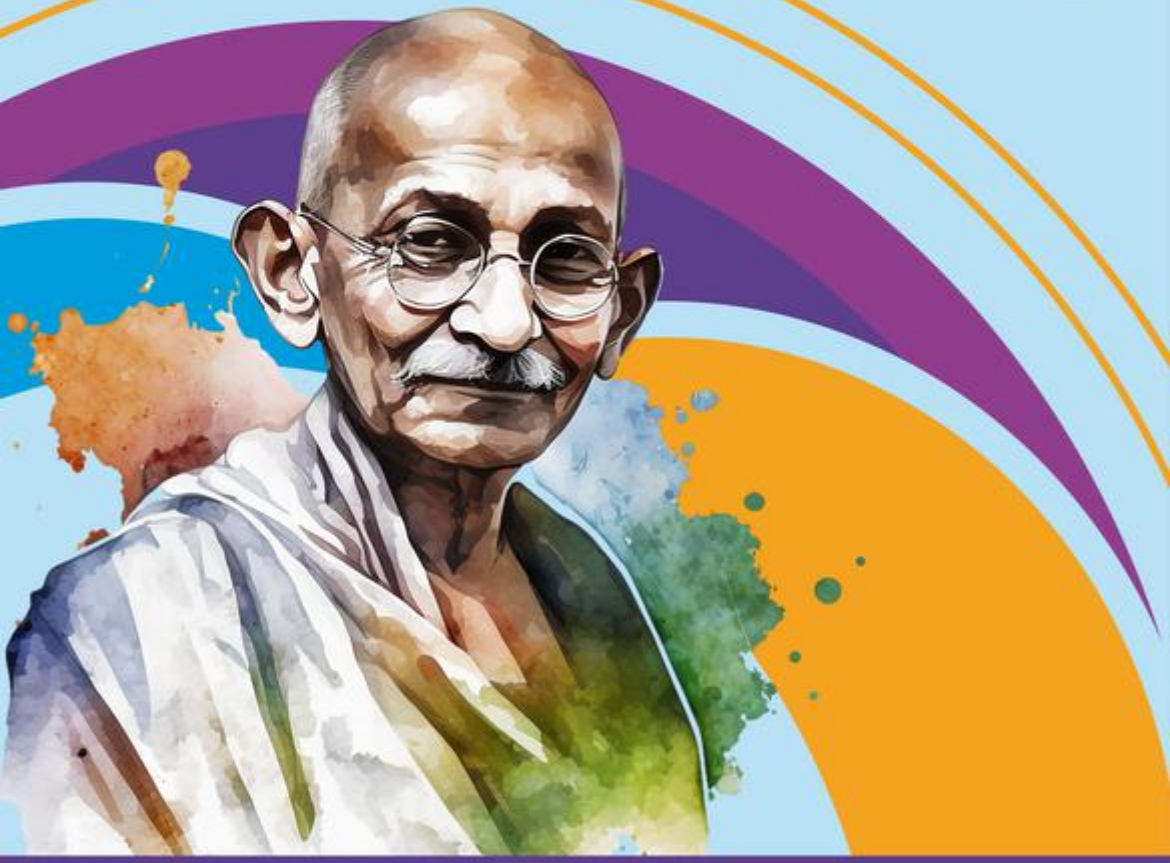
ISSN. No.: 0972 - 351X

Journal of Extension and Research

Volume: XXIII
July 2025 to December 2025

JER



The Gandhigram Rural Institute
(Deemed to be University)
(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
Gandhigram - 624 302, Tamil Nadu, India

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JOURNAL OF EXTENSION AND RESEARCH
Volume XXIII July to December 2025

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Editorial

Greetings from Gandhigram!

It is a great opportunity to read the contributions and see them in print form. As the executive editor, I am much pleased to get the active readers for learning the same experience I had. The JER from Gandhigram Rural Institute brings the thinking of young talented researchers of different disciplines. It permits the authors' authentic and prime research findings for publication twice in a year. It is peer reviewed and so the readers can trust its authenticity. The articles are finely drafted in a simple and lucid language.

They carry in them novel ideas and current knowledge. Upon sending them for peer review, I got excellent results from experts who have documented their recommendations as well as appreciations. My hearty congratulations to all the contributors.

Regards,

Senior Prof. G. Baskaran, Ph.D
Executive Editor
Journal of Extension & Research

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PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BY 2030

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established by the United Nations in 2015, serve as a worldwide framework aimed to achieving peace, economic well-being, and environmental sustainability by 2030. While these 17 goals aim to address critical issues such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and access to education and healthcare, their effective implementation faces several challenges. This paper explores the major problems and constraints that hinder the achievement of these goals, especially in developing and underdeveloped regions.

One of the key problems is the lack of financial resources and efficient funding mechanisms. Many countries struggle to allocate adequate budgets toward achieving the SDGs

due to economic instability or competing national priorities. Another pressing issue is weak governance and corruption, which often result in poor execution of sustainable policies. Additionally, political conflicts, war, and displacement in several parts of the world disrupt developmental efforts. Environmental degradation, driven by rapid industrialization and urbanization, continues to be a major obstacle. Climate change, deforestation, and pollution not only threaten biodiversity but also impact livelihoods, especially in rural areas. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic reversed much of the progress made in health, education, and employment, widening the gap between nations.

This paper also highlights the need for stronger international cooperation, public-private partnerships, and inclusive policy-making. There is a growing urgency to ensure that the goals are not approached in isolation but as interconnected objectives. Through a critical examination of existing barriers, this research aims to provide practical suggestions and innovative solutions to accelerate global progress towards achieving the SDGs by 2030. While the vision of sustainable development is promising, overcoming real-world challenges, it requires collective will, timely action, and equitable participation from all sectors of society.

Keywords: *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Implementation Challenges, Global Cooperation, Environmental Degradation, Policy and Governance.*

Introduction:

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which encompasses 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aspire to eliminate poverty, promote equity, improve well-being, and ensure environmental sustainability across the globe (Nations, 2025). These objectives, although ambitious and all-encompassing, lack a legally binding framework, meaning their realisation depends on the commitment of individual countries and their governance capabilities (Nations U., Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015). As we approach the 2030 deadline, it has become increasingly clear that several nations, particularly those in the Global South, are encountering significant hurdles in achieving these goals (Nations U. , 2015). India, as one of the largest and most populous countries, has shown dedication towards the SDGs through initiatives such as the NITI Aayog's SDG Index, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. However, India continues to struggle with structural challenges, inefficiencies in governance, and resource constraints that hinder the effective implementation of

SDGs (India, 2021). This paper aims to critically explore the barriers and challenges in realising the SDGs and propose contextual solutions for their better realisation, especially in developing nations like India.

Understanding the SDGs: An Overview:

The SDGs are a comprehensive framework that addresses a wide range of interconnected issues such as poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social justice. These goals are not independent but are deeply interrelated. For example, advancements in gender equality (Goal 5) can directly influence economic growth (Goal 8), while ensuring good health (Goal 3) strengthens education systems (Goal 4).

While the universality of the SDGs is one of their key strengths, it also poses challenges. The global nature of the SDGs fails to account for the wide disparities in the socio-economic contexts of different nations. For instance, applying a one-size-fits-all approach often overlooks the complex realities faced by countries, particularly in the Global South, where resources and infrastructure are limited (Moore, 2015). Moreover, inequality, both within and between nations, complicates the realisation of SDGs. According to a World Bank report, more than 40% of the world's population still lacks access to basic services like education, healthcare, and clean

water, underscoring the challenge of truly leaving no one behind (Bank, 2020).

Current Status and Emerging Challenges in Achieving the SDGs:

Nearly a decade into the 2030 Agenda, the global community stands at a critical juncture. While some progress has been made particularly in areas like primary education and access to clean drinking water, a majority of the Sustainable Development Goals remain off-track, especially in developing regions. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 issued by the United Nations reveals that only 15% of the targets are on track, while 48% show moderate or no progress, and 37% have seen a regression (Nations U. , The Sustainable Development Goals Report Special Edition, 2023).

India reflects this global pattern. Although the country has taken concrete steps through the establishment of the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index to monitor state-level implementation, persistent regional inequalities, resource shortages, and institutional gaps continue to impede meaningful advancement. The country's performance varies widely across the 17 goals—with significant lag in areas such as gender equality, climate action, and decent work and economic growth (Aayog, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a severe setback, reversing gains made over several years. Millions were pushed into

poverty, education systems were disrupted, and healthcare systems were overwhelmed—revealing deep structural vulnerabilities. Moreover, the interconnected nature of the SDGs means that stagnation in one area often creates ripple effects, affecting progress in others.

As India and other developing nations strive to balance economic growth with social equity and ecological sustainability, several entrenched constraints—including financial limitations, governance inefficiencies, environmental degradation, and institutional fragmentation—have emerged as critical impediments. The following sections delve into these pressing barriers, analysing their roots and implications.

Financial and Economic Constraints:

A key obstacle to achieving the SDGs is the insufficient funding required to meet these global goals. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), developing nations face a yearly financing gap of approximately USD 2.5 trillion to meet the SDGs (Development). This financial shortfall is exacerbated by weak private investment, limited tax revenues, and the over-reliance on foreign aid, all of which undermine the ability of governments to fund development initiatives. In India, the government's attempts to implement welfare initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) and Ujjwala Yojana face

significant budgetary challenges. While these schemes are ambitious, their financial allocations are often inadequate, and implementation gaps result in poor delivery of services (Prabhu, 1995). Raghuram Rajan, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, pointed out that sustainable development requires long-term investments, particularly in areas like education and healthcare, which India has historically underfunded (Rajan, 2023).

Moreover, financial mismanagement and corruption continue to hinder progress. For instance, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG, 2019) exposed inefficiencies in fund utilisation for rural healthcare under the National Health Mission, highlighting an unspent balance of over ₹7,000 crores (India, Digital Infrastructure and Data Access, 2019). These inefficiencies erode trust in the system and undermine public confidence in government programs. The global COVID-19 pandemic has further compounded financial constraints. With government priorities shifting to emergency healthcare and economic relief, long-term SDG commitments have been sidelined. A UNDP (2021) report found that the pandemic pushed over 100 million people into extreme poverty, reversing years of progress on SDG 1 (no poverty).

Governance and Institutional Barriers:

The achievement of the SDGs requires efficient governance structures and institutional accountability. In many countries, particularly in India, weak governance and institutional inefficiencies present significant barriers to SDG progress. Corruption, bureaucratic delays, and lack of coordination between various government departments hinder the successful implementation of SDG-related policies. Local authorities, who are tasked with executing grassroots development, often suffer from insufficient resources, inadequate powers, and poor capacity to effectively manage development programs (Srinivas, 2022). In the Samvidhan Lecture Series, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud noted that the realisation of SDGs must be grounded in the principles of constitutional morality and institutional integrity. He argued that "SDGs cannot be fulfilled in isolation from the principles of constitutional morality and institutional integrity". However, politicisation of welfare delivery, coupled with bureaucratic apathy, often results in inefficiency and neglect of constitutional ideals.

A report by Gilbert and Martin found that decentralisation, though intended to empower local governance, often ends up shifting inefficiency from central to local levels due to lack of training, monitoring, and capacity building (Gilbert, 2005). Jurisdictional overlaps further exacerbate

governance challenges, particularly in federal systems like India, where responsibilities between Centre and State governments often lead to policy paralysis. A case in point is the overlapping responsibilities between the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and State Pollution Control Boards, which delays action on urgent issues like air pollution control in cities like Delhi (Julie, 2010).

Environmental Degradation and Climate Risks:

The SDGs are deeply tied to the sustainability of the planet. The realisation of environmental goals, such as climate action (Goal 13), life on land (Goal 15), and life below water (Goal 14), is essential for the broader development agenda. However, environmental degradation, including climate change, deforestation, pollution, and biodiversity loss, remains one of the most severe threats to achieving these goals.

India, ranked 120th out of 192 countries in the SDG Index 2023, particularly struggles with environmental performance, especially concerning air quality, water resources, and waste management (UNDP, 2023). Unregulated mining in states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh has not only led to severe ecological damage but also displaced indigenous communities. The Forest Rights Act (2006), which was supposed to protect the rights of these communities, has been poorly enforced due to

collusion between corporate interests and local officials (Christopher, 1980).

In a National Green Tribunal speech, Justice N.V. Ramana warned that environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalised communities, undermining SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) (Ramana). Despite initiatives like the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), the lack of community engagement and poor monitoring have hindered progress on environmental sustainability (India, National Action Plan on Climate Change).

Socio-Cultural Barriers to Inclusive Development:

Sustainable development is not purely an economic or political exercise—it is also deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of each nation. In India, entrenched social hierarchies such as caste, gender, and religion play a pivotal role in excluding marginalised communities from the benefits of development. Despite constitutional guarantees and legislative safeguards, discrimination remains systemic in both urban and rural landscapes. A study by Julie highlights how Dalit women are doubly marginalised, facing discrimination based not just on caste but also on gender, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. This exclusion directly impacts SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Additionally, the failure to sensitise bureaucrats

and local governance actors on intersectionality often results in tokenistic policies that do not address the roots of social exclusion (Moorthi, 2015).

The practice of manual scavenging, outlawed by legislation, still persists in several regions, reflecting the disconnect between legal reform and ground-level implementation. Reports from civil society organisations reveal that in states like Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, sanitation workers are often employed without proper safety gear and denied basic dignity (Gilbert, 2005). Justice Indira Banerjee, in a public lecture, stated that "development without dignity is no development at all", urging for a rights-based approach rather than a welfare-based approach to SDG implementation (Banerjee, 2022). For sustainable development to be inclusive there must be conscious efforts to deconstruct social prejudices and embed equity in planning and execution mechanisms.

Technological Divide and Digital Exclusion:

Technology can act as a great enabler in advancing the SDGs, particularly in areas like education (SDG 4), innovation (SDG 9), and institutional transparency (SDG 16). However, the digital divide—marked by unequal access to internet connectivity, digital literacy, and infrastructure—has led to significant disparities. According to a Government of India (2019) report, only 24% of Indian households have internet

access, and within these, access is disproportionately skewed in favour of urban and male populations (GOI 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of school-going children, especially girls, dropped out due to the unavailability of devices and connectivity—pushing back progress on education and gender equality.

Technological solutions like digital health records, direct benefit transfers (DBT), and e-governance platforms remain underutilised in rural areas due to lack of awareness and infrastructure (Srinivas, 2022). Mucherjee argues that unless digital empowerment becomes a bottom-up process, existing inequalities may deepen further, reinforcing cycles of poverty and exclusion (Mucherjee, 2015).

International Dependencies and Global Inequities:

Another critical barrier to achieving the SDGs is the unequal global power structure, particularly concerning climate financing, trade agreements, and technology transfers. Developing countries often bear the brunt of climate disasters despite having contributed the least to global emissions (UNDP, 2023). Yet, climate financing commitments made by developed nations remain largely unmet. The Paris Agreement envisaged a Green Climate Fund of USD 100 billion annually by 2020 for climate adaptation and mitigation; however, actual disbursement has been inconsistent (Nations U. , United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change, 2021). As a result, countries like India are forced to rely on domestic financing, further straining their limited resources.

Public intellectual Arundhati Roy has critiqued the Global North for perpetuating "a developmental apartheid," where global economic structures favour the powerful while rendering the vulnerable more exposed to crisis (Roy). This imbalance affects the ability of developing nations to independently meet their SDG targets, particularly those involving climate action and industrial innovation.

Inequitable Access to Healthcare and Nutrition:

Access to healthcare is a cornerstone for several SDGs including Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being). However, India's healthcare system is marred by a skewed distribution of resources, urban-rural disparities, and inadequate public investment. According to the Economic Survey (India, Review of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme, 2021), India spends only about 1.3% of its GDP on healthcare, far below the global average.

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) reveals alarming statistics—over 35% of children under five are stunted, and over 50% of women aged 15–49 are anemic (India, National Action Plan on Climate Change). These figures reflect not just

poverty but systemic neglect of nutritional needs. Despite schemes like the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), implementation suffers from corruption, irregular supply, and poor infrastructure (Gilbert and Martin 2005). Devi Shetty, a renowned cardiac surgeon, has consistently advocated for decentralising healthcare and investing in preventive care, noting that "a strong primary healthcare system can drastically reduce the disease burden and cost to the nation" (Shetty, 2021). Until healthcare becomes universal and affordable, achieving related SDGs will remain aspirational.

Education Quality and Dropout Crisis:

While India has made significant strides in increasing school enrolment under the Right to Education Act, learning outcomes remain distressingly poor. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 shows that more than 50% of Grade 5 students cannot read a Grade 2-level text. This impacts SDG 4 (Quality Education) and interlinks with poverty, employment, and gender equality. Teacher absenteeism, inadequate training, and outdated curricula plague government schools. The pandemic intensified this crisis—millions of students lacked access to digital devices, leading to a surge in dropouts, especially among girls and economically weaker sections (Julie, 2010). Many adolescent girls were pushed into early marriage or domestic labour, rolling back progress on

SDGs (Moorthi, 2015). Justice Madan Lokur, in a panel discussion on child rights, emphasised that "education is not a favour, it's a right. Denial of education is a denial of equality" (Lokur, 2021). Strengthening teacher capacity, investing in digital infrastructure, and ensuring safe school environments are essential for realising educational goals.

Urbanisation and Housing Insecurity:

Urbanisation, if managed well, can lead to innovation and economic growth (SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities). However, in India, it has often led to overcrowding, slum proliferation, and unplanned growth. The urban poor are routinely displaced due to infrastructural projects without adequate rehabilitation (Prabhu S. , 1995). Census 2011 data shows that over 17% of India's urban population lives in slums—spaces marked by inadequate access to water, sanitation, and health services (India, National Action Plan on Climate Change). Despite schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), bottlenecks in land acquisition, bureaucratic delays, and corruption limit effectiveness (Salem, 2008).

As noted by Daniel, displacement without participation of the affected violates both social justice and environmental sustainability (Daniel, 1990). The Supreme Court, in Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985), held that the right to housing is integral to the right to life under Article 21. However,

judicial pronouncements often remain unimplemented at the grassroots.

Gender Inequality and Representation:

Despite various gender-centric schemes, SDG 5 (Gender Equality) remains one of the most challenging to achieve in India. Issues such as wage disparity, underrepresentation in politics, and gender-based violence persist across regions and sectors. The Gender Inequality Index places India at a low rank globally, reflecting deep-rooted patriarchal norms (UNDP, 2023). Schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, while well-intentioned, are often criticised for poor utilisation of funds and lack of outcome evaluation. A 2018 CAG report showed that more than half the funds under the scheme were spent on publicity rather than tangible outcomes (India, National Action Plan on Climate Change).

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has long argued that empowering women is not only a social necessity but an economic imperative. He observed, “the freedom of women to participate in economic life has a powerful transformative impact on all SDGs” (Sen, 2010). Political representation remains low—with women constituting only 14% of the Lok Sabha, and even less in state assemblies. Until gender is mainstreamed in governance and planning, sustainable development will remain partial and uneven.

Way Forward and Suggestions:

While the journey towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 appears daunting, it is not unachievable. What is needed is a cohesive, inclusive, and adaptable framework that addresses both structural bottlenecks and operational inefficiencies.

The following suggestions are proposed as a strategic way forward:

a. Strengthening Decentralized Governance and Local Capacities

Effective implementation of the SDGs requires empowering local governance institutions—such as Panchayati Raj bodies and Urban Local Bodies—with adequate resources, training, and autonomy. Justice B.N. Srikrishna, in a 2019 lecture on administrative reforms, emphasised that "local institutions must not merely be instruments of delivery but partners in policy-making" (Srikrishna, 2019). Capacity-building programmes, regular audits, and public participation in planning should be institutionalized (Gilbert, 2005). Further, convergence of state and central government efforts, and synchronization between ministries, would help prevent duplication and policy clashes (Moorthi, 2015). Stronger interdepartmental coordination mechanisms are essential to ensure smoother implementation.

b. Prioritizing Data-Driven and Evidence-Based Policymaking

Data is critical for tracking progress, identifying gaps, and formulating responsive policies. India's current data ecosystem, although improving, suffers from irregularity, lack of disaggregation, and political opacity (UNDP, 2023). NITI Aayog's SDG India Index is a commendable step, but it needs to be expanded to district and block levels for better local accountability. Open-data platforms should be strengthened and made accessible to citizens, civil society, and researchers. Artificial Intelligence and machine learning tools can be leveraged to generate predictive models and identify vulnerable populations in real time (Mucherjee, 2015).

c. Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships and Financial Innovation

Given the financial constraints plaguing SDG realisation, unlocking alternative funding mechanisms is crucial. The private sector, non-profits, and social enterprises must be incentivised to collaborate with the government on infrastructure, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability (Salem 2008: 258–60). Developmental Impact Bonds (DIBs), corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, and social venture capital could bridge financial gaps. The Reserve Bank of India, in its Sustainable Finance Report, suggested integrating

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics into banking and lending decisions. Innovative financing must be accompanied by robust monitoring and evaluation.

d. Integrating Human Rights and Social Justice in SDG Frameworks

Sustainable development is not merely economic—it must be anchored in justice, equity, and dignity. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud remarked that "development without rights is exclusionary, and exclusion is antithetical to sustainability". SDG implementation must therefore align with constitutional values and fundamental rights.

Programmes targeting vulnerable groups—Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, women, and persons with disabilities—should not be tokenistic. Affirmative action policies need reinforcement through inclusive budgeting and decentralised grievance redressal systems (Srinivas, 2022).

e. Climate Resilience through Community-Led Environmentalism

India's climate action plans must move beyond top-down bureaucratic models to a bottom-up, community-driven approach. Forest dwellers, farmers, women, and indigenous communities have been traditional custodians of ecological balance. Their inclusion in climate governance is not just ethical

but effective (Daniel, 1990). Local success stories such as the Hiware Bazar water conservation project and community forest management in Odisha demonstrate that people-led sustainability is viable and scalable (Christopher, 1980). Government schemes must integrate indigenous knowledge systems and enable capacity-building at the grassroots.

f. Reclaiming Trust through Transparency and Accountability

Lastly, rebuilding public trust in institutions is vital for the legitimacy of SDG processes. Corruption, bureaucratic opacity, and elite capture erode faith in welfare schemes (Prabhu 1995). Regular social audits, transparent procurement systems, real-time dashboards, and citizen charters are essential for accountability (India, National Action Plan on Climate Change). Justice N.V. Ramana asserted that "only a transparent democracy can nurture sustainable development, for development is not just about wealth but about people" (Ramana). Civil society must be empowered to play a watchdog role, and whistle-blower protection must be enforced rigorously.

Conclusion:

The path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 is riddled with complex and intertwined challenges. While the intent and ambition behind the SDGs are commendable, their realisation demands more than periodic monitoring—it requires a transformative approach rooted in equity, accountability, and participation.

India's experience illustrates how even well-structured policies can falter in the absence of institutional synergy, financial commitment, and social inclusion. Political vision must be complemented by robust decentralised governance, technological democratisation, and a rights-based welfare framework. Furthermore, the international community must adopt a spirit of shared responsibility and global justice if the SDGs are to be more than just aspirational ideals.

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ANALYSING TRENDS IN INDIA'S MONETARY POLICY RATES: A PRE- AND POST-COVID PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered unprecedented challenges for global economies, prompting swift and adaptive responses from central banks. In India, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) undertook significant monetary policy adjustments to stabilize financial markets, support economic recovery and ensure liquidity. This article analyses the post-Covid trends in three key monetary policy instruments: the Repo rate, Reverse Repo rate and Bank rate. By comparing the trajectory of these rates from 2016 to 2024, this study evaluates the effectiveness and responsiveness of the RBI's monetary policy framework in addressing evolving macroeconomic conditions, particularly in the face of a global crisis. The study incorporates a comparative

analysis of pre-Covid and post-Covid patterns, considering the broader macroeconomic backdrop, including inflation, GDP growth and fiscal-monetary coordination. It also explores global policy parallels and structural reforms required to strengthen monetary transmission mechanisms in the future.

Keywords: Monetary Policy, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, Bank Rate, RBI, COVID-19, India

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in early 2020, had far-reaching implications for the global economy. Beyond the public health emergency, it triggered a severe and widespread economic crisis that disrupted global supply chains, halted production and trade, reduced household consumption and caused massive job losses. In response, governments and central banks worldwide adopted prudent fiscal and monetary measures to contain the economic damage. Central banks, in particular, emerged as key actors in the crisis management process, tasked with the dual responsibilities of maintaining financial stability and supporting macroeconomic recovery (Goodhart & Illing, 2020). India, like many other emerging economies, faced acute challenges due to pre-existing structural vulnerabilities. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) responded with swift and multifaceted monetary policy interventions, marking a significant shift in its traditional policy approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which erupted in early 2020, led to a global health emergency that swiftly transformed into an economic crisis of historic proportions. Almost overnight, nations faced nationwide lockdowns, collapsing demand, disrupted supply chains and financial market volatility. Economies across the globe were brought to a standstill and the consequences were particularly severe for developing and emerging market economies such as India. In response to the unprecedented economic fallout, central banks were thrust into the spotlight, tasked with devising timely and effective policy interventions to cushion the blow. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as the apex monetary authority in India, adopted a proactive and multi-pronged approach, significantly altering its conventional monetary policy trajectory. The immediate focus was not only to preserve financial stability but also to stimulate economic activity, revive demand and support vulnerable sectors (Gopinath, 2020; BIS, 2021).

Before the pandemic, India's monetary policy was governed by the principles of the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework introduced in 2016, wherein the RBI was mandated to maintain consumer price inflation at 4 per cent with a tolerance band of ± 2 per cent. Under this rule-based framework, inflation targeting was prioritized over other macroeconomic goals and the conduct of monetary policy was largely data-driven and forward-looking (RBI, 2016; Patra et al., 2017). Between 2016 and 2019, the

RBI's actions focused on balancing inflation containment with growth concerns, primarily adjusting the Repo rate based on inflation expectations, currency volatility and fiscal conditions (Singh & Pattanaik, 2019). However, the onset of the pandemic created a macroeconomic environment characterized by falling output, disrupted labour markets and heightened uncertainty, necessitating a departure from traditional policy frameworks (Subbarao, 2020).

Prior to the pandemic, India's monetary policy was governed by the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework, formally adopted in 2016. Under this framework, the RBI aimed to maintain price stability with an inflation target of 4 per cent ± 2 per cent, while also supporting economic growth (RBI, 2016). During the pre-Covid period, monetary policy decisions were largely guided by headline and core inflation dynamics, food and fuel prices, global commodity trends and exchange rate fluctuations (Patra et al., 2017). However, the emergence of the pandemic necessitated a recalibration of priorities. The economic contraction during the first wave of COVID-19 was among the sharpest in independent India's history, with GDP fallen in Q1 FY21 onwards (NSO, 2020). In this context, the RBI shifted its stance to an accommodative mode, emphasizing liquidity infusion, rate reduction and credit flow to vulnerable sectors.

Between 2020 and 2022, the RBI reduced the Repo rate and the Reverse Repo rate, bringing borrowing costs to historic lows. These measures were complemented by targeted liquidity tools such as long-term repo operations (LTROs), targeted LTROs (TLTROs), special refinancing facilities and regulatory easing for banks and NBFCs (RBI, 2020; Mohanty, 2021). The Bank rate was also adjusted in tandem to maintain consistency across policy instruments. Papers argue that these interventions were timely and effective in averting a credit crunch and ensuring monetary transmission (Bhoi, 2021; Sengupta & Vardhan, 2021). At the same time, these measures raised questions regarding inflation targeting discipline, fiscal-monetary coordination and the broader implications for central bank autonomy (Raj & Patnaik, 2020).

This article examines the trends in India's key monetary policy rates namely the Repo rate, Reverse Repo rate and Bank rate between 2016 and 2024, focusing specifically on the shifts before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. By analysing the evolution of policy rate movements, the study aims to assess the changing priorities and strategies of the RBI in response to economic shocks. It also explores the implications of these shifts for the future conduct of monetary policy in India, particularly in the context of post-pandemic recovery, inflation pressures and global monetary tightening. The importance of this study lies in its attempt to bridge the gap between empirical

data and evolving monetary policy frameworks in a crisis context. While various central banks have adopted unconventional policy instruments during and after COVID-19, India's case stands out due to its unique developmental context, fiscal constraints and the imperative of financial inclusion. Previous studies have examined the short-term effects of rate cuts and liquidity measures (Goyal, 2021), but a long-term trend analysis covering pre- and post-Covid policy adjustments remains relatively underexplored in academic literature.

The study indicates the RBI's post-Covid monetary policy was marked by a prolonged accommodative stance, increased use of non-conventional tools and a stronger emphasis on reviving growth over inflation control at least in the initial phase of the crisis. While these measures played a critical role in averting a deeper recession, they also posed medium-term challenges, including inflationary pressures and excess liquidity in the banking system. This underscores the need for a calibrated policy approach that is both responsive and forward-looking.

This paper proceeds by first providing a contextual overview of monetary policy trends in the pre-Covid period with methodological framework, followed by an in-depth analysis of the post-Covid adjustments in policy rates. The discussion then extends to the broader macroeconomic implications of these changes, concluding with reflections on future policy directions.

In doing so, this study contributes to the growing discourse on central banking during times of systemic uncertainty and highlights the institutional learning that can inform policy design in future crises.

2. Methodology of the study

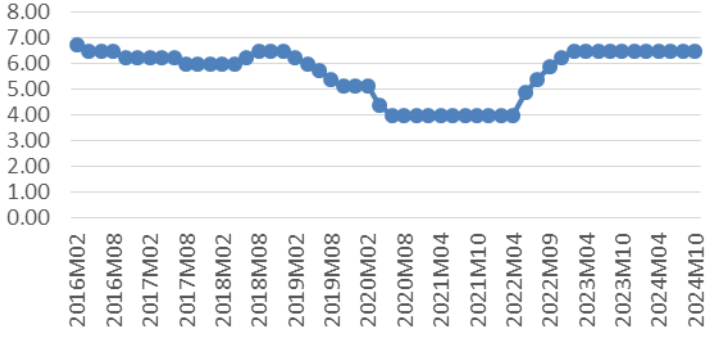
This study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach to examine the trends in India's key monetary policy rates, focusing primarily on the Repo rate, Reverse Repo rate, Bank rate and the recently introduced Standing Deposit Facility (SDF). The analysis covers the period from 2016 to 2024, encompassing both the pre- and post-Covid-19 phases to capture shifts in policy orientation and implementation. The study relies on secondary data sourced from authoritative institutions such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Ministry of Finance, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Key documents include RBI's Monetary Policy Reports, Annual Reports and Bulletins, along with Economic Surveys and working papers. The data is presented in a trend-based format, supported by graphical representation to highlight the variations in monetary policy rates across different periods. This analysis enables a comprehensive understanding of how India's monetary policy framework responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic and how it is evolving in the current macroeconomic context.

3. Comparative Analysis of Monetary Policy Rates: Pre-Covid vs post-Covid Era

The monetary policy framework of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has undergone significant transformations over the years, adapting to the evolving economic landscape and responding to external shocks. The central bank's key policy rates, namely the Repo rate, Reverse Repo rate and Bank rate, serve as crucial instruments in shaping the monetary environment, influencing inflation, liquidity and overall economic activity. While these rates have been adjusted in response to various domestic and global factors, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 marked a pivotal moment in RBI's policy approach. The pandemic prompted the RBI to adopt a more accommodative stance to mitigate the severe economic fallout, leading to a series of significant rate cuts and the introduction of unconventional policy measures. This section examines the trends in India's key policy rates between 2016 and 2024, analysing how the RBI's approach to managing interest rates has evolved, particularly in the context of the pre- and post-pandemic periods. Through this analysis, we aim to explore the shifts in policy priorities, the effectiveness of these interventions and the broader implications for India's macroeconomic stability.

3.1. Trends in Repo rate in the post-Covid era

During the pre-Covid period, India's repo rate saw gradual moderation in response to evolving domestic and global economic trends. From a high of 6.75 per cent in 2016, it was brought down to 5.15 per cent by early 2020 to address weakening growth and benign inflation. This reflected the RBI's cautious optimism and commitment to inflation control, even in the face of decelerating industrial output and declining private investment (RBI, 2018; RBI, 2019). Throughout 2017 and 2018, rates were adjusted with an eye on oil prices, food inflation and the rupee's stability.



Source: Reserve Bank of India

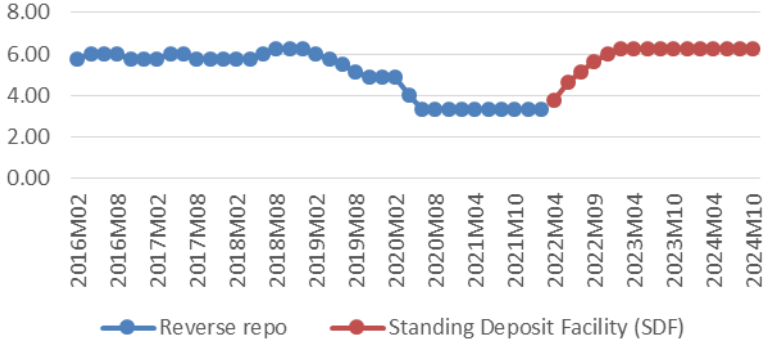
Figure 1: Trends in Repo rate in the pre- and post-Covid era

Post-Covid, the scenario changed dramatically. The repo rate was slashed to 4 per cent in May 2020, the sharpest single-period

cut in over a decade. Unlike the pre-Covid phase, the RBI in 2020 prioritized liquidity and growth over inflation. This stance lasted well into 2022, with the central bank citing the need for accommodative policy to support the recovery. By mid-2022, as inflationary pressures intensified due to global supply constraints and geopolitical tensions, the RBI adopted a hawkish approach, raising the repo rate steadily to 6.50 per cent by 2024 (Economic Survey, 2023; IMF, 2022).

3.2. Trends in Reverse repo rate in the post-Covid era

The Reverse Repo rate, a critical liquidity absorption tool, mirrored the repo rate but was slightly lower, forming part of the RBI's interest rate corridor. Pre-Covid, it was used primarily for routine liquidity management and changes were infrequent and moderate. It ranged between 5.75 per cent and 4.90 per cent from 2016 to early 2020, reflecting a stable policy environment with predictable outcomes (RBI, 2018).



Source: Reserve Bank of India

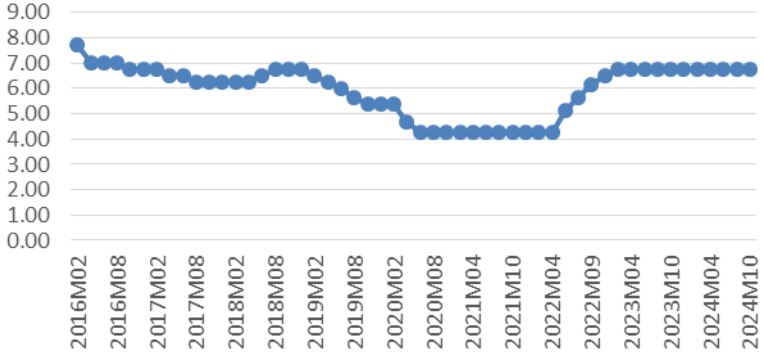
Figure 2: Trends in Reverse Repo rate and Standing Deposit Faciliy in the pre- and post-Covid era

During the pandemic, however, it became a frontline tool for steering short-term market rates. Reduced drastically to 3.35 per cent in 2020, it was meant to discourage banks from parking funds with the RBI and instead lend to productive sectors. This policy had mixed effects while liquidity improved, risk-averse banks continued to rely on the RBI facility, indicating imperfect transmission. The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) is an instrument introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in April 2022 to absorb excess liquidity in the banking system without the need to provide collateral. Unlike the Reverse Repo facility, which requires the RBI to offer government securities as collateral, the SDF allows the RBI to accept deposits from banks on an overnight basis without any collateral. It serves as the floor of the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) corridor, enhancing the RBI's flexibility in managing surplus liquidity while maintaining monetary policy transmission. The introduction of SDF marks a significant shift in India's liquidity management toolkit, especially in a post-Covid context where liquidity levels were exceptionally high. By 2024, the Standing Deposit Facility rate reached 6.25 per cent from 3.75 per cent in 2022, reflecting

an attempt to restore the corridor and normalize monetary conditions (Patra, 2023).

3.3. Trends in Bank rate in the post-Covid era

Used less frequently, the Bank rate traditionally aligns with the repo rate and functions as the penal rate for banks borrowing beyond limits. From 7 per cent in 2016, it was brought down to 5.40 per cent by 2020. In line with emergency measures, it further fell to 4.25 per cent. The post-Covid rise to 6.75 per cent by 2024 reflects a synchronized policy stance with the repo rate and the return to conventional policy signaling (Das, 2023).



Source: Reserve Bank of India

Figure 3: Trends in Bank rate in the pre- and post-Covid era

The pre-Covid years were marked by moderate inflation and sluggish private investment. GDP growth, once peaking at 8 per

cent in FY17, had slowed to 4 per cent by FY20 due to structural issues including twin balance sheet problems, NBFC stress and global uncertainty. Inflation was well within the 4 per cent target band, giving the RBI room to maintain a neutral policy stance. Post-Covid, inflation dynamics became volatile. Supply disruptions, labour shortages and imported inflation due to higher commodity prices pushed headline inflation beyond the upper tolerance band. Core inflation remained sticky. At the same time, growth collapsed to -7.3 per cent in FY21, prompting extraordinary monetary responses. The RBI introduced new tools like TLTROs, Operation Twist and GSAPs to stabilize yields and boost credit. These interventions prevented a deeper crisis and were hailed as innovative by international observers (NCAER, 2021; World Bank, 2022; Sengupta & Vardhan, 2020).

One of the RBI's persistent challenges has been the transmission of policy rate changes to lending and deposit rates. In the pre-Covid period, transmission was sluggish due to banks' reliance on high-cost deposits and asset-liability mismatches. Post-Covid, the RBI mandated external benchmark-based lending, improving transparency and responsiveness. Nonetheless, credit flow remained uneven, with large corporates benefiting more than MSMEs and informal sectors (Bhattacharya, 2020). Financial markets, meanwhile, responded positively to the rate cuts, with bond yields falling sharply in 2020 and the stock

market recovering robustly. The introduction of G-SAPs helped contain long-term interest rates and avoid yield curve steepening. However, market volatility persisted due to global factors like US Fed tapering and oil price shocks.

The pandemic marked a turning point in policy coordination. While pre-Covid monetary and fiscal policies often operated in separately, post-Covid India saw close alignment. Fiscal measures like PMGKY and ECLGS were complemented by RBI's liquidity support. This synergy improved policy credibility and amplified outcomes. The experience underscores the need for formal mechanisms for monetary-fiscal dialogue (Kapoor, 2021; Mohan, 2022). India's response mirrored global trends. Major central banks, including the US Federal Reserve, European Central Bank and Bank of Japan, adopted ultra-loose policies. India's inflation targeting credibility allowed greater flexibility. However, as global rates rose post-2022, capital outflows and rupee depreciation posed new challenges. Exchange rate management and forex interventions gained prominence in the RBI's toolkit (IMF, 2022; Chakrabarty, 2021).

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy evolution from 2016 to 2024 reflects its adaptability in responding to economic challenges, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition from a strict inflation-targeting framework to more

flexible and proactive interventions marked a significant shift in the RBI's approach. The pandemic pushed the central bank to expand its toolkit, incorporating liquidity support, rate cuts and sector-specific relief measures to stabilize the economy. While these measures played a crucial role in preventing deeper economic turmoil, they also highlighted areas for improvement, such as the delayed transmission of policy rates and the over-reliance on liquidity interventions. To further strengthen India's monetary policy framework, it is essential to institutionalize a crisis-policy playbook that provides a clear set of guidelines and protocols for swift and coordinated action during future crises. This playbook would ensure that key decisions are made promptly and effectively, minimizing response lags and ensuring consistency in policy measures. Such institutional preparedness will enable the RBI to manage crises more efficiently, reducing the risks of policy misalignment.

Additionally, deepening and diversifying financial markets should be a priority to improve the transmission of monetary policy. This can be achieved by strengthening the corporate bond market and enhancing the liquidity in various financial instruments, reducing the need for excessive liquidity infusions. A well-developed financial market infrastructure will ensure that monetary policy signals are transmitted more effectively throughout the economy. Another key suggestion is to promote digitization and fintech to improve the reach and impact of

monetary policy. The pandemic demonstrated the potential of digital financial services in ensuring quick and targeted interventions. Expanding digital payment platforms and enabling better access to credit through fintech can facilitate more inclusive monetary policy measures, especially in reaching underserved populations and sectors.

Strengthening data infrastructure is also crucial. Real-time, high-quality data analytics can provide valuable insights for timely and informed policy decisions. By improving data collection systems, the RBI can enhance its capacity to monitor economic conditions in real-time and adjust policies as necessary, ensuring more effective responses to emerging challenges. Furthermore, the development of early warning systems to detect macro-financial vulnerabilities is essential for proactive policy intervention. These systems would help the RBI identify potential risks in sectors like housing, credit and banking before they escalate into broader financial crises, allowing for preventive action. Finally, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on monetary-fiscal coordination. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of a unified approach between the central bank and the government. Strengthening institutional mechanisms for coordination, such as creating formal statutory forums, will help align monetary and fiscal policies, ensuring a more holistic and synchronized approach to managing India's economic challenges.

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HEALTH DIMENSIONS INFLUENCING THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL YOUTH IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The holistic development of rural youth in India is critically shaped by multidimensional health determinants, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental well-being. Despite targeted government initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and National Health Mission, significant disparities persist due to infrastructural gaps, socio-economic inequities, and cultural barriers. This paper explores the key health dimensions and how they impact the physical growth, cognitive development, and socio-economic mobility of rural youth. Through a review of national data, policy documents, and international frameworks, the findings underscore the need for integrated, youth-centered health policies and community-based interventions that are

culturally sensitive and regionally tailored. By addressing these interlinked health dimensions, the study advocates for a more equitable and sustainable framework for empowering rural youth in India.

Keywords: Rural Youth, Health Dimension, Holistic Development, Sustainable Framework

INTRODUCTION

Health is a multifaceted concept that transcends the mere absence of disease, encompassing a holistic integration of physical, mental, social, and other dimensions of well-being. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization, 1948). This definition has laid the foundation for a broader understanding of health, emphasizing the interplay between various dimensions that collectively shape an individual's overall well-being.

Each dimension contributes uniquely to the health experience: physical health enables bodily function and mobility; mental and emotional health foster resilience and coping; social health nurtures connection and support; while spiritual and environmental health provide purpose and a supportive living context. By exploring these interrelated dimensions, this review

aims to present a comprehensive thematic analysis of health, emphasizing the importance of integrated care and holistic development of well-being in contemporary health discourse.

RURAL YOUTH

Youth are defined as individuals aged 15 to 29 years **(**National Youth Policy (India, 2014) and live in non-urban areas (villages, countryside, remote regions). The youth population is growing fastest in the poorest nations. They face limited access to land, natural resources, finance, technology, knowledge, and education. These challenges make it difficult for young people to contribute to or benefit from rural economies. Few aspire to remain in rural areas and make a living out of agriculture, with many migrating to urban areas or overseas.

Here is a table comparing rural youth statistics across the globe and India, focusing on key indicators:

Category	Global	India
Youth Population	~1.8 billion globally (2024)	~420 million (2024); ~29% of total population
Rural Youth Proportion	The majority in developing countries, ~90% of youth, live in developing nations	A large proportion in rural areas, especially in states like UP, Bihar
Gender Distribution	3 out of 4 rural youth in developing nations are female	Female labour force participation remains low in rural areas

Educational Access	Often limited in rural areas, especially in low-income countries	6,49,491 children in 17,997 villages (ASER 2024)
Key Challenges	Poor access to education, training, employment, and digital tools	Skill gaps, lack of local opportunities, and digital divide
Migration Trend	Rural-to-urban migration is common for jobs and education	Similar trend: youth move to cities for work/study
Government/ NGO Initiatives	FAO, IFAD, and OECD support rural youth globally	Programs like TCS iON, Skill India, and PMKVY for training & placement

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL YOUTH

The youth, being dynamic agents of change, possess a natural inclination towards innovation and progress. Their fresh perspectives and untapped energy create a powerful force that can be channelled for the betterment of rural areas. By embracing new ideas and approaches, the youth can break away from traditional paradigms, introducing transformative solutions to longstanding issues (Rashid, 2024).

Through active community engagement, the youth can conduct needs assessments, initiate dialogues, and facilitate discussions to identify the unique requirements of the rural populace. This direct involvement ensures that development initiatives are

tailor-made to address the specific concerns of the community, promoting sustainable and locally relevant solutions (Rashid, 2024).

Investing in the skill development of rural youth is a strategic imperative for holistic and sustainable development. Equipping them with a diverse set of skills, ranging from technical expertise to entrepreneurial acumen, not only enhances their employability but also enables them to contribute meaningfully to their communities (Rashid, 2024).

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Rural youth in India represent more than 68% of the country's total youth population (Census of India, 2011). Despite being a vital demographic for national development, they face disproportionate health challenges that directly impact their education, skill development, and employability. The intersection of poor health outcomes with limited socio-economic opportunities results in a cycle of poverty, underdevelopment, and migration in rural regions.

- According to NFHS-5 (2019–21), over 40% of adolescent girls in rural India are anaemic.
- Mental health issues like depression and anxiety remain underreported and untreated (NIMHANS, 2019).

- Educational dropout rates are significantly linked to poor health and early marriages (UNICEF, 2022).
- Many government programs address health or skills in isolation, leading to fragmented results.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a thematic review methodology to analyse published literature on the health dimensions affecting rural youth development in India. The identified themes for the study are Physical, Mental, Emotional, Social, Spiritual, and Environmental Health. The thematic review reveals that the development of rural youth in India is intricately linked to multiple, often neglected, dimensions of health. Hence, addressing these themes through integrated, youth-centric policies is critical to unleashing India's demographic dividend and achieving inclusive and holistic development.

THEME 1 HEALTH DIMENSION – PHYSICAL HEALTH

Here is a focused thematic section on Physical and Reproductive Health, specifically addressing Road Accidents and puberty among rural youth in India.

- In rural areas, poor road infrastructure, lack of traffic regulation enforcement, and limited access to emergency healthcare contribute to a high incidence of accidents.

- According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), India reported over 155,000 road fatalities in 2022, with a significant proportion involving individuals aged 15–29 and often using two-wheelers without helmets or licenses and with minimal awareness of road safety norms.
- As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21: India), only 17% of rural women aged 15–24 used hygienic methods during menstruation.

ROAD ACCIDENTS

An accident has been defined as an unexpected, unplanned occurrence that may involve injury. Accidents represent a major epidemic of noncommunicable diseases in the present era. Industrialization and urbanization have enormously increased the number of vehicles on the roads. Road traffic continues to be a major developmental issue and a public health concern. Road accidents are multicausal and are often the result of various factors such as human error, road environment, and vehicle condition. They involve high human suffering and monetary costs regarding deaths, injuries, and loss of potential income (Jothula & Sreeharshika, 2021).

Overspeeding, drunk-driving, not using helmets and seatbelts while driving, distracted driving, and using mobile phones while driving are some of the significant risk factors of these accidents.

Rural areas often lack emergency and immediate medical response systems, resulting in higher fatality rates post-accident.

Reasons for not wearing a helmet	- Discomfort - Laziness - Decreased field of vision - Hair loss - Not a style quotient - Does not have a helmet - Not anticipating danger because of driving skills - Not anticipating danger as the distance is short

Source: Jothula & Sreeharshika (2021)

PUBERTY

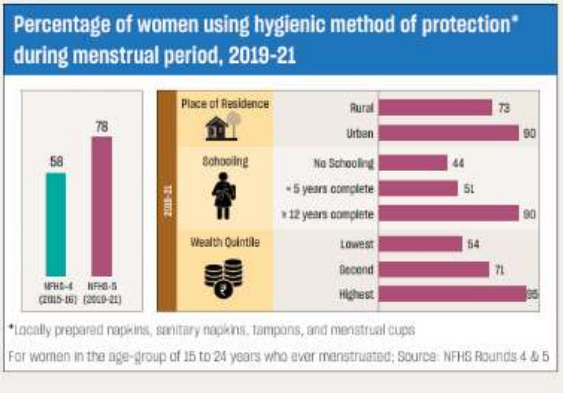
Pubertal status refers to the current level of physical development experienced by the adolescent relative to the overall process of pubertal change. It is an absolute measure that tells the stage or degree of physical maturation (e.g., prepubertal, mid-pubertal, or post-pubertal) reached by an adolescent at a single point in time (Graber et al., 1997).

Poor menstrual hygiene education and School absenteeism during the period. Girls are often shamed for menstruating and face restrictions in kitchens, temples, and schools. Boys have

almost no guidance on emotional or sexual development, leading to confusion and aggression.

Rapid hormonal changes paired with social pressures and isolation can cause Anxiety, Low self-esteem, and Depression. Youth rarely receive counselling or emotional support. NFHS (National Family Health Survey) data shows that the use of hygienic methods of menstrual health management by 15 to 24-year-old women increased by 20 percentage points between 2015-16 and 2019-21 (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Nine of 10 young women in urban areas use hygienic methods, as against a little over seven of 10 in rural areas. Those with 12 or more years of schooling are twice as likely to use hygienic methods compared to those with no schooling. Young women in the lowest wealth quintile are 40 percentage points less likely to use hygienic methods compared to those in the highest wealth quintile.

Lack of Sexual and Reproductive Health Education

- Sex education is minimal in many Indian schools due to cultural taboos.
- Adolescents may rely on unreliable sources (peers, the internet) for information, leading to myths and misconceptions.
- Unprotected sex and STIs: Lack of knowledge leads to a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies.

Policies such as Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) were launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Health to address adolescent health, including sexual and reproductive health, but implementation in rural areas remains inconsistent. Some NGOs and government programs use peer educators to promote safer sexual practices, but coverage is limited.

THEME 2 HEALTH DIMENSION – MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Here is a focused thematic section on Mental and Emotional Health, specifically addressing depression, anxiety, and suicide among rural youth in India.

Mental and emotional health is a foundational component of youth development. However, rural youth in India face numerous barriers to emotional well-being, including social

stigma, lack of mental health literacy, academic and familial pressure, and limited access to psychological support services.

- "One in seven Indians aged 15–24 years experiences a mental health condition, yet most remain undiagnosed or untreated." — WHO, 2021
- NIMHANS (2016): Around 7.3% of adolescents (13–17 years) in India experience mental disorders, with higher prevalence in rural areas.
- NCRB (2021): Over 13,000 student suicides were reported in India; many were from rural and semi-urban regions.
- Suicide rates are significantly higher in rural youth, often due to easy access to pesticides and a lack of intervention.

Mental health issues among rural youth are increasingly a pressing concern that often go unnoticed and untreated. Young people living in rural areas face unique challenges that can negatively impact their mental well-being, including geographic isolation, limited access to mental health services, stigma surrounding mental illness, and fewer educational or employment opportunities. These factors can lead to higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and even suicide among rural youth compared to their urban counterparts.

According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), there has been a sharp increase in mental health issues among India's youth. In May 2020, 9.3% of young people aged 18-24

experienced symptoms of depression and anxiety. By March 2022, this figure had nearly doubled to 16.8%. The situation worsened in 2023, with approximately 25% of young adults aged 18-25 exhibiting signs of depression, a significant jump from previous years. Additionally, nearly 30% of this group is struggling with anxiety disorders, indicating an alarming rise in mental health challenges.

Risk Factors Contributing to the Youth Mental Health Crisis

- ***The use of social media*** - The primary contributor to this crisis is the pervasive influence of social media. Constant exposure to curated, often unrealistic portrayals of others' lives can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.
- ***Academic Pressure*** - The relentless pursuit of academic excellence and the fear of failure create overwhelming stress for many young people. Competitive exams, the hassle of college admissions, and the pressure to excel in extracurricular activities can severely affect mental well-being.
- ***Family and Relationships*** - Family dynamics and relationships play a crucial role in mental health. A lack of support, conflict, or unstable home environments can contribute to depression and anxiety.

- ***Psychosocial Stressors*** **-** Bullying, academic struggles, and obesity can harm self-esteem and increase the risk of depression.
- ***Personality Traits*** **-** Traits like self-criticism, perfectionism, and pessimism make teens more vulnerable to depression. Substance abuse can further exacerbate these vulnerabilities.
- ***Coexisting Physical and Medical Conditions*** **-** Conditions like learning disabilities, ADHD, chronic illnesses (e.g., cancer, asthma), and co-occurring mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, bipolar disorder) can heighten the risk of depression by adding emotional and psychological stress.

Source: The Youth Mental Health Crisis: A Growing Concern (Lifestyle Desk, News18.com, August 2014)

Access to mental healthcare remains a significant concern, with considerable gaps in access to and quality of treatment and limited availability of mental health professionals, especially in rural areas. Inadequate infrastructure, a lack of awareness, and insufficient integration into primary healthcare systems hinder access to appropriate care (Meghrajani et al, 2023).

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Depression and anxiety are prevalent mental health concerns (Khalid & Syed, 2024) among rural youth, influenced by various socio-economic and environmental factors. Depression in rural

youth is characterized by persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, and impaired daily functioning. Anxiety in rural youth involves excessive worry, restlessness, and physical symptoms like increased heart rate, often interfering with daily activities.

A study conducted in the Mysuru district of South India examined the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among adolescents in both urban and rural areas. The findings revealed that rural adolescents exhibited higher rates of depression (39.3%) compared to their urban counterparts (24.2%). Factors contributing to these mental health issues include low family income, parental conflicts, academic pressure, and experiences of bullying (Prakash et. al, 2024). Mental health interventions in India have been mainly reactive, focusing on addressing symptoms rather than identifying the underlying causes of disorders such as depression and anxiety (Kumar & Singh, 2020).

SUICIDE

"Suicide" is the act of intentionally causing one's own death. It is often the result of overwhelming emotional pain, mental health challenges like depression or anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, or other challenging life circumstances (Yan et. al, 2023).

India's rates of youth suicide are some of the highest in the World. Suicide rates in 15-29-year-old Indian men are estimated to be twice that of the global average (25.5 vs 13.1 per 100,000), and rates in young Indian women are nearly 6 times as high (24.9 vs 4.1 per 100,000) (World Health Organization, 2019); and suicide is the leading cause of death for both men and women in this age group (India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative Suicide Collaborators, 2018).

According to official estimates, over 60,000 young people died by suicide in 2021 alone (National Crime Records Bureau, India, 2021). These figures are likely to be underestimated by at least 25% if one considers data from nationally representative surveys (Patel et al., 2012). Moreover, these figures do not include suicide attempts, which are at least 15 times more common than suicides – young women seem to be at increased risk, reporting them more frequently than men (Amudhan et al., 2020).

With 17% of the World's population living in India and nearly 30% being between 15 and 29 years, preventing suicidal behaviours among young people in India is crucial to achieving the targeted reduction of premature deaths due to suicides globally.

Table 2 - Stressors that increase vulnerability to a suicide attempt

Sl. No	Category	Sub-Category
1	Interpersonal	Conflict
		Verbal Aggression
		Unmet needs/expectations
		Threats
		Violence
		Unpleasant discovery
		Break-up
		Control
		Jealousy
		Parental discord
		Alcohol use in the family
		Rejection
2	Financial	The participant and/or his/her partner or family experienced financial difficulties.
3	Legal	The participant got into trouble with the law.
4	Social Disapproval	Neighbours and members of the local community gossiped about or judged the lives of participants and their families, or interfered in their

		family matters.
5	Work	The participant was unable to find a job or had trouble at work, for example, with colleagues
6	Education	The participant failed or performed poorly in exams. This also led to interpersonal stressors.
7	Ill health in the family	The participant's mother had been ill for some time. This resulted in or magnified the impact of the main stressor
8	Death of a family	The participant lost a loved one in the family a while ago and continued to experience grief.

Source: Balaji et.al (2023)

Fig. 1. Emotional states preceding suicidal ideation - word cloud.

India's first-ever National Suicide Prevention Policy was launched in 2022 (MoHFW, 2022). As specified in the Policy, special attention needs to be paid to young women. These efforts need to go beyond increasing health and other support services for vulnerable groups (for example, referral centres for victims of domestic violence), to encompass large-scale social changes which aim at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, such as the provision of education or employment opportunities for young women.

THEME 3 HEALTH DIMENSION – SOCIAL HEALTH

Here is a focused thematic section on Social Health, specifically examining the impact of caste-based harassment and violence on the social well-being of rural youth in India.

Social health refers to the ability to form satisfying interpersonal relationships and adapt to social situations. For rural youth in India, social health is deeply shaped by caste dynamics, which often restrict mobility, limit opportunities, and expose them to discrimination and violence.

- "Social exclusion due to caste remains one of the most persistent forms of inequality in rural India." - Thorat & Newman (2012)

- Many rural youths, particularly from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), face systemic caste-based discrimination in schools, colleges, and workplaces (Nambissan, 2010).
- NCRB (2022): Over 50,000 cases of caste-based atrocities were registered under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, many involving youth.
- Human Rights Watch (2020): Young Dalits face "invisible walls of caste apartheid" in rural education and employment.

More than 200 million people in India are vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and violence simply because of the caste into which they were born. The caste system relegates Dalits, formerly known as 'untouchables,' to a lifetime of segregation and abuse. Caste-based divisions dominate in housing, marriage, employment, education, and general social interaction— divisions that are reinforced through economic boycotts and physical violence. Dalits are forced to perform tasks deemed too "polluting" or degrading for non-Dalits.

CASTE-BASED HARASSMENT

Caste-based harassment among rural youth in India is a serious and multifaceted issue deeply rooted in historical, social, and cultural hierarchies. Despite legal protections and social reforms, caste-based discrimination continues to persist,

particularly in rural areas where traditional caste structures remain rigid.

In India, the caste role in education is discriminatory, which excludes them from their rights (Kahali et al., 2021). Education is an important tool for social transformation, but caste-based discrimination makes it difficult and slows it down. Discrimination is found in schools across India, where scheduled caste students face discrimination, and sometimes, they are excluded from the activities and those of other communities.

Caste-based discrimination in the institution of higher education was neglected by policymakers and the political class, where scheduled caste students face intensified humiliation, harassment, segregation, and derogatory comments. Despite legal safeguards, even in the most prestigious and well-known educational institutions, lower-caste students have experienced discrimination and harassment in modern society (Desai & Kulkarni, 2018).

Human Rights Watch has shared its recommendations in upholding constitutional guarantees of equality, freedom, justice, and human dignity, and the government of India should demonstrate its commitment to the eradication of caste violence and caste-based discrimination by implementing the recommendations as soon as possible. Ensure that states establish special courts in every revenue district and appoint special public

prosecutors to try cases arising under the Atrocities Act (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

VIOLENCE

Violence among rural youth in India is a pressing social issue that manifests in various forms, including physical aggression, sexual violence, domestic abuse, caste-based violence, and substance-related conflicts. While urban violence often draws more media attention, rural areas face unique challenges due to social norms, economic hardship, limited policing, and a lack of youth-focused interventions.

Domestic violence has been cited by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an urgent global maternal and child health priority (Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011). Characterised by multiple forms of abuse, terrorization, threats, and increasingly possessive and controlling behaviour, more than one-third of women in India have experienced domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands, according to India's National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3; International Institute for Population Sciences and Macro International, 2007).

It is helpful to consider the ways current gender role beliefs inform perceptions of domestic violence. The country is currently experiencing a shift from being male-dominated to being gender equal; globalization, education, employment, and public challenges against incidents of violence against women

have raised awareness about gender equality in the context of violence (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013; Koenig et al., 2006; Rocca et al., 2008).

THEME 4 HEALTH DIMENSION – SPIRITUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Here is a focused thematic section on Spiritual and environmental health. Both Spiritual and environmental health are interconnected and foundational to the holistic development of rural youth in India.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Spiritual health refers to a sense of purpose, connection to higher values, inner peace, and ethical grounding (Koenig, 2012). For many rural youths in India, spiritual beliefs are deeply rooted in religion, folklore, and cultural traditions, influencing how they navigate challenges such as stress, poverty, and marginalization. “Spirituality provides a moral compass and resilience to rural youth, especially in the face of socio-economic adversity.” — Singh & Kumar (2019).

Spiritual Health Practices

- Participation in rituals, festivals, and community prayer
- Reliance on religious teachings to cope with mental distress

- Use of yoga, meditation, and traditional healing as spiritual outlets
- Involvement in youth groups linked to temples or faith organizations

Benefits

- Reduces anxiety and improves emotional regulation
- Encourages community bonding and ethical behaviour
- Promotes resilience and life satisfaction (Koenig, 2012)

Risks and Challenges

- Overreliance on religious leaders instead of medical professionals
- Reinforcement of caste or gender-based hierarchies through misinterpreted spiritual practices
- Limited critical thinking if spiritual beliefs go unquestioned

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental health involves living in surroundings that are clean, safe, and conducive to growth. For rural youth, it includes access to clean air, safe water, sanitation, and sustainable natural resources.

"Environmental degradation directly affects the health, education, and livelihood potential of rural youth." — UNEP India Report (2020)

Key challenges in Rural areas - Swachh Bharat Grameen Dashboard (2021), UNICEF and WHO (2019)

- Open defecation and poor sanitation, despite Swachh Bharat efforts
- Polluted water sources from pesticides and industrial runoff
- Deforestation and loss of green cover, reducing access to clean air and nature
- Poor waste management, particularly plastic and agricultural waste

INTEGRATING HEALTH DIMENSION AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL YOUTH

Rural youth in India, making up over 65% of the total youth population, face multidimensional challenges. Developmental progress—whether educational, economic, or social—is closely tied to their health status. A healthy youth population is more productive, engaged, and capable of contributing to national growth.

The need for integration:

- Health is foundational to learning capacity, labour productivity, and civic participation.
- Poor health hinders skill acquisition, reduces employability, and limits aspirations.
- Without addressing nutrition, sanitation, reproductive health, and mental well-being, developmental interventions have limited impact.

Integrating health dimensions with the development of rural youth in India requires a holistic, multi-sectoral approach that connects physical, mental, social, and environmental well-being with education, employment, and empowerment.

Health Dimension	**Link to Youth Development**
Physical Health	Education on Adequate nutrition and disease prevention supports school attendance and productivity. Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) Operated under RKSK, these clinics address physical, mental, and reproductive health of rural adolescents, directly impacting their educational and life outcomes.
Mental and Emotional Health	Emotional resilience reduces school dropouts, substance abuse, and suicide. Empowering

	decision-making and coping with stress is key in transitions from school to work.
Social Health	Fostering teamwork, leadership, and community engagement.
Spiritual and Environmental Health	Encourage ethical grounding, goal orientation, and inner motivation—critical for self-growth and leadership. Clean water, sanitation, and hygiene reduce communicable diseases and absenteeism. Tree planting and afforestation programs, Water conservation (e.g., Jal Shakti Abhiyan), Plastic-free village campaigns, Participation in eco-clubs and green school initiatives

The integration of health dimensions with rural youth development is no longer optional—it is essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth. By adopting a multidimensional framework that combines health, education, and livelihood interventions, India can unlock the potential of its rural youth and ensure they become agents of transformation in their communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This thematic research provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between health and the overall development of rural youth in India. Based on its findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Focus Area	Recommendation
Adopt a Holistic Approach to Youth Health	Recognize and address physical, mental, emotional, and social health as interconnected aspects of youth well-being.
Strengthen Rural Health Infrastructure	- Enhance accessibility and quality of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) in rural areas. - Expand telemedicine and mobile health units to bridge gaps in remote regions.
Promote Health and Life Skills Education	Integrate comprehensive health education into school curricula, covering nutrition, mental health, hygiene, and reproductive health.
Address Mental Health with Urgency	Implement community-level mental health programs tailored to adolescents and young adults. Train teachers and frontline workers in basic mental health first aid and counselling.
Foster Multi-Sectoral Collaboration	Encourage collaboration between health, education, rural development departments, women and child welfare, and youth affairs for integrated program delivery.
Implement Gender-Sensitive Interventions	Ensure health programs are sensitive to the unique needs of rural girls and young women, particularly in areas like menstrual hygiene, reproductive rights, and early marriage. Promote gender equity in access to education, healthcare, and decision-making.

CONCLUSION

India stands at a critical juncture where the health and well-being of its rural youth must be prioritized not just as a welfare issue but as a strategic imperative for national progress. Despite incremental gains in sanitation, nutrition, and healthcare access, deep-rooted disparities and systemic gaps continue to hinder the holistic development of young people in rural areas. Transformative action demands bold political will, sustained investments, and inclusive participation. The future of India's rural youth must be shaped by a vision of equity, dignity, and opportunity, where every young person, regardless of geography, can thrive physically, mentally, and socially.

I am young, and I too have a dream. I dream of an India – strong, independent, self-reliant, and in the front rank of the nations of the World in the service of mankind. – Rajiv Gandhi

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SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN INDIA: HISTORICAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

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Social exclusion is the process under which certain people or groups of people are denied their full or partial participation in society. Exclusion did not origin in society in overnight. It took a longer period to be established as a permanent feature in society. It evolved over the centuries with a strong foundational and structural support of institutions and ideologies in every society. Social exclusion in India is such a product of historical, institutional and ideological dimensions.

Historical basis of origin and evolution of Exclusion in India:

India is a land of diversity with varied stock of racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional communities. Shashi Tharoor described Indian society as a *'thali'*-a special type of Indian cuisine with variety food items in a *'thali'* (plate), each without losing its own taste and flavor. Like food items in a *'thali'*, he compared Indian society has multiple groups and communities existing each without losing its individual identities. Another scholar portrayed Indian society as a '*deep*

net' that all diversified groups/communities in Indian sub-continent are absorbed through the institutions of caste, religion, cultural ethos etc, so that they cannot come outside of the system. The social formation of diversified communities and subsequent exclusion of the majority of them on the basis of colour, birth, gender, religion, language, regions, occurred over a longer historical period in India. Many historians believed that the arrival of Aryans into Indian sub-continent served as an important 'Big Bang' event as far as the evolution of exclusion process in Indian society concerned. When Aryans came, they encountered with native population (Dravidians) and social processes such as conflicts, accommodations and assimilations occurred among them. K. L. Sharma grouped these processes into Aryanisation and Indianisation. **Aryanisation** refers to the impact of Aryans (foreigners) on the indigenous (native) people. The introduction of Varna system in Indian soil is the result of Aryanisation process. **Indianisation** refers to the process of adopting the styles of native people by incoming Aryans. When Aryans encountered, they disgusted the fertility cult or Linga worship which were widely prevalent among the natives. In due course, Aryans accepted and incorporated 'Linga cult' into their belief system. Eminent sociologist Gail Omvedt states that before Aryan arrival, natives/early Dravidians had 'proto-caste' system. She says, varna system of Aryans and 'proto-caste' system of natives/early Dravidians in due course, historically,

crystallized into the Indian caste system. Anthropologist Tylor also viewed Tamil Sangam society had three-fold social divisions; the dominant, the dependent and degraded- the *canror* or warrior elite, the *ilicinar* or toiling commoners, and the unclean *pulaiyar,* a caste like social divisions later might have crystallized with Aryan's varna system to form a caste system .

During the Muslim Rule:

During the Muslim period, the caste system became still more rigid. Because Muslims were not absorbed in elastic Hindu fold. Severe restrictions were imposed on Hindus by Brahmins who assumed the responsibility of protecting caste Dharma/order by making caste system a very rigid system. Therefore, caste based Hindu society became insular. Muslim rulers did not interfere in the social organization/life of Hindus. They did not introduce drastic changes also. According to Marxian historian, Irfan Habib, Muslim rulers did not abolish caste system, because caste system provided cheap labour force/supply for agriculture, the huge source of income for them in a feudal society.

Muslim contacts with Hindus effected the formation of caste like organization among Muslims in North India. The effect was the emergence caste like groups/divisions like *Ashraf* (honorable), *Ajlaf* (non-honourable) and *Arzals*. *Ashraf* Muslims claimed themselves as original Muslims and the true descendents of the Prophet. *Ashrafs* are sub-divided into Sheikh, Mugal,

Pathan and Sayeds, a caste like divisions among Muslims. Muslim converts from mediate and lower castes were called as *Ajlafs*. The converts from untouchable were called *Arzals*.

During British Rule:

New forces of changes such as westernization, modernization and industrialization, and new democratic principles were introduced by British which altogether created both positive and negative consequences in the existing Indian social structure. Western education and democratic principles awakened Backward Classes(BCs, SCs and STs) who had been the victims of caste order. It enlightened them and many movements among them emerged and questioned caste inequality. British's economic policies such as Zamindari systems converted land from the community ownership to private property and created a new agrarian classes like landlords/Zamindars, peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. British's caste based census from 1891 to 1931 gave a new lease of life to caste system. It sowed the seed for 'ethnization of castes' and perpetual caste based politics and issues in Indian soil, for even today. They unified India politically and geographically with diverse groups groups/communities and regions. They only constructed 'Hinduism' by uniting various sects which ultimately gave foundations for the emergence of Hindutva politics. Their divide

and rule policy between Hindus and Muslims founded 'communalism' as a scourge in Indian society.

After Independence:

After independence, India emerged as democratic and welfare state having constitution which treats all citizens are equal irrespective of caste, religion, gender, language, region, etc.. Though founding fathers of India aimed at establishing independent India-a egalitarian society through many reforms, many aspects of exclusion based on caste, gender, regions continued due to variety of factors. New alliance between caste and democracy were forged. Reservation politics sharpened caste identities making caste conflict as perpetual feature today. Government of India reproduced new avatar of caste like SC, ST, OBC and OC.

Institutional basis of origin and evolution of Exclusion in India:

In sociological terms, institutions are well established and structural patterns of behavior or of relationships that is accepted as fundamental parts of a culture. i. e., marriage. To put simply, institution is an organization, established or devoted to the promotion of a particular cause or purpose in a society. Exclusion of groups/communities in India has been institutionalized over the centuries through various historical

processes. Institutionally, caste provided a framework for arranging social groups in terms of their statuses and positions in the social and economic system. It fixed individuals into the structure of social hierarchy on the basis of their birth. Hutton observed caste as a complex institution. Andre Beteille viewed caste has been the fundamental institution of traditional India.

Social:

The Hindu society is divided into a number of socially exclusive hereditary groups called castes. Caste system is a segmental division of social groups in India. Caste is an institutionalized system of interaction among hierarchically ranked hereditary groups (castes) for marriage, occupation, economic division of labour, enforcement of cultural norms and values. The very identity of a person is dependent on caste to which he or she belongs. Status of a person is determined by his/her birth. Thus, caste refers to inequality in theory as well as in practice. Social inequality based on caste is very ubiquitous and persistent till today.

Economic:

Caste system was nothing more than the systematization of occupational differentiation. In traditional caste system, every caste was assigned certain occupation. i.e., astrology and priesthood were assigned to the Brahmins. Certain

caste groups, especially shudras and untouchables were restricted to access economic pursuit of their own, even today. They were forcefully assigned highly polluting/defiling menial occupations.

Political:

Power, privilege and influence of every caste varies in descending order in a caste hierarchy. Over the centuries, Shudras and untouchables were denied power and privilege due to their lowest rank in caste order.

Cultural:

Caste is viewed as an overarching ideological system which pervades over all aspects of social life of Hindu social order. Caste is a normative system or system of actual social-structural relations. However, j*atis* are relatively small endogamous groups with a distinctive style of life. Each caste signifies a cultural homogeneity. Culturally, caste is a system of norms and values which govern and regulates relationships among caste groups. Trespassers of caste boundaries were severely punished. Caste panchayats took the role of enforcing authority of the law of caste. Even culturally sanctioned caste based exclusion occur in commensality- a rule that with whom food should be dined, from whom food is given and taken (pucca and kacha food), in ornaments, in dresses. Using ghee was once taboo for untouchables.

Religious:

Religious tenets and philosophies were used to support caste order and patriarchy.

Educational:

Education was denied to *shudras* and untouchables in traditional Indian society. Education was the institutional monopoly/privilege for upper castes until the arrival of British.

Marriage:

Endogamy, i.e., marriage within a caste is the one of the predominate/persisting feature of the caste system. Scholars viewed endogamy was a hallmark/springboard of caste system for sustaining caste till today.

Ideological basis of origin and evolution of Exclusion in India:

The term ideology was introduced by French philosopher Count Destutt de Tracy in 1700s A.D. The term was used to describe the shared beliefs of a group of people, for example, a nation, a sect of a religion or a group. In every society, this body of beliefs influences the way individuals think, act and the view the world. It is the way in which people think about the world and their ideal concept of how to live in the

world. Capitalism, Marxism, Feminism, Democracy, Socialism are the examples of ideology. For example, Capitalism as ideology emphasizes that open market and free economy would take care of the needs of society.

As an ideology, caste was a system of values and norms that legitimized and reinforced the existing structure of social inequality. As an ideology, caste governs the relationship among groups in a caste society. It also provided a worldview around which a typical Hindu organized his/her life. Caste has its base in Hindu religion and ideology. *Karma* and *Dharma* justify caste system and thereby, provide it ideological basis. *Dharma* refers to the established order including the social and the cosmic, more particularly to the code of ethics and duty specific to each caste group. *Karma* means the past 'deeds' of a person and it is these deeds which determine the varna of a person and his future action. It is these notional aspects of Karma and dharma which gave the ideological foundations for the caste based exclusion in India.

EXTENSION AND FIELD VISIT: AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL (EXPERIENCE SHARING)

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Abstract

Field trips are an important aspect of learning science because they provide students with real-life, experiential learning outside of the classroom context. In this discussion, we will explore the contribution of field trips as a learning experience and their importance for education. By enacting some of the abstract theories, the field visits help students to better appreciate and understand their own scientific knowledge. This discussion delves into various aspects of field visits, including their applications, significance, benefits, and the challenges they experienced.

1. Introduction

Field visits allow students to observe and interpret natural events, carry out field research in a real world context, and contact people and professionals in the field of study. These experiences reinforce their understanding of scientific concepts and stimulate scientific curiosity and analytical problem solving [S. Amos at al. 2024]. Field visits go beyond the experience of

learning and connecting knowledge; it is an important link between learning facts and principles and acting with them in practice, providing students with instances of clarification of scientific abstractions related to practice. They also facilitate collaboration as participants develop a common experience of investigation and data collection. Field visits provide many advantages for science education, despite some challenges including access, safety and available resources. While these visits can be overall effective educational experiences, they rely on planning and collaboration to make sure experiences can occur in a safe and meaningful way. The article supports the idea that field visits are an exciting and valuable educational tool for bringing science to life for students [S. Amos at al. 2024]. By pairing active engagement with more formal educational instruction, field visits provide students with a more engaging and productive way of learning science.

2. Field Visit - A Journey:

A field trip is a planned excursion by a group to a new destination outside of the normal environment. In education these trips are called field visits [S. Amos et al. 2024], which indicate they are guided educational travel opportunities that occur outside of the classroom setting. Field visits allow students to participate in experiential educational opportunities at designated sites.

3. **An Educational tool:**

In educational settings, field trip can be referred to as field visits, meaning the students journey outside of the normal command of the classroom, to get educationally engaged in different environments, under faculty oversight [L. Dourad et al. 2013]. These visits are necessary for engaging in academic responsibilities as stated in defined locations on the map.

The theme park, water resources, play spots, industries, and research centers can be the relevant field visit destinies to understand the concepts and laws [L. Dourad et al. 2013]. Prior to the visit, the teacher had introduced basic physics ideas, specifically force and motion, which allowed students to have a solid foundation for the investigation. With a key foundational understanding, allows students to evaluate its use in real life to the specific example of roller coasters and their riders. This inquiry allows them to explore and observe practically so that they have a deep understanding of gravitational force, acceleration, friction and inertia in motion.

This trip serves an educational purpose by allowing theoretical learning to be applied through experiential learning, causing students to visualize scientific ideas more effectively. As students observe the acceleration and deceleration of roller coasters in conjunction with outside forces, they obtain a complete and thorough understanding of motion mechanics. In addition, the site visit is enjoyable and exciting; in fact, the

experience is stimulating of curiosity, engaging of critical thinking, and inviting of scientific discussion. This field visit not only has the advantage of reinforcing theoretical concepts, but it also provides an engaging and enjoyable learning activity that fosters a more hands-on and interactive way of teaching physics. It demonstrates the connection to theory and their relevance in the real world, reinforcing the value of experiential environments as learning spaces. At the end of the day, this field visit serves as an educational tool [L. Dourad et al. 2013] that encourages students' firsthand experiences with force and motion.

The data of Institute Campus Vs Field Visits is shown in Table 1.

Sl. No	**Formal Education (Institute Campus)**	**Non-Formal Education (Field Visits)**
1	Classroom teaching	Real world experience
2	Theoretical explanations	Practical exposure
3	Knowing the laws and concepts	Understanding the concepts
4	Lack of thinking	Out of the book thinking

Table 1 shows the data on Institute Campus Vs Field Visits

5. Objectives of the field visits:

As discussed in the previous section, field visits are a very useful educational resource in understanding scientific concepts, laws, and applications for a variety of reasons.

The goals of field visits generally are to:

(1) Be a planned learning resource,
(2) Be considered 'teaching' beyond a classroom setting,
(3) Stimulate an awareness of real-life applications,
(4) Be a valuable and straightforward way to learn, and
(5) Use science education beyond the school or college.

6. Benefits of Field Trips or Field Visits:

The field visits make students good qualities stronger than before the trips. The students are learning their subjects and some good qualities very easily in their visits.

The field trips make stronger the qualities given below.

1. A team working
2. Exchanging their innovative ideas to others
3. Full focused participation
4. Eagar to explore new things
5. Asking questions
6. Improving the observation skills
7. Build the critical thinking power
8. Motivating each other
9. Posing and solving the problems what they faced
10. Decision making skills

7. Students' Involvement:

The survey conducted to students from B.Sc., B.Sc., B.Ed., and M.Sc., Physics for knowing their interested learning tool. Based on the survey, majority of students were interested to visit fields for enhancing their knowledge. Even though hands on-training, expert lecture, demonstration, Q&A session, visiting places (exposure) is shown in figure 1.

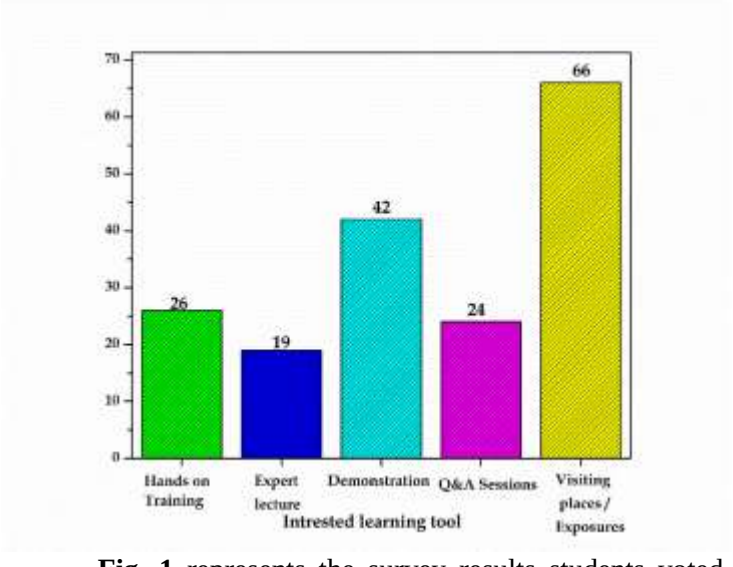

Fig. 1 represents the survey results students voted for their liked teaching method.

Challenges:

The challenges outlined below are some of the most frequent hindrances to success regarding field visits [Carroll, K. 2007].

- Transportation logistics
- Available budget and costs Travel,
- planning along with academic related planning
- Student interest and involvement in the activity
- Health and medical concerns for the participants

Conclusion:

The field visit gives opportunities for observing and making conclusions in practical lessons [S. Amos et al. 2024]. Arranging the field trips as pre-planned session, making trips as internships, promote cost effective learning process in the local industries, and more local trips are the some remedies of faced challenges. Field visit provides possibilities for active class participation, skill-oriented knowledge and selecting student's future professions. The field visit can be a memorable approach to engage students as a good educational tool.

Acknowledgement:

The author thank The Dean, School of Sciences, Professor and Head department of Physics and All the Faculties of Department of Physics, The Gandhigram Rural Institute, Deemed to be University for their support and encouragement.

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A STUDY ON THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE OF THE RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTORS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

The transition to renewable energy is critical for sustainable development, particularly in developing countries where energy access remains limited. Effective policy frameworks and governance mechanisms are essential to accelerate this transition, balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. This paper explores the landscape of renewable energy governance in developing nations, highlighting the role of legal structures, government policies, and judicial intervention. Policy instruments such as feed-in tariffs, renewable energy auctions, tax incentives, and public-private partnerships have been widely implemented with varying degrees of success. Challenges persist, including policy inconsistency, governance fragmentation, limited financing, and political instability. Moreover, land acquisition, indigenous

rights, and environmental justice have led to landmark judicial interventions, shaping a jurisprudence of renewable energy governance in the Global South. This study concludes that robust legal frameworks, judicial activism, and participatory governance are critical for advancing renewable energy deployment in developing countries. Future policy design must integrate lessons from case law to ensure equitable, efficient, and sustainable energy transitions.

Keywords: *Protocols, Incentivize, Pioneered, Interpretations, Energy auctions*

Introduction:

The transition to renewable energy is a global imperative driven by the urgent need to combat climate change, ensure energy security, and promote sustainable development. In developing countries, this transition presents both significant opportunities and complex challenges. Rapid population growth, rising energy demand, and limited access to reliable electricity underscore the importance of expanding clean energy systems. However, the success of such efforts depends heavily on effective policy frameworks and robust governance structures.

Policy and governance are central to shaping the trajectory of renewable energy deployment. They determine how resources are allocated, how markets are structured, and how stakeholders from governments and investors to local communities—engage in the energy transition. In many developing countries, policy environments are evolving, yet often constrained by institutional weaknesses, limited financing, regulatory uncertainty, and socio-political complexities.

This topic explores how tailored policies, regulatory reforms, institutional strengthening, and inclusive governance can accelerate the adoption of renewable energy in developing contexts. It emphasizes the need for coordinated national strategies, regional cooperation, and international support to foster sustainable, equitable, and resilient energy systems.

Climate Change Policy Integration into National Renewable Energy Strategies

Integrating climate change policy into national renewable energy strategies is a crucial step for developing countries to meet both their energy needs and climate commitments (Nations U. , Renewable energy – powering a safer future, 2025). As nations face the dual challenges of achieving sustainable development and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the transition to renewable energy must be seen not just as an

energy solution, but as a key component of national climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

By aligning renewable energy strategies with climate goals, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, governments can ensure that their energy policies support broader climate objectives. This integration creates synergies between energy security, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development. For instance, countries that prioritize renewable energy as part of their climate strategies can attract international climate finance, leverage global climate targets, and foster the growth of green technologies and jobs.

Moreover, such integration supports policy coherence, helping to avoid conflicting objectives between energy, climate, and development agendas. It enables governments to design comprehensive policy frameworks that facilitate the transition to low-carbon energy systems while addressing other pressing challenges, such as energy access, poverty alleviation, and resilience to climate impacts.

As renewable energy projects often face both technical and financial barriers, well-integrated climate change policies can provide the necessary support through targeted incentives, regulatory reforms, and climate finance mechanisms (Change,

2020). Effective integration of climate change policies into renewable energy strategies not only reduces emissions but also ensures that energy systems are resilient to the impacts of climate change, thereby promoting sustainable, inclusive development (Ottmar Edenhofer, 2012).

Digital Governance and Smart Policy Tools for Renewable Energy Monitoring

In the era of digital transformation, the integration of smart technologies and digital governance into renewable energy systems offers new opportunities for enhanced policy implementation and monitoring. The deployment of digital tools enables governments and stakeholders to more effectively track renewable energy progress, improve transparency, and ensure that policies are achieving their intended outcomes.

Smart policy tools, such as real-time data analytics, geographic information systems (GIS), and 'Internet of Things' (IOT) devices, can enhance the management and oversight of renewable energy projects. These technologies allow for the continuous monitoring of energy generation, consumption patterns, and system performance, enabling more responsive policy interventions. Digital platforms can also facilitate the collection of data from decentralized and off-grid systems,

providing policymakers with accurate, up-to-date information on energy access and infrastructure needs.

In addition, digital governance helps optimize regulatory frameworks by providing tools for automating administrative processes, streamlining licensing and permitting procedures, and enhancing stakeholder engagement. By leveraging big data and artificial intelligence, policymakers can predict energy demand and supply fluctuations, assess the effectiveness of incentive programs, and identify areas for improvement in grid integration and efficiency.

Moreover, digital governance fosters transparency by making data on renewable energy investments, production, and consumption accessible to the public, which strengthens accountability and reduces opportunities for corruption. As digital tools become increasingly embedded in energy governance, they enable a more agile, responsive, and data-driven approach to renewable energy management, ensuring that renewable energy systems are effectively integrated into national energy strategies (Agency, 2021).

The Role of International Aid and Development Finance in Renewable Energy Governance:

The International aid and development finance have become critical drivers in advancing renewable energy

governance in developing countries. These external financial resources play an essential role in bridging the financing gap, particularly for countries that face significant economic constraints in funding large-scale renewable energy projects. With limited access to capital and high upfront costs associated with renewable energy infrastructure, many developing nations rely on concessional loans, grants, and risk mitigation instruments provided by international financial institutions and donor agencies.

Development finance institutions (DFIs) such as the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and bilateral agencies like USAID support renewable energy projects through both direct investments and by de-risking private sector involvement (Group, 2020). These funds often catalyze private investment by offering financial products tailored to the needs of the energy sector in developing regions. For instance, concessional loans and guarantees lower the perceived financial risks, thus enabling the private sector to invest in large renewable energy projects.

In addition to funding, international aid also supports capacity-building initiatives, helping countries design and implement effective renewable energy policies. This includes strengthening regulatory frameworks, building institutional

capacity, and providing technical assistance to ensure that national energy systems are efficient and resilient. By working alongside governments, international development finance helps to integrate renewable energy strategies into broader climate change and development goals, promoting long-term sustainability.

Moreover, development finance plays an integral role in supporting innovation and technology transfer. It facilitates the adoption of new technologies and business models, enabling developing countries to leapfrog traditional, carbon-intensive energy systems and move directly to more sustainable and decentralized energy solutions.

However, the effectiveness of international aid and development finance depends on how well these funds are integrated into national strategies. **These financial resources must align** with local development goals and be managed transparently to avoid inefficiencies or corruption. When executed properly, international finance and aid can serve as catalysts for a more inclusive, sustainable, and globally connected renewable energy future.

The impact of corruption and weak institutions on renewable energy development

Corruption and weak institutional structures are significant barriers to the successful deployment of renewable energy in developing countries. These factors not only delay the implementation of renewable energy projects but can also distort markets, increase costs, and hinder the equitable distribution of energy benefits. Corruption in the energy sector often leads to the misallocation of resources, where contracts for renewable energy projects are awarded based on political connections rather than the quality or merit of the project. This fosters inefficiency, increases costs, and may lead to the use of substandard materials, undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of renewable energy systems (Sovacool, 2013).

Weak institutions, including regulatory bodies and governance structures, cannot often enforce energy policies effectively. In such environments, renewable energy policies may be inconsistently applied, and there may be insufficient monitoring and evaluation of projects. This results in unreliable energy infrastructure, insufficient maintenance of renewable systems, and difficulties in integrating renewable energy into the national grid. Furthermore, when regulatory frameworks lack transparency or are subject to political influence, potential investors may be hesitant to invest in the renewable energy

sector due to concerns about financial risks and the stability of the regulatory environment (Florini, 2011).

Additionally, weak institutions are often ill-equipped to address the social and environmental impacts of renewable energy projects, leading to resistance from local communities. Without proper consultation, stakeholders may feel excluded from decision-making processes, which can result in public distrust or opposition to renewable energy projects. Ensuring strong institutional frameworks that promote transparency, accountability, and public participation is critical for building trust and securing broad support for renewable energy transitions.

To mitigate the impacts of corruption and weak institutions, it is essential for developing countries to strengthen governance frameworks, improve regulatory oversight, and adopt anti-corruption measures in the energy sector. International cooperation and capacity-building initiatives can also support countries in creating robust institutions capable of implementing effective renewable energy policies and achieving long-term sustainability (Group, 2020).

Gender-Inclusive Policy Approaches in Renewable Energy Development

Gender-inclusive policy approaches are essential in ensuring that the benefits of renewable energy development are equitably shared among all segments of society, particularly women. In many developing countries, women are the primary energy users within households, often responsible for energy management and related chores. However, they are frequently excluded from decision-making processes in energy planning, and they often face barriers in accessing energy technologies, financing, and employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector.

Integrating gender considerations into renewable energy policies can help address these disparities by ensuring that women have equal access to energy services, resources, and benefits. This includes designing policies that support women's participation in the energy workforce, promote female entrepreneurship in the renewable energy sector, and create energy solutions that respond to the specific needs of women. For instance, decentralized energy systems, such as solar home systems, can directly benefit women by reducing the time they spend on collecting firewood or managing traditional cooking methods, thus improving health outcomes and freeing up time for education or income-generating activities.

Gender-inclusive energy policies also prioritize the involvement of women in decision-making and leadership roles within energy governance. By fostering women's participation in energy policy development, implementation, and monitoring, countries can ensure that energy systems are more inclusive and better tailored to the diverse needs of their populations (Agency, 2021). Additionally, engaging women in renewable energy projects not only enhances the effectiveness of these projects but also contributes to the achievement of broader gender equality and economic empowerment goals.

To successfully implement gender-inclusive policies in renewable energy, governments and stakeholders must address institutional barriers, promote gender-sensitive training and capacity-building, and provide targeted financial support to women in the energy sector. This approach not only improves energy access and security but also strengthens the social and economic fabric of communities, contributing to a more just and sustainable energy transition**.**

Energy Justice and Inclusive Policy-Making in Renewable Transitions

The global transition to renewable energy sources is not solely a technical or economic shift—it is inherently a social

transformation that must prioritize equity and justice. Energy justice aims to ensure the fair distribution of both the benefits and burdens of energy systems, particularly focusing on marginalized and vulnerable communities who have historically borne the brunt of environmental degradation and energy poverty.

Inclusive policy-making is central to operationalizing energy justice. This involves engaging diverse stakeholders—including indigenous groups, low-income populations, and local communities—in the design, implementation, and evaluation of renewable energy projects. Effective participatory frameworks can help prevent new forms of inequality from emerging in the green economy, ensuring that no group is disproportionately affected by land use changes, displacement, or increased energy costs.

Policies must also address procedural justice, ensuring transparency, accountability, and meaningful public involvement in decision-making processes. Distributive and recognition justice must be considered to correct systemic imbalances and to validate the rights and knowledge of communities historically excluded from energy governance.

Without a justice-centered approach, renewable transitions risk reproducing the same power asymmetries and

exclusions that characterized fossil fuel regimes. Thus, a sustainable energy future depends not just on clean technologies, but on fair and inclusive governance structures.

Conclusion

The policy and governance frameworks surrounding the renewable energy sector in developing countries are critical to unlocking the full potential of clean energy solutions. Effective governance, supported by robust policy frameworks, can drive sustainable energy transitions, foster innovation, and ensure equitable access to energy. However, the challenges are significant, with issues such as inadequate financing, weak institutions, corruption, and limited technological capacity often hindering progress. To overcome these challenges, developing countries must prioritize strengthening institutional frameworks, ensuring transparency, and fostering inclusive governance structures. International cooperation and development finance also play an essential role in filling gaps and supporting capacity-building efforts. By integrating gender-inclusive policies, addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, and aligning renewable energy goals with climate change targets, countries can build resilient, sustainable, and equitable energy systems. Ultimately, the successful deployment of renewable energy in developing countries hinges on the creation of coherent, long-term policies that balance economic, social, and

environmental considerations. Through coordinated efforts, developing nations can not only achieve energy security but also contribute meaningfully to global climate goals, all while advancing socio-economic development and reducing inequality.

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CASE STUDIES ON FEEDING ISSUES FACED BY CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY AT GMFCS LEVEL V

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ABSTRACT

Cerebral palsy (CP) is the most common motor disability affecting children worldwide. Children classified under the Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) Level V experience the most severe motor impairments. Feeding difficulties are common and often severe in these children, significantly impacting their nutrition and overall health. This qualitative case study aimed to explore the feeding challenges faced by caregivers of children with GMFCS Level V CP from Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu, India. Two caregivers were purposively selected for in-depth case analysis. Findings showed that both children with GMFCS Level V CP faced major feeding issues, including difficulty in chewing, swallowing, and maintaining posture, leading to prolonged mealtimes and high

caregiver burden. It was also noted that the diet consisted mostly of traditional soft foods, lacked variety and nutritional adequacy. Limited feeding guidance and support increased the risk of malnutrition, poor growth, and low immunity. The study emphasizes the need for targeted feeding interventions and professional support.

Keywords: Cerebral Palsy (CP), Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS), Feeding Issues, Caregiver, Diet

INTRODUCTION

Cerebral palsy (CP) is the most prevalent motor disability among children worldwide. It is a lifelong neurological condition resulting from non-progressive disturbances in the developing foetal or infant brain (Sandran et al., 2024). Worldwide, population-based studies estimate that the prevalence of CP ranges from one to nearly four cases per 1,000 live births, depending on geographic and healthcare variations (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).In developed countries, cerebral palsy (CP) occurs in approximately 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 live births, but the incidence rises significantly to between 40 and 100 per 1,000 among premature infants born before 28 weeks of gestation (Calderone et al., 2025). In India, the estimated prevalence is approximately three cases per 1,000 live

births, making it a significant paediatric health concern (Dias, 2017).

Among children with CP, those classified under Level V of the Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) experience the most severe motor impairments (García-Ron et al., 2023). Feeding issues in this group are particularly complex and multifaceted. Common difficulties include vomiting, regurgitation, delayed gastric emptying, poor trunk control, and challenges with swallowing. These problems are often exacerbated by the child's dependence on others for feeding, difficulties in signaling hunger or satiety, and the inability to maintain proper posture during meals. Such issues not only increase the risk of inadequate nutritional intake and malnutrition but also impose considerable emotional and physical strain on caregivers (García Rona et al., 2019).

Through detailed examinations of individual caregiving experiences, the study seeks to uncover the specific difficulties faced during mealtimes, the strategies employed to manage these challenges, and the emotional impact on the caregivers themselves.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By documenting and interpreting these live experiences, the case studies aim to generate insights that can inform the design of practical, caregiver-oriented interventions and support systems tailored to the unique needs of families raising children with profound motor impairments. Although feeding difficulties are a significant aspect of caregiving for children with severe CP, there is only limited research in this area, especially within the Indian socio-cultural context. These case studies aim to fill this gap by providing a clear and detailed understanding of feeding-related challenges in the Indian context. The findings are expected to help improve both knowledge and practical support for caregivers.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the case studies is to understand the feeding issues experienced by caregivers of children diagnosed with Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) Level V cerebral palsy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a neurological condition that arises during infancy or early childhood and leads to lasting

difficulties with muscle coordination and body movement. It results from damage or abnormalities in the developing brain that interfere with the brain's ability to regulate movement, posture, and balance. The word "cerebral" relates to the brain, while "palsy" indicates issues with movement(National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2025).Cerebral palsy (CP) encompasses a range of disorders affecting movement, posture, and coordination, with various causes. The wide variation in clinical features is captured by multiple classification systems, which consider factors such as the type of motor impairment, affected body parts, severity, and functional abilities (Ferluga, Archer, Sathe, et al., 2013).

The Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) is a tool used to classify the mobility and gross motor abilities of individuals with cerebral palsy into five distinct levels. The Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS) has five levels to describe mobility in individuals with cerebral palsy. Level I includes those who walk, run, and jump with mild limitations. Level II involves walking with some support and difficulty on uneven surfaces. Level III requires assistive devices for walking and may involve wheelchair use for longer distances. Level IV indicates limited mobility with primary reliance on a wheelchair. Level V represents severe motor impairment with complete dependence on assistance or

powered mobility (Cerebral Palsy Alliance Research Foundation, 2023).

Feeding difficulties are among the most frequently observed issues in paediatric and neonatal healthcare. Barton et al (2018) stated that feeding problems affect approximately 25% of typically developing children and can be seen in up to 90% of children who are at risk for developmental delays. Between 85% and 99% of children diagnosed with cerebral palsy (CP) encounter feeding difficulties. These challenges can result in various health-related issues, including malnutrition and constipation, as well as psychosocial problems like diminished self-esteem, social withdrawal, depression, and a reduced overall quality of life (Speyer et al., 2019; Malak et al., 2024). Nur et al. (2025) discuss that about 78% of participants reported experiencing feeding difficulties, with approximately one-third having a high GMFCS level. The GMFCS scale demonstrated a statistically significant association with oromotor dysfunction and poor postural control.

Caregivers of children with cerebral palsy (CP) face considerable challenges in feeding. Although they often find ways to manage these issues, support and guidance from healthcare professionals remain minimal. This lack of assistance can negatively impact the caregiver's and child's social interactions outside the home. Feeding is deeply tied to the

mother-child bond, and caregivers often perceive themselves as failing if they cannot feed their child successfully (Taylor et al., 2025). Taylor et al. (2021) shed light on the challenges faced by caregivers in feeding children with CP, often resulting in ongoing stress. It emphasizes the need for stronger professional support and calls for further research to develop and assess strategies to assist caregivers, particularly those without social or family support.

METHODOLOGY

The case study method involves an in-depth study of a single subject to explore complex issues in real-life settings, revealing relationships that broader studies may overlook (Alex, 2024). This qualitative case study explored feeding issues among caregivers of children with severe motor impairments due to GMFCS V cerebral palsy (CP) from Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu, India. Children aged 6 years with GMFCS Level V were purposively selected for the study. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, observations, and review of medical records. Ethical considerations involved obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and using pseudonyms.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The two case studies classified under GMFCS Level 5 are detailed below.

Case 1

Caregiver's Background: The primary caregiver of Case 1 is a 32-year-old mother with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree. She is currently not employed, having left her job after working for six months to care for her child. She lives in a joint family and has two children. Her husband runs a business, but the family experiences economic instability with a monthly income of around Rs 7,000. A paternal cousin (her father's brother's son) has also been diagnosed with a disability.

Child's Background: Case 1 is a 6-year-old boy diagnosed with flaccid cerebral palsy, classified as Level 5, with 80% disability. He also has Down syndrome and suffers from frequent cold. Physically, he is of fair complexion, 109 cm height, and weighs 11 kg. He lacks neck and back control, appears inactive, and often looks sleepy. His developmental milestones are significantly delayed due to the severity of his condition. The child does not attend school.

Birth-Related Details: Case 1 was delivered via caesarean section in the early part of the ninth month (36th week). During the eighth month of pregnancy, the mother reported that she could not feel any foetal movement. At birth, the baby had suffered from oxygen deprivation and had consumed amniotic fluid. He weighed 2.6 kg at birth. Immediately after delivery, he was diagnosed with Down syndrome, and more recently, he has been confirmed to have cerebral palsy.

Treatment and Medication: The child receives physiotherapy and occupational therapy, while caregiver training has been informal, with only verbal guidance from a physiotherapist. No specific medications have been reported.

Economic Challenges: The family struggles financially due to high medical costs and the father's unstable business. They receive Rs 2,000 monthly from the UDID scheme, which helps, but their expenses still exceed their income, making caregiving difficult.

Feeding History: Case 1 was unable to suck breast milk after birth. As a solution, his mother used a breast pump to express milk, which was fed to him using a traditional "shank"-like device (a type of feeding spoon which is also known as bondla feeding bowl) for the first two months. From the third month onward, formula milk was introduced and continued until 6

months. After that, Cerelac was given. The child has experienced choking issues, especially with liquid foods. Due to an allergy to cow's milk, doctors advised giving soya milk instead.

Challenges in Feeding: Feeding Case 1 remains a difficult task. He dislikes plain rice and experiences both chewing, swallowing and choking difficulties. These issues are aggravated during cold, which occur about once every two months. Nebulization is the only treatment used to manage breathing difficulties. Due to the lack of neck and back control, feeding is physically demanding for the mother. Until recently, she used a horizontal (lactation) position for feeding. Now, with the support of the CP chair provided by the centre, feeding is somewhat easier. All the foods are well mashed and provided to the child for easy consumption.

Family Meal Time Practices: Currently, Case 1 is fed separately while seated in a cerebral palsy (CP) chair. Prior to receiving this chair, his mother had to feed him in a horizontal position. Case 1 is non-vegetarian and began chewing only at the age of four. He is now given soft, easy-to-chew foods such as idly, dosas, and mashed pulses. Typically, he is fed first, after which the rest of the family eats together. Each meal takes nearly an hour to complete.

A Sample Weekly Menu of the Child

Time	Meal/Snack	Food Items and Quantity	Quantity	Notes
8:00 AM(waking up)	Early morning	—	—	—
8:30 AM	Breakfast	Dosa , Idly ,Idiyappam with sambar	2 no: , ½ katorie	Mashed well and given
10:30 AM	Mid-Morning Snack	—	—	—
12:30 PM	Lunch	Rice in the form of Sadam(rasam, sambar) fish/chicken, poriyal (vegetables), keerai curry	¾ cup 1 piece ½ katorie ½ katorie	Child dislikes plain rice Fish/chicken is provided once a week , Faces chewing and swallowing difficulties. Mashed well and given
4:00 PM	Tea Time Snack	Biscuits, juice	2no; 150 ml	—
7:00–8:00 PM	Dinner	Idly / Dosa	2 no:	No dditional side dishes Mashed well and given
9:00 PM	Bedtime	Milk	200 ml	Uses soya milk

Implications of the diet: The diet pattern of the child with severe motor impairments due to GMFCS V cerebral palsy reveals several nutritional and feeding challenges. The limited meal frequency, with no early morning or mid-morning snacks, reduces opportunities for adequate calorie intake throughout the day. The child is offered a typical South Indian diet consisting of idly, dosa, rice, vegetables, and occasional non-vegetarian foods; however, protein-rich items like fish or chicken are included only once a week. This limited protein intake may not meet the heightened nutritional demands of a child with disabilities, potentially affecting growth and immune function. The child faced difficulties in chewing and swallowing, common in cerebral palsy, potentially restricting food variety and nutrient intake. Snack choices like biscuits and juice provide quick energy and can be complemented with more nutrient-dense options to better support the child's overall nutritional needs. Using milk alternatives such as soya milk indicates adaptations for possible lactose intolerance or digestive issues. Overall, this diet highlights the need for more frequent, nutrient-dense meals with appropriate texture modifications and caregiver support to ensure safe feeding, adequate nutrition, and improved growth outcomes for the child.

Assistive Devices Used for Feeding: For feeding and postural support, a CP chair and a shak are currently being used. These

have helped to reduce the physical strain on the mother during meal times.

For a child with Cerebral Palsy at GMFCS Level V, in addition to the CP chair and shak, several assistive devices can enhance feeding and reduce caregiver strain. Advanced adjustable seating systems that provide improved postural support can be beneficial. Adaptive feeding tools such as angled utensils, nosey cups, and non-slip mats aid in safe and easier feeding. Chest harnesses, pelvic straps, and head supports help maintain proper alignment, while floor sitters or feeder seats offer flexible positioning. Consultation with doctors, occupational therapists, rehabilitation workers, or nutritionists can help ensure the most suitable device for the child.

Support Systems: The family receives Rs 2,000 monthly through the UDID scheme. Emotional and caregiving support comes from both maternal and paternal relatives. Technologies such as music, television, and motivational talks are used by the caregiver as sources of relaxation. The family members could understand the child's difficulties and provide assistance when possible.

Advice for Other Parents by the Caregiver: The caregiver did not provide specific advice for other parents but emphasized the importance of consistent care and support from family.

Case 2

Caregiver's Background: The caregiver in Case 2 is a 60-year-old woman who is the child's grandmother. She has studied up to the 5th standard. Her daughter-in-law, who is the mother of the child, holds a BE degree and is now engaged in the textile business. The mother has two children, with the child in focus being the first in ordinal position. Since her second child also started to face the same issues as the first child, the mother could not handle the situation due to stress and left the first child in the custody of her in-laws. The family's monthly income is Rs17, 000.

Child Background: Case 2 is a 6-year-old boy child who is not studying. He is completely dependent and has spastic cerebral palsy (CP) at level 5, classified as severe CP. His height is 108 cm, and his weight is 11.3 kg. The boy appears lean and fair, looks tired, drools and cries during therapy sessions. He has drooling, appears weak, and has no verbal communication but conveys messages through emotions. The child has no back and neck control.

Birth-Related Details: The mother of the child suffered from dengue during the 3rd month of pregnancy. Some complications were identified through MRI scanning during the pregnancy. The child was born in the 9th month (full term) through normal

delivery, weighing 3.100 kg at birth. There is also a history of cerebral palsy in the family, as his younger sister, who is 1 year old, is affected as well

Treatment and Medication: The child experiences seizure but does not take any medication. Only a nasal spray is provided, which helps to alleviate the condition within seconds.

Economic Challenges: Since the parents are engaged in business, they had to leave the child at their grandparents' home. They also spend Rs5, 000 to Rs6, 000 per month on the child's expenses.

Feeding History: The child is a non-vegetarian. He was breastfed until 1½ years and started weaning at 6 months. The child was hesitant to consume formula milk. The child is given food based on his preferences. He likes to have semaiya, biryani, and non-vegetarian food, which need to be well-mashed before being served.

Challenges in Feeding: The child is given well-mashed food or sometimes ground food. He has difficulty chewing and swallowing. Feeding the child takes more than an hour, during which a mobile phone is used to show videos to aid the process. It is easier to feed fruit juices compared to other foods. Drooling

occurs frequently. Previously, vitamin supplements were provided, but they are no longer given.

Feeding Guidance: No special education or guidance regarding feeding has been provided.

Family Meal Time Practices: The grandmother feeds the child first, the family eats their meal afterwards.

A Sample Weekly Menu of the Child

Time	Meal/Snack	Food Items	Quantity	Notes
No fixed time(waking up)	Early morning	—	—	—
8:00 AM .	Breakfast	Idly / Dosa/ Puri	1no:/ 1no: / 1no	No additional side dishes, Mashed for easy consumption
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Mid-Morning	Fruits or fruit juices (apple, orange, coconut water, musambi)	1 no/ 150 ml	Includes fresh fruits or fruit juices.

12:30 PM	Lunch	Rice with rasam, curd, sambar, dhal	¾ cup	Faces chewing and swallowing difficulties, Mashed for easy consumption
4:00 PM	Tea Time	Fruits or aval with jaggery mix	1no / ½ cup	Healthy and fiber-rich snack, Mashed well for easy consumption
8:00 PM	Dinner	Idly, Upma, Ragi Semiya	1no:/ ¾ cup	No additional side dishes, Mashed for easy consumption
9.00 Pm	Bed time	—	—	—

Implications of the diet: The diet of a 6-year-old child with GMFCS Level V cerebral palsy has important implications for their health and development. Given the severe motor

impairments, the child likely faces significant challenges with chewing, swallowing, and self-feeding, making nutrient intake difficult. Although the diet includes a variety of traditional and soft foods, meal frequency and portion sizes may not fully meet the increased energy and protein needs essential for growth and muscle maintenance in children with severe disabilities. The use of mashed foods and soft textures helps with safe swallowing but may limit food variety and micronutrient intake. Without adequate feeding support and specialized nutritional interventions, the child is at risk of malnutrition, delayed growth, and weakened immunity. Therefore, tailored feeding strategies, frequent nutrient-dense meals, and multidisciplinary caregiver support are crucial to improve nutritional status and overall quality of life.

Assistive devices used for feeding: A CP chair and a roaming chair are used for feeding the child. The roaming chair is specifically designed for mobility and serves purposes similar to a wheelchair. No other special devices are used for feeding other than spoon.

For a child with Cerebral Palsy at GMFCS Level V, additional assistive devices can improve feeding safety and comfort. Along with the CP and roaming chairs, tools like angled spoons, nosey cups, non-slip mats, and scoop dishes can aid in easier feeding. Adding headrests, trunk supports, or tray

attachments can enhance posture and stability. Seeking advice from doctors, occupational therapists, rehabilitation workers, or nutritionists can help in suggesting the appropriate assistive devices for the child's condition.

Support systems: The family receives support from neighbours whenever there is an emergency situation. Also the mother of the child receives continuous support from the grandparents (husbands parents), as they are the primary caregivers. The mother of the child experiences depression due to the child's health condition and has been unable to manage the situation, as her second child is also showing similar symptoms. So far, she has not been taking any medication for her depression. This led her to place the child under the custody of his grandparents.

Advice for other Parents by the Caregiver: Although the grandmother, who is the caregiver of the child, feels sad, she continues to go with the flow and strives hard despite the challenges. She also encourages other parents to stay emotionally strong and resilient while caring for their children.

CONCLUSION

Both children with severe motor impairments due to GMFCS Level V cerebral palsy face significant feeding challenges that impact their nutritional status and overall health.

Their diets, while including traditional south Indian foods based on Tamil Nadu and soft foods, often lack variety and sufficient nutrient density to meet their increased energy and protein needs. Difficulties with chewing, swallowing, and posture during feeding, and prolonged meal times have increased the caregiver burden. Limited formal feeding guidance and assistive support further complicate safe and effective feeding. Without targeted interventions, these children are at risk of malnutrition, delayed growth, and compromised immune function.

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GRAPHOLOGICAL DEVIATIONS IN FARLEY MOWAT'S 'A WHALE FOR THE KILLING': A STYLISTIC STUDY

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Abstract:

This study investigates the stylistic impact of graphological choices in Farley Mowat's 1972 memoir, 'A Whale for the Killing'. I analyze how Mowat uses typography, spacing, and punctuation to heighten the narrative's emotional resonance and thematic complexity. Through close reading, this analysis explores how these techniques create immediacy, build tension, and evoke empathy in Mowat's audience, offering deeper insights into his traumatic experiences. Ultimately, this study emphasis the crucial role of graphology in shaping literary meaning and highlights the innovative nature of Mowat's style.

Keywords:graphology, deviation, phonology, stylistics,

Introduction:

Farley Mowat, a renowned Canadian author, is celebrated for his evocative and often unconventional writing

style. His works, such as *A Whale for the Killing*, are characterized by their ability to engage readers on both emotional and intellectual levels. One of the key techniques Mowat employs to achieve this is the strategic manipulation of graphological features. By examining the deliberate use of typography, punctuation, and spacing, this paper aims to explore how these visual elements contribute to the overall meaning and impact of *A Whale for the Killing*. Through a close analysis of specific examples, we will delve into the ways in which graphology enhances the narrative's tension, evokes empathy, and ultimately shapes the reader's interpretation of the text. This study will shed light on Mowat's innovative approach to storytelling and the powerful role of graphology in literary expression.

Significance of the Study:

This research offers a novel perspective on Farley Mowat's literary style, focusing on the often-overlooked yet impactful role of graphology. By analyzing the specific ways in which Mowat employs these visual elements, we can gain a deeper understanding of his writing techniques and their contribution to the overall meaning and effect of his work. This study will not only enhance our appreciation of Mowat's literary artistry but also contribute to the broader field of literary analysis, highlighting the significance of graphology as

a powerful tool for shaping reader interpretation and emotional response.

Farley Mowat (Author):

Mowat, a renowned Canadian writer and environmentalist (1921–2012), was deeply committed to advocating for the environment through his extensive body of work. Most of his writings focus on environmental themes, reflecting his passion for nature and his love for the outdoors. He regarded nature as a precious, divine gift with intrinsic value beyond its practical use, shaping modern environmental discourse and ecological movements. He demonstrated exceptional skill in language, often employing an autobiographical writing style to convey his ideas.

Mowat's writing style is defined by its straightforwardness and clarity. He steers clear of complicated jargon and technical language, ensuring his work is easily understood by a broad audience. This simplicity is one of his greatest strengths as an author. His work reflects a deep understanding of language and effectively conveys the quintessential Canadian spirit. His literary career began with 'People of the Deer' (1952). He followed this with a series of acclaimed works, including the children's classic 'Lost in the Barrens' (1956), the iconic 'Never Cry Wolf' (1963), and the provocative 'A Whale for the Killing' (1972). Other notable titles include 'Owls in the

Family' (1962), 'And No Bird Sang' (1979), 'Sea of Slaughter' (1984), 'Born Naked' (1993), 'No Man's River' (2004), and 'Eastern Passage' (2010) (1).

A Whale for the Killing (Text):

Mowat's *A Whale for the Killing* offers a powerful and insightful examination of humanity's harmful interactions with nature. Set in the harsh and unforgiving landscape of the Arctic, the novel recounts the author's harrowing experiences as a young man on a whaling expedition (2). Through vivid descriptions and introspective narration, Mowat paints a vivid picture of the brutal reality of commercial whaling, exposing the senseless slaughter of majestic creatures for profit. The novel delves into themes of environmentalism, animal rights, and the human capacity for both cruelty and compassion. Mowat's powerful narrative and unwavering honesty make *A Whale for the Killing* a timeless classic that continues to resonate with readers today.

Background of the Study:

'Graphology' is a type of linguistic analysis, focuses on the visual aspects of a language, examining elements like typography, punctuation, and spacing. The word was initially introduced into usage in linguistic analysis by McIntosh, who viewed it as a comparable model to that of phonology. In his

paper "Graphology and Meaning," he employed graphology "as a counterpart to 'phonology' in the realm of spoken language, but within the context of written language." (3). A few years later, Halliday and McIntosh expanded this notion by relating it to spelling, punctuation, and any other aspect of language's graphic resources (4).

Stylistics, on the other hand, explores the stylistic choices made by writers to convey meaning and evoke specific responses from readers. While often associated with linguistic features, stylistics also recognizes the significance of graphology as a powerful tool for shaping the reader's understanding. The intersection of stylistics, and graphology is evident in the deliberate manipulation of visual elements to enhance the narrative (5). By employing techniques such as italics, bolding, and unusual punctuation, writers can create emphasis, highlight key information, or evoke specific emotions. These graphological choices can reinforce the textual meaning, add layers of interpretation, and contribute to the overall aesthetic appeal of the text.

Tracing the 'Style' in Stylistics:

The study of 'Style', in general, is referred to as stylistics. It is the study of how a writer uses words and grammar as other aspects in a phrase and throughout the narrative. 'Style' refers to a writer's choice of words or

mannerisms in conveying his or her thoughts. It allows the writer to use whatever language he or she wants to grab the reader's attention to their work without worrying about grammar or language standards.

Stylistics is a root of linguistics that focuses all aspects of language. Leech distinguishes three levels of language: realization, form, and meaning. Phonology and graphology are responsible for realization, whereas grammar and lexicon are responsible for the form, and semantics is responsible for denotative and cognitive meanings. As a result, 'realization' links phonology and graphology (6). In written language, graphology is the expression of phonology. As a consequence, both levels are linked, and phonological effects may be found in practically any graphological form. According to Leech and Short (7), graphology serves as an alternative form of expression to phonology.

Style relates to the superficial method of appearance in speaking and writing, according to Wales (8). In other words, style refers to how writers and authors use their works to communicate their ideas or thoughts to the audience. The term 'personal style' or 'individual style' has long been used to describe the representation of an author's personality, and it is often used in association with the author's name (9).

Style is frequently associated with deviation, which refers to a deviation from established norms and rules. The writer is consciously employing his or her own style, which is characterized by a disregard for grammar standards, to draw the reader's attention. These are the stylistic markers that he/she employed to achieve the goal of attracting the reader's attention. In reality, style as a deviation and style as a choice are closely related since both serve the same purpose: to communicate a writer's message and often distinguished by the writer's refusal to utilize conventional language, as well as his or her non-conformism and disregard for grammatical standards (10). This non-conformity on his part might be seen as a style indicator.

The linguistic deviation is a unique language form used by the author to stress and impress his or her audience. If the writer employs a vocabulary that differs from that used in everyday conversation, the language might be deemed innovative (6). Crystal, on the other hand, claims that deviation relates to a phrase that breaks a rule grammatically, phonologically, or even semantically. The deviation may be defined as an interruption in the regular communication process that makes it harder to comprehend the content. Leech identified eight degrees of deviations such as "phonological, graphological, lexical deviation, semantic, grammatical,

deviation of register, dialectical deviation, and deviation of the historical period." (9)

Graphology can be used to mimic spoken language, creating a sense of immediacy and authenticity. Through the use of dialectal spellings, unconventional punctuation, or typographical variations, writers can represent different voices and perspectives. This interplay between the written and spoken word emphasizes the dynamic discourse of language, and the traditions in which it can be applied to shape meaning and identity (5). Graphology and Stylistics are intertwined disciplines that work together to create a rich and multifaceted reading experience. By understanding the deliberate use of visual elements, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the artistry and intentionality behind the written word.

Application for the study:

In today's stylistics, the graphological deviation is at the base of the pyramid. Graphology is a subset of certain insignificant, basic, and occasionally unconcerned written language styles. Syntax determines graphological forms like spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, italicization, and paragraphing. Leech and Short (7), in their book 'Style in Fiction', illustrate their discussion with an example from Katherine Mansfield's 'A Cup of Tea': *The discreet door shut with a click.*

For instance, punctuation could have been used to split this into two distinct pieces of information:

(a). *The discreet door shut – with a click.* OR a similar division might have been made by a comma in: (b) *With a click, the discreet door shut.*

This punctuation would have made some difference to the reader's processing of the sentence; (a) in particular would have made the 'click' seem a matter of importance and surprise in its own right, dividing the reader's attention between the two events, instead of making him see them as integral parts of a whole." (7)

Leech and Short suggest that implicit phonology is largely shaped by word choice and syntactic structures, making it a significant element of stylistic expression. However, because the writing system often reflects the sound patterns of speech, graphology also plays a key role in creating phonological effects. (7)

Leech and Short provided a fitting example in their book to illustrate the connection between graphological and phonological deviations.

"… 'How Do You Like London?' Such mimicry, of course, often extends to the use of unorthodox spelling to suggest a character's accent, as when in *Bleak House* the debilitated

cousin's favourite word *fellow* gets reduced to the monosyllable *fler*: 'normously rich fler', 'Far better hang wrong fler than no fler'. There is apparently no graphological device, whether of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, etc. that cannot be exploited for such purposes. But because the correspondence between graphological and phonological features is far from precise, it cannot be said that a writer has actually represented the speech style of a character. Graphological conventions are exploited impressionistically, in a way which suggests what sort of pronunciation a reader should adopt in reading aloud. For example, the capital letters of 'How Do You Like London?' might suggest a number of phonetic factors – abnormal loudness, slow-motion delivery, stressing of every syllable – all expressive of the proverbial Englishman's assumption that those who cannot speak his language as a native are deaf, or stupid, or both. The significant point is that an initial capital is a form of emphasis or highlighting in writing, and therefore can be used as a visual correlative of emphasis in speech." (7)

Text and Context for Discussion:

Mowat vividly recalled the harrowing incident of a pregnant whale that became trapped in Burgeo's local pond for six months. Tragically, the urban people turned its suffering into a form of entertainment, tormenting the helpless creature.

Unable to come to terms with the horrifying events he witnessed, Mowat channeled his anguish into writing *A Whale for the Killing*. This deeply moving account details the whale's desperate fight for survival, with the author courageously stepping in as an advocate and protector for the voiceless animal.

Mowat's exceptional storytelling ability is coupled with a distinctive style. His narratives are both captivating and concise, regardless of the subject matter. His elegant and personalized writing style engages readers, drawing them into the story. Mowat's commitment to his principles often fuels his passionate and expressive language, leading to striking imagery and vivid descriptions. He employs a diverse range of linguistic devices, including specific word choices, idiomatic phrases, verb usage, modal auxiliaries, colloquial expressions and punctuation structures, to create a unique and powerful literary voice.

Mowat's creative linguistic skills have been revealed to be strong at all times. His graphological symbols, such as the usage of punctuation marks, are particularly noteworthy. He has made extensive use of symbols such as italics, dashes, hyphens, question tags, exclamation marks, ellipses, and inverted codes to communicate with his readers. Here are a few of the kinds he has used.

Italics: *Italics* are most commonly employed to distinguish titles and names of certain works or things from the rest of the text. In writing, italics are occasionally employed for emphasis. Excessive usage of italics diverts attention from the font's readability and can cause the reader to become unfocused. Italics are used throughout Mowat's writings to emphasize his significant point.

- She was waiting for us: small, dowdy, dirty; in sharp contrast to the sham grandeur of the *Carson*. But, unprepossessing as she looked, the *SS Burgeo* was wise in the ways of the unforgiving world of water. (WK 1)
- "It's a *Whale* of a whale, ... must be fifty, sixty - feet long…" (WK 86)
- "*Every*t'ing ought to be free to go where it wants!" (WK114)
- Had *my* need of her become greater than *her* need of me? (WK 147)
- I was the keeper of a *living* whale. (WK 163)

In *A Whale for the Killing*, Mowat employs almost a hundred italics, which are crucial to comprehending his narration's keywords. *SS Burgeo*, *Carson*, *may*, *whale*, *Every*, *my*, *living*, and other italicized terms are examples of varied purposeful usage to grasp the author's mindscape.

Dash: Dashes are a form of punctuation and are a horizontal line that denotes lacking words or characters or indicates a gap or pause in content. They are a bit more casual and should be used with caution in writing. Mowat's dashes are frequently used for commas, colons, and brackets in casual writing.

- Our destinations were a scattering of sea-grit fishing villages --- outports; they are called --- thinly spread along the hundreds of miles… (WK 1)
- It was obvious that neither the gunfire --- mostly from 22-calibre rifles --- nor the lance were capable of killing the whales outright; (WK 38)
- "We could see the marks of the bullets --- holes and slashes --- across the back from the blowhole to the fin." (WK 86)

Apostrophe: An apostrophe is a punctuation mark and there is a primary use of an apostrophe. The indication of the possessive cases (as in 'the whale's body,' 'Sam's delight,' etc) and the indication of the deletion of one or more letters, such as the contraction of "I am" turned "I'm", "Southwest" turned "Sou'west." Writers often aim to convey a particular style of speech or writing by using certain techniques. Some choose less common contractions, such as writing *nothin'* to represent the way the final 'g' in "nothing" is often dropped in casual speech. In poetry, you might encounter words like *e'er* instead of "ever." Mowat is highly known for his omission of some

letters and sounds. His use of apostrophes is quite different from others. Usually, writers write like “It’s hard times” whereas Mowat stresses and use apostrophe like “Tis hard times” and this is quite unusual and easy to trace his style.

- During the years Claire and I had known for the Sou’west Coast we had made at least a dozen voyages with Skipper Ro. (WK 2)
- ’Tis hard times when growed men’ll take on like they does now. ’Tis something new. They’s not a man I growed up alongside would kill more’n him and his folks could use. (WK 20)
- ’Twarn’t as we t’ought they’d tear up our gear a-purpose-like, (WK 59)
- “Why not ask the Sou’westers Club?” Claire suggested. “They’re a service club. They ought to be glad to do it.” (WK 112)
- “Don’t you take it too hard now, Skipper. They’s a good many people don’t want that whale hurted. (WK 142)

Hyphen: A hyphen connects two or more words or word components to generate a new term. The hyphenated term “well-known” serves as a distinction between “well” and “known.” When we use the hyphen to link words, we are often indicating to readers that the words operate together as a unit of meaning. It’s simple to link words using a hyphen. However,

selecting the proper words to link might be difficult. Hyphenated words include hyphenated compound words, like Brother-in-law, closed compound words, like fisherman, open compound words, like Coffee cup, and hyphens with digits, like half-inch. In Mowat's vocabulary, there are a number of hyphenated words and concepts. Here are a few examples:

- A Ten-ton bulldozer, lashed to the deck with half- inch cables, had been pitched right through the steel bulwarks into the green depths. (WK 1)
- Taking advantage of what would surely be an all-too-brief spell of fine weather, the inshore fishermen … (WK 11)
- The system whales have evolved to enable them, as air-breathing mammals, to survive for long periods in the depths is wonderfully effective. (WK 72)
- There was a flash of greenish-white light reflected from her undersides, followed by a swirl of water and rising bubbles which signified that she had opened her cavernous mouth. (WK 111)
- Almost overnight the lines became clear-cut. (WK 164)

Question Tag: Usually, a statement can be turned into a question by using question tags. It is frequently used to double-check information we believe is correct. Mowat's question tag is a question that is appended at the end of a declarative phrase to engage the readers, to confirm that something has been

understood, etc. Mostly, his questions take the form of statements. It demonstrates his approach of defining a 'question tag.'

- "When did the whales come back?" (WK 8)
- "What kind of whale is it?" (WK 82)
- "How can they be so bloody stupid? How could I have been so bloody stupid?" (WK 102)
- Did you ever see anything so damned big? (WK 117)
- What about antibiotic treatment for a whale? Is it possible? Could you give it? (WK 153)
- "Gone? She's not gone. She's dead" (WK 157)
- "Do you think there's any chance she might have got away?" (WK 159)

Exclamation: A punctuation mark that appears at the conclusion of a phrase is known as an exclamation mark. The 'note of appreciation' was the original name for exclamation, also known as exclamation points. They are accustomed to saying something. They are frequently employed after interjections (exclamatory, commanding, or protesting words and expressions like "mmm", "ahh", "wow" or "ohh").

- "come on the bridge, Skipper Mowat. We'd best get underway afore this nor'easter busts its guts!" (WK 2)
- "Holy Jesus Christ! 'T is still in there!" (WK 70)

- "*Everyt'*ing ought to be free to go where it wants!" (WK 114)
- "That whale… she spoke to we! I t'inks she *spoke* to we!" (WK 139)
- "Someone's lying!" on e of them replied truculently. (WK 163)

Ellipses: Three dots form an ellipsis, which is a punctuation mark (...). An ellipsis is a symbol that is used to indicate the removal of a word or words (including entire sentences or paragraphs) from a text, to create a long pause, to illustrate an incomplete idea, or to depict a lead off into silence. These ellipsis punctuation points are significant since they indicate that something is lacking in your writing. The points let your audience know that you have merely cited a portion of something and that they may go back and fill in the blanks if they want to. They shouldn't need to if you have used the ellipsis points properly. Here is an example form Mowatian use of ellipsis…

- …the sea which was the people's livelihood…by the sea which was their highway… by the sea which was their mistress and their master… the giver, and the taker away. (WK 6)
- "I began to experience an indescribable sense of empathy with them… and a mounting frustration." (WK 40)
- "Exploit…consume…excrete… at an ever- accelerating pace." (WK 50)

- "…they are essentially good people. I know that, but what sickens me is their simple failure to resist the impulse of savagery…" (WK 102)

Inverted codes: Inverted commas, often known as quotation marks (" "), are used to frame the writer's exact words. Inverted commas are divided into two types: 'single style' inverted commas and 'double style' inverted commas. Inverted commas in "double style" are common in Mowat's works.

- One of the first hurdles he had to overcome was to find means of concentrating the **"**labour resources**"** (by which term he described the people or the outports). (WK 13)
- Despite the ominous forecast, it only blew a **"**moderate breeze**"** that night. (WK 63)
- **"**What would be the use of that? the whale is going to 'die' anyway. Why should I interfere?**"** (WK 100)
- **"**Holy Mother of God!**"** he said softly. **"**You've got a whale!**"** (WK 117)

Conclusion:

The researcher (I) adopted a stylistic approach, a branch of linguistics, to analyze how the author utilizes punctuation and deviations to create a distinct language at the graphological level. Only by paying attention to the context can

those punctuations and purposeful faults be appreciated. Mowat employs capital letters, italic letters, as well as punctuation marks such as ellipsis, quotations, dashes, apostrophes, and question tags, exclamation marks, double quoted marks, brackets so on. He used a casual writing style to express his meaning, which is a type of language that is commonly used in everyday conversation of his time period. This casual style was chosen to reflect the reader's age and environment, to make the reading life more efficient.

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A CRITICAL STUDY ON WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SELECT NOVELS OF SIVAKAMI

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Abstract

Palanimuthu Sivakami is a writer, IAS officer, Feminist activist, and political rights campaigner. She writes about Dalit lives with a special focus on the problems encountered by rural Tamil Nadu. Apart from being one of the most prominent Dalit novelists; she raised her voice towards contemporary social and political issues. She believes that women are at the bottom of the social hierarchy and treated as worse. Dalit literature attempts to draw attention to the hardships and mistreatment that members of these groups endure. Today, people want total cultural and social independence with the help of their self-identification and self-elevation. This paper explores the representation of women in the selected novels of P. Sivakami and highlights how women are not merely victims of social justice but also as complex individuals navigating oppressive structures.

Keywords:

Social issues, social hierarchy, Mistreatment, Self-identification, Self- elevation and oppressive structure

A CRITICAL STUDY ON WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SELECT NOVELS OF SIVAKAMI

"Woman in this planet struggle to blossom into a mature individual with various experiences, resisting the life that has been thrust upon her, trying to find her true self amidst the whims and farces along life's journey and making up her mind and moving forward to her freedom" Sivakami, (146).

Dalit literature has improved in quality and had a significant influence on both people and society in India. It lists the uprising against discrimination of any kind, including exploitation based on caste, race, and class. Purely via writing, the reality and experiences have been expressed, and they help people become more socially and culturally conscious. It has also started to provide a distinct subset of female authors with a platform to communicate their thoughts, and they have made a strong argument for equality and dignity. Those individuals and groups who have been historically and systematically marginalized and excluded from the mainstream of society are referred to be "Dalits." Dr. Ambedkar introduced the phrase to give the so-

called "Untouchables" a new, empowered, and respectable identity. Dalit literature attempts to draw attention to the hardships and mistreatment that members of these groups endure. Today, people want total cultural and social independence with the help of their self-identification and self-elevation.

Palanimuthu Sivakami is a writer, IAS officer, Feminist activist, and political rights campaigner. She writes about Dalit lives with a special focus on the problems encountered by Dalit women in rural Tamil Nadu. Apart from being one of the most prominent Dalit novelists, she raised her voice towards contemporary social and political issues. She believes that women are at the bottom of the social hierarchy and treated as worse. She has penned six acclaimed novels, more than a hundred short stories, and two poetry collections. She has regularly kept in touch with editing and contributing to the monthly magazine called '*Puthiya Kodangi'* since 1995. She is the founder of Dalit Land Rights movements, the Women Front, South India Dalit Writer and Artist Forum, the Forum for Indian women intellectuals, and founder and president of the political party Samuga Samathuva Padai (Party for Social Equality) and served as an advisory member for the Sahitya Akademi.

Moreover, she is prominently writing in Tamil. Her notable works are *Pazhayana Kazhithalum, Kurukku Vettu, Nalum*

Thodarum, and *Kadaisi Mandar*. Most of her works are translated into English and other languages. Her first self-translated novel *The Grip of Change* rated among the five favorite novels of India by BBC Literary Review, has been prescribed as text in Women's studies and translation studies in many Colleges and Universities. Her second novel The Taming of was published by Penguin while another novel *Kurukku Vettu* has been published by the Sahitya Akademi under the title Cross Section. As an Indian Administrative Officer from 1980 to 2008 Sivakami served the Government of Tamil Nadu and Central government till she voluntarily retired to serve the poor and needy. Gita Ramasamy a publisher from Hyderabad, describes Sivakami's writing as "referring and self-critical with a bold modern voice that unapologetic acknowledging her root of which she has grown and evolved successfully".

Caste has been crucial in bringing up concerns about women's marginalization. Even when Indians expelled the colonists, women continued to struggle under patriarchy, particularly those from the Dalit group. To control others, modern civilization now proudly wears the label of "caste." Dalit women have always occupied the bottom echelons of the caste and class hierarchy. They are prohibited from entering temples in certain areas since it is thought that their presence might taint the area. It is challenging to get water from the public faucet; they must wait for other people to leave. Additionally, they made it hard to

enroll in higher education, blocked access to education, and reduced the likelihood of gaining more advanced secondary information.

For the sake of survival, the following phase is forced to lead a precarious existence. In this context, Dalit women's status is negatively impacted in every way. They also lost their identity and uniqueness as a result of their economic dependency on their father or spouse. Women's status in the social system has always been inconclusive. Although the ancient taboos for members of the Dalit community are the same for men and women, women must deal with them more frequently. Women lost them for a variety of reasons, including opposition to education, having to care for their siblings while their parents were out at work, having sick or unemployed parents who had their labor, and the fact that many of them were pushed into marriage at a young age, which prevented them from continuing their education.

In the novel *The Grip of Change*" the character called Gowri's daughter of Katha Muthu understands the agony of Dalits in every aspect. The dramatic persona is playing the exact role of Sivakami to express such brutality. Although her father, a prominent figure in society, permits her to pursue education, she may use the practical information she obtains to criticize and condemn her early marriage. Her view represents awareness and realization among other women. "The suffering that my mother

underwent in her marriage! I don't want to be tortured like her by some man" Sivakami, (124).

She prepares diligently for the test to escape marriage, and upon passing, she chooses to pursue further education at the city college. She experiences freedom from the violent men and community when she leaves home. During floods, waters from overflowing wells mingle with the waters of huge water bodies, transgressing their boundaries (95). This line reflects Gowri's step towards freedom and relief from a world of frustration, and dominance and merged with the people who are rational thinkers who respect humanity. Through her dare attempt try to educate mother Nagamani (second wife of Katha Muthu) to help her come out from subjugation. Sivakami portrays Gowri as an observer of their mother's experience but she dares to move from the victimized state of her mother and completely against her father's principles.

Because she is childless, the second character, a Thangam Dalit widow, is denied a portion of her husband's family land. The issue is that her in-laws try to use her and constantly humiliate her while refusing to give her a piece of the land. Because of her ignorance, she doesn't protest to anybody about the frequent and terrible mistreatment she endured at the hands of her upper caste landlord, Paranjothi, who she works for as a laborer and lives alone. His brother-in-law and other four men

from her community dragged her out in the middle of the night they beat her mercilessly. She faces discrimination from her caste as well. Paranjothi uses her like a mistress but not ready to accept because of pride, and caste bias and he is not only abused her physically but also verbally like, “Ungrateful whore! Even if she was hurt, she was hurt by the hand adorned with gold! A parachi could never dream of being touched by a man like me! My touch was a boon granted for penance performed in her earliest births! And then the dirty bitch betrays me! How can I face the world with my name this polluted”? Sivakami, (34).

The ignorant and poor uneducated woman is tagged as a victim and no one is there for her to support every man who abuse and beats her in other hands treat her like animal. Thangam is an example of an uneducated and pathetic among the Dalit women. The aggressive characters like Kamalam (wife of Parnjothi) and Vellaiammai (Thangam’s sister-in-law) are order others to severely beat her. They feel happy while others are abusing her,

They beat her up. Good! Why did they leave her alive? That fallen woman thinks too much of herself. She thinks that she is very beautiful. That’s why she went after that Udayar. When she loses her shape, he ‘ll throw her out, and she ‘ll be in a state worse than a dog” Sivakami, (28).

Sivakami’s second novel *Taming of Woman* focuses on women from the same family who have different attitudes. Ananthayi is

a poor and innocent woman who is suffering at the hands of Periyannan an arrogant man and a self-love man. He used to crave money, and power and never cared for family, especially his ailing mother and wife Anandhayi, he is such a chauvinist beats other women also. Unfortunately, she depends on him for financial assistance, which makes her constantly agitated. With a heavy heart, she endures the injustice her husband inflicts on her, bringing her shame day by day. When she was pregnant, Periyannan had slept with another lady in his room. He pursued her for no apparent reason, but in reality, he didn't comprehend and didn't look after her. He was blindfolded due to his lust towards another woman Lakshmi" Sivakami, (4).Another character in this novel Vellaiyamma mother of Periyannan not depend on him she lives by herself using her finances. If anyone advises her to take a rest and live by their son's earnings she will burst into a rage. Periyannan mother never used to demand anything from son because of his attitude. He never takes care of his old ailing mother and this infuriated as well. She decides not to live on the mercy of her son" Sivakami,(63).

After getting a building contract he throws a bundle of currency at her feet and insults her. This incident shows the disobedient nature of Periyannan. Moreover, Vellaiyamma is such revolutionary character not frightened about all his activities and she often recollects the memories of her husband, he did the same to her. Periyannan got angry in the same condition he

thrashed Ananthayi and abuse her. She was not able to bear the pain. The strong hands of Periyannan blew her away" Sivakami, (65).

Anandhayi finally starts to speak out against him. When Periyannan begins suspecting her of having an affair while he is away, she decides to end things. She doesn't take this blame well and lashes out at him, building up the strength to do so. "…Things are strewn about this house and you don't seem to be interested in setting them in order. Did you secret lover get you this skirt? Hey stop those words, eh? And if I don't? I'll chop your hair off…you are affine one to talk. You're the one who has a bitch around the house and you accuse me of having a lover"? Sivakami, (117).

In the novel *The Language of the Mirror*, Bhuvana is a sensitive, well-educated lady who observes the outside world in a new nation. She is also a researcher in a tiny dull American university town, where she receives the bare minimum of financial aid. She used to live there alone, actively seeking out Indians and abruptly asking, "Are you Indian?" when she saw someone wearing clothing typical of Indian culture while riding the bus. She usually takes the free bus to reach the university where the rich people will not use the bus and the government of USA provides such a facility for the public. The bus journey is the only way of meeting people (Sivakami, 14). It is a source of joy

to see others from the same culture. Bhuvana and Sujatha, an Indian woman, work together to celebrate the Navaratri celebration in a faraway country. Notwithstanding her being in the United States, she does not respect Western customs. They distribute color sticks and one of the conductors demonstrates how to utilize them with the dance pattern as they sing and dance.

She draped a silk saree and neatly pinned up the pleats for people to think she had taken special care of her appearance. She stuck a maroon pottu on her forehead."Wow! What a beautiful saree!" she and Sujatha complimented each other Sivakami, (13).

Five hundred Indians are gathered to celebrate the occasion, and they are coming in their fancy automobiles one by one. These individuals are from Gujarat and are not there to obtain degrees from America. They are settled and operating businesses like restaurants, grocery stores, and hotels, whereas the elder generation, despite the USA's extreme Westernization, still adheres to their traditional customs. The work vividly depicts the celebration and observance of national customs by persons who have settled in strange lands.

When Bhuvana reads the book "The Autobiography of my Mother" by Jamaica Kincaid, the book deals with the concept of Motherhood and recollects the sacrifice of her mother."Mother… Mother…Mother…It 's about a woman who had misfortune of

growing without a Mother". It is traumatic to grow up without a Mother and the protagonist carry its burden throughout her life" Sivakami, (146).

Freedom is a needed part of a woman's life especially housewives who are always committed to household work and do not at all have a unique world for them to reveal identity. Bhuvana breaks that social construction of housewives over a period of time and has been successful in creating a world for her. A traditional housewife's role of cooking and homemaking did not stop her from creating a new world. She can able to complement her home life with her education and career both home and work became her sources of creativity and strength, and she can able to balance both. Women have having imaginary world to discuss, and lament for everything that may give relief to pass hard times without others' support and they have freedom to share. "Are you day –dreaming"? If someone asked her that, she would look at the time and it would be hardly ten minutes. And that was nature of her work Sivakami, (192).

In Bhuvana's instance, establish a universe for her and communicate with anonymous special pals in a welcoming environment free from troubles and material belongings. A woman may transform herself into a tree or flower in an instant, even if her world is kept secret for the sole purpose of experiencing an unidentified pleasure. This type of world is

brief, but during those priceless minutes, new rivers, mountains, and a wide variety of plants and animals were created for the fictional journey. Although everyone is related, each person is unique and lives in their world, and every woman builds her own. An individual knowingly or unknowingly wants to capture another's world in the name of love, faith and family etc.…

All the characters of P. Sivakami portray different approaches towards life and everyone tries to realize themselves after the struggle and exploitation. Finally ready to face the world with bravery.

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BEYOND PITY: TRANS FEMINIST RESISTANCE IN KALKI SUBRAMANIAM'S POEM *ARISE, MY PRECIOUS*

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Abstract

Kalki Subramaniam's poem *Arise, My Precious* depicts the street-level exploitation and unwavering tenacity of transfeminine sex workers in India. This paper demonstrates how the poem turns depictions of economic despair, sexual violence, and verbal abuse into a plea for collective dignity. This paper is a combination of rigorous textual analysis and transfeminist theory and ideas. The stigmatised flesh becomes a location of sacred resistance when Kali and Śakti are invoked, reclaiming mythological power. The poem highlights the hidden costs of neoliberal modernity by connecting the commodification of flesh to patriarchal nationalism. The literary reading is grounded in a socio-historical framework. In the end, the paper makes the case that the *Arise, My Precious* serves as both a manifesto and an elegy, calling for structural transformation for trans communities throughout India and beyond via erotic autonomy, mutual aid, and subversive delight.

Key words: trans feminist poetics, sex work, queer futurity, sexual violence, necro politics

Arise, My Precious is a poem written by Kalki Subramaniam that distinctively expresses the viewpoint of a poet-activist who has successfully navigated the difficulties of gender and sexuality in contemporary India. *Arise, My Precious* is taken from collection of poems and short stories published under the title *We Are Not Others*. This book highlights context of modern feminist frameworks which provide a foundation for trans poetry in South India. Several poems in this collection are autobiographical in narration that shares real-life experiences of transfeminine sex workers. The transgender body represents as a place of exploitation and a source of subversive resilience. The poem *Arise, My Precious* exhibits dynamic vigour or vitality. To counteract the dehumanising consequences of a patriarchal and masculine ideas the poem argues with a feminist metaphysics of transformation. This is accomplished by employing the imagery of Kali and Śakti. In the beginning of a personal address, Kalki uses the term 'My Precious,' which is a term of love that is normally used by a man to a woman who is in a heterosexual relationship. The transgender community that Kalki belongs to has been reduced to a source of pleasure for those who are on the

outside. She shows her compassion for such kind of group in her poems.

Kalki examines the sexual lives of transgender women who are out on the streets at night through the prism of exploitation. The only people who are the subject of Kalki's distress are the transwomen who wait “at the neon-lit bypasses, concealed in the shadows of blind alleys"(47). During the conversation, Kalki fiercely condemned the system that idealises transgender sexual experiences simultaneously. The first two stanzas of the poem *Arise, My Precious* conjure up images that are conceptually similar to those found in a cinematic montage.

In this poem, she places a strong emphasis on a setting that is entirely saturated with predatory masculine observation. In the context of the global sex industry, Kalki uses Indian sensory surroundings, such as bypass highways, the glow of cigarette ashes, and the vulgar vocabulary of customers. The poem makes use of phrases such as "cruel crowd," "debauchees," and "perverts," all of which are not limited to a particular geographical area. Through the use of this phrase, an unbridled sexist passion is implied. The extensive research titled *Introduction: Transgender Studies 2.0* highlights the fact that “transgender sex work contributes to the escalation of economic marginalisation” says Stryker and Currah, (1–12). Kalki places a strong emphasis on the psychological damage that can be

produced by verbal abuse, including behaviours such as "derogatory language," "taunts," and "demeaning smirks." Eve Sedgwick, in her discussion of the voice of shame, asserts that ‘language acts as a material action that has the ability to form bodies and hierarchies’ (Sedgwick, 1990). Complicity is emphasised throughout the poem by the use of the phrase " who in fact belongs to"(47). The consumer who is funding pleasure is, in essence, the same individual who has previously uttered slurs in the public domain. It is a liberal presumption that interactions in sex work may be distinct from misogyny, yet the poem's depiction of this dual logic disproves this assumption. The main contradiction in the poem is to secure your target, paradoxically, you must initially permit yourself to be targeted! This idea resonates with Gayatri Spivak's (1988) “contemplation on the subaltern woman's body as the arena for ideological fights for power”. Spivak believed that the body of the subaltern woman was the battleground for these ideological struggles (272). On the other hand, Kalki would not allow her speaker to continue to exist in a posture of victimisation.

This poem acts as a portal to a ritual with the purpose of empowering rebellious individuals. "Did you become a woman for this?"(50), which is a rhetorical question posed by Kalki. And the question "What kind of life is this to sell yourself to save your life?"(50) acts more as a stimulus for introspection than as an indictment. This process of making self-reclamation is easier

to accomplish. An urgent desire to ‘wring off the hands that squeeze your breasts’ (49) is expressed by the author in the second phase of the poem, which depicts horrific imagery of dissection and mutilation. The poet states, ‘pluck and cast away the penis that pulsates to penetrate you manically’ (49). In Powers of Horror, Julia Kristeva makes the point that the ‘sexual assault of masculinity against transgender people is not a coincidence; rather, it is a reflection of what these persons are experiencing’ (1982). She defines the term "abject" as the physical borders where cultural prohibitions against purity and contamination are manifested. This understanding is presented in her essay on the topic of abjection. Nevertheless, the word "concurrently" suggests the presence of a disruptive agency: the transbody, which has traditionally been viewed as a receptacle for the dreams of others, is now envisioned as a potential source of retribution.

As a result of the portrayal of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian rupee, which commodifies one's naked body for currency that is stamped with the phrase "Father of the Nation," national hypocrisy are intertwined. Partha Chatterjee, a researcher on postcolonial studies, made the observation in 1993 that "nationalist iconography feminises the nation while undermining the autonomy of actual women." Within the context of this argument, Kalki highlights the significance of the Mahatma's symbolic tranquilly by comparing this with the violent trade that

is supported by the state that worships Mahatma. Through its imagery, the poem illustrates the coexistence of patriotic values and the persecution of women.

When the line "topple him off from your body!" (50) is read, the speaker's narration “Arise!" shifts from being an analytical critique to being a revolutionary rite. "Your Kali face" and "Shakthi incarnate" are two phrases that Kalki uses to elicit her call to action. She does this by drawing upon a deeply entrenched South Indian tradition in which the feminine deity is seen as embodying both protection and destruction. Symbolically, the iconography of the goddess of destruction, Kali, which is distinguished by her protruding tongue and blazing armament, represents the eradication of ignorance and ego; hence, it embodies the manifestation of Goddess Kali's worldwide rage against the architects of patriarchy.

The poem makes it very clear that freedom is inextricably tied to sexual autonomy by stating, ‘Kick at his testicles with your scar-studded anklet foot’ (50). In this case, the erotica is not repressed but rather employed as a combatant. The damaged anklet foot is a symbol of trauma and defiance, where metal meets with flesh, reflecting the convergence of history and insubordinate futurity, as described by Audre Lorde. This act is characterised as "the erotic as a source of female wisdom." According to Kalki, the rhetorical structure of the poem

elucidates crucial rules for trans women. These guidelines include "Now get away from him," (50) "Search men who do not wound your heart,"(51) and "Pursue joy that does not deplete your body"(51). This particular concept serves as the fundamental reference for the search for the utopian concept of "queer futurity," as articulated by José Esteban Muñoz in 2009. This is a domain of unrealised potential that has been discovered by fleeting acts of rebellion within the realm. In this poem, the speaker Kalki does not idealise a speedy resolution to the issue of labour or precarity. Instead, she underlines the significance of building emotional bonds that are not based on commodities. Through the use of the phrase 'I too stand in the thick of the battlefield, destroying stupidity and defeating the emasculated,' (51) the poet was able to combine her own personal experience with a desire to improve society.

The society which imposes gender bias is weak, at the same time the trans feminine individual is mistakenly considered to lack feminine quality. This demonstrates that the genuine manifestation of the goddess Shakti at work. The poet proposes that transgender people can display both strength and weakness, which finally results in the establishment of a counter-myth in femininity that emphasises the independent power of trans womanhood. Through this bold depiction of the transactional sex of transgender individuals, Kalki challenges the customary literary standard society.

The confessional works of Kamala Das (*An Introduction*) and Dalit women writer Bama (*Karukku*), who skilfully used the images of caste brutality in the literary canon of the caste savarna. These are clearly resonant with Kalki's poem. The commodified body is not only gendered feminine but also trans-sexed, an embodiment that is typically pathologized under heteronormative and is normative paradigms. The trans perspective presents a new epistemological viewpoint, that commodified body is not exclusively gendered feminine. The poem sheds light on the complex marginalisation that transgender people who work in the sex industry. Also, she highlights the ways in which their vulnerability is worsened by the junction of caste, poverty, and gender variation. In a noteworthy manner, the poem rejects the politics of pity, even though it contains disturbing imagery.

The poem concludes, 'Do not be afraid, my beloved!' (50). Imagine the song as a rallying cry for the community, urging people to work together rather than simply giving to charity. Kalki uses poetry as an art or a medium for mass mobilisation, an exhortation to action that simultaneously celebrates life. This view is in line with the history of Dalit authors and activists who saw art as praxis (Guru, 2011). A grief for exploitation is conveyed through the poem, which also stirs up revolutionary fire.

Hence, this poem occupies a transitional space between elegy and manifesto. In contrast to other feminist marches, *Arise, My Precious* distinguishes itself by making a direct connection between gender emancipation and the transgender population. Kalki's poetry refers to what Dean Spade refers to as "mutual aid" politics. According to Spade, "liberation requires not only the individual's withdrawal from the sex trade but also the demolition of the socioeconomic structures that initially generate such conditions". The open declaration made by the speaker, about general people statement; when they say, "I, too, stand in the thick of the battle" (51) suggests that they have a collectivist attitude that is based on mutual defence.

A dialogic relationship between radical modernity and tradition is established through the poem's famous political imagery. Using Kali and Shakti, Kalki challenges the colonial bias that portrays Hindu mythology as being fundamentally conservative. She revitalises the subversive potential that is inherent in Indian mythology, which is the goddess as the destroyer of the ego, the personification of justice, and the defender of people who are marginalised due to gender injustices. This religious re-signification summarizes the idea that was proposed by Cat Clarke, a queer theologian: "marginalised individuals may re-appropriate sacred symbols in order to establish "liberatory theologies" (Clarke, 47). Kalki's Shakti goes beyond the realm of aesthetic embellishment; it is a

deliberate appropriation of cultural capital that serves to justify trans anger inside a society that reveres mythical women. A social critique, a spiritual prayer, and an artistic investigation are all functions that "Arise, My Precious" serves concurrently, as the end of this discussion.

Instead of marginalising transgender experiences within ideas of gender justice, it gives transgender people's experiences a higher priority, which enriches Indian feminist writing. As a result, the poem's graphic depiction of physical assault makes readers to confront the daily necropolitics that impact sexualities that are imposed on trans community. Additionally, the poem's passionate demands for action have demonstrated an ethic of unwavering compassion. This Poem goes beyond plain sorrow when it is written by Kalki Subramaniam, who is a competent poet. Poetry changes into a rhythmic summons that brings together bodies that are both wounded and luminous in the desire of communal emancipation. Trans people life can be uplifted only when social change happens. This social change is possible only when trans people are accepted and recognized by the society.

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DUAL REALMS: WOMEN'S POWER, POLITICS, AND THE RE-INVENTION OF MARRIAGE IN NAYANTARA SAHGAL'S NOVELS

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Abstract

Nayantara Sahgal's Novels identify political history and ideology on feminism is the primary tool. The round and flat characters in her novels are used to picture the post-independence crisis of identity among the orient scholars. The women were limited to patriarchal marriage customs in Indian society. She compromises colonial education with Gandhian principles and she refused to associate female with premarital chastity. Sahgal strongly reveals culture imitation and gender inequality. By tracing the protagonists' movement from alienation to self-affirmation, the study shows how Sahgal reunions the family, nation, and individual responsibility. she highlights the roles of tradition and modernity, public politics, and private emotion, continually structure in her novels. This paper contends that Sahgal's nuanced portraits anticipate

contemporary feminist discourse on bodily autonomy, companionate marriage, and the ethics of equality.

Keywords: Indian English novel, feminist criticism, post-independence identity, marital morality, patriarchy,

Nayantara Sahgal is a distinguished Indian novelist. She was born on May 10, 1927, in Allahabad, India. She is the daughter of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, a notable politician and sister of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Sahgal's literary career spans several decades, and she is known for her perceptive and provocative works of fiction. Her novels frequently examine topics of political and social difficulties, especially within the framework of post-independence India. Sahgal distinctly recognised the difference between the novel and drama, both of which are rooted in creative imagination and populated by characters conceived by their respective authors. The characters developed can be categorised into two primary kinds based on their roles in the play or novel: flat characters and round characters.

Flat characters are primarily minor characters, whereas the principal characters in a story are typically spherical characters, especially the protagonist. Flat characters typically embody a certain notion or trait and may occasionally devolve

into caricatures, as exemplified by Rakesh in This Time of Morning. Round characters, conversely, embody multiple traits and are often complex in personality. Flat characters seldom exhibit development or transformation throughout narratives, but round characters consistently undergo growth and evolution. Flat characters seldom exhibit any motivation. However, they seem to be passive. Conversely, circular characters exhibit intricate motivations and initiate a sequence of cause-and-effect scenarios. Flat characters seldom impact the narrative's progression, while the storyline relies on the acts of round characters. Flat characters are readily overlooked by readers, unless they are caricatures. Conversely, round characters are unforgettable and persist in the readers' memory.

The book *A Time to Be Happy* (1958) by Nayantara Sahgal could be found a common list of general social challenges frequently appears in her writings throughout the novel. These issues pertain to several works of fiction and can provide insights into society and human life. Common social difficulties encompass discrimination based on race, gender, societal standing, sexual orientation. Sahgal’s works also speaks on the main themes like poverty, social justice, prejudice, mental health, environmental issues, immigration, and refugees. The novel *A Time to Be Happy* addresses challenges arising from a shifting paradigm. She introduces innovative philosophical

concepts in her novels, encompassing themes of personal identity and origins. The novel, *A Time to be Happy*, centres on the character Sanad Shivpal, the affluent son of a wealthy man, a notable product of a public school, and an accomplished tennis player. His issues predominantly reflect those of west-educated individuals returning to India, grappling with the clash between two value systems. This story provides a more accurate depiction of the independence era and recounts the Gandhian movement of the 1940s. *A Time to be Happy* encapsulates the fervour and idealistic optimism of India immediately following independence. Gandhi represented the fine…show more content…

Mr Trent, his boss, observes these actions and cautions Sanad; however, Sanad confidently asserts that his activities are unproblematic and that his measures are solely intended to acclimatise himself to his own country. He weds Kusum. Following his marriage to Kusum, who hails from a nationalist family, Sanad's primary interest is the restoration of his heritage. Nayantara Sahgal illustrates the dichotomy between Eastern and Western values through his character. He is acutely cognisant of his predicament of being unanchored. He laments his destiny. He articulates his sense of isolation succinctly: "... It is an unusual sensation to exist between two worlds, not fully integrated into either. I do not wholly belong to India. I cannot. My education, upbringing, and values have collectively rendered me un-Indian.

What commonality do I share with the majority of my compatriots?" Sanad is so distressed by his lack of roots that he even contemplates resigning from the British firm where he is employed. Through learning Hindi and spinning homemade cotton yarn, he discovers a sense of belonging to his...

Storm in Chandigarh (1969) Sahgal, through her novels, deeply focused on women's roles, stating that women should not be seen in the stereotypical passive roles of sex objects in modern society or as the ones who are fit only to manage home chores and children without any self-identity of their own. For the smooth functioning of family and society at large, a woman needs to be seen as a man's equal and respected partner. Sahgal does not mention her women characters as wage earners but mainly as wives, daughters and mothers in all her novels. It is in these roles that women are expected to experience freedom and to become aware of themselves as individuals and gain acceptance as equals. In all Sahgal's works, there is a juxtaposition of two worlds: the personal world of man-woman relationships and the impersonal world of politics. Husband-wife alienation resulting from lack of communication, extramarital relationships, existentialistic problems and temperamental incompatibility form the major themes in her novels. Sahgal's characters suffer from the torment of broken marriages. Loneliness, suffering and frustration in marriage make women

rebellious. Most of her couples seem to be happy and contented, but they often experience loneliness and feel discomfort in marriage, like Saroj in Storm in Chandigarh. Her women characters behave as normal human beings, not succumbing to their ego, committing errors, taking wrong decisions, exposing their weakness but raising them in triumph.

Sahgal's third novel, Storm in Chandigarh (1969), advocates for a new marital morality founded on mutual trust, consideration, generosity, and the absence of pretence, selfishness, and self-centredness. It explores intricate human relationships where love, friendship, honesty, freedom, and equality are paramount. The 'storm' in the lives of three married couples Inder and Saroj, Jit and Mira, and Vishal and Leela is set against the political turmoil between the newly divided states of Punjab and Haryana regarding Chandigarh. The characters exhibit modern sensibilities while remaining connected to tradition. This synthesis of tradition and modernity is evident in their perspectives on love, morality, education, gender relations, and even architecture.

In the novel *Storm in Chandigarh*, Saroj is married to Inder, who runs the textile mills of Saroj's cousin Nikhil Ray's company in Chandigarh. There is no emotional communion between them, in spite of their four-year married life with two

children. She represents the new woman who is trying to retain her individuality and breathe freely in the suffocating atmosphere of passionless and unfulfilling marriages and to live in self-respect, thus implicitly demanding a realignment of the parameters on which marriage functions. But she does not consider it a sin, rather as a part of growing up. After her marriage, she has been faithful to Inder to the fullest degree. She is a person who values mutual trust, consideration, honesty, communication and absence of pretence in a relationship. She is thoroughly truthful to Inder, and her honesty in the marital relationship can be gauged from the fact that she even confesses about her pre-marital relationship to him with the intention of looking forward to a clean break from the past. But this confession actually dooms their marriage. Inder has kept on torturing her mentally and physically ever since her confession. Inder represents the traditional patriarchal attitude of society toward women, which puts a high premium on female chastity and virginity before marriage. The double standards of patriarchal morality are visible from the fact that Inder, who wants to make Saroj feel 'ashamed' of her premarital affair, himself has many sexual experiences before marriage. But women have no right to question male promiscuity or indulge in practices which are considered to be male prerogatives.

Saroj symbolises modern women, who want to establish a new order with changed standards, where they can be their true selves and where character is judged by the purity of heart and not the chastity of body. According to Sahgal, Saroj's premarital act of sex has nothing to do with the pollution of flesh, promiscuity or immorality. In spite of all this torture and torment, Saroj has never let her inner strength and her self-esteem get completely obliterated. Even in extremity, she had never said, 'Forgive me'. For each time she had lived through a night's torment, she could wake to the sunlight and find herself unsullied in it. Saroj's yearning for acceptance, communication, honesty, liberty and lack of pretence in a relationship draws her near Vishal Dubey, who completely shares her emotional cravings. Jit and Mira are another couple in the novel who also suffer from a similar dilemma. They are a childless couple who suffer from an emotional void in their lives. Mira's marriage with sweet-tempered and considerate Jit has its share of estrangements and misgivings, but Mira's problem is not physical but psychological. The search for communication makes Mira come towards Inder. In her relationship with Inder, Mira stimulates his mind and involves him in ways no woman ever has. Their relationship comes to an end when the understanding dawns on Mira that there is some part of Inder which she could never be completely aware of, inspite of her best efforts.

Inder is left alone in the end, as Saroj decides to go to Delhi for her confinement with the view of spending the rest of her life with Vishal. She makes every effort on her part to make her marriage with Inder successful. But all her efforts to go near him remain as useless as a bird beating against the windowpane to go inside. She longs for 'oxygen of understanding' with Inder, which she actually finds in her friendship with Vishal. Finally, she becomes symbolic of the modern woman who not only aspires for freedom, dignity and equality in a relationship but who actually has the courage to leave the rotting relationship in favour of one which is full of possibilities without caring about patriarchal society. Saroj revolts against the established norms by leaving a marriage that had become an emotional wasteland for her. Thus, Saroj's departure from her home is an initiation towards the personal freedom of the new woman. Her courage is her virtue, and she asserts her individuality. Saroj, no doubt, is the embodiment of Nayantara's own vision of a virtuous woman.

As a woman novelist, Sahgal recognises that her primary obligation is that of advocating the emancipation of women. She vividly describes how a woman is exploited even during modern times by both the individuals and society. She is deeply concerned with the failure of marital relationships, the loneliness of living and private terrors. Her women characters suffer because they refuse to submerge their individuality and cling to

their personal identity at all costs. Sahgal shows women suffering in married life and deciding to come out of the suffocating bondage by preferring divorce. Her women, like Saroj, Simrit, Rashmi and Anna, all leave their husbands or break the marriage, which does not allow them to be free and to live life in their own way. Having personally experienced the trauma of a failed marriage, Sahgal exhibits the dilemma of women trapped between traditional assumptions regarding womanhood and the stirrings of individuality very sharply and skilfully. Sahgal highlights a clearly feminist function in her scathing exposure of the hollowness of man-woman relationships based on socially predetermined patterns of gender inequality. Sahgal delineates marriage without emotional involvement, love without respect and sex without passion as the causes for unfulfilling marriage in her novels. Sahgal's women characters undoubtedly reveal her feminist ideology.

Women are individuals, and marriage constitutes a partnership rather than an institution. However, the prevailing societal framework is structured to facilitate male dominance over females in marriage, sexual relationships, childbirth, and even infidelity; it is the woman who suffers. This dynamic is vividly depicted in Sahgal's novels. The acceptance of women as equal partners would herald a new era. Their liberation is predicated on the fundamental premise that a woman's body is

inherently her own, and she possesses her own perspectives on pertinent issues. Sahgal embodies a new morality, wherein women are not regarded as mere objects of desire and transient pleasure but as equals and esteemed partners to men.

Mistaken Identity (1988) is set in 1929, during a tumultuous period in India marked by strikes and the British Raj's escalating anxiety. Bhushan Singh, the aimless yet affable son of a minor raja, is erroneously apprehended while travelling home to North India, falsely accused of treason, and subsequently imprisoned. As the months awaiting trial extend into years, the apolitical Bhushan captivates his communist cellmates with narratives from his life: his enigmatic and eccentric mother, his contemporary Parsee girlfriend (who wears dresses), the American flapper who introduced him to the Turkey Trot, and a clandestine childhood romance that incited two violent Hindu-Muslim riots, resulting in his exile. Sahgal weaves suspense, subtle irony, and a rich tapestry of Northern Indian culture around the enigma of Bhushan's arrest and his tales. Mistaken Identity serves as a family saga, a romance, a historical novel, and, most poignantly, a fable illustrating the inexorable nature of karma.

Plans for Departure (1994) In the summer of 1914, the distinguished scientist Sir Nitin Basu finds the arrival of a single

Danish woman, employed as his secretary by his sister Didi, at a secluded Himalayan hill station to be as unsettling as an invasion. The tall, fair, and unconventional Miss Anna Hansen is a feminist, ahead of her time, embarking on a year of travel prior to her marriage to an English diplomat. During her brief stay in Himapur, she will come perilously close to falling in love with another man, uncover what she believes to be evidence of a clandestine crime, and be profoundly affected by a violent and enigmatic death. The small European community in Himapur includes the missionary Marlowe Croft, a domineering and obsessive man intent on establishing a Christian church in the hills; his shrill and foolish wife Lulu, who poses the primary impediment to his mission; and the district magistrate Henry Brewster, an enigmatic individual uncomfortable with the imperial authority he embodies.

Abandoned by his wife Stella, for whom he relinquished his aspirations for a political career in England, he remains deeply enamoured with her. Anna's intrigue with Brewster and her engagement in India's escalating political turmoil prompt her to reevaluate her future; however, a tragic accident and a shocking discovery in a forest glade render her departure inevitable. Plagued by unresolved questions, Anna formulates her exit plans as the personal tragedies of Himapur are overshadowed by the upheaval of war. *Plans for Departure* is

both a romance and a mystery, set against a continent on the brink of revolution and a world teetering on the verge of conflict. Sahgal has crafted a new novel of profound impact and exceptional artistry, imbued with intrigue, subtle humour, and keen observation.

Sahgal's writing style is characterised by a blend of lyrical prose, introspective narratives, and insightful analyses of society. Her contributions have significantly enriched the Indian literary landscape, establishing her as a prominent voice in contemporary Indian literature.

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CINEMATIC HILLS: REIMAGINING HILL STATIONS IN MALAYALAM CINEMA

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Abstract

Hill Stations are enchanting retreats, with lush green plantations, misty mountains, serene environment and cool atmosphere. They signify natural beauty as well as cultural complexity. Many Malayalam films, including *Charlie*, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, *Drishyam*, *Summer in Bethlehem*, *Maheshinte Prathikaram*, *Idukki Gold*, *Ayyappanum Koshiyum*, *Ordinary*, *Kilukkam*, *Iyyobinte Pusthakam* and *Pani Theeratha Veedu* are set in the backdrop of hill stations like Munnar, Vagamon, Ootty and Kodaikkanal. There are different approaches to the representation of landscape in films- landscape can act as a space, place, spectacle and metaphor in a film. Therefore, hill stations as landscape in a film play multiple roles. It can provide the location to the film and can provide the space in which the story of the film unfolds. Hill stations as landscapes, sometimes

becomes a crucial character in a film. The natural beauty of the hill stations can mesmerize the viewers and may boost tourist potential of the place. Hill stations as landscape can act as metaphor to processes like nationalism and colonialism. Hill stations as landscape also represents emotions of the characters in the film.

The paper titled "Representation of Hill Stations as Landscape in Malayalam Films- A Preliminary Study" aims to analyze the representation of hill stations as landscape in selected Malayalam films. The methodology of the paper follows segmental analysis of selected films and analysis using various Post Modern theories.

Key Words- Landscape, Hill stations, Metaphor.

Introduction

Film is a powerful medium that surmounts linguistic and cultural barriers, and offers a unique amalgamation of technology, narration, visual pleasantry and emotional connection. Film has evolved from its origins in black and white reels to the digital forms today, influencing as well as reflecting social values, customs and cultures. Films allow us to experience various perspectives and explore complex themes around the world. Various tools like lighting, music and camera angles are used by the filmmaker to create powerful emotions. Audience plays an

important role in interpreting and connecting with the characters, landscape, themes and perspectives presented in the film.

Landscape is a valuable element in films and provides the space for events to occur. In films, hill stations are portrayed as picturesque landscapes that evoke certain emotions among the characters and the audience. The location of the film plays a significant role, not just as background to a story, but also as an integral element of the narration. Hill stations are portrayed in films as lush green patches, misty mountains, breathtaking cliffs, dense forest and plantations. Over the years, Malayalam filmmakers have used hill stations to portray various emotions like love, sorrow, mystery, horror and escape. The study titled, 'Cinematic Hills: Reimagining Hill Stations in Malayalam Cinema', aims to explore how hill stations are represented in Malayalam films, analyzing their visual and narrative significance.

Literature Review

In the article *"The Geography of Cinema — A Cinematic World,"*[i] Anton Escher explores the history of how landscapes are represented in films and examines various works on filmic landscapes, highlighting their significance in storytelling. Escher argues that landscapes can take on multiple roles in films. They can act as characters, or serve as spectacles, offering aesthetic

appeal. Landscapes contribute to the authenticity of a film's narration, grounding the story in a specific time and place.

Chris Lukinbeal's article *"Cinematic Landscape,"* published in the *Journal of Cultural Geography,* examines how landscapes are portrayed and interpreted in films. He identifies landscapes as functioning in multiple ways: as a physical space where events unfold, as a place embedded with cultural and emotional meaning, as a metaphor conveying deeper themes, perspectives or ideas, and as a spectacle offering aesthetic appeal and visual grandeur.

Saraswathy Raju's book, *Gendered Geographies: Space and Place in South Asia*[ii], deals with various interpretations on the concepts of space and place and analyses how the geography of a given phenomenon can provide the context for the construction of social reality or knowledge.

Theoretical Approaches

The Annales school originated in France, in late 1920s when the journal, Annales d'histoire economique et sociale, was founded by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre. Since then, new fields have been recognized as valuable sources of historical enquiry. Later, this shift led to the development of diverse branches of history, such as environmental history, women's history, subaltern history and film history.[iii] Films have become a significant source of

historical research as they reflect the socio- political, economic, cultural and environmental contexts of the time in which they are produced. They provide information about contemporary politics, ideologies and social structures and can also dramatize or reinterpret past events. Films can thus act as primary and secondary sources for historical research.

A filmic landscape is the representation of real world on the earth's surface, enhanced by cultural factors or fiction. Filmic landscape is the (visual) manifestation of the territorial identity.[iv] Landscape symbolizes human actions, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, ideas and customs. To provide a better understanding of the type of landscape, suffix is added to the landscape and thus natural landscape, cultural landscape, urban/rural landscape and filmic landscape were formed.

Filmic Landscape

Landscapes in a film can be a historical, geographical or fictitious element and provides genuineness to the narration. Landscape can represent and support emotions and strengthen the plot.[v] Filmic Landscape evokes emotions of the audience[vi]. Landscape has different functions of space, place, spectacle and metaphor[vii]. The drama of a film unfolds in the space provided by landscape. Thus landscape becomes a space of action. As a space, landscape is secondary to the plot and characters of the

film. Space is not neutral, it is constructed, moulded and ideologically marked, by the dominant powers.[viii] Landscape as place provides the location of the film and is related to the geographic aspect of landscape. It brings in 'realism' and forces the viewer to realize the story as taking place. Landscape can be a spectacle, i.e. an element of beauty and visual pleasantry. Landscape as spectacle can be something fascinating and can also encodes power relations. As a metaphor, landscape contains meaning and ideology. Landscape conveys particular cultural, political, social, economic and political contexts.[ix]

Landscape in film plays a crucial role in moulding the narrative of the film and in enriching the visual storytelling. They are not only physical settings for a film, but also act as an extension to the story and characters. Thus, they contribute to the emotional and thematic elements of the film. Landscape helps to establish a film world, helping the audience to get immersed in its atmosphere. The landscape in a film can structure how people should see a particular landscape. Some directors use landscape to evoke certain emotions. Forests symbolize terror, mountains as unfriendly places, river stands for a change or something new about to happen and wasteland as hopelessness.[x] Urban landscapes represent chaos and monotonous modern life, whereas rural settings represent freedom and simplicity. Landscapes, which act as metaphors in films, reflect the internal

state of the characters or may mirror the evolution of the plot of the film. When characters are placed in overwhelming environments, they tend to scale down the importance of the characters. Therefore, landscapes are essential tools for filmmakers, to blend artistry with storytelling, to elevate cinematic experiences of the viewers.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the representation of hill stations as landscapes in Malayalam films. The present study employs qualitative analysis of the visual and narrative framework of selected Malayalam films. The selected films were textually analysed, focusing on visual aesthetics, narrative significance and cultural symbolism of hill stations. The primary sources for the study are the selected films which include *Charlie*, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, *Drishyam*, *Summer in Bethlehem*, *Maheshinte Prathikaram*, *Idukki Gold*, *Ayyappanum Koshiyum*, *Ordinary*, *Kilukkam*, *Iyyobinte Pusthakam* and *Pani Theeratha Veedu*. The films were randomly selected, based on the extensive use of hill station in the storyline as well as visual composition in the film. The study adopts a thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and analysed the socio-political, cultural and economic connotations embedded in the portrayal of hill stations, facilitating a better understanding of their filmic representation.

Discussion

Representation of Hill Stations as Landscape in Malayalam Films

The Malayalam film industry, also known as Mollywood, is renowned for its realistic themes and focus on content- driven films. It has received national and international recognitions for innovative techniques, performances and socially relevant narratives. Hill stations have played a vital role in Malayalam films serving as beautiful background that enhances storytelling. Films use the serene beauty, mystic ambience, tea plantations and lush green landscape to evoke various emotions and dramatize the narrative of the film. These filmic landscapes can create emotional depth, present socio- political themes and present the geo- cultural landscape of Kerala. Some films can explore ecological and social issues as well as promote regional tourism.

One of the important elements in Malayalam films is the organic blend of Kerala's natural beauty with the narration of the films. Various landscapes like paddy field, sea shore, coconut plantations, forests, tea plantations and hill stations are regular landscapes in Malayalam films. Among these landscapes, hill stations hold a special place, with their misty mountains, lush greenery, serene ambience and cool climate. Hill stations can

enhance cinematic experience irrespective of the genre of the film.

Hill Station, as filmic landscape, can provide the space for the plot of the film to unfold. Rather than being a mere backdrop, hill stations can shape the narrative, revealing characters' emotions, conflicts, and resolutions. They can act as a catalyst for the emotional exploration of characters. In *Charlie*[xi], a Malayalam film released in 2015, the serene beauty of Vagamon provides the space for the protagonist, Charlie to express his freedom and moulds his perspectives towards life. Tessa, mesmerized by the life of Charlie and his perspectives, tries to find him in Vagamon. Here, the hill station named Vagamon, is not only a physical place, but also acts as a space that unravels her inner conflicts as well as promotes her emotional and spiritual transformation.

Drishyam[xii], the 2013 Malayalam film, used the hilly terrains of Thodupuzha, to build tensions and suspense. The secluded nature of the hills provided a sense of secrecy that complimented the plot of the film. The protagonist Georgekutty uses this secrecy and isolated surroundings to execute his plan, manipulate events and protect his family. The landscape of the hill station thus provides space for the story to unfold, as well as symbolizes the layered complexity of the plot of the film.

In *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*[xiii], the rugged hills and the dense forest acts as the battleground for resistance against colonial oppression. The terrain of the Wayanad hill station plays a crucial role in shaping the plot, and the characters use this landscape to carryout guerilla warfare. The Wayanad hills acts as a space that provides refuge to Pazhassi Raja and his acquaintances and supports the film's narrative which uphold patriotism.

In *Summer in Bethlehem*[xiv], the hill station of Ootty becomes a setting for personal connections. Here, the hill station provides the space for the characters to connect on a deeper level, and the tranquil atmosphere of the hill station helps relationship between the characters to build organically. The important events in the film, including the formation of friendship between the protagonists Dennis and Ravi, establishment of farm houses, the unfolding of love between Dennis and Aami, the mysterious lover of Ravi and resolution of past conflicts of Aami are intricately tied to the evocative setting of the film.

Thus, hill stations are dynamic spaces, where narratives unfold. They set a space for intense conflict and the landscapes are intertwined with the plot of the film.

In *Maheshinte Prathikaram*[xv], the narrative is set in a small, picturesque town in Idukki. The hills, roads and lush greenery of the region serves as an authentic backdrop for Mahesh's life as a

local photographer. The terrain of Idukki, reflects the simplicity of Mahesh and other characters' existence, and presents the close knit relationship between the characters. Here, everyone knows each other and are willing to cooperate in family functions and other popular events. The simple quarrel, that leads to a further conflict, the resolution of Mahesh and eventually solving the issue, all occur within the context of the landscape of Idukki. The mystic hills and waterfalls capture the spirit of Idukki as a place where individuals, relationships and their socio cultural economy are tied to the land.

In *Idukki Gold*[xvi] , the hill station of Idukki is the location of the film, where the characters, who were friends when young, reunite and confronts unresolved issues from the past. Here, the hill station of Idukki, acts as a repository of memories, and evokes a sense of nostalgia among the characters. The physicality of the hill station is used to represent the themes of friendship, aging and reconciliation. The expansive hills and paths symbolize freedom and innocence of the youth. It is also the place where the different stages of life, youth and adulthood, collide. The landscape of Idukki emotionally connects the place with the plot of the film.

In the film, *Ayyappanum Koshiyum*[xvii], the hill station of Attappadi in Palakkad is an important location. The film's plot revolves around the conflict between Ayyappan Nair, a rogue

turned principle police officer and Koshy Kurian, an ex-Havildar. Ayyappan's familiarity with the region and its people, and being connected to the land contrasts with Koshy's outsider status. The socio- economic differences between the protagonists drives the narrative of the film. The hills, unwinding roads, dense forest of Attappady, creates the backdrop as well as presents the intensity of ego clash between the protagonists.

Hill stations in Malayalam films present breathtaking spectacles, showcasing their natural beauty. These films not only use the stunning landscape to unravel the story of the film, but also promote tourism. The films capture the grandeur and serene nature of a place and inspire viewers to visit these places.

In the film *Ordinary*[xviii], the picturesque hill station of Gavi is presented in all its glory. The greenery, reservoir, foggy hills, cool climate and forest set the tone of the narrative. The plot of the film revolves around the simple life of the villagers and the scenic beauty of Gavi enhances the emotional depth of the characters and connects the viewers with the place. The film popularised Gavi as a tourist place and can be considered as a prime example of how films can be used to promote tourism.

Kilukkam[xix], the evergreen classic of Malayalam film industry, is set in Ootty, whose beauty is intricately woven into the plot of the film. The film presents Oottty's iconic spots like the Botanical garden, the lake, the tea plantations, the pine trees and

misty mountains to amplify the romance, comedy and drama in the film. The songs, like *Kilukil Pambaram*, particularly use the stunning scenery of Ootty. The landscape of Ootty serves as a visual treat as well as acts as a ideal background for blossoming the relationship between the protagonists, Joji, Nischal and Nandini.

The film *Iyyobinte Pusthakam*[xx], is set in the British colonial era and post colonial era. The film uses the hill stations of Munnar and Vagamon as a rand spectacle to frame its narrative. The film explores themes like love, betrayal and power. The rolling green hills, sprawling tea plantations, misty peaks, dense forests and colonial architecture bring authenticity to the period setting, while showcasing the beauty of the places.

Landscape in film often has metaphorical significance, reflecting struggles, emotions and psychological states of characters. In *Iyyobinte Pusthakam*, the hill stations of Munnar and Vagamon bears metaphorical values, reflecting socio- political and economic turmoil of characters. The dense forests, misty mountains and the tea plantations and factories serve as representations of oppression and opportunity. The mist acts as a symbol of uncertainty and secrecy, embedding the truths and betrayals in the narrative. The rugged terrains of the hill stations mirrors the internal conflicts of the individuals. Aloshy considers his ancestral house, forests and hills surrounding it, as symbols

of alienation and harsh realities of betrayal he faced since his childhood. The landscape reminds him of his struggles as a young boy, the brutalities of his brothers and also about his love. The unyielding grandeur of the hills also represents colonial exploitation and human greed. When the British arrives Munnar, they realize that the place has ideal climate and soil for tea plantations. They destroy the forests and establish vast tea plantations and factories. These tea plantations and factories are sites of colonial oppression, where they exploited the labourers providing bare minimum and sexually assaulted the women.

The exquisite forests, tea plantations, top stations, grass hills are intricated with the complex life of the natives. The tea plantations provide jobs to the natives. But they are also sites of severe exploitation of the labourers, both men and women, by managers and owners of the plantations. The migration of peasants into the forest and their expulsion from there, by the landlord is another example of how landscape brings in power relationships. Forests are also the safe zones to the tribals and later, Aloshy, Iyyob and Martha also enter into the wild to escape from their enemies. Speaking the story of a period, Munnar itself emerges as a character of the film, rather than being merely a landscape. Munnar also provides the space for the conflict of several ideologies, i.e. colonialism Vs nationalism (which are represented by Harrison and his prototype Iyyob, and Aloshy

respectively), landlordism/capitalism Vs communism (Iyyob and his sons try to suppress the peasant migrants who are gathered under the Communist leadership which always fought against the capitalists and the land lords), patriarchy (many women characters in the film including Kazhali, Annamma and Rahel are silent victims of patriarchal tortures) etc.

Similarly, in *Pani Theeratha Veedu*[xxi], the hill station is a metaphor to emotional isolation and estrangement. The serene, yet desolate atmosphere of the hill station of Ootty, presents the complexities of relationships and reflects the emotional state of the characters. The serene picturesque landscape contrasts with the underlying human cruelty. Leela, a young girl working in the household of a rich plantation owner is sexually assaulted by him. Therefore, plantation becomes a site for exploitation and oppression, revealing the darker realities of natural beauty. Though angry, Jose remains silent so that he can survive and support his family back in his native place. Thus, the hill station of Ootty becomes a filmic metaphor for concealed violence and social inequalities.

Conclusion

In Malayalam films, hill stations are not merely backdrops- they serve different functions of a place, space, spectacle and metaphor. *Charlie*, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, *Drishyam* and

Summer in Bethlehem use the serene charm of hill stations as spaces of romance, humour, drama and emotional connection. The landscape in these films provides the space for the plot of the film to unfold. The landscape a place deals with the geographical location of the film. Hill stations can act as authentic settings that shape the narrative of the films. The films *Maheshinte Prathikaram*, *Idukki Gold*, *Ayyappanum Koshiyum* mirror simplicity and community ties, evokes nostalgia and presents socio- economic contrasts, by blending the landscape with storytelling. Hill stations in Malayalam films can also act as spectacle, adding the aesthetic value of the film. Films like *Ordinary*, *Kilukkam*, and *Iyyobinte Pusthakam* not only showcase scenic landscapes like Gavi, Ooty, Munnar, and Vagamon but also promote tourism. Hill stations serve as powerful metaphors for emotional, social and political struggles. Films like *Iyyobinte Pusthakam* and *Pani Theeratha Veedu* use landscapes to represent oppression and exploitation, making landscape an active participant in exploring human emotions and societal inequalities.

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RAJIV KHANDELWAL'S *CRYSTALLINE TIDINGS*

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Rajiv Khandelwal is an accomplished poet and electrical engineering graduate from Agra, India. He has carved a unique niche in contemporary English poetry, blending classical forms with modern sensibilities. He has contributed to leading journals and anthologies, and has mentored many young writers by guiding beginners in national poetry events "Crystalline Tidings" by Rajiv Khandelwal is a profound anthology of 65 poems that delves into the essence of love, loss, resilience, and self-discovery. Khandelwal's work stands out for its vivid imagery and evocative metaphors, with each poem blending personal experiences and universal truths in a manner that is both accessible and deeply emotional.

The collection gracefully transitions from personal reflections in poems like "Shades of You"—where lasting love and memory are honored in the line, "After almost four decades of marriage, still, in every woman I happen to view, shades of you, you alone!"—to somber explorations of old age and

isolation in “Creeping Darkness.” Here, the poet confides, “I am left with my emptiness, slowly learning to live with loneliness,” capturing the uncertainty and quiet strength of confronting life’s later stages. Social issues find powerful voice in “Do Lawyers Have Daughters,” which resonates with parental anxiety in modern India as it references the aftermath of the Nirbhaya tragedy: “My granddaughter had yet not returned from her tuitions… Suddenly, I was seized by severe anxiety. My breathing and heart rate… Stepped up the gas. Unscripted I was magically transported to the traumatic tale of Nirbhaya.”

Throughout the anthology, Khandelwal demonstrates an impressive emotional range, offering hope, empathy, and insight even amidst hardship. The poems are direct, with a clarity and simplicity that make them widely relatable. Each piece feels grounded in reality, encouraging readers to connect with their own experiences. Poems such as “The End Is Near,” “Love at First Sight,” and “Cultural Diversities” broaden the thematic spectrum from reflections on death and fleeting romance to commentary on social change and ethical dilemmas.

Despite its strengths, “Crystalline Tidings” sometimes sacrifices poetic musicality for conversational flow; a few poems read more like broken-up prose, and certain themes and emotions may seem repetitive as the book progresses. Those seeking

elaborate metaphor or complex rhyme may feel parts of the collection are less inventive.

Overall, this anthology is a heartfelt testament to human endurance and vulnerability. “Crystalline Tidings” combines honest reflections with topical breadth, rewarding readers with moments of beauty and truth while inviting them to make meaning from even the most ordinary moments. It is a comforting and gently provocative work, offering solace, challenge, and recognition to anyone navigating the complexities of life.

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Edited, Printed and Published by Senior Prof. G. Baskaran,
Executive Editor, JER on behalf of GRI-DTBU, Gandhigram