

NEW HORIZONS

A Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Double-blind Peer Reviewed



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Volume XX, August 2023



Mehr Chand Mahajan

DAV College for Women

Chandigarh

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Volume XX, August 2023

ISSN 2277-5218

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Digital Governance: A Bibliometric Analysis of Two Decades of Research

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The rise of digital technologies has ushered in a transformative era in governance and the public sector. This paper explores the dynamic field of digital governance, which leverages modern technologies to drive innovation, sustainability and competitiveness in public administration. However, the terminology surrounding this field remains nebulous, with concepts like e-government, digital government, and e-governance often used interchangeably. This study aims to fill a critical gap by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of digital governance research over the past two decades. A dataset of 21,940 publications has been sourced from The Lens database, spanning from 2001 to 2020. The results reveal the evolving landscape of digital governance research, encompassing document type, publication trends, most productive institutions, primary fields of study, active researchers, productive countries, leading publishing houses, productive sources, and citation counts. Key findings include the dominance of journal articles, particularly in recent years, reflecting a focus on academic research. The University of Edinburgh emerged as the most productive institution, highlighting the substantial research output from British institutions. The dataset spans various fields of study, with business, political science, and sociology taking the lead. Notable researchers such as Aziz Sheikh and Graeme Laurie have made significant contributions to the field. The United Kingdom leads in research output, followed by the United States. The paper also identifies highly cited works, showcasing their impact across diverse fields and geographical locations. Notably, research related to COVID-19 has garnered immense attention, emphasizing the relevance of digital governance in crisis management. The study sheds light on the evolution and multidisciplinary nature

of digital governance research, providing valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in this dynamic field.

Keywords: digital governance, e-governance, e-government, bibliometric analysis, citation analysis, global research trends

Introduction

The rise of digital technologies has had a profound impact on the society and the economy, leading to notable changes in the public sector and governance. The Internet, in particular, has not only changed how governments operate internally but has also transformed their relationships with citizens and businesses. This shift has given rise to a new approach to public administration called digital governance, which emphasizes the role of modern technologies in driving innovative, sustainable and competitive governance.

However, the terminology used to describe this rapidly evolving field has evolved over the past two decades, often blurring the lines between different concepts. Digital governance has been interchangeably referred to as e-government, digital government or e-governance. According to the European Commission in 2020, e-government 1.0 is seen as a precursor to the broader concept of digital government, encompassing open (2.0), smart (3.0), and transformed (4.0) government. Despite efforts to clarify these concepts, a consensus on their definitions remains elusive. Consequently, digital governance serves as an overarching term for recent initiatives aiming to modernize public administration through the integration of modern technologies. The lack of clear definitions for these concepts can be attributed to two main factors: the ICT industry's tradition of re-labelling technologies for marketing purposes and policymakers adopting trendy labels to fit specific contexts, particularly in scientific and policy reports.

While digital governance and e-government are often treated as synonyms, some researchers highlight distinctions in their perspectives. Digital governance goes beyond e-government, involving the use of ICT to enhance governance processes, support e-democracy, e-government and e-business. It encompasses interactions between the government and citizens, businesses, and within government

operations to simplify and improve democratic, governmental and business aspects of governance, leading to increased transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

The concept of digital governance emerged in the early 2000s and is still shaping its basic ideas. Despite a rising interest in studying digital governance, there's a lack of complete explanations about its growth. This paper aims to bridge this gap by thoroughly examining digital governance research from the last two decades. It intends to explore how this field has evolved and identify crucial aspects, such as relevant fields of study, top-performing institutions, engaged researchers, prolific countries, prominent publishing houses, and influential sources, using a bibliometric analysis.

The subsequent sections of the paper are organized in the following manner: Section 2 provides an overview of the existing bibliometric studies on digital governance. Section 3 outlines the research methodology employed in this study. In Section 4, a comprehensive presentation of the results obtained from the bibliometric analysis is provided. The paper concludes by summarizing the main findings in the concluding section.

Literature Review

Research on digital governance is currently in a burgeoning stage of development. According to Dias (2019), e-government research is experiencing notable growth, particularly in developing regions like Ibero-American countries. Nevertheless, the scholarly discourse on digital governance research continues to present various studies that employ bibliometric and scientometric methods, utilizing diverse approaches and bibliometric databases. These studies aim to illustrate the evolution of knowledge in specific facets of digital governance research.

Cheng and Ding (2012) analyzed 2232 journal articles published between 2000 and 2012, identifying key authors and trends, highlighting research areas like cross-sectoral collaboration and security infrastructure. de Oliveira Almeida et al. (2014) used the Web of Science database to study 4225 articles until 2012, noting a growing academic production and substantial citations, with 80% concentrated in the top ten countries. Rodríguez Bolívar et al. (2016) focused on 826

e-government articles from 2000 to 2012, uncovering key research topics like e-government initiatives and transparency. They also highlighted disparities in research impact between developing and developed countries. Alcaide-Muñoz et al. (2017) tracked the evolution of e-government research using a science mapping approach on 8094 documents published between 2000 and 2016, noting the field's ongoing development, particularly regarding citizens' acceptance and e-participation. Bindu et al. (2019) performed a citation network analysis on e-government articles from 1989 to 2016, highlighting key topics such as e-governance framework design and open data, emphasizing the emerging research theme of participatory governance. Lobont et al. (2020) conducted the most recent study on 484 research documents published by 2019, emphasizing the significance of themes like citizen involvement and online services in e-government adoption.

A thorough examination of past bibliometric research on digital governance reveals that the studies vary in scope, sources and variables considered. Commonly utilized databases include Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar, mainly focusing on post-2000 data. Key aspects explored are scientific production, collaboration networks and research themes. Despite this, a comprehensive understanding of the foundational aspects of digital governance research and its evolution is lacking in existing studies. This paper aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of digital governance research from the past two decades using a bibliometric approach.

Research Methodology

Publications pertaining to digital governance were sourced from The Lens database (<https://www.lens.org>) accessed on March 19, 2022. The search in The Lens database was conducted using the keyword “digital governance” across all fields within the structured field search for articles. This search spanned a twenty-year period starting from 2001, chosen due to the consistent annual publication of relevant articles since that year. Given the interdisciplinary nature of digital governance, all available subject areas were integrated into the query to ensure comprehensive coverage. This approach aligns with Dias (2016) methodology applied in a study focused on Portugal. Language restrictions were not imposed

during the search process. In total, 21,940 publications were identified, and Table 1 provides a summary of the search parameters.

Data Source	The Lens
Searching period	01-01-2001 to 31-12-2020
Searching keywords	“Digital Governance”
Searching criteria	All Fields

Table 1: Search parameters

In this study, bibliometric analysis was applied to understand the research productivity and impact within the domain of digital governance. Bibliometric analysis entails the utilization of bibliometric indicators and metrics to assess the research productivity and influence of individuals, research groups or institutions. Through bibliometric indicators like impact factor and citation counts, this analysis can pinpoint highly productive and influential researchers and research groups. The present study utilized a range of bibliometric indicators, encompassing document type, publication trends, most productive institutions, primary fields of study, active researchers, productive countries, leading publishing houses, productive sources and citation counts. The bibliometric data was extracted in Excel format to facilitate further analysis.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Overview

Table 2 presents a comprehensive view of the scholarly impact and interaction with the patent system for a given dataset. The dataset comprises a total of 21,940 scholarly works, forming the basis of scholarly impact assessment. Notably, a significant portion of these works, 16,922 in total, have been cited by other scholarly works, demonstrating their influence and integration within the academic discourse. These works have garnered an impressive 3,92,563 citations, indicating substantial scholarly recognition and dissemination. Additionally, there's a notable interaction with the patent domain: 106 scholarly works have been cited by patents, illustrating the practical relevance and applicability of

academic research in technological and industrial advancements. Conversely, scholarly works themselves have cited 402 patents, emphasizing the interdisciplinary relationship between academic research and innovation in the patent landscape. This table underscores the multifaceted impact of scholarly works, reaching beyond academia to influence technological and industrial progress.

Bibliometric Items	Findings
Scholarly Works	21940
Works Cited by Patents	106
Citing Patents	402
Patent Citations	407
Works Cited by Scholarly	16922
Scholarly Citations	392563

Table 2: Overview of characteristics of scientific literature on digital governance

Bibliometric Analysis

Document Type

Table 3 presents a breakdown of document types within a specific dataset, with a total count of 21,940 documents. The majority of documents are Journal Articles, accounting for 85.32% of the total, indicating a strong emphasis on scholarly articles. Books and Book Chapters make up smaller proportions, with 2.73% and 7.69%, respectively, suggesting a relatively lower focus on these formats. Conference Proceedings and Conference Proceedings Articles represent only 0.67% and 3.59% of the total, suggesting a limited presence of conference-related content. This distribution highlights a predominance of journal articles in the dataset, potentially indicating a focus on academic research and publication within the subject matter under consideration.

Document type	Document Count	Percentage
Journal Article	18720	85.32
Book	599	2.73
Book Chapter	1687	7.69
Conference Proceedings	146	0.67
Conference Proceedings Article	788	3.59
Total	21940	100

Table 3: Document type

Publications Over Time

Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the publication distribution by year and document type within a specific dataset, totalling 21,940 documents. It is evident that Journal Articles dominate the dataset across all years, with an increasing trend over time, reaching 18,720 articles in total. Books and Book Chapters show a relatively lower but increasing presence, indicating a growing emphasis on these formats. Conference Proceedings and Conference Proceedings Articles also exhibit an upward trend but remain relatively modest in comparison to Journal Articles. Notably, 2020 had a high number of publications, reflecting a substantial volume of research during that year. This table illustrates the evolving landscape of publications over the years, with a focus on journal articles, which make up the majority of the dataset.

Publication Year	Document Count	Document Type				
		Book	Book Chapter	Conference Proceedings	Conference Proceedings Article	Journal Article
2001	26	3	2	0	0	21
2002	35	4	3	0	0	28
2003	42	2	1	1	1	37

2004	51	3	0	3	0	45
2005	75	4	2	10	2	57
2006	104	7	15	3	2	77
2007	127	11	0	7	2	107
2008	220	10	3	8	3	196
2009	216	9	12	13	1	181
2010	405	12	45	11	3	334
2011	505	21	44	2	0	438
2012	690	36	94	17	4	539
2013	837	19	34	6	30	748
2014	1235	38	58	6	40	1093
2015	1609	58	72	8	40	1431
2016	2321	55	160	6	47	2053
2017	2952	84	225	10	91	2542
2018	3539	81	299	9	261	2889
2019	3692	65	290	15	119	3203
2020	3259	77	328	11	142	2701
Total	21940	599	1687	146	788	18720

Table 4: Publications over time

Most Productive Institutions

Table 5 provides insight into the publication output of various academic institutions, showcasing the number of publications attributed to each. The University of Edinburgh stands out with the highest number of publications at 1,139, indicating a significant research output. Following closely are University College London, University of Sheffield, King's College London, and University

of Oxford, showcasing substantial scholarly activity. These universities, among others listed, demonstrate a strong commitment to academic research and publication, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and academia. The range of institutions in the list also reflects the diversity and distribution of academic output across different universities in the United Kingdom.

Institution Name	Number of Publications
University of Edinburgh	1139
University College London	309
University of Sheffield	287
King's College London	286
University of Oxford	279
Cardiff University	253
London School of Economics and Political Science	245
University of London	230
University of Sussex	224
University of Nottingham	220

Table 5: Most productive institutions

Top Fields of Study

Table 6 offers a comprehensive view of the distribution of documents across various fields of study. Business emerges as the predominant field with the highest document count at 4,285, suggesting a significant focus on aspects related to commerce, management, and economics. Following closely are Political Science (4,021) and Sociology (3,502), indicating a substantial interest in political and social research. Corporate Governance (2,834) and Public Relations (2,812) also show strong representation, highlighting research on organizational structures and communication strategies. Computer Science (1,978) showcases an interest in technology and computing. Context (Language Use) (1,839) reflects a focus on

linguistic and contextual analyses. Medicine (1,746) signifies attention towards healthcare and medical studies. Lastly, Politics (1,735) and Government (1,463) underline a significant interest in political systems and governance. Overall, the table provides valuable insights into the distribution of research efforts across diverse fields, reflecting the academic and societal interests present in the dataset.

Field of Study	Document Count
Business	4285
Political science	4021
Sociology	3502
Corporate governance	2834
Public relations	2812
Computer science	1978
Context (language use)	1839
Medicine	1746
Politics	1735
Government	1463

Table 6: Top fields of study

Most Active Researchers

Table 7 presents the document count attributed to specific authors, giving an insight into their research output. Aziz Sheikh emerges as the most prolific author with 59 documents, indicating a substantial and extensive contribution to the field of study. Graeme Laurie follows with 24 documents, showcasing a notable research output as well. Marijn Janssen and Yogesh K Dwivedi each have 20 documents attributed to them, signifying a significant body of work. Kathrin Cresswell, Ben Williamson, Helen Margetts, Peter Curwen, Patrick Dunleavy, and Shawn Harmon also demonstrate notable contributions with varying document counts, ranging from 12 to 18 documents. This table provides a glimpse

into the diverse levels of scholarly productivity among specific authors, shedding light on their research impact within the dataset.

Authors	Document Count
Aziz Sheikh	59
Graeme Laurie	24
Marijn Janssen	20
Yogesh K Dwivedi	20
Kathrin Cresswell	18
Ben Williamson	15
Helen Margetts	14
Peter Curwen	14
Patrick Dunleavy	13
Shawn Harmon	12

Table7: Most active authors

Most Productive Countries

Table 8 presents a breakdown of document counts by country, offering insights into the geographical distribution of research contributions within a specific dataset. The United Kingdom dominates with the highest document count at 6,862, indicating a substantial volume of research output from British institutions. The United States follows with 2,229 documents, reflecting a significant research presence. Australia, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Canada, and Italy also make substantial contributions, with document counts ranging from 475 to 1,176, showcasing active research communities in these countries. China and Brazil, while lower in document count, still demonstrate noteworthy participation in the dataset, with 414 and 386 documents respectively. This table highlights the global nature of the dataset, with contributions from a range of countries, underlining the international character of the research represented within it.

Country	Document Count
United Kingdom	6862
United States	2229
Australia	1176
Netherlands	643
Spain	625
Germany	623
Canada	617
Italy	475
China	414
Brazil	386

Table 8: Most active countries

Top Publishing Houses

Table 9 provides an overview of the distribution of scholarly publications across various publishing houses within a specific dataset. Informa UK Limited emerges as the top publisher with 1,939 documents, signifying a substantial presence in the dataset. SAGE Publications follows closely with 1,494 documents, reflecting a significant contribution to scholarly research. Springer Nature and Wiley also demonstrate notable representation, with 1,134 and 1,110 documents, respectively, indicating their influence in the academic community. Other publishing houses such as Emerald, ACM, Springer International Publishing, MDPI AG, BioMed Central, and Oxford University Press (OUP) contribute to the dataset's diversity, representing a range of disciplines and research areas. This table highlights the varied sources of scholarly publications and the significant role these publishing houses play in disseminating research within the dataset.

Publishing house	Document Count
Informa UK Limited	1939
SAGE Publications	1494
Springer Nature	1134
Wiley	1110
Emerald	1006
ACM	679
Springer International Publishing	645
MDPI AG	590
BioMed Central	552
Oxford University Press (OUP)	342

Table 9: Top Publishing houses

Most Productive Sources

Table 10 offers insight into the distribution of documents across various source titles within a specific dataset. "Sustainability" stands out as the most prominent source title with 269 documents, indicating a strong focus on research related to environmental and sustainability issues. "BMJ Open" follows closely with 210 documents, emphasizing the dataset's significant representation of medical and healthcare research. "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health" also demonstrates a substantial presence, with 206 documents, further highlighting the dataset's emphasis on public health and environmental studies. "PloS One" and the "Proceedings of the 19th Annual International Conference on Digital Government Research" represent diverse areas of research, including multidisciplinary and digital governance topics, with 154 and 138 documents respectively. The presence of "Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance" (118 documents) reflects a focus on digital policy and regulatory matters. Other source titles such as "Trials," "Education Policy Analysis Archives," "BMC Health

Services Research," and "IDS Bulletin" contribute to the dataset's diversity, encompassing fields such as clinical trials, education policy, healthcare services, and international development studies. This table highlights the wide array of source titles and research domains represented in the dataset, offering a rich mix of scholarly contributions.

Source Title	Document Count
Sustainability	269
BMJ open	210
International journal of environmental research and public health	206
PloS one	154
Proceedings of the 19th Annual International Conference on Digital Government Research: Governance in the Data Age	138
Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance	118
Trials	90
education policy analysis archives	77
BMC health services research	75
IDS Bulletin	67

Table 10: Most productive sources

Citation Analysis

Citation analysis is a technique employed to assess the influence and impact of academic publications by examining the frequency and structure of citations in other scholarly works. This approach offers valuable insights into a publication's significance and pertinence within a specific field, revealing intellectual connections and collaborative efforts among researchers. Table 11 offers a glimpse into the scholarly discourse across diverse fields and geographical locations, illustrating the breadth and depth of academic research and its influence on subsequent works. The articles span a wide array of topics and are published in

prestigious journals from various countries. The top-cited work, "Clinical Features of Patients Infected with 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China" (2020), published in Lancet (UK), reflects the immense impact of COVID-19 research during the pandemic. The table includes notable research articles on topics like healthcare education, business models, computational social science, urbanism, cancer survival, smart cities, and deep learning in retinal disease diagnosis. These works are published in renowned journals from countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, and more, showcasing the global reach and influence of these research contributions. The number of citing works for each article indicates their broader impact and influence within the academic community.

Sr. No.	Title	Publication Year	Publication Type	Source Title	Publisher	Source Country	Citation Count
1	Clinical features of patients infected with 2019 novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China	2020	Journal Article	Lancet	Elsevier Limited	United Kingdom	27763
2	Health professionals for a new century: transforming education to strengthen health systems in an interdependent world	2010	Journal Article	Lancet	Elsevier Limited	United Kingdom	3482
3	The Business Model: Recent Developments and Future Research	2011	Journal Article	Journal of Management	SAGE Publications	United States	2915
4	Computational Social Science	2009	Journal Article	Science	American Association for the Advancement of Science	United States	2568
5	The structure and dynamics of multilayer networks	2014	Journal Article	Physics reports	Elsevier	Netherlands	2190
6	The Astronomical Journal - The Astropy Project: Building an Open-science Project and Status of the v2.0 Core Package	2018	Journal Article	The Astronomical Journal	American Astronomical Society	United States	2073

7	Global surveillance of cancer survival 1995–2009: analysis of individual data for 25 676 887 patients from 279 population-based registries in 67 countries (CONCORD-2)	2014	Journal Article	Lancet	Elsevier Limited	United Kingdom	1569
8	The real-time city? Big data and smart urbanism	2013	Journal Article	GeoJournal	Springer Science and Business Media LLC	Netherlands	1429
9	Our future: a Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing	2016	Journal Article	Lancet	Elsevier Limited	United Kingdom	1421
10	SoilGrids250m: Global gridded soil information based on machine learning	2017	Journal Article	PloS one	Public Library of Science	United States	1416
11	New public management is dead. Long live digital-era governance	2005	Journal Article	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	Oxford University Press (OUP)	United Kingdom	1402
12	Access-Based Consumption: The Case of Car Sharing	2012	Journal Article	Journal of Consumer Research	Oxford University Press (OUP)	United States	1314
13	Smart cities of the future	2012	Journal Article	The European Physical Journal Special Topics	Springer Science and Business Media LLC	France	1195
14	Clinically applicable deep learning for diagnosis and referral in retinal disease	2018	Journal Article	Nature medicine	Nature Publishing Group	United Kingdom	1122
15	Comparison of Sociodemographic and Health-Related Characteristics of UK Biobank Participants with Those of the General Population.	2017	Journal Article	American journal of epidemiology	Oxford University Press	United Kingdom	1120
16	Future coastal population growth and exposure to sea-level rise and coastal	2015	Journal Article	PloS one	Public Library of Science	United States	1096

	flooding--a global assessment.						
17	Groundwater use for irrigation - a global inventory	2010	Journal Article	Hydrology and Earth System Sciences	Copernicus GmbH	Germany	1016
18	Pan-cancer analysis of whole genomes	2020	Journal Article	Nature	Nature Publishing Group	United Kingdom	985
19	The Repertoire of Mutational Signatures in Human Cancer	2020	Journal Article	Nature	Nature Publishing Group	United Kingdom	943
20	A Taxonomy of Privacy	2006	Journal Article	University of Pennsylvania Law Review	JSTOR	United States	896
21	A Systematic Review of Co-Creation and Co-Production: Embarking on the social innovation journey	2014	Journal Article	Public Management Review	Informa UK Limited	United Kingdom	889
22	High-quality health systems in the Sustainable Development Goals era: time for a revolution	2018	Journal Article	The Lancet. Global health	Elsevier BV	Netherlands	885
23	In the social factory? Immaterial labour, precariousness and cultural work	2008	Journal Article	Theory, Culture & Society	SAGE Publications	United States	871
24	The Lancet Commission on global mental health and sustainable development.	2018	Journal Article	Lancet	Elsevier Limited	United Kingdom	815
25	The institutional environment for infrastructure investment	2002	Journal Article	Industrial and Corporate Change	Oxford University Press (OUP)	United Kingdom	771

Table 11: 25 Highly Cited Publications

Conclusions

The concept of digital governance, emerging around 2000, is still in the process of establishing its conceptual foundations. Despite growing interest and extensive research in digital governance, a comprehensive understanding of its foundational

aspects and evolutionary trajectory is lacking. This paper addressed this gap by conducting an in-depth bibliometric analysis of digital governance research over the past two decades, exploring its evolution. The analysis has shed light on various aspects, including document types, publication trends, influential institutions, research fields, prolific researchers, active countries, publishing houses, and citation patterns.

The findings demonstrate the multifaceted impact of digital governance research, its interdisciplinary nature, and its significant influence beyond academia. As digital technologies continue to evolve, digital governance research will remain a dynamic and influential field, guiding the development of innovative governance strategies in the digital era. Further research and collaboration are essential to continually refine our understanding of this vital area and its ongoing evolution.

There are some limitations to the present study that should be mentioned. (1) The reliance on a single database, The Lens, may lead to an incomplete representation of all available literature on digital governance. (2) The search was conducted using a single keyword, "digital governance," potentially overlooking related terms and synonyms. (3) The analysis predominantly focuses on quantitative bibliometric metrics, lacking qualitative assessments that could provide deeper insights into the literature. Future research should address these limitations to offer a more comprehensive view of the digital governance landscape.

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2

हासोन्मुख समाज की पीड़ा को व्यक्त करती स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कविता

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स्वातंत्र्योत्तर हिंदी कविता का प्रारंभिक स्वरूप नई कविता अथवा प्रयोगवादी कविता है। इस दौर का कवि स्वतंत्रता के बाद की समस्याओं को उजागर करता है। यह समय विभिन्न विचारधाराओं का है। इस दौर की कविता में हासोन्मुख समाज की पीड़ा को व्यक्त करने का काम हुआ है। इस कविता में जीवन के प्रति अगाध आस्था है। स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कविता मानव के सम्पूर्ण सुख-दुख, राग-विराग एवं आशा-निराशा को सशक्तता से व्यंजित करती है। कथ्य की व्यापकता और दृष्टि की उन्मुक्तता स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कविता की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता है। विभिन्न विमर्शों को लेकर चलती यह कविता सही मायने में जनतंत्र की कविता है।

बीज शब्द: हासोन्मुख, स्वातंत्र्योत्तर, वैचारिक-परिवर्तन, परंपरागत कविता, साहित्यिक विमर्श, वर्चस्ववाद

कविता कवि के भावात्मक क्षणों में उभरे विचारों से निकल कर आती है। कविता के माध्यम से ही सहृदय कवि अपने मन मस्तिष्क में उठ रहे विचारों के तूफान को अभिव्यक्त करके जनमानस तक पहुँचाने का कार्य करता है। कविता का क्षेत्र विस्तृत और गूढ़ होता है। कविता के संदर्भ में विभिन्न विद्वानों ने अपनी बात स्पष्ट करने का प्रयास किया है। इस संबंध में सबसे सटीक टिप्पणी आचार्य रामचंद्र शुक्ल की है वे लिखते हैं कि - "जिस प्रकार आत्मा की मुक्तावस्था ज्ञान दशा कहलाती है, उसी प्रकार हृदय की मुक्तावस्था रस दशा कहलाती है। हृदय की इस मुक्ति की साधना के लिए मनुष्य की वाणी जो शब्द विधान करती आई है, उसे कविता कहते हैं। इस साधना को हम भावयोग कहते हैं और कर्म योग और ज्ञान योग का समकक्ष मानते हैं।"¹

स्वातंत्र्योत्तर हिंदी कविता का प्रारंभिक स्वरूप नई कविता अथवा प्रयोगवादी कविता है। इस दौर का कवि स्वतंत्रता के बाद की समस्याओं को उजागर करता है। भारतीय आम जनमानस जो तत्कालीन स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों के इशारे मात्र से अपना सर्वस्व मातृभूमि पर न्योछावर करने के लिए आगे बढ़ा था। स्वतंत्रता के बाद महसूस करता है कि जिस उद्देश्य की पूर्ति के लिए स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन चला था तथा आम जनमानस ने तत्कालीन सत्तासीन सरकारों से जो अपेक्षाएं की थीं वे उनके अनुरूप खरी नहीं उतर रही थीं।

स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कविता का बीजारोपण स्वतंत्रता के पूर्व के युग में ही हो चुका था किंतु उसका वास्तविक प्रस्फुटन स्वतंत्रता के बाद के दौर में ही आरंभ होता है यह दौर विभिन्न विचारधाराओं का दौर है। एक कालखंड के बाद वैचारिक परिवर्तन आता है, नई विचारधारा उभर कर सामने आती है। यह दौर आगे बढ़ते-बढ़ते विविध विमर्शों तक पहुँच जाता है तथा स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कविता की बानगी बन जाता है। इस संबंध में भरत भूषण अग्रवाल का कथन है "मैं निवेदन करना चाहूँगा कि स्वातंत्र्योत्तर हिंदी- कविता की सबसे बड़ी उपलब्धि स्वयं नई कविता है अर्थात् वह प्रचुर काव्य - राशि जिसे मोटे तौर पर नई कविता कहते हैं निश्चय ही इसका बीजारोपण स्वतंत्रता के पूर्व के युग में ही हो चुका था, पर उसका सम्यक् प्रस्फुटन और प्रतिफलन स्वातंत्र्योत्तर युग में विरल और नगण्य ही है। छायावाद तो सन् 35 - 36 के आस-पास ही स्वच्छंदतावाद और प्रगतिवाद के रूप में दो टूक हो चुका था, स्वातंत्र्योत्तर युग में प्रगतिवाद साम्यवादी नारेबाजी के शंखनाद का अनुगमन करता हुआ भावहीन मरु की बालू में लुप्त हो गया और स्वच्छंदतावाद अधिकचरी अतिभावुकता के कारण कवि - सम्मेलनों के मंच से होता हुआ फिल्म - जगत का शरणार्थी बन गया । इसलिए जितनी भी और जो भी उपलब्धि इस काल में हुई है, वह नई कविता के आँगन में फली - फूली है।²

नई कविता ही स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कविता है, जिसमें परंपरागत कविता से आगे नए मूल्यों, नए भाव - बोधों और नए शिल्प विधान का अन्वेषण किया गया। नई कविता में जीवन के प्रति अगाध आस्था है। इस दौर की कविता में ह्रासोन्मुख समाज की पीड़ा को व्यक्त करने का काम कवियों ने किया है। यह वह दौर है जब कवि समाज की पीड़ा को सरकारी तंत्र के सम्मुख प्रस्तुत करने का कार्य करता है। इस दौर के कवियों के पास मनुष्य किसी वर्गीय चेतना, सिद्धांत या आदर्श की वैशाखी पर चलता हुआ नहीं आया। अपने संपूर्ण सुख-दुख, राग - विराग के परिवेश से संयुक्त शुद्ध मानव के रूप में आया।

नई कविता में कोई वाद नहीं है जो अपने कथ्य और दृष्टि में सीमित हो। कथ्य की व्यापकता और दृष्टि की उन्मुक्तता स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कविता की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता है। "में वहाँ हूँ" कविता में कवि अज्ञेय आम जनमानस की पीड़ा को निम्न पंक्तियों में व्यक्त करते हैं-

"यह जो मिट्टी गोड़ता है
कोदई खाता है और गेहूँ खिलाता है उसकी मैं साधना हूँ । यह जो मिट्टी फोड़ता है मढ़िया
में रहता है और महलों को बनाता है उसकी मैं आस्था हूँ ।
वह जो कज्जल - पुता खानों में उतरता है
पर चमाचम विमानों को आकाश में उड़ाता है ,
यह जो नंगे बदन, दम साध पानी में उतरता है
और बाजार के लिए पानीदार मोती निकाल लाता है,
यह जो कलम घिसता है
चाकरी करता है , पर सरकार को चलाता है उसकी मैं व्यथा हूँ ।
यह जो कचरा ढोता है, यह जो झल्लू लिए फिरता है और बेघरा घुरे पर सोता है ,
यह जो गदहे हाँकता है,
यह जो तंदूर झाँकता है, यह जो कीचड़ उलीचती है, यह जो मनियार सजाती है, यह जो
कंधे पर चूड़ियों की पोटली लिए गली-गली झाँकती है,
यह जो दूसरों का उतरन फींचती है, यह जो रद्दी बटोरता है,
यह जो पापड़ बेलता है, बीड़ी लपेटता है, वर्क कूटता है, धोंकनी फूँकता है, कलई गलाता है,
रेड़ी ठेलता है, चौक लीपता है, बासन मांजता है, ईंटे उछालता, रुई धुनता है, गारा सानता
है,
खटिया बुनता है , मशक से सड़क सींचता है ,
रिक्शा में अपना प्रतिरूप लादे खींचता है, जो भी जहाँ भी पिसता है,पर हारता नहीं, न
मरता है --
पीड़ित श्रमरत मानव
अविजित दुर्जेय मानव, कमकर, श्रमकर, शिल्पी, स्रष्टा-- उसकी मैं कथा हूँ।" ³

मानवीय पीड़ा की यह कविता सन साठ के दशक तक अपनी संवेदना व्यक्त करती रही। इस दौर में मुख्य रूप से सप्तकों के प्रकाशन के माध्यम से प्रयोगवादी कविता की परंपरा विद्यमान रही। यह परंपरा प्रयोगवादी कवि अज्ञेय के संपादन में सप्तकों के माध्यम से आगे बढ़ी। पहला तार सप्तक सन 1943 में, दूसरा सप्तक सन 1951 में,

तीसरा सप्तक सन 1959 में तथा चौथा सप्तक सन 1978 में प्रकाशित हुआ। इसी दौरान 1960 के दशक में नई विचारधारा का विकास हुआ जिसे साठोत्तरी कविता का नाम दिया गया। इस नवीन धारा में रघुवीर सहाय, सर्वेश्वर दयाल सक्सेना, विजयदेव नारायण साही तथा दुष्यंत कुमार के अतिरिक्त अन्य कवि धूमिल, लीलाधर जगूड़ी, उदय प्रकाश तथा सुनीता जैन हैं। "सन साठ के बाद की कविता वास्तव में बदलते हुए मूड की कविता है जिसका पूरा स्ट्रक्चर कथ्य के अनुकूल है। उसकी भाषा बोलचाल की भाषा है जिस पर कहीं भी अभिजात्य का मुलम्मा नहीं चढ़ाया गया है। इस काव्य धारा का नेतृत्व करने वाले कवि सुदामा पांडे धूमिल ने अपने पूर्ववर्ती तमाम कवियों की आलोचना करते हुए स्पष्ट शब्दों में कहा था - छायावाद के कवि शब्दों को तोल कर रखते थे। प्रयोगवाद के कवि शब्दों को गोल कर रखते थे। सन साठ के बाद के कवि शब्दों को खोल कर रखते हैं।

धूमिल कविता को गुर्राने वाली, चेतावनी देने वाली जागती आवाज मानता था। ऐसी आवाज जो कबीर की कविता की तरह बार-बार दस्तक दे। वह कविता के द्वारा दूसरे प्रजातंत्र की तलाश के लिए प्रयत्नशील था किंतु मात्र उन्तालीस वर्ष की उम्र में उसका निधन हो गया। मृत्यु से पूर्व लिखी उसकी अंतिम कविता अपने समय के सच को प्रस्तुत करती हुई कविता प्रत्येक पाठक को बार-बार झकझोरती है, उद्वेलित करती है तथा हमारे सामने बेशुमार सवाल खड़े करती है। अपनी अंतिम कविता में धूमिल ने लिखा था-

'लोहे का स्वाद लोहार से मत पूछो उस घोड़े से पूछो जिसके मुंह में लगाम है।'

साठोत्तरी कविता सही मायने में जनतंत्र की कविता है, जिसमें जन-गण के सुख-दुःख ही नहीं, आदमी की नियति के प्रति भी एक सीधा सरोकार है। धूमिल की 'संसद से सड़क तक' तथा लीलाधर जगूड़ी की 'नाटक जारी है' जैसी कविता पुस्तकों से साठोत्तरी हिंदी - कविता का अच्छा - खासा परिचय मिल जाता है। कुल मिलाकर कहें तो सन साठ के बाद की कविता नवीन काव्याभिरुचि, नवीन सौंदर्य बोध, और नये संवेदन की कविता है। इसमें सामान्य व्यक्ति के आक्रोश, विद्रोह, क्रोध, क्षोभ, विरोध, उत्तेजना, तनाव और छटपटाहट की प्रधानता है।"⁴

कवि धूमिल 'रोटी और संसद' कविता के माध्यम से आम नागरिकों के संघर्ष को अभिव्यक्त करते हैं तथा देश की संसद को ललकारते हैं। उनके अनुसार श्रमिक की

स्थिति में कोई सुधार नहीं हो रहा है। सरकार उसके श्रम के साथ - साथ, उसकी मेहनत के साथ भी खिलवाड़ कर रही है। वे देश की संसद को चेताते हैं कि - आम जनों के लिए न्याय एवं सुख सुविधाएं प्रदान क्यों नहीं की जा रही हैं ? उसकी भावनाओं के साथ हर पल खिलवाड़ किया जा रहा है-

"एक आदमी
रोटी बेलता है
एक आदमी रोटी खाता है
एक तीसरा आदमी भी है
जो न रोटी बेलता है, न रोटी खाता है।
वह सिर्फ रोटी से खेलता है
मैं पूछता हूँ -
"यह तीसरा आदमी कौन है?"
मेरे देश की संसद मौन है।"⁵

अपने काव्य लेखन के माध्यम से सरकार को ऐसी चेतावनी धूमिल जैसे कवि ही दे सकते थे। उस दौर में अभिव्यक्ति पर अंकुश नहीं था। कवि, पत्रकार एवं जागरूक नागरिक अपनी विरोधात्मक आवाज सरकार के समक्ष रख सकते थे। यही साठोत्तरी कविता की विशेषता भी रही है। 1980 के बाद के हिंदी काव्य में विविध साहित्यिक विमर्शों ने अपना महत्वपूर्ण स्थान निर्धारित किया। जिसने जैसा जिया हो वह उसकी अभिव्यक्ति और अधिक बेहतर ढंग से कर सकता है। इस दौर में दलित विमर्श, किन्नर विमर्श, पर्यावरण विमर्श, जनजाति विमर्श आदि विविध विमर्शों के अतिरिक्त अन्य प्रकार का साहित्य भी रचा जा रहा है। विमर्शवादी साहित्य ने हिंदी साहित्य में अपना महत्वपूर्ण स्थान निर्धारित किया। साहित्य सृजक विमर्शों के माध्यम से अपनी आपबीती बखूबी पाठकों तक पहुंचा रहे हैं।

दलित विमर्श अस्सी के दशक में उभरा जो नब्बे तक आते-आते बहुत चर्चित हो गया । हंस पत्रिका में ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि की आत्मकथा 'जूठन' को धारावाहिक रूप में प्रसारित किया गया। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि, मोहन दास नैमिशराय, सुशीला टाकभौरै, जयप्रकाश कर्दम, शिवराज सिंह बेचैन, रत्न कुमार संभरिया, कालीचरण स्नेही, रूपनारायण सोनकर, संतराम आर्य, हरपाल सिंह 'अरुष' आर.जी. कुरील 'रसिक' श्यामलाल राही, मीरा परमार, कंवल भारती, दामोदर मोरे 'दीपंकर', कर्मशील भारती, एन सिंह, जय प्रकाश वाल्मीकि,

कालीचरण स्नेही, सी.बी. भारती, जयप्रकाश कर्दम, श्योराज सिंह बेचैन, सुदेश कुमार तनवर, दिनेश चंद्र, असंगघोष, राधा वाल्मीकि, आर.डी. आनंद, अनिता भारती, रजतरानी 'मीनू', प्रबुद्ध नारायण बौद्ध, हेमलता महेश्वर, विजय कुमार भारती, मुसाफिर बैठा, हीरालाल राजस्थानी, डॉ नामदेव, खन्ना प्रसाद अमीन, राजेश कुमार बौद्ध, पूनम तुषामड़, अरविंद भारती, विपिन कुमार, डी. के. भास्कर, नीलम, मुकेश कुमार मिरोठा, सुनील कुमार कर्दम आदि का नाम दलित विमर्श के प्रमुख कवियों के रूप में सामने आता है।

दलित कवि ईश्वरीय सत्ता के प्रति अपना विद्रोह जताता है, उसका मानना है कि मंदिरों में स्थापित देवी - देवता उसके मान - सम्मान को कायम रखने के लिए कुछ नहीं करते सरेआम उसका अपमान होता रहता है। मंदिर के पुजारी उसे मूर्तियों के नजदीक नहीं पहुंचने देते । वह दूर से भी अब उन मूर्तियों को देखना ही नहीं चाहता। इस संबंध में कवि हरपाल सिंह 'अरुण' अपना आक्रोश व्यक्त करते हैं-

"डंके की चोट पर घोषणा है मेरी कि
मुझे तुम्हारे मंदिर की सीढ़ियों पर ही
जीवन व्यतीत नहीं करना
और न दीवार के छेद से झाँककर
देव दर्शन करके संतुष्ट होना

कर्म अधिकार को मुझे उतार फेंकना है
भला कायर को भी कहीं ठौर मिलता है उसके लिए
कैसी खुशी और शांति क्या
सांस्कृतिक अतीत के झमेले
जिस गौरव को उठाए फिरते हैं
मुझे पता है कि वह मेरे विरुद्ध है

पद्मासन कंदराएँ गुफाएँ और मुंदी आँखें
देखकर मेरी आँखें खुल गईं
युगों से चकाचौंध को मेरे लिए ही
आरक्षित करके रख दिया गया
मेरे लिए ही मूरत को छूने की मनाही है

क्या मेहनत करके मेरे हाथ अपवित्र हो गए हैं
मैं तुम्हारी धारणाओं पर धूल डालता हूँ।"⁶

दलित कवि वर्ण व्यवस्था के दंश से आहत होकर, उस व्यवस्था को कोसता है जिसने वर्ण बनाकर मानव को विभाजित करने का कार्य किया। चौथे वर्ण के मनुष्यों को सबसे निकृष्ट माना। यद्यपि सर्वाधिक श्रम एवं स्वच्छता संबंधी कार्य उसी से करवाया गया, उसे ही सबसे अपवित्र बनाकर रखा। जब चाहा उसे अपमानित किया, शारीरिक उत्पीड़न कर उसे दंडित किया। कवि उस व्यवस्था के विरुद्ध विरोधात्मक स्वर से उग्र होकर पूछता है कि वे कौन थे जिन्होंने हमें इस वर्ण व्यवस्था में कैद कर लिया। हमारी सहमति के बिना वे कौन थे जिनमें थोड़ी सी भी मानवता नहीं थी। हमारी जाति पर अछूत होने की मोहर लगाने वाले वे कौन थे, जिन्होंने वर्ण व्यवस्था बनाई? सदियों तक उस व्यवस्था को कायम रखा। उस धूर्त को ढूँढ रहा हूँ जिसने ये जात-पात, ऊंच-नीच की हीन भावना से अपने शास्त्रों में झूठी कहानी गढ़ी कि ब्रह्मा के मुख से ब्राह्मण, भुजाओं से क्षत्रिय, उदर से वैश्य और पैरों से शूद्रों को जन्म दिया था, फिर उसको इस संसार में स्त्री की आवश्यकता क्यों पड़ी ? कवि खन्ना प्रसाद अमीन निम्न पंक्तियों के माध्यम से इस पीड़ा को और अच्छे से व्यक्त करते हैं -

"वे कौन थे? जिन्होंने हमें इस वर्णव्यवस्था में कैद कर लिया
हमारी सहमति के बिना
वे कौन थे ?
जिनमें थोड़ी - सी भी मानवता नहीं थी
ठोक दी हमारी जाति पर 'अछूत'
होने की मुहर
वे कौन थे ?
जिन्होंने वर्णव्यवस्था बनाई शाश्वत
और सदियों तक शाश्वत रखते रहे, उस धूर्त को ढूँढ रहा हूँ
जिसने रची है जात-पात, ऊंच-नीच की हीन और संकीर्ण भावना
उसने अपने शास्त्रों में गढ़ी है
झूठी कहानी
ब्रह्मा के मुख से ब्राह्मण
उनकी भुजाओं से क्षत्रिय
उदर से वैश्य

और पैरों से शुद्रों को जन्म दिया था

फिर उसको इस संसार में स्त्री की आवश्यकता क्यों पड़ी?"⁷

स्त्री के व्यक्तित्व में कोमलता और सहानुभूति का गुण पुरुष से अधिक ही रहा है। युगों-युगांतर से उसके सम्मान को शब्द जालों में ही उलझा कर रखा गया। उसे देवी, जगत जननी, न जाने किन-किन अलंकरणों से अलंकृत किया गया किंतु सम्मान ! न तो उसे उच्च घरानों में प्राप्त हुआ, अति निम्न एवं मध्यवर्गीय परिवारों में तो वह दोहरे और तिहरे शोषण को झेलने की अभ्यस्त ही बनी रही। क्या कारण है कि उसे भोग-विलास की ही वस्तु बनाकर रखा गया ? वर्चस्ववादी एवं शारीरिक रूप से सुदृढ़ पुरुष ने उसे केवल भोगने एवं बच्चे पैदा करने का यंत्र ही समझा । उसे कभी भी वह सम्मान नहीं दिया गया जिसकी वह वास्तव में अधिकारिणी थी।

स्वातंत्र्योत्तर भारत में स्त्रियों ने अस्सी के दशक के बाद अपनी अनुभूति, वेदना, पीड़ा, खुशी को लेखनी के माध्यम से पाठकों तक पहुंचाने का प्रयास किया । स्त्री विमर्श ऐसा विमर्श है जिस विमर्श के माध्यम से महिला साहित्यकारों ने स्त्रियों की पीड़ा को उसके आनंद को पाठकों के सम्मुख रखा। ऐसा नहीं है कि इससे पूर्व स्त्रियों की समस्याओं एवं उपलब्धियों से संबंधित साहित्य नहीं रचा गया। स्त्रियों ने अपने अंतर्मन में घटित द्वंद्व को लेखनी के माध्यम से पाठकों तक संप्रेषित किया। सुशीला टाकभौरे ने 'युग चेतना' कविता में नारियों के अतुलनीय योगदान के माध्यम से अपनी बात स्पष्ट की है-

"यद्यपि मैं क्षुद्र हूँ,
नगण्य हूँ
मगर हूँ उसी परंपरा का अंश
जो कभी इतिहास के किसी पृष्ठ का अंश था।

एक ही स्थिति का अवलोकन करते-करते
मैं

उसी स्थिति में जीने लगी हूँ
और कुछ करने की, कुछ कहने की छटपटाहट - सी होने लगी है-
जैसे मैं गर्भशीला जन्म देना चाहती हूँ किसी सत्य को,
वेदना-संवेदना की राह से,
इतिहास पुरुष- अंश के अवतंश पीड़ा को, छटपटाहट को, मैं एक मां बनना चाहती हूँ!

प्रथम प्रसव के पीर कि
में उत्सुक हूँ
और उत्सुक है पूरा समाज,
मेरे माध्यम से वह अपना प्रस्फुटन देखना चाहता है।

में स्वपन बुन रही हूँ कई दिनों से,
उस नन्हे भवितव्य सत्य के लिए
जो उसे आच्छादित कर,
प्रेरित करेगा
एक नयी दिशा की ओर,
सुदूर पूर्व की ओर जहाँ प्रखर सूरज को-
आग के गोले को वह अपनी मुट्ठी में भर ले!"⁸

दलित वर्ग सामाजिक रीति-रिवाज जो कि कुरीतियों में बदल चुके हैं कायम रखने के लिए दिखावा करता है। झूठे प्रदर्शनों के कारण उसकी आर्थिकी डगमगा जाती है। वह दशकों तक कर्जदार बना रहता है। उसके रहने और खाने के स्तर में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं आता। कर्ज लेने के बाद वह समृद्ध लोगों को ही और समृद्ध करता रहता है। इस संबंध में कवित्री सुशीला टाकभौरे अपनी पीड़ा व्यक्त करती हुई शर्म महसूस करती हैं कि स्वतंत्रता मिलने के बाद भी दलित वर्ग के रहने के स्तर में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं आया है-

"जन्म-दिन, सगाई- ब्याह में
लुटाए धन
सीमा से अधिक खर्च।
फैलाते रहे हाथ फिर
जीवन भर अभाव में कस्कुट के बर्तन, झोपड़ी जैसे मकान, रह जाए अशिक्षित संतान,
वर्तमान पीढ़ी इक्कीसवीं सदी में अपनाएँ पूर्वजों के पुराने तुच्छ रोजगार, यह तुम नहीं हो
सकते-
यह तो शर्म की बात है।
डूबे रहे कर्ज में पसीने की कमाई
देते रहे ब्याज में चलता रहे
पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी कर्ज। उत्तराधिकारी रूप में लिखा दे नाम वंशजों का -
यह तुम नहीं हो सकते-
यह तो शर्म की बात है।"⁹

धार्मिक अंधापन, धार्मिक छलावा एवं रूढ़िवादिता के कारण दलित मंदिर में प्रवेश करने से नहीं रुकते जबकि मंदिर के पुजारियों द्वारा उनका सरेआम तिरस्कार किया जाता है। कुछ स्थानों पर उन्हें धक्के मार कर बाहर निकाला जाता है किंतु अज्ञानता के कारण दलित समाज के लोग अपना अपमान करवाने के लिए वहाँ डटे रहते हैं। उन्हें हिंदू कहा जाता है किंतु माना नहीं जाता। अन्य हिंदुओं की तरह सम्मान नहीं दिया जाता। इस संबंध में कर्मशील भारती ने ब्राह्मणवादी व्यवस्था पर करारी चोट की है -

"शूद्र

मंदिर के द्वार तक पहुँच ही जाता है। प्रवेश नहीं कर सकता।

मंदिर का तथाकथित पुजारी नाक भाँ सिकोड़ लेता है

भुजाएँ तन जाती हैं उसे रोकने के लिए। गालियों से स्वागत होता है

मूर्ति दर्शनाभिलाषी शूद्र का"¹⁰

हिंदी साहित्य में विविध विमर्शों के आने से एक नई शुरुआत हुई। समाज के कुछ ऐसे वर्ग हैं, जिनकी ओर कभी भी किसी का ध्यान नहीं गया। ऐसा ही एक वर्ग किन्नर वर्ग है। युगों- युगों से यह वर्ग उपेक्षा एवं तिरस्कार का ही पात्र बना रहा। कभी भी किसी ने इनकी पीड़ा के द्वन्द्व को समझने की कोशिश नहीं की। साहित्य में इस वर्ग द्वारा अपनी पीड़ा को व्यक्त करने के प्रयास के साथ - साथ अन्य साहित्यकारों द्वारा भी इनकी पीड़ा को महसूस करके लिखा गया। किन्नर विमर्श सभी वर्गों के विमर्श से भिन्न एवं पीड़ादायक है। अन्य विमर्शों में पीड़ितों का साथ उनके माता-पिता तो देते हैं किंतु किन्नर विमर्श एक ऐसा विमर्श है जिसमें पीड़ितों के माता-पिता भी अपने बच्चों को दुनिया के दलदल में धकेल देते हैं। इनके माता-पिता इनके साथ अपना नाम तक नहीं जोड़ना चाहते। कवि असंग घोष ने किन्नर की पीड़ा को अपनी कविता गद्दीनशीन किन्नर में स्पष्ट करने का प्रयास करते हैं -

"मेरे कस्बे में एक किन्नर रहती थी

सब उसे गफूरन भुआ के नाम से जानते थे

बात उन दिनों की है जब मैं बैंक की नौकरी में लगा ही था

गफूरन भुआ बैंक की उस शाखा में अपनी एक पासबुक

कुछ सावधि जमा रसीदें लेकर आयी

उसे जमा कराने थे खाते में कुछ नगद रुपए

देय हो चुकी फिक्स डिपॉजिट का नवीनीकरण करा

उस पर मिला ब्याज भी डलवाना था
 उसे इसी बचत बैंक खाते में
 तब देखा था मैंने उसकी पासबुक को
 उसमें गफूरन भुआ के पिता का नहीं
 बल्कि गुरु का नाम दर्ज था
 बाप के नाम की जगह
 'गुरुबख्श' "11

निष्कर्ष

हमारे स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों ने देश के नागरिकों के लिए स्वतंत्रता रूपी ऐसा उपहार दिया जिसे प्राप्त करके प्रत्येक नागरिक संविधान में दर्शाये गये अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता के अधिकार का पालन करते हुए अपनी बात को स्पष्ट अभिव्यक्त कर सका। हासोन्मुख समाज ने अपने सुख - दुख, यश - अपयश अपनी लेखनी के माध्यम से अभिव्यक्त करने आरंभ किए। इसी से यह संभव हो पाया कि हासोन्मुख समाज की पीड़ा का दर्द जन - जन को महसूस होने लगा। समाज का एक बहुत बड़ा वर्ग इससे अभिभूत हुआ। सरकारों तक किसी न किसी माध्यम से यह पीड़ा पहुँची। सरकार ने इसके निवारणार्थ नीतियाँ बनानी आरंभ की। यही स्वातंत्र्योत्तर भारत की बानगी बनी कि आज सभी को प्रदत्त समानता के अधिकार कार्यान्वित हो रहे हैं।

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The Self and the Imaginary: Journeys of Actualization in Fairy Tales

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This paper explores the journeys of self-actualization in the fantastic elements found in fairy tales, revealing how engagement with imaginary narratives influences perceptions of happiness in regards to one's own self through personal growth. By drawing upon the works of scholars such as Joseph Campbell and Clarissa Pinkola Estés and applying understandings gleaned thus on European fairy tales, it aims to examine the cultural and psychological dimensions of self-actualization affected by the imaginary elements discovered in these tales. Joseph Campbell's work on the expression of human experiences in the elements of myth provides a powerful framework to understand the transformative influence of such narratives, and Estés' work examines fairy tales to reveal the psychological dynamics of storytelling. Gleaning insights from the works of the above-mentioned scholars, the paper analyzes two fairy tales from Europe, namely, "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Cinderella", in order to portray the universal aspects of the imaginary elements which form a part of these tales. In doing so, it aims to uncover the ways in which these stories reflect and inspire an individual's journey towards actualizing the true potential of oneself through transformation. Through an interdisciplinary approach which integrates mythology and psychology with an analysis of fairy tales, the paper tries to deepen the understanding of the contribution of imaginary elements found in such tales to journeys of self-actualization. It therefore portrays the enduring relevance of fairy tales in fostering personal growth and a connection to the inner world of one's own mind.

Keywords: folklore, self-actualization, happiness, fantasy, identification

The imaginary realms of fairy tales are often intertwined with an in-depth exploration of the human psyche that often embarks on a journey of self-actualization. The elements of imagination inherent in such tales are not mere escapism in the sense of abandoning the realities of life for a realm of fantasy, but rather, they are a reflection on lived experiences prompting personal growth. Indeed, such elements are crafted from reality itself in order to reveal familiar experiences in a new light (Tolkien 147). The works of scholars such as Joseph Campbell and Clarissa Pinkkola Estés illuminate how engagement with imaginary narratives can influence perceptions of happiness in regards to one's own self. Campbell's study on the expression of human experiences in the elements of myth provides a powerful framework to understand the transformative influence of fairy tales on the self, while Estés' work on the healing potential of such narratives on the psyche further explores their capacity for self-awareness and actualization. This paper employs the work of these scholars in order to analyze two iconic fairy tales from Europe, namely, "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Cinderella." In doing so, it portrays the universal aspects of the imaginary elements which form a part of these tales, and aims to uncover the ways in which these stories reflect and inspire an individual's journey towards actualizing the true potential of one's own self.

Through his concept of the monomyth, more commonly termed as "the hero's journey," Campbell highlights the universal purport of fairy tales on one's psyche, and posits how it is portrayed in these tales through adventure as several of its elements can be said to repeat throughout these tales in the journey of growth and transformation. The symbols of mythology, he contends, cannot be manufactured, ordered, invented or permanently suppressed, as they are the spontaneous productions of the psyche, each bearing within it the undamaged germ power of its source (4). Thus, they offer a firm groundwork for the portrayal of human experiences, leading to self-exploration and consequently actualization and personal growth. Citing several tales from various mythologies, he demonstrates how small blunders of daily life, such as a child losing her ball in "The Frog King" from *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, herald the representative of a fantastic world, in this case a frog. This is a call to adventure, a call to the awakening of the self-stemming from the realization that the old ideals, concepts and emotional patterns

do not fit as it is time for the passing of a threshold. The realization necessitates the adventure in question, that is, a rite of passage leading to transformation (51). However, leaving the old and familiar behind is not easy. Therefore, the herald, the representative of that other world, is often dark, loathsome, or terrifying, judged to be evil, but if followed, it leads one through light and into the unilluminated dark where the jewels glow (Campbell 53). At the moment of the call, it is much too tempting to refuse it owing to that loathsome appearance which hints at danger. But if it is done, the power of significant affirmative action is lost, and the subject becomes a victim of oneself, walled in one's own boredom, harassed by a monster which is in actuality the image of one's own imprisoned, victimized self (Campbell 59, 61). Only the undertaking of the adventure can lead to transformation and self-actualization.

Campbell's above-mentioned concepts and insights can be used to analyze the iconic tale of "Jack and the Beanstalk," as the concept of the monomyth applies to it as well. The tale indeed begins with a crisis. Milky-White, the family cow, who had sustained Jack and his mother on her milk, cannot provide for them anymore, and Jack is hinted to be unproductive as no one would give him work either. Hence, a drastic change is required in him. And soon enough, his call to adventure arrives, heralded in the form of an old man who offers him a risky bargain; his cow in exchange for the magic beans. As he accepts, his decision serves as a catalyst for his psychological journey towards personal growth, symbolized by his journey into the fantastical realm to which the stalk leads.

Christine Goldberg points out how this is not a stately cosmic tree, but a beanstalk, a plant which cannot even support its own weight, making climbing one seem absurd. However, she continues, fairy tales often have influences from old superstitions, and beans, particularly in Pythagoreanism, were said to contain the souls of the dead which thus linked them to another realm (16). Hence, the appearance of the stalk disrupts Jack's ordinary existence, calling him to adventure in that other realm of revelations and challenges where the giant lives, a realm different from his familiar, easy world.

The old man who bartered for the beans may not have been fearsome or repulsive, but the giant whom Jack encounters certainly is, bringing Campbell's insights

pertaining to the appearance of the monster to mind. It is time for the passing of a threshold, as Jack is no longer safe in the giant's realm or at his home just down the beanstalk. His lazy emotional patterns must change. The monstrous man-eating giant represents Jack's inner fears and limitations, and although the boy may not have been strong enough to confront him directly, he does learn to trick him in order to steal his treasures, and thereby conquer the trials and obstacles inherent in his own mind. As Jack becomes productive in his own way, his family becomes wealthy, until the time comes for the giant to be defeated one last time, symbolizing the final trial which he must complete to achieve his final transformation from the boy he had been earlier.

But what about the tale of Cinderella, much of which consists of the passive awaiting of events to pass? As Eliza Claudia Filimon puts it, in the patriarchal order, waiting is the privilege of the female and a good female should take no action to get what she wants but wait quietly for the opportunities to come to her, a principle which Cinderella's tale illustrates quite clearly (132). Where is the journey inherent in it? Indeed, there is none, and why is that so? The answer lies in understanding that folkloric tales, of which fairy tales are a part, change over time. As Barre Toelken explains, folklore often consists of expressions which employ culture-based interactive codes and formulas (47). In other words, as culture changes over time, folklore does too, along with its contexts. Toelken compares this dynamism inherent in folklore to biological evolution. When an animal is being referenced, it is not being referenced in terms of one single, original specimen, but in terms of a theoretical prototype, conveniently conceptualized as constituting the most commonly recurrent elements in the widest range of that animal species. In a similar manner, there is no original folk ballad or tale, as these have evolved over time and have become variegated, just retaining enough similar characteristics in general so as not to be easily confused with another (47). Such changes are explained by Estés as well. She points out how cultural overlays disarray the central core of fairy tales which often results in erasure of insights to the psyche contained within. Referring to the Grimm brothers, she cites the suspicion regarding their retellings in which the informants may have purified the retold stories owing to the brothers' religious background. Furthermore, the brothers may have situated old pagan symbols in those tales in

their Christianized culture, overlaying the narratives with their own cultural symbols. As a result, most old collections of fairy tales and myths existent today have been scoured clean of the scatological, the sexual, the perverse, the pre-Christian, and the feminine, losing their exploration into women's mysteries, that is, their insights on the journey towards personal growth and the understanding of life (16). Such, perhaps, is the case for "Cinderella", as it seems to have lost whatever journey to the self it contained. Rather, it depicts a tale in which the heroine is rewarded or punished in accordance with how well she behaves to fit the feminine pattern (Filimon 131).

But what can be done about it? Estés describes a method of reconstruction for engaging with such tales, in which she compares many versions of a tale, examining their forms and using her knowledge of archetypal patterns to reconstruct the expression of the instinctual human life (16). It is easy to tell, she contends, what may be missing from the central core of such stories as such gaps are often caused by cultural overlays happening due to conquests, or peaceful or forced religious conversions. However, in keeping with her background in Jungian psychology, she emphasizes that reconstructions are still possible by recognizing the archetypal patterns and filling in the gaps thus (17).

Another way of engaging with such narratives is by using a feminist approach to situate them in contemporary culture, and indeed, some authors have already done so. Such tales, as Filimon points out, provide the readers with an opportunity to understand the inner psyche of a female which is usually overlooked in traditional fairy tales (133). In order to illustrate her argument, she provides the example of "The Moon Ribbon" by Jane Yolen, which is a retelling of Cinderella's tale, but revised from a feminist view. The situation of this tale's protagonist, Sylva, is exactly the same as that of Cinderella, as she too finds herself harassed by a cruel stepmother and her two stepsisters (Yolen 1, 3). However, there is no fairy godmother to rescue her, or the prince, for that matter. Rather, the story deals with Sylva's personal growth, as she learns to take an active part in her own affairs as well as to confront her harassers.

In this text, the journey to self-actualization is provided by a ribbon left to Sylva by her dead mother, one woven from the hair of her mother and other female

ancestors, thereby symbolizing her ancestral path to personal growth (Yolen 1). This ribbon forms the central element of the story which reveals the path to one's instinctual self (Estés 6). Estés describes how this path to the instinctual self lies in finding the connection to one's own psyche and intuition by reconnecting with one's ancestral wisdom (29). Indeed, the ribbon depicts this all too well. In a similar manner, it can be said to herald Sylva's call for adventure as its discovery is corelated by the beginning of the fantastical elements that symbolize her psychological journey (Campbell 51). Sure enough, it represents that journey first in the form of a river which carries Sylva to a silent, scentless meadow (Yolen 4, 5). The river and the landscape, appearing as if in a dream, portray the inert, passive state of her mind. But as Sylva's experiences transform her, prompting her to be active, the river changes to a road which she must walk on her own, and the meadow to a one filled with the smell of flowers and the song of the birds, representing Sylva's present vitality, her return to life (Filimon 135). Thus, the road which the ribbon reveals, symbolizing the journey of Sylva's mind, causes her to transform on the path to achieving her full potential. The journey she undertakes mirrors the process of reconnecting with her ancestral roots and therefore learning to navigate her psyche, the inner world of her mind on the path to self-realization, as described by Estés.

Yolen's reimagining of Cinderella's tale portrays how traditional fairy tales can be reinterpreted from a feminist viewpoint, thereby removing their previous cultural overlay to represent a path to self-actualization where women are concerned. As a result, a tale rewarding passivity becomes that which rewards active participation in a journey of self-discovery. Thus, by reclaiming ancestral wisdom and therefore one's instinctual self, as Estés describes, Sylva's story illustrates the empowering journey that women can embark upon to discover their full potential and achieve personal growth.

In conclusion, the exploration of fairy tales such as "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Cinderella" through Campbell's concept of monomyth and Estés work on women's psychology illuminates the impact of imaginary narratives on human psyche and self-actualization. Campbell's framework depicts how these tales encapsulate universal themes of growth and transformation through the hero's journey, one which symbolically mirrors the inner journey of self-discovery and

personal growth. Furthermore, Estés work on women's psychology enriches our understanding of such narratives in reclaiming ancestral wisdom and instinctual knowledge. It also reveals how fairy tales are not static, but change over time through cultural influences reflecting different societal values, as Toelken also explains. Hence, they often must be either reconstructed or reimagined in order to remodel the path to self that it has the potential to depict. More often than not, the tales which must be reinterpreted thus concern female protagonists, perpetuating traditional gender roles and encouraging passivity in women, and hence authors such as Yolen have used a feminist approach to retell them, situating them in a contemporary context and culture, and therefore remaking a journey of the self in regards to women's psyche.

Essentially, the exploration of fairy tales transcends mere entertainment or escapism, as emphasized by Tolkien. It helps in the exploration of one's own inner identity, encouraging one to confront inner demons by embarking on a transformative journey of self-discovery. Whether analyzed by Campbell's monomyth or Estés work on the female psyche, fairy tales depict the empowerment which can inspire an individual by encouraging self-actualization to navigate the challenges of life and strive towards personal growth and fulfillment. These timeless narratives reveal the enduring power of storytelling in the shaping of one's understanding of the world and oneself, thereby highlighting the impact of imaginary narratives on human psyche and self-actualization.

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A Study of the Impact of Emotional labour on Job Satisfaction of Solopreneurs and Managers

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Background: Emotional Labour is the process by which when a person is involved in the process of direct interaction with the customer, they may be able to regulate their own emotions so that the objectives of the organization can be achieved.

Aim: The study's goal was to investigate the relationship between managers' and Solopreneurs' feelings of emotional labour and job satisfaction. The level of satisfaction among managers and a group of independent creative workers (Solopreneurs) coping the stressors brought on by economic precarity is also explored in this research.

Methodology: A survey was conducted with the help of structured questionnaires on Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among 210 Managers and 55 Solopreneurs from various organizations.

Results: Results revealed that there is a negative correlation between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among Managers and Solopreneurs, which ultimately will lead to stress. Also, the relation between EL and JS is statistically significant in both the categories of personnel's.

Conclusion: Without a doubt, implementing emotional labour will benefit organisations because it will result in customer satisfaction and ultimately aid to improve the organization's reputation. However, the front desk executives—both managers and Solopreneurs—who oversee the job and staff were not recognised by these rewards. This causes individuals to feel more stressed and less satisfied with their jobs.

Keywords: emotional labour, managers, solopreneurs, job satisfaction, stress, front desk executives.

In the world of business, the people who are most successful are those who are doing what they love.
Warren Buffett

Introduction

The significance of passion and enjoyment in the service industry is emphasised by this quotation from eminent investor Warren Buffett. When workers in the service sector are passionate about what they do, they are much more inclined to deliver great service, go above and beyond, and have a good effect on the people they serve. But will this happen in the real world? That's a big question. Delivering the best service by portraying actual emotions is a challenging job.

As economies continue to transition from manufacturing-based economies to service-based economies (Aung and Tewogbola, 2019), the extent of emphasis given to the performance of services has increased in the contemporary world (Kaur and Malodia, 2017). In the service sector, front desk executives, often referred to as front desk officers, receptionists, or customer service agents, are frequently customers' or clients' first point. They are in charge of running the organization's front desk or reception area, taking care of numerous administrative duties, and helping out clients or guests. Without a doubt, front desk staff members in the service industry are essential to providing first-rate customer care, fostering great client relationships, and keeping processes running smoothly. Their competence, interpersonal skills, and multitasking abilities are crucial for the efficient operation of service industry organisations.

Most of us value receiving a smile and a warm welcome along with our beverage, food, or hotel room key, but can we acknowledge that as labour? As more and more employment in the service sector takes the place of jobs in industry and manufacturing, a growing number of employees have explicit job specifications that include displaying positive emotions (e.g., "service with a smile": Grandey and Sayre, 2019).

Employees perform emotional labour whenever they contact with customers in a range of service organisations, including hotels, banks, hospitals, airports,

supermarkets, call centres, and classrooms (Chen, Chang and Wang, 2019). Additionally, despite the fact that the service industry is frequently seen as the epicentre of emotional labour study, many scholars believe that emotional labour is a crucial aspect of any work involving interactions with others (Diefendorff, Richard and Croyle, 2006). Therefore, a large portion of the existing workforce can be described using the concepts of emotional labour.

The service sector for the current research is studied from the point of view of Managers and Solopreneurs.

Emotional labour

Arlie Hochschild, a sociologist, first developed the concept of emotional labour in her book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983). It was subsequently thoroughly studied and investigated in a variety of domains including sociology, psychology, organisational behaviour, social science and gender studies. Emotional labour is the effort and energy that people put in to handling and controlling the feelings they experience in interactions with other people, especially in the environment associated with their work. It entails concealing or exhibiting certain feelings in accordance with social standards and organisational rules, frequently in order to meet consumer or client needs. This labour may necessitate persons displaying good feelings, such as friendliness and attentiveness, even if they do not actually feel that way.

Emotional labour is defined as, “the degree of manipulation of one’s inner feelings or outward behaviour to display the appropriate emotion in response to display rules or occupational norms” (Maini and Chugh, 2012).

Brunetto Y. et al. (2022) conducted a research in which they explore the influence of emotional work and organisational psychological support on the performance of employees. The research project analyses data from 220 Italian authorities and 228 English police personnel using Structural Equation Modelling. It was revealed that poor Perceived Organisational Support (POS) when showing needed emotions results in high stress, which then compromises employees' resilience and possibly discourages them from engaging on their place of employment. Furthermore, it was determined that organisational support constitutes an essential

component for dealing with emotional labour.

It is said that emotional labour is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it can facilitate work completion by managing interactions and prohibiting conflicts between two or more people. On the other hand, it might degrade performance by setting unrealistic expectations for good service.

Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is achieved by ensuring that the rewards obtained from the job are balanced with the expectations and work outcomes (Mason and Gryphon, 2002; Wright, 2006). Job satisfaction is defined by Akgunduz and Eser (2020) and Heimerl et al. (2020) as an individual's degree of contentment with their place of employment. According to Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2009), job satisfaction is determined by an amalgam of people's actual workplace environments and their personal assessments of work.

According to the literature, emotional labour is inversely associated with job satisfaction, as proposed by Kinman et al. (2011), Kaur and Malodia (2017). However, there is a mixed reaction when focussed on dimensions of emotional work, namely surface acting and deep acting. Some studies demonstrate a positive (Pandey and Singh, 2016), a negative (Wu et al. 2018, Fouquereau et al. 2019, Saini and Singh 2020) or no correlation (Lee 2019, Gulsen and Ozmen, 2020).

In present study the emphasis was given on managers and solopreneurs and efforts were done to investigate the relationship between the job satisfaction of managers and solopreneurs and various emotional labour strategies.

Objective of the study

The study was conducted with the motive to examine the association between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among Managers and Solopreneurs.

Method

Participants

The sample includes 265 respondents including 210 Managers and 55 Solopreneurs from Ludhiana, Chandigarh and Delhi ranging in age from 25 to 60 years old. The participants had to be involved in some sort of interaction with

consumer's task in order to participate in the study. Gender was not included in the current investigation for the goal of analysing any kind of conclusion.

Measures

- **Emotional Labour Scale:** To quantify Emotional Labour and its dimensions The Brotheridge and Lee (2003) scale was employed. Frequency, Intensity, Variety, Deep Acting, Surface Acting, and Duration are the six dimensions covered for better analysis.
- **Job Satisfaction Scale:** The Michigan Organisational Assessment Questionnaire for Job Satisfaction created by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979) was utilised for the present research. The results on this rating system are obtained by assigning reverse codes to the first question and then taking the mean of all.

Procedure

- The goal of the study was fully explained to the Solopreneurs and Managers, and comprehensive guidance on the questionnaire statements was provided to them. The respondents' confidentiality was respected.

Results

While conducting the analysis, Emotional Labour is considered as an independent variable and Job Satisfaction is taken as a dependent variable. This clearly shows the effect of Emotional Labour on Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an emotion expressed by service providers whether it may be Solopreneurs or Managers that explains their response to job completion. Hopkins (1983) defines job satisfaction as the fulfilment or peace of certain earnings related to the job one has. While interacting with clients, any service providers must express a variety of emotions. According to studies on Emotional Labour, the degree of Job Satisfaction changes with the voicing of viewpoints. So, based on the opinions of several researchers, the hypotheses framed are:

Hypothesis (Ho1): There is no significant relation between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among Solopreneurs and Managers.

Hypothesis (Ho2): Emotional Labour has no significant impact on Job Satisfaction of Solopreneurs and Managers.

Table 1 explains the mean and standard deviation of Emotional Labour as 51.47 and 6.048 and of Job Satisfaction it is 4.17 and 1.04 respectively from a sample of 265 respondents (210 Managers and 55 Solopreneurs)

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Emotional Labour	51.47	6.048	265
Job Satisfaction	4.171069182389937	1.039660446540787	265

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction

Correlations

		Job Satisfaction	Emotional Labour
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.230
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.092
	N	55	55
Emotional Labour	Pearson Correlation	.230	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.092	
	N	55	55

Table 2: Correlation between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among Solopreneurs

Table 2 depicts the relationship between the Emotional labour and Job Satisfaction among Solopreneurs and it reveals that there is a positive association between the two among Solopreneurs. The findings were congruent with those of Elganas and Shephard (2019).

Correlations

		Emotional Labour	Job Satisfaction
Emotional Labour	Pearson Correlation	1	-.435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	210	210
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	210	210

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Correlation between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among Managers

Table 3 clearly demonstrates a negative association between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among Managers. It means that with the increase in the adoption of Emotional Labour the level of Job Satisfaction decreases. The findings agreed with Kim and Lee (2104) and Lee and Hawang (2016).

So, it is apparent that Managers, when working for their boss, may show dissatisfaction in their work if they are pushed to express the needed emotions, whereas Solopreneurs, as the firm's owner, demonstrates a good degree of Satisfaction while altering their emotions.

Correlations

		Emotional Labour	Job Satisfaction
Emotional Labour	Pearson Correlation	1	-.364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	265	265
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.364**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	265	265

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3a: Correlation between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among Solopreneurs and Managers

In Table 3a the sample of Solopreneurs and Managers were taken collectively and it demonstrates a negative correlation coefficient of -0.364 between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction. This negative value represents that when a Solopreneur or Manager employs emotional labour while communicating with customers, the degree of Job Satisfaction decreases. This association has a p-value of 0.00. Because the value of p is less than that of alpha this indicates that there is a significant relationship between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction.

Regression analysis is a statistical tool used to explore the link between the dependent variable (DV), which is Job Satisfaction, and the independent variable (IV), which is Emotional Labour.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.364 ^a	.132	.129	.970234531087379

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Labour

b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary: R, R², and adjusted value of R² are provided by Model Summary. R² is known as the coefficient of determination and its value in the table is 0.132. This demonstrates that the Independent variable (Emotional Labour) may explain 13.2% of the variance in the dependent variable (Job Satisfaction).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.780	1	37.780	40.133	.000 ^b
	Residual	247.576	263	.941		
	Total	285.356	264			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Labour

Table 5: ANOVA between Job Satisfaction and Emotional Labour

ANOVA: The F value is 40.133, and the p-value is 0.00, according to the ANOVA table (Table 3). We can reject the hypotheses and conclude that Emotional Labour has a significant impact on Job Satisfaction because the p-value is less than the value of alpha.

As a result, we reject our null hypothesis and conclude that the model is significant ($F(1, 263) = 40.133$ $p = 0.00$).

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.390	.512		14.444	.000
	Emotional Labour	-.063	.010	-.364	-6.335	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 6: Coefficient table between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction

Coefficients: As a result, the coefficient table (Table 4) reveals that the slope is -0.063 and the intercept is 7.390.

So, $y = (-0.063)x + 7.390$ i.e. $y = ax + b$

In the table, the t value is 14.444 and the p-value is 0.00, which is less than the value of alpha (0.05).

As a result, we reject our null hypothesis (Ho2) and find that Emotional Labour affects Job Satisfaction.

The current study's findings were also validated by Zapf et al. (1999). Emotional labour has a considerable impact on job satisfaction; according to Celik P. and Topsakal Y. (2016). The results were also supported by Pugleisi K. (1999), Kinman G., Wray S. and Strange C. (2011).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to look at the effect of Emotional Labour on Job Satisfaction in Solopreneurs and Managers. It was discovered that there is an

unfavourable relationship between DV and IV, implying that when collectively, Solopreneurs and Managers employ Emotional Labour as a tool for influencing behaviour while engaging with customers, the level of Job Satisfaction drops. The findings also show that Emotional Labour has an immense effect on Job Satisfaction. Furthermore, the p-value is 0.00, which is smaller than the alpha value of 0.05, indicating that Emotional Labour has substantial effects on Job Satisfaction.

According to the literature, the implementation of Emotional Labour by companies that provide services has favourable benefits for their organisations. This results in client satisfaction and, as a result, contributes to the organization's favourable reputation. However, just as every coin has two sides, Emotional Labour is a two-edged sword. It fails to recognise the contributions of a vital resource, the human being. So, whether the service provider is a Solopreneur or a Manager if he is dissatisfied with his job environment, he might lose enthusiasm in his firm, resulting in Emotional fatigue and Pressure. These unfavourable results not only affect the way he performs but also lower team spirit.

As a result, every service sector employee who interacts with clients must apply tactics that aid in enhancing motivation and recognising new market niches while interacting.

Acknowledgement

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the responders (Solopreneurs and Managers) from various organisations that assisted in filling out the survey questionnaire.

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समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना का सच एवं उसकी चुनौतियाँ

रितु गुप्ता
असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर
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समकालीन हिंदी आलोचना को अपनी सार्थकता अर्जित करने और सही दिशा में विकास करने के लिए इस प्रश्न पर विचार करना आवश्यक है कि आलोचना किसके लिए है? आलोचना समकालीन रचनाकारों के लिए है या सामान्य पाठकों के लिए या दोनों के लिए? आलोचना को केवल छात्रोपयोगी होना चाहिए या व्यापक जनसमुदाय के लिए भी? कहीं ऐसा तो नहीं है कि आलोचना केवल दूसरे आलोचकों के लिए लिखी जा रही है। ऐसी आलोचना से रचनात्मक लेखन का कुछ बनने बिगड़ने वाला नहीं है। अगर ऐसा ही रहा तो आलोचना की प्रासंगिकता ही खतरे में पड़ जायेगी। आधुनिक समय में समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना की सबसे बड़ी चुनौती है वातावरण का असाहित्यिक होना। कहने के लिए तो तमाम किताबें, साहित्यिक पत्रिकाएँ प्रकाशित हो रही हैं। आए दिन पुस्तक विमोचन, लोकार्पण, गोष्ठियाँ, सम्मान-पुरस्कार आदि होते रहते हैं। सामर्थ्य के अनुसार आलोचक जुटाए जाते हैं। वह किताब के बारे में नहीं लेखक के बारे में बोलता है। अच्छी जगह पर आयोजन सम्पन्न होते हैं। मीडिया में यथासंभव 'हाइलाइट' करने की कोशिश होती है। बावजूद इन प्रयासों के पूछा जा सकता है कि कितने उस रचना का पाठ करते हैं। ऐसी स्थिति में आलोचना की स्वस्थ परंपरा कैसे निर्मित होगी?

बीज शब्द: विमोचन, चेतना, सर्जन, सृजन, भोक्ता, संवेदना, प्रमाण, प्रतिक्रिया, प्रतिभा, दृष्टि, अभिव्यक्ति, चुनौती, सामंजस्य

समकालीन का अर्थ है- 'एक समय में रहने या होने वाला' अर्थात् एक समय में घटित होने वाली। समकालीन आलोचना की विशेषता यह रही है कि वह रचना या कृति को उसकी समग्रता में देखने व परखने की पक्षधर रही है। समकालीन आलोचना अस्तित्ववाद

की सीमाओं का अतिक्रमण करते हुए समाज और सौंदर्य की नवीन धारणाओं का स्वागत व उनका समर्थन करती है। समकालीन आलोचना में काफी वैविध्य है, लेकिन आलोचकों में अपने आग्रह, विचार और विविधता के बावजूद यह कोशिश दिखाई देती है कि अंतर्वस्तु और रचना-शिल्प की दृष्टि से एक समावेशी और समेकित आलोचना दृष्टि का विकास किया जा सके। साहित्यकार समाज में प्रचलित स्वरूप को व्यक्त किये बिना नहीं रह सकता। इस प्रकार तत्कालीन साहित्य को प्रभावित करने का श्रेय समकालीनता को ही है। निस्संदेह हम यह कह सकते हैं कि साहित्य में समकालीनता का अत्यंत महत्व है। समकालीन यथार्थ का चित्रात्मक स्वरूप ही साहित्य है। समकालीन विसंगतियों का व्यंग्य-विद्रूप साहित्य की विशेषता है। साहित्य का समकालीन परिस्थितियों से गहरा संबंध है।

आलोचना पर विचार करते हुए रमेश दवे लिखते हैं कि “आलोचना सृजन में अर्थ का अन्वेषण है। एक सर्जक किसी भी रचना को जो रूप, आकार, विचार और कल्पना देता है, आलोचना उन्हें इनकी कसौटी पर कसती है। फिर इनके बीच प्रयुक्त शब्द, वाक्य-संरचना, शिल्प, प्रतीक, बिम्ब, लय, ध्वनि आदि का विश्लेषण करती है। आलोचना सर्जक और पाठक में ऐसा भेद-अभेद उत्पन्न करती है कि वे रचना की शक्ति और रचना की कमियों को पहचानने लगते हैं। वह भावुकता की भूमि पर खड़ी होकर फैसले नहीं देती, बल्कि रचना की आंतरिक काया में प्रवेश कर एक नयी अर्थ-दृष्टि का आविष्कार करती हैं।”¹

हिन्दी आलोचना का आरम्भ प्रभावात्मक आलोचना से होता है। किसी भी रचना के अंतस्तल तक पहुँचने वाली दृष्टि को आलोचना कहते हैं। आलोचना रचनाकार के उद्देश्य और दृष्टि को समाज तक सही ढंग से प्रस्तुत करती है। रचना को उसके सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक आदि संदर्भों में देखना आलोचना का काम है। यह काम तभी संपन्न हो सकता है जब दृष्टि हो और दृष्टि दोष न हो। आज की हिन्दी आलोचना संकट के दौर से गुजर रही है। फिर भी अपने विकासक्रम में विवेचनात्मक आलोचना स्वयं को सर्जनात्मक बनाए जाने का उपक्रम करती है। वस्तुतः आलोचना रचना और पाठक के बीच सेतु का काम करती है। आलोचना का अध्ययन करते हुए पाठक उन सभी परिस्थितियों से गुजरता है, जिनसे गुजर कर रचनाकार रचना को मूर्त रूप देता है। सामान्य अर्थ में आलोचना रचना का समग्र मूल्यांकन है।

हिन्दी की सैद्धान्तिक समीक्षा औपचारिक रूप से भारतेंदु युग में शुरू हुई किंतु इससे पूर्व भक्तिकाल और रीतिकाल से ही समीक्षा के बीज दिखाई पड़ते हैं। हिन्दी में शुद्ध व्यावहारिक आलोचना का सूत्रपात भारतेन्दु युग में गद्य के विकास के साथ-साथ प्राप्त होता है। उनके समय हिन्दी आलोचना का आरंभ पत्र-पत्रिकाओं के माध्यम से हुआ। 'हरिश्चंद्र मैगजीन', 'हिंदी प्रदीप', आनंद कादम्बिनी' आदि मुख्य पत्रिकाएँ थी जिनमें पुस्तकों की समीक्षाएँ प्रकाशित होती थी। यद्यपि इस दौर में हिन्दी आलोचना इतनी परिपक्व नहीं थी फिर भी पत्र-पत्रिकाओं में प्रकाशित होने वाली इन आलोचनाओं ने हिन्दी आलोचना को एक नयी दिशा देने का काम किया। हिन्दी की आरंभिक आलोचना के योगदान पर टिप्पणी करते हुए विश्वनाथ त्रिपाठी कहते हैं, "वस्तुतः हिन्दी आलोचना का विकास पश्चिम की नकल पर नहीं बल्कि अपने साहित्य को समझने एवं उसकी उपादेयता पर विचार करने के लिए हुआ।"²

द्विवेदीयुगीन आलोचना भी पत्र-पत्रिकाओं के माध्यम से विकसित हुई। महावीर प्रसाद द्विवेदी इस युग के सर्वाधिक प्रमुख आलोचक रहे जिन्होंने सैद्धांतिक पक्ष में इतिवृत्तात्मकता और नैतिक-आदर्शवादी मान्यताओं को अत्यधिक महत्त्व दिया। हिन्दी में विशुद्ध आलोचना का सूत्रपात शुक्ल युग में हुआ। उनकी आलोचना एवं साहित्यिक दृष्टि वैज्ञानिक, प्रगतिशील एवं इहलौकिक है। विकासवादी दृष्टिकोण को आधार बनाकर वे कहते हैं कि हमें अपने अतीत से प्रेरणा लेकर आगे के विकास के लिए मार्ग प्रशस्त करना चाहिए। वे बुद्धि और हृदय का संयोजन करके आलोचना कर्म में प्रवृत्त होते हैं। स्वयं शुक्लजी के शब्दों में "हमारे हिन्दी साहित्य में समालोचना पहले-पहल केवल गुण-दोष-दर्शन के रूप में प्रकट हुई।"³ उन्होंने आलोचना में रचनाकार के साथ-साथ रचना के महत्त्व को स्थापित किया। गुण-दोष से आगे बढ़कर कवियों की विशेषताओं एवं अंतःवृत्तियों पर ध्यान दिया। उन्होंने केवल 'साहित्य' ही नहीं पढ़ा बल्कि साहित्य के स्रोत जीवन को भी पढ़ा। इसी युग में छायावादी साहित्य अपने चरम पर था जिस पर नन्ददुलारे वाजपेयी, शांतिप्रिय द्विवेदी जैसे आलोचकों ने काम किया। कृष्णशंकर शुक्ल, आचार्य विश्वनाथ प्रसाद मिश्र, डॉ. रामकुमार वर्मा, लक्ष्मीनारायण सुधांशु, सुमित्रानंदन पंत, सूर्यकांत त्रिपाठी 'निराला' आदि इस युग के अन्य प्रमुख आलोचक रहे। शुक्लोत्तर आलोचकों में नन्ददुलारे वाजपेयी, आचार्य हजारीप्रसाद द्विवेदी और डॉ. नगेन्द्र मुख्य हैं। हिंदी आलोचना को जो प्रौढ़ता और सुव्यवस्था आचार्य शुक्ल ने प्रदान की उसे आगे ले

जाने का चुनौतीपूर्ण कार्य नन्ददुलारे वाजपेयी, हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी और डॉ. नगेन्द्र ने किया। शिवदान सिंह चौहान, प्रकाश चन्द्र गुप्त, रामविलास शर्मा, रांगेय राघव और नामवर सिंह प्रमुख प्रगतिवादी आलोचक रहे हैं। इन आलोचकों ने शुक्लजी की कई मान्यताओं का तर्कपूर्ण ढंग से खंडन किया। उनकी धारणाओं पर गंभीर और तीव्र प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त की।

आचार्य हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी ने अपने गहन अध्ययन और तर्कों से आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल की कई मान्यताओं का खंडन किया। उनके संपूर्ण साहित्य के केन्द्र में मनुष्य और समाज रहा है। वह साहित्य को सामाजिक संदर्भों में देखने और परखने के पक्षधर हैं। वे लिखते हैं कि “मैं साहित्य को मनुष्य की दृष्टि से देखने का पक्षपाती हूँ। जो वाग्जाल मनुष्य को दुर्गति, हीनता, परमुखापेक्षिता से बचा न सके, जो उसकी आत्मा को तेजोद्दीप्त न बना सके, जो उसके हृदय को परदुःखकातर और संवेदनशील न बना सके, उसे साहित्य कहने में मुझे संकोच होता है।”⁴ डॉ. रामविलास शर्मा प्रगतिशील आलोचना के प्रतिनिधि आलोचक हैं। रामविलास शर्मा ने हिंदी साहित्य को वैचारिक कठमुल्लेपन से बाहर निकाला और मार्क्सवादी दृष्टिकोण से हिंदी साहित्य की पुनर्व्याख्या की। प्रगतिशील साहित्य का आरंभिक साहित्यिक संस्कार देने में उनकी ऐतिहासिक भूमिका है। उन्होंने हिन्दी-भाषा और साहित्य की गौरवशाली परंपराओं का अनुसंधान करते हुए नवीन आलोचना दृष्टि का विकास किया। उन्होंने लिखा, “प्राचीन साहित्य के मूल्यांकन में हमें मार्क्सवाद से यह सहायता मिलती है कि हम उसकी विषय-वस्तु और कलात्मक सौन्दर्य को ऐतिहासिक दृष्टि से देखकर उनका उचित मूल्यांकन कर सकते हैं।”⁵ डॉ. नगेन्द्र रसवादी आलोचक हैं। हिन्दी की प्रगतिशील आलोचना को सक्रिय आंदोलन के रूप में आगे बढ़ाने का काम डॉ. नामवर सिंह ने किया। विरोधियों की सर्जनशीलता को स्वीकार करने में भी वह हिचकते नहीं हैं। वे रचना की प्रकृति एवं तात्कालिक प्रसंग-संदर्भ के अनुसार लेखकों का मूल्यांकन-विश्लेषण करते हैं। रमेश दवे के अनुसार अभी हिन्दी में प्रवचनीय या वाचिक आलोचना जैसा तो कोई मुहावरा बना नहीं फिर भी “संगोष्ठियों की आलोचना ऐसी ही आलोचना है, जिसे प्रवचनीय आलोचना या वाचिकता का वाणी-विलास कहा जा सकता है।”⁶

आधुनिक समय में समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना की सबसे बड़ी चुनौती है वातावरण का असाहित्यिक होना। कहने के लिए तो तमाम किताबें, साहित्यिक पत्रिकाएँ प्रकाशित हो

रही हैं। आए दिन पुस्तक विमोचन, लोकार्पण, गोष्ठियाँ, सम्मान- पुरस्कार आदि होते रहते हैं। सामर्थ्य के अनुसार आलोचक जुटाए जाते हैं। वह किताब के बारे में नहीं लेखक के बारे में बोलता है। अच्छी जगह पर आयोजन सम्पन्न होते हैं। मीडिया में यथासंभव 'हाइलाइट' करने की कोशिश होती है। बावजूद इन प्रयासों के पूछा जा सकता है कि कितने उस रचना का पाठ करते हैं। ऐसी स्थिति में आलोचना की स्वस्थ परंपरा कैसे निर्मित होगी?

हिन्दी आलोचना को लेकर सबसे बड़ी चिंता है कि यहाँ सैद्धांतिक बहसों का अभाव न के बराबर है। आचार्य शुक्ल से लेकर 'शीतांशु' जी तक ने सैद्धांतिक और व्यावहारिक आलोचना के बीच अद्भुत समन्वय बनाए रखने का प्रयास किया है।

हिन्दी आलोचना सम्राट आ. रामचन्द्र शुक्ल के उत्तराधिकारी डॉ. नामवर सिंह जी ने अपने लेखन, भाषण और आलोचना पत्रिका के सम्पादन द्वारा देशी-विदेशी आलोचकों, उनकी कृतियों और मान्यताओं को हिन्दी पाठकों से परिचित कराया। वे आलोचना को शासन नहीं वरन् अनुशासन मानते हैं। इनकी आलोचना का नक्शा इस तरह से बनता है- समसामयिकता बोध, राजनीति दृष्टि, सर्जनात्मकता। बड़ी से बड़ी कोई विचारधारा हो, धारणा हो अगर वो -किताबी होगी तो उसमें सृजन की चीखें पैदा नहीं हो सकती। अगर वह जिदंगी में रची-पची होगी तो उसकी झलक दिखाई पड़ेगी। 'छायावाद' डॉ. नामवर सिंह की सृजनात्मक आलोचना का प्रमाण है। उन्होंने लिखा है "‘छायावाद’ की मनमानी परिभाषा करने की अपेक्षा उसके ऐतिहासिक और व्यावहारिक अर्थ को स्वीकार करना अधिक वैज्ञानिक है। वे मानते हैं कि अपने सर्जनात्मक रूप में आलोचना मूलतः व्यक्तिगत प्रयास है क्योंकि किसी आलोचक की सच्ची प्रतिक्रिया तो वैयक्तिक ही हो सकती है।"⁷

स्वातंत्र्योत्तर आलोचना में डॉ. रामस्वरूप चतुर्वेदी 'अर्थसंवर्द्धनपरक आलोचना' के जनक कहे जा सकते हैं। उन्होंने हिन्दी आलोचना के सम्यक विकास का निरूपण करते हुए यह निष्कर्ष निकाला कि शुक्लोत्तर परिदृश्य पर शास्त्र तथा आलोचना के आगे साहित्य चिंतन गति पकड़ता है। अर्थसंवर्द्धन के इस उपक्रम में चतुर्वेदी जी प्रतिमानों या पैमानों का निषेध करते हुए रचना की समझ और उसकी प्रक्रिया पर बल देते हुए कहते हैं "सुनिश्चित प्रतिमानों या पैमानों के सहारे नई कविता की निरंतर विकसनशील प्रक्रिया को समझा-समझाया नहीं जा सकता। प्रतिमानों के आधार पर कविता लिखी नहीं जाती

तो समझी भी नहीं जाती क्योंकि कविता को समझना उसकी रचना-प्रक्रिया का ही विस्तार है।⁸ नए साहित्य चिंतन के इस क्रम में वे मार्क्सवादी आलोचना को अप्रासंगिक बताते हैं। कुछ मार्क्सवादी आलोचक भी भाषिक प्रक्रिया को केन्द्र में रखकर चलना चाहते हैं पर उनका उद्देश्य रचना में अर्थ का संवर्द्धन नहीं वरन् अपने अर्थ का साधन है।

नामवर सिंह जी की आलोचना का दूसरा दौर 'आलोचना' पत्रिका के सम्पादक बनने से शुरू होता है। यह उनके आलोचनात्मक संघर्ष की स्वीकृति का दौर है। इस दौर में मान लिया गया है कि प्रतिभा का कोई विकल्प नहीं हो सकता। 1967 में प्रकाशित 'कविता के नए प्रतिमान' पुस्तक में उन्होंने नए प्रतिमानों पर विशद बहस की है। इस बहस की विशेषता यह है कि इसके सूत्र समकालीन साहित्य चर्चाओं में से उठाए गए हैं। सबसे पहले नेमिचन्द्र जैन ने इस पर रूपवाद का आरोप लगाया। प्रसिद्ध समीक्षक डॉ. रामविलास शर्मा ने इसकी विसंगतियों पर तीव्र प्रहार किया है। आलोचक केदारनाथ सिंह ने डॉ. नामवर सिंह द्वारा लिखित कविता के नए प्रतिमान पर विचार करते हुए यह लिखा कि "नये प्रतिमानों की खोज की प्रक्रिया 'कविता के नए प्रतिमान' के लिखे जाने के साथ समाप्त नहीं हो गई थी बल्कि सिर्फ शुरू हुई थी जो किसी न किसी रूप में आज भी जारी है।"⁹

प्रगतिशील साहित्य को अपनाकर नामवर सिंह जी ने इसकी भारतीयता प्रमाणित कर दी है। उनका कहना है- "प्रगतिशीलता ने तमाम विरोधी आलोचकों को मुंहतोड़ जवाब दिया है। इसलिए प्रगतिवाद की भारतीयता और अभारतीयता को लेकर बहस करना अब बेकार है। फिर भी लोगों की तुष्टि के लिए उस ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठभूमि की ओर संकेत किया जा सकता है जिसके अनिवार्य परिणाम स्वरूप प्रगतिवाद पैदा हुआ।" इन्होंने विभिन्न निबन्धों में आचार्य हजारी प्रसाद द्विवेदी, आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल, सूर्यकान्त त्रिपाठी निराला, नागार्जुन आदि लेखकों एवं कवियों की रचनाओं की समीक्षा की है। उन्होंने 'दूसरी परम्परा की खोज' में द्विवेदी जी के साथ-साथ उनका आत्मसंघर्ष भी अभिव्यक्त किया। आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल जी की रचनाओं पर विचार करते हुए उन्होंने कहा है कि जिन बारह ग्रंथों के आधार पर आदिकाल को 'वीरगाथा काल' नाम दिया है वह अन्तः प्रवृत्तियों की दृष्टि से दरबारी है। कवि नागार्जुन के काव्य की समीक्षा करते हुए नामवर जी ने एक अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण बात कही है। वे लिखते हैं कि कबीर के बाद हिन्दी में नागार्जुन से बड़ा दूसरा व्यंग्यकार पैदा नहीं हुआ। इसके अतिरिक्त डॉ. नामवर सिंह ने

'इतिहास और आलोचना' में धर्मवीर भारती, डॉ. विजयदेव नारायण साही और सच्चिदानंद हीरानंद वात्स्यायन 'अज्ञेय' की रचनाओं की भी विस्तृत आलोचना की और साथ ही आधुनिकतावादी प्रवृत्तियों की आलोचना की।

समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना को सत्ता के ठेकेदार आलोचकों ने बहुत हानि पहुँचाई है। सत्ता बदलते ही दृष्टि बदलती है। जीवन भर धार्मिक कठमुल्लेपन पर प्रहार करने वाले कबीर को 'हिन्दू मानस का कवि करार कर दिया जाता है जब सत्ता घोर दक्षिण पंथियों के कब्जे में हो। इसी प्रकार प्रेमचन्द को कांग्रेसी सिद्ध किया जाता है जब कांग्रेस के हाथ सत्ता हो। इतना ही नहीं आलोचना में आजकल उठा-पटक, मारधाड़ अधिक है। लोकतंत्र कम है। आलोचकों के पास समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना गिरवी पड़ी हुई है। ये जिसे छू दें, जिसकी रचना पर एक या दो वाक्य लिख दें तो वे कालजयी रचना का दर्जा पा जाए, सोना बन जाए, जिस पर नज़र न पड़ी वह कोयला या मिट्टी का टुकड़ा। इसलिए समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना के सामने बड़ी चुनौती है कि इस खेमेबाजी और मठों को तोड़ा कैसे जाए? साहित्यिक मठ और मठाधीशों से साहित्य की दुनिया सर्वाधिक प्रभावित हो रही है।

समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना के लिए एक गंभीर चुनौती है कि इसे अभिजन संस्कृति का हिस्सा बनाने का प्रयास हो रहा है। आम आदमी और उसके सरोकारों से आलोचना को असंपृक्त रखने का प्रयास भी जारी है। उस आलोचना का भला क्या हो सकता है जिसमें सामान्य मनुष्य को नजरअंदाज किया गया हो। यदि आलोचना को सार्थक बनाना है तो अपने समय और समाज की हलचलों के बारे में सजग रहकर रचना कर्म जरूरी है। मार्क्सवादी आलोचना ने किसानों और मजदूरों के आन्दोलन से प्रभावित होकर जनपक्ष को साहित्य के मूल्यांकन का आधार बनाया था। आलोचना समाज केन्द्रित हो तो पूरे समाज की उपस्थित विसंगतियों के साथ सामने आएँगी। बाजारवादी अर्थव्यवस्था से पूरा समाज प्रभावित हो रहा है। आलोचना को उसके दुष्प्रभावों से बचा पाने की पुरज़ोर कोशिश होनी चाहिए। उम्मीद ही नहीं भरोसा भी है कि युवा पीढ़ी के आलोचक समकालीन हिन्दी आलोचना की चुनौतियों का साहसपूर्वक सामना करेंगे तथा हिन्दी आलोचक जगत् को एक नया आकाश प्रदान करेंगे। किसी कवि की सभी रचनाएँ श्रेष्ठ नहीं होती हैं और न ही पूरी की पूरी कविताएँ ही। रचना और आलोचना में एक दृष्टिगत सामंजस्य होता है। जहाँ रचना जीवन के अर्थ का विस्तार करती है तो आलोचना रचना

के अर्थ का। जहाँ जीवन में अर्थ की संभावना को खत्म न होने देने का अन्तहीन क्रम चलता रहता है और यह तभी संभव है "जब हम प्रतिमानों को निरुत्साहित करके वैशिष्ट्य पर बल दें और वैशिष्ट्य की अपनी अनुभूति को प्रतिमान कहकर दूसरों पर आरोपित करने की चेष्टा न करें।¹⁰

आज के आलोचक से अपेक्षा है कि वह विभिन्न विचारधाराओं के नाम पर फैले धुंध के बीच तमाम मनुष्य विरोधी कारस्तानियों को बेनकाब करते हुए मानवतावादी जनतांत्रिक मूल्यों का पैरोकार बने और साहित्य में चित्रित जीवन के यथार्थ के विश्लेषण के साथ ही साहित्य को बोधगम्य बनाते हुए यथासंभव उसमें आम पाठकों की रुचि जागृत कर सके। देश और दुनिया में जहां कहीं भी अच्छा लिखा जा रहा है, उससे अपने भाषिक समुदाय को परिचित करना, उसकी आलोचना करना, देश और काल के प्रवाह में उन रचनाओं की अवस्थिति को रखकर उनके महत्व को रेखांकित करना सार्थक आलोचना का बुनियादी काम है।

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Mother: A Latin American Perspective

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Up to the 20th Century, Latin American nations were predominantly patriarchal and ruled by tyrants. Despite their rich and unique history, landscapes, cultures, and languages, these nations failed to provide women with a legitimate space and representation in society or literature. For many years, women were dominated, conquered and ruled; they were doubly oppressed, at home by men and in public by dictatorial dictums. Their primary vocation continued to be traditional and orthodox (child rearing) regardless of their desires to flourish in other spheres. Motherhood remained their sole means of defining themselves. However, Motherhood as a journey and experience varies greatly among cultures. In Hispanic societies, there exist distinctive stories of motherhood lying dormant, waiting to be discovered by the world. The current work focuses on portraying different perspectives of Latin American motherhood. The paper is designed to look at how two renowned Latin American women writers, Isabel Allende and Julia Alvarez, portray motherhood and mothering in their works. Although they are from different countries, Chile and the Dominican Republic, they share a history of exile and despotic rule. Common occurrences can be found in their life events.

Keywords: motherhood, mothering, indiscrimination, transnational, migration.

Latin American nations are made up of numerous, ethnically varied countries with a rich historical past and many thriving cultures. Majority of these nations have had patriarchal, orthodox, colonial and despotic regimes ruling them. This caused the natives to migrate to North America and other parts of the world as conditions had worsened in their own countries. They relocated to adoptive countries in search of safe havens. After resettling in the host countries, they began to write

about experiences of exile, displacement, political violence and brutality that pervaded their lives. They wrote realistic poems, memoirs and novels that dealt with themes of injustice, inequality, violence, indiscriminate use of force and brutality of regimes in their native lands. Writers also included the themes of alienation, acculturation, displacement and identity crisis in the adoptive homelands.

Latin American nations were ruled by despots, and women actively revolted against despotism. Yet representation of such women in history is inaccurate. Contributions made by women as fighters, revolutionaries and political activists went unnoticed. Until the nineteenth century, the literary world of these nations was primarily dominated by male writers. However, as women gained access to education and battled for their rights, they were able to document their participation, defy stereotypes and challenge orthodox practices.

A glance at the history of Latin American literature reveals exclusion of women writers from the literary canon. But nineteenth century onwards, women writers rose significantly. Pastor and Davies in *A Companion to Latin American Women Writers* opine, “it is in the recent past that women writers have gained recognition, filling a vacuum created by their exclusion, allowing the exploration of the transgressive and revolutionary import of their writings” (2012: 1-2). Women writers such as Gabriela Mistral (Chile), Rosario Castellanos (Mexico), Clarice Lispector (Brazil), Laura Esquivel (Mexico), Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Cuban), Isabel Allende (Chile) and Julia Alvarez (Dominican Republic) paved the way for future generations of women writers. Their works are a true and realistic depiction of challenges and an accurate portrayal of women’s distinctive struggles. For women, writing turned out to be a mode to carve an autonomous identity and gain a legitimate literary space. Out of the vast literary canon, this paper aims to primarily study works of Isabel Allende and Julia Alvarez.

Isabel Allende is a well-known Chilean American novelist. She is the world's most widely read female author and well recognized for her feminist novels and memoirs. Her journey from Chile to California has shaped and moulded her into the woman and writer she is today. Her novels are notable for their magic realism

and feminist overtones. She delves into the minds of women and portrays them as role models, and source of encouragement and inspiration for other silent sufferers. In her writings, she blurs the line between fiction and reality. Her life experiences influenced her writings, having endured “one coup, a military regime, three revolutions and the death of a child” (Rodden, 2004: 235). Allende’s famous works are *The House of the Spirits* (1982), *Of Love and Shadows* (1984), *Eva Luna* (1986), *Paula* (1994), *The Sum of Our Days* (2007), *The Infinite Plan* (1991), *Daughter of Fortune* (1999) and a collection of short stories *The Stories of Eva Luna* (1989), from which *Clarisa*, *The Judge’s Wife*, *The Gold of Tomas Varga* are quite famous. Many of her works have been translated into several languages.

Julia Alvarez, a Spanish-speaking renowned Dominican Republic writer, was the first to write in English. Her writings clearly illustrate the hardships of exile and dislocation. Her narratives feature strong female protagonists who overcome their adversities to find accomplishment. They are portrayed as revolutionaries, immigrants, authors and so on. Most importantly, she depicts women as more than merely daughters, housewives and mothers. She weaves together her homeland’s past and her personal history into a magical masterpiece. Her works are realistic and reveal the varied experiences of women from different walks of life. Her works include *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991), *In the Time of Butterflies* (1994), *Yo !* (1997) and *In the Name of Salome* (2000). Some of her non-fiction works are *Once Upon a Quinceanera* (2007) and *A Wedding in Haiti* (2012). She also writes for children using folklore from her rich heritage. *The Secret Footprints* (2000), *Tía Lola Came to Visit Stay* (2001), *A Cafecito Story* (2001) and *Before We Were Free* (2002). Like Allende, she too has a wide readership around the world.

Both these Hispanic writers aim to showcase the true picture of women of their communities to the rest of the world. In these communities, both Allende and Alvarez have witnessed and endured patriarchy. Therefore, they are aware that women in Hispanic communities were mistreated, oppressed, denied rights, forced to follow and conform to the conventional roles. In *My Invented Country*, Allende describes their terrible existence in Chile:

Women live in an unyielding patriarchy. To begin with, a woman's work or intellect isn't respected; we must work twice as hard as any man to earn half the recognition. Don't even mention the field of literature! ... Men have the economic and political power, which is passed from one male to the next, like the baton in a relay, while women, with few exceptions, are pushed to the side. (2004: 51)

The extremely patriarchal cultures and countries rely on orthodox notions of parenting and allocate to women the prescribed roles of nurturing and caring for the children. Thus, the identity of a woman begins and ends with her becoming a mother. In other words, to retain domination and control, they make women feel that childbirth is the only source of joy that can elevate them in society. In truth, they do so to confine women to the boundaries of home and prevent their participation in activities outside homes.

It is pertinent to also understand that not all women crave for this joy. Many authors have overlooked the legitimate existence of such women in their works. The experience of parenting and motherhood varies for each woman. Motherhood is experienced differently by an elite woman, an immigrant woman, a poor woman, a single mother and a working mother. Not everything can be discoursed from the same standpoint. Generalising experiences of maternity erodes the distinct individual experiences of women belonging to different spheres of life. Alvarez portrays mother, motherhood and mothering in both traditional and modern contexts. Allende and Alvarez give voice to the marginalised maternal experiences.

My research focuses on defining motherhood and analysing the varied experiences of single mothers, divorced mothers, absent mothers, immigrant mothers and transnational mothers as portrayed in the works of Latin American women writers. Finally, I refute the notion that being a mother or a parent is the only way for women to find fulfilment.

A variety of definitions are provided to comprehend motherhood. Some consider it to be a natural given, an integral component of a woman's identity, and that the primary purpose of a woman's existence is to nurture children among other household responsibilities. Teresa Arendell in her article, "Mothering and Motherhood: A Decade Review" states, "Definitions of mothering hold in

common a key theme: the social practices of nurturing and caring for others, usually dependent children. Thus, mothering involves dynamic activity and always-evolving relationships” (1999:2). For Sara Ruddick, motherhood is a biologically determined role: “To be a “mother” is to take upon oneself the responsibility of child care; making its work a regular and substantial part of one’s working life” (1995:17). In Latin American countries, this biological construct has evolved into a social construct. In other words, motherhood has become the ultimate identity for women. It is a role that has been thrust on women by strong patriarchal ideologies. As mentioned, the entire discourse surrounding mothering is a social construct, which means that the society has communicated over time what role a mother is expected to play and moreover how to play the role: “A negative self- image develops from the very childhood and the seeds are sown to make a girl- a woman, a mother to carry on the drudgery of the family” (Kurjekar, 2008: 228). It is imperative to contemplate the difficult circumstances that alter the experience of motherhood in comparison to archetypal motherhood.

The experiences of exile and migration have always been regarded through the eyes of men. Therefore, exile literature focuses on the experiences of male immigrants; it includes displacement, economic insecurity, assimilation and loneliness. The experiences of women in exile, especially mothers, have disappeared from the literary world. Laura Garcia’s struggles and tribulations as an immigrant mother are vividly depicted by Alvarez in her novel *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents* (1991). The novel is a study of the cultural clash that the Garcia family undergoes as a result of their voluntary exile from the Dominican Republic owing to threats from the Trujillo regime. The family flees to the US and restarts their lives as immigrants. Alvarez models Laura Garcia after her own mother, who relates her experiences and memories of mothering in the adoptive homeland and the challenges she faced in raising four daughters.

After migration, mother is the carrier of culture and roots for her children and considered a storehouse of values that she is expected to pass onto them. The obstacles faced by an immigrant mother are new, different and unique. There are pulls and expectations from opposite sides. A mother oscillates between expectations from her children to let them acclimatise with American culture and expectations from her husband to keep the daughters away from Americanising.

She is stymied by her own dilemmas. She has to unlearn and relearn things in order to become a different version of herself. She devises her own ways of dealing with her daughters. When she fails, her girls refer to her as “a terrible parent, a real failure of a Mom” (Alvarez, 1991: 136). She feels burdened and considers herself a failure. She is concerned about her ability to keep the family together. Laura says, “I’m not just crying about leaving home or about everything we’ve lost, but about what’s to come.... I wonder if the six of us will stand together” (Alvarez, 1997: 33).

Even Allende, in her memoir *Paula* and its sequel *The Sum of Our Days* describes a woman as an agent of change, who opposes predetermined standards of Chilean society. An immigrant woman, like her mother, can pose resistance to the patriarchal setups and create the route for her own life. She portrays herself both as a wonderful mother and a bad mother. When Allende’s father abandons her mother in exile, she flees Chile and goes to live with her parents. When Allende finds herself in a similar situation to that of Laura Garcia, she writes:

I think that my need to create and hold together a family, more accurately, a small tribe, had been a part of me since my marriage when I was twenty years old, had grown stronger on leaving Chile - when my first husband and children reached Venezuela...and was consolidated when I found myself an immigrant in the United States. (Allende 2009: 172)

A transnational mother is similar to an immigrant mother. Nicholson writes:

[Transnational mothers] are enacting conceptions of mothering that reflect what many African American, Hispanic and Asian American women have long understood: that economic conditions often necessitate the sharing of childrearing responsibilities with others. (2006:14)

Transnational mothers leave their children behind and move away from home in the hope of a better life. Their separation is harsh, extremely traumatic and painful.

Transnational motherhood openly subverts rational conceptions of the mother-child bonds, nurtured daily within the home and conventional views that employment and mothering are mutually exclusive. (Rajman, Schammah-Gesser, Kemp, 2006 :146)

Garcia family’s house help Primitiva follows them to US leaving behind her only daughter, Sarita with her mother in her motherland. She strives for economic prosperity in order to create a better life for Sarita. She has a difficult existence in

the adopted homeland, does not socialise and keeps to herself. Sarita writes, “Mama had been there five years, and she said she still didn’t know anyone in the houses around ours” (Alvarez, 1997: 60). She saves money in order to send every penny back home. She could only see daughter twice in five years. As a result, it would be unfair and unjust to universalise motherhood.

Because of transnational mothers, surrogate mothers or substitute mothers, roles in mothering have grown in prominence. In the absence of their biological mothers, other women take up the role of mothering children. Wharton in *The Sociology of Gender* mentions “Grandmothers, sisters, aunts or cousins acted as other mothers by taking on childcare responsibilities for each other’s children” (2005:158). Many such situations and stories have been represented by Latin American writers. Julia Alvarez depicts the importance of surrogate mothers such as nannies, grandmothers, aunts, sisters and stepmothers filling the shoes of an absent mother in two of her famous novels, *In the Time of the Butterflies* and *In the Name of Salome*. *In the Time of the Butterflies* depicts that the Mirabal sisters (Patria, Dede, Minerva and Maria) were well known for their active participation in overthrowing the Trujillo regime, the most brutal and longest regime that any Latin American nation had ever encountered. The four sisters were mothers as well, but they did not allow motherhood to interfere in their primary purpose of destroying the regime for the sake of the people of their nation. When they became powerful, Trujillo jailed Minerva and Maria, leaving their children in the care of their grandmother and the eldest aunt Patria. The kids were treated with so much love and care that they eventually started addressing Patria as their mother. Minerva and Maria missed their children but felt secure knowing they were being looked after well. Maria took a promise from Patria, “If anything should happen, promise me you’ll take care of Jacqueline” (Alvarez, 1994: 157). Patria later comments, “It seemed I was going to raise all my sisters’ babies!” (159). But little did she know that eventually even her kids would be looked after by their only surviving sister Dede, after the three sisters were brutally murdered by the dictator. She becomes a mother to all the children in the family. She is addressed as ‘Mama Dede’ by Minerva’s daughter. The substitute mothers provide comfort in the absence of birth-mothers.

Similarly, the role of a step-mother is highlighted by Alvarez in her novel *In the*

Name of Salome. Salome, the National Poetess of Dominican Republic dies leaving behind three young children. Her daughter Camila, is just three years old at that time. She has no memories of her mother; she lives with her maternal grandmother, aunt and her father. The father remarries and takes her along. Tivista, her stepmother makes earnest efforts to win her love but all in vain as Camila feels that by loving her stepmother she will disrespect her biological mother. Alvarez attempts to dispel the stereotypes of stepmothers by portraying Tivista as a caring and loving mother, in fact Camila wonders, “why can’t she be a horrible stepmother so I can hate her?” (2000: 283). Patricia Watson in *Ancient Stepmothers: Myth, Misogyny and Reality* briefs that, “the image of the stepmother frequently encountered in the ancient texts is ... an encapsulation of the negative traits assigned to females in general by a misogynistic tradition” (1995: 2). Alvarez presents the challenges a stepmother encounters in winning her stepdaughters’ love.

Single motherhood has not been dealt with respect and dignity either. The struggles of single mothers have never been acknowledged, as Allende writes, “we were brought up in the tradition that the husband provides for the family and the wife takes charge of home and children, but in our case it was not entirely that way” (2008: 148). It is essential to understand that the role of a woman is not limited to care-giving and nurturing; it also includes providing for the necessities of their children in the absence of a father. Her role extends to earning, working, taking care of both her home and children. Allende reflects this in *Paula* and in the story *Clarisa*. Clarisa, the protagonist of the story is a generous woman always ready to help others. After her marriage, she gives birth to two mentally unstable children. And from then on, her journey as a single mother begins. Her husband locks himself away for forty years as he is ashamed of his progeny. He also gets sexually involved with other women and abandons responsibility towards his family. The entire onus falls on Clarisa. Literature always shows mothers as caregivers, subservient to men’s dominance and so on, but Allende portrays how women take up other challenges. According to Sardenberg, “In this feminist perspective the major objective of women’s empowerment is to question, destabilise and eventually, transform the gender order of patriarchal domination” (2008:19). Clarisa is a single mother even in the presence of her husband. She

tries to remain positive and happy when her husband is ashamed of their children's disability. In *Stories of Eva Luna* Allende writes:

The abnormality of her children did not affect the solid optimism of Clarisa, who considered them pure souls, immune to evil, and related to them only in terms of affection. Her biggest concern was to preserve them uncontaminated by earthly suffering, she often wondered who would take care of them when she was missing. (2017:18)

Allende asserts that a mother, never leaves her children, despite their disabilities. A study conducted by Barlow and Cairns recorded multiple reactions to motherhood. A participant stated: "You look at this baby and you think, I'm responsible, and then nothing is ever the same again. It's not like a dread looming. It wasn't a bad thing, it was just a sort of acceptance of responsibility" (1997: 238). Similarly, Clarisa in the face of financial difficulties, sells her dowry and "spen[ds] the nights awake making rag dolls, wedding cakes to sell, she battle[s] against the deterioration of his house" (Allende, 2017: 20). Allende portrays economic burdens faced by single mothers, an experience never voiced in literature written by male writers.

Similarly in her novel *Paula*, Allende focuses on her mother and her own role as a mother. Looking back at her mother's life, abandoned by her husband, she relocates with her children to her parent's house. This portrays another aspect of motherhood, that of a failed marriage and abandonment. The mother single-handedly is responsible for her children and in addition she is labelled with taunts and criticism, a mother's life is, "contend with poverty, gossip, and the snubs of people who had been her friends" (Allende, 2008:32). Like Clarisa, she too takes up a job to feed her family. Allende writes, "My mother obtained a modest position at a bank, where the main attraction was the possibility of retiring at full salary after thirty-five years of service, and the major drawback was the lust of the director, who kept pinning her in corners" (2008: 29). Allende recalls, "I will never forget that day that my brothers and I were walking down the streets with Margara and as we passed an obviously wealthy woman she screamed, 'your mother's a slut' " (2008: 47).

This brings us to the fact that single mothers have never garnered respect and authentic portrayal in history and literature, which have largely been male

bastions. Role of women writers like Alvarez and Allende then comes to significance, as they pay tribute to such mothers by portraying their sacrifices and struggles through their writings.

"Mothers are identified not by what they feel but by what they try to do," according to Ruddick (1994: 34). Contrary to the popular or accepted view that mothers develop strong emotional bonds and connections, there are also mothers who are unable to build deep connections with their children. These mothers are unavailable to support or motivate the children which are often characterised as natural maternal qualities. Elena Poniatwoska, a Mexican author in her story "La flor de lis" portrays a mother who is disconnected with her children. Mariana, the daughter, feels lost and deprived of her mother's love: "I just had one dream: to be with her" (Hurley, 2003: 169). Thus, it opposes the notion that "caring is part of the world of women" (Tarlow, 1996: 56). Mariana longs for a connection that never develops from her mother's side. Even when she falls ill for the second time, the mother decides to go to their grandparents' house, but soon leaves for France leaving behind emptiness and craving for her presence. Some mothers only show up physically, but they are emotionally inaccessible.

Cultural myths about mothering suggest that mothers are endless fonts of nurturance to their children—an expectation that may be difficult for mothers to sustain in that childrearing can often evoke emotions such as indifference, cruelty, envy, possessiveness, and resentment. (Barlow and Cairns, 1997: 233)

Much literature has been written depicting women as mad and mentally unstable. Latin American writers were influenced by Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic*; they correlated it with Latin American women who were rendered helpless and mad by social restrictions imposed on them (Blake and Kanost, 2015). Brazilian author Lya Luft in her novel *Exilio* (translated into *The Red House*, 1987) portrays motherhood as non-rewarding, stressful and a traumatic experience. Further, depression makes things even worse for her. The unnamed protagonist cannot come out of traumatic memories of her own drunken and emotionally absent mother. Therefore, she fails as a mother herself and mothering drains her leading to suspicion and self-doubt. Luft subverts motherhood myths by writing about the experience as nerve-racking, depressing and full of emptiness. This also reinforces the idea that becoming a mother is also a

psychological experience. When a woman is forced to become a mother against her desires, she cannot be a nurturer as expected. This leads to generational trauma, continuous feeling of emptiness and self-doubt. It often leaves a woman lonely and suicidal. Moreover, due to an absent mother the children often carry the trauma and later depict the same patterns in relationship with their own children. The psychological trauma is passed on through generations.

In Latin American culture, having children is seen as the greatest source of joy for women. A childless woman is considered with disdain and dishonour. If she doesn't have children, her unique identity is not acknowledged. No matter what she accomplishes in life, her identity is always tied to being a mother. If she deviates from the accepted norms, she is labelled as characterless, in an effort to further oppress her to quell any resistance from other women in a similar situation. Julia Alvarez expresses, "in my own Latin culture, where being a woman and a mother are practically synonyms, being childless by choice is tantamount to being wicked and selfish" (1998: 99).

Alvarez breaks this stereotype through her character Yolanda, who is also her alter-ego. Alvarez propagates that a woman is complete in herself and does not need children to complete her. "Through rejecting and resisting discourses that conflate femininity with motherhood, childless women create new discourses that can subvert and transform constructions of femininity" (Gillespie, 2000: 223), and this is precisely what Alvarez does. She urges women to leave their imprint in other spheres of life and not think of being only mothers. Alvarez, in her novels, provides women the space to pursue their passions over duties. It would be wrong to say she propagates anti-motherhood notions. In fact, she legitimately portrays all kinds of mothers in her works.

Yolanda, just like Alvarez, chooses to remain childless even when married. It is Yolanda's choice not to become a mother, she rebels against the society that feeds women's minds that it is an obligation to bear children. Alvarez creates the character of Yolanda in her novels *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents* and *Yo!*, in the hope of breaking the age old notions surrounding motherhood. She equates the process of writing a book to the period of gestation and birthing a child. Yolanda did have the desire to become a mother, but her desire to be an

author was stronger. She knew what she wanted in life more than children, she did not have the time and devotion a mother requires for her children. Therefore, she consciously chose to stay childless and redefined the concept of motherhood. Alvarez believes creating a work of art is equivalent to nurturing a baby in the womb. The writing period is the gestation period which she nurtures with care and love.

She also highlights the transitions taking place in the concept of motherhood. With advancement in science and technology various methods of reproduction paved the way for women to become mothers, without the assistance of husbands. Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART) shatter the dominance maintained by men in the society. Patriarchal supremacy is broken; women no longer need to marry, to have children. Thus, Alvarez doesn't reject motherhood altogether, she makes it a zone of creation and fulfilment for those who want it, when they want it and how they want it. Alvarez restores to her characters the autonomy over their bodies that had been withheld ever since. She deliberates on a new version of motherhood, Single Mother by Choice (SMC). ART and SMC have redefined and deconstructed motherhood. By taking back control of their bodies, it has allowed women to explore new frontiers.

Single mother is a mother who chooses to become pregnant with artificial insemination. It is now essential to redefine mothers' identities and reframe the entire conversation about motherhood. In *How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents*, one of the four sisters, Sandra decides to be a single mother by choice and with the help of scientific techniques. She embraces motherhood without societal pressure, male dominance or as an obligation. Sandra is modelled on Alvarez's elder sister. Alvarez, in her essay states, "My last childless sister became a mother. Forty, single, unlucky in finding a lifelong match, she decided to have a baby on her own" (Alvarez, 1998: 95). As Sandra could not find a husband, she decided to have children because of a strong desire to attain motherhood. Her sister feels there is much to her story as she writes: "single motherhood, artificial insemination, sperm brought from the D.R. from an area of the country where hopefully there aren't many first cousins" (Alvarez, 1997:8). As a result, writers have redefined motherhood by portraying its different aspects.

In conclusion, it becomes pertinent to understand that when a mother is faced with a turbulent economic situation, disturbed marriage, abandonment, immigration and exile, her expectations from herself increase manifold. But the journey becomes even more difficult when society fails to recognize those dimensions and pulls her down. It is crucial to reframe and reimagine women as mothers in various contexts rather than generalizing the idea of motherhood. It is past time to redefine the way mothers are portrayed in media, including movies, books written by men, cultures and historical periods.

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Diverse Love Stories: The Dynamics of Cultural Assimilation in Mixed Marriages

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This article investigates Cultural Assimilation in mixed-marriage families through the constructs of Intercultural Sensitivity (IS), Cultural Perception (CP), Cultural Shock (CS), Cultural Distance (CD), and Cultural Markers (CM). Eighteen families, representing 15 mother tongues and diverse Indian regions now residing in Mumbai, were selected using purposive, volunteer and snowball sampling methods. A 10-item Likert Scale was used to measure the five constructs of Cultural Assimilation, with two statements for each construct. ‘Cultural Perception’ and ‘Intercultural Sensitivity’ were found to be the dominating factors among other constructs of Cultural Assimilation. High levels of Intercultural Sensitivity, ‘positive’ cultural perceptions, no sense of cultural shock, embracing cultural ‘distance’, and breaking cultural markers have facilitated cultural assimilation among mixed-marriage families in the home environment.

Keywords: cultural assimilation, family communication, family studies, intercultural communication, migration, mixed marriages

Introduction

Mixed marriages are becoming increasingly common. However, it is still considered a social stigma in Indian society. The findings of (Pew Research Center, 2021) revealed that a significant proportion of Indians (64 per cent) believe it is crucial to prevent women from their community from marrying outside their castes, and a similar percentage (62 per cent) believe it is important

to prevent men from marrying outside their castes. The differences in these numbers among castes are minimal.

The process of 'assimilation' into a different culture is crucial in family dynamics, especially in the setting of 'mixed marriages.' According to (Soken-Huberty), "Assimilation means absorbing new things into a system. Assimilation is most often talked about in the context of 'cultural assimilation,' which is when immigrant groups are encouraged to 'adopt the culture, values, and social behaviours of their host nation.' This means shedding or hiding aspects of one's culture including certain foods, clothing, language, religious traditions, etc. that the host nation is unfamiliar with."

The study of cultural assimilation in ethno-linguistic families in a home environment is important to understand whether individual family members from ethno-linguistic families have 'completely adapted' to the 'mainstream culture' they wish to 'adopt.'

In this study, ethno-linguistic families were selected based on their 'native languages' and 'immigrant generations'. The ethno-linguistic families that took part in the study consisted of couples who spoke different mother tongues and belonged to different regions of India, either of them being first-, second-, or third-generation migrants to the state of Maharashtra and currently residing in Mumbai.

Kidwai noted India's linguistic diversity as follows:

India is shown to be a country with an admirable linguistic diversity, it has 270 mother tongues which are grouped into two sets as Scheduled Languages and Non-Scheduled Languages. Responses tabulated by the 2011 Census show that 96.71 per cent of the Indian population has ... one of the Scheduled Languages as their mother tongue, the remaining 3.29 percent is accounted for by other languages. (2019: 154)

Respondents from 15 different mother tongues, who participated in this research study, belong to different parts of India but are currently residing in Mumbai. These mother tongues consist of 14 scheduled languages: Telugu, Tamil,

Malayalam, Konkani, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Kachchhi, or Kutchi (a dialect of Sindhi); Punjabi, Hindi, Nepali, Odia, Bengali, Assamese; and one non-scheduled language: 'Lotha.'

Respondents from these 15 mother tongues were divided into seven categories based on India's geography. These categories are: i) South India ii) South-West India iii) West India iv) North-West India v) North India vi) East India vii) North-East India.

Mumbai or Bombay is the 'financial capital of India.' Mumbai is also considered to be the 'city of dreams.' Chaapia emphasised that "as per Census 2011, 25.54% inter-state migrants migrated to Mumbai. Uttar Pradesh tops the list of migrants to Maharashtra and Mumbai, followed by Karnataka and Gujarat" (2019). Shaikh revealed that "Mumbai is slowly becoming a predominantly Hindi-speaking city, fuelled by demographic changes caused by migration. The number of Hindi-speaking people in the city is on the rise" (2019).

A significant change can be seen in the span of 10 years, that is, from 2001 to 2011, among the two major districts of Maharashtra, namely, Mumbai Suburban and Thane. There was an increase in Hindi (43.46%), Gujarati (3.4%) and Marathi (2.74%) speaking populations in the Mumbai Suburban district, whereas the Urdu-speaking population decreased by 3.09%. There was an increase in Hindi (80.45%), Marathi (33.66%), Urdu (33%) and Gujarati (19.22%) speaking populations in Thane district.

Therefore, the objective of this study was to understand the cultural assimilation of ethno-linguistic families in a home environment through the constructs of intercultural sensitivity (IS), cultural perception (CP), cultural shock (CS), cultural distance (CD) and cultural markers (CM).

Review of Literature

Previous studies have focused on mixed marriages and cultural assimilation. Literature was collected from review articles and empirical studies. Among the studies reviewed, some relevant studies are discussed in this section.

Lewis and Ford-Robertson (2010) discussed various studies and theories related

to interracial marriages and interethnic relations in the United States. They reference works that explore assimilation, racial hierarchy and racial discrimination faced by interracial couples, trends in Black/White marriages, and factors influencing spousal choices in Black/White marriages.

Qian and Shah (2015) explored the assimilation outcomes of Asian Indian and Filipino immigrant children who arrived in the US in the 1970s. Through a cohort analysis using census data from 1980, 1990 and 2000, it was found that the educational attainment of Asian Indian immigrant children was higher than that of their parents, whereas the educational attainment of Filipino immigrant children was lower than that of their parents. Additionally, Asian Indians were more likely to complete college but less likely to intermarry with whites compared to Filipinos. These differences in educational attainment and intermarriage patterns highlight the varying paths of assimilation among middle class immigrants.

Epstein (2013) and Potarca and Bernardi (2018) explored the impact of intermarriage on cultural assimilation, with the former suggesting that it can lead to the development of new cultures or the survival of the local culture, and the latter finding evidence of a segmented marriage market and differences in integration pathways between immigrant groups. Tano and Sun (2018) discussed the social construction of marriage and the homogenizing effect of mixed marriages. These studies suggest that cultural assimilation in mixed marriages is a complex and multifaceted process that is influenced by a range of factors, including cultural differences, family ties, and immigration policies.

Mukherjee and Pattnaik (2021) studied the assimilation process and ethnic organization dynamics within a small Bengali immigrant community in Overland park, Kansas City, USA. This research challenges the notion that assimilation is solely linked to socioeconomic progress and suburbanisation, emphasising the significance of ethnic associations in providing a cultural comfort zone and preserving the ethnic identity of its members.

Although various studies have addressed various aspects of mixed marriages and cultural assimilation, they have been deficient from the perspective of 'intercultural communication'.

The existing literature emphasises the cultural assimilation of expatriates, but few studies have examined the cultural assimilation of mixed-marriages among interstate migrants settled within a country. Few studies have focused on the cultural assimilation of mixed marriages that address intercultural sensitivity (IS), cultural perception (CP), cultural shock (CS), cultural distance (CD) and cultural markers (CM).

To fill this research gap, the present study examined cultural assimilation through the constructs of IS, CP, CS, CD and CM among mixed-marriage families, focusing on interstate migrants who belong to different parts of India but currently reside in Mumbai.

The following section discusses the research methodology used to examine cultural assimilation in mixed marriages in a home environment.

Materials and Methods

This section describes the type of data, method of data collection, universes, sampling design/framework and techniques used for data analysis that were followed to conduct the research study.

Type of Data: The data were collected from primary sources. It includes different ethno-linguistic families that belong to different parts of India, but are currently residing in Mumbai.

Methods of Data Collection: A Survey method was used to collect data using a questionnaire.

Universes, Sampling Design and Framework: This study was conducted in two districts of Maharashtra: Mumbai Suburban and Thane. According to (<https://www.censusindia.co.in>), as per Census 2011, 'Thane' (approx. 1.11 crore) and Mumbai Suburban (approx. 93.57 lakh) ranked 1 and 5 among the most populated districts of India.

Sampling Method: A non-probability sampling procedure was used in this study. Purposive sampling was used to select families with mixed marriages. Volunteer and snowball sampling were used, along with purposive sampling.

Sampling of respondents: 18 mixed-marriage families (47 respondents) participated in the study by filling out the questionnaire. Samples were selected using purposive, volunteer and snowball sampling methods. Demographic variables like ‘mother tongue’ and ‘immigrant generations’ were considered while choosing these families.

Sampling Unit: The sampling units were defined for the inputs collected from the questionnaires as: 1 respondent = 1 unit

Data Collection and Analysis: Respondents from ethno-linguistic families filled out the questionnaire in ‘English’. Software viz. ‘IBM SPSS Version 26’ was used for analysing the data. The following section discusses the main findings of this study.

Results and Discussion

The research objective was to study the Cultural Assimilation through the constructs of Intercultural Sensitivity (IS), Cultural Perception (CP), Cultural Shock (CS), Cultural Distance (CD) and Cultural Markers (CM) among ethno-linguistic families in a home environment.

The research objective was studied using a 10-item Likert scale to operationally define the five constructs for cultural assimilation, with two statements for each construct.

The details of the Likert scale are as follows.

Intercultural Sensitivity The role of intercultural sensitivity in cultural assimilation was examined through two statements: “I enjoy interacting and experiencing with family members from different culture without feeling bored” and “I am sensitive while talking to the family member(s) who belong(s) to different culture”.

Cultural Perception: The role of cultural perception was analysed through two statements: “I try to be thoughtful before forming an impression about a family member from different culture” and “I like to participate in different cultural events/gatherings”.

Cultural Shock: The role of cultural shock in cultural assimilation was investigated through the following statements: “I like to cook multicultural cuisines” and “I like to eat cuisines from different cultures on day-to-day basis”.

Cultural Distance: The role of cultural distance in cultural assimilation was studied through the following statements: "I like to celebrate festivals from different cultures” and “I love to stay in a multicultural society over the society where only one culture dominates”.

Cultural Markers: It was studied using two statements. The first statement was “I can change my behaviour to suit social norms, rules, attitudes, beliefs, and customs”, and the second statement was that “Cultural values from other cultures have become an integral part of my life”.

To achieve this objective, we hypothesised the following.

H_a^1 : Cultural Perception is the dominant factor among the constructs of Cultural Assimilation.

H_0^1 : Cultural Perception is not dominant or equivalent to other constructs of Cultural Assimilation.

To test the null hypothesis (H_0^1), non-parametric tests, such as the Mean Rank Test and Kruskal-Walli’s test, were used because the data were not normally distributed. The **data failed to support the null hypothesis** that Cultural Perception is not dominant or equivalent to the other constructs of Cultural Assimilation. Therefore, the **data supports H_a^1** (see Table 1).

Constructs	Mean Rank
IS	175.57
CP	190.59
CS	72.02
CD	63.29
CM	88.53

Table 1: The role of IS, CP, CS, CD and CM in Cultural Assimilation (Mean Rank Test)

Furthermore, the findings suggest a significant difference (P -value < 0.05) among the five constructs mentioned above (see Table 2).

Kruskal-Wallis test	Value
Chi-Square	150.440
d.f.	4
p-value	0.000

Table 2: Test of Significance (Kruskal-Wallis test) between IS, CP, CS, CD and CM

The researcher was further interested in analysing pairwise comparisons among IS, CP, CS, CD and CM. This was performed using Dunn's test (post-hoc comparison) with non-parametric tests. The data findings indicate the significance of the difference in respective pairs wherein ' P '-value < 0.05 (see Table 3).

Construct 1	Construct 2	'P'-value	Interpretation
IS	CP	0.281	NS
IS	CS	0.000	Significant
IS	CD	0.000	Significant
IS	CM	0.000	Significant
CP	CS	0.000	Significant
CP	CD	0.000	Significant
CP	CM	0.000	Significant
CS	CD	0.530	NS
CS	CM	0.235	NS
CD	CM	0.070	Significant

Table 3: Pairwise Comparison (Dunn's Test) between IS, CP, CS, CD and CM

The following section discusses the data derived from Likert-scale responses addressing Cultural Assimilation through these five constructs.

Intercultural Sensitivity

The study of IS in the process of cultural assimilation among family members from ethno-linguistic families will help us to understand whether it facilitates cultural assimilation. This was studied using two domains of IS, which are discussed below.

Discussion of questionnaire results: Two domains of IS, namely "interaction enjoyment" and "interaction attentiveness", were investigated using two Likert-scale statements to examine their role in cultural assimilation. The domain of "interaction enjoyment" focused on the 'degree of enjoyment' among individuals from ethno-linguistic families during interactions with family members from different cultures, while the "interaction attentiveness" domain analysed whether individuals from ethno-linguistic families were 'sensitive' while talking to family members who belong to different cultures.

The summed scores were divided into quartiles to represent the various levels of IS. A total score of 2-4 indicated a low level, 4-6 indicated a low-to-moderate level, 6-8 indicated a moderate-to-high level, and a score of 8-10 indicated a high level of IS. Please refer to Figure 1 for data visualisation of the distribution of the levels of IS among the respondents.

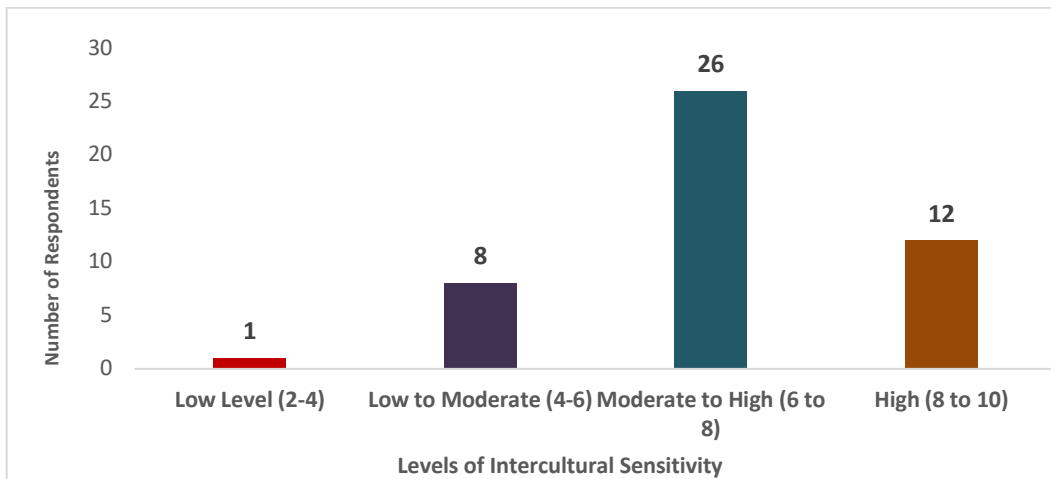


Figure 1: Levels of Intercultural Sensitivity with frequency of respondents

It may be noted from Figure 1 that levels of IS are **negatively skewed** towards moderate to high and high levels of IS (skewness value, $-0.427 < 0$). Logical consistency was observed in the respondents' responses to the two questions.

Cultural Perception

Understanding the role of CP in the process of cultural assimilation involves examining how individuals from different ethno-linguistic families 'perceive' family members from other cultures while 'assimilating' into the 'dominant' culture of the family.

Discussion of questionnaire results: To analyse the role of CP in cultural assimilation, two Likert-scale statements were used. The first statement assessed whether individuals from ethno-linguistic families were thoughtful before forming the impression of a family member from a different culture. The second statement examined whether these individuals enjoy participating in cultural events or gatherings with family members from different cultures.

The summed scores were divided into quartiles to represent various levels of CP. A total score of 2-4 indicated a low level, 4-6 indicated a low-to-moderate level, 6-8 indicated a moderate-to-high level, and a score of 8-10 indicated a high level of CP.

Please refer to Figure 2 for data visualisation of the distribution of the levels of CP among the respondents.

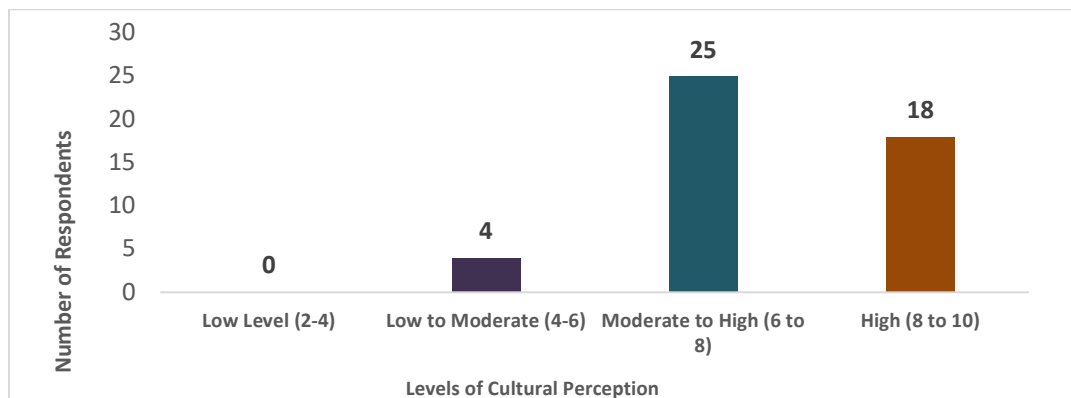


Figure 2: Levels of Cultural Perception with frequency of respondents

It may be noted from Figure 2 that the levels of CP are **negatively skewed** towards moderate to high and high levels of CP (skewness value, $-0.299 < 0$). Logical consistency was observed in the respondents' responses to the two questions.

Cultural Shock

The current research objective is to examine the degree of 'cultural shock' in terms of 'food preferences' in the process of cultural assimilation among ethno-linguistic families in a home environment, which is discussed below in detail.

Discussion of Questionnaire Results: Two Likert-scale statements were used to study the role of CS in cultural assimilation. The first statement investigated whether individuals from ethno-linguistic families like to cook multicultural cuisines, whereas the second statement analysed whether they would like to consume cuisines from different cultures on a daily basis. The summed scores were divided into quartiles to represent the various levels of CS. A total score of 2-4 indicated a low level, 4-6 indicated a low-to-moderate level, 6-8 indicated a moderate-to-high level, and a score of 8-10 indicated a high level of CS. Please refer to Figure 3 shows the data visualisation of the distribution of the levels of CS among the respondents.

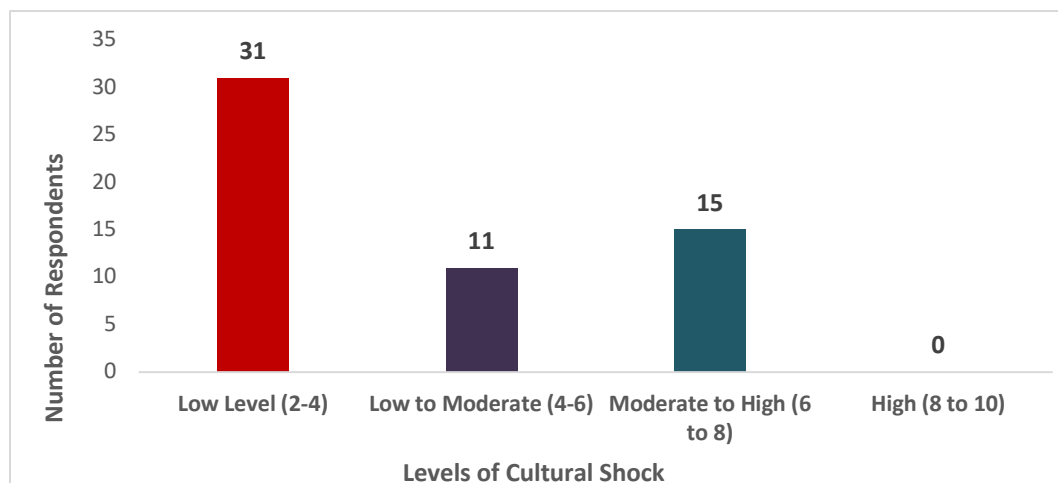


Figure 3: Levels of Cultural Shock with frequency of respondents

It may be noted from Figure 3 that the levels of CS are **positively skewed** towards low to moderate and low levels of CS (skewness value, $1.257 > 0$). Logical consistency was observed in the respondents' responses to the two questions.

Cultural Distance

The study of CD in cultural assimilation among ethno-linguistic families in a home environment is important for understanding the degree of difference between the bride's and groom's cultures and their assimilation into the 'mainstream' culture of Mumbai, which is discussed below.

Discussion of questionnaire results: Two Likert-scale statements were used to assess the role of CD in cultural assimilation. The first statement analysed whether individuals from ethno-linguistic families like to celebrate festivals from different cultures, whereas the second statement investigated whether they love to stay in a multicultural society in preference to a society where only one culture dominates.

The summed scores were divided into quartiles to represent the various levels of CD. A total score of 2-4 indicated a low level, 4-6 indicated a low-to-moderate level, 6-8 indicated a moderate-to-high level, and a score of 8-10 indicated a high level of CD.

Please refer to Figure 4 shows the data visualisation of the distribution of the levels of CD among the respondents.

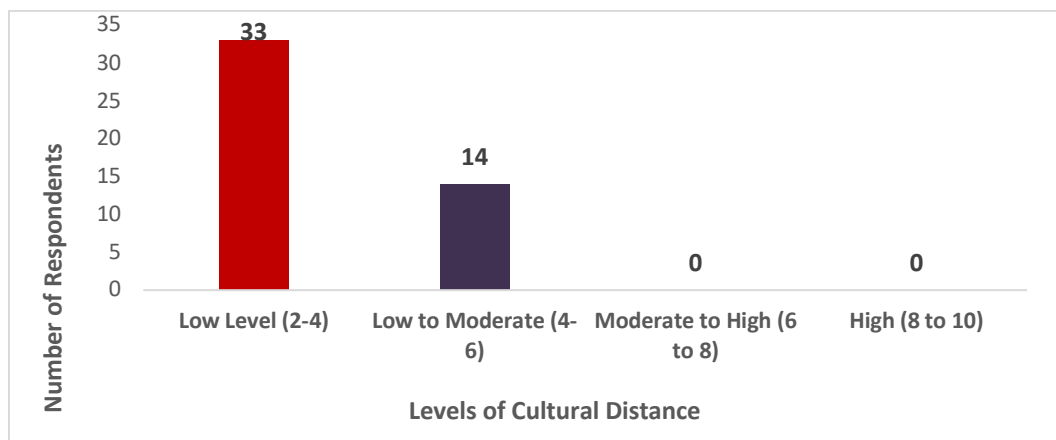


Figure 4: Levels of Cultural Distance with frequency of respondents

It may be noted from Figure 4 that the level of CD is positively skewed towards low to moderate and low levels of CD (skewness value, $0.913 > 0$). Logical consistency was observed in the respondents' responses to the two questions.

Cultural Markers

The role of CM in cultural assimilation helps to comprehend the degree to which it facilitates or dilutes the process of cultural assimilation in ethno-linguistic families in a home environment. This is discussed below:

Discussion of questionnaire results: To analyse the role of CM in cultural assimilation, two Likert-scale statements were used. The first statement assessed the willingness of individuals from ethno-linguistic families to adapt their behaviour to conform to the social norms, rules, attitudes, beliefs and customs of the 'mainstream' culture of their family and assimilate into it.

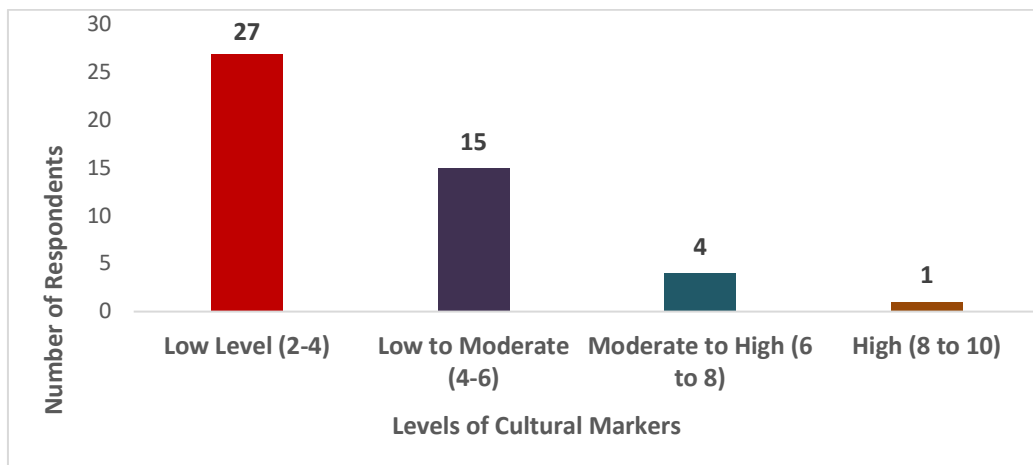


Figure 5: Levels of Cultural Markers with frequency of respondents

The second statement examined whether they perceived cultural values from the 'mainstream' culture of their families to have become an 'integral' part of their lives.

The summed scores were divided into quartiles to represent the various levels of CM. A total score of 2-4 indicated a low level, 4-6 indicated a low-to-moderate

level, 6-8 indicated a moderate-to-high level, and a score of 8-10 indicated a high level of CM.

Please refer to Figure 5 shows the data visualisation of the distribution of the levels of CM among the respondents.

It may be noted from Figure 5 that the levels of CM are **positively skewed** towards low to moderate and low levels of CM (skewness value, $1.282 > 0$). Logical consistency was observed in the respondents' responses to the two questions.

The role of IS, CP, CS, CD and CM in Cultural Assimilation

The current research objective was to study Cultural Assimilation through the constructs of Intercultural Sensitivity, Cultural Perception, Cultural Shock, Cultural Distance and Cultural Markers among ethno-linguistic families in a home environment. The 'presence' of these factors among ethno-linguistic families has graphically represented below in Figure 6.

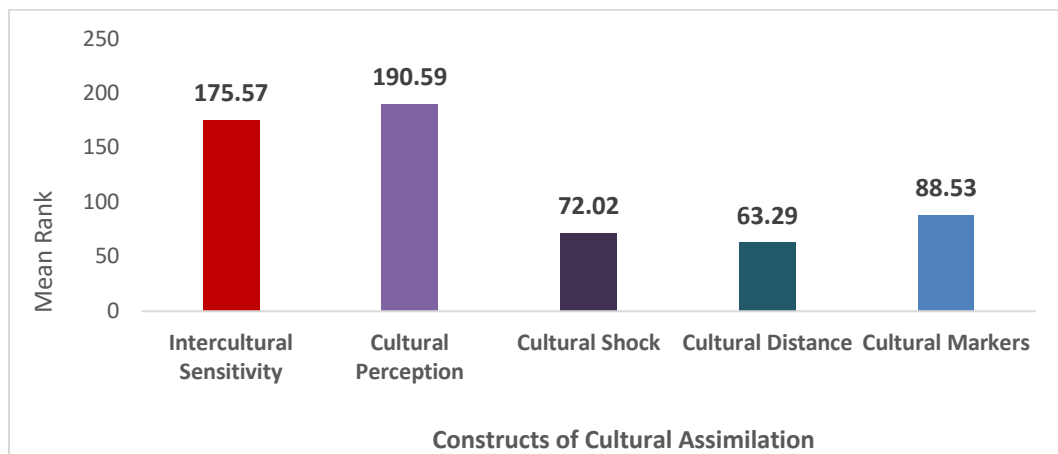


Figure 6: The role of IS, CP, CS, CD and CM in Cultural Assimilation

It may be noted from Figure 6 that the **data failed to support the null hypothesis** that Cultural Perception is not dominant or equivalent to other constructs of Cultural Assimilation. Therefore, the **data supports H_a^1** .

The next section provides an overview of the key findings regarding the current objective of Cultural Assimilation among mixed-marriage families in a home environment.

Key highlights: Cultural Assimilation

"Interaction enjoyment" and "interaction attentiveness" promoted intercultural sensitivity, which resulted in the facilitation of cultural assimilation among mixed marriage families in their home environment. The respondents' thoughtfulness before forming an impression of culturally distinct family members and their willingness to participate in different cultural events or gatherings reflected a "positive" cultural perception towards different cultures, which facilitated assimilation. No cultural shock was found, as most participants liked cooking multicultural cuisines and did not mind having them daily, which facilitated cultural assimilation. The celebration of different festivals and multicultural neighbourhoods helped reduce cultural distance and facilitate cultural assimilation. The quality of "flexibility" helped individuals change their behaviour to suit social norms, rules, attitudes, beliefs, and customs. Similarly, most participants believed that cultural values from other cultures became an integral part of their lives. "Flexibility" and the adoption of cultural values from different cultures helped to reduce cultural markers and facilitated cultural assimilation into different cultures. The following section discusses the findings of the current study in relation to the existing literature.

Discussion of the Current Study's findings with Existing Literature

The existing literature indicates that some studies support the current research objective, while others show inconsistencies.

Regarding Intercultural Sensitivity: The current study found that family members from ethno-linguistic backgrounds exhibit high levels of "interaction enjoyment" and "interaction attentiveness," facilitating intercultural sensitivity among respondents in a home environment.

These findings align with those of Hou (2010: 328-30), Wattanavorakijkul (2020: 92), and Chen and Hu (2023 1-11), indicating that "language competency" enhances "interaction confidence," contributing to a higher level of intercultural

sensitivity. Conversely, “language incompetency” subvert “interaction confidence” which acted as a barrier to intercultural sensitivity among respondents.

Regarding Cultural Perception: The present findings indicate that the majority of respondents are thoughtful in forming impressions of family members from different cultures, fostering a ‘positive’ perception among ethno-linguistic families.

These findings are consistent with those of Hou (2010: 327), and Moradi and Ghabanchi (2019: 139), who emphasised respondents' thoughtful approach in forming impressions of family members from different cultures, suggesting resistance to stereotypes.

Regarding Cultural Shock: The present findings reveal that the majority of respondents from ethno-linguistic families did not find cuisines from different cultures that were highly shocking.

The current research findings are **not consistent** with those of Nagesh (2018: 1-20), and Straiton et al. (2019: 107-119), who explored cultural differences and negotiations in inter-caste marriages, particularly regarding food habits. Nagesh (2018: 1-20) highlighted the conflicts arising from ingredient disparities, food types and serving practices, with women feeling pressured to adopt in-law food preferences. Similarly, Straiton et al. (2019: 107-119) observed that women in Norway experience culture shock due to differences in food preferences between themselves and their husbands but eventually adapt over time.

Regarding Cultural Distance: Family members from ethno-linguistic backgrounds note that neighbours from different cultures help reduce cultural distance and facilitate assimilation into Mumbai's multicultural society.

These findings align with those of Abramitzky, Boustan and Eriksson (2016: 14), who emphasised the significant role of neighbourhoods in reducing cultural distance and promoting cultural assimilation. The research finds that immigrants tend to ‘assimilate’ more quickly when living with people from their own country in a foreign land, as immigrants from countries that assimilated faster. After discussing the present study's findings in relation to the existing literature, the

following section explores the theoretical linkages with the findings of the study.

Theoretical Linkages of the Current Findings

Several theories, such as “U-Curve of Cultural Adjustment”, “Chen and Starosta’s Model of Intercultural Sensitivity” and “Sadharanikaran”, were used to provide a theoretical foundation for the findings of the current research objective.

U-Curve of Cultural Adjustment (1955)- Sverre Lysgaard

The U-curve model of adjustment was first introduced by Norwegian sociologist, Sverre Lysgaard, in 1955. According to this model, cultural adaptation for migrants goes through four stages: honeymoon, cultural shock, adjustment and mastery. This theory is widely used to study Cultural Shock among immigrants. But it can be useful to study the various aspects like intercultural sensitivity, cultural perception, cultural distance and cultural markers

The study’s findings support the stage of ‘**mastery**’ from the theory of the **U-Curve of Cultural Adjustment**. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents from ethno-linguistic families facilitated intercultural sensitivity and ‘positive’ cultural perception by recording moderate to high levels of intercultural sensitivity and cultural perception, whereas the majority of the respondents indicated a low level of cultural shock, cultural distance and cultural markers that eased their assimilation into the home environment.

Chen & Starosta’s Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (2000)- Prof. Guo-Ming Chen and Prof. William Starosta

The model of Intercultural Sensitivity was developed by Guo-Ming Chen and William Starosta in 2000. It measures intercultural sensitivity across five domains: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness. However, the current study used only two of the five domains, "interaction enjoyment" and "interaction attentiveness", to study Cultural Assimilation. The research findings support Chen and Starosta’s Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (2000) by indicating that two domains of intercultural sensitivity, viz., "interaction enjoyment" and "interaction attentiveness," facilitated intercultural sensitivity in

the process of cultural assimilation among ethno-linguistic families in a home environment. It was also found that intercultural sensitivity was the second dominant factor after cultural perception, with a mean rank of 175.57 among the constructs of cultural assimilation.

Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) (2003)- Dr Nirmala Mani Adhikari

'*Sadharanikaran*' theory/model was developed based on the concept of '*Rasa Sutra*' from Bharata's *Natyashastra*. Any act of communication would result in communalisation and the result would also be communalisation. *Sadharanikaran* is the process of developing compassion (atmiyata). People with common feelings (*Saharidaya*) meet *Rasa Utpatti* (the production of Rasa) and *Nishpatti* (the realisation of Rasa). The Rasa theory states that there are four *bhavas*: *Sthayibhava* (intensified permanent emotions), *Vibhava* (excitant), *Anubhav* (ensuing responses) and *Vyabhichari or Sanchari bhava* (transitory feelings). Together, these *bhavas* create the *rasa* that is needed to communicate. The present findings support the concept of '*Saharidaya*' based on the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC). The feeling of '*Saharidaya*," i.e., 'common feelings," between individual family members from ethno-linguistic families facilitated intercultural sensitivity and created a positive cultural perception, which helped to 'ease' the assimilation among them, whereas the feeling of '*Saharidaya*' helped to reduce the cultural shock and cultural distance, which helped them in the 'assimilation' of the dominant culture among the ethno-linguistic family.

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Career Decision Making Ability of Senior Secondary School Students in Relation to Clarity of Career Goals

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The present study was undertaken to investigate the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in relation to clarity of career goals. The sample comprised of 200 randomly selected senior secondary students studying in government and private schools of Chandigarh. The tools employed for the study were career Decision Making Scale (CDMS_KS) by Dr Kirandeep Singh (2014) and self-constructed and validated tool of Clarity of career goals. The statistical techniques employed to analyse the data were Mean, S.D and t-ratio. The analysis of the data revealed that the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students is significantly related to clarity of career goals.

Keywords: career decision making ability, clarity of career goals

Introduction

Career decision making is a complex and life long process. Knowing what is important in one's career, helps to make it easier to make a career decision, be it in terms of values, interests or skills. Important career decisions such as whether to attend university, polytechnic, college of education or a technical school or enter the job force directly after secondary school are made during adolescence. These decisions affect the course of one's life. Therefore, it is important to understand the individual and social factors that influence the process of career development in adolescents.

Gaining clarity on what one wants to do and what one is good at can be a major

challenge, which may often lead to confusion, frustration and indecision among students. Newspapers often report several incidents where the lack of right career decision making and consequent failures in competitive exams leads to cases of anxiety, self-doubt, depression and even suicide. Hence, the present study is the need of the hour for the teachers, educators, administrators and policy planners as it would bring into light the need for bringing clarity in career goals for students for successful career decision making.

As per Haynes and Massie (1971), “career decision making is a process of selection of careers from a set of alternative courses of actions which is thought to fulfil the objectives of the decision problem more satisfactorily than others.”

Salami (2008) conceptualized “career decision making ability as an individual’s readiness to make well informed, age-appropriate career decisions and to shape one’s career carefully in the face of existing societal opportunities and constraints.”

According to Zook (2019) “career clarity is the process of teaching students how they can learn about and understand entire career paths in different industries and even specific companies.”

Hook (2020) says that “career clarity means a clearness of thought, certainty about student’s career direction, goals and having a clear understanding of themselves and the environment they work in.”

Review of literature

Shore et al (2010) reported that clarity in goals among students is associated with positive outcomes for students of differing ability levels, varying from academically advanced to those who struggle academically and even those students with identified learning disabilities. The study has found positive benefits of clarity of goals for students of different grades and ages.

Chen and Liew (2015) explored factors influencing career decision making difficulties of graduating students in Malaysia. They hypothesized that personality (five big traits) and parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles) influence career-decision difficulties in sample (n-100). Parental authority

was found to influence career decision making difficulty significantly. A negative relationship was seen between career decision making difficulties and effective personality which has a combination of traits of extraversion, consciousness and intellect.

Wang et al (2023) proposed a ‘Career Self-Management Model’ based on Albert Bandura's (1997) Self-efficacy Theory and general social cognitive theory which proposes that the interaction between various career elements paves the way to an individual's career path (Lent and Brown, 1994). This model illustrates how to improve the process and quality of career decision-making in college students pursuing higher studies in vocational institutions. It also explored the effect of career goals, values and career self-efficacy on career decision-making. The data was collected through a questionnaire from a sample of 654 students in China. The findings revealed that both career values and career self-efficacy had significant positive effect on making right career decisions. These results further validated the effectiveness of the “Career Self-Management Model” for career decision-making in college students.

It is revealed from the review of related literature that very few studies have been conducted on career decision making of students to explore its relation to the academic abilities, self-efficacy, career self-management, personality and parenting styles. However, none of the studies have been conducted in relation to clarity of career goals. Even the standardised scale for assessing clarity of career goals is not available. Hence, the investigator decided to take up the present study to evaluate career decision making ability of senior secondary students in relation to clarity of career goals. The investigator also prepared a self-constructed and validated tool for assessing clarity of career goals.

Objectives

The study was carried out with the following objectives.

1. To compare the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in Government and Private Schools.
2. To compare the clarity of career goals among senior secondary school students of Government and Private Schools.

3. To study the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in relation to their clarity of goals (high and low).

Hypotheses

Since there is dearth of research studies on the variables under study, the null hypotheses were formulated as follows:

1. There exists no significant difference in the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in Government and Private Schools.
2. There exists no significant difference in the clarity of career goals among senior secondary school students in Government and Private Schools.
3. There exists no significant difference in the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in relation to their high and low levels of clarity of goals.

Design of the study

In the present study, descriptive survey design was used. The descriptive survey describes and interprets what it is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions about ongoing processes, effects that are evident; although descriptive research design often considers past influences as they relate to current conditions.

Sample of the study

In the present study, random sampling technique was employed. The sample of the study consisted of 200 senior secondary school students from Chandigarh. These students were selected randomly from list of government and private schools.

Tools

1. Career Decision Making Scale (CDMS_KS) by Dr Kirandeep Singh (2014)
2. Self-constructed and validated scale of Clarity of Career Goals

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis: 1

Hypothesis 1 states, “There exists no significant difference in the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in Government and Private Schools.” Results are presented vide Table 1. The pictorial form of the table has been presented in figure 1.

Career Decision Making Ability	N	Mean	S.D.	SED	t-ratio	Level of Significance
CDM						Sign. .01 level
Govt.	100	13.81	1.541	0.15	10.21	
Pvt.	100	11.01	2.276	0.22		
CIS						
Govt.	100	17.25	5.95	0.59	10.98	
Pvt.	100	25.33	4.32	0.43		

Note: CDM-Career Decision Scale

CIS-career Indecision scale

Table 1: Mean, S.D & Mean differentials between Career Decision Making Ability of Senior Secondary School Students in Government (N=100) and Private Schools (N=100)

Discussion of results based on Table 1

Table 1 presents the mean, S.D and mean differentials of career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in government and private schools. The mean scores of career decision making ability of government and private school students was 13.81 and 11.01 respectively and SD was 1.541 and 2.276 respectively. The calculated t-ratio was found to be 10.21, which was significant at .01 level.

The mean scores of career indecision of senior secondary school students in government and private schools were 17.25 and 25.33 and SD was 5.95 and 4.32

respectively. The calculated t-ratio was found to be 10.98, which was significant at .01 level. This indicates the government and private senior secondary school students differ significantly both in their career decision making ability and career Indecision ability. Government school students showed better career decision making ability than private schools. This could be due to the reason that students in government schools are exposed to a variety of vocational courses at senior secondary level, so they may be better in terms of career decision making ability than private school students.

Thus, first null hypothesis, i.e. “There exists no significant difference in the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in government and private schools,” has been rejected.

These results are pictorially presented in Fig.1.

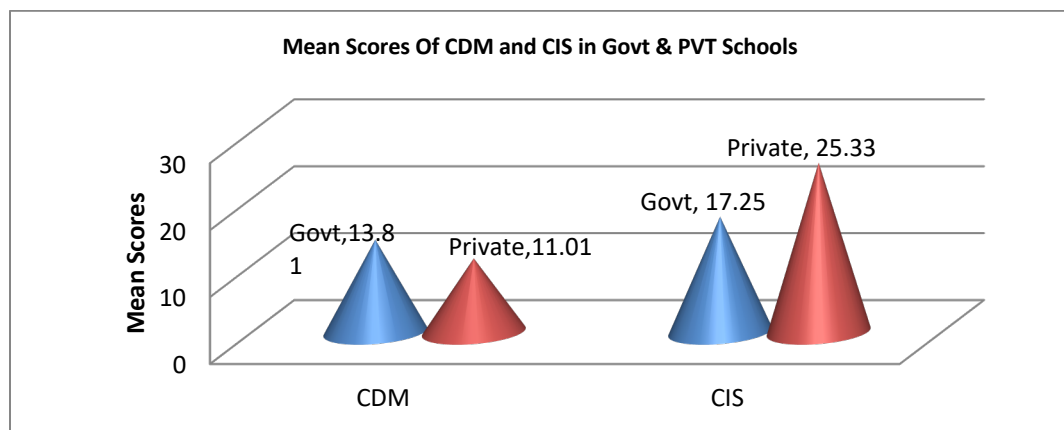


Fig. 1

Hypothesis: 2

Hypothesis 2 states, “There exists no significant difference in the clarity of career goals among senior secondary school students in Government and Private Schools.” Results are presented vide Table 2. The pictorial form of the table has been presented in figure 2.

Clarity of Career Goals	N	Mean	SD	SED	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Govt.	100	55.14	25.15	2.515	5.39	Sign. At .01 level
Pvt.	100	40.06	12.27	1.227		

Table 2: Mean, S.D & Mean differentials in the Clarity of Career Goals of Senior Secondary School Students in Government (N=100) and Private schools (N=100).

Discussion of results based on Table 2

Table 2 represents the Mean, S.D and Mean Differentials of the clarity of career goals of senior secondary government and private school students. The mean scores of clarity of career goals of government and private schools were 55.14 and 40.06, and SD was 25.15 and 12.27 respectively. The calculated t-ratio was found to be 5.39, which was significant at .01 level, indicating that the clarity of career goals in government and private school students differs significantly.

Thus, second null hypothesis is. i.e. “there exists no significant difference in the clarity of career goals among senior secondary school students in Government and Private schools” was rejected.

Further, government school students showed better clarity in career goals than private school students. This could be due to the reason that students in government schools have lot to accomplish due to their socio-economic background than private school students, who are from well-off families and are not very bothered about their vocation and money.

These results are pictorially presented in fig.2.

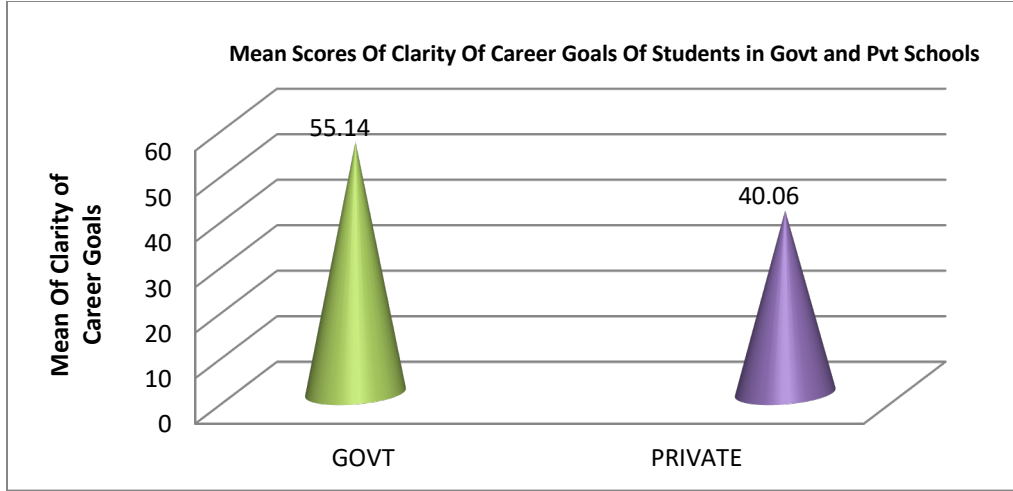


Fig.2

Hypothesis: 3

Hypothesis 3 states that “there exists no significant difference in the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in relation to their high and low levels of clarity of goals”. This hypothesis has been tested with the help of data entered in table 3. The pictorial form of the table has been presented in figure 3.

CDM with COCG	N	Mean	SD	SED	t-ratio	Level of significance
High	54	13.42	1.72	0.23	2.78	Sign. At .01 level
Low	54	12.25	2.54	0.43		

Table 3: Mean difference in the Career Decision Making Ability (CDM) of Senior Secondary School Students in relation to their High and Low Clarity of Career Goals(COCG) (N=54 each)

Discussion of results based on Table 3

Table 3 presents the Mean, S.D and Mean differentials of the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in relation to their high and low level of clarity of career goals. The mean score of career decision making ability of students with high and low clarity of career goals was 13.42 and 12.25 and SD was 1.72 and 2.54 respectively. The calculated t-ratio was found to be 2.78 which was significant at .01 level.

Thus, hypotheses 3, i.e. “there exists no significant difference in the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in relation to their high and low levels of clarity of goals” has been rejected.

These results are further clear with figure 3.

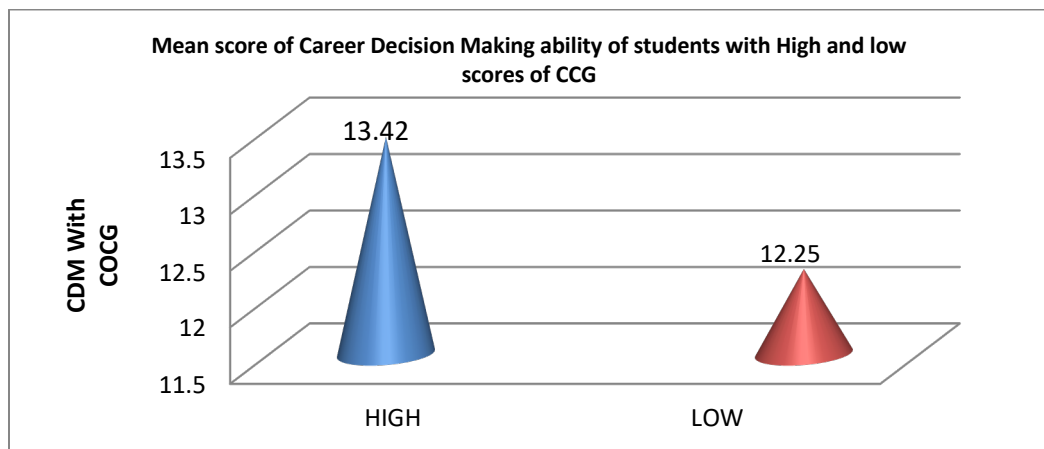


Fig. 3

Findings of the study

1. Significant differences were found between the career decision making ability of senior secondary school students in Government and Private schools. Government school students showed better career decision making ability than private schools.
2. Clarity of career goals differs significantly among senior secondary school

students of Government and Private schools. Government school students showed better clarity in career goals than private school students.

3. Career decision making ability of senior secondary school was found to be significantly related to clarity of career goals.

Educational implications

The present study has following educational implications:

1. Since the career decision making ability of government and private secondary school students was found to be significantly different, thus the teachers in both type of schools should put efforts to help the students about taking right career decisions.
2. Clarity of career goals is an important factor that contributes to right career decision making. Thus, there is a need for the active involvement of parents and teachers to identify the interests and talents of students right from the beginning and help them avoid confusion and indecision.

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Social Media: The Changing Face of Marketing and its Influence on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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Corporations and firms throughout the world are constantly exploring new ways to reach consumers. Traditional techniques are just a small fragment of the diverse approaches used to market products. There is a shift towards a more integrated economy thereby merging national markets into one global marketplace. Social media is gaining popularity in every part of the world. Firms are constantly looking for innovative ways to use social media in their marketing strategies. Thus, the effective utilization of social platforms is essential for creating and maintaining a competitive edge. The aim of this study is to measure the impact of social media on customers' buying process. The results conclude that consumers are positively influenced by social media platforms which shows that ads on social media are influencing most of the respondents. Findings show that buying decision of consumers is majorly influenced by personal factors.

Keywords: social media, consumer behavior, social media marketing, social media platforms

Introduction

The web has revolutionized the world and its entire way of operating by bringing the world closer. It is a new world - a world where everyone has the ability to influence opinion; a world where everyone has the ability to influence purchase; a world where distances are down to zero; a world where voice has speed greater than light; the world that is today, is a world shaped by social media and the free flow of conversations that the phenomenon enables and endorses. People are living in the digital age, a period where individuals have access to never-ending

data at any time. Web and virtual communities have transformed societies with widespread access to information and enhanced communication abilities. Replacing the conventional ways of promotion, it has provided new opportunities for companies to engage users on the web. Firms have recognized the advantages of creating value for their brands on web.

Consumer Behavior

It is a multidimensional discipline which reflects the totality of consumer decisions with respect to acquisition, utilization and disposal activities. Marketers need to figure out personal and group influences which have a considerable impact on users. Demographic factors vary from person to person and include age, income, economic conditions, occupation, gender etc. Cultural factors influence buying habits deeply, a person learns beliefs at a very early stage of childhood. We always seek confirmation from family and friends and avoid things that are not socially acceptable. There is an urgent need to understand the thinking process and psychology of consumers.

Social media marketing

Sharing insights, content, news and opinions on the web and being influenced by them has become a common behavioural practice. Social media platforms are websites and applications that allow users to have conversations and share information through a virtual network. You can watch interesting commercials on Instagram, post opinions on Twitter and share insights on Facebook. Emergence and popularity of social media has led to a communication ecosystem which lays out a new framework of personal associations. It is no surprise that firms have switched to digital media to connect with target market.

“Social media marketing is leveraging the ‘social’ through the ‘media’ to ‘market’ businesses’ constituents,” according to Weinberg. It gives an advantage to firms to engage and interact with prospects with the aim of creating brand awareness, getting feedbacks, building relationships and driving traffic at a low cost. Companies with a small budget are taking full advantage and using this marketing technique to promote their enterprise to gain visibility, viability and sustainability to survive in the modern competitive era (Taneja, 2014).

Literature Review

Chung and Austria, in 2010, discovered that attitudes toward social media ads are closely related to social media information and interaction gratifications. Boateng and Oke (2015) discovered that consumer attitudes toward social media advertising are influenced by perceived corporate reputation, materialism and credibility. Nusairat et al (2020) found that design elements, entertainment, engagement and informativeness of commercials had the greatest impact on consumer perceptions. Zhafirah (2019) discovered a strong and positive correlation between participants positive attitudes toward the Facebook ad content and their purchasing behavior. Ramnarain and Govender (2013) discovered customers' opinions of social media commercials are influenced by information, entertainment, the validity of the advertisement and the its design. Klein (2015) concluded that consumers who view social media advertisements more are more likely to click on the ad and have a more favorable opinion of the brand. Beig and Khan (2004) found that interaction and content sharing significantly affect sensory, emotional, behavioral and intellectual experiences. Kim and Han (2014) explored how customization enhanced the advertising message informativeness, trustworthiness and pleasure. Shanahan (2019) concluded that perceived personalization enhances consumer brand engagement and attachment, enhancing perceived quality and brand loyalty of businesses that advertise on Facebook. Online shopping is a thriving market globally and it provides a globalized level of cross-cultural segmentation (Vinerean et al, 2013). Prospective customers are more interested in recommendations from other users than vendor-generated product description (Ridings and Gefen, 2004). Social media have transformed customers from passive observers to active participants who actually create vast content through online conversations, interactions and behaviors (Malthouse, 2013). WOM has transformed into eWOM, which is exchange of positive and negative reviews and interaction over the Internet (Hennig Thurau, 2004). Chang's (2014) study validates that "shoppers prefer products with high consistent reviews on the core aspects of the product" and advises companies to create a space for content reviews of their products.

Objectives of the Study

1. The purpose of the study is to find the impact of social media on customer buying behavior and how firms are responding to such changes.
2. An attempt is made to discover what types of activities consumers are engaged in; the most used social platforms and the factors that motivate consumers purchase behaviour.
3. To find the significant differences in mean of demographic groups (gender, age and income).

Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary data are used for the research. The paper is mainly based on primary data collected by respondents using Google form. Research papers, articles and books have been studied for collecting secondary data. It includes the people of North India of different ages, income and occupations. The data is collected from 205 participants through convenient sampling. Charts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and t-test are used.

Analysis and Interpretation

This section represents the analysis which has been made on the basis of data collected from respondents. Out of 205 respondents, 100 are men and 105 are women. 95% of respondents use social media. 1-3 hours a day are spent online by majority of customers. 59% of respondents are strongly influenced by social media and 75% of respondents feel that their perception regarding social media has changed with passage of time. About 87% of respondents feel that social media is necessary in today's digital era. 83% consider it an electronic mouth of publicity. 82.4% of respondents say that social media provides great choices of products. 80% of people say that information available on social media is reliable and trustworthy. 54.6% of respondents state that social media helps in building relationships.

For the fulfillment of objective 1, to find out the impact of social media on customer buying behavior and how firms respond to such changes, we have used percentage analysis of the primary data collected from respondents. Firms are

adapting to the era of social media by engaging with consumers directly, building brand presence and leveraging influencers for marketing. Companies use data analytics to understand consumer behaviour and tailor their strategies for online visibility and consumer engagement.

How consumers are influenced by social media

The digital landscape is hyper-competitive. Ads are not just competing with other ads for attention. They are competing with everything on the internet. 31% of the respondents are influenced by advertisements on social media, 15% are impacted by online discussion forums, 14% of them are affected by blogging, 7% are inclined towards paid partnerships.



Figure 1. How consumers are influenced by social media

For the fulfillment of objective 2, i.e. to discover in what types of activities consumers are engaged, most used social media platforms and the factors that motivate purchase decisions are studied.

Major factors influencing purchase decisions of consumers

The opportunity before companies is to understand consumer trends and leverage them to expand portfolio and drive future growth to ensure that these will act as growth engines for future. The findings of the study show that people are mainly influenced by personal factors (74%) followed by social (13%), psychological factors (8%), and least by cultural factors (5%).

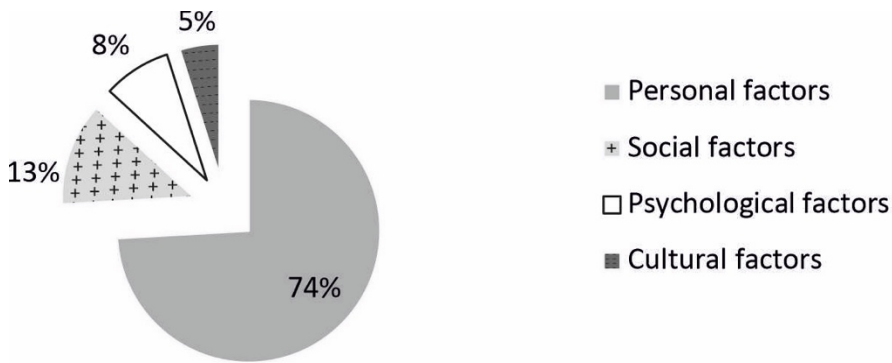


Figure 2. Various factors influencing purchase decisions

Social media platform which influences the consumers the most

Over 300 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute, and five million videos are watched every day. The world is now dominated by influencers, brands and bloggers. The study reveals that YouTube influences the respondents the most (38%), followed by Instagram (35%), Facebook (20%) and Pinterest (5%).

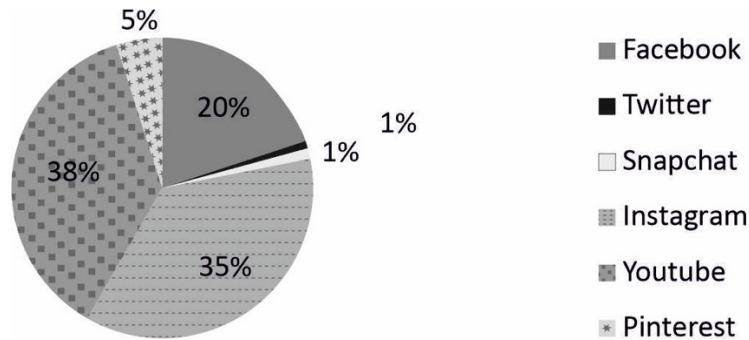


Figure 3. Different social media platforms influencing consumers

People using social media for different purposes

Social media platforms give us the capability to find out what is happening in the world, connect with each other, gain knowledge, share insights and get access to the infinite ocean of information 24/7 without any boundary limitations. The study reveals that 50.2% of the respondents are using social media for connecting with people, 69.3% of them are using social media sites for entertainment, 12.7%

of them engage in social websites for business, 32.7% of them uses it for research, 55.1% are using them for exchange of information and discussions.

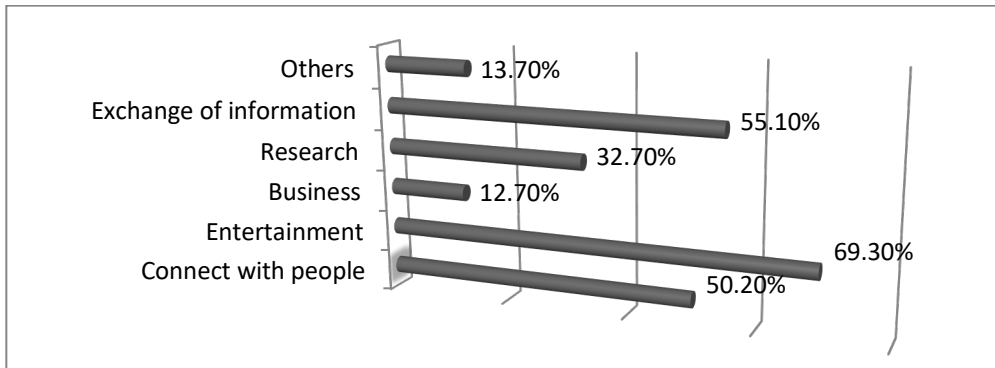


Figure 4. People using social media for different purposes

Different categories of products which are most influenced by social media

Clothing and fashion products (53.2%) are highly influenced by social media, which is employed as a major advertising tool by them. These apps have allowed brands to curate a polished feed of high fashion content, such that one would see on billboards or magazines, further. These are followed by beauty and healthcare (13.2%), electronic (12.7%), food and beverages (8.8%), home supplies (5.9%) and others (6.3%).

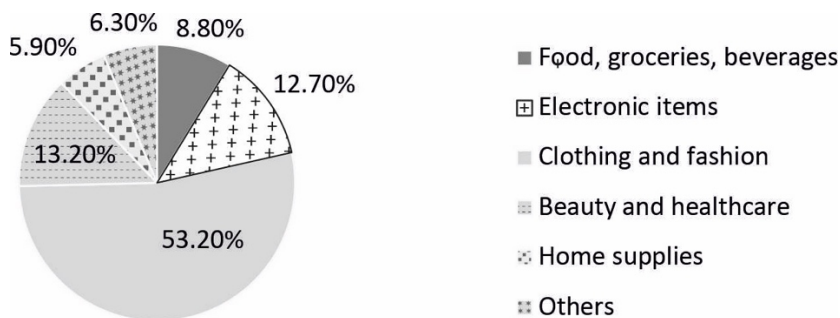


Figure 5. Different categories of products influenced by social media platforms

For the fulfillment of objective 3, i.e. to find out the significant differences in the perceptions of consumers on various dimensions on social media marketing,

standard deviation and T-test have been used to find the significant difference in mean of the groups on the basis of gender, age and income level.

No	Statements	Male N= 100		Female N= 105		t-value	p-value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
S1	Social media influence your buying decisions	1.44	0.499	1.38	0.488	0.856	0.196
S2	You pay attention to ads or pop-ups on social media	2.42	0.727	2.37	0.800	0.455	0.325
S3	Social media necessary in promoting brands and gives vision in digital era	1.18	0.386	1.07	0.251	2.480*	0.007
S4	You follow brands or pages on social media	2.06	0.776	2.02	0.820	0.367	0.357
S5	Social media influencers & celebrity endorsements influence you	2.13	0.706	2.21	0.768	-0.772	0.221
S6	You are follower of trends on social media and influenced by them	2.11	0.680	2.08	0.743	0.340	0.367
S7	Reviews & experiences of social connections influence you	2.05	0.869	2.01	0.882	0.331	0.371
S8	You make unplanned purchase influenced by deals in social sites	2.11	0.751	2.23	0.750	-1.131	0.130
S9	Social media is word of mouth publicity of products	1.18	0.386	1.14	0.352	0.719	0.236
S10	Social media provides great choices to customers	1.19	0.394	1.16	0.370	0.525	0.300
S11	Information & content in social media is reliable and trustworthy	2.55	0.747	2.37	0.812	-1.972*	0.048
S12	Social media provides information with accessibility and saves time	1.18	0.386	1.14	0.352	0.719	0.236
S13	Social media creates a personalized experience	1.36	0.482	1.30	0.463	0.836	0.202
S14	Social media helps in building long term relationships & loyalty	1.50	0.492	1.40	0.502	-1.968*	0.067
S15	Your perception and attitude change about social media marketing with passage of time	1.28	0.451	1.22	0.416	1.005	0.158

Source: Primary Data

*Significant at 5% level of significance

Table 1: Comparison of Social Media Impact on Gender Basis

Table 1 shows the perceptions of consumers of 2 groups (male and female) with respect to social media which shows that overall high mean score is obtained from statement 11 (2.46). In order to find the significant difference between two groups: male and female, t test has been used. The results reveal that t value has turned significant at 5% level at statements 3, 11 and 14. Mean score of men is higher than that of women, which implies that men have a more favorable attitude towards social media than women, which shows that there is a significant difference in mean of the male and female.

Statements	≤ 25 years N= 109		> 25 years N= 96		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
S1	1.36	0.482	1.47	0.502	-1.990*	0.054
S2	2.34	0.830	2.46	0.679	-1.127	0.134
S3	1.11	0.314	1.14	0.344	-0.548	0.291
S4	1.95	0.821	2.14	0.763	-1.99*	0.052
S5	2.10	0.804	2.25	0.649	-1.467	0.075
S6	1.94	0.731	2.26	0.653	-3.241*	0.001
S7	2.00	0.871	2.06	0.880	-0.510	0.305
S8	2.10	0.745	2.25	0.754	-1.421	0.078
S9	1.15	0.356	1.18	0.384	-0.584	0.279
S10	1.16	0.364	1.20	0.401	-0.780	0.217
S11	2.40	0.829	2.53	0.725	-1.176	0.123
S12	1.13	0.336	1.20	0.401	-1.335	0.089
S13	1.27	0.444	1.41	0.494	-2.126*	0.017
S14	1.41	0.495	1.50	0.503	-1.248	0.106
S15	1.23	0.422	1.27	0.447	-0.680	0.248

*Significant at 5% level of significance

Table 2: Comparison of Social Media Impact on Age Basis

Table 2 shows the attitudes of consumers of 2 groups (above 25 and below 25 age) towards social media which shows that overall high mean score is obtained

from statement 11 (2.47). The results reveal that t value has turned significant at 5% level at statements 1, 4, 6 and 13. On all these statements, consumers belonging to the “above 25” age group have higher mean score than customers below 25 years of age, which implies that the former have a favorable attitude towards social media, which shows that there is a significant difference in mean of the aged above 25 or below.

Statements	≤ 25,000/- per month N= 122		> 25,000/- per month N= 83		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
S1	1.42	0.495	1.40	0.492	0.291	0.386
S2	2.35	0.812	2.46	0.686	-1.001	0.167
S3	1.14	0.348	1.10	0.297	0.948	0.179
S4	1.98	0.797	2.13	0.793	-1.388	0.083
S5	2.16	0.765	2.18	0.701	-0.162	0.437
S6	2.05	0.726	2.16	0.689	-1.062	0.145
S7	2.02	0.857	2.04	0.903	-0.092	0.463
S8	2.14	0.742	2.22	0.766	-0.720	0.235
S9	1.16	0.372	1.16	0.366	0.139	0.445
S10	1.18	0.386	1.17	0.377	0.214	0.415
S11	2.45	0.794	2.48	0.771	-0.279	0.390
S12	1.17	0.379	1.14	0.354	0.532	0.300
S13	1.32	0.468	1.35	0.480	-0.440	0.330
S14	1.45	0.500	1.46	0.501	-0.099	0.461
S15	1.27	0.446	1.22	0.415	0.881	0.193

*Significant at 5% level of significance

Table 3: Comparison of Social Media Impact on Income basis

Table 3 shows the attitudes of consumers of 2 groups (income above 25000 & below 25000) towards social media which shows that overall high mean score is obtained from statement 11 (2.47). There is no significant difference in the mean of both groups having income more than 25000 or below.

Conclusion

High speed internet, user-friendliness, cost effectiveness, two-way interaction and wide accessibility have contributed to commercialization in the form of social marketing. The popularity of social media has emerged as an opportunity for firms to direct advertising efforts. According to statistics, Facebook has 2.91 billion active users, Instagram has 1.47 billion, Twitter has 436 million and Snapchat has 557 million. Customers have gone through a drastic change; from being gullible they have become responsible. Any organization, big or small, has its online presence on social media. Companies are achieving good returns by embracing the web and using social media efficiently. It is very important for enterprises to make use of it efficiently and grasp all opportunities that will ultimately help in engaging and retaining the customers for a lifetime.

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**Digital Media and Animal Advocacy in India:
A Comprehensive Study**

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Social media platforms have developed into vital tools for connecting a wide range of people and organisations on a worldwide scale. Through digital media, people are interacting with one another in different ways to advocate for social change, whether it be through #BlackLivesMatter or #MeToo. When people with particular interests enter the public realm, they engage in novel methods of participation and collective action that have been formed by Web 2.0. This paper analyses the ways in which digital media brings social issues related to animal advocacy to the fore as well as the manner in which animal advocacy campaigns are articulated and discussed in the digital media. It also sheds light on veganism, which is a way of life based on animal-advocacy ethic. Veganism is often considered one of the tactics of the animal rights movements. NGOs like PETA India are vocal about animal suffering, and urge people to go vegan in their campaigns. The paper also studies the use of internet discourse subgenres like memes and hashtags by social media platforms to promote digital activism. This paper draws insights from Indian organisations like PETA India working in the space of animal-advocacy related issues to understand the manner in which animal advocacy initiatives are led and harnessed through social media. While

there have been enough studies on NGOs, animal advocacy and the impact of digital media, the complex matrix of these three key aspects has not been studied within the Indian context. This paper thus helps develop a deeper understanding of digital media communication deployed by Indian animal advocacy organisations.

Keywords: digital activism, digital media, animal advocacy, animal advocacy organisations, PETA

Introduction

Activism is an action on behalf of a cause that goes beyond routine processes, which could include rallies, fasting, public meetings etc. (Martin, 2007: 19). In the course of history, activism was essential in putting an end to slavery, safeguarding workers from exploitation and challenging dictatorships. It continues to play a significant role in opposing any kind of discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, creed, and so on. Digital activism is the practice of engaging in various kinds of activism through electronic communication technologies, like social media, particularly Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, YouTube, podcasts and emails. This enables social movements to communicate faster and spread local news to a wider audience. Digitally mediated social activism is also referred to as Internet activism, online activism, cyber activism, e-activism, e-campaigning, digital campaigning and electronic advocacy. However, the term ‘digital activism’ is preferred by critics as it is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Unlike other terms, it includes most of the digitally enabled services and devices used by activists.

Advocacy fundamentally entails resisting power relations at all levels, working with institutions to empower the marginalised, and strategically using information, opportunities and skills to influence public policies to generate systemic change. Advocacy asserts that both the message and the individuals who rally behind that message unite in the name of principles greater than themselves and are, thus, vital to lobbying (Rane and Salem, 2012: 97-111). In modern technology-saturated cultures, the ability to use digital technology is becoming as important as literacy. In recent years, social movements have adopted digital

technology for publicity and effective communication. Therefore, it is not surprising that animal advocacy organisations are focusing their communication and dissemination efforts on digital media.

In recent times, the internet has become a vital tool for animal advocacy organisations, activists and groups. Given the popularity of animals' pictures and videos online, it is not surprising that groups and activists are attempting to raise awareness about animal issues among social media users. Animal rescue and shelter organisations frequently publicise their events and animals, which boosts adoption. Almost all animal organisations today rely on digital media as a fundraising tool to allow general donation. The main objective of this paper is to analyse the role of digital media for animal advocacy in India. The paper analyses how digital media brings social issues related to animal advocacy to the fore as well as the manner in which animal advocacy campaigns are articulated and discussed in digital media.

Social media platforms have developed into vital tools for connecting a wide range of people and organisations on a worldwide scale. Through digital media, people are interacting with one another in different ways to advocate social change, connecting through global movements such as #BlackLivesMatter or #MeToo. When people with particular interests enter the public realm, they engage in novel kinds of participation and collective action that have been formed by Web 2.0. In today's world, people are making use of social media for disseminating information and for pushing against the prevailing methods of sharing news items, which in several cases distort stories altogether. The ubiquitous presence of digital media provides enormous possibilities for activism, discussion, and participation on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which are seen as cost-effective tools to strengthen outreach efforts, promote engagement, and bolster collective action (Chaudhri and Kaul, 2017: 282). In global discourses, terms like "Twitter Revolution" and "Facebook Revolution" were rapidly adopted, while being criticized for obscuring and exaggerating the role of social media in bringing about change on the ground (Sreberny, 2015: 359). Nevertheless, this is no longer the case. As compared to conventional activism, the realm of digital activism is far-reaching, immediate and impactful.

Not too long ago, promoting social movements through activism was limited to marches, protests, rallies, fasting, writing to a representative of the government or chaining to a fence. In earlier times, creating a meaningful impact and building a successful movement often required a significant amount of time, involving months or even years to recruit, organise, and retain participants. Undoubtedly, with the emergence of new media and technological developments, new forms of activism have evolved. The transition of the public sphere into a virtual space of participation and engagement has resulted in the creation of a new phrase known as ‘digital activism’. In *Digital Activism Decoded*, Mary C. Joyce opines: “Digital technology infrastructure – the combination of networks, code, applications and devices that make up the physical infrastructure of digital activism – is a starting point but not an ending point. Differences in economic, social, and political factors ultimately alter how activists use technology” (2010: 2). Thus, digital activism can be defined as the deployment of digital technology for achieving social change-oriented goals.

The prominence of digital activism is determined by factors other than the availability of technology and infrastructure, such as the manner in which it is employed. In this context, William’s statement, the ‘plural use of technology’ is crucial, in which he establishes that whatever may be the original intention for developing a technology, subsequently, social groups with diverse interests or needs either adapt or modify and subvert the uses to which a technology is put to (Lister et al., 2009: 86), for instance, social media networks were not intended to be used for coordination protests, but such actions have emerged as a result of users’ demands and practices. Thus, it has challenged our understanding of conventional activism.

While digital media might not have produced a complete paradigm shift in activism, it has been incorporated into activists’ ongoing activities and has helped diffuse new dynamics of activism, as research studies reveal (Juris, 2012: 268). Insufficiently resourced social movement organisations or activists have benefited from the use of digital media to establish social movements. Social media platforms facilitate the expansion of public engagement for various organisations across all societal strata.

Over the years, social media platforms have been increasingly utilised by animal advocacy organisations for addressing concerns related to animal exploitation and suffering. Digitally mediated platforms like Facebook and Instagram have turned into new avenues for activists to share stories of animals' suffering, voice their concerns and show solidarity, effectively raising awareness about animal welfare issues. With the increasing reliance of social movements on digital technology, there is an emergence of new kinds of solidarity, such as imagined solidarity and situated solidarity, in such digitally mediated environments (Stewart and Schultze, 2019: 2).

Animal advocacy as a social movement is a relatively new social phenomenon that has not received much scholarly attention yet. This paper delves into drawing out insights from Indian organisations like PETA India working in the space of animal-advocacy-related issues to understand the manner in which animal advocacy initiatives are led and harnessed through social media. While there have been enough studies on NGOs, animal advocacy and the impact of digital media, the complex matrix of these three key aspects has not been studied within the Indian context. This paper thus helps develop a deeper understanding of the kind of digital media communication deployed by Indian animal advocacy organisations.

Animal Advocacy Organisations in India

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that work for animal advocacy today attempt to highlight their campaigns and initiatives via digital media. For large-scale information dissemination, lobbying, community development and cause-related advocacy, digital media provides new forms of networked power between organisations and their members, enabling faster response from supporters, facilitating campaigns and amplifying mobilization. Some NGOs utilise social media for gaining followers and promoting their organisation's credibility by leveraging social media's impactful broadcasting feature. The use of social media has been altered from 'participatory cultures' into a 'culture of connectivity' (Dijk, 2006: 154).

Today, animal advocacy organisations use their websites to raise awareness about animal exploitation and to enlighten the public about animal welfare in general.

PETA India, PFA and FIAPO use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for monitoring animal abuse and creating awareness about animal welfare. Throughout their projects, these organisations work to enhance the welfare of animals on a social and legal level. On social media platforms, these groups promote campaigns and online petitions. Nevertheless, offline actions are also planned to increase their impact on socio-political changes.

However, it is crucial to consider that the animal rights movement is not unified as different groups have diverse objectives, agendas and ideologies. However, there are three primary orientations among animal protectionists, like animal liberation, animal rights and animal welfare, but they all “are united on the principle that animals are sentient beings rather than ‘things’ to be commodified as food, research tools, or sporting trophies” (Munro, 2012: 169). Advocacy organisations are thus organised actors that systematically pursue particular causes (Prakash and Gugerty, 2010), “often through directing information at targets with the intention of impelling change” (McPherson, 2014: 125).

In order to understand the impact of digital platform-led advocacy, this paper analyses the framework of three non-profit Indian organisations, namely People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA India), People for Animals (PFA) and Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO). However, there are many others which work for the welfare of animals in India, including Animal Aid Unlimited, Wildlife SOS, Mission Rabies, Blue Cross of India, In Defense of Animals, Humane Society International and so on. In India, there is also a statutory advisory body on Animal Welfare Laws, named the Animal Welfare Board of India, which was established under Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (Act No. 59 of 1960).

Digital media appears to have a significant impact on animal advocacy. This is evidenced by the establishment of official accounts of animal advocacy organisations on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as the implementation of a number of campaign strategies on the new media platforms. Some of the most well-known Indian animal advocacy organisations, such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA India) and People for Animals (PFA) post an average of 14 posts per week on Instagram to promote

civic engagement. This demonstrates how digital tools are becoming the key advocacy tools for animal activism.

In the subsequent sections, the paper analyses the aforementioned Indian animal advocacy organisations in order to understand their digital advocacy practices.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

Established in Mumbai in 2000, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India operates at the intersection of animal advocacy and the dynamic landscape of digital media. Guided by the principle that “animals are not ours to experiment on, eat, wear, use for entertainment, or abuse in any other way,” PETA India has strategically harnessed the power of digital media, particularly social media, to advance its mission (PETA India, no date).

PETA India’s focus extends beyond traditional animal rights organisations. Instead, it employs digital platforms as a conduit to shed light on the intricacies of animal exploitation, aligning with the broader discourse on the ethical treatment of animals. The organisation recognises that the term ‘digital media’ encompasses not only the dissemination of information but also the nuanced workings of social media algorithms that drive content visibility and engagement, ensuring that critical information about animal rights reaches a wider audience.

PETA India employs a multifaceted approach to optimise its online presence. It consistently produces visually compelling and shareable content, such as impactful images and videos, aligning with the preferences of social media algorithms. For instance, campaigns showcasing the ethical treatment of animals or addressing pressing issues like cruelty in the dairy industry, through captivating expressions like “Panic, pain, fear – they feel it all, just like us”, “Your rides are no fun for us!”, and “Please don’t let them kill me” are curated to resonate with their target audience (@petaindia, 2023a; @petaindia, 2023b; @petaindia, 2023c). Hashtags play a pivotal role, with PETA India employing them to enhance the discoverability of its content. For instance, popular hashtags, such as #AnimalRights, #GoVegan, #NotOursToAbuse, #CrueltyFree, and #EndSpeciesism related to animal welfare or environmental concerns, help to tap into broader conversations and increase the reach of their advocacy efforts.

Veganism, one of the key components of PETA India's advocacy, is seamlessly woven into its digital strategy. The organisation actively promotes a vegan lifestyle through its campaigns by not only urging individuals to adopt a cruelty-free lifestyle but also facilitating the transition by utilising data-driven insights to provide recommendations, including recipes, products, and essential supplements. Beyond mere visibility metrics, PETA India's substantial presence on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube reflects its adept handling of social media algorithms. With 1.4 million followers on Facebook, 219k on Instagram, and 165.1k on Twitter, the organisation strategically positions itself to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

The official website of PETA India also has a section titled 'Media Centre', where it keeps posting news about successful campaigns and petitions filed by PETA India. Additionally, it features a section titled 'Action Centre', where individuals can take action by clicking on 'Take Action' against animal abuse. Recently, it has begun asking to act via "URGENT! Help Us Rescue Bullied Elephant Jeymalyatha", "Help Ban Caging of Birds", "Help Ban Animals in Circuses", and other such issues related to animal exploitation.

In the realm of digital advocacy, PETA India has done a substantial amount of work, such as initiating frequent social media campaigns, identifying social media trends and disseminating useful information. The organisation employs new media to spread awareness among public about animal exploitation practised all around. It aids the actual mobilisation process by engaging more people and increasing participation possibilities, whereby participants take to the streets to engage in real actions, such as boycotts or protests.

PETA India has been consistent across all of its successful programs. The fact that PETA India has invested in the power of the media since its inception speaks much about how it taps into digital activism. Given its 1.4 million followers on Facebook and the manner in which it constructs campaigns throughout the year, it is evident that digital media is an integral part of its advocacy efforts. PETA India has been consistently building salience around animal exploitation through the use of effective media advocacy tools. This also suggests that PETA India has been investing significant resources in media messaging, campaign development and

media alliance as well as developing eternal returns around the animal welfare issue. PETA India has also collaborated with different film and music personalities on a variety of animal advocacy initiatives that have garnered substantial online engagement.

The very fact that PETA India has been working for the last two decades on establishing a persuasive discourse on animal welfare is evidenced by its work. Moreover, based on the number of followers it has across all social media platforms, PETA India has made excellent use of digital media. This demonstrates that raising awareness within the realm of animal advocacy requires commitment and investment.

People for Animals (PFA)

People for Animals (PFA), a non-governmental organisation headquartered in New Delhi, has been a stalwart in animal welfare for over three decades, employing a strategic fusion of traditional advocacy and digital media approaches. Founded in 1992 by Maneka Gandhi, PFA harnesses the power of social media to amplify its mission and discourse surrounding animal rights.

PFA's extensive network comprises over 160 regional centres across India, with a membership base exceeding 5 lakh volunteers/members and 26 hospitals. The organisation aims to establish an animal welfare centre in every district of India, fostering a comprehensive approach to rescue, rehabilitation and advocacy. Leveraging social media algorithms, PFA actively engages in content distribution and engagement strategies. The organisation creates compelling posts, videos, and graphics designed to raise awareness about animal rights issues. The visibility of these materials is intricately linked to the algorithms governing user engagement, ensuring targeted and impactful outreach.

With a conspicuous absence on YouTube, PFA strategically engages with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, leveraging social media algorithms to disseminate requests, make announcements, and foster a dynamic online presence. On Facebook, PFA boasts a substantial following with 151k likes, where the organisation showcases a blend of content, including updates on animal rescue operations and impactful videos addressing animal exploitation. The platform

serves as a hub for PFA to connect with its audience and shed light on critical issues within the realm of animal welfare.

The organisation maintains an active presence on Instagram and Twitter, with 82.3k followers and 17.4k, respectively. On these platforms, PFA consistently shares updates on various events, rescue operations, donation requests, and other pertinent issues related to animal rights. The dynamic and engaging content contributes to building issue salience and maintaining a vibrant online community.

Notably, PFA has entered into strategic partnerships, such as collaboration with A+ a Pets, a brand specialising in products for dogs and cats. Leveraging its Instagram feed, PFA seamlessly integrates promotional posts for A+ a Pets' products. This partnership not only enhances PFA's reach but also aligns with its mission by promoting ethically sourced and animal-friendly products. In a proactive move to educate and empower the public, PFA produced an educational video series titled '#AhimsaMatters' on Instagram. This series serves a dual purpose, raising awareness about Animal Protection Laws in India and empowering individuals to take preventive actions against animal cruelty. Through visually compelling content, PFA makes use of the storytelling potential of digital media to create a meaningful impact.

The strategic use of various digital platforms, coupled with partnerships and educational initiatives, exemplifies PFA's commitment to leverage the power of digital media in diverse ways. The organisation's nuanced approach to content creation and engagement underscores the importance of digital media in advancing its mission to prevent animal cruelty and promote animal welfare in India. The organisation, while navigating the evolving landscape of digital technologies, grapples with the dual nature of fostering a sense of belonging among its audience and managing the accompanying expectations and responsibilities (Marlowe et al., 2017: 92).

In its digital advocacy journey, PFA exhibits a focused mobilisation strategy, primarily directing outreach to engage with district authorities. This targeted approach aligns with its mission, reflecting a clear understanding of how digital advocacy can have a tangible impact. By concentrating on district authorities,

PFA employs digital media to exert influence at the grassroots level, emphasising the significance of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 and IPC Section 429. PFA thus utilises digital media not just as a megaphone for awareness but as a tool for precise and impactful advocacy, pushing for legislative compliance and change at the local level.

Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO)

The Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) serves as a dynamic force in animal rights advocacy. Established formally in 2010, FIAPO's vision to instil "recognition and respect for animal rights in society" aligns with a robust mission to connect, empower, and advocate for animal protection through an intricate network of member organisations and activists (Home, no date). The federation employs digital media as a channel for knowledge exchange, expertise development, and fortifying the Animal Rights Movement in the country. FIAPO's digital advocacy unfolds across major social media platforms – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube – where it meticulously navigates the landscape of social media algorithms to disseminate information and galvanise its diverse audience.

Examining FIAPO through the lens of digital advocacy sheds light on it still being in a nascent stage, notwithstanding earnest efforts to enhance animal advocacy and raise awareness on issues concerning animal exploitation. On Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, FIAPO shares a rich tapestry of content, including information, events, experiences, videos, and inspiration quotes. Through a nuanced understanding of social media algorithms, FIAPO maximises the visibility of its content, ensuring that its messages resonate effectively with its audience. Its YouTube channel becomes a repository of knowledge, featuring content related to webinars organised by various entities, including the India for Animals (IFA) Conference held in 2022. This approach not only aligns with the digital age's preference for visual content but also strategically harnesses algorithms to optimise reach and impact.

The campaigns undertaken by FIAPO, such as the '#21DayChallenge,' are strategically designed to leverage social media algorithms. The impact of these campaigns is evident in the precise targeting facilitated by algorithms, enabling

the organisation to connect with individuals who align with its mission. Moreover, FIAPO employs a multi-faceted approach, incorporating elements of the ‘engagement model’ discussed by McPherson (2014). The organisation actively utilises social media platforms, like Instagram, to prompt individuals to sign petitions related to their causes, as seen in campaigns like #FreeMoti and ‘End of the Line for Factory Farming.’ This engagement strategy is aligned with the principles of the engagement model, where ‘engagement and participation are fundamental to advocacy organisations’ (McPherson, 2014).

The monthly newsletter, ‘Commentary,’ reaching over 27,529 people, becomes an additional touchpoint for engagement. FIAPO’s official website, with sections like Blog, News & Updates and Testimonials, complements its social media efforts, enriching the understanding of animal rights and welfare.

While the ongoing connection with its audience through digital media persists, the current landscape positions digital media advocacy as a supportive element in disseminating FIAPO’s core objectives, rather than a pivotal and indispensable aspect of its overarching strategy. However, it plays a crucial part in extending the reach of their messages, fostering awareness, and mobilising support. Yet it is still too early for FIAPO’s digital media-led advocacy to influence public opinion regarding legal mandates pertaining to the issue of animal exploitation.

Use of Hashtags and Memes

In digital culture, hashtags and memes have evolved as important means of expression. A hashtag could be a word or a phrase preceded by the symbol (#), which is used within a social media post to draw attention. When users search for a particular hashtag, it connects them with others who share similar interests. Hashtags have become a significant tool for animal advocacy organisations, allowing their information to be discovered by the appropriate people. There are animal welfare hashtags that can help connect activists and create awareness, for instance, organisations use #MeatlessMondays to promote ethical eating, #EndAnimalCruelty and #animalliberation to voice out animal cruelty, #animalrights and #animalwelfare to create awareness about animal rights and exploitation, #adoptdontshop to promote pet adoption, #govegan to endorse veganism and many others.

#Adoptdontshop, #govegan and #animalwelfare are some of the common hashtags that are used by PETA India, PFA and FIAPO India on their social media posts. FIAPO India even runs campaigns with hashtags, such as #StopSlaughterCruelty, #EndExploitativeDairies, #SupporttheJallikattuBan, #EndingDolphinaria, #RabiesFreeIndia and others. Such hashtags enable activists to connect with one another and form a strong network as the research finds that hashtags “have emerged as reliable curators for information, online conveners for social movements” (Demirhan, 2014: 296) as well as “play a key role in the development of collective identity: bringing diverse communities of interest together in dialog and interaction” (Milan, 2015: 889).

Memes, on the other hand, are humorous, often image-and-text-based pieces of content intended for rapid consumption. As Wark remarks, “memes have particular impact in their collective capacity to circumvent information gatekeepers and cultivate collective identity to support alternative narratives and subcultures” (2015). On Instagram, veganism advocacy pages, such as @vegan_sarcasm, having 330k followers, use memes to raise awareness about veganism. Individuals interact with information spaces through memes in contemporary digital culture. Yet, the animal advocacy organisations reviewed here do not predominantly use memes to advocate animal rights and welfare.

In general, animal advocacy organisations studied here share a similar vision and objective. All these organisations focus on measures to protect animals from exploitation and abuse, followed by raising public awareness of animal rights and education. Although emphasis on issues can vary, programmes implemented by these organisations are consistent with one another. Adoption programs, sheltering abandoned pets or stray animals, rescuing tortured animals or those in need of assistance, legal assistance for specific legal cases involving animals and medical assistance for sick animals are some examples. Digital activism is frequently criticised as there’s no proof that liking or sharing a post online result in any real-world behaviour change (Glenn, 2015: 83). However, there is a need for further research to explore the connections between online content sharing and changes in offline behaviour. Despite the debates among critics about the emancipatory potential of new media, the research suggests that digital technology, especially social networking sites, is instrumental in foregrounding

animal rights. Instagram and Facebook become sites of resistance against animal exploitation as issues and concerns related to animals are hitherto considered unimportant. The interactivity stimulated by digital media helps in developing a network among activists belonging to different geographical spaces.

Conclusion

Advocacy on issues related to animals functions similarly to advocacy on other issues, where digital media could help amplify the key message of any advocacy campaign but could not serve as the sole medium. It still continues to perform a supportive role, from which one can extrapolate that online advocacy can be effective only when combined with offline advocacy and that together they can generate momentum and mobilise volunteers and communities. It is not a situation of either/or; digital media advocacy cannot function independently if it not supported by solid foundations of widespread mobilisation and on-the-ground support.

Furthermore, animal advocacy-led organisations appeal to their readers and viewers to join various protests or events they organise. However, there is no record where one can find participation by readers/viewers except in the comments section. How these debates on the social media stimulate action on the grassroots level could not be traced in this research. However, any case of animal exploitation at any level is targeted and condemned by the activists that undoubtedly spreads awareness among the members of the community and is also helpful in the construction of an imagined community online. In the words of Pramod K. Nayar, “the technology thus creates and widens out a culture of dissent, awareness and therefore social change over a period of time” (2011: 5).

Digital activism has made animal rights common knowledge, so it's no longer surprising when activists discuss issues related to animal welfare. In and of itself, this constitutes advancement. However, much more exists. Earlier, very few people were familiar with the term 'vegan' outside the vegetarian community. Now, 'vegan' is frequently used without explanation in mainstream magazines and newspapers. Today, young people, particularly on college campuses, can comprehend that vegetarianism/vegan and animal rights are major social and personal issues, similar to ecology, women's rights, human rights, LGBT rights

and so on. Thus far, this normalisation of veganism and animal rights among young people is likely the significant accomplishment of the animal rights movement. The influence and manner in which digital media can serve as an advocacy ally for groups operating in the arena of animals are, for the time being, still in development.

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Reverse Osmosis of Selfhood in the Digital Era

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The process of self-realisation traditionally journeys from the individual to the universal, to constitute an identity divorced from the confines of the egotistical self in Indian philosophy. In this context, the osmosis of the self can be defined as the movement of the individual towards the larger cultural landscape to attain universality. However, the digital age exerts an undue pressure on an already saturated cultural milieu, to cause the movement to reverse. Now, the flow is directed from the universal to the self, wherein the self consumes digitally curated cultural commodities to inform its being. The idea of self, hence, becomes removed from reality, becoming a projection of the expectations created and performed within the digital realm. This paper attempts to decipher the ways through which the digital world has commodified the universal, making the distinction between the self and the universal more profound than otherwise. This reversal of the process of self-realization employs the universal as a tool to delineate the boundaries of the self. Furthermore, it underscores the irony inherent in the digital age: while the new media grants access to the entire world with a single tap, it simultaneously fosters a sense of isolation and containment within the self.

Keywords: reverse osmosis, selfhood, universal, individual, privacy, cultural commodification

“यथापिंडेतथाब्रह्माण्डे, यथाब्रह्माण्डेतथापिंडे”

This axiom extracted from the *Yajurveda* deliberates on the nature of self and its congruence with the entire cosmos. It means, “as is the individual, so is the

universe; as is the universe so is the individual,” implying that the self is a microcosm that represents the larger cosmos. Upanishad texts and Vedic literature accord profound significance to the self or the *Atman* that is described as the reality (*tattva*). It is that which is permanent (*nitya*), virtuous (*guna*), eternal (*śāśvatā*) and stable (*dhruva*). In the Upanishadic text, the self (*Atman*) finds centrality and everything else revolves around it. The *Bṛhadaranyakopanishada* explains the self as “*Aham Brahmasmi*”: I am Brahman, while the *Mandukyaupanishada* interprets *Atman* as “*Ayam Atma Brahman*”: The ‘self’ is God. These interpretations suggest that the pure self “*Atman*” and the supreme self “*Brahman*” exist in perfect unity, without any discernible difference between the two.

In the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, the concept of *Atman* and the *Brahman* is explicated through a beautiful analogy of the fig tree. When the small seeds of the fig tree are opened, what appears is complete emptiness. However, it is from that emptiness that the entire fig tree emerges. Similarly, the *Brahman* is contained in the entire cosmos. It is the unseen driving force latent in all creations, waiting to be realised. This is reality; this is *Atman* that contains within itself the *Brahman*. It is only when the pure self combines with the mind, body and the senses, that it acquires a *karma* bondage and becomes the empirical ‘self’ (*Jivatman*) or the individual ‘self’. This creates a distinct dichotomy between the individual self and the supreme self (*Brahman*), where both entities, by spirit as well as by form, are completely at variance with each other.

The Advait philosophy of Shankaraacharya speaks at length about the concept of *Atman* (supreme self) and *Jivatman* (individual self), where he emphasises that *Atman* and *Brahman* are part of the same pure consciousness and constitute a single reality. However, the individual self with its *karma* bondage divorced from truth becomes an appearance or an illusion (*Maya*). Deutsch suggests that “appearance is that which can be sub rated by other experience” (15). This category of appearance contains all that constitutes the empirical world of experience and this can either be subrated by another appearance, or by reality.

The individual self, which the Advait philosophy describes as untrue or unreal from a transcendental lens, has the potential to realize itself, and bridge the gap

between itself and the *Brahman*. The journey it undertakes to free itself from the shackles of worldliness to realise its true self and unite with the *Brahman* is called *Moksha*. The path of *Moksha*, therefore, begins from within to transcend the confines of the egotistical living and acquire reality in form of the *Brahman*. According to Deutsch, “reality is that which cannot be sublated by any other experience” (18), implying that reality cannot be changed or challenged by anything else, and is thus, beyond sublation. Therefore, the unsublatable reality is called the *Brahman*. The state of *moksha* or the state of *nirvikalpasamadhi* is to be one with the Absolute: “Therefore, the aspirant merges into *Brahman*; his ego or individuality is eliminated; all differentiation ceases; and he becomes *Brahman*” (Das 113).

To simplify the argument, the attainment of *moksha* requires the individual self to journey through various meditative and cognitive practices leading him to contemplate the relationship between the self and the *Brahman*. “Contemplation in the end culminates in *nirvikalpasamadhi*—the super conscious ecstatic state of trance in which [one] becomes merged with *Brahman*” (Das 122).

When the mind becomes free from all ideas of perceiver and the perceived, it verily becomes one with the Supreme and non-dual *Brahman*. Therefore the mind becomes free from all fear; for, in that state, the perception of duality, which is the cause of fear, is absent. *Brahman* is peace and fearlessness. (Nikhilananda 193)

This process of realising the self and its complete congruence with the *Brahman* is a movement from the within to the without. The movement, thus, takes one from the egotistical wiring of the individual self to the attainment of the universal, the ultimate reality—the *Brahman*. This osmosis of self begins with a deeper sense of contemplation about oneself, followed by the moving out from the confines of the karmic bondage to dilute duality, differences and blend with the universal. However, with the incoming of the digital era the process of self-realisation has become a movement from the universal to the individual. The traditional osmosis of the self seems to have reversed, resulting in the universe informing the concept of self, rather than the selfactualizing the inherent universe within. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the reverse osmosis of the self within the digital realm, where the digital platform is seen to invite diversity, difference and dialogue only to reaffirm the boundaries of the self.

From Contemplation to Consumption

In the digital age, the process of self-realization begins with consumption that is contrary to its traditional understanding, where the journey towards the self is deeply embedded in contemplation. A Marxist critique becomes essential to understand the reverse osmosis of selfhood in the digital era that primarily takes place due to the extensive commodification of cultural identities made readily accessible to digital consumers in the form of discrete packets of content. But before we delve into the consumption of cultural content, one needs to understand the politics behind creating content and the creation of an unconscious compulsion to consume it. This takes us to the discussion of surveillance capitalism that accelerates the understanding of the above mentioned standpoints. Surveillance capitalism can be explained as “a new economic order that claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, prediction, and sales” (Zuboff 7). It claims human experience to facilitate the process of translating abstract behavioural and affective orientations into concrete data. This results in commodifying or commercializing humanness into discrete content packets to be then “fed into advanced manufacturing processes known as machine intelligence, and fabricated into prediction products that anticipate what one will do now, soon, and later” (Zuboff 12). These products first predict and later dictate human activity and orientation. The automated machine fed with the human data of identities, personalities, emotions and orientations, not only predicts human behaviour but begins to shape it. The risk breeding in “this reorientation from knowledge to power is that it no longer aims to automate information flows about us; the goal now is to automate us” (Zuboff 12).

Interestingly, Zuboff claims that surveillance capitalism has given birth to a new brand of power that she calls instrumentarianism. This power not only has the knowledge but the means to shape human tendencies toward others’ ends to generate profit within the capitalist landscape. So, the new media flooded with distinct packets of content, commodifying human emotions and identities, makes itself readily

available to the consumers to compel them to subscribe to a certain commodified identity and assert that identity rather aggressively. This commodification of human experience leads to the creation of distinct identity markers or templates that exert an unwanted pressure on consumers to fit in a certain template and assert their individual identity by performing it on various social media handles.

To substantiate this argument, one can take into account the working of meme culture that has become a prominent yet implicit means to assert one's identity. Identification through relatability is at the core of the meme model. A meme, described as a unit of cultural information spread by imitating human behaviour, is circulated among masses extensively compelling them to offer a response where they either subscribe to it or scroll further to find a more relatable one. Upon finding the most relatable meme that aptly represents their so-called true self, the consumer then shares, saves or re-posts the meme to re-affirm his identity.

A more effective example to assert the same argument is the progressive neoliberalism "redefining emancipation in market terms" (Fraser 33). In the recent past, neo-liberal movements are seen to create a prominent digital space, curating themselves in such a manner that consumers are unconsciously coerced into having a strong opinion about them.

The previous regimes allied marketization with social protection against emancipation, these (neo-liberal movements) generate an even more perverse configuration in which emancipation joins with marketization. All of them, including antiracism, multiculturalism, LGBTQ liberation, and ecology, spawned market-friendly neoliberal currents to garner support. (Fraser 33)

These movements generate a sense of compulsion in the consumers to choose sides, where they either align with the sentiment or aggressively oppose it. In a way, alignment with a certain movement implies alignment with a certain identity. Therefore, the digital media not only breeds an unconscious compulsion in its consumers to identify themselves with a certain ideology, but also offers a diversity of identities from which to choose. To put it more succinctly, the digital media, inviting diversity, differences and dialogue, makes its consumers more aggressive and impatient to assert an individual identity by directing them

towards prominent identity markers or templates. In other words, it creates a desire to possess a strong sense of individual self and further informs the nature of that self. Althusser's notion of interpellation holds significant relevance in this context, particularly when considering how the digital medium functions akin to a "state apparatus," compelling individuals to seek and construct their identities urgently. Moreover, the creation of these identities is facilitated by identity markers supplied by the medium. It is, thus, easy to comprehend the flow of self-realization in the digital era that unfolds inwardly from the outside, or put differently, from the universal to the individual.

Performing and Projecting the Self (Digitally)

The second aspect of the paper brings us to the discussion of the performance of the projected self in the digital world. The digital media, making the universe accessible with just a click of a button, provides an audience ready to acknowledge, appreciate or challenge curated identities performed on social media. As an extension of the above argument, it is important to highlight the performative nature of identities on social media and the incessant desire to perform those identities in front of an audience. In a way, the actualization of self on the digital medium takes place when the self is witnessed by an audience in order to validate the performed selfhood.

A constructed identity is a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. (Butler 520)

These constructed identities are informed by historical and cultural conventions that stem from external sources rather than internal origins. This idea reaffirms the reverse osmosis of selfhood in the age of digitalization. Moreover, ascribing an identity to the self on social media speaks of the materiality of the body. Cultivated identities are inscribed onto the material body by external forces, which imply that these identities are a mere projection or reflection of the collective expectations about individual behaviour. This projected self, divorced from within, needs to perform itself in front of an audience to sustain a sense of self-worth and to maintain faith in one's identity. On social media, each like, comment, or share reinforces one's sense of self, illustrating the significant role of

external validation in creating one's identity. This idea is completely at variance with the traditional understanding of the self, where self-realization means to dive into the within to realise reality.

Cashmore suggests, “I'd wager that the high price of not capturing and sharing every moment of our lives will soon dwarf the cost to our privacy” (2009). This anxious compulsion to perform the self in front of an audience, as Cashmore aptly puts it, also outweighs our concerns about privacy. The projected self being performed over and over again and the assertion of selfhood through visibility to an audience also explains how, echoing Baudrillard's perspective, visibility becomes a trap. The reality of one's identity rests on its visibility to the outside world. Bringing it all together, the process of self-realization in the digital world is informed by the outside and its authenticity is likewise affirmed from the external. Consequently, the trajectory from within to the universal has reversed and instead become an outward-inward journey.

Identity theorist Erving Goffman in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* proposes the Dramaturgical Model that speaks at length about the performative nature of human interactions. He opines that the self in any human interaction will inevitably be performative in nature. In this regard, people perform roles with a purpose to create specific impressions on individuals they are interacting with, which is quite similar to how actors present characters to a theatre audience. Impression management, an important aspect of this model, highlights the purpose of these public representations of the self in shaping opinions of others and persuading them to accept their understanding of the social situation. This theory becomes more relevant in the purview of digitalization, where the digital platform renders a much larger space to accommodate a larger audience wanting to persuade one another to accept their definitions of any social situation. With the expanding stage and the audience, the performers naturally have to try harder to convince their idea of situationship. Furthermore, this has created and introduced new roles to be performed in front a larger audience. Since, the repetition of this performance happens at much grander scale in the digital realm, the internalization of the roles performed becomes more intense blurring boundaries between the true self and that projected online.

Interestingly, with this rising impatience and aggression to perform a role, cultivate an idea of selfhood and display it online, the notion of privacy becomes significant. While new media has brought the universe within our reach, paradoxically, it has made people more isolated and individualized. Despite serving the universe on a platter, new media has made the differences more apparent than otherwise. Underscoring these differences, consumers have become more aggressive and fierce to protect their identities from being distorted or replaced. This containment of the self goes against the process of impersonalisation that is central to Indian conception of self-realization.

Conclusion

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role. (Park 249)

Park's reference to the word 'person' can be re-interpreted as the 'self', where the self is no longer real but a mask, as she calls it. With the digital media hijacking every human experience, this mask becomes even more pronounced and the roles are gravely internalized. Identity formation in the digital realm, therefore, becomes a process informed by the outside rather than a journey of self-contemplation and introspection. The compulsive need to be visible, viewed and verified by an audience in order to validate one's selfhood, speaks volumes about how selfhood as an entity can only be described in relation to others, rather than its traditional conception as a stable, self-informed unit. This reverse osmosis of selfhood in the era of digitalization, hence, blurs boundaries between the real and the representations of the real.

The ontological question of being that remains central to reality is now becoming removed from it in the hyperreal world. Thus, in contemplating the implications of this shift, we are compelled to recognize the imperative of preserving the integrity of our inquiries into the nature of existence, lest we should find ourselves cast adrift in a world devoid of both questions and answers.

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