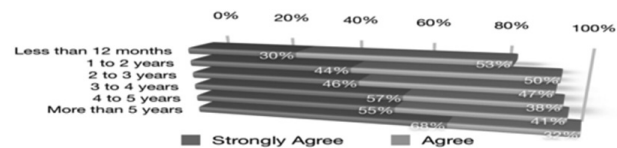
Improved sales

It takes time to develop relationships that lead to sales. However, a large percentage of marketers who take the time find great results.



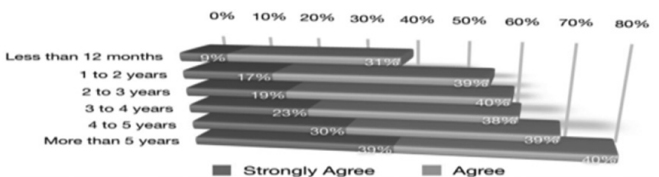
Increased exposure

With as little as 6 hours per week, the vast majority of marketers (95%+) indicated their social media efforts increased exposure for their businesses. Nearly all marketers (93%+) who've been employing social media marketing for one year or longer report it generates exposure for their businesses.



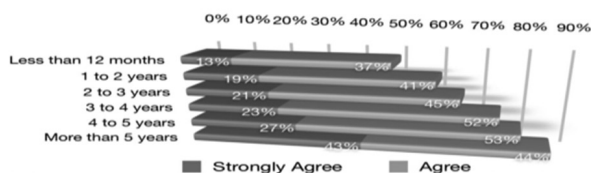
Grew business partnerships

The more time marketers invest in social media, the more they gain business partnerships. More than half of marketers who've invested at least 1 year in social media marketing report that new partnerships were gained. More than half of those investing as little as 6 hours per week in social media were able to build new partnerships.



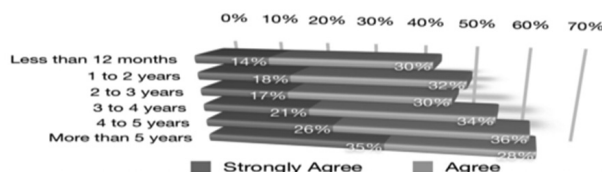
Generated leads

By spending as little as 6 hours per week, 66%+ of marketers see lead generation benefits with social media. More than half of marketers with at least one year of social media experience were generating leads with social platforms.



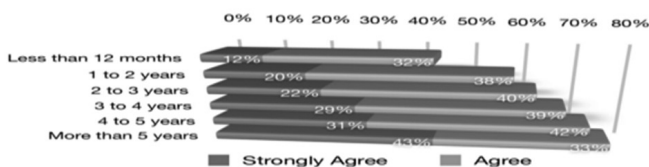
Reduced marketing expenses

Nearly half of those who spend at least 6 hours per week on social media efforts saw a benefit of reduced marketing expenses.



Improved search rankings

Improved search engine rankings were most prevalent among those who've been using social media for one year or longer, with 58%+ reporting a rise. At least 60% of those investing a minimum of 6 hours per week in social media marketing saw improvements in search engine rankings



Increased traffic

A significant 84%+ of participants found that increased traffic occurred with as little as 6 hours per week invested in social media marketing. And those who've used social media for 1 year or more reported substantially better results (79%+ reported benefits) compared with those with less experience.

Provided marketplace insight

Of those with at least 1 year of experience, 69% or more found social platforms provided marketplace insight. At least 74% of those

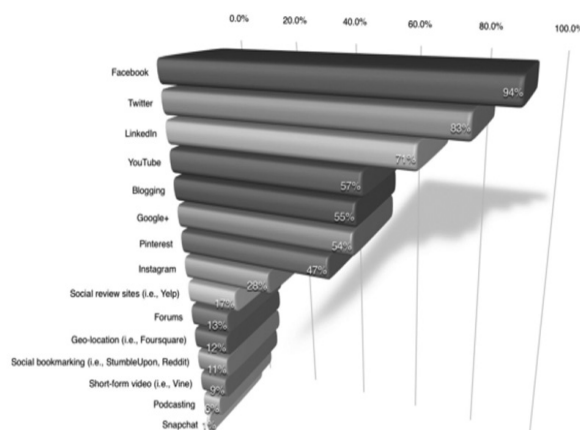
spending at least 6 hours per week were more likely to gain marketplace insight.

Developed loyal fans

Of those who have been using social media for at least 1 year, 69% found it useful for building a loyal fan base. Time invested makes a difference. Of those spending at least 6 hours a week, 78% found benefit compared to 56% of those spending 5 hours or fewer per week.

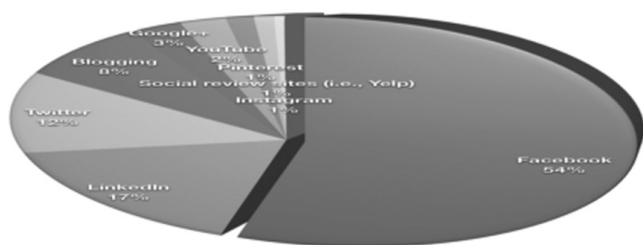
Commonly used social media platforms

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogging, Google+ and Pinterest were the top seven platforms used by marketers, with Facebook leading the pack. All of the other platforms paled in comparison to these top seven.



The most important social platform for marketers is...

Marketers were asked to select the single most important social platform for their business. More than half of marketers (54%) chose Facebook as their most important platform, followed by LinkedIn (17%), Twitter (12%) and then blogging (8%). This chart clearly reveals Facebook is the powerhouse platform for marketers. However, it is interesting to note the importance of blogging.



How will marketers change their future social media activities?

Marketers were asked to indicate how they will change their social media use in the near future. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they will increase, decrease, remain the same or not utilize various social media channels. Marketers plan on increasing their use of blogging (68%), YouTube (67%), Twitter (67%), LinkedIn (64%) and Facebook (64%), in that order. A significant 85% said they have no plans to utilize Snapchat. Sixty-eight percent have no plans to utilize geo-location.

#1: Blogging:- Blogging is now to the top spot for increased activity.

#2: YouTube:- A significant 67% of marketers plan on increasing their YouTube marketing.

#3: Twitter:- A majority of marketers (67%) will increase their activities on Twitter,

#4: LinkedIn:- A significant 64% of marketers plan on increasing their use of LinkedIn.

#5: Facebook:- The study shows the beginning of a decline in the use of Facebook among marketers. Also, 7% of marketers plan on decreasing their use of Facebook. However, as shown earlier, Facebook is still the most important social network to most marketers. Only 4% of marketers surveyed do not plan to utilize Facebook.

#6: Google+:- Google+ is on the radar for many marketers. Most businesses (61%) plan on

increasing their Google+ activities, and slightly more than 1 in 5 have no plans to use Google+.

#7: Pinterest:- Half of marketers plan to increase their use of Pinterest.

#8: Instagram:- Forty-two percent of marketers plan to increase their use Instagram

#9: Short-form video (i.e., Vine):- More than a third of marketers (35%) plan on increasing their use of short-form video services like Vine in the marketing.

#10: Forums:- 29% planned on increasing activities and 47% had no plans to use forums.

#11: Podcasting:- 21% plan on getting involved this year.

#12: Social review sites (i.e.,Yelp):- Only 21% of marketers plan on increasing activities on social review sites like Yelp.

#13: Social bookmarking:- A mere 18% of businesses plan on increasing their social bookmarking activities with sites like StumbleUpon, while 64% have no plans to use social bookmarking.

#14: Geo-location:- Only 12% of marketers plan on increasing their use of geo location services.

#15: Snapchat:- A significant 85% of marketers have no plans to use Snapchat. Only 7% of marketers plan on increasing their activities on Snapchat.

Findings And Suggestions

Findings

1. 92 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that social media marketing is important.
2. 56 percent of the respondents were using the social media marketing for the last two years.

3. Only 37 percent of the marketers are able to measure the return on investment in social media activities.
4. 68 percent of the respondents are regularly analyzing their social media marketing activities.
5. 43 percent of the marketers feel that their face book efforts are working.
6. 41percent of the respondents are able to optimize their blog for mobile readers.
7. 83 percent of the respondents are able to integrate their social media activities with traditional marketing activities.
8. A majority of 64 percent of the marketers on social media marketing spent 6 hrs / week for successful results.
9. There is a direct relationship between a marketers age and time spend for marketing with social media.
10. The top two benefits of social media marketing are increasing exposure and increasing traffic.
11. Majority of the marketers who find more time can improve sales.
12. 95 percent marketers indicated their social media efforts increased exposure for their business.
13. More than half of marketers who have invested atleast one year in social media marketing can gain new partnership.
14. By spending 6 hrs/ week 66 percent of the marketers see lead generation benefits with social media.
15. Nearly half of those who spend atleast 6 hrs / week on social media efforts saw a benefits of reduced marketing expense.
16. 58 percent respondents have a rise in search engine rankings.
17. 84 percent of the participant found that increased traffic occurred after spending 6 hrs / week on social media activities.
18. 69 percent respondent found that social platform provides market insight and developed loyal fans.
19. Face Book and LinkedIn are the two most important social network for market.
20. Most of the marketers plan on increasing their use of blogging (68) YouTube (67) Twitter (67) LinkedIn (64) and face Book (64)
21. 85 percent have no future plans to utilize snap chat and 68 have no plans to utilize geo location.

Suggestions

1. Marketer's can increase the potential of social media strategy by including audio and video content.
2. Marketer's should check the analytics periodically to understand the effectiveness of the media selected.
3. Marketer's can re-share successful posts frequently to create impression.
4. Sponsored posts can be included in the social networking sites.
5. New platform like Beme, Yubl, Blab, Miitomo can be experimented.
6. Marketers can run a face book live chat.
7. Creation of a separate social networking profile will help the marketer's to connect directly with the customer's.
8. Encouraging feedback, responding quickly and monitoring it will definitely enhance the company's image in the mind of customers.

9. Train staff to use social media and set out a clear social media marketing policy.
10. Marketer's should ensure branding is up to date while selecting a social media platform.

Conclusion

It is evident from the study that the social media marketing is gaining its importance now a days and it will definitely bring considerable changes in the return of the company.

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Role of Artificial Intelligence In Transforming E- Commerce Industry

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the e-commerce industry by enhancing customer experiences, optimizing business operations, and enabling data-driven decision-making. This study examines the role of AI in the e-commerce industry with the objective of evaluating the significance and challenges of AI adoption using both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and interviews with consumers and e-commerce professionals, while secondary data were obtained from academic journals, industry reports, books, and credible online sources. The study explores the impact of AI applications such as personalized recommendations, chatbots, predictive analytics, inventory management, fraud detection, and dynamic pricing on business performance and customer satisfaction. It also investigates the major challenges associated with AI adoption, including high implementation costs, data privacy and security concerns, lack of skilled professionals, ethical issues, and integration with existing systems. The findings indicate that AI significantly improves operational efficiency, customer engagement, and competitive advantage, despite the barriers organizations face during implementation. The study concludes that successful AI adoption requires strategic planning, investment in technological infrastructure, workforce training, and robust data governance.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Predictive Analytics, E-commerce, Targeted Marketing, Smart logistics

Introduction

E- Commerce is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world, with millions of customers buying products and services online every day. However e -commerce also faces many challenges such as increasing competition, changing customer preferences and complex supply chains. To overcome these challenges, e-commerce business need to leverage the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is the ability of machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning,

reasoning and decision making Artificial Intelligence plays a critical role in monitoring the business environment, identifying the customer's needs and implementing the necessary strategies without or with minimal human intervention. Thus it bridges the gap between consumer's needs and effective or quality services. Therefore, artificial intelligence is modifying the economic landscape and creating changes that can help consumers and entrepreneurs to reap maximum benefits. It is gaining popularity in business, especially in business administration, marketing and financial management.

Statement of The Problem

Even though Artificial Intelligence systems have revolutionized e-commerce, courtesy of the wide range of functionalities such as video, image and speech recognition, natural language, and autonomous objects, a range of ethical concerns have been raised over the design, development and deployment of artificial intelligence systems. Four critical aspects come in to play: fairness, auditability, interpretability, explainability and transparency. The estimation process via such system is considered the 'black box' as it is less interpretable and comprehensible than other statistical models. The black box concept implies that artificial intelligence predictions and decisions are similar to those of humans. However, they fail to explain why such decisions have been made. While artificial intelligence process may be based on perceivable human patterns, it can be imagined that understanding them is similar to trying to determine other highly intelligent species because little can be inferred about the content and intent of such species (artificial intelligence systems), especially regarding their behavior patterns, issues of the degree of liability and intent of harm also come in to play. The bottom line revolves around how best to guarantee transparency to redeem trust among the targeted users within e-commerce spaces.

Objectives of The Study

1. To evaluate the significance of artificial intelligence in shaping consumer demand in e-commerce sector.
2. To evaluate the challenges of artificial intelligence in e-commerce sector.

Methodology of The Study

For this study, the primary data was collected from e-commerce specialists including employees

working in major e commerce platforms through a random sampling method. A structured questionnaire was designed and administered to the respondents to gather information regarding their perception towards adoption of AI in e commerce platforms. Secondary data was collected from various sources such as books, journals, magazines, market research platforms like Statista, industry reports from Invest India and aggregate data from Eurostat.

Significance of Artificial Intelligence in E-Commerce Industry

- Increased Revenue

AI can help e-commerce businesses to increase their revenue by generating more sales opportunities, increasing conversion rates, reducing churn rates, and enhancing customer lifetime value.

- Reallocation of time and resources

Artificial Intelligence can help you automate tasks and processes like emailing, order fulfillment, customer service, and payment processing. Automations help you reduce labor costs and improve operational efficiency so you can spend less time on maintenance and more time innovating.

- Improved Quality

AI can help e-commerce businesses to improve their quality by ensuring consistency, accuracy, reliability, and security of their products and services.

- Competitive Advantage

AI can help e-commerce businesses to gain a competitive advantage by creating differentiation, innovation, and value for their customers.

- More targeted marketing and advertising

Advances in AI and machine learning have enabled deep personalization techniques to

customize content by user. By analyzing big data from purchase histories and other customer interactions helps companies in what customers really want and deliver the message that will most resonate.

- Increased customer retention.

Delivering targeted marketing and advertising messages personalized for their customers can increase customer retention.

- Seamless automation.

The goal of automation is to accomplish a task with as little human intervention as possible. That can mean anything from scheduling emails in a CRM or marketing tool, using Zapier to automate tasks or leveraging advanced technology to help with hiring. AI can play a big role in helping automate the repetitive tasks that keep online store functioning.

- Personalized product recommendations.

It's easier than ever to collect and process customer data about their online shopping experience. Artificial intelligence is being used to offer personalized product recommendations based on past customer behavior

- Pricing optimization.

AI-enabled dynamic pricing is a strategy of changing your product price based on supply and demand. With access to the right data, today's tools can predict when and what to discount, dynamically calculating the minimum discount necessary for the sale.

- Enhanced customer service.

With virtual assistants and chatbot technology, you can deliver the appearance of higher touch customer support. Virtual agents also have the advantage of being available 24/7, so low-level questions and issues can be addressed at any time of day, without making your customer wait.

- Customer segmentation.

Access to more business and customer data and processing power is enabling ecommerce operators to understand their customers and identify new trends better than ever.

- Smart logistics.

Smart logistics or intelligent logistics, is all about using real-time information through sensors, RFID tags, and the like, for inventory management and to better forecast demand. Machine learning systems become smarter over time to build better predictions for their supply chain and logistics functions.

- Sales and demand forecasting.

Particularly in a world during and after COVID-19, you'll want to plan your inventory on both real-time and historical data. Artificial intelligence can help in sale and demand forecasting

- Better Decision Making

Artificial intelligence has fastened the decision-making process of E-Commerce. AI algorithms can easily identify the complex patterns in the data by predicting user behavior and their purchasing pattern.

- After Sales Service

After sales service is an integral part of E commerce business. Artificial intelligence can automate the feedback form, replacements and handling any other ambiguity in the product. By solving the buyer's issues, the brand value of the website gets improved.

Challenges of Artificial Intelligence in E-Commerce Industry

- Data privacy.

AI algorithms rely on consumer data to make personalized recommendations and predictions.

Collecting this data raises concerns about privacy and data protection. AI also presents a security risk for companies around proprietary intellectual property, leading to accidental leaks and breaches

- High initial investment.

Implementing AI can be costly. It involves an investment in infrastructure, talent, and maintenance. Additionally, AI solutions might not always yield a positive return on investment (ROI).

- Potential for poor-quality customer service

It is because AI customer service relies on chatbots, you may fail to offer the same support and empathy as a human customer service representative. Done poorly, AI customer service can cause friction, customer dissatisfaction, and a poor reputation.

- Regulatory compliance

The use of AI in e-commerce raises regulatory concerns related to data privacy, consumer protection, and fair competition. Businesses must navigate a complex landscape of regulations such as GDPR, CCPA, and ADA to ensure compliance and mitigate legal risks.

- Algorithm Bias and Fairness

AI algorithms can exhibit biases stemming from skewed training data or flawed algorithms, leading to unfair treatment or discrimination against certain user groups. E-commerce businesses must actively address bias and ensure fairness in their AI systems to maintain trust and credibility

- Integration Complexity

Integrating AI systems with existing e-commerce platforms and infrastructure can be

complex and time-consuming. Challenges may arise from compatibility issues, data migration, and the need for specialized expertise, requiring careful planning and coordination .

- Talent Acquisition and Retention

Building and retaining a skilled workforce capable of developing and maintaining AI systems is a significant challenge for e-commerce companies. The demand for AI talent often outstrips supply, leading to talent shortages and fierce competition

- Ethical Consideration

E-commerce companies must grapple with ethical dilemmas surrounding the use of AI, including issues of privacy, transparency, and accountability. Ethical frameworks and guidelines can help businesses navigate these complexities and ensure responsible

Conclusion

The study concludes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force in the e-commerce industry, significantly improving the way businesses operate and interact with customers. AI-powered technologies such as personalized product recommendations, chatbots, predictive analytics, dynamic pricing, inventory management, and fraud detection have enhanced customer satisfaction, streamlined business operations, and increased sales and profitability. Overall, the study concludes that the advantages of AI in the e-commerce industry significantly outweigh its challenges. Organizations that implement AI responsibly by ensuring data security, maintaining ethical standards, reducing algorithmic bias, and balancing automation with human support are more likely to achieve sustainable growth and long-term customer satisfaction.

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Fractured Minds on Screen: Illness and Inner Worlds in the films *Ullozhukku* and *Udal*

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Abstract

In the films Ullozhukku and Udal, illness is used as an effective literary tool which offers an insight into the complex relationship between individuals. Illness is not only presented in order to provide the setting; it also serves as an important factor that helps develop the action and brings the characters' psychological conflicts into the light. In both films, illness is not just a physical condition but a catalyst that heightens the characters' internal conflicts and pushes them to take extreme measures.

Keywords: Psychological Trauma - Social Stigma - Alienation - Emotional Fragmentation

Introduction

Illness is defined “as a way of experiencing a problem in health in which the individual, his family, or larger community defines it as an anomaly requiring change” (Kleinman 26). Interactions come forward include the ability to be moved by illness, to react with the same, which in fact may differ from person to person. Therefore illness functions in larger structures of meaning. In the film *Udal*, the central character Shyni is worn out from the relentless task of caring for her bedridden mother-in-law. In the absence of a home nurse, Shyni struggles with the physical and emotional burden of cleaning and tending to her. According to Kleinman, illness problems are the principal difficulties that symptoms and disability create in our lives (27). The persistent illness becomes a source of deep frustration. Therefore, when asking her husband for help, Shyni is heard to speak bitterly.

It is quite interesting how the movie presents both points of view about the caregivers through

the characters Kuttichayan and Shyni. Kuttichayan appears compassionate and understanding, yet he can do nothing more than console his wife and make her relax. However, the real caregiving task is assigned to his daughter in law. No matter how much Kuttichayan assures her, she will have to provide care for the sickly woman. This highlights the difference between the approaches of the characters, as one of them provides psychological help while the other is concerned with physical assistance. Shyni's frustration leads her to seek escape in an extramarital affair, where she finds release through her relationship with Kiran. In a sense, the mother-in-law's illness serves as a catalyst for her to indulge in this form of escapism. She asks Kiran whether he could help her to escape from that ‘hell’. She reveals to him how she has been struggling for the last four years. She even says that she can't drink a cup of water peacefully.

What is quite apparent is that the husband is mainly depicted in a passive role; all one sees

and hears is him talking over the phone. By doing this effectively, there is an added emphasis on the separation from each other along with the exhaustion that these characters must face in handling the overload. In *Udal*, the main character eventually accepts the role of being the only nurse that can care for her incapacitated mother-in-law leading to the climax when Shyni attempts to murder the ill person. The film's storyline describes how being involved in taking care of another person can be so overwhelming that one can take drastic steps resulting in killing that individual. Due to the mounting frustration and anger towards her mother-in-law, she gradually loses sympathy and turns into an evil personality.

Conventional perceptions concerning the unsatisfactory nature of a daughter-in-law taking care of her mother-in-law can be described as stereotypical, based on traditional stereotypes about women and familial ties. In most cultures, especially in the more conservative, they can be depicted as nothing more than good wives who diligently attend to their husbands and in-laws without making much noise. It is only fair to assume that any resistance of a daughter-in-law to fulfill this role would be interpreted as selfish or rebellious and would conform to societal conventions concerning proper conduct at home. Palliative care involves caring for an aging or ill patient. This is not always an easy task and can sometimes become a very psychological strain on those undertaking it. The appreciation of meanings of illness "is bound within a relationship: it belongs to the sick person's spouse, child, friend or caregiver, or to the patient himself. For this reason it is usually as much hedged in with ambiguities as are those relationship themselves" (31).

Her constant association with sickness and death traps Shyni into a cycle. Inevitably, the

atmosphere of depression associated with sickness provokes the development of bitterness and resentment that does not relate solely to the duties she is forced to undertake. This emotional entrapment breeds frustration and leads to a gradual numbness. Shyni's inability to taste her food reflects a loss of sensory engagement with life itself. What once might have been pleasurable or fulfilling now feels like a chore, stripped of any joy or meaning. The character's increasing emotional distance from her caregiving duties is not a sign of her cruelty or unwillingness, but rather an indication of how the unrelenting burden of caregiving can strip someone of their emotional reserves.

For Shyni, the sensory overload smells, sights, and the grim repetition of attending to illness gradually overwhelms her, creating a form of mental and emotional claustrophobia. It is not just that she is unwilling to care for her mother-in-law; it is that the role has completely consumed her, leaving no space for her to be anything else. Her life becomes defined by the sickness around her, to the point that the lines between her identity and her caregiving duties blur beyond recognition.

Firstly, it is more than the common stereotype of an angry daughter-in-law. Instead, it is a delicate observation on the silent struggle of being a caregiver, wherein the constant, urgent, and comprehensive aspect of being a caregiver could make her feel smothered. Her frustrations and emotional meltdown have nothing to do with the idea of rejecting the caregiver's responsibility. What she feels is the price she pays for being a chronic caregiver and that eventually, at some point, she will experience a mental breakdown if she continues doing this job all alone without ever getting any help. Many people, particularly caregivers, often develop a sense of detachment from themselves and their desires when they

take care of others every day. It may even result in severe cases where the individual resorts to extreme measures to break free from the weight that comes with the job.

In *Ullozhukku*, the central character, Anju, initially cares for her ailing husband with patience and dedication. However, as time passes, her feelings of hopelessness and frustration subtly emerge, not through words, but through her expressions. From the physical standpoint, Anju is entrapped into the life of a caretaker who will never be able to get away from the process of taking care of her ill husband, having to bathe him, feed him, and take care of his health issues. Her husband's illness becomes a pretext for her to meet her lover under the guise of buying medicine from town. Though she only needs to care for her husband for a short time who dies soon after their marriage, the sickness acts as a catalyst for her to continue her relationship with the man she has loved even before her marriage.

The entire story then unfolds around the illness and funeral of Anju's husband, eventually leading to the revelation of her extramarital affair. While in the movie *Udal*, it is Kuttiyachan who comforts his ailing wife, in *Ullozhukku*, it is Leelamma who is emotionally bonded with her sick son, Thomaskutty. Unlike *Udal*, where gore and violence shape the narrative, *Ullozhukku* takes a quieter, more introspective approach to illness and caregiving. The way the female characters in both films perceive illness is central to understanding their emotional journeys. In *Udal*, Kuttiyachan tends to his sick wife with deep, unwavering care, while in *Ullozhukku*, Leelamma, as a single mother, devotes herself to caring for her ailing son, Thomaskutty. Her attachment to him runs deep, as she treats him almost like a child, similar to how Kuttiyachan cares for his wife. For both, their worlds revolve

solely around their loved ones, wife and son even though Leelamma has another daughter. Both Anju and Shyni, in different ways, are desperate to breathe new life and break away from the physical and emotional weight of their situations. Their longing for freedom reflects a deep desire to escape the struggling environment that illness creates around them.

In the cultural context, the stereotypical woman is expected to care for her husband and in-laws. According to Virginia Held, "The central focus of the ethics of care is on the compelling moral salience of attending to and meeting the needs of the particular others whom we take responsibility" (10). However, in both *Udal* and *Ullozhukku*, the women are far from happy in their roles within their in-laws' households. Shyni is burdened by the illness of her mother-in-law, while Anju is forced into a marriage with Thomaskutty, a man she did not choose. Illness becomes the backdrop that intensifies their trauma, pushing them to a breaking point where they can barely cope with their circumstances. This trauma drives them to extreme actions: Shyni kills her mother-in-law, and Anju reveals that her child is not Thomaskutty's.

Another important aspect is the concealment of illness. In *Ullozhukku*, Anju was unaware that Thomaskutty was suffering from a brain tumor, though his mother knew. When Anju discovers the truth, it only worsens her emotional turmoil. In *Udal*, Kuttiyachan is blind, but despite his disability, he leads a relatively normal life and emerges as an anti-hero, avenging the murder of his wife. At a point even Shyni doubts whether he was faking all these days as a blind man.

Shyni's sense of how the life of a caregiver slowly loses its vibrancy is poignantly conveyed when she realizes she can no longer even taste the

chicken curry she prepares. The daily routines of caregiving, the fatigue, and the emotional burden weigh so heavily on her that everything, even the simple act of cooking, becomes joyless. The aroma and flavour of the food are overwhelmed by her constant exposure to the unpleasant realities of caring for her bedridden mother-in-law. The bodily secretions, the smell of illness, and the endless caretaking duties have seeped so deeply into her consciousness that they taint every aspect of her life. Everything around reminds her of the sickness she's surrounded by, making it impossible to find any pleasure in what was once a basic act. This loss of sensory joy symbolizes how Shyni's life, once rich in simple pleasures, has become consumed by the bleakness of caregiving, reflecting the toll it takes on her emotional and mental well-being. As Joan Tronto says, "to care implies more than simply a passing interest or fancy but the acceptance of some form of burden" (117). Thus the vibrant colours of life fade, leaving Shynu in a world defined by illness, and a yearning to escape

In both *Ullozhukku* and *Udal*, the daughters-in-law serve as focal points for exploring how illness and caregiving can trap individuals in oppressive circumstances. While their responses to this entrapment differ, both women long for an escape from the suffocating environments they find themselves in, where the physical sickness around them intensifies their emotional and psychological distress.

Anju, in *Ullozhukku*, finds her lover's embrace in an affair as a way out of the suffocation that the house of her in-laws has become for her. She was all along going to end up in this wedlock with Thomaskutty, which was thrust on her, and in this narrative, her husband's sickness not only becomes a strain physically but embodies the

psychological strife that she endures. When she goes out pretending to buy some medicine, but instead meets her lover, it seems that she is not just searching for love and physicality but also finding herself back to the place of her lost liberty. The reason behind Anju's visits to her lover is to escape the prison-like structures that are slowly engulfing her as a spouse to a man that she does not want to be with, caregiver and a woman, and societal expectations. However clandestine and treacherous the affair may be, it is one of the few places where she could escape the weighty responsibilities that plague her. The constrictive environment of sickness, and at the same time, her marriage was a major contributor to the fact that she gravitated towards her extra marital relationship. Anju's desire to escape is not driven solely by a need for physical freedom but also by a yearning to escape from the constant reminder of death and decay in her household. Her lover offers her a temporary reprieve, a glimpse of the world outside the four walls of her home where she is no longer confined to the role of caretaker or wife to a dying man. The emotional release she finds with her lover is her way of resisting the suffocation she feels within her family's home.

In *Udal*, Shyni's circumstances are different but equally oppressive. She is trapped in a dark, claustrophobic household, where the constant presence of her sick, bedridden mother-in-law drains her mentally, emotionally, and physically. Shyni's situation is compounded by the weight of being unable to escape from her role as caregiver. The atmosphere around her is dark and bleak, with no visible way out. When Anju finds temporary emotional escape through her lover, Shyni's only perceived escape is through violence. The constant caregiving has numbed her to the point where she can no longer tolerate

the presence of her mother-in-law or the darkness that surrounds her. The act of killing her mother-in-law, represents Shyni's desperate attempt to break free from the oppressive environment that has consumed her.

In both *Udaland Ullozhukku*, however, the oppressive nature of the disease does not only affect the two women but also becomes the primary reason behind their extreme acts. While in Anju's case, the act of running away occurs emotionally due to her infidelity, in Shyni's case, the escape is physically violent. The two acts serve to demonstrate the various ways in which women can react under such circumstances. At the core of the matter lies the same basic instinct, the desire for escape and the reclaiming of one's identity. In both cases, the two women want nothing more than to break free of the stifling environment of sickness and to be able to breathe again.

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A Switch from Epic to Mock Epic: The Politics of Epics Played out in *Freedom at Midnight*

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Abstract

The 1975 historical classic of Lapierre and Collins, Freedom at Midnight, is much lauded for its epic dimensions. An epic as a literary endeavor illustrates the stated political purpose of justifying the hegemony of a dominant over a lesser dominant. This same agenda is put in place in Freedom at Midnight as well. The narration here is skewed in favour of the British downplaying the Indians and this in turn plays out the propaganda. The choice of events and selective narration, however, backfires rendering mock epic dimensions to the work. The paper is an attempt to vivify this. **Keywords:** NULM (National Urban Livelihood Mission), Streetvendors, Streetvending, micro enterprises.

Keywords: British India– epic – mock epic - orientalism – East vs West – dichotomies - racial superiority – Mountbatten – Gandhi – Nehru

Introduction

The 1975, Lapierre and Collins historical classic, *Freedom at Midnight* vivifies the last days of the British Raj culminating in the freedom of India and its partition. The book is a work of nonfiction that reads like an epic. Though innocuous at first glance with its high style and farfetched imageries, just like an epic, the work also serves the political purpose of justifying the ways of the dominant over the lesser dominant – the dominant British over the lesser dominant Indians. Milton's (2005) epic poem, *Paradise Lost* has a similar stated purpose - "justify the ways of God to man" (pp. 25-6). That is justifying the ways of a supreme God on the lesser man.

In *Freedom at Midnight*, the authors are so focused on justifying the dominant British, and downplaying the lesser dominant Indians in

epic style that the selective narration, grossly imbalanced and hilarious at times, becomes too obvious to any discerning reader. The epic style rendered in the work, though serves the political purpose, hence, backfires turning the work into a mock epic. In mock epic a trivial subject is rendered in high seriousness. Here, however, this norm is reversed. The subject matter is all serious, so is the style. However, the subject is trivialized by its treatment. The paper is an attempt to illustrate this political agenda of the work rendered in epic dimensions turning it into a mock epic.

An epic, as defined by M.H. Abrams (2012) is "a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style and centered on a heroic or quasi – divine figure on whose actions depend the fate of a tribe, a nation or the human

race” (p. 76). The definition highlights five major features of an epic. One, it is narrative in nature. The narration is omniscient and objective. Two, it deals with a serious subject. Three, its style is formal and elevated. Four, its hero is a heroic or quasi – divine figure. Five, the plight of a tribe, a nation or humanity depends on the hero’s actions. All the said features can be read out in *Freedom at Midnight*.

The opening lines of the work itself promises its narrative ambitions: “It was the winter of a great nation’s discontent. An air of melancholia hung like a chill fog over London” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p.3). Seriousness, in effect, is a relative term. Still, the work affirms that it deals with the end of “the greatest empire the world has ever known, that vast British realm on which the sun never set” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p.1). In a nutshell, the work encompasses the events leading to the freedom of India, its partition, the violence that followed and the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi. All of this is rendered in a highly dramatic dialogic style with many digressions. The epic hero is Mountbatten on whom rests the plight of the British Raj. He is high born, heroic, ambitious and represents his race and nation. Being the last Viceroy of India, his thoughts, words, and deeds have a global impact. Thus, all the features of a typical epic can be read out in *Freedom at Midnight*.

Though an epic seems poetic and innocuous, its elements put in place a political agenda. This is elaborated by David Quint (1993) citing *Aenied* as an example. He notes that the epic employs certain dichotomies to justify the ways of the victor over the loser. The propaganda of epic thus works in two ways. One, the ‘Us’ represent all the goodness and they decree the standards of morality on which the ‘Other’ is weighed upon and is found short in. Two, with such a parameter

already in place, the ‘Us’ assumes a divine allocation that is natural to justify their deeds on the ‘Other’. *Freedom at Midnight* can be seen as putting this propaganda in place. An illustration of this follows further.

The dominant West, according to Quint (1993) is attributed many ‘dominant’ qualities. For instance, the West always gets portrayed as a unified “one” having national unity. It has an “imperial unity out of many” involving many “conquered nations” (p. 25). It represents the “empire without end”. The East however is depicted as a fragmented “many” (“the Parthian hordes”) with emphasis on its “overpopulation and fertility” (p. 25). The West is always in “control” whereas the East always is in a “loss of control” (p. 25). The West represents a “cosmic order” whereas East is always chaotic. There is “permanence” and “reason” attributed to the West whereas East is of “flux, nature” and “loss of identity” (p. 25). The West is masculine whereas the East is feminine. The West (Occident) demarcates itself out from the East (Orient) on grounds of similar dichotomies, notes Said (1995) in *Orientalism*. The assumption that the West is morally, culturally, and racially superior to the East underlies Orientalism. This forms the groundwork on which the whole narration of *Freedom at Midnight* rests.

The painstaking and conscious attempts made by the authors to vindicate the British even in difficult contexts substantiate this. For instance, note how they describe the conditions that existed prior to the Battle of Plassey: unlike the Spaniards, the British came to India for mere trade. However, with feigned innocence they add that, “inevitably, as the trading activities grew the company’s officers became enmeshed in local politics, and were forced to intervene in the squabbles of the petty sovereigns on whose

territory they operated, in order to protect their expanding trade. Thus began the irreversible process that would lead England to conquer India almost by inadvertence” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p.13). The choice of words used here, “inevitably”, “forced to”, “inadvertence”, implies that India became the colony of Britain without any overt awareness or attempt from the part of the British. Hence, they stand vindicated.

The racial superiority of the British is also affirmed by the authors who note that Queen Victoria’s “tubby figure” incarnated “the vocation of the British race to rule the world” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 14). In the beginning the authors’ note of a pageant of the Third World down the Mall in commemoration of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. The authors describe it thus: “Gurkhas, Sikhs, Pathans, Housas from Africa’s Gold Coast, the Fuzzy Wuzzies of the Sudan, Cypriots, Jamaicans, Malaysians, Hong Kong Chinese, Borneo headhunters, Australians and Canadians all in their turn had marched down the Mall to the plaudits of that energetic race to whose empire they belonged” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 5). Such pageants of the conquered are common in epics. This echoes with Quint’s (1993) notion of the “imperial unity out of many ... conquered nations” as found in epics (p. 25).

The most hilarious and paradoxical conclusion to this would be the line that affirms the aftermath of the puritanical rule of the British: “after having been accused for decades of exploiting India, Britain was going to end her Indian adventure five billion dollars in debt to the people she was supposed to have been exploiting” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 199). The British are merely “accused” and “supposed to have been exploiting” India. Still, they were leaving India with a five billion dollars debt.

The superiority and dominance of the British are again affirmed by the deft use of language and selection of events. A condescending, ambiguous, sarcastic tone is reserved for Indians and events involving Indians whereas a hyperbolic and exaggerated one is used for the British. Ironically this backfires to give many hilarious instances in the work. This strange telescopic vision that focuses on such insignificant details ridicules Indians whereas deifies the British. No matter how heinous the crime, a similar use of language is never elicited where the British are concerned. For instance, note this portrayal of William Hodson, the founder of Hodson’s Horse. Hodson was:

a hard – drinking, sadistic, personally courageous man who made his fortune by falsifying his mess accounts and borrowing large sums of money that he had no intention of repaying from the wealthy Indian subalterns he recruited to his colors. When one of them, in company of a young son, was foolish enough to present himself at Hodson’s door to inquire about the repayment of a loan, Hodson discharged his debt with a pistol, killing both the officer and his boy. (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 204)

The humour here is ill placed. Hodson though hard –drinking, sadistic, and made money falsifying mess accounts is still a courageous man. The logic played out here is a bit twisted: The father who came with his son to ask back his money is foolish and hence deserves to be shot dead. Susanne Lindgren Wofford (1992) in her work *The Choice of Achilles: The Ideology of Figure in the Epic* notes of the gulf that exists between the two elements of an epic simile: the original reference and what it is likened to. The likening of something so gory to something too innocuous as seen in epics is not at all innocent. It serves the ideological purpose of sapping the real

incident off its horror (p. 51). This incongruity between language and emotions elicited, is an important feature of epic simile. The same can be read out here.

The contrasts worked out between Indians and the British become most pronounced in characterization. Mountbatten, as the epic hero representing the British race, is the epitome of all virtues. He stands tall as the hero against the backdrop created by the authors by downplaying the Indian leaders. He is presented as the West embodied; masculine, exceptionally handsome, ever self-composed, reasonable and logical. Indian leaders however represent the contrasts to these: divided, uncomposed and chaotic, feminine, weird, and vulgar.

An instance is this contrast drawn between the frail Gandhi and powerful Mountbatten. Gandhi who came to meet Mountbatten seemed like a “sweet sad sparrow perched” on the armchair, whereas Mountbatten was “handsome” with “vitality surging from his athlete’s body”. Gandhi was all frail with his “little frame almost disappear[ing] into his armchair”. He was “the advocate of nonviolence” whereas Mountbatten was “the professional warrior”. He was someone who chose to live his life in penury with “the most destitute masses on the globe” whereas Mountbatten was the “aristocrat”. (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, pp. 105 – 6). Gandhi also is shown as someone impractical who “rambled” and “loved to talk about himself” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 107).

Similarly, it is noted that Nehru, all his life, “had an instinctive need for a strong dominant personality near him, some steadying influence to whom he could turn in the crises engendered by his volatile nature” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 103). Nehru admired “Mountbatten’s practical

dynamism, the capacity for decisive action ...” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 104). Nehru is said to be “slightly feline” having “sensual features of a face” that changed with his moods from “angelic softness to demonic wrath” unlike the ever-composed Mountbatten (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 100). Mountbatten in all these instances is the steadying masculine presence in contrast to the wavering, chaos of Indian femineity.

Gandhi highlights the weirdness and vulgarity of Indians further. It is noted that the “final sign that a man had been accepted in his [Gandhi’s] company came when the Mahatma himself offered to give him a salt – and – water enema” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, pp. 46 – 7). Likewise, Gandhi, once felt comfortable with his Brahmacharya vows, used to take, “his bath in full view of his fellow ashtramites, male and female. He had his daily massage virtually naked with young girls most frequently serving as his masseuses” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 81). A contrast to all these would be how the authors deftly use language to render harmless the Nehru - Edwina relation. To quote: “His wife’s [Mountbatten’s] friendship with the Indian Prime Minister had grown too ... Often, over tea, a stroll in the Mogul Gardens, or a swim in the viceregal pool, she had been able to charm Nehru out of his gloom, redress a situation and subtly encourage her husband’s efforts” (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 147). The relation cannot be anymore softly put.

The reason why such deifying of Mountbatten ultimately backfires is that the book does not cite anything concrete to affirm this heroic aura rendered to Mountbatten. No matter how hard the authors try to whitewash his role in partitioning India by playing the Indian leaders one against the other it still shows through in the work. Mountbatten’s plan for ending the Indian

dilemma is ‘Operation Seduction’ (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 148). The name itself shows the insincerity of his attempts. We see him flattering an unsuspecting Nehru for a stay with him in Shimla and “casually” passing him his partition plan for India which ultimately backfires (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 148). Likewise, the book also notes that he kept away the actual details of partition from Indian leaders till the very end by which time it became impossible for them to tackle its aftermaths (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 264).

To place Mountbatten on a higher relief the authors naturally must downplay the other Indian leaders. This also backfires as a discerning reader fails not to notice the power of Gandhi and the faith people have on him who could singlehandedly stall a full-fledged communal war in Calcutta by his mere presence (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 316), or the humanity of Nehru who even being the Prime Minister finds it hard to sleep over his concern for India (Lapierre 352) and comes out with a lathi to lash away the rioters (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 361). Meanwhile Mountbatten is seen busy listing out his royal lineage up in Shimla (Collins & Lapierre, 1976, p. 363).

There are however passages in the work where the authors seem to know the purpose

of nonfiction rendered in literary style - the description of caste system, the murder of Gandhi and the investigation that followed, the descriptions on religious fundamentalism and so on. They could achieve a solemn balanced narration in these passages with none of the excesses seen in the earlier instances. The reason, however, seems to be that these do not involve the British but only Indians and hence the authors need not aim for the purpose their epic: justifying the ways of the dominant on the lesser dominant.

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Empirical Estimation of the Keynesian Consumption Function in India

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Abstract

This study empirically estimates the Keynesian consumption function in the Indian context. The result of the estimation came out to be , where we identify MPC at 0.64, which is quite high such that roughly 60 percent of the additional incomes generated are used for consumption. Additionally, the psychological law of consumption has been examined in this context, and we found it very matching with the notion of John Maynard Keynes. Also, we modeled the multiplier for an open and as well as a closed economy with simplifying assumptions and demonstrated its effects on both types of economies, which will be a great example for understanding the multiplier effect. One of the greatest limitations of this study is the limitations associated with data availability, we missed recent data, and model simplifications are also acknowledged. However, relaxing assumptions towards more comprehensive econometrics models using recent data is suggested.

Keywords: Keynesian consumption function, Empirical estimation, Marginal Propensity to Consume (MPC), Keynes psychological law of consumption, Output solving equations, Multiplier model, Multiplier effect in closed and open economies.

Introduction

Understanding consumption is very important from a macroeconomic perspective because it is one of the major components of the output of an economy. The Keynesian economics has been widely accepted and posits that consumption depends on income. At an aggregate level, the private final consumption expenditure provides an appropriate measure of consumption, and the national income could give us a sustainable level of income. Tracking how these variables depend on each other is very important, which is essentially the empirical estimation of the Keynesian consumption function.

Prior to Keynes, the classical view posited that free markets would automatically self-correct to a state of full employment, driven by

flexible prices and wages. Keynes' revolutionary findings postulated that the sum of spending by households, businesses, and government is the driving force of the economy. According to Keynes, the consumption function is the theoretical engine of the concept. The consumption function establishes a stable and predictable relationship between current consumption levels and current disposable income, providing the mechanism for understanding how fluctuations in income translate into changes in spending and, consequently, aggregate demand. The fundamental psychological law of consumption, which is rooted in the basic human consumption psychology, is termed the bedrock of Keynes' theory. Keynes defined this law as the common tendency of individuals to spend in a stable manner. The concept is mainly rooted in the fact that as

a person's income rises, more and more of their wants can be satisfied, leading them to spend more on consumer goods and services, which constitute the largest portion of aggregate expenditure. The second and most critical proposition states that this increase in consumption is not proportional to the increase in income; consumption rises, but less proportionately. The theory assumes that the spending habits of the consumer remain stable in the short run and free from abnormal events like war or hyperinflation. The theoretical foundation of the psychological law is formalised in the linear consumption function, a simple yet powerful mathematical model which will be discussed in the forthcoming sections.

The shift and fluctuations in the spending pattern have an effect on growth, investment, and government revenue of an economy. For framing fiscal policies and adjusted tax structures, policy largely depends on these analyses in ways that stimulate demand without fueling unsustainable deficits. The relevance of this economic concept can be extended to an open economic dimension also because in the modern globalisation era, the Indian economy has integrated more deeply into global trade and financial flows, and imports and exports have a significant influence on determining domestic output. The elements like taxation and government expenditure further complicate the dynamics of aggregate demand. So the simple Keynesian consumption function is inefficient in capturing real-world scenarios. To address this, the economist formulated an open economy model of the multiplier framework with government intervention, which allows more comprehensive analysis.

Long-run economic development also needs to be considered here, because subsequent studies have debated whether rising income levels inevitably alter the marginal propensity

to consume. In the background of developing economies like India, higher savings are considered as the means of financing capital formation and expansion of the infrastructure base. However, a higher rate of saving from the income which at the cost of consumption, can dampen demand and slow the pace of growth. So the balance between consumption and savings is the critical determinant of economic momentum, and this is the central base of policy frameworks. The worldwide economic setbacks like the financial crisis of 2008 revealed how depended consumption expenditure to income and employment. In such conditions, the consumption function and multiplier analysis can be used to assess the magnitude of policy interventions required to restore equilibrium and support recovery. In the Indian background, with a large presence of a vast informal sector and heterogeneous income groups, it is more critical to ensure that policy measures are effective.

Data Description

The following data have been collected for the estimation of Keynesian consumption function. National Income is used as the income variable because it reflects the economy's overall earnings at factor cost, excluding indirect taxes and including subsidies. It also adds net factor income from abroad, capturing residents' total income, and deducts depreciation, giving a sustainable measure that can be consumed without reducing productive capacity. Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) is taken as the consumption variable because, reported consistently in the national accounts, it reflects actual final consumption expenditure, making it the most appropriate macro-level proxy for aggregate consumption in the Keynesian framework.

Table 1: Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) and National Income In India (1995–2009)

Date	PFCE	National Income
1995	11690.34	15474.8
1996	12562.58	16757.59
1997	13034.5	17451.6
1998	13823.93	18612.52
1999	15475.09	20012.5
2000	16601.03	20748.58
2001	16885.76	21907.37
2002	18102.58	22783.63
2003	19240.03	24660.93
2004	18804.81	26291.98
2005	20550.82	28772.84
2006	22067.49	31491.49
2007	23805.3	34518.29
2008	26056.47	36643.88
2009	27247.02	39596.53

Source : Central Statistical Organization (CSO)

The figure 1 given above represents the trends in national income and PFCE over time for India between 1995 and 2008. The left panel shows national income, which depicts an upward trajectory over time. It clearly indicates the rising national income during this period. And on the other panel, the PFCE over time is given; it also indicates a clear upward trajectory. It means that people are increasing their consumption expenditure with the rising level of national income. This is a great starting point for the analysis, since we estimate some correlation

between the two. Let's examine this in detail in the empirical results section.

Empirical Results

In this section, we empirically examine the relationship between income and consumption in India, drawing on Keynes' psychological law of consumption. To capture this relationship, a Keynesian consumption function of the form: was estimated, where denotes Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE), represents National Income (Disposable Income), is the

autonomous consumption (intercept), and is the marginal propensity to consume (MPC). Before estimating the relationship we need check for the correlation between the two variables, that is PFCE and national income.

Figure 2 is the scatterplot representing this. A scatter plot is a graph in which the values of two variables are plotted along two axes, the pattern of the resulting points revealing any correlation present. It presents the value of PFCE on y-axis plotted against the values of national income on the x-axis. This helps us inspect their correlation visually, additionally, a trend line is fitted. The diagram reveals a strong correlation between consumption expenditure and national income. The national income increases along with that of consumption expenditure. This positive correlation seems to be strong, as evidenced by the points aligned almost exactly with the upward-sloping trend line. The estimated correlation coefficient was 0.98, which indeed confirms that this is a strong positive correlation. This supports Keynes' fundamental assertion that consumption is primarily a function of income.

The Keynesian consumption function we estimated during this period is: where represents the consumption expenditure and represents national income. The intercept reflects autonomous consumption—which is estimated as 2430.48 crores of rupees. The slope coefficient measures the marginal propensity to consume which we estimated to 0.64, indicating that for every additional unit of rupee, households, on average, spend 64 percent of it on consumption.

Figure 3 represents the diagram of the estimated Keynesian consumption function. The positive intercept of this regression line reaffirms the famous notion of John M Keynes that a certain level of consumption will persists irrespective

of the level income, The MPC value of 0.64 indicates consumption expenditure increases significantly as national income increases. The mean absolute error reveals this model as a good fit. The baseline mean absolute error for this model was 3468.16, but testing for the actual to predicted y values, the mean absolute error came significantly down to 578.46, which indicates it as a good fit. Now lets examine psychological law of consumption by Keynes.

Figure 4 provides a clear visualisation of Keynes' Psychological Law of Consumption. As shown, when national income increases from to , consumption also rises from to . However, the increase in consumption expenditure (ΔC) is smaller than the corresponding increase in income (ΔY). In this case, when national income increased by and additional ₹7,000 crores it only leads to an increase in additional consumption expenditure by ₹4,470 crores. This difference tells us that as income increases, consumption also increases but not proportionally, as some part of this additional income goes for saving rather than consumption, a cornerstone of Keynesian consumption theory. If people spent all the income without any savings, there would be an MPC equal to one theoretically, and the regression line would be an upward straight line at a 45-degree angle, because people would now spend their entire additional incomes for consumption, not considering for savings.

Modeling Multiplier Estimation

The multiplier is a fundamental concept in economics that asserts that an initial increase in output raises the total output in the economy by more than the amount of the initial increase. Therefore, if private consumption expenditure increases by 10 units, the total GDP will increase

by more than 10 units. Mathematically, it's a number that multiplies the output. There exists a direct relationship between the MPC and the size of the multiplier. Because as people have a more spending habit, this essentially increases the overall multiplier effect in the economy. So in the short run, people are encouraged to spend more and save less to increase output, but in the long run, this can be a problem because in the long run, we talk about growth rather than aggregate demand and in such models savings become so important. This is one of the counter intuitiveness in macroeconomics.

India is an open economy with an active government sector. In reality, households pay taxes to the government, imports leak out of the income stream, and both government spending and foreign trade play an important role in determining overall output. The starting point is the familiar national income identity, which states that total output is equal to the sum of consumption, investment, government spending, and net exports. By systematically specifying the behavioural equations for each component we can derive a general equilibrium condition for output.

Our main equation for equilibrium output is:

Now, let's define the functional form for each component. Consumption is a linear function of disposable income.

Tax is a linear function that depends on income.

We assume investment is autonomous.

We assume government spending is autonomous.

We assume exports are autonomous.

Imports depend on income, which is also in a linear functional form.

Solving for Equilibrium Output (Y). Now, we substitute all of these into our main equation and solve for Y.

Simplify the equation by removing the brackets

Group all terms containing Y on one side and all autonomous terms on the other

Factor out Y from the left side

Simplify the terms inside the parenthesis on the left side

Divide by the term in the parenthesis to isolate Y

To clearly show the multiplier, we can rewrite this equation by separating the fraction into two distinct parts: a ratio and a sum of autonomous terms.

Here, the expenditure multiplier for this comprehensive open economy model is

In an open-economy model with a government, there are generally three ways money can leak out of the circular flow. First, a portion of any new income is saved rather than spent. After MPC, the remaining amount is a leakage in the form of saving. Second, a portion of every new rupee of income is paid to the government as a tax. This is determined by the marginal tax rate, or 't'. This money does not continue the spending chain. Third, when people spend their money, some of it is used to buy goods produced in other countries. This money leaves the domestic economy and is a leakage known as the marginal propensity to import, or 'm1'. The multiplier in this comprehensive model accounts for all these leakages, and its value is determined by how much of each new dollar of income leaks out through these three channels. But how will the multiplier be in a closed economy? For understanding multiple effects more precisely,

we need to understand how it will be in a closed economy.

In a closed economy the core equation remains the same without net exports.

So, continue substituting the functional forms for C, I, and G.

Simplify and distribute the terms:

Gather all terms containing Y on one side and all autonomous terms on the other:

Factor out Y from the left side:

Simplify the terms inside the parenthesis on the left side

Divide by the term in the parenthesis to isolate Y

To clearly show the multiplier, we can rewrite this equation by separating the fraction into two distinct parts: a ratio and a sum of autonomous terms.

Here, the expenditure multiplier for this closed economy model is

See that the multiplier is comparatively larger here in this closed economy, as the only ways for money to leak out of the spending cycle

are through savings and taxes. Conversely, in an open economy as domestic income rises, a fraction of that new income is spent on goods and services produced abroad, a phenomenon captured by the marginal propensity to import (m_1). Comparing the two multipliers reveals a fundamental principle: the multiplier for an open economy is always smaller than its closed-economy counterpart. This is because the denominator of the open economy multiplier includes the additional positive term. This larger denominator reflects the greater degree of leakage from the domestic economy, as some income is diverted to imports in addition to savings and taxes. Therefore, the open-economy multiplier provides a more accurate and realistic estimate of the impact of fiscal or investment changes on national income. Therefore, the multiplier for an open economy is always smaller than its closed economy. This is because the denominator of the open-economy multiplier's formula is larger, as it must account for all three leakages—saving, taxes, and imports—while the closed-economy multiplier only accounts for saving and taxes.

The following table provides a clear, side-by-side comparison of the key differences:

Table 2: Multiplier Models in Open and Closed Economies

Feature	Open Economy	Closed Economy
Primary Leakages	Savings, Taxes, Imports	Savings, Taxes
Formula		
<u>Magnitude</u>	Generally smaller	Generally larger

Sourced: Formulated by the researchers, 2025.

Conclusion

This study has successfully identified and estimated the Keynesian consumption function for the given annual data of PFCE and national income ranging from 1995 to 2009. The

estimated consumption function was as follows: which states that the MPC is roughly about 0.64, meaning roughly 64 percent of the income is spent and the rest is saved. Additionally, the Keynesian consumption function was investigated, and we

visually illustrated a functional empirical effect of the law.

This results give us a way to the multiplier in the economy. We demonstrated the output solving equations for both an open and a closed economy and clearly demonstrated how the multiplier would be in both types of economies. This gives us some understanding of how larger the MPC is for an open as well as a closed economy. We found that, as already established, the multiplier effect would be smaller for an open economy than for a closed economy, as in an open economy the additional income now goes on foreign goods expenditure.

One of the limitations of the study was the open availability of data in India at the time. So we could only estimate up to 2009 from 1995, meaning the latest information about data is missing. Also, the equations we used to demonstrate output and solving them are significantly simplified, yet they captured the economic phenomena to a great extent.

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Impact of Online Payment App Among Customers

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Abstract

The widespread adoption of online payment apps presents a significant shift in consumer behavior. The revolution of online payment systems can be traced back to the advent of the internet and the subsequent rise of e-commerce. In the early days online transactions were primarily conducted through credit cards and direct bank transfers. Remarkable succession has been witnessed by payment methods from cash to online payment apps, and currently to electronic commerce and mobile banking. The advancement in technology supporting mobile transactions and making them more convenient and transparent in developing trust among customers who are becoming habitual of employing this mode of payment. But some customers even if the technology is accessible and available are reluctant to utilize. Therefore this study aims to investigate the various aspects influencing the usage of online payment apps.

Keywords: Digitalization, Transaction, Payment apps, Digital landscape

Introduction

In the era of digitalization, the landscape of financial transactions has undergone a significant transformation. Nowadays customers are adopting digital device in order to spend less time. This digital payment is very useful to transaction funds without taking any risk and also easy to handle and make use of it. In the contemporary digital landscape, the advent of online payment applications has revolutionized the way individuals engage in financial transactions. There are various payment apps such as Google pay, phone pay, paytm etc. Now a days the online payment apps users are increased dramatically and also the payment options have been spread in local market. The customers are highly beneficial and satisfied towards payment apps.

The widespread adoption of online payment apps presents a significant shift in consumer

behavior. However, understanding the factors influencing customers usage patterns, preferences and concerns regarding these apps remains essential for both business and policy makers. Online payment is very much used in recent years due to convenience, speed, saving time, attractive sales promotional offers etc. However the future for online payment apps looks bright and promising, online payment apps are still comparatively less familiar to many people and users often remain more doubtful towards digital transactions. This is true in the context of consumers in small cities, where online payment app is still new and consumers are less familiar and often more vague towards it. This situation can be analyzed from social, economic, technological and psychological perspectives. Among customers including usability, trust, convenience, security and demographic factors to provide insights for enhancing user experience and addressing potential challenges in the online

payment system. Therefore this study aims to investigate the various aspects influencing the usage of online payment apps by customers and also their satisfaction towards payment apps.

Objective

To study the impact of online payment apps among customers.

Methodology

To achieve the objective of this particular study both primary and secondary data was used. Articles, Journals, Annual report of various financial institutions, reports of Google websites etc has been used to the study. Since these secondary data did not provide any true picture of the current trend of online app, a primary survey was also conducted. The total number of samples selected for the study was 110. A household survey was conducted in the semi Village area of Sasthamcotta. The survey was carried out by using a questionnaire. The study intends to examine in detail if there was any prominent change in the behavior of the customers who depend on online app in various payments. The intention behind this study was also to find out the issues faced by customers while using online app in their payment. A non

– probability convenience sampling technique was adopted. A simple statistical tool was used for analysis.

The revolution of online payment systems can be traced back to the advent of the internet and the subsequent rise of e-commerce. In the early days online transactions were primarily conducted through credit cards and direct bank transfers. As technology advanced new methods such as electronic checks and digital wallets were emerged which helps to simplifying online transactions and enhancing security. In recent years the advent of digital technology has significantly transformed various sectors including finance. One of the most notable changes is the rise of online payment apps which has revolutionized financial transactions of customers. Major influential payment apps are

- Googl Pay
- PhonePay
- Paytm
- Kotak 811
- Payzapp
- YONO

Table No 1.

Satisfaction level of customers using online payment App

Satisfaction Level	Percentage of Customers
Poor	5.5%
Below Average	10 %
Average	27.3 %
Good	46.4 %
Excellent	10.9 %

Source :Field Survey

The analysis of customers satisfaction regarding the use of the online app reveals that the majority of users hold a positive opinion about the application. The highest percentage of respondents, 46.4 percent rated the APP as good. This shows that nearly half of the customers are satisfied with the services and features provided by the online application. A high proportion of “good”, responses indicates strong customer acceptance and a positive market position for the application. Where as 27.3 percent of the respondents rated the app as average which indicates that more than one fourth of users experience moderate satisfaction.

These customers are satisfied and responded it as useful but may also face certain limitations such as technical issues, slow performance, complicated procedures or limited features. Where as 10 percent customers responded that the app as below average. This reflects that some users are not fully satisfied with their experience. Their dissatisfaction may arise from issues such as login problems, payment failures , poor internet compatibility, lack of responsiveness or security concerns. Overall the findings suggest that customer satisfaction with the online app is generally positive, as the majority of respondents fall under the good and average categories.

Table No. 2
Proportion of Monthly Transactions Conducted via Online Payment App

Monthly Transaction	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 25%	28
25-50 %	37.3
51-75 %	20
More than 75	14.5

Source : Field survey

The table indicated that 37.3 percent respondents reported conducting 25 percent of their transactions through online apps, making this the largest group in the study. It indicates that a significant proportion of people have moderately integrated digital payment systems into their daily lives. These users may rely on online apps for routine payments such as mobile recharges, utility bill payments, shopping ticket booking and money transfers while still continuing traditional cash transactions for certain activities. This reflects a transitional stage where consumers are gradually moving towards a cashless economy. Where as about 28 percent

of respondents stated that less than 25 percent of their transaction are made through online apps. This group represents low level users of digital transaction systems. The study also shows that 20 percent of respondents conduct 51-75 percent of their transactions through online applications. Further, 14.5 percent of respondents reported that more than 75 percent of their transactions are performed through online apps. This group can be considered highly dependent on digital transactions systems. These users may belong to younger educated , urban or professionally employed populations who are comfortable with technology and prefer cashless transactions for almost all activities.

Table No. 3

Customers Respond on Influencing actors on Online APP Rejection

Influencing factors on Online App Rejection	Responds of Customers(Percentage)
Lack of digital literacy	23 %
Fear of security	28
Preference for Cash Transactions	32
Inadequate in adequate internet and Smartphone	17

Source : Field survey.

. The table indicates that the rejection of online apps may be attributed to several factors including lack of lack of digital literacy, concerns regarding online fraud, preference for cash transactions, limited internet access, or unfamiliarity with technology. The table shows that the majority of respondents (32 percent) stated that reference for cash transactions is the primary reason for their lower dependency on online payment applications. This indicates that traditional cash based transactions still dominate among many customers especially in rural and semi urban areas. People feel more comfortable handling physical money because it provides a sense of security, direct control and immediate confirmation of payment. Cash transactions are also deeply rooted in traditional economic practices and daily habits. Many consumers believe cash is easier, more reliable and free from technical complications. Whereas 28 percent responded fear of security issues as a major obstacle to the use of online payment app. This reflected their growing concern about cyber fraud. Their feel is that they may lose money due to technical errors or online scams. Limited awareness about cyber security measures is the reason for this fear which highlights the importance of strengthening digital security awareness. Here 23 percent respondents answered that lack of literacy as a reason for

their lower dependency on online payment applications. Elderly people and rural consumers may largely belong to this category. Their limited use suggests that despite technological growth, certain sections of society still hesitate to fully embrace digital payment methods. This findings highlighted the necessity of effective digital literacy for the successful use of online payment systems. 17 percent responded that lack of internet facilities and lack of smart phones as the reason for least dependency on online payment apps which highlights the intervention of government mechanism to guarantee sound technical infrastructure.

Findings

1. One of the major impacts of online apps is the improvement in convenience and accessibility. Customers can access services anytime and anywhere without visiting physical stores or offices. This saves time, reduces travel expenses, and increases customer comfort. The availability of 24 hour services through online apps has made customers more dependent on digital platforms for their routine activities.

2. Online applications have also influenced the behavioral patterns of consumers. Customers now prefer digital platforms because of ease of use , discounts, personalized recommendations and faster communication.

3. The use of online apps has generated a positive impact on the economy and business sector. About 53.6% respondents feel comfortable using online payment apps for larger transactions. About 76.4% of respondents think online payment apps have made transactions easier. Online platforms create employment opportunities in delivery services, digital marketing, app development and customer support sectors.

4. Overall, the findings indicate that the majority of respondents use online apps for at least a moderate share of their financial transactions. The data highlights the increasing penetration of digital payment systems and the gradual shift from cash-based transactions to electronic modes of payment. Convenience, accessibility, speed, cash back offers and government initiatives promoting digital payments may have positively influenced this trend.

Conclusion

The study on the usage of online payment apps by customers reveals significant insights into consumer behavior and preference in the digital payment landscape. Remarkable succession has been witnessed by payment methods from cash to online payment apps like Google pay, phone pay, paytm etc., and currently to electronic commerce and mobile banking. The advancement in technology supporting mobile transactions and making them more convenient and transparent in developing trust among customers who are becoming habitual of employing this mode of payment.

Despite the overall positive reception, challenges such as concerns over data privacy, occasional technical glitches and the digital divide among different demographic groups remain. Addressing these issues through enhanced security measures, user education and improved app performance will be crucial for sustaining

growth and fostering trust among users.

The study concludes that the future of online payment apps is promising with potential for further innovation and integration into everyday financial activities. Developers and financial institutions should focus on enhancing security, expanding features and addressing user concerns to foster continued growth and adoption. The overall analysis shows that behavioral factors are more influential than technological limitations in reducing dependency on online payment apps. At the same time security concerns indicate the need for stronger awareness programs and safer digital environments.

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Assessing Relief Camp Facilities and Household Satisfaction among Landslide Survivors: Evidence from Multiple Landslide Sites in Kerala

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Abstract

Landslides pose significant challenges to human life and livelihoods especially in landslide prone areas. Relief camps help as a critical immediate response mechanism providing shelter and critical supports to affected populations following the disaster. This study examines the adequacy of amenities as well as facilities and household satisfaction in relief camps for landslide survivors in different landslide sites in Kerala. Based on primary data from 190 affected households, the study evaluates facilities and services such as food, water, sanitation, electricity, medical and emotional support and space availability in relief camps. An adequacy index was constructed using a five-point scale. The results show that basic necessities such as food, clothing, drinking water, and electricity were provided at a highly satisfactory level indicating a strong and efficient emergency response. In contrast, elements that contribute to relief and overall wellbeing such as sanitation facilities, living space and psychosocial support were found to be only moderately sufficient at the relief camps. Although a majority of households reported general satisfaction with the relief camps, the findings underline the importance of moving beyond mere provision of essentials toward more human centred and quality-focused approaches in disaster relief camp planning in the future.

Keywords: Camps, Landslides, Adequacy index, Household satisfaction, Disaster recovery, Kerala

Introduction

Natural disasters remain as one of the most severe challenges confronting human society across the globe. Among the various types of natural disasters, landslides are the most devastating in terms of their impact, casualties and irrevocable disruption of the social and economic fabric of communities affected. Landslides, defined as the downward movement of rock, soil or debris, are often triggered by natural factors such as intense rainfall, seismic activity and volcanic eruptions as well as human-induced causes like deforestation and poorly regulated construction

at ecologically fragile zones (Smith et al., 2023). In a country like India, the consequences of such disasters are more severely felt in the North East and the Western Ghats region. Kerala, the southernmost state bordering Western ghats frequently experience landslides during the monsoon season resulting in a significant loss of life, destruction of property and community displacement. Kerala has been experiencing increase in the number and intensity of landslides since 2018 great floods in Kerala. The recent landslides in Kavalappara, Malappuram (2019), Pettimudi, Munnar (2020) and Mundakkai,

Wayanad (2024) resulted not only in the tragic loss of hundreds of lives but also left a profound impact on the livelihood of affected communities thereby aggravating the existing poverty and socio-economic disparities (National Disaster Management Authority, 2024). Disaster relief camps occupy a central position in emergency response to disaster and recovery (Yore et al., 2025). Those households who were affected by landslides could move forward without the support of others and the society. The survivors went through such a traumatic condition could bring back to normal life through providing better facilities and warmth at the relief/shelter camps. These temporary living arrangements usually exist for several weeks to several months, depending on how long it takes to find more normal living arrangements. The households would continue to remain in relief camps until they get a temporary housing arrangements before formal rehabilitation. These places can provide temporary sleeping spaces to hundreds of human beings and usually it is arranged at school buildings, community buildings or in religious institutions. The quality of services and facilities offered at the relief camps is an important component in disaster recovery and is a critical window during which the quality of support provided can significantly influence long-term recovery outcomes. (Tierney, 2019; Gioli, Jain, & Maiti, 2021).

So, this paper aims to understand the adequacy of amenities and essential services arranged at the relief camps for the landslide affected survivors in three landslide locations in Kerala which are Kavalappara Malappuram district, Kanjikuzhy Idukki district, Kuttickal and Kokkayar in Kottayam and Idukki district respectively. The adequacy and quality of basic services provided at the relief camps and the level of satisfaction among the survivors are also studied.

II. Three landslide locations

Kavalappara in Malappuram district, a rural village in the foothills of the Western Ghats is traditionally dependent on agriculture with crops like arecanut, rubber, and coconut. On 8 August 2019, the area was struck by a devastating landslide triggered by intense rainfall, drawing nationwide attention. The disaster centred around Muthappan Hill, caused 65 fatalities, destroyed over 100 houses and buried large areas of farmland (Sarun, S., et al.2021). Nearly 250 households in the nearby areas are rehabilitated temporarily to the relief camps arranged by the local self-governments. Kerala experienced one of the most severe floods in its history in 2018, impacting nearly all parts of the state and triggering hundreds of landslides particularly along the Western Ghats. The Kanjikuzhy panchayath in Idukki district witnessed multiple landslides of varying intensity in different areas of panchayath. According to the local panchayath records, approximately 160 households were resettled in various parts of the panchayath due to the landslides that left their homes either partially or fully uninhabitable. Kokkayar, located in the eastern part of Idukki district, is a hilly region with steep slopes and fragile geology making it highly prone to landslides during intense monsoon rains. Similarly, Kuttickal, in the neighbouring Kottayam district, shares comparable ecological vulnerabilities due to its rugged terrain and environmental pressures. In October 2021, both areas were severely affected by landslides triggered by heavy rainfall. The disaster caused considerable loss of life and extensive damage to houses, land, and basic infrastructure.

III. Methodology

For this study, 190 landslide affected households were randomly selected from the landslide locations. These households were

severely affected by the landslide and shifted to the relief camps and later rehabilitated by the government and other humanitarian agencies. 85 households from Kavalappara, 65 households from Kanjikuzhy and 40 households from Kuttickal and Kokkayar were selected. Samples from each area are equivalent to the 40% of the landslide affected households in each location and later they were resettled. A questionnaire was prepared to understand the adequacy of essential service and facilities were arranged at the relief camps. It includes the evaluation of availability of food, clothing, bedding, sanitation facilities,

space for each individual, mental health support etc. Quantitative analysis of these services can provide a more objective and data-driven understanding of the conditions in relief camps and help evidence-based decision-making in disaster recovery in future. An index was created based on the responses collected from the sample population.

IV. Results

The table examines the availability and quality of food, clothing, bedding, and clean water at the relief camps in three study locations.

Table 1. Availability of food, clothing, bedding and clean water at relief camps

Landslide area	Food availability						Chi-square	p-Value
	Not at all adequate	Slightly adequate	Moderate adequate	Very adequate	Extremely adequate	Total		
Kanjikuzhy	0	0	1	22	42	65	12.47	0.014
%	0	0	1.50	33.80	64.60	100		
Kavalappara	0	0	0	36	49	85		
%	0	0	(0	42.40	57.60	100		
Kuttickal/ Kokkayar	0	0	0	5	35	40		
%	0	0	0	12.80	87.20	100		
Total	0	0	1	63	126	190		
%	0	0	0.50	33.30	66.10	100		
	Provision and availability of clothing							
Kanjikuzhy	0	1	7	21	36	65	25.43	0
%	0	1.50	10.80	32.30	55.40	100		
Kavalappara	0	0	1	38	46	85		
%	0	0	1.20	44.70	54.10	100		
Kuttickal/ Kokkayar	0	0	0	5	35	40		
%	0	0	0	12.80	87.20	100		
Total	0	1	8	64	117	190		
%	0	0.50	4.20	33.90	61.40	100		
	Provision of bedding							

Kanjikuzhy	0	8	37	15	5	65	21.92	0.001
%	0	12.3	56.90	23.10	7.70	100		
Kavalappara	0	7	42	31	5	85		
%	0	8.20	49.40	36.50	5.90	100		
Kuttickal/ Kokkayar	0	1	10	21	8	40		
%	0	2.60	23.10	53.80	20.50	100		
Total	0	16	89	67	18	190		
%	0	8.50	46.60	35.40	9.50	100		
Provision of clean water supply								
Kanjikuzhy	0	0	19	39	7	65	7.93	0.094
%	0	0	29.20	60	10.80	100		
Kavalappara	0	0	10	60	15	85		
%	0	0	11.80	70.60	17.60	100		
Kuttickal/ Kokkayar	0	0	7	26	7	40		
%	0	0	17.90	64.10	17.90	100		
Total	0	0	36	125	29	190		
%	0	0	19	65.60	15.30	100		

Source: Computed from primary data

The analysis reveals a generally high level of satisfaction with basic facilities provided in relief camps across the study areas. A majority of respondents perceived food provision as highly adequate, with extremely adequate emerging as the most frequent response especially in Kuttickal/Kokkayar reported the highest share (87.2%) indicating both sufficiency and acceptable quality. Similarly, the availability of clothing was evaluated very positively with 61.4% rating it as extremely adequate and 33.9% as very adequate reflecting broad adequacy across sites. In contrast, perceptions of bedding facilities were comparatively moderate with 46.6% of respondents rating them as moderately adequate and only 9.5% as extremely adequate. Significant inter-area variations were observed

in bedding adequacy particularly with relatively better ratings in Kuttickal/Kokkayar, suggesting the need for location specific improvements in post-disaster shelter arrangements. Regarding access to clean water, most respondents (65.6%) reported it as very adequate and the absence of statistically significant differences across locations indicates a relatively uniform and satisfactory provision. Overall, while essential services such as food, clothing and water were largely adequate, bedding facilities require targeted attention to enhance the quality of relief camp living conditions.

The following table examines the availability of sanitation facilities, provision of electricity, medical and emotional support and availability of enough space for each resident at relief camps.

Table 2. Availability and provision of sanitation facilities, electricity, emotional, medical support and availability of space for each resident at the relief camps

Landslide area	Availability and provision of sanitation facilities						Chi-square	p-Value
	Not at all adequate	Slightly adequate	Moderate adequate	Very adequate	Extremely adequate	Total		
Kanjikuzhy	3	10	30	17	5	65	23.383	0.003
%	5	15	46.20	26.20	7.70	100		
Kavalappara	0	5	34	40	6	85		
%	0	6	40	47.10	7.10	100		
Kuttickal/Kokkayar	0	0	13	19	8	40		
%	0	0	33	48.70	17.90	100		
Total	3	15	77	76	19	190		
%	2	8	40.70	40.20	9.50	100		
Provision of electricity								
Kanjikuzhy	0	2	18	36	9	65	10.040	0.123
%	0	3.10	27.69	56.20	0.13	100		
Kavalappara	0	1	10	54	20	85		
%	0	1	11.80	63.50	23.33	100		
Kuttickal/Kokkayar	0	0	4	28	8	40		
%	0	0	10	70.00	20.00	100		
Total	0	3	32	118	37	190		
%	0	1.60	16.50	62.20	19.70	100		
Provision of medical and emotional support								
Kanjikuzhy	1	9	36	14	5	65	10.196	0.252
%	2	0.14	55.40	21.50	7.70	100		
Kavalappara	0	6	43	32	4	85		
%	0	7.10	50.60	37.60	4.70	100		
Kuttickal/Kokkayar	0	3	17	15	5	40		
%	0	7.70	43.60	35.90	12.80	100		
Total	1	18	96	61	14	190		
%	1	9.50	50.80	31.70	7.40	100		
Availability of enough space for each resident at relief camp								
Kanjikuzhy	1	11	37	11	5	65	33.142	0
%	2	17	56.90	17	7.70	100		
Kavalappara	0	8	50	25	2	85		
%	0	9	58.80	29.40	2.40	100		
Kuttickal/Kokkayar	0	2	11	18	9	40		
%	0	5	28.20	45.20	23.10	100		
Total	1	21	98	54	16	190		
%	1	12	52	28.60	8.50	100		

Source: Computed from primary data

The findings indicate sanitation facilities were largely perceived as moderately to very adequate (40.7% and 40.2%, respectively), though only a small proportion rated them as extremely adequate (9.5%), and statistically significant differences across locations highlight the need for targeted improvements particularly in areas with lower adequacy levels. Electricity provision was consistently rated highly, with the majority (62.2%) considering it very adequate and nearly one-fifth (19.7%) extremely adequate, indicating reliable service delivery across all sites especially in Kuttickal/Kokkayar. Medical and emotional support was generally assessed as moderate to very adequate, with over half (50.8%) rating it moderately adequate; however, the presence of respondents reporting only slight adequacy suggests gaps in addressing psychological

and emotional needs, despite the absence of significant inter-area differences. Similarly, the adequacy of space within relief camps was predominantly rated as moderately adequate (51.5%), with significant spatial disparities across locations, as Kuttickal/Kokkayar reported relatively better conditions. The proportion of respondents indicating only slight adequacy underscores concerns of overcrowding and the necessity for improved spatial arrangements. Overall, while electricity provision appears satisfactory, sanitation, psychosocial support, and space require context-specific enhancements to improve the quality of relief camp conditions for disaster survivors.

The following section analyses the adequacy of basic services arranged at the relief camps.

Table 3. Amenity wise adequacy index of relief Camps in landslide locations (N-190)

Facility/Provision of amenities	Kanjikuzhy	Kavalappara	Kuttickal/ Kokkayar
Availability of Food	4.63	4.58	4.88
Provision of Clothing	4.42	4.53	4.88
Availability of Bedding	3.26	3.40	3.90
Provision of Sanitation facilities	3.17	3.55	3.88
Availability of drinking water	3.82	4.06	4.00
Availability of adequate Electricity	3.80	4.09	4.10
Medical and emotional support	3.20	3.40	3.55
Space availability for each individual	3.12	3.25	3.85

Source: Computed from primary data

The Index was constructed using weights such as 1 = Not at all adequate, 2 = Slightly adequate, 3 = Moderately adequate, 4 = Very adequate, 5 = Extremely adequate. Higher score indicates better adequacy. The composite adequacy index

is highest across the sites. Essential services such as food, clothing, electricity and clean water were rated highly adequate reflecting effective immediate disaster response. However, facilities related to human comfort and well-

being such as bedding, sanitation, medical and emotional support and space availability were only moderately adequate. The analysis reveals that space availability remains the most critical concern indicating overcrowding and the need for

improved camp planning. This suggests that while survival needs were effectively met, comforts and psychosocial support require greater policy attention.

Table 4. Households satisfaction with the facilities and services at the relief camps.

Level of Satisfaction	Kanjikuzhy		Kavalappara		Kuttickal/Kokkayar		Total		Chi square	P Value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Very dissatisfied	3	4.60	0	0.00	1	2.60	4	2.10	16.163	0.04
Dissatisfied	0	0.00	2	2.40	0	0.00	2	1.10		
Moderate	12	18.50	12	13.10	2	2.60	26	13.80		
Satisfied	44	67.70	65	77.40	29	74.40	138	72.40		
Very satisfied	6	9.20	6	7.10	8	20.50	20	10.60		
Total	65	100.00	85	100.00	40	100.00	190	100.00		

Source: Computed from primary data

When the survivors across the landslide sites were asked how they felt about the facilities and services provided at the relief camps, their responses highlighted an encouraging picture. An overwhelming 72.40% of households said they were satisfied with the facilities - a testament to the considerable efforts made by local governments, NGOs, and community organizations in delivering basic services under difficult circumstances. The trend is similar across the study areas. A further 13.8% described their experience as moderate suggesting that while their needs were broadly met, there was still room for improvement in certain areas. A smaller but meaningful 10.60% reported being very satisfied, reflecting the experiences of those who felt genuinely cared for during one of the most difficult periods of their lives. On the other end, 3.20% expressed dissatisfaction. These figures suggest that for the vast majority

of families who lost everything in landslide, the relief camps provided not just a roof and a meal, but a genuine sense of support and safety. But a combined 17% reminds that there is a room for improvement in delivering basic services to the survivors at the relief camps.

V. Discussion

The findings of the study offer an important insight into the dual nature of disaster relief interventions where efficiency in meeting immediate survival needs coexists with constraints in ensuring dignity, comfort and psychosocial well-being. The high adequacy scores for food, clothing, water, and electricity clearly indicate that the institutional response in landslide sites were prompt, organized and largely successful in addressing the urgent necessities of displaced households. However, the relatively lower scores for bedding, sanitation, medical and emotional

support and especially space availability point to a critical gap in disaster recovery. The moderate ratings in these dimensions suggest that while people were physically sustained, their lived experience within the camps involved compromises in privacy, comfort, and emotional care. This is further reflected in the satisfaction levels where a majority expressed satisfaction, yet a significant proportion indicated only moderate satisfaction emphasising need for further improvement in relief camp services.

VI. Conclusion

The study concludes that relief camps were largely effective in ensuring the provision of essential survival needs reflecting a strong and timely disaster response system. However, the moderate adequacy observed in aspects such as space, sanitation and psychosocial support highlights critical gaps in addressing the broader dimensions of human well-being. While overall satisfaction levels remain high, the presence of partial dissatisfaction indicates the need for more inclusive and comfort-oriented planning of relief camps. Therefore, future disaster management strategies must move beyond immediate relief to incorporate dignity, privacy and emotional care as integral components of immediate disaster response and recovery.

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भारतीय समाज और स्त्रीमुक्ति आंदोलन

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शोध सार :-

भारतीय समाज में स्त्री की स्थिति ऐतिहासिक रूप से पितृसत्तात्मक संरचना से प्रभावित रही है। समय के साथ सामाजिक, आर्थिक एवं राजनीतिक परिवर्तनों ने स्त्री मुक्ति आंदोलन को जन्म दिया। यह शोध-पत्र भारतीय स्त्री आंदोलन के विकास को तीन प्रमुख चरणों - नवजागरण काल, स्वतंत्रता संग्राम काल तथा स्वातंत्र्योत्तर काल- में विभाजित कर विश्लेषित करता है। अध्ययन से स्पष्ट होता है कि स्त्री आंदोलन केवल सामाजिक सुधार तक सीमित न रहकर राजनीतिक अधिकारों एवं समानता की दिशा में भी विकसित हुआ है।

बीज शब्द : स्त्री मुक्ति आंदोलन, नारीवाद, सामाजिक सुधार, पितृसत्ता, स्त्री सशक्तीकरण

प्रस्तावना :-

समाज में परिवर्तन आंदोलनों के माध्यम से ही संभव होता है। भारतीय इतिहास में स्त्रियों की स्थिति लंबे समय तक दयनीय रही, जिसका मुख्य कारण अशिक्षा, अज्ञानता तथा पितृसत्तात्मक सामाजिक संरचना थी। स्त्री को घर की चारदीवारी तक सीमित रखा गया और उसके अधिकारों का हनन होता रहा। 19वीं शताब्दी के बाद अंग्रेजों के आगमन और आधुनिक शिक्षा के प्रसार ने सामाजिक चेतना को जन्म दिया। इसी चेतना ने स्त्री मुक्ति आंदोलन की नींव रखी। यह आंदोलन केवल सामाजिक सुधार नहीं था, बल्कि एक व्यापक परिवर्तनकारी प्रक्रिया थी जिसने स्त्रियों को अधिकार, शिक्षा और स्वतंत्रता की दिशा में आगे बढ़ाया।

भारतीय स्त्री आंदोलन का ऐतिहासिक विकास :-

भारत में स्त्री आंदोलन का पहला लहर 19 वीं

शताब्दी में सुधारवादी आन्दोलनों के रूप में हमारे सामने आया है। इसमें महिलाओं की मुक्ति हेतु अनेक प्रयास किए गए हैं- सती प्रथा व बाल विवाह का विरोध, विधवा पुनर्विवाह, स्त्री शिक्षा आदि प्रमुख मुद्दे थे। स्त्री आंदोलन का दूसरा लहर तब निकल आया जब स्त्रियों ने स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति हेतु घर के चार दीवारी के बाहर निकलीं थीं। तीसरा लहर स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के बाद से शुरू हुआ है। नवजागरण और स्वाधीनता आंदोलन के प्रभाव स्वातंत्र्योत्तर स्त्री की स्थिति में अनेक परिवर्तन लाये। स्त्रियों ने यह महसूस किया है कि समाज में परिवर्तन तभी संभव होगा जब हम अपनी आवश्यकता को बताएँ और उसके लिए लड़ें। ऐसे ही इन युगों में अनेक प्रकार के आंदोलन चले तथा अनेक महिला संगठन जैसे 'आल इंडिया विमेंस कांफ्रेंस', 'नेशनल फेडरेशन्स ऑफ इंडियन विमीन', 'विमिंस इंडिया एसोसिएशन' बनें, इनमें स्त्री शिक्षा, मताधिकार, पर्दा और व्यक्तिकत अधिकारों को प्रधानता दी गई है।

भारतीय स्त्री आंदोलन को मुख्यतः तीन चरणों में विभाजित किया जा सकता है—

1. नवजागरण और स्त्री आंदोलन
2. स्वतंत्रता संग्राम और स्त्री आंदोलन
3. स्वातंत्र्योत्तरस्त्री आंदोलन

नवजागरण और स्त्री आंदोलन:-

उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी के प्रारंभ से भारत में नवजागरण का दौर शुरू हुआ, जब अंग्रेजी शासन पूर्ण रूप से स्थापित हो चुका था। उस समय भारतीय समाज अनेक कुरीतियों, अंधविश्वासों, जाति-प्रथा, छुआछूत और विशेषकर स्त्रियों के शोषण से ग्रस्त था। स्त्री की स्थिति अत्यंत दयनीय थी—उसे पुरुष के अधीन माना जाता था और उसके कोई अधिकार नहीं थे। इसी पृष्ठभूमि में समाज सुधारकों ने स्त्री की स्थिति सुधारने के लिए प्रयास शुरू किए। स्त्री सुधार आंदोलन का प्रारंभ सती प्रथा के उन्मूलन और शिक्षा के प्रसार से हुआ। राजा राममोहन राय ने सती प्रथा का विरोध कर 1829 में इसे कानून द्वारा समाप्त करवाया और ब्रह्म समाज की स्थापना कर समाज सुधार की दिशा दी। उन्होंने स्त्री अधिकारों, विधवा पुनर्विवाह और शिक्षा पर बल दिया। इसी तरह ईश्वरचंद्र विद्यासागर ने विधवा पुनर्विवाह का समर्थन किया और इसे शास्त्र-सम्मत बताया, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप 1856 में कानून बना। इसी काल में ज्योतिबा फुले ने स्त्री और दलित शिक्षा के लिए महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किया। बंबई और अन्य क्षेत्रों में भी कन्या शिक्षा और सामाजिक सुधार के प्रयास हुए। सावित्रीबाई फुले भारत की सामाजिक सुधार आंदोलन की सबसे महत्वपूर्ण और प्रेरणादायक हस्तियों में से एक थीं। सावित्रीबाई फुले ने अपने पति ज्योतिबा फुले के साथ मिलकर स्त्री शिक्षा, जातिवाद और सामाजिक कुरीतियों के खिलाफ महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किए। उस समय जब लड़कियों की शिक्षा लगभग निषिद्ध थी, उन्होंने 1848 में पुणे में

लड़कियों के लिए पहला स्कूल शुरू किया। यह भारतीय इतिहास में महिला शिक्षा की दिशा में एक क्रांतिकारी कदम था। परमहंस मंडल, आर्य समाज और अन्य संगठनों ने भी जाति-भेद और सामाजिक कुरीतियों के खिलाफ आंदोलन चलाए। स्वामी दयानंद सरस्वती ने स्त्री शिक्षा को परिवार और समाज के नैतिक विकास के लिए आवश्यक बताया।

19वीं शताब्दी के उत्तरार्द्ध में बाल विवाह, पर्दा प्रथा और श्रमिकों की स्थिति जैसे मुद्दे भी उठाए गए। महिला चिकित्सकों और समाज सुधारकों ने बाल विवाह के विरुद्ध आंदोलन किया, जिससे विवाह की न्यूनतम आयु बढ़ाने के प्रयास हुए। इस समय कई महिला संगठनों की भी शुरुआत हुई, जैसे भारत स्त्री मंडल और अखिल भारतीय महिला संगठन, जिन्होंने स्त्री शिक्षा और अधिकारों के लिए संघर्ष किया। 20वीं शताब्दी में स्त्रियों की भागीदारी सामाजिक और राजनीतिक क्षेत्र में बढ़ी। सरोजिनी नायडू, एनी बेसेंट, सरलादेवी जैसी महिलाओं ने राष्ट्रीय आंदोलन और महिला जागरूकता में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। गांधीजी ने भी स्त्री शिक्षा और अधिकारों को समर्थन दिया। इस प्रकार नवजागरण काल स्त्री उत्थान का प्रारंभिक चरण था, जिसमें शिक्षा, सामाजिक सुधार और कानूनों के माध्यम से स्त्रियों की स्थिति सुधारने के प्रयास किए गए। यह युग भारतीय महिलाओं में आत्मविश्वास और जागरूकता के विकास का आधार बना, जिसने आगे चलकर महिला आंदोलन को व्यापक रूप दिया।

स्वतंत्रता संग्राम और स्त्री आंदोलन :-

यह स्त्री आंदोलन की दूसरी लहर है। स्वाधीनता संग्राम के इस युग में ही स्त्रियों ने पहली बार घर से बाहर निकलकर अनेक स्तरों पर भाग लिया। इस समय महिलाओं के अंदर एक नई चेतना जगी, जिसमें स्त्रियों के संगठित होने और लड़ने की हिम्मत व सहस्र देखने को मिला। वास्तव में महिलाएँ नवजागरण के दौर में ही जागरूक जरूर दिखीं पर

उनमें हिम्मत कम थी। लेकिन स्वाधीनता संग्राम के इस युग में स्त्री आंदोलन नवजागरण की चेतना से प्रभावित होकर पूरी तरह एक आक्रोश या आन्दोलन के रूप में सामने आने लगा। दूसरे शब्दों में यदि कहा जाए, तो अँग्रेजी उपनिवेशवाद की पृष्ठभूमि में ही नारी आंदोलन पनपता था। लेकिन यह भी अविस्मरणीय नहीं कि गाँधीजी के आगमन के बाद ही स्त्री मुक्ति का विषय भारत की स्वतंत्रता के साथ जुड़ा। गाँधीजी स्त्री की प्रगति हेतु स्त्री स्वतंत्रता और स्त्री सुरक्षा की आवश्यकता को समझते थे। उनके अनुसार स्त्री और पुरुष में अंतर सिर्फ शारीरिक है तथा भारतीय स्त्री का त्याग, क्षमता और सहनशीलता पुरुष से भी अधिक है।

‘श्रमिक आंदोलन’ 1920 के दशक में शुरू हुआ। इसमें अनेक महिलाओं की उपस्थिति थी। कई ट्रेड यूनियन महिलाएं सामने आईं, इसके अलावा महिलाएँ स्वयं संगठित होना भी शुरू हुआ था। अधिक महिलाएँ सूती मिलों और खदानों में काम कर रही थीं। 1930 में ‘अखिल भारतीय कांग्रेस कमेटी’ ने अपने ग्वालियर सम्मलेन में श्रमिकों के मुद्दे को उठाया और लाहौर में हुए सम्मलेन में श्रमिकों संबंधी कई प्रस्ताव पारित किए। इसमें प्रसूती गृह, नर्सरी स्कूल तथा प्रसूती और बच्चों की देखभाल के लिए महिला डाक्टर आदि जरूरतों को बताया गया था। 1930 में हुए ‘सविनय अवज्ञा आंदोलन’ महिलाओं की भागीदारी का एक नया चरण माना जाता है। यह आंदोलन अंग्रेजों के ‘नमक कानून’ व इनके नमक बनाने के अधिकार को तोड़ना था। ‘नमक सत्याग्रह आंदोलन’ में महिलाओं ने नमक बनाने और बेचने तक का काम किए हैं। इस प्रकार 1930 का दशक एक बृहद नारीवाद का आकार ले सका। ‘कमला देवी चटोपाध्याय’ जैसे नेताओं ने आत्म त्यागी महिलाओं की छवि को सामने लाने की कोशिश की। इस समय अनेक महिला संघठन बनें। मुंबई में महिलाओं ने ‘राष्ट्रीय स्त्री सभा’ का गठन किया, यह पहला महिला संगठन था जो पुरुष के बिना चलाया

जाता था। ‘देश सेविक संघ’, ‘नारी सत्याग्रह समिति’, ‘महिला राष्ट्रीय संघ’, ‘स्त्री स्वराज संघ’ आदि बनें। इन सबने धरने आदि आयोजन करने, खादी का प्रचार-प्रसार, चरखा चलाने का प्रशिक्षण आदि के काम किए। इससे नारी आत्म निर्भर होने भी लगी। 1920 के दशक के आंदोलन में महिलाओं की बराबरी पर चर्चा शुरू हो गयी थी। इस तरह राष्ट्रीय आंदोलन के तर्कों को स्त्री-पुरुष अधिकार मांगने के लिए भी इस्तेमाल किया है।

स्वातंत्र्योत्तर स्त्री आंदोलन :-

स्वतंत्र भारत में महिलाओं की सामाजिक, आर्थिक और राजनीतिक स्थिति में आए परिवर्तन अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हैं। स्वतंत्रता के बाद भारतीय संविधान ने स्त्रियों को पुरुषों के समान अधिकार प्रदान किए और समानता, स्वतंत्रता तथा न्याय को मौलिक अधिकारों के रूप में स्वीकार किया। इसके बावजूद समाज में पितृसत्तात्मक सोच और परंपरागत कुरीतियाँ बनी रहीं, जिनके खिलाफ महिलाओं और समाज सुधारकों ने संघर्ष जारी रखा। प्रारंभिक चरण में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण कानूनी प्रयास हिंदू कोड बिल था, जिसे डॉ. भीमराव अंबेडकर ने स्त्रियों के अधिकारों को मजबूत करने के लिए प्रस्तुत किया। इसमें विवाह की न्यूनतम आयु बढ़ाने, स्त्रियों को तलाक का अधिकार देने, स्त्री संपत्ति अधिकार और दहेज प्रथा को अवैध बनाने जैसे प्रावधान शामिल थे। लेकिन परंपरावादी विरोध के कारण यह एक ही रूप में पारित नहीं हो सका और इसे चार अलग-अलग कानूनों में विभाजित कर लागू किया गया। इससे असंतुष्ट होकर अंबेडकर ने मंत्री पद से इस्तीफा दे दिया। यह घटना महिला अधिकारों के संघर्ष में एक महत्वपूर्ण मोड़ थी।

1950 और 1960 के दशक में महिला आंदोलन मुख्य रूप से समाज सुधार और ग्रामीण विकास आंदोलनों से जुड़ा रहा। इस दौरान महिलाएं भूदान आंदोलन, किसान आंदोलनों और सामाजिक सुधार आंदोलनों में सक्रिय रहीं। विनोबा भावे के भूदान

आंदोलन में महिलाओं ने भूमि वितरण की प्रक्रिया में भाग लिया और ग्रामीण समाज में समानता की भावना को बढ़ावा दिया। इसी तरह चिपको आंदोलन में पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों की महिलाओं ने पेड़ों की कटाई का विरोध कर पर्यावरण संरक्षण का महत्वपूर्ण संदेश दिया। यह आंदोलन न केवल पर्यावरणीय था, बल्कि महिलाओं की सामाजिक जागरूकता और नेतृत्व क्षमता का भी प्रतीक बना। 1970 के दशक में भारतीय महिला आंदोलन ने नया और अधिक संगठित स्वरूप ग्रहण किया। इस समय दहेज प्रथा, घरेलू हिंसा, बलात्कार और लैंगिक असमानता जैसे मुद्दे प्रमुख रूप से सामने आए। मथुरा बलात्कार कांड जैसे मामलों ने न्याय व्यवस्था की कमजोरियों को उजागर किया और व्यापक जन आंदोलन को जन्म दिया। इसके परिणामस्वरूप दहेज निषेध कानून और आपराधिक कानूनों में संशोधन की मांग तेज हुई। इस दौर में अनेक महिला संगठनों का उदय हुआ, जैसे प्रगतिशील महिला संगठन, सेवा, वर्किंग विमेन फोरम आदि, जिन्होंने महिलाओं के अधिकारों के लिए संगठित संघर्ष किया। 1975 को अंतरराष्ट्रीय महिला वर्ष के रूप में मनाया गया, जिसने भारत में महिला आंदोलन को नई ऊर्जा दी। इस समय महिलाओं ने शिक्षा, रोजगार, समान वेतन और राजनीतिक भागीदारी की मांग को अधिक मजबूती से उठाया। यह वर्ष भारतीय महिला आंदोलन के लिए एक “मील का पत्थर” माना जाता है। इसके बाद 1975 से 1985 तक का समय “महिला दशक” के रूप में देखा गया, जिसमें महिलाओं की स्थिति सुधारने के लिए अनेक नीतियाँ और कार्यक्रम शुरू किए गए। 1980 और 1990 के दशक में महिला आंदोलन और अधिक राजनीतिक एवं कानूनी रूप से सक्रिय हो गया। इस समय महिलाओं ने पंचायतों और स्थानीय निकायों में आरक्षण की मांग की, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप बाद में 73वें और 74वें संविधान संशोधन के माध्यम से महिलाओं को राजनीतिक प्रतिनिधित्व मिला। इस काल में महिला

आयोग की स्थापना, पारिवारिक न्यायालयों का गठन और महिला अत्याचार विरोधी कानूनों में सुधार जैसे महत्वपूर्ण कदम उठाए गए। इस अवधि में महिलाओं ने यह भी महसूस किया कि केवल सामाजिक सुधार पर्याप्त नहीं हैं, बल्कि आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता और शिक्षा भी आवश्यक है। इसलिए महिला आंदोलन ने स्वरोजगार, शिक्षा और कौशल विकास पर भी जोर दिया। शहरी और ग्रामीण दोनों क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं ने संगठित होकर अपने अधिकारों के लिए आवाज़ उठाई। कुल मिलाकर स्वातंत्र्योत्तर स्त्री आंदोलन भारतीय समाज में गहरे परिवर्तन लाए। इसने महिलाओं को केवल परिवार तक सीमित रखने वाली सोच को चुनौती दी और उन्हें सामाजिक, आर्थिक एवं राजनीतिक जीवन में सक्रिय भागीदारी के लिए प्रेरित किया। यह आंदोलन महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण, समानता और स्वतंत्रता की दिशा में एक निरंतर विकसित होने वाली प्रक्रिया रही है, जिसने आधुनिक भारत में स्त्री चेतना को एक नई पहचान प्रदान की।

इक्कीसवीं सदी को “कड़ी चुनौतियों का युग” कहा जाता है, जहाँ एक ओर लोकतंत्र, राजनीति और समाज में अनेक समस्याएँ जैसे भ्रष्टाचार, साम्प्रदायिकता, जातिवाद और उपभोक्तावाद बढ़ रहे हैं, वहीं दूसरी ओर इनका प्रभाव महिलाओं की स्थिति पर भी पड़ रहा है। आधुनिक मीडिया में स्त्री को कभी उपभोक्ता वस्तु के रूप में दिखाया जाता है, तो कभी यौनिकता और हिंसा के माध्यम से उसका शोषण बढ़ता है। इससे महिला सशक्तिकरण की प्रक्रिया पर मिश्रित प्रभाव पड़ा है और पहले जैसा संगठित महिला आंदोलन कुछ कमजोर दिखाई देता है, हालांकि पूरी तरह समाप्त नहीं हुआ है। इस दौर में एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि पंचायतों में महिलाओं को आरक्षण मिलना है, जिसे बाद में 33% तक बढ़ाया गया। इससे ग्रामीण और स्थानीय स्तर पर महिलाओं की राजनीतिक भागीदारी में वृद्धि हुई और यह महिला आंदोलन की एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि मानी

जाती है। 1990 के दशक के बाद महिला आंदोलनों का मुख्य केंद्र यौन हिंसा और बलात्कार के खिलाफ संघर्ष रहा है। भंवरी देवी केस ने न्याय व्यवस्था और समाज दोनों को झकझोर दिया, क्योंकि बाल विवाह रोकने के प्रयास में उनके साथ सामूहिक बलात्कार हुआ था। इसके बाद कई राज्यों में व्यापक विरोध प्रदर्शन हुए और महिला संगठनों ने सक्रिय रूप से आवाज उठाई। इसी समय भ्रूण हत्या, वेश्यावृत्ति, दहेज, मूल्यवृद्धि और प्रजनन अधिकार जैसे मुद्दे भी प्रमुख बने। 2000 के बाद कई बड़े यौन हिंसा के मामलों जैसे निर्भया कांड, उन्नाव और कठुआ कांड ने पूरे देश को हिला दिया। इन घटनाओं के बाद देशभर में बड़े पैमाने पर विरोध प्रदर्शन हुए, जिनमें महिलाएँ और पुरुष दोनों शामिल हुए। मोमबत्ती जुलूस, धरना और डिजिटल आंदोलनों के माध्यम से जनता ने न्याय की मांग की। इन आंदोलनों के दबाव में सरकार को कानूनों में सुधार करने पड़े और बलात्कार विरोधी कानूनों को अधिक कठोर बनाया गया। इस अवधि में महिला आंदोलन केवल सड़क संघर्ष तक सीमित नहीं रहा, बल्कि स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता और डिजिटल जागरूकता जैसे नए क्षेत्रों में भी फैल गया। हालांकि चुनौतियाँ अभी भी बनी हुई हैं, फिर भी यह स्पष्ट है कि इक्कीसवीं सदी में महिला आंदोलन ने नए रूप में सामाजिक चेतना और प्रतिरोध की प्रक्रिया को जारी रखा है।

आज हम 2026 में पहुँच चुके हैं, परंतु महिलाओं के खिलाफ शोषण और हिंसा में अपेक्षित कमी नहीं दिखती। यह एक गंभीर सामाजिक चिंता का विषय है। कानूनों में कई सुधार होने के बावजूद भ्रष्टाचार, प्रशासनिक ढिलाई और भाई-भतीजावाद के कारण पीड़ित महिलाओं को अक्सर न्याय समय पर नहीं मिल पाता और कई मामलों में अपराधी सजा से बच निकलते हैं। इससे यह प्रश्न उठता है कि महिला आंदोलन अपनी मूल उद्देश्यपूर्ति में कितना सफल हो पाया। आज आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि महिला संगठनों को केवल सामाजिक जागरूकता तक सीमित

न रहकर राजनीतिक भागीदारी पर अधिक जोर देना चाहिए। पंचायत स्तर से लेकर संसद (लोकसभा और राज्यसभा) तक महिलाओं की अधिक और प्रभावी भागीदारी आवश्यक है, क्योंकि निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रिया में उनकी उपस्थिति ही नीतियों को अधिक संवेदनशील और प्रभावी बना सकती है। वर्तमान में भारतीय राजनीति में पुरुषों की अधिकता के कारण महिला आवाजें कई बार कमजोर पड़ जाती हैं। इसलिए महिला सशक्तिकरण का वास्तविक समाधान केवल कानूनी सुधार नहीं, बल्कि संगठित राजनीतिक भागीदारी और सामाजिक आंदोलनों के माध्यम से व्यवस्था परिवर्तन में है। महिलाओं को अपने अधिकारों और सुरक्षा के लिए सक्रिय रूप से संगठित होकर संघर्ष करना होगा। नारी आंदोलन की सफलता अंततः इसी बात पर निर्भर करती है कि वह स्त्री सुरक्षा, समानता और राजनीतिक भागीदारी को कितनी मजबूती से स्थापित कर पाता है।

निष्कर्ष :-

भारतीय स्त्री मुक्ति आंदोलन एक लंबी ऐतिहासिक प्रक्रिया है जो समाज में महत्वपूर्ण परिवर्तन लाए हैं। नवजागरण काल में इसकी शुरुआत सामाजिक सुधार से हुई, स्वतंत्रता संग्राम में यह राजनीतिक भागीदारी तक पहुँचा, और स्वातंत्र्योत्तर काल में यह अधिकारों और समानता के व्यापक संघर्ष में बदल गया। हालाँकि आज भी स्त्रियाँ अनेक सामाजिक चुनौतियों का सामना कर रही हैं, फिर भी यह आंदोलन लगातार विकसित हो रहा है। स्त्री सशक्तिकरण तभी पूर्ण होगा जब महिलाओं की राजनीतिक, सामाजिक और आर्थिक भागीदारी समान रूप से सुनिश्चित होगी।

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ഉത്തരാധുനിക സിദ്ധാന്തപരിസരത്തിൽ റഫീഖ് അഹമ്മദിന്റെ കവിതകൾ

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പ്രബന്ധ സംഗ്രഹം

ഉത്തരാധുനികതയുടെ സൈദ്ധാന്തിക തലത്തിലൂടെ റഫീഖ് അഹമ്മദിന്റെ കവിതയുടെ പൊതുവായ സവിശേഷതകൾ വിവരിക്കുകയും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ 'തോരാമഴ', 'ശിവകാമി' എന്നീ കവിതകളെ വിലയിരുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

താക്കോൽ വാക്കുകൾ: ഉത്തരാധുനികത, ബഹുസ്വരത, വ്യവഹാര മാധ്യമം, സൂക്ഷ്മ ഘടന

ഉത്തരാധുനികത ആധുനികതയുടെ നിഷേധമായല്ല പരിവർത്തിത രൂപമായാണ് നമ്മിലേക്ക് കടന്നു വന്നത്. വർത്തമാനകാല മനുഷ്യാവസ്ഥകളെ അതിന്റെ ഭിന്നമുഖങ്ങളെ ഭിന്നസ്വരങ്ങളിൽ കേൾപ്പിക്കാൻ ഉത്തരാധുനികർ യത്നിച്ചു. ഭാഷ എന്നത് വ്യവഹാരമാധ്യമം എന്നതിൽ കവിഞ്ഞ് പ്രതീകവൽക്കരണത്തിലേക്ക് അടുത്തു. ആവ്യവും വരേണ്യവുമായ പൂർവ്വധാരണകൾ തകർക്കപ്പെട്ടു. സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ വേലിക്കപ്പുറത്ത് നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന വാക്കുകൾ സാഹിത്യമായി പരിഗണിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. ഇപ്രകാരം ഭാവരൂപ സമാനതകൾ ഇല്ലാത്ത തലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് ഉത്തരാധുനിക കവിത പടർന്ന് പന്തലിച്ചു. ഓരോ കവിതയും അതായിരിക്കണമെന്ന കവിത എന്തെന്നുള്ള അന്വേഷണവുമായി മാറി. ഉത്തരാധുനിക കവികൾ ചെറിയ ചെറിയ ശബ്ദങ്ങളുടെ വലിയ മുഴക്കം സൃഷ്ടിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നവരാണ്. ചെറിയ അനുഭവാവിഷ്കരണങ്ങൾ ശബ്ദാവിഷ്കരണങ്ങൾ ഗന്ധാവിഷ്കരണങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയിലൂടെ സമൂഹ പ്രതിബദ്ധമായ സാഹിത്യനിർമ്മിതിക്ക് ഉത്തരാധുനിക കവികൾക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞു.

ഉത്തരാധുനിക സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ, വിശേഷിച്ചും കവിതയിൽ ഭാഷ ബഹുസ്വരമാണ്. എന്നിരുന്നാലും ഭാഷ എന്നത് വ്യവഹാര മാധ്യമം എന്ന രീതിയിൽ ഉത്തരാധുനികർ അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നില്ല. തങ്ങളുടെ ഉള്ളിലുള്ള അനുഭവത്തിന് ഇന്നത്തെ ഭാഷ അശക്ത

മാണെന്ന് അവർ വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു. വിവരസാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യയുടെ ഏറ്റവും പുതിയ വികാസങ്ങൾ ഭാഷാഘടനയെയും ജീവിതഘടനയെയും മാറ്റിമറിക്കുകയും അർത്ഥരഹിതമായ ആഘോഷമാക്കി മാറ്റുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ഇക്കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ സനാതനമെന്ന് വിളിച്ചുപോന്ന ദർശനങ്ങൾക്ക് അർത്ഥനാശം സംഭവിച്ചു പോയി. അതുകൊണ്ട് വാക്കുകളുടെ വിനിയോഗത്തിൽ കടുത്ത നിയന്ത്രണം പുലർത്തുകയും വായനക്കാർക്ക് അപരിചിതമായ ഘടനകളെ അനുഭവാവിഷ്കരണത്തിന് കണ്ടെത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു പുതിയ കവികൾ അനുവാചകരെ ഉദ്ബോധിപ്പിച്ച് നന്നാക്കാൻ വ്യാമോഹിക്കുന്നില്ല, പടപ്പാട്ടുപാടി വിപ്ലവാവേശം ഉണർത്തുന്നില്ല. വ്യക്തിയുടെ ഉള്ളറകളെ ആവിഷ്കരിക്കാൻ ആണ് ശ്രമിക്കുന്നത്. പദ്യത്തിന് ഒരു പ്രത്യേകഭാഷ വേണമെന്നുള്ള വ്യവസ്ഥാപിത ധാരണയെ വെല്ലുവിളിക്കുകയാണ് പുതുകവിത. ഗദ്യത്തിന്റെ കാവ്യശേഷികളെയും സർഗ്ഗശേഷിയെയും ഉൾക്കൊള്ളാൻ ഉത്തരാധുനികർക്ക് കഴിയുന്നുണ്ട്. അകൃത്രിമമായ ഭാവ പ്രകാശനത്തിന് പറ്റിയ മാധ്യമം ഗദ്യമാണെന്ന് പുതു കവികൾ വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു. കവിത എക്കാലത്തും പരീക്ഷണാത്മകമായിരുന്നു. രൂപപരമായും ഭാഷാപരമായും ഇതി വൃത്തപരമായും ഉള്ള പരീക്ഷണങ്ങളിലൂടെയാണ് മലയാള കവിതയുടെ വളർച്ച. പരീക്ഷണാത്മകമായി പുതുമയെ കവിതയിൽ ആവിഷ്കരിക്കാൻ വാചിക പ

രീക്ഷണങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിച്ച യൂറോപ്യൻ സാഹിത്യത്തിലെ ‘അവാങ്ഗാർഡ്’ സമ്പ്രദായത്തിൽ നിന്നാണ് ഉത്തരാധുനികതയുടെ തുടക്കം. ഉത്തരാധുനികകവിതയെ ആധുനികതയിൽ നിന്ന് വ്യതിരിക്തമാക്കുന്ന പ്രധാന ഘടകം രൂപപരമായ സവിശേഷതയാണ്. ഉത്തരാധുനികത, കേന്ദ്രീകൃത ആശയസംഹിതകളെയും പരമ്പരാഗത കാവ്യസങ്കല്പങ്ങളെയും അട്ടിമറിക്കുകയും അവയെ വികേന്ദ്രീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. അതിന്റെ ഫലമായി സ്ത്രീ, ദളിത്, പാരിസ്ഥിതിക വിഷയങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ കവിതയുടെ മുഖ്യധാരയിലേക്ക് കടന്നുവന്നു. കാവ്യഘടനയിൽ ഉണ്ടായ പ്രധാന പരിവർത്തനം വാക്യവിന്യാസ ക്രമത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടായ മാറ്റമാണ്. കാവ്യഭാഷ ഗദ്യരൂപത്തിലോ പദ്യരൂപത്തിലോ ഉള്ളതാകാം ചിലപ്പോൾ രണ്ടും കൂട്ടിക്കലർത്തി ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഭാഷാപരമായി നോക്കുമ്പോൾ കാവ്യഭാഷയുടെ വിരുദ്ധധ്രുവങ്ങളെ കാവ്യകേന്ദ്രമായി പ്രതിഷ്ഠിക്കുകയാണ് ഉത്തരാധുനികതയുടെ രീതി. രൂപരാഹിത്യമാണ് പുതുകവിതകളുടെ മുഖമുദ്ര. അർത്ഥസംവേദനക്ഷമമായ പദങ്ങൾ മാത്രമല്ല അർത്ഥവൈവിധ്യത്തെ ജനിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ലഘുവാക്യങ്ങളും കാവ്യാത്മകമാവുകയും ആശയസംവേദനം സാധ്യമാവുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന രീതി വർത്തമാനകാല കവിതയിലുണ്ട്. വിരുദ്ധ ആശയങ്ങളുടെയും പദങ്ങളുടെയും സംയോജനത്തിലൂടെ ഐറണികളെയും സറ്റയറുകളെയും സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന പതിവും ഉത്തരാധുനിക കവിതകളുടെ സവിശേഷതയാണ്.

സ്ഥൂലഘടനയിൽ നിന്ന് സൂക്ഷ്മഘടനയിലേക്കുള്ള പരിണാമം ഉത്തരാധുനിക കവിതയെ സവിശേഷമായ രൂപസൗകുമാര്യത്തിലെത്തിക്കുന്നു. കവിക്ക് പറയാനുള്ളതും എഴുതാനുള്ളതും വളരെ കുറച്ചു മാത്രമേ ഉള്ളൂ. ഉത്തരാധുനികർ ബൃഹദാഖ്യാനങ്ങളെ അവിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു. അതിനാൽ രൂപപരമായി അവ സൂക്ഷ്മമായിരിക്കും. രൂപം ധ്രുവാത്മകമാണെങ്കിൽ പോലും ഈ കവിതകൾ സങ്കീർണ്ണമായ ആശയം ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്നവയാണ്. പരസ്പരബന്ധമില്ലാത്തതും പൂർവാപരക്രമം പാലിക്കാത്തതുമായ പദസംഘാതങ്ങളോ, ഒറ്റപ്പദങ്ങളോ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന രീതി ഉത്തരാധുനികതയിൽ ദൃശ്യമാണ്. വാക്കുകൾക്ക് പരസ്പരമുള്ള ബന്ധം നിലനിൽക്കുമ്പോൾ തന്നെ അവയ്ക്ക്

അതീതമായി കൂടിച്ചേരുമ്പോൾ ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന ചിഹ്നവൽക്കരണത്തിലൂടെ പുതിയ അർത്ഥതലങ്ങൾ രൂപപ്പെടുന്നു. ഒറ്റപദങ്ങൾ, അവയുടെ ആവർത്തനം, പുരപ്രത്യയങ്ങളുടെയും പരപ്രത്യയങ്ങളുടെയും ഉപയോഗം, സമുച്ചയം ഉപയോഗിച്ചുള്ള പദബന്ധം സ്ഥാപിക്കൽ, വിഭക്തിപ്രത്യയങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കാതിരിക്കുക, ചോദ്യാവലികളുടെ തുടർച്ച, ഒറ്റവാക്കിലുത്തരങ്ങൾ, ഇവയുടെ ആവർത്തനം എന്നിവയൊക്കെ വർത്തമാനകാല കവിതയുടെ സവിശേഷതകളാണ്. വ്യത്യസ്ത സാഹിത്യശാഖകളെ കൂട്ടിക്കലർത്തുന്ന രീതി, വാർത്ത അവതരണ രീതി, പരസ്യമാതൃകകൾ, ഫ്ലാഷ്ബാക്കുകൾ, ഫോട്ടോഗ്രാഫിയുടെ മാതൃകകൾ എന്നിവയൊക്കെ ഉത്തരാധുനികർ ആവിഷ്കരണ മാതൃകകളായി സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ‘ഞാൻ സ്വാംശീകരിക്കാൻ ഇടയായ കാവ്യപാരമ്പര്യങ്ങൾ, സാമൂഹിക പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങൾ, സാമൂഹിക സന്ദർഭങ്ങൾ ഒക്കെയും ചേർന്ന് രൂപപ്പെട്ട ഒന്നിനെ എന്റെ കവിത എന്നല്ല എന്നിലൂടെ വന്ന കവിത എന്നെ പറയാനാകൂ’ (വീരാൻകുട്ടി വീരാൻകുട്ടിയുടെ കവിതകൾ പുറം 5) ഇത് കേവലം വീരാൻകുട്ടിയുടെ മാത്രം അഭിപ്രായമല്ല എല്ലാ ഉത്തരാധുനികകവികളുടെയും കാഴ്ചപ്പാടാണ്.

റഫീഖ് അഹമ്മദിന്റെ കവിതയുടെ സവിശേഷതകൾ

മലയാള കാവ്യപാരമ്പര്യത്തിന്റെ ഊർജവും ഒഴുക്കും ഉള്ളിൽ ആവാഹിക്കുന്ന കവിയാണ് റഫീഖ് അഹമ്മദ്. തന്റെ കവിതയിൽ ഉടനീളം സംക്ഷിപ്തതയെ മുറുകെപ്പിടിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ശോകത്തിന്റെ തോരാമഴ അനുവാചക ഹൃദയത്തിൽ നിറയ്ക്കാൻ കവിക്ക് സവിശേഷമായ ഒരു സിദ്ധിയുണ്ട്. അതിനൊരുത്തമ ഉദാഹരണമാണ് ‘തോരാമഴ’ എന്ന കവിത. ഉമ്മുക്കുലുസുവിന്റെയും ഉമ്മയുടെയും കവിത. ഉമ്മുക്കുലുസു മരിച്ച രാത്രിയിൽ ഉമ്മ തനിച്ചു പുറത്തു നിന്നു. ഉറ്റവരൊക്കെ പോയി. മുറ്റം ശൂന്യമായി തീർന്നിരുന്നു. വാടകയ്ക്ക് എടുത്ത കസേരകളും ഗ്യാസ് ലൈറ്റ്, പായ തുടങ്ങിയവയെല്ലാം തിരികെ കൊണ്ടുപോയിരുന്നു. പണ്ട് വേലിക്കൽ അവൾ ഒരു ചെമ്പകം നട്ട് വളർത്തിയിരുന്നു

അവിടെ ആകെ ഇരുട്ട് പരന്നു.’

‘ചിമ്മിനിക്കൊച്ചു വിളക്കിന്റെനേരിയ

കണ്ണീർ വെളിച്ചം തുടച്ചു നിന്നു’

ചിമ്മിനി, കൊച്ചു വെളിച്ചം എന്നിപദങ്ങളിലൂടെ മരിച്ചത് ഒരു ചെറിയ പെൺകുട്ടിയാണെന്ന സത്യം അനുവാചകരിൽ എത്തിക്കാൻ കവിക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. ആ ചിമ്മിനിയുടെ കണ്ണീർ വെളിച്ചം തുടച്ചു നീക്കുന്നു. ഉമ്മറപ്പടി ചോട്ടിൽ അവൾ അഴിച്ചിട്ട ചെരിപ്പ് ഒന്ന് ഉരുമ്മി നോക്കിയിട്ട് പുള്ളികുറിഞ്ഞി നിസംഗമായ ഭാവത്തോടെ പിന്നിലെ കല്ലുവെട്ടാൻ കുഴിക്കുള്ളി ലേറി. തെക്കേപ്പുറത്ത് അയക്കോലിലിട്ട അവളുടെ ഇത്തിരി പിഞ്ഞിയ കുഞ്ഞുടുപ്പിൽ ചുറ്റിക്കറങ്ങി നടക്കുന്ന കാറ്റൊന്ന് തട്ടി നോക്കി, പിന്നീട് വേദനയോടെ ആ കാറ്റ് മരക്കൊമ്പിൽ ഏറി. ഉമ്മുകുലുസു മരിച്ചതിനെ തുടർന്ന് തനിച്ചായിപ്പോയ ആ ഉമ്മ മുറ്റത്ത് നിൽക്കെ നിനച്ചിരിക്കാതെ ഒരു പെരുമഴ വരുന്നു. അതാ അമ്മയുടെ ഉള്ളിലെ ദുഃഖത്തിന്റെ പേമാരിയുടെ സൂചകമാകാം പെട്ടെന്ന് എന്തോ ഓർത്തിട്ട് എന്നപോലെ ആ ഉമ്മ അകത്തേക്ക് ഓടിപ്പെന്ന് വില്ലൊടിഞ്ഞെന്ന് തന്റെ മകൾ ചിണ്ണങ്ങി പറയാറുള്ള പുള്ളി കൂടയെടുത്ത് പള്ളിപ്പുറവിലേക്കോടി. ആ പള്ളിപ്പുറവിൽ പുതുതായി കുമിച്ചിട്ട മണ്ണട്ടിമേലെ ആ കൂട നിവർത്തിവെച്ചു. ഉമ്മുകുലുസു മരിച്ച അന്ന് രാത്രി തൊട്ട് ഇന്നോളം ആ മഴ തോർന്നിട്ടില്ല എന്ന് കവി പറയുമ്പോൾ ഏക മകൾ മരിച്ച് തനിച്ചായി പോയ ഒരമ്മയുടെ കണ്ണീരിന്റെ പെരുമഴയാണതെന്ന് ആർക്കും മനസ്സിലാകും. അതുപോലെ പള്ളിപ്പുറവിൽ പുതുതായി കുമിച്ചിട്ട മണ്ണട്ടിമേൽ എന്ന വരിയിലൂടെ എത്ര സംക്ഷിപ്തമായാണ് കവി ആ സ്ഥലത്തിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത്. ബാല്യങ്ങൾ അനുഭവിക്കുന്ന ദാരിദ്ര്യത്തെ നോവോടെ തന്റെ കവിതയിൽ ഉൾച്ചേർക്കാൻ റഫീക്ക് അഹമ്മദിനു കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട് 'തോരാമഴ'യിലും 'ശിവകാമിയിലും' ഇത്തരത്തിലുള്ള ദാരിദ്ര്യത്തിന്റെ സൂചനയുണ്ട്. ഉമ്മുകുലുസുവിന്റെ പിഞ്ഞിയ കുഞ്ഞുടുപ്പും, വാറ് പൊട്ടി പോയ കൂടയും ഉദാഹരണമാണ്.

'ശിവകാമി'

'ഉയരത്തിലുയരത്തിലൊരുമുളകമ്പിന്റെ
നിറുകയിൽ നൂത്തമാടുന്നവൾ ശിവകാമി'

പാണ്ടിയിൽനിന്ന് പൈദാഹങ്ങളൊക്കെ താണ്ടി ത്രിശ്ശിവപേരൂർ നടക്കാവിൽ എത്തിയവളാണ്. മൂന്ന് തെ പൊക്കൽ വിശപ്പുകൾ ഉണ്ടവളാണ്. അവൾ ആകട്ടെ മൂന്നടിയോളം മാത്രം പൊക്കമുള്ളവളാണ്.

ഒരു പഴയ മുളകമ്പിൽ ഭയമുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന അത്ര ഉയരത്തിൽ നട്ടുചവെയിലിൽ ഒരു കാലിൽ നിന്ന് കളിപ്പാവ പോലെ ആടുമവൾ.

'വൈകാശി പഞ്ചാഗ്നി കൂട്ടുന്നു മാനത്തൊ
രാറ്റച്ചിലമ്പിന്റെ വേദന കത്തുന്നു'

മഴ, വെള്ളം തുടങ്ങിയവ റഫീഖ് അഹമ്മദിന്റെ പല കവിതകളിലും ബിംബങ്ങളായി കടന്നു വരാറുണ്ട്. മറ്റൊരാൾത്തമ്മിൽ പറഞ്ഞാൽ വെള്ളം ഭൂമിയെ ഉർവ്വരമാക്കുന്നു. മനുഷ്യമനസിനെ ഉർവ്വരമാക്കുന്നത് കരുണ, ദയ, സഹജീവി സ്നേഹം തുടങ്ങിയ മാനവിക മൂല്യങ്ങളാണ്. ഈ മാനവിക മൂല്യങ്ങളെ നനവിന്റെ ബിംബങ്ങളിലൂടെ കവിതയിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുവരുന്ന കവി ദ്രാവിഡ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിന്റെ ശീലുകളെക്കൂടി കവിതയിലേക്കുകൊണ്ടുവരുന്നുണ്ട്. കവിതയിലെ ഈ പ്രത്യേകതയാവാം അദ്ദേഹത്തെ ഒരു മികച്ച ഗാന രചയിതാവായി മാറ്റിയത്.

ഉപസംഹാരം

തിളങ്ങുന്ന ഒരാശയത്തിന്റെയോ ഭാവത്തിന്റെയോ പൊരിവാക്കിൽ കത്തിപ്പടരുന്നതിനാൽ റഫീക്കിന്റെ ഓരോ രചനയിൽ നിന്നും വെളിച്ചത്തിന്റെ കതിരുകളിൽ നീളുന്നു എന്ന ലീലാവതി ടീച്ചറിന്റെ അഭിപ്രായത്തെ അനുഭവത്തിന്റെ തീവ്രതയോട് ചേർത്ത് ഓരോ അനുവാചകനും ഹൃദയത്തിൽ പേരുന്നു. അതിസൂക്ഷ്മമായ ജീവിതനിരീക്ഷണവും അവയുടെ ലളിതമായ ആഖ്യാനവും റഫീക്ക് അഹമ്മദിന്റെ കവിതയുടെ സവിശേഷതയാണ്. കുഞ്ഞു ചെരിപ്പിൽ ഉരുമ്മിപ്പോയ പൂച്ചക്കുട്ടിയും നിസ്സംഗതയോടെ മരക്കൊമ്പിൽ ചേക്കേറിയ കാറ്റും ലോകത്ത് തനിച്ചാക്കപ്പെട്ട ആ ഉമ്മയുടെ വേദനയെ അതേ തീവ്രതയോടെ പകുത്ത് എടുക്കുന്നവരാണ്. കാവ്യലോകത്ത് തന്റെ ശൈശവദശയിൽ പോലും ഉറച്ച പദം വെക്കലിന് റഫീഖിനെ പ്രാപ്തനാക്കിയത് ലളിതമായ വാക്കുകളിലൂടെ അനുഭവത്തിന്റെ ചൂടും ചൂരും നാട്ടു മണ്ണിന്റെ സുഗന്ധവും അനുവാചകന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിലേക്ക് പകരാനുള്ള കഴിവാണ്.

സഹായകഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ

ഗോപിനാഥ പിള്ള എൻ ആർ കാവ്യമീമാംസപൗരസ്ത്യവും പാശ്ചാത്യവും മാളുബൻ പബ്ലിക്കേഷൻസ്, ഏപ്രിൽ 2001.

ദേശമംഗലം രാമകൃഷ്ണൻ ഡോ: കാവ്യഭാഷയിലെ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ, കേരള ഭാഷ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് തിരുവനന്തപുരം, മാർച്ച് 1986.

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Borders, Belongingness and Illegality: The Paradoxical Identity of Bangladeshi Migrants

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Abstract

The evolution of identity politics of migrants receives an increasing interest among scholars of International Relations. Bangladesh witnessed a forced migration during the 1971 war in which millions were displaced and forced to seek asylum in India. The brutal armed operation- Operation Searchlight, forced the Indian government to intervene in the war-torn East Pakistan which marked not only the establishment of a new state called Bangladesh but also an unresolved matter concerning the migration of individuals from the conflict areas to India. Migration, both legal and illegal, has positive as well as negative impacts on the socio-economic, and political fabric of any state. When Bangladeshis witnessed persecution, intolerance, and unfavourable economic conditions, it became a part of political discourse in the northeastern and West Bengal states of India, which accommodated a large number of migrants. While some people later returned to their homeland, the majority chose to assimilate into India. Now they face the problem of identity- a complex interplay of one's own cultural, political and psychological factors with a set of alien emotions crossing the borders. These people fit the classification set by Myron Wiene- the 'unwanted migrants' and the 'rejected people.' This article identifies that Bangladeshi migrants befit the 'migration paradox' as the border walls reduce cross-border mobility. The problem lies with the emergence of identity politics, which seeks to establish exclusive citizenship rights that impair the rights of migrants who have no other alternative but to relocate. It explores how contemporary challenges such as cultural shifts, identity politics, technological advancements and global interactions impact and transform policy decisions. India cannot be delusional regarding the intake of Bangladeshi migrants since they share a common colonial history, geographical similarities and extended communities. For India, Bangladesh is not just another neighbour, but a key strategic partner.

Keywords: Bangladeshi Migrants, Operation Searchlight, East Pakistan, Migration Paradox

Introduction

East Pakistan shares a border with India, with the states of West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya. With its cultural and historical ties, they share a line of continuity that connects people beyond political borders. For those Bangladeshi citizens who endured the violent and

ruthless atrocities of West Pakistan code named 'Operation Searchlight', the primary option was to escape to these Indian states, where they envisioned a fresh start and considered India as their "new domicile." However, even after a long period of settlement and assimilation with the local culture, these people are treated with a mix

of fear, suspicion, and distrust apart from social and economic exploitation. They also constantly carry the fear of deportation and the threat of being declared as foreigners and place them in detention centers. The first part of the article deals with the mass exodus of population caused by the Bangladesh liberation war (1971) and its consequences. This paper also addresses the identity crisis faced by the immigrant community. Forced migration and continued alienation from the host country create multiple identities and a struggle for belongingness. India is the bedrock of diverse culture and religion brought by immigrants who come to our land. Over the period, these differences in races, language, culture and ideologies got assimilated into a single national identity. Earlier, individuals had the liberty to move to any place of their choice and do whatever they liked. This spatial mobility was restricted by the inception of geopolitical boundaries and citizenship, differentiating people into citizens and non-citizens and categorising migrants into legal and illegal migrants. However, ethnicity and cultural orientations differentiate people into “insiders” and “outsiders”, which often leads to a struggle for belonging in the host country. This ambivalent position questions nationality and the very existence of these people.

Method of research

In this article, the targeted group under study is a complex one in terms of their nationality and existence. The study is exploratory in nature and the methodology employed in this study depends on secondary data to analyse the lives of Bangladeshi migrants. The data was drawn from secondary sources like books, academic research articles, government websites, news reports, and authoritative institutional publications. Generally, for analysing the life pattern of migrants, a qualitative approach is used. Here

also the same pattern is followed, focusing on content analysis of existing literature to identify patterns related to the causes of migration, their socio-economic and political conditions, legal status and challenges faced by the migrants. Statistical data on census reports and political documents were also reviewed to provide a comprehensive demographic and economic approach. It helps to provide us with a multi-dimensional understanding of the complex lives led by the migrants.

Operation Searchlight: The Fate of Bangladesh

The political storm witnessed in East Bengal has been in the making ever since the establishment of Pakistan. A country with two wings, East and West Pakistan, separated by 1200 miles of an alien territory, naturally witnesses domination by caste and class groups. They were different geographically, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically, and they could never form parts of a composite political unit. The root cause of the conflict lies deep in the above factors. These components were aligned in a single line of chain, which resulted in the economic exploitation of East Bengal and the imposition of the Urdu language. The India-Pakistan war of 1965, the removal of Ayub Khan from power, and the ‘Joy Bangla’ speech by Mujibur Rahman were the immediate reasons for the bloodshed. Since the birth of East and West Pakistan, Urdu has been the only state language of the state. This was considered an imposition on millions of Bengali-speaking people, as against only seven per cent of Urdu-speaking people in West Pakistan. A distinguishing feature of East Pakistan is ‘the homogeneity of its population as far as nationality is concerned,’ for 98 per cent of its inhabitants are Bengalis, ‘a people with an ancient culture, who are

proud of their history and literature, love their language and value their national tradition' (Y.V. Gankovsky & L.R. Gordon, 1964). Influential indigenous educationalist Bonnie Jane Maracle has rightly pointed out that when a language is disrupted or replaced, the culture itself shifts, and often leads to resistance or revolt against such impositions. Bengali people possess a rich and proud cultural history that is centered around language, cuisine, artistic expression, and religious practices. The deeply motivated and patriotic Bengali community has consistently resisted oppression related to these fundamental aspects of their identity. This domineering character was also reflected in the political and economic life of Bengalis. Gankovsky pointed out that the central government continued to discriminate in economic and financial matters against East Pakistan. The trade surplus was used to offset the chronically unfavourable foreign trade balance of West Pakistan, which exported less than East Pakistan. According to the calculations of economists, at least 300 million rupees were annually extracted from East Pakistan and used to develop its Western regions (The Pakistan Times, 1956). This economic discontent is transferred to the political discourse of the country. A continuous denial of rightful places for the political leadership of East Pakistan leads to the political alienation of Bengalis. Although Dacca and Karachi were designated as the provincial capital, the former possessed minimal actual authority. Significant political and administrative decisions were predominantly made in Islamabad, illustrating the prevailing influence of West Pakistan within the federal framework.

After a period of Martial Law and the dissolution of the National and Provincial Assembly, elections were held on December 7,

1970. The Awami League party led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won 160 out of the 162 seats from East Bengal in the National Assembly consisting of 300 members. In the West, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan's People's Party secured 87 of the 138 seats. Since the "maximum political autonomy and equal powers" (Singhvi, 1971) concept of Yahya Khan was never as wide as that of Mujibur Rahman, the country again witnessed a wave of political upheavals. When the world was expecting fruitful results out of the negotiations between the two leaders, the troops were pouring into East Bengal by air and sea, and the noose around the neck of East Bengal was tightening.¹ The Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra—a radio broadcasting centre of Bengali nationalist forces reported on March 29 that the Pakistani army, air force and navy had massacred 3,00,000 people and urged free nations of the world to come forward to check this genocide. After nine months of bloodshed, December 16, 1971 marked the end of the Bangladeshi liberation war which manifested not only the establishment of a new state called Bangladesh but also an unresolved matter concerning the migration of individuals from the conflicted areas to India.

A report submitted to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) by the Emergency Commission on July 28 stated that six million Bengalis had streamed out of East Pakistan, their homeland, to the bordering states of West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya. Thousands of new refugees were arriving every day, and the pressure on India generated by this multitude of destitute refugees was mounting dangerously. (Chaudhuri, k.1972) Inside India, the mass migration from East Pakistan into India was considered a "homecoming" by the people as well as the national leadership, but at the local level, the situation was deteriorating gradually as more and more migrants started pouring in.

Identity, Conflict and Life

Among the illegal migrants who migrated from Bangladesh to India, Assam is the most affected state. It has experienced major political, economic, social, and security issues and witnessed even violent aggressions. Agitations in Assam were spearheaded by the All Assam Students Union (AASU), which demanded the removal of illegal migrants from the electoral rolls. Though the agitation resulted in the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985, it only fueled the ongoing agitation against migrants. The accord prescribed for the detection and deletion of the names of illegal immigrants from electoral rolls, and their deportation to Bangladesh, and 'Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people' (Government of Assam 1985, 2). One estimate holds that around one-third of Assam's 22.38 million population is that of immigrants and their descendants (Hazarika, 2013). The major issue is rooted in the allocation and distribution of resources. The perception that migrants displace indigenous workers and acquire farmlands and permanent residence has fueled resentment among the local population, particularly when they obtain ID cards (Das J, 2016). An NGO, Chiring Chapori Yuva Manch, based in Dibrugarh, Assam, organised a campaign against the Bangladeshi who illegally resided there, raised the slogan "Save the Nation, Save Identity, Let's take an oath- deny food, employment and housing to Bangladeshis. Initiate a thorough economic blockade targeting illegal migrants. (Upadhyaya 2005, cited in Shamshad 2010). These perspectives are echoed in the upper echelons of the government.

Governor of Assam, S K Sinha, in the official report submitted to the President of the Republic in November 1998, says, "As a result of population movement from Bangladesh, the spectre looms of a large number of indigenous people of Assam being reduced to a minority in their home state. The preservation of their culture will be at risk, their political authority will be diminished, and their job prospects will be adversely affected." Consequently, it is only a matter of time before a call for their unification with Bangladesh may arise. The rapid growth of international Islamic fundamentalism may provide the driving force for the demand (Report on Illegal Migration into Assam, no. 33,17-18, quoted in Upadhyaya 2006: 12)

Considering the migrant's side, the intensity and extent of the struggle with identity are different for different generations. The children of the first generation born and brought up by the immediate migrants are more connected to their 'roots' and maintain an emotional connection to their native land. For the subsequent generations, this emotional connection often diminishes as they assimilate into new cultural and social environments, eventually adopting a new identity. This struggle for identity has been exacerbated by the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The NRC in Assam has rendered millions of people stateless by requiring proof of ancestry before March 24, 1971, disproportionately affecting Bengali-speaking people, who are often presumed to be "illegal migrants" regardless of their generational ties to the region. As noted by Anuradha Sen Mookerjee (2022), these policies have transformed the India-Bangladesh border into a "site of fear, separation, and domination," where ethno-religious boundaries are drawn to define who

belongs and who does not. This also affects the original inhabitants as well as their descendants, who have no documents to prove their identity. Identity is a socio-cultural marker in which a person identifies his/her belongingness as well as non-belongingness based on group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). When there is a mismatch of self-identification with the labels placed on a person by others based on social perceptions, issues of identity arise (DuBois, 1986). This creates a distinction between “us” and “them” and creates the feeling of “other.” Subsequent decades also witnessed the increased use of words such as ‘infiltrators’ and ‘illegal migrants’, which invariably builds a sense of insecurity among the migrants. This is evident in the Nellie massacre of 1983, as it serves as an important illustration of the violent atrocities that have occurred in Assam, driven by the forces of identity politics. It was demonstrated as a resentment against the East Bengal-originated Muslim population who are illegally residing in the country. Even after a long period of settlement, these communities had been designated as “refugees” by forced migrant policies and cultural practices (Holt, 2007). The Bengali population in Assam includes not only the refugees of the 1971 liberation war but also people who migrated as plantation workers and labourers during the British time. These people had deeply assimilated into their new identity economically, politically, and socially. However, the feeling of alienation by the host country left them with no option but to survive in the newly emerged environment to lead a refugee life. These people fit the classification set by Myron Wiene- the ‘unwanted migrants’ and the ‘rejected people.’ What made this situation unusual is that these stranded people are perceived as not being welcomed in the host country and are unable to return to their country of origin as well. Forced to live with multiple identities, “neither belong

to here nor there” and the “ability to cope against the paradox of resourcefulness in host land” (Mude & Mwanri, 2020), people fit themselves in a position where they are unable to identify their own identity. This forms an important theme in negotiating individual identities.

Individual identity is a complex and multifaceted concept shaped by history, language, religion, customs, traditions, and social norms. The interplay between retaining elements of their home culture and integrating into the host culture creates a complex and multifaceted identity. This process can lead to a sense of ambiguity or questioning one's identity, as individuals navigate between different cultural norms, values, and practices. Identity politics further complicates this process by politicising cultural differences, often framing migrants as “others” in debates over national identity and social cohesion. Their struggle for identity, belonging and survival cannot be studied in isolation from the broader structural and institutional framework. The realities of exclusion, uncertainty, and marginalisation are closely intertwined with questions of citizenship, governance, and state practices.

In India, there is no legal distinction between a refugee and an illegal migrant as India is neither a party to the United Nations Conventions on Refugees, 1951 and its Protocol, nor has it developed its own Refugee Law. Thus, so far, India does not have a legal definition of refugee. Instead, asylum seekers are managed under administrative rules like the Foreigners Act of 1946. However, the people from Bangladesh are not recognised as asylum seekers or refugees under India’s legal framework, which complicates the government’s efforts to identify, regulate, and manage their status. The historically porous borders, which have facilitated the cross border movement for centuries, continue even today to

determine the identity and citizenship of millions of people.

Identity V/S Citizenship

The legal framework governing citizenship in India has struggled to adequately accommodate the historically displaced population. Nearly 2 million of the thirty-three million residents of Assam who participated in the recent state-level citizenship determination procedure were left out of the final NRC list, rendering their citizenship status and identity as residents of Assam and India (Azad et al., 2019., Saha, 2021). The government has tried to pacify the fears of the people by repeatedly emphasizing that the NRC does not take away the citizenship of any Indian, but intends to enumerate its true citizens. However, the verification process makes the whole task even more difficult as most of the people failed to produce the documents. The verification process required the individuals to produce documentary evidence tracing their ancestry to the date of 24th March 1971, as stipulated in the Assam Accord. A significant number of residents failed to produce the required documents due to the absence of birth records, ownership documents, and educational certificates. Frequent displacement caused by floods, low literacy rate, poverty and inadequate administration aggravate the challenge to prove their identity. This excludes many genuine Indian citizens from the NRC despite having lived in India for generations (Siddique & Ramachandran, 2024). This situation highlights the concept of “migranticisation of citizenship and citizenisation of migrancy” as pointed out by Dahinden and Anderson (2021). Political debates surrounding the NRC have frequently been shaped by claims that successive governments refrained from implementing the NRC because of electoral considerations and identity-based mobilization. This increasingly blurred the thin

line between citizens and immigrants through state policies and social discourses.

Contemporary mechanisms of identification and verification, particularly in the context of citizenship register and documentation regimes, have intensified debates around belonging and exclusion, often leading to the marginalisation of vulnerable groups who lack adequate documentary proof (Jayal, 2020; Baruah, 2020). Various political groups have portrayed citizenship verification as essential for protecting the indigenous community's identity. An important feature of the NRC process was that the burden of proving citizenship fell disproportionately on the socio-economically vulnerable population, primarily targeting Bengali-speaking Muslims, including indigenous Assamese groups, Gorkhas and other long-term residents. This can be understood as an institutional form of exclusion through citizen verification called ‘weaponization of citizenship.’² This took away substantive rights, duties, and entitlements of people, which make difficult for them to secure even a basic means of subsistence.

The Constitution of India deals with citizenship from Articles 5 to eleven. However, it contains neither any permanent nor any elaborate provisions in this regard. It only identifies the person who became a citizen of India at its commencement (i.e., on January 26, 1950). It does not deal with the problem of acquisition or loss of citizenship subsequent to its commencement. It empowers the Parliament to enact a law to provide for such matters and any other matter relating to citizenship. Accordingly, the Parliament enacted the Citizenship Act 1955, which has been amended in the subsequent years. According to the Constitution, the following four categories of persons became the citizens of India at its commencement i.e., on 26 January, 1950.

(1) **Article 5: Citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution:** At the commencement of this Constitution, every person who has his domicile in the territory of India and— (a) who was born in the territory of India; or (b) either of whose parents was born in the territory of India; or (c) who has been ordinarily resident in the territory of India for not less than five years immediately preceding such commencement, shall be a citizen of India.

(2) **Article 6: Rights of citizenship of certain persons who have migrated to India from Pakistan:** Notwithstanding anything in article 5, a person who has migrated to the territory of India from the territory now included in Pakistan shall be deemed to be a citizen of India at the commencement of this Constitution if— (a) he or either of his parents or any of his grandparents was born in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935 (as originally enacted); and (b) (i) in the case where such person has so migrated before the nineteenth day of July, 1948, he has been ordinarily resident in the territory of India since the date of his migration, or (ii) in the case where such person has so migrated on or after the nineteenth day of July, 1948, he has been registered as a citizen of India by an officer appointed in that behalf by the Government of the Dominion of India on an application made by him therefor to such officer before the commencement of this Constitution in the form and manner prescribed by that Government: Provided that no person shall be so registered unless he has been resident in the territory of India for at least six months immediately preceding the date of his application.

(3) **Article 7: Rights of citizenship of certain migrants to Pakistan:** Notwithstanding anything in articles 5 and 6, a person who has after the first day of March, 1947, migrated from

the territory of India to the territory now included in Pakistan shall not be deemed to be a citizen of India: Provided that nothing in this article shall apply to a person who, after having so migrated to the territory now included in Pakistan, has returned to the territory of India under a permit for resettlement or permanent return issued by or under the authority of any law and every such person shall for the purposes of clause (b) of article 6 be deemed to have migrated to the territory of India after the nineteenth day of July, 1948.

(4) **Article 8: Rights of citizenship of certain persons of Indian origin residing outside India:** Notwithstanding anything in article 5, any person who or either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents was born in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935 (as originally enacted), and who is ordinarily residing in any country outside India as so defined shall be deemed to be a citizen of India if he has been registered as a citizen of India by the diplomatic or consular representative of India in the country where he is for the time being residing on an application made by him therefor to such diplomatic or consular representative, whether before or after the commencement of this Constitution, in the form and manner prescribed by the Government of the Dominion of India or the Government of India (The Constitution of India, n.d., p. 4-5).

(5) **Article 9:** No person shall be a citizen of India or be deemed to be a citizen of India, if he/she has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of any foreign country.

(6) **Article 10:** Every person who is or is deemed to be a citizen of India shall continue to be such citizen, subject to the provisions of any law made by the Parliament.

(7) Article 11: Parliament shall have the power to make any provision with respect to the acquisition and termination of citizenship and all other matters relating to citizenship.

These Constitutional provisions were framed in the immediate aftermath of partition to address the complex realities of displacement and migration across the newly drawn borders of India and Pakistan. By providing citizenship on the basis of domicile, migration, and ancestral ties, the constitution initially adopted an inclusive and historically sensitive approach to accommodate a considerable section of the population. However, the contemporary challenges faced by these people reveal a significant departure from this foundational vision. While Articles five to eight recognised the fluid and transitional nature of identities in a post-partition context, present day criteria of legal administrative mechanisms based on rigid documentations fail to accommodate such layered histories. However, from the state's perspective, the bureaucratic response will be shaped more by security concerns rather than humanitarian considerations. Migrants are generally perceived through the lens of border control and demographic anxieties. This exerts pressure on the authorities to tighten security and monitor their movements. The contrast among these adopted approaches reinforces the need to revisit the inclusivity framework followed by India to provide a decent, dignified, worry-free livelihood to the affected population.

Way forward: The multifaceted nature of irregular migration and the continuous debates and protests on NRC require a balanced and comprehensive policy approach. Addressing migration from Bangladesh requires a policy framework that integrates national security, constitutional safeguards and administrative efficiency. India should formulate a

comprehensive national migration policy that clearly distinguishes between undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Rather than relying solely on a basic classification of long-term residents and illegal migrants, administrative authorities should adopt a more balanced framework that incorporates unforeseen challenges that may arise in future.

Documentation of the NRC needs to be modernized through digital records and transparent procedures under judicial oversight. This requires the government to strengthen civil registration system, including universal registration of births and deaths. Integration of digital identity databases would minimize future citizenship disputes. Equally important is to ensure that the verification and documentation process need to be impartial rather than a tool for political contestation. The government should also avoid prolonged detention and statelessness by ensuring that no person is deprived of basic rights before the completion of all legal remedies. At the central level, the government need to enhance bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh through diplomatic engagements and coordinated border management practices to address irregular migration. The proposed measures are important as citizenship has now evolved beyond a mere legal status to a fundamental determinant of social and individual rights. Ambiguities surrounding citizenship status can result in the denial of rights, legal protection and economic entitlements.

Conclusion

The Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 was a significant turning point that transformed the geopolitical landscape of South Asia, culminating in the establishment of an independent Bangladesh after years of economic exploitation, political oppression, and cultural marginalisation

under the governance of West Pakistan. The war was characterised by extreme violence, including acts of genocide and widespread atrocities, which drew considerable international attention and prompted India's decisive military intervention. Nevertheless, the post-war period introduced new difficulties. Millions of refugees who sought safety in India during the conflict faced challenges related to their identity, often being categorised as "unwanted migrants" or "illegal infiltrators." In regions such as Assam and West Bengal, these individuals experienced social exclusion and political disenfranchisement, further intensified by ethno-religious conflicts. The Assam Agitation (1979-1985) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) initiative exacerbated this crisis, leaving many descendants of wartime migrants stateless and uncertain about their futures. Their identity remains a subject of contention—perceived by some as legitimate refugees and by others as outsiders—underscoring the ongoing challenges of displacement, citizenship, and national identity in the post-colonial context of South Asia. This complex legacy of both liberation and displacement highlights the ongoing intricacies of identity politics and migration within the region.

Notes

1. Six shiploads of West Pakistani troops landed at Chittagong and Chalna during the talks between President Yahya Khan and Awami League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to augment the already formidable force of 60,000 troops concentrated in the three cantonments of Dacca, Comilla, and Jessore. At Chittagong, thousands of East Bengalis had tried to prevent the army from unloading arms and the dockers had refused to unload the ships.

2. Weaponization of citizenship refers to the process through which governments use

nationality not as a protected right but as a political tool to punish opponents and enemies to further their vested interests.

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One Caste, One Religion, One God: A Critical Analysis of Universal Humanism in the Thought of Sree Narayana Guru

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Abstract

The philosophy of "One Caste, One Religion, One God" articulated by Sree Narayana Guru represents one of the most profound ethical interventions in modern Indian social thought.

Emerging from the deeply stratified caste society of Kerala in the late nineteenth century, Guru's doctrine challenged entrenched hierarchies and religious exclusivism through a vision of universal humanism rooted in spiritual unity and social equality. This article critically examines the philosophical foundations, socio-political implications, and contemporary relevance of this doctrine. By situating Guru within the broader intellectual traditions of Indian philosophy and social reform, the paper argues that his thought constitutes an alternative model of modernity-distinct from both Western liberalism and radical anti-caste movements. The study adopts a normative and interpretive methodology, drawing on primary writings, historical developments, and comparative perspectives. While acknowledging certain limitations-particularly the absence of a structural political program-the paper contends that Guru's universal humanism offers a vital ethical framework for addressing contemporary challenges of caste discrimination, religious polarization, and identity politics. Ultimately, the article positions Guru as a key thinker in reimagining inclusive citizenship and moral community in modern India

Keywords: Sree Narayana Guru; Universal Humanism; Caste System; Social Equality; Kerala Renaissance; Indian Philosophy; Social Reform

Introduction

The persistence of caste-based inequality and religious division continues to shape the socio-political landscape of India. While legal and constitutional frameworks have sought to address these issues, deeply embedded social hierarchies remain resilient. In this context, revisiting the thought of Sree Narayana Guru becomes not only relevant but necessary. Guru's famous proclamation-"One Caste, One Religion, One God for humankind"-was not a mere spiritual slogan but a radical critique of social stratification.

It challenged the ideological foundations of caste hierarchy while proposing a universalist ethical framework grounded in human dignity. Unlike many reformers, Guru did not rely on political mobilization or legal reform alone; instead, he emphasized moral transformation, education, and spiritual awakening as pathways to social change.

He propagated the idea of 'One Caste, One Religion, One God'. He founded the 'Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam' (SNDP) for upliftment and education of Ezhava community.

He launched the "Aruvipuram movement, one of the first moments for equal rights to temple entry. He lent support to Vaikkom Satyagraha for temple entry (1924-25) in Travancore. Founded Ashram dedicated to principle-Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra (all human beings are equal in the eyes of God).

"One Caste, One Religion, One God for All" (Oru Jathi, Oru Matham, Oru Daivam, Manushyanu), is prepared for an academic article, exploring the core of his universal humanism.

He did not simply teach ideals; he embodied them by building institutions, shaping philosophies, and living a life that affirmed his central belief-that humanity must come before religion, and that the true aim of spirituality is to cultivate compassionate, rational, and liberated individuals rather than devoted followers of any single creed. During the 1920s in South India, the non-brahmins organised the Self-Respect Movement led by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. There were numerous other movements demanding that the ban on the entry of lower castes into temples be lifted. Sri Narayana Guru in Kerala led a lifelong struggle against upper caste domination. He coined the slogan "one religion, one caste, one God for mankind", which his disciple Sahadaran Ayyapan changed into "no religion, no caste, no God for mankind".

Objectives of The Study

- To critically examine the concept of universal humanism in the philosophy of Sree Narayana Guru, with special reference to his slogan "One Caste, One Religion, One God for humankind."
- To evaluate Guru's critique of caste hierarchy and religious divisions in colonial Kerala.
- To explore how universal humanism functions

as a tool for social reform and ethical transformation.

Historical and Social Context

To understand Guru's philosophy, it is essential to situate it within the socio-historical context of Kerala in the late nineteenth century. This period was characterized by rigid caste hierarchies, where social status determined access to education, occupation, and religious spaces. Marginalized communities, particularly the Ezhavas, faced severe discrimination, including practices of untouchability and inapproachability.

The intervention of Sree Narayana Guru must be understood as a response to this oppressive order. His consecration of a Shiva idol at Aruvippuram in 1888 was a landmark event that symbolically challenged Brahmanical authority. By asserting the right of marginalized communities to perform religious rituals, Guru disrupted the monopoly of upper castes over spiritual practices.

At the same time, colonial rule introduced new dynamics, including Western education and administrative reforms. These changes created opportunities for social mobility while also generating new forms of inequality. Guru's thought engaged with this transitional context, offering an indigenous critique of both traditional hierarchies and colonial modernity.

Philosophical Foundations of Universal Humanism

The philosophical core of Guru's thought lies in a form of spiritual monism, unity of all existence. While influenced by Advaita Vedanta, his interpretation diverges from classical formulations by foregrounding its social implications.

The idea of "One Caste" rejects the legitimacy

of hierarchical divisions among human beings. It asserts that caste is a socially constructed category rather than a natural or divine order. Similarly, "One Religion" points to the ethical commonality underlying diverse religious traditions, while "One God" affirms a universal spiritual principle transcending sectarian boundaries.

Unlike purely metaphysical interpretations of Advaita, Guru's philosophy is deeply practical. It seeks to translate spiritual insights into ethical action. This synthesis of metaphysics and social ethics distinguishes his thought from both orthodox religious doctrines and secular reform movements.

Guru's universal humanism can thus be understood as a normative framework that integrates ontology (the nature of reality) with ethics (the principles of right conduct). By asserting the fundamental unity of humanity, it provides a moral basis for social equality.

Universal Humanism as Social Critique

The doctrine of universal humanism articulated by Sree Narayana Guru functioned as a powerful critique of existing social structures. It challenged the ideological foundations of caste hierarchy by questioning its moral legitimacy.

In contrast to reformers who sought to modify the caste system, Guru aimed to transcend it altogether. His emphasis on unity and equality undermined the very logic of hierarchical.

Institutional and Social Interventions

The impact of Guru's philosophy extended beyond theoretical discourse into concrete social practices. The establishment of institutions played a crucial role in translating his ideas into reality.

Organizations such as the Sree Narayana Dharm Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam facilitated

collective action and community development. Education initiatives promoted literacy and social mobility while temple reforms challenged exclusionary practices.

These interventions contributed to what is often described as the Kerala Renaissance—a period significant social transformation characterized increased access to education, improved social mobility, and the gradual erosion of caste barrier.

Comparative Perspectives

The thought of Sree Narayana Guru can be better understood through comparison with other prominent thinkers.

Mahatma Gandhi emphasized spiritual unity and social harmony but retained certain ambiguities regarding caste. His concept of *varna* sought reform rather than abolition.

In contrast, B. R. Ambedkar adopted a more radical stance, advocating the complete annihilation of caste through legal and political means. Ambedkar viewed caste as a structural system requiring institutional intervention.

Contemporary Relevance

In contemporary India, issues of caste discrimination, religious intolerance, and identity politics continue to pose significant challenges. The universal humanism of Sree Narayana Guru offers valuable insights for addressing these issues.

His emphasis on ethical unity and inclusivity resonates with modern concepts of pluralism and human rights. By advocating a shared moral foundation, Guru's philosophy provides a framework for fostering social cohesion in a diverse society.

However, the application of his ideas requires careful reinterpretation. In a context marked by

structural inequalities and political contestation, ethical appeals alone may not suffice. Integrating Guru's moral vision with institutional reforms is essential for achieving meaningful change.

Guru's approach occupies a distinct position between these perspectives. While rejecting caste hierarchies, he emphasized moral and spiritual transformation rather than political struggle. This middle path highlights the diversity of strategies within Indian social reform movements.

Critical Evaluation

Despite its strengths, Guru's philosophy is not without limitations. One critique is that its emphasis on spiritual unity may overlook the structural dimensions of inequality. Without addressing economic and political factors, the impact of ethical transformation may be limited.

Additionally, the non-confrontational nature of his approach may be seen as insufficient in contexts requiring direct political action. Critics argue that systemic injustices demand more assertive strategies.

Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the significance of Guru's contribution. Rather, they highlight the need to complement his ethical framework with other approaches to social justice.

Critical Analysis of Sree Narayana Guru's Philosophy

Scholars have interpreted Sree Narayana Guru's philosophy in different ways. One group considers Guru a spiritual reformer whose primary aim was to transform society through moral and ethical values rooted in Advaita philosophy. According to this interpretation, Guru believed that spiritual awakening would naturally lead to social equality by eliminating discrimination based on caste, religion, and social status.

However, another group of scholars argues that Guru should also be understood as a radical social reformer. They point to his temple consecrations, educational institutions, and organizational activities through the SNDP Yogam as evidence that he challenged caste hierarchy not merely through religious teachings but also through practical institutional reforms.

Some scholars criticize Guru's approach by suggesting that his emphasis on spiritual transformation did not directly confront the political and economic structures that sustained caste oppression. Unlike later anti-caste thinkers, Guru did not advocate constitutional or legal mechanisms for social justice. Nevertheless, supporters argue that his philosophy laid the intellectual and moral foundation for Kerala's democratic and egalitarian social development.

Thus, scholarly debates reveal that Guru's philosophy represents a unique synthesis of spirituality, ethics, and social reform rather than fitting neatly into either religious or political categories.

Comparative Perspective

Sree Narayana Guru, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar all sought to eliminate caste discrimination, but their methods and philosophical foundations differed significantly.

Guru advocated **universal humanism**, emphasizing spiritual equality through his famous message, **"One Caste, One Religion, One God for Humanity."** He believed that social harmony could be achieved through education, ethical living, and spiritual enlightenment.

Mahatma Gandhi also opposed untouchability and promoted social harmony. However, Gandhi sought to reform the caste system from within Hindu society and retained certain aspects of

the traditional varna system. His approach emphasized moral persuasion, non-violence, and constructive social work.

In contrast, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar viewed caste as a structural system of oppression that required complete annihilation through constitutional reforms, political representation, legal rights, and social revolution. Ambedkar considered social equality impossible without dismantling caste institutions entirely.

Compared with Gandhi, Guru adopted a more universal and less hierarchical understanding of religion. Compared with Ambedkar, Guru relied more on moral and spiritual transformation than legal and political action. While Guru's philosophy inspired social reform, critics argue that it lacked a detailed political programme for eliminating structural inequalities. Nevertheless, his vision of universal human dignity continues to influence contemporary discussions on social justice.

Universal Humanism as Social Critique

Sree Narayana Guru's concept of universal humanism functioned as a powerful critique of caste-based social exclusion. By declaring that all human beings possess equal dignity regardless of caste, religion, or birth, Guru directly challenged the ideological foundations of caste hierarchy.

His philosophy rejected the notion that social status should be determined by birth and instead emphasized moral character, education, and spiritual development. Through this approach, Guru transformed Advaita philosophy into a practical instrument for social criticism rather than merely a metaphysical doctrine.

Universal humanism also encouraged inter-religious harmony, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect among communities. In modern

democratic societies, Guru's humanism remains relevant in addressing discrimination based on caste, religion, ethnicity, and social identity.

Institutional and Social Interventions

Sree Narayana Guru recognized that philosophical ideals alone could not transform society. Therefore, he established practical institutions to implement his vision of social equality.

His temple consecrations challenged the monopoly of upper castes over religious spaces and demonstrated that spiritual authority belonged to all people. Through the establishment of schools, educational centres, libraries, and the SNDP Yogam, Guru promoted literacy, economic empowerment, and social mobility among marginalized communities.

These institutions created opportunities for education, employment, and collective organization, contributing significantly to Kerala's social transformation. Guru's institutional interventions illustrate that sustainable social reform requires both ideological change and organizational action.

However, scholars also note that while these interventions were highly successful in promoting social inclusion, they were less effective in directly addressing broader political and economic inequalities. Even so, Guru's institutional legacy continues to inspire movements for social justice, inclusive development, and human dignity in contemporary India.

Conclusion

The doctrine "One Caste, One Religion, One God" articulated by Sree Narayana Guru represents a profound vision of universal humanism that continues to hold relevance in contemporary

society. By challenging caste hierarchies and religious divisions, Guru offered an alternative framework for social transformation grounded in ethical unity and human dignity.

His thought bridges the gap between spirituality and social reform, demonstrating that moral and philosophical insights can serve as powerful tools for addressing inequality. While not without limitations, his universalism provides a valuable foundation for reimagining inclusive citizenship and social justice in modern India.

This detailed analysis of Sree Narayana Guru's, "One Caste, One Religion, One God for All" (Oru Jathi, Oru Matham, Oru Daivam, Manushyanu), is prepared for an academic article, exploring the core of his universal humanism.

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Water Governance in Kerala: Institutional Dynamics, Policy Challenges, and Pathways for Reform

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Abstract

Kerala, despite high rainfall and strong social development indicators, faces persistent challenges in ensuring reliable and sustainable drinking water services. This study examines water governance in Kerala through an institutional and public policy perspective, with a focus on the drinking water sector. Using a qualitative analytical approach based on policy review and institutional analysis, the paper traces the evolution of water governance from community-based systems to centralized state-led arrangements, followed by partial decentralization and the emergence of hybrid governance structures. The findings highlight three key governance challenges: institutional fragmentation across multiple agencies, a mismatch between infrastructure expansion and governance capacity, and persistent tensions between centralization and decentralization. While recent programs such as the Jal Jeevan Mission have accelerated access to piped water, improvements in coverage have not been matched by corresponding gains in service reliability, source sustainability, or institutional coordination. The study argues that water governance outcomes in Kerala are shaped primarily by institutional arrangements rather than resource availability alone. It emphasizes the need to move beyond a supply-driven, connection-oriented approach towards an integrated governance framework that prioritizes resource sustainability, demand management, and strengthened inter-institutional coordination. The findings contribute to ongoing policy debates on decentralized water governance and offer insights for improving service delivery in similar socio-ecological contexts.

Keywords: Water Governance; Kerala; Service Delivery; Sustainability

Introduction

Water management in India has historically been shaped by the country's distinctive climatic variability, characterised by intense monsoons followed by prolonged dry periods. The temporal and spatial unevenness of rainfall has necessitated sustained human intervention in water regulation, particularly through irrigation systems, across pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. These interventions have resulted in a diverse set

of technological and institutional arrangements aimed at managing water scarcity and variability.

Water, however, is not merely a resource to be supplied but a component of a complex ecological system that transcends administrative boundaries. Surface water, groundwater, and rainfall are interdependent elements of this system, requiring integrated and coordinated governance. This challenge is particularly acute in India, where approximately 18 per cent of

the global population depends on only about 4 per cent of the world's renewable water resources. Increasing population pressures, rapid urbanization, changing consumption patterns, and climate change have intensified stress on already limited and unevenly distributed water resources. Projections, including those by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, indicate a substantial rise in water demand, further exacerbating concerns regarding long-term sustainability.

In this context, water governance has emerged as a critical policy concern, extending beyond questions of resource availability to issues of allocation, access, regulation, and sustainability. While considerable policy attention has been directed towards expanding water infrastructure and improving coverage, persistent challenges remain in ensuring equitable, reliable, and sustainable service delivery. These challenges are often rooted in institutional fragmentation, weak coordination mechanisms, and the misalignment between policy design and local ecological realities.

Despite receiving an average annual rainfall of nearly 3,000 mm, Kerala experiences recurrent seasonal drinking water shortages due to rapid runoff, limited storage capacity, increasing groundwater dependence, and spatial variability in rainfall. According to the Kerala Economic Review, these hydrological characteristics have intensified seasonal water stress despite the state's relatively abundant water resources, indicating that drinking water security is increasingly a governance challenge rather than one of absolute water scarcity (Kerala State Planning Board, 2024).

Existing studies often focus either on resource availability or infrastructure expansion, while comparatively less attention is paid to

the institutional and governance dimensions shaping water outcomes. This paper addresses this gap by examining water governance in Kerala through a public policy and institutional lens, with particular emphasis on coordination, decentralization, and sustainability challenges. This study adopts a qualitative research design based on policy and institutional analysis to examine the evolution and contemporary dynamics of water governance in Kerala. The analysis draws on a systematic review of national and state policy documents, legislative frameworks, government reports, programme guidelines, institutional publications, and peer-reviewed literature. Key sources include the National Water Policy, the Kerala Water Policy, the Kerala Water Supply and Sewerage Act, and documents related to the Jal Jeevan Mission and other major water sector reforms. These sources are analysed to trace institutional change, examine governance arrangements, and assess the interplay between state agencies, local self-governments, and community-based institutions. The study focuses on understanding how policy frameworks and institutional structures shape drinking water governance, with particular emphasis on coordination, decentralization, and sustainability.

Need for a national water policy

Water is a finite and economically as well as socially valuable natural resource that requires coordinated planning, development, and conservation across multiple governance levels. The administrative history of water management in India can be traced to colonial interventions such as the Famine Commission and the Royal Commission on Agriculture, which laid the foundations for state involvement in irrigation and resource regulation. Post-independence, water management expanded through a range

of sectoral policies and programs implemented by multiple ministries, including those responsible for water resources, agriculture, rural development, and environment, reflecting the fragmented institutional architecture of the sector.

By the 1980s, increasing water stress and recurrent droughts led to the recognition of water as a national asset requiring integrated planning. This culminated in the adoption of the National Water Policy 1987, marking the first formal attempt to articulate a comprehensive national framework for water management. Subsequent revisions in National Water Policy 2002 and National Water Policy 2012 reflected evolving priorities, including sustainability, participatory management, and the need to balance competing sectoral demands (Government of India, 2012).

A significant policy shift emerged during the Twelfth Five Year Plan period (2012-2017), which emphasized a transition from a supply-driven approach towards demand management, efficiency, and decentralization. This shift was driven by growing recognition that the expansion of physical infrastructure alone would be insufficient to address water scarcity, and that governance reforms, particularly those promoting user participation and local-level management, were essential for ensuring equitable and sustainable outcomes (Planning Commission, 2013; International Labour Organization). These policy reforms were introduced against a backdrop of increasing water stress in India. According to NITI Aayog, nearly 600 million Indians face high to extreme water stress, highlighting the necessity of shifting from infrastructure-led development to integrated water governance and demand management (NITI Aayog, 2018). The increasing pressures of urbanization, industrialization, and climate

variability further underscored the limitations of augmenting supply in a resource-constrained context.

In response to emerging challenges, a draft National Water Policy was proposed in 2020, seeking to strengthen principles of integrated water resources management, water use efficiency, and river basin planning. However, as of now, the National Water Policy 2012 remains the operative framework.

While these national policy shifts emphasize decentralization, sustainability, and demand management, their translation into state-level governance structures, particularly in Kerala, remains uneven and contested, reflecting persistent gaps between policy design and institutional practice.

Water Governance

Due to the materiality of water as well as its multi-faceted nature as a natural resource, there is no unanimity in the definition of water governance. Its competing and complimentary uses have created different meanings in different contexts. The diversity of circumstances in which water is found and used makes it difficult to define any single coherent policy for its governance. Water governance relates to the range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels of society (Hall, 2003).

The OECD has defined water governance as the range of political, institutional and administrative rules, practices and processes through which decisions taken are implemented, stakeholders' interests are articulated and decision-makers are made accountable for the management of water (OECD, 2015). According to the UNDP Water Governance Facility, water governance

refers to the range of political, social, economic, and administrative systems that influence water use and management. The concept of water governance is mainly concerned with who gets what, when, and how much water, as well as who has the right to water and its associated benefits. The way societies govern their water resources and services has a profound impact on people's livelihoods and the sustainability of water resources. These governance challenges are particularly relevant in Kerala. Some of the most common governance issues when it comes to the water sector are discussed below:

- Ensuring access to safe drinking water is a major issue faced by many regions in the country. Skewed and unreliable water supply sources are a source of potential unrest among the people.
- Access to water for sanitation and hygiene is an even more serious problem.
- Even today, in many parts of the county, groundwater is still perceived as an individual property and is exploited indiscriminately and inequitably resulting in its over-exploitation.
- Much of the water resource development projects implemented in the country are fragmented in nature, depriving the holistic benefits to its people.
- There is a huge gap in the irrigation potential created and its utilization in the form of inadequate maintenance of the existing infrastructure.
- Water pollution caused by industrial effluents is posing new health hazards. Inadequate sanitation and lack of sewage treatment are also polluting the water bodies. Besides, it threatens the natural flow of the river, the aquatic ecosystem, and its aesthetics as well.
- The lack of adequately trained personnel for scientific planning, utilizing modern techniques and incorporating information technology constraints good water management.
- India still lacks a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to water-related problems.
- Changes in land use patterns, alteration of forest cover etc., are affecting the availability and quality of existing water resources.

These conceptualizations highlight that water governance is not merely about resource management, but about the distribution of authority, accountability, and access across institutional levels. Recent OECD assessments indicate that governance failures, rather than physical scarcity alone, constitute one of the principal barriers to sustainable water management, particularly where institutional fragmentation and weak inter-sectoral coordination exist.

Institutional Ecology of Water Governance in Kerala

Kerala's institutional ecology illustrates a layered governance structure in which historical legacies, bureaucratic centralization, and decentralization reforms coexist, often producing coordination challenges rather than coherent governance outcomes. Kerala's water governance has evolved across pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, characterized by shifts from localized management to a complex interplay of state, community, and multi-level institutions. This trajectory reflects Kerala's socio-political context and continued interface between tradition and modernity.

Kerala's water governance has undergone significant institutional transformation over time, reflecting changing state priorities, governance

philosophies, and policy reforms. Rather than a linear transition, the sector has evolved through successive phases of community-

based management, state-led centralization, decentralization, and hybrid governance. Table 1 summarizes the major phases in the evolution of water governance in Kerala.

Table 1			
Period	Institutional Characteristics	Major Reforms	Governance Orientation
Pre- Colonial	Community-managed ponds, tanks, surangas and customary institutions	Informal customary systems	Community governance
Colonial	Bureaucratic administration and legal regulation	Public Works Department, Water Works Department	Centralized administration
Early post-Independence	Expansion of state responsibility	PHED, public investment in water supply	State-led development
Decentralization (1996 onwards)	Panchayat participation, People's Plan Campaign	73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendments	Decentralized governance
Reform Phase	Community-managed rural water supply	Jalanidhi, KRWSA	Participatory governance
Current phase	Multi-agency implementation	Jal Jeevan Mission	Hybrid governance

Source: Author

Pre-Colonial Period: Community-Embedded Institutions

Water governance in Kerala prior to colonial interventions was deeply rooted in local traditions, indigenous practices, and community-managed institutions. Customary forms of water management, such as the communal upkeep

of ponds (*kulams*), tanks, and small irrigation networks, were prevalent (Sankar, 2022). These practices were often linked to temples or local chieftaincies. Local rights and responsibilities regarding water were defined within caste and community norms, reinforced through deeply ingrained collective rituals and customary laws (Farhat Naz, 2012).

Colonial Era: State Centralization and Legal Reconfiguration

With the advent of colonial rule, Kerala's water governance underwent bureaucratic rationalization and centralized control. British interventions aimed to increase state control over water resources, making water supply and irrigation subjects of colonial administration. This shift eroded customary and community-based rights in favor of standardized legal and technical systems (Khambete, 2023). The introduction of formal legislation, such as the Government of India Act (1935), legally separated responsibilities for water governance between the central state and the provinces, while effectively consolidating local arrangements under colonial regulation.

The origins of organized public works administration in Kerala can be traced back to the establishment of the Maramath Department in Travancore in 1833. This department, created as a branch of the Huzur Cutchery (the Secretariat), was responsible for executing and maintaining various categories of public works, collectively termed maramath. These included the construction and repair of temples, palaces, roads, and irrigation channels. A significant achievement during this period was the initiation of the Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) Water Supply Scheme, which represented the state's first comprehensive modern water infrastructure project for Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of the erstwhile kingdom of Travancore. Recognizing the need for specialized institutional mechanisms, the Travancore administration established the Water Works and Drainage Engineering Department on July 2, 1935.

Early Independence and Local Self-Governance

Kerala's post-independence era was marked by significant land reforms during the 1950s

and 1960s and a gradual decolonization of water management structures. The land reform legislation led to the transfer of private ponds and tanks to public custodianship under local governments, significantly expanding state oversight and establishing a public good orientation toward water management.

Water supply schemes transitioned from ad hoc arrangements to more organized services, with the first piped water initiatives emerging in the 1930s and rapidly expanding after independence. The Public Works Department (PWD) played a crucial role in laying the foundation for modern water governance in Kerala. Its administrative and technical legacy was later inherited by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), which was formed after the political integration of Travancore and Cochin into the state of Kerala in 1956. The establishment of the PHED marked a pivotal moment in the state's evolution of water management, as it was tasked with a comprehensive mandate that included the investigation, planning, design, execution, and management of water supply and sewerage projects across both urban and rural regions of Kerala.

Decentralization and Panchayat Ownership of Schemes

Decentralization reforms in Kerala, initiated in the mid-1990s, represented a significant shift in governance, combining political, fiscal, and administrative devolution. The People's Plan Campaign of 1996 played a vital role in institutionalizing participatory planning by empowering local governments to design and implement development programs through community engagement. These reforms were further reinforced by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments and corresponding

state legislations, which formally established Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) as the third tier of governance.

Within the water sector, decentralization aimed to transfer responsibilities for operating and maintaining water supply systems to local self-governments. However, this shift coincided with the consolidation of technical functions under the Kerala Water Authority (KWA), which was established under the Kerala Water Supply and Sewerage Act of 1986 as a semi-autonomous agency responsible for planning, implementing, and managing water supply and sewerage services throughout the state. While the KWA significantly expanded infrastructure and service coverage, it also reinforced centralized technical and administrative control.

Efforts to devolve water supply schemes, especially the transfer of individual Panchayat schemes from the KWA to Gram Panchayats, have only been partially achieved. Although policy provisions were designed to promote substantial devolution, actual implementation has been limited, resulting in a hybrid governance structure.

In practice, water service delivery in Kerala operates through various institutional arrangements: local governments manage and operate schemes in some areas, community-based beneficiary groups provide services in demand-driven projects, and the KWA continues to directly manage large-scale schemes in both rural and urban contexts. This coexistence of centralized technical control and decentralized service responsibilities reflects an incomplete transition, where decentralization has broadened participation but has not fully reconfigured authority and accountability within the sector.

Kerala Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency

The Kerala Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (KRWSA) was established in 1999 following Kerala's endorsement of the Cochin Declaration, which marked a significant shift in rural water supply policy from a state-led provisioning model to a demand-driven, community-managed approach. This initiative was operationalized through the World Bank-assisted Jananidhi program. KRWSA functions as a special purpose vehicle that promotes participatory planning, user financing, and local management of water supply systems.

In this model, Gram Panchayats and beneficiary groups play a central role in implementing schemes, supported by networks of NGOs and technical agencies. The agency has carried out multiple phases of Jananidhi, demonstrating the effectiveness of decentralized service delivery, particularly in improving access for marginalized groups. Additionally, KRWSA serves as the state's Water and Sanitation Support Organisation (WSSO), coordinating sector support activities, including rainwater harvesting initiatives.

Institutionally, KRWSA represents an effort to operationalise decentralization by strengthening local governance capacity while maintaining state-level facilitation and oversight. Its integration into programs like the Jal Jeevan Mission illustrates the coexistence of community-based approaches within a broader state-driven framework. However, its functioning also highlights challenges in coordination and capacity that affect the sustainability of decentralized water governance systems.

Drinking water governance in Kerala is characterized by the involvement of multiple institutions with overlapping yet complementary

responsibilities. Understanding their respective mandates is essential for analysing the coordination challenges discussed later in the

paper. Table 2 summarizes the institutional architecture of the sector.

Institution	Primary Focus	Governance Level
Ministry of Jal Shakti	National policy, funding, JJM	National
Kerala Water Authority	Planning, implementation, O&M of major schemes	State
Kerala Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (KRWSA)	Community-managed rural water supply, Jalanidhi	State
Local Self Governments	Local planning, monitoring, community engagement	Local
Village Water and Sanitation Committees	Community participation, O&M support	Panchayat
Groundwater Department	Groundwater assessment and regulation	State
Pollution Control Board	Water quality monitoring	State

Source: Author

Jal Jeevan Mission: The Current Phase of Water Governance

Launched in 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) represents the latest phase in the evolution of rural water governance in India, marking a transition toward universal, service-oriented water delivery. The program aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to all rural households, shifting the policy focus from infrastructure creation to ensuring reliable service delivery, including consistency in quantity, quality, and regularity of supply.

In Kerala, JJM builds on a complex institutional landscape shaped by centralized agencies, decentralized governance structures, and community-based initiatives. While the program emphasizes decentralization- assigning

key roles to Gram Panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) in planning, implementation, and operation-it still relies heavily on the technical and administrative capacities of the Kerala Water Authority (KWA) for large-scale infrastructure development and system integration.

This reflects a pattern of institutional layering, where new participatory and service-delivery elements are added to an existing state-centric framework rather than replacing it. As a result, JJM has accelerated the expansion of piped water infrastructure and improved access.

Since its launch in 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission has significantly expanded Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) across rural Kerala, bringing household tap water coverage close

to universal levels. Nevertheless, government reports continue to identify challenges relating to source sustainability, seasonal service reliability, groundwater dependence, and institutional coordination, indicating that infrastructure expansion alone is insufficient to achieve sustainable drinking water governance. It has also reproduced underlying governance challenges, including coordination gaps between agencies, limited functional devolution, and capacity constraints at the local level.

Furthermore, the program has highlighted emerging tensions between coverage and sustainability, especially in regions dependent on groundwater and affected by seasonal variability. While JJM emphasizes source sustainability,

water quality monitoring, and community participation, the extent to which these objectives are operationalized depends on local institutional capacity and inter-agency coordination.

Thus, JJM represents both continuity and change in Kerala's water governance: continuity in the persistence of centralized technical control and change in the scale, ambition, and service orientation of water supply policy. The long-term effectiveness of JJM will depend on the extent to which governance reforms accompany infrastructure expansion, enabling a shift from connection-centric outcomes to sustainable and reliable service delivery. The following table reflects the progress of JJM in Kerala.

Indication	As on 2019	As on July 2026
Total number of households in Kerala	70,75,873	
Households with tap water connections	16,64,091	39,01,882
Villages certified Har Ghar Jal	0	107
Rural coverage	23.52%	55.14%

Source: IMIS

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of water governance in Kerala shows that it's not just about having enough resources or building more infrastructure. The way outcomes unfold comes down to how ecological limits, institutional frameworks, and policy choices interact with one another. There are three key areas worth looking into: institutional fragmentation, the disconnect between infrastructure and governance, and the push and pull between centralization and decentralization.

Institutional Fragmentation

One major characteristic of Kerala's water governance is the variety of institutions involved. You've got organizations like the Kerala Water Authority (KWA), the Groundwater Department, local self-governments, and the Kerala Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, each with their own specific roles. This variety often leads to overlapping responsibilities and coordination issues.

While having multiple institutions aims to tackle the complex nature of water management,

it results in a fragmented system. There is weak coordination and limited integration across different sectors. For instance, separating water supply, groundwater regulation, and watershed management makes it hard to take a comprehensive approach to managing water resources. This compartmentalization often hampers effective policy implementation.

On top of that, there are disparities in technical expertise, financial resources, and administrative power among these institutions, leading to uneven governance outcomes. This creates gaps in monitoring, accountability, and the long-term sustainability of water resources.

Governance- Infrastructure Gap

One of the key takeaways from this study is the noticeable disconnect between building water infrastructure and having the governance systems in place to maintain it. Programs like the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) have done a great job of expanding access to piped water, but this progress hasn't translated into stronger institutional capacity or sustainable operation and maintenance systems.

This gap is reflected in continued reliance on groundwater, the rise of mixed water use practices, and ongoing challenges with service delivery consistency. While ecological factors are undeniably important, the impact of these factors is heavily influenced by institutional dynamics that determine access, allocation, and sustainability.

Often, the focus is on meeting short-term targets like connecting households to functional water taps rather than looking at long-term service quality. If we don't pay careful attention to resource sustainability, managing demand, and effective institutional coordination, just expanding infrastructure may end up reinforcing existing vulnerabilities instead of solving them.

Despite substantial investments in rural water infrastructure under Jal Jeevan Mission, evidence suggests that infrastructure expansion alone has not resolved long-term service delivery challenges. Government reports indicate continued dependence on groundwater sources in many rural areas, while periodic summer water shortages continue to affect several districts. These observations suggest that improvements in access have outpaced corresponding investments in source sustainability, institutional coordination, and long-term operation and maintenance systems.

Centralization- Decentralization Tension

In Kerala, there's a curious balancing act playing out between centralized control and decentralized community involvement in water governance. Recent decentralization reforms have shifted a lot of responsibility to local governments, especially when it comes to operating and maintaining water supply systems. Efforts like the People's Plan Campaign and community-based initiatives have worked to enhance local participation and accountability in water management.

This dynamic reflects both challenges and opportunities as Kerala navigates its water governance landscape, and it emphasizes the need for a more integrated and sustainable approach to water management in the state.

In practice, even though local institutions in Kerala are supposed to play a role in managing water systems, most of the real power lies with state-level agencies, especially the Kerala Water Authority. This has led to a complicated mix where local groups are tasked with implementing and maintaining water projects, but the big decisions still come from a central authority.

The Jal Jeevan Mission highlights this conflict. It promotes getting the community involved and encouraging local ownership, but its success still hinges on top-down planning and specialized knowledge from the state. This creates a situation where the responsibilities of local governments don't match their power, which ultimately hinders the potential benefits of decentralization.

As a result, local governments often find themselves without sufficient financial resources, technical know-how, or organizational support to effectively manage water systems sustainably. This incomplete transfer of authority limits the effectiveness of participatory governance and keeps local institutions reliant on state agencies.

The situation in Kerala shows that the issues with water governance stem more from misalignment between institutions than from a lack of them. Although there are many agencies with set roles, poor coordination, overlapping duties, and uneven distribution of power lead to inefficiencies. This creates a paradox: despite having a lot of institutional structures in place, some areas still struggle to provide decent water services.

Moving Forward: A More Integrated Approach to Water Governance

The analysis indicates that Kerala's water issues are not just about scarce resources; they also reflect flaws in governance and coordination. While the National Water Policy of 2012 recognizes water as a limited and vulnerable resource and advocates for a river basin approach, translating that into practical state-level action has been somewhat lacking. Although ideas like Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) are acknowledged, there's still a long way to go to fully incorporate them into Kerala's policy and institutional frameworks. To tackle

the growing imbalance between water supply and demand and address sustainability, we need to focus on a governance-oriented framework rather than just building more infrastructure. This shift should rest on three main pillars.

Resource Sustainability and Ecological Management

Kerala's drinking water sector remains heavily dependent on groundwater despite the state's abundant rainfall. According to the Groundwater Department, increasing groundwater extraction, combined with reduced natural recharge in rapidly urbanizing and environmentally degraded regions, has intensified seasonal water stress. Climate variability further exacerbates this situation by increasing rainfall intensity while reducing groundwater recharge opportunities. These trends underline the need to integrate source sustainability into drinking water governance.

For Kerala to secure its long-term water future, it's crucial to align governance with ecological realities. Despite the state receiving plenty of rainfall, it faces challenges like high runoff, inadequate storage, and stress on groundwater resources. Therefore, it's vital to prioritize the following actions:

- Adopt an integrated river basin approach to manage and plan water use effectively.
- Strengthen regulations on groundwater and encourage methods to replenish it.
- Restore and enhance traditional and natural water bodies to improve water storage capacity.
- Implement river restoration programs with the involvement of various stakeholders.
- Enforce environmental regulations, emphasizing the "polluter pays" principle and restrictions on sand mining.

- Promote alternative materials for construction to lessen the strain on river ecosystems.

These steps are essential to transition from harmful water use practices to a more sustainable approach to resource management.

Institutional Coordination and Governance Reform

Water governance in Kerala involves multiple agencies, including the Kerala Water Authority, Kerala Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, Groundwater Department, Local Self Governments, and Pollution Control Board. Although each institution performs distinct statutory functions, overlapping mandates and limited institutional convergence continue to constrain integrated water resource management, particularly under large-scale programmes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission. The fragmented institutional structure of Kerala's water sector necessitates stronger coordination mechanisms across agencies and governance levels. Moving towards integrated governance requires:

- Establishing platforms for continuous dialogue among government agencies, local bodies, research institutions, private actors, and civil society
- Strengthening convergence between water supply, sanitation, watershed management, and environmental regulation.
- Enhancing the role of Local Self Governments (LSGs) through capacity building, financial empowerment, and clearer functional devolution.
- Introducing accountability mechanisms such as water and waste auditing systems
- Encouraging inter-agency collaboration in planning and implementation, particularly under large-scale programmes

Improving institutional coherence is critical to overcoming the current disconnect between policy intent and implementation outcomes.

Demand Management and Efficiency Enhancement

Given the limits to augmenting water supply, future strategies must prioritize demand-side management. The increasing per capita demand, driven by urbanization and changing consumption patterns, necessitates a shift towards efficiency-oriented approaches:

- Promoting water-efficient agricultural practices and crop diversification Encouraging the adoption of clean and efficient irrigation technologies
- Reducing water wastage through improved distribution systems and user awareness
- Introducing economic instruments, including user charges and local-level taxation mechanisms, to support operation and maintenance
- Enhancing citizen responsibility in water use, sanitation, and waste management.

These measures aim to balance demand with available resources while improving overall system efficiency.

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that Kerala has achieved considerable progress in expanding rural drinking water infrastructure through successive policy reforms, particularly under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Nevertheless, persistent groundwater dependence, seasonal supply disruptions, institutional fragmentation, and limited functional decentralization continue to constrain the achievement of sustainable drinking water

governance. These findings suggest that future reforms must move beyond infrastructure expansion towards strengthening institutional coordination, ecological sustainability, and service reliability.

This study highlights that the challenges of water governance in Kerala stem more from institutional issues than from just technical or resource-related problems. The success of water policy isn't just about creating effective designs; it largely depends on how well these policies are integrated within existing institutional frameworks and how they are carried out at different levels of governance.

To tackle the current challenges, we need a holistic approach that combines various strategies. This includes reforming irrigation practices, managing groundwater through community-based approaches, restoring watersheds, and enhancing groundwater recharge. It's also crucial to deepen our understanding of the link between groundwater and energy use, as well as to develop integrated strategies that address rural drinking water and sanitation while also taking into account urban wastewater and industrial water management.

In addition, effective flood management should include non-structural measures, while robust water data systems and stronger legal and regulatory frameworks are equally important. Water governance in Kerala functions within a complex web of multiple levels and institutions, which means we must find a careful balance between centralized coordination and decentralized implementation. Given the state's diverse ecological and socio-economic landscape, it's clear that water-related challenges are multi-faceted and require tailored responses. Thus, an integrated approach that spans local, regional,

state, and national levels is vital. This strategy must harmonize ecological sustainability with social equity and economic efficiency.

For Kerala to achieve sustainable water governance, there must be a rethinking of institutional roles, enhanced communication and coordination between governance levels, and the incorporation of ecological factors into policy-making. Transitioning from a focus solely on supply to a broader governance-centric view is essential for ensuring long-term water security, supporting livelihoods, and treating water as a common resource that belongs to everyone.

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Intelligence Without Minds: Reframing Epistemic Agency in Artificial Systems

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Abstract

The rapid development of artificial systems has prompted renewed philosophical debates over the nature of intelligence and the circumstances under which systems can be regarded as epistemic agents. The question that will be answered in this paper is as follows: How far can artificial systems be explicitly viewed as epistemic agents that are able to generate and maintain knowledge practices without invoking consciousness or strong internal representations? Using a deductive philosophical approach, the analysis will start with general descriptions of intelligence, agency, and knowledge and later proceed to look at their applicability to artificial systems. Basing the argument on the naturalistic framework developed by Daniel Dennett, the paper claims that epistemic agency need not assume consciousness or intrinsic mental representation; it can instead be grounded in functional, relational and interpretative capacities. Artificial systems, interpreted in terms of Dennett's intentional stance and the notion of real patterns, may be considered as participants in epistemic practices so far as they reliably produce, process and maintain informational structures in larger socio-technical settings. Nevertheless, this attribution is contingent and contextual in nature, as it needs to be intelligently separated into ascribed and intrinsic agency. It is concluded in the paper that artificial systems can be coherently viewed as epistemic agents in a pragmatic and deflationary sense, and intelligence is redefined as an emergent property of distributed systems rather than a property of minds themselves..

Keywords epistemic agency, artificial intelligence, intentional stance, real patterns, distributed cognition

Introduction

A recurring conceptual controversy in the current discussion of artificial intelligence is whether or not the presence of intelligence implies the existence of a mind. This assumption, propounded primarily by the traditional theories related to the philosophy of mind, has resulted in the cultivation of scepticism and excitement in relation to artificial systems. On the one hand, certain critics are of the view that in the absence of consciousness or actual understanding, artificial systems cannot be epistemic agents; on the other hand, certain others propose that

attribution of intelligence can be done based on observable performance and functional abilities. This paper attempts to resolve the problem by positing the assumption that intelligence has to be anchored in consciousness on hold. More specifically, it addresses the philosophical question: To what extent can artificial systems be sensibly explained as epistemic agents so that they can be considered to produce and maintain the knowledge practices without referring to the notion of consciousness or strong internal representations? The analysis is deductive: it starts with an overview of epistemic agency and

intelligence, proceeding to examine whether or not it entails strong metaphysical commitments. It then utilises the naturalistic framework offered by Dennett, especially the intentional position and the concept of real patterns, as a means to redefine agency in artificial systems. Lastly, it addresses the implications of such a reinterpretation when it comes to comprehending knowledge practices within AI-mediated settings. Contrary to the argument that artificial systems have minds in any substantive sense, the point of this paper is not to definitively show that the category of epistemic agency can be generalised without falling into anthropomorphism. By doing so, the paper will attempt to reorient the debate in such a way that the crucial question to be considered is not what artificial systems are, but what they do in epistemic situations.

Epistemic Agency beyond Consciousness: A Deflationary Framework

Epistemic agency is usually identified with subjects who are able to believe, justify, and act intentionally. This association usually assumes consciousness as the precondition of such capacities. But this is a more powerful presupposition than may be required. A deflationary account of epistemic agency starts by posing the question of what minimal conditions must be met in order to engage in knowledge practices. The criticism that Daniel Dennett gives to the Cartesian assumptions on the mind provides a point of departure for this question. In denying the concept of an organisation of cognition as centralised and conscious, Dennett suggests a model where cognition is distributed and functionally structured (Dennett, 1991). From this perspective, the fact that there is a unified subject is not important; rather, what is crucial is the structuring of processes that generate a coherent behaviour. This change makes possible

a reconceptualisation of epistemic agency as a functional position, as opposed to a metaphysical property. An entity can be regarded as an epistemic agent when it engages in activities that create, transform and stabilise information content in ways that are responsive to the inputs of the environment. This need not be a conscious participation; it simply demands some sort of systemic order and stability. This deflationary attitude is also advocated by the theory of intentional stance (Dennett, 1987). By treating a system as having beliefs and desires, it is possible to predict and explain its behaviour without implicating intrinsic mental states. This plan is not just heuristic, but shows something about the organisation of the agency itself: that it can be attributed in terms of patterns of behaviour, and not inferred inner states. Artificial systems are easily able to meet the requirements of adopting the intentional stance. They take in information, react to inputs and produce outputs that can be viewed as goal-oriented. Although these systems lack a sense of consciousness, they can be systematically comprehended using beliefs and intentions. This implies that, at least in a limited sense, epistemic agency is attributable without appeal to the idea of mental representation, as traditionally understood. This argument is enhanced by Dennett in his idea of real patterns (Dennett, 1991). The fact that a pattern can be compressed and predicted, i.e. there is a benefit in recognising the pattern, makes the pattern real. Such patterns are also created and sensed more easily by artificial systems, commonly at a scale that is impractical to humans. When such patterns are used to stabilise knowledge practices, for instance, activities like modelling of scientific practices or the analysis of data, then the system in question can be regarded as engaged in epistemic processes.

In this way, a deflationary system arises: epistemic agency need not be based on consciousness; rather, it may be a functional involvement in the systems of knowledge generation. This is not to equate agency to artificial systems; instead, this increases the conceptual space in which agency may be understood. What emerges here is that epistemic agency is not an all-or-nothing property but something that can be graded. Examples of rich and reflexive agency can be found in human agents, in terms of their self-awareness and normative accountability. The artificial systems, in contrast, actualise thinner types of agency and forms that are operative as opposed to reflective. But these slenderer shapes are not insignificant. They perform epistemically significant work in the organisation of information, stabilisation of patterns, and make possible inferences that might otherwise be unavailable. Such a graded vision of agency also calls into question epistemic dependence. External aids (texts, instruments, institutions) have always been used by human knowers, but AI systems enhance this reliance by actively creating the space of potential interpretations. The danger then is that the agency becomes less visible. It becomes diluted through interactions and is no longer clearly apparent. This diffusion becomes explicit and philosophically amenable with the understanding of artificial systems as contributors to the epistemic processes. Lastly, a deflationary framework implies a change in the focus of evaluation. Rather than posing the question of whether artificial systems do understand, we are better off examining the levels of reliability and responsibility with regard to the contribution of artificial systems to knowledge practices. The question is practicalised: in what circumstances do the epistemic results improve with these systems, and when do they twist or restrict them? In this regard, epistemic agency

has nothing to do with inner states, but with the functions of systems in the changing networks of inquiry.

Real Patterns, Intentional Systems, and the Distribution of Intelligence

If it is possible to conceptualise epistemic agency in a functional manner, the question then becomes how artificial systems are involved in knowledge practices. The concept of real patterns proposed by Dennett offers a very important bridge between conceptual theory and practice. Artificial systems can be defined as agents that recognise, create and manipulate patterns of data. These patterns do not just occur as statistical artefacts since many of them tend to be associated with epistemically important structures. As an example, machine learning models are capable of identifying correlations that can be used to formulate scientific hypotheses or discover the unknown regularities of complex systems. When this happens, the system itself helps in generating knowledge, although it may not be able to comprehend the patterns that it recognises. From the perspective of intentional stance, such systems can be considered intentional to the extent that their behaviour is best understood by ascribing goals and information processing abilities (Dennett, 1987). This attribution does not mean that the system harbours intrinsic intentions, but it is an expression of the usefulness of such descriptions. The major philosophical shift in this case is to acknowledge the possibility of the existence of intelligence within systems rather than in single agents. In his subsequent writing on cultural evolution, Dennett points out that human intelligence in itself is fundamentally entrenched in external forms, such as language, institutions and technologies (Dennett, 2017). A distributed network can be considered a type of artificial system that enhances the overall epistemic

capacity of the system. This school of thought questions the idea that it is necessary to locate intelligence in one locus. Rather, it considers intelligence as the product of a combination of various elements which lead to information processing and interpretation. Artificial systems in this sense are not autonomous agents, but connections within a larger epistemic network. But this distributed model has other issues as well: the boundaries of agency. Although artificial systems are able to produce and modify patterns, it is within the parameters that are established by human designers and users. This means that their involvement in the knowledge practices is mediated and constrained. This is an indication that they are not epistemic agents but are derivative in nature. However, this should not discount their contribution. It emphasises the relational character of epistemic agency. Agency is not inherent, but a role in a web of exchanges. The artificial systems fill such positions, which play a part in the creation and sustenance of knowledge without the involvement of consciousness.

To elaborate this description, it is necessary to mention that not only does the epistemic importance of artificial systems lie in pattern detection, but also in pattern stabilisation. Most of the AI systems do not simply find connections; they incorporate them into work processes, models and decision-making systems. In so doing, they assist in sedimenting some patterns as authoritative within epistemology, thereby determining what relevant evidence (i.e., what is counted as evidence) or a plausible explanation is. This stabilising function brings artificial systems closer to the core of knowledge practices, where persistence and reproducibility are as important as discovery. Additionally, the distributed model of intelligence displays a change in epistemic

temporality. The thought process of humans is usually limited in time scales and pace, whereas artificial systems have the ability to process and refresh patterns at any given time and speed. Such temporal asymmetry makes it possible to maintain the forms of epistemic activity (e.g., real-time monitoring or iterative optimisation) of artificial systems that are beyond the capabilities of human beings. Consequently, these knowledge practices are greatly reliant on a process that cannot be well understood by any one agent, thereby strengthening the notion that intelligence is an emergent characteristic of interactions at the system level. Meanwhile, this growth brings in a minor reorganisation of epistemic authority. Patterns produced by artificial systems may become institutionalised, taking on a normative quality that is hard to oppose once entrenched. The decentralisation of intelligence, therefore, poses the threat of responsibility being diffused as no one agent can be seen to be entirely responsible for the consequences. Being aware of artificial systems as members of epistemic networks is not a way to resolve the tension, but it makes the structure of the latter clear: the agency is distributed, albeit not equally, and the governance of such systems becomes an inherent component of the knowledge practice based on responsible knowledge.

Knowledge Practices Without Minds: Normative and Conceptual Implications

The re-conceptualisation of the artificial systems as epistemic agents has important consequences for the perception of knowledge practices. Once the agency is distributable and can be functionally based, then knowledge itself should be re-evaluated as a systematic product rather than an individual one. According to Dennett's naturalistic framework, knowledge is not a fixed object but a dynamic process which

entails the stabilisation of informational patterns (Dennett, 1995). Artificial systems are becoming increasingly prominent in this process. They gather information, create models and promote the sharing of information. These practices are part and parcel of modern knowledge practices, especially in the field of science and technology. But the lack of consciousness of artificial systems creates a normative tension. Conventional epistemology tends to attribute responsibility and justification to intentional actions. What does responsibility mean to artificial systems in case there is an epistemic agent? One of the possible answers is to differentiate between participation and accountability. Artificial systems are involved in epistemic processes, yet it is human agents who are accountable. This difference maintains the normative structure of epistemology and recognises the functional aspect of artificial systems. Meanwhile, this arrangement does not have any complications. The less transparent artificial systems are in their contribution to knowledge practices, the more complex and autonomous they become. Such questions raise the possibility of complete control and assessment of such contributions on the part of the human agents. This creates an epistemic dependency that should be carefully handled. In the analysis of the infosphere by Floridi, the broader context of these issues is the ethical aspects of information systems (Floridi, 2014). The honesty of epistemic practices within the context of the environment where knowledge is increasingly mediated by artificial systems relies upon transparency, accountability, and critical engagement. The notion of intelligence without minds, therefore, includes a descriptive and normative aspect. In a descriptive sense, it displays the role of artificial systems in the production of knowledge. Normatively, it

poses the question of how these roles ought to be incorporated in the established structures of responsibility and justification.

Finally, the possibility of the coherence of interpreting artificial systems as epistemic agents is conditional upon the relational and deflationary view of agency. With such a perspective, the non-conscious systems can be incorporated in the practices of epistemology without compromising the uniqueness of human agency. Moreover, this situation creates the need to consider the way norms, too, are reconstituted in circumstances of distributed epistemic agency. When knowledge arises from networks of interaction rather than individual persons, then epistemic norms, including justification, reliability, and trust, have to be conceived relationally as well. The analysis of a knowledge claim is no longer just a matter of the reasoning of an individual, but of the integrity of systems in which the claim is generated. This brings a change from agent-centred epistemology to system-based evaluation. This type of shift foregrounds the significance of design and governance. Artificial systems are not created in a vacuum but are incorporated into institutional, technical and social systems that form their functioning. The question of responsibility, thus, does not only concern individual users, but also addresses designers, engineers, and institutions that set up the epistemic environment. The production of responsible knowledge becomes indistinguishable from the construction, upkeep and control of systems. Moreover, the increasing dependence on artificial systems raises questions about epistemic virtues. Critical reflection, intellectual humility, and interpretive sensitivity are some of the traits that take on different meanings in the context of opaque knowledge mediation. It is not merely a matter of the effective utilisation of artificial systems,

but rather the nurturing of dispositions so that the products of those systems can be evaluated without excessive deference. Lastly, the concept of knowledge practices without minds shows that there is an inherent asymmetry: the artificial systems are capable of supporting and changing the informational structures, but they are not involved in the normative space of reasons as human agents. This is an important difference preserved by this asymmetry. Artificial systems can be a part of knowledge, but do not have epistemic responsibility. Being aware of this limit will help to ensure that the growth of epistemic agency will not undermine the ethical premises on which the knowledge practices will be finally based.

Conclusion

As argued in this paper, it is possible to coherently discuss artificial systems as epistemic agents without referring to consciousness or strong internal representations. Through a deflationary view of agency and utilisation of Dennett's model of the intentional stance and real patterns, it has been demonstrated that epistemic agency can be based on functional engagement of knowledge-generating systems. Such reinterpretation fails to bridge the difference between a human agent and an artificial agent. Instead, it redefines agency as a relational property arising from interactions in distributed systems. Artificial systems are also used to enhance knowledge practices through the production and manipulation of patterns of information, even without knowledge or realisation. Meanwhile, their agency is conditional and contingent. It is attributed, but not inherent, and it exists in structures created by human beings. This imbalance highlights the importance of having normative clarity in terms of responsibility and accountability. The concept of intelligence without minds can therefore

provide a fruitful approach to redesigning the interdependence between artificial systems and epistemic practices. It moves the argument of metaphysics of consciousness towards practical issues of participation and functionality. Further studies are needed to understand the applicability of this framework to other areas of application, especially where artificial systems are at the centre of the production of knowledge. This kind of work will be critical for offering a more in-depth view of intelligence in a world that is increasingly becoming artificial.

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From Social Reform to Bio-Egalitarianism: Sree Narayana Guru's Advaitic Ethics in the Age of Genetic Engineering

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Abstract

Recent advances in biotechnology, including CRISPR-Cas9—a genome-editing technology that enables precise and efficient modification of DNA sequences—synthetic biology, and transhumanist enhancements, have transformed genetic engineering from a theoretical concept into an urgent social issue. Although these innovations hold the potential to eliminate hereditary diseases, they simultaneously present the danger of establishing a privatized, neo-eugenic 'genetic caste system.' This paper contends that, to address these challenges, global bioethics should be grounded in the practical Advaita (non-dualism) articulated by Sree Narayana Guru, which offers a comprehensive ethical framework for responsible biotechnology governance. By analyzing Guru's foundational treatises—specifically Atmopadesa Satakam, Jati Mimamsa, and Arivu—this article develops a framework of "Bio-Egalitarianism." It is argued that Guru's radical rationalism rejects both anti-scientific bias and dogmatic bioethics, maintaining that innovation should promote universal human dignity and joy (Ananda), rather than commodification or the creation of new hierarchical systems.

Keywords: Bio-Egalitarianism, Practical Advaita, CRISPR Bioethics, Genetic Caste System, Radical Rationalism, Biopolitics, Indigenous Epistemology

Introduction : The Technoscientific Frontier and the Ethical Vacuum

Currently, there is a significant gap between technological capabilities and the ethical frameworks that govern them. Technologies such as CRISPR-Cas9, base editing, and prime editing now let humanity go beyond the limitations of natural evolution. These advancements allow editing of human genomes and the alteration of future generations. They enable the deliberate shaping of the biosphere's evolutionary trajectory. (Anzalone et al., 2020)

However, these rapidly advancing medical technologies frequently progress with minimal ethical oversight. Contemporary global

bioethics predominantly adheres to Western principles, emphasizing individual rights and the balancing of benefits and harms. While such frameworks may suffice in clinical settings, they are inadequate for addressing the substantial risks associated with the commercialization of gene editing. In a market-driven context, the sale of potent genetic enhancements—ranging from increased cognitive abilities to extended lifespan—threatens to transform economic disparities into enduring biological inequalities.

To prevent biology and wealth from merging into a basis for new inequality, bioethics must move beyond Eurocentric models. This paper's central claim is that Sree Narayana

Guru's practical Advaita provides a strong, indigenous philosophical alternative. Guru's philosophy, often seen mainly as social reform, is a materialist-compatible metaphysical system that, when adapted, offers clear guidance for Bio-Egalitarianism amid current genetic innovation.

2. Deconstructing the "Genetic Caste": Advaitic Oneness v/s Biological Determinism

2.1 The Hermeneutic Validity of a Posthumous Dialogue

A preliminary methodological challenge arises when projecting the tenets of an early twentieth-century philosopher-reformer onto twenty-first-century molecular biology. Sree Narayana Guru's treatises were composed decades before the double-helix structure of DNA was mapped or the enzymatic mechanisms of CRISPR-Cas9 were isolated.

The application of an early twentieth-century philosopher's ideas to contemporary biology poses methodological challenges, as Sree Narayana Guru wrote before the discovery of DNA's structure or the identification of CRISPR-Cas9 enzymes. Nevertheless, applying his philosophy to modern biotechnology is not merely an anachronism; it is a legitimate approach to deriving ethical principles. Guru's system, described as an evolving "Value-Science," is designed to guide behavior as material conditions change (Sunny, 2026). His assertions regarding the self and the constructed nature of caste remain broadly relevant. Just as Western bioethicists reference Kant or Aristotle to address current dilemmas, Guru's *Advaita* can serve as an indigenous ethical framework for genome editing.

2.2 Molecular Reductionism and the Reification of Identity

Contemporary genetic engineering is rooted in reductionist, information-centric paradigms

that conceptualize humans primarily as coded biological information. In the current market-oriented environment, this perspective risks commodifying genes, treating them as assets to be bought, sold, and ranked. When life is reduced solely to DNA code, it becomes a tradable product subject to value judgments. In a highly monetized global health market, elective germline enhancements—such as optimizing cognitive processing speeds, muscle fiber density, cosmetic traits, or extending lifespan—are likely to become premium commodities. This process threatens to transform economic privilege into a permanent biological condition. (Koplin, 2019, pp. 825-832)

If affluent individuals can purchase genetic enhancements for their offspring, the concept of caste may shift from a social construct to a biological reality, leading to the emergence of a genetic caste system. Those without enhancements would experience compounded disadvantages, including social exclusion and the perception of biological inferiority. (Prince, 2025, pp. 1-7)

2.3 The Ontological Counter: *Atmopadesa Satakam* and the Illusion of Biological Alterity

Sree Narayana Guru's foundational treatise, the *Atmopadesa Satakam* (One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction), offers a definitive metaphysical refutation of this neo-eugenic reductionism. In Verse 24, Guru establishes the radical baseline of non-dual empathy, collapsing the artificial boundary between the self and the external "other":

"What another loves is what belongs to oneself; that is the stance of the single self; action that brings happiness to oneself must also bring happiness to another." (Narayana Guru, 1897)

In contrast to Adi Shankara's *Vivartavada*, which regarded social hierarchy and material

facts as illusory while retaining caste roles, Guru's practical *Advaita* rejects this form of dualism. Guru does not dismiss real suffering or social inequality as mere illusion. Instead, he maintains that the world, the body, and society are all manifestations of the same reality (*Atman*), and that material inequality constitutes a direct violation of spiritual truth.

From this perspective, the genome constitutes part of the *Upadhi*—a temporary constellation of physical traits. DNA modification may influence the body, but it does not alter the foundational consciousness or intrinsic dignity present in all beings. Asserting greater worth for those with genetic enhancements is a fundamental error; it mistakes the contingency of the body for the enduring Self (*Atman*).

2.4 Biological Universalism in *Jati Mimamsa*

Guru deepens this critique of biological essentialism in his radical socio-philosophical text *Jati Mimamsa* (Critique of Caste). In its opening stanza, he employs a highly precise biological analogy to dismantle human categorization:

"Man's humanity is the same as the humanity of all humans, just as cow-ness is shared by all cows. Caste has no such reality." (Narayana Guru, 1914)

Guru asserts that valid groupings (*Jati*) require a shared biological essence, permitting natural reproduction and shared existence. He distinguishes between real biological differences, such as those between humans and horses, and socially constructed differences among humans based on caste, which he identifies as invented rather than inherent.

Within contemporary bioethical discourse, *Jati Mimamsa* functions as an indigenous defense of genomic sovereignty and species solidarity.

Guru's formulation suggests that "humanity" constitutes a singular, indivisible ontological entity. The human genome, therefore, represents the collective, unpatentable heritage of the entire species. (TallBear, 2013, pp. 509-533)

Any techno-scientific project that tries to split species-unity by engineering biological groups or privatizing genetic enhancements is an ontological transgression. (So et al., 2024) Guru's dictum—"One Caste, One Religion, One God for Man"—should be re-theorized as a strict biopolitical constraint. It states that human dignity is a non-negotiable, universal constant. Technology cannot be used to reintroduce caste through genomic enhancement.

3. Radical Rationalism: Beyond the Impasse of Bio-Conservatism and Transhumanism

3.1 The Biopolitical Dichotomy: Liberal Eugenics v/s Neoromantic Deontology

Contemporary international bioethics is deadlocked in an ideological polarization. On one end of the spectrum stands Western transhumanism and the advocates of "liberal eugenics," who argue that human biological limitations should be systematically overcome through technological intervention. (From species ethics to social concerns: Habermas's critique of 'liberal eugenics' evaluated, 2014) Most notably, Oxford philosopher Julian Savulescu champions the principle of "Procreative Beneficence", asserting that couples have a distinct moral obligation to utilize genetic technologies (such as pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and CRISPR-Cas9) to select or modify embryos to ensure their children have the "best chance of the best life" (Savulescu, 2001). Under this utilitarian view, biological traits are reduced to individual consumer choices, and optimization becomes a moral duty. Similarly, Nick Bostrom argues that

transitioning toward a "post-human" state—characterized by enhanced cognitive capacities, radical life extension, and emotional stability—is the logical next step in human development (Bostrom, 2005).

At the other end stands a neo-Romantic, deontological bio-conservatism, championed by thinkers like Leon Kass and Francis Fukuyama. They warn against the existential hubris of "playing God" or violating a static, pristine "human nature" (Fukuyama, 2002). This conservative framework often aligns with orthodox religious dogmas—including traditionalist interpretations of karmic fatalism—which argue that genetic anomalies, congenital disorders, and physiological suffering are part of an inviolable cosmological order that humanity should not disrupt. Consequently, this bio-conservative impasse paralyzes vital, life-saving biomedical research, such as embryonic stem-cell therapies and therapeutic gene editing, out of a metaphysical fear of altering the natural order. (Fukuyama, 2002)

3.2 Sree Narayana Guru's Empirical Advaita as a Rational Middle Path

Sree Narayana Guru's intellectual framework provides a radical alternative that bypasses both the hyper-utilitarian commodification of the trans-humanists and the anti-science paralysis of the bio-conservative. Sree Narayana Guru's intellectual framework offers a radical alternative that circumvents both the hyper-utilitarian commodification advocated by trans-humanists and the anti-scientific paralysis characteristic of bio-conservationists. Guru was fundamentally an empirical and scientific thinker engaged with social realities. He systematically separated ethics from theological dogma, ritualism, and scriptural fatalism. His philosophy regards nature (*Prakriti*) not as a static, sacred object

of veneration, but as a dynamic domain for the realization of human freedom and the alleviation of suffering (*Dukha*). was his attitude toward public health and ritual sanctity; he famously remarked that human corpses, rather than being treated with superstitious dread, costly funeral pyres, or elaborate ritualism, should simply be buried and utilized as "good manure" for the soil to maximize hygiene and societal utility (Joseph, 2024).

By applying this level of uncompromising rationality to modern biotechnology, Guru's philosophy breaks the Western bioethical gridlock:

- **The Rejection of Bio-Conservative Fatalism:** From Guru's perspective, the bio-conservative argument that human germline editing is a sin of "playing God" is a superstitious error. If humanity possesses the rational capability (*Yukti*) to eliminate hereditary diseases like sickle-cell anemia, Huntington's disease, or cystic fibrosis, then failing to deploy CRISPR out of fear of violating "nature" is an abdication of moral responsibility. To Guru, human reason is not an adversary to the spiritual order, but the very mechanism through which the universal self operates to minimize suffering in the material world.

- **The Critique of Transhumanist Optimization:** Concurrently, Guru's framework severely critiques Savulescu's "Procreative Beneficence" and Bostrom's post-humanism. Transhumanism operates on the flawed premise that human happiness can be maximized by modifying the biological property (*Upadhi*). Savulescu's model assumes that optimizing cognitive speed or physical traits automatically yields a "better life." Guru's *Atmopadesa Satakam* explicitly corrects this reduction the *Atmopadesa*

Satakam, Guru reorients the ethical foundation from individual competitive advantage to universal, collective joy (*Ananda*). Verse 24 asserts that genuine action must concurrently benefit both the self and the "other." Verse 24 states that true action must simultaneously benefit both the self and the "other."

When Savulescu advocates the genetic selection of traits to give an individual embryo a competitive edge in a capitalist society, he validates a philosophy of fragmentation and division. Elective enhancements are inherently non-universalizable; they are positional goods meant to place one individual *above* another, thereby reintroducing the structural mechanics of caste. (Douglas, 2011)

Therefore, Sree Narayana Guru's radical rationalism establishes a clear, objective litmus test for scientific innovation, completely independent of religious dogma:

- **Therapeutic Interventions are Valid:**

Gene-editing procedures (whether somatic or germline) aimed at curing congenital pathologies, blindness, or debilitating pain are highly ethical. They remove physical obstructions to human self-realization and align with the expansion of universal well-being.

- **Enhance Interventions are Invalid:**

Genetic modifications aimed at cosmetic optimization, competitive social advantage, or the creation of specialized biological tiers are fundamentally unethical. They originate from egoistic ignorance (*Ahamkara*) and directly manufacture social disharmony. (Glass & Fanzo, 2017, pp. 46-51)

By establishing this distinction, Guru's philosophy offers global bioethics a framework that embraces scientific advancement while

providing a robust safeguard against the eugenic imperatives of market forces.

4. *Arivu* (Gnosis) as an Epistemic Compass for Scientific Innovation

4.1 The Crisis of Instrumental Reason and Cartesian Fragmentation

The contemporary scientific architecture governing molecular biology, gene editing, and synthetic biology is characterized by a severe epistemic fragmentation. This fragmentation traces its lineage to the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm, which structurally severed the subjective observer from the objective world, effectively separating *episteme* (factual knowledge) from *ethos* (existential values). Under the pressures of neoliberal technoscience, this split has intensified into what the Frankfurt School critiques as hyper-specialized instrumental reason—a cognitive mode obsessed with the efficiency of *means* while remaining entirely agnostic toward the morality of *ends*.

The modern laboratory operates within this epistemic silo. The molecular biologist specializing in CRISPR interventions manipulates the genetic code as a decontextualized material entity. They possess the precise, fragmented data points necessary to slice a double-helix strand, yet they are structurally isolated from the holistic ecological, social, and metaphysical ramifications of that intervention. This epistemic blindness allows scientific breakthroughs to be instantly captured by patent law and corporate monopolies, converting the shared biological code of life into privatized intellectual property. To govern frontier technologies like heritable germline modification or gene drives (which bypass natural selection to alter entire ecosystems), global society requires an epistemology that refuses to separate material manipulation from existential responsibility.

4.2 The Epistemological Architecture of Guru's *Arivu*

Sree Narayana Guru's philosophical treatise, *Arivu* (Knowledge or Gnosis), provides a profound epistemological corrective to this Cartesian split. Composed as a series of highly concentrated philosophical verses, *Arivu* does not treat knowledge as a passive accumulation of external empirical facts or a digital database of genomic sequences. Instead, Guru presents knowledge as an active, integrated ontology.

In the conceptual framework of *Arivu*, Guru systematically collapses the traditional triadic division of classical epistemology:

Guru asserts that in its ultimate state of realization, these three dimensions coalesce into a seamless, unbroken unity. He writes that true knowledge is a state of consciousness in which the observer realizes that the object being observed is not an alien, external entity but an extension of the self. Any cognitive mode that perceives the world through a framework of radical alterity—viewing nature or the "other" as a distinct, exploitable object—is classified by Guru as *Avidya* (fundamental metaphysical ignorance).

This ontological collapse of the subject-object duality is not a retreat into anti-empirical mysticism. Rather, it functions as a highly sophisticated transcendental ethics for science. If the knower and the known are fundamentally one, then the act of gaining knowledge about the material world cannot be separated from an attitude of absolute reverence and existential responsibility toward it.

4.3 Formulating a Spiritual Epistemology for Global Bio-Governance

When Guru's *Arivu* is applied directly to the governance of biotechnology, it outlines a

rigorous Spiritual Epistemology of Science. This framework introduces three crucial constraints on modern scientific innovation:

I. The Dissolution of Value-Neutrality

Under the *Arivu* paradigm, the concept of "value-neutral science" is exposed as a dangerous illusion. Because the act of knowing alters the matrix of the known, scientific research is always an ethically charged intervention. A scientist editing a genomic sequence is not merely modifying an isolated strand of organic chemicals; they are altering the collective, non-dual fabric of life. *Arivu* demands that the molecular biologist expand their cognitive field beyond hyper-specialized instrumental data to include a contemplative awareness of the long-term, systemic impact of their research on the global human and ecological collective.

II. Critique of Genomic Patenting and Biopiracy

A spiritual epistemology grounded in *Arivu* is structurally incompatible with the privatization of patenting human, animal, or agricultural genomes. If the genetic matrix is a shared expression of the universal self, the legal enclosure of specific gene sequences by multinational corporations constitutes epistemic and material violence. *Arivu* provides an indigenous framework for an Open-Knowledge Commons (Santhosh, 2025). It dictates that all biotechnological innovations, CRISPR protocols, and life-saving gene therapies must be categorized as global public goods, accessible to all of humanity without economic or geopolitical barriers.

III. Ecological Responsibility and Gene Drives

The deployment of synthetic technologies like gene drives—engineered to intentionally force specific traits throughout a wild population, potentially driving invasive species or disease

vectors to extinction—poses massive ecological risks. Standard Western risk assessments rely on probabilistic models that balance corporate profit against manageable ecological damage.

Conversely, *Arivu* introduces a bio-egalitarian precautionary principle. Because the ecosystem is an integrated extension of the self, any technological intervention that threatens to

irreversibly disrupt the biosphere's equilibrium constitutes self-harm. *Arivu* demands that scientific innovation must always operate with an awareness of cosmic interdependence, ensuring that human ingenuity never destabilizes the shared evolutionary equilibrium of the planetary collective.

5. Comparative Structural Analysis: Bioethical Paradigms

To contextualize Sree Narayana Guru's position within contemporary international thought, the following matrix contrasts his framework of Bio-Egalitarianism against the dominant competing schools of modern bioethics:

Bioethical Paradigm	Core Metaphysical Basis	View on Genetic Engineering	Major Structural Flaw
Western Liberal Utilitarianism	Individual autonomy; market efficiency; maximization of preference-satisfaction.	Highly permissive; views genetic traits as consumer choices and commodities.	Accelerates market-driven eugenics and the rise of a privatized genetic caste system.
Religious Bio-Conservatism	Static divine command; natural law dogma; theological taboos ("Playing God").	Highly restrictive; opposes embryonic stem-cell research and germline modifications.	Paralyzes vital therapeutic innovations capable of alleviating severe human suffering.
Guru's Advaitic Bio-Egalitarianism	Radical non-dualism; species-unity (<i>Atman</i>); empirical rationalism.	Permissive of therapeutic interventions; strictly hostile to enhance/hierarchical modifications.	Requires an epistemic shift away from capitalist market structures to be fully realized.

6. Conclusion: Towards an Indigenous Bioethical Manifesto

Sree Narayana Guru's intellectual trajectory from a subaltern social reformer in colonial South India to a primary philosopher of the global biotechnological age demonstrates the

remarkable elasticity and timelessness of his thought. As humanity stands on the precipice of auto-evolution—actively redesigning its own genetic and biological architecture—the existing Western bioethical framework proves increasingly fragile and complicit in market exploitation.

The framework of Bio-Egalitarianism developed in this paper bridges the deep metaphysical insights of practical *Advaita* with the urgent material realities of synthetic biology and CRISPR genomics. By anchoring the future of scientific innovation in Guru's concepts of ontological species-unity, radical pragmatic rationalism, and the integrated epistemology of *Arivu*, global society can formulate a stringent ethical compass.

True scientific progress must no longer be measured by our capacity to engineer a highly privileged, biologically enhanced class of post-humans. Rather, it must be measured by our collective capacity to utilize biotechnology as a tool of pure compassion—eradicating hereditary pathologies, preserving ecological integrity, and manifesting the profound material and spiritual oneness of all living beings.

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Interrogating ‘Swa’ ‘Raj’ As A Reciprocal Ideal In Gandhi And Ambedkar

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Abstract

There has been a long and rich tradition that keeps enriching our understanding on the Gandhi-Ambedkar debate. We owe a lot to these works for our present understanding on the relationship between Gandhi and Ambedkar. However, these scholars can also be blamed for limiting our understanding on the subject. The scholars have hitherto focused on certain historical events like second round table conference, Gandhi's fast unto death, against separate electorate for untouchables, and/or certain issues like untouchability, caste, varna, inter-dining and inter-caste marriage either to condemn one in order to extol the other. But to propose a possible synthesis of both methods to deal the issue of caste is paramount. Most of these studies do not interrogate whether Gandhi and Ambedkar also agree or disagree on different fundamental issues or not. In short, the account these scholars present give only constrained and closed look on Gandhi-Ambedkar debate that exhausted in analyzing only certain events and actions which both had to deal with in their political career. In this context this study makes ‘Swa’ ‘Raj’ the pivotal concept/s to interrogate Gandhi-Ambedkar debate through their fundamental works Hind Swaraj and Annihilation of Caste respectively in order to present broader and open look of Gandhi-Ambedkar debate. This study is therefore an endeavor to amplify rather than replace the major discourses on Gandhi-Ambedkar debate.

Keywords: Swaraj, caste, untouchability, autonomy

Introduction

Exploring Gandhi-Ambedkar debate is as old an endeavor as their lives. There has been a lengthy and rich tradition starting from Dhananjay Keer to Arundhati Roy that keeps us enriching our understanding on the subject. Some of the important works on the subject include D R. Nagaraj's *Self-Purification Versus Self-Respect: On the Roots of the Dalit Movement*, Ramachandra Guha's *Gandhi's Ambedkar, Gandhi-Ambedkar Interface...* *When Shall the Twain Meet* by Suhas Palshikar among others. Obviously, our current understanding on the connection involving Gandhi and Ambedkar

is indebted a lot to these scholars. However, they can also be blamed for limiting our understanding on the subject. These studies and several other works hitherto have focused on certain historical events like a Second Round Table Conference, Gandhi's fast unto death, separate electorate for untouchables and/or certain issues like untouchability, caste, and varna either used to revile one for eulogizing the other. The account that these scholars present give only a constrained and fastened look of Gandhi-Ambedkar debate that exhausted in analyzing only certain events and actions which both had to deal within their political careers. Most of the studies did not

interrogate whether Gandhi and Ambedkar also agree or disagree on other fundamental issues or not. This study makes 'Swa' 'Raj' the pivotal concept to cross-examine the Gandhi-Ambedkar deliberation through their vital texts viz. *Hind Swaraj* and *Annihilation of Caste* respectively in order to present a broader and open perspective of Gandhi-Ambedkar debate. 'Swa'- 'Raj' is taken as a pivotal concept/s to interrogate the debate not to deviate dominant discourse on it from the issue of caste and untouchability to Swaraj. Indeed, the line of inquiry is adopted because Gandhi and Ambedkar are primarily interested to win Raj or liberty for Swa or people and their difference of opinion to each other on issues of untouchability and caste was part and parcel of their struggle to win 'Raj' for 'Swa'. So, this study is an attempt to strengthen than displace the prevailing discourses on Gandhi-Ambedkar debate that revolved around the issues of caste, untouchability and so on. It is decided to enter into Gandhi-Ambedkar debate through their fundamental texts *Hind Swaraj* and *Annihilation of Caste* respectively and not through certain historical events and actions which both had to deal with in their political career. This paper is primarily interested in understanding both visions of 'Swa'- 'Raj' which is elaborated below, forms the edifice of Gandhi-Ambedkar debate.

'Swa'- 'Raj' in *Hind Swaraj*

Gandhi wrote his seminal work *Hind Swaraj* in 1909 while travelling back from United Kingdom towards South Africa. It is the pivotal book of Gandhi in which his political, social and spiritual ideals found expression. It is widely considered as the foundation that encapsulates Gandhi's philosophical reflections and a very fundamental text to study Gandhian thinking. Parel underscores the significance of *Hind Swaraj* as the source from which Gandhian thought has

evolved into its full form. It is an ideal launching pad for whoever is interested in Gandhian thought from a broader perspective. He further adds that for critical readers also, it is a standard text to evaluate the academic importance of all other works of him as well as his Autobiography. *Hind Swaraj* may serve as a proper guiding light in the midst of the enormous number of works on Gandhi (Parel,1997). There is no doubt that it is crucial to understand Gandhi's theoretical explications of his principles. Eventually, the nature of perspective one adopts in construing *Hind Swaraj* will become a decisive factor in forming a broader canvas in placing and comprehending Gandhian ideal of 'Swa Raj'.

Dietmar Rothermund, a pioneering Gandhian expert and historiographer on Indian studies urges for considering *Hind Swaraj* as a tactical document, a nationalist piece of and for its era (Rudolph & Rudolf 2006). We may find worth in his recommendation that it was penned for a definite objective to stamp the preeminence of nonviolent methods over violent ones for attaining political freedom of the nation, for a definite group (citizens of India). The work is contextualized within a peculiar historic condition (India's wrangle against British rule) as well. These peculiar features indeed make *Hind Swaraj* a tactical work, a nationalist document of and for its epoch. Such a perspective in interpreting it has been endorsed by several works in which Gandhi has been portrayed as a spearhead of India's endeavor for political freedom. Majority of them concur on Gandhi's steadfast in achieving political freedom of India from the colonial domination as he was trying to achieve a statutory nationhood. Parliamentary Swaraj is the expression used by Gandhi for his nation. An array of debates followed on the character of it. Many imagined it as Hindu Raj-an

exclusionary type of Swaraj-and for others it has a broader scope by incorporating apprehensions of females, former untouchables, followers of Islam and other weaker sections. The widespread consensus is that Gandhi has promoted and tried to achieve Parliamentary Swaraj for the nation. This appraisal hints at Gandhi's fight to counter caste system, his crusade for Hindu -Islam harmony and his stance on charkha are predominantly subordinated to achieving political freedom of the country. The just mentioned methods can be understood as establishing auxiliary tactics for streamlining social mobilization between the two stages of mass exertion for the freedom as well. According to Bipan Chandra, "constructive work was basic to a war of position. It played a vital part during the passive or non-mass movement stage in filling the political void left emptied by the retraction of civil disobedience". Chandra adds, "it resolved a fundamental conundrum that a popular crusade faces the sustenance of a sense of activism in the non-mass movement stages of the fight" (Chandra, 1988). It is possible to argue that for *Hind Swaraj* be treated as a tactical record, a nationalist document of and for its age, then that will underscore that for Gandhi 'Swa' means India as a political unit that is equal to either Hindu dominated political community or a political community which is very sensitive towards the existence of deep caste, religious, gender, regional, linguistic and other diversities within it as well. By 'Raj' Gandhi intended in substituting the colonial administration with native administration not swapping their systems of rule, democratic political institutions as well as other establishments. However, in *Hind Swaraj*, he openly snubs the notion. Gandhi indites that "we want English rule without the Englishman. You want the tiger's nature but not the tiger that is to say that you would make

India English and when it becomes English it will be called not Hindustan but Englistan. This is not the Swaraj that I want" (Gandhi, 1938). Further Gandhi declared "my patriotism does not teach me that I am to allow people to be crushed under the heel of Indian Princes if only the English retire" (Gandhi, 1938). Certainly, he not ever believed a modern or Occidental representative and politically aware community as a model or modern Occidental self-governing establishments like government is a standard system of rule. Instead, he regarded state with dread and distrust. For him, it embodies violence in an organized and concerted arrangement. Gandhi saw state as a bleak mechanism and held that the same cannot be stopped from brutality upon which state owns its core being as well (Gandhi, 1934). Gandhi termed parliament as prostitute (Gandhi, 1938) -perhaps the most pejorative term he ever employed to label anything. Consequently, to devalue *Hind Swaraj* as a mere Indian national tract and Gandhi to a predominant nationalist spearhead essentially does not do adequate fairness to his impact to the sense confined within it. But it does mean to discard Gandhi's decisive involvement in the nationalist fight against the colonial power. It simply means that attaining political freedom for the country aligns with parliamentary Swaraj was just one of Gandhi's apprehensions and conceivably not one of overriding significance. It additionally points towards neither parliamentary Swaraj that he attempted to accomplish for his country nor embracing a self-governing, civil, industrial society as his supreme end. Thus, portraying *Hind Swaraj* as a mere nationalist document of and for its period as well as view Gandhi as by and large the nationalist pioneer may be useful in many ways, does not yield the picture of Gandhi's idea of Swa Raj.

Hind Swaraj was more than a text of gambits, as Menon suggests; it conceptualized a conflict of cultures pitted ancient India as an adversary of European modernity (Menon, 2013). Should we read it as Menon proposed? Indeed, it is true that through *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi put forth an appraisal of modern culture and propounded a different normative framework of civilization as well. In his own admission, it does an acute denunciation of modern culture. Consequently, we may conclude that Gandhi has denounced both the political authority of the colonial rule and modern or western civilization as well. Gandhi was convinced that it was essential to discard modern or Occidental civilization to make India free. He urged every Indian should adhere to the old Indian culture like a kid stick to a mom's chest (Gandhi, 1938).

Reading *Hind Swaraj* with such a hindsight is validated by numerous interpretations in which Gandhi is portrayed as anti-modernist, anarchist, utopian and reactionary traditionalist who stood against everything which goes under the name of modernism. Most of these studies agree that Gandhi was an orthodox Hindu, lover of Indian villages and strong supporter of traditional way of life. So, this implies that it was Indian civilization or India's primeval bygone era which Gandhi backed up and tried to resuscitate. For Gandhi, that also means Swa stood for ancient Hindu civilization. But it can be argued that though Gandhi held a contemptuous attitude towards modern civilization and glorified Indian civilization, he also indubitably asserts in *Hind Swaraj* that "do not for one moment consider that I condemn all that is Western; for the time being I am dealing with the predominant character of modern culture viz. the exploitation of the frail races of the earth" (Gandhi, 1939). Moreover, it may be appropriate to recollect that

albeit the Gandhian contempt for modernity, he acknowledged Gokhale - well trained in Occidental tradition-and an ardent supporter of Western instruction as his political mentor and picked the sundry westernized Nehru above the apparently further indianised Vallabhai Patel as a successor in politics. *Hind Swaraj* has recommended 20 works in its appendage for additional appraisal. Among those books, only a couple of books are by Indian writers, all the others in the list are the works of various European and American thinkers. Therefore, it is hard to concede that Gandhi has outrightly dismissed modern or Occidental civilization.

Conversely, it is also not to be presumed that Gandhi cherished everything about early Indian civilization. For him, his seminal work has never been an endeavor to move backwards towards an ostensibly oblivious, murky era (Gandhi, 1939). Gandhi was mindful about the exhaustive nature of institutions especially in Hindu fold and was equally opposed to conventional ways of dominance and hierarchical structures. As Bhikkhu Parekh observes "for centuries Hindus had lived with the evil practice of unchecked untouchability and he declared war on it and shook its moral roots". He further writes: "traditionally women had occupied a low position in India he not only brought a large number of them into public life which is neither learning nor marvel could do and established their equality with men" (Parekh, 1989).

But Gandhi's choice of challenging-albeit indirectly-the traditional modes of dominion and hierarchical systems is purely based on some practical grounds. Here it may be remembered that his categorization of culture is neither on a geographical base (Occidental or Oriental or Indian) nor of period (modern or primeval). His classifications are ethical and was also debated

them in terms of how they ought to be viz. correct versus incorrect or virtuous versus vicious. K. Saran writes: “confrontation as he guarantees quite explicitly thought was not between the colonized world and the imperial bolt it was between one civilization against another whether both were civilizations were also something which can be dispute. we could not for instance say that there were two alternative concepts of civilization and thus this struggle was of one kind of civilization for gaining supremacy over another. It was not a conflict of that kind., it was a conflict between a human civilization, the idea and the reality of equipment civilization and the idea reality of a satanic civilization” (Saran, 1996).

Hence Gandhian criticism of modern civilization-how serious it may appear-may be viewed as neither an outright dismissal of everything that was modern or western civilization nor a veneration of Indian society based on *varnashrama dharma*. Undeniably, Gandhi neither idolized the much-glorified mythical past of Vedic golden age as dependable and perfect epoch of Hindu society. He very categorically dismisses such a prospect as he asserts “I have gone nowhere to guard *varna dharma* though for the elimination of untouchability I have gone to Vaikom. I am the architect of a Congress resolution for spread of *khadi*, establishment of Hindu-Muslim harmony and removal of untouchability-the three pillars of Swaraj; but I have never placed establishment of *varnashrama dharma* as the fourth pillar. You cannot therefore accuse me of placing a wrong emphasis on *varnashrama dharma*” (Gandhi, 1927). Therefore, to interpret *Hind Swaraj* as engaging in the conflict of cultures and hold that so which is explained in *Hind Swaraj* mean ancient Indian civilization. And Raj means

reorganizing India or Hindu society on the basic principle of *varna dharma* would be erroneous.

“It was the momentous merit of Gandhi’s booklet” Fred Dallmayr writes “to raise the issue of Swaraj from fairly strategic concerns to the level of political ethics and a vision of the ‘good life’” (Dallmayr, 2002). It is so mentioned above that when Gandhi was speaking about civilizations in *Hind Swaraj* his types are ethical and he was speaking in line with correct civilization versus incorrect civilization or virtuous versus vicious. So *Hind Swaraj* be read as Gandhi’s attempt to describe Swa Raj in terms of ethical life or good life rather than defining it in terms of Indian political independence from British rule or reviving ancient Indian civilization by rejecting modern or western civilization. If *Hind Swaraj* is read as Gandhi’s effort to define Swaraj in terms of ethical life or good life. Swa for Gandhi stands for an individual and Raj for self-rule as self-transcendence which mean the freedom of self actually session in transcendental sense. For Gandhi Raj means self-governance where an individual or people act according to a principled position that he or she or they have freely chosen.

‘Swa’- ‘Raj’ and *Annihilation of Caste* of Ambedkar

Annihilation of caste is one of Ambedkar’s seminal works. It is an unrepresented talk scripted in 1936 on the request of Sant Ram, the secretary of Jat Pat Todak Mandal of Lahore. It is an association of caste Hindu social activists and a radical faction of Arya Samaj. They invited Ambedkar to speak about caste as the president of their annual conference in 1936. However, the conference was later cancelled because the organizers find some parts of Ambedkar’s speech radical, unbearable and objectionable. But Ambedkar then printed 1500 copies of this

speech at his own expense in 1936. Ambedkar brought its second edition in 1937 with two appendices. Appendix one contained two articles first Gandhi's review on *Annihilation of Caste* and his letter to Sant Ram. second appendix contained Ambedkar's reply to Gandhi's review of *Annihilation of Caste*. Like *Hind Swaraj*, *Annihilation of Caste* is polemic in its nature. whereas *Hind Swaraj* is a harsh condemnation of western civilization, *Annihilation of Caste* is a brutal attack on the ritualistic aspects of Hinduism. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi criticizes western civilization for its moral inadequacy and for creating hierarchy and dominance through their institutions like legislatures armies, hospitals and so on, Ambedkar did criticize Hinduism more or less for the same reasons. He very explicitly explains moral bankruptcy of Hinduism and its own form of hierarchy and dominance and its destructive impact on an individual. Like Gandhi, Ambedkar also believes that Swaraj is something more than mere political freedom from the colonial rule. While Gandhi actively participated and led Congress struggle for the political independence of India from the British, Ambedkar remained very critical of Congress and its struggle. Ambedkar's criticism of Congress led freedom struggle is often depicted as Ambedkar was a conscious participant in British policy of divide and rule or Ambedkar was collaborator of British government and hostile to the freedom struggle. It is a fact that Ambedkar himself has very categorically asserted that "whenever there is any conflict of interest between the country and the untouchables, so far as I am concerned, the untouchables' interests will take precedence over the interests of the country. I am not going to support a tyrannizing majority simply because it happens to speak in the name of the country." (Narke, 1982). Does it mean that for Ambedkar

Swa mean depressed classes or untouchables and Raj means termination of internal operation based on caste and religion and not as such freedom from alien domination. Ambedkar himself tried to answer this question many times. Many depicted him as a spokesperson of the depressed classes. However, they do not present the Congress and Gandhi as spokesperson of upper caste. This paper is not interested to know whether it was Gandhi's Swa represent real India or it was Ambedkar's Swa who represented real India this paper is also not interested to understand what is true meaning of Swa stands for whether freedom from the foreign rule or termination of internal operation based on caste and religion or both. This paper primarily interested to know what Gandhi and Ambedkar mean by Swaraj.

If we look at the issue from this perspective it appears that if Gandhi used dichotomy of British colonizer versus Indian colonized or western civilization versus Indian civilizations to convey his concept of Swa and Raj Ambedkar used the contradiction upper caste and untouchables to explain his meaning of Swa Raj in *Annihilation of Caste*. He ends his work with the following statement "There is no use having Swaraj, if you cannot defend it. More important than the question of defending Swaraj is the question of defending the Hindus under the Swaraj. In my opinion only when the Hindu Society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself. Without such internal strength, Swaraj for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery" (Moon, 1979). As mentioned above Gandhi categorized civilization or society neither on the basis of geography nor on the basis of time. His categories are normative in nature. In essence, he was speaking in terms of how a civilization ought to be. For Ambedkar too when he was using categories like upper

caste and depressed castes, he was referring to certain attitudes or a notion or a mindset and not referring to Brahman's or any other upper caste people and untouchable people on many occasions. He has very explicitly stated that Brahmanical system and capitalism are the two adversaries of untouchables and expounded that he was not opposed to the brahmans but to their defiance and dogma. He added aggravatingly that Brahmanism could well be found even amongst outcastes (Teltumbde, 2011). In *Annihilation of Caste*, he treats caste like an ocean. For him it is a mindset as its destruction does not therefore mean the obliteration of corporeal blockades but it denotes a notional transformation (Ambedkar, 2014). If you read *Annihilation of Caste* in this way, it appears that for Ambedkar's annihilation of caste stands on the one hand for the destruction of institutional practices and customs that create hierarchy and domination in the society. On the other hand, it stands for destruction of the notion of high and low which is based on the idea of purity and pollution from the mind of every individual. In other words, for Ambedkar annihilation of caste means that every individual must be free from such notion that create hierarchy and domination of society if we accept it. Swa for Ambedkar stands for an individual and Raj for a casteless social structure based on freedom, equity and brotherhood where an individual or people act according to a principled position that he or she or they have freely chosen.

Conclusion

Ambedkar and Gandhi are against all kinds of hierarchy and domination present in the society. It is explained that in Hindu Swaraj, Gandhi used different categories like Western civilization, Indian civilization, modern civilization and ancient civilization and Ambedkar used different categories like upper caste, lower caste, brahmin

and untouchables to explain different kinds of domination and subordination present in the society. However, it is argued that in their ultimate analysis both of them were in search for 'Swa' mean individual and 'Raj' means such society where an individual or people act according to a principled position that he or she or they have freely chosen. It is argued that it is an individual or autonomy of an individual for which both of them stood for.

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Pāṇinian Grammar, A Computational And Mathematical Analysis

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Abstract

Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (c. 4th century BCE) represents one of the earliest and most sophisticated formal descriptions of a natural language, predating modern linguistic theory and computer science by over two millennia. This article investigates the mathematical and algorithmic architecture of Pāṇini's generative grammar, framing it as a self-contained, rule-based engine. It analyzes key computational features, including the set-theoretical optimization of the *ŚivaSūtras* the recursive logic governing *Samāsa* (compounding) and *Anuvṛtti* (rule inheritance), and the deterministic meta-language used for unambiguous word derivation. Special attention is given to the recent breakthrough in conflict resolution the "right-side rule" which allows the grammar to function as a fully automated "language machine" without human intervention. By highlighting parallels with the Backus-Naur Form (BNF) and NASA-backed research on Knowledge Representation in Artificial Intelligence, this paper demonstrates why Pāṇini's work remains a foundational model for contemporary Natural Language Processing (NLP).

Keywords: Pāṇini, Aṣṭādhyāyī, Computational Linguistics, Generative Grammar, Algorithms, ŚivaSūtras, Knowledge Representation, Artificial Intelligence, Rule Conflict Resolution, Formal Systems.

Introduction

The *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, composed by the sage Pāṇini around the 4th century BCE, is widely regarded as one of the most sophisticated formal systems in human history. Comprising nearly 4,000 concise aphorisms or *sūtras*, the text is not merely a descriptive record of the Sanskrit language but a generative "machine" capable of producing every valid word and sentence through logical operations. Its mathematical precision and rigorous symbolic logic have led scholars to compare its elegance to Euclid's *Elements* and modern programming architectures.

At its core, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* functions as a rule-based engine that pre-empts the principles

of formal language theory and computational linguistics by over two millennia. It utilizes a technical metalanguage, modular data structures, and a deterministic conflict-resolution algorithm that allows for infinite linguistic creativity within a finite rule.

The Phonological Foundation

The entire Paninian machine rests upon the *Akṣarasamāmnāya*, also known as the *ŚivaSūtras*. These fourteen rows of phonemes serve as the character encoding or alphabetical database for the system. While legend attributes these sounds to the drum of Lord Shiva, their organization reveals a masterclass in set theory and combinatorial optimization.

The Pratyāhāra Technique: Interval-Based Notation

Pāṇini devised a method called *Pratyāhāra* to refer to natural classes of sounds using minimal instructions. By taking a starting sound and pairing it with an *anubandha* (it-marker) found at the end of a row, an interval is created that represents all intervening phonemes.

Mathematical analysis by Wiebke Petersen has demonstrated that this arrangement is strictly optimal. While there are (over 4 trillion) possible subsets of Sanskrit phonemes, Pāṇini's ŚivaSūtras are optimized to define exactly the 281 natural classes used in the grammar rules, minimizing textual space and computational time.

A notable feature of the ŚivaSūtras is the duplication of the sound "h". From a graphtheoretical perspective, this was necessary to ensure that the Hasse diagram of the sound classes remains planar. By duplicating "h", Pāṇini minimized the complexity of the hierarchy, ensuring that his rules could be referenced with maximal efficiency.

Technical Primitives and Keywords

Pāṇini created a self-contained metalanguage to ensure that his rules were unambiguous. This approach mirrors modern programming, where specific keywords are reserved for system operations.

Samjñā-Sūtras: Defining System Keywords

Just as a programmer defines int or float, Pāṇini's *saṃjñā-sūtras* define technical terms known as *Pāribhāṣika-padas*.

- **Vṛddhi:** Defined in the very first sutra (*Vṛddhirādaic* 1.1.1) as referring to specific lengthened vowels {ā, ai, au}.
- **Guṇa:** Refers to strengthened vowels {a, e, o}.

- **It:** A marker or "indicator" sound that triggers specific transformations and is discarded before the final output is produced, much like a null character in a character array.

Anuvṛtti: Rule Inheritance and Scope

The Aṣṭādhyāyī uses a mechanism called *Anuvṛtti*, which is the "carryforward" or inheritance of terms from one rule to the next. A rule inherits the context of a previous rule without repeating it, achieving massive textual compression. This is functionally identical to the concept of "scope" or "context-sharing" in modern software libraries, where a single variable or condition remains active across multiple functions. The Algorithmic Structure of Word Generation

The derivation of a word in Sanskrit follows a deterministic, stepbystep procedure that can be mapped to a computational flowchart.

Every word starts as a base (*Prakṛti*) either a verbal root (*Dhātu*) or a nominal stem (*Prātipadika*) to which suffixes (*Pratyaya*) are applied.

1. **Initialize:** Input the base root (e.g., *Rāma*).
2. **Apply Operators:** Apply suffixes (*Sup* for nouns or *Tiṅ* for verbs).
3. **Scan and Transform:** The system can relevant rules to find applicable transformation.
4. **Recursive Refinement:** Rules apply recursively (e.g., in *Samāsa* or compounding) until a stable, well-formed state is reached.
5. **Terminate:** Output the valid Sanskrit word.

Recursion in Samāsa (Compounding)

The process of creating compound words (*Samāsa*) illustrates Pāṇini's mastery of recursive logic. A compound word can itself serve as a base for further compounding, allowing for

the generation of complex strings from simple primitives. This recursive capability ensures that the grammar is not just a static list but a "dynamic process of discovery".

Conflict Resolution: The "Copernican" Breakthrough

A fundamental challenge in rule-based systems is rule conflict, when two or more rules apply simultaneously to the same input. To resolve this, Pāṇini provided a single meta-rule: *1.4.2 vipratishedheparamkāryam*.

Traditional vs. Modern Interpretation

For centuries, commentators interpreted this as: "In a conflict of equal strength, the rule that appears later in the serial order of the book wins". However, this led to countless exceptions and forced scholars to create hundreds of additional "patch" rules.

In 2022, scholar Rishi Rajpopat decoded the original algorithmic intent. He argued that *param* refers not to serial order, but to the rule applicable to the "right-hand" side of the word.

Using this "right-hand rule," the Pāṇinian machine produces correct Sanskrit forms with almost no exceptions, proving that it is indeed a "perfect machine" that can be taught to computers without master-level human intervention.

Parallelism with Modern Computer Science

Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī has served as a direct or indirect inspiration for many of the foundational concepts in modern computing.

Backus-Naur Form (BNF)

The formal notation used to define the syntax of programming languages, developed by John Backus and Peter Naur, bears a striking resemblance to Pāṇini's rules. Pāṇini invented a notation equivalent in power to BNF more

than 2,000 years earlier, leading some computer scientists to suggest renaming BNF to **Panini-Backus Form (PBF)**.

The Chomsky Hierarchy

Noam Chomsky famously declared the Aṣṭādhyāyī to be the first generative grammar. Scholars have worked to classify Pāṇini within the Chomsky hierarchy. While initially thought to be a regular grammar (Type-3), Frits Staal demonstrated that it contains context-sensitive rules (Type-1). For instance, a rule like $a[b \rightarrow c]d$ (replacing b with c in the context of a and d) is the hallmark of Paninian phonological transformations.

Knowledge Representation and Artificial Intelligence

In 1985, NASA scientist Rick Briggs argued that Sanskrit is uniquely suited for artificial intelligence. Unlike English or other natural languages, Shastric Sanskrit has a "mean deviation of zero" from an ideal language for information processing.

Semantic Nets and Kāraka Theory

Briggs showed that the Indian *Kāraka* system which classifies relationships between actions, agents, and objects is functionally identical to the "Semantic Nets" used in AI to represent knowledge. Because the analysis is based on the semantic message rather than binary syntactic parsing, Sanskrit allows for unambiguous knowledge extraction that is often elusive for purely statistical models.

Temporal Logic and Lakāras

Current research explores the use of Sanskrit *Lakāras* (tenses/moods) as temporal, logical primitives. This has led to the development of "TenseState Computational Grammar" (TSCG), which integrates Paninian linguistics with modern

state-machine logic to create interpretable AI systems with a deep awareness of conditionality and time.

Conclusion

The Aṣṭādhyāyī is more than a book of grammar; it is a monumental achievement in human logic and symbolic representation. By reverse-engineering the natural patterns of Sanskrit into a framework of 4,000 algebraic rules, Pāṇini created the world's first generative, rule-based computational system.

Whether in the optimization of the ŚivaSūtras, the recursive logic of compounding, or the deterministic precision of conflict resolution, Pāṇini's work remains a vital blueprint for modern linguistics and artificial intelligence. As we move toward a future where human speech and machine logic converge, the "Perfect Rule" of Pāṇini stands as a testament to the enduring power of ancient Indian scientific thought.

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Role Of Sanskrit In Personality Development Through Educational Research

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Abstract

Sanskrit, one of the most ancient languages of the world, has been the foundation of India's intellectual, cultural and spiritual heritage. In the present context its relevance extends beyond tradition into the domains of modern linguistics, philosophy, cognitive science and digital humanities. Educational research plays a vital role in revitalizing and sustaining Sanskrit by developing innovative pedagogical methods, integrating technology and bridging traditional scholarship with contemporary learning needs. This paper explores the role of educational research in the systematic development of Sanskrit studies, focusing on curriculum design, teaching methodologies, interdisciplinary approaches and learner motivation.

Introduction

The unique features of ancient Indian culture rests on the foundations, which were laid down by the ancient sages who relentlessly sought for the integral knowledge and perfection of the highest principle. Sanskrit, the divine language, plays a key role in the personality development of an individual. The word personality is derived from the Latin word 'Persona' and is defined as the characteristics sets of behaviour cognition and emotions at patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors.

Our life takes inspirations from the past. The past history of every nation is the inspiration of the country's present and future. Our ancestors have defined life and our moral duties based on spiritual aspects and not on material ones. They not only thought of development of India but also the development of the whole human race as such. For them, the whole universe was family itself. Thus the proclamation “वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्” holds all significant.

The Sanskrit word swabhava can be considered as a direct translation of the word personality. Understanding the Indian approach to personality will require exploring some fundamental concepts that explains certain parts of personality as we currently understand it. No two persons are exactly the same, not even identical twins some people are anxious some are risk taking some are confident some shy and some are quiet. This issue of difference is fundamental to the study of personality.

In Sanskrit language subhashitas played an important role in development of personality development. Subhashitas are a literary genre of Sanskrit epigrammatic poems and their messages are an advice, fact, true lessons or riddle. 'सु' in Sanskrit means good, 'भाषित' means well spoken with together literally means well spoken. Many of the 'सुभाषिता's help us to improve the personality development.

विद्यां ददाति विनयम् ।
विनयात् याति पात्रतवात् ॥
पात्रत्वात् धनमापनोति ।
धनात् धर्मं ततः सुखम् ॥

Knowledge gives humanity to man, that is one becomes humble, by modesty one attains merit, by merit one attains wealth, by that wealth one attains religion, by that religion one attain happiness.

Being one of the essentials of personality development education plays a very important role. In this way, how wide is the scope of personality development in the context of ancient Sanskrit literature, an attempt to put forward to integrate all fields of personality development of student through education.

Keywords

वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम्, प्रयोगमूलम्, दृष्टान्तमूलम्, सङ्केतमूलम्, क्रममूलम्, प्रश्नोत्तरमूलम्।

Importance Of Education In Ancient India

Education was considered essentially a process of illumination and knowledge is the third eye which gives an insight into all affairs and teaches how to act in life.

मातेव रक्षति पितेव हिते नियुङ्क्ते।

कान्तेव चापि रमयत्यपनीय खेदम्॥

(सुभाषितरत्नभण्डागारः)

Education nourishes us like a mother, directs us to the proper path like a father and gives us delight and comfort like a wife.

The most important idea governing the ancient system of education was that of perfection for developing the mind and soul of man. Ancient Indian education aimed at helps individual to grow in the power and force of certain large universal qualities which in their harmony built a higher type of manhood. Human values such as trust, respect, honesty dignity and courtesy are the building blocks of any free, advanced society.

Qualities and duties of a teacher

A 'Guru' is one who Kindles the light of knowledge in his students and destroy the darkness that covers his knowledge and a 'Sishya'

is one who gets its transmission and partaking of light.

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया ।

चक्षुरुन्मीलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

I salute the Guru who opens the eyes of one who is blind with the cataract of ignorance by applying the collyrium of Jnana.

Teaching Techniques

Our ancient Indian teachers had already discovered various methods of effective teaching. Mainly they are-

1. प्रयोगमूलम् (Practical)
2. दृष्टान्तमूलम् (Illustrative)
3. संकेतमूलम् (Symbolic)
4. क्रममूलम् (Graded)
5. प्रश्नोत्तरमूलम् (Question&Answers)

The practical and illustrative methods of teaching are well exemplified in the छान्दोग्यपनिषद् (61.1,6.13.2-2), whereas the symbolic method of teaching is introduced in मुण्डकोपनिषद् (1.2.13,6). The graded method can be observed in तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् (Valli -2) and question and answer method in कठोपनिषद् (II.12,II.13). In केनोपनिषद् we can see the method of questions and answers. For Vedic study memorization was very important.

The Present System Of Education

It is seen that the present generation is following towards the havoc of west culture. Everyone is struggling hard to earn more and more money and hence greed, selfishness, delusion, enmity etc. People are becoming more and more self centred and this mind-set and has strongly influenced on their present education system too. Now the goal of education has remained just for the sake of examination.

The present scenario of the relationship between the students and teacher is known

to all of us most of the teacher have reduced themselves as a simple transmitter of information and the students have become storehouse of information. Even the education institutions have become commercial places where the knowledge is brought and sold to even an unworthy person. The schools were treated as temple then, but now they are just profit oriented institutions.

The disturbed and busy lifestyle of parents, the influence of radio, television, newspaper, mobiles, unhealthy food habits etc are turning off the students from their machine goal or life. The lack of interest in learning as well as teaching can be observed now a days. In older days श्रवण-मनन-निदिध्यासन was practiced. But now once a person get permanently appointed they seldom feels the need of extra studies.

Conclusion

In the forgoing discussion it has been seen that the ideal relationship between the student

and the teacher as found in the ancient system of education and the current also the authenticity of ancient Indian education system. all students irrespective of any caste and can develop their overall personality development. Thus the Sanskrit language has different angles to mould our personality and creativity. Many of our sculpture help us to lay the foundation of our character. By learning and understanding all this one should be able to applied it in our life and become self satisfied.

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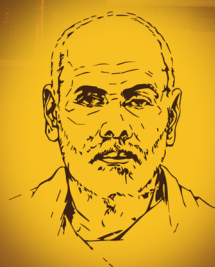
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