

ISSN 0970-5260

**Panjab University
Research Journal (Arts)**

Volume LII

No 2

July-December 2023



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Chandigarh (India)**

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Survival Ecology of Girl Child – A Case study of rural Haryana

RENU BALI

Abstract

Survival ecology of girl child refers to web of interrelated and interconnected variables surrounding the girl child which form a safe ecosystem for her upbringing, growth and survival. These variables range from household level preferences to economic, environmental, social and cultural practices and Government interventions in terms of policies, laws and legislations and their implementation. Child Sex Ratio in Haryana were recorded lowest in country (2011 census). Data collected from four villages of Haryana clearly show that demographic preferences of households are favorable towards male child. Abuse of modern technology as a method to achieve the desired family size and composition is widespread. Discrimination of girl child is majorly a social and cultural issue which requires change in the mind set and attitude of the people.

Keywords: Child Sex Ratio, Birth Order, Demographic Preferences, Sex Determination Techniques, Discriminatory Practices, PC & PN Diagnostic Test Act (2003)

Introduction

Survival ecology here refers to all interrelated and interconnected variables surrounding the girl child which form a safe ecosystem for her upbringing, growth and survival. Provisional population figures released by Census of India for 2011 show a steep decline in child sex ratios in the country from 927 in 2001 to 914 (**Figure 1**). This is lowest ever recorded since independence (Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India (ORGI) 2011).

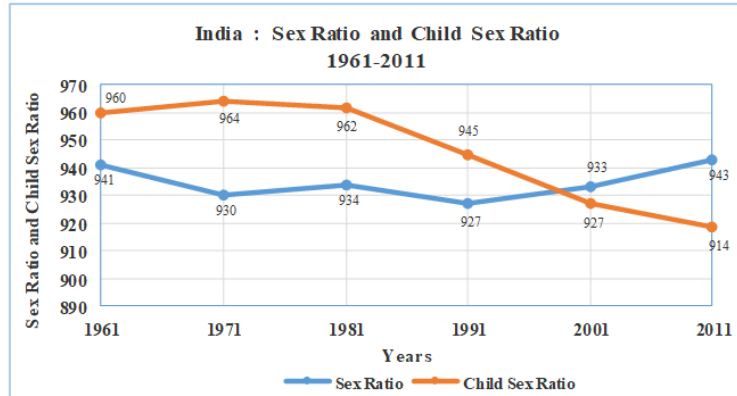
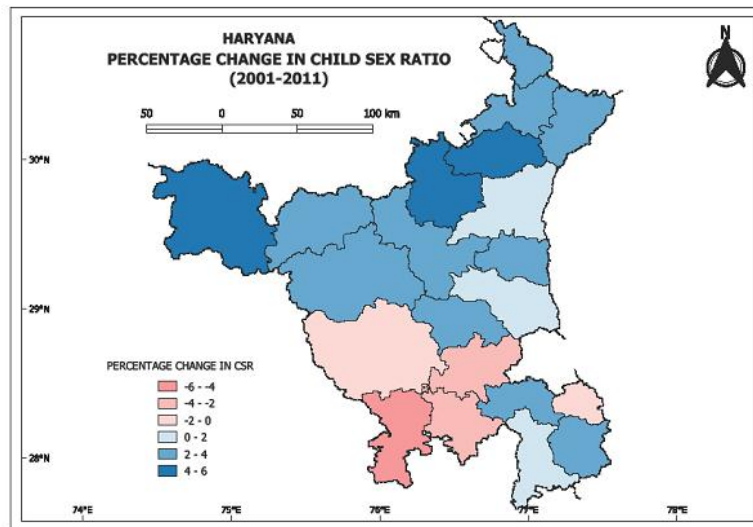


Figure: 1 Trend of Sex ratio and Child Sex Ratio in India 1961-2011

Source: Census of India 2011

With the national average of 914, Haryana is ranked lowest with child sex ratios of 830 among all the states and UT's. Five districts namely Faridabad, Rewari, Jhajjar, Bhiwani and Mahendragarh show a decline in CSR since 2001 (Map 1).



Map 1

Change in Child Sex Ratio in Haryana 2001-2011

Source: Census of India 2011

This reflects low status and low preference given to the girl child in Haryana. Sex ratio and child sex ratio are two demographic indicators measuring the status of women. In 2011 both were lowest in the state of Haryana. In last two decades Haryana has achieved very high economic development but this development had no impact on improvement in the status of women and the girl child in the state.

Literature Survey - Present status of the girl child in Haryana

In literature survey we have included some of the recent studies on the issue of declining child sex ratios in Haryana. Present status of women and girl child in Haryana has been the result of interplay of various factors the historical circumstances, social structure and cultural practices, economic development and its impact, ecological and environmental setting and the most recent medical and related technical advancements and its reach in the society. Some of the recent studies done on this subject substantiate our point.

Studies done by NFHS – I & II have proved preference for son is very high for the state of Haryana (PRC Chandigarh & IIPS Bombay 1995, IIPS and ORC Macro, 2001). Study by Arnold et al. on sex selective abortions in India based on NFHS- II data (IIPS and ORC Macro 2001) reveal that Haryana has highest sex ratio at birth (ratio of no. of male children born to female children born) in the country. Haryana along with other Group – A states of Punjab and Gujarat, also has highest sex ratio immediately after aborted pregnancy of 158 as compared to national average (106.5). Use of Ultrasound for detection of sex of fetus was also found to be highest for Haryana. Termination of female fetus after the test is also highest for Haryana (Arnold et.al. 2002). These results strongly point out to the practice of son preference and use of medical techniques like ultrasound for sex selective abortions.

Study done by Krishnamoorthy based on NFHS – II data shows that Haryana is among the first three states after Punjab and Arunachal Pradesh in terms of high sex selective abortion of 40 (Krishnamoorthy, 2003)

In newspaper article, Ashish Bose (2001), coined the term DEMARU (where D stands for daughter, E for elimination and MARU stands for killing) for group of states, including Haryana with low and declining sex ratios (above 50 points) based on 2001 Census data. He talks about use of amniocentesis and ultrasound for sex selection in Haryana. In another study, he compares the achievements of Himachal Pradesh with Punjab and Haryana, the two economically developed states that have failed in demographic field with high birth rates, low sex ratios and low child sex ratios (Bose, 1995).

George and Dahiya (1998) in their study on female feticide in the four villages of Rohtak district of Haryana conclude that use of medical technology by couples for sex selection and abortion of female fetus especially in rural areas, is very high. Agnihotri (2000) in his book point out to the fact that low sex ratios are more common in households with high economic status. In north India including Haryana, households with larger land holdings of more than 7.5 acres have lowest sex ratio (less than 900). Similarly, Subrahmaniam in her article in newspaper points out to the results of 55Th round of NSSO. NSSO classified the population into four categories on the basis of average monthly per capita expenditure in Rupees: 0-425, 425 - 665, 665 – 1120, 1120 and above. The sex ratios for Haryana in these categories show that it was highest for first category (1567) and lowest for the last category (541). These results point out to the prevalence of sex discrimination and neglect of the girl child practices more in higher and affluent economic categories of households.

National Family Health Survey – I & II (PRC Chandigarh & IIPS Bombay 1995, IIPS and ORC Macro, 2001) reports on Haryana also give proof of high preference for sons in the state. The reports reveal higher preference for boys in family composition. Even women who want more children also give more preference to boys.

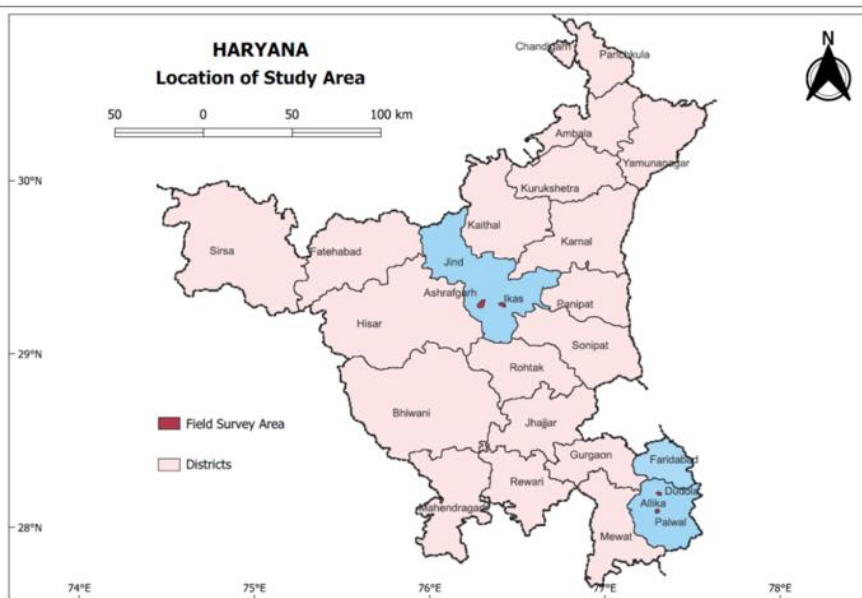
Devraj (2003) and Laxmi Murthy (2002) in their articles point out to the consequences of these practices. According to Devraj (2003) the region is

now facing problem of bride shortage. And in some tehsil there are cases of “importing of wives” from other states. Early marriage or lowering of age of marriage and other practices related to suppression of women, increase in crime against women could be other consequences of this problem.

Studies have been done on type of discrimination being faced by girl child in families. Discrimination against the girl child increases, if there is already a daughter in the family at higher birth order (Dasgupta, 1987, Muhuri and Preston, 1991).

Study Area and Methodology

The primary data analysis is based on survey of 200 women from four villages of Haryana. Two from Jind district namely Ashrafgarh and Ikkas and two from Faridabad district but now part of Palwal district (Census 2011) namely Dudhola and Allika. (Map 2).



Map 2
Location of Study Area
Source: Census of India 2011

Two hundred married women of the child bearing age were selected through Purposive Random Sampling method for primary survey (50 from each village). Face to face interview of married women and structured questionnaire were used to collect the primary data. Simple statistical techniques were used for analysis. Results have been represented with help of tables, maps, and diagrams.

Results and Discussion

Survival Ecology of Girl Child in Rural Haryana

The status of women in the family and society reflects and determines the status of female child in the family and society. The more respect a woman gets in the society, more equal status she has in her family increases the status of female child and her chance of survival. This helps in building a secure place for the girl child thereby increasing her survival chances. The survival of female child in the family and society is dependent on an intricate relationship of different variables working at various levels and forming a complex web of inter and intra relationship. Within each level an intricate web of relationship exists.

- Regional level, and Government Level – External variables
- Primary (family or household) Level - Internal Variables

Regional level: Historical, ecological, economic and socio-cultural factors

Ecological, environmental and related economic factors are the macro level indicators, which affect the demographic choices of society or village at large. Haryana at time of its formation was one of the backward and underdeveloped regions of Punjab, especially western and southern Haryana. It was drought ridden and chronic food shortage region producing fodder crops and coarse grains. The economy of the western region in particular was dependent on animal husbandry and it also served

as a recruitment area for British Army (Chaudhary, 1994). Land was the only resource so very precious and family labor was important to do hard and tough work related to farming and animal husbandry in this dry region. Male heirs were preferred to perform hard labor in the fields. This resulted in strong desire for male child as an heir to the land, which was at that time registered only in name of male member of family. Participation of women in outdoor activities was restricted because of hard labor and seclusion of women because of social practices (Chaudhary, 1994). Because of low economic participation of women in agriculture and social practices like dowry, women had low economic and social status (Sudha and Rajan 1999).

It is the social values, traditions and cultural practices that have impact on the status of women in general and the survival of girl child in particular at the household level. The social structure in Haryana resulted in the practice of preference for a son in the region. Jats were the single major landowning and dominant caste in the region. In 1931 survey British identified Jats both Hindu and Sikhs, as the social groups who practiced female infanticide and had lowest sex ratios (Miller, 1981). Since Jats were the landowning caste preference for male heir to keep land in family was very strong (Miller, 1981 and Dasgupta, 1987).

This region has been frequently in contact with foreign invaders. The protection and security of women and girls from these invaders also made girls in a family a burden and a liability and led to customs and traditions like female infanticide and discrimination against and neglect of female child (Basu, 1992).

Cultural and religious practices advocated preference for sons like performing the last rights (*shraddh*) of parents by sons so that parents attain salvation (*moksha*) after death and for further continuation of the family (*Vansh*). Many popular local proverbs/sayings part of folk culture also point out to the son preference prevalent in the region since ancient time (Chaudhary, 1994).

The power structure within the households, ownership of resources and inheritance laws are most important social and cultural variables governing the survival status of female child. Since women in most cases did not own any property or assets, their literacy level is low and their participation in economic activities is also low therefore economically and socially they are not considered equal. Girls are not desired because of their low economic and social worth

Economic development and its impact

Since its formation as a separate state in 1966 Haryana has made tremendous progress in agricultural, industrial and now in the last two decades it has emerged as an IT center in North India. State of Haryana presently is one of the economically most progressive states of the country. Per Capita income of Haryana at current price has been estimated at Rs. 29, 6685/- during 2022-2023 which is higher than the national average of Rs. 17, 0620/- and is sixth highest in the country (Government of Haryana, 2003).

But all this economic progress has had no positive impact on the status of women and girl child. In recent times, women's participation in outdoor economic activity especially agriculture has declined. Mechanization of agriculture made women less suitable for the advanced agriculture practices. Not only on the basis of technical skill, but, now it has become a matter of status (Nayyar, 1987). Female labor force participation rates are very low 19.1 percent as compared to national average of 32.8 percent for age group 15 and above (Government of India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation PLFS July 2021-June 2022). Ironically, the economic development has not made desired impact on the health and social status of women and girl child. The sex differentials in literacy level have remained high 84.1 percent for males and 65.9 for females. (Government of Haryana Statistical Abstract 2021-22). Demographic indicators like sex ratios and child sex ratios are low and declining (refer Fig 1) Sex differentials in infant and child mortality are high. Female

Infant Mortality in 2008 was 57 per thousand as compared to Male Infant Mortality rate of 61. Female Child Mortality rate was 71 as compared to 60 for Male Child Mortality (RG & CC of India 2011). This shows that social development does not always follow economic development.

Household Level: Survival Ecology of the Girl Child -

In this section we discuss intricate relationships working at family/household level and its impact on the survival status of female child and thus resulting in mortality differentials. How strong a woman is, her economic and social status in the household, her awareness level and decision making choices all govern the survival status of the girl child in the family.

Demographic Choices and Preferences of Women

The size of family, i.e. number of children in the family is very important demographic choice a household has to make. The preference of married women depends on how much power she has to decide. The present structure of the family is also important. With present norm of two children per family it has become more important.

Age and sex composition of child population

Sex composition of children in different age groups directly gives information about the equality of sexes in terms of their number. The data collected from the aanganwadi centers of the villages surveyed give us idea of sex composition of children in these villages. Data was not available at aanganwadi center of Ashrafgarh village of Jind, which has highest incidence of women going for sex determination test. The diagram clearly shows that number of male children is higher than female children in all the age categories for both Jind and Faridabad. In terms of absolute numbers, we find that male children outnumber female children in all age categories (Fig.2).

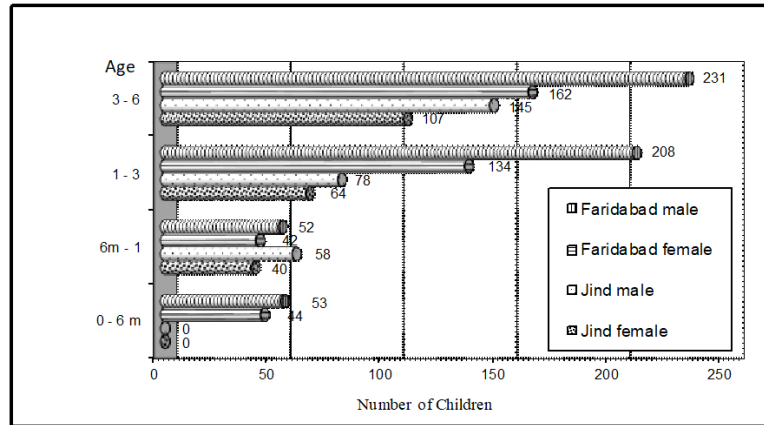


Figure 2: Age and composition of children (0-6 yrs.)

Family structure

The structure and composition of the family or household is the basic unit that determines the survival status of female child. In joint family households, the decisions related to number and sex of children in family is influenced by the elder members present in the family. Our study reveals that majority of households in Jind and Faridabad are joint family households (Fig.3).

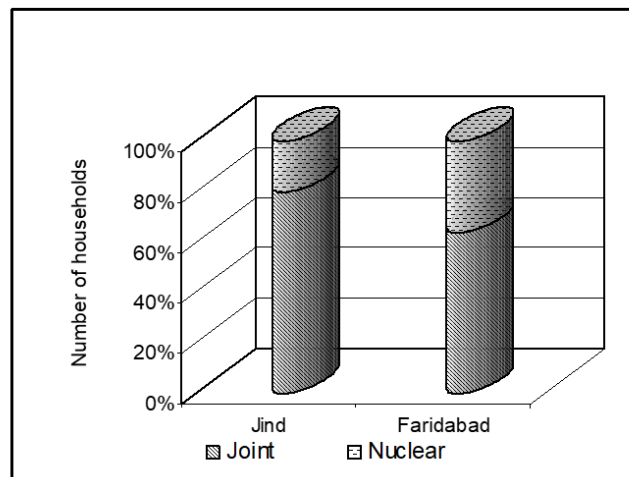


Figure 3: Family Structure

The test of significance (Chi-square) between the two variables, women going for Sex Determination Test and their household structure are not related (Table 1). The relationship is true for both Jind and Faridabad. This means that the women from both types of households, joint as well as nuclear, are going for the SDT.

Table 1
Chi- square test for household structure and SDT

Household structure and SDT	Chi-square	Chi-square Df. (1, 0.05)	Chi-square Df. (1, 0.10)	Accept/Reject the Ho Hypothesis
Jind	0.22	3.84	6.63	Accept
Faridabad	0.33	3.84	6.63	Accept
Total	0.32	3.84	6.63	Accept

Survival status of children conceived

In total, 672 children have been recorded as conceived by 200 women surveyed in the four villages. On average there is 3.5 children born per woman. Average number of children conceived is higher for Faridabad (3.7) than Jind (3.2). Of the total 672 children born, eighty-three percent children have survived and 17 % have died. Rate of survival is slightly higher for Faridabad (84 %) than Jind (81 %). Rate of survival of female children is less than male children. Number of female children dying by various causes is more than male children in both Jind and Faridabad (Fig.4).

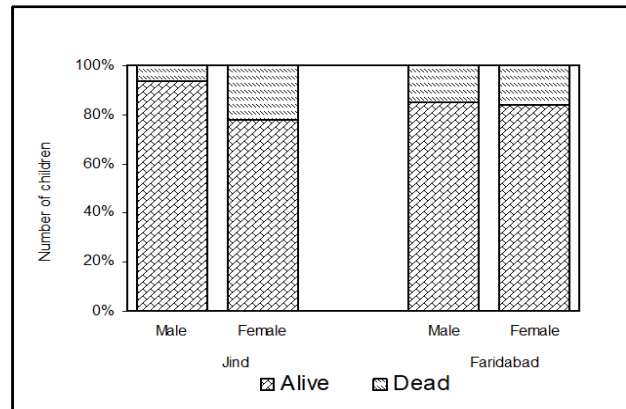


Figure 4: Survival status of total children conceived

Mother's opinion on number and sex of children

With widespread coverage of mass media people are aware of small family campaign by government. Ideal number of children is theoretical aspect not necessary to be achieved by the household. Therefore, 57 percent women believe that the ideal number of children in family is two, with one boy and one girl. In Jind, 64 percent and in Faridabad 50 %, of women have opined that the ideal number of children in family should be two. Around 41 percent believe that number of children in the family to be three, with two boys and one girl. Thirty-four percent women in Jind and 47% in Faridabad have an opined that the ideal number of children in a family should be three (Fig.5).

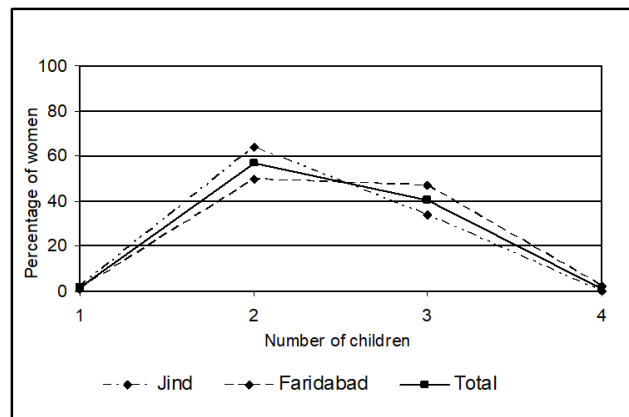


Figure 5: Ideal number of children in family

Around 42 % women in Jind have expressed the opinion of having more boys than girls in family by either having two boys and one girl (34 %) or having only two boys (7 %), or only one boy (1 %). In Faridabad, 47 % women have given preference for more number of boys than girls in the family. Table 2 clearly shows high preference given to male child in the households. Girls are desired but only after one male child. Otherwise the risk of elimination even before birth is high probability. From the analysis it is evident that preference for the male child, even by mothers, is a crucial factor for determining sex of the child. Even, if we consider the birth order. The female child is of course desired but as a last choice.

Table 2
Preference for number and sex of children

Preference for sex of child	Percentage of women		
	Jind	Faridabad	Total
One Boy	1	-	0.5
1 Boy & 1 Girl	52	48	50
1 Boy & 2 Girls	1	-	0.5
Two Boys	7	-	3.5
2 Boys & 1 Girl	34	47	40.5
2 Boys & 2 Girls	1	2	1.5
Either	4	3	3.5

Birth order and sex of children

Number and sex of siblings in the family determine the survival chances of girl child in the family High preference for male child is reflected by the fact that 72 % women in this study area want that first child should be a male child. Only 15 % want that first child should be a girl and 13 % women do not have any particular choice (Fig.6). High preference for a

male child at first order is to have a security of a male child. Around 61% women say that second child should be a female child. Girls are preferred at higher order. At the third birth order again, high preference is for a male child because at least two male children are preferred in the family.

The preference for the sex of children at different birth orders is similar for both Jind and Faridabad. Seventy-two percent of women favor having a boy at first birth order and only 16% in Jind and 14% in Faridabad favor having a girl child at first birth order. This pattern reveals a very high degree of discrimination against girls in the society. At second birth order there is higher preference for girl child both in Jind as well as in Faridabad. In Faridabad 65% women favor having a girl child at second birth order as compared to only 56% in Jind. At third birth order there again is higher preference for a male child (Fig. 6).

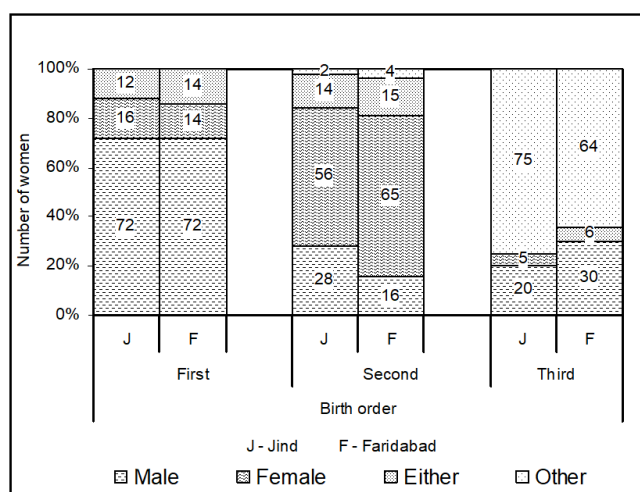


Figure 6: Birth order and preference for sex

The preference for number of children and their sex composition gives an indication of preference of male child by families. Girls are not preferred at first birth order. Households want to have a male child at first birth order. After having a male child at first birth order, the preference moves to girl child at second order. An ideal family size and composition comprises of three children with two sons and a daughter. The girl is

preferred at the second order and a son at first and third order, if the first birth is of son. If the first expected birth is a daughter, then she is aborted by the available technology until a son is born or is preferred at a second order. At the third order, a son is preferred and with family norm of two children it is two boys that are preferred, so female child stands a very dim chance of survival. All the processes of sex selection place the female child at a lower pedestal of social hierarchy.

Desired number of children and sex preference

Forty-five percent of women in our sample are not satisfied with the size of family that they have. They want more children. The desired number of children here refers to additional number of children desired by women even after she has achieved complete family size. Majority of women (73 %) want more sons. Only 16 percent have given preference for a girl child and 11 percent say they do not have any particular choice (Fig.7).

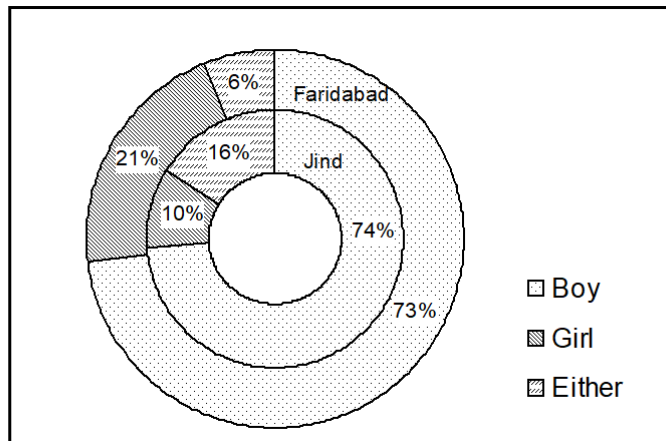


Figure 7: Sex preference for children by women

There is not much difference in choices for sex of children for the two regions. Majority of women wanting a child shows higher preference for male child with respect to female. The gender disparity in preference of male child is clearly visible here. This preference is rooted in social, religious, cultural and economic worth of a male versus female child.

We can judge the preference for male child by testing the relationship between women going for Sex Determination Test and number of male children in the family assuming that women going for SDT will have higher number of male children. The assumption here is that women who go for the test will in majority of cases abort the female fetus and will continue with pregnancy otherwise i.e. if the fetus is male. The hypothesis is not true for Jind. That is number of male children in family has no relation with women going for SDT (Table 3). But the hypothesis is true for Faridabad at both the significance level. So, we can conclude that for Faridabad, women who have got the SDT done and number of male children in the household is related.

Table 3
Chi-square test for number of boys in family and SDT

Number of boys in family and women going for SDT	Chi-square	Chi-square Df (3,0.05)	Chi-square Df (3, 0.10)	Accept/Reject Ho Hypothesis
Jind	4.13	7.81	11.34	Accept
Faridabad	12.41	7.81	11.34	Reject
Total	13.44	7.81	11.34	Reject

Discrimination Practices by Women in Households

In this section we have tried to identify some of the discriminatory practices being followed by women in the house. Sixty-one percent women accepted that they have a discriminatory attitude towards the girl child in the family. Only 14 % said that they do not have discriminatory attitude in any aspect. For rest 25 % the question was not applicable since they had only one child of either sex or two children of same sex (Table 4).

Table 4
Discriminatory practices by women

Districts	Discriminatory practices by women (% Women)		
	Yes	No	Not applicable
Jind	58	17	25
Faridabad	64	12	24
Total	61	14.5	24.5

Aspects of Discrimination

There are many aspects of this discrimination (Fig. 8). The figure clearly shows that discrimination against the girl child is now more in inheritance, cultural practices and restriction of her outdoors activities. Inheritance is one of the major aspects of discrimination. Parents are not willing to give share of their property to daughters for the fear that land will go out of family and will be in control of others. Discrimination in terms of cultural practices like no celebration at time of birth, no observation of any family celebrations and social functions like *Namkaran*, first day to school or birthday etc. in case of girl child is common practice. Buying new clothes, toys etc. is also not done as frequently for girls as for boys because it is considered as waste of money. Girls are groomed since childhood to look after house and are expected to spend their time in doing household work than going out for playing or playing with toys. Restrictions on outdoors activities for playing etc. and confinement to home and burdening the girl child to household chores in addition to her education is also another aspect of discrimination. This often leads to lack of interest in studies and dropping out of school (Fig. 8).

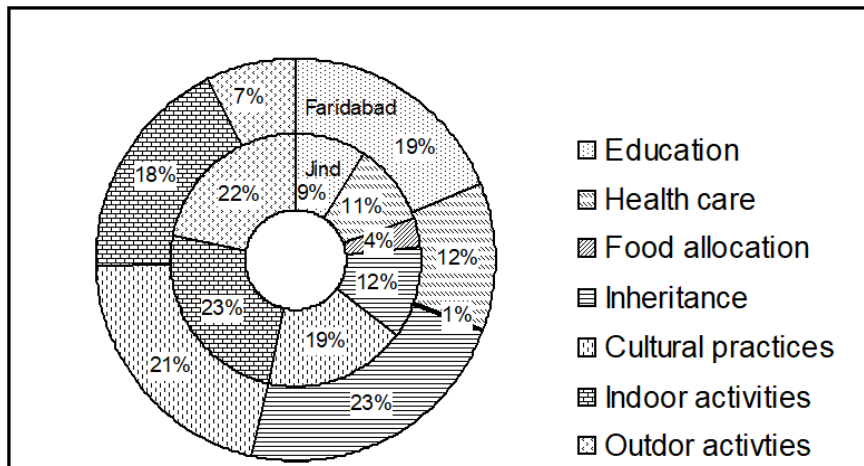


Figure 8: Aspect of discrimination against girl child

Discrimination in terms of education is only after the girls have finished studies in village school. They are not sent outside the village for higher studies. Discrimination in health care is low especially in younger age groups because most of the facilities are available in villages in form of PHC and Aanganwadi centers.

Discrimination in terms of allocation of food is lowest as the region is rich agriculturally, there is no food shortage in households. There are households where girls are fed first since they are helping in kitchen and remain in house whereas boys get food when they return from outside. (Fig. 8). The survey reveals that there is minor sex discrimination among children in terms of breast-feeding practices. There is no discrimination as far as percentage of children of both sexes covered under breastfeeding. The boys are breastfed for longer duration than girls. The discrimination is higher in Jind than Faridabad (Fig.9)

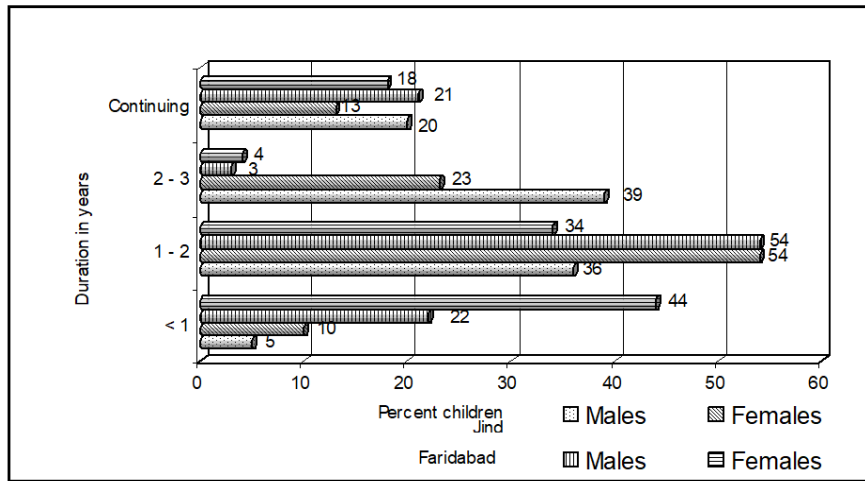


Figure 9: Sex discrimination among children in terms of breast-feeding

Cultural practices are the outcome of historical processes and the ecological and environmental characteristics of the region. In our study, it is the inheritance practices and restrictions on outdoor activities, which emerge as the major form of discrimination. Therefore, it is important to change the attitude of people towards the female child so that these cultural practices change with time.

Sex determination test

One of the direct methods of discrimination against the girl child is sex determining medical tests and aborting the fetus if it is a female. Sex determining medical technologies used during pregnancy have become popular devices to plan a family where one can even choose the sex of the child. These methods were introduced to identify the malformation of the fetus inside the mother’s womb.

Information collected during our study reveals that all women in the are aware of the SDT. Approximately 34 % of women have gone for the test. Majority of them have got the test done to know the sex of the child (97%) and not for any medical reasons (refer Table 3). This shows the easy accessibility of the medical technique and strong desire of the rural people to know the sex of the child before birth. Respondents have even taken

loans to get the test done so that they can have the male child. In Jind percentage of women who have got the test done is higher than Faridabad. In Jind 38 % women have gone for the test whereas in Faridabad 30 % of women went for the test. In Jind some women have got the test done more than once. All of them have gone for the test to know the sex of the child (Table 5).

Table 5
Outcome of sex determination test

Districts	Outcome of sex determination test				
	Number of Aborted			Continued pregnancy	
	Women	Cases	Female	Female	Male
Jind	38	52	21	0	31
Faridabad	30	34	8	10	16
Total	68	86	29	10	47

In majority of the cases, it is by the advice of husband (40 %) or family members (38 %) that women have agreed for the test not by the medical experts (Table 6). It means most of the time it is to know the sex of the fetus and not for any medical reasons that women go for test. Family members influence the decision and very few women have a say in such important matters.

Table 6
Number of women going for sex determination test

District	Person who advised for test				Reason		Satisfied	
	Doctor	Husband	Family	Self	Medical	Sex determination	Yes	No
Jind	3	31	33	33	5	95	98	2
Faridabad	0	53	45	2	0	100	97	3

Conclusion

State of Haryana is classic example of a case, which proves that economic development has no impact on the progress in social indicators especially related to status of women. Haryana has very high per capita income and one of the very fast developing states of country with high index of infrastructure development but in terms of demographic development it fairs very poorly. It has lowest sex ratios and child sex ratios in 2011. It is one of the four states that have experienced highest decline in child sex ratios.

Household level factors are more important in deciding the survival status of the girl child. The demographic preference of women clearly reveals preference for a son. Girls are desired at higher birth order only after one son and fifty percent women have given preference for three children as ideal number with two boys and one girl combination. So, if number of children in family is restricted to two the survival of girls is in danger

Discrimination and neglect of girl child in terms of food distribution and health care is present in the cultural tradition of the society. In our study it is the inheritance and cultural practices related to celebrations of birth & other social functions, restrictions on outdoor activities, helping in household chores and anti inheritance practices that emerge as major aspects of discrimination. It is extremely difficult to measure the discrimination practices inherent in cultural traditions. It is difficult also to change these practices unless social transformation or there is social and cultural change in society.

In this region interplay of two factors cultural traditions and technology are playing important role in deciding the survival status of the girl child. Easy availability and access to these sex selection facilities has encouraged couples from all economic classes to go for the test. This complex interplay of affluence, cultural practices, and technology and resultant chances of survival of the girl child in the society in this region has to be solved at each level to find solutions.

Educating women i.e. make them literate and simultaneously impart them with some skills so that they become economically independent is most important. Secondly, changing the mindset and attitude of society towards the girl child. Family planning campaigns should highlight the value of girl child in family. NGO's, religious bodies, women organizations can play important role to change the mindset of people. Thirdly, there is need to check the widespread misuse of medical technology by strict enforcement of legal laws related to PC & PN Diagnostic Test Act. Lastly there is need for monitoring of all pregnancies with help of village Aanganwadi workers in rural areas and nursing homes and hospitals in urban areas.

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B.R. Ambedkar as the Earliest Feminist: His Pathbreaking Role in Bringing Gender Equality in India, and Legacy

RAJESH KUMAR CHANDER

“Unity is meaningless without the accompaniment of women. Education is fruit-less without educating women, and agitation is incomplete without the strength of women”. – Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Abstract

B.R. Ambedkar, was a multi-faceted personality, like the other builders of modern India. Apart from being a prolific author, he was an outstanding scholar, unrelenting social reformer, illustrious economist, erudite philosopher, preeminent educationist and jurist, meticulous party builder, diligent politician, dedicated cabinet minister, brilliant statesperson, pioneering feminist and above all, a genuine humanist. He had envisaged, and struggled tirelessly for a gender just and inclusive Indian society based on the rudiments of equality, liberty and fraternity which are fundamental for securing social and gender justice. He was the pioneer as far as bringing forth the issues of untouchability, caste, gender discrimination out of the confines of the culture to the central political agenda. The methodology of the paper involved conducting an extensive review of secondary sources, and the content analysis of original writings of Ambedkar, scholarly books and articles, government reports, alongwith the documents available in the public domain, e-resources, online database, and applying historical and analytical methodologies to provide multifaceted analysis of the issue. The research objectives of the paper is to delineate Ambedkar’s enormous role in the empowerment of women, especially, women from the lowest socio-economic strata of society, also, it attemptsto unravel why Ambedkar’s stellar role in emancipating women is discussed sparsely in the academics and policy formulation. The

original contribution of the paper is to unravel the role played by Ambedkar in the feminist movement, and how Ambedkar's multi-faceted contribution in the upliftment of women can be incorporated in the policy formulation. The social and gender implications of the paper is to understand society from the bottom-up, multidisciplinary perspectives, and for policy formulation for the empowerment of the underprivileged (dalits as well as poor).

Keywords: gender, intersectionality, cleavage, inegalitarian, untouchability, dalit, standpoint, panacea, holistic.

Introduction

B.R. Ambedkar, MA, MSc, PhD, DSc, DLitt, Bar-at-Law, is today among the most revered of Indians. Ambedkar's statues across the country, second only in number to those of Mahatma Gandhi (Tharoor, 2022: i). The contrasting viewpoint is that, 'statues and paintings of Dr. Ambedkar have appeared in public squares and buildings across the land' (Tartakov, 2012: 2). In the realm of gender discourse, Ambedkar observed that like dalits; women had also faced oppression for thousands of years and were denied free movement and were excluded from attaining education. Their growth and development has been suppressed due to social dogmas and restrictions. Ambedkar forcefully articulated that gender inequality is the question not just of economic inequality or mere social justice at large; it is not just an issue of women, but a broader human rights issue confronting the country as such. The research paper focuses on multifarious issues; like, debates of Ambedkar with the other great nation-builders, his pivotal contribution as a social reformer, Ambedkar's critical assessment of the prevailing socio-cultural order, Ambedkar's crusade for achieving gender equality & gender justice, his immense contribution to gender equality and gender justice in a society that is still hierarchical/inegalitarian in twenty-first century India, and his powerful legacy. The research paper is classified into the following six sections.

I

Debates of Ambedkar with Other Builders of Modern India:

The prominent thing about modern India was that the eminent men and women, who made its history also wrote more authoritatively about it. The country's influential politicians were also its illustrious political thinkers, especially, the trinity of M.K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar. But even as they fought and struggled, led and governed, Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar wrote at great length about the world they saw and shaped (Guha, 2010: 1). For Nehru, one of the principal masterminds behind modern India, caste was 'the symbol and embodiment of exclusiveness among the Hindus'. It had 'no place left' in the 'social organization of today'. 'If merit is the only criterion and opportunity is thrown open to everybody', he had articulated in the *Discovery of India*, 'then caste loses its present-day distinguishing feature, and, in fact, ends' (Nehru 1957:520, cited in Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 450). Nehru was convinced that social stratification of caste was an 'archaic' and 'parochial' institution that pertained entirely to the realm of the traditional-cultural (Banerjee-Dube, 2015:450).

In contrast, Ambedkar had a totally different standpoint, as he observed that, democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic (Guha, 2010:316). Caste does not result in economic efficiency (Guha, 2010: 216). As the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, he had further observed that caste belonged to the domain of the social and the political, the underlying root of the socio-economic underdevelopment of members of untouchable castes and women. However, still, Ambedkar and Nehru agreed on their vision of liberal democracy postulated on the rights of the untouchables. Both of them also believed that education and employment would eventually get rid of the hierarchy defined by caste, and were of the viewpoint that the necessity of a powerful centre, that went against the Gandhian vision of decentralized power moving up from the village level, for the consistent application of the Constitution and for implementing measures of 'modernization'.

However, Ambedkar and Nehru, two liberal democrats differed on their assessment of caste (Banerjee-Dube, 2015:450).

Ambedkar suggested a political solution to the problem of caste. In this, he differed from Nehru who, like, Gandhi, felt that caste was a matter internal to Hinduism and had to be kept out of the political sphere. Furthermore, Ambedkar turned the colonial legacy of 'reservations' for dalits and members of depressed classes in public employment into an instrument to fight 'social injustice' and advance of the weak (Bayly 1999:270, cited in Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 450). The advocates of liberal democracy understood that "equal opportunities" could be granted to all citizens only when 'conditions were equal'. On the significant issue of elimination of untouchability; Gandhi observed that Indians would not be deserving of freedom from British rule unless they had rid themselves of the scourge of untouchability. He persistently articulated this position through the 1920s and 1930s as he expressed at a "Suppressed Classes Conference" in April, 1921 in Ahmedabad, ".....Hinduism has sinned in giving sanction to untouchability" (Guha, 2010: 162). Ambedkar's contemporary, Gandhi, moreover, was not antagonistic to the caste system; he lamented its aberration that had produced untouchability (Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 312). The Constitution of India declared the menace of 'untouchability' to be illegal (Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 450).

In this background, Ambedkar emerged as an early feminist and spoke extensively on the contribution of women in Indian society; he did not exclude women from his emphasis on equality, placing equal emphasis upon both caste and gender-based discrimination (Tharoor, 2022: 73). Ambedkar struggled for women's equality in accessing education, economic independence for women, and equal property rights for women. In January 1928, he alongwith his wife Ramabai, set up a women's association in Bombay, and encouraged women to speak in public. In contrast, a contemporary feminist would have inconclusive feelings about Gandhi. She/he might deplore his resistance to contraception and his lack of keenness for women in the workforce, but perhaps praise his capability

to bring women into a social movement and his criticism of the treatment of widows in Hindu society (Guha, 2010: 180). Gandhi realised the significant role played by women in India's freedom movement. He further stressed upon his ideals of three S, i.e., *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi*, and *Sarvodaya*, as congruent with women's empowerment. Also, although he acknowledged women's potential as agents of change, he articulated that their primary domain of influence should be the domestic realm, thus, preserving the traditional gender roles. In stark contrast to Gandhi, Ambedkar observed that social emancipation should precede political liberation as social freedom was essential to social and political freedom. Ambedkar resolutely critiqued the social stratification of caste as a system of graded inequality, the law of Hindu social life. His standpoint was that no modern society would prosper if half of its people were kept exploited/oppressed under subjection and oppression.

Carrying the discussion forward, how many of us can afford to be conscious of the broad facts about Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha of 1930? The event is flaunted as a defining one that set the course for India's independence from British rule. But how many of us are aware about Ambedkar's *Mahad water Satyagraha*? That too was a freedom struggle, not from colonialism, perhaps, but from oppressive fellow Indians, from the Brahmins (Naqvi, 2015: 128). Through the 1930s and 1940s, Ambedkar wrote a series of tracts criticizing Gandhi and Gandhism. The two men met several times, but could not reconcile their differences (Guha, 2010: 206).

The Southborough Committee had sought advice from Ambedkar, and he was entrusted to analyse whether the issue of electoral franchise to be included in the constitutional reforms of 1919. With his strong background of anthropology, sociology and other social sciences, Ambedkar observed before the Committee that the actual division in the Hindu society was not between the Brahmans and non-Brahmans, but between the 'touchables' and 'untouchables', an assertion that set him apart from Phule and members of the Satyashodak Samaj (Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 357). Post-

1932, Ambedkar analysed that the British administration was not sympathetic to the sad condition of the untouchables, and that upper castes were not willing to concede social, religious and cultural transformation, that would advance the cause of social and gender equality. He slowly and gradually became antagonistic to Gandhi for being ‘too soft on orthodoxy and its proponents’, a hostility that would come to include Brahminism’ (Rodrigues, 2002:11 cited in Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 358). For Ambedkar and many other social reformers, freedom from Hindu and elite hegemony was a far more fundamental need than gaining freedom from imperialism (Hubel, 1996: 150 cited in Banerjee, 2015: 362).

Before the first parliamentary elections in 1951, the then Prime minister Nehru withdrew the Hindu Code Bill by observing that there was a lot of antagonism for the bill. On this very critical issue, Ambedkar was the first and the last law minister ever, who vanquished his post and resigned from the ministry. Interestingly, the prime minister did not allow Dr. Ambedkar to read his resignation letter in the Parliament. At last, on October 10, 1951, Ambedkar read his resignation letter to the press outside the parliament house. In his resignation, he lamented that, “I will now deal with a matter, which has led me to finally to come to the decision that I should resign”. It was the worst treatment, which was accorded to the Hindu Code Bill. Furthermore, a debate on the bill continued for more than five years and still remained inconclusive. Although the Hindu Code Bill helped the revival of the feminist movement in the country, as a social crusader, Ambedkar toiled to emancipate women from injustice, and motivated the women leaders in Parliament to keep the issue alive until its enactment. In the words of Dr. Ambedkar, “It was killed and died unsung, here once again, the orthodoxy prevailed upon the reforms”.

Gandhi lauded Ambedkar as the most competent critic of Hinduism, and the most uncompromising amongst all the critics. In his condolence message in parliament, on Ambedkar’s demise, Jawaharlal Nehru stated that, “Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of the Indian society” (Shakuntla, 2018:49).

Ambedkar's reputation as the man who could stand up to Gandhi has not gone down well with India's spuriously nonviolent mobs (Naqvi, 2015: 131).

II

Ambedkar : Social Crusader

Prior to Manu's times/entry, a woman was free and equal partner to a man. The women's right to property was accepted by *Brihaspati Samiti* and divorce by *Prashara Smriti*. The earlier matriarchal societies in ancient times, points out that the position of women in the Vedic period was equal to men, for instance, the remarkable contribution of Gargi and Yagnavalkya. However, in the later Vedic period, gender discrimination and denial of fundamental human rights commenced. Women were expected to show complete faithfulness and compliance to men as a wife was reduced to a mere slave in the matter of property. To make matters worse, murdering a woman was considered a *upapataka*, that is, it was considered only a minor offence. What Manu did was to convert what was a social theory into the law of the state. The biggest conundrum is why did Manu degrade women to her lowest status ever? Also, Manu wanted to stem the tide of expansion of Buddhism in India; as women and dalits were converting to Buddhism. The social evils like child marriage, polygamy, illiteracy, *sati*, etc. led to women's complete dispossession, disempowerment and underdevelopment.

In this backdrop, Ambedkar was of the opinion that deterioration of status of women in the society was due to the imposition of severe restrictions under the influence of Manusmriti. women articulated that the path of social reform like the path of heaven, at any rate in India, is strewn with many obstacles. He further observed that the social reforms in India has few friends and many critics. Further, he was not unsympathetic to the social reformers who had preceded him. However, he felt that they had not gone far enough. In this context, Ambedkar had vehemently argued that religious equality meant little without social and economic equality (Guha, 2010: 204). In this regard, he spearheaded radical anti-caste movements in

Western India, and tried to address issues of exclusion of women and criticized caste and gender hierarchies. In continuation, at the Mahad Conference on December 25, 1927; marked by a pronounced participation of untouchable women, Ambedkar burnt a copy of the *Manusmritis* an act of rejecting its adverse impact both for women and for untouchables. All this opened new opportunities for women (Sinha, 2006:48 cited in Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 336).

In addition, Ambedkar provided skillful leadership to the emerging autonomous dalit movement. It was ‘not by chance’ therefore, writes Jaffrelot, ‘that Ambedkar became the first pan-Indian dalit leader’ (Jaffrelot 2005:29 cited in Banerjee: 357). Further, he affirmed prior to the India’s independence in 1947 that, “We are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In the spheres of civic and political equality, we shall have equality and in social and economic life we shall have inequality. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment, or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which we have so laboriously built up”.

In this backdrop and exploitation of women over centuries, Hindu Code Bill was conceived and envisaged by Ambedkar and it was a tremendous fusion of the orthodox and modern approaches; thus, in matters of marriage, a Hindu could choose to follow the old Shastric rules and choose his/her marital spouse from the same varna or could choose to be a reformist and marry outside the community; both types of marriage would be considered valid. In Hindu Code Bill, the law of depriving of property from the Hindu widow by an adopted son, was sought to be done away with.

III

Ambedkar’s Crusade for Gender Equality & Gender Justice:

In comparison to the previous ages, what was the Britishers contribution to women’s emancipation? Dalits had their legitimate concerns which had to be addressed before Constitution of free India took shape. If the demands

for dalit emancipation had not been articulated strongly by Ambedkar, and, subsequently; the demands were not met, then, after country's independence, dalits would have been nothing more than entering into another bond of slavery from their so-called upper caste brethren. Like dalits, women belonging to all strata of society have faced multiple oppression for thousands of years. Owing to the scourge of untouchability coupled with women's low status in the society; the women couldn't protest and struggle for their rights. Their sub-ordinate position in the society was rationalized through the Hindu shastaras. Therefore, like dalits (ex-untouchables), women also faced low status in the caste-ridden Hindu society (Khurram, 2011: 345-346).

Owing to Ambedkar's lived experiences, he was well familiar/versed with the pitiable position of women in Hindu society for which he wanted radical changes in the Hindu family, in particular, and Hindu society in general. In the Hindu family, he wanted remedies to the embedded social problems of *sati*, widow marriage, child marriage, right to divorce for women, to name a few. system and amendments in the laws relating to marriage, adoption, succession, etc.

He struggled for women's human rights for decades whether it was basic rights, access to education and other burning issues, etc. He was well acquainted with the dismal status of women; as a consequence, as a chairperson of the drafting Committee of the Constitution of India, he left no stone unturned to include women's rights in the political lexicon and the Constitution of India. In this light, the Preamble of Indian Constitution ensures social and economic justice to women, because of Ambedkar's momentous contribution, discussed as follows. There are special provisions to uplift the status of women in society and to ensure gender justice and gender equality. For instance, Article 14 states that all citizens of India are equal in the preview of law and equally protected; and ensures, equal rights and opportunities in social, economic, and political domains. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex; while article 15(3) enables positive discrimination in favour of women. Moreover, Article 16

mentions that there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office without any discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, creed or sex.

In the later stage, some amendment in Article 39 is made to accomplish the objectives as 39(d) and 39(a) provides equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work. Article 42 directs to the state that, state shall make provisions for humane conditions of work and maternity relief. In continuation with this article, the Maternity Benefit Act was passed in 1961. Article 44 states that state shall endeavour to ensure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. While Article 46 focuses on educational and economic interests of weaker sections, Article 47 imposes a duty on the state to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health and so on. Later, the legislature regarded Dr. Ambedkar's dream and vision for gender upliftment and many amendments were incorporated in the Constitution such as Article 51 A (a), 51 A(e) to protect and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. He made a multi-dimensional contribution for gender equality in India by advocating girls' education, removal of social attitudes treating women as untouchables during their menstrual period, right of women to act as priests, maternity benefits for working women during the period of pregnancy and the right to separation, divorce maintenance, adoption and succession, etc. He exhorted women to get education, to live hygienically, to remain away from all social evils, to educate their children, to safeguard their children against developing any type of inferiority complex, to make their children ambitious, and not to marry off their children in haste or in a hurry. Ambedkar exhorted women to be bold and fearless like men and also motivated them to wear clean clothes. Education is a panacea of all our social evils, he stressed upon, as he strongly believed that only inclusive and quality education can empower women and dalits/downtrodden in society. He advised women to mould their children so that they lead a life of dignity and virtue.

The role of women as a catalytic agent for social transformation has to be accepted in the process of attaining social and gender justice. The problems of dalit women were due to the fact that Hindu socio-cultural milieu did not recognize the worth of human dignity. They were also the victims of the Manu Smriti and the flawed interpretation of the Hindu Shastaras. The miserable condition of women was a direct repercussion of the Hindu caste system, as analysed by Ambedkar. The social exclusion of dalits and dalit women had its roots in the ideology which has bred and justified inequality. As a reformatory measure, he took the initiative to draft and introduce the Hindu Code Bill. The said bill sought to eradicate polygamy among the Hindus. It advocated the right to property and right to divorce for women. The twin principles of monogamy and divorce introduced in the Hindu Code Bill was opposed vigorously by the Hindu orthodoxy.

Henceforth, Ambedkar proposed the revision and rethinking/reformulation of these laws in seven different areas: i. The right to property of a deceased Hindu dying interstate, to both males and females ii. The order of succession among different heir to the property of a deceased dying interstate, iii. The law of Maintenance, iv. Marriage, v. Divorce, vi. Adoption, and vii. Minority guardianship. The Bill was not passed because of the stiff opposition it faced from the conservative Hindus. Later, the original bill was divided into four different bills with minor changes. The areas which were passed were the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; the Hindu Succession Act, 1956; The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956; and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 (Khurram, 2011: 345-346).

The bill was a part of social engineering, a first step towards the recognition and upliftment of women in India. Under these revolutionary measures, a woman will have property in her own name with right to dispose of her property independently. He left no stone unturned to defend the bill by pointing out the weaknesses and social evils prevalent in the society and arguing that, the values in the “Bill are based on the

Constitutional principles of equality, liberty and fraternity and told how Indian society characterized by the caste system and the oppression of women, since women are deprived of equality therefore, a legal framework is necessary for a social change in which women have equal rights with men". He also further pointed out that the objective was, "to codify the rules of Hindu Law which are scattered in innumerable decisions of high courts and of the covert Council which form bewildering heterogeneity to the common individual". However, in spite of Ambedkar's best efforts, the bill could not withstand the opposition from the Hindu conservatives as the central argument of the detractors of the bill was that it was an endeavour for the shattering of the entire social fabric and the structure of the Hindu society. In reality, the said bill posed a formidable threat to the patriarchal and caste-based Hindu society on which the traditional family structure was based.

The bill further attempted to unify the Hindu code in tune with progressive and modern thought. Prior to the enactment of Hindu Succession Act, 1956 and Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Law was un-codified in a large measure, and Hindu Women's Right to property Act, 1937 was the subject of legislative intervention.

- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and Women
- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 and Women
- The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 and Women
- The Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956

During the proceedings of Joint Selection Committee (1933-34), Ambedkar forcefully pleaded for the adult franchise of women and even before the Lothian Committee (1932), he strongly articulated for the emancipation of women. It was under the Government of India Act, of 1935 that women secured the right to vote.

IV

B.R. Ambedkar's Thought & Contribution: Filling the Gaps?

The paper also attempts to critically examine why Ambedkar as an exemplary multi-faceted scholar is not given his due in social sciences literature and policy formulation in Indian society, even after 76 years of independence. In this context, a pertinent question was raised, "Do India's public intellectuals have a preponderantly upper-caste social lineage? Why do we shun Ambedkar?" (Naqvi, 2015: 124). Perhaps the only sensible course for the public intellectual; today is to work for a sound strategy to blend Ambedkar's fight for the annihilation of caste with the overarching liberal struggle for social justice. It is perhaps the only worthwhile way for India to keep its tryst with the promise of secularism, democracy, gender and social equality (Naqvi, 2015: 131-132).

Taking the discourse further, as articulated by Baxi (1991), earlier, to commemorate the birth centenary celebrations of Ambedkar in 1991, the Indian social sciences landscape has excluded Ambedkar by studious theoretical silence. On his birth anniversary celebrated in the year 1991, a complete compilation of his writings was conspicuous by its absence. Comparisons are odious but we had organized corpus of texts of Mahatma, Nehru and Rajendra Prasad and Patel, etc. Ambedkar remained a forgotten figure till 1991, and Bharat Ratna was awarded to him posthumously 34 years after his demise, in the year 1990. The complete disregard by the academia of Ambedkar poses a critical question concerning the modes of production of knowledge through the formal education and research systems in India. Or can we infer that the lack betrays a collective conspiracy of silence on the part of Indian scholarship? (Baxi, 1991:1). Ambedkar's discourse represents, archetypically, the pervasive 'fear of anonymous prosecutors', typical of the structures of paranoid knowledge (Lacan, 1931 cited in Baxi, 1991:1).

Ambedkar as a seminal scholar, had authored important books on many relevant areas, including federalism, theology and philosophy, finance, language, constitutionalism and, not the least, the sociology, politics and

history of the caste system (Guha, 2010: 207). To add further, a significant aspect of the discourses on caste and gender studies in India, especially of such that occupy bottom rungs of the hierarchy of castes, has been not only about the position of the caste/castes studies, but of the caste/class of the person who has conducted the study. To elaborate further, the same object, event, or an institution such as caste, may appear differently to different actors and observers depending upon their location and position (Chatterjee, 1993 cited in Channa and Mencher, 2013). To compound the problem further, the modern progressive education (considered by social reformers like Ambedkar, Gandhi, Nehru, Savitribai & Jyotiba Phule, Vivekananda), to be the panacea of all our social evils, is found lacking in ethical/moral paradigm and has failed to inculcate in its subjects the notions of human rights, equality and social and gender justice (Rege 2006:2 cited in Channa and Mencher, 2013).

In the reconstruction of an early period of Indian social history, initially by historians and commentators of the upper castes, they read in one way. And then when Phule and Ambedkar read the same texts, they read them differently (Thapar, 2015:140). In the phenomenologically lived experiences and observations, spanning for almost three decades, in the curriculum of social sciences & sociology of caste/gender; the incorporation of Ambedkar's perspectives in analyzing Indian society has not been witnessed. Even if Ambedkar's thought is included in the course curricula of few courses, especially at university level, either, his ideas are skipped altogether, or his original writings are not recommended for the said courses. For instance, for the study of caste system in India, his pathbreaking classic essay, "The Annihilation of Caste" will be conspicuous by its absence. Also to corroborate further, the contribution of Ambedkar, Savitri Bai Phule and Jyotiba Phule (Saytyshodak Samaj) is not mentioned in the same breath and with the same reverence as the likes of Prarthana Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, etc. in the school textbooks. To cite a parallel example, the oppressed women's perspective is seldom taught for the research being conducted in social sciences.

A large number of the studies being conducted on women in India focuses more on women belonging to middle and upper classes, especially in urban India. For instance, less research has been conducted on the rising menace of trafficking in India, women from minority and ethnic communities, adivasi women, dalit women, problem of *Devadasi pratha*, differently-abled women from marginalized sections, to name a few. As per Mishra (2013), the women's movement in India and the feminist scholarship has not tackled the menace of trafficking seriously, henceforth, very few evidence-based studies have been conducted on this issue. To add further, studying inter-sectionality amongst women is also another area of neglect, as is sexual violence faced by the most marginalized women. In this context, the groundbreaking contribution of Ambedkar as a feminist is also neglected, and the seminal role played by Savitri Bai Phule, Jyotiba Phule is also seldom given its due in the social sciences literature.

V

Position of Indian Women in Contemporary Scenario on Global Platform:

In contemporary global scenario, India stands at 127th position out of 146 countries in Global Gender Gap index (WEF Global Gender Gap Report, 2023). In the year 2022, India's rank was 135, which means the rank has improved 8 places in these rankings in a year. This index assesses the different countries on how effectively they have distributed their resources and opportunities amongst their female and male population. There are four indicators on which the gender inequality is measured:

- Educational attainment: Access and impact on basic and higher education.
- Economic Participation & Opportunity: Access to high skilled level employment, salaries earned, and participation level, etc.
- Political Empowerment: Decision making and power sharing outcomes.

- Health & Survival: Outcomes on life expectancy and sex ratio.

At the development level (HDI Rankings), India fell one spot to rank 132th out of 191 countries, as the development across the globe nosedived owing to twin shocks of Covid-19 crisis and Russia-Ukraine conflict, in the 2022 Human Development Index (HDI) released by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is pertinent to analyse that inequality and deprivation continue to be high in the country. A study by Oxfam conducted in the year 2017 unravels that India's poorest half of 67 crore Indians saw their wealth rise by just 1 percent. The richest 1 percent in India cornered 73 per cent of the wealth generated nation-wide in the year 2016 presenting a worrying picture of rising income inequalities.

To compound the problem further, despite formal gender equality and the legal eradication of untouchability, women are still oppressed and dalits & marginalized sections discriminated against (Guha, 2010: 522). As per the statistics provided in the latest NCRB report, dalits and the adivasis face the brunt of the caste-based/gender-based violence; as the atrocities and crimes against scheduled castes have increased by 1.2% in 2021 (50, 900) over 2020 (50, 291 cases). Minorities, Dalits, Adivasis and Women, although in theory equal citizens, with the same status as members of the majority community, do however suffer from a lesser status in lived experiences (Thapar, 2015:144). To corroborate further, as per the National Crime Records Bureau (N.C.R.B.), quoted in the new edition of the *Annihilation of Caste*, a heinous crime is committed against a dalit by a non-dalit every sixteen minutes; every day, more than four untouchable women are raped by touchables; every week, thirteen dalits are murdered and six dalits are kidnapped. In 2012 alone, the year of the moving bus Delhi gangrape and murder, 1574 dalit women were raped (as per the estimates made, only 10 percent of the rapes or other crimes against dalits are ever reported, says the author and activist Arundhati Roy). And 651 were murdered. That's just the rape and butchery. Not the stripping and parading naked and many other ways of showing Dalits their place (Naqvi, 2015: 126).

VI

Legacy of B.R. Ambedkar:

In post-independence India, especially, Ambedkar's legacy as a socio-political and economic reformer and champion of women's human rights had a profound impact as his ideas have acquired vast respect across the political spectrum. His multi-pronged efforts have influenced various spheres of life like socio-economic policies, discrimination, education and affirmative action through socio-economic and legal programmes. He passionately believed in the freedom of the individual and criticized gender and caste discrimination.

Moreover, Ambedkar's political thought has led to the formation of large number of political parties (RPI & BSP), workers'/students' unions, setting up of publication houses, movies on Ambedkar's struggles, grassroots movements, social justice movements, etc, which have a pan-Indian presence and outreach. He had applied enormous pressure on the orthodox Hindus to bury age-old traditions founded on social and economic disparities. He is considered as a harbinger of social change as he vehemently struggled against the social, political and economic discrimination practiced by the so-called high castes against the dalit women and men. Henceforth, social justice and gender justice forms the signature tune of his ideas, policies and Constitution.

Social justice demands that society should promote the welfare of all and not merely the greatest happiness of the greatest number. "The biggest minority in India is its womanhood subjected to generations of gender injustice". The social reform postulated by Ambedkar was a double-edged one; one, the reform of the Hindu family and secondly, the re-organization and re-structuring of the society". Indian women would always remain indebted to this great social revolutionary for their redemption from bondage and complete subjugation from the tyranny. Ambedkar's call to women was to endlessly fight for their dignity and human rights. For instance, Ambedkar's seminal essay titled, "Small Holdings in India and their Remedies" (1918) advocated industrialization as a remedy to the

problem of agriculture, and the disparities in the then society. His legacy serves as a source of inspiration and motivation in the prolonged struggle for the liberation of Indian women from the chains of patriarchy as feminists like Ruth Manorama, Sharmila Rege, Gail Omvedt, Kalpana Kannabiran, have worked on the issues of caste-gender interface, intersectionalities, etc. His philosophy is also reflected in the pro-people, pro-women, pro-poor, empowerment programmes of the Government of India, for example, Stand-up India for encouraging entrepreneurship amongst women belonging to the SC/ST communities, simplification of labour laws and availing loans, Ayushman Bharat Scheme, etc.

For Baxi (2006), the human suffering oriented towards, and caused by, human rights implementation is both creative and destructive of human potential. The vision of the future of human rights depends on our power not just to name an order of evil but in our ability to articulate a normative theory concerning the ethical unjustifiability of certain forms and formations of human suffering that the regime of evil incarnates. According to Alexander, cultural trauma takes place when members of an oppressed community perceive that they have been subjected to a horrendous event. The event leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and altering their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. Meirhenrich has further theorized that the salient characteristic of the cultural trauma as its embeddedness in the structure of the society. Therefore, there is an urgent need to save the dalit/oppressed women from the cultural trauma embedded in the social structure, and to empower and uplift them, through effective formulation of policy, as envisaged by Ambedkar.

Concluding Reflections

From the discussion above, the philosophical underpinnings of Ambedkar, Gandhi and Nehru provide illuminating insights for shaping a gender-just, inclusive and egalitarian society. While these brilliant leaders differed in their approaches, they shared a common vision and commitment for the betterment of the society. Ambedkar analysed various women's related

issues from enforced widowhood, forced girl marriage, prostitution, maternity leave for women working in factories, vote to right for women's property, right to divorce, etc. His dream of society based on gender equality and gender justice is yet to be realized. Henceforth, his thoughts are significant for the social rebuilding that favours women's equality. For those who (perhaps vainly in the eye of history) believe in the possibilities of emancipatory politics, there is no escape from rediscovering Ambedkar. Perhaps, in that lies the possibility of a discovery of India, an un-Nehruvian 'discovery', for a change, for the real *atishudras* of India (Baxi, 1991:16). Ambedkar was the true architect of modern India, and, gender justice and gender equality still remains the twin utopian dream. For Ambedkar, self-help was the best help.

Through ups and downs, success and failure, India has sustained freedom and democracy, even it has failed to offer to its very poor and its marginalized and minority communities, the promising future it has promised (Banerjee-Dube, 2015: 462). India remains a less-than-united nation, a less-than-perfect democracy, a less-than-equal economy and a less-than-peaceful society. Ambedkar's dream of gender equality is yet to be realized even after 76 years of independence (Guha, 2010: 524). Although the goal of empowerment of women is yet to be fully achieved, Ambedkar's ideas about women's rights, women's autonomy, women's development, and women's empowerment are still relevant in contemporary times.

On a positive note, Ambedkar, was chosen as the "Greatest Indian after Mahatama" in 2012 by a online poll organized byvarious television channels. The other observation of these challenging times is that a huge number of Indians cutting across political ideology, caste/class/regional identities criticize human rights violations across the globe; like, issues of racial minorities (black lives matters), animal rights, etc which is commendable. But, the underlying question is why the same social activists do not raise their voices or register the protest when a dalit man/woman feel the brunt of caste violence/atrocities in the twenty-first

century India? In this context, the mofussil intellectual has to do research at the grassroots to produce a grounded theory from a bottom-up perspective & feminist standpoint. Similarly, when we discuss gender equality and gender justice, the transgender community should also be given their proper due. The intersectionalities of social markers, especially gender, must be integrated with the policies to address disparities faced by women and other marginalized communities comprehensively. As a result of Ambedkar's holistic understanding of social issues at large, he, undoubtedly, occupies a prominent place in the builders of modern India.

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The Nature and Dynamics of Gender Stereotypes: A Sociological analysis of Women's Participation in Sports in Contemporary Times

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Abstract

Gender Roles are the expected behavior patterns on the basis of sexual differentiations. Restricting an individual with a particular role based on his/her gender is an unfair deal at the part of society. This research paper examines the relationship between gender roles and sports. An attempt has been made to explore the evolution of gender roles and stereotypes in the field of sports over the period of time. It also attempts to understand how gender stereotypes affect the participation rate in sports, especially for women. The paper discusses how the intersectionality of gender and class impacts the participation rate amongst female athletes. The paper also attempts to analyze how media impacts the participation rate of athletes and the representation differences between male and female athletes.

In addition to this, the paper also delves into the role of gender stereotypes and how they impact the participation of female sports person. The existence of gender based stereotypes, biases and their impact on the performance of sports women has also been explored. The researcher has attempted to present a historical background of gender roles in sports and the contemporary changes that are coming in the world of sports. Finally, the paper discusses the contemporary challenges faced by sports women and how women are breaking the glass ceiling of gender stereotypes in sports. This research paper is divided into three sections. Section I deals with the conceptual understanding and historical background of gender roles and its relationship with sports. Section II is concerned with the impact of gender stereotypes at the participation rate and role played by media. Finally, Section III consists of Discussion and inferences.

Key Words: Women, Gender, Gender roles, Class, Sports, Media, Gender Stereotypes.

Section I

Introduction

"There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender.... identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." – Judith Butler

Gender is a term that has psychological and cultural connotations; if the proper terms of sex are 'male' and 'female,' the corresponding terms of gender are 'masculine' and 'feminine'; these latter might be entirely independent of (biological) sex (Stoller, 1968). Sociologists and most other social scientists view sex and gender as abstractly different. Sex refers to the physical or physiological variances between men and women, including primary sex features (the reproductive system) and secondary physical appearances such as height and muscularity (Grusky, 2001). Gender is a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions associated with being male or female. Gender Identity is the extent to which one identifies as masculine or feminine (Diamond, 2002).

The entire order would start to come apart and would not even exist if both men and women did not function according to the roles allocated to them by society (Bhasin, 2003). The manner in which gender roles are performed is not for individual women or individual men. However, for patriarchy to triumph, all women must consider themselves weaker than each manageable man. It depends on socialization and how society has conditioned sons and daughters to act (Bhasin, 1986).

Women go through different forms of oppression in society, and their participation in employment, particularly in male-dominated professions, is limited (Hoffman et al, 2005). There is a considerable gender gap in sports-related professions too. Given the patriarchal structure of most societies, the legal, social, and cultural practices hinder women's development. Their struggles are severe and challenging. (Oakley, 1974).

A Gender stereotype can be defined as an overgeneralization or belief about

a whole category of people without giving acknowledgment to individual personality (Hoffman and Hurst, 1990). Stereotypes are the basis of the formation of biases and discrimination against certain classes of people. It creates a fixed image of a category (men and women) in the minds of the people (Heilman, 2001). Associating men with laborious jobs and women with home chores is an example of gender-stereotypical ideology. Women are often represented as weak, emotional, and needy. On the other hand, men are represented as logical, career-oriented, and strong (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000).

Stereotypical ideology is being propagated through various social agencies such as families, neighborhoods, schools, media, peer groups as well as religious bodies. Through these agencies of socialization, gender-based stereotypes are being inculcated in the minds of children. Gender stereotypes reflect the tendency of society to perceive individuals of a particular gender with a particular status and role. The expectations of society about ideal feminine and masculine traits are a reproduction of gender stereotypes (Ellemers, 2018) For instance, the average height of males is different from that of females. The statement, “Boy should be taller than a girl when marriage proposals are considered, reflects the stereotypical mentality of society.

Gender stereotypes and sports

Gender stereotyping can be understood as considering a person weaker than the other based on his/her gender. One can find many statements like “boys play better cricket than girls” or “girls cook better than boys”. It is judgmental to address someone strong or weak without knowing the actual capabilities.

There are several studies that substantiate the presence of gender-based stereotypes in sports. Sports, generally regarded as male territory, is full of gender stereotypes. A study in the field of sports psychology (Hively and Alayli, 2014) found that gender stereotypes have a negative impact on

performance. The study suggested that a minor stereotypical comment about the performance of women athletes can lead to a fall in their performance graph.

Objectives

1. To present a historical background of gender roles and their evolution in the world of sports.
2. To analyze the presence of gender stereotypes in sports and its impact on sportswomen.
3. To examine the role of media in changing the stereotypical image of women and promoting sports women.

Research Methodology

This present study used both exploratory and descriptive research design. The data were collected from both primary as well as secondary sources. The universe of the study is jammu and Kashmir. The key respondents of the proposed study were female sportspersons. For this study some colleges were selected, in the selected colleges, the focus of the study was on outdoor sports. Outdoor sports were again divided into individual and team sports. In individual sports, *Athletics, Cross Country, and badminton* were selected, and in team sports, *kho-kho, kabaddi, and basketball* were selected.

Since the researcher had a sampling frame in the form of a list of students, a Probability Sampling Design was selected. Further, in Probability Sampling, Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling was used to divide the respondents into different strata and obtain clarity in the research. The sample size of the present study was 200. Both Primary and secondary sources of data were used. The data was collected with help of Interview Schedule. The researcher also employed observation, personal interviews, focused group discussions and telephone interviews to collect data from the field.

Historical Development of Sports among Women

Gender ideology is a collection of shared ideas about masculinity, femininity, and the relationship between men and women (Bhasin, 2003). Individuals often use these concepts to describe what it means to be a man or a woman, to analyse and assess individuals and relationships, and to decide what they perceive to be rational and moral regarding gender. It is so profoundly embedded in our cultural existence that we never talk about it and rarely ask questions about it (Gill, 2019). People take it for granted and use it as a form of logic to make sense of the world—for instance, pink is a colour for girls, blue is for boys, dolls are for girls, and guns are for boys (Anlue, 2006). For a long time, it is often stressed in the dominant gender ideology in most societies that men are biologically superior to women in any conduct involving energy, physical capacity, and emotional control. So, when a person throws a ball or kicks poorly or ineptly, a general statement is passed that he or she throws or kicks like a girl (Parmar, 2010). Compliant with the philosophy of gender is the idea that sport is physically taxing and thus helps to turn boys into men. At the same time, when women excel in the form of sport usually associated with men, these ideas confuse people and conclude regarding women playing a sport, as it is against the gender stereotypical identity associated with women. People believe that heterosexuality, femininity, and athletic excellence, particularly in physically challenging or heavy-to-contact sports, cannot go together (Smith, 2007). This philosophy has led many female athletes to face discrimination based on physique. As a result, they (female athletes) are often described as lesbians (Woolum, 1998).

Sports sociologists have exemplified that the historical advancement of modern sports is the reason behind the gendered character of sporting practices. Over time, sports has been created and recreated around the postulations, values, and ideologies of males, maleness, and masculinity (Anderson, 2014). The history of modern-day sports lies in the Victorian period in Britain when sports were initiated to be considered by systematized structures and uniform directions. The late nineteenth-

century British sports developments mainly centered on white middle-class males' beliefs and values (Hargreaves, 1994). In institutions such as public schools, universities, churches, and private clubs, sports came to represent a Victorian version of masculinity based on physical superiority, competitiveness, mental acumen, and a sense of fair play (Bandy, 2014). Established ideals of femininity such as passivity, frailty, emotionality, gentleness, and dependence were in stark opposition to the strenuous task of playing sports (Hall, 1988). The belief that male and female traits were innate, biological, and somehow fixed prevailed. Therefore, women's participation in sports was a subject to debate regarding what type and how much physical activity was appropriate for them. The marginalization of women and the dominance of men in sports is a legacy of Victorian images of female frailty that is also reflected in the making of modern sports in the U.S. (Guttmann, 1991).

Female participation improved dramatically in the twentieth century, reflecting changes in contemporary societies that emphasize gender parity (Sangwan, 2008). However, the level of participation and performance varies substantially from country to country (Kay, 1995). Moreover, with the aid of sports, women's sports activities are extensively customary at some point in the arena. Although there has been an upward push in participation with women's aid in sports activities, a considerable disparity remains (Cunningham, 2007). The first Olympic games within the early current generation, which were in 1896, were not open to girls. However, since then, the wide variety of women participating in the Olympic Games has accelerated dramatically (Costa & Guthrie, 1994).

Sports in India: Gender Insight

Gender-based discrimination in sports has long been a controversial topic. Even the founder of the modern Olympics, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, said in 1896, "*No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her body is not cut out to sustain certain shocks.*" (International journal of physical education, sports, and health, 2016) Insights into the vast history of India provides a clear picture of the sports-related scenario in the country.

Table 1
Women's participation in the Olympic Winter Games

Year	Sports	Women's only Events	Mixed Events	Total events	% of women's only events	% of women's/mixed events	Women participants	% of women participants
1924	1	1	1	16	6.3	12.5	11	4.3
1928	1	1	1	14	7.1	14.3	26	5.6
1932	1	1	1	14	7.1	14.3	21	8.3
1936	2	2	1	17	11.8	17.6	80	12
1948	2	4	1	22	18.2	22.7	77	11.5
1952	2	5	1	22	22.7	27.3	109	15.7
1956	2	6	1	24	24.0	29.2	134	17
1960	2	10	1	27	35.7	40.7	144	21.5
1964	3	12	2	34	35.3	41.2	199	18.3
1968	3	12	2	35	34.2	40.0	211	18.2
1972	3	12	2	35	34.2	40.0	205	20.5
1976	3	12	3	37	32.4	40.5	231	20.6
1980	3	12	3	38	31.6	39.5	232	21.7
1984	3	13	3	39	33.3	41.0	274	21.5
1988	3	16	4	46	34.8	41.3	301	21.2
1992	4	23	3	57	40.4	45.6	488	27.1
1994	4	25	3	61	41.0	45.9	522	30
1998	6	29	3	68	42.0	47.1	787	36.2
2002	7	34	3	78	42.5	47.4	886	36.9
2006	7	37	3	84	44.0	47.6	960	38.2
2010	7	38	3	86	44.2	47.7	1,044	40.7
2014	7	43	6	98	44.9	51.0	1,121	40.3
2018	7	44	9	102	42.7	52.0	1,169	41
2022	7	46	12	109	42.2	53.0	1,314*	45.4*

*Predicted number

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) Factsheet – Women in the Olympic Movement, 09 December, 2021

Table 1 reflects the growth in women's participation in the Winter Olympics from 1924 to 2022. It can be seen initially the participation of women in sports events was skewed. But in less than a century of time, one can observe a significant increase in women participation in the Winter Olympic. The table manifests that after 1994 the participation of women in the Olympics become quite significant with at least one-third of the representation.

In Post-Independent modern India, the situation of women's sports changed a lot but one could see a number of cases where gender-based discrimination gets highlighted. Sports as a 'gendered arena' is almost a truism (Kohli, 2017). The gender ratio in sports is highly skewed in India. The participation level of females in India is marginal compared to males. Several socio-economic and cultural barriers are more applicable to women than men in sports. Some of the constraints where one can see a gendered gap in sports are; stipend or match fees, biasness in sports awards, lack of female coaches, lack of females in sports administration, lack of family support, safety and security concerns, etc.

Section II

Gender stereotypes in sports

In this section of the study, an effort has been made to understand the nature of gender stereotypes in sports from the viewpoint of the key respondents. The researcher has tried to gather respondents' opinions about the behavior patterns of their families, neighbors, relatives, and classmates towards them.

Stereotypes are created in every society in every era. Since traditional times, the most common stereotypes are related to men and women. It consists of the psychological and behavioral traits associated with each gender. Men are always associated with jobs like construction worker and women are shown as care givers (Ember Carol R. and Ember Melvin, 2004).

Decision Making

To understand and analyze the presence of patriarchy, the respondents were further interviewed. The main focus of discussion in this part was to ascertain the decision-making authority in the family regarding sports. In earlier studies, it has been found that career choices in the present generation have been influenced by parents, followed by peer pressure and general and financial reasons (Akash Khanna et.al, 2020). To understand the nature of decision-making authority in the family, the respondents were asked about the decision-maker regarding sports in their family.

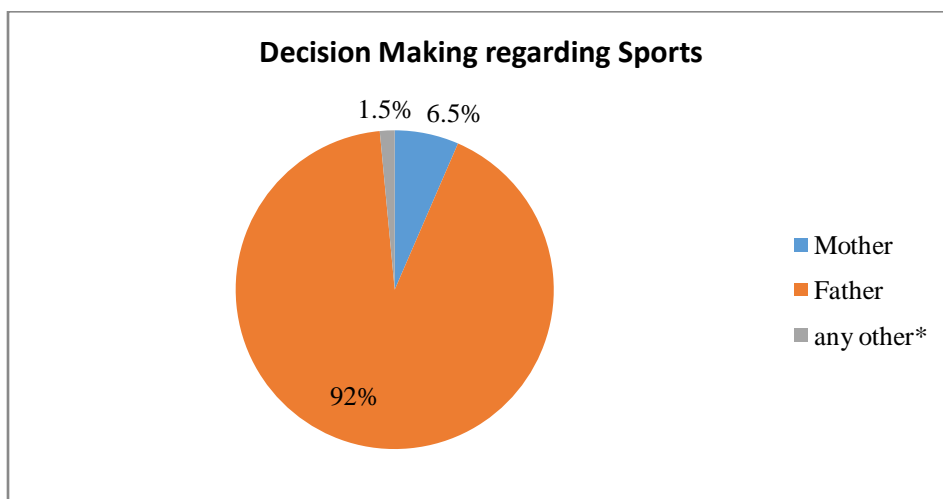


Figure 1: Decision making in Family regarding Sports

Figure1 indicates the presence of male dominance in decision-making regarding sports. It is clearly evident as 92.00 percent of the respondents agreed that it is their fathers who made the decision to continue sports after school or not. The permission to go out of their village/town for sports was also given by their fathers. 6.50 percent of cases were there in which mothers took the decision, and only two respondents (1.50 percent) were there whose grandfathers motivated them to take sports further. This showcases the patriarchal nature of the family system in the study area as males dominated the decision-making capacity regarding the involvement

of females in the family in sports (Coakley White, 1992).

Decision-making at home is a varied phenomenon, where different kinds of decisions are associated with males as well as females, depending upon the norms of society. Whether it is a financial matter or any other important decision that has to be made in the family, the power usually resides with the male. In the present study, it was found that the decision regarding sports as a career was made under the influence of parents and the fathers were the decision makers.

Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Sports Women

There are several studies that substantiate the presence of gender-based stereotypes in sports. Sports, generally regarded as male territory, is full of gender stereotypes. A study in the field of sports psychology (Hively and Alayli, 2014) found that gender stereotypes have a negative impact on performance. The study suggested that a minor stereotypical comment about the performance of women athletes can lead to a fall in their performance graph. Since, one of the objectives of present study is to analyze various gender stereotypes in sports. The respondents were asked whether they had come across such stereotypes.

Table 2
Presence of Gender stereotypes Related to Sports in locality

Response Category	Frequency	Percent
Yes	91	45.50
No	52	26.00
No response	57	28.50
Total	200	100.00

Table 2 reflects the presence of gender stereotypes related to sports in society. The respondents (45.50 percent) agreed with the presence of gender stereotypes. On the other hand, 26 percent of respondents

disagreed with the statement. Whereas some of the respondents chose to give no response to the question. They were skeptical regarding the question.

After asking if they had come across any such incident, some of the respondents revealed that in their surroundings only boys play cricket or football, and girls are being told that these are male sports. Some of the respondents revealed that they often come across biased statements like “*Kya ladkiyon ki tarah khel rha hai!*” (Why are you playing like girls).

Earlier studies suggest that the intensity of stereotypical statements vary from sports to sports (Gentile, Boca, Giammusso, 2018). For instance, Cricket and Soccer are dominated by male players. Women Cricketers experience a higher threat of performance pressure as compared to other sportswomen.

Another respondent highlighted that there’s always a sense of pity for a girl if she is playing with boys. *We usually experience such statements in our surrounding, “Khelne de isko thodi der, jaldi out ho jaegi.”* (Let her play for a while, she would not stand long.)

“khelne de varna rone lag jaegi” (let her play, else she would start crying.)

Statements like these reflect the image of a female in the eyes of society. Women have been portrayed as submissive for a long time (Bhasin, 2003).

Moreover, it has become a perception in society that men only play games and sports. The responses from the field indicated the negative role played by society as well as stereotyping sports in the context of females. It was found out that girls were encouraged by their parents to play indoor games. Many respondents agreed that they were given dolls and kitchen sets to play with during childhood (Anlue, 2006).

It was also found that many respondents faced stereotypical comments daily. The respondents revealed that they were often taunted by their

siblings. Statements like *"Tu karegi sports, shakal dekhi hai apni?"* (You can't do sports, you haven't got the caliber). The behavior of family members was found discouraging in several cases. The respondents highlighted that they had to undergo lot of gender specific stereotypes. They were advised by their family members as well as relatives that the only purpose of going to college was study.

Another gender stereotype highlighted by the respondents was associated with the looks of a girl. A female should have feminine physique (Bhasin, 1986). The respondent narrated that one of the stereotype that she often heard was related to her haircut. Further, it was mentioned that statements like *"Ladki hokar Boy cut kyu karwa rakha hai? Gharwaalo ne allow kaise kar diya itne chhote baal rakhne ke liye?"* (Being a girl, why do you have a boy haircut? How did your parents agree for keeping such short hair?)

(Athlete and Karate player, F, 19 years)

However, several respondents shared their experiences of gender-based stereotypes during the group discussion. Majority of the cases were based on gender biased approach of the society. The respondents were asked if their skin tone gets changed due to sports. To which all the respondents agreed that practicing during the day makes their complexion dark. The respondents were further asked about society's reaction to their changed skin tone. It was found that majority of the respondents had experienced statements relating to ideal female body (Ritzer, 2003).

"kudiyaan te soniyaan hi honi chaidiyaan, kal gi bagaane kaar jaana ae."
 [Girls should be fair and pretty, they have to get married.]

One can understand the narrations and findings by quoting the celebrated French Sociologist, Simone de Beauvoir. In her book *"The Second Sex"* (2011), Beauvoir explains that it is not nature which differentiates between men and women. Masculinity and femininity are construction of civilization. *"One is not born a woman, one becomes one"*. The societal

conditions, the upbringing, the nations about physique etc., are responsible for identity construction of males and females.

After the analysis of the responses gathered from the field, the researcher concluded that stereotypical ideologies regarding gender still existed in the society.

It has been found in earlier studies that a large number of women are discriminated against men in the majority of sports (Young, 2016). The statistical inadequacy of literature on women's participation in sports is evidence of gender discrimination. Meagre mention of women players is found in historical and sociological research on sports in India. (Kohli, 2017).

Sports and Class

To understand the financial status of the respondents, monthly income of the family was considered as a significant variable. The data highlighted that majority respondents belonged to lower middle class families. Almost 63 per cent of the respondents belonged to the income category of up to 40,000 Rs per month. Few cases were also found where respondents did not have a stable monthly income. Almost all the respondents who belonged to lower income group wanted to pursue their career in sports. 51 per cent of the respondents revealed that they were interested in making career in their respective sports. Whereas, 29 per cent of the respondents were of the view that any job through their sports quota would be fine for them.

Gender stereotypes in advertising and media

Mass media are considered to be the fourth pillar of any democratic nation and one of the significant agencies of socialization (Aggarwal & Gupta, 2001). It has its reach to quite a vast audience. Be it for knowledge gathering or entertainment, the dependence of people on mass media cannot be denied. People are dependent on and actively involved in one or the other form of mass media around the clock (Wakefield et.al, 2010).

The perception of society about a particular situation depends a lot upon how that is displayed and portrayed in the media.

There are different kinds of media platforms, such as print media (newspapers, magazines, journals), electronic media (television, cinema, radio), and social media. The most popular and impactful media platform for disseminating any ideology is cinema. Studies highlight (Bannon & Goldenberg, 2007) that films play a significant role in constructing popular culture, and it becomes easier for the audience to understand and remember the message communicated through movies. Many social issues are being talked about in society through movies.

The representation of men and women by the media provides one with several illustrations. Men are 'tall, dark, and handsome', whereas women are 'fair and lovely.' There are a huge number of beauty products for both of them in the market. The advertisements for both males and females are identifiers of an ideal human body. Women are addressed with products like lipsticks, innerwear, and baby care products as they propagate the latent intention of promoting women as docile and sensitive. The advertisement for males is just the opposite. Men are portrayed as the bread winner for the house.

As far as women and sports is concerned, there has been a rapid increase in the number of movies that portray women as strong, muscular character and put forward their real-life struggles. The Indian cinema has come up with multiple sports movies where the female protagonist is shown as strongly opinionated and well-built. Aamir Khan starrer Dangal was one of its kind, where the patriarch trains his daughters to fight with boys of their age in wrestling. The statement "*Chhoriyaan chhoron se Kam hainke*", became very popular and brought about a change in the perspective where women are considered weak and incompetent.

Similarly, movies like Mary Kom, Chak De India, etc., also showed women in strong characters. MC Mary Kom has been awarded several awards for her unstoppable career in the boxing field. Mary Kom has won

medals at all eight All India Boxing Association (AIBA) World Boxing Championships since its inception in 2001, rising to the top spot in the AIBA world rankings. She also competed at the London 2012 Olympic Games, winning a bronze medal after being beaten by eventual champion Nicola Adams. (<https://olympics.com/en/athletes/chungneijang-merykom-hmangte>) She once said, "*People used to say that Boxing is for men and not for women, and I thought I would show them someday. I promised myself, and I proved myself.*" Boxing, like other sports, is considered to be a male-dominated sport where muscularity is admired. Breaking all these gender stereotypes, Mary Kom became the first female boxer from India to win an Olympic medal.

There is a long list of sports movies having female sportspersons as the main character. The majority of sports movies are inspired by the real-life struggles of female sportspersons. One of the essential movies that require a mention here is *Rashmi Rocket*. *Rashmi Rocket* is a movie that has taken its inspiration from the life story of one of the famous Sprinters of India, 'Dutee Chand'. The movie has taken into consideration a severe issue, i.e., the *Testosterone level* in female sports persons. Testosterone is a hormone produced in the body that causes men to develop the physical and sexual features that are characteristic of the male body.

The media has played a significant role in celebrating the success of these female athletes. It has given them the required encouragement and limelight. The success of these female athletes, along with other sportspersons, has encouraged people to make their daughters and girls in their families opt for sports as a career. Thus, the media has helped a lot in breaking the stereotype associated with female sports in the country. 'Sports films can create popular consciousness among the audiences which has no limitation to any kind of boundaries' (Dunning & Coakley, 2002).

The afore-mentioned studies resolve the duality of the role media plays. It both acts as a mirror and molds the values and beliefs of society. It not only reflects the belief system and values of society; society's values are

shaped by the media. It can be understood what Giddens meant by the duality of structure (Appelrouth & Edles, 2020).

Section III

Discussion and Inferences

After discussing with the respondents, it was revealed that society has a mixed notion about women in general and a critical (narrow) perspective about sports women in particular. The behavior of the parents was found supportive. However, 65 percent of the respondents revealed that their parents associate aggression with their sports. Some of the respondents told the researcher that people in their community regard women to be submissive, weak, and incapable of doing hard work. There are so many restrictions that are imposed on women. 54 percent of the respondents highlighted that the behavior of neighbors was discouraging. Sports are not considered to resonate with feminine qualities. The review of related research articles and newspaper articles also revealed that clothing, body shaming, and physique are the major hindrances in the way of women and sports.

The presence of gender stereotypes was evident in society through their notions of masculinity and femininity. 45.5 percent of the respondents confirmed that they had faced such situations. The respondents were asked if women take sports as hobby, to which 55 percent replied negatively. The societal notion of women as a weaker sex was also negated by the respondents. 58 percent of the respondents revealed that women are not physically weak. While on the other hand when enquired about development of masculinity, 75 percent of the respondents highlighted that masculine figure is not developed until or unless one is doing rigorous exercises such as heavy weight lifting. Whereas, on the question of societal acceptance of masculine women, 41.75 percent of the respondents said no. It was also highlighted that masculine women were often looked down upon. The findings identified that there were several gender-specific reasons, such as body image, appearance anxiety, and a higher level of

body surveillance amongst girls, which acted as factors in declining rate of sports participation.

Breaking the stereotype

Women are the backbone of not only a family but society as a whole. They are great achievers who play a significant role in empowering society. As one can see, more often, people do not acknowledge and have the slightest interest in women's sports as much as in men's sports. Women around the world are mostly underestimated, and their potential is undermined in comparison to men. Starting from the early Olympics, the role of women in sports and games was neglected, and the opportunities provided were also scarce.

Earlier studies reflect how over representation of male leadership in sports organization has become institutionalized practice. It disadvantages the female in gaining the access to such positions. Institutionalized practices within sport organizations have valued male ideals, provided men with unquestioned power, and devalued women's contributions to sport leadership (Thornton, & Etxebarria, 2021).

However, the status of women has improved many folds now. Women are seen breaking the glass ceiling of gender stereotypes. During the fieldwork, the researcher met several sportswomen who outshined in their respective games. The respondents were of the view that performance should speak rather than narratives. A change in the attitude of women was also observed, where they were challenging the masculine nature of sports.

Sports related movies: Movies are the manifestation of the various happenings in the society. The motivation behind the stories projected in the movies is derived from the social milieu. Moreover, movies and cinema have a long lasting effect on the psyche of the people and therefore act as important agents of socialization. "Film is a popular culture making it easier to communicate messages. Learning through films becomes enjoyable as it arouses motivation; therefore it becomes easier to

understand and remember the communicated messages,” Bannon and Goldenberg (2007).

Some of the movies worth mentioning are Dangal, Mary Kom, Rashmi Rocket, Saand ki Aankh, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag etc.

The existence of gender stereotypical ideology was evident in the findings of the research paper. However, females (key respondents) were found more confident as compared to non-sports students. The parents' preference to academics over sports was found in almost all the cases. But the parents also acknowledged the importance of sports in the lives of their children. One can conclude that slow and gradual change was evident.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper delved into the intricate and evolving landscape of gender stereotypes within the realm of women's participation in sports in contemporary times. Through a comprehensive sociological analysis, it became evident that while progress has been made in challenging traditional gender norms, pervasive stereotypes continue to influence perceptions, opportunities, and experiences for women athletes.

The research highlighted the multifaceted nature of gender stereotypes, which encompass not only overt biases but also subtle and ingrained attitudes. These stereotypes intersect with factors such as race, class, and body image, creating a complex web of challenges that women athletes navigate. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the determined efforts of women athletes and various stakeholders in reshaping these narratives and dismantling outdated norms.

Contemporary times have witnessed significant advancements in women's sports, with trailblazing athletes shattering records and achieving remarkable feats. Yet, the persistence of unequal media coverage, pay disparities, and limited sponsorship opportunities underscores the urgency of continued advocacy for gender equality in sports. This paper underscores the importance of comprehensive policy reforms, increased

representation in decision-making bodies, and enhanced media portrayal to foster a more inclusive and equitable sporting environment.

As society continues to evolve, so too must our understanding of gender dynamics and stereotypes. This research underscores the need for ongoing dialogue, education, and cultural transformation to challenge deeply ingrained biases. By embracing diverse narratives and celebrating the achievements of women athletes across all disciplines, we can move closer to a future where gender stereotypes hold no sway, and women's participation in sports is truly reflective of their talent, determination, and rightful place in society.

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Elderly Women in Haryana: Problems and Social Work Intervention

MANJU PANWAR, PREETI DABAS, KAVITA

Abstract

The phenomenon of an ageing population has become a major concern for policymakers all over the world. Elderly women face dual challenges within the elderly population, one being old and other as woman. This paper is descriptive in nature and goal is to assess the problems faced by 100 elderly women in the five adopted villages of B. P S Women's University, the first women university in North India. Findings reveal that majority of elderly women face issues such as financial uncertainty, mental disorders, feelings of isolation, and so on. The authors also highlighted the Constitution provisions, policies, and programmes implemented by both Central and state government for enhancing the condition of elderly. This article addresses social work intervention with a specific focus on geriatric social work with the elderly.

Keywords: Elderly Women, social work intervention, counselling, advocacy

Introduction

The world's growing elderly population is becoming an issue of concern. Ill health, a low socio economic status, lack of financial security, and inadequate living conditions are responsible for elderly's vulnerability. The rapid increase in industrialization, urbanization, and the disintegration of joint families have a significant impact on the emotional and mental well-being of the elderly, resulting in disagreement, neglect, lack of respect, and, in extreme cases, exploitation and abuse. (Balamurgan and Ramathirthan)

The gender of the elderly person determines his or her position in the family, as females have a lower social status than males. While the elderly face a variety of challenges, the situation is serious for elderly women because they face prejudice and discrimination in their entire lives and, for the most part, they do not speak out against it. It is critical to recognize that women are more affected by ageing because their challenges differ from men.

The Global Report on Ageing in the Twenty-First Century confirms that older people, particularly older women, face a variety of discriminations, including barriers to employment and health care, abuse, denial of the right to own and inherit property, and a lack of a basic minimum income and social security. Without a doubt, widowed women who are single and abandoned face numerous challenges in their lives. Indian elderly women face three threats: ageing, becoming a woman, and poverty. Women also make up a larger proportion of the elderly population. According to the United Nations report (2017), the world's elderly population is nearly 960 million, but according to the population census 2011, India has nearly 104 million, with 53 million females and 51 million males. The proportion of the elderly increased from 5.6% in 1961 to 8.6% in 2011. Males had a rate of only 8.2%, while females had a rate of 9.0%. Census 2011. In recent years, India's elderly population has grown, and this trend is expected to continue in the coming years. The population over the age of 60 is expected to increase from 8% in 2015 to 19% by 2050. Elderly people will account for nearly 34% of the total population by the end of the century (Office of the Registrar General of India, (ORGI), 2011).

Haryana state accounts for approximately 8.7 per cent of India's total elderly population, with 2194 thousand people aged 60 and above, including 1005 thousand females and 1089 males, according to statistics. There are 1513 thousand rural elderly people in Haryana and 681 thousand urban elderly people. (Borah)

This is because life expectancy has increased dramatically. The family has been a fundamental social institution in India for providing assistance and taking care of the elderly. (Rajan and Kumar p. 75) The well-being of the elderly has been influenced by societal shifts in the Indian family system. With an ageing population, there is a greater need to focus on age-related issues and to promote comprehensive programmes and policies for addressing a growing elderly population.

Definition of Aging

Ageing is defined distinctly in different societies and has evolved significantly over time.

According to Hooyman, ageing can be viewed in terms of Chronological Ageing, which is defined as a person's age determined by the years since birth. Biological ageing refers to the physical deterioration of human organs caused by a decrease in the number of cell replications and the decline of certain non-replicable cells in the human body.

Social ageing refers to an individual's changing roles and relationships within the social structure, whereas mental health ageing refers to changes in sensory and visual processes, mental functioning, personality, drives, and intentions. The social context determines an individual's understanding of ageing, which varies greatly due to cultural differences. It also determines whether the individual's ageing process will be primarily positive or negative.

Ageing, according to the above definition, means approaching an average human life span. The concept of old age is difficult to define due to the fact it does not carry the same significance in all societies. However, in the Indian context, the government of India's National Policy on Older Persons, adopted in January 1999, identifies senior citizens as those aged 60 as well as above. This policy discusses issues affecting senior citizens in both urban and rural areas, as well as the unique needs of the elderly

and older women. In general, the policy promotes an age-integrated society. (Bhalero)

Objectives:

The research focused on the following topics:

1. To understand the problems faced by elderly women in society.
2. To trace the policies and programmes implemented by both Central and State Government for assisting the elderly.
3. To suggest social work intervention for the elderly.

Methodology:

The current study is descriptive in nature, with 100 rural old-aged women randomly selected from the five adopted villages of the B. P. S. Women University, Sonipat Haryana, the first Women's University in North India. In addition to personal interviews with the ten respondents from each village, focus group discussions with the elderly women were held to better understand their problems based on their shared experiences. The final section of the paper discusses social work intervention with the elderly to improve their overall quality of life.

Discussion and Research Findings

Demographic Profile

In any society, chronological age is a significant measure of how people share their respective positions and duties. As a result, a person with grey hair would have particular authority and power in the family as well as the community. (Panda) The respondents in this study range in age from 60 to 90 years old. The survey data revealed that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 60 and 69, with 3% being 90 or older.

5.2 Marital Status

The union of a husband and wife is a vital source of both socio-emotional

and financial support. The marital status of the participants was divided into two categories: married and widow. According to the study, 70% of respondents were married, while 30% were widowed women.

Caste

The caste system is a distinguishing feature of Hindu society. This ancient institution classified people into four varnas: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. In this study, respondents came from three different caste categories: general, OBC, and SC. According to the study's findings, respondents from the General, OBC, and SC. In each sampled village of this study, respondents from the general (55%) and SC (15%) category outnumbered those from the OBC (30%) category.

Educational Status

A significant number of respondents are illiterate, with 70% illiterate and 30% having completed primary school.

Occupation

According to the study, 5% of participants earn their living solely through agriculture and daily wage employment, while 95% work on household responsibilities.

Problems faced by elderly women in Haryana

According to R.C. Atchley (1989), age-related problems are amplified by three major socioeconomic factors: first, labelling older people as fragile and incapable; second, the belief that work is an indicator of a beneficial life; and finally, financial hardship, which often leads to social isolation and psychological feeling depressed.

Economic Insecurity

In India, financial independence for elderly women is non-existent. Women in the unorganised sector and women from low-income families are particularly affected by the crisis. As a result, the situation of older

women, particularly those from the venerable section of society, requires immediate attention. According to the findings, a majority of respondents (70%) have no income and rely on their families. Financial assistance in old age is necessary so that the elderly are not dependent on their children for support.

Following a focused group discussion with participants in the sampled villages, they opined that health is the primary concern during old age and that regular income in the form of a pension can help them to obtain more effective medication. In this context, all of the benefits of schemes and initiatives must be brought to the elderly's doorstep. The position of elderly people within a family is also affected by economic dependency on the family. As a result, there is a need to ensure the economic security of a community's elderly.

Health

The manifestation of old age is deteriorating health. It was discovered that all of the respondents suffered from joint pain and backaches. Mental health encompasses cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and psychological well-being. It all comes down to how people think, feel, and act. Mental health can have an impact on daily life, relationships, and even physical health. There are various definitions of mental health in the context of social work practice. Because these concepts are socially constructed, they differ across cultures, communities, and periods. (Greene) Mental health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "a state of physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity." The elderly's mental health is described as follows:

Depression

More than half of those participants (57%) said they were depressed regularly. While 30% have had some form of depression, 13% are rarely depressed. This small group of elderly people with no liabilities lives with

their spouses and other family members and is rarely depressed. The findings indicate that the respondents' primary sources of depression are familial issues. The death of loved ones, poor economic and health conditions, a lack of family support, and family responsibilities are all major factors affecting the health of rural elderly people.

Insomnia

Insomnia is a common issue among the elderly. Because the body produces less growth hormone as we age, we get less deep sleep and are more likely to wake up during the night. According to research, approximately 60% of respondents have frequent sleeplessness problems, while the remaining 40% have infrequent sleeplessness problems. Sleeplessness has similar causes to depression: social and financial liabilities, as well as the loss of loved ones, have an impact on respondents' sleeping patterns.

Loneliness

Loneliness is an unpleasant emotional response to isolation. Even when surrounded by other people, loneliness can be felt. Loneliness can be caused by a variety of factors, including social, mental, emotional, and spiritual factors. Loneliness is caused not by being alone, but by the absence of some critically important relationships." In the current study, it was discovered that 30% of respondents experience loneliness, while 70% rarely face the difficulty of loneliness in their lives.

Memory Loss

According to the study, people's ability to remember and acknowledge things appears to deteriorate as they get older. Memory loss affects about 55% of participants, while remaining 45% have no problem with it.

Efforts for Elderly Care

Constitutional Provisions

Several constitutional provisions exist to improve the quality of life for the elderly. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment develops and implements acts, policies, and programmes for the welfare of older people in collaboration with the states/UTs. Article 41 of the Constitution guaranteed the rights of older people to work, education, and public assistance. It states that the state must protect the rights of citizens in the event of disability, old age, or disease. Article 46 also states that the government must protect older people's educational and economic rights. Furthermore, the Government of India's National Policy on Older Persons 1999, the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007, and the National Policy for Senior Citizens 2011 all provide a legal framework for meeting the needs of elderly. The National Programme for Health Services of the Elderly and Wellness and Health Centres of the Ayushman Bharat initiative provide dedicated healthcare to the elderly in primary healthcare settings.

So much so, the Supreme Court ruled that daughters and sons, married or unmarried, are equally responsible for caring for their parents. The right of parents without means to be supported by their children with sufficient means is recognised by Section 125 (1) (d) of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 and Section 20(3) of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956. This act codifies the long-established moral obligation of a Hindu child (male or female) to support his aged or infirm parents as long as they are unable to support themselves (The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956).

The United Nations General Assembly also adopted the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (Resolution 46/91) on December 16, 1991. Governments were advised to incorporate them whenever possible into national programmes.

Policies in Place for the Elderly

The Government of India announced a National Policy on Older Persons in January 1999, which provides a broad framework for inter-sectoral collaboration and cooperation within the government as well as between the government and non-governmental organisations. Finance, security, healthcare and nutrition, shelter, education, welfare, life and property protection, and other areas have been identified for intervention. It recognised NGO sector as a significant contributor to senior citizens' well-being (Kumar and Krishna 2012).

Efforts of Haryana State

Haryana's government established a pension scheme for people aged 60 and up much earlier than many other states (1987-1988). In addition, women aged 60 and up who travel on Haryana Roadways buses will receive a 50% discount on bus fares. In addition, the State Government has put in place an integrated programme scheme to improve the living conditions of the elderly. The schemes provide grant-in-aid to Non-Governmental Organisations or Voluntary Organisations to run day-care centres, old age homes, mobile health care, physiotherapy clinics, hearing aids, mental health care and special care, helpline and consultant centre, multi-facility care centres for old widows, voluntary bureaus for old people, and so on. The State Government has also launched a programme to establish Village Senior Citizen Samman Clubs. The Haryana Government has also implemented a State Award Scheme for senior citizens to boost their morale, as well as providing free identity cards to senior citizens so that they can benefit from State and Central Government schemes.

Social Work Intervention with the Elderly

Methods, principles, skills, and techniques of the social work profession improve people's well-being. There is no doubt that social work with the

elderly is both challenging and rewarding, as it requires specific skills, knowledge, and a compassionate attitude towards the elderly. An integrated approach based on need assessment, community engagement, and effective coordination with all stakeholders is required to address the needs of the elderly. A geriatric social worker with experience working with people over the age of 60 can be extremely helpful in this situation. These are typically social workers with advanced training in geriatrics, gerontology, or elderly social work. Geriatric social workers assist older people and their families in dealing with the personal, social, and ecological problems that accompany ageing. Geriatric social workers' primary objective is to maintain and improve the elderly's quality of life. (Swathi)

Individual, family, and societal levels of social work intervention can all benefit elderly care. Today's older people face significant challenges in their lives. As a result, social work intervention will most likely be required to address the challenges that the elderly face. (Malaiyandy and Madasamy)

The following are examples of social work interventions for the elderly:

1. Counselling

Elder citizens' self-esteem must be boosted by counselling them and assuring them that they are a valuable asset to society. To assist the elderly in dealing with psychological and emotional issues, door-to-door counselling services can be provided. Psychosocial theory based on Freudian personality and behavioural social work based on learning theory may be used while counselling the elderly. A social worker counsels the elderly one-on-one and in groups to assist them in overcoming emotional, psychological, and family adjustment issues.

2. Engagement in creational activities

Social workers may combine play and informal learning activities with

children living in the community's vicinity to combat feelings of isolation and loneliness. As a friend and counsellor to adolescents, the elderly can play an important role in the family by providing valuable knowledge about adults, family relationships, social responsibilities, and so on, resulting in lower crime and suicide rates among adults.

3. Spirituality

There is an establishing connection to spiritual and religious matters in old age, which improves general health. Religious beliefs and performance were found to have a strong and positive relationship with subjective well-being. ((Devi and Shyam)) According to research, spirituality plays an important role in people's lives, and it becomes even more important as they get older. Spirituality not only improves the elderly's quality of life, but it also helps with the treatment of dementia and other mental illnesses. Social workers can help organise religious discourse or other cultural programmes to engage and entertain the elderly.

4. Awareness generation camp

Awareness generation camps are required to raise awareness about various schemes and programmes implemented by both Central and state governments. The processes and procedures for obtaining the benefits of these schemes and programmes should be given special consideration. To assess welfare services for the elderly, a social worker can establish a community resource centre in the community which will bridge the gap between the government and the elderly by bringing all welfare schemes and programmes at their doorstep.

5. Advocacy to stop elderly abuse

According to research studies on elderly abuse, one in every six people aged 60 and up has experienced some form of abuse in the community. Emotional abuse is a violation of one's human rights. Abuse of the

elderly has become a major public health issue because it can cause serious physical and mental health problems. Ironically, India is known for their culture of respecting elders in the family, but this picture is evaporating in present times. According to Agewell Foundation research, 73% of older people reported experiencing various forms of abuse in their own homes during the lockdown, with 61% believing that 'interpersonal relationships' were the primary cause of this abuse. Similarly, during the epidemic of Covid, Help Age India examined elder abuse in six major cities throughout India and discovered that 43.1% of older people had felt harassed by their families and society. Keeping the severity of elderly abuse in mind, social workers can advocate for their rights to be protected.

Conclusion

It has been determined that old age is a natural part of the biological cycle. It is critical to recognise that, just as children require love and care from their parents, the elderly require it too. The National Policy on Ageing is an important step towards caring for the elderly, but much more needs to be done in advocacy with policymakers to bring issues and challenges of the elderly, particularly women, into the mainstream by engaging all stakeholders, including government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations, Panchayats, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) bodies, to frame sensitive policies and programmes for the elderly.

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Covid-19 Pandemic and Women in Informal Sector in India: A Post-Lockdown Enquiry

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Abstract

Acknowledging the critical role women workers play in the informal sector, and their often-undermined contribution to the country's economy, this paper reviews the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of women in the informal sector in India. The study accounts personal narratives of the socio-economic crises, struggles and survival through five case studies in the post-lockdown scenario using narrative interviews. Using primary and secondary data, the study encapsulates the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of women working in the informal sector in India.

While exploring the possible interventions, the study puts emphasis on three things viz. the need to integrate a gender lens to the economic response addressing the challenges faced by informal sector women workers; the need to ensure and give due priority to their right to livelihood; and the need to ensure that women's voice from the informal sector is not lost in the decision making processes coping with COVID-19 fall out.

Key Words :Covid-19, Women in Informal Sector, India, Sustainable Development Goals

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic ensued the severing of people's livelihoods, limiting economic activities, and reducing their earnings. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the outbreak hit more than 25 million jobs globally. Among them, the hardest hit are the informal sector workers, who make up "61% percent of total global employment" (ILO, 2018, p.16). India's informal economy is enormous with close to 90% of workforce said to be engaged in the informal sector, and contributing

significantly to the country's GDP. Estimates for the year 2018 indicated that a staggering 369 million workers work in the informal sector.

One of the most significant features is that informal workers exist both in the formal and informal sector, and within households. They consist of the self-employed workers in registered and unregistered enterprises and the wage workers in informal jobs. The latter, i.e., the wage workers includes the domestic workers, construction workers, piecemeal daily wagers, agricultural labourers, etc. and the former, i.e., the self-employed in enterprises includes those primarily engaged in household enterprises. (e.g. *papad making, incense making*) or any other commercial activities (e.g. manufacturing units like textiles which employs large number of women), or small traders/businesses which includes street vendors.

The challenges faced by informal workers are not new. As is critically acknowledged, no less documented, the informal sector workers often lack protection of wages, insurance, and face retrenchment without notice. There is no social protection or minimal social protection in the informal sector. Hence, occupational multiplicity is common among many informal workers to ensure sustainable living. Besides, the labour legislation in the country is primarily designed to resolve disputes between employers and workers in the formal-organized sector. In short, it would not be wrong to suggest that over the years, diminished attention has put more vulnerability factors in the vast majority of informal sector.

Since they are not integral to any social welfare system, they can hope to or are likely to manage shocks or exigencies like COVID pandemic, relying on informal coping mechanisms. Since March 2020, when India witnessed highly controlled lockdown phases, it hastened a vast movement of informal sector workers to their native states and worse, it led to 'millions' losing their jobs. Thus COVID-19 pandemic demanded that their plight get noticed, and solutions offered without much ado as the pandemic made the already fragile informal sector highly volatile, putting this workforce at high risk. Even prior to COVID-19, the informal sector for example, was hit by demonetization and the Goods and Services Tax

(GST). Though the idea and objective behind the GST reform and demonetization may be praiseworthy; “there were negative effects on the informal sector with a net job loss therein”(Kannan & Raveendran, 2019, p.43).

Further, this has disproportionately affected women workers, thus jeopardizing “some of the gains made in recent decades, and exacerbating gender inequalities in the labour market” (ILO, 2020a). As per ILO (2018), women comprise more than 90% of informal employment in sub-Saharan African countries, 89% in countries of Southern Asia and almost 75% in Latin American countries. “Home-based workers, domestic workers, street vendors, waste pickers and construction labourers” (Chakraborty, 2021, p.6) are predominantly women, who engage in the most vulnerable and precarious forms of informal employment with lower wages. “Women comprise more than 80 per cent of homeworkers (industrial outworkers); 30-90 per cent of street vendors; and 83 per cent of the world’s 53 million domestic workers” (UNESCO, 2017). Despite their projected numbers, women informal workers are often undercounted in official statistics.

There is a clear evidence of gender segmentation in informal employment across sectors. “Women informal workers tend to be clustered towards the lower end of the informal occupational spectrum” (Ulrichs, 2016, p.10), where productivity and earnings are low; there is inadequate access to services and capital, social protection and infrastructure; also a skills deficit. These typical lower end sectors provide women very little choice and voice; less pay, minimal collective bargaining, and likely exposure to abuse and exploitation.

Intersection of gender, insecure working conditions and multiple forms of discrimination combine to push women informal workers not just into poverty, but more significantly, into facing gendered economic inequalities. “A call to strengthen women’s economic empowerment (WEE), argues for inclusive growth strategies focusing on creating jobs in the formal economy and ensuring access to those jobs for women; besides

improving the quality of and returns to work in the informal economy” (UKAID, 2020).

“The greatest negative impact on economic output because of COVID-19 was experienced in the informal sectors where women are over represented” (*ibid*). COVID-19 intensified the already precarious situation of the women workers, and affected their capacity to respond to and mitigate the COVID-19 induced economic impact. “The impacts on livelihoods were sudden and severe” (WIEGO, 2020, p.3) since lockdowns during the declared pandemic jeopardized many informal jobs operating out of streets and homes. Many of the women workers experienced reduced hours, increased costs, inability to transport goods/access markets, and faced reduction in customer demand. The situation of women and girls with disabilities was exacerbated, resulting in “extreme and disproportionate economic impacts from the pandemic, both in the immediate- and long-term” (Meaney-Davis, 2020, p.4). In addition, it was undoubtedly evident that “a gendered perspective is absent in the policy response to this crisis” (Singh and Kaur, 2022, p.388)

COVID INDUCED RESPONSES

The nation-wide lockdown because of COVID-19 pandemic has exposed millions of people to the worst forms of vulnerability (Chakraborty, 2020; Malik and Naeem, 2020; Rajan et. al., 2020; Sumalatha et.al., 2021). Due to stalling of economic activities, the informal jobs were severely affected and exacerbated the vulnerability and hardships of majority of households who were living in the margins of economy. As the predominant section of population depends on informal economy as a source of livelihood, particularly women households, the disruptions in the economy disproportionately affected them.

The so called “aversion behavior”(Shekar and Mansoor, 2020) in the lockdown phase, impacted both the supply side as well as the demand side, translating into lower incomes, lower wages, and in some cases, closure of businesses. Supply chains were cut-off due to the closure of the

manufacturing units and all productions were halted to prevent the spread of the virus. This meant no business and no income. A survey conducted by All India Manufacturers' Organisation (AIMO) points out that one by third of the self-employed, small and medium enterprises were on the verge of closing down during the first two months of lockdown (Magazine, 2020). Another study conducted across 12 states in India comprising of 4942 respondents also indicate that "the urban self-employed were the worst impacted" (Kesar et.al, 2021, p.150) and women were more likely to lose employment compared to men.

It is apparent that the "impacts of crises are never neutral to any gender and COVID-19 is no exception" (UNWOMEN, 2020a). An earlier study on the employment status of 37,000 individuals before and after the first lockdown reflects that the reduction in employment is gendered and caste related (Deshpande, 2020). The burgeoning literature on gendered aspect of the pandemic at various levels, both qualitative and quantitative, reaffirm that the pandemic has impacted every aspects of women's lives. A qualitative study conducted on 34 women engaged in informal economy in Punjab summarised five major impacts of the pandemic in their lives as "(a) Poverty related stresses and livelihood challenges, (b) Heightened food insecurity, (c) Restrictions on mobility, (d) Unwanted pregnancies and disruption of routine health services, and (e) Social ostracization." (Singh and Kaur, 2022, p.395). In any social fabric, generally the weakest, poorest and the marginalized devoid of resources and access to services are the worst victims or survivors as an aftermath of an exigency situation. Any disaster or exigency affects both women and men, but its impact on women and men are likely to differ given the gendered hierarchies. COVID-19 pandemic reiterated this fact; and its gendered impact cannot be undermined. Therefore, the present study qualitatively analyses the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women working in the informal economy.

Using case studies of five women belonging to different age, occupation, geographical location and strata of society across the country, working in

the unorganized sector, this section tries to capture the personal narratives of their socio-economic crises, struggles and survival during the Covid-19 lockdown and post-lockdown scenario through narrative interviews of the respondents. With this limited sample size, the study doesn't aim to generalize or quantify their experiences, but to narrate the lived experiences these women had to undergo during and post the Covid-19 led lockdown.

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Pseudonym	Seemabenn	Mayilamma	Bemma Devi	Bina Kumari	Anjali A
Age	65	43	46	30	22
Community	OBC	SC	SC	OBC	SC
Location	Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Mahabubabad, Telengana	Kakching, Manipur	Saran, Bihar	Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu
Occupation	Clay Pot Seller	Daily wage agriculture labourer	Shop keeper and Tailor	Tailor and Tailoring trainer	Beautician
Annual Income (INR)	35000-45000	80000-90000	20000-30000	35000-45000	60000-70000
Marital Status	Widowed	Married	Married	Married	Unmarried
Children	5	2	3	1	Nil
Sole earning member of the family?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Source: The Authors

Using in-depth interview method, the study captured an overall account of the life and livelihood of the respondent women. The study was explorative in nature because of the understanding that “people have storied lives and that knowledge is not ‘found’ but constructed by the participants through their stories and anecdotes.” (Arora and Majumder, 2021, p.311). The recorded narratives of the respondents were transcribed and coded manually to identify the emerging themes. The interaction with the respondents followed ethical guidelines and informed consent was taken from the respondents before proceeding for the conversation recording. The confidentiality of the respondents is ensured.

Interviews of Seemaben, Anjali and Bina Kumari were taken from their respective work places and Mayilamma and Bemma Devi from their homes after their working hours. From their personal narratives on the impact of Covid-19 on their individual, familial and work lives, the following codes and themes were mapped.

Table 2
Codes and Themes

Codes	Themes
Economic Hardships of the family	Vulnerabilities
Lack of Savings and lack of access to social security provisions	
Uncertainty with the job and reduction of income after Covid-19	
Independence	Resilience
Support System	
Education of Children	

Source: The Authors

Under these reoccurring codes, the vulnerabilities and resilience of the respondents during Covid-19 lockdowns are qualitatively analysed and articulated.

COVID induced Vulnerabilities

Women always found it difficult to enter into any structured system of organized labour due the historical and cultural burden of women as care work providers at the household. This historical and cultural discrimination is visible even to those women who are in unorganized sector, in the form of unequal wages. This feminisation of informal work and informalisation of female labour have resulted in women concentrated in low-paid and precarious labour front. Covid-19 induced lockdown further exacerbated their struggle.

All the five respondents in the study faced economic hardships during Covid-19 lockdown as they were left out without jobs and the nature of their jobs didn't fit for online services. Three among them were the sole earning member of the family and three of them lived in rented houses. Even though all of them worked because the financial conditions of the families were not stable, widowhood (Seemaben), paralysis of husband (Mayilamma) and jobloss of husband (Bemma Devi) made it inevitable and inescapable for them.

“If I do not work, we cannot feed our children.” - Bemma Devi

Economic crises hit women harder. Estimates on women workers indicate that one-third of women workers in India are home based workers and the present crisis affected them the most as they couldn't procure any work orders. Corollary to this, with government lockdown orders and opening of only 'essential items/commodities' shops, implied closure of all other form of businesses resulting in loss of wages for daily wage workers or workers in the informal space. Even after lockdown was relaxed due to

reduced consumer demands, there were reduced services/outputs, translating into lower incomes. This reduction in income is pointed out by all the five respondents.

Bemma Devi had a shop that sells essential items, but the shop remained closed as it was a little far away from her home and she lived in a containment zone. Seema Ben is a clay pot seller and she has mentioned the drop in her business even after the lockdown phase. Her husband died many years ago and she has brought up her five children alone. Even at the age of 65, she is the sole income-generating member of a family of six- consisting of her daughter in law and four school-going grandchildren, three males and one female. Without any other income, Seema Ben's family completely relied on the government's food kits for survival during the lockdown period.

Similarly, Anjali resumed working in the beauty parlour after the first wave of covid-19, but majority of her regular customers stopped or reduced their parlour visits as her job involved close contact with the customers. This resulted in considerable reduction of income and service. Anjali and her father, the only income generating members of the family of four, had to sit at home without any work, income and savings. After the lockdown, Mayilamma got only half day work in agricultural lands, thus considerably cutting short her monthly income. Bina Kumari's tailoring unit where she trained young girls in the neighbourhood shifted to personal tailoring to nearby customers. All the five respondents pointed out that their family had lost all their savings after the pandemic.

“Only god is there for us to take care of my family, if something happens to me. We don't have anything else.” - Seema Ben

It is difficult to predict when the economy will regain its momentum. Economic costs of the pandemic are daunting especially when there are no specific or efficient state measures to provide healthcare and other social

safety nets. Together, it only exacerbates the poverty situation, already faced by many informal sector workers. Due to the pandemic, the restrictions and prevention strategies have shifted focus out of other critical services. For instance, there was no guarantee of basic treatment or treatment for chronic diseases which women may experience, besides the lack of antenatal care for pregnant women. Also otherwise, women and girls, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable, often fail to access health infrastructure and services, which in turn increases their risk of infection.

Bina Kumari was pregnant during the first wave of Covid-19 and she couldn't go to her natal house which is at Ludhiana, Punjab as per the customary practice of her community. She had to remain at her husband's family and some hospitals nearby her place didn't admit her for delivery as they were prioritizing covid-19 treatments. Finally she found a government hospital and had her delivery without her mother being with her for the postpartum care. According to her, there was a lot of stress associated with being pregnant during the Covid time. Her whole family had the pressure as they heard that if pregnant mother is affected by Covid-19, the child may not survive. Since Bina Kumari was living in a joint family consisting of 11 members, the family members became more careful with hygiene, using sanitizers etc. as three men in the family worked and their jobs involved mingling with people.

Seemaben lost her elder son to corona, leaving his surviving wife and two children the sole responsibility of her. Bemma Devi's mother in-law got Covid-19 positive, and her husband and daughters, who had close contact with the mother in-law remained in room quarantine. The whole family was home quarantined, which made it extremely difficult to manage daily chores. Bemma Devi says she doesn't have words to articulate how difficult those days were. During Covid-19 times, Mayilamma was many times feverish, but she didn't approach any doctors as the nearby hospitals

were crowded as corona spots. Luckily, she didn't contract the disease and Covid-19 positive cases were very less in her specific area. Anjali met with a small accident and her exposure to the hospital threatened her of catching corona. In general, for all the respondents, hospitals and health care centres were the last resort during the pandemic. All of the respondents, in solidarity, expressed the mental agony that they have gone through due to uncertainty and insecurity induced by livelihood loss.

"I felt so depressed sitting at home without any work. It was more than an economic crisis." - **Anjali**

With COVID-19, the worsening of gender-poverty gaps are expected, since poverty and gaps in basic services and infrastructure will, in turn, worsen women's unpaid care workload (UNWOMEN, 2020a). Women already shoulder a disproportionate responsibility for care-giving, both inside and outside the home. "For countless women in economies of every size, along with losing income, unpaid care and domestic work burden has exploded. Even before COVID-19, women spent an average of 4.1 hours per day performing unpaid work, while men spent 1.7 hours – that means women did three times more unpaid care work than men, worldwide" (UNWOMEN, 2020b). Since the start of the pandemic, both men and women report an increase in unpaid work, "but women are continuing to shoulder the bulk of that work." (*ibid.*). Closure of schools and day care centres, lack of domestic help and meeting the needs of all members of the family available at home all the time, taking care of the sick and elderly at home along with full-time work from home has increased women's workload multi-dimensionally.

All the five respondents engaged in care work at home and four respondents had children. All of them reported increased domestic workload during the lockdown. Unpaid care work, if not done by the respondent, is done by another female member of the household

(Daughter-in-law of Seemaben; daughters of Bemma Devi; mother-in-law and sister in-law of Bina Kumari; mother of Anjali etc.). None of the respondents had male members doing care work at home. Even while their families do not follow gender division of labour in the productive labour (men necessarily not being the bread winners), the gender division of labour is prevalent in reproductive labour and care work. This gives women double work inside and outside home.

The implementation of lockdown norms to stop the spread of COVID-19 pandemic reportedly put the lives of women into the clutch of domestic violence. A study of the informal sector workers across 11 States and 20 different trades by SEWA Bharat revealed a number of unique challenges faced by women in the informal sector, all of whom are SEWA members. The study offered critical insights across diverse trades and highlights the plight of women who has to bear the brunt of domestic violence as were confined in homes due to lockdown as schools were also closed, the women were having additional responsibility to look after the children along with other household chores (Sewa Bharath, 2020).

Mayilamma admits that she used to have minor conflicts and disputes with her husband during the lockdown, but she has never faced any physical assault in the family. Seemaben, being the matriarch of the family, receives nothing but respect, in her own words. However, the understanding the nuances of the term 'domestic violence' and acknowledging the day to day verbal, emotional and financial abuses as domestic violence are essential for getting a proper response in this regard. Partly because of corona and partly because she was pregnant, the family didn't approve of Bina Kumari working during the pandemic. Since three (male) members of the family were already working, it didn't cause considerable reduction in the family income, except the fact that Bina Kumari lost her own income. She says her husband's family is very caring especially because she was pregnant. Anjali faced depression because of

no social interaction and income and the livelihood loss had pushed her into debts, which resulted in family disputes.

As already mentioned, one of the foremost challenges faced by people working in the informal sector is its vulnerability given in its nature of informality that assures no social security provisions. When it comes to women, the idea of head of the household being men prevents women from directly procuring social security provisions as citizens. Any promised support in the informal economy poses significant implementation challenges due to lack of data. The ongoing social protection programmes of the government is yet to cover significant part of the population due to various hurdles. For example, all the five respondents received food kits from the government, but none of them were benefitted by any other governmental or non-governmental reliefs except Bina Kumari. Bina Kumari reported that the three female members of the family received INR 5000 each from the government, but no other support was known to them. Seemaben mentioned the support of police in ensuring that her family received food kits and Bemma Devi had supportive neighbors, friends and local people who helped her with money and food at times. Anjali didn't receive any governmental or non-governmental services except the food kits.

Longer-term inclusion into social protection systems needs to support through “livelihood recovery tailored to the needs of different groups of workers in the informal economy, and ensuring the inclusion of the most vulnerable.” (Alfers, 2020). Any safety nets in place are vital; it is equally critical that “income recovery in the informal economy will require broad and longer-term support” (*ibid.*). However, the country has failed to provide even “a basic level of food and income security to the many households who rely on earnings from informal work” (*ibid.*).

UN women points out that the persisting gap in availability of data in most of the countries on class, gender, race, migrant status, disability etc. results

in extreme difficulty to assess the impact of the pandemic on real-time basis. Also it is most likely that “COVID-19 policy response will ignore the priorities of the most vulnerable women and girls” (UNWOMEN, 2020b).

Responding to the pandemic is not just about economic support and assistance; it is also about building resilience of communities— especially women. In the past, it has been reflected that “in times of crisis, when resources are strained and institutional capacity is limited, women and girls face disproportionate impacts with far reaching consequences that further amplify given their fragile contexts” (UNWOMEN, n.d.). It is contended long standing inequalities have resurfaced themselves, and women’s rights and well-being also threatened.

COVID induced Resilience

Economic independence is one of the significant aspects of empowerment. However negligible the wage is, having a salaried employment also accounts to better decision making space for women. All the five respondents, without being asked separately, mentioned that they like the financial independence they have because they are working. Even though certain financial constraints forced these women to work, they do not wish to stop working as it gives a lot of decision making spaces in the family. Also, they believe that not depending on someone else for the daily food requirements and children’s educational needs is a huge relief.

“Work is my passion. I want to have a stitching centre of my own, where I can train young girls” – Bina Kumari

Bina Kumari tells that she is passionate about her job and she wants to be an entrepreneur in the nearby future. She continued tailoring even after marriage even when the family doesn’t require her income from that. Even though she stopped working on the training unit, she still stitches clothes

individually for the neighborhood. Seemaben wants to sell clay pots till she dies. Working keeps Mayilamma less stressed. Bemma Devi wants to continue working no matter her financial situation improves. Anjali likes to be known as a beautician and she had her dream come true a few months back: being an entrepreneur and having her own beauty parlour. She says being her own boss gives her a lot of confidence and happiness.

In the case of India, statistics indicate that women's labour force participation rate decreased with increased standard of living. However, for lower middle class women, labour force participation gives more social mobility and better social identity. It also acts as a shock-absorber for the family in case of eventualities and causalities. Also, it contributes to the children's health and education the most.

One of the most perilous aspects of informal sector is that the labourers lack institutional support through state and policy protection (Sumalatha et.al., 2021). While many of them face discrimination and stigma in the workplace, there is friendship and bonding between many co-workers (Arora and Majumder, 2021). This is the only support system that majority of them have. The five respondents of the study have supportive families which is not always the case for a predominant number of women. This support may also be because the family depends on the women's income. Lower middle class families always live at the brim of financial crunch and therefore any additional livelihood opportunity can be a relief for them. Also, it is visible that families that do not allow women to work are upper class and above who sort of confined to the idea that *we do not need a woman's income to survive*, which will give them a social identification apart and above the lower middle class. Class-caste intersectionality also works in this notion. All the five respondents belonged to OBC and SC categories, where women used to work even from the previous generations. Upper class women are restricted in many ways and their social mobility is confined to family's honour, which prevents them from

working outside, especially in the informal sector.

Three respondents also had support from neighbours and friends. Many neighbours and friends supported Bemma Devi with money and food during the lockdown. Anjali's neighbours lent her family some money during the lockdown days and her friends helped her to open her own beauty parlour in partnership. The girls in Bina Kumari's tailoring centre and neighbours were helpful to her. However, Seemaben and Mayilamma do not receive any support from neighbours and friends.

Out of the five respondents, four respondents had children. There was no specific question about education of children, but three of them admitted that their life and livelihoods are entirely dedicated for the well-being of their children. Also, while asked about their future plans, they wanted their children, both male and female children, to be educated and employed. Even the 65 years old Seemaben wants her grand-daughters to study rather than get married. While her son died, his children of 16 and 4 years of age were willing to go out for work. However, she and her daughter in law didn't permit them and asked them to continue studying. She wants her grand-daughter also to study rather than getting married at a relatively younger age as per the social practice. When family members and neighbours suggest marrying her off instead of sending to school, Seemaben says, "*If she doesn't get a groom because she is studying, let her better not be married*". She wants all her grandchildren to study, get a job and then get married and start a family.

"Our only future is our children. My only future plan is to educate my children and make them self-dependent." - **Mayilamma**

Like Mayilamma, Bemma Devi also wants to ensure that her daughters are well educated, so that they don't have to depend on any one. She and her husband do everything with this single aim in mind. Bina Kumari's

daughter is just one year old and she has a lot of aspirations for herself. She has received training in tailoring and she wants to open a tailoring centre herself where she could train young girls. She says she loves to train more than tailoring. Anjali also says that being an entrepreneur gives her pride and she wants to train beauticians under her.

LOSS OF LIVELIHOODS: GENERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The novel corona virus inflicted confusion and disorder globally, severely impacting human lives and livelihoods. Along with, its effects on achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) emerge as a concern. “Like a double helix, the SDGs and the COVID-19 pandemic response are intertwined and cannot be tackled by a piecemeal approach” (UNDP, n.d.). The virus overwhelmed countries, economies, and people with untold miseries and sufferings. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020 by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs denotes the insufficient progress and the possible regressive impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the SDGs. The status quo no longer exists. Every country’s efforts to attain SDGs have taken a back seat. The focus is on fighting the COVID-19 crisis.

COVID and subsequent lockdown has disrupted the livelihood of many daily workers/wage earners. Arranging basic necessity and make them regain and earn their livelihood is a critical focus that contributes to promoting decent work and economic growth (SDG8). Further, the pandemic has brought forth equity and equality issues significantly affecting women workforce (SDG 5) linked to other SDGs focusing on poverty (SDG1), hunger (SDG 2), health and wellbeing (SDG3). The digitization of work space and economy, is keeping a substantial portion of human capital out of bounds further contributing to inequalities. Therefore, “there is a very real threat that the gains made by informal workers through years of struggle will be reversed” (Chen, 2020, p.S45).

The gender-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda are definitely at risk. Not only did the pandemic influenced economic crisis disproportionately impacted women (not just in the informal sector) but by exponentially increasing women's time to unpaid care work, it had affected their ability to remain engaged full-time economic activity. In addition, a surge in domestic violence against women was reported.

COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses in global food supply chains (SDG 12). Stopping of MGNREGA work has pushed more families into economic uncertainty. "Without alternative livelihood strategies in sight, informal workers may continue to work without taking adequate preventive measures or appropriate protection, thus exposing themselves and their families to health and safety risks. Further, when experiencing income losses, they may resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of assets, predatory loans from informal moneylenders or child labour." (FAO, 2020). As schools are closed, children from poor families may be exposed to hazardous or age-inappropriate tasks.

India's economy and subsequent GDP is threatened due to this pandemic; nevertheless COVID-19 cannot delink India's focused efforts towards SDGs. Rather, continued focus on SDGs will put India on a secure path to deal with multiple risks and not just health risk. "Achieving the transformative vision of the SDGs by 2030 requires a major realignment of most countries' national priorities toward long-term, cooperative, and drastically accelerated action." (The Lancet Public Health, 2020, p.460). The crisis is necessitating designing a new area of development that balances economic, social and environmental progress as envisioned by the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Integrated solutions are the only way to build a more inclusive future to help countries meet the 2030 goals.

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

COVID-19 pandemic reiterated the perilous situation of informal workers especially women workers. It also served as a reminder of the crucial need

to give priority to the informal sector needs in national policies. While the pandemic exposed the health vulnerabilities; it was far from being a health crisis alone. The severe fall out of COVID – economic crisis, was truly appalling.

Lockdowns, even if in a staggered manner, affected economic activities which came to a standstill; factories/establishments were not able to run to their full capacities or remained closed. Most markets were shut; there was disruption in work, wages/income, and food - all three interconnected – and a recipe for destitution, hunger, starvation and even death. Caught in the quagmire, were the informal workers for whom it is a daily hand-to-mouth existence; and who have little or no savings to eke out a living through a prolonged economic standstill. Women are particularly vulnerable.

“International labour standards provide strong foundations for the design and implementation of equitable policy responses that leave no one behind and that ensure respect for all human rights, equality of opportunity and treatment without discrimination on all aspects of employment and occupation, including health status” (ILO, 2020b). This is extremely significant since informal sector holds the most disadvantaged workers, who frequently suffer human rights violations and discrimination even otherwise.

The existing response does not fully respond to informal workers’ rights either as workers or recipients of any state welfare measures. Ameliorating their conditions would include investment in agriculture, ensuring stable livelihoods in the villages to prevent migration from rural areas; “formulating new state policies that address the increased dependence on urban cities; increasing state capacity to implement existing laws covering the informal sector” (Sulfath and Sunilraj, 2020).

Therefore, the responses need to consider existing protection policies, along with the gendered vulnerabilities present in the informal sector. One

of the first things needed is to improve the targeting i.e. use any information or database that has information on informal workers, and use the data base to engage with informal workers either through their own organizations or other grassroots organizations that work with them. One can also set up an online mechanism that matches the database for workers to apply for support or any form of aid made available to them. In addition, since the onus to mitigate the plight of informal sector workers including women, lay with the government (both central and states), the government could help the informal sectors by looking into a few feasible steps.

The focus on communities, any form of registered associations among informal workers, helps to forge a stronger bond between them and government. Identified/organised communities will aid in bringing voices together and help the authorities to better address all concerns. Besides, communities can also be a good medium through which transactions could take place. Also, there is a pressing need to create a database of informal sector workers. An accurate database will enable to distinguish between vulnerable interstate migrants and migrants in the informal sector. For policy intervention too, it is important to identify them and develop the database. Creating a channel to send money or other provisions as benefits arising from central/state government schemes that are not accessible to those not registered will be another helpful step. Technology enabled initiatives can help reach out to informal workers in a transparent manner and ensure that basic amenities are provided.

Besides, reviewing the existing laws and creating a framework of rules to better mitigate the informal worker crisis are integral. The plight of the workers can be understood looking at their lives through the lens of the constitutional provisions and policies governing the political economy. The viability and impact of the 44 labor laws in the country codified into four Labour Codes in 2020, especially with regards to the informal sector

workers, are under scrutiny and call for intersectional perspectives. In the context of India's G-20 presidency in 2022-23, women led development and informal economy are two widely discussed areas, that are expected to offer sustainable futuristic interventions in policy formulations in the coming days. What is most significant here is that 'women in the informal economy', being an intersection, requires a gender integrative approach in those emerging policies for a fruitful impact on both women and development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The outline of this paper is developed from the RGNIYD-UNICEF Status Paper titled "Impact of Covid-19 on Livelihoods of Women in Informal Sector: Challenges and Strategic Responses" authored by Dr. Malika Basu and Dr. P. Sivakumar, funded by UNICEF, Tamil Nadu. The case studies and analysis are done independently and incorporated by Dr. Niyathi R. Krishna.

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Rumours in (Re)shaping the Discourse: A Foucauldian Analysis of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

LAKI MOLLA

Abstract

The paper aims at the exploration of Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan in the light of Foucauldian theory of discourse. Michel Foucault in his essay "The Order of Discourses" discusses three factors that limit the possibility of shaping a discourse- taboo, madness or sanity, and institutional ratification. In any culture, topics which go against the social customs or existing social values are prohibited or generally avoided from discussion. Similarly, the words spoken by a madman are given no importance and are not accepted to generate discourse. The third factor, institutional ratification that exists in all societies, in some form or other, tries to control the generation as well as circulation of discourses that might be dangerous for the existing political power structure. In the present paper, I tried to explore how during the tumultuous time of Partition, rumors played a significant role in forging a new subjective identity as well as constructing collective discourse. The peaceful co-existence of different religious and ethnic groups was suddenly disrupted by making the erstwhile friend a foe and seriously affecting the existing discourse of the society. In a normal peaceful environment, one community does not generally speak offensively against the other. But during the time of Partition people got divided along communal lines and became one another's enemy spreading rumours that even caused riots. The anxiety of the uncertain future made human beings frenzied enough to speak meaningless offensive words about people belonging to other communities. Even the administration was not strict enough to stop these rumours. The paper also tries to investigate the role of rumours in communal violence in present times.

Keywords: Discourse, Partition, Rumours, Identity, Community.

In a simple sense, discourse refers to a set of meaningful statements, made orally or in writing, on a given topic. Coming from the Latin "discursus",

meaning an argument, discourse in sociology is defined as “any practice (found in a wide range of forms) by which individuals imbue reality with meaning” (“Discourse”). The argument in discourse refers to an exchange of ideas. Thus used specifically, discourse refers to “the thoughts, sentiments, or dialogue of individuals, especially of characters in a literary work” (Ray & Murfin 113). The celebrated French philosopher Michel Foucault in his essay “The Order of Discourse”, delivered at the College de France on 2 December 1970 and published in April 1971 discusses elaborately the factors instrumental for the formation and limitations of discourse. The insights that the essay brings to this simple definition of discourse are that certain deeply ingrained regulations govern how discourses are produced and distributed and place restrictions on them. Foucault argues that practically the number of meaningful statements that we can make is strictly limited to certain factors. He mentions three factors that limit the possibility of shaping a discourse - taboo, madness or sanity, and institutional ratification.

Coming to the notion of taboos, it is “the most obvious and familiar” factor in the creation, circulation and limitation of a discourse. In any culture, topics which go against the social customs or existing social values are prohibited or generally avoided from discussion. Foucault argues, “We do not have the right to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever” (52). For example, in many patriarchal societies, the open discussion of women’s sexual rights is considered taboo. In such cases, the taboo works as a hindrance to the proliferation of any meaningful discourse on that topic. Though these prohibited subjects may vary from one society to another and from one time to another, the fact remains constant that there are always some subjects on which it is impossible or at least very difficult to generate socially acceptable discourse.

Madness or sanity, according to Foucault, is another principle of exclusion. The words spoken by a madman, in spite of the fact that they

may contain some hidden deep philosophy, are considered “null and void”, given no importance and are not accepted to generate any discourse. His madness is primarily recognised through his words which are not heard at all. Though the understanding of madness too is specific to certain social milieus.

Apart from taboo and madness, institutional support or ratification is another factor, and arguably the most important, that limits the proliferation of a discourse. Institutions control the discourse by regulating the circulation of statements and by prioritizing and foregrounding certain statements while marginalizing and gagging certain opposing statements. Thus, the prevalent discourses of a time largely depend upon the institutions that regulate and ratify the production and discrimination of knowledge about this third factor, Foucault observes,

I have spoken of the third at the greatest length. The fact is that it is towards this third system that the other two have been drifting constantly for centuries. The third system increasingly attempts to assimilate the others, both in order to modify them and to provide them with a foundation. (56)

On the basis of the aforementioned theory, the present study examines how during the tumultuous time of Partition in Khushwant Singh’s 1956 novel *Train to Pakistan*, these three factors are used in forging new subjective identity and to shape, circulate and limit the discourse of the time.

The setting for *Train to Pakistan* is Mano Majra, a small village in Punjab that is half a mile from the Sutlej and has roughly 70 families, with Lala Ram Lal’s being the lone Hindu family and the Sikhs and Muslims being equally represented. The Sikhs own all the lands around the village and the Muslims are their tenants sharing their tillings. In spite of their religious differences and complex economic structure, Mano Majra was an abode of communal harmony. The priest of the Sikh temple was habituated to awake at the call of azan:

He has a quick wash, standing facing West towards Mecca and with his fingers in his ears cries in long sonorous notes, 'Allah-o-Akbar'. The priest at the Sikh temple lies in bed till the mullah has called. Then he too gets up, draws a bucket of water from the well in the temple courtyard, pours it over himself, and intones his prayer in monotonous singsong to the sound of splashing water. (Singh 4-5)

Their day closes with the evening prayer which they perform almost at the same time. The faithful Muslims' nod of amens from their rooftop follow the Sikh priest's murmuring of the evening prayer to "a semicircle of drowsy old men and women" (6). Added to these, there is another thread which binds the people together and strengthens their solidarity - the local deity *deo*. All the villagers, irrespective of their religious differences, resign themselves secretly to this deity for their special needs. Mutual respect among the people of different communities characterized the lives in Mano Majra. Imam Baksh- the old *muezzin*¹ of the mosque was "Chacha" (Uncle) to everyone, and the Sikh priest Meet Singh was a "Bhai" (Brother) to all the villagers. Both of them share a mutual respect for each other. Envy had never poisoned the Sikh priest's affection for the aged Imam. Even when the people of the country were engrossed in a communal frenzy and suspicion of the people of other communities characterized the lives, Lambardar Banta Singh, the head man of Mano Majra was angry at the police for not behaving politely to the old Imam. The nationwide political disturbance had no effect on the innocent, illiterate people of this village. It remained an isolated oasis of peace. The Inspector while reporting about the situation of Mano Majra to the Deputy Magistrate is quite right,

I am sure no one in Mano Majra even knows that the British have left and the country is divided into Pakistan and Hindustan. Some of them know about Gandhi but I doubt if anyone has ever heard of Jinnah. (Singh 24).

They also made the innocent confession to Iqbal, the social worker who visited Mano Majra during the tumultuous time following the Partition: “We live in this little village and know nothing” (51). But their ignorance cannot take away their simplicity. They did not want freedom in lieu of the Partition of the country. They considered that Freedom belongs to the intelligent individuals who fought for it. They were once British slaves, and they will soon become slaves of educated Indian or Pakistanis. Even the coming of the “ghost train” from Pakistan did not initially disrupt the pattern of things in Mano Majra. The villagers congregated in small groups to discuss the train, then the groups converged under the large peepul tree and everyone went into the gurdwara, following the known “pattern of things at Mano Majra when anything of consequence happened” (82). Later, as “a faint acrid smell of searing flesh” permeates the air, the villagers’ worst fears are realized. The whole village submerged in “a deathly silence” and from that evening the long-standing tradition of brotherhood among different communities in Mano Majra seemed to be jeopardised permanently: “That evening, for the first time in the memory of Mano Majra, Imam Baksh’s sonorous cry did not rise to the heavens to proclaim the glory of God” (89).

The peaceful coexistence of different communities in Mano Majra was disrupted permanently making the erstwhile friend a foe forging a new identity and severely affecting the existing discourse. It is as if the secret understanding between Imam Baksh- the *mullah*² of the Muslims and Bhai Meet Singh- the priest of the Sikhs seems to be working no more:

Some days it seemed as though the alarm clock had been set for the wrong hour. On others, it was as if no one had remembered to wind it. Imam Baksh waited for Meet Singh to make the first start. Meet Singh waited for the mullah’s call to prayer before getting up. (Singh 81)

During a normal peaceful environment, one community does not generally speak openly offensive against the other. It is considered taboo. But during

the time of Partition people became divided along communal lines speaking vehemently against people belonging to other communities. Hukum Chand, the magistrate, despite his education and responsibility, lost himself in the communal frenzy and spoke abusively about his fellow countrymen belonging to another religion: “We Hindus never raise our hands to strike women, but these Muslims have no respect for the weaker sex” (22-23). The anxiety of an uncertain future made the people frenzied enough to believe and circulate rumours that greatly disturbed the peaceful fabric of society. Rumours of unjustly received acts of violence were justified enough in that tumultuous atmosphere for a community to take revenge against the other. In the novel, there were references to the rumours of atrocities committed by Sikhs on Muslims in Patiala, Ambala and Kapurthala. The Muslims “heard of mosques being desecrated by the slaughter of pigs on the premises, and the copies of holy Quran being torn up by infidels” (128). To the Muslims, all these rumours made the Sikh friends “a stranger with an evil intent” and transformed the *kirpan* “menacingly anti-Muslim”. The rumours of Sikh refugees jumping into wells or burning themselves to escape the hands of Muslims outraged the Sikhs against Muslims. Reasons and logic were all lost. Singh illustrated the bestial cruelties of human beings by an unbiased examination of the public’s consciousness during the partition - how rumours about each other’s barbarous actions, circulated by both communities, affect people’s emotions. He very skillfully depicts that atmosphere of madness: “Schools and offices close. All work stops. Men, women, and children run madly about the streets, waving their arms and shouting ‘Ho Ho’, - hosannas to the miracle of the monsoon” (97). The rumours added to their madness.

The police and the administration who had the duty to restore peace and order, failed to do their job. Rather in the context of the novel, we witnessed they also turned communal and discussed among themselves what their Pakistani counterparts were doing. The sub-inspector, while reporting the situation of Mano Majra to the Magistrate, says, “I believe our RSS boys beat up Muslim gangs in all the cities. The Sikhs are not

doing their share. They have lost their manliness. They just talk big” (21). The policemen while taking Iqbal and Jugga to Chundunnugger police station discussed among themselves that the intentions of the Muslims were evil and they could never be trusted. The hollowness of the entire bureaucracy comes out when the Magistrate tells the sub-inspector that Chundunnugger is a good police station because “there are so many murders, so many illicit distilling, and the Sikh peasants are prosperous” (21). Instead of trying his best to control the situation, the magistrate was engaged in a liaison with a Muslim dancing girl Haseena who was “perhaps younger than his own daughter” (30). They also regulate the rumours to establish their discourses. About the religious identity of Malli and his men, Hukum Chand says, “It would have been more convenient if they had been Mussulman. The knowledge of that and the agitator fellow being a Leaguer would have persuaded Mano Majra Sikhs to let their Muslims go” (104). The police even spoke falsely to the villagers to incite hatred among the Sikhs for the Muslims, which would eventually help them to evacuate Muslims from Mano Majra to Pakistan. The inspector asked the head constable to know from the villagers whether they knew anything about the mischief of the Muslim Leaguer Iqbal. To the puzzled head constable who knew that Iqbal was a Sikh whose title is ‘Singh’, the inspector replied,

There are many Iqbals. I am talking of Mohammed Iqbal, you are thinking of Iqbal Singh. Mohammed Iqbal can be a member of the Muslim League. (119)

It was the head constable’s visit that divided the erstwhile united Mano Majra into “two halves as neatly as a knife cuts through a pat of butter” (127). This is how the bureaucracy changes a particular truth in order to formulate its own discourse. But ultimately, the bureaucracy failed to control the mob violence. Exhausted with all the murder, death, and terrifying incidents, Hukum Chand was tired of making a pretence of law and order:

Well, Inspector Sahib, let them kill. . . The whole world had gone mad. Let it go mad! What does it matter if another thousand get killed? We will get a bulldozer and bury them as we did the others. We may not even need the bulldozer if this time it is going to be on the river. Just throw the corpses in the water. What is a few hundred out of four hundred million anyway? An epidemic takes ten times the number and no one even bothers. (163).

Foucault, while discussing the role of institutional support in limiting the discourse, argues that institutional support is “renewed, no doubt more profoundly, by the way in which knowledge is put to work, valorised, distributed, and in a sense attributed, in a society” (55).

The rumours tremendously affected the collective memory of the people during the time of Partition. The circulation of numerous rumours of violence perpetrated by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to each other spreads sentiments of fear which largely affected the relationship between past events and the future which legitimized violence in the present. In *Train to Pakistan*, Singh also shows us how identities were renegotiated at the time of constructing two independent dominions dividing a united country on the basis of religion. Urvashi Butalia in her polemical *Partition: the Long Shadow* prefers to treat Partition as a phenomenon constructed from the conflict between remembering and forgetting stretching the past, present, and future. The Partition provided the people with a new nation to identify with. The interplay of memory plays a vital role in this regard. For some people remembering the past was essential for constructing their future. Remembering helps them preserve a past that extends into the present and, consequently, passes into their children’s future. But, many had to forget their past. To them, forgetting turns into a method of erasing history, whose elimination enables a community to genuinely move forward. Thus, it appeared that remembering and forgetting had a similar effect of both erasing and preparing the future. They become two incompatible opposites which made the two cultures affected by Partition as oppressor and oppressed, at the same time, based on what was perceived to be the

sentiment that the birth of each nation represented. Butalia argues that “depending on where you are placed and which perspective you approach them from, acts of remembering and forgetting can mean very different things” (2). Singh begins his novel with reference to the communal riots in Calcutta in which rumours helped to maximize the death toll and spread the violence with lightning speed:

From Calcutta, the riots spread north and east and west: to Noakhali in East Bengal, where Muslims massacred Hindus; to Bihar where Hindus massacred Muslims. (1)

However, it is to be noted that rumours always play a vital role in revolutions and riots. The first Indian revolution against the British- the *Mahabidhoro* of 1857 was started with the rumours associated with the cartridges of Enfield rifles. In order to load, one needs to bite the greased cartridges whose covering, it was rumoured, contains fat from cow and pig. The cow is a sacred animal to the Hindus while the Muslims consider the pig as unclean and a *haram*.³ We have witnessed how rumours fanned the fire during the Babri mosque demolition and its subsequent communal riots. More recently, the power of rumours is also shown in the 2005 Dadri lynching in which a mob of villagers attacked the house of Mohammad Akhlaq and killed him for the suspicion of slaughtering a cow.

I would like to conclude that in all these cases three factors, proposed by Foucault, taboo, madness and institutional support are essential in reshaping the existing discourse rather than limiting the formation of discourse. The offensive comments about other communities which are considered taboo in a normal peaceful environment become very relevant during times of trouble and are sometimes deliberately used by people to poison the peaceful atmosphere. Knowing that losing the home on a night which the ancestors took years to build and compelled to leave the place in which one is born and brought up, people had become almost ‘mad’, the unreasonable speeches of these people were considered as true and valid. The various institutions of society, especially the bureaucracy which

should work to resist these efforts, work the way in which their cherished goals can be achieved without considering the welfare of the people. Thus, the first two “systems of exclusion which forge discourse” seem fragile and uncertain in the context of riots and as Foucault suggests they are “invaded by the will of truth, which for its part constantly grows stronger, deeper, and more implacable” (56).

References:

1. “Muezzin” refers to an official of a mosque who calls (through azan) the faithful for prayer five times a day.
2. “Mullah” is a title given in honour to a Muslim leader. It is given to a Muslim scholar who generally has knowledge of Islamic law and theology.
3. The word “haram” is an Arabic word meaning “forbidden”. The acts which are prohibited in the *Quran* are considered haram. They are sinful actions and therefore, forbidden to be done.

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Displacement vis-a-vis Rehabilitation: Lessons from Hirakud Dam Project

KESHAB CHANDRA RATHA

Abstract

The primary focus of this study is to emphasize the challenges faced by the displaced population, their primary grievances towards the Government, the indifferent approach of the Government, and the shortcomings in the compensation, rehabilitation, and resettlement policy. It also establishes the fact that though infrastructure development assumes absolutely necessary, it needs to be implemented with a human touch so that the effect of displacement can be minimized and the goal of inclusive development could be realized. There exists a significant imperative for the enactment of law that encompasses the domains of compensation, rehabilitation, resettlement, negotiation and involvement. Special consideration should be paid to indigenous families that have been displaced, as they possess distinct socioeconomic and cultural characteristics. In order to effectively address poverty among households who have been relocated due to tribal factors, it is imperative to implement relocation and rehabilitation programs that are characterized by distinctiveness and diversity.

The methodology utilized for this research work encompasses normative, historical, analytical, and descriptive approaches. The study has undertaken a thorough collection of data from both primary and secondary sources. The researcher has utilized primary sources, including reports, papers, legislative discussions, and other relevant resources. The researcher has also incorporated perspectives from a range of secondary sources, including books, journals, articles, newspapers, and online sites. Indeed, several dialogues and comments expressed by distinguished figures have contributed to the scholar's acquisition of an in-depth understanding of the problem.

Key Words: Displacement, Rehabilitation, Resettlement, Compensation, Land acquisition

Introduction

The Hirakud Dam was the first significant river valley project in India, and Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation for it in 1948. It covered a total area of 727 sq km when it took on its final form in 1957. On January 13, 1957, Jawaharlal Nehru dedicated the Hirakud Dam to the country, referring to it as the "temple of modern India." Without a doubt, the Hirakud dam has greatly boosted the state's economy and opened the door for industrial development. Additionally, it made a significant contribution to the control of floods in coastal Odisha and provided power for both home and industrial use throughout the whole state. Additionally, it provided irrigation to thousands of acres of farmers' dry land in western Odisha, boosting their revenues. Ironically, none of the ousted individuals utilized any project benefits. Even if skillfully planned and carried out development projects help a country's economy grow more quickly, they frequently can turn out to be harmful. People used to actually encounter the circumstance over time, including inadequate remuneration, subpar new lands, and hostile surroundings. Civil society organizations' rising opposition to the project's need for land acquisition now primarily questions the state's right to do so under the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 in the name of "public cause." One group pays the significant societal expenses, while others accrue the benefits. Development frequently comes at the expense of ecological, degraded soil, lost forests, biodiversity, livelihood, disease spread, and unstable geology. For the purpose of economic growth, groups and individuals may be forced to leave their homes and, frequently, their native countries. This is known as development-induced displacement. A significant amount of land is required for the extraction of natural resources, urban regeneration or development initiatives, and infrastructure projects including highways, bridges, irrigation canals, and dams. Large-scale community disruption and displacement is a typical result of such initiatives. According to estimates, these so-called "developmental operations" result in the displacement of 10 million people each year. However, for the sake of the country's greater national interest, national leaders and policymakers

typically viewed these as justified and inevitable expenses of progress. "If you have to suffer, you should do it in the interest of the country," remarked Pt. J.L. Nehru. 26,501 families were relocated from the 249 revenue villages that were submerged in the reservoir as a result of the Hirakud dam. It is also undeniable that it was one of the largest human displacement the state has ever seen or experienced. The State Government forgot about their rehabilitation after being displaced and relocation. More painfully, the pitiful compensation for many families has gone unclaimed to this day, which shows the government's seeming indifference to the displaced people.

Unwanted removal from one's property and habitat due to a dam, reservoir, or highway is not only immediately upsetting and unpleasant; it also carries long-term hazards of poverty trapping. Under its power of eminent domain, the state claims the right to seize land for "public use," but it declines to fulfil its obligation to relocate and rehabilitate all the affected residents. Instead, rehabilitation is portrayed as a kind gesture (Kasturi, 2008). Large-scale land purchase and the ensuing displacement of people have a history that dates back to the 1950s. The newly independent republics were working on significant state-owned projects at the time that were meant to become the "towering heights of the economy" in the fields of irrigation, power, steel, and heavy engineering. The reservoir of the Hirakud dam serves as a stark illustration of widespread relocation. The burden of development was taken by development-induced displaced people at the expense of their own human rights and social justice. After being asked to leave their community while the dam was being built, the residents struggled to survive. A sizable portion of the population still struggles to get access to necessities and has few opportunities for employment. There are no essential amenities like roads, water, or electricity available to the displaced population. Even though the government has ordered that all non-revenue villages be converted to revenue in 2013, the Forest Department is still refusing to build a road and provide them with Forest Rights Act utilities.

Mirroring the Miseries of the Displaced

According to the colonial Land Acquisition Act, those impacted by an acquisition could only be landowners or occupiers (tenants), and the kind of compensation could only be monetary. Large-scale purchases, however, included taking over entire villages and even excluding their communal resources, such as tanks, grazing areas, and community trees. Other than landowner peasants and tenant farmers, there are many more types of people in a typical Indian village, including agricultural labourers, artisans, and other people who provide for the needs of the farmers. These landless people rely on this land either directly or indirectly. Regarding their rights as impacted parties, the statutes remain silent. Furthermore, the expropriation of resources belonging to common property, which are essential to the livelihood of the poorest communities, was not acknowledged or compensated for. According to government statistics, 110,000 people have been relocated from Hirakud, however academic estimates put the number at 180,000. When the Land Acquisition Act was used for large-scale acquisitions, the result was eviction and loss of source of income for the affected populations. They were not granted the right to rehabilitation or resettlement as a result. Even those few who received financial compensation were unable to replace their lost land assets and regain their source of income. The displaced people seized ownership of the available open lands in the absence of any restoration plans. Due to the lack of documentation of their rights over certain properties, they frequently encountered disrespectful behaviour from officials.

Involuntary displacement brought on by the deliberate use of the state's coercive powers is equal to displacement brought on by a natural disaster. They were both treated equally by the state. Additionally, the Government's discretionary powers, a number of requirements for rehabilitation and relocation, and the inability to enforce a number of provisions all reduce the proposed legislation to little more than a statement of policy (Kasturi, 2008). Regarding the compensation given to

the displaced families, especially the tribe members, a troubling picture is evident. The amount of compensation given was insufficient, and the level of living in the colonies that had been resettled was not met. Even after decades of displacement, there are still a number of unresolved rehabilitation and displacement challenges. Hirakud Dam data show that only 6.17 percent of indigenous residents were relocated. Although 6.17 percent displacement appears little, when expressed as an absolute quantity, it equals 1636 families. The multipurpose dam project resulted in the displacement of 52,584 families, 10,498 of which were indigenous households. There is no substantial irrigation project that prevents the displacement of ST families.

Not only were the oustees defeated in terms of their riches and income, but also in terms of social goods (liberty, opportunity), as well as the basic foundation of their self-respect. Due to inadequate planning and apathy, the Odisha government's initiative to rehabilitate them ended in failure. Certain social groupings experience social exclusion as a result of displacement. Physical separation from a certain area and socioeconomic exclusion from social networks are its outcomes. Because they show an uneven distribution of development's gains and losses, it raises important ethical issues. However, some population segments face significant burdens as a result of the forced relocations brought on by such programmes. By using state power, it limits population rights. Significant social justice and equitable issues are brought up by this. (Nayak,2013).

Thousands of people were displaced by the Hirakud dam, which drained enormous tracts of land. Actual data show that it has resulted in more land being flooded and more people being displaced than was anticipated in the feasibility assessment. The actual number of submerged communities turned out to be 325 covering 1,83,000 acres of land, of which 1,23,000 acres are arable, as opposed to the feasibility report's predictions of 168 villages covering 1,35,000 acres of land, of which 70,000 acres are arable land. It flooded 34 villages in Madhya Pradesh and 291 villages in Odisha, uprooting over 26,501 families and 100,000 people. Three categories can

be used to group the communities that were purchased to make way for the Hirakud dam (completely submerged villages, partially affected villages and villages acquired beyond 632 RL). A total of 116 villages were completely flooded, 133 villages were damaged in part, and 42 settlements were added after 632 RL. 48 of the 133 partially damaged villages had Basti-sites or houses that were inundated but had cultivable land and some buildings that were not. Land has been flooded in the remaining 85 settlements, leaving only the Basti-sites or dwellings outside. (Nayak,2013).

This is better than the adivasi conditions in other places. The adivasis still fight for the meagre compensation that was formerly promised to them after being displaced by the Hirakud in the 1950s and 1960s. The State is taking extensive possession of the land, rivers, and woods. Every institution under its control—the army, the police, the administration, and the courts—is responding to them with a single voice. The effects of the displacement of scheduled tribes caused by development are numerous but easily identifiable from all other effects. Diverse hazards, such as losing access to resources owned by the community (water, forests, grazing land), losing their jobs, being marginalised, being homeless, and food insecurity, have an impact on the displaced tribal people. Their capacity for physical and emotional development as well as their quality of life are calm and passive. Their social and personal lives are nearly irreversibly harmed. Cultural events are few and few between, and freedom of movement is strictly restricted. When living in camps, women in particular experience terrible invasions of their privacy. Children's education and universal access to basic healthcare are nearly nonexistent. A successful tribal eviction narrative caused them to move into squalor today.

In the guise of a development project, the local residents suffer and are defrauded. Resettlement and rehabilitation have not provided them with any assistance. The project made the local communities, which before were dependent on lands, water, and forest resources, poor and jobless.

They made it through the severe financial difficulties. The opposition against the project was put down by force and phoney promises. The government paid the least attention to the financial and social costs of population. In the relocated communities, there were no temples rebuilt by the government. The administration gave no thought to the religious beliefs of the populace. Politicians and bureaucrats were driven by the state and corporate interests in order to increase the GDP, but they neglected to take care of those who lost out on the development process. (Behera, 2017).

Due to ITPS and coal mining by MCL in the Belpahar and Lakhanpur area of Jharsuguda district, the displaced people who were resettled at the upper end of the reservoir had experienced displacement for the second time. Multiple displacement victims were unable to receive any particular care. They suffered from an alien terrain and uncultivated lands in the middle of the worst sufferings. The displaced individuals were commonly referred to as Budi anchalia. Additionally, the undervaluation of land is agreed upon by all socioeconomic groups. To give project benefits to the displaced population, no action has been taken. In reality, the Hirakud dam has helped the coastal population at the expense of displaced people. The government allots a sizable sum of money for the benefit of command areas for the improvement of canals, new agricultural technology, and water management, but no specific development programme is intended for the welfare of displaced people or the irrigation or agriculture of the villages that have been relocated (Behera,2017).

Longstanding Demands of Oustees

Under the aegis of the Hirakud Budi Anchal Sangram Samiti (HBASS), hundreds of Hirakud Dam displaced families from Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Bargarh, and Sonapur demonstrated at Lower PMG Square while asserting that their long-standing demands had been met. In their memorandum, they noted that the Government of Odisha had granted homestead land to displaced households in the Rengali and Jamimkera

Tahasil of the Sambalpur district despite pledges, orders, and applications, but had not granted the same to those in the Jharsuguda and Sundargarh districts. According to Office Order No. 1734 of Dated 22.01.2014, the production of documents like the 4[1] notification and the old patta is required for claiming relocation compensation, but sadly, very few displaced households have their required paperwork, and many have lost it. For the purpose of identifying displaced families and determining eligibility for 10 decimal of homestead land Patta, the recommendations of the relevant Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha need to be taken into consideration. Additionally, they have urged that, in accordance with decisions made in 2002 and 2011, the survey and settlement of 34 unsurveyed communities located above 632 R.L of the Hirakud Reservoir be expedited. According to Office Resolution No. 10930/R dated 11.03.1993 and stated in a statement by Gopinath Majhi, General Secretary of the HBASS, "Early payment of ex-gratia compensation @10.000 per acre should be paid to displaced families in Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, and Sundargarh districts." In addition, they have sought prompt payment for all 9913 Royats who have not yet received compensation in accordance with letters from the Govt. of Odisha River Valley Development Department dated 6.01.1965 and 04.07.1956. The payment of unpaid compensation to the 6693 Royat family, 320 Jhankar, Chaukidar, and Nariha families, at the current market value of the land, trees, wells, etc. The HBASS's top demands are to I issue Royatpattas in lieu of their D.C. patas and demarcate the property appropriately. (ii) Those who hold DC permissions whose land has been purchased by MCL and OPGC, Banharpali, should get the appropriate compensation and employment advantages as soon as possible. (iii) The other 97 cases, whose D.C. Permission land has been in the custody of government institutions and others, should be given alternative land. (iii) Land between 630 and 632 RL should be leased out annually in accordance with the guidelines established in 1966. If not, it is preferable for law and order to continue as they are between 630 and 632 RL. (iv) In the years 1956–1957,

strictly monitor the reservoir for pollution caused by industrial wastes that could harm fishing and the way of life for 11,000 families living around the Hirakud Dam. Additionally, these settlements should be given with essential services like electricity, irrigation, safe drinking water, etc. The Outfit has criticized the Government of Odisha for consistently failing to meet the long-overdue demands of the Budi Anchal Sangram Samiti, citing commitments made by the former Revenue Minister Surya Narayan Patro in a series of review sessions in 2011 and 2012. (Odisha News Insight,2016).

Apathy of Government

The Indian government had promised individuals who were relocated all essential utilities. This featured services for education and health in the relocated communities, as well as agricultural grounds with irrigation systems. They were also to be hired in order to make up for what they had lost, but for the past 60 years, these guarantees have remained just that. Since they lack land, the majority of the oustees have moved to other regions of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and other northern states where they work as labourers. The Hirakud dam's displaced residents have been clamouring for compensation and pleading with the government to give basic amenities, but the headless government is unwilling to hear their complaints and has continued to evict people without providing adequate resettlement. Due to industrial activity in the area, the displaced individuals are being relocated repeatedly.

A calculation of displaced people by an independent inquiry reveals how government authorities underrepresent the situation. The number of people relocated by the Hirakud dam was between 1.1 lakh and 1.6 lakh, according to Viegas' field investigation; the official numbers only put that number at 1.1 lakh (Viegas,1992). According to Fernandes and Thukral, 1.8 lakh people have been displaced as a result of the Hirakud dam (Fernandes & Thukral, 1989). A total of 19,000 households were displaced out of 22,000 families in 200 inundated communities. However,

according to reliable sources, the government only gave 8468 acres of agricultural land and 287.14 acres of homestead land to 2243 families. The idea that the alleged "beneficiaries" are also suffering is more shocking than the reality that the displaced people are still in pain. The rehabilitation of the remaining impacted people received no attention. In the absence of restoration efforts, around 15,000 families who cultivated the dam obtained undeveloped and other public lands on the reservoir's edge. The remaining families settled in the undivided districts of Sambalpur, Sundergarh, and Bolangir, as well as in various areas of the neighbouring state of Chhattisgarh. Later, the government gave each family resident near the Hirakud Dam Reservoir DC Patta of 2 acres of waste land. The government leased the land to those families for agricultural use after purchasing it for the dam. The land supplied to the displaced households on a lease basis has not yet been settled by the government. People who received land on lease in 1959 continued to pay land cess until 1990. But in 1990, the government issued a decree authorizing the settlement of such lands. In order to provide patta to the affected farmers, the lands were subsequently transferred from the Water Resource Department to the Revenue Department in 2014. But settlement of certain lands is still waiting despite government directives (India Today,2018).

The residents of western Odisha were significantly impacted by the dam's construction. A sum of Rs 12 crores was originally budgeted for the payment of compensation to the affected people. After adjustment, the sum was dropped to Rs 9.5 crores, and only Rs 3.32 crores in total compensation was given to the people. From 1956 onward, many families were forcibly removed from their homes and places of comfort without being given any compensation. Nearly 7,000–8,000 persons who were put into slum housing without receiving any compensation are still there. The government of Odisha's irresponsible action is to blame for the growing rift between the residents of Western and Coastal Odisha. And now, after so many years, the Odisha government is putting up yet another plan that

will be unpleasant for the Kosli people. With the Odisha state government, NHPC Ltd. had agreed to build hydropower plants in the Koshal (Western Orissa) part of the state in the districts of Subarnapur (100 MW), Sambalpur (100 MW), and Boudh (120 MW). In conjunction with the Orissa state-run Hydro Power Corporation, the hydropower generating business will construct the facilities in five years with a combined investment of Rs. 2,600 crore to produce 320 MW of power. The projects' submergence of tens of thousands of acres of agricultural land will have effects on the socioeconomic and ecological systems. There is no such need for additional power projects that are likely to flood productive agricultural land, uproot residents, and harm the local ecology. The Government doesn't give a damn about any cost-benefit analysis or the potential repercussions of displacement. An ex-MP from the area named Bhabani Shankar Hota made the observation that the projects would completely or partially affect at least 118 villages. He believed that if the projects went forward, the local population would suffer incalculable suffering and harm. In addition, during project execution, 240 acres of house stead land, 16,000 acres of cultivable land, and 20,000 acres of reserved and village forest area would all be submerged. People are worried that the plants would engulf a number of temples, including the renowned Huma Temple in the Sambalpur area, which is among them. Over the whole region of western Odisha, people had previously expressed firm opposition to this proposition.

In addition to Hirakud, a dam at Tikarpada on the Mahanadi and a barrage at Naraj were proposed as flood control measures. However, the Sonapur and Boudh towns would have been submerged by the Tikarpada Dam. There was building of the Naraj barrage. During Janaki Ballabh Pattnaik's tenure as chief minister in the 1980s, suggestions for the Manibhadra project rather than the Tikarpada dam were circulated. However, it was fiercely opposed throughout western Odisha to the point where the government was forced to airdrop leaflets on Balangir, Sonapur, Boudh, and other districts assuring them the Manibhadra dam would not be built. When the government proposed the Syndhol Hydro Power Project in

1996 in the downstream of the Mahanadi under the name of "Hirakud Stage III," the people of western Odisha were still very resentful of the Hirakud relocation and their suffering at the time. In that context, N. K. Salve, the then-minister of central energy, visited Chiplima. The project won't be implemented if the public opposes it, Janaki Pattnaik promised in his election speech. However, this was also opposed. However, the issue came up once more in the 2003 Rairakhol Assembly bi-election campaigns. During the election campaign, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had firmly stated that "this project is no longer under consideration." The state government had maintained that the Sindol project wouldn't result in any evictions or agricultural land being submerged. Locals, who do not trust the government, have publicly voiced their opposition to the initiative. A preliminary examination into this project made it very evident that 28 villages would be flooded and 1850 families would be uprooted. Therefore, the government made the decision to postpone this project. The government has continued to make projects despite the fact that the Hirakud displaced people have not been adequately rehabilitated or compensated and that it is oblivious to their true needs.

A major bump in the road to success is caused by the infrastructure projects' ineffective planning and execution. The majority of development projects in Odisha have had negative effects, including uprooting people from their native land and way of life and denying them access to their most basic means of subsistence (Sahu,2016). Cash compensation appears to be the sole solution to the issues brought on by displacement and the only rehabilitation strategy for the government and its development agents. The recovery of natural resources, means of subsistence, social and cultural loss are almost hard to assess and compensate for, but the loss of land resulting from relocation may be calculated and compensated. In addition, the way the legislation is written and explained guarantees that the conquered is always the displaced landowner or home owner. The Land Acquisition Act's insufficient provisions make it impossible for the illiterate and impoverished oustees to contest the rate of compensation in practice. Even fewer landowners who were familiar with the legal nuances

of the Land Acquisition brought their claims before a judge. Interest is only due from the date of taking possession to the day of complete compensation, and the worth of the land is estimated as of the date of the gazette announcement. Because of this, the LAA does not account for the increase in market value after notice.

Way Forward

The negative repercussions of the displacement caused by development need to be seriously addressed by the state, and the displaced people need to be resettled in a secure environment where they may start over. However, this would require more than simply designating a specific piece of land for resettlement or only erecting temporary camps for habitation. The urgent requirement is for the "rehabilitation" of the project's affected individuals. Restoring to the prior state is the definition of rehabilitation. Priority should be given to the emotional, cultural, social, political, and economic losses resulting from displacement rather than the project itself. They are psychologically very fragile and lack security due to a lack of social and policy framework. The government's flimsy promises have never materialized, setting the stage for terrible outcomes.

Although relocation would not have been compulsory, the government chose not to consult those whose interests were at danger. They wouldn't have lost their only source of income or their self-esteem if they had been relocated and given rehabilitation in the Hirakud dam's irrigated area. Legislation is urgently needed that addresses the issues of resettlement, rehabilitation, and negotiation involvement in addition to compensation. Due to their distinctive socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, the displaced indigenous families should receive special consideration. The relocation and rehabilitation strategies for tribally displaced families should be unique and varied in order to effectively address their poverty (The Tribal Tribune). Before beginning any project that could lead to development-based displacement, eviction impact assessments must be completed with the goal of completely protecting the human rights of all conceivably impacted individuals, organisations, and communities. It

should be made to thoroughly research all feasible alternatives to any conduct that involves forced eviction. Affected individuals, groups, and communities must be given enough information about the planning and implementation processes related to the relocation in question as well as the reason for the eviction. Those who stand to gain from the evicted sites should likewise be thoroughly informed. The State must ensure that any losses of personal, real, or other property or goods, including rights or interests in property, are adequately and justly compensated. The process of resettlement must be just, equitable, and compliant with international human rights law. The LAA (1894) should be amended to reduce displacement and make rehabilitation a crucial component of land acquisition, not something that should be done separately. Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, and Special Provisions for the Scheduled Castes/Tribes and Weaker Sections must all be taken into consideration while drafting land acquisition policy, which must be done within the confines of the law. Land acquisition-related issues must be handled legally. Investigating the problem of eliminating imbalance from the system is equally important.

To include the displaced people in the development process, a unique development programme must be launched. The task of developing the DPs of HDP should be handled by the corporate sector that has grown up around it. For land losers to be able to live sustainably, financial compensation alone is insufficient. Rehabilitation and resettlement are desperately needed. All DPs should receive the same infrastructure benefits as project employees. To give them enough time to recover and adapt to a new economic and social environment, due income compensation provisions must be implemented for a ten-year period. A Ministry responsible for the relocation and rehabilitation of the displaced persons is necessary. Reservations for the displaced persons in employment and in county-run schools for their children should both be made. All those who are impacted need to receive insurance coverage. A state urgently needs to revive its old water gathering techniques rather than build large dams. There is sufficient room to use rainwater harvesting

technologies and construct modest check dams to store water (Behera, 2017).

To enhance the living conditions of Odisha's underprivileged communities, development is unavoidably required. Without the sacrifice of those who lose a sizable amount of their goods, it cannot happen, though. Therefore, a new strategy for development is required, one that emphasizes the notion that "small is beautiful." It effectively works against the widespread elitist and unsustainable development. It must be both man- and nature-centered. The wealthy should not be the only ones to benefit from progress. Benefits from the project should be distributed equally and justly to everyone. India still lacks a comprehensive relocation strategy. Measures for rehabilitation and resettlement should involve the community. The resettlement process ought to incorporate all interested parties. Compensation measures shouldn't be half-hearted; instead, they should create an atmosphere where the displaced have access to jobs, educational opportunities, secure food, and medical care. The total displacement issue needs to be recognized as a complex human rights, political, social, economic, and cultural concern rather than being regarded as a solely administrative matter. Research, practice, and policy around displacement must focus on more than only the dangers and effects of displacement. Additionally, it ought to include institutional frameworks for development that will protect and advance the rights of displaced people, particularly their rights to education, housing, and development. The difficulties encountered in the process demand unwavering resolve, a long-term political commitment from the government, as well as resources and capacity. In order to safeguard the constitutional aim of a thriving socialist welfare society, it is the state's duty to see to it that change processes and development goals are managed. It's important to resettle the displaced communities in a just and humane manner. The people who would be affected should be persuaded of their broader interests before seeking their consent in accordance with democratic norms. The plan should be announced openly and across the country. It must be determined that development programmes must first receive public support. The key

to reducing the likelihood of their poverty is better talks and negotiations with the oustees. Given that relocation and rehabilitation are to be considered as people's rights and that work should continue for an inclusive development, the genuine spirit of a welfare state can be established.

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The strategic and economic importance of Iran for India: Challenges ahead

PRIYA

Abstract

Iran is located at the junctions of South Asia, the Middle East and the Caucasus region to the Arabian Sea. It is also a vital regional power, situated in the center of gravitation in the larger Middle East from Pamir to the Mediterranean Sea. Islamic Republic of Iran is the second biggest country in the Middle East and has continued to be central to the global political agenda of the world power. Its geo-strategic position and vast energy resources make it a country to be reckoned with in the contemporary world. India and Iran shared historical ties since times memorial and have rich legacy of traditional values, culture etc. The paper looks at the strategic and economic stakes of India in Iran and how it plays a vital role in New Delhi's pursuit for premeditated and economic expansions in Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. The paper too highlights the relevance of Chabahar Port for India in the current dynamics and what futuristic challenges ahead for both the countries.

Key Words: Chabahar Port, Energy Security, India-Iran, Middle East and South Asia.

Introduction

Iran - the officially Islamic Republic of Iran is a sovereign state in West Asia. It controls dozens of islands in the Persian Gulf and 30 percent of its 4,770-mile (7,680-kilometre) boundary is sea-coast (Macropedia, 2002). With an area of 1,648,000 Square kilometers (sq. km), it is the eighteenth biggest country in the world (Sajedi, 1993). Iran has borders with the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman in Southern side and Pakistan and Afghanistan to the Eastern side. It shared border of 936 km with Afghanistan, 35 km with Armenia, 611 km with Azerbaijan and 1,458

with Iraq (Shekhar and Singh, 2005). It too has 909 km border with Pakistan, 499 km with Turkey and 992 with Turkmenistan. And has a 2,440 km shoreline within the Persian Gulf and 740 km coastline alongside the Caspian Sea (Ibid). It also has long coastline both on the Arabian Sea and on the Caspian Sea, which permits it to escape from being isolated and congested like Iraq. And this in order to guarantee that, it is easier for Tehran to avoid any economic sanctions that could be endorsed by the global community (Bansal, 2012).

Further, it is the northern rank state of the Middle East, along with the Afghanistan and Turkey on the southern border of erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), gaining significant importance in international politics. It has an outstanding geo-political and economic position in the “Eurasian Corridor” (Homayoun, 1997). Iran is a land-bridge between two important energy zones i.e. Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf which holds world's known energy reserves and natural gas. It along with Afghanistan and Turkey has cover up 2700 miles of boundaries with Asiatic side of the former USSR (Ibid).

Iran's strategic position, size, population and energy resources and trade and industry links between East and West, along with a strong cultural uniqueness, is vibrant to peace and stability of the Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia and particularly the war torn country Afghanistan. It is certainly a natural transport link and shortest route between the Caspian and the exposed seas (Ibid). Moreover, Iran's self-appreciation of its unique geographical location is the key to the realization of its ambitious goals. In an article entitled, *Confrontation between Military Blocs: The Eurasian “Triple Alliance” The Strategic Importance of Iran for Russia and China*, the researcher Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya sharply etches out the distinctiveness of Iran's geo-geographical characteristics, as he said, “Iran can be considered as a geo-strategic pivot (Kumar, 2015).

Map 1.1
Strategic Provinces of Iran



Source: <http://temi.repubblica.it/limes-heartland/the-strategicprovinces/>

The geo-political balance in Eurasia is very much revolves on the structure of Iran's political coalitions. As he further question if Iran become a partner of the United States after the sanctions, this would seriously disturb Russia and China as both have economic and political interest in Tehran. This also relates to Iran's ethno-cultural, linguistic, economic, religious, and geo-political links to the Caucasus and Central Asia (Ibid).

Tehran occupied a transitional position between two highly commercialized zones of the medieval world; the Levant in the west and India in the east. And its strategic location provided it with an opportunity to stretch its arms in opposite directions while acting as a large market as well as a transit point for long distance trade between Europe and the east (Raphaël, 1890). Raphael Du Mans, a seventeenth-century French Jesuit and resident of Isfahan (Iran), graphically summarized Iran's perfect geographical setting by calling it a carava-sarai with two doors, one opening to the west and the other to the east (Ibid).

Iran assumes a critical military-strategic significance not just because it is part of Middle East, Caspian Sea region, Central Asia but for the reason that it is littoral country of Indian Ocean region, Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman (Alam, 2009). None of the problems of the region whether relating to ethnic, religious, military-economic issues or relating to terrorism, separatism, narco-trading etc. can be professionally dealt without Tehran's participation. Its enormous natural resources and perfect location for building oil and gas pipelines only add to its strategic significance (Ibid, 2009).

Importance of Iran for India

Iran is positioned at the eastern side of oil-rich Persian Gulf and a likely export way for the energy assets of Central Asian Republics (CAR's) (Balooch, 2009). Its geo-strategic location permits it to play a significant role in linking India to Central Asian countries both militarily and strategically. Though lacking straight access to CAR's, New Delhi observes Tehran as an appropriate entry to the markets and energy resources of that region (Ibid).

Iran, which is placed by Persian Gulf, Oman Sea, and Central Asia, is in the center of a perpetual "hot spot" in the world affairs (Ebel, Menon, and Gladney et al. 2000). Moreover, it has played an important role in the Middle East, as a grand power and as a factor in contentions between East and West. It along with Central Asia positioned at the intersection of overland trading paths and a potential customer markets for Indian goods (Macropedia, 2002). Meanwhile, Tehran observes New Delhi as a valuable supplier of high technology inputs (Ebel, Menon, and Gladney et al. 2000).

For India, Iran is a vital country in the region, due to its geo-political and geo-strategic position, long coastline along the Persian Gulf, and its authority over the strategically important Strait of Hormuz and an important source of energy make it a crucial country in the region (Goud and Mookherjee, 2014). Gifted with massive natural resources, Iran is

therefore enthusiastically interested in exporting its excess natural gas to India. In fact, it has acquired second position in-terms of natural gas reserves in the world after Russia (Nuri, 2003). Hence, Iran has figured remarkably in India's strategy to set-up and develops its energy links with the Gulf countries (Ibid).

Iranians base their foreign policies on their identification of the intimate link between the land where they live and the politics they practice (Haidar, 2010). That's why the geo-graphical location of Iran is described as "the golden middle" that positioned between Asia and Europe. It also serves as a link between all transportation lines; together with water ones, whether from north to south or from west to east with regard to Eurasia (Ibid).

The geo-strategic settings of Iran in the heart of Eurasia, and being close to two resources rich regions, makes it well positioned in its relation with great powers. Iran has persistently been an essential country influenced by any shift in the world order that also affects its fortune. During the rise of bipolar system in the twentieth century, the Middle East was the foundation of this system and Tehran was the axis of balance there (Ibid). Iran has become a geo-strategic pathway for the region and the world for its geopolitical rank. This demonstrates how greatly its position is effective in international calculations and power relations, that cannot be ignored neither in economic security affairs nor in conflict and peace ones (Ibid). The Iranian authority recognizes very well the importance of their country's geography and there is no replacement to this position and cannot be marginalized in any world order (Ibid).

Furthermore, Iran is not some twentieth century set-up of family and religious ideology similar to Saudi Arabia, bracketed as it is by arbitrary border (Brown, 1971). The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750. Iran communicates entirely with the Iranian plateau- "the Castile of the Near East", in Princeton historian Peter Brown's word- "even as the dynamism of its civilization reaches far beyond it". Iran was the ancient world's first

super-power. The Persian Kingdom, even as it besieged Greece, “uncoiled, like a dragon’s tail... as far as the Oxus, Afghanistan and the Indus valley”, writes Brown.

Iran as a nation-state and developed civilization is quite admirable. In fact it compares favourably to the Arab world including Mesopotamia and Palestine. There is nothing fake about Iran (Kaplan, 2012). Even the clerical establishment indicates institutionalization. It is surprising that Iran is increasingly seen more and more vital in a multi-polar 21st century. Though, it is much smaller in size and population as compared to India, China, Russia or Europe, but because of its control on the key geography of the Middle East-in terms of place, population, and natural resources, therefore, fundamental to global geopolitics (Ibid).

It is a diverse and multilingual culture country. The religious dilemma of Iran has too played a critical role in the world affairs (Macropedia, 2002). Tehran is the capital and the political, cultural, business and industrial centre of Iran. With the exclusion of Pakistan, it is more populated than any of its neighbours (Bansal, 2012). It is projected that the population of Iran will reach 100 million by 2050 (Jennings, 2005). Its population is two and a half times that of Saudi Arabia. And Iran has only twenty-two percent of its population less than the age of fifteen, which can be interpreted as an advantage (Kaplan, 2012). So far it is Iran’s location advantage, immediately to the South of Mackinder’s Heartland, and inside Spykman’s Rim land, that, more than any other factor, is truly something to behold (Kaplan, 2012).

Nearly, all the significant Middle East’s oil and gas lies either in the Persian Gulf or the Caspian Sea regions (Harkavy and Kemp, 1997). Just as shipping paths spread out from the Persian Gulf, pipelines will discharge from the Caspian region to the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, China and the Indian Ocean. The only country that overlaps both energy-producing areas is Iran; expanding as it does from the Caspian region to the Persian Gulf (Ibid).

Iran's paramount importance is its hydrocarbon resources. It has 10 percent of the world's proven oil assets (154 billion barrels) and holds around 18 percent of total confirmed natural gas reserves universally (1,187 trillion cubic feet (tcf)) (Cordesman, Gold, and Coughlin Schulte, 2014). It has also one of the biggest armed forces in West Asian region, by large maritime capabilities and ballistic missile abilities. Iran too controls the entrance and exit point of the Hormuz Strait through which a large quantity of the oil passes which is also very crucial for India's energy needs (Goud and Mookherjee, 2014).

Notably, Iran has culturally, historically and economically much more similarity with Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, than it has with its western neighbours in the Arabian world. It is right time for India to look at Iran as an essential part of the South Asian economic sphere and the Afghanistan oriented security complex ((Fürstenberg, 2013). Furthermore, the historical, linguistic, religious, and literary links have helped Tehran to keep its dominance in South Asia and become a major business partner in spite of US-led sanctions (Aman and Slavin, 2013). Iran is principally Shia and India too came to have a substantial Shia community. India had no clash with Iran nor is she looking around for a leading role in the Gulf region and yet in size, population, resources and development India is a major country in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) (Dutt, 1999).

According to late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, "Few people have been more closely related in origin and throughout history than the people of India and the people of Iran" (Taghavi, 2012). As a result of these constant and close relations over several centuries, the people of India, particularly northern part of India share significant cultural, linguistic and ethnic characteristics with Iran (Hussain, 2012). There are ingrained 'civilizational ties' between the two countries that still reverberate in the public opinions of both countries and continue to influence foreign policy decisions and bilateral ties. These relations have encompassed political, religious, economic and cultural spheres (Ibid).

India's strong historical, political, and economic ties, determined its foreign policy perceptions with Iran. After India got independence in 1947, a new country between India and Iran had emerged that is Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Varshney, 1954, pp. 141-142). Iran was one of the initial countries who initiated the ambassador level relations with India. Both became nearer by the signing of numerous bilateral agreements between each other. Economically India is a top manufacturing country with a big collection of technical manpower and expertise. The economic and other resources of Iran could be used to better benefit for getting economic power if developed in collaboration with Indian technical capability, this competence being more significant for developing countries (Ibid).

Tehran is an important and economically more realistic source of oil and natural gas provider to New Delhi. India's relations with Iran had attained a fair degree of geniality even though the financial ties had yet to realize their full potential (Ibid, p. 339). Currently New Delhi has been working to strengthening its relations with Tehran for two reasons. First, India's economic development that it is counting on to raise millions of population out of poverty needs energy resources. And secondly, India requires access to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics for militarily and economic purposes, where Iran could offer this connectivity through its strategic port of Chabahar. Indo-Iranian collaboration had "obtained a strategic dimension blooming in the areas of energy, commerce, information technology and transportation (Mousavi, 2011, p. 35).

While India and Iran has gigantic opportunities but have variety of threats. Like, Iran is a diverse country consisting of people of many religions and ethnic backgrounds cemented by the Persian culture. The culture of Iran is a merge of ancient pre-Islamic culture and Islamic culture. Iranian culture has long been a predominant culture of the Middle East and Central Asia, with Persian considered the language of thinkers during much of the 2nd millennium, and the language of belief and the masses before that (Iran Culture & Heritage).

Iran and Saudi Arabia are two powerful neighbours. Both locked in a violent struggle for regional dominance for decades. They follow one of the two main branches of Islam. Iran is largely Shia Muslim, while Saudi Arabia perceives itself as the foremost Sunni Muslim authority. Historically Saudi Arabia, a kingdom and home to the birthplace of Islam, saw itself as the head of the Muslim world. However this was challenged in 1979 by the Islamic revolution in Iran which created a new type of state in the region - a kind of revolutionary theocracy - that had an explicit goal of exporting this model beyond its own borders (Marcus, 2019).

Iran and Saudi Arabia are not candidly fighting but they are engaged in a range of proxy wars around the region. Both have formed Shia-Sunni divide in the region as in the pro-Saudi camp are the Gulf like the UAE and Bahrain plus Egypt and Jordan. In Iranian side is Syria, including Lebanon-based Hezbollah, to fight predominantly Sunni insurgent groups (Ibid). The current war between Israel and Hamas has again created a vacuum in their cold relations.

Relevance of Chabahar Port

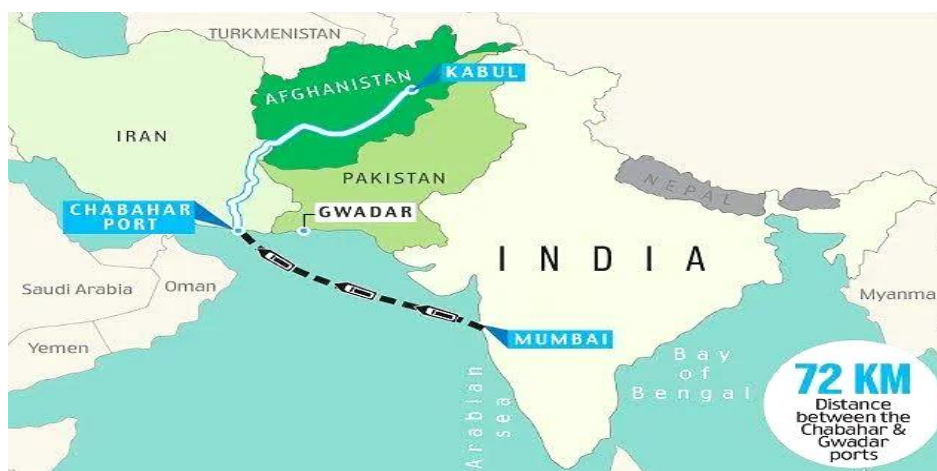
Chabahar بندر چابهار is a southern port of Iran gaining great importance in the world affairs. It situated on the Makran Coast of South Sistan and Baluchistan territory of Iran. It lies in the extreme Southeast next to the Indian Ocean and in the western part of Oman Sea. Chabahar often considered the “Golden Gate” to hydrocarbon rich Central Asian countries and for minerals rich Afghanistan (Roy, 2012, p.958). It has immense trade potential to connect South Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia and land-locked Afghanistan. It is close to South Asia and Europe and can facilitate the transportation of commodities to northern and southern Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics (Ibid).

The road distance between Chabahar to Melak is 950 km on the Afghan border; it is 1,595 km from Dogharoon on the Afghan border; it is 1,827 km to Sarakhs on the Turkmenistan border. More importantly this strategic port is merely 120 km from the Pakistan border. It is 700 km

from the province of Zahedan and 2,200 km away from the capital Tehran (Ibid). This port has encouraged India to develop a deliberate partnership with Iran to minimize its dependency on Pakistan. Chabahar is not only significant for India but also for South Asia at large.

A trilateral agreement was signed among India, Iran and Afghanistan for development of Chabahar road via Melak, Zaranj and Delaram in 2003 (Ministry of External Affairs). The former Iran president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited India in 2008; during his visit Chabahar port and expansion of the railway-line up to the Afghanistan were discussed (Dikshit, 2010). Further, New Delhi is more concerned in investing in Chabahar container terminal project as well as in Chabahar–Faraj–Bam railway line project. It has also planned to increase the potential of the port and working at its full handling capacity of 2.5 million tonnes of cargo each year. India is too linking Chabahar with Bam city of Iran through railway. From Bam, which is on the Afghanistan border, commodities can be taken via Zarang–Delaram road which is linked with the highway connecting all major Afghan cities (Ibid).

Map 1.2
Chabahar Port



Source:- <https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/nous-sanctions-on-chabahar-port>

India's sustain interest in building up Chabahar was also emphasized by Indian leadership in 2010 as follows.

"This project is thus at the heart of the common vision that India and Iran have for Afghanistan and the region as a whole, of increased and easier flow of goods and creation of a network of transport routes and energy pipelines that will bind our people together in an arc of stability, prosperity and peace. The International North South Corridor Project, which also includes Russia and the Central Asian Republics in addition to India and Iran, is also a concept awaiting operationalization on the ground. We would welcome greater interest on part of the Iranian government and private sector in realizing these projects, which should be seen not only as commercial but also as strategic in nature, not just for India, but also for all the countries in the region" (Rao, 2010).

India is offering \$100 million to construct the Chabahar port and considering three investment options. One of the three investment options is to build and start a multi-use freight berth at the port with a cost of around \$20 million. The subsequently option is to make a container at an estimated asset of \$30 million. And the third plan is to expand one more container at a price of \$65 million. And Iran too has plans to develop the port in five stages and to rise up its ability to 20 million tones (Dash, 2012). Chabahar located on the most important worldwide passages like East-West corridor, North-South corridors and Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA). The trilateral agreement among India, Iran and Afghanistan to build up the Chabahar road via Melak, Zaranj and Delaram will ease the neighboring trade and add towards regional-economic prosperity (Chandra, 2014).

Chabahar's nearness to the world's highest emerging regions underlines its strategic value. It has close contiguity with major ports of India like Jawaharlal Port, Kandla, Panjim, Mundra which increases the capacity of trade between the two regions namely South Asia and the Middle East (ICICI, 2015). This port has enormous potential to connect the industry

centers of South Asia (Mumbai, Jamnagar, etc), the Middle East (Dubai), Central Asia (Turkmenistan) and Afghanistan (Milak)(Suresh and Ramesh, 2015). India's participation in the Chabahar project is termed as a "peace project" and "transit diplomacy" (Tishe, 2016).

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Iran has again highlighted the importance of the Chabahar port for India and also gave momentum to the development of the port at top priority. P.M. Narendra Modi and former Iranian President Dr. Hassan Rouhanimet in 2016 and signed 12 agreements including the signing of a bilateral contract on Chabahar Port for expansion and operations between India Ports Global Private Limited (IPGPL) and Arya Banader of Iran; an MoU between Export-Import (EXIM) Bank and Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) specifying the current terms of credit line for Chabahar Project and a confirmation statement between EXIM Bank and Central Bank of Iran on projects in Iran (Government of India).

In addition to the business advantages that would accumulate to India with the developments of Chabahar, the port also appears to have immense strategic significance for the country. Chabahar is about 100 miles east of Gwadar port, where China is developing a large new naval foundation for Pakistan (Pant, 2010). India perceives this as a two-pronged threat and is cautious of the rising potential of Chinese navy and its Beijing's emergent marine presence in the seas around its landmass. It is believed that Gwadar will offer China with a 'listening post' from where it can 'watch American and Indian navy movement in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, respectively as well as any future maritime collaboration between New Delhi and Washington (Ibid).

China and Iran has deep affiliation. In current geo-political environment, China has playing its cards and entered into oil and gas sector of Iran. Worrying for India is that, Tehran has decided to proceed with the construction of a railway line from Chabahar port to Zahedan, along the border with Afghanistan, on its own following alleged delays from New

Delhi in funding the project. This progress comes in the background of Iran finalized a 25-year strategic partnership contract with China value of \$400 billion. This partnership will also include Chinese participation in Chabahar's duty free zone, an oil refinery nearby, and possibly a larger role in Chabahar port as well (Express Web Desk).

In 2023, Iran and China signed 20 additional MOU's on trade, transportation, technology, tourism, agriculture, and crisis response. Dawn Murphy from the National Defense University told *The Iran Primer*. China has increasingly diversified oil imports, not just because of the risk associated with Iran under U.S. sanctions, but also to prevent becoming "too reliant on any one supplier" (Iran & China: A Trade Lifeline).

The dual-use civil-military facilities at Gwadar, giving a base for Chinese vessels and submarines, could pose a direct security threat to India. Equally, Gwadar's nearness to the Strait of Hormuz would enable Pakistan to exercise control over energy routes and as implications for energy traffic to India. India's response to Gwadar was to help Iran develop Chabahar port, from where India can in turn observe the activities of Pakistan and China in the Arabian Sea (Jaffrelot, 2011). In an article "A postcard from Chabahar: Time for strategic perseverance", penned by Mr. Sanjay adds that Iranian's are un-happy with the Trump victory as a President of U.S. as he promise to scrap the nuclear deal with Iran if he came to power. Sanjay in his article also raise the question of India's investment in Chabahar (Kapoor, 2016).

Moreover, Chabahar is also significant as it can serve as a staging post for India's soft power in this region and beyond. Virtually all the people at Chabahar sung Hindi songs and speak brilliant Urdu language. It is a starting of the Indian sub-continent and itshows. All these motives suggest that New Delhi immediately get its act jointly andseize this immense occasion to reconstruct old land routes and business with CentralAsian countries (Ibid). On 29 October 2017, New Delhi sent its initial consignment of 1.1 lakh tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan via Chabahar

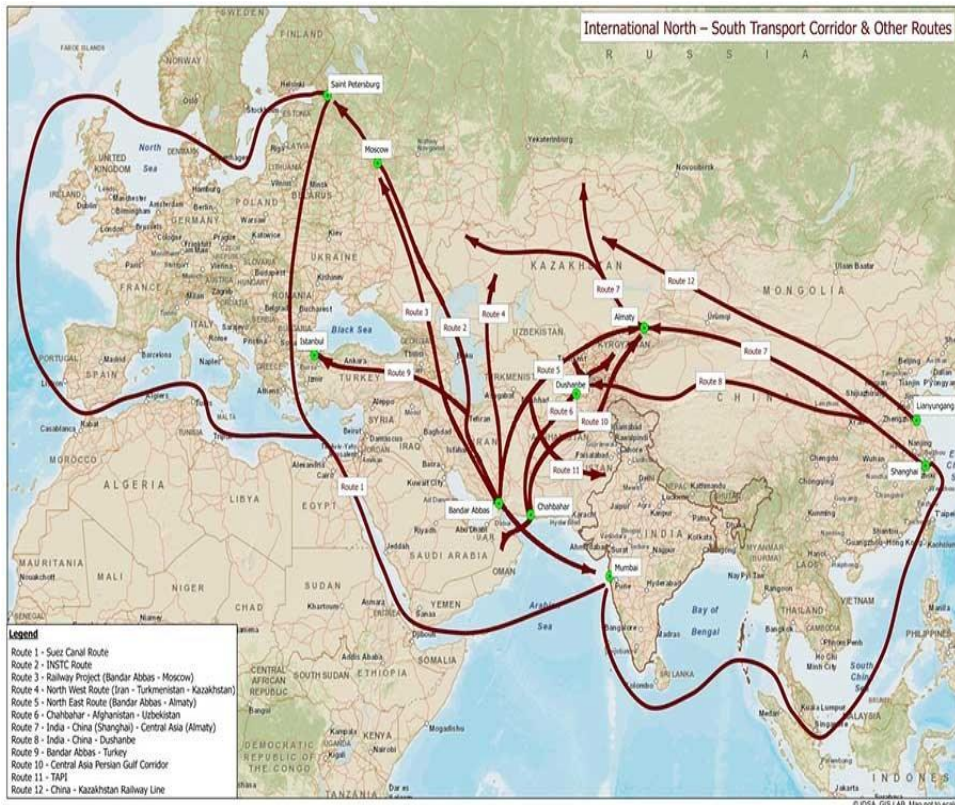
(Roy, 2017). And on 4 December 2017, Iranian former President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated a \$ 1 billion expansion of Chabahar port. The inauguration of the port project comes some 15 years after both India and Iran officially agreed to expand this strategic port (Ibid).

On February 2018, President Hassan Rouhani visited India and has emphasized on Chabahar development. During this, our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi along with Iranian President Rouhani has signed major agreements which provide New Delhi inclusive control of Chabahar port for 18 months. In a combined announcement issued after the talks, both sides reiterated their commitment for early and full operationalization of Shahid Beheshti Port. The lease contract for Shahid Beheshti Port-Phase 1 of Chabahar was signed between Port and Maritime Organization of Iran and India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) (India Gets Control, 2018).

Moreover, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is another significant passage through Chabahar for India to entrée to energy-rich Central Asia and also to Russia. It is a multi-model connectivity project for moving shipment among India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia. In 1995 India signed a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on trade and transportation with Iran to facilitate the trade with Central Asian countries (Ministry of External Affairs Reports, 1996).

As this corridor is part of India-Iran plan to increase their trade in Central Asia, both signed a trilateral trade agreement with Central Asian country Turkmenistan in year 1997. To promote trade and cooperation, the two countries also along with Russia signed an agreement on this corridor in September 2000 at St. Petersburg (Cheema, 2014). Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi's has visited all five Central Asian countries as well as Ufa city of Russia in July 2015. The purpose of visit was to attend the meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In a statement at the Ufa summit, he has also mentioned about the importance of INSTC for India and interest to enhance connectivity with the region and play an active role, as he said:

Map 1.3
International North-South Transport Corridor



Source:-<https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2021/08/08/the-international-north-south-transport-corridor-what-is-the-potential-for-bangladesh/>

“As we look forward, we would lend our support to improving transportation and communication networks in the region. We can create a vast network of physical and digital connectivity that extends from Eurasia’s northern corner to Asia’s southern shores. The International North South Transportation Corridor is a step in that direction” (Roy, 2015).

The corridor when fully ready would allow too easy transportation of goods from the western seaports of India to southern Iranian ports of

Chabahar and Bander Abbas. They would then transit Iran via rail to Iran's ports of Bander Anzali and Bander Amirabad in Caspian Sea. A further onward route would see goods being moved to Russia and Central Asian sectors of Caspian Sea. (Cheema, 2014). From Russia, the route expands alongside the Volga River through Moscow into the northern Europe. As the route by Suez Canal and the Mediterranean gets 45 to 60 days, but this corridor will take only 25 to 30 days. From India's perspective, the INSTC will facilitate to avoid Pakistan and get to Central Asia. Moreover, this corridor would also cut the prices involved in carrying goods to Central Asian region by 30 percent (Ibid).

This 7200 km long corridor is now rapidly becoming reality after along breakdowns. And in June this year 2023, a host of fresh agreements is set to be inked at the international forum at Kazan city (Russia). Additionally, just at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Iranian counterpart Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiyani too discussed the INSTC project development. (IANS 2023). The projects like Chabahar and INSTC are signs of India's international strategy to counter the China's Belt and Road initiatives. India's needs to get indulge in all activities in this strategic area.

Challenges

The ties of two countries facing numerous challenges ever since the United States imposed sanctions on Iran. India's proximity to the US and Iran's increasing proximity to China have also been a challenge to their current ties. The energy connections between both countries have not yet been reinstated, in spite of Indian refiners' willingness to import Iranian oil. The sanctions on Iran remain the primary impediment to resuming energy cooperation between the both. And in a recent attempt to further crack down on entities that allow Iran to trade oil, the United States imposed sanctions on several trading companies. Among those targeted by the U.S. Department of the Treasury was Tibalaji Petrochem Pvt. Ltd., a Mumbai-based petrochemical trading firm. This is the first direct

punishment to an Indian firm for engaging in commercial activities concerning the oil trade.

Conclusion

From geo-strategic point of view, Iran is significant country for India as it serves ideal gateway to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. Iran is too constantly concerned to maintain and strengthen its relations with South Asian countries in general and India in particular. It has been an important source of oil for India's rising energy requirements. The two countries have also worked together to construct alternative trade routes through Afghanistan and CAR's that do not go through Pakistan. Moreover, India is a giant country and has deep geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic concerns. On internal front, it is facing huge energy burdens for its economic development. On external front, it has serious security threat from Pakistan where Iran could play a major role to give land access to Afghanistan where India will check-mate Pakistan's illegal activities. In summarizing, Iran is a very crucial country in terms of geo-strategic location and vast natural resources. It could play a significant role in India's pursuit for strategic holds on Afghanistan and CAR's region.

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Effect of Peer Assessment on Self-Assessment skill: A Study of College Students

SHISHUPAL GORAIN, DIBYA JYOTI BARUAH

Abstract

The students' self-regulated and co-regulated learning skills through peer assessment and self assessment are a crucial learning opportunity for improvement of their academic performance. In order to succeed in peer assessment and self assessment, students must be able to evaluate their own and others' work. The objectives of the research were; to check the difference between peer assessment concerning "group working skills" and "cognitive learning levels" with self-assessment of experimental group. Additionally, check the relationship between peer assessment and self-assessment in experimental group and control group. The experimental design was employed to this study and total 45 students of 2nd year Under Graduate (UG) were selected as a sample for experiment. Therefore, 20 participants in the control group and 25 in the experimental group in this study were select. Paired t-test, Person coefficient correlation, Fisher's Z test and linear regression statistical techniques were used for analysis the data and "Group Work Skills" and "Cognitive Learning Level" checklist form employed for collecting the data of both group (experimental & control). The results of the study showed that, strong significant differences between peer assessment concerning GSW and self assessment of experimental group, as well as CLL and self assessment. Therefore, the experimental group's scores on correlations between peer and self-assessment were significant and higher than those in the control group.

Keywords: Peer Assessment, Self Assessment, Group Work Skills (GWS), Cognitive Learning Level (CLL) & Experimental Research

Introduction

Peer and self assessment is an effective instrument for improving student learning when assessment is employed as learning in the classroom. There

are several advantages to explicitly teaching students how to assess their own work as well as the work of their classmates. It encourages students to understand what they are learning and gives them the chance to evaluate their own efforts critically, enabling them to become more independent learners. Since a learner's acquisition of knowledge and skills cannot be limited to a particular stage of education, assessment practices in active learning environments should move to a setting where students solve their own problems, voice their opinions and assessments, and expose their own thoughts (Arter, 1997).

Peer Group Assessment and Self Assessment: Peer assessment in the education field has been achieved at an increasing rate in recent decades, using it as an assessment tool (Gielen et al., 2011). However, it's crucial to investigate if peer assessment also has a favorable impact on future academic achievement in addition to ensuring comparability between teachers and peer assessment scores. It provides a framework for learning that is based on instruction that revolves around the student and relies on efficient learning. This framework emphasizes the student's complete participation in the process of collaborative learning with peers while being supervised by the teacher (Thomas et al., 2011). Peer assessment is a powerful tool for improving learning since it involves students in the evaluation process, which has drawn attention in recent years from a number of worldwide universities (Rimer, 2007). Peer assessment also seeks to define the evaluation procedures that promote future learning and lessen problems that are anticipated to arise.

One widely accepted definition characterizes peer assessment as "a setup in which individuals evaluate the quantity, level, value, worth, quality, or success of the learning products or outcomes of peers with similar standing (Topping, 1998). The positive effects of self-assessment (SA) and peer assessment (PA) extend to their influence on learning motivation. By engaging students in active and reflective roles during the assessment process, SA and PA contribute to heightened student agency, fostering a greater sense of autonomy and ownership.

Importance of self-assessment and peer-assessment for Academic Purpose: Engaging in self-assessment and peer-assessment is most required learning opportunity for students to improve their capacity for co-regulated and self-regulated learning, which could improve their academic performance. SA and PA require students to make judgments about their own and others' work identify the gap between their current performance and the desired standard and take actions to close the gap (**Andrade, 2010; Black & Wiliam, 1998**). Moreover, peer assessment (PA) offers chances for students to engage with one another, enabling them to impact and gain insights from each other's self-regulation processes. This interaction facilitates the development of internal standards for evaluating the quality of both their own work and that of their peers. Student Assessment (SA) and Peer Assessment (PA) empower students to engage actively and reflectively in the assessment process, fostering heightened student agency and a stronger sense of autonomy and ownership (**Black & Wiliam, 1998**).

The Purpose and Importance of the Study

Following the curricular structural changes in India, there has been a growing enthusiasm for constructivist theory, active learning, and alternative assessment methods. Numerous concepts have been proposed in global literature to enhance self-assessment by directing emphasis toward the interplay between meta-cognitive knowledge and self-assessment. Therefore, several research studies investigating the interrelationships among self-assessment, peer assessment, and co-assessment emphasize the necessity of employing these practices collectively to enhance the effectiveness of alternative assessment approaches. This study will provide benefits for future students. For instance, students can enhance student engagement and ownership of their learning, as well as cultivate critical thinking and meta-cognitive skills. Please rewrite these sentences. Moreover, such assessments can promote a growth mindset and a culture of continuous improvement, simultaneously offering diverse sources and perspectives of feedback. Furthermore, they

can alleviate teacher workload and stress, all the while facilitating the differentiation and personalization of learning.

Student views of alternative assessments were investigated in some studies on the topic (**Falchikov 1986; Hanrahan and Isaacs 2001; Johnston and Miles 2004; Struyven et al. 2005**). Generally, positive aspects of peer assessments (**Hanrahan & Isaacs 2001**) were shown; however, some of the student perceptions also contained some negative aspects. It has been noted in numerous studies on the links between self-, peer-, and co-assessment that co-, peer-, and self-assessment practices should be applied in together for the success of alternative assessment practices (**Falchikov 1995**). Positive effects of co-assessment on peer assessment and peer assessment on self-assessment skills are discussed by (**Flavell, 1987 & Freeman, 1995**).

According to the first approach, the participants were given peer assessment training for their “group work skills” like taking responsibility, carrying out their assignments, contributing to the learning of others, attending to discussions, fulfilling the requirements of their roles. According to the second approach, they received peer assessment training for their "cognitive learning levels" that result from working together and are consistent with the learning process. In this study, co-assessment was considered and implemented as an aspect of peer assessment training since it provided chances for teachers and students to collaborate on assessments.

Objective of the study

1. To check the difference between “group working skills” oriented peer assessment with self-assessment of experimental group.
2. To check the difference between “cognitive learning levels” oriented peer assessment with self-assessment of experimental group.
3. To check the relationship between peer assessment and self-assessment in experimental group and control group.
4. To check the effect between the peer assessment and self assessment.

Hypotheses of the study

1. “Group working skills” oriented peer assessment in experimental group is higher than self-assessment.
2. “Cognitive learning levels” oriented peer assessments in experimental group is higher than self-assessment.
3. The correlations between peer assessment and self-assessment in experimental group are higher than control group.
4. The “group work skills” concerning peer-assessment has a stronger effect on the self-assessment in both experimental and control group.
5. The “Cognitive learning levels” concerning peer-assessment has a stronger effect on the self-assessment in both experimental and control group.
6. The training on peer assessment has been affects to the self-assessment skill.

Method and Participants

In the current study the researchers employed “Experimental design” and “control group post-test model”. This method was chosen because students had no prior experience on alternative assessment methods. The study was conducted on 2nd year Under Graduation (UG) students on Education field at “Jhargram College” in West Bengal. There were select total 45 participants in the study. Out of 45 participants 25 students (m=11, f=14) are experimental group and 20 students (m=12, f=8) in the control group. Students were divided into the experiment and control groups at randomly after identifying them.

The study conducted for 15 working days. Both in the experimental group and control group, the lessons were conducted according to learning together and expertise group techniques (**Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998**) through cooperative learning method. In order to do this, the students were divided into heterogeneous groups of 4, by taking their previous semester grade averages, genders and social communication skills into account (experimental = 2 groups, control = 2 groups). After

division of the group, activities and accompanying worksheet were prepared for each session in light of the objectives and couples of objectives were defined for the Assessment Course (Group Work Skill & Cognitive Learning Level assessment). The guidelines for the cooperative learning approach were presented before to the sessions and students were introduced along with the roles they would alternately play. Both groups were informed during the first session that they would receive a peer and self-assessment form at the end of each session. The purpose and content of the form were briefly described and the control group received no further alternative assessment-related actions. Before the main sessions, pre-sessions were set up for 5 days in both the experimental and control groups to help the participants internalize the requirements of the cooperative study approach and their respective roles. Both groups were informed during the first session that they would receive a peer and self-assessment form at the end of each session. The purpose and content of the form were briefly defined, and nothing else regarding alternative assessment was done in the control group after that.

The Researchers discussed these certain points with the students of the first session:

1. A brief summary about peer assessment and self-assessment methods.
2. Objectives of peer and co-assessment explained.
3. Assessment criteria for collaboration and cognitive learning levels are discussed and identified.
4. Each student participating in co-assessment with the teacher's guidance.
5. At the end of each appropriate task, students are attending sample peer assessment practices.
6. Along with students, observing assessment procedures and outcomes.
7. All students are give feedback on the assessment process and outcomes.

8. Repeating the last four to seven items for the duration of all sessions.

After the brief introduction in the first session, neither the experimental nor the control groups received any more self-assessment activities. Students in the experimental group and the control group were given two separate peer assessment and self assessment forms inside envelopes as a post-test at the details of which are given in the instrumentation section and assessment results were collected the next day.

Instrumentation

The post-test checklists used to determine the effect of peer assessment training on self-assessment was developed in a way that allows students to assess themselves.

Group Work Skills checklist (GWS): was used for this study, developed by (Yurdabakan, 2012). 18 items were utilized by those who participated to assess themselves and their peers' collaboration skills. The items were distributed into "very good" (5) to "very bad" (1). The checklist's criteria for assessment were addressed with the students, and researchers were also given written Performa on how to complete the form and how the scoring would be done. The maximum and minimum scores are 90 and 18, respectively.

Cognitive Learning Level checklist (CLL): used to assess their own levels of cognitive learning and group work and this checklist also developed by (Yurdabakan, 2012). In this checklist, total 14 items are there with measuring of "Very good" (5) to "Very bad" (1). Students and teachers talked about the assessment criteria listed on the CLL checklist. The investigators were given instructions on how to fill the questionnaire and how scores would be allocated. A student's maximum score is 70, and the lowest score is 14.

According to the **Sharp (2006)**, self assessment scores of students were calculated by taking sum of their scores got from the GWS and CLL checklists or a member's peer assessment score was calculated by taking

the averages of the scores given by the other members.

The current study focuses on the effect of the peer assessment activities on self-assessment skills.

Analysis of the study

In this study, the researchers Paired t-test was used for checking whether any difference has or not between peer assessment and self assessment. Therefore, the researchers Fisher's Z test employed for checking differences between two correlations likewise; check connection between peer assessment and self-assessment in both experimental or control group. Moreover, Pearson product moment's multiplication correlation coefficient method was used to determine connections between the peer and self-assessment. Furthermore, for determine the effect of peer assessment scores on self-assessment scores, linear regression analysis was utilized.

Table 1

t-test between "GSW & Self-assessment" or "CLL & Self-assessment"

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	p
GSW	38	12.87	4.4	.38	2.34	.063
Self-assessment	38	12.21	4.1			
CLL	38	11.87	4.3	.72	2.57	.073
Self-assessment	38	11.15	3.9			

The researchers was conducted the t-test of students' between peer-assessment and self assessment scores on GWS and CLL within the experimental group. When check the difference between the GWS and self-assessment were examined, there was a significant difference ($t=1.34$, $p<.05$), according to that comparison. Similar to this, a significant difference was found ($t=-12.57$, $p<.05$) between the CLL and self assessment in the experimental group when the paired sample t-test was used (support hypotheses 1&2).

Table 2

Fisher's Z test between two correlations, i.e.; Experimental Group and Control group:

Experimental Group	Control Groups	R1	R2	SE	z score	p
GSW-Self-assessment	GSW-Self assessment	.92	.67	.46	2.12	.007
CLL-Self-assessment	CLL-Self-assessment	.76	.68	.52	3.94	.004

When the Researcher's applied Fisher's z test between two correlations (experimental & control group) on students' peer-assessment (GSW) and self assessment ($z=2.06$, $p<.01$, $SE=.46$), a strong significant difference was observed in the experimental group's favor. Similar to this, students in the experimental and control groups found significant difference in their correlations of peer and self-assessment concerning for cognitive learning levels (CLL) ($z=2.00$, $p<.01$, $SE=.52$), favoring the experimental group (hypothesis 3 accepted).

Table 3

Person's correlation between peer groups concerning "GWS & self assessment" or "CLL & self-assessment" in experimental and control group.

Groups	Groups Forms	Predicted variable	R	P
Experimental Group	GWS	Self-assessment	.51	0.04
	CLL	Self-assessment	.87	0.00
Control Group	GWS	Self-assessment	.83	0.08
	CLL	Self-assessment	.68	0.04

According to the results (support hypotheses 4&5), the experimental group and the control group both had the strongest relationships between peer and self-assessments on GWS ($r=.51$, $p<01$; $r=.83$, $p<01$). Peer and self-assessments regarding CLL were shown to be correlated in the experimental group ($r=.69$, $p<01$) and similarly significant difference found in control group ($r=.68$, $p<.01$).

Table 4
Linear Regression between peer groups concerning
“GWS & self assessment” or “CLL & self-assessment”
in experimental and control group

Groups	Forms	Predicted variable	R ²	Adjusted R Square	Stander error of estimate	F	p
Experimental Group	GWS	Self-assessment	.636	.632	3.99	71.15	0.02
	CLL	Self-assessment	.757	.755	3.18	69.32	0.00
Control Group	GWS	Self-assessment	.379	.373	3.56	47.91	0.00
	CLL	Self-assessment	.300	.293	3.29	41.46	0.00

Additionally, Table 4's determination coefficients demonstrate that, particularly in the experimental group, peer assessment is a strong predictor of self-assessment concerning GWS ($R^2 = .636$, $p<0.5$) and CLL ($R^2 = .757$, $p<0.5$). According to the results, the independent variable peer assessment explains 63% of the self-assessment dependent variable in the case of GSW and 75% of it in the case of CLL. Peer and self-reports of the GWS in the control group show a moderately significant connection. Additionally, it can be seen from the determination coefficient ($R^2 = .379$,

$p < 0.5$) that peer assessment on GSW predicts self-assessment to a moderate level (hypothesis 6). Similarly, there was also moderate correlation between the peer and self-assessments of CLL in the control group ($R^2 = .300$, $p < .05$).

Major Finding of the Study

On the basis of interpretation of the data Researchers has drawn these finding:

1. The Researchers found strong significant differences between peer assessment concerning GSW and self-assessment of experimental group. Similarly, significant difference found between peer assessment concerning CLL and self-assessment of experimental group.
2. The Researchers raveled that, strong significant difference was observed in the experimental group's favor when compare two correlation of experimental group (GSW and Self-assessment) and control group (GSW and Self assessment).

Similarly, results were came in fever of experimental group's when check the difference between experimental group (CLL and Self-assessment) or control group (CLL and Self assessment).

3. The investigators found from objective no 3; the strongest relationships between peer assessment's concerning GSW/CLL and self-assessments both experimental and control group. Peer assessment strongly effect to self assessment skill.
4. The Researchers known after the analysis; in experimental group, peer assessment concerning GWS and CLL has been affected strongly to self-assessment. Similarly, peer assessment's aspect of GSW and CLL affects self-assessment to a moderately.

Discussion

Rapid advancements in information technology have a major impact on how information is delivered. These changes also affected how individuals

perceived their own learning. Because of this, there has been a shift away from traditional learning environments towards student-centered ones, and there have been developments in many nations to adopt active learning techniques. The learning processes, which make use of active learning techniques, have given students new obligations towards their own learning and altered their learning habits and behaviors.

The current study investigates the effects of group work skills and cognitive learning levels' peer assessment on self assessment. The Investigators found in first hypotheses, strong significant difference between GSW and self-assessment in experimental group. Similarly found significant difference between Peer group concerning and self assessment in experimental group. CLLPeer group assessment is more significant than self-assessment. Some studies even reporting a significant difference with peer assessment and self-assessment (**Covill, 2010; Sadler & Good, 2006. Panadero et al., (2018)** says students can learn in the roles of assessor or assesses in PA because providing and receiving feedback are precious learning opportunities.

The second hypothesis was correlations between experimental and control groups regarding GSW/CLL of peer assessment and self-assessment, or experimental group are more favor than control group. The collected results indicate a significant difference in favor of the experiment group in peer correlations. This result can also be explained by the favorable effect that the experiment group's training in peer assessment had on self-assessment. The findings of Researchers like **Flavell (1987), Somervell (1993), and Topping (2005)** are also supported by these findings, suggesting that peer assessment outcomes can be viewed as a component of self-assessment and that these practices can have an impact on self-evaluation abilities.

This study's third hypothesis is that, the peer assessment has a stronger effect on the self-assessment skills when compared the "Group working skills" and "cognitive learning levels". The results of this study support

the assertion. The group members assessed each other's abilities in the areas of taking responsibility, carrying out obligations, contributing to others' learning, participating in discussions, and meeting the requirements of their roles with GWS. They also evaluated the learning of others that results from group cooperation and is consistent with the goals of the learning process with CLL. **Eva et al. (2004), Fox & Dinur (1988) and Kruger & Dunning (1999)** have proposed that assessment accuracy would rise as ability became simpler and fall as an ability rose in difficulty.

The experimental group's GWS and CLL determination coefficients indicate that training in peer assessment has a strong significant impact on self-assessment. Similarly, the control group's determination coefficient for GWS and CLL is similarly moderately impact on self assessment. As was already indicated, this outcome may be attributed to the fact that both groups adopted a cooperative learning approach. As a consequence, when regression analyses connected to this hypothesis are examined at, it can be said that the self-assessment skill regarding GWS and CLL might be impacted by peer assessment training that was conducted as well as by the cooperative learning approach.

Educational Implication

1. All the findings are against the self assessment as compare peer assessment. Therefore, Peer assessment allows them a framework for thinking about their work, what they have learned and how they can get better. The Researchers recommended to institutions employed peer assessment techniques with flexible way and peer assessment techniques are so beneficial for students potentiality development and confidence build.
2. The Investigators realize after experimental, students can apply this knowledge to their future work and whether on a course of study. In the workplace, by focusing on their areas of strength and playing to their weaknesses in areas they have already identified as needing

improvement.

3. Research has shown that students make more progress when they are actively involved in their own learning and assessment. The Researchers personally felt, students are becoming more reflective giving students the chance to evaluate their own performance and recognize their own virtues, flaws and opportunities for development.

Conclusion

Three significant conclusions came out from the results. Firstly, this study was conducted on Graduate level and it was observed that the graduate students could adapt in a short time to peer and self-assessment issues that arose from the changes in college level curricula. Secondly, several authors argue that peer assessment might be considered as an aspect of self-assessment and peer assessment can have effect on the development of self-assessment skills. Thirdly, the results of the current study reveal that, peer assessment training could also be an important predictor of self-assessment of challenging or higher abilities.

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FORM-IV

(SEE RULE 8)

1. Registration No. : ISSN 0970-5260
2. Place of Publication : Panjab University, Chandigarh
(India)
3. Periodicity of its Publication : Biannual
4. Publisher & Editor-in-Chief's Name : Rani Mehta
Nationality : Indian
Address : Professor
: Deptt. of Sociology
: Panjab University,
Chandigarh.
5. Printer's Name : Jatinder Moudgil
Nationality : Indian
Address : Manager, Panjab University, Press
6. Name and addresses of Individuals who own the Newspaper s and partners of share holders holding more than one per cent of the total capital : Panjab University,
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